

**AMBARVALIA:  
POEMS**

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Ambarvalia: Poems by Thomas Burbidge & Arthur H. Clough

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**THOMAS BURBIDGE & ARTHUR H. CLOUGH**

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BY THOMAS BURBIDGE

AND

ARTHUR H. CLOUGH.

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POEMS

BY

ARTHUR H. CLOUGH.





English  
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THE human spirits saw I on a day,  
Sitting and looking each a different way ;  
And hardly tasking, subtly questioning,  
Another spirit went around the ring  
To each and each : and as he ceased his say,  
Each after each, I heard them singly sing,  
Some querulously high, some softly, sadly low,  
We know not,—what avails to know ?  
We know not,—wherefore need we know ?  
This answer gave they still unto his suing,  
We know not, let us do as we are doing.

Dost thou not know that these things only seem ?—  
I know not, let me dream my dream.  
Are dust and ashes fit to make a treasure ?—  
I know not, let me take my pleasure.  
What shall avail the knowledge thou hast sought ?—  
I know not, let me think my thought.

What is the end of strife?—  
 I know not, let me live my life.  
 How many days or e'er thou mean'st to move?—  
 I know not, let me love my love.  
 Were not things old once new?—  
 I know not, let me do as others do.  
 And when the rest were over past,  
 I know not, I will do my duty, said the last.

Thy duty do? rejoined the voice,  
 Ah do it, do it, and rejoice;  
 But shalt thou then, when all is done,  
 Enjoy a love, embrace a beauty  
 Like these, that may be seen and won  
 In life, whose course will then be run;  
 Or wilt thou be where there is none?  
 I know not, I will do my duty.

And taking up the word around, above, below,  
 Some querulously high, some softly, sadly low,  
 We know not, sang they all, nor ever need we know!  
 We know not, sang they, what avails to know?  
 Whereat the questioning spirit, some short space,  
 Though unabashed, stood quiet in his place.  
 But as the echoing chorus died away  
 And to their dreams the rest returned apace,

By the one spirit I saw him kneeling low,  
 And in a silvery whisper heard him say :  
 Truly, thou knowst not, and thou needst not know ;  
 Hope only, hope thou, and believe alway ;  
 I also know not, and I need not know,  
 Only with questionings pass I to and fro,  
 Perplexing these that sleep, and in their folly  
 Imbreeding doubt and sceptic melancholy ;  
 Till that their dreams deserting, they with me,  
 Come all to this true ignorance and thee.

## 1.

AH, what is love, our love, she said,  
     Ah, what is human love ?  
 A fire, of earthly fuel fed,  
     Full fain to soar above.  
 With lambent flame the void it lips,  
     And of the impassive air  
 Would frame for its ambitious steps  
     A heaven-attaining stair.  
 It wrestles and it climbs—Ah me,  
     Go look in little space,  
 White ash on blackened earth will be  
     Sole record of its place.