

Real Help

If you can smooth his path a bit,
Bring laughter to his worried face,
Restore today his stock of grit
And help him all his troubles chase.
If you can speak one word of praise
That shall his drooping spirits raise
And warm his heart with cheer,
You have done more than they will do
Who'll sighing, rush someday to strew
Red roses on his bier.

If you stretch out a hand to him
Today when he is plodding on,
When everything seems dark and grim,
And hope is very nearly gone,
If you go to him where he stays
And speak the little word of praise
That now may banish fear,
You will have done more good than they
Who'll rush to praise his lifeless clay
And strew with flowers his bier.

If you will note the good you see
In him today, while yet he lives,
If you will be the friend you'll be
When death to him the summons gives,
While he is here to hear your praise,
To profit by your kindly ways,
You'll not seem insincere
If, when death's smile is on his face,
You rush to be the first to place
Red roses on his bier.

Edgar Albert Guest (1861 – 1959)