

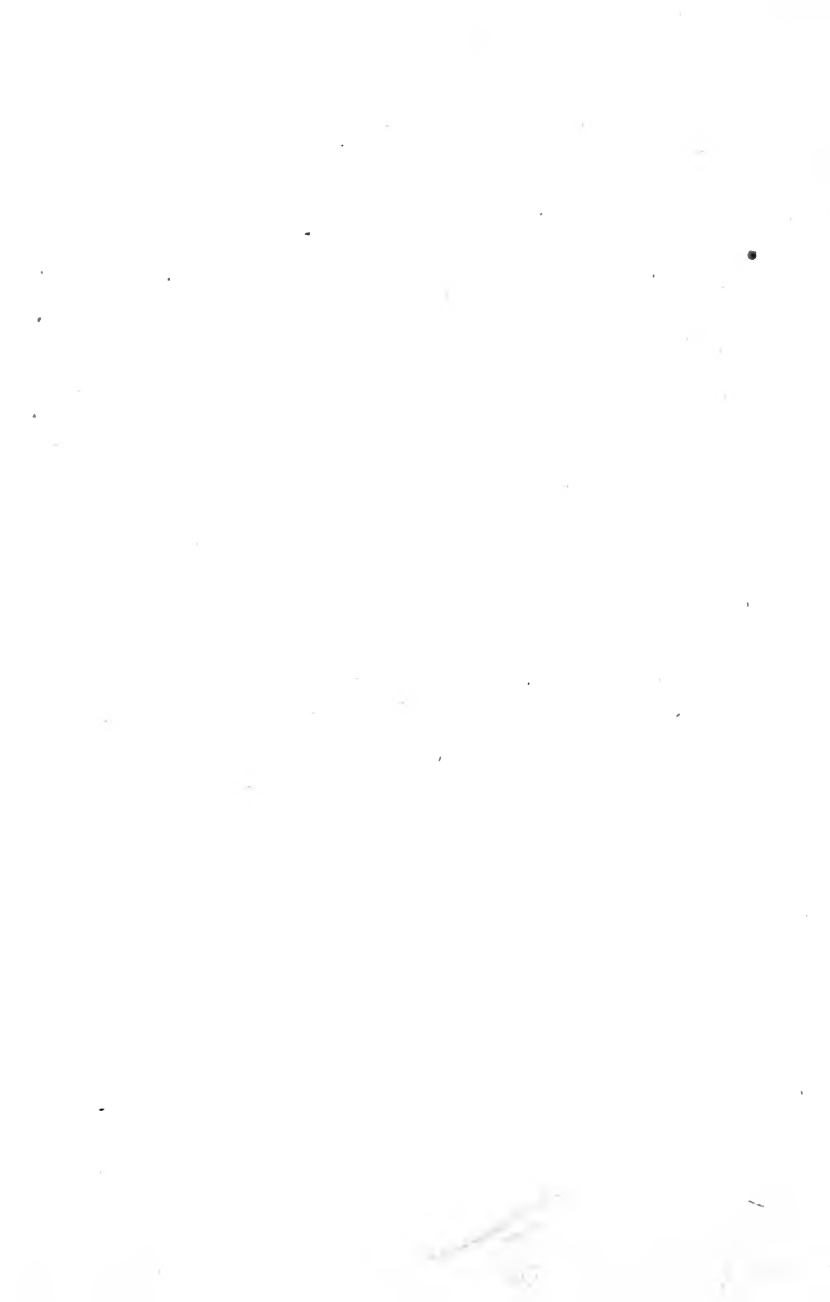
MY SEA  
and OTHER  
POEMS

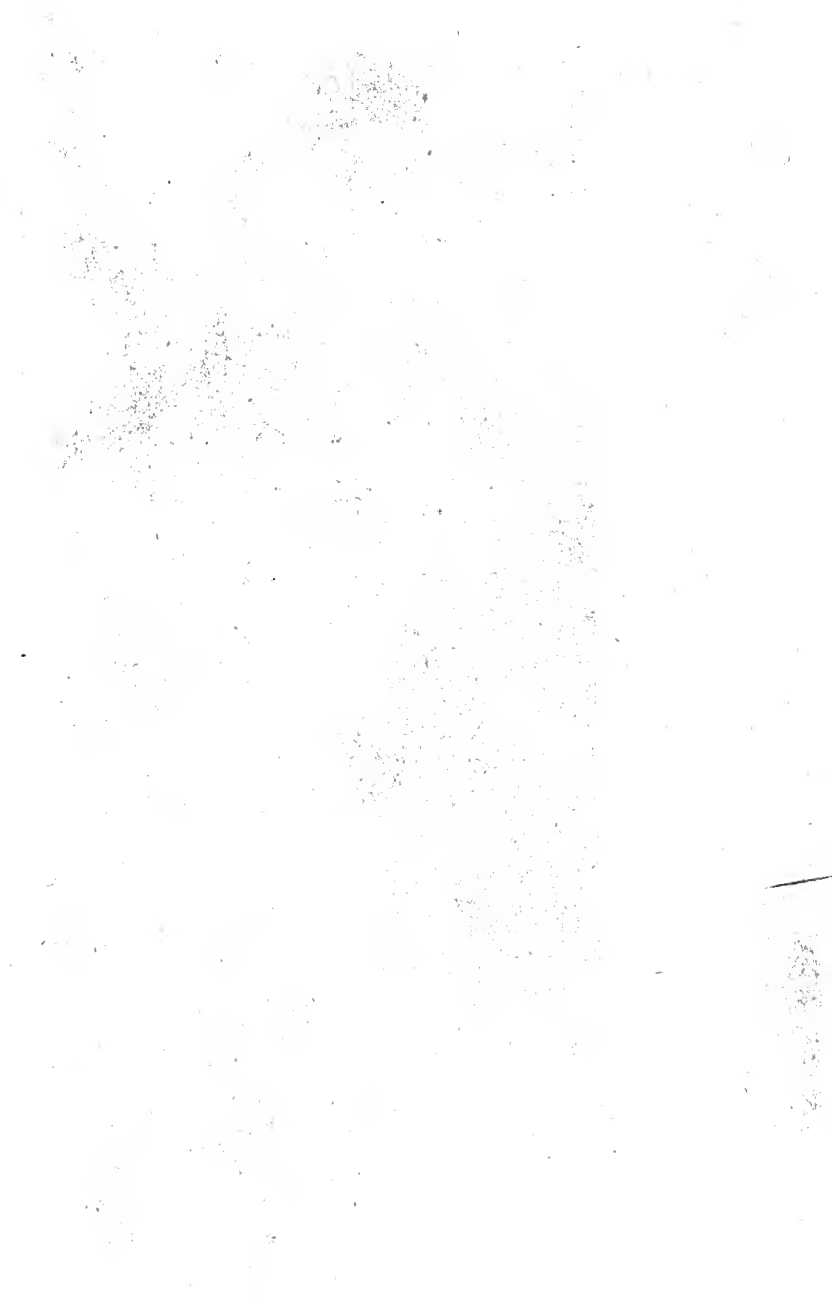


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1896







A.O. Brown

with 1st Christmas week

from

Conrad Noel.

1936



MY SEA  
AND OTHER POEMS





MY SEA &  
OTHER POEMS  
By the HON. RODEN  
NOEL with an IN-  
TRODUCTION by  
• • • • STANLEY  
ADDLESHAW • • • •



LONDON : ELKIN MATHEWS  
CHICAGO : WAY & WILLIAMS

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1896

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## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

IN these poems selected from the posthumous works of the *Hon. Roden Noel* will be found many of those characteristics which from the first have rendered his writings notable in the vast poetical literature of the present reign. Certain aspects, indeed, of the poet's genius won for him a place somewhat apart from his contemporaries.

His were not perhaps the qualities that make for popularity. Like *Browning* he demands a loyal attention from his readers. This, few, alas, care to give—but those who can and do give it, certainly win their reward.

## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

As a nature-poet he took rank with the greatest of his contemporaries, for he understood, as *Wordsworth* did before him, not only the external beauty of nature, but knew also the great guiding spirit that lies beneath it. He loved the natural world for its innate beauty indeed, but also because it was to him an outward symbol of an invisible Deity. It is this quality then that raises the nature poetry of *Roden Noel* to a very different level from the pastoral poems, of which we have only too many at the present day. Numerous are the poets, still living, who will babble to you of brooks and flowers, but few or none who care to fathom the deeper mysteries of nature.

But in *Roden Noel's* "Natura Naturans" we find a fine philosophical veneration for nature (so far removed from a mere sensuous appreciation of her beauty) fully exemplified. And we may note in passing how the Poet does not hesitate, in this poem, and in many others, to touch upon much that may seem ironical or cruel in Nature, or even to explore the darker shadows of life. From doing this *Wordsworth*

## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

himself shrank, with the result that his nature-pictures though always fine, yet sometimes lack artistic completeness.

Though Nature in all her forms, appealed to *Roden Noel* most poignantly, it was the sea that inspired him with his finest thoughts. The sea, with its capricious changes from storm to calm, had an overmastering fascination for him. None of his poems are so fine as those in which the very clang and strife of the waters seem transmuted into words. In these poems, too, his technique rises to its highest level, and often their lines ring with a grand yet subtle music.

In this little book will be found several poems of the sea, none perhaps more powerful than the "Nocturne" where the waves take tongue and speak to the poet of his life, or the "Wild love on the Sea" where the hissing of the storm forms a fitting accompaniment to the frenzied outcries of the triumphant and lawless lover. The poem "At Porthcurno" will recall to many "The Little Child's Monument" with which it is connected in subject and akin in pathos. The Sea here, is represented, not in strife and storm,

## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

but in joyous gladness, and as a comforter to the writer in his sorrow.

*Roden Noel* was perhaps primarily a nature-poet; undoubtedly his strongest work was inspired by the effect Sea and Landscape had upon his mind. But he was far from being only a nature-poet. He was intensely human, and sympathized as few literary men can do with the joys and sorrows of mankind. All who have read "Poor People's Christmas" will know how keenly he felt for the sufferings of the poor, and how bitterly he resented the cruel inequalities of modern life. Nevertheless, though this passionate sympathy with suffering made him strike at times what might seem a pessimistic note, yet he never preached the gospel of Despair, but rather pointed out wrong, that it should not fester unseen but be cleansed and rectified.

This sympathy with sorrow was accompanied by an extraordinary admiration for all Deeds of Daring. In this book is a short and spirited poem "Isandula" inspired by that same love of courage that urged him to write one of his longer and more strenuous works, "Livingstone in Africa."

## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

These two characteristics of his temperament as shown to us in his art—his love for Nature and his love for humanity, are both as I have said well exemplified in many of his posthumous poems. Nor are examples wanting of his lighter vein. The delicious "Eros in May" the music of which is so delicately evanescent,—the "Inconsistent" where a lifetime is summed up in a few terse lines, and the pathetic "To a Comrade" are all excellent specimens of his lyric verse.

It may not be quite out of place, when offering a selection of hitherto unpublished poems by the late *Roden Noel*, to say a brief word concerning the vexed question of his style. It must certainly be conceded that the Poet was a thinker first and a stylist afterwards. There are indeed in his poems not seldom, lines that we could well wish altered and polished. But on the other hand his style invariably rises with its subject (a rare gift) and in his finer poems we come across passage after passage where thought and words are wedded in a manner only to be found in the great masters.

It is doubtless this inequality, this varying from

## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

the heights to the depths, that has repelled those accustomed to the smooth, if somewhat mediocre, level of our Minor Poets. To whom we may say that this sustained perfection in which they so delight, is more often the result of Artifice than Art. *Roden Noel* had but little in common with our living poets, he was not the "idle singer of an empty day" nor did he consider perfection of form the final aim of Poetry.

Rather would he have seemed to take the much disputed dictum of *Matthew Arnold's* that Poetry should be a criticism of life as his standard of perfection. A criticism of life in all its phases, his poetry certainly was, and we may surmise, in the sense that *Arnold* meant; that is to say as a sympathetic interpretation, not as a callous analysis of life, which the foolish have supposed. For criticism without sympathy is after all but a dead letter.

It were futile, nay impertinent, to hazard any prophecy at this time, as to the place the work of *Roden Noel* will ultimately take in our literature. That must be left for posterity to decide. Let it suffice here to have noticed how his work



## AN INTRODUCTORY NOTE

strikes a contemporary. It may be said without presumption that he has many and fervent admirers who will not easily let his memory die. For, like all writers whose work has been the subject of difference and dispute, he has commanded from his followers that tribute of whole-hearted admiration so rarely paid to more generally accepted talent. And this devotion has good reason for its existence. It is not the result of unthinking admiration. For there is revealed in his poems a noble nature that appeals to all that is best in us. What *Matthew Arnold* said of *Goethe* might be said with equal truth of him:

“He took the suffering human race  
He read each wound, each weakness clear,  
And struck his finger on the place,  
And said thou ailest here and here.”

STANLEY ADDLESHAW.

*Oxford*, 1895.



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MY SEA, MY SEA

MY SEA, MY SEA

O MY SEA, my Sea!  
From east to west thou callest me,  
From east to west I follow thee;  
I of the homeless heart go home  
To hear thy lullaby of foam,  
Thou homeless sea,  
Whose dear voice hath no promise broken;  
Of disappointing change no token  
Thy sweet monotony of sound  
Involveth, and thou callest me;  
There's little human left so true  
As thy deep billowy breast of blue  
To lay the weary head upon,  
Whose earthly day is nearly done;  
Thy crystal doors would let me through  
To the infinite beyond  
From this our life's too galling bond:  
Whether on the pebbly beach,

MY SEA, MY SEA

Or on sand, thy tender speech  
Makes living music, or on rock  
The jubilant dear surges shock,  
I hear thy voice,  
And I rejoice,  
Who was so very full of pain,  
I deemed I could not smile again.  
They ask why—since I set my dwelling  
By thy billowy bosom swelling—  
I do not seek my holiday  
Inland: I know not what to say:  
Why I travel not inland  
Indeed I hardly understand;  
But, O my sea, my sea,  
Mystic voices summon me,  
And, like a weeping child, I come—  
O sheen elusive, fluctuant foam—  
Where you sing your lullaby,  
There to live, or there to die.

Ah! the fault is all in me,  
Who seek what here may never be,  
Who adore ethereal dreams,  
That lend our earth few fleeting gleams;  
And yet I know one glimpse of love  
Is more than mines or treasure trove;

MY SEA, MY SEA

But he hath swift wings like a dove,  
Light-nets on clear-water sand  
Are less than Love's entangling band,  
Silent, unaware they come,  
Silent, unaware, pass home;  
But when Love flieth, when he fadeth,  
Pain grows for something that degradeth;  
Thy shores are flecked with crimson weed,  
But Love's with drops from hearts that bleed:  
So for me, for me  
My lipping, leaping, laughing sea—  
My sea, my sea!

## INCONSISTENT

### INCONSISTENT

A PROUD man, I adore the lowly,  
Sinful, kneel before the holy,  
Unclean, fall prone before the pure;  
Rebel, salute Who did endure  
Unmurmuring; give blow for blow,  
Yet Him who, burdened with world's woe,  
Unmindful of His own, fell low,  
Glory to avow I serve;  
And though men jeer, I will not swerve!  
Lord, take my heart, and open it;  
Judge Thou if that be hypocrite!  
Gold, pomp, revenge, the sword, the drum,  
Scorn flaunted full by Christendom,  
In face of Him we feign to follow,  
And worship with lip-service hollow!  
Yet why take this mean Man for God,  
Unless for His poor, dark abode,



INCONSISTENT

Where gloweth Love's eternal fire,  
We felt some hidden deep desire?  
We are captive, who would fain be free!  
Soul of my soul, O Lord, deliver me!

WILD LOVE ON THE SEA

WILD LOVE ON THE SEA

“O SING to me, sing to me, foam of the Sea,  
Sing, while we sail, to my darling and me,  
While we heel to the wind, the foam flies  
    from the bow,  
My love laughs, we were never so happy  
    as now!

We rush through the water, we scatter the  
    spray,  
The foam-bubbles leap in the blue light  
    away,  
My sails are less white than your bosom  
    or hand,  
We will sail on for ever afar from the land.

O dotards may mumble their winterly talk,  
But the young joy of living their age may  
    not baulk,

WILD LOVE ON THE SEA

We shall soon be beyond their bleak North-  
erly Clime,  
Who fain would persuade us that love is  
a crime.

Never fear, never fear, nestle closer to me,  
O we joy to bound over wild waves and  
be free!

For our bridal sing, winds! and, blithe bil-  
lows, your song  
Breathe into your clarion loudly and long!

Winds whistle, and fill the full-bellying sail;  
Yea, what if they rise, and blow shrill to  
a gale?

My boat is a rare one, she swims like a  
bird—

Ha! what if the roar on the reefs may be  
heard?

You're the loveliest lady that ever was  
known,

My rival I slew, and the bride is my own;  
Warm bosom to bosom, hot mouth unto  
mouth,

We are flying to lovelier lands of the  
South...."

WILD LOVE ON THE SEA

“Nay, the sky’s growing darker, I fain would  
return—”

“Your doubts are too late, love, your scruple  
I spurn;”

“I fear thee, I fear thee, fierce lover of mine;  
“Thy lips are the wild wave, thy breasts  
are the brine!”

“Ho! with storm to the windward, and  
breakers to lee,

“They go swimming with Death, who go  
sailing with me!”

## NOCTURNE

### NOCTURNE

AT the close of a day in December  
I went by the winter sea,  
And my soul was a fading ember  
In abyssms of immensity.

Then God spake out of the gloaming,  
Where the wave gave over strife,  
And fell, wan, feeble, and foaming,  
'Man, what hast thou done with life?'

I was ware of a mournful throbbing,  
Of a seapulse on the shore,  
And I heard in it women sobbing,  
Whom I loved and who loved me of yore.

In a rift of the cloudy distance  
Lay blood from the fallen sun,  
While the wind with a low insistance,  
Like a breaking heart moaned on.

NOCTURNE

O blithely the sun ascended  
With carol of bird and breeze!  
And now his career being ended;  
He fell through the leafless trees,  
Amid sighing sounds of seas.

Do the life and the work fail wholly  
For a man who hath lived and loved?  
Through the joy and the melancholy  
With finishing hand God moved.

AT PORTHCURNO

AT PORTHCURNO

O RUDE cliff-castle pile,  
O resonant shell-shore,  
Your clear green waters smile  
In sunshine as of yore,  
Rebuffed from the grave granite rock  
With many a frolic water-shock!  
Their laughter glads your sand  
With delicate white foam,  
A dancing light green band  
Under a deep blue dome.  
It is the same blithe scene  
Of wild aerial glee;  
But years have rolled between  
My happy past and me!  
And yet aloud I call,  
In fellowship with all,  
I catch my breath for joy  
To see the wavelets toy . . . .

AT PORTHCURNO

Till stabbed to the heart I fall,  
Remembering my boy;  
For where the wavelets toy,  
He did out-dance the hours,  
Out-dance the briny brood,  
Arrayed in soft sea-flowers,  
While I defied the flood,  
At flood-tide of my powers!  
My forehead strikes the stone;  
Convulsed with sobs I moan,  
Hear voices calling, 'Come,  
To rest beneath the foam!'

The day was even as this,  
Heaven wore as clear a brow,  
Sea and earth one bliss,  
Ah! what is wanting now?  
The sunshine of the breast,  
Youth more blithe than day,  
Whose every wild behest  
Unwearying limbs obey!  
The presence of the child  
That made my world so fair;  
From whose frame undefiled  
The soul fled elsewhere!  
O lilt of playful wave,



AT PORTHCURNO

O dance of wild green billow,  
Winning spells ye have,  
Each following his fellow,  
Clash, confound your foam  
In your aerial home,  
Refluent from the stone  
On following wave to run,  
Immingling treble laughter  
With his that follows after!  
And yet surpassing this  
Were peals of boyish bliss,  
When he danced with you,  
And laughed into the blue!  
Ah, what a harmony  
Were then the earth and sky!  
Now too like a knell,  
Wanting the master-spell,  
Their music seems to fall  
On a heart beneath a pall;  
For while live air I quaff,  
I seem to hear him laugh  
With the breeze and brine,  
And, hearing him, I pine.  
Yonder is the cot white-walled,  
Where I brooded o'er my rhyme,  
And the solitude ne'er palled

AT PORTHURNO

Amid the fragrance of the thyme  
By wild wave and cliff sublime,  
Yet I do not love them less,  
Now I feel my loneliness,  
Nor brook that hurries toward the Sea,  
To hide in His Eternity!  
And mine are a few hearts who love  
More than wastes of foam that rove!  
But, ah, sweet sea! you conquer me  
With your unconquerable glee!  
I plunge, do what you will with me!  
Every fluctuant foam-blossom,  
Glassed within a limpid bosom,  
Foamy hair, dishevelled blown  
In all the glory of the sun,  
How ye race toward the shore  
Immingling on a shelly floor,  
Labyrinthine lines of light  
Dallying with you in your flight,  
While the gleaming birds above  
Hover over fish that move  
In the lucid realms they love.  
Oh, how the young air abounds  
With happy musical sea-sounds!  
Waves are they, or young children's voices?  
The world is young! my heart rejoices!

AT PORTHCURNO

And surely he cannot be far  
From here where such sweet voices are!  
I will follow where you lead,  
Flow over me, or wind your weed,  
In a cave I'll learn your rede;  
Where reposing at full length  
I may recover youth and strength.

EROS IN MAY

EROS IN MAY

MAYBLOOM foameth pink and white,  
Applebloom hath purple light,  
Butterflies have fairy flight,  
Leaves dally in their young delight.

Goldencups with burnished boat  
On billowy verdure blithely float,  
In labyrinths under, dim, remote,  
Daisy and speedwell blend their fine  
Trebles in the joy divine,  
While yellowdusted bees hum over  
Honied purple of the clover.

Soft, fertile gold fills every flower,  
Birds warble and pair in every bower;  
We yield to Life's abounding power!  
Now, or never, Love's full hour!

EROS IN MAY

Laburnum burned in burning blue,  
Windwaves o'er sheeny grasses flew;  
No blossom was more fair than you;  
Longing lips together grew!

Now warm kisses melt, combine,  
Limbs are white and warm and fine,  
Love is more than mantling wine,  
All or nothing, lady mine!

June, 1889.

## ISANDULA

### ISANDULA

NEAR the close of the dim day  
That saw defeat of England's pride,  
Two horsemen cleave their torrent way  
Through the dusk overwhelming tide  
Of those who hurl the assagai,  
Ruin yawns above their ride  
Swarthy warriors mown like hay,  
Carrying with them England's colours  
From the field of death and dolours,  
Riding from Isandula.

Never draw they bridle rein,  
Followed by the loud pursuit  
Their swift gallop burns the plain  
Until either gallant brute  
Failing with the mighty strain  
Faints with ebbing life, on foot  
They take up the flight again,

## ISANDULA

Carrying with them England's colours  
From the field of death and dolours,  
After dark Isandula.

They have reached the swollen river,  
Lurid twilight falls around,  
One cries "Comrade, now or never,"  
Both have plunged in the profound,  
For the goal of their endeavour  
Is to land on English ground,  
From their flag no fiend may sever,  
They will save old England's colours  
From the field of death and dolours,  
Flying from Isandula!

Two warriors on the further shore  
Whose crimson glows with other red  
Gashed and waterstained and frore,  
Their countrymen discover dead.  
Our colours round their waist they wore,  
Royal on their lowly bed!  
England on their heart they bore;  
Wound in emblems of Her glory.  
She remembers them in story,  
Weeping for Isandula!

## MIDNIGHT

## MIDNIGHT

I

BEWILDERED in a world of stars,  
I wander in the dim midnight,  
November mist their glory mars,  
Bare boughs relieved on doubtful light;  
I cower beneath the infinite.  
Unseen one paces by my side.  
The past gone far beyond recall!  
Where now the laughter, joy, and pride,  
Of life before the autumn fall?  
My heart lies under a dull pall.  
Dear forms and voices of my dead!  
Restore them, O thou milky way!  
Serene you shine, though they are fled!  
The maze of worlds, cold, awful, grey,  
Abides unchanged, but where are they?  
I cower beneath chill eyes unmoved,



## MIDNIGHT

And like a lost child weeping go:  
May hearts once loving and beloved  
Be nought while ye are all aglow?  
Nor you, nor them, nor self I know.  
Where are they? only wild winds wail,  
Or wander moaning on the wold,  
Far surges on the rocks are rolled:  
Gloom-involving mind will fail,  
And the warmest heart lie cold.  
O whelming wilderness of stars.  
Of whom some never spake to men!  
Blind behind our mortal bars,  
Dare we boast our eagle-ken.  
Vaunt poor Earth the centre, when  
Other reasons, rights and wrongs,  
Joys, woes, battle-cries, and songs,  
Reign yonder? all-devouring gloom  
Demands my soul to feed the tomb!  
They dartling rays of varied splendour  
Mutual service royal render,  
While evermore their lights advance  
In solemn many-motioned dance.  
The pageant of the illumined Past  
Surrounds me in dim dream-array;  
Mine own, now vanished in the vast,  
Once more I hear their voices say,

## MIDNIGHT

'Well-loved faces fade away:  
'We shall be like these one day!'  
We wonder at their funerals;  
To-morrow men will bear our palls.  
Sure that we shall always grieve,  
Ah, how soon the tears are dry!  
Vowing we will always cleave  
To one love only, how we sigh  
At other feet, yea, lightly leave  
Ere Death can hasten to bereave!  
Poor broken wrecks of Love and Joy  
Lie stranded on the shores of Time;  
Our Reason, a fool's broken toy,  
Once loomed so wondrous and sublime!  
Weak feet are ours yon heights to climb.  
And O what puny hands to span  
Twin spheres of nature, and of man!  
One treads an insect into earth  
Unheeding—ne'er a jest nor jeer—  
Yet some inviolable hearth  
Of private conscious life was here!  
High Mundane Powers mock man's despair,  
Who recked not even what we were,  
But crushed us in their awful mirth.  
Young Love, who leaps to life like Rhine,  
Child of the hills, reverberates morn,

## MIDNIGHT

With laughter and with joy divine,  
Exulting only to be born,  
He crowned, abounding, feeds with corn  
The races, warms their hearts with wine,  
Yet the Life that blest the lands  
Dies dwindled in ignoble sands!

## MIDNIGHT

### II.

She swathed him in his comforter,  
And watched him down the miry street;  
The dreary dawn was all one blur;  
She heard the parting horse's feet.  
He serves the milk from door to door,  
The milkman his well-trusted friend;  
But the mother trusts him more  
To One who knows nor change nor end—  
—The boy returns whom she did lend—  
—But how? knifed, mutilated, stark,  
With foulest outrage done to death!  
O Power tremendous, dire and dark,  
From Whom we all derive this breath,  
(He slays, and He delivereth!)  
Men owe Thee life and strength and food,  
Thou canst loose, and Thou canst bind!  
Yet I will not call Thee good,  
And I dare not call Thee kind—  
Until Thou deafen and make blind!  
Is our awful world endued  
With Demon's heart, that pumps black blood?

## MIDNIGHT

With sin, disease, and accident,  
Thou doest what the murderer doth!  
Amid wrecked trains burnt, scalded, rent,  
Thou manglest babes of cherished growth!  
To tell the horrors Art is loth.  
Yoked to Hell's triumphal car  
Toil we, prisoners of war?  
Ah, longer than my peers forlorn,  
I held to what appeared firm hold,  
But now wild winds and waves have sworn  
The loss of one who seemed too bold,  
And plunged in the abysses cold;—  
Over me their night hath rolled.

## MIDNIGHT

### III

And yet, what little hearts are ours  
To hold the miseries of the world!  
Behind our private belts of flowers  
We play, nor view to ruin hurled  
Our kindred, till for us Death lowers,  
And summons from the pleasant bowers.—  
Dare not forecast the Future—know  
The doom that Fate reserves for you!  
Look no World-Gorgon in the face.  
Grisly Madness waits that way;  
Only help as help ye may!  
We have to pass the loathly place,  
To reach yon heights of holy Day,  
Serenely shining far away.  
So we justify the Lord.  
And kiss the terrible red sword!  
Far throned in hidden eternal state,  
Though wingless, desolate, she roam,  
The Soul hath chosen all Her fate,  
Now remembering not the Home,  
Whereunto wealthier she will come.

## MIDNIGHT

If One who bore the wide world's pain  
Heartbroken, blest and trusted God,  
I may look up and smile again,  
Kiss the plague-enravelled rod,  
And follow where the Master trod.  
Ah, surely, each is kin to all,  
And man, a mirror of the whole;  
Should worlds, gods, demons, aught appal  
Who knows himself a conscious soul?  
Give me but time, no bounds may thrall  
One who hath God Himself for goal!  
Ah, solitudes immense, profound!  
And lonelier solitudes within!  
Ye shine, O worlds, in solemn swound;  
All the discord, all the din  
Of a city's moil and sin  
Heard from a tower, or from high ground  
Blend to one great ocean-sound;  
So from memories are lost  
All we gladly would forget;  
Faces white with Death's deep frost  
Lose the fever and the fret;  
So yonder orbs in darkness met,  
Each a silver tranquil ghost,  
Lose all of vext and tempest-tost;  
By mortal eyes undreamed in day,

## MIDNIGHT

Revealed alone to darkling night,  
They rest so far, so far away,  
I deem their calm and gentle light  
For our consoling seems to say,  
'Absorbed within the Infinite,  
'Deforming evils fallen away,  
'No dishonouring care can stain,  
'The Ideal only rule and reign!'

Dear places, feelings, thoughts, will go,  
Calm revolving worlds will fail,  
But when the stars have ceased to glow  
Abideth One who ne'er can pale,  
And all in Him, immortal, hale,  
Our Life, abide; whate'er remove,  
Remaineth the Eternal Love,  
And surely Love will reunite  
Who wander sundered here in night!  
Surely Love will lead them home,  
However far afield they roam!

Begun November, 1888; finished May, 1889.



LIGHT LOVE BY THE SEA-GLORY

LIGHT LOVE BY THE SEA-GLORY

O LOVE, how the chorus  
Of billowy laughter  
Softens here for us,  
And the winds' merry wafture  
To a murmur subsideth,  
Dulled by uneven  
Cavewall that hideth  
A span of blue heaven,  
And sunflashing ocean,  
Yet all in a minute  
If you make a mere motion,  
Your ear is full in it,  
In the full tide of thunder  
Sea pours in his joying;  
Even so with blithe wonder  
A child who is toying  
To a shell's heart may listen,  
Hold the lips near, withdraw them;

LIGHT LOVE BY THE SEA-GLORY

How the jewel waves glisten,  
While sunny winds flaw them;  
Green billows are blending  
Clear luminous bosoms,  
Confusedly lending  
One another white blossoms;  
Rank after rank they  
On the sand fall in froth, or  
Where iron cliffs flank, they  
Rush athwart one another.  
Grow transient fountains  
Cloudily foaming,  
Robe grim craggy mountains  
Whitefurred with their coming.  
Hear what a glorious  
Wild warsong resounding,  
As from ever-victorious  
Hosts leaping and bounding!  
Blue air is alive with  
Young joy of their forces;  
Lo! how they drive with  
Tossed manes of white horses!  
From flickering foam-blossom  
Shadows are sliding  
Down the waves' hollow-dome-bosom,  
Gleaming and gliding.

LIGHT LOVE BY THE SEA-GLORY

Little shells on a yellow sand,  
    With a wave-damascening,  
Little wells in the mellowland  
    Eyes of deep meaning!  
The glad ripple in dancing  
    On the shore with a light froth.  
In his footing and glancing  
    Leaves it marked like a night-moth.  
Gems in the carmine  
    Of dim fretted hollows!  
The cave is a starmine  
    Where the eye follows;  
Purple seaweeds are laving  
    In pure pools at leisure,  
Languidly waving  
    With delicate pleasure;  
Fantastical arches  
    With cloud's wavy margin,  
Where the ocean-wave marches,  
    Plumed cavalry charging!  
You behold lonely islands  
    On the sea's azure through them.  
I feel they are my lands,  
    I a bird flying to them.  
... If the wet sand be sinking  
    Under your frail foot,

LIGHT LOVE BY THE SEA-GLORY

That in water land drinking  
    Groweth down like a pale root,  
Sit here on my knee, love,  
    'Tis firmer and drier!  
Safe here will you be, love,  
    From seas that aspire;  
Ah! let us enjoy, love,  
    The moment in flying,  
Even while we toy, love,  
    Daylight is dying!  
Then will the hour come,  
    And touch with forgetting,  
Stars over our numb  
    Forms rising and setting.  
Alive the World-Wonder  
    Flames thundering onward,  
And while we go under,  
    Earth sweepeth sunward;  
I acclaim the wild world-masque,  
    Who cease to be agent,  
Who, faint with my furled task,  
    Fall out of the pageant!

TO ———

TO ———

COMRADE beloved, and helpful soulfellow,  
I fear lest that fine pallor I admire,  
Wherefrom by twilight of thy rosy fire  
Your eyes, like stars in limpid water, glow,  
From pain and frequent weariness may flow!  
Ah! more than one who loved me and my lyre  
Hath left me darkling, and hath risen higher;  
I pray thee, comrade, to abide below!

With tuneful voice, and with the poet's heart  
You sing to heal and gladden our sad time.  
With Mary you have chosen the better part,  
Shedding soul-rays upon our weary clime;  
Neither your friend will yield you, nor your  
Art;  
He needs yourself, and she requires your  
rhyme.

*Translation from the German.*

BUT once again; my spirit cries,  
 I would behold thy face,  
 Ere in the sunshine of thine eyes  
 I fade, nor leave a trace!

It was a dream, a lovely dream,  
 I lived with thee my love;  
 All vanished, like the foaming gleam,  
 That on the wave may move!  
 There now remains in memory  
 Thine image, thine alone;  
 My heart broods ever over thee,  
 And longs for thee, mine own!

TO A COMRADE

TO A COMRADE

HE said, "Now I shall go to sleep",\* and  
died.

Ah! brother, when shall we rest side by  
side?

O God, O God, the duty is too hard  
Ever, on every hand, Thy citadel to guard!  
Yet, comrade, life is to be loved, and love!  
Will not these two remain when all remove?  
However deep the abysses that divide,  
However roars between the sundering tide!

\* Byron's last words.

TO ———

TO ———

As one who rideth pale and weary  
Through a barren lonely land—  
While the dull horizons dreary  
Around, one solitude, expand—  
Finds unaware a limpid spring  
Of warbling water on the way,  
Lovely home of flower and wing,  
Gentle bird and fitting jay;  
Parched lips unto the fountain cling,  
In those wan eyes there dawns a ray,  
New life to languid limbs they bring,  
Chill October yields to May:  
So thy brilliant bloom thy prime  
To my heart was when I met thee;  
O passion flower from sunnier clime,  
In memory's garland have I set thee!



TO ———

Glorious gain, or honeyed harm,  
Thine the subtle, witching charm,  
In thy large, thy limpid eyes  
The labyrinthine mysteries.

Aug. 9th, 1893.

## GREY EYES

### GREY EYES

Lady of the large grey eyes,  
Limpid lakes, aerial skies,  
Home of heavenly harmonies,  
Like a bird, my soul takes flight  
To lose herself in ample light,  
Warm and deep and infinite!  
Soundeth all the gloaming mine,  
Where the living jewels shine,  
Passeth happy languid hours,  
Dreaming in the lovelit bowers,  
Wanders meshed in mazy flowers!  
Patience, Courage strong and true,  
Pity dwells amid their dew,  
Tender flower soft and blue.  
Yea, from care for human pain,  
Weeping warm and gentle rain,  
You would even embrace your bane,  
Wanting only to sustain!

## GREY EYES

Roused by wrong, the starry dream  
Veileth all her tranquil beam,  
Cloud-enshrouded lightnings dart  
Angers of a righteous heart!  
Hideth there an earthlier fire,  
To consume us on the pyre  
Of wild, flame-beautiful desire?  
I know not! only in your eyes  
Limpid, large, responsive, wise,  
Lo! my soul, a bird, takes flight  
To lose herself in ample light,  
Warm, and deep, and infinite!

August, '89

## MYSTIC MUSIC

### MYSTIC MUSIC

FAINT memory of a dreamborn tune,  
Muffled low the music sounded,  
But the same air, reforming soon,  
More lovely, ever more abounded,  
Broke bonds where in the silence wound it,  
Growing more articulate  
From hidden orchestras that mould it,  
Assumed a more majestic state,  
Labyrinthine flower unfolded  
Hourly by the breath of spring,  
Until the Harmony all glorious  
Rose on strong, expansive wing  
Dominating, pealed victorious,  
Erst budding, dim-divined thing;  
Now the elate exultant hearer  
Feels his heart arrived at home,  
While that pæan ever clearer  
With thunder-roll expands the dome;

## MYSTIC MUSIC

His heart, a royal-ported swan,  
Sails the sound, where wondrous vision,  
As by some harbour-river shone,  
Dream-palace fronts, the world's derision,  
Deemed fancies vain! arow they flank  
The flower-terraced shore; but pinion  
Of the eagle-music sank;  
Fell from that sublime dominion.  
So a fountain fails and flows,  
The organized high strain reverted,  
To formless murmur whence it rose  
The hearer's heart dropped disconcerted,  
The flower withered to a close;  
All the glowing glories faded,  
Common day oppressed the view,  
Dream-palace frontage blurred and shaded;  
And yet, ah yet, he hears anew,  
Evolving order from confusion,  
The rhymic travail throbbing low,  
Reforming kosmos; no illusion,  
Whatever comrades named it so,  
For he knew the breathing chorus  
Not from him alone did flow,  
Like spring-tides of the ocean, bore us,  
Pealing at full flood again,  
To goals beyond the primal strain,

## MYSTIC MUSIC

More vital even, rich sonorous,  
Fed on failure, want and pain.  
He knew the anthem re-created  
Ever by the general soul,  
The human soul with nature mated,  
Who lives to organize the whole,  
That would fain evade control;  
So the God grows formed within us,  
And without us in the world;  
Till the spheral music win us,  
And our weary wings unfurled  
Young, unwearying, unhasting,  
Fulfil their high emprize, while resting.

April, 1893.

NATURA NATURANS

NATURA NATURANS

The woodlands have a green world all their  
own,

Young joy of life among the delicate leaves,  
To men who wander under them unknown,  
Where whispering Zephyr light and shadow  
weaves,

And dewy-eyed blithe birds of various tone  
Thrid labyrinths illumined; singing heaves  
Their dewy bosoms while they charm the  
bowers,

And gaily set a-swinging many a spray  
With buoyant, swift caprices; tall beech  
towers,

Mossed bole of mottled variegated grey,  
From thronging grasses flecked with sulphur  
flowers;

Among the boughs a sweet perpetual play  
Of living things newborn; a mystic sound

NATURA NATURANS

Pervades their interwoven sea-murmuring  
roof,  
Where love-built nests, where cooing doves  
abound ;  
Of Love's high advent the young world  
gives proof ;  
Love at full flood makes earth one holy  
ground ;  
Love's hands aerial weave a wondrous woof  
Of melody and mystery Divine ;  
So that I wish my dear dead for a dwelling  
No lovelier than this lovely land of mine  
When Spring arrives, and waves her wand,  
compelling  
A million blades and blooms to rise and  
shine ;  
Yea, from sere leaf-lace, humid mould sweet-  
smelling,  
Life-feeding generations of the dead,  
Beauty and health are nourished with young  
joy.  
Here the veined fragile sorrel bells are fed,  
Whose leaf's a triple heart; babe roseleaves  
toy  
With hazel wands, wee crimson thorns they  
wed



NATURA NATURANS

With wandering woodbine; leaflets tumble  
coy

Out of pink winter-cots o'er one another,  
Rumpled and laughing; by sweet sun called  
early

Obeying the dear still voice of their Mother;  
While infant ferns wake peeping scaled and  
curly;

Ruffled, fresh green leaf-sister calls to  
brother;

The warm South shepherds showers mild  
and pearly.

Here lady beech, embraced by her lord oak,  
Leaned in his strong rude arms, while well  
content

Under their breaths young leaves immingl-  
ing spoke

Softly, and then were silent, their souls  
blent.

The ecstasy of nightingales awoke  
Within the downy-foliaged firmament;  
Rivers and lakes of hyacinths meander  
Among the teeming greenery below,  
Where many a humming velvet bee may  
wander,

And the dew-elves' illuminations glow,

NATURA NATURANS

Mid tiny herbs, pale primrose, blue ger-  
mander.

But those great aisles of pillared forest  
show

Large open spaces, clear of trees, whose  
mast,

And russet leaves of many years have  
browned

Floors, only greenlit by young fern; here  
passed

The storm's might, wrestling with the  
strength of crowned

Tall forest kings, and bowed their pride at  
last.

Yonder a piteous sight upon the ground!  
Huge oak that would nor bend nor break,  
uprooted,

Though with prodigious talons it grasped  
earth,

Deepbased in Night; as high in Day fair-  
fruted,

Dowered with a home inalienable from birth,  
It seemed, for ever here; whose fall was  
bruted

With league-wide tumult, when the storm's  
fierce mirth

NATURA NATURANS

Hurled low the giant, and a wide wound  
made

In rich brown soil; a very garden-space  
Of mould and stones the tree clutched as  
it swayed

In that dread shock; there many a flower's  
fair face

Peers now mid those great rent roots naked  
laid.

The forest patriarchs live out long years,  
Their inner secret all unknown to man;  
They groan, they labour in the storm, with  
tears

Of rain they twinkle, glow with light; but  
can

Any divine what feeling saddens, cheers,  
What mind informs the inarticulate clan?  
Nay, they are resting on their own calm  
shade,

While men pine under them, men fume and  
fret;

The gentle grass and flowers are ne'er afraid,  
With dews, not tears, the woodland ways  
are wet;

Though human hearts were broken while  
they prayed,

NATURA NATURANS

Serenely breathed the wee wild violet.  
Yon trees live out long lives; our genera-  
tions,  
Like their own leaves, rise, fall about their  
feet,  
Through periods; mere shadowed clouds  
men fleet,—  
While these drowsed Druid forms keep  
wonted stations,  
Lives individual, dynasties, and nations;  
Their mystic souls and ours may never meet.  
These have known rose-red youth, fair love,  
young gladness,  
Have seen Heartshine ascend the heavens  
to wane,  
Heard the blithe hunter's horn, bells tolled  
for sadness,  
Seen child grow man, then turn to child  
again,  
Stern, strong resolve fade out to halt, blind  
madness.  
Their peers in age beheld the Red King  
droop,  
His heart stilled by a random-glancing dart,  
While pulsing with hot life, and loud with  
hope;

NATURA NATURANS

Beheld the royal jester, lewd and swart  
Cower mid their boughs from that rough  
    Roundhead troop,  
Questing like sleuthhounds under their green  
    heart;

Saw Henry hide his Rose-of-all-the-world  
In bowers like these, lest Eleanor discover  
The adored and dainty morsel closely curled  
Away from her, fierce wedded hawk a-hover.  
He found her slain, the nest to ruin hurled,  
Then raving anguish burned the royal lover.  
But yonder ants with their economies  
Are every whit as wonderful as man!  
For note how each his proper function plies,  
Counting for world-crest his poor bustling  
    clan;

These have towns, loves, wars, long-drawn  
    histories,—

And famous bards, with critics born to ban!  
Ah, men! your laughter-moving airs and  
    graces

Your fond assumptions of authority,  
Seem antics to the calm eternal faces,  
Regarding you from yonder world-eyed sky;  
For haughty gesture, proud look, royal  
    paces,

NATURA NATURANS

Turn palsy, rheum-drops, flotsam idling by!  
Leaf-filtered sunshine lies upon the moss,  
Between cool shadows, like a tranquil  
blessing;

The exhilarated merry branches toss  
Their newborn leaves in azure air caressing;  
With red-tipped daisies, cups of silver gloss,  
Young Spring the wrongs of Winter is  
redressing.

Hearken! what passion-hearted wealth of  
song

With fire-spray, mazy blossom, thrills the air,  
Vieing a moment, with more during throng  
Of budded plants, that make wood-floors so  
fair;

From fountain-stems of pining low and long  
Flies many-spangling rapture rich and rare.  
The solemn-pillared aisles are misty-dim  
With distance; their moss waves are green  
and brown;

All blends with the sweet mood of her and  
him,

Whose fair young forms are lying listless  
down

Under a forest lord of giant limb,  
His dragon roots around their beauty thrown.

NATURA NATURANS

They leaned anear a stately tower of beech,  
Against a caverned ruin of old oak,  
Where nestling very closely each to each,  
They were so happy that they seldom  
spoke,

Silently waiting for dear Love to teach ;  
Whose breath was gentler than mild airs  
that woke

In festal foliage, tenderly defined  
Athwart the still blue waters of a lake,  
A woodbird's flight away, where moorhens  
find

Their reedy home; with flash and plash they  
make

Warm stillness sweeter for the twain reclined,  
As o'er the water their glad way they take;  
And yet anon a harmless sylvan sound  
Of squirrel, bird, or restless russet leaf  
Startles the timid hearts with sudden bound,  
They fear some coldly-prying human thief  
May snatch the bliss wherein they both  
are wound,

So rich and rapturous, albeit so brief!  
Fair woodland labyrinths weave green lithe  
arms

To roof the curly head of either lover,

NATURA NATURANS

And downy leaves are whispering soft  
    charms,

While to and fro the nimble Ariels hover,  
Fanning desire that never dreams of harms,  
Whatever sword unseen be hanging over.

Fine limbs, fair undulating delicate flesh,  
Invite to joy the solitude allows,

While vital sap that rises pure and fresh  
Challenging calls the kindred blood which  
    flows

In their warm veins; sun weaves a glowing  
    mesh

With foliaged shadows on the smooth, white  
    skin;

From Pleasure's mantling bowl the ripe lips  
    quaff;

They hear the cuckoo-call leave off, begin  
Ever afresh, doves coo, and the wild laugh  
Of woodpecker, tit's tinkle clear and thin,  
Yet for a moment they observe what half  
Alarms; it stares, they deem, with spectral  
    scowl,

A dwarfed, deformed trunk, hugegirthed,  
    mouldering, dark,

By Heaven's bolt blasted; a monk's shadowy  
    cowl



NATURA NATURANS

It seems to wear, one blackened arm stretched  
stark,  
As in denunciation; a grim ghoul  
Head-tentacled, with fungus-blotched rude  
bark,  
(In such a scene the Druid poured young  
blood!)

But not one leaf upon its monstrous age;  
This chilled their hearts a moment as it  
stood  
In dead brown drifts, an evil-threatening  
mage;  
Yet subtle spells rose from the breathing  
wood!

The caterpillar in a fine silk swung  
From frondage o'er them, hued like pale  
green jade,  
While flower-bells a fairy peal faint rung;  
In leafy cradles the aurelia swayed,  
And now the lovely lovers closer clung,  
Feeling a summer-sense in all the glade....  
But far away one heard the woodman's axe  
Splinter the cream-white, fragrant woods  
resounding;  
Muscle-ridged arms, and supple stalwart  
backs

NATURA NATURANS

The man-surpassing years of trees are round-  
ing;

So God, the woodman, clears the space He  
lacks

Among His men and women, too abounding;  
To warm Himself the human faggot stacks.

Is it Dame Nature's frolic thus to dangle  
Baits She who made us knows we can't  
resist?

Set Conscience and blind Passion all a-jangle,  
Then frown because we have too hotly kissed,  
And done her bidding; bad folk will she  
mangle?

Nay, for Her mills use bad and good for  
grist!

NATURA NATURANS

I

Mid gorgeous autumn gold she creeps to die;  
All the deep forest burns with wondrous fires;  
The low red sun glares like God's angry eye,  
Through black contorted boughs, whose leafy  
lyres

Are muttering veiled oracles on high,  
While she flits haggard through rain-sodden  
mires,

Her heart a-flame; wild-eyed and pale she  
fares;

The branches pluck at her the while she goes;  
Few songsters warble where the hectic flares,  
But on a winedark bramble the wind blows  
Some soft grey down blood-reddened; an  
owl scares

Her hooting from the hollow oak; she knows  
That place too well; the lake is at her feet,  
Where he and she lay lapped in heaven's  
bliss!

Dimrobed in cloth of gold those beeches  
greet

NATURA NATURANS

Her, stately curtseying; dusk waves they kiss,  
In carmined mirrors their own image meet,  
Whispering, "Maiden, here your haven is  
"From the hard world!" dense-thronged  
    around the lake,

Whereon there lay a kind of oily scum.  
A misty phantom brood; she deemed they  
    spake,

"Poor child! and can you hesitate to come,  
"When Love and all your cruel race for-  
    sake,

"Where kind Oblivion offers you a home?"  
The tall grey heron in chill twilight stands  
Unmoved as stump or stone, until it hears  
A splash, a human cry; the form expands  
Wide wings; a grey ghost flies; she dis-  
    appears;

The water-rings grow large.

—One roamed the strands,  
Days after, a young man beset with fears  
For her strange flight; he saw above the  
    water

At dusk a pale light by the sighing grove;  
Upon him wandering the labourer's daughter,  
Missed from her home, flashed unaware, his  
    love,

NATURA NATURANS

Though she loved a young noble; her self-  
slaughter

Will soon be plain when that dread treasure-  
trove

Grim grappling-irons labouring up-buoy,  
An awful formless burden which was youth,  
Inanimate dim chaos which was joy!

NATURA NATURANS

II

But ah, the cruel vision, void of ruth,  
Shifts now the scene, to show love's brittle toy  
Broken, mid direr deathsheds of dull truth!  
See those once lovely lovers walk the earth,  
Still side by side, for both are living yet.  
Yea, they were married; but the morning  
    mirth

Hath yielded to chill rain, and dull regret.  
In the gaunt winter woodlands there is dearth  
Of life and song; in those twinned hearts  
    who met

To dance at early dawn, there dance grim  
    Death,

And pale gaunt Horror, with a ghastly  
    motion;

For now no dear enchantment of Love's  
    breath

Transmutes dull Fact; as when through some  
    clear ocean

Plain weeds form lambent fairy realms  
    beneath;

NATURA NATURANS

But they have drunken Time's belittling  
    potion,

And through once warm veins creeps the  
    wintry frost

Of age, indifference, disillusionment,  
Wrath, hate; each droopeth, a tired haggard  
    ghost;

Poor cankering cares for trivial things had  
    blent

With these to wither hopeful buds that, lost,  
Can ne'er form fruit now; so, wan eyes  
    downbent,

They fare upon life's dreary barren road,  
Snows of deep winter on bowed heads and  
    hearts,

As on bare-boughs that groan beneath their  
    load.

Ah! but the acorn dropped in summer starts  
A winged green seedling from its blind abode  
Of burial in kind earth; and sleep imparts  
For renovation rest; the workworn dead,  
Who only longed to cease, have found more  
    life

Unwearying; and hearts who once were wed,  
(So, Faith low-breathes, with strangling  
    doubts at strife),

NATURA NATURANS

For all change, failure, torpor, wounds that  
bled,

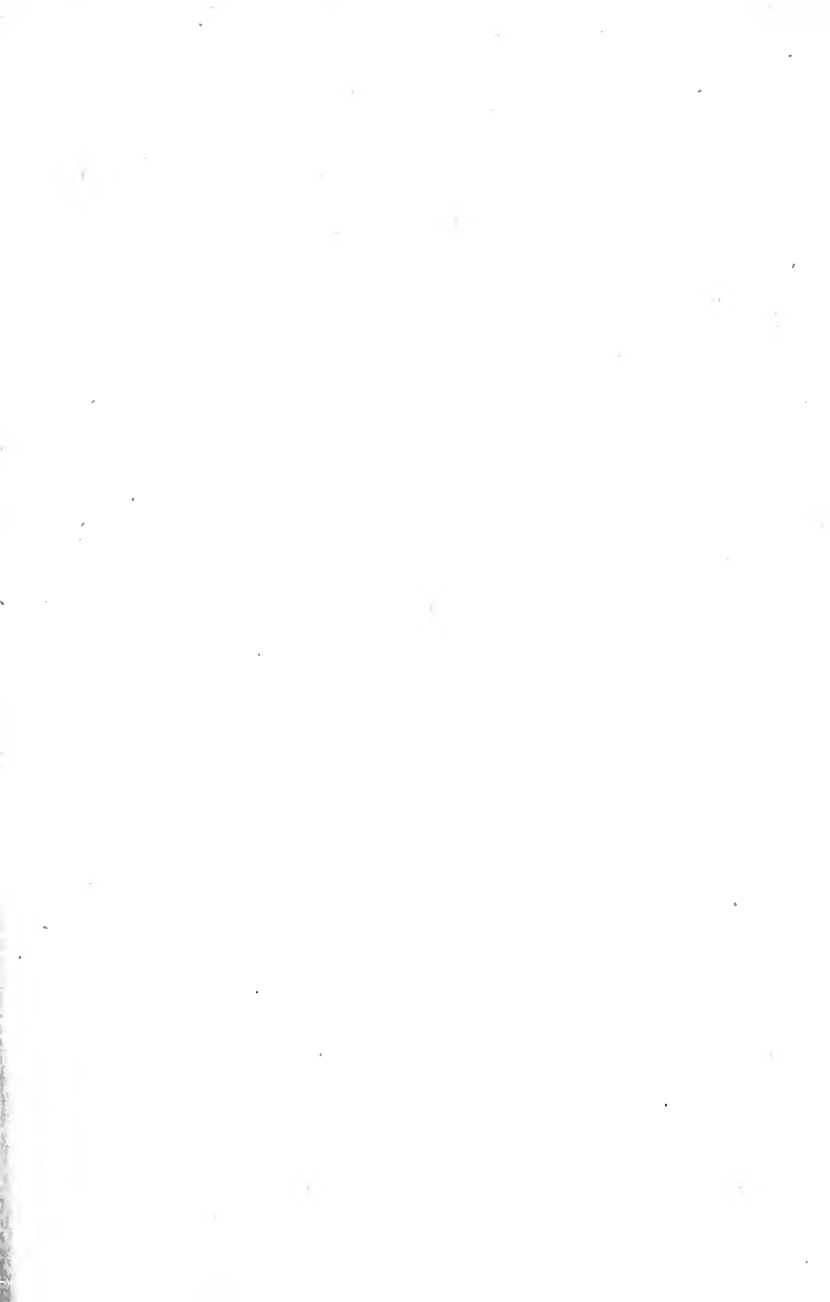
In sunnier climes will grow true man and wife.  
What shocks the best in us can neer be true,  
Nor aught unlovely, save in outward seeming;  
These are the larval Virtues that endue  
Slow ripening perfections richly teeming;  
They wore another aspect while they grew;  
But Sense may prove less near the Truth  
than Dreaming.













PR            Noel, (Hon.) Roden Berkeley  
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1896

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