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Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydow  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Schlegel  
Weber Freiligrath Friedrich II. von Preußen  
Kant Ernst Frey  
Fechner Fichte Weiße Rose von Fallersleben Hölderlin Richthofen Frommel  
Engels Fielding Eichendorff Tacitus Dumas  
Fehrs Faber Flaubert Eliot Ebner Eschenbach  
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Trackl Stevenson Lichtenberg Rathenau Doyle Gjellerup  
Mommssen Thoma Tolstoi Lenz Hambruch Droste-Hülshoff  
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# **Poems of Purpose**

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

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## A GOOD SPORT

I was a little lad, and the older boys called to me from the pier:  
They called to me: 'Be a sport: be a sport! Leap in and swim!'  
I leaped in and swam, though I had never been taught a stroke.  
Then I was made a hero, and they all shouted:  
'Well done! Well done,  
Brave boy, you are a sport, a good sport!'  
And I was very glad.  
But now I wish I had learned to swim the right way,  
Or had never learned at all.  
Now I regret that day,  
For it led to my fall.  
I was a youth, and I heard the older men talking of the road to  
wealth;  
They talked of bulls and bears, of buying on margins,  
And they said, 'Be a sport, my boy, plunge in and win or lose it all!  
It is the only way to fortune.'  
So I plunged in and won; and the older men patted me on the back,  
And they said, 'You are a sport, my boy, a good sport!'  
And I was very glad.  
But now I wish I had lost all I ventured on that day -  
Yes, wish I had lost it all.  
For it was the wrong way,  
And pushed me to my fall.  
I was a young man, and the gay world called me to come;  
Gay women and gay men called to me, crying:  
'Be a sport; be a good sport!  
Fill our glasses and let us fill yours.  
We are young but once; let us dance and sing,  
And drive the dull hours of night until they stand at bay  
Against the shining bayonets of day.'  
So I filled my glass, and I filled their glasses, over and over again,  
And I sang and danced and drank, and drank and danced and sang,  
And I heard them cry, 'He is a sport, a good sport!'

As they held their glasses out to be filled again.  
And I was very glad.  
Oh the madness of youth and song and dance and wine,  
Of woman's eyes and lips, when the night dies in the arms of dawn!  
And now I wish I had not gone that way.  
Now I wish I had not heard them say,  
'He is a sport, a good sport!'  
For I am old who should be young.  
The splendid vigour of my youth I flung  
Under the feet of a mad, unthinking throng.  
My strength went out with wine and dance and song;  
Unto the winds of earth I tossed like chaff,  
With idle jest and laugh,  
The pride of splendid manhood, all its wealth  
Of unused power and health -  
Its dream of looking into some pure girl's eyes  
And finding there its earthly paradise -  
Its hope of virile children free from blight -  
Its thoughts of climbing to some noble height  
Of great achievement - all these gifts divine  
I cast away for song and dance and wine.  
Oh, I have been a sport, a good sport;  
But I am very sad.



## A SON SPEAKS

Mother, sit down, for I have much to say  
Anent this widespread ever-growing theme  
Of woman and her virtues and her rights.  
I left you for the large, loud world of men,  
When I had lived one little score of years.  
I judged all women by you, and my heart  
Was filled with high esteem and reverence  
For your angelic sex; and for the wives,  
The sisters, daughters, mothers of my friends  
I held but holy thoughts. To fallen stars  
(Of whom you told me in our last sweet talk,  
Warning me of the dangers in my path)  
I gave wide pity as you bade me to,  
Saying their sins harked back to my base sex.  
Now listen, mother mine: Ten years have passed  
Since that clean-minded and pure-bodied youth,  
Thinking to write his name upon the stars,  
Went from your presence. He returns to you  
Fallen from his altitude of thought,  
Hiding deep scars of sins upon his soul,  
His fair illusions shattered and destroyed.  
And would you know the story of his fall?  
He sat beside a good man's honoured wife  
At her own table. She was beautiful  
As woods in early autumn. Full of soft  
And subtle witcheries of voice and look -  
His senior, both in knowledge and in years.  
The boyish admiration of his glance  
Was white as April sunlight when it falls  
Upon a blooming tree, until she leaned  
So close her rounded body sent quick thrills  
Along his nerves. He thought it accident,  
And moved a little; soon she leaned again.  
The half-hid beauties of her heaving breast

Rising and falling under scented lace,  
The teasing tendrils of her fragrant hair,  
With intermittent touches on his cheek,  
Changed the boy's interest to a man's desire.  
She saw that first young madness in his eyes  
And smiled and fanned the flame. That was his fall;  
And as some mangled fly may crawl away  
And leave his wings behind him in the web,  
So were his wings of faith in womanhood  
Left in the meshes of her sensuous net.  
The youth, forced into sudden manhood, went  
Seeking the lost ideal of his dreams.  
He met, in churches and in drawing-rooms,  
Women who wore the mask of innocence  
And basked in public favour, yet who seemed  
To find their pleasure playing with men's hearts,  
As children play with loaded guns. He heard  
(Until the tale fell dull upon his ears)  
The unsolicited complaints of wives  
And mothers all unsatisfied with life,  
While crowned with every blessing earth can give  
Longing for God knows what to bring content,  
And openly or with appealing look  
Asking for sympathy. (The first blind step  
That leads from wifely honour down to shame,  
Is oft-times hid with flowers of sympathy.)  
He saw proud women who would flush and pale  
With sense of outraged modesty if one  
Spoke of the ancient sin before them, bare  
To all men's sight, or flimsily conceal  
By veils that bid adventurous eyes proceed,  
Charms meant alone for lover and for child.  
He saw chaste virgins tempt and tantalise,  
Lure and deny, invite - and then refuse,  
And drive men forth half crazed to wantons' arms.  
Mother, you taught me there were but two kinds  
Of women in the world - the good and bad.  
But you have been too sheltered in the safe,  
Old-fashioned sweetness of your quiet life,

To know how women of these modern days  
Make licence of their new-found liberty.  
Why, I have been more tempted and more shocked  
By belles and beauties in the social whirl,  
By trusted wives and mothers in their homes,  
Than by the women of the underworld  
Who sell their favours. Do you think me mad?  
No, mother; I am sane, but very sad.  
I miss my boyhood's faith in woman's worth -  
Torn from my heart, by 'good folks' of the earth.



## THE YOUNGER BORN

The modern English-speaking young girl is the astonishment of the world and the despair of the older generation. Nothing like her has ever been seen or heard before. Alike in drawing-rooms and the amusement places of the people, she defies conventions in dress, speech, and conduct. She is bold, yet not immoral. She is immodest, yet she is chaste. She has no ideals, yet she is kind and generous. She is an anomaly and a paradox.

*We are the little daughters of Time and the World his wife,  
We are not like the children, born in their younger life,  
We are marred with our mother's follies and torn with our father's strife.  
We are the little daughters of the modern world,  
And Time, her spouse.*

She has brought many children to our father's house  
Before we came, when both our parents were content  
With simple pleasures and with quiet homely ways.  
Modest and mild  
Were the fair daughters born to them in those fair days,  
Modest and mild.

*But Father Time grew restless and longed for a swifter pace,  
And our mother pushed out beside him at the cost of her tender grace,  
And life was no more living but just a headlong race.  
And we are wild -*

Yea, wild are we, the younger born of the World  
Into life's vortex hurled.

With the milk of our mother's breast  
We drank her own unrest,  
And we learned our speech from Time  
Who scoffs at the things sublime.

Time and the World have hurried so

They could not help their younger born to grow;  
We only follow, follow where they go.

*They left their high ideals behind them as they ran;  
There was but one goal, pleasure, for Woman or for Man,  
And they robbed the nights of slumber to lengthen the days' brief span.*

We are the demi-virgins of the modern day;  
 All evil on the earth is known to us in thought,  
 But yet we do it not.  
 We bare our beauteous bodies to the gaze of men,  
 We lure them, tempt them, lead them on, and then  
 Lightly we turn away.  
 By strong compelling passion we are never stirred;  
 To us it is a word -  
 A word much used when tragic tales are told;  
 We are the younger born, yet we are very old  
 In understanding, and our knowledge makes us bold.  
 Boldly we look at life,  
 Loving its stress and strife,  
 And hating all conventions that may mean restraint,  
 Yet shunning sin's black taint.  
 We know wine's taste;  
 And the young-maiden bloom and sweetness of our lips  
 Is often in eclipse  
 Under the brown weed's stain.  
 Yet we are chaste;  
 We have no large capacity for joy or pain,  
 But an insatiable appetite for pleasure.  
 We have no use for leisure  
 And never learned the meaning of that word 'repose.'  
 Life as it goes  
 Must spell excitement for us, be the cost what may.  
 Speeding along the way,  
 We oftentimes pause to do some generous little deed,  
 And fill the cup of need;  
 For we are kind at heart,  
 Though with less heart than head,  
 Unmoral, not immoral, when the worst is said;  
 We are the product of the modern day.  
*We are the little daughters of Time and the World his wife,  
 We are not like the children, born in their younger life,  
 We are marred with our mother's follies and torn with our father's strife.*

## HAPPINESS

*There are so many little things that make life beautiful.*

I can recall a day in early youth when I was longing for happiness.  
Toward the western hills I gazed, watching for its approach.  
The hills lay between me and the setting sun, and over them led a highway.

When some traveller crossed the hill, always a fine grey dust rose cloudless against the sky.

The traveller I could not distinguish, but the dust-cloud I could see.  
And the dust-cloud seemed formed of hopes and possibilities - each speck an embryo event.

At sunset, when the skies were fair, the dust-cloud grew radiant and shone with visions.

The happiness for which I waited came not to me adown that western slope,

But now I can recall the cloud of golden dust, the sunset, and the highway leading over the hill,

The wonderful hope and expectancy of my heart, the visions of youth in my eyes; and I know this was happiness.

*There are so many little things that make life beautiful.*

I can recall another day when I rebelled at life's monotony.

Everywhere about me was the commonplace; and nothing seemed to happen.

Each day was like its yesterday, and to-morrow gave no promise of change.

My young heart rose rebellious in my breast; and I ran aimlessly into the sunlight - the glowing sunlight of June.

I sent out a dumb cry to Fate, demanding larger joys and more delight.

I ran blindly into a field of blooming clover.

It was breast-high, and billowed about me like rose-red waves of a fragrant sea.

The bees were singing above it; and their little brown bodies were loaded with honey-dew, extracted from the clover blossoms.

The sun reeled in the heavens dizzy with its own splendour.

The day went into night, without bringing any new event to change my life.

But now I recall the field of blooming clover, and the honey-laden bees, the glorious June sunlight, and the passion of youth in my heart; and I know that was happiness.

*There are so many little things that make life beautiful.*

Yesterday a failure stared me in the face, where I had thought to welcome proud success.

There was no radiant cloud of dust against the western sky, and no clover field lying fragrant under mid-June suns,  
Neither was youth with me any more.

But under the vines that clung against my walls, a flock of birds sought shelter just at twilight;

And, standing at my casement, I could hear the twitter of their voices and the soft, sweet flutter of their wings.

Then over me there fell a sense of peace and calm, and love for all created things, and trust illimitable.

And that I knew was happiness.

*There are so many little things to make life beautiful.*



## SEEKING FOR HAPPINESS

Seeking for happiness we must go slowly;  
The road leads not down avenues of haste;  
But often gently winds through by ways lowly,  
Whose hidden pleasures are serene and chaste  
Seeking for happiness we must take heed  
Of simple joys that are not found in speed.  
Eager for noon-time's large effulgent splendour,  
Too oft we miss the beauty of the dawn,  
Which tiptoes by us, evanescent, tender,  
Its pure delights unrecognised till gone.  
Seeking for happiness we needs must care  
For all the little things that make life fair.  
Dreaming of future pleasures and achievements  
We must not let to-day starve at our door;  
Nor wait till after losses and bereavements  
Before we count the riches in our store.  
Seeking for happiness we must prize this -  
Not what will be, or was, but that which *is*.  
In simple pathways hand in hand with duty  
(With faith and love, too, ever at her side),  
May happiness be met in all her beauty  
The while we search for her both far and wide.  
Seeking for happiness we find the way  
Doing the things we ought to do each day.



## THE ISLAND OF ENDLESS PLAY

Said Willie to Tom, 'Let us hie away  
To the wonderful Island of Endless Play.  
It lies off the border of "No School Land,"  
And abounds with pleasure, I understand.  
There boys go swimming whenever they please  
In a lovely river right under the trees.  
And marbles are free, so you need not buy;  
And kites of all sizes are ready to fly.  
We sail down the Isthmus of Idle Delight -  
We sail and we sail for a day and a night.  
And then, if favoured by billows and breeze,  
We land in the Harbour of Do-as-You-Please.  
And there lies the Island of Endless Play,  
With no one to say to us, Must, or Nay.  
Books are not known in that land so fair,  
Teachers are stoned if they set foot there.  
Hurrah for the Island, so glad and free,  
That is the country for you and me.'  
So away went Willie and Tom together  
On a pleasure boat, in the lazy weather,  
And they sailed in the teeth of a friendly breeze  
Right into the harbour of 'Do-as-You-Please.'  
Where boats and tackle and marbles and kites  
Were waiting them there in this Land of Delights.  
They dwelt on the Island of Endless Play  
For five long years; then one sad day  
A strange, dark ship sailed up to the strand,  
And 'Ho! for the voyage to Stupid Land,'  
The captain cried, with a terrible noise,  
As he seized the frightened and struggling boys  
And threw them into the dark ship's hold;  
And off and away sailed the captain bold.  
They vainly begged him to let them out,  
He answered only with scoff and shout.

'Boys that don't study or work,' said he,  
'Must sail one day down the Ignorant Sea  
To Stupid Land by the No-Book Strait,  
With Captain Time on the Pitiless Fate.'  
He let out the sails and away went the three  
Over the waters of Ignorant Sea,  
Out and away to Stupid Land;  
And they live there yet, I understand.  
And there's where every one goes, they say,  
Who seeks the Island of Endless Play.