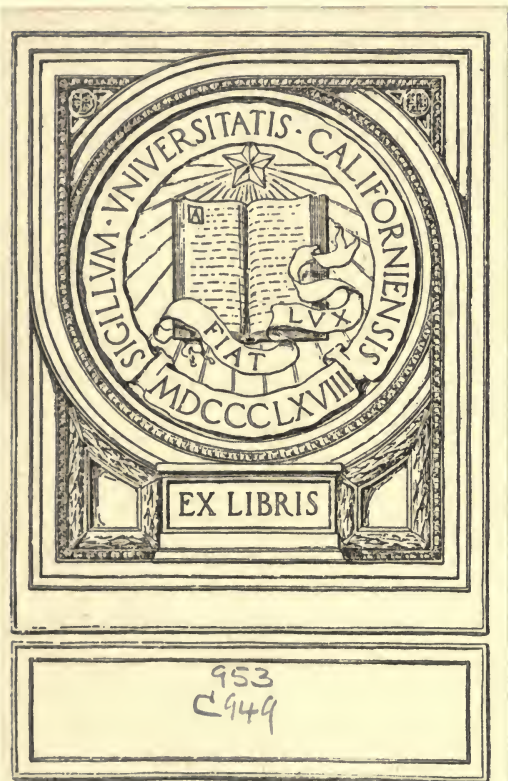


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The Collected Poems of  
T. W. H. Crosland









# The Collected Poems of T. W. H. Crosland

*'Donde una puerta se cierra, otra se abre''*

CERVANTES

UNIV. OF  
CALIFORNIA

London  
Martin Secker  
Number Five John Street  
Adelphi

First published 1917



*The portrait which forms the frontispiece to  
this volume is from a photograph  
by E. O. Hoppé*

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## Note

*The pieces hereby assembled represent a period of production ranging over a quarter of a century. A number of those referring to the war are reprinted from 'War Poems by X' (Martin Secker, 1916). Others are now published for the first time. Lest the title 'Collected Poems' be taken in its post-mortem association, the author desires respectfully to say that he is still alive.*

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## POEMS



*Woman*

Four pomegranates grow for me,  
On my true love's silver tree.

One I have tasted, and my mouth  
Is filled with fragrance of the South ;

One, which burns with holy red,  
He shall give me when we wed ;

The third from its branch shall be torn  
When our little son is born ;

The fourth, which is most delicate,  
Kinder than Love, sharper than Fate,

Fairer than fruit of Samarkand,  
You shall put in my dead hand.

## *Swan Song*

Who makes an Eden must set you in it,  
And who hath stars of crystal brimmed and bright,  
Planets of rose,  
Or moons of amber lit  
From lordly lending suns of chrysolite,  
And beautiful as those  
That ache to furious Saturn.  
For you are silver dawns  
And silver rain  
And silver snows :  
And the prodigious night  
Of balms and dews and darkneses and dreams  
And tranced forests and enchanted streams,  
And unimaginable lawns,  
And unlatched lattices  
(Enlamped and tinkling)  
Suddenly shut-to,  
And snaring silences :  
Eternally for you  
The age-young seas are blue  
And the great peaks rose-white.

The nightingale  
Which doth the world assail  
Athrob with old immitigable pain  
And music past her wit,  
And ambushed in the cedars, spilleth no note  
Or fret or flurry or strain  
Or magical sweet pattern  
That is not yours ;  
Neither shall she, the minstrel, who doth sit  
Poised in extreme height  
And propped by April azures,  
So to fling  
The noise of her aspiring  
At angel feet  
And on immortal floors.

You know the men and women who are dead  
Each by his name and each by her dim name,  
And you do count them as you count spent roses  
From the first down  
And till the last one closes :  
Time-which-hath-been, and cannot be, hath spread  
Beside the river of Time-which-is, a town  
Of echoless dwelling-places where inhabit  
Shadows that shine or bleed  
And creep and climb and falter and are sped,  
And are yet shadows, and shall never know  
More than they knew,  
And never more may say  
More than they said,

And yours is their imperishable joy  
And yours their woe,  
And on your head  
Fall ruth and rapture :  
You are both quick and dead,  
While they,  
Whom luring life never again shall capture,  
Are only dead.

There was a maid who had just heard of love,  
And an old man who had forgotten lust,  
A barren wife whose heart was motherhood,  
A wanton who could think on naught but good ;  
A thief who still  
Had honour, and a liar  
To whom his lie  
Was whip and fire  
And an abhorr'd  
And grievous uttering :  
I heard a bride say in the night  
The world is builded on delight,  
I saw the murderer adore a sky  
Of summer and without fleck  
What time the hangman grabbed at his neck :  
They told me of a princess who had thrown  
From her sweet state, hot kisses to the dust,  
And of a peacock lord  
Who darkly understood  
He was a clown,  
And of a clown who surely was a king



But minded apes.  
All loveliness, all ill,  
All innocence, all ruin and all dread,  
All glory and all disgrace  
Lifted themselves like ghosts,  
In infinite multitude,  
Innumerable hosts ;  
And all these shapes  
Were yours,  
And they had looks like flowers  
And manifold soft graces,  
And ever in their faces  
I could trace,  
Somewhere, your face.

O secret, consecrate  
Inviolable spirit, elate  
And amorous and proud  
With blanchèd plumes that shroud  
And glitteringly conceal  
The flame, and the vermeil  
And whiteness not for sight,  
Who to this garden of tears  
And the enthronèd spheres  
Art essence and breath and light ;  
Who blestest for the blest  
And for the lowliest,  
And standest on heaven's rim  
Out-staturing seraphim,  
And sittest by poor men's fires

And givest to the wicked their desires,  
And whom to gaze upon  
That which is done is done  
For ever, and shall be  
Unto eternity ;  
In the translated clay  
Bathed out of Paphia,  
In love and laughter and might  
And the seven souls of right  
And seventy souls of wrong,  
In birth and sorrow and song  
And terror and despair,  
And all things fine and fair  
Whether of gold or green,  
The wonder have I seen,  
The immanence flashing by,  
And, slain with it, I die !

## *The Weeping*

Through height on height  
Of the far Heaven,  
Which is a firmament  
And infinite air  
And bosom of light,  
Great seraphs swept  
On joyful errands bent ;  
And in the seven  
Sweet spaces  
Where blessedness doth begin,  
The cherubin  
Holily strayed,  
And shined and slept,  
And shined again.

And none that were  
Engardened of those bright places  
Sorrowed or wept  
Or knew the use of tears.  
It had been so a million, million years :  
And then,—  
The world was made.

## *Payments*

### I

“ I will come to you  
Across white dawns,  
In the night of stars,  
In the morning blue.

“ Like a shining dove  
Alone in heaven,  
In your sweet place  
I shall see you move.” . . .

O Heart, it befell,  
When I came, when I came,  
You laughed ghost-white  
In the lamps of hell.

## II

Fairer than the fair  
And than young moons,  
Thus to be lodged  
With sharp despair.

O innocent,  
Unblemish'd and without spot  
And so without defence ;  
For you the punishment.

For you the rod  
And the impitying stroke,  
You loveliness,  
You city of God !

### III

You had no tears  
Women may weep,  
Nor silver easing sigh  
Nor fortifying fears,

No trepidance :  
Only the dumb amaze  
Of undeceivèdness  
Chanced upon all mischance ;

Nor agonies  
Nor sorrow unto death,  
That you should fall on your face  
In seven Gethsemanes.

#### IV

Your punctual candle lit,  
Your bowl kept bright,  
Your thoughts as still  
As the lily in it.

A curtain of blue,  
A bed of cypress wood  
And ivory,  
And one great star for you.

And cloths of fair  
White, and cups of gold—  
And in your heart the knife  
And winter in your hair.

V

How should you pray  
Or call to the saints,  
Who had small need of prayer  
Even as they ?

How should you guess  
That over you would fail  
The pinion shadowless  
Even for a minute's space ?

How could the air  
Forget its kindnesses,  
And the earth its love  
And your angel his care ?



## VI

There was à foul  
And livid, living thing  
That wept and died,  
Having no soul.

The lips of it  
Scarlet with lies  
And impudent with leers,  
And on its forehead writ

Evil and bale ;  
And it hath fellowship  
Malefic as itself,  
But clad in cunninger mail.

## VII

For ever, walls of fire  
And chasms of swords  
'Twixt your green country  
And the world's mire.

It were a sin  
That echo or breath  
Should reach to your tower  
From tents they riot in.

Yet their desert  
Lifts them, and deviously  
From these and thence  
Cometh the hurt.

## VIII

Into your book,  
Jewelled with flame  
And clamped with honour,  
Who shall look ?

Borders of woe,  
Letters of blood,  
Upon a page  
Of milk and snow.

This justice for the just  
Thereby you read—  
*Ashes to ashes*  
*Dust to dust.*

## *A Song of Death*

### I

Smile, O master of life,  
Safe in thy silver house,  
Be pleased with thy pleasant wife—  
Soon thou hast woe for spouse.

Joy and joy are thy choice—  
(Shrewd art thou past a doubt !)  
Take they joy and rejoice—  
Sorrow shall find thee out.

Laugh thou loud at the fool  
Munching his bitter bread ;—  
Surely as thou dost rule  
One shall rule in thy stead.

What though thy heart be flame,  
And perfume all thy breath ?—  
Who hath written thy name  
Here in the book of Death ?

Yea, though thou shine rose-white  
Or though thou burn rose-red,  
Upon the lawful night  
Thou shalt lie spent and sped.

Drink that is soft and sound !  
Meats for the delicate maw !—  
Already the beldame is found  
Who shall tape-up that jaw.

Build through the golden day  
Cunning in every stroke—  
ADZE from his bench must say,  
“ Shall it be elm or oak ? ”

And though thou hast all grace,  
All wisdom, and all wit,  
MATTOCK, in the right place,  
Will delve the appointed pit.

With faith thou art rich ; and firm  
In hopes like the young east—  
Let us promise the worm  
His certain year-long feast !

## II

Fool that no man calls master,  
Irredeemable slave,  
Born for the stark disaster  
With nothing to hope or have.

Inasmuch as thou moilest  
For sour and scanty bread,  
Rejoice, for wherever thou toilest  
One shall toil in thy stead.

And inasmuch as they gall thee  
And bitterness is thy breath,  
On a day they shall call thee  
Forth to thy lawful death.

Let it not be forgotten,  
This is the sure reward—  
Thou shalt lie dead and rotten,  
Even as dead as thy lord.

So with the brand or the feather  
Each hath his tally and term—  
Let us sup nobly together,  
“Here’s to the ultimate worm !”

### III

Lo, there is anguish and wailing  
Out of the world and her wars,  
A cry goeth up unavailing  
Unto the steadfast stars.

Set on sweet thrones they glister  
Over our pain and ruth,  
Each to her shining sister  
Telling the wordless truth.

Though we be fools or sages,  
Who is it conquereth ?  
Death shall pay this world's wages ;  
All that he pays is death.

By the prayers ye have faltered,  
By the blood and the tears,  
Which is the law ye have altered  
In all the faithful years ?

No new sign hath been given,  
No new tale is to tell—  
And still the earth is heaven,  
And still the souls are hell.

Death for life is the guerdon,  
“Life for death” is the ban ;  
None might carry the burden,  
Only the sons of man.

Of whom there is no daunting  
Beneath the pitiless sky,  
For whom the final vaunting  
Is “men can only die.”

Cursèd be he that setteth  
Snares for the bleeding feet ;  
Cursèd be he that getteth,  
And giveth not, good wheat.

Cursèd be he that showeth,  
Unto the simple, lies ;  
Cursèd be he that throweth  
Dust in the star-set eyes.



## *The Ballad of Poor Honesty*

“ Now Good,” quoth he,  
“ Be good for me,  
And Evil be thou evil ” :  
O simple wight !—  
As well he might  
Have leagued him with the Devil—  
Who, when all’s said,  
Is a gentleman bred,  
And civil to the civil.

He trudgeth forth,  
Now south now north,  
To turn the needful penny,  
Upon his back  
He bears a pack  
Through suns and snows a-many  
And mile on mile—  
With an equal smile  
For Richard and for Jenny.

“ Yea these,” he sware,  
“ Be God’s own pair,  
They will not cog or cozen,  
In smocks they go  
To milk and mow,  
And threadbare are their hosen ;  
But if your due  
Be twelve, for you  
They’ll count out the full dozen.”

Yet Dick, fell wretch,  
Did the hangman stretch,  
For cutting a babe’s weasand,  
And by the Bench  
That brazen wench,  
Young Jenny, was imprisoned,  
That folk might cry,  
“ In villainy  
The twain were properly seasoned.”

“ Still Good,” quoth he,  
“ Be good for me,  
And Evil be thou evil ;  
My grandam dear,  
Above her beer,  
Was wont to curse the Devil,  
‘ O little lad,  
Eschew the bad  
Which doth defile ! ’ she’d snivel.”

Upon an ass  
He is fain to pass  
Into the virtuous city,  
And soon doth stop  
With my lord bishop,  
The learnèd and the witty :  
(" So honest a face ! "  
Mused his lordship's grace—  
And hired him out of pity.)

Here every saw  
Of the moral law  
With joy he heard repeated,  
Till on a night  
In the candle-light  
The bishop's guests were seated,  
And they played a game,  
*Bezique* by name,  
And my lord the bishop cheated.

So, nothing loth,  
Our friend shogged off  
To service with a person  
Whom fools did rate  
For a prop of the State :  
There couldn't have been a worse 'un ;  
For by wink or grin  
He approved the sin  
We are bidden to put a curse on.

Then a judge he served  
Who quite unnerved  
This saint by actions foxy,  
Such as bringing home quills  
From the Office of Wills  
And going to church by proxy,  
And, once a week,  
Pinching the cheek  
Of a most offensive doxy.

“ Still Good for me  
Be good,” quoth he,  
“ And Evil be thou evil ;  
I will show my mind  
Unto mankind,  
And speak them fair and civil,  
And tell them how  
All men I know  
Are bondmen of the Devil.”

He trudgeth forth  
Both south and north  
By markets and street corners,  
And saith aloud  
To the wondering crowd,  
“ Ye are plagued with thieves and scorners  
And liars and cheats  
And hypocrites  
And losels and suborners ! ”

He was the first  
That ever burst  
Upon them with such tiding ;  
Eftsoons they cried,  
“ This fellow’s pride  
Is surely past abiding ! ”  
And with grievous stones,  
They bruised his bones,  
And hurried him into hiding.

Upon the floor  
He lies full sore,  
Nor murmureth unduly,  
Although he must  
Give up the ghost  
His speech is not unruly ;  
With his last breath  
He uttereth  
These words : “ I ha’ spoken truly ! ”

So passeth he  
Most miserably,  
Without or sniff or snivel :  
Unhappy wight—  
As well he might  
Have leagued him with the Devil,  
Who on the whole  
Is a decent soul,  
And returneth good for evil !

## *Faitan*

They have fetch'd for the king,  
To his city of might,  
The singers who sing  
In the dusks of delight  
And the noons of the night.

Where the women are lain  
They have order'd his rest,  
With the blood of the slain  
On his sword and his crest,  
And his hands on his breast.

## SONNETS





*April 23*

How shall we praise thee, who art England's praise  
And with the soul of her soul most accords,  
So that she vaunteth to the end of days  
England and Shakespeare high, fast-wedded words ?  
O Royal thou, that spake us a new earth  
And new fair heavens, and a proud new sea,  
Greener is April, boasting of thy birth,  
More blossom'd May, because she swaddled thee !  
Before thy wisdom humbly stand the wise,  
Judged of thy goodness, Virtue hath no cause,  
Whoever mounts, a feeble feather tries  
By thy great pinion ; and except thou pause,  
The sweetest singer falters in his scale—  
Eagle, and Lark, and Swan, and Nightingale !

## *For Remembrance*

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

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

*For Algernon Charles Swinburne*

The cherry whitens in the April air,  
Young Spring has spilt her magic on the wold,  
The woodlands ring with rapture as of old,  
And England lies new-washen, green and fair ;  
Yet is she heavy with a secret care,  
For Death the ever-sharp and over-bold  
Hath taken our Tongue of Honey, our Throat of Gold ;  
And we have digged a pit, and left him there.

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

*For Stephen Phillips*

Now you are dead and past the bitter fret  
And the long doubt and the disputed throne,  
And the contempts which turn the heart to stone,—  
Who that hath wit shall breathe you a regret ?  
Who that hath tears shall pay you pity's debt ?  
Unto your place of easing you are gone,  
Having fetched for us Beauty from her own  
Lodges of gold by silver orchards set.

O mortal man that looked in angels' eyes  
And still of baseness took both rood and reed,  
Griever who wed bright visions to great sounds,  
Teller of sorrowful proud histories ;  
We put our silly fingers in your wounds  
And it is well that they no longer bleed.

## *Ubi Bene*

Along the English lanes a budding green,  
Upon the English orchards pink and white,  
And over them the rapture and delight  
Of April sunshine ! Fair and fresh and clean,  
Washen as if in wells of hyaline  
And very wondrous to the pilgrim sight ;  
A glad, new land of all things soft and bright—  
Oh, surely, here an angel must have been

And left his blessing ! . . . Dead, young son of ours,  
Who didst so proudly taste the loving-cup,  
Whose blood but now shone like a living rose  
Dropped by the Lord upon the Flanders snows,  
What country shall they give you to be yours  
For this, the England you have given up ?

## *The Baby in the Ward*

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

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

## *Titanic*

Upon the tinkling splintery battlements  
Which swing and tumble south in ghostly white  
Behemoth rushes blindly from the night,  
Behemoth whom we have praised on instruments  
Dulcet and shrill and impudent with vents :  
Behemoth whose huge body was our delight  
And miracle, wallows where there is no light,  
Shattered and crumpled and torn with pitiful rents.

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

## *Valour*

Mounting his stairs of azure and of gold,  
The English lark sings in the August weather  
For joy which knoweth neither tie nor tether  
And is not troubled if the world grows old ;  
While you, who were as blithesome and as bold,  
And held your life lightly as any feather,  
Sleep the high sleep that dead men sleep together,  
Careless of what is done and what is told.

I know that all our England shone before you  
When you went down. It made a radiance  
Even of the front of Death. Oh, woman's son,  
You died for England . . . valiant as she that bore you,  
And sent you forth with a still countenance,  
And broke her heart for England—and lives on !



## *Lovers*

He goeth and he returns not. He is dead ;  
Their house of joy no further brightness shows,  
Their loveliness is come unto its close,  
Their last touch given, and their last kindness said ;  
For him no more the vision of her bent head,  
For her no more the lily or the rose,  
Nor any gladness in this place of woes ;  
The book is shut, the bitter lesson read.

Yet who shall beat them down ? Though the Abhorr'd  
Taket the groom, and to the bride hath sent  
The dagger of anguish with the ice-cold hilt,  
Both of them triumph in a strange content—  
And out of souls like these will heavens be built  
And holy cities peopled for the Lord.

## *On the Death of Edward VII*

All our proud banners mourn along the May,  
One who is plumed and powerful breaks us down :  
Marred are the orchards, shaken our strong town,  
And blackness covers up our bright array.  
The Sceptre and the Orb are put away ;  
The scarlet changed for the funereal gown ;  
And easy lies the head that wore a Crown,  
And this which was a King is simple clay.

O mighty Death, the mightiest are thine,  
Thou set'st his Widow weeping in her place,  
And while thou pluck'st her heart with thy chill hand,  
And givest her to drink a common wine,  
The wondering sentry goeth at his pace,  
And England cries, and cannot understand.

## *The Promise*

You know my pains, you see me in the hell  
Through which I toil, hurt and uncomforted,  
You see on what base errands I am sped,  
And what I reap where we sowed asphodel ;  
And my songs are of sorrow, and I tell,  
Knowing no other, tales of grief and dread :  
Though I be warm I am as good as dead,  
And always we can hear my passing bell.

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

## *Ulster*

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

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

## *Charing Cross*

At five o'clock they ring a tinkly bell ;  
The April dawn glimmers along the beds,  
There is a lifting up of weary heads  
From weary pillows. Our old citadel  
Hath still held out, and while the miracle  
Of morning is unbarred again, and spreads  
All the young East with greens and blues and reds  
Each of us wakes to his particular hell.

But even on this bitter shore of Styx  
Where Life to dogged Death puts the last schism,  
We kindle for the ending of the dark :  
The Asthma feebly jokes the Aneurism,  
The little bandaged boy in Number Six  
Sings " Ye shall die " with a voice like a lark.

*For H. M. C.*

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

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

## *After*

And when I die, you should be grieved, and go  
Dumbly into the bitter fields alone,  
For you have long since made your widow's moan,  
And carried in your heart the widow's woe.  
Outrageous Death hath neither feint nor blow  
To hurt you further. Thus without a groan  
I shall go down, and be as cold as stone,  
And you will kiss me and I shall not know.

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

## *Dawn*

*“ This morning at dawn I attacked the enemy’s second system of defence.”—SIR DOUGLAS HAIG*

These are the fights of Love and Joy and Men  
With Fate and Death and the illicit Beast,  
For guerdons, of which Glory is the least  
And Honour not the highest. The old reign  
Of Night shall topple, the old Wrongs be slain :  
Fitting it is that you go to the Feast  
While angel suns kindle the young-eyed east  
And bring the breath of Eden back again.

Oh soldiers’ hour ! . . . For now the English rose  
Flames and is washed with the authentic dew  
And through the mist her ancient crimson shows :  
I see your shadows on the waking lawn  
Like shadows of kings, and all the souls of you  
Blazoned and bright and panoplied in the dawn.



## *Cor Cordium*

He is gone hence. Weep no weak tears for him :  
You gave us freely what you valued most ;  
It is not loss, for gifts are never lost  
Unto the giver. Lo, the star-kept, dim  
Limits where battle fades away, and grim  
Death halts and hath no power ! On that coast  
His feet are set among the shining host  
Who range with cherubim and seraphim.

A thousand suns are unregarded dust,  
A million dawns break and are counted not,  
And Beauty riseth up, and she departs  
Eternally—eternally forgot ;  
But your fair stripling, dead beside his trust,  
Is safely folded in the Heart of Hearts.

“ *Votes for Women* ”

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

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

*For a Rich Man who is said to  
“ Believe in Poetry ”*

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

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

## *Leda*

Out of my silver turrets I look down  
Upon a garden wherein sleeps a rose  
Who hath a ruby heart ; beside her glows  
Unblemished, in a drifted, vestal gown  
Yon lily, and beyond them lies a town  
Of tufted green and each sweet bloom that blows ;  
Midmost from whence a little fountain throws  
His gentle sprays which seem but half his own.

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

## *The "Student"*

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

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

## *Antarctic*

What tale is this which stirs a world of knaves  
Out of its grubbing to throw greasy pence  
Forth to the hat, and choke with eloquence  
In boastful prose and verse of doubtful staves ?  
Four men have died, gentlemen, heroes, braves ;  
Snows wrap them round eternally. From thence  
They may no more return to life or sense  
And a steel moon aches down on their chill graves.

“ They died for England.” It is excellent  
To die for England. Death is oft the prize  
Of him who bears the burden and the load.  
So with a glory let our lives be spent—  
We may be noble in the Minories  
And die for England in the Camden Road.

## *Shepherd's Bush*

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

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

## *Death*

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

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



## *The End*

I know that our fair rose was slain last night :  
She is become a ruinous, delicate wraith,  
And now she gives her perfumes up to Death ;  
No longer may she shine in the sweet light,  
Or drink the dewey darkness ; for the might  
That breaks the hearts of kings and staggereth  
Bold men, hath borne her down. " Take me," she saith,  
" Unto the old, dead roses, red and white."

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

## *For the Time*

Give me the robe an angel late hath worn,  
Give me the tongue of wonder and the pen  
Of magic which doth fetch the souls of men  
Out of deep hell ; give me the stings of scorn,  
The rage of blood, agony of the thorn,  
Wisdom of hills and stars. Let me be ten  
Times tried in furnaces, and tried again,  
And searched in icy wells where proof is born.

And I will say to you a word of breath  
More furious than the forty winds of night  
And fiercer and more terrible than death ;  
And yet as holy as the words of light  
That love or mercy or sainthood uttereth,  
And sweeter than the prayers of women—**FIGHT !**

RED ROSE

*‘Ρόδα μ’ εἴρηκας*

## *Red Rose*

*Red Rose importuneth the Lover,  
and he answereth her*

The red rose called to me,  
“ Be thou my Love ;  
Lo, I am fire and flame  
For love of thee.”

I said to the red rose,  
“ It is in starry white,  
With brows and breasts of snow,  
That my Love goes.”

*She continueth to  
invite him and  
praiseth herself*

“Come to me, come to me,  
I shall be excellence,  
Softness and bloom and myrrh  
And heavy sleep,” saith she.

“And I have doves, as of old,  
My lips are crimson joy,  
And my smiles are of light,  
And my tears are of gold.”

*She telleth him of  
her lovers, and bid-  
deth him be the chief  
of them*

“ Three Kings rage at my door,  
They would have love of me,  
Till I look forth on them,  
They are mean men and poor.

“ In purple they go drest,  
And bright gifts each King bears,  
Come thou and be with us,  
And I will love thee best.”

*She describeth her  
chamber and the  
pleasures thereof*

“ There is a chamber lies  
In the heart of my house,  
Secret and sweet and dim,  
Lit only with mine eyes.

“ We will burn spices there,  
And we will say to Life,  
‘ Bring now for our delight  
All that is good and fair.’ ”



*The Lover telleth  
her of the chamber  
of his own Love*

I said, " No Kings may wait  
Against my white Love's door,  
She hath no Love save one,  
She needeth not such state.

" Her chamber is of blue,  
A gold lamp shines therein ;  
A lily and a babe  
Are in her chamber too."

*The Lover falleth  
captive to her beauty*

Red rose, red rose,  
Oh, thou red rose !  
I went into her house  
Upon the slow day's close,

I lay down on her bed,  
She smiled her smile of light,  
She wept her tears of gold :  
“ Oh, thou red rose ! ” I said.

*He parleyeth with  
her*

“ Red rose, red rose,  
Red rose and rose of mine,  
Behold we are one soul,  
With love for its repose.”

She laughed, like one who sings,  
Saying, “ We are one soul.”  
She thought of my white Love,  
And I of those three Kings.

*They sleep*

She thought of those three Kings,  
And I of my white Love :  
A cold moon look'd at us,  
Chill from a thousand springs.

I said, " But we are one."  
She said, " Yea, we are one."  
We slept a lover's sleep  
Until that moon was gone.

*The awakening*    At dawn she stirred and woke.  
I said, " O red, red rose,  
What of my little white Love ? "  
And never a word she spoke.

Before her mirror long  
Stood she, and tired herself,  
Her hair flamed in the sun,  
Her laugh was like a song.

*They are to ride  
forth*

“The day is fair,” she said,  
“We will ride forth,” said she,  
“I on a milk-white horse,  
Thou on a roan of red.

“The world is deck’d like a bride,  
And sharp and sweet the air,  
Those kings shall follow us,  
Thou ridest at my side.”

*They ride, and the  
Lover seeth his own  
Love*

We rode forth into the dawn,  
All a-glitter and shine,  
Along the sleepy streets,  
Past lodge and river and lawn,

And fields that good men till ;  
And out by the western gate  
I saw my little white Love  
Simpling upon a hill.

*He showeth her to  
Red Rose*

I said, "Red rose, red rose,  
Seest thou who is there?  
It is my own white Love,  
Mark with what grace she goes."

"Pardie, pardie, good Sir,  
Is it thy lady Love?  
Then, if thou lovest me true,  
Get down and speak with her."



*He will not go to  
his own Love*

She smiled her smile of light,  
She pursed her crimson lips,  
She let her hand touch mine,  
Her eyes shone very bright.

I said, "Red rose, I ween  
That thou and I are as one,  
I would not leave they side  
An she were Mary Queen."

*Red Rose dealeth  
shrewdly with him*

So that we rode and came  
Unto a fair green place ;  
She put her head on my breast,  
And softly said my name.

Those three Kings stood apart,  
Plotting my death they stood ;  
She took a jewelled knife,  
And stabbed me in the heart.

*And leaveth him to  
perish*

And turned her milk-white steed,  
And kissed me on the lips,  
And laughed to those three Kings,  
And left me there to bleed.

And, with those Kings, did ride  
Away in the sunshine :  
I could not wish her hurt,  
“ O red, red rose, ” I cried.

*He riseth up*

Like torches in the sky  
At night the stars awoke,  
The ghost of me stood up  
And ached exceedingly.

The world seemed full of shows :  
I went to mine own door,  
And look'd on my white Love,  
And cried, " O red, red rose ! "

*The end*

Spring sitteth at her loom,  
Weaving her green and gold,  
The sweet lark sitteth in heaven,  
And thou in thy red room !

My white Love, still as a mouse,  
Still and quiet and pale,  
Sitteth beside her babe,  
And thou in thy red house !

1903



## WAR POEMS





## War

### I

She took of fire of the sun and steel of the icy moon  
And rage of furious seas and breath of the hurricane,  
And silver sound of April and blossom and dust of June,  
And tears of women and terror of babes and blood of the  
    hearts of men ;  
Through nights athrob with her rose-red star and aghast  
    with the wild star's falling,  
And days of summer whereby she was throned and days  
    of autumn that crowned her,  
She went to make dread feasts and great pomps ; and she  
    reigneth—for ever calling  
The fairest and kindest and bravest and youngest and  
    dearest around her.

### 2

For them she hath lures which are swifter than joy and  
    brighter than hope  
And subtler than aught that cunning deviseth or gildeth,  
Surer to snare and safer to catch than love-lamp or silken  
    rope  
Hung from the moonlit window for token of love which  
    yieldeth ;

She hath content for the high wild heart and content for  
the wooer,  
She is the lover of lovers, whom loving, none may love  
other,  
Softly she sayeth the names of her children that they may  
go to her,  
And she gathers them to her stark fierce bosom like a proud  
mother.

3

Of old hath she been contemned by mouths that were  
zealous and wise,  
Sister of Murder, procuress and bondwoman of Death ;  
Yet is the blood on her hand made snow by the Faith in  
her eyes,  
And the tongue of triumphing Time for her righteousness  
witnesseth :  
Out of all darkness she comes with all sweet light on her  
tresses,  
Into the ear of the flesh she crieth quick speech of the  
spirit ;  
And she bringeth the world from its travail and ache to  
its certain comfort, and blesses  
Them that endure and are broken and spent for them that  
inherit.







## VIII

Troop you from field and fold,  
Market and shop of gold ;  
Let the full tale be told,

England !

Time beats his pitiless drum,  
Fate's at her iron loom,  
For the New Earth, or Doom—

England again !

## *Sons*

### I

We have sent them forth  
To Christ's own rood ;  
Their feet are white  
On the fields of blood,  
And they must slake  
Their young desire  
In wells of death  
And pits of fire.

The red cock crows  
And the grey cock crows,  
And there is red  
On Flanders' snows ;  
And sun-scorched sand  
And thirsty clay  
Drink a red spilth  
By Suvla Bay.

And where Azizeah's  
Turrets gleam,  
And Tigris glitters,  
Like a dream,  
Through nights of scent  
And tinkling sounds,  
Sleep rose-white dead  
With rose-red wounds.

## II

I saw the Shadow  
Count the fair  
Sum of his takings ;  
Them that were  
Children in years  
When they were sped,  
And now are mighty  
Being dead.

Like galaxies  
Of stars, they shone  
In the great places  
They have won ;  
He sets them there,  
No sting hath he,  
And his is not  
The Victory.



And whom he spared  
I saw return,  
Ambassadors  
From his brave bourne—  
Strong with the wisdom  
Of the Wars,  
Bright from the camps  
Of Conquerors.

## *Unto the End*

Though the rivers of crystal run blood till the seas are  
blood,  
And the lands which were for proud harvests gape livid with  
death ;  
And the goodness we had of the days is emptied for ever of  
good,  
And for ever the balm of the silver night faileth and  
perisheth ;  
And though from the womb our sons know only to rage  
and kill,  
And our daughters forget that a bride is wed not for widow  
but wife ;  
And War, which the wise of their wisdom accounted the  
chiefest ill,  
Boasteth itself for the glory and blessing and purport of  
life ;  
Yea, though these things were established for ever—how  
should we quail,  
Or falter, or doubt that the sheer, stark soul of us shall  
prevail ?

We are done with the laughter and solace, the softness, the  
bloom,  
The clusters and sheaves of content, the honey and milk ;  
We are gone from the beautiful places unto the brinks of  
doom,  
Where that is sharp which was sweet and that is steel  
which was silk,  
And that is woe which was flesh, and hurt which was  
delight,  
And the fairest and kindest love must sort with a lurking  
hate,  
And the heart of pity be stone within her, and wrong be  
but right,  
And our very prayers are for power to punish and desolate ;  
Yea, stript to the spirit we stand, naked and very sure  
Of naught but the spirit, which, if it triumph not, yet shall  
endure.

## *Post Prælium*

[*Jutland*]

### I

Lovely, and mightily-thewed  
Mother of this great brood,  
Lo, the beatitude  
Falls on thee like a flood,  
And folds thee where thou'rt stood  
    Fronting the destinies  
    With comfortable eyes.

### II

Now knowest thou the rose  
Which to the sweet air blows  
In thy fair garden-close,  
And thine own lark that throws  
Down music as he goes  
    Vaunting to heaven of thee,  
    Are not for the enemy.

### III

Now knowest thou the maid  
Of her young joy unstayed,  
And matrons who have said  
Most secret prayers, afraid  
To tell themselves they prayed—  
    In thy green land shall dwell  
    Safe and inviolable.

### IV

Woodland and russet farm,  
And hamlet, and the warm  
And goodly towns where swarm  
Thy populations, Harm  
Taketh not in her palm ;  
    And never will they know  
    The tread of any foe.

### V

For round thee is the sheer  
Might of the mariner  
Whom thou didst suckle and rear  
And give for the ships. No peer  
Hath he to drive and steer  
    And fight till the last bells  
    The steely citadels.

## VI

Now knowest thou the deeps  
Of a verity thine ; nor sleeps  
Nor fails the ward. Who leaps  
For what thy Amireld keeps,  
Soweth a wind, and reaps  
    The whirlwind from thy guns,  
    The lightning from thy sons.

## VII

Blessèd art thou that sent  
These to be strawne and spent ;  
And blessèd they that went,  
Singing with heart's content,  
Unto the sacrament ;  
    And blessèd they that mourn  
    Whoso shall not return.

## *Marching On*

### I

I heard the young lads singing  
In the still morning air,  
Gaily the notes came ringing  
Across the lilac'd square ;  
They sang like happy children  
Who know not doubt or care,  
" AS WE GO MARCHING ON."

And each one sloped a rifle  
And each one bore a pack ;  
They had no grief to stifle,  
No tears to weep, alack ;  
They were too blithe to question  
Which of them should come back,  
As they went marching on.

## II

Oh, thou whose eyes are sorrow,  
And whose soul is sorrowing,  
Who knowest that each to-morrow  
A deeper woe may bring,  
And knowest that all the comfort  
Is the very littlest thing  
While they go marching on ;

These sons of thine seek glory,  
As the bridegroom seeks the bride,  
And who shall tell the story  
Of their triumph and their pride ?  
Like lovers, for the love of thee  
They have lain them down and died ;  
And they go marching on.

## III

They march by field and city,  
By every road and way,  
A march which angels pity  
And none may stop or stay  
Till the last head is rested  
On the last crimson clay ;  
So they go marching on !



They march in the broad sunlight  
And by the lovers' moon,  
Into the flame and gun-light  
From morns and eves of June,  
And Death for their entranced feet  
Pipes an obsequious tune,  
And keeps them marching on.

#### IV

And mid the battle thunder,  
And in the fields of blood,  
They see the untarnished wonder,  
The healing, and the good  
Which passeth understanding  
And can not be understood ;  
And they go marching on.

They see the rose's brightness  
Made perfect and complete,  
Lilies and snows of whiteness,  
And wings of gold that beat  
For ever and for ever  
Before the Paraclete ;  
And they go marching on.

## *Sergeant Death*

Oh, Sergeant Death,  
I've served with you,  
And chanced my breath  
A time or two !

I've seen brave men  
Turn green as sin,  
When you have coughed,  
“ Fall in, fall in ! ”

I've heard brave men  
With cold fear shout,  
When you have piped,  
“ Fall out, fall out ! ”

Where'er a lad  
Would do his part,  
'Tis you that probes  
His inmost heart.

Though all be stirred  
By drums a-roll,  
'Tis you that finds  
The soldier soul,

And takes him through  
The conqueror's drill,  
And helps him home,  
Or leaves him still.

'Tis you that puts  
In one parade  
Them that were anxious  
And afraid,

And them that were  
Fed-up and sick,  
And them that begged  
You to be quick,

And them that gave  
You laugh for laugh,  
And bitterer chaff  
For bitter chaff. . . .

Oh, you are old,  
And fierce and wise,  
But there is goodness  
In your eyes.

And still your health  
Goes round the tents—  
“The Father of  
The Regiments!”

## *Kitchener*

If Death had questioned thee,  
“ Soldier, where wouldst thou take  
The immitigable blow ? ”  
Thou hadst answered, “ Let it be  
Where the battalions shake  
And break the entrenched foe.”

Yet wert thou nobly starred  
And destined. Thou dost die  
On the grim English sea ;  
Thou goest to the old tarred  
Great Captains, and shalt lie  
Pillowed with them eternally.

And they shall stir from their rest  
Each in his lordly shroud,  
And say, “ ’Fore God, we have room,  
So are the deeps made proud ;  
Behold the glory on his breast,  
Kitchener of Khartoum ! ”

## *For Righteousness' Sake*

Man that is born of a woman—  
The creature of doom,  
Who lives that the Shadow may summon  
Men forth to the tomb ;

Who knoweth not wages or earning,  
Who sows not to reap,  
Whose labour and passion and yearning  
Must finish with sleep ;

Who catches in vain at the glory ;  
Whose brightness is rust ;  
Whose days are a breath and a story ;  
Whose house is the dust ;

Who lies, if he vaunt him of merit,  
Whose tree bears no fruit,  
Who quenches the spark of the spirit  
With lusts of the brute ;

Yet—standeth erect to the fighting  
And whirlwind and flame,  
And squanders himself for the smiting  
Of Terror and Shame ;

Who gathereth his weakness and brings it  
Where furies move ;  
And loves the world so that he flings it  
Away out of love ;

Even though he were fashioned to perish  
By ordinance grim,  
The Sons of the Morning would cherish  
Memories of him :

Who owing a debt went and paid it,  
And kept with his blood  
The Earth for the Wisdom who made it  
And saw it was good.

## *John Travers Cornwell*

*“ Boy (first class) John Travers Cornwell, of Chester, was mortally wounded early in the action. He nevertheless remained standing alone at a most exposed post quietly awaiting orders till the end of the action, with the gun’s crew dead and wounded all round him.”—ADMIRAL BEATTY*

Mortally hurt, alone he stood,  
England, in thy great fortitude.

While his spent shipmates round him lay  
He held on in thine ancient way—

A stripling with the veteran eye  
For the hard front of destiny.

Effacing Time shall not destroy  
The memory of this, thy boy.



On his young head the glory falls,  
As on the lordliest admirals ;

Fate sets his name in honour grim  
And even Death is proud of him.

## *Steel-True and Blade-Straight*

### I

Steel-true and blade-straight—  
There's your man ! And soon or late  
    He is England—all of her ;  
    All the Blood that makes her fair,  
All the Soul that makes her great,  
Steel-true and blade-straight.

### II

Steel-true and blade-straight—  
Neither puffed out, nor elate,  
    Neither glad, nor sad, nor sorry,  
    Seeking neither grace nor glory,  
Steadfast at the battered gate—  
Steel-true and blade-straight.

### III

Steel-true and blade-straight—  
Let the pillars of the State  
    Wrangle to their hearts' content—  
    His to fend and thrust and feint,  
His to watch and ward and wait,  
Steel-true and blade-straight.

### IV

Steel-true and blade-straight—  
While we bawl and perorate,  
    Big with "ifs" about our war—  
    He, the undoubting conqueror,  
Knocks the nonsense out of Fate—  
Steel-true and blade-straight.

## *Sursum*

I saw his dread plume gleaming,  
As he rode down the line,  
And cried like one a-dreaming  
“ That man, and that, is mine ! ”

They did not fail or falter  
Because his front so shone ;  
His horse's golden halter  
With star-dust thick was sown.

They followed him like seigneurs,  
Proud both of mien and mind—  
Colonels and old campaigners  
And bits of lads new-joined.

A glittering way he showed them  
Beyond the dim outpost,  
And in his tents bestowed them—  
White as the Holy Ghost.

And, by the clear watch-fires,  
They talk with conquerors,  
And have their hearts' desires,  
And praise the honest wars.

And each of them in raiment  
Of honour goeth drest,  
And hath his fee and payment,  
And glory on his breast.

O woman, that sit'st weeping—  
Close, like the stricken dove,—  
He is in goodly keeping,  
The soldier thou didst love !

## *The Full Share*

*"I take my full share of responsibility for the initiation of that operation—my full share. . . . I do not propose to adopt the attitude of a white-sheeted penitent, with a couple of candles, one in each hand, doing penance and asking for absolution."*  
—MR. ASQUITH.

### I

Do not expect from me  
(Whom you have set  
In this authority)  
Defence, apology,  
Excuse or plea,  
Or even a regret :  
No sheeted penitent  
Am I,  
To stand  
Candle in hand  
And cry  
That I may be forgiven,  
Absolved or shriven,  
For what is spilt and spent.

All that has happened so  
Is so.  
I lay it bare ;  
Admission I make :  
The wisest of us err,  
The best plans go awry ;  
Perhaps we blundered sore ;  
But I would have you know  
No one is more  
Responsible than I,  
And of the accountability I take  
My share—and my full share !

## II

In far Gallipoli  
Where Achi frowns to the sea,  
And wild war-fires are set ;  
Stark to the Eastern moon,  
There lies,  
Huddled in the last agonies,  
Beside his shattered gun,  
A new-slain English boy :  
And his dead eyes  
Hint not apologies,  
Excuses or regret,  
Neither dismay nor joy ;  
No candles at his head  
Nor sheet nor shroud has he,

And by his blood-soaked bed  
No shriving words are said.

It is a woman's son—  
The child she bare  
In England free and fair :  
Following the English drum  
Hitherward is he come,  
So to annul  
And break  
Himself for England's sake—  
He, too, hath taken his share,  
And taken it in full.

### III

Lord of the Mysteries,  
Who on the shining air  
Launchest despair,  
And black, by rose and vine,  
Spillest the battle-line ;  
This is the Bread, and this  
The perfumed Wine :  
No period dost Thou set  
Unto our dole and fret,  
Which, being of Thee, are Thine ;  
Yet, if we yield our breath  
To death,



Or keep in strife  
This fripperied fardel life,  
Help each of us to bear  
His share—and his full share !

## *Killed*

Lieutenant Keen was "great," and yet  
He would look over the parapet ;  
And something smacked him in the head,  
And he lay down as dead as dead.

He sluttered down, all proud and grim,  
And we set to and buried him ;  
All night he lay and took his rest  
With lumps of Flanders on his breast.

All day he lay in Flanders ground  
And rested, rested, good and sound ;  
But when the dog-star glittered clear  
He calls, " By Jove, it's dark down here ! "

" Sergeant, ain't I for rounds ? " sings he,  
" And where's the bally Company ? "  
And he was answered, with respect,  
" Here, sir—all present and correct ! "

And—sure as I'm a man—at night  
He comes along the trench, as white

And cheerful as the blessèd saints,  
To see if there was "no complaints."

They cannot quieten that boy's ghost,  
He'll have no truck with no "Last Post,"  
They mark him "Killed," but you may swear  
He's with us, be it foul or fair.

He goes before us like young fire,  
A soldier of his soul's desire ;  
Through the hell-reek that smothers us,  
He fathers us and mothers us.

When we have pushed the German swine  
Across the pretty river Rhine,  
Maybe he'll bide where he was spent  
And lie down happy and content.

## *A Chant of Affection*

And so you hate us ! You  
Hate England—hate, hate, hate !  
A bestial brewage, racked  
Out of the pits and holes  
Of foulness and deceit,  
Riots in your unclean veins ;  
You burn, you rage, you choke  
You spit and splutter hate  
For England ! . . . To the Russ,  
Battering your Eastern doors,  
You have a mind to turn  
The blubbered other cheek ;  
The Gaul—your sweet old friend  
And crony of your love—  
For him, dear soul, white flags,  
Garlands and pretty lures,  
Doves, promises, desire  
To load him with the half  
Of that you filched away :  
For Belgia, “ bleeding hearts,”  
Laments, regrets, “ mild rule,”  
Cheap headstones for her sons,

And for her daughters *You*—  
That they may suage your lusts  
And, by the fireless hearths  
You have made desolate,  
Be snugly brought to bed  
Of further Attilas  
And blonde Barabbases—  
Lieges and “gun fodder”  
For the top-heavy Dolt  
Whom ye call Kaiser and Lord. . . .  
Yea, holy are your eyes  
And filled with kindly beams  
For these and all the world :  
On Turk and Pole and Boer,  
Bulgar, American,  
You smile your panderous smile—  
But for the English—Hate !

And you will rend our Throat,  
And you will bite our Heel,  
And you will stamp us down :  
You put an oath on bronze  
(Not paper this time—bronze !  
Which is not easily blown  
On winds of treachery !)  
You have made an oath of bronze,  
An oath no wind may shake,  
An oath for your sons and their sons  
One foe and one alone—

*ENGLAND!* For England hate!  
And hate and hate and hate!

How shall we hate you back  
We who are England; we  
Whose bugles round the world  
Blow to the punctual dawns  
And fail not; whose great ships  
Traverse the seventy seas  
And always are at home;  
Who are too big, for hate,  
Too careless and too fine,  
Too tempered and too proud—  
How shall we hate you back?  
For when you see us whole  
Our strength is an honest strength  
And based on what we love;  
And these be two things we love:  
Honour, and our fair land—  
Honour which is the crown  
And jewel and lamp and light  
Of them that are not clods;  
And our fair English land  
Peopled with forthright men  
Who make no talk of God,  
But fear Him in their hearts,  
And fear nor hate, nor death  
Nor the King's enemies;—  
A land of blunt, brave men,  
And blessed with memories

Of old and high renown ;  
Old Captains who beat forth  
In lofty ships of war,  
Tawny and tarred and proud,  
Old Admirals, who sleep  
Safe in the ancient deeps,  
And dream for England still :  
Oh, you shall stamp us down  
When all the seas are red  
With the good English blood,  
And all the beaches white  
With decent English bones,  
And when our pleasant fields  
Are hillocked with carrion flesh  
That cries and cries to heaven  
Of coward Englishmen,  
And the white Yorkshire rose  
Blushes for shame of us,  
And her red sister-rose  
Blanches for shame of us,  
Then shall you stamp us down,  
Then shall you suck the blood  
Out of the English throats,  
And tack this Isle of ours  
On to your German wastes !  
O haters, fools and blind  
Go home and make dolls' eyes,  
And silly little clocks,  
And plaisters for our gout,  
Wimples and crissing-pins !

For now the outraged stars  
Have seen enough of you,  
The silver moons are sick  
That ye still blot the earth ;  
From icy, hidden peaks  
And far-off fastnesses,  
From chambers of the South  
And in the unconquerable heart  
Of England, ware and wake,  
The tempest gathers up  
That shall be flails for you,  
And break you in your place  
And scatter you like straw ;  
Instead of " Hate, hate, hate,"  
You shall cry " Doom, doom, doom,"  
And you shall wail and mourn,  
With none to comfort you  
But sprites of murdered babes,  
And ghosts of women raped,  
And wraiths of great slain men.



## *The Riddle*

Through a glass darkly I can see  
Slaves, in whose blood ran liberty ;

Creatures of anguish, fear and wrong,  
Abject of eye, furtive of tongue ;

Whose joy hath taken wings and flown,  
Whose strength no longer is their own ;

Whose high tower toppled to the dust,  
Whose silk and steel are moth and rust ;

Whose name is water and shall be  
A byword and a mockery ;

Who eat the portion of the thrall,  
Whose drink is vinegar and gall ;

Whose flesh doth suffer whip and rope,  
Whose children's children may not hope ;

Upon whose fetters chuckling Fate  
Hath set her scornful mark " Too late."

And on whose brows that fronted God  
The leering Beast writes "Ichabod."

Read you the riddle : who are these  
So naked to their enemies—

And so possessed of their old phlegm  
That one shall safely spit on them ?

I will not tell you who they are ;  
It is enough—THEY LOST THE WAR.

## *A Rhyme of Gaffer D—*

I know the old chap very well,  
He called on us when I was young—  
They sang a hymn and tolled a bell,  
“Friend after friend departs,” they sung.

He took my father somewhat quick,  
He took my brother from his play,  
He took my dog (a dirty trick—  
Though he's the Gaffer, anyway).

After—I didn't mind of 'im  
A-cuttin' up his grisly capers,  
For years and years, although I'd seem  
To read about 'im in the papers.

When war broke out, I saw the bills,  
What says, “Your King and Country Need You,”  
My 'eart with Rule Britannia fills  
An' whispers, “Go where glory leads you.”

But though I loved the 'Uns a treat,  
An' would have 'listed brisk an' 'earty,  
I always seemed to get cold feet  
A-thinkin' of that same Old Party.

Till—well, at last, it had to be,  
My girl, she says, “ You'll make me proud ! ”  
“ Wot about 'im ? ” says I. Says she,  
“ Sign up, my lad, an' 'im be blowed ! ”

An' so I signed and so I joined,  
An' learnt my facin's an' my drillin',  
An' how to wash my ears behind,  
An' always be alert an' willin'.

An' how to do things at the word,  
An' stamp when 'alted or “ attention ”-ed,  
An' all the time I never heard  
The Old Chap's name so much as mentioned.

Our little lot, they say, is “ it,”  
And not a bunch to stick at trifles,  
In fact for 'ficiency an' grit  
We're next door to the Artists' Rifles.

An' yet, my friends, twixt you an' me,  
Despite the bluff they feed the boys on,  
The Reg'ment don't like Gaffer D——  
An', *reely*, 'ates 'im worse than poison.

He is the Major's constant dread,  
The fly in the Lieutenant's ointment,  
Even the Colonel, so 'tis said,  
Will meet him only by appointment.

Oh, he's a wash-out, that Old Gent !  
If 'tweren't for him, so 'elp me never,  
We'd all of us be well content,  
To fight for 'arth and 'ome for ever !

You should ha' seen 'im t'other day,  
A-beckonin' us across the trenches—  
The very corporils knelt to pray,  
An' look at pictures of their wenches !

We did our bit—oh yes, we did,  
An' he was in his element—  
He took a toll which can't be hid  
Until the big new draft is sent.

But still I thank my stars, I does,  
( 'Appy am I it should be so )  
That though he wasn't kind to us  
He weren't no kinder to the foe. . . .

You won't get rid of that Old Card,  
Leastways till you've got rid of sin,—  
So here's his 'ealth, say I—the Hard  
Old Chap that spoils the soldierin' ;

The Chap that mocks at mothers' prayers,  
And loves to widow the young bride ;  
Yet hurteth only whom he spares,  
And makes the rest most satisfied.

## *The Ass*

The enemy without—and he within !  
You meet him on the stairs of your high tower  
All simpers. At his nose he hath a flower,  
Upon his tongue cheap honey ; and his chin  
Waggeth for ever. If we lose or win—  
Please don't talk war ! The witty luncheon hour,  
The joyous week-end ! Good souls, who could sour  
So blithe a spirit, or prick so sleek a skin ?

Cheerfullest wight ! It is his constant whim  
To beam on Fate. All that he asks is love,  
A salad, a glass of wine, music that charms,  
A book, a friend, and " the blue sky above "—  
And underneath, the everlasting arms  
Of them that toil and groan and bleed for him.

## *The Diners*

"*They died content,*" he said,  
And bent a well-groomed head  
Sweetly above the soup :  
"*Ab, splendid lads !*" he sighed,  
"*And . . . (Waiter !) . . . think !—they died*  
*Content ! . . . (the cantaloup*  
*Wasn't quite ripe enough).*  
*Real top-hole lads and tough !—*  
*A lesson for those swine !—*  
(Yes, yes—uncork the wine !)

"*Top-hole, I tell you !—(pish,*  
I'm not so keen on fish !—  
Don't matter—eat it, dear)—  
*Beat us ? Good Lord ! No fear !—*  
*With lads like that about !*  
(Well, well—they call it trout !)  
*Where can you match 'em ? (Oh—*  
*Pâtés of riz de veau !)*

"*All heroes !—(Gad—that's Jones—*  
*Wolfing his damned grilled bones—*



Pardon—but really—well—  
Grilled bones for dinner! . . . “Pell-Mell” ?  
No, darling, let us go  
And see the other show)—  
*Our chaps are simply ‘it’!*—  
(Not just the *weeniest* bit ?  
The waiting here’s absurd :  
When *will* they bring the bird ?)

“ *They died content!* . . . (Don’t look—  
There’s Mumble and the duke  
And Mrs. M.—Of course  
She *does* laugh like a horse!)—  
*They died like gentlemen!*  
(Chicken ? No—ancient hen!—  
But still the salad’s good)—  
*My God—the British blood!*

“ *You very nearly kissed  
That fearful Casualty List?—  
Ah, precious, you’ve a heart!—*  
(What excellent strawberry tart!)—  
*Yes, Haig’s O.K., you bet  
He’ll smother ’em—and yet  
There must be sacrifice!—*  
(I shouldn’t risk the ice!)

“ (Coffee for two—no cream !)  
*It all seems like a dream :*  
*Still, we shall win right through,*  
*As we were bound to do. . . .*

*They died content!*—(Why, sure!—  
*Did-ums* want its *liqueur*? . . .  
And, waiter—that cigar!  
And, waiter—call the car!—  
And, waiter—bring the bill!—  
These ‘ neutrals ’ make me ill !”

*July 1, 1916*

We were unprepared,  
We were most unwise ;  
We have been like that  
For centuries—  
But we've taught ourselves a thing or two,  
And we're muddling through.

Twenty-three months !  
Twenty-three Men !  
Oh, the muddle  
And muddle again !—  
One can't deny it, because it's true—  
But we're muddling through.

Shells and soldiers,  
Piles and files ;—  
The roar goes up  
On seventy miles :  
We know now what we always knew—  
We shall muddle through !

Oh, Banner of ours  
That shines in the wars,  
Oh, excellent bars  
Red, white, and blue,  
With glory in every fold of you—  
We shall muddle through!

## To the Kaiser

[With a Child's Drum]

He was three years old, a mirthful, tumbling wight,  
To see your cohorts pass, he stood at stare,  
Unwitting, but pleased ; and out of his delight  
He laughed you forth a *Vive l'Angleterre*.

Boiled the insulted blood in the high veins  
Of the most puissant and invincible  
(Whose fathers, spat upon, remarked " It rains ! " ) :  
Your soldier fired—rebellious innocence fell.

Wherefore we send you, Conqueror, a child's drum,  
And you shall beat upon it as you go  
Bloodily stalking to your crazy doom—  
The plaything of your murdered baby foe.

1912

[*First published in 1910*]

O Fair and Fair and Fierce,  
Tigress mother of ours,  
Beautiful-browed, deep-thewed  
Passionate mother of ours,  
Hearken ! The drums of doom  
Are beaten at the gate,  
And it is meet that THOU,  
Whose breasts are ice and steel,  
Whose heart is all a fire,  
Should show us frightened eyes,  
And lips becomingly blenched ;  
So say the very wise.

For when the thrones were made  
Thine, the throne of the thrones,  
Was set in the yeasty seas :  
Built and bastioned and braced,  
A tower of brass, a rock,  
An adamant pyramid,  
A strength unshakeable ;

And to thy hands were given  
Power and dominion  
Wherever water is salt,  
Wherever a shipboy sings,  
Wherever ships may ride ;  
So that the seas of the world  
Though they be seventy times seven,  
Are English seas, and thine ;  
Whether it be the harsh  
And bitter seas of the north,  
Flurried by little winds,  
And pushed by piping gales  
Against the winking stars ;  
Or the still blue middle seas ;  
Or where the daffodil moon  
Slips down an amethyst sky  
To walk with silver feet  
On the Southern, soft lagoons,  
It is the English sea. . . .

Who is this that waits  
By the weary Baltic shore,  
By the kneeling Baltic shore,  
With shrouded arm and hand,  
And a hand whereon there gleams  
A glove of impudent mail ?  
Behind him stretch afar  
The pleasant, placid spas,  
Fattened with English aches ;  
And the four-three factories,

And the reek of the dumper's fires,  
And the pretty river Rhine  
(Which owes so much to Cooks),  
And rows, and rows, and rows  
Of flat-head soldier men,  
And the works of Schichau and Krupp,  
And for a sign in the blue,  
The tender himmelblau,  
The good, grey Count's balloons !

Do you know this singular Lord,  
This humorous, hearty Prince,  
Whose cry is " Peace, Peace, Peace,"  
Abroad, and at home " War, War " ;  
Who preaches through the day  
With olive twigs in his hair,  
And rises in the night  
To fan the secret forge ;  
Who says, " Why should we fight ?  
Prithee, why should we fight ?  
What cause have we to fight ?  
Are we not friends, please God,  
And CUSTOMERS ? . . . My glass  
Is raised to you and Peace  
Hurra, Hurra, Hurra ! "

Who says again, " My arms  
Must flourish on the seas,  
My arms and mine alone  
If you wish a place in the sun ;  
As for the one in our path



The one whom we all so love,  
By nineteen hundred and twelve  
I shall be ready for HER !!  
I have promised you your Day—  
Hurra, Hurra, Hurra ! ”

It is nineteen hundred and ten  
And the Seas are English seas,  
They will be English seas  
Till they shall give up Drake  
And the thousand English hearts  
Which have made rich the depths :  
Until they shall be rolled  
Together like a scroll  
They shall be English seas.  
We sleep sound in our beds ;  
We fear no fist of mail ;  
We fear no withered arm ;  
We are not afraid of Krupp  
Nor yet of Blohm and Voss.  
We wish you the Devil's joy  
Of all you have hidden and built ;  
It is nineteen hundred and ten.  
We have simple words for you :  
In the English history books  
There is EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIVE ;  
We say to you when you pray,  
Thank Heaven if we do not write  
In the English history books  
With beautiful German blood  
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND TWELVE.

## *Towards the Reckoning*

With tongue of oil and breath of myrrh  
They bid us turn the other cheek,  
And mark the blessing for the meek,  
The mourner and the peacemaker.

They counsel, " Love your enemies ;  
Do good to them who bear you hate ;  
Agree thou quickly ! " and they prate  
Of being, with the great wisdom, wise.

" Of Eye for Eye and Tooth for Tooth  
None righteously exacts the debt ;  
It is forbidden ! " they say—and yet  
They publish only half the truth.

And by their speech the grinning Host  
Which hath Blasphemed takes lease to live. . . .  
Harden our hearts, lest we forgive  
The Sin against the Holy Ghost !

## *Verdun*

“ One shall be taken and the other left ”—  
’Tis so with men, and even so with forts ;  
One falls, another stands—the strong cohorts  
Beat vainly on it in rage of divers sorts—  
One shall be taken and the other left.

One shall be taken and the other left—  
Behold the Bride that singeth through the gloom,  
And waiteth still with scorn the German groom,  
And fears not to be given away by Doom !—  
One shall be taken and the other left.

One shall be taken and the other left—  
O eyes of Hell and fronts of bloody brass,  
France, by her Lilies, sweareth ye may not pass  
Unto her—though the bar were brittlest glass !—  
One shall be taken and the other left.

## *The Dublin Rising*

### I

Our right—and your old wrongs.  
With men's and angels' tongues  
We did discourse. Alas—  
The tinkling cymbal and the sounding brass !

We “ruled.” You mourned and planned.  
We had gifts to understand  
All knowledge, all dreams, all star-sad mystery ;  
Mountains we moved, while you made prophecy.

We doubted not. Your Eyes  
Were set on Paradise.  
Yet always, and most grievously,  
Both of us missed the “greatest” of “these three.”

## II

Your fair dead—our fair dead.

Now, by each fallen head  
And each rebuking wraith,  
Swear we another Faith.

Your night of tears—our night.

But, by the unquenchable Light  
Toward which, blindly, we grope,  
Behold, another Hope!

Our agony—and yours.

Yea, by the Passionate Hours  
And the Exceeding Bitter Cry,  
Do we still lack . . . the Charity!

## *Wounded*

Back again ! Back again ! Out o' blood and mud and rain ;  
Out o' gun-sound . . . God a'mighty !  
Out o' Blazes and home to " Blighty " !—  
Broke right up and full o' pain,  
But back again—back again !

Back again ! Back again ! By an extry special train  
With the Red Cross on the panels—  
Snuggled in me nice new flannels—  
Like the blinkin' King o' Spain—  
Back again ! Back again !

Back again ! Back again ! Clapham Junction plain as  
plain !—  
Just as grimy, just as gloomy,  
Just as home-like, and as roomy—  
Dead on time—we can't complain—  
Back again ! Back again !

Back again ! Back again ! Waterloo and rows o' men  
Down the platform standing ready  
For to lift us quick and steady—

Nurses smiling—"How's the pain?"  
Back again! Back again!

Back again! Back again! London town and home again—  
Never knew how much they loved us,—  
In the ambulance they've shoved us—  
Nearly numbered with the slain  
But back again—back again!

## *Come Young Lads First*

Sergeant went a-walking  
Wi' ribbons in his cap,  
"Ho-ho," says he, "His Majesty  
Wants just another chap,  
An' as 'tis plain, for married men  
He no more cares a rap,  
Come young lads first !"

Wherefore the bairn I suckled  
Goes now in khaki drest ;  
So young is he, that he med be  
Still cosy from my breast ;  
But he marches with his chin up  
An' his chest out, like the rest,  
Come young lads first !

Old Squire says, "Oh yes, oh yes,  
'Twill do him worlds of good" ;  
An' parson says that losing bairns  
If rightly understood  
Is blessed, an' 'tis sweet, he says,  
For th' King to shed your blood—  
Come young lads first !



“ Abram,” he says, “ gave Isaac,  
As writ in Holy Word,  
An’ Mary broke the precious box  
At the feet of our dear Lord ;  
So you must give your boy,” he says,  
“ To carry England’s sword,  
Come young lads first ! ”

They speak you fair do gentlemen,  
But not more fair or free  
Than my young son, who’s just the one  
His father used to be ;  
And when I said he med get killed  
He angers up at me,  
“ Come young lads first ! ”

For he’s no lad that hides his mind  
An’ he’s no lad that feigns ;  
An’ while he spoke my heart came back  
As easy of its pains  
As when his father courted me  
Along the scented lanes—  
Come young lads first !

A woman has her love (it is  
Her glory and her crown)  
Which many waters cannot quench  
An’ the great floods cannot drown ;  
But men have that which passes love  
When they hear the bugles blown—  
Come young lads first !

An' so the bairn I suckled  
Goes now in khaki drest,  
So young is he, that he med be  
Still cosy from my breast ;  
An' he marches with his chin up  
An' his chest out, like the rest—  
Come young lads first !

## *The Rhyme of the Beast*

Lo, the Beast that rioteth,  
Sick with hate and coveting—  
To the sons of men he saith,  
I will show you a new thing.

This, the Earth, which was the Lord's,  
Prodigal of rose and vine,  
I will desolate with swords  
Till it own that it is mine.

Every brow must bear my brand  
Every wrist must wear my steel,  
Every throat be for my hand,  
Every neck be for my heel.

I will thrust into your souls  
Unnamed terrors and despairs—  
Populate the air with ghouls  
And the sea with murderers.

While I prove that war is war,  
Saints shall mourn and angels weep,  
Star commiserate with star,  
Deep cry out to shuddering deep ;

Tigers marvel in their lust  
At the tale of blood and pain,  
Pity move the insensate dust,  
And the very stones complain.

I will twist the tongue of Truth  
Till her speech be nought but lies,  
I will kill the faith of Youth,  
And the hope in Age's eyes.

Not the altar, nor the tomb,  
Nor the Sufferer on the Tree,  
Nor the babe within the womb  
Shall be sacred unto me.

I will rend and rage and cog,  
Rob and ravish till I die ;  
I will be the Supreme Hog,  
And the world shall be my sty.

## Gaudeamus

*“Our whole High Seas Fleet, without any aid from coast batteries, has delivered a victorious blow against the most powerful navy in the world. . . . The great sea fight so eagerly expected on both sides in the North Sea for twenty-two months has been fought out.”—Tageblatt.*

This is your “victory” !  
We who brook no defeat,  
On any sea,  
    Being of the old sea-mind,  
    Smile the sea-smile, and find  
Our very losses sweet.

Of your “victorious blow”  
We give you the full joy :  
Be glad ! We know  
    Our strengths majestic—  
    Our every admiral,  
Our every sailor boy.

Yet is it not " fought out " :  
Lick you your wounds, good friends,  
And shout and shout—  
You will not shake  
Nelson, or Hood, or Drake,  
Or the appointed ends.

*For Whom it may Concern*

Ye know that Freedom from her height  
Laughs on the world in Fate's despite :  
Here is her comfort set :—  
England is England yet.

Ye know that all the fronts of War  
Shine with the effulgent English star ;  
Ye know whose is the blood  
That baffled and withstood

Old tyrants ; and full well ye know  
There never can be shock or blow  
To hurt more than a reed  
The panoply of your breed.

How shall you in such armour girt  
Palter behind a woman's skirt,  
Or that man's pledge, or this  
Man's broken promises ?

While the slipped flower of the race  
Comports him in the veteran's place—  
His shroud (oh, Fearlessness !)  
Worn like a wedding dress.

You will not grieve those emulous dead  
Boy heritors of goodlihead,  
Who haply loved their lives  
Much as you love your wives.



## *In the Train*

There's a soldier,  
By gad! Yes!—  
See her gi' me  
That there kiss?—

All the people  
Crowdin' by:  
An' her a maid  
As shy as shy!—

Kiss'd me fair  
An' plain an' free  
Before the blessed  
Company—

Whisper'd when  
I bent my head—  
Mustn't tell you  
What she said!

Little 'un,  
But very smart,  
Stands no higher  
Than my heart !

An' *that* straight  
An' unafraid,—  
Like a corporal  
On parade !

Smiles, an' loves you  
With her eyes :  
Stadies you,  
And keeps you wise :

Learns you all  
There is to know :  
Makes you feel  
It's good to go !  
. . . .

Women's funny—  
So they are !  
But who taught 'em  
About war ?

Where'd they learn  
Their bit of drill ?  
Who is it took 'em  
Through the mill ?

And gave 'em grit  
Enough for ten,  
An' sense to share it  
With the men ?

An' made 'em so  
They'd rather die  
Than let a soldier  
See 'em cry ?

An' gives 'em strength  
And nerve and grace  
To look the postman  
In the face ?

. . .

Oh, don't forget it,  
Mother's son—  
They're soldiers, soldiers  
Every one !

Soldiers loving  
Them that's gone,  
Soldiers, soldiers  
“ Holding on ”—

Proudest Regiment  
Ever known,—  
Let us call 'em  
“ The Lord's Own.”

## *Then*

### I

The parson to the padre said,  
“ Once, in a book, these words I read :  
    ‘ If any man take thy coat ; why, go  
    And offer him thy cloak also.’ ”

### 2

I heard the lump of shrapnel drone  
At midnight in the shatter'd bone :  
    “ Let us remember that sweet verse  
    Which bids us bless who brings the curse.”

### 3

And from his grave one calleth clear :  
“ When I come home again, my dear,  
    And my head on your bosom lies,  
    We will forgive our enemies.”

## *Slain*

*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*

You who are still and white  
And cold like stone ;  
For whom the unfailing light  
Is spent and done ;

For whom no more the breath  
Of dawn, nor evenfall  
Nor Spring, nor love, nor death  
Matter at all ;

Who were so strong and young  
And brave and wise,  
And on the dark are flung  
With darkened eyes ;

Who roystered and caroused  
But yesterday,  
And now are dumbly housed  
In stranger clay ;

Who valiantly led,  
Who followed valiantly,  
Who knew no touch of dread  
Of that which was to be ;

Children that were as nought  
Ere ye were tried,  
How have ye dared and fought,  
Triumphed and died !

Yea, it is very sweet  
And decorous  
The omnipotent Shade to meet  
And flatter thus.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES





*Mulier*

I saw a flake  
Of the burning lake  
Caught in an angel breath,  
And blown upon  
Until it shone  
Brighter than love and death

Through the dark it sped  
Like a star that bled  
A-kindle ; and I knew  
That heaven and hell,  
O, Miracle,  
Had made the soul of you.

*From the Chimney Corner*

When we are dead  
And newly buried,  
The worm, 'tis said  
Out of a pity doth creep  
Unto the ear of our sleep,  
And with her little voice  
Singeth a note or so,  
As near 's she can like the lark,  
To help us in the dark :  
Saying, " Rejoice, rejoice,  
For all shall yet be well ! "

From Death who is terrible  
(Yet hath no sting),  
And from the grave  
Which bindeth us  
(Yet hath no victory),  
Physicians might not save  
Old parson. Thus,  
He lay  
Down in the churchyard clay ;

And I have heard folk say  
That on the second day  
The kind worm passeth that way  
And sidleth up to him,  
And doth her best to sing,  
Saying, " Be unafraid,  
'Tis mortal lonesome here,  
Meanly thy bed is made,  
Thou lack'st both light and cheer  
And shalt, for many a year :  
Yet lift up th' heart—endure,  
For the reward is sure ! "—

' Um," sniffs old parson, "*two of a trade !*"

## *The Witling*

### I

An old poor rogue went down to the Ferry,  
Merry as merry.

“ Tho’ some do die on the gallows tree,  
God send they dye a good colour ! ” quoth he.

“ For just as many years they’ll be dead  
As who died snug i’ the ’spital bed !

“ And Moll and Doll and the Pope of Rome  
*La, la*—each goeth the same way home !

“ And as for doleful dumps, why—drat ’em ! —  
As Misery sang—‘ Cheer up for Chatham ! ’ ”

## II

“ Boatman, thou tarriest,” he saith,  
“ ’Tes piercin’ here by thy black staith ;

“ And I ha’ found nor crust nor apple  
Since yon loon got me by the thrapple.

“ Nor brandy-wine is brought to cheer me—  
A dead man hath small luck, I fear me.

“ Boatman, what meaneth thy ill look ?  
Why burns the ripple thou hast strook ?

“ Why is the hand thou touchest me with  
Unkinder than was that of Death ? ”

## *The Little Old Knife*

With my little old Knife  
I killed the paramour ;  
Her bosom was a soft flower,  
She had a girdle of vair  
And ruby combs in her hair :  
“ Come hither,” calls she, “ thou old wife,”  
Flirting her fan in the bower,  
“ And pick up our kerchy,” calls she ;  
“ An ’t please you, madam,” quod I—  
“ And, madam . . . once only we die  
So here’s good once for ye  
And everlasting rest—  
Both from my little old knife ! ”

With my little old knife—  
Ahey ! she looked and smiled  
Like a sleepy three-year child,  
And gaped, and drooped, and was dead ;  
Only a trickle of red  
Slipt down her heavenly breast :  
“ Thus endeth,” quod I, “ a strife,

An ache, a fragrance, a power,  
A shame, a wisdom, a mesh,  
A passion and rose of flesh,  
All finished at *my* hour  
And all with my little old knife !”

## *Thames*

River of rivers, that dost lave the might  
And poms and ships of England ; if the white  
Dawns be upon thee, or thou goest dight  
In armour of the sun ; or where at night  
With mirrored stars and lamps of chrysolite,  
Thou wooest this London to the ancient plight,  
Thou shalt be goodly for the English sight  
And proud till Time shall falter in his flight.

Tiber, Euphrates, Tmolus from the height,  
Tigris and Nilus, streams of old delight,  
And Abbana and Pharphar which were bright  
For queens by swart Damascus—these invite  
Words from the dreamer and the Abderite ;  
But thou art Thames—glorious in their despite.



## *The Eagle*

They have him in a cage  
And little children run  
To offer him well-meant bits of bun,  
And very common people say, " My word !  
Ain't he a 'orrible bird ! "  
And the smart, " How absurd !  
Poor, captive, draggled, downcast lord of the air ! "

Steadfast in his despair,  
He doth not rage ;  
But with unconquerable eye  
And soul aflame to fly,  
Considereth the sun.

## *Sigillum*

With thunder shod  
The hills be trod  
That the children of God  
Should quake at his nod ;  
He had bolt and rod  
For angel and clod  
And he wrote on their foreheads , " Ichabod."

And in his eyes  
Was enterprise  
Still to devise  
Smooth subtleties  
And perjuries  
For the King of Flies ;  
And goodness and truth were his enemies.

We toil and spin,  
Held by the gin  
And web of sin  
He catcheth us in—  
This prance, this grin  
With the felon chin—  
This Heads-you-lose-and-tails-I-win !

## *Cromwell*

*"The damned Psalm-singing old humbug"*

He had the heart of love,  
The heart of love and steel,  
The unshaken English heart  
That can be merciless,  
That can be merciful.

He looked upon the State  
And saw that it was foul.  
"It shall be cleansed," he said,  
"Straightway it shall be cleansed :  
Yea, even with tears and blood !"

The People loved him not,  
The Princes mocked at him ;  
With Sword and Book he strode  
Among them like a tower ;  
"I am your Lord," he said.

He woke the people's strength  
To know itself and fear  
No other strengths that were ;  
For Princes of all time  
He read the lesson out.

For England hath he set  
The way, the immutable plan,  
The rule of Empery :  
“ If ye would rule abroad  
Be fitly ruled at home.”

## *To the Little Muse*

Out of the light of the age,  
An age of superior things,  
I call unabashed unto thee  
O little Muse of the Valley.

Scorn for the simple pipe,  
The trivial, trite tune  
That a man may make in his youth,  
Is the fashion with all the world ;

A fashion dear to the cheap  
Young supercilious scribe,  
Also to wits and wags  
And every honest fool.

So that thy numerous sons,  
Sired by the windy Spring,  
Bristle, or blush, or blench  
At a hint of their parentage.

But little Muse of ours,  
They err who have shame in thee  
And grievously do they err  
Who bandy thy name when they scoff.

For comely art thou, and wise  
And affluent of heart ;  
White are thy feet by the brooks  
And pleasant thy voice in the vines.

Thy Sister, the beautiful-brow'd  
Calm friend of them that endure,  
Loveth thee from her heights,  
And wherefore not we, who are naught ?

## *Audrey*

Audrey knoweth naught of books,  
Naught to captivate the wise ;  
But the soul of goodness looks  
Through the quiet of her eyes.

She can bake and she can knit,  
Cunningly she wields the broom,  
All her pleasure is to sit  
In a neatly order'd room. . . .

Touchstone, shaping a career,  
Shines at each exclusive house :  
“ Such a clever man, my dear,  
Tied to—just ‘ a country mouse ’ !

“ Married ere he dream'd of *us*,  
Ere he knew what gifts he had—  
Strange that Fate should yoke him thus,  
And very, very, very sad ! ”

Touchstone (let them mark it well),  
When the social round is trod,  
Bored by dame and demoiselle,  
Goes home softly, thanking God.



## *The Yeoman*

Across the counties came the sound  
Of war-drums that his fathers knew ;  
He had no heart for horse or hound,  
He said, " Am I not English too ? "

All the old ardours in his blood  
Leapt like the flame from smitten steel,  
And, to himself revealed, he stood  
A buttress of the common weal.

So that if cities give their pride  
To strengthen England's righteous arm,  
Men, too, are bred by countryside  
And quiet grange and folded farm.

1899

## *The Finer Spirit*

### I

I saw the painted worlds go by,  
And wonder'd what great good could lie  
Beneath that dreadful pageantry.

What lamp of excellent brimming light  
Hath kept the immemorial night,  
And watches on, in Time's despite ?

What soul of saving sweetness lends  
The affable touch to things, and blends  
That which begins and that which ends ?

### II

And one, whose look shone kindness, ran  
And fetch'd his sheaf of charts—the plan  
“Mark'd out,” he said, “by God for Man.

“ Look thou ! Thus far, and thus, the clear  
Seas sparkle ; thou mayst pray, and steer  
Thy craft with knowledge here, and here ;

“ But by the vasty marges loom  
God’s well-set darkneses ; the womb  
Bears not the man that skills this gloom.”

### III

Another, wisely, “ We are sure  
Of consciousness and some small store  
Of facts, as ‘ two and two make four.’

“ So nerved and lamp’d may Reason spell  
The systems out, and learn to tell  
The purport of the inmost cell ;

“ But ever as she goes, she sees  
In new and old simplicities  
The old, invincible mysteries.”

### IV

Also another, “ Wine and wheat  
And oil have we, and liberal heat  
Of faithful suns ; our pulses beat

“ With warmth and warm affections—Love  
The chief—and like a blessèd dove  
Joy winnows round us as we move ;

“ And solace cometh for the stroke  
And strength to render dear the yoke—  
These are enough for honest folk.”

## V

Yet who, that waits for happier skies,  
Or searches with assiduous eyes,  
Or dreams among the butterflies,

Hath never felt the effulgence full  
From off the face of things, and all  
The sweetness sicken into gall ?

Hath never heard the implacable blast  
Crying afar through void and vast,  
And stood up shuddering and aghast ?

## VI

Yon planet, set out lustrously  
Upon the tinted dawn, may be  
Some dull immutable agony,

Heavy with hideousness, and fell  
And terrible tribes that quake and yell  
For ever on the slags of hell ;

Creatures to whom death is a vain  
Vague legend of the prime, ere pain  
Bore down and smote them heart and brain.

## VII

And this dear earth of green and grey  
And gold and blue—our broad highway  
And pleasant inn whereat we stay

As travellers lighted luckily  
On goodly cheer and company  
And chambers lavendered—may be

Out of the placid ages come  
With all its load of life and bloom  
Jump to the verge of some wild doom.

## VIII

She called to me across the flood  
Of finish'd years, " Believe thy blood  
Which runs a living faith in good ! "

She called to me out of the still  
And molten noon, " Believe thy will  
Which, having force, would banish ill ! "

She called to me out of the day  
Next to be born, " Believe the clay  
Which sends up goodness from decay !

## IX

" Here is the earnest to make whole  
The parted circlet of the soul,  
To crown thy mirth and star thy dole ;

" Here is the essence that hath kept  
The centuries sweet, and raced and leapt  
In veins that wither'd, eyes that wept ;

" Here is the jewel for the brow  
The beam to set the light aglow  
And to enrose the pinnacled snow.

## X

" I am the crimson of the rose,  
The fair quick flame the crocus shows,  
The spice that with the blossom goes,

“ The witchery of the thrush’s tune,  
The surge of March, the flash of June,  
The marvel of the reapers’ moon,

“ And where the winter aches in white  
And mists, I haunt the doubtful light  
While dwindling suns loom red and bright ;

## XI

“ I am the strength of all the dead,  
The wisdom and the goodlihead  
And pith of what they did and said ;

“ I am the beauty that hath stood  
Bodied, like a beautitude  
In soft, calamitous womanhood

“ From the beginning ; and the Rest  
Of Saints am I, and all the blest  
Rapture of bosoms babes have press’d ;

## XII

“ And Man, the spirit and the dust  
The god that wears the chains, and must  
Be still the creature, and still trust

“ He is not wholly fool and slave,  
And live half angel and half knave  
To sup with Death and fat the grave ;

“ Man that is nothing, yet divine  
Sifting the creeds for one sure sign  
Hath sureness in a look of mine ! ”



## *Materiel*

Since wheels for the breaking of bone  
And hooks for the tearing of flesh,  
And pully and rack  
And screws to crack  
Sinew and joint are forgone ;  
Shall Torture fail of her own  
And lose the admirèd moan  
Of thrice-slain agony,  
Or miss from her ancient mesh  
The victim fair and fresh ?  
Nay, by the Rood, not she !

Ablaze with glittering skill,  
On floors of anguish, still  
Plieth she pincer and bowl,  
And she hath profuse prey ;  
And all night and all day,  
Though bodies go safe and whole,  
She thanks God for the soul.

## *Strike*

Of trivial tide and chance,  
And dribs of circumstance,  
Flourish and feint and threat,  
Swords that are never wet,  
Daggers which only scratch,  
Springs not made to catch,  
Faleshood none uttereth,  
Mumblings of quick apology  
For prettily hinted infamy,  
And dirty hands in nice clean genteel gloves,  
Sick was he unto death.

Dear knows,  
He hath seen his share  
Of fribbles and fret  
And seeming overthrows ;  
Hence sayeth he this prayer  
To men and destiny :  
*Let me be stricken fair  
With infallacious blows.*

## *Iris and the Water-Lilies*

All hidden like a jewel 'mid great hills  
There lies a clear-eyed lake, girt round with shade  
Of willow and green hazel, and behind,  
Forests of oak and fir stretch out and climb  
Unto the topmost sunshine of the heights.

Here at the narrower end, a narrow arm  
Runs deep into the shadows of the wood,  
Losing itself in reedy lonesomeness ;  
Dark wilding weeds, lovers of glamour, creep  
Along its shallow edges, and, in mid-stream  
Like faery shallops waiting for moonrise,  
A fleet of pallid water-lilies sleeps.

At daybreak, when the lake was flushed and strewn  
With red, and gold, and purple ; and the wood  
Shimmer'd with opal tintings, hither came  
The wind-footed Iris—Juno's messenger—  
Bound on her Autumn task to kill the bloom ;

Upon her brow duskily beat and throbb'd  
Three lambent starlets, and her filmy hair  
Stream'd in a shining tangle after her.  
Like starshine from a star, ethereally,  
Or as some sweet soul drifting in bliss, she slid  
Down the hushed dawn to where those lilies were ;  
And seeing them in their white loveliness,  
Cold, pallid, pure, she hovered over them,  
And smiled upon them, as a mother smiles  
Upon her sleeping children. Then the thought  
That she must slay them, even as the rest,  
Shot through her being like sharp agony,  
And lifting up her voice in golden speech,  
She cried upon the queen of gods and men :

“O Juno, in thy heaven,  
Give ear and pity me ;  
Lo, my young heart is riven  
With this I do for Thee,  
Wherefore I pray a respite from my task.

“In valleys where the sun  
Had pitched his golden tent,  
As by their beauty won  
And bound to sloth, he meant  
To rest himself from travel evermore ;

“Vales where the white dove's wing  
Smote ever golden airs,

And she that doth so sing  
Mounting her sunny stairs  
Met neither cloud nor shadow all the way ;

“Over the quiet top  
Of a thyme-laden hill,  
Where drowsy bees did drop  
Into cool cups, to fill  
Their pouches, or to loiter out the hours ;

“Where upward from the corn  
The reapers' voices rang,  
And on the airs were borne  
Light songs the maidens sang  
In the hill-vineyards as the hours slipt past—

“Thither I went to tear  
The glory from men's sight  
And over all that's fair  
Have cast the seed of blight ;  
And this my deed shall bring me naught but pain.

“For the sweet days will pass,  
The sun will leave his camp,  
The dead leaves rot i' the grass,  
The airs wax chill and damp,  
The white dove shiver and the lark grow dumb ;

“And they that reaped the corn  
And laughed among the vines,  
Shall crouch themselves forlorn,  
Soon as the frostwork shines  
And wish the sun-time were come back again.

“Therefore, I pray thee, give  
These lilies of the lake,  
Yet further days to live,  
So that the world may make  
Some solace of them when all else is dead.

“And if thou wilt not—why  
I break my faith with thee !  
These are not meet to die  
Being so fair to see,  
And they shall live for any touch of mine !”

Straightway the sun was darkly cast in clouds  
The gloom brought rain and lightning, and a wind  
Sprang up and wandered wailing round the woods ;  
The fisher at the far end of the lake  
Heard troubled cries, toss'd on the fretful air,  
And putting forth, and coming to the arm, he saw  
One hovering like a glory round the lilies ;  
And as he looked the rain was past and done,  
And seven slant sunbeams piercing thro' the shade,

Beat on her form, which, like a richer light,  
Passed into them, and flushed them with soft hues,  
Rose-blush, rare azure, and all fairy tints ;  
So that a shaft of painted mist arose  
From where she had been ; and as he turned away,  
Behold ! a rainbow stretched across the lake.

## *Brandenburg*

Old duke, with the long white beard,  
Of what woe art thou afear'd ?

What unplumb'd and deathly wound  
Gapes unto thine eyes profound ?

What disastrous blaze of wing  
Smoulders in thy ruby ring ?

From thy cup gleams what disgrace  
From thy napkin what dismays ?

Like a dreamer answereth he  
" It is one shall follow me,

" Without virtue, without lust,  
A bowlessness, a painted dust

" Perk'd up in our powerful seats  
For a race of liars and cheats,

" Whom he knoweth not to contemn—  
Cozening, and not ruling them ! "



## *To John Bunyan*

John, it was sweet of thee to be a tinker,  
For poor men need a trade ;  
And of all trades that picture well with art, John—  
Intuitive, innocent art, John—  
    It is the tinker's.

And it was sweet of thee to go to gaol, John,  
Even unto Bedford Gaol :  
Why may not all of us forthwith repair, John,  
To some such sunless fastness,  
    And dream large dreams, John ?

And sweet it was of thee to make and write, John,  
A sweet and decent book  
Which hath an honest savour, like good bread, John,  
And keeps the general palate ; though their fictions  
    Do come, and go, John.

Ah ! who would not, to author such another,  
    Take thy extremity,  
Thy petty craft ; thy “ gross, implacable ” doctrine ;  
Yea, even a threadbare “ treatise-dowered ” spouse, John,  
    And thank his stars, John ?

## *Epitaph*

If I should ever be in England's thought  
After I die,  
Say, "There were many things he might have bought  
And did not buy."

"Unhonoured by his fellows he grew old  
And trod the path to hell,  
But there were many things he might have sold  
And did not sell."

## *Christmas*

The Baby of Bethlehem  
Lay in a manger,  
And the Wise Men and the Kings came  
To give him gold and frankincense  
And myrrh ;  
And Mary, his mother, bent over him,  
And he had a star for his own,  
Which shone white and fair in the East.

And they have called his name  
The Prince of Peace ;  
And in his name  
Men have cast out devils,  
And handled serpents,  
And ruled the people,  
And builded glories and greatness,  
And died very comfortably.

And you of Babylon  
Shall consider Him now  
Stark, where He stands—  
The Man of Sorrows

And Acquainted with Grief,  
The Light of the World—  
Shivering outside the halls  
Wherein you make feasts for Him.

## *The Christmas Tree*

Far off in yon blue Palestine  
His star, His star, doth tremble and shine.  
O little Baby fair to see,  
Bless these branches for Thy tree,

And these twinkling lights whose flame  
Is spent to glorify Thy Name,  
And these children, whose bright eyes  
Are a perpetual sacrifice !

## *Graves in France*

Once there was a little moon  
That look'd down on Golgotha  
And three crosses rangèd there  
And the burdens which they bare :  
Naught might hurt or trouble her,  
Wise as wise and fair as fair.

O thou silver little moon,  
Miles and miles of Golgotha  
Now are spread to thy still stare :  
And the myriad crosses there  
Glimmer on the evening air,  
Wise as wise and fair as fair.

## *The Lonely Man*

For him  
There were no Springs,  
No tender green, no blue, nor living gold,  
No rose of holy white,  
No blessed rose of red,  
No glory of love or death.

The foolish and the faint  
Set many marks on him ;  
The foolish and the faint  
Were easy, and they laughed.  
The Fool said, " Here is one  
Less than myself " ;  
The Faint said, " Here is one  
Fainter than I ;  
Wherefore lay on,  
And may the Lord be praised ! "

So that his bread was dust,  
And his drink bitterness.



And his delight went past him,  
And he died  
Cheated, and bowed, and dumb.

And when the Worlds,  
That are as sand and sand  
Upon the winds of Time,  
Dropp'd and were quiet,  
I looked athwart the broken battlement  
And saw his grey soul beating up the dawn

## *The Admiring Admirer*

A daw that went in feathers not his own  
Sought out the opulent bird he had them from,  
And cried, " Behold, the plumage thou hast strown  
To glory come ! "

Whereon the other, " That thou shouldst aspire  
So stuck with wastage keeps thee in our love ;  
They steal Jove's thunder and they steal his fire  
Yet hurt, not Jove."

## *Recipe*

CHIDDEN still murmurs,  
SLAPPED and RAPPED complain,  
HURT, with a thousand tongues,  
Whines out his pain.

This is the learning  
Unto which we come :  
PROPERLY WALLOPED  
Is for ever dumb.

## *In Harness*

[*After* W. E. HENLEY]

At the sultry hour of midnight,  
When we keep the door propped open  
For the little boys with "flimsy"  
I can hear our presses whirring.

Whirling, whirring, in a rhythm,  
Steady, rational, persistent ;  
Churning out the first edition,  
To illuminate the counties.

Like the noise of many waters  
Broken on a weir of tea-trays,  
Is the sound—a choppy droning :  
And it rather soothes one's heart-strings.

Yet, at times, I can't help thinking  
How much of my life goes whirring,  
Whirling, whirring, whir, whir, whirring  
With the whirring of those presses.

## *The Good Conceit*

[After W. E. HENLEY]

Out of the cloud that covers me  
And blots the stars and seldom lifts,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my indubitable gifts.

Under the whip, upon the setts,  
Men drive me many a galling mile ;  
My stock of editors' regrets  
Would fill a barrow, but—*I smile.*

Fast by this trade of wind and wit  
I mean to hold till life be done,  
And every year I stay in it  
Finds, and shall find me, tugging on.

It matters not how stiff and sheer  
The climb—how difficult the sum,  
I am the man they've got to hear !  
I am the man that's bound to come !

*July 1899*

*October 21*

Dreams that shine for England still  
Like a city on a hill—  
Glory snatch'd from old dead woe,  
Names of battles long ago !

Yea, with panoply of gold,  
Pomps and glitterings manifold,  
Shine they forth like happy stars  
On the midnight of the wars.

Dreams that heal the banner's rents,  
Dreams that fire the regiments,  
Dreams that are for English eyes  
Smoke of the sweet sacrifice.

Age-old tales of Chivalry  
Clearing still its place to die,  
Sturdy pikes, stout halberdiers  
Conquering through the misty years.

Great grey galleons, saucy sloops,  
Proud-eyed men on haughty poops—  
One of them, with breast ablaze,  
Dies for England all her days!

## *Thou*

'Tis thine to give,  
And thine to scorn ;  
So shalt thou live  
And reign and mourn.

When all is done  
Fate worketh thee no ill,  
Leaving thee still  
Thy skill,  
Thy furious wise will,  
And they heart of stone.

THE END



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