


SONNETS BY
T. W. H. CROSLAND

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SONNETS



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BY

T. W. H. CROSLAND

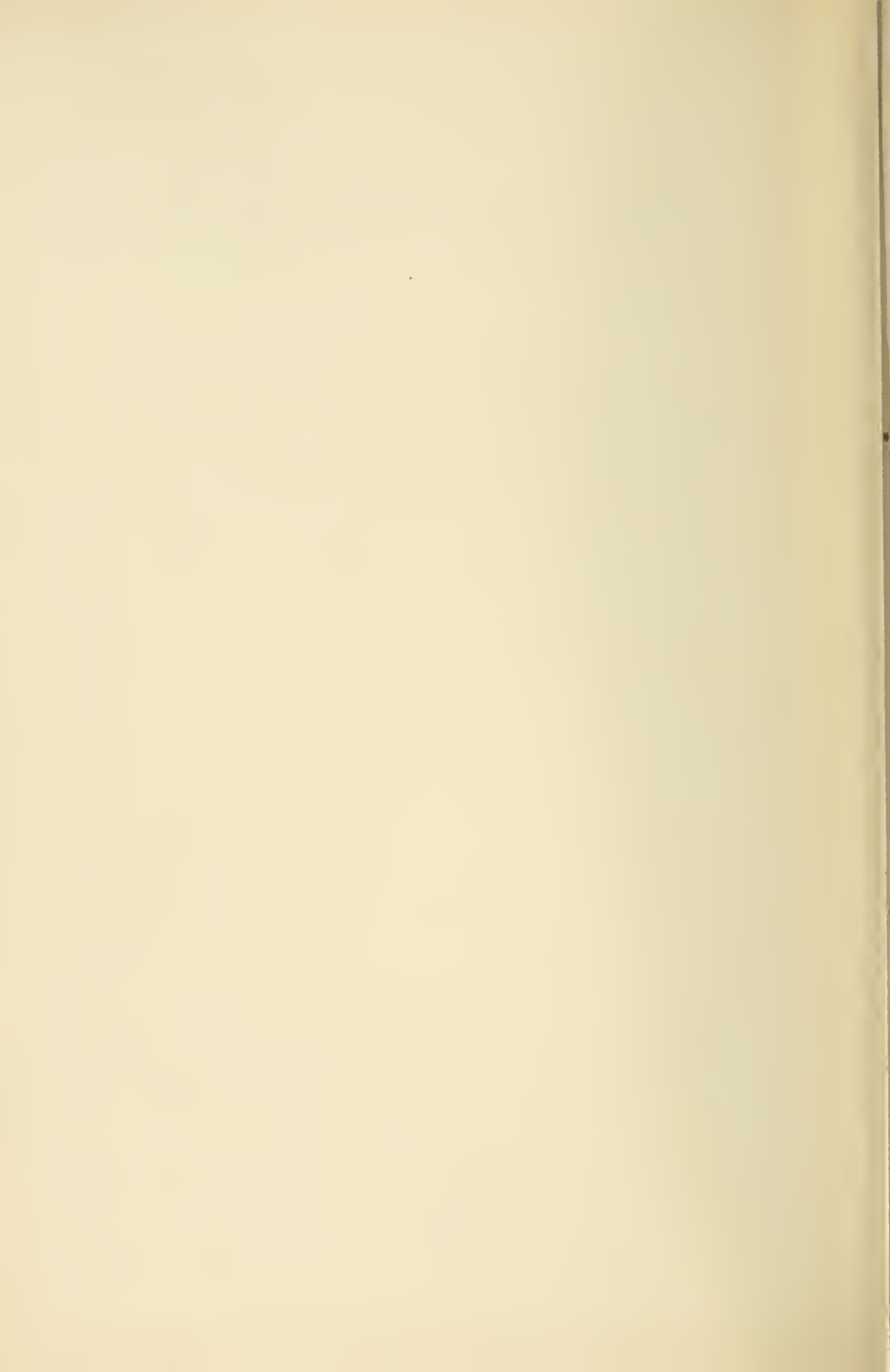
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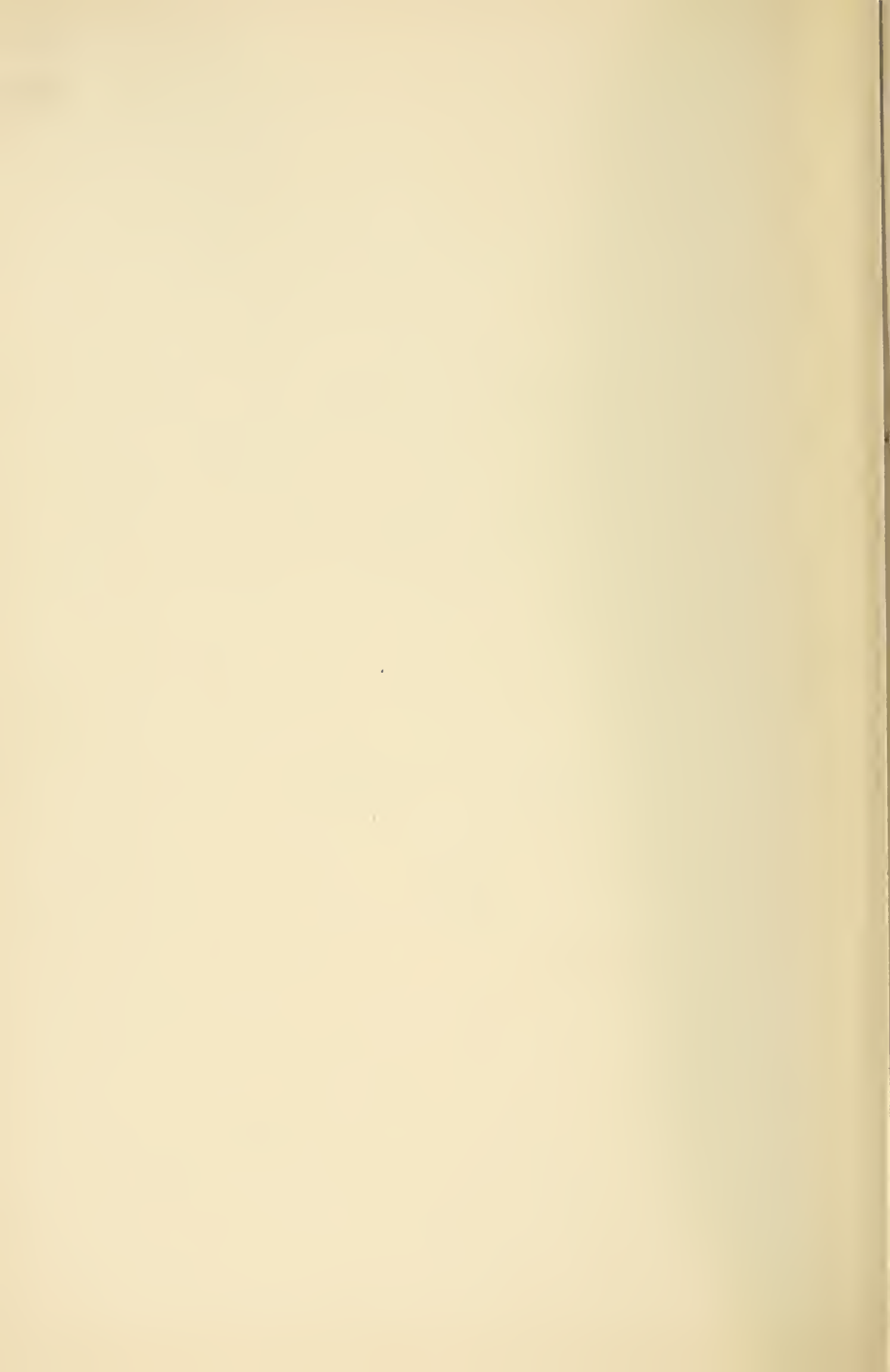
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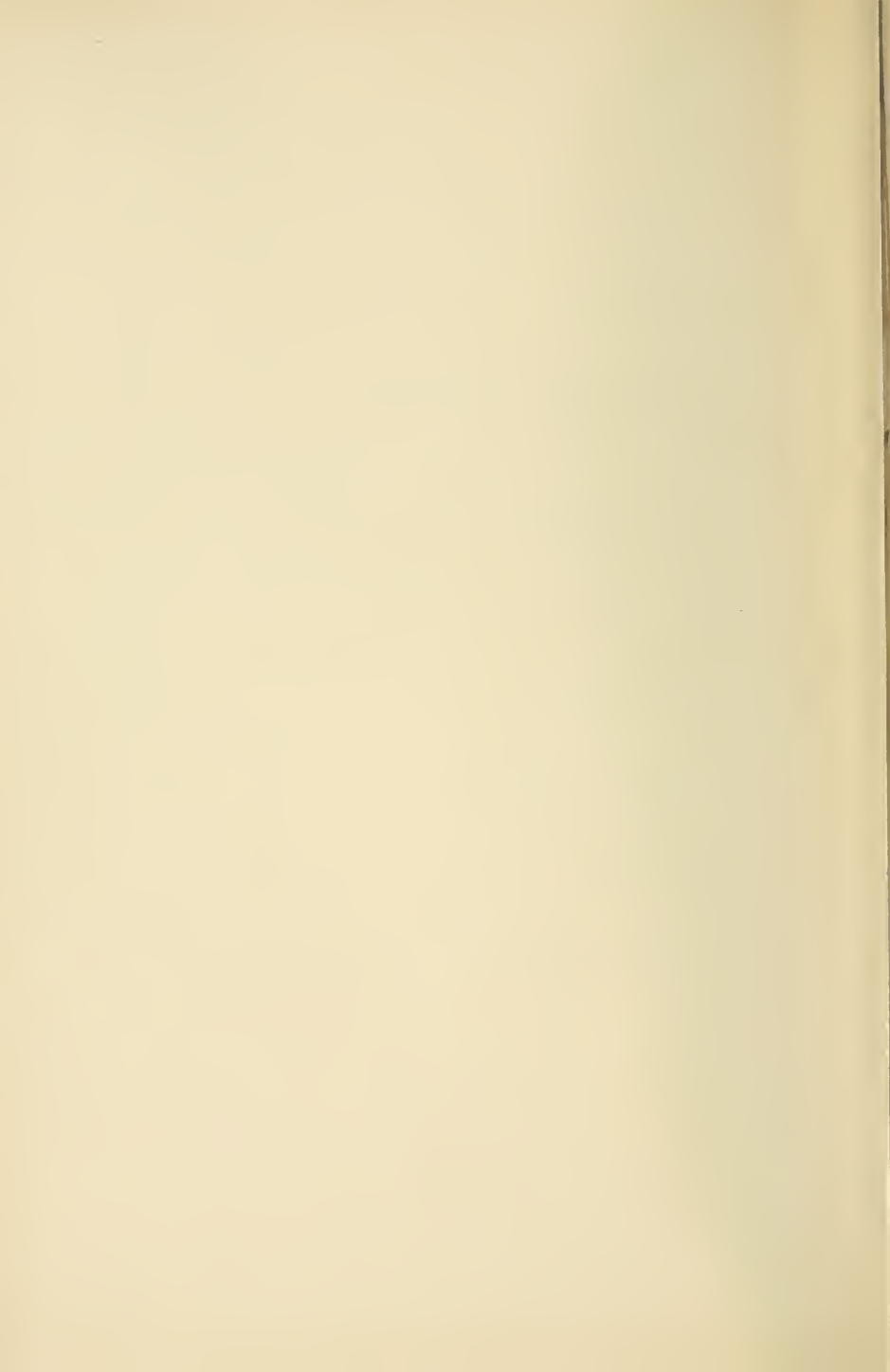


TO
THOMAS EVELYN
SCOTT ELLIS
LORD HOWARD DE WALDEN
AND
WILLIAM CHARLES
DE MEURON
WENTWORTH FITZWILLIAM
EARL FITZWILLIAM
WHOSE
PURCHASE
OF
THE ACADEMY
HATH CONFERRED
SUCH LUSTRE
ON
LETTERS
AND
SUCH A DIGNITY
UPON
THE HIGH MUSES
THIS BOOK
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THEIR LORDSHIPS' OBEDIENT
AND OBLIGED SERVANT
THOMAS
WILLIAM
HODGSON
CROSLAND



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FOR REMEMBRANCE

WHAT wife had he, what sweetheart, what
fair love?

So will the gossips ask themselves when Fame
Shall set her impudent lips upon my name
And make an auction for your cast-off glove.
They know you not. You are a brooding dove,
Whose spirit, fearful of the world's sharp flame,
Nestles unto the goodness whence it came,
And hath nor wish to range nor will to rove.

Yet, that through dusty Time you may not pass
Unpictured, unenshrined, or unadored,
I build this turret of eternal brass,
Wherein, so long as word may chime with word,
You are to sit before your jewelled glass
Beautiful as the Garden of the Lord.

TO A. D.

YOU took proud words and touched their
meagre blood,
You gave them wine and oil and the full grain.
The rose of love, the sacraments of Pain
And Death and Joy, and Beauty where she stood
Ineffable, like a beatitude,
And washed in silver dawns and golden rain ;
You would not stoop for praises or for gain,
And you have wrought us nothing else but good.

They see your soul, on flaming vans of song,
Flash past the prisons, and they shake their bars
With rage and malice ; where there is no light
They sit contriving mockeries and wrong ;
They know you have possessions in the stars,
And they must spit at you their little spite.

FOR ALGERNON CHARLES
SWINBURNE

THE cherry whitens in the April air.
Young Spring has spilt her magic on the
wold,

The woodlands ring with rapture as of old,
And England lies new-washen, green and fair ;
Yet is she heavy with a secret care,
For Death the ever-sharp and over-bold
Hath taken our Tongue of Honey, our Throat
of Gold ;
And we have digged a pit, and left him there.

So must he sleep, though it be high broad noon,
Or Venus glisten in the darkling firs :
The roses and the music are forgot ;
Even the great round marigold of a moon,
That is for lovers and for harvesters,
And all the sighing seas, may move him not.

‘ VOTES FOR WOMEN ’

MARK how their shining effigies are set
For ever on the firmament of Time,
Like lovely words caught in a lovely rhyme,
Or silver stars kept in a faery net.
Ivory and marble hold them for us yet,
And all our blossomy memories of them chime
With all the honest graces of the prime—
Helen, and Ruth, Elaine, and Juliet.

And You, in this disconsolate London square,
Flaunting an ill-considered purple hat
And mud-stained, rumpled, bargain-counter coat,
You of the broken tooth and buttered hair,
And idiot eye and cheeks that bulge with fat,
Sprawl on the flagstones chalking for a vote !

DEATH

FOR thou wert Master of their windy keeps,
In Tyre, in Ilium, and in Babylon,
Which smote the welkin many a year ago
With torches and with shouting. Whoso sleeps
On the large hills, or drowns in the old deeps,
His name shines in a book for thee to con;
And thy chill pomps and aching triumphs are
won
Where the forlornest woman sits and weeps.

So that for thee we make embroideries,
And for thy foul pate twist a beamy crown.
Who art the lord of laughter and of lust,
Who readest all their lesson to the wise,
And to the fools, as they go up and down;
And it is this: A cry, a rose, and—dust.

LEDA

OUT of my silver turrets I look down
Upon a garden wherein sleeps a rose
Who hath a ruby heart ; beside her glows
Unblemished, in a drifted, vestal gown
Yon lily, and beyond them lies a town
Of tufted green and each sweet bloom that
blows ;

Midmost from whence a little fountain throws
His gentle sprays which seem but half his own.

And on the lake that skirts our dreary wood
There sails for ever a new-washen swan,
Who is as white as milk or angels are :
At dawn he glitters in the solitude,
At dusk he goeth glimmering and wan
To where one waits him, white like a young star.

THE BABY IN THE WARD

WE were all sore and broken and keen on
sleep,
Tumours and hearts and dropsies, there we lay,
Weary of night and wearier of day,
With no more health in us than rotten sheep.
Then, tossed to us on some intangible deep,
Alicia came, and each man learnt to pray
That Providence would please find out a way
To still or abate the voice with which she would
weep.

God's infinite mercy, how that child did cry,
In spite of bottle, bauble, peppermint, nurse !
'The Tumour said he'd 'tell the manager,'
The Dropsy mumbled forth his bitterest curse ;
But still she wailed and wailed. And when we
die
We shall be sainted for forgiving her.

FOR H. M. C.

I WONDER which hath triumphed, you or
Death?

For he hath torn you ultimately from your place,
And shattered all the woman in your face,
And put his last injunction on your breath,
And ferried you across to his dim staith
Where there is none who hath either hope or
 grace,
But only the unimaginable race
Of broken souls his wing encompasseth.

O pitiful and pitiful! And yet
Not all he asks is yielded up to him,
And we who fight have our shrewd joy therefor:
Upon your brow sitteth a shining, grim
Rapture of wars, and on your lips is set
To-night the still smile of the conqueror.

TITANIC

UPON the tinkling splintery battlements
Which swing and tumble south in ghostly
white,

Behemoth rushes blindly from the night,
Behemoth whom we have praised on instruments
Dulcet and shrill and impudent with vents :
Behemoth whose huge body was our delight
And miracle, wallows where there is no light,
Shattered and crumpled and torn with pitiful
rents.

O towers of steel and masts that gored the moon
On you we blazoned our pomp and lust and pelf.
And we have died like excellent proud kings
Who take death nobly if it come late or soon :
For our high souls are mirrors of Himself,
Though our great wonders are His littlest things.

AFTER

AND when I die, you should be grieved, and
A^{go}
Dumbly into the bitter fields alone,
For you have long since made your widow's
moan,

And carried in your heart the widow's woe.
Outrageous Death hath neither feint nor blow
To hurt you further. Thus without a groan
I shall go down, and be as cold as stone,
And you will kiss me and I shall not know.

But haply then some mercy may befall,
And to your breast, this death in life being past,
Quiet may come and peace without alloy :
Seeing you lone and lovely and downcast
They will possess you with a secret joy
And keep you with an angel at your call.

THE 'STUDENT'

A MINX of seventeen, with rather fine
Brown eyes and freckles and a cheerful
grin,
She saunters up the ward, and stricken sin
Nods and looks pleasant (why should one
repine ?)
She takes ' her cases,' looks for every ' sign.'
Hammers and sounds the portly and the thin,
Plies them with questions till their cheap heads
spin
And keeps them busy saying ' ninety-nine.'

It's my turn now ! Oh, let me bare my chest
And spread a level sheet across my crib,
And be as wax for our meticulous Miss :
While she, poor dear, doing her anxious best,
Feels for the apex under the wrong rib
And wonders fiercely where my liver is.

TO A CERTAIN KNIGHT

THEY perk you up in scarlet and horsehair,
And let you say your usher-tickling *mots*,
For joy of which the unchained prisoner glows,
And counts his life a very small affair.
Then you write verse. Out comes the *West*
minster

(Why it comes out the Lord in Heaven knows),
And in black type on pea-green paper shows
Whose mantle it is that Milton used to wear.

We who are Justice to a mightier than the King
Have 'carefully perused' your verse, Sir Charles.
And hereby we deliver judgment on it :
A more mechanic, less poetic thing
Was never penned even by Clough or Quarles—
And, Jupiter! what a mess you make of the
sonnet!

ULSTER

THE savage leopardess, and she-wolves and
bears
Cherish their offspring in the solitude,
And red-eyed tigresses whose trade is blood,
And female panthers, and jackals in their lairs.
The lowliest, sullenest mother-creature wears
In her hot heart a jewel of motherhood,
And knoweth darkly that the only good
Is to defend and succour her rude heirs.

And thou whose Might is from the east unto the
west,
Whose Front is of chilled iron and fine gold,
Who yet in glory and honour goest drest,
O great-thewed mother of us all, behold
How this thy sturdy child, who is foully sold,
Fights that he be not banished from thy breast !

ON THE DEATH OF EDWARD VII.

ALL our proud banners mourn along the
May,

One who is plumed and powerful breaks us
down :

Marred are the orchards, shaken our strong
town.

And blackness covers up our bright array.

The Sceptre and the Orb are put away ;

The scarlet changed for the funereal gown ;

And easy lies the head that wore a Crown.

And This which was a King is simple clay.

O mighty Death, the mightiest are thine.

Thou set'st his Widow weeping in her place,

And while thou pluck'st her heart with thy chill
hand.

And givest her to drink a common wine.

The wondering sentry goeth at his pace,

And England cries, and cannot understand.

THE PROMISE

YOU know my pains, you see me in the hell
Through which I toil, hurt and un-
comforted,

You see on what base errands I am sped,
And what I reap where we sowed asphodel ;
And my songs are of sorrow, and I tell,
Knowing no other, tales of grief and dread :
Though I be warm I am as good as dead,
And always we can hear my passing bell.

And yet, dear Spirit, you who have kind eyes
That meet disaster with a child's amaze,
You who have got a wild rose for your lips
And are all fashioned out of Paradise :
You shall stand safe beside the sapphire bays,
And I will show you all our golden ships.

MR. ASQUITH WEPT

RARE and refreshing fruit—Oh ruddy and
rare
And odorous! Behold the 'Tree of Cant
And vain Imaginings which we did plant
That it might spread bright branches on the air
And drop for each poor man a rich man's share,
And yield the lords of sentiment and rant
And every charlatan and recusant
The proud rewards such arborage should bear.

How it did prosper and blossom, our tree of trees,
Like the old green bay-tree in the old script . . .
But now by frosts of Doom it hath been nipped,
And to our frightened glances it appears
Blacker than the funereal cypresses,
And we must water it with Front Bench tears.

SHEPHERD'S BUSH

PREPOSTEROUS stucco, naughty ropes of
light,
The drunken drone of twenty-two brass bands,
A flip-flap, and some hokey-pokey stands :
Smith on your left, and Lipton on your right.
And Lyons, Lyons, Lyons : and that bright
Particular marvel, which, be sure, commands
Respect from fools of all and sundry brands—
The Press Lord Harmsworth prints from every
night.

Here, noble London, dost thou prowl and yell.
Or cause to disappear with horrid zest
The meat and drink provided by the Jew ;
Here flickereth thy paltry, shadowful hell——
And like a silver feather in the West,
And fair as fair, the moon that Dido knew !

FREEDOM

UPON a hill they set her ; she looked down
To where the English orchards drink the
light
And England's brawn flings flame into the
night.
And she had joy of weald and thorp and town,
And her joy was their joy. The dullest clown
Knew he was free ; and insolence and might
For all their pride were shaken before this right
Of liberty, which is the common crown.

Still are her state and glory the marvel of men,
Still for her state and glory and honour and
fame
The old brave shadows greet us through the
mist :
And we have strength because of them. How
then
Shall we discern without a touch of shame
The Welshman's shackle at her milk-white wrist ?

FOR A RICH MAN WHO
IS SAID TO 'BELIEVE IN
POETRY'

LET us be filled with wild and fierce disdains,
Let us contemn, disparage, and cry down
These prancing stomachs who amass and own.
Inherit and squander, and have nets and chains
And panopies of penalties and pains
Wherewith to extort the uttermost half-crown ;
For whom indeed the world's hard fields are
sown
And its scant harvests gathered on gorged wains.

Withal, we must believe good things of them,
And show a kindly bosom while they stand
Grinning out of their proud and cunning eyes ;
Nay, even the chiefest shall not stir our phlegm,
For he hath still knowledge of Paradise,
And hides an angel's feather in his hand.

THE END

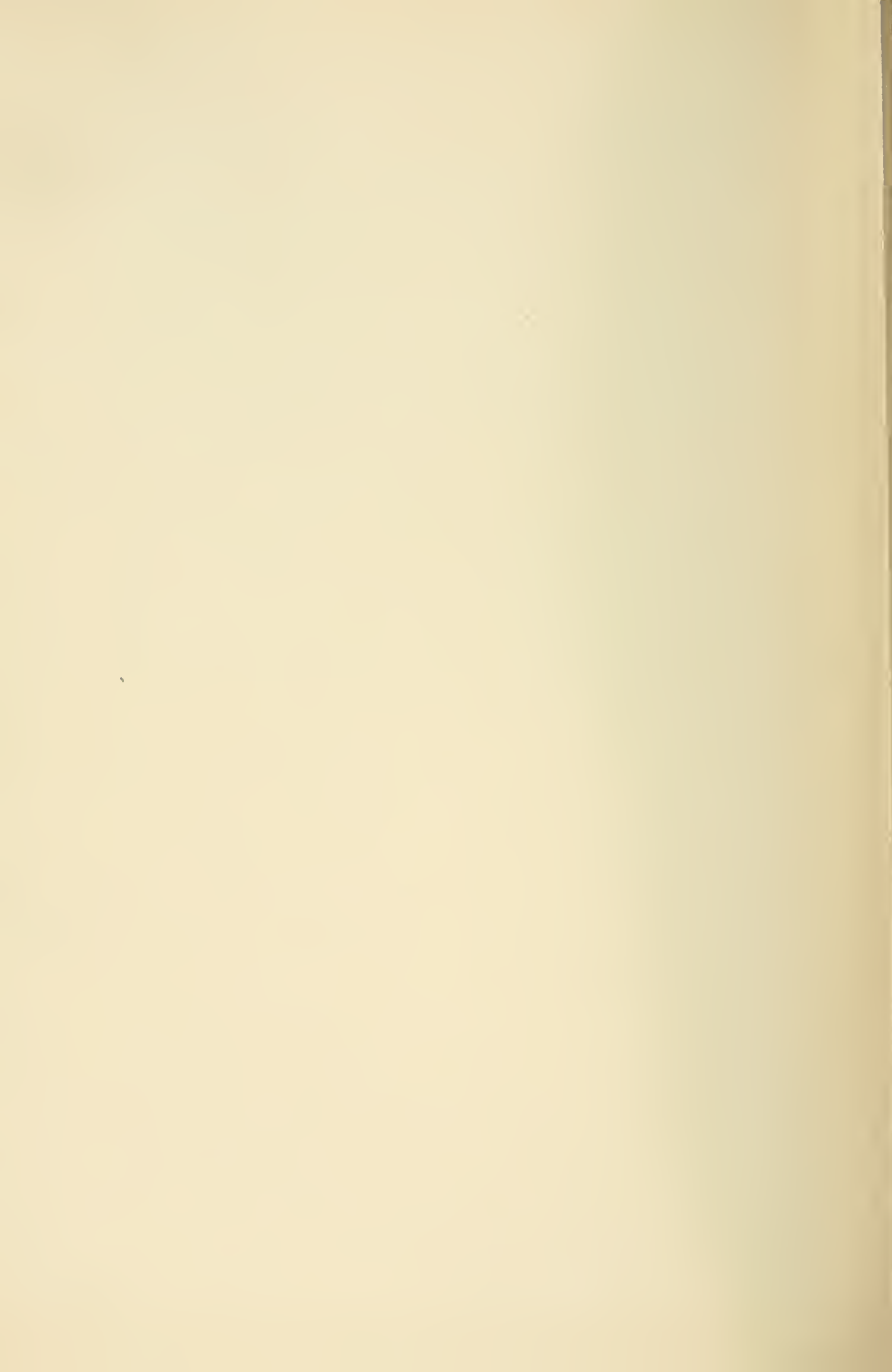
I KNOW that our fair rose was slain last
night :

She is become a ruinous, delicate wraith,
And now she gives her perfumes up to Death ;
No longer may she shine in the sweet light,
Or drink the dewy darkness ; for the might
That breaks the hearts of kings and staggereth
Bold men, hath borne her down. ‘Take me,’
she saith,
‘ Unto the old, dead roses, red and white.’

So, dearest, when the ultimate foul dun
And crawling knave into our hand shall thrust
His figure of accompt and greedy fine
For our poor gladness underneath the sun,
I shall come laughing to your gentle dust,
Or you will come like balm to comfort mine.

NOTE

TEXT of the foregoing sonnets appeared in the *Academy* in the good days of the Editorship of Lord Alfred Douglas. Of the others, four—namely, ‘For H. M. C.,’ ‘Titanic,’ ‘Mr. Asquith Wept,’ and ‘Ulster’—are reprinted from the *Saturday Review*, and the remainder are now published for the first time. To the reviewers, shaven and unshaven, I offer the other cheek.



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