

W O R M - W O R M *

"To Peter, in a dream entrusted,
 A voice from Heaven descending said—
 "Make nothing common that hath descended,
 The great wisdom what God hath made,"
 And thence from Heaven a sound came,
 Appearing like a quivering sheet,
 With hoarse and hoarse and croaking things;
 And thence the voice, "Him, kill and eat."
 The Gentle man, the Apostle learned
 To hold as prodigy as the Jews,
 And, thus addressed, with soul he burns
 To preach to all the glorious Jews.
 Oh! God, in Christ, well pleased with men,
 And pass on earth to all mankind!
 And every Christian man, above them,
 Sing out the message in the wind.
 Which, we find on to Christian faith,
 Brings gladness to the utmost Jew,
 As Christian. Peace distating stands,
 And hidings down the word enters—
 Then Jew and Gentile, in God's love,
 Have equal rights; and, brother still,
 To earth beneath, and Heaven above,
 God's Christmas greeting is good-will.
 And whence came the Apostle's word,
 By that strange voice so strangely given,
 Believers, and venture forth to read
 God's love and hope in earth and Heaven.
 Her veteran Darwin, man of faith,
 With all the still experience brings,
 Shows down to obtain the note
 Of hoarse, and hoarse, and croaking things.
 As systems were may wear the mark
 Of Fatherhood and waiting years,
 A Darwin's eye alone can mark
 The things of the common years.
 To life to teach our common age,
 And, Darwin, all the world to look
 On many an old worn system page,
 Unread before, in Nature's book.
 And wondering much we hear him tell
 Of collisions with the worms have done,
 As mightier ones rise and fall,
 And countless years have come and gone.
 Enough their slow and silent power
 The strongest herbs have rotted down;
 The walls keep, the hoarse tower,
 The Roman wall, the ancient tower,
 The harvesting men has worn away;
 And works that time would not have spared,
 The worms have rotted from decay,
 Embracing them with kind regard.
 And worms, in time, will work their will,
 In darkness and by slow degree,
 Till 'swept cliffs and heavy hills
 Are crumbled in the tumbling sea.
 Though rarely for the present known,
 In cloud-wrapped ages hid from view;
 Through worm-wrought change the morning comes,
 When all creation is made new.
 A countless host, they tend the earth,
 And call her fumes back again.

As every lusty year takes birth
 And plenty covers the laughing plain,
 Back each worth the weight in gold,
 A million men of busy lives
 Press and to where the rich earth mould,
 And that by them the masses driven.
 Ah! little note the hoarsest herd
 How little all his hands were worth,
 If he alone had fed and heard,
 And common worms no rights in earth.
 Now think the farmer as he sows,
 And ponder *vis dependentis* day,
 Or ponder his procedure with
 With rotter crops the seed he sows,
 How he himself, without a thought,
 Compensates many a tenant worm
 For all the improvements it has wrought
 In drains and crops on his farm.
 By creating it beneath the soil,
 Which every day it tilts and drowns,
 The common—after all our toil—
 We're saved by those whom we have loathed.
 As 'tis obvious, the earth we tread
 Enriched with dirt, or drossed in gold;
 But, worm-like, when our days are sped
 We leave in our own earth mould.
 But by the Book of Life we come,
 Which says a sinner with the worms
 Is counted, that we may prepare
 To live in more advanced forms,
 And work that through the passages,
 Unhindered from the life of God,
 Will find a message better,
 The kindly worm that never dies.
 In Eden worms their work began,
 And worms their work will not have done
 Till Eden is won back to man,
 And man to Eden back is won.
 Thus, where Darwin, have we found
 That earth and Heaven together meet;
 That God works often under ground,
 And glory lies beneath our feet.
 No fatal glasses of transient grace
 Allowest the world at random view—
 The light of love, for every place,
 Makes away from life's divine.
 The mightiest powers are often hid,
 The strongest voices small and still;
 The glances of an accident
 Obtrude more than many a noisy will.
 A worm, a Christian, or a Jew—
 In this great world there's work for each,
 And only they whose work is true
 The higher life may hope to reach.
 Look not thy first sight, brother man,
 In hidden truth o'er Britain's fens,
 For God and right in all you see,
 Or yield the crown to common worms.
 Darwin, Dec. 28, 1881. K.

* A review, in shape, of Darwin's recent work on "The Formation of Vegetable Mould and the Habits of Earth-Worms."