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*Wessex Edition*

THE WORKS OF THOMAS HARDY  
IN PROSE AND VERSE

WITH PREFACES AND NOTES

VERSE

VOL. IV



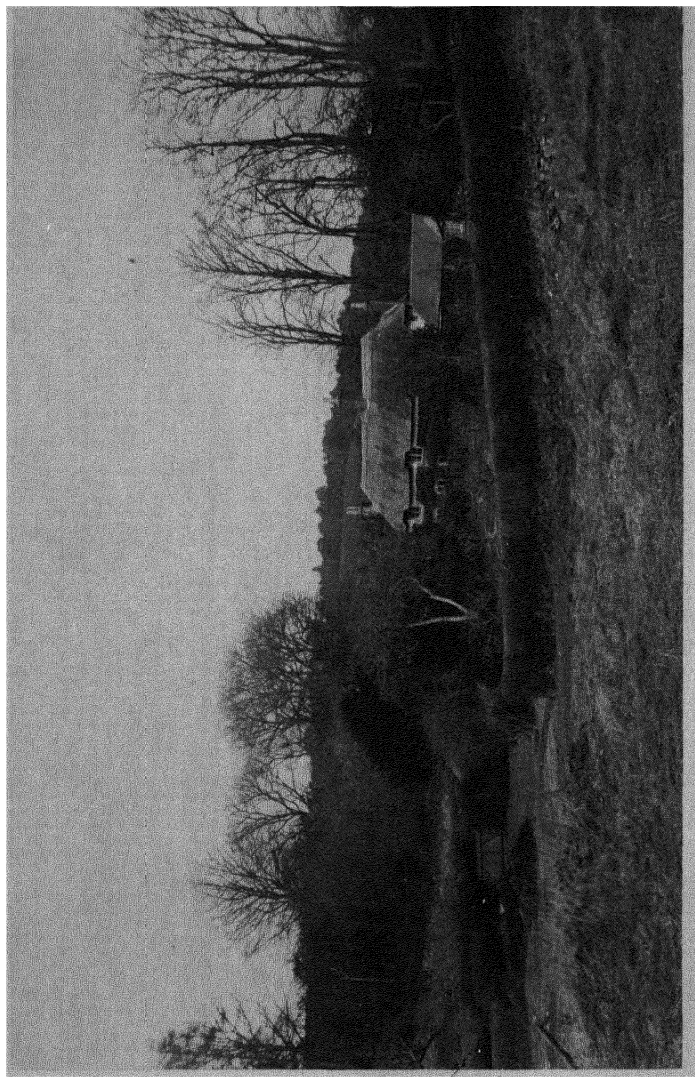
# POETICAL WORKS

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE  
LYRICS AND REVERIES

MOMENTS OF VISION  
AND MISCELLANEOUS VERSES







*"When I set out for Lygonnesse.. the rime was on the spray" (page 18)*

LYRICS AND REVERIES  
AND MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

BY  
THOMAS HARDY

ST. MARTIN'S LANE LONDON





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*Frontispiece.*—"When I set out for Lyonesse . . . the rime  
was on the spray."

MAP OF THE WESSEX OF THE NOVELS AND POEMS.—  
*End of Volume.*

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE  
LYRICS AND REVERIES



## LYRICS AND REVERIES



## IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE

PLUNGING and labouring on in a tide of visions,  
Dolorous and dear,  
Forward I pushed my way as amid waste waters  
Stretching around,  
Through whose eddies there glimmered the customed  
landscape  
Yonder and near

Blotted to feeble mist. And the coomb and the upland  
Coppice-crowned,  
Ancient chalk-pit, milestone, rills in the grass-flat  
Stroked by the light,  
Seemed but a ghost-like gauze, and no substantial  
Meadow or mound.

What were the infinite spectacles featuring foremost  
Under my sight,  
Hindering me to discern my paced advancement  
Lengthening to miles ;  
What were the re-creations killing the daytime  
As by the night ?

O they were speechful faces, gazing insistent,  
Some as with smiles,  
Some as with slow-born tears that brinily trundled  
Over the wrecked  
Cheeks that were fair in their flush-time, ash now with  
anguish,  
Harrowed by wiles.

## IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE

Yes, I could see them, feel them, hear them, address  
them—

Halo-bedecked—  
And, alas, onwards, shaken by fierce unreason,  
Rigid in hate,  
Smitten by years-long wryness born of misprision,  
Dreaded, suspect.

Then there would breast me shining sights, sweet  
seasons  
Further in date ;  
Instruments of strings with the tenderest passion  
Vibrant, beside  
Lamps long extinguished, robes, cheeks, eyes with the  
earth's crust  
Now corporate.

Also there rose a headland of hoary aspect  
Gnawed by the tide,  
Frilled by the nimb of the morning as two friends  
stood there  
Guilelessly glad—  
Wherefore they knew not—touched by the fringe of  
an ecstasy  
Scantly descried.

Later images too did the day unfurl me,  
Shadowed and sad,  
Clay cadavers of those who had shared in the dramas,  
Laid now at ease,  
Passions all spent, chiefest the one of the broad brow  
Sepulture-clad.

So did beset me scenes, miscalled of the bygone,  
Over the leaze,  
Past the clump, and down to where lay the beheld  
ones ;  
—Yea, as the rhyme  
Sung by the sea-swell, so in their pleading dumbness  
Captured me these.



## IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE

For, their lost revisiting manifestations

    In their live time

Much had I slighted, caring not for their purport,

    Seeing behind

Things more coveted, reckoned the better worth calling

    Sweet, sad, sublime.

Thus do they now show hourly before the intenser

    Stare of the mind

As they were ghosts avenging their slights by my  
    bypast

    Body-borne eyes,

Show, too, with fuller translation than rested upon  
    them

    As living kind.

Hence wag the tongues of the passing people, saying

    In their surmise,

“Ah—whose is this dull form that perambulates, see-  
    ing nought

    Round him that looms

Whithersoever his footsteps turn in his farings,

    Save a few tombs?”

## CHANNEL FIRING

THAT night your great guns, unawares,  
Shook all our coffins as we lay,  
And broke the chancel window-squares,  
We thought it was the Judgment-day

And sat upright. While drearisome  
Arose the howl of wakened hounds :  
The mouse let fall the altar-crumb,  
The worms drew back into the mounds,

The glebe cow drooled. Till God called, " No ;  
It's gunnery practice out at sea  
Just as before you went below ;  
The world is as it used to be :

" All nations striving strong to make  
Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters  
They do no more for Christ's sake  
Than you who are helpless in such matters.

" That this is not the judgment-hour  
For some of them's a blessed thing,  
For if it were they'd have to scour  
Hell's floor for so much threatening. . . .

" Ha, ha. It will be warmer when  
I blow the trumpet (if indeed  
I ever do ; for you are men,  
And rest eternal sorely need)."

## CHANNEL FIRING

So down we lay again. "I wonder,  
Will the world ever saner be,"  
Said one, "than when He sent us under  
In our indifferent century!"

And many a skeleton shook his head.  
"Instead of preaching forty year,"  
My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,  
"I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer."

Again the guns disturbed the hour,  
Roaring their readiness to avenge,  
As far inland as Stourton Tower,  
And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

*April 1914.*

## THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN

*(Lines on the loss of the "Titanic")*

### I

IN a solitude of the sea  
Deep from human vanity,  
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly couches  
she.

### II

Steel chambers, late the pyres  
Of her salamandrine fires,  
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic tidal lyres.

### III

Over the mirrors meant  
To glass the opulent  
The sea - worm crawls—grotesque, slimed, dumb,  
indifferent.

### IV

'Jewels in joy designed  
To ravish the sensuous mind  
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and black and  
blind.

# THE CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN

## V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near  
Gaze at the gilded gear  
And query: "What does this vaingloriousness down  
here?" . . .

## VI

Well: while was fashioning  
This creature of cleaving wing,  
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges everything

## VII

Prepared a sinister mate  
For her—so gaily great—  
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

## VIII

And as the smart ship grew  
In stature, grace, and hue,  
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg too.

## IX

Alien they seemed to be:  
No mortal eye could see  
The intimate welding of their later history,

## X

Or sign that they were bent  
By paths coincident  
On being anon twin halves of one august event,

## XI

Till the Spinner of the Years  
Said "Now!" And each one hears,  
And consummation comes, and jars two hemispheres.

## THE GHOST OF THE PAST

WE two kept house, the Past and I,  
    The Past and I ;  
Through all my tasks it hovered nigh,  
    Leaving me never alone.  
It was a spectral housekeeping  
    Where fell no jarring tone,  
As strange, as still a housekeeping  
    As ever has been known.

As daily I went up the stair  
    And down the stair,  
I did not mind the Bygone there—  
    The Present once to me ;  
Its moving meek companionship  
    I wished might ever be,  
There was in that companionship  
    Something of ecstasy.

It dwelt with me just as it was,  
    Just as it was  
When first its prospects gave me pause  
    In wayward wanderings,  
Before the years had torn old troths  
    As they tear all sweet things,  
Before gaunt griefs had torn old troths  
    And dulled old rapturings.

And then its form began to fade,  
    Began to fade,  
Its gentle echoes faintlier played  
    At eves upon my ear

## THE GHOST OF THE PAST

Than when the autumn's look embrowned  
    The lonely chambers here,  
When autumn's settling shades embrowned  
    Nooks that it haunted near.

And so with time my vision less,  
    Yea, less and less  
Makes of that Past my housemistress,  
    It dwindles in my eye ;  
It looms a far-off skeleton  
    And not a comrade nigh,  
A fitful far-off skeleton  
    Dimming as days draw by.

## AFTER THE VISIT

(*To F. E. D.*)

COME again to the place  
Where your presence was as a leaf that skims  
Down a drouthy way whose ascent bedims  
The bloom on the farer's face.

Come again, with the feet  
That were light on the green as a thistledown ball,  
And those mute ministrations to one and to all  
Beyond a man's saying sweet.

Until then the faint scent  
Of the bordering flowers swam unheeded away,  
And I marked not the charm in the changes of day  
As the cloud-colours came and went.

Through the dark corridors  
Your walk was so soundless I did not know  
Your form from a phantom's of long ago  
Said to pass on the ancient floors,

Till you drew from the shade,  
And I saw the large luminous living eyes  
Regard me in fixed inquiring-wise  
As those of a soul that weighed,

Scarce consciously,  
The eternal question of what Life was,  
And why we were there, and by whose strange laws  
That which mattered most could not be.



## TO MEET, OR OTHERWISE

WHETHER to sally and see thee, girl of my dreams,  
Or whether to stay  
And see thee not! How vast the difference seems  
Of Yea from Nay  
Just now. Yet this same sun will slant its beams  
At no far day  
On our two mounds, and then what will the difference  
weigh!

Yet I will see thee, maiden dear, and make  
The most I can  
Of what remains to us amid this brake  
Cimmerian  
Through which we grope, and from whose thorns  
we ache,  
While still we scan  
Round our frail faltering progress for some path or  
plan.

By briefest meeting something sure is won ;  
It will have been :  
Nor God nor Demon can undo the done,  
Unsight the seen,  
Make muted music be as unbegun,  
Though things terrene  
Groan in their bondage till oblivion supervene.

So, to the one long-sweeping symphony  
From times remote  
Till now, of human tenderness, shall we  
Supply one note,  
Small and untraced, yet that will ever be  
Somewhere afloat  
Amid the spheres, as part of sick Life's antidote.

## THE DIFFERENCE

### I

SINKING down by the gate I discern the thin moon,  
And a blackbird tries over old airs in the pine,  
But the moon is a sorry one, sad the bird's tune,  
For this spot is unknown to that Heartmate of mine.

•

### II

Did my Heartmate but haunt here at times such as now,  
The song would be joyous and cheerful the moon ;  
But she will see never this gate, path, or bough,  
Nor I find a joy in the scene or the tune.

## THE SUN ON THE BOOKCASE

(*Student's Love-song*: 1870)

ONCE more the cauldron of the sun  
Smears the bookcase with winy red,  
And here my page is, and there my bed,  
And the apple-tree shadows travel along.  
Soon their intangible track will be run,  
    And dusk grow strong  
    And they have fled.

Yes: now the boiling ball is gone,  
And I have wasted another day. . . .  
But wasted—*wasted*, do I say?  
Is it a waste to have imaged one  
Beyond the hills there, who, anon,  
    My great deeds done  
    Will be mine always?

## “WHEN I SET OUT FOR LYONNESSE”

(1870)

WHEN I set out for Lyonesse,  
A hundred miles away,  
The rime was on the spray,  
And starlight lit my lonesomeness  
When I set out for Lyonesse  
A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonesse  
While I should sojourn there  
No prophet durst declare,  
Nor did the wisest wizard guess  
What would bechance at Lyonesse  
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse  
With magic in my eyes,  
All marked with mute surmise  
My radiance rare and fathomless,  
When I came back from Lyonesse  
With magic in my eyes.

## A THUNDERSTORM IN TOWN

(*A Reminiscence* : 1893)

SHE wore a new "terra-cotta" dress,  
And we stayed, because of the pelting storm,  
Within the hansom's dry recess,  
Though the horse had stopped ; yea, motionless  
    We sat on, snug and warm.

Then the downpour ceased, to my sharp sad pain,  
And the glass that had screened our forms before  
Flew up, and out she sprang to her door :  
I should have kissed her if the rain  
    Had lasted a minute more.

## THE TORN LETTER

### I

I TORE your letter into strips  
    No bigger than the airy feathers  
    That ducks preen out in changing weathers  
Upon the shifting ripple-tips.

### II

In darkness on my bed alone  
    I seemed to see you in a vision,  
    And hear you say : " Why this derision  
Of one drawn to you, though unknown ? "

### III

Yes, eve's quick mood had run its course,  
    The night had cooled my hasty madness ;  
    I suffered a regretful sadness  
Which deepened into real remorse.

### IV

I thought what pensive patient days  
    A soul must know of grain so tender,  
    How much of good must grace the sender  
Of such sweet words in such bright phrase.

## THE TORN LETTER

### V

Uprising then, as things unpriced  
    I sought each fragment, patched and mended;  
    The midnight whitened ere I had ended  
And gathered words I had sacrificed.

### VI

But some, alas, of those I threw  
    Were past my search, destroyed for ever :  
    They were your name and place ; and never  
Did I regain those clues to you.

### VII

I learnt I had missed, by rash unheed,  
    My track ; that, so the Will decided,  
    In life, death, we should be divided,  
And at the sense I ached indeed.

### VIII

That ache for you, born long ago,  
    Throbs on : I never could outgrow it.  
    What a revenge, did you but know it !  
But that, thank God, you do not know.

## BEYOND THE LAST LAMP

*(Near Tooting Common)*

### I

WHILE rain, with eve in partnership,  
Descended darkly, drip, drip, drip,  
Beyond the last lone lamp I passed  
    Walking slowly, whispering sadly,  
    Two linked loiterers, wan, downcast :  
Some heavy thought constrained each face,  
And blinded them to time and place.

### II

The pair seemed lovers, yet absorbed  
In mental scenes no longer orb'd  
By love's young rays. Each countenance  
    As it slowly, as it sadly  
    Caught the lamplight's yellow glance,  
Held in suspense a misery  
At things which had been or might be.

### III

When I 'retrod that watery way  
Some hours beyond the droop of day,  
Still I found pacing there the twain  
    Just as slowly, just as sadly,  
    Heedless of the night and rain.  
One could but wonder who they were,  
And what wild woe detained them there.



## BEYOND THE LAST LAMP

### IV

Though thirty years of blur and blot  
Have slid since I beheld that spot,  
And saw in curious converse there  
    Moving slowly, moving sadly  
    That mysterious tragic pair,  
Its olden look may linger on—  
All but the couple ; they have gone.

### V

Whither? Who knows, indeed. . . . And yet  
To me, when nights are weird and wet,  
Without those comrades there at tryst  
    Creeping slowly, creeping sadly,  
    That lone lane does not exist.  
There they seem brooding on their pain,  
And will, while such a lane remain.

## THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT

If ever joy leave  
An abiding sting of sorrow,  
So befell it on the morrow  
Of that May eve. . . .

The travelled sun dropped  
To the north-west, low and lower,  
The pony's trot grew slower,  
Until we stopped.

" This cosy house just by  
I must call at for a minute,  
A sick man lies within it  
Who soon will die.

" He wished to—marry me,  
So I am bound, when I drive near him,  
To inquire, if but to cheer him,  
How he may be."

A message was sent in,  
And wordlessly we waited,  
Till some one came and stated  
The bulletin.

And that the sufferer said,  
For her call no words could thank her ;  
As his angel he must rank her  
Till life's spark fled.

## THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT

Slowly we drove away,  
When I turned my head, although not  
Called to : why I turned I know not  
Even to this day :

And lo, there in my view  
Pressed against an upper lattice  
Was a white face, gazing at us  
As we withdrew.

And well did I divine  
It to be the man's there dying,  
Who but lately had been sighing  
For her pledged mine.

Then I deigned a deed of hell ;  
It was done before I knew it ;  
What devil made me do it  
I cannot tell !

Yes, while he gazed above,  
I put my arm about her  
That he might see, nor doubt her  
My plighted Love.

The pale face vanished quick,  
As if blasted, from the casement,  
And my shame and self-abasement  
Began their prick.

And they prick on, ceaselessly,  
For that stab in Love's fierce fashion  
Which, unfired by lover's passion,  
Was foreign to me.

She smiled at my caress,  
But why came the soft embowment  
Of her shoulder at that moment  
She did not guess.

## THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT

Long long years has he lain  
In thy garth, O sad Saint Cleather :  
What tears there, bared to weather,  
Will cleanse that stain !

Love is long-suffering, brave,  
Sweet, prompt, precious as a jewel ;  
But O, too, Love is cruel,  
Cruel as the grave.

## LOST LOVE

I PLAY my sweet old airs—  
The airs he knew  
When our love was true—  
But he does not balk  
His determined walk,  
And passes up the stairs.

I sing my songs once more,  
And presently hear  
His footstep near  
As if it would stay ;  
But he goes his way,  
And shuts a distant door.

So I wait for another morn  
And another night  
In this soul-sick blight ;  
And I wonder much  
As I sit, why such  
A woman as I was born !

“MY SPIRIT WILL NOT HAUNT  
THE MOUND”

My spirit will not haunt the mound  
Above my breast,  
But travel, memory-possessed,  
To where my tremulous being found  
Life largest, best.

My phantom-footed shape will go  
When nightfall grays  
Hither and thither along the ways  
I and another used to know  
In backward days.

And there you'll find me, if a jot  
You still should care  
For me, and for my curious air ;  
If otherwise, then I shall not,  
For you, be there.

## WESSEX HEIGHTS

(1896)

THERE are some heights in Wessex, shaped as if by a  
kindly hand  
For thinking, dreaming, dying on, and at crises when  
I stand,  
Say, on Ingpen Beacon eastward, or on Wylls-Neck  
westwardly,  
I seem where I was before my birth, and after death  
may be.

In the lowlands I have no comrade, not even the lone  
man's friend—  
Her who suffereth long and is kind ; accepts what he  
is too weak to mend :  
Down there they are dubious and askance ; there  
nobody thinks as I,  
But mind-chains do not clank where one's next neigh-  
bour is the sky.

In the towns I am tracked by phantoms having weird  
detective ways—  
Shadows of beings who fellowed with myself of earlier  
days :  
They hang about at places, and they say harsh heavy  
things—  
Men with a wintry sneer, and women with tart  
disparagings.

Down there I seem to be false to myself, my simple  
self that was,  
And is not now, and I see him watching, wondering  
what crass cause

## WESSEX HEIGHTS

Can have merged him into such a strange continuator  
as this,  
Who yet has something in common with himself, my  
chrysalis.

I cannot go to the great gray Plain ; there's a figure  
against the moon,  
Nobody sees it but I, and it makes my breast beat out  
of tune ;  
I cannot go to the tall-spired town, being barred by  
the forms now passed  
For everybody but me, in whose long vision they  
stand there fast.

There's a ghost at Yell'ham Bottom chiding loud at  
the fall of the night,  
There's a ghost in Froom-side Vale, thin lipped and  
vague, in a shroud of white,  
There is one in the railway-train whenever I do not  
want it near,  
I see its profile against the pane, saying what I would  
not hear.

As for one rare fair woman, I am now but a thought  
of hers,  
I enter her mind and another thought succeeds me  
that she prefers ;  
Yet my love for her in its fulness she herself even did  
not know ;  
Well, time cures hearts of tenderness, and now I can  
let her go.

So I am found on Ingpen Beacon, or on Wylls-Neck  
to the west,  
Or else on homely Bulbarrow, or little Pilsdon Crest,  
Where men have never cared to haunt, nor women  
have walked with me,  
And ghosts then keep their distance ; and I know  
some liberty.



## IN DEATH DIVIDED

### I

I SHALL rot here, with those whom in their day  
You never knew,  
And alien ones who, ere they chilled to clay,  
Met not my view,  
Will in your distant grave-place ever neighbour you.

### II

No shade of pinnacle or tree or tower,  
While earth endures,  
Will fall on my mound and within the hour  
Steal on to yours ;  
One robin never haunt our two green covertures.

### III

Some organ may resound on Sunday noons  
By where you lie,  
Some other thrill the panes with other tunes  
Where moulder I ;  
No selfsame chords compose our common lullaby.

### IV

The simply-cut memorial at my head  
Perhaps may take  
A rustic form, and that above your bed  
A stately make ;  
No linking symbol show thereon for our tale's sake.

## IN DEATH DIVIDED

v

And in the monotonous moils of strained, hard-run  
Humanity,  
The eternal tie which binds us twain in one  
No eye will see  
Stretching across the miles that sever you from me.

## THE PLACE ON THE MAP

### I

I LOOK upon the map that hangs by me—  
Its shires and towns and rivers lined in varnished  
    artistry—  
And I mark a jutting height  
Coloured purple, with a margin of blue sea.

### II

—'Twas a day of latter summer, hot and dry ;  
Ay, even the waves seemed drying as we walked on,  
    she and I,  
By this spot where, calmly quite,  
She informed me what would happen by and by.

### III

This hanging map depicts the coast and place,  
And re-creates therewith our unforeboded troublous  
    case  
All distinctly to my sight,  
And her tension, and the aspect of her face.

### IV

Weeks and weeks we had loved beneath that  
    blazing blue,  
Which had lost the art of raining, as her eyes to-day  
    had too,  
While she told what, as by sleight,  
Shot our firmament with rays of ruddy hue.

## THE PLACE ON THE MAP

### V

For the wonder and the wormwood of the whole  
Was that what in realms of reason would have joyed  
    our double soul  
    Wore a torrid tragic light  
Under order-keeping's rigorous control.

### VI

So, the map revives her words, the spot, the time,  
And the thing we found we had to face before the  
    next year's prime ;  
    The charted coast stares bright,  
And its episode comes back in pantomime.

## THE SCHRECKHORN

*(With thoughts of Leslie Stephen)*

(June 1897)

ALOOF, as if a thing of mood and whim ;  
Now that its spare and desolate figure gleams  
Upon my nearing vision, less it seems  
A looming Alp-height than a guise of him  
Who scaled its horn with ventured life and limb,  
Drawn on by vague imaginings, maybe,  
Of semblance to his personality  
In its quaint glooms, keen lights, and rugged trim.

At his last change, when Life's dull coils unwind,  
Will he, in old love, hitherward escape,  
And the eternal essence of his mind  
Enter this silent adamantine shape,  
And his low voicing haunt its slipping snows  
When dawn that calls the climber dyes them rose?

## A SINGER ASLEEP

(*Algernon Charles Swinburne*, 1837–1909)

### I

IN this fair niche above the unslumbering sea,  
That sentrys up and down all night, all day,  
From cove to promontory, from ness to bay,  
The Fates have fitly bidden that he should be  
Pillowed eternally.

### II

—It was as though a garland of red roses  
Had fallen about the hood of some smug nun  
When irresponsibly dropped as from the sun,  
In fulth of numbers freaked with musical closes,  
Upon Victoria's formal middle time  
His leaves of rhythm and rhyme.

### III

O that far morning of a summer day  
When, down a terraced street whose pavements lay  
Glassing the sunshine into my bent eyes,  
I walked and read with a quick glad surprise  
New words, in classic guise,—

### IV

The passionate pages of his earlier years,  
Fraught with hot sighs, sad laughter, kisses, tears ;

## A SINGER ASLEEP

Fresh-fluted notes, yet from a minstrel who  
Blew them not naïvely, but as one who knew  
Full well why thus he blew.

### V

I still can hear the brabble and the roar  
At those thy tunes, O still one, now passed through  
That fitful fire of tongues then entered new !  
Their power is spent like spindrift on this shore ;  
Thine swells yet more and more.

### VI

—His singing-mistress verily was no other  
Than she the Lesbian, she the music-mother  
Of all the tribe that feel in melodies ;  
Who leapt, love-anguished, from the Leucadian steep  
Into the rambling world-encircling deep  
Which hides her where none sees.

### VII

And one can hold in thought that nightly here  
His phantom may draw down to the water's brim,  
And hers come up to meet it, as a dim  
Lone shine upon the heaving hydrosphere,  
And mariners wonder as they traverse near,  
Unknowing of her and him.

### VIII

One dreams him sighing to her spectral form :  
“ O teacher, where lies hid thy burning line ;  
Where are those songs, O poetess divine  
Whose very orts are love incarnadine ? ”  
And her smile back : “ Disciple true and warm,  
Sufficient now are thine.” . . .

## A SINGER ASLEEP

### IX

So here, beneath the waking constellations,  
Where the waves peal their everlasting strains,  
And their dull subterrene reverberations  
Shake him when storms make mountains of their  
    plains—

Him once their peer in sad improvisations,  
And deft as wind to cleave their frothy manes—  
I leave him, while the daylight gleam declines  
    Upon the capes and chines.

BONCHURCH, 1910.



## A PLAINT TO MAN

WHEN you slowly emerged from the den of Time,  
And gained percipience as you grew,  
And fleshed you fair out of shapeless slime,

Wherefore, O Man, did there come to you  
The unhappy need of creating me—  
A form like your own—for praying to?

My virtue, power, utility,  
Within my maker must all abide,  
Since none in myself can ever be,

One thin as a phasm on a lantern-slide  
Shown forth in the dark upon some dim sheet,  
And by none but its showman vivified.

“Such a forced device,” you may say, “is meet  
For easing a loaded heart at whiles :  
Man needs to conceive of a mercy-seat

Somewhere above the gloomy aisles  
Of this wailful world, or he could not bear  
The irk no local hope beguiles.”

—But since I was framed in your first despair  
The doing without me has had no play  
In the minds of men when shadows scare ;

## A PLAINT TO MAN

And now that I dwindle day by day  
Beneath the deicide eyes of seers  
In a light that will not let me stay,

And to-morrow the whole of me disappears,  
The truth should be told, and the fact be faced  
That had best been faced in earlier years :

The fact of life with dependence placed  
On the human heart's resource alone,  
In brotherhood bonded close and graced

With loving-kindness fully blown,  
And visioned help unsought, unknown.

1909-10.

## GOD'S FUNERAL

### I

I SAW a slowly-stepping train—  
Lined on the brows, scoop-eyed and bent and hoar—  
Following in files across a twilit plain  
A strange and mystic form the foremost bore.

### II

And by contagious throbs of thought  
Or latent knowledge that within me lay  
And had already stirred me, I was wrought  
To consciousness of sorrow even as they.

### III

The fore-borne shape, to my blurred eyes,  
At first seemed man-like, and anon to change  
To an amorphous cloud of marvellous size,  
At times endowed with wings of glorious range.

### IV

And this phantasmal variousness  
Ever possessed it as they drew along :  
Yet throughout all it symbolled none the less  
Potency vast and loving-kindness strong.

### V

Almost before I knew I bent  
Towards the moving columns without a word ;  
They, growing in bulk and numbers as they went,  
Struck out sick thoughts that could be overheard :—

# GOD'S FUNERAL

## VI

“ O man-projected Figure, of late  
Imaged as we, thy knell who shall survive?  
Whence came it we were tempted to create  
One whom we can no longer keep alive ?

## VII

“ Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,  
We gave him justice as the ages rolled,  
Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,  
And longsuffering, and mercies manifold.

## VIII

“ And, tricked by our own early dream  
And need of solace, we grew self-deceived,  
Our making soon our maker did we deem,  
And what we had imagined we believed.

## IX

“ Till, in Time's stayless stealthy swing,  
Uncompromising rude reality  
Mangled the Monarch of our fashioning,  
Who quavered, sank ; and now has ceased to be.

## X

“ So, toward our myth's oblivion,  
Darkling, and languid-lipped, we creep and grope  
Sadlier than those who wept in Babylon,  
Whose Zion was a still abiding hope.

## XI

“ How sweet it was in years far hied  
To start the wheels of day with trustful prayer,  
To lie down liegely at the eventide  
And feel a blest assurance he was there !

## GOD'S FUNERAL

### XII

" And who or what shall fill his place?  
Whither will wanderers turn distracted eyes  
For some fixed star to stimulate their pace  
Towards the goal of their enterprise?" . . .

### XIII

Some in the background then I saw,  
Sweet women, youths, men, all incredulous,  
Who chimed : " This is a counterfeit of straw,  
This requiem mockery ! Still he lives to us !"

### XIV

I could not buoy their faith : and yet  
Many I had known : with all I sympathized ;  
And though struck speechless, I did not forget  
That what was mourned for, I, too, once had prized.

### XV

Still, how to bear such loss I deemed  
The insistent question for each animate mind,  
And gazing, to my growing sight there seemed  
A pale yet positive gleam low down behind,

### XVI

Whereof, to lift the general night,  
A certain few who stood aloof had said,  
" See you upon the horizon that small light—  
Swelling somewhat ?" Each mourner shook his head.

### XVII

And they composed a crowd of whom  
Some were right good, and many nigh the best. . . .  
Thus dazed and puzzled 'twixt the gleam and gloom  
Mechanically I followed with the rest.

## SPECTRES THAT GRIEVE

"It is not death that harrows us," they lipped,  
"The soundless cell is in itself relief,  
For life is an unfenced flower, benumbed and nipped  
At unawares, and at its best but brief."

The speakers, sundry phantoms of the gone,  
Had risen like filmy flames of phosphor dye,  
As if the palest of sheet lightnings shone  
From the sward near me, as from a nether sky.

And much surprised was I that, spent and dead,  
They should not, like the many, be at rest,  
But stray as apparitions ; hence I said,  
"Why, having slipped life, hark you back distressed ?"

"We are among the few death sets not free.  
The hurt, misrepresented names, who come  
At each year's brink, and cry to History  
To do them justice, or go past them dumb.

"We are stript of rights ; our shames lie unredressed,  
Our deeds in full anatomy are not shown,  
Our words in morsels merely are expressed  
On the scripted page, our motives blurred, unknown."

Then all these shaken slighted visitants sped  
Into the vague, and left me musing there  
On fames that well might instance what they had said,  
Until the New-Year's dawn strode up the air.

“AH, ARE YOU DIGGING ON MY  
GRAVE?”

“AH, are you digging on my grave  
My loved one?—planting rue?”

—“No: yesterday he went to wed  
One of the brightest wealth has bred.  
‘It cannot hurt her now,’ he said,  
‘That I should not be true.’”

“Then who is digging on my grave?  
My nearest dearest kin?”  
—“Ah, no; they sit and think, ‘What use!  
What good will planting flowers produce?  
No tendance of her mound can loose  
Her spirit from Death’s gin.’”

“But some one digs upon my grave?  
My enemy?—prodding sly?”  
—“Nay: when she heard you had passed the Gate  
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,  
She thought you no more worth her hate,  
And cares not where you lie.”

“Then, who is digging on my grave?  
Say—since I have not guessed!”  
—“O it is I, my mistress dear,  
Your little dog, who still lives near,  
And much I hope my movements here  
Have not disturbed your rest?”

## “ARE YOU DIGGING ON MY GRAVE?”

“ Ah, yes! *You* dig upon my grave . . .  
Why flashed it not on me  
That one true heart was left behind!  
What feeling do we ever find  
To equal among human kind  
A dog's fidelity!”

“ Mistress, I dug upon your grave  
To bury a bone, in case  
I should be hungry near this spot  
When passing on my daily trot.  
I am sorry, but I quite forgot  
It was your resting-place.”



## SELF-UNCONSCIOUS

ALONG the way  
He walked that day,  
Watching shapes that reveries limn,  
And seldom he  
Had eyes to see  
The moment that encompassed him.

Bright yellowhammers  
Made mirthful clamours,  
And billed long straws with a bustling air,  
And bearing their load  
Flew up the road  
That he followed, alone, without interest there.

From bank to ground  
And over and round  
They sidled along the adjoining hedge ;  
Sometimes to the gutter  
Their yellow flutter  
Would dip from the nearest slatestone ledge.

The smooth sea-line  
With a metal shine,  
And flashes of white, and a sail thereon,  
He would also descry  
With a half-wrapt eye  
Between the projects he mused upon.

## SELF-UNCONSCIOUS

Yes, round him were these  
Earth's artistries,  
But specious plans that came to his call  
Did most engage  
His pilgrimage,  
While himself he did not see at all.

Dead now as sherds  
Are the yellow birds,  
And all that mattered has passed away ;  
Yet God, the Elf,  
Now shows him that self  
As he was, and should have been shown, that day.

O it would have been good  
Could he then have stood  
At a clear-eyed distance, and conned the whole,  
But now such vision  
Is mere derision,  
Nor soothes his body nor saves his soul.

Not much, some may  
Incline to say,  
To see therein, had it all been seen.  
Nay! he is aware  
A thing was there  
That loomed with an immortal mien.

## THE DISCOVERY

I WANDERED to a crude coast  
Like a ghost ;  
Upon the hills I saw fires—  
Funeral pyres  
Seemingly—and heard breaking  
Waves like distant cannonades that set the land  
shaking.

And so I never once guessed  
A Love-nest,  
Bowered and candle-lit, lay  
In my way,  
Till I found a hid hollow,  
Where I burst on her my heart could not but follow.

## TOLERANCE

"It is a foolish thing," said I,  
"To bear with such, and pass it by ;  
Yet so I do, I know not why !"

And at each cross I would surmise  
That if I had willed not in that wise  
I might have spared me many sighs.

But now the only happiness  
In looking back that I possess—  
Whose lack would leave me comfortless—

Is to remember I refrained  
From masteries I might have gained,  
And for my tolerance was disdained ;

For see, a tomb. And if it were  
I had bent and broke, I should not dare  
To linger in the shadows there.

## BEFORE AND AFTER SUMMER

### I

Looking forward to the spring  
One puts up with anything.  
On this February day  
Though the winds leap down the street  
Wintry scourgings seem but play,  
And these later shafts of sleet  
—Sharper pointed than the first—  
And these later snows—the worst—  
Are as a half-transparent blind  
Riddled by rays from sun behind.

### II

Shadows of the October pine  
Reach into this room of mine :  
On the pine there swings a bird ;  
He is shadowed with the tree.  
Mutely perched he bills no word ;  
Blank as I am even is he.  
For those happy suns are past,  
Fore-discerned in winter last.  
When went by their pleasure, then ?  
I, alas, perceived not when.

## AT DAY-CLOSE IN NOVEMBER

THE ten hours' light is abating,  
And a late bird wings across,  
Where the pines, like waltzers waiting,  
Give their black heads a toss.

Beech leaves, that yellow the noon-time,  
Float past like specks in the eye ;  
I set every tree in my June time,  
And now they obscure the sky.

And the children who ramble through here  
Conceive that there never has been  
A time when no tall trees grew here,  
That none will in time be seen.

## THE YEAR'S AWAKENING

How do you know that the pilgrim track  
Along the belting zodiac  
Swept by the sun in his seeming rounds  
Is traced by now to the Fishes' bounds  
And into the Ram, when weeks of cloud  
Have wrapt the sky in a clammy shroud,  
And never as yet a tinct of spring  
Has shown in the Earth's apparelling ;  
    O vespering bird, how do you know,  
        How do you know ?

How do you know, deep underground,  
Hid in your bed from sight and sound,  
Without a turn in temperature,  
With weather life can scarce endure,  
That light has won a fraction's strength,  
And day put on some moments' length,  
Whereof in merest rote will come,  
Weeks hence, mild airs that do not numb ;  
    O crocus root, how do you know,  
        How do you know ?

*February 1910.*

## UNDER THE WATERFALL

“WHENEVER I plunge my arm, like this,  
In a basin of water, I never miss  
The sweet sharp sense of a fugitive day  
Fetched back from its thickening shroud of gray.

Hence the only prime  
And real love-rhyme  
That I know by heart,  
And that leaves no smart,

Is the purl of a little valley fall  
About three spans wide and two spans tall  
Over a table of solid rock,  
And into a scoop of the self-same block ;  
The purl of a runlet that never ceases  
In stir of kingdoms, in wars, in peaces ;  
With a hollow boiling voice it speaks  
And has spoken since hills were turfless peaks.”

“And why gives this the only prime  
Idea to you of a real love-rhyme ?  
And why does plunging your arm in a bowl  
Full of spring water, bring throbs to your soul ?”

“Well, under the fall, in a crease of the stone,  
Though where precisely none ever has known,  
Jammed darkly, nothing to show how prized,  
And by now with its smoothness opalized,

Is a drinking-glass :  
For, down that pass  
My lover and I  
Walked under a sky



## UNDER THE WATERFALL

Of blue with a leaf-wove awning of green,  
In the burn of August, to paint the scene,  
And we placed our basket of fruit and wine  
By the runlet's rim, where we sat to dine ;  
And when we had drunk from the glass together,  
Arched by the oak-copse from the weather,  
I held the vessel to rinse in the fall,  
Where it slipped, and sank, and was past recall,  
Though we stooped and plumbed the little abyss  
With long bared arms. There the glass still is.  
And, as said, if I thrust my arm below  
Cold water in basin or bowl, a throe  
From the past awakens a sense of that time,  
And the glass we used, and the cascade's rhyme.  
The basin seems the pool, and its edge  
The hard smooth face of the brook-side ledge,  
And the leafy pattern of china-ware  
The hanging plants that were bathing there.

“ By night, by day, when it shines or lours,  
There lies intact that chalice of ours,  
And its presence adds to the rhyme of love  
Persistently sung by the fall above.  
No lip has touched it since his and mine  
In turns therefrom sipped lovers' wine.”



# POEMS OF 1912-13

*Veteris vestigia flammae*



## THE GOING

WHY did you give no hint that night  
That quickly after the morrow's dawn,  
And calmly, as if indifferent quite,  
You would close your term here, up and be gone  
    Where I could not follow  
    With wing of swallow  
To gain one glimpse of you ever anon !

    Never to bid good-bye,  
    Or lip me the softest call,  
Or utter a wish for a word, while I  
Saw morning harden upon the wall,  
    Unmoved, unknowing  
    That your great going  
Had place that moment, and altered all.

Why do you make me leave the house  
And think for a breath it is you I see  
At the end of the alley of bending boughs  
Where so often at dusk you used to be ;  
    Till in darkening dankness  
    The yawning blankness  
Of the perspective sickens me !

    You were she who abode  
    By those red-veined rocks far West,  
You were the swan-necked one who rode  
Along the beetling Beeny Crest,  
    And, reining nigh me,  
    Would muse and eye me,  
While Life unrolled us its very best.

## THE GOING

Why, then, latterly did we not speak,  
Did we not think of those days long dead,  
And ere your vanishing strive to seek  
That time's renewal? We might have said,  
    " In this bright spring weather  
    We'll visit together  
Those places that once we visited."

Well, well ! All's past amend,  
Unchangeable. It must go.  
I seem but a dead man held on end  
To sink down soon. . . . O you could not know  
    That such swift fleeing  
    No soul foreseeing—  
Not even I—would undo me so !

*December 1912.*

## YOUR LAST DRIVE

HERE by the moorway you returned,  
And saw the borough lights ahead  
That lit your face—all undiscerned  
To be in a week the face of the dead,  
And you told of the charm of that haloed view  
That never again would beam on you.

And on your left you passed the spot  
Where eight days later you were to lie,  
And be spoken of as one who was not ;  
Beholding it with a heedless eye  
As alien from you, though under its tree  
You soon would halt everlastingly.

I drove not with you. . . . Yet had I sat  
At your side that eve I should not have seen  
That the countenance I was glancing at  
Had a last-time look in the flickering sheen,  
Nor have read the writing upon your face,  
“ I go hence soon to my resting-place ;

“ You may miss me then. But I shall not know  
How many times you visit me there,  
Or what your thoughts are, or if you go  
There never at all. And I shall not care.  
Should you censure me I shall take no heed  
And even your praises no more shall need.”

## YOUR LAST DRIVE

True : never you'll know. And you will not mind.  
But shall I then slight you because of such ?  
Dear ghost, in the past did you ever find  
The thought "What profit," move me much ?  
Yet abides the fact, indeed, the same,—  
You are past love, praise, indifference, blame.

*December 1912.*



## THE WALK

You did not walk with me  
Of late to the hill-top tree  
    By the gated ways,  
    As in earlier days ;  
    You were weak and lame,  
    So you never came,  
And I went alone, and I did not mind,  
Not thinking of you as left behind.

‘ I walked up there to-day  
Just in the former way ;  
    Surveyed around  
    The familiar ground  
    By myself again :  
    What difference, then ?  
Only that underlying sense  
Of the look of a room on returning thence

## RAIN ON A GRAVE

CLOUDS spout upon her  
Their waters amain  
In ruthless disdain,—  
Her who but lately  
Had shivered with pain  
As at touch of dishonour  
If there had lit on her  
So coldly, so straightly  
Such arrows of rain :

One who to shelter  
Her delicate head  
Would quicken and quicken  
Each tentative tread  
If drops chanced to pelt her  
That summertime spills  
In dust-paven rills  
When thunder-clouds thicken  
And birds close their bills.

Would that I lay there  
And she were housed here !  
Or better, together  
Were folded away there  
Exposed to one weather  
We both,—who would stray there  
When sunny the day there,  
Or evening was clear  
At the prime of the year.

## RAIN ON A GRAVE

Soon will be growing  
Green blades from her mound,  
And daisies be showing  
Like stars on the ground,  
Till she form part of them—  
Ay—the sweet heart of them,  
Loved beyond measure  
With a child's pleasure  
All her life's round.

*Jan. 31, 1913.*

## “I FOUND HER OUT THERE”

I FOUND her out there  
On a slope few see,  
That falls westwardly  
To the salt-edged air,  
Where the ocean breaks  
On the purple strand,  
And the hurricane shakes  
The solid land.

I brought her here,  
And have laid her to rest  
In a noiseless nest  
No sea beats near.  
She will never be stirred  
In her loamy cell  
By the waves long heard  
And loved so well.

So she does not sleep  
By those haunted heights  
The Atlantic smites  
And the blind gales sweep,  
Whence she often would gaze  
At Dundagel's famed head,  
While the dipping blaze  
Dyed her face fire-red ;

And would sigh at the tale  
Of sunk Lyonesse,

## “ I FOUND HER OUT THERE ”

As a wind-tugged tress  
Flapped her cheek like a flail ;  
Or listen at whiles  
With a thought-bound brow  
To the murmuring miles  
She is far from now.

Yet her shade, maybe,  
Will creep underground  
Till it catch the sound  
Of that western sea  
As it swells and sobs  
Where she once domiciled,  
And joy in its throbs  
With the heart of a child.

## WITHOUT CEREMONY

It was your way, my dear,  
To vanish without a word  
When callers, friends, or kin  
Had left, and I hastened in  
To rejoin you, as I inferred.

And when you'd a mind to career  
Off anywhere—say to town—  
You were all on a sudden gone  
Before I had thought thereon,  
Or noticed your trunks were down.

So, now that you disappear  
For ever in that swift style,  
Your meaning seems to me  
Just as it used to be :  
“Good-bye is not worth while !”

## LAMENT

How she would have loved  
A party to-day ! —  
Bright-hatted and gloved,  
With table and tray  
And chairs on the lawn  
Her smiles would have shone  
With welcomings. . . . But  
She is shut, she is shut  
    From friendship's spell  
    In the jailing shell  
    Of her tiny cell.

Or she would have reigned  
At a dinner to-night  
With ardours unfeigned,  
And a generous delight ;  
All in her abode  
She'd have freely bestowed  
On her guests. . . . But alas,  
She is shut under grass  
    Where no cups flow,  
    Powerless to know  
    That it might be so.

And she would have sought  
With a child's eager glance  
The shy snowdrops brought  
By the new year's advance,

## LAMENT

And peered in the rime  
Of Candlemas-time  
For crocuses . . . chanced  
It that she were not tranced  
    From sights she loved best ;  
    Wholly possessed  
    By an infinite rest !

And we are here staying  
Amid these stale things,  
Who care not for gaying,  
And those junketings  
That used so to joy her,  
And never to cloy her  
As us they cloy ! . . . But  
She is shut, she is shut  
    From the cheer of them, dead  
    To all done and said  
    In her yew-arched bed.



## THE HAUNTER

HE does not think that I haunt here nightly :  
    How shall I let him know  
That whither his fancy sets him wandering  
    I, too, alertly go?—  
Hover and hover a few feet from him  
    Just as I used to do,  
But cannot answer the words he lifts me—  
    Only listen thereto!

When I could answer he did not say them :  
    When I could let him know  
How I would like to join in his journeys  
    Seldom he wished to go.  
Now that he goes and wants me with him  
    More than he used to do,  
Never he sees my faithful phantom  
    Though he speaks thereto.

Yes, I companion him to places  
    Only dreamers know,  
Where the shy hares print long paces,  
    Where the night rooks go ;  
Into old aisles where the past is all to him,  
    Close as his shade can do,  
Always lacking the power to call to him,  
    Near as I reach thereto!

## THE HAUNTER

What a good haunter I am, O tell him !  
Quickly make him know  
If he but sigh since my loss befell him  
Straight to his side I go.  
Tell him a faithful one is doing  
All that love can do  
Still that his path may be worth pursuing,  
And to bring peace thereto.

## THE VOICE

WOMAN much missed, how you call to me, call to me,  
Saying that now you are not as you were  
When you had changed from the one who was all to me,  
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear ? Let me view you, then,  
Standing as when I drew near to the town  
Where you would wait for me : yes, as I knew you  
then,  
Even to the original air-blue gown !

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness  
Travelling across the wet mead to me here,  
You being ever dissolved to existlessness,  
Heard no more again far or near ?

Thus I ; faltering forward,  
Leaves around me falling,  
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,  
And the woman calling.

*December 1912.*

## HIS VISITOR

I COME across from Mellstock while the moon wastes  
weaker  
To behold where I lived with you for twenty years  
and more :  
I shall go in the gray, at the passing of the mail-train,  
And need no setting open of the long familiar door  
As before.

The change I notice in my once own quarters !  
A brilliant budded border where the daisies used to be,  
The rooms new painted, and the pictures altered,  
And other cups and saucers, and no cozy nook for tea  
As with me.

I discern the dim faces of the sleep-wrapt servants ;  
They are not those who tended me through feeble  
hours and strong,  
But strangers quite, who never knew my rule here,  
Who never saw me painting, never heard my softling  
song  
Float along.

So I don't want to linger in this re-decked dwelling,  
I feel too uneasy at the contrasts I behold,  
And I make again for Mellstock to return here never,  
And rejoin the roomy silence, and the mute and  
manifold  
Souls of old.

## A CIRCULAR

As "legal representative"  
I read a missive not my own,  
On new designs the senders give  
    For clothes, in tints as shown.

Here figure blouses, gowns for tea,  
And presentation-trains of state,  
Charming ball-dresses, millinery,  
    Warranted up to date.

And this gay-pictured, spring-time shout  
Of Fashion, hails what lady proud?  
Her who before last year ebbed out  
    Was costumed in a shroud.

## A DREAM OR NO

Why go to Saint-Juliot? What's Juliot to me?  
Some strange necromancy  
But charmed me to fancy  
That much of my life claims the spot as its key.

Yes. I have had dreams of that place in the West,  
And a maiden abiding  
Thereat as in hiding;  
Fair-eyed and white-shouldered, broad-browed and  
brown-tressed.

And of how, coastward bound on a night long ago,  
There lonely I found her,  
The sea-birds around her,  
And other than nigh things uncaring to know.

So sweet her life there (in my thought has it seemed)  
That quickly she drew me  
To take her unto me,  
And lodge her long years with me. Such have I  
dreamed.

But nought of that maid from Saint-Juliot I see;  
Can she ever have been here,  
And shed her life's sheen here,  
The woman I thought a long housemate with me?

## A DREAM OR NO

Does there even a place like Saint-Juliot exist ?  
Or a Valency Valley  
With stream and leafed alley,  
Or Beeny, or Bos with its flounce flinging mist ?

*February 1913.*

## AFTER A JOURNEY

HERETO I come to view a voiceless ghost ;  
Whither, O whither will its whim now draw me ?  
Up the cliff, down, till I'm lonely, lost,  
And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.  
Where you will next be there's no knowing,  
Facing round about me everywhere,  
With your nut-coloured hair,  
And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and going.

Yes : I have re-entered your olden haunts at last ;  
Through the years, through the dead scenes I have  
tracked you ;  
What have you now found to say of our past—  
Scanned across the dark space wherein I have lacked  
you ?  
Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought division?  
Things were not lastly as firstly well  
With us twain, you tell ?  
But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

I see what you are doing : you are leading me on  
To the spots we knew when we haunted here  
together,  
The waterfall, above which the mist-bow shone  
At the then fair hour in the then fair weather,  
And the cave just under, with a voice still so hollow  
That it seems to call out to me from forty years  
ago,  
When you were all aglow,  
And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow !



## AFTER A JOURNEY

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,  
The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily,  
Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,  
For the stars close their shutters and the dawn  
whitens hazily.  
Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,  
The bringing me here ; nay, bring me here again !  
I am just the same as when  
Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

PENTARGAN BAY.

## A DEATH-DAY RECALLED

BEENV did not quiver,  
Juliot grew not gray,  
Thin Valency's river  
Held its wonted way.  
Bos seemed not to utter  
Dimmest note of dirge,  
Targan mouth a mutter  
To its creamy surge.

Yet though these, unheeding,  
Listless, passed the hour  
Of her spirit's speeding,  
She had, in her flower,  
Sought and loved the places—  
Much and often pined  
For their lonely faces  
When in towns confined.

Why did not Valency  
In his purl deplore  
One whose haunts were whence he  
Drew his limpid store?  
Why did Bos not thunder,  
Targan apprehend  
Body and breath were sunder  
Of their former friend?

## BEENY CLIFF

*March 1870—March 1913*

### I

O THE opal and the sapphire of that wandering western  
    sea,  
And the woman riding high above with bright hair  
    flapping free—  
The woman whom I loved so, and who loyally loved  
    me.

### II

The pale mews plained below us, and the waves  
    seemed far away  
In a nether sky, engrossed in saying their ceaseless  
    babbling say,  
As we laughed light-heartedly aloft on that clear-sunned  
    March day.

### III

A little cloud then cloaked us, and there flew an irised  
    rain,  
And the Atlantic dyed its levels with a dull misfeatured  
    stain,  
And then the sun burst out again, and purples prinked  
    the main.

## BEENY CLIFF

### IV

—Still in all its chasmal beauty bulks old Beeny to the  
sky,  
And shall she and I not go there once again now  
March is nigh,  
And the sweet things said in that March say anew  
there by and by?

### V

What if still in chasmal beauty looms that wild weird  
western shore,  
The woman now is—elsewhere—whom the ambling  
pony bore,  
And nor knows nor cares for Beeny, and will laugh  
there nevermore.

## AT CASTLE BOTEREL

As I drive to the junction of lane and highway,  
And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,  
I look behind at the fading byway,  
And see on its slope, now glistening wet,  
Distinctly yet

Myself and a girlish form benighted  
In dry March weather. We climb the road  
Beside a chaise. We had just alighted  
To ease the sturdy pony's load  
When he sighed and slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we talked of  
Matters not much, nor to what it led,—  
Something that life will not be balked of  
Without rude reason till hope is dead,  
And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever  
A time of such quality, since or before,  
In that hill's story? To one mind never,  
Though it has been climbed, foot-swift, foot-sore,  
By thousands more.

Primaeval rocks form the road's steep border,  
And much have they faced there, first and last,  
Of the transitory in Earth's long order ;  
But what they record in colour and cast  
Is—that we two passed.

## AT CASTLE BOTEREL

And to me, though Time's unflinching rigour,  
In mindless rote, has ruled from sight  
The substance now, one phantom figure  
Remains on the slope, as when that night  
Saw us alight.

I look and see it there, shrinking, shrinking,  
I look back at it amid the rain  
For the very last time ; for my sand is sinking,  
And I shall traverse old love's domain  
Never again.

*March 1913.*

## PLACES

NOBODY says : Ah, that is the place  
Where chanced, in the hollow of years ago,  
What none of the Three Towns cared to know—  
The birth of a little girl of grace—  
The sweetest the house saw, first or last ;  
    Yet it was so  
    On that day long past.

Nobody thinks : There, there she lay  
In a room by the Hoe, like the bud of a flower,  
And listened, just after the bedtime hour,  
To the stammering chimes that used to play  
The quaint Old Hundred-and-Thirteenth tune  
    In Saint Andrew's tower  
    Night, morn, and noon.

Nobody calls to mind that here  
Upon Boterel Hill, where the waggoners skid,  
With cheeks whose airy flush outbid  
Fresh fruit in bloom, and free of fear,  
She cantered down, as if she must fall  
    (Though she never did),  
    To the charm of all.

Nay : one there is to whom these things,  
That nobody else's mind calls back,  
Have a savour that scenes in being lack,  
And a presence more than the actual brings ;  
To whom to-day is beneaped and stale,  
    And its urgent clack  
    But a vapid tale.

PLYMOUTH, *March* 1913.

## THE PHANTOM HORSEWOMAN

### I

QUEER are the ways of a man I know :  
He comes and stands  
In a careworn craze,  
And looks at the sands  
And the seaward haze,  
With moveless hands  
And face and gaze,  
Then turns to go . . .  
And what does he see when he gazes so ?

### II

They say he sees as an instant thing  
More clear than to-day,  
A sweet soft scene  
That once was in play  
By that briny green ;  
Yes, notes alway  
Warm, real, and keen,  
What his back years bring—  
A phantom of his own figuring.

### III

Of this vision of his they might say more :  
Not only there  
Does he see this sight,



## THE PHANTOM HORSEWOMAN

But everywhere  
In his brain—day, night,  
As if on the air  
It were drawn rose bright—  
Yea, far from that shore  
Does he carry this vision of heretofore :

### IV

A ghost-girl-rider. And though, toil-tried,  
He withers daily,  
Time touches her not,  
But she still rides gaily  
In his rapt thought  
On that shagged and shaly  
Atlantic spot,  
And as when first eyed  
Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide.

1913.

## THE SPELL OF THE ROSE

“ I MEAN to build a hall anon,  
And shape two turrets there,  
And a broad newelled stair,  
And a cool well for crystal water ;  
Yes ; I will build a hall anon,  
Plant roses love shall feed upon,  
And apple trees and pear.”

He set to build the manor-hall,  
And shaped the turrets there,  
And the broad newelled stair,  
And the cool well for crystal water ;  
He built for me that manor-hall,  
And planted many trees withal,  
But no rose anywhere.

And as he planted never a rose  
That bears the flower of love,  
Though other flowers thrive  
Some heart-bane moved our souls to sever  
Since he had planted never a rose ;  
And misconceits raised horrid shows,  
And agonies came thereof.

“ I'll mend these miseries,” then said I,  
And so, at dead of night,  
I went and, screened from sight,  
That nought should keep our souls in severance,

## THE SPELL OF THE ROSE

I set a rose-bush. "This," said I,  
"May end divisions dire and wry,  
And long-drawn days of blight."

But I was called from earth—yea, called  
Before my rose-bush grew ;  
And would that now I knew  
What feels he of the tree I planted,  
And whether, after I was called  
To be a ghost, he, as of old,  
Gave me his heart anew !

Perhaps now blooms that queen of trees  
I set but saw not grow,  
And he, beside its glow—  
Eyes couched of the mis-vision that blurred me—  
Ay, there beside that queen of trees  
He sees me as I was, though sees  
Too late to tell me so !

## ST. LAUNCE'S REVISITED

SLIP back, Time !  
Yet again I am nearing  
Castle and keep, uprearing  
Gray, as in my prime.

At the inn  
Smiling nigh, why is it  
Not as on my visit  
When hope and I were twin ?

Groom and jade  
Whom I found here, moulder ;  
Strange the tavern-holder,  
Strange the tap-maid.

Here I hired  
Horse and man for bearing  
Me on my wayfaring  
To the door desired.

Evening gloomed  
As I journeyed forward  
To the faces shoreward,  
Till their dwelling loomed.

## ST. LAUNCE'S REVISITED

If again  
Towards the Atlantic sea there  
I should speed, they'd be there  
Surely now as then ? . . .

Why waste thought,  
When I know them vanished  
Under earth ; yea, banished  
Ever into nought !

## WHERE THE PICNIC WAS

WHERE we made the fire  
In the summer time  
Of branch and briar  
On the hill to the sea,  
I slowly climb  
Through winter mire,  
And scan and trace  
The forsaken place  
Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,  
And the grass is gray,  
But the spot still shows  
As a burnt circle—aye,  
And stick-ends, charred,  
Still strew the sward  
Whereon I stand,  
Last relic of the band  
Who came that day!

Yes, I am here  
Just as last year,  
And the sea breathes brine  
From its strange straight line  
Up hither, the same  
As when we four came.  
—But two have wandered far  
From this grassy rise  
Into urban roar  
Where no picnics are,  
And one—has shut her eyes  
For evermore.

## MISCELLANEOUS PIECES





## THE WISTFUL LADY

“ LOVE, while you were away there came to me—  
From whence I cannot tell—  
A plaintive lady pale and passionless,  
Who laid her eyes upon me critically,  
And weighed me with a wearing wistfulness,  
As if she knew me well.”

“ I saw no lady of that wistful sort  
As I came riding home.  
Perhaps she was some dame the Fates constrain  
By memories sadder than she can support,  
Or by unhappy vacancy of brain,  
To leave her roof and roam ? ”

“ Ah, but she knew me. And before this time  
I have seen her, lending ear  
To my light outdoor words, and pondering each,  
Her frail white finger swayed in pantomime,  
As if she fain would close with me in speech,  
And yet would not come near.

“ And once I saw her beckoning with her hand  
As I came into sight  
At an upper window. And I at last went out ;  
But when I reached where she had seemed to stand  
And wandered up and down and searched about,  
I found she had vanished quite.”

## THE WISTFUL LADY

Then thought I how my dead Love used to say,  
    With a small smile, when she  
Was waning wan, that she would hover round  
And show herself after her passing-day  
To any newer Love I might have found,  
    But show her not to me.

## THE WOMAN IN THE RYE

“WHY do you stand in the dripping rye,  
Cold-lipped, unconscious, wet to the knee,  
When there are firesides near?” said I.  
“I told him I wished him dead,” said she.

“Yea, cried it in my haste to one  
Whom I had loved, whom I well loved still ;  
And die he did. And I hate the sun,  
And stand here lonely, aching, chill ;

“Stand waiting, waiting under skies  
That blow reproach, the while I see  
The rooks sheer off to where he lies  
Wrapt in a peace withheld from me !”

## THE CHEVAL-GLASS

WHY do you harbour that great cheval-glass  
Filling up your narrow room ?  
You never preen or plume ;  
Or look in a week at your full-length figure—  
Picture of bachelor gloom !

“ Well, when I dwelt in ancient England,  
Renting the valley farm,  
Thoughtless of all heart-harm,  
I used to gaze at the parson's daughter,  
A creature of nameless charm.

“ Thither there came a lover and won her,  
Carried her off from my view.  
O it was then I knew  
Misery of a cast undreamt of—  
More than, indeed, my due !

“ Then far rumours of her ill-usage  
Came, like a chilling breath  
When a man languisheth ;  
Followed by news that her mind lost balance,  
And, in a space, of her death.

“ Soon sank her father ; and next was the auction—  
Everything to be sold :  
Mid things new and old  
Stood this glass in her former chamber,  
Long in her use, I was told.

## THE CHEVAL-GLASS

“ Well, I awaited the sale and bought it. . . .

There by my bed it stands,

And as the dawn expands

Often I see her pale-faced form there

Brushing her hair's bright bands.

“ There, too, at pallid midnight moments

Quick she will come to my call,

Smile from the frame withal

Ponderingly, as she used to regard me

Passing her father's wall.

“ So that it was for its revelations

I brought it oversea,

And drag it about with me. . . .

Anon I shall break it and bury its fragments

Where my grave is to be.”

## THE RE-ENACTMENT

BETWEEN the folding sea-downs,  
In the gloom  
Of a wailful wintry nightfall,  
When the boom  
Of the ocean, like a hammering in a hollow tomb,

Throbbled up the copse-clothed valley  
From the shore  
To the chamber where I darkled,  
Sunk and sore  
With gray ponderings why my Loved one had not  
come before

To salute me in the dwelling  
That of late  
I had hired to waste a while in—  
Dim of date,  
Quaint, and remote—wherein I now expectant sate ;

On the solitude, unsignalled,  
Broke a man  
Who, in air as if at home there,  
Seemed to scan  
Every fire-flecked nook of the apartment span by  
span.

A stranger's and no lover's  
Eyes were these,

## THE RE-ENACTMENT

Eyes of a man who measures  
What he sees  
But vaguely, as if wrapt in filmy phantasies.

Yea, his bearing was so absent  
As he stood,  
It bespoke a chord so plaintive  
In his mood,  
That soon I judged he would not wrong my quietude.

"Ah—the supper is just ready,"  
Then he said,  
"And the years'-long-binned Madeira  
Flashes red!"  
(There was no wine, no food, no supper-table spread.)

"You will forgive my coming,  
Lady fair?  
I see you as at that time  
Rising there,  
The self-same curious querying in your eyes and air.

"Yet no. How so? You wear not  
The same gown,  
Your locks show woful difference,  
Are not brown:  
What, is it not as when I hither came from town?

"And the place. . . . But you seem other—  
Can it be?  
What's this that Time is doing  
Unto me?  
*You* dwell here, unknown woman? . . . Whereabouts,  
then, is she?

"And the house-things are much shifted.—  
Put them where  
They stood on this night's fellow;  
Shift her chair:  
Here was the couch: and the piano should be there."

## THE RE-ENACTMENT

I indulged him, verily nerve-strained  
    Being alone,  
And I moved the things as bidden,  
    One by one,  
And feigned to push the old piano where he had  
    shown.

“Aha—now I can see her !  
    Stand aside :  
Don't thrust her from the table  
    Where, meek-eyed,  
She makes attempt with matron-manners to preside.

“She serves me : now she rises,  
    Goes to play. . . .  
But you obstruct her, fill her  
    With dismay,  
And embarrassed, scared, she vanishes away !”

And, as 'twere useless longer  
    To persist,  
He sighed, and sought the entry  
    Ere I wist,  
And retreated, disappearing soundless in the mist.

That here some mighty passion  
    Once had burned,  
Which still the walls enghosted,  
    I discerned,  
And that by its strong spell mine might be overturned.

I sat depressed ; till, later,  
    My Love came ;  
But something in the chamber  
    Dimmed our flame,—  
An emanation, making our due words fall tame,

As if the intenser drama  
    Shown me there



## THE RE-ENACTMENT

Of what the walls had witnessed  
Filled the air,  
And left no room for later passion anywhere.

So came it that our fervours  
Did quite fail  
Of future consummation—  
Being made quail  
By the weird witchery of the parlour's hidden tale,

Which I, as years passed, faintly  
Learnt to trace,—  
One of sad love, born full-winged  
In that place  
Where the predestined sorrowers first stood face to  
face.

And as that month of winter  
Circles round,  
And the evening of the date-day  
Grows embrowned,  
I am conscious of those presences, and sit spellbound.

There, often—lone, forsaken—  
Queries breed  
Within me ; whether a phantom  
Had my heed  
On that strange night, or was it some wrecked heart  
indeed ?

## HER SECRET

THAT love's dull smart distressed my heart  
    He shrewdly learnt to see,  
But that I was in love with a dead man  
    Never suspected he.

He searched for the trace of a pictured face,  
    He watched each missive come,  
And a sheet that seemed like a love-line  
    Wrought his look lurid and numb.

He dogged my feet to the city street,  
    He followed me to the sea,  
But not to the nigh, still churchyard  
    Did he dream of following me.

## “SHE CHARGED ME”

SHE charged me with having said this and that  
To another woman long years before,  
In the very parlour where we sat,—

Sat on a night when the endless pour  
Of rain on the roof and the road below  
Bent the spring of the spirit more and more. . . .

—So charged she me ; and the Cupid’s bow  
Of her mouth was hard, and her eyes, and her face,  
And her white forefinger lifted slow.

Had she done it gently, or shown a trace  
That not too curiously would she view  
A folly flown ere her reign had place,

A kiss might have closed it. But I knew  
From the fall of each word, and the pause between,  
That the curtain would drop upon us two  
Ere long, in our play of slave and queen.

## THE NEWCOMER'S WIFE

HE paused on the sill of a door ajar  
That screened a lively liquor-bar,  
For the name had reached him through the door  
Of her he had married the week before.

“ We called her the Hack of the Parade ;  
But she was discreet in the games she played ;  
If slightly worn, she's pretty yet,  
And gossips, after all, forget :

“ And he knows nothing of her past ;  
I am glad the girl's in luck at last ;  
Such ones, though stale to native eyes,  
Newcomers snatch at as a prize.”

“ Yes, being a stranger he sees her blent  
Of all that's fresh and innocent,  
Nor dreams how many a love-campaign  
She had enjoyed before his reign !”

That night there was the splash of a fall  
Over the slimy harbour-wall :  
They searched, and at the deepest place  
Found him with crabs upon his face.

## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

HE lay awake, with a harassed air,  
And she, in her cloud of loose lank hair,  
    Seemed trouble-tried  
As the dawn drew in on their faces there.

The chamber looked far over the sea  
From a white hotel on a white-stoned quay,  
    And stepping a stride  
He parted the window-drapery.

Above the level horizon spread  
The sunrise, firing them foot to head  
    From its smouldering lair,  
And painting their pillows with dyes of red.

“What strange disquiets have stirred you, dear,  
This dragging night, with starts in fear  
    Of me, as it were,  
Or of something evil hovering near?”

“My husband, can I have fear of you?  
What should one fear from a man whom few,  
    Or none, had matched  
In that late long spell of delays undue!”

He watched her eyes in the heaving sun:  
“Then what has kept, O reticent one,  
    Those lids unlatched—  
Anything promised I’ve not yet done?”

## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

"O it's not a broken promise of yours  
(For what quite lightly your lip assures  
The due time brings)  
That has troubled my sleep, and no waking cures!" . . .

"I have shaped my will ; 'tis at hand," said he ;  
"I subscribe it to-day, that no risk there be  
In the hap of things  
Of my leaving you menaced by poverty."

"That a boon provision I'm safe to get,  
Signed, sealed by my lord as it were a debt,  
I cannot doubt,  
Or ever this peering sun be set."

"But you flung my arms away from your side,  
And faced the wall. No month-old bride  
Ere the tour be out  
In an air so loth can be justified ?

"Ah—had you a male friend once loved well,  
Upon whose suit disaster fell  
And frustrance swift ?  
Honest you are, and may care to tell."

She lay impassive, and nothing broke  
The stillness other than, stroke by stroke,  
The lazy lift  
Of the tide below them ; till she spoke :

"I once had a friend—a Love, if you will—  
Whose wife forsook him, and sank until  
She was made a thrall  
In a prison-cell for a deed of ill. . . .

"He remained alone ; and we met—to love,  
But barring legitimate joy thereof  
Stood a doorless wall,  
Though we prized each other all else above.

## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

“ And this was why, though I'd touched my prime,  
I put off suitors from time to time—

    Yourself with the rest—  
Till friends, who approved you, called it crime,

“ And when misgivings weighed on me  
In my lover's absence, hurriedly,

    And much distress,  
I took you. . . . Ah, that such could be! . . .

“ Now, saw you when crossing from yonder shore  
At yesternoon, that the packet bore

    On a white-wreathed bier  
A coffined body towards the fore ?

“ Well, while you stood at the other end,  
The loungers talked, and I couldn't but lend

    A listening ear,  
For they named the dead. 'Twas the wife of my friend.

“ He was there, but did not note me, veiled,  
Yet I saw that a joy, as of one unjailed,

    Now shone in his gaze ;  
He knew not his hope of me just had failed !

“ They had brought her home : she was born in this isle ;  
And he will return to his domicile,

    And pass his days  
Alone, and not as he dreamt erstwhile ! ”

“—So you've lost a sprucer spouse than I ! ”  
She held her peace, as if fain deny

    She would indeed  
For his pleasure's sake, but could lip no lie.

“ One far less formal and plain and slow ! ”  
She let the laconic assertion go

    As if of need  
She held the conviction that it was so.

## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

“ Regard me as his he always should,  
He had said, and wed me he vowed he would  
    In his prime or sere  
Most verily do, if ever he could ;

“ And this fulfilment is now his aim,  
For a letter, addressed in my maiden name,  
    Has dogged me here,  
Reminding me faithfully of his claim ;

“ And it started a hope like a lightning-streak  
That I might go to him—say for a week—  
    And afford you right  
To put me away, and your vows unspeak.

“ To be sure you have said, as of dim intent,  
That marriage is a plain event  
    Of black and white,  
Without any ghost of sentiment,

“ And my heart has quailed.—But deny it true  
That you will never this lock undo !  
    No God intends  
To thwart the yearning He’s father to ! ”

The husband hemmed, then blandly bowed  
In the light of the angry morning cloud.

“ So my idyll ends,  
And a drama opens ! ” he mused aloud ;

And his features froze. “ You may take it as true  
That I will never this lock undo  
    For so depraved  
A passion as that which kindles you ! ”

Said she : “ I am sorry you see it so ;  
I had hoped you might have let me go,  
    And thus been saved  
The pain of learning there’s more to know.”



## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

"More? What may that be? Gad, I think  
You have told me enough to make me blink!

Yet if more remain  
Then own it to me. I will not shrink!"

"Well, it is this. As we could not see  
That a legal marriage would ever be,

To end our pain  
We united ourselves informally;

"And vowed at a chancel-altar nigh,  
With book and ring, a lifelong tie;

A contract vain  
To the world, but real to Him on High."

"And you became as his wife?"—"I did."—  
He stood as stiff as a caryatid,

And said, "Indeed! . . .  
No matter. You're mine, whatever you've hid! "

"But is it right! When I only gave  
My hand to you in a sweat to save,

Through desperate need  
(As I thought), my fame, for I was not brave!"

"To save your fame? Your meaning is dim,  
For nobody knew of your altar-whim?"

"I mean—I feared  
There might be fruit of my tie with him;

"And to cloak it by marriage I'm not the first,  
Though, maybe, morally most accurst

Through your unpeered  
And strict uprightness. That's the worst!

"While yesterday his worn contours  
Convinced me that love like his endures,

And that my troth-plight  
Had been his, in fact, and not truly yours."

## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

"So, my lady, you raise the veil by degrees. . .  
I own this last is enough to freeze  
    The warmest wight!  
Now hear the other side, if you please :

"I did say once, though without intent,  
That marriage is a plain event  
    Of black and white,  
Whatever may be its sentiment :

"I'll act accordingly, none the less  
That you soiled the contract in time of stress,  
    Thereto induced  
By the feared results of your wantonness.

"But the thing is over, and no one knows,  
And it's nought to the future what you disclose.  
    That you'll be loosed  
For such an episode, don't suppose !

"No : I'll not free you. And if it appear  
There was too good ground for your first fear  
    From your amorous tricks,  
I'll father the child. Yes, by God, my dear.

"Even should you fly to his arms, I'll damn  
Opinion, and fetch you ; treat as sham  
    Your mutinous kicks,  
And whip you home. That's the sort I am !"

She whitened. "Enough. . . . Since you disapprove  
I'll yield in silence, and never move  
    Till my last pulse ticks  
A footstep from the domestic groove."

"Then swear it," he said, "and your king uncrown,"  
He drew her forth in her long white gown,  
    And she knelt and swore.  
"Good. Now you may go and again lie down.

## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

"Since you've played these pranks and given no sign,  
You shall crave this man of yours ; pine and pine  
    With sighings sore,  
'Till I've starved your love for him ; nailed you mine !

"I'm a practical man, and want no tears ;  
You've made a fool of me, it appears ;  
    That you don't again  
Is a lesson I'll teach you in future years."

She answered not, lying listlessly  
With her dark dry eyes on the coppery sea,  
    That now and then  
Flung its lazy flounce at the neighbouring quay.

1910.

## A KING'S SOLILOQUY

ON THE NIGHT OF HIS FUNERAL

FROM the slow march and muffled drum  
And crowds distrest,  
And book and bell, at length I have come  
To my full rest.

A ten years' rule beneath the sun  
Is wound up here,  
And what I have done, what left undone,  
Figures out clear.

Yet in the estimate of such  
It grieves me more  
That I by some was loved so much  
Than that I bore,

From others, judgment of that hue  
Which over-hope  
Breeds from a theoretic view  
Of regal scope.

For kingly opportunities  
Right many have sighed ;  
How best to bear its devilries  
Those learn who have tried !

I have eaten the fat and drunk the sweet,  
Lived the life out

## A KING'S SOLILOQUY

From the first greeting glad drum-beat  
To the last shout.

What pleasure earth affords to kings  
I have enjoyed  
Through its long vivid pulse-stirrings  
Even till it cloyed.

What days of drudgery, nights of stress  
Can cark a throne,  
Even one maintained in peacefulness,  
I too have known.

And so, I think, could I step back  
To life again,  
I should prefer the average track  
Of average men,

Since, as with them, what kingship would  
It cannot do,  
Nor to first thoughts however good  
Hold itself true.

Something binds hard the royal hand,  
As all that be,  
And it is That has shaped, has planned  
My acts and me.

*May 1910.*

## THE CORONATION

At Westminster, hid from the light of day,  
Many who once had shone as monarchs lay.

Edward the Pious, and two Edwards more,  
The second Richard, Henrys three or four ;

That is to say, those who were called the Third,  
Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth (the much self-widowed),

And James the Scot, and near him Charles the Second,  
And, too, the second George could there be reckoned.

Of women, Mary and Queen Elizabeth,  
And Anne, all silent in a musing death ;

And William's Mary, and Mary, Queen of Scots,  
And consort-queens whose names oblivion blots ;

And several more whose chronicle one sees  
Adorning ancient royal pedigrees.

—Now, as they drowsed on, freed from Life's old thrall,  
And heedless, save of things exceptional,

Said one: "What means this throbbing thudding sound  
That reaches to us here from overground ;

"A sound of chisels, augers, planes, and saws,  
Infringing all ecclesiastic laws ?

## THE CORONATION

"And these tons-weight of timber on us pressed,  
Unfelt here since we entered into rest?"

"Surely, at least to us, being corpses royal,  
A meet repose is owing by the loyal?"

"—Perhaps a scaffold!" Mary Stuart sighed,  
"If such still be. It was that way I died."

"—Ods! Far more like," said he the many-wived,  
"That for a wedding 'tis this work's contrived."

"Ha-ha! I never would bow down to Rimmon,  
But I had a rare time with those six women!"

"Not all at once?" gasped he who loved confession.  
"Nay, nay!" said Hal. "That would have been  
transgression."

"—They build a catafalque here, black and tall,  
Perhaps," mused Richard, "for some funeral?"

And Anne chimed in: "Ah, yes: it may be so!"  
"Nay!" squeaked Eliza. "Little you seem to know—"

"Clearly 'tis for some crowning here in state,  
As they crowned us at our long bygone date;

"Though we'd no such a power of carpentry,  
But let the ancient architecture be;

"If I were up there where the parsons sit,  
In one of my gold robes, I'd see to it!"

"But you are not," Charles chuckled. "You are  
here,  
And never will know the sun again, my dear!"

## THE CORONATION

“Yea,” whispered those whom no one had addressed ;  
“With slow, sad march, amid a folk distressed,  
We were brought here, to take our dusty rest.

“And here, alas, in darkness laid below,  
We’ll wait and listen, and endure the show. . .  
Clamour dogs kingship ; afterwards not so !”

1911.



## AQUAE SULIS

THE chimes called midnight, just at interlune,  
And the daytime parle on the Roman investigations  
Was shut to silence, save for the husky tune  
The bubbling waters played near the excavations.

And a warm air came up from underground,  
And a flutter, as of a filmy shape unsepulchred,  
That collected itself, and waited, and looked around :  
Nothing was seen, but utterances could be heard :

Those of the goddess whose shrine was beneath the pile  
Of the God with the baldachined altar overhead :  
“ And what did you win by raising this nave and aisle  
Close on the site of the temple I tenanted ?

“ The notes of your organ have thrilled down out of  
view  
To the earth-clogged wrecks of my edifice many a year,  
Though stately and shining once—ay, long ere you  
Had set up crucifix and candle here.

“ Your priests have trampled the dust of mine without  
rueing,  
Despising the joys of man whom I so much loved,  
Though my springs boil on by your Gothic arcades and  
pewing,  
And sculptures crude. . . . Would Jove they could be  
removed ! ”

## AQUAE SULIS

“—Repress, O lady proud, your traditional ires ;  
You know not by what a frail thread we equally hang ;  
It is said we are images both—twitched by people’s  
    desires ;  
And that I, like you, fail as a song men yesterday sang !”

“ What—a Jumping-jack you, and myself but a poor  
    Jumping-jill,  
Now worm-caten, times ago twitched at Humanity’s  
    bid ?  
O I cannot endure it !—But, chance to us whatso there  
    will,  
Let us kiss and be friends ! Come—agree you ? ”—  
    None heard if he did. . . .

And the olden dark hid the cavities late laid bare,  
And all was suspended and soundless as before,  
Except for a gossamery noise fading off in the air,  
And the boiling voice of the waters’ medicinal pour.

BATH.

## SEVENTY-FOUR AND TWENTY

HERE goes a man of seventy-four,  
Who sees not what life means for him,  
And here another in years a score  
Who reads its very figure and trim.

The one who shall walk to-day with me  
Is not the youth who gazes far,  
But the breezy sire who cannot see  
What Earth's ingrained conditions are.

## THE ELOPEMENT

"A WOMAN never agreed to it!" said my knowing friend to me.

"That one thing she'd refuse to do for Solomon's mines in fee :

No woman ever will make herself look older than she is."

I did not answer; but I thought, "you err there, ancient Quiz."

It took a rare one, true, to do it; for she was surely rare—

As rare a soul at that sweet time of her life as she was fair.

And urging heart-heaves, too, were strong, for ours was a passionate case,

Yea, passionate enough to lead to freking with that young face.

I have told no one about it, should perhaps make few believe,

But I think it over now that life looms dull and years bereave,

How blank we stood at our bright wits' end, two blown barks in distress,

How self-regard in her was slain by her large tenderness.

I said : "The only chance for us in a crisis of this kind Is going it thorough!"—"Yes," she calmly breathed.

"Well, I don't mind."

## THE ELOPEMENT

And we blanched her dark locks ruthlessly : set  
wrinkles on her brow ;

Ay—she was a right rare woman then, whatever she  
may be now.

That night we heard a coach drive up, and questions  
asked below.

“ A gent with an elderly wife, sir,” was returned from  
the bureau.

And the wheels went rattling on, and free at last from  
public ken

We washed all off in her chamber and restored her  
youth again.

How many years ago it was ! Some fifty can it be  
Since that adventure held us, and she played old wife  
to me ?

But in time convention won her, as it wins all women  
at last,

And now she is rich and respectable, and time has  
buried the past.

## “I ROSE UP AS MY CUSTOM IS”

I ROSE up as my custom is  
On the eve of All-Souls' day,  
And left my grave for an hour or so  
To call on those I used to know  
Before I passed away.

I visited my former Love  
As she lay by her husband's side ;  
I asked her if life pleased her, now  
She was rid of a poet wrung in brow,  
And crazed with the ills he eyed ;

Who used to drag her here and there  
Wherever his fancies led,  
And point out pale phantasmal things,  
And talk of vain vague purposings  
That she discredited.

She was quite civil, and replied,  
“ Old comrade, is that you ?  
Well, on the whole, I like my life.—  
I know I swore I'd be no wife,  
But what was I to do ?

“ You see, of all men for my sex  
A poet is the worst ;  
Women are practical, and they  
Crave the wherewith to pay their way,  
And slake their social thirst.

## “I ROSE UP AS MY CUSTOM IS”

“ You were a poet—quite the ideal  
That we all love awhile :  
But look at this man snoring here—  
He’s no romantic chanticleer,  
Yet keeps me in good style.

“ He makes no quest into my thoughts,  
But a poet wants to know  
What one has felt from earliest days,  
Why one thought not in other ways,  
And one’s Loves of long ago.”

Her words benumbed my fond faint ghost ;  
The nightmares neighed from their stalls,  
The vampires screeched, the harpies flew,  
And under the dim dawn I withdrew  
To Death’s inviolate halls.

## A WEEK

ON Monday night I closed my door,  
And thought you were not as heretofore,  
And little cared if we met no more.

I seemed on Tuesday night to trace  
Something beyond mere commonplace  
In your ideas, and heart, and face.

On Wednesday I did not opine  
Your life would ever be one with mine,  
Though if it were we should well combine.

On Thursday noon I liked you well,  
And fondly felt that we must dwell  
Not far apart, whatever befell.

On Friday it was with a thrill  
In gazing towards your distant vill  
I owned you were my dear one still.

I saw you wholly to my mind  
On Saturday—even one who shrined  
All that was best of womankind.

As wing-clipt sea-gull for the sea  
On Sunday night I longed for thee,  
Without whom life were waste to me!



## HAD YOU WEPT

HAD you wept ; had you but neared me with a hazed  
uncertain ray,  
Dewy as the face of the dawn, in your large and  
luminous eye,  
Then would have come back all the joys the tidings  
had slain that day,  
And a new beginning, a fresh fair heaven, have  
smoothed the things awry.  
But you were less feebly human, and no passionate  
need for clinging  
Possessed your soul to overthrow reserve when I came  
near ;  
Ay, though you suffer as much as I from storms the  
hours are bringing  
Upon your heart and mine, I never see you shed a tear.

The deep strong woman is weakest, the weak one is  
the strong ;  
The weapon of all weapons best for winning, you have  
not used ;  
Have you never been able, or would you not, through  
the evil times and long ?  
Has not the gift been given you, or such gift have  
you refused ?  
When I bade me not absolve you on that evening or  
the morrow,  
Why did you not make war on me with those who  
weep like rain ?  
You felt too much, so gained no balm for all your  
torrid sorrow,  
And hence our deep division, and our dark undying  
pain.

## BEREFT, SHE THINKS SHE DREAMS

I DREAM that the dearest I ever knew  
Has died and been entombed.  
I am sure it's a dream that cannot be true,  
But I am so overgloomed  
By its persistence, that I would gladly  
Have quick death take me,  
Rather than longer think thus sadly ;  
So wake me, wake me !

It has lasted days, but minute and hour  
I expect to get aroused  
And find him as usual in the bower  
Where we so happily housed.  
Yet stays this nightmare too appalling,  
And like a web shakes me,  
And piteously I keep on calling,  
And no one wakes me !

## IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

“WHAT do you see in that time-touched stone,  
When nothing is there  
But ashen blankness, although you give it  
A rigid stare ?

“ You look not quite as if you saw,  
But as if you heard,  
Parting your lips, and treading softly  
As mouse or bird.

“ It is only the base of a pillar, they'll tell you,  
That came to us  
From a far old hill men used to name  
Areopagus.”

—“ I know no art, and I only view  
A stone from a wall,  
But I am thinking that stone has echoed  
The voice of Paul.

“ Paul as he stood and preached beside it  
Facing the crowd,  
A small gaunt figure with wasted features,  
Calling out loud

## IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

“ Words that in all their intimate accents  
Pattered upon  
That marble front, and were wide reflected,  
And then were gone.

“ I’m a labouring man, and know but little,  
Or nothing at all ;  
But I can’t help thinking that stone once echoed  
The voice of Paul.”

## IN THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS

“MAN, you too, aren't you, one of these rough  
followers of the criminal?

All hanging hereabout to gather how he's going to  
bear

Examination in the hall.” She flung disdainful glances  
on

The shabby figure standing at the fire with others  
there,

Who warmed them by its flare.

“No indeed, my skipping maiden : I know nothing of  
the trial here,

Or criminal, if so he be.—I chanced to come this way,  
And the fire shone out into the dawn, and morning  
airs are cold now ;

I, too, was drawn in part by charms I see before me  
play,

That I see not every day.”

“Ha, ha !” then laughed the constables who also  
stood to warm themselves,

The while another maiden scrutinized his features  
hard,

As the blaze threw into contrast every line and knot  
that wrinkled them,

Exclaiming, “Why, last night when he was brought  
in by the guard,

You were with him in the yard !”

## IN THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS

"Nay, nay, you teasing wench, I say! You know  
you speak mistakenly.  
Cannot a tired pedestrian who has footed it afar  
Here on his way from northern parts, engrossed in  
humble marketings,  
Come in and rest awhile, although judicial doings are  
Afoot by morning star?"

"O, come, come!" laughed the constables. "Why,  
man, you speak the dialect  
He uses in his answers; you can hear him up the  
stairs.  
So own it. We sha'n't hurt ye. There he's speaking  
now! His syllables  
Are those you sound yourself when you are talking  
unawares,  
As this pretty girl declares."

"And you shudder when his chain clinks!" she re-  
joined. "O yes, I noticed it.  
And you winced, too, when those cuffs they gave him  
echoed to us here.  
They'll soon be coming down, and you may then have  
to defend yourself  
Unless you hold your tongue, or go away and keep  
you clear  
When he's led to judgment near!"

"No! I'll be damned in hell if I know anything  
about the man!  
No single thing about him more than everybody  
knows!  
Must not I even warm my hands but I am charged  
with blasphemies?" . . .  
—His face convulses as the morning cock that moment  
crows,  
And he droops, and turns, and goes.

## THE OBLITERATE TOMB

“MORE than half my life long  
Did they weigh me falsely, to my bitter wrong,  
But they all have shrunk away into the silence  
Like a lost song.

“And the day has dawned and come  
For forgiveness, when the past may hold it dumb  
On the once reverberate words of hatred uttered  
Half in delirium. . . .

“With folded lips and hands  
They lie and wait what next the Will commands,  
And doubtless think, if think they can : ‘ Let discord  
Sink with Life’s sands ! ’

“By these late years their names,  
Their virtues, their hereditary claims,  
May be as near defacement at their grave-place  
As are their fames.”

—Such thoughts bechanced to seize  
A traveller’s mind—a man of memories—  
As he set foot within the western city  
Where had died these

Who in their lifetime deemed  
Him their chief enemy—one whose brain had schemed  
To get their dingy greatness deeper dingied  
And disesteemed.

## THE OBLITERATE TOMB

So, sojourning in their town,  
He mused on them and on their once renown,  
And said, "I'll seek their resting-place to-morrow  
Ere I lie down, .

"And end, lest I forget,  
Those ires of many years that I regret,  
Renew their names, that men may see some liegeness  
Is left them yet."

Duly next night he went  
And sought the church he had known them to frequent,  
And wandered, lantern-bearing, in the precincts,  
Where they lay pent,

Till by remembrance led  
He stood at length beside their slighted bed,  
Above which, truly, scarce a line or letter  
Could now be read,

"Thus years obliterate  
Their graven worth, their chronicle, their date!  
At once I'll garnish and revive the record  
Of their past state,

"That still the sage may say  
In pensive progress here where they decay,  
'This stone records a luminous line whose talents  
Told in their day.'"

While dreaming thus he turned,  
For a form shadowed where they lay inurned,  
And he beheld a stranger in foreign vesture,  
And tropic-burned.

"Sir, I am right pleased to view  
That ancestors of mine should interest you,  
For I have fared of purpose here to find them. . . .  
They are time-worn, true,



## THE OBLITERATE TOMB

“ But that’s a fault, at most,  
Carvers can cure. On the Pacific coast  
I have vowed for long that relics of my forbears  
I’d trace ere lost,

“ And hitherward I come,  
Before this same old Time shall strike me numb,  
To carry it out.”—“ Strange, this is !” said the other ;  
“ What mind shall plumb

“ Coincident design !  
Though these my father’s enemies were and mine,  
I nourished a like purpose—to restore them  
Each letter and line.”

“ Such magnanimity  
Is now not needed, sir ; for you will see  
That since I am here, a thing like this is, plainly,  
Best done by me.”

The other bowed, and left,  
Crestfallen in sentiment, as one bereft  
Of some fair object he had been moved to cherish,  
By hands more deft.

And as he slept that night  
The phantoms of the ensepulchred stood upright  
Before him, trembling that he had set him seeking  
Their charnel-site.

And, as unknowing his ruth,  
Asked as with terrors founded not on truth  
Why he should want them. “ Ha,” they hollowly  
hackered,  
“ You come, forsooth,

“ By stealth to obliterate  
Our graven worth, our chronicle, our date,  
That our descendant may not gild the record  
Of our past state,

## THE OBLITERATE TOMB

“ And that no sage may say  
In pensive progress near where we decay :  
‘ This stone records a luminous line whose talents  
Told in their day.’ ”

Upon the morrow he went,  
And to that town and churchyard never bent  
His ageing footsteps till, some twelvemonths onward,  
An accident

Once more detained him there ;  
And, stirred by hauntings, he must needs repair  
To where the tomb was. Lo, it stood still wasting  
In no man’s care.

And so the tomb remained  
Untouched, untended, crumbling, weather-stained,  
And though the one-time foe was fain to right it  
He still refrained.

“ I’ll set about it when  
I am sure he’ll come no more. Best wait till then.”  
But so it was that never the stranger entered  
That city again.

Till doubts grew keen  
If it had chanced not that the kinsman seen  
Shaped but in dream on that dim doubtful midnight :  
Such things had been. . . .

So, the well-meaner died  
While waiting tremulously unsatisfied  
That no return of the family’s foreign scion  
Would still betide.

And many years slid by,  
And active church-restorers cast their eye  
Upon the ancient garth and hoary building  
The tomb stood nigh.

## THE OBLITERATE TOMB

And when they had scraped each wall,  
Pulled out the stately pews, and smartened all,  
“It will be well,” declared the spruce churchwarden,  
    “To overhaul

“And broaden this path where shown ;  
Nothing prevents it but an old tombstone  
Pertaining to a family forgotten,  
    Of deeds unknown.

“Their names can scarce be read,  
Depend on’t, all who care for them are dead.”  
So went the tomb, whose shards were as path-paving  
    Distributed.

Over it and about  
Men’s footsteps beat, and wind and waterspout,  
Until the names, aforetime gnawed by weathers,  
    Were quite worn out.

So that no sage can say  
In pensive progress near where they decay,  
“This stone records a luminous line whose talents  
    Told in their day.”

## “REGRET NOT ME”

REGRET not me ;  
Beneath the sunny tree  
I lie uncaring, slumbering peacefully.

Swift as the light  
I flew my faery flight ;  
Ecstatically I moved, and feared no night.

I did not know  
That heydays fade and go,  
But deemed that what was would be always so.

I skipped at morn  
Between the yellowing corn,  
Thinking it good and glorious to be born.

I ran at eves  
Among the piled-up sheaves,  
Dreaming, “I grieve not, therefore nothing  
grieves.”

Now soon will come  
The apple, pear, and plum,  
And hinds will sing, and autumn insects hum.

Again you will fare  
To cider-makings rare,  
And junketings ; but I shall not be there.

## “REGRET NOT ME”

Yet gaily sing  
Until the pewter ring  
Those songs we sang when we went gipsying.

And lightly dance  
Some triple-timed romance  
In coupled figures, and forget mischance ;

And mourn not me  
Beneath the yellowing tree ;  
For I shall mind not, slumbering peacefully.

## THE RECALCITRANTS

LET us off and search, and find a place  
Where yours and mine can be natural lives,  
Where no one comes who dissects and dives  
And proclaims that ours is a curious case,  
That its touch of romance can scarcely grace.

You would think it strange at first, but then  
Everything has been strange in its time.  
When some one said on a day of the prime  
He would bow to no brazen god again  
He doubtless dazed the mass of men.

None will recognize us as a pair whose claims  
To righteous judgment we care not making ;  
Who have doubted if breath be worth the taking,  
And have no respect for the current fames  
Whence the savour has flown while abide the names.

We have found us already shunned, disdained,  
And for re-acceptance have not once striven ;  
Whatever offence our course has given  
The brunt thereof we have long sustained.  
Well, let us away, scorned, unexplained.

## STARLINGS ON THE ROOF

“ No smoke spreads out of this chimney-pot,  
The people who lived here have left the spot,  
And others are coming who knew them not.

“ If you listen anon, with an ear intent,  
The voices, you'll find, will be different  
From the well-known ones of those who went.”

“ Why did they go? Their tones so bland  
Were quite familiar to our band ;  
The comers we shall not understand.”

“ They look for a new life, rich and strange ;  
They do not know that, let them range  
Wherever they may, they will get no change.

“ They will drag their house-gear ever so far  
In their search for a home no miseries mar ;  
They will find that as they were they are,

“ That every hearth has a ghost, alack,  
And can be but the scene of a bivouac  
Till they move their last—no care to pack !”

## THE MOON LOOKS IN

### I

I HAVE risen again,  
And awhile survey  
By my chilly ray  
Through your window-pane  
Your upturned face,  
As you think, "Ah—she  
Now dreams of me  
In her distant place!"

### II

I pierce her blind  
In her far-off home :  
She fixes a comb,  
And says in her mind,  
" I start in an hour ;  
Whom shall I meet ?  
Won't the men be sweet,  
And the women sour ! "



## THE SWEET HUSSY

IN his early days he was quite surprised  
When she told him she was compromised  
By meetings and lingerings at his whim,  
And thinking not of herself but him ;  
While she lifted orbs aggrieved and round  
That scandal should so soon abound,  
(As she had raised them to nine or ten  
Of antecedent nice young men) :  
And in remorse he thought with a sigh,  
How good she is, and how bad am I !—  
It was years before he understood  
That she was the wicked one—he the good.

## THE TELEGRAM

“O HE’s suffering—maybe dying—and I not there to  
aid,  
And smooth his bed and whisper to him! Can I  
nohow go?  
Only the nurse’s brief twelve words thus hurriedly  
conveyed,  
As by stealth, to let me know.

“He was the best and brightest!—candour shone  
upon his brow,  
And I shall never meet again a soldier such as he,  
And I loved him ere I knew it, and perhaps he’s  
sinking now,  
Far, far removed from me!”

—The yachts ride mute at anchor and the fulling  
moon is fair,  
And the giddy folk are strutting up and down the  
smooth parade,  
And in her wild distraction she seems not to be aware  
That she lives no more a maid,

But has vowed and wived herself to one who blessed  
the ground she trod  
To and from his scene of ministry, and thought her  
history known  
In its last particular to him—aye, almost as to God,  
And believed her quite his own.

## THE TELEGRAM

So rapt her mind's far-off regard she droops as in a  
    swoon,  
And a movement of aversion mars her recent spousal  
    grace,  
And in silence we two sit here in our waning honey-  
    moon  
    At this idle watering-place. . . .

What now I see before me is a long lane overhung  
With lovelessness, and stretching from the present to  
    the grave.  
And I would I were away from this, with friends I  
    knew when young,  
    Ere a woman held me slave.

## THE MOTH-SIGNAL

*(On Egdon Heath)*

“WHAT are you still, still thinking,”  
He asked in vague surmise,  
“That you stare at the wick unblinking  
With those deep lost luminous eyes?”

“O, I see a poor moth burning  
In the candle-flame,” said she,  
“Its wings and legs are turning  
To a cinder rapidly.”

“Moths fly in from the heather,”  
He said, “now the days decline.”  
“I know,” said she. “The weather,  
I hope, will at last be fine.

“I think,” she added lightly,  
“I’ll look out at the door.  
The ring the moon wears nightly  
May be visible now no more.”

She rose, and, little heeding,  
Her life-mate then went on  
With his mute museful reading  
In the annals of ages gone.

## THE MOTH-SIGNAL

Outside the house a figure  
Came from the tūmulus near,  
And speedily waxed bigger,  
And clasped and called her Dear.

“ I saw the pale-winged token  
You sent through the crack,” sighed she.  
“ That moth is burnt and broken  
With which you lured out me.

“ And were I as the moth is  
It might be better far  
For one whose marriage troth is  
Shattered as potsherds are ! ”

Then grinned the Ancient Briton  
From the tumulus treed with pine :  
“ So, hearts are thwartly smitten  
In these days as in mine ! ”

## SEEN BY THE WAITS

THROUGH snowy woods and shady  
We went to play a tune  
To the lonely manor-lady  
By the light of the Christmas moon.

We violed till, upward glancing  
To where a mirror leaned,  
It showed her airily dancing,  
Deeming her movements screened ;

Dancing alone in the room there,  
Thin-draped in her robe of night ;  
Her postures, glassed in the gloom there,  
Were a strange phantasmal sight.

She had learnt (we heard when homing)  
That her roving spouse was dead ;  
Why she had danced in the gloaming  
We thought, but never said.

## THE TWO SOLDIERS

JUST at the corner of the wall  
We met—yes, he and I—  
Who had not faced in camp or hall  
Since we bade home good-bye,  
And what once happened came back—all—  
Out of those years gone by.

And that strange woman whom we knew  
And loved—long dead and gone,  
Whose poor half-perished residue,  
Tombless and trod, lay yon !  
But at this moment to our view  
Rose like a phantom wan.

And in his fixed face I could see,  
Lit by a lurid shine,  
The drama re-enact which she  
Had dyed incarnadine  
For us, and more. And doubtless he  
Beheld it too in mine.

A start, as at one slightly known ;  
And with an indifferent air  
We passed, without a sign being shown  
That, as it real were,  
A memory-acted scene had thrown  
Its tragic shadow there.

## THE DEATH OF REGRET

I OPENED my shutter at sunrise,  
And looked at the hill hard by,  
And I heartily grieved for the comrade  
Who wandered up there to die.

I let in the morn on the morrow,  
And failed not to think of him then,  
As he trod up that rise in the twilight,  
And never came down again.

I undid the shutter a week thence,  
But not until after I'd turned  
Did I call back his last departure  
By the upland there discerned.

Uncovering the casement long later,  
I bent to my toil till the gray,  
When I said to myself, "Ah—what ails me,  
To forget him all the day!"

As daily I flung back the shutter  
In the same blank bald routine,  
He scarcely once rose to remembrance  
Through a month of my facing the scene.

And ah, seldom now do I ponder  
At the window as heretofore  
On the long valued one who died yonder,  
And wastes by the sycamore.



## IN THE DAYS OF CRINOLINE

A PLAIN tilt-bonnet on her head  
She took the path across the leaze.  
—Her spouse the vicar, gardening, said,  
“Too dowdy that, for coquetries,  
So I can hoe at ease.”

But when she had passed into the heath,  
And gained the wood beyond the flat,  
She raised her skirts, and from beneath  
Unpinned and drew as from a sheath  
An ostrich-feathered hat.

And where the hat had hung she now  
Concealed and pinned the dowdy hood,  
And set the hat upon her brow,  
And thus emerging from the wood  
Tripped on in jaunty mood.

The sun was low and crimson-faced  
As two came that way from the town,  
And plunged into the wood untraced. . . .  
When severally therefrom they paced  
The sun had quite gone down.

The hat and feather disappeared,  
The dowdy hood again was donned,  
And in the gloom the fair one neared  
Her home and husband dour, who conned  
Calmly his blue-eyed blonde.

## IN THE DAYS OF CRINOLINE

“To-day,” he said, “you have shown good sense,  
A dress so modest and so meek  
Should always deck your goings hence  
Alone.” And as a recompense  
He kissed her on the cheek.

## THE ROMAN GRAVEMOUNDS

By Rome's dim relics there walks a man,  
Eyes bent ; and he carries a basket and spade ;  
I guess what impels him to scrape and scan ;  
Yea, his dreams of that Empire long decayed.

"Vast was Rome," he must muse, "in the world's  
    regard,  
Vast it looms there still, vast it ever will be ;"  
And he stoops as to dig and unmine some shard  
Left by those who are held in such memory.

But no ; in his basket, see, he has brought  
A little white furred thing, stiff of limb,  
Whose life never won from the world a thought ;  
It is this, and not Rome, that is moving him.

'And to make it a grave he has come to the spot,  
And he delves in the ancient dead's long home ;  
Their fames, their achievements, the man knows not :  
The furred thing is all to him—nothing Rome !

"Here say you that Cæsar's warriors lie?—  
But my little white cat was my only friend !  
Could she but live, might the record die  
Of Cæsar, his legions, his aims, his end !"

Well, Rome's long rule here is oft and again  
A theme for the sages of history,  
And the small furred life was worth no one's pen ;  
Yet its mourner's mood has a charm for me.

*November 1910.*

## THE WORKBOX

“SEE, here’s the workbox, little wife,  
That I made of polished oak.”  
He was a joiner, of village life ;  
She came of borough folk.

He holds the present up to her  
As with a smile she nears  
And answers to the profferer,  
“’Twill last all my sewing years !”

“I warrant it will. And longer too.  
’Tis a scantling that I got  
Off poor John Wayward’s coffin, who  
Died of they knew not what.

“The shingled pattern that seems to cease  
Against your box’s rim  
Continues right on in the piece  
That’s underground with him.

“And while I worked it made me think  
Of timber’s varied doom ;  
One inch where people eat and drink,  
The next inch in a tomb.

“But why do you look so white, my dear,  
And turn aside your face ?  
You knew not that good lad, I fear,  
Though he came from your native place ?”

## THE WORKBOX

“ How could I know that good young man,  
    Though he came from my native town,  
When he must have left far earlier than  
    I was a woman grown ? ”

“ Ah no.   I should have understood !  
    It shocked you that I gave  
To you one end of a piece of wood  
    Whose other is in a grave ? ”

“ Don't, dear, despise my intellect,  
    Mere accidental things  
Of that sort never have effect  
    On my imaginings.”

Yet still her lips were limp and wan,  
    Her face still held aside,  
As if she had known not only John,  
    But known of what he died.

THE SACRILEGE  
A BALLAD-TRAGEDY

(*Circa* 182—)

PART I

“ I HAVE a Love I love too well  
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor ;  
I have a Love I love too well,  
    To whom, ere she was mine,  
‘ Such is my love for you,’ I said,  
‘ That you shall have to hood your head  
A silken kerchief crimson-red,  
    Wove finest of the fine.’

“ And since this Love, for one mad moon,  
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor,  
Since this my Love for one mad moon  
    Did clasp me as her king,  
I snatched a silk-piece red and rare  
From off a stall at Priddy Fair,  
For handkerchief to hood her hair  
    When we went gallanting.

“ Full soon the four weeks neared their end  
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor ;  
And when the four weeks neared their end,  
    And their swift sweets outwore

## THE SACRILEGE

I said, 'What shall I do to own  
Those beauties bright as tulips blown,  
And keep you here with me alone  
As mine for evermore?'

"And as she drowsed within my van  
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor—  
And as she drowsed within my van  
And dawning turned to day,  
She heavily raised her sloe-black eyes  
And murmured back in softest wise,  
'One more thing, and the charms you prize  
Are yours henceforth for aye.

" 'And swear I will I'll never go  
While Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor  
To meet the Cornish Wrestler Joe  
For dance and dallyings.  
If you'll to yon cathedral shrine,  
And finger from the chest divine  
Treasure to buy me ear-drops fine,  
And richly jewelled rings.'

"I said: 'I am one who has gathered gear  
From Marlbury Downs to Dunkery Tor,  
Who has gathered gear for many a year  
From mansion, mart and fair;  
But at God's house I've stayed my hand,  
Hearing within me some command—  
Curbed by a law not of the land  
From doing damage there!'

"Whereat she pouts, this Love of mine,  
As Dunkery pouts to Exon Moor,  
And still she pouts, this Love of mine,  
So cityward I go.  
But ere I start to do the thing,  
And speed my soul's imperilling  
For one who is my ravishing  
And all the joy I know,

## THE SACRILEGE

“ I come to lay this charge on thee—  
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor—  
I come to lay this charge on thee  
    With solemn speech and sign :  
Should things go ill, and my life pay  
For botchery in this rash assay,  
You are to take hers likewise—yea,  
    The month the law takes mine.

“ For should my rival, Wrestler Joe,  
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor —  
My reckless rival, Wrestler Joe,  
    My Love’s bedwinner be,  
My rafted spirit would not rest,  
But wander weary and distressed  
Throughout the world in wild protest :  
    The thought nigh maddens me !”

### PART II

Thus did he speak—this brother of mine—  
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor,  
Born at my birth of mother of mine,  
    And forthwith went his way  
To dare the deed some coming night . . .  
I kept the watch with shaking sight,  
The moon at moments breaking bright,  
    At others glooming gray.

For three full days I heard no sound  
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor,  
I heard no sound at all around  
    Whether his fay prevailed,  
Or one more foul the master were,  
Till some afoot did tidings bear  
How that, for all his practised care,  
    He had been caught and jailed.



## THE SACRILEGE

They had heard a crash when twelve had chimed  
By Mendip east of Dunkery Tor,  
When twelve had chimed and moonlight climbed ;

They watched, and he was tracked  
By arch and aisle and saint and knight  
Of sculptured stonework sheeted white  
In the cathedral's ghostly light,  
And captured in the act.

Yes ; for this Love he loved too well  
Where Dunkery sights the Severn shore,  
All for this Love he loved too well

He burst the holy bars,  
Seized golden vessels from the chest  
To buy her ornaments of the best,  
At her ill-witchery's request  
And lure of eyes like stars. . . .

When blustering March confused the sky  
In Toneborough Town by Exon Moor,  
When blustering March confused the sky  
They stretched him ; and he died.

Down in the crowd where I, to see  
The end of him, stood silently,  
With a set face he lipped to me—  
“ Remember.” “ Ay ! ” I cried.

By night and day I shadowed her  
From Toneborough Deane to Dunkery Tor,  
I shadowed her asleep, astir,  
And yet I could not bear—

Till Wrestler Joe anon began  
To figure as her chosen man,  
And took her to his shining van—  
To doom a form so fair !

He made it handsome for her sake—  
And Dunkery smiled to Exon Moor—  
He made it handsome for her sake,  
Painting it out and in ;

## THE SACRILEGE

And on the door of apple-green  
A bright brass knocker soon was seen,  
And window-curtains white and clean  
For her to sit within.

And all could see she clave to him  
As cleaves a cloud to Dunkery Tor,  
Yea, all could see she clave to him,  
And every day I said,  
“ A pity it seems to part those two  
That hourly grow to love more true :  
Yet she's the wanton woman who  
Sent one to swing till dead ! ”

That blew to blazing all my hate,  
While Dunkery frowned on Exon Moor,  
And when the river swelled, her fate  
Came to her pitilessly. . . .  
I dogged her, crying : “ Across that plank  
They use as bridge to reach yon bank  
A coat and hat lie limp and dank ;  
Your goodman's, can they be ? ”

She paled, and went, I close behind—  
And Exon frowned to Dunkery Tor,  
She went, and I came up behind  
And tipped the plank that bore  
Her, fleetly flitting across to eye  
What such might bode. She slid awry ;  
And from the current came a cry,  
A gurgle ; and no more.

How that befell no mortal knew  
From Marlbury Downs to Exon Moor ;  
No mortal knew that deed undue  
But he who schemed the crime,  
Which night still covers. . . . But in dream  
Those ropes of hair upon the stream  
He sees, and he will hear that scream  
Until his judgment-time. .

## THE ABBEY MASON

INVENTOR OF THE "PERPENDICULAR" STYLE OF  
GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

*(With Memories of John Hicks, Architect)*

THE new-vamped Abbey shaped apace  
In the fourteenth century of grace ;

(The church which, at an after date,  
Acquired cathedral rank and state.)

Panel and circumscribing wall  
Of latest feature, trim and tall,

Rose roundabout the Norman core  
In prouder pose than theretofore,

Encasing magically the old  
With parpend ashlar manifold.

The trowels rang out, and tracery  
Appeared where blanks had used to be.

Men toiled for pleasure more than pay,  
And all went smoothly day by day,

Till, in due course, the transept part  
Engrossed the master-mason's art.

—Home-coming thence he tossed and turned  
Throughout the night till the new sun burned.

## THE ABBEY MASON

"What fearful visions have inspired  
These gaingivings?" his wife inquired;

"As if your tools were in your hand  
You have hammered, fitted, muttered, planned;

"You have thumped as you were working hard:  
I might have found me bruised and scarred.

"What then's amiss. What eating care  
Looms nigh, whereof I am unaware?"

He answered not, but churchward went,  
Viewing his draughts with discontent;

And fumbled there the livelong day  
Till, hollow-eyed, he came away.

—'Twas said, "The master-mason's ill!"  
And all the abbey works stood still.

Quoth Abbot Wygmore: "Why, O why  
Distress yourself? You'll surely die!"

The mason answered, trouble-torn,  
"This long-vogued style is quite outworn!

"The upper archmould nohow serves  
To meet the lower tracery curves:

"The ogees bend too far away  
To give the flexures interplay.

"This it is causes my distress. . . .  
So it will ever be unless

"New forms be found to supersede  
The circle when occasions need.

## THE ABBEY MASON

“To carry it out I have tried and toiled,  
And now perforce must own me foiled!

“Jeerers will say : ‘Here was a man  
Who could not end what he began!’”

—So passed that day, the next, the next ;  
The abbot scanned the task, perplexed ;

The townsmen mustered all their wit  
To fathom how to compass it,

But no raw artistries availed  
Where practice in the craft had failed. . . .

—One night he tossed, all open-eyed,  
And early left his helpmeet's side.

Scattering the rushes of the floor  
He wandered from the chamber door

And sought the sizing pile, whereon  
Struck dimly a cadaverous dawn

Through freezing rain, that drenched the board  
Of diagram-lines he last had scored—

Chalked phantasies in vain begot  
To knife the architectural knot—

In front of which he dully stood,  
Regarding them in hopeless mood.

He closelier looked ; then looked again :  
The chalk-scratched draught-board faced the rain,

Whose iced drops deformed the lines  
Innumerable of his lame designs,

## THE ABBEY MASON

So that they streamed in small white threads  
From the upper segments to the heads

Of arcs below, uniting them  
Each by a stalactitic stem.

—At once, with eyes that struck out sparks,  
He adds accessory cusping-marks,

Then laughs aloud. The thing was done  
So long assayed from sun to sun. . . .

—Now in his joy he grew aware  
Of one behind him standing there,

And, turning, saw the abbot, who  
The weather's whim was watching too.

Onward to Prime the abbot went,  
Tacit upon the incident.

—Men now discerned as days revolved  
The ogive riddle had been solved ;

Templates were cut, fresh lines were chalked  
Where lines had been defaced and balked,

And the work swelled and mounted higher,  
Achievement distancing desire ;

Here jambs with transoms fixed between,  
Where never the like before had been—

There little mullions thinly sawn  
Where meeting circles once were drawn.

“ We knew,” men said, “ the thing would go  
After his craft-wit got aglow,

## THE ABBEY MASON

“And, once fulfilled what he has designed,  
We'll honour him and his great mind!”

When matters stood thus poised awhile,  
And all surroundings shed a smile,

The master-mason on an eve  
Homed to his wife and seemed to grieve. . . .

—“The abbot spoke to me to-day :  
He hangs about the works alway.

“He knows the source as well as I  
Of the new style men magnify.

“He said : ‘You pride yourself too much  
On your creation. Is it such ?

“‘Surely the hand of God it is  
That conjured so, and only His!—

“‘Disclosing by the frost and rain  
Forms your invention chased in vain ;

“‘Hence the devices deemed so great  
You copied, and did not create.’

“I feel the abbot's words are just,  
And that all thanks renounce I must.

“Can a man welcome praise and pelf  
For hatching art that hatched itself? . . .

“So, I shall own the deft design  
Is Heaven's outshaping, and not mine.”

“What!” said she. “Praise your works ensure  
To throw away, and quite obscure

## THE ABBEY MASON

“Your beaming and beneficent star?  
Better you leave things as they are!

“Why, think awhile. Had not your zest  
In your loved craft curtailed your rest—

“Had you not gone there ere the day  
The sun had melted all away!”

—But, though his good wife argued so,  
The mason let the people know

That not unaided sprang the thought  
Whereby the glorious fane was wrought,

But that by frost when dawn was dim  
The method was disclosed to him.

“Yet,” said the townspeople thereat,  
“’Tis your own doing, even with that!”

But he—chafed, childlike, in extremes—  
The temperament of men of dreams—

Aloofly scrupled to admit  
That he did aught but borrow it,

And diffidently made request  
That with the abbot all should rest.

—As none could doubt the abbot’s word,  
Or question what the church averred,

The mason was at length believed  
Of no more count than he conceived,

And soon began to lose the fame  
That late had gathered round his name. . . .



## THE ABBEY MASON

—Time passed, and like a living thing  
The pile went on embodying,

And workmen died and young ones grew,  
And the old mason sank from view

And Abbots Wygmore and Staunton went  
And Horton sped the embellishment.

But not till years had far progressed  
Chanced it that, one day, much impressed,

Standing within the well-graced aisle,  
He asked who first conceived the style ;

And some decrepit sage detailed  
How, when invention nought availed,

The cloud-cast waters in their whim  
Came down, and gave the hint to him

Who struck each arc, and made each mould ;  
And how the abbot would not hold

As sole begetter him who applied  
Forms the Almighty sent as guide ;

And how the master lost renown,  
And wore in death no artist's crown.

—Then Horton, who in inner thought  
Had more perceptions than he taught,

Replied : “ Nay ; art can but transmute ;  
Invention is not absolute ;

“ Things fail to spring from nought at call,  
And art-beginnings most of all.

## THE ABBEY MASON

"He did but what all artists do,  
Wait upon Nature for his cue."

—"Had you been here to tell them so  
Lord Abbot, sixty years ago,

"The mason, now long underground,  
Doubtless a different fate had found.

"He passed into oblivion dim,  
And none knew what became of him!

"His name? 'Twas of some common kind  
And now has faded out of mind."

The Abbot: "It shall not be hid!  
I'll trace it." . . . But he never did.

—When longer yet dank death had wormed  
The brain wherein the style had germed

From Gloucester church it flew afar—  
The style called Perpendicular.—

To Winton and to Westminster  
It ranged, and grew still beautifuller:

From Solway Frith to Dover Strand  
Its fascinations starred the land,

Not only on cathedral walls  
But upon courts and castle halls,

Till every edifice in the isle  
Was patterned to no other style,

And till, long having played its part,  
The curtain fell on Gothic art.

## THE ABBEY MASON

—Well : when in Wessex on your rounds,  
Take a brief step beyond its bounds,

And enter Gloucester : seek the quoin  
Where choir and transept interjoin,

And, gazing at the forms there flung  
Against the sky by one unsung—

The ogee arches transom-topped,  
The tracery-stalks by spandrels stopped,

Petrified lacework—lightly lined  
On ancient massiveness behind—

Muse that some minds so modest be  
As to renounce fame's fairest fee,

(Like him who crystallized on this spot  
His visionings, but lies forgot,

And many a mediaeval one  
Whose symmetries salute the sun)

While others boom a baseless claim,  
And upon nothing rear a name.

## THE JUBILEE OF A MAGAZINE

*(To the Editor)*

YES ; your up-dated modern page—  
All flower-fresh, as it appears—  
Can claim a time-tried lineage,

That reaches backward fifty years  
(Which, if but short for sleepy squires,  
Is much in magazines' careers).

—Here, on your cover, never tires  
The sower, reaper, thresher, while  
As through the seasons of our sires

Each wills to work in ancient style  
With seedlip, sickle, share and flail,  
Though modes have since moved many a mile !

The steel-roped plough now rips the vale,  
With cog and tooth the sheaves are won,  
Wired wheels drum out the wheat like hail ;

But if we ask, what has been done  
To unify the mortal lot  
Since your bright leaves first saw the sun,

Beyond mechanic furtherance—what  
Advance can rightness, candour, claim ?  
Truth bends abashed, and answers not.

## THE JUBILEE OF A MAGAZINE

Despite your volumes' gentle aim  
To straighten visions wry and wrong,  
Events jar onward much the same !

—Had custom tended to prolong,  
As on your golden page engrained,  
Old processes of blade and prong,

And best invention been retained  
For high crusades to lessen tears  
Throughout the race, the world had gained ! . .  
But too much, this, for fifty years.

## THE SATIN SHOES

"If ever I walk to church to wed,  
As other maidens use,  
And face the gathered eyes," she said,  
"I'll go in satin shoes!"

She was as fair as early day  
Shining on meads unmown,  
And her sweet syllables seemed to play  
Like flute-notes softly blown.

The time arrived when it was meet  
That she should be a bride ;  
The satin shoes were on her feet,  
Her father was at her side.

They stood within the dairy door,  
And gazed across the green ;  
The church loomed on the distant moor,  
But rain was thick between.

"The grass-path hardly can be stepped,  
The lane is like a pool!"—  
Her dream is shown to be inept,  
Her wish they overrule.

"To go forth shod in satin soft  
A coach would be required!"  
For thickest boots the shoes were doffed—  
Those shoes her soul desired. . . .

## THE SATIN SHOES

All day the bride, as overborne,  
Was seen to brood apart,  
And that the shoes had not been worn  
Sat heavy on her heart.

From her wrecked dream, as months flew on,  
Her thought seemed not to range.  
“What ails the wife,” they said anon,  
‘That she should be so strange?’ . . .

Ah—what coach comes with furtive glide—  
A coach of closed-up kind?  
It comes to fetch the last year's bride,  
Who wanders in her mind.

She strove with them, and fearfully ran  
Stairward with one low scream :  
“Nay—coax her,” said the madhouse man,  
“With some old household theme.”

“If you will go, dear, you must fain  
Put on those shoes—the pair  
Meant for your marriage, which the rain  
Forbade you then to wear.”

She clapped her hands, flushed joyous hues ;  
“O yes—I'll up and ride  
If I am to wear my satin shoes  
And be a proper bride !”

Out then her little foot held she,  
As to depart with speed ;  
The madhouse man smiled pleasantly  
To see the wile succeed.

She turned to him when all was done,  
And gave him her thin hand,  
Exclaiming like an enraptured one,  
“This time it will be grand !”

## THE SATIN SHOES

She mounted with a face elate,  
Shut was the carriage door ;  
They drove her to the madhouse gate,  
And she was seen no more. . . .

Yet she was fair as early day  
Shining on meads unmown,  
And her sweet syllables seemed to play  
Like flute-notes softly blown.



## EXEUNT OMNES

### I

EVERYBODY else, then, going,  
And I still left where the fair was ? . . .  
Much have I seen of neighbour loungers  
Making a lusty showing,  
Each now past all knowing.

### II

There is an air of blankness  
In the street and the littered spaces ;  
Thoroughfare, steeple, bridge and highway  
Wizen themselves to lankness ;  
Kennels dribble dankness.

### III

Folk all fade. And whither,  
As I wait alone where the fair was ?  
Into the clammy and numbing night-fog  
Whence they entered hither.  
Soon do I follow thither !

*June 2, 1913.*

## A POET

ATTENTIVE eyes, fantastic heed,  
Assessing minds, he does not need,  
Nor urgent writs to sup or dine,  
Nor pledges in the rosy wine.

For loud acclaim he does not care  
By the august or rich or fair,  
Nor for smart pilgrims from afar,  
Curious on where his hauntings are.

But soon or later, when you hear  
That he has doffed this wrinkled gear,  
Some evening, at the first star-ray,  
Come to his graveside, pause and say :

“ Whatever his message—glad or grim—  
Two bright-souled women clave to him ” ;  
Stand and say that while day decays ;  
It will be word enough of praise.

*July 1914.*

# SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

IN FIFTEEN GLIMPSES

*(First Published April 1911)*



I

AT TEA

THE kettle descants in a cosy drone,  
And the young wife looks in her husband's face,  
And then at her guest's, and shows in her own  
Her sense that she fills an envied place ;  
And the visiting lady is all abloom,  
And says there was never so sweet a room.

And the happy young housewife does not know  
That the woman beside her was first his choice,  
Till the fates ordained it could not be so. . . .  
Betraying nothing in look or voice  
The guest sits smiling and sips her tea,  
And he throws her a stray glance yearningly.

## II

### IN CHURCH

“AND now to God the Father,” he ends,  
And his voice thrills up to the topmost tiles :  
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,  
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.  
Then the preacher glides to the vestry-door,  
And shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more.

The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,  
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,  
Who adores him as one without gloss or guile,  
Sees her idol stand with a satisfied smile  
And re-enact at the vestry-glass  
Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show  
That had moved the congregation so.

### III

#### BY HER AUNT'S GRAVE

"SIXPENCE a week," says the girl to her lover,  
"Aunt used to bring me, for she could confide  
In me alone, she vowed. 'Twas to cover  
The cost of her headstone when she died.  
And that was a year ago last June;  
I've not yet fixed it. But I must soon."

"And where is the money now, my dear?"  
"O, snug in my purse . . . Aunt was *so* slow  
In saving it—eighty weeks, or near." . . .  
"Let's spend it," he hints. "For she won't know.  
There's a dance to-night at the Load of Hay."  
She passively nods. And they go that way.

## IV

### IN THE ROOM OF THE BRIDE-ELECT

“WOULD it had been the man of our wish!”  
Sighs her mother. To whom with vehemence she  
In the wedding-dress—the wife to be—  
“Then why were you so mollyish  
As not to insist on him for me!”  
The mother, amazed: “Why, dearest one,  
Because you pleaded for this or none!”

“But Father and you should have stood out strong!  
Since then, to my cost, I have lived to find  
That you were right and that I was wrong;  
This man is a dolt to the one declined. . . .  
Ah!—here he comes with his button-hole rose.  
Good God—I must marry him I suppose!”



## V

### AT A WATERING-PLACE

THEY sit and smoke on the esplanade,  
The man and his friend, and regard the bay  
Where the far chalk cliffs, to the left displayed,  
Smile sallowly in the decline of day.  
And saunterers pass with laugh and jest—  
A handsome couple among the rest.

“That smart proud pair,” says the man to his friend,  
“Are to marry next week. . . . How little he thinks  
That dozens of days and nights on end  
I have stroked her neck, unhooked the links  
Of her sleeve to get at her upper arm. . . .  
Well, bliss is in ignorance : what’s the harm !”

## VI

### IN THE CEMETERY

“ You see those mothers squabbling there ? ”

Remarks the man of the cemetery.

“ One says in tears, ‘ *Tis mine lies here !* ’

Another, ‘ *Nay, mine, you Pharisee !* ’

Another, ‘ *How dare you move my flowers*

*And put your own on this grave of ours !* ’

But all their children were laid therein

At different times, like sprats in a tin.

“ And then the main drain had to cross,

And we moved the lot some nights ago,

And packed them away in the general foss

With hundreds more. But their folks don’t know,

And as well cry over a new-laid drain

As anything else, to ease your pain ! ”

## VII

### OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

“ My stick ! ” he says, and turns in the lane  
To the house just left, whence a vixen voice  
Comes out with the firelight through the pane,  
And he sees within that the girl of his choice  
Stands rating her mother with eyes aglare  
For something said while he was there.

“ At last I behold her soul undraped ! ”  
Thinks the man who had loved her more than himself ;  
“ My God !—’tis but narrowly I have escaped.—  
My precious porcelain proves it delf.”  
His face has reddened like one ashamed,  
And he steals off, leaving his stick unclaimed.

## VIII

### IN THE STUDY

HE enters, and mute on the edge of a chair  
Sits a thin-faced lady, a stranger there,  
A type of decayed gentility ;  
And by some small signs he well can guess  
That she comes to him almost breakfastless.

“ I have called—I hope I do not err—  
I am looking for a purchaser  
Of some score volumes of the works  
Of eminent divines I own,—  
Left by my father—though it irks  
My patience to offer them.” And she smiles  
As if necessity were unknown ;  
“ But the truth of it is that oftenwhiles  
I have wished, as I am fond of art,  
To make my rooms a little smart,  
And these old books are so in the way.”  
And lightly still she laughs to him,  
As if to sell were a mere gay whim,  
And that, to be frank, Life were indeed  
To her not vinegar and gall,  
But fresh and honey-like ; and Need  
No household skeleton at all.

## IX

### AT THE ALTAR-RAIL

“ My bride is not coming, alas ! ” says the groom,  
And the telegram shakes in his hand. “ I own  
It was hurried ! We met at a dancing-room  
When I went to the Cattle-Show alone,  
And then, next night, where the Fountain leaps,  
And the Street of the Quarter-Circle sweeps.

“ Ay, she won me to ask her to be my wife—  
'Twas foolish perhaps !—to forsake the ways  
Of the flaring town for a farmer's life.  
She agreed. And we fixed it. Now she says :  
*' It's sweet of you, dear, to prepare me a nest,  
But a swift, short, gay life suits me best.  
What I really am you have never gleaned ;  
I had eaten the apple ere you were weaned. '* ”

## X

### IN THE NUPTIAL CHAMBER

“O THAT mastering tune!” And up in the bed  
Like a lace-robed phantom springs the bride;  
“And why?” asks the man she had that day wed,  
With a start, as the band plays on outside.  
“It’s the townsfolds’ cheery compliment  
Because of our marriage, my Innocent.”

“O but you don’t know! ’Tis the passionate air  
To which my old Love waltzed with me,  
And I swore as we spun that none should share  
My home, my kisses, till death, save he!  
And he dominates me and thrills me through,  
And it’s he I embrace while embracing you!”

## XI

### IN THE RESTAURANT

“ BUT hear. If you stay, and the child be born,  
It will pass as your husband's with the rest,  
While, if we fly, the teeth of scorn  
Will be gleaming at us from east to west ;  
And the child will come as a life despised ;  
I feel an elopement is ill-advised ! ”

“ O you realize not what it is, my dear,  
To a woman ! Daily and hourly alarms  
Lest the truth should out. How can I stay here,  
And nightly take him into my arms !  
Come to the child no name or fame,  
Let us go, and face it, and bear the shame.”

## XII

### AT THE DRAPER'S

"I stood at the back of the shop, my dear,  
But you did not perceive me.  
Well, when they deliver what you were shown  
I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"

And he coughed and coughed as she paled and said,  
"O, I didn't see you come in there—  
Why couldn't you speak?"—"Well, I didn't. I left  
That you should not notice I'd been there.

"You were viewing some lovely things. '*Soon required  
For a widow, of latest fashion*';  
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the man  
Who had to be cold and ashen

"And screwed in a box before they could dress you  
'*In the last new note in mourning,*'  
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,  
I left you to your adorning."



### XIII

#### ON THE DEATH-BED

“ I’LL tell—being past all praying for—  
Then promptly die. . . . He was out at the war,  
And got some scent of the intimacy  
That was under way between her and me ;  
And he stole back home, and appeared like a ghost  
One night, at the very time almost  
That I reached her house. Well, I shot him dead,  
And secretly buried him. Nothing was said.

“ The news of the battle came next day ;  
He was scheduled missing. I hurried away,  
Got out there, visited the field,  
And sent home word that a search revealed  
He was one of the slain ; though, lying alone  
And stript, his body had not been known.

“ But she suspected. I lost her love,  
Yea, my hope of earth, and of Heaven above ;  
And my time’s now come, and I’ll pay the score,  
Though it be burning for evermore.”

## XIV

### OVER THE COFFIN

THEY stand confronting, the coffin between,  
His wife of old, and his wife of late,  
And the dead man whose they both had been  
Seems listening aloof, as to things past date.  
—"I have called," says the first. "Do you marvel  
or not?"

"In truth," says the second, "I do—somewhat."

"Well, there was a word to be said by me! . . .  
I divorced that man because of you—  
It seemed I must do it, boundenly;  
But now I am older, and tell you true,  
For life is little, and dead lies he;  
I would I had let alone you two!  
And both of us, scorning parochial ways,  
Had lived like the wives in the patriarchs' days."

## XV

### IN THE MOONLIGHT

“O LONELY workman, standing there  
In a dream, why do you stare and stare  
At her grave, as no other grave there were?”

“If your great gaunt eyes so importune  
Her soul by the shine of this corpse-cold moon,  
Maybe you’ll raise her phantom soon!”

“Why, fool, it is what I would rather see  
Than all the living folk there be;  
But alas, there is no such joy for me!”

“Ah—she was one you loved, no doubt,  
Through good and evil, through rain and drought,  
And when she passed, all your sun went out?”

“Nay: she was the woman I did not love,  
Whom all the others were ranked above,  
Whom during her life I thought nothing of.”



MOMENTS OF VISION  
AND MISCELLANEOUS VERSES



## MOMENTS OF VISION

THAT mirror  
Which makes of men a transparency,  
Who holds that mirror  
And bids us such a breast-bared spectacle see  
Of you and me ?

That mirror  
Whose magic penetrates like a dart,  
Who lifts that mirror  
And throws our mind back on us, and our heart,  
Until we start ?

That mirror  
Works well in these night hours of ache ;  
Why in that mirror  
Are tincts we never see ourselves once take  
When the world is awake ?

That mirror  
Can test each mortal when unaware ;  
Yea, that strange mirror  
May catch his last thoughts, whole life foul or fair,  
Glassing it—where ?

## THE VOICE OF THINGS

FORTY Augusts—aye, and several more—ago,  
    When I paced the headlands loosed from dull  
        employ,  
The waves huzza'd like a multitude below,  
    In the sway of an all-including joy  
        Without cloy.

Blankly I walked there a double decade after,  
    When thwarts had flung their toils in front of me,  
And I heard the waters wagging in a long ironic  
    laughter  
    At the lot of men, and all the vapoury  
        Things that be.

Wheeling change has set me again standing where  
    Once I heard the waves huzza at Lammas-tide ;  
But they supplicate now—like a congregation there  
    Who murmur the Confession—I outside,  
        Prayer denied.



“WHY BE AT PAINS?”

(*Wooer's Song*)

WHY be at pains that I should know  
    You sought not me?  
Do breezes, then, make features glow  
    So rosily?  
Come, the lit port is at our back,  
    And the tumbling sea;  
Elsewhere the lampless uphill track  
    To uncertainty!

O should not we two waifs join hands?  
    I am alone,  
You would enrich me more than lands  
    By being my own.  
Yet, though this facile moment flies,  
    Close is your tone,  
And ere to-morrow's dewfall dries  
    I plough the unknown.

## “WE SAT AT THE WINDOW”

(*Bournemouth*, 1875)

WE sat at the window looking out,  
And the rain came down like silken strings  
That Swithin's day. Each gutter and spout  
Babbled unchecked in the busy way  
    Of witless things :  
Nothing to read, nothing to see  
Seemed in that room for her and me  
    On Swithin's day.

We were irked by the scene, by our own selves ;  
    yes,  
For I did not know, nor did she infer  
How much there was to read and guess  
By her in me, and to see and crown  
    By me in her.  
Wasted were two souls in their prime,  
And great was the waste, that July time  
    When the rain came down.

## AFTERNOON SERVICE AT MELLSTOCK

(*Circa 1850*)

ON afternoons of drowsy calm  
We stood in the panelled pew,  
Singing one-voiced a Tate-and-Brady psalm  
To the tune of "Cambridge New."

We watched the elms, we watched the rooks,  
The clouds upon the breeze,  
Between the whiles of glancing at our books,  
And swaying like the trees.

So mindless were those outpourings!—  
Though I am not aware  
That I have gained by subtle thought on things  
Since we stood psalming there:

## AT THE WICKET-GATE

THERE floated the sounds of church-chiming,  
    But no one was nigh,  
Till there came, as a break in the liveness,  
    Her father, she, I.  
And we slowly moved on to the wicket,  
    And downlooking stood,  
Till anon people passed, and amid them  
    We parted for good.

Greater, wiser, may part there than we three  
    Who parted there then,  
But never will Fates colder-featured  
    Hold sway there again.  
Of the churchgoers through the still meadows  
    No single one knew  
What a play was played under their eyes there  
    As thence we withdrew.

## IN A MUSEUM

### I

HERE's the mould of a musical bird long passed from  
light,  
Which over the earth before man came was winging ;  
There's a contralto voice I heard last night,  
That lodges in me still with its sweet singing.

### II

Such a dream is Time that the coo of this ancient  
bird  
Has perished not, but is blent, or will be blending  
Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I  
heard,  
In the full-fugued song of the universe unending.

EXETER.

APOSTROPHE TO AN OLD  
PSALM TUNE

I MET you first—ah, when did I first meet you?  
When I was full of wonder, and innocent,  
Standing meek-eyed with those of choric bent,  
While dimming day grew dimmer  
In the pulpit-glimmer.

Much riper in years I met you—in a temple  
Where summer sunset streamed upon our shapes,  
And you spread over me like a gauze that drapes,  
And flapped from floor to rafters,  
Sweet as angels' laughs.

But you had been stripped of some of your old  
vesture  
By Monk, or another. Now you wore no frill,  
And at first you startled me. But I knew you still,  
Though I missed the minim's waver,  
And the dotted quaver.

I grew accustomed to you thus. And you hailed me  
Through one who evoked you often. Then at last  
Your raiser was borne off, and I mourned you had  
passed  
From my life with your late outsetter;  
Till I said, "'Tis better!"

TO AN OLD PSALM TUNE

But you waylaid me. I rose and went as a ghost  
 goes,  
 And said, eyes-full : " I'll never hear it again !  
 It is overmuch for scathed and memoried men  
 When sitting among strange people  
 Under their steeple."

Now, a new stirrer of tones calls you up before me  
And wakes your speech, as she of Endor did  
(When sought by Saul who, in disguises hid,  
Fell down on the earth to hear it)  
Samuel's spirit.

So, your quired oracles beat till they make me tremble  
As I discern your mien in the old attire,  
Here in these turmoiled years of belligerent fire  
    Living still on—and onward, maybe,  
    Till Doom's great day be!

*Sunday, August 13, 1916.*

## AT THE WORD "FAREWELL"

SHE looked like a bird from a cloud  
    On the clammy lawn,  
Moving alone, bare-browed  
    In the dim of dawn,  
The candles alight in the room  
    For my parting meal  
Made all things withoutdoors loom  
    Strange, ghostly, unreal.

The hour itself was a ghost,  
    And it seemed to me then  
As of chances the chance furthestmost  
    I should see her again.  
I beheld not where all was so fleet  
    That a Plan of the past  
Which had ruled us from birthtime to meet  
    Was in working at last :

No prelude did I there perceive  
    To a drama at all,  
Or foreshadow what fortune might weave  
    From beginnings so small ;  
But I rose as if quickened by a spur  
    I was bound to obey,  
And stepped through the casement to her  
    Still alone in the gray.

"I am leaving you. . . . Farewell!" I said,  
    As I followed her on  
By an alley bare boughs overspread ;  
    "I soon must be gone!"  
Even then the scale might have been turned  
    Against love by a feather,  
—But crimson one cheek of hers burned  
    When we came in<sup>g</sup>together.



## FIRST SIGHT OF HER AND AFTER

A DAY is drawing to its fall  
I had not dreamed to see ;  
The first of many to enthrall  
My spirit, will it be ?  
Or is this eve the end of all  
Such new delight for me ?

I journey home : the pattern grows  
Of moonshades on the way :  
“ Soon the first quarter, I suppose,”  
Sky-glancing travellers say ;  
I realize that it, for those,  
Has been a common day.

## THE RIVAL

I DETERMINED to find out whose it was—  
The portrait he looked at so, and sighed ;  
Bitterly have I rued my meanness  
And wept for it since he died !

I searched his desk when he was away,  
And there was the likeness—yes, my own !  
Taken when I was the season's fairest,  
And time-lines all unknown.

I smiled at my image, and put it back,  
And he went on cherishing it, until  
I was chafed that he loved not the me then living,  
But that past woman still.

Well, such was my jealousy at last,  
I destroyed that face of the former me ;  
Could you ever have dreamed the heart of woman  
Would work so foolishly !

## HEREDITY

I AM the family face ;  
Flesh perishes, I live on,  
Projecting trait and trace  
Through time to times anon,  
And leaping from place to place  
Over oblivion.

The years-heired feature that can  
In curve and voice and eye  
Despise the human span  
Of durance—that is I ;  
The eternal thing in man,  
That heeds no call to die.

“YOU WERE THE SORT THAT  
MEN FORGET”

You were the sort that men forget ;  
    Though I—not yet !—  
Perhaps not ever. Your slighted weakness  
    Adds to the strength of my regret !

You'd not the art—you never had  
    For good or bad—  
To make men see how sweet your meaning,  
    Which, visible, had charmed them glad.

You would, by words inept let fall,  
    Offend them all,  
Even if they saw your warm devotion  
    Would hold your life's blood at their call.

You lacked the eye to understand  
    Those friends offhand  
Whose mode was crude, though whose dim purport  
    Outpriced the courtesies of the bland.

I am now the only being who  
    Remembers you  
It may be. What a waste that Nature  
    Grudged soul so dear the art its due !

## SHE, I, AND THEY

I WAS sitting,  
She was knitting,  
And the portraits of our fore-folk hung around ;  
When there struck on us a sigh ;  
“ Ah—what is that ? ” said I :  
“ Was it not you ? ” said she. “ A sigh did sound.’

I had not breathed it,  
Nor the night-wind heaved it,  
And how it came to us we could not guess ;  
And we looked up at each face  
Framed and glazed there in its place,  
Still hearkening ; but thenceforth was silentness.

Half in dreaming,  
“ Then its meaning,”  
Said we, “ must be surely this ; that they repine  
That we should be the last  
Of stocks once unsurpassed,  
And unable to keep up their sturdy line.”

1916.

NEAR LANIVET, 1872

THERE was a stunted handpost just on the crest,  
Only a few feet high :  
She was tired, and we stopped in the twilight-time for  
her rest,  
At the crossways close thereby.

She leant back, being so weary, against its stem,  
And laid her arms on its own,  
Each open palm stretched out to each end of them,  
Her sad face sideways thrown.

Her white-clothed form at this dim-lit cease of day  
Made her look as one crucified  
In my gaze at her from the midst of the dusty way,  
And hurriedly "Don't," I cried.

I do not think she heard. Loosing thence she said,  
As she stepped forth ready to go,  
"I am rested now.—Something strange came into my  
head ;  
I wish I had not leant so !"

And wordless we moved onward down from the hill  
In the west cloud's murked obscure,  
And looking back we could see the handpost still  
In the solitude of the moor.

## NEAR LANIVET, 1872

“It struck her too,” I thought, for as if afraid  
    She heavily breathed as we trailed;  
Till she said, “I did not think how ’twould look in  
    the shade,  
When I leant there like one nailed.”

I, lightly : “There’s nothing in it. For *you*, anyhow !”  
    —“O I know there is not,” said she . . .  
“Yet I wonder . . . If no one is bodily crucified now,  
    In spirit one may be !”

And we dragged on and on, while we seemed to see  
    In the running of Time’s far glass  
Her crucified, as she had wondered if she might be  
    Some day.—Alas, alas !

## JOYS OF MEMORY

WHEN the spring comes round, and a certain day  
Looks out from the brume by the eastern copsetrees  
And says, Remember,  
I begin again, as if it were new,  
A day of like date I once lived through,  
Whiling it hour by hour away ;  
So shall I do till my December,  
When spring comes round.

I take my holiday then and my rest  
Away from the dun life here about me,  
Old hours re-greeting  
With the quiet sense that bring they must  
Such throbs as at first, till I house with dust,  
And in the numbness my heartsome zest  
For things that were, be past repeating  
When spring comes round.



## TO THE MOON

“WHAT have you looked at, Moon,  
In your time,  
Now long past your prime ?”  
“O, I have looked at, often looked at  
Sweet, sublime,  
Sore things, shudderful, night and noon  
In my time.”

“What have you mused on, Moon,  
In your day,  
So aloof, so far away ?”  
“O, I have mused on, often mused on  
Growth, decay,  
Nations alive, dead, mad, asworn,  
In my day !”

“Have you much wondered, Moon,  
On your rounds,  
Self-wrapt, beyond Earth's bounds ?”  
“Yea, I have wondered, often wondered  
At the sounds  
Reaching me of the human tune  
On my rounds.”

“What do you think of it, Moon,  
As you go ?  
Is Life much, or no ?”  
“O, I think of it, often think of it  
As a show  
God ought surely to shut up soon,  
As I go.”

## COPYING ARCHITECTURE IN AN OLD MINSTER

(*Wimborne*)

How smartly the quarters of the hour march by  
That the jack-o'-clock never forgets ;  
Ding-dong ; and before I have traced a cusp's eye,  
Or got the true twist of the ogee over,  
A double ding-dong ricochetts.

Just so did he clang here before I came,  
And so will he clang when I'm gone  
Through the Minster's cavernous hollows—the same  
Tale of hours never more to be will he deliver  
To the speechless midnight and dawn !

I grow to conceive it a call to ghosts,  
Whose mould lies below and around.  
Yes ; the next “Come, come,” draws them out  
from their posts.  
And they gather, and one shade appears, and another,  
As the eve-damps creep from the ground.

See—a Courtenay stands by his quatrefoiled tomb,  
And a Duke and his Duchess near ;  
And one Sir Edmund in columned gloom,  
And a Saxon king by the presbytery chamber ;  
And shapes unknown in the rear.

## COPYING ARCHITECTURE

Maybe they have met for a parle on some plan  
To better ail-stricken mankind ;  
I catch their cheepings, though thinner than  
The overhead creak of a passenger's pinion  
When leaving land behind.

Or perhaps they speak to the yet unborn,  
And caution them not to come  
To a world so ancient and trouble-torn,  
Of foiled intents, vain lovingkindness,  
And ardours chilled and numb.

They waste to fog as I stir and stand,  
And move from the arched recess,  
And pick up the drawing that slipped from my hand,  
And feel for the pencil I dropped in the cranny  
In a moment's forgetfulness.

## TO SHAKESPEARE

AFTER THREE HUNDRED YEARS

BRIGHT baffling Soul, least capturable of themes,  
Thou, who display'dst a life of commonplace,  
Leaving no intimate word or personal trace  
Of high design outside the artistry  
    Of thy penned dreams,  
Still shalt remain at heart unread eternally.

Through human orbits thy discourse to-day,  
Despite thy formal pilgrimage, throbs on  
In harmonies that cow Oblivion,  
And, like the wind, with all-uncared effect  
    Maintain a sway  
Not fore-desired, in tracks unchosen and unchecked.

And yet, at thy last breath, with mindless note  
The borough clocks but samely tongued the hour,  
The Avon just as always glassed the tower,  
Thy age was published on thy passing-bell  
    But in due rote  
With other dwellers' deaths accorded a like knell.

And at the strokes some townsman (met, maybe,  
And thereon queried by some squire's good dame  
Driving in shopward) may have given thy name,  
With, "Yes, a worthy man and well-to-do ;  
    Though, as for me,  
I knew him but by just a neighbour's nod, 'tis true.

## TO SHAKESPEARE

“I’ faith, few knew him much here, save by word,  
He having elsewhere led his busier life;  
Though to be sure he left with us his wife.”  
—“Ah, one of the tradesmen’s sons, I now recall. . . .

Witty, I’ve heard. . . .  
We did not know him. . . . Well, good-day. Death  
comes to all.”

So, like a strange bright bird we sometimes find  
To mingle with the barn-door brood awhile,  
Then vanish from their homely domicile—  
Into man’s poesy, we wot not whence,  
Flew thy strange mind,  
Lodged there a radiant guest, and sped for ever thence.

1916.

## QUID HIC AGIS?

### I

WHEN I weekly knew  
An ancient pew,  
And murmured there  
The forms of prayer  
And thanks and praise  
In the ancient ways,  
And heard read out  
During August drought  
That chapter from Kings  
Harvest-time brings ;  
—How the prophet, broken  
By griefs unspoken,  
Went heavily away  
To fast and to pray,  
And, while waiting to die,  
The Lord passed by,  
And a whirlwind and fire  
Drew nigher and nigher,  
And a small voice anon  
Bade him up and be gone,—  
I did not apprehend  
As I sat to the end  
And watched for her smile  
Across the sunned aisle,  
That this theme of a seer  
Which came once a year

## QUID HIC AGIS?

Might, when sands were heaping,  
Be like a sweat creeping,  
Or in any degree  
Bear on her or on me!

### II

When later, by chance  
Of circumstance,  
It befel me to read  
On a hot afternoon  
At the lectern there  
The selfsame words  
As the lesson decreed,  
To the gathered few  
From the hamlets near—  
Folk of flocks and herds  
Sitting half aswoon,  
Who listened thereto  
As women and men  
Not overmuch  
Concerned at such—  
So, like them then,  
I did not see  
What drought might be  
With me, with her,  
As the Kalendar  
Moved on, and Time  
Devoured our prime.

### III

But now, at last,  
When our glory has passed,  
And there is no smile  
From her in the aisle,  
But where it once shone  
A marble, men say,

## QUID HIC AGIS?

With her name thereon  
Is discerned to-day ;  
And spiritless  
In the wilderness  
I shrink from sight  
And desire the night,  
(Though, as in old wise,  
I might still arise,  
Go forth, and stand  
And prophesy in the land),  
I feel the shake  
Of wind and earthquake,  
And consuming fire  
Nigher and nigher,  
And the voice catch clear,  
“ What doest thou here ? ”

*The Spectator* : 1916.



## ON A MIDSUMMER EVE

I IDLY cut a parsley stalk,  
And blew therein towards the moon ;  
I had not thought what ghosts would walk  
With shivering footsteps to my tune.

I went, and knelt, and scooped my hand  
As if to drink, into the brook,  
And a faint figure seemed to stand  
Above me, with the bygone look.

I lipped rough rhymes of chance, not choice,  
I thought not what my words might be ;  
There came into my ear a voice  
That turned a tenderer verse for me.

## TIMING HER

*(Written to an old folk-tune)*

LALAGE's coming :  
Where is she now, O ?  
Turning to bow, O,  
And smile, is she,  
Just at parting,  
Parting, parting,  
As she is starting  
To come to me ?

Where is she now, O,  
Now, and now, O,  
Shadowing a bough, O,  
Of hedge or tree  
As she is rushing,  
Rushing, rushing,  
Gossamers brushing  
To come to me ?

Lalage's coming ;  
Where is she now, O ;  
Climbing the brow, O,  
Of hills I see ?  
Yes, she is nearing,  
Nearing, nearing,  
Weather unfearing  
To come to me.

## TIMING HER

Near is she now, O,  
Now, and now, O ;  
Milk the rich cow, O,  
Forward the tea ;  
Shake the down bed for her,  
Linen sheets spread for her,  
Drape round the head for her  
Coming to me.

Lalage's coming,  
Nearer is she now, O,  
End anyhow, O,  
To-day's husbandry !  
Would a gilt chair were mine,  
Slippers of vair were mine,  
Brushes for hair were mine  
Of ivory !

What will she think, O,  
She who's so comely,  
Viewing how homely  
A sort are we !  
Nothing resplendent,  
No prompt attendant,  
Not one dependent  
Pertaining to me !

Lalage's coming ;  
Where is she now, O ?  
Fain I'd avow, O,  
Full honestly  
Nought here's enough for her,  
All is too rough for her,  
Even my love for her  
Poor in degree.

Nearer is she now, O,  
Now, and now, O,

## TIMING HER

She it is, I vow, O,  
Passing the lea.  
Rush down to meet her there,  
Call out and greet her there,  
Never a sweeter there  
Crossed to me!

Lalage's come ; aye,  
Come is she now, O ! . . .  
Does Heaven allow, O,  
A meeting to be?  
Yes, she is here now,  
Here now, here now,  
Nothing to fear now,  
Here's Lalage!

## BEFORE KNOWLEDGE

WHEN I walked roseless tracks and wide,  
Ere dawned your date for meeting me,  
O why did you not cry Halloo  
Across the stretch between, and say :

“ We move, while years as yet divide,  
On closing lines which—though it be  
You know me not nor I know you—  
Will intersect and join some day ! ”

Then well I had borne  
Each scraping thorn ;  
But the winters froze,  
And grew no rose ;  
No bridge bestrode  
The gap at all ;  
No shape you showed,  
And I heard no call !

## THE BLINDED BIRD

So zestfully canst thou sing?  
And all this indignity,  
With God's consent, on thee!  
Blinded ere yet a-wing  
By the red-hot needle thou,  
I stand and wonder how  
So zestfully thou canst sing!

Resenting not such wrong,  
Thy grievous pain forgot,  
Eternal dark thy lot,  
Groping thy whole life long  
After that stab of fire;  
Enjailed in pitiless wire;  
Resenting not such wrong!

Who hath charity? This bird.  
Who suffereth long and is kind,  
Is not provoked, though blind  
And alive ensepulchred?  
Who hopeth, endureth all things?  
Who thinketh no evil, but sings?  
Who is divine? This bird.

## “THE WIND BLEW WORDS”

THE wind blew words along the skies,  
And these it blew to me  
Through the wide dusk : “ Lift up your eyes,  
Behold this troubled tree,  
Complaining as it sways and plies ;  
It is a limb of thee.

“ Yea, too, the creatures sheltering round—  
Dumb figures, wild and tame,  
Yea, too, thy fellows who abound—  
Either of speech the same  
Or far and strange—black, dwarfed, and browned,  
They are stuff of thy own frame.”

I moved on in a surging awe  
Of inarticulateness  
At the pathetic Me I saw  
In all his huge distress,  
Making self-slaughter of the law  
To kill, break, or suppress.

## THE FADED FACE

How was this I did not see  
Such a look as here was shown  
Ere its womanhood had blown  
Past its first felicity?—  
That I did not know you young,  
    Faded Face,  
        Know you young!

Why did Time so ill bestead  
That I heard no voice of yours  
Hail from out the curved contours  
Of those lips when rosy red;  
Listed not the songs they sung,  
    Faded Face,  
        Songs they sung!

By these blanchings, blooms of old,  
And the relics of your voice—  
Leavings rare of rich and choice  
From your early tone and mould—  
Let me mourn,—aye, overwung,  
    Faded Face,  
        Overwung!



## THE RIDDLE

### I

STRETCHING eyes west  
Over the sea,  
Wind foul or fair,  
Always stood she  
Prospect-impressed ;  
Solely out there  
Did her gaze rest,  
Never elsewhere  
Seemed charm to be.

### II

Always eyes east  
Ponders she now—  
As in devotion—  
Hills of blank brow  
Where no waves plough.  
Never the least  
Room for emotion  
Drawn from the ocean  
Does she allow.

## THE DUEL

“ I AM here to time, you see ;  
The glade is well-screened—eh?—against alarm ;  
Fit place to vindicate by my arm  
The honour of my spotless wife,  
Who scorns your libel upon her life  
In boasting intimacy !

“ ‘ All hush-offerings you’ll spurn,  
My husband. Two must come ; one only go,’  
She said. ‘ That he’ll be you I know ;  
To faith like ours Heaven will be just,  
And I shall abide in fullest trust  
Your speedy glad return.’ ”

“ Good. Here am also I ;  
And we’ll proceed without more waste of words  
To warm your cockpit. Of the swords  
Take you your choice. I shall thereby  
Feel that on me no blame can lie,  
Whatever Fate accords.”

So stripped they there, and fought,  
And the swords clicked and scraped, and the onsets  
sped ;  
Till the husband fell ; and his shirt was red  
With streams from his heart’s hot cistern.  
Nought  
Could save him now ; and the other, wrought  
Maybe to pity, said :

## THE DUEL

“Why did you urge on this?  
Your wife assured you ; and 't had better been  
That you had let things pass, serene  
In confidence of long-tried bliss,  
Holding there could be nought amiss  
In what my words might mean.”

Then, seeing nor ruth nor rage  
Could move his foeman more—now Death's deaf  
thrall—

He wiped his steel, and, with a call  
Like turtledove to dove, swift broke  
Into the copse, where under an oak  
His horse cropt, held by a page.

“All's over, Sweet,” he cried  
To the wife, thus guised : for the young page was she.  
“'Tis as we hoped and said 't would be.  
He never guessed. . . . We mount and ride  
To where our love can reign uneyed.  
He's clay, and we are free.”

## AT MAYFAIR LODGINGS

How could I be aware,  
The opposite window eyeing  
As I lay listless there,  
That through its blinds was dying  
One I had rated rare  
Before I had set me sighing  
For another more fair?

Had the house-front been glass,  
My vision unobscuring,  
Could aught have come to pass  
More happiness-insuring  
To her, loved as a lass  
When spouseless, all-alluring?  
I reckon not, alas!

So, the square window stood,  
Steadily night-long shining  
In my close neighbourhood,  
Who looked forth undivining  
That soon would go for good  
One there in pain reclining,  
Unpardoned, unadieu'd.

Silently screened from view  
Her tragedy was ending  
That need not have come due  
Had she been less unbending.  
How near, near were we two  
At that last vital rending,—  
And neither of us knew!

## TO MY FATHER'S VIOLIN

DOES he want you down there  
In the Nether Glooms where  
The hours may be a dragging load upon him,  
As he hears the axle grind  
Round and round  
Of the great world, in the blind  
Still profound  
Of the night-time? He might liven at the sound  
Of your string, revealing you had not forgone him.

In the gallery west the nave,  
But a few yards from his grave,  
Did you, tucked beneath his chin, to his bowing  
Guide the homely harmony  
Of the quire  
Who for long years strenuously—  
Son and sire—  
Caught the strains that at his fingering low or higher  
From your four thin threads and eff-holes came  
outflowing.

And, too, what merry tunes  
He would bow at nights or noons  
That chanced to find him bent to lute a measure,  
When he made you speak his heart  
As in dream,  
Without book or music-chart,  
On some theme  
Elusive as a jack-o'-lanthorn's gleam,  
And the psalm of duty shelved for trill of pleasure.

## TO MY FATHER'S VIOLIN

Well, you can not, alas,  
The barrier overpass  
That screens him in those Mournful Meads hereunder,  
Where no fiddling can be heard  
In the glades  
Of silentness, no bird  
Thrills the shades ;  
Where no viol is touched for songs or serenades,  
No bowing wakes a congregation's wonder.

He must do without you now,  
Stir you no more anyhow  
To yearning concords taught you in your glory ;  
While, your strings a tangled wreck,  
Once smart drawn,  
Ten worm-wounds in your neck,  
Purflings wan  
With dust-hoar, here alone I sadly con  
Your present dumbness, shape your olden story.

1916.

## THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

THIS statue of Liberty, busy man,  
Here erect in the city square,  
I have watched while your scrubbings, this early  
morning,  
Strangely wistful,  
And half tristful,  
Have turned her from foul to fair ;

With your bucket of water, and mop, and brush,  
Bringing her out of the grime  
That has smeared her during the smokes of winter  
With such glumness  
In her dumbness,  
And aged her before her time.

You have washed her down with motherly care—  
Head, shoulders, arm, and foot,  
To the very hem of the robes that drape her—  
All expertly  
And alertly,  
Till a long stream, black with soot,

Flows over the pavement to the road,  
And her shape looms pure as snow :  
I read you are hired by the City guardians—  
May be yearly,  
Or once merely—  
To treat the statues so ?

## THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

“ Oh, I'm not hired by the Councilmen  
To cleanse the statues here.  
I do this one as a self-willed duty,  
Not as paid to,  
Or at all made to,  
But because the doing is dear.”

Ah, then I hail you brother and friend !  
Liberty's knight divine.  
What you have done would have been my doing,  
Yea, most verily,  
Well, and thoroughly,  
Had but your courage been mine !

“ Oh I care not for Liberty's mould,  
Liberty charms not me ;  
What's Freedom but an idler's vision,  
Vain, pernicious,  
Often vicious,  
Of things that cannot be !

“ Memory it is that brings me to this—  
Of a daughter—my one sweet own.  
She grew a famous carver's model,  
One of the fairest  
And of the rarest :—  
She sat for the figure as shown.

“ But alas, she died in this distant place  
Before I was warned to betake  
Myself to her side ! . . . And in love of my darling,  
In love of the fame of her,  
And the good name of her,  
I do this for her sake.”

Answer I gave not. Of that form  
The carver was I at his side ;  
His child, my model, held so saintly,  
Grand in feature,  
Gross in nature,  
In the dens of vice had died.



## THE BACKGROUND AND THE FIGURE

*(Lover's Ditty)*

I THINK of the slope where the rabbits fed,  
Of the periwinks' rockwork lair,  
Of the fuchsias ringing their bells of red—  
And the something else seen there.

Between the blooms where the sod basked bright,  
By the bobbing fuchsia trees,  
Was another and yet more eyesome sight—  
The sight that richened these.

I shall seek those beauties in the spring,  
When the days are fit and fair,  
But only as foils to the one more thing  
That also will flower there!

## THE CHANGE

Out of the past there rises a week—  
Who shall read the years O!—  
Out of the past there rises a week  
Enringed with a purple zone.  
Out of the past there rises a week  
When thoughts were strung too thick to speak,  
And the magic of its lineaments remains with me  
alone.

In that week there was heard a singing—  
Who shall spell the years, the years!—  
In that week there was heard a singing,  
And the white owl wondered why.  
In that week, yea, a voice was ringing,  
And forth from the casement were candles flinging  
Radiance that fell on the deodar and lit up the path  
thereby.

Could that song have a mocking note?—  
Who shall unroll the years O!—  
Could that song have a mocking note  
To the white owl's sense as it fell?  
Could that song have a mocking note  
As it trilled out warm from the singer's throat,  
And who was the mocker and who the mocked when  
two felt all was well?

## THE CHANGE

In a tedious trampling crowd yet later—  
Who shall bare the years, the years!—  
In a tedious trampling crowd yet later,  
When silvery singings were dumb ;  
In a crowd uncaring what time might fate her,  
Mid murks of night I stood to await her,  
And the twanging of iron wheels gave out the signal  
that she was come.

She said with a travel-tired smile—  
Who shall lift the years O!—  
She said with a travel-tired smile,  
Half scared by scene so strange ;  
She said, outworn by mile on mile,  
The blurred lamps wanning her face the while,  
“O Love, I am here ; I am with you!” . . . Ah, that  
there should have come a change!

O the doom by someone spoken—  
Who shall unseal the years, the years!—  
O the doom that gave no token,  
When nothing of bale saw we :  
O the doom by someone spoken,  
O the heart by someone broken,  
The heart whose sweet reverberances are all time  
leaves to me.

*Jan.—Feb. 1913.*

## SITTING ON THE BRIDGE

*(Echo of an old song)*

SITTING on the bridge  
Past the barracks, town and ridge,  
At once the spirit seized us  
To sing a song that pleased us—  
As “The Fifth” were much in rumour;  
It was “Whilst I’m in the humour,  
Take me, Paddy, will you now?”  
And a lancer soon drew nigh,  
And his Royal Irish eye  
Said, “Willing, faith, am I,  
O, to take you anyhow, dears,  
To take you anyhow.”

But, lo!—dad walking by,  
Cried, “What, you lightheels! Fie!  
Is this the way you roam  
And mock the sunset gleam?”  
And he marched us straightway home,  
Though we said, “We are only, daddy,  
Singing, ‘Will you take me, Paddy?’”  
—Well, we never saw from then,  
If we sang there anywhen,  
The soldier dear again,  
Except at night in dream-time,  
Except at night in dream.

## SITTING ON THE BRIDGE

Perhaps that soldier's fighting  
In a land that's far away,  
Or he may be idly plighting  
Some foreign hussy gay ;  
Or perhaps his bones are whiting  
In the wind to their decay ! . . .  
Ah !—does he mind him how  
The girls he saw that day  
On the bridge, were sitting singing  
At the time of curfew-ringing,  
“ Take me, Paddy ; will you now, dear ?  
Paddy, will you now ? ”

GREY'S BRIDGE.

## THE YOUNG CHURCHWARDEN

WHEN he lit the candles there,  
And the light fell on his hand,  
And it trembled as he scanned  
Her and me, his vanquished air  
Hinted that his dream was done,  
And I saw he had begun  
    To understand.

When Love's viol was unstrung,  
Sore I wished the hand that shook  
Had been mine that shared her book  
While that evening hymn was sung,  
His the victor's, as he lit  
Candles where he had bidden us sit  
    With vanquished look.

Now her dust lies listless there,  
His afar from tending hand,  
What avails the victory scanned?  
Does he smile from upper air:  
"Ah, my friend, your dream is done;  
And 'tis *you* who have begun  
    To understand!"

## “I TRAVEL AS A PHANTOM NOW”

I TRAVEL as a phantom now,  
For people do not wish to see  
In flesh and blood so bare a bough  
    As Nature makes of me.

And thus I visit bodiless  
Strange gloomy households often at odds,  
And wonder if Man's consciousness  
    Was a mistake of God's.

And next I meet you, and I pause,  
And think that if mistake it were,  
As some have said, O then it was  
    One that I well can bear!

1915.

## LINES

TO A MOVEMENT IN MOZART'S E-FLAT SYMPHONY

Show me again the time  
When in the Junetide's prime  
We flew by meads and mountains northerly!—  
Yea, to such freshness, fairness, fulness, fineness,  
freeness,  
Love lures life on.

Show me again the day  
When from the sandy bay  
We looked together upon the pestered sea!—  
Yea, to such surging, swaying, sighing, swelling,  
shrinking,  
Love lures life on.

Show me again the hour  
When by the pinnacled tower  
We eyed each other and feared futurity!—  
Yea, to such bodings, broodings, beatings, blanchings,  
blessings,  
Love lures life on.

Show me again just this :  
The moment of that kiss  
Away from the prancing folk, by the strawberry-  
tree!—  
Yea, to such rashness, ratheness, rareness, ripeness  
richness,  
Love lures life on.

*Begun November 1898.*



## “IN THE SEVENTIES”

“Qui deridetur ab amico suo sicut ego.”—JOB.

IN the seventies I was bearing in my breast,  
    Penned tight,  
Certain starry thoughts that threw a magic light  
On the worktimes and the soundless hours of rest  
In the seventies ; aye, I bore them in my breast  
    Penned tight.

IN the seventies when my neighbours—even my  
    friend—  
    Saw me pass,  
Heads were shaken, and I heard the words, “Alas,  
For his onward years and name unless he mend!”  
In the seventies, when my neighbours and my friend  
    Saw me pass.

IN the seventies those who met me did not know  
    Of the vision  
That immuned me from the chillings of misprision  
And the damps that choked my goings to and fro  
In the seventies ; yea, those noddors did not know  
    Of the vision.

IN the seventies nought could darken or destroy it,  
    Locked in me,  
Though as delicate as lamp-worm's lucency ;  
Neither mist nor murk could weaken or alloy it  
In the seventies !—could not darken or destroy it,  
    Locked in me.

## THE PEDIGREE

### I

I BENT in the deep of night  
Over a pedigree the chronicler gave  
As mine ; and as I bent there, half-unrobed,  
The uncurtained panes of my window-square let in  
the watery light  
Of the moon in its old age :  
And green-rheumed clouds were hurrying past where  
mute and cold it globed  
Like a drifting dolphin's eye seen through a lapping  
wave.

### II

So, scanning my sire-sown tree,  
And the hieroglyphs of this spouse tied to that,  
With offspring mapped below in lineage,  
Till the tangles troubled me,  
The branches seemed to twist into a seared and cynic  
face  
Which winked and tokened towards the window  
like a Mage  
Enchanting me to gaze again thereat.

### III

It was a mirror now,  
And in it a long perspective I could trace  
Of my begetters, dwindling backward each past each  
All with the kindred look,

## THE PEDIGREE

Whose names had since been inked down in their  
place  
On the recorder's book,  
Generation and generation of my mien, and build, and  
brow.

### IV

And then did I divine  
That every heave and coil and move I made  
Within my brain, and in my mood and speech,  
Was in the glass portrayed  
As long forestalled by their so making it ;  
The first of them, the primest fuglemen of my line,  
Being fogged in far antiqueness past surmise and  
reason's reach.

### V

Said I then, sunk in tone,  
" I am merest mimicker and counterfeit !—  
Though thinking, *I am I,*  
*And what I do I do myself alone.*"  
—The cynic twist of the page thereat unknit  
Back to its normal figure, having wrought its purport  
wry,  
The Mage's mirror left the window-square,  
And the stained moon and drift retook their places  
there.

1916.

## HIS HEART

### A WOMAN'S DREAM

At midnight, in the room where he lay dead  
Whom in his life I had never clearly read,  
I thought if I could peer into that citadel  
His heart, I should at last know full and well

What hereto had been known to him alone,  
Despite our long sit-out of years foreflown,  
"And if," I said, "I do this for his memory's sake,  
It would not wound him, even if he could wake."

So I bent over him. He seemed to smile  
With a calm confidence the whole long while  
That I, withdrawing his heart, held it and, bit by bit,  
Perused the unguessed things found written on it.

It was inscribed like a terrestrial sphere  
With quaint vermiculations close and clear—  
His graving. Had I known, would I have risked the  
stroke  
Its reading brought, and my own heart nigh broke!

Yes, there at last, eyes opened, did I see  
His whole sincere symmetric history ;  
There were his truth, his simple singlemindedness,  
Strained, maybe, by time's storms, but there no less.

## HIS HEART

There were the daily deeds from sun to sun  
In blindness, but good faith, that he had done ;  
There were regrets, at instances wherein he swerved  
(As he conceived) from cherishings I had deserved.

There were old hours all figured down as bliss—  
Those spent with me—(how little had I thought  
this!)

There those when, at my absence, whether he slept  
or waked,  
(Though I knew not 'twas so!) his spirit ached.

There that when we were severed, how day dulled  
Till time joined us anew, was chronicled :  
And arguments and battlings in defence of me  
That heart recorded clearly and ruddily.

I put it back, and left him as he lay  
While pierced the morning pink and then the gray  
Into each dreary room and corridor around,  
Where I shall wait, but his step will not sound.

## WHERE THEY LIVED

DISHEVELLED leaves creep down  
Upon that bank to-day,  
Some green, some yellow, and some pale brown ;  
The wet bents bob and sway ;  
The once warm slippery turf is sodden  
Where we laughingly sat or lay.

The summerhouse is gone,  
Leaving a weedy space ;  
The bushes that veiled it once have grown  
Gaunt trees that interlace,  
Through whose lank limbs I see too clearly  
The nakedness of the place.

And where were hills of blue,  
Blind drifts of vapour blow,  
And the names of former dwellers few,  
If any, people know,  
And instead of a voice that called, " Come in,  
Dears,"  
Time calls, " Pass below ! "

## THE OCCULTATION

WHEN the cloud shut down on the morning shine,  
And darkened the sun,  
I said, " So ended that joy of mine  
Years back begun."

But day continued its lustrous roll  
In upper air ;  
And did my late irradiate soul  
Live on somewhere ?

## LIFE LAUGHS ONWARD

RAMBLING I looked for an old abode  
Where, years back, one had lived I knew ;  
Its site a dwelling duly showed,  
    But it was new.

I went where, not so long ago,  
The sod had riven two breasts asunder ;  
Daisies throve gaily there, as though  
    No grave were under.

I walked along a terrace where  
Loud children gambolled in the sun ;  
The figure that had once sat there  
    Was missed by none.

Life laughed and moved on unsubdued,  
I saw that Old succumbed to Young :  
'Twas well. My too regretful mood  
    Died on my tongue.



## THE PEACE-OFFERING

It was but a little thing,  
Yet I knew it meant to me  
Ease from what had given a sting  
To the very birdsinging  
    Latterly.

But I would not welcome it ;  
And for all I then declined  
O the regrettings infinite  
When the night-processions flit  
    Through the mind !

## “SOMETHING TAPPED”

SOMETHING tapped on the pane of my room  
When there was never a trace  
Of wind or rain, and I saw in the gloom  
My weary Belovéd's face.

“O I am tired of waiting,” she said,  
“Night, morn, noon, afternoon ;  
So cold it is in my lonely bed,  
And I thought you would join me soon !”

I rose and neared the window-glass,  
But vanished thence had she :  
Only a pallid moth, alas,  
Tapped at the pane for me.

*August 1913.*

## THE WOUND

I CLIMBED to the crest,  
And, fog-festooned,  
The sun lay west  
Like a crimson wound :

Like that wound of mine  
Of which none knew,  
For I'd given no sign  
That it pierced me through.

## A MERRYMAKING IN QUESTION

“ I WILL get a new string for my fiddle,  
And call to the neighbours to come,  
And partners shall dance down the middle  
Until the old pewter-wares hum :  
And we'll sip the mead, cyder, and rum ! ”

From the night came the oddest of answers :  
A hollow wind, like a bassoon,  
And headstones all ranged up as dancers,  
And cypresses droning a croon,  
And gurgoyles that mouthed to the tune.

“I SAID AND SANG HER  
EXCELLENCE ”

*(Fickle Lover's Song)*

I SAID and sang her excellence :  
They called it laud undue.  
    (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
Yet what was homage far above  
The plain deserts of my olden Love  
Proved verity of my new.

“ She moves a sylph in picture-land,  
Where nothing frosts the air : ”  
    (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
“ To all winged pipers overhead  
She is known by shape and song,” I said,  
Conscious of licence there.

I sang of her in a dim old hall  
Dream-built too fancifully,  
    (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
But lo, the ripe months chanced to lead  
My feet to such a hall indeed,  
Where stood the very She.

Strange, startling, was it then to learn  
I had glanced down unborn time,  
    (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
And prophesied, whereby I knew  
That which the years had planned to do  
In warranty of my rhyme.

BY RUSHY-POND.

## A JANUARY NIGHT

(1879)

THE rain smites more and more,  
The east wind snarls and sneezes ;  
Through the joints of the quivering door  
The water wheezes.

The tip of each ivy-shoot  
Writhes on its neighbour's face ;  
There is some hid dread afoot  
That we cannot trace.

Is it the spirit astray  
Of the man at the house below  
Whose coffin they took in to-day ?  
We do not know.

## A KISS

By a wall the stranger now calls his,  
Was born of old a particular kiss,  
Without forethought in its genesis ;  
Which in a trice took wing on the air.  
And where that spot is nothing shows :  
    There ivy calmly grows,  
    And no one knows  
    What a birth was there !

That kiss is gone where none can tell—  
Not even those who felt its spell :  
It cannot have died ; that know we well.  
Somewhere it pursues its flight,  
One of a long procession of sounds  
    Travelling aethereal rounds  
    Far from earth's bounds  
    In the infinite.

## THE ANNOUNCEMENT

THEY came, the brothers, and took two chairs  
In their usual quiet way ;  
And for a time we did not think  
They had much to say.

And they began and talked awhile  
Of ordinary things,  
Till spread that silence in the room  
A pent thought brings.

And then they said : " The end has come.  
Yes : it has come at last."  
And we looked down, and knew that day  
A spirit had passed.



## THE OXEN

CHRISTMAS EVE, and twelve of the clock.

“ Now they are all on their knees,”  
An elder said as we sat in a flock  
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
Nor did it occur to one of us there  
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave  
In these years! Yet, I feel,  
If someone said on Christmas Eve,  
“ Come ; see the oxen kneel

“ In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,”  
I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.

1915.

## THE TRESSES

“WHEN the air was damp  
It made my curls hang slack  
As they kissed my neck and back  
While I footed the salt-aired track  
I loved to tramp.

“When it was dry  
They would roll up crisp and tight  
As I went on in the light  
Of the sun, which my own sprite  
Seemed to outvie.

“Now I am old ;  
And have not one gay curl  
As I had when a girl  
For dampness to unfurl  
Or sun uphold !”

## THE PHOTOGRAPH

THE flame crept up the portrait line by line  
As it lay on the coals in the silence of night's profound,  
And over the arm's incline,  
And along the marge of the silkwork superfine,  
And gnawed at the delicate bosom's defenceless round.

Then I vented a cry of hurt, and averted my eyes ;  
The spectacle was one that I could not bear,  
To my deep and sad surprise ;  
But, compelled to heed, I again looked furtivewise  
Till the flame had eaten her breasts, and mouth, and  
hair.

"Thank God, she is out of it now !" I said at last,  
In a great relief of heart when the thing was done  
That had set my soul aghast,  
And nothing was left of the picture unsheathed from  
the past  
But the ashen ghost of the card it had figured on.

She was a woman long hid amid packs of years,  
She might have been living or dead ; she was lost to  
my sight,  
And the deed that had nigh drawn tears  
Was done in a casual clearance of life's arrears ;  
But I felt as if I had put her to death that night ! . . .

## THE PHOTOGRAPH

—Well ; she knew nothing thereof did she survive,  
And suffered nothing if numbered among the dead ;  
    Yet—yet—if on earth alive  
Did she feel a smart, and with vague strange anguish  
    strive ?  
If in heaven, did she smile at me sadly and shake her  
    head ?

## ON A HEATH

I COULD hear a gown-skirt rustling  
Before I could see her shape,  
Rustling through the heather  
That wove the common's drape,  
On that evening of dark weather  
When I hearkened, lips agape.

And the town-shine in the distance  
Did but baffle here the sight,  
And then a voice flew forward :  
“ Dear, is't you ? I fear the night ! ”  
And the herons flapped to norward  
In the firs upon my right.

There was another looming  
Whose life we did not see ;  
There was one stilly blooming  
Full nigh to where walked we ;  
There was a shade entombing  
All that was bright of me.

## AN ANNIVERSARY

It was at the very date to which we have come,  
In the month of the matching name,  
When, at a like minute, the sun had upswum,  
Its couch-time at night being the same.  
And the same path stretched here that people now  
follow,  
And the same stile crossed their way,  
And beyond the same green hillock and hollow  
The same horizon lay ;  
And the same man pilgrims now hereby who pilgrimed  
here that day.

Let so much be said of the date-day's sameness ;  
But the tree that neighbours the track,  
And stoops like a pedlar afflicted with lameness,  
Knew of no sogged wound or windcrack.  
And the stones of that wall were not enshrouded  
With mosses of many tones,  
And the garth up afar was not overcrowded  
With a multitude of white stones,  
And the man's eyes then were not so sunk that you  
saw the socket-bones.

KINGSTON-MAURWARD EWELEASE.

## “BY THE RUNIC STONE”

*(Two who became a story)*

By the Runic Stone  
They sat, where the grass sloped down,  
And chattered, he white-hatted, she in brown,  
Pink-faced, breeze-blown.

Rapt there alone  
In the transport of talking so  
In such a place, there was nothing to let them know  
What hours had flown.

And the die thrown  
By them heedlessly there, the dent  
It was to cut in their encompassment,  
Were, too, unknown.

It might have strown  
Their zest with qualms to see,  
As in a glass, Time toss their history  
From zone to zone!

## THE PINK FROCK

“ O my pretty pink frock,  
I sha’n’t be able to wear it !  
Why is he dying just now ?  
I hardly can bear it !

“ He might have contrived to live on ;  
But they say there’s no hope whatever :  
And must I shut myself up,  
And go out never ?

“ O my pretty pink frock,  
Puff-sleeved and accordion-pleated !  
He might have passed in July,  
And not so cheated ! ”



## TRANSFORMATIONS

PORTION of this yew  
Is a man my grandsire knew,  
Bosomed here at its foot :  
This branch may be his wife,  
A ruddy human life  
Now turned to a green shoot.

These grasses must be made  
Of her who often prayed,  
Last century, for repose ;  
And the fair girl long ago  
Whom I often tried to know  
May be entering this rose.

So, they are not underground,  
But as nerves and veins abound  
In the growths of upper air,  
And they feel the sun and rain,  
And the energy again  
That made them what they were !

## IN HER PRECINCTS

HER house looked cold from the foggy lea,  
And the square of each window a dull black blur  
Where showed no stir :  
Yes, her gloom within at the lack of me  
Seemed matching mine at the lack of her.

The black squares grew to be squares of light  
As the eveshade swathed the house and lawn,  
And viols gave tone ;  
There was glee within. And I found that night  
The gloom of severance mine alone.

KINGSTON-MAURWARD PARK.

## THE LAST SIGNAL

(*Oct.* 11, 1886)

A MEMORY OF WILLIAM BARNES

SILENTLY I footed by an uphill road  
That led from my abode to a spot yew-boughed ;  
Yellowly the sun sloped low down to westward,  
And dark was the east with cloud.

Then, below the shadow of that livid sad east,  
Where the light was least, and a gate stood wide,  
Flashed back the fire of the sun that was facing it,  
Like a brief blaze on that side.

Looking hard and harder I knew what it meant—  
The sudden shine sent from the livid east scene ;  
It meant the west mirrored by the coffin of my friend  
there,  
Turning to the road from his green,

To take his last journey forth—he who in his prime  
Trudged so many a time from that gate athwart the  
land !  
Thus a farewell to me he signalled on his grave-way,  
As with a wave of his hand.

WINTERBORNE-CAME PATH.

## THE HOUSE OF SILENCE

“THAT is a quiet place—  
That house in the trees with the shady lawn.”  
“—If, child, you knew what there goes on  
You would not call it a quiet place.  
Why, a phantom abides there, the last of its race,  
And a brain spins there till dawn.”

“But I see nobody there,—  
Nobody moves about the green,  
Or wanders the heavy trees between.”  
“—Ah, that’s because you do not bear  
The visioning powers of souls who dare  
To pierce the material screen.

“Morning, noon, and night,  
Mid those funereal shades that seem  
The uncanny scenery of a dream,  
Figures dance to a mind with sight,  
And music and laughter like floods of light  
Make all the precincts gleam.

“It is a poet’s bower,  
Through which there pass, in fleet arrays,  
Long teams of all the years and days,  
Of joys and sorrows, of earth and heaven,  
That meet mankind in its ages seven,  
An aion in an hour.”

## GREAT THINGS

SWEET cyder is a great thing,  
A great thing to me,  
Spinning down to Weymouth town  
By Ridgway thirstily,  
And maid and mistress summoning  
Who tend the hostelry :  
O cyder is a great thing,  
A great thing to me!

The dance it is a great thing,  
A great thing to me,  
With candles lit and partners fit  
For night-long revelry ;  
And going home when day-dawning  
Peeps pale upon the lea :  
O dancing is a great thing,  
A great thing to me !

Love is, yea, a great thing,  
A great thing to me,  
When, having drawn across the lawn  
In darkness silently,  
A figure flits like one a-wing  
Out from the nearest tree :  
O love is, yes, a great thing,  
Aye, greatest thing to me !

## GREAT THINGS

Will these be always great things,  
    Greatest things to me? . . .  
Let it befall that One will call,  
    “Soul, I have need of thee” :  
What then? Joy-jaunts, impassioned flings  
    Love, and its ecstasy,  
Will always have been great things,  
    Greatest things to me!

## THE CHIMES

THAT morning when I trod the town  
The twitching chimes of long renown  
    Played out to me  
The sweet Sicilian sailors' tune,  
And I knew not if late or soon  
    My day would be :

A day of sunshine beryl-bright  
And windless ; yea, think as I might,  
    I could not say,  
Even to within years' measure, when  
One would be at my side who then  
    Was far away.

When hard utilitarian times  
Had stilled the sweet Saint-Peter's chimes  
    I learnt to see  
That bale may spring where blisses are,  
And one desired might be afar  
    Though near to me.

## THE FIGURE IN THE SCENE

It pleased her to step in front and sit  
Where the cragged slope was green,  
While I stood back that I might pencil it  
With her amid the scene ;  
Till it gloomed and rained ;  
But I kept on, despite the drifting wet  
That fell and stained  
My draught, leaving for curious quizzings yet  
The blots engrained.

And thus I drew her there alone,  
Seated amid the gauze  
Of moisture, hooded, only her outline shown,  
With rainfall marked across.  
—Soon passed our stay ;  
Yet her rainy form is the Genius still of the spot,  
Immutable, yea,  
Though the place now knows her no more, and has  
known her not  
Ever since that day.

*From an old note.*



## “WHY DID I SKETCH ”

WHY did I sketch an upland green,  
And put the figure in  
Of one on the spot with me ?—  
For now that one has ceased to be seen  
The picture waxes akin  
To a wordless irony.

If you go drawing on down or cliff  
Let no soft curves intrude  
Of a woman's silhouette,  
But show the escarpments stark and stiff  
As in utter solitude ;  
So shall you half forget.

Let me sooner pass from sight of the sky  
Than again on a thoughtless day  
Limn, laugh, and sing, and rhyme  
With a woman sitting near, whom I  
Paint in for love, and who may  
Be called hence in my time !

*From an old note.*

## CONJECTURE

IF there were in my kalendar  
    No Emma, Florence, Mary,  
What would be my existence now—  
    A hermit's ?—wanderer's weary ?—  
    How should I live, and how  
    Near would be death, or far ?

Could it have been that other eyes  
    Might have uplit my highway ?  
That fond, sad, retrospective sight  
    Would catch from this dim byway  
    Prized figures different quite  
    From those that now arise ?

With how strange aspect would there creep  
    The dawn, the night, the daytime,  
If memory were not what it is  
    In song-time, toil, or pray-time.—  
    O were it else than this,  
    I'd pass to pulseless sleep !

## THE BLOW

THAT no man schemed it is my hope—  
Yea, that it fell by will and scope  
    Of That Which some enthrone,  
And for whose meaning myriads grope.

For I would not that of my kind  
There should, of his unbiassed mind,  
    Have been one known  
Who such a stroke could have designed ;

Since it would augur works and ways  
Below the lowest that man assays  
    To have hurled that stone  
Into the sunshine of our days !

And if it prove that no man did,  
And that the Inscrutable, the Hid,  
    Was cause alone  
Of this foul crash our lives amid,

I'll go in due time, and forget  
In some deep graveyard's oubliette  
    The thing whereof I groan,  
And cease from troubling ; thankful yet

## THE BLOW

Time's finger should have stretched to show  
No aimful author's was the blow  
    That swept us prone,  
But the Immanent Doer's That doth not know,

Which in some age unguessed of us  
May lift Its blinding incubus,  
    And see, and own :  
“ It grieves me I did thus and thus ! ”

## LOVE THE MONOPOLIST

(*Young Lover's Reverie*)

THE train draws forth from the station-yard,  
And with it carries me.  
I rise, and stretch out, and regard  
The platform left, and see  
An airy slim blue form there standing,  
And know that it is she.

While with strained vision I watch on,  
The figure turns round quite  
To greet friends gaily ; then is gone. . . .  
The import may be slight,  
But why remained she not hard gazing  
Till I was out of sight ?

“ O do not chat with others there,”  
I brood. “ They are not I.  
O strain your thoughts as if they were  
Gold bands between us ; eye  
All neighbour scenes as so much blankness  
Till I again am by !

“ A troubled souging in the breeze  
And the sky overhead  
Let yourself feel ; and shade-fol trees,  
Ripe corn, and apples red,  
Read as things barren and distasteful  
While we are separated !

## LOVE THE MONOPOLIST

“ When I come back uncloak your gloom,  
And let in lovely day ;  
Then the long dark as of the tomb  
Can well be thrust away  
With sweet things I shall have to practise,  
And you will have to say ! ”

*Begun 1871 : finished——.*

## AT MIDDLE-FIELD GATE IN FEBRUARY

THE bars are thick with drops that show  
As they gather themselves from the fog  
Like silver buttons ranged in a row,  
And as evenly spaced as if measured, although  
They fall at the feeblest jog.

They load the leafless hedge hard by,  
And the blades of last year's grass,  
While the fallow ploughland turned up nigh  
In raw rolls, clammy and clogging lie—  
Too clogging for feet to pass.

How dry it was on a far-back day  
When straws hung the hedge and around,  
When amid the sheaves in amorous play  
In curtained bonnets and light array  
Bloomed a bevy now underground!

BOCKHAMPTON LANE.

## THE YOUTH WHO CARRIED A LIGHT

I SAW him pass as the new day dawned,  
    Murmuring some musical phrase ;  
Horses were drinking and floundering in the pond,  
    And the tired stars thinned their gaze ;  
Yet these were not the spectacles at all that he conned,  
    But an inner one, giving out rays.

Such was the thing in his eye, walking there,  
    The very and visible thing,  
A close light, displacing the gray of the morning air,  
    And the tokens that the dark was taking wing ;  
And was it not the radiance of a purpose rare  
    That might ripe to its accomplishing ?

What became of that light ? I wonder still its fate !  
    Was it quenched ere its full apogee ?  
Did it struggle frail and frailer to a beam emaciate ?  
    Did it thrive till matured in verity ?  
Or did it travel on, to be a new young dreamer's  
    freight,  
And thence on infinitely ?

1915.



## THE HEAD ABOVE THE FOG

SOMETHING do I see  
Above the fog that sheets the mead,  
A figure like to life indeed,  
Moving along with spectre-speed,  
Seen by none but me.

O the vision keen!—  
Tripping along to me for love  
As in the flesh it used to move,  
Only its hat and plume above  
The evening fog-fleece seen.

In the day-fall wan,  
When nighted birds break off their song,  
Mere ghostly head it skims along,  
Just as it did when warm and strong,  
Body seeming gone.

Such it is I see  
Above the fog that sheets the mead—  
Yea, that which once could breathe and plead!—  
Skimming along with spectre-speed  
To a last tryst with me.

## OVERLOOKING THE RIVER STOUR

THE swallows flew in the curves of an eight  
    Above the river-gleam  
    In the wet June's last beam :  
Like little crossbows animate  
The swallows flew in the curves of an eight  
    Above the river-gleam.

Planing up shavings of crystal spray  
    A moor-hen darted out  
    From the bank thereabout,  
And through the stream-shine ripped his way ;  
Planing up shavings of crystal spray  
    A moor-hen darted out.

Closed were the kingcups ; and the mead  
    Dripped in monotonous green,  
    Though the day's morning sheen  
Had shown it golden and honeybee'd ;  
Closed were the kingcups ; and the mead  
    Dripped in monotonous green.

And never I turned my head, alack,  
    While these things met my gaze  
    Through the pane's drop-drenched glaze,  
To see the more behind my back. . . .  
O never I turned, but let, alack,  
    These less things hold my gaze !

## THE MUSICAL BOX

LIFELONG to be  
Seemed the fair colour of the time ;  
That there was standing shadowed near  
A spirit who sang to the gentle chime  
Of the self-struck notes, I did not hear,  
I did not see.

Thus did it sing  
To the mindless lyre that played indoors  
As she came to listen for me without :  
“ O value what the nonce outpours—  
This best of life—that shines about  
Your welcoming ! ”

I had slowed along  
After the torrid hours were done,  
Though still the posts and walls and road  
Flung back their sense of the hot-faced sun,  
And had walked by Stourside Mill, where broad  
Stream-lilies throng.

And I descried  
The dusky house that stood apart,  
And her, white-muslined, waiting there  
In the porch with high-expectant heart,  
While still the thin mechanic air  
Went on inside.

## THE MUSICAL BOX

At whiles would flit  
Swart bats, whose wings, be-webbed and tanned,  
Whirred like the wheels of ancient clocks :  
She laughed a hailing as she scanned  
Me in the gloom, the tuneful box  
Intoning it.

Lifelong to be  
I thought it. That there watched hard by  
A spirit who sang to the indoor tune,  
“O make the most of what is nigh !”  
I did not hear in my dull soul-swoon—  
I did not see.

## ON STURMINSTER FOOT-BRIDGE

RETICULATIONS creep upon the slack stream's face  
When the wind skims irritably past,  
The current clucks smartly into each hollow place  
That years of flood have scrabbled in the pier's sodden  
base ;  
The floating-lily leaves rot fast.

On a roof stand the swallows ranged in wistful waiting  
rows,  
Till they arrow off and drop like stones  
Among the eyot-withies at whose foot the river  
flows ;  
And beneath the roof is she who in the dark world  
shows  
As a lattice-gleam when midnight moans.

## ROYAL SPONSORS

“THE king and the queen will stand to the child ;  
    'Twill be handed down in song ;  
And it's no more than their deserving,  
With my lord so faithful at Court so long,  
    And so staunch and strong.

“O never before was known such a thing !  
    'Twill be a grand time for all ;  
And the beef will be a whole-roast bullock,  
And the servants will have a feast in the hall,  
    And the ladies a ball.

“While from Jordan's stream by a traveller,  
    In a flagon of silver wrought,  
And by caravan, stage-coach, wain, and waggon  
A precious trickle has been brought,  
    Clear as when caught.”

The morning came. To the park of the peer  
    The royal couple bore ;  
And the font was filled with the Jordan water,  
And the household awaited their guests before  
    The carpeted door.

But when they went to the silk-lined cot  
    The child was found to have died.  
“What's now to be done? We can disappoint not  
The king and queen!” the family cried  
    With eyes spread wide.

## ROYAL SPONSORS

“ Even now they approach the chestnut-drive !

    The service must be read.”

“ Well, since we can't christen the child alive,  
By God we shall have to christen him dead !”

    The marquis said.

Thus, breath-forsaken, a corpse was taken

    To the private chapel—yea—

And the king knew not, nor the queen, God wot,

That they answered for one returned to clay

    At the font that day.

## OLD FURNITURE

I KNOW not how it may be with others  
    Who sit amid relics of householdry  
That date from the days of their mothers' mothers,  
    But well I know how it is with me  
    Continually.

I see the hands of the generations  
    That owned each shiny familiar thing  
In play on its knobs and indentations,  
    And with its ancient fashioning  
    Still dallying :

Hands behind hands, growing paler and paler,  
    As in a mirror a candle-flame  
Shows images of itself, each frailer  
    As it recedes, though the eye may frame  
    Its shape the same.

On the clock's dull dial a foggy finger,  
    Moving to set the minutes right  
With tentative touches that lift and linger  
    In the wont of a moth on a summer night,  
    Creeps to my sight.

On this old viol, too, fingers are dancing—  
    As whilom—just over the strings by the nut,  
The tip of a bow receding, advancing  
    In airy quivers, as if it would cut  
    The plaintive gut.



## OLD FURNITURE

And I see a face by that box for tinder,  
    Glowing forth in fits from the dark,  
And fading again, as the linden cinder  
    Kindles to red at the flinty spark,  
    Or goes out stark.

Well, well. It is best to be up and doing,  
    The world has no use for one to-day  
Who eyes things thus—no aim pursuing!  
    He should not continue in this stay,  
    But sink away.

## A THOUGHT IN TWO MOODS

I SAW it—pink and white—revealed  
Upon the white and green ;  
The white and green was a daisied field,  
The pink and white Ethleen.

And as I looked it seemed in kind  
That difference they had none ;  
The two fair bodiments combined  
As varied miens of one.

A sense that, in some mouldering year,  
As one they both would lie,  
Made me move quickly on to her  
To pass the pale thought by.

She laughed and said : “ Out there, to me,  
You looked so weather-browed,  
And brown in clothes, you seemed to be  
Made of the dusty ground ! ”

## THE LAST PERFORMANCE

" I AM playing my oldest tunes," declared she,  
    " All the old tunes I know,—  
Those I learnt ever so long ago."  
—Why she should think just then she'd play them  
    Silence cloaks like snow.

When I returned from the town at nightfall  
    Notes continued to pour  
As when I had left two hours before :  
" It's the very last time," she said in closing ;  
    " From now I play no more."

A few morns onward found her fading,  
    And, as her life outflow,  
I thought of her playing her tunes right through ;  
And I felt she had known of what was coming,  
    And wondered how she knew.

1912.

## “YOU ON THE TOWER”

### I

“ You on the tower of my factory—  
What do you see up there?  
Do you see Enjoyment with wide wings  
Advancing to reach me here?”  
—“ Yea ; I see Enjoyment with wide wings  
Advancing to reach you here.”

### II

“ Good. Soon I’ll come and ask you  
To tell me again thereon. . . .  
Well, what is he doing now? Hoi, there!”  
—“ He still is flying on.”  
“ Ah, waiting till I have full-finished.  
Good. Tell me again anon. . . .

### III

“ Hoi, Watchman! I’m here. When comes he?  
Between my sweats I am chill.”  
—“ Oh, you there, working still?  
Why, surely he reached you a time back,  
And took you miles from your mill?  
He duly came in his winging,  
And now he has passed out of view.  
How can it be that you missed him?  
He brushed you by as he flew.”

## THE INTERLOPER

THERE are three folk driving in a quaint old chaise,  
And the cliff-side track looks green and fair ;  
I view them talking in quiet glee  
As they drop down towards the puffins' lair  
    By the roughest of ways ;  
But another with the three rides on, I see,  
    Whom I like not to be there !

NO : it's not anybody you think of. Next  
A dwelling appears by a slow sweet stream  
Where two sit happy and half in the dark :  
They read, helped out by a frail-wick'd gleam,  
    Some rhythmic text ;  
But one sits with them whom they don't mark,  
    One I'm wishing could not be there.

NO : not whom you knew and name. And now  
I discern gay diners in a mansion-place,  
And the guests dropping wit—pert, prim, or choice,  
And the hostess's tender and laughing face,  
    And the host's bland brow ;  
But I cannot help hearing a hollow voice,  
    And I'd fain not hear it there.

NO : it's not from the stranger you met once. Ah,  
Yet a goodlier scene than that succeeds ;  
People on a lawn—quite a crowd of them. Yes,  
And they chatter and ramble as fancy leads ;  
    And they say, " Hurrah ! "  
To a blithe speech made ; save one, mirthless,  
    Who ought not to be there.

## THE INTERLOPER

Nay : it's not the pale Form your imagings raise,  
That waits on us all at a destined time,  
It is not the Fourth Figure the Furnace showed ;  
O that it were such a shape sublime  
    In these latter days !  
It is that under which best lives corrode ;  
    Would, would it could not be there !

## LOGS ON THE HEARTH

A MEMORY OF A SISTER

THE fire advances along the log  
Of the tree we felled,  
Which bloomed and bore striped apples by the peck  
Till its last hour of bearing knelled.

The fork that first my hand would reach  
And then my foot  
In climbings upward inch by inch, lies now  
Sawn, sapless, darkening with soot.

Where the bark chars is where, one year,  
It was pruned, and bled—  
Then overgrew the wound. But now, at last,  
Its growings all have stagnated.

My fellow-climber rises dim  
From her chilly grave—  
Just as she was, her foot near mine on the bending  
limb,  
Laughing, her young brown hand away.

*December 1915.*

## THE SUNSHADE

AH—it's the skeleton of a lady's sunshade,  
Here at my feet in the hard rock's chink,  
Merely a naked sheaf of wires!—  
Twenty years have gone with their livers and diers  
Since it was silked in its white or pink.

Noonshine riddles the ribs of the sunshade,  
No more a screen from the weakest ray ;  
Nothing to tell us the hue of its dyes,  
Nothing but rusty bones as it lies  
In its coffin of stone, unseen till to-day.

Where is the woman who carried that sunshade  
Up and down this seaside place?—  
Little thumb standing against its stem,  
Thoughts perhaps bent on a love-stratagem,  
Softening yet more the already soft face!

Is the fair woman who carried that sunshade  
A skeleton just as her property is,  
Laid in the chink that none may scan?  
And does she regret—if regret dust can—  
The vain things thought when she flourished this?

SWANAGE CLIFFS.



## THE AGEING HOUSE

WHEN the walls were red  
That now are seen  
To be overspread  
With a mouldy green,  
A fresh fair head  
Would often lean  
From the sunny casement  
And scan the scene,  
While blithely spoke the wind to the little sycamore  
tree.

But storms have raged  
Those walls about,  
And the head has aged  
That once looked out ;  
And zest is suaged  
And trust grows doubt,  
And slow effacement  
Is rife throughout,  
While fiercely girds the wind at the long-limbed  
sycamore tree !

## THE CAGED GOLDFINCH

WITHIN a churchyard, on a recent grave,  
    I saw a little cage  
That jailed a goldfinch. All was silence save  
    Its hops from stage to stage.

There was inquiry in its wistful eye,  
    And once it tried to sing ;  
Of him or her who placed it there, and why,  
    No one knew anything.

AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S IN  
VICTORIAN YEARS

“THAT same first fiddler who leads the orchéstra  
to-night  
Here fiddled four decades of years ago ;  
He bears the same babe-like smile of self-centred  
delight,  
Same trinket on watch-chain, same ring on the hand  
with the bow.

“But his face, if regarded, is woefully wanner, and  
drier,  
And his once dark beard has grown straggling  
and gray ;  
Yet a blissful existence he seems to have led with his  
lyre,  
In a trance of his own, where no wearing or tearing  
had sway.

“Mid these wax figures, who nothing can do, it may  
seem  
That to do but a little thing counts a great deal ;  
To be watched by kings, councillors, queens, may be  
flattering to him—  
With their glass eyes longing they too could wake  
notes that appeal.”

## AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S

Ah, but he played staunchly—that fiddler—whoever  
he was,

With the innocent heart and the soul-touching  
string:

May he find the Fair Haven! For did he not smile  
with good cause?

Yes; gamuts that graced forty years'-flight were not  
a small thing!

## THE BALLET

THEY crush together—a rustling heap of flesh—  
Of more than flesh, a heap of souls ; and then  
    They part, enmesh,  
    And crush together again,  
Like the pink petals of a too sanguine rose  
    Frightened shut just when it blows.

Though all alike in their tinsel livery,  
And indistinguishable at a sweeping glance,  
    They muster, maybe,  
    As lives wide in irrelevance ;  
A world of her own has each one underneath,  
    Detached as a sword from its sheath.

Daughters, wives, mistresses ; honest or false, sold,  
    bought ;  
Hearts of all sizes ; gay, fond, gushing, or penned,  
    Various in thought  
    Of lover, rival, friend ;  
Links in a one-pulsed chain, all showing one smile,  
    Yet severed so many a mile !

## THE FIVE STUDENTS

THE sparrow dips in his wheel-rut bath,  
The sun grows passionate-eyed,  
And boils the dew to smoke by the paddock-path ;  
As strenuously we stride,—  
Five of us ; dark He, fair He, dark She, fair She, I,  
All beating by.

The air is shaken, the high-road hot,  
Shadowless swoons the day,  
The greens are sobered and cattle at rest ; but not  
We on our urgent way,—  
Four of us ; fair She, dark She, fair He, I, are there,  
But one—elsewhere.

Autumn moulds the hard fruit mellow,  
And forward still we press  
Through moors, briar-meshed plantations, clay-pits  
yellow,  
As in the spring hours—yes,  
Three of us : fair He, fair She, I, as heretofore,  
But—fallen one more.

The leaf drops : earthworms draw it in  
At night-time noiselessly,  
The fingers of birch and beech are skeleton-thin,  
And yet on the beat are we,—  
Two of us ; fair She, I. But no more left to go  
The track we know.

## THE FIVE STUDENTS

Icicles tag the church-aisle leads,  
The flag-rope gibbers hoarse,  
The home-bound foot-folk wrap their snow-flaked  
heads,  
Yet I still stalk the course,—  
One of us. . . . Dark and fair He, dark and fair She,  
gone :  
The rest—anon.

## THE WIND'S PROPHECY

I TRAVEL on by barren farms,  
And gulls glint out like silver flecks  
Against a cloud that speaks of wrecks,  
And bellies down with black alarms.  
I say : " Thus from my lady's arms  
I go ; those arms I love the best ! "  
The wind replies from dip and rise,  
" Nay ; toward her arms thou journeyest."

A distant verge morosely gray  
Appears, while clots of flying foam  
Break from its muddy monochrome,  
And a light blinks up far away.  
I sigh : " My eyes now as all day  
Behold her ebon loops of hair ! "  
Like bursting bonds the wind responds,  
" Nay, wait for tresses flashing fair ! "

From tides the lofty coastlines screen  
Come smittings like the slam of doors,  
Or hammerings on hollow floors,  
As the swell cleaves through caves unseen.  
Say I : " Though broad this wild terrene,  
Her city home is matched of none ! "  
From the hoarse skies the wind replies :  
" Thou shouldst have said her sea-bord one."

The all-prevailing clouds exclude  
The one quick timorous transient star ;  
The waves outside where breakers are  
Huzza like a mad multitude.



## THE WIND'S PROPHECY

"Where the sun ups it, mist-imbued,"  
I cry, "there reigns the star for me!"  
The wind outshrieks from points and peaks :  
"Here, westward, where it downs, mean ye!"

Yonder the headland, vulturine,  
Snores like old Skrymer in his sleep,  
And every chasm and every steep  
Blackens as wakes each pharos-shine.  
"I roam, but one is safely mine,"  
I say. "God grant she stay my own!"  
Low laughs the wind as if it grinned :  
"Thy Love is one thou'st not yet known."

*Rewritten from an old copy.*

## DURING WIND AND RAIN

THEY sing their dearest songs—  
He, she, all of them—yea,  
Treble and tenor and bass,  
And one to play ;  
With the candles mooning each face. . . .  
Ah, no ; the years O !  
How the sick leaves reel down in throngs !

They clear the creeping moss—  
Elders and juniors—aye,  
Making the pathways neat  
And the garden gay ;  
And they build a shady seat. . . .  
Ah, no ; the years, the years ;  
See, the webbed white storm-birds wing across.

They are blithely breakfasting all—  
Men and maidens—yea,  
Under the summer tree,  
With a glimpse of the bay,  
While pet fowl come to the knee. . . .  
Ah, no ; the years O !  
And the rotten rose is ript from the wall.

They change to a high new house,  
He, she, all of them—aye,  
Clocks and carpets and chairs  
On the lawn all day,  
And brightest things that are theirs. . . .  
Ah, no ; the years, the years ;  
Down their chiselled names the rain-drop ploughs.

## HE PREFERS HER EARTHLY

THIS after-sunset is a sight for seeing,  
Cliff-heads of craggy cloud surrounding it.

—And dwell you in that glory-show?

You may; for there are strange strange things in  
being,  
Stranger than I know.

Yet if that chasm of splendour claim your presence  
Which glows between the ash cloud and the dun,

How changed must be your mortal mould!  
Changed to a firmament-riding earthless essence  
From what you were of old:

All too unlike the fond and fragile creature  
Then known to me. . . . Well, shall I say it plain?

I would not have you thus and there,  
But still would grieve on, missing you, still feature  
You as the one you were.

## THE DOLLS

“WHENEVER you dress me dolls, mammy,  
    Why do you dress them so,  
And make them gallant soldiers,  
    When never a one I know ;  
And not as gentle ladies  
    With frills and frocks and curls,  
As people dress the dollies  
    Of other little girls ? ”

Ah—why did she not answer :—  
    “ Because your mammy’s heed  
Is always gallant soldiers,  
    As well may be, indeed.  
One of them was your daddy,  
    His name I must not tell ;  
He’s not the dad who lives here,  
    But one I love too well.”

## MOLLY GONE

No more summer for Molly and me ;  
    There is snow on the tree,  
And the blackbirds plump large as the rooks are,  
    almost,  
And the water is hard  
Where they used to dip bills at the dawn ere her figure  
    was lost  
    To these coasts, now my prison close-barred.

No more planting by Molly and me  
    Where the beds used to be  
Of sweet-william ; no training the clambering rose  
    By the framework of fir  
Now bowering the pathway, whereon it swings gaily  
    and blows  
    As if calling commendment from her.

No more jauntings by Molly and me  
    To the town by the sea,  
Or along over Whitesheet to Wynyard's green  
    Gap,  
Catching Montacute Crest  
To the right against Sedgmoor, and Corton-Hill's far-  
    distant cap,  
And Pilsdon and Lewsdon to west.

## MOLLY GONE

No more singing by Molly to me  
In the evenings when she  
Was in mood and in voice, and the candles were  
lit,  
And past the porch-quoin  
The rays would spring out on the laurels ; and dumble-  
dores hit  
On the pane, as if wishing to join.

Where, then, is Molly, who's no more with me ?  
—As I stand on this lea,  
Thinking thus, there's a many-flamed star in the  
air,  
That tosses a sign  
That her glance is regarding its face from her home,  
so that there  
Her eyes may have meetings with mine.

## A BACKWARD SPRING

THE trees are afraid to put forth buds,  
And there is timidity in the grass ;  
The plots lie gray where gouged by spuds,  
    And whether next week will pass  
Free of sly sour winds is the fret of each bush  
    Of barberry waiting to bloom.

Yet the snowdrop's face betrays no gloom,  
And the primrose pants in its heedless push,  
Though the myrtle asks if it's worth the fight  
    This year with frost and rime  
    To venture one more time  
On delicate leaves and buttons of white  
From the selfsame bough as at last year's prime,  
And never to ruminate on or remember  
What happened to it in mid-December.

*April 1917.*

## LOOKING ACROSS

### I

It is dark in the sky,  
And silence is where  
Our laughs rang high ;  
And recall do I  
That One is out there.

### II

The dawn is not nigh,  
And the trees are bare,  
And the waterways sigh  
That a year has drawn by,  
And Two are out there.

### III

The wind drops to die  
Like the phantom of Care  
Too frail for a cry,  
And heart brings to eye  
That Three are out there.

### IV

This Life runs dry  
That once ran rare  
And rosy in dye,  
And fleet the days fly,  
And Four are out there.



## LOOKING ACROSS

### V

Tired, tired am I  
Of this earthly air,  
And my wraith asks : Why,  
Since these calmly lie,  
Are not Five out there ?

*December 1915.*

AT A SEASIDE TOWN IN 1869

(*Young Lover's Reverie*)

I WENT and stood outside myself,  
    Spelled the dark sky  
    And ship-lights nigh,  
And grumbling winds that passed thereby.

Then next inside myself I looked,  
    And there, above  
    All, shone my Love,  
That nothing matched the image of.

Beyond myself again I ranged ;  
    And saw the free  
    Life by the sea,  
And folk indifferent to me.

O 'twas a charm to draw within  
    Thereafter, where  
    But she was ; care  
For one thing only, her hid there !

But so it chanced, without myself  
    I had to look,  
    And then I took  
More heed of what I had long forsook :

## AT A SEASIDE TOWN

The boats, the sands, the esplanade,  
The laughing crowd ;  
Light-hearted, loud  
Greetings from some not ill-endowed ;

The evening sunlit cliffs, the talk,  
Hailings and halts,  
The keen sea-salts,  
The band, the Morgenblätter Waltz.

Still, when at night I drew inside  
Forward she came,  
Sad, but the same  
As when I first had known her name.

Then rose a time when, as by force,  
Outwardly wooed  
By contacts crude,  
Her image in abeyance stood. . . .

At last I said : This outside life  
Shall not endure ;  
I'll seek the pure  
Thought-world, and bask in her allure.

Myself again I crept within,  
Scanned with keen care  
The temple where  
She'd shone, but could not find her there.

I sought and sought. But O her soul  
Has not since thrown  
Upon my own  
One beam ! Yea, she is gone, is gone.

*From an old note.*

## THE GLIMPSE

SHE sped through the door  
And, following in haste,  
And stirred to the core,  
I entered hot-faced ;  
But I could not find her,  
No sign was behind her.  
“Where is she?” I said :  
—“Who?” they asked that sat there ;  
“Not a soul’s come in sight.”  
—“A maid with red hair.”  
—“Ah.” They paled. “She is dead.  
People see her at night,  
But you are the first  
On whom she has burst  
In the keen common light.”

It was ages ago,  
When I was quite strong :  
I have waited since,—O,  
I have waited so long !  
—Yea, I set me to own  
The house, where now lone  
I dwell in void rooms  
Booming hollow as tombs !  
But I never come near her,  
Though nightly I hear her.  
And my cheek has grown thin  
And my hair has grown gray  
With this waiting therein ;  
But she still keeps away !

## THE PEDESTRIAN

AN INCIDENT OF 1883

“SIR, will you let me give you a ride?  
*Nox venit*, and the heath is wide.”

—My phaeton-lantern shone on one  
Young, fair, even fresh,  
But burdened with flesh :  
A leathern satchel at his side,  
His breathings short, his coat undone.

'Twas as if his corpulent figure slopped  
With the shake of his walking when he stopped,  
And, though the night's pinch grew acute,  
He wore but a thin  
Wind-thridded suit,  
Yet well-shaped shoes for walking in,  
Artistic beaver, cane gold-topped.

“Alas, my friend,” he said with a smile,  
“I am daily bound to foot ten mile—  
Wet, dry, or dark—before I rest.  
Six months to live  
My doctors give  
Me as my prospect here, at best,  
Unless I vamp my sturdiest !”

His voice was that of a man refined,  
A man, one well could feel, of mind,  
Quite winning in its musical ease ;  
But in mould maligned  
By some disease ;

## THE PEDESTRIAN

And I asked again. But he shook his head ;  
Then, as if more were due, he said :—

“ A student was I—of Schopenhauer,  
Kant, Hegel,—and the fountained bower  
Of the Muses, too, knew my regard :

But ah—I fear me

The grave gapes near me ! . . .  
Would I could this gross sheath discard,  
And rise an ethereal shape, unmarred ! ”

How I remember him !—his short breath,  
His aspect, marked for early death,  
As he dropped into the night for ever ;

One caught in his prime

Of high endeavour ;

From all philosophies soon to sever  
Through an unconscioned trick of Time !

## “WHO’S IN THE NEXT ROOM?”

“Who’s in the next room?—who?”

I seemed to see  
Somebody in the dawning passing through,  
Unknown to me.”

“Nay: you saw nought. He passed invisibly.”

“Who’s in the next room?—who?”

I seem to hear  
Somebody muttering firm in a language new  
That chills the ear.”

“No: you catch not his tongue who has entered  
there.”

“Who’s in the next room?—who?”

I seem to feel  
His breath like a clammy draught, as if it drew  
From the Polar Wheel.”

“No: none who breathes at all does the door conceal.”

“Who’s in the next room?—who?”

A figure wan  
With a message to one in there of something due?  
Shall I know him anon?”

“Yea he; and he brought such; and you’ll know him  
anon.”

## AT A COUNTRY FAIR

At a bygone Western country fair  
I saw a giant led by a dwarf  
With a red string like a long thin scarf;  
How much he was the stronger there  
    The giant seemed unaware.

And then I saw that the giant was blind,  
And the dwarf a shrewd-eyed little thing;  
The giant, mild, timid, obeyed the string  
As if he had no independent mind,  
    Or will of any kind.

Wherever the dwarf decided to go  
At his heels the other trotted meekly,  
(Perhaps—I know not—reproaching weakly)  
Like one Fate bade that it must be so,  
    Whether he wished or no.

Various sights in various climes  
I have seen, and more I may see yet,  
But that sight never shall I forget,  
And have thought it the sorriest of pantomimes,  
    If once, a hundred times!



THE MEMORIAL BRASS : 186—

“WHY do you weep there, O sweet lady,  
Why do you weep before that brass?—  
(I’m a mere student sketching the mediaeval)  
Is some late death lined there, alas?—  
Your father’s? . . . Well, all pay the debt that paid  
he!”

“Young man, O must I tell!—My husband’s!  
And under  
His name I set mine, and my *death*!—  
Its date left vacant till my heirs should fill it,  
Stating me faithful till my last breath.”  
—“Madam, that you are a widow wakes my wonder!”

“O wait! For last month I—remarried!  
And now I fear ’twas a deed amiss.  
We’ve just come home. And I am sick and saddened  
At what the new one will say to this;  
And will he think—think that I should have tarried?”

“I may add surely,—with no wish to harm him—  
That he’s a temper—yes, I fear!  
And when he comes to church next Sunday morning,  
And sees that written . . . O dear, O dear!”  
—“Madam, I swear your beauty will disarm him!”

## HER LOVE-BIRDS

WHEN I looked up at my love-birds  
That Sunday afternoon,  
There was in their tiny tune  
A dying fetch like broken words,  
When I looked up at my love-birds  
That Sunday afternoon.

When he, too, scanned the love-birds  
On entering there that day,  
'Twas as if he had nought to say  
Of his long journey citywards,  
When he, too, scanned the love-birds,  
On entering there that day.

And billed and billed the love-birds,  
As 'twere in fond despair  
At the stress of silence where  
Had once been tones in tenor thirds,  
And billed and billed the love-birds  
As 'twere in fond despair.

O, his speech that chilled the love-birds,  
And smote like death on me,  
As I learnt what was to be,  
And knew my life was broke in sherds!  
O, his speech that chilled the love-birds,  
And smote like death on me!

## PAYING CALLS

I WENT by footpath and by stile  
    Beyond where bustle ends,  
Strayed here a mile and there a mile,  
    And called upon some friends.

On certain ones I had not seen  
    For years past did I call,  
And then on others who had been  
    The oldest friends of all.

It was the time of midsummer  
    When they had used to roam ;  
But now, though tempting was the air,  
    I found them all at home.

I spoke to one and other of them  
    By mound and stone and tree  
Of things we had done ere days were dim,  
    But they spoke not to me.

## THE UPPER BIRCH-LEAVES

WARM yellowy-green  
In the blue serene,  
How they skip and sway  
On this autumn day!  
They cannot know  
What has happened below,—  
That their boughs down there  
Are already quite bare,  
That their own will be  
When a week has passed,—  
For they jig as in glee  
To this very last.

But no ; there lies  
At times in their tune  
A note that cries  
What at first I fear  
I did not hear :  
“ O we remember  
At each wind's hollo—  
Though life holds yet—  
We go hence soon,  
For 'tis November ;  
—But that *you* follow  
You may forget ! ”

“IT NEVER LOOKS LIKE SUMMER”

“It never looks like summer here  
On Beeny by the sea.”  
But though she saw its look as drear,  
Summer it seemed to me.

It never looks like summer now  
Whatever weather's there ;  
But ah, it cannot anyhow,  
On Beeny or elsewhere !

BOSCASTLE,  
*March 8, 1913.*

## EVERYTHING COMES

“THE house is bleak and cold  
Built so new for me!  
All the winds upon the wold  
Search it through for me;  
No screening trees abound,  
And the curious eyes around  
Keep on view for me.”

“My Love, I am planting trees  
As a screen for you  
Both from winds, and eyes that tease  
And peer in for you.  
Only wait till they have grown,  
No such bower will be known  
As I mean for you.”

“Then I will bear it, Love,  
And will wait,” she said.  
—So, with years, there grew a grove.  
“Skill how great!” she said.  
“As you wished, Dear?”—“Yes, I see!  
But—I’m dying; and for me  
’Tis too late,” she said.

## THE MAN WITH A PAST

THERE was merry-making  
When the first dart fell  
As a heralding,—  
Till grinned the fully bared thing,  
And froze like a spell—  
Like a spell.

Innocent was she,  
Innocent was I,  
Too simple we !  
Before us we did not see,  
Nearing, aught wry—  
Aught wry !

I can tell it not now,  
It was long ago ;  
And such things cower ;  
But that is why and how  
Two lives were so—  
Were so.

Yes, the years matured,  
And the blows were three  
That time ensured  
On her, which she dumbly endured ;  
And one on me—  
One on me.

## HE FEARS HIS GOOD FORTUNE

THERE was a glorious time  
At an epoch of my prime ;  
Mornings beryl-bespread,  
And evenings golden-red ;  
    Nothing gray :  
And in my heart I said,  
“ However this chanced to be,  
It is too full for me,  
Too rare, too rapturous, rash,  
Its spell must close with a crash  
    Some day ! ”

The radiance went on  
Anon and yet anon,  
And sweetness fell around  
Like manna on the ground.  
    “ I’ve no claim,”  
Said I, “ to be thus crowned :  
I am not worthy this :—  
Must it not go amiss ?—  
Well . . . let the end foreseen  
Come duly !—I am serene.”  
    —And it came.



## HE WONDERS ABOUT HIMSELF

No use hoping, or feeling vexed,  
Tugged by a force above or under  
Like some fantocine, much I wonder  
What I shall find me doing next !

Shall I be rushing where bright eyes be ?  
Shall I be suffering sorrows seven ?  
Shall I be watching the stars of heaven,  
Thinking one of them looks like thee ?

Part is mine of the general Will,  
Cannot my share in the sum of sources  
Bend a digit the poise of forces,  
And a fair desire fulfil ?

*Nov.* 1893.

## JUBILATE

“THE very last time I ever was here,” he said,  
“I saw much less of the quick than I saw of the dead.”  
—He was a man I had met with somewhere before,  
But how or when I now could recall no more.

“The hazy mazy moonlight at one in the morning  
Spread out as a sea across the frozen snow,  
Glazed to live sparkles like the great breast-plate  
adorn  
The priest of the Temple, with Urim and Thummim  
aglow.

“The yew-tree arms, glued hard to the stiff stark air,  
Hung still in the village sky as theatre-scenes  
When I came by the churchyard wall, and halted there  
At a shut-in sound of fiddles and tambourines.

“And as I stood hearkening, dulcimers, hautboys, and  
shawms,  
And violoncellos, and a three-stringed double-bass,  
Joined in, and were intermixed with a singing of  
psalms ;  
And I looked over at the dead men’s dwelling-place.

“Through the shine of the slippery snow I now could  
see,  
As it were through a crystal roof, a great company  
Of the dead minueting in stately step underground  
To the tune of the instruments I had before heard  
sound.

## JUBILATE

“It was ‘Eden New,’ and dancing they sang in a  
chore,

‘We are out of it all!—yea, in Little-Ease cramped no  
more!’

And their shrouded figures pacing with joy I could see  
As you see the stage from the gallery. And they had  
no heed of me.

“And I lifted my head quite dazed from the church-  
yard wall

And I doubted not that it warned I should soon have  
my call.

But—” . . . Then in the ashes he emptied the dregs  
of his cup,

And onward he went, and the darkness swallowed him  
up.

## HE REVISITS HIS FIRST SCHOOL

I SHOULD not have shown in the flesh,  
I ought to have gone as a ghost ;  
It was awkward, unseemly almost,  
Standing solidly there as when fresh,  
    Pink, tiny, crisp-curved,  
    My pinions yet furled  
    From the winds of the world.

After waiting so many a year  
To wait longer, and go as a sprite  
From the tomb at the mid of some night  
Was the right, radiant way to appear ;  
    Not as one wanzing weak  
    From life's roar and reek,  
    His rest still to seek :

Yea, beglimpsed through the quaint quarried glass  
Of green moonlight, by me greener made,  
When they'd cry, perhaps, "There sits his shade  
In his olden haunt—just as he was  
    When in Walkingame he  
    Conned the grand Rule-of-Three  
    With the bent of a bee."

But to show in the afternoon sun,  
With an aspect of hollow-eyed care,  
When none wished to see me come there,  
Was a garish thing, better undone.  
    Yes ; wrong was the way ;  
    But yet, let me say,  
    I may right it—some day.

## “I THOUGHT, MY HEART”

I THOUGHT, my Heart, that you had healed  
Of those sore smartings of the past,  
And that the summers had oversealed

    All mark of them at last.

But closely scanning in the night  
I saw them standing crimson-bright

    Just as she made them :

    Nothing could fade them ;

    Yea, I can swear

    That there they were—

    They still were there !

Then the Vision of her who cut them came,  
And looking over my shoulder said,

“ I am sure you deal me all the blame

    For those sharp smarts and red ;

But meet me, dearest, to-morrow night,

In the churchyard at the moon's half-height,

    And so strange a kiss

    Shall be mine, I wis,

    That you'll cease to know

    If the wounds you show

    Be there or no ! ”

## FRAGMENT

At last I entered a long dark gallery,  
Catacomb-lined ; and ranged at the side  
Were the bodies of men from far and wide  
Who, motion past, were nevertheless not dead.

“ The sense of waiting here strikes strong ;  
Everyone’s waiting, waiting, it seems to me ;  
What are you waiting for so long ?—  
What is to happen ? ” I said.

“ O we are waiting for one called God,” said they,  
“ (Though by some the Will, or Force, or Laws ;  
And, vaguely, by some, the Ultimate Cause ;)  
Waiting for him to see us before we are clay.

Yes ; waiting, waiting, for God *to know it.* ” . . .

“ To know what ? ” questioned I.

“ To know how things have been going on earth and  
below it :

It is clear he must know some day.”

I thereon asked them why.

“ Since he made us humble pioneers  
Of himself in consciousness of Life’s tears,  
It needs no mighty prophecy  
To tell that what he could mindlessly show  
His creatures, he himself will know.

“ By some still close-cowled mystery  
We have reached feeling faster than he,  
But he will overtake us anon,  
If the world goes on.”

## MIDNIGHT ON THE GREAT WESTERN

IN the third-class seat sat the journeying boy,  
And the roof-lamp's oily flame  
Played down on his listless form and face,  
Bewrapt past knowing to what he was going,  
Or whence he came.

In the band of his hat the journeying boy  
Had a ticket stuck ; and a string  
Around his neck bore the key of his box,  
That twinkled gleams of the lamp's sad beams  
Like a living thing.

What past can be yours, O journeying boy  
Towards a world unknown,  
Who calmly, as if incurious quite  
On all at stake, can undertake  
This plunge alone ?

Knows your soul a sphere, O journeying boy,  
Our rude realms far above,  
Whence with spacious vision you mark and mete  
This region of sin that you find you in,  
But are not of ?

## HONEYMOON-TIME AT AN INN

AT the shiver of morning, a little before the false  
dawn,

The moon was at the window-square,  
Deedily brooding in deformed decay—  
The curve hewn off her cheek as by an adze ;  
At the shiver of morning a little before the false dawn  
So the moon looked in there.

Her speechless eyeing reached across the chamber,  
Where lay two souls opprest,  
One a white lady sighing, "Why am I sad!"  
To him who sighed back, "Sad, my Love, am I!"  
And speechlessly the old moon conned the chamber,  
And these two reft of rest.

While their large-pupilled vision swept the scene there,  
Nought seeming imminent,  
Something fell sheer, and crashed, and from the  
floor  
Lay glittering at the pair with a shattered gaze,  
While their large-pupilled vision swept the scene there,  
And the many-eyed thing outleant.

With a start they saw that it was an old-time pier-glass  
Which had stood on the mantel near,  
Its silvering blemished,—yes, as if worn away  
By the eyes of the countless dead who had smirked  
at it.

Ere these two ever knew that old-time pier-glass  
And its vague and vacant leer.



## HONEYMOON-TIME AT AN INN

As he looked, his bride like a moth skimmed forth,  
and kneeling

Quick, with quivering sighs,  
Gathered the pieces under the moon's sly ray,  
Unwitting as an automaton what she did ;  
Till he entreated, hasting to where she was kneeling,  
" Let it stay where it lies ! "

" Long years of sorrow this means ! " breathed the lady  
As they retired. " Alas ! "

And she lifted one pale hand across her eyes.

" Don't trouble, Love ; it's nothing," the bridegroom  
said.

" Long years of sorrow for us ! " murmured the lady,  
" Or ever this evil pass ! "

And the Spirits Ironical laughed behind the wainscot,  
And the Spirits of Pity sighed.

" It's good," said the Spirits Ironical, " to tickle their  
minds

With a portent of their wedlock's after-grinds."

And the Spirits of Pity sighed behind the wainscot,

" It's a portent we cannot abide !

" More, what shall happen to prove the truth of the  
portent ? "

—" Oh ; in brief, they will fade till old,

And their loves grow numbed ere death, by the cark  
of care."

—" But nought see we that asks for portents  
there ?—

'Tis the lot of all."—" Well, no less true is a portent  
That it fits all mortal mould."

## THE ROBIN

WHEN up aloft,  
I fly and fly,  
I see in pools  
The shining sky,  
And a happy bird  
Am I, am I!

When I descend  
Towards their brink  
I stand, and look,  
And stoop, and drink,  
And bathe my wings,  
And chink and prink.

When winter frost  
Makes earth as steel  
I search and search  
But find no meal,  
And most unhappy  
Then I feel.

But when it lasts,  
And snows still fall,  
I get to feel  
No grief at all,  
For I turn to a cold stiff  
Feathery ball!

“ I ROSE AND WENT TO ROU'TOR  
TOWN ”

*(She, alone)*

I ROSE and went to Rou'tor Town  
    With gaiety and good heart,  
    And ardour for the start,  
That morning ere the moon was down  
That lit me off to Rou'tor Town  
    With gaiety and good heart.

When sojourn soon at Rou'tor Town  
    Wrote sorrows on my face,  
    I strove that none should trace  
The pale and gray, once pink and brown,  
When sojourn soon at Rou'tor Town  
    Wrote sorrows on my face.

The evil wrought at Rou'tor Town  
    On him I'd loved so true  
    I cannot tell anew :  
But nought can quench, but nought can drown  
The evil wrought at Rou'tor Town  
    On him I'd loved so true !

## THE NETTLES

THIS, then, is the grave of my son,  
Whose heart she won! And nettles grow  
Upon his mound; and she lives just below.

How he upbraided me, and left,  
And our lives were cleft, because I said  
She was hard, unfeeling, caring but to wed.

Well, to see this sight I have fared these miles,  
And her firelight smiles from her window there,  
Whom he left his mother to cherish with tender care!

It is enough. I'll turn and go;  
Yes, nettles grow where lone lies he,  
Who spurned me for seeing what he could not see.

## IN A WAITING-ROOM

ON a morning sick as the day of doom  
With the drizzling gray  
Of an English May,  
There were few in the railway waiting-room.  
About its walls were framed and varnished  
Pictures of liners, fly-blown, tarnished.  
The table bore a Testament  
For travellers' reading, if suchwise bent.

I read it on and on,  
And, thronging the Gospel of Saint John,  
Were figures—additions, multiplications—  
By some one scrawled, with sundry emendations ;  
Not scoffingly designed,  
But with an absent mind,—  
Plainly a bagman's counts of cost,  
What he had profited, what lost ;  
And whilst I wondered if there could have been  
Any particle of a soul  
In that poor man at all,  
To cypher rates of wage  
Upon that printed page,  
There joined in the charmless scene  
And stood over me and the scribbled book  
(To lend the hour's mean hue  
A smear of tragedy too)  
A soldier and wife, with haggard look  
Subdued to stone by strong endeavour ;  
And then I heard  
From a casual word  
They were parting as they believed for ever.

## IN A WAITING-ROOM

But next there came  
Like the eastern flame  
Of some high altar, children—a pair—  
Who laughed at the fly-blown pictures there.  
“Here are the lovely ships that we,  
Mother, are by and by going to see!  
When we get there it's 'most sure to be fine,  
And the band will play, and the sun will shine!”

It rained on the skylight with a din  
As we waited and still no train came in ;  
But the words of the child in the squalid room  
Had spread a glory through the gloom.

## THE CLOCK-WINDER

It is dark as a cave,  
Or a vault in the nave  
When the iron door  
Is closed, and the floor  
Of the church relaid  
With trowel and spade.

But the parish-clerk  
Cares not for the dark  
As he winds in the tower  
At a regular hour  
The rheumatic clock,  
Whose dilatory knock  
You can hear when praying  
At the day's decaying,  
Or at any lone while  
From a pew in the aisle.

Up, up from the ground  
Around and around  
In the turret stair  
He clambers, to where  
The wheelwork is,  
With its tick, click, whizz,  
Reposefully measuring  
Each day to its end  
That mortal men spend  
In sorrowing and pleasuring.  
Nightly thus does he climb  
To the trackway of Time.

## THE CLOCK-WINDER

Him I followed one night  
To this place without light,  
And, ere I spoke, heard  
Him say, word by word,  
At the end of his winding,  
The darkness unminding :—

“ So I wipe out one more,  
My Dear, of the sore  
Sad days that still be,  
Like a drying Dead Sea,  
Between you and me ! ”

Who she was no man knew :  
He had long borne him blind  
To all womankind ;  
And was ever one who  
Kept his past out of view.



## OLD EXCURSIONS

“WHAT’S the good of going to Ridgeway,  
Cerne, or Sydling Mill,  
Or to Yell’ham Hill,  
Blithely bearing Casterbridge-way  
As we used to do ?  
She will no more climb up there,  
Or be visible anywhere  
In those haunts we knew.”

But to-night, while walking weary,  
Near me seemed her shade,  
Come as ’twere to upbraid  
This my mood in deeming dreary  
Scenes that used to please ;  
And, if she did come to me,  
Still solicitous, there may be  
Good in going to these.

So, I’ll care to roam to Ridgeway,  
Cerne, or Sydling Mill,  
Or to Yell’ham Hill,  
Blithely bearing Casterbridge-way  
As we used to do,  
Since her phasm may flit out there,  
And may greet me anywhere  
In those haunts we knew.

*April 1913.*

## THE MASKED FACE

I FOUND me in a great surging space,  
At either end a door,  
And I said : " What is this giddy place  
With no firm-fixéd floor,  
That I knew not of before ? "  
" It is Life," said a mask-clad face.

I asked: " But how do I come here,  
Who never wished to come ;  
Can the light and air be made more clear,  
The floor more quiet some,  
And the doors set wide ? They numb  
Fast-locked, and fill with fear."

The mask put on a bleak smile then,  
And said, " O vassal-wight,  
There once complained a goosequill pen  
To the scribe of the Infinite  
Of the words it had to write  
Because they were past its ken."

## IN A WHISPERING GALLERY

THAT whisper takes the voice  
Of a Spirit, speaking to me,  
Close, but invisible,  
And throws me under a spell  
At the kindling vision it brings ;  
And for a moment I rejoice,  
And believe in transcendent things  
That would mould from this muddy earth  
A spot for the splendid birth  
Of everlasting lives  
Whereto no night arrives ;  
And from this gaunt gallery  
A tabernacle of worth  
On this drab-aired afternoon,  
When you can barely see  
Across its hazed lacune  
If opposite aught there be  
Of fleshed humanity  
Wherewith I may commune ;  
Or if the voice so near  
Be a soul's voice floating here.

## THE SOMETHING THAT SAVED HIM

It was when  
Whirls of thick waters laved me  
Again and again,  
That something arose and saved me ;  
Yea, it was then.

In that day  
Unseeing the azure went I  
On my way,  
And to white winter bent I,  
Knowing no May.

Reft of renown,  
Under the night clouds beating  
Up and down,  
In my wistfulness greeting  
Cit and clown.

Long there had been  
Much of a murky colour  
In the scene,  
Dull prospects meeting duller ;  
Nought between.

Last, there loomed  
A closing-in blind alley,  
Though there boomed  
A feeble summons to rally  
Where it gloomed.

## THE SOMETHING THAT SAVED HIM

The clock rang ;  
The hour brought a hand to deliver ;  
I upsprang,  
And looked back at den, ditch and river  
And sang.

## THE ENEMY'S PORTRAIT

HE saw the portrait of his enemy, offered  
At auction in a street he journeyed nigh,  
That enemy, now late dead, who in his lifetime  
Had injured deeply him the passer-by.  
“To get that picture, pleased be God, I’ll try,  
And utterly destroy it ; and no more  
Shall be inflicted on man’s mortal eye  
A countenance so sinister and sore !”

And so he bought the painting. Driving homeward,  
“The frame will come in useful,” he declared,  
“The rest is fuel.” On his arrival, weary,  
Asked what he bore with him, and how he fared,  
He said he had bid for a picture, though he cared  
For the frame only : on the morrow he  
Would burn the canvas, which could well be spared,  
Seeing that it portrayed his enemy.

Next day some other duty found him busy :  
The foe was laid his face against the wall ;  
But on the next he set himself to loosen  
The straining strips. And then a casual call  
Prevented his proceeding therewithal ;  
And thus the picture waited, day by day,  
Its owner’s pleasure, like a wretched thrall,  
Until a month and more had slipped away.

And then upon a morn he found it shifted,  
Hung in a corner by a servitor.

## THE ENEMY'S PORTRAIT

“Why did you take on you to hang that picture?  
You know it was the frame I bought it for.”

“It stood in the way of every visitor,  
And I just hitched it there.”—“Well, it must go:  
I don’t commemorate men whom I abhor.  
Remind me ’tis to do. The frame I’ll stow.”

But things become forgotten. In the shadow  
Of the dark corner hung it by its string,  
And there it stayed—once noticed by its owner,  
Who said, “Ah me—I must destroy that thing!”  
But when he died, there, none remembering,  
It hung, till moved to prominence, as one sees;  
And comers pause and say, examining,  
“I thought they were the bitterest enemies?”

## IMAGININGS

SHE saw herself a lady  
    With fifty frocks in wear,  
And rolling wheels, and rooms the best,  
    And faithful maidens' care,  
And open lawns and shady  
    For weathers warm or drear.

She found herself a striver,  
    All liberal gifts debarred,  
With days of gloom, and movements stressed,  
    And early visions marred,  
And got no man to wive her  
    But one whose lot was hard.

Yet in the moony night-time  
    She steals to stile and lea  
During his heavy slumberous rest  
    When homecome wearily,  
And dreams of some blest bright-time  
    She knows can never be.



## ON THE DOORSTEP

· THE rain imprinted the step's wet shine  
With target-circles that quivered and crossed  
As I was leaving this porch of mine ;  
When from within there swelled and paused  
    A song's sweet note ;  
And back I turned, and thought,  
    " Here I'll abide."

The step shines wet beneath the rain,  
Which prints its circles as heretofore ;  
I watch them from the porch again,  
But no song-notes within the door  
    Now call to me  
To shun the dripping lea ;  
And forth I stride.

*Jan. 1914.*

## SIGNS AND TOKENS

SAID the red-cloaked crone  
In a whispered moan :

“ The dead man was limp  
When laid in his chest ;  
Yea, limp ; and why  
But to signify  
That the grave will crimp  
Ere next year's sun  
Yet another one  
Of those in that house—  
It may be the best—  
For its endless drowse ! ”

Said the brown-shawled dame  
To confirm the same :

“ And the slothful flies  
On the rotting fruit  
Have been seen to wear  
While crawling there  
Crape scarves, by eyes  
That were quick and acute ;  
As did those that had pitched  
On the cows by the pails,  
And with flaps of their tails  
Were far away switched. ”

## SIGNS AND TOKENS

Said the third in plaid,  
Each word being weighed :

“ And trotting does  
In the park, in the lane,  
And just outside  
The shuttered pane,  
Have also been heard—  
Quick feet as light  
As the feet of a sprite—  
And the wise mind knows  
What things may betide  
When such has occurred.”

Cried the black-craped fourth,  
Cold faced as the north :

“ O, though giving such  
Some head-room, I smile  
At your falterings  
When noting those things  
Round your domicile !  
For what, what can touch  
One whom, riven of all  
That makes life gay,  
No hints can appal  
Of more takings away !”

## PATHS OF FORMER TIME

No ; no ;  
It must not be so :  
They are the ways we do not go.

Still chew  
The kine, and moo  
In the meadows we used to wander through ;

Still purl  
The rivulets and curl  
Towards the weirs with a musical swirl ;

Haymakers  
As in former years  
Rake rolls into heaps that the pitchfork rears ;

Wheels crack  
On the turfy track  
The waggon pursues with its toppling pack.

“ Why then shun—  
Since summer's not done—  
All this because of the lack of one ? ”

Had you been  
Sharer of that scene  
You would not ask while it bites in keen

Why it is so  
We can no more go  
By the summer paths we used to know !

## THE CLOCK OF THE YEARS

“A spirit passed before my face ; the hair of my flesh stood up.”

AND the Spirit said,  
“ I can make the clock of the years go backward,  
But am loth to stop it where you will.”  
And I cried, “ Agreed  
To that. Proceed :  
It’s better than dead !”

He answered, “ Peace ” ;  
And called her up—as last before me ;  
Then younger, younger she freshed, to the year  
I first had known  
Her woman-grown,  
And I cried, “ Cease !—

“ Thus far is good—  
It is enough—let her stay thus always !”  
But alas for me. He shook his head :  
No stop was there ;  
And she waned child-fair,  
And to babyhood.

Still less in mien  
To my great sorrow became she slowly,  
And smalled till she was nought at all  
In his checkless griff ;  
And it was as if  
She had never been.

## THE CLOCK OF THE YEARS

“Better,” I plained,  
“She were dead as before! The memory of her  
Had lived in me ; but it cannot now !”

And coldly his voice :

“It was your choice  
To mar the ordained.”

1916.

## AT THE PIANO

A WOMAN was playing,  
A man looking on ;  
And the mould of her face,  
And her neck, and her hair,  
Which the rays fell upon  
Of the two candles there,  
Sent him mentally straying  
In some fancy-place  
Where pain had no trace.

A cowed Apparition  
Came pushing between ;  
And her notes seemed to sigh,  
And the lights to burn pale,  
As a spell numbed the scene.  
But the maid saw no bale,  
And the man no monition ;  
And Time laughed awry,  
And the Phantom hid nigh.

## THE SHADOW ON THE STONE

I WENT by the Druid stone  
That broods in the garden white and lone,  
And I stopped and looked at the shifting shadows  
That at some moments there are thrown  
From the tree hard by with a rhythmic swing,  
And they shaped in my imagining  
To the shade that a well-known head and shoulders  
Threw there when she was gardening.

I thought her behind my back,  
Yea, her I long had learned to lack,  
And I said: "I am sure you are standing behind me,  
Though how do you get into this old track?"  
And there was no sound but the fall of a leaf  
As a sad response; and to keep down grief  
I would not turn my head to discover  
That there was nothing in my belief.

Yet I wanted to look and see  
That nobody stood at the back of me;  
But I thought once more: "Nay, I'll not unvision  
A shape which, somehow, there may be."  
So I went on softly from the glade,  
And left her behind me throwing her shade,  
As she were indeed an apparition—  
My head unturned lest my dream should fade.

*Begun 1913: finished 1916.*



## IN THE GARDEN

(M. H.)

WE waited for the sun  
To break its cloudy prison  
(For day was not yet done,  
And night still unbegun)  
Leaning by the dial.

After many a trial—  
We all silent there—  
It burst as new-arisen,  
Shading its finger where  
Time travelled at that minute.

Little saw we in it,  
But this much I know,  
Of lookers on that shade,  
Her towards whom it made  
Soonest had to go.

1915.

## THE TREE AND THE LADY

I HAVE done all I could  
For that lady I knew! Through the heats I have  
    shaded her,  
Drawn to her songsters when summer has jaded her,  
    Home from the heath or the wood.

At the mirth-time of May,  
When my shadow first lured her, I'd donned my new  
    bravery  
Of greenth: 'twas my all. Now I shiver in slavery,  
    Icicles grieving me gray.

Plumed to every twig's end  
I could tempt her chair under me. Much did I treasure  
    her  
During those days she had nothing to pleasure her;  
    Mutely she used me as friend.

I'm a skeleton now,  
And she's gone, craving warmth. The rime sticks like  
    a skin to me;  
Through me Arcturus peers; Nor'lights shoot into me;  
    Gone is she, scorning my bough!

## AN UPBRAIDING

Now I am dead you sing to me  
The songs we used to know,  
But while I lived you had no wish  
Or care for doing so.

Now I am dead you come to me  
In the moonlight, comfortless ;  
Ah, what would I have given alive  
To win such tenderness !

When you are dead, and stand to me  
Not differenced, as now,  
But like again, will you be cold  
As when we lived, or how ?

## THE YOUNG GLASS-STAINER

“THESE Gothic windows, how they wear me out  
With cusp and foil, and nothing straight or square,  
Crude colours, leaden borders roundabout,  
And fitting in Peter here, and Matthew there !

“What a vocation ! Here do I draw now  
The abnormal, loving the Hellenic norm ;  
Martha I paint, and dream of Hera’s brow,  
Mary, and think of Aphrodite’s form.”

*Nov.* 1893.

## LOOKING AT A PICTURE ON AN ANNIVERSARY

BUT don't you know it, my dear,  
    Don't you know it,  
That this day of the year  
(What rainbow-rays embow it !)  
We met, strangers confessed,  
    But parted—blest ?

Though at this query, my dear,  
    There in your frame  
Unmoved you still appear,  
You must be thinking the same  
But keep that look demure  
    Just to allure.

And now at length a trace  
    I surely vision  
Upon that wistful face  
Of old-time recognition,  
Smiling forth, "Yes, as you say  
    It is the day."

For this one phase of you  
    Now left on earth  
This great date must endue  
With pulsings of rebirth !—  
I see them vitalize  
    Those two deep eyes !

## LOOKING AT A PICTURE

But if this face I con  
Does not declare  
Consciousness living on  
Still in it, little I care  
To live myself, my dear,  
Lone-labouring here !

*Spring 1913.*

## THE CHOIRMASTER'S BURIAL

HE often would ask us  
That, when he died,  
After playing so many  
To their last rest,  
If out of us any  
Should here abide,  
And it would not task us,  
We would with our lutes  
Play over him  
By his grave-brim  
The psalm he liked best—  
The one whose sense suits  
“Mount Ephraim”—  
And perhaps we should seem  
To him, in Death's dream,  
Like the seraphim.

As soon as I knew  
That his spirit was gone  
I thought this his due,  
And spoke thereupon.  
“I think,” said the vicar,  
“A read service quicker  
Than viols out-of-doors  
In these frosts and hoars.  
That old-fashioned way  
Requires a fine day,  
And it seems to me  
It had better not be.”

## THE CHOIRMASTER'S BURIAL

Hence, that afternoon,  
Though never knew he  
That his wish could not be,  
To get through it faster  
They buried the master  
Without any tune.

But 'twas said that, when  
At the dead of next night  
The vicar looked out,  
There struck on his ken  
Thronged roundabout,  
Where the frost was graying  
The headstoned grass,  
A band all in white  
Like the saints in church-glass,  
Singing and playing  
The ancient stave  
By the choirmaster's grave.

Such the tenor man told  
When he had grown old.



## THE MAN WHO FORGOT

At a lonely cross where bye-roads met  
I sat upon a gate ;  
I saw the sun decline and set,  
And still was fain to wait.

A trotting boy passed up the way  
And roused me from my thought ;  
I called to him, and showed where lay  
A spot I shyly sought.

“ A summer-house fair stands hidden where  
You see the moonlight thrown ;  
Go, tell me if within it there  
A lady sits alone.”

He half demurred, but took the track,  
And silence held the scene ;  
I saw his figure rambling back ;  
I asked him if he had been.

“ I went just where you said, but found  
No summer-house was there :  
Beyond the slope 'tis all bare ground ;  
Nothing stands anywhere.

“ A man asked what my brains were worth ;  
The house, he said, grew rotten,

## THE MAN WHO FORGOT

And was pulled down before my birth,  
And is almost forgotten !”

My right mind woke, and I stood dumb ;  
Forty years' frost and flower  
Had fled since I'd used to come  
To meet her in that bower.

## WHILE DRAWING IN A CHURCHYARD

“It is sad that so many of worth,  
Still in the flesh,” soughed the yew,  
“Misjudge their lot whom kindly earth  
Secludes from view.

“They ride their diurnal round  
Each day-span’s sum of hours  
In peerless ease, without jolt or bound  
Or ache like ours.

“If the living could but hear  
What is heard by my roots as they creep  
Round the restful flock, and the things said there,  
No one would weep.”

“‘Now set among the wise,’  
They say : ‘Enlarged in scope,  
That no god trumpet us to rise  
We truly hope.’”

I listened to his strange tale  
In the mood that stillness brings,  
And I grew to accept as the day wore pale  
That show of things.

“FOR LIFE I HAD NEVER CARED  
GREATLY”

For Life I had never cared greatly,  
As worth a man's while ;  
Peradventures unsought,  
Peradventures that finished in nought,  
Had kept me from youth and through manhood till  
lately  
Unwon by its style.

In earliest years—why I know not—  
I viewed it askance ;  
Conditions of doubt,  
Conditions that leaked slowly out,  
May haply have bent me to stand and to show not  
Much zest for its dance.

With symphonies soft and sweet colour  
It courted me then,  
Till evasions seemed wrong,  
Till evasions gave in to its song,  
And I warmed, until living aloofly loomed duller  
Than life among men.

Anew I found nought to set eyes on,  
When, lifting its hand,  
It uncloaked a star,  
Uncloaked it from fog-damps afar,  
And showed its beams burning from pole to horizon  
As bright as a brand.

## “ FOR LIFE ”

And so, the rough highway forgetting,  
I pace hill and dale  
Regarding the sky,  
Regarding the vision on high,  
And thus re-illumed have no humour for letting  
My pilgrimage fail.



## POEMS OF WAR AND PATRIOTISM





## “MEN WHO MARCH AWAY”

(SONG OF THE SOLDIERS)

WHAT of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us ;  
What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away ?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye,  
Who watch us stepping by  
With doubt and dolorous sigh ?  
Can much pondering so hoodwink you !  
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye ?

Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see—  
Dalliers as they be—  
England's need are we ;  
Her distress would leave us rueing :  
Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see !

## “MEN WHO MARCH AWAY”

In our heart of hearts believing  
Victory crowns the just,  
And that braggarts must  
Surely bite the dust,  
Press we to the field ungrieving,  
In our heart of hearts believing  
Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us ;  
Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away.

*September 5, 1914.*

## HIS COUNTRY

I JOURNEYED from my native spot  
    Across the south sea shine,  
And found that people in hall and cot  
Laboured and suffered each his lot  
    Even as I did mine.

He travels  
southward,  
and looks  
around ;

Thus noting them in meads and marts  
    It did not seem to me  
That my dear country with its hearts,  
Minds, yearnings, worse and better parts,  
    Had ended with the sea.

and cannot  
discover the  
boundary

I further and further went anon,  
    As such I still surveyed,  
And further yet—yea, on and on,  
And all the men I looked upon  
    Had heart-strings fellow-made.

of his  
native  
country ;

I traced the whole terrestrial round,  
    Homing the other side ;  
Then said I, "What is there to bound  
My denizenship? It seems I have found  
    Its scope to be world-wide."

or where  
his duties to  
his fellow-  
creatures end ;

I asked me : "Whom have I to fight,  
    And whom have I to dare,  
And whom to weaken, crush, and blight?  
My country seems to have kept in sight  
    On my way everywhere."

nor who  
are his  
enemies.

## ENGLAND TO GERMANY IN 1914

“O ENGLAND, may God punish thee!”

—Is it that Teuton genius flowers

Only to breathe malignity

Upon its friend of earlier hours?

—We have eaten your bread, you have eaten ours,  
We have loved your burgs, your pines' green moan,  
Fair Rhine-stream, and its storied towers;  
Your shining souls of deathless dowers  
Have won us as they were our own:

We have nursed no dreams to shed your blood,

We have matched your might not rancorously

Save a flushed few whose blatant mood

You heard and marked as well as we

To tongue not in their country's key;

But yet you cry with face aflame,

“O England, may God punish thee!”

And foul in onward history,

And present sight, your ancient name.

*Autumn 1914.*

## ON THE BELGIAN EXPATRIATION

I DREAMT that people from the Land of Chimes  
Arrived one autumn morning with their bells,  
To hoist them on the towers and citadels  
Of my own country, that the musical rhymes

Rung by them into space at meted times  
Amid the market's daily stir and stress,  
And the night's empty star-lit silentness,  
Might solace souls of this and kindred climes.

Then I awoke ; and lo, before me stood  
The visioned ones, but pale and full of fear ;  
From Bruges they came, and Antwerp, and Ostend,

No carillons in their train. Foes of mad mood  
Had shattered these to shards amid the gear  
Of ravaged roof, and smouldering gable-end.

*October 18, 1914.*

## AN APPEAL TO AMERICA ON BEHALF OF THE BELGIAN DESTITUTE

SEVEN millions stand  
Emaciate, in that ancient Delta-land :—  
We here, full-charged with our own maimed and dead,  
And coiled in throbbing conflicts slow and sore,  
Can poorly soothe these ails unmerited  
Of souls forlorn upon the facing shore !—  
Where naked, gaunt, in endless band on band  
Seven millions stand.

No man can say  
To your great country that, with scant delay,  
You must, perforce, ease them in their loud need :  
We know that nearer first your duty lies ;  
But—is it much to ask that you let plead  
Your lovingkindness with you—wooingwise—  
Albeit that aught you owe, and must repay,  
No man can say ?

*December 1914.*

## THE PITY OF IT

I WALKED in loamy Wessex lanes, afar  
From rail-track and from highway, and I heard  
In field and farmstead many an ancient word  
Of local lineage like "Thu bist," "Er war,"

"Ich woll," "Er sholl," and by-talk similar,  
Nigh as they speak who in this month's moon gird  
At England's very loins, thereunto spurred  
By gangs whose glory threats and slaughters are.

Then seemed a Heart crying: "Whosoever they be  
At root and bottom of this, who flung this flame  
Between kin folk kin tongued even as are we,

"Sinister, ugly, lurid, be their fame;  
May their familiars grow to shun their name,  
And their breed perish everlastingly."

*April 1915.*

## IN TIME OF WARS AND TUMULTS

"WOULD that I'd not drawn breath here!" some one  
said,

"To stalk upon this stage of evil deeds,  
Where purposelessly month by month proceeds  
A play so sorely shaped and blood-bespread."

Yet had his spark not quickened, but lain dead  
To the gross spectacles of this our day,  
And never put on the proffered cloak of clay,  
He had but known not things now manifested ;

Life would have swirled the same. Morns would have  
dawned  
On the uprooting by the night-gun's stroke  
Of what the yester noonshine brought to flower ;

Brown martial brows in dying throes have wanned  
Despite his absence ; hearts no fewer been broke  
By Æmpery's insatiate lust of power.

1915.



## IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS" <sup>1</sup>

### I

ONLY a man harrowing clods  
In a slow silent walk  
With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
Half asleep as they stalk.

### II

Only thin smoke without flame  
From the heaps of couch-grass ;  
Yet this will go onward the same  
Though Dynasties pass.

### III

Yonder a maid and her wight  
Come whispering by :  
War's annals will cloud into night  
Ere their story die.

1915.

<sup>1</sup> Jer. li. 20.

## CRY OF THE HOMELESS

AFTER THE PRUSSIAN INVASION OF BELGIUM

“INSTIGATOR of the ruin—  
Whichsoever thou mayst be  
Of the masterful of Europe  
That contrived our misery—  
Hear the wormwood-worded greeting  
From each city, shore, and lea  
Of thy victims :  
“Conqueror, all hail to thee!”

“Yea : ‘All hail!’ we grimly shout thee  
That wast author, fount, and head  
Of these wounds, whoever proven  
When our times are thoroughly read.  
‘May thy loved be slighted, blighted,  
And forsaken,’ be it said  
By thy victims,  
‘And thy children beg their bread!’

“Nay : a richer malediction!—  
Rather let this thing befall  
In time’s hurling and unfurling  
On the night when comes thy call ;  
That compassion dew thy pillow  
And bedrench thy senses all  
For thy victims,  
Till death dark thee with his pall.”

*August 1915.*

## BEFORE MARCHING AND AFTER

(*In Memoriam F. W. G.*)

ORION swung southward aslant  
Where the starved Egdon pine-trees had thinned,  
The Pleiads aloft seemed to pant  
With the heather that twitched in the wind ;  
But he looked on indifferent to sights such as these,  
Unswayed by love, friendship, home-joy or home-  
sorrow,  
And wondered to what he would march on the morrow.

The crazed household-clock with its whirr  
Rang midnight within as he stood,  
He heard the low sighing of her  
Who had striven from his birth for his good ;  
But he still only asked the spring starlight, the breeze,  
What great thing or small thing his history would  
borrow  
From that Game with Death he would play on the  
morrow.

When the heath wore the robe of late summer,  
And the fuchsia-bells, hot in the sun,  
Hung red by the door, a quick comer  
Brought tidings that marching was done  
For him who had joined in that game overseas  
Where Death stood to win, though his name was to  
borrow  
A brightness therefrom not to fade on the morrow.

*September 1915.*

## “OFTEN WHEN WARRING”

OFTEN when warring for he wist not what,  
An enemy-soldier, passing by one weak,  
Has tendered water, wiped the burning cheek,  
And cooled the lips so black and clammed and hot ;

Then gone his way, and maybe quite forgot  
The deed of grace amid the roar and reek ;  
Yet larger vision than loud arms bespeak  
He there has reached, although he has known it not.

For natural mindsight, triumphing in the act  
Over the throes of artificial rage,  
Has thuswise muffled victory's peal of pride,  
Rended to ribands policy's specious page  
That deals but with evasion, code, and pact,  
And war's apology wholly stultified.

1915.

## THEN AND NOW

WHEN battles were fought  
With a chivalrous sense of Should and Ought,  
In spirit men said,  
“End we quick or dead,  
Honour is some reward!  
Let us fight fair—for our own best or worst;  
So, Gentlemen of the Guard,  
Fire first!”

In the open they stood,  
Man to man in his knightlihood:  
They would not deign  
To profit by a stain  
On the honourable rules,  
Knowing that practise perfidy no man durst  
Who in the heroic schools  
Was nurst.

But now, behold, what  
Is warfare wherein honour is not!  
Rama laments  
Its dead innocents:  
Herod breathes: “Sly slaughter  
Shall rule! Let us, by modes once called accurst,  
Overhead, under water,  
Stab first.”

1915.

## A CALL TO NATIONAL SERVICE

UP and be doing, all who have a hand  
To lift, a back to bend. It must not be  
In times like these that vaguely linger we  
To air our vaunts and hopes ; and leave our land

Untended as a wild of weeds and sand.  
—Say, then, “ I come ! ” and go, O women and men  
Of palace, ploughshare, easel, counter, pen ;  
That scareless, scathless, England still may stand.

Would years but let me stir as once I stirred  
At many a dawn to take the forward track,  
And with a stride plunged on to enterprize,

I now would speed like yester wind that whirred  
Through yielding pines ; and serve with never a slack,  
So loud for promptness all around outcries !

*March 1917.*

## THE DEAD AND THE LIVING ONE

THE dead woman lay in her first night's grave,  
And twilight fell from the clouds' concave,  
And those she had asked to forgive forgave.

The woman passing came to a pause  
By the heaped white shapes of wreath and cross  
And looked upon where the other was.

And as she mused there thus spoke she :  
" Never your countenance did I see,  
But you've been a good good friend to me ! "

Rose a plaintive voice from the sod below :  
" O woman whose accents I do not know,  
What is it that makes you approve me so ? "

" O dead one, ere my soldier went,  
I heard him saying, with warm intent,  
To his friend, when won by your blandishment :

" ' I would change for that lass here and now !  
And if I return I may break my vow  
To my present Love, and contrive somehow

" ' To call my own this new-found pearl,  
Whose eyes have the light, whose lips the curl,  
I always have looked for in a girl ! ' "

## THE DEAD AND THE LIVING ONE

“—And this is why that by ceasing to be—  
Though never your countenance did I see—  
You prove you a good good friend to me ;

“ And I pray each hour for your soul's repose  
In gratitude for your joining those  
No lover will clasp when his campaigns close.”

Away she turned, when arose to her eye  
A martial phantom of gory dye,  
That said, with a thin and far-off sigh :

“ O sweetheart, neither shall I clasp you,  
For the foe this day has pierced me through,  
And sent me to where she is. Adieu!—

“ And forget not when the night-wind's whine  
Calls over this turf where her limbs recline,  
That it travels on to lament by mine,”

There was a cry by the white-flowered mound,  
There was a laugh from underground,  
There was a deeper gloom around.

1915.



# A NEW YEAR'S EVE IN WAR TIME

## I

PHANTASMAL fears,  
And the flap of the flame,  
And the throb of the clock,  
And a loosened slate,  
And the blind night's drone,  
Which tiredly the spectral pines intone !

## II

And the blood in my ears  
Strumming always the same,  
And the gable-cock  
With its fitful grate,  
And myself, alone.

## III

The twelfth hour nears  
Hand-hid, as in shame ;  
I undo the lock,  
And listen, and wait  
For the Young Unknown.

## IV

In the dark there careers—  
As if Death astride came  
To numb all with his knock—  
A horse at mad rate  
Over rut and stone.

## A NEW YEAR'S EVE IN WAR TIME

### V

No figure appears,  
No call of my name,  
No sound but "Tic-toc"  
Without check. Past the gate  
It clatters—is gone.

### VI

What rider it bears  
There is none to proclaim ;  
And the Old Year has struck,  
And, scarce animate,  
The New makes moan.

### VII

Maybe that "More Tears!—  
More Famine and Flame—  
More Severance and Shock!"  
Is the order from Fate  
That the Rider speeds on  
To pale Europe ; and tiredly the pines intone.

1915-1916.

## “ I MET A MAN ”

I MET a man when night was nigh,  
Who said, with shining face and eye  
Like Moses' after Sinai :—

“ I have seen the Moulder of Monarchies,  
Realms, peoples, plains and hills,  
Sitting upon the sunlit seas !—  
And, as He sat, soliloquies  
Fell from Him like an antiphonic breeze  
That pricks the waves to thrills.

“ Meseemed that of the maimed and dead  
Mown down upon the globe,—  
Their plenteous blooms of promise shed  
Ere fruiting-time—His words were said.  
Sitting against the western web of red  
Wrapt in His crimson robe.

“ And I could catch them now and then :  
—‘ Why let these gambling clans  
Of human Cockers, pit liege men  
From mart and city, dale and glen,  
In death-mains, but to swell and swell again  
Their swollen All-Empery plans,

“ ‘ When a mere nod (if my malign  
Compeer but passive keep)  
Would mend that old mistake of mine  
I made with Saul, and ever consign  
All Lords of War whose sanctuaries enshrine  
Liberticide, to sleep?

## “ I MET A MAN ”

“ ‘ With violence the lands are spread  
Even as in Israel’s day,  
And it repenteth me I bred  
Chartered armipotents lust-led  
To feuds. . . . Yea, grieves my heart, as then I  
said,  
To see their evil way ! ’

—“ The utterance grew, and flapped like flame,  
And further speech I feared ;  
But no Celestial tongued acclaim,  
And no huzzas from earthlings came,  
And the heavens mutely masked as ’twere in  
shame  
Till daylight disappeared. ”

Thus ended he as night rode high ---  
The man of shining face and eye,  
Like Moses’ after Sinai.

1916.

## “I LOOKED UP FROM MY WRITING

I LOOKED up from my writing,  
And gave a start to see,  
As if rapt in my inditing,  
The moon's full gaze on me.

Her meditative misty head  
Was spectral in its air,  
And I involuntarily said,  
“What are you doing there?”

“Oh, I've been scanning pond and hole  
And waterway hereabout  
For the body of one with a sunken soul  
Who has put his life-light out.

“Did you hear his frenzied tattle?  
It was sorrow for his son  
Who is slain in brutish battle,  
Though he has injured none.

“And now I am curious to look  
Into the blinkered mind  
Of one who wants to write a book  
In a world of such a kind.”

Her temper overwrought me,  
And I edged to shun her view,  
For I felt assured she thought me  
One who should drown him too.



## FINALE





## THE COMING OF THE END

How it came to an end !  
The meeting afar from the crowd,  
And the love-looks and laughters unpenned,  
The parting when much was avowed,  
How it came to an end !

It came to an end ;  
Yes, the outgazing over the stream,  
With the sun on each serpentine bend,  
Or, later, the luring moon-gleam ;  
It came to an end.

It came to an end,  
The housebuilding, furnishing, planting,  
As if there were ages to spend  
In welcoming, feasting, and jaunting ;  
It came to an end.

It came to an end,  
That journey of one day a week :  
(" It always goes on," said a friend,  
" Just the same in bright weathers or bleak ;")  
But it came to an end.

" *How* will come to an end  
This orbit so smoothly begun,  
Unless some convulsion attend ?"  
I often said. " What will be done  
When it comes to an end ?" .

## THE COMING OF THE END

Well, it came to an end  
Quite silently—stopped without jerk ;  
Better close no prevision could lend ;  
Working out as One planned it should work  
Ere it came to an end.

## AFTERWARDS

WHEN the Present has latched its postern behind my  
tremulous stay,  
And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like  
wings,  
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours  
say,  
“He was a man who used to notice such things?”

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless  
blink,  
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to  
alight  
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may  
think,  
“To him this must have been a familiar sight.”

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and  
warm,  
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,  
One may say, “He strove that such innocent creatures  
should come to no harm,  
But he could do little for them; and now he is  
gone.”

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they  
stand at the door,  
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,  
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face  
no more,  
“He was one who had an eye for such mysteries?”

## AFTERWARDS

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in  
the gloom,  
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,  
Till they swell again, as they were a new bell's boom,  
“He hears it not now, but used to notice such  
things”?

THE END







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