

## THE LATER PROPHET

A still small voice spake through the darkness of  
The cave to me: "O son of man, take thee  
A candle, and a fagot and a book  
In which the kings of men have writ. Arise  
Before the dawn, and come to me. Alone  
Amid the hills and solitudes of earth  
Shalt thou behold a mighty lesson and  
A wonder. Son of man, go now and find  
Thy candle, fagot, and thy written book.  
Arise before the dawn, and come to me."  
While yet the day star lingered, I arose  
And bare my burdens through the heavy air,  
Into the hills and past the homes of men.  
"O son of man," the still small voice spake through  
The darkness of the cave, "go get thee brush  
And kindlings, and strike fire, that they may burn."  
So through the hills, into the glowing dawn,  
I searched, and finding, brought my brush and kindli  
Unto the cave. "O son of man," went on  
The still small voice, when through the drifting pitch  
And blackness of the cave a flaming pile  
Arose, "sit thou and watch beside the flame,  
And when the heap is ashes, take thou fire from it  
And light thy candle. Sit thou down and watch."  
So in the grey of morning, while outside  
I heard the song of birds, I watched the flame,  
And saw it die, and fed my candle from it.  
Again I heard the voice. "Arise, O son  
Of man, and hold thy candle high above thee,  
That it may shine through darkness. Hold it thus  
Until the light begin to dim, then burn  
Thy fagot from it. Go, the time is short."  
Then in the glowing red of dawn held I  
My candle high above my head. But yet  
It did not shine through darkness, for the dawn

Was full upon me; in my blood there rang  
The call of morning; all about me was  
The birth of love. My candle flickered out.  
"O son of man," a mighty voice spake through  
The crimson cave, "take thou thy fagot and  
Thy book in which have writ the kings of men,  
And leave this hallowed place. Outside, where men  
Have being and are dead, burn thou thy fagot.  
Make thee a fire for all the world to see,  
And burn upon the flames thy written book."  
In silence and in dread I made my way  
Down from the hills, back from the homes of men.  
There in the market-place, while all the world  
Looked on, burnt I my fagot, and upon  
Its flames my written book. When nothing lay  
Before me but a pile of ashes, and  
The words of kings no longer lived for men,  
A thunder smote upon my soul, and I  
Was hearing once again the still small voice  
Speaking from out the darkness of the cave.  
"Thou hast done well, O son of man," it said.  
"Go now, and full of understanding, speak  
The lesson and the wonder unto men."

R. B. D.

