

Carmen Triumphans

[Verses in Honour of the Freethought Congress
to be held in Rome in September, 1904.]

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SEVEN-HILL'D Rome has reigned; to-morrow Truth
Shall flaunt her pennons from a thousand hills!
And we, the heirs of Science, strong in youth,
With steadfast eye, and heart that gladly thrills,
Acclaim the dawning light that slowly fills
The world with wonder. As the daylight grows
Our shout is raised, then suddenly it stills
Its thunder, for the first faint tint of rose
Brings heart-ease to the world, in promise of repose!

Yesterday Rome! To-morrow's sun shall rise
Upon a world transformed from Night to Day;
We rise to greet the sunshine, and our eyes
Are shaded from the glory far away.
Our herald tongues, entranced, give forth a lay
Of Spring and green and bursting buds—a world
Sweet with the songs of birds, and fragrant hay
From waving fields to strong-drawn waggons hurled—
A vision of the New, the Banner wide unfurled.

Yesterday Rome, where Bruno's ashes gave
A fragrance that remains to this wide morn.
Mind-free, he died to spurn the name of slave,
Leaving his heritage to men unborn.
To-day we laugh the pious priests to scorn;
To-day the doctrines of old Rome are dead
To all the noblest! The pale Christ forsworn
Has given to men a stronger hardihead;
Godless, the world by Men shall still be onward led!

Yesterday Rome! To-day the dawn of Truth
Scorches her banners, and her towers nigh fall
At the glad cry of Day and Strength and Youth—
A world emancipate—a clarion call

From out of the depths. And now, to Love's wide hall
Troop men and women freed; with eyes aglow
They watch the sunrise by the outer wall,
Where swift the living waters ebb and flow—
Where melts the rising sun Religion's chilling snow.

Yesterday Rome! To-morrow Truth shall reign!
Yesterday gods! To-morrow, in their stead,
Humanity shall guard the sacred Fane—
The Trinity: Love, Life, Hope. The gods are dead.
From out of the darkened past the dawning red
Flushes the world anew; the Day shall be
The promise fulfilled, that every age has fed
With heroes blood—the promise of the Free,
Rising beyond the hills—THE NEW HUMANITY.

O for the Dawn beyond the Seven Hills,
That shews their darkness in the world's fierce Day!
The heart of Man now half-unconscious thrills
With growing sense of Dawn, and turns away
From all the idols with the feet of clay
Set up by Rome, for the new Dawn doth bring
The promise of Love—of Live that makes no stay,
But, ever-renewed, brings echoes from the Spring,
And, mindful of the earth, takes ever upward wing.

Yesterday Rome! To-morrow Truth! A song
Resounds throughout the earth, as widely blows
The breeze of Dawn Rome's darkened ways along,
Bringing the scent of hawthorn and of rose,
Of Winter mirth, of frozen lakes and snows,
Of Autumn forests, and of Summer trees
Shading the meadows—of a Life that glows
With Human love—of Human hearts at ease.
And who shall stay the dawn, and who shall still the breeze?

Flash out, O Sun, widely upon the Morn!
Let our wild shouts be echoed in the wide!
Let priests and gods be scorched in the world's scorn,
Or sink, all useless, in the flowing tide!
To-morrow! Ah, to-morrow we will ride
Adown the path of Life, to eager fling
Laurels to dreamers of the Dawn, who died
To give us this new Life, this nobler Spring.
Forward, in joy, we ride; the REIGN OF MAN we sing!