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# THE ELFIN ARTIST

WORKS OF ALFRED NOYES

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COLLECTED POEMS—2 Vols.

THE LORD OF MISRULE

A BELGIAN CHRISTMAS EVE

THE WINE-PRESS

WALKING SHADOWS—*Prose*

TALES OF THE MERMAID TAVERN

SHERWOOD

THE ENCHANTED ISLAND

AND OTHER POEMS

DRAKE: AN ENGLISH EPIC  
POEMS

THE FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN

THE GOLDEN HYNDE

THE NEW MORNING

# THE ELFIN ARTIST

*AND OTHER POEMS*

BY

ALFRED NOYES



NEW YORK  
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PUBLISHERS

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ALFRED NOYES

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**TO  
MY WIFE**



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## THE ELFIN ARTIST

## THE ELFIN ARTIST

Till it shone like an angel's feather  
    With sky-born opal and rose,  
And gold from the foot of the rainbow,  
    And colours that no man knows;  
And I laughed in the sweet May weather,  
    Because of the themes he chose.

For he painted the things that matter,  
    The tints that we all pass by,  
Like the little blue wreaths of incense  
    That the wild thyme breathes to the sky;  
Or the first white bud of the hawthorn,  
    And the light in a blackbird's eye;

And the shadows on soft white cloud-peaks  
    That carolling skylarks throw,  
Dark dots on the slumbering splendours  
    That under the wild wings flow,  
Wee shadows like violets trembling  
    On the unseen breasts of snow;

With petals too lovely for colour  
    That shake to the rapturous wings,

## THE ELFIN ARTIST

And grow as the bird draws near them,  
And die as he mounts and sings;—  
Ah, only those exquisite brushes  
Could paint these marvellous things.

## EARTH AND HER BIRDS

(SHADOW-OF-A-LEAF SINGS)

**B**RAVE birds that climb those blue  
 Dawn-tinted towers,  
 With notes like showers of dew  
 From elf-tossed flowers,  
 Shake your mad wings in mirth,  
 Betray, betray  
 The secret thoughts of May,  
 That heaven, once more, may marry our  
 wild earth.

Dark gipsy, she would dance  
 Unmated still,  
 Challenging, glance for glance,  
 Her lord's high will,  
 But that her thoughts take wing  
 While she lies sleeping;  
 And, into glory leaping,  
 Like birds, at sunrise, to her bride-groom  
 sing.

## EARTH AND HER BIRDS

See how with cheeks aglow  
And lips apart,  
While warm winds, murmuring low  
Lay bare her heart,  
She dreams that she can hide  
Its rosy light  
In ferns and flowers this night,  
And swim like Dian through this hawthorn-  
tide.

Then shame her, lavrocks, shame her,  
At break of day,  
That heaven may trap and tame her  
This mad sweet May.  
Let all your feathered choir  
Leave those warm nests  
Between her dawn-flushed breasts,  
And soar to heaven, singing her young de-  
sire.

## MOUNTAIN LAUREL \*

*(A Connecticut poet returns to his hills singing)*

I HAVE been wandering in the lonely valleys,  
Where mountain laurel grows  
And, in among the rocks, and the tall dark pine-  
trees

The foam of the young bloom flows,  
In a riot of rose-white stars, all drenched with the  
dew-fall,

And musical with the bee,  
Let the fog-bound cities over their dead wreaths  
quarrel.

Wild laurel for me!

*Wild laurel—mountain laurel—*

*Bright as the breast of a cloud at break of day,  
White-flowering laurel, wild mountain laurel,  
Rose-dappled snowdrifts, warm with the honey  
of May!*

\* Dedicated to my friends Carl and E. B. Stoeckel, in memory of one of their music festivals at Norfolk, Connecticut.

## MOUNTAIN LAUREL

*On the happy hill-sides, in the green valleys of  
Connecticut,  
Where the trout-streams go carolling to the  
sea,  
I have laughed with the lovers of song and heard  
them singing  
"Wild laurel for me!"*

Far, far away is the throng that has never known  
beauty,  
Or looked upon unstained skies.  
Did they think that my songs would scramble for  
withered bay-leaves  
In the streets where the brown fog lies?  
They never have seen their wings, then, beating  
westward,  
To the heights where song is free,  
To the hills where the laurel is drenched with the  
dawn's own colours,  
Wild laurel for me!

*Wild laurel—mountain laurel—  
Where Robert o' Lincoln sings in the dawn and  
the dew,*

## MOUNTAIN LAUREL

*White-flowering laurel—wild mountain laurel  
Where song springs fresh from the heart, and  
the heart is true!  
They have gathered the sheep to their fold, but  
where is the eagle?  
They have bridled their steeds, but when have  
they tamed the sea,  
They have caged the wings, but never the heart  
of the singer,  
“Wild laurel for me!”*

If I never should find you again, O, lost com-  
panions,  
When the rose-red month begins,  
With the wood-smoke curling blue by the Indian  
river,  
And the sound of the violins,  
In dreams the breath of your green glens would  
still haunt me,  
Where night and her stars, drawing down on  
blossom and tree,  
Turn earth to heaven, and whisper their love till  
daybreak.  
Wild laurel for me!

## MOUNTAIN LAUREL

*Wild laurel—mountain laurel—*

*O, mount again, wild wings, to the stainless  
blue,*

*White-flowering laurel, wild mountain laurel,*

*And all the glory of song that the young heart  
knew.*

*I have lived. I have loved. I have sung in the  
happy valleys,*

*Where the trout-streams go carolling to the sea,  
I have met the lovers of song in the sunset bring-  
ing*

*“Wild laurel for me!”*

## SEA-DISTANCES

**H**IS native sea-washed isle  
Was bleak and bare.  
Far off, there seemed to smile  
An isle more fair.

Blue as the smoke of Spring  
Its far hills rose,  
A delicate azure ring  
Crowned with faint snows.

At dusk, a rose-red star  
Set free from wrong,  
It beacons him afar,  
His whole life long.

Not till old age drew nigh  
He voyaged there.  
He saw the colours die  
As he drew near.

## SEA-DISTANCES

It towered above him, bleak  
And cold, death-cold.  
From peak to phantom peak  
A grey mist rolled.

Then, under his arched hand,  
From that bare shore,  
Back, at his own dear land,  
He gazed, once more.

Clothed with the tints he knew,  
He saw it smile,—  
Opal, and rose and blue,  
His native isle.

## THE INN OF APOLLO

**H**AVE you supped at the Inn of Apollo,  
While the last light fades from the  
West?

Has the Lord of the sun, at the world's end,  
Poured you his ripest and best?  
O, there's wine in that Inn of Apollo;

Wine, mellow and deep as the sunset,  
With mirth in it, singing as loud  
As the skylark sings in a high wind,  
High over a crisp white cloud.  
Have you laughed in that Inn of Apollo?

Was the whole world molten in music  
At once, by the heat of that wine?  
Did the stars and the tides and your own heart  
Dance with the heavenly Nine?  
For they dance in that Inn of Apollo.

## THE INN OF APOLLO

Was their poetry croaked by the sages,  
Or born in a whisper of wings?  
For the music that masters the ages,  
Be sure, is the music that sings!  
Yes, they sing in that Inn of Apollo.

## THE VICTORIOUS DEAD

### I

**N**OW, for their sake, our lands grow lovelier,  
There's not one grey cliff shouldering  
back the sea,  
Nor one forsaken hill that does not wear  
The visible radiance of their memory.

Our highlands are not lonely as of old;  
For all their crags with that pure light are  
crowned;  
And, round our Sussex farms, from fold to fold,  
Tread where you will, you tread on haunted  
ground.

There's not one glen where happy hearts could  
roam  
That is not filled with tenderer shadows now.  
There's not one lane that used to lead them home  
But breathes their thoughts to-day from every  
bough.

## THE VICTORIOUS DEAD

There's not one leaf on all these quickening trees,  
Nor way-side flower but breathes their messages.

### II

Now, in the morning of a nobler age,  
    Though night-born eyes, long-taught to fear  
    the sun,  
Would still delay that glorious heritage,  
    Make firm, O God, the peace our dead have  
    won.

For folly shakes the tinsel on its head  
    And points us back to darkness and to hell,  
Cackling, "*Beware of visions,*" while our dead  
    Whisper, "*It was for visions that we fell.*"

They never knew the secret game of power.  
    All that this earth can give they thrust aside.  
They crowded all their youth into an hour,  
    And, for one fleeting dream of right, they died.

Oh, if we fail them, in that awful trust,  
How should we bear those voices from the dust?

# THE VICTORIOUS DEAD

## III

You, broken-hearted, comfort you again!  
Eternal Justice guards the gift they gave.  
The goal of all that struggling hope and pain  
Is not the sophists' universal grave.

Our sun shall perish; but they cannot die.  
Their realm of light is far more true than ours.  
Behind the veil of earth and sea and sky  
They live and move and work with nobler  
powers.

They have thrust wide open every long-locked  
portal  
Of man's dark mind to that eternal light;  
Cast off this flesh in proof of things immortal,  
And built an altar that out-shines our night.

The faith they proved is of immortal worth.  
The souls that proved it are not dust and earth.

## THE VICTORIOUS DEAD

### IV

A little while we may not see their eyes  
Or touch their hands, for they are far too near;  
But soul to soul, the life that never dies  
Speaks to the life that waits its freedom here.

They have made their land one living shrine.  
Their words  
Are breathed in glory from each woodland  
bough;  
And, where the may-tree shakes with song of  
birds,  
Their young unwhispered joys are singing now.

By meadow and mountain, river and hawthorn-  
brake,  
In sacramental peace, from sea to sea,  
The land they loved grows lovelier for their sake,  
Shines with their hope, enshrines their memory,

Communes with heaven again, and makes us  
whole,  
Through man's new faith in man's immortal soul.

## PETER QUINCE

**P**PETER QUINCE was nine years old,  
When he see'd what never was told.

When he crossed the fairy fern,  
Peter had no more to learn.

Just as the day began to die,  
He see'd 'em rustling on the sky;

Ferns, like small green finger-prints  
Pressed against them rosy tints,

Mother-o'-pearl and opal tinges  
Dying along their whispering fringes,

Every colour, as it died,  
Beaconing, *Come, to the other side.*

Up he crept, by the shrew-mouse track,  
A robin chirped, *You woant come back.*

## PETER QUINCE

Through the ferns he crept to look.

. . . . .

There he found a gurt wide book;

Much too big for a child to hold.

Its clasps were made of sunset gold.

It smelled like old ship's timbers do.

He began to read it through.

All the magic pictures burned,

Like stained windows, as he turned

Page by big black-lettered page,

Thick as cream, and ripe with age

There he read, till all grew dim.

Then green glow-worms lighted him.

There he read till he forgot

All that ever his teachers taught.

. . . . .

Someone, old as the moon, crept back,

Late that night by the shrew-mouse track.

## PETER QUINCE

Someone, taller maybe, by an inch.  
Boys grow fast. He'll do at a pinch.

Only, folks that know'd him claim  
Peter's wits were never the same.

Ev'ryone said that Peter Quince  
H'aint been never the same child since.

Now he'd sit, in a trance, for hours,  
Talkin' softly to bees and flowers.

Now, in the ingle-nook at night,  
Turn his face from the candle-light;

Till, as you thought him fast asleep,  
You'd see his eyes were wide and deep;

And, in their wild magic glow,  
Rainbow colours 'ud come and go.

Dame Quince never could wholly wake him,  
So they say, tho' she'd call and shake him.

He sat dreaming. He sat bowed  
In a white sleep, like a cloud.

## PETER QUINCE

Over his dim face at whiles,  
Flickered liddle elvish smiles.

•   •   •   •   •   •  
Once, the robin at the pane,  
Tried to chirp the truth again.

*Peter Quince has crossed the fern.  
Peter Quince will not return.*

*Drive the changeling from your chair!  
That's not Peter dreaming there.*

*Peter's crossed the fern to look.  
Peter's found the magic book.*

Ah, Dame Quince was busy sobbin',  
So she couldn't hear poor Robin.

And the changeling, in a dream,  
Supped that night, on pears and cream.

Night by night, he cleared his platter;  
And—from moon to moon—grew fatter;

Mostly dumb, or muttering dimly  
When the smoke blew down the chimley,

## PETER QUINCE

*Peter's turned another page,  
I have almost earned my wage.*

Then the good dame's eyelids shone.

• • • • •

This was many a year ago.  
Peter Quince is reading on.

## THE GREEN MAN

**I**N those old days at Brighthelmstone,  
When art was half Chinese,  
And Venus, dipped by Martha Gunn,  
Improved the shining seas;  
When every dandy walked the Steyne  
In something strange and new,  
The Green Man,  
The Green Man,  
Made quite a how-dy-doo.

Green pantaloons, green waistcoat,  
Green frock and green cravat,  
Green gloves and green silk handkerchief,  
Green shoes and tall green hat,—  
He took the air in a green gig,  
From eight o'clock till ten;  
O, the Green Man,  
The Green Man,  
Was quite successful then.

## THE GREEN MAN

And though, beneath that golden dome,  
That Chinese pup of Paul's,  
With snow and azure, rose and foam,  
He danced at routs and balls,  
Though all the laughing flowers on earth  
Around the room he'd swing,  
The Green Man,  
The Green Man,  
Remained a leaf of Spring.

His rooms, they said, his chairs, his bed,  
Were green as meadows are.  
He dined on hearts of lettuces.  
He wore an emerald star.  
O, many a fop in blue and gold  
His little hour might shine,  
Till the Green Man,  
The Green Man,  
Came strutting up the Steyne.

His name, I think, was William White,  
He wished to keep it green.  
His fond ambition reached its height  
When Brighton's frolic queen,

## THE GREEN MAN

FitzHerbert, stopped her crimson chair,  
And dropped her flirting fan,  
With "Tee, hee, hee!  
O, look! O, see!  
Here comes that odd Green Man!"

Alack, he reached it all too well,  
Despite his will to fame,  
Thenceforth he shone for beau and belle  
By that ambiguous name;  
So William White was quite forgot,  
By matron, fop, and maid;  
Ay, White became  
The Green Man;  
Became an April shade.

Now, even his green and ghostly gig,  
The green whip in his hand,  
The green lights in his powdered wig,  
Are vanished from the land.  
Green livery, darkling emerald star, . . .  
Not even their wraiths are seen.  
And nobody knows  
The Green Man,  
Although his grave is green.

## THE SILVER CROOK

*I WAS mistuk, once, for the Poape of  
Roame . . .*

The drawled fantastic words came floating down  
Behind me, five long years ago, when last  
I left the old shepherd, Bramble, by his fold.

Bramble was fond, you'll judge, of his own  
tales,

And cast a gorgeous fly for the unwary:  
But I was late, and could not listen then,  
Despite his eager leer.

Yet, many a night,  
And many a league from home, out of a dream  
Of white chalk coasts, and roofs of Horsham  
stone,

Coloured like russet apples, there would come  
Music of sheep-bells, baaing of black-nosed lambs,  
Barking of two wise dogs, crushed scents of  
thyme,

A silver crook, bright as the morning star.

## THE SILVER CROOK

Above the naked downs. Then—Bramble's voice,  
*I was mistuk, once, for the Poape of Roame,*  
Would almost wake me, wondering what he  
meant.

Now, five years later, while the larks went up  
Over the dew-ponds in a wild-winged glory,  
And all the Sussex downs, from weald to sea,  
Were patched like one wide crazy quilt, in squares  
Of yellow and crimson, clover and mustard-flower,  
Edged with white chalk, I found him once again.  
He leaned upon his crook, unbudged by war,  
Unchanged, and leering eagerly as of old.

How should I paint old Bramble—the shrewd  
face,  
Brown as the wrinkled loam, the bright brown  
eyes,  
The patriarchal beard, the moleskin cap,  
The boots that looked like tree-stumps, the loose  
cloak  
Tanned by all weathers,—every inch of him  
A growth of Sussex soil. His back was bent  
Like wind-blown hawthorn, turning from the sea,  
With roots that strike the deeper.

## THE SILVER CROOK

Well content  
With all his world, and boastful as a child,  
In splendid innocence of the worldling's way,  
Whose murderous ego skulks behind a hedge  
Of modest privet,—no, I cannot paint him.  
Better to let him talk, and paint himself.  
“Marnin’,” he said; and swept away five years.

With absolute dominion over time,  
Waiving all prelude, he picked up the thread  
We dropped that day, and cast his bait again:—  
*I was mistuk, once, for the Poape of Roame.*—  
“Tell me,” I said. “Explain. I’ve dreamed of  
it.”—

“I racken you doan’t believe it. Drunken Dick,  
'Ull tell you 'tis as true's I'm stannin' here.  
It happened along of this old silver crook.  
I call it silver 'cos it shines so far.  
My wife can see it over at Ovingdean  
When I'm on Telscombe Tye. They doan't mek  
crooks  
Like this in Sussex now. They've lost the way  
To shape 'em. That's what they French papists  
knowed  
Over at Arundel. They tried to buy

## THE SILVER CROOK

My crook, to carry in church. But I woan't  
sell 'en.

I've heerd there's magic in a crook like this,—  
White magic. Well, I rackon it did save Dick  
More ways than one, that night, from the old  
Black Ram.

I've med a song about it. There was once  
A Lunnon poet, down here for his health,  
Asked me to sing it to 'un, an' I did.  
It med him laff, too. 'Sing it again,' he says  
'But go slow, this time.' 'No, I woan't,' I says  
(*I knowed what he was trying*). 'No,' I says,  
'I woan't go slow. You'll ketch 'un if I do.'  
You see, he meks a tedious mort of money  
From these here ballad books, an' I wer'n't goin'  
To let these Lunnon chuckle-heads suck my brains.  
I med it to thet ancient tune you liked,  
*The Brown Girl*. 'Member it?'

Bramble cleared his throat,  
Spat at a bee, leaned forward on his crook,  
Fixed his brown eyes upon a distant spire,  
Solemnly swelled his lungs, once, twice, and thrice;  
Then, like an old brown thrush, began to sing:—

## THE SILVER CROOK

“The Devil turns round when he hears the  
sound

Of bells in a Sussex foald.

One crack, I rackon, from this good crook  
Would make old Scratch leave hoald.

They can't shape crooks to-day like mine,  
For the liddle folk helped 'em then.

I've heerd some say as they've see'd 'en shine  
From Ditchling to Fairlight Glen.

I loaned 'em a loanst o' my crook one day  
To carry in Arundel.

They'd buy 'en to show in their church, they  
say;

But goald woan't mek me sell.

I never should find a crook so slick,  
So silver in the sun;

And, if you talk to Drunken Dick,  
He'll tell you what it's done.

You'll find him spannelling round the Plough;  
And, Lord! when Dick was young,  
He'd drink enough to draown a cow,  
And roughen a tiger's tongue.

## THE SILVER CROOK

He'd drink Black Ram till his noäse turned blue,  
And the liddle black mice turned white.  
*You* ask 'en what my crook can do,  
An' what he see'd that night.

He says, as through the fern he ran  
( 'Twas Pharisees' fern, say I ),  
A wild potatur, as big as a man,  
Arose and winked its eye.

He says it took his arm that night,  
And waggled its big brown head,  
Then sang: '*This world will never go right  
Till Drunken Dick be dead.*'

He shook it off and, rambling round,  
Among the goalden gorse,  
He heers a kin' of sneering sound  
Pro-ciddin' from a horse,  
Which reared upright, then said out loud  
(While Dick said, 'I'll be danged!')  
'*His parents will be tedious proud  
When Drunken Dick is hanged!*'

I rackon 'twould take a barrel of ale,  
Betwix' my dinner and tea,

## THE SILVER CROOK

To mek me see the very nex' thing  
That Drunken Dick did see;  
For first he thought 'twas elephants walked  
Behind him on the Tye,  
And then he saw fower ricks of straw  
That heaved against the sky.

He saw 'em lift. He saw 'em shift.  
He saw gurt beards arise,  
He saw 'em slowly lumbering down  
A hundred times his size;  
And, as he ran, he heer'd 'em say,  
Whenever his head he turned,  
*'This world will never be bright and gay  
Till Drunken Dick be burned.'*

And then as Dick escaped again  
And squirmed the churchyard through,  
The cock that crowns the weather-vane  
Cried *'How d'ye doodle doo?'*  
'Why, how d'ye doodle doo?' says Dick,  
'I know why *you* go round.'  
'*There'll be no luck,*' that rooster shruck,  
'*Till Drunken Dick be drowned!*'

## THE SILVER CROOK

And then, as Dick dodged round they barns,  
And med for the white chalk coast,  
He meets Himself, with the two black horns,  
And eyes 'twud mek you roast.  
'Walcome! walcome!' old Blackamoor cried,  
' 'Tis muttonless day in hell,  
So I think I'll have your kidneys, fried,  
And a bit of your liver as well.'

Then Dick he loosed a tarr'ble shout,  
And the Devil stopped dead to look;  
And the sheep-bells rang, and the moon came  
out,  
And it shone on my silver crook.  
'I rackon,' says Dick, 'if you're oald Nick,  
You'd batter be scramblin' home;  
For *those* be the ringers of Arundel,  
And *that* is the Poape of Roame.' "

## THE SUSSEX SAILOR

**O** NCE, by Cuckmere Haven,  
I heard a sailor sing  
Of shores beyond the sunset,  
And lands of lasting spring,  
Of blue lagoons and palm trees  
And isles where all was young;  
But this was ever the burden  
Of every note he sung:—

*O, have you seen my true love  
A-walking in that land?  
Or have you seen her footprints  
Upon that shining sand?  
Beneath the happy palm trees,  
By Eden whispers fanned . . .  
O, have you seen my true love  
A-walking in that land?*

And, once in San Diego,  
I heard him sing again,

## THE SUSSEX SAILOR

Of Amberley, Rye, and Bramber,  
And Brede and Fairlight Glen:  
The nestling hills of Sussex,  
The russet-roofed elfin towns,  
And the skylark up in a high wind,  
Carolling over the downs.

*From Warbleton to Wild Brook  
When May is white as foam,  
O, have you seen my darling  
On any hills of home?  
Or have you seen her shining,  
Or only touched her hand?  
O, have you seen my true love  
A-walking in that land.*

And, once again, by Cowfold,  
I heard him singing low,  
'Tis not the leagues of ocean  
That hide the hills I know.  
The May that shines before me  
Has made a ghost of May.  
The valleys that I would walk in  
Are twenty years away.

## THE SUSSEX SAILOR

*Ah, have you seen my true love  
A-walking in that land . . .  
On hills that I remember,  
In valleys I understand,  
So far beyond the sunset,  
So very close at hand,—  
O, have you seen my true love  
In that immortal land?*

## THE BEE IN CHURCH

**T**HE nestling church at Ovingdean  
Was fragrant as a hive in May;  
And there was nobody within  
To preach, or praise, or pray.

The sunlight slanted through the door,  
And through the panes of painted glass,  
When I stole in, alone, once more  
To feel the ages pass.

Then, through the dim grey hush there droned  
An echoing plain-song on the air,  
As if some ghostly priest intoned  
An old Gregorian there.

Saint Chrysostom could never lend  
More honey to the heavenly Spring  
Than seemed to murmur and ascend  
On that invisible wing.

## THE BEE IN CHURCH

So small he was, I scarce could see  
My girdled brown hierophant;  
But only a Franciscan bee  
In such a bass could chant.

His golden Latin rolled and boomed.  
It swayed the altar-flowers anew,  
Till all that hive of worship bloomed  
With dreams of sun and dew.

Ah, sweet Franciscan of the May,  
Dear chaplain of the fairy queen,  
You sent a singing heart away  
That day, from Ovingdean.

## IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

I KNOW a sunset shore  
Where warm keen incense on the sea-wind  
blows,  
And dim blue ranches (while these March winds  
roar)  
Drown to the roofs in heliotrope and rose;

Deserts of lost delight,  
Cactus and palm and earth of thirsty gold,  
Dark purple blooms round eaves of sun-washed  
white  
And that Hesperian fruit men sought of old.

The exquisite drought of love  
Throbs in that land, drought that foregoes the  
dew  
And all its life-springs, that the boughs above  
May bear the fruits for which it thirsts anew.

## IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

And those pure mountains rise  
Behind it, shutting our sad world away,  
With shadowy facets where the sunset dies,  
And cliffs like amethyst at the close of day.

An arm's-length off they seem  
At dawn, among the sage-brush; but, at noon,  
Their angel trails wind upward like a dream,  
And their bright crests grow distant as the  
moon.

All day, from peaks of snow,  
The dry ravines refresh their tawny drought,  
Till, on the grey-green foot-hills, far below,  
Like clusters of white grapes the lamps come  
out.

Then, breaths of orange-bloom  
Drift over hushed white ranches on the plain,  
And spires of eucalyptus cast their gloom  
On brown adobe cloisters of old Spain.

There, green-tressed pepper grows,  
In willowy trees that drop red tassels down,

## IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

And carpet the brown road with tints of rose  
Between the palms that aisle the moon-white  
town.

. . . . .  
Oh, to be wandering there,  
Under the palm-trees, on that sunset shore,  
Where the waves break in song, and the bright air  
Is crystal-clean, and peace is ours once more.

There the lost wonder dwells,  
Beauty, reborn in whiteness from the foam;  
There Youth returns with all its magic spells,  
And the heart finds it long-forgotten home.

There, in that setting sun,  
On soft white sand the great slow breaker falls.  
There brood the huts where West and East are  
one,  
And the strange air runs wild with elfin calls.

There, gazing far away,  
Those brown-legged fisher-folk, with almond  
eyes,

IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Crouch by their nets, and through the rose-tinged  
spray

See their own Orient in those deepening skies.

Through fringes of the West,

They see the teeming East, beyond Japan,  
Mother of races that, in age-long quest,  
Have rounded earth, but end where they began ;

End in the strange recall

To that far childhood, that faint flowering past,  
Where some dear shade, loved, lost, the first  
of all,  
Opens the door to their dim home at last.

Home,—home! Where is that land?

Beyond the bounds of earth, the old hungering  
cry  
Aches in the soul, drives us from all we planned,  
And sets our sail to seek another sky.

## INTERPRETATIONS

**I**F I could sing to Eastland,  
As Westland sings to me,  
There should be keener sunlight  
From English sea to sea.  
Much-doubting men should hope again  
And breathe a spacious air,  
And eyes would turn to Westland  
And find their comrades there.

If I could sing to Westland  
As Eastland sings to me,  
'Twould tinge their skies with mournful dyes  
As old as history,  
Ironic as the grave, and cold,  
With cynic laughter fraught;  
And yet—I think the New World  
Could use the grief I brought.

I cannot sing to either  
What both will understand;

## INTERPRETATIONS

And so I go between the two  
    And weave a twofold strand  
Perhaps my pains will all be lost,  
    And both my friends, ere long;  
But O, I cannot count the cost  
    Of that remembering song.

## THE IMMIGRANTS

THEY left the Old World labouring in the night.

They sailed beyond the sunset. They stood dumb

On darkling prows against that westerling light  
And gazed and dreamed of happier worlds to come.

Darkling and dumb, with hungering eyes they gazed,

Men, women, children, at that wistful sky,  
Half-aching for old homes, and half-amazed  
At their new courage, as the foam swept by;

Till, towering from this mast-thronged waterway,  
Liberty rose, the high torch in her hand;  
And each would look at each, and smile, and say,  
*Is this the land, is this the promised land?*

While some looked up, in tears, as if in prayer,  
And wondered if all dreams must waste in air.

## THE MAYFLOWER

(1620-1920)

I THINK some angel christened her,  
Touched her black bows with dew and  
flame,  
And watched her through the sunset bear  
The light of England's loveliest name:  
But O, the Mayflower's not a ship,  
Though Heaven, in one great hour, let slip  
Its bloom on one great ship's renown  
That sailed three hundred years ago,  
From Plymouth Town to Plymouth Town. . . .

O, little fragrant stars of snow  
That bloom in England, laughing May,  
The sea-wind wafts your scent to-day  
Across three thousand miles of spray.

From winding lane and dark sweet coombe  
It wafts the breath of Devon bloom;  
For fairer lands have fairer flowers

## THE MAYFLOWER

But this one loveliness is ours,—

This whitener of the hedge in spring.

These hawthorn buds where, drenched with  
dew,

The bull-finch and green linnet sing,

When God makes earth and heaven anew.

And O, the Mayflower's not a name!

It is a soul, a living flame,

Honey-hearted, white as foam,

The glory of the hills of home,

That blooms in all our songs and tales,

And broke into immortal sails,

When tyrannous black-browed tempests freed

The starry-petalled, winged seed,

And, over the rough ocean blown

It made new may-boughs of its own.

Hark! To-day the mother-stem

Whispers all her heart to them!

You who doubt her, hear the may

Whispering the wide seas away,—

“What is England, answer ye

Whose heart of heart is Liberty;

For only in such hours as this

## THE MAYFLOWER

Her own may tell of all she is.  
Athens, Weimar, Rome, have heard,  
Her children's glorifying word.  
They have praised a hundred lands,  
And still kept silence where She stands;  
Or, if they turned to her, they said  
*England slumbers, or is dead.*

They have searched her soul with fire  
Lest she fail of their desire.  
They have lashed her with their blame,  
And made a taunt of her own name.  
Mockery, anger, careless wit,  
With forkéd tongues have struck at it;  
Till the stranger in her gate  
Wondered at their seeming hate,  
And half believed the thing they said,  
*England slumbers, or is dead.*

What is England? Now, at last,  
Mightier from that tempering past,  
She lifts a prouder head on high,  
And her silent deeds reply:—

## THE MAYFLOWER

“I am England, who first gave  
Freedom and justice to the slave;  
Whose voice and sword and triumphing sea  
First gave charters to the free;  
Mother of Parliaments, who first broke  
Emperors with my thunder stroke . . .  
I am that land, I am that land,  
Where Shakespeare’s soul and Cromwell’s hand,  
Milton’s faith and Byron’s fire,  
With Newton’s, Darwin’s thought conspire  
To teach what kings have never known  
And lead the peoples to their throne.

Though my feet in evil hours  
Failed of the height where my soul towers;  
Though I have sinned as ye have sinned,  
There is no whisper of any wind  
The wide world round, where men stand free,  
But tells of my vast agony.  
Where have I conquered, and not given  
Hostages to my free heaven;  
Ay, with its first wild day-spring crowned  
Mine equal foe the wide world round;

## THE MAYFLOWER

Till, if again at a king I ride  
Mine ancient foes are at my side?

I am England. I am She  
Who crowned with law my liberty,  
And taught my free-born sons to heed  
What I taught kings at Runnymede;  
Who, when my tyrants rose again,  
Broke every link of every chain,  
Flung my may-flower to the seas,  
And sailed to the Atlantides.  
There was England, in that hour,  
The pilgrim soul of all my power,  
Which rose like a triumphant flame  
And made New England in my name.

Ay, though all souls that live on earth  
May mingle in your mightier birth,  
There is no senate of free men  
But echoes my sea-speech again.  
The sea that girds and guards my walls  
Thunders in your own council halls;  
And my hand against strange kings  
Loosed to heaven your eaglet's wings."

## THE MAYFLOWER

*Across three thousand miles of spray,*

*A ghostly ship sets sail to-day.*

*But O, you living flowers of may,*

*Fresh with dew, and white as foam,*

*I hear your murmuring branches say*

*“This is England. This is home. . . .*

*This is New England. This is home.”*

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

AS I came up to London, to buy my love a  
ring,

I passed by a tavern where the painted women  
sing.

Each of 'em was jigging on a greasy fiddler's knee,  
And they cackled at the red rose my true love  
gave to me;

*With their—*

*"Come and see the silly clown that wears a red  
rose!*

*Roses are green now, as everybody knows."*

They cackled (how they cackled!) crying every-  
thing was new.

The old truths were all false, the new lies were  
true.

By play, by book, by poem, it was easier to say  
A new thing, a false thing, than walk the stricter  
way.

Singing,

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

*"It was hard, hard to climb, when only truth was  
true;*

*But all may violently run, down into the new."*

As I came home by Arundel, the wind blew off  
the sea.

It brought the almond scent of gorse, and there  
she came to me,

My true love with the young light that gloried in  
her eyes,

And my soul rose like a giant to the ancient or-  
dered skies,

Laughing,

*Let 'em take their green rose, and pickle it in hell,  
For I have seen the red rose that blows by  
Arundel.*

My soul rose like a giant, and O but it was sweet  
To tumble all its passion like a wave at her feet;  
To leave their tricks behind me, and to find myself  
again

Walking in the clean sun along a Sussex lane,  
Singing,

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

*Let 'em hymn their new love that veers with heat  
and cold,*

*But I will sing the true love that never shall grow  
old.*

Then, as we walked together, I was quietly aware  
Of a mighty throng around us in the hawthorn-  
scented air,

And I knew it was the simple folk that wait and  
listen long,

Ere the soul that makes a nation can unite them  
in a song.

Then,

*"Back," they sang, "to London-town; and we will  
march with you;*

*Because we like the red rose that Eden Garden  
knew."*

But Satan had a vision five-and-thirty years ago,  
When England lost the great faith and said she  
didn't know.

He whistled up his wicked dwarfs, from all the  
nooks of night,

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

And set 'em to the new trick of proving black is white.

Crying,

*"Come, my 'intellectuals.' Trample on the dead.  
Trample truth into the dust, and throne yourselves instead."*

And so it was that rebel imps, in sooty reds and blues,

And little squint-eyed epigrams with scorpions in their shoes,

And white-hot cinders in their breeks to make 'em act like youth,

Came hopping on their hands from hell, to dance upon the truth,

Squeaking,

*"All that you have ever dreamed is ashes now and dust.*

*God's a force—like heat, we think—and love is only lust."*

And some would take to poetry, and roll each other's logs;

But, since their throats were crooked, they could only croak like frogs.

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

And some would take to sculpture, and the naked  
Venus died,  
As they showed their blocks of marble and de-  
clared she slept inside.

Ay,

*And others painted pictures like the stern of a  
baboon;*

*While their fiddlers, by the tavern, fiddled songs  
without a tune.*

And there we found 'em boasting, "We have  
mingled earth and sea,

We have planted tare and hemlock where the  
harvest used to be.

We have broken all the borders, we have neither  
chart nor plan."

Then they saw the throng approaching, and be-  
hold it was a Man,

Chuckling,

*"England waits and suffers long, as nations often  
do,*

*'But the Man that is a Multitude has come to  
answer you.'*

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

His head was in the heavens, though his feet were  
in the clay.

He rose against the smoke of stars we call the  
Milky Way.

Three hundred thousand oak-trees had furnished  
forth his staff;

And he waved his club above them, as a child  
might, with a laugh.

Saying,

*"You have sung a strange song, in God's good  
land!*

*Who shall deliver you, or save you from my  
hand?"*

"O, you have sung a new song, but I will sing an  
old,

And it shall shine like rubies, and it shall ring like  
gold!

And you have sung the little songs of mating flea  
and flea;

But I will sing the great song that thunders like  
the sea;"

Roaring,

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

*"You have sung the red grass, and hymned the  
purple cow;  
And you have asked for justice! Will you kneel  
and have it now!"*

"We're only Intellectuals," a tiny fiddler  
squeaked,

"It's not on such as us, you know, that judgment  
should be wreaked.

Why, even Mr. Trotsky says, we've hardly helped  
at all!

We only scratched the mortar out. We didn't  
smash the wall.

No! No!

*We only thought the reign of law a very poor  
device.*

*We only asked for freedom, in a monkey's para-  
dise."*

The Man that was a Multitude, he dropped his  
mighty staff.

"Why, damn your little eyes," he said, "I'm only  
going to laugh."

## THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE

Then, once, and twice, he guffawed, as a Sussex  
ploughman might,

And the fiddlers and their fancies flew like  
feathers thro' the night,

Whimpering,

*"Is it a Victorian Ghost? Some one that we  
know?"*

*Ecclefechan Tom himself—could hardly treat us  
so!"*

As I came home by Arundel, my true love walked  
with me,

And the Man that was a Multitude was singing  
like the sea,—

*O, they have sung their green rose, and pickled it  
in hell!*

*But we will sing the red rose that Adam used to  
smell.*

And,

*They have sung their new love that veers with  
heat and cold;*

*But we will sing the true love that never shall  
grow old.*

## THE RIDDLES OF MERLIN

**T**ELL me, Merlin,—It is I  
Who call thee, after a thousand Springs—  
Tell me by what wizardry

The white foam wakes in whiter wings  
Where surf and sea-gulls toss and cry  
Like sister-flakes, as they mount and fly,  
Flakes that the great sea flings on high,  
To kiss each other and die.

Tell me, Merlin, tell me why  
These delicate things that feast on flowers,  
Red Admiral, brown fritillary,  
Sister the flowers, yet sail the sky,  
Frail ships that cut their cables, yet still fly  
The colours we know them by.

Tell me, Merlin, tell me why,  
The sea's chaotic colour grows  
Into these rainbow fish whose Tyrian dye  
In scales of gold and green reply

## THE RIDDLES OF MERLIN

To blue-striped mackerel waves, to kelp-brown  
caves,

And deep-sea blooms of gold and green and rose;

Why colours that the sea at random throws

Were ordered into this living harmony,

This little world, no bigger than the hand,

Gliding over the raw tints whence it came,

This opal-bellied patch of sand,

That floats above the sand, or darts a flame

Through woods of crimson lake, and flowers with-  
out a name.

See all their tints around its body strewn

In planetary order. Sun, moon, star,

Are not more constant to their tune

Than those light scales of colour are;

Where each repeats the glory of his neighbour,

In the same pattern, with the same delight,

As if, without the artist's labour,

The palette of rich Chaos and old Night

Should spawn a myriad pictures, every line

True to the lost Designer's lost design.

Tell me, Merlin, for what eye

Gathers and grows this cosmic harmony?

## THE RIDDLES OF MERLIN

Can sea-gulls feed, or fishes brood  
On music fit for angels' food?  
Did Nescience this delight create  
To lure the conger to his mate?

If this be all that Science tells  
The narrowest church may peal its bells,  
And Merlin work new miracles;  
While every dreamer, even as I,  
May wonder on, until he die.

## THE LAST OF THE SNOW

### I

**N**OW, feathered with snow, the fir-tree's  
beautiful sprays

Pensively nod in the sun, while young April de-  
lays,—

Yes—yes—*we* know

How briefly our hearts with the light of the  
may-tide shall glow,

Ere the darkness of winter return; and the green  
boughs and gold

Shall all be choked down by the snow

In the end, as of old.

### II

“Yes, white snow, you will have your revenge for  
the warm dreams that stir

In the sap of my boughs,” said the wise old heart  
of the fir.

“None the less you shall go!

## THE LAST OF THE SNOW

For my brother, the hawthorn, has dreamed of  
a new kind of snow,  
With honey for bees in its heart; and it's worth it,  
I say,  
Though you'll freeze us to death, as we know,  
At the end of our day.

### III

"There's a glory in fighting for dreams that are  
doomed to defeat;  
So perhaps it's because you'll return that the  
bloom smells so sweet.  
There's our victory, too,  
Which you cannot prevent, for we're stronger  
in one thing than you,  
Since we win the one prize that's worth winning,  
win heaven on earth;  
And, if truth remain true,  
Find in death our re-birth."

### IV

So, feathered with snow, the beautiful boughs of  
the fir

## THE LAST OF THE SNOW

Dipped to the thaw of the world as the spring  
touched them there;

And the lane, like a brook,

Sang in the sun, and the pretty girls came out  
to look,

Saying, "Spring is begun! Look, look, how the  
snow runs away!

It is only the snow on the fir-tree that seems to  
delay!"

### V

"That's true," said the fir, "and if only the wind  
of the spring

Would whisper a tale that I know, or a black-  
bird sing,

I think I might shake off this ghost!"—

"Oh, pouf! If that's all,"

Chuckled the spring-wind, "Listen! I think that's  
the call

Of a black-bird! And what d'you suppose is that  
other faint sound—

Snow melting?—leaves budding?—or young  
lovers whispering all round,

## THE LAST OF THE SNOW

In forest and meadow and city? Oh, yes, they've  
begun!

Wake up! Tell that spectre to go!"

And the fir-tree listened and shook, and the last  
of the snow

Slipped from its hold and plumped down on the  
daffodil bed;

And the green-plumed branches danced for delight  
in the sun;

And a black-bird alighted, at once, on the bright  
wet boughs,

And called to his bright-eyed mate on the roof of  
the shed,

*"O, see what a beautiful hiding-place for our  
house!"*

—"That's better," the fir-tree said.

## A SPRING HAT

*DEAR Poet of the Sabine farm,  
Whose themes, not all of blood and tears,  
Beneath your happy trees could charm  
Your lovers for a thousand years,  
You would not blame a modern pen  
For touching love with mirth again.*

For Kit and I went up to town,  
And Kit must choose a hat for Spring;  
And, though the world may laugh it down,  
There is no jollier theme to sing.  
Ah, younger, happier than we knew  
Into the fairy shop we flew.

Then she began to try them on.  
The first one had a golden feather,  
That like the godling's arrow shone  
When first he pierced our hearts together.  
"Now, what d'you think of that," she said,  
Tilting it on her dainty head.

## A SPRING HAT

The next one, like a violet wreath  
    Nestled among her fragrant hair;  
But O, her shining eyes beneath,  
    The while she tipped it here and there;  
And said, with eager face aglow,  
“How do you like it? So? Or so?”

The next one was an elfin crown.  
    She wore it as Titania might.  
She gave the glass a smile, a frown,  
    And murmured, “No. It isn't *quite!*  
I think that other one, the blue,—  
Or no, perhaps the green,—don't you?”

Maidens, the haughtiest ever seen,  
    Like willing slaves around her moved.  
They tried the blue. They tried the green.  
    They trembled when she disapproved;  
And, when she waved the pink away,  
They tried the lilac and the grey.

She perched the black upon her nose.  
    She hid an eye behind the blue.

## A SPRING HAT

She set the orange and the rose,  
    With subtle artistry, askew.  
She stripped the windows of their store,  
Then sent her slaves to search for more.

And while they searched . . . *O, happy face,*  
    *Against the dark eternal night,*  
*If I could paint you with the grace*  
    *The Master used! . . .* A lovely light  
Shone in the laughter of her eyes.  
They glowed with sudden sweet surprise.

She saw—the very hat for Spring!  
    The first one, with the golden feather,  
Dropt from a laughing angel's wing  
    Through skies of Paradisal weather.  
She pinned it on her dainty head.  
“This is the very thing,” she said.

“Now, don't you like me?”—“Yes, I do,”  
    I said. The slaves were far away.  
“Your eyes have never looked so blue.”  
    “I mean the hat,” she tried to say.

## A SPRING HAT

I kissed her. "Wait a bit," said she.  
"There's just one more I want to see."

*Who knows but, when the uproar dies,  
And mightier songs are dead and gone,  
Perhaps her laughing face may rise  
Out of the darkness and live on,  
If one—who loves—should read and say  
This also happened, in that day.*

## A MEETING

WE met, last night.  
His eyes were brimmed with light.  
I knew him well.  
I offered him my hand.  
He did not seem to understand  
The news I tried to tell.  
He was so fresh from heaven, I supposed,  
And I so scarred from hell.

I was the ghost,  
Not he, of hopes long lost.  
And he stood there,  
My own lost youth, and looked  
As if his radiant dreams rebuked  
My load of barren care;  
I had fulfilled so little, I supposed,  
Of promises so fair.

And yet—and yet;  
His eyes on mine were set  
In a strange glory;

## A MEETING

And kneeling at my feet  
He whispered, as a child, simple and sweet  
    Pleads for another story.  
“Tell me,” he said, “the wonders you have found,  
    In worlds not transitory.”

Then—then—I wept,  
And fain I would have kept  
    My tale untold,  
But, since he knelt, I said  
Bowing my head,  
    “I have found that truth on earth is bought and  
    sold;  
And all the crowns that men desire are worth  
    Only their weight in gold!”

“And is this all?”  
—“Oh, no, this is not all!  
    I found one light  
That never has gone out.  
Through all the darkest storms of doubt  
    It burned as bright;  
Yet this was not the glory that we dreamed of,  
    This faint gleam in the night.”

## A MEETING

“Yet this must be  
The light we longed to see  
    When prison-bars  
Kept our hot boyhood fretting.  
Tell me, of that far light which knew no setting  
    Through those disastrous wars.”  
He whispered low. I touched his golden head.  
    “Not far,” I said, “but near ;  
    The heaven we held so dear  
Shone from our father’s house ; one lonely light  
    More constant than the stars.”

## THE ISLE OF MEMORIES

**W**AS it so in Old England, when kings went  
to war?

Did the cottages grow silent, as the lads went  
away,

Leaving all they loved so, the wan face of the  
mother,

The lips of the young wives, the grey head and  
the golden,

While birds, in the blackthorn, made ready for  
the May?

It was even so, even so in Old England.

The homesteads were emptied of happiness and  
laughter.

The fields were forsaken. The lanes grew lonely.

A shadow veiled the sun. A sea-mist of sorrows

Drifted like a dream through the old oak-forests,

Flowed through our valleys, and filled them with  
visions,

## THE ISLE OF MEMORIES

Brooded on our mountains and crowned them  
with remembrance,

So that many a wanderer from the shining of the  
West

Finds a strange darkness in the heart of our land.

Long, long since, in the days of the cross-bow,

Unknown armies from the forge and the farm,

Bought us these fields in the bleakness of death.

The May-boughs budded with the same brief  
glory;

And, sweetening all the air, in a shower of wet  
petals,

The black-bird shook them, with to-day's brave  
song.

His note has not changed since the days of Piers  
Plowman.

The star has not changed that, as curfew chimed,  
In the faint green fields of the sky, like a prim-  
rose

Woke, and looked down, upon lovers in the lanes.

Their wild thyme to-night shall be crushed into  
sweetness,

## THE ISLE OF MEMORIES

On the crest of the downs where, dark against the  
    crimson,  
Dark, dark as death, on the crimson of the after-  
    glow,  
Other lovers wander, on the eve of fare-well,  
Other lovers whisper and listen to the sea.

It was even so, even so in Old England.  
In all this bleak island, there is hardly an acre,  
Hardly a gate, or a path upon the hillside,  
Hardly a woodland, that has not heard or seen  
    them  
Whispering good-bye, or waving it for ever.  
This rain-drenched, storm-rocked earth we adore,  
These ripening orchards, these fields of thick  
    wheat  
Rippling into grey light and shadow as the wind  
    blows;  
These dark rich ploughlands, dreaming in the  
    dusk,  
Whose breath in our nostrils is better than life;  
This isle of green hedge-rows and deep rambling  
    lanes;

## THE ISLE OF MEMORIES

This cluster of old counties that have mellowed  
through the ages,  
Like apples in autumn on a grey apple-tree;  
Those moorlands of Cornwall, those mountains  
of Cumberland,  
Ferny coombs of Devonshire and gardens of  
Kent;  
Those russet roofs of Sussex, those farms and  
faint spires,  
Those fields of known flowers, whose faces, whose  
fragrance,  
Even in this darkness, recall our lost childhood,  
Sleep like our own children, and cherish us like  
angels,—  
All these are ours, because of the forgotten.

## BEAUTY IN DARKNESS

**B**EAUTY in darkness,  
Ivory-white  
Sleeps like the secret  
Heart of the night.

Night may be boundless,  
Formless as death,  
Here the white-breasted one  
Still draws breath.

Music that vanished  
At eve, on the air,  
Silently slumbers  
Till day-break here.

Here, at the heart  
Of my universe, glows  
Exquisite, absolute,  
Love's deep rose.

## HOUSE-HUNTING

I CAME on a house in Sussex,  
That I should like to own,  
A house of old black oak-beams,  
And a roof of Horsham stone,  
With beautiful stains of lichen  
And golden browns o'er-grown.

And a deep age-ripened garden,  
As peaceful as the dead,  
With a warm grey wall around it  
Where peach and pear might spread,  
And a mulberry-tree, and a dial;  
And roses, white and red.

And over the wall, to the southward,  
The roofs of a gabled town,  
In a glory of mellowing colour,  
Russet and gold and brown;  
And, over the wall to the westward,  
The church on the naked down.

## HOUSE-HUNTING

And over the wall to the northward,  
    An orchard, fruitful and fair,  
With white doves wheeling above it  
    On the rose-red evening air;  
And I thought that my quest was ended,  
    And dreamed of my new songs there.

But, over the wall to the eastward,  
    The devil that darkens the sun  
Had builded his big new barracks  
    And ruined what Time had done,  
And put out the eyes of beauty  
    Or ever the song was begun.

So now I must back to London,  
    And live in a flat, I suppose,  
While over earth's loveliest island  
    The army of villa-dom grows,  
In well-drilled regular regiments  
    And horrible red-brick rows.

For it isn't enough, in our blindness,  
    That we cannot make new things fair;

## HOUSE-HUNTING

But, wherever the old touch lingers  
In anything Time can spare,  
We must crush it and grind it to powder  
And set our heel on it there.

Ah, if I had money to buy it  
I would tear their new curse down,  
And plant me another orchard  
In the face of the Mayor's black frown,  
And make my songs in a garden  
In the heart of that old-world town.

## A BALLAD OF THE EASIER WAY

**E**NOUGH of toil," I heard the sculptor  
cry.

"Why should my passionate soul in chains be  
led?

Away with smooth conventions! I'll not try  
To wrest my Venus from her marble bed.

Let her be buried deep, from foot to head,  
In rough-hewn rock, with one toe peeping  
through.

Suggestion is the finer art," he said;

*And, by the by, it looked much easier, too.*

"My lady's face," I heard the painter sigh,

"Was mauve as grass, the day that we were  
wed;

Her shape (she doesn't paint, and can't reply)

Was rambling, like a shell-shocked cattle-shed.

Her fists were like two dimpled rolls of bread;

And, though one eye was green, and one was  
blue,

## A BALLAD OF THE EASIEST WAY

found it took less time to paint them red!"  
*And, by the by, it looked much easier, too.*

saw the proud composer stand on high.  
I heard a shriek that filled my soul with dread,  
wail of tortured cats that clawed the sky,  
A chatter of monkeys clamouring to be fed!  
men, as those awful arms arose and spread  
I heard a voice—"It's absolutely *New!*  
e wastes no time on melody!"—I fled;  
*For, by the by, it sounded easier, too.*

### *Envoy*

ets, that on Parnassus' height would tread,  
With those that sing, beware the formless  
crew.  
ou can be free and formless when you're dead;  
*Though, even to-night, you'd find it easier, too.*

## CUBISM

I HAVE laughed, but seen it,—under Ditchling  
Down,  
Blue cubes, yellow cubes, crimson cubes and  
brown.

I have laughed, but seen it,—shouting at the sky,  
Crazy as a crazy quilt, over Telscombe Tye:

Cubes of russet plowland, greying in the sun,  
Cubes of honeyed clover, red as blood could  
run,

Cubes of yellow mustard, clean as hammered gold,  
Bleating cubes of clouds or sheep, crammed  
into a fold.

Clinging to the Sussex downs,—did we crawl like  
flies?

Ask the proud Antipodes towering to their  
skies.

I have laughed and seen it, solid in the sun,  
All the myriad planes of earth, blocked and  
wedged in one;

## CUBISM

Solid as your flesh and bones, blocked with bits  
of sea,  
Squared with dusky semi-tones, and cubed with  
mystery,  
Planes of Anglo-Saxon art, planes of modern  
mirth,  
From an aeroplane above—or below—the  
earth.

Butting through the solid blue like a submarine;  
While my eyelids clung to cubes of blue and  
gold and green,  
Till the level meadows rose, upright to the sky,  
And we looped the loop again, over Telscombe  
Tye.

## A DEVONSHIRE SONG

**I**N Devonshire now they sing no more  
At market or fair or plough.  
There are no deep cider-songs to roar  
In the red-earth country now.  
The roofs are slate instead of thatch  
And the tall young lads are gone.  
You may pull the bobbin and lift the latch,  
But the old farm-dance is done.

*Yet the blackbird sings in the old apple-tree  
As in Uncle Tom Cobley's day;  
And snow—white snow—in a Devonshire night,  
Is only the bloom on the spray.  
There'll be pocket-fulls, bag-fulls, barn-fulls yet,  
When the ships come home from say.  
For a good cob-wall, and a good hat and shoes,  
And a good heart last for aye.*

They say that love's more fickle of wing  
Than it was in the days gone by;

## A DEVONSHIRE SONG

But a Devonshire lane dives deep in the spring,  
Ere it lifts through the fern to the sky.  
As it was in the days of good Queen Bess  
It shall be in the age to come,  
When the sweet of the year's in the cider-press,  
And the whistling maid turns home.

*For the south wind comes, and it brings wet  
weather,  
And the west is cloaked with grey,  
And a whistling maid and a crowing hen  
Are wicked as frost in May;  
But snow—white snow—in a Devonshire night,  
Is only the bloom on the spray,  
And a good cob-wall, and a good hat and shoes,  
And a good heart last for aye.*

They say that Devon has fought her fight,  
They say that she, too, grows old.  
But the wind blew south upon New Year's night  
And the moon had a ring of gold:  
And a dripping June puts all in tune  
For harvest, as well we know;

## A DEVONSHIRE SONG

So here's to thee, old apple-tree,  
Thou'lt bear good apples enow.

*There were apples to spare for the Golden Hinde,  
When she sailed from Plymouth Bay;  
And, though Widdecombe folk be picking their  
geese,  
There'll be apples to spare to-day;  
For snow—white snow—in a Devonshire night,  
Is only the bloom on the spray,  
And a good cob-wall, and a good hat and shoes,  
And a good heart last for aye.*

## A DEVONSHIRE CHRISTMAS

### I

**H**OW goes it, Father Christmas?—  
Oh—picking—picking along!  
But give me a piece of crumple-cheese  
And you shall hear my song.  
Ay, settle your chestnuts down to roast,  
And fill me a cup of ale;  
Then kiss the girl that you fancy most,  
And you shall hear my tale.

### *Chorus.*

*Froth him a cup of the home-brewed  
That is both old and strong!  
How goes it, Father Christmas?—  
Oh—picking—picking along.*

### II

From Adam and Eve to the Magi,  
The ghosts of the old time fade;

## A DEVONSHIRE CHRISTMAS

And I, myself, would be laid on the shelf  
If it weren't for the mirth I've made:  
And yet, tho' our youth in Paradise  
Be a fable past recall,  
We have seen the glory of sinless eyes,  
And we have watched the Fall.

### *Chorus.*

*So fables may be fancies,  
And yet not very far wrong!  
How goes it, Father Christmas?  
Oh—picking—picking along!*

### III

I walked last night on Dartmoor,  
The wind was bitterly cold,  
My crimson cloak was a thread-bare joke,  
And my bones were brittle and old.  
I had forgotten the world's desire  
And all the stars were dead,  
When I sank right up to my knees in mire,  
At the door of a cattle-shed.

## A DEVONSHIRE CHRISTMAS

*Chorus.*

*I saw the oldest oxen  
That ever knew goad or thong;  
Their sweet breath smoked in the frosty light  
Of the lanthorn that I swung.*

### IV

I saw those oxen kneeling,  
So gentle and dumb and wise,  
By a child that lay in the straw and smiled  
At their big dark shining eyes!  
While a woman breathed "lullay, lullay,"  
The Magi need not roam  
So long ago, so far away,  
When heaven is born at home.

*Chorus.*

*Then all my heart sang "Gloria"  
I lacked no angel throng,  
As over the lonely moor I went,  
Picking, picking along.*

## A DEVONSHIRE CHRISTMAS

### V

And over the farm on the whistling fells  
I saw the great star glide;  
And "Peace on earth" rang Modbury bells,  
And Ermington bells replied.  
*How goes it, Father Christmas?*  
Was the burden of all their song;  
And what could a Devonshire pedlar say  
But "Picking—picking along."

#### *Chorus.*

*He needs a cloak and a pair of shoes,  
But his heart is young and strong!*  
*How goes it, Father Christmas?*  
*Oh—picking—picking along.*

## THE BRIDE-ALE

*A Man.*

**W**HICH is the way that the barn-dance  
goes?

*A Maid.*

First stand up in two straight rows.

*A Man.*

Every Jack must face his Jill.

*The Music.*

Whether he won't or whether he will.

*A Maid.*

What is the song that shall be sung?

*The Music.*

A tale of a wedding when all was young.

*A Man.*

How shall the dance and the song begin?

*The Music.*

Hands across, and down the middle!

## THE BRIDE-ALE

*A Maid.*

Bring the bride and the bridegroom in.

*A Man.*

Now, then, fiddler! Talk to your fiddle!

*Chorus of Bride's-maids.*

Dew—dew—on the wild hill-side,

Dew on the thyme and the clover,

And we are coming to busk the bride

In the great red dawn, with the sky-lark carolling,  
ing,

Carolling, carolling over.

The dew is bright on the red hill-brow,

Although the sun be spreading;

So we must walk in our bare feet now,

And save our shoes—with the sky-lark carolling—

Save our shoes for the wedding.

*Dew—dew—and a song to be sung so.*

*Dew—dew—and a peal to be rung so.*

*Dew—dew—and the world growing young, so*

*Early in the morning!*

## THE BRIDE-ALE

The cows are crunching flowers and dew,  
Their long blue shadows are dwining.  
Their hooves are gold with the butter-cup dust  
(There's gold, wet gold on your ankles, too)  
And their coats like silk are shining.

*Dew—dew—and a dance in the spray of it.*  
*Dew—dew—and a light in the gray of it.*  
*Dew—dew—and a bride in the way of it,*  
*Waking at dawn to be married.*

Now, quick with the jassamine crown for her  
head!

Too long, my dear, you've tarried;  
And I hope that we all may blush so red  
On the day that we walk—with the sky-lark car-  
olling—  
Walk through the dew to be married.

It is only an English song we sing  
For O, we know no Latin!  
But your shoulder is shaped like a sea-bird's wing,  
Milk-white in the wave of your tumbling tresses  
And soft as a queen's white satin.

## THE BRIDE-ALE

Medea used wild herbs, they say

To tangle the heart of Jason.

We bring three pails of the dew of the May,  
Dew of the white-thorn, dew of the black-thorn,  
Dew of the wild thyme, dew of the lavender,  
Dew of the ox-lip, clover, and marigold,  
Dew that we wrung with our hands from the  
meadow-sweet

To pour into your bason.

*Dew—dew—and a song to be sung so.*

*Dew—dew—and a peal to be rung so.*

*Dew—dew—and the world growing young, so  
Come, sweet May, to be married.*

*A Bride's-maid.*

This dance it will no further go.

*The Music.*

I pray you, madam, why say you so?

*A Bride's-maid.*

Because Joan Hedges begins to repent.

*The Music.*

She can't repent, and she shan't repent.  
Love in the hedge-rows laughs at Lent.

## THE BRIDE-ALE

### *Chorus of Groom's-men.*

The muscadine waits for the bride at the church.

Lead her along to the aisle.

Parson is waiting to hop on his perch,

And sexton is trying to smile.

Parson is waiting (though Adam and Eve

Kissed without asking his pardon)

To shepherd the two into Eden anew

And give 'em the keys of the garden.

Quick, let the gown that is white as the Spring's,

All in array for the fray,

Drift like the mist of the dawn as it clings

Hiding the bloom of the May.

Fasten it there, on her shoulder, but O,

Joan, if you shrug it or falter

Now, you'll be married in roses and snow;

So quick, come along to the altar.

### *A Groom's-man.*

This dance it will no further go.

### *The Music.*

I pray you, good sir, why say you so?

### *A Groom's-man.*

Because John Appleby's half afraid.

## THE BRIDE-ALE

*The Music.*

And that's no answer to make to a maid.

*A Groom's-man.*

What shall we do? He is shivering still.

*The Music.*

Parson 'ull preach, on the text *Aprille*.

*The Parson.*

The love-songs that the Frenchmen pipe

I never could long abide.

They are all too curious or too ripe

To troll at the hawthorn-tide.

As for those *Epithalamions*

Which learned poets sing,

Their Phyllidariddles and Corydons—

They have well-nigh spoiled the Spring.

Hymen—the God that rules the roast,

As master Shakespeare knew,

They have turned to a turnip-lanthorn ghost,

And a thumping hypocrite, too.

For either they whisper with tongues like snakes

Of a secret purple sin;

Or else they are burning the hawthorn brakes

And welcoming old age in.

## THE BRIDE-ALE

What do they know of the song Love sings,  
    Passion, or music's beat,  
Who wish to dance with feet like wings,  
    Yet cannot steer their feet?  
For life's a dance, and none has known  
    It's pulsing rapturous breath,  
Who dances unto himself alone  
    And never vowed—*till death.*

### *General Chorus*

The sermon is over and now you may kiss,  
    Kiss, without asking for pardon.  
The cherubs are swinging the gates of your bliss  
    Wide upon Paradise garden.  
Spikenard, saffron, cinnamon, blow,  
    Blow through the beautiful boughs there.  
Solomon said it (to Sheba, you know)  
    And Sheba—why, *she* had a house there.

*Dew—dew—and a dance in the spray of it.*  
*Dew—dew—and a light in the gray of it.*  
*Dew—dew—and a bride in the way of it,*  
    *Waking at dawn to be married.*

## THE UNCHANGING

### I

“All songs are sung, numbered all flowers,” they  
said,

“In some unearthly far-off isle—who knows?—  
Perchance the unvisited lyric blossom blows  
Whence all that primal lustre is not fled  
Nor dimmed the ambrosial dew that crowned its  
birth

Where the pure fourfold river of Eden flows.”  
Then, since my soul was living and not dead,  
Through a lych-gate I went into a grave-yard,  
And, for the first, yet millionth, time on earth,  
I saw—thank God—the rose!

### II

“The world is changed”—unchanged the blue  
heaven smiled—

“Truth is not Truth, Love is not Love,” they  
said,

## THE UNCHANGING

“Laughter and Joy in their simplicity  
Lie dead beneath yon old patched robe, the sea!  
Gird up your loins, run swifter than the wind,  
It may be we shall leave yon old blue heaven be-  
hind!”

Then, since my soul was living and not dead,  
I went into a great miraculous meadow,  
And laughed, with a little child.

## BEAUTIFUL ON THE BOUGH

**B**EAUTIFUL on the bough  
The song-thrush in summer-time  
Carelessly sings.

Beautiful under the bough  
The silent thrush in winter-time  
Lies with stiffened wings.

Who, ah, who, shall sing or say  
Why there comes to careless-hearted joy  
A thing so still and great as death?

If the gods feared that happiness would cloy,  
Surely a slighter sadness would repay  
That little debt,

That debt of harmless gladness!  
Why must the lightest creature that draws  
breath  
Go down this tragic way,

## BEAUTIFUL ON THE BOUGH

Assume the awful majesty of a fate

Worthy a god; if it were not . . . God, Christ,  
Return, return, Compassionate,

We have rejected Thee,

Who saidst that not one should be sacrificed,  
We have rejected Thee, but not the fact,

This terrible naked fact, which if it be

Unanswered, blackens earth and sky and  
sea . . .

This tiny body, mocking the blind sun,

Postulates Thy divine philosophy,  
Not one shall fall to the earth, not one, not one.

## AS WE FORGIVE

**B**EFORE Thy children, Lord, were fully  
grown,  
They bowed like suppliants at their Maker's  
throne  
And prayed, like slaves, that mercy might be  
shown.

They knelt before Thee, pleading in the night,  
That Thou wouldst wash their scarlet raiment  
white.

Now, in the dawn, at last they stand upright.

Not with irreverent hearts, yet unafraid,  
The silent, helpless myriads Thou hast made,  
Give Thee the gifts for which, of old, they  
prayed:

Compassion for the burden Thou must bear;  
And, though they know not why these evils were,  
Their mute forgiveness for the griefs they share.

## AS WE FORGIVE

Yes, for one human grief that still must be  
Too sad for heaven, too tragical for Thee,  
Who even in death wast sure of victory;

For those farewells that darken our brief day,  
The child struck down, the young love torn away,  
And those dear hopes that kiss us to betray;

For perishing youth, for beauty's fading eyes;  
For all Thyself hast given us in such wise  
That, ere we grasp its loveliness, it dies,

Dies and despite our faith, we are not sure.  
Our love, oh God, was never so secure  
As Thine, in Thy strong heaven which must  
endure.

So, in our human weakness, for the scorn  
And scourging, for the bitter cross of thorn  
That this dark earth, from age to age has borne,

We—Thy clay creatures—warped and marred  
and blind,

Stretch out our arms at last, and bid Thee find  
Rest to Thy soul, in crucified mankind.

## AS WE FORGIVE

Come to us! Leave Thy deathless realms on  
high.

We tell Thee, as our dumb dark myriads die,  
We do absolve Thee, with our last sad cry.

## THE MAKING OF A POEM

**L**AST night a passionate tempest shook his  
soul

With hatred and black anger and despair,  
And the dark depths and every foaming shoal  
Ran wild as if they fought with the blind air.

To-day the skies unfold their flags of blue,  
The crisp white clouds their sails of snow unfurl,  
And, on the shore, in colours rich and new  
The strange green seas cast up their loosened pearl.

## TO AN "UNPRACTICAL MAN"

**N**O—no—the cynics rule, for all our creeds.  
Dreams are vain dreams, and deeds are  
brutal deeds.

Why should they hear you, who have never  
heard?

How should you triumph where gods have striven  
in vain,

How break with your weak hands the world-wide  
chain?

Were not the chained souls first to mock your  
word?

Yet—since you must—work out the old sad plan.  
Prove, once again, the bounds God set for man.

Strive for your dream of good and watch it die.  
Fail utterly; but O, welcome that defeat,  
For there—as this world fades—you, too, shall  
meet

In absolute night, the eyes of Victory.

CHRISTMAS, 1919

CHRISTMAS, and peace on earth; an East-  
ern tale

Of shepherds and a star,—  
Can these things, in our mocking age, avail  
A world grown old in war?

Since Galileo opened up a night  
Too deep for hope to scan,  
The starry heavens no longer wheel their light  
To serve the need of man.

There are no wings in that unfathomed gloom,  
Where now our eyes behold,  
World without end, and orderly as doom,  
The mist of suns unfold.

Yet, to fulfil, not to destroy the law,  
The modern mages rose;  
And, round the deeper centre that they saw,  
A vaster cosmos flows.

## CHRISTMAS, 1919

Oh, for a Galileo of the mind  
To pierce this inner night;  
And, deeper than our deepest dreams, to find  
The light beyond our light;

Where angels sing, though not to the fleshly ear,  
As over Bethlehem's Inn.  
Turn to thine own deep soul, if thou wouldst  
hear.  
The Kingdom is within.

Eternal Lord, in whom we live and move;  
Whose face we cannot see;  
Soul of the Universe, whose names are Love,  
And Law, and Liberty;

Confirm our peace! There is no peace on earth,  
No song in our dark skies.  
Only in souls the Christ is brought to birth,  
And there He lives and dies.

## DISTANT VOICES

**R**EMEMBER the house of thy father,  
When the palaces open before thee,  
And the music would make thee forget.  
When the cities are glittering around thee,  
Remember the lamp in the evening,  
The loneliness and the peace.

When the deep things that cannot be spoken  
Are drowned in a riot of laughter,  
And the proud wine foams in thy cup;  
In the day when thy wealth is upon thee,  
Remember thy path through the pine-wood,  
Remember the ways of thy peace.

Remember—remember—remember—  
When the cares of this world and its treasure  
Have dulled the swift eyes of thy youth;  
When beauty and longing forsake thee,  
And there is no hope in the darkness,  
And the soul is drowned in the flesh;

## DISTANT VOICES

Turn, then, to the house of thy boyhood,  
To the sea and the hills that would heal thee,  
To the voices of those thou hast lost,  
The still small voices that loved thee,  
Whispering, out of the silence,  
*Remember—remember—remember—*

*Remember the house of thy father,  
Remember the paths of thy peace.*

## FOR A BOOK OF TALES

**I**F there be laughter, here and there, in a story  
Written when songs were dead, in a dreadful hour;  
Remember, at least, that men may laugh in the  
darkness  
Where tears are not to be borne.

O, if there be any beguilement in these my  
shadows  
Caught—as they walked the world—in a net  
of dreams;  
Remember, at least, that the best of all my music  
Was this—that my songs were dead.

If there be tragical shadows walking amongst  
them,  
The darkest shadow of all has merciful hands;  
And whispers—low in your heart—O, yet remember,  
That shadows are children of light.

## FOR A BOOK OF TALES

So—take them, walking their ways as I saw and  
drew them,

Shadows from British coasts and from over the  
sea,

From Sussex to Maine, from Maine to the City  
of Angels,

Whence the sunset returns as the dawn.

## A SKY SONG

**T**HE Devil has launched his great grey  
craft

To voyage in the sky;  
But Life puts out with a thousand wings,  
To rake His Majesty fore and aft  
And prove that Wrong must die.

So has it been since time began,—  
When Death would mount and fly,  
A swifter fleet, with sharper stings,  
Round him in lightning circles ran  
And proved that Death must die.

Invincible, he came of old.  
His galleons towered on high;  
But Drake and his companions bold  
And this proud sea that laughs and sings  
Declared that Death must die.

## A SKY SONG

So all these four free winds declare  
And these pure realms of sky;  
And these new admirals of the air,  
Ay, Life with all her radiant wings  
Declares that Death must die.

## A RETURN FROM THE AIR

SET the clocks going,  
Turn on the light.  
Is that the old sea flowing  
Out there, in the night?  
We have come back from faërie,  
To the world where Time still plods.  
We have returned from an airy  
Ramble with the gods.

There are few changes showing.  
The fire shines bright.  
But—set the clocks going.  
Turn on the light.  
No, we have nothing to tell you  
That you would care to be told.  
No, we have nothing to sell you  
That ever was bought with gold.

Ah, never look at our faces  
Till we forget our skies,

## A RETURN FROM THE AIR

Or the gleam of the holy places

Has faded from our eyes.

But—set the clocks going.

Turn on the light,

Outside the winds are blowing.

Shut the doors tight.

Is it an age or a minute

That we have been away?

We have lived an æon in it,

That is all we dare to say.

Our knowledge was past all knowing.

Our seeing was past all sight.

But—set the clocks going.

Turn on the light.

## COURT-MARTIAL

**A**LL along the lovers' lane  
Nelly Cobb and I went laughingly.  
When I kissed her,—“Do't again,”  
So she'd say, pert-like and chaffingly.

It was moonlight, and we walked  
Whispering of the bliss in store for us  
Little dreamed I, as we talked,  
That the future held no more for us.

Round and rosy chin held high,  
Buckled shoes and gown of tiffany,  
“Banns 'ull soon be up,” thought I,  
“We'll be married next epiphany!”

Then the war came, wiping out  
All the course that Love had charted us.  
Germany was wrong, no doubt.  
Well, I 'listed, and that parted us.

## COURT-MARTIAL

Now, at dawn, they'll shoot me dead,  
Since my nerve, before the enemy,  
Broke, as the court-martial said,  
(Wonder if she'll think agen o' me!)

I was just a volunteer.

Now she'll marry Joe, no doubt of it.  
He's there—striking. Life is queer.  
Did my best, and now I'm out of it.

How Joe grinned the day I went,  
Called me fool, and stood, saluting me.  
P'raps I was. I thought it meant  
Something—better. Well, they're shoot-  
ing me.

All this happened in one flash!  
Sight may go, and who thinks less of you?  
But, by God, if nerves go crash  
When your pal's blood makes a mess of  
you.

Then God leaves you in the lurch.  
Weakness there is worse than knavery.  
Joke 'ull be at home, in church,  
When the vicar lauds my bravery.

## COURT-MARTIAL

None will know how I was killed.

I'll be mentioned as heroical;

Nelly 'ull cry, and say she's thrilled.

Husband Joe will sit there, stoical.

Life's a funny kind of play.

All the love and hope and youth of it,—

Chucked like so much dirt away;

And there's no one knows the truth of it.

## A VICTORY DANCE

**T**HE cymbals crash,  
And the dancers walk,  
With long silk stockings  
And arms of chalk,  
Butterfly skirts,  
And white breasts bare,  
*And shadows of dead men  
Watching 'em there.*

*Shadows of dead men  
Stand by the wall,  
Watching the fun  
Of the Victory Ball.  
They do not reproach,  
Because they know,  
If they're forgotten,  
It's better so.*

Under the dancing  
Feet are the graves.

## A VICTORY DANCE

Dazzle and motley,  
In long bright waves,  
Brushed by the palm-fronds  
Grapple and whirl  
Ox-eyed matron,  
And slim white girl.

Fat wet bodies  
Go waddling by,  
Girdled with satin,  
Though God knows why;  
Gripped by satyrs  
In white and black,  
With a fat wet hand  
On the fat wet back.

See, there is one child  
Fresh from school,  
Learning the ropes  
As the old hands rule.  
God, how that dead boy  
Gapes and grins  
As the tom-toms bang  
And the shimmy begins.

## A VICTORY DANCE

“What did you think  
We should find,” said a shade,  
“When the last shot echoed  
And peace was made?”  
“Christ,” laughed the fleshless  
Jaws of his friend,  
“I thought they’d be praying  
For worlds to mend;”

“Making earth better,  
Or something silly,  
Like white-washing hell  
Or Picca-dam-dilly.  
They’ve a sense of humour,  
These women of ours,  
These exquisite lilies,  
These fresh young flowers!”

“Pish,” said a statesman  
Standing near,  
“I’m glad they can busy  
Their thoughts elsewhere!  
We mustn’t reproach ’em.  
They’re young, you see.”

## A VICTORY DANCE

*"Ah," said the dead men,  
"So were we!"*

*Victory! Victory!  
On with the dance!  
Back to the jungle  
The new beasts prance!  
God, how the dead men  
Grin by the wall,  
Watching the fun  
Of the Victory Ball.*

## THE RHYTHM OF LIFE

COME back, to the tidal sun,"  
The Angel of Morning said.  
"There are no more songs to be won  
From the sad new pulseless dead;  
But the pine-wood throbs with the truth  
It sang to the heart of a boy!  
Come back, to the hills of youth,  
Enjoyer and giver of joy.

"Come back, to the tidal sea  
And its great storm-guiding tune,  
By the service of law set free  
To sing with the sun and the moon;  
To pulse with the blood and the breath,  
And to ebb ere the flow can cloy,  
In the rhythm of life and death,  
Enjoyer and giver of joy."

## THE ROLL OF HONOR

### I

**H**OW could she know that these tremendous things

Could all be printed in so small a space?  
The headlines flared with footlight queens and  
kings  
And left her dead to his obscurer place.

The line of print that turned her heart to stone,—  
How should it vie with knaves or fools for  
fame?

Let the world pass. Her grief was all her own;  
And of the world she had no care or claim.

Why was he slaughtered, then, since no soul cared,  
Except herself, whether he lived or died;  
Or those that dug some later trench and bared  
The old white bones, and had to turn aside.

Bones that were clothed with living flesh of old,  
Bones that were hands, and had her hands to hold.

# THE ROLL OF HONOR

## II

Yet when that Roll of Honor told her first,  
    In midget print, how all those heroes died,  
Though her brain reeled and heart was like to  
    burst,  
    She heard, she too, the trumpets of their pride.

It seemed as if, with peace, they would return  
    Like boys from football, shouting "Four to  
    three."

Then, as time passed, slowly she came to learn  
    How strangely silent all those dead could be.

For this was not like stories in a book;  
    Not like the fifth act of some splendid play;  
This, this thing was for ever. . . . Her soul  
    shook  
    And stared in terror down that endless way.

Good News! Oh, yes; but, shivering through  
    their cry  
She only heard and breathed Good-bye! Good-  
    bye!

# THE ROLL OF HONOR

## III

At least, she thought, in face of all these dead,  
Mankind would wipe the old lies from heart  
and brain,  
Set a firm heel on those false things we said,  
And never rant of earth's rewards again.

Had honor time to count the hosts that stream  
So simply through this darkness, down to  
death?

Heroes lie dumb, while, like an idiot's dream,  
Painted balloons dance on the popular breath.

For the bawd Glory crowns with blood-drenched  
flowers

The first her eyes can seize, rarely the true.  
The rest must fade, those nameless hosts of ours,  
The obscure brave that never claim their due.

They fade. They fade, for all our shrines and  
scrolls.

There's no reward for gods, except their souls.

# THE ROLL OF HONOR

## IV

Good News! Good News! He perished for the  
right.

Ah, but to die, an atom in the flood  
That tramples myriads down into the night  
And drenches half the earth with boyish blood!

Where is the right to heal this deeper wrong,  
If night eternal hide the soul that gave;  
If silence close the discord, and not song  
And death drag life behind him like a slave?

If but one child be wronged, one love go down,  
That fools to come may clutch an idler dream,  
Justice may drop her sword and play the clown,  
Her court's a mockery in this cosmic scheme.

There is no truth, no cause, no aim secure,  
If best things die, while stocks and stones endure.

## TO CERTAIN PHILOSOPHERS

**A**FTER all the dreaming, the laughter and the  
tears,  
Comes a tramp of armies, a shock of  
naked spears.

After all the loving, with lips and eyes a-light,  
Comes the iron slumber, and the endless night.

After all the singing, and all that souls can pray,  
Comes the empty silence, closing all with *Nay*;

After all the 'progress,' the day when all is told,  
When the stars are darkened, and the sun is cold.

Ah, my latter sophists, if your creed were true,  
Gods, if gods existed, well might kneel to you.

You have found the one thing that gods have  
never heard;  
Found what hell despaired of, found the final  
word.

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

**I**NTO the darkness, trample the cross and the  
martyr's crown.

Crush the faith of your fathers down to the  
night's deep maw.

Tell us the soul is a shadow, tell us that love  
is a dream.

Tell us the world is helmless, a-drift in a measure-  
less gloom!

Rave in the self-same breath of your 'progress,'—  
down to your doom.

Progress down to the darkness, a blind im-  
placable stream,—

Progress of planets and suns, whirled thro' a  
moment of law,

Out of the lawless into the lawless. Trample  
them down.

Mock! And we will out-mock you—whirl you  
hence like a wave!

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Mock, for the night is upon you. Climb now,  
climb to your height.

Look on the glory of man in the light of the  
dying sun.

You that have darkened the heavens for those  
that had only their faith,

Mock, and we will out-mock you! Mock, O,  
wraith of a wraith!

What? You have progress to sell, in a hell  
where such horrors are done.

Mock, O gluttons of death, for the night is upon  
you, the night!

How shall you elbow the rest of us out of  
our home in the grave?

Mock, and we will out-mock you. You have  
heaped dust on your youth,

Blinded the eyes of the simple, and juggled with  
words for an hour!

Mock! For the ages are moving against you  
like waves of the deep.

Mock, for the stars overhead in the depths of the  
night conspire—

Legions of orderly forces, chariots of pitiless fire,

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Marching against you, marching so swiftly,  
they seem but to sleep;  
Till, as you mock them, on heights beyond height,  
beyond thought, the legions of truth  
Plant the unshakeable flags of the Kingdom,  
the Glory, the Power.

How shall you measure or think of them, in the  
same breath as you say

They are beyond all thought, unknowable?  
You who confess

This was the ground of your doubting—that  
all men are utterly blind!

Doubt not the ground of your doubting—that  
these things are greater than you,  
Greater than even your Art, greater than even  
you knew,

Greater than even your flesh, greater than even  
your mind,

Greater than all that was born of them, greater,  
not less, not less,

Even than man, or the brute, or the slime,  
where your thought runs dwindling away.

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Have not your sophisters told us that God is a  
blundering force

Groping in vain for the vision that shines in the  
mind of a fool?

What, you are flogging the dead little anthro-  
pomorphic creeds?

Where is your creed to replace them? At least  
they climbed to a height,

And you say that your God crawls blindly, a dumb  
blind creature of night,

Crawls out of Nothingness, counts upon Time  
to repair His misdeeds!

O, Thou Timeless, Infinite, bowing Thy head in  
remorse,

Learn at the feet of a mountebank, come, and  
be patient in school.

O, Thou Unknowable, Infinite . . . Have we not  
heard of a dream

Made in the heart of a man, yet something  
deeper than this,

Made in the mind of a man, that exulted even  
in pain,

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Knowing that Death was a gate thro' the nar-  
rower limits of Life,  
So that he stood up and cried, triumphant because  
of the strife,  
Crowned and girdled with peace, cried to the  
Day-Spring again,  
*Glory to God in the Highest*, in an agony better  
than bliss,  
One with the Godhead at last, in the Passion,  
the Vision Supreme.

This was a little vision. Trample it utterly down;  
But where is your dream to replace it, and what  
have your visions unfurled?  
New Things! Bones and a skull, under the  
skin of a man!  
Mock, and we will out-mock you, for term by  
contemptible term,  
You have denied and degraded all that the noblest  
affirm;  
God into force, man into beast. Is this the  
new law that we scan,—  
The greater evolved by the less? And you wear  
the philosopher's crown!

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Ours was a Universe, inner and outer, yes,  
ours was the world.

It is the world you would shatter—the world  
where children are born.

It is the world you would shatter, where wise  
men kneel at their feet.

It is the world you would shatter, where Life  
is crucified still.

When you rebelled in the darkness, against this  
Passion and Love,

It was no dream you would shatter, this creed of  
the Snake and the Dove!

Would you reject it, because of the pain it em-  
braces? O, crooked of will,

It is the world around you, palpable, bitter and  
sweet,

And the scorn of the ages laughs your rebellion  
to scorn.

Either not good you have called Him, or else of  
a less than All-Might.

It was the bonds you would break, in whose  
service alone you are free.

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Asking for laws that are lawless, it is Creation you hate,

Chiding your bounds as a river that chides at the banks where it flows.

Would you have blood without veins, and a road that returns ere it goes?

Would you paint pictures, in gold upon gold, with a shadowless light?

It is a prayer that unprays its own praying, a prayer uncreate,

Asking for nought. It is you that have failed in the prayer, and not He.

Though you reject it in Adam, you cannot reject it in Man.

Though you reject it in Heaven, you cannot reject it on Earth,

Here, it is here at your door, though you turn from the ultimate fount,

It is this world you would shatter! You strut with your scraps and your shards,

Epigrammatical sophists, and mad little pessimist bards,

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Proffering new things, little soiled scraps from  
that feast on the Mount,  
Soddened in Soho cafés, and end where your  
fathers began,  
End in miraculous dust, which—you say—had a  
virginal birth.

Born of Fashion—that Virgin—born in the ful-  
ness of Time,  
Cradled in Nothingness, nourished by accident,  
ages ago  
Slumbered an embryo, holding within it . . .  
I speak as a fool . . .  
London, Paris, and Rome, the streets and the  
lights and the roar.  
Nothing was yet to be seen but a jellyfish, flat on  
the shore  
Yes—there was doubtless a shore, for the earth  
was beginning to cool;  
So it had doubtless been hot, which implies, as  
philosophers know,  
Nothing at all; though London, and Paris, and  
Rome, were implied in its slime;

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

So were Socrates, Dante, Shakespeare, Kant and  
the rest.

Water may clamour for water. But souls in  
a void were implied.

There was nothing before them equal at all  
to themselves,—

Only the rapidly cooling earth as it rolled on its  
way.

Then the pageant began, and slowly marched to  
the day,

Till, in the fulness of time, there shone on the  
wild sea-shelves

Thousands of jelly-fish, left by the tide. There  
was doubtless a tide.

That was the life-force, blundering blindly,  
with law in its breast.

O, the miraculous world, when the sun sank over  
the sea;

O, the colours, the rainbows that shone on that  
desolate shore,

Nursing your limitless 'progress,' under the  
dawn of the moon,

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Waiting—under the stars—for the birth of a  
world of tears.

Close your eyes on the vision. Sleep for a billion  
years,

Then open your eyes and behold it, a Cross and  
a night in your noon,

And a voice ringing and crying, for ever and  
evermore,

*Eloi! Eloi! Eloi! Lama Sabacthani!*

Close your eyes on the vision. Sleep but one  
æon away.

Open your eyes in the darkness; for death has  
laid hold on the sun.

See where it hangs, a red ember, and earth  
is colder than death.

There is no relic of man, no ruin, not even a tomb,  
Only the ice and the snow and the deep green  
measureless gloom,

Mocked by the cold white stars; and listen,  
one terrible breath

Shuddering out of the Void, like the moan of a  
spirit astray—

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

“Sleep, O cities, O nations, the last long night  
is begun.”

Mock, and we will out-mock you, for now to this  
end are ye come,

Mock, for we are the ages, and we that were  
old are still young.

Where are your tricks and your fashions,  
your cries of the day and the hour.

Sleep, O terrible cities, your wars are accom-  
plished at last.

All your conquests are conquered. All your  
“progress” is past.

Have we not travailed together and brought  
forth Glory and Power?

Where are the mighty cathedrals that rocked to  
the psalms that we sung?

Is even your Art not immortal? And the shal-  
low mouth, is it dumb?

No—let us whisper together; for we that were  
old are still young.

We are the endless ages. We shall not labour  
in vain.

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Out of our groaning together who knows but  
a god may be born?

Ah, speak low, we have time, and infinite time,  
for that end.

Infinite time we have spent, nor diminished the  
store that we spend.

Were there no God in the past, we still move  
to a deepening morn,

And, in the gates of the future, He waits, till a  
harvest be sprung

Out of the worlds upon worlds that we sow  
in the darkness like grain.

Worlds upon numberless worlds, through that  
beautiful darkness move,

Far off, in that measureless future. All that  
the prophets you killed

Dreamed in their dark strange hearts of a  
heaven that should answer their cry,

Sings through those mightier hosts as they wheel  
on their glittering way.

Death shall descend into night. Life shall arise  
into day.

## A CHANT OF THE AGES

Life, exultant, triumphant, shall mount to the  
Day-spring on high,  
Mount to the unknown God, with the light of His  
vision fulfilled,  
Mount out of discord, at last, to the sun-ruling  
music of love.

## THE GIPSY

**T**HERE was a barefoot gipsy-girl  
Came walking from the West,  
With a little naked sorrow  
Drinking beauty at her breast.  
Her breast was like the young moon;  
Her eyes were dark and wild.  
She was like evening when she wept,  
And morning when she smiled.

The little corners of her mouth  
Were innocent and wise;  
And men would listen to her words,  
And wonder at her eyes;  
And, since she walked with wounded feet,  
And utterly alone,  
It seemed as if the women, too,  
Would make her grief their own.

## THE GIPSY

Ah, had she been an old hag  
    With shrivelled flesh and brain,  
They would have drawn her to their hearts  
    And eased her of her pain;  
But, since her smooth-skinned loveliness  
    Could only hurt their pride,  
They dipped their pins in poison;  
    And, by accident, she died.

## THE GARDEN OF PEACE

**P**EACE? Is it peace at last?  
In the grey-walled garden I hear,  
Under the rambling golden-cruled roofs,  
The beautiful lichened roofs of Horsham stone,  
Only the whisper of leaves,  
And a blackbird calling.

Peace, and a blackbird calling his bright-eyed  
mate;  
Peace, and those young, those beautiful host of the  
dead,  
So quietly sleeping, under the mantle of June;  
Peace, and the years of agony all gone by  
As if they had never been!  
Is it peace at last?

The blackbird flutters away in a rain of petals.  
Under the open window a land-girl passes,  
Dainty as Rosalind, in her short white smock,

## THE GARDEN OF PEACE

Corduroy breeches and leggings and soft slouch-hat.

She swings her basket, happy in her new freedom,  
And passes, humming a song.

She walks through the grey-walled garden,  
Watched by the formal shadows of older days,  
The shadows her grandam knew, in poplin gowns  
And arched sun-bonnets, like old dry crumpled  
rose-leaves.

They peep at her, under the dark green peacock-yew.

They smile at her, under the big black mulberry boughs.

With an exquisite self-reproach in their wise old eyes,

They whisper together, like dim grey lavender blooms,

Glad of her careless joy, "*She will not grow old,  
Never grow old, as we did.*"

See, she pauses,

Now, at the grey sun-dial,

Whose legend, lichen-encrusted in rusty gold,

## THE GARDEN OF PEACE

*Lux et Umbra vicissim,*

*Semper Amor,*

Was read by those that rustled in hooped bro-  
cades,

Admiringly round it, once, in its clear-cut youth.

A moment, there, she pauses, youthful, slim.

She reads the hour on its old dim dreaming face,  
Half mellowed by time, half eaten away by time.

She does not see the shadows around it now.

It is only the hour she sees.

The rest is a dazzle of hollyhock shadows and sun.

She goes her way.

She darkens the deep old arch in the clipped yew-  
hedge,

And vanishes, leaving an arch of light behind her.

*Lux et Umbra vicissim,*

*Semper Amor!*

Is it all a dream,

This unbelievable peace?

The sunlight sleeps on the boughs.

The bees are drowsy with heat.

## THE GARDEN OF PEACE

*Tap-tap, tap-tap!*

Ah no, not the telegraph giving the range to the  
guns;

It is only a dreamer, knocking the ash from his  
pipe,

On the warm grey crumbling wall at the garden's  
end,

Where the crucified fruit-trees bask,

Those beautiful fruit-trees,

Fastened, with arms outspread.

*Tap-tap, tap-tap!*

Now all is quiet again. There is only a whisper,  
Calm as the whisper of grass,

On a sunlit grave.

Is it peace? Was it only a dream

That, under this beautiful cloak of the sunlit  
world,

We saw a blood-red gash in the clean sweet skin,  
And the flesh rolled back by the hand of the sur-  
geon, War;

And there, within,

Alive and crawling,

## THE GARDEN OF PEACE

The cancer ;  
The monstrous cancer of hate,  
With octopus arms,  
Gripping the blood-red walls of its tortured hell?  
Is it peace at last?

Oh, which is the dream? I hear  
Now, in the grey-walled garden,  
Only the whisper of leaves ;  
And now, on the southerly wall,  
The dreamer, knocking the ash from his pipe  
again,  
*Tap-tap, tap-tap ;*  
And the cry of a bird to his mate.

## IN MEMORIAM

HENRY LA BARRE JAYNE

*May 10th, 1920*

**G**OD beckoned him across the night.  
The best of many friends has passed  
Into that world of purer light  
And peace, at last.

Oh, City that he loved, be proud.  
He loved you till his latest breath,  
With love too great to breathe aloud  
In life, or death.

Without one thought of self he gave  
His work, his dreams, his life for you.  
There were more mourners at his grave  
Than any knew.

It will be long before you find  
A heart like his on earth again,  
So quick to feel with all mankind  
In joy and pain.

## IN MEMORIAM

It will be long before you see  
Such faith as lit his eyes with youth;  
That brave and deep humanity,  
That constant truth.

The golden heart that knew no guile,  
Those eager eyes abrim with mirth,  
Conquered our darkness with a smile  
And left, on earth,

A memory fragrant as a prayer,  
A music that exalts our sky,  
A light that broods upon the air  
And cannot die.

## THE RUSTLING OF GRASS

I CANNOT tell why,  
But the rustling of grass,  
As the summer winds pass  
Through the field where I lie,  
Brings to life a lost day,  
Long ago, far away,  
When in childhood I lay  
Looking up at the sky  
And the white clouds that pass,  
Trailing isles of grey shadow  
Across the gold grass. . . .

O, the dreams that drift by  
With the slow flowing years,  
Hopes, memories, tears,  
In the rustling of grass.

## THE REMEMBERING GARDEN

**U**NDER those boughs where Beauty dwelt  
A wistful glory haunts the air,  
As though the joy she gave and felt  
Had left its phantom there.

The lilacs bloom beside the door  
As though their mistress were not dead,  
And their sweet clouds might dream, once **more**,  
Above her shining head.

Nothing endures of all those wrongs  
That broke her heart before she died;  
But little ghosts of happy songs  
Croon, where she laughed and cried.

Like phantom birds, be-winged and gay,  
Among the rustling leaves they go.  
Her phantom children laugh and play  
Upon the path below.

## THE REMEMBERING GARDEN

For, though they've journeyed far since then,  
At times an April breath will come  
And lead them from the world of men  
Back to their mother's home.

No shadow of her deep distress  
Darkens their dreaming garden-ground;  
But oh, her phantom happiness  
That weeps, and makes no sound!

## THE TRUE REBELLION

I HEARD one say, "A proud immortal face,  
Too fair for earth, in dreams has smiled on  
me,  
And robbed my mortal bride of all her grace  
And changed my love to a withering mockery."

"Then O you visionary powers," I cried,  
"May I be worthier all my poor life long,  
To walk with my own comrade side by side,  
And shield a mortal love from that deep  
wrong.

"May all that in me fails of your pure light  
Draw one dear hand more close to mortal  
mine;  
Then—leave us to our memories in the night,  
And, when our flickering torch has ceased to  
shine,

## THE TRUE REBELLION

“Say, in your blasphemous heaven, if you say  
aught,

*Those two dead fools despised our loftiest  
thought.”*

## TO THE PESSIMISTS

**B**ECAUSE I will not darken the dark sky  
Of any soul with my poor clouds of gloom,  
Think you I know them not; think you that I,  
A fellow-traveller to Eternity,  
Have never felt the cold breath of that tomb  
Wherein not only tragic lovers lie,  
But little faces, crushed in their first bloom,  
Born but to smile in love's dim eyes, then die,  
Decay, crushed down by one remorseless doom.  
O friend, what need to strain for elbow-room?  
We shall find room enough there, you and I.

Needs it so keen a gaze to mark all this,  
The horror, the dumb pain?  
"Ah, but you sing life's bliss,"  
You cry, "you proffer us unrealities!  
Too shallow is the strain  
That will not note how all things run amiss;  
But still cries *hope!* in parrot-like refrain."

## TO THE PESSIMISTS

If all things run amiss, whose heart, whose brain  
    Shall judge of its own errors, even in this,  
Where thought is folly and all our utterance vain.  
But, if these lives which come and go like waves  
    Appearing, vanishing, never can be pent  
    In what we call our graves,  
But do return to that great sea which lies  
    Beneath their ebbs and flows;  
To unity with that harmonious sea;  
    Oh, not to a blind sleep  
In a blind Godhead (which we reckon blind  
    Because of the strict walls of man's own mind);  
Not to a vacant sleep,  
    But something far more deep;  
Not something less than personality,  
    But something more, so infinitely more  
That, of its own miraculous excess,  
    It cried *I am, I am*, where absolute nothingness,  
Before the world, with nothingness were content;  
    If this great sea resume all life (as man  
In memory contains his vanished hours),  
    Though darkness cloak the universal plan,  
Yet, on that primal miracle of being,

## TO THE PESSIMISTS

That inconceivable,  
Impossible miracle,  
The mind may base its most substantial towers,  
Without which there's no hearing and no seeing,  
No thought, no speech, that wrecks not its own  
powers.

And so, for all the nightmares that I see,  
Never shall grief of mind pretend  
That you, or I, or any can transcend  
The deep grave heart of joy  
Which is the heart of all humanity.

I hear its even beat  
Through all the rambling highways of the town.  
I hear that laugh of children in the street,  
Which not the red-piled barricades can drown!  
I hear mankind singing among its graves,  
The seamen singing as their ships go down!  
Theirs is the little harmony that saves,  
The rhythmic law no rebel can destroy,  
The close-knit order that at last shall leaven  
Chaos and Death, and turn the world to  
Heaven.

## TO THE PESSIMISTS

I see that while the inconstant battle rages  
The steadfast leaves are green.  
I hear the singing spheres, the marching ages.  
Though war should pour its cataracts of blood  
Through every seaward rift of Time and every  
gaunt ravine,  
It cannot stain that all-embracing sea  
Whose names are Music and Eternity.

Though war's wild crimson flood  
O'erbrim the banks, and dye our fields anew,  
All this shall be as if it had not been.  
Life guards the truth. Death never yet spoke  
true.

Let the dark Anarch with his bloody dew  
Drench the deep-ordered dust from east to  
west,  
The world-embracing harmony shall not rest  
Till all these things are folded in its breast.  
Let him shout 'red,' earth has not heard or seen.  
Her leaves, her fields, are green.  
Though man's blind Justice bare an unjust blade,  
Earth's darkling error is one proof the more

## TO THE PESSIMISTS

That when heaven's wider balances are weighed,  
Diviner Justice shall redress the score;  
For there's one debt most certain to be paid,—  
The Maker's debt to that which He has made.  
If worlds of rock and stone could trample out  
The light in the eyes of a child  
For a God or another's need  
This life would be  
A darker mystery,  
Than could be left for one brief hour to doubt.

On this I base my creed;  
Because no other basis can be found  
For life itself. Rather the battle-shout,  
The sword, rebellion absolute,  
Against all life. Let the world take the plunge  
Into the dark at once; cut the foul root  
Whereby we hang above the eternal night.  
What, you would write,  
Bind, print on hand-made paper your despairs,  
Assume artistic airs,  
When, if your dark imaginings be true,  
If but one child's heart could be trampled out,

## TO THE PESSIMISTS

The only honour left you were to die.

There is no room for doubt.

Although this age runs wild,

There are some things we *know*.

Though, false as water, all things else may go,

Never shall time subordinate

The great to the less great,

The love in one child's heart to this blind dust.

If that young faith within her eyes

Were noble, that which lies

Beyond the world is nobler. This I *know*.

On this I base my creed. On this I base my trust.

## FOUR SONGS, AFTER VERLAINE

### I

#### AUTUMN

**T**OUCH the dark strings.

Pale Autumn sings.

Wet winds creep

The bare boughs through . . .

O, woods we knew,

I, too, weep.

Stifed and blind,

I call to mind

Dreams long lost,

Dreams all astray

In that dead May,

With Love's ghost.

Then I, too, go,

As the winds blow,

Grey with grief,—

## FOUR SONGS, AFTER VERLAINE

Hither, thither,  
I know not whither,—  
A dead leaf.

### II

#### RAIN

My heart is full of the rain  
As it weeps on the dim grey town.  
Oh, what is this endless pain  
That weeps in my heart with the rain?

The grey sky breaks into tears  
On the brown earth and grey roofs.  
O heart, after all these years,  
Are you heavy with tears?

It rains without reason to-night,  
In a heart that is numbed with pain.  
A world without hope of the light  
Grieves without reason to-night.

Ah, the one grief keener than all  
Is to wonder—when grief is fled—

## FOUR SONGS, AFTER VERLAINE

Why the tears of the old time fall  
In a heart grown tired of it all.

### III

#### ILLUSION

The mirrored trees in that nocturnal stream  
Drown like a cloudy dream.  
The bird upon the green bough, looking down,  
Sees his own shadow drown.

He thinks it is his true love drowning there,  
And moans in his despair.  
How many a heart on high among green leaves,  
Grieves, as that sweet fool grieves.

### IV

#### THE ANGEL

Soul, art thou dreaming still  
And sorrowing, even to death?  
Up! Dreams are to fulfil!  
Onward, till thy last breath,  
With all thy strength and will.

## FOUR SONGS, AFTER VERLAINE

Oh, hands that fold in sleep,  
    When wrongs are still to right;  
Oh, craven lips that keep  
    Their silence in the night;  
Oh, eyes too dead to weep—

Does not the hope we knew,  
    Though but a hope, abide?  
And now, to prove anew  
    That truth is on thy side,  
Hast thou not suffering, too?

Enough of dreams and tears!  
    See, faint and far away  
A glimmering light appears.  
    Awake! It is the day!  
Have done with doubts and fears.

Dark, dark against that light  
    The Angel, Duty, stands.  
But go to him forthright,  
    Ay, give him both thy hands,  
And all his mien grows bright.

## FOUR SONGS, AFTER VERLAINE

His heart shall bring to birth  
Treasure that none hath told;  
Wisdom beyond all worth;  
And love, more true than gold,  
More sure than aught on earth;

For, though thine eyes be wet,  
He guards one bliss for thee;  
One heaven, unguessed at yet,  
Whose unhopéd ecstasy  
Shall teach thee to forget;

Yes, even on earth, forget.

\*

## THE STATUE \*

**S**LOWLY he bent above her jewelled hand  
And kissed it. But the boy had little  
heart

To woo the glad young bride that others chose  
And thrust upon him as his princedom's prize.  
The daylight withered on her palace towers,  
And all the windows darkened as he went  
Wearily homeward, tortured with his thoughts,  
Tired with his task of wooing without love,  
Tired with the toil of all that empty speech,  
And almost wishing loveless death would stay  
The mockery of the loveless marriage morn.

Round him the woods, tossing their sombre  
plumes,  
Shed heavy, wet, funereal fragrances;  
And the wind, uttering one low tragic cry,  
Perished. It was a night when wanderers  
Bewildered there might dread some visible Death

\*This is one of the author's earliest poems, not hitherto printed in America.

## THE STATUE

Urging his pale horse thro' the dim blue light  
Of haggard groves and poppy-haunted glades.

His path fainted into the forest gloom  
Like a thin aisle along the wilderness  
Of some immense cathedral long ago  
Buried at some huge epoch of the world  
Far down, under the mountains and the sea;  
A wealth of endless vistas rich and dark  
With secret hues and carvings and—his foot  
paused—

A white breast orient in the softening gloom,  
A cold white arm waving above the shrine,  
A sweet voice floating in a dreamy song  
Till all the leafy capitals awoke  
And whispered in reply! Was it the wind  
Wafting a globe of flowery mist, a sigh  
Of wild-rose incense wandering in a dream?

Far, far away, as through an eastern window,  
Through low grey clouds, painted in curling folds,  
The moon arose and peered into the nave,  
The moon arose behind the dark-armed woods  
And made the boughs look older than the world.

## THE STATUE

And slowly down the thin sad aisle the prince  
Came with his eighteen summers. His dark eyes  
Burned with the strange new hunger of his heart.

He knew how beautiful she was—his bride,  
Whom others chose, but he had ever found  
His love in all things, not in one alone.  
He found the radiant idol of his moods  
In waves and flowers and winds, in books and  
dreams,

In paintings and in music, in strange eyes  
And passing faces; and too well he knew  
The Light that gave the radiance must still fly  
From face to face, from form to form. A word,  
A breath, a smile too swift, and at his feet  
There lay some broken idol, some dead husk,  
And he must seek elsewhere that archetype  
Reflected from some other shape of earth,  
Darkly, as in a glass. Indeed his love  
Dwelt deeper in the night than she who stole  
In moonbeams on Endymion. His heart  
Was lost beyond the shining of the stars.  
His hopes were in his visions: like a boy  
He dreamed of fame; yet all the more his love

## THE STATUE

Dwelt in the past among the mighty dead.  
The emerald gloom, the rosy sunset skies  
He loved for their old legends, and again  
Wandered by lotus isles and heard the song  
Of sirens from a shore of yellow sand.

The vanished Grecian glory filled his soul  
With mystic harmonies that in broad noon  
Added a wonder to the white-curled clouds,  
A colour and a cry, a living voice,  
Almost the visible Presences divine  
To distant sea-horizons, dim blue hills,  
Earth's fading bounds and faint infinities.

And now, as down the thin sad aisle the prince  
Went footing tow'rds the moon, there came once  
more  
A gleam as of a white breast in the dark,  
A waving of a white arm in the dusk,  
A sweet voice floating in a dreamy song.  
He paused, he listened. Then his heart grew  
faint  
Within him, as there slowly rose and fell  
A sound of many voices drawing nigh

## THE STATUE

That mingled with his ancient dreams a song  
Still scented like the pages of a book  
With petals of the bygone years. He fell  
Prone on his face and wept, for all his life  
Thrilled in him as a wind-swept harp is thrilled;  
And all the things that he had once believed  
Seemed shattered by that wonder, and the world  
Became his dreams and he a little child.  
Slowly the distant multitude drew nigh,  
And softly as a sleeping sea they sang:

*Hast thou no word for us who darkly wander,  
No lamp to guide our weary feet,  
No song to cheer our way?*

*Where dark pine-forests sigh o'er blue Scaman-  
der,*

*The long grey winds are sweet,*

*And the deep moan of doves is heard;*

*While shadowy Ida floats in cloudless day;*

*Hast thou no word?*

*Hast thou forgotten the almighty morning*

*That smote upon the cold green wrinkled sea*

*And edged the ripples with a rosy light;*

## THE STATUE

*And made us count cold death a thing for scorning  
Before the love of thee,  
O mother, wave-begotten?  
Yea, sunny day was worth the last long night!  
Hast thou forgotten?*

Whispering ever nearer like a wind  
The song sank into sweetest undertone,  
While the faint murmur of innumerable feet  
Came onward thro' the moonlit purple glades.  
The prince arose to listen. Those wild tears  
Yet glistened in his eyes against the moon.  
His dread seemed lost in a great conscious dream:  
For, one by one, like shadows of his mind,  
Sad voices murmured near him in the dark  
And gave his grief their own melodious pain.

### I

*The gods are gone! To-night the world's heart  
falters,  
To-morrow it may be the sun will shine,  
To-morrow it may be the birds will sing.*

## THE STATUE

*O Earth, my mother, the flame dies on thine  
altars!*

*I would my hands were folded fast in thine,  
That thou wouldst make me sleep,  
Wrapt in thy mantle deep,  
Far, far from sound or sight of anything.*

### II

*Dian is dead! No more the dark sweet forest  
At moondawn murmurs with a holy song.*

*Into the night the feet of love are flown.*

*No more at noon the heaven that thou adorest  
Opens to greet the golden Oread throng!*

*Anadyomene*

*Is buried in the sea,*

*The gods are gone. Thy children dream alone.*

### III

*The gods are dead! What god shall ever wake  
them?*

*Nay, if they lived, our world could never see;  
And I, what should I do the while but sleep?*

## THE STATUE

*Sleep, while the purblind sons of men forsake  
them;*

*Sleep where the old world sleeps in peace with  
thee,*

*Sleep, dust in the old fair dust,*

*Sleep, in the same deep trust,*

*That all is well where none can wish to weep.*

Perchance they were the shadows of his mind  
That sang to him; but over his heart they crept  
As winds of April over the budding leaves.  
And still the rumour of innumerable feet  
Stole like a strain of music thro' the woods,  
Making the darkness wither into dreams;  
Till, all at once, the moonlight blossomed and  
broke

And strowed the splendour of its quivering sprays  
And white rent rose-leaves thro' the throbbing  
night.

Pansy and violet woke in every glade,  
In every glade the violet and the pansy,  
The wild rose and the white woodbine awoke.  
The night murmured her passion, the dark night  
Murmured her passion to the listening earth.

## THE STATUE

The leaves whispered together. Every flower  
With naked beauty wounded every wind.  
Under the white strange moon that stole to gaze  
As once on Latmos, every popped dell  
Rustled, the green ferns quivered in the brake,  
The green ferns rustled and bowed down to kiss  
Their image in the shadowy forest pools.  
Then one last wind of fragrance heralding  
That mystic multitudinous approach  
Wandered along the wilderness of bloom  
And sank, and all was very still. Far, far  
It seemed, beyond the shores of earth, the sea  
Drew in deep breaths, as if asleep.

All slept.

Then like a cry in heaven the sudden hymn  
Rose in the stillness, and across the light  
That brooded on the long thin blossoming aisle,  
Dim troops of naked maidens carrying flowers  
Glided out of the purple woods and sank  
Like music into the purple woods again.

But, when the last had vanished, the white moon  
Withered, and wintry darkness held the trees,

## THE STATUE

And the prince reeled, dazed, till one strange cold  
voice

Out of the dying murmur seemed to thrill

The very fountains of his inmost life.

Oh, like another moon upon his night

That voice arose and comforted the world.

With one great sob he plunged into the wood

And followed blindly on the fainting hymn.

Blindly he stumbled onward, till the sound

Was heard no more; but where the gloom grew  
sweet

And sweeter, where the mingled scent of flowers

And floating hair wandered upon the dark,

Where glimpses pale and rosy moonlit gleams

Like ghosts of butterflies, fluttering softly

Thro' darkness tow'rds the sun, coloured the  
night,

He followed, thorn-pierced, bleeding, followed  
still.

Then, from his feet, a vista flowed away

Duskily purple as a seaward stream

With obscure lilies floating on its breast

Between wide banks of dark wild roses, grave

## THE STATUE

With secret meanings, deep and still and strange  
As death; but, at the end, a little glade  
Glimmered with hinted marble that implored  
Its old forgotten ritual. For a breath,  
He thought he saw that wave of worshippers  
Foam into flowers against a rosy porch,  
Leaving a moment after, only a dream  
Amongst the gleaming ruins, of laughter flown,  
And bright limbs dashed with dew and stained  
with wine.

But suddenly, as he neared the porch, the prince  
Paused; for the deep voluptuous violet gloom  
That curtained all the temple thrilled, and there,  
There in the midst stood out the sculptured form  
Of Her, the white Thalassian, wonderful,  
A Flower of foam, our Lady of the Sea.

Then, with wide eyes of dream, the boy came  
stealing  
Softly. His red lips parted as he gazed,  
His head bowed down, he sank upon his knees,  
Down on his knees he sank before her feet.  
Before her feet he sank, with one low moan,

## THE STATUE

One passionate moan of worship and of love.  
In a strange agony of adoration  
He whispered where he lay—"O beautiful,  
Beautiful One, take pity. Ah, no, no!  
Be as thou art, eternal, without grief,  
Beautiful everlastingly." He rose  
Adoringly he lifted up his face  
To hers, and saw that sweet and cold regard,  
The pitiless divine indifference  
Of Aphrodite gazing thro' the years  
To some eternal sea that calls her still.  
Adoringly he lifted up his lips  
And touched her, softly as a flower might kiss,  
Once, on the cold strange lips.

There came a cry  
Shattering the nerves with agonies of sweetness:  
The marble moved, the immortal marble moved,  
And every movement was an agony  
Of bliss. The marble softened into life,  
The marble softened as a clouding moon  
That takes the first faint rose-flush of the day.  
The lovely face bent down upon the boy,  
The soft white radiant arms enfolded him.

## THE STATUE

She kissed him, once, upon his mortal lips,  
Then—like a broken flower—down at her feet  
He fell. The temple shone with sudden fire,  
And through the leaves the wild miraculous dawn  
Tumbled its ruinous loads of breathless bloom  
On all the glades, and morning held the world.

But ere the morn had melted into noon  
There came a grey-haired man before the King  
And told that, as he went to gather wood,  
Soon after dawn, he heard a bitter cry  
Near that old ruined temple which, some said,  
Was haunted still by wandering pagan souls  
Too foul for heaven, yet ignorant of hell;  
But he believed it not, and therefore crept  
Quietly near to watch and saw the prince  
Dead on the ground; and over him there bent  
A white form, beautiful, but beckoning  
To One more beautiful in the morning clouds,  
The Mother of Bethlehem, to whom he prayed  
Himself, but never knew her till that hour  
So beautiful. For all the light that shone  
From Aphrodite, shone from that deep breast  
August in mother-love, with three-fold grace,

## THE STATUE

Enfolding all the lesser and raising all  
That wind-borne beauty of the wandering foam  
To steadfast heavens of more harmonious law;  
And over her, in turn, diviner skies  
Brooded, deep heavens enfolding all the world,  
Himself, the woods, the dead prince and those  
twain

Long held as deadly opposites, but now  
Strangely at one, though one was but the heaven  
Of colour and light in the other's breast and brow,  
And both but beaconed to the heavens beyond.

But when he led a silent troop of men  
Far thro' the tangled copses to that glade,  
They found the young prince like a broken flower  
Lying, one sun-browned arm behind his head,  
And on his dead cold lips a strange sweet smile.  
Over him stood the statue, clothed with light;  
And he who urged the loveless wooing crept  
Back, for he had no heart to face again  
The pitiless divine indifference  
Of Aphrodite, queen of laughter and love  
On old Olympus, but to this great dawn  
A roseate Hebe, handmaid to the heavens

## THE STATUE

Of beauty, with her long white glowing side,  
Pure sacramental hands and radiant face  
Uplifted in that lovelier servitude  
Whose name is perfect freedom, ministrant  
In harmony with golden laws, thro' all  
The passion-broken, cloudy, fleeting years,  
To that eternal Love which calls her still.

## *DEDICATION*

**W**HEN all the ragged-robin ways of youth  
were ours to roam,

We lost the key to elfin-land among the hills of  
home.

We could not break the wizard-locks that gripped  
the gate we knew,

The delicate green and golden gate of gossamers  
and dew.

We hunted for the glimmering key. We thought  
we saw it gleam,

A green and crimson dragon-fly, by many a chuck-  
ling stream;

Till now, oh far and far away, to one that listens  
long,

The laughter of our summer day has deepened  
into song;

## DEDICATION

*Oh, you may search among the firs, and I will  
search the fern;  
And, if we find our talisman, there'll be no more  
to learn;  
For you will call aloud to me, or I will call to you;  
And the elfin gate will open on our world of dawn  
and dew.*

*It's likelier to be at our feet than hiding very far.  
It's brighter than a flower, I think, but darker  
than a star;  
So down the narrow glen we'll plunge in bracken  
to our knees,  
And hunt for it as divers hunt for pearls in India  
seas;*

*Then through the may we'll rise again like swim-  
mers through the foam  
And I will search the golden gorse, among the  
woods of home;  
And you shall wade the crimson sea of clover  
through and through  
Until we find the key again to all the dreams we  
knew.*

## DEDICATION

*But, if we cannot find it there, above the woods  
we'll climb;*

*And you may search the yellow broom, and I will  
search the thyme;*

*And we will ride the racing clouds, and whistle to  
the lark;*

*And, when the sky forgets the sun, we shall not  
fear the dark;*

*For in your steadfast eyes I'll look, and you will  
look in mine;*

*And there, together, we shall see the hidden glory  
shine;*

*Then all your soul will call to me, and mine will  
call to you;*

*And the gates of death will open on our world of  
dawn and dew.*









