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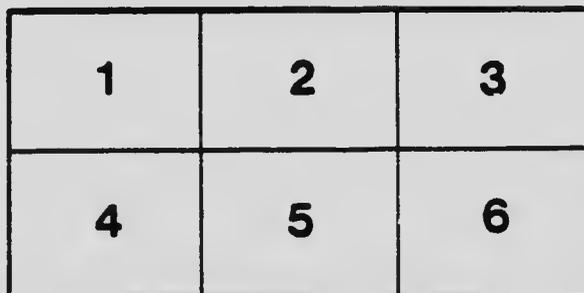
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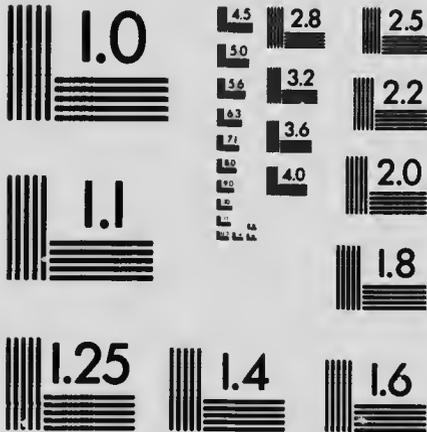
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Thoughts in Verse



BY
ELIZABETH NUTTALL HOPKINS

With a Preface by
PROFESSOR WILLIAM CLARK, D.C.L., LL.D.
of Trinity University, Toronto



TORONTO
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1906

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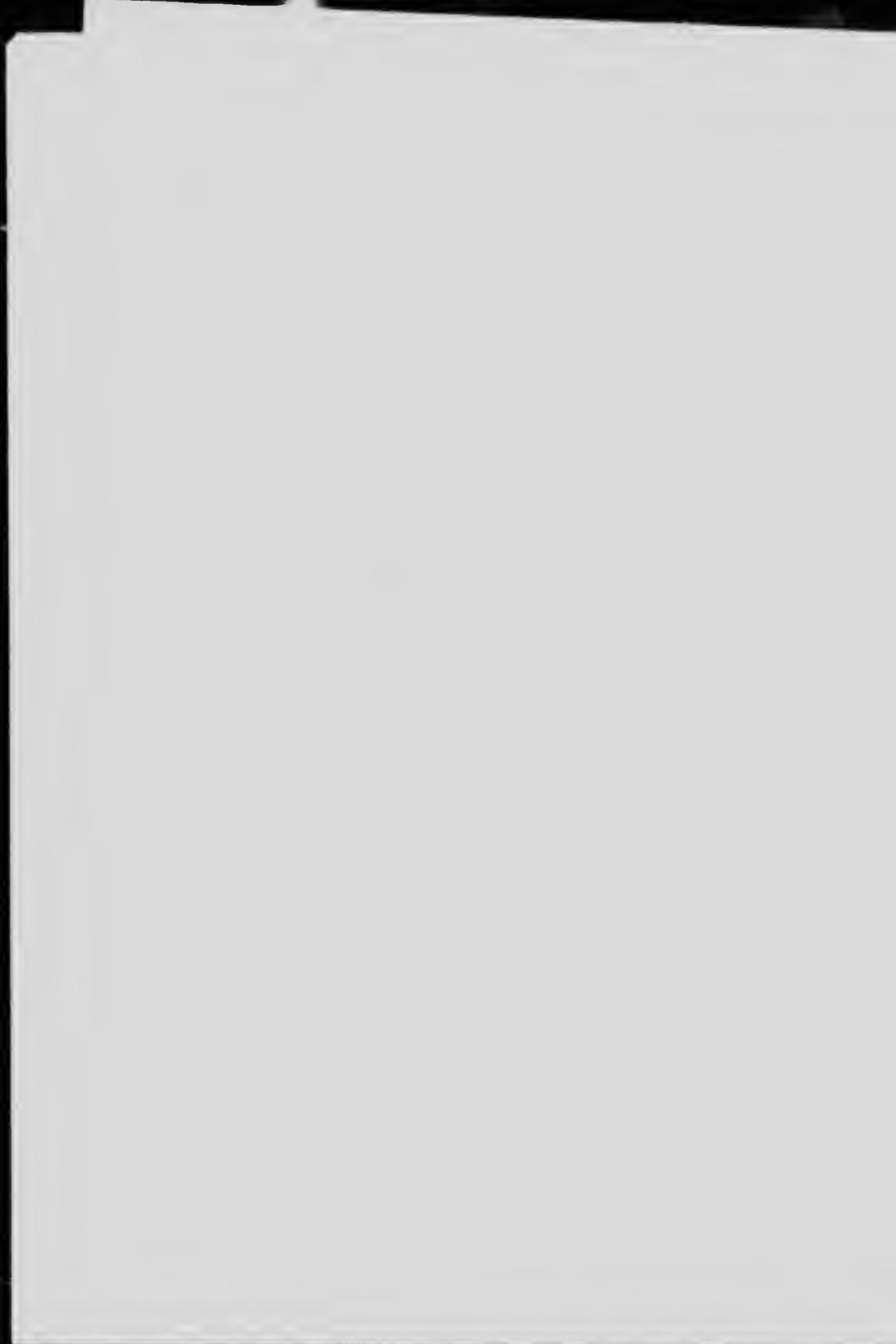
Dedicated
to
My Mother

PREFACE

THIS little volume needs no commendation from an outsider. It will speak for itself to those who have ears to hear and hearts to feel. It will answer to the first demand of poetry by giving pleasure; but, beyond this, it will prove a true interpreter of nature and of human experience. We shall not regret the moments spent in its perusal.

WILLIAM CLARK.

TRINITY COLLEGE,
Xmas, 1905.



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Thoughts in Verse

THE ANGEL OF SLEEP.

O ANGEL of Sleep, with the fair white wings,
Come to me now ;
Tenderly loosen the tired heart-strings,
Breathe on my brow.

Lift up, I pray you, the burden of care,
Just for one night ;
Speed the long hours with pain that they bear
On to the light.

'Neath thy kind dream-wings I fain would repose,
There to find rest,
While gladly and softly my eyelids now close,
By thy lips pressed.

Out to the peace of the byegone days
My soul shall flee,
Lightly treading the mystic ways
That used to be.

OF LOVE.

OH! Love is the dream of a summer's night,
That fades not away at the morning's light,
But lingers and lives in the darkest hours,
And scatters abroad its fadeless flowers
On Life's tossed sea.

Oh! Love is the emblem of youth and age,
But it has its own great war to wage
Against the demons of doubt and despair,
And the bended bows of sorrow and care
That still must be.

The wars are bitter, the wars are long,
And often is heard the wild death-song
Of a vanquished hope, as it flees away
Into the dusk of the endless day
Of " Might-Have-Been."

But the joy that lives in a love-lit soul
Is itself a part of which heaven is whole,
And life seems fairer, the path more bright,
While stars of grace, once far from sight,
Are clearly seen.

FAME.

LIKE some great shield of purest, glittering gold,
 Held up against the western sunset sky,
 To catch the roseate beauty ere it passes by,
 Loath to let the sun-jewels leave its eager hold,
 It throws the withering roses to the dead day, icy
 cold,—

So glory is : men seize the shield and die
 With one triumphant smile and one deep sigh,
 Killed by the radiance of God's wealth untold.

.
 And lying dead, with stiffened hands and chill
 Clasp the shield they died for to their breast,
 The golden beauty lingering on them still,
 They give the glory for eternal rest :
 And knowing 'tis another's higher will,
 They take Death's hand, and smiling deem it best.

MY DREAM.

'TIS a night of dreams, and my weary eyes
 Watch each frail form of the Spirit Land
 Pass through the gloom, a mystic band :
And one is born as another dies ;
While the night is full of their phantom cries
 As the hour-glass frees each grain of sand ;
And one by one their white arms rise
 In grave salute to my soul's command.

I scan them all for my own fond dream,
Till I see her face and the dark eyes gleam.
 Lo ! sudden my heart breaks into song,
 For she has come to my waiting long,
And fairer than day the night doth seem.

AT NIGHT.

MOONLIGHT over the sea ! oh, the infinite peace and
the calm,

The wash of the murmuring flow that gives to the
heart-weary balm.

The silvery path of the moon and the grace of a
drifting sail,

A night such as this full of peace ; and surely my
heart shall not fail.

The dip of the sea-bird's wing as it speeds on its
unknown way

From the gates of the rosy East to the verge of the
dying day ;

On, on, in its eager haste, with neither rest nor
sleeping,

Still on, when over the water the moonlight comes
softly creeping ;

And then in the midst of the shadows the bird has
settled to rest

On a rock that in solitary grandeur is facing the
darkening West.

And so when Life's journey is over, at last ! at last !
May it be when the daytime has faded, and the sun-
set hour has passed,
And only the peace of the moonlight is shedding its
glory afar ;
While on high, gazing tenderly earthward, is ever the
evening star.
And just as to-night, a bird shall flit o'er the silvery
way,
A moment outlined and then lost in the midst of the
shadowy grey.

AN HOUR OF PEACE.

THERE is an hour when shades of night
Steal over earth and sea,
Not yet to bring the hour of rest,
But fraught with memory ;
For with the whisper from the hills
You come once more, dear heart ;
All time slips back, and stealthily
The chains of thraldom part.
Then am I free to clasp again
The form I loved of old,
The smile-wreathed lips are freed from pain,
The sunlight gleams with gold.

A REVERIE.

PEACE to thy slumbers! the Queen of the Night
Wafts thee a dream from her infinite height!

The breath of the mid'night is still on thy brow,
And away on the wings of a dream-bird art thou.

Away and away, through measureless space,
I track thee anon by the smile on thy face:

While ever and ever the voice of the sea
Flows through thy dreamland a glad memory.

THE SONG OF NIGHT.

O'ER the lovely realms of daylight
Comes the night all robed in shadow,
Stealing softly through the twilight,
Over field and over meadow.

One by one the stars are peeping
In the vast blue dome above,
And the great pale moon is rising
To its nightly work of love.

Softly shining on the river,
Making it a trail of light,
As it wends through marsh and woodland
Or adown some rocky height.

And a whisper, sweet and holy,
Spreads throughout the balmy air,
As though Nature, tired and weary,
Chants aloud her evening prayer.

THE FUTURE.

UNFALTERING, I place my hand
 Within the clasp of thine,
The future that we two have planned,
 I make more truly mine ;
And softly falls each golden sand
 From out the glass of Time.

If there are tear-drops in my eyes,
 No pain is in my heart,
The past has gone, and joys arise
 To bid the night depart.
And swiftly each moment flies
 A love-dream to impart.

All that I ask throughout the years
 Is that our love may last,
Then can we easier cope with fears
 That pain and sorrow cast,
And sooner dry misfortune's tears,
 If *but* our love is fast.

And if in the gloom of sorrow's night,
I turn for help to thee,
Strong be thy hand to hold the light,
Enabling me to see ;
For in the doing of the right
True happiness shall be.

And if, perchance, thy feet shall stray
Into the shade of ill,
Quick be my hand to point the way,
And steadfast my good-will
To lead thee back. And thus we may
The power of light instill.

Through light and shade, through joy and pain,
Let us together move ;
Sharing alike earth's loss and gain,
Love's loyalty we prove ;
Trust in each other, and attain
The fullest joy of love.

TELL ME, O NIGHT!

TELL me, O Night, for my soul has said
That wisdom dwells with thee ;
Tell me if ever that soul be dead
In the vast Eternity.

Tell me if ever the sealèd door
Is opened to those of earth,
Who, tasting knowledge, crave for more
That grows from the inner birth.

Tell me if e'er the repentant cry
From a sinner in his pain
Is heard by the God beyond the sky,
Or if it is all in vain.

Tell me if ever a pitying ear
Is moved by the earth-bound woe ;
Tell me this, and my trust draws near
While Heaven has bent so low.

Tell me if what is beyond our thought
Is nearing us every day,
And then, perchance, the haven sought
Will appear an open way ;

And the timid life and the wavering soul
Shall much the stronger be,
For the doors apart reveal the goal,
And earth-born eyes may see.

Tell me these things, O thou silent Night,
With the myriad star-lit eyes,
Tell me, for I shall discern the right
If thou wilt make me wise.

Whisper it ever so low to my heart,
And straightway I shall hear ;
Push just for once the truth-gates apart
That the Light of Faith may appear.

MEMORY.

ALONE 'mid the shadows of evening I ponder,
While out of the starlight a dreamland I weave,
To people with fancies that ever grow fonder,
And somehow my heart has forgotten to grieve.

Closer they press, the sweet dreams of my childhood,
Crude as they are, yet so beautiful still,
Gently I gather, then, flowers of my wildwood,
Bend them and twist to my indolent will.

Over the skies which of late have been stormy,
Fair moonbeams are creeping, and in the soft light
The scenes I so loved are passing before me,
A brief hour of triumph that lives in the night.

Out of the sea waves dim voices are speaking,
Lost to the world, yet alive to my heart,
From the deep shadows in vain are they seeking
A past that has played forever its part.

When all-impatient, I fain would be rending
The veil that obscures and yet darkens my sight,
One whom I loved from the dreamland is bending,
And points me the way that I know to be right.

LEAVES.

THE withered leaves of red and brown
 Fall from the trees,
Softly, sadly fluttering down,
 Stirred by the breeze.

Tenderly moved by the zephyr's breath
 As it goes by,
Mourning to see their early death,
 It breathes a sigh.

Yet still they cling with dying touch
 To the old brown tree,
As loath to leave what they love so much ;
 Sad to be free.

And soon the outstretched arms of brown
 Will be quite bare,
Till Winter comes with snowy crown,
 And lingers there.

Then Autumn with her store of gold
 Must flee away,

And dead leaves rustling in her fold
Hear and obey.

Oh! loath to let the russet leaves
So sadly die,
I fain would keep the golden sheaves,
Nor question, Why?

A GIFT.

THO' far away, I shall be near
 To thee in thought,
And treasure still the memory dear
 Thy love has wrought.

What tho' the skies are bright above?
 The clouds will rise,
And mar the dreamy day of love,
 Which gone, we prize.

I give thee at this last fond hour
 In which we part,
The best of gifts within my power,
 A loving heart.

EARTH'S MYSTERIES.

EARTH'S mysteries around us lie,
The puzzling where, the whence, the why ;
They crowd the world, they block the way
That leads us onward to the day
In mystic revelry.

The skies above are deep and dark,
And mortals bear the bitter mark
That ages gone belonged to Cain,
The symbol of eternal pain,
Unending misery.

Lift up the clouds, oh, Arm of Light !
Reject the wrong, renew the right,
That long ago was given to man
Before the reign of sin began,
And truth was free.

THE TEMPTER.

OH! eyes so wildly staring back from yon glass to-
 night,
 Is this the prayer you carry to a soul bereft of light?

“Break from the bonds of sorrow—speed to the Great
 Unknown;
 What matters now the verdict to a heart so long
 alone?”

“For the light of love has faded, the world is bleak
 and dark,
 And a heart’s last hope lies stricken—here sin has
 set its mark.”

Oh! heart so strongly pleading for the rest that will
 not come,
 Thy longing is the greater that the broken chords
 are dumb,

And the breath of by-gone gladness can stir them
 nevermore.

“Oh, enter then the closed, withal the unlatched
 door.

"What! shrinking from the shadow of the drooping
wings of sin?

'Tis folly to be vanquished by the thoughts of 'might
have been.'

"Choose, then—the bitter present with its heavy bond
of woe—

Or the sleep of a phantom future that thy soul may
never know ;

"Sleep that is still and dreamless, as the unlit mid-
night sky,

With naught to wake thy slumber : Is it so hard to
die?

'Choose, then—the lifted dream-cup is close to thy
trembling lips,

See, from thy shaking body the chain of thralldom
slips!

"Quick, for the time of choosing is already on the
wane ;

Why hesitate, oh, mortal, 'twixt the freedom and the
pain?"

"Tempt me not, oh, tempter," "The coward's words
are these ;

Still hesitant? Thou hast but thy erring self to
please."

" I choose at last, *not* freedom, through forbidden,
unlatched door ;
So plead no longer, tempter, I will not hear thee
more.

" I choose the present rather, e'en tho' fraught with
misery,
For only death unsought can set the captive free.

" Plead then no more, for strengthened I lift again
my cross,
And even in the stooping I know 'tis not my loss ;

" For the heavens are gently lighting the upward-
leading road,
While the bonds of pain are loosened from the soul's
o'er-heavy load."

THE PASSING OF THE YEAR.

SILENT and sad the Old Year lay, with the snow
upon his hair,
And the brow of the passing monarch was furrowed
with lines of care :

His eyes were dim with a sorrow born of the days
gone by,
And the pallid lips were open to breathe a passing
sigh.

In his right hand lay the blessings that had lived in
his own short life,
And the other grasped the sorrows born of his sin
and strife.

From his right there came a radiance that lit the
deepening gloom,
But the left was hid in darkness that told of an
endless tomb.

He lingered till the New-born Year came on the
wings of day,
And stole with his rosy footsteps to where the Old
Year lay,

To seal with lips of carmine the faded, sightless eyes,
Then up from the cold, grey death-bed a new-born
king to rise.

UNANSWERED.

TREMBLING, I lift the Future's veil,
 And watch her eyes,
 Cold, dark, mysterious, as the dale
 Ere morning's rise.

No token on her still white face
 Of life or love ;
 No lifted finger can I trace,
 Pointing above.

Is there no promise of a better life,
 Love everywhere ?
 With not a sign of hate or strife,
 Nor hint of care ?

Tell me, O dumb and mystic fate.
 May we yet stay
 With those we love, beyond the gate
 That bars the way ?

Or is the Afterward all dark ?
 The path all lone,

With none to help, and naught to mark
Save one white stone?

No word comes to my earnest prayer,
No "yea" or "nay";
And blind I wander here and there,
Nor know my way.

A VICTORY.

A SOUL stood trembling at the Border Gate
 That leads beyond, where Good and Evil wait ;
 And he was troubled, for the passing life
 Knew less of Good than bitterness and strife.
 Then wearied, pained, the wandering spirit fell
 Before the gate which leads to heaven or hell ;
 When lo ! upon the dimmed and fading eyes
 A sudden darkness fell ; he struggled to arise,
 But great and gloomy wings beat on the fearful soul,
 And looking up in terror he watched the fiend's eyes
 roll.

He felt the eager grasp, and heard a wild voice say :
 " Mine, mine, and only mine forever and for aye."
 The lips of the pilgrim faltered, " Then tell me who
 art thou ? "

And the fiend's voice made answer, " Methought I
 saw ye bow

To the dusky form of Evil and kiss her lavish hand :
 Perchance thou hast forgotten the heedless merry
 band ? "

The soul was grave and silent ; but in aching pain he
 thought

Of the resting-place he longed for, the prize that he
 had sought,

And he prayed as he had never in the dead and
by-gone days,
Till fainter grew the fiend's voice, and dimmer was
its gaze ;
And out of the gloom and darkness a white-robed
figure grew,
Which shone with a heavenly radiance and the pil-
grim nearer drew.

As he stood in the golden glory the black robes
turned to white,
And a star fell on his forehead as he passed from
dusk to light.

LOVE DIVINE.

IF Sorrow should come in her garment of ill,
 And close to the border thy life-cup should fill,
 Dear heart, do not quail :
 There's One who is watching beyond the star-shine
 As immortal love is to human, divine.
 This love cannot fail.

Whatever thy pleasure, whatever thy woe,
 This love is steadfast, and ever is so
 Through sunlight and shade.
 If they whom you trusted have false been to you,
 The light of this love will pilot you through
 The darkening glade.

Though friends may desert you, though clouds gather
 fast.
 Forever and ever this great love shall last
 Both for you and for me.
 Like unto the love of a parent for child,
 Only a thousand times greater, more pure, undefiled,
 This love is for thee.

THE SUICIDE'S PLEA.

Written on the tragic death of a young man, who blew his brains out
while gazing in a mirror.

O HEART! the wild plea that you treasure to-night
Is fraught with a frantic despair,
And the lips fail to utter what, far from the right,
Your feverish throbbing will dare.

What is the prayer that the eyes carry out
To the eyes that gaze back from the glass?
'Tis plainly read, but a lingering doubt
Is barring the thoughts as they pass.

Oh, plead then no more with a world-weary heart
That earth's sorrows have broken in twain;
The chords all lie mute, for wrench them apart,
How can they vibrate again?

WHEREFORE.

FEEBLY I strive to pierce the clinging mist
 That all envelops me ;
 Bound as I am and fettered, hand and wrist,
 So long I to be free.

Loudly I cry to the great and dim Unseen
 With pain-drawn breath,
 Through all the years no harvest can I glean
 Save promises of Death.

They say that Faith will lead us to our goal ;
 The blind point out the way
 In which is lost so many a wandering soul.
 How can this be, oh, say ?

Thus must I question till the earth-bonds break
 At touch of finite hands,
 And questioning still, my faltering way I make
 Amid the silent bands.

Yet in the faces that have naught of speech
 The fervent answer lies,
 That all through life was far beyond my reach.
 Now am I doubly wise ?

There is a God ; no question should there be ;
A God of life and love ;
Oh! argue not, blind as thou art, yet see
The God of all, above.

So would I think, but a questioning thought
Is clamoring still—
Would He allow earth's misery wrought
And countenance such ill?

If He were just, or kind, or good,
How could this be ?
Answer : I cannot if I would ;
My eyes refuse to see.

Yet better that I am so blind,
If, having sight,
The unseen way I fail to find
In striving after light.

So let it be: no longer now
The darkness palls ;
Obediently my head I bow
Within life's thralls.

THE ROLL OF YEARS.

THE years roll on ; alike in weal and woe,
 Freightd with burdens of much unanswered prayer,
 And souls that perish with earth's weight of care ;
 All shall go forth,—blessed and unblessed they go,
 As some vast river in its sweeping tidal flow
 That rushes madly on, it knows not whence or where,
 Nor in its seething hurry reckons if it bear
 Those of the mighty—or the quite as mighty low.

So will it be until the ages past
 Loom in the shadows of dim Eternity :
 Then shall the evil from the good be cast,
 The right and unright from the " yet to be,"
 The bands be loosened from the great amassed,
 And the captive and the wanderer both go free.

REST.

THE gold of the sunset faded
 Into the paling West.
 As a voice came o'er the waters,
 " Rest to the weary, rest ! "

And the dusky shadows mingled
 With the light of a dying day,
 O'er the blood-red lips of sunset
 There stole a pallor grey.

White wings in the mellow twilight
 Lay on the rising swell,
 And the murmur spread and echoed
 Like the peal of some fairy bell.

Again and again it floated
 Far over the weary world,
 " Rest to the many workers !
 The banner of day is furled "

And my heart was full of gladness,
 I longed for the resting hour,
 To lose myself in slumber
 Beneath an unseen power.

THE DAY'S A DREAM.

THE day's a dream ; and the silent dusky night
Flies like a shadow across the short-lived gold,
Where sunset lay a little while ago,
Clasped in the arms of the dead day's fold.

A moment gone—the snow-white wings of birds
Flashed in the sunlight of the onward passing day ;
'Tis dead now— and the last faint rosy glow
Lingers a moment, then sadly drifts away.

Still nearer comes the swiftly-flying form,
Shading the beauty of a scarcely by-gone dream.
'Tis dark now ;—yet the first fair evening star
Shines in the West with pure and holy gleam.

REVERIE.

'Tis resting-time ; a welcome shade
Creeps o'er the purple hills,
And softly touching weary hearts
A sense of peace instills.

O tender heart ! O loving hands !
Be with me once again,
Just you and I together, love,
When day-time glories wane.

When the shadows fall around me,
To have you by my side,
Oh, then, the past is nearer, dear,
The gulf seems not so wide !

AN ECHO FROM THE PAST.

FROM the shadows of the past, love,
Once again thou com'st to me,
Waking all the songs of old, love,
Touching chords of memory ;
And my heart is full of longing
For the time when I'll be free.

Closer yet I bid thee come, love,
Place thy hand upon my heart,
Calm the pulse-beat's quivering clamor,
Echoes of thy love impart,
And again I shall be happy
When the shades of night depart.

RECOMPENSE.

I KNOW not whence it came, this love of mine!
 Perchance from out some shadow of the past
 Wherein its warmth once fed the light of thine
 With flame too eager and too bright so last.

For when the gloom that lay all thickly round
 Closed in—the love-light died away—
 It folded us in darkness so profound
 We could not see the once-familiar way.

And so we strayed ; and as my eyes were blind,
 I lost you on the border-land of "Doubt." ;
 What tho' I knew some day that I should find
 The path again ;—*you* would not point it out.

Another, and a stranger, came to me,
 And from the tireless working of his skill
 The film has left my sight, so that I see
 The future fair ;—the past lies cold and still.

A SEA SONG.

DEEP in the sea a memory lies
 Asleep, asleep, with fast-closed eyes ;
 It will not wake,
 Save when the storm-waves lash the beach,
 And circling birds with piercing screech
 Mad turmoil make.

Then—then it stirs from its silent sleep,
 And its eyes gaze upward through the deep
 To mine above,
 For this memory wakes when a storm is nigh
 To strike in my heart—I know not why—
 Lost chords of love.

And back and back through the roll of years,
 I see a face that is marred with tears
 And once loved well ;
 The waves have smothered the brow of pain.
 Why the deep reproach should yet remain
 I cannot tell.

Through summer's heat and winter's blast,
 As long as a storm on the sea doth last,
 That face I see ;

The eyes are blurred and the woe is there,
While the sea-weeds play with the flowing hair
Of a memory.

They who once loved are far away,
Beyond the limits of the day,
And I alone
Peer through the watches of the night
For the pale rays of morning light,
Till day has grown.

FOREVER.

ALL unknown, the future lying
Lifts its languid eyes to me,
And the lips that slowly widen
Speak again, dear love, of thee.
Tho' the past has fled forever,
Yet our love shall ever be.

Far, oh, far away, thou'rt sleeping
In a spot I do not know,
Yet my love, instead of dying,
Ever seems in strength to grow ;
And I know 'tis not forgotten
That my love was ever so.

Strong, far stronger than my being,
To the heart that beats for thee ;
For the faith is not the lesser
When the eyesight fails to see,
And beyond, thy spirit seeking
Speaks again of love to me.

A SONG OF THE SEA.

THE gull's white wing and the water's swing,
With the sobbing ebb and flow,
All speak of a day that has passed away
With its hours of joy and woe.

And the tears will rise to my longing eyes
For the day that I loved so well ;
The aching heart is so far apart
From the tale that the waters tell.

Oh! to sail away on the silvery grey
Of a sea that I do not know,
Where the gull's white wing and the water's swing
No longer speak of woe.

Where the dancing gleam of sunlit stream
Means happiness to me,
And the sweet, low word of a song unheard,
That I only dreamt to be,

Rings from the rocks, and straightway knocks
At the heart that opens wide,

And the golden light breaks on my sight
For all time to abide.

And the old, old sea has long ceased to be,
With its murmuring of pain,
For I stand once more where in dreams before
I lived, and I love again.

EVERALD.

OH! frail little life, on my heart at rest,
 Thou of all treasures art ever the best
 And the dearest of all.
 The exquisite joy that has risen in thee,
 The love that is stronger than life is in me,
 Awake at thy call.

Oh! dream on, my little one, watch I shall keep,
 Naught shall disturb thine innocent sleep—
 Dream, softly dream.
 The shadows creep closer, the night hour is nigh,
 The white-wingèd birds more lazily fly
 Athwart the gleam.

And while thou art sleeping, I'll build in the air
 A castle that's furnished with visions so fair,
 And all waiting for thee ;
 For queen thou art e'er of my heart and my thought,
 And the swift-glowing dreams with love's shuttle
 are wrought
 From the dim "to be."

And the dreams that I dream are all gone
bright,

For I weave in the sunbeams, and cast out
With its shadowy pain.

I gather the sweetest of life's fragrant flow

And festooned high on the dream-castle w

They may wither in vain.

all golden and

st out the night

nt flowers,
astle walls,

SLEEP ON.

SLEEP on, tired heart, the evening shades
Are full of peace to thee ;
Live in thy dream until it fades,
For it must cease to be.

Yet while it lasts, the passing hours
Are traced in threads of gold ;
Live on amid the wondrous flowers,
Enriched a thousand fold.

The joys thy earth-life cannot give
For this brief space are thine ;
Sleep, then, and in thy dream-life live,
Awhile thou need'st not pine.

Sleep, for the ills of daytime
Have drifted far away,
Thy dreamland barque is moving
To the sweetest, softest lay.

The hand of Sleep is on thy brow,
And pain-lines quickly fade,
The lips smile from the heart-depths now,
For life's regret is stayed.

Now all thy hopes seem truth at last,
One well-loved waits for thee
With hand outheld to guide thee past
The dream-bars of the sea.

Sleep on until the shafts of day
Pierce through the veil of sleep,
Rest till thy dreamland fades away
Into thy memory's keep.

Sleep, for the ills of daytime
Have drifted far away,
Thy dreamland barque is moving
To the sweetest, softest lay.

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