

Before Sleep.

How better, Father, could we pray
Than thus at end of honest day,
Naked at heart, without pretence,
Secure in simple excellence,
A wife and husband hand in hand
At prayers among the sleeping band
Of angels whom Thy love hath lent
To bind our household sacrament?

When better, Father, could we ask
Thy care than after righteous task,
The need well met, the dream refused,
The oil not spilled, the clean lamp
used?

Two grey-haired children kneel to Thee
In suit for fresh felicity,
Whose married worship to Thine ear,
Allowed, parental, rises clear.

Nor wealth, nor place as gifts Divine
I ask to fall on sours of mine;
But, most of all, a nature sure
To share the heart with rich and poor.
O give them tears! O make them feel
An inward energy to heal,
That never, full of frosty pride,
They pass upon the other side.

Behold these children, Father, God,
Their strip of life so briefly trod;
Their hearts unshaded by the gloom,
Their eyes scarce looking past a bloom.
To act as ministers in these
Implant such holy qualities
That they may march with love unspent,
And in Thy discipline content.

NORMAN GALE.