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AS THE WIND BLOWS
BY EDEN PHILLPOTTS



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BY

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

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ON EYLESBARROW

HITHER, at set of autumn sun,
Each golden child of Hesper flies
From gardens of old deities,
Where Zeus the maiden Hera won.

Their footsteps kindled stone by stone
The time-worn barrow, where it stands,
Above wide, valley border-lands,
Austere and imminent and alone.

Their fingers smoothed each granite frown
And blossomed where no flow'r may live,
And gave, what never flow'r can give,
Of living flame-light for a crown.

And from their flickering kirtles fell
A gleam upon its stubborn ways,
To touch their nakedness with rays
Of amaranth and asphodel.

O Hesperids, remember him
Whose sun is westering to the change,
Along uneven paths and strange,
By shadowed aisles and frontiers dim.

Flash but one token, pure and rare,
From the abundance of your grace,
For many a storm hath stripped the face
Of this, his life, and left it bare.

ON EYLESBARROW

Dance but one measure in a heart
Sad and unprofitably proud,
Ere to your chariots of cloud
Ye leap again and so depart.

NOCTURNE

TWILIGHT and falling dew ; a little bell
And answering bell, from campanile far,
Chime and are silent ; one triumphant star
Conquers the after-glow, that like a shell,
Nacreous and rose, vibrating as it dies,
Faints on the lifted forehead of the snow,
Falls from the deepening purple of the skies
And falling fades upon the hill below.
Unnumbered olive-trees, like hooded wights,
Stand solemn in their companies and grey ;
Mule-mounted men go clattering down the way
To yonder galaxy of earth-born lights.
The crepuscule from sea and radiant land
Hath drunk the colour ; night lifts up her hand
For peace before the coming of the moon—
All darkling heaven will be silver soon.

THE HUNTING

WHEN red sun fox steals down the sky,
And darkness dims the heavens high,
There leap again upon his tracks
The eager, starry, hunting packs.
 They glitter, glitter, gold and green,
 With sparks of frosty fire between,
 And Dian bright as day ;
 While in the gloaming, far below,
 Brown owl doth shout "Hi! Tally Ho
 Sun fox hath gone away!"

To music of the spheres they sweep
Over the western world asleep ;
Then in the east, with sudden rush,
Sun fox shall whisk his white-tipped brush.
 The field is fading, gold and green,
 With sparks of frosty fire between,
 And Dian growing grey ;
 While morning leaps the hither hill
 And herald lark shouts with a will,
 "Sun fox hath gone away!"

Oh, Huntress fond and silly stars—
White Venus, fiery, futile Mars,
In vain your pack ye whirl and cast
Upon the marches of the vast ;

THE HUNTING

In vain ye glitter, gold and green,
 With sparks of frosty fire between,
 And Dian's arrows fly
 In shattered shafts of ebbing light ;
 For ne'er shall day be caught by night,
 And sun fox cannot die.

THE STRIKING HOURS

My brother, can the heart of ocean say
 When winds may woo her bosom ; when the ships,
 Or sudden galleon of an azure day,
 Shall fling her foam to rainbows? Can eclipse
 Hide up their silver when the full moons will?
 Are the cloud-cisterns of the latter rain
 At beck of every, summer-starven rill?
 Life cannot call the time ; nor man may feign
 That he shall haply choose when he would have :
 To will the striking hours he is not free,
 That chime between his cradle and his grave,
 Or speed, or slow the hands of destiny.
 A bunch of stars upon the vine of heaven
 Grows ripe and falls and passes when complete ;
 The galaxy of grapes to your mouth given,
 Bursting their bloomy chalices, are sweet
 One little moment ; for they will not stay
 Your pleasure and their consummation hold
 While you misdoubt and linger and delay
 Before their cups of purple and of gold.
 When to a feast the gods would make you free
 At their own time, or never, shall it be.

NIGHT

ANOTHER day has ended and again
The fading emeralds of the quiet west
Grow dusky o'er the hill-top and the plain,
Dying along each drowsy vale and crest,
Where Earth lifts up her bosom to the breast
Of Night oncoming. Now once more she brings
To the least folded flow'r her primal rest,
Opens the mantle of her darkenings
And sprinkles the white dew from both her starry wings.

The moth and beetle, owl and flittermouse—
All creatures that do call the moon their sun—
Steal silent forth, each from his little house.
They mount and fly, and others creep and run,
Where fox and hare and brock have all begun
The task of living. Now alert, awake,
They seek their joy and substance ; every one
Pads out into the dingle, heath and brake ;
While hungry fishes stir the silver of the lake.

For servants of the day another boon
Brings Night, and as the working hours decrease,
Lifts up her evening star and sickle moon
To disenthral, unfetter and release ;
Bidding the long-drawn tale of labour cease.
She comes with twilight healing for each smart
Of soul and body, lays her unguent peace
With fingers cool on every aching part ;
Anoints the tired flesh, soothes the day-foundered heart.

She asks no worship from our drooping eyes ;
She needs no prayer to minister our plight ;
Hers not our little deeds and destinies,
But still to smooth the pillow, lower the light ;
Play nurse for every world-awearied wight ;
Comfort and succour ; at a touch redeem ;
And pour her ancient anodyne of might :
Omnipotent sleep, inviolate, supreme,
Insensible as death, without one sigh or dream.

SWINBURNE

CHILDREN and lovers and the cloud-robed sea
Shall mourn him first ; and then the motherland,
Weeping in silence by his empty hand
And fallen sword, that flashed for Liberty.
Song-bringer of a glad new minstrelsy,
He came and found joy sleeping and swift fanned
Old pagan fires, then snatched an altar brand
And wrote, " The fearless only shall be free ! "

Oh, by the flame that made thine heart a home,
By the wild surges of thy silver song,
Seer before the sunrise, may there come
Spirits of dawn to light this aching wrong
Called Earth ! Thou saw'st them in the foregrow roam ;
But we still wait and watch, still thirst and long.

JUNE

JUNE, who goes garlanded, who, never sleeping,
Laughs from behind the eastern hills at night,
And flashes to the hidden skylark keeping
His morning watch and thrilling from the height
Ere yet the stars are dim.

June, who unseals all fountains at their sources,
And pours life like a river overflowing
In proud and passionate desire, who courses
To throne our feeling higher than our knowing
And heap it to the brim.

June, when the new-born find their feet and wings,
Scent the sweet grass and air and taste their being,
And in their wanderings and wonderings,
Their motion and their hearing and their seeing
Conquer the earth and sky.

June, with her feast of flow'rs and lyric rapture,
Whose fair days fly the fleetest of the year,
So pure and fresh that only youth may capture
Their rainbow shapes without a thought of fear,
Without a single sigh.

BELLS OF VARENNA

DROWSY and sweet along the Larian Lake
Your melody is stealing ;
Your fitful pealing
Floats on the pinion of a summer night.
Aloft the murmuring upland echoes wake
And wing upon the mountains,
Whence flying fountains
Thin their wild whiteness out o'er many a height,
 Bells of Varenna,
 Bells of Varenna—
 Ancient bells,
 Solemn bells,
 Bells,
 Bells.

A tall grey campanile and a spire
Of russet red upspringing,
Meet for your ringing,
O most melodious, mediæval chime,
Arise and point with fane of moonlight fire
To forests and snow ridges
And far-flung bridges
And ruined castles of the olden time,
 Bells of Varenna,
 Bells of Varenna—
 Dulcet bells,
 Dreaming bells,
 Bells,
 Bells.

Along a floor of crystal, where the moon,
From her blue mansion bending,
Awaits the sending
Of your deep benison and soft "Good-night,"
Canorous cadence comes. Too soon, too soon,
Faint off the last far throbbing
And silver sobbing
By Como's patined pathway, still and bright,
 Bells of Varenna,
 Bells of Varenna—
 Sleeping bells,
 Weary bells,
 Bells,
 Bells.

IN THE VALLEY

HEATHER and potentilla fold
The rocks with purple and with gold ;
The burn beneath sings clear and cold.

Here man and woman kept a tryst ;
Here often met ; here first they kissed
Under the white and secret mist.

And here, within this holy place,
He came and thundered her disgrace,
And looked his last upon her face.

And while he cursed her ruined name,
Her young soul fainted, sick with shame,
Before the death knell of her fame.

Had heath and potentil but known
His wrath and her despairing moan,
Their twinkling flowers had surely flown.

And had the burn but felt that cry,
Or understood their agony,
She must have wept her silver dry.

The grey hills heard the lover take
An oath, that made their echoes ache,
To hate all women for her sake.

The sunshine saw the woman cast
Herself to earth when he had past,
Her little pitcher broke at last.

But heath and potentil are gay ;
The waters sing upon their way,
Though all this happened yesterday.

For June must joy, though joy departs,
And life must laugh, though sorrow smarts,
And buds must break as well as hearts.

GAFFER'S SONG

THE boys don't hoe like they used to do,
And the maids don't sew like they used to do ;
The hen don't lay
And the hound don't bay,
And the wind don't blow like it used to do.

The men don't drink like they used to do,
And the girls don't wink like they used to do ;
The bud don't swell
And the flow'rs don't smell ;
And the folk don't think like they used to do.

The milk don't cream like it used to do,
And the ewes don't teem like they used to do ;
The corn don't kern
And the sun don't burn ;
And my head won't scheme like it used to do.

Bad men ban't hung like they used to be,
Good songs ban't sung like they used to be ;
The jolly and wise
Have all flown to the skies ;
And I ban't so young as I used to be.

SCANDAL

THE owl alighted in a yew
Beside the portals of my house ;
The hour was nearly half-past two
And, as he ate his juicy mouse,
A cuckoo clock made cheerful chime
Within and shouted out the time.

“ O gracious God ! ” the owl began,
And rolled his round eyes at the moon,
“ What a black piece of work is man—
Well might we miss cuckoo in June,
How mad, misguided, inhumane
To keep a cuckoo on a chain !

“ But all the feathered folk must know ;
This infamy I'll bring to light
And tell the horror high and low
And scream the crime by day and night.
No bird shall sing to him again
Who keeps a cuckoo on a chain.”

Good neighbour, of your charity
Consider that mistaken fowl ;
Beware you tell not truth awry
And, hooting with your brother owl,
Into the public ear complain
I keep a cuckoo on a chain.

WELCOME

THE hard azure on high
That bends over the Spring
Falls a tinkling, a thrill—
Sudden, silvery, shrill ;
For the lark's in the sky
And his lyre-shapen wing
Lifts the song in a spiral at will.

In the East is the wind ;
At the fringe of the wood
Shiver catkins of gold
Or the fleece and the fold.
Sure the eaning ewes find
That the sunlight is good,
Though chill Eurus, his scythe's on the wold.

Dawns a sweet lemon light
Through the red-bosomed earth ;
Leaps and sparkles a train
Along dingle and lane ;
For the primrosen bright,
They are come to their birth
And the daffodil's dancing again.

THE NEOLITH

SOLE standing in utter loneliness—superbly alone—
A monolith ruggedly lifts, with the roseal ling at his feet.
Only the murmur of bees and the twinkle and throb of the
heat
On the league-long height, and the shade from his granite
thrown.

Roll upon roll of the Moor flung out on a sky-line free ;
Clouds at the zenith blue ; in the flower-clad earth beneath
The dust of a neolith : one who has swept this heath
As the chieftain of vanished hordes and their fate and their
destiny.

When he died, that no mocking phantom, or jealous shade
Of him mighty, should darken their lodge in the distant
glen,
They brought their lord hither, on shoulders of mourning
men,
And tore at their hair and howled long and fierce music
made.

Then they sought for a stone of girth that should evermore
mark his place
And be seen for remembrance, afar on the frowning hill,
Of that leader of men, whose right arm and resistless will
Had lifted his clan to power and to splendour and pride of
face.

He was cooped with his knees to his chin in a granite kist,
And a granite flake over his head that should last till doom.

So near doth he seem that one feels him not dead in his
tomb,
But crouching, alive and alert, with a warrior's axe in his
fist.

Does he hear the old gods of the thunder? Can summer
sun

Reach down to his pit? May his dog's ears discern the
rain

Hissing over the heather, or tell if the purple stain
From a cloud-shadow dims his grey stone? When the
ponies run,

Can he mark the dull drumming above of their unshod
feet?

Does he chill when the snowdrift is clogged on the frozen
ground?

Does he thrill to the shout of the stream, or the bay of the
hound,

Or heed the sad curlew's cry and the brown snipe bleating
his bleat?

Nay, for nothing lies under the grass but the broken stones
Or mayhap a primeval crock, or a fleck of red rust,
For the hero is earth of the earth, and its dust is his dust,
And his flesh is the flesh of the peat, and its bones are his
very bones.

That master of men is ascended, for joy and for bane,
And life after life hath he lived and relinquished since
then—

In the heather and herbage and birds, in the beetles and
foxes and men,

Each in their turn sprung of earth; each in their turn earth
again.

Yesterday clad with great thews, that builded a chieftain of
 might ;
To-day where the milkwort and fern and the starry
 tormentil
Spread joy by the auburn beck and loveliness on the hill ;
To-morrow a moorman's fire at the fall of a winter's night.

And the aura, so azure clear, that is running above the red,
Was the glow of a savage heart imprisoned within the
 brand ;
And the warmth on your hand was the sun on a stone-
 man's hand
In the far off urgent days that were lived by the ancient
 dead.

So mutable myriads wake to the ring of their morning
 chime ;
So mutable myriads pass at the set of their final sun ;
And only Matter remains—the august, the unchanging
 one—
But no shape and no shadow of aught that she moulds on
 the wheel of Time.

And ye who would bring man his soul from a mystical
 matrix apart ;
And ye who would lift up man's life to a land beyond
 Matter's ken,
Must proclaim how her rape overtook her, and wherefore,
 and when,
Ere we bend to your idols, or take these your fairyland
 stories to heart.

IN A WOOD

THERE runs a pathway through the wood
Where lace the boughs and all is good.
The beech-boles don a robe of white
And gleam like ghosts at dayspring light,
When first the pure, canorous note
Throbs from a waking blackbird's throat ;
And down the long aisle dim
Another answers him.

Often they met, the girl and boy
At this still hour ; it was her joy
To share a kiss at peep of day
Before he took his working way.
Then light of heart the youngster went,
Leaving the little maid content
To seek her home near by
The forest boundary.

But when at evening back he came
Where the beech-boles were all aflame
With ruddy fire along the glade,
She leapt from out some stealthy shade.
And dawdling once when sunset shone,
He cut their letters, one in one,
Upon an ancient stem,
And drew a heart around them.

Then rose the red, accursed star,
And honour swept her boy afar ;
While she, sore hindered and forlorn,
Still heard the blackbird sing at morn,
Still felt her heart with each sun sink,
Knowing he stood upon the brink,
Prayed on in hope and trust—
Until the boy was dust.

Life brought its anodyne of years,
To dull young griefs and dry young tears,
And Time, who knows not to stand still,
Sent a new lover up the hill.
A wife and mother now she goes
And plays with her first baby's toes—
The name in memory
Spoken without a sigh.

And grey upon the beech's rind,
Foregone, forgotten, out of mind,
Two woven letters may be told
When dawns are white and eves are gold ;
Where his aubade the blackbird makes,
Or sleepy, sweet good-even takes ;
And down the long aisle dim
Another answers him.

GHOSTIES AT THE WEDDING

TURN down a glass afore his place ;
Draw up the dog-eared chair ;
For though we shall not see his face,
I think he will be there
Our wedding day to share.

Turn up the glass where she would be
And put a red rose there.
Her quick, grey eyes we cannot see,
But weren't they everywhere,
And shall not they be here ?

Though them old blids are in the grave
And their good light's gone out,
We'd sooner their kind ghosties have
Than all the living rout
As will be there no doubt.

For some are dead as cannot die,
Some flown as cannot flee.
You still do fancy 'em near by.
'Tis so with him and she,
At any rate to we.

DAWN WIND

WIND of the Dawn am I, and only She
Who knows the music of my every song
Can hear the whisper lingering along
Melodiously.

Melodiously along the moonlit corn,
With silver fingering all my peaceful way,
I nightly wander towards another day
Soon to be born.

Lo! from the East he comes; and I rejoice
And throbbing on into the ruddy light
Leap like a giant from the dying night
With organ voice.

Along the rosy, misty, magic lands
That gleam above each dewy-scented lea
The children of the morning welcome me
And clap their hands.

DART

ELFIN river, stealing from far-off granite cradle,
Musical the place names upon thy tidal water ;
Tuckenhay and Greenway, Stoke Gabriel and Dittisham,
Sharpham and Duncannon, beside thy margin's mirror—
Sweet bells all a-chiming for native ear that knows them.
Rainbows in November, above the hillside footed,
Burn along the brake fern to set the auburn flaming
In transparent wonders of emerald and purple ;
Till descends the hailstorm, with lash and scourge ice-
knotted,
Hurling through the coppice ; from larch and cherry
robbing
Amber dust and crimson. Chattering then and hissing,
And fretting first thy bosom into a sudden torment,
He draws his tatters round him and huddles off to seaward.
So the sun returning, by hover and by ripple,
Charms thy fleeting turmoil and wins thee back to
laughter.

At the river ferry a little bell is calling ;
And where the red earth arches, low on the blue above it,
Man and horses ploughing, herald a cloud behind them
Of the great, white sea-fowl that feed along the furrow.
Cobweb grey thine orchards, still the last apples ling'ring,
Topaz and ruby tangled upon the frosted lichen ;
While broad, oaken hangers, a rapture for the sunset,
Meet the steadfast beech scrub, like red-hot fire aglowing,
Till their conflagrations, that blaze along the tide way,
Melt in flame and mingle their wonder with thy crystal.
Massy, rounded elm-trees roll out along the river,

And above, in billows far mightier and vaster,
Sail the light-laden clouds, that lift another forest
Bossed and round as they are and carry up their image,
Crested, crowned and golden, into the hyaline azure.
Pale that lifted glory and faint those sun-touched summits
Seen against the ardour of thine own earth-born elm-trees.
Down beside the reed-rond, pulse of the sea, a-weary,
Doth bring a wreath of flow'rs to mark the place of parting.
High above them glitters the wide weir's silver apron
And the bright salmon leap, springing from salt to
sweetness.

Farewell, worthy worship in all thy times and seasons ;
By thy magic subtle of many a deep and rapid ;
By thy sunny reaches and mystery of shadow ;
Thy gentle hillsides green and dear delight of forests ;
By the surprise of coombs, the hanging woods and dingles ;
The happy days and sad ; the murmur of thy voices ;
Thy changing, winsome moods and little lovelinesses,
Thou art all Devon, and so incomparably England.

BY RUNDLESTONE

HER cottage solitary stood
Beside the granite Rundlestone—
Lonely enough, but not so lone
That fortune missed it, ill and good.

And faring by that way once more
I sought to see the friend of old,
And found an orange-lily's gold
Still burning by her cottage door.

There seemed no stir about the place ;
No voice responded to my call ;
I heard no tardy footsteps fall,
Nor welcomed her familiar face.

From open window overhead
There came a dull and fitful flap,
Where the blind bulged and filled the gap
And billowed as the breezes sped.

Empty the house, for she had gone
Full many a moon before that day,
Passing in steadfast faith away
To join her man beneath his stone.

And now, when currents of the mind
Drift to my thought her vanished name,
I see the orange-lily flame
And hear the flapping of a blind.

A SONG TO SILVER EYES

Now that the dayspring surely comes
To wake a dreaming world once more
And light a thousand, thousand homes
With message from the Eastern shore ;
Though dawn doth shiver sad and grey
And sombre clouds hide earth and sea,
My love shall be the sun to me
And glad' my going through the day.

When mournful darkness falls again -
To sink old earth in slumber deep,
Save where the sisters, sorrow, pain,
Their sobbing, throbbing vigils keep ;
Though faint my heart and dim my sight
Beneath the storm's immensity,
My love shall be a star to me
And guide my going through the night.

ENOUGH

THE larch, the birch and the eagle fern
And granite grey ;
The cry of the kine and the song of the burn
Down Dartmoor way.

A league-long tramp to a lifted stone
Under the sky ;
Long lustral hours superbly alone—
My soul and I.

For you be the kingdoms that you list,
The seas you will ;
And mine a white rainbow in the mist
On a heather hill.

SONG OF THE LARCHES

NOT foliage, but emerald fires
Run through our legions in the spring,
Until their myriad points and spires
Are hidden past remembering.
Through hanging wood, by dell and dene
Again we ray ourselves in green.

Not foliage, but aureate fires
Leap through our legions in the fall.
When autumn lights her saffron pyres
And the red sun sinks to a ball,
Like golden smoke across the grey
We fling our worn-out robes away.

A SONG

SHADOWS we are and shadows seek
And haunt the place where shadows move ;
But I, who know thy blessed love,
Scorn shadowland and all things weak.

Thou art alone reality ;
The rest is dream within a dream.
My life knows nothing but doth seem
Save only thee, save only thee.

Through noon of day and noon of night
There steals a golden thought and rare,
That still we breathe the self-same air,
Still glory in the same delight.

That soul to soul and sense to sense—
Our heavens woven into one—
We're shining, each the other's sun,
Before we vanish and go hence.

And if thy love should faint and die,
The deep, eternal after-glow
Shall burn for ever where I go—
A cloud of light in my grey sky.

BUONARROTTI'S "DAWN"

SPIRIT of twilight chill and upper air
Stretched desolate upon the rack of morn ;
Thou hooded grief from mountain marble torn,
Gazing sad-lidded on the sky's despair,
While the grey stars, like tears, descend forlorn ;
Earth's broken heart and man's unsleeping care
Wait on thy pillow, crying to be borne—
The only burden thou shalt ever bear.
No infant hope may dream on thy deep breast,
No little lip may soothe with infant might
Thy mouth's immortal woe ; for thee, oppressed,
Dawn dim epiphanies beyond all light,
Where man's long agony and cry for rest
But torture dayspring into darker night.

A DARTMOOR STREAM

WHEN Shakespeare wrote, you sang the song I hear,
And when Eliza reigned, your lint-white locks
Flashed where they flash to-day, among the rocks,
And showered their tresses twined into the brown pool
clear.

You danced and flung your foam upon the fern,
And sang along your green and granite ways
Even as now, in far-off Golden days,
When toiled the tinner men beside your heathery urn.

Their ruins shrink beside you ; foxglove springs
Above the roofless hut and smelting place ;
No more their shadows fall upon your face,
Or mediæval chime of pick and hammer rings.

But they were children in your lap beside
The early men of stone, whose lodges stand,
Like mushroom circles grey upon the land
Above the cotton-grass that marks your cradle wide.

The bear has lapped your crystal on his rounds ;
The stricken elk beside you dropped at last—
A flint home in his shoulder, deep and fast—
To smear your emerald moss from red of deathly wounds.

And now, where once the wolf pack hunting went,
With ululation through the snowy nights,
Leap motor cars upon the highway heights,
And by their hooting horns the silent air is rent.

All one to you : machine and beast and man,
And Time, that leads them off and brings them in ;
You strive above all circumstance, to win
Your immemorial dream and predetermined plan.

Unchanging, ever-changing, you possess
Your spirit quickened with an ardour still
Of workmanship—a patient, steadfast will
To rarer beauty yet and purer loveliness.

THE FALL

I'LL sing a song of kings and queens
And falling leaves and flying rain,
With Time to mow, and Fate who gleans
Their good and evil, boon and bane.

I'll sing a song of leaves and rains
And flying queens and falling kings,
Yet doubt not reason still remains
Snug hidden at the core of things.

For every year an autumn brings
To round the root and fat the sheaves
And haply garner queens and kings
With falling rain and flying leaves.

The rain is salt with tears of queens,
The leaves are red with blood of kings ;
Unknowing what the mystery means,
We puzzle at these mighty things.

For why great kings and rains should fall,
And wherefore leaves and queens should fly,
Or such rare wonders be at all,
You cannot tell ; no more can I.

Yet this we know : new leaves and rain
Anon shall crown the vernal scene,
But dust of dynasts not again
Blows up into a king or queen.

LAPWINGS

WHEN white ice tinkles on the rutted roads
And icicles are bearding from the thatch ;
When fens are froze, the lapwings make despatch
And all a-mewing come from their frost-bound abodes.

With rush of wings upon the northern wind
Across the wintry blue, like sparks of gold
They flash into the valleys, hunger-bold,
And seek their comforting with doubtful human-kind.

They love the lew, where yellow corn-stacks stand,
And puff their feathers in the pallid sun,
Go daintily about and peep and run,
Like pixy pilgrim folk of some far fairy-land.

And near to bud-break, when young grey-eyed Spring,
Clad in the silver of an April rain,
Calls from the hill-tops, home they go again
And lift their kitten cries to give her welcoming.

TO AN OPAL

WRAPT in the radiant air's own milky tress,
That's less than cloud and more than cloudlessness,
Dawn-light and moon-light art thou ; dreaming fire,
That dies along the west : a pulse ; a pyre
Burning beneath the brow of some red eave ;
The very staple that the salt winds weave
Into the vaporous east, or sobbing south,
When some grey hurricane sucks at the mouth
Of the dear, wild-haired sea, and with huge mirth
Rains back his rape of kisses on the earth.
The blooms of old-world flow'rs in ancient garths ;
The dancing aureole of winter hearths ;
The argent flame that haunts eternal snows ;
Spray of the burn and petal of the rose ;
Gleam of the dragon-fly or halcyon's wing ;
The dew-bedappled kirtle of the Spring ;
The amber ripple of the kerning corn ;
Splendour of fruit ; where ripeness, like a morn,
Breaks through the bloom ; the rainbow's liquid light ;
The northern dancers of an arctic night ;
Nacre of pearl and foam upon the sea—
All these, thou glimmering epitome
Of the world's glory, throb and nestle here
Within the little compass of a tear.

JACK O' LANTERN

WHERE the dim marrish oozes out and fills
The lap of the hills,
While drowsy gloom broods deep upon the wold,
They keep their place and take their trembling flight
And fringe the night
With pallid flowers of azure and faint gold.

Along the darkness elfin lanterns flicker,
Now slow, now quicker—
A pale corona set upon the mire.
They float and fly and leap and sink together
Upon one tether,
Where ancient fens excern their lambent fire.

Thin, shaking, blue—spectres of flame—they travel
And break and ravel,
Then fade and flash again and fade again.
They wave their lamps upon the quag; they quiver
And soar and shiver
And flit, like little ghosts, above the plain.

Born from the heavy breath of sleeping Earth,
In feeble mirth
They trail and slink and linger, rise and fall;
Then, shuddering before the chill of day,
Soon speed away,
Blow out their lights and vanish, one and all.

THE OLD ROAD

How short the road with you, my friend,
How short the road with you—
The hills and vales, the heights and dales
And each unfolding view ;
For side by side and foot by foot,
Though long that summer noon,
The twilight fell too soon, my friend,
The twilight fell too soon.

How far the road alone, my friend,
How far the road alone ;
The hills how steep, the dales how deep,
Their ancient magic flown ;
For now the way, together trod,
You cannot tread again,
Is twenty miles of pain, my friend,
Is twenty miles of pain.

Still winds the patient road, my friend ;
Still winds the patient road,
Whereon I go, now high, now low,
With my appointed load ;
And glories shared I felt were gone
For ever when you past,
Have brought you back at last, my friend,
Have brought you back at last.

THE DOUBTFUL ONES

THEY lie about, the naughty folk, a-mingling with the rest,
And just so green the grave-grass on their mounds as on
the best ;
For Nature's poor at morals, and to her they're all the
same,
With their virtues no great matter and their vices no great
shame.
Tom White bides there : they say he slew his first to wed
another,
And that's the hill that hides Jack Ford, as robbed his own
grandmother.
This lump of earth, where dandelions be keeping such a
state,
Is Katherine Jay's, the baby's friend, once known as "cruel
Kate."
They dug up thirteen childer in her garden, so 'tis said ;
And when they ran the creature down, she'd cut her evil
thread.
Near by we teeled Bart. Coombstock—one as took his own
life too :
He hanged hisself at seventy-three, though why for no man
knew.
And Martin Cobby, in a pit beside they godly Foxes,
Did six months of his middle time for breaking the alms
boxes.
Where yonder row of Caunters lie—a famed and far-spread
clan—
Have crept their black sheep, Rupert, him once called
"the gentleman."

A reckless love-hunter was he, and made an end of life
When Noah Bassett shot him dead for playing with his
wife.

Poor Nelly Dingle, buried by the lich-gate on the left,
Burned six good stacks of wheat the night they flung her
out for theft ;

And they small hillocks, down-along, of babies side by
side,

Be "chrisomers," as never got baptised afore they died,
There do they rest—the doubtful ones—and sleep so sweet
and sound

As any proper saint of God that ever went to ground ;
But when the graves be opened and they birds begin to
sing—

Lord ! Won't it be a funny dish to set before the King !

✓
LITANY TO PAN

By the abortions of the teeming Spring,
By Summer's starved and withered offering,
By Autumn's stricken hope and Winter's sting,
Oh, hear !

By the ichneumon on the writhing worm,
By the swift, far-flung poison of the germ,
By soft and foul brought out of hard and firm,
Oh, hear !

By the fierce battle under every blade,
By the etiolation of the shade,
By drought and thirst and things undone half made,
Oh, hear !

By all the horrors of re-quickened dust,
By the eternal waste of baffled lust,
By mildews and by cankers and by rust,
Oh, hear !

By the fierce scythe of Spring upon the wold,
By the dead eaning mother in the fold,
By stillborn, stricken young and tortured old,
Oh, hear !

By fading eyes pecked from a dying head,
By the hot mouthful of a thing not dead,
By all thy bleeding, struggling, shrieking red,
Oh, hear !

By all the agonies of all the past,
By earth's cold dust and ashes at the last,
By her return to the unconscious vast,
Oh, hear !

A SONG

How I have lived while others slept,
With the white moon and thee !
Heaven-high my adoration leapt
Sea-deep my ecstasy.

And now one memory I keep
Till life and I shall part :
She loved me well enough to sleep
In peace upon my heart.

CHERRYBROOK

FAR more than others feel or see ;
Far more than others hear or know,
Awakes and lives and throbs for me
When by the Cherrybrook I go.

For others, Bellever's green side
And yellow furzes burning bright ;
Grouse heather, foaming like a tide,
And stones that dance, or drowse in light.

For others, just a singing stream
Of flashing stickles, cherry red,
That mirrors in her breast the beam,
Like golden beads upon a thread.

For me, a river of regret
In every reach so still and clear—
A streamlet, where I follow yet
The Shadow of a brother dear.

I see his trout-rod catch the sun ;
I hear the music of his reel ;
Knowing his kindly days are done,
His good life gone beyond appeal.

Now other rods are twinkling high ;
But the grey shape I used to bless,
Lacking, the stream runs lonely by
And Cherrybrook's an emptiness.

THE HUNTER'S MOON

OCTOBER day drifts into night and now,
Globing red gold upon a naked bough,
The Hunter's Moon climbs through a ragged larch,
Swings out on Heaven and sweeps her steadfast arch
Through cloudrack dim ; while underneath there lie
The darkling forests and the floods, and fly
Leaves from the summer woods. They tinkle down
Russet and sere, etiolate and brown,
Blood-red and scarlet, auburn, silver, grey—
Good millions, bearing wherewithal to pay
Debt of the trees. The busy earthworms cold
Draw in the yearly dues to rich the mould,
Storing what tree-tops earned ; and thus full round
The cycle spins ; for sure the sodden ground
Is but a bank, that hoards to give again,
Wherein the beetle and the mole and rain
Balance their books beneath the Hunter's Moon,
While Nature budgets for another June.

VOICES

I

HARKEN, harken, neighbour, harken !
There be little childer jangling,
There be childer up-long wrangling
By the thorn-tree in the wood.
Nay, them noises you are hearing,
Out of yonder blue-bell clearing,
Are the wild cat's kitlings playing,
While their mother's hunting food.

II

Harken, harken, neighbour, harken !
There's the pixy bells a-ringing,
And the dinky pixies singing
Through the curtain of the rain.
Nay, 'tis but a flock of plover—
Golden plover now come over,
From the places of their summer,
To their winter home again.

III

Harken, harken, neighbour, harken !
There's some poor, unhappy devil
Homing drunk after a revel,
Drowned in snow and lost in night.
Nay, that creepy, crawly yowling
Be red fox up over howling,
Pads acold and belly empty,
Hunger-starven for a bite.

IV

Harken, harken, neighbour, harken !
To the sound of woman's wailing—
A sad woman, quailing, railing,
Like the sob of wind-swept leaves.
Nay, that ban't no cry of woman,
Nor the moan of any human :
'Tis the murmur of the hill-tops
And "the calling of the cleaves."

WIND OF THE WEST

I BEAR the banner of the sun at noon ;
I light the million jewelled lamps of June ;
I weave, from sky and purple sea below,
The rosy cradle where a baby moon
 Rocks in the after-glow.

Awake ye bells, shine out ye stars of Spring ;
And let the music of the wild wood ring ;
Deck my dear harp anew with golden green—
My ancient forest harp, whereon I sing
 Of all this budding scene.

A song of rainbows gleaming on the rain ;
Of sap and scent and sunlight come again ;
Of the young laughing year's unmeasured mirth ;
Of quickened Nature's mother-pang, whose pain
 Forewent this vernal birth.

THE LOVER AND THE WIND

“WIND of the South with the wild, wet mouth,
Cease from thy wailing and fury of railing ;
Whisper to me in my vigils of pain
That soon I shall meet her,
And soon I shall greet her,
And thrill with the passion of kisses again.

“Wind of the South with the wild, wet mouth,
Silence thy raving and hark to my craving ;
Echo a hope through my vigils of pain.
I hunger to hold her,
I throb to enfold her
And melt in the fire of her body again.”

“Suffering man, since thy race began
I have been weeping and I have been keeping
A myriad vigils of sorrow and pain.
No more shalt thou meet her,
No more shalt thou greet her,
Or thrill with the passion of kisses again.

“Suffering man, the arc of thy span
To-morrow is bounded and finished and rounded.
Thou shalt forget all thy vigils of pain,
Nor hunger to hold her,
Nor throb to enfold her,
Nor cry for the fire of her body again.”

A SONG

THE red's in the heather, the gold's on the fern—
Heigho! Heigho!
A nip to the wind and the year at the turn—
Heigho, Johnny!

The aglet and rowan, shine bright on the bough—
Heigho! Heigho!
But seedtime, or harvest be one to him now—
Heigho, Johnny!

All one the wild weather, the wind and the rain—
Heigho! Heigho!
For she that made summer will not come again—
Heigho, Johnny!

Was left in the lurch at a young woman's whim—
Heigho! Heigho!
Who cared not a cuss for the ruin of him—
Heigho, Johnny!

Oh, little we mind what the seasons may bring—
Heigho! Heigho!
When hearts are a winter without any spring—
Heigho, Johnny!

THE GRAVE OF KEATS

I

WHERE silver swathes of newly fallen hay
Fling up their incense to the Roman sun ;
Where violets spread their dusky leaves and run
In a dim ripple, and a glittering bay
Lifts overhead his living wreath ; where day
Burns fierce upon his endless night and none
Can whisper to him of the thing he won,
Love-starved young Keats hath cast his gift of clay.
And still the little marble makes a moan
Under the scented shade ; one nightingale
With many a meek and mourning monotone
Throbs of his sorrow ; sings how oft men fail
And leave their dearest light-bringers alone
To shine unseen, and all unfriended pale.

II

Oh, leave the lyre upon his humble stone,
The rest erase ; if Keats were come again,
The quickest he to blot this cry of pain,
The first to take a sorrowing world's atone.
'Tis not the high magistral way to moan
When a mean present leaps and sweeps amain
Athwart the prophets' vision ; not one groan
Escapes their souls, and lingers not one strain.
They answer to their ideals ; their good
Outshines all flare and glare of futile marts.

THE GRAVE OF KEATS

They stand beside their altars while the flood
Ephemeral rolls on and roars and parts.
It shall not chill a poet's golden blood ;
It cannot drown the masters' mighty hearts.

TIGER

*To the barking of the monkeys, to the shrieking of the birds ;
To the bellow of the bison and stampeding of the herds ;
At fiery edge of sunset, from the jungle to the wold,
Death stalks in shining ebony and orange-tawny gold.*

He slouched with loose, low shamble from the glade,
And as he flung his feet along the track,
Machine-like glided each great shoulder-blade
Under his pelt. He stopped and scratched his back
Against a stump ; then sat a little while,
Curling his ring-straked tail around his paws,
Yawning with a gigantic, sleepy smile
That showed the ruddy gulf between his jaws.
The fangs were white and sound, for he was young—
A male of four full years, in all his pride,
Perfect, lean, knit of rubber and steel, and strung
With sinews taut ; content and satisfied,
Since the twice five great, crooked daggers set
Deep in his awful pads had never failed
To win his belly all it wanted yet—
A tiger who unfailingly prevailed.
And no beast kinglier than himself he knew,
For he had tracked and hunted, caught and slain
All that his fellow-tigers caught and slew,
Though horns might miss by inches eye and brain.
A forthright beast and huge, his yellow eyes
Glowered steadfast into life ; he felt no ill
Of heart or conscience, or the pang that flies
Through higher mammals, plagued with choice of will

And all the handicaps of consciousness.
He knew not right nor wrong ; no evil thought
Sullied his wits ; his task no more or less
Than faithfully to do all he was taught.
While the dread smeech and terror of his breath
Down a hot wind at dusk, to fearful flocks
Threatened the unknown, unnamed horror, death,
And sent them hurtling to the plains and rocks,
To him they stood for life and all it meant
Of being—food and sport and work and play,
Love and prosperity and full content,
With strength to solve the problems of each day.

His brain began to brood and meditate,
Thinking on action, while the red sun set,
For he had come from far with a new mate
To a new valley. She was sleeping yet
In the bamboos behind him, great with young,
Where prickly cactus hemmed the lair and palm
Over their couch its sombre frondage hung.
There would she bide a little safe from harm,
While he must go afield and do his part
And fetch a tender antelope, or goat,
To win her praise and glad her weary heart
With a hot supper for a hungry throat.
He pondered now within his broad, flat skull,
Then stretched and with his lifted nose and ear
Winnowed the silence of the evening lull
To learn if grass-eaters were stirring near ;
When down the wind, though not a lizard ran
And no hoof thudded on the dusty bent,
He smelt a something fragrant and began
To twitch his nostrils at the ravishment.

A subtle scent and new ! His whiskers pricked ;
His body huddled flat and seemed to shrink ;
His great nape bristled up ; his jowl he licked ;
Then, like a banded snake, began to sink
And trickle through the spear grass. By a stone
He sudden lifted, then he set and stilled,
While footfall of some game, that went alone,
Came innocently pattering, to be killed.
Couchant, like a set trap, with head out-thrust,
The hunter crouched, quivering his black tail-tip,
Until it drew a fan upon the dust
Behind him. Then his jaws began to drip,
As though a gargoye, where red lichens grew,
Was dribbling. Now the thing that he had heard
Approached—a little creature, strange and new—
That went not on four feet, nor yet a bird.
He strung himself to spring, while at a trot,
The Indian runner on his lonely road
Jogged forward, dreaming of a supper-pot.
Bound was he for a village, where abode
One, passing fair, the runner's master meant
To wed ere long—a radiant maid to whom,
By fleet-foot messenger, the suitor sent
Two poems of his own writing.

Then the gloom,
Where a first firefly winked her golden spark
Upon the deepening purple, broke and tore—
The twilight stillness ended on a stark,
Harsh, grating, deep-mouthed, solitary roar,
Hollow as death ; while from his secret place
The tiger loosed the lightning of his thighs,
Leapt on the man and with unwitting grace
Struck him to instant nothing. Levin flies

Less merciful. A huddled, crumpled clout,
Brown, oozing red, dissolved beneath the mass
Of living teeth and brawn. The brains were out ;
Head, a cracked egg-shell leaking on the grass.
Thus in a heap to mother earth they came,
Both quick and dead ; and then the great cat sought
His grim, familiar, ghastly after-game ;
But he had hit too hard and spoiled his sport.
He drew and coaxed with hooked and playful paws,
Hoping to find the life had not quite gone,
And moved by those infernal, feline laws,
That made him frolic when his work was done.
For oft his perishing food would feebly strive,
Driven by life's undying hope, and led
To struggle still from death while yet alive ;
But his first man the tiger found was dead.

And when the conqueror tasted, his rough tongue
Thrilled a new, joyous lust into his brain,
For the soft, furless stuff his palate stung
With mad, delicious twang—oft, oft again
Would he smell up the wind for such another.
He hoped the dainty creatures went in packs,
And that his prey had kids and many a brother
To steal at cool of evening on his tracks.
He gaped and gripped the mangled clod of earth
Under its ribs, heaved up a muzzle white,
Sounded a grunt, that seemed akin to mirth,
And bore his dripping coolie out of sight.
So to his mate, and as the cross-cut saws
Bite upon teak with backward, forward hiss,
He purred, then dropped the banquet from his jaws
And woke the tigress with a bloody kiss.

Eyes shut, heads sideway, cheek by cheek they ate,
To sound of squash and gulch and cracking bone,
Deciding swiftly, as they fed, the fate
Of the two love songs. They were deftly sewn
Within the compass of a gold-cloth bag,
Tied with a silken cord, stamped with a seal.
The tiger crunched and gulped the sodden rag
With all the other mysteries of his meal.
For, while a poem himself, he was no poet,
Being devoid of vision, wit, or ruth ;
But many who live poetry, never know it
And would be much surprised to learn the truth.

Sated at last, they sauntered forth to find
A water-hole ; but as they washed their jowls
And cleaned their whiskers, sudden on the wind
Broke din of brass and drums and human howls.
For there had gone another runner by,
And smelt the blood and seen the reeking trail,
And flown, and shouted " Bagh ! " and raised the cry
That tiger were again upon the vale.
From jungle edge they peered and torches red
Turned each bewildered eye into a gem
Of glinting emerald—then sudden dread
Awoke at flash of fire, unknown to them.
Fear touched their primitive hearts ; they ran and roared,
Awakening old echoes down the glade ;
Shoulder to shoulder from the gleam abhorred
They padded, wondering to be afraid.
Until no blink of the accursed thing
Tortured the night, they galloped, sweating hot,
Then, all unknowing what the day would bring,
They stopped and sulked and snarled ; and so forgot.

Anon they sleep, nor guess the dawn shall see,
Of hunters white and beaters brown, some score
Surround them in a circle steadfastly,
To set the cosmos on its feet once more.
They sleep, nor dream the pangs of "dum-dum" lead
That wait on sunrise, when they two shall feel
All they have measured to uncounted dead,
And suffer sentences without appeal.
Upon their mighty necks will dance the feet
Of the unpelted things that lay them low ;
For of the fruit forbidden did they eat
And both must go where the bad tigers go.

*To the trumpeting of elephants and blaze of morning light,
To the nosing rifle barrels, to the stinking of cordite,
With a crash and smash and struggle and a yell their tale is
told ;
Death blots the shining ebony and orange-tawny gold.*

THE PUDDLE

I CURSED the puddle when I found
Unseeing I had walked therein,
Forgetting the uneven ground,
Because my eyes
Were on the skies,
To glean their glory and to win
The sunset's trembling ecstasies.

And then I marked the puddle's face,
When still and quiet grown again,
Was but concerned, as I, to trace
The wonder spread
Above its head,
And mark and mirror and contain
The gold and purple, rose and red.

VISION

THERE have been seers of olden time who said,
When dreaming men are rapt into the state
Where only shadow people congregate,
That never may they see the faces of their dead.

But I have seen the faces I have lost,
And none so clear and none so shadowless
In all that moonshine dance and frolic stress
Of dream futility, as some I loved the most.

Not as I knew him last my brother stood,
A man upon whose kindly face a stain
Lay in the letters of life's care and pain ;
But as a little lad, when all the world was good.

High in the darkness of a pine, elate
About our long-forgotten forest play,
I hung, where he had found a squirrel's dray :
For I was twelve again, and he was only eight.

I saw his boyhood's look, as bright and fair
As ever shone from huddle of a dream ;
Reality's own self shall never seem
More real than his young laugh and flaxen, Saxon hair.

And waking old, I blessed the memory
Of my child-brother's unforgotten face,
Thanking, as it had been a deed of grace,
The tenderness of dreams that brought him back to me.

IN GALLIPOLI

THERE is a fold of lion-coloured earth,
With stony feet in the Ægean blue,
Whereon of old dwelt loneliness and dearth
Sun-scorched and desolate ; and when there flew
The winds of winter in those dreary aisles
Of crag and cliff, a whirling snow-wreath bound
The foreheads of the mountains, and their miles
Of frowning precipice and scarp were wound
With stilly white, that peered through brooding mist pro-
found.

But now the myrtle and the rosemary,
The mastic and the rue, the scented thyme
With fragrant fingers gladdening the grey,
Shall kindle on a desert grown sublime.
Henceforth that haggard land doth guard and hold
The treasure of a sovereign nation's womb—
Her fame, her worth, her pride, her purest gold.
Oh, call ye not the sleeping place a tomb
That lifts to heaven's light such everlasting bloom.

They stretch, now high, now low, the little scars
Upon the rugged pelt of herb and stone ;
Above them sparkle bells and buds and stars
Young Spring hath from her emerald kirtle thrown.
Asphodel, crocus and anemone
With silver, azure, crimson once again
Ray all that earth, and from the murmuring sea
Come winds to flash the leaves on shore and plain
Where evermore our dead—our radiant dead shall reign.

Imperishable as the mountain height
That marks their place afar, their numbers shine,
Who with the first-fruits of a joyful might
To human liberty another shrine
Here sanctified ; nor vainly have they sped
That made this desert dearer far than home,
And left one sanctuary more to tread
For England, whose memorial pathways roam
Beside her hero sons, beneath the field and foam.

THEN AND NOW

WHEN I was young and leapt into the Spring—
An eager, quick-eyed, all-inquiring thing—
I hunted wood and valley, sea and shore
Yet knew not how to feel the wonders that I saw.

Now am I old and creep into the Spring—
A grey-haired, dim-eyed, still inquiring thing.
By ancient ways, a shadow, still I steal,
Yet know not how to see the wonders that I feel.

Come Youth again, while to another Spring
My memories the old adventure bring.
Wonder and wander yet once more with me.
I'll teach you how to feel, and you my eyes shall be.

VIGIL

THERE is a glen beneath a lonely hill,
Where the deep tangles of the red brake fern
Huddle to death and beautifully burn,
While maiden birches flame along the sunset still.

Like morning lamps they fade ; their gold expires
Among the silvery shadows of each stem.
Delicious light gently departs from them
Where winter bloweth out the autumn's final fires.

Furzes, all agate-budded for the spring,
Hedge round about the coomb and, higher still,
A mist of naked branches hides the hill,
And pines bring warmth and scent and dusky sheltering.

How oft have I within this vernal wood
Watched the green mantle and the sweet sap mount.
Trees are mine own familiars ; them I count
Among the changeless hearts that make my chiefest good.

How often, when the first of blossoms come,
Do I behold the opening of their eyes.
Mine is the worship ; theirs the shy surprise
That I so well should know each punctual haunt and home.

Here have I watched full many a night from far
Like lover shadowy, ere set of sun,
Dark-eyed steal hither, and when day was done,
Mist meet the gentle moon ; dew, the eternal star.

Once more the stroke of every madcap wind
Doth shake the bough and dash the ripe fruit down,
Or shower red leaves and berries for a crown,
October's stormy hair to glorify and bind.

Again I see ; again I sigh to see
The fading, flaming year sink to her end,
Another summer—sure another friend—
Decline and die and pass with music solemnly.

Farewell, ye happy, rainbow-winged hours ;
The autumn's dew and bitter, silver breath
Shall freeze your rosy feet, and strike to death
Your spirits where ye drowse amid the withered flowers.

Farewell ye domes and canopies of June
Raining upon the earth in red and gold ;
Hiding the sodden bosom of the wold ;
Flying like little ghosts, beneath the hunter's moon.

Beside the passing year my watch I keep
And mark the sad-eyed gloamings steal away,
And feel the low and lemon light of day
Fade, like an aching care, upon the fringe of sleep.

DARTMOOR NIGHT

Now twilight spreads her cool and amber plume,
Descending on the solitudes until
All detail dies : the valley and the hill
Together darkling roll and merge into the gloom.

Faints the far emerald west and day is done ;
White Venus, throbbing on the dusky gold,
Swings out her lamp above the weald and wold,
While little, earth-born flames make answer one by one.

A child upon her mighty mother's breast,
Earth cuddles in the bosom of old Night,
Who, gathering coomb and woodland, heath and height,
Opens her dewy wings to hide their dreamless rest.

The mists are trailing grey by watersmeet,
Night-hidden in the forest far below,
And where their pearly-paven vapours flow,
The Huntress upward steals to find her starry seat.

Her waxing splendours over moss and mire
Flood fen and barrow, reeve and pool and burn,
The lone, high tors, the tracks that wind and turn
Where the quartz crystal shines with dim and tremulous
fire.

She marks the stone-man's lodges empty lie ;
The broken folds, the tinner's delving place ;
She lights the cairn, the cross, the faltering trace
Of bygone dead who homed in this immensity.

From cottage window fades the ruby gem
And glimmer moonbeams only ; while the moon,
Mounting to heaven upon her silver shoon,
A sovereign sceptre holds and wears the diadem.

O Queen of sleep and silence, thou shalt reign,
With lustral glory poured to soothe and bless
The least small life in all the wilderness,
Till morning stars awake and sing the dawn again.

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE

THE seraphim, beneath their burning blades,
Moved in a wave of light ; while overhead
Gleamed the pale moon, a ghost behind the tongues
Of all those flaming swords ; and rearward crept
The brutes of Paradise—the tiger, ounce,
The leopard and the minions of the night.
Stealthy they stalked, with growls that showed the fang,
While in a broken thread of fiery beads,
Golden and green and ruby, through the dark,
Fierce glowed their eyes behind that angel host.
And now they roared for mingled grief and fear,
Because, before the moving seraphim,
Flung out for ever from the dingles deep
And all those pleasant places of sweet shade
Beside the rivers and beneath the trees,
Two, whom the great cats loved, were driven forth.
Bewildered and disgraced, the primal pair,
Now glimmering with moonlight on their heads
And streaks of flickered gold that splashed along
Their thighs and backs, reflected from the swords,
Together went. Hand clasped in hand they moved
Before the marching angels, till at last
The confines of the only home they knew
Were reached and the soft herbage made an end.
Over their heads the tracery of trees
Ceased, and the naked moon among her stars
Hung in the nightly sky and threw a light,
Cold as grey ashes, on the earth beneath.
Starkly the desert struck upon their toes

With harsh and flinty welcome ; Eve's right foot,
Set down upon a thistle, cried to her
Of a new grief ; she moaned in pain, and he,
Adam, with tenderness bent down to it
And licked the blood that sparkled on her skin
In drops the moonlight robbed of sanguine stain
And turned to bright, black pearls. Thus driven forth
Were they for their transgression, and the guard
Took open order on the fringe of Eden,
Against whose frontier dark the sentinels
Stood silently, lit by their burning swords,
To hold the garden precincts ; while between
Each seraph and his neighbour still peeped out
The creatures of the earth and howled farewell
To those white things that had befriended them,
And taught their cubs to play in Paradise.
They crouched and lashed their tails and shook the night
That Eve and Adam to the wilderness
Should pass away without one lynx or pard
To purr beside them. All would have rushed forth
But that the ring of fire struck on their hearts
And sent them snarling back. For there had been
A precious bond, a close and curious link
Twixt Adam and his partner and the brutes—
A harmony of happiness and peace
Now vanished from the earth. But then, indeed,
The first man and his woman stood so near
To all their neighbours, sharing their delights
And moving in that new-made world so nigh
To beast and bird and saurian, that they—
The conscious creatures—knowing little more
Than woodland wisdom shared with all the rest,
Gessed not the gap between. Had ape or sloth

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE

Broke heavenly ordinance and ate the Fruit,
Then had they been the lords of good and ill,
And haply ruled the kingdoms of the earth
With kinder wit than man. Yet it fell out
The creatures in the image of their God
Won the beasts' homage by their shapes upright,
Yet shared their subjects' ignorance. The stag,
The tawny bear, the elephant, the wolf,
The monkey folk and all the greater fowls,
Composed their theme and filled their human minds
With fascination. And betwixt themselves,
When Adam spoke to Eve or she to him,
Their converse was abrupt and cynical,
Untinged by human ruth, or tender care
Each for the other's inner happiness.
And when the shadows lengthened and their God
Walked for awhile between them through the cool
Of dewy evenings, in their simple way,
They chattered to Him of the names they gave
Unto the great gier-eagle on the crag,
Or hippo, with his mighty nose asnot
Above the mud of Paradise. And He
Would listen with celestial gravity
And go His way again. The couple lacked
Much food for thought; indeed, they never thought;
For what had they to think about beside
The living present and the daily joy
Of food and drink and sleep, and playtime shared
With lesser things as beautiful as they?
Thus did they live through days not fuller fraught
With care and vision of to-morrow's dawn
Than their companions of the hoof and pad
And claw and shining wing. Their mingled life

Was neither more complete nor beautiful
Than that of the striped tiger and his mate,
Who dwelt together in a porphyry den
A stone's throw from the holt that Adam wove
Of living boughs and green wood broken down
Wherein to sleep by Eve. The very birds—
The warbler and the chaffinch and the wren,
Or the red mouse that loved the seeding grass—
Built snigger homes than they ; and they would laugh
And wonder how the little, busy things,
Having no hands, could weave so close and true ;
Or how the spider lined her nest with silk
To hold her pearly eggs. And when they slept
They dreamed of good to-morrows and no more,
Such as the children dream.

Then came to them
The scorching breath of knowledge, and their jest :
To make God laugh when He should come and see
Them clad with leaves and flowers, as their friends
Were clothed with pelt and feathers—their poor jest,
When they perceived them naked, brought them down
And cast them out into another world
Beyond the joys of Eden.

That first night
Their incipient spirits wept some mournful while,
Till the moon sank upon a dreary rim
Of desolation and they watched the stars
Sink to earth's edge and vanish one by one,
Like tears that stole adown night's cheek ; and then
They turned to look again where Paradise
Lay in a purple shadow on the east

THE FRUIT OF THE TREE

Under her palms and mountains ; while along
Those far-flung boundaries dim sparks of fire
Twinkled to mark the soldier angels stand.
Adam at last, in hollow of a dune,
Whose horrent hair along its crest sprang up
In withered bents, a place of shelter found
Where the night wind came not ; and there the man
His limping partner brought, then laid her down
To sleep till day ; but it was keen and chill
And, finding that Eve slumbered, Adam came
As close as he well might to warm his blood
And draw a little of her golden mane
About his frozen bosom.

Thus they slept,
Until there broke on earth another day,
Whose light unwitting touched a wondrous sight
More pregnant and more precious to the world
Than Earth until that dayspring hour had known.
For when young Eve awakened, from her eyes
Flashed a new glory, something that till now
Had never trembled in those azure deeps ;
And, with her arms about her dreaming man,
She called to him, and he arose to see
A change in her fair face, the which he read
In light of his own quickening. Her voice
Proclaimed a new evangel from her heart,
And full upon the thin and desert air
Poured in the ear of Adam such sweet words
That he forgot his hunger and his grief
And looked at her, the dew in her bright hair,
As subject on a queen.

“My love!” she cried;
And since the word had never till that dawn
Set the air singing, he forgot all else
And listened open-mouthed. “My own true love,
Dost thou not feel within thy bosom’s home
A strange new spirit, born for me and thee?
Dost thou not pant with such a joy that never,
Until this daybreak on the wilderness,
Thy soul hath throbb’d to feel? In that sharp grief,
While the white seraphim did drive us out,
I felt the first faint thrill that fought the grief,
And when you bent and lick’d my wounded foot,
Even then there flash’d to me a sudden bliss
That ministered the pain!”

“And I,” said he,
“If I had felt as now I feel—on fire
With tender adoration for my Eve—
Oh, then, I never should have play’d the coward
And flung the blame on you, my better part,
But taken it myself. This light within,
That burns far brighter than the eastern sky,
Doth show how mean and vile and base a thing
I did to bleat that thou hadst tempt’d me;
For now I grow to something greater far,
More wise and more discerning than before
I ate the Fruit of the Tree. O would that I
Had claim’d the punishment, as meet I should,
And been cast out and suffer’d happily
Knowing that thou wert safe in Paradise;
For then had I but laugh’d at thorns and flint
And the cold night beneath the setting stars,
Knowing my Eve safe in our little lair.”

“Man, man!” she answered, “what our lair to me,
And what all Eden and the golden sun,
Without my Adam? What the crystal founts
And aubade of the birds in misty denes?
And what the morning mellowness of fruits,
Or subtle, magic fragrance born by night
From moony blossoms, that obeyed the moon
And oped, all others shutting? Eden’s self
Had been this ugly desert spread for Eve
Without thee; but beside thee, close and close,
Near as thy shadow, then these antres vast
And dreary vague of lion-coloured dust
Is paradise enough. For we have won
From that thrice-blessed Fruit a dearer thing
Than all the blossomy paths of Paradise
Knew how to offer. Through the taste of it
We are become above the cherubim,
Who never feel, beneath the rainbow light
That dreams upon their bosoms, what a man
And woman feel when love unveils their eyes.”
“We must tell God,” said Adam. “When He knows
What hides within the amethystine rind
Of that sweet globe forbidden, then will He
Make haste to eat of it Himself, and so,
Touched by ineffable and sacred love,
Seek us, all naked in the desert sand,
With pity on His awful brow. And then
Us will He soon forgive, for if He eats,
A tender, lambent flame of gentle ruth
Must burn within His everlasting Heart
And crown Him with pure mercy.” Thus the man;
And then the woman’s voice throbbed cheerfully.
“Him will we tell how this that He denied

Has lifted us above all lesser life
And made us wiser than the seraphim,
Who drove me forth so roughly that they scorched
My shoulder with their swords. But this I know :
If Michael and his winged ones had ate
From that kind fruit, as you and I did eat,
A gentle pity would have taught them sheathe
Their brands and made them weep to do us harm.
For what to them were we but beings twain,
No better than the silly, little apes
That would not come to us from out the wood
Until I tempted them with sugary fruits
And almonds that they loved? But now, but now
Are we above all creatures lifted up
And wedded into one—aye, wedded so
That life for me is Adam, and for him
Nothing but Eve. Let that our Maker hear,
And when He learns what now thou art to me
And I to thee, and what this lifeless dust
And shadeless solitude do seem to be
With thy brown hand in mine, then will He know
That we, His creatures, now have haply found
A dearer and more precious Paradise
Than all the hosts of Heaven yet thought upon.
Him we must tell, and from our wondrous cup
He too shall drink, that He, our God, may know
The blessed taste of mercy.”

“I will bid
The seraphim to pray to Him for mates !”
Cried Adam, in a fervour that all Heaven
Should share the knowledge dazzling. “Yea, let Him
Cast down his hosts in slumber and withdraw

A woman angel from each winged side,
So that they cast away their writhing swords
Far from them and rejoice, as we rejoice,
To share a life with dearer life than theirs.”
They spurred each other on, and laughed to think
Of the divine delight when God should hear
Their wondrous rede; and then together turned
Where Paradise, like a low silver cloud,
Fretted the dawn. But now to them there flew
Out of the waxing sky a messenger,
Who bade them keep their faces to the void
And nevermore approach the sinless paths
Their innocent feet had trod before they fell.
“Wisdom hath spoken, and it is decreed”—
With unimpassioned voice the angel spoke—
“That now ye thieves of wisdom through your span
Shall suffer first and bear the eternal fruit
Of your unnatural sin. And when the years
Have worn and withered you and broke you down,
Since Time hath now dominion over you,
Then shall you die and turn again to dust
From which the Almighty, in too generous mood,
Did lift you up. Begone—your way lies there!
And know that since the parents’ sin must be
On children visited for evermore,
Ye shall have seed and bring the race of man
Upon this earth to taste the bitter drink
That ye have brewed for every human lip.”
“But we have much to tell our God!” cried Eve;
While he, the servant of Omnipotence,
With level tones indifferent, broke to them
That never more their Maker should they see.
Thereon he spread his wings, and in the light

Of the red morning opened, petal-wise,
His gorgeous pinions, like a new-born flower
All opal tinted. So he flew away,
And soon was lost to sight upon the clouds
That day had fringed with fire.

A little while

The pair stood very silent ; then young Eve,
Mother of all men, from her wide blue eyes
Shaking the tear, that like a diamond hung
One moment on her lashes, smiled and set
Her arms about our primal father's neck.
“ Be of good cheer ; we have each other still,
My own brave heart ! ” said she ; “ and what this death
Shall prove, concerning which the angel spake,
We know not and we fear not ; for 'tis sure
That death can never be so strong, or good,
Or radiant and enduring and supreme
As love, that we have won to light our way
And guide us through all deserts and all griefs.
And since He will not let us speak to Him,
Or tell Him of our treasure, it shall flow
For babes and sucklings. With their mother's milk
I'll teach my little children how to love.”

WHERE MY TREASURE IS

ETERNAL MOTHER, when my race is run,
Will that I pass beneath the risen sun,
Suffer my sight to dim upon some spot
That changes not.

Let my last pillow be the land I love
With fair infinity of blue above ;
The roaming shadow of a silver cloud,
My only shroud.

A little lark above the morning star,
Shall shrill the tidings of my end afar ;
The muffled music of a lone sheep-bell
Shall be my knell.

And where stone heroes trod the Moor of old ;
Where ancient wolf howled round a granite fold ;
Hide thou, beneath the heather's new-born light,
My endless night.

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