

The Common Joys

These joys are free to all who live
The rich and poor, the great and low:
The charms which kindness has to give,
The smiles which friendship may bestow,
The honor of a well-spent life,
The glory of a purpose true,
High courage in the stress of strife,
And peace when every task is through.

Nor class nor caste nor race nor creed,
Nor greater might can take away
The splendor of an honest deed.
Who nobly serves from day to day
Shall walk the road of life with pride,
With friends who recognize his worth,
For never are these joys denied
Unto the humblest man on earth.

Not all may rise to world-wide fame,
Not all may gather fortune's gold,
Not all life's luxuries may claim;
In differing ways success is told.
But all may know the peace of mind
Which comes from service brave and true;
The poorest man can still be kind,
And nobly live till life is through.

These joys abound for one and all:
The pride of fearing no man's scorn,
Of standing firm, where others fall,
Of bearing well what must be borne.
He that shall do an honest deed
Shall win an honest deed's rewards;
For these, no matter race or creed,
Life unto every man affords.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881-1959)