



THE COMPLETE 1886 BOOK AND LATER POEMS

ISAAC KINLEY

Labor Rhymes

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EXTREMES AND MODERATIONS:
EARLY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA POETRY

A TEXT-TECH PAPERS PROJECT

Extremes and Moderations

Early Southern California Poetry

Extremes and Moderations is a Text-Tech Papers project devoted to recovering poetry written, published, and circulated in Los Angeles and Southern California. Each volume brings neglected books and poems back into view through carefully prepared texts, archival images, biographical context, and a clear record of the surviving sources.

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

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Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

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EDITORIAL EDITION

This edition prints the complete text of Isaac Kinley's *Labor Rhymes* (1886), followed by two later poems located in contemporary Indiana publications. The 1886 scan is the copy-text for the book: every page has been reread, stanza divisions and intentional alternate-line or refrain indents are retained, and narrow-page wraps are rejoined. Earlier reader PDFs and OCR were used only as finding aids.

Isaac Kinley

November 7, 1820, Randolph County, Indiana – January 15, 1909, Los Angeles, California

Edited by Brian Kim Stefans

The Text-Tech Papers

Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry

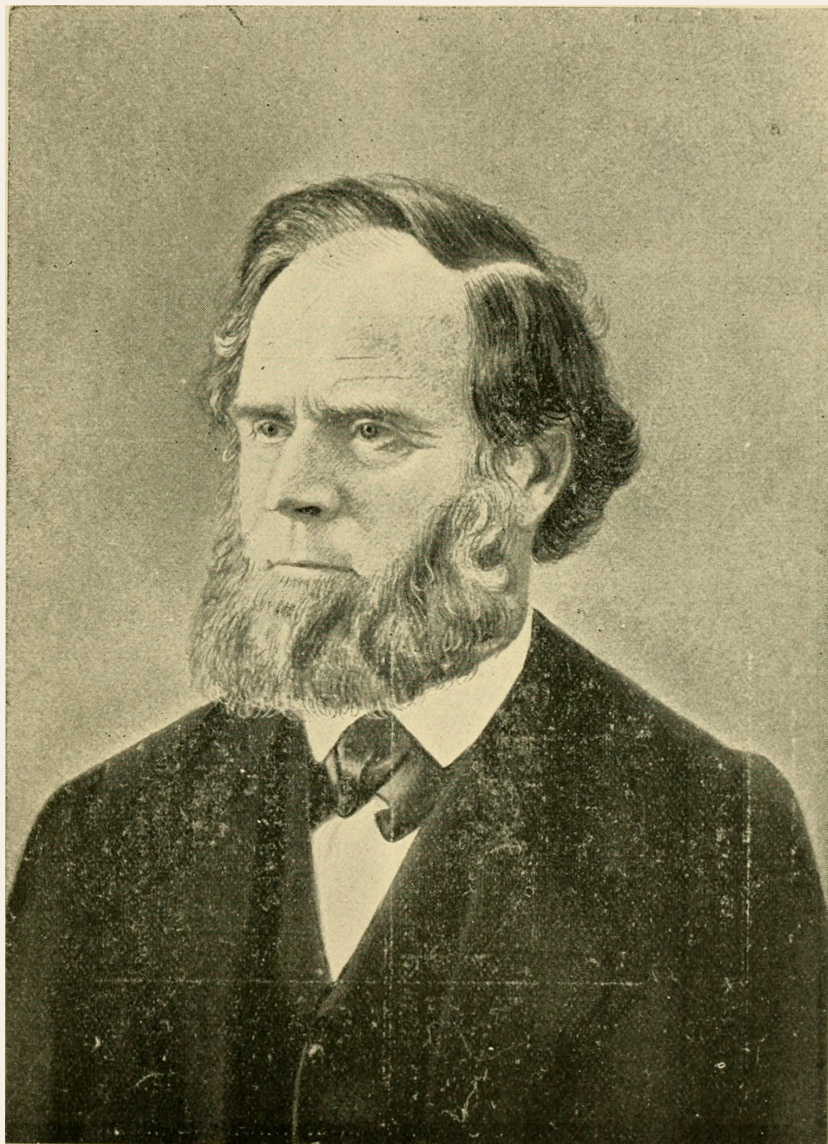
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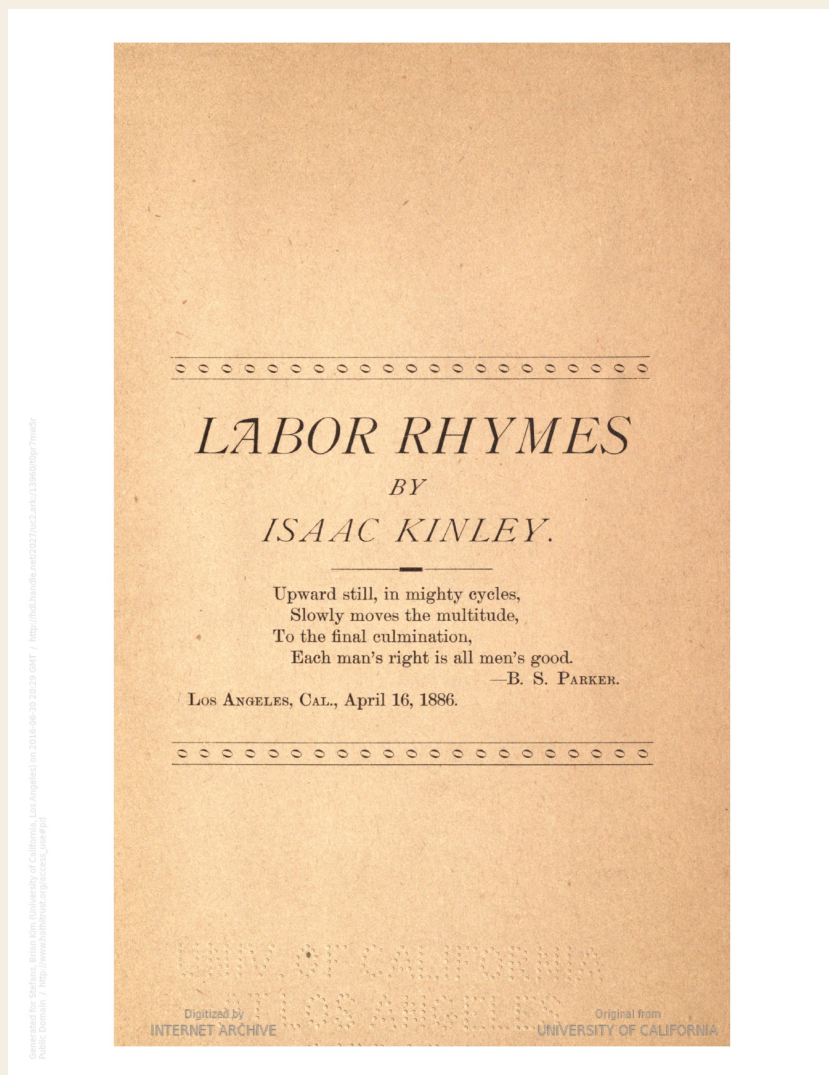
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Isaac Kinley and the original 1886 book



*Major Isaac Kinley. Portrait published in William Grose's *The Story of the Marches, Battles and Incidents of the 36th Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry* (1891).*



Title page of *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles, 1886), the only poetry collection Kinley published.

Introduction

Isaac Kinley, 1820–1909

Isaac Kinley carried reform across nearly nine decades of American life. An Indiana teacher and Free-Soil delegate to the convention that framed the state constitution, he became a Republican legislator, a Union officer terribly wounded while commanding the Thirty-sixth Indiana at Stones River, and later an editor and labor politician in Los Angeles. His privately printed *Labor Rhymes* (1886) turns that history into direct public verse: long visions of labor's emancipation, songs for fraternal fellowship, attacks on plutocracy, and exhortations to endurance. This edition resets the complete book from its original scan and adds two later poems located during research, "Voices of Angels" (1889) and "Karma" (1894).

Stage I | Education, reform, and Indiana letters, 1820–1860

Isaac Kinley was born in Randolph County, Indiana, on November 7. A memorial notice published after his death gives the year as 1820, while other nineteenth-century sources give 1821 or 1822; the present edition follows the fuller memorial record preserved in the project archive. He was the son of Isaac Kinley and Ann Reece Kinley. When he was about three or four, the family moved to Wayne County, settling near Centerville. His formal schooling was limited by the circumstances of frontier Indiana, but he pursued knowledge intensely and began teaching at fifteen. For nearly a quarter century he taught in Wayne and Henry Counties, including work at Greensboro Seminary beginning in 1848 and at Union Seminary near Spiceland. Contemporary accounts remembered him not merely as a schoolmaster but as an educator with unusual intellectual range and a commanding ability to lecture on Shakespeare, Scott, Byron, and the force of English language.

Education led Kinley into public office and reform politics. He served Henry County as surveyor and school examiner and, in 1850, was elected as a

Free-Soil delegate to the Indiana Constitutional Convention of 1850–51. At about twenty-eight he was its youngest member. Later accounts credited him with helping shape the educational provisions of the new constitution and even with outlining the foundation of Indiana's public-school system. He represented Henry County in the state senate during the later 1850s and was active in the early antislavery movement and the organization of the Republican Party in Indiana. His public commitments were unusually broad for the period: he and his second wife later signed the call that revived organized woman-suffrage work in Indiana in 1869.

Kinley married Nancy B. Holloway in 1849. She wrote poetry that a Henry County history praised for its warmth and generosity, but she died in 1855. On October 2, 1859, he married Jennie G. Adams, born in Bristol, Maine, on May 8, 1822. Jennie was a poet and landscape painter who had studied art in Boston and taught at the academy Kinley founded near Knightstown. Her satire "The Iron Bedstead" was remembered as a popular attack on bigotry and intolerance. A Richmond directory for 1865 also places Amanda E. Kinley, a teacher, in Kinley's household, although the surviving sources reviewed for this edition do not securely establish the relationship. In 1869 Isaac and Jennie toured Europe; his letters describing the journey appeared in Isaac H. Julian's Richmond newspaper *The Radical*.

Kinley was already an editor and writer before the Civil War. Around 1858 he founded *The Beech Tree*, a thirty-two-page Henry County literary magazine that survived only a few months but left a strong local memory. He also edited the Knightstown weekly *Citizen* and a Richmond monthly called *The Industrial*. A county history published in 1871 described his essays and short articles as work of rare merit and singled out his poems "Astræa" and "I Forgive" as locally popular. Only "Astræa" has been recovered; it was revised or reprinted in *Labor Rhymes*. The same history hoped he would gather his best poems, sketches, and memories into a book. That wish would be fulfilled fifteen years later, though the surviving volume concentrated on reform verse rather than the full range of his literary work.

Stage II | War, public office, and migration west, 1861–1877

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Kinley organized Company D of the Thirty-sixth Indiana Infantry and was elected its captain. The regiment's officers promoted him to major. He saw action during the campaigns through Kentucky and Tennessee and commanded the Thirty-sixth at the Battle of Stones River. Early in the fighting on December 31, 1862, a Minié ball shattered his hip. The wound was considered nearly fatal, and Jennie's months of nursing were credited with saving his life. He never fully recovered. Afterward he served as provost marshal for an Indiana congressional district, then returned to public life. He was elected to the Indiana senate from Wayne County in 1866 and served four years. In December 1865 he had also been confirmed as a trustee for the institution that became Indiana State Normal School, although he resigned the following September.

The Kinleys moved to California in 1874, partly in hope that the climate would improve Jennie's health. They first went to San Jose and took charge of San Jose College. A contemporary sketch calls the school successful but says they relinquished it after two years as Jennie's condition worsened. They then moved to Los Angeles, where she died in May 1877. Kinley entered the city's young labor movement. From August 1878 to May 1879, the Workingmen's Party operated the *Daily Star* under his editorship; a contemporary notice described it as serving the interests of workingmen. He was nominated during the Workingmen's convention of 1879, later ran unsuccessfully for Congress as a Greenback candidate in 1882 and on the People's Party line in 1884, and published another labor paper, *The Slogan*. His advocacy belonged to a movement that combined demands for labor rights and curbs on corporate power with the period's exclusionary hostility toward Chinese workers—a contradiction that also appears explicitly in “Lecher Baldwin.”

Stage III | Los Angeles labor politics and late poetry, 1878–1909

In Los Angeles Kinley joined political, literary, scientific, and historical work. He became the second president of the Historical Society of Southern California in 1886. His inaugural address urged systematic research into regional history, ethnology, Indigenous languages, and the natural sciences, while his paper “North American Lakes” appeared in the same issue of the society’s journal. On April 16, 1886, he privately published *Labor Rhymes*. Its eight poems move from the long egalitarian prophecy of “The Dawning Day” to fraternal songs, attacks on monopoly and avarice, transatlantic republican solidarity, and the ethic of persistent work. Kinley was not writing about labor from outside it: the book extends the politics of the *Star*, *The Slogan*, his Greenback campaigns, and a lifetime of antislavery and educational reform into a deliberately public poetic voice.

Kinley continued to write in old age. Benjamin S. Parker’s sketch for the 1889 Western Association of Writers convention printed “Voices of Angels,” a retrospective poem that turns education, nature, aspiration, and song into messages heard across an entire life. George S. Cottman’s *Poets and Poetry of Indiana* included “Karma” in 1894 and described Kinley as a reform poet then living at Sunland near Los Angeles. His old wound increasingly disabled him, and comrades in Bartlett Logan Post of the Grand Army of the Republic unsuccessfully sought a more adequate federal pension for him. Kinley nevertheless remained mentally alert. He died at his daughter’s Los Angeles home on January 15, 1909, after several years as an invalid. His funeral was held three days later at Dexter-Samson Chapel under the auspices of his G.A.R. post. The local press remembered the last survivor of Indiana’s constitutional convention; *Labor Rhymes* preserves the more combative identity behind that civic obituary—a poet who believed that knowledge, organization, and labor could make equality real.

Editorial Note

Texts, lineation, and sources

The copy-text for the eight poems and Kinley's introduction is the University of California copy of *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles, 1886), digitized by the Internet Archive and HathiTrust. The old six-page local reader contains only "Lecher Baldwin" and "Work On, Hope Ever" and was not used as authority. "Voices of Angels" is transcribed from the 1889 Western Association of Writers souvenir; "Karma" is transcribed from *Poets and Poetry of Indiana*.

The 1886 book uses deliberate alternating insets in many four-line stanzas and a deeper refrain indent in "Work On, Hope Ever"; those patterns are preserved. The five-line stanzas of "The Better for the Doing" and the later poems were centered as display blocks in their sources, so their changing left edges are not treated as authorial indentation. The line broken as "riv- / ers" in the narrow Astræa epigraph has been rejoined.

Obvious scanning damage and OCR intrusions have been removed. Three obscured readings—"justice," "eye," and "coffers"—were resolved from the page images and surrounding syntax. Kinley's spellings and grammatical peculiarities, including "milennial," "Inda," "for ever," and "be of thee require," remain as printed. The title "I Forgive," praised in an 1871 county history, has not been recovered and is not reconstructed here.

Labor Rhymes

Stage III | The complete 1886 collection

Los Angeles, April 16, 1886. Epigraph by Benjamin S. Parker: “Upward still, in mighty cycles, / Slowly moves the multitude, / To the final culmination, / Each man’s right is all men’s good.”

Introduction

In giving these little poems to the public, I am not foolish enough to pretend indifference to their reception.

“O wad some power the giftie gie us” to look on the bairns of our brains with the eye of the unbiased critic. Not only “It wad frae monie a faut and blunder free us,” but save our friends, too, from the infliction of many a foolish book—perhaps mine.

I. K.

The Dawning Day

*O! There be hearts that ache to see
The day-dawn of our victory:
Eyes full of heart-break with us plead,
And watchers weep and martyrs bleed:
O! Who would not a champion be
In Labor's lordlier chivalry?*

*Work, brothers mine; work hand and brain;
We'll win the golden age again:
And love's millennial morn shall rise
In happy hearts and blessed eyes.
Hurrah! Hurrah! True knights are we
In Labor's lordlier chivalry.*

Gerald Massey

I sing the dawning of a brightness
Falling on a sleeping world:
Behold upon the eastern mountain,
Bright the flag of morn unfurled.

I sing of light dispelling darkness—
Light dispelling fog and mist;
I sing the splendors and the glories
Of our earth by day-beams kissed.

I sing the earth, an orb of beauty
Fair reposing in the day;
With all its darkness and its coldness
Driven by the light away.

I sing its valleys and its mountains,
And its food-producing soil;
I sing its cities and its hamlets
Built by the hand of toil.

I sing of man and sister woman,
Freed alike from woe and thrall;
For day that in the east is dawning
Shines with equal light for all.

I sing the time of peace and plenty—
All mankind a brotherhood—

No mad ambition war is waging—
Fields of carnage dyed in blood.

Brighter shine the dawning glories
Of this welcome, breaking day;
How rejoice the toiling millions
As the clouds and mist give way!

Alike for all this day resplendent
Shall on land and ocean glow;
And man himself grow truer, nobler,
For the light his eyes shall know.

Not for the few shall then the many
Drudge, and trudge, and sweat, and moil,
And of the wealth produced by labor
None shall rob them or despoil.

The earth shall man's be in its fulness,
They shall reap alone who sow,
Nor shall they—the toiling millions—
Hunger in their homes of woe.

Fair Nature spreads her shining treasures—
Light and air and sea and soil—
And comes she with her crown of glory,
Binds it on the brow of toil.

No more shall labor crouch a craven,
Begging for the freeman's right;
But bravely facing unto all men
Take its own by right and might.

For Right and Might shall stand together
Married, and the twain be one,
And Right give Might a constant blessing
For each noble deed that's done.

For on the side of Right shall numbers
Bravely stand in field or fray;
And from before their forward marching
Shall the hosts of Wrong give way.

United at the public ballot

They shall speak with freedom's voice,
And after, with the will of freemen,
Execute the freemen's choice.

And knowledge then shall come with blessing,
Labor learn to think and know;
The soul exalted by this knowing
Into higher beauty grow.

Taught in school of hard endeavor,
Toiling hand and thinking brain,
Shall toilers learn from wrongs they've suffered—
Know their rights and dare maintain.

Then shall the workers be the thinkers,
Workers be the ones of worth,
And plenteous fall in lap of labor
Choicest blessings of the earth.

No more shall Labor then be crouching,
Begging for permit to toil;
But Labor be its own employer,
Labor own the sea and soil.

No more shall crime be running riot,
Mad and drunk with lust and sin;
But crime that's lawful or unlawful
Known shall be as things that's been.

And looking forward through the vista
To the speedy coming time,
No pen shall lend its storied pages
To ennoble sin and crime.

No inhuman, human butcher,
Blood-stained fiend of Macedon,
Shall loud be praised in song or story
For crimes untold and realms undone.

No more shall man delight in slaughter,
Nor honored be for blood he's spilt;
No more shall honors due to virtue
Guerdon be that's paid to guilt.

No more shall greatness be in granite—
Polished pile on pile that's laid—
But wealth that's been from labor plundered,
Back returned to those who made.

No more be seen the reeling, drunken,
Hideous making day and night;
No more the greedy sons of Mammon
Curse the earth with sin and blight.

And no more man shall wrong his neighbor,
Kneeling base at shrine of Hate;
Sweet Charity the soul elating
Good for evil compensate.

And everywhere shall honest Labor
Learn to work with manly pride;
And all the earth with plenty filling,
Love and joy be multiplied.

Whate'er of good in age called golden,
Whate'er of beauty poets sing,
Yet more than these, with all their blessings,
Shall the day that's dawning bring.

Then honored be, shall all who labor—
All who toil with head or hand—
And proud shall Labor's sons and daughters
Equal with the highest stand.

See yonder rise the gorgeous palace,
Of the millions the despoil;
One night within its halls carousing
Costs ten thousand days of toil.

See! round about it are the hungry,
Want and woe and wan despair,
What for the weeping and the wailing
Cares the beast that burrows there?

In all the land the toiling, plundered—
Victims of his lust and greed—
From early dawn till night they're toiling
This remorseless wolf to feed.

Not always thus shall be the noble
 Toiling bondsmen to the base;
Not always thus this bestial gorging
 In the life-blood of the race.

Look to the east—the day is dawning—
 Grandly comes the Orient glow;
If thus 'tis beauteous in its twilight,
 What joy the day's full tide to know!

The earth itself shall put on brightness,
 Brighter be the land and main;
And wilderness and desert blooming
 Guerdon be of brawn and brain.

And fairer then shall bloom the garden,
 Sweeter fruits the orchard yield;
And for this dawning, greater harvests
 Come from off the well-tilled field.

About you look and see the glories
 Labor from the earth has won;
Of truth I know that Labor's holy,
 Noble each good deed that's done.

Henceforth, when rise the stately mansions,
 None shall be the price of sin;
But honest work of honest workers—
 Those who build shall enter in.

And brighter still shall come the dawning—
 It shall come the perfect day—
See! Higher waves the flag of morning,
 Brighter are the beams that play.

'Twill be a time of toil and struggle;
 But of toil unmixed with strife;
And from the toiling and the struggling
 All shall grow to higher life.

The noble acts of self-denial,
 Generous deeds for others done—
To house of woe to carry blessings—

These the proudest laurels won.

Then each shall find his bliss the greater
For the blessing that he gives;
And man himself shall grow the nobler
For the noble life he lives.

Oh! Would you hasten on the coming
Of this bright and beauteous day,
Would you lift your brother, sister,
Up from out the mire and clay?

If you would mould them to the beauty
Which their constant souls aspire,
If you would snatch them from the burning,
Out from the consuming fire;

Then forward is the place of duty;
Stand a hero at the front,
And bravely in the hour of struggle,
Of its dangers bear the brunt.

And should you find your brothers, sisters,
Tired and fainting on the road,
Aweary of the toilsome journey,
Weary of the heavy load,

Reach out to them the hand of helping,
Speak unto them words of cheer,
And point them to the light that's dawning
With its glories coming near.

For we should learn to aid each other
In the turmoil and the strife—
Should learn to bear each other's burdens
On the toilsome march of life.

Should learn to bear life's burdens equal,
Not to shrink from touch of toil,
And gather of the fruits of labor
From the air and sea and soil.

Or should you find your brother, sister,
Erring on life's downward way,

Point them to the beauteous dawning
Gorgeous with the coming day.

'Tis yours to teach of virtue, duty,
Teach of peace, and love, and truth;
To teach of upright men and women,
Teach of pure and stainless youth.

For in this time of dawning brightness
Sin and shame shall flee away,
And love, and peace, and truth, and beauty,
Grandly glorify the day.

For God will bless the hand of toiling,
God will bless the soul that's true;
Then faithful in the work we're doing
Let us walk our journey through.

We dare not silence thoughts we cherish—
Virtue, beauty, truth and good—
Though we should find that the baptismal
Font should be a font of blood.

'Tis thus the day I sing is dawning,—
With each truth that's bravely told,
Still come the day-beams brighter, brighter,
Bringing blessings manifold.

And in this day we'll walk together,
Walk with Truth alone our guide;
And in our better, nobler living,
Be the All-Father glorified.

Publication. *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1886), pp. 7–17.

Good Night

Good night, good night: each mutual friend,
The members of our faithful band,
Our blessings, each with each, we send,
As give we each the parting hand.

On what is good we'll ponder well,
Of all we've seen and heard to-night;
And bound in Friendship's holy spell,
We'll drink its cup of sweet delight.

We'll keep our pledges faithful, true,
And help along the generous plan;
We'll honest be in all we do
And "help each other all we can."

Nor shall we stop and idly wait
For chance to do a noble deed;
No grudging hand shall hesitate
When brothers, sisters are in need.

Nor shall we hide our light within
Our toiling, faithful, noble band,
But others to our order win
And spread its blessings through the land.

And upward shall our souls aspire
Unto the purer, nobler love;
And kindle in our souls the fire
Whose light is of the Light above.

Good night, good night; each mutual friend,
The members of our faithful band;
Our blessings, each with each, we send,
As give we each the parting hand.

Publication. *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1886), pp. 18–19.

Astræa

*When hard-hearted Interest first began
To poison Earth, Astræa left the plain;
Guile, violence and murder seized on man,
And for soft, milky streams, in blood the rivers ran.*

Thompson

Oh! Why should tears of sadness fall,
And sorrow's mourning shroud the heart?
Why Avarice spread his deathful pall,
And make for gold fair Truth a mart?

The heavens spread their lights on high,
Our earth's aglow with loveliness;
Then why not beaming from the eye,
And brother's love a brother bless?

It e'en was so in times of eld,
In fair Astræa's golden reign;
Then man each man a brother held,
And face that smiled met smile again.

Then virtue reigned, each mutual face,
As joy it met did joy impart;
The bliss of each to each we trace,
As heart in kindness spoke to heart.

Ah! Sweet it was, I ween, to see
The peace and love that friends endear;
The look, the deed of charity—
The mutual smile, the mutual tear.

Then speech was truth, and guileless thought,
And none fair Truth did false construe;
Hypocrisy there then was nought,
And love, oh bliss! on earth was true.

Ne tongue of slander then assailed
With poisonous breath a brother's fame;
If meed of praise for one prevailed,
The rival generous owned the flame.

Ne children dug beneath the soil,

Nor famished mother starved for bread;
Ne stalwart brother begged to toil,
Nor martyrs then for justice bled.

And in the early, primal day,
No need the justice courts impart;
No need of legal rules the sway,
For thine, O virtue! was the heart.

The bounteous Earth in vernal climes,
O man, her plenty spread for thee;
Ah! Woe it is in latter times,
We moil and hunger, thirst and dree.

Astræa, woe it is, thy reign
Should lose o'er earth and man its sway;
Wilt ne'er resume thy rule again,
Of peace to glad this latter day?

We ne'er may drink the cup of life
Filled up with sweetness to the brim,
While peace on earth gives place to strife,
And lust for gold the heart doth dim.

While man and woman slavish toil
That they may reap who do not sow,
Must sweat of labor curse the soil
On which sustaining food must grow.

I pour my scorn, I set my foot
Upon the low-born lust for gold—
It drags to earth the aspiring thought,
It drags to hell the aspiring soul.

I would not have within my breast
The soul corrupt the miser feels,
For all the wealth of Inda blest,
For all the mines this earth conceals.

I would not yield the free-born will
And bow to lustful Mammon's spell,
For all the wealth the coffers fill
Of all the millionaires of hell.

For what's the gewgaw, glittering gold,
That man should sell his soul to buy?
Exchange the soul, of worth untold,
For dust that in the earth doth lie.

With groveling thoughts, hell-born he digs,
In hell-born thoughts his being lives;
With baseness, falsehood, low intrigues,
The miser for his treasure strives.

Ah! what to him that brother bleeds,
Or widow's aching heart is wrung?
Ah! what to him are ruthless deeds
Of bloody crime or perjured tongue?

Ah! what to him that tyrant wields
The lash upon the toiling slave,
If but the grudging cotton-fields
The lucre yield his soul doth crave?

Ah! what to him that virgins sell
Their virgin fame for sister's bread?
Ah! what to him but nought? Till hell
Shall yield its damned dead,

Shall he ne'er feel for others' woe,
Nor warm his heart with pity's ruth;
Nor shall his rayless soul e'er know
The bliss affliction's sigh to soothe.

Oh! when shall earth the brightness see,
It saw in early primal day?
Oh! when shall gladness fill the eye
And Love on earth regain its sway?

Not while the soul can worship dust,
Or wealth with blood its coffers fill;
Not while the low-born, sensual lust
Shall spread o'er earth its cankering ill.

Not while the base-born lust of gold
Shall reason hold subordinate;
And pure emotions of the soul
By passions low be subjugate.

A fairer day shall come I trow,
 Its light shall fall on land and main:
When none shall reap who do not sow,
 And peace on earth resume her reign.

I give, Astræa, homage thee,
 My dreams have oft thy light beheld—
Oh! Shall our earth again e'er see
 The happy days, the days of old?

Publication. *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1886), pp. 20–24. An earlier version was known in Henry County by 1871, but no earlier copy has been recovered.

America to Europe

Hail! Ye friends beyond the waters,
 Struggling for dear Freedom's right;
Take our hand—all men are brothers—
 More we pledge you, freemen's might.

Bear aloft your freeman's banner,
 To the eyes of toil unfurled:
Blazon there the noble motto:
 RIGHT AND FREEDOM FOR THE WORLD.

Never more to priest or despot
 Man shall crouch a creeping slave;
Proudly shall he live a freeman,
 Dying fill a freeman's grave.

Bowing meekly to the tyrant
 Only makes his chains more tight;
Never can to masters fawning
 Gain for slave the freeman's right.

Rally 'round your chosen leaders,
 Strive with sword, and tongue, and pen—
This shall be your gathering slogan:
 DOWN WITH TYRANTS, UP WITH MEN.

Tell oppressors, tell them boldly,
 Freedom's sword that's now unsheathed
Never more shall know its scabbard
 While God's air by slave is breathed.

Tell the tyrants, tell them truly,
 Freedom's banner now unfurled
Goes from conquest on to conquer,
 Proudly waving 'round the world.

Tell the despots—make them hear you—
 Rights belong to all alike;
For the wrongs that they have done you,
 You've the power and will to strike.

By the exiles and their sorrows,

By the tears of loved ones shed,
By the blood of freedom's martyrs,
They shall bleed for those who've bled.

Not in anger, but in sorrow,
Hold we out the bitter cup—
Wrong must needs find retribution—
They must drink and drink it up.

Truth once spoken's truth for ever,
Victor battling with the lie;
Right of all to equal freedom
Not can earth nor hell deny.

Forward is the marching order,
Wrong and falsehood must give way;
As the sun at break of morning
Brings triumphant perfect day.

Ask ye not if slavery's hoary,
Ask not who his minions be;
Truth shall be protecting Ægis—
Bravely strike ye for the free.

For your help at our young struggle
When fair Freedom's war was won,
Glow the spirit of the father
Grateful living in the son.

For the ties of blood that bind us,
For the kin of blood we trace,
For the blood in veins of all men,
Here's for freedom and the race.

Hail, ye brothers! Hail, ye sisters!
Struggling for dear Freedom's right!
Take our hand—all men are brothers—
More we pledge you—FREEMEN'S MIGHT.

Publication. *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1886), pp. 25–27.

You and I

God has robbed the world in beauty,
 Robed the land, the sea, the sky;
Bound are we in love and duty—
 You and I, you and I.

God commands to love each other
 As our work we daily ply;
Here's my hand, my sister, brother—
 You and I, you and I.

We shall live and toil together,
 And our daily wants supply;
But we'll spurn the lightest tether—
 You and I, you and I.

Freedom's banner, all-enfolding,
 Freedom's rights to glorify,
Hold we up to all beholding—
 You and I, you and I.

Blessed is the lot of labor
 When its strokes in love we ply;
Each is every other's neighbor—
 You and I, you and I.

Publication. *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1886), pp. 28–29.

Lecher Baldwin

It may be asked why this poem is found among "Labor Rhymes." The subject of it, in addition to his beastliness, is the employer of three hundred coolies. It is well that other monopolists know in whose company they muster. Besides, I think it better in morals as well as in manliness, to publish while its author may be made responsible, than to leave it to be some time hence given out posthumously.

My curse upon thee, "Lucky" man—
Thy crime too foul for tongue to name;
For ever be thou under ban,
The deep damnation of thy shame.

Right glad we seek in vain to find,
In human story, thing so base—
Thou miscreate that mocks our kind
With biped semblance of the race!

I've named thee man; thou art not such;
'Twould libel beasts to call thee beast;
The reptiles vile in filth that slutch,
Would nauseate turn from thy foul feast.

Of all the things that creep or crawl
Upon their bellies on the earth—
Of vipers, scorpions, adders all—
Thou art than they of lower worth.

Our mother tongue has never heard
For thing so foul as thee a name;
Let Lecher Baldwin be that word
To synonym thy crime and shame.

'Tis Lecher Baldwin, while there lives
On earth, as thou, so foul a blot;
When none of thee or thine survives,
Be it and thou alike forgot.

I pity thee, poor miscreate
With soul so shriveled, dwarfed and vile,
So low that no thing animate
Can touch thy hand without defile.

As man, henceforth, we know thee not,
 Go wallow in thy slimy den;
As lecher vile, thou art boycott
 In all the walks and ways of men.

For all thy foul, unnaméd crimes,
 For all thy words and ways obscene,
As lepers were in olden times,
 We bid, begone! Unclean! Unclean!

Thou worst abort of woman born,
 Henceforth a by-word and a hiss;
The cat-o'-nine-tails of our scorn
 Shall be thy 'venging Nemesis.

Publication. *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1886), pp. 30–32. Kinley's prefatory note is retained with the poem.

Work On, Hope Ever

A bright day is coming
 In sunshine and beauty—
The day for the toiling
To bless them forever.
When honor shall come as
 The guerdon of duty—
 Work on, hope ever.

But let not your thoughts be
 An idle bewailing—
A fruitless imploring
Your fetters to sever;
But stand ye for freedom
 With spirit unquailing—
 Work on, hope ever.

For never can conquer
 The Right, but by trying—
Unyielding must be our
Unchanging endeavor:
The truth be proclaiming
 And error defying—
 Work on, hope ever.

For not can conviction
 Be carried by pleading—
Nor stony hearts melted
When wooed as a lover—
Come on in your numbers
 Where Honor is leading—
 Work on, hope ever.

The day that is coming
 Is glory to labor,
With justice unswerving
A ruler for ever,
When kindness and love shall
 Own each as a neighbor—
 Work on, hope ever.

The flag of the fathers
 Shall wave in its glory,
And freedom be real—
A blessing for ever—
And all shall rejoice as
 They're learning the story—
 Work on, hope ever.

Publication. *Labor Rhymes* (Los Angeles: privately printed, 1886), pp. 33–34.

The Better for the Doing

*Droop not! though shame, sin and anguish are round thee!
Bravely fling off the cold chain that hath bound thee!
Look to the pure heaven smiling beyond thee!
Rest not content in thy darkness—a clod!
Work for some good, be it ever so slowly!
Cherish some flower, be it ever so lowly!
Labor! all labor is noble and holy!
Let thy great deed be thy prayer to thy God!*

Francis S. Osgood

Through the dim twilight of the ages—
From cycles, long ago, of time—
Still come the voices of the sages;
And written on historic pages
Are names of men of deed sublime.

The world doth joy, the world doth glory
In its great names of long ago—
The demigods of ancient story,
Who waked mankind from sin and woe—
Whose deeds it is our school to know.

Arouse thee, O my laggard spirit,
Let deed of greatness then be thine,
And bless the world that shall inherit
Thy name, thy fame, thy great design
In word, or deed, or living line.

If on thy name wouldst have no blackness,
No spot of foulness mar thy fame,
Then in thy work must be no slackness;
Thy soul must glow, a living flame,
Undimmed by aught of sin or shame.

Think'st thou there is no living Hydra?
No monster in thy path to-day?
Ah! cleanse thou yon Augean stable,
And yon Procrustean tyrant slay—
Where all must walk, make clear the way.

Seest Mammon's sons at their devotions?
Before their sordid god they fall;

They know not pity's pure emotions,
Nor thought above the things that crawl—
But human reptiles are they all.

Seest thou the wrong vile Mammon's doing—
Debasing Labor to a slave—
The work the fathers did undoing—
Despoiling all the gifts they gave,
And dragging Freedom to the grave?

Throughout the years have maundered, driveled
These Mammon's greedy devotees—
These sightless souls so dwarfed and shriveled—
Like things called animalcules
That eye microscopic sees.

See yonder banner won by freemen—
Shall it o'er aught than freemen wave?
Shall pale its stars in sight of heaven?
Wilt spurn the gifts the fathers gave
And own thyself a cringing slave?

Or wilt thou yield, a crawling, creeping—
A craven, over-burdened drudge?
Is this the harvest for our reaping?
Know, who for masters willing trudge
Shall wallow in the dirt and sludge.

Strike down the power all enslaving,
Hold up the banner of the free,
O'er land of Freedom proudly waving;
And Freedom's land it e'er shall be,
Where none to tyrant bows the knee.

What is the reason—dost thou ask me,
O laggard spirit of my life,
Why to thy utmost strength I task thee—
Why struggle in the scenes of strife,
With turmoil, toil and danger rife?

I answer that thou art a human
With soul to dare and hand to do;
For who aspires to be a true man,
Must labor on his journey through

And bid to ease and sloth adieu.

Thou might'st beneath the weeping willow
On flowery beds of ease recline,
And idly dream upon thy pillow
Of goblets red with flowing wine—
Thy hours to useless ease resign.

Thou might'st, I grant, with little labor,
Contrive to know what others know,
As wise become as is thy neighbor,
And do, perchance, as others do!
With idlesse all the journey through.

Doth love of man or hope of heaven
My laggard spirit e'er inspire?
For every talent God has given,
Know, ten will be of thee require,
All cleansed and purified by fire.

'Tis work that strength the toiler gives,
For all he does, he gains the more;
And struggling on each day he lives
Is better for the day before,
And wiser for its garnered lore.

It is the law of human growing,
We stronger are for what we do;
And whether brain or brawn bestowing,
The power that's spent doth power renew—
We truer grow for being true.

From day to day the strength grows stronger,
Is greatened by the work that's done,
And life itself, protracted longer,
Is youthful to its setting sun,
And cheerful for its triumphs won.

The sailor on the wide, wild ocean,
As oft by storm-fiend haply spared—
The soldier used to war's commotion,
Who fields of death has bravely shared,
More daring is for dangers dared.

And he who watches the careering
Of planets through the realms on high,
But sees the farther for this peering
Of his heaven-searching eye,
To solve the problems of the sky.

The mind is greated by its thinking,
With better fiber builds the brain;
The thought-pulse quickens by this linking
Of truth to truth, an endless chain
Uniting Reason's wide domain.

And so is, too, the power of loving—
We better love for love we bear,
And every deed of heart-felt kindness
But lifts us up where angels are,
The sweetness of their peace to share.

If in each work that's worth the doing,
To well do be the golden rule,
In the vocation we're pursuing,
We'll find life's labor is a school—
To higher life the vestibule.

And praising God for work that's given
From morning dawn to set of sun,
The stronger be that we have striven,
The better for the work that's done
And greater for the glories won.

All noble thought and noble feeling
Must ever make the soul more pure,
And each day's toil the truth's revealing
That God doth bless the noble doer
And on to greater works allure.

Then hail! my brother! hail! my sister!
Toiling on life's rugged way;
For ye shall reap in the hereafter
Rich blessings for the toils to-day.

Later Poetry

Stage III | Indiana anthology and association publications, 1889–1894

Voices of Angels

In the night time and the silence,
In life's springtime, long ago,
Came the voices of the angels,
Speaking softly, speaking low.

And the words the voices whispered,
In the silence sounding clear,
Sweeter than the harp Æolian,
Fell as music on the ear.

And they told me of the beauty
Of a life of love and truth,
Told me of the way up higher,—
Warned against the snares of youth.

All along the toilsome journey,
To my life's declining day,
Softly whispered, have the voices,
Tidings of the better way.

Fired my soul with aspiration
For the beautiful and true,
Warned against the hidden pitfalls
Lying on the journey through.

Filled my soul with love for knowing,
Thrilled me with the voice of song—
Everything its joys bestowing,
As I walked the way along.

Taught the language of all nature—
Lovely flower and stately tree,
Hill and dale, and rugged mountain,
Fount and stream, and raging sea;

Taught the earth, the orbs of heaven,
Floating in the sea of blue;
Oh, they have their angel voices
That our God is speaking through!

Publication. *W.A.W.: Souvenir of the Fourth Annual Convention at Warsaw, Indiana* (Warsaw, Indiana, 1889), p. 195; printed within Benjamin S. Parker's biographical sketch of Kinley.

Karma

'T is what there is in nature wrought;
'T is what our own deep thinking brings;
'T is the consistency of thought,
And the consistency of things.

Of what of earth-life that we know;
Of things of good or ill repute,
Of all there be of high or low,
It is the blossom and the fruit.

The wind that bloweth where it lists,
The ocean with its ceaseless roll;
What contradicts and what consists;
'T is the beginning and the goal.

'T is cause and sequence,—endless chain;—
A river with a ceaseless flow;—
'T is life and death, 't is brawn and brain;
'T is all we feel and all we know.

Publication. *Poets and Poetry of Indiana*, edited by George S. Cottman (Indianapolis: J. W. Meeker, 1894), p. 330.

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Indiana Constitutional Convention and state-senate records; local scans archived with this edition.

Colophon

Production record

This critical reader's edition was prepared for *Extremes and Moderations: Early Southern California Poetry*. It is set in EB Garamond at six by nine inches. The cover uses unlettered artwork supplied by Brian Kim Stefans, cropped for the Green-system art panel and reset with live series typography.

The poetry was transcribed and collated against the complete 1886 book scan, the 1889 Western Association of Writers souvenir, and the 1894 *Poets and Poetry of Indiana*. The portrait, title page, primary scans, newspaper clippings, downloaded histories, and research notes are archived with the production files.