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The Heart of the Singer

BY

FRED WHITNEY

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*To her whom life's perversive will
Refused its promise to fulfill,
And held her soul in bondage strong,
Gave her the heart but hushed the song
Till failed the singer, this brief strain
With love is dedicated. The pain,
The hope, the strife, the call for art,
The worded song — all this her heart
Saw dumbly die, yet saw begun —
She gave her talents to her son.
And with their tutored wealth he sings,
Raising the perished song on wings.*

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THE WATER BIRD

Whither away, whither away,
O water-haunting bird above the moor?
Thy pinions with the wide air play,
And call me toward thy wingèd way
In airy, yonward flight the sealand o'er.

For to my fettered soul thou criest,
Forever criest of the open way,
As through the endless air thou fliest,
Or on the boundless water liest;
And may forever flee or ever stay.

The homeless wind is in thy wing,
And in thy wandering heart a spirit wild.
The waters, flowing, to thee sing,
And clouded skylands to thee bring
A luring call, from other hearts exiled.

Sky unto sky, with note soul-haunting,
Thou tellest of the mystic land : Somewhere.
Forever of its knowledge vaunting,
Forever of its beauties chanting :
The haloed lyric land of my despair.

The land of my most inward dreams
Which goes before me ever wraith-like fleeing ;
That aery land of fitful gleams,
Of wavering tints where poetry teems :
Along the border line of real being.

A land of mists and waters gray,
Of whisper-haunted fens and zephyrs sighing,
Of wandering berg and iris ray,
Of enchanted, moving, endless way :
A land of mountains dim far, hazy lieing.

Thou knowest where its borders rise ;
The magic distance of its charmed dominion
As, through the nightward ocean skies,
Where rosy glow of sunset lies,
Thou passest like a cloud on snowy pinion ;

Or, in the golden-misted morn,
Arisest from the lake with glinting plume ;
From off its emerald bosom torn,
By thine afflatus heavenward borne,
Thy farland, wending journey to resume ;

Or, through the moon-illumined night,
As fleecy cloud to cloud thy way thou takest,
A shadow in the silvery light,
A passing bird in skyey flight
Which, crying down, the water spirit wakest ;

Or, as through the rack thou goest,
A gloomèd image in the misty shroud
Which, waking from the air, outflowest ;
Whose birth and airy flight thou knowest,
And criest with the voice of night and cloud.

Thou knowest of that Somewhere world —
Forever of its dreamy vision telling —
And, stooping where the waters purled,
Are whispering to the sedges furled,
Thou hearest the secret of its far impelling.

It's in the half-lit shades of dawn
Which, gloaming, o'er the marshland reaches spread,
And in the gauzy veiling drawn
Along the moon-lit waters wan
Where pass thy trailing numbers seaward sped :

And in the flight-seen miraged lake ;
The distant river's azure-winding line ;
The plashy land where tide flows take
Their creeping way ; the misty brake ;
Which, dreaming, lie beneath the border line.

Or, far from marish land or lea,
Upon thy pilgrim wingings unconfined,
Out o'er the foamy-wavèd sea,
Above the green-deeped mystery,
Thou hearest the secret in the passing wind.

Thou hearest: but doth the yearning
Which makes my seeking soul to flights aspire,
The insatiate spirit burning,
Forever to that Somewhere turning,
Come to thy tameless heart as Art desire?

Is that which sends my soul in flight,
Its inspiration and its strife renewing,
O'er misty shores or waters bright
The urger of thy far delight
From tarn to sea; of thy wild heart's pursuing?

Is that which shapes my nature's course,
Its genius and its whereward drift renewing,
The fountain of thy migrant course,
Its endless giver and its source?
Is't that which shapes thy ways, its form concealing,

As, on some nighted bayou flown,
Where pass the dreaming hours in downy gloom,
Thy Impulse comes to thee, alone
Upon the waters starry sown;
And, in thy nature-spirit makest room?

The sprite of sedgy slu is thine,
The genius of the tided sea, the bay ;
And, breasting o'er the endless brine,
Thou followest the trend Divine
Which wafts thee on thy seeking journey-way.

And, with thy sky-traversing wing —
The rhythmed expresser of thy nature's ways —
Thou bringest to me, interpreting,
The soul of sea, of marsh, of spring,
Unto my nature's trend its harmonies.

And, where the lyric numbers flow,
Which tide and sky with spirit stress prolong,
I stand upon the marsh below
To mark thee where I may not go,
But feel the One Impulse which breaks in song.

A VALE OF FLOWERS

I walked into a vale of flowers
Which idly dreamed, entuned with bees,
And round me hung the golden hours
Which whispered : " Life's a thing of ease."

" A Spring day dream, a scent, a song,
A vale Elysian trial free."
And down I sank these sweets among
Thinking to pay to life no fee.

I drank my idle spirit's fill
Of thoughtlessness from ease untold.
But as I lay the bee grew still,
And from the bright hours fled the gold.

Then I awoke with wounded sense,
And cried : " Is this, is this the ease
For which my spirit was lured hence?
Is this the lot will pleasure please?"

Then straight a voice rose from the gloom :

“The bee was toiling while he sang ;

'Twas effort filled the odorous bloom,

And every sweet from trial sprang.”

“The bee is now within his bower

Enriched by his tuned wing's employ ;

The stem is laboring at its flower.

Who will not toil may not enjoy.”

LIGHT

On beams of light from heaven's sun
Men mount the skies and outward run
With burst of vision, seeing bright
What lay before in shadowy night.
Or whether with angel's acclaim
Light flood the gloom in savior flame
To light a world, or dimmer beams
Where someone idling vaguely dreams,
It's still the light, and from above ;
The guide of strife, of peace, of love.
It makes the teacher, poet, sage,
And burns men's hearts into the page.

WHY, O SINGER ?

Why, O singer, tell me why
Do you sing a song of sadness,
Dearth of hope and dearth of gladness?
Know you not that joy and sorrow
Each from other something borrow,
That Beauty makes its soul of white
Half of day and half of night?
From cold wet earth grow golden flowers,
Richest hearts from troubled hours.
Sigh not then nor sing sadly.
Know that life may treat you badly,
Or that it may meet you gladly.
Joy ever follows pain,
Sunshine always follows rain.
Round the world in low or high
Weeping, laughing life goes by.

HITHER

Hither pray, wend away
In the golden-houred day.
Bees around the blooms are singing,
Butterflies like fairies winging
To the nectared cups are clinging.
Blowing flowers everywhere
 Sweets in everything
All in unison declare
 They bring the happy Spring.

Every blitheless thing's forgot
Winter's sighs and frowns are not.
From the old the new is winning,
All's in the beginning.
Love and life in harmony
Sweet as ever they may be.
 Hither, pray,
 Wend away.
And, before their sweets depart,
Let them blow into your heart.

LINES TO M. W., IN MEMORY

Good-bye, dear friend of ripened years,
For you are gone. Gone through the peaceful night
To that bright dawn which lies beyond life's ills.
And with your passing comes the thoughts
Of times now worn away :
When you first came ;
And I, with childhood's blithesome will,
Was playmate of the fields and flowers ;
And how, long months, 'twas you and I alone
To do the homely tasks and share their bread,
To build the comfort kindlings on the hearth,
And hear the creature call of wintered winds.
But most, of all our builded friendship did,
I now recall, as I have done with you :
'Twas you who, from the careless blossom meads
Of halcyon dreams, urged my young course
Toward lettered shaping of the self within.
And, though you never understood just why,
Yet in your woman's heart you felt
The nearer lots of plod, the toiler's strife

Were not my being's heritage.
That I'd a finer call than forge or field.
And so you planned that I should find my tasks
In other ways than use of years
But humbly with the sod at toil.
And when, in the unfolding months,
The argument of inconvenient change
Would seek to hush the tongue of better tales,
And sink the upward course in common lot,
'Twas you who, with persistent thought,
Strove for my tutored youth, and gained for me
A lengthened chance toward my unawakened light
Until was touched the tenor of my soul,
And dawned the nascent vision of my life.
And though you smiled when I told you my dreams,
How I should write, and of the visioned walls
Of castles in my rapture land before,
I counted sure that I should come and say :
This have I done to prove my prophet tongue,
And give a form to your instinctive thoughts ;
Here is the thing achieved. I've caught the dream,
But my slow feet, still struggling at the task,
Have missed the slipping years with glean of straw,
For all which men have reckoned as success.
And you are gone.
Gone out by life's wide change
With but the irised vapor of my dreams

To prove that what you felt was worth the while.
And so it is. With life before
We listen to our souls when they cry : "Forth."
Nor understand, but follow out and in
In search of earthly spots in skyey realms,
Taking the evening wage of faith and fears,
Until death comes and locks the mortal house
And hides the key. And we may never know
If what we've felt and vainly striven for
Is well or ill. But, in a contra course
Strive on and think it well
Till someone come in after time and find it so.
But in this country, lit of gray-houred dawn
Or shined of stars, we find it cold and drear.
And I have sometimes wished I had not waked
From thoughtless seeing of the show of life,
But stayed behind, content
To take life dull and own the bliss of souls
Not harrowed by the martyr-thoughts of men.
But I may not turn back ; the gleam leads on.
And, with the stronger thoughts of faith
Whose steps climb up, I ask for will like yours
Which knew to faint and fall and yet to strive,
To face the stubborn rise of my life's hills.
For still I lift my eyes to see
The castles on the mountains of my dreams.

CLOUDLAND

Far-off Cloudland, beautiful rack !
Which, waking from the planet's ether track
Along the vapor-breathing solitude, outpours
With gauzy hills and drifting slopes and shores,
 With island images of earth
 And crystal sands,
 With floating vapor-peaks of viewless birth ;
 Along thy strands
 My waking spirit sweeps
A gossamer host of Thought's creations frail ;
Visual shapes of the ethereal Mind —
 Brought forth of feeling's deeps —
Which, striking on my mind's ordered detail
 In harmony,
Of its own form builds and of the Spirit's varied
 kind.

As, in the duller ways, the level-seeking stream
 Upon its endless circling to the sea,
From misty ether dream
Of skies unto the scarce-translucent deep,
 With limpid waves
 The kindred margent laves,
And, from the contact of its reverb'rant sweep,
 A throbbing melody awakes
Which is not only from the marge and from the
 stream,
But from them both and of that Impress
 Which, thrilling through them, music makes.
And, on the Spirit's stress,
 Above the dull forms rise
 An aery likeness of them twain unto the skies.

YONDERLAND

Whither bound? I gaze and question.

Not that I feel not the soul's immortal,
The spirit's rich with that suggestion ;
But whence and where, what earthen portal
Shall open when this temple falls?

Or shall the air enfold the spirit,
Breathed out from this terrestrial form,
To touch no land, though wandering near it ;
A volt of force the ego's norm,
Or but a pulse where darkness palls?

Is't not that from this tarrying place
The form-freed soul takes spirit way,
Circling through yon world-hung space
Until it strikes affinitive clay,
To rise anew in other life,
And build beyond this earthly strife?
If it is not so, the ego hurls,
Then why this clay and why these worlds?

AIDENN

What realm far yonder wending from,
White clouds of the traveling wind?
What autumn azure is your home
In Aidenn dreamland far behind?

That skyey realm of magic dreams
You wander from. Where Fancies go
O'er vapory fields of yellow gleams
Where trees as golden shadows grow ;

Where ether waves on gauzy shores
Keep strains of music memory hears,
And the viewless soul of Passion soars
O'er mist-made hills and aery meres ;

Where wavering heights and snowy peaks
Look on the starry loiter vales,
And Poetry earthly robings seeks
'Mongst Reverie's haunting beauty tales.

That realm of visual soul desire,
Of half-revealèd mystery,
Of mist-hills lit with flameless fire
Or dim with charms of yesterday.

Whither bound from that enchanted place
White wraiths of the landless blue?
Your charm is left in its embrace
When you this sky go wandering through.

SHADOW

What matters it, my soul?

Here is the blossom meadow.

And all around the sun is bright,

It is the day and not the night.

What matters it, my soul,

If you went down in the valley of the shadow?

THE NEW

What makes the hour, that we should say
Here passes the old away?
Spanned by the width of a mortal day
We fix on a point in space sublime,
And run with the breath of human time,
In the course of the onward range,
On through the fleeting change
Till we say it is sped,
There it lies old and dead.

Time flies

And the old year dies

In eternity whence it grew.

Then hail! here is the New.

How vain was the soul with a dream afire
Which saw the transient hour expire,
How vain was the plan which arose
But to meet its close
In the chance to build temples unbid,
How vain the light by darkness hid!
For we say it is sped,
There it lies old and dead.

Time flies

And the old year dies

In eternity whence it grew.

Then hail! here is the New.

THE JOLLY SPRING

It is the Spring, the jolly Spring,
Sweet and gay with flower and song.

Oh come with me a wandering

The happy vales among!

For they're a tale a-telling,

A tale that's ever young.

The buds, the blades, the blushing blooms

Are tip-toe all a-listening

Upon the bashful meads.

The hairbell listens tremblingly,

The dandelion plumes,

The love vine round the rose is saying : "Guess."

The cowslips hang their heads,

The lilacs whisper : "Yes."

And unto me and unto you,

The secret thought betraying,

The wooing breezes slip about and through

Aye coyly, sweetly saying :

“ The sky is blue above,
The bee is round the clover ;
Oh come and be my love,
And I will be your lover.”

The leaflets clap their hands
As a breeze steals round their way,
And sweetly o'er them fans.
And there upon a spray
A little bird is singing
Unto his mate :
“ Sweet, oh sweet ! it never is too late.
Oh love is always winging ! ”

Then ho for hearts a-loving !
And ah for those who may !
It is the jolly, jolly Spring.
It cannot pass away.

WINTER SONG

A robin sat singing in a tallon tree :
Come back, O Springtime, come back to me.
'Twas Winter's days over field and hill,
But the sun was bright and the winds were still.
 The sky was wide and blue overhead,
 And he sang and said :
Here are the red blooms, but somehow it's late.
I sing on the bough without my mate.
 Such beauty to see
 With the sun in the tree !
Come back, O Springtime, come back to me.

SERENADE

It is the hour
When the night-blowing cereus flower,
As sweet as eventide in June,
Puts forth in beauty with the moon.
But lingering beside thy bower,
O lady mine, it wears thy sweets,
And with thy charms my presence greets.

But list!

The evening moth its lips has kissed,
And, with the bliss of honeyed art,
He plunders sweetness from its heart.
And ah, my love! they'll soon depart,
The moth be flown, the flower faded,
And with my love you unpersuaded.
Let not vain waiting be my fate.

Awake! For you I wait.

THE FLOWER

She stooped with languid grace
And a dreamy, glowing face,
And plucked a flower from its place.
She brushed its petals 'cross her lips
And touched them with her finger tips.
She asked not why 'twas there it grew,
Nor if it drank the morning dew,
Nor half its beauty saw nor knew.
Her lips would but repeat :
You are sweet, sweet.

THE ORIOLE

Oh, who is it so sweetly sings,
Pouring from his gladdened throat
Liquid joy in fluting note?
Voicing all the sweets a-dreaming
In the season's early beaming,
 What melodist Spring joy brings?
 The oriole, the oriole!
In the air, the trees among;
 Richest, sweetest singer soul,
Turning all his golden beauty into song.

Oh, who is it the buds among,
Drinking sweets and telling love,
Bearing bliss the earth above?
What gladdened heart with music swelling,
To the skies in rapture telling
 How beauty may be turned to song?
 The oriole, the oriole!
In the air, the trees among;
 Richest, sweetest singer soul,
Blythely carroling how beauty may be sung.

ALBIA*

Albia is form most fair.

Her eyes are deeps of blue,
Sunbeams are her hair.

Her breath the breath of flowers new,
Her face Spring's witchery.

Her voice the murmur of the sea
And the sound of singing streams.

Of all her kind on earth may be
None else there is like her to me.

She's the weaver of my dreams,
The prompter of my fancies

In the vernal days

And the golden Summertime.

Me she showeth glances

Rarest from her eyes,

Leadeth me where sweetest beauty lies.

*Albia: From New Albion, the name given California by Sir Francis Drake.

Telleth me tales wondrous
Beneath the starlight glorious,
Whispering in measures sweet with rhyme ;
Giveth me the poet's pen,
Filleth my heart with fire then,
Presenteth me with treasures fit for king !
What may I but sing?

THE CHANT OF THE CATARACT

I come from the mist-crowned mountain heights :

Ho ho-o ! Ho ho-o ! Ho ho-o !

The giant of the rain and the snow.

And sing and shout as I take the flights

Which run to the sea below.

Hu ho ! Hu ho ! Hu ho !

The voice of the canon it is mine.

I sing of the wind in the fir and the pine :

Hu ro, ho ho ! Hu ro !

Of the storm in the wintry skies ;

Of the gurgling rain and the spray which flies,

And shout through them all as I go : hu ho-o-o !

Hu ro ! Hu ro ! Hu ro, ho ho !

Hu ro, ho ho ! Hu ho-o !

I sing of the towering mountain old :

Hu ro ! Hu ro ! Hu ro-o !

Of the chasms deep and the precipice bold ;

Of the wild, gray dawn and the noon of gold :

Hu ro, ho ho ! Hu ro-o !

Of the stars which glitter in the deep blue night,
Of the journeying moon and her silver light,
Of the iris bow,
And the shadows below : hu ho-o!
For I carry them all in my breast as I flow.

Hu ro! Hu ro! Hu ro-o!
I leap at the gorges below ;
And laugh at the boulders would hold me back,
For I am the great cataract :
Hu ro, ho ho-o! Hu ro-o!
I laugh and I sing as I go :
Ha ha! Ho ho! Ha ha! Ho ho! Ho ho-o!
The mountain's above and the sea is below : ho ho!
Hu ro, ho ho! Hu ro, ho ho!
Hu ro! Hu ho! Hu ho-o!

THE OLD CASA

The full moon floods the balmy skies,
The same fair moon which shone of yore
When love-enkindled, dusky eyes
Looked forth upon their amador ;
When the guitar's sweet, plaintive measures
Were vibrant here with lover's treasures.

And up above the mesa brown
The lonely cliffs in silence bide
Where, in the olden, they looked down
Upon the casa's peopled pride.
But where the silvery moonlight falls
There linger now but ruined walls.

The Spaniard's soft, melodious voice
Sounds here no more, nor trips his feet
Through the fandango's gallant joys ;
And gone the whispering lovers sweet,
The dashing troops of gay vaqueros
With sashes red and decked sombreros.

The glad Señor's salute : "Hola Don !"

And, "Welcome friend," which followed after.
The dark Señora too is gone —

The silvery peals of merry laughter.
The Señorita is no more,
And gone the singing amador.

No more he woos with his guitar,

His serenade has died away —
The horseman's shout faded afar

With merry din of dancers gay.
In jest and laughter careless hearted
These gallant guests have long departed.

Around the ruins but spectral shades

Frequent the moon-enchanted night
Where some old form half rising fades,

And voiceless tales take backward flight.
While to it all deep silence clings
Save when a mocker wakening sings.

THE NEW SEA

Down the azure inlet, wending,
Let the winds blow as they list,
And the dark-faced sea, insending,
Plunge the lowlands all in mist ;

But my soul, upon a headland,
Holding presence with the sun,
Looks out o'er a new sea, light-spanned,
And sees the full hours westward run.

P. A., 1902

BLUE LAKES

O emerald tarn, who called thee blue?
Thou mirror of the slopes and trees.
Thou holdest naught of the heaven's hue;
But the green of the great Bard's seas.

Or from what welkin came the dye
That anyone in thee its tint should find?
It's not the arch now bends on high.
Or, he who gazes, is he Bard blind?

IRENE

A FRAGMENT

Farewell, loved land of childhood !
With memories dear to me.
Your violet beds and wild thyme
Cling to me lingeringly.

And you, broad hills and woodside,
Your sweets will never blow
Where I, on ebb and flood-tide,
Am tossing to and fro.

The martin calls as day breaks
From oak trees by the mill,
And morn each golden ray takes
From bursting hill to hill.

The bee is round the red bloom,
The oriole's sweet with song ;
But now at eve the dead moon
Is eloquent of wrong.

Ah, love! I've felt your blue eyes
 Look faithfully into mine
Where bright at morn the dew lies,
 And blows the eglantine.

But Spring will fade and wither ;
 Your love is lost to me ;
And heart and hope together
 Go down eternally.

The joy which youth-time brought me
 Has found its yesterday ;
For, when at last I sought thee
 To bear thy vows away,

I learned the years to nothing
 Had brought my heart of love —
I've felt that still it must cling —
 But no. 'Twould useless prove.

For you have found another,
 And all is different, strange.
And I (O heart, turn whither?)
 Am lonely in the change.

The words of our love's shaping
 Are silent ; and their store
Is lost in the sweet day's 'scaping.
 I may not love you more !

This, then, the end of long years !
This, then, the end of all !
I here alone in wrung tears,
And you to another's call?

Still I'll not blame you, sweetheart,
Although you bow my soul.
For love, despite its deep art,
May not aye love control.

Lo, it may gain from friendship
Itself in semblance dressed
Till hearts strike down the kinship,
And like's by like possessed.

But mine's the sad misfortune
To feel the riving blow
Which severs with distortion
My chilled heart from its flow.

Thus hopes in pleasure waiting
Have faded at the last ;
And bonds of love's debating
Have sunk into the past.

Ah ! sweet to my rapt hearing
The sounds of distant days
When we, our young hearts nearing,
Found love in children's ways !

When we, to prove if true love
Would be our happy end,
Gathered the vine which new love,
And, with a shut-eyed send,

Cast it to fortune's wild will.
And, so we fancied most,
On some green bough it smiled still,
And love would ne'er be lost.

And other ways with blind chance
We played at finding love
In innocent strife to find whence
Our future fortune'd move.

And to my mind how fresh still
Those ways we used to play!
They for us would every wish fill
To pleasure time away.

Oft bending by the brook side
We sailed our leafy boats
Where, in the noon, some rook cried
While stilled were other throats.

Or, in the evening's dim light,
Along the dusty lane
We raced the swallow's trim flight
Till he came not again.

And, as the dark night crept on,
And the hoot-owls raised their call
We cuddled on the step-stone,
Nor heard the light footfall

Which came, nor broke our sleeping,
And bore her to her home.
Nor, till the gray dawn's peeping,
Did we know bed-time had come.

And how once more we, when day
Was on with gladsome strain,
Would seek each other, and play
The hours all through again.

A-swing between the tall trees
On grapevines hung in loops,
Or, searching where the fall is,
We'd find the ferny troops

Which linger after Springtime,
And weave us crowns of green.
And, though no more 'twas berrying time,
We'd search where they had been.

Then, 'mongst the brush and vine, we
The bearing hazel marked.
There, in some sunny pine tree
The frisking squirrel barked.

And so the Fall would pass by
Till wintry grew the days,
And, from hill to hill, would fast fly
The clouds on stormy ways.

Then in beside the fire-place
We'd play from day to day,
Or watch the storm its ire trace
From tree-top's sway to sway ;

And fancy we were hearing
Men talk out in the storm,
When, through the window peering,
We'd see a shadowy form

Cast on the scudding cloud drift—
An old man dark and strange—
Which, in the flow, would shift
From view with transient change.

Then we would shout together
At that wild passing voice.
And scarcely we knew whether
'Twas men or tempest's noise.

And how I liked to hear her
When, with the chimney, she
Would sing in treble clearer
Its song of mystery !

And dear too was her sweet voice
When, beyond the river's marge,
She'd wake the echo's fleet voice
From out the frosty gorge.

But dearer was her halloo
When Spring was on the hills,
From 'mongst the cowslips yellow,
And gold the daisy spills.

No bloom of all the May-time
Was fairer than was she.
No voice in Nature's play-time
So full of witchery.

The meadows, hills and woodside
Would to her glee reply,
And not a sweet thing could hide
From her sylvan sorcery.

Her blythe way was their spirit,
And she their queen divine
With a soul which kept love near it—
And I believed her mine!

How this old slope clings to me
With its yellow and its gold!
For still her voice sings to me
From living Springtimes old.

Here, as one morning brightly
The sun broke through the mists,
Which, rising feathery, lightly,
Floated as their spirit lists,

She stood, and round her fair feet
The golden poppies spread,
While April's balmy air sweet
Played o'er her sunny head.

And I, from distant absence,
Just on that morn returned,
With glad, free feet a-dance hence,
Each joy anew discerned,

Hearing the mill-stream's fall free
At its young song of hope,
Beheld, and heard her call me
Adown this flowery slope.

And, with delight which thrilled me,
I sprang toward where she stood,
But stopped; for thoughts which filled me
Were drowned in emotion's flood.

A new sensation 'd swept me;
A mingling strange and sweet
Of moods still hours had kept me
For dreams at nature's feet,

With something stronger, new born,
An impulse and an awe ;
A joy from heart depths true borne,
But none which nature'd draw.

But childhood soon o'ercrowded
With other time delights,
And I, with gladness flooded,
Amidst the olden sights

Forgot all, save the sound of
Her voice in happy strain,
And things we had been fond of
In our old play domain.

Ah ! How we ran delighted
From place to place that day !
The olden charms new sighted
Were riched with memory's play.

We climbed Beldeli's steep side,
And far out saw the lake —
Fair Wona's azure sweep wide
Where wild fowl, wintering, take

Their misty flight. We sought out
The home of bird and bee,
And their sweet secrets wrought out
With rising ecstasy.

And up and down the mill stair
We played ; along this road,
And down this little rill where
The deserted cabin stood.

Thus all that day we played
'Mongst woods and songs and flowers
With a year's delights, delayed,
Poured in a few short hours.

And when at last night came —
Ah, fast the hours had sped !
A sense of pleasure's flight came,
And she and I were sad.

For, in the morning's gray light,
Uncle Meed must off again,
And I, to ship and spray flight
Amongst the sailor men.

So we two that eve parted
With all our pleasures ceased.
But, e'er the day had started
His light well in the east,

We were out again ; and meeting,
Down here beside the mill,
With joyous morning greeting,
She laughing gay, I still,

Just here beneath this holly —
The birds were singing near —
She whispered to me, “Rolly,
I love you, Rolly, dear !”

And, reaching o'er her head, she
Drew down a flowered spray,
And plucked a bloom from the red tree,
And, with a witching way,

She pinned it to my blue coat
Aye laughing, laughing still.
And through my heart the new note
Went singing with a thrill.

* * * * *

The tears would come to blind me
Though to keep them back I'd try,
Till Uncle Meed said, kindly :
“ There now, my lad, don't cry.”

* * * * *

But where now is this sweetness
Which clung so to my soul?
Where joy's old-time completeness?
Where love which sweetly stole

From youth's fair days to manhood,
Seizing upon my heart?
Where she, O torture rude!
Of me a living part?

Gone! Gone! For aye departed!
O heart with pain o'er filled!
O God! that I were free-hearted,
With all my yearnings stilled!

Free with but childhood's fancy,
A wind-tossed bud of joy
With but nature to entrance me,
A wild, delighted boy!

* * * * *

Farewell, loved land of chidtime!
Irene! Farewell to thee!
Forever o'er the wild brine
I'll sail and sail from thee.

P. A., 1902-03

SONNETS

CALIFORNIA

What land was that beside the sunset seas
Where dwelt the immortal bliss the Grecian
dreamed?
What visioned country called Hesperides
Where eternal Spring and song and joy teemed?
A happy land not tried by sun nor cold,
But gently by the breath of Zephyrus kissed.
A land of fruits and flowers manifold
Where they who dwelt an endless joy possessed.
My Hesper land, within the seaside bowers,
Where beauty, song and bloom each past
redeem,
Where richly blessed is life with happy hours,
You've caught the earthly portion of this dream.
Sunlight and azure depths ; a land of gold
Where Summer never dies nor joy grows old.

ARGONAUTA

Lo, like a wanderer down the wasted past
Of ruin centuries old, I sit agaze
On broken walls and desolation vast
Which breathe a sense of long-forgotten days.
As if, with backward look through ages gone,
One should behold the living waste of Tyre ;
Or, gazing on the walls of Babylon,
Should see the blackened wreckage of its pyre.
Save that the straggler there within its gates
Saw but its kingly form forever down,
While he who wanders here knows other fates,
And rises in his might the waste to crown.
And over him the visioned towers gleam —
The builded city of the golden dream.

S. F., May 6, 1906

INTERIM

It is a hushed and quiet eve of Fall.

As silent, listless as the faded leaf

Upon the ground. And just as empty all

Of wish, of strife, of living joy or grief ;

A voiceless hour not even tongued of Wind,

As storyless of what has gone before

As if't had left no finished strife behind,

Nor to a new-found hope would waken more.

But in the lull still holds the heavenward fate.

The triumph of pain and joy but stays its strife,

The shaping winds but pause, the buds but wait.

There is in life a death, in death a life.

The joy, the pain, the sun, the storm inures,

The blossom fades, the flower still endures.

THE MARCH OF LIGHT

The sun wheels down the wide-enkindled west,
His glory speeding to some distant land.
And, from the mountain's erst-engoldened crest,
His light uplifts with night revealing hand.
And down upon the landscape fall the shades
With threat of gloom eternal wrapped in night.
But, as westward the last gold gleaming fades,
The starry heavens wake with beaming light.
From deep to deep illumines the spreading arch
Till every trailing shadow feels the thrill,
And owns the eternal triumph of the March.
E'en thus, O soul, thy lighted fires burn still.
And, gleaming with the one great Giving Ray,
Shine on above the shadows toward the Day.

SLEEP

The flooding moon in beauty sails the deep
Beyond the gauzy curtains of the night ;
And, from the broken azure's farther sweep,
A deep sweet silence pinions earthward flight.
Upon the noiseless wings the wide blue cool
Floats down its slumber gift to mortal rest,
Created of the poise of strifeless rule
Along the marches of the deep's behest.
And in man's pausing soul breathes its calm force
For longer hours of the terrestrial way
Till morn, obedient to the nearer course,
Shall ope the flaming portals of the day ;
And, from the bosom of the nearer sky,
The downy robes of sleep put softly by.

O SEA!

O Sea! I stand upon this silent height
High here above the heads of hills and woods,
And sad, deep thoughts, with weary-wingèd flight,
Rise up from out thy distant solitudes.
For, when I think of all the years I've lost
Down in the chasm of dumb, benighted time,
My heart, against the blackened shore crags tossed
Along Life's sea, bleeds in the bitter brine.
Are there no depths within the all-spent past,
O Sea, which treasure up what was its store?
For I, agaze upon the empty vast,
But hear the waves which echo, sad, No more.
Cannot Time's surge cast on a yearning spot
One coral piece from some sunk isle forgot?

King's Mountain, April 1901

YOUTHTIME

When, in the youthful Springtime of my strife

I first essayed the measures of my Art,

And dipped a tender pen in beauteous life

To sing the stirring music of my heart,

I came unto a place of still delay

Where young-houred Song, with flowers in his
hair,

Sang o'er the valley green. And my heart's way

Bent toward its own, care-free and debonair.

And then I dreamed the morn would on to noon

In happy sequence, sheening shadowed streams ;

And shades of early dawn would brighten soon.

But life is not so well as youthful dreams.

The unsophisticated pleasure pure

Of youth, along life's path may not endure.

AFTER

Ah, what may youth foreknow, sweet youth
a-dream

In golden gossamer of life's intent
Where morning lights the field with irist gleam,
Of how of sun and shadow life is blent?

Of how, with visions of a captured ray,
Or chasing gorgeous-wingèd butterflies,
Its real will evanesce and fade away,

And rosy colors blot in tempest skies?
Of how a pit may catch the venturing foot.

Nor yet, sweet thought, how chance it may to
win,

From all the hungry strife of drear pursuit,
To find the vanished beauties stored within;
But strangely barred and gleamed with shade and
sun,

An other-visioned light than that begun.

THE GREENING FIELD

The lark is cheery in the greening field.

But, save his song, there is no note of Spring,
Not one sweet bud the hills or valleys yield ;

But few dead leaves to Fall-old branches cling.
With his lone call he stays the year all through

Like memory or joy which cannot die,
Holding the wasting old, calling the new ;

And green upon the vale young grasses lie.
And I, from journeys far, turned here again,

Hearing his note, am moved with memory's tale
How here I sang then long but called the strain

At last to see my call with song prevail.
And my heart's seasons in hill and vale are seen,
Its faded leaves, sunshine and hopeful green.

WINTERED

When the flower maiden of the summery times
Withdraws her sweet dominion from the vales
Because her ardent lover no more climbs
The zenith hills, but far off southward fails,
It's then the blue-eyed Sky, with sad regret,
A shadowed veiling draws across her face,
And trails it o'er the hills with weeping wet
That these fair loves no more the valleys grace.
The lonely breezes, robbed of sweet delight,
Go wandering o'er the barren vale in seek
Of some belated song or flower bright ;
And sigh upon the hills, in tree-tops bleak.
So I, of Spring of heart and song bereft,
Was desolate and drear, in Winter left.

WHENCE

Sweet Najoqui, what cast of fate was this

That two, whose souls were fashioned by the
Muse,

Should in your realm their metric numbers lisp?

That they should touch and then each other
lose?

That one from old and empty-numbered hours

Should travel hence and tarry with a song,

Aiding the poet pen with your sweet bowers,

The other-lyred music to prolong?

That the other your land should natal own,

And sing here joyous in a lyric youth,

Then travel hence, 'gainst life the dullard thrown,

To cease his song and learn the tongue uncouth.

Was it that they with song should pay you toll,

Then darkly drift to find your promised goal?

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SONG UNHEARD

The matchless painter Day with glowing brush
 Paints not the morning sky because it's seen ;
Nor do the gathered clouds with watery rush
 Restore the barren earth for Beauty's green.
The luscious bough fruits not for plundering lips
 Nor breathes the flower sweets to be inhaled.
The planless stem but takes its nature's tips,
 Nor to a conscious death the blade is paled.
It's only feathered melodist who sings
 From delight and delight a profit makes ;
Save man who pleasure unto profit brings,
 And from dull plants and skies a beauty takes.
But beauty still unseen or song unheard
Are blank as space, half rich as singing bird.

A CAPTIVE HOUR

A captive hour past I cry, I'm free !

The ill-companioned task has slipped its leash,
And turn I to my own of high degree

To work the consummation of my wish.

My sweetened fancy swims in reveries,

Or, rousing, from the buskin slips the mask,
Or peeps at wit or mirth where humor is

The glad forgetter of an unloved task.

But, in the happy midst, the old returns

To drive the new-begotten from his pleasure.

Though old, a stranger it my heart discerns,

The pauper taker of a princely treasure.

And I am made the captive for no crime.

A muse-entrusted spirit serving time.

THE ARTIST HAND

In hour too rare attending on that world
Where mimic life laughter and tears compels,
Seeing an end for pain or mirth unfurled,
Finding the hill of thought where poetry dwells,
I see that I of its own wisdom know
But vague report nor ken its knack of life ;
That though its sprites through my mind troop-
ing go
They lack the craftsman hand to stage their
strife.

Although I know but souls from simples sprung,
Of humankind in art but vaguer bound,
I know the wonder tale from Nature's tongue,
And my own heart arisen from the ground.
And at some time will come the artist hand
To use this cruder store of its demand.

THE HOPE IN TO-MORROW

Many I see with their life's work before,
At one with what they are, for it's their choice ;
And hourly they add unto their store
What makes their lots content, their hearts
rejoice.

But I am absent from my luckless lyre
Till my heart's toil grows dull and strangely
cold

Like an outworn book from which has fled the fire
Through long-neglected page and conning old.

And then I wish I had been born for else,
Some useful work which brings a sure reward,
Nor builded hopes into a vapor melts,
Nor makes a toil a foreign cost afford.

Still, though ill gains the song my effort sings,
The hope that's in to-morrow a solace brings.

GARNERS

Sometimes I think life is a farce, a cheat.

For so it seems at times when one must rise
By ways where few contend yet all compete

In ignorant strife against the rarer skies.

Life seems to grudge the soil where toil he must,

Unto the last to crowd him from the field ;

Then, like a fanning mill, blow into dust

The fruitless bundles of his labor's yield.

But, although few succeed where struggle many,

And with one's gain but ill another fares,

Within life's varied fields there is not any

Where one may not gold grain grow 'mongst
the tares.

Though I may not from life my garners swell

In her large plan she richly serves and well.

THE DAY

Across the sky an eve of flaming rack

Bids glorious farewell to the spent day,
The far-off light from glinting ocean track
Flings back the golden splendor of his ray.
And in my soul I see an hour ago

When over eastern mountains sprang the sun
That all the earth rose singing from below,
And filled my heart with burning song begun;
Then, clouding o'er the song, came toil before
Till sank the noon. Now song takes heaven-
ward flight

To sound its notes and flame its fire once more
In one brief moment ere the space of night.
But in some day that ardent light will rise
To keep the morning's course till even dies.

INSPIRATION

That hour my soul bids me to heights arise,
And clothes itself with shapes of its own fire,
And, with inspired vision, sweeps the skies,
The throned possessor of a great desire ;
Then high creations on my presence tend,
Then life and death lay tribute at my feet,
Then mind and heart their aiding forces lend,
Then world its wisdom brings to make complete.
But when the shaping hand would start to build,
And train the wished-for hour's later stay,
That humble need which long my time has filled
Dull-handed comes and takes the light away.
Then over sunken embers my heart bends
In effort to renew what my soul sends.

THE THREE-FOLD SELF

A three-fold self my fate has worked with life ;
And each across the other striven in turn :
The artist soul, with ill gains in the strife,
Who sees base days his golden hours burn ;
The gentler one who still is but the boy,
And sees a harsh demean with sensitive fears,
Who dreamed life bright and sweet, a lovely joy,
But finding it scarce so has smiled with tears ;
And then the other one who later came,
And rose above these twain with master sway,
Born of the strife in the survivor's game,
The man who came to fight and win the day.
Although some lose and some come greater through,
Who climbs by life's hard course learns deep and true.

AS ONE WHOSE SOUL ACCORDS

As one whose soul accords with music's soul
Gains from his instrument a sweetened pain
From mood disconsolate swollen o'er control,
And to his heart's deep treasure adds a gain ;
And, moving the sad-souled unhappy air
With consolation's heavenly harmony,
He takes some other heart dejected there,
And soothes its marring pain with melody ;
So I with feelings pent turn toward my muse,
And through its suing numbers free my heart ;
And gain thuswise a balm others refuse,
And add the softened wealth its strains impart.
Mayhap when from such song my pen has ceased
Someone, reading, will find his pain released.

THE DULL-HOURED REALM

What time I from this dull-houred realm gain forth

In brief contact with world of my own tastes,
Of my own self to find that richer worth

In what my dull continuance but wastes ;
And feel one passing moment of that man

My inward eye beholds, but else unknown,
Built of a height immortal worlds to scan,

But humble servant to the baser throne ;
I then look on my draggled spirit's rags,

And ask myself: All this, what is it for?
Which makes worth cheap, and struggling height
down drags,

And sets my greater self with such at war.

Ah, well! for every loss there is a gain.

And by this wise it is I'll rich through pain.

TWO POWERS

Two powers there are to which I pay my tasks,
Two thrones, one greater, one of lesser worth ;
And each of me attendance on it asks,
One drawing to the skies, one down to the earth.
Upon the greater one high sits my Art,
And with a regal splendor hails my soul,
And owns the loving pledges of my heart ;
But few the hours of mine at her control.
And on the other one sits Humble Toil.
Him have I never loved. Yet not for pay
Have I served him alone, but in his moil
Put my own self with honest will away.
Though I have paid him rich for his support
I've earned the purple still for my Art's court.

SERVICE

Not unto his own self does any live,
The selfish holder of an unshared trust.
His own existence must receive and give ;
And whether with a will, still give he must.
The skies lend colors to the painter's oils,
And music has more hearts than the musician's.
The wealthy gains his wealth from thousand toils,
The poet's strong lines grow from small additions.
And thus great heart in lowly help may be.
Nor I forget the lesser riches paid,
But give in gratitude the common fee,
And own the forward worth in backward aid.
And, with the greater man, does great deserve,
I shall at last go free, go free — to serve.

THE WINTERED SPRING

The sky is islanded with snowy clouds
 Floating within a violet sea. And soft
The breezes wander 'mongst the golden crowds
 Of ores nodding on the emerald croft.
The sun pours down his light in beams of glory,
 And bright-winged insects pipe their infant joy ;
The lark's new-taken measure hints a story,
 The linnet sings his heart in unalloy.
And I, a loiterer, look on the cast
 Of sweet, unbounded joy in everything
Which hears no echoes of a wintered past,
 Nor lets one note sound stranger to the Spring.
But with my heart Spring makes no joyous tryst.
I may not sing, but to the singer list.

IN STORE

As one who toils against the needy hour,
Encumbering his present need, to store,
Thinking the store as well the less devour,
Each joy to make the hoarded joy more ;
And of the day fond dreams when from the vault
He shall withdraw what planning has laid by,
And to his heart's designs fit, nor with fault,
The pleasure-purchase of reality ;
So I some such. From dreaming on to-morrow,
I save in hope what now is poor and small ;
And, for that greater pay, with leases borrow —
Drawn up by dreams — till time shall pay it all.
Though he who saves may yet come pleasure-poor,
He still may be twice rich — in dreams and store.

TRIUMPH

When I behold time pass without the light
My muse should raise in brightness toward the
noon,
And but the ray of hope shows in the night
Like slender crescent on the faded moon ;
And, from that orient land toward which my soul
Presses, the full-houred noon to overtake,
There comes a brightening gleam should day unroll,
But still the morn, delaying, does not break,
I yet can think : the all-prevailing day
A little while must stand the gloom, till lo!
A golden morning breaks with radiant ray,
And all the hindering shades dissolve and go.
And thus it is that triumph wakes to tend
On him who holds his course on to the end.





