



Mary C. Upham

POEMS OF

Mary Cornelia Upham



A perfect woman nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command.
—*Wordsworth.*

Born at Cleveland, Ohio, January 21, 1843
Died at Marshfield, Wis., November 29, 1912

Index

Appreciation of the Woman Who Understood,
Lloyd Kenyon Jones

Christmas Eve.

Spirit of Christmas.

A Christmas Message.

New Year's Day.

New Year's Card for the Grandchildren.

A New Year's Prayer.

Easter.

Decoration Day.

The Autumn Days.

Life's Voyage.

The Titanic.

The Old Scrap Book.

A Message to the C. E. Society.

To a Friend.

Sunday in the Country.

Sunday in the City.

The Family Bible.

Foreword

AS a tribute to the memory of a beloved wife and companion for forty-five years, this volume is dedicated to her memory, that the loving thoughts, the children of her mind and pen, may be preserved and remembered by those who knew her and were dear to her when living.

Unstinted in her devotion to her husband and family, unceasing in her labor for the "right" and "public good," she never knew what it was to consider self.

Beginning her married life at an army post, changing to a fishing and lumber hamlet on Lake Michigan, moving back into a wilderness, inhabiting a log cabin and shanty, later on occupying the governor's mansion and presiding with grace and dignity, no matter the location and conditions, she always made a "Home," regardless of the surroundings.

—*Her Husband and Comrade,*

In Appreciation of the Woman Who Understood

By Lloyd Kenyon Jones

A CCEPT this as tribute to The Woman Who Understood - whose day is done - whose sun has set in a halo of benediction in the late afternoon of her day of life.

And acknowledge (all who knew her) that beyond the chill grey of the pall of her passing, the good she accomplished lives on - increases - multiplies.

Mrs. W. H. Upham - Aunt Mary Upham - arose supreme and superior above the mere plane of morality; for morality itself is too often a moribund thing: a point of least resistance.

Hers was different from ordinary goodness, or ordinary charity, or ordinary love.

Others have had compassion. Others have loved. Others have been considerate.

But she - well, she understood, and very, very few ever understand.

She understood the frailties of the human kind - and had compassion for those who erred. She understood to that divine degree where she let censure go unuttered, and guided the faltering, weary and mistaken feet back from the thorny paths of wrong to the broader highway of right.

This noblewoman of the Northland had that rarest of all faculties of making her precepts abiding. They settled deep into the minds, hearts and souls of growing boys and girls, and became stronger and more purposeful when those same boys and girls became men and women.

Were we to canvass the years and days of the

past, and interview all those who came into contact with Mrs. Upham, we could not find one who was not better off for having known her.

What an unselfish life was hers! She had the means to travel and enjoy. She had every faculty for comfort and surcease from labor.

But to her, in the breadth and truth of her mind, her boys and girls were dearer to her than the fame, the honor, the social prestige that were hers for the asking.

Fame courted her and beckoned to her always - but she was a teacher - a leader, and saw, as she only could see, the value of personal aid to the little ones - and the grown-ups as well - in the city that she and her husband founded.

And as both of them were empire builders in fact, so was Mrs. Upham a builder of the empire of good - which has extended its borders far beyond the metes and bounds of the town where she had her being.

If all the doctrines of the soul were penned and preached, and sifted down, the sum total of them all would be to hope for a supervising power that could understand.

Her intellect was as broad and deep as the cause from which it sprung.

While others fight and struggle for honor, she thrust it from her. Fame was not what she wished - but ever it sought her.

For what Mrs. Upham achieved in our own lives, we are glad to thank her - openly, before the world - for what she did.

We thank her for the privilege of having known and felt the unending blessing of the Woman Who Understood.

Christmas Eve

In the memories of twilight we catch the refrain
Of the song that has so blessed the world;
Its echoing chorus now thrills us again,
Like a banner of promise unfurled.

And when Christmases here prove their value above,
To loved circles now scattered afar,
We will realize better the message of love
In the story of Bethlehem's star.

Spirit of Christmas

The spirit of Christmas can never grow old,
But must gather new meaning each year;
Its song and its triumph the whole world enfold,
In the truest and dearest of stories are told,
'Tis the key to life's mysteries here.

As we stop in the twilight and catch the refrain,
Replete with its meaning divine,
Love would strengthen all ties and bid us again
Remember the message, 'twill not be in vain
That we cherish the glad Christmas time.

A Christmas Message

The cares and burdens of life roll away
If we catch the true spirit of Christmas day.
The sweet benediction of that long ago song
Grows clearer and dearer as years roll along.
I send love's message to you, dear friend,
That blessings most priceless your pathway attend.
"To be blessed and bless others," through all the
New Year,
Would bring the true spirit of Paradise here.

New Year's Day

Each New Year marks a golden day,
Where faith and hope combine
To prove that o'er the darkest day
The inner light shall shine.

We leave the errors of the past,
And with new grace divine,
We clasp again those things that last,
Those truths that outlast time.

And when that path leads out of sight,
And we pass on, I trow,
Forever in that land of light,
We'll meet and love as now.

New Year's Card for the Grandchildren

The happiest year you yet have known,
Is my New Year's wish for thee,
And as years pass on you'll always own
The best is yet to be.

In the blessings here below,
A double meaning see,
To be a blessing here below,
As well as blessed be.

May cloudy days pass quickly by,
And sunny ones be long,
The rainbow ever in your sky,
And life a grand, sweet song.

A New Year's Prayer

Dear Father on this New Year's day,
Hear thou my heartfelt prayer,
And manifest along life's way
Thy presence everywhere.

Life hath its sunshine and its shade,
Then thankful may I be,
And of no evil be afraid,
As I Thy goodness see.

Most bravely may I conquer pain,
And cheerfully press on,
If disappointments thwart again,
And interrupt life's song.
If deeper sorrow I must meet,
Oh, leave me not alone,
Good Shepherd, keep my faltering feet,
Thy presence then make known.

Easter

The Laureate's wreath the poet wore,
Heartsick, he'd failed to reach the goal
Sought by each poet long before,
That unwritten poem of the soul.

She sang, 'tis true, to breathless throngs,
But they could only partly hear
The echo of the Seraph's songs
She heard with her attuned ear.

The painting won him noble fame,
He tried its beauty to portray;
That hidden vision was his aim,
But he could never find the way.

The sculptor saw in marble white
What blinded eyes could never see;
His inspiration and delight
Still lured him on like mockery.

Since here we're deaf and dumb and blind,
To glories all unseen,
Then somewhere, sometime, we must find
What aspirations mean.

The artists' hopes, the dreams of youth,
The love that brightens all our way,
Seem prophecies of surest truth,
Of man's real immortality.

But logic failed the proof to give;
Self evident it seemed
That here, man just begins to live,
He must fulfill his dreams.

Then came that wondrous Easter Day,
Confirming all we'd hoped before,
Proving to man his legacy,
Eternal life forever more.

Oh! glorious Easter, vital day,
Let faith and hope its mission tell,
Rolling the stone of doubt away,
"Abide with us," "Immanuel."

Decoration Day

Low bow the head, in reverence bow,
For heroes pass this way;
Let patriots all give honor now,
This Decoration Day.

A remnant only here we see
Of all that army grand,
Who bravely gave our legacy,
A free, united land.

How strong the step and bright the eye,
Just fifty years ago;
How firm the hand that held the flag
Beyond the reach of foe.

Now faltering and slow they tread,
Their locks have turned to gray;
Keep back the tears, for where they led
We walk a brighter way.

The empty sleeve, the crutch proclaim
But half the price they paid;
That Liberty might ever reign,
This sacrifice was made.

"Flowers the smiles of God" enshrine,
This bivouac of the dead,
And eulogies that outlast time
Crown every soldier's head.

In years to come we'll not forget
All that they freely gave;
As children's children decorate
Each noble patriot's grave.

For soon the roll above will call
Where duty nobly done
Will bring its own reward to all,
"God bless you every one."

The Autumn Days

The autumn days have fairly come,
The gladdest of the year,
The leaves are decked in red and brown,
And golden tints appear.

The evergreens their background show;
A painted forest rare
Envelopes all the earth below,
With beauty everywhere.

The partridge and the wild ducks call,
The hunter grasps his gun;
The school boy knows where nuts may fall,
And joins the merry fun.

Each season shows the artist's power,
Painted by hand divine,
But Nature proves her richest dower,
In autumn's hues sublime.

Grow old in beauty like the leaf,
No higher aim be thine,
For toward the sunset, life is brief,
Let heavenly virtues shine.

Life's autumn then may well attest,
As age and beauty grow,
That added years are always best,
Reflecting autumn's glow.

Let years their fruitful harvest show, -
Of wisdom, grace and truth;
Beyond the sunset's beauteous glow,
We reach perpetual youth.

Life's Voyage

Some sail to Heaven on a cloudless sea,
With faith and hope secure;
Their anchor held so steadily,
They smiled at ocean's roar.

But some like battered hulks are seen,
Wild storms have left their mark;
With canvas torn and broken beam,
A shattered, ruined bark.
What matters it, so that at last
Heaven's harbor reached, all storms are past?

The Titanic

Now honor American manhood,
And give it its well-won fame;
And laurels shall crown as they should,
The high-water mark of its aim.

Let chivalry tell all her story,
And all her brave knights have done;
History pales in the light of the glory
Of this deed of America's sons.

Calm, majestic, triumphantly brave,
Greater love never was known;
Their lives to save others they gave
And then turned to the darkness alone.

"Nearer to God" they could not be,
"Infinite love" responds so soon,
And He who walked on Galilee,
Brought Heaven's own light to midnight's
gloom.

The Old Scrap Book

'Tis not conceit that makes us prize
This quaint old ragged treasure,
Intrinsic values we surmise
Are far beyond earth's measure.

It tells its tale of fifty years
In truth with little friction,
And hints of joys and smiles and tears
In words of formal diction.

Where strangers smile at clippings old,
Our memories sacred linger;
In heart throbs that can ne'er be told,
We check Time's busy finger.

Here yesterdays become today,
And wedding bells resound;
And childish voices in their play
Send echoes all round.

If some things here resound with praise,
They help make history nearer;
Remember these were stirring days,
And patriots' fires burned clearer.

The hero, always modest, knew
How to sift truth from dross,
His higher aim of duty true,
He followed gain or loss.

The shadows of the other life
Here show their inner lining,
As past and present here unite
To solve earth's sad repining.

Thus fifty years pass as a day,
For Ponce's spring is here,
Old friends, old times, are here to stay,
And all that makes life dear.

We read between these lines of strife,
God's care and blessing ever,
And note the holiest ties of life,
Not years nor death can sever.

A Message to the Christian Endeavor Society

Within thy house, dear Lord, today,
Inspired by all I heard, -
The song, the prayer, the blessed way,
Brought new light to Thy word.

Baptismal strength I sought anew,
To do, to dare, to be;
With martyrs brave I'd do my share
To win Thy victory.

Alas the answer came to me, -
No great thing canst thou do;
Just do the duty next to thee,
And to thyself be true.

Let each day's record show more clear,
One deed of kindness done,
A helpful word, a smile of cheer,
Ere setting of the sun.

Unselfish acts hold highest place
Among the deeds of men;
Though here their end you cannot trace
You'll find them all again.

The hidden records none can see
Are treasured up above;
Fear not, "Ye did it unto me,"
Proclaims that voice of love.

To a Friend

Dear friend, you have gladdened my heart tonight,
With the faces of your treasures rare;
They shine from the wall with a radiant light
As if they could banish all care.

The holiest mission on earth, we know,
Is yours in your jewels so bright;
Untarnished by all the dust here below,
Like doves, may they keep pure and bright.

May life bring them years of comfort and bliss,
With God's blessing as they go along,
Until the full measure of joy in this,
Shall echo Eternity's song.

Sunday in the Country

The chimes ring out at early dawn,
This perfect day in June;
"Joy to the World," for Christ is born,
And we awake in tune.

The quiet church so full of peace,
May well be called a "Home,"
Their love for it will never cease,
How ever far they roam.

From many homes they come in flocks,
Parents and children dear;
No one here at Sunday mocks;
Their faith and hope is clear.

The prayer, the song, and all they heard
Gave strength along life's way;
Since lives fed on that "Holy Word,"
Know joy and peace always.

One family they seem to be
In sickness and in death,
With kindly deeds continually,
Where love outvalues wealth.

The Sabbath peace is over all,
The calm day near its end;
And children's children learn to call
Their Great Redeemer, "Friend."

The Vesper Hymn in happy homes
Lit up by sunset's glow,
Brings Heaven nearer in the tunes,
And brightens life below.

Although 'tis not a holiday,
The quiet walks and rides,
The cheerful call, all prove that they
Find happiness besides.

Sunday in the City

Life in a city knows no day
Of quiet rest along the way,
Here changes come, men call them new,
And pride themselves on what they view.

The gay crowds throng the busy street,
To make this holiday complete,
Bands and processions lead the way
To parks where entertainments stay.

The theaters open their arms,
For deadened conscience knows no qualms;
A church spire vainly tries to show
What it might mean to men below.

And though a few are found within,
They are the salt 'mid city's din;
Gomorrah-like, 'twould long ago
Have perished in its mortal woe,

Had not the seven faithful few
Found mercy that they never knew;
For those who quite forgot 'twas given,
They shared alike the gifts from Heaven.

At midnight, tired and weary worn,
Unfitted for tomorrow's dawn,
Tired out with folly, - did it pay
To squander thus the Sacred Day?

No rest to body or to soul
But shortened life must pay the toll,
And in eternity they'll say,
"No, surely then it did not pay."

The Family Bible

A sacred heirloom here we see,
With records placed within;
A written roll of memory,
Within its keeping seen.

The marriage register here tells,
Of generations past,
The echo of those wedding bells,
Through length of years shall last.

How blest the love that here is found,
Forever firm and true,
Divorces never did abound
With those we have in view.

These Christian homes kept sacred ties,
Till death alone should part;
Faith that no one e'er denies,
Eternal in the heart.

The next page faith and joy unite,
So welcome each new name;
Since love as on that Holy night,
Forever seems the same.

The last page, blotted out by tears,
Speaks volumes of true sorrow;
Through the vista of the years,
We'll meet again tomorrow.