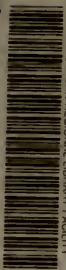


THE 
COCKPIT
OF IDOLS
BY MURIEL
STUART

A
0
0
0
5
6
1
4
4
7
4



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS

THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS

BY

MURIEL STUART

AUTHOR OF "CHRIST AT CARNIVAL"

METHUEN & CO. LTD.
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.
LONDON

First Published in 1918

PR
6037
5932c

TO YOU

AND ALL THAT WE REMEMBER

v
764939

FOREWORD

I WISH to thank Mr. Austin Harrison for his courtesy in allowing me to reprint the following poems that have appeared in *The English Review*: "It's Rose-Time Here . . ." "Bluebell Night," "The Centaur's First Love," "Indictment," and also for his kindness in publishing in 1915 a long poem by an unknown author.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
IT'S ROSE-TIME HERE	1
THE CENTAUR'S FIRST LOVE	4
INTERIOR	7
TO EACH MAN HIS FEAR	8
THE BASTARD	9
THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS	13
THE SECOND-HAND BOOKSTALL	29
TO ———	30
THE SLAVE	31
ÉTAPLES	34
COMMON FIRES	35
TO ———	36
INDICTMENT	38
BLUEBELL NIGHT	39
HELIODORE	43

THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS

IT'S ROSE-TIME HERE . . .

1918

It's rose-time here . . .
How could the Spring
Be the same merry thing ?
How could she sparkle April's posy-ring
Upon the finger of this widowed year ?
How could she bring
Her gauds so pitilessly near ?
How could she bear
To lead the pomp of May,
The primings and the promises of June
So near, so soon,
In the old happy way ?
How could she dare
To prick the eyes of Grief
With moekeries of returning bud and leaf ?
How could she wear
Such coloured broideries

Beside the tattered garments of despair ?
Tenting the hills with April's canopies,
Setting the tulips' spears . . .
How could she keep her tourneys through
such tears ?

She did not care . . .
The roses are as beautiful this year.
The lily never doffed
One golden plume, nor did the may renounce
One thrilling splendour, nor wear one pearl
less.
She has not grieved—even a little space—
For those who loved her once—
For those whom surely she must once have
loved.

It's rose-time here . . .
While over there
Where all the roses of the world have
blown
The blood is not yet dried upon their
hair,
Their eyes have scarcely filmed against the
moon,
The sun has not yet utterly gone out ;
Almost the stained grass still
Is conscious of their breath—
Those heavenly roses, torn and tossed about
On the vast plains of Death.

It's rose-time here . . .

(How I shall always hate the Spring
For being such a calm, untroubled thing.)

While over there

Where there're no children left to pull

The few scared, ragged flowers,

All that was ours, and, God, how beautiful!

All, all, that once was ours

Lies faceless, mouthless, mire in mire,

So lost to all sweet semblance of desire

That we in those fields seeking desperately

One face long-lost to Love,—one face that lies

Only upon the breast of Memory—

Would never know it—even though we stood

Upon its breast, or crushed its dreadful eyes,

Would never find it—even the very blood

Is stamped into the horror of the mud:

Something that mad men trample under foot

In the narrow trench—for these things are

not men—

Things shapeless, sodden, mute

Beneath the monstrous limber of the guns;

Those things that loved us once . . .

Those that were ours, but never ours again.

It's rose-time here . . .

THE CENTAUR'S FIRST LOVE

I HUNTED her down the morning,
Fleet hoof and bosom bare,
She fled me in swift scorning,
With her great, golden mane of hair
Firing the hot, dry, quivering air.
Down broad, bleached plain, up sunburnt
hill

She led me, and I followed still.
She leapt the rock, I caught the gleam
Of glistening haunches in the stream ;
Her little murderous hoofs she drove
Through reed and flower, her hair alone
With long gold fingers urged me on
Till I was mad and blind with Love,
With sun and sleep and sharp desire
That make the first hours keen as fire,
And crashing through the blinding light,
Fiercer than flame, swifter than flight,
I hunted her down the morning.

I loved the beast in her, the hide
Sweating and sleek, the heaving side,
I burned to stifle savagely
The human mouth that taunted me

From the wild-woman face above ;
 As on the Isle of Awful Love
 Pasiphae and the Bull of Crete
 Tasted strange lips and found them sweet ;
 I heard, as they heard, for Love's song,
 The sound of hoofs the whole night long.

I hunted her down the morning !

 She leapt with neighing shrill ;
 No stream too deep, too high no hill
 To master such bright scorning :
 Till where the reeds grew thiek and tall
 I saw her stumble, sway and fall.
 But, from her eyes as I drew near
 Leapt fear, and something more than fear :
 She did not stir, she did not move,
 She knew the ancient Sport of Love,
 She knew me at the side of her.
 From great gold mane to trembling hoof,
 The sleek, the tawny hide of her,—
 All the predestined sweets thereof—
 Are mine to crush or choke or kill . . .

Kisses grew quicker, closer still,
 Lip to lip, hoof to hoof we lay . . .
 The broad bright morning burnt away,
 The stream went mocking in our ear,
 We did not see, we did not hear,
 We did not care, we did not move ;
 What power could stay the Centaur's Love ?

The glorious chase was all for this,
More fleet the flight, more fierce the kiss ;
She knew how doubly sweet would be
Her last surrender, and to me
How swift the vengeance on her scorning . . .

And now I lie and laugh with her,
She will not fly, I shall not stir
To hunt her down the morning !

INTERIOR

WHEN I sit down to read at night
I hear a thousand voices call—
The painted cups, the mirror bright,
The crazy pattern on the wall ;

Terrible sounds of woe and strife
Make thunder through this quiet room,—
Women who gave the mill their life,
And men who shuddered at the loom,—

The noise the snarling hammer made
In maddened ears, the foundry's roar,—
The woe that stitched this rich brocade,
That beat this brass, that hewed this door.

How can I read while round me swarm
Creatures that wept and strove and died
To make this room, rich, safe and warm,
To keep the weather-beasts outside ?

How can I rest while in the gloom
From mine and garret, den and pit,
They pass, who built in blood this room,
And with their tears so furnished it !

TO EACH MAN HIS FEAR

THROUGH reeling night and crumbling day
You pace the Haunted House of Pain,
The Thing that marked you for its prey
Follows you, hides and springs again.

To blinding window, sinking floor,
Drunken with ether, torn with knife,
Crazy and blind you lurch once more
Into the hideousness of Life.

And nothing beautiful nor strong,
Nor kind, nor fierce, nor vain, nor pure,
Concerns you,—only this,—how long,
How much, how well, you may endure.

The fiery brain that dreamed and planned,
The kissing lips, the restless feet,
Lie knotted like a dead man's hand,
And writhe beneath the twisted sheet.

Till to a life that but revolved
Round a dim night-light's settling blue
Comes Death, and lays aside, unsolved,
The foolish riddle that was You !

THE BASTARD

HERE thou art safe as roses in the bud,—
Safe from the wind that will not spare the
 rose ;
Here thou art daily and divinely fed
 On holy wine and bread
That none deny—my body and my blood—
I housle thee, myself the sacrament,
And I am great with thee, as souls with
 God.

Lie close, in Love's first, safest house lie
 close,
Blind, breathless, undesirous, and content,
Hearing my blood sing o'er thee, like a
 lute,
Feeling my flesh as daisies feel the earth
Over them, round them, warm and very
 still . . .
Oh thou art so impatient of thy birth !
As in her blind hood gropes the daffodil,
As in the pale flower leaps the rebellious
 fruit.
Lie still beneath this most unquietest heart,
For thou a calmer pillow shalt not know

Upon this side of sunset, nor shalt go
So careless of the steely hearts of men.
Thou hast the peace that men desire in
vain—

The quiet men lose and cannot find again ;
After, thou shalt not find such sweet repose.
Starlight and moonshine will not say thee
'Nay,'

Nor the sun question thy divinest right—
The Password of the Portals of the Day,
The Freedom of the City of the Night ;
The orphaned lily, the unfathered rose
Shall not disdain thy gold, unharmed hair,
But men shall claim thee their eternal
prey,

Hunt thee to Death, and hound thee to
Despair,

Mark thee, and set thee loose, to take again
As they hunt each forlorn, defenceless
thing,—

As I am hounded by the hate of men.

For us there is no pardon, pity none
Of all cold hearts beneath the pitying
sun,—

Of all cold lips above the pardoning seas.
Behold us, foes of all Love's enemies,
With every hand against the hand of Love,
And we, the slaves of Love's swift tourneying,
Paying the slow and bitter price thereof.

Lie still awhile ; thy beauty builds my shame !—
The shame thou dost so innocently bring :
At thy beseeching blood my blood grows
tame,

Thy body makes my own most wearisome,
And with thy kindling lips my lips become
Colder ; within me something daily dies.

Yet, oh ! most sweet, I do not quarrel
thee,

For more desired thou art than chastity ;
Closer thou art than eyelids over eyes,
Than kissing lips or clasping hands can be ;
As flame with flame, as tide with tide thou
art ;

Nearer, much nearer, than myself to me :
I carry Heaven beneath my labouring heart.

But thou wilt lie no longer than Love lay,
Thou wilt weary of my body even as he ;
And I again with body and blood shall pay
To the last farthing's ruthless penalty
The nights with Love, the days, the hours
with thee.

And when at last thy fashioning is o'er,
When flesh from flesh, when soul from soul,
goes free,

When Love's poor house can give thee nothing
more,

And thou break through the wearying bonds
thereof,

I will seek pardon of thee on my knees,
And thou ask pity `of God, or stones, or
trees,
But not of men—we will ask naught of these—
I, the loving, and thou the seal of Love.

THE COCKPIT OF IDOLS

I, God's young priest, went to His House to
pray.

In the dim church the warm deep-bosomed
air

Swelled on remembered music, whose last
note

 Yearned in the organ's throat ;
Great columns carved in fountain-fall of
stone

Upheld the dizzy roof on might of spray.

 Beneath the pavement bare
Slumbered the dead, serenely separate,
 Too still for praise or prayer,
 Too wise for love or hate ;

With no more haste to finish or begin,
With no more need to tarry or pursue
Where nothing more is finished or begun.
The nave stood plunged in purple to the chin,
And all the windows stared a solemn blue
Pricked with the golden needles of the sun.

But I thought not on Beauty, but on Sin—
On all the nameless evils dared and done,
For me the dark worm tunnelled in the bud

The moth despoiled the tapestries of rich
years,
For me each Dawn was but a vision of tears,
And every night a winking bowl of blood.

A gentle Christ above the altar stared
At His mean feast prepared,
And near the earven Rood
The Maid—the Mother stood.

I kneeled before her, I who had wept and
prayed
Each day and night of my remembering
years,

Whose youth profane and passionate was
laid

Beneath the cloisters' celibate still shade,
And dedicated at the Font of Tears.

But as I kneeled the grim walls seemed to
fade

Into wet woodlands, and wide, happy leas
Where lovers with kissed lips and mazy hair
Went dancing to the stately sound of trees.

Love blew his rapturous bubbles in the air,
And suddenly for the first wild time I knew
The strange sweet pang that the hid violet
knows

When first she dreams of blooming, and how
the rose

Shivers beneath the sharp, baptismal dew.

I heard the song the thrush one morn would
sing,
And knew then what the dumb reed wept to
say
Ere Pan had kissed her mouth, I felt that
day
The shameless, sweet, unshatterable Spring!
And suddenly the whole world shook with
song—
Music of brooks and birds, of bees and
showers;
To the grey fields carolled the rosy flowers;
The grass's husky, hesitating tongue
Murmured and ceased; from the remotest
sea
Rose, as a tune that hidden minstrels play,
The water's lyric, the wind's lutany.

Oh! voices, voices, bringing to mine ears
Your tender torture! Oh! sweet hurt of
Spring
Shed all along my veins. Oh! flying fire
Of passion, of woe, of wildness, of desire;
The Hound of Love was on the Heel of Youth,
Beauty came wiling, wooing, whispering,
And wounded me upon the breast and mouth
With secret wounds—with kisses sharp as
spears,
Sudden as flame, and bright and thick as
tears,

Yet breathing peace withal, as when one
bowers

His head upon some dew-begotten dell,
And feels his eyelids cold against cold flowers.

How could I pray? Could such lips shape a
sigh?

What chalice had this hour to lend to tears?
Only the cuckoo's song was in my ears,
My dumb voice quickened only to one
cry:

“Darest thou listen, Mother-Maid, to me,—
Thou who hast listened all these empty years

To the slow fall of tears,—

To coward penitence that scarce hath lain
Upon thy breast but hears Sin's whistle
shrill,

And cries for her old bedfellow again?

Hath any paused to offer on his knee

A word of love since one for Love's own
sake

Gave thee swift, crowded hours of ecstasy,
Whose voice above all prayers thou hearest
still?

Thou wert a woman to him, thou didst make

Each summer mystery plain;

Were not thy clinging hands the wind's un-
rest?

Was not thy spread hair thunder on his
breast?

Was not thy face the rose, thy tears the rain ?
Here kneeleth one who loves thee even as
he ! ”

The day reeled past me, haggarding the
night,

Then stayed her breath,
Waiting for an immediate doom to fall
On one whom none may succour or requite,—
Doom neither prayer nor pity hindereth.

The loosened ivy cringed against the wall,

The dusk about me drew
A closer noose of gloom ; the silence wept ;
The lights upon the altar lapsed and leapt

In gusts of gold and blue.

From the night's caravan a beggar-wind
Crept up and listened at the door
Like some poor outcast creature that hath
sinned

And dareth home no more,
But listens to old songs round the old hearth,
Wondering if his forbidden name one saith,
If one be sad, remembering. Then I heard—
Lower than pipe of an entranced bird

That shakes a dewy wing
On glittering boughs at sunrise, venturing
Against hushed lips of dawn his perilous
flute—

The stumble soft of unaccustomed speech
That patience or despair hath long made mute,

Sad as sea-sounds in most forlornest shells
 Scattered upon a tide-forsaken beach,
 Wherein the murmur of the far sea dwells.

“ I hear thy plea, my wild one ! Have thy
 prayers

Led thee to me for this ?

And have I so mis-read thy daily vows ?
 My silence, hath it seemed a sinful ‘ Yea ’ ?
 Hast thou but beaten dedicated brows
 Against the feet of Lust, and in my house
 Profaned me, deeming me to be enticed
 By snare of service, and by bait of prayer
 Into Sin’s meshes ? Wouldst thou father
 Christ ? ”

“ Lady, thy children were not all of God ;
 Thy gentle feet have trod
 The path of Love, thy bosom well hath known
 Its blossoms and its bowers,
 Thy mouth hath crushed its fruit ; oh ! thou
 hast grown

Into my soul as sun grows into flowers,
 As the sea rolls into the sunset’s shell.
 Thou dwellest in me as the Host doth
 dwell

Within the Cup, but also dwelleth there
 That other ancient Spirit of the Vine
 Torched on the hills, laughing and quiek with
 wine,

Pursuing Ariadne as she flies
Through the dim woods, the fountain of her
hair
Blown backwards in warm gold against the
air,
Its bubbles sparkling at his lips and eyes.
Thou art the beaker that Bacchantes
bring—
And thine the cup whence Mænades caroused,—
The vine upon a thousand hill-sides sunned,
The warm bright grape their amorous bodies
bruised ! ”

I heard my words rush past me thundering,
As one who on the lonely mountain hears
The deep abysses groan their agonies,—
The ridge make sharp her merciless strong
spears,
And hears the awful hammer of the ice
Break the great crags in shards about his
ears !

But as I kneeled and shuddered, sound of
feet
Sighed in the aisle, and lingered and grew
close.
One kneeled by me—an outcast of the
street—
A creature wan as June's last lovely rose

That, following forsaken summer fades
 Slowly through nights of rain, and days of
 drouth—

A graveless ghost, whom sleep in vain per-
 suades,

Whom merey may not save, nor pity
 stir,

Wearing the harlot's rose on cheek and
 mouth,

With all her pitiful hair spilled over her.

She leanced towards me, a few words stammer-
 ing—

Learned lesson of the streets so glibly
 spoken!—

The priest in me leaped out and smote her
 there,

“Darest thou plead, poor, painted Folly,
 broken

Across the knees' of those thou once didst
 snare?

Shall Love be borne upon a vulture's wing?

Shall paper roses bear

The burden of the Spring?

Canst thou set all the sunrise in a ring?

What whip shall scourge the trafficker that
 sells

Such shameful wares within the House of
 God

Where Holiness hath its august abode,

Denied the gold by which thou art grown
rich ?

Behold above us where God's Mother
dwells. . . ."

Darkness alone stood in the empty niche.

" Son, for whom died my Son, I have come
down !

I am the terrible answer to thy kiss.

Behold the graven image overthrown ;

Passion at last brings all its gods to this.

What ware is sold more shameful than thine
own,

What harlot's house is more profaned than
mine,

Whose priests forswear the solemn vows
they made,

In whose hands broken is indeed the bread,

And for whose sins shall blush the holy
wine ? "

As in some vast and desperate agony,

On torn lips furrowed by the Plough of Pain,

A meaningless word within all words be knit,

Repeated till all sense be gone from it,

And it mean naught, and beat upon a brain

Long crazed and without fear, I spake again :

" Wert thou more faithful to thy God than
I ?

Mary, for Him wert thou inviolate ?

Didst thou for Him all other loves deny,
 Forsworn thy lips, thy body celibate
 To Him who made thy breast His Sanctuary ?
 For I have never turned aside to slake
 My thirst on Folly's fruit or Pleasure's wine ;
 I think no other woman had been mine
 After thy hair had swept me ! For thy
 sake

I had been only, and for ever thine.
 Yea, I had swiftly died upon thy kiss—
 Death flying in straight splendour to such
 mark—

Not as a beggar to the house of alms,
 Not in a narrow bed with hasty rite,
 And sudden hush of psalms,
 But as a great white Day goes out at night
 Upon the splendid venture of the Dark ! ”

So spake I, and fell weeping, closelier drew
 Until my brow against her feet was laid,
 Fell on my ears, as on shut flowers the dew,
 The swift sad words she said.

“ I, too, was but a weapon in God's hand—
 Human like thee—a weapon and a sign
 Misread of men ; in every human breast
 God lays Him down to rest
 Until the earthly cast forth the divine.
 None sainted me : did I at my Son's feet
 With other Marys sit ?

Was my forgotten hair beloved or blessed
As Magdalen's? Did I not ever stand
Aside, apart, forgotten and alone?
What word had Mark or Luke the Evangelist
For her whom God made Mother of His Son?
Why shouldst thou worship where they bowed
no knee?

“ O Son, O Wild One, thou hast brought
even me

Into thy soul's arena. All men turn
Their unseen gods to graven images,
Each man the idol of his choosing leads
That in the Cockpit of men's brutal creeds
Each god may bleed and burn,
Till frailer ones be fallen on their knees,—
Sweet gods soon broken upon the spears of
Youth,

Soon silenced at the knee of Sophistry,
Till Earth's eyes with the lust of battle dim,
Till gaping Hell be bubbled to the brim,
And Heaven grow grey against a dead god's
mouth.

Yea, Zeus and Christ in the great lists are
flung,

Dagon and Vishnu face to face are thrust,
Pallas Athene tourneys with the dust;
God of the North above whose throne were set
The golden shields, Isis of Egypt sung,
Meet only where all dying gods have met!

There shudders the moon-goddess Ashtoreth ;
 The Syrian, and the Cyprian, fall on death ;
 Olympus, Asgard and Gethsemane,
 Vigil of Paphos and of Olivet !
 And while these gods in the great shambles
 dic,

 Thrust on each other's spears,
 He, nameless and unchallenged, wanders by
 In every tree that peers
 Into the wizard darkness of the hill,
 And in each tarn most deeply contemplates
 The image of His beauty, lingers still
 To twist again the purpled clover's ears,
 World-weary feet He cools
 Where windless noons lie bathing in the pools,
 Or takes His solitude
 Where, in the purple cloak of twilight, waits
 The moon to pierce the solitary wood.

The God who made the world and found it
 good
 When the great pageant of six days rolled by,
 Who fired the laughing splendour of the
 blood,
 Painted the dawn, and laid the starry floors,
 And led the amazed moon across her sky,—
 Who wrestled with the thunder and the
 night,—
 Who heard the first seas singing up the shores,
 And saw the first fields blush in the first light.

Deny no more the spirit of delight,
No more thy brother's image erueify.
In every home thou hast bid men watch him
die,
And carved the moment of his agony.
Thou hast given us the Eternal load to bear,
The burden of the outcast and forlorn,
Give us the gift of laughter, not of prayer,—
The joy His Mother had when He was born,
And bid the wounded brow of Jesus wear
The rose and not the thorn.”
She ceased. Upon my brow's cold earthli-
ness
Faltered the stainless petals of her kiss,
While all the fluttering pinions of the air
Made ready as if to bear
An infinite impalpable foot thereon.
No trump declared her, but the air was
sweet
With crooked croon of doves,—with brooks
that run
Laughter and tears together,—with buds
that greet
With freckled faces the kisses of the sun.
All saddest things went gathered to her
breast,—
The foundling sorrow, and the grief that goes
To the lean bosom any hireling bares
When the heart's house is swept for Pleasure's
heirs,

And Life's broad bed another lover knows.
 My old despairs, old sorrows and old fears
 She took, as from the wide fields' palimpsest
 Sunlight blots out the legend of the snows
 For Spring's green name, while April dries her
 tears
 To prick the warm bright eyelids of the rose.

Dawn made a sudden crescent curve of flame
 Above the world, as o'er Endymion
 Arched in a trembling splendour, Dian came,
 The moon behind her, and before the sun,
 The Orient with her thundery hair distraught,
 The dying West still troubled at her feet,
 And the dark world beneath her chained and
 caught
 In the gold net where Night and Morning
 meet.

Never was Spring so longed for as this
 Spring—
 My Spring so long delayed and come at
 last—
 A child despaired of, overmuch desired,
 Born in the winter of Love when grown too
 old
 Has seemed the body and the lips too cold,
 The hands, the heart too tired
 For further fashioning.
 Oh! never had the heart's first celandine

Unhooded her so slowly from the green,
Never before had stately shaft and plinth
Been built so slowly by the hyacinth ;
Never had any captive fled so fast
From the grim haunted tower of solitude,
Never had leapt to such shrill trumpet blast
The prisoned pulse or marched the daunted
blood !

I loosed the bonds, I watched the idols fall,
From the dark shrine I went out, sane and
free,

Creedless and unforbidden to serve and see
The unknown, only God within us all.
Men seemed no more the legionaries of lust,
Women no more their pleasure or their
prey,—

Lost creatures blown from frail, alluring
dust,

And doomed to slow corruption and decay.
Something so lovely, pitiful and wise,
Something so infinite crowned the finite
whole !

I saw the unshatterable temple of each soul,
I heard their laughter as the wind that blows
Wider the thrilling rose,
And felt their tears like rain, their sweat like
dew.

I saw God die a thousand deaths and rise
In triumph from each yawning sepulchre,
And Summer's hair was gold beneath His feet.

Then lo ! She passed before me, and I knew
I might have found, loved, healed and hallowed
her

In every violet-seller by the wall,
In pavement-saints, Madonnas of the Shawl,
In Magdalen's hair, in Martha's ministry,
Wherever women's heads were blessed or
bowed ;

I walked with God in every noisy street,
And saw in every creature that passed by
Christ go forth too and mingle with the
crowd.

THE SECOND-HAND BOOKSTALL

ON a stall they shiver now,
Huddled in the dust and rain,—
A forlorn and tattered row,
Like the castaways of men.

A profound green library
Held them once, serene and close,
Where a sonnet's lips were dry
With the blood of some dead rose.

Dirty hands and furtive eyes
Touch, profane them where they lie,
And a ticket shows the price
Of such immortality !

Dust is deep on Marlowe's lip,
Hell holds Dante in these streets,
Milton takes the gutter's drip,
Mud is on the breast of Keats.

All the lovely thoughts men think,
All their rapture, love and pain,—
God come down in blood and ink,—
Sold for sixpence in the rain !

TO —

WHEN I grow old and my quick blood is
chilled,

And all my thoughts are grey as my grey hair,
When I am slow and dull, and do not care,
And all the strife and storm of Life are stilled ;
Then if one carelessly should speak your
name

It will go through my body like swift spears
To set my fireless bosom in a flame,
My faded eyelids will be bright with tears ;
And I shall find how far my heart has gone
From wanting you,—how lost and long ago
That love of ours was : I shall suddenly know
How old and grey I am . . . and how alone.

THE SLAVE

THE Sins, the Joys, the Sorrows of the Soul
Sat down to feast, and He was bidden wait
Upon them,—He who wore an aureole
About His brows, while they washed hands
 and ate,
Plucked fruit and spices from the costly
 plate,
And drained the black wine from the lordly
 bowl.

Twelve guests of God they sat at meat ; each
 guest
Closest to him he loved ; lean Treachery
Spilled salt and moved Pride's eyelid with a
 jest,
Repentance, scarcely daring to reply,
Sat with wan cheek half-turned from Chastity,
But Love—Love wept against the Servant's
 breast.

Young Hope and Fear clung, dove-like breasts
 together
Near Joy and Grief with wild and gentle eyes ;
Courage, a bird that flies in every weather,

Refused to count his scars for Pity's sighs ;
Lust crouched and tossed red meats and
savouries
To his gaunt hounds that whinnied at their
tether.

With pity infinite the Slave leaned down
Serving them Folly's wine, and Pleasure's
meat,
And when cups yawned, and broken fruits
lay brown
He, rising, took rough linen and water sweet
And kneeled and washed those erring Masters'
feet,
And drew their gold and broidcred sandals on.

Joy fled ; Love cried : " Lord, serv'st thou
such as they ? "
Hope, Fear and Sorrow chorused Pity's
sigh ;
But Pride thrust forth his feet, and Lust said :
" Yea,"
Courage was shamed ; aghast stood Chastity ;
Repentance with wild hair wept : " Thus
did I ! "
And Treachery kissed the Slave and went
away.

By some forgotten, and by some denied,
By all forsaken, from that banquet-hall

The Slave went forth, Love weeping at his
side,
And for the Body's sins, for those who fall
Because of it—for Love's sake most of all—
After their feast the Slave was crucified.

ÉTAPLES

“ÉTAPLES,” what does it mean ?
Is it the name of a town ?
Fields where the wild flowers blow,
A hill where the brooks run down ?

*Is it a town to us ?—
A field where the jonquils grow ?
Is it a hill where the streams
Run laughing ? We do not know.*

“Étapes,”—a strange, vague word
Spelled on the lips of the guns
Where all that our wild hearts loved
Went through with the regiment once !

COMMON FIRES

THE fern and flame had fought and died
together,
From fading frond the failing smoke crept
grey,
The heath drew close her old brown shawl of
heather,
And turned her face away.

To-day the bee no bell of honey misses,
The birds are nesting where the bracken
lies
Green, tranquil, deep, quiet as dreams or
kisses
On weary lips and eyes.

The heath has drawn the blackened threads
together,
My heart has closed her lips upon old pain,
But somewhere, in my heart and in the
heather,
No bud shall grow again.

TO —

COME back no more : nothing is left us now :
Let us forget ; let us go back, go soon
To the old loves we left, and crave the boon
Of their old kindness, nor remember how
Your hands burnt in my hands,—how wild,
 how dear
Those hours were once, that now forgotten
 are,
Let this thing be as far as love is far,
Yea, let this be as things that never were.

Though it have altered all that used to be,
Have changed our earth, and brought strange
 wave and weed
Into our fields, and smart and smell of sand
From waters that have never known the
 land ;
Though on our tides have burned rich scent
 and seed
From gardens that were strangers to the sea.

Come back no more : what is there but to find
This rose's flaw in every other rose ?
To taste in all fruit this fruit's bitter rind,

To breathe these ashes on each wind that
blows ?

Was it for this we pledged a thousand vows,
And by eternal kisses swore our faith—
This dearest of dead things that lies beneath
The stretched sheet in Life's latched and
shuttered house ?

What word is there to bring it ? No word
more ;

It would not hear though we had words to
say,

Though we had tears to shed, or prayers to
pray.

Leave to this dead its dark, and close this
door . . .

It was not Love that we brought here to die,
Let us go back, go by.

INDICTMENT

IN women is it Chastity you prize?—
The unapproachable white purities,—
The vestal moon forsworn of celibate skies,
The ice that spurns remote and barren seas?
Can Chastity cool your kisses, slake your
sighs?

And when, at last, o'ertaken and embraced,
We give you burning lips, wild words and
eyes,

In your arms lying, would you have us chaste?

If it were Chastity filled your treasuries,
Possession would be Prize instead of Prey.
You would be wise and clean, and we should
go

Free of your lusts and importunities,
Nor trace the dubious paths we take to-day
From your first, careless footsteps in the
snow.

BLUEBELL NIGHT

WHEN Earth stands trembling on the brink
of June

Spring reads the writing on the sunset's wall,
And 'Farewell' on the bright page of the
moon,

While the winds lute a faint memorial.

She hears Night toll the hour of her fare-
well,

And seeks once more a breast whereon to
die,—

In the last wood to yield to Summer's
spell,

That still dreams on with wide and tranquil
eye

When June the mighty huntress rakes the
sky

And sows the world with heat,—still sees its
cool

Green image peering o'er the enchanted pool.

Past the low track where many a groaning
cart

Has lurched above the beating of Spring's
heart

She fleets, June's arrows falling swift and
bright :

The creening curlew-wind wails, following,
The old wheel-wounds are filled with flowers
to-night.

Her reels of gold, blue skein and yellow bead,
Fall from her hand as wild and white she
goes,

The poppy lacking still a golden thread,
Her needle pricking still the unfinished rose.

To-night the bluebells die, already wan
With prescience of her whose death is theirs :
A sheathing wing the solemn thicket bears,

 Though heedless birds sing on,
Though through the listening moonlight
wanders still

The wide-lipped water talking in her sleep,
 And far beyond the hill,

Across the heaven's golden, vast divide,
The twilight rose nods to the lily moon ;

 Too old, too wise to weep,
They watch where Spring has fallen, and see
her swoon

With the long spear of Summer in her side.

The lean swift bramble hastens o'er the
stones,—

A gipsy Autumn makes an emperor
Splendoured in purple, glorious in gold ;

The young wild trees whom she may tend no
more

Forget their cradle-songs in April's house,
And on Earth's shoulders take a mighty
hold,

Against the sun spread vast pavilions,
And stun the great storms with huge, thunder-
ous brows.

While from Spring's dying hand the jewels
fall ;

The hawthorn folds her frail embroidery,
The drowsy hyacinth puts out her light,
Gold-throated flowers that lured the pirate
bee

Fade like old dreams across the face of
night,

Of whom stern Day forbids memorial.

Something of Spring must die in us to-night—
Something the full-lipped Summer may not
know,—

The sharp, sad rapture, the impetuous flight
That finds all heavens too near, all heights
too low ;

When Dawn seems but a glittering rose to
throw

To a mad world, and from Youth's beakers
flow

The keen, the sparkling Daysprings of De-
light !

But not for ever ! All that died to-night
Has heard one same sweet word, and knows
that Change

Though seeming wild and strange,—
Seeming to stamp its heel on all delight,
And giving Beauty only grace to die,
Shall bring a rich to-morrow ; though Spring
lie

Dead as the first faith in Youth's sepulchre,
She shall return, and glide,—

A white swan moving on the green Spring-
tide :

A snowdrop soon shall quicken in her side,
And round her lips a little sigh shall stir . . .
While loud December stamps the frozen ways
Leave her to dreamless nights and deedless
days,

And strew the paling bluebells over her !

HELIODORE

Who will remember Heliodore ?
The nightingales, the nightingales
That sing to-night in vain for thee
Whose nights no singing shall restore ?
The myrtle that in vain hath shed
Bloom for thy bridal feet to tread
That wander dim and sunless vales,
Far off, too far for Love and me ?
What music hath Persephone,
What woodland glade, what balmy grove
To bower sweet birds in lutany ?
What lip or lyre speaks low in Love
Where grey ghosts after and before
Weave thee a mournful canopy
Of hemlock grim and hellebore ?
This is thy maiden company,
These are thy roses, Heliodore.

Who will remember Heliodore ?
No rain of Autumn's weaving
On Twilight's loom with shuttle slow ;
No plaint of sad birds' grieving
Makes of thy name a deeper woe.

The earth that holds thee tranced and deep
In Death's long tyranny of sleep
Will not remember Heliodore.

For thou wilt be no more to her
Than dust of ferns, or shades that stir
The sands on Lethe's long cold shore,
Than crumbling bones of beast or bird,
Than perfume vague of musk or myrrh
Clinging round lip of shell or sherd ;
Those eyes, that strange gold flame of hair,
Shall be to her as Helen's were—
Dust in the dust—she will not care
If these sweet limbs and lips be those
Of fawn or flowers or dryad, nor
Discern thy beauty from the rose,
Nor thee from lilies, Heliodore.

Who will remember Heliodore ?
Not this sea, not this shore ;
Not this forgetting wind and tree :
The dreaming land will wait once more
The sighing, swift, desirous sea ;
To-morrow's sun will take the moon,
To-morrow's bloom will burn the bee ;
The days will give the sweet days' boon
To Midnight's savage empery.
The silver sails will fret the morn
For the pale Pleiades' return ;
Atys will woo Aurora's kiss
In the tall woods : the Dryades

Will woo their fauns, and Hippoerene
Will wait the noon to dance between
The white feet of Melpomene,—
But not for thine, but not for thee !

Who will remember Heliodore ?
What if my heart remember thee
In Thessaly ? What lyre have *I*
To trance Alecto's furious hair ?
What ghost shall see thee gliding by
To laughter and to love once more—
To the old mortal days that were ? . . .
I cannot wake thee, Heliodore.
A day, a year, and I shall be
As unremembering as they
Who share thy sweet oblivion.
Silence and song shall be as one,
Moonset as sunrise, night as day,
Rivers as rocks, and stars as stones :
And the last flower may cease to grow,
The last bird sing, the last wind blow,—
I shall not heed, I shall not know
That thou wert, or that I was, once.

In vain, in vain shalt thou implore
Thine old song's rapture, Heliodore.
Oh ! Love, Love, loved immeasurably !—
Sweet, only Splendour lived and shed
Through all my singing, thou shalt see

How far, how utterly at last
Art thou from all Remembrance cast
When Love himself forgetteth thee,
And these, thy lips, can sing no more,—
When I am dead as thou art dead,
Dumb as thy dumb mouth, Heliodore.

P R E S S N O T I C E S

“A NEW poet of mark. . . . ‘Christ at Carnival’ contains more than promise—it is an achievement, it is worked out with fine romantic exuberance, and there are lines which any modern poet would be glad enough to own.”—*Sunday Times*.

“Muriel Stuart writes powerfully and shows true poetic vision. She promises great power of expression.”—*Daily Mail*.

“The melody and passion of her work are indissoluble, only the authentic fire could light such flame, being in language fierce, economical, and almost always making music, even when its bitter scorn shows something altogether hideous. It can be read from end to end for sheer lyrical ecstasy and impassioned tenderness.”—*Bookman*.

“The writer has a feeling for the rhythmical march of stately words and glowing images which makes fine poetry.”—*Times*.

PRESS NOTICES—*continued*

“‘Christ at Carnival’ has a dignity and moral force which are unusual in modern verse. We have a quite new and personal vision for seeing and telling the vision.”—*Leader*.

“The really great poets of the period can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and to add to their galaxy one must be careful that the work justifies the distinction. Muriel Stuart does this. Not only in the dangerous originality of the idea has Muriel Stuart struck fresh ground, but in the highly poetic treatment. It is all told with a richness of imagery and lofty altitude of thought rarely witnessed in recent poems even from the best writers.”—*Gentlewoman*.

“The poem is a remarkable achievement. Muriel Stuart has stepped into the shoes of Stephen Phillips, but she has her own note, and that note has many tones not found in Stephen Phillips’ work—a stronger, fuller note.”

Weekly Dispatch

“A powerful and arresting poem.”

Westminster Gazette.

RECENT POETRY

TWENTY POEMS FROM RUDYARD KIPLING

Fcap. 8vo, 1s. net.

DAYBREAK

By ALICE M. BUCKTON, Author of "Eager Heart." Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

FAIRIES AND CHIMNEYS

By ROSE FYLEMAN. Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo, 3s. 6d. net.

THE BOMBER GIPSY, AND OTHER POEMS

By A. P. HERBERT. Fcap. 8vo, 3s. 6d. net.

THE NIGHT SISTER, AND OTHER POEMS

By Captain CHARLES T. FOXCROFT. Fcap. 8vo, 1s. 6d. net.

COT 5 AND ROSE VAQUETTE OF LA BOISELLE

By EDWARD KNOBLOCK. Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo, 1s. 6d. net.

THE WAY OF WONDER

By MAY DONEY, Author of "Songs of the Real." With an Introduction by Sir ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

METHUEN & CO. LTD., LONDON

THE POEMS OF RUDYARD KIPLING

Buckram Crown 8vo, 7s. 6d. net each.
Limp lambskin, gilt top Fcap. 8vo, 7s. 6d. net each.
Cloth, gilt top Fcap. 8vo, 6s. net each.
The Service Edition, in 8 vols., square fcap. 8vo,
3s. net each.

BARRACK-ROOM BALLADS

One Hundred and Ninety-second Thousand.

"Mr. Kipling's verse is strong, vivid, full of character. . . .
Unmistakable genius rings in every line."—*Times*.

"'Barrack-Room Ballads' contains some of the best work that
Mr. Kipling has ever done, which is saying a good deal.
'Fuzzy-Wuzzy,' 'Gunga Din,' and 'Tommy' are, in our opinion,
altogether superior to anything of the kind that English literature
has hitherto produced."—*Athenæum*.

THE SEVEN SEAS

One Hundred and Forty-seventh Thousand.

"Packed with inspiration, with humour, with pathos."
Daily Chronicle.

"All the pride of empire, all the intoxication of power, all the
ardour, the energy, the masterful strength and the wonderful
endurance and death-scorning pluck which are the very bone and
fibre and marrow of the British character are here."—*Daily Mail*.

THE FIVE NATIONS

One Hundred and Twentieth Thousand.

"Mr. Kipling shows a serener and more profound view of life
than ever he has shown before, he strikes deeper notes and sounds
more intricate chords, and, what is equally important, the day of
his experiments in verse is over. He controls his material with
the absolute, assured touch of a master of rhythmical effect."

Morning Post.

DEPARTMENTAL DITTIES

Eighty-ninth Thousand.

"With the appearance of 'Departmental Ditties' the high-water
mark of Indian poetry has been reached. . . . They will suffer
little by comparison with the best work of Praed or Locker."

Englishman.

TWENTY POEMS FROM RUDYARD KIPLING

Fcap. 8vo, 1s. net.

This little book contains a selection from Mr. Kipling's volumes
of verse, and in addition three poems which have never been
published before in book form.

NINE CHARMING WORKS BY
MAURICE MAETERLINCK

TRANSLATED BY
ALEXANDER TEIXEIRA DE MATTOS

THE
BURGOMASTER OF STILEMONDE

Fcap. 8vo, 5s. net

THE MIRACLE OF SAINT ANTHONY

(A Play in One Act.) Fcap. 8vo, 3s. 6d. net.

THE WRACK OF THE STORM

Third Edition. Crown 8vo, 6s. net.

This volume contains sixteen essays which M. Maeterlinck has written since the outbreak of the war, and the three speeches delivered at Milan, Rome, and London respectively.

THE BLUE BIRD (A Fairy Play in Six Acts)

The book is issued in three forms :

A sumptuous Edition, containing 25 Illustrations in Colour by F. CAYLEY ROBINSON, A.R.W.S. Crown 4to, 21s. net.

An Edition in Cloth. Deckle edges, fcap. 8vo, 6s. net.

An Edition in Cloth. Fcap. 8vo, 1s. 9d. net.

(Forty Editions of this book have been issued in all.)

MARY MAGDALENE (A Play in Three Acts)

Third Edition. Fcap. 8vo, deckle edges, 5s. net.

An Edition in Cloth. Fcap. 8vo, 1s. 9d. net.

DEATH

Fourth Edition. Fcap. 8vo, deckle edges, 3s. 6d. net.

A beautiful essay by this master of poetic prose.

OUR ETERNITY

With a Photogravure Frontispiece after G. F. WATTS' "Hope."

Second Edition. Fcap. 8vo, deckle edges, 6s. net.

THE UNKNOWN GUEST

Third Edition. Crown 8vo, 6s. net.

POEMS

DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY BERNARD MIALL

Second Edition. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

METHUEN & CO. LTD., LONDON

JOHN OXENHAM'S BOOKS OF VERSE

Small pott 8vo, paper, 1s. 3d. net
Cloth boards, 2s. net

BEES IN AMBER	228th Thousand
ALL'S WELL	203rd Thousand
THE KING'S HIGHWAY	120th Thousand
THE VISION SPLENDID	100th Thousand
THE FIERY CROSS	80th Thousand
HIGH ALTARS	40th Thousand
HEARTS COURAGEOUS	

[In the Press]

A LITTLE TE DEUM OF THE COMMONPLACE	2d. net
AD FINEM	1d. net
POLICEMAN X	2d. net
HYMN FOR THE MEN AT THE FRONT (on a Postcard)	1d. net
NATALICIA: His True Birthday	PART I. 1d. net; PART II. 1d. net
BE OF GOOD CHEER	3d. net



This book is DUE on the last
date stamped below.

10M-11-50(2955)470

REMINGTON RAND INC. 20

THE LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

PR Stuart -
6037 The cockpit of
S932c idols

PR
6037
S932c

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 561 447 4

