

THE QUEST

Edward Salisbury Field



PS

3511

.I24Q8

1904



Class PS3511

Book .I24Q8

Copyright N^o 1904

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.







The Quest

AND

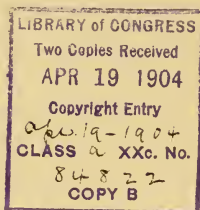
OTHER POEMS

EDWARD SALISBURY FIELD



BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
THE GORHAM PRESS
1904

Copyright, 1903, by Edward Salisbury Field
All Rights Reserved



PS3511
.I24Q8
1904

MADE IN
AMERICA

Printed at
THE GORHAM PRESS
Boston, U. S. A.

TO MY MOTHER,

I've gone about for years I find
With eyes half blind,
Squandering golden hours
In search of flow'rs
That do not grow, it seems,
Except in dreams ;
But in my wanderings
From place to place
I've found no face more fair—
No eyes more true than thine,
Oh mother mine.



CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Quest	7
Eyes of my Life.....	15
Song	16
I Think the Garden Misses You.....	17
Bitter Sweet	18
Why Do I Love Thee?.....	19
But Love Can Hear.....	20
How Did I Know?.....	21
You Smiled	22
When You Are Away.....	23
Moon Song	24
I Love Thee and I Will Not Go.....	25
To Forget	26
Now Thou Art Gone.....	27
The Shadow	28
Lest My Soul Should Stray.....	29
And The Seasons Go.....	30
The Little Things	31
The Portrait of a Gentleman.....	32
Along The Stream.....	33
The Wind Seems Kind Today.....	34
A' Rose or Two.....	35
Jealously	36
The Time for Mating.....	37
And We Were Alone.....	38
The Dragon-Fly	39
The First Prelude Chopin.....	40
For Her Majesty The Queen.....	41
Nesting Times	42
Quatrain	43

	PAGE
Friendship	44
I Know a Place Where a River Weaves.....	45
Was It The Sea?.....	46
Song of a Lonely Soul.....	47
Until a Master Passion Shall Arise.....	48
Have You Ever Been To Fairy Land?.....	49
I Would Be Great.....	50
What Do You Say?.....	51
Then Came Twilight.....	52
Longings	53
Sir Insolence	54
The Water Lilies.....	55
An Old Fashioned Garden.....	56
But The Living Fade.....	57
When Sunbeams Stray.....	58

THE QUEST

With windows open towards Futurity
I sit and wait, and watch the eastern sky.
'Tis weary waiting for the days that lie
Somewhere beyond. The clouds go winging by

As I have sometimes seen belated birds
Go winging nestward, fearful in their flight
Thro' the uncertain and fast-fading light
Lest they be overtaken by the Night.

In dreams alone have I found Happiness.
Last night I dreamed of freedom; of release
From sorrow; of a strange, sweet song of
peace.
Alas, that such a dream should ever cease!

But as I drifted thro' the Shoals of Sleep,
Out from the Isle of Dreams where all things
are,
I saw what seemed to be a peerless Star,
And longed to grasp it, but it was too far.

So many of us are but restless birds
Of passage, constantly upon the wing;
Who never think to look within the ring
Of Self and Soul, to find the Hidden Spring.

And few possess a vessel large enough
To hold the countless tears that overflow.
The Christian has his God; we Pagans know
No God to comfort us, and we must go.

And lay our heads on some dear, faithful
breast,
And breathe the sorrows that the Seasons send
To one who, in our life's uneven trend,
Has merited the sacred name of Friend.

Within my garden many flow'rs have bloomed
And withered, and its pathways all are strown
With petals that the willful winds have blown—
With little hopes that once I called my own.

When Twilight with her pale, gray fingers
sweeps
The last rose-tinted glory from the west,
I sometimes feel my aching brow caress'd
By the cool hands of her whom I love best.

There is a Voice that I shall always hear
(If that strange thing be true—that shadowy
Predicted something called Eternity)
It has become so much a part of me.

Across sad seas, within the Vale of Sleep,
Two silent cities lie ; and of the pair,
One is so cold, and dark and sinister,
That I would pray to never enter there.

For all night long there roams within its walls
A Restlessness. Without, from dusk till dawn,
The Night Wind moans and mutters till the
wan,
Pale face of Morning bids them both begone.

Oh, pity him who longs and yearns for rest—
The tortured one whom Sleep will not obey!
The head that on a sleepless pillow lay
Must rise at morn to face another day.

I am a captive caught within the web
Of Circumstance. I trust the weight of years
To free me. Why, then, importune the ears
Of One who never answers if He hears?

Some day the threads will snap beneath the
strain,
And give me liberty. When I can go
And come at will, and reap where now I sow,
And pay the paltry pennies that I owe,

Life will be rid of petty tyrannies.
Then shall I have more time to sing my songs,
More time to satisfy a Soul that longs
To solve the mystery of Rights and Wrongs.

The sweetest singer that has ever sung
Thro' all the ages, from a Vintner's Sign
Fashioned a harp, with tendrils of the Vine
For strings, and sang a wondrous Song of
Wine.

For one brief moment it was given me
To lie within the arms of Happiness;
And I remember every tenderness—
Each smile, each sigh, each heart-throb, each
caress.

Last night I listened to a mocking-bird
That sang to me somewhere out in the rain.
There was a note within its lovely strain
That told of heart-break and a world of pain.

I love the music of the Night ; and yet
In all the songs the Night has sung to me
I have not found one single melody
That was not written in a minor key.

And when I listen to a violin
That seems almost to suffer as the bow
Within the Master's hand glides to and fro
Across its strings (and it is often so)

I feel the bow upon my own heart strings.
And every sob, and sigh, and psalm of praise,
And every curse and cadence that obeys
Is mine ; and I—the violin he plays.

I seem to feel each veering of the wind.
Above the petty clouds of Loss and Gain
I sit, and watch Earth's children strive and
 strain,
And search for sunbeams in a blinding rain.

Death came to me one night within a dream,
And stood beside me for a while ; then laid
His hand upon my head and gently bade
Me follow him. And I was not afraid.

I rose and followed him. But as I asked
Of him that question which the Living must
Forever ask, into my hands was thrust
An alabaster box half-filled with dust.

There is a Heaven in this world somewhere ;
And if I could but find it I would give
Up all I have, throw down the sorry sieve
Thro' which I sift the sands of Life, and—
LIVE!

Of Life's Illusions, this is not the least :
The Pleasures of the Morrow magnify
Themselves ; and thus deceived, too oft we sigh,
And pass the Pleasures of the Present by.

In some things I am nothing but a child :
I make believe the cloudy days are fair,
And when the pain seems more than I can bear,
I smile—and make believe I do not care.

Ah, yes! but there is one of me (the child
Or man, I know not which it is) who fears
That should the game be played thro' many
years
I shall go blind with holding back the tears.

I am a plaything in the hands of Fate.
Sometimes I seem to please, as playthings will ;
And then again, my Master treats me ill,
And tosses me aside—His plaything still.

Life is a journey ; days are distances.
Each morn we rise where we so safely stowed
Our packs the night before, and with the load
Once more upon our backs, we take the road

That leads—NO ONE KNOWS WHERE.

Altho' 'tis plain

That we could gather from the Least Profound
The most concerning whither we are bound,
Were Silence less intelligent than Sound.

And tho' I know that I should never turn
My little lamp upon another's sin
Until I have first turned its rays within,
And scanned the miles to where I might have
been ;

We know so many things that are not true.
That dreams are sweetest in the month of May,
And your eyes bluest when the skies are gray,
Were worth a thousand truths of Yesterday.

My eyes so often seek the Evening Star.
I sometimes fancy it a sentinel
Before the walls of Night ; placed there to tell
The world when Day is dead, and all is well.

Ah, 'tis a noble sight to watch the stars
As *cap-á-pie*, with every shining lance
Aloft, and every armored side a-glance
With gleaming light, they silently advance.

Dear Heart, oft times when Night is marshalling
Her regiments, I wonder where you are ;
If your dear eyes are watching from afar
The self-same heavens, and the self-same star.

Ah, see yon meteor that westward wings
Across the firmament and disappears
In nothingness beyond! As days in years
Are lost, or hours of happiness in tears.

If I could envy, I would envy him
Who has the power to make the Present pay
For all the joylessness of yesterday,
And all the sorrow which the morrow may

Hold out to him. I would that I could say :
"To-morrow is, at best, an idle boast ;
And Yesterday—what is it but a ghost?
'The Great Today is mine ; the least, the most."

We rail at Life ; and yet if gold could buy
Us years to live, I venture to foretell
That we should never find the ones who dwell
At length upon Life's woe, with years to sell.

Life is a sad sweet song of wonderment.
The dead leaves wonder why the west wind
blows ;
The willows wonder where the river flows ;
And I—I wonder if the river knows.

Sometimes the hopes we build our very Lives
Upon are razed ; and then, altho' we start
A thousand times to play the little part
Assigned to us, we play with half a heart.

I love the spirit that can smile in pain.
It is the spirit in the Human Race
That has the power to glorify—to trace
Nobility upon the Human Face.

The pictures of the past by mellow tints
Are glorified. The flow'rs that used to grow
Were somehow sweeter than the flow'rs we
know
Today. Dear Heart, it will be always so.

The best that Life can offer is the best
Within us. Down our little Road of Years
We hurry—thro' a mist of smiles and tears—
Pursuing Hope ; pursued by Doubts and Fears.

Like butterflies we sip now here—now there.
Like thistledown we drift, and rise and fall
At every careless zephyr's beck and call.
Like flow'rs we bloom and wither ;—that is all.

EYES OF MY LIFE

Eyes of my Life!
If thou should'st go—
What of the night?
Dost thou not know—
Heart of my Heart!—
Hast thou forgot
There is no light
Where thou art not?

SONG

Last night I saw you in a dream ;
I called—you did not hear me.
And then there came another dream
And you were very near me.
We roamed the meadows, hand in hand,
Whilst all the world was sleeping ;
And then at dawn we parted, dear,
And I awakened, weeping !

I THINK THE GARDEN MISSES YOU

I think the garden misses you ;
The roses, if they did not care,
Would never droop the whole day thro',
Nor look as wistful as they do.

BITTER-SWEET

It is sweet to be missed
So the old saying goes,
And I doubt it not, Dearest ;
Yet every one knows
That dark shadows lurk
In the converse of this,
That the bitter remains
For the many who miss.

WHY DO I LOVE THEE?

Why do I love thee? Why dost thou believe
That there is vision greater than thy sight?
Why do the swallows circle in their flight?
Why can he give most, who can most receive?
Why does the bosom of the ocean heave?
Why are the lilies of the valley white?
Why do the morning-glories close at night?
And why does Autumn wear one scarlet sleeve?

Thou would'st not ask a reason for the rose,
Nor of the wind know more than that it blows;
And yet thou askest me to tell thee why
I love thee. Still, to please thee, I will try—
(And who shall call my answer incomplete?)
I love thee, just because I love thee, Sweet!

BUT LOVE CAN HEAR

Love is blind, but Love can hear.
The faintest footfall tell the lover's ear
That she is near.

And blind tho' lovers be ; still can they see
A thousand graces, hidden all the while
From you and me.

HOW DID I KNOW?

How did I know that we should meet?
I think it was my own heart's beat
That told me you were coming, Sweet!

How did I know which way you'd pass?
I saw a daisy in the grass
Consult its dewdrop looking-glass!

YOU SMILED

You smiled, and then the whole world seemed
to thrill;

A pulsing, throbbing joy ran thro' my veins
As rills run down a mountain when it rains.

And straightway all my thoughts deserted me;
Attracted by the glory of your eyes,
As golden-rod attracts the butterflies.

WHEN YOU ARE AWAY

When you are away
The hours lag so,
And the days declare
That they will not go.
But how they can care,
Or bear to stay
When you are away,
I do not know.

MOON SONG

The night is clear, and the moon sails high.
Come nearer my Belovéd, nearer still!
The winds are crooning a lullaby.
Come nearer my Belovéd, nearer still!
There are none in the world but Thou and I;
And Thou art mine to caress until
The stars grow pale in the eastern sky,
And the moon sails over the hill.
But oh, how swiftly the moments fly!
Come nearer my Belovéd, nearer still!

I LOVE THEE, AND I WILL NOT GO

I love thee, and
I will not go.
Dost understand?
I love thee, and
Should'st thou command
I must say: "No;
I love thee, and
I will not go!"

TO FORGET

Spirit of song within my glass,
Sparkling wine, soul of the vine,
Stray sunbeams, golden gleams,
Ripples of laughter, daring dreams
In this glass of mine—
Thou shalt pass my lips, and let
Thy sweet madness teach my sadness
To forget.

NOW THOU ART GONE

God knows I miss thee thro' the day,
And thro' the evening hours. But when
I kiss the pillow where thy dear head lay—
God! how I miss thee then!

I love thee so! I even dare
To hope—yes, know that thou wilt be
Mine as thou wert before. Sometime, some-
where,
Thou wilt return to me!

The law of Life that made me thine,
Gave thee to me. Were it not so,
Then had I learned to curse this heart of mine
That will not let thee go!

THE SHADOW

Since thou hast turned thy face from me,
The winds blow neither good nor ill.
Thou art as yonder straying cloud,
And I—the shadow on the hill;
For thou dost go where e'er the winds decree,
And I—I can but choose to follow thee.

LEST MY SOUL SHOULD STRAY

Lethe, lest my soul should stray
Again into the mortal clay,
Lend it (to warn it how it was betrayed before)
One little, haunting memory, that it may be
Content to enter some fair tree—
A poplar, or a sycamore.

AND THE SEASONS GO

The seasons come, and the seasons go;
Alas that the days should hurry so!
Spring floats by like a butterfly,
And summer is gone before we know.

The seasons come, and the seasons go;
Alas, that the days should loiter so!
My poor heart grieves for the dear, dead leaves,
And the long, long time till the roses blow.

THE LITTLE THINGS

The happiness of life doth so depend
Upon the little things,
That any word of kindness may portend
The thought which brings
The deed ; which, in the end,
Doth make the friend.

THE PORTRAIT OF A GENTLEMAN

Helpful and hopeful, doing what he can
To make the lives about him more serene ;
Upright and fearless, sober, steadfast, clean,
Quick to discern the great All Father's plan ;
Eager to learn, and not afraid to scan
The future ; kindly, gracious, tender, keen,
The very soul of honor, never mean—
That is the portrait of a gentleman.

Some seek for fortune in the busy marts,
Some for mere selfish pleasure, some for fame ;
And some would sell their souls and rob their
 hearts—
Would barter all for riches or a name.
But still we are reminded, now and then,
That there are some who would be gentlemen.

ALONG THE STREAM

For miles the drooping willows shade the
stream ;
For hours the violets dream, and nod, and
dream,
While sunbeams stab the shadows with their
gleam.

And languid butterflies float idly where
The wild flow'rs breathe the sweetest, and 'tis
there
That zephyrs comb the tangled maiden-hair.

THE WIND SEEMS KIND TODAY

The trees nod east, the trees nod west ;
The wind seems kind today, most kind ;
It lulls the little leaves to rest.
The trees nod east, the trees nod west ;
Do you suppose it has a quest ?
Has something definite to find ?
The trees nod east, the trees nod west ;
The wind seems kind today, most kind.

A ROSE OR TWO

A Rose or two
For *ma duchesse*.
Not many—true,
A rose or two.
Who sent them? You
Could never guess.
A rose or two
For *ma duchesse*.

JEALOUSY

The shadows seem to love the stream,
The willows bend above it;
And while I cannot say I deem
It strange that they should love it,

I must confess that when I see
The willows bending o'er it,
I feel a twinge of jealousy—
For I, myself, adore it!

THE TIME FOR MATING

What is the use of waiting?
Tell her your love today.
The Spring 's the time for mating :
There is no month like May.
The lilies are renewing
Their promise to the lake ;
Intent upon his wooing,
A dove is softly cooing
Somewhere within the brake.

Why be content with sighing
As if it were too late?
The mocking bird is flying
This moment to his mate.
Enough of contemplating—
Spring will depart with May!
And Spring 's the time for mating!
Too long you have been waiting ;
Tell her your love today.

AND WE WERE ALONE

The moon rose—
The night was wistful ;
And the thistle stalks shimmered.
Adown the slope, southerly,
Shone the lights of the city
The wind moaned—
Moaned as a wounded woman might—
And the stars blinked wonderingly
In their blue-green meadow.
Then all was still.
And my soul entered into the silence
As into a sanctuary ;
And we were alone.

THE DRAGON-FLY

Unless you are keener by far than I,
You would never guess
That the water-cress
Is madly in love with the dragon-fly.
Poor water-cress!
For the dragon-fly darts here and there
All unconcerned. He does not care.

THE FIRST PRELUDE:—CHOPIN

The Morning of Creation heard
Such music, when the first wind stirred;
A World was born with every bar—
With every sixteenth note, a star.

FOR HER MAJESTY, THE QUEEN.

A fleet of fairy sunbeams
Is sailing the cloud-seas o'er ;
The flagship is "The Forget-me-not."
And I am the commodore.

Yes, I am the commodore of the fleet ;
And I sail o'er seas of a silver sheen
With my cargo—a thousand kisses
For her majesty, the Queen.

NESTING TIME

The oriole flies to his mate;
The linnet has already flown;
And e'en the flicker on the gate
Is not alone.

O happiness of flying home!
One lonely heart thou hast forgot;
For such as I may stay or roam—
It matters not.

QUATRAIN

My life is a curious, threadbare thing—
A garment, clean in the main, I trust ;
But worn, and patched with the songs I sing,
And I wear it because I must.

FRIENDSHIP

You ask me what is Friendship. And I say:
The beacon light that throws the brightest ray
On Yesterday, Tomorrow, and Today—
That is Friendship.

You ask me what is Friendship. I reply:
The smile for smile, the sigh for sigh,
Unchanged and changeless as the years go by—
That is Friendship.

I KNOW A PLACE WHERE A RIVER
WEAVES

I know a place where a river weaves
Thro' fields that are wide, and cool, and green ;
I know where they gather the red rose-leaves
For the bed of the Fairy Queen.

And I have seen at the twilight hour
A star gaze sadly thro' the trees ;
Sad with loving some earth-born flow'r
That sighed for the evening breeze.

WAS IT THE SEA?

The song of the sea is in my ears—
The song of the sea, the song of the sea!
Souls that have lived in the bygone years,
Singing to me, singing to me!
Off to the west the dark sky clears;
A sea-gull circles, and wheels, and peers.
The cloud fleets sail to the southward—Hist!
Was it a voice that called to me—
A voice that I have not heard in years—
Or was it the sea?

My cheek is wet with a dash of spray—
A dash of spray, a dash of spray!
And into my heart come, creeping, fears:
And I look away, I look away!
And into my eyes there comes a mist,
A mist of spray—or is it tears?

SONG OF A LONELY SOUL

Have you ever thought of the uselessness
Of the lives we lead?
Have you ever sounded the emptiness
Of the word "succeed?"
Have you ever trudged for many an hour
O'er many a mile,
To find that you sought but a withered flow'r
That was not worth while?

UNTIL A MASTER PASSION SHALL
ARISE

Until a master passion shall arise,
Absorbing all his little likes and loves
As the first morning sun absorbs the dew,
Man is inconstant as a weather vane
In March. When looking south, he loves the
south;
Yet loves no point upon the compass less
Because he thinks he loves the south the best.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TO
FAIRYLAND?

Have you ever been to Fairyland?
Did you go by way of the Rainbow Road?
Did the tiny chief of the outlaw band
Of elves demand that you pay a toll?
And did you give him a feather from
The wing of a golden oriole?

I WOULD BE GREAT

I would be great ;
Not great in strength, nor mastery of art ;
But great of heart !

I would be true ;
That I might seem to be more worthy of
A woman's love !

And I would look
Upon my fellow men with trustful eyes.
I would be wise !

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Some say: "Life is but a merry dance
Thro' endless mazes of Night and Day"—
Or: "Life is at best but a game of chance;
And we are but pawns in a ceaseless play"—
Or again: "The great moulder is Circum-
stance;
And we—mere pieces of plastic clay."

Ah, Life is a bundle of Hopes and Fears!
'Tis enough, that enough will be always more;
Our lives do but echo the laughter and tears
Of thousands of souls who have gone before—
They who have mounted that flight of years
Which leads to a closed or open door!

THEN CAME TWILIGHT

Then came Twilight ;
And with her own pale hands let down the bars
That kept them from our sight,
And—one by one—the sleepy little stars
Arose and strayed into the night.

Then—as a bride
In her white wedding-garments—came the
Moon.
“They say her lover died
Long years ago,” I whispered. “Yes, the
Moon
Is mad—stark mad!” the Night Wind sighed.

LONGINGS

The mocking bird that fluttered half a-swoon,
And all but blinded by the glare of noon,
Was longing for (poor, little mocking bird!)
That strange, white mystery some call the moon.

The night wind, when the western sky was
kiss'd
With saffron shaded into amethyst,
Was sighing for (poor, little lonely wind!)
The mountains dreaming in their purple mist.

SIR INSOLENCÉ

Self-satisfied and jauntily at ease,
Well-groomed and rakish, daring—debonair—
(A veritable Lovelace, if you please)
The blackbird swaggers in the garden there.
Just hear him scold! 'Tis evident he sees
Me coming. Hear him clamor and declare
That they are his—my lawn, and flow'rs, and
trees;
And that 'twere best that I should have a care.

Altho' I should not wish to have him know,
I like his scoldings and his lordly ways;
I like to see him strutting to and fro
Across my lawn. I miss him on the days
When he indulges me with a pretense
Of having made a change of residence.

THE WATER-LILIES

Sometimes the water-lilies lay
Their cheeks to cool
Upon the bosom of the pool
Of a summer's day ;
And then the ripples kiss them when they dare.

I need not say
That there are many graceful ripples there.

Perhaps that 's why the lilies sometimes lay
Their cheeks to cool
Upon the bosom of the pool
Of a summer's day ?

AN OLD-FASHIONED GARDEN

Larkspur and eglantine,
Heartsease and heather,
Hollyhocks, four-o'clocks,
Poppies, mignonette and phlox
Growing wild together.
What a dear, old-fashioned nook,
And how few would heed it.
What a place to take a book—
And never read it!

BUT THE LIVING FADE

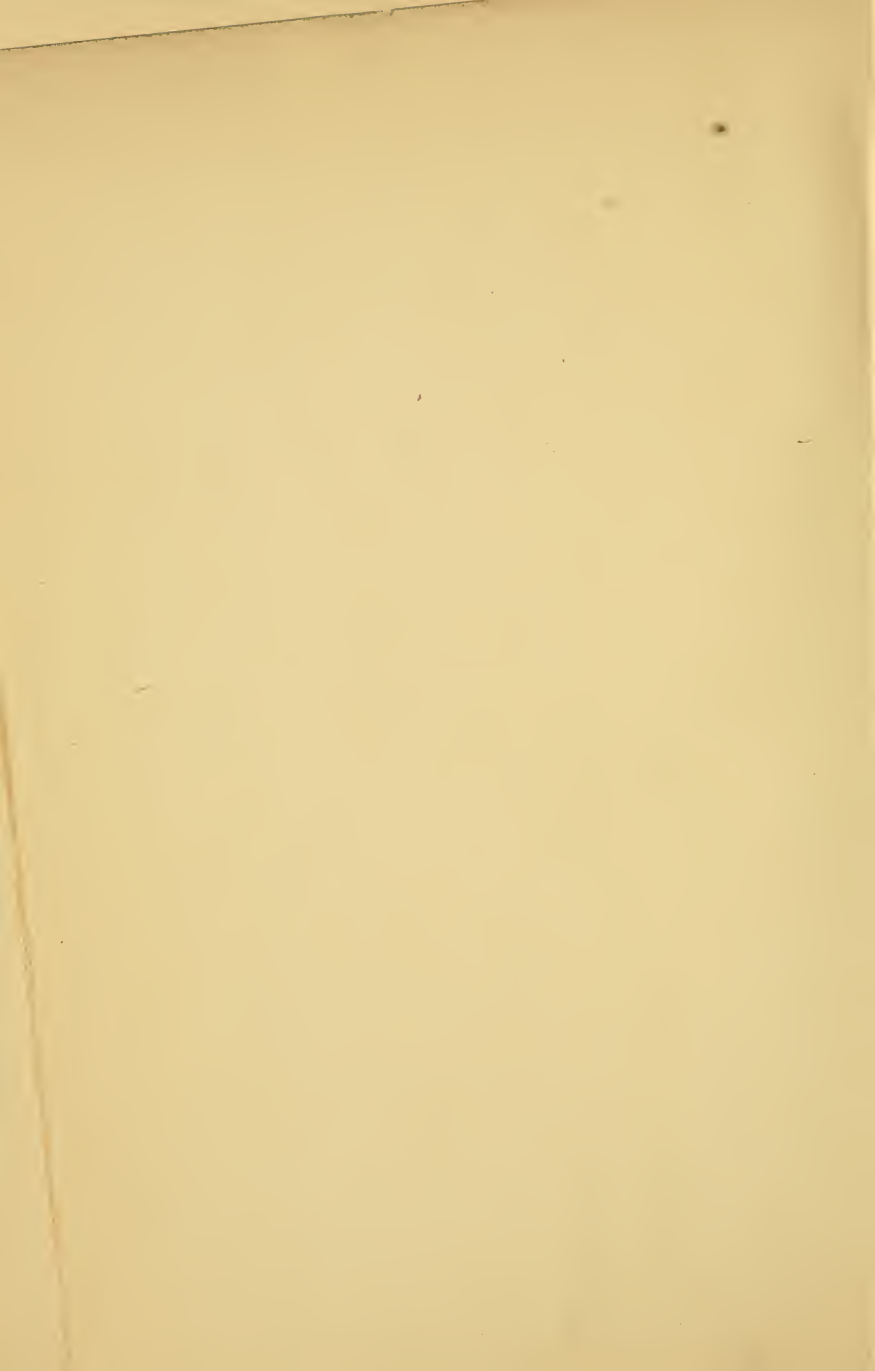
A mocking bird on the topmost spray
Of a distant tree
Is singing:
*"The days are slipping away from me—
Drifting into eternity.
Like the brook in the glade,
Life ripples on;
But the Living fade
Like the rose of dawn,
Which is scarce abloom
Before 'tis gone.
And I, who came
With a heart of flame,
And a spirit as restless as the sea—
I, too, must follow the drift of days
Into eternity."*

Ah, the mocking bird is sad tonight!
Sad with the thought that the days must bring
Another spray—
Another spring—
And another mocking bird to sing.

WHEN SUNBEAMS STRAY

When sunbeams stray
Into my heart,
The shadows start
To run away.

“They start,” I say;
Too well I know
How shadows stay
And sunbeams go.



APR 19 1904

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 898 151 8