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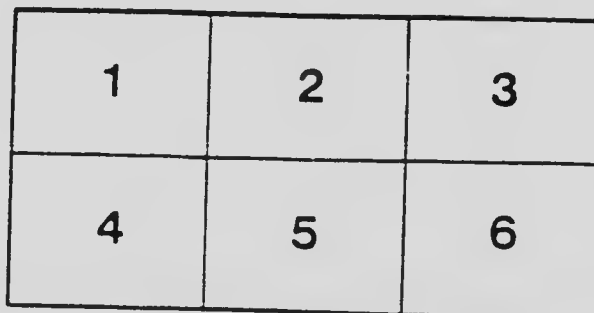
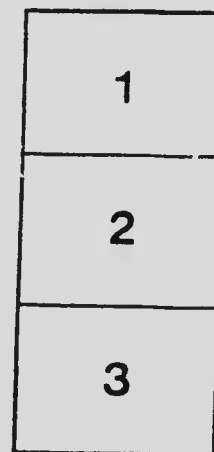
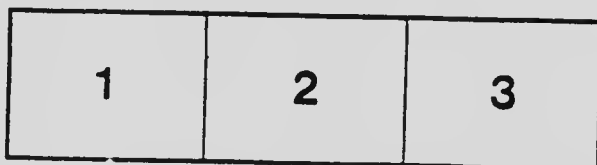
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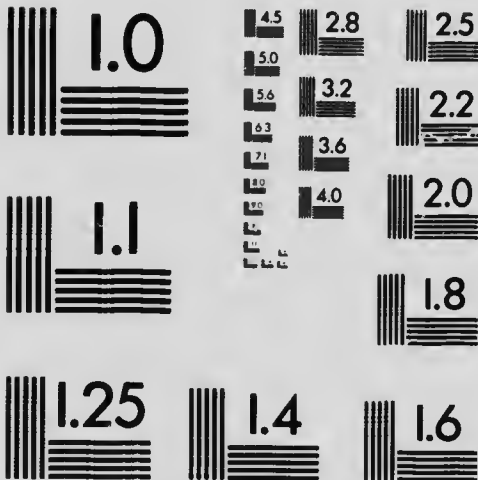
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FIGS & WHISTLES

by

D Bedford Jones .



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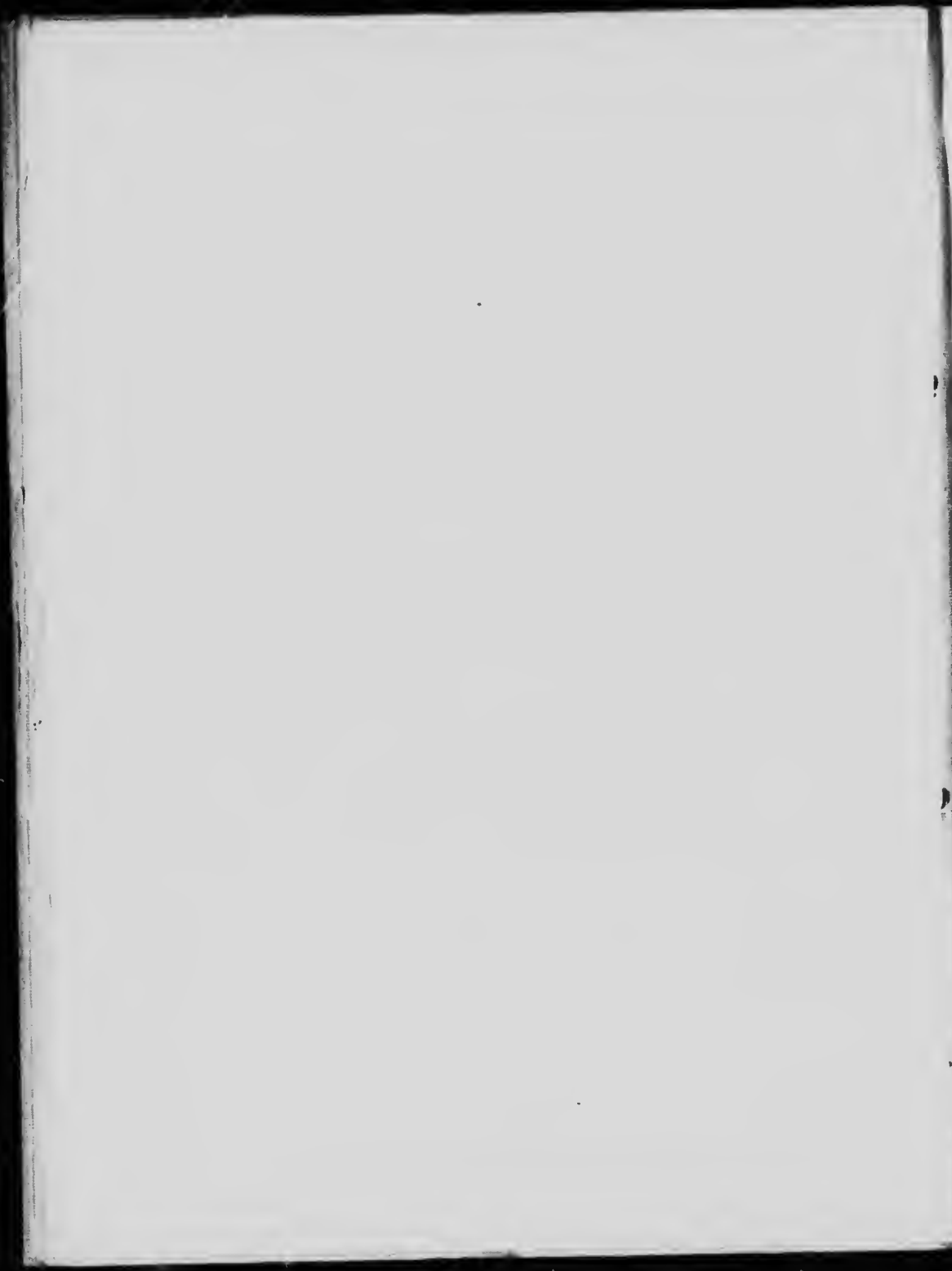
FIGS AND THISTLES



D. BEDFORD JONES.

Christmas.

1914



These titles have appeared in certain books, magazines & newspapers, and are here collected for the first time, in evidence that figs may be found even upon thistles.

TO MY MOTHER

Mais il y pend toujours quelque goutte de sang.

... De Musset.



C O N T E N T S

SONGS AT HOME

SONGS ABROAD

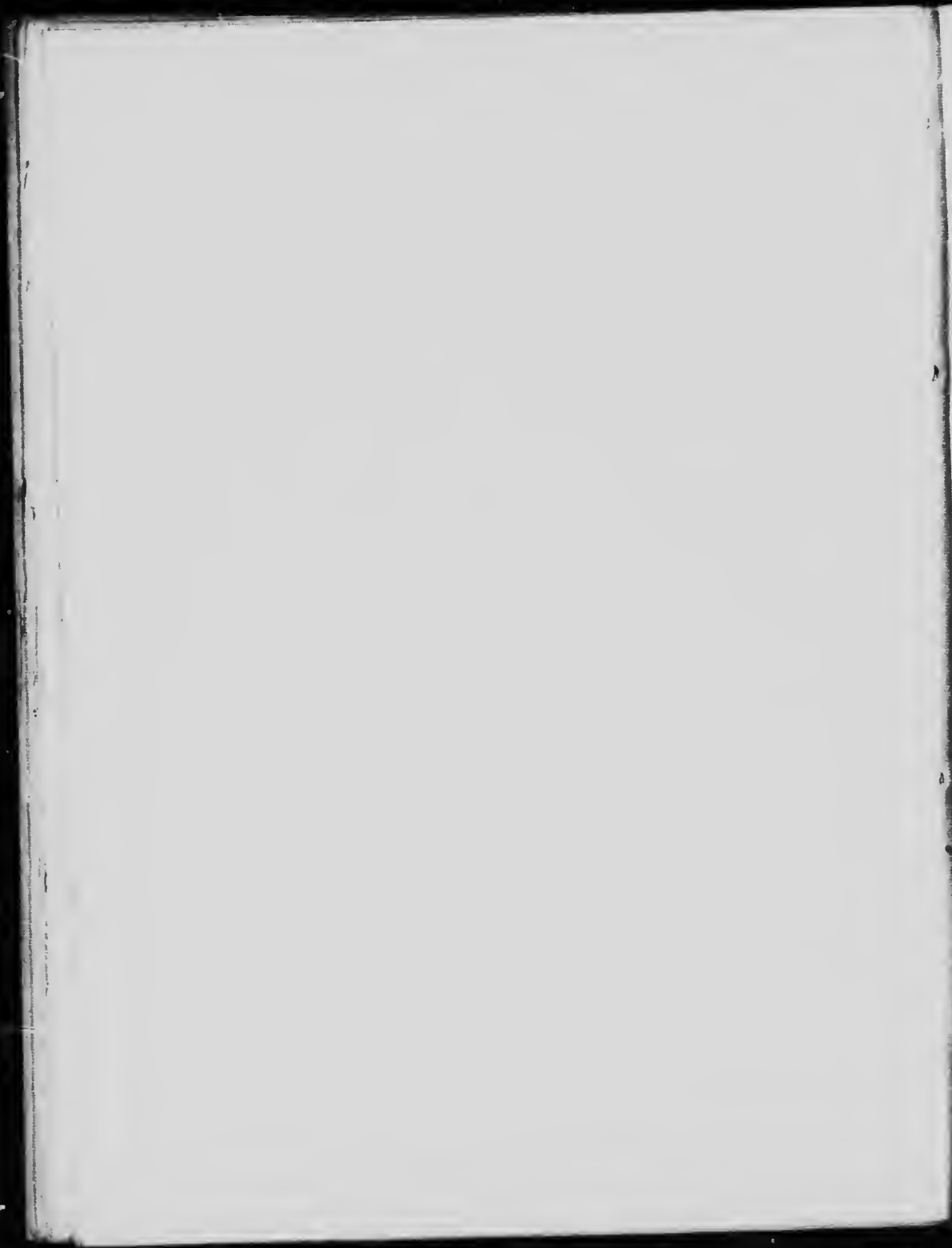
SLUMBER - SONGS

BOOK - SONGS



Fame comes cheaply, after all !
Can you hear the throstle's call,
Catch the song thrilled from the sky ?
Fame has lost her sanctity,
Lost it in the dollar mart ;
Let yours be of soul and heart !

Fame comes cheaply, after all .
Sense to feel the hidden thrall
Of things virgin, primal things ...
Squirrel chatter, eagles' wings ;
Sense to feel and know and be
One with all ... means fame to me !



S o n g s A t H o m e

A H Y M N O F M O T H E R S

We have suffered and anguished and sorrowed
 Drawing near to the Vale of the Shade;
We have writhed in our torture, and borrowed
 The strength and the power of God's aid;
We have watched and denied years unending
 We have wept that our weeping was done,
But the courage and love of our lending
 Wrought the soul of a son.

We have builded all earth and its beauty,
 We are building what all things shall be,
For this is our perilous duty
 Whose fulfillment we never shall see.
Our son and our daughters shall judge us,
 Yet their judgments are out of our ken;
Let no one our glory begrudge us,
 Us --- the mothers of men!

Yet more than our deeds and our glory
 Or the world that we hold in our sway,
Is the Singer whose Song is our Story,
 The Helper whose hand is our stay.
The binding of sorrows silles us,
 His hand smooths the way we have trod;
He comforts, nor ever denies us,
 For our helper is --- God!

4 0 1 5 5 2 1 0 0 1 1 2

O U T O F T H E D U S T

There is dust in the city streets.

There are feet on the sin-worn way:

The dust creeps up into weary eyes

While we, looking on from afar, despise

The sin that is not our sin, and say

"Oh Rulers of these our city streets

Come, cleanse them of sin! Are the laws then lies?

Obey!"

There is dust in the city streets.

There are harlots of sin-worn throat.

We lash them forth, and we bid them trust.

We offer them penitence, pity, lust.

We fashion us laws, and we bid them note:

Yet when have we cleansed the city streets?

Lord Christ only stooped to the wayside dust

And wrote.

A LITTLE SONG OF AGE

Now, what is the meed of a carven fane
Or the worth of a poet's dole,
To the winding road and the plash of rain
And song o' the cedar's soul?

We were three, and we were mad
With the very breath of youth;
Mad and bad and glad and sad,
Bartering what souls we had
In the search for truth.

John was clerkly, and became
Somewhat of a thoughtful drole;
Gave God praise and gave Him blame,
Garnered name and wealth and fame ---
Well, he's carved in stone!

Richard, with the gift of health,
Chose a master-poet's lot;
Won him name and fame and wealth,
Paid God somewhere, died by stealth ---
Now he's quite forgot.

I? Oh, I was ever mad
As the rolling stars above I
Lost me all the others had,
Lost me all that made them glad ---
Bartered it for love!

Now what is the lure of a carven fane
Or the worth of a hard-bought dole,
To the bend in the road and the kiss of rain
And the song o' the cedar's soul!

TO MY GRANDMOTHER'S PORTRAIT

Dear little maid of long ago,
 So wistful-eyed & tender-faced,
When the old artist caught you so,
 What winsome though's were yours, & chaste?

I wonder if you felt the years
 Your eyes would gaze on, from the wall;
The longing hopes, the clinging fears
 That found your heart, that find us all.

I wonder if you knew the trust,
 The simple truth of higher things
That you, long crumbled into dust,
 Would leave in subile whisperings
To stir our souls & bid us seek
 The childlike faith we lost long since?
So absolute, so pure & meek,
 The trust your painted eyes evince!

If this were yours, as yours the task
 To stir our souls to life again
Across the years -- ah, may we ask
 Some such memorial to attain?

Dear little maid of long ago
 So tender-faced & wistful-eyed,
Give us this inner power to know:
 For see! You have not wholly died!

S o n g s A t H o m e

I N M I C H I G A N

1

Across the night the ages-muted bell
 Of Arbre Croche re-echoes, with the light
Sweet chime that once the good Marquette loved well
 Across the night.

Far off, the city lies in garnered might
 Of wealth; but deep within her shadow dwell
Wan multitudes, whose sleepless eyes gleam bright
In fever. Could but some swift wind impel
 This fragrance of the northwoods to the slight
Hot cheeks --- what thousand heartfelt prayers would swell
 Across the night!

2

In lowly guise, concealed by fir and pine;
 Arbutus buds are lost to curious eyes;
Yet under pine and fir they countless twine
 In lowly guise

Till all the northland greets the kiss that lies
 So mystic-sweet on all things, fragrance fine
In lowly guise!

Lord, grant whate'er of help or cheer is mine
 May thus steal forth to lighten darker skies
Unknown, perchance, to me; that ere it dies
 My life may prove an instrument divine
In lowly guise.

A D A G I O

Down from the heart of the gray cloud-rifting
 Pierces a blast of October breath,
 Eddying over the wood, light-lifting,
 Catching the brown leaves, swirling and sifting
 Hither and thither, dizzily drifting,
 Floating them, fluttering, down to death:
 All the long winter sleepily shifting,
 Dreaming of dawn in the spring, God's gifting ---
 "Peace, and be patient," the good wind saith.

Far in the distance the call of a plover
 Quivers and thrills to the mist-gray skies:
 And I hear, as I lie in the burnt brown clover,
 The answering cadence, sung over and over,
 That rises and falls from its leafy cover
 Faint, and more faint, till the last note dies.
 Ah, gay and light-hearted brown-speckled wing-rover,
 How may thy song soothe the grief of a lover?
 "Peace, and be patient," the good wind sighs.

H E A R T H E S I T A N T

So bides her soul above me

--- Whisper, whisper, oh my spirit !

Did it stoop to prove me, love me,

Should I seek it, hope or fear it ?

So thrill her eyes my blindness,

So chides her heart my sorrow ---

Should I seek love thru her kindness,

Win and keep, or only borrow ?

--- Whispers soul, "Live for the morrow!"

She lives her life sincerely,

Faces tears and fears and laughter;

Dare I bid God make her merely

Love of mine for ever after ?

For so bides her soul above me

--- Whisper, whisper, oh my spirit !

Did it stoop to prove me, love me,

Could I help but scar it, sear it ?

--- Whispers soul, "Ah, take nor fear it!"

T H E F O U R M A S T E R S

"Love is a thing," said the first,
Who was ancient and hoary of head

"Love is a thing at its worst,
No sooner living than dead.
Born out of passion, dead in its thirst,
Once wearied, its spirit is fled."
--- He was ancient, and hoary of head.

"Love is a vision," said he
Whose eyes were deepset and dark.

"Love is sheer foam of the sea
Struck by a shattered fire-spark.
Vision intangible, dim mystery,
As vain as the song of the lark!"
--- His strong eyes were deepset and dark.

"Love is a wraith," said the third,
Who had tasted of life over-well.

"A wraith from the Pit upstirred
To garner men down into hell;
Ever bewraying God and His word,
Enweaving the world in its spell!"
--- He had tasted of life over-well.

"Aye, thing and vision and wraith!"
Cried he whose young eyes were aflame.

"Full sooth is what each master saith;
For the three are but one and the same ---
Since each of the three bides in faith,
And Faith is Love's mystical name!"
He was young, and his eyes were aflame

THE WASTREL MUSE

Drifting through the rifted ages
From the primal dawning-mist ;
Lingering a space o'er pages
Scarce in greeting-parting kissed,
She is ever fleeting --- fleeting ---
Where the newer voices ring ;
Waster of the breath of greeting .
Vagrant and a-wandering !

Constancy has left her keeping ;
Dare she tarry, she forswears
All the gods' good gifts, but weeping ---
This in every hour she shares .
Yet through all her very madness
Loveliness is hers to sing ;
Squandering the moment's gladness .
Vagrant and a-wandering

Deep through all her touch is thrilling
Somewhat more than men may feel :
Somewhat of the fear-instilling
Glory that the gods reveal ;
And her sole reward in giving
Is this joy that she may bring .
Careless of the End of Living .
Vagrant, and a-wander'ng !

S o n g s A t H o m e

WITH FAITH ABIDING

Tomorrow sits not in Today's enthroning,
 Nor Spring in Winter's . Ever drift we, fleeting
 Across Life's wide expanse, and ever meeting
The Change we cannot stay yet must be moaning!
Friendship and custom, thought itself disowning
 In some degree with each new day's completing,
 Onward or back we move till Death's quick greeting
Leaves us with peace, and the dim pines' intoning
From youth to age, from birth to our maturing,
 We grow and change to life's remotest deeps;
From youth to age we clasp the reassuring
Firm hand of Change, that all our future keeps;
 And yet from youth to age we find enduring
The love that humblers not nor ever sleeps!

S o n g s A t H o m e

T H E L O N E P I N E

Dawn on the mist; above the trees
 A lonely pine uprears
Long ghost-hung branches to the breeze,
 Scarred by the olden years.

The mist writhes upward, at the spell
 Of some far-hidden bird;
But clearer grows the sentinel,
 His brethren dim and blurred

So stand, my soul, amid thy fears
 High over wind and wraith;
Across the darkling drift of years
 A sentinel to faith!

V I C T O R Y

Thus I would die --- not with the timbrel's blare
 And blazonry of splendor on the sky,
 Nor with the hymn of triumph swelling high,
The victor's crown, the flaming swords in air;
Not with a proud magnificence to flare
 My spirit forth in conquest; nor with sly
 Wild gropings after life, with tear and sigh
And mutterings of sadness and despair ---
 Thus, I would die!

But might I lie beneath some cedar barge
 Where ghostly sedge and water whisper by,
I think the stars would sing me welcome there;
Till, with the dawn-mists veiling earth in prayer
 God's hand would steal to mine, bid me forth fare ---
 Thus I would die

Three men lay dying with the dying sun.

"I wonder why we were afraid?" says one.

"Why, death is only sleep, when all is done!"

"You lie!" gasps one, atremble. And "You lie!

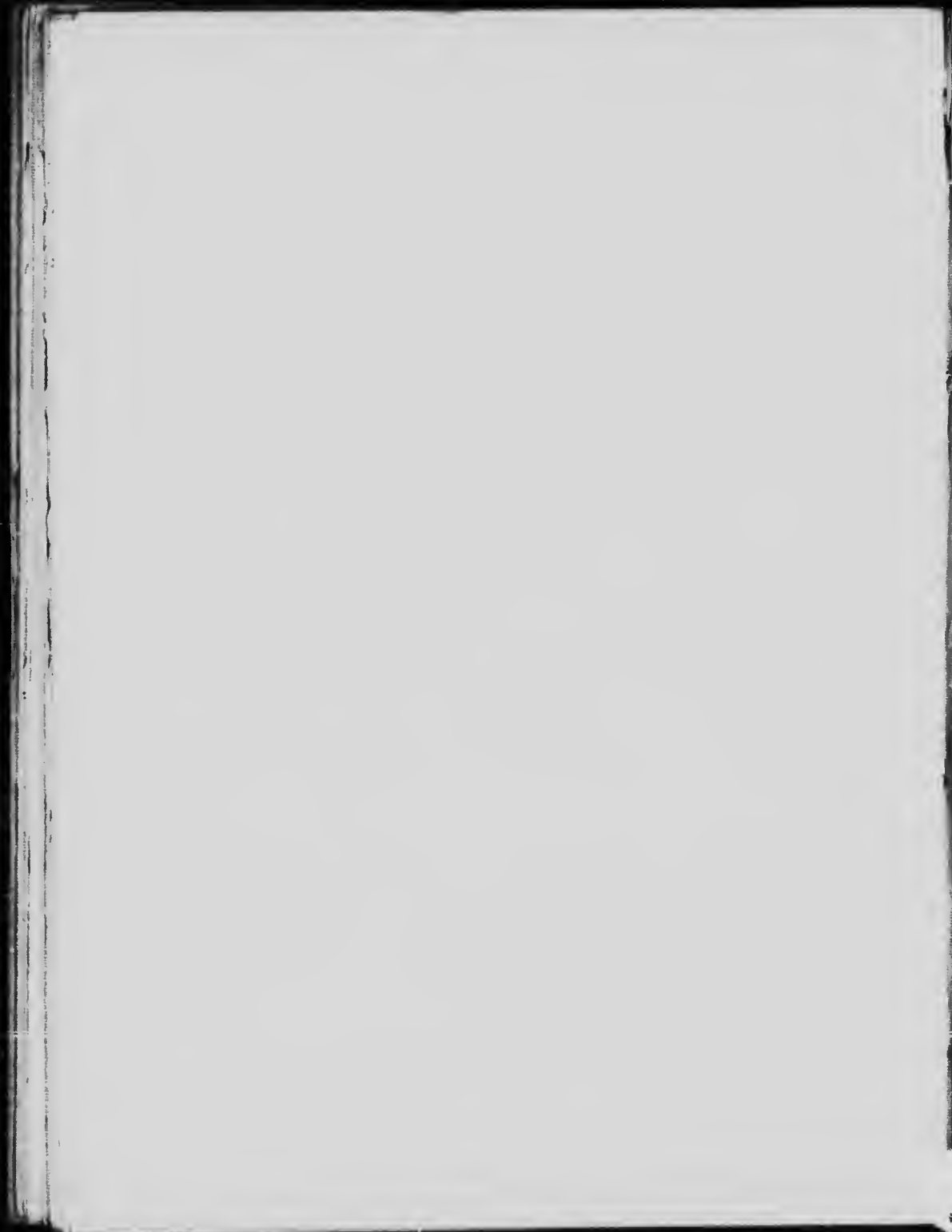
Death is the end, and we are lost who die!

God! If I could but live again, and try..."

"Peace!" one laughs out. "See how the green
trees sway

That but a week ago stood stark and gray!"

Three men lay dead upon an April day.



THE OLD CORYCIAN

I recollect an old Corycian, who,
 Possessed of some poor acres near divine
 Oebalia, --- land too sterile for the kine
To graze upon, too rough for ploughing, --- knew
The art of gardening ; there, peeping through
 His thorns were lilies, poppies seeded fine,
 And hyacinths: belied was every sign
Of winter, in his purple roses' hue !

First unto him would April bring reward
 Of blossom, his the fruit first: August brings ;
And home returning late, his humble board
 Was freely graced with earth's rich offerings.
Happy old man ! Dame Nature's toil-won hoard
 Matched in thy heart's content the feast of kings !

A SONNET OF FELIX ANVERS

Within my soul there lies a secret, thieved
Eternally from Love, that knows no sleep.
All ignorant is she, whose name lies deep
Enshrined within my heart; nor has she grieved
With love's kind grief; and naught have I achieved
Though ever at her side. Thus I shall keep
My secret, while I live. How should I reap
A meed unasked, when none can be received?

For she, whom God has made so sweet and tender,
Goes calmly on her way, and will not hear
The murmured homage Love would gladly render ---
So pure she is, so quiet and austere I
Reading this verse she fails herself to see
And smiling, asks "Who may this angel be?"

S o n g s A b r o a d

ADVENTURERS ALL

"Battle!" sang one, and thundered
 A saga of land and sea;
"Love!" whispered one, and wondered
 If his soul held love in fee;
"Gold!" slavered one, and blundered
 With tongue that was over-free;
 But
"Freedom!" laughed one --- and sundered
 The lies of the other three

IN THE NORTH

Pine-needles, mute on the sand,
 That once sang low in the breeze;
But the winds may never command
Pine-needles, mute on the sand.
And we, sitting here hand in hand,
 Shall lie, as the Deathless Ones please ---
Pine-needles, mute on the sand,
 That once sang low in the breeze

DE MUSSET'S EVENSONG

Star, perishing above the darkened hill,
 Sad tear of silver on the stole of night,
 Where lies thy way, unseen of our faint sight,
Across the deeps? Dost thou, beside some rill
Of roses redolent, seek unrest to still?
 Is this the end, haply to quench thy flight
 Enwrapt in silence, falling like some white
Clear pearl athwart the glinting wavelet-thrill?

If such thy thought, thus to repose and lay
 Thy fairness low in Lethe, and forget
 All thou hast been, between the wings of Death, ...
Then, Star, bethink thee ere the skies cloud gray!
 For though thy spirit bides in darkness, yet
 Ever upon the dawn will steal Love's breath!

S o n g s A b r o a d

RONSARD TO HELENE

Spinning beside the winter's fire, your hair
 A silvern crown beneath the candles dim,
 The thought will come, as these my songs you hymn ---
"Ronsard enbrined me, when that I was fair!"
Then not a drowsy servant by you there,
 Half dozing, feigning work to suit your whim,
 But shall awaken at those songs of him
And bless you, for the love he held so rare.

But I shall be at rest, while up above
 The myrtle shadows weave my mystic pyre,
 When you will croon across a dying fire
And mourn your old disdain, and my lost love.
 Ah, live and love, nor wait the morrow's dawn:
 Cull thou Youth's rose, Helene, ere it be gone!

DE MUSSET'S CHANSON

I whispered to my heart, my feeble heart,
 'Is it not enough to love sincerely?
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To lose youth's blessing in the worldly mart?

Heart answered 'Nay, not thus is Fate bestead!
 It is not enough to love sincerely;
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To render sweet the pleasures that are dead?

I whispered to my heart, my feeble heart,
 'Does not Life buy of its grief too dearly?
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To seek each day new griefs within the mart?

Heart answered 'Nay, not thus is Fate bestead!
 Life buys not its share of grief too dearly;
 Dost not see that fickle love is merely
To render sweet the anguish that is dead?

AN OLDEN RHYME

Fount of delight, whose crystal clearness merits
 Rich wine and flowers, I vow to thee at dawn
A yearling kid, whose swelling brow inherits
 Vain promise of a life so soon foregone ---

Soon, when across thy diamond-sparkling whiteness
 Shrined in its fairness of low-drooping leaves,
Shall dash the rubies of his life, their brightness
 Fled on the shadows which the dawn-sword cleaves

Thee the dread season of yon dogstar blazing
 May not affect, for to thy ripples cool
Wander the weary herds, too spent for grazing.
 I : in the lure of thy sweet-darkling pool.

Fame shall be thine of fountains old in story;
 While that gnarled oak, whose arms entwining strong
Protect the birth of all thy babbling glory,
 Shall fear no death, long living in my song!

OLD MEMORIES

You make me heartsick, sending me this green
 Old bit of stucco! Here I work, exist,
 Gain nothing. Once again I feel the mist
Just etching the lagunes in opaline;
Wan tapers at the old shrine there, between
 The bridge and Balbi; gentle lap and list
 From the canal below; and then dawn-kissed
Salute's miracle. Ah, I have seen!

Look just one side the Molo landing, where
 That long black shivering shadow strains the eye
That's Marco's gondola. Far over there
 Beneath cool San Lazzaro, we would lie
Half the day --- broken dreams, far-gathered here!
 For thee, Venezia, age hath no secret!

ADDRESS OF OISIN TO SAINT PATRICK

When Fionn reclined on the crag's stony flank, and sang
 Brave songs to us there, till courage made all our blood leap,
 And his sweet-fashioned words were lost in the weapons' clang,
 And our shouting resounded till all dark Glen-miala rang;
 When he chanted a soft pleasing lay, that fell to the heroes below
 Till their senses were lost in its charm, as gently they sank
 into sleep ---

Ah, sweeter that song by far, than thy music's flow,
 Thou Singer of Hymns !

Sweet are the notes of the thrush, that quiver and rise
 And lade the fresh air of the morn with their dew-bedimmed
 pearls :

Sweet is the rush of the waves, as the evening air dies,
 And the shaft of the moon o'er the breast of the swift billows
 flies :

Sweet were our clear-ringing harps, as we swept the far-
 swelling chord --- so I

While we watched the slow smoke-clouds ascend, and the
 flames in their glittering whirrs :

And sweeter that song by far, than thy music's flow,
 Thou Singer of Hymns !

Loudly of old would we greet the great-echoing shout
 Resounding and flinging afar from each mountain and glen
 Ringing and gay would our horns send wild music about
 Over baying of hounds and clatter of swift-sweeping rout I
 And thou tellest me, Cleric, that I and all heroes of Fionn will
 know

Deep pains in some Hell ? It is good --- I will see my
 companions again !

And sweeter their hunt-song by far, than thy music's flow,
 Thou Singer of Hymns !

THE WAYS OF THE GODS

Lo !

Gaily the King, in feasting and riot, squandered the wasting
hours of fate ;

Far in the dim death-quiet forest flourished a Sapling, fair
and straight ;

And a Child was watching the bowmen shooting, hard by
the Syrian palace gate .

Lo !

Here was the King in common armor, garbed in the garb
that his thousands wore ;

Loose in its quiver stood an Arrow, feathered and barbed as
a dozen more ;

While an Archer waited the signal, trembling, sick to the
soul with the dust and gore .

Lo !

Swiftly apace the King upraised his shield to the blow
of a quick-flung spear ;

Aimlessly snapped the Archer's bow, as he stood and
watched in the battle rear ;

And the bolt flew home to the finger-breadth of space in the
joint of the proud King's gear !

THE O U T R I D E R S

There's a shard of a shattered rifle-butt in the sands of the
Kizil Kum;

There's a faded rag of an unknown flag in the depths of the
Andes' gloom;

There's a crimson smudge on a camel-loop where an Afghan
tent is spread ---

And this is all that the winds recall of the Men Whose Blood
Was Red.

It's 'Smith was across the harbor mouth when a searchlight
showed him clear;'

Or 'When Brown was drilled and his last man killed they hoisted
him on a spear;'

Or 'The sprawled-out chap that you potted last gave Billy his
bit of lead ---'

And this is all that their mates recall of the Men Whose Blood
Was Red.

But soft in the surge of the German seas, or under the Sussex
skies,

Or low in the drone of the northwoods' moan comes a whisper
that never dies.

'There was pity and love in his heart for all --- ah, God, let me
hear his tread!'

For this is all their mothers recall of the Men Whose Blood
Was Red.

S o n g s A b r o a d

G O D ' S W A Y

"Oh for a draught from the spring
At the old village gate!" sighed the King.
 And the Three stole down through the foe
 Filled a helm at the well --- "blow for blow
Oh my king, blood for blood then we gave
Till we broke them, as ship's prow the wave!
 So drink; it is heart's love we bring,
 Oh my king!"

"Say rather, a blood-offering,
My children!" The weary-eyed King
 Took the helm. "No gift worthy of me,
 But only of God. Let it be
To His honor, my warriors --- so!"
But a heat-withered thistle below
 Caught the life-giving water. God's way?
 Who shall say?

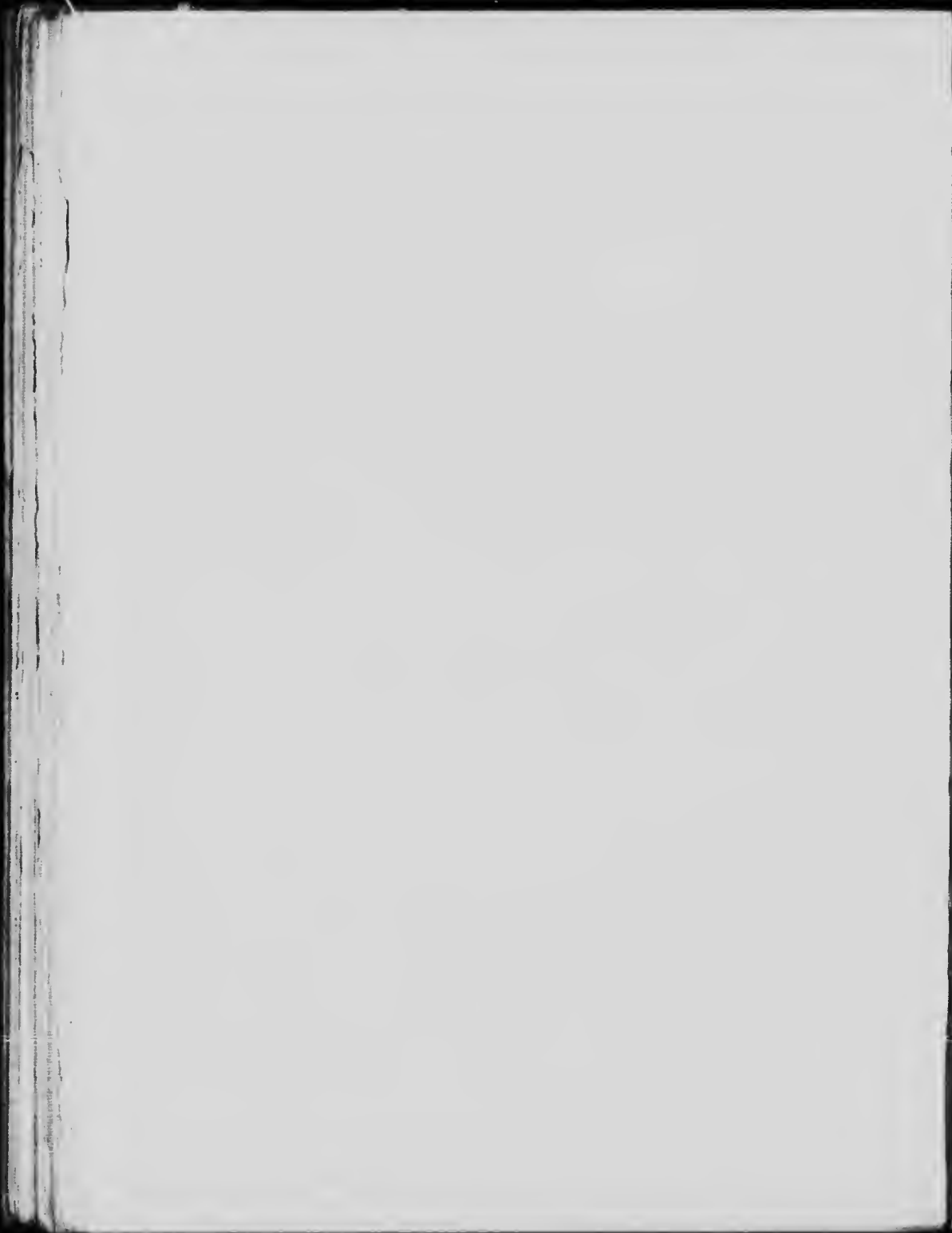
S o n g s A b r o a d

D R O M E N G R O

Oh voices faint that lift to me, that drift to me & call me
From over the dim distances to bid me wander home,
What know you of the sweetness of the miracles that thrall me --
The bird athwart the white road & the snowy salt
sea-foam !

So bide you in your happiness & smug content behind me,
Nor cry to me to join you in the peace I cannot know ;
For when I seek to turn again, the shreds of sunlight blind me
And raindrops pelt me onward in the way that I must go.

Oh brethren of the olden days, the golden days far-dying,
We'll meet again to part again, for I am none of mine ;
And while you're biding safe abed, there be a shadow flying
Across the dim-lit pathway where the stars make silvern
wine !



What makes the world? Why, only this:

Two little dimpled cheeks to kiss,

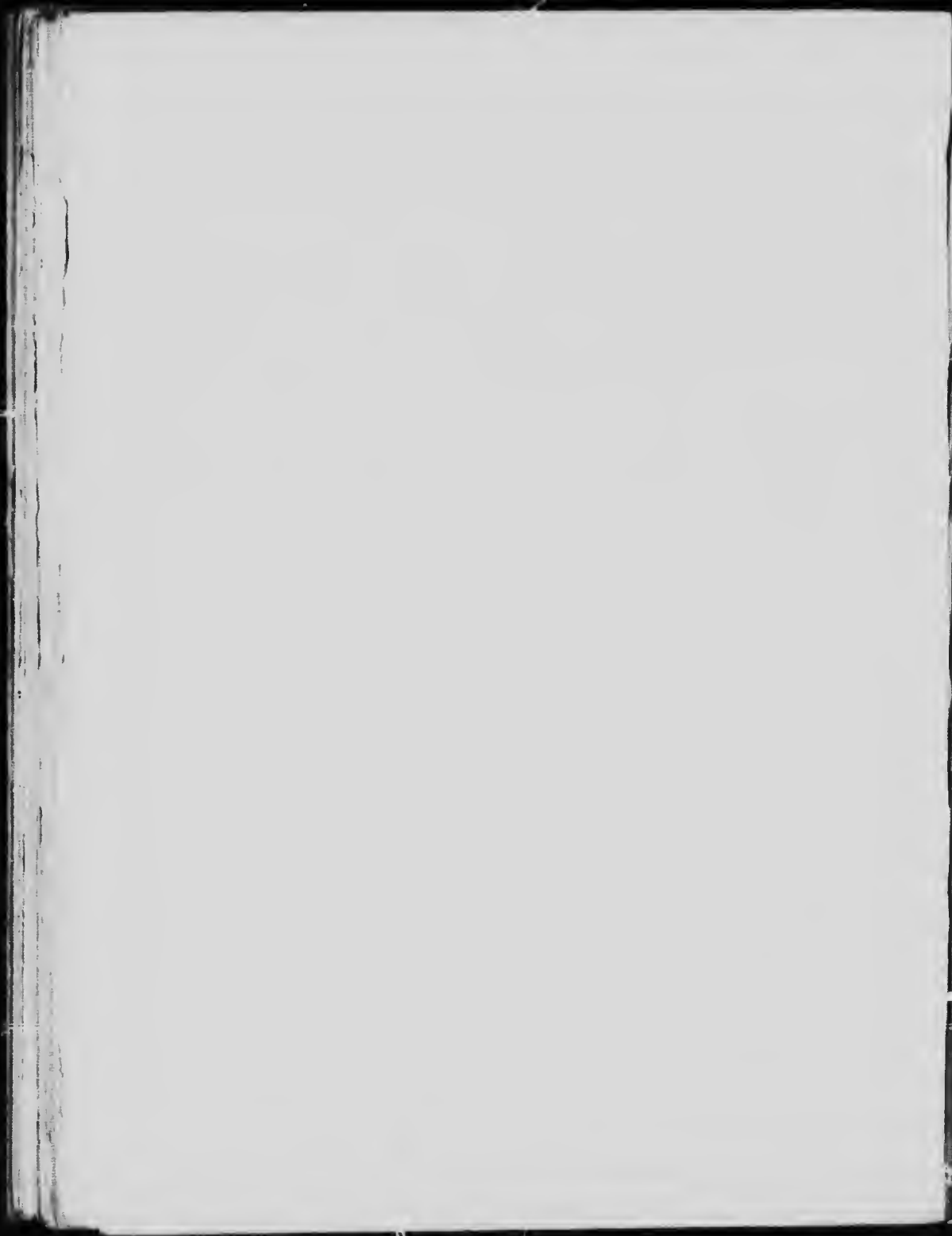
Two little eyes to gaze into

Alight with Heaven's purest blue,

A little crib to bend above

In fullness of the mother-love ...

This makes the world!



THE HILLS

Upon the hills above the lonely plain
Stand wondering shepherds, while some Presence thrills
The restless sheep; then over vales and rills,
Sheepcots and crags, outbursts the heavenly strain:
"Peace! Peace on earth, goodwill to men!" Refrain
Upon refrain bears forth the word, and stills
The far-off echo; and as those rude wills
Bow to the will divine, 'tis night again
Upon the hills.

So on our night of sorrow or of pain
A glory streams that all our darkness fills;
A Word descends to lighten these our ills---
"Behold, I bring you tidings;" And we gain
Some measure of His peace, that falls as rain
Upon the hills.

LABHAIR'S LULLABY

A lone blackbird is singing down by the valley road
And the voice of the cedars murmurs low;
The ocean is agleam, while on the shore bestowed
The chonnail-sprouts are springing, by the four winds sowed,
And the apple-blossoms blow
But the waves are failing slow,
And they flame and flare again with the radiant sunset fire
That leaps from out the west, the dead day's funeral pyre.
So rest, my princeling, rest ye so!

The West Wind is wafting unto the hall of shells
Of her rest from the dim unknown deep;
While from the high-hung shields, like some wild hunter's bells,
The little breeze re-echoes all the tale it tells;
Then the darker shadows creep
Till Ard-Cruagh's frowning steep
Is enwrapt in purple shades, and across the evening sky
The pale sweet moonbeams sweep, and the long lights softly die.
So rest, my princeling, rest and sleep!

L u m b e r S o n g s

EVENING ON THE PLAINS

Wan are the skies, their tarnished silver glowing
As some old loving-cup held down from God
To the black earth beneath --- the world-rim showing
Sharp on the sky, a grim black line forth-flowing
Like God's huge chastening rod.

And, terrible against the silver drifting,
Hang high black clouds knife-edged and bleak and dark;
But, set between the rod and the cloud-rifting,
Over that heaven-chalice brave gleams sifting,
The Evening Star --- God's mark!

GIPSY SLUMBER-SONG

Under the hedges the thin grey stringing
Gnat-clouds murmur day's threnody:
Out of the gathering dusk comes flinging
A little brown bat, all wierdly winging
Over the fields, and fireflies are stringing
Jewels of flame on the old yew-tree.
Eventide comes to thee, little one, bringing
Rest and strength in the song of her singing.
Strength and rest to the wanderers, clinging
Ever and ever to ways that are free:
Sleep, little chal of the Romany!

Silent and cold the forges are sleeping
Under the old yew's canopy:
Darkness is come, and the dew is seeping
Down to the tired earth, weary with weeping.
Down from the dear stars, pallidly peeping ---
Dew, and dreams of night-mystery.
Rest, my babe, as the shadows come creeping
Over the hill, and slumber is steeping
Earth and sky in the peace of its keeping ---
Rest and strength to the earth and thee.
Sleep, little pal of the Romany!

THE AUTUMN NIGHT

Sleep, little babe in your crib so white,
Like the first thin snow on the fields outside;
Mother is near, through the long dark night,
- Oh love of my love lie still! -
And her heart all your tears and your grief will hide.
So sleep, while over the fields and town,
Over the streets and the stubble brown,
The breeze will whisper its wafted air ---
"Oh babe so tender, babe so rare,
Goodnight!"

Far overhead through the frost-clear sky
The wild geese wing to the south again:
Rustling and shivering leaves hang dry
- Oh heart of my heart, lie still! -
On the vines that are brushing against the pane,
But sleep, for after the snow comes spring!
And after the night the dawning will bring
A breeze to whisper you, sweet and sure,
"Oh babe so tender, babe so pure,
Good-day!"

THE NORTHLAND MOTHER

Sleep, my babe, sleep!

Far in the hemlocks the north wind is howling,

Far in the forest a gray wolf is prowling,

And snowdrifts are deep:

But here in the cabin, dear heart, do not fear thee,

Mother's close by and the Sandman is near thee ---

So sleep, my babe, sleep

Sleep, my babe, sleep!

Over the forest the cedars are singing,

Over the lone trail snowshoes are swinging,

For white drifts are deep:

But here in the cabin the hearth fire is gleaming,

Under thee, over thee, deep shadows streaming ---

So sleep, my babe, sleep

THE OTTAWA MOTHER

A silver glinting mist-sheen pearls the softness of the night.

Sing softly, little meadow-lark, sing low!

And across the long swamp shadows gleam the lilies,
tender white,

- Soft, my little screebird, low! -

While all the old ghost-warriors meet at the dead pine tree
To smoke the ghost-pipe once again; and ere they leave
to thee

My sturdy voyagers they bring the dreams that none may see

Save but the dreams of long ago

Oh darling little meadow-lark, sing low

Thy father in the old canoe is fixing down the shore

- Cry softly, little cedar-owl, cry low!

With gleaming trout and siskiwet to keep the winter's store

Soft, my little night-owl, low!

So sleep thee soundly, while the tall firs whisper overhead

Their dim songs of the elden day before our race was dead

And all the night long I am watching, close beside thy bed

In the cabin, by the faint star-glow

Oh plaintive little cedar-owl, cry low!

THE FISHER-WIFE

Out on the sea where the sad winds wail

- Sad and low, sad and low! -

I catch the flash of thy father's sail

Dipping from sight in the sunset glow.

He comes no more till the dim stars die.

And the day gleams red in the eastern sky

Baby of mine,

Oh baby of mine, hush, hush thy cry,

For the deep sea-moan holds grief of its own ---

Grieve not my heart with thine!

Out on the sea where the low gulls wheel

- Sad and slow, sad and slow! -

The writhing night-mists twine and steal,

Veiling the infinite ocean's woe:

Father will come when the nets are drawn,

With a kiss for thee as the night is gone!

Baby of mine,

Oh baby of mine, in the blushing dawn

He will come to me, with a kiss for thee

On the crest of the tossing brine!

S l u m b e r S o n g s

AN OJIBWAY CRADLE-SONG

Low, pines, sing low !
All day long the giant hemlocks hymned of war and strife ;
 Now as darkness gathers closer, slow lake-breezes drifting,
All the hidden forest life
 Murmurs through the lifting
 Lilting light wind's rifling,
Sifting songs of rest and slumber from the soft star-glow.
Low, pines, sing low !

Low, pines, sing low,
Breathing dreams from out the low moon hanging in the east !
 Dreams to a papoose, birch-cradled, underneath the
 sweeping
Cedar boughs, in moonlight fleeced.
 Sing, while night o'er-creeping
 Hovers close, and leaping
Weeping wavelets answer softly from the beach below :
Low, pines, sing low !

OISIN'S SLUMBERING

O sweet pale star
Of descending night!
Thy glittering crest
Casts fair and far
A shaft of light
From the closing gates of the silvery west
As thy far-flung locks stream high.
The restless ocean in anger leaps;
Ghosts of dead heroes ride on the blast:
Over the waters the long dawn creeps
Faintly and silently --- yet how fast!
Thy faint light falls, as the sad stars die.
Soft as a lover's sigh
Over the darkling waves; but the sleep
Which covers the world cannot quench thy gleam
So pure and calm and crystal-deep ---
Sweet as the dawnflush, soft as a dream
Or the limpid pool of a mountain stream, ---
While the snows of the tossing billows roll
And the storm-winds swell
O purest light of my soul,
Farewell!

Slumber Songs

A GAELIC LULLABY

Hush, little heart of me! The birds are dreaming,
The soft pale starlight through the treetops streaming;
The close-laid chonnail-thatch is o'er thee,
The long sweet night lies all before thee,
While far at sea thy father's sail is gleaming.
So hush, dear little love of mine --- ah, hush thee!

The Little People through the fields are stealing,
The fairy chimes from Creagh's hill are pealing,
And dreams of love, on silver wings,
To thee alone sweet slumber brings,
All cares and troubles of the day concealing.
So rest, dear little love of mine --- ah, hush thee!

IMPLORATION

Dear Lord, the world is very great and strong
And turns its eyes from Thee; yet one true soul
May win men's faith, with-holding them from wrong.
And with his reverence pervade the whole.
Lord, make him such as this!

Hold him in peace, far from the busy mart
That blunts the spirit; or, if this must be,
So guard him that thy love within his heart
May keep him pure, and ever near to thee.
Lord, make him such as this!

Give him not world-hopes but the nobler need ---
New life Thy hand brought from the Gates of Death;
That he may have no failing faith or creed.
But trust in Thy sure hand that quickeneth.
Lord, make him such as this!

A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

So long ago Thou gavest men a greeting
Of peace and kindness, on that first day
When war was not, and all the wide earth lay
In quiet. Is remembrance then so fleeting.
Dear Lord -- have men so soon forgotten Thee?
Ah, no! And yet the long tumultuous sea
Of life sweeps on, in waves of strife and danger,
And Love seems very old and weak and sore!
Lord, if thou wilt, give grief and many a tear;
But never in his life come, as a stranger,
To him who liest here!

He is so little! Hold him in Thy keeping.
For Thou art Love, and let him know Thy face:
Cast over him the mantle of Thy grace.
Kind Shepherd, in his waking and his sleeping.
Let him seek Thy sure refuge when oppressed
By trouble, and he has no mother-breast
To flee to; guide him safe through joy and sorrow
In shadow of the Cross that Thou hast worn.
Hear this my prayer, dear Lord! Be near from morn
To eve; and bless him in Thy love tomorrow,
The day that Thou wast born!

AN EVENING SONG

Oh Sleep, who takest babes to thee,
Take now my baby dear!
Thou findest him so frail and small;
Ah, bring him back all strong and tall---
As lofty as the cypress tree
Upon the mountain here!
Be thou his keeper, fasten thou
The seal of slumber on his brow!

Oh Peace, who takest babes to thee,
Take now this babe of mine!
Thou findest him so helpless-weak;
Ah, bring him back with soft-kissed cheek.
And let thy soothing gift abide
Within his spirit-shrine!
Be thou his warder, guard him sure,
And keep him ever strong and pure!

S l u m b e r S o n g s

MORNING SONG

Waken, baby! Dreams come true,
 Stars have fled and night has ceased!
All the sky is rose and blue
 With the morning vapors fleeced!
See, the day has come for you
 From the threshold of the East!

Waken, for the birds anew
 Greet the sun-flame from the corn;
Buttercups, agleam with dew,
 Open to the touch of morn.
Waken, babel! It is for you
 That this dawn-delight is born!



Lovers laugh the world away,
Youth & life & love are gay!

All too fleet,

Tripping feet

Fail in death at close of day ...

Never leads the dance astray;

Never youth with wisdom lay!

..., Capistrano



From "Water" of "Strife"

THE OLD BRONZE

See, where the steady hand has slipped, and marred
The level line! Perchance the weary eyes
Lifted to rest on the majestic rise
Of Fuji, far above; and so was scarred
A memory in the bronze. "Yet Heaven is starred
Unevenly!" the patient worker sighs.
"Perhaps He, too, grew weary of the skies
And glanced at Fuji. Was His art so hard?"

Poor simple graver by the temple gate!
More beautiful a thousandfold in this
One errant line, the bronze accounted spoiled
Is perfect; be thy master-craft assoiled!
God breathed upon thee softly with His kiss
Till in its flaw thy work is consecrate.

From "The Border Of Blades"

SONG OF JANI

A breeze crept up from the waves, and caressed the tree,
 Beaming each leaf astir in the sun's pale gleam
And so in my love would I waft a caress to thee
 That might all too lightly and melt, on the wings of a dream!

A flame stole out of the west, as the dark sun waned,
 That touched where it died, the locks of the evening star;
And so in my song would I reach to the unattained ---
 Touching thy spirit but lightly and once from afar!

From "Far Far-wandering"

AWAY

some urn, sea-hued and long immured,
 wreathed with myrtle, rosemary and bays,
 hung down to Eternity by
 whose dear prayers would have secured
 the old Earth lured
 to the dream of younger days,
 And cast behind the irreligious gaze
 Of all men -- like this ancient bronze insured
 Of quietness forever, I was fain
 To dwell far from the drumming city's marts
 To dream away Eternity, to gain
 Surcease from that unrest within men's hearts --
 Until I glimpsed a soul. Strangely
 Life's ministry was mine: the rest was vain!

From "Capistrano"

1

"Serve God and die,"
The Wise Man said;
His dust was dry
When he lay dead.
Men came and made
The dust to brick ---
The Wise Man laid
In wa'ls built thick.
Who serves God dies;
Who serves man, lives:
He was not wise.
Yet service gives

2

Golden lies the sand road, the long road, the grand road,
Dusty gold a-sifting to the lifting of the breeze;
Weary are the footsteps traveling the land road,
But kings and fools go drifting to the shifting of the coast

From "Blood Royal"

UNDERTONES

We who have joyed in life's good,
We who have laughed at despair,
We who have sorrowed and stood
Side by side over our dead ---

 Shall we care

For the things that will some day be said

When we are sped? Truth is where ---

 Where be lead?

Here, for the life we shall live:

Here, for the trust we shall find:

Here, for the good we shall give

Careless of them that may come.

 For the wind

Bloweth free, with no thought to the hum

Of the cedars behind! Faith is dumb

 And is blind!

JEAN LE LONGUE

Oh, Jean le Longue hees arm be strong
And he's take hees whiskey clear;
He's buck de jam and he's fight de cam',
And hees arm be broke and he's skin hees han',
But he's drive de Irish from Michigan I
He's roll de boss on de bar-room floor
Den Jean le Longue go look for more,
For he's take hees whiskey clear, by gar ---
He's take hees whiskey clear I

Oh, Jean le Longue hees arm be strong
And he's take hees whiskey clear;
He's look for fight from dawn to night,
And he's put de calks to de Irishman I
He's bus' de jail at Pierre le Gran',
He's lose one eye and hees ear's been tore,
But hees fis' she split dat big jail door I
For he's take hees whiskey clear, by gar ---
He's take hees whiskey clear I

STRANG'S AXE - SONG

For work and ache and sweat, for weary strife
By spear and peavey, oar and trap and net,
The northland gives men a wage of life ---
And sells it dear, for toll of work and sweat !

Yet men gain something more, A grave apart
Where cedars whisper requiem to the stars ;
A dwelling close to God, an honest heart,
Hands gnarled from toil and rough with honor's scars ;
Contempt from lesser men, perhaps; a strong
Sure faith in all the things which are not seen ;
A simple trust that Right is more than Wrong,
Thanks unto God because the leaves are green !
And with it all, the deep respect of those
Who labor at their side by wave or wood ;
The surety that He who made them knows
How, while the axe may slip, it still is good !

So, for hard labor and unceasing strife
By axe and peavey, oar and saw and net
The north woods give a larger wage than life ---
And ask no price, save only work and sweat !

JIM'S SONG

I will weave on a warp of God's beauty,
A woof of the winds and star-dust;
I will fashion a fabric of duty
And bind up its edges with trust;
I will forge me a sword of decision
And hilt it with faith sprung anew;
And the world shall bow down to my vision,
For my vision is -- you!

I will take of the tears of the gloaming,
Of the delicate laughter of dawn,
The splendor of sea-surges foaming,
The sweetness of days that are gone;
I will fashion a song from my plunder,
A song such as never man knew;
And the world shall bow down to my wonder,
For my wonder is -- you!

Till out on the lonely sand-reaches
And out on the desolate hills,
And out on the palm-scattered beaches
And out where the frost-terror kills ---
Men shall hear my song ever re-ringing
Till their heartache shall whisper them "True!"
And the world shall bow down to my singing,
For my song is of you!

C R E D O

When God's hand touches mine, in sure appeal,
To call me forth among the greater things,
I would it came where slow waves fade and steal
And cedars fill the night with whisperings.

It is not mine to dream afar, and seek
The Grails of pomp and power where others throng,
Let it be mine to know how Might is weak,
How Truth and Justice fare not with the strong I

Not mine to find the crown that greatness brings,
The hymn of triumph and the flame of swords;
Still let my hand shrink from the deeper strings
To touch the beauty of the minor chords.

No gift be mine of prophet's high insight,
No fiery eloquence of faith assailed;
Mine not to lead, but follow after, Right ---
And if they will, let men deem I have failed.

Say this of me: He found peace after strife,
And trust in Nature's wisdom held him true;
His steps were cast in humbler walks of life ---
Perchance God loved him, for his deeds were few I

