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## THE HARVEST OF THE SEA

BY CHARLES HANSON TOWNE

The jealous Sea moaned in the April night:  
"Lo! there are comrades hidden in my heart,  
Unfortunates who sought me, sick of life.  
But I am hungry for brave souls; I crave  
Their warmth and passion through my chilling tides;  
Their heads upon my bosom, and their hands,  
Like children's hands, about me in the dark.  
I need their blood in my cold loneliness."

A Titan sailed her weary leagues of foam,  
Unknowing her strange wish, her mad desire.  
But there was menace in the startlit night,  
And sudden doom upon deceiving paths,  
And a wild horror on the mighty deep.

The grey Sea laughed—and drew those brave men down,  
And braver women who but mocked at Death,  
Seeing that Love went with them. These the souls  
The awful Sea desired! These the hearts  
She waited for in that stupendous hour!  
They were enough to warm the Arctic wastes,  
To fill with furnace heat the frozen zones,  
And fire the very Sea that was their grave.

But dream not, mighty Ocean, they are yours!  
We have them still, those high and valiant men  
Who died that others might reach ports of peace.  
Not in your jealous depths their spirits roam,  
But through the world to-day, and up to heaven!

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 April 20, 1912  
 The "Titanic"

WITHIN the dungeon of the deep  
 There sleeps the queen of all the seas,  
 Who swung assurance at the sweep  
 Of ghostly peril on the breeze,  
 And dared the elements to ply  
 Their angered forces at her head  
 That she might battle and defy—  
 And lo! *one* battle left her dead!

With all the graces of a court  
 She slipped the tethers of the tide  
 And glided far from out the port  
 That bound her power and her pride,  
 And with the promise of her youth  
 And all the future in her sway,  
 She strode in triumph over truth  
 And tossed the danger with the spray!

Within, her heart was great and gay,  
 Without, her sinews stretched in length,  
 The very heavens seemed to play  
 Beside the pulses of her strength!  
 And through the day and through the night  
 Of billowed pleasure undismayed,  
 Her throb of fervor set to flight  
 The toll of fear, and fear obeyed.

Peace! While the even waters glide  
 By quiet stars from night to day;  
 Peace! While the measured hours stride  
 In swift descent upon their prey;  
 And there in shrouded silence steals  
 The stealthy espion of the sea,  
 Whose frozen mask afar conceals  
 The dark decree of destiny.

Peace! While the miracle of man  
 Yet flies her flag in majesty;  
 Peace! While she breathes her final span  
 Serene unto eternity;  
 And then—the muffled knell of doom,

The flash of fate, the riven rod,  
The plunge into the gulf of gloom,  
And last—the very touch of God!

A thousand lives embosomed are  
Beneath the wonders of the wave,  
A thousand spirits vanished far  
Beyond the waters of the grave;  
And sunken in that solemn keep,  
The carcass of a vessel vast,  
Where only weeds and fishes creep  
Among the port-holes of the past!

No marble monolith may mark,  
Brave sons! the traces of your doom,  
Where but the caverns of the shark  
Return the echoes of the tomb,  
And but a broken bulk of steel  
Crushed in the sea's eternal bed,  
Shall tell the distant ages still  
Where tender homage may be led.

And yet, about that shattered shell  
Whose glory crumbled in an hour,  
The waves may wind a coral spell  
And weave a poem into power,  
Until the heaving depths of slime  
And clinging beauties of the deep  
Shall mold a monument sublime  
Unto your ceremented sleep.

And here, since every sorrow swings  
Some note of beauty on the tide,  
And not a dark despair but brings  
A feeble glimmer to abide,  
Bereaved, benumbed, all hearts may fold  
About the courage of the dead,  
And honor strength that died enrolled  
To yield the weaker, life instead.

And while the winds and waters merge  
In mournful requiem of sighs,  
And chant a great eternal dirge  
Of far regret unto the skies,  
The wave of all the ages still  
Shall sweep the reef of memory,  
And yearning breakers curve and thrill  
In music of your eulogy!

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