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Adeline Champney
The Price of Progress
September 1907

Vol. XVI No. 3, September 1907, #399. *Liberty (Not the daughter but the mother of order) ... v.15-17 (1906-1908).*
Retrieved from Hathi Trust

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The Price of Progress

Adeline Champney

September 1907

Young brother, young sister, with the uplift gaze,
Would you follow the new vision, live the new life?
Have you conceived an ideal beyond old creeds
and customs?
Does it call you? Would you follow? Count the
cost!
Has poverty no terrors for you?
Can you be driven from shelter to shelter till
“home” is an empty name,
And can you still be true?
Can you hunger while prostitution feasts and
flourishes,
And keep your genius pure?
Have you reckoned with the world’s scorn, and
counted it as naught?
Can you discount the averted gaze where once
shone welcome?
Still I say to you — Count the cost!
Do you know the price you shall pay for your free-
dom?

A sword shall sever you from kindred, friends,
lovers.
Not one who is not of the new, not one of the old
can hold you or be held.
One by one you shall sacrifice them on the altar of
your progress,
In a long-drawn agony of pain.
Your very blood shall cry out to you for cruelty.
Your throat shall ache with pity, but they will
never understand.
The reproach in their eyes shall haunt your sweet-
est joys,
And your veriest triumphs shall ring with their de-
feats.
They whom you love, love, love!
Can you pay for your progress the price of their
pain?
Then go on, on, on! and die, still going on!
For you shall never arrive!

But you shall gain? Strength that grows by resis-
tance, power that is born of purpose;
A deeper insight, a clearer understanding, a
greater love.
And here and there, along steep hillsides, beside
yawning chasms,
A warm hand shall clasp yours,
Clear eyes shall look into yours with the look that
knows and responds,
And you shall claim comrades, yours, your own!
You may not keep them with you, but you shall
know
That somewhere on the pathway they too are
climbing,
They too are pursuing the dream and the vision,

And in you shall be born a living, leaping Hope
that into the pain and the yearning,
Into the world's weariness and woe,
A new light shall dawn, a new day shall break;
That, whether you stand or fall, the world shall
grow by your striving;
That slowly, but with onward sweep of endeavor,
On into Freedom and Joy-life, the World is advanc-
ing!

ADELINE CHAMPNEY.