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A BOOK OF BOTH SORTS

THE WORKS OF JOHN MASEFIELD

PLAYS:

THE FAITHFUL
GOOD FRIDAY
ESTHER. *(From the French of Jean Racine]*
BERENICE. *(From the French of Jean Racine)*
MELLONEY HOLTSPUR
A KING'S DAUGHTER
THE TRIAL OF JESUS
THE TRAGEDY OF NAN
TRISTAN AND ISOLT
THE COMING OF CHRIST
EASTER
END AND BEGINNING

POETRY:

DAUBER
THE DAFFODIL FIELDS
PHILIP THE KING
LOLLINGDON DOWNS
A POEM AND TWO PLAYS
REYNARD THE FOX WITH SELECTED SONNETS AND LYRICS
ENSLAVED
RIGHT ROYAL
SELECTED POEMS (new edn.)
KING COLE
POEMS (collected)
MIDSUMMER NIGHT
MINNIE MAYLOW'S STORY
A TALE OF TROY
A LETTER FROM PONTUS
SOME VERSES TO SOME GERMANS
GAUTAMA THE ENLIGHTENED
WONDERINGS
NATALIE MAISIE AND PAVILASTUKAY

FICTION:

SARD HARKER
ODTAA
THE MIDNIGHT FOLK
THE HAWBUCKS
THE BIRD OF DAWNING
THE TAKING OF THE GRY
THE BOX OF DELIGHTS
VICTORIOUS TROY
EGGS AND BAKER
THE SQUARE PEG
DEAD NED
LIVE AND KICKING NED
BASILISSA
CONQUER

GENERAL:

GALLIPOLI
THE OLD FRONT LINE
ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON
THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME
RECENT PROSE
WITH THE LIVING VOICE
THE WANDERER OF LIVERPOOL
POETRY: A LECTURE
THE CONWAY
THE NINE DAYS WONDER
IN THE MILL
NEW CHUM
THANKS BEFORE GOING and
A MACBETH PRODUCTION
A BOOK OF BOTH SORTS

A BOOK OF BOTH SORTS'

SELECTIONS FROM THE VERSE AND PROSE OF

JOHN MASEFIELD

WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD
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To
MY WIFE

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WONDERINGS

OUT of a dateless darkness pictures gleam,
But are they memories or only dream?
One earliest image is a gorge of crags
Drenched in a spray, with rainbows among jags,
Fish-cruising ospreys gleaming, dipping, calling, *Imaginings*
And thunder and majesty of water falling,
The endless onwards of a cataract
In terror and exultation of its act.

Over a precipice it streamed, and broke
To gliddery wool and after crashed to smoke,
Uptwisted, and creamed on, and where it drave
A path of wet stones led into a cave.
Within that cavern, sheltered from the gorge,
Men, stripped for effort, hammered at a forge;
At what their hammers beat I cannot tell,
With spurt of spark the fire rose and fell,
The craftsmen's bodies gleamed, as sparks were blown.
All this was shrewdly seen and inly known.
Cataract, cave and smithy were as clear
As things of home, as places once held dear.

Three strangenesses come next, of sight or thought.
High in the elms, the rooks their cradles wrought,
And there, in sunlight, in an April sky
Three immense floating giants passed me by;
Three figures, linked as one, as one, intent
Eastward, and staring east, at speed they went.
They were not clouds, as living things they fared,
I marvelled at their life, but was not scared;

Whatever purpose, impulse or design
Drove them, its splendour banished fear of mine.

Then, from behind a curtain, I beheld
The frosty, moonless Heaven, many-stelled,
And heard, that I was looking into Space,
An Everywhere unclosed in any place
But ever Somewhere, going on and on
On, into Nowhere that had never gone.
This caused the visions that I seemed to see
Streamings of fire flying over me
Rings and ellipses hurtling in their flame
A fire and beauty endlessly the same
Part of me, surely, and myself a part
(Perhaps) of it; a paint-dot in an art.

Early Memories

Then, from a time which happiness made tense,
Come memories of persons long gone hence:
A coachman pulling-up, to bid me mark
The mad-dog frenzy of a fox's bark:
An old man pointing where three vipers rose:
"They hissed at me, all standing on their toes".
Then, a most gentle friend, with silver hair,
At lunch, falling asleep upon her chair.
A little yellow chicken lying dead:
And then a gate through which a trackway led
Beside an apple-orchard to a boat
Wherein my pilgrim self went first afloat.

Great floods were out; the hedges in black lines
Wallowed like water-snakes with bony spines,
Within the channel, full of swirl in swill,
A six-mile current romped towards the mill.

I was then three; two half-remembered men
Launched with me forth and brought me back agen,
But half a century later, I was told
What risks beset us in that bliss of old.
The boat was crazy, like her merry crew,
And many drowned men's deaths that mill-race knew.
Life, looking on her lamb, postponed the slaughter
And stamped within my soul delight in water.

Delight in water

Beauty of water gave delight again:—
The earth was shining after winter rain,
Each little brook was shouting in its run
Each meadow was a jewel in the sun,
And in a midmost grass a foot-high fount
Throbbed and uptumbled its collapsing mount
Wonder, dissolved, resolved, upspringing, sped,
Beauty, yet never aught, yet never dead.

Terror of water followed, when I saw
The eddies of a flood in torrent draw
The wreckage under, as though hands were there
Hands, and the will to make a boy beware.
Even in summer when the pools were clear
The quiet depth was brooded-on by fear,
To be within its power was to die,
For all its still, reflected earth and sky.

But exquisite delight my spirit took
In many a roadside—, many a meadow-brook,
One above all so beautiful a thing
I thought God had a cottage at its spring.
And by another once a partridge came
With chicks which I could stroke, they were so tame

Quick, pecking, peering, all the mottled clutch
Bright-eyed, unfearing, exquisite to touch.

One other water blessed me with her grace,
A deep, calm quiet in a sunny place,
Where yellow flags grew tall and reeds grew gray
As though all time would be a summer day.
Sometimes a ring would spread as a fish rose
Then, the ring spent, placidity would close,
A skating fly might skim, a shadow flit
As some exulting swallow stooped at it,
But save for these, no other aim there was
Than to be beauty and beauty's looking-glass.

Clover fopf Near by, within a little field there grew
Clover, dim white, with blushes glowing through,
Great-headed clover, exquisitely sweet,
Wherein the bees went fumbling for their meat
Wonder, that kept in poise life's dual thrust,
To red, to white, while being only dust.

The Flowers Other intense delights of those glad hours
Were scents and colours of the fruits and flowers,
The perfume in the tulip's waxen shell
Whence the May Moon-Queen gathers hydromel;
The pale blue chicory, with scrubby stalk,
(Uncommon there, that lover of the chalk),
And under dark green leaves, the first deep red
June strawberry with yellow speckles spread,
Each of the three too exquisite a prey
For hand to gather, save to give away,
For to a prodigal, the joy of living
Is not in having for oneself but giving,

For life is emptiness and Nature bare
Lacking the friend to have the larger share.

The Town

Mine, was a little town of ancient grace,
A long street widened at a market-place,
Crossed, in its length, by two transversal ways
Doubtless the course of brooks in early days.
Within the width, a market-building stood
Propped upon weathered quarres of chestnut-wood.
In near-by lanes, where rotting tan-pits stank,
Prince Rupert's horse had broken Massey's rank
And sent him flying, in our Civil War;
Men found the bullets still, in beam and door.
Rude, leaden lumps, last relics to survive
The agony and rage of men alive.

The little town was pleasant to the sight,
Fair, with half-timbered houses, black and white,
Shops, taverns, traffic, market, in the street,
And cobbled paving, painful to the feet.
Slowly, *I* came to know it, but at first
Judged of it only by its best and worst.

Timber
Waggons

Two things beyond all others were the best;
Someone was felling timber in the west,
And daily up the Bye Street timber-waggons
Dragged the chained scaly butts like slaughtered dragons.
It was delight to see those timber-teams
The iron of their shag-hoofs striking gleams,
Their brasses bright, their mighty crests at strain,
With crack of whip-shot coming up the lane,
And where the narrow lane-end opened wide
The corded carter ran ahead to guide

Seizing the leading horse, who tossed his head
With jingle and snort, disdaining to be led.
Surely, the summit of man's glory was
To govern mighty horses hung with brass,
And bear a plaited lash with which to stun
The ear with whip-cracks sudden as a gun.

The Wtather-cock

Life's other glory topped the church's spire,
A golden vane surveying half the shire,
A weather-cock serene in the assails
Of tree-upsetting, ship-destroying gales.
Pinnacled, plumey, lonely, there he shone,
Swinging to shifts, but never moving on,
Braving, perhaps, the blasts that were to be
Death to the *Captain* and *Eurydice.*
Lofty as any clipper's skysail truck,
Steadfast as life, as certainless as luck,
Seeing him swinging to the wester's drive
I ever thought that golden bird alive.

The Old Canal

Almost at once, a third delight, as great,
Came, bringing bliss to my enchanted state:—
The horse-canal, with barges passing by
Bursting the blue of the reflected sky,
Going from towns unknown to quays unconned,
From sunrise to the sunset and beyond.
Whenever happy fortune let me see
Those barges passing, it was bliss to me.

The Barges

The barges were blunt-ended tanks,
With rub-strakes polished by the banks,
And bearing dingy freight for fee,
But, oh, when they were close to me,

At locks, when, just beneath my eyes
The dreadful eddies made them rise,
When, within touch, I looked into
The darling cabin of the crew
The little house with bunks and stove
For her who steered and him who drove
Ah, then, to me, each barge became
A fairyland of coloured flame.

Daily I saw them as they crawled
Behind the ribby horse that hauled;
The slug-horse, day-long keeping pace,
Blowing his nose-bag in his face;
Tauting his line so iron-hard
It grooved the bridges' arches' guard,
With riven scorings cutted sleek
Smooth as a little baby's cheek;
There, on the path, with pipe or ballad,
The captain looked for eggs or salad,
Or whittled clothes-pegs, or with hand
Polished a holly-plant with sand.
V-like the spreading ripples veered
A woman with long earrings steered
An old sun-bonnet on her head,
No log, no latitude, no lead,
Nothing but keeping the same pace
From loading-wharf to mooring-place.
Daily, I saw them pass me by,
Just horse and movement to the eye,
A plodding horse, a gliding sheer,
With chimney-smokings blowing clear,
And colour where the helmsman leant
Against the tiller as she went.

The Western View

Next to these dear delights, I knew
And loved, my daily western view:—
Two fields to the canal, and then
A farm, a mill, and fields agen,
A wood, with yew-trees almost black;
A bridge with railways on its back;
A line of poplar-trees, a white
Steep, hilly roadway just in sight;
A hill, of which the stories told
That it had moved in days of old,
Glid for two days, church, manor, village,
Pump, barton, tavern, crop and tillage.
Beyond this Wonder, distant, dim,
My western vision had its rim,
And yet, when western skies were clear,
The distance hard, and rain was near,
A blueness shewed against the sky,
The Welsh Black Mountains, beyond Wye.

The Country as I first saw it

All of this westward soil was red as meat,
The blood of life to roses, corn and neat;
A wine of life, from apple and from pear,
Gushed each September in the orchards there;
Red, white-faced cattle browsed there, matched by none,
Visible bread grew golden in the sun.
Near timbered barns the red brick farmsteads stood,
Each with an oast house like a Welsh crone's hood;
Each floated over by the shifting flight
Of countless pigeons flashing dark and white;
Each glad with cockcrow, and the laugh of duckling,
The turkies gobbling and the fantails ruckling;
Each tented thick about with builded stacks
Waiting the droning thresher and the sacks;

Each bean-rick dark beneath a strawy dome,
Each moping haystack sweet as honeycomb,
Cut sometimes with the knife for present use,
So honeyful the touch expected juice.
There on the levelled cut the cat would drowse
Forgetting dread of dog and hope of mouse,
Curled on the fragrant bed with hidden claws,
Her neat wee nose just shewing beneath paws
While the hot summer's many noises blurred
Into one warm and self-approving word.
There the cat slept, and on his kennel's chain
The house-dog dreamed of catching rats again,
Till towards sunset when with plash and moo
The funeral-footed cows to milking drew,
And all the yard was filled with patient eyes,
Great, licking tongues, and tail-tips swishing flies.

The Barge, mtn's Inns

South-westward, as I heard, there lay
Old wharves of darkness tucked away,
Black courtyards thick with ancient inns
Kept by the Seven Deadly Sins.
My elders said, This was the port
Whereto the bargemen made resort.
I never trod those lanes, nor saw
The seven breakers of the law,
Only their washing hung from lines
And dingy, painted, swinging signs,
And empty alleys with none stirring
Save possibly a black cat purring,
Doubtless a cat with Satan's mark
Who rode a broomstick after dark.

Ah, after dark, when bound for bed,
What images were in my head
Of lamplight in those secret houses
And songs and fiddles and carouses
And ear-ringed bargemen sipping rum
Defying death and kingdom come,
Telling the marvels of the seas
From Maelstrom to the Ramireez.
For who could doubt those swarthy men
Knew Tenedos and Darien,
Had heard the Goan bells and sinned
In Trapalanda and Melind,
And now the Sins themselves, in red,
Were with them as I went to bed.
O, how I longed for but one peep
Before the swift annulling sleep.

The terrors of the fields

Though drink and poverty and crime
Poisoned those alleys of old time,
Where wickedness gave little truce,
I knew that energy was loose;
Energy, too, made sudden storms
In farmers' fields in other forms,
For those whose wits were gathering wool
Would often come upon a bull,
And tales of bulls from every side
Kept little children terrified.
The wolf that scared Red Ridinghood
Could scare less than a red bull could.

From almost every farm, a dreadful tale
Of what a bull had done, made children quail:

How the bull, wrenching, turned upon his lord
Then taking him to drink, and knelt, and gored:
How the bull, loose in meadow, chased and tossed
A little boy, who lived, (with reason lost).
How one, pursued across a field, was torn:
"The bull had tatters of him on his horn".
And other some, who in extreme despair
Just reached the tree, and panted, dodging there.

Too well, a little child imagined them,
Seeing the great horns coming round the stem;
Hearing the great side brushing round the tree,
Knowing the hunted fox's agony.
But others, leaping at a branch, had just
Caught, and swung clear above the antler thrust,
But huddled in the branches had to stay
Watched by the red beast's malice all the day,
Watching him horn the tree-bark into grooves,
And snorting try to clamber with his hooves,
Then seeming to go graze, but watching still
The quarry treed that was to be the kill.
That land's imagination was filled full,
And wisely so, with terror of the bull
And none who crossed a field was ever free
From dreadful wonder where the bull might be.

Going out alone to see the bull

Ah, with what mixed adventure and alarm
I crept to see a bull upon a farm.
In the hot June, I crept away alone,
I passed the duckpond and the upping-stone,
I reached the mighty barn's vast waggon door,
And, scared though eager, entered to explore.

Dim as an abbey's nave the barton lay,
Its cobwebbed brickwork stuck with scraps of hay,
Its rafters quick with flitting of the birds,
Arrowing swallows crying darting words;
The yellow wreck of an old waggon stood,
Its rusty iron coming from its wood,
Further along, in line, were sunlit stalls,
The horses gone, old harness on the walls.
The little wrens went up the wooden side,
Stall after stall, their sudden peckings pried.

I wandered down the stable, stall by stall,
It was all vast and I was very small,
And still, the hurrying swallows squealed and sped
Athwart the sunbeams up into their bed.

At the barn's end, a wooden ladder hove
Up, through a hatchway, to a loft above,
And climbing this, I saw that sunlight shone
Along a hayloft stretching on and on,
Cluttered with hay and speckled with a draff
Left by the cutters when they chopped the chaff.

I stepped along that loft of unknown dangers
I looked down hay-slides into cattle-mangers,
I heard the pigeons chuckling on the roof,
And saw a gray cat shyly glide aloof,
And quaked, lest from behind me, up the stair,
A tip-toe bull should catch me unaware,
With sudden thunder charging to disjoint
My trembling meat upon his piker point,
Yet, none the less, my spirit said "Explore. . . .
See, try, and know the things unknown before".

Then, at the final shoot, I saw below,
Alive, close-to, the thing I dreaded so;
There, stamping straw, alone, within his cell,
The thunder-shouldered felon lowered fell,
A cringle in his snout to lead him by
And smoulders of hell-fire in his eye.

All weight, he seemed, yet, when I saw him shift,
His muscles rippled and his soul was swift,
Seeing his evil prisoned thus, I knew
For the first time, the wonder man can do. . . .
Man from the first had faced this peril close,
Had penned him in, and ringed him through the nose.
So, can Man shackle all the plagues that kill
And wars that slaughter, if he have the will.

THE HEREFORD SPEECH

WORDS SPOKEN TO THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR, THE COUNCILLORS AND ALDERMEN OF HEREFORD, ON THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23RD, 1930

I have now to thank you for the great and beautiful honour that you have paid me in giving me the Freedom of this City.

It is a very great honour to be received into any city of men amd women, as a fellow citizen, with privileges that few of the citizens enjoy,

I am the more conscious of the honour', since you pay it to me because I am a poet. Often a poet is a solitary', who is not at one with his community', and only enters it to wound its members and himself, to rebel against it and outrage it because of something in his mind that is not in this world at all; and cannot adjust itself, but wants the moon or some image of the moon, and so lives restless and dies wretched, leaving behind him the images of his wants.

Many poets would say "I am nothing, and belong nowhere, but in my mood I go into a place that is better than anywhere, and the king and queen of that place are greater than anybody here, and give me words to say.[9]'

I believe that 'Life is an expression of some Law, or Will, that has a purpose in each of its manifestations. I believe that this world is a shadow of another world.

And looking intently on what is brightest and most generous in this world, which is but a little and dim thing compared with the real world, the great beauty and bounty and majesty of the real world are borne in upon the soul.

I am linked to this country by subtle ties, deeper than I can explain: they are ties of beauty. Whenever I think of Paradise, I think ofparts of this County. Whenever I think of a perfect Human State, I think of parts of this County. Whenever I think of the bounty and beauty of God, I think ofparts of this County.

I know no land more full of bounty and beauty than this red land, so good for corn and hops and roses. I am glad to have lived in a country where nearly every one lived on and by the land, singing as they carried the harvest home, and taking such pride in the horses, and in the great cattle, and in the cider trees. It will be a happy day for England when she realises that those things and the men who care for them are the real wealth of a land: the beauty and the bounty of earth being the shadow of Heaven.

Formerly, when men lived in the beauty and bounty of'Earth, the reality of Heaven was very near; every brook and grove and hill was holy, and men out of their beauty and bounty built shrines so lovely that the spirits which inhabit Heaven came down and dwelt in them and were companions to men and women, and men listened to divine speech. All up and down this county are those lovely shrines, all of the old time.

I was born in this County, where there are so many of those shrines, the still living evidence that men here can enter Paradise. I passed my childhood looking out on these red ploughlands and

woodland and pasture and lovely brooks, knowing that Paradise is just behind them. I have passed long years thinking on them hoping that by the miracle of poetry the thought of them would get me into Paradise, so that I might tell people of Paradise, in the words learned there, and that people would then know and be happy.*

I haven't done that of course, or begun to, but in giving me this freedom you recognise that I have tried, and I therefore thank you.

THE LAND WORKERS

AND then, in all those pleasant lands
I used to see the farming-hands.
I need but shut my eyes, and fast
There come the pictures of the past,
Of men and women, long-since dead,
Who battled with the Earth for bread
(A daily bread they might but taste)
For Folly and his doll to waste.

And first, the whetstones making writhe
The screaming anguish of the scythe;
The hayfield, the moon-daisy-stelled,
Where the wet frog his hoppage held,
Where the just-blushing opal clover
Had the king bumble-bee for lover,
And many a blunt-tailed rusty mouse
Piped treble in his grassy house.

There at the swinging edges' scathe
The summer flowers fell in swathe;
Daisy and ragged-robin drooped
Then tumbled, as the sharpness swooped.
A field-long grassy dragon snaked
Behind the scythes, where women raked;
And who, that looked on these, forgets
Their flapping lilac sun-bonnets?

Then, who forgets the bristled corn
When sloes are blue among the thorn?

The harvest-reapers stretched for luncheon
About the wooden cider-puncheon,
Backed on the sunburnt golden stooks
New-cutted by the fagging-hooks.
(For sickles did the reaping then
In those old days, when men were men.)

Each year the blue September comes
With wasps all sugar-drunk, in plums,
And crackling partridge-stubble twined
With trumpet-flowered bedewind.
But those old harvesters uncouth
Are gone out of my world with youth,
Gone like the corn-crake, whose harsh word
So darling then is now not heard.

Then, like to maypoles set in lines,
The hopyards of the English vines:
The cribs, wherein I picked for hours
The resined, flakey, pungent flowers,
Whose gummage stained my fingers brown:
Then … all those rascallies from town,
The hoppers, cribbing deep, with hooting
New-comers, till they paid their footing,
Or crouching at the twilit meuse
Setting the brass hair-wire noose
That made the wide-eyed rabbit choke.
Or slinking quietly as smoke
Along the hedge till stick could reach
Apron or pinner set to bleach;
Or sudden hand could grab the wing
Of pullet come a-harvesting.

Or, at the inns on market-nights
Rousing the moon with songs and fights.
Where are they, thefts and songs and feuds?
The inns are shut and the moon broods
"These mad leaves that the man-tree bears
Are soon wisps blowing down the airs."

With these, I well remember still
That miracle of strength and skill
The Cowman, who, with hook and heed,
Let forth the grim red bull to breed,
A ton of power surging by
With seven devils in his eye,
Lurching, like some ninth fatal wave
That a mad moon's compelling drave,
His soul a strength of hell in smoulder
The earthquake heaving in his shoulder,
His malice slanting from his look,
Yet ringed by Man and held by hook.
Man daunted him to please his Wife;
So Man will someday conquer Life.

Then, the grave man, who used to guide
The shire-stallion to his bride:
The stallion stalking, proud as Spain,
With ribbons in his tail and mane,
(It took two hours' work to do
That plaiting, red and white and blue.)
His fetlocks combed, his roller trim,
And that grave men in charge of him,
The artist shewing forth his ware,
The might surmounted and made fair.

Then, more September memories
Of apples glowing on the trees,
Of men on ladders in the sun
Gathering apples by the ton,
Of heaps of red-fleshed cider-fruit
Wasp-pestered at each apple root
And smell of pomtnace warm in air
From cider-presses everywhere.

Then, the farm-carters, who could lash
The still air like a musket-crash,
Who strode ahead of waggons talking
To horses jingling in their stalking
From brasses at their collars hung.
The horses understood the tongue,
Of which Phoenician fragments stay
Still, in my memory today:—
"ZAKEEYA DAHBI WOOTA STAH".

Under the earth those heroes ate;
Those Englishmen, slow, stubborn, kind,
Farm-labourers, time out of mind,
Who, with odd gurgles, growls and clicks,
Stacked the slain Summer into ricks
Who tamed the great beasts' strength, and beat
Earth's red rebellious clay to meat.

Each full of fancies, dark and odd
From when the devil had been god,
Knowing the rite, with seed or muck,
Without which "Twoulden have no luck":
Knowing how fatal 'twas to plough
Ere Earth and Heaven had said "Now";

And how the blood of bird or mouse
Would bring the crop or guard the house;
And how, unless you turned the penny,
The new moon rode you with her meyny.

Though Night's old terrors stayed, the Earth
Kept in them still the seeds of mirth,
Shrivelled, yet living, from a time
Before wild manhood became crime.
All helped the children to make gay
A maypole for the First of May,
For glory of the fragrant, green
Delightful Spring, the Meadow Queen;
All sang, (and after sixty years
The singing lingers in my ears)
From waggon-tops, while bearing back
The end of harvest to the stack;
The young men, with their swords, would dance
Our pagan blood's inheritance,
Or, strangely dressed, with helms and swords,
And uncouth, half-forgotten words,
(And bladders upon sticks, to beat
Spectators back) in market street
Would act that age-old play of Corn
Cut down by Death and then re-born.
And other touching graces stayed
From times ere pageant had decayed.

For sometimes still, when children died,
Women in white, each like a bride,
Would bear the body to its rest.
And when men died all did their best

To set a feast, however poor.
Of wine and sweetmeats at the door
Though God's recording angels knew
That in their life-times feasts were few.
I know, indeed, I knew of yore,
The bitter cross those heroes bore.
The pastoral those fellows played
Was piped beneath no beech-tree shade,
But fought by manhood grinded bare
Against starvation and despair.

What were they like to look at, say,
Those men who fed us yesterday?
Unlike us, clothing, gait and face,
That uncouth, ancient British race.
Their coats, cut in the antique shear,
Had stood the weather many a year,
With baggy pockets each a bin
To hide the wired rabbit in.
Brown corduroy their trews would be
Gartered with straps below the knee.
Their boots on stone struck sparks like steels
From iron on their soles and heels.
The oldest men still daily wore
The smocks of centuries before,
Each fairly needled on the chest
By loving hands long since gone west.
Alas, its sixty years by clock
Since last I saw a man in smock.

Then, for their gait, their joints, sans oil,
All bent, from having stooped at toil,

Moved with a bow-legged shamble, slow
As the led bull or horse would go.
Since most had started work at seven
They had not quite the grace of Heaven.

Then, for their looks:—their air, their tinct,
(Like all that caused them) are extinct;
But in old photographs I see
Those lost leaves of the English tree,
And know, from seeing them, why Spain
That came to smite ran home again,
And why, at last, man's greed and knavery
Were forced to stop the trade of slavery,
And why, that deadly June day through
The red line stood at Waterloo,
And why all seas have felt the ploughs
Of England's island-builded bows.

Such, on the whole, my memory says
The farm-hands were, in ancient days.
But now, in topsy-turvy now,
Who tends the beasts and drives the plough?

Soon after dawn the other day
I saw a tractor rive the clay,
Sped by a girl of seventeen
With hair of gold and trowsers green,
With fag against her dainty tongue.
Her sister led a cart of dung
Beside the lane where she was going
Boy-scouts in shorts were busy hoeing,
And as the leader of the band
The local parson bore a hand,

And further on, a girl apart
Was loading up a turnip-cart.

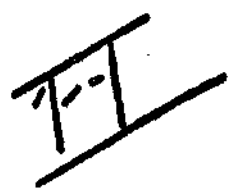
The same old work was being done
With pleasure, comradeship and fun;
And at the days-work-end for these
Even in war-time, there was ease,
And strength remaining for delight
In other joy than gin or fight,
In homes unlike the huts of old
Whose leaky thatch was green with mould,
Whose drink was from the brook beyond
Or scoopings from the seepage pond.
Then, from these minds, the fear was riddened
Of what would happen if you didn't
Observe some grimy rite or other
Due to the devil or his mother.
Quit, also, were they of the fear
Of that starvation ever near
The brave Victorians known to me
Twixt seventy eight and eighty three,
Who toiled from dawn till after dark,
And lodged like beasts in Noah's ark,
And brought up children food-bereft
Glad of the turnip sheep had left,
Who drank, if Fortune smiled, (who wouldn't
If Fortune mostly said you couldn't?)
Who poached a bit, and snared and fought
And most heroically wrought
The harvests by whose sap we stood.

I saw no change but for the good.

From THE MIDNIGHT FOLK

KAY'S SUNDAY

APART from these joys, church had few solaces. Often in the summer a swallow would flit about: when there was no swallow, the only thing to do was to look at the walls, which were full of queer things. For instance, if you looked at the lines of mortar which held in the irregular stones on the walls, you could sometimes imagine that they made pictures. Close to him there was a very good portrait of Henry VIII, thus:



and a picture of a boat, thus:

which filled in a lot of time. Then, in some of the walls were the mouldings of windows and arches long since filled in: it was quite good fun to imagine the windows and arches as still there, and to go through them into some jollier place than church. He knew all the memorial

tablets within sight by heart, from Captain Porkins, late of the 9ist (Duke of Cumberland's) Light Horse, who was slain while doing staff duty at Hougomont on the Field of Waterloo to

"ANNABEL BETHESDA MEE, Spinster of this Parish.
She rests in peace till Wars and Tumults end,
We an Example mourn, the Poor a Friend.

But the chief pleasure in church was to look at the carved and painted figures arranged along the wall-pieces of the chancel-roof. There were sixteen of these on each side. They had been put there, with the chancel roof, somewhere about the year 1500. No one knew quite what they represented, for only a few of them were winged. They were "the busts and heads of men and angels/' so the guide-book said. Some tried to make up the sum of 32 thus:

12 Apostles.
7 Virtues.
9 Worthies.
4 Archangels.

32

To Kay they were all sorts of things at different times. Now they would be the Condicote and Much Zennor Rugby football teams (with an umpire each), all lined up for kick-off; anon they would be the Australian eleven, 1882, facing the team of Cambridge University, which beat them; then on another Sunday one side of them would be A False Start for the Derby, from a well-known print, while the other side would be the start for the Grand National Steeplechase, 1839, with Mr. Mason

on Lottery, and Mr. Martin, in his pink sleeves, on Paulina. Sometimes they would be Britons and Romans, and sometimes they would be the House of Parliament, with the East window coming in on them as Oliver Cromwell.

After the service, people gathered outside the church in the broad walk near the porch. The governess was stopped by Mrs. Gossip, who had something to discuss with her. The two of them walked together deep in talk through the churchyard. A man whom Kay did not know, but who seemed to know him, clapped him on the shoulder and began conversation with, "Well, Kay, have you found the Harker treasure yet?"

He started, because how could this man know how much the Harker treasure had been in his thoughts for these last few days?

"Oh, don't look so startled," the man said. "I won't peach if you've found it, but I'm afraid that there's no hope of that. But there is a treasure that I wonder you don't seek for."

"What treasure is that?" Kay asked.

"Well did you ever hear of Bendigo the highwayman? Benjamin, as people called him."

"I should think I had," Kay answered. "He used to live in our stable when it was a house. But had he any treasure?"

"Oh, I expect that he had a great deal of treasure," the man said, "from robbing the stage coaches. I was reading an account of him in the Annual Register. He kept his mare Dowsabel, which is a French name, Douce et belle (meaning gentle and lovely), at the 'Cock and Pye,' the inn where you go to see the hounds meet. They searched for his property when they caught him,

but they never found anything. You ought to look in your stable for it."

"What sort of treasure would it be, please?' Kay asked.

"Oh, purses of guineas, and repeater watches (that is, watches which will *repeat* that is, re-strike, the last hour that struck whenever you press a spring). Then I expect he took gold rings and pocket-books full of bank-notes. Those were more worth having, don't you think, than pieces of eight, which were only worth four shillings when all is said?"

At this point the governess claimed Kay and led him back to dinner.

After dinner Kay thought, "Well, why shouldn't I explore for Benjamin's treasure?" The governess always passed her Sunday afternoons in her study, which she called "having some letters to write," but he judged from her bitterness when he had been noisy in the garden on these occasions, that she really took a long nap.

All through his life he had dreaded exploring that side of the garden, where the stables, that had once been Benjamin's home, stood. In some undated past a man called The Tailor had been found killed in one of the outhouses there, "stabbed right through the skull," as Ellen said, "which shows you the force that must have been used." To-day The Tailor seemed very far away and treasure very much in the air. "I'll go," he said.

The stables (they were no longer used as stables) stood at the end of a long chain of buildings or ruins, which shut the garden from the road on that side. First was the barn, the thatch of which was green with moss and

sunken into pits, which would presently be holes. Next to this was the dangerous brew-house, where cavernous old barrels stood falling asunder, as their hoops rusted through. The rotten floor was full of holes, through some of which you could hear the murmur of running water. Indeed the brew-house was a terrible place, which made one remember the worst that one had ever heard of Sweeny Todd.

When he entered it this afternoon, another tale came back to him, that one of his grandfather's workmen, who had worked in the brew-house, had so soaked himself with spirits that at last, as Ellen said, "he took fire and burned all blue. There was nothing left of him but some black oil on the floor." However, Dr. Gubbins had thrown doubts on this tale.

Beyond the brew-house was an open space, which had once been covered by the making-house. It was now a jungle of giant heraclea, nettles, plantains, burdock and dandelion. Beyond this jungle was the pigeon-house built out like an apse from the wall of the stable. Both pigeon-house and stable were swathed more than a foot thick in ivy.

As Kay came into this wilderness, a big grey cat, which he had learned to call The Phantom from the swiftness with which he fled, leaped from his sleep in the sun and disappeared. This time Kay saw that he had darted into a hole below a projecting stone, which looked like a paving-stone. After poking and digging at the hole for half an hour, he found that there was a hollow beyond and below it. He fetched a trowel from the tool-shed, cleared out the entrance, and grovelled on the ground, trying to see. Yes, there was a room or cave.

Creeping into the house, he took some candle-ends

and a box of matches from the pantry mantelshelf. By candle-end light he could make out masonry, slug-tracks and specks of quartz in the stone.

"It must be Benjamin's secret den," he thought. "I'll get down it to make sure."

He fetched a newspaper, in which Joe, the gardener, who came once a week, had wrapped his lunch. He lit this, dropped it into the hollow, and saw it flame down, lighting up a little cellar about five feet deep. Within a minute he had squirmed down feet foremost into this cellar, to explore. The phantom cat had long since gone by another hole between the stones, through which he could see into the garden. He could find no other opening. Roots of ivy thrust into the ground among the masonry; tendrils of ivy with bright, pale leaves, had trailed in through the holes. There were slug-tracks on the floor and walls. A dead centipede was phosphorescent in a corner.

"What a lovely place," Kay thought. "I shall be able to come here always and have it for my cave. I'll bring bread and ham here. I'll keep a catapult here. Perhaps I'll run away some evening and sleep here. I wish I could get one of those lanterns with coloured lights; that would be just the thing for here."

He lit two more candle-ends. By their light he found a recess in the wall, where the stones had been removed. In this lay a padlock with the key rusted into it, half-a-dozen links of rusty chain, the heel-grip and rowels of a spur, and part of a horse's headstall.

"These must be relics of Benjamin," he thought. "The spur that he spurred Dowsabel with. I shall call this place Benjamin's Lair."

Footsteps sounded outside. He saw Mrs. Scatternews

coming down the path within a few feet of him on her way to call on the governess. He could hear her muttering, as was her way, "The bombazine, ninepence three-farthings; two pennyworth of tape, eleven-three; a penny reel, a shilling-three; two packets of best assorted—but they're gone up: how much did Sarah say they came to?"

"I can be here," Kay thought, "and no one will ever suspect where I am. It's the loveliest place that I've ever found, and I'll spend all my time here always and have books and a clothes-brush, so that the dust won't show."

He made another careful examination of the walls and then "Terang, terang, terang!" it was the bell for tea.

When he came indoors he found that Mrs. Scatternews was more fun than Mrs. Tattle; she had been to Mr. Holyport's lecture, the night before, on "My predecessors in this parish."

"Imagine the things that went on here," she said. "The parish was honeycombed with crime. No sooner was the smuggling stopped, than the highwaymen broke out and stole Sir Hassle Gassle's repeater watch worth five hundred guineas. No sooner were the highwaymen hanged, than out came the rick-burners, holding meetings and setting fire to property. Oh, it was dieadful! And all in red nightcaps, too, just as in the Reign of Terror. No sooner were *they* all sent to transportation, than back came the smugglers, only this time they came secretly, and left the brandy and wines at the doors, just as though they were the milk, and so cheap. . . . Mr. Holyport read from the journal of the reverend gentleman who was rector here in the 'forties. He said that

'although wages were lower than he had ever known them, hardly a man in the parish failed to find means for a Saturday intoxication/ Then he went on to say how the parish now remembered only its criminals, Benjamin, the highwayman, and Mr. Galloway, the nickname of the smuggler, whereas in former times it remembered its saints, St. Alpig of St. Alpig's well, who is thought to have had a hermitage near the river; and St. Conda, to whom the church was dedicated. He said that this was because courageous energy is always valued and remembered, and that though the highwaymen and the others often used their energy wickedly, they still used it, and risked their lives to use it. We shall have half the boys in the parish to-morrow playing at highwaymen and knocking people's eyes out. I wonder that he did not tell the girls that they had better all take to being witchesi"

"Do you mind," the governess said, in her very sweetest voice, "do you mind if we do not talk of witches? I am sure that we ought not to talk of them, because of course, well . . . really."

This ended the talk of witches.

After tea Kay went back to the garden, thinking to explore the stable for some other relic of Benjamin. Usually the stable was locked, there being now no horses, but to-day, to his surprise, the door was open.

The reason for its being open lay within on the wheelbarrow. There, on some straw, with a crimson, drunken face, lay Joe the gardener, fast asleep, breathing heavily. He was a very drunken man, who had been in the Afghan War. When sober, he could set wires for rats (which never failed) and sing "As I was a-walking by the light of the moon." He could also dance two or three steps of the step-dance.

Kay was afraid of him when he was drunk, because Ellen and Jane were. He edged away from him cautiously.

Two stalls further down the line was the harness-room, which Kay could just remember, or thought that he could remember, in the warmth and glitter of use. A memory, so early that it might have been a dream, showed him that room all bright with a blazing fire, gleaming with bits, curb-chains, buckles and stirrups, and comfortable with the smell of saddle-soap and metal-polish. Two men, called Bob and Jay, had been there then, singing Twankydillo as they worked; and Bob had opened the marvellous carven corner cupboard, which had the arms of the Harkers, three oreilles couped proper, done above it between supporters. Inside there had been a blaze of shining things, the coach-lamps, and the silver turrets that old Mr. Harker had used when he drove four-in-hand.

The corner cupboard was still there, but frouzy and cobwebby. Rusty bits of harness still hung on the nails; the grate was broken. Starlings in the chimney had knocked soot, mortar and scalings down into the room. Cobwebs containing bits of fly, bluebottle, gnat, clegg, bee, wasp and moth, covered the window. There was a broken carriage clock still on the mantelpiece.

Kay pulled the rusty key of the corner cupboard so that the door swung slowly open, to show its blackness of decay. Dry-rot was at work upon it; spiders, earwigs, woodlice and centipedes all had their dwelling there. There was nothing within except a scrubbing brush and a horse-picker. Kay took the scrubbing brush to serve as a clothes brush in Benjamin's lair. On second thoughts he took the horse-picker too.

In the next stall he found another treasure. Two years

before, in the winter of the great frost, Joe had made him a toboggan by nailing battens across two runners. The toboggan had disappeared at the thaw; Kay had not seen it since; but now here it was, shoved aside, propped up against the manger; even the rope still on it. "The very thing I've been panting for," Kay thought. "This will make a ladder down into the lair."

Outside the stable, on the walls which seemed to be directly over his lair, he noticed the toad-flax. It had little, mouthed flowers of palest purple touched with gold, which reminded him of snapdragons, violets, and sweet-peas; it had vivid green leaves and thrusters of purple. Noticing it for the first time on this exciting day in that place, he remembered it always, as something even more strangely beautiful than most flowers.

A solitary mushroom grew on the site of the manure-heap. He seemed to remember that Bob, in the old days, had grown many baskets full of mushrooms there. Now the giant burdock and the overgrown laurels had taken charge; all the garden was like that: weeded up.

As he was clambering down the toboggan rungs into his den, the runners gave way beneath him, so that he fell. He found that one of the runners had sunk into the floor, through the run of some rat, into what looked like the lid of a box. On groping with the horse-picker, he pulled out the remains of a wooden box, long rotted into touch in the ground. Within its shell was mouldy stuff, which may once have been cloth. Underneath the mouldy stuff was something hard, done up in what felt like a mummy rabbit, which had been tied with strips of leather now broken. The wrappings unrolled to display a tin box rather more than a foot long, also tied with leather. The hinges were decayed through. The

lid came off as he opened it. Inside was a bundle tied with oilskin, which contained a rather heavy net purse and a decaying mahogany box with battered metal corners. Kay opened the mahogany box first. It contained a pair of duelling pistols, by Turner, Milsom Street, Bath, 1803, so an engraved brass plate said. With these pistols, in little beds in the green baize, were wads, caps, a rammer and picker, and a neat carven horn with a stopper at the end. They were the real duelling pistols with the saw handles which he had read of in books. Rust had eaten deeply into their cocks and barrels, but they were still pistols, perhaps the very pistols with which Benjamin had made people stand and deliver. The purse, which was secured by sliding rings, contained six heavy bullets, a broken shilling of George III with a cross cut on it, a cameo ring, a monogram seal and a small pewter snuff-box embossed with a fox's mask. He knew that the broken shilling had been cut with a cross for use against ghosts. Ellen had told him of a farmer who had shot a ghost with such a bullet at the Wantways, where the suicides were buried. "No ghost," she said, "can stand silver marked with a cross."

In the bottom of the purse was a paper pulp, which seemed to be rotting Scottish bank-notes. On the inside of the lid of the pewter snuff-box someone had scratched with a sharp nail the following inscription:

S 100 yds frm. S.S.S.
———————
J. G. Z. R. P. C.

What that meant Kay could not tell.

"It's where Benjamin's treasure is hidden," he said to

himself. "South a hundred yards from S.S.S. What would S.S.S. be? Might it be," he thought, "South of Seeking's Stable? This may have been called Seeking's Stable then. J. G. Z. and R. P. C.—I suppose that those are the initials of his gang."

JOSEPH HODGES, OR THE CORN

HE wore the smock-frock of the country's past,
That ancient with frank eye and upright head;
His gray hair, beautiful unto the last,
Nearly upon his withered shoulders spread.
He had a stubbly beard, his furrowed cheeks
Were bloodless Age's, threaded with red streaks.

He, who had gathered eighty harvests in
As boy or reaper, now himself was white
For Death to sickle and to bring to bin.
Gone was his body.'s old companion, Might.
He, who had all day sung, swinging his hook,
Now waited to be carted, a cut stook.

His hands, that long had hardened on the hale,
Holding the plough behind two horses' backs,
And in the sheds of old had swung the flail
On many a harvest, now lay white and lax.
Himself sat upright ever, gazing forth
Over the grass and hopyards to the north.

What harvest did his inner eyes behold
From his spent Summer, now that Winter came?
The women who had cherished him of old?
The friends whom ninety Autumns had made tame?
The ploughteams pondering out, on shaggy hoofs,
At dawn, from farms with pigeons on their roofs?

These; and, perhaps, some feeling of the link
Of Destiny, that bound him to the Corn,
Beauty and bounty of man's meat and drink,

That greens, and browns, and then is waggon-borne,
And then is food, and strength, and then is Joy,
Seed-corn of crops that nothing can destroy.

For, as a man declines toward the tomb,
The symbols of his life, that ruled his way
Before his spirit quickened in the womb,
Gather to cheer him through his hut's decay,
So haply here, as darkness gathered dim,
Immortal cornland shone, and nourished him.

Till, as he gazed into the past, the sound,
The scene and colour of his life's delight,
The crop in April, green upon the ground,
The crop in rank, in bristle, sickle-white,
The crop in barn, in bread, all merged and made
A Word that led him deathwards unafraid.

* * * * *

It is raw clay tangled with roots of flowers.
This earth that grows the grass and little flowers.
You cut it with the share or with the spade;
It is like meat, it shines; the stones stick in it.
The seed is flung on it and tumbled over,
While the rooks' beaks, like iron, probe for it.

And gulls' bills too; and bitter winter binds.
Then, in the dark meat of the world, the seed
Heats in its nook, and sings, and thrusts out roots
To suck and clutch, to break in three and suck.

Then, feeling where the sun shines, it arises
And bursts out of the clod into the Spring,

The sun, the sky, the blowing cloud and wind,
Rain falling mixed with snowflakes; blackthorn blowing.

First, fear of birds' beaks and of hunters* hooves,
Then the green blade will cover up the hare
As she lies, furrow to the kestrel's eye.

Then, as the cuckoo comes and May rain follows
With hawthorn, crimson speckled, drowsy smelling,
It stands and buds and ears, till it is army
Massed within hedges, dense as a King's crowd.

The vixen with her cubs lie in the runway
Watching the shrew-mice race into the dark,
Or beetles rambling, or the harvest-mice
Weaving their ball of joy above bright stems.

Two sparks among the rust of a red fur,
One with the clay, the vixen: rabbits come
Nibble the nicked tongues of the milky weed,
And scratch, or cock an ear, or rise to listen
With drooped forepaws, and round eyes very bright.
High overhead the sparrow-hawk is watching.
His murder drops, the footpad weasel leaps,
The white trap of the vixen snatches suddenly.
There is a squealing, bleating into silence.
A blackbird chackers: all begins again,
Under high summer blazing in the sun
In a great drone of flies, now up, now down.

Sometimes a little boy, escaped from school,
Creeps up the ditch and thence into the forest
Of countless yellowing stems; he sits there, hidden

Marvelling at the dusk dose to the ground
Smiling to hear his fellows call his name
Not knowing where he is; but not replying
Till they, weary of calling, having tasted
The honey in the honeysuckle trumpets
Among the hedge close-by, go shouting on,
While he sits still, within the amber gloom
Seeing far off the head and crimson eye
Of a cock pheasant, lifted, watching him,
And near at hand the delicate strong strings
(Decked with striped flowers) that twist about the stalks;
Rough poppy stems with scarlet banners drooped;
Blue cornflower and yellow ragwort flowers
And thistle tufting into down for finches.

At dusk, with silent glide of curving wings,
The covey settle and run swift, swift, swift,
Into their quiet, where the mottled shells
Lie broken, whence they came. Now the moon rises,
The owls come out; the moths with their long tongues
Quiver above the honey-suckle trumpets.
The humble bees beside their honey-pouches
Dream of the clover-field in the hot light,
Ten acres of pink clusters of sweet suck.
A white mist dims on the cool grass and thickens
Above the pond, along the water-reach.
Night deepens and is still, save for some cow
Moving in pasture, or the squeak of bats,
Or bells from the two churches within hearing,
Or sheep in fold above, cropping the chicory.

But when the dew is gone, on the hot morrow
Farmer and men and teams come with the reapers;

And all day long the horses drag the reapers
Swathe within swathe along the lessening square.
The army falls in rank, the flowers wither,
And men and women stook the banded bundles,
And then with sticks and guns murder the rabbits
That have crept inwards to the last patch cut.
The dusk falls on a field of tented stooks
Where wild things tremble at the covert gone,
And partridges call each to each till darkness.

Now, the brown horses drag the waggons in
For loading of the stooks, till all is carted.
All the rough, bristling, four square plaited ears
All fat and firm with food, are flung aloft;
Then the last bundle of the last stook taken
Falls to the woman, for her plait, then all,
Men, women, children, mount on the last waggon,
Waving their wisps of gleaning, and all sing
In the hot afternoon, for harvest home.
The wheels crush the close stubble, the song lifts,
In joy of earth that makes man's marrow fat
And cords his muscles; joy of the sun that pours
Energy forth on life, joy of the corn,
By which their twined strength enters into man.
So with their song they come into the barn;
There the brown mice flit to the golden shelter
And pigeons pick the spilled grain, the red cock
Clucks for his wives; they peck about the floor.
But the skilled woman plaits from the last stook
Twin crowns of straw, for Gospel and Epistle,
To hang in Church upon Thanksgiving day.

Soon, when the apples redden or glow gold,
And hawthorn berries brighten in the hedge,
And partridges are killed and swallows gather,
The threshers will be there, and all day long
The drone will lift and die about the farm
Among the wash and trample of flung straw,
The dust of straw, the heaving forks of men,
Chaff underfoot and bodies of dead mice,
While the sacked grain is readied for the mill.

* * * * *

All-living Sun, all-giving Earth, the two
Father and Mother of the stock of men,
Kindler and giver of the miracle
By which we stand, the Corn, we give Thee thanks.

By Corn we eat the radiance of high heaven
And inmost blood and marrow of the earth;
All that the easter chills and wester fosters;
All that the will of life within the seed
Can suck of plumpness from the clay; of greenness
Out of the air, the rain, or resolved atom;
Of ripeness from the turning of the wheel.

This that was plant of pride is now man's strength,
Steering a ploughshare steady between horses;
Leading the bull to drink; sickling laid corn;
Mowing the knee-deep meadow of moon-daisies,
In the June blaze among the biting flies,
When cuckoos try for their forgotten tune;
Holding the stallion in his hour of ramp;
Sinking the piers of bridges, laying causeways
Athwart the run of floods, damming back tides,

Winning a cornland from the sea itself;
Daring the sea on fallen logs, fire-hollowed,
Then, daring further, felling pine and oak
Bending the stubborn timber, sawing plank,
Pitching the seams and launching forth with oars,
Or canvas hoisted, to the unknown fate
Beyond the skyline, out of sight of land.
And from this mettle of man, the sweetness comes:
The women with the majesty of queens,
With knowledge, mercy, wisdom; their calm eyes
Perceiving truth, their courage sheltering truth,
Their selflessness like light about men's lives,
Their tenderness like light to little children,
Who sport about them, singing, merry as May.

All strength and gladness, shadows of Earth and Sun,
Are shadows of the might and glory of God,
To Whom all men who grow out of the Earth
Lift in their exultation, as the Corn lifts.

Out of this Corn, that is such joy, men build
Their churches, where they act day after day
With singing, music, dancing, lights and colour,
The death and resurrection of glad man,
Till the eared corn of man becomes a flame
No longer Earth, but burning from the Sun,
No longer multitudinous but one,
No longer bread of sacrifice but Joy.

From THE EVERLASTING MERCY

SAUL KANE'S MADNESS

I OPENED window wide and leaned
Out of that pigstye of the fiend
And felt a cool wind go like grace
About the sleeping market-place.
The clock struck three, and sweetly, slowly,
The bells chimed, Holy, Holy, Holy;
And in a second's pause there fell
The cold note of the chapel bell,
And then a cock crew, flapping wings,
And summat made me think of things.
How long those ticking clocks had gone
From church and chapel, on and on,
Ticking the time out, ticking slow
To men and girls who'd come and go,
And how they ticked in belfry dark
When half the town was bishop's park,
And how they'd rung a chime full tilt
The night after the church was built,
And how that night was Lambert's Feast,
The night I'd fought and been a beast.
And how a change had come. And then
I thought, "You tick to different men."
What with the fight and what with drinking
And being awake alon^ there thinking,
My mind began to carp and tetter,
"If this life 's all, the beasts are better."
And then I thought, "I wish I'd seen
The many towns this town has been;

I wish I knew if they'd a-got
A kind of summat we've a-not,
If them as built the church so fair
Were half the chaps folk say they were;
For they'd the skill to draw their plan,
And skill 's a joy to any man;
And they'd the strength, not skill alone,
To build it beautiful in stone;
And strength and skill together thus . . .
O, they were happier men than us.

"But if they were, they had to die
The same as every one and I.
And no one lives again, but dies,
And all the bright goes out of eyes,
And all the skill goes out of hands,
And all the wise brain understands,
And all the beauty, all the power
Is cut down like a withered flower.
In all the show from birth to rest
I give the poor dumb cattle best."

I wondered, then, why life should be,
And what would be the end of me
When youth and health and strength were gone
And cold old age came creeping on?
A keeper's gun? The Union ward?
Or that new quod at Hereford?
And looking round I felt disgust
At all my nights of drink and lust,
And all the looks of all the swine
Who'd said that they were friends of mine;
And yet I knew, when morning came,
The morning would be just the same,

For I'd have drinks and Jane would meet me
And drunken Silas Jones would greet me,
And I'd risk quod and keeper's gun
Till all the silly game was done.
"For parson chaps are mad supposin'
A chap can change the road he's chosen."
And then the Devil whispered "Saul,
Why should you want to live at all?
Why fret and sweat and try to mend?
It's all the same thing in the end.
But when it's done," he said, "it's ended.
Why stand it, since it can't be mended?"
And in my heart I heard him plain,
"Throw yourself down and end it, Kane."
"Why not?" said I. "Why not? But no,
I won't. I've never had my go.
I've not had all the world can give.
Death by and by, but first I'll live.
The world owes me my time of times,
And that time 's coming now, by crimes."
A madness took me then. I felt
I'd like to hit the world a belt.
I felt that I could fly through air,
A screaming star with blazing hair,
A rushing comet, crackling, numbing
The folk with fear of judgment coming,
A 'Lijah in a fiery car
Coming to tell folk what they are.

"That 's what I'll do," I shouted loud,
"I'll tell this sanctimonious crowd,
This town of window-peeping, prying,
Maligning, peering, hinting, lying,

Male and female human blots
Who would, but daren't be, whores and sots,
That they're so steeped in petty vice
That they're less excellent than lice,
That they're so soaked in petty virtue
That touching one of them will dirt you,
Dirt you with the stain of mean
Cheating trade and going between,
Pinching, starving, scraping, hoarding,
Spying, through the chinks of boarding
To see if Sue the prentice lean
Dares to touch the margarine.
Fawning, cringing, oiling boots,
Raging in the crowd's pursuits,
Flinging stones at all the Stephens,
Standing firm with all the evens,
Making hell for all the odd,
All the lonely ones of God,
Those poor lonely ones who find
Dogs more mild than human kind.
For dogs," I said, "are nobles born
To most of you, you cockled corn.
I've known dogs to leave their dinner,
Nosing a kind heart in a sinner.
Poor old Crafty wagged his tail
The day I first came home from jail,
When all my folk, so primly clad,
Glowered black and thought me mad,
And muttered how they'd been respected,
While I was what they'd all expected.
(I've thought of that old dog for years,
And of how near I come to tears.)

"But you, you minds of bread and cheese,
Are less divine than that dog's fleas.
You suck blood from kindly friends,
And kill them when it serves your ends.
Double traitors, double black,
Stabbing only in the back,
Stabbing with the knives you borrow
From the friends you bring to sorrow.
You stab all that 's true and strong;
Truth and strength you say are wrong;
Meek and mild, and sweet and creeping,
Repeating, canting, cadging, peeping,
That 's the art and that 's the life
To win a man his neighbour's wife.
All that 's good and all that 's true,
You kill that, so I'll kill you."

At that I tore my clothes in shreds
And hurled them on the window leads;
I flung my boots through both the winders
And knocked the glass to little flinders;
The punch bowl and the tumblers followed,
And then I seized the lamps and holloed
And down the stairs, and tore back bolts,
As mad as twenty blooded colts;
And out into the street I pass,
As mad as two-year-olds at grass,
A naked madman waving grand
A blazing lamp in either hand.
I yelled like twenty drunken sailors,
"The devil's come among the tailors."
A blaze of flame behind me streamed,
And then I clashed the lamps and screamed

"I'm Satan, newly come from hell."
And then I spied the fire-bell.

I've been a ringer, so I know
How best to make a big bell go.
So on to bell-rope swift I swoop,
And stick my one foot in the loop
And heave a down-swig till I groan,
"Awake, you swine, you devil's own."
I made the fire-bell awake,
I felt the bell-rope throb and shake;
I felt the air mingle and clang
And beat the walls a muffled bang,
And stifle back and boom and bay
Like muffled peals on Boxing Day,
And then surge up and gather shape,
And spread great pinions and escape;
And each great bird of clanging shrieks
0 Fire, Fire! from iron beaks.
My shoulders cracked to send around
Those shrieking birds made out of sound
With news of fire in their bills.
(They heard 'em plain beyond Wall Hills.)

Up go the winders, out come heads,
I heard the springs go creak in beds;
But still I heave and sweat and tire,
And still the clang goes "Fire, Fire!"
"Where is it, then? Who is it, there?
You ringer, stop, and tell us where."
"Run round and let the Captain know."
"It must be bad, he's ringing so."

"It's in the town, I see the flame;
Look there! Look there, how red it came."
"Where is it, then? O stop the bell."
I stopped and called: "It's fire of hell;
And this is Sodom and Gomorrah,
And now I'll burn you up, begorra."

By this the firemen were mustering,
The half-dressed stable men were flustering,
Backing the horses out of stalls
While this man swears and that man bawls,
"Don't take th' old mare. Back, Toby, back.
Back, Lincoln. Where 's the fire, Jack?"
"Damned if I know. Out Preston way."
"No. It's at Chancy's Pitch, they say."
"It 's sixteen ricks at Pauntley burnt."
"You back old Darby out, I durn't."
They ran the big red engine out,
And put 'em to with damn and shout.
And then they start to raise the shire,
"Who brought the news, and where 's the fire?"
They'd moonlight, lamps, and gas to light 'em,
I give a screech-owl's screech to fright 'em,
And snatch from underneath their noses
The nozzles of the fire hoses.
"I am the fire. Back, stand back,
Or else I'll fetch your skulls a crack;
D'you see these copper nozzles here?
They weigh ten pounds apiece, my dear;
I'm fire of hell come up this minute
To burn this town, and all that 's in it.
To burn you dead and burn you clean,
You cogwheels in a stopped machine,

You hearts of snakes, and brains of pigeons,
You dead devout of dead religions,
You offspring of the hen and ass.
By Pilate ruled, and Caiaphas.
Now your account is totted. Learn
Hell's flames are loose and you shall burn."

At that I leaped and screamed and ran,
I heard their cries go "Catch him, man."
"Who was it?" "Down him." "Out him, Ern."
"Duck him at pump, we'll see who'll burn."
A policeman clutched, a fireman clutched,
A dozen others snatched and touched.
"By God, he 's stripped down to his buff."
"By God, we'll make him warm enough."
"After him." "Catch him," "Out him," "Scrob him,
"We'll give him hell." "By God, we'll mob him."
"We'll duck him, scrout him, flog him, fratch him."
"All right," I said. "But first you'll catch him."

The men who don't know to the root
The joy of being swift of foot,
Have never known divine and fresh
The glory of the gift of flesh,
Nor felt the feet exult, nor gone
Along a dim road, on and on,
Knowing again the bursting glows
The mating hare in April knows,
Who tingles to the pads with mirth
At being the swiftest thing on earth.
O, if you want to know delight,
Run naked in an autumn night,

And laugh, as I laughed then, to find
A running rabble drop behind,
And whang, on every door you pass,
Two copper nozzles, tipped with brass,
And doubly whang at every turning,
And yell, "All hell 's let loose, and burning."

I beat my brass and shouted fire
At doors of parson, lawyer, squire,
At all three doors I threshed and slammed
And yelled aloud that they were damned.
I clodded squire's glass with turves
Because he spring-gunned his preserves.
Through parson's glass my nozzle swishes
Because he stood for loaves and fishes,
But parson's glass I spared a tittle.
He give me an orange once when little,
And he who gives a child a treat
Makes joy-bells ring in Heaven's street.

And he who gives a child a home
Builds palaces in Kingdom come,
And she who gives a baby birth
Brings Saviour Christ again to Earth,
For life is joy, and mind is fruit,
And body's precious earth and root.
But lawyer's glass—well, never mind,
Th' old Adam 's strong in me, I find.
God pardon man, and may God's son
Forgive the evil things I've done.

What more? By Dirty Lane I crept
Back to the "Lion," where I slept.

The raging madness hot and floodin'
Boiled itself out and left me sudden,
Left me worn out and sick and cold,
Aching as though I'd all grown old;
50 there I lay, and there they found me
On door-mat, with a curtain round me.
51 took my heels and Jane my head
And laughed, and carried me to bed.
And from the neighbouring street they resided
My boots and trousers, coat and weskit;
They bath-bricked both the nozzles bright
To be mementoes of the night,
And knowing what I should awake with
They flannelled me a quart to slake with,
And sat and shook till half-past two
Expecting Police Inspector Drew.

SAUL KANE REDEEMED

O CHRIST who holds the open gate,
O Christ who drives the furrow straight,
O Christ, the plough, O Christ, the laughter
Of holy white birds flying after,
Lo, all my heart's field red and torn,
And Thou wilt bring the young green corn
The young green corn divinely springing,
The young green corn for ever singing;
And when the field is fresh and fair
Thy blessed feet shall glitter there.
And we will walk the weeded field,
And tell the golden harvest's yield,
The corn that makes the holy bread
By which the soul of man is fed,
The holy bread, the food unpriced,
Thy everlasting mercy, Christ.

The share will jar on many a stone,
Thou wilt not let me stand alone;
And I shall feel (Thou wilt not fail),
Thy hand on mine upon the hale.

Near Bullen Bank, on Gloucester Road,
Thy everlasting mercy showed
The ploughman patient on the hill
For ever there, for ever still,
Ploughing the hill with steady yoke
Of pine-trees lightning-struck and broke.
I've marked the May Hill ploughman stay
There on his hill, day after day

Driving his team against the sky,
While men and women live and die.
And now and then he seems to stoop
To clear the coulter with the scoop,
Or touch an ox to haw or gee
While Severn stream goes out to sea.
The sea with all her ships and sails,
And that great smoky port in Wales,
And Gloucester tower bright i' the sun,
All know that patient wandering one.
And sometimes when they burn the leaves
The bonfires' smoking trails and heaves,
And girt red flames twink and twire
As though he ploughed the hill afire.
And in men's hearts in many lands
A spiritual ploughman stands
For ever waiting, waiting now,
The heart's "Put in, man, zook the plough."

By this the sun was all one glitter,
The little birds were all in twitter;
Out of a tuft a little lark
Went higher up than I could mark,
His little throat was all one thirst
To sing until his heart should burst,
To sing aloft in golden light
His song from blue air out of sight.
The mist drove by, and now the cows
Came plodding up to milking house,
Followed by Frank, the Callows' cowman,
Who whistled "Adam was a ploughman."
There come such cawing from the rooks,
.Such running chuck from little brooks,

One thought it March, just budding green
With hedgerows full of celandine.
An otter 'out of stream and played,
Two hares come loping up and stayed;
Wide-eyed and tender-eared but bold.
Sheep bleated up by Penny's fold.
I heard a partridge covey call;
The morning sun was bright on all.

Down the long slope the plough team drove,
The tossing rooks arose and hove.
A stone struck on the share. A word
Came to the team. The red earth stirred.
I crossed the hedge by shooter's gap,
I hitched my boxer's belt a strap,
I jumped the ditch and crossed the fallow>
I took the hales from farmer Callow.

How swift the summer goes,
Forget-me-not, pink, rose.
The young grass when I started
And now the hay is carted,
And now my song is ended,
And all the summer spended;
The blackbird's second brood
Routs beech-leaves in the wood,
The pink and rose have speeded,
Forget-me-not has seeded.
Only the winds that blew,
The rain that makes things new,.
The earth that hides things old,.
And blessings manifold.

O lovely lily clean,
O lily springing green,
O lily bursting white,
Dear lily of delight,
Spring in my heart agen
That I may flower to men.

Great Hampden, June 1911.

THE TOWERER

OLD Jarge, Hal, Walter and I, the Rector and Bill,
The old red setter and Joe, the retriever, Bess,
Went out in the cider time for something to kill,
Past Arthur's Camp, a couple of miles, I guess.

We came in the noon of the blue September day
To a tongue of grass thrust into a cleft of copse,
Berries were black and plump on the changing spray,
A dwindled spring went over its lip in drops.

We stopped to drink at the spring, Hal, Walter and I,
The retriever, Bess, the old red setter and Joe.
A covey went up with a whirr and the guns let fly,
The birds went skimming the trees towards Barney's Low.

They fired two last long shots, the Rector and Bill,
A feather came out of a bird, but the bird went on.
"Hit him," they said; we muttered, "You didn't kill."
Over the tips of the trees the covey was gone.

The hit bird swerved from the line of the covey's charge,
Over the grass of the field we watched him rise:
"Got him," the Rector said. "Her towers," said Jarge.
We saw him breast like a lark the hot blue skies.

He climbed the air till he struggled in sky alone,
Straining and beating up on a battling breast,
Then paused, then dropped with a thump upon bounding bone:
Joe brought him in; we bagged him up with the rest.

At covey-call time in the dusk September eve,
We loitered home together and shared the kill:
Nine brace, three rabbits, a hare: we all took leave;
Jarge took the dogs: the moon came over the hill.

Poor Bess, the retriever, died, her muzzle all white;
A run-away cart ran over the spaniel, Joe;
Jarge died of a quart of rum next Christmas night;
The old red setter went west, oh, ages ago.

Bill died from shock of a fall, as his heart was weak,
The Rector lingered to die of a sheer old age;
Walter went down with a stroke and could not speak,
He, too, has gathered his goods and drawn his wage.

Only Hal and myself of the nine remain,
And Hal's forgotten the bird, forgotten the shoot;
The grass, the wood and the spring are here in my brain,
With the dogs and the wine-leaved brambles black with fruit.

I think of the towering bird with its choking lung,
Its bursting heart, its struggle to scale the sky,
And wonder when we shall all be tried and hung
For the blue September crime when we made it die.

From THE WIDOW IN THE BYE STREET

THE END OF THE TROUBLE

BURNING they watch, and mothlike owls come out,
The redbreast warbles shrilly once and stops;
The homing cowman gives his dog a shout,
The lamps are lighted in the village shops.
Silence; the last bird passes; in the copse
The hazels cross the moon, a nightjar spins,
Dew wets the grass, the nightingale begins.

Singing her crazy song the mother goes,
Singing as though her heart were full of peace,
Moths knock the petals from the dropping rose,
Stars make the glimmering pool a golden fleece,
The moon droops west, but still she does not cease,
The little mice peep out to hear her sing,
Until the inn-man's cockerel shakes his wing.

And in the sunny dawns of hot Julys,
The labourers going to meadow see her there.
Rubbing the sleep out of their heavy eyes,
They lean upon the parapet to stare;
They see her plaiting basil in her hair,
Basil, the dark red wound-wort, cops of clover,
The blue self-heal and golden Jacks of Dover.

Dully they watch her, then they turn to go
To that high Shropshire upland of late hay;
Her singing lingers with them as they mow,
And many times they try it, now grave, now gay,
Till, with full throat over the hills away,
They lift it clear; oh, very clear it towers
Mixed with the swish of many falling flowers.

From THE DAFFODIL FIELDS

THE BROOK GOES BY

BETWEEN the barren pasture and the wood
There is a patch of poultry-stricken grass,
Where, in old time, Ryemeadows' Farmhouse stood,
And human fate brought tragic things to pass.
A spring comes bubbling up there, cold as glass,
It bubbles down, crusting the leaves with lime,
Babbling the self-same song that it has sung through time.

Ducks gobble at the selvage of the brook,
But still it slips away, the cold hill-spring,
Past the Ryemeadows' lonely woodland nook
Where many a stubble gray-goose preens her wing,
On, by the woodland side. You hear it sing
Past the lone copse where poachers set their wires,
Past the green hill once grim with sacrificial fires.

Another water joins it; then it turns,
Runs through the Ponton Wood, still turning west,
Past foxgloves, Canterbury bells, and ferns,
And many a blackbird's, many a thrush's nest;
The cattle tread it there; then, with a zest
It sparkles out, babbling its pretty chatter
Through Foxholes Farm, where it gives white-faced cattle water.

Under the road it runs, and now it slips
Past the great ploughland, babbling, drop and linn,
To the moss'd stumps of elm trees which it lips,

And blackberry-bramble-trails where eddies spin.
Then, on its left, some short-grassed fields begin,
Red-clayed and pleasant, which the young spring fills
With the never-quiet joy of dancing daffodils.

There are three fields where daffodils are found;
The grass is dotted blue-gray with their leaves;
Their nodding beauty shakes along the ground
Up to a fir-clump shutting out the eaves
Of an old farm where always the wind grieves
High in the fir boughs, moaning; people call
This farm The Roughs, but some call it the Poor Maid's Hall.

There, when the first green shoots of tender corn
Show on the plough; when the first drift of white
Stars the black branches of the spiky thorn,
And afternoons are warm and evenings light,
The shivering daffodils do take delight,
Shaking beside the brook, and grass comes green,
And blue dog-violets come and glistening celandine.

And there the pickers come, picking for town
Those dancing daffodils; all day they pick;
Hard-featured women, weather-beaten brown,
Or swarthy-red, the colour of old brick.
At noon they break their meats under the rick.
The smoke of all three farms lifts blue in air
As though man's passionate mind had never suffered there.

And sometimes as they rest an old man comes,
Shepherd or carter, to the hedgerow-side,
And looks upon their gangrel tribe, and hums,

And thinks all gone to wreck since master died;
And sighs over a passionate harvest-tide
Which Death's red sickle reaped under those hills,
There, in the quiet fields among the daffodils.

THE BROOK GOES OUT TO SEA

IN the day's noise the water's noise was stilled,
But still it slipped along, the cold hill-spring,
Dropping from leafy hollows, which it filled,
On to the pebbly shelves which made it sing;
Glints glittered on it from the 'fisher's wing;
It saw the moorhen nesting; then it stayed
In a great space of reeds where merry otters played.

Slowly it loitered past the shivering reeds
Into a mightier water; thence its course
Becomes a pasture where the salmon feeds,
Wherein no bubble tells its humble source;
But the great waves go rolling, and the horse
Snorts at the bursting waves and will not drink,
And the great ships go outward, bubbling to the brink,

Outward, with men upon them, stretched in line,
Handling the halliards to the ocean's gates,
Where flicking windflaws fill the air with brine,
And all the ocean opens. Then the mates
Cry, and the sunburnt crew no longer waits,
But sings triumphant, and the topsail fills
To this old tale of woe among the daffodils.

From THE CONWAY

THE RIVER MERSEY

FORTY years ago the flower of all England's shipping belonged in Liverpool: the river and docks were always busy with the best ships of the time. The Cunard moorings were just down-stream from us; the White Star and Inman moorings beyond them; and the P.S.N. and Alfred Holt moorings still further on, but in sight. The Elder Dempster ships were near us in the Sloyne. The steamers of many famous lines were weekly visitors to the river, we knew them all, their funnels, their house-flags and their tenders: even the foreign steamers and what they brought were known to us.

But in those days the bulk of the world's freight was carried in sailing ships, which had then reached their last, strange, beautiful perfection. At all times we could see in the river or in the docks the queens of that last construction, the superb four-masted ships and barques, of from two to three thousand tons, which went with general cargoes to San Francisco and came back with grain. They are now gone, but then they were many; and many of the many were strange with new device of build or rig, of intense interest to us, whose talk and thought was of ships.

Often, perhaps every week, sometimes for weeks together, every day, one such queen would come with her tugs into the Sloyne and anchor near us all trim from her last month's work, her sails in harbour-stows, her blocks gleaming, her mainyards still aback, just as they had braced them on taking the towline, and her house-

flag at her main truck. Then at the next flood her crowd would man the capstan, her anchor would come in to "Rolling Home" or "Good-bye, fare you well," and she would pass to dock.

At flood tide in any case the river would waken into bustle and beauty of ships coming in and going out, till it would seem like a street with ships for people. The dock-gates would open to the sound of cheers to let pass some ship with her Blue Peter flying; barges would tack by under their red sails; schooners, brigantines, yawls and ketches went out or returned, under all sail. Greek and Italian polaccas of all sizes came in under sail. Norwegian barques sometimes sailed in, tack and tack, to anchor near us. No such display of living ships could be seen in any other port in the world at that time.

The display did not cease with the living ships, far ftom it. On both sides of the river there were the slips and gantries of the building firms, and all the racket and clatter of new construction, always going on in sight and sound of us. We watched ships being built and launched and floated. We saw them going forth in splendour and coming back shattered by the sea, listed, shored up, dismasted, red with sea-rust, white with sea-salt, holed, dinted, ruined, all pumps still spouting, just limping into dock with three tugs, or just crawling to the mud and lying down.

And with these, we saw the ships of the river services; not only the tugs, famous all over the world, such as the *Helen Dagmar,* the *B/a%er*$_9$ the *Kings* and the *Cocks,* but the ferries and the bar-dredgers, the salvage and diving craft; all the fleet of a great port.

For beauty, interest and variety no scene on earth could compare with the river in which we lived. We

were in the sea-world and of it, initiated into the mystery and free of the guild, and there at its busiest heart. Of all the many joys that youth and the ship offered, that gift of beauty was the greatest.

Looking out on those scenes as we did, even the dullest of us said, in the words of our grace: "For these and all His mercies the Lord's Name be praised."

THE *WANDERER*

ALL day they loitered by the resting ships,
Telling their beauties over, taking stock;
At night the verdict left my messmates' lips,
"The *Wanderer* is the finest ship in dock."

I had not seen her, but a friend, since drowned,
Drew her, with painted ports, low, lovely, lean,
Saying, "The *Wanderer*, clipper, outward bound,
The loveliest ship my eyes have ever seen—

"Perhaps to-morrow you will see her sail.
She sails at sunrise": but the morrow showed
No *Wanderer* setting forth for me to hail;
Far down the stream men pointed where she rode.

Rode the great trackway to the sea, dim, dim,
Already gone before the stars were gone.
I saw her at the sea-line's smoky rim
Grow swiftly vaguer as they towed her on.

Soon even her masts were hidden in the haze
Beyond the city; she was on her course
To trample billows for a hundred days;
That afternoon the norther gathered force,

Blowing a small snow from a point of east.
"Oh, fair for her," we said, "to take her south."
And in our spirits, as the wind increased,
We saw her there, beyond the river mouth,

Setting her side-lights in the wildering dark,
To glint upon mad water, while the gale
Roared like a battle, snapping like a shark,
And drunken seamen struggled with the sail.

While with sick hearts her mates put out of mind
Their little children left astern, ashore,
And the gale's gathering made the darkness blind.
Water and air one intermingled roar.

Then we forgot her, for the fiddlers played,
Dancing and singing held our merry crew;
The old ship moaned a little as she swayed.
It blew all night, oh, bitter hard it blew!

So that at midnight I was called on deck
To keep an anchor-watch: I heard the sea
Roar past in white procession filled with wreck;
Intense bright frosty stars burned over me,

And the Greek brig beside us dipped and dipped,
White to the muzzle like a half-tide rock,
Drowned to the mainmast with the seas she shipped;
Her cable-swivels clanged at every shock.

And like a never-dying force, the wind
Roared till we shouted with it, roared until
Its vast vitality of wrath was thinned,
Had beat its fury breathless and was still.

By dawn the gale had dwindled into flaw,
A glorious morning followed: with my friend
I climbed the fo'c's'le-head to see; we saw
The waters hurrying shorewards without end.

Haze blotted out the river's lowest reach;
Out of the gloom the steamers, passing by,
Called with their sirens, hooting their sea-speech;
Out of the dimness others made reply.

And as we watched, there came a rush of feet
Charging the fo'c's'le till the hatchway shook.
Men all about us thrust their way, or beat,
Crying, "The *Wanderer!* Down the river! Look!"

I looked with them towards the dimness; there
Gleamed like a spirit striding out of night,
A full-rigged ship unutterably fair,
Her masts like trees in winter, frosty-bright.

Foam trembled at her bows like wisps of wool;
She trembled as she towed. I had not dreamed
That work of man could be so beautiful,
In its own presence and in what it seemed.

"So, she is putting back again," I said.
"How white with frost her yards are on the forel"
One of the men about me answer made,
"That is not frost, but all her sails are tore,

"Torn into tatters, youngster, in the gale;
Her best foul-weather suit gone." It was true,
Her masts were white with rags of tattered sail
Many as gannets when the fish are due.

Beauty in desolation was her pride,
Her crowned array a glory that had been;
She faltered tow'rds us like a swan that died,
But although ruined she was still a queen.

"Put back with all her sails gone," went the word;
Then, from her signals flying, rumour ran,
"The sea that stove her boats in killed her third;
She has been gutted and has lost a man."

So, as though stepping to a funeral march,
She passed defeated homewards whence she came
Ragged with tattered canvas white as starch,
A wild bird that misfortune had made tame.

She was refitted soon: another took
The dead man's office; then the singers hove
Her capstan till the snapping hawsers shook;
Out, with a bubble at her bows, she drove.

Again they towed her seawards, and again
We, watching, praised her beauty, praised her trim,
Saw her fair house-flag flutter at the main,
And slowly saunter seawards, dwindling dim;

And wished her well, and wondered, as she died,
How, when her canvas had been sheeted home,
Her quivering length would sweep into her stride,
Making the greenness milky with her foam.

But when we rose next morning, we discerned
Her beauty once again a shattered thing;
Towing to dock the *Wanderer* returned,
A wounded sea-bird with a broken wing.

A spar was gone, her rigging's disarray
Told of a worse disaster than the last;
Like draggled hair dishevelled hung the stay,
Drooping and beating on the broken mast.

Half-mast upon her flagstaff hung her flag;
Word went among us how the broken spar
Had gored her captain like an angry stag,
And killed her mate a half-day from the bar.

She passed to dock upon the top of flood.
An old man near me shook his head and swore:
"Like a bad woman, she has tasted blood—
There'll be no trusting in her any more/'

We thought it truth, and when we saw her there
Lying in dock, beyond, across the stream,
We would forget that we had called her fair,
We thought her murderess and the past a dream.

And when she sailed again, we watched in awe,
Wondering what bloody act her beauty planned,
What evil lurked behind the thing we saw,
What strength was there that thus annulled man's hand.

How next its triumph would compel man's will
Into compliance with external Fate,
How next the powers would use her to work ill
On suffering men; we had not long to wait.

For soon the outcry of derision rose,
"Here comes the *Wanderer!*'[9] the expected cry.
Guessing the cause, our mockings joined with those
Yelled from the shipping as they towed her by.

She passed us close, her seamen paid no heed
To what was called: they stood, a sullen group,
Smoking and spitting, careless of her need,
Mocking the orders given from the poop.

Her mates and boys were working her; we stared.
What was the reason of this strange return,
This third annulling of the thing prepared?
No outward evil could our eyes discern.

Only like one who having formed a plan
Beyond the pitch of common minds, she sailed,
Mocked and deserted by the common man,
Made half divine to me for having failed.

We learned the reason soon; below the town
A stay had parted like a snapping reed,
"Warning," the men thought, "not to take her down."
They took the omen, they would not proceed.

Days passed before another crew would sign.
The *Wanderer* lay in dock alone, unmanned,
Feared as a thing possessed by powers malign,
Bound under curses not to leave the land.

But under passing Time fear passes too;
That terror passed, the sailors' hearts grew bold.
We learned in time that she had found a crew
And was bound out and southwards as of old.

And in contempt we thought, "A little while
Will bring her back again, dismantled, spoiled.
It is herself; she cannot change her style;
She has the habit now of being foiled."

So when a ship appeared among the haze,
We thought, "The *Wanderer* back again"; but no,
No *Wanderer* showed for many, many days,
Her passing lights made other waters glow.

But we would often think and talk of her,
Tell newer hands her story, wondering, then,
Upon what ocean she was *Wanderer,*
Bound to the cities built by foreign men.

And one by one our little conclave thinned,
Passed into ships and sailed and so away,
To drown in some great roaring of the wind,
Wanderers themselves, unhappy fortune's prey.

And Time went by me making memory dim,
Yet still I wondered if the *Wanderer* fared
StilJ pointing to the unreached ocean's rim,
Brightening the water where her breast was bared.

And much in ports abroad 1 eyed the ships,
Hoping to see her well-remembered form
Come with a curl of bubbles at her lips
Bright to her berth, the sovereign of the storm.

I never did, and many years went by,
Then, near a Southern port, one Christmas Eve,
I watched a gale go roaring through the sky,
Making the caldrons of the clouds upheave.

Then the wrack tattered and the stars appeared,
Millions of stars that seemed to speak in fire;
A byre cock cried aloud that morning neared,
The swinging wind-vane flashed upon the spire.

And soon men looked upon a glittering earth,
Intensely sparkling like a world new-born;
Only to look was spiritual birth,
So bright the raindrops ran along the thorn.

So bright they were, that one could almost pass
Beyond their twinkling to the source, and know
The glory pushing in the blade of grass,
The hidden soul which makes the flowers grow.

That soul was there apparent, not revealed,
Unearthly meanings covered every tree,
That wet grass grew in an immortal field,
Those waters fed some never-wrinkled sea.

The scarlet berries in the hedge stood out
Like revelations but the tongue unknown;
Even in the brooks a joy was quick: the trout
Rushed in a dumbness dumb to me alone.

All of the valley was aloud with brooks;
I walked the morning, breasting up the fells,
Taking again lost childhood from the rooks,
Whose cawing came above the Christmas bells.

I had not walked that glittering world before,
But up the hill a prompting came to me,
"This line of upland runs along the shore:
Beyond the hedgerow I shall see the sea."

And on the instant from beyond away
That long familiar sound, a ship's bell, broke
The hush below me in the unseen bay.
Old memories came: that inner prompting spoke.

And bright above the hedge a seagull's wings
Flashed and were steady upon empty air.
"A Power unseen," I cried, "prepares these things;
Those are her bells, the *Wanderer* is there."

So, hurrying to the hedge and looking down
I saw a mighty bay's wind-crinkled blue
Ruffling the image of a tranquil town,
With lapsing waters glittering as they grew.

And near me in the road the shipping swung,
So stately and so still in such great peace
That like to drooping crests their colours hung,
Only their shadows trembled without cease.

I did but glance upon those anchored ships.
Even as my thought had told, I saw her plain;
Tense, like a supple athlete with lean hips,
Swiftness at pause, the *Wanderer* come again—

Come as of old a queen, untouched by Time,
Resting the beauty that no seas could tire,
Sparkling, as though the midnight's rain were rime,
Like a man's thought transfigured into fire.

And as I looked, one of her men began
To sing some simple tune of Christmas day;
Among her crew the song spread, man to man,
Until the singing rang across the bay;

And soon in other anchored ships the men
Joined in the singing with clear throats, until
The farm-boy heard it up the windy glen,
Above the noise of sheep-bells on the hill.

Over the water came the lifted song—
Blind pieces in a mighty game we swing;
Life's battle is a conquest for the strong;
The meaning shows in the defeated thing.

From BIOGRAPHY

THE CUTTER RACE

DAYS of endeavour have been good: the days
Racing in cutters for the comrades' praise,
The day they led my cutter at the turn
Yet could not keep the lead and dropped astern
The moment in the spurt when both boats' oars
Dipped in each other's wash and throats grew hoarse
And teeth ground into teeth and both strokes quickened
Lashing the sea, and gasps came, and hearts sickened
And coxswains damned us, dancing, banking stroke,
To put our weights on, though our hearts were broke
And both boats seemed to stick and sea seemed glue,
The tide a mill-race we were struggling through
And every quick recover gave us squints
Of them still there and oar-tossed water-glints,
And cheering came, our friends, our foemen cheering,
A long, wild, rallying murmur on the hearing
"Port Fore!" and "Starboard Fore!" "Port Fore!" "Port Fore!"
"Up with her, Starboard," and at that each oar
Lightened, though arms were bursting, and eyes shut
And the oak stretchers grunted in the strut
And the curse quickened from the cox, our bows
Crashed, and drove talking water, we made vows,
Chastity vows and temperance; in our pain
We numbered things we'd never eat again
If we could only win; then came the yell
"Starboard," "Port Fore," and then a beaten bell
Rung as for fire to cheer us. "Now." Oars bent
Soul took the looms now body's bolt was spent,

"Give way, come on now!" "On now!" "On now!" "Starboard."
"Port Fore!" "Up with her, Port!" each cutter harboured
Ten eye-shut painsick strugglers, "Heave, oh, heave!"
Catcalls waked echoes like a shrieking sheave.
"Heave!" and I saw a back, then two. "Port Fore."
"Starboard!" "Come on!" I saw the midship oar
And knew we had done them. "Port Fore!" "Starboard!" "Now!"
I saw bright water spurting at their bow,
Their cox full face an instant. They were done.
The watchers' cheering almost drowned the gun.
We had hardly strength to toss our oars; our cry
Cheering the losing cutter was a sigh.

From DAUBER

DOWN FROM ALOFT

THE Dauber on the fore-topgallant yard
Out at the weather yard-arm was the first
To lay his hand upon the buntline-barred
Topgallant yanking to the wester's burst;
He craned to catch the leech; his comrades cursed;
One at the buntlines, one with oaths observed,
"The eye of the outer jib-stay isn't served."

"No," said the Dauber. "No," the man replied.
They heaved, stowing the sail, not looking round,
Panting, but full of life and eager-eyed;
The gale roared at them with its iron sound.
"That 's you," the Dauber said. His gasket wound
Swift round the yard, binding the sail in bands;
There came a gust, the sail leaped from his hands,

So that he saw it high above him, grey,
And there his mate was falling; quick he clutched
An arm in oilskins swiftly snatched away.
A voice said "Christl" a quick shape stooped and touched,
Chain struck his hands, ropes shot, the sky was smutched
With vast black fires that ran, that fell, that furled,
And then he saw the mast, the small snow hurled.

The fore-topgallant yard far, far aloft,
And blankness settling on him and great pain;
And snow beneath his fingers wet and soft

And topsail-sheet-blocks shaking at the chain.
He knew it was he who had fallen; then his brain
Swirled in a circle while he watched the sky.
Infinite multitudes of snow blew by.

"I thought it was Tom who fell," his brain's voice said
"Down on the bloody deck!" the Captain screamed.
The multitudinous little snow-flakes sped,
His pain was real enough, but all else seemed.
Si with a bucket ran, the water gleamed
Tilting upon him; others came, the Mate . . .
They knelt with eager eyes like things that wait

For other things to come. He saw them there.
"It will go on," he murmured, watching Si.
Colours and sounds seemed mixing in the air,
The pain was stunning him, and the wind went by.
"More water," said the Mate. "Here, Bosun, try.
Ask if he 's got a message. Hell he 's gone!
Here, Dauber, Paints." He said, "It will go on."

Not knowing his meaning rightly, but he spoke
With the intenseness of a fading soul
Whose share of Nature's fire turns to smoke,
Whose hand on Nature's wheel loses control.
The eager faces glowered red like coal.
They glowed, the great storm glowed, the sails, the mast.
"It will go on," he cried aloud, and passed.

Those from the yard came down to tell the tale.
"He almost had me off," said Tom. "He slipped.
There came one hell of a jump-like from the sail. . . .

He clutched at me and almost had me pipped.
He caught my 'ris'band, but the oilskin ripped. . . .
It tore clean off. Look here. I was near gone.
I made a grab to catch him; so did John.

"I caught his arm. My GodI I was near done.
He almost had me over; it was near.
He hit the ropes and grabbed at every one."
"Well," said the Mate, "we cannot leave him here.
Run, Si, and get the half-deck table clear.
We'll lay him there. Catch hold there, you, and you.
He 's dead, poor son; there 's nothing more to do."

Night fell, and all night long the Dauber lay
Covered upon the table; all night long
The pitiless storm exulted at her prey,
Huddling the waters with her icy thong.
But to the covered shape she did no wrong.
He lay beneath the sailcloth. Bell by bell
The night wore through; the stars rose, the stars fell.

Blowing most pitiless cold out of clear sky
The wind roared all night long; and all night through
The green seas on the deck went washing by,
Flooding the half-deck; bitter hard it blew.
But little of it all the Dauber knew—
The sopping bunks, the floating chests, the wet
The darkness, and the misery, and the sweat.

He was off duty. So it blew all night,
And when the watches changed the men would come
Dripping within the door to strike a light

And stare upon the Dauber lying dumb,
And say, "He come a cruel thump, poor chum."
Or, "He'd a-been a fine big man"; or, "He . . .
A smart young seaman he was getting to be."

Or, "Damn it all, it's what weVe all to face! . . .
I knew another fellow one time . . ." then
Came a strange tale of death in a strange place
Out on the sea, in ships, with wandering men.
In many ways Death puts us into pen.
The reefers came down tired and looked and slept.
Below the skylight little dribbles crept

Along the painted woodwork, glistening, slow,
Following the roll and dripping, never fast,
But dripping on the quiet form below,
Like passing time talking to time long past.
And all night long "Ai, ail" went the wind's blast,
And creaming water swished below the pale,
Unheeding body stretched beneath the sail.

At dawn they sewed him up, and at eight bells
They bore him to the gangway, wading deep,
Through the green-clutching, white-toothed water-hells
That flung his carriers over in their sweep.
They laid an old red ensign on the heap,
And all hands stood bare-headed, stooping, swaying,
Washed by the sea while the old man was praying

Out of a borrowed prayer-book. At a sign
They twitched the ensign back and tipped the grating.
A creamier bubbling broke the bubbling brine.

The muffled figure tilted to the weighting;
It dwindled slowly down, slowly gyrating.
Some craned to see; it dimmed, it disappeared;
The last green milky bubble blinked and cleared.

"Mister, shake out your reefs," the Captain called.
"Out topsail reefs!" the Mate cried; then all hands.
Hurried, the great sails shook, and all hands hauled,
Singing that desolate song of lonely lands,
Of how a lover came in dripping bands,
Green with the wet and cold, to tell his lover
That Death was in the sea, and all was over.

Fair came the falling wind; a seaman said
The Dauber was a Jonah; once again
The clipper held her course, showing red lead,
Shattering the sea-tops into golden rain.
The waves bowed down before her like blown grain;
Onwards she thundered, on; her voyage was short,
Before the tier's bells rang her into port.

Cheerly they rang her in, those beating bells,
The new-come beauty stately from the sea,
Whitening the blue heave of the drowsy swells,
Treading the bubbles down. With three times three
They cheered her moving beauty in, and she
Came to her berth so noble, so superb;
Swayed like a queen, and answered to the curb.

Then in the sunset's flush they went aloft,
And unbent sails in that most lovely hour
When the light gentles and the wind is soft,

And beauty in the heart breaks like a flower.
Working aloft they saw the mountain tower,
Snow to the peak; they heard the launchmen shout;
And bright along the bay the lights came out.

And then the night fell dark, and all night long
The pointed mountain pointed at the stars,
Frozen, alert, austere; the eagle's song
Screamed from her desolate screes and splintered scars.
On her intense crags where the air is sparse
The stars looked down; their many golden eyes
Watched her and burned, burned out, and came to rise.

Silent the finger of the summit stood,
Icy in pure, thin air, glittering with snows.
Then the sun's coming turned the peak to blood,
And in the rest-house the muleteers arose.
And all day long, where only the eagle goes,
Stones, loosened by the sun, fall; the stones falling
Fill empty gorge on gorge with echoes calling.

From IN THE MILL

THE MISTAKE-FINDER

I PASSED my first day of learning, going down to the weaving-floors, looking at carpets on the looms, going to the office for designs, looking at specimen lengths of carpet, comparing these with the designs, and sometimes bringing occasional spools to setters, for re-setting. I was puzzled and anxious at the end of the day. I felt that I had not been a success and that my teacher shared my feeling. I was unhappy about the picking-room and about the many varieties of mistake which I was expected to diagnose. It seemed to me that I was a student sent suddenly to take a general practice in a time of sickness. I felt that half a dozen people would get the wrong mixture and that then I should be sacked.

However, in clearing my mind about this, I took heart. It was a highly responsible job, a real promotion, leading to a good deal more money for books, and certain to make me familiar with every process in use in my end of the mill. It brought me into touch with the weavers at all the different types of loom in use, and with men whose jobs I had not even suspected on the floor above mine. I judged that I could hold the job down, and that I would grind away at chemistry and anatomy in the evenings and save every cent that I could save; then, perhaps, in a while, I could take the plunge and become a medical student.

As I had expected, in a very few hours my teacher was removed from my side; I had to run the job by my own light. This was extraordinarily exhilarating. The

work of the day now became a great game of solving puzzle after puzzle, some very easy, some less easy, some most perplexing; and one or two—ah, let us not speak of the one or two; of one at least, by much the worst ever made there. Each puzzle was due of course to the frailty of some worker at some moment, in one or other process. I had to discover, first, what was wrong with the carpet, next, who had done the deed, and then see that it was re-done rightly. It was intricate work, often extraordinarily interesting, as perhaps detective work or research work may be. Sometimes, I would wonder "How on earth has this happened?" Then, patient study would give a clue, and I would see how some weariness, shortness of sight or natural mistake had led from the true path into something very odd.

The work was absorbing; there was a great deal of it; much of it had to be done at speed, however intricate it might prove. Sometimes to-day I glance at carpets on which my feet happen to be resting, and think, as experience will, that carpets are not what they used to be. Often in some modern make of carpet I see this or that which in the mill I should have seen and set right with my own hands. Just beneath me, as I write, there are "a cross" and "a shoved tuft", which ought never to have been allowed to pass.

I will try to describe the work in simple words.

Sometimes, when a new sett was put upon a loom, and the carpet-length began to appear, the weaver would notice something odd, stop the weaving and send for me. These were the glaring cases, the very easy puzzles. Usually, they were due to some reversing of some set of ten spools, or the misplacing of a single spool. These mistakes were very easily put straight, and

usually it was not too certain who had done the deed.

In most cases there was nothing which struck the weaver as unusual. He would run off his trial length or "single repeat" of carpet and send it down to the picking-room, where pickers swiftly examined it, marked any doubtful point with a length of scarlet wool drawn through with a packing-needle, and sent the trial piece to me. I then took the carpet design, compared it with the woven piece, and decided which of the doubtful points were mistakes and what had caused them. Most of the mistakes were very small crossings or misplacings of tufts of wool. Usually these were due to the threaders, who passed their days tossing threads of wool over hooks, and were quite certain to cross some of them in the course of the day. I suppose that a good threader handled 25,000 or 30,000 threads of wool in a day, about one a second when a spool was on the tinner. If she were talking to the next girl, or thinking of something else (as I hope she often was), it was easy for her fingers to take the threads in their wrong order. These mistakes were easy to set right. I went at once to the loom, had the chain turned, and re-threaded the misplaced lines myself, or shewed the weaver how to do it.

Sometimes the mistake was more serious, subtler, and more difficult to diagnose. In this case, it was usually due to the setters in the setting-room, who had first translated the lines painted on the design into lines of coloured wool wrapped round spools. It was the custom for setters to work in pairs, one to each half of a spool; sometimes one of them went astray; sometimes they set a line twice, or omitted a line, or set a succession of lines with wrong colours. They set me some perplexing puzzles, first and last; and I hated the moment when the

puzzle was made clear, for then there was nothing for it but to stop the weaving, remove the wrongly-set spools, and go up to the poor setters to shew them how they had gone wrong, and leave them to reset what was amiss, which might take them a day or two. I came to know how very difficult some designs were to set, and decided (I think rightly) that these were the bad designs, of intricate pattern and depressing colour. It says a lot for these setters that they never once tried to kill me; and yet, not so; they were devout women, ardent Roman Catholics, who were merry enough on ordinary days, but on all holy days like nuns.

The most difficult mistakes to trace and to correct were those in which wool of a wrong tint had been used in perhaps one of half a dozen strips of a big rug. I discovered at once that over fifteen hundred chief colours were in use, and that to be any good as a mistake-finder I must know them all, with absolute certainty. I know not how many thousands of colours could be had in case of need. Specimens of the chief colours were displayed in a room on the setting-floor, each over its appropriate number. I find it difficult even now to describe the subtle and delicate beauty of some of the colours. I longed to know the miracle by which tints of such poignant perfection could be made in the first instance and then repeated to exactly the same shade. Here were still new, exciting, wonderful processes, which I ought to know, if I were to be of any use. Meanwhile, I had to learn those colours as perfectly as I knew the Rule of the Road at Sea and the Mariner's Compass.

I was a very busy man, when I began this job of mistake-finding; I had much to do and was only fumbling my way into it. During working hours, I had no chance

of pausing at the colour-stand to learn a few colours. I had to snatch them colour by colour, and beat each one into my head as the work brought it to my notice. In the lunch time I sometimes learned a few, and at odd times I went over those which I had learned. In time I learned them all. I could look at a line of carpet and name the number of each colour used in it. Possibly for a man this was an average performance; most women would have done it in a week. However, I had not that knowledge at the time, and was not a little pleased at my success. A day or two later, while reading Macaulay I came upon a note describing the workings of his memory. I knew, then, that some men would have looked at those fifteen hundred colours for five minutes, and would have remembered each, by number and by tint, for ever.

In a few days I mastered mistake-finding sufficiently to enjoy it very much and do it competently. I was at it all day long, working at speed; well, that was no hardship to me. From childhood, I had been trained to jump to the order; and speed has always seemed to me to be a vital part of efficiency. The continual movement put an end to my day-dreams about the Merchant Service College. I now was moving about all day long, going from floor to floor, stopping a loom, getting another under way, solving some odd error, or causing something to be set right, and having brief words with weavers now and then about the working of their machines. Most of my joy in the work came from its independence. I was the mistake-finder, running the job pretty much as I liked, trusted to do it well, and knowing that I was trusted. The flattery of this was a continual great delight to me; it was my first command, and full of the liveliest

interest. No man can be unmoved by the great concerted energy of many men and women. The roaring thundering clang of the energy of the weaving-rooms was a big and exciting thing. Sometimes I felt that it was an enormous dragon and that my mind was going against it with one little purpose, to get at its secret springs and master it. My promotion had not turned my head; it had encouraged me to believe that I could master it. I felt that I had suddenly been lifted to a point from which I could see many of its workings, and begin to understand what lay beyond. What did lie beyond? Where were the brains of this energy? Who was it who knew all the processes which started with blue-flowered flax in the glen and wool on the back of a sheep, and ended up in carpets bought and paid for? I was wondering now at my ignorance of what happened when the carpets left the mill. Somebody somewhere had thought it all out; he had a fleet of lorries, with horses, stables, drivers, grooms. He had warehouses, distributors, travellers. How did you set about selling carpets? How should I set about it? Did you enter a furnishing store with a roll of carpet, unroll it with a flip before some indignant Manager, and at once begin. "Say, this carpet fell plunk from Heaven for you to captivate the prima donna with. Look at the colour-scheme. Tread on it. Give your feet the time of their lives. Roll on it. It's the very bed of love. What? You don't like it? Sir, I never thought to win your discriminating taste at a first effort. Look, therefore, at this second sample . . ."

I knew nothing at all of that side of the business. Somebody, somewhere, was all the time at work on that side of the business, and if he did not do it well, our side of the business might collapse. I was at first daunted by

the complexity of the energy needed to make and sell carpets; then the American climate made me feel that there was something grand in mastering that complexity, as well as a kind of fun.

W. B. YEATS

WHEN in London, in the early years of this century, he lived at 18, Woburn Buildings, at the back of St. Pancras Church.

The Buildings had the look of having been built between 1810 and 1830. Forty years ago, that court of small houses was more romantic than it is today. At its western end in Upper Woburn Place, there were some interesting late Georgian houses behind plane-trees, all long since destroyed and their site covered by the new hotel. In the early years of this century, the shadows of the planes upon the houses were ever very beautiful in the lamplight. A blind beggar always stood there, under the lamp, after dark, offering matches and shoe-laces upon a little wooden tray.

Number 18 was on the north side of the Buildings. He always described it as "next door to a lapidary's shop". Near the bell-pull was a small brass-plate, with the name YEATS deeply engraven on it. This plate has been preserved.

He lived on the second-floor, where he had a biggish front sitting-room and a small back kitchen. His bedroom was on the floor above this.

His sitting-room was papered with brown paper; the window was hung with dark curtains; brown baize, when I first knew him; later, a dim blue.

The fireplace was in the east wall. Over the mantelpiece was his father's painting from a scene in Blake's ballad of *William Bond.* There were other Blake relics at this place; his engraving of the *Whirlwind of Lovers;* a small portrait of Blake; a print of *The Ancient of Days;*

and a little engraving from the *Job*. Later, Yeats hung with these his own small pastels of the Lake and Hills at Coole, and a pencil drawing of much beauty by Mr. Cecil French, of a woman holding a rose in her lips.

To the left of the fireplace, a tall dark settle jutted out into the room. At its back were bookshelves, screening the door to the little kitchen. On the wall at this point was Aubrey Beardsley's poster for the Florence Farr production of *The Land of Heart's Desire*.

To the right of the fireplace, a small dark divan ran along the wall. Over this hung a portrait of a lady and a Blake engraving.

At meal-times, the table stood in the centre of the room; after meals it was lifted to the western wall. At meal-times, it bore upon it a little oriental gong, gay with scarlet, which he struck to summon Mrs. Old, his landlady.

After meals, the table bore dark glasses, brown or green, and a dull red clay tobacco jar, with an oriental dragon embossed upon it, containing cigarettes. The chairs were dark; the effect of the room was sombre. After 1904-5, he added to the room a big dark-blue lectern, on which his Kelmscott Chaucer stood, between enormous candles in big blue wooden sconces. These candles, when new, stood four feet high, and were as thick as a ship's oar.

This was the most interesting room in London at that time. On Monday evenings, from eight o'clock onwards, he was at home to his friends here. It was the rule, that the last comer should go down to let-in the next comer. That curved stair, lit by a lamp at the curve, was trodden by all who made our world.

In himself, at that time, Yeats was paler, frailer and

less robust than in his later maturity and old age. He was very short-sighted, and peered from under his mop of hair through pince-nez secured to his coat by some tiny laniard with many kinks in it. He had the most beautiful hands I have ever seen; he used these a great deal in conversation, moving them in a personal way which seemed to mark the rhythm of his thought. He was very tall, but at that time stooped a good deal. He wore always dark clothes at that time (1900) with a great flopping black tie arranged in a way all his own.

When greeting or parting with a friend, he stood very erect and lifted his right hand above his head. This gesture of his he kept until the last time I saw him. It was a strangely beautiful gesture; the man himself; unearthly and beautiful, with a winning and witty charm unequalled in our time.

From BIOGRAPHY

W. B. YEATS'S ROOMS

So, if the penman sums my London days,
Let him but say that there were holy ways,
Dull Bloomsbury streets of dull brick mansions old,
With stinking doors, where women stood to scold,
And drunken waits at Christmas with their horn,
Droning the news, in snow, that Christ was born;
And windy gas-lamps and the wet roads shining,
And that old carol of the midnight whining,
And that old room (above the noisy slum),
Where there was wine and fire and talk with some
Under strange pictures of the wakened soul,
To whom this earth was but a burnt-out coal.

O Time, bring back those midnights and those friends,
Those glittering moments that a spirit lends,
That all may be imagined from the flash,
The cloud-hid god-game through the lightning gash,
Those hours of stricken sparks from which men took
Light to send out to men in song or book.
Those friends who heard St. Pancras's bells strike two
Yet stayed until the barber's cockerel crew,
Talking of noble styles, the Frenchman's best,
The thought beyond great poets not expressed,
The glory of mood where human frailty failed,
The forts of human light not yet assailed,
Till the dim room had mind, and seemed to brood,
Binding our wills to mental brotherhood,

Till we became a college, and each night
Was discipline and manhood and delight,
Till our farewells, and winding down the stairs
\t each grey dawn had meaning that Time spares,
That we, so linked, should roam the whole world round
Teaching the ways our brooding minds had found,
Making that room our Chapter, our one mind,
Where all that this world soiled should be refined.

Often at night I tread those streets again,
And see the alley glimmering in the rain;
Yet now I miss that sign of earlier tramps,
A house with shadows of plane-boughs under lamps
The secret house where once a beggar stood
Trembling and blind to show his woe for food.
And now I miss that friend who used to walk
Home to my lodgings with me, deep in talk,
Wearing the last of night out in still streets
Trodden by us and policemen on their beats
And cats, but else deserted. Now I miss
That lively mind and guttural laugh of his,
And that strange way he had of making gleam,
Like something real, the art we used to dream.

JOHN M. SYNGE

I FIRST met John M. Synge at the room of a friend, up two pairs of stairs, in an old house in Bloomsbury, on a Monday night of January, 1903. When I entered the room, he was sitting in a rush-bottomed chair, talking to a young man just down from Oxford. My host introduced me, with the remark that he wanted us to know each other.

Synge stood up to shake hands with me. He was of the middle height, about five feet eight or rune. My first impression of him was of a dark, grave face, with a great deal in it; changing from the liveliness of conversation to a gravity of scrutiny. After we had shaken hands, I passed to the other end of the room to greet other friends. We did not speak to each other again that night.

When I sat at the other end of the room my chair was opposite Synge's chair. Whenever I raised my eyes I saw him, and wondered who he could be. Synge gave one from the first the impression of a strange personality. He was of a dark type of Irishman, though not black-haired. Something in his air gave one the fancy that his face was dark from gravity. Gravity filled the face and haunted it, as though the man behind were for ever listening to life's case before passing judgment. It was "a dark, grave face, with a great deal in it." The hair was worn neither short nor long. The moustache was rather thick and heavy. The lower jaw, otherwise clean-shaven, was made remarkable by a tuft of hair, too small to be called a goatee, upon the lower lip. The head was of a good size. There was nothing niggardly, nothing abundant about it. The face was pale, the cheeks were

rather drawn. In my memory they were rather seamed and old-looking. The eyes were at once smoky and kindling. The mouth, not well seen below the moustache, had a great play of humour on it. But for this humorous mouth, the kindling in the eyes, and something not robust in his build, he would have been more like a Scotchman than an Irishman.

I remember wondering if he were Irish. His voice, very guttural and quick, with a kind of lively bitterness in it, was of a kind of Irish voice new to me at that time. I had known a good many Irish people; but they had all been vivacious and picturesque, rapid in intellectual argument, and vague about life. There was nothing vivacious, picturesque, rapid or vague about Synge. The rush-bottomed chair next to him was filled by talker after talker, but Synge was not talking, he was answering. When someone spoke to him he answered with the grave Irish courtesy. He offered nothing of his own. When the talk became general he was silent. Sometimes he went to a reddish earthenware pot upon the table, took out a cigarette and lit it at a candle. Then he sat smoking, pushed back a little fiom the circle, gravely watching. Sometimes I heard his deep, grave voice assenting 'Ye-es, ye-es,' with meditative boredom. Sometimes his little finger flicked off the ash on to the floor. His manner was that of a man too much interested in the life about him to wish to be more than a spectator. His interest was in life, not in ideas. His place was outside the circle, gravely watching, gravely summing up, with a brilliant malice, the fools and wise ones inside.

SEA-FEVER

I MUST go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind 's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick 's over.

THE WEST WIND

IT'S a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes.
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown hills,
And April 's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as mine,
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air 's like wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the nest.

"Will you not come home, brother? you have been long
away,
It 's April, and blossom time, and white is the may;
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the rain,—
Will you not come home, brother, home to us again?

"The young corn is green, brother, where the rabbits run,
It 's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and sun.
It 's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's brain,
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring again.

"Larks are singing in the west, brother, above the green
wheat,
So will you not come home, brother, and rest your tired
feet?
I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for aching
eyes,"
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries.

Lyrics from GOOD FRIDAY

MADMAN

THEY cut my face, there 's blood upon my brow.
So, let it run, I am an old man now,
An old, blind beggar picking filth for bread.
Once I wore silk, drank wine,
Spent gold on women, feasted, all was mine;
But this uneasy current in my head
Burst, one full moon, and cleansed me, then I saw
Truth like a perfect crystal, life its flaw,
I told the world, but I was mad, they said.
I had a valley farm above a brook,
My sheep bells there were sweet,
And in the summer heat
My mill wheels turned, yet all these things they took;
Ah, and I gave them, all things I forsook
But that green blade of wheat,
My own soul's courage, that they did not take.
I will go on, although my old heart ache.
Not long, not long.
Soon I shall pass behind
This changing veil to that which does not change,
My tired feet will range
In some green valley of eternal mind
Where Truth is daily like the water's song

The wild duck, stringing through the sky,
Are south away.
Their green necks glitter as they fly,
The lake is gray.

So still, so lone, the fowler never heeds.
The wind goes rustle, rustle, through the reeds.

* * * * *

There they find peace to have their own wild souls.
In that still lake,
Only the moonrise or the wind controls
The way they take,
Through the gray reeds, the cocking moor-hen's lair,
Rippling the pool, or over leagues of air.

* * * * *

Not thus, not thus are the wild souls of men.
No peace for those
Who step beyond the blindness of the pen
To where the skies unclose.
For them the spitting mob, the cross, the crown of thorns
The bull gone mad, the Saviour on his horns.

* * * * *

Beauty and peace have made,
No peace, no still retreat,
No solace, none.
Only the unafraid
Before life's roaring street
Touch Beauty's feet,
Know Truth, do as God bade,
Become God's son.
[*Pause.*]

Darkness, come down, cover a brave man's pain,
Let the bright soul go back to God again.

Cover that tortured flesh, it only serves
To hold that thing which other power nerves.
Darkness, come down, let it be midnight here,
In the dark night the untroubled soul sings clear.

[If darkens.]

I have been scourged, blinded and crucified,
My blood burns on the stones of every street
In every town; wherever people meet
I have been hounded down, in anguish died.

[It darkens.]

The creaking door of flesh rolls slowly back
Nerve by red nerve the links of living crack,
Loosing the soul to tread another track.
Beyond the pain, beyond the broken clay,
A glimmering country lies
Where life is being wise,
All of the beauty seen by truthful eyes
Are lilies there, growing beside the way.
Those golden ones will loose the torted hands,
Smooth the scarred brow, gather the breaking soul,
Whose earthly moments drop like falling sands
To leave the spirit whole.
Now darkness is upon the face of the earth.

Only a penny, a penny,
Lilies brighter than any,
Lilies whiter than snow.
Beautiful lilies grow
Wherever the truth so sweet
Has trodden with bloody feet,
Has stood with a bloody brow.
Friend, it is over now,

The passion, the sweat, the pains.
Only the truth remains.

* * * * *

I cannot see what others see;
Wisdom alone is kind to me,
Wisdom that comes from Agony.

* * * * *

Wisdom that lives in the pure skies,
The untouched star, the spirit's eyes:
O Beauty, touch me, make me wise.

AUGUST, 1914

How still this quiet cornfield is to-night.
In an intenser glow the evening falls,
Bringing, not darkness, but a deeper light;
Among the stooks a partridge-covey calls.

The windows glitter on the distant hill;
Beyond the hedge the sheep-bells in the fold
Stumble on sudden music and are still;
The forlorn pinewoods droop above the wold.

An endless quiet valley reaches out
Past the blue hills into the evening sky;
Over the stubble, cawing, goes a rout
Of rooks from harvest, flagging as they fly.

So beautiful it is, I never saw
So great a beauty on these English fields,
Touched by the twilight's coming into awe,
Ripe to the soul and rich with summer's yields.

* * * * *

These homes, this valley spread below me here,
The rooks, the tilted stacks, the beasts in pen,
Have been the heartfelt things, past-speaking dear
To unknown generations of dead men,

Who, century after century, held these farms,
And, looking out to watch the changing sky,
Heard, as we hear, the rumours and alarms
Of war at hand and danger pressing nigh.

And knew, as we know, that the message meant
The breaking off of ties, the loss of friends,
Death, like a miser getting in his rent,
And no new stones laid where the trackway ends.

The harvest not yet won, the empty bin,
The friendly horses taken from the stalls,
The fallow on the hill not yet brought in,
The cracks unplastered in the leaking walls.

Yet heard the news, and went discouraged home,
And brooded by the fire with heavy mind,
With such dumb loving of the Berkshire loam
As breaks the dumb hearts of the English kind,

Then sadly rose and left the well-loved Downs,
And so by ship to sea, and knew no more
The fields of home, the byres, the market towns,
Nor the dear outline of the English shore,

But knew the misery of the soaking trench,
The freezing in the rigging, the despair
In the revolting second of the wrench
When the blind soul is flung upon the air,

And died (uncouthly, most) in foreign lands
For some idea but dimly understood
Of an English city never built by hands
Which love of England prompted and made good.

* * * * *

If there be any life beyond the grave,
It must be near the men and things we love.

Some power of quick suggestion how to save,
Touching the living soul as from above.

An influence from the Earth from those dead hearts
So passionate once, so deep, so truly kind,
That in the living child the spirit starts,
Feeling companioned still, not left behind.

Surely above these fields a spirit broods
A sense of many watchers muttering near
Of the lone Downland with the forlorn woods
Loved to the death, inestimably dear.

A muttering from beyond the veils of Death
From long-dead men, to whom this quiet scene
Came among blinding tears with the last breath,
The dying soldier's vision of his queen.

All the unspoken worship of those lives
Spent in forgotten wars at other calls
Glimmers upon these fields where evening drives
Beauty like breath, so gently darkness falls.

Darkness that makes the meadows holier still,
The elm-trees sadden in the hedge, a sigh
Moves in the beech-clump on the haunted hill,
The rising planets deepen in the sky,

And silence broods like spirit on the brae,
A glimmering moon begins, the moonlight runs
Over the grasses of the ancient way
Ructed this morning by the passing guns.

From GALLIPOLI

THE A.N.Z.A.C

THE Australian and New Zealand Army Corps who together made up more than half the army, were almost all men who had enlisted since the declaration of war, and had had not more than six months' active training. They were, however, the finest body of young men ever brought together in modern times. For physical beauty and nobility of bearing they surpassed any men I have ever seen; they walked and looked like the kings in old poems, and reminded me of the line in Shakespeare:

"Baited like eagles having lately bathed."

It was said that when a big shell was coming men of other races would go into their dugouts, but that these men paused only to call it a bastard, and then went on with their work.

By the night of the second day the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps had won and fortified their position. Men writing or reporting on service about them referred to them as the A.N.Z.A.C., and these letters soon came to mean the place in which they were, unnamed till then, probably, save by some rough Turkish place-name, but now likely to be printed on all English maps, with the other names, of Brighton Beach and Hell Spit, which mark a great passage of arms.

SONNETS

O WRETCHED man, that for a little mile
Crawls beneath heaven for his brother's blood,
Whose days the planets number with their style.
To whom all earth is slave, all living, food!
O withering man, within whose folded shell
Lies yet the seed, the spirit's quickening corn,
That Time and Sun will change out of the cell
Into green meadows, in the world unborn!
If Beauty be a dream, do but resolve
And fire shall come, that in the stubborn clay
Works to make perfect till the rocks dissolve,
The barriers burst, and Beauty takes her way:
Beauty herself, within whose blossoming Spring
Even wretched man shall clap his hands and sing.

OUT of the special cell's most special sense
Came the suggestion when the light was sweet;
All skill, all beauty, all magnificence,
Are hints^so caught, man's glimpse of the complete.
And, though the body rots, that sense survives;
Being of life's own essence, it endures
(Fruit of the spirit's tillage in men's lives)
Round all this ghost that wandering flesh immures.
That is our friend, who, when the iron brain
Assails, or the earth clogs, or the sun hides,
Is the good God to whom none calls in vain,
Man's Achieved Good, which, being Life, abides:
The man-made God, that man in happy breath
Makes in despite of Time and dusty Death.

I COULD not sleep for thinking of the sky,
The unending sky, with all its million suns
Which turn their planets everlastingly
In nothing, where the fire-haired comet runs.
If I could sail that nothing, I should cross
Silence and emptiness with dark stars passing;
Then, in the darkness, see a point of gloss
Burn to a glow, and glare, and keep amassing,
And rage into a sun with wandering planets,
And drop behind; and then, as I proceed,
See his last light upon his last moon's granites
Die to a dark that would be night indeed:
Night where my soul might sail a million years
In nothing, not even Death, not even tears.

How did the nothing come, how did these fires,
These million-leagues of fires, first toss their hair,
Licking the moons from heaven in their ires,
Flinging them forth for them to wander there?
What was the Mind? Was it a mind which thought?
Or chance? or law? or conscious law? or power?
Or a vast balance by vast clashes wrought?
Or Time at trial with Matter for an hour?
Or is it all a body where the cells
Are living things supporting something strange,
Whose mighty heart the singing planet swells
As it shoulders nothing in unending change?
Is this green earth of many-peopled pain
Part of a life, a cell within a brain?

IT may be so; but let the unknown be.
We, on this earth, are servants of the sun:
Out of the sun comes all the quick in me,
His golden touch is life to everyone.
His power it is that makes us spin through space;
His youth is April and his manhood bread;
Beauty is but a looking on his face;
He clears the mind, he makes the roses red.
What he may be, who knows? But we are his;
We roll through nothing round him, year by year,
The withering leaves upon a tree which is,
Each with his greed, his little power, his fear,
What we may be, who knows? But every one
Is dust on dust a servant of the sun.

WHAT is this life which uses living cells
It knows not how nor why, for no known end,
This soul of man upon whose fragile shells
Of blood and brain his very powers depend?
Pour out its little blood or touch its brain,
The thing is helpless, gone, no longer known;
The carrion cells are never man again,
No hand relights the little candle blown.
It comes not from Without, but from the sperm
Fed in the womb; it is a man-made thing
That takes from man its power to live a term,
Served by live cells of which it is the King.
Can it be blood and brain? It is most great.
Through blood and brain alone it wrestles Fate.

CAN it be blood and brain, this transient force
Which, by an impulse, seizes flesh and grows
To man, the thing less splendid than the horse,
More blind than owls, less lovely than the rose?
Oh, by a power unknown it works the cells
Of blood and brain; it has the power to see
Beyond the apparent thing the something else
Which it inspires dust to bring to be.
Both blood and brain are its imperfect tools,
Easily wrecked, soon worn, slow to attain;
Only by years of toil the master rules
To lovely ends those servants, blood and brain.
And Death, a touch, a germ, has still the force
To make him ev'n as the rose, the owl, the horse.

NOT only blood and brain its servants are;
There is a finer power that needs no slaves,
Whose lovely service distance cannot bar,
Nor the green sea with all her hell of waves;
Nor snowy mountains, nor the desert sand,
Nor heat, nor storm, it bends to no control;
It is a stretching of the spirit's hand
To touch the brother's or the sister's soul;
So that from darkness in the narrow room
I can step forth and be about her heart,
Needing no star, no lantern in the gloom,
No word from her, no pointing on the chart,
Only red knowledge of a window flung
Wide to the night, and calling without tongue.

DROP me the seed, that I even in my brain
May be its nourishing earth. No mortal knows
From what immortal granary comes the grain,
Nor how the earth conspires to make the rose;
But from the dust and from the wetted mud
Comes help, given or taken; so with me,
Deep in my brain the essence of my blood
Shall give it stature until Beauty be.
It will look down, even as the burning flower
Smiles upon June, long after I am gone.
Dust-footed Time will never tell its hour,
Through dusty Time its rose will draw men on,
Through dusty Time its beauty will make plain
Man, and, Without, a spirit-scattering grain.

AH, but Without there is no spirit scattering;
Nothing but Life, most fertile but unwise,
Passing through change in the sun's heat and cloud's watering,
Pregnant with self, unlit by inner eyes.
There is no sower, nor seed for any tillage;
Nothing but the grey brain's pash, and the tense will,
And that poor fool of the Being's little village
Feeling for the truth in the little veins that thrill.
There is no Sowing, but digging, year by year,
In a hill's heart, now one way, now another,
Till the rock breaks and the valley is made clear,
And the poor Fool stands, and knows the sun for his brother,
And the Soul shakes wings like a bird escaped from cage,
And the tribe moves on to camp in its heritage.

You are too beautiful for mortal eyes,
You the divine unapprehended soul;
The red worm in the marrow of the wise
Stirs as you pass, but never sees you whole.
Even as the watcher in the midnight tower
Knows from a change in heaven an unseen star,
So from your beauty, so from the summer flower,
So from the light, one guesses what you are.
So in the darkness does the traveller come
To some lit chink, through which he cannot see,
More than a light, nor hear, more than a hum,
Of the great hall where Kings in council be.
So, in the grave, the red and mouthless worm
Knows of the soul that held his body firm.

Is it a sea on which the souls embark
Out of the body, as men put to sea?
Or do we come like candles in the dark
In the rooms in cities in eternity?
Is it a darkness that our powers can light?
Is this, our little lantern of man's love,
A help to find friends wandering in the night
In the unknown country with no star above?
Or is it sleep, unknowing, outlasting clocks
That outlast men, that, though the cockcrow ring,
Is but one peace, of the substance of the rocks;
Is but one space in the now unquickened thing;
Is but one joy, that, though the million tire,
Is one, always the same, one life, one fire?

From REYNARD THE Fox

THE END OF THE RUN

FOR a minute he ran and heard no sound,
Then a whimper came from a questing hound,
Then a "This way, beauties," and then "Leu, Leu,"
The floating laugh of the horn that blew.
Then the cry again, and the crash and rattle
Of the shrubs burst back as they ran to battle,
Till the wood behind seemed risen from root,
Crying and crashing, to give pursuit,
Till the trees seemed hounds and the air seemed cry,
And the earth so far that he needs must die,
Die where he reeled in the woodland dim,
With a hound's white grips in the spine of him.
For one more burst he could spurt, and then
Wait for the teeth, and the wrench, and men.

* * * * *

He made his spurt for the Mourne End rocks
The air blew rank with the taint of fox;
The yews gave way to a greener space
Of great stones strewn in a grassy place.
And there was his earth at the great grey shoulder
Sunk in the ground, of a granite boulder.
A dry, deep burrow with rocky roof,
Proof against crowbars, terrier-proof,
Life to the dying, rest for bones.

* * * * *

The earth was stopped; it was filled with stones.

* * * * *

Then, for a moment, his courage failed,
His eyes looked up as his body quailed,
Then the coming of death, which all things dread,
Made him run for the wood ahead.

* * * * *

The taint of fox was rank on the air,
He knew, as he ran, there were foxes there.
His strength was broken, his heart was bursting,
His bones were rotten, his throat was thirsting;
His feet were reeling, his brush was thick
From dragging the mud, and his brain was sick.

* * * * *

He thought as he ran of his old delight
In the wood in the moon in an April night,
His happy hunting, his winter loving,
The smells of things in the midnight roving,
The look of his dainty-nosing, red,
Clean-felled dam with her footpad's tread;
Of his sire, so swift, so game, so cunning,
With craft in his brain and power of running;
Their fights of old when his teeth drew blood,
Now he was sick, with his coat all mud.

* * * * *

He crossed the covert, he crawled the bank,
To a meuse in the thorns, and there he sank,
With his ears flexed back and his teeth shown white,
In a rat's resolve for a dying bite.

* * * * *

And there, as he lay, he saw the vale,
That a struggling sunlight silvered pale:
The Deerlip Brook like a strip of steel,
The Nun's Wood Yews where the rabbits squeal,
The great grass square of the Roman Fort,
And the smoke in the elms at Crendon Court.

* * * * *

And above the smoke in the elm-tree tops
Was the beech-clump's blur, Blown Hilcote Copse,
Where he and his mates had long made merry
In the bloody joys of the rabbit-herry.

* * * * *

And there as he lay and looked, the cry
Of the hounds at head came rousing by;
He bent his bones in the blackthorn dim.

* * * * *

But the cry of the hounds was not for him.
Over the fence with a crash they went,
Belly to grass, with a burning scent;
Then came Dansey, yelling to Bob:
"They've changed! Oh, damn it! now here 's a job."
And Bob yelled back: "Well, we cannot turn 'em,
It 's Jumper and Antic, Tom, we'll learn 'em!
We must just go on, and I hope we kill."
They followed hounds down the Mourne End Hill.

* * * * *

The fox lay still in the rabbit-meuse,
On the dry brown dust of the plumes of yews.

In the bottom below a brook went by,
Blue, in a patch, like a streak of sky.
There one by one, with a clink of stone,
Came a red or dark coat on a horse half-blown.
And man to man with a gasp for breath
Said: "Lord, what a run! I'm fagged to death."

* * * * *

After an hour no riders came,
The day drew by like an ending game;
A robin sang from a pufft red breast,
The fox lay quiet and took his rest.
A wren on a tree-stump carolled clear,
Then the starlings wheeled in a sudden sheer,
The rooks came home to the twiggy hive
In the elm-tree tops which the winds do drive.
Then the noise of the rooks fell slowly still,
And the lights came out in the Clench Brook Mill;
Then a pheasant cocked, then an owl began,
With the cry that curdles the blood of man.

* * * * *

The stars grew bright as the yews grew black,
The fox rose stiffly and stretched his back.
He flaked the air, then he padded out
To the valley below him, dark as doubt,
Winter-thin with the young green crops,
For old Cold Crendon and Hilcote Copse.

* * * * *

As he crossed the meadows at Naunton Larking
The dogs in the town all started barking,
For with feet all bloody and flanks all foam,
The hounds and the hunt were limping home;

Limping home in the dark dead-beaten,
The hounds all rank from a fox they'd eaten.
Dansey saying to Robin Dawe:
"The fastest and longest I ever saw."
And Robin answered: "Oh, Tom, 'twas good!
I thought they'd changed in the Mourne End Wood,
But now I feel that they did not change.
We've had a run that was great and strange;
And to kill in the end, at dusk, on grass!
We'll turn to the Cock and take a glass,
For the hounds, poor souls! are past their forces;
And a gallon of ale for our poor horses,
And some bits of bread for the hounds, poor things!
After all they've done (for they've done like kings)
Would keep them going till we get in.
We had it alone from Nun's Wood Whin."
Then Tom replied: "If they changed or not,
ThereVe been few runs longer and none more hot,
We shall talk of to-day until we die."

* * * * *

The stars grew bright in the winter sky,
The wind came keen with a tang of frost,
The brook was troubled for new things lost,
The copse was happy for old things found,
The fox came home and he went to ground.

* * * * *

And the hunt came home and the hounds were fed,
They climbed to their bench and went to bed;
The horses in stable loved their straw.
"Good-night, my beauties," said Robin Dawe.

* * * * *

Then the moon came quiet and flooded full
Light and beauty on clouds like wool,
On a feasted fox at rest from hunting,
In the beech-wood grey where the brocks were grunting.

* * * * *

The beech-wood grey rose dim in the night
With moonlight fallen in pools of light,
The long dead leaves on the ground were rimed;
A clock struck twelve and the church-bells chimed.

From THE TAKING OF HELEN

NIREUS HIDES THE RUNAWAYS

HE went on for another mile and then stood upon a stone wall to look about. The sun was shining upon a pasture beyond the wall. Most of the pasture was burnt, but below the wall some grass, still green, was wet with dew, and on the dew were the footprints of a man and girl who had walked side by side there.

"Here they are," he said, "here they are! These are their tracks." He flung himself down and kissed what he thought were her footprints, and as he grovelled he groaned: "She will never walk by my side as she walks by his; never, never, never. Oh, curse him, curse him for his luck; and bless her!"

There were only half-a-dozen steps in the dew, for they ceased where the grass ceased. He wiped them out with Helen's cloak and hurried on as they led. He went over three fields or enclosures into a lane, where he heard voices and stopped with a gasp, for there they were.

Beyond a curve in the lane was a roofless shrine with flowers growing on its ruins. A broken column of grey stone in front of it still bore some relic of worship there. Some bunches of flowers had been laid there "for luck" by children or passers-by, out of custom that outlasts belief. Beside the temple was a little grove of aspens, whose leaves silvered and unsilvered in the wind and made a noise like rain. Out of the hill on which they grew came water of the hill, in a gush, to an old stone trough, over which the birds skimmed at gnats.

When Nireus looked, the truants were standing together near the stone. They had laid offerings of wild strawberries upon the altar. Helen had taken an old clay jug that had been left at the spring for the purpose, and had filled it at the spring. Now she was about to offer libation there.

It was at the moment when the light first fell upon that place. Helen was standing in front of the altar with the pitcher raised above her head. Her sleeves had fallen back, showing her arms bare to the elbows; the light was on her face. She was praying, but even in prayer her face seemed like a smile. Nireus had never seen her look so beautiful.

He looked at Paris. He, too, was beautiful, with the easy glow of the bright young man to whom life has not been difficult. He was standing a foot or two behind Helen, and a little to one side of her. When Nireus caught sight of him, he was watching Helen intently with a working mouth.

"My God," Nireus muttered. "What beauty and what ease and charm! O you lucky, beautiful fiend, I would love to kill you!"

But the water was poured, the rite was over; Nireus ran to them.

"In the name of the gods/' he cried, "why are you stopping here?"

"We stopped to sacrifice," Helen said. "This is the Lovers' shrine."

"May the Lover bless you, then; but you may be seen at any instant."

"Why should we not be seen?" Paris asked.

"Why not?" Nireus said. "Tell me, what brought you here?"

"Love," Helen answered.

"Do not speak another word," Nireus said. "But hurry uphill with me to that copse. There we'll be hidden and can talk."

He hurried them uphill into the copse, which was mainly scrub and small oak, with firs in the high ground and ilex below. Some heifers were browsing in the scrub. At the top of the ridge, the hill tipped sharply down towards the sea, which could be both seen and heard, although a mighty thicket of berried evergreen shut the beach from view. Inside the thicket, a hundred yards from them, someone was beating mats.

"What are we to do now?" Paris asked.

"Get your breath first," Nireus said. "You surely know that you are being pursued, that you are in danger?"

"What of it?" Paris said. "We are within an hour of Green Havens, where your ship lies."

"Paris, my ship is impounded. Soldiers are guarding her and watching Green Havens. The country is thick witji soldiers, hunting for you. I have another ship on the coast, among the rocks, three miles from here. She may be impounded too for all that I know, but she is your only hope."

"My only hope, Nireus? I think I have other hopes. Who is pursuing us?"

"The King," Nireus said. "If you will come aside with me to that clump of hazels, I will tell you what I know."

He took Paris aside and told him. They were in a thickish scrub on a hillside and talked in low voices, and heard not a sound; but when Nireus looked to one side, he saw a little boy watching them. He was a starved-looking little boy with a mean and eager face. He slunk

away when he saw that he was seen, but he cast a shrewd look back and then ran.

"We had better consult with Helen," Paris said.

Danger and love had brightened Helen's eyes.
She wooed the wild things there with crumbs of bread.
A goldfinch and a squirrel with small cries
Reached little claws to her and took and fed.

"We have been seen here," Nireus said. "We must either hide or fly; which shall it be?"

"Where can we hide, whither can we fly?"

"I say get under cover, somewhere near here, until dark, and then push on, over the rocks on the shore, to my ship," Nireus said.

"I will do nothing under cover," Paris said. "I have taken the King's wife and will wear her like my crown."

"Listen," Nireus said. "There are horses coming from the direction of the shrine. They are soldiers. That is armour jingling."

"It is not armour," Paris said. "It is a farmer's harness. Nireus seems to be in a state of terror. We must act calmly, Nireus, as well as proudly. We will go quietly down to the ship."

"Helen," Nireus said, "by everything you love come down to that thicket of evergreens."

His voice compelled her in spite of Paris. They hurried down the hill, followed a path through the thicket, crossed a nearly dry gully by a bridge, came to a rotting gate, pushed through it and looked about them.

"This is coming right into the trap," Paris said.

They had entered a court or yard of ruined stables and

byres; fowls were picking about it; there was a look of ill-luck on it. They had hardly entered before some troopers rode down the hill just outside the thicket within fifty yards of them. Nireus hurried the truants forward into another, larger yard, at the back of a big low ruinous house, where a stout young woman was beating mats upon a line outside a door.

Her back was towards them, and what with her beating and her snatches of song, she did not hear them.

> One, two, three, four (she sang)
> Love—no—man—more.
> Eight, seven, six, five.
> Men promise, till they wive,
> But seven, eight, nine, ten,
> Little love in man then.

As she paused for breath she heard them upon the paving and turned. She was a frank young woman with merry eyes and the look of a jolly boy. Nireus made up his mind instantly to trust her. He held up his hand and she looked at him pretty hard. Many thought him the comeliest young man of his time; she thought so, to, and as her song showed, she was ware of handsome young men; but she saw that Nireus saw her and wanted her as a jolly boy, and that pleased her, for that was how she thought of herself.

"Madam," Nireus said, "there are two lovers here, my dear friends; they are being pursued and will be killed if caught. Will you hide them?"

Her whole nature was there at once. Paris she summed up as nothing but a handsome young man, but Helen was of a kind she had never seen; she was Helen's slave

thenceforth. Nireus saw her put out a shy finger to touch Helen's dress as she brought her to the door.

"Will the lady please to enter?" she said.

When they were all inside the door, in a damp stone passage, she looked at them and giggled.

"I do not know where I am to put you," she said. "Will they search the houses for you?"

"Yes," Nireus said. "And in a minute's time."

"Will the lady come this way?" she said.

"You must not go," Paris said. "Nireus, you ought not to have brought us here."

"I will go with this good girl anywhere," Helen said.

The girl caught Helen's hand and kissed it.

"We ought to be together," Paris said.

"We cannot save her: the girl may," Nireus said.

"Come," Helen said to the girl. "You will slip me into some cupboard, will you, with your dresses? I am not very big."

The girl led Helen swiftly away into the darkness of the house. Paris stamped on the floor.

"That girl would sell us all for a silver pin," he said. "I'll bring her back."

"She would die for any of us," Nireus said. "Besides, you have to trust her now."

"Thanks to you."

"Do not let us quarrel. Listen. There is a soldier in the courtyard."

Someone was indeed in the courtyard and coming to the door with a load that bumped upon him. The two princes backed into a store-room to avoid being seen. The man came right up to the door, and gave a whistle of invitation, in the hope of calling the girl. As it failed, he sang some lines of a song.

"There was a girl called Towzel Head,
Her eyes were bright, her lips were red.
Queen Helen, naked in her bed,
Was not so fine as Towzel Head."

As even the song failed to bring the girl, the man came right up to the door, looked in arid called to her.

"Are you there, Myrtle? Are you there? Where have you got to? Are you entertaining all your fine friends?"

He listened for half a minute, then muttered to himself, "Ah, she is away!" and resigned himself to going. He seemed to fill buckets at a well, and then bore slowly away, with his load, singing, till he was out of earshot up the hill.

The girl reappeared.

""Where have you hidden the lady?" Paris asked.

"I will not say," she said. "She is hidden. I will hide you."

"Tell me where the lady is," Paris said, "in case I have to go to her."

"There are soldiers riding to the front of the house," she said. "Will you come?"

She took Paris hastily along a passage and up some steps. Nireus heard the soldiers approaching; he took off his princely coat and thrust it into an oil jar. The girl came back for him.

"I have nowhere to put you," she said, "and the men are at the door there."

"Can I hide in the well-house?"

"No, there's no room."

"Let me out here, then," he said. "Where can I find a pick and shovel?"

"There, by the cart."

"I'll get into the gully then and dig a basin for the brook."

At the other side of the house a dismounted horseman was already rattling at the door, and crying, *"Is* there anyone inside there?" While the girl went through the house to open the door, Nireus took pick and shovel, scrambled into the gully and began to dig. He heard the soldiers go into the house, rummage about and drag things out of corners. Presently they left the house, and came beating and peering among the tamarisks in the gully. One of them asked Nireus what he was doing.

"Making a catchment for the brook."

'It ought to be hot work."

"Pretty well. What are you doing?"

"Looking for a man and a woman."

"Weren't you doing that last evening?"

"Yes."

"Haven't you found them yet?"

"No."

"What have they done?"

"They've been doing reasons of state, and we've got to have them."

"They wouldn't come to a place like this."

"You're right. A ruin like this. The girl's a nice piece."

"She's my sister," Nireus said.

"You'd ought to be proud of her," the trooper said. *"1* am."

The sergeant in charge of the men came out at this point, wiping his mouth.

"No trace of them in the house," he said. "We'll follow down this gully to the sea and beat all the scrub. Who is the young fellow here?"

"The girl's brother, digging a catchment."

"By God, it's in the family!" the sergeant said. "She's dug a scratchment in my cheeks, I know." He walked with energy but a little unsteadily down into the gully and thrust at the scrub with his lance as he went. His men followed him and did the same: the horse-holders followed slowly along the gully top leading the horses: Nireus went on with his work. In a few minutes the soldiers were out of earshot down the gully. Nireus looked up and saw the girl looking down upon him.

"Will you help me shift my mats?" she said.

When he had carried her mats indoors for her, she said:

"What is the worst they have done?"

"Love each other," he said. "How did the soldiers miss them?"

"They did not look in the right places. Nor in the wrong much, for that matter."

"They'll come back," Nireus said, "for we were seen by a little boy before we came here."

"A little sharp thin boy?"

"Yes."

"He will tell," the girl said. "They will come back."

"If they come back with an officer," Nireus said, "they will search like the north wind. Will they find them then?"

"There is no place to hide them in this old ruin."

"Is there any other place?"

"No. Everybody is searching all over the countryside. I cannot think how you escaped to come here."

"Do you live here?"

"Yes."

"There was a man calling you, just before the soldiers came."

"That is Steer. He tends the cows above. I do not know how he missed seeing you."

"You have been a rare friend to us. I say, the gods bless you."

The girl tossed her head.

"I've told the soldiers that you are my sister."

"You should not have done that," she said. "My brothers are dead; all here know that."

From A TALE OF TROY

STHENELUS' DAUGHTER

THE ENTRY INTO TROY

KING STHENELUS, my Father, has often told me
The adventure of the Horse: I tell as he told.

"When the time came to put it to the proof,
Only we five and Agamemnon knew
What had been planned: then Diomed was told.

When the Greeks struck the camp and launched the ships,
We five went openly aboard a ship;
We said that we were bound to holy Chrysa,
To sacrifice to great Apollo there.
Men cheered us as we went and thought us gone.

But when we were beyond the Point, we landed,
And slept until a little before dawn,
When we returned unseen to Agamemnon,
And stole into the stable of the Horse.

There we anointed, prayed, and saw all ready
And took a meal together cheerfully,
Since it might be our last. Odysseus ordered
King Menelaus to the Horse's neck,
Himself to the King's right, me to the left,
Epeios on my left, facing the boy.
We waited for King Agamemnon's signal.

At the appointed time the trumpeters
Blew the long blast to bid the Greeks aboard.
There came a long long cheer and grating of pebbles,
And cheering and still more cheering.
We five shook hands
And said good-bye to light and clambered in.
When we were in our seats Odysseus drew
The cunning lid across and bolted it.
We were in darkness then, like five men buried.
Should we ever see the light of day again?

Then we heard Agamemnon at the hut,
Bidding men strike it: this was swiftly done.
Some glimmer of the daylight came to us.
Then workers felt about the Horse's body,
Fixing his golden trappings with small pins.
Then Agamemnon said: 'This Argive Horse
Is offered to Apollo's Trojan shrine.
We pray that Troy receive it and admit it
Within the shrine: and that it bring to Troy
The blessings that we pray for her: so be it.'

We heard him spill the wine in the libation;
Then the men muttered prayers: then the King
Ordered 'About, turn. March. Aboard your ships.'
We heard the singing as they hoisted sail,
The cries of men heaving: the plash of oars:
The griding, rib on rib, the oaths and cheering:
And the crackle of the flames from the great bonfire
Of burning hut-wood well to leeward from us.
The noise of our friends' cheering slowly died,
We knew ourselves alone within the camp.

And then a crow perched on the Horse's head
And cawed and flapped, and cried an eager cry
Seeing a morsel, and with creaked wings went.

Then seagulls perched upon the Horse together:
They talked their sea speech as they preened themselves;
Then, after shifting leg for leg, they slept
There in the sun above us, while the heat
Grew greater in the oven where we were.

We five were packed into a narrow space
With fresh air only from the Horse's nostrils:
Outside the sun was beating on the wood
In full midsummer. We hid taken oath
Never to speak, but suffef silently
Whatever came: we panted: the sweat trickled.

Being so shut away, we could net tell
How long we had endured or had to suffer:
It seemed another life since the ships sailed.
Then suddenly Odysseus put his hand
Upon my knee: he had heard horses coming.

They were the Trojan chariots drawing near.

Our hearts thumped: the adventure had begun.

Then, as the horses and the chariots halted,
One of their stallions whinnied at our Horse.
We heard the men leap down to hold the teams
And the harness jingling, as the horses tossed.
Then Priam and the princes came about us.

And first they praised the beauty of the work.
'It was a well-made Horse, handsomely decked/
But then one or two voices, which Odysseus,
Who knew Troy well, could recognise, not I,
Asked, 'Why should Agamemnon leave a Horse
Instead of gold or beasts for sacrifice?'
But Priam said: 'The god appeared to him;
Apollo's self ordered a Horse's image.'
One said: 'He bears at least ten pounds of gold.'

We heard the princes comment on our fleet
Now sailing past the Point to Tenedos.
And citizens of Troy came round the Horse
And stared and wondered at him; many praised.
They dared not touch, thinking him consecrated.
We heard them poking in the sites of huts
For relics of our stay, to carry home,
Spear-heads and arrow-heads and armour buckles.
Then Priam and the princes came again.
Then Priam put his hands upon the Horse
And shook, to test if it were strongly fixed.

He said: 'It is well made and heavy. Feel it.
The body must be made of solid wood/
He tapped the body, but the plate and trappings
Made the blow dull. He could not prove it hollow.

We heard them bring up teams and waggon-traces,
Four teams were harnessed to the float, and men
Stood to side-traces and to guiding-traces,
Then, as the sweat came pouring down our faces,
We felt our prison moving towards Troy.

We were able to forget the heat a little
In the thought of what might meet us on the way.
My thought was, If the Horse break from its stand . . .
Or stick within the river at the ford . . .
Or fall and break asunder in the ford . . .'
But we had set ourselves upon the chance
And had to take what came.

It often happens
That a thing dreaded ere it come, is nothing
In the doing when it comes. We crossed the ford,
Scarce knowing we were there.

Long hours seemed to pass, then, suddenly,
There came a blast of trumpets and a cry,
A long wild cry of cheering and exaltation:
We were below the gate: the citizens
Had crowded to the ramparts. We were there.

Here we were halted while they took the horses
And changed the traces for long ropes of leather,
Then all Troy's strongest, singing all together,
Hauled, and the girls flung flowers, pipers blew
Apollo's hymn, and so the Trojans drew
The Horse within the Waggon Gate of Troy.

Then our wheels rumbled on the paven ways
Up a steep slope: and ever hymns of praise
With lyres and with cymbals greeted us.
We went with music and with singing thus
Round all the city (to our seeming) thrice.
At the third round we thought: 'The sacrifice

Will follow this; shall we be burnt, or thrown
Over the walls to break upon the stone?'

We halted: then the singers ceased their song.
We felt that all about us was a throng
Of men and women pressing, touching, peering . . .

The heralds of the Trojans called a hearing.
When there was silence old King Priam spoke.
He was so near, we felt his left hand stroke
The Horse's neck and pat it when he paused,"

My sister here shall tell you what he said.

THE TROJANS ABOUT THE HORSE

"APOLLO'S self commanded Agamemnon
To make this image for the Trojan shrine,
In expiation of the long pollution
Of all Apollo's land by acts of war.
Here is the image, and the Greeks are gone
South of the headland, bound for Tenedos.
Now you, the elders, priestesses and priests,
Debate here in the council, and decide
What shall be done with this. There are three courses:
Bring it within Apollo's temple here,
Burn it with holy fire where it stands,
Or fling it from the ramparts to the rocks.
I urge that it be placed within the temple,
As bright Apollo bade the Argive King."

After a moment's pause another spoke:
"This city wants no offering from the Greeks.
This that the Greeks have made has been received.
I move that it be offered now to God
With holy fire, even where it stands.
When it is ashes, let us take the ashes
And fling them from the city to the wind,
And so be done with Greeks and offerings."

Another said: "'We cannot understand
Why anyone should bring an Argive image
Into this city. We have suffered much
Since the first Argive image entered Troy.
We have her still, and suffer from the having.

I say let Princess Helen mount the horse
And ride on him over the walls to hell.
Later, when we have tilled the fields again,
Replanted all our vineyards, stocked our byres,
And put aside the memory of our sons
Dead in this war for Helen and her boy,
We may forget a little what we owe
To Agamemnon and his company.
At present we owe death to him and his,
And I say smash this image into fragments,
Here or upon the rocks below the walls."

And instantly the mob assailed the Horse
With tooth and hand, and would have torn it piecemeal
But for the press and the beast's size and strength.
But heavy blows fell on the beast, and hands
Snatched at the trappings, and a woman screamed
"Tear it to pieces, put it in the fire!"

We felt that we were ended, without hope.

Then, just as the Horse tottered under press,
There came something that made our blood run cold,
And checked the raging of those wolves of Troy
With horror.

There came a cry like mad laughter or weeping,
A sobbing like one laughing over a corpse.
And the mob froze, and people shrank aside,
Horror had put her hand on everyone.
It was the worst thing that we suffered there.

KASSANDRA

I WAS the thing they heard, I am Kassandra.
I am as one blind from too much light.
The pure air, the pure light and the pure fire
And the ecstasy that comes, considering these,
Are all my having. All else is touched with Death.

I saw that golden Horse, Apollo's Horse,
With all those Deaths about Him in Troy Town.
Men with their carrion arms and bloodstained hands,
And the skeleton fingers of the women stretched
And the skulls of all, all gibbering, showing teeth,
All rotting, all Death, about Apollo's Horse,
The stallion of Pure Fire on which He rides.
0 terrible pollution, those living dead.

So I crept among them . . . and I am like the Light,
Death shrinks away from me, those shrank away . . .
I touched Apollo's Horse and instantly
Light came to me: I spoke the Light, the Truth.

This is Apollo's Horse. Take off your hands
From this immortal work and holy gold.

This Wood is from the Holy Grove of Ida,
Where nothing mortal comes on foot or wing
Nor crawls, for it is lifeless, save for trees,
Pine trees immense, together, ever-living,
A forest of the pine trees, nothing else,
Only the dark green trees, murmuring wisdom,
Daylong murmuring wisdom like the sea.

But at night, lo, they are mountain goddesses
Singing by moonlight terrible songs of god. . . .
This Wood is of their Flesh, Goddesses' Flesh.

This Bronze, that was the armour of dead men,
Has since been through the fire, Apollo's fire,
The purity of fire has made it deathless.

This Gold is from the inmost mountain glen
Beyond all Life whatever, beyond all noise,
Save sometimes the rocks crack and the stones fall.

All day the rocks stand up among the glare,
All night they face the frost, the moon, the stars;
Not even the shadow of a cloud dare cross there.

And in its secrecy a water trickles
Out of the rock, the purest, brightest water,
Into a pool whose sand is dust of gold.
And there Apollo plunges from the rock.

This Gold is from Apollo's wing-feathers.

And Apollo will come into Troy at sunrise
To claim his Horse and ride: I see him riding
Bright, bright, bright, through the city . . .
O so bright . . .
Bright as pure gold: I see him riding here,
Brighter than gold, like something in a flame . . .
Yes, he will ride like fire, bright fire in Troy,
And, yes, the fire will redden as red as blood,
These ways, these walls, these towers, will glow like sunset,

A ruby of red, an ember, all heart's blood spilt.
And roaring fire will raven and lightnings sear.

His sword will bring bright death upon all of Troy;
O joy, joy, joy, when Apollo rides the ways.

Bring precious gums, bring gold,
The cobwebbed winejar old,
The pure work of the bees,
And Indian spice,
Bring milk, barley, and oil,
Bring salt, ashes and soil;
Gather all these.
We have a god to please,
Apollo to appease,
With sacrifice.

And strew down Indian silks, green silks, all woven
With sunbirds in gold thread, at the bright feet
That soon shall trample fire from the street
And dart his lightnings till the Wall be cloven.
Apollo shall come riding into Troy,
O joy, O joy.

Friends, beautiful Apollo tells me this:
That I shall ride on this immortal Horse
Far, far from Troy, in triumph, like a Queen,
Past lions, up a stair all strewn with purple
Straight into fire . . .
Straight to my lover Apollo waiting for me.

From SARD MARKER

CLARA OF THE SALT-PANS

NEARLY all the way a great white bird (whether an owl or some sea-bird, he could not tell) flew above and ahead of him. It seemed to him that this bird shone Perhaps the poison had upset his eyes, or perhaps his eyes never lost the shine of the sea breaking beside him. In his shaken state, this bird seemed like a luminous swan, guiding him to quiet.

Near the southern end of the pans he saw a shack or stable, facing him. The seaward end of this shack was a small adobe house, with a palm roof. The stable was empty: there was neither ass nor dog there.

Sard listened for half a minute, standing still, at ten paces from the house, while he took stock. The house was closed to the night, yet it had the look or feel of having someone there. Perhaps an animal instinct survives in us from the time when it was important to know if a lair were blank or not.

Sard went no nearer; he hailed the house in Spanish, calling on Don Miguel by name. The place was silent, except for the flogging of the palmetto on the roof, the scutter of crabs and gophers on the bents and the wail of the wind across the salt-pans. Then presently something tinkled within the house. It might have been a revolver cartridge, or a knife coming out of a sheath, or a bottle upon glass. Sard hailed again, saying that he came alone, in peace, from Don Enobbio, with desire to hire a horse.

This time, Sard saw the shutter which covered the window (a space a foot square near the door) move about three inches to one side. He heard no noise, but he was watching the shutter and saw its greyness change to blackness as the wood moved. "I am a friend," he called. "I come from Don Enobbio to Don Miguel to hire a horse. I, a sick man, wish to ride to Las Palomas if Don Miguel will give aid, thus emulating the Good Samaritan."

He heard the heavy iron-wood bar of the door go back in its runners; the door opened about eighteen inches; a young woman appeared, yawning.

"Enrique," she said, "Enrique, back already?"

"I am not Enrique, lady," Sard said, "but a traveller in need of a horse."

"Dios mio," she said, "and I not combed! I thought you were Enrique. Wait, then."

He did not have to wait more than a minute; a light •appeared at the shutter; a tin basin or pan was kicked into a corner; then the door was opened, the young woman called:

"Will the caballero enter, then?"

"Enter," Sard thought, "and have my throat cut, perhaps; but I will enter."

He went in, with a watchful eye lest Miguel, who "erred in mind," should be lying in wait with a sandbag just behind the door. However, Miguel was not there, the young woman was alone in the one-roomed house.

She had lighted a little tin lamp, which had a smoke-blackened glass, broken at the top. By the light of this Sard saw the room to be bare and untidy. The bed was an array of small pine boughs, with their needles, covered

with sacks, ponchos and old scrapes. The young woman had just risen from her nest there; she was "not combed," as she had said, nor dressed, but hung about, as it were, with a long undergarment torn at the shoulder. She was a plump young woman, just beginning to grow fat: she was very dirty: her long, black hair shone from an unguent; she flung it rakishly back from her brow with the gesture of a great actress. Her eyes were like mules' eyes, black and shining, with yellow whites. Her mouth was exceedingly good-natured. She stood near the door, clutching her sacking to her shoulder with one hand, while with the other she motioned Sard to enter. She grinned at Sard as a comely woman will grin at one whose praise of her comeliness would be esteemed.

The room, which was next door to the stable, had been lived and slept in for some months with closed door and shutter. It smelt of oil, tortillas, frijoles, horses, rats, mice, espinillo, hair-grease, poverty, garlic, tobacco, joss-stick and musk. A sort of mental image of a life made of all these things, all flavoursome and with a tang to them, reached Sard at once through his nostrils, with the further thought that it was not such a bad life, since it left the person both dignified and kind.

He explained that he needed a horse.

"Ay de mi," she exclaimed, "but Miguel is with the horses at the siding beside the jetty, a half league hence. Assuredly he will lend a horse, but it is further on, at the quay, that you will find him now."

"I will go on, then," Sard said.

"But you are wet and have known misfortune. Enter, I pray you, and rest from your misfortune. Ay de mi, your foot has trodden unhappily."

"Not since it has led me to your presence,"Sard said. "But thank you, I must not enter. I will go on to Miguel, to the horse."

Something in his tone or bearing or look, something in himself, seemed to impress the woman.

"Assuredly," she said, "the good Jesu comes thus, but must not go thus. Sit you, Sir caballero." She brought forward a three-legged stool, the only seat in the room, and made him sit. "Sit you down till I see your foot," she said. She would have none of his protests, but had his bandage off.

"You have met a snake," she said.

"No; a sting-ray."

"Then you have been in the sea and are of the ship, no doubt; ay de mi, all wet, all wet, what misery." She felt his arm and shoulder and cold hand. "And a sting-ray; often have I seen them, with their horns. There is a negro who can cure such with a white powder; but I have nothing. Nothing but love which is a part of the love of God."

She was kneeling at his side with his foot in her hands, kneading the swollen flesh.

"No," she said, "this is no time for the cure. The poison has killed, but is now dead: the flesh is dead. It takes a day, two days, who knows, after a sting-ray. Then, when the life begins to return, one can help. See now, I can, by God's mercy, do something. I have here a stirrup shoe made long ago, but still of use. I have but the one, for the other was cast out in error, as I always maintain; while others, on the contrary, think that Martin took it, Martin the pedlar, the old soldier, who comes round with saints and handkerchiefs. See now, a shoe for a count or duke."

She produced what had been the stirrup-shoe of a count or duke in the days when such things were. It was a sort of wooden-soled slipper, with a sole of wood, and heel and toecaps of cuir-bouilli. The great silver bosses and brackets had long since been wrenched from it. The last user had fixed it to his leathers with wire. The design on the cuir-bouilli was of a coat-of-arms, but eaten away by ants and green with mould.

"See now," she said, fitting it to his foot, "a shoe for a count or duke. You shall walk the better for it. It is a shoe such as might have been made for you."

Her hand rested for an instant on Sard's pocket, from which a draggled silk handkerchief hung.

"Dios mio," she said, "you are count or duke. It is so soft. This is silk of the countess."

She fingered it with a child's delight in the texture. "Is it all like this?" she said. "Truly, if you are not count or duke, you are servant to one."

"That's more like it," Sard said, rising, so as to tread upon the shoe. "I'm a servant, to a limited company. Your shoe, senora, is as water to one dying in the desert. You have been a friend to me in time of need. You know the wise saying, 'a friend to the beggars will never lack guests.' I say, 'May a host to a beggar never lack friends.'"

"The good Jesu comes in all shapes," she answered. "And you are not a beggar, but very much a caballero; oh, very, very much a duke or count. You are English. They say that the English are as ice, and therefore come hither to be thawed."

"That is partly true, senora. I have been melted by your kindness."

"It is also said (though this I do not believe) that no

Englishman will kiss a woman to whom he has not been married by the priest."

"That is assuredly true, senora."

"Never, never, never; even if all things conspired: the moonlight, perfumes, music, and beauty such as hers of Sheba?"

"Never, never, never," he said.

"Ay de mi," she said. "But it is said that the English are as Turks, and are married to very many."

"We are as God made us, not as people say, senora; but we remember kindly acts for ever, and I shall remember you."

"For ever?"

"I think so."

"That is very caballero. But what is memory? A thought. You have not even asked me my name."

"I was going to ask it."

"You were going to ask it?"

"Assuredly."

"Assuredly," she said. "It is true, then, as they say, that the English are as ice. 'Assuredly/ You said it with a peck, as from a beak. 'Assuredly.' If I were to take a dagger and thrust it into my heart so that I fell dead, you would say 'Assuredly she has driven the point too far. Assuredly she is no longer alive.'"

"Not so," Sard said; "I should not say it. I might think it."

"Would you be sorry?"

"I am sorry for any suicide."

"Your cold ice would not thaw one tear. But, vaya, if I were countess, and lay d^ad, you would stand like marble and say poetry. Listen: my name, the name I call myself, is Rose of the South: will you remember that?"

"Yes."

"Assuredly?"

"No; faith of caballero."

"Will you remember me, who am that name?"

"Yes."

"It is me, myself, that name. When I was little, I had a sister: we used to play grand ladies out in the sage-brush. She was Lily of the West; I was Rose of the South. She is dead, pobrecita, the Lily: she was of this world, which needs a man, not a woman: pobrecita mia."

"What is your real name?" Sard asked.

"Clara," she said, "Clara of the Salt-Pans, the woman of Miguel, called Miguel sin Nada."

"He is Miguel con Mucha, with yourself, sefiora," Sard said. "And now adios, and always my thanks, siempre, siempre, siempre. I will return your shoe by Miguel."

'Tor the love of all the saints in bliss, caballero," she said, "in no way let Miguel suspect that you have talked with me. Ay de mi, we women; we suffer for our hearts. Miguel is of a jealousy that would make proud, being such evidence of love, if it were not such inconvenience. A thought, a turn of the head, a look, and he at once ranks me with those infamous of life, with her of Sheba, and Ysabel, Queen of England."

"I will not let him suspect," Sard said. "And now farewell, and my thanks and again my thanks."

"Stay yet," she said. "Stay yet for one instant. I shall be here sixty years, perhaps, like Caterina La Fea, below, at the poblacion, old, old, and wrinkled like the devil, red-eyed, blind, from sitting in the smoke, sucking bits of meat at last, with her gums. And little children flinging dead rats at her and calling her Witch-Witch. I have had one instant with you; let me have one other;

only one; since it has to last for sixty years, you would not grudge me one instant? Then when I am as Caterina, I shall think, ah, but truly I lived, once, at that midnight, when one like St. Gabriel came to my door, and was as a count or duke to me, who am Clara the woman of Miguel."

"Senora," Sard said, "I, too, shall think of you, at times, for whatever years may remain to me; but now I must go, and so I say again, thank you and farewell."

He turned away as fast as he could hobble.

"Stay yet," she implored. "I do not importune, but I do not know your name. Tell me your name. I would think of your name and pray for you in the chapel and before the image here."

"My name is Harker."

"Marker. What does that mean?"

"I do not know: perhaps 'one who listens.' "

"Listens for what?"

"What do people listen for?"

"The sea wind in the heat," she said thoughtfully; "and the crowing of the cock in the night of pain; and, in life, the footstep of the beloved who never comes; or when he does come, goes on the instant."

"Good-bye."

"What do you listen for?" she cried.

"A change of wind, perhaps. Adios."

He turned from her rapidly, but as he turned she knelt suddenly at his side, snatched his hand and kissed it. "Thank you," he said, "but men are not worthy of that, senora." He withdrew his hand and hobbled a few steps away. At this little distance, he called: "I thank you, senora; good night,"

He knew that she would not follow him into the dark-

ness: she did not, but he heard her break into a wild crying of tears and lamentation. The last that he saw of her was the grey of her sacking and the pallor of her face, standing looking after him while she lifted up her voice and wept.

From ODTAA

THE DESERTED RANCHE

A si electric light burned over the door: some moths were butting at it. The door itself was of black maruca, bound with steel. A big bronze pipkin, such as the country people all over Meruel use for milking, hung beside the door. "I suppose this is the bell," he thought. "It's just like a castle in the Morte d'Arthur. Here goes for a bang."

He struck the bronze, which clanged aloud, spinning round upon its cord and thrilling: then he struck again more loudly, twice. The clang died down into a trembling of the air, but all within the house was silent, there was neither voice nor footstep. There came a rustling of wind from the madre de cacao trees; nobody came, nobody spoke. "Is anyone inside there?" Hi cried. There was no answer.

"I don't believe that there is anybody here," he said. Then the thought came: "Suppose the people have all been rounded up or killed by the Reds?"

"But, no," he thought, "the Reds would have sacked and burned the place. It is not that. I don't know what it is: it must be something queer." He struck the bronze for a last time.

"Well, if they won't answer, I'll see if I can go in," he said. He lifted the latch by plucking the plaited leather bobbin: the door was not locked, it opened before him into a long lit corridor or hall where an English clock was ticking. As he opened the door, the wind blowing

in shook the pictures on the wall: they swayed and clacked for an instant, then steadied. There were lighted rooms opening from each side of the corridor, but no sound of any living being.

"Hullo, you inside here," Hi called. *"I* am a friend. Is anyone there? Senor Elena. Senor George, Senor William. Hey, hey, heya. Is anyone here at all?"

His voice rang along the corridor and died away: no one was there. "Very well, I'll go in," Hi said. He stepped in, and closed the door against the wind. As he did so a letter and envelope, which had been lying on the edge of a table near him, fell to the stone flags with a clatter. He replaced them on the table; then paused to look about him.

He had heard that men of the great ranches lived like princes. The hall in which he stood was bare, big and white, lit by electric lights. There were two stiff black chairs, two black pictures of yellow nymphs, a table heaped with silver horse-trappings, and the English grandfather's clock, gravely telling the time. He walked up to the clock and read the words on the dial:

Edward Hendred.
1807
Abingdon.
212

These two little things of old Berkshire met thus in this strange house so many miles from Thames and Down. "Hendred of Abingdon," he repeated. "There may be a Berkshire man here who may know father." He glanced at the pictures of the yellow nymphs in their clothes blown out in the grand manner. "Religious pictures,"

he thought and glanced away. The house was so still that he hardly dared to go further.

"What can have happened?" he asked. "Some fight or some show or what?"

He walked to the nearest door, on his left. The door was ajar, shewing a lit room: he knocked at the door, had no answer, and therefore looked in. It was a big, long room, in use as the messroom of the household, for whom thirty places had been laid on the table. Food in abundance had been set there for a meal, which had been begun. Baskets of small Meruel loaves were on a sideboard near the door: he felt these by accident as he put out his hand: the under loaves were still warm from the oven. There was warmth in the vast silver cazuela tureen, which stood, more than half empty at the head of the table. The table was littered with the mess of the meal: broken loaves, bowls which had been used for cazuela, halves of oranges, skins of bananas, and the bones of big birds like turkeys. Yet from the look of the plates Hi felt that the meal had never been finished: something had interrupted it before they had reached the coffee and cigarettes. Somebody with some news had come there soon after they were half way through, then chairs had been thrust back and food left, half eaten and the eaters and talkers had gone. Why had they gone, and where? Hi did not like the feeling of this house.

He went again to the hall and cried: "Is there anybody here?" But there was no answer. "There must be someone somewhere in all this barrack," he said. "Surely in the kitchen or outhouses there will be a woman or a negro or a peon. There must be at least a caretaker or night-watchman. The kitchens will be along the corridor some-at the back."

He went down the corridor, where he found the kitchen. It was a vast room, bare, clean, and empty of people. The fire, which had done the work of cooking, had been allowed to die down; but the castle-kettle, once full of water for coffee and the washing-up of the dishes, was still boiling and half full. A black cat with its paw round its face was curled up asleep on a mat on a chair. "I'm glad that there is something alive here," he said.

Doors opened from the kitchen into outhouses, sculleries and larders: Hi felt a dread of looking into these rooms, but he overcame it: no one was there.

"Well," he said, "if there's no one to ask, I will make a mash for my poor horse. No one could object to that."

He took one of the big round-up stew cauldrons which lay against a wall. In this he made a hot mash of bread for his horse, adding some salt. He carried it out to the horse, who seemed glad of the warm food for a few instants; but it was not all that he had hoped; in a few instants his muzzle dropped from it. "Poor old boy," Hi said, "I wish I knew what I could give you, that you would like."

He lingered by the horse for a few minutes, to pull his ears, and rub him down. The breeze which had set in struck cold, so Hi moved the horse to a more sheltered place behind the immense rain vats a few yards from the tethering posts. He had hoped that somebody would come there while he was outside with the horse, but there came neither sight nor sound of anybody.

"I'll go in to explore," Hi said. "There must be someone, and if there's someone there may be something I can do."

It was harder to enter the house for this second time than it had been before. The uncanniness was greater

now. The clock still ticked, the light still burned, the table still stood uncleared. "I don't want to be caught bagging things in a strange house," Hi thought, "but I'm jolly well going to bag some food and leave some money for it."

He ate and drank of what was on the table, to the amount (as he judged) of a peseta, reckoning in the bread for the horse. He left one of his five pesetas on the table for this. "What am I to do, and where am I to go?" he wondered. "If I leave this? This may be Anselmo; almost must be: yet where are all the Elenas gone? Perhaps I'll find something in the other rooms."

There were three more rooms in the corridor of the hall: two on the opposite side, one on his side, nearer the kitchens. The rooms further down the corridor had the look of being offices or studies. "I'll go into those first," he said. "Very likely I'll come upon somebody dead in one, or on the old mad doctor who runs this private madhouse." He knocked at the door beside him, which was shut: for one instant he was shocked by thinking that at the sound of his knocking someone within the room had turned the pages of a book. He opened the door upon a dark room, into which the breeze blew from an open ventilator high up in the wall. He saw the light switches and switched the lights fully on. The room was the estancia office, as he had supposed. There was a safe, built into the wall. There were two long tables heaped with papers; but another thing impressed Hi: chairs had been lifted from the floor on to these tables, so that the floor might be swept. Two brooms had begun to sweep the floor: there was the tide mark of dust, earth, torn paper, cigarette ends and cigar butts half way across the room. There were the two brooms

resting against the table, just as the unknown sweepers had left them when their task had been interrupted by what? On a third table was a row of flat, square, white china dishes, each containing about a pint of brown or reddish liquid. Hi judged that the liquid was a chemical of some sort, perhaps a parasite mixture.

He crossed the corridor to the room opposite. This was plainly a room for the women. It contained a long settle which faced a row of spinning wheels. On a table there were heaps of palm-blades partly unravelled into the white bast from which the Meruel women plaited their hats. At the further end of the room were two hand-looms on which some weavers had already woven parts of saints for the back cloth of an altar. Someone had spilled a little bottle of scent upon the palm-blades. It was oozing from its cork into a rivulet which had dripped into a pool upon the floor. "There has been a hurry, even here," Hi said. "Oh, I wish to goodness I had come here an hour ago. If only I had not taken that wrong turn, or slept quite so long, I might have found the people here: and they are good people, doing good things."

He went again into the corridor to listen: no one had entered the house. "There are all the outhouses to search through presently," he said. "I must find someone before I can leave here. I'll try this other room, opposite the dining-room."

This proved to be the main living-room of a company of men. One side of it was slung with Indian hammocks, loosely woven of dyed fibres: the rest was in the con fusion in which undisciplined men will live. It was littered with clothes, shot-guns, cartridges, belts, knives, books, papers, watches, money, cigars, broken cigarettes,

pipes, spurs, quirts, matches, plugs of tobacco, photographs of girls, prints of horses, shoes, laces, straps and twitches. Tobacco had been smoked there not more than an hour before, but another smell also struck Hi's nostrils. It was a familiar smell, yet for an instant in that smell of tobacco he could not say what it was. Then the sight of an empty brass revolver shell upon the floor reminded him that what he smelt was the smell of gunpowder. Somebody had burned a cartridge in that room not more than an hour before: there was the shell of the cartridge.

He picked it up, with the thought that it was the heaviest revolver cartridge he had ever seen. "Why," he thought, "a thing like this would stop a bison. This is a Jack the Giant Killer. Whoever has fired a thing like this in here?" He put the brass shell to his nose and instantly the pungent smell brought scenes into his mind of two months before. The first scene was of the wood on the down above Tencombe, on a sunny January afternoon, when he had shot a pheasant, and had stood to jerk out the shell. A red squirrel had appeared on one of the leafless oaks there: it had run along the branch to jabber at him, to within six feet of him. This scene floated by into another of the Blowbury Woods at sunset, when he had waited in the cold for wood-pigeons. The orange sky to the west had been netted black by the elm twigs, and the woods had stood still in the cold. He had had a shot at last, but had missed with both barrels, had jerked out the cartridges, and had smelt just this smell, from fumes curling up at him out of the breech.

He dropped the shell: it fell with a tinkle and rolled from him. He was standing, at that moment, some four feet from the door, within the room; he had not much

more than entered to take his survey. Fear, anxiety, homesickness, and the torment of failing his friends were all preying upon him. Then he looked up, suddenly, towards one of the windows, where something made his heart stand still. A man with a white face and blazing eyes was watching him through the window with a look of rage which made his blood run cold. The man's brow was pressed on the pane, while his rigfit hand reached back for a gun. That man was no dweller in the house, but a spy and an enemy.

FORGET

FORGET all these, the barren fool in power,
The madman in command, the jealous O,
The bitter world biting its bitter hour,
The cruel now, the happy long ago.

Forget all these, for, though they truly hurt,
Even to the soul, they are not lasting things:
Men are no gods; we tread the city dirt,
But in our souls we can be queens and kings.

And I, O Beauty, O divine white wonder,
On whom my dull eyes, blind to all else, peer,
Have you for peace, that not the whole war's thunder,
Nor the world's wreck, can threat or take from here.

So you remain, though all man's passionate seas
Roar their blind tides, I can forget all these.

ON GROWING OLD

BE with me, Beauty, for the fire is dying;
My dog and I are old, too old for roving.
Man, whose young passion sets the spindrift flying,
Is soon too lame to march, too cold for loving.
I take the book and gather to the fire,
Turning old yellow leaves; minute by minute
The clock ticks to my heart. A withered wire,
Moves a thin ghost of music in the spinet.
I cannot sail your seas, I cannot wander
Your cornland, nor your hill-land, nor your valleys
Ever again, nor share the battle yonder
Where the young knight the broken squadron rallies.
Only stay quiet while my mind remembers
The beauty of fire from the beauty of embers.

Beauty, have pity! for the strong have power,
The rich their wealth, the beautiful their grace,
Summer of man its sunlight and its flower,
Spring-time of man all April in a face.
Only, as in the jostling in the Strand,
Where the mob thrusts or loiters or is loud,
The beggar with the saucer in his hand
Asks only a penny from the passing crowd,
So, from this glittering world with all its fashion,
Its fire, and play of men, its stir, its march,
Let me have wisdom, Beauty, wisdom and passion,
Bread to the soul, rain where the summers parch.
Give me but these, and, though the darkness close
Even the night will blossom as the rose.

from KING COLE

HE SPEAKS WITH THE SHOWMAN

KING COLE. Trust still to Life, the day is not yet old.
THE SHOWMAN. By God! our lives are all we have to trust.
KING COLE. Life changes every day and ever must.
THE SHOWMAN. It has not changed with us, this season* yet.
KING COLE. Life is as just as Death; Life pays its debt.
THE SHOWMAN. What justice is there in our suffering so?
KING COLE. This: that not knowing, we should try to know.
THE SHOWMAN. Try. A sweet doctrine for a broken heart.
KING COLE. The best (men say) in every manly part.
THE SHOWMAN. Is it, by Heaven? I have tried it, I.
I tell you, friend, your justice is a lie;
Your comfort is a lie, your peace a fraud;
Your trust a folly and your cheer a gaud.
I know what men are, having gone these roads.
Poor bankrupt devils, sweating under loads
While others suck their blood and smile and smile.
You be an artist on the roads awhile,
You'll know what justice comes with suffering then.
KING COLE. Friend, I am one grown old with sorrowing men.
THE SHOWMAN. The old are tamed, they have not blood to feel.
KING COLE. They've blood to hurt, if not enough to heal.

I have seen sorrow close and suffering close.
I know their ways with men, if any knows.
I know the harshness of the way they have
To loose the base and prison up the brave.
I know that some have found the depth they trod
In deepest sorrow, is the heart of God.
Up on the bitter iron there is peace.
In the dark night of prison comes release,
In the black midnight still the cock will crow.
There is a help that the abandoned know
Deep in the heart, that conquerors cannot feel.
Abide in hope the turning of the wheel,
The luck will alter and the star will rise.

His presence seemed to change before their eyes.
The old, bent, ragged, glittering, wandering fellow,
With thready blood-streaks in the rided yellow
Of cheek and eye, seemed changed to one who held
Earth and the spirit like a king of old.
He spoke again: "You have been kind," said he.
"In your own trouble you have thought of me.
God will repay. To him who gives is given,
Corn, water, wine, the world, the starry heaven."

Then, like a poor old man, he took his way
Back to the city, while the showman gazed
After his figure like a man amazed.

THE WIFE. I think that traveller was an angel sent.
THE SHOWMAN. A most strange man. I wonder what he meant.
THE WIFE. Comfort was what he meant, in our distress.

THE SHOWMAN. No words of his can make our trouble less.

THE WIFE. O, Will, he made me feel the luck would change.

Look at him, husband; there is something strange
About him there; a robin redbreast comes
Hopping about his feet as though for crumbs,
And little long-tailed tits and wrens that sing
Perching upon him.

THE SHOWMAN. What a wondrous thing!

THE RIDER AT THE GATE

A WINDY night was blowing on Rome,
The cressets guttered on Caesar's home,
The fish-boats, moored at the bridge, were breaking
The rush of the river to yellow foam.

The hinges whined to the shutters shaking,
When clip-clop-clep came a horse-hoof raking
The stones of the road at Caesar's gate;
The spear-butts jarred at the guard's awaking.

"Who goes there?" said the guard at the gate.
"What is the news, that you ride so late?"
"News most pressing, that must be spoken
To Caesar alone, and that cannot wait."

"The Caesar sleeps; you must show a token
That the news suffice that he be awoken.
What is the news, and whence do you come?
For no light cause may his sleep be broken."

"Out of the dark of the sands I come,
From the dark of death, with news for Rome.
A word so fell that it must be uttered
Though it strike the soul of the Caesar dumb."

Ctrsar turned in his bed and muttered.,
With a struggle for breath the lamp-flame guttered;
Calpurnia heard her husband moan:
"The house is falling.,
The beaten men come into their own"

"Speak your word," said the guard at the gate;
"Yes, but bear it to Caesar straight,
Say, 'Your murderer's knives are honing,
Your killer's gang is lying in wait.'

"Out of the wind that is blowing and moaning,
Through the city palace and the country loaning,
I cry, Tor the world's sake, Caesar, beware,
And take this warning as my atoning.

" 'Beware of the Court, of the palace stair,
Of the downcast friend who speaks so fair,
Keep from the Senate, for Death is going
On many men's feet to meet you there.'

"I, who am dead, have ways of knowing
Of the crop of death that the quick are sowing.
I, who was Pompey, cry it aloud
From the dark of death, from the wind blowing.

"I, who was Pompey, once was proud,
Now I lie in the sand without a shroud;
I cry to Caesar out of my pain,
'Caesar, beware, your death is vowed.' "

The light grew grey on the window-pane,
The windcocks swung in a burst of rain,
The window of Caesar flung unshuttered,
The horse-hoofs died into wind again.

CcBsar turned in his bed and muttered,
With a struggle for breath the lamp-flame guttered:
Calpurnia heard her husband moan:
"The house is falling.
The beaten men come into their own."

From A KING'S DAUGHTER

THE SAILING OF NIREUS

NIREUS sailed; and a strange wind blew him to islands unseen before,
Where the gods sat throned on the crags with peace on their marvellous faces,
Clouds and the smoke of fire, that glittered and changed, they wore!
And unto them came the crying of all man's sorrowful races.

They cried to him as he passed, "You are seeking and you shall find,
Not in the way you hope, not in the way foreseen;
Out of horror, of soul, ache, and anguish of mind,
Out of the desert of all, shall come the leaf that is green."

Then the \tfind blew on to an island where millet is ever in ear,
And the horses that live in the sea come thronging in thousands to eat,
And the horses that live on the island will never let them come near,
But they fight on the beaches forever with flashing and thunder of feet.

Then he sailed by invisible islands, he smelt the fruit on the trees,
And heard the noise in the shipyards, the crowing of cocks unseen,

Then sheered from the roar of breakers and on over unknown seas,
And ever he grieved for Paris, and thought of the beautiful Queen.

Then he came to a sea of terror, where monsters rose from the sea,
Things with the beaks of birds and arms like the suckers of vines:
Things like ghosts in the water coming motionlessly
To tatter the flesh of men with teeth like the cactus-spines.

Over unending water ever he held his course,
Birds that were curses followed, crying around and above:
"Nireus, broken by beauty, broken again by remorse,
Goes to the breaking of death for killing his friend and love."

And ever he cursed himself for bringing them both to wreck,
Helen and Paris, the lovely; and ever the waves seemed filled
With skull-bones hollow in death, that rose and peered on the deck:
And he thought, "They are those from Troy whom I in my madness killed.

"Had I refused, when they asked for my help to escape,
Paris would still be alive, Troy, the city, would stand,
And all the killed of the war would be tilling the corn and the grape,

Not ghosts with a curse in the air and torn bones
strewing the land."

So he sailed; but at night in the dark when the lantern
bubbled aloft,
And men lay sleeping, when all save he were asleep,
And the ship slid on with a gurgle of water soft,
He knew that the dead of Troy came with him over
the deep.

Out of the long-backed roller that slid from its crest of
foam,
Gibbered the bloodless dead, white faces with haggard
eyes,
Pointing the bones of their hands at him who had forced
them from home,
Their curses came to his ears like little twittering cries.

Whenever he moored at an island for water or food or
rest,
Soon those wraiths of the dead would rise and bid him
begone,
To harry the resting gannet out of the roller's crest,
And carry the curse of his soul to the unknown, on
and on.

In the grey of morning
When the stars were paling,
Nireus sailing,
Saw land ahead.
An island shining
With city towers,
Where bells were ringing
And men singing.

As Nireus stepped ashore there
He stood staring,
For all men there
Were the dead of the war:
The Greeks and Trojans,
Beautiful and swift,
Killed in the trampled tamarisks
Beneath Troy town.

Stars were in their hair,
Their brows were crowned with violets,
They stepped like stags,
Comrade with comrade.
They had forgotten
The mud and death,
The heat and flies
Of the plain of Troy.

There among them
Came a prince in scarlet,
With his hands stretched
In welcoming.
It was Paris, his friend,
Paris whom he killed
In the midnight raid
Beneath Troy wall.

Paris cried,
"Nireus, my comrade,
Nireus, my beloved,
My friend of old!
Here we have forgiven
What my young man's folly bred,

We feast as friends
In the violet fields."

Then he led Nireus
To the hall of feasting.
There they feasted
In the violet fields.
Three summer days and nights,
It seemed, they feasted,
Each summer day and night
Was ten years long.

Paris and the heroes
Cried to Nireus,
"We loved Helen,
When we were men.
Now we love her still
And we see her lonely,
Old, and haunted
By her lovers dead.

"Take to Helen
Gifts from her lovers,
In her old age find her
And give her these:
Beauty and peace
And our forgiveness,
And all our thanks
For what she was."

As they ceased speaking
They faded from him,
The island faded,

Nireus was at sea.
He and his men
Were all grown old,
Thirty years
Had fallen on them.

As old men failing
They came to Sparta;
All unavailing
Their coming was.
Helen was gone
And none knew whither,
To search for peace
Or to find release.

Over the seas
In lands and islands
Nireus sought her,
But could not find.
For the gods retire
When men desire,
Though it burn like fire
And make men blind.

THE TAKING OF MORGAUSE

MORGAUSE the Merry played beside the burn:
The otter said: "Go home: return, return."

But no; she wandered down to the seaside;
"Go home, O little friend," the gannets cried.

But no; she strayed to Erbin heaping wrack:
"Morgause," he said, "beware, my dear; turn back."

But no; she laughed, and ran along the beach:
Blind Erbin cried: "Come back, dear, I beseech."

She ran with naked feet in the bright foam:
The shepherd on the cliff-top called "Go home."

But no, she did not hear, or could not care.
The little vixen stopped her with "Beware . . .

Beyond this jutting headland, drawn to land,
A pirate's Drake-Ship lies upon the sand.

There, filling water, is the pirate's crew . . .
Beware, lest, with the water, they take you."

But no, she heard the sweet-voiced pirates sing,
Filling their earthen breakers at the spring.

Above the cuckoos and the bees of June,
She heard the voices at the ancient tune:—

"My spear will feed me with another's bread,
House me, where once another laid his head,
And bride me with the girl another wed.
Farewell, you women all, that once were dear;
Lovely is love, but warring makes more near
The man beside me with a fellow spear."

Then little Morgause longed to see and know
These dreaded pirates who were singing so.

She thought: "One little peep among the fern
To say I've seen them, then I will return."

But as she went, the black-backed adder cried:
"You tread the road to trouble; turn aside."

The blunt-tailed field-mouse called with shrilly shrieks:
"Beware of iron claws and horny beaks."

Then the red robin, hopping, twittered: "Flee . . .
Those men are wicked, they flung stones at me."

* * * * *

Now, as she crouched among the grasses' stalks,
She saw the Drake-Ship on the roller-balks.

She was red-painted with a sweeping run,
Rowlocked for twelve, with shields for everyone.

A gilded Dragon eyed the way she went,
Aft, were Thor's Hammer and a scarlet tent.

Below the cataract that'leapt the rock
The gold-ringed pirates filled their water-stock.

They filled red earthen jars: their King stood near
Whetting the deadly edges of a spear.

He was a young man, smiling, with black eyes;
In all a pirate's wisdom he was wise.

He wore a scarlet cloak above a mail
Of shining silver wrought like salmon-scale.

He eyed the grass where little Morgause lay,
But did not seem to see: he looked away.

He ceased the whetting of his weapon: then
He watched the work and chatted with his men.

At flood, he bade them run the Dragon down
To sea, across the beach-wrack tumbled brown.

They ran her seaward, crying "Heave" and "Hale";
'Now,' (little Morgause thought) 'I'll see her sail.'

* * * * *

They hoised her red sail, singing to the pull
A song which Morgause thought most beautiful.

The red sail filled and jangled; the calm sea
Lifted and lapsed the vessel not yet free.

The wading pirates loaded her with stores,
Unlasht the steering, shipped the rowing oars.

'There,' (Morgause thought) 'they are about to go,
And I, alone, of all the castle, know . . .

I shall return and tell them: "Look at me . . .
I saw the pirates whom you did not see.

They could not see me hidden in the flowers,
But there I snuggled, watching them for hours.

I was as near as you are to the King,
I heard him tell his boatswain what to sing.

He never saw me, but he came so near,
I could have touched him with a hunting-spear.

Now, after this, I'll wander where I choose,
And when I wish to, nor shall you refuse.' "

* * * * *

So Morgause thought, but now the Dragon's sheets
Were homed; the after rowers took their seats;

The moorings slackt; the silver harnesst lord
Spoke to two seamen as he climbed aboard.

The two men trotted inland: a call blew
Shrill, as the captain passed among his crew.

The oars were tosst together and let fall
Into the rowlocks at the "Ready all."

. * * * * *

'Now,' (Morgause thought) 'they go away, away,
Oar-blades green-swirling, Dragon spouting spray;

Would I could go with them, to see and know
Where all the setting suns and planets go;

To hear the Mermaids singing, and to see
The spicy Phoenix in her burning tree;

And all the golden Apples that the Snake
Guards, lest the neighing Centaurs come to take;

And that dim Valley of the silver corn
Browsed in the moonlight by the Unicorn;

O would I could . . ' And suddenly she felt
Two pirates grip her grimly as she knelt.

* * * * *

King Lot, the silver-scaled, said "By-and-by,
When you are wiser, you will make a spy . . .

Meanwhile, my Morgause, you shall come with me
Over the thoughtless, ship-destroying sea,

North, to my Orkney kingdom's granite tower;
In that grim garden you shall be the flower."

* * * * *

Thither she went: within that stony place
She grew to loveliness of form and face.

And when the seasons made her seventeen,
King Lot of Orkney took her as his Queen.

ARTHUR AND HIS RING

BEAUTY'S Delight, the Princess Gwenivere,
The day she promist marriage to the King
Drew from her hand the gem she held most dear,
Kissed it, to Arthur gave,
Saying, "O love, I plight me with this ring,
This sapphire, my most precious marvellous thing."
Her hair was in it, red as corn in ear.
"This," Arthur said, "I'll carry to my grave."

And being filled with joy, he went to thank
The goddess Venus who had blest his love.
Her image stood before a marble tank
In which, in glittering falls,
A fountain sprinkled water-rings that clove
The shadows of the temple myrtle-grove;
There her bright-breasted pigeons preened and drank,
Sliding and ruckling ever with douce calls.

In marble was the goddess, fashioned well,
Yearning a little forward as she stared;
Men thought her holy bosom rose and fell;
Her robe drooped to her hip,
Fallen in folds, while all above was bared . . .
The myrtle shadows and the water fared
Into the pool before her, there to dwell
With the statue's shadow for companionship.

And Arthur, passing, saw his shadow pass
Along that water on the imaged sky
Wherein the evening planet's glitter was.

He reacht the shape of stone,
Love's very Queen who gives the victory;
He saw her sweet, proud face, her steadfast eye,
Her crown that gleamed, like glow-worms among grass,
Her left hand stretcht, her right hand at her zone.

"O lovely Queen," he cried, "to whom all hearts
That ever suffered Love's intensest ache,
Turn with most passionate crying from all parts,
Take now my thanks, most sweet;
All my heart's deepest thankfulnesses take,
Because, to-day, thy Loveliness didst make
Me, thy poor servant, healed from many smarts
By granted love;" he bent and kissed her feet.

And as he kissed, he felt the marble thrill
As though alive; he felt her garment stir;
Her awful beauty made his heart stand still;
His spirit understood
The cryings of the birds attending her;
Light beat upon him, and the smell of myrrh;
Ecstasy rapt him to a greater will;
A peace that burnt like fire, a pain most good.

"O goddess, risen from the sea," he cried,
"Grant that this ring which my beloved gave
May touch your finger and be sanctified;
And make my love endure
Like to the mountain, not the breaking wave;
Make it my star to shine beyond the grave.
O rose, whom men adore in every bride,
Grant me this boon, most beautiful, most pure.

Behold the ring." At this, he tendered it
To Venus' self, and with his gentlest touch
Upon her outstretcht finger made it fit . . .
But to his utmost awe,
The finger bent to take the ring in clutch;
Then, instantly, his ecstasy was such
That the green leaf was speaking to his wit
And the gold glow-worm telling him his law.

He felt the goddess' hand caress his head;
He heard the music that the planets sing;
Strange flowers fell upon him, scarlet-red,
And glow-worms gleaming green . . .
Yet in the midmost of his joy, the King
Still strove amidst it all to take the ring,
But, lo, it clippt the hand that never bled,
Merged to the finger of the marble Queen.

And as his fingers pluckt, the glory went;
The twilight's wind was in the myrtle grove,
Rattling the leaves and killing all the scent;
The goddess was but stone,
A marble thing to which his jewel clove;
He wrested at it, but it would not move,
It could not move, the finger being bent,
The goddess meant to keep it for her own.

Even with unguents, even when he smeared
Finger and ring with oil, the gem remained
Fast on the stone; until King Arthur feared
That it was lost indeed.
"And yet," he murmured, "if the stone were planed,
By some good craftsman when to-night has waned,

Then, without any doubt it could be cleared."
He went to bed, praying that dawn might speed.

But being abed, the midnight glowed with fire.
There, standing radiant in her crescent moon,
Was Venus' self, the Granter of Desire,
The Hope forever green.
Her quire of lovebirds carolled all in tune,
Her laughing eyes were glowing like the moon,
Joy was her gift and beauty her attire.
"Arthur," she said, "will you not take your Queen?

For I am yours, you wedded me this night;
Take me, beloved: I was never won
Before by mortal man beneath the light,
But I am won by you."
Then Arthur cried, "O creature of the sun,
Have pity on me, O immortal one,
Give back the jewel that my lover plight,
It is Queen Gwenivere's and I am true."

"Behold it, set upon my hand," she said;
"You placed it there with many words of love;
Though I am deathless, do not be afraid,
I am your wedded wife."
"O lady, no," he cried. "By heaven above,
By you, the Blesser and by judging Jove,
My love is Gwenivere, the royal maid,
I neither wooed nor wed you, on my life."

Her crescent moon dimmed down, her eyes seemed stone,
Her scarlet lovebirds dimmed and ceast to sing;
He heard the bloodhounds in the courtyard moan.

"So, Arthur, you deny
Me, the immortal, you an earthly King.
God has your words recorded, I your ring."
The goddess said: "But she whom you disown
Will come again." She dimmed into the sky.

All day he urged his craftsmen, one by one,
To break away the ring; but all from fear
Of goddess or of priest, refused, and none
Would lift a tool or hand.
Then as he sorrowed in the midnight drear,
His bloodhounds whimpered like a stricken steer,
Venus again came shining like the sun,
With eyes not glad, but gleaming like a brand.

"Arthur," she said: "Behold your Queen again . . .
I come out of the brightness of the sky
To seek my husband; must it be in vain?"
Then he, in sore distress,
Said: "Queen, return the jewel. I deny
I ever gave, or thought of giving. I …
Goddess, take pity on a mortal's pain."
"So," she said, "twice you spurn my happiness.

Be wise in time, my Arthur, and beware
A third denial." Then, with dimming light,
She faded from the room and left him there
Shaken at loss and threat.
Unhappy dreams tormented him all night,
Hell-hounds, with yellow eyes and fang-teeth white,
Trotted about his bed with the night-mare.
He rose like one well taken in a net.

And looking at the quay below his tower,
He saw a stranger landing from a ship;
A dark, fierce man, with bright eyes full of power
Blazing beneath a hood . . .
One swift and telling as a cutting whip,
Keen, with a King's decision on his lip.
He smiled on Arthur; Arthur toiled an hour,
Then sought the garden where the statue stood.

And lo, a curse, had fallen: fungus grew
Over the goddess in a lace of green;
No sparrows chirruped nor did pigeons coo,
And mat-weed chokt the tank.
The smell of dying made the place unclean,
All withered were the myrtles of the Queen.
"This cannot be the garden that I knew,"
King Arthur thought, and yet his spirit sank.

"Alas," he muttered, "I have brought a curse
Through scorning of the goddess in the night."
Yet in Apollo's House the wreck was worse;
Jove's House was in decay,
The altars bloodless without gift or rite:
No sweet blue incense-smoke, no votive light,
The golden serpents broken from the thyrse,
And no one there to sacrifice or pray.

No pine torch streamed to Mars in tongues of flame,
The Sanctuary of the Sun was shut,
And in the Moon's House kittens were at game:
To Mercury no oil
Poured, and to Saturn was no offering put,
Vine-prunings, milk, or cornshoots newly-cut;

No woman called aloud on Juno's name,
Nor brought her wool, or balm, or household spoil.

And no man was at work at field or craft,
Nor loitering in the market or the lanes,
No hawkers cried, no children screamed or laught,
No woman tended stall:
The world seemed weary of its fight for gains,
Its daily battle with its daily pains,
Its daily acquiescence in the daft;
A strange awakening had come to all.

But turning tow'rds a lifted voice he heard,
He found them in the circus at the gates,
Intently listening to a teacher's word.
That same fierce foreign man,
Whom he had seen on quayside midst the freights,
Was speaking to them about life and fates.
His spirit quelled them like the eagle-bird,
The hearers trembled as his message ran.

And when he ceast, those tremblers rose as one,
Eyeing each other for a man to lead;
Then, at a word, they all began to run
Towards the city gate,
Crying, "Destroy the idols, the whole breed . . .
Destroy these statues of the devil's seed!"
Then household idols from their niches spun
Crashing: the stranger bade King Arthur wait.

"Arthur," he said, "I see you have a grief
Tormenting to your spirit: lay it bare."
Then, having heard, he said: "I bring relief;

Their strength begins to fail.
They are but erring thoughts and empty air,
Though some of them are strong and other fair.
My Master is the Master of their chief;
Trust to my Master, for his words avail.

But, hark. To-night, at midnight, you must go
Out of the city to that open space
Where the three highways all together flow
Before the bridge-gate fort.
You know the spot, it is an evil place:
Blood-sodden spirits haunt there without grace.
Natheless, go boldly, for ere cocks shall crow,
Their King will travel thither with his court.

Go to that Sovereign and demand your ring
Before he pass the gateway with his crew;
Many and deadly evils do they bring . . .
My Master be your guide.
Ask for that stolen sapphire as your due
And do not blench nor quaver: if you do,
Then truly it will be an evil thing;
But to the valiant nothing is denied."

* * * * *

At midnight Arthur crept outside the gate
Over the causeway to the river bank,
There where the bridge-head tower rose up great
Above three meeting roads.
A fire-basket swung there from a crank,
Lighting the river-ripples rank on rank;
Nothing was there but Darkness full of fate
And spirits without pardon or abodes.

And Arthur, standing at the meeting ways,
Lit by the fire swinging from the tower,
Heard voices crying in a meteor-blaze
That streamed across the air.
One voice was calling: "They have had their hour!"
Then one: "All changes, even Beauty and Power."
Then one: "Eternity has many days . . .
The things that will be are the things that were."

Then from the city, horses' clattering feet,
Trotting upon the causeway, swiftly neared . . .
There came an old King, in a winding sheet,
Whose gemless crown was lead.
Long-boned was he, sunk-eyed, with scanty beard,
Old beyond human telling, bowed and sered,
Tapping the ass he rode with ancient wheat
That, like a sceptre, dreary lustre shed.

And after him, on horseback, came a crew
Of figures, wrapped in cloaks inscribed with signs,
Each tended by the symbol creature due,
The eagle and the pard,
The wolf, the peacock and the stag with tines,
The ox, the goat, the hedgehog with his spines:
The last was one whose looking almost slew,
Who bore no symbol but a broken shard.

Then Arthur, catching at the donkey's rein,
Challenged the Sovereign as the priest had told,
Saying, "O Saturn, give my ring again!"
Then Saturn slowly spake.
"I, ageless, am most aged: I was old
Ere first a lichen sprouted upon mould,

And now I meet a man who prefers pain
On earth to bliss such as immortals take.

Accept your lesser fortune: take your gem."
Then, with a sudden waft of holy scent,
That loveliest flower of the immortal stem,
Venus herself, the Queen,
To Arthur from her golden saddle leant.
"Take back the troth-plight that you never meant,"
She said, and gave it. "Think not I condemn.
In exile I shall keep your memory green.

We pass to exile, you to reap your sowing,
We to the violet fields, you to your end,
We into peace and you to ebb and flowing;
But when the Fate cuts short,
When life has no more penny left to spend,
When Will no longer makes your elbow bend,
Then, from my sea, O Love, I will come rowing,
My Queens and I, to bring you into port.

And now, farewell." And, as she spoke, a cock
Crowed from the gateway tower; the brazen gate
Jarred, rolling open at King Saturn's knock;
And all the glimmering crowd
Rode slowly through, those forces of no date:
Last went the Death that held the broken fate.
Then Arthur, stunned, recovering from his shock,
Kissed his beloved's ring and sang aloud.

GWENIVERE TELLS

So Arthur passed, but country-folk believe
He will return, to triumph and achieve;
Men watch for him on each Midsummer Eve.

They watch in vain, for ere that night was sped,
That ship reached Avalon with Arthur dead;
I, Gwenivere, helped cere him, within lead.

I, Gwenivere, helped bury him in crypt,
Under cold flagstones that the ringbolts shipped;
The hangings waved, the yellow candles dripped.

Anon I made profession, and took vows
As nun encloistered: I became Christ's spouse,
At Amesbury, as Abbess to the house.

I changed my ermines for a goat-hair stole,
I broke my beauty there, with dule and dole,
But love remained a flame within my soul.

What though I watched and fasted and did good
Like any saint among my sisterhood,
God could not be deceived, God understood

How night and day my love was as a cry
Calling my lover out of earth and sky
The while I shut the bars against reply.

Years thence a message came: I stood to deal
The lepers' portions through the bars of steel;
A pilgrim thrust me something shut with seal.

I could not know him in his hoodings hid;
Besides, he fled: his package I undid;
Lancelot's leopard-crest was on the lid.

Within, on scarlet ivory, there lay
A withered branchlet, having leaves of gray.
A writing said: "This is an olive spray

Picked for your blessing from a deathless tree
That shades the garden of Gethsemane;
May it give peace, as it has given me."

Did it give peace? Alas, a woman knows
The rind without may deaden under blows;
But who has peace when all within's a rose?

THEN, after many years, a rider came,
An old lame man upon a horse as lame,
Hailing me 'Queen' and calling me by name.

I knew him; he was Bors of Gannis, he.
He said that in his chapel by the sea
My lover on his death-bed longed for me.

No vows could check me at that dying cry,
I cast my abbess-ship and nunhood by …
I prayed, "God, let me see him ere he die."

We passt the walls of Camelot: we passt
Sand-raddled Severn shadowing many a mast,
And bright Caerleon where I saw him last.

Westward we went, till, in an evening, lo,
A bay of bareness with the tide at flow,
And one green headland in the sunset's glow.

There was the chapel, at a brooklet's side.
I galloped downhill to it with my guide.
I was too late, for Lancelot had died.

I had last seen him as a flag in air,
A battle banner bidding men out-dare.
Now he lay dead; old, old, with silver hair.

I had not ever thought of him as old . . .
This hurt me most: his sword-hand could not hold
Even the cross upon the sacking-fold.

They had a garden-close outside the church
With Hector's grave, where robins came to perch.
When I could see again, I went to search

For flowers for him dead, my king of men.
I wandered up the brooklet, up the glen:
A robin watched me and a water-hen.

There I picked honeysuckles, many a bine
Of golden trumpets budding red as wine,
With dark green leaves, each with a yellow spine.

We buried him by Hector, covered close
With these, and elder-flower, and wild rose.
His friends are gone thence now: no other goes.

He once so ringing glad among the spears,
Lies where the rabbit browses with droppt ears
And shy-foot stags come when the moon appears.

Myself shall follow, when it be God's will;
But whatso'er my death be, good or ill,
Surely my love will burn within me still.

Death cannot make so great a fire drowse;
What though I broke both nun's and marriage-vows,
April will out, however hard the boughs:

And though my spirit be a lost thing blown,
It, in its waste, and, in the grave, my bone
Will glimmer still from Love, that will atone.

From THE WANDERER

ADVENTURE ON

Adventure on, companion, for this
Is God's most greatest gift, the thing that is.
Take it, although it lead to the abyss.

Go forth to seek: the quarry never found
Is still a fever to the questing hound,
The skyline is a promise, not a bound.

Therefore, go forth, companion: when you find
No highway more, no track, all being blind
The way to go shall glimmer in the mind.

Though you have conquered Earth and charted Sea
And planned the courses of all Stars that be,
Adventure on, more wonders are in Thee.

Adventure on, for from the littlest clue
Has come whatever worth man ever knew;
The next to lighten all men may be you.

Adventure on, and if you suffer, swear
That the next venturer shall have less to bear;
Your way will be retrodden, make it fair.

Think, though you thunder on in might, in pride,
Others may follow fainting, without guide,
Bum out a trackway for them; blaze it wide.

Only one banner, Hope: only one star
To steer by, Hope, a dim one seen afar
Yet naught will vanquish Hope and nothing bar.

Your Hope is whatyou venture for, your Hope
Is but the shadowed semblance ofyour scope,
The chink of gleaming towards which you grope.

What though the gleam be but a feeble one,
Go on, the man behind you may have none;
Even the dimmest gleam is from the sun.

Be very sure, that good things truly willed
Survive the broken heart, the martyr killed,
Hope that endures becomes a Hope fulfilled.

A BALLAD OF SIR FRANCIS DRAKE

BEFORE Sir Francis put to sea,
He told his love, "My dear,
When I am gone, you wait for me,
Though you wait for seven year."

His love, who was redder than the rose,
And sweeter than the may,
Said, "I will wait till summer snows
And winter fields bear hay.

"I'll wait until the ice is hot,
And July sun is cold,
Until the cliffs of Dover rot,
And the cliffs of Devon mould."

Sir Francis went aboard his ship,
Her sails were sheeted home,
The water gurgled at her lip
And whitened into foam.

And months went by, but no more word
Came from that roving soul
Than comes from the Mother Carey bird
That nests at the South Pole.

In the seventh year men gave up hope,
And swore that he was dead.
They had the bell tolled with the rope
And the burial service read.

His love, who was redder than the rose,
Mourned for him long and long,
But even grief for a lover goes
When life is running strong.

And many a man beset her way
Who thought it Paradise
To gaze at her lovely eyes and say
That her eyes were stars, not eyes.

And so she promised a nobleman
When the ninth-year hay was hauled,
And before the harvest-home began
Her marriage banns were called.

The wedding-day came bright and fair,
The bells rang up and down,
The bridesmaids in their white were there
And the parson in his gown.

The rosy bride came up the aisle,
The page-boys bore her train;
She stood by the groom a little while
To be made one out of twain.

Not one of all within the church
Thought of Sir Francis Drake.
A crash made the transept columns lurch
And the central tower quake.

A cannon-ball came thundering by
Between the bride and groom.
The girl said, "Francis wonders why
There's someone in his room.

"Francis is homing from the seas,
He has sent this message here.
I would rather be wife to Francis, please,
Than the lady of a peer."

Ere the priest could start his talk again,
A man rushed in to say,
"Here is Drake come home with the wealth
of Spain.
His ships are in the Bay."

The noble said with courtly grace,
"It would be a wiser plan
If I let Sir Francis take my place,
And I will be Best Man."

From A TRIBUTE TO BALLET

SUR LES POINTES

THE time is near, my sweet,
'Tis almost here, my sweet,
After this strain has died,
You will appear, my sweet.

Now, on the strings, my sweet,
The clear cue rings, my sweet,
Upon the note you glide
Out of the wings, my sweet.

Rapt, rapt, in dear delight,
In the moon's dream, in white,
One with the starry grass
And withf the starry night.

White, white, you gleam, my sweet,
White, white, you pass, my sweet,
Like dew on grass, my sweet,
Like mankind's dream, my sweet.

Still as the down you drift,
Light as the mist you lift,
White as the snows you float,
Light as the moonbeam mote.

O white bird from the moon
So soon to cease, my sweet,
Out of your peace, my sweet,
Come soon again, come soon.

SHOPPING IN OXFORD

TWENTY-FOUR years ago, I wandered down
An unknown, unseen, midnight Oxford Town,
And crossed the Thames, and paused upon the bridge
To note the smudge of wood on Hinksey Ridge;
Then went, by summer hedgerows, up the hill
In dewy dimness, all things lying still,
To hear the night-jars in the pine-wood spinning
And the first blackbird tell the day beginning.

Since then, my happy days have all been spent
By this gray town for Learning excellent;
Some of her scholars whom the world commends
Have been for years my neighbours and my friends.
As to the World and Time, she is to me
A Sovran City of Civility.

Others have told her power, who have known.
A vagrant, I, not rightfully her own,
Who draw from her not Learning, having none,
But yet the kindness shared with everyone,
The grace and beauty scattered up and down,
And this in special, single to the town,
That those within her shops in courtesy
Repay the buyers whatsoe'er they buy.

Twenty-four years of purchase, in amount,
Mean, many parcels more than I can count.
In all that little life-time, year by year,
The weekly wants have brought me shopping here.

And knowing buying thus, I wonder well
What sort of life it is, to stand and sell.

The sellers stand, to cherish all day long
The hundred wants of the demanding throng;
To bear, however much they inly burn,
The rude, the pert, the thruster out of turn;
The meddlesome, whose fidget-fingers change
The place of goods that daintinesses range;
The troublesome-fastidious whose desires
Are, to see all, yet never to be buyers;
Or, possibly still worse, the unprecise,
His want unclear, who makes the labour thrice.
And many others bring a special hell
Doubtless, sometimes, to those who stand to sell,
Who, whether well or ill, or hot or freezing,
Seek out the buyer's pleasure and are pleasing.

That they are pleasing, all who ever buy
In Oxford shops can surely testify:
Of all the shops I name or do not name
I and their other buyers can make claim
That, of our purchased parcels laid in pile
Each one was rendered friendly, with a smile,
A charming word or jest that gave a grace
Of silver to the penny's commonplace,
So that a spirit companied the thing
Borne in the paper package tied with string,
So that it seemed a thing not bought and sold
But given, out of friendship and worth gold.

It is a pleasant pastime to go eyeing
Where things attract and tempt you into buying;

The dustless shining things which subtly wait
Yourself, the willing fish for this the bait.
Among these verses I have written down
The fruits of shopping about Oxford town,
Each with the happy memory of faces
Who greet me friendly at the customed places,
And of the streets in which the windows shine,
That are the magnets to these friends of mine;
For here, new pleasures purchasers attend,
They find the looked-for treasure and a friend.

I seek few treasures, except books, the tools
Of those celestial souls the world calls fools.
Happy the morning giving time to stop
An hour at once in Basil Blackwell's shop,
There, in the Broad, within whose booky house
Half England's scholars nibble books or browse.
Where'er they wander blessed fortune theirs,
Books to the ceiling, other books upstairs.
Books, doubtless in the cellar, and behind
Romantic bays where iron ladders wind,
And in odd nooks sometimes in little shelves,
Lintot's and Tonson's calf-bound dainty twelves.

Many fair windows look on Oxford streets
Bright to the passing fly with booky sweets,
I know of seven others, but, alas,
Prudence and taxes make one guard' e pass.

If books be suns, there is a moon's delight
About the things which help a man to write,
There is a joy arranging like the cook
The many things which help to make the book,

The paper bluish, blue-lined, toughish, glazed,
Which (when I wrote with pens) I ever praised;
The canvas note-books, taking to the eyes,
The paste-pots precious in a last revise;
The black and scarlet inks, the pens they feed
Of metal, quill or glass, or gold or reed;
The blotting-paper, pink or white, which sips
The damps of Helicon with thirsty lips;
The rubber-bands, or metal-weights, which guard
The written chapter on its base of card;
The envelopes, of twenty different shapes,
Each gummy-tongued above a mouth that gapes,
Each with a void in which will some day lurk
The chaptered, numbered, named, completed work.
The crayons, too, blue, green and yellow-tipped,
Useful for marking bundled manuscript;
And things with ever brief but useful lives,
Pencils and little pocket paper-knives;
And, waiting still the Greek seal I affix,
Cardinal-coloured wax in slender sticks.

Then the black-bright, smooth-running, clicking, clean
Brushed, oiled and dainty typewriting machine,
With tins of ribbons waiting for the blows
Which soon will hammer them to verse and prose;
These and their plenishings, I love to tell them
And love the happy houses where they sell them.

Then, too, the Printers, piled up to the roofs
With old work done and drying poster proofs,
With letterings in red, announcements, sales,
And damp, smudged galleys fluttering from nails;

The perfume of the drug that poets drink
(The brew they sometimes die of), printers' ink;
And close at hand the music poets bless,
The lift and trample of the printing press.
What memories I have, correcting versions
Of proofs for Recitations and Diversions,
In days of peace when every year's July
Brought us a Festival of Poetry.

All who love books must love the Binder's skill
That fights all foes that work a volume ill,
That slays the boring worm and nulls the fox
(Who yellows leaves like lichen upon rocks);
That smooths the tattered, dogs'-eared crumpled page,
That brightens youth and glorifies old age,
That keeps old leather sides upon their backs
And scorns to shear dear pages with his axe.
Maltbys, the binders, re-create books thus;
And many a royal binding glorious
Of blue morocco or white vellum pure
They have made fair, in beauty to endure.
And cases, too, they make, in which are slipped
Old printer's copy, type or manuscript,
There like the mummy of old joy, to wait
A maid's cremation in some unknown grate.
These things St. Michael's binders subtly build
Of linenned card, and having lettered, gild.
All these, it once has been delight to buy
As workman's fittings to the craft I ply.

Though books delight me, sometimes music seems
As sure a gateway to a world of dreams

Therefore I sometimes tread romantic floors
Lined to the ceiling with recorded scores,
Where, each in's box, the music-lovers stay
Hearing ten tunes and wishing nine away.
There, as the artist must, I follow fast,
The one, though interrupted, to the last,
And bear its black disc home and set it going
And tread its peace in moonlights out of knowing.
That room of records keeps the faery keys
Of gardens lovelier than th' Hesperides,
Of wells more liquid with eternal thought
Than Lully drank of or de Leon sought;
Therefore I see no records lifted down
Without the thought: "There Joy goes into town'

And other tools I sometimes come to find;
Carpenter's tools delighting hand and mind;
Vices to clutch the work, and crows with claws,
And saws and tenon-saws and metal-saws;
Chisels and firmer chisels, gouges, clippers,
The tiniest brads, the neatest little nippers.
Minutest screw-eyes, nails and screws of brass,
And drills so subtle that they bend, alas.
And other goods I sometimes come to seek
Sticks of hard woods and little scraps of teak,
And thread of many sorts to be the rope
Aboard a model not yet more than hope;
The paints and brushes for her, and the oil
Which gives such polish after so much toil.
What fun to buy these things, and to have known
In him who sells skill greater than your own.

While life is energy and blood is red
Some parts of shopping must be daily bread:—

Therefore, I praise the bakehouse standing sentry
Close upon Gloucester Green at Friar's Entry,
Wherein one buys the crusty, fragrant, sweet,
Hot brown bread, "precious as the gods do eat".
And scones so full of symmetry and light
That the glad tooth is half afraid to bite;
And buns that make the questing spirit see
All Chelsea ever was or Bath could be.
In praising bakers, let me also praise
Those who refresh the weary on their ways;
The Shamrock tea-rooms, up the narrow stairs,
What scones, what jellies and what jams are theirs.
There, as the weary rest in Gothic nooks,
They hear the Oxford bells and bless the cooks.

Man needs instruction, daily bread and rest;
Convention adds, he should be shod and dressed.
And England has a lack which all deplore
The suit for work within and out of door;
Such as the French blue blouse or English smock
One not in use, the other not in stock.
Till lately, too, she kept a crazy rule,
"In summer seasons no man must be cool".
I was the first that order to defy,
I wandered cool in Oxford only I.
I praise the tailors who, (perhaps in fear)
Helped this insane, wise, easy pioneer.
I well remember in that early stage
Men's angry envy or their jealous rage;
But I was cool and smiled to see the scowl
Glare from the furry coat and woollen cowl,
I bless the skilful men who keep my form
In summer tranquil and in winter warm.

Then those who during many years have shod
The feet upon whose leather I have trod,
In all five continents and seven seas
And twenty-six of man's communities.
Upon their leather, whereso'er I roam,
I have set forth and later wandered home
And ever find, re-entering the place
The same swift helpful tact and courteous grace.

Then those, across the way, that fragrant cave
Of joys of life and guards against the grave;
Whence, besides drugs, the buyer carries home
The sponge that sluices and the soaps that foam,
Throat-blessing gargles, and the scented, nice,
Pungent, sub-Tropic, cuttled dentifrice;
The shaving-brush whereon the lathers swoon
Being plucked at dawn from badgers of the Moon;
Boracic crystals, lint and cataplasms
And cures for all from pernio to spasms.

In Market Street, a glittering shop there is
Pounce-like and sharp with many cutleries
Of knives, and the most cunning scissors made,
And many a different kind of razor-blade.
Since edges have meant progress, sages stop
Always, to eye the wonders in this shop.

In many a morning I have gone to choose,
Groceries, fruits and sweets at Grimbly Hughes,
That crowded house where all that man has dreamt
Of dainty niceness is in sight to tempt.
Then, the Cadena, crowded with the wise
Who seek fresh-ground the coffee that they prize

And bear it home in paper-bags imprest
Scenting the street with Araby the Blest.
There, too, a counter stands of sweet things sweeter
Than tongue can ever tell in words and metre.

Then in the Market there will always be
The stalls to tempt one, beautiful to see,
And to remember long in after hours
For some undreamed-of ecstasy of flowers,
Or some strange fruit, or subtle alien plant
Remote among her spines, perverse, askant;
Or rapturous words from little girls and boys
In Paradise from looking at the toys.
Even in time of war, the shops display
The wealth of sea and land in their array,
The sides of beef still dangle from the hooks;
The meat-axe chops for critic-witted cooks;
And damp on marble slabs the ice amid
The fish forget the pure through which they glid.

And other shops there are where none can pry
Unless with peril of a bankruptcy;
The charming shops of old and lovely gear
From what were homes of folk no longer here,
The chairs, the stuffs, the gems, the yellowed lace,
The fans once cool on some forgotten face;
The shawl where silken butterflies still glance
Whose owner saw Carlotta Grisi dance;
The dainty havings sadly left behind
By ancient love and elegance of mind;
The necklet-lockets still containing hair
From loves, now ghosts, long mingled in the air;

Enamelled boxes haunted by the faint
Sweet scent or tint of powder or of paint;
The netted purse, whose owner long since went
Under the spade, her last spade-guinea spent;
The miniatures, un-named, of folk unknown;
And saddest yet, the painted eye alone.
Among the gilt, the silk and old brocade
Of ruined homes which past affections made,
Sometimes a mirror, chair, or broidered piece,
Is singled thence, to take another lease
Of human use and sometimes seekers' eyes
Searching the print-pile come upon a prize
A Durer or a Rembrandt; or a drawing
Of ships disdainful of the billows clawing,
(Such prizes have been mine) and sometimes, too,
Among the porcelain, all white and blue,
Of early Worcester, one perceives the bowl,
The bell-like, swan-like, chipless, crackless, whole
Desired piece that summer's fragrant stir
Shall fill with rose-leaves or with lavender.

The common thing, if blessed by head and heart,
Becomes uncommon as a work of art;
So these who sell to those who only buy
Have made their sellings bright in memory.
Thanks cannot pay what kindness freely gives,
But the glad kindness runs the world and lives.
I live the gladder for the daily thought
"They gave me golden what my copper bought."

From THE BIRD OF DAWNING

THE BOAT'S CREW DISAPPOINTED

At four o'clock the watch was relieved. The wind was now blowing a full steady gale out of the west, with a clear sky, and a promise of fair weather.

"I'll lie by till daylight," Cruiser said. "The sea may be a bit less confused then, and we can have a look at the hull before we get sail on her."

"Very good, sir," old Fairford said. "She's come through the night very well, sir, considering."

"Yes, considering."

There was nothing more to be done at the moment. Cruiser looked round the boat and saw the heads of the watch on deck all alert, and the boat's bows rising and falling with a grinding and chopping noise, and the sprays gleaming as they flew off on either side. The light of the false dawn was whitish aloft, "taking the shine out of the stars." He felt gladder than he could say for the blessing of light and the passing of the gale. All the men about him, however seasoned to the sea, were feeling cold. They had now been a day in the boat; and how much worse their lot was now than it had been twenty-four hours before.

"Still, we're alive," he thought "And the port watch are dead, whatever that means." He wondered what it did mean.

He saw that Chedglow was fairly snug, and then wedged himself into a nook. Being exceedingly weary he fell into a deep sleep, like a death, from which he woke in an hour, so cramped and stiff that it took some

minutes of pain to get movement into neck and limbs. He rose and stretched and took a look at the sea. The false dawn had died, leaving the heaven dark and shot with stars. The sea was still high, though it seemed to be steadying to the wind.

'Til wait another hour before making sail," he said.

"Very good, Captain Trewsbury."

Before curling down to sleep again he looked out over the starboard quarter at the beginning of the dawn, and at once shouted, "Sail-ho." As he shouted the look-out man sang out:

"Sail on starboard quarter, sir."

All hands were up on the cry full of the wildest hope.

"Trip the drogues and get them in," Cruiser said, unshipping the steering oar and reshipping the rudder. "Get the sail on her."

They ran in the drogues to an overhand chorus:

> A handy ship and a handy crew,
> Handy, my boys, so handy;
> A handy mate and a second mate, too,
> Handy, my boys, away. O.

They ran up the sail to a similar ditty of:

> Away, haul away, boys, haul away together,
> Away, haul away, boys, haul away. O.

With the brightness in the sky exhilaration had come to those weary men: hope was now quick in them.

Old Fairford came aft when the drogues were stowed; the boat was standing towards the sail, which was now plainly in sight, little more than a mile from them.

"A fine full-rigged clipper, sir," old Fairford said.

"Burn a flare, Mister," Cruiser said. "Go on burning till she sees us."

The ship was coming down on a soldier's wind under a press of canvas. Her royal masts had been sent down, probably in the storm of the night before, but she carried full topgallants and her fore topmast studding sail. She was making probably twelve knots in what seemed a succession of staggering pauses followed by lifting thrusts forward. She seemed to bow down till her bowsprit was deep in smother and her eyes submerged, then after a check amid the bubble she would rise and rise and clear what seemed like half her length, all shaking with running water and surge herself forward, still rising and rolling till the power of her fabric bowed down again.

"Quick, the flare, Mister," Cruiser said.

"The flares are wet, sir; that's the third. Ah, here's one."

There came a sputtering from the little torch, sparks flew from the end of it, then the red glow burned true, so that all the haggard faces became transfigured, and the broken boat was as a thing of ruby bringing spirits across the sea of death.

"Pass the flares forward. Burn them forward," Cruiser called.

In an instant a second flare was burning, making such a glare on the sea that they could see fishes rising at it thirty yards away. A flight of flying fishes came into it as they fled, they streamed across it like scarlet darts. The ship was dimmer to them from the glare. She made no sign of having seen them. She held her thundering course.

"Shout. Hail her all together," Cruiser said. "She's to leeward; she may just hear."

They shouted together: "Ship ahoy. Ahoy there, you. Ship ahoy."

"There she comes. She sees us. She's coming to the wind," Rodmarton cried.

"She doesn't see us," Kemble said. "She yawed a bit perhaps."

"Another flare there, quick."

They burned yet another flare. This time a flight of fishes confused by it fell aboard the boat and flapped and fluttered in the well. The ship had now crossed their bows, without any sign of having seen them.

"It's a bad time to be seen by a ship," old Kemble said. "The look-out's been relieved, and the watch has knocked off for coffee. The mate's having coffee on the poop, and the only man who could see us is the man at the wheel, and you can see he's got his hands full."

"I wish to God we'd a rocket, sir," old Fairford said. "A rocket or two would catch the eye more. Men in a ship are always looking up, and men ashore generally looking down. Those fellows are looking aloft."

"They're not looking at us," Cruiser said. "They haven't seen us. But burn another flare, Mister."

'Til bet dey seen us," Bauer said. "But dey want to make der passage and not split der sails."

"Because you're a dirty skunk," Edgeworth said, "it don't follow everyone else is."

However, Bauer had spoken to some willing listeners. As the ship dimmed away from them the disappointment broke out in growls against the unknown ship, that she had seen them and must have seen them, but had not

chosen to stop for them. Cruiser thought it wiser to check them.

"A boat is never easy to see," he said. "Even in broad daylight a white boat is hard to pick up at sea. Before dawn with a big sea running the chances are anything against our being seen."

"Dey must have seen der flares, sir," Bauer said.

"Hell with your 'must,'" Kemble said. "I've told you, if you'd ears to hear, why she didn't see. You Dutch square heads can neither see nor know. I was shipmates once with a man who was on the raft from the *Carradale.* He said they had two wefts flying and twenty men hollaing and praying, yet a big ship went past them just before dawn, within two cables, and never saw nor heard. Hell with your 'must.' There's vapours at sea, in the air, that will hide anything, and jobs on board that will keep every eye in the ship; and there's the fortune of the sea, too; what we all signed for and have to take."

"Pick up the flying fish and bring them aft," Cruiser said. There were eleven flying fish.

"Delivered at the door just like the milk," Perrot said.

"Lash an oar to the mast there," Cruiser said, "and bend a weft to the blade. Someone aloft in her may see it."

They did this, and looked longingly after the flying clipper, now far to the south of them. There was a bare chance perhaps now that the sun was almost up that someone aloft in her might sight the boat; but would he report her? And if he did, would she fling away the wind and a sail or two to come to them? Cruiser felt that she would, if the weft were reported, but thought that the chance of the boat's being reported was remote. He knew that the only men likely to be aloft in the ship

were the lads, overhauling buntlines, and that if a lad saw them he would not guess what they were. He would probably come down and say that he thought he saw some floating wreck, and would then be told that he wasn't paid to think, but that if he saw any more he could have it for his breakfast.

THE RACE

JUST off the Fairlight a little steamer, going with coals for Fowey, edged close in to the *Bird of Dawning,* so as to have a good look at her. Cruiser hailed her through the trumpet.

"Ahoy, there, the *Chaffinch,* what China ship won the Race?"

"No ship," the *Chaffinchs* skipper shouted back. "You are the Race. Go in and win."

"Thank you," Cruiser shouted. "Is that straight?"

"Yes. Get to it. Knock the bastards silly."

This was greeted with a cheer from all hands: they had a chance still.

There came a sudden, hurrying greyness astern: it sent before it a hissing noise which put Cruiser's heart into his boots. He shouted out, "Let go your royal halliards. Stand by topgallant braces," and had let fly the main royal halliards as a rain squall swept over them and blotted out ships, sea and land in a deluge that filled the scupper. Out of the deluge there came wind in a gust that tore the flying royals into tatters. Something more than the royals went, the topgallant stunsails went at tack and halliards, blew out in the rain like dirty flags, flogged once, twice and away, with whips of their gear lashing round anything they touched. The masts bent, the yards curved at the arms under the pull of the sheets, and the ship leaped forward as though suddenly lashed.

The men ran to the gear: nothing more was lost: the split sails were cleared and new ones bent but not set. The rain made a darkness about them for twenty minutes,

during which Cruiser had two men on the fo'c's'le looking out.

As the squall cleared off, the sun drawing to the west shone out and made a rainbow upon its darkness. Under the arch of colours they saw the *Caer Ocvran* not two hundred yards from them on the starboard bow. She seemed to be stuck there in tossing waters that whitened about her in a great bubble.

Through the glass Cruiser could plainly see her captain, pacing his weather poop, glancing quickly aloft and at the *Bird of Dawning.* "Ah, yes, sir," Fairford said, as he watched, "you can glance and you can curse the helmsman, but the *Bird of Dawnings* got you beat to the wide."

"That's Captain Winstone," Cruiser said. "He was mate of the *Bidassoa* when I was in her. Look at that now: did you ever see a ship so wet?"

"She's famous for it, sir; the *Caer.* A fine ship, too."

Presently they were abreast of her, and forging ahead upon her, so that they could sec her in her glory. She had a straight sheer and a transom stern, having been built upon the lines of the famous French frigate, *UAigle.* In a light air no ship of her time could touch her, and she could run with the swiftest. She had a name through the seven seas for being wet: her decks now were running bright: for she was a caution in a head sea. They were watching and tending her now, getting some of her after-sail off her to keep her from burying her bow. Cruiser dipped his colours to her as he passed, but would not hail his old captain. As he drew clear, he saw her famous figurehead of Queen Gwenivere bowing down into the smother, then rising and pausing, then plunging down till the fo'c's'le-rail was lipping green.

"Look at that," Cruiser said. "Did you ever see a ship pitch like that?"

As he spoke, she took a deeper 'scend than usual, and rose with a snapped stunsail boom lifting on a loose wing.

The *Fu-Rien* drew clear of the *Caer Ocvran* on her lee-side: she was now a quarter of a mile away and gaining perhaps twenty yards a minute. Dungeness lay ahead, distant perhaps eight miles, and somewhere about Dungeness there would be pilots and perhaps tugs. There or thereabouts the race would be decided, another hour would see it out. Cruiser's men had been hard at it all day, and were showing signs of wear. They drank strong tea, syrupy with sugar and laced with brandy, as they got their hawsers ready forward and eyed the distant winning post.

All the issue from the gate of the Channel were about them: all the ships of a tide or two before from London and Antwerp, all the fishermen of Kent and Sussex. Every seaman who came past had no eyes for anything but those two superb clippers disputing for pride of place.

When the squall had passed by both had set every rag that could be brought to draw: they were now straining under clouds of canvas with a strong beam wind, and a head tide. .Tarlton, who had been in the *Fu-Kien,* was not encouraging. "Just the wind she likes most," he said, "she's a glutton for it. And she laps up a head sea like a rum milk-punch." All the marvellous evening shone out mile after mile as they raced: the French coast plain as far as Calais, England white to windward, with occasional windows flashing like jewels, and a darkness of passing storm beyond. Occasional violent gusts kept men in both ships at the upper halliards; and still the *Fu-fjen* gained.

Cruiser was watching her now; she was not more than a hundred yards astern and to leeward, her decks full of men, and spare sails, all made up for bending, on each hatch, and the ship herself a picture of perfection, all bright for port, the paint-work and tarring finished; the hull black, with a white sheer-straik to set off her sheer, the yards black, man-of-war fashion, but with white yard-arms, and her masts all scraped clean with glass, of shining yellow pine. All her brass was bright, and the scroll below her bowsprit had been freshly gilt. She was driving on easily with great laughing leaps. Cruiser could see, in the bearing of the men in her, their certainty that they were winning. Both ships were hauling their wind now to turn the bend. Both could see now, coming out from Dungeness, the pilot cutter, standing towards them, not two miles away, and beyond, making for them what seemed to be tugs, but might be small coasters.

"Too bad, sir," old Fairford said. "We'd have done it if we'd had a bit more luck."

Cruiser was feeling broken-hearted at being passed on the post, but he could not take this view of it. "No, no," he said. "We've had such luck as no sailors ever had before. Think of what has come to us." All the same, he had to move away. When he was on the lee-poop staring at the *Fu-Kien*, old Fairford could not see how bitterly he felt.

As they hauled their wind, the *Fu-Kien* forged ahead upon them, standing close in upon them, intending to weather upon them and drive across their bows. Bloody Bill China was there on his poop, an unmistakable big figure with a hard tall grey hat jammed sideways on his head and a long pistol in his right hand. "That's Bloody Bill, sir," Tarlton said to Mr. Fairford. "Bloody Bill

China, sir, the Captain. You'll see him send a bottle of brandy out to the yard-arm in a moment."

Sure enough a lad with a line went up the mizen-rigging and out to the crojick yard with it, rove it through a jewel block at the yard-arm, and brought it down on deck. *A* bottle of brandy was hauled out to the yard-arm upon it and dangled there. "That's Bloody Bill's way, sir," Tarlton said. "If ever he weathers on a ship he shoots a bottle of brandy at the yard-arm and then splits another on all hands."

Twenty faces stared at the *Bird of Dawning* from the *Fu-Kien's* side. Those men of the sea, negroes, Malays and Europeans, grinned and cheered as their ship slid past.

Bloody Bill China, who was certainly half drunk, shouted something to his steward, who was standing near the break of the poop beside a grog-kid. The steward put a corkscrew into the cork of a bottle which he held. Bloody Bill strode to the ship's rail, and yelled at Cruiser, whom he took to be Captain Miserden, "Give my love to the Prophet Habakkuk."

Voices from the *Fu-Kien's* waist, eager for the promised grog, and full of joy in their victory, shouted "Habakkuk, Yah Yah, Habakkuk," and instantly the *Fu-Kietfs* mainmast was ahead of the *'Bird of Dawnings* mizen, and at once the *Fu-Kieris* crew manned the rail and cheered, and beat the fire signal on both her bells. Bloody Bill China brandished his pistol above his head, brought it down, and fired it as it fell: the bottle at the yard-arm was shattered—the brandy spilled. Instantly the steward drew his cork and Bloody Bill China shouted, "Grog-oh! The *Fu-Kien* wins the China Race."

She tore past the *Bird of Dawning.* She cleared her by a cable, then by three hundred yards. "Look out, sir,"

Tarlton cried to Cruiser. "He'll cross your bows as sure as God made Sunday

And instantly Bloody Bill China did; he luffed up out of bravado, so as to get to windward of the *"Bird of Dawning.*

He was going to cross her bows, just to show her. As he luffed, one of the violent gusts beat down upon both ships. Cruiser saw it coming and let go in time, but it caught the *Fu-Kien* fairly, and whipped her top-gallant masts clean off in succession as one might count one, two, three. The great weight of gear swung to and fro on each mast, the fore-upper topsail went at the weather clue, the main-upper topsail halliards parted and the yard coming down brought the lower topsail with it, bending the truss and cockbilling the yard. The helmsman let her go off, she fell off, thumping and thrashing while gear came flying down from the ruin. With a crash, the wreck of the foretopgallant mast, with its three yards, and stunsail booms and weight of sail and half a mile of rigging, collapsed about the forehatch.

It all had happened in a moment. Cruiser had been warned and had just time to heave the helm up. The *Bird of Dawning* always steered like a bird: she answered to a touch; she answered to it now, but the *Fu-Kien* was right athwart her hawse not three hundred yards away, falling off and coming down on her, with all the wreck on her mainmast visibly shaking the whole mast. One active daredevil soul was already racing with an axe to the splintered mast-head, to hack through the shrouds.

Cruiser saw her come round almost on her heel, straight at the *Bird of Dawning.* For about half a minute it seemed certain that the two would go into each other and sink each other. The mizen royal yard slid out of its bands

and smote the *Fu-Kietfs* deck end-on like a harpoon. The terrified helmsman hove the helm hard down; the ship, having still way on her, swung back into the wind; with a running, ripping, walloping crash, her main topgallant wreck came down into her waist, going through the bunt of the mainsail as it went.

The *Bird of Dawning* went past her and missed her by thirty yards. As they passed, Bloody Bill China leaped on to the top of the wheel-box, hurled his hard hat at Cruiser, and while it was still in the air, settling to the sea, put three bullets through it with his pistol: he then hurled his pistol after it and leaped down cursing on to the main-deck to clear the wreck.

Cruiser left him to clear it; there, ranging down upon him, was the pilot cutter. In another minute that graceful boat rounded to with her pilot, who caught the tackle flung, and in an instant was swung high and brought upon the *Bird of Dawnings* deck.

The Pilot was a short man of enormous breadth, with a gentle manner. He seemed puzzled at the smallness of the crew and at the unusual untidiness of the deck, the planks not scrubbed nor oiled, the paint not freshened. He came up the weather ladder to Cruiser and shook him by the hand.

"I'm proud to welcome you, Captain," he said. "You're the first China clipper to take a pilot this year."

About five minutes later two tugs bore down upon them. Cruiser hoped as they drew near that they would be those telegraphed for by him. They were, however, two pirates, anxious to make the most of the situation. "Take you in, and dock you, for £100 a tug, Captain," their spokesman said.

"Are you the London and Dover Tug Company?"

"No, Captain; the South Foreland Tug Company. What about it?"

"Nothing doing."

"Now, Captain," the tugman cried. "You give us your line. £100 a tug is nothing to you if you win the prize. And with us you can't fail to win the prize. What's £100 a tug to honour and glory?"

"I'll give you £50 a tug," Cruiser said.

"Is that your last word?"

"Yes."

"Adew, my bucko," the tugman cried. Both tugs sheered off, in what Cruiser took to be the familiar gesture of a tugman driving a bargain. In this he was wrong, both tugs bore down on the *Fu-Kien* in such obvious distress astern. They had no doubt hoped that they might get a little salvage there. He saw them hang round the stern of the *Fu-Kien* while they drove their bargain and though Bill China was an ill man to bargain with, they drove it, for he saw them take position ahead to take the *Fu-Kietfs* lines. But there was some little delay in their getting the lines, because the *Fu-Kietfs* forward deck was a jumble of wreck not yet cleared. Old Fairford shook his head. "Ah, Captain Trewsbury," he said, "if you'll excuse my saying it, sir, 'Agree with thy adversary quickly' is wisdom when you're dealing with tugs. Now we're past the bend of the land this wind will fall and be tricky: we'll be as like as not becalmed before we're in the Downs: and there aren't too many tugs, sir. It'd be hard to see the *Fu-Kien* go past with those two fellows. Besides, sir, if the wind should fall light, as it will, we shall have the *Caer Ocvran* on us again. They say her captain can get way on her by blowing a flute on the poop."

"I dare say I was an ass," Cruiser said, "but we'll soon know."

There came a shout from forward on the starboard side. Efans came running aft,

"What's the matter?" Cruiser asked.

"The *Serica,* sir. She's peen on the French side, look you, and is standing ofer ahead of us."

"What of it?" Cruiser asked. "She can't sail against the wind."

He had watched that ship to leeward for some time, wondering if she could be one of the fleet. He had not thought her to be the *Serica.* If she were the *Serica,* then she, too, would be in the running, and might get a tug before him and beat them all. He looked at her through the telescope, and thought that she was liker the *Min and Win;* but a ship ahead of them by any name would be as ugly. "Well, I suppose I was an ass," he concluded to himself, as the evening closed in and the sun dipped into the clouds above England.

As old Fairford had foretold from the depth of his knowledge, the wind fell light and was tricky. Sheltered there in the Channel under the lee of the land, with the tide still ebbing, there was little lop on the water, which was of a dark grey now under the cliffs, and stretching green, with pinkish mottlings from the clouds, to distant France. Dover Pier and Castle and cliffs rose up: and there, bearing down upon him, were two tugs with tall scarlet smoke-stacks banded at the top with black. "There are the London and Dover tugs," he said.

"Them's them," old Fairford said. "The *Morning* and *"Evening Star."* He sheered away to utter his real comment unheard: "And them two the *Fu-Kierfs* got will eat the pair of them for breakfast."

As the *Evening Star* swung round, and came almost alongside, Cruiser saw his brother, the lawyer, standing on the bridge with the tug-captain.

"Hallo, Mike," he hailed. "How goes it?"

"Hallo, Cyril."

"You got my telegram?"

"Yes. I've settled with these tugs. I've settled everything."

"Give us your line, Captain," the tugman cried. The lines were tossed down: in a few minutes the hawsers were passed and the tow to London River had begun.

Soon after they had started towing and before it had become too dark to see, the ship that men had thought to be the *Serica* showed clearly that she could not be the China clipper, but some unknown lofty ship bound for Dunkirk, Cruiser was able to judge the speed of the *Fu-Kien* under tow as less than his. He had a start of at least a couple of miles of her, and hoped to be able to maintain it.

In the last of the light he saw the *Caer Ocvran* come gliding up on a breath and signalling for steam. There was no tug for her. Presently the wind ceased, so that even the *Caer Ocvran* lay still in the calm.

The September night closed in upon them as they drew into the Downs. Deal lights twinkled to port; on ahead, on the starboard bow, the Gull Stieam light gleamed out and vanished and again gleamed. Presently, as they finished with the sails and came from aloft in the dark, a big moon rose on the one hand, while on the other came the Kentish lights, Ramsgate Harbour and the North Foreland. A mile or two more brought them round the Elbow, into the great expanse starred with beacons, the Prince's Channel and the Girdler, with

Shoebury far beyond. The night came cold and quiet, with a clear sky, into which the moon rose triumphing.

All through the night they towed, from the Channels to the Deeps and from the Deeps into the Reaches. The hard work of the voyage was over, but all hands stayed on deck ready for a call. Perrot made them suppers at odd times; some of them slept and others sang. Edgeworth stretched canvas over the ends of a cask and made a drum.

Before morning came, as Cruiser walked with the Pilot watching sleeping England and the unsleeping life of the river, a Kentish cock crowed for morning in some unseen roost. The faint magical noise reached the *Bird of Dawning* and instantly her cock flapped on his perch in the coop and crowed in answer. Far away ashore on both sides of the river the cry passed from roost to roost. Cockcrow surely will rouse the dead at the dawn of judgment.

Soon light came into the sky: factory whistles blew to work, chimneys smoked; bells rang and the life of the port became busy about them. At eight o'clock, as they drew near to dock, a big steamer, coming down, beat her bells to them; her crowd of passengers, stewards and deckhands clustered at the rail and cheered them: she blew her siren, and passed them, dipping colours. Now down the river towards them came a flotilla of tugs, river-craft, skiffs, wherries and launches, all crowded, all gay with flags. The pierhead loomed up, black with people. The dockside railwaymen began to let off detonators. All those multitudes cheered and cheered, waved flags and streamers, flung their hats aloft and cried for the *Bird of Dawning.*

"You're for it, Captain," the Pilot said. "If you'll

cast an eye down the Reach you'll see your rival."

Far down the river, too far down perhaps to be a serious rival, a big ship without topgallant masts was towing up in a cloud of black smoke.

"She's the *Fu-Kien,"* Cruiser said.

"She's got three tugs to her," the Pilot said. "She'll run you close still. The worst of these races is that they're never decided till the ship's docked. And we're far from docked yet."

"Yes, there's many a slip," Cruiser said. "And she's coming up fast."

"If we can get the gates closed behind us, before she's ready to enter, we'll beat her," the Pilot said. "But in this river anything may delay us, a barge or one of your admirers in a skiff here."

From DEAD NED

THE CORONER'S INQUEST

"SHALL we come then?" the Rector said.

"Yes, indeed," I said, "let us come."

I stood up, and motioned the Rector to go first; he wished me to go first, but I said: "The Church leads," and on that, he led the way. Bert wondered what he should do. I told him that he would have to come to the Court too, in case they enquired about the time of the finding of the body; he followed me. I told the old man with the blunderbuss to blow out the candles. He scowled at me and muttered something, but blew them out and clumped down the passage after us. The company in the dining-room had fallen still; I could see that some people were sitting in the kitchen; they, too, were still. The Rector and I both trod quietly in that house of death. This old man with the gun came after us noisily. He might have been Death with his Scythe clanking all his bones.

The dining-room was lit with a great many candles as well as by a bright fire. The shutters had been closed and the curtains drawn. The table was pulled towards the windows. Sir Charles sat in the middle of it, with his back to the windows. To the right of him sat two justices of the peace who lived in the parish; one was a Mr. Ryme, the other was a Mr. Suker or Soker. Both these men had writing materials before them. To the left sat Dr. Gubbins, the Admiral's doctor, the only physician in the parish, and Thomas the clerk ready to take down depositions. Opposite Sir Charles, in chairs taken from

all the rooms in the house, and now ranged along the wall, sat a jury of householders. At? the end of the room, Mrs. Will, Polly and a girl sat weeping. Another woman there was Mrs. Henery. About half a dozen men stood between the jury and the women. These, I supposed, were witnesses. Henery was among them. I wondered what brought the Henerys there. The table was bright with candles. I noticed particularly Sir Charles's dominant head and sharp eye. I should have said that on the table, on two big flat blue and white dishes, were the slung-shot and the sheath-knife.

All eyes turned upon me as I entered; I bowed to Sir Charles, who gave me a nod and waved to me to be seated at the table-end, near Dr. Gubbins. The Rector sat beside me. The jury had been sworn. Sir Charles was not one to lose time, I found. The door closed behind us. The old man with the blunderbuss remained outside, as a guard upon the Court in session.

Sir Charles lolled back in his chair and said that he had come to enquire into the death of Admiral Cringle, whose body they had now all viewed. They would examine witnesses upon oath to decide how the deceased came by his death and whether by accident, by felo de se, by manslaughter or by murder, and whether anybody had been guilty of causing the death, and if so, what person, and whether he had fled. He spoke with easy force, rolling his great eyes from face to face in the jury. He was a man of great splendour. He wore scarlet, heavily splashed at the cuffs and collar with gold lace; he had a fine ruffled shirt, across the chest of which some thin gold chains hung, bearing his quizzing glasses and the little ivory tablets on which he made notes. He ended by thanking all there for having come so promptly to his calls.

He ceased his prelude, signalled to Thomas, who rose, called Dr. Emanuel Gubbins, and swore him to tell the truth.

Gubbins was an oldish man who could never have been very young. He was rather a healer than a physician. It was said of him, that he could never cure anybody, but that he had a wonderful power of persuading people to get well. He was very strangely perceptive of the patient's ailment. It was as though his soul was sensitive to the exact location of the trouble. He was loved by all his patients, except perhaps some impatient young men who thought his methods antique.

He said that he had examined and identified the body of Admiral Cringle, who had been his patient for many years. The Admiral had been stricken on the head, between three and four inches above the left eye, by a blunt instrument. He had been stricken with much force, for the bone of the skull was fractured for about one inch. The blow must have stunned but had probably not killed him. The cause of death was a knife wound in the throat. Someone had driven a sheath-knife, the knife now on the table, a knife having a blade five and one half inches long, into the Admiral's neck from behind. This thrust had been delivered after the Admiral had fallen to the floor. He judged that the Admiral had entered the powdering-room carrying a candle, had been instantly smitten senseless and had then been stabbed in the neck. Neither wound could have been self-inflicted. The slight marks on the face and hands had probably been made in falling. As to the bruise and fracture of the skull, it had been made by some such weapon as the slung-shot now on the table, which bore upon it some of the Admiral's hairs. The slung-shot, he added, contained

three small balls or grapes of iron each weighing half a pound. He had not examined the other vital organs of the deceased. He was satisfied of the cause of death. He had no doubt that the candle carried by the deceased had been burning at the time of the fall. The deceased had fallen on it and had put it out; his coat was slightly singed and smutted where it had pressed upon the hot candle-end.

Mr. Ryme, the justice, asked if the Admiral had suffered from a weak heart, and had died from some shock to that. Gubbins said: "No, his heart was sound; he was a hale old man, but beginning to feel age in some of his joints. He had been murdered. He had walked into the powdering-room, had been suddenly stricken, and then fatally stabbed."

Sir Charles said that they had all viewed the body and had now heard the medical evidence; he took it that they would agree that the Admiral had been murdered; it was no case of accident or misfortune; no case of manslaughter, but one of murder. With some little mutter of: "Yes, I agree," they consented. Sir Charles said that in all cases of murder they had to examine into the case to try to find the murderer, and whether he had fled. He wished to examine first, who, as far as they could tell, had last seen him alive, who, if anyone, had been seen near the house at that time with motive or opportunity, and who had found the body. He thought, and perhaps they would agree, that the crime had been done by a robber disturbed in the breaking open and robbing a secret cupboard in the room above them. That cupboard had been wrenched open by savage force and its contents, or some of them, hastily pulled out and scattered, by someone who disregarded papers, even papers of

value, in his search among the cupboard's contents. What was the robber searching for? It is to be presumed that he was searching for things of value. As he neglected papers of value, probably he was looking for money, for plate or for jewels. It is a matter of common gossip in the district that the Admiral kept a large sum of money hidden in the house. Usually the house contained within it three servants, and had an extra guard in the person of the gardener. On this day by an unhappy chance the gardener had a holiday, because of the Fair, and the two elder servants had gone to a funeral at some little distance. The gardener, being a bell-ringer, had passed his day with the other bell-ringers, either ringing the parish bells or attending the parish feast, which had been interrupted by the news of the crime. He and the other servants would give evidence.

The gardener was soon done with; he had not seen the Admiral since the evening of the day before, and had been all day long with his mates, either in or near the parish church. Will, who came next, told how he and his wife had had to attend a funeral, and had said that they would be back at St. Marches' Church by the carrier's van from London that stopped at the Church at four. They had asked the Admiral if Polly might come to meet them at this van, and the Admiral had given leave. He added that Polly had not been left alone in the house with the Admiral. A girl friend, Kirrie Trinsicker, had passed the day with her and that, so far as he could tell, they must have been the last, except the murderer, to see the Admiral alive. Here Will, whose hands were clenched, turned a deadly look upon me. He then added that his girl was much upset and though she would always tell the truth, he hoped the Court would

let her mother be with her. Sir Charles said, of course. Polly was called.

Mrs. Will, looking like a Female Death in her mourning gown, brought the two girls forward; they were given seats and a pot of smelling salts. Kirrie Trinsicker sat nearer me, Polly on the far side of her mother. In my visits to the Admiral I had seen Kirrie several times about the kitchen; she was one of Polly's friends. She was a good, steady, shrewd, silent girl, with a round bullet-head covered with a mop of pretty hair; she was much more sure of herself than Polly.

Polly was a very pretty girl with unusual features, which are ever much marked in women; her eyebrows were darker than her hair, which was golden, and her eyes were dark. I have always thought that fair women lose their looks at once in a time of stress, while dark women may become better looking; this may be all prejudice. Certainly Polly had lost her looks; she was all blubbered and swollen, with black pouches under her eyes; she had a spasmodic sobbing which sometimes threatened to pass out of control into hysterics. She said that she had been left in the house at half-past ten that morning, when her parents set out, that she had been alone in the house until Mr. Mansell came at eleven. Soon after this Kirrie had come in and had been "in and about" ever since. She went on to say that she had served the Admiral with his meal at noon; he had been pernickety and had asked for this and that, had then asked for a boiled egg and had refused it when it came. He had gone down into the cellar later, for brandy, had opened a bottle and had drunken some of it. She had made him some tea; but he had refused that, as only fit for petticoats. At about twenty minutes to four she had

asked the Admiral if she might slip down into the village to meet her parents at the Church, where the van from London stopped. He had been sitting in his chair at a table dressed in his dressing-gown, polishing the glasses of a telescope with a piece of soft silk rag. "He often took his telescopes to pieces and cleaned his glasses," she added. He had told her, yes, to go down and come back at once, for he expected Mr. Mansell. Here she gave me a ghastly look and broke down.

I must say that my heart leaped when I heard that the old man had been expecting me. He had known then, that I should return to seek a reconcilement. But an instant later I saw all eyes turn upon me, and felt all hearts turn against me; my heart turned a little sick for a moment; for no man is such a good dog that he can bear the pack against him. But I remember thinking, in spite of all this: "she hasn't been quite strictly truthful; I know this Polly; she did not leave the house at twenty to four; no, she was off to the Fair before half-past three."

Sir Charles waited a little till she had recovered somewhat, and then asked if she had ever seen the knife or the red grapes or shot of iron now lying on the plates on the table. This question laid her low.

When she could speak at all, she said: "Yes; the shot are like the ones in some of the rooms. The knife is the one left by Mr. Mansell for my father. He put it with a writing on the slate on the kitchen table this morning."

"Did you see him put it there?"

"No," she said, "I was out of the kitchen then, sir; but I saw it when I came in and read the message. It was lying on the slate when I left the house

this afternoon to meet the van, of that I am certain."

"Was it there when you returned?"

"No, sir. And the writing was rubbed out."

"When did you see it again?"

"When Father and the Doctor brought it down, sir."

"You were present when Mr. Mansell called upon the Admiral this morning?"

"Yes, sir."

"You heard something of their conversation together? What did you hear?"

This was too much for her for a time; at last she said: "I heard Mr. Mansell say: 'I come to you as the only friend I have and the Admiral said: 'You want two thousand pounds. What the devil led you to suppose I would lend you two thousand pounds?'"

There was something of a titter at this. The Admiral's testiness was well-known. Polly got some support from the mirth; she needed it.

"Was that all that was said?"

"No, sir. The Admiral said: 'You'd better get out of here before I do you an injury.' "

"Where were you when this was said?"

"Just outside the door, sir."

"What were you doing there?"

No answer.

"You were listening at the keyhole, eh?"

No answer.

"Answer. You were eaves-dropping?"

"Yes, sir."

"Were you alone?"

"No, sir."

"Who was with you?"

"Jack Pannifer, the baker's son."

"And what happened after that?"

"Mr. Mansell said he would go and would not feel like coming back, and the Admiral said: 'Stay away then Then Mr. Mansell walked out and so along to the kitchen and left the house."

"Yet when you went to meet your father, the Admiral told you to come back soon because he expected Mr. Mansell, since he expected him to return. Did you not hear him make some appointment to return?"

"No, sir."

"The last words were: 'Stay away you did not expect him to return?"

"No, sir."

"Why then, did the Admiral expect him?"

"I don't know, sir."

This ended the examination of Polly, who collapsed into her mother's arms and stayed there. Jack Pannifer was then called.

He was one of the village lads whom I had seen about the house from time to time. I remember him vaguely, still, as having curly hair and a somewhat merry manner. He was a good, clever lad. He was one of Polly's admirers, as the Admiral had said. His evidence was much the same as Polly's, but as he was more of a person than Polly, he made much more of the quarrel between the Admiral and myself. He said that he had been in the kitchen delivering bread, when he had heard such a noise of angry speech from the Admiral's room, that he had said: "Is that anyone going for the Admiral?" and at once both had crept along the corridor to hear. "I wasn't going to let the Admiral be set upon." He was truthful, but he had a dramatic sense, and certainly made the most of the quarrel. He said, too, that Polly had

urged him to come back to the kitchen, 'TJut I wouldn't let her go, nor go myself. I said, 'If there's violence being done, or going to be done, I must be here to stop it.' So I kept inside the little room there till Mr. Mansell had left."

Two of the jurors asked about the quarrel. One asked if it were about money? He said: "Yes; Dr. Mansell asked for two thousand pounds." The other asked:

"Was Dr. Mansell angry at being refused?"

He said, yes, he should say it sounded so.

After some more questions, now forgotten, he went on to say that he had returned with the Coxwains at a little after four, had been with Will at the discovery of the body, and had then run for Dr. Gubbins.

"Yes, I know," Sir Charles said, and allowed him to stand down.

Kirrie Trinsicker was called next. She was clearer-headed and more strictly truthful than Polly. She said that when she reached the house at about half-past eleven, she saw the knife lying on the slate with the message, "Gifts from the October Fair for Mr. and Mrs. Will Coxwain, from E.M." She said that the knife and message were both gone when she returned with the Coxwains at some time after four. She was sure that the knife on the table was the one that had lain on the slate, or one exactly like it. She said that she had heard that Mr. Mansell and the Admiral had had a dreadful quarrel about money. The Admiral had been cross all day, and at three went down into the cellar for some brandy. At a quarter past three by their kitchen clock she went with Polly to ask if they might slip down to the church to meet the van. The Admiral was then in his coat; he had taken off his dressing-gown and was clean-

ing parts of a telescope. He was very cross, and asked: "What d'ye want now, girl? To go to the church? Yes, go, for God's sake, and leave me in peace. But mind you come back soon, for I'm expecting Mr. Mansell." They had then set forth, over the fields, to the church, to meet the van.

"Did you lock the door when you went . . . the kitchen door?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"The Admiral told Polly not, sir."

"She asked him if she should then?"

"Yes, sir. Just before she left him, she asked should we lock it? He said: 'Lock it? What for, lock it? Leave it and leave me "

One of the jurymen asked if it had not seemed rash to her to leave the door unlocked on a fair day, when the district was full of strangers, many of them disreputable?

"No, sir," she said, "he said Mr. Mansell was coming; we thought Mr. Mansell would be there. The front door and gate were locked, and we saw nobody about. We looked out for Mr. Mansell; but did not see him. So we did what we were told."

They had no more questions to put to her. Sir Charles said that as far as he could gather these two girls were the last mortals to see the Admiral alive. When they had left the house between a quarter past three and twenty to four, he was alive, well, busily engaged and expecting Mr. Mansell. When Mr. Mansell found him, perhaps within half an hour of their leaving the house he was dead, by the act of some felon. They would now hear Mr. Edward Mansell. I was thankful that my chance

had come at last. "Now for it," I thought. I rose and took the oath. As I rose I perceived by that extra sense which often comes to us, that the company there had shrewd suspicion that I was the murderer.

I felt that nothing but the strictest possible truth could persuade. I told why I had asked to see the Admiral; I explained that though I needed the lump sum of two thousand pounds for the purchase of a partnership, all but six hundred pounds of it would be fully secured by a charge on my estate, and the six hundred pounds would be secured by the partnership itself. I explained that the Admiral had told his household that I was to be his heir, because I had once scared some footpads from him. I had gone to him as to my only intimate friend, and as the man likeliest to help me, though I had had thoughts of applying to a banker in the City. I said that the Admiral was often testy and irritable, that he had been unusually vexed that morning and that we had quarrelled. I had left the house in a rage . . .

Here I was asked, had I had any arrangement or appointment to return to see the Admiral at half-past three or so?

I said: "No, none. Our parting this morning was angry. We meant never to see each other again."

A juror said: "Yet the Admiral said plainly that he expected you."

"Possibly," I said. "We were much attached to each other. We were really friends however much we wrangled. He knew that I should want to make friends. He knew that I should be as much upset by our quarrel as he was. I am glad to think that he knew I should return."

"But at half-past eleven you meant never to return?"

"A cross mood doesn't last an hour. I could not have slept without making an effort at reconciliation."

"So you returned to the house to end the quarrel? How did you enter the house?"

"By the kitchen door."

"Why?"

"Because I expected to find the Coxwain family returned. I wished to ask them to ask the Admiral to see me."

"Why did you not go to the front door in the usual way?"

"I approached the house from the fields. The kitchen door was nearer."

"Had you ever entered by the kitchen door in other visits?"

"No. Never. I did not enter this afternoon till I had knocked. As no one opened I looked in and then went in."

"Now it has been said that you left this knife with which the Admiral was killed as a present for Will Coxwain. Was it where you left it when you entered the kitchen?"

"No. It was not. I noticed that at once. And the writing on the slate had been erased. I judged from that that the Coxwains had returned."

I told my tale as you have heard it already; how I half saw some man leaving the garden; and how I found the Admiral dead, among the scattered papers from the cupboard.

Sir Charles then asked me if I knew of the cupboard or hiding-place in the powdering-room. I said: "Yes," and described how the Admiral had shown me the way to open it, and how he had told me that it contained

leases and accounts of his property. They then asked if I knew of gold hidden in the house. I said that it was often said in the district that he had twenty thousand pounds hidden in the house; that he had once almost admitted that there was some, somewhere; but that I did not know where it was.

One of the jurymen asked why I had left the body lying on the floor when I had found it; why had I not at least laid it on the bed? I replied, that having some medical knowledge, I had seen that the Admiral had been killed, and felt that it might help the investigation if I left the body exactly as I had found it; men might judge from it how the crime had been committed. He asked \vhy I had not at least covered the face? I said that in the shock of finding a friend and benefactor murdered, my first thought had been to rouse the district and bring in the magistrates. I had rushed out to do that. I said, too, that I had hoped that hue and cry might be raised after that man who had left the garden,

"Yes," Sir Charles said. "Now to go back to thL-; knife. Will you look on it and say if it be the one that you bought for Coxwain here?"

"It is very like it," I said.

"Take it in your hands and see."

"There is no need," I answered. "I cannot swear to it. It is as like to my knife as a pea to a pea. It is most unlikely that there would be two knives of this unusual kind in Cholsington."

"We can prove the knife, as it happens," Sir Charles said. "Call Mrs. Jollycok."

The words: "Mrs. Jollycok, there," was passed along the passage. She presently appeared, rather white and

frightened, and curtsied to the gentry. She was then sworn and asked if she recognised the knife. She said she did, but would like to look at it close to be certain. She then said that it was marked with her mark. It was the knife she had sold that morning to young Dr. Mansell. On being asked if it were not a very unusual knife for a young doctor to buy, she said that she had been puzzled, no, she said, she'd been upset, and on being asked why she said: "He acted so queer while he was buying it, that I felt he meant no good to somebody. I was in two minds about letting him have it, and directly 1 heard the poor gentleman had been killed, I said, "That was my knife did it, depend upon it.' "

Sir Charles said that her feelings were not evidence; but she had now uttered them and that with such deep feeling, that they told as evidence.

Sir Charles said that there was still another witness as to the knife. "Call the man Henery."

A voice answered: "Here, sir," and Mr. Henery came forward, neat, reserved, hatchet-faced, with his fingers pressed together in front of him, and those eyes pale and wide apart which had never looked upon me, save with hatred.

"Swear Mr. Henery," Sir Charles said. Then, on his being sworn, he added: "You wish to give evidence about the purchase of this knife from Mrs. Jollycok?"

Mr. Henery bowed his head a little, and very gravely said: "Yes, sir."

"Tell your story," Sir Charles said.

"Sir Charles and gentlemen," Henery began "I was in the Fair this morning at a little before eleven, as a spectator. Being near Mrs. Jollycok's stall, I noticed the young Mr. Mansell, who I knew by sight, examining a

knife. He was behaving so strangely that I could not help noticing him."

"In what way, strangely?" Sir Charles asked.

"Ay, let us know that, please; it is important," another man said.

"I can only say, sir, that he looked desperate," Henery said. "He looked, if I might put it so, as though something would have to give way before him."

"I do not know what sort of a look that may be," the Rector said. "We are not enquiring into looks. He was examining a knife, you say, and behaving strangely. Tell us of his behaviour."

"Sir," Henery said, "he did not seem at ease; he was nervous. He kept looking over his shoulder, and then knitting up his brows, as though making up his mind. Then he refused some clasp-knives; he said: 'No, they might shut up on the hand if you struck a good blow with them He said he wanted a strong knife of the sheath kind, that you could be sure of.' "

"Does that agree with your memory, Mrs. Jollycok?" Mr. Ryme asked.

"Yes, sir," she said. "Those words were used. After he had bought the knife, I said to the gentleman, 'I hope he needs it for no bad purpose. I was half afraid to let him have it; he said he wanted it for a gift.' "

"May I continue, sir?" Henery asked.

"Certainly," Coggs said. "Have you more to tell?"

"Yes, sir; I have, sir; about the return of Mr. Mansell to Hannibal House this afternoon."

"Did you see him return, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"When?"

"At a little before four; perhaps a quarter to four, sir."

' Tell me what }ou saw'

"I saw Mr. Mansell come up towards the house from the fields in a very suspicious manner.'

\"In what way, suspicions?"

"Sir, he crept up, and stopped to listen. Then he peered over the wall to see if he could see anyone."

"How was this suspicious?"

"Sir, it was not straightforward. He showed that he did not wish to be seen. He seemed to be spying out the land."

"Where were you when you saw him?"

"In the lane, sir, not fifty yards from where we are now."

"Did you call his attention to show that he was seen?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Well, sir . . ."

"Why not? You were spying out the land. You didn't want to be seen, perhaps?"

"Sir, we were watching …"

"I don't doubt it," Sir Charles said, with contempt. "I ask, why you didn't interfere? You say, you had seen him buy a knife in a suspicious manner, then come to a house in a suspicious manner, yet you didn't call out, nor tell anyone, nor do anything."

"No, sir. We were waiting to see . . ."

"How Jong did you watch? And what did you see?"

"Just the minute or half-minute that he was there, sir, till he went to the door and went in."

"Were you alone?"

"No, sir; Mrs. Henery was with me."

"Did he knock on the door?"

"Yes, sir."

"What were you doing there, you two, so near to the house?"

"We were on our way, sir, to read the Bible to old Mrs. Iffleys at four o'clock."

"That is true, Sir Charles," the Rector said. "I saw them at old Mrs. Iffleys' at a few minutes before four. They read the Bible to her twice a week."

"But come, now," Sir Charles said, "what did you think he was doing or going to do, coming slinking up to the house, as you say he did?"

"Saving the company's presence, sir, we thought he had a girl from the Fair in one of the outhouses, and was going to join her there."

"Did you see any girl?"

"No, sir."

"Did }ou think he had bought the knife for the girl?"

"We didn't know, Mr."

"And he didn't go to the outhouse?"

"Not as we saw, sir."

"You are prejudiced against Mr. Mansell."

"No, sir."

"You helped to throw him out of your master's house only a year ago. The Admiral told me so himself."

"Sir, Mr. Rackage, my master, ordered me to see Mr. Mansell's things removed, as he was not to continue among us. I owe an obedience to my master."

"When you saw that Mr. Mansell did not go to any girl or outhouse, but into the house, you felt that your suspicions were unjust, did you?"

"No, sir."

"Why not?"

"Sir . . ."

"I ask you why not? You had seen that they were

false. Why didn't you see that they were unjust?"

"If you please, sir . . ."

"Why didn't you go to the house to see what this suspicious man was going to do there? Plainly, you had had to admit that you were wrong about him. You were foiled of the bit of scandal you hoped to publish."

"We supposed that it as all right, sir, and had, in any case, to go on."

Sir Charles scowled at him and shrugged his shoulders. "I don't think you need pay much attention to a prejudiced witness, gentlemen," he said. "But I've not done with you yet . . ."

He had a grim, bullying manner when he was against anyone. He now leaned forward over the table, and shot out his threatening lip in a very ominous way. "Hark you to me, you Henery," he said. "Where were you and your wife when you saw this Mr. Mansell approach this house? Come you out with the jury and show us the exact spot."

This going and coming took some little time. I went with them, and was startled to find that it was dark now. I was startled, too, to see how all shrank from me, except that grim man with the blunderbuss. When we had all gathered again in the room, Sir Charles said:

"Don't stand down, you, Henery. Now, gentlemen, you have seen the lane which runs along the front of the house. These Hcnerys, by their own showing, were near the house in that lane almost at the time of the crime. Now, you, Henery; but wait one moment; we need the other. Come you out, Mrs, Henery, you, too, and be sworn."

Mrs. Henery came out to be sworn, too, and a frightened woman she was.

Sir Charles glowered at them, and had them both white before him, licking their lips, and everybody against them. Sir Charles had some prejudice against Henery; I do not know what it was; but I think that Henery may have cheated him in some way during Dennis's minority. Part of the Rackage estate was a small brick field where they made a cheap yellow brick, of which Sir Charles was sometimes a buyer. Perhaps Henery, as man in charge, had given Sir Charles short measure or bad quality, in some delivery of brick. Sir Charles was a vindictive man, who never forgot one who had once had a little the better of him. He watched the two wretches in front of him, and relished their misery. He had been drinking hard that afternoon; some of the cruelty in him was no doubt due to his wine. It is a grim thing to say, but I know that I felt relief when the pack there gathered changed their quarry and turned from me against the Henerys.

"Now then, you Henerys," Sir Charles said, "on your peril and by your soul's salvation, you made up this tale of Mr. Mansell to put the scent from yourselves."

"No, sir."

"When did you come to that place in the lane this afternoon?"

"Just when we saw Mr. Mansell, sir."

"Where were you coming from?"

"The Manor House, sir."

"When did you leave the Manor House?"

"Just three minutes before, sir; perhaps four or five minutes."

"What time would that be?"

"A few minutes after half-past three, sir."

A voice from among the men seated at the end of the

room said: "May I be sworn, sir, please?" The man who spoke was the young man, Joe Stevens, employed at the Manor.

"What d'ye mean by interrupting?" Sir Charles asked. "Swear him."

Joe was sworn and Sir Charles then asked: "Now you are sworn. What is it?"

"Sir, I can tell the time Mr. Henery left the Manor House; it was twenty minutes to four. I timed it by the stable clock, sir, as he went out, he and Mrs. Henery."

"What made you time it? Did he tell you to time it?"

"No, sir. I knew he was going to Mrs. Iffleys, and I thought he'd left it later than usual. Generally he starts at the half-hour."

Sir Charles sank back in his chair, still glowering at the Henerys. He reflected, no doubt, that these Henerys were telling the truth. He turned to Joe Stevens.

"Did you go with them along the lane at all?"

"No, sir."

"You saw them start?"

"Yes, sir."

"Was anyone with them?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see anyone else in the lane at the time?"

"No, sir."

Sir Charles told him to stand down, and turned again to the Henerys.

"Listen, you Henerys," he said. "When you were in the lane near this house this afternoon, it was broad clear daylight. Did you see anybody in.or near this house's grounds, coming to or going from this house; anybody at all?"

"No, sir," they both said. "No one but Mr. Mansell."

"After you had gone on from the house, did you glance back?"

"Yes, sit."

"Why?"

"To see if we could see Mr. Mansell, sir."

"Did you ree him?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see anybody?"

"No, sir."

"Was anybody following you in the lane?"

"Nobody, sir."

"Or going away from you in the lane?"

"We saw nobody, sir. Everybody would have been at the Fair."

He reflected a little, spoke in French with Mr. Ryme, and told the Henerys to stand down. After this he asked me to stand up again. He said that he wanted to know one or two little things which perhaps I could clear up. I said I would tell him all that I could.

"You are positive that you had no engagement to return to this house after leaving it in indignation this morning?"

"Positive."

"Although the Admiral expected you?"

"He expected me only because he knew that I should seek a reconcilement. We had no engagement together. We parted angrily; crossly would be a better word."

"You had meant not to see him again?"

"That was the mood of the moment. People soon regret crossness."

"If you were not going to see him again, why did you remain in the parish? Why did you not return to London, to your work?"

"I was unsettled by the quarrel and wished to compose myself."

"It is said that you were seen talking to a scoundrelly-looking ruffian in the fields here. Who was that?"

"1 do not know. A man begged from me; he told me a story, which I exposed. I took him to be one of the many rogues who frequent the fairs near London."

"Was he the man whom you say you saw leaving this house?"

"I cannot tell. As I said, I did not properly and clearly see that figure."

"Having composed yourself, you sent no message to the Admiral, asking him to see you?"

"No."

"You did not send this beggar-man to him with a message?"

"Of course not."

"Nor anyone else?"

"No. I sent no message."

"Yet you have heard the Admiral expected you. How could he have expected you without some message from you?"

"Sir, I have answered that. From his knowledge of my affection for him. These girls were with him all the day. They know that no message from me was sent or given to the Admiral between my leaving the house and their going down to meet the van."

"As you value your salvation, now, answer me this. When you arranged by letter to see the Admiral to-day, was it arranged that you should see him in the morning, then leave him, but return later in the afternoon?"

"No. I had no engagement to return; none."

"Yet you did return, just as he expected."

"I am thankful to think that he knew that I should seek a reconcilement. I grieve that it was never made."

"When you had composed your mind, after walking in the fields, had you resolved what you would do for this two thousand pounds which you need?"

"Yes. I planned to ride home by the house of a friend of my father, to ask him to advance me the money against my own estate and the partnership itself; it is not an unusual nor an unfair business proposal. If my father's friend could not arrange the advance, doubtless some banker would do so, on payment of some sum for the use of the money."

"Yet you knew that the Admiral had, or was said to have, a vast sum actually in the house here?"

"I have heard the rumours; no more than that."

"You said that the Admiral almost admitted the rumour."

"I think he loved to hear the rumour."

"When you returned you meant to ask him for the money?"

"I meant to seek reconcilement. If he had lent the money after reconcilement, why, well. But my purpose in coming the second time was to make friends. I did not wish to let the sun go down upon my wrath. You have heard a witness say that I approached the house in a suspicious way. I say 'rubbish.' I stopped to listen if I could hear Mrs. Coxwain's voice. Usually, when she is in the house, she sings. I wished to ask her to go to the Admiral and ask him to see me."

"Did you really expect her to sing, immediately on her return from a funeral?"

"Yes; she sings hymns and psalms. As I did not hear voices I looked over the wall to see if I could see anyone.

As I went on I saw that someone had gone to or from the kitchen door only a little while before me, and had left the little gate open; the hens were in the flower garden."

"How can you tell that it was only a little while before?"

"Because only three hens had gone in, and not much of the beds had yet been scratched."

At this, Polly and Kirrie Trinsicker were asked if the little gate had been closed when they had set forth to meet the van. They said that it had been closed. They were certain of it, as the Admiral was so particular. I went on to say that I had no doubt that the murderer had left the gate open, had entered the kitchen, taken my knife, gone to the cupboard, and there been surprised. It was he whom I had seen leaving the house, after doing his deed of blood.

All this time I had felt the passion of those about me swaying up against me like a wave or flooding a little away from me. As I made these points I knew that some there began to think better of me. They began to believe in this half-seen shadowy figure, who had left the gate open just before I appeared.

Sir Charles said: "As a medical man, how long, in your opinion, had the Admiral been dead when you found the body?"

"I do not pretend to say, Sir Charles. It must have been between ten and twenty minutes. The girls left the house at about half-past three. The Henerys saw me enter at about a quarter to four. It must have been within that quarter of an hour that he was killed."

"I put it to you, that you had determined to break

open the cupboard, in the hope of finding some of this twenty thousand pounds."

"Sir Charles," I said, "you talk offensive rubbish. I saw the cupboard opened, not very long ago, and knew that it contained no money, but leases and papers. I was also shown how to open and close the cupboard. You saw for yourself that it was burst open."

"It was wrenched open by the spike on the knife with which the Admiral was stabbed; the knife which you bought this morning. If you had taken up the knife when I bade you just now, you would have seen, that a bit of painted splinter from the cupboard has been shut into the knife, as the robber closed the spike after using it."

"I do not doubt it," I said.

"Will'you take up the knife and look?"

"Certainly," 1 said. I did so. I knew that all thought that I was the murderer, and that the knife would drip blood at my touch. I saw a spasm of horror pass over the faces watching me. "Yes," I said, examining the splinter caught there. "I do not doubt that this is some of the cupboard. But I still do not see why any man should break open a cupboard when he knows the very simple catch that opens it."

"You admit that you knew that the cupboard was there?"

"Certainly."

"I put it to you, that you went there, tried the catch, failed to open it, and then wrenched it open at once."

"I spurn any such suggestion," I said angrily. "Even if I were a thief, why should I? The catch opens easily. If you will go upstairs you can prove that."

"The catch is now broken," Sir Charles said. "You

knew that the cupboard is in that spot, and that it contains valuables. Who else knew, or knows?"

"Probably nobody. The Admiral was a secret man."

"You admit, then, that the man who went there this afternoon knew that it was there?"

"No. I admit no such thing. But it is surely the likeliest place in the house. Where else would a hiding-place be? Anyone can see that there is room for a hiding-place in the thickness of the wall there. And where would the Admiral secrete his treasures, save near his bedroom?"

"You did not tell anybody that you had seen the cupboard?"

"Of course not."

"It was not a part of your talk with the beggar-man in the fields this afternoon?"

"Certainly not. Why should it have been?"

"It should not have been," he said, "but men in need of money will sometimes enlist strange allies."

"I am not in need of money," I said. "I never have been. This chance of a partnership is a fair one, not an overwhelming opportunity. I can well afford to let it go and try for something else. Besides, as I have told you, and as you must know, from your knowledge of affairs, many people would lend me the money."

"They would not," he retorted. "You are still a minor."

At that I felt that all the feelings in my favour (and some still lingered) ebbed right away from me.

"I shall not long be a minor," I said.

"Perhaps," he answered, meaningly. There was a pause for a moment, while the Rector whispered something to him.

"Tell me, Mr. Mansell," Sir Charles went on, dropping from his bullying way into one of persuasion, "as a medical man, do you think with Dr. Gubbins here, that the Admiral had been stunned by a blow, before being stabbed?"

"Undoubtedly. He was stunned, and fell forward unconscious. His skull was fractured over the left eye."

"Would that have caused death?"

"Probably not. It would have caused a complete unconsciousness for perhaps some minutes."

"During which he was fatally stabbed?"

"Yes."

"What caused the fracture?"

"I should say the slung-shot lying on the floor near the body. The fracture of the bone seemed just such an one as the slung-shot must have made."

"Would much force have been needed for the blow?"

"It was, no doubt, a violent blow."

"You see the shot or grapes of iron on the plate here?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen them before?"

"I do not know. They are like the grape-shot arranged as ornaments in some of the rooms here. In the little study where I waited a few minutes back, several shot are missing from one of the piles. It struck me that these shot may have come from there. They are in use in all ships, the Admiral said, but these ones are painted red, and probably were picked up in the house."

"You see the stocking into which the shot were shaken as a weapon?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen it before?"

"I take it that it is the one found near the body."

"It is that one. Have you seen it before?"

"Certainly. I saw it near the body, when I found it."

"Yes; but before that?"

"I think not."

"Yet it is your stocking."

"No."

"I say, it *is* your stocking, plainly marked with your name. Take it up and look at it."

I did not believe him; I stepped to the table, reached for the stocking and looked at it. It was a black silk stocking of no great fineness; there were thousands such in London City daily. I turned to the open end and looked inside. There, sewn on a little tape, was my name embroidered, "Edward Mansell"; it was quite true; it *was* my stocking. I was dumbfounded, and my face must have shown it. I felt the nets come over me and pluck themselves tight.

"Well," Sir Charles said, looking at me with some triumph. "It is your stocking, I suppose?"

"It seems to be," I said. "It is marked like all my stockings. The pair that I wear is marked with just such a tape."

"How did it come to be in the room upstairs?"

"The murderer took it there," I said.

"How did he come by it?"

"I do not know," I said. Indeed, I was so startled by this last fact, that my wits were all astray. After what seemed a long time I collected my thoughts a little, and said: "I have several times slept in this house, and in another house in this parish. I have had stockings like these for the last three or four years. I may well have left a stocking or a pair of stockings at one or other place.

I do not remember losing any, but I may have done so. I'm afraid I'm not so careful of my clothes as I might be."

"*It* will be easy to prove if you have left stockings in either house," Sir Charles said. "The servants of both households are here."

I stood down, while the Coxwains, the Henerys, Joe and Tryphena all swore that I had never left a stocking behind me at any of my visits at either house.

Presently, they had done. Sir Charles said that all had now heard the evidence, and knew perhaps as much as ever would be known of the comings and goings and doings and undoings at Hannibal House that afternoon. He would now clear the court, so that the jury might deliberate in private. The witnesses would wait in the kitchen; he and the justices would go along the passage, and Mr. Mansell would come with them, perhaps. Here Mr. Ryme whispered something to him, and he hastily said: "Ah, yes; perhaps, then, you . . . Rector," and whispered something to the Rector. We all stood, as Sir Charles left the court, with the justices. The Rector said to me: "Let us go into this little study, shall we?" and led me back to the little room where I had waited before. The constable, John Lambert, brought us one candle, and the man with the blunderbuss stood outside the door.

The Rector's first act was to take the candle from the table and light the two candles on the mantelpiece. Those three candles were to light me to my ruin, it seemed. Somebody tapped at the door, I went to it, and though the Rector tried to get there first, I opened. Dennis stood there.

"*I* say," he said, "I'm sorry it has come to this."

I looked him in the face without replying, and brazen

as he was, he didn't like my gaze and couldn't bear it, but slunk away. The old man with his gun and John Lambert with his truncheon both standing just outside the door were the witnesses of this scene.

After he had gone, the Rector tried to make conversation. Had the Admiral any relatives? I said, I believed none; for his brothers had died young and unmarried, and his sisters had died childless. He had been alone in the world for years. There was a cruel constraint upon us. He thought that I had just murdered my benefactor, and was still all smeared with his blood. I thought that he was probably there to extort me to confess and did not like to begin. I gave him no incentive to begin, and I expect that he felt that if he did begin he might be murdered too. I knew that in the room on one side of me Sir Charles would be drinking the Admiral's brandy, and saying that he had got at the truth of it, while in the room on the other side of me the jury was debating, if it was Wilful Murder, by young Mr. Mansell. I know I thought: "The murder was done just before I reached the house. If I had been just two minutes sooner, I'd have caught the murderer, with his deed undone." I thought, too, of my stocking. "Tm caught in the net, indeed,"I muttered.

"What is that?" the Rector asked.

"Oh nothing," I said. "I was talking to myself."

I know that the Rector asked me how constant I had been in my attendance at church. I said that no doctor could attend church very regularly, and that often I was called away during the service. I pointed out to him, how some of the shot were gone from the garland on the mantel.

After this our conversation lapsed again.

Presently the dining-room door opened, and somebody spoke. I heard a light footstep pass through the Admiral's sitting-room, and a minute later I heard Sir Charles say: "Well, ask the Rector to take Mr. Mansell in."

The light footsteps came to the door of the little study; Thomas opened the door and said: "If you would come, please, Rector and Mr. Mansell." So we rose up and followed him to the dining-room, where some of the witnesses had now re-assembled, and the jury had taken their seats. They had replenished the fires since I was there last, and had brought in more candles, so that the room was now very bright. Presently, Sir Charles and the two justices, who had been refreshing themselves in the sitting-room with the Admiral's brandy, came in and took their seats. We all rose as they passed, and then settled down again. I did not need any telling that all there were against me; that was quite perfectly plain.

A great man, who was then living, had said a year or two before, that when a man is going to be hanged it concentrates his faculties wonderfully. I say that that is not so; it annuls his faculties; but I know that it develops in him an unusual sense of what others think and feel.

"Gentlemen," Sir Charles said, "have you considered your verdict?"

The foreman, who was a rosy-faced man, with a wide mouth and very good teeth, otherwise quite unknown to me, said that they had. Sir Charles asked what their verdict was. The foreman said that they found that Admiral Topsle Cringle had been wilfully murdered, and though they did not charge me with the crime, there

were circumstances which justified my being attached and put upon my trial. Sir Charles said that he couldn't accept a verdict like that. Did they find it Wilful Murder against me, or did they not? The foreman looked at his jurymen; there was a little half-minute's whispering and muttering; then the foreman said: "Yes, Sir Charles, we find it Wilful Murde against Mr. Mansell."

After this there was sort of gasp of relief from all the witnesses; then there was silence, while Thomas wrote the findings of the Court. It took him some little time, and in the silence the pen scratched and scratched on the paper, like a mouse gnawing through something, or trying to gnaw through and never getting through. At last he had done with the writing, and sprinkled it with the sand from the sand-box on the table. As I was very near to him, I saw his writing, and remember it to this day. I should recognise it anywhere. It was neat and rather pointed, not very good, not good enough for a clerk, I thought; it wasn't clear enough, it wasn't bold enough. When he had finished I saw that Sir Charles was busy writing. When he had finished, he turned to me and said: "Since this Court has found a verdict of Wilful Murder against you, it is my duty to see you committed to safe keeping, in order to your trial, where you will have every opportunity of defending yourself according to the law. You will be delivered from this to the custody of the Sheriff or his officers."

Thomas brought some paper or papers for Sir Charles to sign and for Mr. Ryme to witness. The Rector leaned over to me and said:

"You will understand that this is only a Coroner's Inquest? The law allows you still two chances of showing your innocence: the Grand Inquest, and the Petty

Jury. I, of course, foresaw this verdict, and I have taken steps to procure a coach to be ready for your conveyance."

From BASILISSA

THE BALLET AT ANTIOCH

"A DANCER from Athens, who became a painter; he is a musician, too, and a sort of demi-god. I don't think he's quite human, but he made the Sosthenes Ballet and nothing like it has been seen. He made it in Smyrna. We've been at it for three years, and have made all Karamania and Syria and Egypt our abject slaves. Now Sosthenes is taking us to a theatre in The City. You will see what we are. We're something new. Here are some practice dresses, if you really will warm up with me. But this is my dresser, Eurycleia; Eurycleia, you must meet my great, great friend Theodora. Can you tell us if Sosthenes is in his office? He is? Come on, then, Theodora. You must see him; he isn't human, but he won't bite."

She led the way to another big room facing to the north. Here she found Sosthenes, and introduced him to her friend. Theodora saw before her a rather tall, heavy man, with a grave, keen scrutiny. He was pale, middle-aged and industrious, Theodora thought. He was working with a young man at the effects of some coloured stuffs upon wicker models. His face lit up at the sight of Macedonia.

"Ha," he said. "Come in; we've got the effect now. Is this your friend?"

"I should think she is," Macedonia said. "This is Theodora, my sparring partner and manageress. She is going to look after me, she says, but not so much as I'm going to look after her. She is coming with us to

The City in my cabin; that is easy to arrange, isn't it?"

"Of course, if you wish it. Lady Theodora, may I introduce my young friend Sotion, who is doing the dresses for a new ballet we're planning?"

"I met you years ago," Theodora said to the painter. "You knew my sister Comito."

Ha," Sosthenes said, "you are Comito's sister. What a mime. Marvellous."

Sotion at the coming-in of Theodora had watched her eagerly; he had sighed for that dark-eyed beauty years before, when he had been an art student following the theatre.

"I remember you," Sosthenes said. "You used to do a marvellous little dance between the verses of a song. The song was nothing, but the dance was something to remember. Where did you get the dance?"

"Oh, there were many dances," Theodora said. "Comito was always finding someone to teach me a novelty."

"The song was called 'Tiddley-om-pom-pom'," Sotion said.

" 'High, boys, ho, boys,
Tiddley-om-pom-pom'.

I've got a drawing of you doing it."

"The song could be bettered," Sosthenes said, "but the dance was adorable."

"Nothing that she ever did could be bettered," Macedonia said. "Come, now; we must change and warm up; time's passing."

Sosthenes called out: 'Til come round in half an hour to take you in front. You mustn't miss this show; we shan't be doing the *Psyche* to-morrow, when we close".

After the warming-up, Theodora borrowed a very beautiful wrap, so that she might sit in front, during the performance. The coming-back to the theatre had been strangely delightful. She had not liked the theatre world when she had been of it; yet now the easy comradeship of people who, besides being good artists, were what the slang called "Good troupe-ers", and the charm and sweetness of Macedonia were welcome. It was so different being under a remarkable man, good at three of the arts, and able to fuse them into a fourth, from being under old Garbage and pestered by Anthrax. Now Sosthenes called for her, and led her out of Macedonia's room.

"Watch my entrances and exits," Macedonia cried. "Watch everything I do, and bludgeon me for it."

"I shall watch everything you do," Theodora said.

"You will," Sosthenes said. "She is the wonder of her time. You've not seen her lately?"

"Not since the Old Winter Palace."

"She's as far changed from that," Sosthenes said, "as the Bird of Paradise is from its egg."

He led her through the manager's door into the vast auditorium, which rose up tier upon tier in a blur of faces and bright colours. He led her past the side of the great white marble orchestra, and by a gangway through the massed music, all in the blue and white of the Sosthenes company. The conductor was tapping his chin with his baton as he waited for the signal.

"Let us sit here, now," Sosthenes said, showing her to one of the marble seats usually kept for the chief City Magistrates.

The conductor saw his signal, stepped to his box, tapped, and at once the overture began.

Ever since she had entered the theatre, Theodora had known that the direction was something both new and splendid. It was not only beautiful to every eye, it was ruled, ordered, cleanly cut, and in all things exquisite. She noted that before the music began all people were in their seats. Now she saw that the gangways were gated; late-comers were shut out. The illusion which Sosthenes had tried to create was now to have its hour; those who had come to experience the illusion were not to be disturbed while the illusion was created. But she was at once held by the music. She was fond of music; she had some little skill with zither, harp and two kinds of pipe; she had played these for a living. Now she heard a remarkable company playing under the best conductor in that civilisation. She did not know him; she had noticed his charming young face, with its rather noticeable strong chin; now there it was transfigured and aflame in the box lifting the eighty musicians into the Paradise to which he had found the key. "What a conductor," she thought; "and then, what musicians, and what an overture.' She looked at Sosthenes beside her. He was not in Paradise, like the conductor. He had a block of thin wood upon his knee. To this block some twenty vellum sheets had been pinned. He was now staring at the conductor, the musicians, and various parts of the house, and making little notes in shorthand in crayon. He had an eye for everything, and the crayon was busy. Once, when two musicians who had a momentary rest, passed a joke under their breaths and smiled, the crayon made a black mark and Sosthenes looked murder. Near the end of the overture she glanced to her left. A few seats away, in the row behind her, was this man Silpi, whom the old seaman had called Nicanor of the Bays.

He was with two members of the Persian Trade Commission. Nicanor (or Silpi) was rapt with the music; the Persians were looking at the women, of whom there were many and very lovely, all set out (so Theodora thought) with more lavish colour and sparkle than was admitted in The City, and all staring, so Theodora judged, at the divine young athlete who was conducting the music. The overture climbed and crashed to its close, and at once passed into the *Psyche* music with a little dance of little unearthly figures whose exquisiteness made the entire audience of twenty thousand people spellbound. She heard no cough, no movement from the vast crowd, nothing but the light footfall, the unearthly music and Sosthenes' crayon on the vellum. Macedonia had told her and had sung to her the flute motif which preceded her entrance; she sat waiting for this, entranced by what she saw, and finding little odd memories of her friend coming out of their hiding-places. She had been a little shy, skinny girl from the wilds, able to jump and do hand-springs. What would the stage show? There came the drum music, with the effects of distant thunder; she had been told to get ready at this point. She looked to her right, for the moment was near now.

"Watch now," Sosthenes whispered; she was already watching. The flutes took up their haunting cry, and in an instant Psyche was floating on, and the men and women were weeping unashamed in ecstasy; and Theodora understood what had happened. That little wild, skinny, shy girl had become the exquisite creature of her century, supreme for lightness, charm and grace. No wonder that this creature was beset. It was plain, now, why Antioch was wild with joy in her. Such a thing was not seen more than once in a hundred years; and

those who saw her now saw the genius set forth with a blending and fusing of all that was noblest in all the arts. Genius was appearing in such a splendour as had never before been seen upon the stages of the world. Macedonia had told her to watch everything she did and then to bludgeon her for it. Watch everything. How could she help watching? But how criticise or help this wonderful thing? Theodora had danced; she had been through the schools and learned the metier; and only now saw what dancing ought to be or could be. It would be days, she thought, before she could understand this wonder. But that she would adore it and help it with all the power of love in her, she had no doubt. She watched the man who danced the god with some jealousy. Like everybody among the twenty thousand, she had begun to love Macedonia. She was only some three or four years older, but how much older in wisdom of the world. Yet here was Macedonia moving in a glory of success which seemed to put her in another planet.

When the ballet ended, Sosthenes drew his crayon across his seventh page of notes and said: "Like to come round?"

She said that she would love to speak to Macedonia. "But first," she said, '1 would like to say that I think all this is marvellous. Nothing like it has been seen. You are wonderful."

"You see what I'm trying to do?" Sosthenes said. "Did you see any change in Macedonia?"

"Change?" she said.

"She was always this," he said. "The butterfly was there, only waiting for a little sun. The Old Winter Palace was more Winter than Palace, perhaps."

"I cannot tell you what I think," Theodora said to

Macedonia. "It was the most exquisite thing I ever saw."

"I'm glad you like it," Macedonia said. "But, oh, do watch me and tell me where I'm wrong. Watch me in this virgin thing."

"I'll just knead your ankles," Theodora said. "If you have much to do in the next ballet you'll find a little work on them very refreshing. Lie down, now, and I'll have your shoes off. You were liker a spirit from heaven than anything I'd believed possible. I don't marvel at your room being piled with flowers and all sorts of joys. You are the most exquisite of living artists," she said. "I have never praised anyone like that before. I did not think that anyone like you, or at all like you, could exist. I think you are too lovely to describe. I shall always say that."

"My dear," Macedonia said, "if you had not passed when that Anthrax beast was attacking me, I should have been broken, and never been anything at all. I cannot tell you what a joy it is to think that my dream has come true, and that I have found you again and really danced for you and heard that you have liked me a little. I have always looked on you as a sort of a queen, and prayed that I might some day have the glory of dancing in your presence. You see, my dear, there is something very queenly about you. I used to notice you a lot at the Palace. In your last two seasons I had to be in the wings ready to begin while you were doing your songs and all those mimes with Comito: oh, you were good in them. I used to wonder if you would ever teach me miming, but never dared ask you. I saw you play the Queen more than once. Do you remember that absurd play of the Rival Queens, which you and your sister were

so wonderful in? I think your head, as it is, is adorable, and very beautiful; it is so exquisitely put on its neck; but it does lack one thing, and that is a golden crown, with a lovely blue amethyst or sapphire in the front here, set off by your hair. That is the one thing lacking in a very lovely creature."

"My dear," Theodora said, "you are the one Queen here, and how anyone can keep from crowning you on the spot at each performance I cannot understand. But, of course, they do crown you, with laurels and bays and myrtle and flowers and poems and adoration."

"That is nothing, dear," she said. "It is all due to Sosthenes; he made me, as he made everything in this company, but he does not care twopence for any one of us, nor does he care for success. One success only lights up something new to be done; something that one of us might do; then he sets-to to do it for us. We all know very well that it is all due to him. He pulls the talent out of us. When the people crown us, and drag us home and so forth, it is not we who deserve it, but he."

Theodora went back to her place for the St. George, wondering what would happen at the end. They had been in ecstasy over the Cupid and Psyche, a charming pagan tale.- What would they be after St. George? The tale and its setting belonged to that district; everybody there had a pride and a possession in the legend. What would happen when the fable was presented? She was soon to know. It went in a long rapture of cheering, which grew and grew until all present were almost in a frantic frenzy of jov. Men and women wept, and were not ashamed; they leaped upon their seats to cheer and wave their scarves and sob and sing. As before, they flung jewels, flowers and other presents upon the

stage; the attendants, in their blue and white cloaks, came with baskets, filled them with these things and then bore them to the divine Macedonia and the god-like lad who had danced St. George with her. Long after the play had ended, the applause lasted, and showers of gifts succeeded; time and time again the entire company had to form or defile before the back of the scene while the principals came forward to be cheered and cheered. It did not occur to the audience that the maker of the illusion, who had used the marvel of Macedonia, the heroical youthful strength of the St. George, the genius of the musicians and of the painters, and the youth and grace of the dancers to an end clearly perceived, deserved something of the glory. Sosthenes was at the back somewhere, saying polite things to some of the dancers and cold things to others. He was unmoved by this success. He had watched the piece from in front, as ever, and now had his notes to tead to the company. So-and-so had a jewel two inches astray in her hair; the other must change his wig; what had caused that delay on the right in the slow movement? another had crossed on hops instead of *en glissade;* why had she worn that red scarf, where was her blue one? one culprit had come out of line, another had looked vacant, another had seemed bored. They must all go ovei that scene later and get the ensemble better. "Get it rg&," Sosthenes said. "It will NOT DO. It looked frightful,"and the culprits went off cowed. He kept repeating at intervals: "Everybody is to be in the rehearsal room after the comedy". The performance was to end with a farcical ballet.

Theodora noticed that no one not of the theatre was allowed behind the scene. This was indeed a change

from the Old Winter Palace, where the friends admirers and lovers of the company made merry every day behind the scene. She liked the change; it gave the makers of illusion a distinction.

She waited till Sosthenes had finished his notes; then she went to him and said, "Sosthenes, you must be sick of praise, and I am not used to giving it, but I must say to you that you have made a new thing and a divine thing. I had not thought it possible to be so shaken in a theatre. I thought the theatre was all earth and you have brought out of it this miracle of a flower, all colour and fragrance and mystery".

He seemed pleased, and was so, for this was Comito's sister.

"It does for fable what the churches do for faith," he said, "only, we keep joy, which churches tend to kill with fear. Macedonia has just urged me again, to urge you to come home with us. I gladly do that, saying, that you will do me and Macedonia, too, a very, very great service if you will and can. Only I fear it may be difficult; we have to sail to-morrow."

"I thought it was to be the day after."

"'Well; we're late as it is; we have stopped on for an imprudent week; the seamen are anxious; and the man Nicanor, who is coming with us, has decided not to stay beyond to-morrow."

"Is he of the company?" she asked.

"No, but he worked the Prefect to send us home in the despatch-ships, so, of course, we must a little meet his wishes."

"I would love to come with the company, if you really could take me," she said. "I could be ready to-night. I thank you very much for the thought."

"I thank you," he said. "It is a great thing for Macedonia, a really great thing."

"Tell me," she said, "is this man Nicanor of the Bays?"

"Yes," he said.

"Why is he called 'of the Bays?"

Sosthenes looked at her, with some wonder. "I am growing old," he said. "1 was afraid I was."

"WAS that Nicanor of the Bays?" Comito said. "Well, I can tell you about him. You never cared for horse-racing; I don't myself; but when you were a kid and I was going round with the boys I used to go to the races a Jot; some of my boys put money on for me when they knew of something. But long before all that, I was taken to the races by Kumothoe's party. 1 played little servant to her, same as you did to me, when you began. It was the first time I ever went, and as it happened, I saw Nicanor's win. I was a kid, but I'll tell you about it, for it impressed me a lot, and it's still talked of sometimes, by these old racegoers."

"You never told me about it," Theodora said.

"No, very likely not. I was keeping my going to the races very dark; Mother didn't exactly approve of Kumothoe's gentleman friends. Of course, I don't know anything of horse-racing, but you know it's exciting the first time, all the crowd and the dresses, and the way the cars come round the bend, and go crash. I was hoping a team of greys would win. They came up the straight, dead level with another team; everybody thought they'd do it. Then this Nicanor came round the bend on the far side. He looked tremendous. He just lifted his team along, just as though he were picking them up and flinging them. He was screaming at them and all splashed with foam from them. I'll never forget it. How he made up the lead, I can't think. He must have reckoned he could do it and then made them do it. He did it by a short head; the Axion Bays, they called them; they were no good afterwards, but those fellows wouldn't mind that.

It was a very famous win. That's why they called him Nicanor of the Bays. It was talked of all over the world."

Theodora asked Macedonia's father if he knew anything about Nicanor of the Bays. The little sharp black eyes of Menodotos gleamed.

"Yes, I do," he said. "I hear he came back to-day, with your Ballet people."

"Yes, I saw him land. Do tell me about him. Is he in the secret service?"

"I imagine that all that he does is very secret service."

"I saw him in Antioch, with some Persians, or possibly they were Syrians," she said. "I know that he won a famous chariot race."

"Yes; the Imperial Gold Cup. I saw him win it. He and a few friends won enormous sums of money by it. They were his brother's horses. His brother was Theokritos: does that mean anything to you?"

"No."

"He was a Green. He had very great estates in the west. When the last Emperor was failing, Theokritos hoped to become Emperor after him. He gave his agent an enormous sum of money, over a million pieces, a good deal more, to bribe the Imperial Guard to bring this about. Now the head of the Guard, Justinus, thought that he would prefer to be Emperor himself. So he took the money, bribed the Guard to choose himself as Emperor, and, as soon as he was chosen, he put Theokritos and his agent to death."

"Good Heaven!"

"You didn't know that? Not many do. It isn't wise to talk about it. I tell you, for you are as a daughter here. Things are done in politics which aren't done in civil life, nor even in business."

"I COME from Britain," he said. "Perhaps you have not heard of it?"

"Oh yes, I have," she said. "It used to be in the Empire, and then the pagans got it. Have the pagans got it still?"

"No," he said, "I've got it at the moment, more or less. 1 am here to try to persuade people here to secure it. We want some ships and shipwrights; and then some horses, and some men trained in your cavalry tactics. Is that too much to ask?*'

She reflected that the entire Empire, upon all its marine coasts and frontiers, cried for just those things.

"So many are asking for those things," she said. "I was in the Pentapolis and at Antioch a few months or weeks ago. All there were crying out for ships and cavalry. How did you get here, though? Was it not a frightful journey?"

"No," he said simply. "I hoped to get the things, and saw no other way, I've got to this point."

"And with the things you could turn out the pagans and secure the land back to the Empire?"

"Yes, and to Christianity. I believe I could."

She saw that the old Empress was busily talking to Justinian; she longed to talk more with this man; she had never before seen a man from Britain.

"You speak with faith," she said; "that is nine-tenths of every battle."

"It is all that I bring," he said. "We have nothing else; we have no money; a little wheat, wool and corn; and a breathing space, as it happens, which may last a year or

two; I hope it may. I want not to lose the breathing space, but to get ready for what will follow, when the pagans begin again."

"What are the pagans?" she asked.

"Pirates of different races," he said, "with varying customs. For a little while they will or may leave us alone."

"I think," she said, "Her Imperial Majesty wishes you to speak to her."

He turned to the old Empress, who wore the strange triple head-dress of a Sardican lady of high birth. This had been a jest for years throughout the Empire, being the head-gear which the poor soul had longed to wear in her native village seventy years before, and had not then been allowed. Sosthenes was saying something to Justinian's mother. The Emperor in a loud voice said to Macedonia, who may have hoped that his wound was not troubling him: "It's troubling all the time. An old wound's like an unhappy marriage: night and day the devil. But by my way of it, an old man's legs are like an old horse's legs, always needing rubbing and not worth the trouble."

Something about legs reached the ears of the Empress, who called out: "What's that you're saying about legs?"

"I was saying that yours are the best in the Empire," Justo said. "And they ought to be on all the coins."

"They were good legs," the Empress said, "but I defy any woman to keep good legs after seventy-nine or eighty. And what would be the use? Who would want to see?"

"All the world, surely," her husband said.

"No, no," the Empress said, "no such luck. Some of the flesh and the devil might, but not even much

of them; not the world. The world knows better."

"But every woman can keep good legs till ninety," Macedonia said. "My old teacher's teacher is eighty-four; she dances still, and does her practices. She stands on her head for twenty minutes every day to let the blood run into her brain."

"There's something in that," the Empress said. "A lot too many women keep their genius in their legs. It's best to let some of it into the head."

As this seemed to sum up and end the topic of legs, whose main purpose must ever be to support the head, the Emperor started something fresh. He turned to Theodora and asked:

"Are you a countrywoman, hey?"

"No," she said, "I was born in The City here."

She had been born within a quarter of a mile of that dinner-table, but she was not going to allude to that.

"I don't mean that," Justo said. "I mea i, do you come from the good old Sardican landscape?"

"The Emperor means, do you come from Dacia," Macedonia said.

"No," Theodora said, "no, Excellency; 'but my great ability might warrant the supposition'."

The Emperor banged the table. "Hear that, Pheemy?" he called. "Hear what this little woman says? She says she isn't a Dacian, but her great ability might lead one to think she was. She's got some sense, Pheemy. The boy said she had. I must remember that. I must tell that to the Patriarch. 'No, I'm not a Dacian, but my . . .' what was it now . . . 'great ability might lead you to think I am one.' I like you for saying that. Pheemy always used to say things like that. Well, you're as like a dark Dacian as can be; that's the next best thing to being one. This

Macedonia here; she's the flower of the land; I never saw anyone dance those Dacian dances like her, since the day 1 left my village and came to be a soldier. Ah, well. I could dance, too, in my young days. 'If you can't dance, you can't do,' we always said. It's true, too. No man could be head-man in the village, nor sergeant to a troop unless he could dance. I'd like to make it a rule in life," he said. "Don't you think we ought to make Patriarchs dance before we raise them to the Patriarchate?"

"Sir," Sosthenes said, "it might not do to have Patriarchs under thirty."

"Still," Justinian said, "you would admit dancing into ritual?"

"Indeed I would; why not? You have David, and the universal testimony of the past. God must be worshipped with rhythms."

"They do it in the East," the Emperor said. "I've seen 'em dancing to their gods. It's very pagan."

"We could find something Christian," Sosthenes said.

However, the Emperor was off on another topic now.

"You've all just come from Antioch," he said. "Now, my dark young Dacian," he said, turning to Theodora, "what are the Persians up to? What was said in the bazaars, hey?"

"I was not in the bazaars," Theodora said. "I was only two days there."

"I go a lot by what is said in bazaars," the Emperor said. "I get these reports a yard long which I can't read; a word from the bazaar's worth ten of them. What's said in Antioch Bazaar is what Chosroes does next spring."

"I am sure that you heard two things," Justinian

said; "an expectation of war and a longing for peace."

"Yes," Theodora said. "What I did hear was that the Persian King does most truly want peace with you; he has troubles enough on his own borders to the north. He only wants a real assurance that you won't attack him on one side while he is fighting on the other. In the theatre I overheard a man saying that you could make friends with him for the next ten years if you wrote to him and sent him some ivory."

"I'm not much of a hand at writing," Justo said. "They bring me these charters and laws and things, and I put some red paint to make 'em law."

The Empress, who had been paying close attention, said: "Tino or Philip, or someone, could write a letter. The Eastern Praefect could deliver it."

"And ivory, you said? I hate to think of ivory going to a pagan."

"No," Euphemia said, "no ivory to a sun-worshipper. Ivory's gone up and up since the Persians started buying it. The Patriarch was saying he can't get enough even for the reliquaries."

"It sounds to me too much like trying to buy him off," Justo went on.

"Not in the least," Theodora said. "Could you not simply say that you hear he is beset by savages on his borders, and that as a brother ruler you sympathise and assure him that you will not try to snatch an advantage? In the meantime, perhaps he might care to have this ivory? He is building an ivory room, like the King of Samaria."

She had never before been called upon to speak her mind before Empire; nor had she expected that Empire could be like this.

"I could dictate a letter," the Emperor mused, "and Philip or the boy there, or the Praefect could put the moonlight on it. But Pheemy's right about the ivory. I'm not going to send any ivory to a pagan. Bone is what he'll have to use, or this old wood the sap's died in; that's like enough to ivory for a pagan. But I believe this young woman's right about the Persian King; he may want peace. But he's a vain man, and he does stick out for form. He wants me to humble myself to him. Will I? He can ask till he turns blue. Let him crawl to me, if he wants peace. I'm the Emperor."

"You are here," Theodora said, greatly daring, "but he is Emperor in Persia. Every Persian King reflects that once all the world in sight from here was his, or tributary to him. You are both great princes. Say that you recognise that; and that no great prince shall disturb another in his trouble. He has thought that you have been trying to snatch advantage; he has resented that. Show him that you aren't thinking of any such thing; and he'll be grateful; not perhaps as grateful as any ordinary man, but more grateful than a king usually is. There is no need for you to send any Embassy. Send a letter by the Praefect with some gifts. If ivory is scarce, send some other treasure; white mules are what he longs for."

"I don't doubt," the Emperor said; "other people like white mules, too; they're not so easy come by, since Vitalian sacked the breeding-station."

"A thousand white mules would be cheaper than a war," Theodora said.

"I'll see him stewed in hell before he gets a white mule from me," the Emperor said.

"Well," Theodora said, "why not white peacocks?

He longs for white peacocks and silver pheasants."

"How the devil do you know that?" the Emperor said.

"I met a Persian lady in the ship going to Antioch, who told me. He longs for any white creature because he thinks it is to some extent released from the need of action and turned to thought."

"If he'd turn a little whiter himself," the Emperor said, "it might save trouble. There's a man just across the water with white peacocks, any number. I'll have to ask about pheasants. But what's he going to give me? I'm not going to do all the giving, I hope. What do you suppose he'll give me?"

"If he gave you peace, he would give you a safe frontier, wouldn't he?" Theodora said.

"Yes, and for how long? You can't trust a word these fellows say."

"That was what the Persian lady said to me of your Ministers," Theodora said, "that the Persian King couldn't trust a word they said."

"By God, I'm not surprised," the Emperor said. "That's my own view of 'em, if you ask me, but nothing's been proved against 'em, so far."

Theodora was wondering now if she would be sent to be beheaded at the end of the meal; she was not used to talking to Emperors; still, she was aware that the old man was friendly, and liked the truth.

"It seems to me," the old man said, "that all your advice is nothing but Christianity, which is dangerous advice in politics. I'd say that now's the time to fall on Persia, now that her border's all beset."

"That wasn't the view in Antioch," Theodora said.

"Well; you were there," he said. "What was the view?"

"The view was, that all the tribes of the east are moving west, and the one thing people hoped was that Persia might be free to stop them. If Persia doesn't stop them, they'll come west, right into your Empire, and stop all your trade caravans. They're doing that now. Half the trade caravans are stopped already."

"These tribes . . . they're the lads with the ponies," the Emperor said. "They'll only come as far as there's pasture. Nations aren't like men, young lady, they are a great deal worse. You can give help to your next-door neighbour, but not to your next-door nation; that's the way to death."

"Well, he that loseth his life . . ." Theodora said. "Suppose that you fall upon Persia now; what amount of life will you get from that? The raiders will raid her and get a lot of spoil. You will, with great difficulty and vast expense, send an army to the Persian frontier and fight one or two inconclusive battles. By the time you have lost your first army by disease and desertion and sent out a second, not half so good, the raiders will have turned on you: they'll be over all your frontiers, pillaging your cities. Then you will have to make peace with Persia on Persia's terms, not yours, and turn to defend your property. I am only repeating what the people in Antioch were saying. They have to live beside Persia, and want her prosperous and friendly."

"I hate the Persians," the Emperor said. "Every damned bargain I've tried to make with 'em, they've tried to get the better of me."

"Uncle," Justinian said, "this young lady has said the very things I have been feeling, yet unable to formulate. I do feel sure that she's right. I'd better go to King Chosroes and see what I can do. In addition to the

pheasants and the peacocks, I would suggest some of John's white ponies. That would save the white mules for your kettle-drummers. I would start next week and I don't doubt we could come to some friendly arrangement."

"I doubt you'll get much good from King Chosroes," the Empress said. "Get him to be a Christian first, *I* say. If he'll become a Christian, then we may believe him."

"Everything has to have a beginning," Justinian said. "If he'll give me a friendly welcome, I don't doubt that I'll be able to win him."

"Well, I always believed in a personal talk," the Emperor said. "But for this sick groin of mine, I'd go myself and see him, that is, if he'd come half-way. But I won't have you lowering yourself to him; I'm all for a direct deal, but he'll have to show that he knows it's a damned condescension on our part for the Emperor's nephew to talk to him. You'll go as the Praefect of the East, to inspect fortresses. It shan't be said that you go to see him."

"Not unless he turns Christian," the Empress said. "These pagans ought to be rooted out, really."

Theodora was amazed at the conversation. Someone had said that the world was governed in a very odd way; she had not reckoned on becoming suddenly an instrument of Imperial policy; yet here she was, chatting at supper and apparently dictating what was to be done on the most important of the Empire's frontiers.

"You see, young lady," the Emperor said, "Tino here said you'd got some sense. I think you have. We'll try what these peacocks and things'll do. If they help him to be a bit whiter, you'll have done a good night's work.

Friend Sosthenes, your two young ladies are credits to your taste. Let's drink to them."

"Sir," Sosthenes said, "Iam proud to drink to them."

'Tm going to drink, too," the Empress said. *"I* like both these girls; they do their hair so nicely. Say what you like, young girls are better than old."

"They can't be," the Emperor said. "Now here's to the ladies Macedonia and Theodora. God bless them."

The party rose to drink the toast; the old Empress stood, waved her little glass and said: "My dears, I love you."

Theodora was aware that the British Count, who had been left out of the conversation, was looking a little lost. He had probably concluded that these were the ways of The City, and had made up his mind, now, to the failure of his mission. She found a chance to say to him, as he sat, after rising for the toast:

"Thank you so much, Count. We were talking about the Eastern frontier."

"It isn't a frontier," he answered, "it is the good-will of the Persian King; that is the only frontier there."

She looked at him with appreciation. The swordsmen of the Body-Guard entered, bearing black cloaks. The men of the party now had to go with the Emperor to Evening Prayers with the Body-Guard. As they passed out, Justinian's mother gave him her blessing, and added that she would now go to lie down. A maid helped her away.

"Come in to the little room," Euphemia said to the two young women. "We can have our sweetmeats there."

She led the way to a very beautiful room, walled with

black enamel, on which someone had modelled a flight of wild geese in low relief.

"What a beautiful room," Theodora said.

"Ah, you like the birds," the Empress said. "They were done a long time since; it is what they call old work, that. Settle yourselves in, now, and be snug. These palace places are all for state, but I always tell my husband, the Emperor, I do like a room where I can be comfortable. What I suffer in these great halls at these functions. This is the only room in the quarters where I can be homey and put my feet up. Though you know, my dears, I've much to be thankful for; being Empress. I don't mind so much for myself; it's for Justo; he likes being in command and taking the salute. I ask for a lot of warmth and sweets after dinner. And I do like a nice brisket once or twice a week. You know, you can have that, when you're Empress. And I do like being called Queen, after being at people's beck and call: 'Lupi, why haven't you cleaned the plates? Lupi, take up your mistress's broth, and see the napkin's clean.' I've had all that, in my time. But what pretty dresses you both have. Ah, it's nice to be young and care what you wear. It's nice of you to come to the Palace to talk with old people. It's nice for the boy, too. I always think he ought to mix more with people of his own age. He's never been young. In a way, I suppose one ought to be thankful, for most young men are only too young. I know they were in my time. But you'll know better than I if they still are. He said to me only the other night, 'I enjoyed meeting those dancers, and their advisers'. I never knew him break out like that about anybody. Now here are the honey-wafers and that. These are the real Sardican honey-cakes. Honey-dix, we call them. They would put

this cinnamon in them, which is wrong, but I think IVe got them to do it at last. Did the boy say anything about what he wanted you to do for him?"

This question was put to Macedonia, but the Empress looked at Theodora, too, as though she, too, were meant. Both young women said: "No. What can we do?"

"He'll be back from prayers in a few minutes," the Empress said. "Evening Prayers only takes a few minutes, but they don't like missing it, because all the officers report afterwards; just a matter of form, but Justo always can tell if anything's been kept back, and then he pounces. They all think Justo's easy going; so he is, but, my, if anyone tries to take a liberty, or to dodge him. There's nothing like being an old soldier, is there, for teaching a general what may be going on? You'd be surprised at what goes on. But Justo was in the business when they were still boys at top-notch. He saw it all; the corn and fodder business, and so much to the colonel, so much to the sergeants. My dear, what pretty hands you've got." This was to Theodora, who had hands of much beauty, "I do like a girl to have pretty hands. I used to long for pretty hands when I was young, and used to rub ivy on them; they say ivy makes a white skin, ivy or lemons: but it never did with me; I had always too much rough work to do, scrubbing and cooking, and all the washing. Let me have a close look at your hands."

She was comfortably prone on a cushioned settle, which was hung with scarlet. Theodora came to her side, knelt down and held out her hands. The Empress took them and looked at them inside and out.

""We used to have roamers," she said. "They used to

come about and tell fortunes from the hands. Did any roamer tell your hand?"

"No, none," Theodora said. "My mother was very strict against any fortune-telling."

"I go by the face," the Empress said. "I'd say that a good fortune waited on both you girls."

From PAVILASTUKAY

LIFE ON EARTH HAS BEEN FAIR AT TIMES

THOUGH reckoned rather frail to serve and die
Jonnox was amply strong enough to feel
The all-besetting, aching misery
In all the months of hatred, blood and steel
When common danger linked the commonweal.
He bore with folly, danger, grief and pain,
Thinking his thought "This must not be again",

When in his iron hat he trod his beats
Crunching at every step the fruits of strife,
The powdered brick and glass that had been streets,
And sad at the stupidity of life,
Then like the lifting thrilling of a fife
Within his mind that City's image thrilled,
Saying, "much better things have once been willed.

Much better things, which can again be had
Will, therefore, to possess the life you saw
Of men and women perfect, children glad
Living at peace in cities without flaw.
The anarchy that makes itself the law
That must be killed before the holiday
Of cities like to Pavilastukay.

And since men covet change, and tiger-men
Are often born and often bring a change
To make men dwellers in the caves agen,

Well, reckon it unhappy, but not strange,
And in the cellar of the burnt-out grange
Or huddled in some drain amid decay
Still think thete once was Pavilastukay,

Which can be had again, if there be will.
Pray not to any god for it, but plan
Imagine, work, determine, struggle still
That out of modern man there may come MAN.
Life was a sorry thing when it began
Life is a sorry thing when warrings sway.
But Life was fair in Pavilastukay.

Therefore, come any devilry devised
By things called soldiers serving things called states,
Destroying all that wisdom ever prized,
Infecting every mob with all their hates.
I have a star for when the storm abates
A cock that crows against the coming day
England shall live like Pavilastukay."

AN EPILOGUE

THE MEDITATION OF HIGHWORTH RIDDEN

I HAVE seen flowers come in stony places
And kind things done by men with ugly faces,
And the gold cup won by the worst horse at the races,
So I trust, too.