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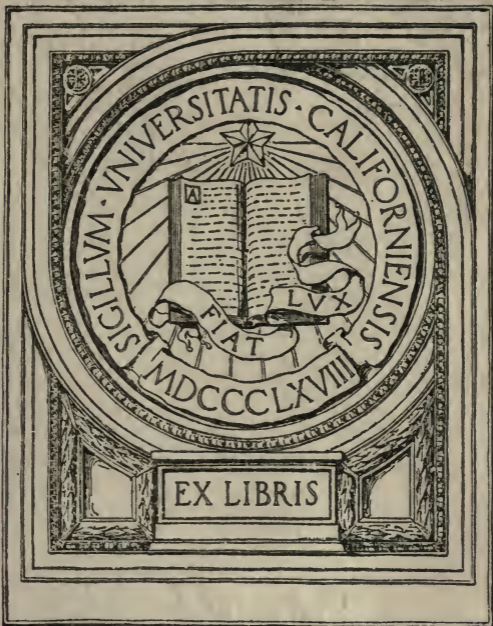
THE PURSUIT
AND OTHER POEMS
ROBEL HUME FISHER

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GIFT OF
Knights of St. Patrick



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THE PURSUIT
AND OTHER POEMS

NOTE

I wish to thank the Editor of the WESTMINSTER GAZETTE for leave to reprint one of the following poems.—I. H. F.

THE PURSUIT
AND OTHER POEMS
BY ISOBEL HUME FISHER

MAUNSEL & COMPANY, LTD.
DUBLIN AND LONDON

1913

Knights of St. Patrick

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DEDICATION

TO IRELAND

PR889
F55F
1913
MAIN

*Not in vain and not for nothing my mother bore
me,*

In long travail and pain,

*Since at the end I am come to serve and adore
thee ;*

Not in vain.

*Not in vain the grief and toil of my hard up-
bringing,*

The wound of man's disdain ;

*If at the end I may solace thee with my singing,
Not in vain.*

*Hear my troth-plight, for thee will I worship,
none other,*

While yet thy sod is green,

*I am thy child and thy lover and thou my mother
And my queen.*

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THE PURSUIT

AND OTHER POEMS

NOW-A-DAYS

It's oh ! to be young in a world grown old !

A sober world and grey,

With chivalry banished and love grown cold

And the fairies fled away ;

For the Little People are over the sea, over the
sea to the West,

A thousand leagues through the Sunset Gates
they dwell, in the Isles of the Blest.

It's oh ! to be young in a world grown old !

A world that once was fair,

She has painted her face like an old-time queen

And tired her faded hair ;

NOW-A-DAYS

And Love, and Laughter, and Hope, and Faith,
are withered and worn as she,
For all sweet things are fled away with the
Little Folk over the sea.

JOURNEY SONG

Bread of tears and the wine of sorrow,

We say as we go

“ There is still To-morrow ! ”

Till the weeks grow months and the months
grow years,

Wine of sorrow and bread of tears.

Bread of mirth and the wine of laughter,

We feast and forget

Grim Death comes after,

And earth at the last goes down to earth,

Wine of laughter and bread of mirth.

JOURNEY SONG.

Bread to eat and of wine much choosing,
Till we reach God's Inn
Who takes no refusing;
Thither at evensong tired folk creep
Where He doles to His pilgrims the Alms of
Sleep.

SPRING

Loosen your shining hair !

Let it float to your knee—

Lately a child you were,

Now you hold Love in fee.

There is a wood I know

Hid in a lonely place,

Where the white wind flowers grow

No fairer than your face.

And elfin rivers run

Tall grasses scarcely cover ;

There you will sit in the sun,

And I will be your lover.

SPRING

Lately a child you were,

Now you hold Love in fee—

Loosen your golden hair,

Let it float to your knee.

THE SLEEPER

Under white eyelids

The dreams come and go,
Kiss her on her rosy mouth,
And wake her so.

Under white eyelids

The dreams are all done,
Fold her hands across her breast—
Let her sleep on.

HOME-COMING

I am come home again
Back to the old grey town,
Battling with wind and rain
As I go up and down.

I am come from the South,
With never a greeting said,
And no one to kiss my mouth
Now that my love is dead.

As I go up and down
In the loud wind and rain,
Through the familiar town
He walks with me again.

A woman robbed of her youth—
The ghost of a lad long dead,
With never a kiss on my mouth,
And never a greeting said.

NIGHT

Night hath a woman's breast,
Whereon her babes may sleep ;
Both those who laugh and weep
She foldeth to their rest.

Unbinding her dark hair
When Day lays down his sword,
Though he be King and Lord,
To her we make our prayer :

That she, so fair and wise,
May soothe our hopes and fears,
And kiss away our tears,
And croon our lullabies.

So are we stayed, until—
“ It is enough,” she saith,
“ Wend to my Mother, Death,
That ye may sleep your fill.”

THE PURSUIT

All night long in my dreams I wandered to find you,
By shadowy woods and streams,
But you fled,—with the moon before and the
wind behind you,—
All night long in my dreams.

I dreamed I gathered one star of a shining Seven
To light me on my way,
Till I found you at length under a glimmering
heaven,
Before the break of day.

And you leaned and smiled, while Morn in the
east lay hidden
All wrapped in rosy mist,
Then softly and sweetly, like children but lately
chidden,
We wept and clung and kissed.

SHEPHERDS

The Fairies keep their gentle flocks
Of milk-white doves in Fairyland ;
On upland pastures and gray rocks
The wise, far-seeing herdsmen stand.

The Lady-Moon, with silver wand,
Leads nightly forth her stars again ;
And God Himself takes crook in hand
To shepherd the lost souls of men.

EHEU FUGACES

I made a little song for you

And sang it softly for your sake,

Should I sing now my heart would break,

Remembering, of fair and true

I may not sing again to you.

There was your name that no one knew,

My name for you, it was so dear,

Yet now it cannot reach your ear ;

The sullen earth so covers you,

I may not pierce the silence through.

Yet silence once fell like a dew

Upon our hearts, when day by day

We loitered on the Primrose Way ;

EHEU FUGACES

How sound you sleep now! Would I too
Had done with work and done with play,
For in the twilight ways we knew,
Young lovers pass me, two by two,
And I no more may walk with you.

URSULA BARING

“ O braid your shining hair to a crown,

Ursula Baring !

Bid your maidens haste with your wedding-gown,

And heedfully, lest your father frown,

Greet your bridegroom as you go down

From your preparing.”

The milk-white pearls are twined in her hair,

Ursula Baring !

Yet not for Kilmainham was she fair,

For her heart was broken for young Lord Stair,

Who was dead, and buried, and past all care

For his love's wearing.

URSULA BARING

She came to her bridegroom proud and straight,
Before dame and squire,
Quo' she, " I will speak ere it be too late,—
With a dead man's love will you keep your state ?
Will you have a dead man's bride for your mate
And your heart's desire ?

Kilmainham's eyes were as black as jet
Or the raven's feather,
" Oh, a young maid's heart, it is lightly set,
And you will be blythe of your bridal yet
We will think on the dead without regret,
We twain together."

Thereafter the long years came and went,
Grey days unending ;
She was wise and fair and of sweet intent,
And many deemed her not ill-content,
Till her life burned low, like a flame forspent
And past all mending.

URSULA BARING

She called her seven sons to her knee,
 One with the other,—
“Ye are ruddy and stark and fair to see,
I have borne ye and nursed ye and tended ye,
Yet now at the last shall I go free,
 I,—your mother.”

The wind was rising, the tide ebbed fast,
 Ursula Baring!

The grey tower rocked at a fearful blast,
And at that loud crying her white soul passed,
And so she came to her love at last,
 From her wayfaring.

ACHIEVEMENT

I said to Death—" Abide
Till I have done :
I shall be satisfied
At set of sun.

I shall have all men's praise,
And Love for meed,
With laurel wreaths and bays
For word and deed."

Death came in later days,
At my life's end :
" Had you then all men's praise
And one sweet friend ? "

ACHIEVEMENT

I said—"One thing I crave :
Put me to sleep.
There is no room in the grave
To toil or weep."

THE RETURN OF LOVE

Beneath the snowy orchard boughs I looked to
find my dear,

I loitered in the greenwood ways her silver
voice to hear,

The sunset flamed beyond the West, the stars
came out above—

She came back through the gloaming like a
homing dove.

She came into my arms like a tired bird to her
nest,—

“ Oh, from what starry distance do you come
now to your rest ?

And where have you been all day long, to what
bourne did you wend ? ”

Quo' she—“ Our sorrows all are left at the
world's end.”

THE RETURN OF LOVE

“ A river girdles all the world, both dark it is
and deep,
Its waters are forgetfulness, where weary men
find sleep ;
And there I wandered when the dawn made all
the white stars dim,
And there I made an end of grief, at the world’s
rim.”

JOURNEY SONG

The dust is thick on Helen's eyes
That lighted all Troy town,
And long and long ago it is
Since Guinevere lay down.

The maids men sung are pale and dead,
The queens men served are cold ;
To one dark end go all sweet things,
Red lips and hair of gold.

I have a sweetheart tall and fair
As lilies in the Spring,
And I will meet her at the end
Of this day's journeying.

JOURNEY SONG

God's pity be on all green graves !

God comfort those who weep !

For I will kiss my dear to-night,

Before I go to sleep.

THE WORLD'S WIFE

The World's Wife came to buy from me,
As is her wont :—" Now bring the grey
Sad-coloured stuff you weave alway,
Your warp and woof of everyday,
In it I cloak my Griefs," quo' she ;
And then before her wondering eyes
I piled my bales of merchandise.

" What is come to you, child ? " she said,
For here is every lovely thing
That buds and blooms to garland Spring
With dainty pomp of blossoming,
All gold and green, all white and red,
Here is a miracle in sooth ;
Is't wrought by Love, my maid, or Youth ? "

THE WORLD'S WIFE

“ In this shall all young Joys be clad,
Since Youth is such a heady brew,
And Spring so fair when it is new,
And Love so sweet and Love so true
That you shall nevermore be sad ;
For spite of all your silence, child,
I have your secret,” and she smiled.

SONG

Doth Love then end in this—

Heartache and bitter pain,
That hath brought us such bliss ?
Will Love not come again ?

Ah, never, no,
Love doth not so.

Is this the end of all,

Although our hearts are fain ?
May there be no recall,
Will Love not come again ?

Young Love, alack !
Cometh not back.

A MINISTERING SPIRIT

It was an angel passed me by,
 Fresh from her praying,
The splendours of the lucent sky
Haloed her with felicity,
And her young eyes looked tenderly,
 Beyond all saying.

And as she vanished down the street
 I blessed her beauty,
Knowing that lately at God's feet
In Paradise, she kissed you, sweet,
Then came and found me, as was meet,
 Doing my duty.

A MINISTERING SPIRIT

When next you kiss her, she will say,
 With tender laughter,
“ I found him old and tired and gray,
I saw him toil, I heard him pray
That, as I come to you to-day,
 He may come after.”

NOEL

Take Thou, O little Babe, the gift I bring,
No royal offering

Of myrrh, or odorous frankincense, or gold,
For Thy small hands to hold ;

But here, to Thee,

I offer up the fair life I had planned,

The glow, the passionate toil, the ecstasy,
Of ready brain and hand.

I shall not make it real,

My white Ideal,

Though I have ever followed its far gleam ;

I shall not grasp my Dream ;

But in their stead

For the loth hand and head

There waits the task continuous and obscure

Through which men's souls endure.

NOEL

Yet, this unloved work done,
And this unsought goal won,
Wilt Thou not, in that life that is to be,
Restore my work to me?—
Wilt Thou not give a heart that is so fain
Its dream again?

PILGRIMAGE

O homeless heart !

To what end do you take
Your way by wold and brake ?
Think you to find your rest
Upon a woman's breast ?—
Some comrade for love's sake—

O homeless heart ?

O lonely heart !

That is for love so fain,
Though men give smiles again,
And women take your hand,
No one will understand,
No one can ease your pain,

O lonely heart.

PILGRIMAGE

O heart unsought !

Leave now their merry din,
You are not of their kin ;
There is no place for you,
No loyal friend and true,
You have no part therein,

O heart unsought.

O heart forlorn !

Have patience till life end,
Nor hope for love or friend.
Go proudly and aloof
Under the wide sky-roof ;
At last all things will mend,

O heart forlorn.

O homeless heart !

There waits a narrow bed,
To lay a weary head,
A narrow bed and strait,
For the heart's leaden weight :
One is at peace, being dead,

O homeless heart.

BEFORE DAYBREAK

Every morn I awake
 Before the coming of day,
 Before the dawn is grey,
For my belovèd's sake.

And, ere the day can break,
 Lowly I kneel to pray
 In the old child-heart way,
For my belovèd's sake.

Not for a wealthy ease—
 Not for the end of strife—
 Not for the gauds of life—
Lest there be sin in these.

BEFORE DAYBREAK

But that in strife and strait
Still may his hope endure,
Still may his heart be pure,
Warring early and late.

Every morn as I wake,
Before the coming of day,
This is the thing I pray,
For my beloved's sake.

HARVESTING

The sickle moon rose keen and clear
And reaped the roses in the West,
To lay upon Night's tranquil breast,
Where they must wither and grow sere.

So Life is garnered to adorn
The bier of Death, as in the West
Are roses gathered for the breast
Of Night that will give place to morn.

THE SINGER IN YOUTH

I sing of the things that I love best

(Hush, heart, and hearken)

Rose o' the Dawn, and Fires o' the West,

As the days darken.

And of all things that are fair to see—

Wing of a bird, and leaf on a tree,

Shine of the sun and gleam of the sea ;

Of all the things that are sweet to hear,—

A young maid's laughter, both low and clear,

The song of a bird in the spring o' the year.

But the ugly things keep out of sight,

The grisly horrors that fly by night,

The wind of the East that is red with blight.

THE SINGER IN YOUTH

Three things remain that are strong and pure :
The friendship of friends that will endure,
Death that is pitiful, Love that is sure.

I sing of the things that I love best,
 (Hush, heart, and hearken)
Rose o' the Dawn, and Fires o' the West,
 As the days darken.

AT EVENING

Each day I watch the sunset fade

Behind the hills and then I say :

“ There came no word from him to-day
Nor he came not ”—I grow afraid.

Dear God, Who garners my grey days,

That are so jarred by strangers' mirth,

Send now one shining day to earth,

Wherein I too may give thee praise.

THE PASSING OF LOVE

Love died beneath a waning moon,
 And dropped between us like a bird
Whose wings are faint in the hot noon ;
 And now my heart is no more stirred
 By your least look or slightest word.

What use to weep, what help to pray ?—
 Love was,—and Love has ceased to be,—
And there is nothing left to say,
 Nor key to this hard mystery,
 Nor hope for immortality.

Yet ere we part now, take my hand,
 Aught else were but a needless pain,
For you will die in a strange land,
 And we will never meet again
 Who were so loving and so fain.

PIERRETTE IN JUNE

If Love is the best,

Then the best is denied us !

If the god be in quest,

Then he sure hath not spied us !

But what is your heart's desire, Pierrot,

Now June is come and the roses blow ?

If we swore to be true,

Then we surely would rue it !

And the best we could do,

Would then be to undo it !

But what if I gave you a rose, Pierrot,

And you kissed my hand ere you let it go ?

PIERRETTE IN JUNE

It were best that we take

All June has for bestowing,

Without thought of heartache

At the sweet summer's going.

But what if our dreams came true, Pierrot,

As the best dreams may when the roses blow ?

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