

## **THE PESSIMIST**

You that have snarled through the ages, take your answer and go-- I know your hoary question, the riddle that all men know. You have weighed the stars in a balance, and grasped the skies in a span: Take, if you must have answer, the word of a common man.

Deep in my life lies buried one love unhealed, unshriven, One hunger still shall haunt me--yea, in the streets of heaven; This is the burden, babbler, this is the curse shall cling, This is the thing I bring you; this is the pleasant thing.

'Gainst you and all your sages, no joy of mine shall strive, This one dead self shall shatter the men you call alive. My grief I send to smite you, no pleasure, no belief, Lord of the battered grievance, what do you know of grief?

I only know the praises to heaven that one man gave, That he came on earth for an instant, to stand beside a grave, The peace of a field of battle, where flowers are born of blood. I only know one evil that makes the whole world good.

Beneath this single sorrow the globe of moon and sphere Turns to a single jewel, so bright and brittle and dear That I dread lest God should drop it, to be dashed into stars below.

You that have snarled through the ages, take your answer and go.