

SHORTER WORKS OF KHALIL GIBRAN

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Dead are my people

Kahlil Gibran wrote the following during the First World War (1914 to 1918), a time when many places, including Lebanon, were struck by famine. At the time of writing he was living in Boston in the United States.

Dead are my people, gone are my people, but I exist yet, lamenting them in my solitude. Dead are my friends, and in their death my life is naught but great disaster. The knolls of my country are submerged by tears and blood, for my people and my beloved are gone, and I am here living as I did when my people and my beloved were enjoying life and the bounty of life, and when the hills of my country were blessed and engulfed by the light of the sun.

My people died from hunger, and he who did not perish from starvation was butchered with the sword; and I am here in this distant land, roaming amongst a joyful people who sleep upon soft beds, and smile at the days while the days smile upon them.

My people died a painful and shameful death, and here am I living in plenty and in peace. This is deep tragedy ever enacted upon the stage of my heart; few would care to witness this drama, for my people are as birds with broken wings, left behind the flock.

If I were hungry and living amid my famished people, and persecuted among my oppressed countrymen, the burden of the black days would be lighter upon my restless dreams, and the obscurity of the night would be less dark before my hollow eyes and my crying heart and my wounded soul. For he who shares with his people their sorrow and agony will feel a supreme comfort created only by suffering in sacrifice. And he will be at peace with himself when he dies innocent with his fellow innocents.

But I am not living with my hungry and persecuted people who are walking in the procession of death toward martyrdom. I am here beyond the broad seas living in the shadow of tranquillity, and in the sunshine of peace. I am afar from the pitiful arena and the distressed, and cannot be proud of ought, not even of my own tears.

What can an exiled son do for his starving people, and of what value unto them is the lamentation of an absent poet?

Were I an ear of corn grown in the earth of my country, the hungry child would pluck me and remove with my kernels the hand of Death from his soul. Were I a ripe fruit in the gardens of my country, the starving women would gather me and sustain life. Were I a bird flying the sky of my country, my hungry brother would hunt me and remove with the flesh of my body the shadow of the grave from his body. But, alas! I am not an ear of corn grown in the plains of Syria, nor a ripe fruit in the valleys of Lebanon; this is my disaster, and this is my mute calamity which brings humiliation before my soul and before the phantoms of the night. This is the painful tragedy which tightens my tongue and pinions my arms and arrests me usurped of power and of will and of action. This is the curse burned upon my forehead before God and man.

And oftentimes they say unto me, the disaster of your country is but naught to calamity of the world, and the tears and blood shed by your people are as nothing to the rivers of blood and tears pouring each day and night in the valleys and plains of the earth."

Yes, but the death of my people is a silent accusation; it is a crime conceived by the heads of the unseen serpents. It is a sceneless tragedy. And if my people had attacked the despots and oppressors and died rebels, I would have said, "Dying for freedom is nobler than living in the shadow of weak submission, for he who embraces death with the sword of Truth in his hand will eternalize with the Eternity of Truth, for Life is weaker than Death and Death is weaker than Truth.

If my nation had partaken in the war of all nations and had died in the field of battle, I would say that the raging tempest had broken with its might the green branches; and strong death under the canopy of the tempest is nobler than slow perishment in the arms of senility. But there was no rescue from the closing jaws. My people dropped and wept with the crying angels.

If an earthquake had torn my country asunder and the earth had engulfed my people into its bosom, I would have said, "A great and mysterious law has been moved by the will of divine force, and it would be pure madness if we frail mortals endeavoured to probe its deep secrets." But my people did not die as rebels; they were not killed in the field of battle; nor did the earthquake shatter my country and subdue them. Death was their only rescuer, and starvation their only spoils.

My people died on the cross. They died while their hands stretched toward the East and West, while the remnants of their eyes stared at the blackness of the firmament. They died silently, for humanity had closed its ears to their cry. They died because they did not befriend their enemy. They died because they loved their neighbours. They died because they placed trust in all humanity. They died because they did not oppress the oppressors. They died because they were the crushed flowers, and not the crushing feet. They died because they were peace makers. They perished from hunger in a land rich with milk and honey. They died because monsters of hell arose and destroyed all that their fields grew, and devoured the last provisions in their bins. They died because the vipers and sons of vipers spat out poison into the space where the Holy Cedars and the roses and the jasmine breathe their fragrance.

My people and your people, my Syrian Brothers, are dead. What can be done for those who are dying? Our lamentations will not satisfy their hunger, and our tears will not quench their thirst; what can we do to save them between the iron paws of hunger? My brother, the kindness which compels you to give a part of your life to any human who is in the shadow of losing his life is the only virtue which makes you worthy of the light of day and the peace of the night. Remember, my brother, that the coin which you drop into the withered hand stretching toward you is the only golden chain that binds your rich heart to the loving heart of God.

Have mercy on me, my Soul!

Why are you weeping, my Soul?
Knowest thou my weakness?
Thy tears strike sharp and injure,
For I know not my wrong.
Until when shalt thou cry?
I have naught but human words to interpret your dreams,
Your desires, and your instructions.

Look upon me, my Soul;
I have consumed my full life heeding your teachings.
Think of how I suffer!
I have exhausted my life following you.

My heart was glorying upon the throne,

But is now yoked in slavery;
My patience was a companion,
But now contends against me;
My youth was my hope,
But now reprimands my neglect.

Why, my Soul, are you all-demanding?
I have denied myself pleasure
And deserted the joy of life
Following the course which you impelled me to pursue.
Be just to me,
Or call Death to unshackle me,
For justice is your glory.

Have mercy on me, my Soul.
You have laden me with Love until I cannot carry my burden.
You and Love are inseparable might;
Substance and I are inseparable weakness.
Will e'er the struggle cease between the strong and the weak?

Have mercy on me, my Soul.
You have shown me Fortune beyond my grasp.
You and Fortune abide on the mountain top;
Misery and I are abandoned together in the pit of the valley.
Will e'er the mountain and the valley unite?

Have mercy on me, my Soul.
You have shown me Beauty,
But then concealed her.
You and Beauty live in the light;
Ignorance and I are bound together in the dark.
Will e'er the light invade darkness?

Your delight comes with the Ending,
And you revel now in anticipation;
But this body suffers with the life
While in life.
This, my Soul, is perplexing.

You are hastening toward Eternity,
But this body goes slowly toward perishment.
You do not wait for him,
And he cannot go quickly.

This, my Soul, is sadness.

You ascend high, though heaven's attraction,
But this body falls by earth's gravity.
You do not console him,
And he does not appreciate you.
This, my Soul, is misery.

You are rich in wisdom,
But this body is poor in understanding.
You do not compromise,
And he does not obey.
This, my Soul, is extreme suffering.

In the silence of the night you visit The Beloved
And enjoy the sweetness of His presence.
This body ever remains,
The bitter victim of hope and separation.
This, my Soul, is agonizing torture.
Have mercy on me, my Soul!

History and the Nation

By the side of a rivulet that meandered among the rocks at the foot of Lebanon's Mountain sat a shepherdess surrounded by her flock of lean sheep grazing upon dry grass. She looked into the distant twilight as if the future were passing before her. Tears had jewelled her eyes like dew-drops adorning flowers. Sorrow had caused her lips to open that it might enter and occupy her sighing heart.

After sunset, as the knolls and hills wrapped themselves in shadow, History stood before the maiden. He was an old man whose white hair fell like snow over his breast and shoulders, and in his right hand he held a sharp sickle. In a voice like the roaring sea he said, "Peace unto you, Syria."

The virgin rose, trembling with fear. "What do you wish of me, History?" she asked. Then she pointed to her sheep. "This is the remnant of a healthy flock that once filled this valley. This is all that your covetousness has left me. Have you come now to sate your greed on that?"

"These plains that were once so fertile have been trodden to barren dust by your trampling feet. My cattle that once grazed upon flowers and produced rich milk, now gnaw at thistles that leave them gaunt and dry.

"Fear God, oh History, and afflict me no more. The sight of you has made me detest life, and the cruelty of your sickle has caused me to love Death.

"Leave me in my solitude to drain the cup of sorrow- my best wine. Go, History, to the West where Life's wedding feast is being celebrated. Here let me lament the bereavement you have prepared for me."

Concealing his sickle under the folds of his garment, History looked upon her as a loving father looks upon his child, and said, "Oh Syria, what I have taken from you were my own gifts. Know that you sister-nations are entitled to a part of the glory which was yours. I must give to them what I gave you. Your plight is like that of Egypt, Persia and Greece, for each one of them also has a lean flock and dry pasture. Oh Syria, that which you call degradation is an indispensable sleep from which you will draw strength. The flower does not return to life save through death, and love does not grow except after separation."

The old man came close to the maiden, stretched forth his hand and said, "Shake my hand, oh Daughter of the Prophets." And she shook his hand and looked at him from behind a screen of tears and said, "Farewell, History, farewell." And he responded, "Until we meet again Syria, until we meet again."

And the old man disappeared like swift lightning, and the shepherdess called her sheep and started on her way, saying to herself, "Shall there be another meeting?"

A Hymn to Liberty

From the depths of these depths
We call you, O Liberty - hear us!
From the corners of this darkness
We raise our hands in supplication - turn your gaze toward us!
On the expanse of these snows
We lay ourselves prostrate before you, have compassion upon us!

We stand now before your terrible throne
Wearing the blood-smeared garments of our fathers;
Covering our heads with the dust of the tombs mingled with their remains;
Drawing the swords which have been sheathed in their entrails;
Raising the spears that have pierced their breasts;
Dragging the chains that have withered their feet;
Crying aloud cries that have wounded their throats,
And lamentations that have filled the darkness of their prisons;
Praying prayers that have sprung out of the pain of their hearts -
Listen, O Liberty, and hear us!

From the sources of the Nile to the estuary of the Euphrates
The wailing of souls surging with the scream of the abyss rises;
From the frontiers of the peninsula to the mountains of Lebanon
Hands outstretched to you, trembling in the agony of death;
From the cost of the gulf to the ends of the desert
Eyes are uplifted to you with pining hearts -
Turn, O Liberty, and look upon us.

In the corners of huts standing in the shadow of poverty and humiliation,
From prison to prison our bodies move, and the mocking ages pass us by -
How long are we to bear the mockery of the ages?
From yoke to heavier yoke our necks do pass
And the nations of the earth look at us and laugh -
How long shall we endure the mockery of nations?
From fetters to fetters our path leads us
And neither do the fetters disappear nor do we perish -
How long shall we remain alive?...

From the grasp of Pharaoh
To the claws of Nebuchadnezzar;
To the nails of Alexander;
To the swords of Herod;
To the claws of Nero;
To the fangs of the devil;
Whose yoke is going to enslave us now?
And when shall we fall within the grasp of death to find comfort away from the silence of nonexistence?

With the strength of our arms they erected the pillars of their temples
and shrines to glorify their gods;
On our backs they brought clay and stones to build castles to
strengthen their strongholds;
And with the power of our bodies they built pyramids to render their
names immortal;
How long are we to build castles and palaces
And live but in huts and caves?
How long are we to fill granaries and stores
And eat nothing but garlic and clover?
How long are we to weave silk and wool
And be clad in tattered cloth?

Through their cunning and treachery they have set clan against clan;
Breasts are being beaten for you;
In the emptiness of houses erected in the darkness of ignorance and
folly,
Hearts are cast before you;
And in the corners of houses buried in the clouds of oppression and
tyranny,
Spirits are longing for you -
Look upon us, O Liberty, and have compassion.

In schools and offices
Despairing youth calls upon you;
In the churches and mosques
The forsaken book invites you;
In the counsels and courts
The neglected law implores you -
Have pity, O Liberty, and save us.

In our narrow streets
The merchant barter his days only to pay the thieves from the West,
And none is there to advise him!
In our barren fields
The peasant ploughs the earth with his finger-nails,
And sows the seeds of his heart and waters them with his tears,
And nothing does he harvest save thorns and thistles,
And none is there to teach him!
In our empty plains
The Bedouin walks bare-foot, naked and hungry
And none is there to have mercy upon him -
Speak, O Liberty, and teach us...

From the very beginning the darkness of the night has descended
upon our souls -
How long until the dawn?
Have separated group from group;
Have sown the seeds of hate twixt tribe and tribe -
How long are we then to wither like ashes before this cruel hurricane,
And fight like hunger young lions near this stinking carcass?

In order to secure their power and to rest at heart's ease they have
armed the Durzi to fight the Arab;
Have instigated the Shi'i against the Sunni;
Have incited the Kurd to slaughter the Bedouin;
Have encouraged the Mohammadan to fight the Christian -
How long is a brother to fight his brother on the breast of the mother?
How long is a neighbour to threaten his neighbour near the tomb of
the beloved?
How long are the Cross and the Crescent to remain apart before the
eyes of God?

Listen, O Liberty, and harken unto us
Turn your gaze towards us, O mother of the earth's inhabitants,
For we are not the offspring of your rival;
Speak with the tongue of any one of us
For from one spark the dry straw catches fire;
Awaken the sound of your wings the spirit of one of our men
For from one cloud one lightning flash illuminates valley-lanes and
mountain-tops.
Disperse with your resolve these dark clouds;
Descend as a thunderbolt,
Destroy like a catapult
The props of those thrones erected on bones and skulls,
Plated with the gold of taxes and bribery
And soaked in blood and tears.

Listen to us, O Liberty,
Have compassion on us, O Daughter of Athens,
Rescue us, O Sister of Rome,
Save us, O Companion of Moses,
Come to our aid, O beloved of Mohammad,
Teach us, O bride of Jesus,
Strengthen our hearts that we may live;

Or strengthen the arms of our enemies against us
That we may wither, perish and find peace.

I believe in you

I believe in you, and I believe in your destiny.

I believe that you are contributors to this new civilization.

I believe that you have inherited from your forefathers an ancient dream, a song, a prophecy, which you can proudly lay as a gift of gratitude upon the lap of America.

I believe you can say to the founders of this great nation, "Here I am, a youth, a young tree whose roots were plucked from the hills of Lebanon, yet I am deeply rooted here, and I would be fruitful.

And I believe that you can say to Abraham Lincoln, the blessed, Jesus of Nazareth touched your lips when you spoke, and guided your hand when you wrote; and I shall uphold all that you have said and all that you have written"

I believe that you can say to Emerson and Whitman and James, "In my veins runs the blood of the poets and wise men of old, and it is my desire to come to you and receive, but I shall not come with empty hands.

I believe that even as your fathers came to this land to produce riches, you were born here to produce riches by intelligence, by labour.

And I believe that it is in you to be good citizens.

And what is it to be a good citizen?

It is to acknowledge the other person's rights before asserting your own, but always to be conscious of your own.

It is to be free in thought and deed, but it is to know that your freedom is subject to the other person's freedom.

It is to create the useful and the beautiful with your own hands, and to admire what others have created in love and with faith.

It is to produce wealth by labour and only by labour, and to spend less than you have produced that your children may not be dependent on the state for support when you are no more.

It is to stand before the towers of New York, Washington, Chicago and San Francisco saying in your heart, "I am the descendant of a people that builded Damascus, and Biblus, and Tyre and Sidon, and Antioch, and now I am here to build with you, and with a will.

It is to be proud of being an American, but it is also to be proud that your fathers and mothers came from a land upon which God hid his gracious hand and raised His messengers.

Young Americans of Syrian origin, I believe in you.

My Countrymen

What do you seek, my countrymen?

Do you desire that I build for you gorgeous palaces, decorated with words of empty meaning or temples roofed with dreams?

Do you command me to destroy what the liars and tyrants have built?

Shall I uproot with my fingers what the hypocrites and the wicked have implanted?

Speak your insane wish!

What is it you would have me do my countrymen?

Shall I purr like the kitten to satisfy you, or roar like the lion to please myself?

I have sung for you, but you did not dance;

I have wept before you, but you did not cry.

Shall I sing and weep at the same time?

Your souls are suffering the pangs of hunger, and yet the fruit of knowledge is more plentiful than the stones of the valleys.

Your hearts are withering from thirst, and yet the springs of life are streaming about your homes.

Why do you not drink?

The sea has its ebb and flow,

The moon has its fullness and crescents,

And the ages have their winter and summer,

And all things vary like the shadow of an unborn god moving between earth and sun,

But truth cannot be changed, nor will it pass away;

Why, then, do you endeavour to disfigure its countenance?

I have called you in the silence of the night to point out the glory of the moon and the dignity of the stars,

But you startled from your slumber and clutched your swords in fear,

Crying "Where is the enemy? We must kill Him first!"

At morning-tide when the enemy came, I called to you again,

But now you did not wake from your slumber,

For you were locked in fear, wrestling with the processions of spectres in your dreams.

And I said unto you, "Let us climb to the mountain top and view the beauty of the world."

And you answered me, saying, "In the depths of this valley our fathers lived,

And in its shadows they died, and in its caves they were buried.

How can we depart this place for one which they failed to honour?"

And I said unto you, "Let us go to the plain that gives its bounty to the sea."

And you spoke timidly to me, saying, "The uproar of the abyss will frighten our spirits,

And the terror of the depths will deaden our bodies."

I have loved you, my countrymen, but my love for you is painful to me and useless to you;

And today I hate you, and hatred is a flood that sweeps away the dry branches and quavering houses.

I have pitied your weakness, my countrymen,

But my pity has but increased your feebleness,

Exalting and nourishing slothfulness which is vain to life.

And today I see your infirmity which my soul loathes and fears.

I have cried over your humiliation and submission, and my tears streamed like crystalline,

But could not sear away your stagnant weakness;

Yet they removed the veil from my eyes.

My tears have never reached your petrified hearts, but they cleansed the darkness from my inner self.

Today I am mocking at your suffering, for laughter is a raging thunder that precedes the tempest and never comes after it.

What do you desire, my countrymen?

Do you wish for me to show you the ghost of your countenance on
the face of still water?

Come, now, and see how ugly you are!

Look and meditate!

Fear has turned your hair grey as the ashes,

And dissipation has grown over your eyes and made them into
obscured hollows,

And cowardice has touched your cheeks that now appear as dismal
pits in the valley,

And death has kissed your lips and left them yellow as the autumn
leaves.

What is it that you seek, my countrymen?

What ask you from life, who does not any longer count you among
her children?

Your souls are freezing in the clutches of the priests and sorcerers,

And your bodies tremble between the paws of the despots and the
shedders of blood,

And your country quakes under the marching feet of the conquering
enemy;

What may you expect even though you stand proudly before the face
of the sun?

Your swords are sheathed with rust, and your spears are broken, and
your shields are laden with gaps,

Why, then, do you stand in the field of battle?

Hypocrisy is your religion, and falsehood is your life, and nothingness
is your ending;

Why, then, are you living?

Is not death the sole comfort of the miserable?

Life is a resolution that accompanies youth, and a diligence that follows maturity, and a wisdom that pursues senility;

But you, my countrymen, were born old and weak.

And your skins withered and your heads shrank,

Whereupon you become as children, running into the mire and casting stones upon each other.

Knowledge is a light, enriching the warmth of life,

And all may partake who seek it out;

But you, my countrymen, seek out darkness and flee the light,

Awaiting the coming of water from the rock,

And your nation's misery is your crime.

I do not forgive you your sins, for you know what you are doing.

Humanity is a brilliant river singing its way and carrying with it the mountains' secrets into the heart of the sea;

But you, my countrymen, are stagnant marshes infested with insects and vipers.

The spirit is a sacred blue torch, burning and devouring the dry plants,

And growing with the storm and illuminating the faces of the goddesses;

But you, my countrymen, your souls are like ashes which the winds scatter upon the snow,

And which the tempests disperse forever in the valleys.

Fear not the phantom of death, my countrymen,

For his greatness and mercy will refuse to approach your smallness;

And dread not the dagger, for it will decline to be lodged in your shallow hearts.

I hate you, my countrymen, because you hate glory and greatness.

I despise you because you despise yourselves.

I am your enemy, for you refuse to realize that you are the enemies of the goddesses.

The Nay

Give me the Nay and sing the secret song of eternity.
The laments of the Nay will linger beyond the decline of existence.

Have you, like me, chosen the forest dwelling rather than the castle?
Have you followed the stream and climbed the rocks?
Have you anointed your body with fragrance distilled in light?
Have you been drunk with dawn in the goblets full of pure air?

Have you, like me, sat down at dusk, among the glowing languor of vines laden with grapes?
Have you lain down on the grass at night and covered yourself with heavens,

Opening your heart to the future, forgetful of the past?

Give me the Nay and sing the song in tune with hearts.
The laments of the Nay will linger beyond the fading of sins.

Give me the Nay and sing unmindful of troubles and cures.
For each man is nothing more than a watercolour sketch

The New Frontier

There are in the Middle East today two challenging ideas: old and new. The old ideas will vanish because they are weak and exhausted.

There is in the Middle East an awakening that defies slumber. This awakening will conquer because the sun is its leader and the dawn is its army.

In the fields of the Middle East, which have been a large burial ground, stand the youth of Spring calling the occupants of the Sepulchres to rise and march toward the new frontiers. When the Spring sings its hymns the dead of the winter rise, shed their shrouds and march forward.

There is on the horizon of the Middle East a new awakening; it is growing and expanding; it is reaching and engulfing all sensitive, intelligent souls; it is penetrating and gaining all the sympathy of noble hearts.

The Middle East, today, has two masters. One is deciding, ordering, being obeyed; but he is at the point of death. But the other one is silent in his conformity to law and order, calmly awaiting justice; he is a powerful giant who knows his own strength, confident in his existence and a believer in his destiny.

There are today, in the Middle East, two men: one of the past and one of the future. Which one are you? Come close, let me look at you and let me be assured by your appearance and your conduct if you are one of those coming into the light or going into the darkness.

Come and tell me who and what are you.

Are you a politician asking what your country can do for you or a zealous one asking what you can do for your country? If you are the first, then you are a parasite; if the second, then you are an oasis in a desert.

Are you a merchant utilizing the need of society for the necessities of life, for monopoly and exorbitant profit? Or a sincere, hard-working and diligent man facilitating the exchange between the weaver and the farmer? Are you charging a reasonable profit as a middleman between supply and demand? If you are the first, then you are a criminal whether you live in a palace or a prison. If you are the second, then you are a charitable man whether you are thanked or denounced by people.

Are you a religious leader, weaving for your body a gown out of the

ignorance of the people, fashioning a crown out of the simplicity of their hearts and pretending to hate the devil merely to live upon his income? Or are you a devout and a pious man who sees in the piety of the individual the foundation for a progressive nation, and who can see through a profound search in the depth of his own soul a ladder to the eternal soul that directs the world? If you are the first, then you are a heretic, a disbeliever in God even if you fast by day and pray by night. If you are the second, then you are a violet in the garden of truth even though its fragrance is lost upon the nostrils of humanity or whether its aroma rises into that rare air where the fragrance of flowers is preserved.

Are you a newspaperman who sells his idea and principle in the slave market, who lives on the misery of people like a buzzard which descends only upon a decaying carcass? Or are you a teacher on the platform of the city gathering experience from life and presenting it to the people as sermons you have learned? If you are the first, then you are a sore and an ulcer. If you are the second, then you are a balsam and a medicine.

Are you a governor who denigrates himself before those who appoint him and denigrates those whom he is to govern, who never raises a hand unless it is to reach into pockets and who does not take a step unless it is for greed? Or are you a faithful servant who serves only the welfare of the people? If you are the first, then you are as a tare in the threshing floor of the nations; and if the second, then you are a blessing upon its granaries.

Are you a husband who allows for himself what he disallows for his wife, living in abandonment with the key of her prison in his boots, gorging himself with his favourite food while she sits, by herself, before an empty dish? Or are you a companion, taking no action except hand in hand, nor doing anything unless she gives her thoughts and opinions, and sharing with her your happiness and success? If you are the first, then you are a remnant of a tribe which, still dressing in the skins of animals, vanished long before leaving the caves; and if you are the second, then you are a leader in a nation moving in the dawn toward the light of justice and wisdom.

Are you a searching writer full of self-admiration, keeping his head in the valley of a dusty past, where the ages discarded the remnant of its clothes and useless ideas? Or are you a clear thinker examining what is good and useful for society and spending your life in building

what is useful and destroying what is harmful? If you are the first, then you are feeble and stupid, and if you are the second, then you are bread for the hungry and water for the thirsty.

Are you a poet, who plays the tambourine at the doors of emirs, or the one who throws the flowers during weddings and who walks in processions with a sponge full of warm water in his mouth, a sponge to be pressed by his tongue and lips as soon as he reaches the cemetery? Or have you a gift which God has placed in your hands on which to play heavenly melodies which draw our hearts toward the beautiful in life? If you are the first, then you are a juggler who evokes in our soul that which is contrary to what you intend. If you are the second, then you are love in our hearts and a vision in our minds.

In the Middle East there are two processions: One procession is of old people waling with bent backs, supported with bent canes; they are out of breath though their path is downhill.

The other is a procession of young men, running as if on winged feet, and jubilant as with musical strings in their throats, surmounting obstacles as if there were magnets drawing them up on the mountainside and magic enchanting their hearts.

Which are you and in which procession do you move?

Ask yourself and meditate in the still of the night; find if you are a slave of yesterday or free for the morrow.

I tell you that the children of yesteryears are walking in the funeral of the era that they created for themselves. They are pulling a rotted rope that might break soon and cause them to drop into a forgotten abyss. I say that they are living in homes with weak foundations; as the storm blows -- and it is about to blow -- their homes will fall upon their heads and thus become their tombs. I say that all their thoughts, their sayings, their quarrels, their compositions, their books and all their work are nothing but chains dragging them because they are too weak to pull the load.

But the children of tomorrow are the ones called by life, and the follow it with steady steps and heads high, they are the dawn of new frontiers, no smoke will veil their eyes and no jingle of chains will drown out their voices. They are few in number, but the difference is as between a grain of wheat and a stack of hay. No one knows them

but they know each other. They are like the summits, which can see or hear each other -- not like caves, which cannot hear or see. They are the seed dropped by the hand of God in the field, breaking through its pod and waving its sapling leaves before the face of the sun. It shall grow into a mighty tree, its root in the heart of the earth and its branches high in the sky.

Satan

The people looked upon Father Samaan as their guide in the field of spiritual and theological matters, for he was an authority and a source of deep information on venial and mortal sins, well versed in the secrets of paradise, hell, and purgatory.

Father Samaan's mission in North Lebanon was to travel from one village to another, preaching and curing the people from the spiritual disease of sin, and saving them from the horrible trap of Satan. The Reverend Father waged constant war with Satan. The fellahin honoured and respected this clergyman, and were always anxious to buy his advice or prayers with pieces of gold and silver; and at every harvest they would present him with the finest fruits of their fields.

One evening in autumn, as Father Samaan walked his way towards a solitary village, crossing those valleys and hills, he heard a painful cry emerging from a ditch at the side of the road. He stopped and looked in the direction of the voice, and saw an unclothed man lying on the ground. Streams of blood oozed from deep wounds in his head and chest. He was moaning painfully for aid, saying, "Save me, help me. Have mercy on me, I am dying." Father Samaan looked with perplexity at the sufferer, and said within himself, "This man must be a thief. He probably tried to rob the wayfarers and failed. Someone has wounded him, and I fear that should he die I may be accused of having taken his life."

Having thus pondered the situation, he resumed his journey, whereupon the dying man stopped him, calling out, "Do not leave me! I am dying!" Then the Father meditated again, and his face became pale as he realized he was refusing to help. His lips quivered, but he spoke to himself, saying, "He must surely be one of the madmen wandering in the wilderness. The sight of his wounds brings fear into my heart; what shall I do? Surely a spiritual doctor is not capable of treating flesh-wounded bodies." Father Samaan walked ahead a few

paces when the near-corpse uttered a painful plaint that melted the heart of the rock and he gasped, "Come close to me! Come, for we have been friends a long time. You are Father Samaan, the good shepherd, and I am not a thief nor a madman. Come close, and do not let me die in this deserted place. Come, and I will tell you who I am."

Father Samaan came close to the man, knelt, and stared at him; but he saw a strange face with contrasting features; he saw intelligence with slyness, ugliness with beauty, and wickedness with softness. He withdrew to his feet sharply, and exclaimed, "Who are you?"

With a fainting voice, the dying man said, "Fear me not, Father, for we have been strong friends for long. Help me to stand, and take me to the nearby streamlet and cleanse my wounds with your linens." And the Father inquired, "Tell me who you are, for I do not know you, nor even remember having seen you."

And the man replied with an agonizing voice, "You know my identity! You have seen me one thousand times and you speak of me each day. I am dearer to you than your own life." And the Father reprimanded, "You are a lying impostor! A dying man should tell the truth. I have never seen your evil face in my entire life. Tell me who you are, or I will suffer you to die, soaked in your escaping life." And the wounded man moved slowly and looked into the clergyman's eyes, and upon his lips appeared a mystic smile; and in a quiet, deep and smooth voice he said, "I am Satan."

Upon hearing the fearful word, Father Samaan uttered a terrible cry that shook the far corners of the valley; then he stared, and realized that the dying man's body, with its grotesque distortions, coincided with the likeness of Satan in a religious picture hanging on the wall of the village church. He trembled and cried out, saying, "God has shown me your hellish image and justly caused me to hate you; cursed be you for evermore! The mangled lamb must be destroyed by the shepherd lest he will infect the other lambs!"

Satan answered, "Be not in haste, Father, and lose not this fleeting time in empty talk. Come and close my wounds quickly, before life departs from my body." And the clergyman retorted, "The hands which offer a daily sacrifice to God shall not touch a body made of the secretion of hell. You must die accursed by the tongues of the ages,

and the lips of humanity, for you are the enemy of humanity, and it is your avowed purpose to destroy all virtue."

Satan moved in anguish, raising himself upon one elbow, and responded, "You know not what you are saying, nor understand the crime you are committing upon yourself. Give heed, for I will relate my story. Today I walked alone in this solitary valley. When I reached this place, a group of angels descended to attack, and struck me severely; had it not been for one of them, who carried a blazing sword with two sharp edges, I would have driven them off, but I had no power against the brilliant sword." And Satan ceased talking for a moment, as he pressed a shaking hand upon a deep wound in his side. Then he continued, "The armed angel -- I believe he was Michael -- was an expert gladiator. Had I not thrown myself to the friendly ground and feigned to have been slain, he would have torn me into brutal death."

With voice of triumph, and casting his eyes heavenwards, the Father offered, "Blessed be Michael's name, who has saved humanity from this vicious enemy."

And Satan protested, "My disdain for humanity is not greater than your hatred for yourself. You are blessing Michael, who never has come to your rescue. You are cursing me in the hour of my defeat, even though I was, and still am, the source of your tranquillity and happiness. You deny me your blessing, and extend not your kindness, but you live and prosper in the shadow of my being. You have adopted my existence as an excuse and weapon for your career, and you employ my name in justification for your deeds. Has not my past caused you to be in need of my present and future? Have you reached your goal in amassing the required wealth? Have you found it impossible to extract more gold and silver from your followers, using my kingdom as a threat?

Do you not realize that you will starve to death if I were to die? What would you do tomorrow if you allowed me to die today? What vocation would you pursue if my name disappeared? For decades you have been roaming these villages and warning the people against falling into my hands. They have bought your advice with their poor dinars and with the products of their land. What would they buy from you tomorrow, if they discovered that their wicked enemy no longer existed? Your occupation would die with me, for the people would be safe from sin. As a clergyman, do you not realize that

Satan's existence alone has created his enemy, the Church? That ancient conflict is the secret hand which removes the gold and silver from the faithful's pocket and deposits it forever into the pouch of the preacher and the missionary. How can you permit me to die here, when you know it will surely cause you to lose your prestige, your church, your home, and your livelihood?"

Satan became silent for a moment and his humility was now converted into a confident independence, and he continued, "Father, you are proud, but ignorant. I will disclose to you the history of belief, and in it you will find the truth which joins both of our beings, and ties my existence with your very conscience.

"In the first hour of the beginning of time, man stood before the face of the sun and stretched forth his arms and cried for the first time, saying, 'Behind the sky there is a great and loving and benevolent God.' The man turned his back to the great circle of light and saw his shadow upon the earth, and he hailed, 'In the depths of the earth there is a dark evil who loves wickedness.'

"And the man walked towards his cave, whispering to himself, 'I am between two compelling forces, one in whom I must take refuge, and the other against whom I must struggle.' And the ages marched in procession while man existed between two powers, one that he blessed because it exalted him, and one that he cursed because it frightened him. But he never perceived the meaning of a blessing or of a curse; he was between the two, like a tree between summer, when it blooms, and winter, when it shivers.

"When a man saw the dawn of civilization, which is human understanding, the family as a unit came into being. Then came the tribes, whereupon labour was divided according to ability and inclination; one clan cultivated the land, another built shelters, others wove raiment or hunted food. Subsequently divination made its appearance upon the earth, and this was the first career adopted by man which possessed no essential urge or necessity."

Satan ceased talking for a moment. Then he laughed and his mirth shook the empty valley, but his laughter reminded him of his wounds, and he placed his hand on his side, suffering with pain. He steadied himself and continued, "Divination appeared and grew on earth in strange fashion.

"There was a man in the first tribe called La Wiss. I know not the origin of his name. He was an intelligent creature, but extremely indolent and he detested work in the cultivation of land, construction of shelters, grazing of cattle, or any pursuit requiring bodily movement or exertion. And since food, during that era, could not be obtained except by arduous toil, La Wiss slept many nights with an empty stomach.

"One summer night, as the members of that clan were gathered round the hut of their chief, talking of the outcome of their day and waiting for their slumber time, a man suddenly leaped to his feet, pointed towards the moon, and cried out, saying, 'Look at the night god! His face is dark, and his beauty has vanished, and he has turned into a black stone hanging in the dome of the sky!' The multitude gazed at the moon, shouted in awe, and shook with fear, as if the hands of darkness had clutched their hearts, for they saw the night god slowly turning into a dark ball which changed the bright countenance of the earth and caused the hills and valleys before their eyes to disappear behind a black veil.

"At that moment, La Wiss, who had seen an eclipse before, and understood its simple cause, stepped forward to make much of this opportunity. He stood in the midst of the throng, lifted his hands to the sky, and in a strong voice he addressed them, saying, 'Kneel and pray, for the evil god of obscurity is locked in struggle with the illuminating night god; if the evil god conquers him, we will all perish, but if the night god triumphs over him, we will remain alive. Pray now and worship. Cover your faces with earth. Close your eyes, and lift not your heads towards the sky, for he who witnesses the two gods wrestling will lose his sight and mind, and will remain blind and insane all his life! Bend your heads low, and with all your hearts urge the night god against his enemy, who is our mortal enemy!'

"Thus did La Wiss continue talking, using many cryptic words of his own fabrication which they had never heard. After this crafty deception, as the moon returned to its previous glory, La Wiss raised his voice louder than before and said impressively, 'Rise now, and look at the night god who has triumphed over his evil enemy. He is resuming his journey among the stars. Let it be known that through your prayers you have helped him to overcome the devil of darkness. He is well pleased now, and brighter than ever.'

"The multitude rose and gazed at the moon that was shining in full beam. Their fear became tranquillity, and their confusion was now joy. They commenced dancing and singing and striking with their thick sticks upon sheets of iron, filling the valleys with their clamour and shouting.

"That night, the chief of the tribe called La Wiss and spoke to him, saying, 'You have done something that no man has ever done. You have demonstrated knowledge of a hidden secret that no other among us understands. Reflecting the will of my people, you are to be the highest ranking member, after me, in the tribe. I am the strongest man, and you are the wisest and most learned person. You are the medium between our people and the gods, whose desires and deeds you are to interpret, and you will teach us those things necessary to gain their blessings and love.'

"And La Wiss slyly assured, 'Everything the human god reveals to me in my divine dreams will be conveyed to you in awakeness, and you may be confident that I will act directly between you and him.' The chief was assured, and gave La Wiss two horses, seven calves, seventy sheep and seventy lambs; and he spoke to him, saying, 'The men of the tribe shall build for you a strong house, and we will give you at the end of each harvest season a part of the crop of the land so you may live as an honourable and respected master.'

"La Wiss rose and started to leave, but the chief stopped him, saying, 'Who and what is the one whom you call the human god? Who is this daring god who wrestles with the glorious night god? We have never pondered him before.' La Wiss rubbed his forehead and answered him, saying, 'My honourable master, in the olden time, before the creation of man, all the gods were living peacefully together in an upper world behind the vastness of the stars. The god of gods was their father, and knew what they did not know, and did what they were unable to do. He kept for himself the divine secrets that existed beyond the eternal laws. During the seventh epoch of the twelfth age, the spirit of Bahtaar, who hated the great god, revolted and stood before his father, and said, 'Why do you keep for yourself the power of great authority upon all creatures, hiding away from us the secrets and laws of the universe? Are we not your children who believe in you and share with you the great understanding and the perpetual being?'

"The god of gods became enraged and said, 'I shall preserve for myself the primary power and the great authority and the essential secrets, for I am the beginning and the end.'

"And Bahtaar answered him saying, 'Unless you share with me your might and power, I and my children and my children's children will revolt against you!' At that moment, the god of gods stood upon his throne in the deep heavens, and drew forth a sword, and grasped the sun as a shield; and with a voice that shook all corners of the eternity he shouted out, saying, 'Descend, you evil rebel, to the dismal lower world where darkness and misery exist! There you shall remain in exile, wandering until the sun turns into ashes and the stars into dispersed particles!' In that hour, Bahtaar descended from the upper world into the lower world, where all the evil spirits dwelt. Thereupon, he swore by the secret of life that he would fight his father and brothers by trapping every soul who loved them.'

"As the chief listened, his forehead wrinkled and his face turned pale. He ventured, 'Then the name of the evil god is Bahtaar?' and La Wiss responded, 'His name was Bahtaar when he was in the upper world, but when he entered into the lower world, he adopted successively the names Baalzaboul, Satanail, Balial, Zamiel, Ahriman, Mara, Abdon, Devil, and finally Satan, which is the most famous.'

"The chief repeated the word 'Satan' many times with a quivering voice that sounded like the rustling of the dry branches at the passing of the wind; then he asked, 'Why does Satan hate man as much as he hates the gods?'

"And La Wiss responded quickly, 'He hates man because man is a descendant of Satan's brothers and sisters.' The chief exclaimed, 'Then Satan is the cousin of man!' In a voice mingled with confusion and annoyance, he retorted, 'Yes, master, but he is their great enemy who fills their days with misery and their nights with horrible dreams. He is the power who directs the tempest towards their hovels, and brings famine upon their plantation, and disease upon them and their animals. He is an evil and powerful god; he is wicked, and he rejoices when we are in sorrow, and he mourns when we are joyous. We must, through my knowledge, examine him thoroughly, in order to avoid his evil; we must study his character, so we will not step upon his trap-laden path.'

"The chief leaned his head upon his thick stick and whispered,

saying, 'I have learned now the inner secret of that strange power who directs the tempest towards our homes and brings the pestilence upon us and our cattle. The people shall learn all that I have comprehended now, and La Wiss will be blessed, honoured and glorified for revealing to them the mystery of their powerful enemy, and directing them away from the road of evil.'

"And La Wiss left the chief of the tribe and went to his retiring place, happy over his ingenuity, and intoxicated with the wine of his pleasure and fancy. For the first time, the chief and all the tribe, except La Wiss, spent the night slumbering in beds surrounded by horrible ghosts, fearful spectres, and disturbing dreams."

Satan ceased talking for a moment, while Father Samaan stared at him as one bewildered, and upon the Father's lips appeared the sickly laughter of death. Then Satan continued, "Thus divination came to this earth, and thus was my existence the cause for its appearance. La Wiss was the first who adopted my cruelty as a vocation. After the death of La Wiss, this occupation circulated through his children and prospered until it became a perfect and divine profession, pursued by those whose minds are ripe with knowledge, and whose souls are noble, and whose hearts are pure, and whose fancy is vast.

"In Babylon, the people bowed seven times in worshipping before a priest who fought me with his chantings. In Nineveh, they looked upon a man, who claimed to have known my inner secrets, as a golden link between God and man. In Tibet, they called the person who wrestled with me the son of the sun and moon. In Byblus, Ephesus and Antioch, they offered their children's lives in sacrifice to my opponents. In Jerusalem and Rome, they placed their lives in the hands of those who claimed they hated me and fought me with all their might.

"In every city under the sun my name was the axis of the educational circle of religion, arts, and philosophy. Had it not been for me, no temples would have been built, no towers or palaces would have been erected. I am the courage that creates resolution in man. I am the source that provokes originality of thought. I am the hand that moves man's hands. I am Satan everlasting. I am Satan whom people fight in order to keep themselves alive. If they cease struggling against me, slothfulness will deaden their minds and hearts and souls, in accordance with the weird penalties of their tremendous myth.

"I am the enraged and mute tempest who agitates the minds of man and the hearts of women. And in fear of me, they will travel to places of worship to condemn me, or to places of vice to make me happy by surrendering to my will. The monk who prays in the silence of the night to keep me away from his bed is like the prostitute who invites me to her chamber. I am Satan everlasting and eternal.

"I am the builder of convents and monasteries upon the foundation of fear. I build wine shops and wicked houses upon the foundations of lust and self-gratification. If I cease to exist, fear and enjoyment will be abolished from the world, and through their disappearance, desires and hopes will cease to exist in the human heart. Life will become empty and cold, like a harp with broken strings. I am Satan everlasting.

"I am the inspiration of falsehood, slander, treachery, deceit and mockery, and if these elements were to be removed from this world, human society would become like a deserted field in which naught would thrive but thorns of virtue. I am Satan everlasting.

"I am the father and mother of sin, and if sin were to vanish, the fighters of sin would vanish with it, along with their families and structures.

"I am the heart of all evil. Would you wish for human motion to stop through cessation of my heartbeat? Would you accept the result after destroying the cause? I am the cause! Would you allow me to die in this deserted wilderness? Do you desire to sever the bond that exists between you and me? Answer me, clergyman!"

And Satan stretched his arms and bent his head forward and gasped deeply; his face turned to grey and he resembled one of those Egyptian statues laid waste by the ages at the side of the Nile. Then he fixed his glittering eyes upon Father Samaan's face, and said, in a faltering voice, "I am tired and weak. I did wrong by using my waning strength to speak on things you already know. Now you may do as you please. You may carry me to your home and treat my wounds, or leave me in this place to die."

Father Samaan quivered and rubbed his hands nervously, and with apology in his voice he said, "I know now what I had not known an hour ago. Forgive my ignorance. I know that your existence in this

world creates temptation, and temptation is a measurement by which God adjudges the value of human souls. It is a scale which Almighty God uses to weigh the spirits. I am certain that if you die, temptation will die, and with its passing, death will destroy the ideal power which elevates and alerts man.

"You must live, for if you die and the people know it, their fear of hell will vanish and they will cease worshipping, for naught would be sin. You must live, for in your life is the salvation of humanity from vice and sin.

"As to myself, I shall sacrifice my hatred for you on the altar of my love for man."

Satan uttered a laugh that rocked the ground, and he said, "What an intelligent person you are, Father! And what wonderful knowledge you possess in theological facts! You have found, through the power of your knowledge, a purpose for my existence which I had never understood, and now we realize our need for each other.

"Come close to me, my brother; darkness is submerging the plains, and half of my blood has escaped upon the sand of this valley, and naught remains of me but the remnants of a broken body which death shall soon buy unless you render aid." Father Samaan rolled the sleeves of his robe and approached, and lifted Satan to his back and walked towards his home.

In the midst of those valleys, engulfed with silence and embellished with the veil of darkness, Father Samaan walked towards the village with his back bent under his heavy burden. His black raiment and long beard were spattered with blood streaming from above him, but he struggled forward, his lips moving in fervent prayer for the life of the dying Satan.

You have your Lebanon

You have your Lebanon and its dilemma. I have my Lebanon and its beauty. Your Lebanon is an arena for men from the West and men from the East.

My Lebanon is a flock of birds fluttering in the early morning as

shepherds lead their sheep into the meadow and rising in the evening as farmers return from their fields and vineyards.

You have your Lebanon and its people. I have my Lebanon and its people.

Yours are those whose souls were born in the hospitals of the West; they are as ship without rudder or sail upon a raging sea.... They are strong and eloquent among themselves but weak and dumb among Europeans.

They are brave, the liberators and the reformers, but only in their own area. But they are cowards, always led backwards by the Europeans. They are those who croak like frogs boasting that they have rid themselves of their ancient, tyrannical enemy, but the truth of the matter is that this tyrannical enemy still hides within their own souls. They are the slaves for whom time had exchanged rusty chains for shiny ones so that they thought themselves free. These are the children of your Lebanon. Is there anyone among them who represents the strength of the towering rocks of Lebanon, the purity of its water or the fragrance of its air? Who among them vouchsafes to say, "When I die I leave my country little better than when I was born"?

Who among them dare to say, "My life was a drop of blood in the veins of Lebanon, a tear in her eyes or a smile upon her lips"?

Those are the children of your Lebanon. They are, in your estimation, great; but insignificant in my estimation.

Let me tell you who are the children of my Lebanon.

They are farmers who would turn the fallow field into garden and grove.

They are the shepherds who lead their flocks through the valleys to be fattened for your table meat and your woollens.

They are the vine-pressers who press the grape to wine and boil it to syrup.

They are the parents who tend the nurseries, the mothers who spin the silken yarn.

They are the husbands who harvest the wheat and the wives who gather the sheaves.

They are the builders, the potters, the weavers and the bell-casters.

They are the poets who pour their souls in new cups.

They are those who migrate with nothing but courage in their hearts and strength in their arms but who return with wealth in their hands and a wreath of glory upon their heads.

They are the victorious wherever they go and loved and respected wherever they settle.

They are the ones born in huts but who died in palaces of learning.

These are the children of Lebanon; they are the lamps that cannot be snuffed by the wind and the salt which remains unspoiled through the ages.

They are the ones who are steadily moving toward perfection, beauty, and truth.

What will remain of your Lebanon after a century? Tell me! Except bragging, lying and stupidity? Do you expect the ages to keep in its memory the traces of deceit and cheating and hypocrisy? Do you think the atmosphere will preserve in its pockets the shadows of death and the stench of graves?

Do you believe life will accept a patched garment for a dress? Verily, I say to you that an olive plant in the hills of Lebanon will outlast all of your deeds and your works; that the wooden plough pulled by the oxen in the crannies of Lebanon is nobler than your dreams and aspirations.

I say to you, while the conscience of time listened to me, that the songs of a maiden collecting herbs in the valleys of Lebanon will outlast all the uttering of the most exalted prattler among you. I say to you that you are achieving nothing. If you knew that you are accomplishing nothing, I would feel sorry for you, but you know it not.

You have your Lebanon and I have my Lebanon.

Your Thought and Mine

Your thought is a tree rooted deep in the soil of tradition and whose branches grow in the power of continuity. My thought is a cloud moving in the space. It turns into drops which, as they fall, form a brook that sings its way into the sea. Then it rises as vapour into the sky. Your thought is a fortress that neither gale nor the lightning can shake. My thought is a tender leaf that sways in every direction and finds pleasure in its swaying. Your thought is an ancient dogma that cannot change you nor can you change it. My thought is new, and it tests me and I test it morn and eve.

You have your thought and I have mine.

Your thought allows you to believe in the unequal contest of the strong against the weak, and in the tricking of the simple by the subtle ones. My thought creates in me the desire to till the earth with my hoe, and harvest the crops with my sickle, and build my home with stones and mortar, and weave my raiment with woollen and linen threads. Your thought urges you to marry wealth and notability. Mine commends self-reliance. Your thought advocates fame and show. Mine counsels me and implores me to cast aside notoriety and treat it like a grain of sand cast upon the shore of eternity. Your thought instils in your heart arrogance and superiority. Mine plants within me love for peace and the desire for independence. Your thought begets dreams of palaces with furniture of sandalwood studded with jewels, and beds made of twisted silk threads. My thought speaks softly in my ears, "Be clean in body and spirit even if you have nowhere to lay your head." Your thought makes you aspire to titles and offices. Mine exhorts me to humble service.

You have your thought and I have mine.

Your thought is social science, a religious and political dictionary. Mine is simple axiom. Your thought speaks of the beautiful woman, the ugly, the virtuous, the prostitute, the intelligent, and the stupid. Mine sees in every woman a mother, a sister, or a daughter of every man. The subjects of your thought are thieves, criminals, and assassins. Mine declares that thieves are the creatures of monopoly, criminals are the offspring of tyrants, and assassins are akin to the slain. Your thought describes laws, courts, judges, punishments. Mine

explains that when man makes a law, he either violates it or obeys it. If there is a basic law, we are all one before it. He who disdains the mean is himself mean. He who vaunts his scorn of the sinful vaunts his disdain of all humanity. Your thought concerns the skilled, the artist, the intellectual, the philosopher, the priest. Mine speaks of the loving and the affectionate, the sincere, the honest, the forthright, the kindly, and the martyr. Your thought advocates Judaism, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. In my thought there is only one universal religion, whose varied paths are but the fingers of the loving hand of the Supreme Being. In your thought there are the rich, the poor, and the beggared. My thought holds that there are no riches but life; that we are all beggars, and no benefactor exists save life herself.

You have your thought and I have mine.

According to your thought, the greatness of nations lies in their politics, their parties, their conferences, their alliances and treaties. But mine proclaims that the importance of nations lies in work - work in the field, work in the vineyards, work with the loom, work in the tannery, work in the quarry, work in the timberyard, work in the office and in the press. Your thought holds that the glory of the nations is in their heroes. It sings the praises of Rameses, Alexander, Caesar, Hannibal, and Napoleon. But mine claims that the real heroes are Confucius, Lao-Tse, Socrates, Plato, Abi Taleb, El Gazali, Jalal Ed-din-el Roumy, Copernicus, and Pasteur. Your thought sees power in armies, cannons, battleships, submarines, aeroplanes, and poison gas. But mine asserts that power lies in reason, resolution, and truth. No matter how long the tyrant endures, he will be the loser at the end. Your thought differentiates between pragmatist and idealist, between the part and the whole, between the mystic and materialist. Mine realizes that life is one and its weights, measures and tables do not coincide with your weights, measures and tables. He whom you suppose an idealist may be a practical man.

You have your thought and I have mine.

Your thought is interested in ruins and museums, mummies and petrified objects. But mine hovers in the ever-renewed haze and clouds. Your thought is enthroned on skulls. Since you take pride in it, you glorify it too. My thought wanders in the obscure and distant valleys. Your thought trumpets while you dance. Mine prefers the anguish of death to your music and dancing. Your thought is the

thought of gossip and false pleasure. Mine is the thought of him who is lost in his own country, of the alien in his own nation, of the solitary among his kinfolk and friends.

You have your thought and I have mine.

Love Letters

The professors in the academy say, "Do not make the model more beautiful than she is," and my soul whispers, "O if you could only paint the model as beautiful as she really is."

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 8th November 1908)

Each and every one of us, dear Mary, must have a resting place somewhere. The resting place of my soul is a beautiful grove where my knowledge of you lives.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 8th November 1908)

Let me, O let me bathe my soul in colours; let me swallow the sunset and drink the rainbow.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 8th November 1908)

When I am a stranger in a large city I like to sleep in different rooms, eat in different places, walk through unknown streets, and watch the unknown people who pass. I love to be the solitary traveller !

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 16th May 1911)

Imagination sees the complete reality, - it is where past, present and future meet... Imagination is limited neither to the reality which is apparent - nor to one place. It lives everywhere. It is at a centre and feels the vibrations of all the circles within which east and west are virtually included. Imagination is the life of mental freedom. It realizes what everything is in its many aspects ... Imagination does not uplift: we don't want to be uplifted, we want to be more completely aware.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 7th June 1912)

I want to be alive To all the life that is in me now, to know each moment to the uttermost.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 7th June 1912)

I realized that all the trouble I ever had about you came from some smallness or fear in myself.

(Extract from Mary Haskell's journal dated 12th June 1912)

Mary, what is there in a storm that moves me so ? Why am I so much better and stronger and more certain of life when a storm is passing ? I do not know, and yet I love a storm more, far more, than anything in nature.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 14th August 1912)

The most wonderful thing, Mary, is that you and I are always walking together, hand in hand, in a strangely beautiful world, unknown to other people. We both stretch one hand to receive from Life - and Life is generous indeed.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 22nd October 1912)

If I can open a new corner in a man's own heart to him I have not lived in vain. Life itself is the thing, not joy or pain or happiness or unhappiness. To hate is as good as to love - an enemy may be as good as a friend. Live for yourself - live your life. Then you are most truly the friend of man. - I am different every day - and when I am eighty, I shall still be experimenting and changing. Work that I have done no longer concerns me - it is past. I have too much on hand in life itself.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 25th December 1912)

His love is as restful as Nature itself. He has no standard for you to conform to, no choice about you, but is simply with your reality, just as Nature is. You are real, so is he: the two realities love each other - voila!

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 29th December 1912)

A man can be free without being great, but no man can be great without being free.

(From Gibran's letter to Mary Haskell dated 16th May 1913)

A true hermit goes to the wilderness to find - not to lose himself.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 8th October 1913)

"With you, Mary," he said today, "I want to be just like a blade of

grass, that moves as the air moves it -to talk just according to the impulse of the moment. And I do."

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 10th January 1914)

I often picture myself living on a mountain top, in the most stormy country (not the coldest) in the world. Is there such a place ? If there is I shall go to it someday and turn my heart into pictures and poems.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 1st March 1914)

I want to do a great deal of walking in the open country. Just think, Mary, of being caught by thunder storms! Is there a sight more wonderful than that of seeing the elements producing life through pure motion?

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 24th May 1914)

But now I can put myself in your hands. You can put yourself in another person's hands when he knows what you are doing and as respect for it and loves it. He gives you your freedom.

(Extract from Mary Haskell's Journal dated 20th June 1914)

What is poetry ? "An extension of vision - and music is an extension of hearing."

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 20th June 1914)

An expression of that sacred desire to find this world and behold it naked; and that is the soul of the poetry of Life. Poets are not merely those who write poetry, but those whose hearts are full of the spirit of life.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 17th July 1915)

What the soul knows is often unknown to the man who has a soul. We are infinitely more than we think.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 6th October 1915)

When the hand of Life is heavy and night songless, it is the time for love and trust. And how light the hand life becomes and how songful the night, when one is loving and trusting all.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 19th December 1916)

Sometimes you have not even begun to speak - and I am at the end of what you are saying.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 28th July 1917)

Knowledge is life with wings.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 15th November 1917)

You have helped me in my work and in myself. And I have helped you in your work and in yourself. And I am grateful to heaven for this you-and-me.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 12th March 1922)

If I accept the sunshine and warmth I must also accept the thunder and lightning.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 12th March 1922)

Follow your heart. Your heart is the right guide in everything big. Mine is so limited. What you want to do is determined by that divine element that is in each of us.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 12th March 1922)

That deepest thing, that recognition, that knowledge, that sense of kinship began the first time I saw you, and it is the same now - only a thousand times deeper and tenderer. I shall love you to eternity. I loved you long before we met in this flesh. I knew that when I first saw you. It was destiny. We are together like this and nothing can shake us apart.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 12th March 1922)

Demonstration of love are small, compared with the great thing that is back of them.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 28th April 1922)

We are expression of earth, and of life - not separate individuals only. We cannot get enough away from the earth to see the earth and ourselves as separates. We move with its great movements and our growth is part of its great growth.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 5th May 1922)

The relation between you and me is the most beautiful thing in my life. It is the most wonderful thing that I have known in any life. It is eternal.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 11th September 1922)

I am so happy in your happiness. To you happiness is a form of freedom, and of all the people I know you should be the freest. Surely you have earned this happiness and this freedom. Life cannot be but kind and sweet to you. You have been so sweet and kind to life.

(Extract from one of Gibran's letters dated 24th January 1923)

I care about your happiness just as you care about mine. I could not be at peace if you were not.

(Extract from Gibran's diary dated 23rd April 1923)

Among intelligent people the surest basis for marriage is friendship - the sharing of real interests- the ability to fight out ideas together and understand each other's thoughts and dreams.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 26th May 1923)

What difference does it make, whether you live in a big city or in a community of homes ? The real life is within.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 27th May 1923)

Marriage doesn't give one any rights in another person except such rights that a person gives - nor any freedom except the freedom which that person gives.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 27th May 1923)

The trees were budding, the birds were singing - the grass was wet - the whole earth was shining. And suddenly I was the trees and the flowers and the birds and the grass - and there was no I at all.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 23rd May 1924)

You listen to so much more than I can say. You hear consciousness. You go with me where the words I say can't carry you.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 5th June 1924)

No human relation gives one possession in another - every two souls are absolutely different. In friendship or in love, the two side by side raise hands together to find what one cannot reach alone.

(Gibran's words quoted from Mary Haskell's journal dated 8th June 1924)

What-to-Love is a fundamental human problem. And if we have this solution - Love what may Be- we see that this is the way Reality loves - and that there is no other loving that lasts or understands.

(Extract from one of Mary Haskell's letters dated 2nd February 1925)

QUOTATIONS BY KAHLIL GIBRAN

Friendship is always a sweet responsibility never an opportunity.

Perplexity is the beginning of knowledge.

A man can be free without being great but no man can be great without being free.

Rebellion without truth is like spring in a bleak, arid desert.

Generosity is giving more than you can and pride is taking less than you need.

Art is a step from what is obvious and well-known toward what is arcane and concealed.

The significance of a man is not in what he attains but rather what he longs to attain.

You may forget the one with whom you have laughed but never the one with whom you have wept.

Ever has it been that love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.

We live only to discover beauty. All else is a form of waiting.

It is slavery to live in the mind unless it has become part of the body.

He who has not looked on Sorrow will never see Joy.

Beauty is eternity gazing at itself in a mirror.

What the soul knows is often unknown to the man who has a soul.
We are infinitely more than we think.

By losing your goal you have lost your way.

There are those who give with joy and that joy is their reward.

All that spirits desire spirits attain.

Your hearts know in silence the secrets of the days and the nights.

If the other person injures you, you may forget the injury but if you injure him you will always remember.

Zeal is a volcano, the peak of which the grass of indecisiveness does not grow.

The highest virtue here may be the least in another world.

Life without love is like a tree without blossom and fruit.

We are expression of earth, and of life not separate individuals only.

Safeguarding the rights of others is the most noble and beautiful end of a human being.

The envious praises me unknowingly.

And think not you can guide the course of love For love, if it finds you worthy, shall guide your course.

Doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother.

If indeed you must be candid be candid beautifully.

To be able to look back upon ones life in satisfaction is to live twice.

Strange that we all defend our wrongs with more vigor than we do our rights.

What difference does it make, whether you live in a big city or in a community of homes? The real life is within.

Life without liberty is like a body without spirit.

If you reveal your secrets to the wind you should not blame the wind for revealing them to the trees.

Coming generations will learn equality from poverty and love from woes.

How shall my heart be unsealed unless it be broken.

Progress lies not in enhancing what is but in advancing toward what will be.

Love and doubt have never been on speaking terms.

A true hermit goes to the wilderness to find not to lose himself.

Strange, the desire for certain pleasures is a part of my pain.

Doubt is a pain too lonely to know that faith is his twin brother.

Half of what I say is meaningless but I say it so that the other half may reach you.

In the sweetness of friendship let there be laughter and sharing of pleasures.

Knowledge cultivates your seeds and does not sow in you seeds.

Faith is an oasis in the heart which will never be reached by the caravan of thinking.

It is well to give when asked but it is better to give unasked, through understanding.

Yesterday is but today's memory tomorrow is today's dream.

Desire is half of life indifference is half of death.

If you cannot work with love but only with distaste it is better that you should leave your work.

One may not reach the dawn save by the path of the night.

We choose our joys and sorrows long before we experience them.

The optimist sees the rose and not its thorns the pessimist stares at the thorns, oblivious to the rose.

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding.

In one drop of water are found all the secrets of all the oceans.

In the depth of my soul there is a wordless song.

Hell is not in torture Hell is in an empty heart.

Love possesses not nor will it be possessed for love is sufficient unto love.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth.

Poetry is a deal of joy and pain and wonder with a dash of the dictionary.

You are blind and I am deaf and dumb so let us touch hands and understand.

Faith is a knowledge within the heart beyond the reach of proof.

Say not, 'I have found the truth,' but rather, 'I have found a truth.'

Lovers embrace that which is between them rather than each other.

Knowledge is life with wings.

If I accept the sunshine and warmth I must also accept the thunder and lightning.

When Life does not find a singer to sing her heart she produces a philosopher to speak her mind.

Birth and Death are the two noblest expressions of bravery.

What is poetry? An extension of vision and music is an extension of hearing.

The most pitiful among men is he who turns his dreams into silver and gold.

The real in us is silent the acquired is talkative.

Trust in dreams for in them is the hidden gate to eternity.