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# THE TOILING OF FELIX

☞  
A LEGEND

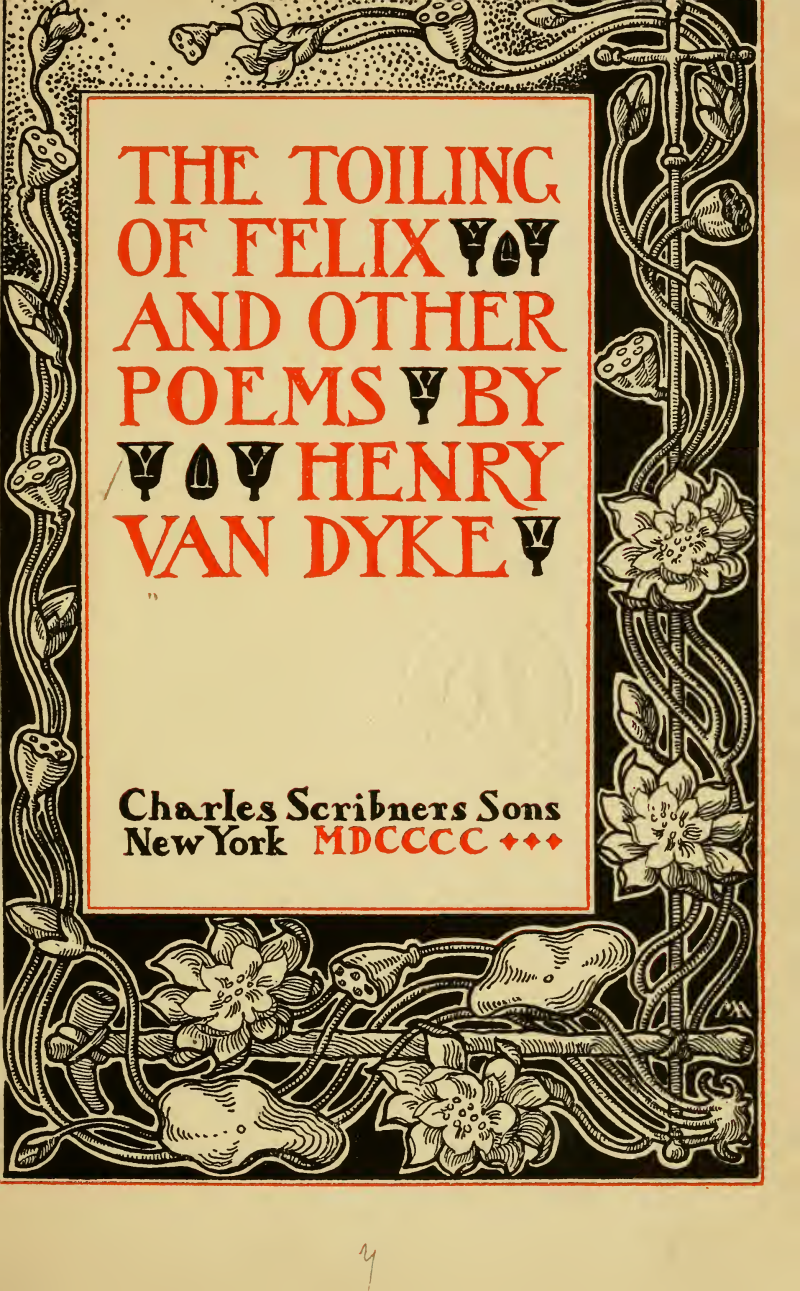
ON A NEW SAYING OF JESUS








*I*N the rubbish heaps of the ancient city of Oxyrhynchus, near the river Nile, a party of English Explorers, in the winter of 1897, discovered a fragment of a papyrus book, written in the Second or Third Century, and hitherto unknown. This single leaf contained parts of seven short sentences of Christ, each introduced by the words, "Jesus says:" It is to the fifth of these Sayings of Jesus that the following poem refers.

THE TOILING OF FELIX  
AND OTHER POEMS







THE TOILING  
OF FELIX    
AND OTHER  
POEMS  BY  
   HENRY  
VAN DYKE 

Charles Scribners Sons  
New York **MDCCCC** ♦♦♦

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## PRELUDE

### A LOST WORD OF JESUS

**H**EAR a word that Jesus spake  
Eighteen centuries ago,  
Where the crimson lilies blow  
Round the blue Tiberian lake :  
There the bread of life he brake,  
Through the fields of harvest walking  
With His lowly comrades, talking  
Of the secret thoughts that feed  
Weary hearts in time of need.  
Art thou hungry? Come and take ;  
Hear the word that Jesus spake :  
'T is the sacrament of labour ; meat and drink  
divinely blest ;  
Friendship's food, and sweet refreshment ;  
strength and courage, joy and rest.

Yet this word the Master said,  
Long ago and far away,  
Silent and forgotten lay  
Buried with the silent dead, —  
Where the sands of Egypt spread,  
Sea-like, tawny billows heaping  
Over ancient cities sleeping ;  
While the River Nile between  
Rolls its summer flood of green,  
Rolls its autumn flood of red, —  
There the word the Master said,  
Written on a frail papyrus, scorched by fire,  
wrinkled, torn,  
Hidden in God's hand, was waiting for its  
resurrection morn.

Hear the Master's risen word !  
Delving spades have set it free,—  
Wake ! the world has need of thee,—  
Rise, and let thy voice be heard,  
Like a fountain disinterred,  
Upward springing, singing, sparkling ;  
Through the doubtful shadows darkling ;  
Till the clouds of pain and rage  
Brooding o'er the toiling age,  
As with rifts of light are stirred  
By the music of the Word ;  
Gospel for the heavy-laden, answer to the  
labourer's cry ;  
*“Raise the stone, and thou shalt find Me ; cleave the  
wood, and there am I.”*

## LEGEND

### THE TOILING OF FELIX

**L**ISTEN, ye who look for Jesus, long to see  
Him close to you,  
To a legend of this saying ; how one tried, and  
found it true.

Born in Egypt, 'neath the shadow of the crum-  
bling gods of night,

He forsook the ancient darkness, turned his  
young heart toward the Light.

Felix was the name they gave him, when his  
faith was first confessed ;

But the name was unavailing, for his life was  
yet unblessed.

Seeking Christ, in vain he waited for the vision  
of the Lord ;

Vainly pondered all the volumes where the  
creeds of men were stored ;



Vainly shut himself in silence, keeping vigil  
night and day ;

Vainly haunted shrines and churches where  
the Christians came to pray.

One by one he dropped the duties of the com-  
mon life of care ;

Broke the human ties that bound him ; laid his  
spirit waste and bare ;

Hoping that the Lord would enter to that  
empty dwelling-place,  
And reward the loss of all things with the  
vision of His face.

Still the blessed vision tarried ; still the light  
was unrevealed ;

Still the Master, dim and distant, kept His  
countenance concealed.

Fainter grew the hope of finding, wearier grew  
the fruitless quest ;

Prayer, and penitence, and fasting gave no  
comfort, brought no rest.

In the darkness of the temple, ere the lamp of  
faith went out,  
Felix knelt before the altar — lonely, sad, and  
full of doubt.

“Hear me, O thou mighty Master,” from the  
altar-step he cried,  
“Let my one desire be granted, let my hope  
be satisfied !

“Only once I long to see thee, in the fulness of  
Thy grace :  
Break the clouds that now enfold Thee, with  
the sunrise of Thy face !

“All that men desire and treasure have I  
counted loss for Thee ;  
Every task have I forsaken, save this one —  
my Lord to see.

“Loosed the sacred bands of friendship, soli-  
tary stands my heart ;  
Thou shalt be my sole companion when I see  
Thee as Thou art.

“ From Thy distant throne in glory, flash upon  
my inward sight,  
Fill the midnight of my spirit with the splen-  
dour of Thy light.

“ All Thine other gifts and blessings, common  
mercies, I disown ;  
Separated from my brothers, I would see Thy  
face alone.

“ Let them toil and pray together, let them win  
earth’s best reward,  
This shall be my only glory — I alone have  
seen the Lord.

“ I have watched and I have waited as one  
watcheth for the morn :  
Still Thou hidest in the heavens, still Thou  
leavest me forlorn.

“ Now I seek Thee in the desert, where the  
holy hermits dwell ;  
There, beside the saint Serapion, I will find a  
lonely cell.

“ There at last Thou wilt be gracious ; there  
Thy presence, long-concealed,  
In the solitude and silence to my heart shall  
stand revealed.

“ Thou shalt come, at morn or even, o’er the  
rolling waves of sand ;  
I shall see Thee close beside me, I shall touch  
Thy pierced hand.

“ Lo, Thy pilgrim kneels before Thee ; bless  
my journey with a word ;  
Tell me now that, if I follow, I shall find Thee,  
O my Lord ! ”

Felix listened : through the darkness, like the  
whispering of the wind,  
Came a secret voice in answer : “ Seek aright,  
and thou shalt find.”

Long and toilsome was his pathway through  
the heavy land of heat,  
Egypt’s blazing sun above him, blistering sands  
beneath his feet.

Still he plodded slowly onward, step by step  
and mile by mile,  
Till he reached the rugged mountain, beetling  
high above the Nile,

Where the birds of air assemble, once a year,  
their noisy flocks,  
Then, departing, leave their sentinel perched  
among the barren rocks.

Far away, on wings of gladness, over land and  
sea they fly ;  
But the watcher on the summit lonely stands  
against the sky.

There the eremite Serapion in a cave had made  
his bed ;  
There the bands of wandering pilgrims sought  
his blessing, brought him bread.

Month by month, in deep seclusion, hidden in  
the rocky cleft,  
Dwelt the hermit, fasting, praying ; once a year  
the cave he left.

On that day, one happy pilgrim, chosen out of  
all the land,  
Won a special sign of favour from the holy  
hermit's hand.

Underneath the narrow window, at the door-  
way closely sealed,  
While the afterglow of sunset deepened round  
him, Felix kneeled.

“Man of God, of men most holy — thou whose  
gifts cannot be priced! —  
Grant me thy most precious guerdon; tell me  
how to find the Christ.”

Breathless, Felix bowed and listened, but no  
answering voice he heard;  
Darkness folded, dumb and deathlike, round the  
Mountain of the Bird.

Then he said, “The saint is silent — he would  
teach my soul to wait;  
I will tarry here in patience, like a beggar at  
his gate.”

So the companies of pilgrims, clambering up  
the rocky stair,  
Found the lonely, voiceless stranger by the  
window, lost in prayer,

Never moving from his station, watching there  
without complaint, —  
Soon they came to call him holy, fed him as  
they fed the saint.

Day by day he saw the sunrise flood the distant  
plain with gold,  
While the River Nile beneath him, silvery  
coiling, seaward rolled.

Night by night he saw the planets range their  
glittering court on high,  
Saw the moon, with regal motion, mount her  
throne and rule the sky.

Morn advanced and midnight fled, in visionary  
pomp attired ;  
Never morn and never midnight brought the  
vision long-desired.

Now at last the day is dawning when Serapion  
makes his gift ;  
Felix kneels before the threshold, hardly dares  
his eyes to lift.

Now the cavern door uncloses, now the saint  
above him stands,  
Blesses him without a word, and leaves a token  
in his hands.

'T is the guerdon of thy waiting — look ! thou  
happy pilgrim, look ! —  
Nothing but a tattered fragment of an old papy-  
rus book.

Read ! perchance the clue to guide thee tangled  
in the words may lie :  
*“ Raise the stone, and thou shalt find Me ; cleave the  
wood, and there am I.”*

Can it be the mighty Master spake such simple  
words as these ?  
Can it be that men must seek Him, at their  
toil, 'mid rocks and trees ?



Disappointed, heavy-hearted, from the Mountain of the Bird

Felix mournfully descended, questioning the Master's word.

Not for him a sacred dwelling, far above the haunts of men :

He must turn his footsteps backward to the common life again.

From a quarry by the river, hollowed out below the hills,

Rose the clattering voice of labour, clanking hammers, clinking drills.

Dust, and noise, and hot confusion made a Babel of the spot :

There, among the lowliest workers, Felix sought and found his lot.

Now he swung the ponderous mallet, smote the iron in the rock —

Muscles quivering, tingling, throbbing — blow on blow and shock on shock ;

Now he drove the willow wedges, wet them till  
they swelled and split,  
With their silent strength, the fragment — sent  
it thundering down the pit.

Now the groaning tackle raised it ; now the rollers  
made it slide ;  
Harnessed men, like beasts of burden, drew it  
to the river-side.

Now the palm-trees must be riven, massive  
timbers hewn and dressed —  
Rafts to bear the stones in safety on the rushing  
river's breast.

Axe and auger, saw and chisel, wrought the will  
of man in wood :  
'Mid the many-handed labour Felix toiled, and  
found it good.

Every day the blood ran fleeter through his  
limbs and round his heart ;  
Every night his sleep was sweeter, knowing he  
had done his part.

Dreams of solitary saintship faded from him;  
 but, instead,  
 Came a sense of daily comfort, in the toil for  
 daily bread.

Far away, across the river, gleamed the white  
 walls of the town  
 Whither all the stones and timbers, day by day,  
 were drifted down.

There the workman saw his labour taking form  
 and bearing fruit,  
 Like a tree with splendid branches rising from a  
 humble root.

Looking at the distant city, temples, houses,  
 domes, and towers,  
 Felix cried in exultation: " All the mighty work  
 is ours.

" Every mason in the quarry, every builder on  
 the shore,  
 Every chopper in the palm-grove, every rafts-  
 man at the oar —

“Hewing wood and drawing water, splitting  
stones and cleaving sod—

All the dusty ranks of labour, in the regiment  
of God,

“March together toward His triumph, do the  
task His hands prepare:

Honest toil is holy service; faithful work is  
praise and prayer.”

So through all the heat and burden Felix felt  
the sense of rest

Flowing softly, like a fountain, deep within his  
weary breast.

Felt the brotherhood of labour, rising round him  
like the tide,

Overflow his heart, and join him to the workers  
at his side.

Oft he cheered them with his singing at the  
breaking of the light,

Told them tales of Christ at nooning, taught  
them words of prayer at night.

So he felt the Master's presence drawing  
closer all the while :  
Though the Master's face was hidden, yet he  
knew it wore a smile.

Once he bent above a comrade fainting in the  
mid-day heat,  
Sheltered him with woven palm-leaves, gave  
him water, cool and sweet.

Then it seemed, for one swift moment, secret  
radiance filled the place;  
Underneath the green palm-branches flashed  
one look of Jesus' face.

Once again, a raftsman, slipping, plunged be-  
neath the stream and sank ;  
Swiftly Felix leaped to rescue—caught him,  
drew him toward the bank—

Battling with the cruel river, using all his  
strength to save—  
Did he dream? or was there One beside him  
walking on the wave?

Now at last the work was ended ; grove de-  
serted, quarry stilled,  
Felix journeyed to the city that his hands had  
helped to build.

In the darkness of the temple, at the closing  
hour of day,  
Once again he sought the altar, once again he  
knelt to pray :

“Hear me, O Thou hidden Master ; Thou hast  
sent a word to me ;  
It is written—Thy commandment. I have  
kept it. Look and see.

“Thou hast bid me leave the visions of the  
solitary life ;  
Bear my part in human labour ; take my share  
in human strife.

“I have done Thy bidding, Master ; raised the  
rock and felled the tree ;  
Swung the axe and plied the hammer, working  
every day for Thee.

“ Once it seemed I saw Thy presence through  
the bending palm-leaves gleam ;  
Once upon the flowing water — Nay, I know not  
— ’t was a dream !

“ This I know : Thou hast been near me : more  
than this I dare not ask.  
Though I see Thee not, I love Thee. Let me  
do Thy humblest task ! ”

Through the dimness of the temple slowly  
dawned a mystic light ;  
There the Master stood in glory, manifest to  
mortal sight :

Hands that bore the mark of labour, brow that  
bore the print of care ;  
Hands of power, divinely tender ; brow of light,  
divinely fair.

“ Harken, good and faithful servant, true dis-  
ciple, loyal friend !  
Thou hast followed Me and found Me ; I will  
keep thee to the end.

“ Well I know thy toil and trouble. - Often  
weary, fainting, worn,  
I have lived the life of labour; heavy burdens I  
have borne.

“ Never in a prince’s palace have I slept on  
golden bed,  
Never in a hermit’s cavern have I eaten un-  
earned bread.

“ Born within a lowly stable, where the cattle  
round Me stood,  
Trained a carpenter in Nazareth, I have toiled,  
and found it good.

— “ They who tread the path of labour follow  
where My feet have trod ;  
— They who work without complaining do the  
holy will of God.

— “ Where the many toil together, there am I  
among My own ;  
— Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I  
with him alone.



“I, the peace that passeth knowledge, dwell  
amid the daily strife ;

I, the bread of heaven, am broken in the sacra-  
ment of life.

“Every task, however simple, sets the soul that  
does it free ;

Every deed of love and mercy, done to man, is  
done to Me.

“Thou hast learned the peaceful secret ; thou  
hast come to Me for rest ;

With thy burden, in thy labour, thou art Felix,  
doubly blest.

— “Nevermore thou needest seek Me ; I am with  
thee everywhere ;

— Raise the stone, and thou shalt find Me ; cleave  
the wood, and I am there.”

## ENVOY

### THE GOSPEL OF LABOUR

THE legend of Felix is ended, the toiling of  
Felix is done ;  
The Master has paid him his wages, the goal of  
his journey is won ;  
He rests, but he never is idle ; a thousand years  
pass like a day,  
In the glad surprise of that Paradise where  
work is sweeter than play.

But I think the King of that country comes out  
from his tireless host,  
And walks in this world of the weary, as if He  
loved it the most ;  
For here in the dusty confusion, with eyes that  
are heavy and dim,  
He meets again the labouring men who are  
looking and longing for Him.

He cancels the curse of Eden, and brings them  
a blessing instead:

Blessed are they that labour, for Jesus partakes  
of their bread.

He puts His hand to their burdens, He enters  
their homes at night:

Who does his best shall have as a guest the  
Master of life and of light.

And courage will come with His presence, and  
patience return at His touch,

And manifold sins be forgiven to those who love  
Him much ;

And the cries of envy and anger will change to  
the songs of cheer,

For the toiling age will forget its rage when the  
Prince of Peace draws near.

This is the gospel of labour — ring it, ye bells of  
the kirk —

The Lord of Love came down from above, to  
live with the men who work.

This is the rose that He planted, here in the  
thorn-cursed soil —

Heaven is blest with perfect rest, but the bless-  
ing of Earth is toil.

VERA

☪  
AN IDYLL

OF THE MYSTERY OF SOUND



A SILENT world, — yet full of vital joy  
Uttered in movements manifold, and swift  
Clear smiles that flashed across the face of  
things

Like sudden sunbeams of divine delight, —  
A world of many sorrows too, made known  
In fading flowers, and withering leaves, and  
dark

Tear-laden clouds, and tearless, clinging mists  
That hung above the earth too sad to weep, —  
A world of fluent change, and changeless flow,  
And infinite suggestion of new thoughts,  
Reflected in the mirror of the heart

With shifting colours and dissolving forms,  
From dark to light and back again to dark, —  
A world of many meanings but no words :  
A silent world was Vera's home.

For her  
The hidden doors of sound were shut and sealed.  
The outer portals, delicate as shells,  
Suffused with faintest rose of far-off morn,  
Like underglow of daybreak in the sea, —  
The ear-gates of the garden of her soul,

Shaded by drooping tendrils of brown hair, '   
Waited in vain for messengers to pass,   
And thread the inner paths with flying feet,   
And swiftly knock upon the inmost doors,   
And enter in, and speak the mystic word   
To Vera, sitting there alone and listening.   
But through those gates no message ever came :   
Only with eyes did she behold and see, —   
With eyes as crystal-clear and bright and brown   
As waters of a woodland river, — eyes   
That questioned so they almost seemed to   
    speak,   
And answered so they almost seemed to hear,—   
Only with silent eyes did she behold   
The inarticulate wonder of the world.

She saw the great wind ranging freely down   
Interminable archways of the wood ;   
And tossing boughs and bending tree-tops hailed   
His coming : but no sea-tuned voice of pines,   
No roaring of the oaks, no silvery song   
Of poplars or of birches, followed him :   
He passed ; they waved their arms and clapped   
    their hands ;   
But all was still.



The torrents from the hills  
Leaped down their rocky stairways, like wild  
steeds

Breaking the yoke and shaking manes of foam.  
The lowland brooks coiled smoothly through  
the fields,

And softly spread themselves in glistening lakes  
Whose ripples merrily danced among the reeds.  
The standing waves that never change their  
place

In the swift rapids, curled upon themselves,  
And seemed about to break and never broke ;  
And all the wandering waves that fill the sea  
Came buffeting in along the stony shore,  
And plunging in along the level sands,  
And creeping in through creeks with swirling  
tides

And eddies. Yet from all the ceaseless flow  
And tumult of the unresting element  
Came neither shout of joy nor sob of grief,  
For there were many waters, but no voice.

Silent the actors all on Nature's stage  
Performed their parts before her watchful eyes,  
Coming and going, making war and love,

Working and playing, all without a sound.  
The oxen drew their load with swaying necks,  
The kine came sauntering home along the lane,  
The trooping sheep were driven from field to  
    fold,  
In mute obedience. Down the unseen track  
The hounds, with panting sides and lolling  
    tongues,  
Pursued their flying prey with noiseless haste.  
The birds, the most alive of living things,  
The quickest to respond to joy and fear,  
Found mates, and built their nests, and reared  
    their young,  
And waged their mimic strifes, and flashed  
    athwart  
Dark avenues of shade as sparks of light,  
And over sunlit field as spots of shade ;  
They swam the flood of air like tiny ships  
Rising and falling o'er invisible waves,  
And, gathering in great navies, bore away  
To North or South, without a note of song.

All these were Vera's playmates, and she loved  
To watch them, wondering oftentimes how well  
They knew their parts, and how the drama  
    moved

So swiftly, smoothly on from scene to scene  
Without confusion. But she sometimes  
dreamed

There must be something hidden in the play  
Unknown to her, an utterance of life  
More clear than action and more deep than  
looks.

And this she felt most surely when she watched  
Her human comrades and the throngs of men.  
They met and parted oft with moving lips  
That seemed to mean far more than she could  
see.

No deed of anger or of tenderness  
Could bring such sudden changes to the face,  
Could work such magical effects in life,  
As those same dumbly-moving lips. She saw  
A lover bend above a maid beloved  
With moving lips, and, though he touched her  
not,  
Her cheeks bloomed roses and her eyes flashed  
light.

She saw a hater stand before his foe  
And move his lips ; whereat the other shrank  
As if he had been smitten on the mouth.  
She saw great regiments of toiling men

Marshalled in ranks and led by moving lips.  
But once she saw a sight more strange than all :  
A crowd of people sitting charmed and still  
Around a little company of men  
Who touched their hands in measured, rhyth-  
mic time  
To curious instruments ; a woman stood  
Among them, with bright eyes and heaving  
breast,  
And lifted up her face and moved her lips.  
Then Vera wondered at the idle play,  
But when she looked around, she saw the glow  
Of deep delight on every face, and tears  
Of tender joy in many eyes, as if  
Some visitor from a celestial world  
Had brought glad tidings. But to her alone  
No angel entered, for the choir of sound  
Was vacant in the temple of her soul.  
And none could pass the gates called Beautiful.

So when, by vision baffled and perplexed,  
She saw that all the world could not be seen,  
And knew she could not know the whole of life  
Unless the hidden gates should be unsealed,  
She felt imprisoned. In her heart there grew

The bitter creeping plant of discontent,  
The plant that only grows in prison soil,  
Whose root is hunger and whose fruit is pain.  
The springs of still delight and tranquil joy  
Were drained as dry as desert dust to feed  
That never-flowering vine, whose tendrils clung  
With strangling touch round every bloom of  
    life

And made it wither. Vera could not rest  
Within the limits of her silent world ;  
Along its spoiled and desolate paths she roamed  
A captive, looking everywhere for rescue.

In those long distant days, and in that land  
Remote, there lived a Master wonderful,  
Who knew the secret of all life, and could,  
With gentle touches and with potent words,  
Open all gates that ever had been sealed,  
And loose all weary prisoners that were bound.  
Obscure he dwelt, not in the wilderness,  
But in a hut among the throngs of men,  
Concealed by meekness and simplicity.  
And ever as he walked the city streets,  
Or sat in quietude beside the sea,  
Or trod the hillsides and the harvest fields,

The multitude passed by and knew him not.  
But there were some who knew, and turned to  
him

For help; and unto all who asked, he gave.  
Thus Vera came, and found him in the field,  
And knew him by the pity in his face.  
She knelt to him and held him by one hand,  
And laid the other hand upon her lips  
In mute entreaty. Then she lifted up  
The coils of hair that hung about her neck  
And bared the beauty of the gates of sound, —  
Those virgin gates through which no voice had  
passed, —

She made them bare before the Master's sight,  
And looked into the kindness of his face  
With eyes that spoke of all her prisoned pain,  
And told her great desire without a word.

The Master waited long in silent thought,  
Like one reluctant to bestow a gift,  
Not for the sake of holding back the thing  
Entreated, but because he surely knew  
Of something better that he fain would give  
If only she would ask it. Then he stooped  
To Vera, smiling, touched her ears and spoke :

“ Open, fair gates, and you, reluctant doors,  
Within the ivory labyrinth of the ear,  
Let fall the bar of silence and unfold !  
Enter, you voices of all living things,  
Enter the garden sealed, — but softly, slowly,  
Not with a noise confused and broken tumult,—  
Come in an order sweet as I command you,  
And bring the double gift of speech and  
hearing.”

Vera began to hear. And first the wind  
Breathed a low prelude of the birth of sound,  
As if an organ far away were touched  
By unseen fingers ; then the little stream  
That hurried down the hillside, swept the harp  
Of music into merry, tinkling notes :  
And then the lark that poised above her head  
On wings a-quiver, overflowed the air  
With showers of song. Thus, one by one, the  
tones  
Of all things living, in an order sweet,  
Without confusion and with deepening power,  
Entered the garden sealed. And last of all  
The Master's voice, the human voice divine,  
Passed through the gates and called her by her  
name,  
And Vera heard.

## II

What rapture of new life  
Must come to one for whom a silent world  
Is suddenly made vocal, and whose heart  
By the same magic is awaked at once,  
Without the learner's toil and long delay,  
Out of a night of dumbly moving dreams,  
Into a day that overflows with music !'  
This joy was Vera's ; and to her it seemed  
As if a new creative morn had risen  
Upon the earth, and after the full week  
When living things unfolded silently,  
And after the long, quiet Sabbath day  
When all was still, another week had dawned,  
And through the calm expectancy of heaven  
A secret voice had said, " Let all things speak."  
The world responded with an instant joy ;  
And the untrodden avenues of sound  
Were thronged with varying forms of viewless  
    life.

To every living thing a voice was given  
Distinct and personal. The forest trees  
Were not more diverse in their shades of green  
Than in their tones of speech ; and every bird



That nested in their branches had a song  
Unknown to other birds and all his own.  
The waters spoke a hundred dialects  
Of one great language ; now with pattering fall  
Of raindrops on the glistening leaves, and now  
With steady roar of rivers rushing down  
To meet the sea, and now with rhythmic throb  
And measured tumult of tempestuous waves,  
And now with lingering lisp of creeping tides, —  
The manifold discourse of many waters.  
But most of all the human voice was full  
Of infinite variety, and ranged  
Along the scale of life's experience  
With changing tones, and notes both sweet and  
    sad,  
All fitted to express some unseen thought,  
Some vital motion of the hidden heart.  
So Vera listened with her new-born sense,  
To all the messengers that passed the gates,  
In measureless delight and utter trust,  
Believing that they brought a true report  
From every living thing of its true life,  
And hoping that at last they would make clear  
The meaning and the mystery of the world.

But soon there came a trouble in her joy,  
A cloud of doubt across her sky of trust,  
A note discordant that dissolved the chord  
And broke the bliss of hearing into pain.  
Not from the harsher sounds and voices wild  
Of anger and of anguish, that reveal  
The secret strife in nature, and confess  
The touch of sorrow on the heart of life, —  
From these her trouble came not. For in these,  
However sad, she felt the note of truth,  
And truth, though sad, is always musical.  
The raging of the tempest-ridden sea,  
The crash of thunder, and the hollow moan  
Of winds complaining round the mountain-  
                  crag ;  
The shrill and quavering cry of birds of prey,  
The fiercer voice of conflict-loving beasts, —  
All these wild sounds are potent in their place  
Within life's mighty symphony ; the charm  
Of truth attunes them, and the hearing ear  
Finds pleasure in their rude sincerity.  
Even the broken and tumultuous noise  
That rises from great cities, where the heart  
Of human toil is beating heavily  
With ceaseless murmurs of the labouring pulse,

Is not a discord ; for it speaks to life  
Of life unfeigned, and full of hopes and fears,  
And touched through all the trouble of its notes  
With something real and therefore glorious.

Only one voice of all that sound on earth, —  
One voice alone is utterly discordant,  
And hateful to the soul, and full of pain, —  
The voice of falsehood. And when Vera heard  
This mocking voice, and knew that it was false ;  
When first she learned that human lips can  
speak

The thing that is not, and betray the ear  
Of simple trust with treachery of words ;  
The joy of hearing withered in her heart.  
For now she felt that faithless messengers  
Could pass the open and unguarded gates  
Of sound, and bring a message all untrue,  
Or half a truth that makes the deadliest lie,  
Or idle babble, neither false nor true,  
But hollow to the heart, and meaningless.  
She heard the flattering voices of deceit,  
That mask the hidden purposes of men  
With fair attire of favourable words,  
And hide the evil in the guise of good.

The voices vain and decorous and smooth,  
That fill the world with empty-hearted talk  
And pass a worthless coin for gold, she heard.  
The foolish voices, wandering and confused,  
That cannot clearly speak the thing they would,  
But ramble blindly round their true intent  
And tangle sense in hopeless coils of sound, —  
All these she heard, and with a sad mistrust  
Began to doubt the value of her gift.  
It seemed as if the world, the living world,  
Sincere, and deep, and real, were still concealed,  
Shut out by secret gates not yet unclosed,  
And she, within the prison of her soul,  
Still waiting silently to hear the voice  
Of perfect knowledge and of perfect peace.

So with the burden of her discontent  
She turned to seek the Master once again,  
And found him sitting in the market-place,  
Alone among the careless crowds of men,  
Half-hidden in the shadow of a porch  
And looking out with patient peaceful eyes  
On the confusions of the noisy throng,  
As one who sits beside a whirling stream  
And watches it serenely : for he knows

The meaning of the tide, and whence it comes,  
And where it flows.

Then Vera spoke to him:

“Thy gift was great, dear Master, and my  
heart

Has thanked thee many times for that first  
touch

That made the bar of silence fall, and let  
The voices of all living things pass through  
The gates of hearing to my prisoned soul.  
But I have learned that hearing is not all  
I need to make me understand the world.  
For underneath the speech of men, there flows  
Another current of their hidden thoughts.  
The messengers of sound have not revealed  
Life's secret to my heart; for oftentimes  
They bring a false report, in treachery;  
And oftentimes with vague and empty words  
They mock my longing to receive the truth.  
Behind the mask of language I perceive  
The eyes of things unuttered; and I feel  
The throbbing of the real heart of the world  
Beneath the robe of words. Touch me again,  
Dear Master, with thy liberating hand,  
And free me from the bondage of deceit.

Open another gate, and let me hear,  
Without confusion and with clearer sense,  
The hidden thoughts and purposes of men ;  
For only thus my heart shall be at rest,  
And only thus, at last, I shall perceive  
The meaning and the mystery of the world."

The Master's face was turned away from her;  
His eyes looked far away, as if he saw  
Something beyond her sight; and yet she knew  
That he was listening; for her pleading voice  
No sooner ceased than he put forth his hand  
To touch her brow, and very gently spoke,  
With face averted, and with lingering words :  
"Thou seekest for thyself a wondrous gift, —  
The opening of the second gate, — a gift  
That many wise men have desired in vain, —  
But some have found it, — whether well or ill  
For their own peace, they have attained the  
power  
To hear unspoken thoughts of other men.  
And thou hast begged this gift? Thou shalt  
receive, —  
Not knowing what thou seekest, — it is thine :  
The second gate is open! Thou shalt hear

All that men feel within their hidden hearts :  
All thoughts that move behind the veil of words  
Thou shalt perceive as clear as if they spoke.  
The gift is granted, daughter, go thy way !  
But if thou findest sorrow on this path,  
Come back again, — there is a path to peace.”

### III

Beyond our power of vision, poets say,  
There is another world of forms unseen,  
Yet visible to purer eyes than ours.  
And if the crystal of our sight were clear,  
We should behold the mountain-slopes of cloud,  
The moving meadows of the untilled sea,  
The groves of twilight and the dales of dawn,  
And every wide and lonely field of air,  
More populous than cities, crowded close  
With living creatures of all shapes and hues.  
But if that sight were ours, the things that now  
Engage our eyes would seem but dull and dim  
Beside the splendours of our new-found world,  
And we should be amazed and overwhelmed  
Not knowing how to use the plenitude  
Of vision. So in Vera's soul, at first,  
The opening of the second gate of sound  
Let in confusion like a dizzying flood.  
The tumult of a myriad-throated mob ;  
The trampling of an army through a place  
Where echoes hide ; the sudden, clanging  
    flight  
Of an innumerable flock of birds  
Along the highway of the midnight sky ;



The many-whispered rustling of the reeds  
Beneath the footsteps of a thousand winds ;  
The long-drawn, inarticulate, wailing cry  
Of million-pebbled beaches when the scourge  
Of white-lashed waves is curled across their  
back, —

All these seemed less bewildering than to hear  
What now she heard at once: the tangled  
sound

Of all that moves within the minds of men.  
For now there was no measured flow of words  
To mark the time ; nor any key of speech,  
Though false, to bring a seeming harmony  
Into the sound ; nor any interval  
Of silence to repose the listening ear.

But through the dead of night, and through the  
calm

Of weary noon-tide, through the solemn hush  
That fills the temple in the pause of praise,  
And through the breathless awe in rooms of  
death,

She heard the ceaseless motion and the stir  
Of never-silent hearts, that fill the world  
With interwoven thoughts of good and ill,  
With mingled music of delight and grief,

With songs of love, and bitter cries of hate,  
With hymns of faith, and dirges of despair,  
And murmurs deeper and more vague than  
all, —

Thoughts that are born and die without a  
name,

Or rather, never die, but haunt the soul,  
With sad persistence, till a name is given.  
These Vera heard, at first with heart perplexed  
And half-benumbed by the disordered sound.  
But soon a clearer sense began to pierce  
The cloudy turmoil with discerning power.  
She learned to know the tones of human  
thought

As plainly as she knew the tones of speech.  
She could divide the evil from the good,  
Interpreting the language of the mind,  
And tracing every feeling like a thread  
Through all the mystic web that passion  
weaves

From heart to heart around the living world.  
Then, — when at last the Master's second gift  
Was perfected within her, and she heard  
And understood the secret thoughts of men, —  
Then sadness fell upon her, and the weight

Of an intolerable knowledge pressed her down  
With weary wishes to know more, or less.  
For all she knew was like a broken word  
Inscribed upon the fragment of a ring ;  
And all she heard was like a troubled strain  
Preluding music that is never played.

Then she remembered in her sad unrest,  
The Master's parting word, — "a path to  
peace," —

And turned again to seek him with her grief.  
She found him in a hollow of the hills  
Beside a little spring that issued forth  
From broken rocks and filled an emerald cup  
With never-failing water. There he sat,  
With waiting looks that welcomed her afar,  
And smiling lips that gently bade her speak.  
"I know that thou hast heard, my child," he  
said,

"For all the wonder of the world of sound  
Is written in thy face. But hast thou heard,  
Among the many voices, one of peace ?  
And is thy heart that hears the secret thoughts,  
The hidden wishes and desires of men,  
Content with hearing ? Art thou satisfied ?"

“Nay, Master,” she replied, “thou knowest  
well

That I am not at rest, nor have I heard  
The voice of perfect peace. For all I hear  
Brings me disquiet and a troubled mind.  
The evil voices in the souls of men,  
Voices of rage and cruelty and fear  
Have not dismayed me ; for I have perceived  
The voices of the good, the kind, the true  
Are more in number and excel in strength.  
There is more love than hate, more hope than  
fear,

In the mixed murmur of the human heart.  
But while I listen to the mighty sound,  
One thing torments me, and destroys my rest  
And presses me with dull, unceasing pain.  
For out of all the minds of all mankind,  
And through all voices of unuttered thought,  
There rises evermore a questioning voice  
That asks the meaning of this widespread  
world

And finds no answer, — asks, and asks again,  
With patient pleading or with wild complaint,  
But wakens no response, except the sound  
Of other questions, wandering to and fro,

From other souls in doubt. And this one  
voice  
Rises above all others that I hear,  
And binds them up together into one,  
Until the mingled murmur of the world  
Sounds through the secret places of my heart  
Like an eternal question, vainly asked,  
By every human soul that thinks and feels,  
And vainly echoed back, without reply.  
This is the heaviness that weighs me down,  
And this the pain that will not let me rest.  
Therefore, dear Master, shut the gates again,  
And let me live in silence as before !  
Or else, — and if there is indeed a gate  
Unopened yet, through which I might receive  
An answer in the voice of perfect peace — ”

She ceased ; and in her upward faltering tone  
The question echoed.

Then the Master said :

“ There is another gate, not yet unclosed.  
For through the outer portals of the ear  
Only the outer voice of things may pass ;  
And through the middle doorways of the mind  
Only the half-formed voice of human thoughts,

Uncertain and perplexed with endless doubt;  
But through the inmost gate the spirit hears  
The voice of that great Spirit who is Life.  
Beneath the tones of living things, He breathes  
A deeper tone than ever ear hath heard ;  
And underneath the troubled thoughts of men,  
He thinks forever, and His thought is peace.  
Behold, I touch thee once again, my child :  
The third and last of those three hidden gates  
That closed around thy soul and shut thee in,  
Falls open now, and thou shalt truly hear.'"

Then Vera heard. The spiritual gate  
Was opened softly as a full-blown flower  
Unfolds its heart to welcome in the dawn,  
And on her listening face there shone a light  
Of still amazement and completed joy  
In the full gift of hearing.

What she heard  
I cannot tell ; nor could she ever tell  
In words ; because all human words are vain ;  
There is no speech nor language to express  
The secret messages of God, that make  
Perpetual music in the hearing heart.  
Below the voice of waters, and above

The wandering voice of winds, and underneath  
The song of birds, and through all varying  
tones

Of living things that fill the world with sound,  
God spoke to her, and all she heard was peace.

So when the Master questioned, "Dost thou  
hear?"

She answered, "Yea, at last I hear." And  
then

He asked her once again, "What hearest thou?  
What means the voice of Life?" She answered,  
"Love!

For love is life, and they who do not love  
Are not alive. But every soul that loves,  
Lives in the heart of God and hears Him  
speak."





# ANOTHER CHANCE



A LYRIC

FROM LIFE'S MONODRAMA



## ANOTHER CHANCE

COME, give me back my life again, you heavy-handed Death !

Uncrook your fingers from my throat, and let me draw my breath.

You do me wrong to take me now — too soon for me to die —

Ah, loose me from this clutching pain, and hear the reason why.

I know I've had my forty years, and wasted every one ;

And yet, I tell you honestly, my life is not begun ;  
I've walked the world like one asleep, a dreamer in a trance ;

But now you've gripped me wide awake — I want another chance.

My dreams were always beautiful, my thoughts were high and fine ;

No life was ever lived on earth to match those dreams of mine.

And would you wreck them unfulfilled? What folly, nay, what crime !

You rob the world, you waste a soul — give me a little time.

You 'll hear me? Yes, I 'm sure you will, my  
hope is not in vain :  
I feel the even pulse of peace, the sweet relief  
from pain ;  
The black fog rolls away from me ; I 'm free  
once more to plan :  
Another chance is all I need to prove myself a  
man.

. . . . .  
The world is full of warfare 'twixt the evil and  
the good ;  
I watched the battle from afar as one that  
understood  
The shouting and confusion, the bloody, blun-  
dering fight —  
How few there are that see it clear, how few  
that wage it right !

The captains flushed with foolish pride, the sol-  
diers pale with fear,  
The faltering flags, the feeble fire from ranks  
that swerve and veer,  
The wild mistakes, the dismal doubts, the cow-  
ard hearts that flee —  
The good cause needs a nobler knight to win the  
victory.

A man whose soul is pure and strong, whose  
sword is bright and keen,  
Who knows the splendour of the fight and what  
its issues mean ;  
Who never takes one step aside, nor halts,  
though hope be dim,  
But cleaves a pathway thro' the strife, and bids  
men follow him.

No blot upon his stainless shield, no weakness  
in his arm ;  
No sign of trembling in his face to break his  
valor's charm :  
One man like this could stay the flight and lead  
the wavering line ;  
Ah, give me but a year of life — I'll make that  
glory mine !

Religion? Yes, I know it well ; I've heard its  
prayers and creeds,  
And seen men put them all to shame with poor,  
half-hearted deeds.  
They follow Christ, but far away ; they wander  
and they doubt.  
I'll serve him in a better way, and live his pre-  
cepts out.

You see, I've waited just for this; I could not  
be content  
To own a feeble, faltering faith with human  
weakness blent.  
Too many runners in the race move slowly,  
stumble, fall;  
But I will run so straight and swift I shall out-  
strip them all.

Oh, think what it will mean to men, amid their  
foolish strife,  
To see the clear, unshadowed light of one true  
Christian life,  
Without a touch of selfishness, without a taint  
of sin, —  
With one short month of such a life a new world  
would begin!

And love! — I often dream of that — the treasure  
of the earth;  
How little they who use the coin have realized  
its worth!  
'T will pay all debts, enrich all hearts, and make  
all joys secure.  
But love, to do its perfect work, must be sincere  
and pure.

My heart is full of virgin gold. I'll pour it out  
and spend  
My hidden wealth, with lavish hand, on all who  
call me friend.  
Not one shall miss the kindly deed, the largess  
of relief,  
The generous fellowship of joy, the sympathy  
of grief.

I'll say the loyal, helpful things that make life  
sweet and fair,  
I'll pay the gratitude I owe for human love and  
care.  
Perhaps I've been at fault sometimes—I'll ask  
to be forgiven,  
And make this very room of mine seem like a  
little heaven.

For one by one I'll call my friends to stand be-  
side my bed ;  
I'll speak the true and tender words that I have  
left unsaid ;  
And every heart shall throb and glow, all cold-  
ness melt away  
Around my altar-fire of love — ah, give me but  
one day !

. . . . .

What's that? I've had another day, and  
wasted it again?  
A priceless day, in empty dreams, — another  
chance in vain?  
Thou fool — this night — it's very dark — the  
last — this choking breath —  
One prayer — have mercy on a dreamer's soul  
— God, this is death.



SEVEN SMALL SONGS  
IN DIFFERENT KEYS



## THE ANGLER'S REVEILLE

WHAT time the rose of dawn is laid across  
the lips of night,  
And all the drowsy little stars have fallen asleep  
in light ;  
'T is then a wandering wind awakes, and runs  
from tree to tree,  
And borrows words from all the birds to sound  
the reveille.

This is the carol the Robin throws  
Over the edge of the valley ;  
Listen how boldly it flows,  
Sally on sally :

*Tirra-lirra,  
Down the river,  
Laughing water  
All a-quivver.  
Day is near,  
Clear, clear.  
Fish are breaking,  
Time for waking.  
Tup, tup, tup !  
Do you hear ?  
All clear —  
Wake up !*

The phantom flood of dreams has ebb'd and  
vanish'd with the dark,  
And like a dove the heart forsakes the prison  
of the ark ;  
Now forth she fares through friendly woods  
and diamond-fields of dew,  
While every voice cries out " Rejoice ! " as if  
the world were new.

This is the ballad the Bluebird sings,  
Unto his mate replying,  
Shaking the tune from his wings  
While he is flying :

*Surely, surely, surely,  
Life is dear  
Even here.  
Blue above,  
You to love,  
Purely, purely, purely.*

There 's wild azalea on the hill, and roses down  
the dell,  
And just one spray of lilac still abloom beside  
the well ;  
The columbine adorns the rocks, the laurel buds  
grow pink,  
Along the stream white arums gleam, and vio-  
lets bend to drink

This is the song of the Yellowthroat,  
Fluttering gaily beside you ;  
Hear how each voluble note  
Offers to guide you :

*Which way, sir ?  
I say, sir,  
Let me teach you,  
I beseech you !  
Are you wishing  
Jolly fishing ?  
This way, sir !  
I'll teach you.*

Then come, my friend, forget your foes, and  
leave your fears behind,  
And wander forth to try your luck, with cheer-  
ful, quiet mind ;  
For be your fortune great or small, you 'll take  
what God may give,  
And all the day your heart shall say, "'T is luck  
enough to live."

This is the song the Brown Thrush flings  
Out of his thicket of roses ;  
Hark how it warbles and rings,  
Mark how it closes :

*Luck, luck,  
What luck ?  
Good enough for me !  
I'm alive, you see.  
Sun shining,  
No repining ;  
Never borrow  
Idle sorrow ;  
Drop it !  
Cover it up !  
Hold your cup !  
Joy will fill it,  
Don't spill it,  
Steady, be ready,  
Good luck !*

## A BIT OF GOOD LUCK

☞  
*MAY 4th, 1898. — To-day, fishing down the Swiftwater, I found Joseph Jefferson on a big rock in the middle of the brook, casting the fly for trout. He said he had fished this very stream three-and-forty years ago.* Leaf from my Diary.

☞  
**W**E met on Nature's stage,  
And May had set the scene,  
With bishop-caps standing in delicate ranks,  
And violets blossoming over the banks,  
While the brook ran full between.

The waters rang your call,  
With frolicsome waves a-twinkle, —  
They'd known you as boy, and they knew you  
as man,  
And every wave, as it merrily ran,  
Cried, "Enter Rip van Winkle!"





## A SLUMBER-SONG

FOR THE FISHERMAN'S CHILD

**F**URL your sail, my little boatie ;  
Here 's the haven, still and deep,  
Where the dreaming tides, in-streaming,  
Up the channel creep.  
See, the sunset breeze is dying ;  
Hark, the plover, landward flying,  
Softly down the twilight crying ;  
Come to anchor, little boatie,  
In the port of Sleep.

Far away, my little boatie,  
Roaring waves are white with foam ;  
Ships are striving, onward driving,  
Day and night they roam.  
Father 's at the deep-sea trawling,  
In the darkness, rowing, hauling,  
While the hungry winds are calling, —  
God protect him, little boatie,  
Bring him safely home !

Not for you, my little boatie,  
    Is the wide and weary sea ;  
You're too slender, and too tender,  
    You must rest with me.  
All day long you have been straying  
Up and down the shore and playing ;  
Come to port, make no delaying !  
    Day is over, little boatie,  
    Night falls suddenly.

Furl your sail, my little boatie ,  
    Fold your wings, my tired dove.  
Dews are sprinkling, stars are twinkling  
    Drowsily above.  
Cease from sailing, cease from rowing ;  
Rock upon the dream-tide, knowing  
Safely o'er your rest are glowing,  
    All the night, my little boatie,  
    Harbour-lights of love.

## THE ECHO IN THE HEART

**I**T'S little I can tell  
About the birds in books ;  
And yet I know them well,  
By their music and their looks :  
When May comes down the lane,  
Her airy lovers throng  
To welcome her with song,  
And follow in her train :  
Each minstrel weaves his part  
In that wild-flowery strain,  
And I know them all again  
By their echo in my heart.

It 's little that I care  
About my darling's place  
In books of beauty rare,  
Or heraldries of race:  
For when she steps in view,  
It matters not to me  
What her sweet type may be,  
Of woman, old or new.  
I can't explain the art ;  
But I know her for my own,  
Because her lightest tone  
Wakes an echo in my heart.

## A NOVEMBER DAISY

**A**FTERTHOUGHT of summer's bloom !  
Late arrival at the feast,  
Coming when the songs have ceased  
And the merry guests departed,  
Leaving but an empty room,  
Silence, solitude, and gloom !  
Are you lonely, heavy-hearted ;  
You, the last of all your kind,  
Nodding in the autumn wind ;  
Now that all your friends are flown,  
Blooming late and all alone ?

Nay, I wrong you, little flower,  
Reading mournful mood of mine  
In your looks, that give no sign  
Of a spirit dark and cheerless :  
You possess the heavenly power  
That rejoices in the hour,  
Glad, contented, free, and fearless, —  
Lifts a sunny face to heaven  
When a sunny day is given ;  
Makes a summer of its own,  
Blooming late and all alone.

Once the daisies gold and white  
Sea-like through the meadows rolled :  
Once my heart could hardly hold  
All its pleasures, — I remember,  
In the flood of youth's delight  
Separate joys were lost to sight.  
That was summer ! Now November  
Sets the perfect flower apart ;  
Gives each blossom of the heart  
Meaning, beauty, grace unknown, —  
Blooming late and all alone.

## THE RIVER OF DREAMS

**T**HE river of dreams runs softly down  
From its hidden spring in the forest of sleep,  
With a measureless motion calm and deep ;  
And my boat slips out on the current brown,  
In a tranquil bay where the trees incline  
Far over the waves, and creepers twine  
Far over the boughs, as if to steep  
Their drowsy blooms in the stream, that  
goes,  
By a secret way that no man knows,  
Under the branches bending,  
On through the shadows blending, —  
While the body rests, and the passive soul  
Is drifted along to an unseen goal,  
And the river of dreams runs down.

The river of dreams runs smoothly down,  
    With a leisurely tide that bears my bark  
    Out of the visionless woods of dark,  
Into a world where day-beams crown  
    Valley and hill with light from far,  
    Clearer than sun or moon or star.  
    Luminous, wonderful, weird, oh, mark  
    How the radiance pulses everywhere,  
    Through the lucènt sky and the shadowless  
    air!

Over the mountains shimmering,  
Up from the fountains glimmering, —  
    'T is the mystical glow of the inner light,  
    That shines in the very noon of night,  
Where the river of dreams runs down.



The river of dreams runs murmuring down,  
Through the fairest garden that ever grew ;  
And I catch, as my boat goes drifting  
through,  
A mingled music that seems to drown  
The river's whisper, and charms my ear  
With a sound I have often longed to hear,—  
A magical harmony, strange and new,  
A wild-rose ballad, a lilac-song,  
A virginal chant from the lilies' throng,  
Blue-bells silverly ringing,  
Pansies merrily singing, —  
For all the flowers have found their voice ;  
And I feel no wonder, but only rejoice,  
While the river of dreams runs down.

The river of dreams runs broadening down,  
    Away from the peaceful garden-shore,  
    With a current that deepens more and more,  
By the league-long walls of a mighty town.  
    I see the hurrying crowds of men  
    Dissolve like clouds and gather again,  
    But never a face I have seen before ;  
    For they come and go, and they shift and  
    change,  
    And even the forms and the dresses are  
    strange :  
This is a city haunted,  
A multitude enchanted !  
    At the sight of the throng I am dumb with  
    fear,  
    For never a sound from their lips I hear,  
As the river of dreams runs down.

The river of dreams runs wildly down  
· Into the heart of a desolate land,  
By ruined temples half-buried in sand,  
Thro' a cleft of the hills, whose black brows  
frown  
Over the shuddering, lonely wave,  
While the air grows dim with the dust of  
the grave.  
No sign of life on the dreary strand ;  
No ray of light on the mountain's crest ;  
And a weary wind that cannot rest  
Comes down the valley creeping,  
Lamenting, wailing, weeping, —  
I strive to cry out, but my fluttering breath  
Is choked with the clinging fog of death,  
While the river of dreams runs down.

The river of dreams runs swiftly down,  
Out of the valley of nameless fear,  
Into a country calm and clear,  
With a mystical name of high renown, —  
A name that I know, but may not tell, —  
And there the friends that I loved so well  
The long-lost comrades, forever dear,  
Come beckoning down to the river shore,  
And hail my boat with the voice of yore.  
Fair and sweet are the places  
Where I see their unchanged faces !  
And I feel in my heart with a secret thrill,  
That the loved and lost are living still,  
While the river of dreams runs down.

The river of dreams runs silently down  
By a secret way that no man knows ;  
But the soul lives on while the dream-tide  
flows  
Through the gardens bright, or the forests  
brown ;  
And I think sometimes that our whole life  
seems  
To be more than half made up of dreams.  
For its changing sights, and its passing  
shows,  
And its morning hopes, and its midnight  
fears,  
Are left behind with the vanished years.  
Onward, with ceaseless motion,  
The life-stream flows to the ocean, —  
And we follow the tide, awake or asleep,  
Till we see the dawn on Love's great deep,  
When the bar at the harbour-mouth is  
crossed,  
And the river of dreams in the sea is lost.



# THE RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET

## I

**W**HERE 'S your kingdom, little king?  
Where 's the land you call your own,  
Where 's your palace, and your throne?  
Fluttering lightly on the wing  
Through the blossom-world of May,  
Whither lies your royal way?  
Where 's the realm that owns your sway,  
Little king?

*Far to northward lies a land,  
Where the trees together stand  
Closer than the blades of wheat,  
When the summer is complete.  
Like a robe the forests hide  
Lonely vale and mountain side:  
Balsam, hemlock, spruce and pine, —  
All those mighty trees are mine.  
There 's a river flowing free;  
All its waves belong to me.  
There 's a lake so clear and bright  
Stars shine out of it all night,*

*And the rowan-berries red  
Round it like a girdle spread.  
Feasting plentiful and fine,  
Air that cheers the heart like wine,  
Royal pleasures by the score,  
Wait for me in Labrador  
There I'll build my dainty nest ;  
There I'll fix my court and rest ;  
There from dawn to dark I'll sing :  
Happy kingdom ! Lucky king !*

II

Back again, my little king !  
Is your happy kingdom lost  
To that rebel knave, Jack Frost ?  
Have you felt the snow-flakes sting ?  
Autumn is a rude disrober :  
Houseless, homeless in October,  
Whither now ? Your plight is sober,  
Exiled king !

*Far to southward lie the regions  
Where my loyal flower-legions*



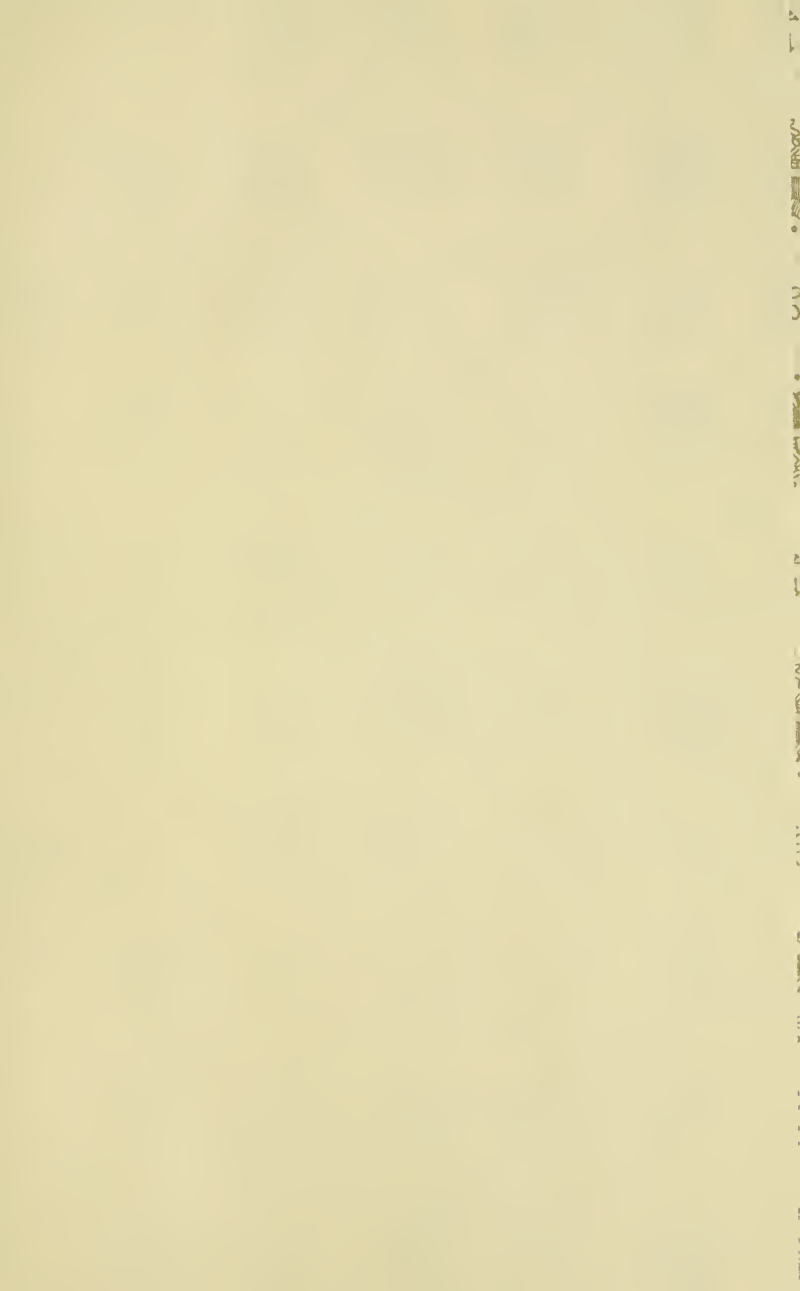
*Hold possession of the year,  
Filling every month with cheer.  
Christmas wakes the winter rose;  
New Year daffodils unclose;  
Yellow jasmine through the woods  
Runs in March with golden floods,  
Dropping from the tallest trees  
Shining streams that never freeze.  
Thither I must find my way.  
Fly by night and feed by day,  
Till I see the southern moon  
Glistening on the broad lagoon,  
Where the cypress' vivid green,  
And the dark magnolia's sheen,  
Weave a shelter round my home.  
There the snow-storms never come:  
There the bannered mosses gray  
In the breezes gently sway,  
Hanging low on every side  
Round the covert where I hide.  
There I hold my winter court,  
Full of merriment and sport:  
There I take my ease and sing:  
Happy kingdom! Lucky king!*

Little boaster, vagrant king !  
 Neither north nor south is yours :  
 You 've no kingdom that endures.  
 Wandering every fall and spring,  
 With your painted crown so slender,  
 And your talk of royal splendour  
 Must I call you a Pretender,  
 Landless king ?

*Never king by right divine  
 Ruled a richer realm than mine !  
 What are lands and golden crowns,  
 Armies, fortresses and towns,  
 Jewels, scepters, robes and rings, —  
 What are these to song and wings ?  
 Everywhere that I can fly,  
 There I own the earth and sky ;  
 Everywhere that I can sing,  
 There I 'm happy as a king.*

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