

ON MAN

by

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Man! What a strange composition he is?
The higher and lower adroitly blended;
An angel with brute crossed, genius with folly;
Where meet celestial and terrestrial belts,
Where gravity pulls from points sundered in twain;
A river that inclines and flows to the depths
From heights of durationless Infinity!
A power-projectile that's facing senseward,
But tethered to endless expanse of being,
With long-extending silken three-stranded ropes:
A flame that is burning, a wave on the sea;
A force that is rushing, constant becoming;
A spectrum, a prism, a triangle, a line,—
All things in one; and what a contrast he makes!
How mean, and how low; yet how great, and how grand!

There isn't a creature born so ungrateful,
So stupid, presuming, self-centred debased,
A bad judge of things when in adversity,
So unjust to others, so false to himself;—
Now give him power, and his head quickly turns;
He sees, then, the world with a new set of spectacles;
Oppose him, he cringes when found to be weak;
If strong, he flies into a passion and rage,
And threatens creation with uplifted doom;
Arrogates all goodness to himself in vain,

And imputes the evils of Satan to 'thers.
For him all are suspects, save himself alone;
All wrong, except what is his and what he is,
He'd sting like a scorpion and bite like a snake;
Is sly like a fox when occasion demands;
When wroth a tiger, and ravenous in greed;
A beast in emotions when left unrestrained.
Whatever he does, and whatever he thinks,
Lives indelible in the ether's records,—
He smugly deceives himself, secret in deeds,
Like th' ostrich in sands, amidst forces all o'er;—
Befooled by the senses, by forms tantalised,
Like th' stag in the fable bewitched by the tunes
Of th' hunter who's let loose his hounds for his prey;
Feeble in judgments, gregariously ruled.
A rumour that's spread he converts into rock
By heaping accretions from funds of his mind.
As vapour hardens into liquid and earth,
A breeze of some word that a vagrant uttered
Gets planted as flint in his immature will,
And he worries himself, and pesters others
With th' crotchets and pranks of a credulous heart,
Thus, then, is created a universe of thoughts,
Of imaginations and feelings and whims,
Shaky edifices built over quicksand,—
The worlds of beliefs faiths and baseless fancies
In selfishness rooted, from nescience rising.
All these are the walls of the prison he's raised
To throw himself in, with his boasted learning.

Behold! how he gropes though descended from Light,
Though th' ocean of wisdom is at his background!
In a flash he can ope his vision to the truth
Of's being, if only he wills and he strives.
But he wouldn't, as owl he can see not the day,
Though th' blaze of the sun is there dazzling all things,
Uninterrupted, homogeneous and one.

Lo! What does man need but some food and clothing,
And a shelter to guard him from wind and from rain:—

He struts like a peacock posing what he's not,
For th' sake of this meanest of things, his ego;
Which's a dog in the manger, that won't be appeased
And would not rest peaceful in'ts cravings galore,
In'ts hunger for fame and power and renown,
And name and authority, prestige and pride;—
Sheer empty sounds that mean so much to the fool,
So much of concrete reality and life,
And what it can offer with its outstretched arms.
He'd face a bullet, but not bear calumny!
Poor Soul! He does not know what disturbs his peace
Defies understanding and eludes his grasp;
Whether seen or unseen; here or hereafter,—
This world, this ego, and its concomitants,
And what is beyond these, the Truth of all truths,
And wisdom consists in seeing things clear,
Not closing one's eyes when the world blows as storm.

But wisdom lingers and not fall from the blues;
The patient and waiting do gain it in time.
Look! here is the lofty crown of creation,
Confined in the walls of collapsing clay,
With past wholly buried, and future unknown;
Death's at his elbow, yet acts as immortal!
A marvel indeed; a wonder of wonders,
For's frail tabernacle holds th' light of Heavens;
And truly it's said, man's the image of God!
The Cosmic is here, masquerading in form;
Scratch him, he's animal; probe him, he's Divinity.

Then what of his fate? He's bound back' to the Lord,
Our Ruler, Sustainer, Protector and Guide,
Lord, Parent, Indweller, Director, Resort,
Friend, Consoler, Solace, the Beginning and End
Of what is and is not, the Seed of all life;
Who heats as the Sun, and who blows as the wind,
Who pours down as rain, and who freezes as cold,
Who's change and destruction, who's relentless Time
That winds up creation in'ts all-swallowing folds;

Who's Immortal Essence, the Nectar Divine,
That Resplendent Grandeur, the Supreme Abode
Of Peace and Perfection, the One Existence
That Sages proclaim as the myriad- visioned,
Whose heads are the heavens, whose feet are the earth,
Whose eyes are the Sun and the Moon e'er aglow,
Whose ears are the quarters, the scripture's whose speech,
Whose breath is this breeze, and whose Universe is heart,—
Almighty Existence, Consciousness and Bliss.
To know Him is life, to forget Him is death;
To love Him with heart is service done to all;
To serve Him with soul is fulfilment supreme;
Adore Him, the world shall adore you as self.
As children do sit round their mother for food,
Creation with longing to him gravitates,
Whose root is this Being, thund'ring through silence.

This's man's destination which's slowly realised
Through gradual ascent, by effort and by Grace
That work together by a law that is strange
In'n integral world that is cause and effect
At once, in a sweep that does stagger one's thought
Which is wont to imagine a linear logic
Of a reason encumbered by space and by time,
This Goal which is mighty's attained in One's Self
In deep contemplation by a passionless heart,
Which seeks not pleasure in these tinsels mundane
Pretending to done the attire of a gem,
But soars to the heights of empyrean that's God's;
By service of man, by compassion and love
For all that is seen, as His Body revealed
To senses that discern Spirit as matter;
By worship and giving in unselfish acts
Of charity, sweet words and feeling for life;
By chastened, ennobled and straightforward deeds,—
Both inward and outward,—by truth, continence,
By openness, kindness, contentment and peace,
Study, introspection, company of saints,
By vigilance unsleeping, dispassion for fame,

For name and for wealth, for power and status,
For rewards and good words, for honour, respect;
By trampling down ego with wisdom and sense;
With restrained emotions, being tranquil within
When th' world disregards you and treats you as dust,
And casts you aside as an unwanted weed;
By prayer that's silent, fortitude, and faith,
With a fire of longing for God, God alone,—
Nothing short of God,—though this flesh may here melt,
And th' skin rend asunder, bones crack and dissolve.
In such sublime states of communion and joy
Has man intimations of what he's meant for.
But is this easy? No; the knowers declare
That th' path is subtle and is sharp as a sword
Or a razor whose edge we cannot visualise,
As th' track of the fish or of birds in the sky,
The way to Eternity's invisible.
The heed that the seeker in this art and science
With intense awareness is called to maintain
Is unremitting and a winkless living
Of th' canons defining this infinite way
To th' Infinite Being;—with hardship obtained!
May peace be on man, he succeed in his quest!
May Masters and Teachers their Grace on him shower!