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LEAVES FROM AUSTRALIAN FORESTS.

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AUSTRALIAN FORESTS.

BY

HENRY KENDALL.

MELBOURNE:  
GEORGE ROBERTSON, 69 ELIZABETH STREET,  
MDCCLXIX.

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## DEDICATION.



To her, who, cast with me in trying days,  
Stood in the place of health, and power, and praise;—  
Who, when I thought all light was out, became  
A lamp of hope that put my fears to shame;—  
Who faced for love's sole sake the life austere  
That waits upon the man of letters here;—  
Who, unawares, her deep affection showed,  
By many a touching little wifely mode;—  
Whose spirit self-denying, dear, divine,  
Its sorrows hid, so it might lessen mine,—  
To her, my bright best friend, I dedicate  
This book of songs. 'Twill help to compensate  
For much neglect. The act, if not the rhyme,  
Will touch her heart and lead her to the time  
Of trials past. That which is most intense  
Within these leaves is of her influence;  
And if aught here is sweetened with a tone  
Sincere, like love, it came of love alone.



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I.

I PURPOSED once to take my pen and write  
Not songs like some tormented and awry  
With Passion, but a cunning harmony  
Of words and music caught from glen and height,  
And lucid colours born of woodland light,  
And shining places where the sea-streams lie ;  
But this was when the heat of youth glowed white,  
And, since, I've put the faded purpose by.  
I have no faultless fruits to offer you  
Who read this book ; but certain syllables  
Herein are borrowed from unfooted dells,  
And secret hollows dear to noontide dew ;  
And these at least, though far between and few,  
May catch the sense like subtle forest spells.

II.

So take these kindly, even though there be  
Some notes that unto other lyres belong :  
Stray echoes from the elder sons of Song ;  
And think how from its neighbouring, native sea  
The pensive shell doth borrow melody.

I would not do the lordly masters wrong,  
By filching fair words from the shining throng  
Whose music haunts me, as the wind a tree !

Lo, when a stranger, in soft Syrian glooms  
Shot through with sunset, treads the cedar dells,  
And hears the breezy ring of elfin bells

Far down by where the white-haired cataract  
booms,

He, faint with sweetness caught from forest smells,  
Bears thence, unwitting, plunder of perfumes.

# LEAVES FROM AUSTRALIAN FORESTS.



## THE HUT BY THE BLACK SWAMP.

Now comes the fierce North-Easter, bound  
About with cloud and racks of rain ;  
And dry dead leaves go whirling round  
In rings of dust, and sigh like Pain  
Across the plain.

Now Twilight, with a shadowy hand  
Of wild dominionship, doth keep  
Strong hold of hollow straits of land ;  
And watery sounds are loud and deep  
By gap and steep.

Keen fitful gusts that fly before  
The wings of Storm when Day hath shut  
Its eyes on mountains, flaw by flaw,  
Fleet down by whistling boxtree-but  
Against the Hut.

And ringed and girt with lurid pomp  
Far eastern cliffs start up and take  
Thick steaming vapours from a swamp  
That lieth like a great blind lake  
Of face opaque.

The moss that like a tender grief  
About an English ruin clings—  
What time the wan autumnal leaf  
Faints after many wanderings  
On windy wings—

That gracious growth whose quiet green  
Is as a love in days austere,  
Was never seen—hath never been  
On slab or roof, deserted here  
For many a year.

Nor comes the bird whose speech is song—  
Whose songs are silvery syllables  
That unto glimmering woods belong,  
And deep meandering mountain-dells  
By yellow wells.



But rather here the wild dog halts,  
And lifts the paw, and looks, and howls ;  
And here, in ruined forest-vaults,  
Abide dim, dark, death-featured owls,  
Like monks in cowls.

Across this Hut the nettle runs ;  
And livid adders make their lair  
In corners dank from lack of suns ;  
And out of fetid furrows stare  
The growths that scare.

Here Summer's grasp of fire is laid  
On bark and slabs that rot and breed  
Squat ugly things of deadly shade—  
The scorpion, and the spiteful seed  
Of centipede.

Unhallowed thunders harsh and dry,  
And flaming noontides mute with heat,  
Beneath the breathless, brazen sky,  
Upon these rifted rafters beat  
With torrid feet.

And night by night, the fitful gale  
Doth carry past the bittern's boom,  
The dingo's yell, the plover's wail,  
While lumbering shadows start, and loom,  
And hiss through gloom.

No sign of grace—no hope of green,  
Cool-blossomed seasons marks the spot ;  
But, chained to iron doom, I ween,  
'Tis left, like skeleton, to rot  
Where ruth is not.

For on this Hut hath Murder writ  
With bloody fingers hellish things ;  
And God will never visit it  
With flower or leaf of sweet-faced Springs,  
Or gentle wings.

SEPTEMBER IN AUSTRALIA.

GREY Winter hath gone, like a wearisome guest,  
And, behold, for repayment,  
September comes in with the wind of the West,  
And the Spring in her raiment!  
The ways of the frost have been filled of the flowers  
While the forest discovers  
Wild wings with the halo of hyaline hours,  
And a music of lovers.

September, the maid with the swift, silver feet!  
She glides, and she graces  
The valleys of coolness, the slopes of the heat,  
With her blossomy traces.  
Sweet month with a mouth that is made of a rose,  
She lightens and lingers  
In spots where the harp of the evening glows,  
Attuned by her fingers.

The stream from its home in the hollow hill slips  
In a darling old fashion ;  
And the day goeth down with a song on its lips,  
Whose key-note is passion.  
Far out in the fierce bitter front of the sea,  
I stand and remember  
Dead things that were brothers and sisters of thee,  
Resplendent September.

The West, when it blows at the fall of the noon,  
And beats on the beaches,  
Is filled with a tender and tremulous tune  
That touches and teaches:  
The stories of Youth, of the burden of Time,  
And the death of Devotion,  
Come back with the wind, and are themes of the  
rhyme,  
In the waves of the ocean.

We, having a secret to others unknown,  
In the cool mountain-mosses,  
May whisper together, September, alone  
Of our loves and our losses.  
One word for her beauty, and one for the grace  
She gave to the hours ;  
And then we may kiss her, and suffer her face  
To sleep with the flowers.

High places that knew of the gold and the white  
On the forehead of Morning,  
Now darken and quake, and the steps of the Night  
Are heavy with warning !  
Her voice in the distance is lofty and loud,  
Through the echoing gorges ;  
She hath hidden her eyes in a mantle of cloud,  
And her feet in the surges !

On the tops of the hills ; on the turreted cones—  
Chief temples of thunder—  
The gale, like a ghost, in the middle watch moans,  
Gliding over and under.  
The sea, flying white through the rack and the rain,  
Leapeth wild at the forelands ;  
And the plover, whose cry is like passion with pain,  
Complains in the moorlands.

O, season of changes—of shadow and shine—  
September the splendid !  
My song hath no music to mingle with thine,  
And its burden is ended :  
But thou, being born of the winds and the sun,  
By mountain, by river,  
May lighten and listen, and loiter and run,  
With thy voices for ever.

## GHOST GLEN.

“SHUT your ears, stranger, or, turn from Ghost Glen  
now,

For the paths are grown over; untrodden by men  
now—

Shut your ears, stranger!” saith the grey mother,  
crooning

Her sorcery Runic, when sets the half moon in!

To-night the North-Easter goes travelling slowly,  
But it never stoops down to that Hollow unholy—

To-night it rolls loud on the ridges red-litten,  
But it *cannot* abide in that Forest sin-smitten!

For over the pitfall the moondew is thawing,  
And, with never a body, two shadows stand sawing!  
The wraiths of two sawyers (*step under and under*),  
Who did a foul murder, and were blackened with  
thunder!

Whenever the storm-wind comes driven and driving,  
Through the blood-spattered timber you may see the  
saw striving—

You may see the saw heaving, and falling, and heaving,  
Whenever the sea-creek is chafing and grieving!

And across a burnt body, as black as an adder,  
Sits the sprite of a sheep-dog!—was ever sight sadder!  
For as the dry thunder splits louder and faster,  
This sprite of a sheep-dog howls for his master!

“ Oh! count your beads deftly,” saith the grey mother,  
crooning

Her sorcery Runic, when sets the half moon in!  
And well may she mutter, for the dark hollow laughter  
You will hear in the sawpits, and the bloody logs after!

- Ay, count your beads deftly, and keep your ways wary,  
For the sake of the Saviour and sweet Mother Mary!  
Pray for your peace in these perilous places,  
And pray for the laying of horrible faces!

One starts with a forehead wrinkled and livid,  
Aghast at the lightnings sudden and vivid!  
One telleth with curses the gold that they drew  
there

(Ah! cross your breast humbly) from him whom  
they slew there!

The stranger who came from the loved—the  
romantic

Island that sleeps on the moaning Atlantic;  
Leaving behind him a patient home yearning  
For the steps in the distance, never returning;—

Who was left in the Forest, shrunken, and starkly  
Burnt by his slayers (so men have said darkly):  
With the half-crazy sheep-dog, who cowered beside  
there  
And yelled at the silence, and marvelled, and died  
there!

Yea, cross your breast humbly, and hold your breath  
tightly,  
Or fly for your life from those shadows unsightly;  
From the set staring features (cold, and so young  
too!)  
And the death on the lips that a mother hath clung to.

I tell you, the Bushman is braver than most men,  
Who even in daylight doth go through the Ghost Glen!  
Although in that Hollow, unholy and lonely,  
He sees the dank sawpits and bloody logs only!



## DAPHNE.

DAPHNE! Ladon's daughter, Daphne! Set thyself in  
silver light,

Take thy thoughts of fairest texture, weave them into  
words of white—

Weave the rhyme of rose-lipped Daphne, nymph of  
wooded stream and shade,

Flying love of bright Apollo,—fleeting type of fault-  
less maid!

She, when followed from the forelands by the lord of  
lyre and lute,

Sped towards far-singing waters, past deep gardens  
flushed with fruit;

Took the path against Peneus, panted by its yellow  
banks;

Turned, and looked, and flew the faster through grey-  
tufted thicket ranks;

Flashed amongst high flowered sedges: leaped across  
the brook, and ran

Down to where the fourfold shadows of a nether  
glade began;

There she dropped, like falling Hesper, heavy hair of  
radiant head  
Hiding all the young abundance of her beauty's  
white and red.

Came the yellow-tressed Far-darter—came the god  
whose feet are fire,  
On his lips the name of Daphne, in his eyes a great  
desire ;  
Fond, full lips of lord and lover, sad because of suit  
denied ;  
Clear, grey eyes made keen by passion, panting,  
pained, unsatisfied.  
Here he turned, and there he halted, now he paused,  
and now he flew,  
Swifter than his sister's arrows, through soft dells of  
dreamy dew.  
Next with gleams of Ladon's daughter, dashed along  
the son of Jove,  
Fast upon flower-trammelled Daphne fleeting on from  
grove to grove ;  
Flights of seawind hard behind him, breaths of bleak  
and whistling straits ;  
Drifts of driving cloud above him, like a troop of  
fierce-eyed fates !  
So he reached the water-shallows ; then he stayed his  
steps, and heard

Daphne drop upon the grasses, fluttering like a wounded bird.

Was there help for Ladon's daughter? Saturn's son  
is high and just:

Did he come between her beauty and the fierce Far-  
darter's lust?

As she lay, the helpless maiden, caught and bound in  
fast eclipse,

Did the lips of god drain pleasure from her sweet and  
swooning lips?

Now that these and all Love's treasures blushed,  
before the spoiler, bare,

Was the wrong that shall be nameless done, and seen,  
and suffered there?

No! for Zeus is King and Father. Weary nymph  
and fiery god,

Bend the knee alike before him—he is kind, and he  
is lord!

Therefore sing how clear-browed Pallas—Pallas, friend  
of prayerful maid,

Lifted dazzling Daphne lightly, bore her down the  
breathless glade,

Did the thing that Zeus commanded: so it came to  
pass that he

Who had chased a white-armed virgin, caught at her,  
and clasped a tree.

## THE WARRIGAL.\*

THROUGH forest boles the stormwind rolls,  
Vext of the sea-driven rain,  
And up in the clift, through many a rift,  
The voices of torrents complain.  
The sad marsh-fowl and the lonely owl  
Are heard in the fog-wreaths grey,  
When the Warrigal wakes, and listens, and takes  
To the woods that shelter the prey.

In the gully-deeps, the blind creek sleeps ;  
And the silver, showery, moon  
Glides over the hills, and floats, and fills,  
And dreams in the dark lagoon ;  
While halting hard by the station yard,  
Aghast at the hut-flame nigh,  
The Warrigal yells, and the flats and fells  
Are loud with his dismal cry.

\* The Wild Dog.

On the topmost peak of mountains bleak,  
The south wind sobs, and strays  
Through moaning pine, and turpentine,  
And the rippling runnel ways ;  
And strong streams flow, and great mists go,  
Where the Warrigal starts to hear  
The watch-dog's bark break sharp in the dark,  
And flees like a phantom of Fear !

The swift rains beat, and the thunders fleet  
On the wings of the fiery gale,  
And down in the glen of pool and fen,  
The wild gums whistle and wail,  
As over the plains, and past the chains  
Of waterholes glimmering deep,  
The Warrigal flies from the Shepherd's cries,  
And the clamour of dogs and sheep.

The Warrigal's lair is pent in bare  
Black rocks at the gorge's mouth :  
It is set in ways where Summer strays  
With the sprites of flame and drouth ;  
But when the heights are touched with lights  
Of hoarfrost, sleet, and shine,  
His bed is made of the dead grass-blade  
And the leaves of the windy pine.

He roves through the lands of sultry sands,  
He hunts in the iron range,  
Untamed as surge of the far sea verge,  
And fierce and fickle and strange.  
The white man's track and the haunts of the black  
He shuns, and shudders to see ;  
For his joy he tastes in lonely wastes  
Where his mates are torrent and tree.

EUROCLYDON.

ON the storm-cloven Cape  
The bitter waves roll  
With the bergs of the Pole,  
And the darks and the damps of the Northern Sea :  
For the storm-cloven Cape  
Is an alien Shape  
With a fearful face ; and it moans, and it stands  
Outside all lands  
Everlastingly !

When the fruits of the year  
Have been gathered in Spain ;  
And the Indian rain  
Is rich on the evergreen lands of the Sun ;

There comes to this Cape—  
 To this alien Shape,  
 As the waters beat in and the echoes troop forth,  
 The Wind of the North,  
 Euroclydon! ✕

And the wilted thyme,  
 And the patches past  
 Of the nettles cast  
 In the drift of the rift, and the broken rime,  
 Are tumbled and blown  
 To every zone  
 With the famished glede, and the plovers thinned  
 By this fourfold Wind—  
 This Wind sublime!

On the wrinkled hills  
 By starts and fits  
 The wild Moon sits;  
 And the rindles fill, and flash, and fall  
 In the way of her light,  
 Through the straitened night,  
 When the sea-heralds clamour, and elves of the war  
 In the torrents afar,  
 Hold festival!

✕ A tempestuous S.E. wind raising great waves  
 in the Mediterranean Sea!



From ridge to ridge  
The polar fires  
On the naked spires  
With a foreign splendour, flit and flow ;  
And clough and cave  
And architrave,  
Have a blood-coloured glamour on roof and on wall,  
Like a nether hall  
In the hells below !

The dead dry lips  
Of the ledges, split  
By the thunder fit  
And the stress of the sprites of the forkéd flame,  
Anon break out  
With a shriek and a shout,  
Like a hard bitter laughter cracked and thin  
From a ghost with a sin  
Too dark for a name !

And, all thro' the year,  
The fierce seas run  
From sun to sun,  
Across the face of a vacant world !

And the Wind flies forth  
From the wild white North,  
That shivers and harries the heart of things,  
And shapes with its wings  
A Chaos uphurled !

Like one who sees  
A rebel light  
In the thick of the night,  
As he stumbles and staggers on summits afar—  
Who looks to it still,  
Up hill and hill,  
With a steadfast hope (though the ways be deep,  
And rough, and steep),  
Like a steadfast star ;

So I, that stand  
On the outermost peaks  
Of peril, with cheeks  
Blue with the salts of a frosty Sea,  
Have learnt to wait  
With an eye elate  
And a heart intent, for the fuller blaze  
Of the Beauty that rays  
Like a glimpse for me—

Of the Beauty that grows  
Whenever I hear  
The Winds of Fear  
From the tops and the bases of barrenness call :  
And the duplicate lore  
Which I learn evermore,  
Is of Harmony filling and rounding the Storm,  
And the marvellous Form  
That governs all !

ARALUEN.

RIVER, myrtle-rimmed, and set  
Deep amongst unfooted dells—  
Daughter of grey hills of wet,  
Born by mossed and yellow wells—

Now that soft September lays  
Tender hands on thee and thine,  
Let me think of blue-eyed days,  
Star-like flowers, and leaves of shine !

Cities soil the life with rust : *P. C. life v. rusty t.*  
Water-banks are cool and sweet :  
River, tired of noise and dust  
Here I come to rest my feet.

Now the month from shade to sun  
    Fleets and sings supremest songs,  
Now the wilful woodwinds run  
    Through the tangled cedar throngs.

Here are cushioned tufts and turns  
    Where the sumptuous noontide lies.  
Here are seen by flags and ferns  
    Summer's large luxurious eyes.

On this spot wan Winter casts  
    Eyes of ruth, and spares its green  
From his bitter sea-nursed blasts,  
    Spears of rain and hailstones keen.

Rather here abideth Spring,  
    Lady of a lovely land,  
Dear to leaf and fluttering wing,  
    Deep in blooms—by breezes fanned.

Faithful friend beyond the main—  
    Friend that Time nor Change makes cold—  
Now, like ghosts, return again  
    Pallid perished days of old.

Ah, the days—the old, old theme  
    Never stale, but never new,  
Floating, like a pleasant dream,  
    Back to me and back to you.

Since we rested on these slopes,  
    Seasons fierce have beaten down  
Ardent loves and blossoming hopes—  
    Loves that lift, and hopes that crown.

But, believe me, still mine eyes  
    Often fill with light that springs  
From divinity, which lies  
    Ever at the heart of things.

Solace do I sometimes find  
    Where you used to hear with me  
Songs of stream and forest-wind,  
    Tones of wave and harp-like tree.

Araluen! home of dreams!  
    Fairer for its flowerful glade  
Than the face of Persian streams,  
    Or the slopes of Syrian shade.

Why should I still love it so?  
Friend and brother far away,  
Ask the winds that come and go,  
What hath brought me here to-day.

Evermore of you I think,  
When the leaves begin to fall,  
Where our river breaks its brink,  
And a rest is over all.

Evermore in quiet lands,  
Friend of mine beyond the sea,  
Memory comes with cunning hands,  
Stays, and paints your face for me.

### AT EUROMA.

THEY built his mound of the rough red ground,  
By the dip of a desert dell,  
Where all things sweet are killed by the heat,  
And scattered o'er flat and fell.  
In a burning zone they left him alone,  
Past the uttermost western plain ;  
And the nightfall dim heard his funeral hymn  
In the voices of wind and rain.

The songs austere of the forests drear,  
And the echoes of clift and cave,  
When the dark is keen where the storm hath been,  
Fleet over the far-away grave.  
And through the days when the torrid rays  
Strike down on a coppery gloom,  
Some spirit grieves in the perished leaves  
Whose theme is that desolate tomb.



No human foot, or paw of brute,  
Halts now where the stranger sleeps ;  
But cloud and star his fellows are,  
And the rain that sobs and weeps.  
The dingo yells by the far iron fells,  
The plover is loud in the range,  
But they never come near to the slumberer here,  
Whose rest is a rest without change.

Ah! in his life, had he mother or wife,  
To wait for his step on the floor?  
Did Beauty wax dim while watching for him  
Who passed through the threshold no more?  
Doth it trouble his head? He is one with the dead ;  
He lies by the alien streams ;  
And sweeter than sleep is death that is deep  
And unvexed by the lordship of dreams.

## ILLA CREEK.

A STRONG sea-wind flies up and sings  
Across the blown-wet border,  
Whose stormy echo runs and rings  
Like bells in wild disorder.

Fierce breath hath vexed the foreland's face,  
It glistens, glooms, and glistens ;  
But deep within this quiet place  
Sweet Illa lies and listens.

Sweet Illa of the shining sands,  
She sleeps in shady hollows  
Where August flits with flowerful hands  
And silver Summer follows.

Far up the naked hills is heard  
A noise of many waters ;  
But green-haired Illa lies unstirred  
Amongst her star-like daughters.

The tempest pent in moaning ways  
Awakes the shepherd yonder ;  
But Illa dreams, unknown to days  
Whose wings are wind and thunder.

Here fairy hands and floral feet  
Are brought by bright October ;  
Here stained with grapes, and smit with heat,  
Comes Autumn sweet and sober.

Here lovers rest, what time the red  
And yellow colours mingle,  
And Daylight droops with dying head  
Beyond the western dingle.

And here, from month to month, the time  
Is kissed by Peace and Pleasure,  
While Nature sings her woodland rhyme  
And hoards her woodland treasure.

Ah, Illa Creek ! ere Evening spreads  
Her wings o'er towns unshaded,  
How oft we seek thy mossy beds  
To lave our foreheads faded !

For, let me whisper, then we find  
The strength that lives, nor falters,  
In wood and water, waste and wind,  
And hidden mountain altars.

MOSS ON A WALL.

DIM dreams it hath of singing ways,  
Of far-off woodland water-heads,  
And shining ends of April days  
Amongst the yellow runnel beds.

Stoop closer to the ruined wall,  
Wherein the wilful wilding sleeps,  
As if its home were waterfall  
By dripping clefts and shadowy steeps !

A little waif, whose beauty takes  
A touching tone, because it dwells  
So far away from mountain lakes,  
And lily leaves, and lightening fells.

Deep hidden in delicious floss  
It nestles, sister, from the heat :  
A gracious growth of tender moss,  
Whose nights are soft, whose days are sweet.

Swift gleams across its petals run,  
With winds that hum a pleasant tune :  
Serene surprises of the sun,  
And whispers from the lips of Noon.

The evening-coloured apple-trees  
Are faint with July's frosty breath ;  
But lo, this stranger getteth ease  
And shines amidst the strays of Death !

And at the turning of the year,  
When August wanders in the cold,  
The raiment of the nursling here  
Is rich with green and glad with gold.

O, friend of mine, to one whose eyes  
Are vext because of alien things,  
For ever in the wall moss lies  
The peace of hills and hidden springs.

From faithless lips and fickle lights  
The tired pilgrim sets his face,  
And thinketh here of sounds and sights  
In many a lovely forest-place.

And when by sudden fits and starts  
The sunset on the moss doth burn,  
He often dreams, and lo, the marts  
And streets are changed to dells of fern!

For, let me say, the wilding placed  
By hands unseen amongst these stones,  
Restores a Past by Time effaced,  
Lost loves and long-forgotten tones!

As sometimes songs and scenes of old  
Come faintly unto you and me,  
When winds are wailing in the cold,  
And rains are sobbing on the sea.

## CAMPASPE.

TURN from the ways of this Woman! Campaspe we  
call her by name—

She is fairer than flowers of the fire—she is brighter  
than brightness of flame.

As a song that strikes swift to the heart with the  
beat of the blood of the South,

And a light and a leap and a smart, is the play of her  
perilous mouth.

Her eyes are as splendours that break in the rain at  
the set of the sun,

But turn from the steps of Campaspe—a Woman to  
look at and shun!

Dost thou know of the cunning of Beauty? take  
heed to thyself and beware

Of the trap in the droop in the raiment—the snare  
in the folds of the hair!



She is fulgent in flashes of pearl, the breeze with her  
 breathing is sweet,  
 But fly from the face of the girl—there is death in  
 the fall of her feet!  
 Is she maiden or marvel of marble? O rather a  
 tigress at wait  
 To pounce on thy soul for her pastime—a leopard for  
 love or for hate.

Woman of shadow and furnace! she biteth her lips  
 to restrain  
 Speech that springs out when she sleepeth, by the  
 stirs and the starts of her pain.  
 As music half-shapen of sorrow, with its wants and  
 its infinite wail,  
 Is the voice of Campaspe, the beauty at bay with her  
 passion dead-pale.  
 Go out from the courts of her loving, nor tempt the  
 fierce dance of desire  
 Where thy life would be shrivelled like stubble in  
 the stress and the fervour of fire!

I know of one, gentle as moonlight—she is sad as  
the shine of the moon,  
 But touching the ways of her eyes are: she comes  
to my soul like a tune—

Like a tune that is filled with faint voices of the  
loved and the lost and the lone,

Doth this stranger abide with my silence: like a  
tune with a tremulous tone.

The leopard, we call her, Campaspe! I pluck at a  
rose and I stir

To think of this sweet-hearted maiden—what name  
is too tender for her?

## ON A CATTLE TRACK.

WHERE the strength of dry thunder splits hill-rocks  
asunder,

And the shouts of the desert-wind break,

By the gullies of deepness, and ridges of steepness,

Lo, the cattle-track twists like a snake!

Like a sea of dead embers burnt white by Decembers,

A plain to the left of it lies;

And six fleeting horses dash down the creek-courses,

With the terror of thirst in their eyes.

The false strength of fever, that deadly deceiver,

Gives foot to each famishing beast;

And over lands rotten, by rain-winds forgotten,

The mirage gleams out in the east.

Ah! the waters are hidden, from riders and ridden,

In a stream where the cattle-track dips;

And Death on their faces is scoring fierce traces,

And the drouth is a fire on their lips.

It is far to the Station, and gaunt Desolation  
Is a spectre that glooms in the way ;  
Like a *red* smoke the air is, like a hell-light its glare is,  
And as flame are the feet of the day.  
The wastes, are like metal that forges unsettle  
When the heat of the furnace is white ;  
And the cool breeze that bloweth when an English  
sun goeth,  
Is unknown to the wild Desert Night.

A cry of distress there! a horseman the less there!  
The mock-waters shine like a moon!  
It is "speed, and speed faster from this hole of  
disaster,  
"And hurrah for yon God-sent lagoon."  
~~Doth a devil deceive them? Ah, now let us leave  
them,  
We are burdened in life with the sad ;  
Our portion is trouble, our joy is a bubble ;  
And the gladdest is never too glad.~~

From the pale tracts of peril, past mountain heads  
sterile,  
To a sweet river shadowed with reeds  
Where Summer steps lightly, and Winter beams  
brightly,  
The hoof-rutted cattle-track leads.

There soft is the moonlight, and tender the noonlight ;  
There fiery things falter and fall ;  
And there, may be seen, now, the gold and the green,  
now,  
And the wings of a peace over all.

Hush, bittern and plover ! Go, wind, to thy cover  
Away by the snow-smitten Pole !  
The rotten leaf falleth, the forest rain calleth ;  
And what is the end of the whole ?  
Some men are successful after seasons distressful,  
[Now, masters, the drift of my tale]  
But the brink of salvation is a lair of damnation  
For others who struggle, yet fail.

## TO DAMASCUS.

WHERE the sinister sun of the Syrians beat  
On the brittle bright stubble,  
And the camels fell back from the swords of the heat,  
Came Saul with a fire in the soles of his feet,  
And a forehead of trouble.

And terrified faces to left and to right,  
Before and behind him,  
Fled away with the speed of a maddening fright,  
To the cloughs of the bat, and the chasms of night,  
Each hoping the zealot would fail in his flight  
To find him and bind him.

For, behold you, the strong man of Tarsus came  
down

With breathings of slaughter,  
From the priests of the city, the chiefs of the town,  
(The lords with the sword, and the sires with the  
gown),  
To harry the Christians, and trample, and drown,  
And waste them like water.

He was *ever* a fighter, this son of the Jews—

A fighter in earnest;  
And the Lord took delight in the strength of his  
thews,  
For He knew he was one of the few He could choose  
To fight out His battles, and carry His news  
Of a marvellous Truth through the dark, and the  
dews,  
And the desert-lands furnaced!

He knew he was one of the few He could take

For His Mission supernal;  
Whose feet would not falter, whose limbs would not  
ache,  
Through the waterless lands of the thorn and the  
snake,  
And the ways of the wild—bearing up for the sake  
Of a Beauty eternal.

And therefore the road to Damascus was burned  
 With a swift, sudden brightness ;  
 While Saul, with his face in the bitter dust, learned  
 Of the sin which he did, ere he tumbled, and turned  
 Aghast at God's whiteness !

Of the sin which he did, ere he covered his head  
 From the strange revelation.  
 But, thereafter, you know of the life that he led ;  
 How he preached to the peoples, and suffered, and sped  
 With the wonderful words which his Master had said,  
 From nation to nation.

Now would we be like him, who suffer and see,  
 If the Chooser should choose us !  
 For I tell you, brave brothers, whoever you be,  
 It is right, till all learn to look further, and see,  
 That our Master should use us !

It is right, till all learn to discover and class,  
 That our Master should task us :  
 For now we may judge of the Truth through a glass ;  
 And the road over which they must evermore pass,  
 Who would think for the many, and fight for the  
 mass,  
 Is the road to Damascus.

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## BELL BIRDS.

By channels of coolness the echoes are calling,  
And down the dim gorges I hear the creek falling :  
It lives in the mountain where moss and the sedges  
Touch with their beauty the banks and the ledges.  
Through breaks of the cedar and sycamore bowers  
Struggles the light that is love to the flowers ;  
And, softer than slumber, and sweeter than singing,  
The notes of the bell-birds are running and ringing.

The silver-voiced bell-birds, the darlings of daytime !  
They sing in September their songs of the May-time ;  
When shadows wax strong, and the thunder-bolts  
    hurtle,  
They hide with their fear in the leaves of the myrtle ;

When rain and the sunbeams shine mingled together,  
They start up like fairies that follow fair weather ;  
And straightway the hues of their feathers unfolden  
Are the green and the purple, the blue and the  
golden.

October, the maiden of bright yellow tresses,  
Loiters for love in these cool wildernesses ;  
Loiters, knee-deep, in the grasses, to listen,  
Where dripping rocks gleam and the leafy pools  
glisten :

Then is the time when the water-moons splendid  
Break with their gold, and are scattered or blended  
Over the creeks, till the woodlands have warning  
Of songs of the bell-bird and wings of the Morning.

Welcome as waters unknissed by the summers  
Are the voices of bell-birds to thirsty far-comers.  
When fiery December sets foot in the forest,  
And the need of the wayfarer presses the sorest,  
Pent in the ridges for ever and ever  
The bell-birds direct him to spring and to river,  
With ring and with ripple, like runnels whose torrents  
Are toned by the pebbles and leaves in the currents.

Often I sit, looking back to a childhood,  
Mixt with the sights and the sounds of the wildwood,  
Longing for power and the sweetness to fashion,  
Lyrics with beats like the heart-beats of Passion ;—  
Songs interwoven of lights and of laughters  
Borrowed from bell-birds in far forest-rafters ;  
So I might keep in the city and alleys  
The beauty and strength of the deep mountain valleys :  
Charming to slumber the pain of my losses  
With glimpses of creeks and a vision of mosses.

## A DEATH IN THE BUSH.

THE hut was built of bark and shrunken slabs  
That wore the marks of many rains, and showed  
Dry flaws, wherein had crept and nestled rot.  
Moreover, round the bases of the bark  
Were left the tracks of flying forest-fires,  
As you may see them on the lower bole  
Of every elder of the native woods.

For, ere the early settlers came and stocked  
These wilds with sheep and kine, the grasses grew  
So that they took the passing pilgrim in,  
And whelmed him, like a running sea, from sight.

And therefore, through the fiercer summer months,  
While all the swamps were rotten—while the flats  
Were baked and broken; when the clayey rifts

Yawned wide, half-choked with drifted herbage past,  
Spontaneous flames would burst from thence, and race  
Across the prairies all day long.

At night

The winds were up, and then with fourfold speed,  
A harsh gigantic growth of smoke and fire  
Would roar along the bottoms, in the wake  
Of fainting flocks of parrots, wallaroos,  
And 'wildered wild things, scattering right and left,  
For safety vague, throughout the general gloom.

Anon, the nearer hill-side growing trees  
Would take the surges ; thus, from bough to bough,  
Was borne the flaming terror ! Bole and spire,  
Rank after rank, now pillared, ringed, and rolled  
In blinding blaze, stood out against the dead  
Down-smothered dark, for fifty leagues away.

For fifty leagues ! and when the winds were strong,  
For fifty more ! But, in the olden time,  
These fires were counted as the harbingers  
Of life-essential storms ; since out of smoke  
And heat there came across the midnight ways  
Abundant comfort, with upgathered clouds,  
And runnels babbling of a plenteous fall.

So comes the Southern gale at evenfall  
(The swift "brickfielder" of the local folk)  
About the streets of Sydney, when the dust  
Lies burnt on glaring windows, and the men  
Look forth from doors of drouth, and drink the change  
With thirsty haste and that most thankful cry  
Of, "here it is—the cool, bright, blessed rain!"

The hut, I say, was built of bark and slabs,  
And stood, the centre of a clearing, hemmed  
By hurdle-yards, and ancients of the blacks:  
These moped' about their lazy fires, and sang  
Wild ditties of the old days, with a sound  
Of sorrow, like an everlasting wind,  
Which mingled with the echoes of the noon,  
And moaned amongst the noises of the night.

From thence a cattle-track, with link to link,  
Ran off against the fishpools, to the gap,  
Which sets you face to face with gleaming miles  
Of broad Orara, winding in amongst  
Black, barren ridges, where the nether spurs  
Are fenced about by cotton-scrub, and grass  
Blue-bitten with the salt of many droughts.

'Twas here the shepherd housed him every night,  
And faced the prospect like a patient soul;

Borne up by some vague hope of better days,  
And God's fine blessing in his faithful wife ;  
Until the humour of his malady  
Took cunning changes from the good to bad,  
And laid him lastly on a bed of death.

Two months thereafter, when the summer heat  
Had roused the serpent from his rotten lair,  
And made a noise of locusts in the boughs,  
It came to this, that, as the blood-red sun  
Of one fierce day of many slanted down  
Obliquely past the nether jags of peaks  
And gulfs of mist, the tardy night came vexed  
By belted clouds, and scuds that wheeled and whirled  
To left and right about the brazen cliffs  
Of ridges, rigid with a leaden gloom.

Then took the cattle to the forest camps  
With vacant terror, and the hustled sheep  
Stood dumb against the hurdles, even like  
A fallen patch of shadowed mountain snow ;  
And ever through the curlew's call afar  
The storm grew on, while round the stunted slabs  
Sharp snaps and hisses came, and went, and came,  
The huddled tokens of a mighty blast  
Which ran with an exceeding bitter cry  
Across the tumbled fragments of the hills,  
And through the sluices of the gorge and glen.

So, therefore, all about the shepherd's hut  
That space was mute, save when the fastened dog,  
Without a kennel, caught a passing glimpse  
Of firelight moving through the lighted chinks ;  
For then he knew the hints of warmth within,  
And stood, and set his great pathetic eyes,  
In wind and wet, imploring to be loosed.

Not often now the watcher left the couch  
Of him she watched ; since, in his fitful sleep,  
His lips would stir to wayward themes, and close  
With bodeful catches. Once she moved away,  
Half-deafened by terrific claps, and stooped,  
And looked without ; to see a pillar dim  
Of gathered gusts and fiery rain.

Anon,

The sick man woke, and, startled by the noise,  
Stared round the room, with dull delirious sight,  
At this wild thing and that ; for, through his eyes,  
The place took fearful shapes, and fever showed  
Strange crosswise lights about his pillow-head.  
He, catching there at some phantasmic help,  
Sat upright on the bolster, with a cry  
Of, " Where is Jesus ?—it is bitter cold !"  
And then, because the thundercalls outside  
Were mixed for him with slanders of the Past,



He called his weeping wife by name, and said,  
"Come closer, darling! we shall speed away  
Across the seas, and seek some mountain home,  
Shut in from liars, and the wicked words  
That track us day and night, and night and day."

So waned the sad refrain. And those poor lips,  
Whose latest phrases were for peace, grew mute,  
And into everlasting silence passed.

As fares a swimmer who hath lost his breath  
In 'wildering seas afar from any help—  
Who, fronting Death, can never realise  
The dreadful Presence, but is prone to clutch  
At every weed upon the weltering wave ;  
So fared the watcher, poring o'er the last  
Of him she loved, with dazed and stupid stare ;  
Half conscious of the sudden loss and lack  
Of all that bound her life, but yet without  
The power to take her mighty sorrow in.

Then came a patch or two of starry sky ;  
And through a reef of cloven thunder-cloud  
The soft Moon looked : a patient face beyond  
The fierce impatient shadows of the slopes,  
And the harsh voices of the broken hills !

A patient face, and one which came and wrought  
A lovely silence like a silver mist  
Across the rainy relics of the storm.

For in the breaks and pauses of her light  
The gale died out in gusts ; yet, evermore  
About the roof-tree, on the dripping eaves,  
The damp wind loitered ; and a fitful drift  
Sloped through the silent curtains, and athwart  
The dead.

There, when the glare had dropped behind  
A mighty ridge of gloom, the woman turned  
And sat in darkness face to face with God,  
And said—"I know," she said, "that Thou art wise ;  
That when we build and hope, and hope and build,  
And see our best things fall, it comes to pass  
For evermore that we must turn to Thee !  
And therefore now, because I cannot find  
The faintest token of Divinity  
In this my latest sorrow, let Thy light  
Inform mine eyes, so I may learn to look  
On something past the sight which shuts, and blinds,  
And seems to drive me wholly, Lord, from Thee."

Now waned the moon beyond complaining depths ;  
And, as the dawn looked forth from showery woods  
(Whereon had dropt a hint of red and gold),

There went about the crooked cavern-eaves  
Low flute-like echoes with a noise of wings  
And waters flying down far-hidden fells.  
Then might be seen the solitary owl,  
Perched in the clefts ; scared at the coming light,  
And staring outward (like a sea-shelled thing  
Chased to his cover by some bright fierce foe)  
As at a monster in the middle waste.

At last the great kingfisher came and called  
Across the hollows loud with early whips,  
And lighted, laughing, on the shepherd's hut,  
And roused the widow from a swoon like death.

This day, and after it was noised abroad,  
By blacks, and straggling horsemen on the roads,  
That he was dead " who had been sick so long,"  
There flocked a troop from far-surrounding runs  
To see their neighbour and to bury him.  
And men who had forgotten how to cry  
(Rough flinty fellows of the native bush)  
Now learned the bitter way, beholding there  
The wasted shadow of an iron frame  
Brought down so low by years of fearful pain ;  
And marking, too, the woman's gentle face,  
And all the pathos in her moaned reply  
Of " masters, we have lived in better days."

One stooped—a stockman from the nearer hills—  
To loose his wallet-strings, from whence he took  
A bag of tea, and laid it on her lap ;  
Then, sobbing, “ God will help you, missus, yet,”  
He sought his horse with most bewildered eyes,  
And, spurring swiftly, galloped down the glen.

Where black Orara nightly chafes his brink,  
Midway between lamenting liues of oak  
And Warra’s gap, the shepherd’s grave was built.  
And there the wild-dog pauses, in the midst  
Of moonless watches : howling through the gloom  
At hopeless shadows flitting to and fro,  
What time the East Wind hums his darkest hymn,  
And rains beat heavy on the ruined leaf.

There, while the Autumn in the cedar trees  
Sat cooped about by cloudy evergreens,  
The widow sojourned on the silent road,  
And mutely faced the barren mound, and plucked  
A straggling shrub from thence, and passed away,  
Heart-broken on to Sydney ; where she took  
Her passage, in an English vessel bound  
To London, for her home of other years.

At rest ! Not near, with Sorrow on his grave,  
And roses quickened into beauty—wraapt  
In all the pathos of perennial bloom ;

But far from these, beneath the fretful clay  
Of lands within the lone perpetual cry  
Of hermit plovers and the night-like oaks,  
All moaning for the peace which never comes.

At rest ! And she who sits and waits behind  
Is in the shadows ; but her faith is sure,  
And *one* fine promise of the coming days  
Is breaking, like a blessed morning, far  
On hills " that slope through darkness up to God."

## A SPANISH LOVE SONG.

FROM Andalusian gardens  
I bring the rose and rue,  
And leaves of subtle odour,  
To weave a gift for you.  
You'll know the reason wherefore  
The sad is with the sweet!  
My flowers may lie, as I would,  
A carpet for your feet.

The heart—the heart is constant!  
It holds its secret, Dear!  
But often in the night time  
I keep awake for fear.  
I have no hope to whisper,  
I have no prayer to send,  
God save you from such passion!  
God help you from such end!

You first, you last, you false love!  
In dreams your lips I kiss,  
And thus I greet your Shadow,  
"Take this, and this, and this!"  
When dew's are on the casement,  
And winds are in the pine,  
I have you close beside me—  
In sleep your mouth is mine.

I never see you elsewhere;  
You never think of me;  
But fired with fever for you  
Content I am to be.  
You will not turn, my Darling,  
Nor answer when I call;  
But yours are soul and body  
And love of mine and all!

You splendid Spaniard! listen—  
My passion leaps to flame  
For neck, and cheek, and dimple,  
And cunning shades of shame!  
I tell you, I would gladly  
Give Hell myself to keep,  
To cling to, half a moment,  
The lips I taste in sleep.

## THE LAST OF HIS TRIBE.

HE crouches, and buries his face on his knees,  
And hides in the dark of his hair ;  
For he cannot look up to the storm-smitten trees,  
Or think of the loneliness there :  
Of the loss and the loneliness there.

The wallaroos grope through the tufts of the grass,  
And turn to their covers for fear ;  
But he sits in the ashes and lets them pass  
Where the boomerangs sleep with the spear :  
With the nullah, the sling, and the spear.

Uloola, behold him ! The thunder that breaks  
On the tops of the rocks with the rain,  
And the wind which drives up with the salt of the  
lakes,  
Have made him a hunter again :  
A hunter and fisher again.



For his eyes have been full with a smouldering thought;  
But he dreams of the hunts of yore,  
And of foes that he sought, and of fights that he  
fought  
With those who will battle no more :  
Who will go to the battle no more.

It is well that the water which tumbles and fills  
Goes moaning and moaning along ;  
For an echo rolls out from the sides of the hills,  
And he starts at a wonderful song :  
At the sounds of a wonderful song.

And he sees, through the rents of the scattering fogs,  
The corroboree warlike and grim,  
And the lubra who sat by the fire on the logs,  
To watch, like a mourner, for him :  
Like a mother and mourner, for him.

Will he go in his sleep from these desolate lands,  
Like a chief, to the rest of his race,  
With the honey-voiced woman who beckons, and  
stands,  
And gleams like a Dream in his face—  
Like a marvellous Dream in his face?

## ARAKOON.

Lo, in storms, the triple-headed  
Hill, whose dreaded  
Bases battle with the seas,  
Looms across fierce widths of fleeting  
Waters beating  
Evermore on roaring leas !

Arakoon, the black, the lonely !  
Housed with only  
Cloud and rain-wind, mist and damp :  
Round whose foam-drenched feet, and nether  
Depths, together  
Sullen sprites of thunder tramp !

There the East hums loud and surly,  
    Late and early,  
Through the chasms and the caves ;  
And across the naked verges  
    Leap the surges !  
White and wailing waifs of waves.

Day by day, the sea-fogs gathered—  
    Tempest-fathered—  
Pitch their tents on yonder peak !  
Yellow drifts and fragments, lying  
    Where the flying  
Torrents chafe the cloven creek !

And at nightfall, when the driven  
    Bolts of heaven  
Smite the rock and break the bluff,  
Thither troop the elves whose home is  
    Where the foam is,  
And the echo, and the clough.

Ever girt about with noises,  
    Stormy voices,  
And the salt breath of the strait,  
Stands the steadfast Mountain Giant,  
    Grim, reliant,  
Dark as Death, and firm as Fate !

So when trouble treads, like thunder,  
    Weak men under—  
Treads, and breaks the thews of these—  
Set thyself to bear it bravely,  
    Greatly, gravely,  
Like the hill in yonder seas :

Since the wrestling, and endurance  
    Give assurance  
To the faint at bay with pain,  
That no soul to strong Endeavour  
    Yoked for ever,  
Works against the tide in vain.

## THE VOYAGE OF TELEGONUS.

ILL fares it]with the man whose lips are set  
To bitter themes and words that spite the gods :  
For, seeing how the son of Saturn sways  
With eyes and ears for all, this one shall halt  
As on hard hurtful hills ; his days shall know  
The plaintive front of Sorrow ; level looks  
With cries ill-favoured shall be dealt to him ;  
And *this* shall be that he may think of peace  
As one might think of alienated lips  
Of sweetness touched for once in kind warm dreams.  
Yea, fathers of the high and holy face,  
This soul thus sinning shall have cause to sob  
“ Ah, ah,” for sleep, and space enough to learn  
The wan wild Hyrie’s aggregated song  
That starts the dwellers in distorted heights,

With all the meaning of perpetual sighs  
Heard in the mountained deserts of the world,  
And where the green-haired waters glide between  
The thin lank weeds and mallows of the marsh.

But thou to whom these things are like to shapes  
That come of darkness—thou whose life slips past  
Regarding rather these with mute fast mouth—  
Hear none the less how fleet Telegonus,  
The brass-clad hunter, first took oar and smote  
Swift eastward-going seas, with face direct  
For narrowing channels and the twofold coasts  
Past Colchis and the fierce Symplegades  
And utmost islands washed by streams unknown.

For in a time when Phasis whitened wide  
And drove with violent waters blown of wind  
Against the bare salt limits of the land,  
It came to pass that, joined with Cytheræa,  
The black-browed Ares, chafing for the wrong  
Ulysses did him on the plains of Troy,  
Set heart against the king; and when the storms  
Sang high in thunder and the Thracian rain,  
The god bethought him of a pale-mouthed priest  
Of Thebæ, kin to ancient Chariclo,  
And of an omen which the prophet gave  
That touched on Death and grief to Ithaca;

Then, knowing how a heavy-handed fate  
Had laid itself on Circe's brass-clad son,  
He pricked the hunter with a lust that turned  
All thoughts to travel and the seas remote ;  
But chiefly now he stirred Telegonus  
To longings for his father's exiled face,  
And dreams of rest and honey-hearted love,  
And quiet death with much of funeral flame  
Far in the mountains of a favoured land  
Beyond the wars and wailings of the waves.

So past the ridges where the coast abrupt  
Dips greyly westward, Circe's strong-armed son  
Swept down the foam of sharp-divided straits  
And faced the stress of opening seas. Sheer out  
The vessel drave ; but three long moons the gale  
Moaned round ; and swift strong streams of fire  
revealed

The labouring rowers and the lightening surf,  
Pale watchers deafened of sonorous storm,  
And dripping decks and rents of ruined sails.  
Yea, when the hollow ocean-driven ship  
Wheeled sideways, like a chariot cloven through  
In hard hot battle, and the night came up  
Against strange headlands lying East and North,  
Behold a black wild wind with death to all  
Ran shoreward, charged with flame and thunder-smoke,

Which blew the waters into wastes of white  
And broke the bark, as lightning breaks the pine ;  
Whereat the sea in fearful circles shewed  
Unpitied faces turned from Zeus and light,  
Wan swimmers wasted with their agony,  
And hopeless eyes and moaning mouths of men.  
But one held by the fragments of the wreck,  
And Ares knew him for Telegonus,  
Whom heavy-handed Fate had chained to deeds  
Of dreadful note with sin beyond a name.  
So, seeing this, the black-browed lord of war,  
Arrayed about by Jove's authentic light,  
Shot down amongst the shattered clouds and called  
With mighty strain, betwixt the gaps of storm,  
" Oceanus, Oceanus ! " whereat  
The surf sprang white, as when a keel divides  
The gleaming centre of a gathered wave ;  
And, ringed with flakes of splendid fire of foam,  
The son of Terra rose halfway and blew  
The triple trumpet of the water-gods,  
At which great winds fell back and all the sea  
Grew dumb, as on the land a war-feast breaks  
When deep sleep falls upon the souls of men.  
Then Ares of the night-like brow made known  
The brass-clad hunter of the facile feet  
Hard clinging to the slippery logs of pine,  
And told the omen to the hoary god  
That touched on Death and grief to Ithaca ;



Wherefore Oceanus with help of hand  
Bore by the chin the warrior of the North,  
A moaning mass, across the shallowing surge,  
And cast him on the rocks of alien shores  
Against a wintry morning shot with storm.

Hear also thou how mighty gods sustain  
The men set out to work the ends of Fate  
Which fill the world with tales of many tears,  
And vex the sad face of Humanity:  
Six days and nights the brass-clad chief abode  
Pent up in caverns by the straightening seas,  
And fed on ferns and limpets; but the dawn  
Before the strong sun of the seventh, brought  
A fume of fire and smells of savoury meat,  
And much rejoicing, as from neighbouring feasts;  
At which the hunter, seized with sudden lust,  
Sprang up the crags, and, like a dream of Fear,  
Leapt, shouting, at a huddled host of hinds  
Amongst the fragments of their steaming food;  
And, as the hoarse wood-wind in Autumn sweeps  
To every zone the hissing latter leaves,  
So, fleet Telegonus, by dint of spear  
And strain of thunderous voice, did scatter these  
East, South, and North: 'twas then the chief had rest,  
Hard by the outer coast of Ithaca,  
Unknown to him who ate the spoil and slept.

Nor stayed he hand thereafter ; but, when noon  
Burned dead on misty hills of stunted fir,  
This man shook slumber from his limbs, and sped  
Against hoar beaches and the kindled cliffs  
Of falling waters ; these he waded through,  
Beholding past the forests of the West  
A break of light, and homes of many men,  
And shining corn, and flowers, and fruits of flowers ;  
Yea, seeing these, the facile-footed chief  
Grasped by the knot the huge Ææan lance,  
And fell upon the farmers ; wherefore they  
Left hoe and plough, and crouched in heights remote  
Companioned with the grey-winged fogs ; but he  
Made waste their fields and throve upon their  
toil—

As throve the boar, the fierce four-footed curse  
Which Artemis did raise in Calydon  
To make stern mouths wax white with foreign fear,  
All in the wild beginning of the World.

So one went down and told Laertes' son  
Of what the brass-clad stranger from the straits  
Had worked in Ithaca : whereat the King  
Rose, like a god, and called his mighty heir,  
Telemachus, the wisest of the wise ;  
And these two, having counsel, strode without,  
And armed them with the arms of warlike days—

The helm, the javelin, and the sun-like shield,  
And glancing greaves and quivering stars of steel!  
Yea, stern Ulysses, rusted not with rest,  
But dread as Ares, gleaming on his car  
Gave out the reins; and straightway all the lands  
Were struck by noise of steed and shouts of men,  
And furious dust, and splendid wheels of flame.  
Meanwhile the hunter (starting from a sleep  
In which the pieces of a broken dream  
Had shown him Circe with most tearful face),  
Caught at his spear, and stood, like one at bay  
When Summer brings about Arcadian horns  
And headlong horses mixt with maddened hounds;  
Then huge Ulysses, like a fire of fight,  
Sprang sideways on the flying car, and drave  
Full at the brass-clad warrior of the North  
His massive spear; but fleet Telegonus  
Stooped from the death, but heard the speedy lance  
Sing like a thin wind through the steaming air;  
Yet he, dismayed not by the dreadful foe—  
Unknown to him—dealt out his strength, and aimed  
A strenuous stroke at great Laertes' son,  
Which missed the shield, but bit through flesh and  
bone,  
And drank the blood, and dragged the soul from  
thence!  
So fell the King! and one cried, "Ithaca!  
Ah, Ithaca!" and turned his face and wept.

Then came another—wise Telemachus—  
Who knelt beside the man of many days  
And pored upon the face ; but lo, the life  
Was like bright water spilt in sands of thirst,  
A wasted splendour swiftly drawn away.  
Yet held he by the dead : he heeded not  
The moaning warrior who had learnt his sin—  
Who waited now, like one in lairs of pain,  
Apart with darkness hungry for his fate ;  
For, had not wise Telemachus the lore  
Which makes the pale-mouthed seer content to sleep  
Amidst the desolations of the world ?  
So therefore he who knew Telegonus,  
The child of Circe by Laertes' son,  
Was set to be a scourge of Zeus, smote not  
But rather sat with moody eyes, and mused,  
And watched the dead. For who may brave the  
    gods ?

Yet, O my fathers, when the people came,  
And brought the holy oils and perfect fire,  
And built the pile, and sang the tales of Troy—  
Of desperate travels in the olden time,  
By shadowy mountains and the roaring sea,  
Near windy sands and past the Thracian snows—  
The man who crossed them all to see his sire,  
And had a loyal heart to give the King,

Instead of blows—this man did little more  
Than moan outside the fume of funeral rites,  
All in a rushing twilight full of rain,  
And clap his palms for sharper pains than swords.  
Yea, when the night broke out against the flame,  
And lonely noises loitered in the fens,  
This man nor stirred nor slept, but lay at wait,  
With fastened mouth. For who may brave the gods?

## SITTING BY THE FIRE.

AH! the solace in the sitting,  
Sitting by the fire,  
When the wind without is calling  
And the fourfold clouds are falling,  
With the rain-racks intermitting,  
Over slope and spire.  
Ah! the solace in the sitting,  
Sitting by the fire.

Then, and then, a man may ponder,  
Sitting by the fire,  
Over fair far days, and faces  
Shining in sweet-coloured places  
Ere the thunder broke asunder  
Life and dear Desire.  
Thus, and thus, a man may ponder,  
Sitting by the fire.

Waifs of song pursue, perplex me,  
Sitting by the fire :  
Just a note, and lo, the change then !  
Like a child, I turn and range then,  
Till a shadow starts to vex me—  
Passion's wasted pyre.  
So do songs pursue, perplex me,  
Sitting by the fire.

Night by night—the old, old story—  
Sitting by the fire,  
Night by night, the dead leaves grieve me :  
Ah ! the touch when youth shall leave me,  
Like my fathers, shrunken, hoary,  
With the years that tire.  
Night by night—that old, old, story,  
Sitting by the fire.

Sing for slumber, sister Clara,  
Sitting by the fire.  
I could hide my head and sleep now,  
Far from those who laugh and weep now,  
Like a trammelled, faint wayfarer,  
'Neath yon mountain-spire.  
Sing for slumber, sister Clara,  
Sitting by the fire.

CLEONE.

SING her a song of the sun :

    Fill it with tones of the stream,—  
Echoes of waters that run  
    Glad with the gladdening gleam.  
Let it be sweeter than rain,  
    Lit by a tropical moon :  
Light in the words of the strain,  
    Love in the ways of the tune.

Softer than seasons of sleep :

    Dearer than life at its best !  
Give her a ballad to keep,  
    Wove of the passionate West :  
Give it and say of the hours—  
    “ Haunted and hallowed of thee,  
Flower-like woman of flowers,  
    What shall the end of them be ? ”



You that have loved her so much,  
Loved her asleep and awake,  
Trembled because of her touch,  
What have you said for her sake?  
Far in the falls of the day,  
Down in the meadows of myrrh,  
What has she left you to say  
Filled with the beauty of her?

Take her the best of your thoughts,  
Let them be gentle and grave,  
Say, "I have come to thy courts,  
Maiden, with all that I have."  
So she may turn with her sweet  
Face to your love and to you,  
Learning the way to repeat  
Words that are brighter than dew.

CHARLES HARPUR.

WHERE Harpur lies, the rainy streams,  
And wet hill-heads, and hollows weeping,  
Are swift with wind, and white with gleams,  
And hoarse with sounds of storms unsleeping.

Fit grave it is for one whose song  
Was tuned by tones he caught from torrents,  
And filled with mountain-breaths, and strong  
Wild notes of falling forest-currents.

So let him sleep ! the rugged hymns  
And broken lights of woods above him !  
And let me sing how Sorrow dims  
The eyes of those that used to love him.

As April in the wilted wold

Turns faded eyes on splendours waning,  
What time the latter leaves are old,  
And ruin strikes the strays remaining ;

So we that knew this singer dead,

Whose hands attuned the Harp Australian,  
May set the face and bow the head,  
And mourn his fate and fortunes alien.

The burden of a perished faith

Went sighing through his speech of sweetness,  
With human hints of Time and Death,  
And subtle notes of incompleteness.

But when the fiery power of Youth

Had passed away and left him nameless,  
Serene as Light, and strong as Truth,  
He lived his life untired and tameless.

And, far and free, this man of men

With wintry hair and wasted feature,  
Had fellowship with gorge and glen,  
And learned the loves and runes of Nature.

Strange words of wind, and rhymes of rain,

And whispers from the inland fountains,  
Are mingled in his various strain  
With leafy breaths of piny mountains.

But, as the under-currents sigh  
    Beneath the surface of a river,  
The music of Humanity  
    Dwells in his forest-psalms for ever.

No soul was he to sit on heights  
    And live with rocks apart and scornful :  
Delights of men were his delights,  
    And common troubles made him mournful.

The flying forms of unknown powers  
    With lofty wonder caught and filled him ;  
But there were days of gracious hours  
    When sights and sounds familiar thrilled him.

The pathos worn by wayside things,  
    The passion found in simple faces,  
Struck deeper than the life of springs  
    Or strength of storms and sea-swept places.

But now he sleeps, the tired bard,  
    The deepest sleep ; and lo, I proffer  
These tender leaves of my regard  
    With hands that falter as they offer.

## GOD HELP OUR MEN AT SEA.

THE wild night comes like an owl to its lair ;  
The black clouds follow fast ;  
And the sun-gleams die and the lightnings glare,  
And the ships go heaving past, past, past—  
The ships go heaving past !

Bar the doors, and higher, higher  
Pile the faggots on the fire !  
Now abroad by many a light  
Empty seats there are to-night ;  
Empty seats that none may fill,  
For the storm grows louder still !

How it surges and swells through the gorges and  
dells,

Under the ledges and over the lea,  
Where a watery sound goeth moaning around.

God help our men at sea !

Oh ! never a tempest blew on the shore,  
But that some heart did moan  
For a darling voice it would hear no more,  
And a face that had left it lone, lone, lone—  
A face that had left it lone !

I am watching by a pane  
 Darkened with the gusty rain ;  
 Watching through a mist of tears,  
 Sad with thoughts of other years :  
 For a brother I did miss  
 In a stormy time like this.

Ah! the torrent howls past, like a fiend on the  
 blast,

Under the ledges and over the lea ;  
 And the pent waters gleam, and the wild surges  
 scream !

God help our men at sea !

Ah, Lord, they may grope through the dark to find  
 Thy hand within the gale ;  
 And cries may rise on the wings of the wind  
 From mariners weary and pale, pale, pale—  
 From mariners weary and pale !

'Tis a fearful thing to know,  
 While the storm-winds loudly blow,  
 That a man can sometimes come  
 Too near to his father's home ;  
 So that he shall kneel and say,  
 " Lord, I would be far away !"

Ho ! the hurricanes roar round a dangerous shore,  
 Under the ledges and over the lea ;

And there twinkles a light on the billows so white—

God help our men at sea !

## COOGEE.

SING the song of wave-worn Coogee—Coogee in the  
distance white

With its jags and points disrupted, gaps and fractures  
fringed with light!

Haunt of gledes and restless plovers of the melan-  
choly wail

Ever lending deeper pathos to the melancholy gale.

There, my brothers, down the fissures, chasms deep  
and wan and wild,

Grows the sea-bloom, one that blushes like a shrink-  
ing fair blind child;

And amongst the oozing forelands many a glad green  
rock-vine runs,

Getting ease on earthy ledges sheltered from Decem-  
ber suns.

Often, when a gusty morning, rising cold and gray  
and strange,

Lifts its face from watery spaces, vistas full with  
cloudy change;

Bearing up a gloomy burden which anon begins to  
wane,  
Fading in the sudden shadow of a dark determined  
rain ;  
Do I seek an eastern window, so to watch the  
breakers beat  
Round the steadfast crags of Coogee, dim with drifts  
of driving sleet :  
Hearing hollow mournful noises sweeping down a  
solemn shore  
While the grim sea-caves are tideless and the storm  
strives at their core.

Often when the floating vapours fill the silent autumn  
leas,  
Dreamy memories fall like moonlight over silver  
sleeping seas,  
Youth and I and Love together!—other times and  
other themes  
Come to me unsung, unwept for, through the faded  
evening gleams :  
• Come to me and touch me mutely—I that looked  
and longed so well,  
Shall I look and yet forget them? who may know or  
who foretell?  
Though the southern wind roams, shadowed with its  
immemorial grief,



Where the frosty wings of Winter leave their whiteness on the leaf?

Friend of mine beyond the waters, here and here  
these perished days

Haunt me with their sweet dead faces and their old  
divided ways.

You that helped and you that loved me, take this  
song and when you read

Let the lost things come about you, set your  
thoughts and hear and heed:

Time has laid his burden on us: we who wear our  
manhood now—

We would be the boys we *have* been, free of heart  
and bright of brow—

Be the boys for just an hour, with the splendour  
and the speech

Of thy lights and thunders, Coogee, flying up thy  
gleaming beach!

Heart's desire and heart's division! who would come  
and say to me

With the eyes of far-off friendship, "You are as  
you used to be"?

Something glad and good has left me here with  
sickening discontent,

Tired of looking, neither knowing, what it was or  
where it went.

So it is this sight of Coogee, shining in the morning  
dew,  
Sets me stumbling through dim summers once on fire  
with youth and you.  
Summers pale as southern evenings when the year  
has lost its power,  
And the wasted face of April weeps above the withered  
flower.

Not that seasons bring no solace—not that time lacks  
light and rest ;  
But the old things were the dearest, and the old loves  
seem the best.  
We that start at songs familiar—we that tremble at a  
tone,  
Floating down the ways of music, like a sigh of sweet-  
ness flown,  
We can never feel the freshness—never find again the  
mood  
Left amongst fair-featured places brightened of our  
brotherhood ;  
This, and this, we have to think of, when the night is  
over all,  
And the woods begin to perish, and the rains begin to  
fall.

## OGYGES.

STAND out, swift-footed leaders of the horns,  
And draw strong breath, and fill the hollowy cliff  
With shocks of clamour,—let the chasm take  
The noise of many trumpets, lest the hunt  
Should die across the dim Aonian hills,  
Nor break through thunder and the surf-white cave  
That hems about the old-eyed Ogyges  
And bars the sea-wind, rain-wind, and the sea!

Much fierce delight hath old-eyed Ogyges  
[A hairless shadow in a lion's skin]  
In tumult, and the gleam of flying spears,  
And wild beasts vexed to death; “for,” sayeth he,  
“Here lying broken, do I count the days  
For very trouble; being like the tree—  
The many-wintered father of the trunks

On yonder ridges : wherefore it is well  
To feel the dead blood kindling in my veins  
At sound of boar or battle ; yea to find  
A sudden stir, like life, about my feet,  
And tingling pulses through this frame of mine  
What time the cold clear dayspring, like a bird  
Afar off, settles on the frost-bound peaks,  
And all the deep blue gorges, darkening down,  
Are filled with men and dogs and furious dust ! ”

So in the time whereof thou weetest well—  
The melancholy morning of the World—  
He mopes or mumbles, sleeps or shouts for glee,  
And shakes his sides—a cavern-hutted King !  
But when the ouzel in the gaps at eve  
Doth pipe her dreary ditty to the surge  
All tumbling in the soft green level light,  
He sits as quiet as a thick-mossed rock,  
And dreameth in his cold old savage way  
Of gliding barges on the wine-dark waves,  
And glowing shapes, and sweeter things than sleep ,  
But chiefly, while the restless twofold bat  
Goes flapping round the rainy eaves above,  
Where one broad opening letteth in the moon,  
He starteth, thinking of that gray-haired man,  
His sire : then oftentimes the white-armed child  
Of thunder-bearing Jove, young Thebe, comes  
And droops above him with her short sweet sighs

For Love distraught—for dear Love's faded sake  
That weeps and sings and weeps itself to death  
Because of casual eyes, and lips of frost,  
And careless mutterings, and most weary years.

Bethink you, doth the wan Ægyptian count  
This passion, wasting like an unfed flame,  
Of any worth now; seeing that his thighs  
Are shrunken to a span; and that the blood  
Which used to spin tumultuous down his sides  
Of life in leaping moments of desire,  
Is drying like a thin and sluggish stream  
In withered channels—think you, doth he pause  
For golden Thebe and her red young mouth?

Ah, golden Thebe—Thebe, weeping there,  
Like some sweet wood-nymph wailing for a rock,  
If Octis with the Apollonian face—  
That fair-haired prophet of the sun and stars—  
Could take a mist and dip it in the West  
To clothe thy limbs of shine about with shine  
And all the wonder of the amethyst,  
He'd do it—kneeling like a slave for thee!  
If he could find a dream to comfort thee,  
He'd bring it: thinking little of his lore,  
But marvelling greatly at those eyes of thine.  
Yea, if the Shepherd waiting for thy steps,  
Pent down amongst the dank black-weeded rims,

Could shed his life like rain about thy feet,  
He'd count it sweetness past all sweets of love  
To die by thee—his life's end in thy sight.

O but he loves the hunt, doth Ogyges!  
And therefore should we blow the horn for him:  
He, sitting mumbling in his surf-white cave  
With helpless feet and alienated eyes,  
Should hear the noises nathless dawn by dawn  
Which send him wandering swiftly through the days  
When like a springing cataract he leapt  
From crag to crag, the strongest in the chase  
To spear the lion, leopard, or the boar!  
O but he loves the hunt; and, while the shouts  
Of mighty winds are in this mountained World,  
Behold the white bleak woodman, Winter, halts  
And bends to him across a beard of snow  
For wonder; seeing Summer in his looks  
Because of dogs and calls from throats of hair  
All in the savage hills of Hyria!  
And, through the yellow evenings of the year,  
What time September shows her mooned front  
And poppies burnt to blackness droop for drouth,  
The dear Demeter, splashed from heel to thigh  
With spinning vine-blood, often stoops to him  
To crush the grape against his wrinkled lips  
Which sets him dreaming of the thickening wolves  
In darkness, and the sound of moaning seas.

So with the blustering tempest doth he find  
A stormy fellowship : for when the North  
Comes reeling downwards with a breath like spears,  
Where Dryope the lonely sits all night  
And holds her sorrow crushed betwixt her palms,  
He thinketh mostly of that time of times  
When Zeus the Thunderer—broadly-blazing King—  
Like some wild comet beautiful but fierce,  
Leapt out of cloud and fire and smote the tops  
Of black Ogygia with his red right hand,  
At which great fragments tumbled to the Deeps—  
The mighty fragments of a mountain-land—  
And all the World became an awful Sea !

But, being tired, the hairless Ogyges  
Best loveth night and dim forgetfulness !  
“ For,” sayeth he, “ to look for sleep is good  
When every sleep is as a sleep of death  
To men who live, yet know not why they live,  
Nor how they live ! I have no thought to tell  
The people when this time of mine began ;  
But forest after forest grows and falls,  
And rock by rock is wasted with the rime,  
While I sit on and wait the end of all ;  
Here taking every footstep for a sign ;  
An ancient shadow whiter than the foam ! ”

## BY THE SEA.

THE caves of the sea have been troubled to-day  
With the water which whitens, and widens, and  
fills ;

And a boat with our brother was driven away  
By a wind that came down from the tops of the hills.  
Behold I have seen on the threshold again  
A face in a dazzle of hair !

Do you know that she watches the rain, and the main,  
And the waves which are moaning there ?  
Ah, moaning and moaning there !

Now turn from your casements, and fasten your doors,  
And cover your faces, and pray, if you can ;  
There are wails in the wind, there are sighs on the  
shores,

And alas, for the fate of a storm-beaten man !  
Oh, dark falls the night on the rain-rutted verge,  
So sad with the sound of the foam !  
Oh, wild is the sweep and the swirl of the surge ;  
And his boat may never come home !  
Ah, never and never come home !



## SONG OF THE CATTLE-HUNTERS.

WHILE the morning light beams on the fern-matted  
streams,

And the water-pools flash in its glow,

Down the ridges we fly, with a loud ringing cry—

Down the ridges and gullies we go!

And the cattle we hunt, they are racing in front,

With a roar like the thunder of waves;

As the beat and the beat of our swift horses' feet

Start the echoes away from their caves!

As the beat and the beat

Of our swift horses' feet

Start the echoes away from their caves!

Like a wintery shore that the waters ride o'er,

All the lowlands are filling with sound;

For swiftly we gain where the herds on the plain,

Like a tempest, are tearing the ground!

And we'll follow them hard to the rails of the yard,  
Over gulches and mountain-tops grey,  
Where the beat and the beat of our swift horses'  
feet

Will die with the echoes away!

Where the beat and the beat  
Of our swift horses' feet  
Will die with the echoes away!

## KING SAUL AT GILBOA.

WITH noise of battle and the dust of fray,  
Half-hid in fog, the gloomy mountain lay ;  
But Succoth's watchers from their outer fields  
Saw fits of flame and gleams of clashing shields  
For where the yellow river draws its spring  
The hosts of Israel travelled thundering !  
There, beating like the storm that sweeps to sea  
Across the reefs of chafing Galilee,  
The car of Abner and the sword of Saul  
Drave Gaza down Gilboa's southern wall ;  
But swift and sure the spears of Ekron flew,  
Till peak and slope were drenched with bloody dew !  
" Shout, Timnath, shout ! " the blazing leaders cried,  
And hurled the stone, and dashed the stave aside :  
" Shout, Timnath, shout ! Let Hazor hold the height,  
Bend the long bow and break the lords of fight ! "   
From every hand the swarthy strangers sprang,  
Chief leaped on chief, with buckler buckler rang !  
The flower of armies ! set in Syrian heat,  
The ridges clamoured under labouring feet ;

Nor stayed the warriors till from Salim's road  
The crescent horns of Abner's squadrons glowed.  
Then, like a shooting splendour on the wing,  
The strong-armed son of Kish came thundering ;  
And as in Autumn's fall, when woods are bare,  
Two adverse tempests meet in middle air,  
So Saul and Achish; grim with heat and hate,  
Met by the brooks and shook the scales of Fate ;  
For now the struggle swayed, and, firm as rocks  
Against the storm-wind of the equinox,  
The rallied lords of Judah stood and bore  
All day the fiery tides of fourfold war.

But he that fasted in the secret cave,  
And called up Samuel from the quiet grave,  
And stood with darkness and the mantled ghosts  
A bitter night on shrill Samarian coasts,  
Knew well the end: of how the futile sword  
Of Israel would be broken by the Lord ;  
How Gath would triumph with the tawny line  
That bend the knee at Dagon's brittle shrine ;  
And how the race of Kish would fall to wreck  
Because of vengeance stayed at Amalek ;  
Yet strove the sunlike king, nor rested hand  
Till yellow evening filled the level land ;  
Then Judah reeled before a biting hail  
Of sudden arrows shot from Akor's vale,

Where Libnah, lapped in blood from thigh to heel,  
Drew the tense string and pierced the quivering steel.  
There fell the sons of Saul, and, man by man,  
The chiefs of Israel up to Jonathan ;  
And, while swift Achish stooped and caught the spoil,  
Ten chosen archers red with sanguine toil  
Sped after Saul, who, faint and sick and sore  
With many wounds, had left the thick of war :  
He, like a baffled bull by hunters prest,  
Turned sharp about and faced the flooded west,  
And saw the star-like spears and moony spokes  
Gleam from the rocks and lighten through the oaks ;  
A sea of splendour ! How the chariots rolled  
On wheels of blinding brightness manifold !  
While stumbling over spike and spine and spur  
Of sultry lands, escaped the son of Ner  
With smitten men ! At this the front of Saul  
Grew darker than a blasted tower wall ;  
And seeing how there crouched upon his right  
Aghast with fear a black Amalekite,  
He called and said, " I pray thee, man of pain,  
Red from the scourge, and recent from the chair,  
Set thou thy face to mine and stoutly stand  
With yonder bloody sword-hilt in thine hand  
And fall upon me." But the faltering hind  
Stood trembling like a willow in the wind.  
Then further, Saul : " Lest Ashdod's vaunting hosts  
Should bear me captive to their bleak-blown coasts,

I pray thee, smite me : seeing peace has fled,  
And rest lies wholly with the quiet dead.”  
At this a flood of sunset broke, and smote  
Keen blazing sapphires round a kingly throat,  
Touched arm and shoulder, glittered in the crest,  
And made swift starlights on a jewelled breast !  
So, starting forward like a loosened hound,  
The stranger clutched the sword and wheeled it  
    round,  
And struck the Lord's Anointed ! Fierce and fleet,  
Philistia came with shouts and clattering feet ;  
By gaping gorges and by rough defile,  
Dark Ashdod beat across a dusty mile ;  
Hot Hazor's bowmen toiled from spire to spire ;  
And Gath sprang upwards like a gust of fire !  
On either side did Libnah's lords appear ;  
And brass-clad Timnath thundered in the rear !  
“ Mark, Achish, mark ! ”—South-west and south there  
    sped  
A dabbled hireling from the dreadful dead !  
“ Mark, Achish, mark ! ”—The mighty front of Saul,  
Great in his life and god-like in his fall !  
This was the arm that broke Philistia's pride  
Where Kishon chafes his seaward-going tide !  
This was the sword that smote till set of sun  
Red Gath from Michmash unto Ajalon !  
Low in the dust. And Israel scattered far !  
And dead the trumps, and crushed the hoofs of war !

So fell the king ! as it was said by him  
Who hid his forehead in a mantle dim  
At bleak Endor, what time unholy rites  
Vext the long sleep of still Samaritan heights :  
For bowed to earth before the hoary Priest  
Did he of Kish withstand the smoking feast,  
To fast, in darkness and in sackcloth rolled,  
And house with wild things in the biting cold ;  
Because of sharpness lent to Gaza's sword,  
And Judah widowed by the angry Lord.

So Silence came ! As when the outer verge  
Of Carmel takes the white and whistling surge,  
Hoarse hollow noises fill the caves and roar  
Along the margins of the echoing shore,  
Thus War had thundered ! But as Evening breaks  
Across the silver of Assyrian lakes,  
When reapers rest, and through the level red  
Of sunset, peace like holy oil is shed,  
Thus Silence fell ; but Israel's daughters crept  
Outside their thresholds, waited, watched, and wept.

Then they that dwell beyond the flats and fens  
Of sullen Jordan, and in gelid glens  
Of Jabesh-Gilead, chosen chiefs and few,  
Around their loins the hasty girdle drew,  
And faced the forests huddled fold on fold,  
And dells of glimmering greenness manifold,

What time Orion in the west did set  
A shining foot on hills of wind and wet :  
These journeyed nightly till they reached the capes  
Where Ashdod revelled over heated grapes ;  
And, while the feast was loud and scouts were turned,  
From Saul's bound body cord by cord they burned,  
And bore the king athwart the place of tombs,  
And hasted eastward through the tufted glooms ;  
Nor broke the cake, nor stayed the step till Morn  
Shot over Debir's cones and crags forlorn !

From Jabesh then the weeping virgins came ;  
In Jabesh then they built the funeral flame ;  
With costly woods they piled the lordly pyre,  
Brought yellow oils and fed the perfect fire ;  
While round the crescent stately Elders spread  
The flashing armour of the mighty dead,  
With crown and spear, and all the trophies won  
From many wars by Israel's dreadful Son.  
Thence, when the feet of Evening paused and stood  
On shadowy mountains and the roaring flood  
(As through a rushing twilight full of rain  
The weak Moon looked athwart Gadara's plain),  
The younger warriors bore the urn, and broke  
The humid turf about a wintering oak,  
And buried Saul ; and, fasting, went their ways,  
And hid their faces seven nights and days.



## IN THE VALLEY.

SAID the yellow-haired Spirit of Spring  
To the white-footed Spirit of Snow,  
“On the wings of the tempest take wing,  
And leave me the valleys, and go.”  
And, straightway, the streams were unchained,  
And the frost-fettered torrents broke free,  
And the strength of the winter-wind waned  
In the dawn of a light on the sea.

Then a morning-breeze followed and fell,  
And the woods were alive and astir  
With the pulse of a song in the dell,  
And a whisper of day in the fir.  
Swift rings of sweet water were rolled  
Down the ways where the lily-leaves grew,  
And the green, and the white, and the gold,  
Were wedded with purple and blue.

But the lips of the flower of the rose  
Said, "where is the ending hereof?  
Is it sweet with you, life, at the close?  
Is it sad to be emptied of love?"  
And the voice of the flower of the peach  
Was tender and touching in tone,  
"When each has been grafted on each,  
It is sorrow to live on alone."

Then the leaves of the flower of the vine  
Said, "what will there be in the day  
When the reapers are red with my wine,  
And the forests are yellow and grey?"  
And the tremulous flower of the quince  
Made answer, "three seasons ago  
My sisters were star-like, but since,  
Their graves have been made in the snow."

Then the whispering flower of the fern  
Said, "who will be sad at the death,  
When Summer blows over the burn,  
With the fierceness of fire in her breath?"  
And the mouth of the flower of the sedge  
Was opened to murmur and sigh,  
"Sweet wind-breaths that pause at the edge  
Of the nightfall, and falter, and die."

## TWELVE SONNETS.

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### I.

#### A MOUNTAIN SPRING.

PEACE hath an altar there. The sounding feet  
Of thunder, and the 'wildering wings of rain,  
Against fire-rifted summits flash and beat,  
And through grey upper gorges swoop and strain ;  
But round that hallowed mountain-spring remain,  
Year after year, the days of tender heat,  
And gracious nights whose lips with flowers are sweet,  
And filtered lights, and lutes of soft refrain.  
A still bright pool. To men I may not tell  
The secret that its heart of water knows—  
The story of a loved and lost repose ;  
Yet *this* I say to cliff, and close-leaved dell :  
A fitful Spirit haunts yon limpid well,  
Whose likeness is the faithless face of Rose.

## II.

## L A U R A .

IF Laura—lady of the flower-soft face—

Should light upon these verses, she may take  
The tenderest line, and through its pulses trace  
What man can suffer for a woman's sake.

For in the nights that burn, the days that break,  
A thin pale Figure stands in Passion's place ;  
And Peace comes not, nor yet the perished grace  
Of Youth to keep old faiths and fires awake.

Ah, marvellous maid! Life sobs, and sighing saith,  
“ She left me, fleeting like a fluttered dove ;

But I would have a moment of her breath,

So I might taste the sweetest sense thereof,

And catch from blossoming, honeyed lips of love  
Some faint, some fair, some dim delicious death.”

## III.

## BY A RIVER.

BUT red ripe mouth and brown luxurious eyes  
Of her I love, by all your sweetness shed  
In far fair days, on one whose memory flies  
To faithless lights and gracious speech gainsaid,  
I pray you, when yon river-path I tread,  
Make with the woodlands some soft compromise  
Lest they should vex me into fruitless sighs  
With visions of a woman's gleaming head!  
For every green and golden-hearted thing  
That gathers beauty in that shining place  
Beloved of beams and wooed by wind and wing,  
Is rife with glimpses of her marvellous face;  
And in the whispers of the lips of Spring  
The music of her lute-like voice I trace.

## IV.

## ATTILA.

WHAT though his feet were shod with sharp fierce  
flame,

And Death and Ruin were his daily squires,  
The Scythian helped by Heaven's thunders came :  
The time was ripe for God's avenging fires.

Lo, loose lewd trulls and lean luxurious liars  
Had brought the fair fine face of Rome to shame  
And made her one with sins beyond a name—

That queenly daughter of imperial sires !  
The blood of elders like the blood of sheep

Was dashed across the circus ! Once, while din,  
And dust, and lightnings, and a daggled heap  
Of beast-slain men made lords with laughter leap,  
Night fell, with rain. The Earth so sick of sin  
Had turned her face into the dark to weep.

v.

## A R E W A R D.

BECAUSE a steadfast flame of clear intent  
Gave force and beauty to full-actioned life ;  
Because his way was one of firm ascent,  
Whose stepping-stones were hewn of change and  
strife ;  
Because as husband loveth noble wife,  
He loved fair Truth ; because the thing he meant  
To do, that thing he did, nor paused, nor bent,  
In face of poor and pale conclusions ; yea,  
Because of this, how fares the Leader dead ?  
What kind of mourners weep for him to-day ?  
What golden shroud is at his funeral spread ?  
Upon his brow what leaves of laurel, say ?  
*About his breast is tied a sackcloth grey,  
And knots of thorns deface his lordly head.*

## VI.

TO \_\_\_\_\_

A HANDMAID to the Genius of thy Song  
Is sweet fair Scholarship. 'Tis she supplies  
The fiery Spirit of the passion'd eyes  
With subtle syllables whose notes belong  
To some chief source of perfect melodies.  
And, glancing through a laurell'd lordly throng  
Of shining singers, lo, my vision flies  
To William Shakespeare! he it is whose strong  
Full flute-like music haunts thy stately Verse.  
A worthy Levite of his court thou art!  
One sent amongst us to defeat the curse  
That binds us to the Actual. Yea, thy part,  
O lute-voiced lover, is to lull the heart  
Of love repell'd: its darkness to disperse.



## VII.

## THE STANZA OF CHILDE HAROLD.

WHO framed the stanza of Childe Harold? He  
It was who, halting on a stormy shore,  
Knew well the lofty Voice which evermore  
In grand distress doth haunt the sleepless sea  
With solemn sounds! And as each wave did roll  
Till one came up, the mightiest of the whole,  
To sweep and surge across a vacant lea,  
Wild words were wedded to wild melody!  
This Poet must have had a speechless sense  
Of some dead Summer's boundless affluence!  
Else, whither can we trace the passioned lore  
Of Beauty, steeping to the very core  
His royal Verse? And that rare light which lies  
About it like a Sunset in the skies?

## VIII.

## A LIVING POET.

HE knows the sweet vexation in the strife  
Of Love with Time, this Bard who fain would stray  
To fairer place beyond the storms of Life,  
With astral faces near him day by day.  
In deep-mossed dells the mellow waters flow  
Which best he loves ; for there the echoes, rife  
With rich suggestions of his Long Ago,  
Astarte ! pass with thee. And, far away,  
Dear Southern Seasons haunt the dreamy eye :  
Spring, flower-zoned, and Summer, warbling low  
In tasselled corn, alternate come and go ;  
While gipsy Autumn, splashed from heel to thigh  
With vine-blood, treads the leaves ; and, halting nigh,  
Wild Winter bends across a beard of snow.

## IX.

## DANTE AND VIRGIL.

WHEN lost Francesca sobbed her broken tale  
Of Love, and Sin, and boundless Agony ;  
While that wan Spirit by her side did wail  
And bite his lips for utter misery—  
The Grief which could not speak, nor hear, nor  
see ;  
So tender grew the superhuman face  
Of one who listened, that a mighty trace  
Of superhuman Woe gave way, and pale,  
The sudden light upstruggled to its place ;  
While all his limbs began to faint and fail  
With such excess of Pity ! But, behind,  
The Roman Virgil stood—the calm, the wise—  
With not a shadow in his regal eyes,  
A stately type of all his stately kind !

## X.

## REST.

SOMETIMES we feel so spent for want of rest,  
We have no thought beyond. I know to-day,  
When tired of bitter lips and dull delay  
With faithless words, I cast mine eyes upon  
The shadows of a distant mountain-crest,  
And said, "That hill must hide within its breast  
Some secret glen secluded from the sun.

O, mother Nature! would that I could run  
Outside to thee, and, like a wearied guest  
Half blind with lamps and sick of feasting, lay  
An aching head on thee. Then down the streams  
The moon might swim; and I should feel her  
grace,

While soft winds blew the sorrows from my face  
So quiet in the fellowship of dreams."

## XI.

## AFTER PARTING.

I CANNOT tell what change hath come to you  
To vex your splendid hair. I only know  
*One* Grief: the Passion left betwixt us two,  
Like some forsaken watchfire, burneth low.  
'Tis sad to turn and find it dying so  
Without a hope of resurrection! Yet,  
O radiant face that found me tired and lone,  
I shall not for the dear-dead Past forget  
The sweetest looks of all the Summers gone.  
Ah! Time hath made familiar wild Regret;  
For now the leaves are white in last year's bowers;  
And now doth sob along the ruined leas  
The homeless storm from saddened southern seas,  
While March sits weeping over withered flowers.

## XII.

## ALFRED TENNYSON.

THE silvery dimness of a happy dream  
I've known of late. Methought where Byron  
moans,  
Like some wild gulf in melancholy zones,  
I passed tear-blinded! Once a lurid gleam  
Of stormy sunset loitered on the sea  
While, travelling troubled, like a straitened stream,  
The voice of Shelley died away from me!  
Still sore at heart I reached a lake-lit lea;  
And then, the green-mossed glades with many a  
grove  
Where lies the calm which Wordsworth used to love;  
And lastly, Locksley Hall! from whence did rise  
A haunting Song that blew, and breathed, and blew,  
With rare delights: 'twas *there* I woke and knew  
The sumptuous comfort left in drowsy eyes.

## SUTHERLAND'S GRAVE.

[*The first white man buried in Australia.*]

ALL night long the sea out yonder—all night long the  
wailful sea,  
Vext of winds and many thunders, seeketh rest  
unceasingly !  
Seeketh rest in dens of tempest where, like one  
distraught with pain,  
Shouts the wild-eyed sprite, Confusion: seeketh rest,  
and moans in vain !  
Ah, but you should hear it calling, calling when the  
haggard sky  
Takes the darks and damps of Winter with the  
mournful marsh-fowls' cry ;  
Even while the strong, swift torrents from the rainy  
ridges come  
Leaping down and breaking backwards—million  
coloured shapes of foam !

Then, and then, the sea out yonder chiefly looketh  
for the boon

Portioned to the pleasant valleys, and the grave sweet  
summer moon :

Boon of Peace, the still, the saintly, spirit of the  
dewdells deep—

Yellow dells, and hollows haunted by the soft dim  
dreams of sleep.

All night long the flying water breaks upon the  
stubborn rocks—

Ooze-filled forelands burnt and blackened, smit and  
scarred with lightning shocks ;

But above the tender sea-thrift—but beyond the  
flowering fern,

Runs a little pathway westward—pathway quaint  
with turn on turn—

Westward trending, thus it leads to shelving shores  
and slopes of mist :

Sleeping shores, and glassy bays of green and gold  
and amethyst !

*There* tread gently—*gently*, pilgrim ; *there* with  
thoughtful eyes look round ;

Cross thy breast and bless the silence : lo, the place  
is holy ground !

Holy ground for ever, stranger ! All the quiet silver  
lights



Dropping from the starry heavens through the soft  
Australian nights—

Dropping on those lone grave-grasses—come serene,  
unbroken, clear,

Like the love of God the Father, falling, falling, year  
by year !

Yea, and like a Voice supernal, *there* the daily wind  
doth blow

In the leaves above the Sailor buried ninety years  
ago.

## SYRINX.

A HEAP of low dark rocky coast  
Unknown to foot or feather!  
A sea-voice moaning like a ghost ;  
And fits of fiery weather !

The flying Syrinx turned and sped  
By dim mysterious hollows,  
Where night is black, and day is red,  
And frost the fire-wind follows !

Strong heavy footfalls in the wake,  
Came up with flights of water :  
The gods were mournful for the sake  
Of Ladon's lovely daughter.

For when she came to spike and spine,  
Where reef and river gather,  
Her feet were sore with shell and chine ;  
She could not travel farther.

Across a naked strait of land,  
Blown sleet and surge were humming ;  
But trammelled with the shifting sand,  
She heard the monster coming !

A thing of hoofs, and horns, and lust !  
A gaunt goat-footed stranger !  
She bowed her body in the dust,  
And called on Zeus to change her.

And called on Hermes fair and fleet,  
And her of hounds and quiver,  
To hide her in the thickets sweet  
That sighed above the river.

So He that sits on flaming wheels,  
And rules the sea and thunder,  
Caught up the satyr by the heels,  
And tore his skirts in sunder.

While Arcas of the glittering plumes  
Took Ladon's daughter lightly,  
And set her in the gracious glooms  
That mix with moon-mist nightly.

And touched her lips with wild-flower wine ;  
And changed her body slowly,  
Till in soft reeds of song and shine  
Her life was hidden wholly.

## ON THE PAROO.

As when the strong stream of a wintering sea  
Rolls round our coast, with bodeful breaks of storm,  
And swift salt rain, and bitter wind that saith  
Wild things and woeful of the White South Land  
Alone with God and Silence in the cold—  
As when this cometh, men from dripping doors  
Look forth, and shudder for the mariners  
Abroad, so we for absent brothers looked  
In days of drought, and when the flying floods  
Swept boundless : roaring down the bald, black, plains  
Beyond the farthest spur of western hills.

For where the Barwān cuts a rotten land,  
Or lies unshaken, like a great blind creek,  
Between hot mouldering banks, it came to this,  
All in a time of short and thirsty sighs,  
That thirty rainless months had left the pools  
And grass as dry as ashes : then it was  
Our kinsman started for the lone Paroo,

From point to point, with patient strivings, sheer  
Across the horrors of the windless downs,  
Blue-gleaming like a sea of molten steel.

But never drought had broke them : never flood  
Had quenched them : they with mighty youth and  
health,

And thews and sinews knotted like the trees—  
*They*, like the children of the native woods,  
Could stem the strenuous waters, or outlive  
The crimson days and dull dead nights of thirst  
Like camels ! yet of what avail was strength  
Alone to them—though it was like the rocks  
On stormy mountains—in the bloody time  
When fierce sleep caught them in the camps at rest,  
And violent darkness gripped the life in them  
And whelmed them, as an eagle unawares  
Is whelmed and slaughtered in a sudden snare.

All murdered by the blacks ! smit while they lay  
In silver dreams, and with the far faint fall  
Of many waters breaking on their sleep !  
Yea, in the tracts unknown of any man  
Save savages—the dim-discovered ways  
Of footless silence or unhappy winds—  
The wild men came upon them, like a fire  
Of desert thunder ; and the fine firm lips

That touched a mother's lips a year before,  
And hands that knew a dearer hand than life,  
Were hewn like sacrifice before the stars,  
And left with hooting owls, and blowing clouds,  
And falling leaves, and solitary wings!

Ay, you may see their graves—you who have toiled,  
And tripped, and thirsted, like these men of ours;  
For verily I say that *not* so deep  
Their bones are that the scattered drift and dust  
Of gusty days will never leave them bare.  
O dear, dead, bleaching bones! I know of those  
Who have the wild strong will to go and sit  
Outside all things with you, and keep the ways  
Aloof from bats, and snakes, and trampling feet  
That smite your peace and theirs—who have the heart  
Without the lusty limbs to face the fire,  
And moonless midnights, and to be indeed,  
For very sorrow, like a moaning wind  
In wint'ry forests with perpetual rain.

Because of this—because of sisters left  
With desperate purpose and dishevelled hair,  
And broken breath, and sweetness quenched in tears—  
Because of swifter silver for the head,  
And furrows for the face—because of these  
That should have come with Age, that come with Pain,

O Master! Father! sitting where our eyes  
 Are tired of looking, say for once are we—  
 Are *we* to set our lips with weary smiles  
 Before the bitterness of Life and Death,  
 And call it honey, while we bear away  
 A taste like wormwood?

Turn thyself, and sing—  
 Sing, Son of Sorrow! Is there any gain  
 For breaking of the loins, for melting eyes,  
 And knees as weak as water? any peace,  
 Or hope, for casual breath, and labouring lips,  
 For clapping of the palms, and sharper sighs  
 Than frost; or any light to come for those  
 Who stand and mumble in the alien streets  
 With heads as grey as Winter? any balm  
 For pleading women, and the love that knows  
 Of nothing left to love?

They sleep a sleep  
 Unknown of dreams, these darling friends of ours.  
 And *we* who taste the core of many tales  
 Of tribulation—*we* whose lives are salt  
 With tears indeed—we therefore hide our eyes  
 And weep in secret lest our grief should risk  
 The rest that hath no hurt from daily racks  
 Of fiery clouds and immemorial rains.



## FAITH IN GOD.

HAVE faith in God. For whosoever lists  
To calm conviction in these days of strife,  
Will learn that in this steadfast stand exists  
The scholarship severe of human life—

This face to face with Doubt! I know how strong  
His thews must be who fights, and falls, and bears,  
By sleepless nights, and vigils lone and long,  
And many a woeful wraith of wrestling prayers;

Yet trust in Him! not in an old Man throned  
With thunders on an everlasting cloud,  
But in that awful Entity, enzoned  
By no wild wraths nor bitter homage loud.

When from the summits of some sudden steep  
Of Speculation, you have strength to turn  
To things too boundless for the broken sweep  
Of finite comprehension, wait and learn

That God hath been "His own interpreter"  
 From first to last;—so you will understand  
 The tribe who best succeed when men most err  
 To suck through fogs the fatness of the land.

One thing is surer than the autumn tints  
 We saw last week in yonder river bend,  
 That all our poor expression helps and hints,  
 However vaguely, to the solemn end

That God is Truth. And if our dim ideal  
 Fall short of fact—so short that we must weep,  
 Why shape specific sorrows, though the real  
 Be not the song which erewhile made us sleep?

Remember, Truth draws upward! This, to us,  
 Of steady happiness should be a cause  
 Beyond the differential calculus,  
 Or Kant's dull dogmas and mechanic laws.

A man is manliest when he wisely knows  
 How vain it is to halt, and pule, and pine,  
 Whilst under every mystery haply flows  
 The finest issue of a love divine.

## MOUNTAIN MOSS.

It lies amongst the sleeping stones,  
Far down the hidden mountain-glade;  
And past its brink the torrent moans  
For ever in a dreamy shade :

A little patch of dark-green moss,  
Whose softness grew of quiet ways,  
(With all its deep, delicious floss,)  
In slumb'rous suns of summer days.

You know the place? With pleasant tints  
The broken sunset lights the bowers ;  
And then the woods are full with hints  
Of distant, dear, voluptuous flowers !

'Tis often now the pilgrim turns  
A faded face towards that seat,  
And cools his brow amongst the ferns :  
The runnel dabbling at his feet.

There fierce December seldom goes,  
With scorching step, and dust, and drouth ;  
But, soft and low, October blows  
Sweet odours from her dewy mouth.

And Autumn, like a gipsy bold,  
Doth gather near it grapes and grain,  
Ere Winter comes, the woodman old,  
To lop the leaves in wind and rain.

O, greenest moss of mountain glen,  
The face of Rose is known to thee ;  
But we shall never share with men  
A knowledge dear to Love and me !

For are they not between us saved,  
The words my darling used to say ;  
What time the western waters laved  
The forehead of the fainting Day !

Cool comfort had we on your breast  
While yet the fervid Noon burned mute  
O'er barley field and barren crest,  
And leagues of gardens flushed with fruit.

Oh! sweet and low, we whispered so ;  
And sucked the pulp of plum and peach :  
But it was many years ago,  
When each, you know, was loved of each.

## THE GLEN OF ARRAWATTA.

A SKY of wind! And while these fitful gusts  
Are beating round the windows in the cold,  
With sullen sobs of rain, behold I shape  
A Settler's story of the wild old times :  
One told by camp-fires when the station-drays  
Were housed and hidden, forty years ago ;  
While swarthy drivers smoked their pipes, and drew,  
And crowded round the friendly-gleaming flame  
That lured the dingo howling from his caves  
And brought sharp sudden feet about the brakes.

A tale of Love and Death. And shall I say  
A tale of Love *in* Death ; for all the patient eyes  
That gathered darkness, watching for a son  
And brother, never dreaming of the fate—  
The fearful fate he met alone, unknown,  
Within the ruthless Australasian wastes ?

For, in a far-off sultry Summer rimmed  
With thunder-cloud and red with forest-fires,  
All day, by ways uncouth and ledges rude,  
The wild men held upon a stranger's trail  
Which ran against the rivers and athwart  
The gorges of the deep blue western hills.

And when a cloudy sunset, like the flame  
In windy evenings on the Plains of Thirst  
Beyond the dead banks of the far Barcoo,  
Lay heavy down the topmost peaks, they came  
With pent-in breath and stealthy steps, and crouched,  
Like snakes, amongst the grasses, till the Night  
Had covered face from face and thrown the gloom  
Of many shadows on the front of things.

There, in the shelter of a nameless glen  
Fenced round by cedars and the tangled growths  
Of blackwood stained with brown and shot with grey,  
The jaded white-man built his fire, and turned  
His horse adrift amongst the water-pools  
That trickled underneath the yellow leaves  
And made a pleasant murmur, like the brooks  
Of England through the sweet autumnal noons.

Then after he had slaked his thirst, and used  
The forest-fare, for which a healthful day  
Of mountain-life had brought a zest, he took

His axe, and shaped with boughs and wattle-forks  
A wurley, fashioned like a bushman's roof :  
The door brought out athwart the strenuous flame :  
The back thatched in against a rising wind.

And, while the sturdy hatchet filled the cliffs  
With sounds unknown, the immemorial haunts  
Of echoes sent their lonely dwellers forth  
Who lived a life of wonder : flying round  
And round the glen—what time the kangaroo  
Leapt from his lair and huddled with the bats—  
Far-scattering down the wildly-startled fells.  
Then came the doleful owl ; and evermore  
The bleak morass gave out the bittern's call ;  
The plover's cry ; and many a fitful wail  
Of chilly omen, falling on the ear  
Like those cold flaws of wind that come and go  
An hour before the break of day.

#### Anon

The stranger held from toil, and, settling down,  
He drew rough solace from his well-filled pipe  
And smoked into the night : revolving there  
The primal questions of a squatter's life ;  
For in the flats, a short day's journey past  
His present camp, his station yards were kept  
With many a lodge and paddock jutting forth



Across the heart of unnamed prairie-lands,  
Now loud with bleating and the cattle bells  
And misty with the hut-fire's daily smoke.

Wide spreading flats, and western spurs of hills  
That dipped to plains of dim perpetual blue ;  
Bold summits set against the thunder-heaps ;  
And slopes be-hacked and crushed by battling kine !  
Where now the furious tumult of their feet  
Gives back the dust and up from glen and brake  
Evokes fierce clamour, and becomes indeed  
A token of the squatter's daring life,  
Which growing inland—growing year by year,  
Doth set us thinking in these latter days,  
And makes one ponder of the lonely lands  
Beyond the lonely tracks of Burke and Wills,  
Where, when the wandering Stuart fixed his camps  
In central wastes afar from any home  
Or haunt of man, and in the changeless midst  
Of sullen deserts and the footless miles  
Of sultry silence, all the ways about  
Grew strangely vocal and a marvellous noise  
Became the wonder of the waxing glooms.

Now, after Darkness, like a mighty spell  
Amongst the hills and dim dispeopled dells,  
Had brought a stillness to the soul of things,  
It came to pass that, from the secret depths

Of dripping gorges, many a runnel-voice  
 Came, mellowed with the silence, and remained  
 About the caves, a sweet though alien sound :  
 Now rising ever, like a fervent flute  
 In moony evenings, when the theme is love :  
 Now falling, as ye hear the Sunday bells  
 While hastening fieldward from the gleaming town.

Then fell a softer mood ; and Memory paused  
 With faithful Love, amidst the sainted shrines  
 Of Youth and Passion in the valleys past  
 Of dear delights which never grow again.  
 And if the stranger (who had left behind  
 Far anxious homesteads in a wave-swept isle  
 To face a fierce sea-circle day by day,  
 And hear at night the dark Atlantic's moan)  
 Now took a hope and planned a swift return,  
 With wealth and health and with a youth unspent,  
 To those sweet ones that stayed with Want at home,  
 Say *who* shall blame him—though the years are long,  
 And Life is hard, and waiting makes the heart grow  
     old ?

Thus passed the time until the Moon serene  
 Stood over high dominion like a dream  
 Of Peace : within the white-transfigured woods ;  
 And o'er the vast dew-dripping wilderness  
 Of slopes illumined with her silent fires.

Then far beyond the home of pale red leaves  
And silver sluices, and the shining stems  
Of runnel-blooms, the dreamy wanderer saw,  
The wilder for the vision of the Moon,  
Stark desolations and a waste of plain  
All smit by flame and broken with the storms :  
Black ghosts of trees, and sapless trunks that stood  
Harsh hollow channels of the fiery noise  
Which ran from bole to bole a year before,  
And grew with ruin, and was like, indeed,  
The roar of mighty winds with wintering streams  
That foam about the limits of the land,  
And mix their swiftness with the flying seas.

Now, when the man had turned his face about  
To take his rest, behold the gem-like eyes  
Of ambushed wild things stared from bole and brake  
With dumb amaze and faint-recurring glance,  
And fear anon that drove them down the brush ;  
While from his den the dingo, like a scout  
In sheltered ways, crept out and cowered near  
To sniff the tokens of the stranger's feast  
And marvel at the shadows of the flame.

Thereafter grew the wind ; and chafing depths  
In distant waters sent a troubled cry  
Across the slumb'rous Forest ; and the chill  
Of coming rain was on the sleeper's brow,

When, flat as reptiles huddled in the scrub,  
A deadly crescent crawled to where he lay—  
A band of fierce fantastic savages  
That, starting naked round the faded fire,  
With sudden spears and swift terrific yells,  
Came bounding wildly at the white man's head,  
And faced him, staring like a dream of Hell!

Here let me pass! I would not stay to tell  
Of hopeless struggles under crushing blows;  
Of how the surging fiends with thickening strokes  
Howled round the Stranger till they drained his  
strength;  
How Love and Life stood face to face with Hate  
And Death; and then how Death was left alone  
With Night and Silence in the sobbing rains.

So, after many moons, the searchers found  
The body mouldering in the mouldering dell  
Amidst the fungi and the bleaching leaves,  
And buried it; and raised a stony mound  
Which took the mosses: then the place became  
The haunt of fearful legends, and the lair  
Of bats and adders.

There he lies and sleeps  
From year to year: in soft Australian nights;  
And through the furnaced noons; and in the times

Of wind and wet ! yet never mourner comes  
To drop upon that grave the Christian's tear  
Or pluck the foul dank weeds of death away.

But while the English Autumn filled her lap  
With faded gold, and while the reapers cooled  
Their flame-red faces in the clover grass,  
They looked for him at home ; and when the frost  
Had made a silence in the morning lanes,  
And cooped the farmers by December fires,  
They looked for him at home : and through the days  
Which brought about the million-coloured Spring  
With moon-like splendours in the garden plots,  
They looked for him at home : while Summer danced,  
A shining singer, through the tasselled corn,  
They looked for him at home. From sun to sun  
They waited. Season after season went,  
And Memory wept upon the lonely moors,  
And Hope grew voiceless, and the watchers passed,  
Like shadows, one by one, away.

And he,  
Whose fate was hidden under forest leaves,  
And in the darkness of untrodden dells,  
Became a marvel. Often by the hearths  
In winter nights, and when the wind was wild  
Outside the casements, children heard the tale

Of how he left their native vales behind  
(Where he had been a child himself) to shape  
New fortunes for his father's fallen house ;  
Of how he struggled—how his name became,  
By fine devotion and unselfish zeal,  
A name of beauty in a selfish land ;  
And then, of how the aching hours went by,  
With patient listeners praying for the step  
Which never crossed the floor again. So passed  
The tale to children ; but the bitter end  
Remained a wonder, like the unknown grave  
Alone with God and Silence in the hills.

## E U T E R P E .

CHILD of Light, the bright, the birdlike! wilt thou  
float and float to me

Facing winds, and sleets, and waters, flying glimpses  
of the sea?

Down amongst the hills of tempest where the elves  
of tumult roam—

Blown wet shadows of the summits, dim sonorous  
sprites of foam?

Here, and here, my days are wasted, shorn of leaf,  
and stript of fruit :

Vexed because of speech half-spoken, Maiden with  
the marvellous lute !

Vexed because of songs half-shapen, smit with fire,  
and mixed with pain :

Part of thee, and part of Sorrow, like a sunset pale  
with rain.

Child of Light, the bright, the bird-like! wilt thou  
float and float to me

Facing winds, and sleets, and waters, flying glimpses  
of the sea?

All night long, in fluent pauses, falling far, but full,  
but fine,

Faultless friend of flowers and fountains, do I hear  
that voice of thine.

All night long, amidst the burden of the lordly storm,  
that sings

High above the tumbled forelands, fleet and fierce  
with thunderings!

Then, and then, my love, Euterpe, lips of life replete  
with dreams

Murmur for thy sweet sharp fragments dying down  
Lethean streams:

Murmur for thy mouth's marred music, splendid  
hints that burn and break

Heavy with excess of beauty: murmur for thy music's  
sake.

All night long in fluent pauses, falling far, but full,  
but fine,

Faultless friend of flowers and fountains, do I hear  
that voice of thine.



In the yellow flame of evening, sound of thee doth  
come and go

Through the noises of the river and the drifting of  
the snow :

In the yellow flame of evening—at the setting of the  
day—

Sound that lightens, falls, and lightens, flickers, faints,  
and fades away.

I am famished of thy silence—broken for the tender  
note

Caught with its surpassing passion—caught and  
strangled in thy throat !

We have nought to help thy trouble—nought for  
that which lieth mute

On the harpstring and the lutestring and the spirit  
of the lute.

In the yellow flame of evening sound of thee doth  
come and go

Through the noises of the river and the drifting of  
the snow.

Daughter of the dead red summers ! men that laugh  
and men that weep,

Call thee Music—shall I follow, choose their name,  
and turn, and sleep ?

What thou art, behold, I know not ; but thy honey  
slakes and slays

Half the want which whitens manhood in the stress  
of alien days!

Even as a wondrous woman struck with love and  
great desire

Hast thou been to me, Euterpe! half of tears and  
half of fire.

But thy joy is swift and fitful; and a subtle sense of  
pain

Sighs through thy melodious breathing, takes the  
rapture from thy strain.

Daughter of the dead red summers! men that laugh  
and men that weep,

Call thee Music—shall I follow, choose their name  
and turn, and sleep?

## ELLEN RAY.

A QUIET song for Ellen—  
The patient Ellen Ray,  
A dreamer in the nightfall,  
A watcher in the day.  
The wedded of the sailor  
Who keeps so far away :  
A shadow on his forehead  
For patient Ellen Ray.

When autumn winds were driving  
Across the chafing bay,  
He said the words of anger  
That wasted Ellen Ray :  
He said the words of anger  
And went his bitter way :  
Her dower was the darkness—  
The patient Ellen Ray.

Your comfort is a phantom,  
My patient Ellen Ray ;  
You house it in the night-time  
It fronts you in the day ;  
And when the moon is very low  
And when the lights are grey,  
You sit and hug a sorry hope,  
My patient Ellen Ray !

You sit and hug a sorry hope—  
Yet who will dare to say,  
The sweetness of October  
Is not for Ellen Ray ?  
The bearer of a burden  
Must rest at fall of day ;  
And you have borne a heavy one,  
My patient Ellen Ray.

AT DUSK.

AT dusk, like flowers that shun the day,  
Shy thoughts from dim recesses break,  
And plead for words I dare not say  
For your sweet sake.

My early love! my first, my last!  
Mistakes have been that both must rue,  
But all the passion of the past  
Survives for you.

The tender message Hope might send,  
Sinks fainting at the lips of speech;  
For, are you lover—are you friend,  
That I would reach?

How much to-night I'd give to win  
A banished peace—an old repose !  
But here I sit, and sigh, and sin  
When no one knows.

The stern, the steadfast reticence  
Which made the dearest phrases halt,  
And checked a first and finest sense,  
Was not my fault.

I held my words because there grew  
About my life persistent pride ;  
And you were loved who never knew  
What love could hide.

This purpose filled my soul like flame  
To win you wealth, and take the place  
Where care is not, or any shame  
To vex your face.

I said, “ till then my heart must keep  
Its secret safe and unconfest ; ”  
And days and nights unknown to sleep  
The vow attest.

Yet, O my Sweet, it seems so long  
    Since you were near, and fates retard  
The sequel of a struggle strong,  
    And Life is hard !

Too hard when one is left alone  
    To wrestle Passion, never free  
To turn and say to you, " My own,  
    Come home to me."

S A F I .

STRONG pinions bore Safi, the Dreamer,  
Through the dazzle and whirl of a race ;  
And the Earth, raying up in confusion,  
Like a sea thundered under his face !

And the Earth raying up in confusion  
Passed flying and flying afar,  
Till it dropped like a moon into silence,  
And waned from a moon to a star.

Was it light—was it shadow he followed  
That he swept through those desperate tracts  
With his hair beating back on his shoulders  
Like the tops of the wind-hackled flax ?



“ I come,” murmured Safi the Dreamer,  
“ I come, but thou fliest before !  
But thy way hath the breath of the honey,  
And the scent of the myrrh evermore.”

His eyes were the eyes of a watcher  
Held on by luxurious faith,  
And his lips were the lips of a longer  
Amazed with the beauty of Death.

“ For ever and ever,” he murmured,  
“ My love for the sweetness with thee,  
Do I follow thy footsteps,” said Safi,  
“ Like the wind on a measureless sea.”

And, fronting the furthestmost spaces,  
He kept through the distances dim,  
Till the days, and the years, and the cycles,  
Were lost and forgotten by him.

---

When he came to the silver star-portals,  
The Queen of that wonderful place  
Looked forth from her towers resplendent,  
And started, and dreamed in his face.

And one said, " this is Safi the Only,  
Who lived in a planet below,  
And housed him apart from his fellows,  
A million of ages ago.

" He erred, if he suffers, to clutch at  
High lights from the wood and the street ;  
Not caring to see how his brothers  
Were content with the things at their feet."

---

But she whispered " Ah, turn to the Stranger !  
He looks like a lord of the land ;  
For his eyes are the eyes of an angel,  
And the thought on his forehead is grand !

" Is there never a peace for the sinner  
Whose sin is in this that he mars  
The light of his worship of Beauty,  
Forgetting the flower for the stars ? "

---

" Behold him, my Sister immortal,  
And doubt that he knoweth his shame,  
Who raves in the shadow for sweetness,  
And gloats on the ghost of a flame !

“His sin is his sin, if he suffers,  
Who wilfully straitened the Truth ;  
And his doom is his doom, if he folloys  
A lie without sorrow or ruth.”

---

And another from uttermost verges  
Ran out with a terrible voice—  
“Let him go—it is well that he goeth  
Though he break with the lot of his choice.”

---

“I come,” murmured Safi the Dreamer,  
“I come, but thou fliest before !  
But thy way hath the breath of the honey,  
And the scent of the myrrh evermore.”

---

“My Queen,” said the first of the Voices,  
“He hunteth a perilous wraith,  
Arrayed with voluptuous fancies  
And ringed with tyrannical faith.

“Wound up in the heart of his error  
He must sweep through the silences dire,  
Like one in the dark of a desert  
Allured by fallacious fire.”

---

And she faltered, and asked, like a doubter,  
“When he hangs on those Spaces sublime  
With the Terror that knoweth no limit,  
And holdeth no record of Time,—

“Forgotten of God and the demons—  
Will he keep to his fancy amain?  
Can he live for that horrible Chaos  
Of flame and perpetual rain?”

---

But an answer as soft as a prayer  
Fell down from a high hidden Land,  
And the words were the words of a language  
Which none but the gods understand.

## IN MEMORIAM.

---

DANIEL HENRY DENIEHY.

TAKE the harp, but very softly for our brother touch  
the strings :

Wind and wood shall help to wail him, waves and  
mournful mountain-springs.

Take the harp, but very softly, for the friend who  
grew so old

Through the hours we would not hear of—nights we  
would not fain behold !

Other voices, sweeter voices, shall lament him year  
by year,

Though the morning finds us lonely, though we sit  
and marvel here :

Marvel much while Summer cometh trammelled with  
November wheat,

Gold about her forehead gleaming, green and gold  
about her feet ;  
Yea, and while the land is dark with plover, gull,  
and gloomy glede,  
Where the cold swift songs of Winter fill the inter-  
lucent reed.

Yet my harp, and O, my fathers, never look for  
Sorrow's lay,  
Making life a mighty darkness in the patient noon  
of day ;  
Since he resteth whom we loved so, out beyond  
these fleeting seas,  
Blowing clouds, and restless regions paved with old  
perplexities,  
In a land where thunder breaks not, in a place  
unknown of snow,  
Where the rain is mute for ever, where the wild  
winds never go :  
Home of far-forgotten phantoms—genii of our  
peaceful prime,  
Shining by perpetual waters past the ways of Change  
and Time :  
Haven of the harried spirit, where it folds its  
wearied wings,  
Turns its face and sleeps a sleep with deep forget-  
fulness of things.

His should be a grave by mountains, in a cool and  
thick-mossed lea,

With the lone creek falling past it—falling ever to  
the sea.

*His* should be a grave by waters, by a bright and  
broad lagoon,

Making steadfast splendours hallowed of the quiet-  
shining moon.

There the elves of many forests—wandering winds  
and flying lights—

Born of green, of happy mornings, dear to yellow  
summer nights,

Full of dole for him that loved them, then might  
halt, and then might go,

Finding fathers of the people to their children  
speaking low—

Speaking low of one who, failing, suffered all the  
poet's pain,

Dying with the dead leaves round him—hopes which  
never grow again.

## MEROPE.

FAR in the ways of the hyaline wastes—in the face  
of the splendid

Six of the sisters—the star-dowered sisters ineffably  
bright,

Merope sitteth, the shadow-like wife of a monarch  
unfriended

Of Ades—of Orcus, the fierce, the implacable god  
of the night.

Merope—fugitive Merope! lost to thyself and thy  
lover,

Cast, like a dream, out of thought, with the moons  
which have passed into sleep,

What shall avail thee? Alcyone's tears, or the  
sight to discover

Of Sisyphus pallid for thee by the blue, bitter, lights  
of the deep?



Pallid, but patient for sorrow? O, thou of the fire  
and the water,  
Half with the flame of the sunset and kin to the  
streams of the sea,  
Hast thou the songs of old times for desire of thy  
dark-featured daughter,  
Sweet with the lips of thy yearning, O Æthra:  
with tokens of thee?  
Songs that would lull her, like kisses forgotten of  
silence where speech was  
Less than the silence that bound it as Passion is  
bound by a ban;  
Seeing we know of thee, Mother, *we* turning and  
hearing how each was  
Wrapt in the other ere Merope faltered and fell for  
a man?  
Mortal she clave to, forgetting her birthright,  
forgetting the lordlike  
Sons of the Many-winged Father, and chiefs of the  
plume and the star,  
Therefore, because that her sin was the grief of the  
grand and the godlike,  
Sitteth thy child than a morning-moon bleaker, the  
faded, and far.  
Ringed with the flowerlike Six of the Seven, arrayed  
and anointed  
Ever with beautiful pity, she watches, she weeps, and  
she wanes,

Blind as a flame on the hills of the Winter in hours  
appointed

For the life of the foam and the thunder—the  
strength of the imminent rains.

Who hath a portion, Alcyone, like her? Asterope,  
fairer

Than sunset on snow, and beloved of all brightness,  
say what is there left

Sadder and paler than Pleione's daughter disconsolate  
bearer

Of trouble that smites like a sword of the gods to  
the break of the heft?

Demeter, and Dryope, known to the forests, the falls,  
and the fountains,

Yearly, because of their walking, and wailing, and  
wringing of hands,

*Are* they as one with this woman? or Hyrie wild  
in the mountains,

Breaking her heart in the frosts and the fires of the  
uttermost lands?

*These* have their bitterness. This, for Persephone,  
that, for Æchalian

Homes, and the lights of a kindness blown out with  
the stress of her shame:

One for her child, and one for her sin; but thou  
above all art an alien,

Girt with the halos that vex thee, and wrapt in a  
grief beyond name.

Yet sayeth Sisyphus—Sisyphus, stricken and chained  
of the Minioned  
Kings of great darkness, and trodden in dust by the  
feet of the fates,  
“ Sweet are the ways of thy watching, and pallid and  
perished and pinioned,  
Moon amongst maidens, I leap for thy love like a  
god at the gates—  
Leap for the dreams of a rose of the heavens, and  
beat at the portals  
Paved with the pain of unsatisfied pleadings for thee  
and for thine,  
But Zeus is immutable Master, and these are the  
walls the Immortals  
Build for our sighing, and who may set lips at the  
lords and repine?  
Therefore,” he saith, “ I am sick for thee, Merope,  
faint for the tender  
Touch of thy mouth, and the eyes like the lights of  
an altar to me ;  
But lo, thou art far, and thy face is a still and  
a sorrowful splendour !  
And the storm is abroad with the rain on the perilous  
straits of the sea.”

## AFTER THE HUNT.

UNDERNEATH the windy mountain walls  
Forth we rode, an eager band,  
By the surges, and the verges, and the gorges,  
Till the night was on the land—  
On the hazy, mazy land!  
Far away the bounding prey  
Leapt across the ruts and logs,  
But we galloped, galloped, galloped on,  
Till we heard the yapping of the dogs!  
The yapping and the yelping of the dogs.

Oh! it was a madly merry day  
We shall not so soon forget,  
And the edges, and the ledges, and the ridges,  
Haunt us with their echoes yet—  
Echoes, echoes, echoes yet!  
While the moon is on the hill  
Gleaming through the streaming fogs,  
Don't you gallop, gallop, gallop still?  
Don't you hear the yapping of the dogs—  
The yapping and the yelping of the dogs?

## ROSE LORRAINE.

SWEET water-moons, blown into lights  
Of flying gold on pool and creek,  
And many sounds, and many sights,  
Of younger days, are back this week.  
I cannot say I sought to face,  
Or greatly cared to cross again,  
The subtle spirit of the place  
Whose life is mixed with Rose Lorraine.

What though her voice rings clearly through  
A nightly dream I gladly keep,  
No wish have I to start anew  
Heart-fountains that have ceased to leap.  
Here, face to face with different days,  
And later things that plead for love,  
It would be worse than wrong to raise  
A phantom far too faint to move.

But, Rose Lorraine—ah, Rose Lorraine,  
I'll whisper now where no one hears.  
If you should chance to meet again  
The man you kissed in soft dead years,  
Just say for once "he suffered much,"  
And add to this "his fate was worst  
Because of me, my voice, my touch,"—  
There is no passion like the first!

If I that breathe your slow sweet name  
As one breathes low notes on a flute,  
Have vexed your peace with word of blame,  
The phrase is dead—the lips are mute.  
Yet when I turn towards the wall,  
In stormy nights, in times of rain,  
I often wish you could recall  
Your tender speeches, Rose Lorraine.

Because, you see, I thought them true,  
And did not count you self-deceived,  
And gave myself in all to you,  
And looked on Love as Life achieved.  
Then came the bitter, sudden change,  
The fastened lips, the dumb despair:  
The first few weeks were very strange,  
And long, and sad, and hard to bear.

No woman lives with power to burst  
My passion's bonds, and set me free ;  
For Rose is last where Rose was first,  
And only Rose is fair to me.  
The faintest memory of her face,  
The wilful face that hurt me so,  
Is followed by a fiery trace  
That Rose Lorraine must never know.

I keep a faded ribbon string  
You used to wear about your throat ;  
And of this pale, this perished thing,  
I think I know the threads by rote.  
God help such love ! To touch your hand,  
To loiter where your feet might fall,  
You marvellous girl, my soul would stand  
The worst of hell—its fires and all !

THE END.









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