

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Read the poem a few times.

## ❧ A Nation's Strength ❧

William Ralph Emerson

What makes a nation's pillars high  
And its foundations strong?  
What makes it mighty to defy  
The foes that round it throng?

And is it pride? Ah, that bright crown  
Has seemed to nations sweet;  
But God has struck its luster down  
In ashes at his feet.

It is not gold. Its kingdoms grand  
Go down in battle shock;  
Its shafts are laid on sinking sand,  
Not on abiding rock.

Not gold but only men can make  
A people great and strong;  
Men who for truth and honor's sake  
Stand fast and suffer long.

Is it the sword? Ask the red dust  
Of empires passed away;  
The blood has turned their stones to rust,  
Their glory to decay.

Brave men who work while others sleep,  
Who dare while others fly...  
They build a nation's pillars deep  
And lift them to the sky.

**Directions:** Write the underlined words or phrases in the table. Next, circle the context clues that tell their meaning. Then define the words or phrases.

Words or Phrases	Context Clues	Meaning