

SUNSHINE OVER ALL.

"What folly, then," the faithless critic cries,
With sneering lip and wise world-knowing eyes,
"While fort to fort, and post to post repeat
The ceaseless challenge of the war-drum's beat;
And round the green earth, to the church-bells' chime,
The morning drum-roll of the camp keeps time.
To dream of peace amidst a world in arms,
Of swords to plowshares changed by Scriptural charms;
Of nations, drunken with the wine of blood,
Staggering to take the pledge of brotherhood,
Like tipplers answering Father Matthew's call.

* * *

Check Bau or Kaiser with the barricade
Of 'Olive leaves' and resolutions made,
Spike guns with pointed Scripture texts, and hope
To capsize navies with a windy trope;
Still shall the glory and the pomp of war
Along their train the shouting millions draw;
Still dusky labor to the parting brave
His cap shall doff and beauty's kerchief wave,
Still shall the bard to valor tune his song;
Still hero-worship kneel before the strong;
Rosy and sleek, the sable-gowned divine,
O'er his third bottle of suggestive wine,
To plumed and sworded auditors shall prove
Their trade accordant with the law of love;
And Church for State and State for Church shall fight,
And both agree that might alone is right."

Despite the sneers like these, oh, faithful few,
Who dare to hold God's word and witness true,

Whose clear-eyed faith transcends our evil time,
And o'er the present wilderness of crime
Sees the calm future with its robes of green,
Its fleece-flecked mountains, and soft streams between.
Still keep the path which duty bids ye tread,
Though worldly wisdom shake the cautious head;
No truth from heaven descends upon our sphere
Without the greeting of the skeptic's sneer;
Denied and mocked at till its blessings fall
Common as dew and sunshine over all.

– *J. G. Whittier.*

=====