

ARTISTE-EN-ŒUVRE



HOMME-ŒUVRE

THEIR BOOK

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From your
Guide, Philosopher and Friend,
Arthur Davison Ficke.

ARTHUR
FONE



TOM
METCALF

THEIR BOOK

Of this book there were but fifty copies
printed, during the summer of 1901,
for private circulation.

This copy is No. 10

Arthur Davison Ficke
and
Thomas Newell Metcalf





AT your peril, take this book seriously.

It was written in an idle hour by two idle fellows with no object but their own amusement. So if it amuses anyone else, it does more than it was ever meant to do.



the joy of living!

To lie in the shade

Beneath the greening trees that sleep,

Drinking the light the sun is giving

And look up into the clear cool deep

Where the castled clouds my dreams have made

Pile high their snowy silver heaps

And there to float till I grow afraid

Of the silent beauty that yonder sleeps.



HIS is the bedbug amiable,
With hair like new-mown peas.
He lives on cheese and cabbages
And cabbages and cheese.



T**HIS** is the frowsy-headed man
Of Ethiopian hue.
He wears a bath robe scarlet bright
And underwear of blue.



HIS lady with the snaggle teeth
Is Katherine the Fair,
Who o'er the festive griddle cakes
Strews strands of auburn hair.



thought I saw a Turkish bath

Upon my horse's tail.

I looked again and saw it was

A brace of hard boiled quail.

—You'd better turn your collar up,

Your teeth are getting pale.

I'D like to be a mucker
And with the muckers stand,
A grin upon my grimy face,
A penny in my hand.





ALLY climbed a mountain top,

Stood upon the dizzy brink,

Tumbled down with one big flop.

Awful silly, don't you think?

TRIOLET.



FIREFLIES flit through the night,

Now they glow near and now far;

Strewing the dusk with their light,

Fireflies flit through the night.

Vanishing moments of bright

Over the meadow afar;

Fireflies flit through the night—

Wings and the soul of a star.

THE BALLAD OF ELEANOR.

I.



soft-eyed golden Eleanor,
My ship is on the tide
And I can now no longer stay
Where most I wish to bide.

The anchor 's up—I must away
Upon the windy main
And long, O long I fear 'twill be
Ere I come back again.

But as I ride the rocking swell
Out in the stormy blue
Will you not let me, Eleanor,
Call you my sweetheart true?

And as I sail the lonely sea
Of scattered fringing foam
May I not think there is a heart
That beats for me at home?"

The slender, soft-eyed Eleanor
Stands silent in the sun,
Like to a lily with a crown
Of golden glory spun.

With eyes cast down and shadowed brow
In silence long she stands
And sorrowfully shakes her head
And hides it in her hands.





Down through the narrow cobbled street
That winds up to the hill,
Where bloom the quiet hollyhocks
And beds of daffodill,

The master of the "Sea Gull" moves
With eyes cast down and dim,
With heavy step and heavy heart
And gloom enfolding him.

II.

The sun is rising joyfully,
The wind is blowing free
And out upon the world's blue edge
A white sail dots the sea.

III.

Throughout the quiet fishing town
A rumor wild has spread—
“They say the ‘Sea Gull’ sank last night
And all her crew are dead.

The storm last night swept down on them
With lurid lightning breath
And made the waves like maddened steeds
That dragged them down to death.

And never from the hungry deep,
Across the sunlit main,
Will they come back to sit beside
Their cheerful hearths again.”



IV.

Upon the hill behind the town,
More pale than e'er of yore,
With trembling lips and tearful eyes
Stands golden Eleanor.

"It cannot be! It cannot be!
I know that he will come
To let me tell him of my love
And claim me as his own.

O God, thou art too merciful
To give him to the foam.
Come back, my love, my life of life—
I wait your coming home."



But from the calm and placid deep
The wind blows soft and free
And out unto the world's blue edge
Stretches the silent sea.



THE WEST WIND.

In twilight soft the West Wind came
From out his purple-shadowed grove
Where sank the sunset's dying flame
And on a quest without a name—
An aimless, wanton, wand'ring quest,
Throughout the trees did move.

He came unto a garden-keep
All shaded round by solemn trees
Where leaned a maid in slumber deep
And from the misty vales of sleep
He woke her with a kiss as sweet
As unheard melodies.



The maiden woke from slumbering
Leaving the mist of dreams behind
And felt, like breath of blossomed Spring
Or some soft sweet remembering
Brought back from old and happy days,
The kiss of the West Wind.

And as she ope'd her arms to fold
This wafture of the Summer sky,
She saw above the silver stars
Shine through the branches' swaying bars
And heard the footsteps of the Wind
Go rushing by.

AT SUNSET



ONCE upon a time there lived a little Poet. He lived by himself way up in a garret. Now the garret was cold as cold in Winter and the snow used to drift in through the ill-made windows and through a crevice in the weather-worn roof. But The Little Poet lived through the Winter by dreaming of the Spring to come; and in the Spring he left the windows open wide and for nothing would he have stopped up the crevice, for there was a star which peeped through at him and sang him to sleep night after night with its soft silvery voice. From one window of the garret he could see the many red-tiled roofs of the city which stretched for miles and miles down to the great purple sea. And from the other

window he could look down on the somber gardens which skirted the Palace of The Great Princess. Very beautiful they were in the Springtime, when the year was young and the grass was green and the flowers were budding. Then it was that the trees were all abloom; and to The Little Poet, who used to sit by the window and build air castles, it seemed as if the world was a great garden of beautiful many-petaled pink-and-white flowers. And sometimes of an afternoon he could see The Great Princess walking in the garden with her ladies. And which was the Princess he could not for the life of him tell. But there was one among them as tall and straight as a lily, with wonderful tawny hair, whom The Little Poet loved. Only he did not know he loved her, for he knew so little of the world.

Many a time did he sit by the window and dream and dream and watch the great red sun slowly climb down in the western sky, pouring a blood-red sea of light over the world. And once when the violet twilight was covering the great city there came to The Little Poet a little Poem, and sang and sang to him. All night long he listened to the music of the poem; all the next day and the next, and on and on until he forgot about the glorious sinking sun, forgot about the singing star and The Lady of the Lilies. He thought how soft and sweet the Poem and cherished it and let no one see it.

One day The Little Poet was all for taking a jaunt out into the wide green world. So he took his hat and staff from the peg behind the door, and with The Little Poem went down the rickety stairs,

out through the narrow city streets and into the free green country—where the world was younger than in the city and where the shepherds piped and the peasants danced and even the sun joined in the merrymaking. And many a day did The Little Poet and The Little Poem travel together. All the while they sang; and ever greener the earth, ever sweeter the flowers, and the birds the blither.

One night they came to a tavern where they had a mind to sup. So in they went and asked the Landlord, had he a room where they might sup alone. Now being out under God's own heaven for many days and sleeping in Mother Nature's lap for as many nights makes one look no better than one should. And this was the case with The Little Poet. Prut, said the Landlord, did The Little Poet

think he had private rooms for such as he? If he wasn't satisfied with the common room he might go out and spend another night with the stars and winds. But when he saw The Little Poem, the Landlord changed his tune, for he had a soft enough heart after all, and knew that The Little Poem was not for such as yokels and clods. Nevertheless he had no private room unoccupied; but there was one in which there were but two gentlemen, both pliers of the pen, who would undoubtedly receive The Little Poet and his Poem with pleasure. So in they went and sat them down to sup.

After the meal was ended and the glasses filled, The Little Poem sang to pleasure the strangers. But when the song was done, how those two men went at the Poem—such things as they said—how

they laughed and jeered. Nor a whit did they care for the heart pain and aching of The Little Poet nor for the bruises and slashes that they gave The Little Poem. At last The Little Poet could stand their abuse no longer, so clasping The Little Poem, all bruised and broken, he ran out into the calm night, and ran and ran until the tavern and the critics were far behind.

Then for many days the two went near no tavern, but wandered up and down in the world, singing to the countryside and making every one the happier for it. They were wont to stop at the cottages along the road-side to beg for a crust and a place to sleep, and never a soul refused them food or shelter.

Early one scarlet Autumn morning The Little

Poet and The Little Poem knocked at the gate of a cottage and asked for a cup of milk and a crust of bread to help them along the highroad of the day. From the house there came a woman, tall and slender with hands white and thin; and her hair was long and creamy, like spun flax; her eyes mild and soft like violets half hidden 'neath darksome leaves, and her face as pale as silver. When she saw the Poem she called to one within, and there came out a second woman as much like the first as one lily is like another. And the two women came slowly down the path and with fondlings and pettings, such as are given to little children, led the Poem into the cottage, leaving the Poet bewildered, to follow by himself. All day the two stayed with the women; but little enough attention did The Little Poet get. For they,

with lovelorn sighs and glances, with yearning words and murmurs, paid homage to the Poem. From crimson dawn to purple dusk the Poem sang on and into the shadowless night, until the women fell asleep from the music and The Little Poem had almost sung its heart out. Then the wondering Poet arose and with his Poem stole softly from the house of those who had almost killed it.

All Autumn long the two wandered on, over leaf-strewn hill and dale, and near no cottage nor tavern did they go, but lived from the bounty of the woods and of the fields and of many a shepherd spending a weary life on the downs. One night in dark November, when they had at last turned their footsteps homeward, the two found themselves out on a lonely heath and not a sign of shelter could they

see anywhere. The cold wind howled across the moor, all but drowning the music of The Little Poem. But after a while they saw a light burning bright in the dark, and toward this they turned, and at last came to a tavern set all by itself out in the middle of a lonely heath. The wind was howling loud without and the night was bleak, but within all was alive and warm. Those within made room for the two wayfarers and after a warm corner by the hearth had been given them and the wine had gone its round, The Little Poem began to sing—and never such music had been heard within that tavern before.

Now it happened that in the next room was a Great Poet who was making a journey and he was at dinner when The Little Poem began to sing. When he heard the singing, nothing would do but

that The Little Poet and The Little Poem should come into the room and sing to him. So in the two went, and a very pleasant evening they had of it. But The Great Poet was covetous of The Little Poem, and when The Little Poet was not looking, he dropped a drug in the wine; and the poor Little Poet forgot the world, forgot the Poem, forgot everything and fell asleep.

The next morning he found himself lying out on the heath alone. The Little Poem was gone. Back he hurried to the tavern and learned that The Great Poet had left and taken The Little Poem with him. Nothing was for The Little Poet but to follow the thief, and wearily he hurried along after him.

Bye and bye he came to a great city where everyone sang the praises of The Great Poet and his

wonderful Poem. Then he learned that The Great Poet had gone across The Purple Sea, far across to The Land of the Silver Mountains. And The Little Poet crossed The Purple Sea too and climbed up and down the Mountains, all the while hearing the praises of The Great Poet and his stolen Poem, but never seeing or hearing either. Time flew on and The Little Poet heard less and less of the Poem. Day by day he met fewer people who knew it, and finally a day went by and he met no one who remembered it; and the same the next day and the next, and always. And then it came to The Little Poet that he was an old man and he bethought him that he would go back to his garret by the Garden of The Great Princess. For his little Poem was lost forever and he might as well be as happy as he could

with the beautiful garden and the beautiful sunset.

So one day in the Spring, when the world was all aflower again, the weary Little Poet climbed the rickety stairs and sat down by the window which looked out on the garden, and dreamed. No air castles now, only half forgotten memories. Out from the Palace into the Garden came an old woman, straight and tall for one with her weight of years, with hair of faded gold. And The Little Poet knew it was his Lady of the Lilies. As he sat there, from the garden came floating to him soft sad music—so sweet and so familiar to him.

It was his Poem.

The Lady of the Lilies and The Little Poem were together. She alone of all the world loved and

cherished it. And the little old Poet's wrinkled face
was wet with tears.



TWILIGHT SONG.

THE glow in the west o'er the hilltops is dying;
The night wind is rising and sinking and sighing.

My thoughts are of longing too sweet to be pain
And a fullness of joy comes again and again
To surge in my heart and to sink in the stream
Of its own flood of happiness—all like a dream.

Is it thou that art calling,
My sweetheart, to me?

I hear thee, I hear thee, my love, and am coming
To press in the gloaming thy hands in mine own,
Where the night winds are roaming, are roaming alone;

Where the river is lapping
And shadows are falling;
Is it thou that art calling,
My sweetheart, to me?



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