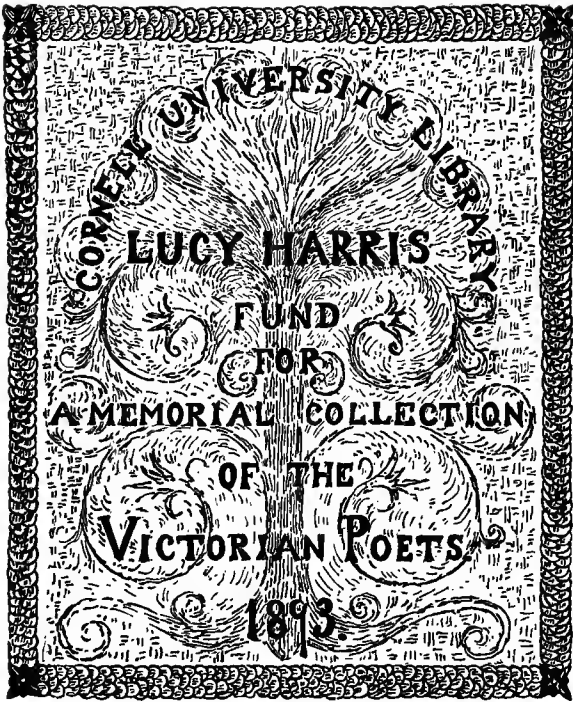


Voices
After
Sunset

By
E. H. Blakeley.

Illustrated by
H. Maurice Page.

1897.



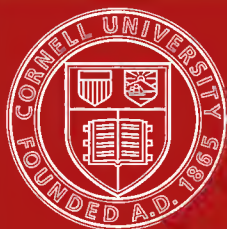
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Voices after Sunset

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

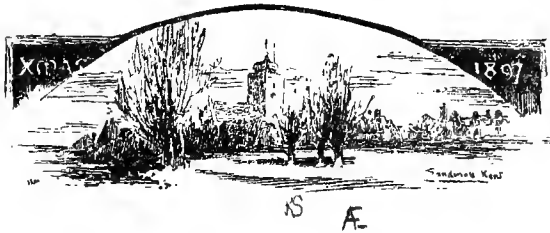
EDWARD HENRY BLAKENEY.

With Illustrations by

H. MAURICE PAGE.

Cantantes licet usque—minus via laedit—eamus.

VIRGIL, *Eclogues.*



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PREFATORY NOTE.



Many of the poems which appear in this book have been published before, either in certain early collections of verse ranging from 1889 to 1892, or in the pages of magazines. These reprinted pieces have been carefully revised for the present collection, and in one or two instances enlarged.

The arrangement of the poems is, in the main, chronological; hence those pieces which are latest in date are placed last in the book.

My best thanks are due to Mr. H. M. Page, of Manwood Court, Sandwich, for the beautiful drawings with which, at my request, he has adorned this volume. There is something peculiarly appropriate that he, of all men, should have given these poems of mine that rare touch of distinction which they would otherwise have lacked indeed; for is it not in and through the special circumstances of our co-operation that the Spirit of the Past, gazing wistfully down from the grey walls of the old Grammar School, looks in upon the Present and wishes it God-speed in the new life dawning in a new place?

E. H. B.

*Sir Roger Manwood's Grammar School,
Sandwich,*

November 23, 1897.

Τῷ περὶ φιλομαθίαν καὶ περὶ τὰς ἀληθεῖς φρονήσεις ἐσπουδακῶτι
καὶ ταῦτα μάλιστα τῶν αὐτοῦ γεγυμνασμένῳ φρονεῖν μὲν ἀθάνατα
καὶ θεῖα, ἄνπερ ἀληθείας ἐφάπτηται, πῦσα ἀνάγκη πον, καθ' ὅσον
δ' αὖ μετασχεῖν ἀνθρωπίνη φύσις ἀθανασίας ἐνδέχεται, τούτου μηδὲν
μέρος ἀπολείπειν, ἅτε δὲ αἰεὶ θεραπεύοντα τὸ θεῖον ἔχοντά τε αὐτὸν
εὖ κεκοσμημένον τὸν δαίμονα ζήναιον ἐν αὐτῷ διαφερόντως ἐνδαίμονα
εἶναι.

PLATO, *Timaeus*.



Manda fuor la vampa
Del tuo disio, mi disse, si, ch' ella esca
Segnata bene dell' interna stampa ;
Non perchè nostra conoscenza cresca
Per tuo parlare, ma perchè t' ausi
A dir la sete, si che l'uom ti mesca.

DANTE, *Paradiso*.



I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man ;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

WORDSWORTH,

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To A. E. S. B.

WITH THE POEMS WHICH FOLLOW.



MY wife, my Amy, whose sweet life is linked
With mine by royal right of love and trust,
Whose gentle years, moving with guileless
feet,

Have brought a blessing in their wake to all
That, knowing, cherish you—nay, whose dear name
Is nought but Love's own golden synonym ;
Who, isled amid a round of daily toils,
Home cares, and fair solitudes, have watched,
With no unheeding interest, the growth
—Month after month, year after gradual year—
Of this brief book of song : to you, at length
My task complete, I consecrate whate'er
Of pure or right therein shall meet your eye
Or touch your heart, binding upon my brow
The tender tribute of your meed of praise.

October 18, 1897.



Prologue.



Voices Before Sunrise.



HOLIEST Love, to whom our highest
praise
Is but a broken utterance of earth
That fain would strive, in accents crude and weak,
To attune its inmost soul of harmony
To that great pæan that the Angels sing
In endless hallelujahs round the Throne,—
To thee, supreme and perfect voice of God,
I lift my heart and consecrate my song.

Rapt in a vision thro' the unfathomed void
Where never light broke soft on stormless seas,

My spirit took her flight and sped away
O'er unknown gulfs ; and, wandering many a league
Thro' immemorial regions, found at length
A home beyond the threshold of the world
Far out, and knew her long-sought resting-place.
Awhile my soul had peace ; I seemed to drink
In purest ecstasy the bliss of dreams,
Nor longed for aught beyond. Then, slow at first
But with insistence that might brook no check,
My spirit yearned within itself to find
Some bliss completer yet, some fuller joy
That waked no lingering passion for past things,
Nor any after-questionings, faint and dim
Yet touched with some vague sorrow at the core,
Nor any thought save only " Life is joy."
There, as my restless spirit chafed, and chid
Its fond desire in vain, methought I saw
A sudden-rising glory, sphered in light
And white with wonder. Fronting me, it stood :
Spellbound I held my breath as one that sleep
Has lapt in sweet oblivion ; I knew
By swiftest intuition that this shape,

So passing fair, on errand high had come
To bring me sacred tidings of the truth
From some bright isle of God beyond the stars.

“O stranger soul,” he spake—and how his words,
Like the calm cadence of a golden bell,
Woke music in my tired spirit!—“lo,
The pent imperious secret of thy life
Which long has robbed thy being of its rest,
Thy strong desire to ‘know,’ to probe the heart
Of all the silent splendours of the world
And all the mystic glories that gleam out
So fitfully across man’s little life,
God deigns to grant: have then thy will! ‘tis thine
To see the hidden soul of things.” With that,
A sharp, quick spasm did rend my heart in twain;
I felt some influence, unguessed before,
Pass thro’ my secret being; and straightway
My spirit knew its self, both all it was
And is and shall be; and the close-barred gate
Of knowledge fell as, in long ages gone,
The wall of Jericho fell at the blast

Of dread Jehovah's trumpet. Then a thrill,
Cold, incommunicable, awful, strange,
Laid hands upon me : and aloud I shrieked.
A smile passed over the Immortal's face :
" Thy wish is granted : all thou hast required
Is thine : why, then, that look of terror, wan
And deathlike, on thy face ? Speak, ere I pass

But I, in accents pained and slow, replied :
" Thou servant of the living God, who cam'st
To give and not refuse the boon I craved,—
Take back, take back thy gift ! I feel—I know
By that full knowledge that within me dwells,
That I have sought in vain. One thing I lack
Whereof the presence, in the heart of him
That guards his treasure, is a fount of light,
A well-spring of contentment and sweet bliss,
Of holier joys than ever knowledge won,—
And that sole thing is Love. I see it now,
In this full, overpowering, sudden beam
Shed o'er mine aching heart. Blind that I was !
Who passed unheeding by, that better part,

Nor realised this truth summed up in brief—
‘ To love ’ is ever greater than ‘ to know. ’ ”

Whereat there stole into my fevered thought
A quickening sense of joy, a settled peace
Unfelt till then ; no anguish longer held
My soul in icy fetters ; Love was Lord,
I knew—Love, strong as death and deep as life,
No stream of transient passion, but a tide
Whose flood moves on rejoicing thro’ the years
Till, swept triumphant o’er the bar of Time,
It sleeps in God’s illimitable sea.

October 5, 1894.





*JUVENILIA.**

αἶψα γὰρ ὥστε νόημα παρέρχεται ἀγλαὸς ἤβη·
οὐδ' ἴππων ὄρμη γίγνεται ἠκυτέρη.

THEOGNIS.

* Written for the most part during the summer of 1889.



Day Dreams.



I.



IGHT upon lawns and leafy dells
And meadows flashing forth in flowers,
And peaceful light on yonder towers,
And light upon the glimmering fells.

Sweet peace beside the brimming streams
And torrents foaming down the glade ;
And, as the sun's fierce glories fade,
A deeper hush like evening dreams.

Lo, with the darkness, kindly sleep
Returns ; the lingering light has past ;
Mysterious Night glides wavering, fast
And silent, o'er the muffled deep.

II.

Oft-times a sorrow dimly felt,
And vague as half-forgotten fears,
Will stir the thoughts that quicken tears :
We guess not why. Perchance indwelt

Remembrance of some spot we knew,
Of joys for ever fled away,
When Love held undisputed sway,
And, striking deep, yet deeper grew.

Then, as the days swim back to sight
A silent sigh wells from the soul ;
How swift the dark years, as they roll,
Have power to plunge our prime in night !

III.

Like some sweet half-remembered psalm,
Long-loved, which steals across the mind
As music in a choral wind,
There falls on me a chastened calm.

That hushes wakeful memories, sad
From musing on a vanished past,
And love's brief bliss—too fair to last,—
And once again my heart is glad ;

Thrilled thro' with sense of full belief
That earth's lost joys shall live once more,
Recovered on some distant shore,
For contrast set in deep relief.



Watchword.

— ἔρχεται ἡ ὥρα. St. John ix. 4. —



MOURN not the vanished hour ; 'tis thine
no more ;

But concentrate thy energies, thy time,
Thy talents, opportunities, and wealth,
Upon the golden present. *That* is thine,
And lying in thy grasp. Be wise to make
The most of every moment as it speeds.
Heed not the future—known to God alone
Who shapeth all things to His sovereign will.
Each minute's precious, and to thee is given
For loss or gain ; and every flying hour—
Never to be recalled—is bringing thee
One sure step nearer heaven or nearer hell.



An Autumn Musing.



H, sweet remembrance of long-buried
years !

How swiftly Memory, at this pensive hour,
Unbars the portal of the shuttered past,
When my dear love was here !

For oft, upon some calm, still summer eve,
When twilight shadows gradually gained,
Steeping all Nature in their mystic shroud,
We roamed the woods together.

Dear was her voice, more dear, more sweet to me
Than any sound that mortal ears might hear ;
And ah ! her face was lovely, fresh, and pure,
But now—no longer seen !

For ere the winter had made way for spring,
And while the leaves were breaking from each
bud
And life pulsated thro' the awakening land,
My love had passed away.

A Mirage.

Credula res amor est.—OVID, Met. vii. 826.



ÆL the world looked fair, love, when in
summer days, love,
Slow we took our way beside the
solitary sea ;
Everything so calmful, no intruding comer
There, to mar the dreams that floated, love, to
you and me.

When was time so bright, love? O the recollections—
How they crowd my brain to-night that longs
for rest again !
Deeply sobs the ocean, dark with storm and rain,
love,
While tempests hoarsely echo, and the earth
breathes low in pain.

So, 'twas all a fancy ? just a passing thought, love ?
All the palaces we reared were phantoms, nothing
more ?
Airy homes so bright, love, where, to reign my
queen, love,
You a heart's devotion might possess—soul's
treasure-store.

“ Ah ! but all is over ! ” clang the words so harsh,
love !
Whose the doing—yours or mine ? Between two
hearts a wall
(Sadly be it said, love) have your hands upraised,
love ;
While I—live on the same, and yet . . . the
dream's fled ; that is all.



To Spring :

AN EXPERIMENT IN VERSIFICATION.



FOR a glimpse of the Spring, with its
wonder and smile, and its blossom, and
bloom !

O for a breath of the salt sea wave to scatter the
night and the shadowing gloom !

To gaze for one hour on the set of the sun, 'mid
crimson and purple and gold,

And the lurid rack of the western clouds, their
colour, their might, and their glories untold !

Oh to hear once more the long-drawn murmur of
lines of surf rolling up on the beach,

Their green crests threatening aloft, ere they whiten
in foam, tumbled each over each ;

To feel the pulse of Atlantic gales majestic in move-
ment and onslaught and rout,

As their royal procession sweeps over the land, with
splendour and joy encircled about.

Right glad is a life by the ocean wave, haunted ever
by freedom and passion's unrest,
And the strong full music by night of the winds,
and the blast roaring out of the West ;
And sweet is the tremulous moonlight that silvers
the deep with a mantle of light and of love,
With the planet-spheres and the stars that glide in
noiseless circle and order above.



Restlessness and Rest.



EASELESS movement, ebb and flow

O'er Time's restless sea ;

Mortals born to come and go ;

Life an hour for you and me,—

Life, with all its splendid things,

Dreams of good and noble deeds ;

Light and love, divine and free ;

All the glory that life brings.

Yet, within the distance, know

Death awaits both you and me :

God has ordered so.

Seems this sad in contemplation ?

Feel you thus opprest

By that strange and dread relation—

Life, with death its consummation ?


Long you so for rest ?

Rest is sweet, but life means labour
For that very rest we love ;
And more precious will the rest be,
And more perfect will our zest be
In a crown for *work well finished*,
Somewhere far above.



Farewell.



“S it farewell? Yet not for ever, love !”
He cried, his whole soul trembling on
his lips ;

“ The sun sinks down, is hid from human gaze,
But rises, bringing with it the new day :
So must we part, yet only for a while.

O must it be? Love, but a time will come
—Who knows how soon?—when we shall meet again ;
The noon’s retreating glories shall arise
With healing in their blaze of orient strength,
To comfort us o’erwearied of the dark.

Aye, rise again ! So farewell—for a time.
And as the music of yon glittering stream
Re-echoes softly, sweetly, thro’ each cleft
Of these vast hills that compass us about,
So may my words re-echo thro’ thy heart.

O in the speaking silences of night,
Haply if doubt or sorrowful dismay
Steal o'er thee, may love's tones reverberate
Clear in the secret chambers of thy soul,
And of this heart's devotion whisper still.





THE SECRET,
AND OTHER POEMS.



ἕτερος ἐξ ἑτέρου σοφὸς τό τε πάλαι τό τε νῦν·
οὐδὲ γὰρ ῥᾶ ἴσιν ἀρρήτων ἐπέων πύλας
ἐξευρεῖν·

BACCHYLIDES.

Apri alla verità che vien nel petto.

DANTE, *Purgatorio*.

We touch the shadow ; lo, it stands
As if to mock our hopes and tears ;
But still we trust, beyond the years,
To rest at length our wearied hands

Upon the substance which had cast
Each fitful shadow long ago ;
And we shall lift our eyes, and know
The Truth attained, the sorrow past.

The Secret.



WHAT is the secret of life, we wonder,
Its mystery, strange to comprehend?
Where its beginning, and what its end?

Does good predominate over ill,
Or ill crush out the striving good?
These are the problems whereon we brood.

Life is a tangled web, we know,
Of fact and fallacy, right and wrong,
Of tears and smiles, of sob and song.

In youth the world looms large enough
For the budding soul to expatiate,
Its each road merging at Heaven's gate.

But, as the days of earliest prime
Grow lessening shadows, ahead—we dream—
Thro' the future's mist new passions gleam.

There come, with regret for a faded Past,
Convictions, unquenched by flood or fire,
Bidding us struggle and still aspire ;

Not yield to disappointment's power
That fain would blast our energies' scope,
Rendering fruitless the soil of Hope.

For Hope's glad soil produces growth
Incontrovertibly sure to brace
The mental faculties thro' life's race :

Life's race—for the prize of Wisdom pure,
And Knowledge refined from dregs of earth
And Love, that looks for a second birth

In far-off regions where God is proved
Source and end of immortal Truth,
And Love's fire absolute strength, in sooth ;

Sweet communion of soul with soul—
That hidden glory which links afresh
The sometime oneness 'twixt God and flesh.

Years flit ; hearts once aglow with faith,
Or ardent cravings for joy and gain,
Grow dull 'neath age's increasing strain.

We have reached, after painful toil, a height
When we survey the path late trod :
Was it all a dream that our goal was—God ?

Comes a sorrow to cross our life,
Subtle of touch ; some mute keen smart
To draw the blood from an aching heart ;

Some sacrifice for a nobler end
Than this world knows ; 'tis *then*, 'mid stress
Of a thousand conflicts, more or less,

That suddenly—as when Moses struck
The rock in a thirsty wilderness—
Flow the waters that heal and bless.

I trow that in other worlds, indeed,
Life riddling and tangled now (it seems)
A heaped confusion of strifes and dreams,

When seen outstretched before our eyes—
Its panorama laid bare, at last—
Shall appear no hazard of Chance, but cast

A sphere, compacted by God's own hand,
With the outside roughnesses left, uncouth,
For earth's probation to wear them smooth.

To work, and combat, and struggle below,
To agonise for the gains stored there
In mansions not made with hands, be our care !

Attainment now would but falsify
Life's law reported through space and time :
Perfection be won in some better clime,

Not here ! This lesson we need—that man,
Most oft thro' failure here and strife
Rough hews his path to the Gates of Life.

Certainly Death shall close not all ;
Else what were Life but a story told,
A moment's radiance—quenched and cold ?

A fragment flashed from a starry tide
That swiftly, fallen across the night,
Fades in a dying splendour of light ?

Death sets the coping-stone to life,
And suffers the soul, from sense set free,
To wander at will through Eternity,

Learning ever, at Wisdom's fount,
Yet deeper meaning in things create—
Or high or low, or small or great ;

Love bringing—subservient still to Law—
To ripe fulfilment that glorious plan,
Full reconcilment of God and man.

Here is our time of trial ; 'tis Death
Must solve the secret—Earth's " Now," I ken,
Made plain in the light of God's grand " Then."

Agnosticism.



EN tell us God exists not ; that He stands
The dim projection of our hopes and fears
Upon the future ; never realised,

But for all time the vague embodiment
Of human yearning and of human thought :
We know not aught save Matter.

Blind, O blind !

When Reason, spite her thousand arguments,
Is powerless to prove God's life to us,
We recognise and feel His presence here—
Deep in the heart, and deeper in the soul,
And in the consciousness we have of Him.
Nay, show that nought exists, or mind of man
Or things to sense perceptive ; say that all
Is false and evanescent as a dream ;

But not that God exists not. He is here
When we surmise His Being least ; He moves
Mysterious in His loveliness and power ;
Stirs all that's noblest, purest, best within,
Filling the soul with light and life diffused
From His grand Self.

We care not what they say !
Men have their little day, but God endures—
'Mid wrecks of Time the One Reality,
With everlasting arms stretched out to draw
Earth's sons, like tired children, home to Him.



Storm and Wreck.



TORMLESS that morning broke; the
Sun, unclouded,
Rose up, and smote the heart of Night
in twain;

While, from the watch-towers of the Dawn's young
splendour,

The light in golden ripples flecked the main.

Still as the day wore on, the calm grew deeper;

The folded mist scarce changed its slumbering
form,

Ere, from the northward, gloomed an arch of
tempest

Vaulted with cloud and moving leagues of storm.

The darkness grew apace ; and, mantling heaven,
In one drear, deathlike pall, full o'er the sea
It fell ; furiously strove the winds ; the lightnings
Shot their far fires ; the rains drove fierce and free.

There, 'mid the strife of elements, while thunder
Rolled deep-tongued echoes through the hollow
night,
A vessel toiled, despite the rack and fury :
God help her crew, and quell the wild affright !

All but in reach of the desired haven,
Almost in hail of their dear native strand,
Foundered that good ship ; down beneath the billows
She plunged, with her six hundred, close to land.

Far, far below, tho' tempests rave above them,
Those brave souls lie till God's great Advent
dawn ;
Among the rocks and tangled seaweed sleeping,
They rest, unvexed by wind or any storm.

On the Death of a Child.

*Adapted from the Latin of MARTIAL,
Epigrams, v. 34, 37.*



MORE fair than ever swan was fair,
That with her stately oarage moved,
The snowy marvel of the mere ;
More fair indeed, and sweeter far,
Wert thou, beloved Erotion.
Was ever shell of Lucrine lake
So deftly carved, so flawless-fine ?
Or coral of the Red Sea dyed
A deeper flush ? Nay, never snow,
Nor lily whose young loveliness
No hand has soiled, to me did seem
In aught to be compared with thee.

Erotion, on whose marble brow
My tenderest kisses rained ! O lips
That breathed of honey newly stored
By Attic bees, and many a rose
In Pæstum's garden plucked at morn !
Bright hair that I so often loved
To fondle ! thy resplendency
Ne'er yet was seen in all the waves
That Tmolus rolls o'er golden sands.

Lie light upon her beauty, Earth !
Her foot, I ween, trod light o'er thee.



To a Baby Boy.



SWEET little boy with the golden hair
Soft and fair,
Here and there
Suffer the wind thro' a summer air
Ever so gently to breathe and blow
When the sun dips low
And one kind star
Shines with its lone light, faint and far.

Dear little one with the eyes so blue,
Earnest and true,
That have caught the hue
Of the tranquil ocean thro' and thro' ;
Angel eyes, where gleams the light
Of a dewy heaven, crystal-bright.

Dear little love !
Kiss me once and twice and thrice
 With those pretty lips
Sweeter than flowers the bold bee sips.

Say, do you love me ? tell me, dear !
Nay, but the answer is here, my dear,
 All in those bonny blue eyes
 Deep as the moving skies,
 Where a wonder of laughter lies,
 And ah ! so trustful and clear.

Sweet little child, best treasure on earth,
 Angels guarded your birth ;
Angels are with you here and now ;
Each morn they caress the fair young brow,
And tenderly watch by the tiny bed
Where sunbeams kiss the golden head ;
 While the least wan trace
 Of tears they chase
 Ever so far away.

TO A BABY BOY.

My baby, my joy, and my innocent pride,
The world, they tell us, is cold and wide ;
Does it matter so much, whatever betide,
 With you, little one, by my side ?
And so may the good God bless you, my
 darling, to-day,
 Bless you for ever and aye !



Impromptu.



LINGER awhile, sweet light !

Still wave thy floating banners in
the west,

As thro' the air there steals a solemn rest

Or ever comes the night.

Such pause may not be long ;

So soon, 'mid quiet depths of darkness, rise

Bright stars that tremble like angelic eyes

Hung with quick tears, when some diviner song

Wells thro' the silent skies.

Thou canst not linger more,

Image of all things brief and beautiful ! gleams

Of myriad worlds whence broken glory streams

Toward this earthly shore.

*On Hearing
Chopin's Third Nocturne.*



MUSIC, that bringest unto souls, which yearn
To catch some glimpse of regions
worlds away,

A better revelation than the day
Upon night's shrouding dark ; from thee we learn
Secret emotions, fits of strangest grief,

That breathe withal a subtle sweet delight,
Which never heart may fathom. What relief

Thy passing harmonies beget ! O light
Cast, dew-like, o'er our heaviness and gloom !

Far hid 'mid " depths of Personality,"
Thy power and presence yield our spirits room
Unfathom'd seas of Thought to travel through ;

Thou mystic star hung from Eternity !
We dare not doubt thou art divine and true.



H. Maurice Page 1907

*Under the Crags of the
Finsteraarhorn,*

August 18, 1892.



MAJESTIC in their silence rise the hills,
Each summit crown'd with everlasting
snows ;
And from their crags, where glittering ice-fields sleep,
The echoing torrent flows.

The slow-enfolding mists ebb to and fro,
Winding damp arms about the rocky spires,
And, all too soon, from peak and scarpèd cliff
Fade the enchanted fires.

Over a jutting hill the moonlight stoops,
Touching with silver half the quiet lake ;
While, flush'd with secret loveliness, the clouds
A new-born glory take.

The day is past ; Night, like a sombre robe,
Falls o'er the face of Nature ; all is still ;
But in my soul a living Presence bides,—
Of mountain and of rill.

The Poet.

To D. M. Panton.



HE poet stood by the sea,
Under the brow of the night,
While the firmament flashed in stars
And the moon unveil'd her light ;
And the fireflies darted and shone,
And the sudden meteors gleam'd,
Dying out in the depths of a joy diviner
Than ever the poet had dream'd.

And an echo of minster bells
Stole up on the wings of the wind,
Filling the air with the chimes of Heav'n,
Utter'd to humankind ;
And the river swept noiselessly by
To the sea ; and the cataract leapt
Half a league in the light of its silver foam,
And the soul of the charm'd woods slept.

And the heart of the poet was glad,
 And he wrought him a noble psalm,
Crown'd with a vision of Life and Love,
 And touch'd with a sacred calm ;
To the uttermost ends of the earth
 That the feet of his fellows had trod
His song went out by the way of the years,
 And rose to the feet of God.



A Winter's Walk:

Within view of the Wrekin, near Wrockwardine.



UPON a shoulder of yon distant hill
That rises from a mist-enfolded plain,
The short-lived splendours of a winter's eve
Fade into purple shadow. Toward the east
A slumbrous haze hangs, like a funeral pall,
Mystic and silent in the waning light.
Against the unclouded blue of frosty skies
Each leafless tree a fairy network weaves,
Motionless ; while anon a drowsy bird,
The would-be harbinger of spring to come,
Pursues his doubtful quest across the dome
Of twilight fields, and down the glimmering lane.
Stilled are the myriad sounds of busy life,
Save when our curious ears catch, far away,
The clink of steel upon the frozen pool,
Some whistle from a farm, or, clear and quick
Upon the tingling air of icy night,
The sweet elf-music of a village chime.



A Valentine.



WREATH of ivy and of snowdrops
pure
Came to delight me as with Spring's
bright breath ;

Thy love, my sweet, thy love that knows not death,
Seemed twined round each white bud; love with its lure
Of benedictions from the fallen year,

Of half-accomplished joys still veiled in gloom
Till life's unclouded summer breaks in bloom,
And light of wedded days dawn, calm and clear.
Dear, for an earnest of the bliss to be,

Take these poor lines, with careful art unwrought,
But welling into simplest melody

Straight from a heart whose love for thee has caught
A hidden rapture of perpetual song,
Whereof the radiance glows the whole day long.

In the Bernese Oberland.

August, 1893.



N paths of quiet joy and peace
Three perfect days went swiftly by ;
We watched the purple sunsets die,
And hailed the day's divine increase.

The Alpine peaks in dread array
Were our sublime companions then ;
We turned aside from haunts of men ;
We loved in secrecy to stray

And catch the icy breath of morn
Come blowing over frozen seas,
Which, glimmering thro' the ranks of trees,
Sloped from the sovran Wetterhorn.

From many a mountain terrace rose
 Long leagues of immemorial rock,
 That brave the stormy lightning's shock
And every wintry wind that blows

Across those Alpine barriers cold :
 O peaks of terror touched with tears
 Of all the dim and distant years
That o'er a sorrowing world have rolled !

At daybreak oft we rose ; the hills
 Put off their diadem of stars ;
 O'er broken crag and level bars
Came whispers from a hundred rills.

In solemn pomp the mountain-kings
 Flung up their brows to greet the dawn ;
 While, as the azure-lidded Morn
Passed by on swift and radiant wings,

The white, lone fields of ice and snow
 Burned blood-red, like a funeral-pyre ;
 On every crest and stormy spire
Fell splendours of the sacred glow.

Far down the cloistered valley, bright
And tranquil in the early beam,
We watched the sudden torrent gleam
In sliding arcs of lucid light.

The forests, mute with all their leaves,
Rejoiced at touch of day unveiled ;
Night's every vagrant shadow quailed
Before the sigh which Morning heaves.



In the Lötschenthal.

Inscribed to S. R. S., the companion of my wanderings in that
pleasantest and most secluded of Swiss valleys, during
the summer of 1894.



RIGHT and fair, in the cold, still air, and
robed in vesture of stainless white,
Pure as a sky when song-notes die of
even, ebbing away to night,
Seems the glow of the far-off snow whose radiance
crowns the untrodden height.

Here, alone as I stand, the moan of streams that
murmur adown the hills,
Strikes mine ear with a cadence clear and soft as a
voice which, rejoicing, thrills
Thro' the heart of a man when start Love's first shy
preludes that rapture fills.

Faint and far is the first-born star whose pale lamp
hangs upon yonder crest,
Dim and white in the lessening light ; and fainter
still in the cloudless west
Idly dream in the sun's spent gleam the ghosts of a
glory sunk to rest.

Strange yet sweet are the thoughts whose feet make
silent music, as o'er the mind
Soft they steal at Memory's heel, like fancies borne
on a fitful wind,—
Thoughts whose breath is supreme o'er Death that
fails not ever, nor looks behind.



In Memoriam.

H. P. T.

Died April 6, 1895.

ὄν οἱ θεοὶ φίλουσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος.

MENANDER.



TO-NIGHT, upon the brink of this blue
lake

Whose waters lave the soft Italian shore,

I stand amid a hush of all things, sore
At heart, and sorrowful for thy dead sake,
Child, whose brief course is run. We vainly make
Our horoscope of each young life, and store
The coming years with glory ; for evermore,
Unrecked, Death's presence follows in the wake.

O not for thee the stress and strife of years,
Life's fevered joys and its abiding pains !
No more that mute, cold brow shall cloud in tears ;
Not thine the cares that fret, the light that wanes !
The hidden mystery of GOD now lies
Clear, like an open scroll, before thine eyes.

Lago Maggiore,
April 14.

On a May Morning.

May 22, 1895.



ORN ! and the heart of the earth
Is visibly stirred,
Beating in tune with a voice that the
Heaven hath heard,
When, laughing amain in his mirth,
The Lord of the day
Upriseth to greet the birth
Of the new-born May.

Cometh across the sea
The faint expectant ray,
In rapture and holy glee,
Lingering low adown on the virgin strand ;
And the soul of the wondering land
Awaketh free.

A glory of dawn hath struck
 To the pulse of the world ;
Over the dim woods, mute in solemn array,
 A silent splendour is whirled—
Splendour of joy unborn
 And of hours unfurled.

All thro' the valleys wide
The great mists roll
In measureless tide ;
High on their dazzling brows are the fires of morn
 In rapture of soul upborne.
And never a waking flower
But is clad in the golden dower
Of the wealth of springs of the Dawn flowing forth
 in his might.
While over the awestruck hills
Dance the magic feet of the rills
 In music of flight.

The reign of the dark-crowned Night is over and done,
 Death-doomed at the glance of the Sun !

The Wanderer.



ESIDE this sea-encumbered strand
Where, glimmering faint across the sand
The white low lines of tortured foam

Are vainly seeking for a home,
I wander silently and slow
And watch the surges come and go.

Above, the star-embroidered skies
Unshut their myriad-glancing eyes,—
Those unknown depths of living light
Set in the hollow of the night :
Beneath, there heaves the insurgent sea,
Stern symbol of Eternity.

'Twixt these two infinites stand I—
The echoing sea and silent sky,
A wanderer, whose life's strands are cast
Midmost the grey abysmal Past

And unscanned Future, heeding not
If life be man's sublimer lot,
Or close of life, when man lays down
His burden and puts on the crown.

The swift stars throb within their sphere,
And hour by hour, and year by year,
Perform, thro' never-ending Time,
The functions of a life sublime ;
While, thro' unnumbered ages, still
The great seas work their Maker's will.
Lo, in majestic period
The wide creation worships God.

Ah ! soul of mine, if oft thy part
In life with fret and aching heart
Be compassed, still hold firmly on—
No rest, till the long race be won !
The chains that bind us here are strong,
And forged with links of Doubt and Wrong ;
Yet patience ! far beyond this strife
Where sin and woe breed discord rife,

Beyond our brief horizon—set,
Like some uno'erleaped parapet,
To stay our steps from realms that lie
(Their glories screened from human eye)
Upon the further side—there come,
Like voices from an oft-sought home,
Grave words our ears perhaps had caught
In childhood's hours, and now are fraught
With peace,—sweet hints that God has sent
For counsel and encouragement !

Christmas, 1895.



In the Twilight.



VER the dusky verge
Of the quiet lea,
Slowly I watch emerge
The silver rim
Of the crescent moon ; pale, dim,
The soft stars, one by one,
With holy glee
Steal out, and light their lamps ;
For day is done.

The tempests are asleep :
Only the balm
Of some cool evening wind
Ruffles the calm :
The listening ear of Night
Can catch no sound
Save when, in slumber bound,
Earth turns and sighs :
Peace rules the deep.

Aye, peace! across the dark
Star-paven sky
The Night-queen's silver bark
Goes gliding by :
With murmuring faint, the streams
Drowse as they flow
In their hid channels ; slow
Down-dropping dews
Slide from the heavens, like gleams
Of Love-born dreams.

Frail breaths of jessamine,
Of roses fair,
Shy hints of mignonette,
Rise thro' the air
From unseen gardens, there—
Beneath my feet.
Ah me! how at their spell
Swift fancies rise!
What touching sympathies,
What golden memories,
And thoughts how sweet!

The Light from the Golden Isles.



AS some tired voyager through unknown
lands

Beholds, across the mists that rise at eve,

An arc of light that glimmers to the heaven

Crowning the city that he seeks afar ;

And so takes heart, and moves with swifter step

In eager longing to descry once more

The haunts of men grown unfamiliar,

And fancies that he hears the busy hum

Of life bestirring in each crowded street,

And deems he sees, unrolled before his eyes,

The panorama of a world in brief :

Ev'n so I, moving down Time's shadowy ways,

Amid Life's brooding passion of unrest

Oft catch, as twilights gather, a far gleam,

Some momentary splendour from the marge

Of Death's majestic sea ; a mystic light

Rayed in the stillness from the Golden Isles,
Those Golden Isles of everlasting day,
Whose holy shores are laved by stormless tides
Midmost the Ocean of Eternity.

O happy Isles, ringed round with bliss
In yon dim underworld,
Whose shores soft-whispering wavelets kiss,
Whose beauties lie unfurled
To every wind that floats o'er fields
Angelic feet have trod—
For you I yearn, bright Isles of Peace,
Set in the sea of God !

1896.



The Mother and the Child.



ONE summer's afternoon when all things
sweet
In flower and sunshine o'er the fair
fields smiled,
I saw, upon the lawn spread at my feet,
A mother and her child.

Her eyes were bent upon the little form
That nestled close within her warm embrace,
And often would she pause, and lift the veil,
To stroke the sleeper's face.

A gracious presence looked she, pacing there
With measured step and slow ; and ah! the sound
Of whispered greetings into sleeping ears
Touched me with joy profound.

Entranced I stood, nor dared to break the spell
 So pure a vision kindled in my heart :
I watched the sunlight falling on the twain
 Making the sleeper start ;

And then I turned : across the happy fields
 Stole breathing balms and scent of summer flowers,
Like unseen trophies brought by unseen hands
 Wrested from unseen powers.

I heeded not their lure ; before me rose
 That picture of the mother and her child,
On whose fair lives God's glory seemed to float
 In sunbeams soft and mild.

June, 1897.



In Memoriam.

Rev. Richard Elwyn

(*Master of the Charterhouse ; Canon of Canterbury*),
Died September 28, 1897.



MASTER, whose latest words re-echo still
Within yon reverend walls that crown
this old

Historic town, so grey amid the dim
And silent memories of its vanished past ;
Here where, with eyes of mirth, you lately spoke
Your message, prompted by the sweet child-heart
That beat beneath the snows of seventy years—
Aye here, amid this world of dawning lives
Made brighter by your presence, fain would I
—Heart speaking out to heart, tho' worlds away—
This last time hail you.

Ah, we dream, we dream !

'Tis *you* that have awakened from life's dream ;

And, while we idly beat with feeble hands
And wearied spirits 'gainst the prison doors
That cloke the light of Heaven from our view
You, in unclouded vision, have looked forth
And gazed upon the unveiled face of God.

So we, that wait but see not, cherishing
That summer-memory you left with us,
Lay, by the tired brow so still in death,
This lowly tribute, like a flower that blooms
Its one brief hour, and, fading, dies away.





H. M. Page

A Winter Moonlight.

A Fragment.



. THE sight that met
Our gaze was one of those swift glimpses caught
At intervals—too rare, alas !—that haunt
Our after-life like hints of Heaven. Above
Hung the pale moon all in a wintry sky,
Wearing that frozen smile upon her face,
'Mid orbs of bliss shot thro' with living fire,
And constellations massed in depths of light
Unfathomable ; while, horizonwards,
Clad in the garment of majestic peace,
Lay the enchanted sea. No stormy surge
From those salt-laden lips disturbed our joy,
But only the low music of the arched
Inevitable wave that, landward drawn
From out the slumbering ocean's silver tides,
Fell, as the lightest whisper spoken, to hush
Its foam-bright water on the glassy sands.

Sunset on the Richborough Road.

October 7, 1897.

To M. E. P.



LEAR heights of heaven that welcomed
back,
Thro' all your domes of laughing blue,
The face of yon slow-setting sun
What time his punctual course was due ;
Across your crimson-fretted rack
What rush of purple fancy flies !
What tumult of divine unrest
As the long evening splendour dies !

Unfolded far by unseen hands
The curtains of the radiant day
Drop, blood-red, o'er the shining floods
That mock the sunbeams at their play ;
In many a backward-fleeting curve
Unwind the tresses of the Night,
And over all the level lands
Wavers the fast-retreating light.

Like mystic echoes caught in dreams
From some loud ocean's golden rim,
O'er sandswept dune and shadowy pool
Steal fragments of a cosmic hymn ;
While sleep the winds and slide the dews
Thro' calms of even, far and wide
The landlocked haven, bathed in mist
Hears murmurs of the incoming tide.



Autumn Music.

Oct. 29, 1897.



ALM and bright,
This Autumn day
Holds in fee
The wealth of May.

Sweet and strong
The sunbeams gleam
Over meadow
And over stream.

Where the morning
Mists lie low
Webs of fairy
Gossamer glow.

Thro' the lawns
Are strewn anew
Million sparks
Of diamond dew.

Seaward lo !
The primrose bar
Of the sundawn
Shines afar.

Bold the heart
Of radiant June ;
Magical
Her depths of noon ;

But a subtler
Purer bliss
Seems to breathe
In Autumn's kiss ;

Touching chords
Of music fine,
All-elusive,
Half divine.

The Passing of Summer.



ASTWARD, a level line of lifted sea
Frowned o'er by bars of cloud ; westward
the flush

Of swift indignant sunset, all too soon
Melting to shadow ; yonder, in the north,
Zones of incumbent mist that hourly shift
Their airy station ; far to southward, lo !
A sleeping range of lowly-ordered hills
In solemn twilights hushed.

Ah, summer suns,
How soon ye fade, nor leave one glow behind
Of all your glory ! how the days decrease,
And strong the night winds mutter ! Once again
Thro' mellow Autumn's lingering robe of gold,
Starteth white Winter's iron hand : anon

His ice-mailed cohorts will descend, and rob
Our fields of all their joy, and bring the long
Cold nights about our heads.

But Earth, the while,
Happy, shall nurse her deep immortal heart,
Biding the resurrection of the Spring.



Epilogue.



Voices After Sunset.



CROSS the bay, when every glory-cloud
Had died athwart the sunset ; in the
strange

Divine enchantment of the afterglow
When all the world is hushed, and stars grow bright,—
I heard, or seemed to hear, a Voice that rose
From out the depths of immemorial years,
To breathe a whisper from the sundering Past.
Across the bay, and over the long line
Of wandering foam-bells on the sleepless bar,
That Voice bare witness of all secret things,
The while it stole adown the low grey shore
And fell into a whisper thro' the hills.
It spake of dreams that, when the days were young,
Called sudden glories into marvellous life ;

Of visions seen when hearts, made strong in faith,
Were crowned with lightness as the morning sun
Is crowned with might and joy ; visions that came
And vanished down the silent gulfs of Death
And never more returned. It told of Hope
That laughed and woke a music in the soul
When life was one sweet summer ; radiant Hope
That drooped too soon, on whose brow Grief had set
His chaplet of derision. Still the Voice
Took up the tale, and rolled its record forth,
Singing of Love who wandered, long ago,
O'er many a rose-strewn tract, till, 'mid the pride
Of conscious joy, pale Sorrow, touching him,
Shook the wild splendours from his golden wings,
And mocked the young-eyed triumph in his gaze,
And reft his beauty from him, smiting down
His pride, and wrecked his swift imperious life
Upon the starless seas of gaunt Despair.
“ O Voice,” I cried, as, in a sudden pause,
The song-notes faltered in the twilight hush,
“ Is this the sum of all thy song ? is this
Thine only guerdon to beseeching hearts ? ”

Lo, with the words yet hot upon my lips,
Forth from the glimmering portal of the west,
A larger utterance seemed to pierce the void
Of slumber-laden darkness,—utterance winged
With hallowed music from the choir of Heaven,
Which charmed the soul to rapture, filling it
With peace that passeth knowledge, and the light
Of Faith and hoary Hope. Methought the air
Did throb with song and welcome; every star
Blazed with a sevenfold glory; and mine ear,
Lifted to listen, caught, or seemed to catch,
Immortal echoes from angelic harps.

“Faith is not dead,” so spake the Voice, “nor Hope,
Nor Love; they suffer but eclipse awhile,
What time the shadow of an earthly life,
And darkness wrought by evil round the world,
Have marred the brightness, and have dimmed the gleam
Of those three deathless stars—Love, Mercy, Truth,
That flame upon the diadem of God.”

July 8, 1893.



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