

## THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

This statue of Liberty, busy man,  
Here erect in the city square,  
I have watched while your scrubbings, this early morning,  
Strangely wistful,  
And half tristful,  
Have turned her from foul to fair;

With your bucket of water, and mop, and brush,  
Bringing her out of the grime  
That has smeared her during the smokes of winter  
With such glumness  
In her dumbness,  
And aged her before her time.

You have washed her down with motherly care -  
Head, shoulders, arm, and foot,  
To the very hem of the robes that drape her -  
All expertly  
And alertly,  
Till a long stream, black with soot,

Flows over the pavement to the road,

And her shape looms pure as snow:  
I read you are hired by the City guardians -  
    May be yearly,  
    Or once merely -  
To treat the statues so?

"Oh, I'm not hired by the Councilmen  
    To cleanse the statues here.  
I do this one as a self-willed duty,  
    Not as paid to,  
    Or at all made to,  
But because the doing is dear."

Ah, then I hail you brother and friend!  
    Liberty's knight divine.  
What you have done would have been my doing,  
    Yea, most verily,  
    Well, and thoroughly,  
Had but your courage been mine!

"Oh I care not for Liberty's mould,  
    Liberty charms not me;  
What's Freedom but an idler's vision,  
    Vain, pernicious,  
    Often vicious,  
Of things that cannot be!

"Memory it is that brings me to this -  
Of a daughter--my one sweet own.  
She grew a famous carver's model,  
One of the fairest  
And of the rarest:-  
She sat for the figure as shown.

"But alas, she died in this distant place  
Before I was warned to betake  
Myself to her side! . . . And in love of my darling,  
In love of the fame of her,  
And the good name of her,  
I do this for her sake."

Answer I gave not. Of that form  
The carver was I at his side;  
His child, my model, held so saintly,  
Grand in feature,  
Gross in nature,  
In the dens of vice had died.

## THE BACKGROUND AND THE FIGURE

(Lover's Ditty)

I think of the slope where the rabbits fed,  
Of the periwinks' rockwork lair,  
Of the fuchsias ringing their bells of red -  
And the something else seen there.

Between the blooms where the sod basked bright,  
By the bobbing fuchsia trees,  
Was another and yet more eyesome sight -  
The sight that richened these.

I shall seek those beauties in the spring,  
When the days are fit and fair,  
But only as foils to the one more thing  
That also will flower there!