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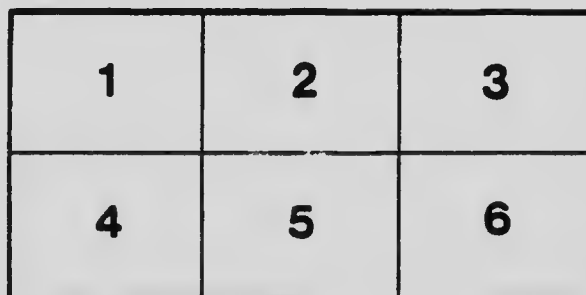
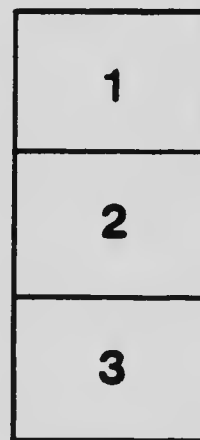
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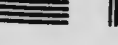
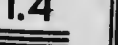
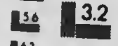
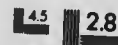
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# From the Balcony

and

## Other Poems



BY

KATE SEYMOUR MACLEAN

# From the Balcony

and

## Other Poems

BY

KATE SEYMOUR MACLEAN

*"And smalle fowles make melody  
That sleepe all the night with open eye."  
THE CANTERBURY TALES.*

1904  
THE JACKSON PRESS, KINGSTON

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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1. From the Balcony.
2. A Bird Song.
3. Next-door Neighbors.
4. Birds of Passage.
5. The White-throated Sparrow.
6. "Wood-notes Wild."
7. October.
8. The Cuckoo Song.
9. Sunset.
10. Voices of June.
11. On the River.
12. The Captive Heron.
13. In September.
14. A Forerunner.
15. Midsummer Woods.
16. The Serenaders.
17. A Memorial of Certain Dumb Friends.
18. In the Forest of Arden.
19. October.
20. Three Bird-songs.
21. The Stone-cutter.
22. The Cuckoo's Song.
23. Night in the Thousand Islands.



**The Balcony**



9

FROM THE BALCONY.

**T**HIS is my private box above the stage  
Of the great theatre of out-o'-door,  
Roofed by the open sky; whose ample floors  
Of sunny lawns slope down to golden shores.  
The varied scenes my musing thoughts engage,  
Changed with the changing hours of the green May  
Wherein each day is a new matinee.

What silver pipes and flutings usher in  
Each morn with warblings from a thousand throats  
The robin's breeze, and the air which floats  
The full orchestra with its mingled notes  
With which the day's antiphonies begin;  
And all myriad harmonies repeat  
The joyous theme in music loud and sweet.

I do not see the scene-shifter—he slips  
So silently among the opening leaves,  
When dawn is breaking o'er the glimmering eaves,  
And lo! the world is changed, the color weaves  
Itself into the flowers in radiant tips  
Of rosy flame, and tender emerald hues  
Reclothe the boughs, and all the air suffuse.

Or when the curtain is rung down at night,  
The very moment that the lights grow pale,  
I am not sure—nor when the voices fail,  
For then the thrush, our northern nightingale  
Begins his vesper hymn, so clear, so bright  
And all the world is still for rapt delight,  
Ringed with his liquid notes of gold about,  
While in the purple skies the stars come out.

## A BIRD SONG.

**A**RT thou not sweet,  
O world! and glad to the inmost heart of thee?  
All creatures rejoice  
With one rapturous voice,  
As I, with the passionate beat  
Of my overfull heart feel thee sweet,  
And all things that live, and are part of thee!

Light, light as a cloud  
Swimming and trailing its shadow under me,  
I float in the deep  
Like a vision in sleep;  
And the wind makes a murmuring loud  
Far down where the pine tops are bowed:  
And I see where the secret place of the thunders be!

O the sky free and wide,  
With all its cloud banners flung out in it!  
Its singing wind blows  
As a great river flows,  
And I swim down its rhythmical tide,  
Where still the horizon spreads wide,  
With the birds' and the poet's songs like a shout in it!

Oh life, thou art sweet,  
Sweet, sweet to the inmost heart of thee!  
I drink with my eyes  
Thy limitless skies,  
And I feel with the rapturous beat  
Of my wings, O life, thou art sweet,  
And I,—I am alive, and a part of thee!

## NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBORS.

**A** sturdy little mechanic is he,  
A carpenter, sawing away,  
Hammer and chisel he handles with glee,  
Building his house in the old beech tree,  
In his suit of homespun grey.

All the chill morning his rap-tap-tap,  
Rings with a business air and a jerk,  
And still, on his head, his little red cap  
Shakes again with the vigor and snap  
He puts to his morning work.

Warm is his cottage and soft his bed,  
Floors underfoot, and walls overhead,  
As snug and tidy as it can be,  
For his wife is a worker as well as he,  
And the cunning cap on her little round head  
Is velvet black instead of red,  
And crossed demurely under her chin,  
Her kerchief is pinned with a silver pin,  
Modest and matronly.

Of kitchen and larder she keeps the key,  
From meddlesome fingers and prying eyes ;  
She knows where the daintiest morsels be,  
And nice fat grubs of the largest size  
Fit for breakfast and dinner and tea :  
And she leads her chicks in the way to be  
Healthy and merry and wise.

Up in the morning before the sun,  
Some work to be finished, some task begun,  
House repairing and furnishing too,  
Chicks to be reared and started in life,—  
Always something or other to do,—  
This jolly carpenter and his wife.

Where do you hide when the tempests roar,  
And black clouds cover the wintry skies,  
Small shy neighbors of mine next door?—  
Safe in your snug little house mayhap :—  
But when the snow like a blanket lies,  
And the woods are still, and the sun shines out,  
And the weeds like gems are flashing about,  
I hear your rhythmical rap-tap-tap,  
And catch the gleam of a bright red cap  
Nodding in time to this ancient scrap  
Of feathered philosophy, sage and sonud  
For him who walks, as for him who flies  
'Tis good to be busy all the year round,—  
Good to be merry and wise.

## BIRDS OF PASSAGE.

Ⓝ UT of the north two wild birds came—  
Out of the north where the ice-floes lie,  
And the desolate land, and the cruel sea,  
And the silent gulfs no man may name.  
Leagues of darkness and boreal cold,  
Ghastly glimmer of ice locked fiords,  
And frost that cuts to the bone like swords.  
Birds of the Northland swift and bold,  
Glossy of feather and strong of wing,  
Tell us, what are the news ye bring.

What news of the captain and his crew,  
What of the ship in the ice held fast,  
And the storm-worn colors nailed to the mast ;  
Saw ye the lips that are frozen blue,  
Where the yet inviolate billows roll  
Round the awful mystery of the Pole ?  
Small voyageurs of the gulfs of air,  
Storm-vexed and thick with blinding snow,  
When all the slumbering earth below  
Heeds not stern March's trumpets blare,  
What cheer, and whither do ye fare ?

What is the quest that brings you here,  
Is it kindlier skies and ampler cheer ?  
Nay, but the hearts of men are made  
As cold as your arctic atmosphere,  
And hard by the keen demands of trade,  
Fly away to your native haunts again,  
From the covetous eyes and the greed of men.

Your glacier fields are bleak and bare,  
But not so ruthless and empty and vain,  
As the gentle faces of ladies fair,  
Graceful, smiling and debonair,  
Who shriek at the sight of an insect's pain

Yet calmly wear such barbarous things,  
Dismembered bodies, and heads, and wings,  
(Christian mothers and maids, and wives),  
That have cost a thousand innocent lives.

So fly to your native north again,  
From the covetous eyes of Christian men,  
To the home of the wolf and Eskimo,  
And the land of immemorial snow :  
For the bitterest storms of the polar main  
Are not so cruel and not so cold  
As the laws of fashion, the lust of gold.

A whirl and flutter of wings that rise,  
A glimpse of swift pinions as forth they fare.  
And their forms dissolve in the northern skies,  
Adieu "little brothers of the air."

## THE WHITE-THROATED SPARROW.

CLEAR, clear, clear and far,  
Dropping down from the sunset sky,  
Like flute-notes from some wandering star.  
I hear thy lyric cry,  
Clear, clear, clear and high,  
Where the violet shadows of sundown lie.

Receding still, and faint and dim,  
And thrice repeated, like a strain  
From some antique Gregorian hymn,  
Those three bird-syllables again !  
Thrill the rapt ear with melancholy,  
Ascending vesper-wise and holy.

Oh silver throat that sings unseen,  
And by the careless ear unheard,  
So sweet, so sad, and so serene,—  
To me thou art not any bird,  
But the pure soul escaped and free  
Of some lost heavenly melody :—

Three dropped notes from a poet's song  
That found no fuller utterance here,  
Whose solemn harmonies belong  
To some diviner atmosphere,  
Beyond these earthly clouds obscure,—  
Forever clear, forever pure.



"WOOD-NOTES WILD."

A little bird woke singing in the night,  
Dreaming of coming day,  
And piped for very fulness of delight  
His little roundelay ;  
Deeming he heard the wood-lark's carol loud  
Down calling to his mate.  
Like silver rain out of a golden cloud  
At morning's radiant gate

And all for joy of his embowering woods,  
And dewy leaves he sung,  
The summer sunshine, and the summer floods,  
By forest flowers o'er-hung.  
Thou shalt not hear those wild and sylvan notes  
When morn's full chorus pours  
Rejoicing from a thousand feathered throats,  
And the lark sings and soars.—

Oh poet of our glorious land so fair  
Whose foot is at the door,  
Even so my song shall melt into the air,  
And die and be no more ;—  
But thou shalt live,—part of the nation's life,—  
The world shall hear thy voice  
Singing above the noise of war and strife,  
And therefore I rejoice.

## OCTOBER.

**R**OBINS in the rowan trees,  
More than half-seas-over,  
Out of coral cups like these  
Drink the red wine to the lees,  
Not a robin sober,  
Singing, swaying in the breeze,  
Piping in October;

Apples in the orchard fall  
When no wind is stirring,  
Blue the haze is over all,  
You may hear the squirrel's call.  
And the partridge whirring,  
And the house-cat on the wall,  
In the sunshine purring.

By the wayside rustic fence  
Golden rod and asters  
Faintly hint of flower scents  
Wafted fresh and spicy thence,  
Next summer's gay forecasters :  
Now the spider's silver tents  
Dot the autumn pastures.

Robins in the rowan trees  
(More than half-seas-over)  
Out of coral cups like these,  
Drink the red wine to the lees,  
Not a robin sober ;  
Swinging, swaying in the breeze,  
Piping in October.

## THE CUCKOO SONG.

**G**RANDFATHER sat in the chimney nook,  
With his big-bowed spectacles on his nose,  
And the firelight played on his open book,  
And over his old-fashioned Sunday clothes,  
And twinkled and winked from the china shelf  
And the little maid dancing all by herself  
With the shadows that danced on the wainscotted wall,  
Singer and dancer and piper and all,  
As she merrily caroled and danced away,—  
“The cuckoo comes to the fields in May;—  
She feeds on the lilies to keep her voice clear,  
And she never sings cuckoo till spring of the year.”

Grandfather nodded and dozed in his chair,  
The firelight shone on his silver hair,  
And grandmother's flax-wheel buzzed and sung,  
Like a blithe brown bee as the spindle flew,  
While the little maid balanced and gaily swung  
Her shadow-partners as waltzers do.

The cricket chirped on the kitchen hearth,  
And the very fire-dogs twinkled with mirth,—  
And still she sung as she danced away,—  
“The cuckoo comes to the fields in May;—  
She feeds on the lilies to keep her voice clear,  
And she never sings cuckoo till spring of the year.”

## SUNSET.

ⓂUT of the glowing heart of flowery June,  
The affluence of the many-blossomed year,  
Beneath tall hedge rows, and acacia trees,  
I take my fill of honey with the bees :—  
The robin's and the oriole's pipe I hear,  
And feel my heart with all the birds in tune.

Sweet are the budded roses, sweet the smell  
Of the cut clover lying in the dew,  
And faintly-sweet the locusts, whence the sound  
Of loitering honey-bees, and scent of ground  
Fresh-turned between the corn-rows, with the blue  
Corn flowers and grasses, lying where they fell.

Under the arching elms that seem to reach  
In green perspective to the sunset West,  
The haymaker with scythe on shoulder goes,—  
A silhouette against a sky of rose.—  
The small bold piper in the russet vest,  
Remits a note in his half-human speech

A breath's-length, and the far-off sound of bells  
Let clattering down for the slow-stepping cows,  
The herd-boy's whistle, and the watch-dog's bark  
Are heard remote :— swift comes the summer dark,  
As under shadow of dew-laden boughs  
I take my silent way beneath the stars.

## VOICES OF JUNE.

**T**HE dew is on the meadow where the clover  
blossom swings,

The strawberry hides in the grass so lush and tall,  
And over it a wee little drunken birdie sings,—

The soul of the music, and the gladness of it all.  
Bob-o-link, bob-o-link, dink-a-dink, a-diuk-a-diuk,

O dearie, be cheery, be cheery, be cheery !—  
Mar-jor-ie, Mar-jor-ie, here's where the robins drink,—  
Bob-o-link, bob-o-link, dink-a-dankle-dink.

Brown bees and yellow bees murmur in the locust  
trees,

The flicker takes the other side the hickories we  
pass by,  
And up on the topmost bough a-swinging in the  
breeze

The flame-coated oriole whistles wild and high.  
While the lonely white-throat chants his plaintive  
monotone

Chee-chee, chee-chee, Mar-jor-ie, Marjorie,—  
Bird notes falling seemingly out of the blue sky  
Pea-bod-y, pea-bod-y, pea-body-y, far away and  
alone.

Over the long low Cataraqui bridges,

The rustic grass-grown roadway curving round the  
bay,  
Lace-winged dragon-flies, and clouds of silver midges  
Sparkle in the sun like the starry milky-way ;  
While the hoarse-throated grackle, like a rusty-  
hinged gate

Ajar in the wind, sings out of tune and harsh  
His croaking love-song to his husky dusky mate,  
Gurgle, gurgle, dunk ! croak the bull-frogs in the  
marsh.

## ON THE RIVER.

**A** SILVERY tide and a sliding keel,  
That lightly swims as a bird can soar,  
And a rhythmic stroke from muscles of steel,  
And the flash of the ripple that follows the oar :—

With the wind behind and the waves before,  
And the rush of the river among its reeds,  
And the balsamy scent of the firs on shore,  
Water lilies and river weeds ;—

To follow wherever the current leads,  
In and out where the islets lay,  
Green with moss where the pickerel feeds,  
Gray with rocks, and wet with spray.

Ferns and rushes grow rank in the bay ;  
Silvery scale and winking fin  
Flash and flicker and vanish away  
Into the waves where the depths begin ;—

Into the shallows where dragon-flies spin,  
And the marsh hen clucks to her hidden brood,  
Still as a shadow our boat glides in—  
A ghost in a sylvan solitude.

Here in a dim enchanted wood,  
Under the twilight boughs we float,  
Down watery ways, by dreams pursued,  
The silent crew of a shadow boat.

## THE CAPTIVE HERON.

**I** SAW a lonely captive with clipped wings,  
A swift, wild creature of the wave and sky,  
Freest and fiercest of all soaring things,  
And strong of foot and wing to dive or fly,—  
His brave plumes shorn, and dull his piercing eye,  
A rock his prison house, the wave that springs  
In silver spray from the clear fountain nigh  
And the free wind, among the pines that sings,  
Sole comforters of his captivity.

From morn to night he sat, dreaming forlorn  
Of woods and waters he should see no more,  
Of the green river's reeds where he was born.  
And the tall flags that hemmed the sylvan shore,  
When first his untried wing was taught to soar  
Among his brother herons, when the morn  
Was young among the hills, and gray before  
The coming of the sun, as w. & glad scorn  
He cleft the clouds and heard the wild winds roar.

Like the great chief on far St. Helen's isle,  
Discrowned and sceptreless, but kingly still,  
He stood among his prisoning rocks the while,  
Mute, motionless, a captive whose wild will  
No chains could bind, though haply they might kill.  
The sunshine vexed him with its constant smile,  
And the long days that brought no change of ill,  
The mockery of his captors, and the vile  
Close round of thraldom, strong on every side  
To hold the untamed creature,—so he died.

## IN SEPTEMBER.

I SAT alone in a garden seat  
Under the hickory trees,  
And a little bird called sweet, sweet, sweet!  
In a gamut of minor keys.  
The crickets chirped in the aftermath,  
A my. d-blended strain,  
And the ant toiled over the garden path,  
Tugging his winter grain.

His subterranean house and store,  
With its galleries all complete,  
Its tiny cells, and its nursery floor,  
Its secret vaults and its guarded door  
Were builded at my feet.  
And strange it seems among the corn,  
In long crescendo chime,  
To hear the locust's strident horn,  
As in mid harvest time.

For now the squirrel stuffs his cheek  
With nuts and acorns brown,  
And stops and scolds in squirrel Greek,  
Midway from runkled root to peak,  
As he comes scurrying down.  
And all the still September air  
Is sunny as in June,  
But the leaves fall here, and the leaves fall there,  
And the signs of autumn are everywhere,  
For the year's in its afternoon.



## A FORERUNNER.

⊙ BIRD of sleek and glossy sable coat,  
And hoarse and raucous throat,  
That has no voice to warble or to sing,  
Whose solemn flapping wing  
Settles with slow precision in the firs,  
Making a little stir like Spring,  
Among bare boughs,—there is no voice of her's  
More welcome than thy unmelodious note.

I hear thy croaking call,  
In which there is no melody nor cheer,  
Nor any picture of delight at all,  
But just the bold announcement, "Spring is here!"  
Yet in the furrows after April rains  
Thou find'st a scattered few of last year's grains,  
To pay thy heedful searching, and the laws  
Of nature still obedient to thy caws.

O thou most sage of bird philosophers,  
Calling thy mates among the black-boughed firs,  
More sweet to me thine unmellifluous croak  
Than blue bird's whistle or the robin's flute,—  
Thou sayest prophet-wise when they are mute,  
Folding about thee thy funereal cloak  
In such an unromantic business way  
That Spring has come to stay.

## MIDSUMMER WOODS.

THE goldfinch at the thistle down,  
Swings in the warm wind up and down,  
The dandelion's small balloons  
Swim slowly in the July noons,  
The long leaves rustle in the corn,  
The locust winds his strident horn :  
There is no voice of any bird,  
No bark of dog, nor low of herd ;  
The watchful collie lies asleep,  
And in the pool and mid-leg deep,  
The patient cattle ruminates  
On matters of the bovine state.  
Thick is the shade by this cool lake,  
No winds the glassy surface break,  
And far-off sound of voice or oar  
But make succeeding silence more  
Restful and lulling and complete,  
Shut in from noise and dust and heat.  
The busy world seems far away,  
With all the cares of common day ;  
The moss beneath is soft and deep,  
And stealthily the shadows creep  
Where drooping boughs shut out the sky,  
While all unmarked the hours go by.  
Voices are here unheard before,  
Whispers of mystic forest lore  
Rise from the ground, bend from the trees :—  
Some day I shall be part of these,  
Part of the quiet and the shade,  
And the long rest for tired ones made.  
My beating heart shall softly pass  
Into the growing leaves and grass,—  
The music in my soul find wings,  
And mount with every bird that sings,  
And all my being lapsed and gone,  
Still in the universe live on.

Each to its primal element  
Slowly dissolved, and kindly blent,  
Earth, air and water, wind and flame,  
Atoms of this vast general frame,  
Glad and rejoicing still shall be  
Part of this wondrous pageantry.

## THE SERENADERS.

**S**MALL and innumerable, and all night long,  
Musicians of these haunted autumn nights,  
Tuning their zithers under the pale moon  
To such a weird and melancholy tune,  
(Echoes of all the summer's lost delights,)  
Like elfin ghosts repeat the shadow of a song.

Until last eve the harvest fields were mute,  
The hillside pastures had not found a voice,  
Since the soft throats of spring-time hylas ceased  
To pipe till dawn was breaking in the east.  
Where dwelt these unseen players that rejoice  
To-night with myriad noise of elfin harp and flute!

The spider weaves her web of gossamer,  
Spangled with pearls athwart the shaven grass,  
And the brown stubble of the yellow wheat :—  
The fairie meshes to those sylvan feet  
Disturb no slight-poised dewdrop as they pass,  
Though all the mimic world of music is astir.

Out of the chorus breaks the katydid—  
A sibilant blade from a green sheath of sound—  
A momentary flash, and half articulate,  
Protesting of immitigable fate—  
A pebble in the murmurous ocean round,  
Beneath its reflux tide submerged and hid.

The moon moves on in heaven serene and deep,  
And makes black shadows of the spectral trees ;—  
The winds are sleeping, all the air is still :—  
Drowsy the shades that stretch beneath the hill,—  
Drowsy and soft the lullaby from these  
Invisible harps that charm the world to sleep.

## A MEMORIAL OF CERTAIN DUMB FRIENDS.

**T**O-DAY my heart is sad for the helpless and the weak,  
Feudal retainers of man, of whom he is master and lord,  
Whose piteous eyes plead for them, whose dumb lips cannot speak,  
For whom to die is the only goal, and refuge and reward :  
The only refuge, the last,—for merciful death is kind  
To the poor worn bodies and limbs, stiffened with toil and sore,  
Bringing the soft anaesthetic of sleep for the weary, to find  
Rest and peace in the grave where the cruel trouble no more.

Do they not think and feel—do they not certainly know?—  
These thralls of the field, these swift-limbed steeds of the stall,  
Who start and cower and shrink from a cruel word like a blow,  
Whom a child may lead with a tether, who come at a gentle call?  
Fear and desire and shame, and the keen sense of disgrace,  
And love, and a wistful sympathy words could not make more plain,  
Speak in the eloquent limbs, and the sensitive mobile face,—  
Like, and so unlike ourselves in nerve and muscle and brain ;

Unlike in a dumb devotion, which triumphs and survives  
Evil and wrong and cruelty, unquestioning and mute,

Ah, were the balance strictly laid between these alien  
lives,  
Before high heaven, which were the nobler, arro-  
gant man or the brute !

Swift and sure are the steady feet where our's in the  
darkness grope,  
Quick are the listening ears that flinch from the  
lash's stinging hiss ;—

Spirit of slumbering justice, speak !—is there no  
“larger hope,”

No hint of life immortal to right the wrongs of  
this ?—

For I would that somewhere waiting beyond the  
bounds of time

There is balm for the speechless anguish that never  
has been told,

Some sweet and blessed country, some unimagined  
clime,

Where there's room for all God's creatures within  
its sheltering fold.

## IN THE FOREST OF ARDEN.

**K**NOWEST thou the path that leads thither?—  
Hast thou the key to its mystic garden—  
Knowest thou the name of its verger and warden,  
And the frolicsome elves that troop hither,  
By night in the forest of Arden?

For he must have ears to discover  
The clue to this mystical garden,  
And the strange sweet voices that hover  
In shadow and sunlight over,  
And the eyes and the heart of a lover  
To enter the forest of Arden.

For the leaves have a language enchanted,  
That only the bees in the garden  
And the fairy-folk read, and the haunted  
Verse of Orlando, still spoken and chanted  
In the ancient forest of Arden.

Here the high court of Summer is holden,  
As if in a royal-walled garden,  
In verdurous splendor enfolden,  
And a solitude affluent and golden  
In the heart of the forest of Arden.

The bird-lovers know the way thither,  
Free commoners they of the garden,  
The small folk in fur and in feather,  
And the flowery people together,  
Are at home in the forest of Arden.

The throstle pipes in the thicket,  
And the wren's thatched house in the garden,  
Hath its tiny invisible wicket.  
But all the wild things are the picket  
On guard in the forest of Arden.

## OCTOBER.

**S**UMMER days are gone and over,  
The fields are bare where the bluejay sings,  
And the mullein stalks where the brown bird clings ;  
And dragon flies and late bees hover  
In lush swamp grasses and sun-dried clover,  
Haunt of the kildeer and the plover.  
Pipe of snipe, and blackbird's whistle,  
Hips and haws, and down of thistle,  
Shepherd's purse, and plaintain seeds  
Ripen for the small birds' needs.  
Now the clambering bitter sweet  
Opens flame-red berries out,  
Where with nimble hands and feet,  
And many a ringing laugh and shout,  
In hazel trees and hickories brown,  
The schoolboy shakes the russet treasures down.  
Blue the haze rests on the hill,  
Wave and sky look far and dim,  
Fleecy cloudlets sail and swim,  
Autumn days are soft and still.  
Autumn harvests gathered in,  
Golden apples in the bin.  
Fruit and corn and yellow wheat  
Make the farmer's store complete.  
Sharp-eyed gleaners in the path  
Of the ox-cart's rustling sheaves, —  
Reapers of the aftermath, —  
Burrowers among the leaves,  
Where the spider nightly weaves  
Ropes of pearls in jewels set,  
Fit for Titania's amulet :  
Tiny harvesters are merry  
Gathering stores while skies are fair,  
Scarlet leaf and russet berry, —  
Motley is the only wear.  
Hawthorn apples sweet and sound,



In small cellars underground,  
Keep the long cold winter round.  
Mossy cells in field and wood  
Shield the bumble bee's young brood,  
Ready with the winds of spring  
To visit every blossoming thing,  
And in the meadow grass of June  
To sing again their lulling tune.  
Morning airs are crisp with rime,  
Fields and woods are brown and sober,  
For this is the round world's resting time,  
And the sweet of the year is the gray October.

### THREE BIRD-SONGS.

ON the topmost branch of the hickory tree,  
Which rocks in the wind like a ship at sea,  
The oriole sings to his mate and me,  
Sweet—sweet!—What cheer!  
I am here! here! here!  
And the world is warm, and the sky is clear.

But the blithest spirit that comes in June,  
When earth and sky and wave are in tune,  
And sings all morning and afternoon,  
Is bob-o-link, bob-o-link, dinkle-down-daisy,  
Meadow-sweet, repeat, repeat!  
Sunshine over the springing wheat.  
And bob-o-link gone crazy!

And now from the upper sky afloat  
There falls the clear three-syllabled note  
Of the song-sparrow with the silver throat,  
Cheer—cheer—cheer!  
For this is the tranquil sphere,  
Above the world and away—  
Well-a-way, well-a-way, well-a-way!

## THE STONE-CUTTER.

**I**N the hollow under the hill,  
Where the sunset shadows fall,  
That gather and break at the wild wind's will,—  
Tower, and turret, and wall ;—  
Among the gray old rocks  
From which these walls have grown  
He wields the hammer with sturdy knocks,  
And plies his craft alone,—  
With a musical rhythm, a bell-like tone,  
Clink, clank, clink !  
As he plies his task alone.

The flowers that blossom and thrive  
And slowly day by day  
Take shape and colour as if alive,  
Are those that scorn decay.  
For under his shaping hand  
The arch and the column grow,  
That shall overshadow and grace the land  
When we are dust below.  
And the lilies of the capital blow,—  
Clink, clank, clink !  
When we are dust below.

The hollow holds apart,  
Like an opal with shifting lights,  
A tiny pool in its sombre heart,  
Glassing the great stone heights ;  
And set in its silver cup,  
With its flower-enamelled brim  
A glimpse of the sky when he looks up,  
To hearten, and gladden him.  
When the round of toil looks dull and dim,—  
Clink, clank, clink !  
To hearten and gladden him.

## THE CUCKOO'S SONG.

**S**ITTING alone in my quiet room  
I smell the fragrance of new-mown hay,  
Add see the buttercups all in bloom  
And hear the cuckoo far away  
Recite his stuttering roundelay.  
And then in a trice I find again  
The winding path through the shaded glen,  
Where the lady-ferns and the king-cups grow—  
[But that was many a year ago,  
When the woods were a wonderland and wild  
To the dreaming eyes and heart of a child.]

There insect mimes, fantastic manners.  
Bird and beast were all new-comers,  
Butterfly and chrysalid,  
Lace-winged beetle, katydid,  
From the thick leaves in and out  
Glanced my rustic seat about :  
And fearsome shapes in shining mail  
With fierce round eyes and dragon tail  
Ran swiftly down the glistening track—  
The silver trail of the wandering snail  
That carries his house on his vagrant back,  
And his quaint horn spectacles, too, good lack !

Cushioned with moss and carpeted,  
And leafily canopied overhead  
The green pavilion from which I spy  
The housekeeping of the birds close by—  
The small and sweet economies  
Of the winged folk in the dusky trees,  
The mother-talk to the brooding young,  
The soft bird-lullabies crooned and sung,—  
The swift short flight in search of food,  
The glad return to the nestling brood—  
The flutter and stir of untried wings,  
And the tree-top song which the father-bird sings.

I smell the sweet breath of the hay,  
I hear the children at their play—  
The cuckoo from some copse remote  
Repeats his soft insistent note ;  
The clouds, like white-sailed ships at sea,  
Drift slowly o'er the sapphire blue—  
My book lies open on my knee,—  
Its fairy tales have all come true,  
For these enchanted woods are full  
Of lovely things more wonderful  
And strange than any book can tell :  
I know their mystic legends well,  
And the shy folks that in them dwell,  
For with them I have been at school.  
Once more the cuckoo far away  
Repeats his cadencéd roundelay ;—  
I hear it like a voice unheard  
Since my heart, too, was the heart of a bird—  
The joyous heart of a little child  
That sang for very happiness  
Of the fields and the peopled wilderness,  
To find the world so sweet and wild.  
Oh cuckoo ! now thy voice to me  
(A dear remembered melody,  
Reminder of a long past day,)  
Is tinged with sadness, and seems to say,  
Ah well-a-way, ah well-a-way !

## NIGHT IN THE THOUSAND ISLANDS.

ⓄN the liquid dark of the river, among its rainbow surges,

A moving shadow the great ship glides in the twilight gray and dim,

And slowly the city of beautiful dreams, the island city, emerges, —

Roof and spire and colonnade down to the river's brim :—

Here are the water ways with the dusk trees glooming over,

Here are the fleeting shapes of dryad and nymph and faun ;

Here are the long sea-lanes that beckon the young sea rover,

That murmur of isles beyond that are fairer than night or dawn.

Silently as the stars come out in the purple arch of heaven,

Or as the mist dissolves in the golden light of morn,  
When the bold hunter fades away, and the radiant sisters seven.

Vanish into the night, and the rosy day is born,—  
Out of the opaline after-glow the fairy city rises,

Tower and dome and bowery hall out of the crystal wave,

With the glamour and gleam of a strange sea dream,  
and full of a dream's surprises,

Glitter of pearl, and pink of the shell, spoil of a mermaid's cave.

Sails like a seabird's wing, glancing hither and thither,

Seen and lost in the shadows—darks of the summer's night,

Laughter and low-voiced singing sweet, from who knows whither,

Like the silver bells of elf-land, the fairies ring in  
flight.  
The ship moves on in a silence and fragrance half  
elysian ;

A silver furrow widening along the track she came  
And the very stars have left the skies to the lingering  
backward vision,  
And tipt each spire and minaret with points of  
winking flame.

O green and happy islands, where yet there is no to-  
morrow,  
For every day keeps holiday, and every night  
brings rest,  
With ever fresh enchantments to banish toil and  
sorrow,  
And make one little spot of earth a paradise so  
blest !  
Our ships, alas, pass in the night, and only wistful  
glances,  
And longing lingering looks return along the  
watery way,  
Then night and darkness swallow up those sweet and  
dream-like fancies,  
And the lovely lost Atlantis vanishes quite away.



Rockwood Hospital, Kingston







**The Tower, Rockwood Hospital**

