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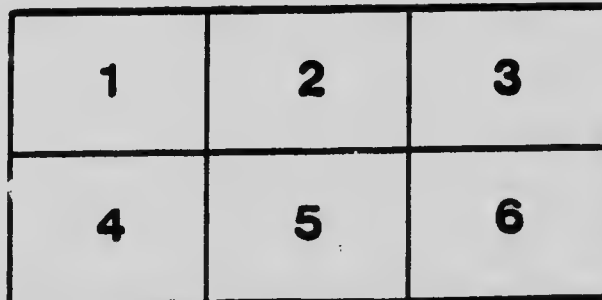
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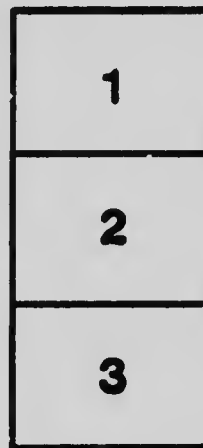
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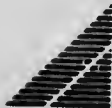
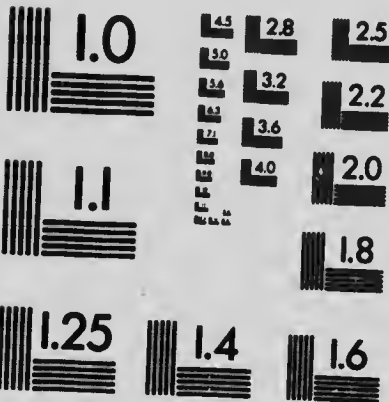
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The Elfin Artist
And Other Poems

The Elfin Artist

And Other Poems

BY

ALFRED NOYES

Toronto

The Copp Clark Co. Limited

1920

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DEDICATION
TO THE MEMORY OF CECIL SPRING-RICE

I.

STEADFAST as any soldier of the line
He served his England, with the imminent death
Poised at his heart. Nor could the world divine
The constant peril of each burdened breath.

England, and the honour of England, he still served
Walking the strict path, with the old high pride
Of those invincible knights who never swerved
One hair's breadth from the way until they died.

Quietness he loved, and books, and the grave beauty
Of England's Helicon, whose eternal light
Shines like a lantern on that road of duty,
Discerned by few in this chaotic night;

And his own pen, foretelling his release,
Told us that he foreknew "the end was peace."

II.

Soldier of England, he shall live unsleeping
Among his friends, with the old proud flag above;
For even to-day her honour is in his keeping,
He has joined the hosts that guard her with their love.

They shine like stars, unnumbered happy legions,
In that high realm where all our darkness dies.
He moves with honour, in those loftier regions,
Above this "world of passion and of lies";

For so he called it, keeping his own pure passion
A silent flame before the true and good;
Not fawning on the throng in this world's fashion
To come and see what all might see who would.

Soldier of England, perfect, gentle knight,
The soul of Sidney welcomes you to-night.

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THE ELFIN ARTIST.

IN a glade of an elfin forest
When Sussex was Eden-new,
I came on an elvish painter
And watched as his picture grew.
A harebell nodded beside him.
He dipt his brush in the dew.

And it might be the wild thyme round him
That shone in that dark strange ring ;
But his brushes were bees' antennæ,
His knife was a wasp's blue sting ;
And his gorgeous exquisite palette
Was a butterfly's fan-shaped wing.

And he mingled its powdery colours
And painted the lights that pass,
On a delicate cobweb canvas
That gleamed like a magic glass,
And bloomed like a banner of elf-land,
Between two stalks of grass ;

The Elfin Artist.

Till it shone like an angel's feather
With sky-born opal and rose,
And gold from the foot of the rainbow,
And colours that no man knows ;
And I laughed in the sweet May weather,
Because of the themes he chose.

For he painted the things that matter,
The tints that we all pass by,
Like the little blue wreaths of incense
That the wild thyme breathes to the sky ;
Or the first white bud of the hawthorn,
And the light in a blackbird's eye ;

And the shadows on soft white cloud-peaks
That carolling skylarks throw,—
Dark dots on the slumbering splendours
That under the wild wings flow,
Wee shadows like violets trembling
On the unseen breasts of snow ;

With petals too lovely for colour
That shake to the rapturous wings,
And grow as the bird draws near them,
And die as he mounts and sings ;—
Ah, only those exquisite brushes
Could paint these marvellous things.

THE INN OF APOLLO.

HAVE you supped at the Inn of Apollo,
While the last light fades from the West?
Has the Lord of the Sun, at the world's end,
Poured you his ripest and best?
O, there's wine in that Inn of Apollo;

Wine, mellow and deep as the sunset,
With mirth in it, singing as loud
As the skylark sings in a high wind,
High over a crisp white cloud.
Have you laughed in that Inn of Apollo?

Was the whole world molten in music
At once, by the heat of that wine?
Did the stars and the tides and your own heart
Dance with the heavenly Nine?
For they dance in that Inn of Apollo.

Was their poetry croaked by the sages,
Or born in a whisper of wings?
For the music that masters the ages,
Be sure, is the music that sings!
Yes, they sing in that Inn of Apollo.

THE LOST BATTLE.

It is not over yet—the fight
Where those immortal dreamers failed.
They stormed the citadels of night,
And the night praised them—and prevailed.
So long ago the cause was lost
We scarce distinguish friend from foe ;
But—if the dead can help it most—
The armies of the dead will grow.

The world has all our banners now,
And filched our watchwords for its own.
The world has crowned the “rebel’s” brow
And millions crowd his lordly throne.
The masks have altered. Names are names.
They praise the “truth” that is not true.
The “rebel” that the world acclaims
Is not the rebel Shelley knew.

We may not build that Commonweal,
We may not reach the goal we set ;
But there’s a flag they dare not steal.
Forward ! It is not over yet.

The Lost Battle.

We shall be dust and under dust,
Before we end that ancient wrong ;
But there's a sword that cannot rust,
And where's the death can touch a song ?

So, when our bodies rot in earth,
The singing souls that once were ours,
Weaponed with light and helmed with mirth,
Shall front the kingdoms and the powers.
The ancient lie is on its throne,
And half the living still forget ;
But, since the dead are all our own,
Courage, it is not over yet.

TO A SUCCESSFUL MAN.

(WHAT THE GHOSTS SAID.)

AND after all the labour and the pains,
After the heaping up of gold on gold,
After success that locked your feet in chains,
And left you with a heart so tired and old,

Strange—is it not?—to find your chief desire
Is what you might have had for nothing then—
The face of love beside a cottage fire
And friendly laughter with your fellow-men?

You were so rich when fools esteemed you poor.
You ruled a field that kings could never buy :
The whisper of the sea was at your door,
And all those quiet stars were in your sky.

The nook of ferns below the breathless wood
Where one poor book could unlock Paradise. . . .
What will you give us now for that lost good ?
Better forget. You cannot pay the price.

You left them for the fame in which you trust.
But youth, and hope—did you forsake them too ?
Courage ! When dust at length returns to dust,
In your last dreams they may come back to you.

SONGS OF THE TRAWLERS

THE PEOPLE'S FLEET.

Out of her darkened fishing-ports they go,
A fleet of little ships, whose every name—
Daffodil, Sea-lark, Rose and Surf and Snow,
Burns in this blackness like an altar-flame ;

Out of her past they sail, three thousand strong,
The people's fleet that never knew its worth,
And every name is a broken phrase of song
To some remembered loveliness on earth.

There's *Barbara Cowie, Comely Bank and May,*
Christened, at home, in worlds of dawn and dew :
There's *Ruth and Kindly Light and Robin Gray,*
With *Mispah.* (May that simple prayer come true !)

Out of old England's inmost heart they sail,
A fleet of memories that can never fail.

KILMENY.

DARK, dark lay the drifters against the red West
As they shot their long meshes of steel overside ;
And the oily green waters were rocking to rest
When Kilmeny went out, at the turn of the tide ;
And nobody knew where that lassie would roam,
For the magic that called her was tapping unseen.
It was wellnigh a week ere Kilmeny came home,
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

She'd a gun at her bow that was Newcastle's best,
And a gun at her stern that was fresh from the Clyde,
And a secret her skipper had never confessed,
Not even at dawn, to his newly-wed bride ;
And a wireless that whispered above, like a gnome,
The laughter of London, the boasts of Berlin. . . .
O, it may have been mermaids that lured her from
home ;
But nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

It was dark when Kilmeny came home from her quest
With her bridge dabbled red where her skipper had
died ;
But she moved like a bride with a rose at her breast,
And *Well done, Kilmeny!* the Admiral cried.

Kilmeny.

Now, at sixty-four fathom a conger may come
And nose at the bones of a drowned submarine ;
But—late in the evening Kilmeny came home,
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

There's a wandering shadow that stares at the foam,
Though they sing all the night to old England, their
queen.
Late, late in the evening, Kilmeny came home,
And nobody knew where Kilmeny had been.

CAP'N STORM-ALONG.

THEY are buffeting out in the bitter grey weather,
—*Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down!*—
Sea-lark singing to *Golden Feather*,
And burly blue waters all swelling aroun'.
There's *Thunderstone* butting ahead as they wallow,
With death in the mesh of their deep-sea trawl;
There's *Night-hawk* swooping by wild *Sea-swallow*,
And old Cap'n Storm-along leading 'em all.

Bashing the seas to a welter of white,
Look at the fleet that he leads to the fight.
O, they're dancing like witches to open the hall;
And old Cap'n Storm-along's lord of 'em all.

Now, where have you seen such a bully old sailor?
His eyes are as blue as the scarf at his throat;
And he rolls on the bridge of his broad-beamed whaler,
In yellow sou'-wester and oilskin coat.
In trawler and drifter, in dinghy and dory,
Wherever he signals, they leap to his call;
They batter the seas to a lather of glory,
With old Cap'n Storm-along leading 'em all.

Cap'n Storm-along.

*You'll find he's from Devon, the sailor I mean ;
Look at his whaler now, shipping it green.
O, Fritz and his "U"-boat must cru' it and crawl
When old Cap'n Storm-along sails to the ball.*

Ay, there is the skipper that knows how to scare 'em
—*Blow the man down, bullies, blow the man down!*—
Look at the sea-wives he keeps in his harem,
Wicked young merry-maids, buxom and brown :
There's *Rosalind*, the sea-witch, and *Gipsy* so lissom,
All dancing like ducks in the teeth of the squall,
With a bright eye for Huns, and a Hotchkiss to kiss 'em ;
For old Cap'n Storm-along's lord of 'em all.

*Look at him, battering darkness to light!
Look at the fleet that he leads to the fight!
O, hearts that are mighty, in ships that are small,
Your old Cap'n Storm-along's king of us all.*

THE BIG BLACK TRAWLER.

THE very best ship that ever I knew

—*Ah-way O, to me O—*

Was a big black trawler with a deep-sea crew—

Sing, my bullies, let the bullgine run.

There was one old devil with a broken nose

—*Ah-way O, to me O—*

He was four score years, as I suppose—

But sing, my bullies, let the bullgine run.

We was wrecked last March, in a Polar storm

—*Ah-way O, to me O—*

And we asked the old cripple if his feet was warm—

Sing, my bullies, let the bullgine run.

And the old, old devil (he was ninety at the most)

—*Ah-way O, to me O—*

Roars, "Ay, warm as a lickle piece of toast"—

So sing, my bullies, let the bullgine run.

"For I soaked my sea-boots and my dungarees

—*Ah-way O, to me O—*

In the good salt water that the Lord don't freeze"—

Oh, sing, my bullies, let the bullgine run.

NAME-SAKES.

BUT where's the brown drifter that went out alone?

—Roll and go, and fare you well—

“Was her name *Peggy Nutten*?” That name is my own.

Fare you well, my sailor.

They sang in the dark, “Let her go! Let her go!”

And she sailed to the West, where the broad waters flow;

And the others come back, but . . . the bitter winds blow.

Ah, fare you well, my sailor.

The women, at evening, they wave and they cheer.

—Roll and go, and fare you well—

They're waiting to welcome their lads at the pier

Fare you well, my sailor.

They're all coming home in the twilight below;

But there's one little boat. . . . Let her go! Let her go!

She carried my heart, and a heart for the foe.

Ah, fare you well, my sailor.

The *Nell* and the *Maggie*, the *Ruth* and the *Joan*,

—Roll and go, and fare you well—

They come to their name-sakes, and leave me alone.

Fare you well, my sailor.

And names are kep' dark, for the spies mustn't know;

But they'll look in my face, an' I think it will show;

Peggy Nutten's my name. Let her go! Let her go!

Ah, fare you well, my sailor.

WIRELESS.

Now to those who search the deep,
 Gleam of Hope and Kindly Light,
Once, before you turn to sleep,
 Breathe a message through the night.
Never doubt that they'll receive it.
Send it, once, and you'll believe it.

Wrecks that burn against the stars,
 Decks where death is wallowing green,
Snare the breath among their spars,
 Hear the flickering threads between,
Quick, through all the storms that blind them,
Quick with worlds that rush to find them.

Think you those aerial wires
 Whisper more than spirits may?
Think you that our strong desires
 Touch no distance when we pray?
Think you that no wings are flying
'Twixt the living and the dying?

Wireless.

Inland, here, upon your knees,
You shall breathe from urgent lips,
Round the ships that guard your seas,
Fleet on fleet of angel ships ;
Yea, the guarded may so bless them
That no terrors can distress them.

You shall guide the darkling prow,
Kneeling thus—and far inland—
You shall touch the storm-beat brow
Gently as a spirit-hand.
Even a blindfold prayer may speed them,
And a little child may lead them.

FISHERS OF MEN.

LONG, long ago, He said,
He who could wake the dead
And walk upon the sea—
"Come, follow Me."

Leave your brown nets and bring
Only your hearts to sing,
Only your souls to pray,
Rise, come away.

Shake out your spirit-sails,
And brave those wilder gales,
And I will make you then
Fishers of men."

Was this, then, what He meant?
Was this His high intent,
After two thousand years
Of blood and tears?

Fishers of Men.

God help us, if we fight
For right and not for might.
God help us if we seek
To shield the weak.

Then, though His heaven be far
From this blind welter of war,
He'll bless us, on the sea
From Calvary.

AN OPEN BOAT.

O, WHAT is that whimpering there in the darkness?

*"Let him lie in my arms. He is breathing, I know.
Look. I'll wrap all my hair round his neck."—"The
sea's rising,
The boat must be lightened. He's dead. He must go."*

See—quick—by that flash, where the bitter foam tosses,
The cloud of white faces, in the black open boat,
And the wild pleading woman that clasps her dead lover
And wraps her loose hair round his breast and his
throat.

*"Come, lady, he's dead."—"No, I feel his heart beating.
He's living, I know. But he's numbed with the cold.
See, I'm wrapping my hair all around him to warm
him."*

*—"No. We can't keep the dead, dear. Come, loosen
your hold."*

*"Come. Loosen your fingers."—"O God, let me keep
him!"*

O, hide it, black night! Let the winds have their
way!

And there are no voices or ghosts from that darkness,
To fret the bare seas at the breaking of day.

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THE VICTORIOUS DEAD



THE VICTORIOUS DEAD.

I.

Now, for their sake, our lands grow lovelier.

There's not one grey cliff shouldering back the sea,
Nor one forsaken hill that does not wear
The visible radiance of their memory.

Our highlands are not lonely as of old,

For all their crags with that pure light are crowned ;
And, round our Sussex farms, from fold to fold,
Tread where you will, you tread on haunted ground.

There's not one glen where happy hearts could roam

That is not filled with tenderer shadows now.
There's not one lane that used to lead them home
But breathes their thoughts to-day from every bough.

There's not one leaf on all these quickening trees,
Nor way-side flower but breathes their messages.

The Victorious Dead.

II.

Peace? I recall an acre of the dead,
Marked with the only sign on earth that saves.
The wings of death were hurrying overhead,
The loose earth shook on those unquiet graves;

For the deep gun-pits with quivering stabs of flame
Made their own thunders of the sun-lit air;
Yet, as I read the crosses, name by name,
Rank after rank, it seemed that peace was there.

Sunlight and peace—a peace too deep for thought,
The peace of tides that underlie our strife,
The peace with which the moving heavens are fraught,
The peace that is our everlasting life.

The loose earth shook. The very hills were stirred.
The silence of the dead was all I heard.

III.

For they said this: "*We have no more to pray.
To all men's praises we are deaf and blind.
We may not even know if they betray
Our hope, to make earth better for mankind.*"

*Only our silence, in the night, shall grow
More silent, as the stars grow in the sky;
And while they deck our graves they shall not know
That our eternal peace has passed them by.*

The Victorious Dead.

*For we have heard them say, before we perished,
They lacked the power, but not the will to good,
Then, when the enemy struck at what they cherished,
We saw them move the mountains where they would.*

*What can be done, we know. But—have no fear!
If they fail now, we shall not see or hear."*

IV.

Now, in the morning of a nobler age,
Though night-born eyes, long taught to fear the sun,
Would still delay that glorious heritage,
Make firm, O God, the peace our dead have won.

For folly shakes the tinsel on its head
And points us back to darkness and to hell,
Cackling, "*Beware of visions,*" while our dead
Whisper, "*It was for visions that we fell.*"

They never knew the secret game of power.
All that this earth can give they thrust aside.
They crowded all their youth into an hour,
And, for one fleeting dream of right, they died.

Oh, if we fail them, in that awful trust,
How should we bear those voices from the dust?

V.

You, broken-hearted, comfort you again!
Eternal Justice guards the gift they gave.
The goal of all that struggling hope and pain
Is not the sophists' universal grave.

The Victorious Dead.

Our sun shall perish ; but they cannot die.
Their realm of light is far more true than ours.
Behind the veil of earth and sea and sky
They live and move and work with nobler powers.

They have thrust wide open every long-locked portal
Of man's dark mind to that eternal light ;
Cast off this flesh in proof of things immortal,
And built an altar that out-shines our night.

The faith they proved is of immortal worth.
The souls that proved it are not dust and earth.

VI.

A little while we may not see their eyes
Or touch their hands, for they are far too near ;
But soul to soul, the life that never dies
Speaks to the life that waits its freedom here.

They have made their land one living shrine. Their
words
Are breathed in glory from each woodland bough ;
And, where the may-tree shakes with song of birds,
Their young unwhispered joys are singing now.

By meadow and mountain, river and hawthorn-brake,
In sacramental peace, from sea to sea,
The land they loved grows lovelier for their sake,
Shines with their hope, enshrines their memory,

Communes with heaven again, and makes us whole,
Through man's new faith in man's immortal soul.

"A VICTORY CELEBRATION."

WRITTEN AFTER THE BRITISH SERVICE AT
TRINITY CHURCH, NEW YORK.

I.

BEFORE those golden altar-lights we stood,
Each one of us remembering his own dead.
A more than earthly beauty seemed to brood
On that hushed throng, and bless each bending head.

Beautiful on that gold, the deep-sea blue
Of those young seamen, ranked on either side,
Blent with the khaki, while the silence grew
Deep, as for wings—O, deep as England's pride.

Beautiful on that gold, two banners rose—
Two flags that told how Freedom's realm was made,
One fair with stars of hope, and one that shows
The glorious cross of England's long crusade:

Two flags, now joined, till that high will be done
Which sent us forth to make the whole world one.

"A Victory Celebration."

II.

There were no signs of joy that eyes could see.
Our hearts were all three thousand miles away.
There were no trumpets blown for victory.
A million dead were calling us that day.

And eyes grew blind, at times ; but grief was deep,
Deeper than any foes or friends have known ;
For O, my country's lips are locked to keep
Her bitterest loss her own, and all her own.

Only the music told what else was dumb,
The funeral march to which our pulses beat ;
For all those dead went by, to a muffled drum.
We heard the tread of all those phantom feet.

Yes. There was victory ! Deep in every soul.
We heard them marching to their unseen goal.

III.

There, once again, we saw the Cross go by,
The Cross that fell with all those glorious towers,
Burnt black on Rheims and mocked on Calvary,
Till—in one night—the crosses rose like flowers,

Legions of small white crosses, mile on mile,
Pencilled with names that had outfought all pain,
Where every shell-torn acre seemed to smile—
Who shall destroy the Cross that rose again ?

"A Victory Celebration."

Out of the world's Walpurgis, where hope perished,
Where all the forms of faith in ruin fell,
Where every sign of heaven that earth had cherished,
Shrivelled among the lava-floods of hell,

The eternal Cross that conquers might with right
Rose like a star to lead us through the night.

IV.

How shall the world remember? Men forget :
Our dead are all too many even for Fame !
Man's justice kneels to kings, and pays no debt
To those who never courted her acclaim.

Cheat not your heart with promises to pay
For gifts beyond all price so freely given.
Where is the heart so rich that it can say
To those who mourn, "I will restore your heaven"?

But these, with their own hands, laid up their treasure
Where never an emperor can break in and steal—
Treasure, for those that loved them, past all measure,
In those high griefs that earth can never heal,—

Proud griefs, that walk on earth, yet gaze above,
Knowing that sorrow is but remembered love.

V.

Love that still holds us with immortal power,
Yet cannot lift us to His realm of light ;
Love that still shows us heaven for one brief hour
Only to daunt the heart with that sheer height ;

"A Victory Celebration."

Love that is made of loveliness enfold
In form and thought and act ; and still must shame us

Because we ever acknowledge and aspire,
And yet let slip the shining hands that claim us.

O, if this Love might cloak with rags His glory,
Laugh, eat and drink, and dwell with suffering men,
Sit with us at our hearth, and hear our story,
This world—we thought—might be transfigured then.

"But O," Love answered, with swift human tears,
"All these things have I done, these many years."

VI.

"This day," Love said, "if ye will hear my voice ;
I mount and sing with birds in all your skies.
I am the soul that calls you to rejoice,
And every wayside flower is my disguise.

Look closely. Are the wings too wide for pity ?
Look closely. Do these tender hues betray ?
How often have I sought my Holy City ?
How often have ye turned your hearts away ?

Is there not healing in the beauty I bring you ?
Am I not whispering in green leaves and rain,
Singing in all that woods and seas can sing you ?
Look, once, on Love, and earth is heaven again.

O, did your Spring but once a century waken,
The heaven of heavens for this would be forsaken."

"A Victory Celebration."

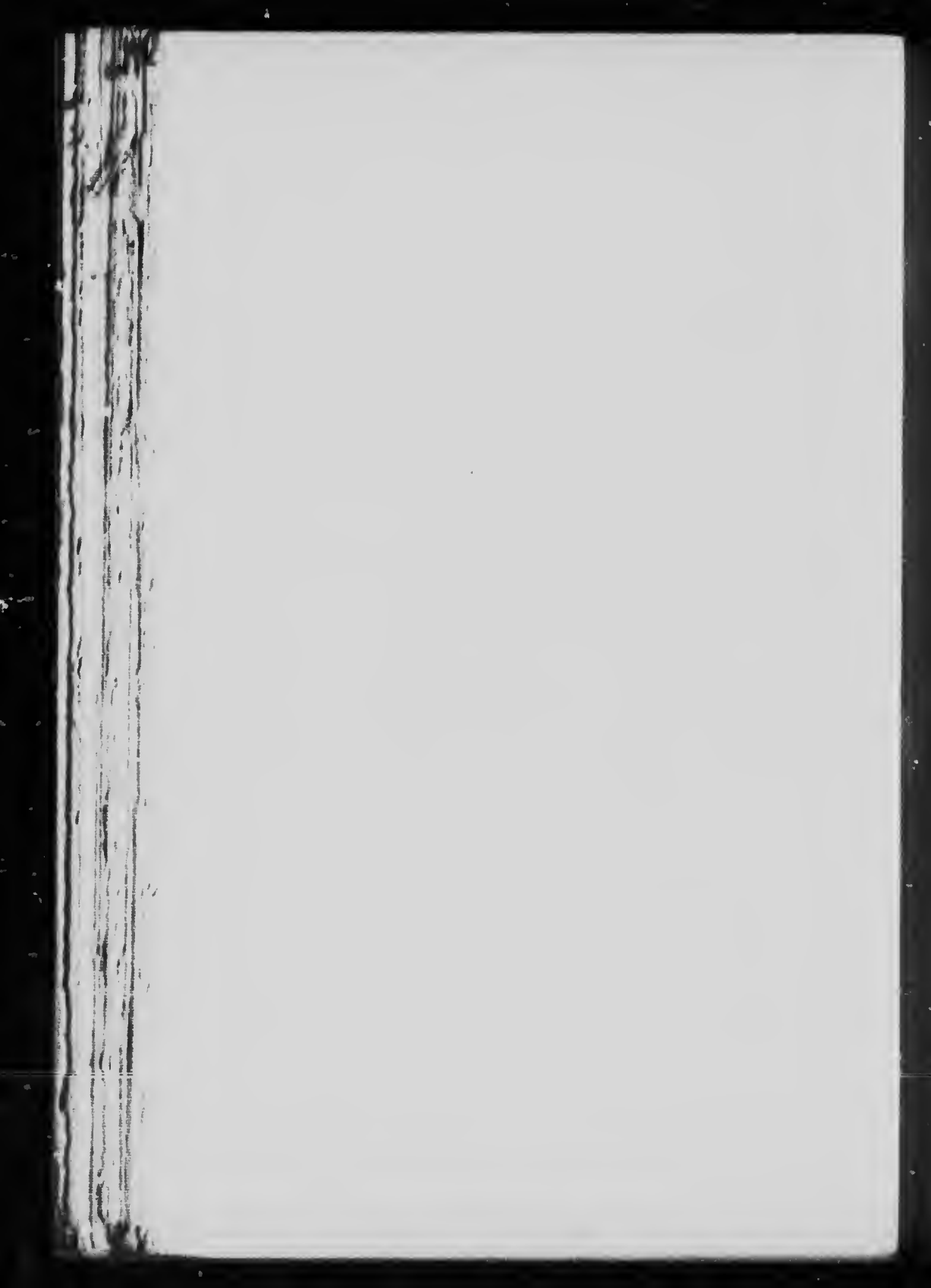
VII.

There's but one gift that all our dead desire,
One gift that men can give, and that's a dream,
Unless we, too, can burn with that same fire
Of sacrifice ; die to the things that seem ;

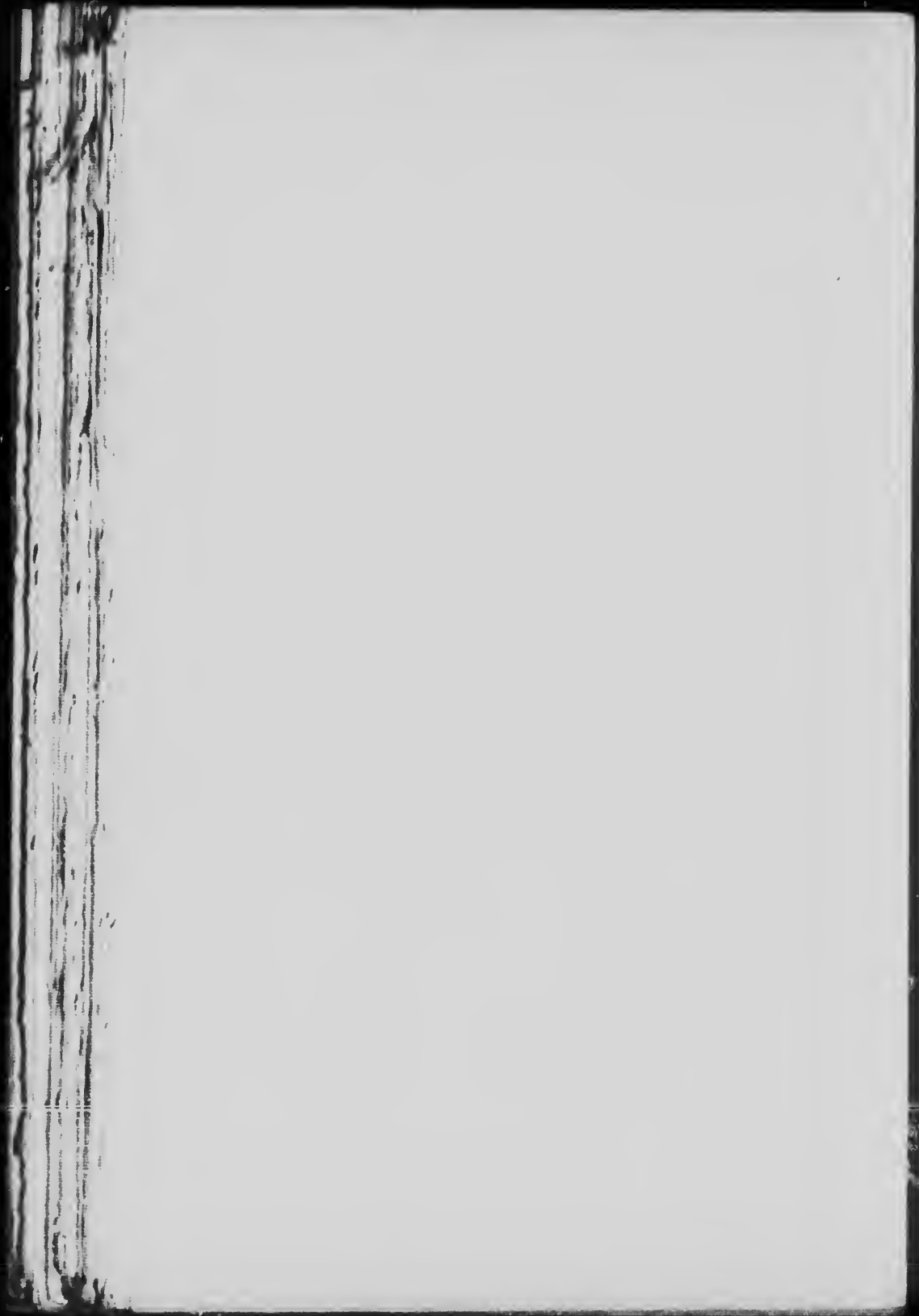
Die to the little hatreds ; die to greed ;
Die to the old ignoble selves we knew ;
Die to the base contempts of sect and creed,
And rise again, like these, with souls as true.

Nay (since these died before their task was finished)
Attempt new heights, bring even their dreams to birth,
Build us that better world, O, not diminished
By one true splendour that they planned on earth.

And that's not done by sword, or tongue, or pen,
There's but one way. God make us better men.



SUSSEX POEMS



PETER QUINCE.

PETER QUINCE was nine year old
When he see'd what never was told.

When he crossed the fairy fern,
Peter had no more to learn.

Just as day began to die,
He see'd 'em rustling on the sky ;

Ferns, like small green finger-prints
Pressed against them rosy tints,

Mother-o'-pearl and opal tinges
Dying along their whispering fringes,

Every colour, as it died,
Beaconing, *Come, to the other side.*

Up he crept, by the shrew-mouse track.
A robin chirped, *You woant come back.*

Peter Quince.

Through the ferns he crept to look.

There he found a gurt wide book ;

Much too big for a child to hold.
Its clasps were made of sunset gold.

It smelled as old ship's timbers do.
He began to read it through.

All the magic pictures burned,
Like stained windows, as he turned

Page by big black-lettered page,
Thick as cream, and ripe with age.

There he read, till all grew dim.
Then green glow-worms lighted him.

There he read till he forgot
All that ever his teachers taught.

Someone, old as the moon, crept back,
Late that night by the shrew-mouse track.

Someone, taller maybe, by an inch.
Boys grow fast. He'll do at a pinch.

Only, folks that know'd him claim
Peter's wits were never the same.

Peter Quince.

Ev'ryone said that Peter Quince
H'aint been never the same child since.

Now he'd sit, in a trance, for hours,
Talkin' softly to bees and flowers.

Now, in the ingle-nook at night,
Turn his face from the candle-light ;

Till, as you thought him fast asleep,
You'd see his eyes were wide and deep ;

And, in their wild magic glow,
Rainbow colours 'ud come and go.

Dame Quince never could wholly wake him,
So they say, tho' she'd call and shake him.

He sat dreaming. He sat bowed
In a white sleep, like a cloud.

Over his dim face at whiles,
Flickered liddle elvish smiles.

.

Once, the robin at the pane,
Tried to chirp the truth again.

*Peter Quince has crossed the fern.
Peter Quince will not return.*

*Drive the changeling from your chair !
That's not Peter dreaming there.*

Peter Quince.

*Peter's crossed the fern to look.
Peter's found the magic book.*

Ah, Dame Quince was busy sobbin',
So she couldn't hear poor Robin.

And the changeling, in a dream,
Supped that night on pears and cream.

Night by night, he cleared his platter ;
And—from moon to moon—grew fatter ;

Mostly dumb, or muttering dimly
When the smoke blew down the chimley,

*Peter's turned another page.
I have almost earned my wage.*

Then the good dame's eyelids shone.

.

This was many a year ago.
Peter Quince is reading on.

THE GREEN MAN.

In those old days at Brighthelmstone,
When art was half Chinese,
And Venus, dipped by Martha Gunn,
Came rosy from the seas ;
When every dandy walked the Steyne
In something strange and new,
The Green Man,
The Green Man,
Made quite a how-dy-doo.

Green pantaloons, green waistcoat,
Green frock and green cravat,
Green gloves and green silk handkerchief,
Green shoes and tall green hat,—
He took the air in a green gig,
From eight o'clock till ten ;
O, the Green Man,
The Green Man,
Was quite successful then.

The Green Man.

And though, beneath that golden dome,
That Chinese pup of Paul's,
With snow and azure, rose and foam,
He danced at routs and balls,
Though all the laughing flowers on earth
Around the room he'd swing,
The Green Man,
The Green Man,
Remained a leaf of Spring.

His rooms, they said, his chairs, his bed
Were green as meadows are.
He dined on hearts of lettuces;
He wore an emerald star.
O, many a fop in blue and gold
His little hour might shine,
Till the Green Man,
The Green Man,
Came strutting up the Steyne.

His name, I think, was William White.
He wished to keep it green.
His fond ambition reached its height
When Brighton's frolic queen,
FitzHerbert, stopped her crimson chair,
And dropped her flirting fan,
With "Tee, hee, hee!"
O, look! O, see!
Here comes that odd Green Man!"

The Green Man.

Alack, he reached it all too well.
Despite his will to fame,
Thenceforth he shone for beau and belle
By that ambiguous name ;
So William White was quite forgot
By matron, fop, and maid ;
Ay, White became
The Green Man ;
Became an April shade.

Now, even his green and ghostly gig,
The green whip in his hand,
The green lights in his powdered wig,
Are vanished from the land.
Green livery, darkling emerald star, . . .
Not even their wraiths are seen.
And nobody knows
The Green Man,
Although his grave is green.

THE SILVER CROOK.

I was mistuk, once, for the Poape of Roame. . . .
The drawled fantastic words came floating down
Behind me, five long years ago, when last
I left the old shepherd, Bramble, by his fold.

Bramble was fond, you'll judge, of his own tales,
And cast a gorgeous fly for the unwary :
But I was late, and could not listen then,
Despite his eager leer.

Yet, many a night,
And many a league from home, out of a dream
Of white chalk coasts, and roofs of Horsham stone,
Coloured like russet apples, there would come
Music of sheep-bells, baaing of black-nosed lambs,
Barking of two wise dogs, crushed scents of thyme,
A silver crook, bright as the morning star
Above the naked downs. Then—Bramble's voice,
I was mistuk, once, for the Poape of Roame,
Would almost wake me, wondering what he meant.

Now, five years later, while the larks went up
Over the dew-ponds in a wild-winged glory,
And all the Sussex downs, from weald to sea,

The Silver Crook.

Were patched like one wide crazy quilt, in squares
Of yellow and crimson, clover and mustard-flower,
Edged with white chalk, I found him once again.
He leaned upon his crook, unbudged by war,
Unchanged, and leering eagerly as of old.

How should I paint old Bramble—the shrewd face,
Brown as the wrinkled loam, the bright brown eyes,
The patriarchal beard, the moleskin cap,
The boots that looked like tree-stumps, the loose cloak
Tanned by all weathers,—every inch of him
A growth of Sussex soil. His back was bent
Like wind-blown hawthorn, turning from the sea,
With roots that strike the deeper.

Well content

With all his world, and boastful as a child
In splendid innocence of the worldling's way,
Whose murderous ego skulks behind a hedge
Of modest privet,—no, I cannot paint him.
Better to let him talk, and paint himself.

"Marnin'," he said; and swept away five years.

With absolute dominion over time,

Waiving all prelude, he picked up the thread

We dropped that day, and cast his bait again :—

I was mistuk, once, for the Poape of Roame.—

"Tell me," I said. "Explain. I've dreamed of it."—

"I racken you doan't believe it. Drunken Dick,

'Ull tell you 'tis as true's I'm stannin' here.

It happened along of this old silver crook.

I call it silver 'cos it shines so far.

My wife can see it over at Ovingdean

When I'm on Telscombe Tye. They doan't mek crooks

Like this in Sussex now. They've lost the way

The Silver Crook.

To shape 'em. That's what they French papists knowed
Over at Arundel. They tried to buy
My crook, to carry in church. But I woan't sell 'en.
I've heerd there's magic in a crook like this,—
White magic. Well, I rackon it did save Dick
More ways than one, that night, from the old Black Ram.
I've med a song about it. There was once
A Lunnon poet, down here for his health,
Asked me to sing it to 'un, an' I did.
It med him laff, too. 'Sing it again,' he says,
'But go slow, this time.' 'No, I woan't,' I says
(I knowed what *he* was trying). 'No,' I says,
'I woan't go slow. You'll ketch 'un if I do.'
You see, he meks a tedious mort of money
From these here ballad books, an' I wer'n't goin'
To let these Lunnon chuckle-heads suck my brains.
I med it to thet ancient tune you liked,
The Brown Girl. 'Member it?"

Bramble cleared his throat,
Spat at a bee, leaned forward on his crook,
Fixed his brown eyes upon a distant spire,
Solemnly swelled his lungs, once, twice, and thrice;
Then, like an old brown thrush, began to sing:—

"The Devil turns round when he hears the sound
Of bells in a Sussex foald.
One crack, I rackon, from this good crook
Would make old Scratch leave hoald.
They can't shape crooks to-day like mine,
For the liddle folk helped 'em then.
I've heerd some say as they've see'd 'en shine
From Ditchling to Fairlight Glen.

The Silver Crook.

I loaned 'em a loanst o' my crook one day
To carry in Arundel.
They'd buy 'en to show in their church, they say
But goald woan't mek me sell.
I never should find a crook so slick,
So silver in the sun ;
And, if you talk to Drunken Dick,
He'll tell you what it's done.

You'll find him spannelling round the Plough ;
And, Lord ! when Dick was young,
He'd drink enough to draown a cow,
And roughen a tiger's tongue.
He'd drink Black Ram till his noäse turned blue,
And the liddle black mice turned white.
You ask 'en what my crook can do,
An' what he see'd that night.

He says, as through the fern he ran
('Twas Pharisees' fern, say I),
A wild potatur, as big as a man,
Arose and winked its eye.
He says it took his arm that night,
And waggled its big brown head,
Then sang : *This world will never go right
Till Drunken Dick be dead.*

He shook it off and, rambling round,
Among the goalden gorse,
He heers a kin' of sneering sound
Pro-ciddin' from a horse,

The Silver Crook.

Which reared upright, then said out loud
(While Dick said, 'I'll be danged!'),
*'His parents will be tedious proud
When Drunken Dick is hanged.'*

I rackon 'twould take a barrel of ale,
Betwix' my dinner and tea,
To mek me see the very nex' thing
That Drunken Dick did see;
For first he thought 'twas elephants walked
Behind him on the Tye,
And then he saw fower ricks of straw
That heaved against the sky.

He saw 'em lift. He saw 'em shift.
He saw gurt beards arise.
He saw 'em slowly lumbering down
A hundred times his size;
And, as he ran, he heer'd 'em say,
Whenever his head he turned,
*'This world will never be bright and gay
Till Drunken Dick be burned.'*

And then as Dick escaped again
And squirmed the churchyard through,
The cock that crowns the weather-vane
Cried '*How d'ye doodle doo?*'—
'Why, how d'ye doodle doo?' says Dick,
'*I know why you go round.*'
'*There'll be no luck,*' that rooster shruck,
'*Till Drunken Dick be drowned!*'

The Silver Crook.

And then, as Dick dodged round they barns,
And med for the white chalk coast,
He meets Himself, with the two black horns,
And eyes 'twud mek you roast.
'Walcome! walcome!' old Blackamoor cried,
''Tis muttonless day in hell,
So I think I'll have your kidneys, fried,
And a bit of your liver as well.'

Then Dick he loosed a tarr'ble shout,
And the Devil stopped dead to look ;
And the sheep-bells rang, and the moon came out,
And it shone on my silver crook.
'I rackon,' says Dick, 'if you're oald Nick,
You'd batter be scramblin' home ;
For *those* be the ringers of Arundel,
And *that* is the Poape of Roame.'"

THE SUSSEX SAILOR.

O, ONCE, by Cuckmere Haven,
I heard a sailor sing
Of shores beyond the sunset,
And lands of lasting spring,
Of blue lagoons and palm trees
And isles where all was young ;
But this was ever the burden
Of every note he sung :—

*O, have you seen my true love
A-walking in that land ?
Or have you seen her footprints
Upon that shining sand ?
Beneath the happy palm trees,
By Eden whispers fanned . . .
O, have you seen my true love
A-walking in that land ?*

And, once, in San Diego,
I heard him sing again,
Of Amberley, Rye, and Bramber,
And Brede and Fairlight Glen :

The Sussex Sailor.

The nestling hills of Sussex,
The russet-roofed elfin towns,
And the skylark up in a high wind,
Carolling over the downs.

*From Warbleton to Wild Brook
When May is white as foam,
O, have you seen my dearling
On any hills of home?
Or have you seen her shining,
Or only touched her hand?
O, have you seen my true love
A-walking in that land.*

And, once again, by Cowfold,
I heard him singing low,
'Tis not the leagues of ocean
That hide the hills I know.
The May that shines before me
Has made a ghost of May.
The valleys that I would walk in
Are twenty years away.

*Ah, have you seen my true love
A-walking in that land . . .
On hills that I remember,
In valleys I understand,
So far beyond the sunset,
So very close at hand,—
O, have you seen my true love
In that immortal land?*

THE BEE IN CHURCH.

THE nestling church at Ovingdean
Was fragrant as a hive in May;
And there was nobody within
To preach, or praise, or pray.

The sunlight slanted through the door,
And through the panes of painted glass,
When I stole in, alone, once more
To feel the ages pass.

Then, through the dim grey hush there droned
An echoing plain-song on the air,
As if some ghostly priest intoned
An old Gregorian there.

Saint Chrysostom could never lend
More honey to the heavenly Spring
Than seemed to murmur and ascend
On that invisible wing.

The Bee in Church.

So small he was, I scarce could see
My girdled brown hierophant ;
But only a Franciscan bee
In such a bass could chant.

His golden Latin rolled and boomed.
It swayed the altar flowers anew,
Till all that hive of worship bloomed
With dreams of sun and dew.

Ah, sweet Franciscan of the May,
Dear chaplain of the fairy queen,
You sent a singing heart away
That day, from Ovingdean.

MISCEI LANEOUS POEMS

IMMORTAL SAILS.

Now, in a breath, we'll burst those gates of gold,
And ransack heaven before our moment fails.
Now, in a breath, before we, too, grow old,
We'll mount and sing and spread immortal sails.

It is not time that makes eternity.
Love and an hour may quite out-span the years,
And give us more to hear and more to see
Than life can wash away with all its tears.

Dear, when we part, at last, that sunset sky
Shall not be touched with deeper hues than this ;
But we shall ride the lightning ere we die
And seize our brief infinitude of bliss,

With time to spare for all that heaven can tell,
While eyes meet eyes, and look their last farewell.

THE VINDICTIVE.

How should we praise those lads of the old *Vindictive*
Who looked Death straight in the eyes,
Till his gaze fell,
In those red gates of hell?

England, in her proud history, proudly enrolls them,
And the deep night in her remembering skies
With purer glory
Shall blazon their grim story.

There were no throngs to applaud that hushed adventure.
They were one to a thousand on that fierce emprise
The shores they sought
Were armoured, past all thought.

O, they knew fear, be assured, as the brave must know it,
With youth and its happiness bidding their last
good-byes ;
Till thoughts, more dear
Than life, cast out all fear.

The Vindictive.

For if, as we think, they remembered the brown-roofed
homesteads,

And the scent of the hawthorn hedges when daylight
dies,

Old happy places,
Young eyes and fading faces ;

One dream was dearer that night than the best of their
boyhood,

One hope more radiant than any their hearts could
prize.

The touch of your hand,
The light of your face, England !

So, age to age shall tell how they sailed through the
darkness,

Where, under those high, austere, implacable stars,
Not one in ten
Might look for a dawn again.

They saw the ferry-boats, *Iris* and *Daffodil*, creeping
Darkly as clouds to the shimmering mine-strewn
bars,

Flash into light !
Then thunder reddened the night.

The wild white swords of the searchlights blinded and
stabbed them,

The sharp black shadows fought in fantastic wars.
Black waves leapt whitening,
Red decks were washed with lightning.

The Vindictive.

But, under the twelve-inch guns of the black land
batteries

The hacked bright hulk, in a glory of crackling
spars,

Moved to her goal
Like an immortal soul ;

That, while the raw rent flesh in a furnace is tortured,
Reigns by a law no agony ever can shake,
And shines in power
Above all shocks of the hour.

O, there, while the decks ran blood, and the star-shells
lightened

The old broken ship that the enemy never could
break,

Swept through the fire
And grappled her heart's desire.

There, on a wreck that blazed with the soul of England,
The lads that died in the dark for England's sake,
Knew, as they died,
Nelson was at their side ;

Nelson, and all the ghostly fleets of his island,

Fighting beside them there, and the soul of
Drake :—

Dreams, as we knew,
Till these lads made them true.

*How should we praise you, lads of the old Vindictive,
Who looked death straight in the eyes,
Till his gaze fell
In those red gates of hell ?*

THE CHELTENHAM CHIMNEY- SWEEPS.

WHEN hawthorn buds are creaming white,
And the red foolscap all stuck with may,
Then lasses walk with eyes alight,
And it's chimney-sweepers' dancing day.

For the chimney-sweeps of Cheltenham town,
Sooty of face as a swallow of wing,
Come whistling, fiddling, dancing down
With white teeth flashing as they sing.

And Jack in the green, by a clown in blue,
Walks like a two-legged bush of may,
With the little wee lads that wriggled up the flue
Ere Cheltenham town cried "dancing day."

For brooms were short and the chimneys tall,
And the gipsies caught 'em these blackbirds cheap,
So Cheltenham bought them, spry and small,
And shoved them up in the dark to sweep.

The Cheltenham Chimney-Sweeps.

For Cheltenham town was cruel of old,
But she has been gathering garlands gay,
And the little wee lads are in green and gold,
For it's chimney-sweepers' dancing day.

And red as a rose, and blue as the sky,
With teeth as white as their faces are black,
The master-sweeps go dancing by,
With a gridiron painted on every back.

But when they are ranged in the market-place,
The clown's wife comes with an iron spoon,
And cozens a penny for her sweet face
'To keep their golden throats in tune.

Then, hushing the riot of that mad throng,
And sweet as the voice of a long-dead May,
A wandering pedler lifts 'em a song,
Of chimney-sweepers' dancing day ;

And the sooty faces, they try to recall . . .
As they gather around in their spell-struck rings . . .
But nobody knows that singer at all
Or the curious old-time air he sings :—

Why are you dancing, O chimney-sweeps of Cheltenham,
And where did you win you these may-coats so fine ?
For some are red as roses, and some are gold as daffodils,
But who, ah, who remembers, now, a little lad of
mine ?

The Cheltenham Chimney-Sweeps.

Lady, we are dancing, as we danced in old England
When the may was more than may, very long ago :
As for our may-coats, it was your white hands, lady,
Filled our sooty hearts and minds with blossom,
white as snow.

It was a beautiful face we saw, wandering through
Cheltenham.

It was a beautiful song we heard, very far away,
Weeping for a little lad stolen by the gipsies,
Broke our hearts and filled 'em with the glory of the
may.

Many a little lad had we, chirruping in the chimney-tops,
Twirling out a sooty broom, a blot against the blue.
Ah, but when we called to him, and when he saw and
ran to her,
All our winter ended, and we freed the others too.

Then she gave us may-coats of gold and green and
crimson,
Then, with a long garland, she led our hearts away,
Whispering, "Remember, though the boughs forget the
hawthorn,
Yet shall I return to you, that was your lady May."

But why are you dancing now, O chimney-sweeps of
Cheltenham,
And why are you singing of a May that is fled ?—
O, there's music to be born, though we pluck the old
fiddle-strings,
And a world's May awaking where the fields lay dead.

The Cheltenham Chimney-Sweeps.

And we dance, dance dreaming, of a lady most beautiful
That shall walk the green valleys of this dark earth
one day,
And call to us gently, "O chimney-sweeps of Cheltenham,
I am looking for my children. Awake, and come
away."

THE GHOST OF SHAKESPEARE, 1914.

CRIMSON was the twilight, under that crab-tree,
Where—old tales tell us—all a midsummer's night,
A mad young poacher, drunk with mead of elfin-land,
Lodged with the fern-owl, and looked at the stars.

There, from the dusk where the dream of Piers Plowman
Darkens on the sunset, to this dusk of our own,
I read, in a history, the record of our world.

The hawk-moth, the currant-moth, the red-striped tiger-
moth

Shimmered all around me, so white shone those pages;
And, in among the blue boughs, the bats flew low.

I slumbered, the history slipped from my hand.
Then I saw a dead man, dreadful in the moon-dawn,
The ghost of the master, bowed upon that book.
He muttered as he searched it,—*what vast convulsion*
Mocks my sexton's curse now, shakes our English clay?
Whereupon I told him, and asked him in turn
Whether he espied any light in those pages
Which painted an epoch later than his own.
I am a shadow, he said, and I see none . . .

The Ghost of Shakespeare, 1914.

I am a shadow, he said, and I see none . . .

Then, O then he murmured to himself (while the moon
hung

Crimson as a lanthorn of Cathay in that crab-tree)
Laughing at his work and the world, as I thought,
Yet with some bitterness, yet with some beauty,
Mocking his own music, these wraiths of his rhymes :

I.

God, when I turn the leaves of that dark book
Wherein our wisest teach us to recall
Those glorious flags which in old tempests shook
And those proud thrones which held my youth in
thrall.

When I see clear what seemed to childish eyes
The gorgeous colouring of each pictured age ;
And for their dominant tints now recognise
Those prints of innocent blood on every page ;

O, then I know this world is fast asleep,
Bound in Time's womb, till some far morning break ;
And, though light grows upon the dreadful deep,
We are dungeoned in thick night. We are not awake.

The world's unborn, for all our hopes and schemes ;
And all its myriads only move in dreams.

The Ghost of Shakespeare, 1914.

II.

Read what our wisest chroniclers record :—

A king betrayed both foes and friends to death,
Delivered his own country to the sword,
And lied, and lied, and lied to his last breath.

He died, the martyred anarch of his time.

What balm is this that consecrates his dust?
The self-same history shudders at the "crime"
Which shed a blood so fragrant, so "august."

Yes. Let your sons by thousands, millions, die;
And when the crowned assassin of to-day
Stands in the Judgment Hall of Liberty,
What shall your desolate nations rise and say?

'Honour the vanquished murderer! He's a king!
So—for our dead—he's too "august" a thing.'

III.

*It was a crimson twilight, under that crab-tree.
Moths beat about me, and bats flew low.
I read, in a history, the record of our world.*

*If there be light, said the Master
I am a shadow, and I see none . . .*

I am a shadow, and I see none.

THE LITTLE ROADS.

THE great roads are all grown over
That seemed so firm and white.
The deep black forests have covered them.
How should I walk aright?
How should I thread these tangled mazes,
Or grope to that far-off light?
I stumble round the thickets, and they turn me
Back to the thickets and the night.

Yet, sometimes, at a word, an elfin pass-word,
(O, thin, deep, sweet with beaded rain!)
There shines, through a mist of ragged robins,
The old lost April-coloured lane,
That leads me from myself; for, at a whisper,
Where the strong limbs thrust in vain,
At a breath, if my heart help another heart,
The path shines out for me again.

A thin thread, a rambling lane for lovers
To the light of the world's one way,
Where the white dropping flakes may wet our faces
As we lift them to the bloom-bowed spray:
O, Master, shall we ask Thee, then, for high-roads,
Or down upon our knees and pray
That Thou wilt ever lose us in Thy little lanes,
And lead us, by a wandering way.

THE HUMMING BIRD.

(PRINCE OF NEW JERSEY.)

GREEN wing and ruby throat,
What shining spell, what exquisite sorcery,
Lured you to float
And fight with bees round this one flowering tree?

Petulant imps of light,
What whisper or gleam or elfin-wild perfume,
Thrilled through the night
And drew you to this hive of rosy bloom?

One tree, and one alone,
Of all that load this magic air with spice
Claims for its own
Your brave migration out of Paradise;

Claims you, and guides you, too,
Three thousand miles across the summer's waste
Of blooms ye knew
Less finely fit for your ethereal taste.

The Humming Birds.

To poets' youthful hearts,
Even so the quivering April thoughts will fly,—
Those irised darts,
Those winged and tiny denizens of the sky.

Through beaks as needle-fine,
They suck a redder honey than bees know.
Unearthly wine
Sleeps in this bloom ; and, when it falls, they go.

NIPPON.

LAST night, I dreamed of Nippon . . .

I saw a cloud of white
Drifting before the sunset
On seas of opal light.

Beyond the wide Pacific

I saw its mounded snow
Miraculously changing
In that deep evening glow,

To rosy rifts and hillocks,

To orchards that I knew,
To snows of peach and cherry,
And feathers of bamboo.

I saw, on twisted bridges,

In blue and crimson gleams.
The lanterns of the fishers,
Along the brook of dreams.

Nippon.

I saw the wreaths of incense
Like little ghosts arise,
From temples under Fuji,
From Fuji to the skies.

I saw that fairy mountain . . .
I watched it form and fade.
No doubt the gods were singing
When Nippon isle was made.

THE REALMS OF GOLD.

(Written after hearing a line of Keats repeated by a passing stranger under the palms of Southern California.)

UNDER the palms of San Diego
Where gold-skinned Mexicans loll at ease,
And the red half-moons of their black-pipped melons
Drop from their hands in the sunset seas,
And an incense, out of the old brown missions,
Blows through the orange trees ;

I wished that a poet who died in Europe
Had found his way to this rose-red West ;
That Keats had walked by the wide Pacific
And cradled his head on its healing breast,
And made new songs of the sun-burned sea-folk,
New poems, perhaps his best.

I thought of him, under the ripe pomegranates
At the desert's edge, where the grape-vines grow,
In a sun-kissed ranch between grey-green sage-brush
And amethyst mountains, peaked with snow,
Or watching the lights of the City of Angels
Glitter like stars below.

The Realms of Gold.

He should walk, at dawn, by the lemon orchards,
And breathe at ease in that dry bright air ;
And the Spanish bells in their crumbling cloisters
Of brown adobe would sing to him there ;
And the old Franciscans would bring him their baskets
Of apple and olive and pear.

And the mandolins, in the deep blue twilight,
Under that palm with the lion's mane,
Would pluck, once more, at his golden heart-strings,
And tell him the old sea-tales of Spain ;
And there should the daughters of Hesperus teach him
Their mystical songs again.

Then, the dusk blew sweet over seas of peach-bloom ;
The moon sailed white in the cloudless blue ;
The tree-toads purred, and the crickets chirruped ;
And better than anything dreamed came true ;
For, under the murmuring palms, a shadow
Passed, with the eyes I knew :

A shadow, perhaps, of the tall green fountains
That rustled their fronds on that glittering sky,
A hungering shadow, a lean dark shadow,
A dreaming shadow that drifted by ;
But I heard him whisper the strange dark music
That found it so "rich to die."

And the murmuring palms of San Diego
Shook with stars as he passed beneath.
The Paradise palms, and the wild white orchards,
The night, and its roses, were all one breath,
Bearing the song of a nightingale seaward,
A song that had out-soared death.

SUNLIGHT AND SEA.

GIVE me the sunlight and the sea,
And who shall take my heaven from me?

Light of the Sun, Life of the Sun,
O, happy bold companion
Whose golden laughs round me run,
Making wine of the blue air
With wild-rose kisses everywhere,
Browning the limb, flushing the cheek,
Apple-fragrant, leopard-sleek,
Dancing from thy red-curtained East
Like a Nautch-girl to my feast,
Proud, because her lord the Spring,
Praised the way those anklets ring ;
Or wandering like a white Greek maid
Leaf-dappled through the dancing shade
Where many a green-veined leaf imprints
Breast and limb with emerald tints,
That softly net her silken shape,
But let the splendour still escape,
While rosy ghosts of roses flow
Over the supple rose and snow.

Sunlight and Sea.

But sweetest, fairest is thy face,
When we meet, when we embrace,
Where the white sand sleeps at noon
Round that lonely blue lagoon,
Fringed with one white reef of coral
Where the sea-birds faintly quarrel
And the breakers on the reef
Fade into a dream of grief,
And the palm-trees overhead
Whisper that all grief is dead.

Sister Sunlight, lead me then
Into thy healing seas again——
For when we swim out, side by side,
Like a lover with his bride,
When thy lips are salt with brine,
And thy wild eyes flash in mine,
The music of a mightier sea
Beats with my blood in harmony.
I breast the primal flood of being,
Too clear for speech, too near for seeing ;
And to his heart, new reconciled,
The Eternal takes his earth-bound child.

Who the essential secret spells
In those gigantic syllables,—
Flowing, ebbing, ebbing, flowing,—
Gathers wisdom past all knowing.
Song of the sea, I hear, I hear,
That deeper music of the sphere,
Catch the rhythm of sun and star,
And know what light and darkness are ;

Sunlight and Sea.

Ay, faint beginnings of a rhyme
That swells beyond the tides of time
Beat with thy rhythm in blood and breath
And make one song of life and death.

I hear, I hear, and rest content,
Merged in the primal element,
The old element whence life arose,
The fount of youth, to which it goes.

Give me the sunlight and the sea,
And who shall take my heaven from me?

MEMORIES OF THE PACIFIC COAST.

I KNOW a sunset shore
Where warm keen incense on the sea-wind blows,
And dim blue ranches (while these March winds roar)
Drown to the roofs in heliotrope and rose ;

Deserts of lost delight,
Cactus and palm and earth of thirsty gold,
Dark purple blooms round eaves of sun-washed white,
And that Hesperian fruit men sought of old.

The exquisite drought of love
Throbs in that land, drought that forgoes the dew
And all its life-springs, that the boughs above
May bear the fruits for which it thirsts anew.

And those pure mountains rise
Behind it, shutting our sad world away,
With shadowy facets where the sunset dies,
And cliffs like amethyst at the close of day.

Memories of the Pacific Coast.

An arm's-length off they seem

At dawn, among the sage-brush ; but, at noon,
Their angel trails wind upward like a dream,
And their bright crests grow distant as the moon.

All day, from peaks of snow,

The dry ravines refresh their tawny drought,
Till, on the grey-green foot-hills, far below,
Like clusters of white grapes the lamps come out.

Then, breaths of orange-bloom

Drift over hushed white ranches on the plain,
And spires of eucalyptus cast their gloom
On brown adobe cloisters of old Spain.

There, green-tressed pepper grows,

In willowy trees that drop red tassels down,
And carpet the brown road with tints of rose
Between the palms that aisle the moon-white town.

Oh, to be wandering there,

Under the palm-trees, on that sunset shore,
Where the waves break in song, and the bright air
Is crystal-clean, and peace is ours once more.

There the lost wonder dwells,

Beauty, reborn in whiteness from the foam ;
There Youth returns with all its magic spells,
And the heart finds its long-forgotten home.

Memories of the Pacific Coast.

There, in that setting sun,
On soft white sand the great slow breaker falls.
There brood the huts where West and East are one,
And the strange air runs wild with elfin calls.

There, gazing far away,
Those brown-legged fisher-folk, with almond eyes,
Crouch by their nets, and through the rose-tinged spray
See their own Orient in those deepening skies.

Through fringes of the West,
They see the teeming East, beyond Japan,
Mother of races that, in age-long quest,
Have rounded earth, but end where they began ;

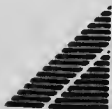
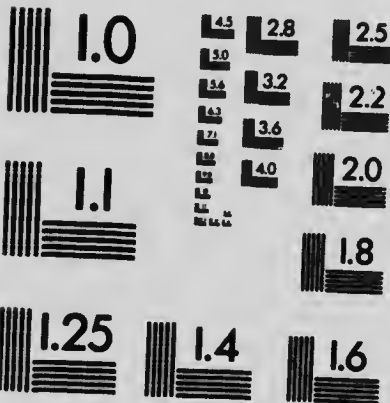
End in the strange recall
To that far childhood, that faint flowering past,
Where some dear shade, loved, lost, the first of all,
Opens the door to their dim home at last.

Home,—home ! Where is that land ?
Beyond the bounds of earth, the old hungering cry
Aches in the soul, drives us from all we planned,
And sets our sail to seek another sky.

REPUBLIC AND MOTHERLAND



(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)



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INTERPRETATIONS.

If I could sing to Eastland,
As Westland sings to me,
There should be keener sunlight
From English sea to sea.
Much-doubting men should hope again
And breathe a spacious air,
And eyes would turn to Westland
And find their comrades there.

If I could sing to Westland
As Eastland sings to me,
'Twould tinge their skies with mournful dyes
As old as history,
Ironical as the grave, and cold,
With cynic laughter fraught ;
And yet—I think the New World
Could use the grief I brought.

I cannot sing to either
What both will understand ;
And so I go between the two
And weave a twofold strand.
Perhaps my pains will all be lost,
And both my friends, ere long ;
But O, I cannot count the cost
Of that remembering song.

1911.

(Written after entering New York Harbour at daybreak.)

UP the broad harbour with the morning sun
The ship swept in from sea ;
Gigantic towers arose, the night was done,
And—there stood Liberty.

Silent, the proud torch lifted in one hand,
The dawn in her grave eyes,
Silent, for all the shouts that vex her land,
Silent, hailing the skies ;

Hailing that mightier Kingdom of the Blest
Our seamen sought of old,
The dream that lured the nations through the West,
The city of sunset gold.

Saxon and Norman in one wedded soul
Shook out one flag like fire ;
But westward, westward, moved the gleaming goal,
Westward, the vast desire.

1911.

Westward and ever westward ran the call,
They followed the pilgrim sun,
Seeking that land which should enfold them all,
And weld all hearts in one.

Here on this mightier continent apart,
Here on these rolling plains,
Swells the first throb of that immortal heart,
The pulse of those huge veins.

Still, at these towers, our old-world cities jest,
And neither hear nor see
The brood of gods at that gigantic breast,
The atoning race to be ;

Chosen from many—for no sluggard soul
Confronts that night of stars,
The trumpets of the last Republic roll
Far off, an end to wars ;

An end, an end to that wild blood-red age,
That made and keeps us blind ;
A mightier realm shall be her heritage,
The union of mankind.

Chosen from many nations, and made one ;
But first, O Mother, from thee,
When following, following on that pilgrim sun,
Thy *Mayflower* crossed the sea.

THE MAYFLOWER.

(1620-1920.)

I THINK some angel christened her,
Touched her black bows with dew and flame,
And watched her through the sunset bear
The light of England's loveliest name :
But O, the Mayflower's not a ship,
Though Heaven, in one great hour, let slip
Its bloom on one great ship's renown
That sailed three hundred years ago,
From Plymouth Town to Plymouth Town. . . .

O, little fragrant stars of snow
That bloom in England, laughing May,
The sea-wind wafts your scent to-day
Across three thousand miles of spray.

From winding lane and dark sweet coombe
It wafts the breath of Devon bloom ;
For fairer lands have fairer flowers
But this one loveliness is ours,—
This whitener of the hedge in spring.

These hawthorn buds where, drenched with dew,
The bullfinch and green linnet sing,
When God makes earth and heaven anew.
And O, the Mayflower's not a name !
It is a soul, a living flame,

The Mayflower.

Honey-hearted, white as foam,
The glory of the hills of home,
That blooms in all our songs and tales,
And broke into immortal sails,
When tyrannous black-browed tempests freed
The starry-petalled, wingéd seed,
And, over the rough ocean blown
It made new may-boughs of its own.

Hark ! To-day the mother-stem
Whispers all her heart to them !
You who doubt her, hear the may
Whispering the wide seas away,—
“ What is England, answer ye
Whose heart of heart is Liberty ;
For only in such hours as this
Her own may tell of all she is.”
Athens, Weimar, Rome, have heard
Her children's glorifying word.
They have praised a hundred lands,
And still kept silence where She stands ;
Or, if they turned to her, they said
England slumbers, or is dead.

They have searched her soul with fire
Lest she fail of their desire.
They have lashed her with their blame,
And made a taunt of her own name.
Mockery, anger, careless wit,
With forkéd tongues have struck at it ;
Till the stranger in her gate
Wondered at their seeming hate,

The Mayflower.

And half believed the thing they said,
England slumbers, or is dead.
What is England? Now, at last,
Mightier from that tempering past,
She lifts a prouder head on high,
And her silent deeds reply :—

“ I am England, who first gave
Freedom and justice to the slave ;
Whose voice and sword and triumphing sea
First gave charters to the free ;
Mother of Parliaments, who first broke
Emperors with my thunder stroke . . .
I am that land, I am that land,
Where Shakespeare's soul and Cromwell's hand,
Milton's faith and Byron's fire,
With Newton's, Darwin's thought conspire
To teach what kings have never known
And lead the peoples to their throne.

Though my feet in evil hours
Failed of the height where my soul towers ;
Though I have sinned as ye have sinned,
There is no whisper of any wind
The wide world round, where men stand free,
But tells of my vast agony.
Where have I conquered, and not given
Hostages to my free heaven ;
Ay, with its first wild day-spring crowned
Mine equal foe the wide world round ;
Till, if again at a king I ride
Mine ancient foes are at my side ?

The Mayflower.

I am England. I am She
Who crowned with law my liberty,
And taught my free-born sons to heed
What I taught kings at Runnymede ;
Who, when my tyrants rose again,
Broke every link of every chain,
Flung my may-flower to the seas,
And sailed to the Atlantides.
There was England, in that hour,
The pilgrim soul of all my power,
Which rose like a triumphant flame
And made New England in my name.

Ay, though all souls that live on earth
May mingle in your mightier birth,
There is no senate of free men
But echoes my sea-speech again.
The sea that girds and guards my walls
Thunders in your own council halls ;
And my hand against strange kings
Loosed to heaven your eaglet's wings."

*Across three thousand miles of spray,
A ghostly ship sets sail to-day.
But O, you living flowers of may,
Fresh with dew, and white as foam,
I hear your murmuring branches say
" This is England. This is home. . . .*

This is New England. This is home."

THE IMMIGRANTS.

THEY left the Old World labouring in the night.
They sailed beyond the sunset. They stood dumb
On darkling prow against that westering light
And gazed and dreamed of happier worlds to come.

Darkling and dumb, with hungering eyes they gazed,
Men, women, children, at that wistful sky,
Half-aching for old homes, and half-amazed
At their new courage, as the foam swept by ;

Till, towering from this mast-thronged waterway,
Liberty rose, the high torch in her hand ;
And each would look at each, and smile, and say,
Is this the land, is this the promised land ?

While some looked up, in tears, as if in prayer,
And wondered if all dreams must waste in air.

THE UNION.

(1917.)

You that have gathered together the sons of all races,
And welded them into one,
Lifting the torch of your Freedom on hungering faces
That sailed to the setting sun ;

You that have made of mankind in your own proud
regions
The music of man to be,
How should the old earth sing of you, now, as your
legions
Rise to set all men free ?

How should the singer that knew the proud vision and
loved it,
In the days when not all men knew,
Gaze through his tears, on the light, now the world
approved it ;
Or dream, when the dream comes true ?

The Union.

How should he sing when the Spirit of Freedom in
thunder

Speaks, and the wine-press is red ;
And the sea-winds are loud with the chains that are
broken asunder
And nations that rise from the dead ?

Flag of the sky, proud flag of that wide communion,
Too mighty for thought to scan ;
Flag of the many in one, and that last world-union,
That Kingdom of God in man ;

Ours was a dream, in the night, of that last federation,
But yours is the glory unfurled—
The marshalled nations and stars that shall make one
nation,
One singing star of the world.

GHOSTS OF THE NEW WORLD.

"There are no ghosts in America."

THERE are no ghosts, you say,
To haunt her blaze of light,
No shadows in her day,
No phantoms in her night.
Columbus' tattered sail
Has passed beyond our hail.

What? On that magic coast,
Where Raleigh fought with fate
Or where that Devon ghost
Unbarred the Golden Gate,
No dark, strange, ear-ringed men
Beat in from sea again?

No ghosts in Salem town
With silver buckled shoon?
No lovely witch to drown
Or burn beneath the moon?
Not even a whiff of tea,
On Boston's glimmering quay?

Ghosts of the New World.

O, ghostly Spanish walls,
Where brown Franciscans glide,
Is there no voice that calls
Across the Great Divide,
To pilgrims on their way
Along the Santa Fé?

Then let your Pullman-cars
Go roaring to the West,
Till, watched by lonelier stars,
The cactus lifts its crest.
There, on that painted plain,
One ghost shall rise again.

Majestic and forlorn,
Wreck of a dying race,
The Red Man, half in scorn,
Shall raise his haughty face,
Inscrutable as the sky,
To watch our ghosts go by.

What? Is earth dreaming still?
Shall not the night disgorge
The ghosts of Bunker Hill,
The ghosts of Valley Forge,
Or, England's mightiest son,
The ghost of Washington?

No ghosts where Lincoln fell?
No ghosts for seeing eyes?
I know an old cracked bell
Shall make ten million rise
When one immortal ghost
Calls to the slumbering host.

THE OLD MEETING-HOUSE.

(NEW JERSEY, 1918.)

*(All the headstones bore names whose every syllable was made
in England.)*

Its quiet graves were made for peace till Gabriel blows
his horn.

Those wise old elms could hear no cry

Of all that distant agony,—

Only the red-winged blackbird, and the rustle of thick
ripe corn.

The blue-jay, perched upon that bronze, with bright
unweeting eyes,

Could never read the names that signed

The noblest charter of mankind ;

But all of them were names we knew beneath our
English skies.

And on the low grey headstones, with their crumbling
weather-stains,—

Though cardinal birds, like drops of blood,

Flickered across the haunted wood—

The names you'd see were names that woke like flowers
in English lanes.

The Old Meeting-House.

John Applegate was fast asleep; and Temperance Olden, too.

And David Worth had quite forgot
If Hannah's lips were red or not;
And Prudence veiled her eyes at last, as Prudence ought
to do.

And when, across that patch of heaven, that small blue
leaf-edged space,
At times, a droning airplane went,
No flicker of astonishment
Could lift the heavy eyelids on one gossip's upturned face.

For William Speakman could not tell—so thick the
grasses grow—
If that strange humming in the sky
Meant that the Judgment Day were nigh,
Or if 'twas but the summer bees that blundered to and
fro.

And then, across the breathless wood, a Bell began to
sound,
The only Bell that wakes the dead,
And Stockton Signer raised his head,
And called to all the deacons in the ancient burial-
ground.

"The Bell, the Bell is ringing! Give me back my
rusty sword.
Though I thought the wars were done,
Though I thought our peace was won,
Yet I signed the Declaration, and the dead must keep
their word.

The Old Meeting-House.

There's only one great ghost I know could make that
'larum ring.

It's the captain that we knew
In the ancient buff and blue,
It's our Englishman, George Washington, who fought
the German king ! ”

So the sunset saw them mustering beneath their
brooding boughs,
Ancient shadows of our sires,
Kindling with the ancient fires,
While the old cracked Bell to southward shook the
shadowy meeting-house.

PRINCETON, 1917.

(The first four lines of this poem were written before the United States entered the War, for inscription on a monument at Princeton, the first joint-memorial to the British and American soldiers who fell in the Revolutionary War.)

I.

*Here Freedom stood, by slaughtered friend and foe,
And ere the wrath paled or that sunset died,
Looked through the ages : then, with eyes aglow,
Laid them, to wait that future, side by side.*

II.

Now lamp-lit gardens in the blue dusk shine
Through dog-wood red and white,
And round the grey quadrangles, line by line,
The windows fill with light,
Where Princeton calls to Magdalen, tower to tower,
Twin lanthorns of the law,
And those cream-white magnolia boughs embower
The halls of old Nassau.

Princeton, 1917.

III.

The dark bronze tigers crouch on either side
Where red-coats used to pass,
And round the bird-loved house where Mercer died
And violets dusk the grass,
By Stony Brook that ran so red of old,
But sings of friendship now,
To feed the old enemy's harvest fifty-fold
The green earth takes the plough.

IV.

Through this May night if one great ghost should stray
With deep remembering eyes,
Where that old meadow of battle smiles away
Its blood-stained memories ;
If Washington should walk, where friend and foe
Sleep and forget the past,
Be sure his unquenched heart would leap to know
Their hosts are joined at last.

V.

Be sure he walks, in shadowy buff and blue,
Where those dim lilacs wave,
He bends his head to bless, as dreams come true,
The promise of the grave.
Then with a vaster . . . than thought can scan,
Touching his ancient sword,
Prays for that mightier realm of God in man,
"Hasten Thy Kingdom, Lord.

Princeton, 1917.

VI.

"Land of new hope, land of the singing stars,
Type of the world to be,
The vision of a world set free from wars
Takes life, takes form, from thee,
Where all the jarring nations of this earth,
Beneath the all blessing sun,
Bring the new music of mankind to birth,
And make the whole world one."

VII.

And those old comrades rise around him there,
Old foemen, side by side,
With eyes like stars upon the brave night-air,
And young as when they died,
To hear your bells, O beautiful Princeton towers,
Ring for the world's release.
They see you, piercing like grey swords through flowers.
And smile from hearts at peace.

BEETHOVEN IN CENTRAL PARK.

*(After a glimpse of a certain monument in New York, during the
Victory Celebration.)*

THE thousand-windowed towers were all alight,
 Throngs of all nations filled that glittering way ;
And, rich with dreams of the approaching day,
Flags of all nations trampled down the night.
No clouds, at sunset, die in airs as bright ;
 No clouds, at dawn, awake in winds as gay ;
 For Freedom rose in that august array,
Crowned with the stars and weaponed for the right.
Then, in a place of whispering leaves and gloom,
 I saw, too dark, too dumb for bronze or stone,
 One tragic head that bowed against the sky ;
Oh, in a hush too deep for any tomb,
 I saw Beethoven, dreadfully alone,
 With his own grief, and his own majesty.

"THE AVENUE OF THE ALLIES."

THIS is the song of the wind as it came
Tossing the flags of the nations to flame :

*I am the breath of God. I am His laughter.
I am His Liberty. That is my name.*

So it descended, at night, on the city.
So it went lavishing beauty and pity,
Lighting the lordliest street of the world
With half of the banners that earth has unfurled,
Over the lamps that are brighter than stars,
Laughing aloud on its way to the wars,
Proud as America, sweeping along
Death and destruction like notes in a song,
Leaping to battle as man to his mate,
Joyous as God when He moved to create,—

Never was voice of a nation so glorious,
Glad of its cause and afire with its fate !
Never did eagle on mightier pinion
Tower to the height of a brighter dominion,
Kindling the hope of the prophets to flame,
Calling aloud on the deep as it came,

*Cleave me a way for an army with banners.
I am His Liberty. That is my name.*

"The Avenue of the Allies."

Know you the meaning of all they are doing?
Know you the light that their soul is pursuing?
Know you the might of the world they are making,
This nation of nations whose heart is awaking?
What is this mingling of peoples and races?
Look at the wonder and joy in their faces!
Look how the folds of the union are spreading!
Look, for the nations are come to their wedding.
How shall the folk of our tongue be afraid of it?
England was born of it. England was made of it,
Made of this welding of tribes into one,
This marriage of pilgrims that followed the sun!
Briton and Saxon and Norman were drawn,
By winds of this Pentecost, out of the dawn,
Westward, to make her one people of many;
But here is a union more mighty than any.
Know you the soul of this deep exultation?
Know you the word that goes forth to this nation?

*I am the breath of God. I am His Liberty.
Let there be light over all His creation.*

Over this Continent, wholly united,
They that were foemen in Europe are plighted,
Here in a league that our blindness and pride
Doubted and flouted and mocked and denied,
Dawns the Republic, the laughing, gigantic
Europe, united, beyond the Atlantic.
That is America, speaking one tongue,
Acting her epics before they are sung,
Driving her rails from the palms to the snow,
Through States that are greater than Emperors know—

"The Avenue of the Allies."

Forty-eight States that are empires in might,
But ruled by the will of one people to-night,
Nerved as one body, with networks of steel,
Merging their strength in the one Commonweal,
Brooking no poverty, mocking at Mars,
Building their cities to talk with the stars,
Thriving, increasing by myriads again
Till even in numbers old Europe may wane,—
How shall a son of the England they fought
Fail to declare the full pride of his thought,
Stand with the scoffers who, year after year,
Bring the Republic their half-hidden sneer?
Now, as in beauty she stands at our side,
Who shall withhold the full gift of his pride?
Not the great England who knows that her son,
Washington, fought her, and Liberty won;
England, whose names like the stars in their station,
Stand at the foot of that world's Declaration,—
Washington, Livingston, Langdon, she claims them,
It is her right to be proud when she names them,
Proud of that voice in the night as it came,
Tossing the flags of the nations to flame:

*I am the breath of God. I am His laughter.
I am His Liberty. That is my name.*

Flags, in themselves are but rags that are dyed.
Flags, in that wind, are like nations enskied.
See, how they grapple the night as it rolls
And trample it under like triumphing souls.
Over the city that never knew sleep,
Look at the riotous folds as they leap.

"The Avenue of the Allies."

Thousands of tri-colours laughing for France
Ripple and whisper and thunder and dance ;
Thousands of flags for Great Britain aflame
Answer their sisters in Liberty's name.
Belgium is burning in pride overhead ;
Poland is near, and her sunrise is red.
Under and over and fluttering between
Italy burgeons in red, white, and green.
See, how they climb like adventurous flowers,
Over the tops of the terrible towers. . . .

*There, in the darkness, the glories are mated.
There, in the darkness, a world is created.
There, in this Pentecost, streaming on high,
There, with a glory of stars in the sky,
Here the broad flag of our union and liberty
Rides the proud night-wind and tyrannies die.*

MOUNTAIN LAUREL.

(THE GREEN MOUNTAIN POET SINGS.)

I HAVE been wandering in the lonely valleys,
Where mountain laurel grows ;
And, in among the rocks, and the tall dark pine-trees
The foam of its young bloom flows,
In a riot of rose white stars, all drenched with the
dew-fall,
And musical with the bee.
Let the fog-bound cities over their dead wreaths quarrel.
Wild laurel for me !

Wild laurel—mountain laurel—

*Bright as the breast of a cloud at break of day,
White-flowering laurel, wild mountain laurel,
Rose-dappled snowdrifts, warm with the honey of May!
On the happy hill-sides, in the green valleys of Connecticut,
Where the trout-streams go carolling to the sea,
I have walked with the lovers of song and heard them
singing
“ Wild laurel for me ! ”*

Far, far away is the throng that has never known beauty,
Or looked upon unstained skies.
Did they think that my songs would scramble for
withered bay-leaves
In the streets where the brown fog lies ?

Mountain Laurel.

They never have seen their wings, then, beating west-ward,

To the heights where song is free,
To the hills where the laurel is drenched with the
dawn's own colours,
Wild laurel for me !

Wild laurel—mountain laurel—

*Where Robert o' Lincoln sings in the dawn and the dew,
White flowering laurel—wild mountain laurel,
Where song springs fresh from the heart, and the heart
is true !*

*They have gathered the sheep to their fold, but where is the
eagle ?*

*They have bridled their steeds, but when have they
tamed the sea,*

*They have caged the wings, but never the heart of the
singer.*

" Wild laurel for me ! "

If I never should see you again, O, lost companions,

When the rose-red month begins,

With the wood-smoke curling blue by the Indian river,

And the sound of the violins,

In dreams the breath of your green glens would still
haunt me,

Where night and her stars, drawing down on blossom
and tree,

Turn earth to heaven, and whisper their love till
daybreak.

Wild laurel for me !

Mountain Laurel.

Wild laurel—mountain laurel—

*O, mount again, wild wings, to the stainless blue,
White-flowering laurel, wild mountain laurel,*

And all the glory of song that the young heart knew.

*I have lived. I have loved. I have sung in the happy
valleys,*

Where the trout-streams go carolling to the sea.

I have met the lovers of song in the sunset bringing

“Wild laurel for me!”

TOUCHSTONE ON A BUS

TOUCHSTONE ON A BUS.

LAST night, I rode with Touchstone on a bus
From Ludgate Hill to World's End. It was he!
Despite the broad cloth and the bowler hat,
I knew him, Touchstone, the wild flower of folly,
The whetstone of his age, the scourge of kings,
The madcap morning-star of elfin-land,
Who used to wrap his legs around his neck
For warmth on winter nights. He had slipped back,
To see what men were doing in a world
That should be wiser. He had watched a play,
Read several books, heard men discourse of art
And life; and he sat bubbling like a spring
In Arden. Never did blackbird, drenched with may,
Chuckle as Touchstone chuckled on that ride,
Lord, what a world! Lord, what a mad, mad world!

Then, to the jolt and jingle of the engine,
He burst into this bunch of madcap rhymes:—

I.

THE NEW DUCKLING.

"I WANT to be new," said the duckling.

"O, ho !" said the wise old owl,
While the guinea-hen cluttered off chuckling
To tell all the rest of the fowl.

"I should like a more elegant figure,"
That child of a duck went on.
"I should like to grow bigger and bigger,
Until I could swallow a swan.

I *won't* be the bond-slave of habit.
I *won't* have these webs on my toes.
I want to run round like a rabbit,
A rabbit as red as a rose.

I *don't* want to waddle like mother,
Or quack like my silly old dad.
I want to be utterly other,
And *frightfully* modern and mad."

The New Duckling.

"Do you know," said the turkey, "you're quacking !

There's a fox creeping up thro' the rye;

And, if you're not utterly lacking,

You'll make for that duck-pond. Good-bye !"

"I won't," said the duckling. "I'll lift him

A beautiful song, like a sheep ;

And when I have—as it were—biffed him,

I'll give him my feathers to keep."

Now the curious end of this fable

—So far as the rest ascertained,

Though they searched from the barn to the stable,—

Was that *only his feathers remained*.

So he *wasn't* the bond-slave of habit,

And he *didn't* have webs on his toes ;

And *perhaps* he runs round like a rabbit,

A rabbit as red as a rose.

II.

THE MAN WHO DISCOVERED THE
USE OF A CHAIR.

THE man who discovered the use of a chair,
Odds—bobs—

What a wonderful man !

He used to sit down on it, tearing his hair,
Till he thought of a highly original plan.

For years he had sat on his chair, like you,
Quite—still !

But his looks were grim,

For he wished to be famous (as great men do)
And nobody ever would listen to him.

Now he went one night to a dinner of state
Hear ! hear !

In the proud Guildhall !

And he sat on his chair, and he ate from a plate ;
But nobody heard his opinions at all ;

Man who Discovered Use of Chair.

There were ten fat aldermen down for a speech,
(*Grouse! Grouse!*

What a dreary bird!)

With five fair minutes allotted to each,
But never a moment for *him* to be heard.

But, each being ready to talk, I suppose,
Order! Order!

They cried, for the Chair!

And, much to their wonder, our friend arose
And fastened his eye on the eye of the Mayor.

"We have come," he said, "to the fourteenth course!
High—time,

for the Chair," he said.

Then, with both of his hands, and with all of his force,
He hurled his chair at the Lord Mayor's head.

It missed that head by the width of a hair.

Gee—whizz!

What a horrible squeak!

But it crashed through the big bay-window there
And smashed a bus into Wednesday week.

And the very next day, in the decorous *Times*,
(*Great—Guns!*

How the headlines ran!)

In spite of the kings and the wars and the crimes,
There were five full columns about that man.

Man who Discovered Use of Chair.

ENVOI.

Oh, if you get dizzy when authors write
(*My stars !*

And you very well may !)

That white is black and that black is white,
You should sit, quite still, in your chair and say :

It is easy enough to be famous now,
(*Puff—puff !*

How the trumpets blare !)

Provided, of course, that you don't care how,
Like the man who discovered the use of a chair .

III.

COTTON-WOOL.

SHUN the brush and shun the pen,
Shun the ways of clever men,
When they prove that black is white,
When they swear that wrong is right,
When they roast the singing stars
Like chestnuts, in between the bars,

*Children, let a wandering fool
Stuff your ears with cotton-wool.*

When you see a clever man,
Run as quickly as you can.
You must never, never, never
Think that Socrates was clever.
The cleverest thing I ever knew
Now cracks walnuts at the Zoo.

*Children, let a wandering fool
Stuff your ears with cotton-wool.*

Homer could not scintillate.
Lincoln, too, was merely great.
That's a very different matter
From talking like a frantic hatter.

Cotton-Wool.

Keats and Shelley had no tricks.
Wordsworth never climbed up sticks.

*Children, let a wandering fool
Stuff your ears with cotton-wool.*

Milton would create a gloom
In many a London drawing-room.
He'd be silent at their wit,
He would never laugh at it.
When they kissed Salome's toes,
I think he'd snort and blow his nose.

*Children, let a wandering fool
Stuff your ears with cotton-wool.*

They'd curse him for a silly clown,
They'd drum him out of London town.
Professor Flunkey, the historian,
Would say he was a dull Victorian.
Matthew, Mark, and Luke and John,
Bless the bed I rest upon.

*Children, let a wandering fool
Stuff your ears with cotton-wool.*

AMEN.

IV.

FASHIONS.

FASHION on fashion on fashion

(With only the truth growing old !)

And here's the new purple of passion !

(And Love waiting out in the cold !)

Who'll buy ?

They are crying new lamps for Aladdin,

New worlds for the old and the true ;

And nobody seems to remember—

The magic was not in the new.

They are hawking a new rose for Eden.

It has feathers. It's green. I suppose

The only thing wrong with their rose is

The fact that it isn't a rose.

Who'll buy ?

And here's a new song without metre ;

And, here again, nothing is wrong

(For nothing on earth could be neater)

Except that it isn't a song.

Fashions.

An inspired and divine generation
Is flogging, with all of its force
(And unanimous "rebel" damnation)
A frozen Victorian horse.

Who'll buy?

Yes. It's dead. Here's the hair that deluded
Our grandmother's horrible taste.
But look—and look well—they've included
Some better things, too, in their haste.

Did the anti-macassars abet them?
Were they hidden in sofas of plush?
Did an Anglican bishop forget them,
Or leave them behind in the crush?
Who'll buy?

Here's Tennyson, going quite cheaply,
He propped a stuffed bird in the hall;
And to Lady Cocotte (who thinks deeply)
That settles it, once and for all.

Here's *item*, a ring, very plain, sirs;
And *item*, a God (but He's dead).
They say that you'll need Him again, sirs;
So, *item*, a cross for His head.
Who'll buy?

Yes, they say that He'll rise from the dead, sirs,
It is only the fashions that die;
And—here are the thorns for His head, sirs,
They'll keep till you need 'em. Who'll buy?

THE MAN THAT WAS A MULTITUDE.

As I came up to London, to buy my love a ring,
I passed by a tavern where the painted women sing.
Each of 'em was jigging on a greasy fiddler's knee,
And they cackled at the red rose my true love gave
to me ;

With their

*" Come and see the silly clown that wears a red rose !
Roses are green now, as everybody knows."*

They cackled (how they cackled !) crying everything
was new.

The old truths were all false, the new lies were true.

By play, by book, by poem, it was easier to say

A new thing, a false thing, than walk a stricter
way.

Singing,

*" It was hard, hard to climb, when only truth was
true ;*

But all may violently run, down into the new."

The Man that was a Multitude.

As I came home by Arundel, the wind blew off the sea.
It brought the almond scent of gorse, and there she
came to me,
My true love with the young light that glowed in her
eyes,
And my soul rose like a giant to the ancient ordered
skies,
Laughing,
*Let 'em take their green rose, and pickle it in hell,
For I have seen the red rose that blows by Arundel.*

My soul rose like a giant, and O but it was sweet
To tumble all its passion like a wave at her feet ;
To leave their tricks behind me, and to find myself
again
Walking in the clean sun along a Sussex lane,
Singing,
*Let 'em hymn their new love that veers with heat and
cold,
But I will sing the true love that never shall grow old.*

Then, as we walked together, I was quietly aware
Of a mighty throng around us in the hawthorn-scented
air,
And I knew it was the simple folk that wait and listen
long,
Ere the soul that makes a nation can unite them in
a song.
Then,
*"Back," they sang, "to London-town; and we will march
with you ;
Because we like the red rose that Eden Garden knew.*

The Man that was a Multitude

"But Satan had a vision five-and-thirty years ago,
When England lost the great faith and said she didn't
know.

He whistled up his wicked dwarfs, from all the nooks
of night,

And set 'em to the new trick of proving black is white.

Crying,

Come, my 'intellectuals.' Trample on the dead.

Trample truth into the dust, and throne yourselves instead."

And so it was that rebel imps, in sooty reds and blues,
And little squint-eyed epigrams with scorpions in their
shoes,

And white-hot cinders in their breeks to make 'em act
like youth,

Came hopping on their hands from hell, to dance upon
the truth,

Squeaking,

"All that you have ever dreamed is ashes now and dust.

God's a force—like heat, we think—and love is only lust."

And some would take to poetry, and roll each other's logs;
But, since their throats were crooked, they could only
croak like frogs.

And some would take to sculpture, and the naked Ver-
died,

As they showed their blocks of marble and declared she
slept inside.

Ay,

And others painted pictures like the stern of a baboon;

*While their fiddlers, by the tavern, fiddled songs without
a tune.*

The Man that was a Multitude.

And there we found 'em boasting, "We have mingled
earth and sea,
We have planted tare and hemlock where the harvest
used to be.
We have broken all the borders, we have neither chart
nor plan."
Then they saw the throng approaching, and behold it
was a Man,
Chuckling,
*"England waits and suffers long, as nations often do,
But the Man that is a Multitude has come to answer you."*

His head was in the heavens, though his feet were in
the clay.
He rose against the smoke of stars we call the Milky Way.
Three hundred thousand oak-trees had furnished forth
his staff;
And he waved his club above them, as a child might,
with a laugh.
Saying,
*"You have sung a strange song, in God's good land!
Who shall deliver you, or save you from my hand?"*

"O, you have sung a new song, but I will sing an old,
And it shall shine like rubies, and it shall ring like gold!
And you have sung the little songs of mating flea
and flea;
But I will sing the great song that thunders like the sea;"
Roaring,
*"You have sung the red grass, and hymned the purple cow;
And you have asked for justice! Will you kneel and have
it now?"*

The Man that was a Multitude.

"We're only Intellectuals," a tiny fiddler squeaked.

"It's not on such as us, you know, that judgment should be wreaked.

Why, even Mr Trotsky says, we've hardly helped at all !
We only scratched the mortar out. We didn't smash the wall.

No ! No !

We only thought the reign of law a very poor device.

We only asked for freedom, in a monkeys' paradise."

The Man that was a Multitude, he dropped his mighty staff.

"Why, damn your little eyes," he said, "I'm only going to laugh."

Then, once, and twice, he guffawed, as a Sussex ploughman might,

' the fiddlers and their fancies flew like feathers thro' the night,

Whimpering,

"Is it a Victorian Ghost? Some one that we know?

Ecclefechan Tom himself—could hardly treat us so !"

As I came home by Arundel, my true love walked with me,

And the Man that was a Multitude was singing like the sea,—

O, they have sung their green rose, and pickled it in hell !

But we will sing the red rose that Adam used to smell.

And,

They have sung their new love that veers with heat and cold ;

But we will sing the true love that never shall grow old.

DEAD MAN'S MORRICE

DEAD MAN'S MORRICE.

THERE came a crowder to the Mermaid Inn,
One dark May night,
Fiddling a tune that quelled our motley din,
With quaint delight.

It haunts me yet, as old lost airs will do,
A phantom strain :
*Look for me once, lest I should look for you,
And look in vain.*

In that old wood, where ghosts of lovers walk,
At fall of day,
Gleaning such fragments of their ancient talk
As poor ghosts may,
From leaves that brushed their faces, wet with dew,
Or tears, or rain . . .
*Look for me once, lest I should look for you,
And look in vain.*

Have we not seen them—pale forgotten shades
That do return,
Groping for those dim paths, those fragrant glades,
Those nooks of fern,

Dead Man's Morrice.

Only to find that, of the may they knew,
No wraiths remain ;
*Yet they still look, as I should look for you,
And look in vain.*

They see those happier ghosts that waned away—
Whither, who knows?—
Ghosts that come back with music and the may,
And Spring's first rose,
Lover and lass, to sing the old burden through,
Stave and refrain :
*Look for me once, lest I should look for you,
And look in vain.*

So, after death, if in that starless deep
I lose your eyes,
I'll haunt familiar places. I'll not keep
Tryst in the skies.
I'll haunt the whispering eims that found us true,
The old grass-grown lane.
*Look for me there, lest I should look for you,
And look in vain.*

There, as of old, under the dreaming moon,
A phantom throng
Floats through the fern, to a ghostly morrice tune,
A thin sweet song,
Hands link with hands, eyes drown in eyes anew,
Lips meet again . . .
*Look for me once, lest I should look for you,
And look in vain.*

THE OLD FOOL IN THE WOOD.

"If I could whisper you all I know,"
Said the Old Fool in the Wood,
"You'd never say that green leaves 'grow,'
You'd say, 'Ah, what a happy mood
The Master must be in to-day,
To think such thoughts.'"
That's what you'd say.

"If I could whisper you all I've heard,"
Said the Old Fool in the fern,
"You'd never say 'the song of a bird,'
You'd say, 'I'll listen, and p'raps I'll learn
One word of His joy as He passed this way,
One syllable more,'"
That's what you'd say.

"If I could tell you all the rest,"
Said the Old Fool under the skies,
"You'd hug your griefs against your breast
And whisper with love-lit eyes,
'I am one with the sorrow that made the may,
And the pulse of His heart.'"
That's what you'd say.

THE MATIN-SONG OF FRIAR TUCK.

I.

If souls could sing to heaven's high King
As blackbirds pipe on earth,
How those delicious courts would ring
With gusts of lovely mirth !
What white-robed throng could lift a song
So mellow with righteous glee
As this brown bird that all day long
Delights my hawthorn tree.
Hark ! That's the thrush
With speckled breast
From yon white bush
Chaunting his best,—
Te Deum ! Te Deum laudamus !

II.

If earthly dreams be touched with gleams
Of Paradisal air,
Some wings, perchance, of earth may glance
Around our slumbers there ;

The Matin-Song of Friar Tuck.

Some breaths of may will drift our way
With scents of leaf and loam,
Some whistling bird at dawn be heard
From those old woods of home.
How souls would listen
In those high places !
What tears would glisten
On glorious faces,—
Te Deum ! Te Deum laudamus !

III.

Then, still as frost, the heavenly host
Would touch no golden wire,
If but one cry of joy went by
From this, our greenwood choir :
Then, at one flash of daffodils,
Where those sweet cries resound,
Their heaven would seem the shadowy dream
And earth the holy ground ;
Ay, angels then
Would jostle and clamour
To hear the wren
And the yellow-hammer,—
Te Deum ! Te Deum laudamus !

IV.

For birds by nature must enjoy
The Lord their God for aye ;
Therefore their music cannot cloy
As lutes of angels may.

The Matin-Song of Friar Tuck.

Break, wild-flowers, through the golden floor
Where long-faced martyrs sing.
Then, let the carolling sky-lark soar
And flood their Heaven with Spring.
O, what a pœan
Of joy would shake
The Empyrean.
Awake! Awake!—
Te Deum! Te Deum laudamus!

v.

No king or priest shall mar my feast
Wherever my soul may range.
I have no fear of heaven's good cheer
Unless our Master change.
But, when death's night is dying away,
If I might choose my bliss,
My love should say, at break of day,
With her first waking kiss:—
"Hark! The the thrush
With speckled breast,
From yon white bush
Chaunting his best,—
Te Deum! Te Deum laudamus!"

A NEW MADRIGAL TO AN OLD MELODY.

(It is supposed that Shadow-of-a-Leaf uses the word "clear" in a more ancient sense of "beautiful.")

As along a dark pine-bough, in slender white mystery

The moon lay to listen, above the thick fern,

In a deep dreaming wood that is older than history

I heard a lad sing, and I stilled me to learn ;

So rarely he lilted his long-forgot litany,—

Fall, April ; fall, April, in dew on our dearth !

Bring balm and bring poppy, bring deep sleepy dittany,

For Marian, our clear may, so long laid in earth.

Then I drew back the branches. I saw him that
chaunted it.

I saw his fool's bauble. I knew his old grief.

I knew that old greenwood and the shadow that haunted
it,—

My fool, my lost jester, my *Shadow-of-a-Leaf* !

And "Why," I said, "why, all this while, have you left
me so

Luckless in melody, lonely in mirth ?"

"Oh, why," he sang, "why has this world then bereft
me so

Soon of my Marian, so long laid in earth ?"

A New Madrigal to an Old Melody.

"In the years that are gone," he said, "love was more fortunate.

Grief was our minstrel of things that endure.
Now, ashes and dust and this world grow importunate.
Time has no sorrow that time cannot cure.
Orce, we could lose, and the loss was worth cherishing.
Now, we may win, but O, where is the worth?
Memory and true love," he whispered, "are perishing,
With Marian, our clear may, so long laid in earth."

"Ah, no!" I said, "no! Since we grieve for our grief again,

Touch the old strings! Let us try the old stave!
And memory may wake, like my *Shadow-of-a-Leaf* again,
Singing of hope, in the dark, by a grave.

So we sang it together,—that long-forgot litany:—

*Fall, April; fall, April; bring new grief to birth.
Bring wild herb of grace, and bring deep healing dittany,
For Marian, our clear may, so long laid in earth.*

THE RIDDLES OF MERLIN.

I.

As I was walking
Alone by the sea,
"*What is that whisper ?*"
Said Merlin to me.
"Only," I answered,
"The sigh of the wave"—
"*Oh no,*" replied Merlin,
"*'Tis the grass on your grave.*"

As I lay dreaming
In churchyard ground,
"*Listen,*" said Merlin,
"*What is that sound ?*"
"The green grass is growing,"
I answered ; but he
Chuckled, "*Oh no !*"
"*'Tis the sound of the sea.*"

The Riddles of Merlin.

As I went homeward
At dusk by the shore,
"What is that crimson?"
Said Merlin once more.
"Only the sun," I said,
"Sinking to rest"—
"Sunset for East," he said,
"Sunrise for West."

II.

Tell me, Merlin,—It is I
Who call thee, after a thousand Springs—
Tell me by what wizardry
The white foam wakes in whiter wings,
Where surf and sea-gulls toss and cry
Like sister-flakes, as they mount and fly,
Flakes that the great sea flings on high,
To kiss each other and die.

Tell me, Merlin, tell me why
These delicate things that feast on flowers,
Red Admiral, brown fritillary,
Sister the flowers, yet sail the sky,
Frail ships that cut their cables, yet still fly
The colours we know them by.

Tell me, Merlin, tell me why
The sea's chaotic colour grows
Into these rainbow fish whose Tyrian dye
In scales of gold and green reply

The Riddles of Merlin.

To blue-striped mackerel waves, to kelp-brown caves,
And deep-sea blooms of gold and green and rose ;
Why colours that the sea at random throws
Were ordered into this living harmony,
This little world, no bigger than the hand,
Gliding over the raw tints whence it came,
This opal-bellied patch of sand,
That floats above the sand, or darts a flame
Through woods of crimson lake, and flowers without
a name.

See all their tints around its body strewn
In planetary order. Sun, moon, star,
Are not more constant to their tune
Than those light scales of colour are ;
Where each repeats the glory of his neighbour,
In the same pattern, with the same delight,
As if, without the artist's labour,
The palette of rich Chaos and old Night
Should spawn a myriad pictures, every line
True to the lost Designer's lost design.

Tell me, Merlin, for what eye
Gathers and grows this cosmic harmony ?
Can sea-gulls feed, or fishes brood
On music fit for angels' food ?
Did Nescience this delight create
To lure the conger to his mate ?

If this be all that Science tells
The narrowest church may peal its bells,
And Merlin work new miracles ;
While every dreamer, even as I,
May wonder on, until he die.

THE OLD GENTLEMAN WITH THE AMBER SNUFF-BOX.

*THE old gentleman, tapping his amber snuff-box
(A heart-shaped snuff-box with a golden clasp)
Stared at the dying fire. "I'd like them all
To understand, when I am gone," he muttered.
't how to do it delicately! I can't
logise. I'll hint at it . . . in verse;
And, to be sure that Rosalind reads it through,
I'll make it an appendix to my will!"
—Still cynical, you see. He couldn't help it.
He had seen much, felt much. He snapped the snuff-box,
Shook his white periwig, trimmed a long quill pen,
And then began to write, most carefully,
These couplets, in the old heroic style:—*

O, had I known in boyhood, only known
The few sad truths that time has made my own,
I had not lost the best that youth can give,
Nay, life itself, in learning how to live.

Old Gentleman with Amber Snuff-Box.

This labouring heart would not be tired so soon,
This jaded blood would jog to a livelier tune :
And some few friends, could I begin again,
Should know more happiness, and much less pain.
I should not wound in ignorance, nor turn
In foolish pride from those for whom I yearn.
I should have kept nigh half the friends I've lost,
And held for dearest those I wronged the most.

Yet, when I see more cunning men evade
With colder tact, the blunders that I made ;
Sometimes I wonder if the better part
Is not still mine, who lacked their subtle art.
For I have conned my book in harsher schools,
And learned from struggling what they worked by rules ;
Learned—with some pain—more quickly to forgive
My fellow-blunderers, while they learn to live ;
Learned—with some tears—to keep a steadfast mind,
And think more kindly of my own poor kind.

*He read the verses through, shaking his wig.
" Perhaps . . . perhaps," he whispered to himself,
" I'd better leave it to the will of God.
They might upset my own. I do not think
They'd understand. Jocelyn might, perhaps ;
And Dick, if only they were left alone.
But Rosalind never ; nor that nephew of mine,
The witty politician. No. No. No.
They'd say my mind was wandering, I'm afraid."
So, with a frozen face, reluctantly,
He tossed his verses into the dying fire,
And watched the sparks fly upward.*

Old Gentleman with Amber Snuff-Box.

*There, at dawn,
They found him, cold and stiff, by the cold hearth,
His amber snuff-box in his ivory hand.
"You see," they said, "he never needed friends.
He had that curious antique frozen way.
He had no heart—only an amber snuff-box.
He died quite happily, taking a pinch of snuff."*

*His nephew, that engaging politician,
Inherited the snuff-box, and remarked
His epitaph should be "Snuffed Out." The clubs
Laughed, and the statesman's reputation grew.*

A MEETING.

WE met, last night.
His eyes were brimmed with light.
I knew him well.
I offered him my hand.
He did not seem to understand
The news I tried to tell.
He was so fresh from heaven, I supposed,
And I so scarred from hell.

I was the ghost,
Not he, of hopes long lost.
And he stood there,
My own lost youth, and looked
As if his radiant dreams rebuked
My load of barren care ;
I had fulfilled so little, I supposed,
Of promises so fair.

And yet—and yet ;
His eyes on mine were set
In a strange glory ;
And kneeling at my feet
He whispered, as a child simple and sweet
Pleads for another story.
“Tell me,” he said, “the wonders you have found,
In worlds not transitory.”

A Meeting.

Then—then—I wept,
And fain I would have kept

My tale untold,
But, since he knelt, I said,
Bowing my head,

I have found that truth on earth is bought and sold,
And all the crowns that men desire are worth
Only their weight in gold !

“ And is this all ? ”

—“ Oh, no, this is not all !

I found one light
That never has gone out.
Through all the darkest storms of doubt
It burned as bright ;
Yet this was not the glory that we dreamed of,
This faint gleam in the night.”

“ Yet this must be

The light we longed to see

When prison-bars
Kept our hot boyhood fretting.
Tell me, of that far light which knew no setting
Through those disastrous wars.”

He whispered low. I touched his golden head.

“ Not far,” I said, “ but near ;

The heaven we held so dear
Shone from our father’s house ; one lonely light
More constant than the stars.”

THE OLD HARBOUR.

GIVE me the pulse of the tide again,
And the slow lapse of the leaves,
The rustling gold of a field of grain,
And a bird in the nested eaves ;

And a fishing-smack in the old harbour
Where all was happy and young ;
And an echo or two of the songs I knew
When songs could still be sung.

For I would empty my heart of all
This world's implacable roar,
And I would turn to my home, and fall
Asleep in my home once more.

And I would forget what the cities say,
And the folly of all the wise,
And turn to my own true folk this day,
And the love in their constant eyes.

There is peace, peace, where the sea-birds wheel,
And peace in the breaking wave ;
And I have a broken heart to heal,
And a broken soul to save.

THE SYMPHONY.

WONDER in happy eyes
Fades, fades away :
And the angel-coloured skies
Whisper farewell.

Loveliness over the strings of the heart may stray
In fugitive melodies ;
But O, the hand of the Master must not stay,
Even for a breath ;

For to prolong one joy, or even to dwell
On one rich chord of pain,
Beyond the pulse of the song, would untune heaven
And drown the stars in death.

So youth, with its love-note dies ;
And beauty fades in the air,
To make the master-symphony immortal,
And find new life and deeper wonder there.

COMPENSATIONS.

Nor with a flash that rends the blue
Shall fall the avenging sword.
Gently as the evening dew
Descends the mighty Lord

His dreadful balances are made
To move with moon and tide;
Yet shall not mercy be afraid
Nor justice be denied.

The hate that filled us yesternight
And was not breathed aloud,
Shall leave a sorrow in the light
Of many an evening cloud.

The dreams that seemed to waste away,
The kindness forgot,
Were singing in your heart to-day
Although you knew them not.

The sun shall not forget his road
Nor the high stars their rhyme.
The traveller with the heavier load
Has one less hill to climb.

Compensations.

And though a darker shadow fall
On every struggling age,
How shall it be if, after all,
He share our pilgrimage?

The end we mourn is not the end.
The dust has nimble wings.
But truth and beauty have a friend
At the deep heart of things.

He will not speak? What friend belies
His love with idle breath?
We read it in each others' eyes,
And ask no more in death.

THE OPEN DOOR.

O, MYSTERY of life,
That, after all our strife,
 Defeats, mistake.,
Just as, at last, we see
The road to victory,
 The tired heart breaks.

Just as the long years give
Knowledge of how to live,
 Life's end draws near ;
As if, that gift being ours,
God needed our new powers,
 In worlds elsewhere.

There, if the soul whose wings
Were won in suffering, springs
 To life anew,
Justice would have some room
For hope beyond the tomb,
 And mercy, too.

The Open Door.

And since, without this dream
No light, no faintest gleam
Answers our "why";
But earth and all its race
Must pass and leave no trace
On that blind sky;

Shall reason close that door
On all we struggled for,
Seal the soul's doom;
Make of this universe
One wild unanswering curse,
One 'ampless tomb?

Mine be the dream, the creed
That leaves for God, indeed,
For God, and man,
One open door whereby
To prove His world no lie
And crown His plan.

FIVE CRITICISMS.

I.

(On many recent novels by the conventional unconventionalists.)

OLD Pantaloon, lean-witted, dour and rich,
After grim years of soul-destroying greed,
Weds Columbine, that April-blooded witch
"Too young" to know that gold was not her need.

Then enters Pierrot, young, rebellious, warm,
With well-lined purse, to teach the fine-souled wife
That the old fool's gold should aid a world-reform
(Confused with sex). This wrecks the old fool's life.

O, there's no doubt that Pierrot was clever,
Quick to break hearts and quench the dying flame;
But why, for his own pride, does Pierrot never
Choose his own mate, work for his own high aim,

Stand on his feet, and pay for his own tune?
Why scold, cheat, rob, and kill poor Pantaloon?

Five Criticisms.

II.

*(On a certain goddess, acclaimed as "new" but known
in Bab^lon.)*

I saw the assembled artists of our day
Waiting for light, for music and for song.
A woman stood before them, fresh as May
And beautiful; but, in that modish throng

None heeded her. They said, "In our first youth
Surely, long since, your hair was touched with grey."
"I do not change," she answered. "I am Truth."
"Old and banal," they sneered, and turned away.

Then came a formless thing, with breasts dyed scarlet.
The roses in her hair were green and blue.
"I am new," she said. "I change, and Death
knows why."
Then with the eyes and gesture of a harlot
She led them all forth whinneying, "New, how new!
Tell us your name!" She answered, "The New
Lie."

III.

(On certain of the Bolshevik "Idealists.")

With half the force and thought you waste in rage
Over your neighbour's house, or heart of stone,
You might have built your own new heritage,
O, fools, have you no hands, then, of your own?

Five Criticisms.

Where is your pride? Is this your answer still,
This the red flag that burns above our strife,
This the new cry that rings from Pisgah hill,
 "Our neighbour's money, or our neighbour's life?"

Be prouder. Let us build that nobler state
With our own hands, with our own muscle and brain!
Your very victories die in hymns of hate,
And your own envies are your heaviest chain.

Is there no rebel proud enough to say
"We'll stand on our own feet, and win the day?"

IV.

(On certain Realists.)

You with the quick sardonic eye
For all the mockeries of life,
Beware, in this dark masque of things that seem,
Lest even that tragic irony
Which you discern in this our mortal strife,
Trick you and trap you, also, with a dream.

Last night I saw a dead man borne along
The city streets, passing a boisterous throng
That never ceased to laugh and shout and dance:
And yet, and yet,
For all the poison bitter minds might brew
From themes like this, I knew
That the stern Truth would not permit her glance
Thus to be foiled by flying straws of chance,
For her keen eyes on deeper skies are set,
And laws that tragic ironists forget.

Five Criticisms.

She saw the dead man's life, from birth to death,—
All that he knew of love and sin and pain,
Success and failure (not as this world sees)
His doubts, his passions, inner loss and gain,
And borne on darker tides of constant law
Beyond the margin of this life she saw
All that had left his body with the breath.
These things, to her, were still realities.

If any mourned for him unseen,
She saw them, too.
If none, she'd not pretend
His clay were colder, or his God less true,
Or that his grave, at length, would be less green.
She'd not deny
The boundless depths of her eternal sky
Brooding above a boundless universe,
Because he seemed to man's unseeing eye
Going a little further to fare worse ;
Nor would she assume he lacked that unseen friend
Whom even the tragic ironists declare
Were better than the seen, in his last end.

Oh, then, beware, beware,
Lest in the strong name of "reality,"
You mock yourselves anew with shapes of air ;
Lest it be you, agnostics, who re-write
The fettering creeds of night,
Affirm you know your own Unknowable,
And lock the wingéd soul in a new hell ;
Lest it be you, lip-worshippers of Truth
Who break the heart of youth ;

Five Criticisms.

Lest it be you, the realists, who fight
With shadows, and forget your own pure light ;
Lest it be you who, with a little shroud
Snatched from the sightless faces of the dead,
Hoodwink the world, and keep the mourner bowed
In dust, real dust, with stones, real stones, for bread ;
Lest, as you look one eighth of an inch beneath
The yellow skin of death,
You dream yourselves discoverers of the skull
That old *memento mori* of our faith ;
Lest it be you who hunt a flying wraith
Through this dissolving stuff of hill and cloud ;
Lest it be you, who, at the last annul
Your covenant with your kind ;
Lest it be you who darken heart and mind,
Sell the strong soul in bondage to a dream,
And fetter us, once more, to things that seem.

v.

(*The New Morning.*)

The great new morning fills the sky
Because the old sun walks on high ;
And the old miracle of the dew
Christens the rose that Eden knew.

New every morning, yea, for me
New, night and day, is the old gray sea,
New every note that the thrush can sing
And new the shape of the swallow's wing.

Five Criticisms.

Only the ill dream drifts apart
Out of the universal heart.
Only chaos and death withdraw
Out of the universal law.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away,"
I heard the youngest rebel say.
The very next day he was buying a ring
And writing an ode to the great new Spring.

Ever the constant clock of the flower
Marks the time and tells the hour.
Ever the oldest tale on earth
Brings the youngest dream to birth.

So, lift up your heart when the wrong and the lie
Go their ways to the dark and die ;
But down on your knees, in the dawn, and pray,
That the ageless word may be yours to-day.

THE ROAD THROUGH CHAOS.

I.

THERE is one road, one only, to the Light ;
A narrow way, but Freedom walks therein ;
A strait firm road through Chaos and old Night,
And all these wandering Jack-o-Lents of Sin.

It is the road of Law, where Pilate stays
To hear, at last, the answer to his cry ;
And mighty sages, groping through their maze
Of eager questions, hear a child reply.

*" Truth ? What is Truth ? Come, look upon my tables.
Begin at your beginnings once again.
Twice one is two ! " If all the rest be fables,
There's one poor glimpse of Truth to keep you sane.*

For Truth, at first, is clean accord with fact,
Whether in line or thought, or word, or act.

The Road through Chaos.

II.

Then, by those first, those clean, precise, accords,
Build to the Lord your temples and your song ;
The curves of beauty, music's wedded chords
Resolving into heaven all hate and wrong.

Let harmonies of colour marry and follow
And breaking waves in a rhythmic dance ensue ;
And all your thought fly free as the wings of the swallow,
Whose arrowy curves obey their measure, too.

Then shall the marching stars and tides befriend you,
And your own heart, and the world's heart, pulse in
rhyme ;
Then shall the mob of the passions that would rend you
Crown you their Captain and march on in time.

So shall you repossess your struggling soul,
Conquer your world, and find the eternal goal.

THE COMPANIONS.

How few are they that voyage through the night
On that eternal quest,
For that strange light beyond our light,
That rest beyond our rest.

And they who, seeking beauty, once descry
Her face, to most unknown ;
Thenceforth like changelings from the sky
Must walk their road alone.

So once I dreamed. So idle was my mood ;
But now, before these eyes,
From those foul trenches, black with blood,
What radiant legions rise !

And loveliness over the wounded earth awakes,
Like wild-flowers in the Spring.
Out of the mortal chrysalis breaks
Immortal wing on wing.

They rise like flowers, they wander on wings of light,
Through realms beyond our ken.
The loneliest soul is companied to-night
By hosts of unknown men.

THE WAR WIDOW.

I.

BLACK-VEILED, black-gowned, she rides in bus and train,
With eyes that fill too listlessly for tears.
Her waxen hands clasp and unclasp again.
Good News! they cry. She neither sees nor hears.

Good News, perhaps, may crown some far-off king,
Good news may peal the glory of the State—
Good news may cause the courts of heaven to ring.
She sees a hand waved at a garden gate.

For her dull ears are tuned to other themes ;
And her dim eyes can never see aright,
She glides—a ghost—through all her April dreams,
To meet his eyes at dawn, his lips at night.

Wraiths of a truth that others never knew ;
And yet—for her—the only truth that's true.

The War Widow.

II.

Yet when that Roll of Honour told her first,
In midget print, how all those heroes died,
Though her brain reeled and heart was like to burst,
She heard, she too, the trumpets of their pride.

It seemed as if, with peace, they would return
Like boys from football, shouting "four to three."
Then, as time passed, slowly she came to learn
How strangely silent all those dead could be.

For this was not like stories in a book ;
Not like the fifth act of some splendid play ;
This, this thing was for ever. . . . Her soul shook
And stared in terror down that endless way.

Good News ! Oh, yes ; but, shivering through their cry,
She only heard and breathed *Good-bye ! Good-bye !*

III.

How could she know that these tremendous things
Could all be printed in so small a space ?
The headlines flared with footlight queens and kings
And left her dead to his obscurer place.

The line of print that turned her heart to stone
How should it vie with knaves or fools for fame ?
Let the world pass. Her grief was all her own ;
And of the world she had no care or claim.

The War Widow.

Why was he slaughtered, then, since no soul cared,
Except herself, whether he lived or died ;
Or those that dug some later trench and bared
The old white bones, and had to turn aside ;

Bones that were clothed with living flesh of old,
Bones that were hands, and had her hands to hold

IV.

At least, she thought, in face of all these dead,
Mankind would wipe the old lies from heart and brain,
Set a firm heel on those false things we had,
And never rant of earth's rewards again.

Had honour time to count the hosts that succumb
So simply through this darkness, down to death ?
Heroes lie dumb, while, like an idiot's dream,
Painted balloons dance on the popular breath.

For the bawd Glory crowns with blood-drenched flowers
The first her eyes can seize, rarely the true.
The rest must fade, those nameless hosts of ours,
The obscure brave that never claim their due.

They fade. They fade, for all our shrines and scrolls.
There's no reward for gods, except their souls.

V.

Good News ! Good News ! He perished for the right.
Ah, but to die, an atom in the flood
That tramples myriads down into the night
And drenches half the earth with boyish blood !

The War Widow.

Where is the right to heal this deeper wrong,
If night eternal hide the soul that gave ;
If silence close the discord, and not song ;
And death drag life behind him like a slave ?

If but one child be wronged, one love go down,
That fools to come may clutch an idler dream,
Justice may drop her sword and play the clown,
Her court's a mockery in this cosmic scheme.

There is no truth, no cause, no aim secure,
If best things die, while stocks and stones endure.

vi.

So her soul cried, "There is no way but this.
Out of the night a star begins to rise.
I know not where my soul's deep Master is ;
Nor can I hear those angels in the skies ;

Nor follow him, as childhood used of old,
By radiant seas, in those time-hallowed tales.
Only at times, implacable and cold,
From this blind gloom, stand out the iron nails."

Yet, at this world's heart, stands the Eternal Cross,
The ultimate frame of moon and star and sun,
Where Love with outstretched arms, in utter loss,
Points East and West and makes the whole world one.

Good News! Good News! There is no hope, no way,
No truth, no life, but leads through Christmas Day.

THE BELL

THE Temple Bell was out of tune,
That once out-melodied sun and moon.

Instead of calling folk to prayer
It spread an evil in the air.

Instead of a song, from north to south,
It put a lie in the wind's mouth.

The very palms beneath it died,
So harsh it jarred, so loud it lied.

Then the gods told the blue-robed bonze :
"Your Bell is only wrought of bronze.

*Lower it down, cast it again,
Or you shall shake the heavens in vain."*

Then, as the mighty cauldron hissed,
Men brought the wealth that no man missed.

The Bell.

Yea, they brought silver, they brought gold,
And melted them into the seething mould.

The miser brought his greening hoard,
And the king cast in his sword.

Yet, when the Bell in the Temple swung,
It jarred the stars with its harsh tongue.

"Is this your best?" the oracle said,
"Then were you better drunk or dead."

Once again they melted it down,
And the king cast in his crown.

Then they poured wine, and bullock's blood,
Into the hot, grey, seething flood.

They gave it mellowing fruits to eat,
And honey-combs to make it sweet.

Yet, when they hauled it to the sky,
The Bell was one star-shattering lie.

So, for the third time and the last,
They lowered it down to be re-cast.

The white-hot metal seethed anew,
And the crowd shrank as the heat grew ;

But a white-robed woman, queenly and tall
Pressed to the brink before them all,

One breast, like a golden fruit lay bare ;
She held her small son feeding there.

The Bell.

She plucked him off, she lifted him high,
Like rose-red fruit on the blue sky.

She pressed her lips to the budded feet,
And murmured softly, "*Oh, sweet, my sweet.*"

She whispered, "*Gods, that my land may live,
I give the best that I have to give!*"

Then, then, before the throng awoke,
Before one cry from their white lips broke,

She tossed him into the fiery flood,
Her child, her baby, her flesh and blood.

And the crisp hissing waves closed round
And melted him through without a sound.

"*Too quick for pain,*" they heard her say,
And she sobbed, once, and she turned away.

.
The Temple Bell, in peace and war,
Keeps the measure of sun and star.

But sometimes, in the night it cries
Faintly, and a voice replies :

*Mother, Oh, mother, the Bell rings true!—
You were all that I had!—Oh, mother, my mother!—
With the land and the Bell it is well. Is it well,
Is it well with the heart that had you and none other?*

THE NIGHT OF THE LION.

THEIR Day was at twelve of the night,
When the graves give up their dead.
And still, from the City, no light
Yellows the clouds overhead.
Where the Admiral stands there's a star,
But his column is lost in the gloom ;
For the brazen doors are ajar,
And the Lion awakes, and the doom.

He is not of a chosen race.
His strength is the strength of the skies,
In whose glory all nations have place,
In whose downfall, Liberty dies.
He is mighty, but he is just.
He shall live to the end of years.
He shall bring the proud to the dust.
He shall raise the weak to the spheres.

It is night on the world's great mart,
But the brooding hush is awake
With the march of a steady heart
That calls like the drum of Drake,

The Night of the Lion.

Come! And a muttering deep
As the pulse of the distant guns,
Or the thunder before the leap
Thro' the rolling thoroughfare runs.

And the wounded men go by
Like thoughts in the Lion's brain.
And the clouds lift on high
Like the slow waves of his mane ;
And the narrowing lids conceal
The furnaces of his eyes.
Their gold is gone out. They reveal
Only two shafts as of steel
Steadily sweeping the skies.

And we hoped he had peace in his lair
Where the bones of old tyrannies lay,
And the skulls that his cubs have stripped bare,
The old skulls they still toss in their play.
But the tyrants are risen again,
And the last light dies from their path ;
For the midnight of his mane
Lifts to the stars with his wrath.

From the East to the West he is crouching.
He snuffs at the North-East wind.
His breast upon Britain is couching.
His haunches quiver on Ind.
It is night, black night, where he lies ;
But a kingdom and a fleet
Shall burn in his terrible eyes
When he leaps, and the darkness dies
With the War-Gods under his feet.

The Night of the Lion.

*Till the day when a little child,
Shall lay but a hand on his mane,
And his eyes grow golden and mild
And he stands in the heavens again ;
Till the day of the seventh seal,
Which the Lion alone shall rend,
When the stars from their courses reel,
His kingdom shall not end.*

SLAVE AND EMPEROR.

"Our cavalry have rescued Nazareth from the enemy whose
supermen described Christianity as a creed for slaves."

THE Emperor mocked at Nazareth
In his almighty hour.
The Slave that bowed himself to death
And walked with slaves in Nazareth,
What were his words but wasted breath
Before that "will to power"?

Yet, in the darkest hour of all,
When black defeat began,
The Emperor heard the mountains quake,
He felt the graves beneath him shake,
He watched his legions rally and break,
And he whimpered as they ran.

"I hear a shout that moves the earth,
A cry that wakes the dead !
Will no one tell me whence they come,
For all my messengers are dumb ?
What power is this that comes to birth
And breaks my power ?" he said.

Slave and Emperor.

Then, all around his foundering guns,
Though dawn was now not far,
The darkness filled with a living fear
That whispered at the Emperor's ear,
" *The armies of the dead draw near
Beneath an eastern star.*"

*The trumpet blows in Nazareth.
The Slave is risen again !
Across the bitter wastes of death,
The horsemen ride from Nazareth,
And the Power we mocked as wasted breath
Returns, in power, to reign ;
Rides on, in white, through Nazareth,
To save His world again.*

BEAUTY IN DARKNESS.

BEAUTY in darkness,
Ivory-white
Sleeps like the secret
Heart of the night.

Night may be boundless,
Formless as death,
Here the white-breasted one
Still draws breath.

Music that vanished
At eve, on the air,
Silently slumbers
Till day-break here.

Here, at the heart
Of the universe, glows
Exquisite, absolute,
Love's deep rose.

HOUSE-HUNTING.

I CAME on a house in Sussex
That I should like to own,
A house of old black oak-beams,
And a roof of Horsham stone,
With beautiful stains of lichen
And golden browns o'er-grown.

And a deep age-ripened garden,
As peaceful as the dead,
With a warm grey wall around it
Where peach and pear might spread,
And a mulberry-tree, and a dial ;
And roses, white and red.

And over the wall, to the southward,
The roofs of the gabled town,
In a glory of mellowing colour,
Russet and gold and brown ;
And, over the wall to the westward,
The church on the naked down.

House-Hunting.

And over the wall to the northward,
An orchard, fruitful and fair,
With white doves wheeling above it
In the rose-red evening air ;
And I thought that my quest was ended,
And dreamed of my new songs there.

But, over the wall to the eastward,
The devil that darkens the sun
Had builded his big new barracks
And ruined what Time had done,
And put out the eyes of beauty
Or ever the song was begun.

So now I must back to London,
And live in a flat, I suppose,
While over earth's loveliest island
The army of villa-dom grows,
In well-drilled regular regiments
And horrible red-brick rows.

For it isn't enough, in our blindness,
That we cannot make new things fair ;
But, wherever the old touch lingers
In anything Time can spare,
We must crush it and grind it to powder
And set our heel on it there.

Ah, if I had money to buy it
I would tear their new curse down,
And plant me another orchard
In the face of the Mayor's black frown,
And make my songs in a garden
In the heart of that old-world town.

CUBISM.

I HAVE laughed, but seen it,—under Ditchling down,
Blue cubes, yellow cubes, crimson cubes and brown.
I have laughed, but seen it,—shouting at the sky,
Crazy as a crazy quilt, over Telscombe Tye :

Cubes of russet plowland, greying in the sun,
Cubes of honeyed clover, red as blood could run,
Cubes of yellow mustard, clean as hammered gold,
Bleating cubes of clouds or sheep, crammed into a fold.

Here and there, upon the downs, crawled a human fly,
While we buzzed among the clouds and butted
through the sky.

I have laughed and seen it, solid in the sun,
All the myriad planes of earth, blocked and wedged
in one ;

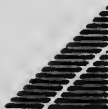
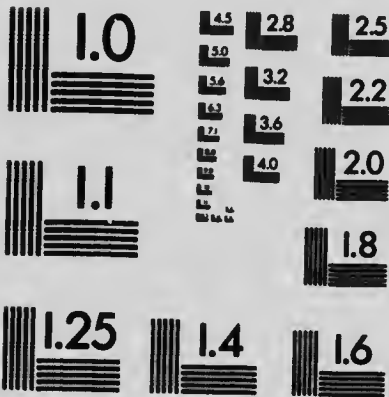
Solid as your flesh and bones, blocked with bits of sea,
Squared with dusky semi-tones, and cubed with
mystery,

Planes of Anglo-Saxon art, planes of modern mirth,
From an aeroplane above—or below—the earth.



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Cubism.

Butting through the solid blue like a submarine ;
While my eyelids clung to cubes of blue and gold
and green,
Till the level meadows rose, upright to the sky,
And we volplaned to the earth, over Telscombe Tye.

A DEVONSHIRE SONG.

IN Devonshire now they sing no more
At market or fair or plough.
There are no deep cider-songs to roar
In the red-earth country now.
The roofs are slate instead of thatch,
And the tall young lads are gone.
You may pull the bobbin and lift the latch,
But the old farm-dance is done.

*Yet the blackbird sings in the old apple-tree
As in Uncle Tom Cobley's day ;
And snow—white snow—in a Devonshire night,
Is only the bloom on the spray.
There'll be pocket-fulls, bag-fulls, barn-fulls yet,
When the ships come home from say.
For a good cob-wall, and a good hat and shoes,
And a good heart last for aye.*

They say that love's more fickle of wing
Than it was in the days gone by ;
But a Devonshire lane dives deep in the spring,
Ere it lifts through the fern to the sky.
As it was in the days of good Queen Bess,
It shall be in the age to come,
When the sweet of the year's in the cider-press,
And the whistling maid turns home.

A Devonshire Song.

*For the south wind comes, and it brings wet weather,
And the west is cloaked with gray,
And a whistling maid and a crowing hen
Are wicked as frost in May ;
But snow—white snow—in a Devonshire night,
Is only the bloom on the spray,
And a good cob-wall, and a good hat and shoes,
And a good heart last for aye.*

They say that Devon has fought her fight,
They say that she, too, grows old.
But the wind blew south upon New Year's night
And the moon had a ring of gold :
And a dripping June puts all in tune
For harvest, as well we know ;
So here's to thee, old apple-tree,
Thou'lt bear good apples enow.

*There were apples to spare for the Golden Hynde,
When she sailed from Plymouth Bay ;
And, though Widdecombe folk be picking their geese.
There'll be apples to spare to-day ;
For snow—white snow—in a Devonshire night,
Is only the bloom on the spray,
And a good cob-wall, and a good hat and shoes,
And a good heart last for aye.*

A DEVONSHIRE CHRISTMAS.

I.

How goes it, Father Christmas?—
Oh—picking—picking along!
But give me a piece of crumple-cheese
And you shall hear my song.
Ay, settle your chestnuts down to roast,
And fill me a cup of ale;
Then kiss the girl that you fancy most,
And you shall hear my tale.

Chorus.

*Froth him a cup of the home-brewed
That is both old and strong!
How goes it, Father Christmas?—
Oh—picking—picking along.*

II.

From Adam and Eve to the Magi,
The ghosts of the old time fade;
And I, myself, would be laid on the shelf
If it weren't for the mirth I've made:

A Devonshire Christmas.

And yet, tho' our youth in Paradise
Be a fable past recall,
We have seen the glory of sinless eyes,
And we have watched the Fall.

Chorus.

*So fables may be fancies,
And yet not very far wrong !
How goes it, Father Christmas ?
Oh—picking—picking along !*

III.

I walked last night on Dartmoor,
The wind was bitterly cold,
My crimson cloak was a thread-bare joke,
And my bones were brittle and old.
I had forgotten the world's desire,
And all the stars were dead,
When I sank right up to my knees in mire,
At the door of a cattle-shed.

Chorus.

*I saw the oldest oxen
That ever knew goad or thong ;
Their sweet breath smoked in the frosty light
Of the lanthorn that I swung.*

IV.

I saw those oxen kneeling,
So gentle and dumb and wise,
By a child that lay in the straw and smiled
At their big dark shining eyes !

A Devonshire Christmas.

While a woman breathed "*lullay, lullay,*
The Magi need not roam
So long ago, so far away,
When heaven is born at home."

Chorus.

*Then all my heart sang "Gloria."
I lacked no angel throng,
As over the lonely moor I went,
Picking, picking along.*

v.

And over the farm on the whistling fells
I saw the great star glide ;
And "Peace on earth" rang Modbury bells,
And Ermington bells replied.
How goes it, Father Christmas ?
Was the burden of all their song ;
And what could a Devonshire pedlar say
But "Picking—picking along."

Chorus.

*He needs a cloak and a pair of shoes,
But his heart is young and strong !
How goes it, Father Christmas ?
Oh—picking—picking along.*

THE BRIDE-ALE.

A Man.

WHICH is the way that the barn-dance goes ?

A Maid.

First stand up in two straight rows.

A Man.

Every Jack must face his Jill.

The Music.

Whether he won't or whether he will.

A Maid.

What is the song that shall be sung ?

The Music.

A tale of a wedding when all was young.

A Man.

How shall the dance and the song begin ?

The Bride-Ale.

The Music.

Hands across, and down the middle !

A Maid.

Bring the bride and the bridegroom in.

A Man.

Now then, fiddler ! Talk to your fiddle !

Chorus of Bride's-maids.

Dew—dew—on the wild hill-side,
Dew on the thyme and the clover,
And we are coming to busk the bride
In the great red dawn, with the sky-lark carolling,
Carolling, carolling over.

The dew is bright on the red hill-brow,
Although the sun be spreading ;
So we must walk in our bare feet now,
And save our shoes—with the sky-lark carolling—
Save our shoes for the wedding.

Dew—dew – and a song to be sung so.

Dew—dew—and a peal to be rung so.

Dew—dew—and the world growing young, so

Early in the morning !

The cows are crunching flowers and dew,
Their long blue shadows are dwining.
Their hooves are gold with the butter-cup dust
(There's gold, wet gold on your ankles, too)
And their coats like silk are shining.

The Bride-Ale.

Dew—dew—and a dance in the spray of it.
Dew—dew—and a light in the gray of it.
Dew—dew—and a bride in the way of it,
Waking at dawn to be married.

Now, quick with the jessamine crown for her head !
Too long, my dear, you've tarried ;
And I hope that we all may blush so red
On the day that we walk—with the sky-lark carolling—
Walk through the dew to be married.

It is only an English song we sing,
For O, we know no Latin !
But your shoulder is shaped like a sea-bird's wing,
Milk-white in the wave of your tumbling tresses
And soft as a queen's white satin.

Medea used wild herbs, they say
To tangle the heart of Jason.
We bring three pails of the dew of the May,
Dew of the white-thorn, dew of the black-thorn,
Dew of the wild thyme, dew of the lavender,
Dew of the ox-lip, clover, and marigold,
Dew that we wrung with our hands from the meadow-
sweet
To pour into your bason.

Dew—dew—and a song to be sung so.
Dew—dew—and a peal to be rung so.
Dew—dew—and the world growing young, so
Come, sweet May, to be married.

The Bride-Ale.

A Bride's-maid.

This dance it will no further go.

The Music.

I pray you, madam, why say you so?

A Bride's-maid.

Because Joan Hedges' begins to repent.

The Music.

She can't repent, and she shan't repent.
Love in the hedge-rows laughs at Lent.

Chorus of Groom's-men.

The muscadine waits for the bride at the church.

Lead her along to the aisle.

Parson is waiting to hop on his perch,

And sexton is trying to smile.

Parson is waiting (though Adam and Eve

Kissed without asking his pardon)

To shepherd the two into Eden anew

And give 'em the keys of the garden.

Quick, let the gown that is white as the Spring's,

All in array for the fray,

Drift like the mist of the dawn as it clings

Hiding the bloom of the May.

Fasten it there, on her shoulder, but O,

Joan, if you shrug it or falter

Now, you'll be married in roses and snow;

So quick, come along to the altar.

The Bride-Ale.

A Groom's-man.

This dance it will no further go.

The Music

I pray you, good sir, why say you so?

A Groom's-man.

Because John Appleby's half afraid.

The Music.

And that's no answer to make to a maid.

A Groom's-man.

What shall we do? He is shivering still.

The Music.

Parson 'ull preach, on the text *Aprille*.

The Parson.

The love-songs that the Frenchmen pipe

I never could long abide.

They are all too curious or too ripe

To troll at the hawthorn-tide.

As for those *Epithalamions*

Which learned poets sing,

Their Phyllidariddles and Corydons—

They have well-nigh spoiled the Spring.

The Bride-Ale.

Hymen—the God that rules the roast,
As master Shakespeare knew,
They have turned to a turnip-lantern ghost,
And a thumping hypocrite, too.
For either they whisper with tongues like snakes
Of a secret purple sin ;
Or else they are burning the hawthorn brakes
And welcoming old age in.

What do they know of the song Love sings,
Passion, or music's beat,
Who wish to dance with feet like wings,
Yet cannot steer their feet ?
For life's a dance, and none has known
It's pulsing rapturous breath,
Who dances unto himself alone
And never vowed—*till death.*

General Chorus.

The sermon is over and now you may kiss,
Kiss, without asking for pardon.
The cherubs are swinging the gates of your bliss
Wide upon Paradise garden.
Spikenard, saffron, cinnamon, blow,
Blow through the beautiful boughs there.
Solomon said it (to Sheba, you know)
And Sheba—why, *she* had a house there.

Dew—dew—and a dance in the spray of it.
Dew—dew—and a light in the gray of it.
Dew—dew—and a bride in the way of it,
Waking at dawn to be married.

The Bride-Ale.

The Miracle.

I.

"All songs are sung, numbered all flowers," they said,
"In some unearthly far-off isle—who knows?—
Perchance the unvisited lyric blossom blows
Whence all that primal lustre is not fled,
Nor dimmed the ambrosial dew that crowned its birth
Where the pure fourfold river of Eden flows."
Then, since my soul was living and not dead,
Through a lych-gate I went into a grave-yard,
And, for the first, yet millionth, time on earth,
I saw—thank God—the rose!

II.

"The world is changed"—unchanged the blue heaven
smiled—
"Truth is not Truth, Love is not Love," they said.
"Laughter and Joy in their simplicity
Lie dead beneath yon old patched robe, the sea!
Gird up your loins, run swifter than the wind,
It may be we shall leave yon old blue heaven behind!"
Then, since my soul was living and not dead,
I went into a great miraculous meadow,
And laughed, with a little child.

BEAUTIFUL ON THE BOUGH.

BEAUTIFUL on the bough
The song-thrush in summer-time
Carelessly sings.

Beautiful under the bough
The silent thrush in winter-time
Lies with stiffened wings.

Who, ah, who, shall sing or say
Why there comes to careless-hearted joy
A thing so still and great as death?

If the gods feared that happiness would cloy,
Surely a slighter sadness would repay
That little debt,

That debt of harmless gladness!
Why must the lightest creature that draws breath
Go down this tragic way,

Assume the awful majesty of a fate
Worthy a god; if it were not . . . God, Christ,
Return, return, Compassionate,

Beautiful on the Bough.

We have rejected Thee,
 Who saidst that not one should be sacrificed,
We have rejected Thee, but not the fact,

This terrible naked fact, which if it be
 Unanswered, blackens earth and sky and sea . . .
This tiny body, mocking the blind sun,
 Postulates Thy divine philosophy,
Not one shall fall to the earth, not one, not one.

THE MAKING OF A POEM.

LAST night a passionate tempest shook his soul
With hatred and black anger and despair,
And the dark depths and every foaming shoal
Ran wild as if they fought with the blind air.

To-day the skies unfold their flags of blue,
The crisp white clouds their sails of snow unfurl,
And, on the shore, in colours rich and new,
The strange green seas cast up their loosened pearl.

TO AN "UNPRACTICAL MAN."

No—no—the cynics rule, for all our creeds.

Dreams are vain dreams, and deeds are brutal deeds.

Why should they hear you, who have never heard?

How should you triumph where gods have striven in vain,

How break with your weak hands the world-wide chain?

Were not the chained souls first to mock your word?

Yet—since you must—work out the old sad plan.

Prove, once again, the bounds God set for man.

Strive for your dream of good and watch it die.

Fail utterly; but O, welcome that defeat,

For there—as this world fades—you, too, shall meet

In absolute night, the eyes of Victory.

CHRISTMAS, 1919.

CHRISTMAS, and peace on earth ; an Eastern tale
Of shepherds and a star,—
Can these things, in our mocking age, avail
A world grown old in war ?

Since Galileo opened up a night
Too deep for hope to scan,
The starry heavens no longer wheel their light
To serve the need of man.

There are no wings in that unfathomed gloom,
Where now our eyes behold,
World without end, and orderly as doom,
The mist of suns unfold.

Yet, to fulfil, not to destroy the old, v,
The modern mages rose ;
And, round the deeper centre that they saw,
A vaster cosmos flows.

Christmas, 1919.

Oh, for a Galileo of the mind
To pierce this inner night ;
And, deeper than our deepest dreams, to find
The light beyond our light ;

Where angels sing, though not to the fleshly ear,
As over Bethlehem's Inn.
Turn to thine own deep soul, if thou wouldst hear,
The Kingdom is within.

Eternal Lord, in whom we live and move ;
Whose face we cannot see ;
Soul of the Universe, whose names are Love,
And Law, and Liberty ;

Confirm our peace ! There is no peace on earth,
No song in our dark skies.
Only in souls the Christ is brought to birth,
And there He lives and dies.

DISTANT VOICES.

REMEMBER the house of thy father,
When the palaces open before thee,
And the music would make thee forget.
When the cities are glittering around thee,
Remember the lamp in the evening,
The loneliness and the peace.

When the deep things that cannot be spoken
Are drowned in a riot of laughter,
And the proud wine foams in thy cup ;
In the day when thy wealth is upon thee,
Remember thy path through the pine-wood,
Remember the ways of thy peace.

Remember—remember—remember—
When the cares of this world and its treasure
Have dulled the swift eyes of thy youth ;
When beauty and longing forsake thee,
And there is no hope in the darkness,
And the soul is drowned in the flesh ;

Distant Voices.

Turn, then, to the house of thy boyhood,
To the sea and the hills that would heal thee,
To the voices of those thou hast lost,
The still small voices that loved thee,
Whispering, out of the silence,
Remember—remember—remember—

*Remember the house of thy father,
Remember the paths of thy peace.*

THE REWARD OF SONG.

WHY do we make our music?

O, blind dark strings reply :
Because we dwell in a strange land
And remember a lost sky.
We ask no leaf of the laurel,
We know what fame is worth ;
But our songs break out of our winter
As the flowers break out of the earth.

And we dream of the unknown comrade,
In the days when we lie dead,
Who shall open our book in the sunlight,
And read, as ourselves have read,
On a lonely hill, by a fir-wood,
With whispering seas below,
And murmur a song we made him,
Ages and ages ago.

If, making his may-time sweeter
With dews of our own dead may,
One pulse of our own dead heart-strings
Awake in his heart that day,

The Reward of Song.

We would pray for no richer guerdon,
No praise from the careless throng ;
For song is the cry of a lover
In quest of an answering song.

As a child might run to his elders
With news of an opening flower,
We should walk with our young companion
And talk to his heart for an hour,
As once by my own green fir-wood,
And once by a Western sea,
Thank God, my own good comrades
Have walked and talked with me.

Too mighty to make men sorrow,
Too weak to heal their pain,
(Though they that remember the hawthorn
May find their heaven again).
We are moved by a deeper hunger :
We are bound by a stronger cord ;
For love is the heart of our music,
And love is its one reward.



