

THE TWO

ARCADIAS

ROSALIND TRAVERS



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Benjamin Travers

July 1909

"Forgotten peace, a long forgotten war"

People & Rings are gone,

Dust from the wheels of Time's un-  
rushing car;

Only the vase lives on".

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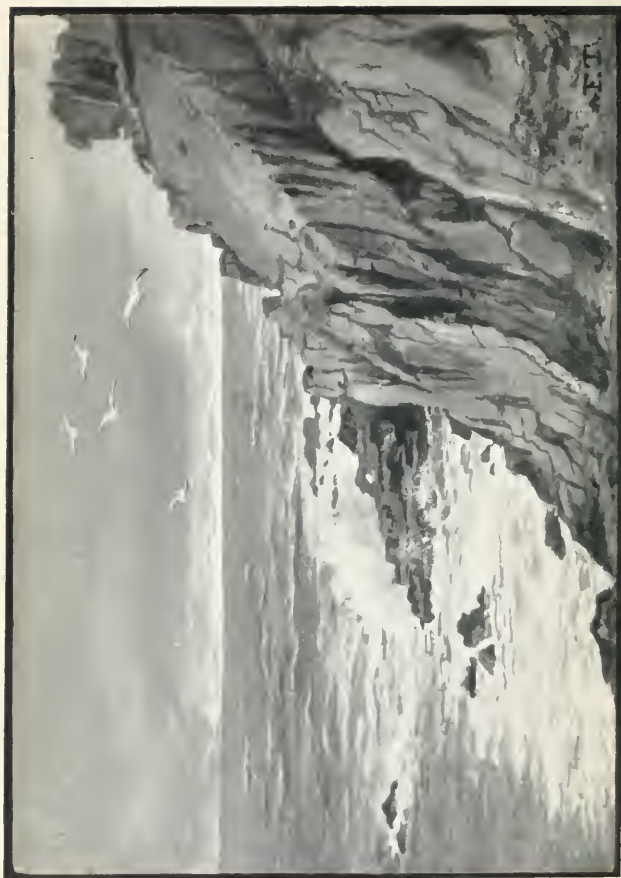


THE TWO ARCADIAS





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THE SHORES OF HALZAPHRON



# THE TWO ARCADIAS

PLAYS AND POEMS

BY

ROSALIND TRAVERS

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

RICHARD GARNETT, C.B., LL.D.



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## INTRODUCTION

IT may be said of Poetry as of Love, that "delightedly he dwells mid fays and talismans." The poetry of Fancy may be too purely ideal to produce a profound impression upon the world at large, but at all events it is bound to possess the one indispensable requisite, it *is* poetry. Verse which aims at clothing the facts of ordinary life with poetic garb is indeed worthy of high honour when the writer proves himself a poet in the essence as well as in the vesture of his work, but it sometimes happens that this particular method of expression has been resorted to, not because the author is, but because he is *not* a poet. The power so frequently manifested in the metrical treatment of the prosaic facts of life is less often the token of a creative genius than of a vigorous talent and a literary faculty which would have found more adequate expression in prose. Poetry, too, which has no savour of fancy, is likely to become insipid to the palate of future generations, and to retain at best a merely historic and antiquarian interest.

It is, therefore, a subject for congratulation when we encounter a truly poetical fancy united with a practical concern for contemporary interests and competent to exalt them to the sphere of poetry by investing them with the glamour of imagination. This we would venture to affirm of the young and hitherto unrevealed writer, whose first enterprise in authorship these introductory lines accompany.

We have to do here, if we mistake not, with a powerful and original mind, inspired with deep and even passionate interest in the questions of the day, and phases of contemporary existence, while at the same time capable of bestowing on them that ideal radiance which redeems them from the commonplace. It is characteristic of the essentially poetical character of the authoress's mind that the modern evil which has at present taken most hold upon her imagination, is the irruption of barbarism, that flood of untutored opulence and plebeian materialism, comparable, in the intellectual sphere, to the subversion of the ancient civilizations by the people of the north. The particular aspect of this which chiefly impresses her is that most apparent to a poet, the desecration of natural beauty by wanton destruction, tasteless meddling, or vulgar intrusion. There are many manifestations of the barbarian element in the modern world more serious than the atrocities of builders, or the misdeeds of trippers, but perhaps not many that lend themselves more to effective literary treatment, whether of the indignant or of the merely humorous order. There will be no difference as to the exuberant humour and satiric force of "Arcady in Peril," but this is only one side of the authoress's talent. Without probably any deliberate intention, she has presented the converse, the devastated Arcadia of our own day, in two little dramas, depicting the Arcadia that may have been seen by the author of the "Sad Shepherd," and the "Faithful Shepherdess"; we will not say of Theocritus, for the modern note of pain, inseparable from augmented knowledge, intrudes even in these charming pictures of the old romantic world. But these form a powerful and valuable counterbalance to the satire and fun of the human pieces, symbolically depicting the beauty yet in the world, which the march

of vulgarity threatens to destroy, and practically, though not professedly appealing to the instincts and fellow-feelings of the cultured orders of society. Nor need the appeal be devoid of result; for, as already intimated, the features of the present age which inspire apprehension of its decadence are rather tokens of irruption from without than of decay from within. There is no reason to suppose that the really educated classes are less refined than of old, and the newly enriched, though more numerous, are not, cannot be, more vulgar than those depicted by the Roman satirist in the age of Nero. The cause is simply the prodigious development of material wealth and scientific invention, which has made the uncultured classes much more powerful factors in the social system than formerly, and all that the world needs is that cultivated society should compensate for diminution of numerical proportion by increase of beneficent energy. The moral and social phenomena of our time, and of every other time, are but illustrations of the co-existence of elevating and degrading influences in the realm of mind as in the crust of earth. In the natural order this results in a general equilibrium: in the mental order conscious human intelligence intervenes to trim the balance, and work in the spirit of Miss Travers's little volume may be regarded as weight seasonably cast into the scale of refinement and true civilization.

Although few of the manifestations of the spirit of evil in our age are more offensive than the gratuitous disfigurement of the beautiful, and the tendency to grind distinction of any sort down into mechanical monotony, these are not the most alarming and immediately perilous symptoms of social disorder. There is that in Miss Travers's work which assures us that she will be capable of dealing in due season with

themes more tragical than she has yet attempted. Though her most conspicuous characteristic so far as revealed in this volume, is a bright and inventive fancy, there is no lack of deep earnestness and impetuous passion, evinced perhaps most clearly in "The Open Door," and in some of the shorter poems, but breaking forth amid the grace and delicacy of her sylvan scenes. What depth of feeling, for instance (if we may borrow an example from another poem, reserved for future publication from reasons of space), in this outburst of the wood-spirit, an Arcadian Undine, who does not, like the Undine of the north, need the adornment of a human soul for the perfection of her nature!

*Hylinome.*                    O, were I mortal,  
I never could rejoice! or quite forget  
The fallen bird, the pitiful slain deer;  
But we, who see the vanished life slip on  
Into the nestling, or the new-dropped fawn  
Or happy dancing mote, we do not weep.

*Eurhoe.* No, closed in our crystal chalice of joy  
And immortality, we do not weep.  
The voice of nature has a thousand tones  
We do not hear; slow, melancholy dusk  
That speaks of grief and healing; empty skies  
O'er widely flooded plains; the midnight wind  
In leafless trees; frost, and the scorn of stars;  
We know them not, but man's dark, earth-born sense  
Receives all these and more." (*Thyrsis and Fausta.*)

This passage by itself sufficiently attests the poet, yet does not conspicuously transcend the general level of diction and sentiment. "The Enemy Within" appears at first sight unrelated to the other dramas; yet like them exemplifies the principle of contrast. In the Arcadian group, "Arcady in Peril" and its companion, are set against each other as



irreconcilable opposites, the urban trippers and the pastoral spirit are absolutely incompatible. In "The Enemy Within" the contrast is within the limits of the same play. The polities, Athenian and Spartan we may call them, are pitted against each other for a life and death struggle within the narrow limits of ancient Cornwall. One or the other must, it would seem, inevitably perish, and yet the moral, implied though not expressed, is that for the good of both parties, neither ought to perish. Each antagonist has a world to learn of the other, and the path of progress for each community is, while retaining the ideas which constitute the essence of its own national life, to yield free access to the sentiments and ideals of the stranger and opposing nation. This was not possible to the two warring races of the West in ancient times, but will it not become possible to the civilizations of our own day? This thought worked out on a larger scale, with nearer reference to modern needs and conditions may lead the authoress far.

RICHARD GARNETT.



ARCADY IN PERIL



## ARCADY IN PERIL

SILVIO. *A Shepherd.*                      ALBERT. *A Jerry-Builder.*

PHOEBE. *A Shepherdess.*                MARIA. *His best Girl.*

*Chorus of Nymphs.*                      *Chorus of Trippers.*

*The Goddess DIANA.*

### SCENE I

*A glade among early summer woodlands, and a little rising ground. Morning light. Enter the Nymphs.*

#### CHORUS I

LIGHTLY, lightly came the Spring,  
On a breezy day;  
Bade the woodlands dance and sing  
Winter cares away.  
"O daffodils," she whispered, "try  
To out-laugh the jocund sky."

Softly, softly followed Love;  
Bluebells where he came  
Sweetly chimed; the apple-grove  
Brake in rose-white flame.  
Nightingales were heard anew;  
Melodious Love went singing too.

Clearly, clearly flowed his song  
 Through the listening glade;  
 Rapture-led, a rustic throng  
 Follow, half-dismayed.  
 For Spring is past, and who shall say  
 If Love will last a summer's day?

[*The Nymphs dance and depart.*]

*Enter SILVIO and PHOEBE.*

*Ph.* Well met, good Silvio.

*Sil.* Gentle Phoebe, long  
 May such a heaven shine o'er thee! Long may summer  
 Crown thee her fairest flower!—Whence com'st thou, love?

*Ph.* From o'er the placid river-meads. I sought  
 Our sweet-breathed kine, while yet the ruddy beams  
 Were long and low; while dew-cold vapours rose  
 From streams, and all the crystal air was cool.

*Sil.* I left the flocks upon the low green hills,  
 Watched by my faithful sheep-dog, plummy-throated,  
 And almost human-wise; hither I came  
 To seek fair Phoebe, who disdains my love.

*Ph.* You weary me with your complaints of love.  
 Am I at fault? I did not bid you love;  
 Nor I will not forbid you.

*Sil.* Grant me this,  
 My queen—leave to adore you, humbly serve you:  
 For woman's love is born, so wise men say,  
 Of grateful memories.

*Ph.* What should wise men know?  
 Queen of a day, forgotten in a year!

Love then: I vow you'll get no more of me  
Than friendship true and lasting. What is better?

*She sings.*

Sweet Friendship is a matron mild:  
Peace in her vision dwells, and Truth.  
Love is a little wayward child,  
A radiant blossom, light as youth.

Cruel as childhood, brief as joy:  
As false, impatient as the wind.  
Who would not shun the heedless boy?  
And follow Friendship, true and kind?

Yet this a dainty sport doth prove  
(Ere heavy years have told their tale),  
To play at hide-and-seek with Love,  
Amid the foils of Friendship's veil.

*Sil.* Sport, play! such is the stuff a woman's love  
Is made of—thus her gossamer fancy held  
With frailest dewdrops! while a man stakes all  
His being, just to lay the crown of life  
Before her little feet! Some counsel sagely  
Scorn and disdain——

*Ph.* Who scorns a woman's love  
Has oftenest failed to win it! What now, Silvio?  
Will you not have me gay? Then I'll be sad;  
For sad I am with some yet shapeless woe.  
But when I marked *you* all my smiles shone out,  
And I was gay to greet you.

*Sil.* Dearest Phoebe!

*Ph.* I laughed to see you coming——

*Sil.* [*with appropriate action*]. Phoebe—rapture!

*Ph.* For 'twas your lovesick air that made me laugh.

*Sil.* This is too much—[*going*].

*Ph.* Nay, stop; I'll jest no more;

Will you be going? Why, I looked to you

To help me of my sorrow, sweetheart Silvio.

*Sil.* Thou April maid, what ails thee? Lo, thine eyes  
Are sad as rain-swept pools.

*Ph.* My heart is heavy:

For signs and rumours on the countryside

Threaten of loud-voiced strangers, city-born,

Coming to roam our wild-woods here.

*Sil.* Alas!

*Ph.* Soon shall they have their will of mead and vale  
Corrupting all——

*Sil.* Such strangers I have seen;  
Cheap-trippers called, and them th' excursion train  
Beareth in sweltering ranks—the well-filled train,  
With clamorous speed and untuned cry, along  
A glittering trail.

*Ph.* And hitherward they come.  
No more an almost fearful peace shall crown  
Our solemn hills; no more shall dream-clad Silence  
Glide mutely down the drowsy glades at noon.

*Sil.* Ere long will tender sylvan nymphs forsake  
The night-black pools, the dancing golden shallows  
Of mountain streams.

*Ph.* Too true! For those are near  
Whose mirthless laughter drives reluctant Echo  
To answer yelling! those who rend and tear  
Frail underwoods, and snatch, with wanton grasp,  
The soon-rejected blossom: those who hack



The temporary paramour's initials  
On every tree.

*Sil.* How strange a life is theirs!  
They tell of glaring joys, and sodden toil,  
And quick-won gold; gold that like marsh-fire gleams  
Corruptly, in the startled shepherd's face.

*Ph.* Ah me! low-thoughted cares  
Shall cloud our sunny lives, for many a heart,  
Unknowing, hides the lust of gold and change.  
I dread the heavy day.

*Sil.* Best Phoebe, hear me;  
If one should put to flight the tourist hordes—  
If one, a simple shepherd-youth, should drive  
Cheap-trippers howling back across the plains,  
To seek in fitter sphere their frantic joys—  
Should such an one have naught of you but friendship?

*Ph.* No more; unless it chanced that hero's name  
Were—Silvio! Then——

*Sil.* *Then, Phoebe——*

*Ph.* Well, perchance,  
I *might* say (long years hence, as we grow old):  
“Hero, have now your choice of treasures twain,  
Friendship and Love. Which will you?”

*Sil.* Would I pause?

*He sings.*

Friendship is the frozen Spring  
Of pallid hours, when few birds sing,  
Light and cold.  
Love's the glorious summer-time;  
June, in passion-wingéd prime,  
Rose and gold.

Love, the fruit of friendship's flower,  
 Ripens in one ardent hour  
     Of swift desire.  
 With flower-like hands let Friendship play;  
 Love o'er red-ripe lips hath sway:  
 Love will snatch the soul away  
     In a kiss of fire.

*Ph.* [*repressing Silvio*]. Nay, friend! it is still spring.

*Sil.* Phoebe, for you,

I will defy the tourists, yea, the trippers!  
 Nor Cook, nor Gaze, of world-encircling fame,  
 Nor what, of lesser potency, multitudes  
 Invoke on tickets for excursion fraught,  
 Shall daunt me! Soon the unblest mob shall fly,  
 Fly, huddling o'er the meads, enraged, aghast,  
 Back to yon wayside station, well-adorned,  
 Of paint much odorous, where the instructive board  
 Shows a white-lettered name *Arcadia* clear.  
 There will I spurn them back with curses dire,  
 Primeval, cataclysmic, in the names  
 Of dread Demeter, and of earth-born Pan.

*Ph.* Most gallant Silvio! Thou wilt sure prevail!  
 For thee I'll supplicate the woodland goddess  
 Purest Diana—Hark, what horrid sounds!

*Sil.* That strident mirth—those jangled harmonies—  
 The trippers come!

*Ph.* O let us seek the hills—  
 The groves—

*Sil.* Never! I meet them now and here!  
 But seek you shelter.

*Ph.* Can I hide alone,

And know you braving all their desperate might?  
 They come—Oh hide, until their force you see;  
 Their power's unknown—hide, then, for love of me!

[PHOEBE and SILVIO hide.

[*Enter the chorus of Trippers, followed by ALBERT and MARIA. The latter carries a lunch-basket and bottles; the former, with an air of mingled pleasure and business, carries a folding notice-board, marked "Eligible Building Sites," also a large measuring-tape, and a leather bag.*

*The Trippers sing.*

CHORUS II

The sun was bright on the chimney-pots;  
 No fog obscured the sky:  
 "What a beautiful day for Hampstead Heath!  
 Or sweet Southend," said I.  
 But my girl she said "O shut your head!  
 Such low resorts!" said she:  
 "And I would not go to Margate, no!  
 In the best of company!  
 But we'll have a happy holiday,  
 Whatever the sun or rain;  
 For it isn't far to Arcadiar  
 By the first excursion-train."

So we booked ourselves first-class, you bet;  
 And lots of refreshment too;  
 For I like to keep my whistle wet  
 When I look at a blooming view.  
 But what do you think? there was nowhere to drink,  
 No inn, hotel, or bar!

## ARCADY IN PERIL

Yes, that's the rub, there's never a pub

In all Arcadiar!

But we'll have a happy holiday

Whatever the sun or rain:

For it isn't far to Arcadiar

By the first excursion-train.

*[The Trippers essay a clumsy dance.]*

*Alb.* Yes, just farney naow! Why, when we got to the station there wasn't a coach or a waggonette or a brake,—let alone a motor-car—to be seen! not even a dusty fly! we had to walk a mile! and nothing to sweeten the journey. But there'll be a great alteration by next season.

*The Trippers resume their song.*

For soon a wonderful change you'll see

In this benighted hole:

Each grove will become a heap of bricks,

Each tree a building-pole.

With a Ho-tel tall, and a music-hall,

And a row of villas neat;

If the public take, we'll very soon make

*Arcadiaville* complete.

Ah, *then*, what a happy holiday!

Whatever the sun or rain:

If you mote or wheel to Arcadiaville,

Or go by excursion-train.

*[Exeunt the Trippers, dancing in unseemly fashion, and throwing their headgear at one another.]*

*Mar.* Maybe, but just now it's a damp, draughty, dreary,

role! What's to amoose us—listenin' to the dicky-birds? There ought to be cocoa-nut shies——

*Alb.* And swing-boats——

*Mar.* And a steam merry-go-round that plays the very latest tunes upon a fog-whistle——

*Alb.* And fireworks——

*Mar.* And two or three bands, and a jolly dancing-place, and a good big refreshment-room.

*Alb.* Let 'em *all* come! And so they will: you'll see! Where's that tape, old girl? [*He begins measuring.*] Here's the site of the first building, a gi-gantic public-house!

*Mar.* [*Sniffing.*] I *wish* it was 'ere now, so I do! [*Examining a bottle.*] The bloomin' booze is nearly all done.

*Alb.* Here, hand that over to me! [*He drinks from the bottle, and flings it away.*] Now for the villas!

[*He opens the notice-board marked "Eligible Building Sites" and sets it up.*]

*Sil.* [*Dashing out of the bushes followed by PHOEBE.*] Villainous spawn of cities! Get you hence!

[*He snatches up and breaks the notice-board, while PHOEBE hurls away the bottle.*]

*Alb.* [*Struggling with SILVIO.*] Maria! hi! help, can't you? Here's a bally lunatic! [*MARIA catches hold of SILVIO.*]

*Sil.* I cannot struggle with a woman.

*Alb.* You're a fair young caution, you are!

[*PHOEBE darts towards MARIA.*]

*Alb.* Look out, Maria, the girl's going for you now! I'll soon settle her!

[*He attempts a rough embrace, and PHOEBE flies weeping to the bushes.*]

*Mar.* [*Still holding SILVIO.*] Be quiet naow; a nice-looking chap like you oughtn't to get angry with a lydy.

*Alb.* [*To SILVIO.*] Are you often taken like that? Broken my board, and spoilt my Panarma, so you have!

*Sil.* I would not injure you, only begone!  
Hence! seek your loathsome joys in other lands.

*Mar.* Lor'! 'ow prettily 'e speaks! Why, dear boy, we ain't doin' you no 'arm; lots of *good* rather! We're going to bring money and business to Arcadia.

*Alb.* Why, yes, you're dead-alive here! However do you get along in this dull hole?

*Sil.* I will not palter with you; let me go!

*Mar.* How unkind you are! [*tearfully*]. And such a pretty boy, too!

*Alb.* Well you might give the lady a civil answer at least!

*Mar.* Yes, tell us 'ow you live, there 's a dear! What do you do all dye? Don't you never 'ave a good time?

*Sil.* Mine is the Arcadian shepherd's wonted life.  
Dawn calls me forth, o'er gray and dewy plains,  
To tend my flock: 'tis joy to see the sun  
Come dancing from the East. Where verdant oaks  
Rise towering o'er the bracken's silver sea,  
How sweet the noonday rest! Then, homeward bound,  
Toil o'er, communing with the twilight winds  
In untaught song, what quiet joys are mine!

*Alb.* What, have you no Bank-holidays at all?

*Sil.* Each changing season brings the appointed feast.  
On clear spring eves, young maidens, whitely clad,  
Do tend Diana's shrine, and strew the pale  
Fresh lady-smock, and moonlight-coloured May.  
Summer and autumn, to the good Earth-mother  
We sing our thankful praise, we happy crowds;  
And old and young acclaim the feastful day  
With merriment. On frosty winter nights

We build huge fires, whose leaping flames reveal  
 Bare, umbered branches, rocks, and ice-bound rills;  
 And vie in hymns to strange, primeval Pan.

*Mar.* Oh lor! I should die of the blues!

*Alb.* All very well for country bumpkins, old chap. But you're a cut above that, *you* are! A smart young fellow like you wants to see *life*.

*Mar.* Next season *will* be an eye-opener for you! There'll be cocoa-nut shies——

*Alb.* And swing-boats——

*Mar.* And a steam merry-go-round that plays the very latest tunes on a fog-whistle——

*Alb.* And fireworks——

*Mar.* And two or three bands, and a jolly dancing-place, and a huge refreshment-room.

*Sil.* What are these unknown joys?

*Alb.* *Larks*, my boy! *Life*! Come up to Town with us, and we'll show you what's what.

*Mar.* 'Ow the girls *would* run after 'im! Ah, you've broken hearts already with those eyes of yours, or I'm very much mistook.

*Sil.* No—not precisely; that is—here and there!

You, kindly maid, are wise and not too coy.

*Mar.* *Coy*! That doesn't pay now-a-days.

*Alb.* No—there 's too many of you about for that.

[*He begins measuring again, murmuring to himself.*]

*Mar.* Besides, 'andsome, clever chaps such as you *like* a girl to be a bit coming, don't you now?

*Sil.* It may be—for a change.

*Mar.* Ah yes, that 's what all men like, money and change.

*Alb.* [*Gruffly, still measuring.*] Ah, and women too, confound them!

*Mar.* Never mind 'im—'e's jealous! Lor!' 'e 'as such a nasty temper! If 'e catches you squeezing my 'and [*takes SILVIO'S hand and drops it hastily, in pretended fright*]. There, I told you so!

*Alb.* You're pretty free with a stranger, Maria!

*Mar.* *Free* indeed! Thank you, Mr. Albert, *I* know how to behave myself! and if I didn't I shouldn't come to *you* to learn. *Free*!! I can't 'elp it if——

*Alb.* Oh well, hold your jaw! I don't want a slanging-match.

*Mar.* *Slanging match*!! There, you see 'ow 'e insults me! Takes me away from all my pals to a wretched 'ole like this, and then rows me till I don't know whether I'm on my 'ead or my 'eels! and all because a young gentleman that *is* a gentleman, 'appens to look at me.

*Alb.* Oh, hang the woman! You better be careful, Maria, or you'll go too far.

*Mar.* *Woman*! d'you 'ear? that's what 'e calls a lydy! Not another step do I go with you, Albert, unless——

*Alb.* Very well; you may get home as best you can, Maria; I've had enough of you.

[*He gathers up board, tape, etc. and goes away.*]

*Mar.* Oh—*oh—oh*! the wretch—he deserts me!!

[*She throws herself into SILVIO'S arms, who respectfully props her up against a tree, and prepares to follow ALBERT.*]

*Sil.* Peace, peace; I'll call him back.

*Mar.* Stop, you great silly! d'you want to see me murdered, and yourself too? And it's *all* your fault. [*Sobbing.*]

*Sil.* Nay, I did nothing.

*Mar.* You did—you made eyes at me—and 'owever shall I get home now?



*Sil.* Weep not, dear lady, prithee do not weep!  
I will protect you since you are alone.

*Mar.* No you shan't; you don't care for me, and I won't be pitied! You *might* care though, after all I've gone through for you.

*Sil.* Shed no more tears; it is not pity alone—

*Mar.* What you *do* love me then? Oh no—no—you're only pretendin', and here I am deserted and all for you—

[*Weeps violently.*]

*Sil.* Dear lady, I beseech you, weep no more! My sweet-heart is fled; in sooth she cared not for me. What then? you are kind, and all alone; I'll take you to your strange world of cities, and serve you well; only, shed no more tears.

*Mar.* Will you really care for me? Oh, won't the girls be jealous just!

*Sil.* Let us begone; the woods are hateful to me now.

*Mar.* Hooray! come along to the station then; this is the way.  
[*Exeunt SILVIO and MARIA.*]

*Enter PHOEBE.*

*Ph.* Silvio—what Silvio! Fled with that coarse maid?  
Oh gentle death, come quickly to mine aid!

[*She falls to the ground.*]

## SCENE II

*The Nymphs enter, and sing sadly.*

## CHORUS III

Hence, oh hence, ye golden hours!  
 Your radiance doth increase my pain:  
 Hasten, dreary autumn showers!  
 Sweeping o'er the mournful plain,  
 Scatter all the leaves that be;  
 Only spare the willow tree;  
 For I must wear the willow!

Pluck, oh pluck the bitter yew,  
 And the cypress, dark and proud:  
 Gather rosemary and rue;  
 Violets for a maiden's shroud.  
 But the wreath you lay on mine  
 Of willow-branch and ivy twine;  
 For I must wear the willow. [*Exeunt Nymphs.*]

PHOEBE *raises herself.*

*Ph.* Grief is a storm whose winds are woeful sighs,  
 The rain warm tears. Break, break, oh heavy storm!  
 O'erwhelm me! Like a hapless flower I fall  
 Dismantled, to the crashing hail: and lie  
 All strown upon the ground. Ah me! true grief  
 Hath neither wisdom, words, nor thought; one memory  
 Aches in the heart; I love him: he is fled.  
 Let me die soon! [*Flings herself down. Pause.*]  
 Did I not hear a voice?

Far-off, yet silver-clear? "Phoebe, for shame!  
 Arise!" it cried. Strange voice, thou warnest well!  
 No flower am I to fall at the first storm  
 That takes me! Even the tender nightingale  
 Laments her woe, but dies not, still delighting  
 The woods with anguished ecstasy of song.  
 So let me strive, and from my bitter grief  
 Draw strange, unearthly sweetness. Yet, oh heart!  
 My lonely heart, how many twilight years,  
 Dim, slowly darkening into night, are mine;  
 And none can help me! neither earthly powers  
 Nor heavenly—Nay, I'll seek Diana's aid!  
 Strong shield of maidens, help me bear my woe!

## INVOCATION

*PHOEBE and the Nymphs, unseen, chant.*

O Forest Queen!

Hear, from thy dreamy bowers  
 Far in the secret, cool, and winding glen,  
 Where quenched sunbeams fall in sparkling showers,  
 (Dark boughs between)

On strange and starry flowers,  
 Azure, and silver-streaked, unknown of men,

Hear, and give aid, O Queen!

By the moorland, wild and wide,  
 On the sunny mountain-side;  
 By the torrent, cool as snow,  
 Murmuring to the fields below;  
 By the pinewoods, breathing balm;  
 By the moonbeam's holy calm;  
 By all nature's joys, that be

Tameless, strong and pure as thee,  
Hear, and give aid, O Queen!

*Soft music. DIANA appears, followed by the Nymphs.*

*Diana.* Fear not, sad maid, a goddess looks on thee  
With favouring eye. Think not I scorn thy sorrow.  
Mine are the virgins' vows, yet not unheard  
True lovers shall implore mine aid. I prize  
The rose, the splendid, richly-bosomed rose,  
No less than merry, maiden daffodils,  
Or snowdrops pale, or violets dark and coy.  
Thou, Phoebe, dost beseech my power to grant  
Thee strength to live a fair, unfallen blossom;  
Faithful, forsaken. Such is not thy fate.  
Thy lover shall return and thou'lt forgive  
As women do. But mine Olympian wrath,  
Slow-gathering, passionless, deadly, comes to purge  
Arcadia's land by unimagined means.  
Hence, maidens all! Wait on Diana's power!

[*Music. DIANA vanishes. Exeunt PHOEBE and  
the Nymphs. Pause.*]

*Enter MARIA and SILVIO.*

*Mar.* A pretty guide *you* are! don't even know your own woods! 'Ere we are back again in the old place! There's my sandwich paper, and one of Albert's cig'rettes. [*Sighs.*] 'Ow are we ever to get to the station?

*Sil.* Forgive me—I am bewildered; the whole world is strange to me. Perchance from the hillock I shall discern our way. [*He goes to the rising ground.*]

*Mar.* Look out for the station road.

*Sil.* I see the highway near at hand; further the trim, white station, whence the shiny rails crawl snake-like to the distant city. Our way lies—Ye gods!!—there is a fearful dragon yonder!

*Mar.* O—o—ooh! Where?

*Sil.* On the near highway—his squat and bulky, scarlet form rests on four short, gray paws—his huge eyes glare—the earth shakes at his breath—oh terror!—oh *hideous* monster!

*Mar.* Let me see, though—let me see! [*Scrambling up the mound.*] Why, you silly cuckoo, it's nothing but a motor-car!

*Sil.* That horror?

*Mar.* Yes, of course. How jolly! I can smell it from here! *Now* we shan't be long! We'll ride it home.

*Sil.* Never will I draw near that dreadful shape! 'Tis surely some evil power incarnate!

*Mar.* Nonsense. It does look a fine one—in the latest style! Wonder 'oo it b'longs to? Well, if they leave it about, they must expect folks to borrow it now and then! Come along, stupid.

*Sil.* I will not touch the accursed thing!

*Mar.* All right then, *I'll* drive 'er. Come along.

*Sil.* No mortal power shall bid me look thereon Again; it is too loathly-formed, too vile.

*Mar.* Garn, you chicken-'earted sponge-cake! I'd make a better man than *you* out of a used-up frisette and an old lamp-shade!

*Enter* ALBERT.

*Mar.* 'Ooray 'ere's Albutt! [*Running up to him.*] I say, old man—

*Alb.* [*Coldly.*] I don't want to have anything to do with you. Shouldn't have come near you again, only there's something wrong with this blasted wood; I can't find the way out of it.

*Mar.* O come now, don't be 'uffy! I'm sorry I spoke—there! I can't do with 'im, nohow! There's such a *heavenly* motor-car down there on the road, and 'es *afraid* of it.

*Alb.* A motor-car! Where? [*Running up mound.*] Why so there is! Well, I'm blowed! [*Staring.*]

*Mar.* Come along, Albutt, lovey; there's no one about—we'll have such a scrumptious ride 'ome! You shall steer, and I'll toot the 'orn.

*Alb.* [*still staring.*] Well, that's a rum start! Left there at owner's risk, eh? All right, Maria, I'm on the job.

*Sil.* Oh stay—you are rushing to destruction, stay! Mark its foul gaze; it pants for loathsome joy  
To see you coming! Shun it, I beseech you!  
A thing so frightful is a pain for ever.

*Alb.* Look here, my boy—you go back to your trees and your flowers, and your dicky-birds! So long.

[*Exeunt ALBERT and MARIA. Exit also SILVIA distractedly.*]

*Enter the Trippers, who sing.*

#### CHORUS IV

Let us take the road,  
All the world before us!  
Young Adventure leading  
Mighty forces, speeding  
Roaring iron, humming tyres,  
In a whirlwind chorus!

Motors take the road!  
 (Take the *whole* of the road;)  
 Snort and quiver in dreadful play!  
 (Earthquakes out for a holiday),  
 Burn the miles of the winding way!  
 Shriek to the cloudlands o'er us;  
 Woodlands clearing, houses nearing,  
 Children scattering, runaways clattering,  
 Dodging, flying, maimed, and crying,  
 Calling, cursing, near and far—  
 “*Out of the way* of the motor-car!”

Ride the feeble down!  
 For life runs fast and faster;  
 Strong in iron, gold and power,  
 Borne on the wings of the flying hour,  
 With wit to dare and might to hold,  
 Show the crowd a master!

Motors! take the road!  
 (Take the *whole* of the road;)  
 Snort and quiver in dreadful play!  
 (Earthquakes out for a holiday),  
 Burn the miles of the winding way!  
 Waken the land with disaster!  
 For pounding, astounding,  
 Resounding, confounding,  
 With-terror-surrounding, in-slaughter-abounding,  
 Like the swoop and rush of a runaway star,  
 Is the meteor-flight of a motor-car!  
 [*The Trippers fetch their breath, then  
 hurry out.*]

SILVIO *returns, and flings himself down in despair. Pause.*

*Enter* PHOEBE.

*Ph.* *Silvio!* Not dead? oh speak, if yet thou livest!

*Sil.* Phoebe!

*Ph.* Thou art not wounded? Dost thou suffer?  
Tell me! Thou know'st my craft of healing herbs,  
And simple charms.

*Sil.* I am faint with utter woe.

*Ph.* Rest, and I'll cool thy brow; speak not awhile.

*Sil.* My heart aches, and the very soul of me  
Is wrung with torment of self-loathing and shame.  
False to my vows; my wordy valour proved  
Fleeting as April sun—and I, bewitched,  
Forsook this nymph for yonder Blowsabel!  
Turn thy sweet eyes from me! I cannot bear  
To see my loss! For now, even now, I learn,  
Who never loved before, to love indeed.

*Ph.* [*softly*]. And I.

*Sil.* What say'st thou?

*Ph.* Had I naught to learn,  
Sweetheart?

*Sil.* Thou truest maid! Canst thou forgive?

*Ph.* What is that word? *I love*, and will not hear  
My dear one lightly blamed. O grieve no more!  
The fault was mine, who did not love you then.

*Sil.* Phoebe, sweet Phoebe, all my life and soul  
Are yours——

*Ph.* Too great a gift for me; I'll ask  
One heartfelt word, no more.



*Sil.* Speak!

*Ph.* —Say you *hate* her!

Swear that you *hate her*, you despise and loathe  
That city girl, and all her wanton crew!

*Sil.* With heart and soul I do abhor them all;

'Twas foul enchantment—— [*A distant crashing sound.*]

*Ph.* Hark! what shakes the wood?

Shall not this be Diana's wrath revealed?

I tremble——

*Sil.* Since thou hast forgiven, I dread

No mortal ills. From yonder mound I'll peer  
Down the long glades, and find what danger threatens.

[*Running up the mound.*]

The woods—the road—far cries—a burst of flame!

Ah, Phoebe! horrors and destruction! See!

*Ph.* No—no—I cannot look! What is befallen?

*Sil.* That motor-car, beguiling trippers hence,  
Sped like a monstrous hornet through the woods,  
Humming with joy——

*Ph.* Yes, yes; I marked them speed

Towards the station——

*Sil.* So, their dragon horse

Tameless as fire, crashed through the splintering boards  
Of paling, ticket-office, waiting-room,  
And roused the still-reluctant porters, see!

With sudden flame, and now—— [*Sounds of distant explosion.*]

*Ph.* A wrathful God

Has heaved and flung the rolling thunderbolt!

*Sil.* Not so; self-doomed the furious motor burst!!

A fountain of fire and flame, and flying fragments!

A raging meteor wrenched from burning worlds!

*Ph.* Alas, alas! are those poor trippers slain?

*Sil.* Surely—[*gazing hard*—]—Nay look, what strange and  
soaring forms,  
High in mid-air, above the blaze! It is—  
It is indeed the trippers! Every one  
Upborne, and hurtling in enforced flight;  
That fierce explosion drives them high, and far  
Far onward! 'Tis some God that guides their speed  
Uninjured still. O hawk-eyed Phoebe, hither!  
They sail beyond my sight—

*Ph.* There—still they rise,  
Poor, much-exploded trippers! veering now  
As if a mighty wind had seized them; straight,  
Straight heading for the city. Far, oh far!  
Smaller they grow, and now they gently sink  
Softly and slowly, towards a watery gleam.

*Sil.* I know it; 'tis a reedy, shallow pool  
Cushioned with oozy mud.

*Ph.* They will crawl thence  
Unhurt.

*Sil.* And seek the city's sheltering din,  
Nor ever wake the woodland echoes more.

*Ph.* [*without enthusiasm*]. I am glad they were not slain.  
Thus trippers fare  
When Dian's wrath is roused.

*Sil.* Was this in truth  
Diana's deed?

*Ph.* Yea; thus the goddess willed  
To free Arcadia.

*Sil.* Then, to-morrow eve  
We'll deck her altars wild with freshest flowers,  
And praise her name in song. Yet how to find  
Sweet words enough? for I am spent with joy,

Praising my own heart's queen.

*Ph.* Call me not so!  
Queens are forsaken; let me rather be  
Your comrade, quick to serve in every need;  
Your comforter when all the world's awry;  
Your Tried-and-True.

*Sil.* Comrade, I *always* need you;  
Alone I am naught; but with your hand in mine  
I fear no fall. Then let us plight our vows  
To-morrow, when the assembled shepherds come;  
And swear eternal faith.

*Ph.* How many days  
Will your "eternal" hold? Till the first leaf  
Is shed?

*Sil.* Till we, like withered leaves become  
One with this quiet earth; and even here,  
Perchance one leaf will know the other near.

[*Exeunt* SILVIO and PHOEBE.]

*Enter the Nymphs, who sing.*

CHORUS V

Where the hues of sunset fail,  
Where the sky is primrose-pale,  
And the silver moon hangs low;  
Faint and few the starry gleams,  
'Tis the land of fancy-dreams:  
Thither, mortals let us go!

Westward burns the splendid sky;  
There's the Realm of Poesy,  
Sought of many, found of few.

## ARCADY IN PERIL

In that lambent air and fire  
Fragile-wingéd thoughts expire;  
    Withered, drop to earth anew.

But to Fancy's paler sphere  
Ye may journey free of fear,  
    Even as our light verses fly.  
Ye have wings, though cramped and small;  
Fancy-flights upbear you all;  
    Mortals! spread your wings and try!

*Exeunt Omnes.*

ARCADIAN SONGS



## ARCADIAN SONGS

### SONG

O MERRY Muse!  
Forget the over-skilled and lifeless chime  
Of careful modern rhyme!

I prithee choose  
A rambling air,  
Of wayward song,  
And win it with thy happy lute along;  
Nor shake the dewy blossoms from thy hair!

Wilt sing of Love?  
Nay, wingéd wanton, hush for shame!  
Regard my well-stored years and sober fame,  
Which even wealthy citizens approve!

Hence, mad and fair  
Beguiling eyes!  
And lips that breathe such airy fantasies;  
Nor strew thy blossoms on my scanty hair!

Ah, have thy will!  
And I shall tell what over-earthly bliss  
My Queen of Song yields in one fairy kiss!  
The golden thrill

Of a wild, starry thought, which falls  
 Across my feeble wit, and dazzling, calls  
 For words, swift, silver-footed words, to sing  
     The marvellous thing!  
 Then clothed in joy, I breathe divinest air;  
 And kiss the blossoms from thy radiant hair.

### SPRING SONG

#### I

**S**PRING, O Spring is here again! radiant skies all clear  
     of rain;  
 Gleaming rivers, flashing brooklets, laugh the news abroad.  
     Shadows over bright meads drifting;  
     Dazzled cloudlands breaking, lifting;  
 Every lark from humble furrow, soars, of boundless sunshine  
     lord;  
 New-born joys of Earth and Heaven mingled in his song  
     accord.

#### II

How shall mortals greet you, Spring, but with verses sweet  
     to sing?  
 Birds in every woodland teach us golden-throated praise!  
     Thrush! with mellow note saluting  
     Blackbird's ripple-bosomed fluting;  
 Nightingale! whose song leaps flame-like o'er the dusk of  
     lonely ways;  
 Sweetest minstrels! ne'er can mortal sound the charm of  
     wild-winged lays.



## III

Fairy Spring is wooed and won, since in might renewed the  
Sun  
Smote her towers of frozen cloud, and set his Princess free.  
Though on gusty wings she fly him,  
Armed in glittering showers defy him,  
Soon the storm-rack fades, departing into shores of opal sea ;  
Spring, the dewy Bride of Heaven, freely blesses wood and  
lea.

## THE CYPRUS VASE

A TWILIGHT breeze, of honied scent impassioned,  
Shakes gently to and fro  
Red roses, in a jar of Cyprus, fashioned  
Three thousand years ago.

So long earth hid secure in her dark bosom  
The fragile, moulded clay ;  
Unburied now, it holds the fleeting blossom  
Of a brief summer's day.

And breathes out visions to the dusk, that hover  
Flame-like, upon the wall ;  
Beauty and old-time gladness, passing over  
While the red roses fall.

Rose-leaves which patter like the rhythmic feet  
Of dancing-girls, who glide  
Through sunlit halls, where kings and chieftains meet  
When spears are laid aside.

Peace crowned the girls with roses, brimmed with wine  
 The lovely curves of you,  
 Fair ancient vase! and raised, with touch divine,  
 Dead brotherhood anew.

Forgotten peace! and long forgotten war!  
 People and Kings are gone;  
 Dust from the wheel of Time's unresting car;  
 Only the vase lives on.

Perfect as when, within the shady portal,  
 It cooled from summer's glow;  
 Who would have deemed the frail thing half immortal,  
 Three thousand years ago?

#### RONDEL

*RAIN?* this light caprice of an April sky?  
 The swift, dark frown that wins to a smile again,  
 Ere you have mastered the carol of thrushes, that cry:  
 "Rain!"

Bright, young branches sway to the gust, and strain;  
 Fresh leaves flutter, all a-quiver to fly;  
 Daffodils scatter their drops in a dance of disdain.

See! a flight of arrowy rays, that tie  
 Heaven to the dew-dazzled Earth in a glittering chain;  
 Call you these diamonds, flung for the garden to try,  
 Rain?

## THE WOOD OF TEARS

THERE'S an old wood in Dreamland, where the boughs  
are bending low,  
Always bending low, with their weight of dripping leaves;  
Where a warm rain is falling, always falling, hushed and slow,  
With a soft, soft sobbing as of one who faintly grieves.

But no wind ever lifts the tired boughs and sodden grasses,  
Clinging like the locks of a corpse washed ashore.  
Through those miles of misty woodland no phantom ever  
passes;  
'Tis the Wood of Human Tears, and they are falling ever-  
more.

## WIDER FATE

I N moonlit glades, when soft airs blow,  
The swaying blue-bells faintly chime;  
And village girls with lovers go  
To hear, at evening's gentle time.

They, rosy maidens, fresh and hale,  
Sing to their lovers, unafraid.  
The lonely moon is not more pale  
More lone than I, sad, voiceless maid!

## ARCADIAN SONGS

I would the ghostly Huntsman came,  
 And said "Dost fear to ride with me?"  
 His glance would stir my cheek to flame;  
 We'd gallop thundering o'er the lea!

The village maids would quake with fear  
 To see our night-black courser bound!  
 I should be robed in moonlight clear,  
 And Queen with starry circlet crowned.

No need for me to sing: the breeze  
 Would wildly chant our echoing ride——  
*Who* crashes through the quivering trees?  
 The Huntsman comes! to claim his bride.

His vision wakes my soul to fire!  
 He lifts me to his wingéd steed—  
 Away! upborne with high desire,  
 We spurn the earth in soaring speed!

The flower-faced maidens swoon to hear,  
 Such ghostly music storms on high!  
 For I am Queen of Night and Fear!  
 And crowned with whirling stars we fly!

## PEACE-OF-HEART

**I** CAST my love and labour down;  
 I left the golden toys of Art.  
 By wintry fields, and woodlands brown,  
 I sought the lily, Peace-of-Heart.

I sought her by the cloud-blown Moon;  
By solemn Day-break, strange and clear;  
Till Spring unveiled a glittering noon,  
And promised "Peace-of-Heart is near."

Sweet airs, that stirred the blackthorn spray,  
Beguiled me to a woody vale,  
Where clouds of dream-like windflower lay  
O'er starry heavens of primrose pale.

The breezes stayed, the birds were still.  
Beside a young green larch, apart,  
Just pictured in the quiet rill,  
I found her, found her, Peace-of-Heart!

I dared to utter, "Peace is mine,"  
Alas! the soft wind heard the cry!  
He shrieked aloud to Powers malign,  
And flung the withered leaves on high.

Fast came the cruel Sons of God;  
They smote the buds and flowers with hail  
That rent, by sudden, dreadful rod,  
Those harmless woods! that gentle vale!

Howling, they hunted down the storm;  
At last, they flung their spears aside,  
And turned to mark my wretched form;  
While from the rolling clouds, one cried:

"Who boasts to hold her, Peace-of-Heart,  
Has lost the flower for evermore!  
None dare her star-born seed impart,  
Her cup of fallen joy restore."



THE SUBURBIAD





# THE SUBURBIAD

## A MODERN SATIRE

THE God who rules the Purse, the Press, the Pen  
Of roaring Town, the Lord of Business Men,  
Mammon, I sing! But 'tis not mine to raise  
My puny voice for inefficient praise  
Of Mammon's mystic Bride, his own creation  
By Gold and Guile, elect from every nation,  
Whom men have called "the City." Let me frame  
These fleeting lines t' adorn the lighter fame  
Of her who sways his pleasure, merely bound  
By love's caprice, Mammon's gay Mistress crowned,  
The willing nymph Suburbia!

Turn we then,  
Mild reader, from the noisier haunts of men;  
But oh, not far! Scarcely a dozen miles  
From London 'tis, where spruce Suburbia smiles  
Upon her frequent trains, and bids them fly  
To Town, where wealth, pride, pleasure, profit lie.  
Suburbia's lot is fallen in a fair ground;  
Low hills, and wide, green meadows girdle round  
The dark Metropolis. Most fair it seems  
Where gliding Thames leads down the little streams  
That, springing 'mid the balmy pines, bestow  
Their wild-wood freshness on his graver flow.

Here let us pause, while summer rides the blue  
 And burning sky. Alas! on nearer view  
 The country-side looks haggard, soiled and sad;  
 Only the coarsest flowers remain to glad  
 Hedgerow and mead, too valueless to tear  
 Up by the roots for sale, bright weeds that bear  
 The dust, and thrive in petrol-laden air. }  
 And what can Morning's freshest dews avail  
 In ruined groves, where broken branches trail?  
 Where plots of trodden grass in hayfields show  
 A wrathful owner where the trippers go;  
 Fond, noisy, gay or sober, all inclined  
 To leave the fragments of the feast behind;  
 The broken bottle glittering in the sun,  
 Th' experienced egg, and the well-travelled bun.  
 Slight votive offerings to Suburbia these;  
 Such mortal lendings her gregarious fancy please.

E'en this deflowered woodland shrinks and dies,  
 For everywhere the new red villas rise;  
 Trim, scanty, bright, smart, spick-and-span, select,  
 With lavish, flimsy ornaments bedecked,  
 With smallest gardens, whence the neighbour's ear  
 Is tickled oft with what he should not hear.  
 See, on the stroke of nine, their varnished doors  
 Let out the "City gentlemen." Like scores  
 Of human insects, from their neat abodes  
 They bustle, darkening all the station roads.

Arrived, entrained, soothed by the engine's hum,  
 Nine out of ten peruse the *Daily Scum*,

Suburbia's witness, oracle and guide,  
 Rapier of wit, banner of martial pride.  
 Hail, gifted Pearsworth! thou who first divined  
 The Lowest Common Factor of the Mind!  
 Thou sawest, a mighty Public fain would read  
 Matter, not great, nor good, nor vile indeed,  
 But cheap and futile; spiced with flattery shown  
 Subtly, by thought just shallower than their own.  
 Thou fill'st with sounding lies and marvels vain  
 That thriftless void thy reader deems a brain.  
 'Twas thine "within the reach of All" to place  
 Views pertly foolish, lightly, meanly base.  
 The careless and the low-lived to delight  
 With muddy jest at Progress, Reason, Right;  
 With hope of strife and bloodshed quick to please  
 The crowd, whose flesh and pockets bulge at ease,  
 (Yet apt to note opinion's drift, and range  
 As feigned Reformer when the currents change).  
 'Tis thine the charitable mood to chill  
 With jeer or lie; to urge the spendthrift still  
 With tales of boastful luxury; to uphold,  
 Thou, Priest of Mammon, cynical and bold, }  
 In every venal line, the praise of Gold!

Yet even the *Daily Scum* has failed to cheer,  
 Sometimes, these City men of visage drear;  
 And oft a stare of worried gloom confesses  
 'Tis hard to pay for wife's and daughters' dresses  
 A third of one's whole income! House-rent, too,  
 Absorbs another third; yet what to do?  
 "For should I stint pin-money by a fraction,  
 They'd run in debt, and drive me to distraction.'

On rolls the train, the coaches rock and swing  
 As with the beat of Trouble's heavy wing.  
 Emblem of life the daily journey seems  
 For many a one; closed round with anxious dreams  
 And still-recurrent cares, unheeding hurled  
 Through this dread, glorious, many-visioned world,  
 This Plain of Changeful Years, where Unknown Powers  
 With storm and splendour shake the whirling hours!

But all too far imagination strays  
 From scant Suburbia's narrow, trodden ways.  
 See, later trains convey a brighter load!  
 Forth come the fair, imperious wives, who goad  
 These toiling husbands on, and still commend  
 The hot pursuit of wealth they hope to spend—  
 (Suburbia's chosen; such she smiles to view  
 And prays her Mammon smile upon them too).  
 With these a various following, young and old,  
 Foolish and practical, demure and bold,  
 All hastening up to Town. Some business calls,  
 But most the dread of lonely hours appals;  
 And London shops may cheer when home is dull,  
 When the head's empty and the purse is full.  
 Few greetings pass upon the tedious way, }  
 Since critical and hostile glances play }  
 Coldly around, that intercourse dismay.  
 For true suburban residents restrain  
 Neighbourly feelings all with cautious rein.  
 " *You never know.*" "Glen-Almain's" bright-haired lady  
 Ignores a Past diversified and shady;  
 In "Rothesay's" mistress, searching eyes detect  
 Through Past and Present nothing incorrect;

But here the Future threatens, insecure;  
 Her husband's solvency is far from sure.  
 Those people who enlarged "Ashburnham Hall"  
 Snatched a swift, passing wealth, and so their all  
 Is lost; they disappear. At "Severnside"  
 The widow's penniless: her husband died  
 Quite suddenly; now she must face her lot  
 Behind a counter: "Shocking, is it not?"

Light come, light go, Suburban fortunes fare.  
 Yon well-robed matron, with the cheerful air,  
 Is known to be indebted far and wide;  
 But, "smartly gowned," she cares for naught beside.  
 Regal in rich attire and gorgeous sheen  
 She moves, for lavish brilliance makes the queen }  
 Where all in fashionable guise are seen. }  
 Strange that these dames, in costume, silk and laces  
 So perfect, show in manners, tones and faces  
 Such imperfections! Mark the borrowed air,  
 Uneasy or defiant, quick to flare  
 In red offence, shrill-tongued; the accents hard,  
 Harsh, such as ring across a small back-yard  
 To neighbour or to slavey; glances, lines,  
 Expressions, where a seeing eye divines  
 Temper and turbulence, the angry haste  
 Of untrained motherwit, that frets to waste  
 For lack of large, heart-filling thought, and fires  
 Of generous interest and high desires.  
 Not seldom, too, bearing and looks betray  
 Those who seek pleasure by the primrose way;  
 Who often risk and lightly lose their fame.  
 Let Luxury and Leisure have the blame

If Folly turn to profitable sin,  
And "Suburb woman" all a former meaning win.

Ere Town be reached, leave we these fair to roam  
As fancy wills, and seek some villa-home  
Whose mistress shall from London jaunts refrain  
To-day, her local friends to entertain.  
She doffs the dingy wrapper now, to bloom  
Fresh as a flower, in her new drawing-room;  
That realm of facile prettiness, that waste  
Of tricked-out glitter, and upholsterer's taste.  
For Art, large, well-framed photographs appear,  
Where household, friends, relations far and near,  
All in the same bland, borrowed youth are met;  
For Literature, the current *Silly Set*,  
*Home Twaddle*, and the *Daily Scum* we find;  
Dear, chosen food of the Suburban mind!  
Some standard works from a small bookcase peer;  
Locked in, they pine and pale from year to year.

Fitly this chamber shrines the assembled fair,  
(For only "lady visitors" are there;  
Suburbia's men, as the dull week runs round,  
From ten to five are in the City found).  
Well suits the trim and banal decoration  
With the clipped phrase, the vapid conversation  
That trickles here, save when the quickening glow  
Of lunch and ardent liquor stirs its flow.  
Speech and thought circle round one constant theme;  
"Lots, lots of money" is each lady's dream  
Of happiness; to lead a life of pleasure,  
Excitement, change, and spending without measure.

She covets neither Dignity, Renown,  
 Nor Power, which taketh up and setteth down,  
 Nor even a well-marked place 'mid social stars,  
 But freedom, wealth, and several motor-cars.  
 Here claims of long descent no honour find;  
 High birth, good breeding, or rare gifts of mind  
 Are powerless even as Virtue to procure  
 That awed respect Riches at once ensure;  
 Where gained, how spent, no matter. Wealth alone,  
 Crude, gross, foul *Wealth* attracts Suburbia's own  
 Fair brood, who greet with equal welcomes glad  
 Rand Magnate, Sweater, Swindler, gilt-edged Cad.

But even luncheon-parties come to end  
 Sometime, and guests toward the river wend.  
 Here stately Thames adorns Suburbia's best  
 Like a rich necklace on the venal breast  
 Of some gay courtesan. The quiet river  
 Breaks, ripples, glitters, glistens, all a-quiver  
 With dripping oars and speeding boats: a scene  
 Wondrous with daring colour; gold and green  
 Of water-meads: scarlet of sunshade, cloak,  
 Cushion, or flag that flutters in the smoke  
 From a great launch; white garments everywhere;  
 Keen blue, pink, lilac, shrill against the flare  
 Of brassy-hued and unconvincing hair. }  
 With no soft murmur flows the loaded stream;  
 Shrill chatter, creak of toiling oars, the scream  
 Of empty mirth, the wail of vinous song,  
 The crash and beat of blatant bands, the long  
 And savage steamer-whistle, all unite  
 A wondering ear to trouble and affright.

Yet still in backwaters, and by the slow,  
Small, reedy streams that gently Thames-ward flow,  
Peace listens through the long, warm afternoon,  
By flowered shallows to the wild bees' tune.

Till the gay, splashing, shouting, punt-loads come,  
With scores of damsels, brisk and frolicsome,  
By two lone, over-maidened youths conveyed.  
They land, and soon the cheerful tea is laid.  
One budding swain a full-blown matron tends,  
And a spruce cleric every guest befriends,  
And all unquestioned rules. Yonder, behold  
His church, that rises gray among the bold  
Red, clustering villa-roofs. A prosperous fane  
Of frequent worship, well-adorned domain  
Of fashion, music, women, wealth and sect.  
'Tis strange how little heavenly themes affect  
Suburban life and morals! yet they thrill  
Facile emotions, win adherents still  
To novel, daring ritual, robes and song,  
And unacknowledged priestly might; for strong  
On the new-formed, bewildered suburb lies  
That guidance politic religions prize  
So highly. 'Tis the subtle, temporal sway,  
Ancient as time, that Church and pastor may  
Adroitly use, Religion's shadow, cast  
Where'er Religion, the World's Lamp, has passed.  
While human means uphold that Lamp on high,  
This human shadow hovers darkly nigh.

But sombre thoughts are these for the gay scene,  
And bright-robed damsels straying o'er the green.



Now ends their fête; for soon the "husbands' train"  
 Brings City toilers to their homes again,  
 Hoping for rest. Alas! some find instead  
 Disorder and incompetence have bred  
 Domestic broils, with hasty warnings sped  
 Too well; the house distraught, each ill-paid menial fled. }

Some, only less unlucky, now assume  
 Their smiles and festive garb (while waiting, fume  
 The pleasure-seekers); speed away once more  
 Townward, to dine abroad, and pay the score  
 Of eating-house and theatre. "Life's become  
 So smart, that *no one* entertains at home!  
 We *must* keep up with people." Midnight past,  
 Suburban revellers hie them home at last.  
 Hot, crumpled, peevish, wives and daughters frown,  
 Chide the slow train, and wish they lived in Town.

Yet many a City man may slowly fare  
 Riverward, seeking peace and twilight there.  
 But all in vain pale dreams of far delight  
 Steal o'er the dusky violet-beds of night;  
 While great elms slumber in the meadows gray,  
 And the white moon begins her trancèd way.  
 For still his anxious purpose never leaves  
 The hope of gain; still cunning nets he weaves  
 To catch the elusive gold; dark webs that lie  
 Sad o'er the thought, and cloud the wistful eye.

"Ah, could I plunge deep in some quiet river!  
 And rise, newborn in splendid strength, to shiver

The old, unshapely life to pieces! tear  
 Away the tawdry vain-delight; lay bare  
 The waste of years, the wrong of mean desires and sordid  
     care! }

Then build the home anew, on pillars firm;  
 Of comradeship and trust which years confirm;  
 With simple joys, and kindly neighbourhood,  
 And general labour for the common good!"  
 Thus will the sad, suburban father dream;  
 Resting his gaze upon the cool, slow stream.

But passing boats too soon disturb the vision;  
 With festive tumult, song and swift derision  
 Mocking the wanderer: yet he dares not seek  
 The backwater, the winding, shadowy creek  
 Or dim woodside, lest he, unasked, behold  
 Strange scenes and revels better left untold.  
 (For dusk-veiled Libertina moveth still  
 Suburban trippers to her secret will.)  
 Homeward he turns, soon to take up the vain,  
 Crowded, unsatisfying life again;  
 The chase for gold and pleasure—all the coil;  
 And jaded Morrow brings the Morrow's toil.

Thus, patient Reader, have we sped the hours  
 By Mammon's shrine, in fair Suburbia's bowers.  
 O hence! we waste the fancy's dewy prime!  
 Let fall the wreaths of careful, woven rhyme,  
 And flee these hideous gods of our huge, sordid time! }

These shift and pass: the Unknown Powers remain;  
 The Everlasting Voices linger yet

By field and flood; imperishable Joy  
Rides with the sunbeams o'er the wind-swept main;  
And mighty Peace through the dim forest moves;  
While Beauty, on the changeless heaven uprears  
Swift, multitudinous splendour, towers and thrones,  
Or spreads the grave pavilions of the night  
With touch divine, for all the world to see.  
And from the gaze of toiling man looks forth  
The veiled vision of a younger god;  
The enduring Spirit of Humanity,  
Promethean, casting still his golden fires  
On darkest mortal woe.

Look up, O men!

Shut in with little miseries, futile task,  
And meanest self-inflicted care, arise!  
Fling wide the dusty windows of your soul  
On spring and sunshine, melody and mirth!  
A newer morning breaks o'er field and town;  
The sad air quickens: kindly gods are near!



HELEN GROWN OLD



## HELEN GROWN OLD

*On the coast of Laconia, long after the siege of Troy. HELEN sits apart: the Handmaidens are spinning in the palace court.*

### *The Handmaidens*

EMPTY with longing, sick of years,  
Wan-eyed with slow and wintry tears,  
Sits Helen, on the grassy lea  
High o'er the foamless, purple sea,  
By Menelaus' shining halls.  
No more like golden garment falls  
Her hair, the mighty coils unbound,  
In soft and splendid tresses round;  
For all that gold is ruined gray.  
No more the clinging silk defines  
Her rose-shaped breast in perfect lines;  
For bud and flower are fallen away.  
Yet cruel Summer, ever young,  
Her charm of ripest joy has flung  
O'er all the land, until it smiles  
Like careless Troy, at Helen's wiles,  
Long, long ago. And still the sea  
Has lost no jot of witchery,  
And looks not older, since the day  
When Paris bore his love away.

And we fresh maids, who laugh and spin,  
The cool sea-scented court within,  
We too are young and fair, and some  
Have lovers, when the dark ships come,  
Who meet them on the moonlit strand,  
While some have lovers near at hand.  
Ah, who would change with Helen now?

*Helen*

Recall, O Time, the ever-flying years!  
But with far other gifts upon their wings!  
Take back the star-born, magic loveliness  
Baleful as fire, disastrous as the sea,  
That crowned me long ago—ah, give instead  
Young homeliness, glowing with simple love!  
—Hateful to me, the warm, white beauty of old!  
Hateful the quickening, rose-flushed life, that came  
And went, with the changing beams of glorious eyes!  
Accursed day! which bathed my budding youth  
In springs of God-given beauty, like the flow  
Bitter and bright, of laughing seas at flood;  
Heavy as death in the dull ebb.

For what is Helena, her beauty gone?  
A desolate, sea-forsaken shore, a brand  
Burnt out, gray ashes of the flame that seized  
Me, hapless torch, to blazon o'er the world;  
To lead a thousand heroes down to death,  
Set flowing a river of tears, and stain the walls  
Of Ilion dreadful red! Ah gods! not mine,  
Not mine the heart to will such bitter woe!



I never sought to shape my fate, or sway  
Men's eager souls; I wept to follow Paris;  
And Helen could not even greatly sin.

Alas, I am no more wise in mind or heart  
Than when, as half-grown girl, my beauty sprang  
To sudden, peerless bloom, which Theseus saw:  
Who madly coveting, stole me away.  
How should I need to learn such careful love  
As wins, through long, forbearing years, the true  
And inmost heart of man? For every glance  
Laid all a life's devotion at my feet.  
Yea, even women gazed with tender eyes  
Where Helen of Troy passed by.

Now am I left

An old, unlessoned wife, old and unloved.  
Not one of all the kings who glorified  
My bright renown in days of yore, and vowed  
To die, has ever loved me with true love.  
Ah no! even Menelaus, who forgave;  
Enamoured all of beauty, not of me.  
Most treacherous gods! ye brought a gift that seemed  
Ambrosia to mine eager youth, the while  
Ye reft from me the common bread of life,  
Good, human love; and now, I starve for love!

*The Handmaidens*

Phoebus! how slow the minutes fly,  
Till dove-gray twilight veils the sky,  
A gentle time for maids and men!  
Ah, who will meet their lovers then?

Heedless of her who sits above,  
The sad, old Queen on the quiet hill.  
Well, Helen drank deep, deep of love,  
And we poor maids would drink our fill.  
Come, sing a little foolish song,  
To speed the drowsy hours along.

*The Handmaidens sing:*

Maidens all! the Spring is here!  
Did you see the joyful Year  
Overtake her, glad to win?  
Did you see him, through the trees  
(Where the leafy veil is thin),  
Kiss her, ere she darted by?  
Here the cherry-blossoms lie;  
Strew more blooms, O gentle breeze!  
Spring is coming in.

Where the wild white bloom is strewn  
Is it meet that Spring *alone*  
Gathers kisses, all in play?  
Kisses light as blossoms be.  
Here 's a charm for maids to say,  
Laughingly, in idle hours;  
"Gentle breezes, drifting by!  
Spring has strown your wings with flowers,  
Strew them on our way!"

[HELEN *descends and comes to the*  
*Handmaidens.*

*Helen*

O girls! you break my heart with your light song;  
Why should you tell of blossoms, breeze and spring,  
Boasting your foolish youth, and happy loves,  
As if the world were Youth and Love at play?  
High Summer rules the plain, and not a breath  
Stirs the hot wood, whose dark and jaded leaves  
Droop to the heavy-scented fern. And you,  
Maids though you be, your summertime is here;  
Aye, and for some it wanes.

There, do not weep!

What should you know of aching eyes that search  
O'er the past tumult of years, and see them strewn  
With splendid wrecks of fame, but find not love;  
Then, gazing onward, find not even hope,  
Nor peace, but misery and a hateful death.  
O happy girls, so rich in youth, that wins  
Dear, homely love, safe in the simple fate  
That learns to hold and guard it! go your way;  
I chide you not; sing again if you will!

*The Handmaidens*

So she was angry! well-a-day,  
Perchance if all our locks were gray,  
And youth and lovers far behind,  
We too should chide the merry wind,  
And twitch our withered heads away.  
Now maidens for a mournful rhyme!  
You, dark-eyed Lycis! often sad,  
As if some bitter love you had,  
Sing us a dirge of autumn-time,  
Or death, or weary winter days.

*A Handmaid sings:*

Low sunshine across the bare harvest-land falling!  
Golden-green woods against faintly-flushed haze;  
O months! the pale Winter, your Mother, is calling!  
For brown leaves are falling along the white ways.

Some weary of laughter, some worn-out with weeping,  
At length all the months obey Winter's behest.  
Snow, silence and gloom spread a couch for their sleeping;  
Where smiling or weeping, she lulls them to rest.

THE OPEN DOOR



## THE OPEN DOOR

CLEON. *A Hermit.*                      PAMELA. *Wife of THESTALUS.*  
THESTALUS. *A Shepherd.*          IANTHE. *A Shepherdess.*  
DION. *The dead child of THESTALUS.*

SCENE.—*The edge of a mountain wood, overlooking a long deep valley. A cold, spring night, towards dawn. Silence, only a continual murmur of streams. Full moonlight shines on CLEON'S hut. This is built of the roughest logs, against a steep, grassy hillside; the door is large, and when open shows all within.*

*Enter THESTALUS from the wood, carrying the dead child DION in his arms.*

### *Thestalus*

STRANGE, crystal night that follows clouded eve!  
The world seems overwhelmed with a clear sea  
Of silver, o'er whose lifeless deeps the Moon  
Drifts, a great frozen pearl. All drowned in quiet  
Lies the long valley; lapped in death-like peace  
The mountain, snow-besprent, the barren woods,  
The unmoving shadows—all the world is dead!  
And sole I breathe, a restless thing of grief,  
Clothed with affliction, free among the dead.

The year's young hopes are slain, alike with mine;

Suddenly slain. These green-tipped larches all  
 Droop with untimely snow; the biting airs  
 Laid many a songster dead beneath the spray.  
 This gale, that smote the Spring with heavy sword,  
 Seems a thing monstrous, dire, against all nature,  
 Like Death in childhood.

[*To* DION] Little frozen flower!  
 Art sheltered from the cold? No more, no more  
 Thou'lt turn into my arms, as thou dost lie.  
 Between us now is all the silent night.

[THESTALUS *knocks at the hut door.*

Cleon! [CLEON *opens.*  
 Good hermit, canst thou ease an o'er-fraught heart?

*Cl.* What would you?

*Th.* Give me death!

*Cl.* Alas, poor friend,

You carry death here in your arms.

*Th.* 'Tis true.

Thou seest, Cleon, my little son is dead,  
 My only child.

*Cl.* Thestalus! Hapless father!

Was this your bright-eyed boy? Come in, lay down  
 Your tender burden; look you, he shall rest  
 Here, on a balmy couch of sundried herbs:  
 Wild mountain herbs, that loved the snow-born winds  
 Even as he.

*Th.* You have not then forgot

My pretty boy?

*Cl.* You climbed the mountain path

Last year, and slowly by your side he came.  
 The hot vale drowsed in green and luscious peace,  
 Teeming with summer; all her rich airs cloyed



The heavy breath. But here, your child rejoicing,  
Leapt down the grassy hills, shouted and splashed  
Knee-deep in silver streams.

*Th.* Ah! how he laughed  
To dip his curls in the swift and foamy brook,  
And shake them, drop-crowned, to the sun!

*Cl.* Tired out  
He slept at length.

*Th.* And when he woke, you fed him  
With hillside dainties, berries sweet and red,  
And freshest milk.

*Cl.* So trippingly he thanked  
"Good Father Hermit."

*Th.* Through the flying days  
The mirror of his childish mind held clear  
Your image; many a time his keen eyes sought  
Your hut, beside the long, gray-bosomed down,  
Which oft he called "Great Mother Hill." He loved  
To speak of "Father Hermit," "Mother Hill";  
And all the hours we'd spend with them in Spring.  
Alas! my boy, my little love, my treasure,  
My hope, my life!

Ah, Cleon, lay us both  
In the great arms of Mother Hill to rest!

*Cl.* Do you indeed seek death?

*Th.* I am but dead.  
My life and spirit is fled with him; alone  
The foolish body lingers at the threshold.  
Open to me the gracious Door of Death!

*Cl.* Wide, wide it stands, who shall forbid you pass?  
The gates of Death are vaulted o'er with peace;  
But *Pain* and *Fear* uphold the shadowy arch.

*Th.* And pain I dread, for all my being thrills  
 More keenly to pain and joy than other men's.  
 But you, Cleon, are skilled in sleepy herbs  
 Whence gentle Death beguiles the dreaming sense,  
 As with the softest music, o'er his threshold,  
 In strains of dying fall. O lead me thus  
 Through the Open Door where Dion ventured in!

*Cl.* I think, he suffered not?

*Th.* He fell asleep.

Death called him gently forth, but ah! he was  
 Such a little soul to follow Death alone!

*Cl.* Where is the mother?

*Th.* Cleon, half distraught,

She will not yet believe our son is dead.  
 She vows with bright and tearless eyne, he lies  
 Merely asleep, entranced, by long suspension  
 Of tired nature's task.

*Cl.* Such things have been;

But no—not here. [*He takes DION'S hand, and lets it fall.*]

*Th.* Then she, with strong desire,

And piteous instance, bade me bring our child,  
 Our little weary child, to you, the wise  
 And pitiful hermit, who should wake him soon  
 (By wisdom, magic herb, or holy prayer)  
 To greet, new-born, the sunshine on the hill.

*Cl.* Why came she not beside you?

*Th.* There are souls,

I trow, who pluck the venomous thorns of Pain  
 And lay them to their breast like flowers of joy.  
 One torment yet remained to her, to lose  
 His tender body from her touch, her view.  
 This pang she sought; and spends the darkened hours

Alone, in anguish of prayer, before her shrine.

*Cl.* Will you forsake her thus?

*Th.* O friend, there lies

A world between us! long our only bond  
Has been the lovely child, who, sun-like, flung  
Upon us, far-removed, his love. Withdrawn  
His gentle blessing, darkened I remain,  
In starless dark, but other light hath she.  
Her gods deny her not, as mine.

*Cl.* Alas!

It is a wild, unlawful Fate, accurst,  
Unnatural, that a fair, young child should die.  
Herein thy woe is cureless. Yet, I doubt  
Thou art not wholly sworn to dark-eyed Death,  
The jealous lover. Turn again, despise not  
To seek the all-enfolding arms of Time,  
The changing face of Time, and many morrows.

*Th.* They bring no children to my wife and me.  
*He* was our young-eyed Future, golden Morrow.  
Without him, Life's the jaded end of day;  
Hope's empty chamber, bare in the common light  
Of dusty afternoon. Some men endure  
To creep in weary patience toward the dark;  
Long dead before they die. Some, hopeful, seek  
And find new radiance in their even-time;  
Some jump the hueless hours, and thus would I.

*Cl.* Thestalus—

*Th.* Call me not thus; O call me rather Sorrow!

*Cl.* Not thine that pass-word to the lonely sphere  
Of the Suffering God! One name thou hast, of right  
Inalienate, that name the Powers breathe  
Into the sails of every human soul

They launch upon the shoreless Sea of Life.  
 O perilous sea! O frail, dream-laden craft!  
 I'll call thee by the name each human soul  
 Greets for her own: addition always true,  
 The changeless mortal name, *Unhappy*.

O man!

Life, death, and suffering build a brazen Ring  
 Impenetrable, closing in our world!  
 So small a Ring that not the least of souls  
 Slips its confine; again so great a Ring  
 It girdles all things save eternity.

*Th.* Is there no cure? Shall all be racked as I?  
 Cleon, thou spakest of a Suffering God:  
 Might he not tread my burning grief beneath  
 His cool and pitying feet?

*Cl.*

I cannot tell.

The way to Him lies o'er the land of Sorrow.  
 The endless, empty waste, where every wind  
 Whispers "alone—alone."

I have been there;

And often thought to end an aching life  
 With mine own violent hand, yet ever heard  
 A voice of unknown purport, source unknown,  
 Deep in my heart, a quiet voice, "Forbear;  
 Vex not the suffering God": At last I knew,  
 Dimly, a sad, upholding Presence, whose gaze  
 Silvered the sky with peace.

*Th.*

O never mine

Such sunless faith! My gods were Life and Light.  
 But storming Titans hurled them down from Heaven,  
 And old Night reigns, intolerable Night!  
 Weighing down my soul with black and brutal wings.

O set the broken spirit free! it longs  
For restful death.

*Cl.* Tarry a moment more,  
Ere you quit lifting glooms for night unknown.  
Day is at hand: sung in with little voices  
Clear as the sky, in sweet and single notes,  
Like silver-dropping fountains heard in dreams.  
Dawn opes the windows of her aery tower  
And stoops to kiss the sombre earth, and deck  
Her out with rosy fingers: lightly touching  
Her tears to fleeting diamond sheen.

O stay  
And view this maiden pageant! When the Dawn  
Is sped, if thou dost still, with purposed heart,  
Turn from the Day, then surely I'll prepare thee  
The cup of dark forgetfulness.

*IANTHE is heard singing through the wood*

I

Sorrow is caught in a net of light!  
For our Lady of Joy, the white-armed Dawn,  
Hath strewn the garments of wandering Night  
With roses reft from the couch of morn.  
Lo! here she comes dancing over the hills,  
With silver feet on the snow-fed rills;  
And leaping down to the long, dark valley,  
Flings her radiant toils from height to height.

*Th.* Who sings thus early?

*Cl.* 'Tis a mountain maid,  
Ianthe; sweet as wilding violets are,  
That freshly look, and scorn to droop their heads.

She seeks her hardy flock at sunrise; often  
 Passing my door, she brings me kindly gifts  
 For unremembered service.

IANTHE *sings nearer.*

II

Shall Dawn bring life where the night has slain?  
 A thousand buds for one frost-nipt flower!  
 A thousand lives by river or plain,  
 For one that the wolf-toothed winds devour!  
 Young woods, lift up your bannerets new!  
 For the Spirit of Life comes riding through!  
 When the bright-winged Sun beats darkness under,  
 And sorrow is bound with a day-long chain.

IANTHE *enters through the wood.* CLEON *comes out of the hut to greet her.* THESTALUS *remains within.*

*Ian.* Good morrow, hermit. Oh, the happy morn!  
 'Twill set our woodlands all aflame with Spring.

*Cl.* The air is keen as wine; delighted birds,  
 Wild with the sunshine, shrill in mad-winged joy,  
 Strive to dash through the dizzy gates of Heaven,  
 Upborne on raptured song.

*Ian.* Ah, how I wish  
 I were a bird! At once to *sing* and *fly*  
 Higher and higher!—and yet I'd rather be  
 —Nay, but you'll laugh—the mighty Sun himself!  
 That so with myriad arms I could embrace  
 The shivering world, and kiss away all hurts  
 The bitter storm has made. Why, still the glens

Are full of snow from that untimely fall!  
 And look—I bring you a wondrous treasure-trove;  
 Violets that bloomed beneath the snow! I found them  
 Just nipt, but peeping through the frozen white  
 Bravely, to meet the sun.

*Cl.* Child, bring them in.  
 We'll strow them o'er the sweetest mortal blossom  
 That cruel frost e'er slew.

*CLEON and IANTHE enter the hut. She sees the  
 body of DION.*

*Ian.* O! O! alas!  
 The piteous sight! But is he truly dead?  
 Thou havoc death, to seize so bright a bird!  
 O, I must weep.

*Th.* Most tender maid, forbear!  
 Your tears are dew-like, mine, hot, bitter drops,  
 Pressed forth, as the heart's blood, in anguished flow;  
 A father's tears; then move me not again  
 To mistful eyes. *[CLEON leaves the hut.*

*Ian.* I'faith, I'll weep no more.  
 I would not add the weight of a single tear  
 To your most heavy burden. See, I'll lay  
 These pitiful violets on his breast—no, wait;  
 They are too cold with snow.

*Th.* Fear you to wake him?  
 Think not the coldest dew, nor burning tears,  
 Not freshest flowers, nor parched imploring lips,  
 That strive with passionate kisses to win back life,  
 Shall ever rouse him more.

And he would stir,

All smiling, at the first swift sunbeam's touch!  
 Alas, alas, why will my heart not break?

*Ian.* Nay, nay, you must not weep! He'd surely be  
 Distraught to see you! Look on him, who lies  
 Folded in fairest peace! There's never sleep  
 Lays such a healing hand on tired brows.  
 I have seen my young lambs fallen dead; they look  
 So gentle: drooping head, and outstretched feet,  
 As if they meekly bore the hardest blow  
 That Life could give; well-knowing it set them free  
 Beyond Life's furthest malice. Who could weep  
 To see this tender Victor over life  
 Mild in his lovely triumph? Crown him then  
 With violets, woven in unrepining love.

*Th.* Oh, you are kinder than the gentlest breeze!  
 Place your cool hands upon my burning eyes,  
 Thus, thus! How cool they are! And yet I feel  
 Their strong life beating to the finger-tips;  
 A steady current that warms and clears mine own.

*Ian.* I've dropped my flowers; I pray you help me strow  
 them  
 Here on his breast; and round his golden head  
 Crown-wise.

*Th.* There are not violets enough,  
 Nor have I heart to weave them as you said.

*Ian.* Come, then, and gather more. My garden holds  
 Hundreds of sheltered blooms, unspoilt with snow.  
 Will you not come? It is a little service  
 We render him, that he would surely love.  
 And oh, the way is sweet! Fresh, vital airs  
 Blow softly through the woods from rock-crowned hills.  
 Rested and soothed, you'll come to him again.



*Th.* Where did you learn these tender wiles, to ease  
 An aching heart? Indeed, I'll come with you.—  
 My little love, think not, because I go  
 Unburdened with thy fragile weight, my soul  
 Is not bowed down with a load of grief: mine arms  
 Close clasping to my heart the death-cold grief.

*Ian.* Do not speak thus; I am sure, his gentle spirit  
 Will play about you, clothed in sun and wind,  
 With memories of love and laughter, till  
 You find your grief is turned to violet-blooms.  
 Come then, away. [*To DION.*] Sleep softly, fallen lamb!

*Th.* Farewell, sweet boy: thy father soon returns.

[*THESTALUS and IANTHE disappear through  
 the trees.*

*CLEON returns.*

*Cl.* Light Thestalus! thou art not one of those  
 Who set their faces toward the Open Door.  
 Earth's child thou art: the homely mother keeps  
 Her brood about her still, with myriad claims  
 Upon the clinging sense. I blame thee not;  
 Faithful thou art—to Earth and Mother Nature.

[*PAMELA is seen approaching through the wood.*

*CLEON closes the door of the hut.*

*Cl.* Who comes in haste up through the quiet woods?

*Pamela.* Are you Cleon? O, tell me that he lives,  
 Dion, my little son!

*Cl.* Are you the mother  
 Of Thestalus' son?

*Pam.* Why, then, I *know* he lives!  
 You said *are* you his mother?

O! I've prayed  
 So hard, so long, since when, with tears of blood,

I made the last and sharpest sacrifice:  
 And Thestalus bore our little son away,  
 Away—out of my reach and sight. I *knew*  
 God's sternest will could not hold out against  
 Such dreadful sacrifice! He *must* relent;  
 And send our Dion safely back, befriended  
 Of angels, through the dark! O swiftly comes  
 My boy, my little son, who hears me call!

*Cl.* Call him no more. He is gone too far to know  
 His mother's voice.

*Pam.* No—no, it cannot be!  
 Let me look on him—bring him to the sun—  
 The morning sun will wake him.

[CLEON *opens the door of the hut, and shows  
 the body of DION on the couch of herbs.*

*Pam.* Oh—'twas true!  
 Dion is dead. [She turns to go.

*Cl.* Stay, give your anguish voice,  
 Poor mother! dumb and tearless grief becomes  
 A frenzied prisoner of the soul, that rends  
 The house of life. Look on your child; he lies  
 In lovely rest.

*Pam.* He will be all alone,  
 Longing for us among the stranger dead.  
 Oh—my heart breaks! [She falls down.

He calls, through the open door!  
 I am coming, Dion. [Dies.

*Cl.* Hast thou so quickly learnt the way to death?  
 Casting thy soul, like leaping flame, across  
 The vast, void threshold, on a mighty wind  
 Of measureless pain?

Yea, thou art now within

The quiet halls of Death.

[CLEON *brings* DION *and folds* PAMELA'S  
*arms about him.*

*Cl.* Hast thou thy will? Art one with him again?

Little Dion, you are very young to keep  
Death's secret: tell me, has she found you yet?  
For she, too, is at peace.

I do not need  
To pray for you, I think. Yet I must turn  
Heart-shaken from these piteous fates, to One  
Moving, unmoved, in all things.  
Thou Suffering God, bound by unyielding Law  
High o'er the sweeping flood of human woe!  
Thou Fire-bringer, who sett'st the flame within  
Each mortal spirit! who burnest thyself, with fire  
Unquenchable, of Mercy, Pity, Love!  
Thou Star of Sorrow! Fellow-sufferer  
In our most anguished need, receive our prayer!  
O purify our pain and fear! enlarge  
Our narrow-visioned grief, shape our gross woe  
Into a noble sadness; lift our hearts  
To the great stature of Love that o'erpeers Death!



THE REVOLT



## THE REVOLT

I N midmost of the illimitable Dark  
And Infinite, beyond the unknown stars,  
There flows a vaster stream than seas of Time,  
Immeasurable, more strong than moving spheres,  
And deeper than the interstellar void.  
It is the stream of Universal Law  
That rolls through all things, guiding perilous suns  
Circled with busy worlds, yet bidding atoms  
Fulfil their task in the Eternal Scheme;  
A power that men call God. And mortal spirits  
New-freed from earth, must still behold this Power  
In semblance of a human, kingly Form,  
Who, from his towered and all-beholding throne,  
Guides this supernal flood.

The souls of men  
Fleeting from radiant lands of fulfilled dream  
Ethereal, to resume their ancient yoke  
On Earth's dark field of woe and slain desires,  
Must pass, in ever-drifting cloud-array  
Before His awful throne. Ah, who shall dare  
With spirit-vision scan the face of God?  
Look in His eyes, and tell if Love, or Hate,  
Or passionless fulfilment of Design  
Inspire the Hand that sways Almighty Law?  
Downcast the souls flit by, in endless flow.

As when a great wind o'er a forest goes,  
 While bending woodlands sweep in seeming flight  
 Continuous, one tree rears a stiffened crest  
 High in defiant pause, so, from the throng  
 Of moving spirits, rose one resolved Soul.  
 And, like a sudden, daring star, his voice  
 Flamed through the silent terror, fired with rage,  
 Protest, and indignation; thus he spake :

“Thou Lord of soulless Matter, what have we  
 Spirits to do with thee? Our being moves  
 Not with thy brutal laws of death-fed life,  
 Down-trampled weakness, over-mastering Power,  
 “Destroy, or be destroyed”——but in the light  
 Of Love, in fullest commonalty shared;  
 Of succouring pity, proud self-sacrifice,  
 And terrible Honour, all that uplifts Man  
 From the beast-level of Thy rule, from earth  
 To the clear empyrean of spirit-life.

Thy blazing suns are darkness to that flame  
 Of white Eternity! immortal fire  
 Fusing the soul of him who gladly dies  
 For an Idea! who sheds his crimson life  
 For pale, intangible Thought, thus wrenching free  
 His being from Thy most instinctive law.  
 Shall souls, with corporal essence clouded o'er,  
 Frustrate Thee, and I, free spirit, in the clear,  
 Reviving night, 'twixt turbid day and day  
 Of earth-life, not defy the insatiate Law  
 Which bids me back to human shape?

Arise,



O brother souls! too long the stream of Fate  
 Drives us through myriad incarnations, still  
 Re-entering man's distasteful house of Life:  
 The pitiful house, built by unworthy means,  
 Closed round with pain, upreared on boundless death.  
 Time was, the happy-seeming glow of Earth  
 Deceived us, but no more the songful morn,  
 Nor springtime, mad with blossoming joy, shall tempt  
 To life and love! for we have pierced beneath  
 The flowers, and to our saddened sense, each bird  
 Carols of death and pain. No more we joy  
 In hard, high-thoughted labour; all our toils  
 Are raindrops, singly shed in bitter seas  
 Of mortal misery, that ebb and flow  
 Within the hollow of Thy grievous hand.  
 —Break off! ye weary souls! disdain to serve  
 A soulless Power! defy the Law that drives  
 You darkling back to blood-stained Earth!

Alas!

O fleeting spirits, do ye still obey?  
 I cannot tell your thought; perchance ye move  
 Patient with larger vision, to endure?  
 Or, dazzled yet with mortal fears, ye dare  
 Not lift your glance; still downcast borne along  
 The whelming stream of Universal Law.  
 Then—lone in dread revolt, I tell thee, God,  
 No more I'll bear that armour of decay,  
 The body of death! To earth I will not go!"

As a strong saint, who is decreed to die  
 For his thought's sake, feels, while the death prepares,  
 A sea of fear rush in upon his heart;

And maddened, desperate, overwhelming fear  
Surge round his high resolve; so, o'er that Soul  
Greatly defiant, broke the ancient flood  
Of elemental terror, abject, dire,  
Horrible dread, that tugs the gasping thought  
Down to the uttermost primeval slime;  
To awful deeps of dark Beginning, where  
Man cowers, clothed in fear.

The Spirit strove

With fierce, immortal anguish; then, as man  
By infinite pangs fought up from primal night,  
So rose he, striving, through the deadly flood  
Of mortal fear. And, from his steadfast mind  
It sank and fled like dreams.

Then he no more

Beheld the stream, the kingly form of God,  
And ever-moving souls. Superbly free,  
The spirit soared, in high victorious flight  
Away, beyond that dreamland shore, where souls  
Await the call to earth-life. Winged with joy,  
To realms of keen, celestial being he sped.  
And, far below, the ordered Universe  
Seemed but a drifting vessel in the space  
Of immaterial ocean, unexplored,  
Unapprehended, save of daring souls;  
A clear, transcendent, all-containing Sea  
Of spiritual being, whereon Thought  
Is borne, like flying foam; a heavenly Sphere,  
Still verging on divine Eternity.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

## NOTE

THOSE who know the far west of Cornwall may, perhaps, remember what a striking contrast can be found, almost within the limit of ten miles, between the northern and southern Atlantic shores. Journeying from Penzance towards Zennor, Gurnard's Head, St. Just, or any part of the northern coast west of St. Ives, what an extraordinary change of atmosphere and surroundings is to be noted! Soil, vegetation, outline, colouring, the very air and sky seem different. Boulder-crowned moors for green field and woodland, towering, iron-bound cliffs for pale sand, keener, sweeter winds than those that blow over the southern bays, and seas of deeper, more turbulent blue. Must not these different shores have bred different and warring races in ancient times?

# THE ENEMY WITHIN

## A DRAMA OF ANCIENT CORNWALL

THE CHIEF.	CHYHEIRA.
EVIAN.	LEITO. <i>A Young Girl.</i>
KARCLUZ. <i>A Cripple.</i>	HENDRA.
SHEPHERDS.	GULVAL.
CHORUS OF MEN.	CHORUS OF WOMEN.

GWENTHAR.

SCENE.—*Before the Council Hall of Halzaphron, a large building with pillars of unheewn stone. In the pavement before it is one great block with an iron ring. Little gray houses cluster round: beyond are bare hills, and a bright turbulent sea. Morning light, sunshine, and a perpetual murmur of waves. THE CHIEF, EVIAN, KARCLUZ, CHYHEIRA, LEITO, HENDRA, GULVAL, THE CHORUS OF MEN, and THE CHORUS OF WOMEN stand about a rough altar with offerings. There is fire upon the altar.*

*The Chief.*

YE unknown Powers, who speed the changeful round  
Of Time, who guide each golden ship of Heaven  
O'er the vast blue serene, receive our prayer!  
O let the solemn breath of sacrifice,  
Pale smoke, and winged choral song, ascend  
To your immeasurable and viewless home!

For men must praise the Gods, through weal and woe  
 Unfaltering, nor dispute the will divine  
 That guides each heavy stroke of Fate; thus men  
 Grow in wide-visions patience, strong as Gods.  
 Ye Life-givers! we bless the hand that dowers  
 Dark Halzaphron with plenty, strength and peace!  
 Through Victory hard-won, yea, straitly forced  
 From countless spears, thick as ripe barley-blades,  
 In thy rich meads, Rosmorna, ancient foe!  
 They quail, thy southern towers, thy well-armed walls,  
 Rosmorna! bosomed low in sheltering trees  
 By the mild southern shore. Sleek, crafty folk!  
 Ye have proved too well the harsh, cliff-eagle's grip:  
 Nor tempt again this eyrie, Halzaphron,  
 Impregnable, crown of the Iron Head;  
 Black fortress, sentinelled with sleepless waves.  
 O praise our boundless Northern Ocean, King  
 Of white-haired, billowy hosts! smiting apart  
 With dreadful clamour the sea-ward gates of earth!  
 Praise we his perilous glory! sing his Power!

*Chorus of Men*

Earth-shaker, wilt thou call thy troops to war?  
     The inland peoples flee  
 From the manifold and huge, death-dealing might  
     Of our Lord of Fear, the Sea!

But this Iron Headland bears a dauntless folk  
     Who tremble not, nor quail:  
 By thy clean, foamy buffets tempered true,  
     Proved in the sounding gale.

Between the black cliff and the breaking wave  
    There is no room for fear:  
We lift unyielding brows to death, and stride  
    Through life with careless cheer.

Long keels of ours have ploughed thine azure main  
    So many nights and days  
Our eyes have caught, from thine estranging deeps,  
    Their blue, unfathomed gaze.

Our hearts have dared thine undiscovered miles,  
    Our limbs have beat thine icy wave;  
Thou hast bred thee stalwart sons to fight and roam,  
    Who are thine, to sink or save!

To every man his death-bed; narrow tombs  
    Are not for such as we!  
Earth is aged, bloodstained; let us lie  
    Within thy clear and timeless deep, O Sea!

*Chief.* Now cast upon the sacrificial fire  
Your wave-won offerings; briny driftwood, tough,  
Much valued on our treeless shores; and bring  
An oar from every vessel to the flame.  
So honour we the gods in worthy gifts  
Well-prized, and learn to rate our dearest treasure  
Lightly as they.

Women, lift up your song.

[*The men go forth.*]

*Chorus of Women.*

Will ye never tire of voyaging and strife,  
 Wild-hearted sailor-men?  
 O stay! Dear is the little gray-walled town,  
 The hearth-fire, child, and faithful wife!  
 Sunbeams o'er the threshold dancing down  
 Light her, where she spins and sings  
 Of quiet, happy things,  
 And all the peaceful hours of homebred life.

Has Earth no joys for you? the waving corn,  
 The cliff-meads, bright against the cloudy morn,  
 With the sparse, delicate gold of upland flowers;  
 The sea-ward slopes, where we have lain  
 Deep in soft mountain grass, through burning hours,  
 Fanned by a honey-scented heather breeze;  
 Alas! more dear to you the thundering seas,  
 Whose tumult in your memory dwells  
 As ocean murmurs in the echoing shells.

Is Earth not vast enough for your unbounded view,  
 Sea-rovers? Look upon her moorland hills!  
 Height after height, towards an Unknown Land;  
 With boulders crowned, that heaped and towering stand,  
 Where bleak winds whistle through?  
 And league-long wastes, under white, rolling skies,  
 Pale in the gleaming noon,  
 Or darkly boundless to the wandering moon.  
 Ah, what avails! Upon this narrow shore  
 Your eager spirits languish, chafed and slow.  
 The broad, unreachéd ocean fills your eyes;  
 But ours are dim with sea-born woe.



Their boats have dropped beyond the ocean verge;  
 And we alone must till our upland fields,  
 Pile the rough stones, and reap the scanty grain;  
 While far below the white, importunate surge  
 Beats threatening echoes of a stormy main.  
 We are alone; the very children run  
 To the wild beach, and dare the leaping wave;  
 Impatient as the wind, each mother's son  
 Longs for his full-grown might to try the fair  
 Death-dealing flood, perchance his own vast grave!

Better for us the cruel chance of war;  
     The gleam of spears upon the waste,  
 Suddenly seen; swift call to arms, and battle-haste,  
     Our men go forth; we, tearless, wait the end.  
 For come they back unhurt, their prowess makes our glory;  
     And wounded they are ours to tend.  
     Slain, we may seek them out and lay  
     Our lips to theirs, and know them for our own;  
     Before we cover them away  
     Deep in quiet earth, making our moan.  
 Children of Earth are we; while the dark Mother holds  
     Our lost beloved, we are not quite alone.

[*The men return bringing oars.*]

*Chief.* Make offering, women, of the priceless good  
 Of Earth's life-giving treasure, flesh and grain.

[*The women throw these on the fire.*]

You, Singer-maid, Chyheira, prophetess  
 And pride of Halzaphron, raise to the Gods  
 Tribute of single-voicéd, thankful song.

*Chyheira.*

Of all the unknown Powers I praise the Wind!

Is he not Lord of Strife?

Kindling with battle-breath the waters wan

To flame-like surge of dreadful life.

What terror waits upon the windless Sea?

A thing of sleepy death!

Who dreads the unwarring peoples, dull with peace?

Land-tillers, drawing slavish breath.

But, like a ringing wind, tumultuous War

Beats round the Iron Head;

Hurls our men, wave-like, up to heights untried

Of sheer renown, one with the mighty dead!

Ah yet, from wars, from windy clamour turning

Into the peace of some great sheltering hill!

Into a little land of rest,

Where Silence hath her gentle will!

Where the low, green valleys keep

(Like the hushed fields of sleep)

The quiet of a ever-windless deep:

And all the world is still!

Lonely hollows, folded round

From the realm of stir and sound;

Where the sea-pink, frail and gay,

Moves not, by the boulder gray;

Where on tired ears no more

Beats the long, uneven roar

Of windy waves; only a little stream

(Like silver music in a morning dream)

Goes singing through the deeper grass,  
 And glimmers by.  
 Far overhead, wild changing clouds and glamour pass;  
 So far, so high!

Calm after wind, ease after care;  
 Hill-spring waters after sea-born foam;  
 Cool night that follows day;  
 Cloud-piercing star, and journey-ending home;  
 Silence, oh, silence after echoing din!  
 Rest after life-long toil;  
 So Peace upon the storms of War shall come,  
 Cleansing the troubled spirit from every soil.

*Chief.* Let each and all with happy utterance praise  
 The daughter of Heaven, rainbow-girdled Peace!

*All.* Hail, Daughter of Heaven, hail! most lovely Peace!

[*The CHIEF and some of the Men break up the  
 oars they have brought and cast them on  
 the fire. CHYHEIRA, standing apart, waits  
 with a golden torque in her hand, till this  
 is done.*

*Evian.* A goodly song, Karcluz!

*Kar.* Aye, 'twas not ill;

If choral song and offering needs must be.

*Ev.* What, should our City leave the Gods unpraised,  
 Unthanked, for famous victory?

*Kar.* The Gods

Know best who gives them deep and heartfelt praise,

And who lifts up his voice in empty song.

Of old, our fighting-men gave thanks to Heaven

In silence; mighty silence, big with deeds

Of huge renown.

*Ev.* But this new fame outshines  
The paler fires of ancient glory, leaping  
Heaven-high, whipt by the maddening wind of song.  
Why, man! this sudden power of music sweeps  
Across our youth, filling the air with swords,  
As if the dead from earth and ocean cried:  
"Forward, resistless Halzaphron!"

*Kar.* Well; well.  
When I could fight, we needed not the craft  
Of singer-maid, or voiceful prophetess,  
Heartening us to the field, nor any wiles  
Of ambush, feint, or snare, as now we use.  
Merely, one man of Halzaphron was match,  
Just as he stood, for some Rosmorna five.  
And so we chose our men, and hewed 'em down  
Upright, nor stooped to craft. But the race wanes,  
Rust gathers on the Iron Head, with song,  
Soft living, women's rule, and useless gold.

*Ev.* It is not so! Halzaphron's honour stands  
Cliff-like, unshaken by the stormy years!  
We sailors meet the furious sea with craft  
And overcome them; shall *we*, wavelike, fall  
In blind straight-forward rage on the skilled foe,  
Who, veering, laughs to 'scape?

*Kar.* O, heed me not!  
The battle-song has waked mine ancient wounds  
To fierce remembrance. Evian, I am mad  
That I shall fight no more! all my heart burns  
Against my useless bones. O gods! O gods!  
Let me do one more battle-deed and die!

*Chy.* Chief, in my turn I will make sacrifice,

And yield a dear thank-offering; richest spoil  
 Of the slain foe, and mine by noble gift,  
 Your dower, O City, to the Singer-maid!  
 Accept this honour-bearing gold, ye Powers!  
 And grant us many golden days of peace.

[*She casts the torque on the fire.*

*Chief.* Daughter of Halzaphron, thou hast done well.  
 Ye elders of the people, go within  
 The Council Hall; come, worthy Evian,  
 And Karcluz, bitter-wise with many ills.  
 Chyheira, come! we need your flame-like spirit,  
 That oft, devouring ignoble hindrance, leaps  
 Forth-right to work some swift, far-shining deed.

[*Exeunt CHIEF, Chorus of Men, EVIAN, KARCLUZ  
 and CHYHEIRA; also the Chorus of Women  
 by twos and threes into the houses, gradually.*

LEITO, HENDRA, and GULVAL remain.

*Le.* See, Hendra, the fire hath not taken hold upon the  
 necklace that Chyheira gave.

*Hen.* No! that is strange, for 'twas of pure gold.

*Le.* Taken from a dead warrior's neck.

*Hen.* If the soldiers of Rosmorna go out to war thus, what  
 shall the adornment of the women be?

*Le.* O I am sorry for peace! Since we had the foe by the  
 throat, why not slay them all, march upon Rosmorna, and  
 raze the rich city to the ground! We had all worn golden  
 necklaces then.

*Hen.* Aye, and silken robes of Tyrian dye, such as the  
 dark strangers bring.

*Gul.* [*Mending a fish-net.*] Ill garments to follow the  
 plough.

*Le.* We should no more follow the plough; we should fare softly, tended with slaves, like the women of Rosmorna.

*Hen.* [*Sitting.*] And lie in the shade of great trees at noon.

*Le.* [*Sitting beside her.*] And hear the birds sing in the woods! 'Tis sweeter than running brooks, they say; nowise like our creaking gulls.

*Hen.* Once I saw a forest of trees from afar. 'Twas a vision of many caves together, but no sea, and yet there was a continual murmur of waves. I was afraid.

*Le.* You are soon afraid. I will be like Chyheira when I am full-grown, and fear nothing, not even the sea.

*Gul.* Idle girl! When you are a wife and a mother you will fear.

*Le.* I will not bear children; I will make songs like Chyheira.

*Hen.* O foolish talk! How should you learn to make songs?

*Le.* How did Chyheira learn?

*Gul.* Song is a gift of the Gods.

*Hen.* The Gods are great! But neighbour, whence was this Chyheira bred?

*Gul.* What, know you not? Aye, you are young, and till now you have dwelt far away. Her mother was a good woman of the city. Have you not noted the half of a well-wrought bracelet that Chyheira wears, hung upon a chain? 'Twas her mother's own.

*Le.* But who was her father?

*Gul.* Best unnamed. 'Twas fortune of war.

*Hen.* Ah! But when did this befall?

*Gul.* Years ago, a band of Rosmorna soldiers came suddenly with craft nearly to the city gates. All our men-folk were at sea. They fell upon us in the fields, as a stoat will seize a rabbit: they slaughtered the children and forced the women.

*Hen.* O barbarous! The Gods smite them with powerless shame!

*Gul.* Ah—but when our men o’ertook them, was there not a goodly fight to see!

*Hen.* ’Twas well done.

*Gul.* Of the women who fared ill, many that had been maids slew themselves; yet one vowed she would bring her child to the light, that it might avenge its mother. But ’twas a girl-child, and the mother turned her face away and died. That child was Chyheira.

*Hen.* Alas, poor mother! Yet I think Chyheira has brought more vengeance upon Rosmorna than hosts of men.

*Le.* Surely—did she not prophesy disaster upon them, fulfilled tenfold?

*Hen.* Aye, and made devices to o’ertake the foe by sea and land, more cunning than the Chief himself!

*Le.* And heartened our youth to battle with her song, so that none could withstand them.

*Hen.* Best of all was the secret, tunnelled way, wrought at her command, whereby Halzaphron is indeed impregnable.

*Le.* O true! What enemy should ever guess how the Secret Way runs out far, so far to the distant shore?

*Gul.* The ancient passage, the She-Wolf’s Cavern, branching from the Secret Way, runs out near at hand.

*Le.* Aye, just beyond the city wall, but its mouth is safe hidden by the bubbling well.

*Hen.* Verily, Rosmorna might besiege us for years; it would be naught; we have unfailing waters, and we should always get our food by sea.

*Gul.* While the Secret Way remains unknown.

*Hen.* Who should betray it?

*Le.* But then—is Chyheira half part of Rosmorna blood?

*Hen.* What matter? She bears herself true Halzaphron.

*Gul.* Aye, aye, but those who weave know that one weak thread will spoil the whole web.

*Le.* How the old love to bode evil!

*Hen.* What kin hath Chyheira among us?

*Gul.* None, nor ever had. Her mother was the last of her tribe.

*Le.* Is she all alone? Oh, my heart is sad for Chyheira!

*Gul.* Girl, will you talk like Rosmorna folk? With them 'tis the wont, aye, and has been for many hundred years, that man or woman count the love of kindred above aught else. Rather than do hurt to father or brother they would betray the city, 'tis said. Base-hearted!

But our tough sons, of truer mettle, hold  
The unhewn walls of Halzaphron more dear  
Than kith or kin. Our city overbids  
The nearest tie of blood, even as her stones  
Outweigh our flesh; enduring monuments  
Of mighty life, when time and times are done.

*Enter Shepherds bearing GWENTHAR wounded and unconscious.*

*Le.* Lo, the shepherds! O Hendra, they bear a wounded man!

*Hen.* Wounded—O pity! Why, shepherds, how came this?  
A mere youth!

*Gul.* Where found ye the stranger?

*Shep.* By the Giant's Ladder; he saith he is escaped from Rosmorna. Go, one of you, and tell the Chief.

*Hen.* But he is in Council.



*Shep.* We will go then. Pray you look to the youth.

[*Laying down* GWENTHAR.]

*Le.* Nay, spread my cloak about him! O softly, the poor boy!

*Hen.* He is in a swoon. Bring water, Leito.

[LEITO goes to the spring.]

*Gul.* Take heed; what if 'twere a spy from Rosmorna?

*Shep.* O foolish woman—had we not then slain him outright? 'Tis some escaped prisoner.

[*They go into the Council Hall.*]

*Gul.* [*Calling after them.*] Oh, aye, you are wise; wisdom grows about the sheepfold.

[LEITO brings water; they tend GWENTHAR.]

GULVAL looks on.

*Gul.* Methinks he is not deeply wounded.

*Hen.* Yet he swoons still; there must be some inward hurt. I would Chyheira came: she has the healing craft.

*Gul.* Well, 'tis few battle-wounds I have tended, for the sea took all my menfolk and hides them in its depths. Husband and five sons, five sons!

*Enter CHYHEIRA from the Hall.*

*Le.* [*Running to her.*] Chyheira, the poor lad! He lies like dead; oh, can you heal him?

*Chy.* Alas!

What craft is mine at the Chief's word I use,

And for pure pity's sake. [*She and HENDRA tend him.*]

*Le.* [*A little apart with GULVAL.*] The comely youth!

*Gul.* Fair as a girl, and soft as caked sea-foam,  
Mantling in quiet pools before the wind.  
What gale has blown him hither?

*Le.* See, his locks,  
How soft they are! and long and ruddy brown,  
Much like a new-turned peat, or the warm shades  
Of our Chyheira's own.

*Gul.* 'Tis an ill hue.  
When I was young, the girls of Halzaphron  
Were ever black-haired; so the proverb ran,  
"Fit not your shaft with bronze or copper blade,  
But chose the dark-tressed iron."

*Le.* He is fair  
As any flower—what is't he brings to mind?  
Why, once I found Chyheira, sleeping fast  
Among the heather, as a tired child  
That bore a load beyond its strength; she looked  
Most like the stranger now.

*Chy.* [*Looking up from beside* GWENTHAR.] All will be well.  
His wounds are slight, but the poor stripling lies  
Outworn with weary miles, hunger and fear.  
Good Hendra, bring your wine of precious herbs,  
Cordial, and sweetest morning-milk. [*Exit* HENDRA.]

*Le.* [*Coming close.*] He wakes!

*Gwen.* Where am I? safe? Who are you, gentle maids?

*Chy.* Daughters of Halzaphron, who tend your hurts.  
Whence come you?

*Gwen.* Leagues and leagues across the moor;  
Fleeing from many-towered Rosmorna's hold.

*Re-enter* HENDRA *with wine.*

*Le.* Who smote you thus?

*Gwen.* One of Rosmorna's men.

*Chy.* Drink of this wine; it bears the hardy juice

Of cliff-herbs, growing 'twixt the wind and sea.  
Then tell us where you dwell.

*Gwen.* Merciful lady,  
Men call me Gwenthar in the land of Rhûn,  
By farthest southern shores, where the warm sea  
Flows waveless up through woody, winding creeks;  
Where mild and plenteous hills stoop to the strand,  
As if the ripe earth wooed the smiling main.  
We call our home "The City of Winter Flowers."  
And wintry mortal lives there break in bloom  
Of many-coloured wisdom, grace and joy.

*Chy.* Ah me! I have dreamt of such a city.

*Hen.* Yet—  
How is't you speak our tongue?

*Gwen.* Does not the same  
Swift, many-worded speech Brythonic ring  
All down the Southern shore, within Rosmorna,  
And here in rocky Halzaphron?

*Gul.* 'Tis true.  
This honourable speech of ours must burn  
On smooth Rosmorna lips.

*Gwen.* Or else your accents  
Fall stone-like, wounding on their ears.

*Le.* But whence  
Left you your city?

*Gwen.* On a call to arms;  
Which I most gladly heard, for, of my father  
I bear a noble, far-resounding name  
Wherein the honour of his death yet lives  
Throughout the South. I will not speak his name  
Till, by some deed of craft and peerless courage  
I prove me strong to bear the great addition,

Nor sink beneath its weight.

*Chy.* O valiant lad,  
 You are too young, too young for arms! I would  
 You lay in safety on those flowery hills  
 Far hence; and yet, so ripe a spirit fills you,  
 Your land ere long shall proudly call you son.  
 But oh, these fair limbs marred! this budding might  
 Hewn down with swords—oh, monstrous, pitiful!  
 Tearless I have seen strong men die, but this  
 I weep to think on.

*Gul.* [*As if to herself.*] Was it my youngest-born  
 That raging waters seized and flung to die  
 Upon a sharp-toothed rock? No older he  
 Than this soft lad.

*Gwen.* We too have cruel seas,  
 Good mother, and our youth have learnt to look  
 Death in the face.

*Hen.* Surely; since you have dared  
 Rosmorna men in battle.

*Gul.* Loathly crew!  
 Cunning as foxes, fierce as wolves; yea, wolf-like,  
 They fight in banded fellowship, and fear  
 To go alone.

*Gwen.* Yet a young wolf may chance  
 Hunting alone, with patient craft, to seize  
 A mighty prey unawares.

*Le.* —No more of wolves,—  
 I fear! But you, Rosmorna's prisoner once,  
 Have seen the city's women; are they fair?  
 And very richly clad?

*Gwen.* What prisoner knows?  
 But I may fitly celebrate mine own

Sweet country-wives. White-skinned, smooth-handed they;  
Slender as ivory sceptres tipped with gold;  
Just clouded in their floating veils, they shine  
Like misty moons.

*Hen.* Such splendour knows not toil.

*Gwen.* They labour not, yet every gracious art  
Is theirs: the silken skill of broideries,  
Fair, woven pictures, signs, words, melody,  
Rhythmical movements, miracles of song.

*Le.* Soul-moving song!

*Chy.* Ah, did some wingéd wind  
Bear echoes of your bright melodious days  
Into our far-off dreams? We strive to build  
The viewless fane of many-voicéd song  
Harmonious, here, amid the rushing gales  
That shake spray-beaten Halzaphron.

*Gwen.* Fair lady,  
I marvel not, for you with voice and look  
Call to my thought the lovely maids of Rhûn  
Who follow Music, wheresoe'er she leads,  
By mournful ways, or hand in hand with joy,  
Along the flowery paths.

*Chy.* [*Softly.*] Had I but wings  
To bear me thither for an hour!

*Gwen.* I would  
You knew my land, for there the bonds of love  
Are very closely knit in home and kin.  
Mother and son, sister and brother hold  
In tender fellowship, and gladly die  
Each for the other.

*Le.* Wherefore must your gods  
Appoint you *all* things well? A plenteous earth,

Glad lives, tenderly cherished womenkind  
Who move among their joys, surpassing fair?

*Gul.* Bright, empty flies a-dancing in the sun.

*Gwen.* Maiden, my father, who in many lands  
Had met strange fortunes, vowed, the fairest woman  
He e'er beheld, straight, splendid, eagle-eyed,  
Was some unrivalled maid of Halzaphron.

*Hen.* O then, your father came with those rich strangers  
Belike, who brave the tireless miles of sea  
With merchandize——

*Le.* But tell——

*Gwen.* No more I know.  
Her light has waned, who, so my father told,  
Had well-nigh slain him for his love; the brief  
Joy of a soldier's day! yet, till his death,  
He wore the half of a poor bracelet, taken  
From her: I keep it still.

[*GWENTHAR touches a chain round his neck.*]

*Le.* A bracelet! strange—  
And dreamlike strange! for our Chyheira wears  
Such broken treasure too; her mother's once.

*The CHIEF enters with EVIAN, KARCLUZ, and two or three Elders. Various women come out of their houses; whispering and wondering they draw near during the next two or three lines until all the Chorus of Women are present.*

*Gul.* Women, be still; the Chief!

[*HENDRA, LEITO, GULVAL, and others except CHYHEIRA move away from GWENTHAR, who rises painfully to greet the CHIEF and stands leaning against a pillar.*]

*Chief.* Whence comes the stranger?  
What does he seek in Halzaphron?

*Chy.* He comes  
From Rhûn, a city of the distant south.  
Gwenthar his name; he dared his youth against  
Our foes: now, from Rosmorna towers escaped,  
Wounded, seeks shelter here. The stripling shows  
A gallant spirit, meet for Halzaphron.

*Chief.* Speak, youth, what will you here?

*Gwen.* Shelter and healing,  
O Chief! is all my prayer. But the shrill fame  
Of this impregnable gray citadel,  
This crown of northern valour, reached our ears  
In quiet, golden Rhûn; wherefore I fain  
Would learn the secret of your prowess, mark  
Your wise, cold laws, and all your hardy lives.

*Chief.* Then must you serve our city, toil with us  
In northern seas, shoulder to shoulder fight  
With us th' encroaching foe.

*Gwen.* When I am healed  
You shall be judge of southern might, and know  
How southern guile and daring won their fame.

*Chief.* Promise of guile looks evil to our sight  
As bogs in moorland hollows, where the black  
Foul death lies hidden.

*Gwen.* Yet our warriors prize  
Subtlety, joined with courage, as the steel  
A strong man grips, who else, fighting unarmed,  
Had spent his strength at loss.

*Chief.* Guile is the watchword  
Of yonder venomous and writhing brood,  
Humbled Rosmorna; nest of adders, whom

Our cliff-eagles have wounded to the death.

*Gwen.* Deem you Rosmorna conquered?

*Chief.*

Nay, for snakes

Will breed again, of quickening sun and slime

On feverish southern inlets, where the bright,

Cleansing, wide-water billows never break.

Fit home for such a people; teeming earth

Engenders them of moist, rank plenty, thick

As vermin, hundreds swarm for hundreds slain.

*Gwen.* Yea, a ripe land; a rich and numerous folk!

*Chief.* What profit them their countless legions, armed

With buckler, greaves and helm, a-flash with gold?

Their cunning craft, their feigned devices, all

Their many inventions, swift and marvellous guile,

Before a simple nation, scant of arms,

Sea-toilers, lone rock-dwellers, newly taught

The skill and honourable craft of war.

Rosmorna quailed and fled; our following foot

Was on their neck—they bit the blood-stained dust:

A thousand traitor souls went shrieking down

The sudden gulfs of many-caverned Hell!

*Gwen.* [*springing forward*].

Rosmorna breeds no traitors, man!

*Chief.*

You lie!

A traitor fronts me here!

[*To the Elders.*]

Bind him, and leave

Rosmorna's spy to wait his doom.

[*They bind him to the pillar with ropes hastily torn from the fishing-nets. He makes no resistance. There is murmuring and horror among the women.*]



*Gwen.*

So be it!

I fail, and die as savage wills decree.

*Chief.* You are young for treachery. An older spy  
Had choked down wrath, when I, suspecting, made  
Incendiary and scornful boast.

*Gwen.*

'Tis true.

*Chief.* But can it be that great Rosmorna stoops  
To such immeasurable baseness? sending  
A peace-breaker, a wounded boy to tell  
Lies to our women, cheat our pity, and strive  
Through daily comradeship and healing hurts,  
To reach the inmost secrets of our life?  
Are you indeed Rosmorna's thought?

*Gwen.*

My city

Knew naught of my design, and every word  
I told the maidens here is true! What know  
Such letterless barbarians of the skill  
To order truth in words that needs must strike  
An echoing falsehood on the listener's ear?  
Prisoned for light offence within the walls,  
I did in truth escape; a comrade, learning  
Part of mine enterprise, assailed me thus  
At bidding; while Rosmorna rightly bears  
The name of Rhûn. Let your unpractised wits  
Distinguish further true and false! But you—  
Gaunt, wave-spurned flotsam, bred in dripping caves,  
Nourished on sea-weed, artless, graceless, harsh  
As your own thundering shores, barren as they—  
How should your scanted, barbarous souls perceive  
Shame of *defeat*, the maddening, venomed sting  
Intolerable, to great Rosmorna's pride?  
She, mistress of the southern shore, renowned

For delicate crafts, for wide and gracious life,  
 And warrior-skill—Rosmorna, beaten back  
*Defeated*, by these half-clad fishers! Oh—  
 The very thought is fire! Was I not driven  
 To smite you to the death some way? to maim  
 Your dreadful secret strength? The Heavens are black,  
 The Gods all slumbering, when Rosmorna turns  
*Defeated*, from a meagre northern hold!  
 But triumph once made ours, you stubborn cragsmen  
 Owing Rosmorna's potency, had learnt,  
 By swift and countless benefits received,  
 How a great nation greatly can forgive.  
 —Such was mine enterprise; if it contain  
 One spark of honour, skill or daring, this  
 Light up Rosmorna's glory! may the blot  
 And stain of wilful treachery lie on me!

*Chief.* Not all th' insatiate fires of pride, not all  
 The high and generous rage of patriot shame  
 Can burn from you the brand of traitor! Die  
 The appointed death: stoning at women's hands.

*Leito.* The first stone to shed traitor blood be mine!

*Chy.* Shame on thee, girl!

*Chief.* Yet must the Council hear  
 The deed of guilt; confirm the stripling's fate.  
 It is soon done: let mortal sentence fall  
 Swiftly and surely, as the blinding sword  
 Of passionless Gods. Back to the Council, men!  
 Women, betake you to the Field of Stones;  
 Await us there, and pray the Gods to steel  
 Impressive hearts unto the dreadful task  
 Of justice, by the commonalty wrought.  
 Chyheira, to your safe and wisest guard  
 We now commend this fettered lad, death-doomed.

Watch o'er his few brief moments, raise his thought  
And vision to th' eternal face of Death.

[THE CHIEF and the Men go into  
the Council Hall, the women  
go slowly out with veiled heads.  
Outside they sing.

*Women.*

Veiling our heads we go  
Upon a darkened way;  
For a sudden shadow of death  
Has stricken the burning day.  
Women shall lift their hands  
In a terrible deed and just;  
To smite for the land, and fell  
Young life to the dust.  
—Ye Powers that wrought this thing!  
We pray with awestruck breath:  
Turn away from our homes,  
From our loved, the Shadow of Death!

[CHYHEIRA stands close to GWENTHAR  
but turned away from him. He  
can just reach her garment.

*Chy.* Accurséd, touch me not!

*Gwen.*

Oh, you are hard!

Are all your women like that furious girl?  
Men do not thus; the very Chieftain felt  
Some pity for a lad condemned to die.

*Chy.* Ah Gods! the pity almost breaks my heart!

[GWENTHAR looks at her with quick  
hope. She is still turned away.

You broad, fierce wings of sunshine, strike me blind

When the just deed is done.

*Gwen.* Must it be done?

Is there no hope?

*Chy.* None. [*She turns towards him.*]

*Gwen.* Shall I then be stoned

To death by women?

*Chy.* Yea, and I must lead

The stoning. [*GWENTHAR covers his face.*]

O child, poor helpless child, fear not

To suffer! 'tis a swift and shattering death.

Look not upon the crowd: to quiet Heaven

Uplift your gaze, then will you never flinch.

A well-aimed blow shall stun your wavering sense—

But oh, 'fore God, turn not your eyes on me!

*Gwen.* [*dreamily*]. I see bright Ocean, blue and death-  
less air,

And huge, dark Earth, teeming with happy lives

Like mine. It cannot be that I shall die

So soon, so young! The land will guess my fate

And fly to save me! Go, Chyheira, tell

The Council vengeance, deadly vengeance, waits

Upon my murder; famine, fire and sword,

Lives whelmed in crashing ruin! For their own

Poor sakes, O bid them hold their hands! beseech

That they reprieve me for a day, an hour!

*Chy.* No more of this: the flickering, faithless hope  
Leads to a coward's death.

*Gwen.* How can you lift

Your arm to kill me? you, whose gentle eyes

I know not why, have homelights in them; you

Whose speech is soft with lingering cadences,

Such as our own: whose maiden grace would stand

Unrivalled, 'mid Rosmorna women.

*Chy.* Cease;

I am northern-bred, a child of Halzaphron.

*Gwen.* Strange! had I met you on the cloudy moors  
Remote from any city, I had cried  
"Rosmorna maiden, hail! and fair unknown  
Kinswoman, hail!"—Oh 'tis approaching death  
That fogs mine eye! Hence, daughter of the foe!  
I need no stranger's pity; let me die  
Alone the shameful death, alone!

[*There is silence for a moment.*]

[*With a little cry.*]

O—could

The meanest of my countrymen stand by,  
And speak some grieving word, I had not passed  
So bitterly alone!

*Chy.* Turn not from me.

My father was a soldier of Rosmorna.

*Gwen.* Your father? you? Have you not urged our foes  
And sung them on to battle?

*Chy.* Shall not I

Avenge my mother's honour? basely stained  
By one who seized her maidenhood, despoiled  
With vile, outlandish touch her pride of race;  
Who in his fierce and hateful triumph, rent  
Her locks, and even the heavy metal rings  
Upon her bleeding arms, to bear away!  
When I was born, she died.

*Gwen.* Your father sprang  
From us? You bear your mother's broken bracelet,  
As the girl said? Come hither!

[*He snatches the chain round her neck  
and fits her half-bracelet to his.*]

*Gwen.* See, the halves,  
Brother and sister meeting, join again!

*Chy.* Brother and sister?

*Gwen.* Aye—your father was  
Mine own. O sister, half your blood is mine!

*Chy.* Was that my father yours?

*Gwen.* It must be so.  
This poor half bracelet, taken from the maid  
Of Halzaphron, the dear-loved maid he fain  
Had carried home with him, fits, edge for edge,  
Upon your mother's broken bracelet here.

*Chy.* Then be it so. The wise and righteous gods  
Bring me to wreak my mother's deadly wrong  
On you—oh brother, little brother, on you!

*[She sinks down on the stones.]*

*Gwen.* Sister, you will not let me die?

*Chy.* *[Faintly.]*

I must.

You would betray my city.

*Gwen.* Light as air  
The hate of Halzaphron, Rosmorna's pride,  
To us in whom the kindred life runs strong!  
What, could I shed your dearest blood for all  
Th' innumerable cities, golden plains,  
And rich seas of the never-ending world?  
No! not for bidding of immortal Gods!  
The very Heavens are naught to you and I  
Who living, breathing, brother and sister, laugh  
To feel the glorious sun, and know ourselves  
Alive, like him, smiting the clouds of death  
And darkest deathborn Fear, to nothingness!  
Come with me, sister, to a radiant land  
Of river-meadows, golden autumn woods,

And white-walled cities, full of joy and song!  
 A land of homes, a land of kindred love  
 And solace, tender as an April sky!  
 So near it lies—O take your brother's hand,  
 Follow him o'er the desolate moorlands, home!

[*A silence.*]

Will you not cut these bonds? each moment is  
 A wingéd danger, peering for our lives!

[*Silence.*]

O sister, set me free!

No?

Then I die

For you; for you and all this stony shore  
 You love so well!

I pray you, kiss my brow

But once, before they kill me.

[*Sounds within the Council Hall.*]

*Chy.*

Ah! they come!

You shall not die—I'll give my life for yours,  
 Or die beside you!

[*Cutting his bonds.*]

Stand forth free, and meet

Unbound the call to death together!

*Gwen.*

Hush!

They come not! whither shall I flee?

[*CHYHEIRA lifts the iron-hinged block in the  
 pavement showing a deep hole and a flight  
 of steps.*]

*Chy.*

Descend.

These steps will bring you, by a secret path  
 Far underground, to winding caverns, black,  
 But safe, and leading slowly, surely out

Upon a distant shore.

*[Taking from the altar some burning brands  
and the golden torque.*

Thus light your way;

And bear this gold, unharmed of fire, to win

You food and help.

*Gwen.* *[about to descend].* O, come with me—

*Chy.*

Descend!

You must not linger, brother—

*[Kissing him.*

Dear, farewell.

*[Exit GWENTHAR. CHYHEIRA closes the stone  
and stands thinking.*

Oh, can he safely reach the strand? it lies

So far! Could he mistake, and follow down

The She-Wolf's Cavern, issuing near at hand

With rock-born waters by the city wall?

Or faint beside the way? No, for his hurts

Are bound, and all his piteous swoon was feigned.

Alas! the brand of *Liar* on his proud,

Bright crest! the treachery, foul as marish ooze

——Treachery! and I——

Who set the city's foe and prisoner free!

I am a thousand-fold more traitor! I

Have broke my trust, betrayed my land!

No! No!

It is a dream of Hell! have I not dreamt

Strange things before, yet waking; in the blaze

Of sunward hills, and by the winter fire?

I knew it for a dream!

Nay, but these bonds

About the pillar—severed—here my knife

That cut him free, my city's foe! Ah, death!



Kill me, great gods! [*Flinging down the knife.*

The very sun is pale,  
To look on such accurséd thing as I!

[*Clinging to the pillars.*

Oh to drag down these blocks upon my head,  
To hide my foul and everlasting shame! [*Going.*

The cliff! the crashing waters!

No—such fate

Were all too clean. Dishonoured must I fall  
Beneath the stoning: thus should traitors die.  
—The people's eyne, with righteous hate afire,  
Burn out the guilt from me! Let the false blood  
Rosmorna-given, redden all their stones!  
—O little brother, dearest lad, but you  
This doom escape!—

Only to bring despair,

Slavery, wreck and ruin on this proud  
And pitiful brave fortress, Halzaphron!  
This through my doing!—How to save—O gods!  
I *must* think—calm this frenzy for a while!  
Let me not yet go mad!

[*She stands silent. Then flinging open the doors  
of the Council Hall, she cries.*

Chieftain, come forth!

*The CHIEF, EVIAN, KARCLUZ, and all the Chorus of Men  
come forth. CHYHEIRA stands before them.*

*Chief.* What is befallen? The prisoner escaped!  
How came this?

*Chy.* My hand set him free.

*Ev.* She raves!

The villain overpowered her: she is mad  
With grief and rage—

*Chief.* Where went he?

*Chy.* Ask not me,

He was my brother; mine own father's son.

I cannot tell.

*Ev.* Thy brother? Hapless maid!

Accurst of gods and men—

*Kar.* Let be the gods!

This is no work for Heaven; manly might

Shall win us back what woman's treason lost.

—Traitor!

*Chief.* [*To some of the Elders.*] Go twain of you, take  
boat, and seek

The lonely cove whereon the Secret Way

Runs out—there guard the passage. Other twain

Watch where the She-Wolf's Cavern issues forth

Beyond the city wall: the rest abide

To judge this deed.

*Chy.* [*With a great cry.*] Woe, woe! he's taken! in vain!

[*She falls to the ground. The CHIEF speaks  
apart with the Elders. KARCLUZ  
struggles with the iron ring to lift the  
stone block.*

*Kar.* Evian, good Evian, help me, friend! 'Tis mine,  
At last, to do another battle deed!

*Ev.* Why, man, what will you? [*Helping.*

*Kar.* Heave the block—'tis done.

[*Going down the steps.*

Reach me the brand. There, in the narrow dark,

A cripple, propped by friendly walls, can meet

On equal terms the foe. I come not back

Most like, but I will slay my man, be sure!

[*Descends.* EVIAN *closes the door.*

*Chief.* Chyheira, rise! [*She does so, clinging to the pillar.*

*Chy.* Now is the city safe;

The foe death-doomed: now must the traitor die.

*Chief.* Thou woeful offspring of an alien race!

Sad daughter of most ill-commingled blood!

Great was the fault, to set our trust in thee

And thy diviner leading! All thy mind

Was strange to us; thy subtlety, thy grace,

Even thy moving might of holy song

Was alien; alien as the passionate cry

Of cherished kinship, bidding thee forbear,

At any cost, to spill a kinsman's blood.

[CHYHEIRA *makes a hopeless gesture.*

Mourner, think not I seek to cover o'er

Thy terrible crime, and deadly. Know but this,

Myself and all the State have sinned with thee.

Thou wast our pride, our joy, our splendid star!

Crowning with whitest, heavenly radiance all

These storm-beat lives upon the Iron Head.

How art thou fallen, star! The poorest wife

Of Halzaphron, who all unflinching sends

Her loved ones to the dreadful battle-field,

Is truer far than thou! Freely she gives

Her best, the sunshine of her simple days,

To serve the State; so from her darkened home

She too defends the City. She has set

Immortal honour over earthly love;

To lead her men by the old, painful way

Of Duty, down to brave, unnoted death.

Women, I trow, thus scale the nobler heights

Of selfless love. Small task it were to yield  
 One's own poor blood with honour for the State;  
 But ah, how hard to see the dearest life  
 Of brother, husband—child—'mid anguish shed!  
 And my heart dies with thee, Chyheira!

[*To the Elders.*]

Men,

Is it your will this woman should be slain  
 For treason to the State?

*All Men.* It is our will.

*Chy.* Chieftain, I thank thee for thy wise, sad words.  
 It lightens blackest torment to be shown  
 The cause of things; so frantic misery calms  
 From tempest to the quiet deeps of woe,  
 Unfathomable woe!

*Chief.* Evian, go tell  
 The women all this sudden thunderstroke  
 Of doom; in saddest silence bring them hither.

[*Exit EVIAN.*]

*Chy.* O Chief, let me die soon!

*Chief.* Dost long for death?

*Chy.* 'Tis death alone tears from the tortured soul  
 Th' intolerable fiery cloak of shame.

*Chief.* Bethink thee, thou art hapless more than vile.

*Chy.* [*wildly*]. Come death to sever the unnatural  
 bond

That holds in one frail body spirits twain  
 Unreconciled, Rosmorna, Halzaphron!  
 O strong, O fatal tie! Devouring pain,  
 White-hot self-loathing burns not from my soul  
 The likeness of my country's enemy.  
 Shall even death do this? Oh—shall I find

The conflict ends not with my life? and strive,  
Still earth-bound, o'er the unreachéd gulfs of death?

*Chief.* Poor heart, each one in his degree has known  
A strife like thine. Man is of mingled race,  
The child of Earth, the foster-child of Heaven.  
Now with the Gods, now fallen, and sick to view  
His own loathed, inward Hell—ah, weary man!  
Who doomed thee to this battlefield of life?  
But surely rest remaineth, rest for thee.  
We have looked upon the faces of the dead;  
We know they slumber dreamless, cannot doubt  
They are folded round with vast forgetfulness.

*Chy.* Merciful, God-appointed death!

*Chief.* Thou maid!

Has thine arm power to lift the steel, and strike  
(Acknowledging the justice of thy fate)  
Thine own self to the heart?

*Chy.* I am strong with joy

To do this righteous deed for Halzaphron.

*[She stoops for the knife which lies near her.]*

*Chief.* *[reaching her his own sword].*

Not so! With clear and undishonoured blade  
Let thou thy noble spirit free.

*[CHYHEIRA stabs herself and falls dead.]*

O friends!

Speak, is this well?

*Men.*

Yea, Chief, it is well done.

*[There is silence for a moment; then  
the Women enter. LEITO rushes  
to CHYHEIRA'S side.]*

*Leito.* Chyheira, mistress, lady mine! Ah life,  
Thou'rt fled too soon! I would have died with thee!

—Woe on you, gray-head Elders, sullen-eyed,  
 Gray-hearted, stonies of men! Must you endure,  
 Drag out your stale remainder years, that Time  
 Has sickened at, while she, keen flower of flame,  
 Fair ray of song, that wildly stooped to crown  
 Your iron death-in-life, lies quenched, lies dead!  
 Self-slain! For what? for a most idle feud!  
 A profitless, sour loathing sprung 'twixt men  
 Like-hued, like-hearted, worshipping like Gods  
 On neighbour hills, with all the self-same tongue;  
 Giving life-tribute to the same vast main,  
 And subject to the self-same changeful Heavens!  
 Were not the winter-stung and howling wolves  
 Enough for you to hate?—Were not the plains  
 And river-forests of the Southern shore  
 Enough for them to covet? No—these foes,  
 Iron-walled North and golden-stranded South,  
 Merciless eld, and one vile traitor lad  
 Must join, in furious kinship, to destroy  
 This Daughter of new bliss, who, in her noon,  
 From North to South had glorified the world!  
 Woe! woe! *[She flings herself down.]*

*Hen.* [*softly*]. Nay, trouble not the peace of death.  
 Nor wrath, nor wild rebellion, naught avail  
 To touch her now. Chyheira, gentle maid!

*[Laying her garments about her.]*

Hide we thy cruel wound! these sorrowful locks  
 Part from thy brow and o'er thy bosom spread!  
 I would that thou hadst known the dear, warm weight  
 Of little children sleeping on thy breast!  
 Come, Leito.

*[LEITO rises and weeps on HENDRA'S shoulder.]*

*Gul.* Better make an end of words.  
Such happenings overwhelm the springs of thought,  
And speech is clouded. Chieftain, bid them raise  
The death-song; then in silence make an end.

[*Enter the two Elders who were sent to watch the  
She-wolf's Cavern.*]

*Elder.* O Chief, the spy, Rosmorna's son, is slain!  
Slain, in the breathless, cold and narrow dark,  
By Karcluz' hand, who doth himself lie dead.

*Chief.* Whence know you this?

*Elder.* We waited, at your word,  
By the stream's fern-clad vault, where, gushing forth  
It hides the She-wolf's Cavern. Rocky walls  
Far-echoing, bore to us a sudden scream,  
And one exultant shout of battle-joy.  
We hearkened for the conflict; heard no more.  
Then struggling in, then feeling by the walls  
Our black and difficult way, sound of spent groans  
And heavy breathing fell upon our ears.  
Farther, my foot touched warm and running blood.  
It was the boy; we dragged him to the light  
And smote, but found him surely dead. Karcluz  
Gave up his spirit on the meadow-grass,  
Beneath the open sky; we marvelled much  
How he, sore crippled, wrought this worthy deed.

*Chief.* The Gods abide, and to man's feeble aim  
Of Justice, lend their own sufficing powers.  
Raise you the death-song, women. All we men  
Fitly respond, honouring heroes twain,  
Karcluz, and this Chyheira, nobly dead.

*Chorus of Women*

Lone traveller on a dark and boundless sea,  
Where lies thy bourn?  
Steadily out into the midnight sky  
Thou goest; from warm and living shores we cry  
Most vainly after thee,  
Swift soul! absorbed in thy great voyage, calm and free,  
Heedless of us that mourn.

Hushed in the peace of mystery revealed  
And life-long wonder satisfied,  
Thou followest on, o'er shadowy deeps unknown,  
Thy secret path alone.  
Whither art bound? Shall ocean-tides of Death  
Wash the still base of Heaven's eternal Throne?  
Does thy wave bear thee to the Gods? Made clear  
Of mortal stain, canst thou behold Them near?

If it be so, with very tender eyes  
Some God shall draw thee to Him, knowing all  
Thy fears, thy guilt and many miseries,  
Splendour and folly, mighty hopes and small.  
Some gentle God, all-wise, perceiving Life and Death;  
Who knows how pitiful a thing,  
So anxious, yet so light and vanishing,  
Is every changeful shape of mortal breath.

May it be thus! for nothing do we know:  
As sailor-wives by winter nights  
Look from their doors upon the unfathomed dark,  
Pricking the blackness with their tiny lights,  
And wonder and pray for each far-distant bark.



“Are they now tempest-struck? or borne  
In silver peace upon a starry tide?  
Or do they greet some clear and glowing morn  
By marvellous shores, forgetting all beside?  
O let us meet them face to face again!  
And kiss away the parting and the pain!”  
—Fall, little prayers, down the abyss of Fate!  
So we, with ignorant hope and dread,  
Look out from life upon the dead.  
The dark is silent as the Powers that be;  
We only know, our loved are with the Sea.

*Chorus of Men*

Warriors! raise a chant of sorrow pealing to the deathless  
sky!  
Strong in pain subdued, as hands that slack not grip for any  
wound;  
Tearless woe and soleinn mourning fitteth best when Heroes  
die;  
Like a kingly robe let sorrow, grave and splendid, wrap them  
round.

We will make an end of question, sighs and fears that wait on  
Death.  
Death the dark Unknown—what know ye of life's viewless  
years in store?  
Life desired, yet Change and Terror threaten every mortal  
breath;  
Men who trust the wild To-morrow, shrink not from the  
Evermore!

Ye that moved in life as heroes, bear you hero-like beyond!  
Greet your guiding Star again through clouds and glamour,  
    storm and fears;  
Caught away from kindly earth-light, darkened let the vile  
    despond;  
But the heroes' Star of Honour wanes not through eternal  
    spheres!

*Chief.* Bear we Chyheira to the mountainous cliff  
Sheer rising from untroubled deeps, and bear  
Beside her Gwenthar, proud Rosmorna's son,  
Our sometime foe, in whom Chyheira's blood  
Yet ran, and for whose hope of life she died!  
Let Ocean there receive them.

Boundless One!

Immortal, vast, all-reconciling Sea!  
That laves Rosmorna's shore and Halzaphron;  
Wash out the stain of blood, the fires of hate,  
Anguish and weariness, falsehood and fear!  
Wash away all the wild and suffering heart,  
—The lovely, dreadful being, known yet strange,  
The unimagined web of good and ill  
That was Chyheira, that was Gwenthar! free  
Their little lives into Eternity!

OTHER VERSES



## OTHER VERSES

### THE CLIFF-HEAD

“**W**HAT calls you to the sharp, sheer crag, o’erhanging  
endless sea?

What seek you by the whelming brim of furious waters  
white?

Where billows storm the battered stones, where sea-gulls  
scream and flee;

Or where the surging west-wind strives to wrench you from  
the height.”

“ Ah, know you not *Who* haunt the cliffs in weird, enticing  
play?

Who beckon from the foam-drenched rock, laugh up from  
sea-pools clear?

From toppling crag and dreadful slope they call and leap  
away;

The Sirens of the Precipice, the sisters Death and Fear!

Good sport it is to play with Death, to see Her wild eyes  
gleam

Above the cliff that *shall* be scaled, to mark Her lithe  
form bend

Round the strait pass, whose perilous edge shows, like an  
evil dream,

The sudden deeps; where slip or fall brings swiftly-  
crashing end.

'Twas joy to feel Her flying hair back in my set face blown  
While fast I clung where treacherous stone no foothold  
more allowed;  
Where roaring breakers burst in foam, to hear Her cry:  
"Leap down!  
Dare the mad rush! and find the surge as soft as dazzling  
cloud."

'Tis sport to face and slip Her hold; 'tis keener joy to keep  
Her sister back, who winds cold arms about the throat  
and eyes;  
The giddy Fear, who trembling cries "I dare not!" from the  
steep;  
And tells of shameful, shrieking death where merciless  
waters rise.

Her cloak of terror folds me round in narrow, dripping caves,  
Where groaning waters sob and fall, in hidden fissures  
near;  
She grips me with the maddened, furious dread of speeding  
waves;  
'Tis joy to meet and break Her clutch; tread down the  
abject Fear!

Oh, pleasant is the purple moor! the shade of giant stones,  
The sweet, warm sound of honey-bees among the golden  
bloom;  
But high above the splendid sea, Joy laughs from towering  
thrones  
To Death and Fear below, who ride the white and thundering  
doom.

## AN UGLY WOMAN

SUCH harsh, uncomely form and face  
The mirror renders back to me,  
Mine aspect hath no more of grace  
Than broken rocks above the sea.

Like yonder lonely Rock am I;  
Rough-hewn, unsightly where it stands,  
Beyond the utmost tide-wash, high,  
Forsaken on the yellow sands.

Within the glittering waters' zone,  
Burnished and splendid, rich of hue,  
Lies many a rounded, wave-worn stone,  
Bedecked with pools of laughing blue.

Shall the lone Rock, harsh, wild and strong,  
Envy her sisters of the tide?  
Desire the enfolding waves, and long  
For sea-born grace, by Fate denied?

Most fair they seem, amid the play  
Of lucent tides that scarcely break;  
Most glorious, by the passionate spray  
Embraced, when winter storms awake.

While dark and gentle Evening turns  
To the far, violet seas again,  
Dream-heavy towers the Rock, and yearns,  
Perchance, toward the estranged main.

On blue and shimmering morns, will she,  
Envy her mates, where wavelets curl?  
I, like the Rock, harsh, strong and free,  
Envy no rounded, lovely girl!

The turbulent sea that men call Love  
Enfolds her, lending beauty, fire,  
And grace; but all her best years move  
Bonds to the law of sex-desire.

My times are wholly mine, to make  
A life-work tower in steady force;  
No waves of primal impulse shake  
My purpose from its ordered course.

I fear no fading years, nor yet  
The ache of mother-hopes forgone.  
Not mine to mourn the lessening fret  
Of tides at ebb, and stranded stone.

Self-poised, the lonely Rock appears  
More blest than all the wave-worn throng.  
She to the changeless zenith rears  
Unshaken boulders, dark and strong.

She knows the peaceful brotherhood  
Of Earth and Sky, of Cloud and Light,  
And hers the god-like plenitude  
Of silent Air, and boundless Night.



When storm-clad winds are seaward sped,  
And cloudy waters surge amain,  
Far from the brackish wave, her head  
Is crowned with pools of crystal rain.

Here, stooping o'er the vast sublime,  
A perfect star emmirrored lies ;  
And grave Urania, queen of Time  
And Space, looks down with quiet eyes.

### THE OLD SCHOOLMISTRESS

O WHAT to me the fire-lit room?  
The careful house of quiet days?  
My heart is yonder in the gloom  
Without, on dark and crowded ways.

O, hear you not the hurrying feet  
Of all my children, travelling by?  
Their school-days o'er; so young to meet  
Stern toil, and ruthless destiny.

O, children! were you mine indeed  
By gift of life, and mother-pain,  
I would not urge, till direst need,  
Your unripe strength to scanty gain!

Young limbs, unapt for burdens yet ;  
Young hearts, too frail for care and tears ;  
Young brains, that hasten to forget  
The hard-won lore of childish years.

## OTHER VERSES

The City, huge and roaring loom  
That weaves the fate of folk and kings,  
Absorbs you, in the shadowy doom  
Of countless mute, unheeded things.

And here my anxious love must end;  
Nor help at all your perilous way?  
Too old am I to guide and tend?  
Ah well, I am not too old to pray!

So let my prayers about you rise,  
Like fragrance in the dusky street;  
Like stars to city-wearied eyes;  
Or rose-leaves to your tired feet.

Child-lives! out-borne upon the tide  
Of Work, that sweeps the poor home bare;  
The God of Sorrows be your guide,  
And have you in his pitying care!

## THE RETURN

AFTER many days and many tears,  
Dead and gone Belovéd, is it you?  
Coming clothed in dream, across the dew?  
Spirit-presence, hid from eyes and ears,  
Only felt upon the grieving heart.  
Though the bounded senses naught discern,  
You are here! restored from worlds apart.  
Thus you keep your promise to return;  
Threading back the dreadful, starless ways,  
After many days.

O come nearer! Though the heart may know  
All your presence, soul to soul reply,  
Yet take pity on the senses' cry:  
Let me see and hear you ere you go!  
Only speak aloud the mute farewell!  
Fill mine empty ears with rapt surprise;  
As the flood-tide brims a stranded shell.  
Grant some vision to the longing eyes!  
Blinded now with dark and shapeless fears,  
After many tears.

## THE TRAMP

I HAVE turned my face away from the City,  
 The careless, glittering, woeful City,  
 Full of laughter, cries and toil,  
 To the long, pale road, the bare and sleeping trees,  
 The fields and Mother Earth again.

Mother, O mother, let me in!

There is nothing before me but night and stars;  
 It is strange to be alone with the stars!  
 It was dreadful, alone with men.  
 The stars look down—men turn their eyes away  
 From me, who have no friend but Earth.

Mother, O mother, let me in!

Am I far enough from the City yet?  
 She burns and breathes on the sky-line yet;  
 Long trains flare through the night.  
 But here I smell the pure and rain-washed earth;  
 A little earth, a narrow field.

Mother, O mother, let me in!

I have grown almost too weary to die;  
 For 'tis no easy thing to die;  
 I have seen men struggle and strive.  
 O dark, clean Earth, fold me with heavy arms  
 Away from sight and life; O, take me in!

FINIS.



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