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L Phillips Jones





Youth. A Song.





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Leslie Phillips Jones.

1915.

From a photograph by Edgar Ward.

Youth.

A Song.

Leslie Phillips Jones.



Leslie Phillips Jones

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Born June 18th, 1895.

Educated at Mill Hill School.

Medical Student, St. Bartholomew's
Hospital, 1913-14.

Oriel College, Oxford, 1914.

Gazetted to Royal Berkshire Regiment
October 27, 1914.

Promoted February 8th, 1915.

Sailed for Dardanelles, May 20th.

Attch. 2nd Hampshire Regt., 29th Div.

Died of wounds June 7th, 1915.



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Youth. A Song.

Let me sing, for awake is my soul;
Let me laugh, for cares have I cast.
I am mad, am mad with delight;
I'm enraptured, in love with my soul,
I will play my part through to the last.

But hark—what is that which I hear?
O cover it, steep it in shades.
I must die, must die in cold death,
'Tis death drums rumbling clear,
'Tis a message that youth even fades.

But what care I for the world?
What I for future's dim realm?
I will live, will live wild and free.
For youth is my banner unfurled,
I steer my life from the helm.

July, 1914.

Their Course.

A Spring.

Then a stream of sparkling water
Slowly widening to the sea.
Battling shadows, falls and rapids,
Streaming slowly, sullen, sadly,
Rushing swiftly, roaring gladly,
Calmly blending with the sea.

A Babe.

Then a child, with happy laughter,
Slowly growing to a man,
Meeting woe and life's temptations,
Sometimes stumbling, blindly wading,
Or all-conquering, sweetly fading
Midst God's realms, an honest man.

To Mother. July, 1914.

An Arctic Night.

Cold and white ;
Winds, ice, clouds, snow, stormy sea,
Mighty, magnificent majesty—
Dusky light,
Clouds scurrying fast o'er leaden sky.
No cave, no shelter for man is nigh.

Roar and crash ;
And the blizzard sweeps on o'er the land,
While the racing seas foam on the surf-strewn strand.
Blinding flash ;
The ice lights up brilliant as fire,
While the wind screams past shriller and higher.

Bleak and bare ;
When the storm has rushed headlong in flight,
Still hurrying, screaming deep into the night.
Stony glare :
As the cold sun rises o'er rocky hill,
Where no sound's heard, but all is still.

7/9/13.

Rest.

An eerie stillness called night,
Enveloped in solitude's shroud,
Here rent! See! A stage, a shivering curtain,
 Swaying,
 Playing,
Mid the dusky memory cloud,
And the flickering shadows of light,
In scenes of the past, of future uncertain.

And a weary monotonous hum,
Of the music of everything still,
Croons idle songs and thoughts for the morrow,
 Hazily,
 Lazily,
As in the heather-clad hill,
Dwindles the drone of the drum
So fade these omens of joy or of sorrow.

Then shades seeming empty and naught,
Are hovering restless and frail,
'Neath shimmering threads which quiver and creep
 Wearily,
 Drearly,
Weaving a gossamer veil,
From the delicate webwork of thought
To a mystical drapery—beautiful sleep.

Beauty.

In the sun is a glory of colour, and might
Of lustre, of power, succour and strength,
Crowned with the crown of omnipotent light.

In the moon and the stars, the mysterious charm,
Is of silver, and coolness—shadowy shades
Draped in a fabric of peacefulness, calm.

There's a beauty of stealth and of motion,
Of freedom, and music, of wildness and blue
Masked 'neath the grandeur of sea and of ocean.

The passions of life rest embossed on the sky,
The fury of rage, the peace of content—
The vacance of thought, the lovers' soft sigh.

And the land sings to us its wonderful song
Of life always playing the pageant of time
With its endless, tireless, changeable throng.

And the beauties of fine jewels and gold,
Of flowers, mountains, glaciers, snow,
Are naught to the beauty that never seems old.

And that beauty of beauties that never will fade,
The heritage left to the sons of the land
Is the sculpting of God, the form of a maid.

Peace.

A cool, calm night,
And a glowing fire ;
Then the stately toll of a chime,
'Midst the stillness of thoughts
Seen thro' the haze of time ;
Lingering vaguely the while,
A soft, dull light,
And a tall, grand spire,
Bold, black, 'gainst the dusky sky—
An echo fading in space,
And the rising winds' sigh,
Crooning, lulling—then sleep.

Oxford. July, 1914.

Printed in Oxford Book of Verse for 1915.

War.

War's fiery cross is kindled,
Flung flaming o'er the land,
While Death, with scythe expectant,
Grins waiting, fans the brand.
One lustful despot's passion
For might and power's key
Has plunged a blameless nation
In war's distressful sea.
To Mars, his god, he offers,
As sacrificial rite,
Myriads of helpless victims,
Resenting, dragged to fight.
Then England strips for action,
Dissembles party faction,
Prepares her armies' traction,
For God, for King, for Right!

And soon the din of battle
Is blasting every land,
And tott'ring nations balance
On fortune's shifting sand.
Then, like the crafty wolf-pack
That lurks, tho' half in fear,
There creeps, so slow, yet certain,
With cruel and cringing leer,
The awful ghost of sickness.
Disease's dreaded pall
Enwraps, enthalls the wounded,
Skulks, waiting for his fall.
Then young men, scholars, sages,
As England nobly rages,
Join ye the war she wages
For God, for King, for Right!

'Tis Nelson's fight she's fighting,
'Tis Cromwell's old campaign—
The fight for right and weakness—
'Tis Waterloo again.
The clashing clarion soundeth,
It rings out "Crush this Shame."
The waving pennon flying
Calls out "Preserve our Fame."
Your heritage remember,
Your Empire's deeds of yore:
Embark on honour's warship
To champion England's shore.
Endued with righteous feeling,
Avenge their double-dealing—
Hark! hear the war song pealing,
"For God, for King, for Right."

Aug 5th 1914

*"Praised be the Lord, for our brother the fire,
by whom light comes in darkness,
For he is bright and pleasant
And very masterful and strong."*

—ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI.

Stormy night,
Clothed in a wind that lashed the lofty trees;
And fiercely,
Wildly screamed in delight,
Rising, falling, like restless, pestered seas.

Way ahead
Starts the flash of a friendly twinkling ray,
Beckoning,
Offering succour, sleep—
Onward then thro' the night, on to the day.

O kind flame
Spur us on, brandish high that flashing light;
Thro' the gloom
Stretch forth your guiding hand,
And lend, at last, sweet sleep this night.

Peace! dreaming,
O Fire! destructor cruel of Troy and Rome.
The sacrifice
You lick, embrace, consume,
Yet to the weary you are life and home.

O power!
Ruler of the thunderings of Jove,
Moulder of
The hammer swung by Thor,
Yet you the ruddy sundown splendour wove.

Conjuror !
Midst your glow we see the past's dim haze
Re-mirrored.
Clear twixt your flick'ring tongues
Yon magic pageants of our future days.

O helper !
You were our light in darkness all night long,
Now beauteous,
Very bright and pleasant,
O brother, truly, thou art masterful and strong.

The Voyage of Life.

We start our voyage in a tiny yacht,
Built for us in eternity.
It's launched to earth as a baby's cot
That floats on a calm and vacant sea.

Anon we grow, board a pleasure boat
Of white, and as children we play,
Gaily, carelessly, laughingly float
In cloudless, sunbathed happy bay.

Our next boat's larger, takes a form
Bolder, sterner, yet small: a rigged barque,
Far better built to weather life's storm,
We board her in joy; we sail at a mark.

Some gain this mark with apparent ease,
Others are stricken, foundered and lost,
Some change their course at the slightest breeze,
Then wallow becalmed or are tempest-tost.

The few who have reached their port unharmed,
Voyage in grand liners, built like hotels—
Sail where they wish through storm or becalmed,
And landing, roam the meadows and dells.

Others voyage, and the fates are less kind,
In full-rigged vessels, bathed in white sails—
Now tossed and beaten by rude rough wind,
Now riding gaily 'fore helpful gales.

The smoky and grimy tramps are allotted
To those with yet unhappier fate,
To voyage wild seas and dark skies, blotted
With racing clouds of war, sin, and hate.

Some sail their lives like a battle-ship,
Avenging wrong, now defending right—
Some, like pirates, with strength they grip
The weaker boats in their hands of might.

All, no matter what craft was their charge,
Will be torn apart, tho' husband and wife,
To board at last the purpled-draped barge
That crosses the bar to the sea of life.

19/9/13.

Reunion.

A distant dog barked ;
A fountain sprayed in a marble bowl,
Rich curtains swayed from a golden pole :
The moon cast a beam
Which shivered and played
In th' eerie night shade :
'Twas calm like a dream.

A night bird cried :
A gentle wind rustled the trembling trees,
A tiny mouse hustled among the old eaves :
A bat circled past,
Flickered round in its flight,
Like a moth at a light,
Then flapped away, fast.

Hush followed the wind ;
A figure crept silently up the broad floor
As if it still slept, or were dreaming of yore.
'Twas clad in steel mail,
Held a spear in his grip,
With a sword at his hip ;
'Twas a knight of the Grail.

A clock tolled one :
Like witch-spell snapped by Christian tear,
As if ghosts had clapped at the tall knight's ear,
He started awake,
Expectant, alert,
For rustle of skirt.
He had come for her sake.

The old oak creaked :
Treading lightly, she stole down the uncarpeted stair ;
Her heart and her soul were now eager ; lo ! there
Was her knight ; it was he !
She was beautiful, light,
In a dress of pure white,
Her long grey hair flowing free.

Each other they clasped :
They wandered in joy as his tales he re-told,
His life from a boy to the day he grew old.
She asked him once more
If his love were still true.
In his words sweet and few
He answered love's lore.

Alas ! what now ?
Their figures fade, like a dream that is spent.
They vanish like shade when sunlight is sent.
Shades, meeting each year,
Of an age far away.
Dawn closes their stay,
They vanish in fear.

19/9/13.

The Fall of the Gods.

King Jupiter, lord of all,
Beware! Fate heralds your fall.
Tho' brought up on honey, succoured on goats' milk,
Clothed in fine linen, draped in coloured silk;
Tho' gods, nymphs, muses obey,
Remember, soon comes the day
 When you'll totter and fall.

Your power, strength, all will fail,
Thunderbolts will not avail.
Fair Juno, goddess of riches and marriage,
Queen, drawn by dragons in gilded carriage,
She, with you, will flee away
Fast, on the now dreaded day
 That completes your doom.

Pluto, stern ruler of hell,
The fates ring also your knell.
Tho' Proserpine fair from her mother you stole,
And hurried her down by an underground hole,
Which opened at your command,
Ceres one day will demand
 Her daughter's return.

Lame Vulcan, ugly, deformed,
Oft at his father he's stormed.
From Olympus Jove dashed him at Lemnos to settle,
And teach the natives the working of metal.
The god of fire and art
Lost his passionate heart
 To Venus' charm.

The goddess of laughter and love
Considered by gods above,
The beautiful queen of all lovely faces,
Heavenly mistress of beautiful graces,
Her own handsome Apollo,
His fair mother must follow
In beauty of form.

Tall, shapely, comely and strong,
God of sun, music and song,
No more in your honour the pœan they'll sing,
Ne'er again in praise will you hear voices ring,
Pan's foe, inflictor of plague,
To man you'll fade, distant, vague,
Like a passing shade.

Diana of Jupiter's kin,
Mighty Apollo's fair twin,
Strong, tall, manly, and fleet like her brother,
Of Cupid the love god she's the fair mother.
Goddess and queen of the chase,
Followed by dogs she would race,
To kill the white stags.

Cupid the love god, her child,
Fierce, gentle, harsh, tender and wild,
Brave rider of dolphin and harnessed lion,
The gods' last remaining and noblest scion.
No longer hearts will you bind,
Always you'll live in man's mind
As the baby-god.

Minerva, goddess of war,
Of wisdom, arts, martial law,
Her claim as first builder of ships none dispute.
The brilliant inventress, skilled player of flute,
She, with her helm and her blade,
In dim future will fade,
 With the rest of her kin.

Swift Mercury, winged at heel,
Lord of liars, men that steal.
God's messenger swift, both graceful and fair,
No more Jove's cup in your hands will you bear.
So false, yet manfully brave,
Never fearing the grave
 In his fearsome endeavours.

Bacchus, drink-sodden with wine,
The far-famed grower of vine,
Maker of honey, half-god, half a mortal,
To the isles of the east he opened the portal.
Of tilling the land, sowing
Seed, rearing and growing
 The grape and the fig.

God of archer and bowman,
Mars, so sacred to Roman,
Fierce patron of war-hunt and gladiator,
Feared by man as the heartless creator
Of war, battle, and sadness.
Death! the killer of gladness
 He seemed to the women.

Sweet Ceres, goddess of corn,
At your loss, each year, men mourn,
And for six months eagerly wait your return,
Offering sacrifice ; singing the while the priests burn
Incense, and offer up prayers,
Crying "Cast off your cares
Thro' Proserpine's loss."

Neptune, King of sea, fountains,
Rivers, shaker of mountains,
Seated with trident enthroned in a shell,
The fate's warning to you they've come far to tell.
Soon no god shall be left.
The power'll be cleft
By a single man.

Saturn, the old father-god,
Hercules, killer of snakes,
All shall be underfoot trod.
No one will plead for their sakes ;
Myth shall be their only stay.
They shall live, but live in the past.
The ancients' god's had his day.
Christ's white reign's come at last.

12/9/13.

Evening.

Of all the gifts that God has given,
There's one so calm and grand,
We soon forget that man has striven
To fight, and sour the land.

So bloodshed, vice, and all man's wrongs,
Fall fast before its might;
And man forgets life's busy throngs
Enraptured with the sight.

The sky ablaze with ruddy glow,
The orange fire around,
Gives place to greeny-blues which flow
To clouds with purple crowned.

The great vast beauty of it all,
The calm which reigns so still;
The colours, tints, and shades which fall,
All thoughts but fair ones kill.

And then the purple curtain falls;
Sun sinks his golden head:
The gently-rising zephyr calls
Like whisp'rings from the dead.

The moon her silver face now shows,
She beckons out her stars—
And yet around e'en now still glows
Sun's fire in blood-red bars.

And so we see the short-lived life
Of an evening's glorious wane:
And surely man, midst woe and strife,
Finds faith from this eve's brief reign.

7/9/13.

Fairies ?

My life? O! it's happy and short,
My tale, that's just the same too,
For I've seen in the burn over yonder,
For I've heard 'neath that hollow old tree,
What would make you mortal folk wonder,
And you'd envy the likes o' me.

For all night long have I watched 'em.
I've seen the wee folk at play.
I've seen the pixies, the fairies, the fays.
I've seen them dance at night in the moon.
I've heard 'em singing their songs and their lays—
I've heard 'em eerily whisper and croon.

When the old sun's low in the west,
When the moon creeps into the sky,
Then the flick'ring shades 'neath the old oak-bole,
Then the hustling sigh of the wind in the glen,
And the death-like silence, or hoot of the owl,
Would startle, would frighten you men.

And the waterfall softly drones
Its elemental lay,
For the phantom shades to dance with the light
That heralds the coming of beautiful day.
While the music rises and falls with night,
Then sinks and fades with the sun's red ray.

Then you scowl at me and you scoff,
"These are no goblins or fawns,
For oft I've seen all yon scampering shades
As they dance and frolic and sport themselves.
I've seen the stars and the moon thro' the glades,
But these—are these your pixies and elves?"

Now listen, O do— tho' I'm young,
Yet for me I'm old, so old.
Tho' I'm only a swaying rush of green,
That idly grows in a ferny dell,
Yet I've watched, I've listened, I've heard and I've
seen—
So, mortal child, you may see—who can tell?

13/4/14. To Katherine.

Something New.

Our minds are narrow, small,
Ambitious, unsatisfied—
But the spirit of youth urging the soul,
But the thoughts of mystery wrapped in your name,
And the ages of time that wearily roll
Conjure up memories, fan into flame
Our mouldering longings for you, the unknown.

With age truth is revealed.
We see the dawn and spring,
We see the nest and the young birds born.
From the same old brook new harmonies sound.
The new thread of our life is magically drawn.
Awakened we laugh, at last we have found,
Something new in the old, old world!

To you, fair earth and sky,
And rock and open sea,
To you, Mother Nature, pure and kind,
To you, sweet night, and your mystical friends
The gentle zephyr and fearsome wind,
We offer our thanks for beauty that lends
The artist his picture, the poet his song.

But we are mortal folk,
So we crave for something new.
Tho' we never shall tire of leaf or tree,
Yet we worry, we fret, and we longingly pray.
For we seek, we look for knowledge of thee,
No matter from whence, or whither you stray,
As long as you're different, new, to us men.

Treasure.

Like a sea bird's cry that lingers,
Or the surf's incessant moaning,
Something always seemed to haunt him—
Mystic whispers used to taunt him,
And he'd hearken to their droning.

"Uncontented, you must venture,
Voyage afar, and go discover
Out beyond that blue deep's ending,
Where the sea and sky are blending,
Seek for wealth, you treasure lover."

So one day he launched his galleon,
Decked mast-high in gaudy colours.
And with happy laughter, guided
For the golden sundown, glided
In a bank of misty vapours.

But he sailed for days unnumbered
'Neath a sun's relentless burning,
And his men grew sick and weary
Of the hot days, passed in dreary
Contemplations of returning.

Till one day he turned her homeward.
Then the wind and sea grew angry,
And in disappointment clashing,
Foamed in breakers vainly lashing
At the vessel, in their fury.

But at last he spied his landmarks
Lying low 'twixt breakers, fleeting.
And he cried aloud with pleasure
He had found his hidden treasure,
For his wife awaited, greeting.

A Meditation on Highland Country.

With dulness all your purple slopes
Are clothed, in quiet mystery.
Each lonely flower idly mopes
Its life should pass so sullenly;
Your tranquil calm, all listless lorn,
Those barren heights which wear a state
Of lonely majesty. Upborne
Upon your peaks so great
And bare, there rests the stately throne
Of your wild dignity supreme.
Low breezes, your true subjects, moan
To lull you in that lonely dream.
Like distant music far away
In harmony the brooks and wind
Blend, crooning songs which gently play
Upon our vague enchanted mind.
Anon, with blazon trumpets' blare
Tear screeching gusts in howling blast;
Like music hushed, wild maidens fair
Will chant from burns that warble past.
That snow-white sheet or canopy
From mountain tops, the misty clouds
In stately train all orderly
Enwrap the moorland in their shrouds.
And oft above a calm will mock
The noisy cascade's clashing voice,
As, falling sheer from rock to rock,
With happy cry that rings "Rejoice!"
She laughs to scorn the noble piles
Of Mother Nature's handiwork—

Leaps dancing madly o'er the miles
Which carry her to where may lurk
The silent lakes, like sheets of blue,
Tucked lazily amongst the rills
Like fairies' bath, whose azure hue
Reflects and mirrors clear the hills.
And then your lofty throne, o'erspread
With carpets rich of purest snow,
Fit only for the dainty tread
Of your wild populace below,
Which tend their young, safe guarded by
The antlered deer which roam around.
That lazy heron's piercing cry,
Yon heathered moor and ferny ground,
Those rustling trees and lonely birds,
The lichened slopes of mossy green,
Here dashed with red of browsing herds—
The quiet lochs which e'er have been
The harbourer's of moorland's fowl,
Your mighty freedom, naught but space.
The low wind's sigh and lonely howl,
Or ghostly shriek of birds affright
May interrupt your tranquil lair—
O surely you, in your lone might,
Are truly happy, truly rare.

Sept., 1913.

Virgin White.

Earth's richest, deepest blues,
Her gorgeous purple hues,
The green of western sea
In its wild majesty,
Fire's furious crimson red,
Or black, so dull and dead,
Dawn's dainty pink so light,
The eerie shades of night—
Or dearest turkish dye,
The richest man could buy—
And lustrous gems so rare;
Not one is half as fair
As white : pure, virgin, white.

8/9/13.

The Lonely Syren.

A Viking's galleon she,
That sailed on a summer sea,
A warrior leaned from her wooden prow.
He dreamed of home far away,
He longed for his little one's play,
He lowered his head and darkened his brow.

Far out in the deep he gazed,
Stared at a sand-bank, amazed!
Not real? what he saw on the yellow strand—
Surely his eyes told a lie!
Was he mad? He wanted to fly,
But was held, as if charmed by a wizard's hand.

He oft had laughed as a lad,
Had scoffed, and called the folk mad,
To believe that a nymph still existed.
He turned to the sky blood-red,
Stamped, beat his hands, shook his head,
He could not remove it, the vision persisted.

'Twas a mermaid still sleeping,
White foam round her leaping,
She was fairer than dawn, eve, or night.
Weird, lithe, half-fish, half a girl,
Her dark hair wild, in a swirl,
Wreathing her delicate arms, so white.

She awoke, saw the ship,
Watched her roll, saw her dip,
Then waved to the warrior standing alone.
She splashed deep in the sea,
Was lost, then rose full of glee:
And the wind in the rigging started to moan.

She swam fast, racing before
The ship's prow, while a low roar,
Followed in wake of the galleon's boom.
She circled her arms about,
Sang in a loud, shrilly shout,
Wind screamed; the ship hastened on to doom.

The storm howled, reached its height,
The boat shook in its flight.
Then one mighty roar, one terrible gust,
Crash! and a sickening shock,
She was dashed on the rock.
Water lashed, wind screamed, she crumbled to dust.

The wind fell low, hushed its howl,
The sky grew calm, hid its scowl.
The water smoothed like a land-locked lake.
All silent—save a girlish voice
Singing a song to rejoice
That another soul followed her wake.

12/9/13

Past.

Gone! gone! sunk in the depths of earth's ages,
Now we love the one we oft did hate.
O that we may glean from her past pages
New themes of life before it is too late!

Inscribed upon the tablet which she wears
Lie memories that all men love to hear.
Their childhood's free and happy days it bears,
Youth's pleasures, life's first battles written clear

When life's work is finished and man grows aged,
As he sits and gazes down through glowing coals,
Whilst thinking, he will see the past re-staged,
He'll live in it again as by it rolls.

Present.

Always with us, yet coming and going,
Melting to past, from future taking form—
Joy, happiness, death, sorrow, are flowing
By, passing like the haze before a storm.

Future.

Dark and uncertain, eerie, but so sure,
How we long to know what she will bring.
All lies written in her golden casket pure—
Yet from her breast not one word may we wring.

Youth meditates and wonders what she'll be,
Age understands and never trusts her long.
He knows she's unchained, fetterless and free,
Remembers how she's fickle, crafty, strong.

Unfathomable mystery, blank and bare,
That offers man some hopeless baffling strife.
'Tis future with this quality so rare,
Spurs man to work and live a noble life.

12/10/13.

Summer Storm.

Something pending and foreboding,
Something in the distance moans;
And the laden trees they whisper,
And the woodwork creaks and groans—
While the sun's light seems uncertain,
And perplexed fades 'neath a cloud,
Black, threatening in the distance,
Like the winter's gloomy shroud.
Then that feeling of a mystery,
As a door is startled, crashes,
And it shakes the earth again,
While the whistling lightning flashes,
Lending splendour to the scene.
Something slowly mutters, pat'ring;
'Tis the rain with muffled noises
To the leaflets swiftly chatt'ring
With its low caressing call.
Then, like Jove's majestic roaring,
Bursts the thunder from the sky:
But it dwindles, slowly soaring
To an echo far away.
And the rain, in satisfaction,
Weirdly ceases its crude song—
All seems peaceful, save the action
Of the raindrops quickly falling
From the rafters, lowly beating
A stern metre to the music
Of the freshness, and in greeting
To the sun.

23/4/14.

Awaken !

Are the men of the age yet awake to the fact
That they're born in the world to inherit their share ?
Not like slaves years ago to be bought or be sold,
For they're men, with emotions for love and for care,
Why should sluggards in ease squander ancestor's gold,
While the pitman yet toils in the grimy earth's core ?
And the worker of metal still sweats 'neath the fire,
While the seaman's still haunted by howling winds roar
Like a madman's fierce shriek or a devil's wild choir.
All those sons of the earth, that brave bludgeoning fate
Why should they, that are men, in this world full of
health
Toil for those puppets which all of them hate,
Those accurs'd and (oft) fattening nurslings of wealth ?

April, 1913.

A Rose and a Life.

A Spring dawn's sun was rising,
A pretty child stood watching—
Stood watching all the golden forks of light
Dispersing those unwilling shades of night.
She reached to toy with buds of would-be bloom,
And, happy in the loss of sullen gloom,
She laughed in her childish way.

A Summer sun shone glaring.
A fair young girl was gazing—
Was gazing o'er a garden bathed in flower.
And thinking of a bygone childhood's hour
Spent playing with the buds now burst from green,
And spreading forth soft flakes of velvet sheen.
She smiled at the thought of that day.

An Autumn sun was sinking
'Midst folds of mist now lifting—
Now lifting with the gentle wind that fanned
A drooping rose, held in a withered hand.
She touched the one-time sov'reign of the bank,
A petal fell—and, as to earth it sank,
She paused. Gold locks had turned to grey!

A Winter sun had passed away;
A pattering rain drove out the day—
No rose now decked the branches of that tree
Which stood uncared for, drooped in misery.
But just beyond the one-time bank of bloom
A stately train now bore her to her tomb,
And on the bier a bunch of roses lay!

Rebirth.

A summer sun was sinking low,
A silver moon cast flick'ring shades,
Foreboding zephyrs slowly blow
A yielding mist thro' wooded glades.
A listless form lay on the ground,
Outstretched beneath a sky of lead,
His haggard face showed that he'd found
Some misery that bowed his head,
As if his mind was in a hood.
The world was blurred, tho' faint and dim,
He heard the rustlings in the wood,
For fierce despair had mastered him.
The sun had gone, and rain fell fast
Bespatting both his clothes and hair.
As night wore on, a growing blast
Of threatening wind was everywhere.
The tortured form still lay inert,
Ground in the mill of conscience pangs,
Mocked by bitter taunts that hurt
Him, gripped in misery's cruel fangs.
And thus, that ghastly night droned past.
The harassed form, yet lay quite still,
And as each gust would skurry past
It helped to cleanse his mind from ill.
At last, the wind grew calm and ceased,
The clouds had hurried far away,
For nature had at this hour leased
From time, a new born day.
A faintly flick'ring ray of dawn
Had pierced the canopy of night,
And slowly o'er the sky was drawn
A pinkish glow of ruddy light.

Beasts and birds awoke from sleep,
A bubbling brook bespoke its wealth,
And from the hills the sun's rays peep,
Bathing all the land in health.
A mind and body soaked in gloom
Slowly from oblivion came,
And paralyzed, 's tho' snatched from doom
Gazed at the sun's red flame.
The breaking of that early dawn
Had helped that man—at last—to find
Within its reign of being born,
What most he sought, his peace of mind.

Life's Ring.

A golden ring around a finger,
Has a time-worn tale to tell.
Now a ring is never ending,
Always twisting, turning, blending,
Meeting self and self again.

And so swathing life there linger,
Mutable and mystic ringlets,
As the same sky golden shrouded
Changes, draped for winter, clouded
In a pall of neutral hue.

So man's ancient thoughts and actions,
Seeming lost yet latent, waiting,
Rise disguised, their raiment altering,
Follow Phoebus never faltering,
Waxing, waning thus for aye.

Life, death, love, war, empire's factions,
In a sequence droll or blissful,
Bide man's time all waiting power,
And as seed to splendid flower,
Pass around their meted way.

Water.

Like the dew-drop in the morning,
As a rare gem's lustre flashing
In a tiny point of light
Gathered slowly thro' the night.
Like the downy mist at dawning
Idling, lazy in the valley,
Shrouding all the rich green land
With its soft and velvet hand.

Like the streams of sparkling water,
Or the bland and mighty ocean,
Calm and tranquil, stern and bold,
Fiercely wild or cruel and cold—
Like the sweetness in the desert,
Of oasis cool and greeny—
Like the rushing hurried clouds
Battered, huddled in their crowds.

Like the snow-and-ice-clad mountains
Staring coldly, lacking feeling—
Whited—loving, not unloved,
By the ages left unproved—
So the water, man's own brother,
Lives a life of rôles é'er-changing,
And the man, unstable too,
Lives his life, now false, now true.

Tho' unstable as the water,
Moved and influenced by the breeze,
Yet there lives and grows with him
Tho' obscure, uncertain, dim,
All the strength, the force, the power,
Of the lashing hail and rain storm
Only waiting the great shining
Of the rainbow—God's combining.

Nil Desperandum.

When I sweat in the toil of the day,
And my work whatever it is
May pause, and my lips seem to pray.
Was I born in the world all for this?
Wherefore here? What's my work?
Was I fashioned as toys upon earth?
As a puppet to live my life through
And be sport of the wind since my birth?

Then at night to rest I will go,
And I hurl myself down on a bed;
But the phantoms they hound me, I know,
I'm a dog, and I wish I were dead!
I've lain so long in a slumber,
It seemed a series of years,
And I listen, I watch, and I wonder,
And my pillow is steeped in my tears!

For I know—t'was flung in my teeth,
T'was hurled in my face as I slept!
If you probe through the outward sheathe
You'll learn the secret I've kept.
For look! All around are my friends,
They are piece and part of the play,
And the truth that dawns on my mind
Rends the weight. It urged me to pray.

Tho' I'm seared, yet have I striven.
Then cheer! and let's try again.
'Tis said your past is forgiven,
Let's scorn it's filthy black stain!
The fairest form e'er was fashioned,
So lovely and good to behold,
When you sever the outward weaving
You'll find some spots in its fold.

“The Garden of England.”

The far off vagrant, musing, found his memory wandering back, home—and he conjured before him fleeting visions of England, his land, and he sang a song “O, to be in England,” and he rhapsodized on the beauty of the brushwood sheaf and the elm-tree bole. And others sing the glories of the hedgerows, the beauty of the woodlands, the music of the streamlets, sparkling 'neath the summer suns, the enchantments of the meadow; and they call them “The garden of England.” And another poet sings, “A thing of beauty is a joy for ever,” and they say “England is beautiful,” and they sing, “England is a garden.”

Have you ever seen a garden run to seed?
Have you ever seen a stately flower left untended
to run her own undisciplined course?

The garden ceases to be beautiful, ceases to be a joy for ever; it reverts to a tangled wild of twisting, twining foliage, neighbour gripping neighbour, selfishly throttling each other in a fierce bid for light and life—a kingdom of flowers swamped, writhing in the turbid sea of anarchy and war—the one-time stately flower, now, a cruel wild weed. But the cultured garden lives on, an object of beauty, of joy.

England is a cultured garden, her people are the tended flowers, tended mutually by each other.

Then some, pondering, mutter—“Is this your old monition, patriotism? We, unpatriotic! Do we

not toil and sweat in the gaudy, flag-decked meeting hall? Do we not shout our throats hoarse and dry, loudly singing 'Rule Britannia'? We weary, we tire of that old reproof, we are citizens, we live in the garden of England."

Can they not see the tiny nettle seedling beyond the hedgerow, nor across the moorland the thistles springing, and over the flower bed the faint green points of the sprouting weeds?

No, all is sweet, the garden has been hoed and scythed by our forefathers, brake and brier are young, and the smell of the blossom is calling. And so, the dazzling splendour of colour, flags, and bloom flashing bravely in the golden sun masks the grim, hidden, ever-rising realities.

As the swallow loves her last year's nest, as we harbour a crude affection for the well-rubbed book, and the trite saying, for they are old friends, tried and not found wanting—so should we love an old, tried country, which bequeaths to her sons a goodly heritage.

Then must we remember—"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," and as "Ill weeds grow fast," we must keep our garden weeded.

July, 1914.



Youth

A Song.

Leslie
Phillips
Jones

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