



BELCEIL MOUNTAIN, P.Q. FROM THE G. T. R. BRIDGE.

For the silent unaccompanied way
Where the inn is cold and the night is gray.

But noon is warm and the world is still
Where the Kelpie riders have their will.

For never a wind dare stir or stray
Over those marshes salt and gray;

No bit of shade as big as your hand
To traverse or trammel the sleeping land,

Save where a dozen poplars fleck
The long gray grass and the well's blue beck.

Yet you mark their leaves are blanched and sear,
Whispering daft at a nameless fear.

While round the bole of one is a rune,
Black in the wash of the bleaching noon.

"Ride, for the wind is awake and away.
Sleep, for the harvest grain is gray."

No word more. And many a mile,
A ghostly bivouac rank and file,

They sleep to-day on the marshes wide;
Some far night they will wake and ride.

Once they were riders hot with speed,
"Kelpie, Kelpie, gallop at need!"

With hills of the barren sea to roam,
Housing their horses on the foam.

But earth is cool and the hush is long
Beneath the lull of the slumber song,

The crickets falter and strive to tell
To the dragon-fly of the crystal well;

And love is a forgotten jest,
Where the Kelpie riders take their rest,

And blossoming grasses hour by hour
Burn in the bud and freeze in the flower.

But never again shall their roving be
On the shifting hills of the tumbling sea,

With the salt, and the rain, and the glad desire
Strong as the wind and pure as fire.

One doomful night in the April tide
With riot of brooks on the mountain side,

The goblin maidens of the hills
Went forth to the revel-call of the rills.

Many as leaves of the falling year,
To the swing of a ballad wild and clear

They held the plain and the uplands high;
And the merry dancers held the sky.

The Kelpie riders abroad on the sea
Caught sound of that call of eerie glee,

Over their prairie waste and wan;
And the goblin maidens tolled them on.

The yellow eyes and the raven hair
And the tawny arms blown fresh and bare,

Were more than a mortal might behold
And live with the saints for a crown of gold.

The Kelpie riders were stricken sore;
They wavered, and wheeled, and rode for the shore,

"Kelpie, Kelpie, treble your stride!
Never again on the sea we ride.

"Kelpie, Kelpie, out of the storm;
On for the fields of earth are warm!"

Knee to knee they are riding in:
"Brother, brother,—the goblin kin!"

The meadows rocked as they clomb the scour;
The pines re-echo forevermore

The sound of the host of Kelpie men;
But the windflowers died on Bareau Fen.

Over the marshes all night long
The stars went round to a riding song:

"Kelpie, Kelpie, carry us through!"
And the goblin maidens danced thereto.

Till dawn,—and the revel died with a shout,
For the ocean riders were wearied out.

They looked, and the grass was warm and soft;
The dreamy clouds went over aloft;

A gloom of pines on the weather verge
Had the lulling sound of their own white surge;

A whip-poor-will, far from their din,
Was saying his litanies therein.

Then voices neither loud nor deep:
"Tired, so tired; sleep! ah, sleep!"

"The stars are calm, and the earth is warm,
But the sea for an earldom is given to storm.

"Come now, inherit the houses of doom;
Your fields of the sun shall be harried of gloom."

They laid them down; but over long
They rest,—for the goblin maids are strong.

The sun goes round; and Bareau Fen
Is a door of earth on the Kelpie men,—

Buried at dawn, asleep, unslain,
With not a mound on the sunny plain,

Hard by the walls of calm Rochelle,
Row on row by the crystal well.

And never again they are free to ride
Through all the years on the tossing tide,

Barred from the breast of the barren foam,
Where the heart within them is yearning home,—

For one long drench of the surf to quell
The cursing doom of the goblin spell.

Only, when bugling snows alight
To smother the marshes stark and white,

Or a low red moon peers over the rim
Of a winter twilight crisp and dim,

With a sound of drift on the buried lands,
The goblin maidens loose their hands;

A wind comes down from the sheer blue North;
And the Kelpie riders get them forth.

St. John, N.B.

W. G. MACFARLANE.