

Of unfathomable magic sorrow,
 While a touch of wistfulness forever
 Clings about the human theme and softens
 All our loveliest melodies to minor?
 So believe. The oldest faith is better
 Than the newest doubt, if only beauty,
 Gladness, loving kindness, strength and patience,
 Spring therefrom. Let perfect wisdom follow.

Silvery, reverberant, come with flute notes
 Up the dark ravine with joy and pathos,
 O you small brown bird among the beeches,
 Did the nightingales of Mitylene
 So outsing you in the moonlit gardens,
 Where the blue sea round the Isles of Hellas
 Plashed and murmured in those far-off summers?

Care not! Only heed the lyric moment!
 Let no yesterday and no to-morrow
 Mar the fine perfection of the present
 With regret or longing. Make the hour
 All sufficient, full and fine and joyous.
 Let mere gladness in the fleeting instant
 Do away regret and anxious forethought,
 Every task the better thus accomplished
 For the undivided spirit's rapture.
 Then whatever may befall hereafter
 Let the gods have in their holy keeping.
 You at least have hindered not the purpose
 Of creation, undistraught, unlagging,
 And unhasting to her unknown issue.
 Ah, no languor and no foolish hurry
 Vex the silver strain of that pure singing.
 Then what matter in the long hereafter
 Though our mountain thrushes do compare not
 With the nightingales of Greece for splendor,
 When the dead years rang with Sappho's glory!
 Here and now; the play of Lovely Mortals
 Has no other scene nor time; and promptly
 On the skilled and skillless falls the curtain.

Yet, remembering departed Summers,
 When you hear that broken silver sequence
 Pouring through the unfrequented valleys
 And blue passes of the rainy Catskills,
 Say, "What must have been the magic music
 From the groves of ilex, which found lodgment
 In one human heart,—how wild, how tender,
 And how faultless,—and became an echo
 In those perished songs from Mitylene!"