CHANTS COMMUNAL

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Chants communal by Horace Traubel

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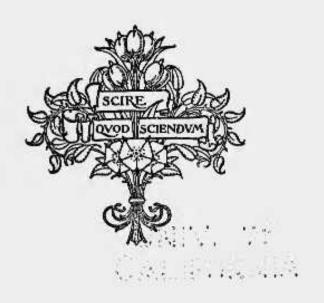
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DEDICATING THESE PAGES

Worn with the burdens of rebellious years,
Across the sea's scan matching birth with death,
Like ships skysailed that earthward come no more,
Lowe's dreams must wanish down the edge of sight,
All spent ahead where life will follow on:
Celestial children, soon beyond my reach,
Entering the unseen port to wait for me.

OPTIMOS

In some faces I meet I see vice rampant and virtue veiled,
In some faces I meet I see virtue smiling and vice curtained,
In vice I know vice, in virtue I know virtue, I stretch the boundaries of
neither,

I stand apart not to judge but to witness:

I hold no discourse with fragments, supposing them complete men and women,

To each I accord my whole faith and from each I receive in full stream the returning tide.

Is it my call to set men apart, good, bad, indifferent?

Is it my part to sentence man for one sin or pardon him for one virtue?

Is it my part to distrust the tree at its roots because its leaves in the fall are dead?

Is it on my palette to color the sun? Can I pour from my garden-pot rain-falls and sea-drifts?

Back of me are a thousand friendly arms holding me to modest judgment, Before me are as many thousand assurances demanding that I give men, women, myself, time for fulfilment.

I have toiled on stony roads, the hot sun overhead, in my heart the northern ice,

In the winter's night the snow beat across my face, the north winds accused my faith, in my heart the tropic heat. The word you hear from my lips is but an emissary,

The word is not me, it but announces me-

The song I hear from the illustrious woman is not the song of her heart:

Underneath the song which the audience applauds I hear the real song framed in her immortal desires.

The artist paints his picture, it is honorably hung, it receives the prize of the salon,

Is the artist here in this paint and canvas? Lo! as I look these vanish, a dim beckoning figure appears, I follow.

I would say, do not let this mystery worry you-

At its heart this mystery is revelation, in its final solution it offers a cup benign,

If these things I see are all that is to be seen I too would seek the roadside and dissolve myself in grief,

But these things I see are only forerunners, signals, flags, standards raised whose significance is yet to be known,

I use them, see them used, as I eat my dinner at noonday, joyously, not too much dwelling upon it,

They are ships to sail me forth, wings for flight, feet for marches,

They are lingerings this side, arrested deeds, hesitated heroisms, shamed fears,

They have no apologies to offer, they are as truly a part of the perfect whole as the whole is consistent with itself.

As I look out of these windows—as I pass where men crowd, where this silent man is alone,

As I take solace of degradation and bring to lives condemned eloquent passwords to the future,

As I decline to sit on this bench as judge over any man or any object,

As I stand not indifferent to any thing nor as a spectator looking at something outside myself,

As cloud-barriers do not distress me-the cloud, my sun its creator,

As I am re-born in every person I meet, every event, every starburst,

As I can be severely arraigned by myself, never by any other,

So do I melt all coined gold into earth-veins again, render all bricks back into clay-beds, return all stones to their quarries, that men may meet men everywhere without interferences—

So, in all the faces I see, maimed, passion-bruted, hounded, whatever the cursory veils they bear,

All bringing to me my own self again and again, only in other dress, I am recognized, welcomed.

THE CHANTS

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