

**A SENTIMENT IN VERSE.
FOR EVERY DAY
IN THE YEAR.
ETICAL YEAR BOOK NO.II**

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A Sentiment in Verse. For Every Day in the Year. Etical Year Book No.II by Walter L. Sheldon

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WALTER L. SHELDON

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A SENTIMENT I N V E R S E

For Every Day in the Year

Compiled by

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Ethical Year Book No. 11

S. BURNS WESTON

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OF VIRGINIA

Prefatory Note.

IN issuing this little volume the one who has made the collection feels as if he were parting with something out of his own life. He has hesitated long in regard to the matter and now takes the step with much reluctance. He began making the compilation already in his High School days, over thirty years ago. It is still growing and will probably continue to do so. From this material he has been accustomed to make his selections for closing readings, following his discourses given under the auspices of the Ethical Society in St. Louis, on Sunday mornings. A strong desire has been expressed many times by those present on such occasions to have a collection of this kind. He has thought best therefore to yield to the wish—although the material thus brought together had been compiled wholly for himself and with no thought of the outside public. The selections are meant as uplifts for the spirit. Those who would expect merely to read the volume through and then lay it aside, had better let it alone altogether. It is not intended for miscellaneous perusal. The collection is designed rather for those who would like to have Scriptures in verse, which they might commit to memory and preserve for a life time. The volume therefore is adapted only for a special class of persons, and the compiler hopes that just these persons may find it and know how to value it. He trusts that some will be inclined to commit all the selections to memory and know them by heart. Only in this way will the book serve its true purpose. This is not a "calendar," to be read and discarded at the end of a year. Some families, however, may perhaps like to use it for readings once a day at the dinner table as a kind of "grace before meat." In that case it is urged very strongly that each selection always be read twice. One must first get the sense, and then hear the lines a second time in order to be able to appreciate the sentiment and the music without any strain or effort. As for the "Nature" thread which appears repeatedly, there may be some who feel that in the cramped conditions of city life this would have no meaning for them. But they are to be reminded that

from the standpoint of the poet, the flowers growing in their gardens, the dandelion by the wayside, the grass springing up along the pavements, the trees standing in the parks—these are all "Nature," quite as much as big lakes, thick forests or high mountains. Wordsworth can be enjoyed even by those who never get more than a few miles outside the city limits. Ethical piety may also include the cosmic element. As for the religious terms appearing in the selections, it has to be remembered that these are always far more elastic in their meaning when voiced in the music of verse than when found in prose literature. The language of religion in poetry expresses feeling and not philosophy and has a universal significance. Even those who rarely use these words in the form of a creed or as the abstractions of theology, may still cherish and value them as expressive of feelings or a faith universal in the human heart quite irrespective of sects, doctrines, or any one specific religion. In poetry each man is free to interpret "God" in his own way and to give to that name as wide or as narrow a meaning as he pleases. Hence it is that we may all be able to respond to certain language in the form of verse, when we may not be able to do this in the form of creeds. The art of poetry like that of music speaks for the sentiments natural to the human soul. We all have *feelings* which seem to go further than our thinking will carry us. It should be said that the compiler has taken the greatest care not to print anything from living authors without first getting their consent—except when it proved wholly impossible to locate them or communicate with them. He has thought best to let each selection, however, stand by itself without any name, and to give the author and the title of the full poem in an index at the end of the volume. The subjects attached to the various lines are of his own choosing, as suggesting what they mean to *him*, and do not come from the respective poets. He hopes that these selections may impart to others something of the comfort and strength and inspiration which they have given to him.

WALTER L. SHELDON,
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A
Sentiment in Verse for Every
Day in the Year

Compiled by

WALTER L. SHELDON
LECTURER OF THE ETHICAL SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS

JAN. 1.

For Him Who Has Visions
Of the Harvest Time.

“And his spirit leaps within him to be gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in among the throngs of
men;
Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something
new;
That which they have done but earnest of the things that
they shall do.”

JAN. 2.

Of What Makes
Life A Battle.

“Our little lives are kept in equipoise
By opposite attractions and desires;
The struggle of the instinct that enjoys,
And the more noble instinct that aspires.”

JAN. 3.

Of What The
Prophets Tell.

“For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold;
When Peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing.”

JAN. 4.

Of the Mission
of Art.

“ 'Tis the privilege of Art
Thus to play its cheerful part,
Man in earth to acclimate,
And bend the exile to his fate,
And, molded to one element,
With the days and firmament,
Teach him on these as stairs to climb
And live on even terms with Time.”

JAN. 5.

Of Being
A Free Man.

“ Yet to this thought I hold with firm persistence,
The last result of wisdom stamps it true;
He only earns his freedom and existence,
Who daily conquers them anew.”

JAN. 6.

Of Nature's
Great Law.

“ What tho' the holy secret which moulds thee,
Moulds not the solid earth? tho' never winds
Have whispered it to the complaining sea,
Nature's great law, and law of all men's minds?—
To its own impulse every creature stirs;
Live by thy light, and earth will live by hers!”

JAN. 7.

Of Him Who
Is Above Envy.

“ I envy not their hap
Whom favor doth advance;
I take no pleasure in their pain
That have less happy chance.
To rise by others' fall
I deem a losing gain:
All states with others' ruin built
To ruins run amain.”

JAN. 8.

Of the World
To Come.

“Ring, bells in unrequited steeples,
The joy of unborn peoples!
Sound, trumpets far off blown,
Your triumph is my own!
I feel the earth move sunward,
I join the great march onward,
And take, by faith, while living,
My freehold of thanksgiving.”

JAN. 9.

Of the One Law
For Everybody.

“However others act towards thee
Act thou towards them as seemeth right;
And whatsoever others be,
Be thou the child of love and light.”

JAN. 10.

Of Being
Ever Young.

“While a slave bewails his fetters;
While an orphan pleads in vain:
While an infant lispeth his letters,
Heir of all the age’s gain;
While a lip grows ripe for kissing;
While a moan from man is wrung;
Know, by every want and blessing,
That the world is young.”

JAN. 11.

Of the Pleasure
In Resistance.

“Then, welcome each rebuff,
That turns earth’s smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!”

JAN. 12.

Of the Measure
Of Greatness.

"Toil on, then, Greatness! thou art in the right,
 However narrow souls may call thee wrong;
 Be as thou wouldst be in thine own clear sight,
 And so thou wilt in all the world's ere long;
 For worldlings cannot, struggle as they may,
 From man's great soul one great thought hide away,"

JAN. 13.

Of Memories
Of the Beautiful.

"These beauteous forms,
 Through a long absence, have not been to me
 As is a landscape to a blind man's eye;
 But oft in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
 Of towns and cities, I have owed to them
 In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
 Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
 And passing even into my purer mind,
 With tranquil restoration."

JAN. 14.

For Each
And All.

"Once in the flight of ages past,
 There lived a man; and who was he?
 Mortal! howe'er thy lot be cast,
 That man resembled thee.
 He saw whatever thou hast seen;
 Encountered all that troubles thee;
 He was—whatever thou hast been;
 He is—what thou shalt be.
 The annals of the human race,
 Their ruins, since the world began,
 Of him afford no other trace
 Than this,—there lived a man!"