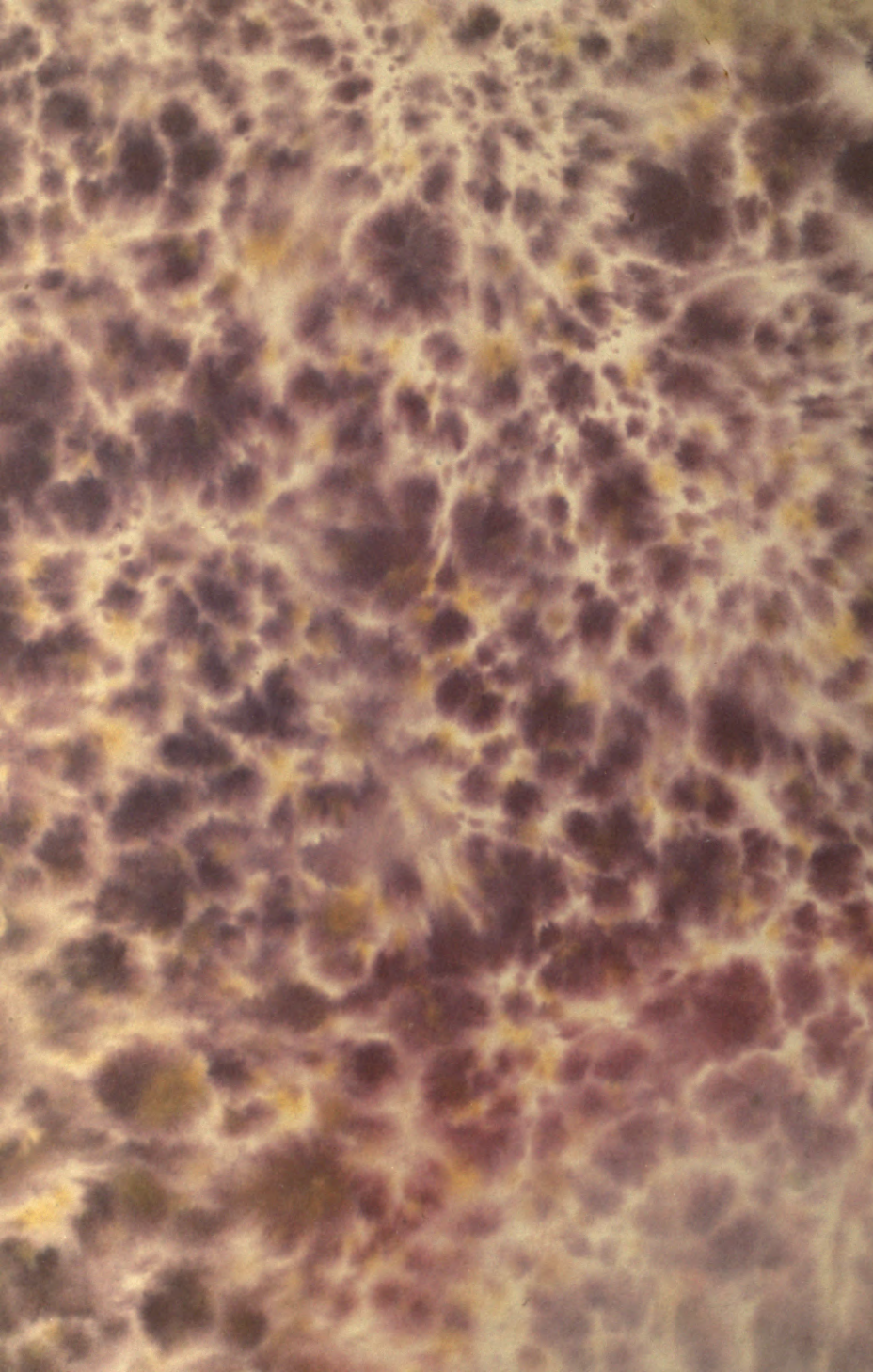
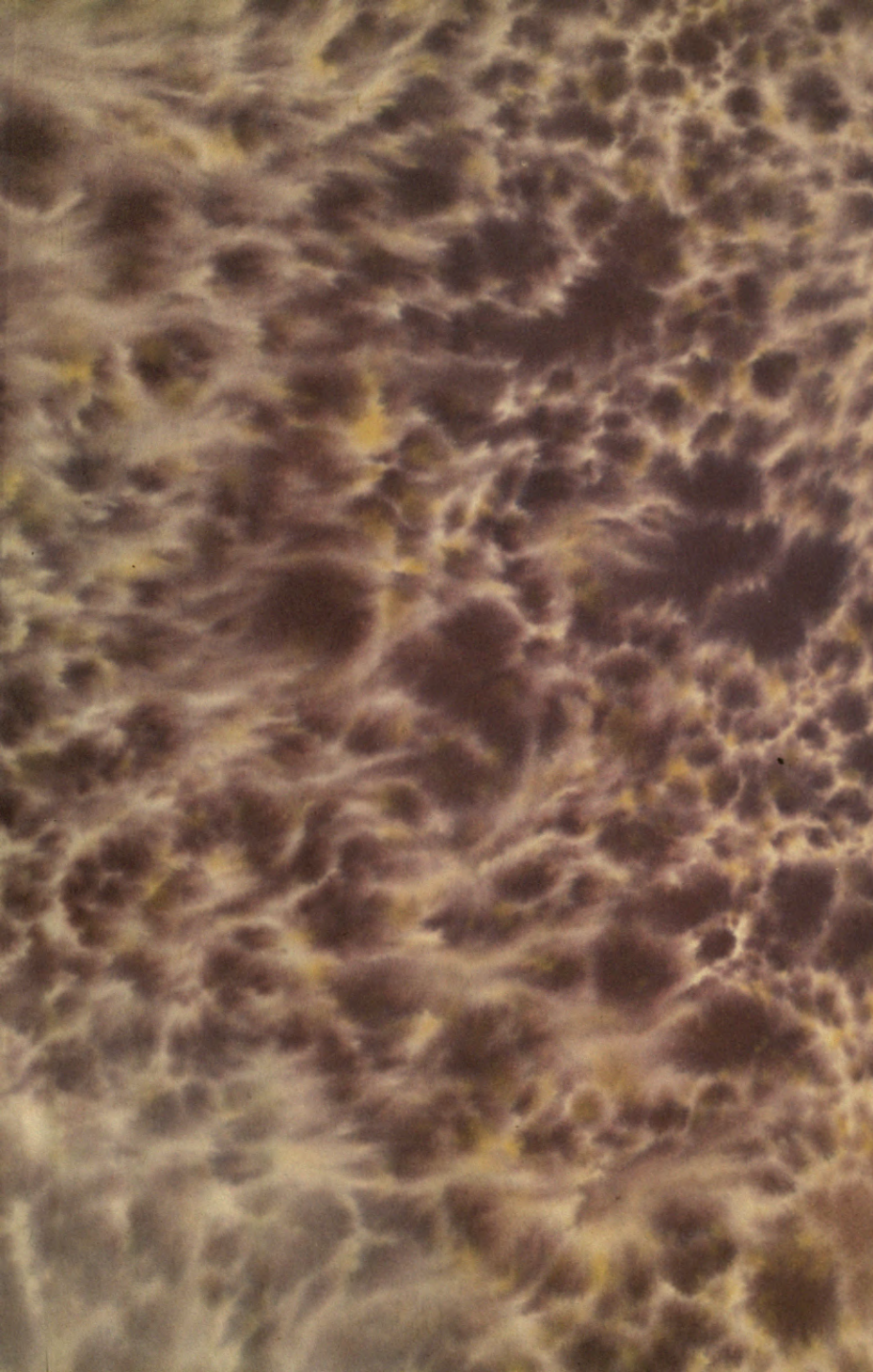


A
0
0
0
1
1
2
0
0
3
9



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY











ANNIVERSARY EDITION

THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS HARDY
IN PROSE AND VERSE

WITH PREFACES AND NOTES

IN TWENTY-ONE VOLUMES



VERSE
VOL. XXI

Author's Edition

THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS HARDY
IN PROSE AND VERSE

WITH PREFACE AND NOTES

BY TWENTY-ONE WRITERS

VERSES
W. K. M.

POETICAL WORKS

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

MOMENTS OF VISION

AND

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

POLITICAL WORKS

NATURES OR CIRCUMSTANCES

MOMENTS OF TRUTH

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

LYRICS AND REVERIES

WITH MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

MOMENTS OF VISION

AND

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

BY

THOMAS HARDY



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

SATIRES OF
CIRCUMSTANCE

LYRICAL AND REVERIES

WITH MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

MOMENTS OF VISION

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

BY
THOMAS HARRY



HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK AND LONDON

PART I
CONTENTS
SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE
LYRICS AND REVERIES

LYRICS AND REVERIES—

	PAGE
In Front of the Landscape	3
Channel Firing	7
The Convergence of the Twain	9
The Ghost of the Past	12
After the Visit	14
To Meet, or Otherwise	16
The Difference	18
The Sun on the Bookcase	19
“When I set out for Lyonesse”	20
A Thunderstorm in Town	21
The Torn Letter	22
Beyond the Last Lamp	25
The Face at the Casement	27
Lost Love	30
“My spirit will not haunt the mound”	31
Wessex Heights	32
In Death divided	35

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

	PAGE
The Place on the Map	37
Where the Picnic was	39
The Schreckhorn	41
A Singer asleep	42
A Plaint to Man	45
God's Funeral	47
Spectres that grieve	52
“Ah, are you digging on my grave?”	54

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE—

I. At Tea	59
II. In Church	60
III. By her Aunt's Grave	61
IV. In the Room of the Bride-elect	62
V. At a Watering-place	63
VI. In the Cemetery	64
VII. Outside the Window	65
VIII. In the Study	66
IX. At the Altar-rail	67
X. In the Nuptial Chamber	68
XI. In the Restaurant	69
XII. At the Draper's	70
XIII. On the Death-bed	71
XIV. Over the Coffin	72
XV. In the Moonlight	73

CONTENTS

LYRICS AND REVERIES (*continued*)—

	PAGE
Self-unconscious	77
The Discovery	80
Tolerance	81
Before and after Summer	82
At Day-close in November	83
The Year's Awakening	84
Under the Waterfall	85
The Spell of the Rose	88
St. Launce's revisited	90

POEMS OF 1912-13—

The Going	95
Your Last Drive	97
The Walk	99
Rain on a Grave	100
"I found her out there"	102
Without Ceremony	104
Lament	105
The Haunter	107
The Voice	109
His Visitor	110
A Circular	112
A Dream or No	113
After a Journey	115
A Death-day recalled	117

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

	PAGE
Beeny Cliff	119
At Castle Boterel	121
Places	123
The Phantom Horsewoman	125

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES—

The Wistful Lady	129
The Woman in the Rye	131
The Cheval-Glass	132
The Re-enactment	134
Her Secret	140
“She charged me”	141
The Newcomer's Wife	142
A Conversation at Dawn	143
A King's Soliloquy	152
The Coronation	154
Aquae Sulis	157
Seventy-four and Twenty	160
The Elopement	161
“I rose up as my custom is”	163
A Week	165
Had you wept	167
Bereft, she thinks she dreams	169
In the British Museum	170
In the Servants' Quarters	172
The Obliterate Tomb	175

CONTENTS

	PAGE
"Regret not me"	183
The Recalcitrants	185
Starlings on the Roof	186
The Moon looks in	187
The Sweet Hussy	188
The Telegram	189
The Moth-signal	191
Seen by the Waits	193
The Two Soldiers	194
The Death of Regret	195
In the Days of Crinoline	197
The Roman Gravemounds	199
The Workbox	201
The Sacrilege	203
The Abbey Mason	210
The Jubilee of a Magazine	222
The Satin Shoes	224
Excunt Omnes	227
A Poet	228

POSTSCRIPT—

"Men who march away"	229
--------------------------------	-----

PART II

CONTENTS

MOMENTS OF VISION
AND
MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

	PAGE
Moments of Vision	1
The Voice of Things	2
“Why be at pains?”	3
“We sat at the window”	4
Afternoon Service at Mellstock	5
At the Wicket-gate	6
In a Museum	7
Apostrophe to an Old Psalm Tune’	8
At the Word “Farewell”	11
First Sight of Her and After	13
The Rival	14
Heredity	15
“You were the sort that men forget”	16
She, I, and They	17
Near Lanivet, 1872	18
Joys of Memory	20
To the Moon	21
Copying Architecture in an Old Minster	22

MOMENTS OF VISION

	PAGE
To Shakespeare	24
Quid hic agis?	27
On a Midsummer Eve	30
Timing Her	31
Before Knowledge	34
The Blinded Bird	35
“The wind blew words”	36
The Faded Face	37
The Riddle	38
The Duel	39
At Mayfair Lodgings	42
To my Father's Violin	44
The Statue of Liberty	47
The Background and the Figure	50
The Change	51
Sitting on the Bridge	54
The Young Churchwarden	56
“I travel as a phantom now”	57
Lines to a Movement in Mozart's E-flat Symphony	58
“In the seventies”	60
The Pedigree	62
His Heart. A Woman's Dream	65
Where they lived	68
The Occultation	69
Life laughs Onward	70
The Peace-offering	71

CONTENTS

	PAGE
"Something tapped"	72
The Wound	73
A Merrymaking in Question	74
"I said and sang her excellence"	75
A January Night. 1879	77
A Kiss	78
The Announcement	79
The Oxen	80
The Tresses	81
The Photograph	82
On-a Heath	84
An Anniversary	85
"By the Runic Stone"	87
The Pink Frock	88
Transformations	89
In her Precincts	90
The Last Signal	91
The House of Silence	93
Great Things	95
The Chimes	97
The Figure in the Scene	98
"Why did I sketch"	99
Conjecture	100
The Blow	101
Love the Monopolist	103
At Middle-field Gate in February	105

MOMENTS OF VISION

	PAGE
The Youth who carried a Light	106
The Head above the Fog	108
Overlooking the River Stour	109
The Musical Box	111
On Sturminster Foot-bridge	113
Royal Sponsors	114
Old Furniture	116
A Thought in Two Moods	118
The Last Performance	119
“ You on the tower ”	120
The Interloper	122
Logs on the Hearth	124
The Sunshade	126
The Ageing House	128
The Caged Goldfinch	129
At Madame Tussaud's in Victorian Years	130
The Ballet	132
The Five Students	133
The Wind's Prophecy	135
During Wind and Rain	137
He prefers her Earthly	139
The Dolls	140
Molly gone	141
A Backward Spring	143
Looking Across	144
At a Seaside Town in 1869	146

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Glimpse	149
The Pedestrian	151
“Who’s in the next room?”	153
At a Country Fair	155
The Memorial Brass : 186—	156
Her Love-birds	158
Paying Calls	160
The Upper Birch-Leaves	161
“It never looks like summer”	162
Everything comes	163
The Man with a Past	164
He fears his Good Fortune	166
He wonders about Himself	167
Jubilate	168
He revisits his First School	171
“I thought, my Heart”	173
Fragment	174
Midnight on the Great Western	176
Honeymoon-time at an Inn	177
The Robin	181
“I rose and went to Rou’tor Town”	183
The Nettles	184
In a Waiting-room	185
The Clock-winder	187
Old Excursions	189
The Masked Face	191

MOMENTS OF VISION

	PAGE
In a Whispering Gallery	192
The Something that saved Him	193
The Enemy's Portrait	195
Imaginations	197
On the Doorstep	198
Signs and Tokens	199
Paths of Former Time	201
The Clock of the Years	203
At the Piano	205
The Shadow on the Stone	206
In the Garden	208
The Tree and the Lady	209
An Upbraiding	211
The Young Glass-stainer	212
Looking at a Picture on an Anniversary	213
The Choirmaster's Burial	215
The Man who forgot	217
While drawing in a Churchyard	219
"For Life I had never cared greatly"	221

POEMS OF WAR AND PATRIOTISM—

His Country	225
England to Germany in 1914	227
On the Belgian Expatriation	228
An Appeal to America on behalf of the Belgian Destitute	229

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Pity of It	230
In Time of Wars and Tumults	231
In Time of "the Breaking of Nations"	232
Cry of the Homeless	233
Before Marching and After	235
"Often when warring"	237
Then and Now	238
A Call to National Service	240
The Dead and the Living One	241
A New Year's Eve in War Time	244
"I met a man"	246
"I looked up from my writing"	248

FINALE—

The Coming of the End	253
Afterwards	255

BY FRANK OF THE LANTERN

Expressed and blended in a poetic
medium
of words and tones,
forming a melody and rhythm which
is the

LYRICS AND REVERIES

... of the soul
... of the heart
... of the mind
... of the spirit
... of the soul
... of the heart
... of the mind
... of the spirit
... of the soul
... of the heart
... of the mind
... of the spirit

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter I	10
Chapter II	25
Chapter III	45
Chapter IV	65
Chapter V	85
Chapter VI	105
Chapter VII	125
Chapter VIII	145
Chapter IX	165
Chapter X	185
Chapter XI	205
Chapter XII	225
Chapter XIII	245
Chapter XIV	265
Chapter XV	285
Chapter XVI	305
Chapter XVII	325
Chapter XVIII	345
Chapter XIX	365
Chapter XX	385
Chapter XXI	405
Chapter XXII	425
Chapter XXIII	445
Chapter XXIV	465
Chapter XXV	485
Chapter XXVI	505
Chapter XXVII	525
Chapter XXVIII	545
Chapter XXIX	565
Chapter XXX	585

INDEX AND REFERENCES

Index	595
References	615

IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE

PLUNGING and labouring on in a tide of
visions,
Dolorous and dear,
Forward I pushed my way as amid waste
waters
Stretching around,
Through whose eddies there glimmered the
customed landscape
Yonder and near

Blotted to feeble mist. And the coomb and
the upland
Coppice-crowned,
Ancient chalk-pit, milestone, rills in the
grass-flat
Stroked by the light,
Seemed but a ghost-like gauze, and no
substantial
Meadow or mound.

What were the infinite spectacles featuring
foremost
Under my sight,

4 IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE

Hindering me to discern my paced advance-
ment
Lengthening to miles ;
What were the re-creations killing the daytime
As by the night ?

O they were speechful faces, gazing insistent,
Some as with smiles,
Some as with slow-born tears that brinily
trundled
Over the wrecked
Cheeks that were fair in their flush-time, ash
now with anguish,
Harrowed by wiles.

Yes, I could see them, feel them, hear them,
address them—
Halo-bedecked—
And, alas, onwards, shaken by fierce unreason,
Rigid in hate,
Smitten by years-long wryness born of
misprision,
Dreaded, suspect.

Then there would breast me shining sights,
sweet seasons
Further in date ;
Instruments of strings with the tenderest
passion
Vibrant, beside

IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE 5

Lamps long extinguished, robes, cheeks, eyes
with the earth's crust
Now corporate.

Also there rose a headland of hoary aspect
Gnawed by the tide,
Frilled by the nimb of the morning as two
friends stood there
Guilelessly glad—
Wherefore they knew not—touched by the
fringe of an ecstasy
Scantly descried.

Later images too did the day unfurl me,
Shadowed and sad,
Clay cadavers of those who had shared in
the dramas,
Laid now at ease,
Passions all spent, chiefest the one of the
broad brow
Sepulture-clad.

So did beset me scenes, miscalled of the
bygone,
Over the leaze,
Past the clump, and down to where lay the
beheld ones ;
—Yea, as the rhyme
Sung by the sea-swell, so in their pleading
dumbness
Captured me these.

6 IN FRONT OF THE LANDSCAPE

For, their lost revisiting manifestations
 In their live time
Much had I slighted, caring not for their
 purport,
 Seeing behind
Things more coveted, reckoned the better
 worth calling
 Sweet, sad, sublime.

Thus do they now show hourly before the
 intenser
 Stare of the mind
As they were ghosts avenging their slights
 by my bypast
 Body-borne eyes,
Show, too, with fuller translation than rested
 upon them
 As living kind.

Hence wag the tongues of the passing people,
 saying
 In their surmise,
“Ah—whose is this dull form that peram-
 bulates, seeing nought
 Round him that looms
Whithersoever his footsteps turn in his
 farings,
 Save a few tombs?”

CHANNEL FIRING

THAT night your great guns, unawares,
Shook all our coffins as we lay,
And broke the chancel window-squares,
We thought it was the Judgment-day

And sat upright. While drearisome
Arose the howl of wakened hounds :
The mouse let fall the altar-crumb,
The worms drew back into the mounds,

The glebe cow drooled. Till God called,
"No ;
It's gunnery practice out at sea
Just as before you went below ;
The world is as it used to be :

"All nations striving strong to make
Red war yet redder. Mad as hatters
They do no more for Christ's sake
Than you who are helpless in such matters.

“That this is not the judgment-hour
For some of them’s a blessed thing,
For if it were they’d have to scour
Hell’s floor for so much threatening. . . .

“Ha, ha. It will be warmer when
I blow the trumpet (if indeed
I ever do ; for you are men,
And rest eternal sorely need).”

So down we lay again. “I wonder,
Will the world ever saner be,”
Said one, “than when He sent us under
In our indifferent century !”

And many a skeleton shook his head.
“Instead of preaching forty year,”
My neighbour Parson Thirdly said,
“I wish I had stuck to pipes and beer.”

Again the guns disturbed the hour,
Roaring their readiness to avenge,
As far inland as Stourton Tower,
And Camelot, and starlit Stonehenge.

April 1914.

THE CONVERGENCE OF THE
TWIN

(Lines on the loss of the "Titanic")

I

In a solitude of the sea
Deep from human vanity,
And the Pride of Life that planned her, stilly
couches she.

II

Steel chambers, late the pyres
Of her salamandrine fires,
Cold currents thrid, and turn to rhythmic
tidal lyres.

III

Over the mirrors meant
To glass the opulent
The sea-worm crawls—grotesque, slimed,
dumb, indifferent.

10 CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN

IV

Jewels in joy designed
To ravish the sensuous mind
Lie lightless, all their sparkles bleared and
black and blind.

V

Dim moon-eyed fishes near
Gaze at the gilded gear
And query: "What does this vaingloriousness
down here?" . . .

VI

Well: while was fashioning
This creature of cleaving wing,
The Immanent Will that stirs and urges
everything

VII

Prepared a sinister mate
For her—so gaily great—
A Shape of Ice, for the time far and dissociate.

VIII

And as the smart ship grew
In stature, grace, and hue,
In shadowy silent distance grew the Iceberg
too.

CONVERGENCE OF THE TWAIN 11

IX

Alien they seemed to be :
No mortal eye could see
The intimate welding of their later history,

X

Or sign that they were bent
By paths coincident
On being anon twin halves of one august
event,

XI

Till the Spinner of the Years'
Said "Now!" And each one hears,
And consummation comes, and jars two
hemispheres.

THE GHOST OF THE PAST

WE two kept house, the Past and I,
 The Past and I ;
Through all my tasks it hovered nigh,
 Leaving me never alone.
It was a spectral housekeeping
 Where fell no jarring tone,
As strange, as still a housekeeping
 As ever has been known.

As daily I went up the stair
 And down the stair,
I did not mind the Bygone there—
 The Present once to me ;
Its moving meek companionship
 I wished might ever be,
There was in that companionship
 Something of ecstasy.

It dwelt with me just as it was,
 Just as it was
When first its prospects gave me pause
 In wayward wanderings,

THE GHOST OF THE PAST 13

Before the years had torn old troths
 As they tear all sweet things,
Before gaunt griefs had torn old troths
 And dulled old rapturings.

And then its form began to fade,
 Began to fade,
Its gentle echoes faintlier played
 At eves upon my ear
Than when the autumn's look embrowned
 The lonely chambers here,
When autumn's settling shades embrowned
 Nooks that it haunted near.

And so with time my vision less,
 Yea, less and less
Makes of that Past my housemistress,
 It dwindles in my eye ;
It looms a far-off skeleton
 And not a comrade nigh,
A fitful far-off skeleton
 Dimming as days draw by.

AFTER THE VISIT

(To F. E. D.)

COME again to the place
Where your presence was as a leaf that skims
Down a drouthy way whose ascent bedims
The bloom on the farer's face.

Come again, with the feet
That were light on the green as a thistledown
ball,
And those mute ministrations to one and
to all
Beyond a man's saying sweet.

Until then the faint scent
Of the bordering flowers swam unheeded
away,
And I marked not the charm in the changes
of day
As the cloud-colours came and went.

Through the dark corridors
Your walk was so soundless I did not know
Your form from a phantom's of long ago
Said to pass on the ancient floors,

Till you drew from the shade,
And I saw the large luminous living eyes
Regard me in fixed inquiring-wise
As those of a soul that weighed,

Scarce consciously,
The eternal question of what Life was,
And why we were there, and by whose
strange laws
That which mattered most could not
be.

TO MEET, OR OTHERWISE

WHETHER to sally and see thee, girl of my
dreams,
Or whether to stay
And see thee not! How vast the differ-
ence seems
Of Yea from Nay
Just now. Yet this same sun will slant
its beams
At no far day
On our two mounds, and then what will the
difference weigh!

Yet I will see thee, maiden dear, and make
The most I can
Of what remains to us amid this brake
Cimmerian
Through which we grope, and from whose
thorns we ache,
While still we scan
Round our frail faltering progress for some
path or plan.

TO MEET, OR OTHERWISE 17

By briefest meeting something sure is
won ;
It will have been :
Nor God nor Demon can undo the done,
Unseen the seen,
Make muted music be as unbegun,
Though things terrene
Groan in their bondage till oblivion supervene.

So, to the one long-sweeping symphony
From times remote
Till now, of human tenderness, shall we
Supply one note,
Small and untraced, yet that will ever be
Somewhere afloat
Amid the spheres, as part of sick Life's
antidote.

THE DIFFERENCE

I

SINKING down by the gate I discern the thin
moon,
And a blackbird tries over old airs in the
pine,
But the moon is a sorry one, sad the bird's
tune,
For this spot is unknown to that Heartmate
of mine.

II

Did my Heartmate but haunt here at times
such as now,
The song would be joyous and cheerful the
moon ;
But she will see never this gate, path, or
bough,
Nor I find a joy in the scene or the tune.

THE SUN ON THE BOOKCASE

(*Student's Love-song* : 1870)

ONCE more the cauldron of the sun
Smears the bookcase with winy red,
And here my page is, and there my bed,
And the apple-tree shadows travel along.
Soon their intangible track will be run,
 And dusk grow strong
 And they have fled.

Yes : now the boiling ball is gone,
And I have wasted another day. . . .
But wasted—*wasted*, do I say ?
Is it a waste to have imaged one
Beyond the hills there, who, anon,
 My great deeds done
 Will be mine always ?

“WHEN I SET OUT FOR
LYONNESSE”

(1870)

WHEN I set out for Lyonesse,
A hundred miles away,
The rime was on the spray,
And starlight lit my lonesomeness
When I set out for Lyonesse
A hundred miles away.

What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there
No prophet durst declare,
Nor did the wisest wizard guess
What would bechance at Lyonesse
While I should sojourn there.

When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes,
All marked with mute surmise
My radiance rare and fathomless,
When I came back from Lyonesse
With magic in my eyes.

A THUNDERSTORM IN TOWN

(*A Reminiscence* : 1893)

SHE wore a new "terra-cotta" dress,
And we stayed, because of the pelting storm,
Within the hansom's dry recess,
Though the horse had stopped; yea, motion-
less

We sat on, snug and warm.

Then the downpour ceased, to my sharp sad
pain,
And the glass that had screened our forms
before

Flew up, and out she sprang to her door :
I should have kissed her if the rain
Had lasted a minute more.

THE TORN LETTER

I

I TORE your letter into strips
No bigger than the airy feathers
That ducks preen out in changing
weathers
Upon the shifting ripple-tips.

II

In darkness on my bed alone
I seemed to see you in a vision,
And hear you say : "Why this derision
Of one drawn to you, though unknown ?"

III

Yes, eve's quick mood had run its course,
The night had cooled my hasty madness;
I suffered a regretful sadness
Which deepened into real remorse.

IV

I thought what pensive patient days
A soul must know of grain so tender,
How much of good must grace the
sender
Of such sweet words in such bright phrase.

V

Uprising then, as things unpriced
I sought each fragment, patched and
mended ;
The midnight whitened ere I had ended
And gathered words I had sacrificed.

VI

But some, alas, of those I threw
Were past my search, destroyed for ever:
They were your name and place ; and
never
Did I regain those clues to you.

VII

I learnt I had missed, by rash unheed,
My track ; that, so the Will decided,
In life, death, we should be divided,
And at the sense I ached indeed.

VIII

That ache for you, born long ago,
Throbs on ; I never could outgrow it.
What a revenge, did you but know it !
But that, thank God, you do not know.

BEYOND THE LAST LAMP

(Near Tooting Common)

I

WHILE rain, with eve in partnership,
Descended darkly, drip, drip, drip,
Beyond the last lone lamp I passed
 Walking slowly, whispering sadly,
 Two linked loiterers, wan, downcast :
Some heavy thought constrained each face,
And blinded them to time and place.

II

The pair seemed lovers, yet absorbed
In mental scenes no longer orb'd
By love's young rays. Each countenance
 As it slowly, as it sadly
 Caught the lamplight's yellow glance,
Held in suspense a misery
At things which had been or might be.

III

When I retrud that watery way
Some hours beyond the droop of day,
Still I found pacing there the twain
 Just as slowly, just as sadly,
 Heedless of the night and rain.
One could but wonder who they were,
And what wild woe detained them there.

IV

Though thirty years of blur and blot
Have slid since I beheld that spot,
And saw in curious converse there
 Moving slowly, moving sadly
 That mysterious tragic pair,
Its olden look may linger on—
All but the couple ; they have gone.

V

Whither? Who knows, indeed. . . . And yet
To me, when nights are weird and wet,
Without those comrades there at tryst
 Creeping slowly, creeping sadly,
 That lone lane does not exist.
There they seem brooding on their pain,
And will, while such a lane remain.

THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT

If ever joy leave
An abiding sting of sorrow,
So befell it on the morrow
Of that May eve. . . .

The travelled sun dropped
To the north-west, low and lower,
The pony's trot grew slower,
Until we stopped.

"This cosy house just by
I must call at for a minute,
A sick man lies within it
Who soon will die.

"He wished to—marry me,
So I am bound, when I drive near him,
To inquire, if but to cheer him,
How he may be."

28 THE FACE AT THE CASEMEN

A message was sent in,
And wordlessly we waited,
Till some one came and stated
The bulletin.

And that the sufferer said,
For her call no words could thank her ;
As his angel he must rank her
Till life's spark fled.

Slowly we drove away,
When I turned my head, although not
Called to : why I turned I know not
Even to this day :

And lo, there in my view
Pressed against an upper lattice
Was a white face, gazing at us
As we withdrew.

And well did I divine
It to be the man's there dying,
Who but lately had been sighing
For her pledged mine.

Then I deigned a deed of hell ;
It was done before I knew it ;
What devil made me do it
I cannot tell !

THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT 29

Yes, while he gazed above,
I put my arm about her
That he might see, nor doubt her
My plighted Love.

The pale face vanished quick,
As if blasted, from the casement,
And my, shame and self-abasement
Began their prick.

And they prick on, ceaselessly,
For that stab in Love's fierce fashion
Which, unfired by lover's passion,
Was foreign to me.

She smiled at my caress,
But why came the soft embowment
Of her shoulder at that moment
She did not guess.

Long long years has he lain
In thy garth, O sad Saint Cleather :
What tears there, bared to weather,
Will cleanse that stain !

Love is long-suffering, brave,
Sweet, prompt, precious as a jewel ;
But O, too, Love is cruel,
Cruel as the grave.

LOST LOVE

I PLAY my sweet old airs—
The airs he knew
When our love was true—
But he does not balk
His determined walk,
And passes up the stairs.

I sing my songs once more,
And presently hear
His footstep near
As if it would stay ;
But he goes his way,
And shuts a distant door.

So I wait for another morn,
And another night
In this soul-sick blight ;
And I wonder much
As I sit, why such
A woman as I was born !

“MY SPIRIT WILL NOT HAUNT
THE MOUND”

My spirit will not haunt the mound
Above my breast,
But travel, memory-possessed,
To where my tremulous being found
Life largest, best.

My phantom-footed shape will go
When nightfall grays
Hither and thither along the ways
I and another used to know
In backward days.

And there you'll find me, if a jot
You still should care
For me, and for my curious air ;
If otherwise, then I shall not,
For you, be there.

WESSEX HEIGHTS

(1896)

THERE are some heights in Wessex, shaped
as if by a kindly hand
For thinking, dreaming, dying on, and at
crises when I stand,
Say, on Ingpen Beacon eastward, or on
Wylls-Neck westwardly,
I seem where I was before my birth, and
after death may be.

In the lowlands I have no comrade, not even
the lone man's friend—
Her who suffereth long and is kind ; accepts
what he is too weak to mend :
Down there they are dubious and askance ;
there nobody thinks as I,
But mind-chains do not clank where one's
next neighbour is the sky.

In the towns I am tracked by phantoms
having weird detective ways—
Shadows of beings who fellowed with myself
of earlier days :

They hang about at places, and they say
harsh heavy things—
Men with a wintry sneer, and women with
tart disparagings.

Down there I seem to be false to myself, my
simple self that was,
And is not now, and I see him watching,
wondering what crass cause
Can have merged him into such a strange
continuator as this,
Who yet has something in common with
himself, my chrysalis.

I cannot go to the great grey Plain ; there's
a figure against the moon,
Nobody sees it but I, and it makes my breast
beat out of tune ;
I cannot go to the tall-spired town, being
barred by the forms now passed
For everybody but me, in whose long vision
they stand there fast.

There's a ghost at Yell'ham Bottom chiding
loud at the fall of the night,
There's a ghost in Froom-side Vale, thin
lipped and vague, in a shroud of white,
There is one in the railway-train whenever I
do not want it near,
I see its profile against the pane, saying what
I would not hear.

As for one rare fair woman, I am now but a
thought of hers,
I enter her mind and another thought succeeds
me that she prefers ;
Yet my love for her in its fulness she herself
even did not know ;
Well, time cures hearts of tenderness, and
now I can let her go.

So I am found on Ingpen Beacon, or on
Wylls-Neck to the west,
Or else on homely Bulbarrow, or little Pilsdon
Crest,
Where men have never cared to haunt, nor
women have walked with me,
And ghosts then keep their distance ; and I
know some liberty.

IN DEATH DIVIDED

I

I SHALL rot here, with those whom in their
day
You never knew,
And alien ones who, ere they chilled to clay,
Met not my view,
Will in your distant grave-place ever neigh-
bour you.

II

No shade of pinnacle or tree or tower,
While earth endures,
Will fall on my mound and within the hour
Steal on to yours ;
One robin never haunt our two green
covertures.

III

Some organ may resound on Sunday noons
By where you lie,
Some other thrill the panes with other tunes
Where moulder I ;
No selfsame chords compose our common
lullaby.

IV

The simply-cut memorial at my head
Perhaps may take
A rustic form, and that above your bed
A stately make ;
No linking symbol show thereon for our tale's
sake.

V

And in the monotonous moils of strained,
hard-run
Humanity,
The eternal tie which binds us twain in one
No eye will see
Stretching across the miles that sever you
from me.

THE PLACE ON THE MAP

I

I LOOK upon the map that hangs by me—
Its shires and towns and rivers lined in
varnished artistry—
And I mark a jutting height
Coloured purple, with a margin of blue sea.

II

—'Twas a day of latter summer, hot and
dry;
Ay, even the waves seemed drying as we
walked on, she and I,
By this spot where, calmly quite,
She unfolded what would happen by
and by.

III

This hanging map depicts the coast and
place,
And re-creates therewith our unforeboded
troubulous case
All distinctly to my sight,
And her tension, and the aspect of her face.

38 THE PLACE ON THE MAP

IV

Weeks and weeks we had loved beneath
that blazing blue,
Which had lost the art of raining, as her eyes
to-day had too,
While she told what, as by sleight,
Shot our firmament with rays of ruddy hue.

V

For the wonder and the wormwood of the
whole
Was that what in realms of reason would have
joyed our double soul
Wore a torrid tragic light
Under order-keeping's rigorous control.

VI

So, the map revives her words, the spot,
the time,
And the thing we found we had to face before
the next year's prime ;
The charted coast stares bright,
And its episode comes back in pantomime.

WHERE THE PICNIC WAS

WHERE we made the fire
In the summer time,
Of branch and briar
On the hill to the sea,
I slowly climb
Through winter mire,
And scan and trace
The forsaken place
Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,
And the grass is gray,
But the spot still shows
As a burnt circle—aye,
And stick-ends, charred,
Still strew the sward
Whereon I stand,
Last relic of the band
Who came that day!

40 WHERE THE PICNIC WAS

Yes, I am here
Just as last year,
And the sea breathes brine
From its strange straight line
Up hither, the same
As when we four came.
—But two have wandered far
From this grassy rise
Into urban roar
Where no picnics are,
And one—has shut her eyes
For evermore.

THE SCHRECKHORN

(With thoughts of Leslie Stephen)

(June 1897)

ALOOF, as if a thing of mood and whim ;
Now that its spare and desolate figure gleams
Upon my nearing vision, less it seems
A looming Alp-height than a guise of him
Who scaled its horn with ventured life and
limb,

Drawn on by vague imaginings, maybe,
Of semblance to his personality
In its quaint glooms, keen lights, and rugged
trim.

At his last change, when Life's dull coils
unwind,
Will he, in old love, hitherward escape,
And the eternal essence of his mind
Enter this silent adamantine shape,
And his low voicing haunt its slipping snows
When dawn that calls the climber dyes them
rose ?

A SINGER ASLEEP

(*Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837-1909*)

I

IN this fair niche above the unslumbering sea,
That sentrys up and down all night, all day,
From cove to promontory, from ness to bay,
The Fates have fitly bidden that he should be
Pillowed eternally.

II

—It was as though a garland of red roses
Had fallen about the hood of some smug nun
When irresponsibly dropped as from the sun,
In fulth of numbers freaked with musical
closes,
Upon Victoria's formal middle time
His leaves of rhythm and rhyme.

III

O that far morning of a summer day
When, down a terraced street whose pave-
ments lay

Glassing the sunshine into my bent eyes,
I walked and read with a quick glad surprise
New words, in classic guise,—

IV

The passionate pages of his earlier years,
Fraught with hot sighs, sad laughters, kisses,
tears ;
Fresh-fluted notes, yet from a minstrel who
Blew them not naively, but as one who knew
Full well why thus he blew.

V

I still can hear the brabble and the roar
At those thy tunes, O still one, now passed
through
That fitful fire of tongues then entered new !
Their power is spent like spindrift on this
shore ;
Thine swells yet more and more.

VI

—His singing-mistress verily was no other
Than she the Lesbian, she the music-mother
Of all the tribe that feel in melodies ;
Who leapt, love-anguished, from the Leu-
cadian steep
Into the rambling world-encircling deep
Which hides her where none sees.

VII

And one can hold in thought that nightly
 here
 His phantom may draw down to the water's
 brim,
 And hers come up to meet it, as a dim
 Lone shine upon the heaving hydrosphere,
 And mariners wonder as they traverse near,
 Unknowing of her and him.

VIII

One dreams him sighing to her spectral form :
 "O teacher, where lies hid thy burning line ;
 Where are those songs, O poetess divine
 Whose very orts are love incarnadine ?"
 And her smile back : "Disciple true and
 warm,
 Sufficient now are thine." . . .

IX

So here, beneath the waking constellations,
 Where the waves peal their everlasting strains,
 And their dull subterrene reverberations
 Shake him when storms make mountains of
 their plains—
 Him once their peer in sad improvisations,
 And deft as wind to cleave their frothy
 manes—
 I leave him, while the daylight gleam declines
 Upon the capes and chines.

A PLAINT TO MAN

WHEN you slowly emerged from the den of
Time,
And gained' percipience as you grew,
And fleshed you fair out of shapeless slime,

Wherefore, O Man, did there come to you
The unhappy need of creating me—
A form like your own—for praying to ?

My virtue, power, utility,
Within my maker must all abide,
Since none in myself can ever be,

One thin as a phasm on a lantern-slide
Shown forth in the dark upon some dim sheet,
And by none but its showman vivified.

“Such a forced device,” you may say, “is
meet

For easing a loaded heart at whiles :
Man needs to conceive of a mercy-seat

Somewhere above the gloomy aisles
Of this wailful world, or he could not bear
The irk no local hope beguiles."

—But since I was framed in your first despair
The doing without me has had no play
In the minds of men when shadows scare ;

And now that I dwindle day by day
Beneath the deicide eyes of seers
In a light that will not let me stay,

And to-morrow the whole of me disappears,
The truth should be told, and the fact be faced
That had best been faced in earlier years :

The fact of life with dependence placed
On the human heart's resource alone,
In brotherhood bonded close and graced

With loving-kindness fully blown,
And visioned help unsought, unknown.

GOD'S FUNERAL

I

I saw a slowly-stepping train—
Lined on the brows, scoop-eyed and bent
and hoar—
Following in files across a twilit plain
A strange and mystic form the foremost bore.

II

And by contagious throbs of thought
Or latent knowledge that within me lay
And had already stirred me, I was wrought
To consciousness of sorrow even as they.

III

The fore-borne shape, to my blurred eyes,
At first seemed man-like, and anon to change
To an amorphous cloud of marvellous size,
At times endowed with wings of glorious
range.

IV

And this phantasmal variousness
Ever possessed it as they drew along :
Yet throughout all it symbolled none the less
Potency vast and loving-kindness strong.

V

Almost before I knew I bent
Towards the moving columns without a word ;
They, growing in bulk and numbers as they
went,
Struck out sick thoughts that could be over-
heard :—

VI

“ O man-projected Figure, of late
Imaged as we, thy knell who shall survive ?
Whence came it we were tempted to create
One whom we can no longer keep alive ?

VII

“ Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,
We gave him justice as the ages rolled,
Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,
And longsuffering, and mercies manifold.

VIII

“And, tricked by our own early dream
And need of solace, we grew self-deceived,
Our making soon our maker did we deem,
And what we had imagined we believed.

IX

“Till, in Time's stayless stealthy swing,
Uncompromising rude reality
Mangled the Monarch of our fashioning,
Who quavered, 'sank ; and now has ceased
to be.

X

“So, toward our myth's oblivion,
Darkling, and languid-lipped, we creep and
grope
Sadlier than those who wept in Babylon,
Whose Zion was a still abiding hope.

XI

“How sweet it was in years far hied
To start the wheels of day with trustful
prayer,
To lie down liegely at the eventide
And feel a blest assurance he was there !

XII

“ And who or what shall fill his plac
Whither will wanderers turn distracted eyes
For some fixed star to stimulate their pace
Towards the goal of their enterprise? ” . . .

XIII

Some in the background then I saw,
Sweet women, youths, men, all incredulous,
Who chimed : “ This is a counterfeit of straw,
This requiem mockery ! Still he lives to us ! ”

XIV

I could not buoy their faith : and yet
Many I had known : with all I sympathized ;
And though struck speechless, I did not forget
That what was mourned for, I, too, long had
prized.

XV

Still, how to bear such loss I deemed
The insistent question for each animate mind,
And gazing, to my growing sight there seemed
A pale yet positive gleam low down behind,

XVI

Whereof, to lift the general night,
A certain few who stood aloof had said,
"See you upon the horizon that small light—
Swelling somewhat?" Each mourner shook
his head.

XVII

And they composed a crowd of whom
Some were right good, and many nigh the
best. . . .
Thus dazed and puzzled 'twixt the gleam and
gloom
Mechanically I followed with the rest.

SPECTRES THAT GRIEVE

"It is not death that harrows us," they
lipped,
"The soundless cell is in itself relief,
For life is an unfenced flower, benumbed and
nipped
At unawares, and at its best but brief."

The speakers, sundry phantoms of the gone,
Had risen like filmy flames of phosphor dye,
As if the palest of sheet lightnings shone
From the sward near me, as from a nether
sky.

And much surprised was I that, spent and
dead,
They should not, like the many, be at rest,
But stray as apparitions; hence I said,
"Why, having slipped life, hark you back
distressed?"

"We are among the few death sets not free,
The hurt, misrepresented names, who come

SPECTRES THAT GRIEVE 53

At each year's brink, and cry to History
To do them justice, or go past them dumb.

“ We are stript of rights ; our shames lie
 unredressed,
Our deeds in full anatomy are not shown,
Our words in morsels merely are expressed
On the scripted page, our motives blurred,
 unknown.”

Then all these shaken slighted visitants
 sped
Into the vague, and left me musing there
On fames that well might instance what they
 had said,
Until the New-Year's dawn strode up the air.

“AH, ARE YOU DIGGING ON
MY GRAVE?”

“AH, are you digging on my grave
My loved one?—planting rue?”

—“No : yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
‘It cannot hurt her now,’ he said,
‘That I should not be true.’”

“Then who is digging on my grave?
My nearest dearest kin?”

—“Ah, no ; they sit and think, ‘What use!
What good will planting flowers produce?
No tendance of her mound can loose
Her spirit from Death’s gin.’”

“But some one digs upon my grave?
My enemy?—prodding sly?”

—“Nay : when she heard you had passed
the Gate
That shuts on all flesh soon or late,
She thought you no more worth her hate,
And cares not where you lie.”

“DIGGING ON MY GRAVE” 55

“Then, who is digging on my grave ?

Say—since I have not guessed !”

—“O it is I, my mistress dear,
Your little dog, who still lives near,
And much I hope my movements here
Have not disturbed your rest ?”

“Ah, yes ! *You* dig upon my grave . . .

Why flashed it not on me

That one true heart was left behind !

What feeling do we ever find

To equal among human kind

A dog's fidelity !”

“Mistress, I dug upon your grave

To bury a bone, in case

I should be hungry near this spot

When passing on my daily trot.

I am sorry, but I quite forgot

It was your resting-place.”

SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

IN FIFTEEN GLIMPSES

(First published April 1911)

I

AT TEA

THE kettle descants in a cozy drone,
And the young wife looks in her husband's
face,
And then at her guest's, and shows in her
own
Her sense that she fills an envied place ;
And the visiting lady is all abloom,
And says there was never so sweet a room.

And the happy young housewife does not
know
That the woman beside her was first his
choice,
Till the fates ordained it could not be so. . . .
Betraying nothing in look or voice
The guest sits smiling and sips her tea,
And he throws her a stray glance yearningly.

II
IN CHURCH

“AND NOW TO God the Father,” he ends,
And his voice thrills up to the topmost tiles :
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.
Then the preacher glides to the vestry-door,
And shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more.

The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,
Who adores him as one without gloss or
 guile,
Sees her idol stand with a satisfied smile
And re-enact at the vestry-glass
Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show
That had moved the congregation so.

III

BY HER AUNT'S GRAVE

"SIXPENCE a week," says the girl to her lover,
"Aunt used to bring me, for she could
confide

In me alone, she vowed. 'Twas to cover
The cost of her headstone when she died.
And that was a year ago last June ;
I've not yet fixed it. But I must soon."

"And where is the money now, my dear?"
"O, snug in my purse . . . Aunt was *so* slow
In saving it—eighty weeks, or near." . . .
"Let's spend it," he hints. "For she won't
know.

There's a dance to-night at the Load of
Hay."

She passively nods. And they go that way.

IV

IN THE ROOM OF THE BRIDE-ELECT

WOULD it had been the man of our wish !”
Sighs her mother. To whom with vehemence
she

In the wedding-dress—the wife to be—
“ Then why were you so mollyish
As not to insist on him for me !”
The mother, amazed : “ Why, dearest one,
Because you pleaded for this or none !”

“ But Father and you should have stood out
strong !

Since then, to my cost, I have lived to find
That you were right and that I was wrong ;
This man is a dolt to the one declined. . . .
Ah !—here he comes with his button-hole
rose.

Good God—I must marry him I suppose !”

V

AT A WATERING-PLACE

THEY sit and smoke on the esplanade,
The man and his friend, and regard the bay
Where the far chalk cliffs, to the left
displayed,
Smile sallowly in the decline of day.
And saunterers pass with laugh and jest—
A handsome couple among the rest.

“That smart proud pair,” says the man to
his friend,
“Are to marry next week. . . . How little
he thinks
That dozens of days and nights on end
I have stroked her neck, unhooked the links
Of her sleeve to get at her upper arm. . . .
Well, bliss is in ignorance: what’s the harm!”

VI

IN THE CEMETERY

“ You see those mothers squabbling there? ”

Remarks the man of the cemetery.

“ One says in tears, ‘ *Tis mine lies here !* ’

Another, ‘ *Nay, mine, you Pharisee !* ’

Another, ‘ *How dare you move my flowers*

And put your own on this grave of ours ! ’

But all their children were laid therein

At different times, like sprats in a tin.

“ And then the main drain had to cross,

And we moved the lot some nights ago,

And packed them away in the general foss

With hundreds more. But their folks don’t

know,

And as well cry over a new-laid drain

As anything else, to ease your pain ! ”

VII

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

“ My stick ! ” he says, and turns in the lane
To the house just left, whence a vixen voice
Comes out with the firelight through the pane,
And he sees within that the girl of his choice
Stands rating her mother with eyes aglare
For something said while he was there.

“ At last I behold her soul undraped ! ”
Thinks the man who had loved her more than
himself ;

“ My God ! — ’tis but narrowly I have
escaped. —

My precious porcelain proves it delf.”
His face has reddened like one ashamed,
And he steals off, leaving his stick unclaimed.

VIII
IN THE STUDY

HE enters, and mute on the edge of a chair
Sits a thin-faced lady, a stranger there,
A type of decayed gentility ;
And by some small signs he well can guess
That she comes to him almost breakfastless.

“ I have called—I hope I do not err—
I am looking for a purchaser
Of some score volumes of the works
Of eminent divines I own,—
Left by my father—though it irks
My patience to offer them.” And she smiles
As if necessity were unknown ;
“ But the truth of it is that oftenwhiles
I have wished, as I am fond of art,
To make my rooms a little smart,
And these old books are so in the way.”
And lightly still she laughs to him,
As if to sell were a mere gay whim,
And that, to be frank, Life were indeed
To her not vinegar and gall,
But fresh and honey-like ; and Need
No household skeleton at all.

IX

AT THE ALTAR-RAIL

“ My bride is not coming, alas ! ” says the
groom,
And the telegram shakes in his hand. “ I own
It was hurried ! We met at a dancing-room
When I went to the Cattle-Show alone,
And then, next night, where the Fountain
leaps,
And the Street of the Quarter-Circle sweeps.

“ Ay, she won me to ask her to be my wife—
'Twas foolish perhaps !—to forsake the ways
Of the flaring town for a farmer's life.
She agreed. And we fixed it. Now she says :
*' It's sweet of you, dear, to prepare me a nest,
But a swift, short, gay life suits me best.
What I really am you have never gleaned ;
I had eaten the apple ere you were weaned. '* ”

X

IN THE NUPTIAL CHAMBER

“O THAT mastering tune!” And up in the
bed
Like a lace-robed phantom springs the bride ;
“And why?” asks the man she had that day
wed,
With a start, as the band plays on outside.
“It’s the townfolks’ cheery compliment
Because of our marriage, my Innocent.”

“O but you don’t know ! ’Tis the passionate
air
To which my old Love waltzed with me,
And I swore as we spun that none should
share
My home, my kisses, till death, save he !
And he dominates me and thrills me through,
And it’s he I embrace while embracing you ! ”

XI

IN THE RESTAURANT

“BUT hear. If you stay, and the child be
born,
It will pass as your husband's with the rest,
While, if we fly, the teeth of scorn
Will be gleaming at us from east to west ;
And the child will come as a life despised ;
I feel an elopement is ill-advised !”

“O you realize not what it is, my dear,
To a woman ! Daily and hourly alarms
Lest the truth should out. How can I stay
here,
And nightly take him into my arms !
Come to the child no name or fame,
Let us go, and face it, and bear the shame.”

XII

AT THE DRAPER'S

" I STOOD at the back of the shop, my dear,
But you did not perceive me.
Well, when they deliver what you were shown
I shall know nothing of it, believe me ! "

And he coughed and coughed as she paled
and said,
" O, I didn't see you come in there—
Why couldn't you speak ? " — " Well, I didn't.
I left
That you should not notice I'd been there.

" You were viewing some lovely things. ' *Soon
required
For a widow, of latest fashion* ' ;
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the
man
Who had to be cold and ashen

" And screwed in a box before they could
dress you
' *In the last new note in mourning,*
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,
I left you to your adorning."

XIII

ON THE DEATH-BED

“ I’LL tell—being past all praying for—
Then promptly die. . . . He was out at the
war,
And got some scent of the intimacy
That was under way between her and me ;
And he stole back home, and appeared like a
ghost
One night, at the very time almost
That I reached her house. Well, I shot him
dead,
And secretly buried him. Nothing was said.

“ The news of the battle came next day ;
He was scheduled missing. I hurried away,
Got out there, visited the field,
And sent home word that a search revealed
He was one of the slain ; though, lying alone
And stript, his body had not been known.

“ But she suspected. I lost her love,
Yea, my hope of earth, and of Heaven above ;
And my time’s now come, and I’ll pay the
score,
Though it be burning for evermore.”

XIV

OVER THE COFFIN

THEY stand confronting, the coffin between,
His wife of old, and his wife of late,
And the dead man whose they both had been
Seems listening aloof, as to things past date.

—"I have called," says the first. "Do you
marvel or not?"

"In truth," says the second, "I do—some-
what."

"Well, there was a word to be said by
me ! .

I divorced that man because of you—
It seemed I must do it, boundenly ;
But now I am older, and tell you true,
For life is little, and dead lies he ;
I would I had let alone you two !
And both of us, scorning parochial ways,
Had lived like the wives in the patriarchs'
days."

XV

IN THE MOONLIGHT

“O LONELY workman, standing there
In a dream, why do you stare and stare
At her grave, as no other grave there were ?

“If your great gaunt eyes so importune
Her soul by the shine of this corpse-cold
 moon,
Maybe you'll raise her phantom soon !”

“Why, fool, it is what I would rather see
Than all the living folk there be ;
But alas, there is no such joy for me !”

“Ah—she was one you loved, no doubt,
Through good and evil, through rain and
 drought,
And when she passed, all your sun went out ?”

“Nay : she was the woman I did not love,
Whom all the others were ranked above,
Whom during her life I thought nothing of.”

SELF-DENIATIONS

APRIL 18 1897

LYRICS AND REVERIES

(continued)

SELF-UNCONSCIOUS

ALONG the way
He walked that day,
Watching shapes that reveries limn,
And seldom he
Had eyes to see
The moment that encompassed him.

Bright yellowhammers
Made mirthful clamours,
And billed long straws with a bustling air,
And bearing their load
Flew up the road
That he followed, alone, without interest there.

From bank to ground
And over and round
They sidled along the adjoining hedge ;
Sometimes to the gutter
Their yellow flutter
Would dip from the nearest slatestone ledge.

The smooth sea-line
With a metal shine,
And flashes of white, and a sail thereon,
He would also descry
With a half-wrapt eye
Between the projects he mused upon.

Yes, round him were these
Earth's artistries,
But specious plans that came to his call
Did most engage
His pilgrimage,
While himself he did not see at all.

Dead now as sherds
Are the yellow birds,
And all that mattered has passed away ;
Yet God, the Elf,
Now shows him that self
As he was, and should have been shown, that
day.

O it would have been good
Could he then have stood
At a clear-eyed distance, and conned the whole,
But now such vision
Is mere derision,
Nor soothes his body nor saves his soul.

Not much, some may
Incline to say,
To see therein, had it all been seen.
Nay! he is aware
A thing was there
That loomed with an immortal mien.

THE DISCOVERY

I WANDERED to a crude coast
Like a ghost ;
Upon the hills I saw fires—
Funeral pyres
Seemingly—and heard breaking
Waves like distant cannonades that set the
land shaking.

And so I never once guessed
A Love-nest,
Bowered and candle-lit, lay
In my way,
Till I found a hid hollow,
Where I burst on her my heart could not
but follow.

TOLERANCE

"IT is a foolish thing," said I,
"To bear with such, and pass it by ;
Yet so I do, I know not why !"

And at each cross I would surmise
That if I had willed not in that wise
I might have spared me many sighs.

But now the only happiness
In looking back that I possess—
Whose lack would leave me comfortless—

Is to remember I refrained
From masteries I might have gained,
And for my tolerance was disdained ;

For see, a tomb. And if it were
I had bent and broke, I should not dare
To linger in the shadows there.

BEFORE AND AFTER SUMMER

I

LOOKING forward to the spring
One puts up with anything.
On this February day
Though the winds leap down the street
Wintry scourgings seem but play,
And these later shafts of sleet
—Sharper pointed than the first—
And these later snows—the worst—
Are as a half-transparent blind
Riddled by rays from sun behind.

II

Shadows of the October pine
Reach into this room of mine :
On the pine there swings a bird ;
He is shadowed with the tree.
Mutely perched he bills no word ;
Blank as I am even is he.
For those happy suns are past,
Fore-discerned in winter last.
When went by their pleasure, then ?
I, alas, perceived not when.

AT DAY-CLOSE IN NOVEMBER

THE ten hours' light is abating,
And a late bird wings across,
Where the pines, like waltzers waiting,
Give their black heads a toss.

Beech leaves, that yellow the noon-time,
Float past like specks in the eye ;
I set every tree in my June time,
And now they obscure the sky.

And the children who ramble through here
Conceive that there never has been
A time when no tall trees grew here,
A time when none will be seen.

THE YEAR'S AWAKENING

How do you know that the pilgrim track
Along the belting zodiac
Swept by the sun in his seeming rounds
Is traced by now to the Fishes' bounds
And into the Ram, when weeks of cloud
Have wrapt the sky in a clammy shroud,
And never as yet a tinct of spring
Has shown in the Earth's apparelling ;
 O vespering bird, how do you know,
 How do you know ?

How do you know, deep underground,
Hid in your bed from sight and sound,
Without a turn in temperature,
With weather life can scarce endure,
That light has won a fraction's strength,
And day put on some moments' length,
Whereof in merest rote will come,
Weeks hence, mild airs that do not numb ;
 O crocus root, how do you know,
 How do you know ?

February 1910.

UNDER THE WATERFALL

“WHENEVER I plunge my arm, like this,
In a basin of water, I never miss
The sweet sharp sense of a fugitive day
Fetched back from its thickening shroud of
gray.

Hence the only prime
And real love-rhyme
That I know by heart,
And that leaves no smart,
Is the purl of a little valley fall
About three spans wide and two spans tall
Over a table of solid rock,
And into a scoop of the self-same block ;
The purl of a runlet that never ceases
In stir of kingdoms, in wars, in peaces ;
With a hollow boiling voice it speaks
And has spoken since hills were turfless
peaks.”

“And why gives this the only prime
Idea to you of a real love-rhyme ?
And why does plunging your arm in a bowl
Full of spring water, bring throbs to your
soul ?”

86 UNDER THE WATERFALL

“ Well, under the fall, in a crease of the stone,
Though where precisely none ever has known,
Jammed darkly, nothing to show how prized,
And by now with its smoothness opalized,

Is a drinking-glass :

For, down that pass

My lover and I

Walked under a sky

Of blue with a leaf-wove awning of green,
In the burn of August, to paint the scene,
And we placed our basket of fruit and wine
By the runlet's rim, where we sat to dine ;
And when we had drunk from the glass to-
gether,

Arched by the oak-copse from the weather,
I held the vessel to rinse in the fall,

Where it slipped, and sank, and was past
recall,

Though we stooped and plumbed the little
abyss

With long bared arms. There the glass
still is.

And, as said, if I thrust my arm below

Cold water in basin or bowl, a throe

From the past awakens a sense of that time,

And the glass we used, and the cascade's
rhyme.

The basin seems the pool, and its edge

The hard smooth face of the brook-side ledge,

And the leafy pattern of china-ware

The hanging plants that were bathing there.

UNDER THE WATERFALL 87

“By night, by day, when it shines or lours,
There lies intact that chalice of ours,
And its presence adds to the rhyme of love
Persistently sung by the fall above.
No lip has touched it since his and mine
In turns therefrom sipped lovers' wine.”

THE SPELL OF THE ROSE

“I MEAN to build a hall anon,
And shape two turrets there,
And a broad newelled stair,
And a cool well for crystal water ;
Yes ; I will build a hall anon,
Plant roses love shall feed upon,
And apple trees and pear.”

He set to build the manor-hall,
And shaped the turrets there,
And the broad newelled stair,
And the cool well for crystal water ;
He built for me that manor-hall,
And planted many trees withal,
But no rose anywhere.

And as he planted never a rose
That bears the flower of love,
Though other flowers throve
Some heart-bane moved our souls to sever
Since he had planted never a rose ;
And misconceits raised horrid shows,
And agonies came thereof.

THE SPELL OF THE ROSE 89

“I'll mend these miseries,” then said I,
And so, at dead of night,
I went and, screened from sight,
That nought should keep our souls in sever-
ance,
I set a rose-bush. “This,” said I,
“May end divisions dire and wry,
And long-drawn days of blight.”

But I was called from earth—yea, called
Before my rose-bush grew ;
And would that now I knew
What feels he of the tree I planted,
And whether, after I was called
To be a ghost, he, as of old,
Gave me his heart anew !

Perhaps now blooms that queen of trees
I set but saw not grow,
And he, beside its glow—
Eyes couched of the mis-vision that blurred
me—
Ay, there beside that queen of trees
He sees me as I was, though sees
Too late to tell me so !

ST. LAUNCE'S REVISITED

SLIP back, Time !
Yet again I am nearing
Castle and keep, uprearing
Gray, as in my prime.

At the inn
Smiling nigh, why is it
Not as on my visit
When hope and I were twin ?

Groom and jade
Whom I found here, moulder ;
Strange the tavern-holder,
Strange the tap-maid.

Here I hired
Horse and man for bearing
Me on my wayfaring
To the door desired.

Evening gloomed
As I journeyed forward
To the faces shoreward,
Till their dwelling loomed.

If again
Towards the Atlantic sea there
I should speed, they'd be there
Surely now as then? . . .

Why waste thought,
When I know them vanished
Under earth; yea, banished
Ever into nought!

POEMS OF 1813-13

First Edition 1813

POEMS OF 1912-13

Veteris vestigia flammae

THE GOING

WHY did you give no hint that night
That quickly after the morrow's dawn,
And calmly, as if indifferent quite,
You would close your term here, up and
gone

Where I could not follow
With wing of swallow
To gain one glimpse of you ever anon !

Never to bid good-bye,
Or lip me the softest call,
Or utter a wish for a word, while I
Saw morning harden upon the wall,
Unmoved, unknowing
That your great going
Had place that moment, and altered all.

Why do you make me leave the house
And think for a breath it is you I see
At the end of the alley of bending boughs
Where so often at dusk you used to be ;
Till in darkening dankness
The yawning blankness
Of the perspective sickens me !

You were she who abode
By those red-veined rocks far West,
You were the swan-necked one who rode
Along the beetling Beeny Crest,
And, reining nigh me,
Would muse and eye me,
While Life unrolled us its very best.

Why, then, latterly did we not speak,
Did we not think of those days long dead,
And ere your vanishing strive to seek
That time's renewal? We might have said,
"In this bright spring weather
We'll visit together
Those places that once we visited."

Well, well! All's past amend,
Unchangeable. It must go.
I seem but a dead man held on end
To sink down soon. . . . O you could not
know
That such swift fleeing
No soul foreseeing—
Not even I—would undo me so!

December 1912.

YOUR LAST DRIVE

HERE by the moorway you returned,
And saw the borough lights ahead
That lit your face—all undiscerned
To be in a week the face of the dead,
And you told of the charm of that haloed
view
That never again would beam on you.

And on your left you passed the spot
Where eight days later you were to lie,
And be spoken of as one who was not ;
Beholding it with a heedless eye
As alien from you, though under its tree
You soon would halt everlastingly.

I drove not with you. . . . Yet had I sat
At your side that eve I should not have seen
That the countenance I was glancing at
Had a last-time look in the flickering sheen,
Nor have read the writing upon your face,
"I go hence soon to my resting-place ;

“ You may miss me then. But I shall not
know

How many times you visit me there,
Or what your thoughts are, or if you go
There never at all. And I shall not care.
Should you censure me I shall take no heed
And even your praises no more shall need.”

True: never you'll know. And you will
not mind.

But shall I then slight you because of such?
Dear ghost, in the past did you ever find
The thought “ What profit,” move me much?
Yet abides the fact, indeed, the same,—
You are past love, praise, indifference, blame.

December 1912.

THE WALK

You did not walk with me
Of late to the hill-top tree
 By the gated ways,
 As in earlier days ;
 You were weak and lame,
 So you never came,
And I went alone, and I did not mind,
Not thinking of you as left behind.

I walked up there to-day
Just in the former way ;
 Surveyed around
 The familiar ground
 By myself again :
 What difference, then ?
Only that underlying sense
Of the look of a room on returning thence.

RAIN ON A GRAVE

CLOUDS spout upon her
Their waters amain
In ruthless disdain,—
Her who but lately
Had shivered with pain
As at touch of dishonour
If there had lit on her
So coldly, so straightly
Such arrows of rain :

One who to shelter
Her delicate head
Would quicken and quicken
Each tentative tread
If drops chanced to pelt her
That summertime spills
In dust-paven rills
When thunder-clouds thicken
And birds close their bills.

Would that I lay there
And she were housed here !

Or better, together
Were folded away there
Exposed to one weather
We both,—who would stray there
When sunny the day there,
Or evening was clear
At the prime of the year.

Soon will be growing
Green blades from her mound,
And daisies be showing
Like stars on the ground,
Till she form part of them—
Ay—the sweet heart of them,
Loved beyond measure
With a child's pleasure
All her life's round.

Jan. 31, 1913.

“I FOUND HER OUT THERE”

I FOUND her out there
On a slope few see,
That falls westwardly
To the salt-edged air,
Where the ocean breaks
On the purple strand,
And the hurricane shakes
The solid land.

I brought her here,
And have laid her to rest
In a noiseless nest
No sea beats near.
She will never be stirred
In her loamy cell
By the waves long heard
And loved so well.

So she does not sleep
By those haunted heights
The Atlantic smites
And the blind gales sweep,

FOUND HER OUT THERE" 103

Whence she often would gaze
At Dundagel's famed head,
While the dipping blaze
Dyed her face fire-red ;

And would sigh at the tale
Of sunk Lyonesse,
As a wind-tugged tress
Flapped her cheek like a flail ;
Or listen at whiles
With a thought-bound brow
To the murmuring miles
She is far from now.

Yet her shade, maybe,
Will creep underground
Till it catch the sound
Of that western sea
As it swells and sobs
Where she once domiciled,
And joy in its throbs
With the heart of a child.

WITHOUT CEREMONY

It was your way, my dear,
To vanish without a word
When callers, friends, or kin
Had left, and I hastened in
To rejoin you, as I inferred.

And when you'd a mind to career
Off anywhere—say to town—
You were all on a sudden gone
Before I had thought thereon,
Or noticed your trunks were down.

So, now that you disappear
For ever in that swift style,
Your meaning seems to me
Just as it used to be :
“ Good-bye is not worth while ! ”

LAMENT

How she would have loved
A party to-day!—
Bright-hatted and gloved,
With table and tray
And chairs on the lawn
Her smiles would have shone
With welcomings. . . . But
She is shut, she is shut
 From friendship's spell
 In the jailing shell
 Of her tiny cell.

Or she would have reigned
At a dinner to-night
With ardours unfeigned,
And a generous delight ;
All in her abode
She'd have freely bestowed
On her guests. . . . But alas,
She is shut under grass
 Where no cups flow,
 Powerless to know
 That it might be so.

LAMENT

And she would have sought
With a child's eager glance
The shy snowdrops brought
By the new year's advance,
And peered in the rime
Of Candlemas-time
For crocuses . . . chanced
It that she were not tranced
 From sights she loved best ;
 Wholly possessed
 By an infinite rest !

And we are here staying
Amid these stale things,
Who care not for gaying,
And those junketings
That used so to joy her,
And never to cloy her
As us they cloy ! . . . But
She is shut, she is shut
 From the cheer of them, dead
 To all done and said
 In her yew-arched bed.

THE HAUNTER

HE does not think that I haunt here nightly :
 How shall I let him know
That whither his fancy sets him wandering
 I, too, alertly go ?—
Hover and hover a few feet from him
 Just as I used to do,
But cannot answer the words he lifts me—
 Only listen thereto !

When I could answer he did not say them :
 When I could let him know
How I would like to join in his journeys
 Seldom he wished to go.
Now that he goes and wants me with him
 More than he used to do,
Never he sees my faithful phantom
 Though he speaks thereto.

Yes, I companion him to places
 Only dreamers know,
Where the shy hares print long paces,
 Where the night rooks go ;

Into old aisles where the past is all to him,
Close as his shade can do,
Always lacking the power to call to him,
Near as I reach thereto !

What a good haunter I am, O tell him !
Quickly make him know
If he but sigh since my loss befell him
Straight to his side I go.
Tell him a faithful one is doing
All that love can do
Still that his path may be worth pursuing,
And to bring peace thereto.

THE VOICE

WOMAN much missed, how you call to me,
 call to me,
Saying that now you are not as you were
When you had changed from the one who
 was all to me,
But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you,
 then,
Standing as when I drew near to the town
Where you would wait for me: yes, as I
 knew you then,
Even to the original air-blue gown!

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness
Travelling across the wet mead to me here,
You being ever dissolved to existlessness,
Heard no more again far or near?

 Thus I; faltering forward,
 Leaves around me falling,
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from
 norward.
 And the woman calling.

HIS VISITOR

I COME across from Mellstock while the moon
wastes weaker
To behold where I lived with you for twenty
years and more :
I shall go in the gray, at the passing of the
mail-train,
And need no setting open of the long familiar
door

As before.

The change I notice in my once own quarters !
A brilliant budded border where the daisies
used to be,
The rooms new painted, and the pictures
altered,
And other cups and saucers, and no cozy nook
for tea

As with me.

I discern the dim faces of the sleep-wrapt
servants ;
They are not those who tended me through
feeble hours and strong,

But strangers quite, who never knew my rule
here,
Who never saw me painting, never heard my
softling song
Float along.

So I don't want to linger in this re-decked
dwelling,
I feel too uneasy at the contrasts I behold,
And I make again for Mellstock to return
here never,
And rejoin the roomy silence, and the mute
and manifold
Souls of old.

A CIRCULAR

As "legal representative"
I read a missive not my own,
On new designs the senders give
For clothes, in tints as shown.

Here figure blouses, gowns for tea,
And presentation-trains of state,
Charming ball-dresses, millinery,
Warranted up to date.

And this gay-pictured, spring-time shout
Of Fashion, hails what lady proud?
Her who before last year ebbed out
Was costumed in a shroud.

A DREAM OR NO

WHY go to Saint-Juliot? What's Juliot
to me?
Some strange necromancy
But charmed me to fancy
That much of my life claims the spot as its
key.

Yes. I have had dreams of that place in the
West,
And a maiden abiding
Thereat as in hiding;
Fair-eyed and white-shouldered, broad-browed
and brown-tressed.

And of how, coastward bound on a night
long ago,
There lonely I found her,
The sea-birds around her,
And other than nigh things uncaring to know.

So sweet her life there (in my thought has it
seemed)
That quickly she drew me
To take her unto me,
And lodge her long years with me. Such have
I dreamed.

But nought of that maid from Saint-Juliot I
see ;
Can she ever have been here,
And shed her life's sheen here,
The woman I thought a long housemate with
me ?

Does there even a place like Saint-Juliot exist ?
Or a Valency Valley
With stream and leafed alley,
Or Beeny, or Bos with its flounce flinging
mist ?

February 1913.

AFTER A JOURNEY

HERETO I come to view a voiceless ghost ;
Whither, O whither will its whim now
draw me?
Up the cliff, down, till I'm lonely, lost,
And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.
Where you will next be there's no knowing,
Facing round about me everywhere,
With your nut-coloured hair
And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and
going.

Yes : I have re-entered your olden haunts
at last ;
Through the years, through the dead scenes
I have tracked you ;
What have you now found to say of our
past—
Scanned across the dark space wherein I
have lacked you ?
Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought
division ?
Things were not lastly as firstly well
With us twain, you tell ?
But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

I see what you are doing : you are leading
 me on
 To the spots we knew when we haunted
 here together,
 The waterfall, above which the mist-bow
 shone
 At the then fair hour in the then fair
 weather,
 And the cave just under, with a voice still
 so hollow
 That it seems to call out to me from forty
 years ago,
 When you were all aglow,
 And not the thin ghost that I now frailly
 follow !

Ignorant of what there is fitting here to see,
 The waked birds preen and the seals flop
 lazily,
 Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,
 For the stars close their shutters and the
 dawn whitens hazily.
 Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,
 The bringing me here ; nay, bring me here
 again !
 I am just the same as when
 Our days were a joy, and our paths through
 flowers.

A DEATH-DAY RECALLED

BEENY did not quiver,
 Juliot grew not gray,
Thin Valency's river
 Held its wonted way.
Bos seemed not to utter
 Dimmest note of dirge,
Targan mouth a mutter
 To its creamy surge.

Yet though these, unheeding,
 Listless, passed the hour
Of her spirit's speeding,
 She had, in her flower,
Sought and loved the places—
 Much and often pined
For their lonely faces
 When in towns confined.

Why did not Valency
 In his purl deplore
One whose haunts were whence he
 Drew his limpid store?

118 A DEATH-DAY RECALLED

Why did Bos not thunder,
Targan apprehend
Body and breath were sunder
Of their former friend?

BEENY CLIFF

March 1870—March 1913

I

O THE opal and the sapphire of that wandering
western sea,
And the woman riding high above with bright
hair flapping free—
The woman whom I loved so, and who
loyally loved me.

II

The pale mews plained below us, and the
waves seemed far away
In a nether sky, engrossed in saying their
ceaseless babbling say,
As we laughed light-heartedly aloft on that
clear-sunned March day.

III

A little cloud then cloaked us, and there flew
an irised rain,
And the Atlantic dyed its levels with a dull
misfeatured stain,
And then the sun burst out again, and purples
prinked the main.

IV

—Still in all its chasmal beauty bulks old
Beeny to the sky,
And shall she and I not go there once again
now March is nigh,
And the sweet things said in that March say
anew there by and by?

V

What if still in chasmal beauty looms that
wild weird western shore,
The woman now is—elsewhere—whom the
ambling pony bore,
And nor knows nor cares for Beeny, and will
laugh there nevermore.

AT CASTLE BOTEREL

As I drive to the junction of lane and high-
way,
And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,
I look behind at the fading byway,
And see on its slope, now glistening wet,
Distinctly yet

Myself and a girlish form benighted
In dry March weather. We climb the
road
Beside a chaise. We had just alighted
To ease the sturdy pony's load
When he sighed and slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we
talked of
Matters not much, nor to what it led,—
Something that life will not be balked of
Without rude reason till hope is dead,
And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever
 A time of such quality, since or before,
 In that hill's story? To one mind never,
 Though it has been climbed, foot-swift,
 foot-sore,
 By thousands more.

Primaeval rocks form the road's steep border,
 And much have they faced there, first and
 last,
 Of the transitory in Earth's long order ;
 But what they record in colour and cast
 Is—that we two passed.

And to me, though Time's unflinching rigour,
 In mindless rote, has ruled from sight
 The substance now, one phantom figure
 Remains on the slope, as when that night
 Saw us alight.

I look and see it there, shrinking, shrinking,
 I look back at it amid the rain
 For the very last time ; for my sand is sinking,
 And I shall traverse old love's domain
 Never again.

March 1913.

PLACES

NOBODY says : Ah, that is the place
Where chanced, in the hollow of years ago,
What none of the Three Towns cared to
 know—
The birth of a little girl of grace—
The sweetest the house saw, first or last ;
 Yet it was so
 On that day long past.

Nobody thinks : There, there she lay
In a room by the Hoe, like the bud of a
 flower,
And listened, just after the bedtime hour,
To the stammering chimes that used to play
The quaint Old Hundred -and - Thirteenth
 tune
 In Saint Andrew's tower
 Night, morn, and noon.

Nobody calls to mind that here
Upon Boterel Hill, where the waggoners skid,

With cheeks whose airy flush outbid
Fresh fruit in bloom, and free of fear,
She cantered down, as if she must fall
 (Though she never did),
 To the charm of all.

Nay : one there is to whom these things,
That nobody else's mind calls back,
Have a savour that scenes in being lack,
And a presence more than the actual brings ;
To whom to-day is beneaped and stale,
 And its urgent clack
 But a vapid tale.

PLYMOUTH, *March* 1913.

THE PHANTOM HORSEWOMAN

I

QUEER are the ways of a man I know :
He comes and stands
In a careworn craze,
And looks at the sands
And the seaward haze
With moveless hands
And face and gaze,
Then turns to go . . .
And what does he see when he gazes so ?

II

They say he sees as an instant thing
More clear than to-day,
A sweet soft scene
That once was in play
By that briny green ;
Yes, notes alway
Warm, real, and keen,
What his back years bring—
A phantom of his own figuring.

III

Of this vision of his they might say more :
Not only there
Does he see this sight,
But everywhere
In his brain—day, night,
As if on the air
It were drawn rose bright—
Yea, far from that shore
Does he carry this vision of heretofore :

IV

A ghost-girl-rider. And though, toil-tried,
He withers daily,
Time touches her not,
But she still rides gaily
In his rapt thought
On that shagged and shaly
Atlantic spot,
And as when first eyed
Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide.

MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

THE WISTFUL LADY

‘ LOVE, while you were away there came to
me—

From whence I cannot tell—
A plaintive lady pale and passionless,
Who laid her eyes upon me critically,
And weighed me with a wearing wistfulness,
As if she knew me well.”

“ I saw no lady of that wistful sort
As I came riding home.
Perhaps she was some dame the Fates constrain
By memories sadder than she can support,
Or by unhappy vacancy of brain,
To leave her roof and roam? ”

“ Ah, but she knew me. And before this
time
I have seen her, lending ear
To my light outdoor words, and pondering
each,
Her frail white finger swayed in pantomime,
As if she fain would close with me in speech,
And yet would not come near.

“And once I saw her beckoning with her
hand
As I came into sight
At an upper window. And I at last went
out ;
But when I reached where she had seemed
to stand,
And wandered up and down and searched
about,
I found she had vanished quite.”

Then thought I how my dead Love used
to say,
With a small smile, when she
Was waning wan, that she would hover round
And show herself after her passing day
To any newer Love I might have found,
But show her not to me.

THE WOMAN IN THE RYE

“WHY do you stand in the dripping rye,
Cold-lipped, unconscious, wet to the knee,
When there are firesides near?” said I.
“I told him I wished him dead,” said she.

“Yea, cried it in my haste to one
Whom I had loved, whom I well loved still ;
And die he did. And I hate the sun,
And stand here lonely, aching, chill ;

“Stand waiting, waiting under skies .
That blow reproach, the while I see
The rooks sheer off to where he lies
Wrapt in a peace withheld from me !”

THE CHEVAL-GLASS

WHY do you harbour that great cheval-glass
Filling up your narrow room ?
You never preen or plume,
Or look in a week at your full-length figure—
Picture of bachelor gloom !

“ Well, when I dwelt in ancient England,
Renting the valley farm,
Thoughtless of all heart-harm,
I used to gaze at the parson's daughter,
A creature of nameless charm.

“ Thither there came a lover and won her,
Carried her off from my view.
O it was then I knew
Misery of a cast undreamt of—
More than, indeed, my due !

“ Then far rumours of her ill-usage
Came, like a chilling breath
When a man languisheth ;
Followed by news that her mind lost balance,
And, in a space, of her death.

“Soon sank her father; and next was the
 auction—

 Everything to be sold :
 Mid things new and old
Stood this glass in her former chamber,
 Long in her use, I was told.

“Well, I awaited the sale and bought it. . . .
 There by my bed it stands,
 And as the dawn expands
Often I see her pale-faced form there
 Brushing her hair’s bright bands.

“There, too, at pallid midnight moments
 Quick she will come to my call,
 Smile from the frame withal
Ponderingly, as she used to regard me
 Passing her father’s wall.

“So that it was for its revelations
 I brought it oversea,
 And drag it about with me. . . .
Anon I shall break it and bury its fragments
 Where my grave is to be.”

THE RE-ENACTMENT

BETWEEN the folding sea-downs,
 In the gloom
Of a wailful wintry nightfall,
 When the boom
Of the ocean, like a hammering in a hollow
 tomb,

Throbbled up the copse-clothed valley
 From the shore
To the chamber where I darkled,
 Sunk and sore
With gray ponderings why my Loved one
 had not come before

To salute me in the dwelling
 That of late
I had hired to waste a while in—
 Dim of date,
Quaint, and remote—wherein I now expectant
 sate ;

On the solitude, unsignalled,
 Broke a man
 Who, in air as if at home there,
 Seemed to scan
 Every fire-flecked nook of the apartment
 span by span.

A stranger's and no lover's
 Eyes were these,
 Eyes of a man who measures
 What he sees
 But vaguely, as if wrapt in filmy phantasies.

Yea, his bearing was so absent
 As he stood,
 It bespoke a chord so plaintive
 In his mood,
 That soon I judged he would not wrong my
 quietude.

“Ah—the supper is just ready!”

Then he said,

“And the years-long-binned Madeira
 Flashes red!”

(There was no wine, no food, no supper-table
 spread.)

“You will forgive my coming,
 Lady fair?

I see you as at that time
 Rising there,

The self-same curious querying in your eyes
 and air.

“Yet no. How so? You wear not
 The same gown,
 Your locks show woful difference,
 Are not brown :
 What, is it not as when I hither came from
 town?”

“And the place. . . . But you seem
 other—
 Can it be?
 What’s this that Time is doing
 Unto me?
You dwell here, unknown woman? . . .
 Whereabouts, then, is she?”

“And the house - things are much
 shifted.—
 Put them where
 They stood on this night’s fellow ;
 Shift her chair :
 Here was the couch : and the piano should
 be there.”

I indulged him, verily nerve-strained
 Being alone,
 And I moved the things as bidden,
 One by one,
 And feigned to push the old piano where he
 had shown.

THE RE-ENACTMENT 137

“Aha—now I can see her !
Stand aside :
Don't thrust her from the table
Where, meek-eyed,
She makes attempt with matron-manners to
preside.

“She serves me : now she rises,
Goes to play. . . .
But you obstruct her, fill her
With dismay,
And embarrassed, scared, she vanishes away !”

And, as 'twere useless longer
To persist,
He sighed, and sought the entry
Ere I wist,
And retreated, disappearing soundless in the
mist.

That here some mighty passion
Once had burned,
Which still the walls enghosted,
I discerned,
And that by its strong spell mine might be
overturned.

I sat depressed ; till, later,
My Love came ;

But something in the chamber
 Dimmed our flame,—
 An emanation, making our due words fall
 tame,

As if the intenser drama
 Shown me there
 Of what the walls had witnessed
 Filled the air,
 And left no room for later passion anywhere.

So came it that our fervours
 Did quite fail
 Of future consummation—
 Being made quail
 By the weird witchery of the parlour's hidden
 tale,

Which I, as years passed, faintly
 Learnt to trace,—
 One of sad love, born full-winged
 In that place
 Where the predestined sorrowers first stood
 face to face.

And as that month of winter
 Circles round,
 And the evening of the date-day
 Grows embrowned,
 I am conscious of those presences, and sit
 spellbound.

THE RE-ENACTMENT 139

There, often—lone, forsaken—
 Queries breed
Within me; whether a phantom
 Had my heed
On that strange night, or was it some wrecked
 heart indeed?

HER SECRET

THAT love's dull smart distressed my heart
 He shrewdly learnt to see,
But that I was in love with a dead man
 Never suspected he.

He searched for the trace of a pictured face,
 He watched each missive come,
And a sheet that seemed like a love-line
 Wrought his look lurid and numb.

He dogged my feet to the city street,
 He followed me to the sea,
But not to the nigh, still churchyard
 Did he dream of following me !

“SHE CHARGED ME”

SHE charged me with having said this and that
To another woman long years before,
In the very parlour where we sat,—

Sat on a night when the endless pour
Of rain on the roof and the road below
Bent the spring of the spirit more and
more. . . .

—So charged she me ; and the Cupid’s bow
Of her mouth was hard, and her eyes, and
her face,
And her white forefinger lifted slow.

Had she done it gently, or shown a trace
That not too curiously would she view
A folly flown ere her reign had place,

A kiss might have closed it. But I knew
From the fall of each word, and the pause
between,
That the curtain would drop upon us two
Ere long, in our play of slave and queen.

THE NEWCOMER'S WIFE

HE paused on the sill of a door ajar
That screened a lively liquor-bar,
For the name had reached him through the
door
Of her he had married the week before.

“ We called her the Hack of the Parade ;
But she was discreet in the games she played ;
If slightly worn, she's pretty yet,
And gossips, after all, forget.”

“ And he knows nothing of her past ;
I am glad the girl's in luck at last ;
Such ones, though stale to native eyes,
Newcomers snatch at as a prize.”

“ Yes, being a stranger he sees her blent
Of all that's fresh and innocent,
Nor dreams how many a love-campaign
She had enjoyed before his reign ! ”

That night there was the splash of a fall
Over the slimy harbour-wall :
They searched, and at the deepest place
Found him with crabs upon his face.

A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

HE lay awake, with a harassed air,
And she, in her cloud of loose lank hair,
 Seemed trouble-tried
As the dawn drew in on their faces there.

The chamber looked far over the sea
From a white hotel on a white-stoned quay,
 And stepping a stride
He parted the window-drapery.

Above the level horizon spread
The sunrise, firing them foot to head
 From its smouldering lair,
And painting their pillows with dyes of red.

“What strange disquiets have stirred you,
 dear,
This dragging night, with starts in fear
 Of me, as it were,
Or of something evil hovering near?”

A CONVERSATION AT DAWN 145

“Ah—had you a male friend once loved well,
Upon whose suit disaster fell
 And frustrance swift?
Honest you are, and may care to tell.”

She lay impassive, and nothing broke
The stillness other than, stroke by stroke,
 The lazy lift
Of the tide below them; till she spoke:

“I once had a friend—a Love, if you will—
Whose wife forsook him, and sank until
 She was made a thrall
In a prison-cell for a deed of ill. . . .

“He remained alone; and we met—to love,
But barring legitimate joy thereof
 Stood a doorless wall,
Though we prized each other all else above.

“And this was why, though I'd touched my
 prime,
I put off suitors from time to time—
 Yourself with the rest—
Till friends, who approved you, called it
 crime,

“And when misgivings weighed on me
In my lover's absence, hurriedly,
 And much distress,
I took you. . . . Ah, that such could
 be! . . .

146 A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

“ Now, saw you when crossing from yonder
shore

At yesternoon, that the packet bore
On a white-wreathed bier
A coffined body towards the fore ?

“ Well, while you stood at the other end,
The loungers talked, and I couldn't but lend
A listening ear,
For they named the dead. 'Twas the wife of
my friend.

“ He was there, but did not note me, veiled,
Yet I saw that a joy, as of one unjailed,
Now shone in his gaze ;
He knew not his hope of me just had failed !

“ They had brought her home : she was born
in this isle ;
And he will return to his domicile,
And pass his days
Alone, and not as he dreamt erstwhile ! ”

“—So you've lost a sprucer spouse than I ! ”
She held her peace, as if fain deny
She would indeed
For his pleasure's sake, but could lip no lie.

“ One far less formal and plain and slow ! ”
She let the laconic assertion go
As if of need
She held the conviction that it was so.

A CONVERSATION AT DAWN 147

“ Regard me as his he always should,
He had said, and wed me he vowed he would
 In his prime or sere
Most verily do, if ever he could ;

“ And this fulfilment is now his aim,
For a letter, addressed in my maiden name,
 Has dogged me here,
Reminding me faithfully of his claim ;

“ And it started a hope like a lightning-streak
That I might go to him—say for a week—
 And afford you right
To put me away, and your vows unspeak.

“ To be sure you have said, as of dim intent,
That marriage is a plain event
 Of black and white,
Without any ghost of sentiment,

“ And my heart has quailed.—But deny it
 true
That you will never this lock undo !
 No God intends
To thwart the yearning He’s father to ! ”

The husband hemmed, then blandly bowed
In the light of the angry morning cloud.
 “ So my idyll ends,
And a drama opens ! ” he mused aloud ;

148 A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

And his features froze. "You may take it
as true
That I will never this lock undo
For so depraved
A passion as that which kindles you!"

Said she: "I am sorry you see it so;
I had hoped you might have let me go,
And thus been saved
The pain of learning there's more to know."

"More? What may that be? Gad, I think
You have told me enough to make me blink!
Yet if more remain
Then own it to me. I will not shrink!"

"Well, it is this. As we could not see
That a legal marriage would ever be,
To end our pain
We united ourselves informally;

"And vowed at a chancel-altar nigh,
With book and ring, a lifelong tie;
A contract vain
To the world, but real to Him on High."

"And you became as his wife?"—"I did."—
He stood as stiff as a caryatid,
And said, "Indeed! . . .
No matter. You're mine, whatever you've
hid!"

A CONVERSATION AT DAWN 149

“But is it right! When I only gave
My hand to you in a sweat to save,
Through desperate need
(As I thought), my fame, for I was not brave!”

“To save your fame? Your meaning is dim,
For nobody knew of your altar-whim?”
“I mean—I feared
There might be fruit of my tie with him;

“And to cloak it by marriage I’m not the first,
Though, maybe, morally most accurst
Through your unpeered
And strict uprightness. That’s the worst!

“While yesterday his worn contours
Convinced me that love like his endures,
And that my troth-plight
Had been his, in fact, and not truly yours.”

“So, my lady, you raise the veil by degrees. . . .
I own this last is enough to freeze
The warmest wight!
Now hear the other side, if you please:

“I did say once, though without intent,
That marriage is a plain event
Of black and white,
Whatever may be its sentiment:

150 A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

“I'll act accordingly, none the less
That you soiled the contract in time of stress,
 There to induced
By the feared results of your wantonness.

“But the thing is over, and no one knows,
And it's nought to the future what you disclose.
 That you'll be loosed
For such an episode, don't suppose !

“No : I'll not free you. And if it appear
There was too good ground for your first fear
 From your amorous tricks,
I'll father the child. Yes, by God, my dear !

“Even should you fly to his arms, I'll damn
Opinion, and fetch you ; treat as sham
 Your mutinous kicks,
And whip you home. That's the sort I am !”

She whitened. “Enough. . . . Since you
 disapprove
I'll yield in silence, and never move
 Till my last pulse ticks
A footstep from the domestic groove.”

“Then swear it,” he said, “and your king
 uncrown.”

He drew her forth in her long white gown,
And she knelt and swore.

“Good. Now you may go and again lie down

A CONVERSATION AT DAWN 151

“Since you’ve played these pranks and given
no sign,
You shall crave this man of yours ; pine and
pine
With sighings sore,
’Till I’ve starved your love for him ; nailed
you mine !

“I’m a practical man, and want no tears ;
You’ve made a fool of me, it appears ;
That you don’t again
Is a lesson I’ll teach you in future years.”

She answered not, lying listlessly
With her dark dry eyes on the coppery sea,
That now and then
Flung its lazy flounce at the neighbouring
quay.

A KING'S SOLILOQUY

ON THE NIGHT OF HIS FUNERAL

FROM the slow march and muffled drum,
And crowds distrest,
And book and bell, at length I have come
To my full rest.

A ten years' rule beneath the sun
Is wound up here,
And what I have done, what left undone,
Figures out clear.

Yet in the estimate of such
It grieves me more
That I by some was loved so much
Than that I bore,

From others, judgment of that hue
Which over-hope
Breeds from a theoretic view
Of regal scope.

For kingly opportunities
Right many have sighed ;
How best to bear its devilries
Those learn who have tried !

A KING'S SOLILOQUY 153

I have eaten the fat and drunk the sweet,
Lived the life out
From the first greeting glad drum-beat
To the last shout.

What pleasure earth affords to kings
I have enjoyed
Through its long vivid pulse-stirrings
Even till it cloyed.

What days of drudgery, nights of stress
Can cark a throne,
Even one maintained in peacefulness,
I too have known.

And so, I think, could I step back
To life again,
I should prefer the average track
Of average men,

Since, as with them, what kingship would
It cannot do,
Nor to first thoughts however good
Hold itself true.

Something binds hard the royal hand,
As all that be,
And it is That has shaped, has planned
My acts and me.

May 1910

THE CORONATION

AT Westminster, hid from the light of day,
Many who once had shone as monarchs lay.

Edward the Pious, and two Edwards more,
The second Richard, Henrys three or four ;

That is to say, those who were called the
Third,
Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth (the much self-
widowed);

And James the Scot, and near him Charles
the Second,
And, too, the second George could there be
reckoned.

Of women, Mary and Queen Elizabeth,
And Anne, all silent in a musing death ;

And William's Mary, and Mary, Queen of
Scots,
And consort-queens whose names oblivion blots ;

And several more whose chronicle one sees
Adorning ancient royal pedigrees.

—Now, as they drowsed on, freed from Life's
old thrall,
And heedless, save of things exceptional,

Said one: "What means this throbbing
thudding sound
That reaches to us here from overground;

"A sound of chisels, augers, planes, and saws,
Infringing all ecclesiastic laws?

"And these tons-weight of timber on us
pressed,
Unfelt here since we entered into rest?

"Surely, at least to us, being corpses royal,
A meet repose is owing by the loyal?"

"—Perhaps a scaffold!" Mary Stuart sighed,
"If such still be. It was that way I died."

"—Ods! Far more like," said he the many-
wived,
"That for a wedding 'tis this work's contrived.

"Ha-ha! I never would bow down to Rimmon,
But I had a rare time with those six women!"

"Not all at once?" gasped he who loved
confession.

“Nay, nay!” said Hal. “That would have been transgression.”

“—They build a catafalque here, black and tall, Perhaps,” mused Richard, “for some funeral?”

And Anne chimed in: “Ah, yes: it maybe so!”
“Nay!” squeaked Eliza. “Little you seem to know—

“Clearly ’tis for some crowning here in state,
As they crowned us at our long bygone date;

“Though we’d no such a power of carpentry,
But let the ancient architecture be;

“If I were up there where the parsons sit,
In one of my gold robes, I’d see to it!”

“But you are not,” Charles chuckled. “You are here,
And never will know the sun again, my dear!”

“Yea,” whispered those whom no one had addressed;

“With slow, sad march, amid a folk distressed,
We were brought here, to take our dusty rest.

“And here, alas, in darkness laid below,
We’ll wait and listen, and endure the show. . . .
Clamour dogs kingship; afterwards not so!”

AQUAE SULIS

THE chimes called midnight, just at interlune,
And the daytime parle on the Roman investi-
gations
Was shut to silence, save for the husky
tune
The bubbling waters played near the excava-
tions.

And a warm air came up from underground,
And a flutter, as of a filmy shape un-
sepulchred,
That collected itself, and waited, and looked
around :
Nothing was seen, but utterances could be
heard :

Those of the goddess whose shrine was beneath
the pile
Of the God with the baldachined altar over-
head :
“ And what did you win by raising this nave
and aisle
Close on the site of the temple I tenanted ?

“ The notes of your organ have thrilled down
out of view
To the earth-clogged wrecks of my edifice
many a year,
Though stately and shining once—ay, long
ere you
Had set up crucifix and candle here.

“ Your priests have trampled the dust of mine
without rueing,
Despising the joys of man whom I so much
loved,
Though my springs boil on by your Gothic
arcades and pewing,
And sculptures crude. . . . Would Jove they
could be removed !”

“—Repress, O lady proud, your traditional
ires ;
You know not by what a frail thread we
equally hang ;
It is said we are images both—twitched by
people’s desires ;
And that I, like you, fail as a song men
yesterday sang !”

“ What—a Jumping-jack you, and myself
but a poor Jumping-jill,
Now worm-eaten, times ago twitched at
Humanity’s bid ?

O I cannot endure it!—But, chance to us
whatso there will,
Let us Kiss and be friends! Come, agree
you?"—None heard if he did. . . .

And the olden dark hid the cavities late laid
bare,
And all was suspended and soundless as before,
Except for a gossamery noise fading off in
the air,
And the boiling voice of the waters' medicinal
pour.

BATH.

SEVENTY-FOUR AND TWENTY

HERE goes a man of seventy-four,
Who sees not what life means for him,
And here another in years a score
Who reads its very figure and trim.

The one who shall walk to-day with me
Is not the youth who gazes far,
But the breezy sire who cannot see
What Earth's ingrained conditions are.

THE ELOPEMENT

“A WOMAN never agreed to it!” said my
knowing friend to me.

“That one thing she'd refuse to do for
Solomon's mines in fee:

No woman ever will make herself look older
than she is.”

I did not answer; but I thought, “you err
there, ancient Quiz.”

It took a rare one, true, to do it; for she was
surely rare—

As rare a soul at that sweet time of her life
as she was fair.

And urging heart-heaves, too, were strong,
for ours was a passionate case,

Yea, passionate enough to lead to freaking
with that young face.

I have told no one about it, should perhaps
make few believe,

But I think it over now that life looms dull
and years bereave,

How blank we stood at our bright wits' end,
two blown barks in distress,
How self-regard in her was slain by her large
tenderness.

I said : " The only chance for us in a crisis
of this kind
Is going it thorough ! " — " Yes," she calmly
breathed. " Well, I don't mind."
And we blanch'd her dark locks ruthlessly :
set wrinkles on her brow ;
Ay—she was a right rare woman then, what-
ever she may be now.

That night we heard a coach drive up, and
questions asked below.
" A gent with an elderly wife, sir," was re-
turned from the bureau.
And the wheels went rattling on, and free at
last from public ken
We washed all off in her chamber and restored
her youth again.

How many years ago it was! Some fifty
can it be
Since that adventure held us, and she played
old wife to me?
But in time convention won her, as it wins
all women at last,
And now she is rich and respectable, and
time has buried the past.

“I ROSE UP AS MY CUSTOM IS”

I ROSE up as my custom is
On the eve of All-Souls' day,
And left my grave for an hour or so
To call on those I used to know
Before I passed away.

I visited my former Love
As she lay by her husband's side ;
I asked her if life pleased her, now
She was rid of a poet wrung in brow,
And crazed with the ills he eyed ;

Who used to drag her here and there
Wherever his fancies led,
And point out pale phantasmal things,
And talk of vain vague purposings
That she discredited.

She was quite civil, and replied,
“ Old comrade, is that you ?
Well, on the whole, I like my life.—
I know I swore I'd be no wife,
But what was I to do ?

"You see, of all men for my sex
A poet is the worst ;
Women are practical, and they
Crave the wherewith to pay their way,
And slake their social thirst.

"You were a poet—quite the ideal
That we all love awhile :
But look at this man snoring here—
He's no romantic chanticleer,
Yet keeps me in good style.

"He makes no quest into my thoughts,
But a poet wants to know
What one has felt from earliest days,
Why one thought not in other ways,
And one's Loves of long ago."

Her words benumbed my fond faint ghost ;
The nightmares neighed from their stalls,
The vampires screeched, the harpies flew,
And under the dim dawn I withdrew
To Death's inviolate halls.

A WEEK

ON Monday night I closed my door,
And thought you were not as heretofore,
And little cared if we met no more.

I seemed on Tuesday night to trace
Something beyond mere commonplace
In your ideas, and heart, and face.

On Wednesday I did not opine
Your life would ever be one with mine,
Though if it were we should well combine.

On Thursday noon I liked you well,
And fondly felt that we must dwell
Not far apart, whatever befell.

On Friday it was with a thrill
In gazing towards your distant vill
I owned you were my dear one still.

I saw you wholly to my mind
On Saturday—even one who shrined
All that was best of womankind.

As wing-clipt sea-gull for the sea
On Sunday night I longed for thee,
Without whom life were waste to me!

HAD YOU WEPT

HAD you wept ; had you but neared me with
a hazed uncertain ray,
Dewy as the face of the dawn, in your large
and luminous eye,
Then would have come back all the joys the
tidings had slain that day,
And a new beginning, a fresh fair heaven,
have smoothed the things awry.
But you were less feebly human, and no
passionate need for clinging
Possessed your soul to overthrow reserve when
I came near ;
Ay, though you suffer as much as I from
storms the hours are bringing
Upon your heart and mine. I never see you
shed a tear.

The deep strong woman is weakest, the weak
one is the strong ;
The weapon of all weapons best for winning,
you have not used ;

Have you never been able, or would you not,
through the evil times and long?
Has not the gift been given you, or such
gift have you refused?
When I bade me not absolve you on that
evening or the morrow,
Why did you not make war on me with those
who weep like rain?
You felt too much, so gained no balm for all
your torrid sorrow,
And hence our deep division, and our dark
undying pain.

BEREFT, SHE THINKS SHE
DREAMS

I DREAM that the dearest I ever knew
Has died and been entombed.
I am sure it's a dream that cannot be true,
But I am so overgloomed
By its persistence, that I would gladly
Have quick death take me,
Rather than longer think thus sadly ;
So wake me, wake me !

It has lasted days, but minute and hour
I expect to get aroused
And find him as usual in the bower
Where we so happily housed.
Yet stays this nightmare too appalling,
And like a web shakes me,
And piteously I keep on calling,
And no one wakes me !

IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

“WHAT do you see in that time-touched
stone,
When nothing is there
But ashen blankness, although you give it
A rigid stare?

“You look not quite as if you saw,
But as if you heard,
Parting your lips, and treading softly
As mouse or bird.

“It is only the base of a pillar, they'll tell you,
That came to us
From a far old hill men used to name
Areopagus.”

—“I know no art, and I only view
A stone from a wall,
But I am thinking that stone has echoed
The voice of Paul,

“ Paul as he stood and preached beside it
Facing the crowd,
A small gaunt figure with wasted features,
Calling out loud

“ Words that in all their intimate accents
Pattered upon
That marble front, and were wide reflected,
And then were gone.

“ I’m a labouring man, and know but little,
Or nothing at all ;
But I can’t help thinking that stone once
echoed
The voice of Paul.”

IN THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS

“MAN, you too, aren't you, one of these rough
followers of the criminal?
All hanging hereabout to gather how he's
going to bear
Examination in the hall.” She flung dis-
dainful glances on
The shabby figure standing at the fire with
others there,
Who warmed them by its flare.

“No indeed, my skipping maiden: I know
nothing of the trial here,
Or criminal, if so he be.—I chanced to come
this way,
And the fire shone out into the dawn, and
morning airs are cold now;
I, too, was drawn in part by charms I see
before me play,
That I see not every day.”

IN THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS 173

'Ha, ha !' then laughed the constables who
also stood to warm themselves,
The while another maiden scrutinized his
features hard,
As the blaze threw into contrast every line
and knot that wrinkled them,
Exclaiming, "Why, last night when he was
brought in by the guard,
You were with him in the yard !"

"Nay, nay, you teasing wench, I say ! You
know you speak mistakenly.
Cannot a tired pedestrian who has legged it
long and far
Here on his way from northern parts, en-
grossed in humble marketings,
Come in and rest awhile, although judicial
doings are
Afoot by morning star ?"

"O, come, come !" laughed the constables.
"Why, man, you speak the dialect
He uses in his answers ; you can hear him up
the stairs.
So own it. We sha'n't hurt ye. There he's
speaking now ! His syllables
Are those you sound yourself when you are
talking unawares,
As this pretty girl declares."

“ And you shudder when his chain clinks ! ”
she rejoined. “ O yes, I noticed it.
And you winced, too, when those cuffs they
gave him echoed to us here.
They'll soon be coming down, and you may
then have to defend yourself
Unless you hold your tongue, or go away
and keep you clear
When he's led to judgment near ! ”

“ No ! I'll be damned in hell if I know any-
thing about the man !
No single thing about him more than every-
body knows !
Must not I even warm my hands but I am
charged with blasphemies ? ” . . .
—His face convulses as the morning cock
that moment crows,
And he droops, and turns, and goes.

THE OBLITERATE TOMB

“MORE than half my life long
Did they weigh me falsely, to my bitter wrong,
But they all have shrunk away into the silence
Like a lost song.

“And the day has dawned and come
For forgiveness, when the past may hold it
dumb
On the once reverberate words of hatred
uttered
Half in delirium. . . .

“With folded lips and hands
They lie and wait what next the Will commands,
And doubtless think, if think they can : ‘ Let
discord
Sink with Life’s sands ! ’

“By these late years their names,
Their virtues, their hereditary claims,
May be as near defacement at their grave-
place
As are their fames.”

176 THE OBLITERATE TOMB

—Such thoughts bechanced to seize
A traveller's mind—a man of memories—
As he set foot within the western city
Where had died these

Who in their lifetime deemed
Him their chief enemy—one whose brain had
schemed
To get their dingy greatness deeper dingied
And disesteemed.

So, sojourning in their town,
He mused on them and on their once
renown,
And said, "I'll seek their resting-place to-
morrow
Ere I lie down,

"And end, lest I forget,
Those ires of many years that I regret,
Renew their names, that men may see some
liegeness
Is left them yet."

Duly next night he went
And sought the church he had known them
to frequent,
And wandered lantern-bearing, in the precincts,
Where they lay pent,

THE OBLITERATE TOMB 177

Till by remembrance led
He stood at length beside their slighted
bed,
Above which, truly, scarce a line or letter
Could now be read.

“Thus years obliterate
Their graven worth, their chronicle, their
date!
At once I'll garnish and revive the record
Of their past state,

“That still the sage may say
In pensive progress here where they decay,
'This stone records a luminous line whose
talents
Told in their day.'”

While dreaming thus he turned,
For a form shadowed where they lay inurned,
And he beheld a stranger in foreign vesture,
And tropic-burned.

“Sir, I am right pleased to view
That ancestors of mine should interest you,
For I have fared of purpose here to find
them. . . .
They are time-worn, true,

“But that’s a fault, at most,
 Carvers can cure. On the Pacific coast
 I have vowed for long that relics of my
 forbears
 I’d trace ere lost,

“And hitherward I come,
 Before this same old Time shall strike me
 numb,
 To carry it out.”—“Strange, this is!” said
 the other ;
 “What mind shall plumb

“Coincident design !
 Though these my father’s enemies were and
 mine,
 I nourished a like purpose—to restore them
 Each letter and line.”

“Such magnanimity
 Is now not needed, sir ; for you will see
 That since I am here, a thing like this is, plainly,
 Best done by me.”

The other bowed, and left,
 Crestfallen in sentiment, as one bereft
 Of some fair object he had been moved to
 cherish,
 By hands more deft.

THE OBLITERATE TOMB 179

And as he slept that night
The phantoms of the ensepulchred stood up-
right
Before him, trembling that he had set him
seeking
Their charnel-site.

And, as unknowing his ruth,
Asked as with terrors founded not on truth
Why he should want them. "Ha," they
hollowly hacked,
"You come, forsooth,

"By stealth to obliterate
Our graven worth, our chronicle, our date,
That our descendant may not gild the record
Of our past state,

"And that no sage may say
In pensive progress near where we decay :
'This stone records a luminous line whose
talents
Told in their day.' "

Upon the morrow he went,
And to that town and churchyard never bent
His ageing footsteps till, some twelvemonths
onward,
An accident

Once more detained him there ;
 And, stirred by hauntings, he must needs
 repair
 To where the tomb was. Lo, it stood still
 wasting
 In no man's care.

And so the tomb remained
 Untouched, untended, crumbling, weather-
 stained,
 And though the one-time foe was fain to
 right it
 He still refrained.

“ I'll set about it when
 I am sure he'll come no more. Best wait till
 then.”
 But so it was that never the kinsman entered
 That city again.

Till doubts grew keen
 If it had chanced not that the kinsman seen
 Shaped but in dream on that dim doubtful
 midnight :
 Such things had been. . . .

So, the well-meaner died
 While waiting tremulously unsatisfied
 That no return of the family's foreign scion
 Would still betide.

THE OBLITERATE TOMB 181

And many years slid by,
And active church-restorers cast their eye
Upon the ancient garth and hoary building
The tomb stood nigh.

And when they had scraped each wall,
Pulled out the stately pews, and smartened all,
"It will be well," declared the spruce church-
warden,
"To overhaul

"And broaden this path where shown ;
Nothing prevents it but an old tombstone
Pertaining to a family forgotten,
Of deeds unknown.

"Their names can scarce be read,
Depend on't, all who care for them are dead."
So went the tomb, whose shards were as path-
paving
Distributed.

Over it and about
Men's footsteps beat, and wind and water-
spout,
Until the names, aforetime gnawed by
weathers,
Were quite worn out.

182 THE OBLITERATE TOMB

So that no sage can say
In pensive progress near where they decay,
"This stone records a luminous line whose
talents
Told in their day."

“REGRET NOT ME”

REGRET not me ;
Beneath the sunny tree
I lie uncaring, slumbering peacefully.

Swift as the light
I flew my faery flight ;
Ecstatically I moved, and feared no night.

I did not know
That heydays fade and go,
But deemed that what was would be always so.

I skipped at morn
Between the yellowing corn,
Thinking it good and glorious to be born.

I ran at eves
Among the piled-up sheaves,
Dreaming, “I grieve not, therefore nothing
grieves.”

"REGRET NOT ME"

Now soon will come
The apple, pear, and plum,
And hinds will sing, and autumn insects hum.

Again you will fare
To cider-makings rare,
And junketings ; but I shall not be there.

Yet gaily sing
Until the pewter ring
Those songs we sang when we went gipsying.

And lightly dance
Some triple-timed romance
In-coupled figures, and forget mischance ;

And mourn not me
Beneath the yellowing tree ;
For I shall mind not, slumbering peacefully.

THE RECALCITRANTS

LET us off and search, and find a place
Where yours and mine can be natural lives,
Where no one comes who dissects and dives
And proclaims that ours is a curious case,
Which its touch of romance can scarcely grace.

You would think it strange at first, but then
Everything has been strange in its time.
When some one said on a day of the prime
He would bow to no brazen god again
He doubtless dazed the mass of men.

None will recognize us as a pair whose claims
To righteous judgment we care not making;
Who have doubted if breath be worth the
taking,
And have no respect for the current fames
Whence the savour has flown while abide the
names.

We have found us already shunned, disdained,
And for re-acceptance have not once striven;
Whatever offence our course has given
The brunt thereof we have long sustained.
Well, let us away, scorned unexplained.

STARLINGS ON THE ROOF

“No smoke spreads out of this chimney-pot,
The people who lived here have left the spot,
And others are coming who knew them not.

“If you listen anon, with an ear intent,
The voices, you'll find, will be different
From the well-known ones of those who
went.”

“Why did they go? Their tones so bland
Were quite familiar to our band;
The comers we shall not understand.”

“They look for a new life, rich and strange;
They do not know that, let them range
Wherever they may, they will get no change.

“They will drag their house-gear ever so far
In their search for a home no miseries mar;
They will find that as they were they are,

“That every hearth has a ghost, alack,
And can be but the scene of a bivouac
Till they move perforce—no care to pack!”

THE MOON LOOKS IN

I

I have risen again,
And awhile survey
By my chilly ray
Through your window-pane
Your upturned face,
As you think, "Ah—she
Now dreams of me
In her distant place!"

II

I pierce her blind
In her far-off home :
She fixes a comb,
And says in her mind,
"I start in an hour ;
Whom shall I meet?
Won't the men be sweet,
And the women sour !"

THE SWEET HUSSY

In his early days he was quite surprised
When she told him she was compromised
By meetings and lingerings at his whim,
And thinking not of herself but him ;
While she lifted orbs aggrieved and round
That scandal should so soon abound,
(As she had raised them to nine or ten
Of antecedent nice young men) :
And in remorse he thought with a sigh,
How good she is, and how bad am I!—
It was years before he understood
That she was the wicked one—he the good.

THE TELEGRAM

“ O HE’S suffering—maybe dying—and I not
there to aid,
And smooth his bed and whisper to him!
Can I nohow go?
Only the nurse’s brief twelve words thus
hurriedly conveyed,
As by stealth, to let me know.

“ He was the best and brightest!—candour
shone upon his brow,
And I shall never meet again a soldier such
as he,
And I loved him ere I knew it, and perhaps
he’s sinking now,
Far, far removed from me! ”

—The yachts ride mute at anchor and the
fulling moon is fair,
And the giddy folk are strutting up and
down the smooth parade,
And in her wild distraction she seems not to
be aware
That she lives no more a maid,

But has vowed and wived herself to one who
blessed the ground she trod
To and from his scene of ministry, and
thought her history known
In its last particular to him—aye, almost as
to God,
And believed her quite his own.

So rapt her mind's far-off regard she droops
as in a swoon,
And a movement of aversion mars her recent
spousal grace,
And in silence we two sit here in our waning
honeymoon
At this idle watering-place. . . .

What now I see before me is a long lane
overhung
With lovelessness, and stretching from the
present to the grave.
And I would I were away from this, with
friends I knew when young,
Ere a woman held me slave.

THE MOTH-SIGNAL

(*On Egdon Heath*)

"WHAT are you still, still thinking,"
He asked in vague surmise,
"That you stare at the wick unblinking
With those deep lost luminous eyes?"

"O, I see a poor moth burning
In the candle-flame," said she,
"Its wings and legs are turning
To a cinder rapidly."

"Moths fly in from the heather,"
He said, "now the days decline."
"I know," said she. "The weather,
I hope, will at last be fine."

"I think," she added lightly,
"I'll look out at the door.
The ring the moon wears nightly
May be visible now no more."

She rose, and, little heeding,
Her life-mate then went on
With his mute museful reading
In the annals of ages gone.

Outside the house a figure
Came from the tumulus near,
And speedily waxed bigger,
And clasped and called her Dear.

“ I saw the pale-winged token
You sent through the crack,” sighed she.
“ That moth is burnt and broken
With which you lured out me.

“ And were I as the moth is
It might be better far
For one whose marriage troth is
Shattered as potsherds are !”

Then grinned the Ancient Briton
From the tumulus treed with pine :
“ So, hearts are thwartly smitten
In these days as in mine !”

SEEN BY THE WAITS

THROUGH snowy woods and shady
We went to play a tune
To the lonely manor-lady
By the light of the Christmas moon.

We violed till, upward glancing
To where a mirror leaned,
It showed her airily dancing,
Deeming her movements screened ;

Dancing alone in the room there,
Thin-draped in her robe of night ;
Her postures, glassed in the gloom there,
Were a strange phantasmal sight.

She had learnt (we heard when homing)
That her roving spouse was dead ;
Why she had danced in the gloaming
We thought, but never said.

THE TWO SOLDIERS

Just at the corner of the wall
We met—yes, he and I—
Who had not faced in camp or hall
Since we bade home good-bye,
And what once happened came back—all—
Out of those years gone by.

And that strange woman whom we knew
And loved—long dead and gone,
Whose poor half-perished residue,
Tombless and trod, lay yon !
But at this moment to our view
Rose like a phantom wan.

And in his fixed face I could see,
Lit by a lurid shine,
The drama re-enact which she
Had dyed incarnadine
For us, and more. And doubtless he
Beheld it too in mine.

A start, as at one slightly known ;
And with an indifferent air
We passed, without a sign being shown
That, as it real were,
A memory-acted scene had thrown
Its tragic shadow there.

THE DEATH OF REGRET

I OPENED my shutter at sunrise,
And looked at the hill hard by,
And I heartily grieved for the comrade
Who wandered up there to die.

I let in the morn on the morrow,
And failed not to think of him then,
As he trod up that rise in the twilight,
And never came down again.

I undid the shutter a week thence,
But not until after I'd turned
Did I call back his last departure
By the upland there discerned.

Uncovering the casement long later,
I bent to my toil till the gray,
When I said to myself, " Ah—what ails me,
To forget him all the day ! "

As daily I flung back the shutter
In the same blank bald routine,
He scarcely once rose to remembrance
Through a month of my facing the scene.

196 THE DEATH OF REGRET

And ah, seldom now do I ponder
At the window as heretofore
On the long valued one who died yonder,
And wastes by the sycamore.

IN THE DAYS OF CRINOLINE

A PLAIN tilt-bonnet on her head
She took the path across the leaze.
—Her spouse the vicar, gardening, said,
“Too dowdy that, for coquetries,
So I can hoe at ease.”

But when she had passed into the heath,
And gained the wood beyond the flat,
She raised her skirts, and from beneath
Unpinned and drew as from a sheath
An ostrich-feathered hat.

And where the hat had hung she now
Concealed and pinned the dowdy hood,
And set the hat upon her brow,
And thus emerging from the wood
Tripped on in jaunty mood.

The sun was low and crimson-faced
As two came that way from the town,
And plunged into the wood untraced. . . .
When severally therefrom they paced
The sun had quite gone down.

198 IN THE DAYS OF CRINOLINE

The hat and feather disappeared,
The dowdy hood again was donned,
And in the gloom the fair one neared
Her home and husband dour, who conned
Calmly his blue-eyed blonde.

“To-day,” he said, “you have shown good
sense,
A dress so modest and so meek
Should always deck your goings hence
Alone.” And as a recompense
He kissed her on the cheek.

THE ROMAN GRAVEMOUNDS

By Rome's dim relics there walks a man,
Eyes bent ; and he carries a basket and spade ;
I guess what impels him to scrape and scan ;
Yea, his dreams of that Empire long decayed.

"Vast was Rome," he must muse, "in the
world's regard,
Vast it looms there still, vast it ever will be ;"
And he stoops as to dig and unmine some
shard
Left by those who are held in such memory.

But no ; in his basket, see, he has brought
A little white furred thing, stiff of limb,
Whose life never won from the world a
thought ;
It is this, and not Rome, that is moving him.

And to make it a grave he has come to the
spot,
And he delves in the ancient dead's long
home ;

200 THE ROMAN GRAVEMOUNDS

Their fames, their achievements, the man
knows not ;
The furred thing is all to him—nothing
Rome !

“ Here say you that Cæsar’s warriors lie ?—
But my little white cat was my only friend !
Could she but live, might the record die
Of Cæsar, his legions, his aims, his end ! ”

Well, Rome’s long rule here is oft and again
A theme for the sages of history,
And the small furred life was worth no one’s
pen ;
Yet its mourner’s mood has a charm for me.

November 1910.

THE WORKBOX

"SEE, here's the workbox, little wife,
That I made of polished oak."
He was a joiner, of village life ;
She came of borough folk.

He holds the present up to her
As with a smile she nears
And answers to the profferer,
" 'Twill last all my sewing years ! "

" I warrant it will. And longer too.
'Tis a scantling that I got
Off poor John Wayward's coffin, who
Died of they knew not what.

" The shingled pattern that seems to cease
Against your box's rim
Continues right on in the piece
That's underground with him.

“And while I worked it made me think
Of timber’s varied doom ;
One inch where people eat and drink,
The next inch in a tomb.

“But why do you look so white, my dear,
And turn aside your face ?
You knew not that good lad, I fear,
Though he came from your native
place ?”

“How could I know that good young man,
Though he came from my native town,
When he must have left far earlier than
I was a woman grown ?”

“Ah, no. I should have understood !
It shocked you that I gave
To you one end of a piece of wood
Whose other is in a grave ?”

“Don’t, dear, despise my intellect,
Mere accidental things
Of that sort never have effect
On my imaginings.”

Yet still her lips were limp and wan,
Her face still held aside,
As if she had known not only John,
But known of what he died.

THE SACRILEGE
A BALLAD-TRAGEDY

(*Circa* 182-)

PART I

" I HAVE a Love I love too well
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor ;
I have a Love I love too well,
 To whom, ere she was mine,
' Such is my love for you,' I said,
' That you shall have to hood your head
A silken kerchief crimson-red,
 Wove finest of the fine.'

" And since this Love, for one mad moon,
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor,
Since this my Love for one mad moon
 Did clasp me as her king,
I snatched a silk-piece red and rare
From off a stall at Priddy Fair,
For handkerchief to hood her hair
 When we went gallanting.

"Full soon the four weeks neared their end
 Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor ;
 And when the four weeks neared their end,
 And their swift sweets outwore,
 I said, ' What shall I do to own
 Those beauties bright as tulips blown,
 And keep you here with me alone
 As mine for evermore? '

"And as she drowsed within my van
 On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor—
 And as she drowsed within my van,
 And dawning turned to day,
 She heavily raised her sloe-black eyes
 And murmured back in softest wise,
 ' One more thing, and the charms you prize
 Are yours henceforth for aye.

"And swear I will I'll never go
 While Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor
 To meet the Cornish Wrestler Joe
 For dance and dallyings.
 If you'll to yon cathedral shrine,
 And finger from the chest divine
 Treasure to buy me ear-drops fine,
 And richly jewelled rings.'

"I said : ' I am one who has gathered gear
 From Marlbury Downs to Dunkery Tor,
 Who has gathered gear for many a year
 From mansion, mart and fair ;

But at God's house I've stayed my hand,
Hearing within me some command—
Curbed by a law not of the land
From doing damage there !'

"Whereat she pouts, this Love of mine,
As Dunkery pouts to Exon Moor,
And still she pouts, this Love of mine,
So cityward I go.
But ere I start to do the thing,
And speed my soul's imperilling
For one who is my ravishing
And all the joy I know,

"I come to lay this charge on thee—
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor—
I come to lay this charge on thee
With solemn speech and sign :
Should things go ill, and my life pay
For botchery in this rash assay,
You are to take hers likewise—yea,
The month the law takes mine.

"For should my rival, Wrestler Joe,
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor—
My reckless rival, Wrestler Joe,
My Love's bedwinner be,
My rafted spirit would not rest,
But wander weary and distrest
Throughout the world in wild protest :
The thought nigh maddens me !"

PART II

Thus did he speak—this brother of mine—
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor,
Born at my birth of mother of mine,
 And forthwith went his way
To dare the deed some coming night . . .
I kept the watch with shaking sight,
The moon at moments breaking bright,
 At others glooming gray.

For three full days I heard no sound
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor,
I heard no sound at all around
 Whether his fay prevailed,
Or one more foul the master were,
Till some afoot did tidings bear
How that, for all his practised care,
 He had been caught and jailed.

They had heard a crash when twelve had
 chimed
By Mendip east of Dunkery Tor,
When twelve had chimed and moonlight
 climbed ;
 They watched, and he was tracked
By arch and aisle and saint and knight
Of sculptured stonework sheeted white
In the cathedral's ghostly light,
 And captured in the act.

Yes ; for this Love he loved too well
Where Dunkery sights the Severn shore,
All for this Love he loved too well
 He burst the holy bars,
Seized golden vessels from the chest
To buy her ornaments of the best,
At her ill-witchery's request
 And lure of eyes like stars. . . .

When blustering March confused the sky
In Toneborough Town by Exon Moor,
When blustering March confused the sky
 They stretched him ; and he died.
Down in the crowd where I, to see
The end of him, stood silently,
With a set face he lipped to me—
 “Remember.” “Ay !” I cried.

By night and day I shadowed her
From Toneborough Deane to Dunkery Tor,
I shadowed her asleep, astir,
 And yet I could not bear—
Till Wrestler Joe anon began
To figure as her chosen man,
And took her to his shining van—
 To doom a form so fair !

He made it handsomé for her sake—
And Dunkery smiled to Exon Moor—
He made it handsome for her sake,
 Painting it out and in ;

And on the door of apple-green
 A bright brass knocker soon was seen,
 And window-curtains white and clean
 For her to sit within.

And all could see she clave to him
 As cleaves a cloud to Dunkery Tor,
 Yea, all could see she clave to him,
 And every day I said,
 "A pity it seems to part those two
 That hourly grow to love more true :
 Yet she's the wanton woman who
 Sent one to swing till dead !"

That blew to blazing all my hate,
 While Dunkery frowned on Exon Moor,
 And when the river swelled, her fate
 Came to her pitilessly. . . .
 I dogged her, crying : "Across that plank
 They use as bridge to reach yon bank
 A coat and hat lie limp and dank ;
 Your goodman's, can they be ?"

She paled, and went, I close behind—
 And Exon frowned to Dunkery Tor,
 She went, and I came up behind
 And tipped the plank that bore
 Her, fleetly flitting across to eye
 What such might bode. She slid awry ;
 And from the current came a cry,
 A gurgle ; and no more.

How that befell no mortal knew
From Marlbury Downs to Exon Moor ;
No mortal knew that deed undue
 But he who schemed the crime,
Which night still covers. . . . But in dream
Those ropes of hair upon the stream
He sees, and he will hear that scream
 Until his judgment-time.

THE ABBEY MASON

INVENTOR OF THE "PERPENDICULAR"
STYLE OF GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

(With Memories of John Hicks, Architect)

THE new-vamped Abbey shaped apace
In the fourteenth century of grace ;

(The church which, at an after date,
Acquired cathedral rank and state.)

Panel and circumscribing wall
Of latest feature, trim and tall,

Rose roundabout the Norman core
In prouder pose than theretofore,

Encasing magically the old
With parpend ashlar manifold.

The trowels rang out, and tracery
Appeared where blanks had used to be.

Men toiled for pleasure more than pay,
And all went smoothly day by day,

Till, in due course, the transept part
Engrossed the master-mason's art.

—Home-coming thence he tossed and turned
Throughout the night till the new sun burned.

“What fearful visions have inspired
These gaingivings?” his wife inquired;

“As if your tools were in your hand
You have hammered, fitted, muttered, planned;

“You have thumped as you were working
hard:
I might have found me bruised and scarred.

“What then's amiss. What eating care
Looms nigh, whereof I am unaware?”

He answered not, but churchward went,
Viewing his draughts with discontent;

And fumbled there the livelong day
Till, hollow-eyed, he came away.

—'Twas said, “The master-mason's ill!”
And all the abbey works stood still.

Quoth Abbot Wygmore : “ Why, O why
Distress yourself? You’ll surely die ! ”

The mason answered, trouble-torn,
“ This long-vogued style is quite outworn !

“ The upper archmould nohow serves
To meet the lower tracery curves :

“ The ogees bend too far away
To give the flexures interplay.

“ This it is causes my distress. . . .
So it will ever be unless

“ New forms be found to supersede
The circle when occasions need.

“ To carry it out I have tried and toiled,
And now perforce must own me foiled !

“ Jeerers will say : ‘ Here was a man
Who could not end what he began ! ’ ”

—So passed that day, the next, the next ;
The abbot scanned the task, perplexed ;

The townsmen mustered all their wit
To fathom how to compass it,

But no raw artistries availed
Where practice in the craft had failed. . . .

--One night he tossed, all open-eyed,
And early left his helpmeet's side.

Scattering the rushes of the floor
He wandered from the chamber door

And sought the sizing pile, whereon
Struck dimly a cadaverous dawn

Through freezing rain, that drenched the
board
Of diagram-lines he last had scored—

Chalked phantasies in vain begot
To knife the architectural knot—

In front of which he dully stood,
Regarding them in hopeless mood.

He closelier looked ; then looked again :
The chalk-scratched draught-board faced the
rain,

Whose icicled drops deformed the lines
Innumerable of his lame designs,

So that they streamed in small white threads
From the upper segments to the heads

Of arcs below, uniting them
Each by a stalactitic stem.

—At once, with eyes that struck out sparks,
He adds accessory cusping-marks,

Then laughs aloud. The thing was done
So long assayed from sun to sun. . . .

—Now in his joy he grew aware
Of one behind him standing there,

And, turning, saw the abbot, who
The weather's whim was watching too.

Onward to Prime the abbot went,
Tacit upon the incident.

—Men now discerned as days revolved
The ogive riddle had been solved ;

Templates were cut, fresh lines were chalked
Where lines had been defaced and balked,

And the work swelled and mounted higher,
Achievement distancing desire ;

Here jambs with transoms fixed between,
Where never the like before had been—

There little mullions thinly sawn
Where meeting circles once were drawn.

“We knew,” men said, “the thing would go
After his craft-wit got aglow,

“And, once fulfilled what he has designed,
We’ll honour him and his great mind !”

When matters stood thus poised awhile,
And all surroundings shed a smile,

The master-mason on an eve
Homed to his wife and seemed to grieve. . .

—“The abbot spoke to me to-day :
He hangs about the works alway.

“He knows the source as well as I
Of the new style men magnify.

“He said : ‘You pride yourself too much
On your creation. Is it such ?

“‘Surely the hand of God it is
That conjured so, and only His !—

“‘Disclosing by the frost and rain
Forms your invention chased in vain ;

“ ‘Hence the devices deemed so great
You copied, and did not create.’

“ I feel the abbot’s words are just,
And that all thanks renounce I must.

“ Can a man welcome praise and pelf
For hatching art that hatched itself? . . .

“ So, I shall own the deft design
Is Heaven’s outshaping, and not mine.”

“ What ! ” said she. “ Praise your works
ensure
To throw away, and quite obscure

“ Your beaming and beneficent star?
Better you leave things as they are !

“ Why, think awhile. Had not your zest
In your loved craft curtailed your rest—

“ Had you not gone there ere the day
The sun had melted all away ! ”

—But, though his good wife argued so,
The mason let the people know

That not unaided sprang the thought
Whereby the glorious fane was wrought,

But that by frost when dawn was dim
The method was disclosed to him.

“Yet,” said the townspeople thereat,
“’Tis your own doing, even with that!”

But he—chafed, childlike, in extremes—
The temperament of men of dreams—

Aloofly scrupled to admit
That he did aught but borrow it,

And diffidently made request
That with the abbot all should rest.

—As none could doubt the abbot’s word,
Or question what the church averred,

The mason was at length believed
Of no more count than he conceived,

And soon began to lose the fame
That late had gathered round his name. . . .

—Time passed, and like a living thing
The pile went on embodying,

And workmen died, and young ones grew,
And the old mason sank from view

And Abbots Wygmore and Staunton went
And Horton sped the embellishment.

But not till years had far progressed
Chanced it that, one day, much impressed,

Standing within the well-graced aisle,
He asked who first conceived the style ;

And some decrepit sage detailed
How, when invention nought availed,

The cloud-cast waters in their whim
Came down, and gave the hint to him

Who struck each arc, and made each mould ;
And how the abbot would not hold

As sole begetter him who applied
Forms the Almighty sent as guide ;

And how the master lost renown,
And wore in death no artist's crown.

—Then Horton, who in inner thought
Had more perceptions than he taught,

Replied : “ Nay ; art can but transmute ;
Invention is not absolute ;

“ Things fail to spring from nought at call,
And art-beginnings most of all.

“ He did but what all artists do,
Wait upon Nature for his cue.”

—“ Had you been here to tell them so
Lord Abbot, sixty years ago,

“ The mason, now long underground,
Doubtless a different fate had found.

“ He passed into oblivion dim,
And none knew what became of him !

“ His name ? ’Twas of some common kind
And now has faded out of mind.”

The Abbot : “ It shall not be hid !
I’ll trace it.” . . . But he never did.

—When longer yet dank death had wormed
The brain wherein the style had germed

From Gloucester church it flew afar—
The style called Perpendicular.—

To Winton and to Westminster
It ranged, and grew still beautifuller :

From Solway Frith to Dover Strand
Its fascinations starred the land,

Not only on cathedral walls
But upon courts and castle halls,

Till every edifice in the isle
Was patterned to no other style,

And till, long having played its part,
The curtain fell on Gothic art.

—Well : when in Wessex on your rounds,
Take a brief step beyond its bounds,

And enter Gloucester : seek the quoin
Where choir and transept interjoin,

And, gazing at the forms there flung
Against the sky by one unsung—

The ogee arches transom-topped,
The tracery-stalks by spandrels stopped,

Petrified lacework—lightly lined
On ancient massiveness behind—

Muse that some minds so modest be
As to renounce fame's fairest fee,

(Like him who crystallized on this spot
His visionings, but lies forgot,

And many a mediaeval one
Whose symmetries salute the sun)

While others boom a baseless claim,
And upon nothing rear a name.

THE JUBILEE OF A MAGAZINE

(To the Editor)

Yes ; your up-dated modern page—
All flower-fresh, as it appears—
Can claim a time-tried lineage,

That reaches backward fifty years
(Which, if but short for sleepy squires,
Is much in magazines' careers).

—Here, on your cover, never tires
The sower, reaper, thresher, while
As through the seasons of our sires

Each wills to work in ancient style
With seedlip, sickle, share and flail,
Though modes have since moved many a
mile !

The steel-roped plough now rips the vale,
With cog and tooth the sheaves are won,
Wired wheels drum out the wheat like hail ;

THE JUBILEE OF A MAGAZINE 223

But if we ask, what has been done
To unify the mortal lot
Since your bright leaves first saw the sun,

Beyond mechanic furtherance—what
Advance can rightness, candour, claim?
Truth bends abashed, and answers not.

Despite your volumes' gentle aim
To straighten visions wry and wrong,
Events jar onward much the same!

—Had custom tended to prolong,
As on your golden page engrained,
Old processes of blade and prong,

And best invention been retained
For high crusades to lessen tears
Throughout the race, the world had
gained! . . .
But too much, this, for fifty years.

THE SATIN SHOES

“ If ever I walk to church to wed,
As other maidens use,
And face the gathered eyes,” she said,
“ I’ll go in satin shoes ! ”

She was as fair as early day
Shining on meads unmown,
And her sweet syllables seemed to play
Like flute-notes softly blown.

The time arrived when it was meet
That she should be a bride ;
The satin shoes were on her feet,
Her father was at her side.

They stood within the dairy door,
And gazed across the green ;
The church loomed on the distant moor,
But rain was thick between.

“The grass-path hardly can be stepped,
The lane is like a pool!”—
Her dream is shown to be inept,
Her wish they overrule.

“To go forth shod in satin soft
A coach would be required!”
For thickest boots the shoes were doffed—
Those shoes her soul desired. . . .

All day the bride, as overborne,
Was seen to brood apart,
And that the shoes had not been worn
Sat heavy on her heart.

From her wrecked dream, as months flew on,
Her thought seemed not to range.
What ails the wife?” they said anon,
“That she should be so strange?” . . .

Ah—what coach comes with furtive glide—
A coach of closed-up kind?
It comes to fetch the last year’s bride,
Who wanders in her mind.

She strove with them, and fearfully ran
Stairward with one low scream:
“Nay—coax her,” said the madhouse man,
“With some old household theme.”

“ If you will go, dear, you must fain
Put on those shoes—the pair
Meant for your marriage, which the rain
Forbade you then to wear.”

She clapped her hands, flushed joyous hues ;
“ O yes—I’ll up and ride
If I am to wear my satin shoes
And be a proper bride ! ”

Out then her little foot held she,
As to depart with speed ;
The madhouse man smiled pleasantly
To see the wile succeed.

She turned to him when all was done,
And gave him her thin hand,
Exclaiming like an enraptured one,
“ This time it will be grand ! ”

She mounted with a face elate,
Shut was the carriage door ;
They drove her to the madhouse gate,
And she was seen no more. . . .

Yet she was fair as early day
Shining on meads unmown,
And her sweet syllables seemed to play
Like flute-notes softly blown.

EXEUNT OMNES

I

EVERYBODY else, then, going,
And I still left where the fair was? . . .
Much have I seen of neighbour loungers
Making a lusty showing,
Each now past all knowing.

II

There is an air of blankness
In the street and the littered spaces ;
Thoroughfare, steeple, bridge and highway
Wizen themselves to lankness ;
Kennels dribble dankness.

III

Folk all fade. And whither,
As I wait alone where the fair was?
Into the clammy and numbing night-fog
Whence they entered hither.
Soon do I follow thither !

June 2, 1913.

A POET

ATTENTIVE eyes, fantastic heed,
Assessing minds, he does not need,
Nor urgent writs to sup or dine,
Nor pledges in the roseate wine.

For loud acclaim he does not care
By the august or rich or fair,
Nor for smart pilgrims from afar,
Curious on where his hauntings are.

But soon or later, when you hear
That he has doffed this wrinkled gear,
Some evening, at the first star-ray,
Come to his graveside, pause and say :

“ Whatever his message—glad or grim—
Two bright-souled women clave to him ” ;
Stand and say that while day decays ;
It will be word enough of praise.

July 1914.

POSTSCRIPT

"MEN WHO MARCH AWAY"

(SONG OF THE SOLDIERS)

WHAT of the faith and fire within us
Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray,
Leaving all that here can win us ;
What of the faith and fire within us
Men who march away ?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,
Friend with the musing eye,
Who watch us stepping by
With doubt and dolorous sigh ?
Can much pondering so hoodwink you !
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,
Friend with the musing eye ?

230 "MEN WHO MARCH AWAY"

Nay. We well see what we are doing,
Though some may not see—
Dalliers as they be—
England's need are we ;

Her distress would leave us rueing :

Nay. We well see what we are doing,
Though some may not see !

In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just,
And that braggarts must
Surely bite the dust,
Press we to the field ungrieving,
In our heart of hearts believing
Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away
Ere the barn-cocks say
Night is growing gray,
Leaving all that here can win us ;
Hence the faith and fire within us
Men who march away.

September 5, 1914.

MOMENTS OF VISION

That mirror
Which makes of men a transparency,
Who holds that mirror
And why in such a transparent spectacle
Of you and me?

PART II

MOMENTS OF VISION

AND

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

That mirror
Which makes of men a transparency,
Why is that mirror
Are there or never see ourselves once take
When the world is awake?

That mirror
Can not only make the world
You see through it
May call be but thought, who's the soul
Of the
Giving it—

MOMENTS OF VISION

THAT mirror
Which makes of men a transparency,
Who holds that mirror
And bids us such a breast-bared spectacle see
Of you and me?

That mirror
Whose magic penetrates like a dart,
Who lifts that mirror
And throws our mind back on us, and our
heart,
Until we start?

That mirror
Works well in these night hours of ache;
Why in that mirror
Are tincts we never see ourselves once take
When the world is awake?

That mirror
Can test each mortal when unaware;
Yea, that strange mirror
May catch his last thoughts, whole life foul
or fair,
Glassing it—where?

THE VOICE OF THINGS

Forty Augusts—aye, and several more—ago,
When I paced the headlands loosed from
dull employ,
The waves huzza'd like a multitude below,
In the sway of an all-including joy
Without cloy.

Blankly I walked there a double decade after,
When thwarts had flung their toils in
front of me,
And I heard the waters wagging in a long
ironic laughter
At the lot of men, and all the vapoury
Things that be.

Wheeling change has set me again standing
where
Once I heard the waves huzza at
Lammas-tide;
But they supplicate now—like a congregation
there
Who murmur the Confession—I outside,
Prayer denied.

“WHY BE AT PAINS?”

(Wooper's Song)

WHY be at pains that I should know
 You sought not me?
Do breezes, then, make features glow
 So rosily?
Come, the lit port is at our back,
 And the tumbling sea ;
Elsewhere the lampless uphill track
 To uncertainty !

O should not we two waifs join hands?
 I am alone,
You would enrich me more than lands
 By being my own.
Yet, though this facile moment flies,
 Close is your tone,
And ere to-morrow's dewfall dries
 I plough the unknown.

“WE SAT AT THE WINDOW”

(*Bournemouth*, 1875)

WE sat at the window looking out,
And the rain came down like silken strings
That Swithin's day. Each gutter and spout
Babbled unchecked in the busy way
 Of witless things :
Nothing to read, nothing to see
Seemed in that room for her and me
 On Swithin's day.

We were irked by the scene, by our own
 selves ; yes,
For I did not know, nor did she infer
How much there was to read and guess
By her in me, and to see and crown
 By me in her.
Wasted were two souls in their prime,
And great was the waste, that July time
 When the rain came down.

AFTERNOON SERVICE AT
MELLSTOCK

(*Circa 1850*)

ON afternoons of drowsy calm
We stood in the panelled pew,
Singing one-voiced a Tate-and-Brady psalm
To the tune of "Cambridge New."

We watched the elms, we watched the
rooks,
The clouds upon the breeze,
Between the whiles of glancing at our books,
And swaying like the trees.

So mindless were those outpourings!—
Though I am not aware
That I have gained by subtle thought on
things
Since we stood psalming there.

AT THE WICKET-GATE

THERE floated the sounds of church-chiming,
But no one was nigh,
Till there came, as a break in the loneliness,
Her father, she, I.
And we slowly moved on to the wicket,
And downlooking stood,
Till anon people passed, and amid them
We parted for good.

Greater, wiser, may part there than we three
Who parted there then,
But never will Fates colder-featured
Hold sway there again.
Of the churchgoers through the still meadows
No single one knew
What a play was played under their eyes
there
As thence we withdrew.

IN A MUSEUM

I

HERE's the mould of a musical bird long
passed from light,
Which over the earth before man came was
winging ;
There's a contralto voice I heard last night,
That lodges in me still with its sweet singing.

II

Such a dream is Time that the coo of this
ancient bird
Has perished not, but is blent, or will be
blending
Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice
that I heard,
In the full-fugued song of the universe
unending.

EXETER.

APOSTROPHE TO AN OLD
PSALM TUNE

I MET you first—ah, when did I first meet
you?
When I was full of wonder, and innocent,
Standing meek-eyed with those of choric
bent,
While dimming day grew dimmer
In the pulpit-glimmer.

Much riper in years I met you—in a temple
Where summer sunset streamed upon our
shapes,
And you spread over me like a gauze that
drapes,
And flapped from floor to rafters,
Sweet as angels' laughters.

But you had been stripped of some of your
old vesture
By Monk, or another. Now you wore no
frill,

TO AN OLD PSALM TUNE 9

And at first you startled me. But I knew
you still,
Though I missed the minim's waver,
And the dotted quaver.

I grew accustomed to you thus. And you
hailed me
Through one who evoked you often. Then
at last
Your raiser was borne off, and I mourned
you had passed
From my life with your late outsetter ;
Till I said, "'Tis better !"

But you waylaid me. I rose and went as a
ghost goes,
And said, eyes - full : " I'll never hear it
again !
It is overmuch for scathed and memoried
men
When sitting among strange people
Under their steeple."

Now, a new stirrer of tones calls you up
before me
And wakes your speech, as she of Endor did
(When sought by Saul who, in disguises hid,
Fell down on the earth to hear it)
Samuel's spirit.

10 TO AN OLD PSALM TUNE

So, your quired oracles beat till they make
me tremble

As I discern your mien in the old attire,
Here in these turmoiled years of belligerent
fire

Living still on—and onward, maybe,
Till Doom's great day be!

Sunday, August 13, 1916.

AT THE WORD "FAREWELL"

SHE looked like a bird from a cloud
On the clammy lawn,
Moving alone, bare-browed
In the dim of dawn,
The candles alight in the room
For my parting meal
Made all things withoutdoors loom
Strange, ghostly, unreal.

The hour itself was a ghost,
And it seemed to me then
As of chances the chance furthestmost
I should see her again.
I beheld not where all was so fleet
That a Plan of the past
Which had ruled us from birthtime to meet
Was in working at last :

No prelude did I there perceive
To a drama at all,
Or foreshadow what fortune might weave
From beginnings so small ;

12 AT THE WORD "FAREWELL"

But I rose as if quicked by a spur
I was bound to obey,
And stepped through the casement to her
Still alone in the gray.

"I am leaving you. . . . Farewell!" I said,
As I followed her on
By an alley bare boughs overspread;
"I soon must be gone!"
Even then the scale might have been turned
Against love by a feather,
—But crimson one cheek of hers burned
When we came in together.

FIRST SIGHT OF HER AND AFTER

A DAY is drawing to its fall
I had not dreamed to see ;
The first of many to enthrall
My spirit, will it be ?
Or is this eve the end of all
Such new delight for me ?

I journey home : the pattern grows
Of moonshades on the way :
“ Soon the first quarter, I suppose,”
Sky-glancing travellers say ;
I realize that it, for those,
Has been a common day.

THE RIVAL

I DETERMINED to find out whose it was—
The portrait he looked at so, and sighed ;
Bitterly have I rued my meanness
And wept for it since he died !

I searched his desk when he was away,
And there was the likeness—yes, my own !
Taken when I was the season's fairest,
And time-lines all unknown.

I smiled at my image, and put it back,
And he went on cherishing it, until
I was chafed that he loved not the me then
living,
But that past woman still.

Well, such was my jealousy at last,
I destroyed that face of the former me ;
Could you ever have dreamed the heart of
woman
Would work so foolishly !

HEREDITY

I AM the family face ;
Flesh perishes, I live on,
Projecting trait and trace
Through time to times anon,
And leaping from place to place
Over oblivion.

The years-heired feature that can
In curve and voice and eye
Despise the human span
Of durance—that is I ;
The eternal thing in man,
That heeds no call to die.

“YOU WERE THE SORT THAT
MEN FORGET”

You were the sort that men forget ;
 Though I—not yet !—
Perhaps not ever. Your slighted weakness
 Adds to the strength of my regret !

You'd not the art—you never had
 For good or bad—
To make men see how sweet your meaning,
 Which, visible, had charmed them glad.

You would, by words inept let fall,
 Offend them all,
Even if they saw your warm devotion
 Would hold your life's blood at their call.

You lacked the eye to understand
 Those friends offhand
Whose mode was crude, though whose dim
 purport
Outpriced the courtesies of the bland.

I am now the only being who
 Remembers you
It may be. What a waste that Nature
 Grudged soul so dear the art its due !

SHE, I, AND THEY

I was sitting,
She was knitting,
And the portraits of our fore-folk hung
around ;
When there struck on us a sigh ;
“ Ah—what is that ? ” said I :
“ Was it not you ? ” said she. “ A sigh did
sound.”

I had not breathed it,
Nor the night-wind heaved it,
And how it came to us we could not guess ;
And we looked up at each face
Framed and glazed there in its place,
Still hearkening ; but thenceforth was silentness.

Half in dreaming,
“ Then its meaning,”
Said we, “ must be surely this ; that they
repine
That we should be the last
Of stocks once unsurpassed,
And unable to keep up their sturdy line.”

NEAR LANIVET, 1872

THERE was a stunted handpost just on the crest,
Only a few feet high :
She was tired, and we stopped in the twilight-
time for her rest,
At the crossways close thereby.

She leant back, being so weary, against its stem,
And laid her arms on its own,
Each open palm stretched out to each end
of them,
Her sad face sideways thrown.

Her white-clothed form at this dim-lit cease
of day
Made her look as one crucified
In my gaze at her from the midst of the
dusty way,
And hurriedly "Don't," I cried.

I do not think she heard. Loosing thence
she said,
As she stepped forth ready to go,

“I am rested now.—Something strange came
into my head ;
I wish I had not leant so !”

And wordless we moved onward down from
the hill
In the west cloud's murked obscure,
And looking back we could see the handpost
still
In the solitude of the moor.

“It struck her too,” I thought, for as if
afraid
She heavily breathed as we trailed ;
Till she said, “I did not think how 'twould
look in the shade,
When I leant there like one nailed.”

I, lightly : “There's nothing in it. For *you*,
anyhow !”
—“O I know there is not,” said she . . .
“Yet I wonder . . . If no one is bodily
crucified now,
In spirit one may be !”

And we dragged on and on, while we seemed
to see
In the running of Time's far glass
Her crucified, as she had wondered if she
might be
Some day.—Alas, alas !

JOYS OF MEMORY

WHEN the spring comes round, and a
certain day
Looks out from the brume by the eastern
copsetrees
And says, Remember,
I begin again, as if it were new,
A day of like date I once lived through,
Whiling it hour by hour away ;
So shall I do till my December,
When spring comes round.

I take my holiday then and my rest
Away from the dun life here about me,
Old hours re-greeting
With the quiet sense that bring they must
Such throbs as at first, till I house with
dust,
And in the numbness my heartsome zest
For things that were, be past repeating
When spring comes round.

TO THE MOON

“WHAT have you looked at, Moon,
In your time,
Now long past your prime?”
“O, I have looked at, often looked at
Sweet, sublime,
Sore things, shudderful, night and noon
In my time.”

“What have you mused on, Moon,
In your day,
So aloof, so far away?”
“O, I have mused on, often mused on
Growth, decay,
Nations alive, dead, mad, aswoon,
In my day!”

“Have you much wondered, Moon,
On your rounds,
Self-wrapt, beyond Earth's bounds?”
“Yea, I have wondered, often wondered
At the sounds
Reaching me of the human tune
On my rounds.”

“What do you think of it, Moon,
As you go?
Is Life much, or no?”
“O, I think of it, often think of it
As a show
God ought surely to shut up soon,
As I go.”

COPYING ARCHITECTURE IN AN
OLD MINSTER

(Wimborne)

How smartly the quarters of the hour
march by
That the jack-o'-clock never forgets ;
Ding-dong ; and before I have traced a
cusp's eye,
Or got the true twist of the ogee over,
A double ding-dong ricochetts.

Just so did he clang here before I came,
And so will he clang when I'm gone
Through the Minster's cavernous hollows
—the same
Tale of hours never more to be will he
deliver
To the speechless midnight and dawn!

I grow to conceive it a call to ghosts,
Whose mould lies below and around.
Yes ; the next "Come, come," draws them
out from their posts,

COPYING ARCHITECTURE 23

And they gather, and one shade appears, and
another,
As the eve-damps creep from the
ground.

See—a Courtenay stands by his quatre-
foiled tomb,
And a Duke and his Duchess near ;
And one Sir Edmund in columned gloom,
And a Saxon king by the presbytery chamber ;
And shapes unknown in the rear.

Maybe they have met for a parle on some
plan
To better ail-stricken mankind ;
I catch their cheepings, though thinner than
The overhead creak of a passager's pinion
When leaving land behind.

Or perhaps they speak to the yet unborn,
And caution them not to come
To a world so ancient and trouble-torn,
Of foiled intents, vain lovingkindness,
And ardours chilled and numb.

They waste to fog as I stir and stand;
And move from the arched recess,
And pick up the drawing that slipped from
my hand,
And feel for the pencil I dropped in the
cranny
In a moment's forgetfulness.

TO SHAKESPEARE

AFTER THREE HUNDRED YEARS

BRIGHT baffling Soul, least capturable of
themes,
Thou, who display'dst a life of common-
place,
Leaving no intimate word or personal
trace
Of high design outside the artistry
Of thy penned dreams,
Still shalt remain at heart unread eternally.

Through human orbits thy discourse to-
day,
Despite thy formal pilgrimage, throbs on
In harmonies that cow Oblivion,
And, like the wind, with all-uncared effect
Maintain a sway
Not fore-desired, in tracks unchosen and
unchecked.

And yet, at thy last breath, with mindless
 note
 The borough clocks but samely tongued
 the hour,
 The Avon just as always glassed the tower,
 Thy age was published on thy passing-bell
 But in due rote
 With other dwellers' deaths accorded a like
 knell.

And at the strokes some townsman (met,
 maybe,
 And thereon queried by some squire's good
 dame
 Driving in shopward) may have given thy
 name,
 With, "Yes, a worthy man and well-to-do;
 Though, as for me,
 I knew him but by just a neighbour's nod,
 'tis true.

"I' faith, few knew him much here, save by
 word,
 He having elsewhere led his busier life;
 Though to be sure he left with us his wife."
 —"Ah, one of the tradesmen's sons, I now
 recall. . . .
 Witty, I've heard. . . .
 We did not know him. . . . Well, good-day.
 Death comes to all."

So, like a strange bright bird we sometimes
find
To mingle with the barn-door brood awhile,
Then vanish from their homely domicile—
Into man's poesy, we wot not whence,
Flew thy strange mind,
Lodged there a radiant guest, and sped for
ever thence.

1916.

QUID HIC AGIS?

I

WHEN I weekly knew
An ancient pew,
And murmured there
The forms of prayer
And thanks and praise
In the ancient ways,
And heard read out
During August drought
That chapter from Kings
Harvest-time brings ;
—How the prophet, broken
By griefs unspoken,
Went heavily away
To fast and to pray,
And, while waiting to die,
The Lord passed by,
And a whirlwind and fire
Drew nigher and nigher,
And a small voice anon
Bade him up and be gone,—

QUID HIC AGIS ?

I did not apprehend
As I sat to the end
And watched for her smile
Across the sunned aisle,
That this theme of a seer
Which came once a year
Might, when sands were heaping,
Be like a sweat creeping,
Or in any degree
Bear on her or on me !

II

When later, by chance
Of circumstance,
It befel me to read
On a hot afternoon
At the lectern there
The selfsame words
As the lesson decreed,
To the gathered few
From the hamlets near—
Folk of flocks and herds
Sitting half aswoon,
Who listened thereto
As women and men
Not overmuch
Concerned at such—
So, like them then,
I did not see
What drought might be

With me, with her,
As the Kalendar
Moved on, and Time
Devoured our prime.

III

But now, at last,
When our glory has passed,
And there is no smile
From her in the aisle,
But where it once shone
A marble, men say,
With her name thereon
Is discerned to-day ;
And spiritless
In the wilderness
I shrink from sight
And desire the night,
(Though, as in old wise,
I might still arise,
Go forth, and stand
And prophesy in the land),
I feel the shake
Of wind and earthquake,
And consuming fire
Nigher and nigher,
And the voice catch clear,
“What doest thou here ?”

ON A MIDSUMMER EVE

I IDLY cut a parsley stalk,
And blew therein towards the moon ;
I had not thought what ghosts would walk
With shivering footsteps to my tune.

I went, and knelt, and scooped my hand
As if to drink, into the brook,
And a faint figure seemed to stand
Above me, with the bygone look.

I lipped rough rhymes of chance, not choice,
I thought not what my words might be ;
There came into my ear a voice
That turned a tenderer verse for me.

TIMING HER

(Written to an old folk-tune)

LALAGE's coming :
Where is she now, O ?
Turning to bow, O,
And smile, is she,
Just at parting,
Parting, parting,
As she is starting
To come to me ?

Where is she now, O,
Now, and now, O,
Shadowing a bough, O,
Of hedge or tree
As she is rushing,
Rushing, rushing,
Gossamers brushing
To come to me ?

Lalage's coming ;
Where is she now, O ;

TIMING HER

Climbing the brow, O,
Of hills I see ?
Yes, she is nearing,
Nearing, nearing,
Weather unfearing
To come to me.

Near is she now, O,
Now, and now, O ;
Milk the rich cow, O,
Forward the tea ;
Shake the down bed for her,
Linen sheets spread for her,
Drape round the head for her
Coming to me.

Lalage's coming,
Nearer is she now, O,
End anyhow, O,
To-day's husbandry !
Would a gilt chair were mine,
Slippers of vair were mine,
Brushes for hair were mine
Of ivory !

What will she think, O,
She who's so comely,
Viewing how homely
A sort are we !

Nothing resplendent,
No prompt attendant,
Not one dependent
Pertaining to me!

Lalage's coming ;
Where is she now, O ?
Fain I'd avow, O,
Full honestly
Nought here's enough for her,
All is too rough for her,
Even my love for her
Poor in degree.

Nearer is she now, O,
Now, and now, O,
She it is, I vow, O,
Passing the lea.
Rush down to meet her there,
Call out and greet her there,
Never a sweeter there
Crossed to me!

Lalage's come ; aye,
Come is she now, O ! . . .
Does Heaven allow, O,
A meeting to be ?
Yes, she is here now,
Here now, here now,
Nothing to fear now,
Here's Lalage !

BEFORE KNOWLEDGE

WHEN I walked roseless tracks and wide,
Ere dawned your date for meeting me,
O why did you not cry Halloo
Across the stretch between, and say :

“ We move, while years as yet divide,
On closing lines which—though it be
You know me not nor I know you—
Will intersect and join some day ! ”

Then well I had borne
Each scraping thorn ;
But the winters froze,
And grew no rose ;
No bridge bestrode
The gap at all ;
No shape you showed,
And I heard no call !

THE BLINDED BIRD

So zestfully canst thou sing?
And all this indignity,
With God's consent, on thee!
Blinded ere yet a-wing
By the red-hot needle thou,
I stand and wonder how
So zestfully thou canst sing!

Resenting not such wrong,
Thy grievous pain forgot,
Eternal dark thy lot,
Groping thy whole life long,
After that stab of fire;
Enjailed in pitiless wire;
Resenting not such wrong!

Who hath charity? This bird.
Who suffereth long and is kind,
Is not provoked, though blind
And alive ensepulchred?
Who hopeth, endureth all things?
Who thinketh no evil, but sings?
Who is divine? This bird.

“THE WIND BLEW WORDS”

THE wind blew words along the skies,
And these it blew to me
Through the wide dusk : “Lift up your
eyes,
Behold this troubled tree,
Complaining as it sways and plies ;
It is a limb of thee.

“Yea, too, the creatures sheltering round—
Dumb figures, wild and tame,
Yea, too, thy fellows who abound—
Either of speech the same
Or far and strange—black, dwarfed, and
browned,
They are stuff of thy own frame.”

I moved on in a surging awe
Of inarticulateness
At the pathetic Me I saw
In all his huge distress,
Making self-slaughter of the law
To kill, break, or suppress.

THE FADED FACE

How was this I did not see
Such a look as here was shown
Ere its womanhood had blown
Past its first felicity?—
That I did not know you young,
Faded Face,
Know you young !

Why did Time so ill bestead
That I heard no voice of yours
Hail from out the curved contours
Of those lips when rosy red ;
Listed not the songs they sung,
Faded Face,
Songs they sung !

By these blanchings, blooms of old,
And the relics of your voice—
Leavings rare of rich and choice
From your early tone and mould—
Let me mourn,—aye, overwung,
Faded Face,
Overwung !

THE RIDDLE

I

STRETCHING eyes west
Over the sea,
Wind foul or fair,
Always stood she
Prospect-impressed ;
Solely out there
Did her gaze rest,
Never elsewhere
Seemed charm to be.

II

Always eyes east
Ponders she now—
As in devotion—
Hills of blank brow
Where no waves plough.
Never the least
Room for emotion
Drawn from the ocean
Does she allow.

THE DUEL

“ I AM here to time, you see ;
The glade is well-screened—eh?—against
alarm ;
Fit place to vindicate by my arm
The honour of my spotless wife,
Who scorns your libel upon her life
In boasting intimacy !

“ All hush-offerings you'll spurn,
My husband. Two must come ; one only go,'
She said. ' That he'll be you I know ;
To faith like ours Heaven will be just,
And I shall abide in fullest trust
Your speedy glad return.' ”

“ Good. Here am also I ;
And we'll proceed without more waste of
words
To warm your cockpit. Of the swords

Take you your choice. I shall thereby
 Feel that on me no blame can lie,
 Whatever Fate accords."

So stripped they there, and fought,
 And the swords clicked and scraped, and the
 onsets sped ;
 Till the husband fell ; and his shirt was
 red
 With streams from his heart's hot cistern.
 Nought
 Could save him now ; and the other,
 wrought
 Maybe to pity, said :

"Why did you urge on this ?
 Your wife assured you ; and 't had better
 been
 That you had let things pass, serene
 In confidence of long-tried bliss,
 Holding there could be nought amiss
 In what my words might mean."

Then, seeing nor ruth nor rage
 Could move his foeman more—now Death's
 deaf thrall—
 He wiped his steel, and, with a call
 Like turtledove to dove, swift broke
 Into the copse, where under an oak
 His horse cropt, held by a page.

“All's over, Sweet,” he cried
To the wife, thus guised ; for the young page
was she.

“ 'Tis as we hoped and said 't would be.
He never guessed. . . . We mount and
ride

To where our love can reign uneyed.
He s clay, and we are free.”

AT MAYFAIR LODGINGS

How could I be aware,
The opposite window eyeing
As I lay listless there,
That through its blinds was dying
One I had rated rare
Before I had set me sighing
For another more fair ?

Had the house-front been glass,
My vision unobscuring,
Could aught have come to pass
More happiness-insuring
To her, loved as a lass
When spouseless, all-alluring ?
I reckon not, alas !

So, the square window stood,
Steadily night-long shining
In my close neighbourhood,
Who looked forth undivining
That soon would go for good
One there in pain reclining,
Unpardoned, unadieu'd.

Silently screened from view
Her tragedy was ending
That need not have come due
Had she been less unbending.
How near, near were we two
At that last vital rending,—
And neither of us knew!

TO MY FATHER'S VIOLIN

Does he want you down there
In the Nether Glooms where
The hours may be a dragging load upon him,
As he hears the axle grind
 Round and round
Of the great world, in the blind
 Still profound
Of the night-time? He might liven at the
 sound
Of your string, revealing you had not forgone
 him.

In the gallery west the nave,
But a few yards from his grave,
Did you, tucked beneath his chin, to his
 bowing
Guide the homely harmony
 Of the quire
Who for long years strenuously—
 Son and sire—
Caught the strains that at his fingering low
 or higher
From your four thin threads and eff-holes
 came outflowing.

TO MY FATHER'S VIOLIN 45

And, too, what merry tunes
He would bow at nights or noons
That chanced to find him bent to lute a
 measure,
When he made you speak his heart
 As in dream,
Without book or music-chart,
 On some theme
Elusive as a jack-o'-lanthorn's gleam,
And the psalm of duty shelved for trill of
 pleasure.

Well, you can not, alas,
The barrier overpass
That screens him in those Mournful Meads
 hereunder,
Where no fiddling can be heard
 In the glades
Of silentness, no bird
 Thrills the shades ;
Where no viol is touched for songs or
 serenades,
No bowing wakes a congregation's wonder.

He must do without you now,
Stir you no more anyhow
To yearning concords taught you in your
 glory ;

46 TO MY FATHER'S VIOLIN

While, your strings a tangled wreck,
Once smart drawn,
Ten worm-wounds in your neck,
Purflings wan
With dust-hoar, here alone I sadly con
Your present dumbness, shape your olden
story.

1916.

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

THIS statue of Liberty, busy man,
Here erect in the city square,
I have watched while your scrubbings, this
 early morning,
 Strangely wistful,
 And half tristful,
Have turned her from foul to fair ;

With your bucket of water, and mop, and
 brush,
 Bringing her out of the grime
That has smeared her during the smokes of
 winter
 With such glumness
 In her dumbness,
And aged her before her time.

You have washed her down with motherly
 care—
 Head, shoulders, arm, and foot,
To the very hem of the robes that drape
 her—

48 THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

All expertly
And alertly,
Till a long stream, black with soot,

Flows over the pavement to the road,
And her shape looms pure as snow :
I read you are hired by the City guardians—
 May be yearly,
 Or once merely—
To treat the statues so ?

“ Oh, I'm not hired by the Councilmen
 To cleanse the statues here.
I do this one as a self-willed duty,
 Not as paid to,
 Or at all made to,
But because the doing is dear.”

Ah, then I hail you brother and friend !
 Liberty's knight divine.
What you have done would have been my
 doing,
 Yea, most verily,
 Well, and thoroughly,
Had but your courage been mine !

“ Oh I care not for Liberty's mould,
 Liberty charms not me ;
What's Freedom but an idler's vision,

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY 49

Vain, pernicious,
Often vicious,
Of things that cannot be !

“Memory it is that brings me to this—
Of a daughter—my one sweet own.
She grew a famous carver’s model,
One of the fairest
And of the rarest :—
She sat for the figure as shown.

“But alas, she died in this distant place
Before I was warned to betake
Myself to her side ! . . . And in love of my
darling,
In love of the fame of her,
And the good name of her,
I do this for her sake.”

Answer I gave not. Of that form
The carver was I at his side ;
His child, my model, held so saintly,
Grand in feature,
Gross in nature
In the dens of vice had died.

THE BACKGROUND AND THE
FIGURE

(*Lover's Ditty*)

I THINK of the slope where the rabbits fed,
Of the periwinks' rockwork lair,
Of the fuchsias ringing their bells of red—
And the something else seen there.

Between the blooms where the sod basked
bright,
By the bobbing fuchsia trees,
Was another and yet more eyesome sight—
The sight that richened these.

I shall seek those beauties in the spring,
When the days are fit and fair,
But only as foils to the one more thing
That also will flower there !

THE CHANGE

Out of the past there rises a week—
Who shall read the years O!—
Out of the past there rises a week
Enringed with a purple zone.
Out of the past there rises a week
When thoughts were strung too thick to
speak,
And the magic of its lineaments remains with
me alone.

In that week there was heard a singing—
Who shall spell the years, the years!—
In that week there was heard a singing,
And the white owl wondered why.
In that week, yea, a voice was ringing,
And forth from the casement were candles
flinging
Radiance that fell on the deodar and lit up
the path thereby.

Could that song have a mocking note?—
Who shall unroll the years O!—

Could that song have a mocking note
 To the white owl's sense as it fell ?
 Could that song have a mocking note
 As it trilled out warm from the singer's
 throat,
 And who was the mocker and who the mocked
 when two felt all was well ?

In a tedious trampling crowd yet later—
 Who shall bare the years, the years !—
 In a tedious trampling crowd yet later,
 When silvery singings were dumb ;
 In a crowd uncaring what time might fate
 her,
 Mid murks of night I stood to await her,
 And the twanging of iron wheels gave out
 the signal that she was come.

She said with a travel-tired smile—
 Who shall lift the years O !—
 She said with a travel-tired smile,
 Half scared by scene so strange ;
 She said, outworn by mile on mile,
 The blurred lamps wanning her face the
 while,
 "O Love, I am here ; I am with you !" . . .
 Ah, that there should have come a
 change !

O the doom by someone spoken—
Who shall unseal the years, the years!—
O the doom that gave no token,
When nothing of bale saw we :
O the doom by someone spoken,
O the heart by someone broken,
The heart whose sweet reverberances are all
time leaves to me.

Jan.-Feb. 1913.

SITTING ON THE BRIDGE

(Echo of an old song)

SITTING on the bridge
Past the barracks, town and ridge,
At once the spirit seized us
To sing a song that pleased us—
As “The Fifth” were much in rumour;
It was “Whilst I’m in the humour,
Take me, Paddy, will you now?”
And a lancer soon drew nigh,
And his Royal Irish eye
Said, “Willing, faith, am I,
O, to take you anyhow, dears,
To take you anyhow.”

But, lo!—dad walking by,
Cried, “What, you lightheels! Fie!
Is this the way you roam
And mock the sunset gleam?”
And he marched us straightway home,
Though we said, “We are only, daddy,
Singing, ‘Will you take me, Paddy?’”

SITTING ON THE BRIDGE 55

—Well, we never saw from then
If we sang there anywhen,
The soldier dear again,
Except at night in dream-time,
Except at night in dream.

Perhaps that soldier's fighting
In a land that's far away,
Or he may be idly plighting
Some foreign hussy gay ;
Or perhaps his bones are whiting
In the wind to their decay ! . . .
Ah !—does he mind him how
The girls he saw that day
On the bridge, were sitting singing
At the time of curfew-ringing,
“Take me, Paddy ; will you now, dear ?
Paddy, will you now ?”

GREY'S BRIDGE.

THE YOUNG CHURCHWARDEN

WHEN he lit the candles there,
And the light fell on his hand,
And it trembled as he scanned
Her and me, his vanquished air
Hinted that his dream was done,
And I saw he had begun
 To understand.

When Love's viol was unstrung,
Sore I wished the hand that shook
Had been mine that shared her book
While that evening hymn was sung,
His the victor's, as he lit
Candles where he had bidden us sit
 With vanquished look.

Now her dust lies listless there,
His afar from tending hand,
What avails the victory scanned?
Does he smile from upper air :
" Ah, my friend, your dream is done ;
And 'tis *you* who have begun
 To understand ! "

"I TRAVEL AS A PHANTOM NOW"

I TRAVEL as a phantom now,
For people do not wish to see
In flesh and blood so bare a bough
As Nature makes of me.

And thus I visit bodiless
Strange gloomy households often at odds,
And wonder if Man's consciousness
Was a mistake of God's.

And next I meet you, and I pause,
And think that if mistake it were,
As some have said, O then it was
One that I well can bear!

1915.

LINES

TO A MOVEMENT IN MOZART'S E-FLAT
SYMPHONY

Show me again the time
When in the Junetide's prime
We flew by meads and mountains
northerly!—
Yea, to such freshness, fairness, fulness,
fineness, freeness,
Love lures life on.

Show me again the day
When from the sandy bay
We looked together upon the pestered
sea!—
Yea, to such surging, swaying, sighing,
swelling, shrinking,
Love lures life on.

Show me again the hour
When by the pinnacled tower
We eyed each other and feared futurity!—

LINES TO A SYMPHONY 59

Yea, to such bodings, broodings, beatings,
blanchings, blessings,
Love lures life on.

Show me again just this :
The moment of that kiss
Away from the prancing folk, by the
strawberry-tree !—
Yea, to such rashness, ratheness, rareness,
ripeness, richness,
Love lures life on.

Begun November 1898.

“IN THE SEVENTIES”

“Qui deridetur ab amico suo sicut ego.”—JOB.

IN the seventies I was bearing in my breast,
 Penned tight,
Certain starry thoughts that threw a magic
 light
On the worktimes and the soundless hours of
 rest
In the seventies; aye, I bore them in my
 breast
 Penned tight.

In the seventies when my neighbours—even
 my friend—
 Saw me pass,
Heads were shaken, and I heard the words,
 “Alas,
For his onward years and name unless he
 mend!”
In the seventies, when my neighbours and
 my friend
 Saw me pass.

In the seventies those who met me did not
know

Of the vision

That immuned me from the chillings of mis-
prision

And the damps that choked my goings to
and fro

In the seventies ; yea, those noddors did not
know

Of the vision.

In the seventies nought could darken or
destroy it,

Locked in me,

Though as delicate as lamp-worm's lucency ;
Neither mist nor murk could weaken or
alloy it

In the seventies !—could not darken or
destroy it,

Locked in me.

THE PEDIGREE

I

I BENT in the deep of night
Over a pedigree the chronicler gave
As mine ; and as I bent there, half-
unrobed,
The uncurtained panes of my window-square
let in the watery light
Of the moon in its old age :
And green-rheumed clouds were hurrying past
where mute and cold it globed
Like a drifting dolphin's eye seen through
a lapping wave.

II

So, scanning my sire-sown tree,
And the hieroglyphs of this spouse
tied to that,
With offspring mapped below in
lineage,
Till the tangles troubled me,

The branches seemed to twist into a seared
and cynic face
Which winked and tokened towards the
window like a Mage
Enchanting me to gaze again thereat.

III

It was a mirror now,
And in it a long perspective I could
trace
Of my begetters, dwindling backward each
past each
All with the kindred look,
Whose names had since been inked down
in their place
On the recorder's book,
Generation and generation of my mien, and
build, and brow.

IV

And then did I divine
That every heave and coil and move
I made
Within my brain, and in my mood and
speech,
Was in the glass portrayed
As long forestalled by their so making
it :

The first of them, the primest fuglemen
of my line,
Being fogged in far antiqueness past surmise
and reason's reach.

v

Said I then, sunk in tone,
"I am merest mimicker and counter-
feit!—
Though thinking, *I am I,*
And what I do I do myself alone."
—The cynic twist of the page thereat
unknit
Back to its normal figure, having wrought its
purport wry,
The Mage's mirror left the window-
square,
And the stained moon and drift retook their
places there.

1916.

HIS HEART

A WOMAN'S DREAM

At midnight, in the room where he lay
dead
Whom in his life I had never clearly read,
I thought if I could peer into that citadel
His heart, I should at last know full and
well

What hereto had been known to him alone,
Despite our long sit-out of years foreflown,
"And if," I said, "I do this for his memory's
sake,
It would not wound him, even if he could
wake."

So I bent over him. He seemed to smile
With a calm confidence the whole long
while
That I, withdrawing his heart, held it and,
bit by bit,
Perused the unguessed things found
written on it.

It was inscribed like a terrestrial sphere
 With quaint vermiculations close and
 clear—

His gravings. Had I known, would I have
 risked the stroke
 Its reading brought, and my own heart nigh
 broke!

Yes, there at last, eyes opened, did I see
 His whole sincere symmetric history ;
 There were his truth, his simple singleminded-
 ness,
 Strained, maybe, by time's storms, but
 there no less.

There were the daily deeds from sun to sun
 In blindness, but good faith, that he had
 done ;
 There were regrets, at instances wherein he
 swerved
 (As he conceived) from cherishings I had
 deserved.

There were old hours all figured down as
 bliss—
 Those spent with me—(how little had I
 thought this !)
 There those when, at my absence, whether he
 slept or waked,
 (Though I knew not 'twas so !) his spirit
 ached.

There that when we were severed, how day
dulled
Till time joined us anew, was chronicled :
And arguments and battlings in defence of
me
That heart recorded clearly and ruddily.

I put it back, and left him as he lay
While pierced the morning pink and then
the gray
Into each dreary room and corridor around,
Where I shall wait, but his step will not
sound.

WHERE THEY LIVED

Dishevelled leaves creep down
Upon that bank to-day,
Some green, some yellow, and some pale
brown ;
The wet bents bob and sway ;
The once warm slippery turf is sodden
Where we laughingly sat or lay.

The summerhouse is gone,
Leaving a weedy space ;
The bushes that veiled it once have grown
Gaunt trees that interlace,
Through whose lank limbs I see too clearly
The nakedness of the place.

And where were hills of blue,
Blind drifts of vapour blow,
And the names of former dwellers few,
If any, people know,
And instead of a voice that called, " Come in
Dears,"
Time calls, " Pass below ! "

THE OCCULTATION

WHEN the cloud shut down on the morning
shine,
And darkened the sun,
I said, "So ended that joy of mine
Years back begun."

But day continued its lustrous roll
In upper air ;
And did my late irradiate soul
Live on somewhere ?

LIFE LAUGHS ONWARD

RAMBLING I looked for an old abode
Where, years back, one had lived I knew ;
Its site a dwelling duly showed,
But it was new.

I went where, not so long ago,
The sod had riven two breasts asunder ;
Daisies throve gaily there, as though
No grave were under.

I walked along a terrace where
Loud children gambolled in the sun ;
The figure that had once sat there
Was missed by none.

Life laughed and moved on unsubdued,
I saw that Old succumbed to Young :
'Twas well. My too regretful mood
Died on my tongue.

THE PEACE-OFFERING

It was but a little thing,
Yet I knew it meant to me
Ease from what had given a sting
To the very birdsinging
Latterly.

But I would not welcome it ;
And for all I then declined
O the regrettings infinite
When the night-processions flit
Through the mind !

“SOMETHING TAPPED”

SOMETHING tapped on the pane of my room
When there was never a trace
Of wind or rain, and I saw in the gloom
My weary Belovéd's face.

“O I am tired of waiting,” she said,
“Night, morn, noon, afternoon ;
So cold it is in my lonely bed,
And I thought you would join me soon !”

I rose and neared the window-glass,
But vanished thence had she :
Only a pallid moth, alas,
Tapped at the pane for me.

August 1913.

1-6

THE WOUND

I CLIMBED to the crest,
And, fog-festooned,
The sun lay west
Like a crimson wound :

Like that wound of mine
Of which none knew,
For I'd given no sign
That it pierced me through.

A MERRYMAKING IN QUESTION

“I WILL get a new string for my fiddle,
And call to the neighbours to come,
And partners shall dance down the middle
Until the old pewter-wares hum :
And we'll sip the mead, cyder, and rum !”

From the night came the oddest of answers :
A hollow wind, like a bassoon,
And headstones all ranged up as dancers,
And cypresses droning a croon,
And gurgoyles that mouthed to the tune.

"I SAID AND SANG HER
EXCELLENCE"

(Fickle Lover's Song)

I SAID and sang her excellence :
They called it laud undue.
 (Have your way, my heart, O !)
Yet what was homage far above
The plain deserts of my olden Love
Proved verity of my new.

"She moves a sylph in picture-land,
Where nothing frosts the air :"
 (Have your way, my heart, O !)
"To all winged pipers overhead
She is known by shape and song," I said,
Conscious of licence there.

I sang of her in a dim old hall
Dream-built too fancifully,
 (Have your way, my heart, O !)
But lo, the ripe months chanced to lead
My feet to such a hall indeed,
Where stood the very She.

76 "I SANG HER EXCELLENCE"

Strange, startling, was it then to learn
I had glanced down unborn time,
 (Have your way, my heart, O!)
And prophesied, whereby I knew
That which the years had planned to do
In warranty of my rhyme.

By RUSHY-POND.

A JANUARY NIGHT

(1879)

THE rain smites more and more,
The east wind snarls and sneezes ;
Through the joints of the quivering door
The water wheezes.

The tip of each ivy-shoot
Writhes on its neighbour's face ;
There is some hid dread afoot
That we cannot trace.

Is it the spirit astray
Of the man at the house below
Whose coffin they took in to-day ?
We do not know.

A KISS

By a wall the stranger now calls his,
Was born of old a particular kiss,
Without forethought in its genesis ;
Which in a trice took wing on the air.
'And where that spot is nothing shows :
 There ivy calmly grows,
 And no one knows
 What a birth was there !

That kiss is gone where none can tell—
Not even those who felt its spell :
It cannot have died ; that know we well.
Somewhere it pursues its flight,
One of a long procession of sounds
 Travelling aethereal rounds
 Far from earth's bounds
 In the infinite.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT

THEY came, the brothers, and took two chairs
In their usual quiet way ;
And for a time we did not think
They had much to say.

And they began and talked awhile
Of ordinary things,
Till spread that silence in the room
A pent thought brings.

And then they said : "The end has come.
Yes : it has come at last."
And we looked down, and knew that day
A spirit had passed.

THE OXEN

CHRISTMAS EVE, and twelve of the clock.

“Now they are all on their knees,”

An elder said as we sat in a flock

By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where

They dwelt in their strawy pen,

Nor did it occur to one of us there

To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave

In these years! Yet, I feel,

If someone said on Christmas Eve,

“Come ; see the oxen kneel

“In the lonely barton by yonder coomb

Our childhood used to know,”

I should go with him in the gloom,

Hoping it might be so.

1915.

THE TRESSES

“WHEN the air was damp
It made my curls hang slack
As they kissed my neck and back
While I footed the salt-aired track
I loved to tramp.

“When it was dry
They would roll up crisp and tight
As I went on in the light
Of the sun, which my own sprite
Seemed to outvie.

“Now I am old ;
And have not one gay curl
As I had when a girl
For dampness to unfurl
Or sun uphold !”

THE PHOTOGRAPH

THE flame crept up the portrait line by line
As it lay on the coals in the silence of night's
 profound,
 And over the arm's incline,
And along the marge of the silkwork superfine,
And gnawed at the delicate bosom's defence-
 less round.

Then I vented a cry of hurt, and averted my
 eyes ;
The spectacle was one that I could not bear,
 To my deep and sad surprise ;
But, compelled to heed, I again looked furtive-
 wise
Till the flame had eaten her breasts, and
 mouth, and hair.

“Thank God, she is out of it now !” I said
 at last,
In a great relief of heart when the thing was
 done
 That had set my soul aghast,

And nothing was left of the picture unsheathed
 from the past
 But the ashen ghost of the card it had
 figured on.

She was a woman long hid amid packs of
 years,
 She might have been living or dead ; she was
 lost to my sight,
 And the deed that had nigh drawn tears
 Was done in a casual clearance of life's arrears ;
 But I felt as if I had put her to death that
 night ! . . .

—Well ; she knew nothing thereof did she
 survive,
 And suffered nothing if numbered among the
 dead ;
 Yet—yet—if on earth alive
 Did she feel a smart, and with vague strange
 anguish strive ?
 If in heaven, did she smile at me sadly and
 shake her head ?

ON A HEATH

I COULD hear a gown-skirt rustling
Before I could see her shape,
Rustling through the heather
That wove the common's drape,
On that evening of dark weather
When I hearkened, lips agape.

And the town-shine in the distance
Did but baffle here the sight,
And then a voice flew forward :
Dear, is't you ? I fear the night ! ”
And the herons flapped to norward
In the firs upon my right.

There was another looming
Whose life we did not see ;
There was one stilly blooming
Full nigh to where walked we ;
There was a shade entombing
All that was bright of me.

AN ANNIVERSARY

It was at the very date to which we have
come,
In the month of the matching name,
When, at a like minute, the sun had
upswum,
Its couch-time at night being the same.
And the same path stretched here that
people now follow,
And the same stile crossed their way,
And beyond the same green hillock and
hollow
The same horizon lay ;
And the same man pilgrims now hereby who
pilgrimed here that day.

Let so much be said of the date-day's
sameness ;
But the tree that neighbours the track,
And stoops like a pedlar afflicted with
lameness,
Knew of no sogged wound or wind-
crack.

And the stones of that wall were not
 enshrouded
 With mosses of many tones,
And the garth up afar was not over-
 crowded
 With a multitude of white stones,
And the man's eyes then were not so sunk
 that you saw the socket-bones.

KINGSTON-MAURWARD EWELEASE.

“BY THE RUNIC STONE”

(Two who became a story)

By the Runic Stone
They sat, where the grass sloped down,
And chattered, he white-hatted, she in brown,
Pink-faced, breeze-blown.

Rapt there alone
In the transport of talking so
In such a place, there was nothing to let them
know
What hours had flown.

And the die thrown
By them heedlessly there, the dent
It was to cut in their encompassment,
Were, too, unknown.

It might have strown
Their zest with qualms to see,
As in a glass, Time toss their history
From zone to zone !

THE PINK FROCK

“O MY pretty pink frock,
I sha'n't be able to wear it!
Why is he dying just now?
I hardly can bear it!

“He might have contrived to live on;
But they say there's no hope whatever;
And must I shut myself up,
And go out never?

“O my pretty pink frock,
Puff-sleeved and accordion-pleated!
He might have passed in July,
And not so cheated!”

TRANSFORMATIONS

PORTION of this yew
Is a man my grandsire knew,
Bosomed here at its foot :
This branch may be his wife,
A ruddy human life
Now turned to a green shoot.

These grasses must be made
Of her who often prayed,
Last century, for repose ;
And the fair girl long ago
Whom I often tried to know
May be entering this rose.

So, they are not underground,
But as nerves and veins abound
In the growths of upper air,
And they feel the sun and rain,
And the energy again
That made them what they were !

IN HER PRECINCTS

HER house looked cold from the foggy lea,
And the square of each window a dull black
blur.

Where showed no stir :
Yes, her gloom within at the lack of me
Seemed matching mine at the lack of her.

The black squares grew to be squares of light
As the eveshade swathed the house and lawn,
And viols gave tone ;
There was glee within. And I found that
night
The gloom of severance mine alone.

KINGSTON-MAURWARD PARK.

THE LAST SIGNAL

(Oct. 11, 1886)

A MEMORY OF WILLIAM BARNES

SILENTLY I footed by an uphill road
That led from my abode to a spot yew-
boughed ;
Yellowly the sun sloped low down to west-
ward,
And dark was the east with cloud.

Then, below the shadow of that livid sad
east,
Where the light was least, and a gate stood
wide,
Flashed back the fire of the sun that was
facing it,
Like a brief blaze on that side.

Looking hard and harder I knew what it
meant --
The sudden shine sent from the livid east
scene ;

It meant the west mirrored by the coffin of
my friend there,
Turning to the road from his green,

To take his last journey forth—he who in
his prime

Trudged so many a time from that gate
athwart the land!

Thus a farewell to me he signalled on his
grave-way,
As with a wave of his hand.

WINTERBORNE-CAME PATH.

THE HOUSE OF SILENCE

“THAT is a quiet place—
That house in the trees with the shady lawn.”
“—If, child, you knew what there goes on
You would not call it a quiet place.
Why, a phantom abides there, the last of its
 race,
And a brain spins there till dawn.”

“But I see nobody there,—
Nobody moves about the green,
Or wanders the heavy trees between.”
“—Ah, that’s because you do not bear
The visioning powers of souls who dare
 To pierce the material screen.

“Morning, noon, and night,
Mid those funereal shades that seem
The uncanny scenery of a dream,
Figures dance to a mind with sight,
And music and laughter like floods of light
 Make all the precincts gleam.

"It is a poet's bower,
 Through which there pass, in fleet arrays,
 Long teams of all the years and days,
 Of joys and sorrows, of earth and heaven,
 That meet mankind in its ages seven,
 An aion in an hour."

GREAT THINGS

SWEET cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
Spinning down to Weymouth town
By Ridgway thirstily,
And maid and mistress summoning
Who tend the hostelry :
O cyder is a great thing,
A great thing to me !

The dance it is a great thing,
A great thing to me,
With candles lit and partners fit
For night-long revelry ;
And going home when day-dawning
Peeps pale upon the lea :
O dancing is a great thing,
A great thing to me !

Love is, yea, a great thing,
A great thing to me,
When, having drawn across the lawn
In darkness silently.

A figure flits like one a-wing
Out from the nearest tree :
O love is, yes, a great thing,
Aye, greatest thing to me !

Will these be always great things,
Greatest things to me ? . . .
Let it befall that One will call,
"Soul, I have need of thee" :
What then ? Joy-jaunts, impassioned
flings,
Love, and its ecstasy,
Will always have been great things,
Greatest things to me !

THE CHIMES

THAT morning when I trod the town
The twitching chimes of long renown
 Played out to me
The sweet Sicilian sailors' tune,
And I knew not if late or soon
 My day would be :

A day of sunshine beryl-bright
And windless ; yea, think as I might,
 I could not say,
Even to within years' measure, when
One would be at my side who then
 Was far away.

When hard utilitarian times
Had stilled the sweet Saint-Peter's chimes
 I learnt to see
That bale may spring where blisses are,
And one desired might be afar
 Though near to me.

THE FIGURE IN THE SCENE

It pleased her to step in front and sit
Where the cragged slope was green,
While I stood back that I might pencil it
With her amid the scene ;
Till it gloomed and rained ;
But I kept on, despite the drifting wet
That fell and stained
My draught, leaving for curious quizzings yet
The blots engrained.

And thus I drew her there alone,
Seated amid the gauze
Of moisture, hooded, only her outline shown,
With rainfall marked across.
—Soon passed our stay ;
Yet her rainy form is the Genius still of the
spot,
Immutable, yea,
'Though the place now knows her no more,
and has known her not
Ever since that day.

From an old note.

“WHY DID I SKETCH”

WHY did I sketch an upland green,
And put the figure in
Of one on the spot with me?—
For now that one has ceased to be seen
The picture waxes akin
To a wordless irony.

If you go drawing on down or cliff
Let no soft curves intrude
Of a woman's silhouette,
But show the escarpments stark and stiff
As in utter solitude ;
So shall you half forget.

Let me sooner pass from sight of the sky
Than again on a thoughtless day
Linn, laugh, and sing, and rhyme
With a woman sitting near, whom I
Paint in for love, and who may
Be called hence in my time !

From an old note.

CONJECTURE

If there were in my kalendar
No Emma, Florence, Mary,
What would be my existence now—
A hermit's?—wanderer's weary?—
How should I live, and how
Near would be death, or far?

Could it have been that other eyes
Might have uplit my highway?
That fond, sad, retrospective sight
Would catch from this dim byway
Prized figures different quite
From those that now arise?

With how strange aspect would there creep
The dawn, the night, the daytime,
If memory were not what it is
In song-time, toil, or pray-time.—
O were it else than this,
I'd pass to pulseless sleep!

THE BLOW

THAT no man schemed it is my hope—
Yea, that it fell by will and scope
 Of That Which some enthrone,
And for whose meaning myriads grope.

For I would not that of my kind
There should, of his unbiassed mind,
 Have been one known
Who such a stroke could have designed ;

Since it would augur works and ways
Below the lowest that man assays
 To have hurled that stone
Into the sunshine of our days !

And if it prove that no man did,
And that the Inscrutable, the Hid,
 Was cause alone
Of this foul crash our lives amid,

I'll go in due time, and forget
In some deep graveyard's oubliette
 The thing whereof I groan,
And cease from troubling ; thankful yet

Time's finger should have stretched to show
No aimful author's was the blow
That swept us prone,
But the Immanent Doer's That doth not know,

Which in some age unguessed of us
May lift Its blinding incubus,
And see, and own :
" It grieves me I did thus and thus ! "

LOVE THE MONOPOLIST

(*Young Lover's Reverie*)

THE train draws forth from the station-yard,
And with it carries me.
I rise, and stretch out, and regard
The platform left, and see
An airy slim blue form there standing,
And know that it is she.

While with strained vision I watch on,
The figure turns round quite
To greet friends gaily ; then is gone. . . .
The import may be slight,
But why remained she not hard gazing
Till I was out of sight ?

“ O do not chat with others there,”
I brood. “ They are not I.
O strain your thoughts as if they were
Gold bands between us ; eye
All neighbour scenes as so much blankness
Till I again am by !

“A troubled sougning in the breeze
And the sky overhead
Let yourself feel ; and shadeful trees,
Ripe corn, and apples red,
Read as things barren and distasteful
While we are separated !

“When I come back uncloak your gloom,
And let in lovely day ;
Then the long dark as of the tomb
Can well be thrust away
With sweet things I shall have to practise,
And you will have to say !”

Begun 1871 : finished——.

AT MIDDLE-FIELD GATE IN
FEBRUARY

THE bars are thick with drops that show
As they gather themselves from the fog
Like silver buttons ranged in a row,
And as evenly spaced as if measured,
although
They fall at the feeblest jog.

They load the leafless hedge hard by,
And the blades of last year's grass,
While the fallow ploughland turned up nigh
In raw rolls, clammy and clogging lie—
Too clogging for feet to pass.

How dry it was on a far-back day
When straws hung the hedge and
around,
When amid the sheaves in amorous play
In curtained bonnets and light array
Bloomed a bevy now underground !

BOCKHAMPTON LANE.

THE YOUTH WHO CARRIED
A LIGHT

I SAW him pass as the new day dawned,
Murmuring some musical phrase ;
Horses were drinking and floundering in the
pond,
And the tired stars thinned their gaze ;
Yet these were not the spectacles at all that
he conned,
But an inner one, giving out rays.

Such was the thing in his eye, walking there,
The very and visible thing,
A close light, displacing the gray of the morn-
ing air,
And the tokens that the dark was taking
wing ;
And was it not the radiance of a purpose rare
That might ripe to its accomplishing ?

What became of that light ? I wonder still
its fate !
Was it quenched ere its full apogee ?

YOUTH WHO CARRIED A LIGHT 107

Did it struggle frail and frailer to a beam
emaciate ?

Did it thrive till matured in verity ?

Or did it travel on, to be a new young
dreamer's freight,
And thence on infinitely ?

1915.

THE HEAD ABOVE THE FOG

SOMETHING do I see
Above the fog that sheets the mead,
A figure like to life indeed,
Moving along with spectre-speed,
Seen by none but me.

O the vision keen!—
Tripping along to me for love
As in the flesh it used to move,
Only its hat and plume above
The evening fog-fleece seen.

In the day-fall wan,
When nighted birds break off their song,
Mere ghostly head it skims along,
Just as it did when warm and strong,
Body seeming gone.

Such it is I see
Above the fog that sheets the mead—
Yea, that which once could breathe and
plead!—
Skimming along with spectre-speed
To a last tryst with me.

OVERLOOKING THE RIVER STOUR

THE swallows flew in the curves of an eight
 Above the river-gleam
 In the wet June's last beam :
Like little crossbows animate
The swallows flew in the curves of an eight
 Above the river-gleam.

Planing up shavings of crystal spray
 A moor-hen darted out
 From the bank thereabout,
And through the strearh-shine ripped his
 way ;
Planing up shavings of crystal spray
 A moor-hen darted out.

Closed were the kingcups ; and the mead
 Dripped in monotonous green,
 Though the day's morning sheen
Had shown it golden and honeybee'd ;
Closed were the kingcups ; and the mead
 Dripped in monotonous green.

110 OVERLOOKING THE STOUR

And never I turned my head, alack,
 While these things met my gaze
 Through the pane's drop-drenched
 glaze,
To see the more behind my back. . . .
O never I turned, but let, alack,
 These less things hold my gaze !

THE MUSICAL BOX

LIFELONG to be
Seemed the fair colour of the time ;
That there was standing shadowed near
A spirit who sang to the gentle chime
Of the self-struck notes, I did not hear,
I did not see.

Thus did it sing
To the mindless lyre that played indoors
As she came to listen for me without :
“O value what the nonce outpours—
This best of life—that shines about
Your welcoming !”

I had slowed along
After the torrid hours were done,
Though still the posts and walls and road
Flung back their sense of the hot-faced sun,
And had walked by Stour-side Mill, where
broad
Stream-lilies throng.

And I descried
The dusky house that stood apart,
And her, white-muslined, waiting there
In the porch with high-expectant heart,
While still the thin mechanic air
Went on inside.

At whiles would flit
Swart bats, whose wings, be-webbed and
tanned,
Whirred like the wheels of ancient clocks :
She laughed a hailing as she scanned
Me in the gloom, the tuneful box
Intoning it.

Lifelong to be
I thought it. That there watched hard by
A spirit who sang to the indoor tune,
"O make the most of what is nigh!"
I did not hear in my dull soul-swoon—
I did not see.

ON STURMINSTER FOOT-BRIDGE

RETICULATIONS creep upon the slack stream's
face

When the wind skims irritably past,
The current clucks smartly into each hollow
place

That years of flood have scabbled in the pier's
sodden base ;

The floating-lily leaves rot fast.

On a roof stand the swallows ranged in wistful
waiting rows,

Till they arrow off and drop like stones
Among the eyot-withies at whose foot the
river flows ;

And beneath the roof is she who in the dark
world shows

As a lattice-gleam when midnight moans.

ROYAL SPONSORS

“THE king and the queen will stand to the
child ;

’Twill be handed down in song ;
And it’s no more than their deserving,
With my lord so faithful at Court so long,
And so staunch and strong.

“O never before was known such a thing !

’Twill be a grand time for all ;
And the beef will be a whole-roast bullock,
And the servants will have a feast in the
hall,
And the ladies a ball.

“While from Jordan’s stream by a traveller,
In a flagon of silver wrought,
And by caravan, stage-coach, wain, and
waggon
A precious trickle has been brought,
Clear as when caught.”

The morning came. To the park of the peer
The royal couple bore ;
And the font was filled with the Jordan water,
And the household awaited their guests before
The carpeted door.

But when they went to the silk-lined cot
The child was found to have died.
“What’s now to be done? We can dis-
appoint not
The king and queen!” the family cried
With eyes spread wide.

“Even now they approach the chestnut-
drive !
The service must be read.”
“Well, since we can’t christen the child alive,
By God we shall have to christen him dead !”
The marquis said.

Thus, breath-forsaken, a corpse was taken
To the private chapel—yea—
And the king knew not, nor the queen, God
wot,
That they answered for one returned to clay
At the font that day.

OLD FURNITURE

I KNOW not how it may be with others
Who sit amid relics of householdry
That date from the days of their mothers'
mothers,
But well I know how it is with me
Continually.

I see the hands of the generations
That owned each shiny familiar thing
In play on its knobs and indentations,
And with its ancient fashioning
Still dallying :

Hands behind hands, growing paler and paler,
As in a mirror a candle-flame
Shows images of itself, each frailer
As it recedes, though the eye may frame
Its shape the same.

On the clock's dull dial a foggy finger,
Moving to set the minutes right

With tentative touches that lift and linger
 In the wont of a moth on a summer
 night,
 Creeps to my sight.

On this old viol, too, fingers are dancing—
 As whilom—just over the strings by the
 nut,
 The tip of a bow receding, advancing
 In airy quivers, as if it would cut
 The plaintive gut.

And I see a face by that box for tinder,
 Glowing forth in fits from the dark,
 And fading again, as the linden cinder
 Kindles to red at the flinty spark,
 Or goes out stark.

Well, well. It is best to be up and doing,
 The world has no use for one to-day
 Who eyes things thus—no aim pursuing!
 He should not continue in this stay,
 But sink away.

A THOUGHT IN TWO MOODS

I saw it—pink and white—revealed
Upon the white and green ;
The white and green was a daisied field,
The pink and white Ethleen.

And as I looked it seemed in kind
That difference they had none ;
The two fair bodiments combined
As varied miens of one.

A sense that, in some mouldering year,
As one they both would lie,
Made me move quickly on to her
To pass the pale thought by.

She laughed and said : “ Out there, to me,
You looked so weather-browned,
And brown in clothes, you seemed to be
Made of the dusty ground ! ”

THE LAST PERFORMANCE

"I AM playing my oldest tunes," declared she,
"All the old tunes I know,—
Those I learnt ever so long ago."
—Why she should think just then she'd play
them
Silence cloaks like snow.

When I returned from the town at nightfall
Notes continued to pour
As when I had left two hours before :
"It's the very last time," she said in closing ;
"From now I play no more."

A few morns onward found her fading,
And, as her life outflew,
I thought of her playing her tunes right
through ;
And I felt she had known of what was coming,
And wondered how she knew.

1912.

“YOU ON THE TOWER”

I

“You on the tower of my factory—
What do you see up there?
Do you see Enjoyment with wide wings
Advancing to reach me here?”
—“Yea; I see Enjoyment with wide wings
Advancing to reach you here.”

II

“Good. Soon I’ll come and ask you
To tell me again thereon. . . .
Well, what is he doing now? Hoi, there!”
—“He still is flying on.”
“Ah, waiting till I have full-finished.
Good. Tell me again anon. . . .

III

Hoi, Watchman! I’m here. When comes he?
Between my sweats I am chill.”
—“Oh, you there, working still?”

THE INTERLOPER

THERE are three folk driving in a quaint old
chaise,
And the cliff-side track looks green and fair ;
I view them talking in quiet glee
As they drop down towards the puffins' lair
By the roughest of ways ;
But another with the three rides on, I see,
Whom I like not to be there !

No : it's not anybody you think of Next
A dwelling appears by a slow sweet stream
Where two sit happy and half in the dark :
They read, helped out by a frail-wick'd gleam,
Some rhythmic text ;
But one sits with them whom they don't
mark,
One I'm wishing could not be there.

No : not whom you knew and name. And
now
I discern gay diners in a mansion-place,

And the guests dropping wit—pert, prim, or
choice,

And the hostess's tender and laughing face,
And the host's bland brow ;

But I cannot help hearing a hollow voice,
And I'd fain not hear it there.

No : it's not from the stranger you met once.
Ah,

Yet a goodlier scene than that succeeds ;
People on a lawn—quite a crowd of them.

Yes,
And they chatter and ramble as fancy leads ;
And they say, " Hurrah ! "

To a blithe speech made ; save one, un-
watched,
Who ought not to be there.

Nay : it's not the pale Form your imagings
raise,

That waits on us all at a destined time,
It is not the Fourth Figure the Furnace
showed ;

O that it were such a shape sublime
In these latter days !

It is that under which best lives corrode ;
Would, would it could not be there !

LOGS ON THE HEARTH

A MEMORY OF A SISTER

THE fire advances along the log
Of the tree we felled,
Which bloomed and bore striped apples by
the peck
Till its last hour of bearing knelled.

The fork that first my hand would reach
And then my foot
In climbings upward inch by inch, lies now
Sawn, sapless, darkening with soot.

Where the bark chars is where, one year,
It was pruned, and bled—
Then overgrew the wound. But now, at
last,
Its growings all have stagnated.

My fellow-climber rises dim
From her chilly grave—
Just as she was, her foot near mine on the
bending limb,
Laughing, her young brown hand awave

December 1915.

THE SUNSHADE

AH—it's the skeleton of a lady's sunshade,
Here at my feet in the hard rock's chink,
Merely a naked sheaf of wires!—
Twenty years have gone with their livers
and diers
Since it was silked in its white or pink.

Noonshine riddles the ribs of the sunshade,
No more a screen from the weakest ray;
Nothing to tell us the hue of its dyes,
Nothing but rusty bones as it lies
In its coffin of stone, unseen till to-day.

Where is the woman who carried that sun-
shade
Up and down this seaside place?—
Little thumb standing against its stem,
Thoughts perhaps bent on a love-strata-
gem,
Softening yet more the already soft face!

Is the fair woman who carried that sunshade
A skeleton just as her property is,
Laid in the chink that none may scan?
And does she regret—if regret dust can—
The vain things thought when she flourished
this?

SWANAGE CLIFFS.

THE AGEING HOUSE

WHEN the walls were red
That now are seen
To be overspread
With a mouldy green,
A fresh fair head
Would often lean
From the sunny casement
And scan the scene,
While blithely spoke the wind to the little
sycamore tree.

But storms have raged
Those walls about,
And the head has aged
That once looked out ;
And zest is suaged
And trust is doubt,
And slow effacement
Is rife throughout,
While fiercely girds the wind at the long-
limbed sycamore tree !

THE CAGED GOLDFINCH

WITHIN a churchyard, on a recent grave,
I saw a little cage
That jailed a goldfinch. All was silence save
Its hops from stage to stage.

There was inquiry in its wistful eye,
And once it tried to sing ;
Of him or her who placed it there, and why,
No one knew anything.

AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S IN
VICTORIAN YEARS

“THAT same first fiddler who leads the
orchestra to-night
Here fiddled four decades of years ago;
He bears the same babe-like smile of self-
centred delight,
Same trinket on watch-chain, same ring on
the hand with the bow.

“But his face, if regarded, is woefully wanner,
and drier,
And his once dark beard has grown
straggling and gray ;
Yet a blissful existence he seems to have led
with his lyre,
In a trance of his own, where no wearing or
tearing had sway.

“Mid these wax figures, who nothing can
do, it may seem
That to do but a little thing counts a
great deal ;

To be watched by kings, councillors, queens,
 may be flattering to him—
With their glass eyes longing they too could
 wake notes that appeal."

Ah, but he played staunchly—that fiddler—
 whoever he was,
 With the innocent heart and the soul-
 touching string :
May he find the Fair Haven! For did he
 not smile with good cause?
Yes ; gamuts that graced forty years'-flight
 were not a small thing !

THE BALLET

THEY crush together—a rustling heap of
flesh—
Of more than flesh, a heap of souls ; and then
They part, enmesh,
And crush together again,
Like the pink petals of a too sanguine rose
Frightened shut just when it blows.

Though all alike in their tinsel livery,
And indistinguishable at a sweeping glance,
They muster, maybe,
As lives wide in irrelevance ;
A world of her own has each one underneath,
Detached as a sword from its sheath.

Daughters, wives, mistresses ; honest or false,
sold, bought ;
Hearts of all sizes ; gay, fond, gushing, or
penned,
Various in thought
Of lover, rival, friend ;
Links in a one-pulsed chain, all showing
one smile,
Yet severed so many a mile !

THE FIVE STUDENTS

THE sparrow dips in his wheel-rut bath,
The sun grows passionate-eyed,
And boils the dew to smoke by the paddock-
path ;
As strenuously we stride,—
Five of us ; dark He, fair He, dark She,
fair She, I,
All beating by.

The air is shaken, the high-road hot,
Shadowless swoons the day,
The greens are sobered and cattle at rest ;
but not
We on our urgent way,—
Four of us ; fair She, dark She, fair He, I,
are there,
But one—elsewhere.

Autumn moulds the hard fruit mellow,
And forward still we press
Through moors, briar-meshed plantations,
clay-pits yellow,

As in the spring hours—yes,
 Three of us : fair He, fair She, I, as here-
 tofore,
 But—fallen one more.

The leaf drops : earthworms draw it in
 At night-time noiselessly,
 The fingers of birch and beech are skeleton-
 thin,
 And yet on the beat are we,—
 Two of us ; fair She, I. But no more left
 to go
 The track we know.

Icicles tag the church-aisle leads,
 The flag-rope gibbers hoarse,
 The home-bound foot-folk wrap their
 snow-flaked heads,
 Yet I still stalk the course,—
 One of us. . . . Dark and fair He, dark and
 fair She, gone :
 The rest—anon.

THE WIND'S PROPHECY

I TRAVEL on by barren farms,
And gulls glint out like silver flecks
Against a cloud that speaks of wrecks,
And bellies down with black alarms.
I say: "Thus from my lady's arms
I go; those arms I love the best!"
The wind replies from dip and rise,
"Nay; toward her arms thou journeyest."

A distant verge morosely gray
Appears, while clots of flying foam
Break from its muddy monochrome,
And a light blinks up far away.
I sigh: "My eyes now as all day
Behold her ebon loops of hair!"
Like bursting bonds the wind responds,
"Nay, wait for tresses flashing fair!"

From tides the lofty coastlands screen
Come smittings like the slam of doors,
Or hammerings on hollow floors,
As the swell cleaves through caves unseen.

136 THE WIND'S PROPHECY

Say I : " Though broad this wild terrene,
Her city home is matched of none !"
From the hoarse skies the wind replies :
" Thou shouldst have said her sea-bord one."

The all-prevailing clouds exclude
The one quick timorous transient star ;
The waves outside where breakers are
Huzza like a mad multitude.
" Where the sun ups it, mist-imbued,"
I cry, " there reigns the star for me !"
The wind outshrieks from points and peaks :
" Here, westward, where it downs, mean ye !"

Yonder the headland, vulturine,
Snores like old Skrymer in his sleep,
And every chasm and every steep
Blackens as wakes each pharos-shine.
" I roam, but one is safely mine,"
I say. " God grant she stay my own !"
Low laughs the wind as if it grinned :
" Thy Love is one thou'st not yet known."

Rewritten from an old copy

DURING WIND AND RAIN

THEY sing their dearest songs—
He, she, all of them—yea,
Treble and tenor and bass,
 And one to play ;
With the candles mooning each face. . . .
 Ah, no ; the years O !
How the sick leaves reel down in throngs !

They clear the creeping moss—
Elders and juniors—aye,
Making the pathways neat
 And the garden gay ;
And they build a shady seat. . . .
 Ah, no ; the years, the years ;
See, the webbed white storm-birds wing
 across.

They are blithely breakfasting all—
Men and maidens—yea,
Under the summer tree,
 With a glimpse of the bay,
While pet fowl come to the knee. . . .

138 DURING WIND AND RAIN

Ah, no ; the years O!
And the rotten rose is ript from the wall.

They change to a high new house,
He, she, all of them—aye.
Clocks and carpets and chairs
On the lawn all day,
And brightest things that are theirs. . . .
Ah, no ; the years, the years ;
Down their chiselled names the rain-drop
ploughs.

HE PREFERS HER EARTHLY

THIS after-sunset is a sight for seeing,
Cliff-heads of craggy cloud surrounding it.

—And dwell you in that glory-show?
You may; for there are strange strange
things in being,
Stranger than I know.

Yet if that chasm of splendour claim your
presence

Which glows between the ash cloud and the
dun,

How changed must be your mortal mould!
Changed to a firmament-riding earthless
essence

From what you were of old :

All too unlike the fond and fragile creature
Then known to me. . . . Well, shall I say it
plain?

I would not have you thus and there,
But still would grieve on, missing you, still
feature

You as the one you were.

THE DOLLS

“WHENEVER you dress me dolls, mammy,
 Why do you dress them so,
And make them gallant soldiers,
 When never a one I know ;
And not as gentle ladies
 With frills and frocks and curls,
As people dress the dollies
 Of other little girls?”

Ah—why did she not answer :—
 “Because your mammy’s heed
Is always gallant soldiers,
 As well may be, indeed.
One of them was your daddy,
 His name I must not tell ;
He’s not the dad who lives here,
 But one I love too well.”

MOLLY GONE

No more summer for Molly and me ;
There is snow on the tree,
And the blackbirds plump large as the
rooks are, almost,
And the water is hard
Where they used to dip bills at the dawn ere
her figure was lost
To these coasts, now my prison close-
barred.

No more planting by Molly and me
Where the beds used to be
Of sweet-william ; no training the
clambering rose
By the framework of fir
Now bowering the pathway, whereon it swings
gaily and blows
As if calling commendment from her.

No more jauntings by Molly and me
To the town by the sea,
Or along over Whitesheet to Wynyard's
green Gap,

Catching Montacute Crest
To the right against Sedgmoor, and Corton-
Hill's far-distant cap,
And Pilsdon and Lewsdon to west.

No more-singing by Molly to me
In the evenings when she
Was in mood and in voice, and the
candles were lit,
And past the porch-quoin
The rays would spring out on the laurels; and
dumbledores hit
On the pane, as if wishing to join.

Where, then, is Molly, who's no more
with me?
—As I stand on this lea,
Thinking thus, there's a many-flamed
star in the air,
That tosses a sign
That her glance is regarding its face from her
home, so that there
Her eyes may have meetings with
mine.

A BACKWARD SPRING

THE trees are afraid to put forth buds,
And there is timidity in the grass ;
The plots lie gray where gouged by spuds,
 And whether next week will pass
Free of sly sour winds is the fret of each bush
 Of barberry waiting to bloom.

Yet the snowdrop's face betrays no gloom,
And the primrose pants in its heedless push,
Though the myrtle asks if it's worth the fight
 This year with frost and rime
 To venture one more time
On delicate leaves and buttons of white
From the selfsame bough as at last year's
 prime,
And never to ruminare on or remember
What happened to it in mid-December.

April 1917.

LOOKING ACROSS

I

It is dark in the sky,
And silence is where
Our laughs rang high ;
And recall do I
That One is out there.

II

The dawn is not nigh,
And the trees are bare,
And the waterways sigh
That a year has drawn by,
And Two are out there.

III

The wind drops to die
Like the phantom of Care
Too frail for a cry,
And heart brings to eye
That Three are out there.

IV

This Life runs dry
That once ran rare
And rosy in dye,
And fleet the days fly,
And Four are out there.

V

Tired, tired am I
Of this earthly air,
And my wraith asks : Why,
Since these calmly lie,
Are not Five out there?

December 1915.

AT A SEASIDE TOWN IN 1869

(Young Lover's Reverie)

I WENT and stood outside myself,
Spelled the dark sky
And ship-lights nigh,
And grumbling winds that passed thereby.

Then next inside myself I looked,
And there, above
All, shone my Love,
That nothing matched the image of.

Beyond myself again I ranged ;
And saw the free
Life by the sea,
And folk indifferent to me.

O 'twas a charm to draw within
Thereafter, where
But she was ; care
For one thing only, her hid there !

But so it chanced, without myself
I had to look,
And then I took
More heed of what I had long forsook.

The boats, the sands, the esplanade,
The laughing crowd ;
Light-hearted, loud
Greetings from some not ill-endowed ;

The evening sunlit cliffs, the talk,
Hailings and halts,
The keen sea-salts,
The band, the Morgenblätter Waltz.

Still, when at night I drew inside
Forward she came,
Sad, but the same
As when I first had known her name.

Then rose a time when, as by force,
Outwardly wooed
By contacts crude,
Her image in abeyance stood. . . .

At last I said : This outside life
Shall not endure ;
I'll seek the pure
Thought-world, and bask in her allure.

Myself again I crept within,
Scanned with keen care
The temple where
She'd shone, but could not find her there.

I sought and sought. But O her soul
Has not since thrown
Upon my own
One beam! Yea, she is gone, is gone.

From an old note.

THE GLIMPSE

SHE sped through the door
And, following in haste,
And stirred to the core,
I entered hot-faced ;
But I could not find her,
No sign was behind her.
“Where is she ?” I said :
—“Who ?” they asked that sat there ;
“Not a soul’s come in sight.”
—“A maid with red hair.”
—“Ah.” They paled. “She is dead.
People see her at night,
But you are the first
On whom she has burst
In the keen common light.”

It was ages ago,
When I was quite strong :
I have waited since,—O,
I have waited so long !
—Yea, I set me to own
The house, where now lone
I dwell in void rooms
Booming hollow as tombs !

But I never come near her,
Though nightly I hear her.
And my cheek has grown thin
And my hair has grown gray
With this waiting therein ;
But she still keeps away !

THE PEDESTRIAN

AN INCIDENT OF 1883

“SIR, will you let me give you a ride?

Nox Venit, and the heath is wide.”

—My phaeton-lantern shone on one

Young, fair, even fresh,

But burdened with flesh :

A leathern satchel at his side,

His breathings short, his coat undone.

'Twas as if his corpulent figure slopped

With the shake of his walking when he
stopped,

And, though the night's pinch grew acute,

He wore but a thin

Wind-thridded suit,

Yet well-shaped shoes for walking in,

Artistic beaver, cane gold-topped.

“Alas, my friend,” he said with a smile,

“I am daily bound to foot ten mile—

Wet, dry, or dark—before I rest.

Six months to live
 My doctors give
 Me as my prospect here, at best,
 Unless I vamp my sturdiest ! ”

His voice was that of a man refined,
 A man, one well could feel, of mind,
 Quite winning in its musical ease ;
 But in mould maligned
 By some disease ;
 And I asked again. But he shook his head ;
 Then, as if more were due, he said :—

“ A student was I—of Schopenhauer,
 Kant, Hegel,—and the fountained bower
 Of the Muses, too, knew my regard :
 But ah—I fear me
 The grave gapes near me ! . . .
 Would I could this gross sheath discard,
 And rise an ethereal shape, unmarred ! ”

How I remember him !—his short breath,
 His aspect, marked for early death,
 As he dropped into the night for ever ;
 One caught in his prime
 Of high endeavour ;
 From all philosophies soon to sever
 Through an unconscieced trick of Time !

“WHO’S IN THE NEXT ROOM?”

“Who’s in the next room?—who?
I seemed to see
Somebody in the dawning passing through,
Unknown to me.”
“Nay: you saw nought. He passed in-
visibly.”

“Who’s in the next room?—who?
I seem to hear
Somebody muttering firm in a language new
That chills the ear.”
“No: you catch not his tongue who has
entered there.”

“Who’s in the next room?—who?
I seem to feel
His breath like a clammy draught, as if it
drew
From the Polar Wheel.”
“No: none who breathes at all does the door
conceal.”

154 "WHO'S IN NEXT ROOM?"

"Who's in the next room?—who?

A figure wan

With a message to one in there of something
due?

Shall I know him anon?"

"Yea he; and he brought such; and you'll
know him anon."

AT A COUNTRY FAIR

At a bygone Western country fair
I saw a giant led by a dwarf
With a red string like a long thin scarf ;
How much he was the stronger there
 The giant seemed unaware.

And then I saw that the giant was blind,
And the dwarf a shrewd-eyed little thing ;
The giant, mild, timid, obeyed the string
As if he had no independent mind,
 Or will of any kind.

Wherever the dwarf decided to go
At his heels the other trotted meekly,
(Perhaps—I know not—reproaching weakly)
Like one Fate bade that it must be so,
 Whether he wished or no.

Various sights in various climes
I have seen, and more I may see yet,
But that sight never shall I forget,
And have thought it the sorriest of panto-
 mimes,
 If once, a hundred times !

THE MEMORIAL BRASS : 186-

“WHY do you weep there, O sweet lady,
Why do you weep before that brass?—
(I’m a mere student sketching the mediaeval)
Is some late death lined there, alas?—
Your father’s? . . . Well, all pay the debt
that paid he!”

“Young man, O must I tell!—My
husband’s! And under
His name I set mine, and my *death*!—
Its date left vacant till my heirs should fill it,
Stating me faithful till my last breath.”
—“Madam, that you are a widow wakes my
wonder!”

“O wait! For last month I—re-
married!
“And now I fear ’twas a deed amiss.
We’ve just come home. And I am sick and
saddened
At what the new one will say to this;
And will he think—think that I should have
tarried?”

THE MEMORIAL BRASS 157

“I may add, surely,—with no wish to
harm him—
That he’s a temper—yes, I fear!
And when he comes to church next Sunday
morning,
And sees that written . . . O dear, O
dear!”
—“Madam, I swear your beauty will disarm
him!”

HER LOVE-BIRDS

WHEN I looked up at my love-birds
That Sunday afternoon,
There was in their tiny tune
A dying fetch like broken words,
When I looked up at my love-birds
That Sunday afternoon.

When he, too, scanned the love-birds
On entering there that day,
'Twas as if he had nought to say
Of his long journey citywards,
When he, too, scanned the love-birds,
On entering there that day.

And billed and billed the love-birds,
As 'twere in fond despair
At the stress of silence where
Had once been tones in tenor thirds,
And billed and billed the love-birds
As 'twere in fond despair.

O, his speech that chilled the love-birds,
And smote like death on me,
As I learnt what was to be,
And knew my life was broke in sherds !
O, his speech that chilled the love-birds,
And smote like death on me !

PAYING CALLS

I WENT by footpath and by stile
 Beyond where bustle ends,
Strayed here a mile and there a mile
 And called upon some friends.

On certain ones I had not seen
 For years past did I call,
And then on others who had been
 The oldest friends of all.

It was the time of midsummer
 When they had used to roam ;
But now, though tempting was the air,
 I found them all at home.

I spoke to one and other of them
 By mound and stone and tree
Of things we had done ere days were dim,
 But they spoke not to me.

THE UPPER BIRCH-LEAVES

WARM yellowy-green
In the blue serene,
How they skip and sway
On this autumn day!
They cannot know
What has happened below,—
That their boughs down there
Are already quite bare,
That their own will be
When a week has passed,—
For they jig as in glee
To this very last.

But no ; there lies
At times in their tune
A note that cries
What at first I fear
I did not hear :
“ O we remember
At each wind's hollo—
Though life holds yet—
We go hence soon,
For 'tis November ;
—But that *you* follow
You may forget ! ”

“IT NEVER LOOKS LIKE SUMMER”

“It never looks like summer here
On Beeny by the sea.”
But though she saw its look as drear,
Summer it seemed to me.

It never looks like summer now
Whatever weather's there ;
But ah, it cannot anyhow,
On Beeny or elsewhere !

BOSCASTLE,
March 8, 1913.

EVERYTHING COMES

"THE house is bleak and cold
Built so new for me!
All the winds upon the wold
Search it through for me;
No screening trees abound,
And the curious eyes around
Keep on view for me."

"My Love, I am planting trees
As a screen for you
Both from winds, and eyes that tease
And peer in for you.
Only wait till they have grown,
No such bower will be known
As I mean for you."

"Then I will bear it, Love,
And will wait," she said.
—So, with years, there grew a grove.
"Skill how great!" she said.
"As you wished, Dear?"—"Yes, I see!
But—I'm dying; and for me
'Tis too late," she said.

THE MAN WITH A PAST

THERE was merry-making
When the first dart fell
As a heralding,—
Till grinned the fully bared thing,
And froze like a spell—
Like a spell.

Innocent was she,
Innocent was I,
Too simple we!
Before us we did not see,
Nearing, aught wry—
Aught wry!

I can tell it not now,
It was long ago ;
And such things cow ;
But that is why and how
Two lives were so—
Were so.

THE MAN WITH A PAST 165

Yes, the years matured,
And the blows were three
That time ensured
On her, which she dumbly endured ;
And one on me—
One on me.

HE FEARS HIS GOOD FORTUNE

THERE was a glorious time
At an epoch of my prime ;
Mornings beryl-bespread,
And evenings golden-red ;
 Nothing gray :
And in my heart I said,
“ However this chanced to be,
It is too full for me,
Too rare, too rapturous, rash,
Its spell must close with a crash
 Some day ! ”

The radiance went on
Anon and yet anon,
And sweetness fell around
Like manna on the ground.
 “ I’ve no claim,”
Said I, “ to be thus crowned :
I am not worthy this :—
Must it not go amiss ?—
Well . . . let the end foreseen
Come duly !—I am serene.”
 —And it came.

HE WONDERS ABOUT HIMSELF

No use hoping, or feeling vext,
Tugged by a force above or under
Like some fantocine, much I wonder
What I shall find me doing next !

Shall I be rushing where bright eyes be ?
Shall I be suffering sorrows seven ?
Shall I be watching the stars of heaven,
Thinking one of them looks like thee ?

Part is mine of the general Will,
Cannot my share in the sum of sources
Bend a digit the poise of forces,
And a fair desire fulfil ?

Nov. 1893.

JUBILATE

"THE very last time I ever was here," he said,
"I saw much less of the quick than I saw of
the dead."

—He was a man I had met with somewhere
before,
But how or when I now could recall no more.

"The hazy mazy moonlight at one in the
morning
Spread out as a sea across the frozen snow,
Glazed to live sparkles like the great breast-
plate adorning
The priest of the Temple, with Urim and
Thummim aglow.

"The yew-tree arms, glued hard to the stiff
stark air,
Hung still in the village sky as theatre-scenes
When I came by the churchyard wall, and
halted there
At a shut-in sound of fiddles and tambourines:

“ And as I stood hearkening, dulcimers, haut-boys, and shawms,
And violoncellos, and a three-stringed double-bass,
Joined in, and were intermixed with a singing of psalms ;
And I looked over at the dead men’s dwelling-place.

“ Through the shine of the slippery snow I now could see,
As it were through a crystal roof, a great company
Of the dead minueting in stately step underground
To the tune of the instruments I had before heard sound.

“ It was ‘ Eden New,’ and dancing they sang in a chore,
‘ We are out of it all!—yea, in Little-Ease cramped no more !’
And their shrouded figures pacing with joy I could see
As you see the stage from the gallery. And they had no heed of me.

“ And I lifted my head quite dazed from the churchyard wall
And I doubted not that it warned I should soon have my call.

But—" . . . Then in the ashes he emptied
the dregs of his cup,
And onward he went, and the darkness
swallowed him up.

HE REVISITS HIS FIRST SCHOOL

I SHOULD not have shown in the flesh,
I ought to have gone as a ghost ;
It was awkward, unseemly almost,
Standing solidly there as when fresh,
 Pink, tiny, crisp-curled,
 My pinions yet furled
 From the winds of the world.

After waiting so many a year
To wait longer, and go as a sprite
From the tomb at the mid of some night
Was the right, radiant way to appear ;
 Not as one wanzing weak
 From life's roar and reek,
 His rest still to seek :

Yea, beglimpsed through the quaint quarried
 glass
Of green moonlight, by me greener made,
When they'd cry, perhaps, "There sits his
 shade

172 HE REVISITS HIS FIRST SCHOOL

In his olden haunt—just as he was
When in Walkingame he
Conned the grand Rule-of-Three
With the bent of a bee.”

But to show in the afternoon sun,
With an aspect of hollow-eyed care,
When none wished to see me come there,
Was a garish thing, better undone.
Yes ; wrong was the way ;
But yet, let me say,
I may right it—some day.

“I THOUGHT, MY HEART”

I THOUGHT, my Heart, that you had healed
Of those sore smartings of the past,
And that the summers had oversealed
 All mark of them at last.
But closely scanning in the night
I saw them standing crimson-bright
 Just as she made them :
 Nothing could fade them ;
 Yea, I can swear
 That there they were—
 They still were there !

Then the Vision of her who cut them came,
And looking over my shoulder said,
“I am sure you deal me all the blame
 For those sharp smarts and red ;
But meet me, dearest, to-morrow night,
In the churchyard at the moon’s half-height,
 And so strange a kiss
 Shall be mine, I wis,
 That you’ll cease to know
 If the wounds you show
 Be there or no !”

FRAGMENT

At last I entered a long dark gallery,
Catacomb-lined ; and ranged at the side
Were the bodies of men from far and wide
Who, motion past, were nevertheless not dead.

“The sense of waiting here strikes strong ;
Everyone’s waiting, waiting, it seems to me ;
What are you waiting for so long?—
What is to happen?” I said.

“O we are waiting for one called God,” said
they,
“ (Though by some the Will, or Force, or
Laws ;
And, vaguely, by some, the Ultimate
Cause ;)
Waiting for him to see us before we are clay.
Yes ; waiting, waiting, for God *to know*
it.” . . .

“To know what?” questioned I.
“To know how things have been going on
earth and below it :

It is clear he must know some day."
I thereon asked them why.
"Since he made us humble pioneers
Of himself in consciousness of Life's tears,
It needs no mighty prophecy
To tell that what he could mindlessly show
His creatures, he himself will know.

"By some still close-cowled mystery
We have reached feeling faster than he,
But he will overtake us anon,
If the world goes on."

MIDNIGHT ON THE GREAT
WESTERN

IN the third-class seat sat the journeying boy,
And the roof-lamp's oily flame
Played down on his listless form and face,
Bewrapt past knowing to what he was going,
Or whence he came.

In the band of his hat the journeying boy
Had a ticket stuck ; and a string
Around his neck bore the key of his box,
That twinkled gleams of the lamp's sad beams
Like a living thing.

What past can be yours, O journeying boy
Towards a world unknown,
Who calmly, as if incurious quite
On all at stake, can undertake
This plunge alone ?

Knows your soul a sphere, O journeying boy,
Our rude realms far above,
Whence with spacious vision you mark and
mete
This region of sin that you find you in,
But are not of ?

HONEYMOON-TIME AT AN INN

At the shiver of morning, a little before the
false dawn,
The moon was at the window-square,
Deedily brooding in deformed decay—
The curve hewn off her cheek as by an
adze ;
At the shiver of morning a little before the
false dawn
So the moon looked in there.

Her speechless eyeing reached across the
chamber,
Where lay two souls opprest,
One a white lady sighing, "Why am I
sad!"
To him who sighed back, "Sad, my Love,
am I!"
And speechlessly the old moon conned the
chamber,
And these two reft of rest.

While their large-pupilled vision swept the
scene there,
Nought seeming imminent,
Something fell sheer, and crashed, and from
the floor
Lay glittering at the pair with a shattered
gaze,
While their large-pupilled vision swept the
scene there,
And the many-eyed thing outleant.

With a start they saw that it was an old-time
pier-glass
Which had stood on the mantel near,
Its silvering blemished,—yes, as if worn
away
By the eyes of the countless dead who had
smirked at it
Ere these two ever knew that old-time pier-
glass
And its vague and vacant leer.

As he looked, his bride like a moth skimmed
forth, and kneeling
Quick, with quivering sighs,
Gathered the pieces under the moon's sly
ray,
Unwitting as an automaton what she
did;

Till he entreated, hasting to where she was
 kneeling,
 "Let it stay where it lies!"

"Long years of sorrow this means!" breathed
 the lady
 As they retired. "Alas!"
 And she lifted one pale hand across her
 eyes.
 "Don't trouble, Love; it's nothing," the
 bridegroom said.
 "Long years of sorrow for us!" murmured
 the lady,
 "Or ever this evil pass!"

And the Spirits Ironic laughed behind the
 wainscot,
 And the Spirits of Pity sighed.
 "It's good," said the Spirits Ironic, "to
 tickle their minds
 With a portent of their wedlock's after-
 grinds."
 And the Spirits of Pity sighed behind the
 wainscot,
 "It's a portent we cannot abide!"

"More, what shall happen to prove the truth
 of the portent?"

—“Oh ; in brief, they will fade till old,
And their loves grow numbed ere death, by
the cark of care.”

—“But nought see we that asks for por-
tents there?—

’Tis the lot of all.”—“Well, no less true is a
portent

That it fits all mortal mould.”

THE ROBIN

WHEN up aloft
I fly and fly,
I see in pools
The shining sky,
And a happy bird
Am I, am I!

When I descend
Towards their brink
I stand, and look,
And stoop, and drink,
And bathe my wings,
And chink and prink.

When winter frost
Makes earth as steel
I search and search
But find no meal,
And most unhappy
Then I feel.

THE ROBIN

But when it lasts,
And snows still fall,
I get to feel
No grief at all,
For I turn to a cold stiff
Feathery ball !

“ I ROSE AND WENT TO ROU'TOR
TOWN ”

(She, alone)

I ROSE and went to Rou'tor Town
With gaiety and good heart,
And ardour for the start,
That morning ere the moon was down
That lit me off to Rou'tor Town
With gaiety and good heart.

When sojourn soon at Rou'tor Town
Wrote sorrows on my face,
I strove that none should trace
The pale and gray, once pink and brown,
When sojourn soon at Rou'tor Town
Wrote sorrows on my face.

The evil wrought at Rou'tor Town
On him I'd loved so true
I cannot tell anew :
But nought can quench, but nought can drown
The evil wrought at Rou'tor Town
On him I'd loved so true !

THE NETTLES

THIS, then, is the grave of my son,
Whose heart she won! And nettles grow
Upon his mound; and she lives just below.

How he upbraided me, and left,
And our lives were cleft, because I said
She was hard, unfeeling, caring but to wed.

Well, to see this sight I have fared these
miles,
And her firelight smiles from her window
there,
Whom he left his mother to cherish with
tender care!

It is enough. I'll turn and go;
Yes, nettles grow where lone lies he,
Who spurned me for seeing what he could
not see.

IN A WAITING-ROOM

ON a morning sick as the day of doom
With the drizzling gray
Of an English May,
There were few in the railway waiting-room.
About its walls were framed and varnished
Pictures of liners, fly-blown, tarnished.
The table bore a Testament
For travellers' reading, if suchwise bent.

I read it on and on,
And, thronging the Gospel of Saint John,
Were figures—additions, multiplications—
By some one scrawled, with sundry emenda-
tions ;
Not scoffingly designed,
But with an absent mind,—
Plainly a bagman's counts of cost,
What he had profited, what lost ;
And whilst I wondered if there could have
been
Any particle of a soul
In that poor man at all,

To cypher rates of wage
 Upon that printed page,
 There joined in the charmless scene
 And stood over me and the scribbled book
 (To lend the hour's mean hue
 A smear of tragedy too)
 A soldier and wife, with haggard look
 Subdued to stone by strong endeavour ;
 And then I heard
 From a casual word
 They were parting as they believed for ever.

But next there came
 Like the eastern flame
 Of some high altar, children—a pair—
 Who laughed at the fly-blown pictures
 there.

‘ Here are the lovely ships that we,
 Mother, are by and by going to see!
 When we get there it's 'most sure to be fine,
 And the band will play, and the sun will
 shine!’

It rained on the skylight with a din
 As we waited and still no train came in ;
 But the words of the child in the squalid
 room
 Had spread a glory through the gloom.

THE CLOCK-WINDER

It is dark as a cave,
Or a vault in the nave
When the iron door
Is closed, and the floor
Of the church relaid
With trowel and spade.

But the parish-clerk
Cares not for the dark
As he winds in the tower
At a regular hour
The rheumatic clock,
Whose dilatory knock
You can hear when praying
At the day's decaying,
Or at any lone while
From a pew in the aisle.

Up, up from the ground
Around and around
In the turret stair
He clambers, to where
The wheelwork is,

THE CLOCK-WINDER

With its tick, click, whizz,
Reposefully measuring
Each day to its end
That mortal men spend
In sorrowing and pleasuring
Nightly thus does he climb
To the trackway of Time.

Him I followed one night
To this place without light,
And, ere I spoke, heard
Him say, word by word,
At the end of his winding,
The darkness unminding :—

“So I wipe out one more,
My Dear, of the sore
Sad days that still be,
Like a drying Dead Sea,
Between you and me !”

Who she was no man knew :
He had long borne him blind
To all womankind ;
And was ever one who
Kept his past out of view.

OLD EXCURSIONS

“WHAT’s the good of going to Ridgeway,
Cerne, or Sydling Mill,
Or to Yell’ham Hill,
Blithely bearing Casterbridge-way
As we used to do ?
She will no more climb up there,
Or be visible anywhere
In those haunts we knew.”

But to-night, while walking weary,
Near me seemed her shade,
Come as ’twere to upbraid
This my mood in deeming dreary
Scenes that used to please ;
And, if she did come to me,
Still solicitous, there may be
Good in going to these.

So, I’ll care to roam to Ridgeway,
Cerne, or Sydling Mill,
Or to Yell’ham Hill,

Blithely bearing Casterbridge-way
As we used to do,
Since her phasm may flit out there,
And may greet me anywhere
In those haunts we knew.

April 1913.

THE MASKED FACE

I FOUND me in a great surging space,
At either end a door,
And I said : " What is this giddy place,
With no firm-fixéd floor,
That I knew not of before ? "
" It is Life," said a mask-clad face.

I asked : " But how do I come here,
Who never wished to come ;
Can the light and air be made more clear,
The floor more quiet some,
And the doors set wide ? They numb
Fast-locked, and fill with fear "

The mask put on a bleak smile then,
And said, " O vassal-wight,
There once complained a goosequill pen
To the scribe of the Infinite
Of the words it had to write
Because they were past its ken."

IN A WHISPERING GALLERY

THAT whisper takes the voice
Of a Spirit, speaking to me,
Close, but invisible,
And throws me under a spell
At the kindling vision it brings ;
And for a moment I rejoice,
And believe in transcendent things
That would mould from this muddy earth
A spot for the splendid birth
Of everlasting lives,
Whereto no night arrives ;
And from this gaunt gallery
A tabernacle of worth
On this drab-aired afternoon,
When you can barely see
Across its hazed lacune
If opposite aught there be
Of fleshed humanity
Wherewith I may commune ;
Or if the voice so near
Be a soul's voice floating here.

THE SOMETHING THAT SAVED
HIM

It was when
Whirls of thick waters laved me
Again and again,
That something arose and saved me ;
Yea, it was then.

In that day
Unseeing the azure went I
On my way,
And to white winter bent I,
Knowing no May.

Reft of renown,
Under the night clouds beating
Up and down,
In my needfulness greeting
Cit and clown.

Long there had been
Much of a murky colour
In the scene,
Dull prospects meeting duller ;
Nought between.

194 SOMETHING THAT SAVED HIM

Last, there loomed
A closing-in blind alley,
Though there boomed
A feeble summons to rally
Where it gloomed.

The clock rang ;
The hour brought a hand to deliver ;
I upsprang,
And looked back at den, ditch and river,
And sang.

THE ENEMY'S PORTRAIT

HE saw the portrait of his enemy, offered
At auction in a street he journeyed nigh,
That enemy, now late dead, who in his life-
time

Had injured deeply him the passer-by.
"To get that picture, pleased be God, I'll try,
And utterly destroy it; and no more
Shall be inflicted on man's mortal eye
A countenance so sinister and sore!"

And so he bought the painting. Driving
homeward,
"The frame will come in useful," he declared,
"The rest is fuel." On his arrival, weary,
Asked what he bore with him, and how he
fared,
He said he had bid for a picture, though he
cared
For the frame only: on the morrow he
Would burn the canvas, which could well be
spared,
Seeing that it portrayed his enemy

196 THE ENEMY'S PORTRAIT

Next day some other duty found him busy :
The foe was laid his face against the wall ;
But on the next he set himself to loosen
The straining-strips. And then a casual call
Prevented his proceeding therewithal ;
And thus the picture waited, day by day,
Its owner's pleasure, like a wretched thrall,
Until a month and more had slipped away.

And then upon a morn he found it shifted,
Hung in a corner by a servitor.
“Why did you take on you to hang that
picture ?
You know it was the frame I bought it for.”
“It stood in the way of every visitor,
And I just hitched it there.”—“Well, it
must go :
I don't commemorate men whom I abhor.
Remind me 'tis to do. The frame I'll stow.”

But things become forgotten. In the shadow
Of the dark corner hung it by its string,
And there it stayed—once noticed by its
owner,
Who said, “Ah me—I must destroy that
thing !”
But when he died, there, none remembering,
It hung, till moved to prominence, as one
sees ;
And comers pause and say, examining,
“I thought they were the bitterest enemies?”

IMAGININGS

SHE saw herself a lady
With fifty frocks in wear,
And rolling wheels, and rooms the best,
And faithful maidens' care,
And open lawns and shady
For weathers warm or drear.

She found herself a striver,
All liberal gifts debarred,
With days of gloom, and movements stressed,
And early visions marred,
And got no man to wive her
But one whose lot was hard.

Yet in the moony night-time
She steals to stile and lea
During his heavy slumberous rest
When homecome wearily,
And dreams of some blest bright-time
She knows can never be.

ON THE DOORSTEP

THE rain imprinted the step's wet shine
With target-circles that quivered and crossed
As I was leaving this porch of mine ;
When from within there swelled and paused
 A song's sweet note ;
And back I turned, and thought,
 "Here I'll abide."

The step shines wet beneath the rain,
Which prints its circles as heretofore ;
I watch them from the porch again,
But no song-notes within the door
 Now call to me
To shun the dripping lea
 And forth I stride.

Jan. 1914.

SIGNS AND TOKENS

SAID the red-cloaked crone
In a whispered moan :

“The dead man was limp
When laid in his chest ;
Yea, limp ; and why
But to signify
That the grave will crimp
Ere next year’s sun
Yet another one
Of those in that house—
It may be the best—
For its endless drowse !”

Said the brown-shawled dame
To confirm the same :

“And the slothful flies
On the rotting fruit
Have been seen to wear
While crawling there
Crape scarves, by eyes
That were quick and acute ;

As did those that had pitched
On the cows by the pails,
And with flaps of their tails
Were far away switched."

Said the third in plaid;
Each word being weighed :

"And trotting does
In the park, in the lane,
And just outside
The shuttered pane,
Have also been heard—
Quick feet as light
As the feet of a sprite—
And the wise mind knows
What things may betide
When such has occurred."

Cried the black-craped fourth,
Cold faced as the north :

"O, though giving such
Some head-room, I smile
At your falterings
When noting those things
Round your domicile !
For what, what can touch
One whom, riven of all
That makes life gay,
No hints can appal
Of more takings away !"

PATHS OF FORMER TIME

No ; no ;
It must not be so :
They are the ways we do not go.

Still chew
The kine, and moo
In the meadows we used to wander through ;

Still purl
The rivulets and curl
Towards the weirs with a musical swirl ;

Haymakers
As in former years
Rake rolls into heaps that the pitchfork rears ;

Wheels crack
On the turfy track
The waggon pursues with its toppling pack.

202 PATHS OF FORMER TIME

“ Why then shun—
Since summer's not done—
All this because of the lack of one ? ”

Had you been
Sharer of that scene
You would not ask while it bites in keen

Why it is so
We can no more go
By the summer paths we used to know !

1913.

THE CLOCK OF THE YEARS

“A spirit passed before my face ; the hair of my
flesh stood up.”

AND the Spirit said,
“I can make the clock of the years go
backward,
But am loth to stop it where you will.”
And I cried, “Agreed
To that. Proceed :
It’s better than dead !”

He answered, “Peace” ;
And called her up—as last before me ;
Then younger, younger she freshed, to the
year
I first had known
Her woman-grown,
And I cried, “Cease !—

“ Thus far is good—
It is enough—let her stay thus always ! ”
But alas for me. He shook his head :

No stop was there ;
And she waned child-fair,
And to babyhood.

Still less in mien
To my great sorrow became she slowly,
And smalled till she was nought at all
In his checkless griff ;
And it was as if
She had never been.

“ Better,” I plained,
“ She were dead as before ! The memory of
her
Had lived in me ; but it cannot now ! ”
And coldly his voice :
“ It was your choice
To mar the ordained.”

1916.

AT THE PIANO

A WOMAN was playing,
A man looking on ;
And the mould of her face,
And her neck, and her hair,
Which the rays fell upon
Of the two candles there,
Sent him mentally straying
In some fancy-place
Where pain had no trace.

A cowed Apparition
Came pushing between ;
And her notes seemed to sigh,
And the lights to burn pale,
As a spell numbed the scene.
But the maid saw no bale,
And the man no monition ;
And Time laughed awry,
And the Phantom hid nigh.

THE SHADOW ON THE STONE

I WENT by the Druid stone
That broods in the garden white and lone,
And I stopped and looked at the shifting
shadows
That at some moments there are thrown
From the tree hard by with a rhythmic
swing,
And they shaped in my imagining
To the shade that a well-known head and
shoulders
Threw there when she was gardening.

I thought her behind my back,
Yea, her I long had learned to lack,
And I said : "I am sure you are standing
behind me,
Though how do you get into this old
track?"
And there was no sound but the fall of a
leaf
As a sad response ; and to keep down grief
I would not turn my head to discover
That there was nothing in my belief.

SHADOW ON THE STONE 207

Yet I wanted to look and see
That nobody stood at the back of me ;
But I thought once more : "Nay, I'll not
unvision
A shape which, somehow, there may be."
So I went on softly from the glade,
And left her behind me throwing her shade,
As she were indeed an apparition—
My head unturned lest my dream should
fade.

Begun 1913 : finished 1916.

IN THE GARDEN

(M. H.)

WE waited for the sun
To break its cloudy prison
(For day was not yet done,
And night still unbegun)
Leaning by the dial.

After many a trial—
We all silent there—
It burst as new-arisen,
Shading its finger where
Time travelled at that minute.

Little saw we in it,
But this much I know,
Of lookers on that shade,
Her towards whom it made
Soonest had to go.

1915.

THE TREE AND THE LADY

I HAVE done all I could
For that lady I knew! Through the heats I
 have shaded her,
Drawn to her songsters when summer has
 jaded her,
Home from the heath or the wood.

At the mirth-time of May,
When my shadow first lured her, I'd donned
 my new bravery
Of greenth : 'twas my all. Now I shiver in
 slavery,
Icicles grieving me gray.

Plumed to every twig's end
I could tempt her chair under me. Much did
 I treasure her
During those days she had nothing to pleasure
 her ;
Mutely she used me as friend.

210 THE TREE AND THE LADY

I'm a skeleton now,
And she's gone, craving warmth. The rime
sticks like a skin to me ;
Through me Arcturus peers ; Nor'lights shoot
into me ;
Gone is she, scorning my bough !

AN UPBRAIDING

Now I am dead you sing to me
The songs we used to know,
But while I lived you had no wish
Or care for doing so.

Now I am dead you come to me
In the moonlight, comfortless ;
Ah, what would I have given alive
To win such tenderness !

When you are dead, and stand to me
Not differenced, as now,
But like again, will you be cold
As when we lived, or how ?

THE YOUNG GLASS-STAINER

“THESE Gothic windows, how they wear me
out
With cusp and foil, and nothing straight or
square,
Crude colours, leaden borders roundabout,
And fitting in Peter here, and Matthew
there!

“What a vocation! Here do I draw now
The abnormal, loving the Hellenic norm;
Martha I paint, and dream of Hera's brow,
Mary, and think of Aphrodite's form.”

Nov. 1893.

LOOKING AT A PICTURE ON
AN ANNIVERSARY

BUT don't you know it, my dear,
Don't you know it,
That this day of the year
(What rainbow-rays embow it !)
We met, strangers confessed,
But parted—blest ?

Though at this query, my dear,
There in your frame
Unmoved you still appear,
You must be thinking the same,
But keep that look demure
Just to allure.

And now at length a trace
I surely vision
Upon that wistful face
Of old-time recognition,
Smiling forth, " Yes, as you say,
It is the day."

For this one phase of you
 Now left on earth
This great date must endue
With pulsings of rebirth?—
I see them vitalize
 Those two deep eyes!

But if this face I con
 Does not declare
Consciousness living on
Still in it, little I care
To live myself, my dear,
 Lone-labouring here!

Spring 1913.

THE CHOIRMASTER'S BURIAL

HE often would ask us
That, when he died,
After playing so many
To their last rest,
If out of us any
Should here abide,
And it would not task us,
We would with our lutes
Play over him
By his grave-brim
The psalm he liked best—
The one whose sense suits
“Mount Ephraim”—
And perhaps we should seem
To him, in Death's dream,
Like the seraphim.

As soon as I knew
That his spirit was gone
I thought this his due,
And spoke thereupon.

“I think,” said the vicar,
“A read service quicker
Than viols out-of-doors
In these frosts and hoars.
That old-fashioned way
Requires a fine day,
And it seems to me
It had better not be.”

Hence, that afternoon,
Though never knew he
That his wish could not be,
To get through it faster
They buried the master
Without any tune.

But 'twas said that, when
At the dead of next night
The vicar looked out,
There struck on his ken
Thronged roundabout,
Where the frost was graying
The headstoned grass,
A band all in white
Like the saints in church-glass,
Singing and playing
The ancient stave
By the choirmaster's grave.

Such the tenor man told
When he had grown old.

THE MAN WHO FORGOT

At a lonely cross where bye-roads met
I sat upon a gate ;
I saw the sun decline and set,
And still was fain to wait.

A trotting boy passed up the way
And roused me from my thought ;
I called to him, and showed where lay
A spot I shyly sought.

“ A summer-house fair stands hidden where
You see the moonlight thrown ;
Go, tell me if within it there
A lady sits alone.”

He half demurred, but took the track,
And silence held the scene ;
I saw his figure rambling back ;
I asked him if he had been.

218 THE MAN WHO FORGOT

“I went just where you said, but found
No summer-house was there :
Beyond the slope 'tis all bare ground ;
Nothing stands anywhere.

“A man asked what my brains were worth ;
The house, he said, grew rotten,
And was pulled down before my birth,
And is almost forgotten !”

My right mind woke, and I stood dumb ;
Forty years' frost and flower
Had fled since I'd used to come
To meet her in that bower.

WHILE DRAWING IN A CHURCH-
YARD

"It is sad that so many of worth,
Still in the flesh," sighed the yew,
"Misjudge their lot whom kindly earth
Secludes from view.

"They ride their diurnal round
Each day-span's sum of hours
In peerless ease, without jolt or bound
Or ache like ours.

"If the living could but hear
What is heard by my roots as they creep
Round the restful flock, and the things said
there,
No one would weep."

" 'Now set among the wise,'
They say : 'Enlarged in scope,
That no god trumpet us to rise
We truly hope.' "

I listened to his strange tale
In the mood that stillness brings,
And I grew to accept as the day wore pale
That show of things.

“FOR LIFE I HAD NEVER CARED
GREATLY”

FOR Life I had never cared greatly,
As worth a man's while ;
Peradventures unsought,
Peradventures that finished in nought,
Had kept me from youth and through man-
hood till lately
Unwon by its style.

In earliest years—why I know not—
I viewed it askance ;
Conditions of doubt,
Conditions that leaked slowly out,
May haply have bent me to stand and to
show not
Much zest for its dance.

With symphonies soft and sweet colour
It courted me then,
Till evasions seemed wrong,

Till evasions gave in to its song,
And I warmed, until living aloofly loomed
duller
Than life among men.

Anew I found nought to set eyes on,
When, lifting its hand,
It uncloaked a star,
Uncloaked it from fog-damps afar,
And showed its beams burning from pole to
horizon
As bright as a brand.

And so, the rough highway forgetting,
I pace hill and dale
Regarding the sky,
Regarding the vision on high,
And thus re-illumed have no humour for
letting
My pilgrimage fail.

POEMS OF WAR AND
PATRIOTISM

HIS COUNTRY

I JOURNEYED from my native spot
 Across the south sea shine,
And found that people in hall and cot
Laboured and suffered each his lot
 Even as I did mine.

He travels
southward,
and looks
around ;

Thus noting them in meads and marts
 It did not seem to me
That my dear country with its hearts,
Minds, yearnings, worse and better parts
 Had ended with the sea.

and cannot
discover the
boundary

I further and further went anon,
 As such I still surveyed,
And further yet—yea, on and on,
And all the men I looked upon
 Had heart-strings fellow-made.

of his
native
country ;

I traced the whole terrestrial round,
 Homing the other side ;
Then said I, "What is there to bound
My denizenship ? It seems I have found
 Its scope to be world-wide."

or where
his duties to
his fellow-
creatures end ;

nor who
are his
enemies.

I asked me : " Whom have I to fight,
And whom have I to dare,
And whom to weaken, crush, and blight ?
My country seems to have kept in sight
On my way everywhere."

1913.

ENGLAND TO GERMANY, IN 1914

“O ENGLAND, may God punish thee !”

—Is it that Teuton genius flowers

Only to breathe malignity

Upon its friend of earlier hours ?

—We have eaten your bread, you have eaten
ours,

We have loved your burgs, your pines' green
moan,

Fair Rhine-stream, and its storied towers ;

Your shining souls of deathless dowers

Have won us as they were our own :

We have nursed no dreams to shed your
blood,

We have matched your might not ran-
corously,

Save a flushed few whose blatant mood

You heard and marked as well as we

To tongue not in their country's key ;

But yet you cry with face aflame,

“O England, may God punish thee !”

And foul in onward history,

And present sight, your ancient name.

Autumn 1914.

ON THE BELGIAN EXPATRIATION

I DREAMT that people from the Land of
Chimes

Arrived one autumn morning with their bells,
To hoist them on the towers and citadels
Of my own country, that the musical rhymes

Rung by them into space at meted times
Amid the market's daily stir and stress,
And the night's empty star-lit silentness,
Might solace souls of this and kindred climes.

Then I awoke ; and lo, before me stood
The visioned ones, but pale and full of fear ;
From Bruges they came, and Antwerp, and
Ostend,

No carillons in their train. Foes of mad
mood
Had shattered these to shards amid the gear
Of ravaged roof, and smouldering gable-end.

October 18, 1914.

AN APPEAL TO AMERICA
ON BEHALF OF THE BELGIAN
DESTITUTE

SEVEN millions stand
Emaciate, in that ancient Delta-land :—
We here, full-charged with our own maimed
and dead,
And coiled in throbbing conflicts slow and
sore,
Can poorly soothe these ails unmerited
Of souls forlorn upon the facing shore !—
Where naked, gaunt, in endless band on band
Seven millions stand.

No man can say
To your great country that, with scant delay,
You must, perforce, ease them in their loud
need :
We know that nearer first your duty lies ;
But—is it much to ask that you let plead
Your lovingkindness with you—woeing-
wise—
Albeit that aught you owe, and must repay,
No man can say ?

December 1914.

THE PITY OF IT

I WALKED in loamy Wessex lanes, afar
From rail-track and from highway, and I
heard
In field and farmstead many an ancient word
Of local lineage like "Thu bist," "Er war,"
"Ich woll," "Er sholl," and by-talk similar,
Nigh as they speak who in this month's moon
gird
At England's very loins, thereunto spurred
By gangs whose glory threats and slaughters
are.

Then seemed a Heart crying : " Whosoever
they be
At root and bottom of this, who flung this
flame
Between kin folk kin tongued even as are we,
" Sinister, ugly, lurid, be their fame ;
May their familiars grow to shun their name,
And their breed perish everlastingly."

April 1915.

IN TIME OF WARS AND TUMULTS

“WOULD that I'd not drawn breath here!”
 some one said,
“To stalk upon this stage of evil deeds,
Where purposelessly month by month proceeds
A play so sorely shaped and blood-bespread.”

Yet had his spark not quickened, but lain dead
To the gross spectacles of this our day,
And never put on the proffered cloak of clay,
He had but known not things now manifested;

Life would have swirled the same. Morns
 would have dawned
On the uprooting by the night-gun's stroke
Of what the yester noonshine brought to
 flower;

Brown martial brows in dying throes have
 wanned
Despite his absence; hearts no fewer been
 broke
By Empery's insatiate lust of power.

1915.

IN TIME OF
"THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"¹

I

ONLY a man harrowing clods
In a slow silent walk
With an old horse that stumbles and nods
Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame
From the heaps of couch-grass ;
Yet this will go onward the same
Though Dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight
Come whispering by :
War's annals will cloud into night
Ere their story die.

1915.

¹ Jer. li. 20.

CRY OF THE HOMELESS

AFTER THE PRUSSIAN INVASION OF BELGIUM

“INSTIGATOR of the ruin—
Whichsoever thou mayst be
Of the masterful of Europe
That contrived our misery—
Hear the wormwood-warded greeting
From each city, shore, and lea
Of thy victims :
“Conqueror, all hail to thee !”

“Yea : ‘All hail !’ we grimly shout thee
That wast author, fount, and head
Of these wounds, whoever proven
When our times are throughly read.
‘May thy loved be slighted, blighted,
And forsaken,’ be it said
By thy victims,
‘And thy children beg their bread !’

“Nay : a richer malediction !—
Rather let this thing befall

234 CRY OF THE HOMELESS

In time's hurling and unfurling
On the night when comes thy call ;
That compassion dew thy pillow
And bedrench thy senses all
For thy victims,
Till death dark thee with his pall."

August 1915.

BEFORE MARCHING AND AFTER

(*In Memoriam F. W. G.*)

ORION swung southward aslant
Where the starved Egdon pine-trees had
thinned,
The Pleiads aloft seemed to pant
With the heather that twitched in the
wind ;
But he looked on indifferent to sights such as
these,
Unswayed by love, friendship, home joy or
home sorrow,
And wondered to what he would march on
the morrow.

The crazed household-clock with its
whirr
Rang midnight within as he stood,
He heard the low sighing of her
Who had striven from his birth for his
good ;

236 MARCHING AND AFTER

But he still only asked the spring starlight,
the breeze,
What great thing or small thing his history
would borrow
From that Game with Death he would play
on the morrow.

When the heath wore the robe of late
summer,
And the fuchsia-bells, hot in the sun,
Hung red by the door, a quick comer
Brought tidings that marching was done
For him who had joined in that game over-
seas
Where Death stood to win, though his name
was to borrow
A brightness therefrom not to fade on the
morrow.

September 1915.

“OFTEN WHEN WARRING”

OFTEN when warring for he wist not what,
An enemy-soldier, passing by one weak,
Has tendered water, wiped the burning cheek,
And cooled the lips so black and clammed
and hot ;

Then gone his way, and maybe quite forgot
The deed of grace amid the roar and reek ;
Yet larger vision than loud arms bespeak
He there has reached, although he has known
it not.

For natural mindsight, triumphing in the act
Over the throes of artificial rage,
Has thuswise muffled victory's peal of pride,
Rended to ribands policy's specious page
That deals but with evasion, code, and pact,
And war's apology wholly stultified.

1915.

THEN AND NOW

WHEN battles were fought
With a chivalrous sense of Should and Ought,
In spirit men said,
“End we quick or dead,
Honour is some reward !
Let us fight fair—for our own best or worst ;
So, Gentlemen of the Guard,
Fire first !”

In the open they stood,
Man to man in his knightlihood :
They would not deign
To profit by a stain
On the honourable rules,
Knowing that practise perfidy no man durst
Who in the heroic schools
Was nurst.

But now, behold, what
Is warfare wherein honour is not !
Rama laments
Its dead innocents :

Herod breathes : "Sly slaughter
 Shall rule! Let us, by modes once called
 accurst,
 Overhead, under water,
 Stab first."

1915.

A CALL TO NATIONAL SERVICE

UP and be doing, all who have a hand
To lift, a back to bend. It must not be
In times like these that vaguely linger we
To air our vaunts and hopes; and leave our
land

Untended as a wild of weeds and sand.
—Say, then, “I come!” and go, O women
and men
Of palace, ploughshare, easel, counter, pen;
That scareless, scathless, England still may
stand.

Would years but let me stir as once I stirred
At many a dawn to take the forward track,
And with a stride plunged on to enterprize,

I now would speed like yester wind that
whirred
Through yielding pines; and serve with
never a slack,
So loud for promptness all around outcries!

March 1917.

THE DEAD AND THE LIVING
ONE

THE dead woman lay in her first night's
grave,
And twilight fell from the clouds' concave,
And those she had asked to forgive forgave.

The woman passing came to a pause
By the heaped white shapes of wreath and
cross,
And looked upon where the other was.

And as she mused there thus spoke she :
" Never your countenance did I see,
But you've been a good good friend to me ! "

Rose a plaintive voice from the sod below :
" O woman whose accents I do not know,
What is it that makes you approve me so ? "

" O dead one; ere my soldier went,
I heard him saying, with warm intent,
To his friend, when won by your blandishment :

242 THE DEAD AND THE LIVING

“ ‘ I would change for that lass here and now !
And if I return I may break my vow
To my present Love, and contrive somehow

“ ‘ To call my own this new-found pearl,
Whose eyes have the light, whose lips the
curl,
I always have looked for in a girl ! ’

“ —And this is why that by ceasing to be—
Though never your countenance did I see—
You prove you a good good friend to me ;

“ And I pray each hour for your soul’s repose
In gratitude for your joining those
No lover will clasp when his campaigns close.”

Away she turned, when arose to her eye
A martial phantom of gory dye,
That said, with a thin and far-off sigh :

“ O sweetheart, neither shall I clasp you,
For the foe this day has pierced me through,
And sent me to where she is. Adieu !—

“ And forget not when the night-wind’s
whine
Calls over this turf where her limbs decline,
That it travels on to lament by mine.”

THE DEAD AND THE LIVING 243

There was a cry by the white-flowered mound,
There was a laugh from underground,
There was a deeper gloom around.

1915.

A NEW YEAR'S EVE IN WAR
TIME

I

PHANTASMAL fears,
And the flap of the flame,
And the throb of the clock,
And a loosened slate,
And the blind night's drone,
Which tiredly the spectral pines intone!

II

And the blood in my ears
Strumming always the same,
And the gable-cock
With its fitful grate,
And myself, alone.

III

The twelfth hour nears
Hand-hid, as in shame ;
I undo the lock,
And listen, and wait
For the Young Unknown.

IV

In the dark there careers—
As if Death astride came
To numb all with his knock—
A horse at mad rate
Over rut and stone.

V

No figure appears,
No call of my name,
No sound but "Tic-toc"
Without check. Past the gate
It clatters—is gone.

VI

What rider it bears
There is none to proclaim ;
And the Old Year has struck,
And, scarce animate,
The New makes moan.

VII

Maybe that "More Tears!—
More Famine and Flame—
More Severance and Shock!"
Is the order from Fate
That the Rider speeds on
To pale Europe ; and tiredly the pines intone.

1915-1916.

“I MET A MAN”

I MET a man when night was nigh,
Who said, with shining face and eye
Like Moses' after Sinai:—

“I have seen the Moulder of Monarchies,
Realms, peoples, plains and hills,
Sitting upon the sunlit seas!—
And, as He sat, soliloquies
Fell from Him like an antiphonic breeze
That pricks the waves to thrills.

“Meseemed that of the maimed and dead
Mown down upon the globe,—
Their plenteous blooms of promise shed
Ere fruiting-time—His words were said,
Sitting against the western web of red
Wrapt in His crimson robe.

“And I could catch them now and then :
—‘Why let these gambling clans
Of human Cockers, pit liege men
From mart and city, dale and glen,
In death-máins, but to swell and swell again
Their swollen All-Empery plans,

“When a mere nod (if my malign
 Compeer but passive keep)
 Would mend that old mistake of mine
 I made with Saul, and ever consign
 All Lords of War whose sanctuaries enshrine
 Liberticide, to sleep ?

“With violence the lands are spread
 Even as in Israel’s day,
 And it repenteth me I bred
 Chartered armipotents lust-led
 To feuds. . . . Yea, grieves my heart, as
 then I said,
 To see their evil way !’

—“The utterance grew, and flapped like
 flame,
 And further speech I feared ;
 But no Celestial tongued acclaim,
 And no huzzas from earthlings came,
 And the heavens mutely masked as ’twere in
 shame
 Till daylight disappeared.”

Thus ended he as night rode high—
 The man of shining face and eye,
 Like Moses’ after Sinai.

"I LOOKED UP FROM MY
WRITING"

I LOOKED up from my writing,
And gave a start to see,
As if rapt in my inditing,
The moon's full gaze on me.

Her meditative misty head
Was spectral in its air,
And I involuntarily said,
"What are you doing there?"

"Oh, I've been scanning pond and hole
And waterway hereabout
For the body of one with a sunken soul
Who has put his life-light out.

"Did you hear his frenzied tattle?
It was sorrow for his son
Who is slain in brutish battle,
Though he has injured none.

“ And now I am curious to look
 Into the blinkered mind
Of one who wants to write a book
 In a world of such a kind.”

Her temper overwrought me,
 And I edged to shun her view,
For I felt assured she thought me
 One who should drown him too.

THE COMING OF THE END

It was a quiet day
The morning after the storm
And the birds were singing
The night was still and cold
The sun was in the sky

FINALE

The day was bright and clear
With the sun in the sky
Oh, how the birds were singing
It was a quiet day

It was a quiet day
The birds were singing
The sun was in the sky
Oh, how the birds were singing
It was a quiet day

It was a quiet day
The birds were singing
The sun was in the sky
Oh, how the birds were singing
It was a quiet day

THE COMING OF THE END

How it came to an end !
The meeting afar from the crowd,
And the love-looks and laughers unpenned
The parting when much was avowed,
How it came to an end !

It came to an end ;
Yes, the outgazing over the stream,
With the sun on each serpentine bend,
Or, later, the luring moon-gleam ;
It came to an end.

It came to an end,
The housebuilding, furnishing, planting,
As if there were ages to spend
In welcoming, feasting, and jaunting ;
It came to an end.

It came to an end,
That journey of one day a week :
(" It always goes on," said a friend,
" Just the same in bright weathers or bleak ;")
But it came to an end.

254 THE COMING OF THE END

“ *How* will come to an end
This orbit so smoothly begun,
Unless some convulsion attend ? ”
I often said. “ What will be done
When it comes to an end ? ”

Well, it came to an end
Quite silently—stopped without jerk ;
Better close no prevision could lend ;
Working out as One planned it should work
Ere it came to an end.

AFTERWARDS

WHEN the Present has latched its postern
behind my tremulous stay,
And the May month flaps its glad green
leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the
neighbours say,
“He was a man who used to notice such
things”?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's
soundless blink,
The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the
shades to alight
Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer
may think,
“To him this must have been a familiar
sight.”

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness,
mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over
the lawn,

One may say, "He strove that such innocent
creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them ; and now
he is gone" ?

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at
last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that
winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet
my face no more,
"He was one who had an eye for such
mysteries" ?

And will any say when my bell of quittance
is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its
outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's
boom,
"He hears it not now, but used to notice
such things" ?

THE END

One day she said, "His name that such innocent
 creatures should come to no harm,
 But he could do little for them; and now
 as 'twere gone!"

It were better that I have been killed, or
 had they stand at the door,

Watching the fall-misted heavens that
 show me now,

Will this thought rise on those who will meet
 my feet no more.

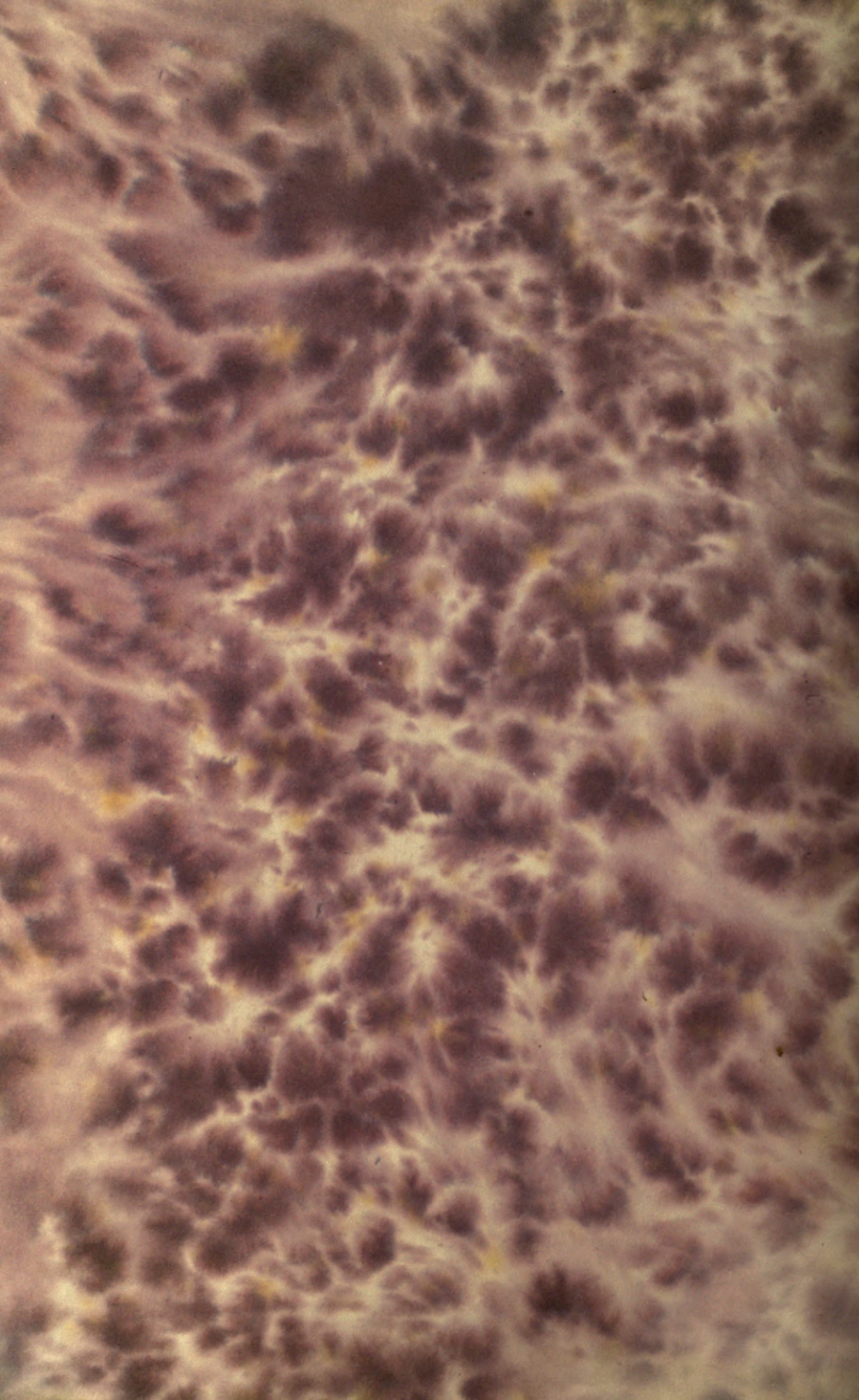
He was not who had an eye for such
 a creature?"

And will my eye when my bell of justice
 is heard in the gloom,

And a coming breeze's note a pause in its
 murmurings,

Did they not sigh as they were a new bell's
 boom,

"He heard it not now, but was no longer
 a creature?"



UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 112 003 9

