

THE IDEALIST

BY ALICE A. KEEN

There lived a man who trusted 'neath God's rood
That every evil must succumb to good.
He thought, because he wished that this might be,
That evil could be slain—the world set free.
His soul with love o'erflowed. He kept apart:
Supreme to him the God within his heart.
His lofty soul, from passion's sway had sought
To free the world. Alas—they heeded not;
And even while his soul in anguish strove
The sounds of war o'erwhelmed his dream of love.

Hate stalked the earth with ruthless, bloody tread,
Strewed land and sea with sorrow and the dead!
All laws of God and man were set at naught—
Undreamed-of, cruel wrongs were foully wrought!
Such powers of evil Satan flung abroad,
Men, hopeless, cried despairing, "Where is God?"

Confused, appalled, the man of tender will,
Now torn by doubt and stress of soul, fell ill.
With fevered mind and stricken form he lay;
Unfettered, then, his spirit went its way.
Straight as the flight of homing birds set free,
Back in the place of souls it sought the key.

(While reason sleeps, the spirit finds reprieve
From fleshly bonds that human minds deceive.)

He brought no memory from that spirit sphere
And yet he had emerged from doubt and fear.
Far vision deepened in his eyes once blind;
New thoughts, like cleansing winds, rushed through his mind.

"Is this the truth?" he cried. "What power hath brought
The light my groping mind so long had sought?
The Law of Stress! I see through Nature's course,
For every force is set a contra-force.
Two forces, equal, yield stability—
Balanced powers, trembling to be free.

And so with man—his struggling, outward life
Is but a symbol of his inner strife—
Angels and demons prisoned in his soul,
Ever battling for supreme control.
The law is God's and naught can separate
From stress, man's will to love, his impulse to hate.
Ah! Now—with far-fixed eyes at last I see
The truth—Forever, hate with love must be!