

## THE FINER THOUGHT

How fine it is at night to say:  
'I have not wronged a soul to-day.  
I have not by a word or deed,  
In any breast sowed anger's seed,  
Or caused a fellow being pain;  
Nor is there on my crest a stain  
That shame has left. In honor's way,  
With head erect, I've lived this day.'

When night slips down and day departs  
And rest returns to weary hearts,  
How fine it is to close the book  
Of records for the day, and look  
Once more along the traveled mile  
And find that all has been worthwhile;  
To say: ' In honor I have toiled;  
My plume is spotless and unsoiled.'

Yet cold and stern a man may be  
Retaining his integrity;  
And he may pass from day to day  
A spirit dead, in living clay,  
Observing strictly morals, laws,  
Yet serving but a selfish cause;  
So it is not enough to say:  
'I have not stooped to shame to-day!'

It is a finer, nobler thought  
When day is done and night has brought  
The contemplative hours and sweet,  
And rest to weary hearts and feet,  
If man can stand in truth and say:  
'I have been useful here to-day.  
Back there is one I chanced to see  
With hope newborn because of me.

'This day in honor I have toiled;  
My shining crest is still unsoiled;  
But on the mile I leave behind  
Is one who says that I was kind;  
And someone hums a cheerful song  
Because I chanced to come along.'  
Sweet rest at night that man shall own  
Who has not lived his day alone.

Edgar Albert Guest (1881 – 1959)