

Alexander Search

MEN OF TO-DAY

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Men of to-day and yester's nought,
Before you were the things we see
Who gave a guess or gave a thought
That such as you to-day should be?
Ah, passers by the common way,
Who thought of ye before to-day?

Men of to-day, to-morrow's dust,
When years have past where shall ye go?
What vulgar daub or hurried lust [...]
Shall chronicle your joy and woe?
Waves on the crest of life's swift sea,
After to-day who'll think of ye?

Genius alone can rouse the fire
That in your glorious nature lies;
Genius alone can strike the lyre
And raise your name to mortal skies;
Genius of death can tear the pall
And yester's nought may be an all.

But virtue, fool, like human tears,
By sand of earth too surely drunk,
Sinks in the dust of passing years,
Nor knowest thou where has it sunk.
Let genius then the laurel wear;
To-morrow's dust may live for e'er.

1904

Poesia Inglesa. Fernando Pessoa. (Organização e tradução de Luísa Freire. Prefácio de Teresa Rita Lopes.) Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1995: 48.