

“ De Profundis ”

By S. Cornish Watkins

THE hot white road winds on and on before,
The hot white road fades into haze behind,
With clinging dust each hedge is powdered o'er,
The sun is high, no shelter can we find.
A dusty bird upon a dusty spray
Sings o'er and o'er a little dreary song,
There is no rest, no rest, the livelong day,
And we are weary, and the way is long.

We know not whence we come, or whither wend,
What goal may be to which our journey draws,
Fate binds this burden on us, and the end
We know not, care not, and we must not pause.
A motley train we move. The young, the old,
Women and men, with feeble steps or strong,
Driven, like herded sheep, from fold to fold—
Oh, we are weary, and the way is long.

Vain whispers have we known, and hopes as vain ;
And one, he bore a banner with a cross,
And spake wild words of comfort after pain,
And future gain to balance present loss.

But

But where he is we wot not. We have lost
All hopes we had, all faiths or right or wrong,
We have been shaken, shattered, tempest-tost,
And we are weary, and the way is long.

Yet still, within each bosom smoulders there
Some little spark that might have been divine,
Something that will not let us quite despair,
Something we cannot, if we would, resign.
Some day the spark may quicken and may guide,
And fire the soul within us, dead so long,
So may there be, when falls the eventide,
A joyous ending to a grievous song.