

The Proof of Worth

Though victory's proof of the skill you possess,
Defeat is the proof of your grit;
A weakling can smile in his days of success,
But at trouble's first sign he will quit.
So the test of the heart and the test of your pluck
Isn't skies that are sunny and fair,
But how do you stand to the blow that is struck
And how do you battle despair?

A fool can seem wise when the pathway is clear
And it's easy to see the way out,
But the test of man's judgment is something to fear,
And what does he do when in doubt?
And the proof of his faith is the courage he shows
When sorrows lie deep in his breast;
It's the way that he suffers the griefs that he knows
That brings out his worst or his best.

The test of a man is how much he will bear
For a cause which he knows to be right,
How long will he stand in the depths of despair,
How much will he suffer and fight?
There are many to serve when the victory's near
And few are the hurts to be borne,
But it calls for a leader of courage to cheer
The men in a battle forlorn.

It's the way you hold out against odds that are great
That proves what your courage is worth,
It's the way that you stand to the bruises of fate
That shows up your stature and girth.
And victory's nothing but proof of your skill,
Veneered with a glory that's thin,
Unless it is proof of unfaltering will,
And unless you have suffered to win.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881 – 1959)