

"A Clear and a Sincere Soul"

Poignant with the beauty that is bought with death is the verse in *Poems* by Gladys Cromwell, who with her sister Dorothea, after doing war work in France, jumped from the deck of the "Lorraine" just a little over a year ago. Three months later, the two sisters were buried in France with military honors, and the French Government awarded them the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille de Reconnaissance française. Unconsciously perhaps, but truly, Gladys Cromwell voiced her fate in her poem, "The Extra."

THE EXTRA

Sheltered and safe we sit.
Our chairs are opposite;
We watch the warm fire burn
In the dark. A log I turn.
Across the covered floor
I hear the quiet hush
Of muffled steps; the brush
Of skirts;—then a closing door.
Close to you and me
The clock ticks quietly.
I know that we exist
Two entities in Time.
Our vital wills resist
Enclosing night; our thoughts
Command a truth above
All fear, in knowing Love.
But a voice in the street draws near;
A wordless blur of sound
Breaks like a flood around:
"Trust not your hopes, for all are vain,
Trust not your happiness and pain,
Trust not your storehouses of grain,
Trust not your strength on land or sea,
Trust not your loves that come and go,
Trust only the hate of the unknown foe,—
War is the one reality."
Are we awake or dreaming?
On the hearth, the ashes are gleaming.
Listen, dear:
The clock ticks on in the quiet room,
It's all a joke, a poor one, too.
Or else I'm mad! This can't be true?
I light the lamp to lift the gloom.
My world's too good for such a doom.
One fact, if nothing else, I know,
I'll die sooner than have it so!

Poems, by Gladys Cromwell. The Macmillan Company.