

INCENSE; VERSES

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Incense; Verses by Levi Gilbert

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LEVI GILBERT

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VERSES**

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Verses

BY

LEVI GILBERT



CINCINNATI: JENNINGS AND GRAHAM
NEW YORK: EATON AND MAINS

a. m. w., 5 Dec., 1932

To My Six Children

WHOM I LOVE

AND

IN WHOSE LOVE

I CONTINUALLY REJOICE

5

THERE are three strains which will be found recurring in these poems—those of religion, patriotism, and human love. With the last are blended all the sanctities of married life and all the holy memories of those who have gone before us into Paradise. The altar, the flag, the hearthstone—however imperfectly these may be sung—will ever remain the strongest attachments of the human soul, evoking evermore the most ennobling and consecrating emotions.

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Incense

WITHIN the vast cathedral wall,
Which echoes with the strains of song,
I join in glad processional
To praise the Holy One and Strong.

No hierarch, no prelate high—
Archbishop, suffragan, or priest—
A simple, serving brother I,
My offices among the least.

No stole I wear with gold bedight,
No cassock broidered rich with lace;
I am a lowly acolyte,
Contented with the humblest place.

No litanies may I intone,
No solemn masses for the dead;
For me one task minute alone,
To keep my bowl with odors fed.

But slight my offering: some grain
Of balsam, myrrh, or frankincense—
Sure that my Lord will not disdain
My modest gift of small pretense.

Dim through the dusk the arches spring,
The temple's dome above me bends;
My censer to and fro I swing,
Its scented wreath of smoke ascends.

My inmost heart to organ-tone
Vibrates in joy; and prayer and rite
Conjoin with glorious antiphon
In blessing me, an acolyte.

The creeds and chants to heaven uproll,
A reverent, noble liturgy;
Though but an acolyte, my soul
Responds with throbs of ecstasy!