

THE SHEPHERD





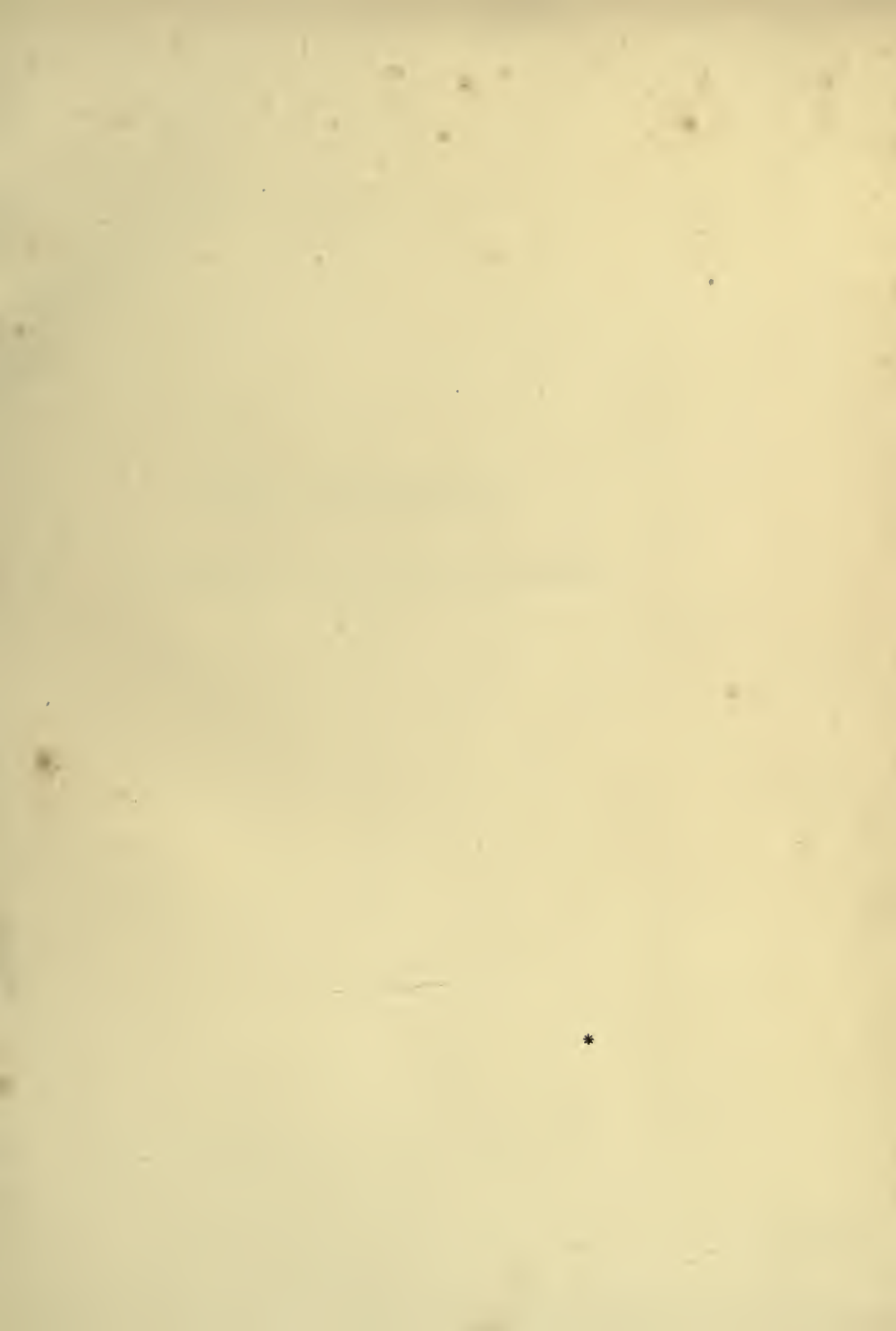
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THE SHEPHERD

A BOOK OF BALLADS AND SONGS



THE SHEPHERD

A BOOK OF
BALLADS AND SONGS

BY

HERBERT ARTHUR MORRAH

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & SONS
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1909

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TO
SIR F. SEYMOUR HADEN, P.R.E.

THIS TRIBUTE TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENTS
AND NOBLE CHARACTER
IN MEMORY
OF A FRIENDSHIP WHICH HAS ENDURED
"UNTO THE THIRD GENERATION"

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THE SHEPHERD

I

THE shepherd left his flock, and then the steep
Ascending, heard low music of the fells
Distantly chiming, as a sound that swells
And falls unheeded on a world asleep.

Cold to his heart, and faint, and lost, and dim
His mountain-home and all its wonders lay,
Loudly he heard the City calling him :
“ Shepherd, from these dull fields, away, away !

“ Is yours a task to fit the soul of man ?
Gathers your life no gain, but moth, and rust !
And is it true, our life is but a span
Bridging the destinies of dust and dust ?

“ Shepherd, the herding of a flock was sweet
Once, in the primal world’s fresh-scented age.
Recall it so ! But here’s a later page,
Storied with tales of conquest and defeat,

“ Hatred and love, pity, and hope, and pain,
Where millions surge and other millions strive ;
These cry to you, and shall you still refrain
From splendid life who are not yet alive ?

“ The land is teeming with a fruitful seed,
But barren you : dreaming of better days,
You linger still in these deserted ways,
Your youth despoiled and your doom decreed.

“ Come to the City, come, it is not well
To waste your spirit when its powers are grown ;
Gird up your loins : assault this citadel,
And know the glories that the great have known.”

The shepherd’s veins were quick with hope and fear ;
Musing awhile, he hasten’d to obey.
A maiden called him, but he would not hear,
Forth to the City straight he took his way.

II

The City's curse, steel in our human blood,
 Poisons the weak, but medicines the strong
 For task and toil. This wind, that bears along
Us men, as straws on the relentless flood,

Breathes to a lonely soul the word of fire.

 But you, O foolish shepherd, could not see
The flaming light unquench'd, that bids aspire,
 There in your mountain-ranges calm and free.

You, for the burning spark that cannot die,
 Changed but the blazing torches of the town,
With a rare zest you raised the brand on high,
 And with an equal madness flung it down.

It was too late, your blood was cursed. Too late
 To stem the raging current wild and deep.
And who should pity, in his luckless state,
 The man, once shepherd, herded with the sheep ?

You fled the mountains, fled the meads bedew'd,
 Once they were yours : you lost them, once for all.
Gifts of the gods are never more renew'd,
 That you refused they will not now recall.

Without regret you shared the common lot,
 Hopeless their daily labour, yours the same ;
Joy you had none, and yet you miss'd it not,
 Base were your pleasures, yet you knew no shame.

Without regret, for once you trod again
 Those pastured fields awhile, and hotly flung
The City's scorn on some that heard with pain,
 But could not answer in their rustic tongue.

They could not answer, but their silence gave
 The just rebuke you could not understand.
 What if they perish in an empty land ?
The City sinks you in a nameless grave.

And here's the moral, bitterly bestow'd,
 Not upon you, but on ourselves, who rest
Here with content in this befoul'd abode,
 Who might yet fly to Nature and be blest.

Foolish, O shepherd, you : more foolish yet
 The poet, whom one voice persistent calls,
Who will not dare the fate before him set,
 But breaks his heart against the City's walls.

THE SINGER

THE man could sing : blown from a southern sea,
Tann'd by the fierce heat of the summer sun,
Bound as a slave for service to the free,
His life but scarce begun ;
Storm and high passion once had swept his soul
And sear'd his face :
" Fill ! " he had cried, " and break the flowing bowl,
Make grace disgrace ! "

A common story ; yet the man could sing,
Sing like a bird. Nay, for a bird is far
Too tender and too trivial a thing,
And stern in strength our human singers are !
Not like a bird, but with a deeper note
Than from a nestling's throat
Can issue to the Maker of all Song
He sang, and so men listen'd, rapt and long.

He sang of the live air, till the dead street
 Sprang to his call, grew light and bright and wise.
Men held their breath, wan women stay'd their feet,
 New laughter in their eyes.
Ringing to heights beyond his promise went,
 Paused, and return'd, and sped
Thro' lowest courts wherein all faith was spent
 Or whence all hope was fled.

Heard we the close ?
 Dared we to look behind ?
Was it regret that rose
 Or solace for the mind ?
God answers ! Love might yet awake, and fire
 The singer's heart and will,
He may be soil'd and sunken in the mire,
 He may be singing still.

THE GATES OF CHRYSOPRASE

THEY halted at the gates of chrysoprase,
A thousand phantoms, worn to shadows faint :
Weary of the wild waste of human ways,
Sick of the wanton passion of dead days,
And conscious of their taint.

They halted. Swift their darkling pilgrimage
Through desert space, under the spell of bliss,
With no cold reading of life's painful page,
An easy flight of soul from stage to stage :
—So that world joins to this.

And "Open ! Open ! Open !" was the cry
At that strange halt, which seem'd so dread and dire,
While still the immortal music soars too high
For hearts which naught can soothe or satisfy
Save the celestial fire.

Till one at last, embolden'd by distress,
Knocks at the gate, but answer cometh none.
He cares no whit, no jot for more or less,
But still upstanding in the fearsome press
Outstares the blinding sun.

Crying, in speech of woe:—" No merit mine,
But suffering only, not with patience borne ;
God's glance I never felt, nor touch benign :
My world no splendid star of His design :
But spittle of His scorn !

" Yet haply, if He hear, or if refrain,
That sorry coil we knew of earth may mend.
But who shall answer if our cry be vain ?
How, if these gates of glory barr'd remain,
Our waiting find its end ? "

He ceased : and loudly through the listening throng
Murmurs arose, weird as the ghosts of thought,
As though each heart shrank dead from sense of wrong,
Nor any music heard, save muted song
Echoing from spheres unsought.

Husht was the scene. From gates far lost in cloud
The jewell'd flames of glory seem'd to fade,
All voices sank to silence, heads were bow'd,
As though in sight above the phantom crowd
There swung the phantom blade :

The blade that cuts all hope, all blossom down,
The sword of silent wrath, unswerving might,
Swift, sharp, and sure, impatient to discrown,
Taking man's highest record of renown
To close it to the light.

Whereon in depth of the descending gloom
Vanish'd and fail'd all feelings save despair ;
And nothing but their loss had place or room,
Nor knowledge other than impending doom,
Immitigable care.

Who tells how long this torture held its sway ?
The tragic tale is written in God's book.
These are the lines of truth, and they shall say
Who wipe their terrors with their tears away
And in that mirror look.

For sudden, soft, from shadows dimly coil'd,
 Out of the gloom of an exhausted storm,
As though the powers of darkness were despoil'd
In the white glimmer of a robe unsoil'd,
 There moved,—a human form.

And with the music stirr'd, which in the glow
 New peace dispersed for dark disorder wild,
Through the long ranks erst tossing to and fro
Which fell to solemn order, row on row,
 There walk'd,—a little child.

With radiant air he came, and certain pace,
 His form full fair, stainless his very guise,
Passing with joyous triumph in his face,
He touch'd the barrier, with divining grace
 Of knowledge in his eyes :

The gates flew open ! And to loftier height
 Beyond the open screen unfolded far,
Stretch'd, to the spirit fain, the gladden'd sight,
Vaster, those halls of unimagined light,
 God's realms of star and star :

Whereto the child, with swift and instant feet,
Led on, as one unstain'd of hate or sin,
Nor fail'd one soul to follow as was meet :
And all their woes were lost in safety sweet :
And so they entered in.

THE WOODS OF ALDERNAIN

WOODS of Aldernain !
How full of grace and glory,
How redolent of pain
To those who know your story !
For though, with Winter dead
Hath Spring begun her reign,
Thy glades the children never tread,
O woods of Aldernain !

Woods of Aldernain !
The maid was such a treasure,
Her eyes had such disdain ;
In laughter was her pleasure.
Alas ! her cries were vain
Against the fate which bound her,
And lifeless she had lain
Long, when the children found her.

Her form, which men thought fair,
Was happy childhood's bane—
And the children left her lying there
In the woods of Aldernain.

Woods of Aldernain !

The children will not blunder
Into your heart again.

But still, when roaring thunder
Breaks with a storm of rain,
They cry : " Though spirits strive
To wash away the stain,
A mortal grief is yet alive
In the woods of Aldernain ! "

Woods of Aldernain !

This was good Fortune's doing,
So fertile your domain
Is grown from Nature's wooing.
There the wild creatures roam,
Happily met and mated,
By wanton feet their home
Is never desecrated.

And what was foul is fair,
And what was loss is gain,
For Spring is rich, Summer is rare,
In the woods of Aldernain !

A DREAMER'S VENICE

THIS is Venice, this the centre of a people's power
and pride ;

Dead, you call it? Shall we enter? See, the door is
open wide—

Make our bow to dead San Marco? Dead, if all the
saints have died !

You, sir, with your northern vision and your friendly
foreign air,

Talk of death with strange precision. Death is foul, but
life is fair ;

Here is life ; no land is fairer ; there's the truth, deny
who dare !

Here is life, the high immortal knowledge of a love which
brings—
Through this stately graven portal, borne on yonder
angels' wings—
Hope to men who take the burden, bear the cross of
earthly things.

Good, you think your kind of thriving argues other folks'
decay!
What's your progress but depriving life of sweetness,
anyway?
You with your machines and madness, dust and discord,
fret and fray.

Here, if labour lags a little, here, if tires the spirit soon,
Time is short as glass is brittle—we enjoy life's after-
noon!
Quickly fall the evening shadows, night sinks down on
the lagoon.

They who gave us of their glory gave us all the world
beside,

You, who come to read our story, gaze upon our strength,
our pride,
Make your bows to great San Marco, ask his pardon,
since you lied !

Rough, perhaps, my speech, but burning with the zeal
of faithful will,
Make it yours, and so returning keep it yours for good
or ill,
Venice is as great as ever, all her fires are blazing still.

So your hand, sir, men and nations are but accidents of
birth.
What if these your desolations wide you spread and far
your dearth ?
Venice rests the great protectress of the beauties of the
earth.

A MOMENT AT WINCHESTER

DREAMS of the dying year and fading day
Shine through this line of gloom, this leafless
shade,

Bringing the sun to mock the earth's decay,
In which but yester-night our hearts we laid :
Those hearts that yester-eve
Could only rasp and grieve
For some lost eminence of power or place,
Yet held, in care's despite,
A promise of the light,
And cast despair aside, to pray for grace.

For lo, it is with men as with the soil,
Barren and bleak while heat and frost and wind
Slake from the deep their thirst, that corn and oil
Spring forth, with all ripe blessings in their kind ;

That through the pregnant mould
Our living eyes behold
Our fathers' world, as though it were the same,
The very earth we know
Fruit-bearing, in the glow
Of this bright sun, that consecrated name.

So are we one with those who went before!
Here the grey clothes of venerated age
Hide, with our own, one nakedness the more
Pleading the common shame, and History's page:
In which time-sodden street
The generations meet
To cry the sorrows which at least endure,
The old to weep in vain,
The new to vaunt their pain,
All to lament the doom which calls too sure.

What of this doom, that we are still distress'd
Who wander cold beside these crumbling walls?
We tread the stones more patient feet have press'd,
We crush in haste to our own funerals.

Traces their wisdom gave
To check the greedy grave
Lie on the path that is not yet fulfill'd,
The path their virtue made,
Who charge us, unafraid,
“Lose not the sense of height the while you build.”

Was that your motto? Was it thus you plann'd
The city beautiful, so that it grew
Beyond you? For the mute perfections stand
Mighty ensamples for the fit and few.
Yonder, an anger'd race
The feverish market-place
Curses, for slight ills now to monsters grown,
Forgetting in its need
That the unsifted seed
Springs to the bitterest fruit where it was sown.

But here is peace, freshly engender'd still
In this calm plot, where silence conquers speech,
Where springing lights, speaking from hill to hill,
Point to a land that lies within your reach.

Yours, though the mirage seem
The offspring of a dream,
Who have not falter'd, are not left forlorn ;
Who tend the failing fires
That gild a thousand spires,
Who guard at night the treasures of the morn.

THE FIRES OF FENNY VALLEY

THE fires of Fenny Valley
Lift to the lurid sky
Their gaunt arms and their fetid smoke,
That men may live thereby.

Such joys as earth may yield us
Fleet with the wind away :
But power we have,—to fashion yet
Life for a better day.

Look backward to the cradle,
Look forward to the grave,
Behold the onslaught of the sea,
The backwash of the wave :

The flotsam and the jetsam
 Thrown by each wanton tide,
And here and there a wasted corpse
 You yet may sleep beside :

But ever, while the sunlight
 Speaks of a dawn to come,
See where your fellows strain their arms
 And hear the markets hum !

With them, from dawn to darkness,
 Forge you the iron bars,
And little more than the machine
 Pay heed to blows and scars !

Forge as your fathers forged them,
 Nor live nor lust in vain,
But wrestle with the earth for wealth,
 To give it back again ;

Knowing that while they labour'd
 Whose sinews now decay,
The valley had no use for saints,
 And you are much as they.

Our fathers took such pleasures
As came within their ken :
They loved, as wisely as ourselves,
The sport of making men.

And we must do our duty,
And give the maids their due ;
That if the world were empty, we
Might start the race anew.

For past the reeking valley,
We hear them moan and fret,
Whose children from unwelcome birth
Are nursed to bleak regret :

A dull demure existence
Where all men have their fill,
The cold heart, and the coward's part,
Take them who can and will !

But here's the heaving murmur
Of million wheels that whirr,
Here is the essence, pulsing warm,
That keeps the world astir :

Blood that beyond to-morrow
Shall fill a nation's need,
Raising, to an insurgent call,
The sanest, sturdiest breed,

While fires of Fenny Valley
Leap lurid to the sky,
And fill the world with light and flame,
That men may live thereby!

DURLSTON BAY

SUNSET over the hills, and far at sea
One ship, a living mark, sighting the land,
Hails us to measure what her strength may be,
How master'd, and how mann'd.
'Tis England's flag she flies : England's, whose charge
Rises beyond the dim world's widest marge
And keeps our future free !

Sunset over the sea, and in the haze
Of summer heat, a breeze that murmurs low
Some fragrant memory of Dorset days
Lasting from long ago :
A poet's message, and a human creed,
The heart's demand ; that men no more misread
The men and modes they know ;

But bring with song the sunshine over the hills,
Waking, to join our life, a world that runs
In wider grooves, whose jubilation fills
The sphere of circling suns,
Whose glory gives our littleness its poise ;
While we, who revel in life's lesser joys,
Know not the pace that kills.

Then, ere the moon shine faintly over the wold,
Let us ingather all the charm of earth
That makes men see, though other thoughts strike cold,
Boys in their mood of mirth.
So, boys of Durlston, make the most of day !
Play is grand labour ! Is your labour play ?
Or must you too grow old ?

O for an echo ringing over the wave—
“ Never despair of England, youth on her side ! ”
Thus let your chorus, set to a joyful stave,
Swing with the moving tide !
Beneath these rocks such mighty forces heave
As soon might crush you : but you must believe
He conquers who is brave.

Conquest? Who spoke of conquest? Over the downs,
Over the main, a perfect calm doth brood.
Yonder, how many minds in Dorset towns
Have caught their poet's mood!
Now into Poole the wakeful waters creep,
Now on grey Corfe and on her crumbling steep
The modern spirit frowns;

And nothing, from the ages over and flown,
Can ever be, nor can appear the same.
But learn a language to the past unknown,
And give *yourselves* a name!
And when they bid you take as slaves your hire,
And pass from torch to torch your borrow'd fire,
Whose birthright is a throne,

Look back with patient eyes, and over the page
Forward, as seeing all things old and new,
Gravely discern how honest men must wage
War for the right and true.
Time's gold was never delved to make us slaves!
That doctrine, festering in a thousand graves,
Is not of English hue.

Nay, as your vision ranges over the space
Wherein we many with reluctance fare—
Ev'n as you burn to strip you for the race
In which you long to share—
Behold our players in their winning parts,
And take more fondly to your eager hearts
Those who can lose with grace !

Speak, summer, youth, and pastime, over so soon—
Say, kindly nurture, all too quickly past—
Have these, for blossom of life's afternoon
No promise that shall last ?
No seed to ripen and no fruit to fall
To the great Harvester who loves us all,
And fails not of his boon ?

Sunset over the sea gives answer fair,
Sunrise shall gild the shore with one reply—
“ In that vast England of the brighter air,
The sunlight cannot die.
What we hold fast is all the wide world's gain ;
What we hold not, let other hands retain,
If Freedom flourish there ! ”

Ay, Freedom! To hold the Cross still over the Crown—
Though half the world take vengeance for a text—
So pledge your faith, so charter your renown
For this life and the next.
And they, who ventured lamely in the fight,
Longing shall watch you from the lists of light,
Unto the last sundown!

WITH FLOWERS TO STELLA

DEAR child, because a gleam of gold
Your grey eyes luminously hold,
These blossoms, with their grateful hue,
Have turn'd my vagrant thoughts to you,
Knowing they cannot fail to yield
The grace and fragrance of the field,
Although they breathe, for human ears,
Change, and the sense of falling tears,
Because these buds, which must decay
In the declining of a day,
Speak of a doom too soon in store,
When I who send them come no more.

Child, when outworn and weary, I
This husk of being have put by,
And long unseen, unspoken, go
The loves and hopes I cherish so,

Deep in your looks the world shall see
How that your heart remembers me.
The children you have taught to play,
Light as yourself, with eyes as grey,
Shall chance amid their roystering
To lilt the tunes I tried to sing,
And raise, in their melodious rhyme,
This half-forgotten summer-time.

AN INVITATION

COME ; the summer spirit beckons !
Leave your highways of the city ;
Let the gay and let the witty
Bid you stay : yet one that reckons
Art unkind, but Nature tender,
Calls you to the deeper pleasure,
Takes his cup, and fills his measure,
Claims your presence, cries your pity,
Asks your passionate surrender,
Bids you give him all your treasure,
Where the ripen'd glories rise
Of an earthly Paradise.

Come ; for yet you have not sighted
This green land of rock and river,
Where the waters gleam ; where quiver
Marshes frost hath never blighted.

Here our Graces with their singing
Soon could tame your Furies' passion,
Here survives the ancient fashion,
Honour lives : Love is requited.
And the heart you have delighted
Shall not fail fresh tribute bringing,
Heralding the time to be :
Faint yet bold ; a slave, but free.

Come ; the spell is yet unbroken,
Canopies the heaven o'er us
Spread, and life that lies before us
Hath the stars for sign and token
Of a faith unseen, yet spoken
With the music you discover
In the language of a lover :
So this mystic note of beauty
Swells into a lighter chorus,
Calls you to your present duty :
Come, nor evermore depart ;
All my hope is in your heart !

THE STORM

THE reading that she gave of love
Was like the storms that brood above,
Was like a cloud that passes by,
A whirlwind that afflicts the sky,
Part of the tumult of a dream
Where things are never what they seem.

But if she wanted peace and rest,
Why were her fancies frenzy-drest ?
By some these things are lightly done,
She would not so be lost or won.
Nay, but to stir her soul's desire
There must be flood, there must be fire,
And I must go through both to win
The heart she wrapp'd her passions in.

So, when I knew her heart was mine,
I thought her fury was divine.
And though I fear'd, I would not fly
The darts of her intensity.
For Nature works with storms that surge,
With cuts that heal, with draughts that purge ;
And woman, by her wile and will,
Speaks with the voice of Nature still.

So let her often speak to me
And various let her accents be,
For words that strike, and thoughts that rive
Will keep the weakest faith alive,
And, when the tempest once is past,
Ourselves shall blow the counterblast.

TO A RIVER VISITANT

O HAPPY visitant skimming the river
With greater grace than any sailor plies,
Wheeling aloft, as ready to deliver
A word of freedom straight from sullen skies :
Here is thy home, yonder is thy dominion,
Here the black flood, and there the salient brine,
And yet thou waverest on uncertain pinion,
Taking no rest, calling no refuge thine !

Answers the wind, bursting in vigorous thunder,
Answers the high crest of the troubled main,
As though o'erhead an angel spoke, and under,
Giants, mighty in wrath, awoke with pain ;
While, fathoms deep, wild monsters past restraining
Gnash for blind hate against the unyielding stone,
Hurling in pitiless rage their strength remaining
Against the cliffs whence the wise birds are flown.

Tarry awhile, thou well-advised stranger !
Tarry awhile, and soon thou shalt return,
For thee the murky town holds little danger,
Thee its wild lights shall neither blind nor burn.
Quickly the storms die in the shining distance,
The tides resume their calm and equal flow,
The fiercer furies slacken their resistance,
The genial sun beams forth, and thou canst go.

But I—if it could be that I might follow
Down to some channel where the white sea breaks,
Scattering music sweet through the caverns hollow
Dash'd by salt spume in diamantine flakes—
There would I stay, and, loosed from the world's sadness,
Forget the care which now too seldom sleeps,
And hear the laughter of the ocean's madness,
And wait the tempest rolling from the deeps.

FRIENDSHIP : A BURDEN

FRIENDS, to a thousand times our friends,
Until at last the journey ends !
Although in acting as they would,
None but themselves had seen it good ;
Although they put a vision frail
Above the sense that should prevail ;
And cold contention took the place
Of simple and conceding grace.
They call'd it Love—the magic thought
 Made protest ill.
Seldom Life gives us what it ought,
 But what our follies will.

These friends, alas, in whom we trust,
Who are not ordinary dust,
Whose nobler hearts give to mankind
What's lacking in the general mind :

These worthy natures, zealous, fine,
Who see the world a world divine,
Yet fail what's near them to discern ;
Who love to teach, but will not learn—
Behold them ! Is it not a grief
That they should mock at our belief ?
All that we had to them we gave :
 They were not free
To take, and bury in the grave
 Their own felicity !

JUSTICE : A PANEGYRIC

IS Justice dead? You live
Where the black past is past,
Where all who hate forgive,
Where, full in light, at last
Those bitter troubles die
That held our souls in thrall,
Where none are great or small,
Where none are low or high,
But God is all in all.

Not dead! Because you stand
In an unshadow'd land,
And that your spirit gave
This side the hungry grave
First for your country's good,
Then for the brotherhood
Of all who feel and think—

Of all who suffer pain
In body, soul, or brain,
 The feeble and the brave,
For them that dare the flood
 Or hover near the brink—
All that you gave of power,
 All that you gave of love
Rises here to your praise.
For first in passionate days,
And at the sunrise hour,
 Your prayers aroused above
A force that seem'd to sleep ;
 Then it was yours to move
Quick hands and willing feet
Under the scorching heat
 Of an angry summer sun.

Yet was your work not done !
 On through the night, when deep
The mystic silence hung,
Or loud some brazen tongue
 Clang'd a despairing knell,
You whisper'd : " It is well ! "
 You bade the discords drown :

Your spirit rose at need,
 You touch'd the hero's note,
You did the hero's deed,
 You struck; and worlds remote
Swore that the stroke should tell.

Hero—that were the name
 To set a captive free.
Saint—were a higher claim
 Blessing the years to be.
For you, O lofty soul,
No shining aureole
 Can add to your renown.
Through you, to distant skies,
The voice of honour cries,
 Speaking a nation's shame.
Yet, by the perfect just
 Lives truth, and dieth blame.
Your body falls to dust,
 Your soul lives on the same.
By faith and hope and light
You bid us walk aright,
 Eschew the gauds of fame

And pray for perfect sight.
So let us work and fight :
 In vain shall Justice call ?
The prisoner's chain shall rust,
 His bands decay and fall,
Depart the years of lust,
 And God be all in all.

THE POET

THE King stepp'd down from his throne,
Robed in his royal fashion,
His sword-rest clang'd on the angry stone,
His lips were cold with passion.

His words were the words of rage,
Though they took the tone of sorrow :
“Gather me Statesman, Saint, and Sage ;
We must make war to-morrow !”

The Statesman's words were few,
But a terrible fierceness framed them,
And the people shouted when they knew
What light, what fire inflamed them.

The Saint was longer : he sigh'd :
And tearfully talk'd of friction :
But look'd on the signs of strife with pride,
And murmur'd a benediction.

Then the Sage spoke up for them all :
" Nature," he said, " hath a hunger
For havoc. Answer her stirring call
As they did when the world was younger !"

.
But the Poet came forth with a cry,
And their pulses beat the faster :
" For Love ye live, yet for Hate would die—
And which of the twain is your master ?

" Nay, let me sing you a song
Of a fair, heroical haven,
Where peace makes her joy life-long !"
But the King said :—" This is a craven !"

Stung, he replied :—" I will go."
" Cheer us," they said, " with your singing !"
But his answer came—" Not so !"
And his accents, too, were stinging.

He said :—" If I fight, I fight,
With a patriot's zest and gladness :
When we return, I will write
The truth of this racial madness !

" I will sing, when we all return,
Such a strain of fear and thunder,
That half of the world with shame shall burn,
Half tremble with hopeful wonder !"

.

He fell in the front of the fray,
And the song on his lips was blended
With shouts of a wonderful day
Whose echoes are not yet ended.

But what he sang is unknown,
And what he felt is unsated,
The world is no happier grown,
Its horrors are scarcely abated.

They raised a great stone to his name,
Letter'd large with a soldierly story,
They gave the proud cause of his fame,
And a Lie is his Title to Glory.

ONE WORD

GIVE me one word of hope,
When days are sad and long,
And that sweet music shall awake
New harmonies of song.

Give me the word of love
Which once your lips could frame,
And I'll return the longing thought
That rises at your name.

Give me one word of life,
And all the days of woe
Shall pass through darkness to the light
We lived in long ago.

THE VIGIL

A LEGEND OF THE MISSION-FIELD

I

L OUD through the land from east to west
Red battle surged ; from north to south
The demon of a world's unrest
Blazed in the angry cannon's mouth.

And growing fury, creeping fire,
Sprang from the outer darkness deep,
Uncheck'd, to hurl a people's ire
On distant nations lost in sleep.

Soundly they slept ! They could not hear
Low from our lips that hopeful call,
That prayer for life, which knows not fear,
Yet asks that death may not befall,

For life is sweet, and men must take
 Into their hearts wife, child, and friend.
But sound they slept, and only wake
 Knowing the strange and dreadful end.

Yet God gave strength : and morn by morn
 Faithful His luminary rose
To give, with every hour new-born,
 A light unseen of friends and foes.

We look'd the future in the face,
 And dared its issue : it was kind.
The body loses form and grace,
 Remains the beauty of the mind—

Remains the inward health and light,
 Force of the brain, strength of the will,
Remains the heart's supernal sight,
 Remains the soul's own splendour still.

We said farewell to life and love,
 We said farewell to hope and youth,
We glanced below, we gazed above,
 And so we faced the tragic truth.

Fears in our danger rose, but fell :
At first the children held their breath,
But soon they heard, and it was well,
As of a friend, the name of Death.

And so to arms, while east and west
Red battle surged, and north and south
The demon of a world's unrest
Blazed in the fiery cannon's mouth.

II

Each to his task : each to his post :
We took our orders, none rebell'd ;
We shared with those who loved it most
The honour of the name we held.

And all was ready, come the dread
Deliverance as it might and must.
Our chief looked noble as he said :
"Do but your duty, God is just."

Each to his post. Increased the strain,
The days were one hard labour long,
But still we found our wits again,
And sometimes laughter rose to song.

A cheerful band, together knit,
Old friends, and only one away,
And he ? The good God answer it !
Alone. He could not disobey.

And yet how grand his fatal lot,
A mortal shielding the divine,
For though he fall, he suffers not
Who guards till death a sacred shrine.

We left him when the hour was late
(One only could be spared to rest
Within the sanctuary gate
Before the emblems of the blest).

His face was calm, his eyes were bright ;
With cheerful voice he said " Good-bye ! "
And pointed to the single light
That hung before the altar high.

He spoke—we answer'd with a smile ;
 “You die together : I alone.
The future ? 'Tis a little while,
 And we shall meet before the Throne.”

And in his glance there shone the trust
 Of those whose work is yet to do.
The scoffer's scorn lay deep in dust,
 For they who wonder'd found him true.

Forth to our fearful toil we went
 Through empty court and vacant room,
And there, his courage still unspent,
 We left him kneeling in the gloom.

III

The days, the very hours were long ;
 And twenty times he heard the clock
Above him chime for evensong.
 Twice every day he turned the lock,

Seeking the cloister. There the store
Was scanty. Little was his need ;
He would not give the body more,
It was his soul he will'd to feed.

And all the while from east to west,
With distant thunder north and south,
The demon of a world's unrest
Blazed in the furious cannon's mouth.

One night he turn'd at the quick sound
Of footsteps, while the angry storm
Seem'd nearer. On the holy ground
There stoop'd to him a sombre form.

A friend ! A parchment-yellow face,
But still a friend, who spoke with haste :
"The time is short, but I can trace,
Master, a path across the waste,

"Where all lie dead. The time is short !"
The priest but bless'd him by his name :
"In days of good and ill report
You helped me. Christ would do the same."

“ But look,” he said, “ there, overhead,
Light fails. Our foes I fain would foil.”
With magic feet his servant sped
And brought him back a cruse of oil.

Blest service ! Once again the glow
Shone brightly as it shone of old ;
With thanks he made his servant go :
“ We meet,” he said, “ when all’s unroll’d.”

“ Dead ! ” And the merry music still’d
Of children ; the perfected zeal
Of men and women, proudly fill’d
With love for this strange people’s weal.

Gone ! And he shrank a moment, blind
With horror : then to lift his eyes
And see, past every fate unkind,
A sign of perfect peace arise.

IV

Night fell. Once more the solemn hour
Of vigil through increasing pain,
Alone, whilst in the quiet tower
Chimed the sweet bell again, again,

To daylight, with an aching heart
 He watch'd and waited for release.
The slightest whisper made him start :
 He pray'd with pallid lips for peace.

Peace, but to keep that altar light
 Steadily burning till he died.
And after ? God maintains the right ;
 The rest He will at last provide.

“ My happiest duty's all but done,
 I fear no sword's benignant edge,
But fear, ere yet my race be run,
 The last most dreadful sacrilege.”

He spoke with utterance faint and weak,
 Hunger had long begun to gnaw,
But still he pray'd, intent to seek
 Mercy for those without the law.

Then the light flicker'd, and his strength
 Grew with the moments less and less.
But prayers are heard. Loud, loud at length
 He heard the rabble shriek and press.

He rose to meet them, threw the door
Wide open ; came full strength anew.
Then at one blow the holy floor
Was quickly stain'd a crimson hue.

But ere he fell one glance he flung
Backward, to lift a cry of praise,
For there before the altar hung
No flickering light. A mighty blaze,

A golden splendour, seen of men
Who hold the faith when all is gone.
He saw, and died. And only then
The blind unreasoning crowd swept on.

V

O crowning mercy, vigil blest,
Hiding from those imperfect eyes
The triumph of that strange unrest !
For we, from vantage of the skies,

See with an undiminish'd faith
The light, extinguish'd for an hour,
Pass from the dim abodes of death
To radiance of a higher power :

While through the land from east to west
Dark fury rules, and north and south
Blind anger, with a demon's zest,
Is blazing in the cannon's mouth :

See fresh reveal'd, through weal and woe,
That ancient promise, made of yore,
As light athwart the darkness : "Go,
For I am with you evermore !"

THE DREAM-DANCERS

AT even, when the house is still,
The far, far world a silence holding,
When angry voices, harsh and shrill,
Have ceased at last their cruel scolding :
With irksome thoughts alone I sit
And on the ills of life I ponder,
And ask if Wisdom, Grace, or Wit
Will have the strength to mend them,—yonder.

Then, suddenly, to ease my woe,
Out come the dancers, stepping lightly
Where, in the hearth's uncertain glow,
One spark shines, scintillating brightly :
And soon around the room they fling
Their merry notes, their wanton pleasure ;
Were I not spell-bound, I would spring
To catch their glee, to join their measure !

Dream-dancers ! As they dance, they dream
That all those half-decay'd romances
Love, and *Goodwill*, and *Peace Supreme*
Are solemn truths, not idle fancies :
And I who watch am smitten mute,
I cannot mock their happy seeming,
I frown : my grimness they refute :
I smile : and know not I am dreaming !

“MINE EYES UNTO THE HILLS”

BECAUSE there are so many things of Earth
Our mortal eyes have probed not, we assign
To those vast heights which were before our birth
The deeper knowledge which is call'd Divine.
We, the Imperfect, who the Perfect seek,
Can so discern the Infinite Supreme
And Gracious Power that guides us, strong or weak,
In nothing Myth : that not an empty dream
Is the sure Hope of our deliver'd souls ;
But as, with winds that from the cloudland blow,
A veil athwart the distance as it rolls,
Can neither hide the peaks, nor spoil the glow,
So, that our spirits oft distress'd must be,
Our sight made faint with tears, our hearts from shame,
The mountains know in their sublimity,
And knowing, guide us by the Eternal Flame.

A GRAVE IN THE MOUNTAINS

HERE is the spot, his grave by ice-peaks guarded,
Where sunlight streaks the gloom.
His shroud the robes which angels have discarded,
Who watch above his tomb.

He was a man to death who pass'd still singing,
And yet the echoes grow
Shaking the clefts whence the strong pines are springing,
Where mountain-whirlwinds blow.

How light his step ! For, if his eyes were daunted,
Some bard of Greece or Rome
Quicken'd his music : or his clear voice chanted
The simpler songs of home.

What of his hopes? He held that Right must flourish.
What of his fears? His heart was not afraid.
Earth had the seed, and surely He would nourish
By Whom that earth was made.

Such was his life : here let the mountains hold him
Whose spirit is the same.
Let yonder citadel in peace enfold him,
And crown it with his name.

ILLUMINATIO

OUT of the dark we came,
Into the light we go,
A sun that sees our shame,
An all-revealing flame,
A purifying glow.

Yet these, by passion stain'd,
And those, by frenzies torn,
Who life and hope disdain'd,
To curse, while strength remain'd,
The day when they were born,

Shall breathe with us the same
Blest air, Death's overthrow,
And the redeeming flame,
And the restoring glow :
Out of the dark they came,
Into the light they go.

THE BRIDE OF MERRYHAMPTON

SWEET maid of Merryhampton,
This is your wedding-day,
A morning when the oldest fool
His folly puts away !

What courage meets your bridal !
Although your eyes have thrown
My challenge forward, to a time
Much later than mine own ;

Wherein a tremor takes me :
The aisles are floating dim :
My heart is thumping like a drum,
The whole world seems to swim.

The loftiest mountains rising
Sink to a dreary vale,
And there I wander, like a myth
In a forgotten tale !

Solemn the words are spoken,
Clearly the answers come,
The music clashes out afresh,
And cheerier grows the hum.

Once more the vision changes,
And down the valley dark,
As a fool peers, who summons thence
A solitary spark :

I see you, winsome matron,
Lead, with unfaltering hand,
A tribe of restive girls and boys
Across the stony land.

Pass, momentary vision,
Presage of change and care !
Give me to greet and touch again
My wreath'd and radiant pair ;

Whose friends with smiles and kisses
And laughter press and troop,
Whilst I one moment with a tear
Over your hand can stoop :

Just with one word of blessing
Deep in a sigh confest,
And a man's hand-grip, to condone
Our hoping for the best !

Maid of sweet Merryhampton,
Since here you will not stay,
My folly shall not follow you
Beyond your wedding-day !

WANBOROUGH FAIR

THE tumult how happy, the frolic how rare,
When the countryside chooses fresh colours to
wear,

And lighter with chaffing,
And brighter with laughing,
Flocks down in a body to Wanborough Fair !

See the wrestlers ! How agile, how lithe ! I declare
Every ounce is sound flesh, not an atom to spare !

Observe now how supple
Swing, swerve now each couple !
What *must* be their earnings at Wanborough Fair !

See, too, the high boats, as they plunge in the air
To a ring of delight, or a cry of despair !

If hollow confusion
Must follow illusion,
Still,—we nearly reach'd Heaven at Wanborough Fair !

But come to the downs, it is quieter there,
Away from the frolic, away from the glare ;
 So tender I'll guide thee,
 And render beside thee
My thanks to the makers of Wanborough Fair !

Yes, come to the downs, if my thoughts you would share,
And my love, and my life, and my joy, and my care,
 Forgetting in glamour
 Yon setting of clamour,
To die on my lips far from Wanborough Fair !

A SONG OF JUNE

HERE in the rays of the sun beating down in his
glorious might,
Reckon no longer for me the swift hours and their
petulant flight,
Paint me no shadows, display me no menace of storm,
Time in this place has no murderous deeds to perform,
Time is the slave of the singers who sing to a world
beyond reason and sight.

Bring me a posy wash'd sweet by the rainfall at noon,
What if the glory of morning must vanish so soon ?
What if you show me the vaporous nature of youth ?
I am no craven to turn me from death and the truth ;
Mine is a heart can retain all the pain and the passion
and pleasure of June.

More, for though nightshade and rue with the roses
entwine,

Pain, passion, and pleasure—drunk down to the lees of
life's wine

Purge me from treacherous fear of the infinite deep.

Where is the secret? All secrets are mine, or to give,
or to keep :

All, save the secret of sleep, and the secret of sleep is
divine.

A SLUMBER SONG

SLEEP, belovèd, while above thee
Love's own banner proudly flies,
And in all the hearts that love thee
Frenzy fails and tumult dies.
Sleep, oh, sleep, belovèd, sleep,
Angels yet thy rest shall keep ;
Sleep, belovèd, sleep.

Deep our plaint : and dost thou hear us ?
Let thy lips but faintly smile,
And thy peace shall hover near us
Healing in a little while !
Sleep, oh, sleep, belovèd, sleep,
Tranquil be thy rest and deep ;
Sleep, belovèd, sleep.

Then at last, when sunlight streaming
 Fills with hope the hearts of men,
Bring thou from thy love-land's dreaming
 Hope with dawn : but sleep till then.
Sleep, oh, sleep, beloved, sleep,
Waking eyes alone can weep ;
 Sleep, beloved, sleep.

TO KATHLEEN ON HER BIRTHDAY

DEAR little lady, not forgetting here
The island beautiful, the skies so clear,
Nor the warm days of summer flying fast :
I, with the new year at this hour begun,
Turn to your eyes which are so like the sun,
And lo ! they gild the future with the past.

A poet sang the waters of the isle,
Where to this day all nature seems to smile :
He sang of youth as well, as though to spurn
The thought that these our joys shall not return :
As though a certain vista he could see,
Whose promised lights I might pass on to thee.

I pass them on ! I give thee, for thy dole,
A heart undaunted, and a resolute soul !
It may be in the darkness thou shalt strive,
But power within shall keep thy light alive ;
And later days of grace discern the part
Accounted to thy will, and to thy heart !

AN EXILE'S SONG

HOME of my heart and shrine of my affections,
Where but in fancy I may bow the knee,
Exiled and slaved, with loving recollections
My grateful spirit turns to thine and thee !
Dear land of France, where light on all things living
Falls as thy gleaming banners yet advance,
I bid thee fair, whose gifts are worth the giving,
Whose graces are thy guerdon, land of France,
Dear land of France,
Dear land of France !

Thou heroes' home, from Clovis the immortal,
To every lord of his historic line,
Admitting none to pass that kingly portal
Save what seems noble, save what may grow divine !

May the bright sun—whose beams upon thy fountains
Light with what playful and translucent glance—
Strike to the heights of thine eternal mountains,
And raise once more the Oriflamme of France,
Dear land of France,
Dear land of France !

Home of my heart, though from the mists of ages
Some shadows fall upon the field of gold,
Not vainly labour'd all thy saints and sages,
Nor of thy fame is half the story told.
They who scorn thee, *their* labour is the vainest,
For thou shalt conquer, over change and chance,
Home to thy sons who art, and home remainest,
Home of the world's hopes, happy land of France,
Dear land of France,
Dear land of France !

A SONG OF THE SOLENT

UP with the lark while the day is new
And the year is young,
What if we part ere the hour be due
With our songs unsung ?
And the old spell broken, the peace, the rest
That we used to know,
Have they not told us, who love us best,
That Life runs so ?

Never, at least, shall our souls forget
This time and place,
Where, in a silver frame, are set
Glory and grace :
The shore, and the masts in their serried ranks,
And the flood between,
And the busy mart, and the distant banks,
And the island green.

Never, England, whose royal heart
 Beats for mankind—
To what we suffer, ere we depart,
 Shalt thou be blind :
Lost in the vast, beyond the light,
 Thine own may be,
Lost to the mortal sense of sight,
 But not to thee !

TO PATRICK, WITH A BOOK

A BOOK of ballads and songs I wrought alone and
apart,
Praying they might be worthy a mother's tears,
Worthy a mother's hopes and fears, and her courageous
heart.

Take my hand, little son : rather, one finger hold !
Strength—is it strength, or weakness ? If I but knew !
Then were the false from the true how readily, easily
told !

But if you ask me, knowing the stress of pain
Which the hours as they pass are all too ready to give,
—Where of the life that we live is the certain glory or
gain ?

Then let me answer gladly, We are not dust on the wind,
All the deeds we do are as thoughts of the soul
Touching the final goal and the fate of humankind.

All of our feeble efforts, all of our struggles and wrongs,
These you shall learn at least to endure in a little
while,
Even as now you turn with a smile to my ballads and
songs.

A LOVER'S POSTSCRIPT

NOW all these griefs are over,
And I am safe at rest,
I think you shall discover
The things I held the best,
And why I was dishearten'd,
And why I was distrest.

Not that the world was cruel—
Many had suffered more,
Heap'd like a load of fuel
Beside the furnace door,
Or thrown as wasted wreckage
Upon a barren shore.

Nor yet because those others,
Who made my loss their gain,
Had bless'd me once as brothers,
To curse me in my pain,
Seeing that what I dared and dream'd
My will might not attain.

Not these : but when, as lover,
I put you to the test,
'Twas you could not discover
The things I held the best,
Till griefs and joys were over,
And I was safe at rest !

THE MESSAGE

I

MUSIC came rolling out of the mists of morn,
Trumpets afar—stirring a magic breeze—
As the wind is stirr'd by a burden of heaving seas
At the hour when the tempest-horses, sick with scorn
Of their cruel reinage, chafe for the sandy leas
And the day new-born.

II

If the blast were all, to die with the mists away,
We had come to the light with hearts made sorry and
cold,
For a soundless air is dead as a tuneless lay,
And the heart must chill to a melody half unroll'd.
But the trumpet-notes were hardly fading afar
Or we heard a tremulous cadence, delicate, shrill,

Cleaving the nearness. Whispering, we stood still,
Watching the rise and fall of a drifted spar.
Watching a drifted spar, its rise and its fall,
Hearing—I hear them yet, with a tug at the heart—
Songs attuned to a morning joy, and the call
Of a man with a message to give ere his spirit depart.

III

“Speech and vision of this dawn-music made,
Here is the answer, here is the will to aid!
Fellow-traveller, drifting over the bar
To the land unknown, to the undiscernible land,
Balm for your sorrow, healing for wound and scar,
Give us to breathe out the word, and to stretch out the
hand!”

IV

So I turn'd to my friend, who upright stood on the
sand.
His eyes had caught some spell from the Naiads'
home,
Hair, all curl, still dripping with soft sea-foam,
While his body, lithe as cool, in the sunlight shone.

“Go!” I whisper’d, and lo, he was girt and gone.
Up the cliff he flung, without haste or rest,
Loosing the ready mare, leaping astride,
Laughing forth with a will to his easy quest :
And there I stood, on the silent shore, alone.
Life of the ocean, bountiful, warm, and wide
Swell’d in a silence harsh—till the music spoke ;
Till the glass and gold of the sand into jewels broke ;
Diamond dews, in the splendid dawn serene,
And a fantasy flow’d to my heart from a fount unseen.

V

I would leap too, like my friend, with an equal soul !
Who shall help the sick save one that is whole ?
Who shall raise the barque that is dredging the
ground,
But he, the diver in deeps where treasures are
found ?
Therefore into the craft that was moor’d hard by
Quickly I leapt : ready to gather and ply
Oars that answered my touch in the liquid blue,
And over the limpid water we forward flew.

VI

“O I will save thee, whosoever thou be !
Master or slave, holding what message for me ?
Is it a secret, that still from the cloudier range
Of that infinite world, with its gleamings so sombre and
 strange,
Rich, brilliant, and varied, glowing over the sea,
Draws the desire of this earth to the ultimate change ?
Or is it some simple neglect, or a duty ill-done,
Something that pricks thee to anguish at set of the sun ?
Be not afraid ! For the sorrow thou bearest, I bring
Solace, the solace of friendship, that holiest thing :
Flash though the spark down to ashes, *they* speak not
 the end :
Thy danger leaves no man a stranger ; each stranger is
 friend.
Of all that thou gainedst in life not an atom is lost,
Of all thou shouldst suffer thy Maker hath counted the
 cost,
Though the pains of the passionate Universe form and
 re-form,
There is light that shines ever and near in the track of
 the storm !”

VII

So I spake ; and a moment fell sick in a spasm of
dread,
As a coward might look without hope in the face of the
dead.
But he moved to my whisper some answer and made a
mute sign,
Whilst clear through a ripple of echoes that rose in the
brine
I steer'd to a rock which rose near like a haven of rest,
With the stranger my guest.

VIII

Unleash'd from the spar at a thought's throb, how easy
the task !
Impatient, I moisten'd his lips with a touch of my flask.
Nor waited the hand-gripping answer that gave with its
hold
Just the feeling of absolute trust that can hardly be
told.
And round us again in a murmur the music began,
As I bent me to measure at leisure the form of a man.

IX

Easy strength in each limb served to model an outline
of grace—

How noble the mould for a sculptor of figure and face !
And I marvell'd to see his immaculate masculine prime
Flung thus to the merciless waves, by what folly or
crime ?

Wherefore straight, while the sea-flocks flew mockingly,
merrily by,

A lustre came into his eyes and he made his reply.

X

“ Well you wonder, and I, in God's truth ! for I thought
it was past,

That the teen of my long disenchantment was over at
last !

Better so ! It is better one moment if only to live,
Since to you and you only I still have a message to give !
Take it hence,—to a beautiful hamlet not far from the
bight,

Double-steeped : you know it ? Thank God ! It was
thence, in my flight

From the trivial fate of the place where life's threads
were first spun
That I came forth to follow untrammell'd the course of
the sun.
So I left them! But tell me, what's right in our wonder-
ful scheme?
When we bind us with fetters and rivets, such dolts as
we seem!
And I loved her, the wife of my bosom, but life was too
mild,
I could not endure it, nor yet for the sake of my child!
It was freedom I long'd for, and therefore 'twas freedom
I sought—
The glory of freedom of movement and freedom of
thought!
—Seek her out, let her know that wherever or wildly I
roved,
However I struggled and suffer'd and ventured and loved,
It was all of it done with a will as a part of my right;
It is all of it open and plain to the sun and the light;
Take it hence,—it may be, that the truth she will under-
stand yet!
So you breathe not a word in her ear of remorse or
regret!"

XI

Music came rolling out of the misty bay,
As I look'd in his eyes that were dead to the light and the
day,
And I steer'd me sadly, slowly back to the strand :
Bringing the boat and the load on my heart that lay
Safely to land.

XII

To my friend the charge he was more than ready to bear :
To myself the duty rife with a delicate care,
Riding straight from the bight without thought of rest,
I sped me faithfully forth on my difficult quest :
And the sun flared out to guide me with provident flame
Away to the place of Two Steeples : and thither I came.

XIII

At the green-mantled house I paused, by the edge of the
wood,
Drawing rein at the gate, where the beautiful watcher
stood

Waiting for me, signalling out with a gaze
Pensive and grave; from the rift of a brow that could
blaze
Haply from anger, or haply from sorrow pale;
But welcomed me now with a smile to the woodland vale.

XIV

Calmly and proudly she spoke: "It is later!" she said,
"Later than many would welcome a word from the dead!
Yes, but I know!—" And the depth of her knowledge
was blent
With an infinite sweetness of touch that I could not
resent.
—"Even this day unto me there came, through the shimmering morn,
A message, out of the mists with music borne.
Out of the pathless drifts of a fathomless sea
It was a messenger hither who came unto me!

XV

"—Hither he came in the guise of a passing soul,
And who should heal his hurt but one who is whole?"

Nay, but he spake : and before me waver'd a shroud—
Himself seem'd veil'd in a wreath of encompassing
cloud—
And his voice was strange with its burden of torture and
pain,
As he told me his venture was all of it utterly vain :
How he yearn'd for a gleam of his home and the sight
of my face,
How he pray'd to be rid of the past with its dream of
disgrace,
For the dire disenchantment had eaten right into his
heart,
And he long'd to disburden his soul as he came to
depart !
Then I gave him the sign I was only too ready to give,
Since they who have pardon'd alone have good reason to
live :
It was I in one breath who could grant him the word of
release,
And his burden of evil was loosed in an infinite peace !
There you have it, the message so given, so answer'd !
the same
Were as readily heard from your lips, since so kindly
you came,

Friendly stranger! My thanks! There is nothing remaining to tell :
It is happy with me and my child, and I bid you farewell ! ”

XVI

So from that gracious presence I rode forthright,
And we laid him down in the shade of his lonely grave.
And while the sun shines fair and free far over the bight,
Or the tempest-horses shake their manes in the light,
Or trample forth full-fleck'd with their spume of
passion and scorn,
Safely lock'd in my heart is the load of the message he
gave,
Till the hour when the trumpet-music, after the night,
Rings to the morn.

THE BELLS OF BROMLEY

BELLS of Bromley Village !
Chime, as you chimed of old,
Ere the new world came to taunt you,
And nothing on earth could daunt you
From ringing the age of gold !

A gentle whisper at evening,
At morning a cheerful chime,
And always a mellow completeness
To tincture with sound and with sweetness
The falling waters of time :

These are the notes I remember,
These are the sounds I recall,
But here to a heart that rejoices
An echo of human voices
Were better by far than all !

And one, whom you summon so lightly,
 Aside one moment has laid
The solemn work he is doing,
The labour he is pursuing,
 And issues forth from the shade.

Ye bells of Bromley Village !
 He speaks as he spoke of old !
And never the world shall taunt you,
And nothing on earth shall daunt you
 From ringing the age of gold !

ENGLAND, TO THEE

FOR THE MILLENARY OF KING ALFRED

ENGLAND, to thee, in the name of the royally gifted,
England, to thee, from the first of thy cities
uplifted,

Rises the strain of a musical, magical song ;
Prayer, that ennobles the patriot soul and its yearning,
Hymn, breath'd of old at the head of the cradle of
learning,

Fatherhood, motherhood, brotherhood, tender and
strong.

For lo, with an echo deep drawn from the heart of thy
story,

There passes an army, new-crown'd with the laurels of
glory,

And led by a King who embraces the flag of the free :

While loud through the passionate world with a motion
of thunder,
A voice from the dead in the ears of the nations that
wonder
Rings high with the promise of infinite honour to be,
England, to thee.

RISE, GREATER LIGHT

RISE, greater light, and arising, enkindle
Fires that were failing a little while since !
What if we suffer'd this Britain to dwindle,
Monarch and prince ?

Here, when the strength and the infinite glory,
Waking anew, in the musical breeze,
Touch to fresh praise of her limitless story
Thundering seas :

Let the deep voice of invincible Britain
Cry with the laughter belovèd of God,
Fearless, her challenges, as it is written,
Armour'd and shod,

Shielded, enpanoplied, sure of her honour,
Proud in the children she bears at her breast,
Worthy the love that they lavish upon her,
Blessing and blest,

As it is written, displacing the evil,
As it is written, desiring the good,
So that the force and the scorn of the devil
May be withstood ;

Thus let it be : and though trouble, though passion—
Spite of her wisdom, her courage, increase—
Lies past this transient world and its fashion
Ultimate peace.

Therefore arise, greater light, to enkindle
Fires that were failing a little while since !
What if we suffer'd this Britain to dwindle,
Monarch and prince ?

HAIL AND FAREWELL

January 22, 1901

I

LIGHTEN our darkness : let the embers leap
To kindle life, and drive afar the cold,
Beacons, that glimmer from each distant steep,
Cast your long chains of fire upon the deep,
And wake the world to wonder and behold.

Then let the trumpets sound, the drums be roll'd :
"Hail and Farewell ! Hail and Farewell, O Queen !
Now in due time dost thou fulfil thy quest,
Join thy belovèd with pure joy serene,
And pass into thy rest."

II

Hail ! For this lamp was lit
A guide for age and youth,

In faith a message writ,
That men should carry it
Into the time to be ;
No legendary truth,
No graceless lie, to mock the shrine of Fame
With wanton worship of a regal name,
But record fair and free.

For we, who saw her move and saw her live,
Knew what she gave, and what she had to give,
Whose simplest word, through consecrated tears,
Made noble music in a people's ears.

This was her strength, that virtue was her dower,
The sign and symbol of a nation's power ;
From her all faction fled, before her died
Pestilent envy and malignant pride.

Dispensing mercy with imperial grace
She served the lowly from her lofty place.
Deep in her soul there dwelt pure passion's fire,
Love was her life, and peace her heart's desire.

So was it well : her destiny was great
To save a Throne and to preserve a State.
In the divine her human wisdom grew,
And so she made the England that we knew.

III

England, for thee at last
 This gracious life was born,
To wean thee from a past
By shadows overcast
 Outwearied and outworn.
A world may look with scorn,
But great and greater yet must Britain rise,
For God Himself hath call'd us from the skies
 To greet anew the morn.
On thee, most prosperous and pacific isle,
The favouring air shall play, the sun shall smile,
Mother of mighty kingdoms yet to be
Beyond the distant bars of land and sea.
Therefore behold, in patience unafraid,
The pictured Paradise that saints have made :
For this world mirrors bright a world above,
Whose rule is Honour, and whose law is Love.
Here with the frenzy of our warring wills,
Our lust that cankers, and our greed that kills,
Wrong may prevail ; but let us know the cause,
Man's own inherent weakness, not his laws ;

And in our wide domain let all men know
They live as freely as the winds that blow ;
So shall we build a substance from a dream,
Ourselves a part of that majestic theme.

IV

So let the darkness fly ; and embers leap
 Enkindling life, driving afar the cold,
Beacons that gleam and flame from every steep
Fall in long chains of fire upon the deep
 And the world wake to wonder and behold.
 Loudly the trumpets sound, the drums be roll'd,
The bells clash out : " Hail and Farewell, O Queen !
 Now in due time fulfil at last thy quest,
Tranquil in pleasure, in thy pain serene,
Here is thy purpose known, thy triumph seen :
 Take the hearts' praise of those who love thee best
 And pass into thy rest."

AN EVENING HYMN

INTO Thy hands, at evening call,
We give ourselves, O Lord of all :
Thou feelest for our least distress,
Thou waitest not to bend and bless,
If men, from all dependence free,
Are willing yet to come to Thee.

Because our human hands are frail,
And Thou but touchest to prevail :
Since all we have and all we know
A little thing can overthrow :
Into Thy hands we give again
What Thou canst aid or Thou restrain.

Into Thy gracious hands, the same
That gave the sun his path of flame,
The planets their eternal course,
All human hopes their fire and force,
And mind and soul and thought and will
Their lofty mission to fulfil :

Into Thy hands we now commend
All spirits that can need a friend,
For Thou renewest, day by day,
What toil and trouble fret away,
And canst defend from rust and rage
Each moment of our pilgrimage.

Into Thy hands, at evening light,
We give our own beyond our sight :
The living, save and soothe and keep ;
The dead, protect them while they sleep ;
With Thee their Friend, with Thee their Guide
All shall awaken satisfied.

ODE TO AUGUSTA

A SALUTATION TO THE CITY OF TRÈVES

THEE, in the scrolls of eld aforetime hail'd,
City augùst ! I dare once more salute,
Whence I outcall a spirit of the past
Unto the present dim, the future mute :
Which spell of light I cast
Into a world where denseness hath prevail'd,
Denying sense of sight or sweet of sound,
With noisy clamour streaming down the rills,
And angry cries reverberant in the hills
For blood yet fresh to stain thy holy ground.

There was a day men spoke of holiness
As something certain, something yet secure :
To gain the joys which saw the world well lost
All things might melt and fade, but Heav'n was sure :
Here was life's little cost,

A spell of wilfully enforced distress,
The hard cold earth a little while to bear,
 This was the length of torment erst design'd,
 This the worst test of the Supernal Mind,
This once endured, came the surcease of care.

But here, meseems, that spirit, if it haunt
 Groves half-deserted in this latter day,
 Little of strength hath gather'd now to range
 The greater world with this Trevirian way :
 But like an echo strange
Sounds through the crowded streets the priestly chaunt
Which though its moving cadence yet survive
 Hath dropt its ancient power to heal or harm,
 And vainly offers an elusive charm
To those whom faith in reason keeps alive.

And yet in vain to reason we appeal,
 Who delve for bread and disinter a stone !
 The ghosts of myth which so disturb'd our rest
 Have made the vacant temples all their own,
 As though to mock the zest

Of men who scatter—where they may not steal—
The truths their vanity too long pursued :
Men who the spirit lose, to find the form :
Who seek the calm, but only raise the storm :
And drive from earth her nobler quietude.

Quiet, indeed, that man may rest and be
Who smiles on sleep and so descries his fate,
And, link'd one moment to a passing race,
Sees for himself no destiny more great
Than may secure with grace
The sturdy prop which stays a falling tree :
Who, lured not by the chances of surmise,
Follows no more the soul-distracting gleam,
But leaves to fools the folly of their dream,
And trusts the stern effacement of the wise.

But here, if still unheeded is the cry
For light, scarce irresponsive to the call
Burst into leafage bright the hills anew,
And through the woodland, where green shadows fall,
Fresh buds absorb the dew :

If then my foot, without the knowing why,
Upturn an emmet's toil-built citadel,
 Tossing his well-tried labour to the air,
 Shall he not find an answer elsewhere,
Or I not give him one from where I dwell ?

I hold it true, no insect drops to earth
 But takes the essence of his being hence,
 That as naught perishes of earthy stuff,
 Nothing of life goes void to the immense,
 Which solace is enough :
The very infant stifled at his birth
Ere yet one sigh was utter'd, breath was drawn,
 Pass'd, with his energy scarce-form'd, to grow
 Into such glory as we see below,
Here, where proud sunset issues from pale dawn.

Yet in pursuance of our little life
 Loud as the thud falls down yon busy street
 A martial tramp to happy music play'd,
Our very contradictions are complete :
 And so our wits are stay'd

From patient thought of the insensate strife,
That we are fever'd to make terms with ill ;
 And when we build as ready to destroy,
 So, lest we taste an undiluted joy,
We save alone that germ we mean to kill.

Far, far afield, these sorrows have been strown,
 And we may bury them, or we may spread,
 Knowing ourselves can make injustice just,
 Who here preserve the ashes of the dead,
 From whose assembled dust
Comes, not the scent of wantonness outgrown,
But to the pain-fraught and the passion-driven,
 The faint aroma of a fragrant time,
 Which bids us know that now the only crime
Is—*not* to learn lessons so freely given !

And therefore, though the world has lust to drift
 Through ventures vast to chaos once again,
 These passing drums let no man choose to spurn :
 Their cheery madness we will soon restrain
 When saner days return :

And so I bring to thee my humble gift,
Taking one step on the Augustan way,
A human atom that must soon disperse
A force not useless in the Universe,
Once having hail'd with thee the appointed Day.

THE END

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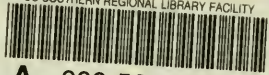


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