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SELECTED POEMS



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SELECTED POEMS

OF

T. STURGE MOORE

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PREFACE

SIR JOHN SQUIRE'S suggestion that " Sturge Moore's reputation would be assisted by a one-volume Selection, preferably not made by himself," gave me the courage to attempt what had been in my mind for a long time. My hope is that this little book will find its way into many rucksacks and pockets and will win new lovers to a poet I am not shy to recommend to my readers. I want to thank the friends who have been most helpful in sending me their " Selections." The choice of most of these poems has been decided by the number of votes, including my husband's, who has also contributed some notes.

MARIE STURGE MOORE

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I

TO IDLENESS

O IDLENESS, too fond of me,
Begone, I know and hate thee !
Nothing canst thou of pleasure see
In one that so doth rate thee ;

For empty are both mind and heart
While thou with me dost linger ;
More profit would to thee impart
A babe that sucks its finger.

I know thou hast a better way
To spend these hours thou squanderest;
Some lad toils in the trough to-day
Who groans because thou wanderest;

A bleating sheep he dowses now
Or wrestles with ram's terror ;
Ah, 'mid the washing's hubbub, how
His sighs reproach thine error !

He knows and loves thee, Idleness ;
For when his sheep are browsing,
His open eyes enchant and bless
A mind divinely drowsing ;

No slave to sleep, he wills and sees
From hill-lawns the brown tillage ;
Green winding lanes and clumps of trees,
Far town or nearer village,

The sea itself; the fishing fleet
Where more, as fond, thy lovers,

Heark'ning to sea-mews find thee sweet
Like him who hears the plovers.

Begone ; those haul their ropes at sea,
These plunge sheep in yon river :
Free, free from toil thy friends, and me
From Idleness deliver I

KINDNESS

OF the beauty of kindness I speak,
Of a smile, of a charm
On the face it is pleasure to meet,
That gives no alarm !

Of the soul that absorbeth itself
In discovering good,
Of that power which outlasts health,
As the spell of a wood

Outlasts the sad fall of the leaves,
And in winter is fine,
And from snow and from frost receives
A garment divine.

Oh ! well may the lark sing of this,
As through rents of huge cloud,
He broacheth blue gulfs that are bliss,
For they make his heart proud

With the power of wings deployed
In delightfulest air.
Yea, thus among things enjoyed
Is kindness rare.

For even the weak with surprise
spread wings, utter song,
They can launch . . in this blue they can rise,
In t his kindness are strong, . .

They can launch like a ship into calm,
Which was penned up by storm,
Which sails for the islands of balm
Luxuriant and warm.

TO MEMORY

O DEEPER than the noontide seems when blue,
Conceived as of yet finer woof than air,
Where, as clouds form, folk cherished, moments
 rare,
Fitfully gleam and pass . . . romance all true,
Yet never real enough ; thou wilt deceit,
Drug us till we, no longer what we are,
Love as we loved ! . . . Reluming star by star
Night falls and tears with thy far glances meet.

Thou dream of dreams, which most we can retrieve
And least forget ! for thee, dramatic truth
Drapes in fresh silks the tragedy of youth.
Yet as they act, our eyes, once blind, perceive
Much those performers are too fond to note
Till phantom sobs catch in a shrivelled throat.

TO SILENCE

O DEEP and clear as is the sky,
A soul is as a bird in thee
That travels on and on ; so I,
Like a snared linnnet, now break free,
Who in thee have but played before
As youth bathes near a sultry shore.

Then (as a floating nereid sleeps
In the deep-billowed ocean-stream ;
And by some goatherd on lone rock
Is thought a corpse, though she may dream
And profit by both health and ease
Nursed on those high green rolling seas)

Languidly drifted with thy tide,
Appearing dead to those I passed,
I lived in thee, and dreamed, and waked
Twice what I had been. Now, I cast
Me broken on thy buoyant deep
And dreamless in thy calm would sleep.

Silence, almost I now believe
Thou art the speech on lips divine,
Their greatest kindness to their child.
Yet I, who for all wisdom pine,
Seek thee but as a bather swims
To refresh and not dissolve his limbs.

Though those be thine, who asked and had,
And asked and had again, again,
Yet always found they wanted more,
Till craving grew to be a pain !

And they at last to Silence fled,
Glad to lose all for which they pled,

O pure and wide as is the sky,
Heal me, yet give me back to life !
Though thou foresee the day when I,
Sated with failure, dead to strife,
Shall seek in thee my being's end,
Still be to my fond hope a friend. »*

TO GIACOMO LEOPARDI

COLD was thy thought, O stricken son
Of Italy, cold as the moon
That naked, barren, frozen, on
This fertile earth, the boon
Of silver light
Sheds by night,—
Touching the million shaken leaves
That crown our woods ; while every fold
Of buttressed Alp soft charm receives,
Till near things look like lands far sought.
Yes, thy thought ached, it was so cold ;
And winsome movement, and choice sound,
In harmonies divinely wrought,
Could they be born of that profound
Despair which they so clearly taught ?
Nay, suffering, like a nightmare still,
Turned all thy youth's warm radiance chill,
—As yon dead moon turns the sun's beams
Aside in cold yet lucid streams,
Whose loveliness from farther came
Than that dead planet's cratered side ;
A globe of glory all one flame
Is in their brightness still implied.
So in the beauty of thine odes
Man's glowing eager spirit shines,
While yet its strange deflection loads
With added charm their play, refines
Their luminous force, till they,
Fair as moonlight,
Infuse the night
Of our roused sorrow, sadness, and
Remembered pain, where they expand

Brilliance, both solemn and serene,
Grand as the presence of Night's queen.y

TO AN EARLY SPRING DAY

O DAY, thou found'st me sleeping; let me sleep !
Too many of thy brothers too like thee
Have waked me with such manners. Didst thou peep
With something of thy sisters' smile, may be
I even then would sleep ; though they were gay
And called me oft in leafy flowery May :
Of banks more soft with moss than any bed,
With lush bee-peopled canopies o'er head,
They knew, and talking led me out to play.

Ah, they were gay, thy sisters ! They were young,
And like the flowers, half divine with dew
Diamonds in their roughened manes or flung
Forth in their frolic ; nothing sad they knew.
But thou, thou hast the sob of many sorrows ;
Gloom from a stormy night thy wet wing borrows ;
Each pelting shower, like angry sudden tears,
Answers an urgent spurring which one hears
Driving thee on t'ward disenchanting morrows.

Alas, there is but wind and rain abroad,
Fatiguing warmth that tempts the sharded buds !
I would I were a god of stone to hoard,
As russet grange the summer's golden floods,
All that Greece knew of beauty in her youth :
And, vantage'd, from an island temple's roof
Had watched a shore-road near across the sea,
Since young men on white horses buoyantly
Chanting rode by to meet the dawn of truth ;

A god who pays to-day no heed, a form
Though handless, footless, still in trance elate,

And tingling with old splendours that keep warm
(As echoes through a stone reverberate)
His comely stillness. So grand songs are held
Spell-bound within the temple where they swelled
Long after all the choristers have ceased,
Might my life, thus immured, ne'er be released
To learn how men from such fair gods rebelled !

O Day, grey-habited, thou too art sad !
Thou, too, art all too conscious of the past . .
Of all those leaves that thy forerunners had
To bathe in, plunge in, fall to sleep at last,
Tired out like children, in ! Thou, with thy rain
Pelting wet roofs and dripping boughs, wouldstfain
Dance among flowers and make the roses bob ;
Thou wouldst from dells of thyme and clover rob
Scents to make sea-nymphs sniff and sniff again.

Then let us, Day, go friendly ! help thou me,
Strengthen my feet and occupy my hands ;
And From all clinging yearning set me free
To find in things the look that understands
With mother-like alacrity, our need !
For nature is her children's friend indeed,
Who need not then be exiles anywhere ;
But, loving beauty, still find beauty there,
As thou canst find thee comfort in thy speed.

Rough Minister of Life, thine infant hand
May once have ushered Psyche through Love's house:

Viewless and trembling didst thou later stand
And soothe her sleep with music ? shy as mouse,
Evade but when, with many a skyey leap
From cloud - caps downward, came, with meteor
sweep,
Her rosy husband ? Ah, attend my prayers,
Immediate as her unseen ministers,
Till hope grow real enough to clasp in sleep !

In sleep we can believe we, rapt and fain,
Full knowledge of elusive beauty store :
In sleep we do not know ourselves, nor strain
Like birds at sea and fainting ere the shore,
To reach a joy that, ever seeming near,
Lies far beyond our strength : in sleep we hear,
As echoes hear, who do not weep at songs,
And unmoved watch, like stars, unpitied wrongs.
Then, Day, storm on till sleep be doubly dear !

Press on and shoulder up thy lagging clouds I
Invigour me ! Born from thine energy,
And bright from thy despair, with leaves in crowds,
The spring shall be I at last the spring shall be !
Beauty shall like a day-dream brave the light . .
A day-dream likelier than the dreams of night
Surmised among thy sisters, Summer Days,
When, 'mid birds singing, I will sing her praise
Exalting her with this thy strenuous might.

II

THE GAZELLES

THE GAZELLES

WHEN the sheen on tall summer grass is pale,
Across blue skies white clouds float on
In shoals, or disperse and singly sail,
Till, the sun being set, they all are gone :

Yet, as long as they may shine bright in the sun,
They flock or stray through the daylight bland,
While their stealthy shadows like foxes run
Beneath where the grass is dry and tanned :

And the waste, in hills that swell and fall,
Goes heaving into yet dreamier haze ;
And a wonder of silence is over all
Where the eye feeds long like a lover's gaze :

Then, cleaving the grass, gazelles appear
(The gentler dolphins of kindlier waves)
With sensitive heads alert of ear ;
Frail crowds that a delicate hearing saves,

That rely on the nostrils' keenest power,
And are governed from trance-like distances
By hopes and fears, and, hour by hour,
Sagacious of safety, snuff the breeze.

They keep together, the timid hearts ;
And each one's fear with a panic thrill
Is passed to an hundred ; and if one starts
In three seconds all are over the hill.

A Nimrod might watch, in his hall's wan space,
After the feast, on the moonlit floor,

The timorous mice that troop and race,
As tranced o'er those herds the sun doth pour;

Like a wearied tyrant sated with food
Who envies each tiniest thief that steals
A crumb from his abstracted mood,
For the zest and daring it reveals.

He alone, save the quite dispassionate moon,
Sees them ; she stares at the prowling pard
Who surprises their sleep and, ah ! how soon
Is riding the weakest or sleepest hard !

Let an agony's nightmare course begin,
Four feet with five spurs a-piece control,
Like a horse thief reduced to save his skin
Or a devil that rides a human soul !

The race is as long as recorded time,
Yet brief as the flash of assassin's knife ;
For 'tis crammed as history is with crime
'Twixt the throbs at taking and losing life ;

Then the warm wet clutch on the nape of the neck,
Through which the keen incisors drive ;
Then the fleet knees give, down drops the wreck
Of yesterday's pet that was so alive.

Yet the moon is naught concerned, ah no !
She shines as on a drifting plank
Far in some northern sea-stream's flow
From which two numbed hands loosened and sank.

Such thinning their number must suffer ; and worse
When hither at times the Shah's children roam,
Their infant listlessness to immerse
In energy's ancient upland home :

For here the shepherd in years of old
Was taught by the stars, and bred a race
That welling forth from these highlands rolled
In tides of conquest o'er earth's face :

On piebald ponies or else milk-white,
Here, with green bridles in silver bound,
A crescent moon on the violet night
Of their saddle cloths, or a sun rayed round,

With tiny bells on their harness ringing,
And voices that laugh and are shrill by starts,
Prancing, curvetting, and with them bringing
Swift cheetahs cooped up in light-wheeled carts,

They come, and their dainty pavilions pitch
In some valley, beside a sinuous pool,
Where a grove of cedars towers in which
Hérons have built, where the shade is cool;

Where they tether their ponies to low-hung boughs,
Where long through the night their red fires gleam,
Where the morning stir doth them arouse
To their bath in the lake, as from dreams to a dream.

And thence in an hour their hunt rides forth,
And the cheetahs course the shy gazelle

To the east or -west or south or north ;
And every eve in a distant vale

A hecatomb of the slaughtered beasts
Is piled ; tongues loll from breathless throats ;
Round large jet eyes the horsefly feasts . .
Jet eyes, which now a blue film coats :

Dead there they bleed, and each prince there
Is met by his sister, wife, or bride . .
Delicious ladies with long dark hair,
And soft dark eyes, and brows arched wide,

In quilted jacket, embroidered sash,
And tent-like skirts of pleated lawn ;
While their silk-lined jewelled slippers flash
Round bare feet bedded like pools at dawn :

So choicefully prepared to please,
Young, female, royal of race and mood,
In indolent compassion these
O'er those dead beauteous creatures brood :

They lean some minutes against their friend,
A lad not slow to praise himself,
Who tells how this one met his end
Out-raced, or trapped by leopard stealth,

And boasts his cheetahs fleetest are ;
Through his advice the chance occurred,
That leeward vale by which the car
Was well brought round to head the herd.

Seeing him bronzed by sun and wind,
She feels his power and owns him lord,
Then, that his courage may please her mind,
With a soft coy hand half draws his sword,

Just shudders to see the cold steel gleam,
And drops it back in the long curved sheath ;
She will merge his evening meal in a dream
And embalm his slumber like the wreath

Of heavy-lidded flowers bewitched
To murmur words of ecstasy
For king who, though with all else enriched,
Pays warlock for that the young hear free.

But, while they sleep, the orphaned herd
And wounded stragglers, through the night
Wander in pain, and wail unheard
To the moon and the stars so cruelly bright.

Why are they born ? ah ! why beget
They in the long November gloom
Heirs of their beauty, their fleetness . . yet
Heirs of their panics, their pangs, their doom ?

That to princely spouses children are born
To be daintily bred and taught to please,
Has a fitness like the return of morn :
But why perpetuate lives like these ?

Why, with horns that jar and with fiery eyes,
Should the male stags fight for the shuddering does

Through the drear dark nights, with frequent cries
From tyrant lust or outlawed woes ?

Doth the meaningless beauty of their lives
Rave in the spring, when they course afar
Like the shadows of birds, and the young fawn strives
Till its parents no longer the fleetest are ?

Like the shadows of names which the sun's rays
 throw
On a kiln's blank wall, where glaziers dwell,
Pale shadows as those from glasses they blow,
Yet that lap at the blank wall and rebel. .

Even so to my curious trance-like thought
Those herds move over those pallid hills,
With fever as of a frail life caught
In circumstance o'er-charged with ills ;

More like the shadow of lives than life,
Or most like the life that is never born
From baffled purpose and foredoomed strife,
That in each man's heart must be hidden from scorn,

Yet with something of beauty very rare
Unseizable, fugitive, half discerned ;
The trace of intentions that might have been fair
In action, left on a face that yearned

But long has ceased to yearn, alas !
So faint a trace do they leave on the slopes
Of hills as sleek as their coats with grass 1
So faint may the trace be of noblest hopes.

Yet why are they born to roam and die ?
Can their beauty answer thy query, O soul ?
Nay, nor that of hopes which were born to fly,
But whose pinions the common and coarse day
 stole.

Like that region of grassy hills outspread,
A realm of our thought knows days and nights
And summers and winters, and has fed
Ineffectual herds of vanished delights.

SHE

As from heaven alighting, she early
Stepped sleep-anointed from bed ;
Yet, if her brow stooped, you dreamed she
Gazed through the ground at the dead.

Aflash as are dewy pansies
Were the eyes that she raised to meet men's
Till their blackness bloomed benignly
With smiles of a gay innocence.

When, slim and straight as a fir-tree,
She carried that teeming head,
On the dignity of her bearing
Da Vinci's eyes might have fed.

She had soothed while her years were tender
The woe that can not be shared,
And knew that the wrong had happened
Which never can be repaired,

And, though sigh escaped if she brooded,
Her alacrity captured the light
That streams from ineffable sources
And tempers with stars midnight.

She planned and she wrought and though she
Had given her utmost, behold !
A brimmed heart every morning
To lavish on young and old,

Till cavelike it flooded with slumber
As the pillow beneath her head gave.

Thus her days by their refluent bounty
Became as the heave of a wave,

A wave that washes for ever
A world that will never be clean :
And, that fragrance from ardency fade not,
Where the throng was, she passed unseen.

THAT LAND

WOULD that I might live for ever
Where those who make me happy dwell!
Desire doeth excellently well,
Now wooing me,
For, oh, she never
Nameth any other place !
There ease weds grace ;
There thought is free,
Born like a smile upon the face,
Expressed as simply as a child
Kisseth its playmate, laughing gaily,
There, there the courteous, joyous, mild,
Train life to beauty daily !

There thought is free ; for life is bound
Religiously, and sings while serving ;
There beauty's law admits no swerving ;
All strengthens life,
Till sought be found !
Old valours rise to share
Ordeals there ;
Near, like a wife,
Stands effort's outcome, bodied fair,
Not fettered with dead thoughts, not fainting
Because the nightmare world hath lain
Athwart her hopes, but love acquainting
With beauty ever again.

Ever again and again
Filling the eyes of our child
With the milk of Paradise,
Of which the soul is fain,

For which the heart is wild,
And tears are in the eyes :
Ah ! that milk of Paradise
Is happiness,
Is power to bless ;
What balmy air to halcyon's wing
That power to those who make me glad is,
To bind my life in bonds to sing,
The way such freedom may be had is ;
The way to gain the power to bless,
The one way to win happiness !

SUMMER LIGHTNING'
I WOULD rather ruffle leaves,
Pillaging a vine,
Than 'neath my tresses shelter thieves,
Robber lips at mine.

I would rather feel the rain,
When standing under cover,
Course my out-stretched hands amain,
Than tears shed by a lover.

O Bird in the night awake,
Thou almost mak'st me weep !
Why should thy voice so shake ?
Is it thy pinions ache ?
What hindereth thee to sleep ?
I want not to love and I will not . . . Oh !
Love's not worth so much ! and thou dost know,
I know, and all the world too knows,
No girl had loved unless she chose ! *

LOVE'S FAINTNESS DEFIED

Kiss me!

Are we not farther from to-day

Than is to-morrow ?

Steeped in reality, what love possesses,

Time doth but borrow ;

Kiss me !

Canst fear what any voice can say,

When all man's knowledge clearly must be guesses ?

Whilst joy is ours, like dogs to gain a bone

They'll fawn on us for what we leave alone.

Clasp me !

Like sands the falling moments close,

Stifling the weary ;

To-morrow from to-day no force can sever,

Keep thou but near me.

Clasp me !

Canst shudder at a falling rose,

When folly's proof must be to prate of " ever " ?

Whilst joy is ours, they'll seek us out to learn :

Those only died who, loved, made faint return !

ON HARTING DOWN

ONCE, when their hearts were wild with joy,
They bedded on the downs :
Hours drifted past, the dawn grew ghast,
Their polls wore dewy crowns.

While the stars paled, she, first, awoke
And saw, no more alone,
They kernel were to a herd of deer,
Come round them all unknown.

A dun buck couched upon the left,
A white doe to their right,
An hundred others, like watching mothers,
Loomed peacefully out of night.

Ere she could wake him, they rose and were shaking
Small droplets from cold thighs ;
Proudly the leader then streamed them afar
To where the sun would rise.

Till, dot by dot, they threaded the arch
His lifting forehead raised,
And, sublimed to light, were lost to sight,
Though still enthralled she gazed.

Her lover rose and, leaning close,
Through to her mind he peered ;
Parked therein, numerous, timid, dumb
Musings retired or neared.

A DUET'

" FLOWERS nodding gaily, scent in air,
Flowers posied, flowers for the hair,
Sleepy flowers, flowers bold to stare. . ."
" Oh, pick me some ! "

" Shells with lip, or tooth, or bleeding gum,
Tell-tale shells, and shells that whisper * Come,'
Shells that stammer, blush, and yet are dumb. . ."
" Oh, let me hear ! "

" Eyes so black they draw one trembling near,
Brown eyes, caverns flooded with a tear,
Cloudless eyes, blue eyes so windy clear. . ."
" Oh, look at me ! "

" Kisses sadly blown across the sea,
Darkling kisses, kisses fair and free,
Bob-a-cherry kisses 'neath a tree. . ."
" Oh, give me one ! "

Thus sang a king and queen in Babylon.

MUCH VIRTUE IN IF
IF I were king of this broad land,
And you were England's queen,
All high-roads should be glades of lawn,
All byways mossed and green ;

The seashore should be lengthened out
With beach, and rock, and sand,
Till the most rural hamlet lay
Scarce seven mile inland.

Yea, long sea arms should wind and thread
Our midlands through and through,
That foresters and shepherd lads
Might watch the salt and blue.

Then caravans and pedlars,
Replacing shop and street,
Should bring folk dainty things to wear
And luscious things to eat.

A few of the great changes these,
On which we might decide,
If I were in Westminster throned
With you crowned at my side. *

NOWHERE AND ONWARD

THERE is no reason we should write,
Or read, or speak, or sing, to-night;
Profusely starred the sky awaits us,
Our souls may thitherward take their flight.

No one alone, nor three, nor four,
Nor any counted number more,
Can make of thought such rapt keen joyance
As thrills two voyaging towards no shore.

Twin spirits cleave the vast of air
Best if their bodies do not stir :
Come, breast the stillness, and on and ever
Dip at a moment and rise a pair !

Birds, cleaving either night or day,
Flit one before, one after ; they
Straggle, form clots or clouds, but never
Keep pace when flying ; be that our way.

Though toil and zeal be often crossed,
No tick of time enjoyed is lost ;
One hour replete with satisfaction
Old kings would prize at a great war's cost.

RENOVATION

WOULD that I were naked Adam,
And you like Eve ran bare,
Though all our friends and other folk
Unboin, unthought-of, were I

Should we miss house or street or town,
Gossip, tea or cake,
Might we but climb a breeze-rocked pine,
Doze there or lie awake ?

Ah, nothing grieves that is itself:
Say, are these millions men
Who, boxed in slate-roofed rows, there sicken
For sea, forest or glen ?

THE PHANTOM OF A ROSE *

"AH," thought she, " if there
But one young man like this rose were
Deep with crimson as ocean with green,
With not one billowed petal flawed,
With scent that dims the beauty seen
With beauty known, till overawed
The domineering eyes relent
In the dark palace of mute scent,
And, humid, vail before the throne
Of sense more puissant than they own.
With eyelids closed and blind heart fearless,
Then would I yield to my prince Peerless.
Oh that then were now ! " she sighed
And let her head nest in her hair
Bunched on the back of the cushioned chair.

And lo ! incipient sleep replied . .
Her rose sways, lifts from where she dropped it,
Enlarges, floats as though ripples propped it.
While visibly as on chill air breathing
Fragrance transform to a rosy mist 1
Which halo-sphere befilms with wreathing
Trails of pink and amethyst.
The petals unaccountably,
As a breeze may cling to a single tree
Though all the wold around move not,
Bestir themselves as each had got
A separate soul. The smallest pair
From out the centre upward jet,
Poise and fold themselves on the air
Till jaunty like a cap they set

* An asterisk refers to a note, see p. 199.

A little above four larger leaves
That into a velvet doublet round.
While, fallen and writhing on the ground,
Two, as when caterpillar weaves
Its sleep a hammock, are rolled, are turned . .
Have their ends shaped by witchery
Till crimson dancing pumps they be.
That visible lucent atmosphere
Solidifies :
Young limbs appear
Tapering down in green hose gloved !
Warm blood informs that doublet red !
Under short curls, see ! daring eyes !
Under that cap a well-thatched head !
Her need has leapt, her heart has loved
Ere he with doffed cap kneel to her.

" Matter to thought is docile where,
Beyond your senses' range,
Lies the world from whence I come :
There no intent is dumb,
Hearts are express.
To me seem strange,
Grievous and comfortless
Your dead walls ever as they were,
Your disobedient furniture,
And obdurate insensitive lies
All tissues that disguise.
Less than your flesh our webs immure
Emotion, for to any hue,
Chameleons of the soul,
We flush apparel through,
Our voices' luminous control,

From song to whisper, can traverse
Phases like those of the moon ;
And groups of friends converse
As to a constellation wrought;
While tenser than the tropic noon
Glow hours when all are rapt in thought,
And darkness is unknown,
For always many muse alone.
That world of light can heighten this,
Make a rose lovelier ; and it is
The earth-bound heart's clear loyal will
That sets our paradise athrill,
Breaks into bloom the rarest scented,
Or sends a butterfly contented
Sailing cerulean-winged through trees
Whose sap is a long life's victories."

She ached to rise, she yearned to speak,
She strove to smile, but proved too weak ;
As one who in quicksand neck-deep,
Wild with the will, has no power to leap ;
Her limbs like a sunken ferry-boat
Lay logged with sleep and could not float.
She had danced too often at the ball,
She had fluttered, nodded, and smiled too much.
Tears formed in her heart: they did not fall.
Her thought, pitying her, could not touch
The spring of emotion ; even a blush
Failed her shame ; her body hung
Sullenly back like a dumb man's tongue.
Hers, that had welcomed so many young eyes,
Though this pair of them all she could least despise,
Greeted him not: yet, unoffended,

He rose, and danced a visible song;
With rhythmic gesture he contended
Against her trance, and proved so strong
That the grapes of his thought wore the bloom of his
mood
While her soul tasted and understood.

" Lay aside this weight!
A rarer substance thou dost own,
More refined.
This is but a cumbrous gown
That loads and thwarts a soul elate,
And, ageing, disenchants the mind.
Sweet one, thou art blind !

Young, make thy escape,
Ere touch less deft than Hope's have moulded
Thee, and come
Where desire is unfolded
In fulfilling hue and shape,
And life in nought is marred or dumb ;
Sweet, be venturesome !

Single thou mayst do
A greater deed than heroes who
Strike tyrants dead :
Or than the wise whose pains unlatch
In Nature traps, and hold them wide,
While they with shrewd description match
The secret toil that throbs inside.
Joy won and fled,
Since men think not, when facing worse,
On ills that courage erst made good ;

And those who most have understood
Still front in ignorance Fate's curse ;
But those who on themselves turn round,
Wrestle and win, transformed are crowned."

All vanished : and she felt the strain
Of the sense-impeded will
Through every tissue wrench in pain ;
Then recover with a thrill
As her phantom slowly came
Steam-like from her nerveless frame.
First a ghostly head and shoulders
Where phosphorescence vaguely smoulders :
Next, opal-misted bust, flank, loins ;
Then all that these to ankles joins ;
Last, twin soft air-treading feet.
To itself that cloudlike form
Seemed alone in a blank void,
And lacked all thought of who might see it.
But as it realized life's warm
Likeness, and into beauty joyed
The presence of that rose-begotten
Youth, till then so far forgotten
Flushed back . . .
And instant on her wish's track
Came its fulfilment, sumptuous veiling
Warm like air or water gliding
Over her, round her, down her, hiding
From neck to instep, and freely sailing
Voluminous after her when she moved.
Raising her lids, she first approved
The fabric, which was finely rayed . . .
Argent frequent on violet,

With seams outlined in beads of jet.
Then hers sought his eyes unafraid.
For admiration aptly gifted
They join their hands and are uplifted ;
While down-distancing she perceives
In reflex as from well's deep gloom
Walled and narrow, her own room . .
Her tiny bed, her glass, her press
Open, and in it her ball-dress . .
Her unknit figure over the chair
In petticoat with corset loose ;
And, before its silken shoes,
On the white floor-cloth a mere dot,
The crimson rose, as dropped, lay there.
She saw and knew these things had not
Been real conditions of her life,
But travesties born of a futile strife
Between her faculties and will
That wried the world perversely till
She cried against it, and was heard
In the flawless realm her soul preferred.

Happy where we long to live,
Clad by each glad thought, she in
Different jacket, skirt, or snood,
Strolls under trees where flowers give
" Good-day " to her, though not one spin
Or of the morrow ever think.

Her neighbourhood takes her elation . .
Nay, gives each mood due celebration ;
For flowering branches in that wood
Smile blue which yesterday glanced pink

While cups that were have become bells,
And with their fashion changed their smells.
Her dance is eloquent, and repose
Distils fresh dew on all she knows.
Then if she meet her friend, she sees
His trees come gliding between her trees,
When, sympathetic with their will,
Beneath them heaven heaves in a hill;
While his blooms twine their stalks with hers
Till a holt form round them that is theirs
In unique beauty. Distinct from his,
Blossom and leaf and branch and stem,
Not more like hers that plant-life is,
But appropriate solely unto them.
And glimpsed beyond its boscaige lie
Moutain, plain, sea-coast and sky ;
For theirs are friends of open heart,
Leader, poet, saint and lover
Who in that world from this recover . .
Great natures, they health and thought impart,
Shape and make grand
The spirit's land,
Are filled and fill with admiration,
Create and are their own creation,
Till adoring they unite,
Fused into the heart of light.

.

IV

SILENCE SINGS

So faint, no ear is sure it hears,
So faint and far;
So vast that very near appears
My voice, both here and in each star
Unmeasured leagues do bridge between ;
Like that which on a face is seen
Where secrets are;

Sweeping, like veils of lofty balm,
Tresses unwound
O'er desert sand, o'er ocean calm,
I am wherever is not sound !
And, goddess of the truthful face,
My beauty doth instil its grace
That joy abound.

THE DYING SWAN

O SILVER-THROATED Swan

Struck, struck ! a golden dart
Clean through thy breast has gone
Home to thy heart.
Thrill, thrill, O silver throat!
O silver trumpet, pour
Love for defiance back
On him who smote !
And brim, brim o'er
With love ; and ruby-dye thy track
Down thy last living reach
Of river, sail the golden light . .
Enter the sun's heart . . even teach,
O wondrous-gifted Pain, teach thou
The god to love, let him learn how.

HOPE

HOPE is a dream dreamed by the mummied past,
Or sound inside an egg ; loved hearts with ours
To wed, as some bee-go-between the flowers,
She woman-like e'er walketh over-fast,
Half-frightened by odd shadows that are cast
In front from just behind ; hers are all powers
By which the unknown helps the known; she
towers

Where through the rainbow we would stride at last.
The solemn snow and silver hair are hers,
For folded linen clothes and napkins wrapped *
Together by themselves : each neat bud bears
Witness to her deft fingers, who ne'er tapped
At Memory's door and found her smileless, kissed
Blind Love and left unfound the path he missed.

BEAUTY

WITH naught the world contains or small or great
Can we content desire ! " Here is no home ! "
Cries Hope " No realm " cries kingly Love " No
dome ! "

Sighs Faith " to tent my altars alternate
My choruses beneath." They hardly wait,
Though hollow wayside trees hold honeycomb,
Though o'er the hedge-top honeysuckle roam,
But, pilgrims, they push on with " It grows late."
Knowledge they scorn for slowness, and decry
Beauty made happy with a flower's growth,
Beauty whose fault is being sweetly shy,
That, blue-eyed, wonders both at haste and sloth,
That, water-born, was brought up by the light . . .
And yet, O Beauty, touch us with thy might!

A MIDNIGHT ECSTASY

" FROM everywhere seen,
I cannot see.
My ray of light
Straight through the night
Has everywhere been
Save back to me.
One power is mine,
One only, to shine ;
It is all that I am or do
Or think of or love."

—It is fine, O star,
Alone, afar,
Absorbed, contented, true,
To dwell above
The divided wills,
The hope that kills,
And long, long ache that in man
Gnaws and is fed
In conscious strife
On self-planned life
That never has done all it can ;
Whose gleam flickers, blurs red,
Never streams in straight line
Like that white shaft of thine.
Yet forth from self forgot,
From creature fused in act white-hot,
What power comes to re-create ?
What joy goes forth to celebrate
The life that has been ?
The wise world saith
Such act, such death,

From everywhere seen
Is blind like thee,
O act of light!
Rapt pure and bright
Is not thy being keen ?
Hast thou no glee ?

Want makes men what they are.
Can doer of a perfect deed
Have any need ?
Success, like incapacity,
Require a fee ?
Nay, it, like star,
Is what it gives . .
Is that which lives
In our felicity,
The buoyancy of admiration,
Tingling health of all elation !
For, as dun cloth is bleached to white,
Exposed to worth men's hearts refine ;
The lit give light,
The shone-on shine,
Grow clean, grow fair,
Transmute, absorbed in seeing,
To full responsive being . .
Till joy be everywhere,
Yet nowhere any bounded glee
Nor soul not to all others free.

I LIKE THE MOON AM

(From *Judas*) *

So Judas prayed,
And heard a faint small singing far within;
And yet him seemed that he saw Jesus chant
Far, far aloft, as though his pale face were
Painted in profile like a half moon hung
Above the clouds and out of reach of harm :
Naught of his person else, except that voice
Which might proceed, or might not, from those lips:
I like the moon am,
That follows the sun
To glorify afresh
A world foredone.

Those failure and dust
And heat have jaded
Revive in my pureness,
By my patience are aided.

I am nearer and dearer,
Though gliding through heaven,
Than the loads you limp under
Over stones uneven.

Can towering ambition
Or the gains that men die for
Compete with the beauty
That I am on high for ?

The power which fills me
Is wholly aware
That it yields what is wanted,
Completes what is there;

Is kindness only,
And fully bestowed :
What you suffer I suffered . .
Yea, bled on that road;

The way you are going
Is the way that I went ;
And the thought in you growing
Is all my words meant.

WORDS FOR A PEAL OF CHRISTMAS BELLS

WHAT is there in this child
To drive Heaven's choirs wild,
Poor shepherds crazy ?
Them to themselves he brings ;
In full chime each heart rings ;
Forgotten, foreknown things,
Though speechless, says he.

Hope fills this little flagon ;
Charm to enthrall a dragon
Brim from his eyes.
Though busy men and idle
But smile and past him sidle,
Further than king can ride he'll
Follow who flies.

Has our world no more thrones
Vacated by fleshed bones ?
But three kings kneeling ?
Level with lives forlorn,
This day spring, like a morn
Crowned before it was born,
Westward comes stealing.

Through black clouds' rugged pother,
White-hot, keen sword-blades hover
In wrath . . ? In fear,
Plow hard hearts fight, ere they see
Between huge tempests, may be,
Like star shine out this baby,
Safe, tranquil, clear !

v

THOU MOON AND O YE STARS

(From *Judith*)

JUDITH [*steps forward, and looking up, speaks*]:

THOU moon and O ye stars, ye hosts of light !

Terrible is your beauty unto me.

—What am I ?

And what am I to do ?

—Now is the time to help me ;

Thou hast seen me, O Lord God ;

He did not touch me to defile me, and he sleeps :

Thou puttedst this deed in my heart to do,

For all up at Bethulia did prepare . .

Being starved and thirsty . . did prepare their hearts

To anger Thee and eat forbidden things ;

And they had opened the town gates ere long,

And given all Thy land unto thy foe,

Unto this drunken beast.

—Alas, I am alone,

Alone, in this huge night.

Ah, what am I to do ?

The most that can be done, the best, is like

A single point of light, a lonely star ;

Yea, this deed which so cries on me to do it

Will be for clearness but one fevered lamp ;

And all my life obscure and all the lives

Of those I live among, quite lustreless ;

Darkness in which this throbbing act of blood

Demands to shine.—O God, it is Thy will,

That didst create the evil and the good.

Pour Thou thy strength into my weakness now ;

Pierce Thou my life's obscurity at once !

Now is the time to help me, now at once . .

For all around me sleep thine enemies.

[A silence while she looks round as though recollecting the presence of the camp, then HOLOFERNES moans and, lifting the curtain,, she half stoops over him as over a sleeping child and croons soothingly.]

With limbs that ache
Full many lie awake ;
With pangs as they were breaking
The jealous hearts lie waking :
Deep is the dream of mutual sleep
And kind as deep.

[When he snores once more she stretches over him and un-hooks his faulchion from the tent pole and, carrying it in its sheath, comes forward out of the tent.]

Oh, I have never killed a man before !
No, never even butchered goat or sheep. . .
I have taken down his faulchion,
And now must make it bare.

[She prepares to draw the blade]

To have stripped off my clothes before that man,
Whom wine had heated and whose god is vile,
Could not have caused more terror to my soul
Than now, before my hard unshrinking purpose,
To bare this blade.

[She draws the faulchion.]

O Cruelty,
Ravish not thou my heart!

[She lowers it and holds it behind her.]

I have been praised for loving-tenderness :
It was like sunshine to me when a child
Or a poor beggar knew my heart was kind,
Although before he had no knowledge of me . . .
Oh, this is vain as girls are vain for beauty !
It must be done.

[She raises the blade and looks at //.]

His hair must be put by and his thick beard ;
Swords will not cut them through, I've heard it said.
Shall I have strength to carve right through his bone ?

[She holds it up in her hands and prays.]

Be present with me now !
For the exaltation of Thy people aid me now,
Approver of the Righteous Will, that livest
Even in a woman's heart !

[She returns into the tent and draws the curtain.]

BETHULIA'S GATE*

WHAT have you in your apron wrapped ?
Your face is fell with fright ;
Your shadow hurries to catch you up,
Across the blank moonlight.

Why is your maid so white and wan ?
What makes her so alert ?
Why with her hands does she fumble thus
And wipe them on her skirt ?

Ill to be borne your burden seems,
You fetch your breath so short;
Why do your eyes shine brighter far
Than, for the moon, they ought ?

You take less heed of what you pass
Than one who walks in a dream ;
The thing you hide so fills you out,
A woman with child you seem.

You take a turn, the town you see,
Your feet to run begin ;
Is yours the strength which makes so strong
The supple thews of sin ?

Why beat you now with naked hands ?
On the gate they make no sound ;
Your knuckles bleed ; ah ! your force falls ;
You drop upon the ground.

Now you are raised upon your feet
And pulled within the town ;

Wild light from flickering flames falls full
Upon your bloody gown ;

Your throat is thrilled, your tongue is thick,
And triumph turns your lip ;
As men tumultuous throng you round,
Each girds a sword to his hip :

But now by your imperious cries
Were they roused up from bed ;
Now, high above your head, your hands
Hold Holofernes' head.

IN TIME OF WAR

I

COUNTER OR CAMP. August 1914
COUNTER or camp, which of the two rules worst ?
Both alike waste, spread forth their pomp, and lie.
The counter, blind with greed and styled finance,
Exploits, insults and treads down those who toil
As though the head should dare despise the hand
Whose deftness taught it nicety and grasp !
The camp out-tigers dumb brutes in its rage,
And boastfully mistakes mere might for right;
Invokes and desecrates the love of home
As the other lauds and mocks that sweet name Peace.
Both, rebels, scorn the man who ought to lead,
The kind and docile, tentative, meek man
Who prized the beauty of his innocence,
And still explores the universe with awe.

II

THE WOUNDED

CANCELLED the fair-planned life
Brooded on, talked over with the wife ;
The visionary quiet home
Of expectation ;
The task that, thought of, gave elation !
Vanished, like flashing foam,
All, all that set a-dance the inner sea !
Hopes every man now halt, or maimed, or blind,
Took out with him to face the enemy,
Comes back without 1 Yea, now usurps his mind
A crestless, colourless monotony
Of mere dwarf ripples that through years to come

Alone shall differentiate
His will, so straitly limited,
From those, quite still, perhaps more fortunate,
Who grasp the incalculable, being dead.

III

THE DESECRATED DREAM

WITH every mighty nation now at war,
While hideous cannon shatter works of art
And break young men, whose disguised fair forms
are

Compelled to crouch in burrows, whence they start
Only to run on death with terror's strength,
Drab demons of a tract of stench and mud
Where spiked iron ropes of any length
Writhe like fierce snakes, and all about them thud
Huge iron crocks charged with the pent-up rage
Of many thousand weary aching slaves,
Born into toil, shut like an artful cage
Where life must pine on hope that never saves :
Feeling and knowing this I long to stray
Naked and wild by some Pacific bay.

How all the patience of the soul is claimed
Watching this loathsome quarrel wreck the world !
Man's timid flesh is for his proud thought shamed
Since it invents new engines to be hurled
Against his easily unseated life
Though that agree best with the tenderest ways
Of wave and breeze, of leaf and child and wife.
I pine for naked freedom in some place
Where ocean whispers to a fragrant shore,

Where trees hide oranges with orange flower,
And birds such plumes shed that bride needs not
more
Dainty tiara for her long hair shower.
Yet the hard tenant of this soft domain
Still seeks worse ways to slay and to be slain.

IV

AFTER THE ARMISTICE (November 1918)
PSYCHE has fouled both hands in blood and clay.
Now, before speaking, let her wash and rest:
A task so much against the grain oppressed
Her life like poison ; yet she, day by day,
Toiled, lips and ears shut, and content they say
Their pleasure who yet never gave their best.
'Tis done : let her gaze travel down the west
As the light fades ! O give her silence way !

Thus may she fill the future with a voice
True as the fabled harp that Orpheus tuned,
That built a city, or made hearts so light
Men with huge boulders wrought as Titans might.
So, having first with awe and hope communed,
Then turned to cleaner work, shall she rejoice.

COUNTERSIGNS

WHO has left the world alone
As though his heart were but a stone ?
Left innocence and the good will
To torture and contempt, until
The best souls born have bowed to ill ?

Who keeps silence when we ask ?
Like ogre in archangel's mask
Peers down blandly through the sun
And smooths ail after the typhoon,
Forgetting quickly the worst done ?

We men leave each other lone ;
Our hearts lie inert like stone.
For our good we have used wrong,
Tuned other's woe to a sweet song,
And remembered no shame long.

Yet through gloom have shone a few
Spirits wholly kindled, who
Set at naught the odds and won,
Dared be kinder than the sun
To good transmuting evil done.

THE SERPENT

HAIL Pytho ! thou lithe length of gleaming plates,
War's choicely finished work and instrument,
Ingenious death's device ! what groping hates
Hast thou taught to evolve their dull intent ?

Men treasonous from thee learn subtle skill,
Thou vision ! Beauteous devil of the grass,
Quick-sighted and close-thoughted, what a thrill
Through conscious souls thine undulations pass!

With nicety applying gliding bark
To rigid serpent forms of trunk or bough,
Thou climbest, and canst sling thy length or yark
Thy small malignant head, and in all how

Well demonstrate the precise use of power,
Yet long wilt thou in lassitude He gloomed ;
Though lightning-swift to strike, wilt lose an hour
Watching, more still than indolent queen, thy
doomed.

Relentless tautening cable, thou canst mangle
Bull-bison, snap off those raised arms of trees
Where sloth bears hang, or from a tortuous tangle
Be self-resolved with smooth unfaltering ease.

Thou dancest . . art more fatal than our young
Women whose lascive limbs yet tyrannise . .
Fascinatest with tiny flickering tongue,
And tigers quail before those beads, thine eyes.

Five hundred forms thou hast, five hundred lengths
Stretched from a span long to a fabled mile ;
As many hues as diverse mails ; and strengths
Of venom to match every depth of guile . .

The innocent blindworm like love's deceit,
And then the snake, the adder, viper, asp,
Whose bites, like common injuries, defeat
Not leechcraft, or the hand's repentant clasp.

Cobras there are too, as their mortal foes
Are, from whom poison can be taken ; nay,
That can be charmed by the spell music throws ;
Their friendly service shall the vermin slay.

There is the boa-constrictor, that ne'er will
Untighten, but envelopes and consumes ;
And doubt absorbs with nightmare coils of ill
Hope and the room for heaven, while life fumes,

And sweet affections fret, and all looks drear
Till youth's fair morning seem a flux of dreams,
And time and space and power be symbol'd clear
In age-long serpents black, with baneful gleams,

Wound like the orbits wherein planets move
Through spectral convolutions purposeless,
Devoid of joy, devoid of warmth, of love,
The vast digesters of man's vain distress.

Limbless and surging thine invasion sweeps
And loops itself the towering height of night;

Or through the water-conduit flows ; or creeps
Like the round darkness of a pipe to light ;

Emerged, proceedeth through the city dead,
Contented. Jungle vines have curtained all
Those pillared halls, where Solitude is fed,
And Stillness mute and dreadful hears thee crawl.

Rank vegetation preys on fane and tomb,
Muffles the tower and revels on the roof,
One woven extravagance of gaudy bloom
That, caved in o'er some court, has strained its woof.

There-through the sun's ray probes at sultry noon,
Across mosaic feels with scorching stealth.
Thou waitest its caress, approaching boon,
The slow sole kiss that helps thee love thyself.

All other lives are banished : not a beast
Dares venture near the hall where thou dost lie ;
No ferret filches at thy gloomy feast,
Nor bird nor ape dare wake thee with a cry.

That kiss received which mindeth thee of hell,
That lonely gluttony and torpid trance,
That smouldering fury or alertness fell,
That grandeur when thou dost to kill advance . .

In all thy moods, thou virulence, we share :
Our forefathers have born thee on their shields,
Symbol of passions trusted to prepare
The delectable transport that all carnage yields.

Among our thoughts thou threadest well-worn ways ;
And, though the recognition of thee hurt,
Discreet, thou hast for thy redeeming grace
That charm efficiency must needs exert.

VALUE AND EXTENT

THE more they peer through lenses at the night,
The finer they split rays of stellar light,
The vaster their estimates
Of distances, of movements, and of weights !

The stupor of this unimagined size
Like a mole's eyelid palls the keenest eyes.
Yea, like unearthed moles,
We, by truth tortured, writhe outside those holes . .

Dark homely galleries of confined thought,
Whose utmost reach must now be held as naught
Compared with that grand space
Which those unlike us may superbly grace.

Substance more subtle, forms of comelier growth,
Diviner minds, nothing but mental sloth
Prevents us thus to bid
Against the size revealed, with worth still hid.

No reason can be urged why all this room
Should hold no more life than, within a tomb,
The first small worm that stirs ;
For all known life is less in the universe.

Undreamable communications, sun
To sun, may be the hourly routes they run,
Swifter even than light,
On business purer than a child's delight!

Not that I can, like scornful Plato, fear
Our fine things but poor copies of true worth ;
Proportioned to this earth,
There thrill and shape small genuine glories here.

VI

GREEK SUBJECTS*

LETTER TO A SICILIAN VINEDRESSER SENT
FROM EGYPT WITH A FAIR ROBE OF
TISSUE. 276 B.C.

PUT out to sea, if wine thou wouldest make
Such as is made in Cos : when open boat
May safely launch, advice of pilots take ;
And find the deepest bottom, most remote
From all encroachment of the crumbling shore,
Where no fresh stream tempers the rich salt wave,
Forcing rash sweetness on sage ocean's brine ;
As youthful shepherds pour
Their first love forth to Battos gnarled and grave,
Fooling shrewd age to bless some fond design.

Not after storm ! but when, for a long spell,
No white-maned horse has raced across the blue,
Put from the beach ! lest troubled be the well . .
Less pure thy draught than from such depth were
due.

Fast close thy largest jars, prepared and clean !
Weight each a buoyant womb down through the
flood,

Far down ! then, with a cord the lid remove,
And it will fill unseen,
Swift as a heart Love smites sucks back the blood :
This bubbles, deeper born than sighs, shall prove.

If thy bowed shoulders ache, as thou dost haul . .
Those groan who climb with rich ore from the mine ;
Labour untold round Ilion girt a wall ;
A god toiled that Achilles' arms might shine ;
Think of these things and double knit thy will!
Then, should the sun be hot on thy return,

Cover thy jars with piles of bladder weed,
Dripping, and fragrant still
From sea-wolds where it grows like bracken-fern :
A grapnel dragged will soon supply thy need.

Home to a tun convey thy precious freight!
Wherein, for thirty days, it should abide,
Closed, yet not quite closed from the air, and wait
While, through dim stillness, slowly doth subside
Thick sediment. The humour of a day
Which has defeated youth and health and joy,
Down, through a dreamless sleep, will settle thus,
Till riseth maiden gay
Set free from all glooms past . . or else a boy
Once more a school-friend worthy Troilus.

Yet to such cool wood tank some dream might dip :
Vision of Aphrodite sunk to sleep,
Or of some sailor let down from a ship,
Young, dead, and lovely, while across the deep,
Through the calm night, hoarsely his comrades
chaunt . .

So far at sea, they cannot reach the land
To lay him perfect in the warm brown earth.
Pray that such dreams there haunt!
While, through damp darkness, where thy tun doth
stand,
Cold salamanders sidle round its girth.

Gently draw off the clear and tomb it yet
For other twenty days, in cedarn casks !
Where through trance, surely, prophecy will set;
As, dedicated to light temple-tasks,

The young priest dreams the unknown mystery.
Through Ariadne, knelt disconsolate
In the sea margin, so welled back and throbbed
A nuptial promise : she
Turned; and, half-choked through dewy glens,
 some great,
Some magic drone of revel coming sobbed.

Of glorious fruit, indeed, must be thy choice,
Such as has fully ripened on the branch,
Such as due rain, then sunshine, made rejoice,
Which, pulped and coloured, now deep bloom doth
 blanch ;
Clusters like odes for victors in the games,
Strophe on strophe globed, pure nectar all!
Spread such to dry . . if Helios grant thee grace,
Exposed unto his flames
Two days, or, if not, three ; or, should rain fall,
Stretch them on hurdles in the house four days.

Grapes are not sharded chestnuts, which the tree
Lets fall to burst them on the ground, where red
Rolls forth the fruit, from white-lined wards set free,
And all undamaged glows 'mid husks it shed ;
Nay, they are soft and should be singly stripped
From off the bunch, by maiden's dainty hand,
Then dropped through the cool silent depth to sink
(Coy, as herself hath slipped,
Bathing, from shelves in caves along the strand)
Till round each dark grape water barely wink ;

Since some nine measures of sea-water fill
A butt of fifty, ere the plump fruit peep,

(Like sombre dolphin shoals when nights are still,
Which penned in Proteus' wizard circle sleep,
Where 'twixt them glinting curves of silver glance
If Zephyr, dimpling dark calm, count them o'er)
Thus for two days let the fruit soak, then tread !
While bare-legged bumkins dance,
Arched spouts will from the bursting presses pour,
And gurgling rills towards the vats run red.

Meanwhile the maidens, each with wooden rake,
Drag back the skins and laugh at aprons splashed ;
Or youths rest, boasting how their brown arms ache,
So fast their shovels for so long have flashed,
Baffling their comrades' legs with mound and heap.
Double their labour ! still the happier they,
Who at this genial task wear out long hours,
Till vast night round them creep,
When soon the torch-light dance whirls them away ;
For gods who love wine treble all their powers.

Iacchus is the always grateful god !
His vineyards are more fair than gardens far ;
Hanging, like those of Babylon, they nod
O'er each Ionian cliff and hill-side scar !
While Cypris lends him saltness, depth, and peace ;
The brown earth yields him sap for richest green ;
And he has borrowed laughter from the sky ;
Wildness from winds ; and bees
Bring honey. Then choose casks which thou hast seen
Are leakless, very wholesome, and quite dry !

At regal tables often a pledged guest,
I can assure thee, having travelled much,

That Coan vintage easily is best.
Faint not before the toil! this wine is such
As tempteth princes launch long pirate barks ; . .
From which may Zeus protect Sicilian bays,
And, ere long, me safe home from Egypt bring,
Letting no black-sailed sharks
Scent this king's gifts, for whom I sweeten praise
With those same songs thou didst to Chloe sing !

I wrote them 'neath the vine-cloaked elm, for thee.
Recall those nights ! our couches were a load
Of scented lentisk ; upward, tree by tree,
Thy father's orchard sloped, and past us flowed
A stream sluiced for his vineyards ; when, above,
The apples fell, they on to us were rolled,
But kept us not awake. O Laco, own
How thou didst rave of love !
Now art thou staid, thy son is three years old ;
But I, who made thee love-songs, live alone.

Muse thou at dawn o'er thy yet slumbering wife !
Not chary of her best was nature there,
Who, though a third of her full gift of life
Was spent, still added beauties still more rare ;
What calm slow days, what holy sleep at night,
Evolved her for long twilight trystings fraught
With panic blushes and tip-toe surmise :
And then, what mystic might
All, with a crowning boon, through travail brought 1
Consider this and give thy best likewise 1

Falter, and even contentment will taste flat!
Welcome me, Laco, with this liquid glee !

I see that red face under thy straw hat,
I see thy house, thy vineyards, Sicily !
Thou dost demur, good but too easy friend !
Come, put those doubts away ! thou hast strong lads,
Brave wenches ; on the steep beach lolls thy ship
Where vine-clad slopes descend,
Sheltering our bay, that headlong rillet glads,
Like a stripped child fain in the sea to dip.

CHORUS OF GREEK GIRLS

WE maidens are older than most sheep,
Though not so old as the rose-bush is ;
We are only as pretty as that.
We are gay as the weather. Our minds are deep
Like wells, as any boy tells
By the blushes he dares not kiss.
The hills are fond of our chat;
We dance and shake like ringing bells,
Till our hair tumbles out of our hoods.
The boys are away in the woods,
Hunting the boar or the bear.
But joy is here as well as there ;
Pretend to fly
Up into the sky,
Jumping with both feet together,
Holding out like wings
Your sleeves and things.
Feeling as light as a feather,
Never wonder whether
The day be long
Or the night short,
Since all our thought
(Big as the song
Of a brown fussy bee)
But just fills the flower which we
Each call " Me."

O WONDER OF THE SEA

(From *Omphale and Herakles*) *

SIMAETHA :

His heart were lightened, I believe, to see us
Feign o'er this roof to sail as girls at Rhodes
Skim meadows close beside the sea when all
The little ones swoop round us curtseying ;
They call themselves the white-winged birds, and
woo us

As stately ship is wooed by kittiwakes ;
For we have wider skirts and vests ; they sing :

" O wonder of the sea,
On green waves riding,
Thou drawest the heart of me
To love confiding :

My heart, oh, that is great
As thou art, strong one,
And starts on voyage elate
E'en for a long one."

Then we the elder girls grave-voiced reply :

" Thy love is too light for me,
Its home too near ;

What seemeth long to thee,

Is short, I fear ;

Though ocean have isles afar,

Where birds may nest,

That, as night showeth star upon star,

Adorn his breast;

No isle, no rest, my goal;

To sail as far as blue waves roll,

That, that, has dreamed my soul,

. . . has dreamed my soul!

That, that, has dreamed my soul ! "

IN THESSALY THE HILLS ARE HIGH

(From *Orpheus and Eurydice*)*

EURYDICE [*after a prolonged pause*] :

O Orpheus, why this silence ? dost thou dream
That there are homes like ours upon these meads . . .

ORPHEUS : Eurydice, I'll touch my lyre again,
For that has power where all our words are vain.

In Thessaly the hills are high,
On their green brows are caverns seen,
And many a coppice near the sky
Waves boughs that fan that blue serene :
Yet lower down the great woods stand
Ranged round a sunny meadow land.

Apollo walks our mountain tops,
And in their caverns satyrs dwell:
Dryades hallow wood and copse,
They hearts of fox and badger quell :
While water nymphs on a clear night
Wander the meadows in delight.

In Thessaly our home was built:
The sun will parch its jessamine,
The honey from our hives be spilt
By satyrs, dryades begin
To milk our bleating ewes at dawn,
While up the lane to pull our plums,
The youngest nymph by moonlight comes :
There stretched at full length on the lawn,
Under the heavy laden boughs,

She, while the dormice squeal and rail,
Sigheth to think the vacant house
Or those who gave her tithe and chaunt
Must soon become the foxes' haunt,
And all those pious customs fail.

FROM "THE SEA IS KIND"*

I

" THEY give but never promise."
Due to the frailty of our nature is it
That human spouses promise.
In gods joy dreads not but greets danger, is
Intensified by solitude :
Being the simplest, surest, purest,
Most persuasive and securest
Self-assertion ;
Delicate as gorgeous mealy wings are,
Brave as hymns that lark up-towered sings are.
Self-desertion,
Impossible to joy,
Never tempted god alloy
Fidelity to good, because
He or she deserted was.

II

" THERE is no kindlier cradle for your mood,
Young lovers dear, than open boat at large ;
Dream the girl mother and her babe there ; brood
O'er Danae, the wide sea's delicate charge.

" Think, all the boat she had was just a chest,
While all her sail spread but to let breeze through,
(Being long flapping hair) ; and all her crew
That babe who nuzzled at her domed breast;

" Her only sweeps, arms trimly turned and bladed
With playful tender hands ; never a rope,

Never a mast which through the gale should slope
In eager haste. Her never pilot aided,

" Yet she thrid shoals, did tack and foil the wind.
Mere beauty was her cargo, not for sale,
None 'neath tarpaulin stowed, none in a bale,
But all on deck : and was not the sea kind ? "

I AM OLD AND WISE AND STRONG

(From *Pan's Prophecy*)*

I AM old and wise and strong,
Hale, and still inclined to song;
And the morning I salute
Loud upon my oaten flute ;
Then, ardent o'er my ranked pipes bending,
Match the sky-lark's song ascending ;
With pursed lips hovering o'er each reed,
From deep to treble on I speed,
And surprise him in the blue
With earth-born echo clear and true.
And sometimes, when the rustling breeze
Draws hints of music from the trees,
I nurse and fondle their beginning,
Chord to mate with chord still winning,
Rearing the infant tune to express
All a dryad's happiness.
Next bend mine eyes to worship flowers ;
This tip-toe on a slim stalk towers,
Pride at one with innocence
Like a child in a new wimple;
This other, under leafage dense,
Sure of being searched for, simple
Yet counting upon beauty's power,
Content to wait its triumph's hour.
How the gracious ferns expand
Like a sleeping infant's hand !
And their growth acquires greatness
As a boy-king's soul sedateness.
For them, belike, the trees are gods,
Whom they wonder of and trust,
And augur from their drowsy nods

Till the autumn, when they rust;
Their glades then gorgeous to behold,
Complain they that their age grows cold ?

TO SLOW MUSIC

LIKE shovels white of porcelain
In pyramids of spices deep,
Are shells half scooped into brown sand
Which ebbing waves drew on a heap.
Like blush by smooth nail overlain
Are others ; five for either hand,
Nay, plenty for both hands and feet
Of Venus when she walks the strand,
Escaped from perfumed temple's heat.

Like wail which for Adonis rang,
Drawn up and round a hollow maze,
In others dwells a wealth of sound
That she prefers to all men's praise.
Made coral by a moment's pang
And snapt off from true hearts are found
The branching red rich veins of those
Who, wounded by her son, have drowned,
Seeking a " sea-change " for their woes.

The idle nymphs in caves far down,
Secluded life-long from alarms,
Where distance lulls the billow's roar
And moony sea-light dreams of day,
Made every shell that strews the shore.
They with their handiwork do crown
Long tresses, twine their grand white arms
With chains of cowries, and array
Their necks and bosoms. . Naught of lily
(Since Venus never tells) know they,
Naught of the tender violet's charms,
Of daisy naught, nor daffodilly.

TEMPIO DI VENERE

A MARBLE ruin nigh forgotten
Fronts sheer on Naples' bay ;
The cornice stones are weather-rotten,
Stained both by rain and spray.

The shifting mounding shore has buried
All steps save the top three,
To which small waves run up like hurried
Sly kisses of the sea.

The fluted columns crevice-jointed
Must totter every storm.
Bird-droppings have the eaves anointed,
Blunted each moulding's form.

With pavement chequer-rich sand-whitened,
Tell-tale to flaws of wind . .
With walls, that once gay pictures brightened,
Blank as an old man's mind . .

For fisher's painted boat 'tis stable,
Festooned with nets and cords,
Littered with dead-eyes, ends of cable,
Crab-baskets, boat-hooks, boards.

A wreckage mast, its only rafter,
Supports an old tanned sail.
Here Venus dwelt who so loved laughter ;
Here now chinks flute and wail;

Here once the pirate-Pompey's seaman
Offered her shells and gold ;

Here oft, flogged slave or pious leman
Complained that hearts are sold.

No more here marble limbs shall glisten,
Nor carved face smile here more,
And, bending forward half to listen,
Prompt those who mute adore.

Yet, though he call no goddess mother,
A child bathed here to-day
Who, naked, was as Cupid's brother,
So sturdy, arch, and gay !

THESEUS *

" WHAT am I ? O thou sea, with all thy noise,
Thou tell'st me not:—and thou great sun, that
leavest

Once more thy ruby red on little clouds
Where thou hast dived from sight, art mute and art
No parent of an answer to my prayer,
My daily prayer to thee. Those clouds, are they
As I am ? and shall I, as they will, lose
What fastens now the eyes of men on me ?
Youth, as they say, is that but as yon red
Which dims while I gaze on it, dims and fails
Before the breath of all-disabling night ?
It makes me shudder : is there such a breath
To conquer youth and make men lose their glow,
A gulf to swallow youth as night those tints ?
And shall I scurry as the storm-chased cloud,
Darkling and teased to tears, and torn with groans ?
Ah, must it come upon me to be spent
And no more heard of ? Is there a gulf like that ?
Yea, even the old man, who has lived well,
Whose smile of fortitude has blessed and blessed,
Day after day, his friends through fifty years,
When his knees totter and his arm grows weak,
Though the gods love him, yet, to please Fate, he
Must be content to palter and lose all;
'Neath cover of a smile, be quite undone,
Yea, steal away, stand by, and let the grand
Converging circumstances tempt in vain
To some exploit worthy his life laid down,
Needed by all the world, but which weak hands
And knees that shake can now forbid him bring
To masterful fruition. Yea, Fate's fool,

Amidst the dearth of younger men endowed
With spirit and resources like his own,
He must sit down, give counsel, then unsay ;
Even as I have had to fume 'mid men
Who lacked my heart, yet owned the strength I
lacked,

And watch the chance go by . . feeling it fleet,
The unseized moment when a god cried 'Dare !'
'Tis sullen Fate thus thwarts the hopeful god,
Thus ends the good man, thus begins with me ;
It is so, comes upon me, I shall fail ;
For I have failed before ; each year have failed
To roll this stone aside, which hides the proof,
The sign of whether I am no man's son,
Begotten of a man who wore a sword,
Or of some rascal whose long tongue deceived
A woman's heart. Shame hounds me when I think
That I have cheeks which flush to hear men's praise,
Who cannot say that I am such an one,
And add thereto * my father sails afar/
Or ' fetcheth golden apples from the tree
That the sweet women sit beneath and sing/
Or ' is in Cyprus, where he works a mine,'
Or ' followeth wars in Thrace,' or ' seeks a cure
At Delphi for some strange unkind disease.'
Thus other lads can vaunt and need not come,
What day the sun behind yon little isle
Each autumn sets for one who standeth here,
They need not come down to this lonely beach
And tug at this dull stone, till they are faint ;
Nor as their limbs grow cold ache with despair,
To hope and craven fear not slaves by turns ;
And, if they oftener bear defeat in speed

Or when we wrestle, fence, or hurl the quoit,
A father teacheth what there lacked, and how
With greatest likelihood to compass it.

While I

Visit my mother where she sits and works,
As women work, weaving in wall-cloths wide
Figures of men and gods, and hear her talk
As women talk, with smiles and hopeful words.
Oft will she bid me stand in such a way
As Heracles or Jason rightly stand,
Then silently doth bend her to her task,
That she may fill their pictures out from mine ;
While I forget her and that busy room,
Watching those heroes lay the red fir poles
Before the prow of Argo on the grass,
High up some glade, high in the forest hills,
Whence the vast Ister and Absyrtus draw
Their waters, and where stags, of huger build
Than horses, stand forth on the brows of cliffs
And bell at man's intrusion, ere they turn
With long quick strides to seek yet virgin wilds.
From morn to eve, before the Argo there,
They laid the poles, then dragged her over them;
And on they toiled, week after week, right up ;
Then rigged as 'twere a second keel of plank,
And sledded her across the fields of snow,
And to encircling ocean brought her down.
They did this : I, who helped them in my thought,
Have heard my mother laugh, and waked to know
She could not tell me who my father was."

Thus far the lad with many a heart-drawn sigh ;
Then eased his shoulders of a short grey cloak,

And tossed his hat of straw upon the ground.
Firm in vague twilight, naked, fleckless, blond
(Save that a sandal strap still laced each foot
And that his head was dark with clustered curls)
He stood as those whose prayer bestirs mute lips ;
Then gravely did approach a sea-worn rock
Half buried in the shingle, wan ; for sand,
With which the scouring wind its slaty hue
Had scored, was lodged in all its hollows ; wan
With livid marblings, lonely, rounded, smooth,
Planted as for a bourne unto that sea
Whose hoarse waves gnawed the grating beach hard
by.

While, back from there, in dry and yellow reeds
Which belted the cove round, wind rattled bleak.
Beyond, dark hills rose, tranquil as the sky.
Suddenly his curls shook, he felt both arms,
Searched with his feet for purchase, then bent down
And, digging with both hands in the loose beach,
Obtained a thorough grip. His foothold gave
And gave beneath each crooked and straddled leg ;
Their knees touched to the beach, pressed in, dug
down

While sinews on broad thighs, his hollowed loins,
And curved back hardened, knotted, and showed up :
Sweat, from a streaming forehead, dripped into
Those dangling curls which bounced before his eyes
And teased that burning furnace of his face :
But the stone gave, and his subsiding effort
Sank down upon it shifted in its bed.
Some time he sobbed, then knelt and sucked his
hands

Bleeding and numb, and pinched between salt stones :

Rose then ; his knees were raw ; his chin was rasped,
For he had ground it on that sullen block ;
With deep-drawn breaths he poised his limbs in the
air,
Relaxed their o'er-strained joints, and chafed their
thews ;
And, having mopped his hot brow with his cloak,
Sat down and smiled because the stone had moved.
Yet soon, alas, a fear began to tease,
And fret, and clamour till it numbed his brain,
Making all life seem madness, and the gods
Unhearing scorns at distances extreme.
If he should roll the stone back from a blank,
An empty bed ! His heart stood still ! There was
No future ; such a moment ought to be
The last ! . . . Yet, far within,
He saw all time succeed,
No consonancy in it with the days,
Those days of sterling effort, gone before.
He thought it best almost to now give up.
But then the all-conquering hope to find a god,
A hero at the least, had been his sire,
Brought him upon his feet and cleared his mind :
That which was raised from good must go to good ;
But from a lie the fair thing sprung at first
Would be reduced and end in utter waste.

Choosing such larger stones as gave foothold,
He banked them up where he his feet would rest ;
And, having scooped quite clear sufficient grip
For his sore-smarting hands, a second time
He bowed his back and worked down with his
knees,

And heeded not annoy from clammy curls,
But put his soul into his boyish arms,
And hugged and raised the stone, then rolled it over,
Dragged by sheer weight himself, dragged sideways
down . . .

Not long to lie, for he had seen ! now saw !
(For into heaven, lo ! the moon had glid,
Between their woods the dewy hills were grey,
And 'mid the reeds lagoons were pathed with light,
While countless silver patines danced at sea.)
Saw ! saw ! in sheath of inlay capped with gold
A sword, its baldrick, and beneath, a shield
Cased in a leathern bag, but printed through,
And on the bag large words, " My son, my Theseus,
That worthy of thy sire now hast proved,
Come to me, come to Attica, in Athens,
Ask for King ^Egeus, and bring with thee these."

GRIEF DWELLS WITH LIFE

(From *Medea*)*

GRIEF dwells with life,
Joy's limping and wry-necked shadow,
So the old live with the young :
Courage has pain for wife,
And he dies a fool with these words on his tongue
" In an instant I shall have done with pain,
And never wish to be dead again."

"Yea, thou art still,"
Cries the phantom shaken with fever,
" Cold flesh needs never to ease an ache
But I, I walk and am ill.
O for a sleep too sound to wake,
That a soul might really have done with pain,
Who had swallowed their nostrum death in vain! "

Death is life veiled
By the pang winch destroys the senses
Passion 'survives.' and more daintily limbed,
Man has to ail as he ailed :
His new habiliment though dimmed,
Yet shines, by turns, Jiransfigured^again
As immortal beauty recovers from pain.

10*

" BEAUTIFUL nymph all white with fear,
Stay with me, share with me, dream with me here,
A night, a month, a year ! "

" Shepherd, shepherd, I am loved ; I am cursed 1
And the woes to be suffered may yet be the worst."

" Corals have I who dwell in a cave ;
White trembler, though brown as a rock, I am brave ;
Break over my breast, sad wave ! "

" Fisher, fisher, I am chased ; I am blessed !
But the joys as yet tasted are far from the best."

" Her youth peeped through her tattered cloak !
She was white ; we are black, we Ethiop folk ;
She shuddered when we spoke ! "

" Great Zeus, great Zeus ! I am thine, I am pure !
Thy touch but not theirs will my soul endure ! "

" White Cloud, no more driven ! O Feminine Youth,
Rest! oaks at Dodona have told thee the truth,
Behold I fondle and soothe ! "

" Grandly, grandly I am loved, I am kissed !
Above me the eyes of the stars all mist!
A warm wind sighs ;
Egypt, our noble bed,
Hushed nuptial and secret lies ;
I am sure, I can feel that my cheeks are red . .
Are kissed and red ! "

OVER LATMOS SLOWED THE MOON

(From *The Powers of the Air*)*

OVER Latmos slowed the moon :
Endymion on the hill
Slept in the warm summer night
Without a blanket; still
The forest lay beneath, the sea beyond.
Out of her halting car with grace
Selene leaned to view his face :
Her gaze grew fond
For her high solitary heart was stirred
With wonder at the fashion of his youth.
But though her blood sing loud, his has not heard
Her flushed austerity confess the truth
That she is formed to share that sleep
And mingle life with his and give
And take joy neither he nor she could keep.
Yes, there is time to clear her stately mind,
Glance on through future years and find
Incompatible his mortal with
Her immortalities.
And when she gave the kiss
She meant that it should change
His flesh to marble and that he should lie
Shapely and naked under every sky,
Whether her car athwart the ether range
Or darkness fill with 'wilderling snow
Or storms bring deluges of rain
Or under star or sunlight or grey day
A steady windy clearness flow
Over the lone top. Yea,
He lies as he has lain,
Posture unchanged, although the face

Have weathered, and grey lichen stain
And crust youth's nigh obliterated grace
Till strangers might pass by, but shepherds say
" Yon stone man sleeps " to turn their eyes his way
" Since granfeyther's granfeyther's time and 'fore."
Yet spring and summer still
Selene as of yore
Loiters full many a night upon that hill.

THE SONG OF CHIRON
UNDER the mountain lawn
Ate caverns, yea, there are many
On no cliff face that yawn,
Nor may be reached by any
Fissure, or crevice, or chink
Through which the stoat might slink,
Or winter-dreading snake
His way to their vastness make.

Lakes in those rock-halls sleep,
Huge cisterns, water lanes,
Pure in black darkness and deep,
The storage of old rains ;
In corridor, aisle, and transept
As pure and as long have slept
Vast volumes of the night air,
For wind was never there.

Beautiful on the lawn
The hooves of the centaur sound,
Thrilling the peaceful dawn,
And echoing underground :
But maddening, grander, divine
Music, though unenjoyed,
Must float over tarns of the mine,
Which heard would enkindle a bliss
Excelling that on silence buoyed,
When, mute as my worship is,
Round a dome that has all things spanned
The stars unnumbered stand.

I am the centaur, who knows
The beauty of hooves is sound ;
And not like the horse that goes
Unenraptured over the ground.
The wisest of men I track,
And take them upon my back ;
Pitying their steps so weak,
But entranced to hear them speak.

They say the adventurous mind,
Where thought has yet no roads,
Holds there are yet to find
Vast and divine abodes
In the central secret soul,
Where purpose and grace do roll
Like music tombed in the lawn,
When I gallop for joy at dawn;
Like silence of stars by night,
When their beauty exerts her might.

ALCESTIS SPEAKS

" O GLAD Devotion flushing up the sky,
Dawn brighter than a child's best mornings are,
Art seen, yet deemed for human strength too far ?
We, prone to view an end, of Hope too shy,
Too diffident, await Fate's casting die
Much as Fear waits. Westward speeds every star ;
Some, which set quick upon the sun, there are
Drop into it; those glory, so may I.
Love should not barter like coarse traffickers
Nor buy with abnegation any store
Of helps . . . Did not my children thank me for
The rising moon not mine to give nor theirs ? . .
Let me, a child, own gifts in everything ;
Like them blow kisses to the birds that sing."

IS SPOKEN OF

SHE then became a shade that he might live,
Now is what she had been. . . We contemplate
One who gave all, who, reckless chose for mate,
Not him who lacked whatever she might give,
Nor Time-to-Come distraught with echoing names,
Nor dim and dusty Death . . . her all was given
To that which in each heart is the true heaven,
A spirit victor over all men's shames.
Yes, rather cease to be than be so vile
As peer close at a balanced less or more ;
Beauty pays not for admiration, nor
Is bounty taxed for every kindling smile ;
Their worth is not like truth about this earth
But knows no measure, neither death nor birth.

THE ROUT OF THE AMAZONS *

At Laomedon's Upper Fold.

FAUN [*afar off*]: Ahi, ahi, ahi, Laomedon !

LAOMEDON : It is the faun : he is in sore dismay :
That shrewd " Ah ee " denoteth grief or pain.

FAUN [*nearing*] : Ahi, ahi, ahi!

LAOMEDON : Ah ! there he comes !
What bounds !—O Hermes, how he bounds along !
Like to a frog which boys do pelt with stones,
But straighter, without pause : and every leap
Cleareth a rood or more ! . . He's o'er the stream,
And takes the hurdles of the fold with ease,
And comes, and comes . . .

FAUN : Ahi, ahi, ahi!

LAOMEDON :
Heyday, heyday ! what fills thee with alarm ?

FAUN : Ahi!

LAOMEDON : Take breath, O aegipan, take breath.

FAUN : Ahi ! Laomedon, art thou alone ?

LAOMEDON :
Yea, yea ; see, here's a bowl ; I'll pour thee out
A draught of milk.

FAUN : Nay, stay : thou art alone ?

LAOMEDON :
Alone I am, and shall be yet awhile :
My wife and daughters have gone ofT to bathe ;
The heat had wearied them, and, ere sun-down,
They wended slowly by yon zig-zag path,
So through the valley wood, on by the stream,
To gain the shore, where, floored with sand, a trough
Between flat shelves of rock doth form a bath
Convenient for their youth and timid hearts ;
Yon sail, that twinkles on the far sea marge,

My boys have hoisted ; having rowed out thither,
They now await the freshening breeze of night. . .
Behold, its first flaw travels the calm bay.
FAUN : You love a sober speech and call it best;
Grave rounded syllables ; but oh, give ear !
Ahi, ahi! my tale will not support
A measured speech ;
It must come like the wind,
Gust upon gust,
With rapid sweeping,
Curve following curve,
Until the waves are tossing and can roar.

Oh, has the zephyr won thy heart to love,
With beauty daring all the other winds
To give him chase ? or has
A child armed with a branch
Of silver-willow catkins,
Who dances round the men at work and laughs
His merry gibes ?
Oh ! it is worse
Than when it falls and hurts itself and weeps . .
More suddenly ended and more utterly . .
When the fair youthful woman,
Brandishing her spear,
Flaunting her cape of spotted leopard skin,
Prancing a white unsaddled horse
As full of bounding mettle as her glance is,
Gashed shrieks and wounded topples to the ground !
Ah ! it is worse than when a lovely day is
In rushing storm englutted,
To see her dragged by one foot from the fight,
Amid the hooves whirled by a frantic steed,

Her head trailed through the dust, her poor bruised
face

Like a down-beaten muddied flower, fainted . .

Her white hands trodden upon,

Her white hands trodden upon.

What pain ! alas, what pain !

LAOMEDON :

What hast thou seen, ah me ! that makes thee weep

That art not wont to weep ? Thou cam'st so straight,

That com'st at other times so waywardly . .

Seeking the ferret's hole beneath the hedge,

Chasing the rabbit with a merry whoop,

Mocking the blue-tit swinging upside-down

With his " chin chin," thy fingers in thy teeth,

From lichened bole picking the mealy moth,

And prying into all creation's hopes.

What ails thee ? hast thou seen a goddess fight ?

For goddesses do fight among the gods,

Though men with women fight not on the earth.

FAUN : Ahi, ahi, ahi ! if they did not

I should be as I always am to-day,

But they put on short tunics

Scarce covering half their thighs,

The baldrick o'er their shoulders

And quivers they put on ;

To the bow set foot and knee,

String it with twanging cord

And fit the notched shaft;

Javelin and spear take up ;

And mount the steed and spur him, wearing straps

Wound round the heel and ankle, tightly wound ;

They wheel and prance and canter,

And make him arch his neck,

Rear, and with delicate knees
Cling to his moistening flanks.
A thousand rode together, poising darts,
Behind them those with other arms came on ;
All flaunting down a green-sward valley came
Between Arcadia's gentle holted hills.
It was for beauty like a fleet at sea,
Or like an hundred swans
Sailing before the breeze across a lake !
Their vests of daffodil, or pallid pink
Or milky violet! their saffron caps
And hoods like birds for sudden wing-like flaps !
Their white and piebald mounts ! the rich green
 sward,
The morning light, the blossoming hawthorn trees !
The zephyr's music in the holts that crown
With delicate fern-like trees, each soft knoll's top !
I thought the night had borne me heavenward
And in Olympus I had waked from sleep ;
And when their war-song rose
Long tears of rapture ran across my face :
Apollo made it, or, if 'twas not he,
Why, Marsyas died for nought.

Then heard I shouts, male voices,
And turning round I saw them come,
The men of Attica ;
With archers on the hills
In bands of twenty strong,
And horsemen in the plain,
And infantry drawn up in branching glens
Which sloped from either side down to the meads ;
I knew their stations had been ta'en with care ;

And soon the women would have turned the range,
And both those armies in each other's view
Must stand opposed.

In the boughs of an oak I have quaked, where four
roads met,

To watch upon either hand draw near to the cross
A boy and a girl both lovely and light of foot,
With life escaping out of unhindering eyes ;
My heart has ached for fear that they should not
laugh,

Not utter the kindly word when they met, but with-
stand

The power of either's beauty, and shamefac'd pass,
Fighting desire in their breasts for lack of a heart
Gallant with daring and sense ; my pulse has stood
still.

But, for fearing the thing that those nearing armies
might do,

When they met in the widening meads at the foot of
the hills,

My blood it grew cold, so long a time it stood still.
For now a silence settled on both their hosts,
As a wistness fell on those children, when they heard,
Each unseen, the other's approaching step on the
road ;

For scouts had sighted and made to both sides report.
Ah, that hush was like a December night in my soul,
And dull the sound of the hooves as the dismal sound
In the winter forest that wakes one upon a thaw.

Ahi, ahi, ahi, it was shrewd pain !
And not with a radiant welcome and hearty laugh

Each fronted each ; but with a shout like a curse,
With a yell that had stricken the lion's heart with fear,
They on to each other rushed.

Ah ! the eyes, that saw it, bleed ;

And my ear is a wounded sense !

These were men, that their terrible spears

Hurled at the female breast:

These were men, who the well-aimed arrow

Let fly in the eyes of a girl.

LAOMEDON :

Faun, thou hast dreamed, this cannot be, is not;

I think I know enough this to deny.

Some bitter herb hast eaten and slept ill;

This has been born from fumes ; some weed's rank
sap

Deludes thee, Faun, there's wolf's-bane in thy blood 1

Thou hast seen perchance in wild October night,

After the vintage, some the coarser hinds

Fight with their callets, and hast seen may be

Both wounds and blood dealt upon womankind ;

Their clothes rent then, they by the hair were
dragged:

They shrieked, they yelled, they tore with nails and
teeth.

This in the fair spring night returned to thee . .

The drunken riot, the hideous lustful rage

Transformed and tuned by trees above thy sleep.

There, with life-giving scent of May-time turf

And blossom's bounty floating the air of night,

Thy nostrils dilating, coloured thy dream has been

With delicate clarity ; while agile forms,

Such as the Spring befit, rehearsed those crimes

With which the Autumn rude thy soul had laden :

For know, the gently reared have gentle hearts.

FAUN : Nay, this was no dream, not at all !

Oh, believe me ! for I have plucked no berries,
Have eaten no spotted leaf nor any tongue-shaped
(Like the adder's tongue, so shaped, so venomous)
Nor none with prickles touched ; the wholesome
alone

Have made my salads, and I am not deceived ;
It was there, I can show thee the place, and lead thee
thither :

Nor these were not country wenches,
Nor did them resemble as dreams resemble
The world and men and gods ;
These were the make of princesses, as thou hast told
me :

And tended flowers that stand thy house before
Over the weed in the ditch bear not the palm
So far as these o'er some rich herdsman's child,
When, beauty ripe, she wears her very best ;
For splendid purposes had these been trained,
And had the aspect of untiaired queens ;
Were like the tears of the morning for freshness ;
Like the arms of the evening thrown up for weariness,
Such was the radiance of their arms . . . but thrown up,
Oh ! thrown up in fright, in terror thrown up,
Those lovely and blood-splashed arms !

I was not on fire for them ; think it not of me !

I viewed them not as our wild faunesses ; no,

Though I have chased a nymph,

It was not so to-day ;

I was sadder than a man to-day.

I will pray Pan fervently

That he may inspire me
With a ditty expressive of that mood
Whose sorrow was richer than joy.
He will do it,
For he is a sad god at his hours ;
In the evening he is sad . .
Very often.

LAOMEDON :

The men fought them, thou sayest ? lanced them
with spears ?

Had they no pity then, seeing them bleed ?

Surely their hearts were touched then, they stayed
then ?

The dreadful and upraised sword
Was stayed then, was dropped then ? and they
Ran to those they had wounded, lifted them, helped
them,

And were at once most gentle with their hands ?

FAUN : No ! nothing of that ; for these,

Though they were hurt, were terrible ;

Though they bled, they hated ;

Though they died, they did not shed tears :

Their knees and arms were unstrung,

But their hearts were not.

Overthrown and puddled round with blood,

They struck at those who approached ;

It was not safe to be merciful :

Though of those men some felt pity,

None showed it and lived.

It were better to have been a horse in that battle ;

The strong steed knew not

Where he planted his hoof ;

He ruined bosoms

That should have suckled heroes,
The children of a god ;
But he knew it not.
If he broke the thigh of beauty,
Or crushed the loins
That had sate him so firmly,
With such elegance as the moon has,
The moon that rides white clouds,
Or the sea nymph whom a dolphin
Bears with pride as with pride he bare her.
This the dumb steed knew not;
But they, the men,
Knew what they did.

Look you,
To destroy beauty
Is what the year doth ; the flower
Springs up in tenderness,
Is reared in elegance,
Sometimes to majesty,
But withered it giveth no more delight to the eye
Than an old creased ragged dusty kerchief!
Behold,
The storm it ravageth the sweet season ;
Is it not then the fairest trees that suffer most ?
What is the sea when tempest belloweth ?
Not that wooer which erewhile
The youth, nay even
The maiden could not withstand ;
But must be naked
And, bathing, intimately know
The caress of living waters ?
A horse is very much as a wind . .

It raceth, it is spurred, it becometh wild,
And in madness it rageth ;
It hath the form of speed as wind hath the sound ;
It forgetteth itself in everything it doth.

Needs must be that beauty perish,
A brief thing everywhere beneath the stars ;
If it be otherwise among them,
None will wonder when it is known :
But here we see it short-lived ;
Yet is Spring as constant as the fall,
The bud as sear'd petal sure
Despite both storm and frost ;
And in despite
Of the terrible hooves of the horse
The female child
Shall be born and reared in beauty,
And ride and curb the steed
With the grace of those ;
But the men who saw them
Shall not see these,
Or if they see them
Be old and chill,
Dull, and of no mettle to enjoy :
And this those men,
Destroying that beauty, knew.
Ah, and they know
More clearly yet by now !

LAOMEDON:

Indeed, indeed, O Faun, thy words are wise ;
Such truth as ne'er before sits on thy lips :
This is the pain of thought, and our soul's goad,
Tnis is the spur of man, and sad he is ;

To the child alone Spring comes with capturing glee ;
 Only to youth with sweet co-ordinate soul,
 And powers akin to theirs, will like their own ;
 The man mature is braced to undertake
 What, the last Autumn, had been judged too hard ;
 For him the Spring has come like self restored.
 To age but as reprieve from pain it comes :
 The laughing face throws on them some faint smile,
 As from a shield the pale round lights a wall
 Shed by its brilliant blaze ; but oftenest, ah !
 The envy of sour impotence is theirs ;
 Or dull regret, for they cannot be cheered,
 Nor can they bless the kindness that would cheer ;
 Then o'er the grave Spring treads unheeded quite.
 FAUN : Give me the milk, Laomedon ; I thirst.
 Thanks. Ah ! the milk is good,
 As sweet it seems to me
 As in those lovely bosoms there was stored
 For infants that shall never wail for it.
 They broke, they broke, and scattered far and wide,
 Even so suddenly as I have seen
 The cherry tree almost to one sole gust
 Give up its bloom.
 Like petals in the breeze, like butterflies,
 They headed for the hills,
 For shelter with loose rein
 On all sides fleeing !
 As when among the sheep
 A young dog wantonly, that has not learned
 To gather in the flock on Helicon,
 And make a white drift like late-lingering snows
 Among the rocks and cactus of a glen . . .
 As when such young cur wantonly will bark

And run and worry ; as then fly the sheep
In headlong terror, so those fair queens fled.
But no Apollo from the clear sweet sky
Hastened, as then sore-vexed the shepherd hastes
To stay the cur with swift correcting stone,
And gather-to the sheep with sager dogs . . .
Ah no, ah no, Apollo I
Apollo, where wast thou ?
Afar on white Olympus' brow ?
Or didst thou some fair Daphne follow ?
Or wast thou minding sheep
For some boy shepherd's love
Upon Thessalian steep ? . .
While in thy car above
A Phaeton, a mortal's child,
The reins had from thy hand beguiled,
With silly pride to drive his father's team,
Heedless of evils, flush-faced, in a dream . .
Cheeks flushed, curls streaming,
Rapt standing in thy car,
In daylight dreaming ;
Blissful as sleepers are,
Heedless of evils be they near or far,
Of evils heedless be they near or far ...
But close, close, close to me
A feminine splendour on a whirlwind steed
Rushed up, flashed forth, passed by,
Plunging through the crashing brakes
Deep between trees, on, on :
And others . . I could hear them broach the wood
At diverse distances ;
Some with shrewd wails of pain
For jolted wound, or blow from low-hung bough :

So turned and hastened towards the wooded hills,
Leaving the open valley and the meads
And the harsh voices of victorious men ;
And, following tracks some hour, came upon
A stream, and by the stream
One crouched, half stripped, wiping a wounded foot.
Her bare arms, shaped as dreams of courage are
In some young lover's mind,
Glowed bright with strength, efficiency, and grace :
The woundless foot bespoke a power to dance,
To race, to wheel, and leap,
As tunny's tail expresseth subtler force
And water-quelling feats of deftness rare.
Behind, into an oak bush leaned her shield
And her long spear : her face
Was strange and sweet as when the spell of thought
Lays hold upon a child,
Who feels no captive yet,
And, when he shall, that instant will escape :
Her hair, a nut-red, hung
Unnetted down her back ;
Some vests on which she sate dipped in the stream,
And in the water dipped
One of her silvery greaves
Shapely and curved :
Not far away her horse,
Where the bank widened and the sunshine fell,
Lay panting with green branches strewn o'er him,
Green branches she had first drenched in the stream.
Then, as she staunched her wound,
Her shift fell open and I saw her breast
Quick heaving still:
The flowers that grow upon that lush stream-bank,

Fed with green half-veiled light
Or short half-hours of sun,
Deep in the wood,
No wind could reach to stir ; but like some belled
Faint-flushed anemone
Wherein a bee is hid
Her bosom shook . . .
I shall not speak about her loveliness
Beyond what now is said :
She never saw me and I left her there.
Soon I on traces came of wildest flight:
The white and spunky end of some dead branch
Snapt on the ground . . the wounded toadstool clump
Scattered in chips of sulphur or shrewd red . .
Rent and dragged tangle, briar, clematis,
Or woodbine . . clotted leaves scooped up, turned
over;
Black, moist, and glistening on the dusty mats,
They form where'er the gloom forbiddeth weeds ;
Last, ploughed-up dints in ruddier needles led me
On to a hill-side plateau : mid the pines
Through which a glade was opened o'er the land,
A shred of silk there fluttered 'gainst the sky.

At foot of tall and grandly-towering pines
Was where she fell; for there she dead lay fallen,
Between two groves of grandly-towering pines.
Yea, here she fell; for here she dead lay fallen
With both arms stretched beyond her upturned face,
Pointing the way her steed had madly fled ;
Her feet, where their wake ended in dank grass
Through which they had been trailed some thirty
yards,

Lying wound in their straps and scored with
scratches ;

A spotted skin belting the tattered vests
That chilly shook upon her loins, or framing
A globed discovered breast and firm full throat:
Perfectly still : and in her raven hair
Nested her face like snow on cypress cradled,
While near one hand a yellow daffodil
With unbruised stalk flaunted its winsome head.
There, while I gazed upon her, I could see
The quiet country melt in haze away
Miles beyond miles. There beautiful she lay,
The tall pines barely murmuring far aloft,
Not stooping and not conscious she was there :
Yet once I saw the ripe and rustling corn
Arch down above a baby sleeping naked;
Tender and careful as Demeter was
Of her Persephone at eighteen months,
So fond the wheat bowed o'er that baby lying
Not far from where men reaped between two fields
Upon a patch of close-grown clover leaves.
A pitcher in a wattled jacket cased,
And food tied with a napkin, stood beside
Its curly flaxen poll; the patterned shawl,
Which once had wrapped it, 'neath its legs lay
crumpled,

For great the warmth and sturdy those fine limbs.
There, under curving heavy-fruited stalks,
And nodding ears of dry and rustling corn,
Between those fields outspread like oceans rolling,
The two-years-old slept sound ; and I, who heard
The reapers sing the contest and defeat
Of Linus, to give time to their hard toil,

Might watch her grace in slumber half an hour,
And wonder whether she had dreams or no.
It was a child, whose prettiness in play
Might well have charmed the bird down from the
tree :

I, gazing on that dead form, thought of her,
And felt as then I felt, and stole away,
As though a-feared lest she might wake, and scream
To see my horns, brown visage, and white teeth.

LAOMEDON :

Meseems that these must have been amazons,
Beyond the isles that live, beyond the isles ;
I have heard tell (but ne'er did credit much)
Of their strange way of life and warlike strength :
And yet, since that thy tongue seems new-endowed,
Perchance thou art inspired of a god
And speakest things that are not, to win love . .
To win love hinting grandeurs not contained
In what contains us, air and sight and sound ;
For that they should invade our Hellas seems
In very sooth a dream.

FAUN:

No, no ! no dream !

Not far from where that lovely warrior lay
I sate me down in deep and solemn mood,
Then came a bird and sang . .
Sang and flew off once more ;
A squirrel came and wondered what it meant;
The nimble rogue had hoped I'd give him chase.
He knew not she lay there in middle glade
Dead, yet as beautiful as hope of health
After one has been sick. And it grew cold,
And the damp spring-tide evening settled in ;
Between the tall sad trunks the light grew grey,

And green gave place to blackness in the grass :
With strident cries at times, but ne'er a song,
The birds had gone to roost; and silence reigned
Like the great future, absolute control
Exerting without any sensible sign . .
Lord of an hour, as that great realm of hope
Imposeth all life long. Mutely I prayed
That she to joy might even yet return,
Then looked and saw the stars shine through the
 boughs,
And far away I heard a silver sound.
At first methought it was the rising moon
Did make a music pure and clear as dew ;
But, lo ! 'twas answered from the west, and soon
Out of the south was gently born again.
I did not move, but mine eyes filled with tears ;
And now from many quarters all at once,
And then again in silver dialogue,
Across the inlets of the sea,
Across the plains,
Across successive ranges of the hills,
Fainter than music, more magical than harps,
It rose and was approaching from all sides ;
I rocked myself for bliss . . a hallali,
A hallali on horns of crystal sounded.
The nymphs of Artemis they blew those horns
On all the hills, in every forest's heart,
And down the valleys, and across the plains,
And near the distant inlets of the sea,
Where'er a woman's body they had found.
Now close behind me, twenty paces back,
It sounded : and I, turning, saw one stand
With all the dignity and charm of night,

In a white tunic with a grey-green cloak,
Beside that prostrate sister of like grace.
Then knelt she and laid both the arms to rest,
Next straightened both the knees, and closed the shift
Above the breast, ordered the dew-damp hair,
And kissed the eyelids, having lowered them ;
Went then and gathered young ferns not far off ;
With these she covered up that lovely corse,
Then drew a circle round it with an arrow,
Saying some words of heaven . . . some rare spell,
Doubtless of might to stay
The onward rushing wolf, and yet so fine
That it could hold the spider and the ant,
Forbid their entrance like a crystal wall,
And owl or chough or vulture on the wing
Suddenly turn to folly, and their instinct,
Never at fault before, lead far astray,
As though their hearts felt love, and they were gone
To vainly haunt round some fair rock-nymph's lodge,
Or to persuade the moon with lover's sighs.
Sounding again that glory on her horn,
She turned and passed away among the trees.
Soon I arose and sought the freer air
And gazed out o'er the night; and here and there,
Lo ! a white tunic and a green-grey cloak
Of fainter than a phosphor radiance, gleamed
Upon the plain, or on the sides of hills.
Ere long I knew they gathered toward that place
(Winding their horns at times, the while they went)
Where the main battle raged ; and I made thither.
But, when I saw
How many queens were busy on that field,
And with what rapid gliding steps they moved,

Fear fell upon me lest I were surprised,
Actaeon-like, and changed to more a beast,
Losing both speech and laughter . . . so I fled
Just as the morning was about to break.
An hundred miles have I come straight to thee,
Mine only friend, Laomedon ; and now
Haste thee, O shepherd, to return with me ;
For though they doubtless buried some last night,
And will to-night inter yet more, I deem
It shall be full a week ere that they quit
Their travail o'er Arcadian hills and dales :
So come, for we may see them at their work
And in our hearts put by so pure a vision,
That though old age and blindness fall on us,
We shall know hours of rapture to the end.

LAOMEDON :

O Faun, I do believe thee, and will come ;
For what thou tell'st is worthy of the gods,
And holy Artemis would act e'en so.
First let me say farewell unto my wife
And daughters, for I hear them at the house.
They have returned and shall provide a scrip
With cates and meat, figs and good flask of wine ;
For thou has fasted long, and several days
Must pass before I can be here once more.

FAUN : Laomedon, I will await thee ! haste !

—So good a man both gods and nymphs respect;
I shall be safe with him. The poor wild faun,
With that kind shepherd who once saved his life,
Shall look upon the holy Artemis
And all her stately and white-tunic'd nymphs.
A man walks slow, our journey will take time.
But, see, he doth return ; his wife and girls,

Who take their leave, come with him ; I will hide.

DAUGHTER :

O father, wilt thou go an hundred miles ?

LAOMEDON : Eudora, yea ; an hundred miles, my
girl.

His WIFE : Laomedon, be heedful and not rash ;
Anger no nymph, intrude not on their rites !

LAOMEDON : Dear, fear me not; farewell.

LITTLE DAUGHTER :

An hundred miles is further than the caves ?

ELDEST DAUGHTER :

Yes, Doto, for the caves are scarce ten miles.

LAOMEDON :

Farewell, my sweetest little one, farewell;

Oh, I could kiss you all away to-night I

ANOTHER DAUGHTER :

There is the faun ; I saw him ; mother, mother !

THE WIFE :

He will not hurt you, dear ; 'tis a kind faun.

EUDORA : Father, I cannot think an hundred miles :

It is beyond beyond, too far, and like

The moon and stars ; or are they nearer us ?

LAOMEDON :

Further, I think, but ask the rere-mice that;

Farewell, be good.—Dear wife, one last farewell I

ALL:

Farewell, farewell, farewell; good-bye, good-bye !

FAUN : Hist!

I to the hay rick on yon ridge will pass

And there await thee ; I can not walk slow.

LAOMEDON :

Good, good ; agreed !—Ha, ha ! see, he is off;

My best strides are no match for bounds like that;—

Didst thou see, Doto, how he leaped i' the dark

DOTO : Ha, ha, the funny faun !

LAOMEDON : Good-bye, sweet one.

ALL : Father, good-bye !

EUDORA : The darkness down the hill

Hides him so fast, he seems a shadow now

That waves its hand upon a dark grey wall.

THE MOTHER :

There, let us all go home and get to bed ;

The boys will not be back till near on dawn ;

I hope they will bring fish, for all the meat

Did I thrust in his wallet, wrapped in leaves.

If it be wise to try and see the gods

I know not; but your Father is a man,

And men will not be cautious in such things ;

So let us get to bed and pray for him.

NOSTALGIA*

ALAS, O Hellas lorn and whist,
Statues on culminant crags of long
Nude promontories no more list
To islands glamorous with song !

Unmatchable Acropolis,
Thou blossom rooted in mean lanes
Of small plain homes, can aught that is
Console us for thy shattered fanes ?

Afar thy hardy frugal youth
That was . . and dared . . the heroic deed . .
Thy mind on beauty fed, which truth
Could not confuse with her drugg'd mead !

Our hearts, like icebergs, drifting south,
Would strand where ruins are divine,
And, neighbour to a baked rock's drouth,
Lose form and substance, dreaming thine,

Dead land, still hugged by thy warm sea
Nymphless, unfauned, uncentaured l
Only thy Sphinx still potently
Smiles when we ask her what she said !

VII

BEFORE REREADING SHAKESPEARE'S SONNETS

WHETHER his loves were many or but two,
Whether his heart grew strong or bled to waste,
Whether he toyed with words as idlers do
Or some unseasoned lines betray his haste,
We enter here as to an empty house . . .
As pale folk from a far-off clime and date
Peep into pictured halls, where the carouse
Of mummied kings once mocked their certain fate.
We gaze at signs he saw, but only guess
How he read what we read . . . not bloom to fruit,
Meal to moth's wing, sight to blind eye is less
Recoverable ! Time treads life underfoot:
Black, dead, these words can warm us but as coal,
Once, forest leaves, they murmured round his soul.

IN DELIGHT AT A BOX OF ROSES SENT
FROM LEICESTER TO LONDON, JULY 1918

TENDER dawns peep from under night's gray cowl
As from hard buds, pink, crimson, yellow, white,
Their indolent yet lavish-souled avowal
Each day advances ; . . loving, trusting light,
Ripening towards that gorgeous disarray
When petals loll and slide to languid heaps ;
For every rose confesses all she may
To ease the kindness of her balmy deeps.
Ah, thus the heart would open ! thus the soul
Longs to expand her self-approved intent
In utter shameless bounty ! but, poor fool,
Fears others will read ill what well she meant ;
And so, pent up, her sweetness clots to stone,
And kills the beauty that she dare not own.

Your far-sent roses showing every day
A less restrained abandon, ruined, seem
More magical, more touching yet than they
Were ever while life lifted each sweet dream
Prim with composure through its odorous sleep.
They brought immured Psyche to my mind,
Over whose durance, told in tales, men weep,
Though each her jailor be, deaf and unkind.
But there ! I thrust the thought away and smile ;
For these choice blossoms by her fair hand culled,
Prove that you let her fetterless beguile
The summer in deep garden lanes, till, lulled
By flitting song-bird, zephyr-rustled tree,
Her heart grew light enough to think of me.

AN OLD SNATCH DREAMED OVER*

THERE dwelt a man in Babylon,
Lady, lady,
Was famed for cruel grace of speech ;
Such eyes did for his heart beseech,
Whene'er he deigned to woo he won,
Lady!

That man the talk of Babylon,
Lady, lady,
Has left the town . . . lo ! o'er thy cheek
Truth spreads ; e'en so his blush could speak
Response as clear as rising sun,
Lady . . . ?

Red dawn ! and ah ! a drenching day
Will drown us, might drown Babylon !
Lady, poor lady !
The rose he stooped o'er pines away ;
With yon bullfinch her perfume's gone !
Lady, poor lady !

VARIATIONS ON RONSARD*

I

THE grace of the moon is
Born monthly, my dear,
If our light the less soon is
Put out, re-appear
Will it never
Nor ever
In thin crescence peep
To dispel the long sleep.

Then, while we are living,
Tease not but kiss ;
A thousand times giving
Renewal of bliss :
Neither measured
Nor treasured
Can love be, whose grace
More embraceth than space.

II

TIME flits away, time flits away, lady ;
Alas, not time, but we
Whose childish limbs once skipped so fairily,
And still to dance are free.

Things are forgot, things are forgot, lady ;
Alas, not things alone,
But dames whose sweet, sweet names chimed airily
Are no more loved or known.

How bright those stars I and think, each bright star
stays,
Though all else fair be brief;

Leisure have they and peace and length of days
And love, 'tis my belief.

For Love gives light, Love vows his light will last,
And Love instilleth peace . . .
As lake returns the star-rays downward cast,
Be thou the Love, Love sees.

SILENCE

No word, no lie, can cross a carven lip ;
No thought is quick behind a chiselled brow ;
Speech is the cruel flaw in comradeship,
Whose self-bemusing ease daunts like a blow
Though unintended, irrevocable !
For wound, a mere quip dealt, no salve is found
Though poet be bled dry of words to tell
Why it was pointed ! how it captured sound !

Charmed by mere phrases, we first glean their sense
When we behold our Helen streaming tears.
Give me dry eyes whose gaze but looks intense !
The dimpled lobes of unreceptive ears !
A statue not a heart ! Silence so kind,
It answers love with beauty cleansed of mind.

O where is Silence more alive than dead ?
Not where space mutes a myriad furnace suns ;
Where time will soon know noise or knew it once,
Corpse-like, she lies on rock- or ocean-bed . . .
Yet as the tender-footed Dawn has sped
From east to west, inaudibly she runs
And, while the bird's insensate hymn she shuns,
Yet lark-like climbs within the ecstatic head.

Thought yearns, and hopes, surpassed, just watch her
rise;

While vision's vault distends the aerial dome,
The cage of dreams becomes a permanent home
To house heart's whole content. Then eloquent eyes
Sing silence, which, if gazing, one have heard,
He thenceforth will disdain the uttered word.

AH, MIGHT EACH INSTANT BE A KISS

(From *A Torrent*) *

AH, might each instant be a kiss
As Beauty ever counts them, for
In her perfection dwells such bliss
Continuance only makes it more !
Without alarm, without regret,
She leans from *now* into *notyet*,
So t'ward deep water naiad slopes,
Shoots out of depth, with push of toe,
And, trailing comeliness, aglow
Launches her smile to follow Hope's,

Braves the vast cold unplumbed abyss,
Shudders from heel to nape, then swims
With lengthy placid stroke and is
Completely tranced through mind and limbs ;
No fleck of doubt, no hint of fear
Troubles an eye like a glad tear
Filled with diminutive azure noon :
And every foundered soul conceives,
Watching the dazzling wake she leaves.
How even life at poise were boon !

SEPTEMBER TWILIGHT

A LARGE pool, and tall trees, and lo ! undressed
One runs out, pauses, hesitates, looks round :
Twilight reviveth freedom long oppressed ;
The bather plunges in ; a generous sound
And radiant splash of waters welcome him ;
His wake all silver widens, he can swim !

Swim in that dark cold water . . swim and wend
As through a dream with strange facility,
A dream still quite unconscious it must end,
Quite dreadless, though this pool proved open sea,
No memory goes with it, no hope leads,
But inwardly content it onward speeds.

THE DEEPER DESIRE

FROM noon and afternoon rich blue has bled
Into a sea now dark as the sky is pale ;
Down through the cliffs in heat-hushed haste they
trail.

Vesture, like flimsy petals, quickly shed,
Each naked girl is soon a bobbing head.
Breeze ruffles, lo ! the bay is strewn with sail,
And conscious of the shoreward-tacking male,
They stumble forth ; the quietude has fled.
While towels cling, Diana climbs the east ;
Their bevy turns half-clad to mutely stare ;
The fleet afar is heading for the moon !
Though its approach had to young hearts been boon,
The disappointment more profoundly pleased ;
Ocean and solitude had lured them there.

THE FORERUNNER

VIRGIN, afar, those snowfields tower !
And who so bold to limit hope
Before he there hath lain an hour,
And thence surveyed each weary slope ?

Man's spirit has alone been there,
There waits for us with welcoming eyes.
Heartened by our resolve to front
Life's drizzling cant and sleet of lies,

He ran before us ; yea, he is
The flower of our daring ; we
Gave him that quick sure foot and itch
To tackle sheer immensity.

We stumble and are left behind ;
We toil, our strength breaks, and we die ;
Yet those, whose loss meant gain for him,
Have let all go without a sigh.

SHELLS

NATURE nothing shows more rare
Than shells, not even flowers ; no,
Unfading petals tinted glow
Where ocean's obscure weight is air ;
Where winds are currents, streams or tides,
Life to perfect their beauty hides.

Each hinged valve curves out and rims
Pink, yellow, purple, green or blue,
A colour-whisper's graded hue ;
While dinted lobe, spine or rib limns
Crisp helmet, cusped shard to wing.
Full panoply for fairy king.

In easy air and warm light nursed
Bloom wit and love with glamour fraught,
And brave but flower-like youth :
Like brittle shells, long years immersed,
Secreted by toil, conscience, thought,
Are formed art, virtue, truth.

YET THERE IS ROOM

I

WHAT boundless contrast in these clear night-skies !
Yea, earth, with all the worthies who now thrive,
Or ever at one moment were alive,
Lose in those shoals all virtue and all size !
"Why prate of bad and good then ? " some wit cries.
Yet doth wasp's paper home yield like a hive ?
Are maidens ne'er proved true by those who wive ?
Shall science not outweigh opinion's lies ?
Since man's whole metric prowess is surpassed
By height, depth, width and weight, so, too,
May loyal effort, passion, and grace contrast
With all that makes men good, and, lost to view
Through very grandeur, purposeful pursue
With art divine, aims lovely as they are vast.

II

For major worths pass through our midst unseen
Of most who stare with hope to fill a head
Or warm a heart; being reserved, they shed
Too fine a radiance . . . have no chance to wean
Crowds from more obvious skill and brilliance. Keen
And thorough students, and they hardly, thread
Confusing claims, while inch by inch is spread
Report or how ill-prized our best have been.
What though alone our dim small planet sound
Discordant 'mid the ether's choral throng ?
What though among us men might now be found,
Unnoted and unhailed, who hear the song
That Plato listened for, that Buddha heard,
That Jesus had by heart, both tune and word ?

III

Peasants, by no alluring pool seduced,
Peer from the mule-track down through July wood,
Convinced the best swimmer by those clear gulfs
could

Be sucked to doom. But, at such fears amused,
Footing their honeymoon, two tourists halt,
Strip, plunge, and find beneath the loud cascade,
Flecked by the Spanish-chestnut's hovering shade,
For youth and health a bath without a fault.
Thus the world's road winds near an Alpine stream,
And many catch, like torrent's beryl gleam,
Flashes from strength with which ideals are fraught;
Yet rare the soul which yearns, is bold and dives :
Still fewer those whose fair confederate lives,
In naked bliss, cleave the pure wells of thought.

FURTHER PRAYER

O GIANT Universe of star and sun,
And World whose sea-searched crust
Is tear-d by merchant lust,
Delved]_{nj} built over, road-scarred, fought upon :
Help me to make my littleness mine own
And not pretend that things surmised are known. .
T5 feel my helplessness as innocence
And, unashamed as is the ladybird,
Live in a tiny cage of vivid sense
And trouble naught for things by distance blurred ;
Crush not in me that virtue of the mind,
Which undismayed can find
In very impotence a well of peace
And be least blind absorbed by what it sees
Clearest,
Which, affined unto the soul, familiar is
And dearest.

METAMORPHOSIS IN ART

" No I won't," said the stone
" All I am is my own."
But, see ! tempered steel
Has struck from it chips !
Lo, ennobled ! lo, graced,
Growth comes from this waste !
Till live have to feel
After lovelier lips,
Which triumphant in form
Though cold yet look warm !
" No sullen stone I ;
Take all of me ! all ! " they cry ;
" Though no touch can thrill me,
Nor passion unchill me,
From heart, mind, and eye
I claim an elation
Much nearer true bliss
Than is found in a kiss.
Rapt contemplation
Wherein the whole will
Is content to lie still ! "

TWO SONNETS

(From *The Deed*)*

No sight earth yields our eyes is lovelier than
The body of a naked strong young man.
O watch him course the meadows flecked with shade
Beside a stream, before his plunge be made !
Then watch him ridge the water to its brims
With rhythmic measure while he gravely swims ;
And watch him issue, shining even more,
Run, leap and prove himself upon the shore,
Intent to warm his limbs and have them dry,
Making great efforts, seeming as he would fly.
Ah ! he can fill an hour up in this way
And never hear a voice within him say
" Why art thou not at work ? " for it is true
That all he is approves what he doth do.

BUT might the beauty of the soul be viewed
As easily coursing over happenings rude,
Parting the fulness of its quick desires
With strokes as steady toward where man aspires
To be, in order there to prove new strength ;
Might souls be watched thus, then indeed at length
Life winged with beauty and unhindered grace
Would quicken rapture on the upturned face.
Might souls be viewed as swallows are, then all
Would train as athletes, let loose follies fall,
Strip each his cared-for self from clinging shames
Like useless garments, and at heavenly games
Exert his talents and good-will express,
Not as lame duty tries, but with success.

AT BETHEL*

GABRIEL :

Jacob, O Abdiel, the chosen man,
To whom most cheeringly we were revealed,
Ascending and descending ministers
That by a ladder came or went from heaven . .
Jacob has prospered, yet not ceased to err ;
Impatient with slow time (his fond belief,
That cunning forwards not retards his ends,
Persisting) and has come, but trembling come,
From Haran back to Bethel: I with him.

Climbed unto fortune by base knavish tricks,
Lured on by darkly guessing ignorance,
Sullen, in torment, he was pleased to meet
Strong opposition from a steady wind :
So made his lonely way to higher ground.
Meanwhile flocks, herds, the camels, asses, dogs,
His hirelings, Leah's train and Rachel's train,
Spread, like the shade of some slow sailing cloud,
Athwart the valley, moved along its bed.

Ah, Abdiel, the light blinds none of us,
Its absence is no barrier to our gaze ;
But man's dim eyes are foiled with too much light.
And in the darkness ache, they are so weak :
Not half of what he does doth he intend,
Therefore his purpose must be looked into.
So I was sent to be with him and know
His thought, and I was thrown in doubt . . Oh yes!
For, though his ardour conquering obstacles
Has been so great that men astounded tell
How seven years appeared but a few days

Ere he might win the woman whom he loved ;
Yet, compassed by deceits and trivial minds,
Himself did stoop to most unworthy shifts,
And his activity was clouded round
With cares enough, at last, to choke the soul.
Still effort, sprung from anger at himself,
This I perceived to be his saving grace :
Not heaven, not earth, not life doth he distrust,
But doth mistrust himself, and for good cause ;
This is his virtue, this his victory.

Leant forward, shoulder edge-wise to the blast,
He made along the rolling sweeps of bleak
Sad, uncongenial upland, while more fierce
There in his mind a brother's probable wrath
Waxed to predestined certainty and stormed.
He suffered ; and his agony intense
Absorbed me so, that inadvertently,
Foredone with ruth, almost I had been brought
Then to put on the like tormented form
And close with him in answer of his prayer,
That strongly yearned to engage some kindred force
And not be lost for ever in the whirl
Which his poor unencountered efforts made.
Although I judged this impulse ill-advised,
Still help, I felt, he needed : help I gave,
And met him there with half the host of heaven.
As, when the rain hath ceased some afternoon,
Between a low and deluge-threatening roof
And the wet shining grass that coats the hills,
A space of clarity, a wall of light
Appears as far as eye can reach, each way ;
Thus, with anointed bodies and white spears,

My cohorts in his front emerged to view :
His raised hand shaped a penthouse for his eyes,
Silent he stood and gazed : I signal gave ;
Straight like the boundless shadow when a cloud
Has travelled suddenly across the sun,
Our absence followed where our presence shone.
He said " This is God's host! " and named the place.

ABDIEL :

It must be, Gabriel, it must! This awe,
Beholding energies he might express
Set forth a thousand times with one consent,
Doth show that man begins to know himself.

GABRIEL :

For many days that vision had effect,
While still, as each eve closed, it seemed fair tents
Enriched a sister valley, ere he left
The heights to join his folk who camped below . .
Pavilions, as he deemed them, raised by powers
Watchful for his protection, so he might,
Provided for in the great scheme of things,
Without precaution, buoyantly secure,
Wend on as hand in hand with sun and moon,
Upheld in unison with quiring stars,
His right course found for ever, and content.
I bade the wind to cease, unneeded then ;
But long it could not be ; the past surged back :
How could he trust those smiling distances ?
It seemed too easy and too magical!
Him gentle airs perplexed yet more than storms,
Who, fond, would pay a price for pleasant weather :
Acceptance of such generosity
Appeared foolhardy to his teething heart,
Fretful itself, supposing fretfulness

In circumambient peace ; the end for him
Loomed darkness, though the end indeed is light.

Wrapped in a head wind's fury he rejoiced
Like one escaped from peril, briefly brave
Ere fears grew gusty : yet an aid welled now
Within him, for he thought on Rachel's face.
Perchance thou oft-times in the spring hast seen
One tree all white, so tipped it is with buds,
Amongst the tender green of others stand :
O'er him her candour, where most use disguise,
Cast such sweet glamour as that tree exerts,
And he adored the future in her face.
Gardeners in sultry summer count on fruit,
Rememb'ring how their orchards once were white ;
And recollection of her beauteous youth
Vouched now his ripening fulness joy and peace.
Alone and undistracted, greatly wrought,
While battling forward on those hills exposed,
He often summoned to his inward view
The beauty that once nerved him to succeed ;
And, to that vision harmonised at once,
His hope spread forth and filled the future up,
Leaving no place for fear : so, from the east,
The magic passage of the light is made
Unto the extremest western verge . . . no sound,
No stir, attainment without effort . . . dawn 1
ABDIEL :

O Gabriel, man's words take hold on me ;
To hear thee use them touches me to tears.
No stress like this has heavenly intercourse :
Thoughts, passing perfectly from mind to mind
In sacred quiet, mix not pain and pleasure ;

Our songs are silence vivified with awe,
Our weeping is an ecstasy distilled.

GABRIEL :

Even so, dear Abdiel, recall that day,
When first as in a mirror we in Adam
Beheld ourselves expressed in kneaded earth.
Oh, what a rapt anxiety was ours
To watch his conscious body prove itself!
" Let beauty beautifully move ! " we sang,
Beholding him stand up in Paradise
Whose many trees were stirred with whispering
sound :

The grass was dewy and his feet were pleased ;
His bosom next, conceiving ecstasy,
Filled with the summer wind, and he looked round ;
Vision was his ; but still he raised that hand,
So simple yet so manifold in power,
Creating by its very aptitude
The thought creative : herewith slow he felt
That breast which to his shoulders slanted up ;
To whose firm breadth succeeds the easy neck,
Mobile for stately carriage of his head ;
Then seemed to apprehend some heavenly truth,
And smiled, possessing what so soon proved lost.
Delighted to hope comprehended thus
In boon and sensuous symbol all we were,
With novel tremor, anxious a first time then,
We sang, and singing wept; and still we sing
Weeping, as man's creation still unfolds.
Thus too this man is lyrically stirred
Recalling Rachel young and strange to him.
There, in his mind, I saw her as she came
On foot before her camels, in a stole

Straight, girdleless, of unbleached linen ; large
The opening at the neck in clear ellipse
Lay on her bosom, then swept up, and o'er
Each shoulder vanished; mellow and warm that
lake

Which but just billowed towards each hidden breast;
Her neck erect seemed strangely slight to rear
The oval head massy with looped-up hair
Whose raven depth was crimped vividly,
In graduated fineness like the track
Cast net-wise out upon some shining pond,
Whose ripple deepens inward from the curve
Its quickened dark forms on that bland expanse . .
So from her smooth brow ruffled lobes of hair.
Guarded by grand shade-treasuring lids and brows,
Large pupils, arch for blackness, swam in milk ;
The soft warm cheeks were nowhere flushed or
pallid ;
Her lips breath misted ; and, dimpled about with
shade,

There, like a rounded pebble, glowed her chin.
Long loose sleeves swaying wholly cloaked her
arms ;

While, brown, in green grass-woven sandals cased,
Her feet advancing filled her vesture up
With something like the music of her form,
Audible to the folds it set to move
In grave impressive measures. Abdiel,
On picturing this, he every time believed,
Despite his stooping to ignoble craft,
That dreamed promise would be all fulfilled,
Redoubling his best efforts to make way ;
For, always strong, the gale would, now and then,

Increase in force so vastly he must halt.
 Though difficult steps had yielded him content,
 Stopped short or forced to cower near the ground,
 The sweat of agony broke from his brow,
 And, drying, left strange salt incrusted there.
 " O thou that, warring with the furious wind,
 Dost symbol forth the passion at thy heart,
 That which like cold of serpents frightens thee,
 Moist on thy smarting brow, that is thy sweat;
 The dust thy fingers marvel to find there,
 Is salt brought from the glistening desert steppes ;
 That sound of scourges is from rags thou wearest,
 With which the blast is violent, rousing them
 To waspish wrath : O superstitious man
 Build not from these a portent! " So I sighed,
 For he prayed abjectly.—" A truce, O wind,
 Let him take breath and know himself again I "
 Yet every eve, having regained the tents,
 With brief decisive words he gave command
 Intent to thwart his brother of revenge ;
 Dividing first his company in two,
 So, were one lost, the other might escape;
 Next sends a noble present on before ;
 A second soon of like well-chosen beasts ;
 A third anon. . . It seemed not right to rest,
 And he slept ill; his life, one over-wrought
 Intense conjecture striving to foresee,
 Was barred expansion towards his boys and girls ;
 E'en Rachel did not venture to draw near.

We came to the ford Jabbok as the dusk
 Deepened, what time was left, between these
 brothers,

Not one day's journey. Could he rest there, then ?
No, but by moonlight had his droves across ;
The camels bore his wives and children over :
Then on the further bank the camp was pitched.
Yet he crossed not, but palely watched them safe,
Yearning to feel their ease to ford the stream
A presage and permission for himself.
And almost prayed he for a sudden squall
To rise, or accident to intervene
With danger from the water, from the winds,
From robber hordes : so did they but succeed
Against some expectation, this might work
Assurance clear that he would be allowed
To plant his banished feet on native soil ;
Since still instinctive terror held him back
And figured deities of local power,
That in a bounded tract are capable
To harm, and lie in wait for men unsound.
By such might Esau be preferred, he thought,
Whose claim was that of birth, and who besides
Was a swart hunter such as demons love.
These enemies were raised from heathen talk,
When awe which he had watched in alien eyes
Imposed on him despite his better sense.
Therefore last night, although they safe were crossed,
He climbed unto yon heights, but found no wind
With which to battle and relieve his soul.
I anxiously was near him and I knew
Almost he would go back : he strained, indeed,
On having crossed his folk and cattle o'er,
As to its moorings in some swollen stream
A shallop doth ; and as it shakes and sighs
He moaned and shuddered under stress of fears

Whose urgent current tugged against his hold,
His failing hold upon the future's strand,
Intent to whirl him backward through the world,
An aimless man to dwindle evermore.

Then felt I such compulsion to assume
This human form, that very suddenly,
Between his arms outstretched in anguish cruel
To realise his failure setting in ...
Yea, that same instant, when I saw his eyes,
His hands were clenched, his elbows bent, his brows
Contracted, and his open mouth and eyes
Drawn with sheer pain to own himself foredoomed I
Feeling this warm resistant wholesome flesh,
Bolt upright, almost touch his out-thrust breast,
He grappled, with a bitter cry of joy.
My thoughts, confused in their strait residence,
Doubted an instant whether by this act
I had not fallen as those others fell,
Who saw the daughters of men how fair they were,
And out of all proportion loved their beauty,
Begetting giants of enormous strength.
The sympathy I felt had been so strong
That in the conformation of man's brain
It found no chamber, save the wards of passion,
Permitting of activity so swift,
Entire, and wholly centred on one end.
Anon that perfect sanity was mine
Which Enoch reached, what time he walked with God,
Grown up to be with us world without end.

With violence he bound me in his arms ;
Then wrestled as it were for very life,

Swinging his weight this side or that of me
To throw or else compel me to my knees :
But I maintained impassively my ground.
And thus it was all night; his strength grew less,
Yet his will wearied not to conquer now
Or die ; at last, I touched his thigh and caused
The sinew of its hollow to shrink short,
Marking him with full proof, that who opposed,
In rash and strenuous antagonism,
The righted image of his nature's health,
Must lame himself: this blindly yet he did . . .
Still, still though halt, he persevered in pain,
Though he was weeping, though his arms grew weak
Beyond belief, even as an infant's feeble !
Yet now at last sobs difficult and heavy
Shook me, no strength of his availed to shake,
And lo ! we staggered, tottering both as one,
For his sobs ruled us in their violence.
Then prayed I him to let me go, since now
The day was breaking. He with gasps replied
"I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."
" What is thy name ? " I said. " Jacob ! " he
moaned.

Then I, " Thou shalt be called Jacob no more
" But Israel! for like a prince hast thou
" Had power with God and men, and hast prevailed."
Silence ensued, but soon he craved yet more :
" Tell me thy name." " Wherefore is it that thou
After my name shouldst ask ? " was my reproof:
" Content thee that I bless thee ; be thou blessed."
Herewith I vanished from before his face.
ABDIEL :

O Gabriel, such pains man must endure,

And, hard put to, close always on his fate :
Yea, here indeed the generous Esau errs,
Not anxious for the future, nor in throes
Of travail for perfection out of reach,
He met me, and mistook me for a youth ;
Praised but my beauty, bid me to a meal,
Kissed me, and went his way, content and kind.

Thus angels sat, conversing with men's words,
Upon huge stones that strew the higher lawns ;
While in the vale beneath spread Jacob's tents
And Esau's, side by side in slumber merged.
They were in beauty like to men of strength,
One younger, one mature, in perfect health ;
Still we had felt perchance, those limbs had bathed
In sweeter waters than the best on earth.
Most lovely was the night, and they were glad
To take man's beauty to them for a while ;
Yet vanished from their thrones before the dawn
Could rouse one sleeper in those numerous tents.

VIII

FROM "THE LITTLE SCHOOL"*

BEAUTIFUL MEALS

How nice it is to eat!
All creatures love it so
That they who first did spread,
Ere breaking bread,
A cloth like level snow,
Were right, I know.

And they were wise and sweet
Who, glad that meats taste good,
Used speech in an arch style,
And oft would smile
To raise the cheerful mood,
While at their food.

And those who first, so neat,
Placed fork and knife quite straight,
The glass on the right hand ;
And all, as planned,
Each day set round the plate,
Be their praise great!

For then, their hearts being light,
They plucked hedge-posies bright
Flowers who, their scent being sweet,
Give nose and eye a treat:
'Twas they, my heart can tell,
Not eating fast but well,
Who wove the spell
Which finds me every day,
And makes each meal-time gay ;
I know 'twas they.

WIND'S WORK

KATE rose up early as fresh as a lark,
Almost in time to see vanish the dark ;
Jack rather later, bouncing from bed,
Saw fade on the dawn's cheek the last flush of red ;
Yet who knows
When the wind rose ?

Kate went to watch the new lambs at their play
And stroke the white calf born yesterday ;
Jack sought the wood where trees grow tall
As who would learn to swarm them all:
Yet who knows
Where the wind goes ?

Kate has sown candy-tuft, lupins and peas,
Carnations, forget-me-not and heart's-ease ;
Jack has sown cherry-pie, marigold,
Love-that-lies-bleeding and snap-dragons bold ;
But who knows
What the wind sows ?

Kate knows a thing or two useful at home,
Darns like a fairy, and churns like a gnome ;
Jack is a wise man at shaping a stick,
Once he's in the saddle the pony may kick.
But hark to the wind how it blows !
None comes, none goes,
None reaps or mows,
No friends turn foes,
No hedge bears sloes,
And no cock crows,
But the wind knows !

LUBBER BREEZE

THE four sails of the mill
Like stocks stand still;
Their lantern-length is white
On blue more bright.

Unruffled is the mead
Where lambkins feed,
And sheep and cattle browse,
And donkeys drowse.

Never the least breeze will
The wet thumb chill
That the anxious miller lifts,
Till the vane shifts.

The breeze in the great flour-bin
Is snug tucked in ;
The lubber, while rats thieve,
Laughs in his sleeve.

LULLABY

LAUGH, laugh,
Laugh gently though,
For leaves do so,
When the great boughs, to and fro,
Cradle the birds on the tops of the trees ;
Gently they laugh for the love of these.

Sleep, sleep,
Sleep lightly though,
For birds do so,
Rocked by great boughs to and fro ;
With wind in their feathers, their dreamg have wings
And they visit the gardens of fabulous kings. ^-

SHOES AND STOCKINGS OFF

BARE feet, bare feet,
Lovers of the dew ;
Pleased by the wet moss greatly,
Pleased by the shell-strewn shore,
Pleased by the lawn grass too
Yet
More by a golden floor.

Bare feet, bare feet,
Every day bless you !
Walk near the fountains stately,
Walk in the pebbled stream,
Walk 'neath the calm waves blue
And
Dream there a mermaid's dream.

Oh, fare sweet, my bare feet
Like lovers two and two !
Lead me for ever where there
Of shoes is known no need :
For I have ne'er met care there
Where I with you might speed ;
Lead me because I love you,
Love you, my sweet bare feet,
Then still I'll sing above you
And you shall still fare sweet.

HOME RULE

OH, to be glad as a bird I
Never to be put out!
Not to be ruffled by look or word,
But both to meet like the bluest day
That charms the world in May !

Oh, to live on and on !
Travel the world about,
As cloud sails or as sails a swan,
When skies are blue and waters bright
Bearing serene delight !

Bearing a smile like the sun,
Break on to-day and to-morrow,
Soothing the eyes of sorrow,
And giving a cause for none !
This is to be a queen or a king,
Not of countries but hearts ;
This is to conquer everything
At home, not foreign parts.

WATER

" TELL me what hath water done ? "

" From highest mountains it hath run
And found a way to distant seas,
And all the time flowed on with ease,
Welcome as those who love to please."

" Say, what else hath water done ? "

" It hath soared up toward the sun
And piled cloud-ranges in the air,
Shaped city, ship or white steed there
Forms that with happiest dreams compare."

" What hath water done beside ? "

" Cleansed the hands we fain would hide,
Made soiled faces fit to kiss ;
And water's crowning work it is
When tear-washed hearts recapture bliss."

HANDS

SING, for with hands,
One thumb and four fingers a-piece,
They built the temples of Egypt and Greece I
Sing, for in many lands
Are things of use and beauty seen,
That without hands had never been
Without skilled hands!

White hands, deft hands,
No lily is more lovely, no
Nor can the swan more graces show
Than lady's arm commands I
O strength as of a giant's grip !
O firmness meet to steer a ship !
O swart, male hands!

Frank hands, free hands,
When shall my little ones grow great
And clasp such huge ones for their mate ?
Who thinks, who understands,
How hands of soldiers and of kings,
And all those by princesses waved,
Were once a baby's hands, and craved
For jangling toys and shining things ?

DAVID AND GOLIATH

WITH half his arm in running water
David groped for rounded pebbles ;
Kneeling by the brook, he sought there
Till he found five that were good :
O that I had been by then,
When at last he upright stood,
Choicest of the sons of men !
While round his feet in rippling trebles
Water crooned across the pebbles.

He was young and fair to see
In his shepherd's dress ;
His spirit and his limbs felt free,
Quit then of their late distress
When he, caged in king Saul's casque and gaunt war
 suit,
Had said, " I cannot go in these,
Since their use I have not tested," would not do it
Even a king to please.

He left that clear and purling water ;
Only one of his five stones
Did he use, yet mighty slaughter
On the Philistines ensued :
O that I had heard the shout,
When that stone had been proved good,
Done its work beyond a doubt!
While ended felled Goliath's groans,
And no need for further stones.

It is always good to be
Where long-sighed-for things

Are done with that felicity
Every hero with him brings,
When he must be up and doing, steps forth lightly,
Nor needs fear's casque and mail to don ;
Sure, he who acteth simply, bravely, rightly,
Hath trustier armour on.

THE YOUNG CORN IN CHORUS
ALL we, the young corn, stalwart stand
In millions upright side by side,
And countless acres of the land
In orderly close chorus hide,
Shouting : " Gold, of his largess,
And health he discharges
Both far and wide ! "

Though all the world were brimmed with gold
And valleys with health had overrun,
Who could command his hand to hold,
Contest the giving of the sun ?
Hail him ; vigour for growing
He cometh bestowing
On each weak one !

The winds, with showers on their backs,
His servants, lounge by distant seas ;
And far-seen summits of their packs
Heave up when shifted for their ease,
Wearied, long there attending
Lest heat of his sending
Cloy those he would please.

LIFE

MY life feels like a mouse
In some strange giant's house ;
Or like a single fly
In a Saharan sky :
Small part in life have I,
Yet of one sort with it whole
Is my small soul.

Bird-life makes glad the trees,
And tree-life throngs our hill,
But life would fill
An airier hive with souls for bees
More room than, far from shore,
A night-sky coops above wide seas:
Though that were packed, outside were more.

My eyes drink up the swallow's flight
Swift, smooth and light:
Their joy is free.
The sound that heaves
Like music up from a mile of leaves,
Is glory to me.

Then, there are waters gurgling along,
And ladies together singing a song,
Sounds that, entering my head,
Move more than can be said.
Oh ! and by how much life, thought of, should
Thrill more than flight, song, stream or wood I

TWILIGHT REVERIE

REMEMBERED in the evening,
After a long happy day,
All my moods of work and play
Fold together like a book,
Collect, compose as, at a look,
A picture shows you miles of land,
Mountain or camel-travelled sand,
Or as a crowd which may require,
For all its homes, full half a shire.

Remembered in the evening,
After a long happy day,
All my moods of work or play
Gleam like pool at some sea-side
Left by a far-ebbing tide . . .
World you could cover with a gown,
Weed-forests, a pebble town
And shell palace, where tiny, proud,
Invisible royalties,
From pearl-fretted balconies,
Gaze at my face, as it were a pink cloud.

DAYS AND NIGHTS

LIKE a king from a sunrise-land
In fair ship sailing,
With banners salt wings expand
And pennons trailing ;
With wealth untold and a mind unknown,
And a power to love and make friends of his own,
And a power to leave those he likes not alone,
Each new day comes to me,
Like king from far east sailing
Over the sea.

In a barge with golden trappings
For queen prepared,
And, against the cold, rich wrappings
And furs deep-haired,
To lands afar, by a force unguessed,
Where the face reveals what hides in the breast,
And by doubt of another no heart is distressed,
Some nights have carried me,
Like queen that homeward fared
Over the sea.

O heart, be true and strong,
That worth make thee each day's good friend ;
Then thou the hours of dark shalt spend
Out there, where is no wrong.

THE ROWERS' CHANT

Row till the land dip 'neath
The sea from view.

Row till a land peep up,
A home for you.

Row till the mast sing songs
Welcome and sweet,
Row till the waves, out-stripped,
Give up, dead beat.

Row till the sea-nymphs rise
To ask you why,
Rowing, you tarry not
To hear them sigh.

Row till the stars glow bright
Like certain eyes.
Row till the noon be high
As hopes you prize.

Row till you harbour in
All longing's port.
Row till you find all things
For which you sought.

IX

FROM "DANAË"

THE STORY

A daughter was born to Acrisius, king of Argolis, and called Danae, and taken to the temple of Zeus as the custom would have it done. There those who had brought her, having made an offering, awaited an oracle, when pronouncement was made to this effect: that the son of this child should slay her father. Now Acrisius was no king by nature ; no, not so much as a brave man is ; he, therefore, thinking to prevent Fate, determined to immure his daughter, and, by the time that she was weaned, had raised a tower of brass, so strong that it might never be broken into, so smooth that it might never be scaled, and so high that his daughter was reared in the top of it beyond the reach of any man. There, she grew with no attendance save that of a single crone, who, as youthful poets know, like all old women had but one subject to converse upon, namely the scandals of love ; now this one had been under such penalties forbidden her, that, as a companion, she was little better than a hen. Nevertheless the Will that is Love hated the selfish cowardice of Acrisius and chose the child that she might live immaculate and yet become a happy mother, in order that the blessedness of that state might be made known, as also the nobleness of the issue born out of purity. For she became mother of "Perseus, after being only once bathed in pure sunshine. Whereupon Acrisius in a very great panic, thinking it a miracle or worse, sent her to sea in an open chest, her baby with her ; but Light is over the sea and Love findeth a path across the widest ocean ; nor was she ever in danger, but without fear found both haven and home in Seriphos, where she brought up her son as holily as she ought. This is the story " such as youthful poets dream on summer eves by haunted stream"

DANAE*

*Of the
tower's siege
by golden
light and of
Danae's
swoon*

STILL brilliant with bright brass, the tower derides
The sun's gold shafts; which strike, and on all sides
Like ridicule-lit laughter, spread ; and some
In bravery bend back whence they have come,
And try their strength with those that come direct,
With first impetuous potency unchecked
From the god's bow, For this the heat is great
O'er all the land of Argolis of late.
The king, Acrisius, hopes his tower may prove
Impregnable to liquid light and love,
Rolled round it in a golden ocean-tide
Whose ebb is a June night: and so all dried
And dusty have the ways become; the fields
They wind among, with grain a rich soil yields
Should glow, not thus discover to the eye,
Between straws lank and earless, what cracks lie
And lengthen snake-like on the brittle earth,
Light in excess stifles her nursling mirth :
Old Inachus, most like a fevered wretch,
Who on his hot bed scarce hath strength to stretch,
Doth, round stones limping, feebly seaward crawl:
While in the tower-top Danae small,
Unconscious how a god toward her steals
Across her prison-floor, lies numbed : nor feels
His burning kiss the hand he reaches first;
But swooned amort, with sweat her brow has burst
While parted lips show teeth like maids in bower,
Where past them no sweet breath hath stirred this
hour.

*Of her
father's folly* An oracle had Zeus, the king of heaven,
On this Acrisius' fond petition given :

" By the unintended hand of thy new-born
And infant daughter's son shalt thou be torn
From life and power: till he that age attain
When young men take to quoits first, live and
reign! "

This silly king was filled with hope at once
To outwit Zeus, which proved him but a dunce ;
His daughter he from all men straight immured,
And deemed himself from grandsons thus secured.

Leaves lap and overlap, and trees; the lily,
Deep-delled and fragile, grows up very stilly:
So silken shade and shawls of varied hue
Hid Danae who whiter daily grew :
When moulds the potter on his whirling wheel
Dumb clay, a hint of final curves will steal
From clever hands in sapience sure ; just so
Quaint querulous suggestion of a flow
Of contour simpler, more capacious, slips
From God's thumb when he moulds a woman's
hips.

*Of her
body's
growth and
its changing
beauty and of
sisterly love
for the re-
flection of
that beauty
in her mirror*

Her thighs will lengthen faster than they round,
Till their delightful devious line be found.
The heels, too narrow, of the little feet
Will give her steps a wayward wavering sweet.
As when, unpropped, the heavy dahlias stoop,
Her head nods, nods, and even her spirits droop ;
For nothing saw she, save her room's few things,
Beside the well-conned window-view; and brings
Each year no increase to her life's thin store
Of sights—they only one not known before,
A larger loveliness, that might be found
By searching the great mirror's polished round :

This had advent so imperceptible
 It dwelt unnoticed there ; and yet, whimsful,
 She loved to view—no soil or levity
 In her fresh silent mind—naked and free
 Her beauty ;—purely, with no least alloy
 Of flurrying shame that hindered to enjoy ;
 Nor vain at all, since she had never seen
 Eyes like to those which modest maidens screen
 Themselves from, neither knew that any girls
 There were less fair than she, or who wore curls
 Less copious or of poorer purple sheen
 On lustre-lacking black. Oft would she lean
 As through a thunder-rain, while combing it,
 Nor then alone before her mirror sit ;
 For when (cool after washing with well-water,
 That up the winding stair nurse daily brought her),
 She gravely sat to musingly commune
 With her companion-self a June forenoon,
 To see so grave her gentle image brood
 Within its round, that pensiveness renewed,
 Which, on the wane, bright health had nigh dis-
 persed ;
 Yet, though in reverie still deep immersed,
 To gain a smile's return sometimes she smiled.
 So *from* her nurse's knee she, oft beguiled,
 When little, by the bright resemblance to
 Her young glad life, had tottered towards the new
 Espied child, whose fresh rosy limbs resembled
 Love's own in their deep-dimpled mould, that
 trembled
 Within the mirror's glimmering polished deeps, . .
 Thus at the foot of forest trees there peeps
 A sky cress-framed that laughs to recognize

Another blue. And, though she now knew better,
She would not slight her double nor forget her,
But smiled, and half-deception friendly-wise
Lingered, though hands no longer patted pleased
To meet their chubby twins as when she, seized
With love, bunched up her lips to meet the lips
Out-thrust to them ; still no experience strips
(Though silver disks may give one the cold shoulder,
And though a dozen years must leave one older)
That veil, with child-dreams broidered, from her
head;

Still someway separate existence led
The twin, and not so much more silent, sister
With her up-grown. Not once had she yet missed
her,

As slow their earliest dimpled limbs discovered
Most gradual change, and winsome spareness hovered
Waywardly peeping out till plumpness went:
O'er salient points a certain tightness lent
A peevish pinched appearance ; in sight too
Their shoulder-blades moved looselier ; a new
Sly meagreness thus crept o'er them : like shoots
They sprouted up to statelier growth : as roots
Sent down into dark mould, grew whiter daily.
Strange inner effervescence sparkled gaily
Out through their eyes. Thus taller, taller yet,
Till many a frock that pleased begins to fret,
The skirt too short that had been long enough,
While thin and faded wears the patterned stuff,
Nay, scarce can she re-picture how, when bright
As first put on, appeared flushed with delight,
Her tip-toe sister, who with pretty grace
Held it out wide within the mirror's face.

*A fond plea
for not
leaving child-
hood yet* Can we now turn our crowding thoughts away
From those sweet days ?—the heart misgives us, nay !
But linger o'er the lovely ; soon, full soon,
The morning hours lose charm and it is noon.

*Of her com-
panionship
with reflec-
tions in her
mirror and in
the brazen
walls and
how it was
not enough* Though every week her clothes are borne away
Soiled, crumpled, limp ; wait seven days and they
Come back clean, smooth and neatly folded : so
Slumber each night renews her. Thus time's flow
Seems nothing, till she find two sandals small
Far back within a cupboard on the wall,
And hardly can believe that they were hers ;
Then laughs for how the mirror-sister stares
At tiny sandals there. Thus lived they on
Most silent happy twins, almost alone
And yet not quite ; for deep through polished walls,
Inhabiting adjacent dimmer halls,
That gleamed like vague perspectives 'neath a lake
Mid water-lily stems, and half-awake
Dusky or silvered fish, what ghost ? What shade
Of hazier gaze ? What dreamier shy maid ?
Or was it ghosts ? (vague as her sister fades
When her breath dims the mirror) ghosts of maids ?
Friends ? or one magic gliding friend that there
Walks as they walk, more distant combs her hair ?
The mirror held whom most a sister seemed
Yet sometimes of this other had she dreamed,
Who still was seen through that part of the wall
Whither her gaze was turned .. wimpled a shawl,
Or laced a slipper dim in gold haze drowned :
But if she puzzled, lo ! the mirror frowned ;
So she must smile to cheer her thoughtless friend
And thus unsolved her meditations end.

Nor might she muse, when from the appointed place,
New budded breasts, dissimulating grace
As March flakes feign the snowdrop's calm, showed
forms

Hazy like mushrooms when the night-time warms,
That globe and gleam, yet leave the stars in doubt
If on the dewy slopes they shift about.

For, did she muse, her sister first grew still,
Then, as she harder thought, frowned and looked
ill;

So she for pity could no long time dwell
Upon these mysteries : yet all went well,
Nor did she find an urgency for thought
To mark events ; solutions came unsought,
Or were not needed : yet she had a need
Unhelped, though change thus patiently proceed
And she be never long what she hath been.

Yea, even a mere white-mouse caged and seen
Through close-strung wires, will writhe its sleek
length high,

And hold with pinky paws, and seem to sigh
While, sniffing tainted air, it seeks a vent
From prison ; and then scurries back, as bent
On finding in the oft-searched farther end
Some small escape ; and, since its birth there penned,
Yet lives on, never losing childish hope
Somehow eventually its sense may cope
With most perplexing life-imprisonment:
Thus Danae, with hopeful discontent,
Led to and fro her white shape in her life's
Wall-hampered home ; and still this useless strife's
Fatigue can barely disappoint a mind
So scantily versed in freedom, or unblind,

To fate's fell force, eyes closed by charity
To real and might-be sights' disparity.

*Again fond-
ness pleads
for not yet
leaving child-
hood*

'Tis time; come, turn these loitering thoughts away
From those child years. Lack we the heart still?—

"Yea

Yet linger o'er the lovely ; soon, full soon,
The morning hours lose charm and it is noon."

*Of how in
spite of lack
of ensample
and her
seclusion she
yet came to
be of most
gracious dis-
position*

Of manners and accomplishments, you deem,
So lonely maid had little. This may seem
Quite certain; yet, e'en as her tender flesh
That readily took print or blenched, so fresh
The quiet gods had kept her growing mind ;
Leaves wet with dew in lettuce-hearts confined,
Are not more dainty or more clear of hue:
Though never to fib tempted, she was true,
Two shapely feet taught her how best to walk ;
To please a sensitive ear she trained her talk ;
Full oft to sit upright made her feel good
And raised her languor to a better mood.
Concerned to judge of objects which were best,
Watchful for intuition, she would test
Her least decision by renewed appeals
To quick experience ; how it is she feels,
Spacing her coral necklace beads with sprigs
Of hen-and-chicken fern, and how with twigs
Of box, whose leaves resemble beetle-wings:
Thus, tracing beauty through a thousand things,
Her features had assumed an earnest mien,
Which would have well become enthroned queen,
Yet, as a breeze with honeysuckle, she
Had madcap moments, and her locks would free

To dance and twine ; this freedom so became them
She oft indulged it and was loth to tame them ;
Yet when she did, thoroughly combed, she bound
them

With ribbons or in strings of pearls enwound them,
Plaited them now, and now would have them crimple,
Or snood them up completely in a wimple :

For each success suggested new successes,
Till she was taught distinction by her tresses.

At meals, in ordinance for seemliness,
Her practice like perfection did express !

Disgust, watching her nurse's common ways,
Had taught her what to avoid, and native grace
Had chosen fine-cut morsels, moderate sips,
And placed a napkin by to wipe her lips :

" Thank you " and " please " she said, till nurse ex-
claimed

That matched with her a goddess might be shamed !
Which praise gave her great pleasure ; in reward
A kiss to the old crone she would accord ;
For she had learned to win her judges over.

Where is it women will not this discover ?

Her little terra-cotta dolls to see

Home to their cupboard taught her courtesy ;

For they were brittle, easily upset,

As much so as folk for politeness met.

To lay for meals and put away her toys

Thus exercised her tact and furnished joys :

While moths that entered during the warm nights
Were novelties, excitements and delights.

Their mealy wings, full early, she respected,

And with both hands behind her them inspected,
Enjoying golds and browns and marblings rich

In shading finer than the finest stitch
 That silk embroidery can hope for; she
 Their delicate curved feathered antennae
 Admired, and supposed them an head-dress.
 Their jewelled eyes she knew at once, Oh yes!
 Though some bore eyes upon their pinions painted,
 With such deceiving wiles she was acquainted.
 The bronze-green rose-bug and the lady-bird
 Paid visits; calls of butterflies occurred
 More rarely; sparrows could be lured with crumbs,
 And even doves! while wasps would light on
 plums.

The characters of all she soon divined ;
 And from the first, these last distressed her mind;
 For cruelty seemed such a proof of thought,
 She deemed this insect wiser than she ought,
 And hated it far more than there was need;
 To women partial judgments Zeus decreed.

*A third
 time fond-
 ness pleads
 for ttingermg
 over child-
 hood*

Come, turn, though late, these too fond thoughts
 away
 From her full days! Still, still, Love pleadeth," nay!
 But linger o'er the lovely : soon, full soon,
 The morning hours lose charm and it is noon ! "

*of her bed
 with the
 morning and
 eveningjoys
 related
 thereto*

How long it took before her bed was made!
 Such precious cares expended, overpaid
 In self-approval sweet themselves! It stood,
 A scaffold house of slender painted wood,
 Secluded like a shrine far in the room
 Where curtains through the day made hallowed
 gloom.
 Deep (many a dove gave every bosom feather)

The mattress hung on straps of pliant leather,
Which, through each other plaited, joined the frame ;
Soft were the pillows ; over all there came
A coverlet which made sheets gleam so white,
Heaven's lining, outward turned, less dazzling bright
Appears to those who, at the height of noon,
Loll back on scented heather late in June
And sound, beyond blue, blue and blue beyond.
Blue drunk into sea sleeping like a pond
Beneath such heavens, could scarcely match that quilt,
Where the profusion of the night was spilt I
Numberless stars, yea, stars of every size !
Thus friendly night and day did fraternize ;
Only the jealous sun, he was not there ;
He with a silver crowd would nothing share,
Neither a spangled cloth nor day's long void,
Through which he rides in pomp, sole, sad and
cloyed :

Yet o'er her navel, when she lay supine,
In its first quarter meek the moon did shine :
This served for warmth ; but oh ! above her head,
Hung the real glory of that lovely bed ;
Which she, half-dreaming, studied many a morn
With infant happiness, Sleep's newly-born.
Fanwise did leafy boughs depth o'er depth rise,
Like upward caves or under-sea green skies ;
In whose aerial vaults the small sweet-voiced
And never-wearied choristers rejoiced,
And some had nests, and some were building them,
And all made silence singing ! Folk condemn
Long hours spent in this delicious way ;
Leave them the busy middle of the day !
Watch Danae though, as pensive she undressed

By gaze or voice sets in ; still shall she find
Solace in things unthankful, for her yearning.
Yet now dark silence warms, her fate is turning
From life love-stinted overmuch ; for save
Her nurse, no one to love, or that could crave
Her love, she knew, thus let heart-worship fall
Portioned to dead things—as some silken shawl,
That she would hold against her cheek—kiss it,
Space out, and bid its folds her fancy fit;
Till thus an afternoon be whiled away,
Fondling its foolish yards. Another day
Brought flowers that came in pitchers, or a load
Plumping an apron, or else singly stowed
In with the butter, sprinkled o'er the fruit,
Or making dewy nests for eggs. First mute
For gladness, next with clapping hands, on feet
That totter with impatience, see her greet
With airy kisses little friends—small eyes
Glorious with gazing on the liberal skies,
Sent by the open-hearted folk who wonder
" How fares small prisoner princess penned up
yonder ?"

Friends, but ah ! torture like to tongue-tied love,
She knew no names for heartsease, or foxglove ;
The spindle-parsley, purple vetch, the clover
Were all as nameless as her trance's lover ;
She coo'd above them sounds in pet-names 'stead.
" Sweet Aphrodite's navel," " nipple-red,"
" Her fly-trap," or her son " Love in a mist,"
Or crimson may called " kisses double-kissed."
Such were the only names her old nurse knew
But told not, fearing she'd explain them too.
Next in her favour stood some exile shells

Large lips, agape with wonder-working spells,
 Which the ear hearing, vainly the mind strove
 To dredge a meaning from. So oft she wove
 With nets and toils of hair one to her ear,
 Deep in that cushion sunk she found most dear,
 Her feet out-thrust on the mat most to her mind,
 Because, 'mid green waved lines, it showed a kind
 Of ready needle-pictured likeness to
 Her whole bare body, over which there flew
 Much smaller portraits of herself, as she
 Is to her mind brought back by memory.

* * * * *

*How the
 Spring
 returning
 made many
 tkngs appar-
 ent that before
 were hid and
 of her
 father's con-
 sequent panic
 and cruelty*

When young breezes strike

A tune, and Spring, spry wanton, comes, her nurse
 Looks puzzled, makes her pinched-up lips to purse
 And her eyes blink, bewildered, at the maid,
 Who goldly glimmers in the gleam. Afraid
 They have not told her of the thing aright,
 She falls to rubbing them with all her might ;
 For, lo ! a woman with child, no maïd, is that
 Sits where the maid a year before had sat ;
 She fain had got to scolding but delayed,
 So' clear the eyes she met ; and then she prayed
 She might be much mistaken, and still knew
 She was not ; such a queer knot how undo ?
 For she had ne'er an instant left the tower,
 Scarcely the room for much more than an hour.

Who could have done this thing ? O ye great gods,
 Walls, locks, and all man's cares make little odds
 To you, when once ye have a mind a thing
 Shall be : well may a man stare, whistle, sing,

And blow upon his nails, if ye have entered
With him a race on which perhaps had centered
Dozens of spangled hopes—or life ; 'tis one,
And the race won before 'tis ever run.
So, when a boy-child came to light, her father
Had to be told he was grandsire ; though rather
His ears had heard his daughter, pined away
In prison lone, was gone to swell, that day,
The dim ranks of his dead who wait in earth's
Strongholds, all kings, or issue by their births
Of kings, or queens, or queenly-mothered.

O happier thou than women, who must know
At last by day-light, not moon's opal glow,
Him whom they loved.. thou, loved by the unknown,
A mother, all a mother's joys thine own,
Without the pain that overtakes a wife
To learn love lasts a season not for life,
Must be replaced by friendship at the best,. .
Thou, thou art happy in thy wave-rocked nest,
Not to have loved, not to have known a lover,
Yet with fond kisses thus thy babe to cover !

*Of why she
should be
considered
most blessed*

NOTES

p. 38, *The Phantom of a Rose*.

Suggested by the dancing of Nijinsky and Karsavina in *Le Spectre de la Rose*. A girl returning from the ball enters her bedroom, and wearily drops the rose she has unpinned from her dress, then sinks into a chair and dreams that a youth, the perfect emanation of that flower, invites her to dance with him.

p. 49, *love's Loss 'Lamented*.

This poem was written when a girl whom I knew well, jilted with a dramatic suddenness, abandoned a life of open enterprise and retired to an obscure retreat. The divergence of sex in the first image for the change condoled with will preoccupy no one capable of entering into the mood.

p. 55, *Hope*.

The reference is to Luke xxiv. 12.

p. 58, *Judas*. A Narrative Poem in four Books. (Collected Edition, vol. ii.)

p. 63, *Judith*. A Drama in one Act. (Collected Edition, vol. ii.)

In 1916 at the Stage Society performances, with Charles Rickett's scenery and costumes, Lillah MacCarthy acted this sword episode so splendidly that Arnold Bennett immediately wrote a more extensive *Judith* to frame her. The story comes from the Apocrypha. Nabuchodonosor, the king of Assyria, sent out his general, Holofernes, to waste the whole earth. Judea's turn came. Bethuha, a key position, was besieged, and when its folk saw their stores running low they decided to open their gates if within five days no help came from God. Judith, a rich widow, upbraided them for tempting God and said she would brave the enemy alone with her maid, only they must not ask what she meant to do. She being a comely person, Holofernes listened to her; and having made him sleepy with wine, she trapped him into remaining alone in his tent with her. She cut off his head and took it back to Bethuha. When

the chief men saw it they sallied down with their warriors, and fell on the leaderless Assyrians who had just discovered the headless trunk of their general; and Judea was saved.

p. 66, *Betuhas Gate*: a second incident in the same story.

HEBREW SUBJECTS.

These Hebrew stories used to be known by every English child, and they will probably return to favour when the function of imagination as the creator of sympathy and the harmonizer of subconscious impulse with reason comes to be more fully understood. Imagined and re-imagined with ever new incident and significance, poetry can obtain from such stories the distance that enchants, and a marriage of old associations with new insight without which it remains raw and indigestible. See also *At Bethel*, p. 203.

p. 79, GREEK SUBJECTS.

The Greek stories are of inexhaustible fertility, their incidents and motives invite endless variations, but the original outline or skeleton should be known in order that the intentions of the poet may be appreciated, for these will reveal the deeper impulses of his imagination. To compare new with old is the only means we have of appreciating the difference. Those who confine themselves to either old or new must of necessity remain narrow and unrecceptive. I myself am no scholar, but I read in Lempriere enough to understand what I am about when an old story rises before me in a new form.

p. 88, *Owphale and Herakles*. A Drama in seven Scenes. (Col. Ed. vol. iv.)

This Lyric is sung by a Slave-girl, Simaetha, and reveals her feeling about the home she has been stolen from.

p. 89, *Orpheus and Eurydice*. A Drama in three Acts. (Col. Ed. vol. in.)

p. 91, *The Sea is Kind*. A poem in three Dialogues. (Col. Ed. vol. iii.)

p. 93, *Pan's Prophecy*. A dialogue in stanzas between Pan and Psyche. (Col. Ed. vol. iv.)

p. 98, *Theseus*.

The boy Theseus found his father's shield and sword under a boulder on the beach, when he grew at last to be strong enough to roll it aside. His mother had no knowledge who his father was. This situation at the time I wrote appeared to me to be that of mankind, a thought that is widespread in diverse forms. Since, I have come to recognize that value is independent of origin, and that mankind's value is independent of an unknown father. But the belief, that of aristocracies, though a pathetic fallacy, has played a great part in the evolution of the mind, and demands from us all profound sympathy. It is a fertile theme for poetry. Origin is unknown; in the last resort the beginning like the end is lost in darkness, but what we are we know and can appraise, each individually the better in so far as, besides himself, he also knows good, and to know more good is the only advance possible; and of good, surprising discoveries are still made. So the boy Theseus is a living symbol.

p. 104, *Medea*. A chamber Drama in one Act. (Col. Ed. vol. iii.)

p. 105, *Io*.

Io was a cause of Hera's jealousy, whom Zeus to protect changed into a heifer. Hera then sent a gadfly to chase her; thus Io was driven over the face of the earth until at last she was reunited to Zeus in Egypt. She is the moon, he the sun. Argus, the giant with an hundred eyes, who was first set to watch over her, is the starry night. But, as with all myths, the story might easily become symbolical, perhaps was primarily that, having a psychological as well as a physical interpretation, Io's wanderings are those of the soul, the gadfly, conscience, and her reunion with God, the cause of her blessed fecundity. In poetry interpretations are held in suspense as in a solution; similarly in art Io often retains nothing of the heifer save the horns, a crescent behind her head. Common minds materialize myths; for imagination they are transparencies. In this poem her beauty is wooed in vain by many whom she is driven past, only to find at last the mystical union and become no longer a wandering desire for peace, but an active mother.

p. 106, *The Powers of the Air*. A Dialogue in prose. (Col. Ed. vol. iv.)

Selene or Diana, the goddess of the moon, seeing Endymion, a shepherd, asleep on the top of the hill named Latmos, stoops and kisses him. In this lyric her kiss transmutes his flesh to marble, so that he never wakes but remains a marvel to all who visit that neighbourhood.

p. in, *The Rout of the Amazons*.

The story ran that a race of warlike women had invaded Greece. Theseus, the legendary king of Athens, had conquered them and married their queen. In the poem a faun has been present at this battle and describes it to a shepherd who had once nursed him when wounded. The poem came to me when the newspapers were saying that the Boer women would fight with their husbands against the English.

p. 132, *Nostalgia*.

This poem is, as it were, my farewell to the Greek Mythology. Not that I thought, like many reviewers, that these subjects were in any degree moribund, but because age was upon me. Athens was a town of mean streets with splendid public buildings. Even the wealthy there were content with small houses. To be an Athenian demanded not a little physical heroism, and needed as much spiritual heroism, which alas ! ran dry when the city became head of an empire.

p. 137, *An Old Snatch Dreamed Over*.

The first two lines are sung by the FOOL in *Twelfth Night*.

p. 138, VARIATIONS ON RONSARD.

To translate poetry is impossible, as equivalence of meaning does not result in equality of suggestion and sonority, and change of phrase means change of sense. But to adapt a poem admired in a foreign tongue to the felicities native to his own is one of the most natural efforts of a poet; to replace unavoidable losses by gains is as good a training as he can obtain. Nor can a poet leave his creative impulse in abeyance, but will create while he copies, as Rubens did when copying

Titian, for imagination is life, and there can be no rightful property in life. As art only belongs to those who enjoy it, so also it belongs in a still higher degree to those whose joy can create with it. For in spiritual things there can be no exclusive ownership. (See my book, *Armour for Aphrodite?*)

p. 141, *A Torrent*. A metaphysical meditation. (Col. Ed. vol. iv.)

p. 150, *The Deed*. A sequence of seven sonnets. (Col. Ed. vol. i.)

p. 151, *At Bethel*.

Esau was all for hunting, and one day returned to his father's tents famished and faint from the desert. Jacob, his younger twin, took advantage, having a "mess of pottage" ready, to sell it to his brother for his rights of seniority derived from a few minutes' earlier birth. He next feared Esau might kill him to get back his birthright, and so left his father's tents and journeyed to Haran, whence Abraham, their grandfather, had emigrated. He there found his uncle Laban and became his steward, serving seven years for his younger daughter. But Laban cheated Jacob, who in the morning found he had slept with the elder sister Leah. However, Laban again promised Rachel, and Jacob served another seven years for her. Enriched with his wages and the two dowries, he then set out for Palestine, but as he neared home his fear of Esau revived till he was almost for retracing his steps. But an angel met him; and they wrestled all night till Jacob had heard himself blessed and called Israel. Next day he found his brother had nursed no ill-will, but embraced and made him welcome. The poem came to me on a holiday while cycling against head-winds between Amiens, Beauvais and Rouen. When I dismounted to rest I scribbled in a note-book.

p. 163, *The Little School*. (Col. Ed. vol. i.)

Some of these poems are imagined as coming from children of various ages, others are addressed to them. Thus the first and the fifth issue obviously from the mouths of two very individual little girls; those in between from older lips. Browning insisted that all his poems were the utterances of imaginary

characters, but this rule proved just as misleading as the vulgar assumption that a poet always speaks only for himself. Delicacy of imaginative sympathy will easily resolve the problem whenever a solution is needed.

p. 184, *Danae*. (Col. Ed. vol. i.)

The poem from which these extracts come was written and rewritten at widely separated intervals. My friend, Charles Ricketts, gave me a laughing commission to lengthen it, as it was not long enough for his purposes when he issued it in book form from the Vale Press, saying that the new passages were to drip with golden syrup! I was surprised many years after to find the main principles of my aesthetic expounded in it, without my, at the time, having been aware of any such intention. This persuaded me, who was prepersuaded, that poems are forms of life, which grow rather than are directed, so that they are as surprising to the artist as children are to their parents and need as much knowing.

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THE END

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