

A PAGAN SHRINE

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R GORDON CANNING

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A PAGAN SHRINE

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BY

R. GORDON CANNING

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CONTENTS.

A MIDNIGHT PLAY	7
GOOD MORNING	29
TWO SONNETS :					
I. THE QUESTION	31
II. THE ANSWER	32
FROM ALEXANDRIA TO THE ITALIAN ALPS					33
THREE SONNETS	...	...	...	...	35
ON 32ND BIRTHDAY AT ALEXANDRIA				...	37
WAVES	...	...	...	...	39
TEMPLE OF DIANA	...	...	...	...	42
TAORMINA	...	...	...	...	43
MOUNT ÆTNA	...	...	...	...	44
INTO THE HILLS	...	...	...	...	45
ON A HAVERSACK	...	...	...	...	47
THE SYMBOL	...	...	...	...	49
OLD AGE	...	...	...	...	50
TO A YOUNG GIRL	...	...	...	...	53
IN THE CARPATHIANS		...	...	...	55
EXPECTATION	...	...	...	...	59
IN A ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH			...	...	60
CATULLUS' HOUSE AT SIRMIONE			...	...	61
THE DESERTED HOME		...	...	...	63
HOPE DEFERRED	...	...	...	...	67
AN OCTOBER EVENING		...	...	...	68
APHORISMS	...	...	...	...	69

A MIDNIGHT PLAY.

PART I.

THE DESIRE.

Strange faces call to-night from distant lands,
And I would leave this world of solid earth
For spaces in the far off, unknown skies.
Leave the long shining streets and yellow lights
And all the roaring traffic, and the crowd
Of unimaginative beings
We call men; who toil and are unhappy,
Who idly live, and still are discontented;
Who dare not for a moment sit alone
To dream upon the Beauty of the past,
Or ponder on the future worlds to come;
And to the Ideal raise no single deed
Of their material life, nor give a thought
With which to worship at the Shrine of Love.

The noise grows less, the midnight hour has
passed.

The tawdry show, the vulgar haste has ceased.
I call upon the powers of Space and Time,
To break my dulled perception from its trance,
Marooned upon this world of present age;
To send me floating through the airy ways
Until I come into the glades of Gods,
And hear their laughter echo through the hills
Greeting the dawn upon the first lit peak;
Until I reach the gardens of the world,
Where Beauty, Love in sweet disorder lie.

And I would take my mortal bride to see
The long dead lovers we have read about;
And hear the passionate voices of the men
Who sang the praise of richer things than gold.

How strong the bonds of earth My eager soul
Longs to be borne through the still, starry night,
To sail upon the white beams of the moon,
To reach the regions of eternity,
To see my love's eyes light the far-off worlds,
And shame the planets at their own wild game.

Far-off Voices Singing.

Sleep creeps upon the thought,
Like mist along the vale;
The hardy limbs are caught
In beds of flowers unsought,
They wander in their jail,
Like lovers overwrought.

Sleep falls upon the eyes,
Like snowflakes on the ground;
And all the looks so wise
Fade from their coloured size,
As softly without sound
Their eyelids droop and rise.

Sleep steals away the pain
That clutches round the heart;
But like the fickle crane,
It takes not long to wane;
And leaves with cunning art,
When morning comes again.

PART II.

ZONE OF EARTH BOUND.

I sank into the dark abyss of sleep,
Whereon, it seemed as if a whirlwind came
Down from the far-off heavens through the roof,
Which bore me in its centre spiral up
Into the realms of air beyond the smoke.
And as I passed I saw the chimneys move,
And eager strive, as if to come with me
Into the space that they so long have watched;
That silent space where fiery meteors go
Flashing a million miles across the night.

The highest buildings quickly left my view
As through the blue-grey mist of foggy air
I passed.

The lights stayed lingeringly like he
Who loves and cannot say good-bye—but turns
And looks into her eyes once more, then knows
That she is not for him, yet cannot face
Th' irrevocable farewell of all his hopes,
So wildly flings yet one more beam of love
To thaw the frozen stillness of her look.

The stars looked still as far, but then I felt
That human hands were clutching wildly at me.

Invisible, and yet I heard them say :—
“ A man from earth goes by, let him not pass
Before we hear him tell us of the world,
Long, long ago it is since we were there;
And he will tell us of the lovely cities,
Conglomerations vast of whirling life,
And if they're like what once we used to know.”

At length the numbers of their grasping hands
Halted and held our rapid rise through night,
And gradually my eyes found power to see,
From out the shadows, faces of the world.

Faces of those who work for two-score years
At little tasks, and cannot break their toil,
But become part of it; faces of those
Who more successfully have gathered gold
And never will be free of that desire.
Faces of girls and older women rouged
To cloak insipidness and yellow skins;
Who never can forget the lure of lights,
Of feeble passions, feeble joys of life;
Of all light deeds that do not strike the depth
Of human character, but titillate
The withered senses to a safe degree.
And there were sportsmen near, who talked of
golf,
Or a day's hunting when they led the field,
Or pheasants slaughtered for a record bag.
They all closed round to hear my latest news;
“ Speak, speak,” they cried, to two who stood
apart.

A Man Speaking.

“ Are cities still the centre of your life?
Is gold still sought and difficult to find?
Are there still men who live with lawful wife
So that the law protects their lustful mind?

Do rich men still grow richer in their sleep
And see the sunlight in their golden fame?
Are there still sporting crowds who like to keep
Their conversation turning round a game? ”

Then spoke a woman to my dreaming love
Who looked unhearingly at the shining stars;
“ Tell us the latest scandal of thy world.

Are all the shops still bright with woman's dress?
What fashions wear they now, short, full or
fine?

Are they still ready for a mild caress,
And not a word their cheeks incarnadine? ”

Then answered I their questions short and sharp;
“ That cities grew the greater every year,
That they will soon be crowded from their space
Such mighty millionaires, such swarming hives
Of drones, such crowds of sportsmen keen,
And ladies who love nothing but their dress. ”

But then I asked: “ Why do you look below
And not above, is not the starry blue
More beautiful than lights of earthly towns? ”

They shouted clamourously with one accord :

“Speak not to us of the wide skies above.
We loathe th’ eternal mystery lurking there,
The silence and the beauty of that space;
An utter loneliness creeps through our souls
And we begin to doubt that we are gods.
Hence quickly leave; already grows unrest,
Which, fed by Fear, steals like malaria
To make us shake and fall as autumn leaves;
We want no Freedom of the wild west wind,
But rigid laws to hold us shackled safe.”

Then quickly their retaining hands fell off
And we began to smoothly glide away.
Ere yet we had attained a rapid course,
I saw there was a youth still holding fast;
Whose voice and mournful eyes prayed
earnestly
To take him from the lure of earthly lights
Into the wide deep regions of the stars.
I heard him murmur in despairing tone;
“ Oh, I was born and bred in curtained beds,
Great name, and greater riches greeted me
At youth’s wide door.

They led me by the hand
Into a world of sport and goodly things,
Of dance, and wine, and clothes, and artifice,
Whereby the wandering thoughts are closely
caught
And drugged into a state of somnolence;
And my too ready senses fed on food

Which soon o'erwhelmed the weak desire for
Truth.

For though I knew the joy of every sport,
And felt delicious thrills of blushing limbs,
And passed all day and night in luxury;
I also knew occasional hours of dreams,
Which were as if the sun had stormed the
clouds

And broken through the dreary winter months,
To warm with his most unaccustomed ray
The sources of my mind; and like a glass
Seen from afar caught in the sunset's glow
To light the window of my sleeping soul."

I heard no more, there came a dizziness
From the thin airs that were not of the Earth.

PART III.

ZONE OF THE LOST.

How long I lay unconscious in that flight?
How many thousand miles I spanned that time?
I do not know, but found on waking, still,
That I went whirling through the aerial ways,
While all around was space unfathomable.
And then perception rising like the dawn,
Drove through me with its penetrative light,
Until I saw that fleece-like clouds were near,
And into these plunged noiselessly and smooth.
I felt my brain betrayed by fragrant drugs,
As if the clouds dropped heavy scents of old,
Thrice stronger than tuberose in Eastern nights,
Which fills the thought with maddening
mysteries.

In all my veins the subtle poison ran,
A weariness stole through my limbs, a weight
Lay on my heart and I began to sigh,
Like some poor fool who knows not what he
wants;

When on my ear there fell a far off sound,
The delicate low echo of a song,
Which, as I nearer came, seemed thus to say :

The Song of Sorrow.

This is the land of sorrow;
Shadow and gloom are here.
Always we greet to-morrow
With a glistening tear.

Hope has gone by for ever,
Hung between earth and skies,
Nought can be done to sever
Sound of eternal sighs.

This is the land of dreamers
With little power to dream;
Here there are no redeemers
Never for us a gleam.

This is the land of weeping;
We are makers of seas;
This is our short life's reaping,
The sighing sough of the breeze.

This is the land of wailing,
A twilight home of the soul,
Lost in a rudderless sailing
On a treacherous shoal.

The clouds grew less as sound of singing fell
The louder on my hearing, and the moon
Lit with pale radiance a shadowy vale.
And then the wind which bore us through the
night

At terrifying speed, ceased for a while;
We drifted like some sailing ship becalmed
On the green smoothness of Malayan seas

Thus were we held; I saw we had arrived
In an oasis of humanity,
Set in the regions of the snowy clouds;
I felt the gaze of many faces pale
With melancholy which were turned on me.
I saw their eyes that weeping with long sorrow

Were deeper than the deepest mountain lake.
Such hopeless sadness I had never seen
On any human face at any time,
No, nor in the wild, sad scenes of Nature.
Yet I have seen, sad, sorrowful, cruel things;
The dumb resigned look of animals
Tortured and starved throughout their toiling
lives;

The face of woman with her bastard babe
When she stands shivering lone against the law;
And seen a sun set o'er a battlefield,
Red with reflected carnage of mankind,
An echo to the sighs of anguished souls.

What was this land of weeping? Who lived
here?

Was the full glory of a mid-day sun
Unknown to light these lands, to warm these
hearts?

Until men sing like birds in a green copse
Where night still leaves her midnight kisses wet,
And dawn with blushes sees them all exposed;
Or like a fevered lover from the South
Whose fiery deeds and words his rivals quell,
Who clasps his mistress to his burning breast,
The Sun enfolds his ever amorous Earth.

We lighted gently near a shadowy crew;
They took no heed, but crouching round a pool,
Still sighed their souls, still crooned their songs
away,

Which sounded like th' atribilious sea
That breaks for ever on a sandy shore,

That everlasting cry, " Too late! Too late! "
Which echoes from the drowning souls of men.
" Tell me the secret of this weeping land,"
I said; then from his lips there softly ran
As water runs o'er one broad level reach,
His answer.

" This is where Death brings many souls,
The feeble dreamers and faint living mass,
Who cannot grasp earth's joys for sordid fear
Of those too vigorous ecstasies that flare
And send the senses flaming through the limbs.
And those who dream of other worlds, and yet
Have not the power to follow fancy's lure
Which leads them up a bramble-covered path,
And winds mysteriously ere yet there breaks
Upon astonished gaze a dazzling view—
Imagination's snow-crowned, dawn-lit peak
Whereon are seen immortal Gods and Men
Who beckon them to climb and join their band.

I glanced down at my love and saw her pale,
Her eyes were filled with tears, they overflowed,
They looked like waves at night beneath the
moon

Which lead one to the halls of Aphrodite,
Those cool, clear caverns of her ocean home,
That shrine her soul and curving limbs of foam.
A wind howled round, storm clouds were driven
thick

And hid the scene; the thunder groaned and
roared.

We moved—a voice—" Rise, for your hour is
near."

PART IV.

THE ISLE OF PARADISE.

Black clouds enveloped us through which we
tore;

There was a noise as of an ocean falling
Over some dark abyss to unknown depths.
It seemed as if great Nature's hidden powers,
Had concentrated there her mighty force,
To draw a line no puny man could cross;
But would o'erwhelm him in her primal grip—
Like a frail fishing boat caught unawares
In open seas before a sudden gale,
One moment spun to dizzy heights of foam,
The next sunk in black hollows 'twixt the waves;
And when the wind abates, the foam subsides,
No remnant of humanity is seen,
Only the monstrous swell that smoothly curls
In simmering rage of unattained desire.
Fear gripped my heart, my eyes closed terrified,
Fire flashed across the dark, I felt the heat;
Great tongues of flame, like serpents' heads
outstretched

Struck at us as we passed, and fiercely fanned
By screeching winds they set the clouds alight,
Until I thought that Christian priests spoke truth,
And this indeed was their foul-fabled Hell
At which I had arrived to take up my abode.

Just as I had rescinded my denial,
And once more believed their books lugubrious,
Peace fell upon my ear, light breezes blew

Upon my lids, and strange emotions came
Unlike to anything I knew before.
And at that moment my companion woke;
Her trance fell off, she turned to me and smiled,
She looked as if she knew where we had come,
As if some dream she saw on earth was now
To live before her eyes—as if some perfect
thought

Was now at long-last realised and True.
I had no time to speak, one word she said;
“Behold”; my eyes with difficulty I brought
From off her face, she was so beautiful,
More beautiful than ever on our earth.
A light suffused her eyes, a tint her skin
Which was not of mortality I knew,
But spoke of an unknown cosmic cause,
Which touched her with its magic wand and
made

The mortal flesh take an immortal glow,
And held me in her new ethereal light.

I turned at last and saw before my gaze
Green valleys and bright streams and wooded
hills;

I heard soft-singing birds and saw their wings
Gleam in wild brilliant colours 'neath the sun;
Inhaled the scent of rose and cherry trees,
And saw white lilies, orange tulips bend,
And yellow daffodils and Eastern shrubs;
There was so much of Beauty and of Peace
That all my limbs felt faint in ecstasy,
Then gathered strength from the serenity.

Just as our movement ceased, we touched the
ground

Close by a cypress grove; where in the shade
there stood

A slim, white figured boy who played a lyre,
Who as we moved spoke softly smiling thus :
“ I have been waiting here some little while,
For I have piloted you through space this time,
And brought you safely through the midnight
skies

Of heavy earth, unto this isle of heaven.”

Then swift yet softly I replied to him :

“ Where have you brought us now, and shall
we stay ?

For there is in this isle an atmosphere
Of Immortality and peace and love.

I feel myself free from all restlessness,
And I can see my love, here, too has changed.
Tell us—Who does inhabit this fair land ?
And who, thyself, who talks all unconcerned,
With thy bare body open to our view ? ”

Back went his head, he laughed melodiously,
And his teeth gleamed like pearls against the
flesh

Of some bare-breasted beauty of our land,
While round them ran, like dawn around a peak,
The rose-red of his lips. His slender neck
Was like a marble column of the Greeks
In living flesh, his arms and ankles, hips,
Delightful, curved in every graceful move.
Down came his eyes to mine, with laughter
bright :

“This is an isle where come the true, bold
hearts

When Death doth glean them from your prudish
earth.

You felt the quiet of this fair dreaming isle
As soon as you first dimly saw the shore.
For here no terror reigns, no struggle breaks
The calm and cloudless days of perfect peace.
Flowers only change in bending to some breeze
Or glistening with the diamond dew of morn.
The birds here sing and love and sleep
Eternally complete. Here is no Death nor Birth,
No pangs of Motherhood, nor rotting corpse,
Malignant growths do not find ground to root,
To undermine the vital source of life;
And dismal cemeteries you will not see
Which with their pitiful still row of mounds
And empty epitaphs hold terror near.
Blood never taints the smell, nor cries of pain
The hearing; here no ambush waits the weak,
But every form stays Beautiful and Pure.
Look at the blue that circumvents this isle !
Are not your eyes entranced to tears of joy ?
Blue like the Hindu's colour of devotion
That is indelible and unforget.
Rain falls not here, the dews of heaven are all
That are required. No autumn wind moans
here
As herald to the cold, nor cracks the bough
O'erladen with the wealth of summer's love.
Night is unknown here, the sun goes down

But for an hour or two, that there may be
The glory of his setting and his rise;
For with the night so beautiful and still,
With stars set in her blue infinity,
There steals up melancholy, and the soul
Loses itself in misty maze of thought,
And wails for things impossible to reach;
Then with the midnight comes a loneliness
Which opens wide the doorways to the heart,
And sorrow spreads her beauty o'er the mind
And enters in a guise of pseudo love.
Now I will lead you to the beings here
Who come from the dim past of history,
Whose stories break monotony of Time,
Illuminate the gloomy caves of Age
And drive Despair back to his dusty home.
Others are here who never caught the light
Of Fame, which glitters on Time's sea,
But through their life gave of their best to Love
Or followed Beauty with enraptured thoughts.
This is an isle of rest for those who faced
The multitude and set the world as nought,
To win the Love that conquers centuries;
Or with their hands imprinted marvellous
dreams
On canvas, paper, wood or marble stone,
Which float through Time for ever Beautiful,
Inspire or ease an overburdened heart.
Here, then, they dwell in peace and happiness
Each with his love, and all with each are
friends;

While murmuring songs hang on the listening
air,
Which, when inhaled, like the wild poppy drug,
Bring lovely visions to all comers here.

You ask me why I do not blush for shame
At this, my nakedness? As you can feel,
And as I said myself, in this quiet isle
There is no blighting frost nor bitter wind;
The sun reigns here and sheds a temperate heat;
The naked limbs bathe in his warm, bright rays;
And every eye accustomed to the view
Sees naught to raise a blush, to start the mind
On carnal paths of expectation keen;
For hidden things seem always very strange,
But open viewed, they take their normal shape.
So, children of the earth, behold me thus.
There's nothing here that's virulent or vile
In these fair limbs kissed by the grass and
flowers.

Besides, that fierce and sharp desire of flesh
For flesh is all unknown in this tranquil isle,
Which sometimes on your earth pursues a man,
Driving him to a marsh of sensual slime
Where from the steamy vapours that arise
He sees weird sins in mad, exotic guise.
But follow me, for I will lead you down
The scented paths where Beauty reigns
supreme."

His spring-like body gleaming in the sun
Led us by flowery ways and laughing streams,

Until upon a daisied lawn we saw
Women and men in joyful gathering.
I greeted them and asked how they had found
The way to reach this isle of paradise,
And how my love and I might follow them.
"Look at this lady by my side," said one;
"She was my star that shone by night and day.
See how her soul speaks in her every move;
Crowns—empires—worlds? what are they to
herself?

A million slaves— what are they to her hands?
A lake of gold, what to her red, rich mouth?
A thousand royal salutes, what to her voice?
And emperors at my feet obedient
What to her untamed eyes? To see but one,
To let the heart speak free, that was my victory;
Love with a tidal wave swept thrones away,
They went like dew before the morning sun.
'Voluptuous,'—did they say, that does not last;
But we have lived these two-score centuries,
And we have triumphed o'er oblivion.
Then would you join us here in future years;
You have a lady who can lead you too.
See from her eyes love shines personified.
Throw to the crowd all save your heart's
desire."

As he had finished speaking, there approached
A slight but buoyant figure of a youth,
And from his eyes eternal spring leapt forth.
All living things seemed bent to welcome him,
And on his lips words tuned to music sweet.

“Love—Love,” he sang, “The beautiful and
bright;
Love life and sun and joy and live for Truth,
Cast to the smoking dunghill of the past
Hypocrisy and Christianity.
Two different words, and yet the self-same
thing,
For both are but a bitter grave for Hope,
A sea of blood wherein their followers sink.
You see this Isle, created by Love’s will,
And throned upon the far-off heaven of Truth,
Is the pure home of Beauty without stain.”

I heard our guide say many names well-known,
Leonardo, Phidias, Shakespeare, Wagner there,
And from the farthest East, far back in Time.
There one might see ‘Jehan,’ the Moghul Shah
Who wrought the masterpiece of Indian art
That far-off future nations of the world
Should know the glory of his Taj Mahal.
In twenty years raised up the marble dome,
That each night makes the hearts of those that
see

The moon caress the silent towers of white,
Ache with unutterable bewilderment:
Astonished stand in speechless reverence,
As ‘gainst the blue depth of an Eastern night
It floats like palaces of phantasy.
And in the cool interior he laid
With emeralds and glowing precious stones,
His still more precious love.

Led by our guide

We wandered slowly on. No sign of age
 Lay its corrupting hand upon this land.
 Trees held no withered branch, no herbs
 decayed.

And o'er the hills and blue translucent skies
 There lay a glowing light, more radiant clear
 Than that we know on earth with April rain.
 Then through my senses swept the knowledge
 sure,

That Sorrow was not here born twin with Joy.
 Beauty and Peace set on this heaven-kissed
 throne,

Endured unchanging 'gainst decaying Time.
 Then to my love I turned and gently said:
 "Rose of the world, flower-fragrant Jewel of
 Life,

Through you and with you will I win this isle.
 Let your lips give me their celestial wine:
 For on your brow I see dead Helen live,
 And in your voice I hear fair Iseult speak,
 And through your eyes the Queen of Egypt
 looks,

And in your limbs Apollo's Daphne moves."
 Then sudden darkness came; I heard these
 words:

"Earth's dawn is near, and Earth's toil calls you
 back;

Soar eagle-like on Beauty's outstretched wings.
 Fear not the rays of th' emblazoning sun,
 Nor heed the headlong fall to gloomy depths.

Those wings unbreakable can bear you firm,
And bring you through Earth's storms to this
fair land."

And true indeed that I was called away;
For through my curtained window crept the day,
To find it was a dream! Nought but a midnight
play.

“ GOOD MORNING.”

Good morning, sleepy eyes!

Can you yet read
This early morn surprise?

Will you succeed
To raise your heavy lid
To light the star sleep hid
So bright and splendid?

Good morning, little hands!

Where have you strayed
Whilst in sleep's dreamy lands,

What mischief made?
I love your ten fine points,
And with my lips annoint
Your fragile joints.

Good morning, silky locks!

Are you all wild,
In disarray that mocks
Last night so mild?
I think the Fates must use
Your strands of hair as ruse,
To weave my noose.

Good morning, coral lips!

Are you still curled
In drowsy yawn, where slips,
Life that lay furled
Within your mouth all night?
Love brings you with delight
These verses light.

Good morning, each soft limb!
Still curled in bed?
So warm and boyish slim;
Luxurious spread
On white, caressing sheet,
Which with my lips compete
Each curve to greet.

Good morning,—dear!
Did Mercury
Play with you last night here?
The rascal flee
When Helios rose again,
Shame! Shame! but don't complain
He'll come again.

TWO SONNETS.

(*After seeing R. Milton in "HAMLET" at the Old Vic., 9.3.21*).

I.

THE QUESTION.

Can reason thus be driven from the mind
By immaterial shades from Death's domain,
Like dead leaves scattered by a winter's wind,
To leave me stranded with a barren brain?
Can all lore gleaned from centuries of life
Be overwhelmed by wailing of a ghost,
So that I believe a brother and a wife
Murdered my father to attain their post?
Back, baying hounds of Madness; back, avaunt!
Not six months gone and yet they live so free
In smiling bliss no conscience seems to daunt.
Now reason hold, for thou must prove to me,
And naught these hands shall do, until their guilt
Speaks through their very lips, to tell the blood
they spilt.

THE ANSWER.

His guilt spoke in his pale and shaking looks;
Action is leader now! Then laugh free
heart :

Shake off the trammels of deep, labouring books,
And speed thy furthest aim till it impart

Unto these long, pale hands thy purpose firm.

Poor feeble hands to grip the deadly knife!
Strength, strength, weak hands, now must you
feed the worm

Even with the warm blood of your Uncle's life.

Each moment that he lives prolongs his joy,

And each night brings his evil love to fruit.

What! do I let him still his power employ

While I stand dreaming by irresolute?

Now brain and eye and hand combine you well,

To send this murderous hypocrite to hell.

FROM ALEXANDRIA TO THE ITALIAN
ALPS.

I have left the cities behind me,
The tumult of crowd and car;
I have turned where Earth will unwind me
The beautiful forms from her Jar.

I have left the voices of mankind
Harsh, haggling over their goods,
For the sounds and scents of the wild kind
Dwelling by rivers and woods.

I have left the parasite fountains
Of gold, and disease, and show,
For the old and the silent mountains
And the pure pale airs of the snow.

I have lost them all in the valleys,
On the slopes of the climbing hill,
In the narrowing rock-bound alleys
Enclosing the tumbling rill.

And the lights of a midnight city
Are lost in the glow of a dawn;
The cry of a beggar for pity
In the sound of a stream new-born.

The modern magnificent buildings,
Will vanish as Cæsar's have done,
The spires and the domes with their gildings,
Will not answer the morning sun.

Monte Rosa will rise in her whiteness
Silent and still and vast,
An ice-bound ruinless brightness
'Gainst dazzling blue to the last.

THREE SONNETS.

I.

Your beauty has been crowned by lovers'
hands,

Who wove the silky texture of your hair.

They chose the finest webs of leafy lair

That hang at dawn in fragile shining strands,

Then, tempered by electric waves of air,

And dipped for ages in the midnight blue,

They hung in mountain forests till it drew

The mystic fragrance that the lone pines bear.

The long, dark waves are falling round my head

I lose myself in their dim dreary way;

I am entangled by one silken thread,

And softly yield my last low breath away,

Until, like moonbeams in a cloudy sky,

Your white neck trembles on my drowsy eye.

II.

They lied again, who said the Gods were dead!

For you are made with their most cunning
art,

And gifted with Apollo's voice and dart

And, like Pandora, Jove created, fed

With power to wreck man's all too fragile
heart.

Poor human hearts, the playthings of the Gods

And yours to bend and break with simple nods,

Raising them in your net to tear them all
apart.

But you have Hope yet locked within your
 breast,
 And eyes whose depths reflect her hidden
 light,
Round which we hover in our tireless quest;
 Like shipwrecked men through the northern
 winter night,
Who wait on icy isles and ever gaze
For Hope's first gleam to fire the midnight
 space.

III.

Look how the tors confront the winds of Time,
 Mark how they hold their dark heads to their
 Fate;
 Even though they stand for ever desolate,
Amid the howling gales of Northern clime.
 While round their base black, oozing quag-
 mires wait
Or subtly hidden on a mossy slope,
In treacherous craft all eager to envelope
 Their lonely pride that rests inviolate.

Even so our love stands like a beacon forth
 Amid the slime of luring sycophant
While round us storm the gales of jealous Wrath
 And Envy curls her misty creeping cant.
Rude winds, engulfing mists and marshy snare,
Would you destroy and crush—well then turn
 otherwhere.

ON 32ND BIRTHDAY AT ALEXANDRIA.

Returns once more the day—the day of birth,
Alone I sit and ponder on the mirth
Of that spontaneous act which came to this;—
Brought forth this struggling life, and with a kiss
So slightly sealed another new spun web.
Sun, moon and stars and seas that ebb
And flow and rise and fall through human acts,
As if they were not!

No shadow on your tracks
Is this my birth and wandering life to you.
Here in this town, so ancient yet so new,
So Eastern, yet so Western, like a result
Of Missionary zeal that ends in tumult,
I stay; while armies wait to storm the ranks
Of all hypocrisy in Europe's wounded flanks;
While ears and hearts of custom-ridden men
Remain yet drugged in their miasmatic den.
Away, away; I will stay here no longer,
Deaf ears shall hear, and Truth shall prove the
stronger.

No, I would be a dreaming, glorious King
Upon an Eastern throne, where Dusk would
bring
Some Sheba to steal all my dreams away.
No, these are modern days, I'd play and play
At tennis, polo, cricket, win all there is
From these; at night the dancer's circling bliss
Would bring me close proximity of lip
Whereat one takes a temporary sip!

Away—false world of things! Shelley shall
throw

His magic over me, his golden lyrics flow
Renewed beneath my pen. A starry stream
Of emerald meteorites shall break the dream
Of Life; once more in realms of fairy lights,
To dream and soar mid their ethereal heights.

Oh! I would be beneath Italian skies,
And with the night unloose my love's dark hair,
And dream upon the starlight in her eyes,
Which quivers in a deep, reflecting pair
Of azure pools, two silent lakes of love
That lap her lids, those wooded banks of shade;
And like moon silver are her brows above,
So cool, whereon my lips are overlaid.

I laugh—still here! all is futility.
Fear, envy, pride, courage, ability
End in the self-same pit:—Obscurity,
That is what comes of our Futurity!
Love, for a while, plays harmonies divine,
And Beauty beckons from her fragile shine.

WAVES.

I sat upon a rock one sunny day,
 Outhanging o'er the sea;
And watched the waves run lapping round the
 bay,
Against the black rocks breaking in white spray;
 And heard the caverns gloomy
Reverberate their falling disarray.

I sat upon a rock and saw them sent
 Towards their certain doom;
Wave followed wave with unassuaged intent,
Till on the shore their azure force was spent,
 There in disorder loom
All foaming in their stony ravishment.

I sat upon this rock until I thought
 That every wave did speak;
And some upon the crest with hope I caught,
And others wailing broken and distraught,
 I heard their voices weak;
Uprise with sobs that pain had overwrought.

I sat upon the rock and watched the flow,
 Until I thought the waves
Were ceaseless surge of human crowds that go
In stern procession to their final woe;
 For what is there that saves
The falling spray of their last overthrow?

The human ocean answers to a call,
As seas move to the moon;
It restless surges ever to its fall
In eager waves against a dumb dark wall,
To force an answer soon,
The abysm of ages cannot disenthral.

As every ocean breaks in sterile might
Upon its harsh confines;
So through all lands, yellow and black and
white,
Break on the shores of visionary sight,
Each race for ever pines
To touch the hem of unattained delight.

Born, fed and raised to full maturity,
Why must the soul be wrought
For nothingness in dim eternity?
For groping to a mute divinity?
Its lover's words be brought
To frothy mutterings of futility?

Slow moving mass of blue and grey and green,
How beautiful you are!
Your serried ranks that smoothly glide serene,
Or stirred by gales your heaving bosom seen;
How sorrowful you are,
With brooding deep where nought can
intervene.

O moving souls of men aflame with hope,
How beautiful you are !
When firmly scaling some bewildering slope,
When daring titan deeds beyond your scope;
How weeping sad you are,
In that last fall with bony hands agrope.

For ever and for ever break you must
Both waves and souls of men;
Your utmost hope to silent death be thrust;
Though ever you will hold implicit trust
That your adored shall open,
Those silent lips to scatter all mistrust.

You come by millions to the sacrifice
On the responseless shore;
Break in white foam your yearning heart's last
rise;
While souls of men in red froth pay the price,
And ages run with gore
That pours a-down the slopes of paradise.

O Beauty breaking round the shores of Time
How short a while is yours !
E'en at the glowing summit of your prime
E'en at the radiance of your godlike clime
There come Time's searing claws
To rend your vision when it's most sublime.

TEMPLE OF DIANA.

SEGESTA.

Mid these wild hills in the dim far-off days
Elymians lived;—they passed and left no sign.
Then came the Greeks who in religious praise
Built with unrivalled art this stately shrine;
Raised to the glory of their golden Dian
This Time-defying temple, sun-entranced.
Silence now reigns where holy chorus ran,
Lizards now creep where Grecian maidens
danced.

Lo! round thy hall fair flowers their garlands
fling
Yellow and blue and pink, they fill thy space;
Light with the laughter and the Joy of Spring,
As once the virgins with their youthful grace.
Across the years have all the pagans flown,
Are there no acolytes around Diana's throne?

TAORMINA.

Below a turquoise sea in silver haze
With long white curves breaks on a sandy
floor,
One can just hear the lazy wave that lays,
Its yearning heart on the Sicilian shore.

Up from the beach in emerald colours bowered,
The steep hills rise to rocky citadels;
Upon their sides a thousand buds have flowered,
And on their slopes the ripening muscatels.

Across the hills and vales of lemon grove,
Above grey clouds the peak of Ætna shows,
Caught by the sun its virgin white is wove
Into a floating dome of gilded snows.

Away beyond, low sloping hills descend
Cleaving far out into the ocean's blue;
Dim in the space where sky and sea both blend
Azure with azure meets in one continuous
hue.

And like a nymph uprising from sea caves
Her lovely form half veiled by golden hair;
Italia's coast uprises from the waves,
Wrapped in a golden veil of cloudy air.

Thou Queen of Beauty, sun-kissed, sea-throned
place!
How were you born, how came you then
to be
Set in this changing world of warring race?
Jewel unsurpassed in Nature's artistry!

Was it Apollo in his flaming car
Driving his rosy way through misty morn,
Saw Aphrodite on her pearl afar,
And with his burning kiss this spot was born?

MOUNT ÆTNA.

Still,—on a throne in jewelled palaces,
Whose roofs are sapphire skies or purple
shrouds,
Whose floors are turquoise blue wherein one
traces
Mosaic patterns of thy evening clouds,
You stretch colossal limbs of misty blue;
A dreaming god in lonely power secured,
Around thy neck hair falls in snowy hue
White with the weight of age on age endured.

You've seen Ulysses and his labouring crew,
You've seen the turbined liners as they
passed;
And with your wisdom told them what you
knew,
How many heeded in their haste and craft?
But with a laugh you shake the world afraid,
Crush in a moment's scorn what time and man
have made.

INTO THE HILLS.

Carry me well my feet!

Stretch out my legs for the task!

I would be over the hills,
Away from the noisy street,
Away from the city's mask,
Up by the tiny rills.

The moon is high in the night,
And the stony path is clear,
And the way is quiet and cool;
It is far away from the sight,
The haunt of the calling deer,
Where fairies play by a pool.

A blue mist hangs on the hills,
The peaks are white with snow,
The villages all asleep;
And a midnight call that thrills,
And the way that is far to go,
And the narrow path is steep.

Up and away in the night,
Inhaling the cool, sweet air,
Passing the silent farm;
Then up to the lonely height
Climbed by a dizzy stair,
Where the restless brain finds calm.

Up on the heathery hillsides,
Up mid the mountain dew,
Lone in a silent place;
There where Nature confides
In the moonlight's silvery blue,
Secrets of Time and Space.

ON A HAVERSACK.

Where is the marshal's baton I was told
You hid within your fold?
Where the bright glory that you were to bring?
And where the youthful victor who would sing
The triumph that you hold?

How different now the glory that you hide,
No longer is your pride,
War's bloody mantle streaming in the wind,
The roar to deafen and the flash to blind,
But Beauty you provide.

The days come back when you did hold for me
A weird variety;
Corned beef, jam, dressings, biscuits, iodine;
Maps, shaving kit, gloves, bullets have been seen
Stuffed in you hurriedly.

Down dusty road, or through a rainy night,
Returning to the fight,
Your weight lay on my shoulder through the
ride,
Protruding like an ulcer from my side;
A most detested sight!

And I recall the last dark hours that shield
Upon dew laden field;
The gathered host of horsemen for the fray,
When you became a pillow, till the day
Forced screening night to yield.

And you bring back to me the muddy trench,
The damp decaying stench
Of rotting flesh and cloth and piles of bones;
The minnenwerfer's bombs and dying moans,
The midnight ration bench.

What! have you drifted from the art of Wars,
Forgotten maps and stores?
What is it now that fills you to the brim?
No lousy men to wash, but ladies slim
You watch by silver shores!

Oh, hardy warrior fed by wanton arms!
No more the wild alarms,
But silken bathing suits for young smooth limbs,
Sweet smelling powder for her woman's whims,
Corrupt you with their charms!

Do you not find these soft hours to your taste?
No longer noise or haste,
Are not past days but loathsome ghosts that
tease?
Is not the present, Beauty, peace and ease,
In which there is no waste?

Forget the glory of the warrior true,
Red tabs were not for you!
Now is a greater glory to embrace,
Gather and hold the scented fragile lace,
And soldiers all eschew.

“ THE SYMBOL.”

“ Rest on your arms reversed; ” a silence falls
Upon the thronged humanity that sways;
Then passes that still Symbol of the days,
To pipes that wail out their funereal calls,
When Death insatiate piled its ghastly blaze
And fed, through four long years, on tortured
flesh.

Now from the past their faces rise afresh,
And vanquish Death with their immortal rays.

Wrapped in the Flag you pass imperial
While Kings and Queens and Marshals mourn
for you,

The royal salute booms o'er our capital
To lead you to the grave which is your due;
Hail, Fallen Warriors ! To-day your glory lights
All English hearts to these symbolic rites.

OLD AGE.

Far from our cities and our high refinement,
In hidden glades of waving long grass feed
Wild wandering herds in animal content,
With glossy forms of muscled healthy breed;
Where Nature reigns there is no place for age,
The old bull roams in solitary rage.

Our intellect proclaims we should retard,
All that grows old and weak with utmost
care;
The dignity of age deserves regard
It is so wise, and Time makes all things fair!
Look how a spell seems cast round ruined stone
That is a Roman building overthrown.

How dignified they look sprawled in their car,
In restaurants when hunched within their
chair.
Oh,—listen to their wisdom from afar!
Sit silent open-mouthed and hear them tear
The modes and manners of the present youth;
For they hold all monopolies of truth!

They love a game of bridge to show their skill,
In play of cards and argumentive power!
They love young girls to reconstruct a thrill,
To make them blossom like a young spring
rose!
Ha ha—Ha ha! how comical they are;
Alas—alas! our old age is not far!

Hairless or grey, with beard or flaccid chops,
Dried like cured hide or overlapping necks,
With rheumy eyes and bulging paunch that
flops,

They linger on Life's ocean, dismal wrecks;
Still would their failing flesh partake of Joys,
Still would their feeble hands grasp youthful
toys.

She was a radiant star in other days
Round which youth fluttered in bewilderment;
A hundred voices whispered loving praise,
A hundred hands outstretched, beseeched
content.

Bright was the glory of her shining eyes
A budding rose her cheek; all men's surprise.

Her eyes have lost allure, her voice is hard,
Once fragrant hair is dulled with filthy dyes,
Her skin corrupt with many coats of nard,
Her figure overflows what e'er she tries;
Once fairy-like she passed with magic wand,
Now as a wrinkled witch she takes her stand.

Time pushed her o'er a cliff, and she must fall
Down through a black abyss of ugliness;
But still she clasps some weed upon the wall,
And fights against o'erwhelming nothingness.
Vain, Vain—for her, and vain for everyone!
Laugh at ourselves, our youth will soon be done.

She sits all day within her padded chair,
Sunk in the past, her hours of youth long sped;
Thin-featured, bony hands and thin grey hair

With eyes alone that tell she is not dead;
Around her toil grandchildren of all age,
Who wait to place her in death's dismal cage.

Poor, lonely, sapless trunk of withered life,
Musing forever of your former days;
Like some trapped animal with instinct rife
For boundless plains or sunless forest maze;
You watch your children moving in the room,
And know they wait the coffin for your tomb.

How terrible is aged humanity,
A monstrous mirror to affright our thought;
O'er all the world they spread their malady,
And with their evil deed our youth is bought.
Haste! Haste, O golden Youth enjoy your
fling,
Blossom in wild profusion through your Spring.
Let the red blood go pouring through your veins,

Clasp in your arms each fragrant flower you
meet;
Spend in mad largess, heed no future pains,
To live is all—all that you need entreat.
Hurl out defiance 'gainst sardonic Age,
Scorn in your youthful pride his envious rage.

I rise to go, but who is he who stands
With foolish grin full of impertinence;
I do not like the movements of his hands,
He points towards my head with impudence;
Away damned glass it is myself indeed,
And to your beastly lies I'll pay no heed!

TO A YOUNG GIRL OF 16 YEARS.

The land is wrapped in summer's hot embrace,
Earth's bosom here is laden with love's fruit
Full blown th' emerald foliage of her space,
Where lazily she plays her half-heard lute.

Fair bud of Spring with Youth and Beauty rife,
Untroubled yet by any loves or hates,
Swaying so lightly on thy bough of life,
Yet for a touch all ripe to blossom waits.

Ah, that I were June's sun to waken thee!
And thou May's bud to blossom in a day;
Ah, that I were night's dew to lie with thee,
And by the dawn thou drained desire away.

I would unfold thy petals one by one,
And bare the heart that lies asleep within;
And with my lips make summer overrun
The budding lips of thy unbruised skin.

Thy breasts are still but unripe cherries hung
Upon the soft wall of thy bosom white,
Leave then thy blouse a little more unflung,
So they may ripen in the warm sunlight.

To make a blood red rose from pale pink bud,
All in a day's short span from morn to morn;
Then with another day to drain the blood,
And leave a white rose for the coming dawn.

Someone, someday will take thy full-blown
flower,

Then why not I, thy young bright bud of May;
Ope with my lips all in one warm passionate
hour

Thy quivering petals for a summer's day.

IN THE CARPATHIANS.

For many a week, the hot and senseless ways
Of London streets have scorched my aching
feet;

And past my eyes has whirled a moving maze
With roar and crash when flesh and metal
meet;

Rose from the jumbled mass, a bus conveys,
Foul odours that besmirched the summer's
heat.

Few were the fields I saw, still fewer heard
The soaring lark and golden throated bird.

Now once again I tread untrammelled earth,
And as I climb I feel my thighs first shake
Flush to the touch as cheeks provoked by mirth;
I feel the muscles long unused awake,
Leap into life like to a magic birth,
And urge my body through the shadowy
brake.

Cool breezes blow down fragrant forest paths,
Untarnished by a thousand city hearths.

The lower slopes are dense with beech and pine
Which shield me from the fierce, uprising sun;
Deep shady tresses that caressing twine
Around a dazzled lover who would run
Too swiftly from his first beheady wine,
And ere an hour had passed be quite undone.
From out the shades a voice comes singing
sweet,

Rich with the joy of summer he would greet.

Upward and ever upward winds the track
Which seems as lined by swelling choirs
unseen;

Breaks through the leafy roof by slender crack
Slim rays that light the tender emerald green,
Piercing dim nooks in unabashed attack,
Dissolving artfully the fragile screen,
A mountain stream goes babbling out his spell,
Splashing his way adown a rocky dell.

The trees grow scarce as now the climb grows
stiff

Upward I glance to find the high peaks furled
In eddying mists driven by a light wind's whiff;
I see my path far up above is curled
Snake-like around a bold forbidding cliff,
Then disappears into an unseen world.
Now as the trees are left wild flowers upspring,
With gorgeous hues their fairy garlands fling.

I look below and see the forests dipped
In grey blue haze that lies along the vale;
Like to a bee who finds a flower unsipped
I drain the nectar of this lonely trail;
Sudden invisible hands have silent ripped
The view away, all round are phantoms pale;
Yet one more change, the peaks are now
sunkissed,
While down below lie seas of moving mist.

The stony track mid grasses ankle deep,
Has faded like the trees; soft uplands spread
Between low hills where countless violets heap
Their delicate bloom up to the watershed;
Undreamt of sweetness mid these mountains
steep !

Floating in space upon thy perfumed bed,
I view the beauty that is now unveiled,
Unravished realms of Nature unassailed.

For long I gaze on mountain, plain and wood,
Until, half-drugged by silence, flowers and
view,

I drift into the past and dimly brood
Of other hills I trod, of other peaks I knew.
Italian Alps with needle points that stood
Immaculate against an azure hue;
Of massive Aetna's snowy cupola
Lit by the God's gold flashing chariot car.

Upon a rock lapped by the bluest sea,
I see Mount Padro when the darkness yields
Beneath a rising moon, float from night's
mystery,

His snow-white crest turned into diamond
fields;
And Atlas forests of the cedar tree
Where wild boar roams and cruel snow
leopard steals
Where untamed tribes more wild and fierce
than these
Hurl back the tainted froth of Europe's ease.

Then loom vast ranges of the Himalayas
While far beyond are piled the Kuen Lun
Earth-stretching and sky-cleaving avatars
Of cold pure silent space, cloud wrapped
unwon,
Leh with its caravans of rough Kashgars
The windswept Zoji-la which travellers shun
When day has broke;—I see them clear again,
Ice peaks, bare plains, of that immense domain.

O mountains of the world, to you I kneel!
Storm scarred your sides, yet unperturbed
you stand
Impervious to the blows that ages deal;
Humanity stands back at your command.
Beauty is yours; you health and peace reveal
To those who look, who hear, who under-
stand.
Lost is the body in thy brooding space
The questing soul finds rest in your embrace.

EXPECTATION.

Last Spring—how long ago was that?

Three months, no more!

Last Spring that seems so very far away!

Last Spring it was I bid farewell to you,

Upon a shore

Where sad waves ever pour

Their azure hearts out in a last adieu.

Spring came and passed, and summer too

Has almost gone;

Summer with all its wealth of green and gold

and blue,

Flowers bloom and fade, the hay has all been

The golden dawn mown;

Leads but to days forlorn.

And starry nights light up an empty throne.

Late summer now and still apart!

Hot August here,

With fields of gold that soon shall pass away,

With words of green that soon shall turn to red;

Sad days so near

Of one more falling year;

You bring to me—a rising hope instead.

Sad days of loveliness in death,

Of summer's doom!

For me there waits another world as green,

Beauty as great, that shall not wither yet.

No moist damp tomb,

Gapes through winter's gloom

But smiling lands with sun and flowers beset.

IN A ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

The dim light hides the silent worshippers,
The dome and roof are lost in deeper shades,
All form is gone—a mystic stillness stirs,
While round the church like vestal virgin
 maids
 Hang candles on the wall.

How far—how near? from out the dimness
 shines
An altar bright—the church's glowing soul;
It seems as though a priestly hand designs
Each candle flame a golden aureole
 About Christ's shining throne.

Deep waves of sound break out in harmony,
An organ wakes the brooding acolytes;
And from the choir in answering euphony
Swell out the praises of their heavenly lights
 Of Christ and the Madonna.

Amid the dim light of the candle flame,
Amid the forms of kneeling penitents,
Amid the symbols that the priests proclaim
Reason is driven into banishment,
 And incense lulls the brain.

CATULLUS' HOUSE AT SIRMIONE.

O Catullus, was this then once your house !
Here did you write, and with your friends
carouse !

Now olive trees grow in your grassy halls,
And northern hordes climb on your ivied walls.

You and your house but dusty bones of Time !
Yet still your poems are living in their prime,
Fresh as the waters of the lake below
Thy lyric lines still warm with passion flow.

The men and women that were once with you
No more than dead fish in Lake Garda's blue;
And all the souls two thousand years have shed
As hidden as the deep lake's rocky bed.

Here in the cool of a soft summer day
The heartless Clodia did you lead astray;
And in her little ears did whisper words,
More pleasing than the music of wild birds ?

Here round a table filled with fruit and wine
With Roman friends did you at eve recline,
And did these cliffs so silent now at night
Echo your words beneath the moon's pale light ?

And as day crept upon night's dark domain,
Did you once more your ready wine glass drain,
And greet the morn with laughter and with joy,
And take the hand of some dawn-cheeked
young boy ?

All these have come and gone, all these but you
O Catullus—have bid a long adieu !
And as the hills their loveliness retain,
So through the years you, and your poems
 remain.

THE DESERTED HOME

I.

Home—What is home?

They know—

Who see the starlit foam,
Break in a line of snow
Against a cobalt sea,
From their ship's side;
A fast incoming tide
Of youthful memory.

They homeward trail,

To find—

Old customs still prevail,
Familiar faces kind;
Still by the fireside clings
A comfortable chair,
Old books and relics there
Of former wanderings.

Home is a shelter then,

An end—

From the strange ways of men,
Where everything's a friend,
Dogs, horses, cats, each tree;
Peace from the windy ways,
Peace from the worldly maze,
A last tranquility.

II.

Close shuttered rooms and dust sheet covered
chairs,
Chill empty grates and gloomy corridors;
Bare walls and empty beds and musty airs,
All silent now, these once well trodden floors.

The garden lies like a drunk sodden lewd
Unkempt, dishevelled in her unmade bed;
And from the oaks stark withered boughs
protrude
Like blackened teeth no surgeon's hand has
shed.

The stable-yard—a square of bolted doors,
Echoes no more to man or wheel or horse;
The rats have gone for lack of forage stores,
And vacant stalls tell of our change and loss.

What are these landscapes that I now behold,
And whence these bare fields that are new
wrought scars,
These gaunt unsheltered pastures grim and cold,
More mournful than the heaven without her
stars.

III.

This was my home—a country house of England,
Huge log fires blazed a welcome to the guest;
On many a winter morn, a merry band
Descended the broad staircase with a jest,
Ready to be the first of many best,

In fierce endeavour of an arduous chase;
Or when the evening came, relaxed in rest
Mid sofas soft and warm, told of the heated pace
Stupendous fences cleared and phantom deeds
retraced.

Was this the garden where I once did pass
Long, long ago in youthful holiday?
Was this disordered uncut tufted grass
A mown lawn—and smoothly rolled to play
Tennis or croquet? This weedy rugged way,
A gentle path mid rhododendrons bloom?
Dead leaves lie thick and unpruned rose trees
stray,
Where is the mower now, the old man with
his broom?
I shall but call in vain, all is decay and gloom.

A score of horses in these stables stood,
Well groomed, well rugged and warmly
bedded down,
Across the yard at midday with their food
Red jerseyed figures moved. Black, bay and
brown
The chestnut mane—where now? The fates
but frown
And silence—silence hovers over all.
Like driven sands that swamp a desert town,
The sands of Time have laid their dismal pall,
And where keen heads looked out nought but
a barren wall!

On every side these fields I freely ran,
Sold—sold—I trespass now; no day goes by
But some old friend falls neath his owner's ban,
Beauty is gashed and torn, the wild birds fly,
Men and their tools but swiftly multiply
The sad destruction of these ancient trees;
Now to these lands I bid a long goodbye—
I'll seek the revels of the wayward seas,
Strange foreign lands far off and alien mysteries.

HOPE DEFERRED.

“ Unruly winds wait on the tender spring.”

Blow winds once more !

Untether,

The frozen forces of thy wintry weather;

Out from thy breast let pour

The dying gales together.

Sweep up the debris of the sullen skies,

Drive them in massed battalions o'er our eyes,

To hide the young Spring's feathers.

Fall snow and hail !

Recover,

Your harsh bleak kingdom from the coming
lover;

Drive back the sunlight pale,

Hush up the calling plover,

Clothe with thy blighting garb precocious earth,

Stifle the infant striving of new birth,

And all your power uncover.

Rage on wild wind !

Offbreaking,

The budded branches sleepily awaking;

From all restraint unbind,

And o'er the smooth seas making

Vast walls of water rise in proud reply;

Moan yet again your voices through the sky,

And leave the whole world aching.

On, on, wild wind!
 Careering,
 In bitter blasts of uncontrolled tearing;
Herd up thy wintry kind,
 Drive them with demon steering;
Unshackled courses of the aerial way,
Beyond control they run their strength astray,
 Exhausted disappearing.

Hast fled wild wind?
 Departed,
 With all thy slaves of gloomy clouds cold
 hearted,
No lingerer left behind?
 O feel the warm sun darted
Down to moist earth and every living cell;
Clear skies above and joyful birds foretell,
 Thy reign has now departed.

AN OCTOBER EVENING OFF TOTTENHAM
COURT ROAD.

Into the foggy depth
Beneath an orange light,
Two horses go behind a man,
Drearily dragging,
Weary from day's toil amid the noisy streets
On slippery blocks of wood;
Towards their home.

Their home, a stable,
How much in that word—stable!

APHORISMS.

How beautiful are flowers, how cruel the Lover! Driven by the very ardency of his love he plucks them, holds them to him, inhales their dream-laden fragrance, only to bring them to an untimely death.

* * *

Love can never be kind, the tempestuous winds of its wild longing scatter the delicate webs of its building as an autumn gale roots up the towering elm.

* * *

Art is power of imagination and expression. Perfect art is imagination, expression and emotion.

* * *

Art can deal with the most sordid facts of life, but not with sordid words.

* * *

Good and evil are terms which should have been rejected long ago for Success and Failure.

* * *

The "trans-valuation of all values," wrote Nietzsche. Let us be content with two for the time being, and revalue Hypocrisy and Cities.

* * *

A City is an octopus of the land entangling in its ceaseless movement "Humanity."

The Slave Trade has never prospered so well; each day in cities, bodies and souls are bought and sold. And what ancient King in all his glory could muster so many thousand slaves as the two modern masters—Popular Government and Trade Unions.

* * *

More terrible is modern government with its petty myrmidons than the vain pomp and sword play of an ancient emperor.

* * *

The cruelty of tiger and savage is infinitesimal when compared to that of civilisation.

* * *

How naive is woman that she can wear the plumage of birds and thus aggravate her ugliness!

* * *

People say that cruelty in civilisation towards animals is caused by Ignorance. Are Civilisation and Ignorance compatible? If after ten thousand years of varied civilisations humanity has not yet arrived at an elementary standard of kindness, will it ever do so?

* * *

History proves that cruelty is an ineradicable trait of all human races; which fact might lead us back to the idea that only a cruel and autocratic governor or government can rule successfully.

There are more legalised crimes in the world than illegal.

* * *

The more beautiful the woman, the more virtuous she will be; she will not be so likely to fall at the first temptation.

* * *

Virtue can only be attained through Experience and Temptation.

* * *

Surely the senses become atrophied soon enough without resorting to artificial repression.

* * *

The divinity of a woman is her Satanic soul.

* * *

The most prehistoric and universal of vices has never found any difficulty in holding its own against Christianity.

* * *

The wickedest man of all history? He is the omnipotent God of Christianity. Behold his handiwork!

* * *

The Christian virtues are—humility, self-sacrifice, awe.

The Pagan are—pride, self-reliance, bravery.

I wonder which bring the greatest joy on this earth?

Whom would you rather have for companions in the next world, Antony and Akbar, Napoleon and Nelson, or Peter and the homely clergy?

Out of the mouths of Allied Ministers flowed honeyed words. They held the world spell-bound with their promise of "No more War." But like a conjuror, when he has sufficiently attracted your attention, they produced from some unlooked-for corner ten New Nations!

* * *

It is said that to make as many people happy as one can is a high ideal of this life; and yet the prostitute is despised.

* * *

Duty is a banquet hall for the elders, but a burial ground for youth.

* * *

I have been pointed out quite a number of unselfish people, but they do not bear investigation.

* * *

An unselfish person is like a draught animal, who works either to attain a good feed of grain or to avoid punishment.

* * *

Can one expect anything else but futuristic art in these days after having been to a dance and seen the naked women?

* * *

The historical origins of wars are religious and racial pride, but when one nation attempts to abolish these, she is at once set upon by the others. Therefore, mankind must have war, and why abolish things we love?

The Supreme Council wanted to add a little colour to the League of Nations, so they invented a few more Balkan States. Let us hope, at any rate, they will give us another "Merry Widow"!

* * *

Everyone suffers from some kind of snobbery, but the very worst form we can be guilty of is that of the Society "LION HUNTER." Behold her like an Epstein amid Greek statues.

* * *

The Turkish Peace Treaty appears to be the culminating point of modern civilisation.

* * *

The Allied Ministers are not the best one could wish for; their respective countries will soon be suffering from severe indigestion.

* * *

There is no country that entered the war other than from the most materialistic of motives.

* * *

We are all beggars in this life, yet expecting our own importunities to be heard, how many of us turn a deaf ear to the miserable remnant of the city street?

* * *

The word "Progress" will soon be as tainted as the words "Religion" and "Nationality."

There is a very logical reason for the difference of treatment to women in the Moham-
medan and Christian religions. Mohammed
was able to see the result of 6 centuries of
Christianity, and he judged that both men and
women had miserably failed in the trust placed
in them by Jesus as regards sexual proceedings,
so he thought of eradicating temptation as far
as possible.

* * *

A British Cavalry Regiment in a foreign sta-
tion is like a beautiful woman for the amount
of jealousy and criticism it inspires.

* * *

A clever person is one who can convince
himself that this world is the centre of the
universe, and then convince other people that
he is the most necessary adjunct to it.

* * *

Concentration on one definite aim in life
appears to be fanaticism, and all fanaticism is
stupidity, therefore, the world is governed by
fools.

* * *

Two days in the Carpathians—sun, snow,
wind; silence, solitude. The red carpet of
fallen beech leaves, the silver trunks, the
brown slender branches, the green of spruce
and other pine, the yellow larch. After this
one can return to the town, and the soul re-

dipped in the splendours of Nature can withstand the hideousness and monstrosities of humanity.

* * *

The oftener one looks at the map of Europe as compiled at the Peace Conference of Versailles, the more one notices how Europe has been cut in pieces and lies open and weak to the re-awakened masses of the East.

* * *

Germany and Germany alone can save Europe.

* * *

Europe is as a battleship out of date, or as a motor which has seen its best days. Weak from internal dissolution, its varied parts working inharmoniously, it threatens to disintegrate at any moment.

* * *

But what after all is Europe but a mass of mechanism, an edifice of false proportions, an outworn civilisation.

* * *

Which among the Nations of the World shall rise, which—like a perfected aeroplane will rise over the ruins of the old—soaring majestically, master of earth and sky; destroying, creating. Tearing away archaic values, instilling fresh principles; casting away old hopes, inspiring new desires; destroying the baroque throne of Hypocrisy, recreating the classic throne of Beauty.

The 3rd glorious anniversary of the glorious
Armistice! Behold Roumania!

* * *

Only in the great spaces of this world can
one get in touch with the Infinite and Unknown,
with the exception of some artist's masterpiece
it is impossible in a city.

* * *

Swept into the vortex of Humanity in search
of Money, shall I ever be able to reach the
smooth waters of Freedom—Contemplation and
Beauty.

* * *

I have seen many parts of the world, yet there
remain great tracts still unseen. Often I long
to have the discerning eye of Cunninghame
Graham or the sensuous language of Pierre Loti
to tell of what I have seen. Their sympathy,
their understanding for life alien to *our* civilisa-
tion, I have in common with both of them.

* * *

What a paradox is the word civilisation—an
ideal for all and a share for all.

* * *

When one has a mingling of active and
passive temperaments in almost equal propor-
tion, is it possible to find one's "metier"?

"Action, what is action? it dies the moment
of its energy," says Oscar Wilde.

It is true; it is the passive mind, the mind of

contemplation which rules the world and directs the active. The results of the former are more lasting than the latter.

* * *

The Washington Conference is more likely to hasten another War than to usher in an era of peace for mankind. Every individual's wants, let alone their thoughts, are different and when it comes to nations there is nothing in common except jealousy of one another.

* * *

The good emanating from the Franco-Turkish Treaty is simply to bring the rupture of the Anglo-French entente into the near future.

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