

SONGS
OF THE
HENNEY TIMES

Songs of the Times

by

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THE MOTORMAN

I.

"Clang, Cling Clang, Cling Clang,"

Thus the trolley signal rang
Through the busy street,
Warning hurrying feet,
Automobile, serious horse
And carriage in their devious course,
Bicycle and laden dray,
To clear the way
For the common people's car,
Shuttling near and rolling far
On the people's errands bent,
To the people's service lent.

II.

One

On the platform stands alone,
Powers of lightning in his grip,
Hands that never fail nor slip

SONGS OF THE TIMES

From the levers, holding there
Subject to his will the car:
Faithful hands and eyes that gaze
Straight ahead through busy ways,
Striving ever safe to win
Through the City's press and din,
Brave, collected, quick and strong
Guiding through the hurrying throng
Precious freight of life and limb;
Great the trust reposed in him,
Wayfarer and Passenger
Debtors to his skill and care.

III.

What of him, this common friend,
When his years of toiling end?
Marked for swift dismissal by
His trembling hand and dimming eye,
This the guerdon, this the price
Of unmeasured sacrifice,
This the recompense, at last,
For the years in service passed,
Thrown aside as worthless, hurled
To the scrap-heap of the world.

THE MOTORMAN

IV.

What a world of contrasts, ours!
Here the incense breathing flowers,
There the venomed plant whose breath
Fills the air around with death;
Here the crystal brook is sped
Gushing from the fountain head,
There the angry torrent roars
In its desolating course,
Leaps its bounds and spreads amain
Over fields of ripening grain,
Ruthless in its foaming wrath,
Fell destruction in its path;
Here the plumaged warblers sing
Welcome to returning spring,
Bird and brook and flower and tree
Voicing nature's rhapsody;
There the wild blast tosses high
The naked branch against the sky,
Fierce the icy tempests blow
Piling high the drifted snow;
Here the yellow sunbeams chase
The shadow round the dial's face,
There the moon flings far and free
Her shining pathway on the sea,
And the star-beam, cold and bright
Shimmers down the azure night.

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V.

Greater contrasts far than these
In the birds, the brooks, the trees,
Winter's snow and summer's bloom
Sunbeam's glory, midnight's gloom,
Shall the eye observant ken
In the seething hearts of men,
Love and hate and fierce desire,
Cold despair and passion's fire;
Here, the virtues fair abide
Nurtured at the fireside,
Lo! in shining troops they come,
Gladdening the hearth and home:
There the vices rule the hour,
Greed of gain and lust of power,
Anger rushing to fulfill
Dictates of the selfish will,
Vengeance burning to requite,
Fierce to seize and swift to smite,
Grasping avarice, strong to hold
Lands and treasures manifold,
Such a weird world round thee scan,
Philosophic motorman.

VI.

Stranger things than these behold
In the magic power of gold.

THE MOTORMAN

See the ruffian lifted high,
While to laud and magnify
Suppliant crowds his steps attend,
Potentates before him bend,
Grasping in his greedy hands
Fruit of toil from many lands,
Serving none beyond himself
In his mania for pelf.
See, again, in lowly lot,
By the eager world forgot,
Him who gives in humble place
Priceless service to his race.
From thy toil what blessings flow;
Commerce thrives and cities grow,
Store and factory and mart,
Skilfull trade and useful art,
Flourish where thy swift car speeds,
Serving ever newer needs,
These their tale of progress tell
In the clanging of thy bell.

VII.

Sound the signal, speed the car,
Shuttling near or rolling far,
Linking city, field and wood
In one grateful servitude

SONGS OF THE TIMES

To expanding human need;
Mart of trade and flowery mead,
Crowded square and level green,
Park and Lake and Sylvan Scene,
Grouped together by the tie
Of the trolley flashing by,
Serving, for the common good,
All the prosperous neighborhood.

VIII.

In this weird world's vast design,
Motorman, a part is thine,
Humble though it seem to thee
In that world's immensity.
Purposeful the golden ray
Ushers in the new-born day,
Purposeful the star-beams bright
Fling their radiance through the night.
Through the boundless deeps of space,
Star and sun their orbits trace,
Moonbeams glisten, rain-drops fall
By a law that guides them all.
Time and season, shine and shower
Bud and blossom, snow and flower,
Vale and mountain, lakes and leas,
Tides and torrents, brooks and seas,

THE MOTORMAN

And the star whose vesper ray
Flashes through the fading Day,
Brightening in the deepening shade,
These, and such as these were made
To suggest the depth and height
Of a purpose infinite.
Through the world that purpose runs,
Quenching planets, kindling suns,
Shaping flower and tree and star
And the hand that guides the car.

IX.

Study well the system vast
Nature has around thee cast,
How the things of time and space
Work in their allotted place,
All harmonious to fulfill
Dictates of a sovereign will,
Each on special mission sent,
Each in special service spent,
In that system this the test:
Greatest, that which serveth best.
Motorman, despise thou not,
Though it lowly be, thy lot;
When the angel shall compete
Earth's prodigious balance sheet,

SONGS OF THE TIMES

And the inventory be
Taken for eternity,
Many a king with glittering crown,
Many a knight of fair renown,
Blazoned name and lineage old,
When the final tale is told
May, perchance, thy service see
Ranked above his pedigree.

X.

What suggestive echoes swell
From the clanging of thy bell!
'Mid the city's busy street,
Eager throngs and hurrying feet,
Ranging field and wood and glade
In the sunshine or the shade,
By the farm, the shop, the mill,
In the dell or on the hill,
Where the forge and furnace burn,
And the lapsing waters turn
Many a wheel of industry,
Where the clattering shuttles fly
In the noisy factory,
Wheresoe'er in anxious strife
Mortals play the game of life,
There, in faithful service, are
Motorman and trolley car.

THE MOTORMAN

XI.

Servant thou of high degree;
Though thy meed a pittance be,
Industry and progress bless
Thy career of usefulness,
Reaping benefits that sprang
From the insistent trolley's clang.
Knights are dubbed and kings are crowned,
Titles of imposing sound
Gild the churl and mask the fool
In this world's weird carnival.
Knighthood leal and true is thine.
Though no glittering orders shine
On thy shabby coat of blue
Heart and hand and eye are true.
Service is the true knight's test,
Greatest he that serveth best;
Toil-worn hands are nobler far
Than the ribbon and the star,
In His sight whose wisdom still
Moulds creation to his will,
Marks, in hidden places dim,
Faithful service wrought for Him.

XII.

Blessings on the trolley car,
Shuttling near or rolling far,

SONGS OF THE TIMES

Bringing, at our will and mood,
Society or solitude,
Clanging now through crowds that wait
Pent within the city's gate,
Now, through field and wood it glides,
Ranging quiet countrysides.
Luxuries and comforts few
The resourceful fathers knew;
Prodigal abundance pours
Blessings at their children's doors;
Of them all we least could spare
Motorman and trolley car.