

“MY SORT O’ MAN”

BY

PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR

I don’t believe in ‘ristercrats

An’ never did, you see;
The plain ol’ homelike sorter folks
Is good enough fur me.
O’ course, I don’t desire a man
To be too tarnal rough,
But then, I think all folks should know
When they air nice enough.

Now there is folks in this here world,

From peasant up to king,
Who want to be so awful nice
They overdo the thing.
That’s jest the thing that makes me sick,
An’ quicker ‘n a wink
I set it down that them same folks
Ain’t half so good ’s you think.

I like to see a man dress nice,

In clothes becomin' too;
I like to see a woman fix
As women orter to do;
An' boys an' gals I like to see
Look fresh an' young an' spry.—
We all must have our vanity
An' pride before we die.

But I judge no man by his clothes,—

Nor gentleman nor tramp;
The man that wears the finest suit
May be the biggest scamp,
An' he whose limbs air clad in rags
That make a mournful sight,
In life's great battle may have proved
A hero in the fight.

I don't believe in 'ristercrats;

I like the honest tan
That lies upon the healthful cheek

An' speaks the honest man;
I like to grasp the brawny hand
That labor's lips have kissed,
For he who has not labored here
Life's greatest pride has missed:

The pride to feel that yore own strength

Has cleaved fur you the way
To heights to which you were not born,
But struggled day by day.
What though the thousands sneer an' scoff,
An' scorn yore humble birth?
Kings are but puppets; you are king
By right o' royal worth.

The man who simply sits an' waits

Fur good to come along,
Ain't worth the breath that one would take
To tell him he is wrong.
Fur good ain't flowin' round this world
Fur every fool to sup;
You 've got to put yore see-ers on,
An' go an' hunt it up.

Good goes with honesty, I say,

To honour an' to bless;
To rich an' poor alike it brings
A wealth o' happiness.
The 'ristercrats ain't got it all,
Fur much to their su'prise,
That's one of earth's most blessed things
They can't monopolize.