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"Simon of Cyrene" Poem By Anna Julia Cooper

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Simon of Cyrene.

The human back was weary,
The path was sharp and steep,
A threefold load of sorrow,
His cross of anguish deep:

A cross of Love-rejected; -
His own received Him not -

"How oft would I have gathered
Your brood of hapless lot,
E'en as a hen her chickens,
To save - but ye would not."

A travail cross of service,
The Heart that aches to give
All of its songing pulses
That brother-man may live.

And then the thorny wood-cross,
The nails of foilsome strife
With earth's uncouth conditions
To give the lowly life.

And so the Cross was heavy,
Its threefold weight dragged hard;
The feet were torn and bleeding
That trod Judea's sward!

II

Beside the road to Calvary
 A swarthy figure stood
 Simon of Cyrene,
 Alone amid the crowd:
 His brawny arms knew burdens;
 His big broad shoulders, bent,
 To many a loving service
 A willing lift had lent.

The Man of Sorrows halted;
 The man of Service saw
 The look of love exalted
 Triumphant over law
 Of race or class proscription,
 Of barriers high and low;
 O'er narrowness of vision
 That cannot see or know
 A brother in the stranger;
 O'er drowsy ears that fail
 To hear the needy calling,
 The slow of heart that quail
 At union in "One Father",
 Or kinship in "one blood".

Through all the petty nothings
 That keep mankind apart
 These two a look all-seeing
 Shot forth from heart to heart.
 Two spirits met each other
 At Nature's tidal flood -
 The one, a man of no caste,
 The One, the Son of God!

A look, a thrill, a heartthrob
 Of comprehension clear
 To bind in one communion
 God's children far and near.
 The Negro's willing shoulder
 Beneath the Cross was thrust.
 The Burden and the Bearer
 No more shall be accurst.

"We two went up together!
 "And they who love the Lord
 "Some day shall call me brother
 "In mem'ry of His word."

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