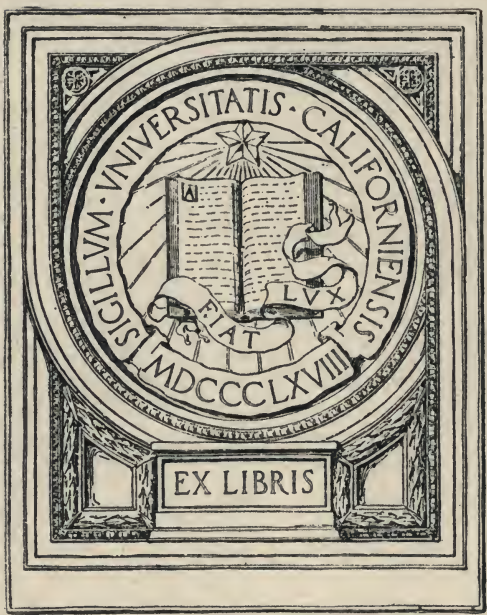


# CALIFORNIANS

*By*

ROBINSON  
JEFFERS





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CALIFORNIANS



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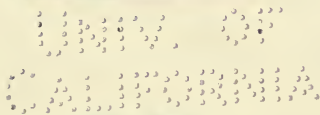
MACMILLAN & CO., LIMITED  
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TORONTO

# CALIFORNIANS

BY

ROBINSON JEFFERS



New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1916

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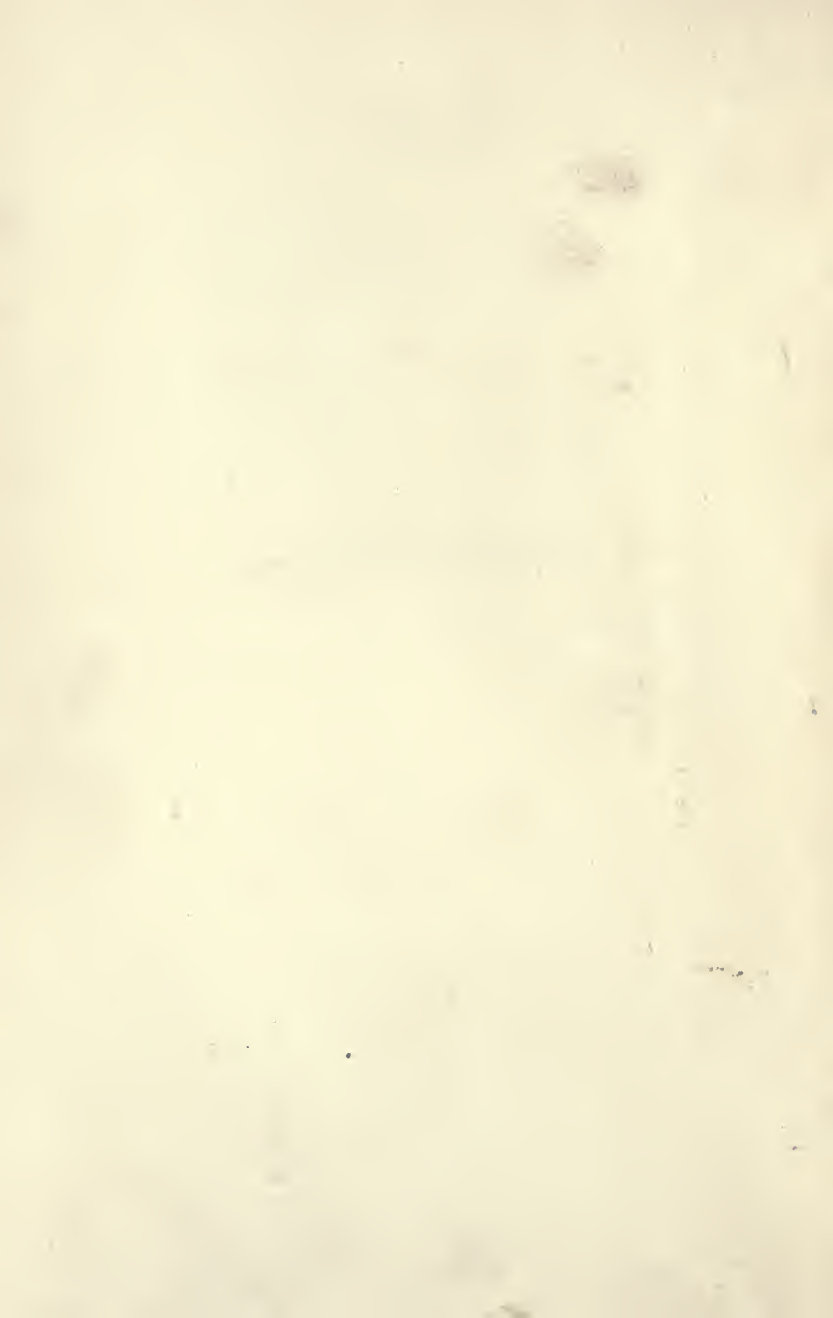
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CALIFORNIANS





# CALIFORNIANS

## INVOCATION

O EVENING star deep in the deep west burning,  
Far over the faint line of flickering foam ;  
A solitary star, and unreturning

But with return of night : thy sisters come  
Laughing out of the east, but thou declinest ;  
Day wanes no faster than thou fliest home ;

Thou wilt not, though in heaven, O divinest,  
Endure divided glory, nor too near  
Approach, nor multitude. Alone thou shinest.

Thou hast precedence in heaven : have it here  
In song, and in my heart that yearns afar  
Above the wave-tops toward thy splendor clear,

THE  
SUN  
SHINE

CALIFORNIANS

Lamp of the west, O loveliest wandering-star !  
And thinks how oft at closing in of days  
Nameless, and evening respites of dim war,

My fathers looked from unremembered ways  
Up to thy guiding light ; and swore at dawn  
To turn their shoulders downward, and still gaze

The whole day toward thy setting ; and were drawn  
Out of huge Asia, past the Euxine Sea,  
Northward of cloudy Caucasus, and on

Westward, free wanderers. They would look for  
thee

At fire-lighting each night ; but when thy face  
Was hidden, there they halted, eagerly

Awaiting thy new birth, and in that place  
Built huts and plowed the field. Thy light renewed,  
They rose, and tracked westward the wilderness.

Now I, the latest, in this solitude  
Invoke thee from the verge extreme, and shoal  
Of sand that ends the west. O long-pursued,

## INVOCATION

Where wilt thou lead us now? What greater goal  
Gleams for our longing down the abysm of time?  
What weariness of body and worn soul?  
What farther west? What wanderings more sub-  
lime?

## STEPHEN BROWN

— IN the San Bernardino Mountains,  
Traveling from sky-peaked Grayback to Bear Lake,  
In a deep-shaded dell I saw great fountains  
Of shining water from the black earth break,  
And pour through heavy-fronded ferns below,  
And down the dark ravine a turbulence make  
As of immortal footsteps, when they go  
Assured and at their will the wide world to and fro.

Beyond, I met a lone old man, who walked  
My way ; and he was merry as a bird  
In the familiar forest, yet he talked  
But little ; at long intervals a word  
Laughed on his lips to show his inward joys.  
As for my answers, they were never heard ;  
The old man was deaf to every earthly noise ;  
Yet often smiled as if he heard some spiritual voice.

STEPHEN BROWN

He was but five feet tall; and like an elf  
Quick-footed; and a thin gray beard he had.  
He spoke of woods and mountains and himself  
As if they were old friends, and deeply glad  
All of the others' company. "But come  
Up to my house and share my food," he said.  
"There's plenty in store: for each of us a crumb."  
Then asked me whither I went, and where I had  
journeyed from.

I answered, though he heard not; and we came  
To his log-cabin, all of unbarked wood.  
Upon a sideling hill, clipped in a frame  
Of huge dark pines, and well-withdrawn it stood,  
Two hundred paces from the lonely trail.  
Close by, a trickle of dancing water flowed,  
And, through a hollowed sapling's trough, some fell  
As from a spout, and tinkled in a wooden pail.

The old man walked proudly ahead; and, I could  
see,  
Glad to be gracious, for his guests were rare.  
All that his larder served, he speedily  
Displayed upon the table white and bare.

## CALIFORNIANS

And, after luncheon ended, he talked more  
Than while we walked. "There's youth in moun-  
tain air,"  
He said; "you wouldn't guess I'm seventy-four?  
And younger now, I think, than ever I was before."

He had lived thirty years in this one spot,  
High in the lonely mountains: — here he leaped  
Out of his chair, and from a closet brought  
A treasured document, a column clipped  
From a newspaper of the valley town.  
"Read this," he said, and with one finger flipped  
The folded print. I read how Stephen Brown,  
Seventy-three years old, had lately travelled down

From (said the newspaper) his hermitage,  
Thirty miles in a day, through snow waist-deep, —  
A journey few strong men of half his age  
Would dare — to visit valley friends, and keep  
The Christmas with them. — While I read, the old  
man  
Laughed boylike; when I looked at him, a deep  
Quick flood of red across his pale cheek ran;  
And troubled like a boy, and blushing, he began:



STEPHEN BROWN

“There’s one man lives at Bear Lake Dam, and one  
At Mountain Lodge: three of us altogether  
Winter up here. When snow flies, you stay on  
Till the March thaw, and watch the wild white  
weather

Fill up the windows: — but, last year, I meant  
To see my friends.” He paused; I knew not  
whether

To wonder more that he the long descent  
Had dared, or that his other winters here were spent.

I took a card and wrote: “It’s ten hard miles  
To Bear Lake Dam; to Mountain Lodge eighteen.  
— If you should fall ill?” — “Why,” the old man  
smiles,

“I’d be no worse off then than I *have* been.

I was consumptive, I came west, you’d say,  
With death holding my hand. So dry and lean,  
If I’d gone barefoot I’d have blown away.  
They gave me six months’ life, but not another day.

“I’d always loved the trees; and half a year  
Was half a year; and it was springtime then.  
I’d always loved the mountains; I came here,  
But soon, instead of dying, I lived again.

## CALIFORNIANS

I like my hill, though it is far removed  
From the sweet looks and kindly help of men."  
— The old man spoke now as if in words approved  
By lingering thought : " We grow to be what we have  
loved."

Now when I went my way I wondered still  
What he had meant in saying, " We grow to be  
What we have loved." Was it, that in the hill  
Buried, he would grow into earth and tree,  
And briar and fern? Or did he rather mean  
That, by such love uplifted and made free  
From common fears, he had become serene  
As Nature's darling children evermore have been?

The mighty peaks that bathe in viewless air,  
The pines that murmur by the mountain streams,  
What thoughts have they? We know they do not  
share

Our passions, the disturbance of our dreams.  
But as I looked about me, treading slowly  
The canyon trail, the curtain of what seems  
Was lifted, and my heart grew glad and lowly :  
" O happy earth," I cried, " O fearless, O most holy !"

STEPHEN BROWN

Then I remembered with no change of mood  
That aged man whose wisdom was serene.  
— He stands now in my memory, as he stood  
Upon his cabin threshold, and between  
The door-posts of rough pine, to say good-by.  
A little man, scant-bearded, old and lean ;  
A man at home in the world to live or die,  
Self-stationed, self-upheld as the all-beholding sky.

## EMILIA

### I

THE old heart of the world is changed not with its  
dress.

Give thanks to God ; and presently read on.  
— High on a lovely hill, which cypresses  
And somber eucalypts had overgrown ;  
And eastward from its height Los Angeles,  
Or rather of her lights the untimely dawn,  
Was seen at nightfall ; but the daytime breeze  
Brought ever the sharp breath of western seas ;

### 2

And at the hill's foot, thrusting forth her piers  
Like water-roots, Redondo not content  
Numbers her shipping ; and beyond appears  
The inviolable eternal element,  
Lapped in that azure mantle which it wears

## EMILIA

Unfaded from the morn of time ; and bent  
Perfectly like a crescent, the bay reaches  
South, and far north, on foam-wet glistening  
beaches : —

### 3

High on this far-viewed hill, and over-spired  
By cypresses, and locked with tangled boughs  
Of live-oaks and the eucalypts ; retired  
Into a sober distance which allows  
But murmurs, as of insects evening-choired,  
From shore and harbor, stood her father's house.  
White-fronted and flat-roofed it was, with small  
Grilled balconies before the windows tall.

### 4

It looked straight westward ; when the sun declining  
Stood flushed above the far verge of the seas  
In a sky of amber and rose, his level shining  
Cast the slim shadows of the cypress trees  
Like ribbons up the wall, with darkness lining  
The deep-set casements and the balconies ;  
While gleamed with sunset colors glorious  
The window-panes, as fire were in the house.

## CALIFORNIANS

### 5

Low down against the wall, yet vinelike too,  
With sudden upward reaches as of flame,  
Rich and full-flowered with yellow and orange, grew  
Streptoslen bushes, and their blossoms came  
Up to the window-ledges, clinging to  
The rough and cream-white plaster ; and these same  
Climbed the broad door-posts of the central door  
On trellises unseen, and arched it o'er.

### 6

Beyond the driveway wall and hedge of privet  
Tall dahlias answered the streptoslen bushes  
In color : — as the liquor of high Glenlivet  
Finds new youth in a worn man's veins, and flushes  
His overshadowed cheek — or brandy'll give it  
The same ambrosial ardor : so these gushes  
Of lively color lit the house and park,  
Which cypresses and blue-gums made so dark.

### 7

But there was fragrance too, that quietly crept  
Across the narrow paths, among the stems  
Spiring or gnarled of tufted trees, and swept

## EMILIA

The lawns, with trailing as of silken hems  
And whispering; or at windless nightfall slept  
Against the doorstep. Like a miser's gems  
Were hid the little gardens whence flew forth  
Such deep sweet breathings of the tranquil earth.

### 8

Scarcely the gardener, old John Williamson,  
Though his pipe drew well of a morning, and the gout  
Forgot to twist his knuckles, could have known  
Where were the little plots, nor found them out  
For tending; gentle Emilia, she alone  
Had planted them, and knew the paths about  
Their secrecies, and came in summer eves  
With water; and she loved their least of leaves.

### 9

Her gardens — how should any but herself  
Number? or know the blossoms growing there?  
Her pansies, each the quaint face of an elf  
Lifting from shadow, whispering to faint air  
Their faintest odor — on a sunny shelf  
Of earth a live-oak's knotted knees upbear  
Her gay verbenas, half ashamed to fret  
With color-wealth pale-wanded mignonette,



## CALIFORNIANS

10

That grew near by — her violets under a ledge  
Where the hill cropped out with rock and downward  
    slanted  
Into rich crevices — and in the hedge  
Her sweet-briar roses carefully transplanted: —  
Sweet-william too she kept, that used to pledge  
The breeze from cups of spice — her plots not wanted  
Snowfall of sweet alyssum, — and had scope  
For phlox and basil and dwarf heliotrope.

11

Like a young Goddess who with love requites  
And nurture, the swung censers and sweet vows  
Of worshippers and priests and acolytes,  
She passed at twilight from the garrulous house  
(Now that the yearning veiled autumnal nights  
Set early in) and under obscure boughs  
Swift darkness felt her all alone, not lonely,  
Finding her charges by their fragrance only.

12

Autumn is not the rich and mournful close,  
With us who dwell against the sunseting,

14



## EMILIA

Of the year, ere winter and the cerecloth snows  
Enwind him, a pale slumberer until spring :  
Here autumn is a traveller's brief repose  
At heat of noon ; he sleeps not ; he will fling  
The vine-leaves in a moment from his brow,  
And run, refreshed with wine — for even now,

### 13

This side the nearest milestone, accompanied  
By laughing shepherd Fauns who pipe the flocks  
To fruitfulness, by wanton girls dove-eyed,  
By that old kindly Satyr who still mocks  
And loves too, — cometh she, the longed-for bride,  
Even she above whose dark wet shining locks  
Burns like a star the whole year's desire, even Spring,  
Veiled in soft rain, — with joy, with blossoming.

### 14

This night it seemed to Emilia she was here  
Already, though October had not rounded  
His brother's late-born crescent, that swam clear  
Of cloud in middle heaven ; but clouds abounded  
On all the wide circumference ; nor could peer  
More than four stars or five, and these confounded

### 15

## CALIFORNIANS

Dizzily by the moon-rays that outmeasure  
Her islanded estate of straitened azure.

15

“The night is warm, the rain will come to-night.  
There is no wind but many clouds; all day  
The sun threw doubtful beams, and milky white  
Through mist on the blue bosom of the bay;  
No dew is fallen at all; the air is light;  
The ocean’s tones are clear but far away.  
O come, rain, come, sweet rain, fall softly and  
bring  
To me and to my little flowers the spring!

16

“The hill-slopes are all gray and wait for you  
To weave them lustrous robes of living green.  
The trees grow faint with drinking the thin dew;  
Leaves wrinkle, meagre limbs are bare between.  
The sky is tired of being always blue.  
The ways are deep with dust: O wash them  
clean!  
And all my blossoms though well tended cry  
Wistfully for the waters of the sky!”

16

## EMILIA

17

Thus prayed Emilia, not with open lips,  
But longingly at heart. For she was one  
Who held to the ancient first apocalypse:  
As the pure sons and daughters of the dawn  
Prayed nor to images, nor fellowships  
Of Godheads on a mountain, nor withdrawn  
In heaven one God nor three; but worshipped rather  
Kindlier powers, — the sun, their lofty father;

18

Deep-bosomed earth, their mother; and the wind,  
The rain, the sheltering hills, the moving sea:  
Even so Emilia, not with conscious mind,  
I think, but by deep nature, reverently  
Regarded the great elements, inclined  
Her heart before the first — and verily  
The only visible — Gods; — and found her prayer  
As often answered as most others are.

19

But the fifth night it was. From set of sun  
The gentle night was three hours old; the hearth  
Nourished a blaze — no winter-crackling one —

## CALIFORNIANS

Emilia's dear two sisters with their mirth  
Were noisier. She, her evening tendance done,  
And loved communion with the pensive earth,  
Was joined with them. The sudden heavenly  
    gift  
Upon the window panes a-pattering swift

20

Resounded: then the first-born of the three  
Who sat within, laughed suddenly and said,  
“At least to-night the boy won't visit me —  
Francis, I mean: there's nothing stirs his dread  
Like driving on wet roads, since the evening he  
Skidded and toppled over. Now, instead  
Of sitting two and two, for once we'll spend  
The evening like three sisters — with no friend.

21

“Are you not glad, Emilia?” But that third  
While Flavia spoke had vanished from the room.  
“Where is the girl? — Where is she going?” — They  
    heard  
Down the long panelled hall the house-door boom,  
Closing. They ran and opened: soft rain purred

18

## EMILIA

On all the leaves without; through murmurous  
gloom  
Faint perfume of untimely blossoms crept;  
And in a haze of rain the garden slept.

22

They called; and when she answered not, returned  
Wondering to the hearthside. In the night  
Beneath the trees Emilia walked, and yearned  
As solemnly as ever anchorite  
To his high phantom-God: but *she* discerned  
The God of her desire — for silvery-white,  
Beating the long clear grass like one who danced,  
Bacchanalian, silver-footed, gleamed and glanced

23

In the slant window-glimmer the sweet rain,  
And hissed among the leaves, and pattered on  
The ghostly gravel walks; and like a stain  
Across the radiance of the moon was drawn  
In luminous clouds; and failed; and fell again,  
Wetting the tall-stemmed dahlias autumn-wan;  
And from the eave-troughs with a gurgling sound  
Gushed; and was sucked in by the thirsty ground.

19

## CALIFORNIANS

24

What ails the maiden thus to walk afield  
In the wet cold discomfortable dark?  
The field-squirrel now is in his cave concealed,  
Even in its driest depth ; the meadowlark  
Hugs what small cover a few wild mustards yield ;  
The fat wood-grub has burrowed under bark ;  
The slug finds shelter under a wet stone :  
Why walks Emilia roofless, she alone ?

25

Because she loves — because she worships — yea,  
What can the maiden do and how express  
More wholly her devotion? All astray  
She casts her streaming hair ; she will not less  
Than give in gratitude her soul away  
Unto the cool kind torrents : now her dress  
Is loosened at the throat, and on her breast  
Numberless silver kisses are impressed.

26

Now slip her garments backward — who can watch  
In the wet night, and she well hidden behind  
Her friendly trees? — she loosens the gold catch  
Of the pin at her bosom ; and the blind

20

## EMILIA

Quick fingers of the raindrops, from the thatch  
Of upper leaves wind-shaken, soon can find  
And play upon her shoulders glistening bare  
Between the mingled strands of her dark hair.

27

No eye is under all the darksome trees ;  
No step to frighten virgin modesty ;  
The world is housed : now, if the maiden please,  
May she not walk and play conformably  
To her desire and beauty? Piece by piece  
Her raiment slips from off her, and with glee  
Naked she stands, and free and without stain,  
Mixing her tender body with the rain.

28

Anon she dances. — Thus a young doe-fawn,  
One that has never known the stag, nor stood  
Beneath his weight of love, about moon-dawn  
Leaps in a lonely clearing of the wood  
For love of her own lightness ; far withdrawn  
She dances in the mountain solitude ;  
Yet, should but a bird cry, how far she flees  
Into the darkness of the taller trees !

21



## THE VARDENS

IN spring, when the young grass and wildflowers  
    clothe

With color their clear forms, the yucca stands  
In the wet world unflowering, a grim nest  
Of spear-points from one center radiated,  
Hateful to travellers. But when summer's glow  
Has bared of their ephemeral bravery  
The high forestless mountains burning in the south;  
When only in cool of deep ravines is left  
A little water, and green leaves beside it:  
Then is the yuccas' flowering-time; they shoot  
Heavenward the towering columns of their joy,  
With whitest petals flaked; — from far they seem  
Tall and clear candles on the mountain's flanks,  
Toward the far peak advancing.

        Thus may love  
Withhold itself too long, and blossom at last



## THE VARDENS

Hopeless, untimely ; as that nest of thorns  
In the arid season after spring is dead.

But Richard Varden from the first was froward,  
Unmanageable ; and all the more, because  
Of that half perfect brother ; and the pale  
Faint-smiling beauty of his sister, doomed  
To illness all her days. *His* cheek was bright  
And sanguine through the sunburn ; his gray eyes  
Were wild and liberal as an ocean-wave ;  
Yet often rested on some weed of the earth  
In sudden contemplation tenderly.

He in his fifteenth year forsook the house  
That bred him up to boyhood ; a brief quarrel  
Concerning girls he walked with, and sweet wine  
Illicit he had drunk, made wide the gulf  
And separate the destinies. At dawn  
The house awoke and Richard was not there ;  
Nor in the almond orchard was he found,  
That reached up to the hill ; nor where the olives  
Drowsed with gray leaves under the morning heat ;  
Nor in the vineyard of the broad-leaved vines  
Grown autumn-heavy. He had chosen a way  
Far off ; and Graham his brother, riding out

## CALIFORNIANS

On the roan mare, had word of him last seen  
Passing afoot the Santa Ynez wash  
A long day's toil northwestward. Who returned  
With no more tidings. Then the mother cried,  
"O my poor boy! He has left us; and I know him,  
He never will come back." But he that ruled  
The house and farm, said gravely: "Never: unless  
With penitent lips and most obedient will."  
And Graham said nothing; but the sister wept  
Bitterly; the pale girl yet scarcely grown  
Out of her childhood; like a desolate child.

Above that farm near Santa Barbara  
The swift years hurried; when Graham Varden  
turned  
Backward his thought it seemed that the keen years  
Had flown like buzzards soaring from the north  
Over La Cumbre's top: so rapidly.  
The vines that grew when Richard went away  
Heavy toward autumn, purpled all their grapes  
And gave them to the press; the young wine moved  
In deep vats, and was barrellled, racked, and fined,  
And slowly ripened in the cellars cool,  
And made men merry at heart; the olive boughs

## THE VARDENS

Twelve times let fall their rich maturity;  
And Varden, the old man, the housefather,  
Lay dying; for his old age had borne him down,  
And pressed him — as a packhorse by his burden  
Through quicksand at a treacherous river-ford —  
So him his years pressed down into the grave.  
Dying, he cried out for Richard. Lucy came,  
Whom grief and weakness both made pale as snow.  
“*You* are not Richard,” moaned the old man.

“*His* cheek

Is red and brown, but yours is dull and white,  
Although your eyes are brightening.” Graham  
approached

The bedside; his dark clothing and brown hair  
Were gray with dust. “Not Richard!” cried the old  
man.

— “No, father: I am Graham, your elder boy.

I was about your business in the town

When word was brought me —” “It seems that  
you have been

Travelling: did you see Richard on the way?”

— “No, father.” — “Then your journey was in  
vain.”

## CALIFORNIANS

With such farewells for his two faithful ones  
The old spirit fled fast away ; but did not find  
Richard in the dim country and shadowy road  
Which bodiless it wandered. But it saw  
The little farm that lay at the mountain's foot  
Dwindle below ; — the vineyard, groves, and home  
So long loved and inhabited so long.  
For all grew dim, and fog rushed in between,  
The ocean-fog of evening : — yet it saw  
Graham Varden from the alien form that lay  
So rigid on the bed, upraise his brow ;  
And Lucy cry in the corner. . . . Then it saw  
The old woman that had been its body's wife,  
Unnoticed until then, at the bed-foot  
Lift her brown hands and bring them to her eyes.

The fog moved, and the death-chamber was veiled.  
On one side lay the ocean vast and blank ;  
On the other stood the mountain ; far below  
The twinkling street of Santa Barbara  
Waned like a moon ; then the old man's ghost was  
blown  
By the strong wind above La Cumbre's top  
Into a desert ; there it flickered out,

## THE VARDENS

And sense, and that weak shadow of life, at once  
Dissolved; and the great world that knew it not  
Was emptied of a soul. But many such  
This world retains, ever engendering more.

To annihilation and blank vacancy  
Given up, the spirit was lost: its voice was left:  
(For naked in the final agony  
Man's soul is sometimes of its batlike voice  
Most piercing and far heard) — the voice drove  
on,—

As when a star is blackened, yet its light  
Rains on the earth for centuries to come  
From the incalculable gulf and vast of heaven —  
Drove north above the immense Tulare plain,  
Blind messenger, crying "Richard!" Sierran  
heights,

Bare, and those hooded with perpetual snow,  
It passed; and on the promontoried shore  
Of Eagle Lake, remote in the northeast,  
Fell; the deep night below Fredonyer Peak  
Shook to its wistful cry. A young man woke  
Beside his campfire's blackening ember-heap  
And starting upright, stirred the ash; whose gleam

## CALIFORNIANS

Shot ruby lights among the mirrored stars  
Below, on the black crystal of the lake.

But he, that wandering man, in grief and awe  
Wept silently before his lonely fire  
Until pale dawn with light had slain the stars.

## MALDROVE

I CLIMBED Old Baldy ; and in coming down  
Through San Antonio Canyon, stopped the night  
With Peter Graham, my somewhat less than friend,  
Who has a cottage near the road, and lives  
Alone, with one man-servant, all year through.  
Peter is old and ruddy and white-haired,  
A jovial hermit, who professes more  
Than feels, contempt of man and of the time.  
“A dreadfully degenerate age,” he said  
At dinner ; “and the stench of it comes up  
The valley in the evening. Oversea  
They are luckier ; they have gunpowder to purge  
Their breezes ; they will live the cleaner for it.  
You, meanwhile — you write verses ! — But,” he  
said,  
“A better and a younger man than you  
Sat in your chair last year about this time,



## CALIFORNIANS

Slept in the bed you'll sleep in. Should have slept,  
I ought to say, for he was up all night, —  
I heard these planks creak with his regular steps, —  
And heard him draw the latch and go away  
A little before morning. On the floor  
We found some papers after he was gone;  
And on the hearth —" Graham paused; then  
earnestly,  
"Oh no," he said, "believe me, your great poets,  
Your Dante, Shakespeare, Shelley, are second-rate.  
The great ones die unheard of; you'll be read  
A year or so; but Maldrove — the boy's name —  
Fell in a skirmish by the Dardanelles  
(A special British blunder, God forgive them!)  
Five months ago — unknown — the way he chose.

"I do believe he had written a great poem.  
He had wandered our whole coast, and knew it well,  
San Diego to Vancouver. All the forms  
Of nature, every promontory and bay,  
Mountain and valley and gorge and stand of trees,  
And all our ways of human life, were grown  
Into his heart, as if to finer soil  
Transplanted with due care; and he had drawn



## MALDROVE

These, and the high wild creatures of his thought,  
Into one organism, his poem, — burnt  
On the hearth here. The night I spoke of, though,  
He made a kind of dedication . . . rash,  
Nervous, unfinished, . . . which I found next day  
Tumbled about the floor. I have it here;  
And you shall read it.”

— In this wise it ran: —

### I

Mother-country, O beautiful beyond  
All power of passionate verse, or dream of mine,  
Yet take this homeless verse; for it is thine  
Prededicate, and doth to thee respond  
With bitterness less bitter than the brine  
That washes all thy west, and with despair  
Less bleak than of thy mountain-summits bare.

### II

But waters in the hollows of thy mountains,  
In hidden woods that secret leaves seclude,  
In sacred wayless heights of solitude,  
Remember to be sweet; thy voice of fountains  
Is music all year through; that music's mood,

## CALIFORNIANS

Hidden too deep for feet of men to reach,  
Makes verdure there, and in my heart makes speech.

### III

This voice of speech if it be good, be gracious,  
My country, and refuse not for all thine ;  
Seeing not as men remember and design  
I have remembered and designed the spacious  
Frame, and great forms to fill it, and divine  
Breath to fulfil the forms ; but as thou, divinest  
Giant mother, rememberest and designest.

### IV

Who shalt in due time, asking no God's leave,  
Fill thy large frame with lovely and great sons,  
Successors of these little and verminous ones,  
Thy temporary fosterlings : believe,  
O mother, and rejoice ! That future atones,  
Though future, for this present : yea, though it be  
But a vision, for this instant infamy.

### V

How shall I fall not from so hopeless hope?  
How call it more than vision? Can the blast

## MALDROVE

And furnace of Fate spare it? Yet thou hast  
Great stars and lordly in thy horoscope;  
Nor the hours of their dominion can be past,  
For they have never been; nor the years done,  
Being yet unlighted by any cycle of sun.

## VI

Is it next year thy people congregate  
The world's to their fine festival? — to see  
Thy wealth, and the opened inlets of thy sea;  
And deal as those that love not thee but hate,  
But furrow and spoil thee and make their vaunt of  
thee,  
And call themselves thy lords: but I on hell  
To attest I love them little, but thee well.

## VII

O dreams, O more innumerable than sand,  
Or salt flakes of the sea-froth driven and beaten  
On sands the west wind and the north have smitten,  
The southeast wind and the east wind from the land  
Have piled with wilder dunes and fiercelier bitten  
With seaward gullies — O visions of my dreaming,  
Numberless as the sea-wrack tossed and streaming!

## CALIFORNIANS

### VIII

Much frailer than the sea-froth : O but sweeter,  
O dreams, to me than honey from the hive !  
Too sweet to endure, too beautiful to thrive  
Beyond the kindly bonds of rhyming metre :  
O dreams, O visions, it is you that drive  
My heart through love's excess to excess of hate :  
For those — are men ; but you, O dreams, are great !

### IX

*Odi et amo!* "Loving thee, I hate!"  
The tenderest fieriest mouth of Roman song  
Cried to his strumpet-goddess from the long  
Passion, the wild desire, the vain regret,  
Cried to his strumpet-goddess — Greater wrong  
Urges who cries to men : For love of you  
Hatred of all exceeds my love of few !

### X

I call you all-abominable ! Did she,  
The wonderful strumpet-goddess, the all too sweet,  
Defile herself with porters from the street  
And slaves in the inner chamber ? Let her be,  
Nor cry at her, nor sniff at her : the feet

## MALDROVE

Of punishment are waiting at the doors —  
O star of harlots, adorable of whores !

### XI

I call you all-adorable, O men,  
For the Gods' sakes you might be ! What you are,  
God knows I will not say — not God nor star,  
God knows, nor honest nor clean clay ! Again  
With nostrils nipped adoring from afar  
I do salute you for their worthier sakes  
In whom your filth has blossomed, and awakes

### XII

To flowers of beauty and courage and clear seeing,  
To Achilles or to Shelley : as in her,  
The strumpet-goddess found hateworthier  
For love's sake, blossomed into lordlier being  
Some flowers of beauty : else her worshipper  
Had worshipped not, and Lesbia's name were just  
As dumb to us as any sister-dust.

### XIII

Nay, let her rest ! One voice is fierce enough,  
Her lover's own and tireless, to hunt down

## CALIFORNIANS

That white sweet body, naked but the crown  
Of shameful verse immortal, through the rough  
Alleys and gutters of the eternal town :  
Thou let her rest, my song, and let man rest,  
And find thee what is better than his best.

### XIV

O great hills of my country, thrones of death  
Divine, and drought, and godlike solitude !  
O terrible blue dome of the unsubdued  
God, and the savage temple ! O fierce breath  
Of winds from the eastern deserts, or imbued  
With wild salt odors from the western sea,  
Or icy-keen from the higher infinity

### XV

Of the upper, the all-irrespirable æther  
That not your eagles, O my mountains, dare  
Attempt : vainly the vans would whistle there,  
Vainly through seeming vacancy ; and neither  
May soul of man attain that purest air,  
Nor song of mine : — dear song ! had we access  
To that lustration of high loneliness !

## MALDROVE

### XVI

There all the vermin infamies of men,  
The many foulnesses, O song I love  
I may not soil thy lips with mention of,  
Might surely be forgotten; surely again  
Thou and I might be white, and winged above  
The turpitudes: as once, when I was young,  
And thou, messenger of my heart, unsung.

### XVII

Now thou art sung, and comest wide-winged flying  
Full on the goal, my eagle of messengers,  
My falcon of fair speech! What fool prefers  
Long life and bitter, slow and painful dying?  
Thou wiser choosest gladlier, not averse  
From the instant immortality of fire  
Violent and bright; the sudden kindled pyre

### XVIII

Where thou in all thy beauty of briefest youth  
Shalt fold both wings and droop each eager eyelid,  
Dear singing-bird of keen and undefiled  
Plumage! and flee gay-hearted whither Truth



CALIFORNIANS

And Beauty are fled — out of the world! Thy smile  
hid

Too much contempt of man, and too much love  
Toward stars he cannot bear the brightness of.

XIX

Therefore, O thou keen-hearted, rise from the ashen  
Couch and the dusty grave, and do thou stand  
Before the eternal spirit of this land,  
And say in thy sweet voice: I am the passion  
Of a young man, and come at his command  
Who made me winged and fearless, fair and free,  
That I might stand before thee and honor thee.

XX

And say: Not fashioned wholly of due disdain  
Am I, nor wholly of hate though justified,  
Thou seest, O mother! But of love and pride  
Also, and keen desire, and bitter pain,  
And of thy beauty, mother. — Let me abide  
Here at thy feet, to await with quiet eyes  
And folded wings thy supreme destinies.



## MALDROVE

The reading finished, I looked up ; but said  
Nothing. And Graham began : “No more than boy  
Was Maldrove — twenty-two, or three, perhaps, —  
And might have written worthily at length.  
Only — this world — what is there in it to love  
But unresponsive Nature? — He was then  
Not old enough to clarify his dreams  
Into a human image : — nor am I,  
Old though I am : old, jolly and hopeless, I.  
This cankered world, what is there in it to love?  
A world at war is well enough — but this,  
Rotting in peace — commerce — and for a hope  
What but the socialism we’re settling to,  
Quotidian Sunday chicken, and free love  
High over all, the spirit of hugger-mugger,  
And cosmopolitan philanthropy  
With wide wings waving blessing?

Maldrove went,  
And killed, I hope, a brace of Turks, before  
He dropped among the blundering Britons there ;  
Died, and is buried near Achilles’ mound,  
Under the herbless Hellespontine hills.”

## THE THREE AVILAS

### I

THIS west wind striking from the booming boughs  
What tones the supreme harp-maker designs ;  
This roar of the ocean through our little house  
Reverberant roof and wall ; this roar of the pines  
And high-pitched ripple of pine-needles, to rouse  
Loud-slumbering Pan himself ; this sun that shines  
Inexpressibly clear, and wakes the wood  
To other than its yesterday's weak mood ; —

### 2

All the brave rustle and gleam of the world ; the  
tameless  
Pulse of music, rapture of light, have shaken  
Me certainly from dreams and doubts and flameless  
Sloth : I am nearly winged ! and feel awaken  
Visions and words long wandering lost and aimless,

### THE THREE AVILAS

Fires of dull nights, and pleasures unpartaken,<sup>1</sup>  
Or sleepily, of old: but now they flame  
As were the very wind and sun in them!

#### 3

Now I have courage to make song of this  
Which makes my very life a song — your love:  
That precious flower that edged the immense abyss:  
That star, deathless, beautiful, hung above  
The gulf of curded cloud: that blessedness  
Unutterable: — what else for singing of  
Has my weak voice? What else this hand that  
tries —  
Vainly perhaps — to draw from the immortal skies

#### 4

Light to make wise with brightness these dull pages,  
The unhopeful blanks we write on? Yet behold  
To me this happened, even for me did the ages  
Pour into an aching heart their purest gold —  
Their choice of molten gold! — the privileges  
Of what but Gods being given to me to hold  
In my poor hand and bosom — yea, but see —  
Your love into my life, your lips to me!

## 5

Softly, my song, my heart! O softly, lowly,  
 Speak, and tread carefully underneath the stars,  
 Or jealous Gods awaken: O they are holy  
 And covetous, crafty and righteous: what debars  
 All beauty from completeness? What grows slowly  
 On every lovely child, and surely mars  
 His purest brow with evil lines, and strips —  
 Or death does first — the blossom from his lips?

## 6

What but the will of jealous Gods? And therefore  
 Tremble, not sing, my heart, for happiness!  
 And what thine inmost blood with crying makes  
     prayer for  
 Beware thy lips betray not, nor confess  
 In hearing of shrewd ears; and if thou care for  
 The life of any loveliness, the less  
 Appear thou to regard it: huddle it, fold it  
 In mourning-cloth lest the wise sun behold it!

## 7

Number thy sorrows of old time, but tell  
 Thy happinesses never: rather say,

## THE THREE AVILAS

“Beneath yon pasture-oak I was miserable  
For a thwart word; and such another day  
Nearby the foaming surge that tripped and fell  
In shelter of an oozy rock I lay,  
And drunken with immoderate bitter, saw  
The sea-mews hawking through the misty flaw.”

### 8

Then think — for if we ponder long enough  
On omens when the Gods are very good  
It may be they'll avert them — think how tough  
And ropy from the bottle, how like blood,  
The wine was poured last night, the fumes thereof  
Forgot their sleepy pleasantness and stood  
Like thick fog in the veins and in the brain,  
And choked the course of kindly sleep with pain,

### 9

And dreadful bodings of vain dreams; and after,  
When we had slept until dawn should have come,  
And dawn came not, nor any message-wafer  
Warned the murk night with pallor nor faint hum  
From eastward: what bird with a demon's laughter  
Awaked the sodden wood, and then was dumb

## CALIFORNIANS

A moment, and then wailed — until we thought  
The night's black hunters had their quarry caught?

### 10

Last night was not the first that we had heard  
That lamentable demon shriek in the murk  
Beyond the pined ravine: no natural bird  
Wails like an omen at such dreaming-work:  
Nor spoke we of it; but my heart's heart stirred,  
And sighed — awake, I knew: O fiends that lurk  
On paths that wait our darkling feet, we knew  
The terror of you and the voice of you!

### 11

Omens — why there are omens without number  
For wakeful folk to tremble at in the dark.  
Therefore beside our bed before we slumber  
(Here in our cottage where the mossed pines  
mark  
The wild world's end, and tangled slime-weeds  
cumber  
The outer sea's beginning; the meadowlark  
At drippings of the briny rock drinks deep) —  
I hang my holstered weapon ere we sleep.

## THE THREE AVILAS

12

Fool — would I scare with gunpowder and lead  
The phantoms that flock hither where earth verges  
To chaos, and like gray fingers of the huge dead  
Mists rake the high-spun foam of the eastering  
surges —

The phantoms that flock here about our bed?  
The bitter, bitter cry that deathward urges  
Those who look long at water? Or the pain —  
Life's shepherd-dog — that nips us home again?

13

There is a healthless gorge we penetrate  
Each evening, bringing driftwood from the beach  
To glut our hearthstone: either way the great  
High windy sanddunes north and southward reach,  
Hardening to cliffs not blossom-desolate;  
The tide-race with rare shells, the dunes are rich  
With sand-verbena yellow and lavender,  
The cliffs with blue beach-asters and the flare

14

Of ill-named paintbrushes, the vivid stalks  
Whose upper leaves are tipped with quenchless flame

45



And unconsuming: everywhere one walks  
 Is all ablaze with more than I can name  
 Of miracles of blossom; the wind talks  
 In wooer's wise to each, and without blame  
 Filching from each her inmost spirit of scent,  
 Makes fragrant the universal element.

## 15

But in this gorge what fragrance? Here obscurely  
 The sapless rushes are at root corrupt  
 And poison the air; here never a wind flows purely  
 Over the stagnant pools, through juts abrupt  
 Of the red rock like fangs decayed; here surely  
 Canidia with Hecate has supped  
 Right often, and the nightshade here profuse  
 Has wreathed their writhen temples, and the loose

## 16

And bloated pods of that wind-chattering weed  
 Which maddens horses when they eat of it,  
 And dog-bane near at hand: — Dreamer, what need?  
 Is the ravine without a fictive wit  
 Not venomous enough? Yet here indeed,



### THE THREE AVILAS

Being weary with our driftwood loads, we sit  
At evening, and the bats flit overhead,  
And on the stagnant bank the reeds are dead.

17

Large toads across the slimy bottom creep,  
And swim not, swollen too fat with marine worms ;  
The channel of the stream is choked and deep  
With refuse of the raging winter storms  
That into this foul nook for haven sweep  
Seaweeds, and wood of shipwreck, and huge forms  
Of twisted trunks and stumps, heaped half-afloat,  
That come across the sandbar here and rot.

18

This is the place to think of when we'd try  
To avert omens by much pondering them.  
Here let us have our dreams more often lie  
Than our tired selves, in hope to find the gem  
Of future health in sickness ; for the sky  
Hereover only wears no anadem ;  
Lank exhalations from these oozy bars  
Arise, and strangle the ever-living stars.

47

## CALIFORNIANS

19

The sunsets that are clear and crystalline,  
On floods of amber suckling Hesperus,  
Watched from the beach, from high Point Lobos seen  
Soft through pure mists have often pleased us ;  
From Cypress Point the windy trunks between  
They sparkle with wild lights tumultuous ;  
But gazed on from this westward-throated glen  
Seem dull red wounds on foreheads of drowned men.

20

Can human sorrow taint an open valley?  
Old passions rot the pale reeds ere they grow?  
Thwart love bequeathe as on a notched wand's tally  
Its record to the streams? — If that be so —  
Where the armies of the newt and serpent rally  
At the glen's head, remain from long ago  
Reason enough and vestiges enough —  
O ghosts, lie quiet! Bones of long dead love,

21

Lie still and stir not! while I quietly  
Tell my deep heart's own sister, my desire

48

### THE THREE AVILAS

And dear delight, your living misery.  
O sister of my heart, under that briar  
Which only here grows flowerless, do you see  
The mass of stone and mortar, slipped entire  
From the steep bank above; the tumbled wall  
That choked and turned the rivulet by its fall?

22

That ruin is remnant of a nest wherein  
Two lovers dwelt, accurst from the first breath.  
Four generations have been sown, and been  
Reaped, with successive pangs of birth and death,  
Since from the world those lovers brought their sin  
And lodged it here: — as much of love and faith  
As ever nourished goodness — as much joy —  
Fed the grave passions of this girl and boy.

23

What was their crime? They loved too much; they  
drew  
From the same parent-seed their sweeter lives.  
But the boy, stranger-fostered, never knew  
His year-younger twin-flower until connives  
Time with blind Fate about the season new

## CALIFORNIANS

When passion chiefly and most violently drives  
The winged folk — and young hearts — then Time  
and Fate

Join these poor two, nor either knows what mate

24

Is chosen out of all the else-doomless world  
For hers, and his, by those conspirators.  
Two twigs bound in one fagot to be hurled  
Into a fire's white heart and central force —  
Two autumn leaves together swept and swirled  
Toward the white falls adown a water-course —  
Two birds one arrow pierces in mid-air —  
Are not more surely doomed than these two were.

25

They loved; they could not give to take again.  
They loved too much; too much to be dispraised  
By wiser, cowardlier, less ill-fortuned men.  
When the discovery came, and either gazed  
On either, they beheld reflected pain,  
But neither doubt nor fear, nothing amazed  
Nor hesitant; they only knew that here  
Their fate had spoken — yet their way was clear.

50

Men say that he, though Spanish of descent,  
 Was blond as morning, tall and azure-eyed.  
 In her more twilit cheek the rose was blent  
 With olive; and I think that either side  
 Her clear gray eyes, thick-lidded, somnolent,  
 The dark brown hair fell downward in such wide  
 And equal curves as yours has; and was bound  
 With double braids the little head around.

They travelled a long exile, and came hither  
 To the utter end of the world; and here unknown  
 Hoped to live out their love and lives, and wither  
 As in green shade two deer-bells, which alone  
 The forest wildbirds visit; they had neither  
 Converse nor clasp of hand with any one.  
 They lived like two stars burning in one blue —  
 If the whole huge heaven ensphered no more than  
 two.

O, do you see in hardly alien fate  
 Our imaged own? We also are come from burning

## CALIFORNIANS

The world behind us : — be it desolate,  
Nor lurk back there to greet us unreturning !  
My deep heart's dear one sister and lone mate,  
Yes we would weep — but would we long go mourn-  
ing —  
Were it not also joy — if us like them  
One tree had borne, twin-blossoms of one stem ?

29

Here on the slope of this green hill, above  
The glen that then was happy, they'd had built  
By the Indians' unskilled hands to house their love  
A rude and lovely nest : not then with silt,  
With yellow rain-spilth of the dunes, and slough  
Of woods and sea, as is with hidden guilt  
A channel of clear thoughts, their brook was bound,  
But flowed through shadow and shine with crystal  
sound,

30

Transparent silver, singing all night long  
With virgin voice that answered the vast sea's ;  
A slender fearless thread of liquid song,  
Bright piping to his boundless harmonies

52

### THE THREE AVILAS

From wildrose brakes, and the blue-misted throng  
Of buckthorns, and the flowering currant-trees.  
Also our lovers lined with hollyhocks  
Their cabin pathway down to the clean rocks.

#### 31

Except by one old Indian woman bringing  
The daily food, they lived unvisited.  
They heard, far off and faint, the Sabbath ringing  
Of those Franciscan throats the friars had made,  
The Mission bells, by loops of rawhide swinging  
Within the domed one of two towers; they  
    led  
Nor hopes nor footsteps thither, never seen  
Among the throng of worshippers within.

#### 32

They looked beyond, as we have done so often,  
Up to the Santa Lucian hills, and saw  
The straw-brown slopes in middle winter soften  
To sweet young urgent green; and when the  
    flaw  
Drew in from westward and white waves would  
    roughen



## CALIFORNIANS

Along Point Lobos, streaming mists would draw  
As now, even so lustrous purities  
Across their summits arching from the seas.

### 33

And brighter and more pure in the rude nest  
On the hill's brow their passion burned supreme.  
At night their eyelids closing for sweet rest  
Would close upon the tears that burst and stream  
When full desire has way: for unoppressed  
By custom, and undulled their love would seem  
By time, that dulls the great stars; nor laid by  
The violent prime of its virginity.

### 34

And were they happy? Flaming heart, are we?  
Life spoke in theirs as in all lovers' ears,  
"This has to end, of course; but meanwhile be  
Happy!" And if Marina wept her tears  
Avila had his kisses: certainly  
Where there are fools there will be loves and  
fears:  
And where are man and woman are two fools:  
And Time should cure us: he not even cools!



35

“Meanwhile be happy!” Meanwhile by what trace  
 What bloodhound was it tracked them all the way?  
 They had a brother, and his blood’s disgrace  
 Cried out for blood; or so he thought; and day  
 Was darkness to him, and the sun’s great face  
 A candle in a bladder, until his prey  
 Were earthed, and justice done: both family pride  
 And Christian faith commanded fratricide.

36

This drove him like a scourge from dreaming youth  
 And home by the Aztec mountain; he came up  
 Dark-burning from the midland east and south,  
 And coastwise crept, and raked the western slope.  
 But these, to whom each moon a silver mouth  
 Had seemed, bidding good-by, — began to hope,  
 Seeing moon from moon catch fire in summer’s  
     bosom,  
 That death was not of love the certain blossom.

37

An afternoon when the long year was ripe  
 And drunken with great suns, those lovers went

55

## CALIFORNIANS

Down seaward hand in hand: the long-billed snipe  
Knew and not fled their steps of slow descent  
Customary; the killdeer did not pipe  
A note the quicker; of one element  
With their wild selves and the ocean and free air  
Those wing-borne wanderers knew our lovers were.

38

Who sought, as was their wont in the hot days,  
That little cove the cormorants love to haunt —  
And we too — at the Promontory's base,  
Well sheltered by enormous cliffs that slant  
Southwestward, breaking the main seas; which raise  
No foam-flags there, or seldom; but they pant  
In long exhausted heavings, with low tones  
Running among the small and rounded stones.

39

Here no man ever came except those two  
Joined flowers whose deadly fading is at hand.  
Here underneath a hollowed rock they drew  
Their summer-clothing off, and down the strand  
Walked through blue light to the much cooler blue.  
She swayed in walking like a slender wand

56

### THE THREE AVILAS

Beneath her weight of hair ; he with one arm  
Held her, to keep the tender feet from harm.

40

Shy in the sun, untamed and beautiful,  
Were they as the blue wave, but lovelier white.  
They seemed two wild white deer come down to  
cool  
Their autumn fever in the sea's delight.  
O, hidden above the cliff what leering-dull  
And viper-hateful eyes had impious sight  
Of bodies so divine — is even more hard  
And sour to tell than what was afterward.

41

He saw, and had no pity : save this one —  
To kill first and not speak. He drew fair aim,  
Resting his musket on some branch ill-grown  
Of wind-blistered old pine ; then deadly flame  
Leaped from the gun-barrel and lighted on  
That white boy's breast more bright than its own  
shame,  
More white than any foam-flake of the west,  
More loved than the Lord Christ, and more unblest.

57

## CALIFORNIANS

42

For while the water kissed with azure kisses,  
And cinctured with clear shadow at the waist  
The milk-white column of Marina's blisses,  
Avila had just turned to her, and faced  
Toward her and shore ; even then the scorpion hisses,  
Fire-blown and leaden-bodied, in hot haste  
To kill the most loved life God ever drew  
About these shores and forests, until you.

43

Full-breasted, with a wide and open heart,  
Ungroaning, he took death ; whom ere he sank  
Her arms held fast ; yet from his lips apart  
Some crimson drops that trickled the wave drank  
Before her poor lips could ; she did not start  
Nor scream, but dragged him to the pebbled bank,  
Panting, not sobbing ; there she laid her sweet,  
Where last weak ripples lapped his pallid feet.

44

There, careless of her shining nakedness,  
Forgetting all but that her own was dead,  
She bent above him, and with lorn caress

58

### THE THREE AVILAS

Touched, where no more was any fleck of red  
To answer love, his flushless cheek ; and less  
Was on his lips ; but where the small wound bled  
She heaped and pressed her uncoiled hair ; and  
          stanchèd  
The bleeding, now the very heart was blanched.

#### 45

It seems not possible that any man,  
And least of all that bloodhound, could be hard  
And merciful enough to end her pain  
The one remaining way ! Yet when she had stared  
Long on her dead, and knew him surely slain,  
And raised the beauty of her body bared  
To its full height of stature, and her arm  
Through hair blood-darkened, clinging wet and warm

#### 46

Against her breasts and shoulders to her thighs ;  
And stood by the lone shore of the low sea,  
A marble grief, too desolate for cries,  
Too desperate for tears : — even then did he  
Take second aim : and his unblinded eyes  
Are proof that no God cares for what may be

CALIFORNIANS

Of horrible, or out of reason, done  
Below the foolish looks of the wide sun!

47

She died; then with her slayer a kind of sense  
Of kindred had its way, so that he wept.  
(To which effect we have for evidence  
His holograph confession the Church kept  
First here and then in Monterey, and thence  
Took southward, times being troublous.) Then he  
    crept  
Down the steep blossomy cliff, this tearful slayer,  
And knelt astrand and mumbled a brief prayer.

48

Which said, as Noah's praiseworthy two sons  
Walked backward toward their father drunk-asleep  
And naked, so did he over the stones  
Go stumbling backward toward the shining heap  
Of limbs yet beautiful, that more than once  
Had burned with so much love; now fathom-deep  
Beyond desire, beyond burning, beyond breath,  
In the inexpressive drunkenness of death.

## THE THREE AVILAS

49

Touched by the water, in a sunny place,  
Among the small round pebbles and beach boulders  
Those dead lay close entwined ; and he, with face  
Averted, peeping sometimes o'er his shoulders  
To see his way but not their loveliness,  
Unloosed his dyed *serape's* silver holders,  
And, without looking, with one backward sweep,  
Flung it above the two there laid asleep.

50

Thus having somewhat clothed their shame, he made  
A couch of grasses by the cliff's descent,  
Beyond the sway of tides, and thereon laid  
His brother and his sister ; and then went  
Hastily to the Mission church, and said  
What he had done, and wherefore, and the event,  
All to the first-met priest ; who issued hurried  
Command, and had those lovers brought and buried.

51

But whether near the Latin-magicked plot  
Obscene with hundreds mouldering there, or whether  
In some remoter and more decent spot

61



## CALIFORNIANS

Well consecrated by the sun and weather,  
Their dust has vanished, is recorded not.  
But of the house wherein they dwelt together  
The wood was burned, and the unflammable stone  
With special care was broken and pulled down.

### 52

“In order” — runs a postscript clerkly penned  
To that confession — “that nor sight nor thought  
Of so unspeakable wickedness offend  
Lord Jesus, nor the (alas!) yet hardly taught  
Rude Indian people. — What we could not mend  
We have made vanish.” Thus the parchment  
    brought  
To benediction, ends as suddenly  
As two sweet lives down by the autumn sea.

### 53

Now we are here; and where they loved, we love;  
And where they died we sit at evenfall  
To watch the sunset wither, far above  
The sea-cliff's dark and cormorant-haunted wall.  
O, there is much that scarce bears thinking of,  
It fades so soon — and changes not at all.



## THE THREE AVILAS

Another race, another tongue: but then  
The old sobbing yearning hearts of the same men!

### 54

Thus dark and bitter ends the bridal song  
I meant to make for you: thus let it end!  
Those that most love will suffer the most wrong —  
We know. For to love well is to contend  
With Gods vengeful and envious. O be strong,  
My lover, my heart's sister, my one friend!  
Be strong, seeing Life's crown-jewels remain these  
three —  
To have strength, and to love much, and to be free.

### 55

But as for us, let us forget to fear,  
Some brief permitted while, those vengeance.  
The woods and shore yet shelter us; and here  
Where the world ends in waves and silences  
We may be quite as joyful as the clear  
Small blossoms of the beach and wilderness;  
Those lamps whose light is perfume, which they  
scatter  
Profuse on the wide air and the pale water.

## RUTH ALISON

Two waters of the Santa Lucian hills,  
Beautiful streams, were named in the elder tongue  
The southern rivers: *el Sur Chiquito* one;  
The larger and more southern *el Sur Grande*.  
These elder names our later language turns  
Into the Little River, and Big Sur.  
Most beautiful both streams; and both to me,  
In memory of the day when first beheld,  
Are sacred waters.

Of the larger one  
I speak. Under the awful shade immense  
It runs, of immemorial redwood boughs  
That downward writhe from the columnar trunks;  
Trunks that by girth and noblest height, and form  
Uncouth, suddenly tapering at the peak,  
Recall to mind the giant world, and growths  
Exorbitant, that rose from watery soil

RUTH ALISON

Into the fume and rush of monstrous heavens  
Ere man was born on earth — so huge they are.  
Below them the fair current darkly flows,  
By dappling chance of sun made beautiful  
And grace of its own ripples. As the vale  
Widens, it widens too, more open now  
To daylight and the visitings of the wind;  
And now as from a fugitive enlarged  
The darkening redwood forests draw themselves  
A little backward, peopling either side  
The low slope of the hills; and on the bank  
Few cedar trees and many sycamores  
Diffuse their kindly fragrances above  
The flashing shallows and the clear green pools.

Thus after many miles of smooth descent  
The river gains enlargement uttermost  
Of ocean and salt waves. Midway its course  
Within that wooded valley, and from thence  
To the flat lands against the ocean-gulf,  
Lie several farms, weak inroads of few men  
Amid the imperturbable majesty  
Of the old forest. Alison's of these  
Not largest yet was loveliest, for it lay

## CALIFORNIANS

About the river's westward bend, and where  
A dozen rivulets danced into the stream.  
They threaded the small pasture as with pearls,  
And warbled ever in the nearby grove  
Notes like the lowest of a meadowlark's  
And mellowest, mixed with rushing liquid noise  
That slipped from stone to stone. Ruth Alison,  
The farmer's daughter, loved to hear their voice.  
A lovely, shy, dove-throated maid she was ;  
Blond as the honey that her father stored  
From hives with white sage pastured ; of her years  
Not past fourteen, yet grown to height and form  
Of womanhood among the favoring hills.

O fortunate was her inheritance  
More than of wealth or lordly name ! She heard  
The rivulets and the river past her home  
Go murmuring noon and night ; she watched at eve  
The golden-jewelled phantoms of the sky  
With seasonal change above the redwood tops  
Wheel westward their great arcs, from month to  
month  
Even as from hour to hour seeking the west  
And haunts deep-hidden beyond the ocean-plain.

## RUTH ALISON

Or in wet winter yet more wonderful  
Were the long mists and gray scarfs of the rain,  
When all the brooding sky, though stars were none,  
Shone on the darkness, full of secret light  
As the comb is of honey; and bent down  
To touch the trees; nay, mix with them, and make  
Their summits into darker clouds, that stood  
Motionless, while the others moved among them.  
Nor thus alone did heaven intangible  
Before her very eyes and in her heart  
Prove itself whole with earth: a warbler's tune  
Throbbled from the water-footed alder-group  
Sufficiently might bridge that facile gulf.  
Nor, feeling such communion, felt she less  
Her own with both of those: unworded ever —  
Well nigh unthought of, as too deep for thought —  
These feelings were, this knowledge. One who  
dwells

In the great woods or on the oceanside,  
Not strayed by much acquaintance, labors not  
To bring into the paltry light of speech  
The movements of the soul. Of song I speak not;  
For song may treat nobly of noble moods.  
Rare are the gifts of song, and many feel

## CALIFORNIANS

Truths that alone the poet can word, and he  
Not well, nor in full substance. For the rest  
I hold it greatly better to be mute  
Than speak ignobly, as the manner is  
Of the anthill populace, whose every mood  
Must froth at surface easily into words.

Yet did Ruth lack not for companionship  
Of more articulate — closer could not be —  
Than with the waters and the cloudy trees  
And valley ferns and flowers. Her father indeed —  
Great head and beard of russet streaked with white,  
Thick-woven, tremulous with age, wherethrough  
But nose and eyes were seen; an aquiline curve  
That; and the eyes large, tranquil, hazel clear,  
Shy like a gentle beastie's, or Pan's own  
When favorable — he, fond of stream and field,  
Was like those other comrades taciturn  
And lovable; her mother had more words,  
Yet lovable; so Ruth was not alone.  
And she had had brothers and sisters five,  
Herself the youngest; but of those who lived  
Two dwelt in San Francisco, and one watched  
Australian herds, one mined Alaskan quartz.

[RUTH ALISON

One more there was of men whom Ruth held dear,  
A young man ; and her mother smiled upon him.  
For he was pleasant to be seen and heard,  
Tall, and of mettle and strength to mount and rule  
The wildest pony of the hill-pastures.  
Nor did Ruth's mother smile the less because  
Paul Hayworth was the Widow Hayworth's son,  
And of her thousand acres by the sea  
And of her pastures and her valley-farms  
Heir with his brothers. Ruth deemed little of this,  
But liked him well, and when he rode each day  
To visit her, would greet him gladly ; and soon  
Answered his words of love so lovingly  
That all the valley knew they were betrothed.

Now, his maternal lands being widely flung,  
An orchard here, a pasture there, and tilth  
On the far side of the hills along the sea,  
And many laborers to be watched, Paul found  
Less than he wished of time to be with Ruth.  
And even at the best Ruth's mother often,  
Bustling with irksome hospitality,  
Came in between their converse : therefore soon  
They chose a more convenient trysting-place



## CALIFORNIANS

Than the small farmhouse with its flapping doors.  
A redwood tree it was; hollow with age,  
Giant of girth, and highest of all the trees  
That flourished in that valley. There they met  
Each day a little; or if it could not be  
Paul would ride over ere the sun arose  
To leave within the hollow of the huge trunk  
Word that he could not come, and of his love.  
Which Ruth would read, and kiss the paper, and  
wish

The sun gone down and risen on a new day.  
And when he thus was absent, or had come  
And gone again too soon, she rarely failed  
To honey the tough bark of the old tree  
With her sweet lips, and pressure of hands and  
breast,

Saying, "Good old trunk, my faithful! Do not  
think

Because I love him I have forgotten you.  
No, never will I; nor your sapling kin,  
Nor any of you all that guard my life  
And look upon my love." — For thus to her  
It seemed, that if the beauty of the trees  
Were taken from her, life and love alike



RUTH ALISON

Must wither in hard sun, two satin-bells  
Fallen, delicatest, or two bronze fritillaries.

Vast of its height that trunk o'ertopped the wood ;  
Into its hollow an archway led, with brown  
Deep-folding bark encrusted ; and within  
A round tower-chamber opened, or a high  
Chapel, to the divinity of the wood

Long-dedicate : upon its rich brown floor  
Two half-lights laid their shadows ; from the low  
And narrow archway one ; one from above,  
From high and most immeasurably high —  
It seemed to whosoever stood within —  
Even from a little window that looked forth  
High in the narrowing trunk, above the heads  
And shadows of the forest roundabout.

In such a chapel, not without strange awe  
Standing, did gentle Ruth and her beloved  
Make sacred vows ; here mouth to mouth, and  
breast

To lovely bosom pressing, they grew whole  
In strong desire, one being that erst were twain.  
Yet such the innocence and power and awe  
Of holiest beauty, that the man forbore

## CALIFORNIANS

As if a naked sword had lain between ;  
Trembled within himself, tortured himself  
Even to the heart, and virgin Ruth remained.  
So beauty holiest and divine desire  
Contended to the profitless event.

This redwood in the corner farthest north  
Stood of Ruth's father's holding ; from the house  
A quarter mile, and from the stream withdrawn,  
Yet in full hearing of it, and near that road  
Which winds over high hills, through canyons deep,  
And by the booming shore and promontories,  
The forty miles northward to Monterey.  
By the same road a half hour's gallop north,  
Or less when Paul was riding, lay the farm,  
Paul's home ; the farmhouse witnessed its own age,  
The central part as the olden manner was  
Being built of square-hewn logs and chinked with  
    mud ;  
But this had since been panelled all within ;  
And now from that rude core two wings were grown,  
Each greater than its origin, nor framed  
Of logs, but of sawn timber bright with paint  
Olive and green, so that the dwelling stood

## RUTH ALISON

Distinguished in that country, and far seen  
Above its well-pruned orchard-drifts of white  
And rows of blackberry vines with blossom on them.

For now it was the entering in of May,  
And all the country blithe with blossom. Now,  
The rains being over, every week-end night  
Was dancing and the wail of violins  
At Hanlon's place. From Manvil's lumber camp,  
And from the lime-kiln on the Mill Creek hills,  
Men came; and many ranchers roundabout,  
Or ranchers' sons, with joy forgathered there  
To celebrate the term of a week's toil.

Paul thither begging Ruth to dance with him  
Not eagerly she heard. To dance alone  
In the deep wood or by the dimpling water  
Was pleasant; yet the movements of her heart  
Loved not a general mirth; she had no full joy  
In that which makes the life of many maids —  
Or spoils it, rather. Little and poor the spirit  
That most enjoys when least it is alone.  
The noble and pure spirit is in itself  
Immense enough to be a multitude,  
And needs no outward. It may pour its all

## CALIFORNIANS

In friendship or in love, all, all of itself ;  
It grudges even a scruple of itself  
To babble and mixture muddling heart and brain.

Ruth grudged, and gave to love what love desired,  
Grudging no whit for love's sake. At the time  
When lingeringly above the hilltop wood  
Across the river day's last radiance leans  
In latter spring, though sundown lacks an hour  
For those who on the ocean headlands dwell, —  
Came Paul, driving two horses of his best,  
Two grays perfectly mated, mare and foal,  
Quick walkers on the climb, and sure of foot  
To gallop down ; wide-nostrilled too they were,  
With slender legs, no fetlocks, and great throats.  
Ruth's father had none such. Forward they leaped ;  
And ere the girl could greet it with her eyes  
That mighty redwood the loved trysting-place  
Was passed ; and near the river with arched necks  
The horses ran, pounding the road to rhythm  
Of married hoof-beats beautiful to hear.  
"They are better under saddle than in harness.  
The mare," Paul said, naming them, "shall be  
yours

## RUTH ALISON

When we are wed, for she is quieter ;  
The gelding mine. We shall ride often, Ruth.  
They were my mother's gift to me last year,  
My twenty-first." — "They are beautiful," Ruth  
said.

And now they left the river, and now climbed  
The hill with rapid steps. The hilltop gained,  
Before them, rosy above the valley-mist,  
Shone, all his limestone height one glow of even,  
Tall Pico Blanco opposite the sun.

Ruth on the mountain fixed her gaze, and felt  
The heart o'erflowing within her ; but Paul's look  
Gave on the next hill-ridge, whereover gleamed  
White apple blossom and his mother's house.

Before the driveway entrance Paul drew rein ;  
And, while his horses tossed their heads, and breath  
Like smoke came from their nostrils on the cool  
And flush of even, he said, "Let us go in  
To see my mother : we have time to spare,  
Dearest." They entered, and she came to meet  
them,

Folding the lace mantilla round her head.  
For she, by her marriage though of English name,

## CALIFORNIANS

Hayworth, yet stemmed from the colonial blood  
That held the land before, and filled the land  
With saints' names and the warble of Latin vowels.  
All Spanish hers, no Indian intermingling;  
Therefore her eyes though brown were lighter of hue  
Than usual in the race; and taller she,  
And courtlier; saying, "Ah, you will dance, my  
Ruth?

— But beautiful she is, so fair, so slender —  
Is she not, Pablo? Hair more pale than gold,  
True honey color, Pablo." And again  
To Ruth, when they had entered the house-door:  
"I think you do not love to dance, my dear;  
You go to please the boy: then please him well,  
Or others may well please him. Laugh, be gay!  
We are hard to hold, we Aleras; but are held  
Worth holding, we." Thus did she speak, and  
laughed.

But Ruth, a little frightened, turned her face  
To Paul, not answering. So a man, who dreads  
Some danger on his lonely path, at night,  
When feebly wanes through cloud a watery moon, —  
If the close bushes crackle he does not peer  
Into the dark, but eyes his faithful dog



## RUTH ALISON

Trotting before him within touch of hand.  
Thus Ruth; and Paul answered her with a smile,  
As meaning, "Have no fear: we are bound too close  
In love and understanding." Yet she did  
Tremble a little; and the world of men  
Seemed large and homeless to her, and all unlike  
The faithful wood and narrower world she knew.

When from the lighted house they issued, — lo,  
Swift evening in a moment, as it seemed,  
Had fallen, and ways were dark; that limestone  
peak  
Gleamed pallidly; the road fell off downhill  
By swift hoofs beaten and ringing wheels; and  
thus —

As an owl that has hung above a wood  
In airy gyres of starlight hour by hour,  
But now beholds her prey, the tender leaves  
Nibbling of cress or clover, and she falls  
All at one rush into the trees and through them —  
Thus into the deep midnight of the trees  
They plunged from the high hill; along the road  
Was heard the murmuring of the Little River.  
Here seemed the air stagnant and icy cold

## CALIFORNIANS

Like to profoundest waveless ocean-depths ;  
For neither those through the azure opaque above  
Does the sun warm, nor can he ever gaze  
Into this gorge through the dim vast and green  
Of undeciduous foliage layer on layer,  
Star-proof, clothing the columns of the wood.  
And now above the rush of hoofs and wheels  
Shrill sound was heard at pulsant intervals ;  
To such great distance the sonorous wood  
Carried the high notes of the fiddle ; the lower  
And mellower all were lost ; and thus it seemed  
A weird and dangerous music in a dream,  
Compulsive, not melodious. In a dream  
Ruth deemed herself ; and when the lights appeared  
Of Hanlon's place, she waked.

A platform stood,  
Ringed with great paper lanterns purple and red,  
Beside the creek and in full forest ; and here  
The dancers danced. Men from the lumber camp,  
Men from the lime-kiln in the Mill Creek hills,  
Men from the lonely heights and valley farms :  
And with the men what women? These had  
brought  
Their wives, and those their sweethearts ; and a few



RUTH ALISON

Being both were neither. Merrily squealed the  
fiddles ;  
And the stream murmured low, the august trees  
Stood all about, and some fantastically  
Were tricked with lanterns for this festival.  
Near to the platform was a cabin built,  
Which seemed a larger lantern, so aglow  
The doorway and the windows were ; and here  
Liquor was sold, hot, acrid, biting the blood,  
Wakening the joyous devil in a man.

Now after Paul had danced with Ruth two rounds  
On the foot-shaken platform, and the cry  
Ceased, of the strident violins, one came,  
A young man of the city, who in these hills  
Had dwelt a twelvemonth for his weakness' sake  
And ailing of his lungs. Being known to Paul,  
He spoke to him, huskily as his wont.  
Whom greeting, Paul made Ruth's name known ;  
and Ruth,  
Unwilling, liking not the sickness in him,  
Danced with him a third round, for so it seemed  
Paul wished ; and in another's arms did Paul.  
A second young man came ; with this one too

## CALIFORNIANS

It was Ruth's lot to dance not willingly,  
In the wild lights, under the solemn trees,  
Hearing the wind among them, and the water  
Below them, and the strident violins.  
She turned her head in dancing, then she saw  
Paul with a woman habited like the sun  
In azure silk and golden jewels; and when  
This woman's head below the lantern light  
Passed, it was dark but lovely; full of pride  
It seemed, and full of joy: the black hair shone,  
Diamonded, and curled in sudden waves  
To the white throat; and the arms were white and  
bare,  
Slender, and on the wrist a bracelet glowed.  
Ruth asked her partner, taming the dislike  
She had of him: who answered: "She? The wife  
Of Leonard Manvil." — "Manvil?" Ruth replied.  
—"Manvil who owns the lumber camp down  
yonder  
At Manvil's Landing, where the ships come in."  
—"She is like a swan," thought Ruth within  
herself,  
"That flies in mere proud littleness of heart  
Among the wild ducks. Fly to your own, great swan!

## RUTH ALISON

Trouble us not with pride, but let us be.”  
And Ruth, having no guile in her, nor wont  
Of masking and the social farce that hides  
The social being from its own consciousness —  
Ruth, when the music and her dancing-partner  
Ceased troubling her, ere Paul approached to claim,  
Ran from the circle of light into the wood.  
There, sitting on the wet bank of the stream,  
Her arm on a great root, her forehead lying  
Upon her arm, and all her honeyed hair  
Dishevelled even to the earth, soiling itself,  
She felt slow tear-drops trickle on her arm  
And thence into the water. Meanwhile wailed  
The fiddles, flickered the lights, the dance went on.

Paul sought her soon, and found her, comforted her,  
Laughing a little at her folly, and said —  
“Dear, if you love not dancing we will go.”  
And all his heart was drawn to her the more  
Because she had wept. Had some one breathed ill  
words,  
Or looked askance? Or had she been afraid  
Among so many people? She replied  
That she had wept merely from loneliness;

## CALIFORNIANS

She knew not why she had wept. And now she  
sobbed,  
But happily; and so he brought her home.

The next day early waked Ruth Alison,  
And all the night was as a faded dream.  
But through her little chamber-window, low,  
Caught in with honeysuckle and clematis,  
She heard the rivulets murmuring, and the river  
Laugh at her evening folly as Paul had done.  
And from the window gazing — all in white,  
Barefoot she was, warm from the tossed white bed,  
And on her shoulders lay in two thick braids  
Her honey-colored weight of maiden hair —  
She saw in the pearl-gray of early dawn  
The redwood tops against the reddening sky  
So tall, so great, so earnest, that it seemed  
No one could use her ill, no one betray,  
No failure spoil her happiness — her own;  
And all her fears were folly; and the night  
Departed, trailing westward the dark hill.

But she whose beauty when she danced with Paul  
Had startled Ruth to tears, awoke meanwhile

RUTH ALISON

And moved within her wider bed. She lay  
Northward as far from that strange dancing-  
ground

As Ruth lived southward ; near the ocean she,  
Above the sea-cliff ; and the ocean's voice  
Murmured along the bases of the rocks.

Could she not sleep ? She had no will as yet  
To waken. Then she looked upon his face  
Who next her lay, her husband's, dull asleep ;  
A face not beautiful, though manly enough ;  
Not old ; but worn lately with haggard lines ;  
A weary brow. Moving in bed, and yet  
Not much, lest he be wakened, Manvil's wife  
Within her wakeful heart remembered all  
The freak had brought her hither.

For at first,  
When Manvil bought the forest-lands, and schemed  
Over a chart, here should the roads be run ;  
And here the ships would moor, off the high cliff,  
The water being deep enough, and take  
Their lading from the cables and the cranes ;  
And here at the cliff's edge the shingle-mill  
Would stand ; and with his pencil drew a line  
To fence the houses that should cluster it

## CALIFORNIANS

For the laborers to dwell in — cottages  
To house the married, and a building broad,  
Three-storied, capable of many beds,  
For all the single men: — “But where,” he said,  
“Shall ours be built — which cottage will you  
choose?

For we must be there often.” Then she had  
laughed,

Answering, “You will be there when you must.

Not I: the city does me well enough.

I — on that harsh coast, under the windy hills?

I could not live there, not one day, my dear!”

Then Manvil, — he indeed could master men

Often, but not a woman, not his wife —

He begged forgiveness even for the wrong

Done to her beauty in thought to exile it

From that it loved — the city — where it flowered.

He drew the fence and framed the shingle-mill

And raised the cottages to cluster it,

And in the midst that building gaunt and broad,

Three-storied, capable of many beds.

All this had been five years ago, and more;

But she had never seen the place; though he

Must see it some four months of every year,



RUTH ALISON

And see to its working, and the timber hauled  
From deep hill-valleys.

How the ocean boomed  
At daybreak on the bases of the rocks !

Was it last week or was it yesterday  
She had laughed out with a sudden whim, and  
said,

“Leonard: since you are going I will go  
With you, and see these businesses of yours  
That steal you from me six months at a time.”  
Thus had she come; she had been here three  
days,

And heard through morning clouds the shingle-  
mill

Trumpet its brazen-throated column of steam,  
Calling to labor (but to-day it would not,  
Being Sunday). She had watched the draught-  
horses

Whiten their collars and round quivering flanks  
With odorous foam, dragging huge logs downhill;  
And seen the tall trunks reel against the cloud,  
Axe-bitten, and cumber the valley with their fall;  
And seen the desolated glens below,

## CALIFORNIANS

Dotted with stumps, and some few scraggy trees  
Left standing, as unworthy of the axe.  
For all about the mill and up the streams  
Was desolation; only the upper glens  
Remained yet to be spoiled; and now indeed  
There was more tan-bark brought than redwood  
trunks  
To Manvil's Landing, and the hungry ships  
That anchored under cliff. By wagon loads  
Incessant from the hills the tan-bark came,  
And the stripped oaks rotted where they were  
felled.

But now her thoughts flew wide, and now they  
paused  
Upon the dance visited yesternight;  
A revel uncouth — interesting — a sport  
To talk of to her friends at her return.  
“A tribe of Corybantic savages” —  
She phrased the tale in her own mind. — “And  
yet,  
Friends? Have I friends? Who is my friend up  
there?  
— A tribe of Corybantic savages,



RUTH ALISON

Inflamed with vicious drink and animal heat,  
Dancing by flarelight in a gully. — One  
Was amiable enough," she thought.

But now

Men moved without; her husband woke; they  
dressed.

And after they had breakfasted she said,  
"Who was the boy I danced with, the handsome  
one,

A trifle Spanish, though his eyes were blue?  
Black-haired: Haywood, was that his name?" —  
"Hayworth,"

He answered. "His old mother has more land  
Than I can own and lease. All south of here,  
On the two rivers and the coast below.

And vigilant too: my men cut tan-bark now  
On the Reserve, and no one wiser. Hers  
We touch not or we'd pay for it — *her* trees."

— "Is she so wealthy?" said the woman. — "Well,  
She has land enough," he answered negligently.

"Sole heir of the old Alera Ranch, and since  
Has widened it." — "A pretty boy," she said,  
"For all the Spanish in him"; and they passed  
Out of the house and walked on the high cliff.

## CALIFORNIANS

It were mere folly to tell all the tale.  
A million lives like these riot and mix  
About the world, and none keeps record of them.  
So on a mountain-flank the rainy grass  
Is new in January and lost in June,  
And none keeps record of it: the blind hearts  
Of men likewise renew themselves and die.

She made occasion; he was glad to yield.  
He had heard it called a jest and thought a glory  
To love outside the law; and glad to yield  
He was, and thought the yielding wholly hers.  
She wept indeed; some ice in woman's heart  
Thaws, when she thinks her act is wickedest,  
In thin tears, on the verge of joy. A fool,  
Not worse, we hold her: who of women or men  
Has power to be aught worse — of those at least  
That measure life but in the vulgar terms  
Of passion — and amusement — and they die?

Others die other deaths. Manvil's perhaps  
Was nobler; for his wife being his no more  
He had not much left to work for. She had been  
So long his pilot-star — his beautiful —  
For all men worship beauty in some wise —

## RUTH ALISON

That when she left him the stars were dead to him.  
Yet he would not have died ; but Government,  
That justly indignant God, waxed hot against him  
For tan-oaks on the public lands despoiled  
Of bark, bare trunks, rotting where they were  
felled.

Therefore — he would have slept in prison else,  
With shame and loss beyond his power to bear —  
He ended, a revolver in his mouth.

But Ruth — O sovereign Nature of the trees,  
Quiet and long-enduring — of the streams,  
Eternally refreshed, clear-flowing and new —  
O mighty Mother of more than life — for thou  
Hauntest the barren eminences of hills  
Where no life lives but of the fruitless grass ;  
And on the peaks beyond of glimmering stone  
Makest thy habitation ; and far up  
In lifeless wingless heaven unfoldest all  
Thy spirit of power, whether in the azure noon,  
Or at the many-colored ends of day,  
Or on the abysm of darkness, populous  
With hosts innumerable of infinite light : —  
O mighty Mother, comfort thy poor child !

## CALIFORNIANS

She also is a part of all that is ;  
And lo, except thou help her, she remains  
Desolate.

For each day Ruth Alison  
Ran early to that hollow redwood tree,  
Giant of girth, and highest of all the trees  
That flourished in her valley. Thither came  
Paul too, and she rejoiced to be with him.  
Then for some days he failed her ; and she came,  
And was alone, and went away alone.  
But the fourth day he came. "O Paul," she said,  
"Why have you failed me?" And he lied, and said :  
"My mother wanted stores from Monterey  
And sent me for them. I was there two days,  
Bargaining, and I came again last night."

Then once again he failed her for three days.  
And when he came he cried, "O Ruth, I am man,  
Not angel! I have been a traitor to you,  
I have played the fool, I have lied, wasted myself :  
And yet, whatever comes of it, I swear  
I love you only, Ruth, you evermore  
To the pale end of life and after dark."  
She clung to him, she wept, pardoning all,

## RUTH ALISON

All — all — she knew not what — much more than  
all.

He could not stay, but like a man afraid  
Unclasped her arms that clung to him, kissed once  
Her forehead, under the hair, above the tears,  
And caught his horse, and mounting fled away.  
She, prone on the dry mouldering forest-slough  
That masked the old tree's hidden roots, could hear  
The hoof-beats of his horse: they waned and ceased  
Far off; the murmuring river came between,  
And like a bird a rivulet sang close by.

O Ruth, was it indeed so hard to bear?  
Was it impossible, poor child, to bear it?  
Let the elder and the strong, hearts all of iron,  
Hammered by Fate with iron and frequent strokes,  
Harden themselves in wisdom and live on.  
So eager and so beautiful a child  
Might well be tender too: was hers a face  
For sorrow to make spoil of? Hers indeed  
Was a mild heart easily to be bruised,  
Not long-enduring, soft and flowerlike sweet.

She came each morning to the redwood tree  
Vainly; each evening she returned in vain,

## CALIFORNIANS

And always paler. Yet it is not said  
She perished of this grief; but sure it is  
That ere the brown bees filled their autumn cells  
From the late lupine blossoms, ere the rain  
Freshened October nights, Ruth failed to come  
To the tall tree; and ere much rain was fallen  
Her flowerlike body fell into the earth.  
Men dream large dreams of life beyond this world:  
For her dear sake I wish them true. O God,  
Can it be possible so fair a spirit  
Passed, and no remnant left? We must have  
    strength  
Both to love beauty and to love the truth  
Equally. Let no more be said than this —  
Had he been faithful she would have been most  
    happy,  
Being of her nature beautiful, and bound  
To the great nature of that lonely place  
In harmony: most happy she would have been.  
He had no faith; but now she suffers not.  
She is calm, being dead; and the huge trees are  
    calm;  
And the vast ocean, though his countenance  
Be vexed with storm, is very calm at heart.



## RUTH ALISON

That following winter there were many storms,  
And trees uprooted. Thrice the thunder roared  
Right over the fair vale where Ruth had lived,  
With sharp and awful voices. The third morn  
Ruth's father went forth, sorrowing as his wont,  
To gaze on the swoll'n river; but returned  
Before his wont, shaken with grief, and said,  
"Our daughter's redwood has been broken, Mother."  
She came, and they two, weeping, looked upon  
The wreck of broad limbs shattered, and the huge  
trunk  
Split in four fragments even to its base,  
All prone among the ruins of lesser growth.

The next year at this place were saplings grown  
From the ancient root; but not after their kind  
Of green and joyous leafage. White were these,  
Wax-white, with no least hint of kindly green.  
Whether the lightning at one stroke had changed  
The inmost natural essence of their sap,  
Drawing the color from it, I cannot say.  
The simple people of the countryside,  
Liking to dream into more visible form  
The doubtless bond that links all beings with all,

## CALIFORNIANS

Imagine that the foliage thus grew white  
Feeling the maiden's grief: her tree it was,  
Her trysting-place; and he that passes there  
May even now behold in the deep wood  
That leafage, under shadow of loftier boughs  
All shining white, a marvel in the wood.

Close by, the Big Sur River murmuring flows.  
And if you pass northward, and cross the hills,  
And cross the Little River, and Mill Creek too,  
Then you will see on the bleak ocean-cliff,  
Under bare windy hills, a settlement  
Of cottages about one building, broad,  
Three-storied, capable of many beds;  
And thereby an old mill. These vacant stand,  
All; and the grass will hardly grow between them,  
And there is hardly a tree for miles around.



## DOROTHY ATWELL

UNDER the hill-range windy and high  
That walls the coast from wave to sky  
Between Point Lobos and Point Sur,  
Dorothy Atwell, five years old,  
With sunny eyes and hair of gold,  
Lived in a ranchhouse low and poor.

There she was born : a place too wild  
And desolate for such a child  
To grow to girlhood happily,  
The world would think ; and so do I.  
Nothing is there but hill and sky  
And voices of the vast flat sea.

A poet, who would put away  
The mingled color of every day  
To live one-minded, calm, and still,  
And ponder a world simplified,

## CALIFORNIANS

Might choose the place, — so very wide  
The sea, so very bare the hill !

Yet, as the poet would soon perceive  
The passions and the powers that live  
Within those large and simple things,  
Even so the child, and even more : —  
To stand within her father's door  
Thrilled her with wondrous wanderings.

She loved to watch the sombre boughs  
Of cypresses before the house,  
Which the wind worried like a hound ;  
And the storm broke them every year,  
But still in strife they lived, and were  
The only trees for miles around.

She heard the cries of men who drove  
Their cattle in the hills ; her love  
At other times would fix upon  
Some tiny dooryard flower that leaned  
Low down to earth under the wind  
And scarcely dared to eye the sun.

And she had terrors too : with cloud  
The hill's vast head was often bowed

DOROTHY ATWELL

As by a weight too great to bear ;  
The sun was gone, the sky was black ;  
It seemed the heights must groan, must break,  
Under the burden of thick air.

The mighty motions of the sea  
Brought her much joy ; they grew to be  
So fearful too that oft she wept.  
Her mother then must lay the care  
Of the household by, and comfort her  
With song until her sorrow slept.

This little maid's great pleasure was  
To watch the mail-stage daily pass  
With its two horses and their driver.  
Mondays it came from Monterey,  
And Tuesdays northward took its way,  
Returning from the Big Sur River.

Of the two horses one was white ;  
This one was Dorothy's delight,  
So tall he was, and trotted high.  
The other, like her father's own,  
Was but an ordinary brown,  
Less pleasing to the childish eye.

## CALIFORNIANS

Small Dorothy would often wait  
For hours beside the driveway gate  
Until they came; once, laughingly,  
The driver lifted her, to pat  
The white's long velvet nose; — and that  
Was a great day for Dorothy!

But soon appeared a darker day  
Of strange confusion and dismay.  
For at the hour when mostly passed  
The stage, the driver came alone,  
A man disastrous, woe-begone,  
And panting hard, and running fast.

“Where is your father?” From the shed  
Her father coming, the man said,  
“Fetch ropes, and help! My team is gone  
Over the cliff!” And ropes in haste  
They found, and up the road they raced,  
And Dorothy was left alone.

She heard the tale her father told  
That evening — how the wagon rolled  
Over the rocks into the sea.  
Hanlon (the driver's name) had seen

DOROTHY ATWELL

The earliest white globe-tulips lean  
Above the road ; and eagerly

Dismounting from the seat to pluck  
Their fragile beauty, by ill luck  
On the brake-lever he had looped  
His reins ; the wagon then was standing  
Where the steep grade from Manvil's Landing  
Edges the cliff ; the rock is scooped

Below ; and when the horses lowered  
Their heads to crop green herbage, toward  
The sea, and brink of that abyss,  
They slipped the brake ; the wagon lunged  
Forward ; the frightened horses plunged  
Headforemost down the precipice.

“Their necks were broken,” Atwell said.  
“The brown one in the waves lay dead ;  
We saw it rolling back and forth  
Under the cliff upon the rocks ;  
And gulls were gathered there in flocks,  
Wheeling from the south and north.”

— “But the white horse?” said Dorothy.  
“The white one : — him we could not see.

## CALIFORNIANS

He must have got into the caves  
At the cliff's foot : they often draw  
Seaweed and driftwood down. We saw  
The brown one rolling in the waves."

To Dorothy the white had seemed  
Strange always, like a creature dreamed,  
Or told of in a fairy-book ;  
And now his disappearance lay  
Strange on her mind ; he had gone away  
Into the caves ; and one might look

Forever, and not see again  
The tossing of his long white mane,  
The lifting of his hard white feet.  
The brown, though dead, was in the waves ;  
But this one in the secret caves  
Had gone to what obscure retreat !

This fancy so her mind possessed  
She could not listen to the rest  
That by her father then was spoken :  
How they had climbed with ropes, and got  
The mail-sacks from the surf, but not  
Anything else, for all was broken.

DOROTHY ATWELL

This fancy still so heavily lay  
Upon her heart that when, next day,  
The stage came, a new wagon, drawn  
By other horses, — then it seemed  
The white was also there, and gleamed  
Ahead of them, and led them on.

But daily, and each day the same,  
The new stage passing by, became  
Familiar; and more rarely seen  
That phantom leader white and tall  
Soon faded from her thoughts, and all  
Appeared as it had always been.

Below the hill, below the house,  
Under the sea-cliff's misty brows,  
There is a narrow beach of sand;  
No smaller shingle well could be;  
Yet smooth it is, and fronts the sea,  
Closed with huge rocks on either hand.

Thither, when summer days began,  
The little maiden often ran,  
And like a sandpiper would flit  
Along the foam's edge many an hour,



## CALIFORNIANS

Or mould the sand in mound or tower,  
And gather it and scatter it.

There seaweed red and brown and blue,  
Or mottled, or of mingled hue,  
Made glad and bright her curious eyes,  
And shells, of tint yet vividier,  
And those that most delighted her,  
In color and form like butterflies.

There by her mother's knee she played  
One day, when suddenly afraid,  
She cried, "O mother! the white horse  
Is swimming to us from his cave!"  
Her mother looked: it was a wave  
Breaking with more than usual force

On the low sand; and swift and tall  
It moved, and white with foam was all  
Its hollow front; and curled, and broke.  
"See, it's a wave," the mother said.  
And Dorothy was still afraid,  
But not another word she spoke.

A later day she watched the sea,  
Mute, a long while, and finally



DOROTHY ATWELL

Said, "Mother dear, what does it want?  
What is it crying for? It seems  
To reach for something in its dreams,  
And like a dog it seems to pant."

October came, the loud south blew,  
Foreboding showers, but still with dew  
At dawn the sun-bleached grass was bright.  
A half-moon waning in mid-sky  
Showed broken vapors thin and high  
Northward rushing o'er the night.

The cypress boughs were bent and thinned,  
The ocean roared under the wind,  
The house-walls creaked; and Dorothy  
Cried in her sleep, then waking cried.  
Her mother rose, and by her side  
Standing, she heard the roar of the sea.

"What ails you, child?" — "He comes too near  
In darkness, mother; I cannot bear  
To have him gallop round and round!  
I often tremble in my bed  
Because I hear him neigh," she said,  
"And feel his hoof-beat shake the ground."

## CALIFORNIANS

— “You hear the waves that never are still,  
You feel the wind shaking the hill,  
And nothing more,” her mother said.  
“Now sleep, as a good girl should do ;  
Nothing will hurt nor waken you,  
And I will sit beside your bed

“A little while, and sing you a song.”  
— “Mother,” she answered, “is it wrong  
To be afraid? I know the sea  
And the wind, I hear them every day :  
But — I should like to have you stay  
Beside the bed, and sing to me.”

— “Down the white daisy  
Nestled in grass  
When the wind was loud.  
The wind is crazy,  
Puffing a cloud ;  
The wind is crazy,  
But the wind will pass.  
Blustering, blustering,  
Over my nest  
Deep in the grass.

DOROTHY ATWELL

“Laughed the white daisy,  
Here will I rest,  
Deep in the grass,  
Deep in the nest.  
Let him bluster and blow :  
Do I care, do I care?  
He is cold in the air,  
I am warm and low ;  
Warm and low  
I rest.

“Rest, little daughter.” The low strain  
Was hummed a second time, and then  
The mother tip-toed quietly  
Away ; and murmured half asleep,  
Hearing the wind howl in from the deep,  
“Sleep, little daughter Dorothy.”

Who slept ; but often all that year  
Would wake in the night and wail for fear ;  
And even while the sunlight shone  
Was rarely happy as of old : —  
So pitiful it seemed and cold  
In the deep caves to dwell alone.

## CALIFORNIANS

She thought that horses of all food  
Like barley best : barley she strewed  
Upon the beach below the hill,  
And wisps of hay she scattered there :  
Next morning all the beach was bare ;  
And Dorothy was pleased, and still

Was full of pity. In the night  
She pitied while she feared — so white  
The horse had been, so beautiful !  
This passion still renewed made weak  
The unfoldings of her youth ; her cheek  
Grew pale, her azure eyes grew dull.

The strong will thrive on bitter food  
And simplest ; nothing is not good  
For the most strong : but for a child —  
A spirit unformed and all to be —  
That world of only hill and sea  
Might prove too simple and too wild.

Too much of chaos in a glance,  
Too terrible significance  
In each quotidian act and sight :  
Even for the full-grown man must be —

DOROTHY ATWELL

If he can feel, if he can see —  
A danger in that infinite.

If toward the land you look, on high  
Stands the hill, and over it the sky,  
And nothing further can be seen.  
If oceanward, no form is there  
But the skyline clear, the earthline bare,  
The hard blue sea a band between.

The hard blue sea : but down beneath  
At the cliff's foot it seemed to breathe ;  
It slid white fingers of long spray  
Among the rocks ; it moaned and panted ;  
Something it lacked, something it wanted,  
Begged for and sought for night and day.

Dorothy knew not what it sought :  
Of her most precious thing she thought,  
Her own small painted chair, and went  
Tottering with too great a burthen  
Across the road, and down the earthen  
Slope, and the stairlike rock-descent.

She waded on the hard wet beach  
Until the foam-swirls' chill could reach

## CALIFORNIANS

Up to her knees ; and there she laid  
On the retreating wave her treasure,  
The small red chair, her chiefest pleasure,  
The painted chair her father had made.

“Dear beautiful white horse,” prayed she, —  
For in her mind the rush of the sea  
And the white horse were grown to one —  
“Dear horse, I have brought the best I have  
To make you happy in your cave  
Although you cannot see the sun.”

Then terror seized her, and she fled  
Homeward ; that night she mourned in bed  
The too-accepted sacrifice.  
Her parents questioned her in vain,  
And pondered late, nor guessed what pain  
Subdued the childhood in her eyes.

Before the long year turned its ring  
Back to the blossom-time of spring  
Wee Dorothy was fallen ill ;  
She wasted with a fever slow,  
And still when the wind was heard to blow  
Cried that his hoof-beat shook the hill !

DOROTHY ATWELL

What end had been of her distress  
I cannot say, I dare not guess.  
She might have grown at weary length  
Of days, insensitive to all  
Influences that please or appall ;  
She might have conquered — a child's strength

Being more than we divine — the fear  
And pity which tormented her ;  
Or in eventual madness known  
The forms her fever trafficked in, —  
The phantoms ; — or sole priestess been  
Of a religion all her own.

But Fate ruled better ; for the man  
Her father, seeing her ever wan  
Except at night in fever's hold ;  
Her blue eyes often wet, and growing  
Dim with a shadow past his knowing ;  
And her voice dull, her small hands cold ; —

He sold, in hope to do her good,  
His land : — too much a solitude,  
It seemed for one so young and frail.  
Inland they journeyed ; when the sea



## CALIFORNIANS

Vanished, right glad was Dorothy;  
With every mile she grew less pale.

Forgetting that sea-solitude,  
Growing up to lovely womanhood,  
In a high Maderan valley shines  
The golden head of Dorothy;  
The sunlight glances there with glee  
Between the wheatlands and the vines.

## THE OLD FARMER

(The small farm described here is about two miles north of the Big Sur postoffice. Its owner, who was known as the best bee-man of the neighborhood, sold it in his old age and went to the city, to live with his son. Eventually—out of pure homesickness, it would seem—he committed suicide.)

WITH my own hands my little house  
I built below the redwood boughs  
Beside the Big Sur River.

With my own hands I split the shakes,  
And laid the rain-tight roof; my axe  
Rang all day in the deep wood  
To make a clearing where it stood.

I drew a fence, and trained in lines  
My blackberry and raspberry vines;  
And eastward of the river,  
Where there were but few trees, I cut  
The rest, and in that sunny spot

## CALIFORNIANS

Planted an orchard : — who will waste  
The fruit that I shall never taste?

Above the rich dark river-silt  
A dike of logs and stones I built  
    To hold the flooding river ;  
And still from dawn-gray to night-gloom  
I toiled, and made a narrow flume  
Of hollowed redwood stems, to yield  
Water for my alfalfa field.

And on the hill where thick white sage  
Makes plentiful bee-pasturage  
    Above the shadowed river  
I set the white hives close together,  
Carefully ; and in late spring weather  
What joy, what joy I had to hear  
My honey-gatherers humming clear !

To think of it will bring me harm :  
Why did I leave my little farm  
    Beside the friendly river?  
It is not good for me to think  
How flamed upon the water-brink,

## THE OLD FARMER

Wet-leaved from winter's earliest showers,  
The autumn-golden sycamores.

Nor of the solid redwood bank  
Behind: — the deer came down and drank,  
    Their forehoofs in the river;  
And grazed on the cress-bordered lawn  
Below the sycamores at dawn;  
And at the moonrise I could hear —  
Could see them, if the night was clear.

Like towers of the giant days  
The close-branched redwoods in the haze  
    Above the sliding river  
Stood up at twilight; they would seem  
To overlook the stars, if beam  
Of any star could pierce the high  
Soft vapors of that shining sky.

Here the sky never shines so much,  
And there are few green things to touch.  
    O! does my lovely river  
Laugh ever as it used to do?  
And run the deep green shadows through,

## CALIFORNIANS

And ripple on low stones, and make  
Behind the ocean-bar a lake?

It was eight miles of valley-land  
Down to the sea-mouth and the sand,  
    Following the river.

I walked it last to get the pay  
For my poor farm. . . . A holiday  
My life has been since then — and yet  
I often grow so tired of it!

My son is very good to me  
Here in the town; I ought to be  
    Glad to have left my river.  
I see it in my dreams; I hear  
Its music murmuring in my ear;  
I am so old and white and weak  
I often think my heart will break.

## AT LINDSAY'S CABIN

HERE, by the nameless little brook that runs  
With no more rustle than a gliding snake  
Among its cresses, Lindsay often used  
To sit all day and gaze upon the brook,  
Or the dark redwoods, or a moving cloud.  
At other times he wandered lone the hills  
Into the farther wood. Yonder you see,  
Mossed over, and the roof fallen in with age,  
The cabin that he built with his own hands —  
Or hut : it seems to melt into the hill  
Naturally ; as fourteen years ago  
It grew and had its being : for no squared beam  
Was built into it, no sawn plank nor lath,  
But redwood split according to the grain  
In shakes and slabs. There Lindsay dwelt ; and  
those  
Who passed would often wonder what he thought

## CALIFORNIANS

All the long days, and how his time was spent.  
He kept no cattle, and he tilled no soil  
Except one little garden of few herbs ;  
He owned nor horse, nor orchard, nor a hive  
To care for, and but rarely talked with man.  
Hanlon, who drove the mail from Monterey,  
Knew most about him : by what meat he lived  
Knew, for he brought it to him ; and that he read  
Believed, for he had brought a case of books,  
Both large and heavy, from the town. — And yet  
Lindsay had not so much as turned a leaf  
Since they were come ; he read, perhaps, the brook,  
Or the green redwoods, or a moving cloud.  
Steep, as you see, above his cabin home  
Rise the two hills each way from the ravine,  
With weight of redwoods overhung ; and here  
The sun but rarely enters ; yonder, though,  
Where on a low stone by the rivulet  
He often used to sit, yonder the sun  
Pours fullest radiance all the afternoon  
If heaven be clear ; for south and west the hills  
And trees are gapped ; and yellow grow the weeds  
In summer by the brookside, glittering flows  
The brook among its cresses and tall ferns.



AT LINDSAY'S CABIN

Not out of hatred of the race of men  
Did Lindsay dwell alone ; kindly he was ;  
So Carlos Black might witness, were he here.  
For Black, who worked at Manvil's shingle-mill,  
Mishandled once the blocks ; — from the elbow  
down

His arm was mangled by the whirling saw.  
His wife, who nursed three children, nursed him  
too ;

Then, for he could not work, and wages lacked,  
The household lacked for bread ; but Lindsay  
came —

Hanlon had told him of it — and helped the house  
More than with alms. Food he provided ; rest  
He brought the toiling woman ; for *he* toiled,  
Scrubbed, set the house in order, cooked the food,  
Tended the torn flesh with clean bandages ;  
And, when a fever took the man, he held him  
By strength of hand ; by strength of hand he  
forced

The broth between his teeth ; and Carlos Black  
Lived : but with money Lindsay lent him after,  
Went north ; he tills his farm in Oregon,  
A man content, and capable of toil.

## CALIFORNIANS

Lindsay went back to his cabin, and would sit  
Daylong beside the brook, or day and night  
Wander the distant canyons and dark hills,  
A solitary man. Three years he lived  
Here, in this fashion. At the third year's end,  
A matter, people judged, of some concern  
Called him to San Francisco. It was thought  
In brief while he'd return; — two years went by  
Before he did; and he who had gone away  
Straight-shouldered, middle-aged, in prime of  
strength,  
Returned old, weak, full of mortality,  
A weary head, with more white hair than gray.

The tale of his misfortune is not known  
Fully; he never spoke of it; but one  
Who had helped him in his travel, passing here,  
Told some of it, and men conjecture more.

For when he reached the city — (it is said  
The errand regarded certain property  
Invested, wherewithal he sparely lived) —  
The city reached, the business looked into,  
Yet incomplete until the second day,  
He felt a sudden faintness at the heart

## AT LINDSAY'S CABIN

Among so many people : multitudes  
They moved the streets, an endless aimless throng,  
As in a broken anthill scurry the ants,  
And seem to have no aim, but everywhere  
In multitudinous confusion mingled  
Stream through the little, close, and earthy ways :  
Even thus they swarmed the city, and Lindsay  
felt

That none among so many destinies  
Could be of moment, seeing so many they were,  
So mixed and all-inextricable. — But when  
Evening was fallen, and hardly could one see  
The stars of heaven, so many and bright the lamps,  
An endless aimless glitter : then indeed  
The fancy grew more strange, the crowd was merged  
Into one being unformable and huge,  
A monster of convulsive breath, a life  
Alien to man though all composed of men,  
Unfriendly, menacing, fearfully alive.  
Thus too the forest with its million trees  
Had merged into one being the while he watched,  
Sitting beside the brook on the low stone ;  
But this had never been unkindly, this  
Though alien never dreadful. Lindsay groaned

## CALIFORNIANS

To be back yonder where the rivers run,  
And men are few, — thence individual souls,  
And often like the hills in dignity.

Afraid of his own fear he sought the draught  
Which makes the healthful healthfully rejoice  
If moderately, and calms the uncomforted ;  
But should there lie a poison at the heart, —  
Unwisdom, illness, baseness, — wakening that,  
Oft makes the man go mad in walking sleep.

This man's ill fancies were a poison to him : —  
O, to how many others those have been  
Poisonous, and the atmosphere of towns  
Been pestilential ! Not the feeble in chief  
Fall victim to it ; often the free, the best,  
Men full of generous blood : such Lindsay was  
Through all the austerity of lonely days.

He drank ; and he was gladdened ; that ill dream  
Vanished ; and men he spoke with seemed once  
more

Men, not mere atoms of the monstrous beast.  
He dreaded lest the dream in sleep return,

AT LINDSAY'S CABIN

And knew not when he slept — or his mind slept,  
The body moving still.

He awoke, and heard  
Creakings, and murmur of water, and a voice  
That thundered on his dream. The sails were  
spread;

The morning wind blew right abaft, the sea  
Rippled immeasurably from wave to wave,  
Bright gold on azure; under the eastern sun  
Far yellow hills pierced a faint line of fog.

Then Lindsay from his mates learned bitter news.  
The ship was English, bound for Liverpool  
Through the Magellan Straits. And *he* was bound,  
He, with the ship. He had come aboard last night,  
Like a corpse, carried in men's hands, and yet  
Had somehow signed the paper binding him.  
Here, with a deep laugh from the hair-grown chest,  
A mighty-shouldered seaman spoke the word,  
*Shanghaied*, — a word which echoed night and day  
Like shame in Lindsay's ears; yet he endured.

Strength to desire the best, and strength to endure  
Albeit the worst: these both are in man's heart  
Borne: — happy is he who but the first of these

## CALIFORNIANS

Knows and requires : and yet not miserable,  
Not wholly miserable must he be named  
Whom the other and the sadder power supports.  
Lindsay endured and failed not ; all that day  
Performed his work, although with hands unskilled,  
Hands in such toil unpractised, quick to bleed.  
That evening late, flickered, a low earth-star,  
The light which marks Point Pinos, westernmost  
Horn of the Monterey Peninsula.  
He saw it ; he dared not think, who yet must feel,  
How in the dark the tall peninsular pines  
Move, sighing, below the myriad gleam of stars ;  
How on the cliff, gaunt forms above the gray  
Of infinite ocean, gleam the cypresses.  
O from thence on, with yearning heart, and eyes  
Most desolate, he shoreward gazing knew  
Albeit unseen the Santa Lucian hills,  
Which in the north tall pines, and southerly  
The mightier redwoods mass with living depth  
Of shadow and sweet odor : it was this  
That mastered him, and made unwilling eyes  
Wet, while he gazed ; this thought of leafy air,  
And the rare smell of cedars by the stream,  
And the all-enfolding sweet and subtle breath

## AT LINDSAY'S CABIN

Of redwood boughs, blown from deep canyons up  
Over the windy ridges of dark hills.

An hour before the dawn he wakeful saw  
The home-light flash — that beacon of Point Sur  
Set in the westward forehead of the rock.  
Then, longing like an agony came upon him  
To leap over the side and strike for shore  
And liberty and home. Death had been his  
In those wide waves, under the infinite stars;  
And this he knew. Death, a perpetual loss:  
The present but a season's or a year's:  
Too long — he yet at length would turn again  
Home: but from death is no returning home.

What storms encountered cannot profit now  
To tell, nor what half desperate weeks of calm  
Retarded the slow voyage. Yet port at length  
Was gained; but Lindsay ere that day, though  
still

He labored with the rest and did his part,  
Was fallen sick; and when he came ashore  
Lay five weeks near to death, within which time  
The wages of his bondage were all spent.



## CALIFORNIANS

And then what long delays withheld him there,  
A penniless man and friendless, ere in time  
He gathered help and money from afar,  
Need not be told. After long lapse of hope  
He sailed at length, and homeward, and came home.

It is avouched by those who witnessed it  
That when by the mail-stage from Monterey  
He rode again, — not strong as once he was,  
But weak and old, full of mortality, —  
Seeing, up the creek of San José, the first  
Of redwoods flourish, like a child he wept,  
A little child who has wandered and been lost,  
And then its mother finds it. He, white-haired,  
Thus wept, and all had pity on him. He lived  
Five years thereafter in the cabin here,  
And here he was found dead, a day in spring.

I think his life was largely fortunate.  
Useless, you say? Man, what is man to judge  
Of use and unuse? Are the weeds that grow  
Deep in the dark abysses of the eyeless wave,  
Yielding the fish no pasture, — are the flowers  
No wildbird ever saw, so buried they are  
In deep green hollows of the ancient wood —

AT LINDSAY'S CABIN

Are therefore these unuseful? — Man to man  
Being helpful is of worth, yet man to man  
Is not the whole — perhaps is the least part  
Of the infinite interrelation of all being.  
This man, as others love a woman, he  
His chosen valley. Look! For I believe  
His love hath made it the more beautiful.

## THE MILL CREEK FARM

DON'T close the window; open it wide: there's a  
touch

Of frost in the air, I know; but not so much  
That you need to shut me in from the noise of the  
stream.

I've heard it these forty-three years through wak-  
ing and dream,

Winter and summer; I'll hear it a short while more.  
But you, if you're cold, — that coonskin coat by  
the door —

I shan't need it again; if I should, you might wear  
it the same.

A good kind girl you've been to me, dear; you  
won't blame

My old whims, Katie; I couldn't be happy without  
The noise of the creek — You're turning it inside out:

## THE MILL CREEK FARM

Fool girl! I can't help you. Well; so you've  
gotten it on,

And are warm enough now, I hope. I said to my  
John,

"She's a good girl, John, and pretty, a joy to the  
sight,

But a fool girl, John." — He'd have you, though.  
He was right;

And lucky to get you: lucky for me, you think,  
What with the pills to take and the doses to drink,  
That I've one of my kin to nurse me; and you so  
kind.

But it's easy enough to die when you make up  
your mind.

I could die alone; it would save us trouble, my dear;  
But I'm glad that you married John; and I'm glad  
you're here.

Listen! The creek's alive and laughing to-night,  
Tumbling over its pebbles.

Turn down the light,  
Will you, Katie? or lower the lamp-shade: there.  
Soon as my eyes undazzle after the glare  
Maybe I'll get one look at a couple of stars

## CALIFORNIANS

Over the buck-eyes, under the window-bars.

It's a clear night, isn't it, Katie? And winter; yes;

Drawing the bolt for January. I guess

The Northern Cross should be yonder, left of the hill,

Northwestward, over the valley-mouth. Look, if  
you will.

I can see the bright star of the top. The Dipper,  
you know,

Is down in the north, it will rise in three hours or so,

And stand like a giant, straight up, with its foot  
on the crest,

Where the wagon-road crosses the ridge. My  
window looks west;

The Dipper will rise, but I never shall see it again.

Katie: you're used to the town, I know; but then

You're too young to be set in your ways: — it'll  
do no harm,

My asking . . . whether you think you could keep  
the farm?

Well, dear, it doesn't matter. It's yours when I die,

If you like it or not. You'll sell it: I know who'll  
buy.

## THE MILL CREEK FARM

The Widow Hayworth has wanted it thirty year —  
Don't sell too cheap; take time and bargain, my  
    dear —

Thirty year: — she'll have it in thirty-one,  
And the stars will rise the same, and the creek will  
    run,  
And the buck-eyes leaf, and the orchard blossom,  
    and all.

— Dead or alive it'll run; summer and fall,  
Morning and night. — The creek, what else?  
    — It roars

In spring like an ocean under the sycamores.  
In summer it ripples and tinkles from rock to rock,  
Feeling for shade. But now — you can hear it  
    talk

Like a woman, laugh like a child, sing like a bird,  
Now in the winter; the forty-third that I've heard  
Its music run to the sea; and the last one, too.

Katie, you needn't to cry; you're a fool if you  
    do.

Fool girl, I always said it.

What's that? — In heaven? —

A place for children to plan for; *I'm* eighty-seven.

## CALIFORNIANS

You'll know, when you get to be tired and sleepy  
and white,  
That the only word at the end is plain Good-night.

I've done some good in the world: I built the road  
Over the hill, where to-morrow the stage with its  
load  
Will joggle and climb; and the next day down at  
full trot.

To-morrow maybe I'll hear it pass; but not  
Day-after-to-morrow. I built the road; and I  
built  
The dam that gave me four acres of river-silt,  
And feed for the cows; and I planted the orchard  
below.

Then, Katie, the hives to care for: five in a row,  
Six rows; and the eight new stands. You'll watch  
when they swarm. . . .

— For a minute I dreamed you were going to keep  
the farm,  
Katie; but now I remember. Well . . . let it be.

The Widow has thousands of acres; a wise one, she;  
Flat land, wonderful grazing, down by the coast;



## THE MILL CREEK FARM

And still she crawls up the creeks. She's a mortgage  
on most

Of Cauldwell's ranch; and she closed Will Hanlon  
out:

The last eight years she's belted me all about;  
And run her line-fence over the hill both ways.  
Now she can pull it down. Her steers will graze  
From the tide-flats up the creek to the door of the  
house,  
And crop green apples in August from the orchard  
boughs.

Well, Katie, it can't be helped. They're all of  
them gone,

Bob and Henry and David, — the last was John;  
And you're but a fool of a girl, and the creek runs on.

Queer that a man's four boys must die, and the land  
Fall from their father's into the stranger's hand!

I thought of that when I visited you in town,  
Katie, and saw the people run up and down,  
Trotting the streets; and young fellows busy with  
work

Not fit for a man to put hand to: waiter and clerk,  
Poolroom loafer and barroom lapper: I thought,



## THE BELLED DOE

### — A WATERFALL

Hung never wavering from the mountain wall,  
So windless was the vale: a thread of fleece  
Much longer than the tallest cedar trees,  
Or the dark-tufted beauty of any fir,  
The waterfall appeared; calm whisperer  
Of music all night long and all the day.  
Below that precipice the plowland lay,  
Crossed by the brook; the lowly vine-grown house  
Was under broad twin oaks, but orchard boughs  
Heavy with ripening apples folded it.

I have never seen a more immured retreat;  
The unbroken hills all round were deeply grown  
With ancient forest: one tall peak alone —  
San Gabriel's — was far visible above  
The girdling heights. It was a place to love;

## CALIFORNIANS

And in my memory perhaps appears  
Yet lovelier than it was : for many years  
Are vanished since the kindly man who tilled  
In the deep valley that enchanted field,  
Told me in homelier, fewer and better words  
Than I can use, this tale :

— The fledgling birds  
Are flown before we know it (he said) ; and then  
It does no good to wish them home again.  
You'd never think, to see us living here,  
Us two alone together, year on year,  
We'd had six girls and boys ; and every one  
Grew up here, and the last of them is gone.  
O, they write often : — all but Charles ; for he  
Has lived too long somewhere beyond the sea,  
And maybe has forgotten us. The last  
Was Barbara ; three years and more are past  
Since she was here. For now having a home  
And babies of her own, she cannot come  
To visit us so often as before.

But we are sorry that we hear no more  
Her tame doe in the mountains. Barbara  
Was just eighteen when out Dark Canyon way,

## THE BELLED DOE

At foot of Sister Elsie Peak, I found  
A little orphan fawn on the black ground  
Under a fernbrake lying. The mother doe  
Had been shot by some scoundrel — (for you know  
That does are guarded by the forest law) —  
And on the low leaves of the ferns I saw  
A trail of darkened blood. The fawn was lying  
Half-starved, and made a pitiful faint crying  
When I came near; and struggled once to rise,  
But could not; and it watched me with wild eyes.

I carried it, so light it was and weak,  
To a ranch over on Tujunga Creek,  
Where they had Jerseys pastured; and it soon  
Learned to take milk in driblets from a spoon.  
And though I had to leave it there, in ten  
Or eleven days I went for it again  
And brought it home. Our Barbara loved it so  
That when it grew to be a sleek young doe,  
And pined for freedom, round its throat I hung  
A small brass cow-bell with a noisy tongue'  
To warn the hunters off. It used to roam  
The mountains all night long, and yet would come  
Home to our cabin often; and it played

## CALIFORNIANS

With Barbara like a tame lamb unafraid.  
I had to fence the garden-patch, and yet  
Never could keep it out.

One evening late,  
When in the summer heat we'd left our door  
Wide open, it stepped in, as oft before,  
Jingling its bell. But in the shade without  
I saw another one that moved about  
Just on the edge of light.

The doe had brought  
Her mate avisiting; but quick as thought  
When we'd have looked at him the stag was gone.  
Then the doe came less often. Very soon  
Barbara too had found her mate; and we  
Were left here quite alone. I used to see  
Sometimes in the early morning Barbara's doe  
Along the brookside; but it seemed to know  
That Barbara was gone. Its bell would sound;  
It would not come; but with a leap and bound  
Be off into the forest. Lonely men  
Have heard its bell above Pacoima glen;  
And summer campers where the West Fork runs  
Into San Gabriel River saw it once.  
But in the chaparral of Strawberry Peak

## THE BELLED DOE

It was both seen and heard ; and where the creek  
Drops down through Devil's Canyon. Bob Devore,  
The ranger, was on duty there, before  
He went to Foxbrook Flats, and brought us word  
In passing. But the pretty sound was heard  
No more after a year ; we could not tell  
Whether the thong had broken and the bell  
Been lost among the mountains ; or astray  
Our daughter's pet had wandered far away.  
— We hope it did not come to any harm.

Thus he made end of speech.

Upon his farm

Below the mountain-peak and lofty trees  
There breathed, I thought, an air of the innocent  
peace

That does appear forgotten ; but is not  
All perished, in a world thus vexed and hot,  
And full of stabs unlooked for, and fierce toil.

O traffickers and chiefs, that share the spoil,  
And reap wide swaths of glory in far lands,  
Having taken up Earth's battles into your hands, —  
You also Earth has need of ; you requires  
Fate, that upon the fume of your desires



## CALIFORNIANS

Is fed, and waxes mightily : — but yet,  
Brief rulers, I would have you not forget  
The old dignity of him that drives the plow  
Through crumbling furrows deep, when morning's  
    brow  
Flames in the orient world ; and him that broods  
Memory of an old love under the simple woods.

DESCRIPTIVE SONGS AND OTHERS



## A WESTWARD BEACH

### I

THERE is a narrow lonely beach  
    Beyond the promontory,  
And there alone the tall pines reach  
    To where the surf is hoary  
On worn red rocks and ochre sand;  
At the starved limits of the land,  
Feeling the outer foam, they stand.

Our thrawn peninsular cypresses  
    Are fitlier formed for striving  
With storm and famine and the stress  
    Of salty vapors driving;  
Yet I have never seen them wedge  
Their roots — this pine-grove's privilege —  
Through wet rocks to the water's edge.

## CALIFORNIANS

At morn the shadows of the pines  
    Float on the turbulent water ;  
But just at sunset the long lines  
    Of rising breakers scatter  
A liquid shade, translucent, dim,  
On every lower bough or stem  
That in the morning shadowed *them*.

But when the earnest ecstasy  
    Of cloudless noon possesses  
The cliff, the shore, the prostrate sea,  
    And with such light oppresses  
The world that every form is blent,  
And every color, sound, or scent,  
Into one ardent element :

Then are these pinetrees great ; they stand  
    Self-authorized, unshifting,  
From the lone verge of sea and land  
    Their sunlit spires uplifting.  
They live so hard, they fare so ill,  
Their prosperous noontide finds them still  
Austere and unsubduable.

## A WESTWARD BEACH

### II

Under these pines an autumn day  
    From dawn to darkness lingering,  
The waves above the reefs at play  
    And in the crannies fingering  
I watched, and weighed my narrow sense  
With all the mute intelligence  
Of natures old, remote, immense.

I cannot pass a dog or horse  
    Without some form of greeting ;  
Glance catches glance, as if of course  
    To celebrate our meeting ;  
And I am joyful with the birds ;  
We know each other without words,  
Life to life so well accords.

But friendship with the living trees  
    Is something deeper, rarer ;  
Word, glance and gesture fail ; there is  
    A subtler message-bearer.  
My love beneath the bark can glide  
And mix with the green life inside ;  
And, though deceived, is justified.

## CALIFORNIANS

Deceived — but how deceived? I know  
    What I have felt — how often  
Have felt the baby branches grow,  
    The buds unfold and soften,  
The eager sap in springtime clear  
Whisper below the bark, my ear  
Against the wrinkled bark to hear.

### III

Happy whose spirit of wisest thought  
    Can share the deep emotion  
Of woods and hills, whose heart has caught  
    The rhythm of the infinite ocean,  
To whom this earth not alien is,  
Who with the stars hath sympathies, —  
Happy is he; great joys are his.

Add yet, O dear maternal Earth,  
    A human loving-kindness,  
A sympathy with mortal mirth  
    And tears and wants and blindness; —  
Add these, that so thy child may be  
Entire, as he is glad and free, —  
A poet full-souled and worthy of thee.



## A WESTWARD BEACH

He walks obscure ; few know, few care  
    What stone or turf or pillow  
Will rest his head to-night ; or where.  
    Below the rolling billow  
He might rest well in waters dim,  
And sea-flowers twine each passive limb :  
Only three hearts would grieve for him.

— And one of them a dog's. But Time  
    Eternally redresses  
With change of rhythm and ranging rhyme  
    Life's casual outwardnesses.  
He can lift up and he can lower  
The worthless world from hour to hour ;  
Upon the spirit he has no power.

I promise you, serene and great  
    Ocean, and Earth, my mother,  
In days well-friended, fortunate,  
    My spirit will not be other  
Than now it is : — I have fared not ill ;  
I have known joy : yet keep my will  
Austere and unsubduable !

## CALIFORNIANS

### IV

The rock on all this narrow beach  
Whereof the pines are wardens  
That farthest seaward juts, and which  
The deepest foam-flow hardens, —  
This reddish-amber sandstone prow  
That shears the breakers' landward flow  
Is marked with iron upon its brow.

Within the tide's impetuous fling,  
Where the worn crag is slanted  
Waveward, a rivet and great ring  
In living rock are planted.  
Their age and use alike unknown ;  
They are brown with ancient rust, and grown  
To be a parcel of the stone.

There clings a thin-worn shell of rock  
Two inches up the rivet,  
Thwarting the ocean's tempest-shock  
By strength the iron can give it.  
How old the iron is, who will dare  
Guess, seeing how deeply waves could wear  
The rock since it was planted there?

A WESTWARD BEACH

Though worn and brown, it still is firm,  
    Deep-anchored and long stable,  
To hold a schooner in a storm  
    Or tall three-master's cable.  
It holds a loop of seaweed brown ;  
It grows a parcel of the stone ;  
Nature accepts it for her own.

How it came fresh from human hands,  
    Black, brilliant from the forges !  
But now — no cliff of lonely strands,  
    No wave that swells and charges,  
None of these wind-accepting trees,  
Is cleaner of the quaint disease  
Of human works and fineries.

V

Over against the beach of pines  
    Four island-rocks stand sentry,  
And break with sudden spray the lines  
    Of billows forcing entry  
Into the Pescadero cove.  
Beyond them darkens, and above,  
Point Lobos with his cypress-grove.

## CALIFORNIANS

One of these rocks is sharp and tall,  
    And near the base is tunnelled;  
At floodtide the waves flash and fall,  
    Through that arched opening funnelled.  
A second one is flat and low,  
Yet lifts above the tidal flow  
Its surface, white as foam or snow.

White with the droppings of a flock  
    Of cormorants; daily, yearly,  
They stand assembled on this rock  
    In ordered groups, austerely.  
No wing is moved, no neck is bent;  
They seem a quiet folk intent  
For some miraculous event.

## VI

There is no house for miles around;  
    There is no human chatter;  
The waves give tongue, the cliffs resound,  
    The pines along the water  
Murmur together, and on high  
Seagulls call and curlews cry,  
Wheeling low in vacant sky.

## A WESTWARD BEACH

How do I love these voices more,  
    These cries remote, inhuman,  
These echoes of the lonely shore,  
    Than words of man or woman?  
Alas, it is not well with me:—  
Can man wash off humanity  
And wed the unmarried sea?

For miles around there is no house;  
    Only, between the forelands,  
Where those dark-tufted cypress boughs  
    Are raised above the shorelands,  
Remain, like seeds ill planted, bones  
Ill buried, the foundation stones  
Of that which was a dwelling once.

Three barren fruit-trees long untilled  
    Wave gladly and weave thicker  
Their wasted branches; in the field  
    A few geraniums flicker,  
Lost gleams of wandering red; and here  
One rosetree makes one bloom a year,  
And drops it where the gardens were.

## CALIFORNIANS

And these are all. Old silences  
That know the sea's voice only  
Live now beneath the cypresses  
And walk the pathways lonely.  
Dear Earth, thou art so beautiful!  
Lo, thou acceptest all things dull  
And outcast and unusable;

Thou takest home and makest whole  
The relics and discarded  
Raiment of man; each toy or tool  
By him no more regarded  
To thee is dear, and grows to thee,  
And finds acceptance full and free,  
Even with the old hills and the sea.

O men, my brothers! even you  
She would accept, unfetter.  
Look up into the free and blue:  
Have you no dreams of better  
And purer lives than those you lead  
About the market-place, and feed  
With endless labors endless greed?

## A WESTWARD BEACH

You are strangers to the earth and sky,  
    And all their wonders flung you  
Like pence to beggars : you, not I,  
    Are exiles : from among you  
I am gone home : but follow me,  
And we might live as brotherly  
As the brown hills and the blue sea.

Meanwhile, my voice may reach so far  
    As to your ears, and waken  
Some spark within you, the one star  
    Your chimneys could not blacken ;  
And I will plead and I will cry,  
And rage at you, and pass you by,  
And wander under the open sky.

## WONDER AND JOY

THE things that one grows tired of — O, be sure  
They are only foolish artificial things!  
Can a bird ever tire of having wings?  
And I, so long as life and sense endure,  
(Or brief be they!) shall nevermore inure  
My heart to the recurrence of the springs,  
Of the gray dawns, the gracious evenings,  
The infinite wheeling stars. A wonder pure  
Must ever well within me to behold  
Venus decline; or great Orion, whose belt  
Is studded with three nails of burning gold,  
Ascend the winter heaven. Who never felt  
This wondering joy may yet be good or great:  
But envy him not: he is not fortunate.



## EUCALYPTUS TREES

THANKFUL, my country, be to him who first  
Brought hither from Australia oversea  
Sapling or seed of the undeciduous tree  
Whose grave and sombre foliage fears no burst  
Of heat from summer-naked heavens, nor thirst  
Though all the winter is rainless, and the bee  
Starves, finding not a blossom. Patiently  
The great roots delve, and feel though deep-im-  
mersed

Some layer of ancient moisture, and the leaves  
Perish not, hanging pointed in the sky.  
To see these lofty trunks gray-barked and broad  
Wall with clear shade a long white southern road  
I have been as one devoted, who receives  
An impulse or a promise from on high.

## THE FIRST GRASS

It rained three autumn days; then close to frost  
Under clear starlight the night shivering was.  
The dawn rose cold and colorless as glass,  
And when we wakened rains and clouds were lost.  
The ocean surged and shouted stormy-tossed.  
I went down to companion him. Alas,  
What faint voice by the way? The sudden grass  
Cried with thin lips as I the valley crossed,  
Saying blade by blade, "Although the warm sweet  
rain  
Awakened us, this world is all too cold.  
We never dreamed it thus." — "Your champion  
bold  
Is risen," I said; "he in an hour or twain  
Will comfort you." I passed. Above the dune  
Stood the wan splendorless daylight-waning moon.

## WHEN I BEHOLD THE GREATEST

WHEN I behold the greatest and most wise  
Fall out of heaven, wings not by pride struck numb  
Like Satan's, but to gain some humbler crumb  
Of pittance from penurious granaries ;  
And when I see under each new disguise  
The same cowardice of custom, the same dumb  
Devil that drove our Wordsworth to become  
Apologist of kings and priests and lies ;  
And how a man may find in all he loathes  
Contentment after all, and so endear it  
By cowardly craft it grows his inmost own ; —  
Then I renew my faith with firmer oaths,  
And bind with more tremendous vows a spirit  
That, often fallen, never has lain prone.

## JUAN HIGERA CREEK

NEITHER your face, Higera, nor your deeds  
Are known to me ; and death these many years  
Retains you, under grass or forest-mould.  
Only a rivulet bears your name : it runs  
Deep-hidden in undeciduous redwood shade  
And trunks by age made holy, streaming down  
A valley of the Santa Lucian hills.  
There have I stopped, and though the unclouded sun  
Flew high in loftiest heaven, no dapple of light  
Flecked the large trunks below the leaves intense,  
Nor flickered on your creek : murmuring it sought  
The River of the South, which oceanward  
Would sweep it down. I drank sweet water there,  
And blessed your immortality. Not bronze,  
Higera, nor yet marble cool the thirst ;  
Let bronze and marble of the rich and proud  
Secure the names ; your monument will last  
Longer, of living water forest-pure.

## THE RETURN OF VENUS

THESE many months half hopelessly  
From dune and cliff and shingle  
I had watched the shining west, to see  
That star which will not mingle  
With other stars — the evening one,  
The radiant follower of the sun.

Filled full of liquid amber light,  
Above the breakers' onset,  
Unclouded, vast, serene, to-night  
The giant flower of sunset  
Unfolded all its purity  
And high perfection over me.

The crescent moon but three days old  
Upon that airy splendor  
Swam like a silver shell. — Behold,  
What light more pure, more tender,

## CALIFORNIANS

If such can be, began to shine  
Low down above the ocean-line !

Untwinkling, O how softly pure !  
How radiantly tender !  
Too lovely for a man to endure :  
I thought I would surrender  
My very life, my very soul,  
For anything so beautiful.

Like one half mad I walked the dune ;  
I could not watch my footing,  
I could not see the crescent moon,  
But only Venus floating  
Low down, low down. She set too soon ;  
Then I beheld the little moon.

I stood beside the cove that lies  
Below the Promontory.  
There shone, there took me by surprise,  
The crescent clothed in glory ;  
Between the cliffbrow and the wave  
Shone, like a candle in a cave.

HE HAS FALLEN IN LOVE WITH THE  
MOUNTAINS

HE has fallen in love with the mountains:

How should he not be blest?

Him the high canyon fountains

Feed with coolness and rest;

Him the gray mists with pleasure

About the day's release;

The sleepy long noons with leisure;

And the eerie dawns with peace.

Remote, steel-gray and scornful

The peaks; above them glides

Dawn, and purples the mournful

Pines on the canyon sides;

Day, and the ferny fountains

Are full and crystal-dim;

And he who has loved the mountains,

How should they not love him?

White be the fair young maiden,

And comely, without stain,

## CALIFORNIANS

Her lover sorrow-laden  
    Will look to her in vain,  
Unhelped ; for she is human,  
    She will quietly pass by,  
Like every other woman  
    Who has lived under the sky.

Good be the friend, and grateful  
    For kindnesses of old,  
Yet will his eyes turn hateful,  
    Yet his heart's love burn cold.  
Build house-walls of cut clover ;  
    Lean on a fennel staff ;  
Put faith in friend or lover,  
    And hear the high Fates laugh.

Then to the far hill-ridges  
    Lift up your eyes, and slake  
Your thirst among the sedges  
    That lock a mountain lake.  
Your changèd fates bewail not : —  
    Is mortal guile new-proved ?  
But the mountains move not, fail not,  
    Never in vain beloved.



## THE WANDERER TO HIS WINE-CUP

LITTLE blue gulf of pleasure  
Shot through with films of red,  
In the old years fallen and dead  
I loved thee out of measure.

Like mother's milk to me,  
Medicinal and kindly,  
O recklessly and blindly  
I loved and worshipped thee.

To thee of day and night all  
My hours were given up ;  
And sometimes, little cup,  
Betrayal was thy requital.

I blamed thee not therefor ;  
My worship grew more fervent ;  
I worthily thy servant  
But loved thee yet the more.

## CALIFORNIANS

Severe art thou, not cruel,  
Infinite little god ;  
Thou chastenest with a rod  
And crownest with a jewel.

Not now as once I did  
Do I need thee, O divinest ;  
Still like a star thou shinest,  
And let the sun be hid !

And let the high sun blunder  
To the ultimate eclipse,  
And thou with open lips  
Swallow up the wasted thunder.

Who loves thee on his knees,  
Who worthily thee kisses,  
Shall drink the starry abysses  
And empty the huge seas.

## FOR A BRIDEGROOM

(To G. F. E.)

I

BUT only twice or thrice  
Between the silver starting-mark  
    Of birth, and the strange cavernous goal,  
May gleams of our lost Paradise  
Revisit through the breathless dark  
    That fugitive racer, the swift soul.

2

Once at a daybreak hour,  
When on a child the saffron heaven  
    Flows in through jasmine lattices ;  
Once in full manhood, if the power  
We give our lives to gain, is given  
    To pay that sad devotedness.

CALIFORNIANS

3

And once when shining wings  
Flutter the lintel and the door,  
    And love has entered : then rejoice !  
The purpose and the hope of things  
Appear, and rapturous hours restore  
    To the hushed world a human voice.

4

The rest of happiness  
Is peace, the second-best of boons  
    A not too hostile Fate will give.  
— May that also be yours, nor less  
Replenished than the frequent moon's  
    Calm light — the equally fugitive.

WHERE SHALL I TAKE YOU TO

WHERE shall I take you to,  
Whither shall I fly with you,  
Falcon dear, to find a nest?  
— Tired are we of the flat and strict:  
Take me where tall cliffs are flicked  
With spray of the sea's stormiest.  
Thither! or else  
We two to a blue mountain's crest.

Between the land of great dead queens  
And Greece of beauty intervenes  
A sea where a thousand islands foam.  
— Old olives will stand about our house,  
Dwarf cypresses on the cliff's brows,  
And vines full-fruited tangle the dome. . . .  
Thither! Or else  
To the flaming miraculous height, our home.

## THE HOMELY LABORS

Nor merely falcon-passions and the sweep  
    And sealike power of love ;  
Nor yet alone the dreams that dive hell-deep  
    Or fly to heaven above ;  
Nor yet the sense ineffable that springs  
    When, vast and purified,  
On wine-red ocean, with enormous wings  
    Of cloud fiery and wide,  
The day departeth as the Phoenix did,  
    Through death to dawn returning,  
Consumed and incorruptible, and hid  
    In its own glory and burning ;  
Nor yet the spiritual agony of light  
    Innumerable, icy-clear,  
When gapes a chasm of cloud at dead of night  
    And infinite stars appear ; —  
Not these alone, although no poet's endeavor

THE HOMELY LABORS

Can praise them well enough,  
Make splendid our seclusion : but forever  
I shall be mindful of  
The small and daily tasks, the laying of fire,  
The cleaving of fire-wood,  
And how much beauty and how sweet desire  
And wisdom these include.

## TO AN OLD SQUARE PIANO

(Purchased from the caretaker of an estate in Monterey.)

WHOSE fingers wore your ivory keys  
So thin — as tempest and tide-flow  
Some pearly shell, the castaway  
Of indefatigable seas  
On a low shingle far away —  
You will not tell, we cannot know.

Only, we know that you are come,  
Full of strange ghosts melodious  
The old years forget the echoes of,  
From the ancient house into our home;  
And you will sing of old-world love,  
And of ours too, and live with us.

Sweet sounds will feed you here : our woods  
Are vocal with the seawind's breath ;



TO AN OLD SQUARE PIANO

Nor want they wing-borne choristers,  
Nor the ocean's organ-interludes.  
— Be true beneath her hands, even hers  
Who is more to me than life or death.

## LET US GO HOME TO PARADISE

LET us go home to Paradise,

O my adored !

There are neither flaming sword

Prohibitive, nor angel's eyes

Jealous of our happiness.

O from this valley of distress

Look up, look back, to Paradise !

There gentle mists are drawn along

The margins of the deep,

And up the quiet valley creep.

There the pines with low sweet song

Murmur at morning half asleep,

Trailing through each fingered bough

The gray fog on the hill's brow.

Our beautiful peninsula

Cannot rejoice

LET US GO HOME TO PARADISE

For all its forest, and the voice  
Of breaking waves in Carmel Bay,  
Until we come; the cypresses  
Grieve above the dove-gray seas  
For us their lovers far away.

## DREAM OF THE FUTURE

(To U. J.)

FAITHFUL and loved, you know when at first we  
came

Out of the too-bright land, from a shore without  
trees,

Though mighty of rocks, and clothed with the same  
blue wave, —

You know how our hearts were moved at looking  
down

From the high peninsular yoke; the breath of the  
morning

Hung in the pines; and this, we felt, was our  
home;

This, the narrow bay; the promontories;

The islands, each one rock; the capes beyond,

To the left, of Lobos, and yonder of Pescadero.

We were glad; we had found our place.

## DREAM OF THE FUTURE

May I write for you, dearest,  
The dream of a later day? The sun stood then  
To the evening-side of our home, and from seaward  
gazed  
Up-stream of the Carmel River; and I was walking  
With opposite steps the road of that fair first  
morn.

I saw, from the yoke peninsular looking down,  
Monterey, and the bay that answers to ours,  
Though larger. Mightily swept, unbroken, illim-  
itable,

The curve of the northering shore. Was it the sun-  
rays

Cast from behind me across it that made it so  
infinite?

Little the town seemed; old is the town, yet it  
seemed

A temporal accident, somehow dropped in that  
vastness,

A moment permitted to be; hardly permitted.

The curve of the dunes was immense as the moving  
ocean;

Thought shrank from before it. How do we dare  
to live

## CALIFORNIANS

In so great and tameless a land? We dare; we  
are here.

Our children, if Destiny guard them, may equal the  
land.

I pleased myself with the stately towers, the dwell-  
ings,

A century hence may witness. Yonder a villa,  
All white, cypress-bowered; a cottage here  
At the roadside, backed by its ploughland, seeming  
more firm

In rightful tenure than any tower though the tallest.

Only, O men of the future, I pray you spare  
The live-oaks that dot your fields of this eastward  
hillside,

The ancient pinewood that crowns your hill with  
darkness.

Yea, be rulers, but kindly; take toll, but destroy  
not

With all too heavy exaction your beautiful serfs.

Yet I hold it sure that the hardness of unsubjected,  
Unvassalled dominions nerves the heart in a man.

## DREAM OF THE FUTURE

He is the best who unsubduably strives  
With unsubduable nature; the happiest he  
Who has tribute of water and earth, yet no whole  
conquest.

I am ill content, I fear the too-greatness of man.  
Not uncorrupted the conqueror. Much is lost  
When the tame horse runs to the bridle, or the maid  
to the kiss.

Our children, if Destiny guard them, may find out  
a land  
Greater, more masterless, worthy their mastering  
strength.

— Where? — When Alaska is peopled, will Venus  
lack ploughland?

I have dreamed that our children may even ascend  
to the stars.

O race of men, not to be limited, striving  
With strength inexhaustible! Lo, this earth, this  
globe  
Of subduable rock, transnavigable ocean, how long  
Will it fix your minds and your hopes, insatiate  
children?

## CALIFORNIANS

You have tracked the sky with your engines ; on  
the headland cliffs

Of La Jolla dwelling I watched them ; edging the  
shore,

Higher than falcons, far up over the dawn-mist,  
With northward beaks ; San Diego had seen them  
arise.

And over the sky is the æther, the gulf of the planets,  
The ocean of stars, the way of the wings of the morn-  
ing.

Thus did I dream, descending that road which crosses  
The wooded peninsular yoke, from bay to bay  
Up, and then down ; multiform clouds were crossing  
From north-east to south-west the sky ; a flight of  
ravens

Drove with the clouds, but more rapidly, motes  
on the wind.



## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

IN MEMORY OF W. H. J. AND M. J.

### I

OCEAN and solemn pines that made me whole  
With influences benign : a second loss  
Endured has torn my soul  
At the old wound more sorely : oaks, whose moss  
Is wet with winter now, as then it was  
Fresh from the feeding dews and winds of spring,  
Behold what grievous doubling of *Alas*,  
What twofold suffering  
One dark-starred year may bring !  
Out of bland May the fair and firstling fruit  
Was reft in sudden dark ; and now the root  
Is hewn ; fallen the strength ! We stand no more :  
I stand, though shattered : but that elder strength  
Is fallen, is bruised on dust, is gone far down,

## CALIFORNIANS

Far out of reach of sunlight : there nor length  
Of vision, neither power  
Of voices can behold him nor recall.  
The round insensate hopeless world goes on ;  
And wars increase ; and tumults as before  
Continue ; and the stars in time will fall,  
And the sun's light be gone ;  
And we ere that conclusion long outworn  
Will have preceased from striving, will have shorn  
The votive lock of hair  
From hope's head to despair  
And life's to death devoted ; and the morn  
Have kindled countless fires above a shore  
Vacant of man, a blue sea void of ships, —  
The morn with smiling lips  
Made ruddy by the old rose : but thee nor care  
Of all these things, O Father ! thee nor care  
Nor love nor woe can touch forevermore.

## II

Where art thou gone that love though mighty is  
powerless  
To follow thee? even ours,

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

Even thy son's? What region blind and flower-  
less,

What hopelessness of exile? O, what fire  
Has taken hold upon the untimely flowers  
That tricked thy bier with weeping and desire  
Of white rose-buds in winter — on the wreath  
Of oak-leaves bronzed when thine were fallen in  
death —

And on the laurel not unmerited —  
And on the calm white face austere — the head  
Most beautiful and dead

Whereon my kiss fell vainly, and my tears  
Failed as the wave's on the unresponsive stone!  
Leavest thou thus alone

Me, after many years?

Me, not to see thee more, never to hear  
Thy grave words, not to watch thy face: I know  
That on wide ocean the late winds will blow  
And on low lands the spring-wind, and restore  
The wild flag and the wanton cowslips clear  
In watery places; and the grasses green  
On pastured hills serene:

Also the trees that now are bald and frore,  
Yea and the undeciduous oaks and pines,

## CALIFORNIANS

Will take new leaves upon them, yea and the vines :  
But thou wilt not return ; no more, no more.

### III

— What dost thou weeping in the living spring,  
Dull chanter of despair? — But what dost thou,  
O lying mother, O Earth, because thy brow  
With briefest blossoming  
Of weeds that cannot live unto the fall  
Is star-bedecked, with lies of splendor new?  
— I that was old am young. — Is one of all  
The same? Of those that blew  
Last year is one returned? I know there is none.  
— Yet I am here. — Wilt thou outlive the sun,  
That perishable star? — Yet I am here.  
— Nor is my grief yet perished, nor the urn  
Poured empty of its perpetual return  
With the reviving year.

### IV

I will upon the dead world's vacant frame  
Retrace his sacred footsteps reverently,  
And dream his life back to the power it was.

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

O river westward flowing that of thy name  
Namest his parent commonwealth: by thee  
My years began to be;  
And I was born upon thy shore, whenas  
Thy shore lay stark below no yeaning moon,  
Nor auguries of June;  
But toward the dead of January was rolled  
The torrent caked with ice and dark with cold  
Under thy great-arched bridges, and the walls  
And ways with no pure snow from no clear sky  
Strown, but with such as falls  
In towns, trodden underfoot of passers by.  
Unto thy shore though but in vainest dream  
Let me at length go home, O westering stream,  
And entering at the issued gate, no more  
Be anything, as I was naught before.  
But from that cloud and breathless past to gaze  
Upon his trodden ways —  
Let such be my exemption from the lot  
Of other souls unborn: yea now, I see  
The smaller clearer stream whose pebbly throat  
Made music for his boyhood, through such wood  
Running, as is no more in all that land.  
There with the oak and elm the hawthorn tree,

## CALIFORNIANS

There with the birch and beech the chestnut stood,  
And the tall pine : a thousand where now stand  
Not twenty : and the beautiful house-door  
Opened for such a brood  
As the pure forest and unpopulous earth  
Are parents of — the world before this flood  
Which ever widening, gulging more and more,  
Makes lewd all things, makes common. Such  
his birth  
And boyhood, who before the boyish years  
Were past and gone, went forth — so burned the  
fire  
Within him, of desire  
To know and conquer. Nay, thou fitful dream,  
Flee not so fast away to thy compeers !  
Stay with me though but little while, and say  
What nations in his strong and elder day  
He saw and knew : The extreme  
Of the dim eastern well-heads of the world  
Were given to him with seeing eyes to scan :  
The Palestinian hills where that began  
Which like strong poison in the sickly world  
Works yet for evil and good ; medicinal  
And deadly : he indeed not wholly pierced

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

The curtain slack and ceremonial  
Of misbelieving priestcraft : nay, he twirled  
Himself the loaf, and made it flesh and God  
With charms and faith : so mixed with best is  
    worst.

Yet much he knew ; he burst  
Many strong bonds of folly, and made broad  
The beautiful steep highways of the mind.  
Say further, O fair dream,  
His wanderings : In the mountainous seed-plot  
Of freedom and fair thought  
And sweet desire of beauty, he inclined  
To contemplation his great soul, and walked  
In Athens marble-shrined,  
And Thebes war-broken, and below the crown  
Of old Thaumasius in Arcadia ;  
And sunward took no unregardful way  
To lordly Lacedæmon ; yea and divine  
Eleusis knew ; and drank the honeyed wine  
Corinthian ; and with mountain shepherds talked,  
From high Pentelican pastures gazing down  
On famous Marathon.  
Also Nilotic glories and the waste  
Of god-begetting Egypt he beheld ;



## CALIFORNIANS

And that huge oak which ere its boughs were lopped  
And all its glorious crown of foliage felled  
By northern axemen and the tawny-tressed  
Cimmerians and fierce Vandals and the rest,  
Had with strong shadow quelled  
The ocean-belted orb of lands, and dropped  
Sharp javelin-rooted acorns of its power  
On British soil and Parthian sand alike,  
And from the Iberian shore  
To where the extreme Caucasian summits strike  
With snowy tops the wombs of crystal snow :  
And though the Roman power is dead, of Rome  
The term is not yet come :  
Nor is there term appointed to my woe :  
But thine is fixed, Father, forevermore !

## V

Much worthier men than I have made sweet song  
Out of a fair friend's death since Bion died.  
Moschus and grave-browed Milton :— they were  
strong  
Enough, for aught I know, not to be sorry.  
Their friends have mighty memories and shared  
glory.



## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

Thou more than friend, thou dearer, art denied  
All music of lament : thou hast the tones  
Of a mere broken sobbing — lo, thy son's.

### VI

How do I cry as unto living ears  
To him that was my father ! All his life  
He had the calm of mountains ; nor the fears  
Shared of this headlong world, nor the blind strife  
Was partner of : but where oaks grew, or hills  
Raised age-proof heads above the troublous sea, —  
There, only there upon this shaken earth,  
Were creatures calm as he.  
Now all his power is gone ; the last of ills  
Hath snatched him wholly forth :  
His calm, his calm endures eternally.  
How do I cry as unto who can hear ?  
Yea, though he heard me would he answer me,  
Though to his soul most dear ?

### VII

White Alpine summits crowned with snow and peace,  
Islanded high above the deadly flood

## CALIFORNIANS

Of dark and sundering blood,  
With you we dwelt in the old fair days when still  
Peace lived on earth ; and his most reverend head  
Lived ; and with fruitfulness of high increase —  
Whether beneath Geneva's cloudy hill,  
Or where more gently swelling, and bespread  
With gardens and trim pines  
Zuerich's arise about the sapphire lake —  
He patient with me planted in my soul  
Grave words of elder wisdom, and winged lines  
Of deathless verse, the seeds of living fire  
Struck from no recent lyre —  
Bring back to me, O Alpine mountains bleak,  
Those years happy forever, when yet whole  
I walked with him, and wept not for his sake,  
Ere he my father and the better part  
Of this diminished heart  
Had entrance to the mountain-cave of death !

— O wanderer, wilt thou alway spend thy breath  
In vanity of weeping and lament ?  
Dost thou alone within a world at war,  
Alone bewail thy dearest ? No new cause  
Hast thou : to every man

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

If so his days be longer than one span  
No other grief is sent,  
And on his lessened heart no lesser scar  
Heals with slow time ; to such eternal laws  
Let also thine assent.

— Nay, if all share my fates then all men born  
Are the more lost, not I the less forlorn.

### VIII

O lordly oaks and pines of mine own shore  
To you will I returning plain my grief.  
Now is full summer bright in all your boughs ;  
Now is the water dried that wont to pour  
Adown the valley brawling ; now the brows  
Of heaven show gold on azure but no cloud ;  
Dry are both moss and leaf ;  
And dry the ferns that grew by the low house.  
Thou only at hot noonday speakest loud,  
Great ocean ; from afar I hear thy voice.  
Is it for joy, or dost thou also mourn ?  
Be still : for I will teach thee how to mourn.

O folly of the heart that will not learn  
What yet it needs must know !

## CALIFORNIANS

These creatures are too mighty to rejoice,  
Too strong to suffer woe.  
They live not weakly nor of woman born ;  
Nor grief's nor pleasure's dire vicissitude  
Tempers their loftiest mood.  
Serene are they, yet stern ;  
And of their natures next to supreme God.

Where on white sand the long waves roll and break  
Under the azure fervor of the noon ;  
Where on gray cliffheads walled of giant stone  
The cypresses of the Peninsula  
Their bright-green foliage in the westwind shake,  
And through gnarled roots feel the impetuous tide  
Lash with long foam and jets of whirling spray  
Their natal rocks ; and where  
The Santa Lucian hills their forest-pride  
Of northward pines and redwoods in the south  
Raise in serenest air ;  
And where behind its bar the Carmel-mouth  
Stagnates at noon of summer, and through sand  
Creeps oceanward from reedy pastureland : —  
In all these schools have I applied my heart  
To wisdom, yea with tears ; and lo how small

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

My learning is ; alas, how far apart  
From the great wisdom that informs them all !  
Natheless have I done well unto this hour ;  
Nor could I spare one day of all my days  
For any worldling's, though with love or praise  
Crowned, or with perfumed ease or golden power.

Yet stand my counsellors dumb before this death ;  
Or in strange tongues with little hope respond ;  
Or breathe unwonted scorn.

— Ye doubtless, doubtless ye, the tall pine saith,  
Self-moving, intricately made, and formed  
From no earth-planted seed but mother-warmed,  
And in due season born,  
Ye in due season dying, have life beyond.  
For us, when the ignorant tempest brings us low,  
Or woodsman's iron craft, or crank old age  
Ruddying the needles on the barren bough,  
Somewhile we lie dead wood in forest-mould ;  
The elements take us home ; the pilgrimage  
Begins all new, and there is nothing old.  
Leaves none of ours draw back from earth and  
air  
The essence of the beauty that we were.

## CALIFORNIANS

Ye doubtless — But in scorn the pinetree spoke,  
Or thus meseemed. Like answer gave the hills  
Santa Lucian, and the rocks and wave.  
Yea, even that tended oak,  
Which, rooted by the house-door, daily feels —  
O love, O weak to help, mighty to weep! —  
My presence, and the love that could not save.

## IX

Shall I seek darker counsel, shall I take  
Resort to such as murmur in the gloom  
With tortured Pythian lips familiar names  
And tongues of mortal slumber? Must I fee  
That lost king's Endor-witch to answer me?

Gray gossip of the unreverberant tomb,  
By thy familiar spirit for my sake  
Call him up hither whom my heart reclaims  
With anguish and sore yearning!

Yea, the tone  
Is nearly his; yea, almost thus he spake.  
That lying spirit of thine is keen of wit,  
An excellent mime; could well-nigh counterfeit  
For very God the cry of his dead son!

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

Our baser part of consciousness flows over,  
And mocks us from without. Thence Gods were  
made.

Thence to the desolate lover  
A phantom of his grief, no holier shade,  
Comes in at deep of night through bolted doors ;  
Ere cockcrow past and gone :  
Then, watched through sleep-wet eyelashes, gray  
dawn  
Stains the far sky and trails with fog the shores.

### X

Ocean and shore, grave pines, oaks always green,  
Oaks large-limbed, always green, and ye not less,  
Peninsular cypresses  
That nearest overbrow the wave serene,  
Ye keep much purer counsel, nor deceive.

You in wet winter the wild storms will rend,  
Raging from wave to hill ; and through the vale  
Like iron-winged vultures toiling, bid you grieve  
For leaves dispersèd and the wasted year.  
But now fair autumn fans you ; without fail  
The course of spring will cure : but us no end,



## CALIFORNIANS

No end of woe is meted ; us the year  
All-grievous strikes ; in May the flower first-born,  
At the dark solstice fell the father-stem.  
And all year through that flood of wrath and fear  
Waxes beyond the flowerings of the morn ;  
That sanguine flood, and fills with death the world.  
O rather with those millions, O with them  
Much rather would I bleed and perish, hurled  
Into the monstrous gape  
And ravening maw of war, so thou mightst live !  
And she have lived ; and thou, O Father, shape  
The splendor of her opening youth, and give  
Wise counsel and sweet love, as unto me  
So unto her, to a much worthier end !

Us evermore, O wood, the stormwinds rend ;  
You but a narrow season, and soon done.

I will look up unto the holy sun,  
The all-visiting light, the cloudless God, and ask  
What he has known of whither the dead flee.  
Yea, and with sleepless questioning will task  
The flaming walls of heaven, the hearthless fires,  
The stars for light in this dark mystery.



## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

They know but the one universe ; them tires  
Not the blind falcon hope, with feverish flight  
Forever circling ; not the meagre wolf  
Of sorrow hunts them down.

They overgaze all gulfs but that one gulf  
Obscurest ; that alone  
Beyond their witness opens on a night  
Awful, discrowned of stars, naked of light.

They age, burn crimson, wane, are blackened out.  
Vega from her young glory fiery-wan  
Turns ; the wroth Bull's red glare, Aldebaran,  
Feels coldest æther take him roundabout  
With age and slow decay ; he wanes content.  
New lamps from the Protean element  
Blaze forth when these are blackened ; these return  
No more, no more ; they care not though they  
perish ;  
Though their companions and their mates die first  
No sorrow bids them the less boldly burn.  
O fools are we ! who cherish  
Long loves in such a travelling world, who thirst  
For that which the stars know not, which the Gods  
Have not : were feigned to have :

## CALIFORNIANS

That blossom rooted in the bottomless grave,  
The impossible dawning of that second morn.

### XI

Thus cried the young man, and veiled his brows,  
and wept.

As lain on ocean-shore the various sand,  
Shell-pink and white and purple, nightly swept  
By the tide's liquid yet unequal hand,  
Shows often a strange hue : like mountain snows  
The whole beach gleams at dawn ; all porphyrine  
Glooms in the morning of the second day ;  
And, when the moon has waned, like roseate wine  
Flows to the wave, as differing winds dispose :  
Thus on the singer's voice had sorrow brought  
Still various colors upward from his mind.  
But now, as when hard northern storms have way  
The beach is swept all bare : so further thought  
Failed from the broken song.

As rise from wrack of winter sand the blind  
Long-buried rocks forth-jutting, and the bones  
Of shipwreck from their yearlong shrouding rise,  
Thus did his grief rise bare ; and in low tones

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

He sang not but he wept, with veiled eyes  
Remembering : long his woe ; his memories long.

### XII

A year is past, a year is past and gone ;  
Yea, it is winter now.

On loud-winged southern blasts the rain-clouds  
blow.

The star-zoned Huntsman opposite the sun  
Arises in the evening ; all night long  
He paces heaven, at dawn he seeks the wave.  
The hearths flame up with smoking pitch ; the strong  
Shag-fetlocked horses tug the winter plough.  
The days are clipped and dark ; sharp herbage  
brave

Pricks feebly the hard footprints of the frost.  
That day approaches : in the winter thou  
Didst leave us ; at the solstice thou wast lost.

Lost? No, but we that lost thee, lost are we ;  
Or lacking strength were so.  
Strength needs must have who travels this hard  
world.

Not lost art thou ; thou hast but girded thee

## CALIFORNIANS

And taken staff in hand, thither to go  
Whence thou of old didst come : —  
As one comes forth when the east is gray impearled,  
And all day laboring in the toilsome field  
At evenfall right gladly goeth home.

But thou no more to hill or field returnest ;  
No second dawn, infinite night is sealed  
Over the bed of thy belovèd sleep.  
Ours in our turn to labor ; ours to weep,  
Yet sparely now ; ours to be strong and earnest,  
Kindly and strong as thou ; and ours to keep  
The ensample of thy life forevermore.  
While that remains is all of thine departed ?  
Can that be lost if we be faithful-hearted ?  
No wave but makes some record on the shore ;  
No wind but writes memorial ; flesh and breath,  
Spirit and flesh as wind and wave are fled ;  
Not all the man is dead :  
His greater soul takes life — yea, even from death.

Behold, the unteachable heart  
Insatiate of its grief yet moans in vain  
Being mortal for mortality again ;

## THE YEAR OF MOURNING

Wanting the baser, not the better part.

Grieve then, and have enough.

Brim the deep urn, have all thy fill of pain!

Yet he for all thy weeping, all thy love,

All thy long weeping, will not wake again.

He is gone down where Fate and adverse Gods

Trample all things great, all honored things: the  
plain

Envies the mountain; Life assenting nods,

And all that power is levelled. — Save be true

The vulgar dreams; or that more lofty and wise

Which from eternal change doth build anew

At long recurrence of the sage's year

All mortal things forever: — little cheer

I find; nothing to fear;

Whether or no this dream be someway true.

This we have known: Virtue and strength and  
love,

Courage and freedom, do themselves reward;

Life has been good, being hard:

So much we hold for sure; and like enough

Shall know not more, though all be formed anew,

And thou be born again, and all be so

## CALIFORNIANS

As in old years before ;  
And thou be taken home from us once more ;  
And we on death-cold ashes falling low  
Not weakly mourn thee, not with common woe  
Consolable ; but such as those have known  
Who to their lord with huge unmortared stone  
Built great memorials near the Breton shore.

## SONG OF QUIETNESS

DRINK deep, drink deep of quietness,  
And on the margins of the sea  
Remember not thine old distress  
Nor all the miseries to be.  
Calmer than mists, and cold  
As they, that fold on fold  
Up the dim valley are rolled,  
Learn thou to be.

The Past — it was a feverish dream,  
A drunken slumber full of tears.  
The Future — O what wild wings gleam,  
Wheeled in the van of desperate years !  
Thou lovedst the evening : dawn  
Glimmers ; the night is gone : —  
What dangers lure thee on,  
What dreams more fierce ?

## CALIFORNIANS

But meanwhile, now the east is gray,  
    The hour is pale, the cocks yet dumb,  
Be glad before the birth of day,  
    Take thy brief rest ere morning come :  
Here in the beautiful woods  
All night the sea-mist floods, —  
Thy last of solitudes,  
    Thy yearlong home.



## ODE ON HUMAN DESTINIES

### I

HERE in the beautiful peninsula  
Most gladly would I rest, never to be  
A wanderer more by land nor weary sea ;  
Here gladly would I rest, and put away  
All hot and vulgar cares,  
All foolish-eager dreams, only to see  
The yearly blossoming of the stately pines,  
And the azure limpid sweet cloud-carrying airs  
That bathe the Santa Lucian summit-lines.  
Here gladly would I rest, and in high verse —  
Whenas that quickening spirit should have wrought  
Into full ripeness the hoarded patient thought —  
Of human fates rehearse  
Their majesty, that needs nor God nor goal : —  
Thus if long time and tranquil were assured :

## CALIFORNIANS

But in my ears a word  
Of sunderance hath been spoken, and I know  
How soon the year of quiet will cease to be,  
How soon from stormy and fiery years my soul  
Yearn back upon her peace of long ago,  
This rare tranquillity.  
Therefore, albeit from heart and will most pure,  
Untimely thoughts, a theme not yet mature  
Are mine : but if occasion yield me space  
In any future days,  
Or truce of storm, I shall not fail to speak  
In full what now in strains unworthy and weak, —

## II

And as a messenger whom spears  
Menace, in the people's ears  
Shouts his word of further war,  
News of danger and of hope,  
Crying of death and boast of faith : —  
As a falcon on the slope  
Of the coming storm afar  
And wildly driven,  
Cries aloud 'twixt earth and heaven

## ODE ON HUMAN DESTINIES

Ere he pass, and down the wind  
Be mingled with the lightning bright and blind.

### III

I stood upon the Promontory of Stones ;  
A flashing day in February ; an hour  
Tumultuous, trembling between sun and shower  
And thunder. Like a crystal torrent streamed  
The wind against my face ; in passionate tones  
The ocean spake ; the sea-line gleamed ;  
The wild gulls battled in the seawind's power.  
On water-glimmering rocks below, some worn  
And iron-bolted beams, a dead ship's bones,  
Hung fast but never tranquil. Fast they hung,  
Yet heaved they ever and were swung  
By the ocean's touch, and soft wet slivers torn  
From their hard sides. Northward the clouds were  
rushing ;  
White waves above the blackened rocks were gush-  
ing ;  
High on the rapid heads of twisted foam  
The seawrack and the bladderwrack upborne  
Writhed serpent-fashion, black and brown and  
green.

## CALIFORNIANS

And white and black, across the light-blue dome  
Of heaven through sudden chasms of cloud far-seen,  
Strained broken vapors dizzily; silver-veiled  
Quick drifts of rain in dazzling sheen  
Adown the Santa Lucian slopes did come.  
How many broken rainbows flashed between!  
Among the mists they glowed and paled,  
Gleamed and vanished: I beheld  
Never a single perfect arc.  
As Hope's bright pallid angels intervene  
Delusive 'twixt the rushing dark  
And fitful starts and lights of this our life:  
So fragmentary did the rainbows lean  
Out of the clouds, and vanish; in the strife  
Of winds and vapors o'er the valley-throat  
Inwoven they were; they shone, enduring not.  
With flecks of rain and spray the wind was rife;  
The westering sun's great beams  
Waved like a whirling of swords  
Above my head; the world seemed all to float  
On thwart and sidelong streams;  
As in rain-flooded river-fords  
Horse and man and ferry-boat  
Toppling I have seen go down,

## ODE ON HUMAN DESTINIES

Horse and oarsman overthrown,  
And churning hoofs that struggle in the tawny  
flood.

— I turned, and climbed a little way, and stood  
Beside that mighty boulder-stone

Which, with its brothers, names the Promontory.

Serene it stands, a child of the Earth's own ;

With light-gray lichen old its flanks are hoary ;

And such a monument it seems

As primal men laboring in dreams

At Stonehenge raised or near the Breton shore

Unto some God's or mortal chieftain's glory ;

But this not human, thence intransitory,

Stands, and the ocean's roar

Shakes it not ; from so deep-grown root it springs,

Knit with the Earth's old central stony core.

— Above it flashed the fragmentary bows,

Swept the storm and swooped the wild sea-wings ;

It stood in strong repose,

Unmoving evermore.

Thither when I was tired of turbulence

And of the day's and light's impermanence,

The Sunderings, the vanishings,

I lifted up my eyes and heart, to adore

## CALIFORNIANS

The inveterate stability of things.

— Toward evening moved the day; the mighty  
world

Silently eastward whirled;

Above the waves the windy sunset burned.

— Unmoving was that monumental stone?

Unmoved, when all the face of Earth is turned?

— Yea, as to man unmoved.

Ourselves are the only measure of our thought.

How can we know or how acknowledge aught

Except it be our own?

Not the mere bulk of granite is approved

Steadfast; but we have sought

Into the very soul of things, and known

Of our own souls the very steadfastness.

## IV

Nothing of man's is strange to man:

Who of old the course began

Runs the course: he finishes.

In the future wild and dim,

Full of wings and fiery-wan,

Many fates and much distress

Multiform, keep watch for him;

## ODE ON HUMAN DESTINIES

The sun will redden, the earth grow strange :  
Man will change not, though all Gods  
Utterly change.

He will change not, being whole,  
Body and sense and breath and soul ;  
Though his tents of night and daily abodes  
Be moved above his mortal head ;  
Though the Lyre the northern pole,  
Vega and the starry Lyre,  
Mark ; as once the mariner led,  
Once of old, his oar and sail  
By the faint ethereal fire  
Thuban of the Dragon shed.

Sway of the poles will not avail : —  
Nay, if the Earth's long-fruitful strength  
Be dried, her bosom drained at length  
Of seasonable milk, and fail  
The pastures of the flocks unfed ;  
And Man with unreturning course  
Into the breathless æther force  
His guarded way, and colonize  
A later planet, — he shall dread  
Nothing in the infinite skies,  
Nothing, knowing from afar



## CALIFORNIANS

The vapor-girdled Evening Star  
Younger sister of his mother,  
And her house vine-garlanded  
To hail him welcome; and with love  
Greet the ten-mooned heavens of Jove,  
The old sweet Earth's own elder brother.  
— Far and fearless though the course be sped,  
Death, O Man, will reap at last  
All the heritage thou hast:  
He cannot change thee; and the dead  
Stand forever safeguarded  
In the chambers of the Past;  
As a mighty monarch's gem  
So they are watched and held in state,  
With a seal upon the gate,  
Time, the giant, guarding them.

## V

But we that live, not less are we secure  
Than the ancient dead or those of yesterday.  
We have nothing to endure  
Not from of old determined; nor our feet  
Travel in any unpredestined way.  
The path of one by waters pale and sweet



## ODE ON HUMAN DESTINIES

Runs, harmless of all frost and fervent heat :  
Another's track the eagles gray  
Of mountains, and the summits hoar  
Witness ; on his head are spilled  
Icy rains, and eager lightnings gild  
The edges of the precipice ;  
He hears the mountain-torrents roar  
Deep under in the vapor-dimmed abyss : —  
Let neither tremble, neither falter  
In the course he cannot alter ;  
Each walks a way long chosen, long before ;  
That path as well as this  
In surest guidance is ;  
Fate, that alone is God, can change no more  
Than the strong traveller may control,  
His necessary courses toward the timeless goal.

## VI

No wilful rage, nor breach of natural bonds,  
Is this that battens with innumerable agonies  
Europe's blood-wonted boundaries, not before  
Satiated ; — nor the tumults and the cries  
Burdening our wind from eastward are the breath  
Of life at length despondent : — who desponds

## CALIFORNIANS

Knows not the bitter strength that grows at core  
Of this old living Earth ; he has fed on lies  
In time of quiet, therefore now his faith  
Fails in the thunderous hour, the harvest-home of  
    death.

Behold, our faith may be as even the Earth's  
Unhopeful and firm-rooted. — The man dies?  
The race is hardly yeaning yet. The race  
At length will perish also? Other births  
Even now are quickening in the timeless womb.  
Life tortures the old clay to later form ;  
That least reluctant gulf the eternal tomb  
Regorges still his tenants, and the storm  
That gluts him is but herald of new games.  
Something endures ; the universal Power  
Endures forever ; we, the whiffs and flames  
That breathe and flicker for one briefest hour,  
We also have our dignity, being part  
Of the immortal thing ; — we serve our nearest  
    aims : —

The fox goes forth to ravage ; the antlered hart  
Finds out his richest pasturage ; the man  
Takes where he may and harvests all he can ;  
Or mayhap with unreasonable divine

## ODE ON HUMAN DESTINIES

Excesses of desire loves friend or mate  
Or form of natural beauty, and fulfils  
His nature's need to loveward : — what he wills  
Is part and substance of the immense design :  
He is beautiful and great,  
Being work and will, being child and slave, of constant Fate.

### VII

The holy multitude of night,  
The innumerable stars, with light  
Their beauty, as it were of flowers  
The fragrance after sudden showers,  
Pour forth immeasurably, and flood  
The infinite world ; as it were a God  
The sun from the orient mountain springs  
Into glorious day, with wings  
Far-shining ; by his lightening shaken  
The hills are changed, the forests waken,  
Million-waved the ocean dances,  
The rocky isles at random sown  
Gleam, and the cliffs : the watcher fancies  
A spirit flashing from the stone.  
A wind is up, and swarming wings

## CALIFORNIANS

Of gull and tern and sanderlings  
Wheel above the whitening waves  
That break in spray on cliff and shingle;  
Land and ocean lift and mingle  
With the sun's ethereal splendor;  
On the hill the pinetree waves  
Ritual weight of sacred branches,  
Wafting fragrance; fair and slender  
Flagflowers bloom in purple ranks  
In open glades by water banks  
Where the doe her fever stanches;  
Yellow pansies brown and brightening  
From the windy foreland render  
To the sun their silent thanks;  
The red-shafted woodpecker  
Through the upper forest launches  
Arrow-flights of ruddy lightning;  
Where the streaming billow blanches  
Rise the wings; a vapor tender  
Rises like a spirit there,  
Pearling the pure air.  
Mighty Spirit, from the stone  
Flashing, from the sea exhaling,  
On the azure hill thy garments trailing

## ODE ON HUMAN DESTINIES

Floating in glory from the sun,  
Soaring in melody and mirth  
From the forest and mild earth ;  
As lately from thine ancient throne  
Of orb on orb of starry flame  
Ere the dawn thou lookedst down : —  
Have I seen thee, have I known  
Thee in all thy forms the same,  
Holy Spirit, loveliest one ?  
Lovely, dear, and terrible,  
Have I known thee well ?  
Beauty is thy human name ;  
Yet ere the sun had been, thou art ;  
Time and the outer cold will slay  
The currents of his burning heart,  
But thou remainest ; death will lay  
A finger on the race of man  
And all our hearts that yearn to thee ;  
The flame art thou, the fuel are we ;  
All must end that once began ;  
The holy stars will cease to be ;  
But thou art from eternity.  
The rhythm of universal things  
Art thou : what light is to the sun,

## CALIFORNIANS

Or swiftness to the swallow's wings,  
Or smiting to the wielded sword,  
Or thought to man, O loveliest one,  
That art thou to eternal Fate.  
His spirit thou art, his child, his mate,  
His great fulfilment. No mean lord  
We serve and share with, serving thee,  
O twin-born bride of Destiny!

## VIII

The mighty vision vanishes;  
The breathing that fulfilled this bruised reed  
Fails, the poor stops are faint and whisperless.  
They will again awaken, when the need  
Is greater, and in greater power will praise  
That purest loveliness.  
I, driven ahead on undiscovered ways  
Yet predetermined, do not fail to see,  
Over the fog and dust of dream and deed,  
The holy spirit, Beauty, beckoning me.

## A NOTE ABOUT PLACES

THE Monterey Peninsula takes name from the town of Monterey, capital of California in Spanish and Mexican times, situated some ninety miles south of San Francisco. The peninsula is a little one, about four miles wide and as many long. The Carmel River empties just south of it; the Carmel Mission (founded 1770), one link of that long chain of churches and cloisters built by Franciscan missionaries for the conversion of the Indians, stands near the north bank of the river-mouth. The peninsula is heavily forested; its westward rocks, and those of Point Lobos, a little to the south, are fringed with Monterey cypresses, trees of tempestuous grandeur, and of a sort peculiar to the place. Pines compose the bulk of the forest.

The Santa Lucian hills overlook the Carmel River and extend southward along the coast. Their



## CALIFORNIANS

northernmost slopes are pine-crested; the valleys beyond are forested with redwoods (sequoias) and oaks and Santa Lucian firs. This region, and the peninsula, are made aërially beautiful by cloud-play and the frequent ocean-mists. The clouds most often hang low, half veiling the hills; yet the atmosphere is singularly transparent, and I have been astonished by the brilliancy of the sky, during thunderstorms, in heavy and starless nights.

Redondo, where Emilia lived, is a sea-port near Los Angeles. Old Baldy (Mount San Antonio) — spoken of in "Maldrove" — is visible from Los Angeles, some sixty miles to the northeast. Farther still is Grayback (Mount San Gorgonio), and a little higher; both peaks are patched with snow in mid-summer. La Cumbre, less than half as high, and forestless, is the mountain overlooking Santa Barbara. The peaks and canyons named in "The Belled Doe" are all quite near to Los Angeles, on the north. La Jolla (pronounced approximately La Hoya) is suburban to San Diego.

The San Bernardino Mountains, scene of the poem called "Stephen Brown," are beautifully wooded and richly watered. I remember espe-



## A NOTE ABOUT PLACES

cially the fountains spoken of in the first stanza of that poem, and how they surprised me, who had just climbed from the parched lowland. They were flowing full and crystalline, in late autumn, before the first rain.

I may be allowed thus much by way of epilogue, the poems being so closely involved in the nature of the country. The story of the three Avilas, for example, grew up like a plant from the ravine described in it, through which the first stream north of the river flows into Carmel Bay;— the story about Ruth Alison derived from a clump of perfectly albino redwood shoots in the Big Sur Valley, from a few people met there, and from the grand and sombre beauty of that forest.



THE following pages contain advertisements of a few of the Macmillan books on kindred subjects.



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