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SCHOOL**

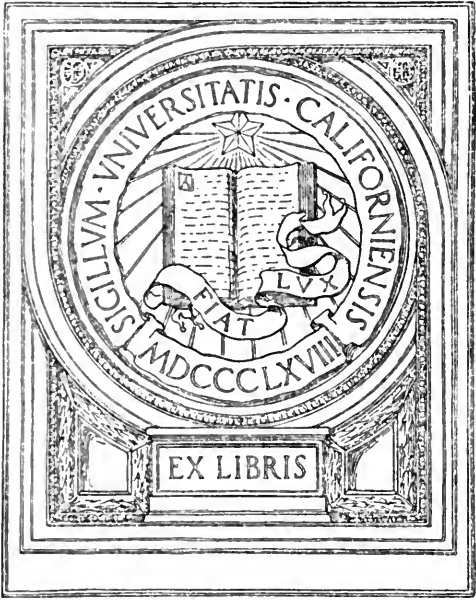
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**HARCOURT, BRACE
AND HOWE**

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THE LITTLE SCHOOL

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

POETRY

1899. THE VINEDRESSER AND OTHER
POEMS

1901. APHRODITE AGAINST ARTEMIS

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BLAKE)

1915. HARK TO THESE THREE

THE LITTLE SCHOOL
BY
T STURGE MOORE

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES
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NEW YORK
HARCOURT, BRACE AND HOWE

1920

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TO DAN AND RIETTE

This enlarged edition of "The Little School" is dedicated, without prejudice to the original inscription, to

SYBIL PYE

the mistress of the little school, who first wished the poems made for, and brought them home to, children.

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THE LITTLE SCHOOL

BEAUTIFUL MEALS

How nice it is to eat !
All creatures love it so
That they who first did spread,
Ere breaking bread,
A cloth like level snow,
Were right, I know.

And they were wise and sweet
Who, glad that meats taste good,
Used speech in an arch style,
And oft would smile
To raise the cheerful mood,
While at their food.

And those who first, so neat,
Placed fork and knife quite straight,
The glass on the right hand ;
And all, as planned,
Each day set round the plate,—
Be their praise great !

For then, their hearts being light,
They plucked hedge-posies bright—
Flowers who, their scent being sweet,
Give nose and eye a treat :
'Twas they, my heart can tell,
Not eating fast but well,
Who wove the spell
Which finds me every day,
And makes each meal-time gay ;
I know 'twas they.

TO COOK

Like mown hay tossed in a high wind,—
As a calf careers round a cow,—
Like bags that with lavender I lined
In the linen presses to stow,—
So buoyant my glee,—
So joyous I bound and so free,—
So sweet and delicious the smell,
And the taste even so sweet as well,
That you, that you, that you give to me
With your plum puddings, dear old cook :
I'll have your praise sung in a book !

MERRY WIND

The sun makes dust on the highways :
The wind pokes fun at the geese ;
With feathers blown all sideways
In walking they find no ease.

Let them spread wings, in it rushes,
As though to bulge out a sail ;
Away they're blown on the bushes
To wreck like yawls in a gale.

WIND'S WORK

Kate rose up early as fresh as a lark,
Almost in time to see vanish the dark ;
Jack rather later, bouncing from bed,
Saw fade on the dawn's cheek the last flush of red :
Yet who knows
When the wind rose ?

Kate went to watch the new lambs at their play
And stroke the white calf born yesterday ;
Jack sought the woods where trees grow tall
As who would learn to swarm them all :
Yet who knows
Where the wind goes ?

Kate has sown candy-tuft, lupins and peas,
Carnations, forget-me-not and heart's-ease ;
Jack has sown cherry-pie, marigold,
Love-that-lies-bleeding and snap-dragons bold ;
But who knows
What the wind sows ?

Kate knows a thing or two useful at home,
Darns like a fairy, and churns like a gnome ;
Jack is a wise man at shaping a stick,
Once he's in the saddle the pony may kick.
But hark to the wind how it blows !
None comes, none goes,
None reaps or mows,
No friends turn foes,
No hedge bears sloes,
And no cock crows,
But the wind knows !

WORDS FOR THE WIND

With the waves for hounds,
With the clouds for hawks,
I hunt the fragile ships
And scour the dry-land's dips ;
And my hale voice sounds
When a cavern talks.—
Quick, children, hold your petticoats down,
Or with heads in their folds you will sail through
the town.

When I lie on the earth
For leagues flowers shake
With joy ; I sit up, and trees
Pulse as my heart decrees ;
And new heavens have birth
When I sleep on a lake.—
Quick, children, hold your petticoats down,
Or with heads in their folds you will sail through
the town.

LUBBER BREEZE

The four sails of the mill
Like stocks stand still ;
Their lantern-length is white
On blue more bright.

Unruffled is the mead
Where lambkins feed,
And sheep and cattle browse,
And donkeys drowse.

Never the least breeze will
The wet thumb chill
That the anxious miller lifts,
Till the vane shifts.

The breeze in the great flour-bin
Is snug tucked in ;
The lubber, while rats thieve,
Laughs in his sleeve.

LEAF-LAND

High, high, high,
In the sky
The tree's great head
Far out-spread
Holds a world for fairies,
Joy for ever varies.

Happier none
Beneath the sun !
They in and out
Till leaves e'en shout,
Just as hills do after
Children's louder laughter.

As I stare
Right up there,
I can see
Come to me
Down the leafy staircase,
Such a peeping fair face

That I feel
So little real,
Airs might shift,
Yea, and lift
Me where bird-wing fanning
Would be nigh unmanning.

High, high, high,
In the sky,
'Mid the spread
Twigs I'd thread,
Like the little fairies
Where no jot of care is.

THE FAUN

A householder is Goathooves ;
He dances in his house :
Its pillars are tall timber ;
Its rafters, lichened boughs,
Support a thatch of live green leaves ;
And dead leaves cake up into mats ;
Moss grows him carpets of deep pile.
He has no coats, he has no hats,
Nor wardrobe, nor pantry,
No table, no chair,
Nor bedstead, nor basin,
For he can wash where
The stream runs clear above the stones :
And the best that he owns
Is a heart that warms a true neighbour
For folk in feathers—folk in fur,
But dreads to meet with grown-up men,
Though it have a weakness for some children.

THREE THINGS

Three things are there made for fun,
And one a frolic breeze is ;
See it over wide fields run !
Ha, your hair is down !
Ho, there goes my hat !
And neither meant to tease is :
There's fun in this, there's fun in that ;
How useless at the wind to frown !

Three things are there meant for frisks ;
And one a field of hay is ;
Fill the air with scented whisks !
Ha, you're buried, child !
Ho, where am I now ?
All's fun that done in play is ;
Both this and that come right somehow
Though all a field with joy go wild.

Three things are there planned for romps
And one a dancing sea is ;
When they forget their foaming pomps,
Ha, what rogues the waves are !
Ho, I'm off my feet !
The sea-folk know what glee is ;
They all have tempers sweet,
Are laughers loud as caves are,
Are rompers hard to beat.
Sea-children let us be to-day
And roll and gambol in the spray,
Till little merlads and little mermaids
Leave their under-sea lawns and their sea-weed
glades
And come to join our play ;
They happy as we, we happy as they
The live-long day.

A SONG OF CLEANNESS

Sing gladly when you wash, and start
A sweet song when you take your bath :
Clean hands they make a lightsome heart,
And clean feet tread a happy path.

Into the trembling water dip
With soiled and clammy skin,
Soon from the tossing bath to skip
Clean as a new pin.

Life in you, as in a lamb, is
Keen to gambol joyously :
Towel toga and fringed chlamys,
In place of frock and suit, leave free
Limbs as for small Greek and Roman ;
Be you like them then, if no man
Else to-day so wise is found ;
Frolic with grace, and let your voices,
Timed and tuned, avoid mere noises ;
Riot not, but dance and sing :
“ If tall trees above the ground
“ Grow green in spring,
“ Deep, oh deep, their roots have wound
“ Groping where no light is found.
“ Strike deep, strike deep, like a root ;
“ Wisdom, strike deep through the heart !
“ Your clean foot wants not for a boot ;
“ Clean hands, once joined, need never part.”

From laughter rarely cease for long,
Yet never over loudly laugh ;
Then gaily singing wash ! A song,
Oh, sing one gladly in your bath !

THE MOUSE IN THE BEECHES

A little brown wood-mouse
His ample fur-cloak dons ;
Then ties his comforter,
Wool white as down of swans ;
And as he left the house,
To see his tail was there,
He turned his head ;
Then off he sped,
To look if beech nuts were
Silver or red.

THE SQUIRREL

O squirrel, would I were as you !
As nimble on a bough, as quick
To listen,—re-assured, to flick
My tail and bound across and through
The leafy coverts, twig-supported,
'Mid rafters of some great tree's roof
Where sun soaks through the rain-drop proof,
And heavy body never sported.

Winged birds are there, and you, the red
Small playful scurrier up the bark,
Whose home is in some hollow dark
But soft and warm as any bed.
Have after you, you wingless flitter !
Race me into the topmost boughs !
What need have we for floors ? a house
Without a plank for us were fitter !

Teach me to swarm and climb and be
A sailor such as those who vie
—On mast and rigging dizzy high—
With you in nimbleness and glee !
For though a loud wind toss these branches
A ship is handled worse by storms :
Then to his work the sailor warms ;
From spar to rope he daring launches.

NEW CLOTHES

O all ye meadows fair,
And soft sunshiny banks,
Where daisies without number—where
Pale cowslips range their comely ranks,
And buttercups with prouder yellow
Think each himself the finest fellow ;
Since I put on new clothes to-day,
Call, call me forth to you ;
For I would bear myself the way
Your trimmest blossoms do.

Ye nobly peopled woods,
And stately throngéd dells !
Moods of grand oak and beech-tree—moods
Of lofty pines whose music swells
To the hale wind's repeated pleasure,
When all their tops keep time and measure—
Are moods that I would learn to share ;
Then call me forth, ye trees,
Teach me grave bows and curtseys fair
As those ye give the breeze.

SHOES AND STOCKINGS OFF

Bare feet, bare feet,
Lovers of the dew ;
Pleased by the wet moss greatly,
Pleased by the shell-strewn shore,
Pleased by the lawn grass too
Yet
More by a golden floor.

Bare feet, bare feet,
Every day bless you !
Walk near the fountains stately,
Walk in the pebbled stream,
Walk 'neath the calm waves blue
And
Dream there a mermaid's dream.

Oh, fare sweet, my bare feet
Like lovers two and two !
Lead me for ever where there
Of shoes is known no need ;
For I have ne'er met care there
Where I with you might speed ;
Lead me because I love you,
Love you, my sweet bare feet,—
Then still I'll sing above you
And you shall still fare sweet.

LULLABY I.

Laugh, laugh,
Laugh gently though,—
For leaves do so,
When the great boughs, to and fro,
Cradle the birds on the tops of the trees,—
Gently they laugh for the love of these.

Sleep, sleep,
Sleep lightly though,—
For birds do so,
Rocked by great boughs to and fro ;
With wind in their feathers, their dreams have
wings
And they visit the gardens of fabulous kings.

LULLABY II.

Stripped thee when thou hast and girt
Thy clean night-shirt,
Leap into thy soft snug bed ;
Lay down thy head ;
Sleep, and in thy white cot be
A picture for the stars to see.

Cling not to the game that's dead ;
Be glad instead,
After all thy falls and frowns,
That silence drowns
All that any star might see
To make such clear light sad for thee.

Sleep, sleep ;
Down, down,
Through silence good and deep,
Down, down ;
Sink as through a well, each trace
Or of spite, of sulk or frown,
Dying out from thy still face
Till asleep thou dreaming lie,—
A sight to charm the moon on high
And hold her longer in the sky.

PICTURE FOLK

Little rogues in pictures,
Rogues with nothing on,
Naked, nimble, elfin,
Quickly come and gone ;
Whether ye have wings or no
Easy as a thought you go
Through the air and over sea,
Or, in and round majestic tree,
Circle like some giddy bee.

Little rogues in pictures,
How did you come there,
Naked, nimble, elfin,
Blithe as sunny air ?
Whether now you swim or fly
Swallow-like about the sky,
Is it all the same to you
That I cannot, rustling through
Green boughs upward, reach the blue ?

Little rogues in pictures,
Lived I where you play,
Freed from clothes and elfin,
Airy, light and gay,
Though an hundred friends I had,
I should want one who was clad
In clothes and walked in boots, I should ;
And, in summer field or wood,
I should swoop down where he passed
And hold and kiss him very fast,
For fear that he should be afraid
Before of him my friend were made
And we upon the earth had played.

WINGS

That man who wishes not for wings
Must be the slave of care ;
For birds that have them move so well
And softly through the air :
They venture far into the sky,
If not so far as thoughts or angels fly.

Feather from under feather springs,
All open like a fan ;
Our eyes upon their beauty dwell,
And marvel at the plan
By which things made for use so rare
Are powerful and delicate and fair.

When callow brood doth rest
Against a feathered mother's breast,
Beneath the shadow of her wings,
None seem so close at home as they,
Nor is love felt a cosier way ;
Their mother is their home ! Lark sings,
And lark may sing ; but not so take
The heart by storm as hen can take
When, hawk in the sky,
She is brave for her fledglings' sake !
Swallow soars, and swallow may soar on high
To the top of the sky ;
The eagle is strong, the ostrich fleet ;
Let them glory in prowess. Ere
They learned to conquer air and space
With ease, velocity and grace,
Lark, swallow, eagle, ostrich were
Dependent on devoted care ;
Each once was snugly stowed away,
Yea, like a smooth stone there each lay
Egg speckled, bluish, white or grey !

HANDS

Sing, for with hands,
One thumb and four fingers a-piece,
They built the temples of Egypt and Greece !
Sing, for in many lands
Are things of use and beauty seen,
That without hands had never been—
Without skilled hands !

White hands, deft hands,
No lily is more lovely, no,
Nor can the swan more graces show
Than lady's arm commands !—
O strength as of a giant's grip !
O firmness meet to steer a ship !
O swart, male hands !

Frank hands, free hands,
When shall my little ones grow great
And clasp such huge ones for their mate ?
Who thinks, who understands,
How hands of soldiers and of kings,
And all those by princesses waved,
Were once a baby's hands, and craved
For jangling toys and shining things ?

DAYS AND NIGHTS

Like a king from a sunrise-land
In fair ship sailing,
With banners salt winds expand
And pennons trailing ;
With wealth untold and a mind unknown,
And a power to love and make friends of his own,
And a power to leave those he likes not alone,
Each new day comes to me,—
Like king from far east sailing
Over the sea.

In a barge with golden trappings
For queen prepared,
And, against the cold, rich wrappings
And furs deep-haired,
To lands afar, by a force unguessed,
Where the face reveals what hides in the breast,
And by doubt of another no heart is distressed,
Some nights have carried me,
Like queen that homeward fared
Over the sea.

O heart, be true and strong,
That worth make thee each day's good friend ;
Then thou the hours of dark shalt spend
Out there, where is no wrong.

HOME RULE

Oh, to be glad as a bird !
Never to be put out !
Not to be ruffled by look or word,
But both to meet like the bluest day
That charms the world in May !

Oh, to live on and on !
Travel the world about,
As cloud sails or as sails a swan,
When skies are blue and waters bright
Bearing serene delight !

Bearing a smile like the sun,
Break on to-day and to-morrow,
Soothing the eyes of sorrow,
And giving a cause for none !
This is to be a queen or a king,
Not of countries but hearts ;
This is to conquer everything
At home, not foreign parts.

NURSERY ENACTMENTS

Before their nursery fire one day
Upon two hassocks sat
Willy and Nance, half tired of play ;
Between them purred the cat.

“ You said this afternoon ‘ I would
“ We’d seen a fairy,’ Nance ;
“ I’ve read of fairies ; most were good
“ And loved to play and dance.

“ Yet now it is a long while since
“ Fairies were often seen ;
“ Oh, that I then had been a prince,
“ And you had been a queen !

“ Then, kindlier spoken of, the fairies
“ Were not too rarely seen ;
“ By night they churned butter in dairies
“ Or swept the farm-house clean.

“ A bowl of milk for Lob was set,
“ His beans Hobgoblin earned :
“ And one was drained, the other eat
“ Before the day returned.

“ Then through the woodland glades by night
“ Would Queen Titania stray
“ With Oberon, and the moonlight
“ No fairer was than they.

“ While little elves danced in their rings
“ Upon the dewy grass ;
“ Ah, freshlier, greener, herbage springs
“ Where feet so happy pass !

“ A world within a world was theirs,
“ A house within a house ;
“ One slumbering while the other stirs,
“ One bold, one shy as mouse.

“ A prince no other palace had,
“ A queen no other bower,
“ Than a farm-house with roses clad,
“ And jasmine porch in flower.

“ The queen sate in the doorway then,
“ Adorned with joy and health ;
“ The prince then laboured with his men,
“ More proud of skill than wealth :

“ The queen shelled peas as she sate there,
“ Or russet pippins pared ;
“ Wise travellers speak to those so fair,
“ And thus their meals were shared ;

“ For such a prince was glad to find
“ For guest at supper time,
“ A man who had improved his mind
“ In many a far-off clime.”

The cat purred on ; then Nance, at last
Unto her brother said,
While on her grave face fire-light cast
Its fervent glow of red,

“ O Willy, when you spoke of how
“ The fairies worked by night,
“ And in the morning swept and neat
“ Each farm-house would its inmates greet,
“ I thought the same thing happens now ;
“ Our house is thus set right.

“ For often when we go to bed
“ The room’s in such a mess,
“ That I am quite rejoiced to see
“ The bedrooms prim and orderly ;
“ They make me on my toe-tips tread
“ In awe of tidiness.

“ And in the morning, why, we leave
“ The beds turned inside out ;
“ ’Tis dreadful after bolster-fights !
“ But think, are there more dear delights
“ Than from this room our eyes receive ?
“ It often makes you shout

“ To see a nice new fire ablaze,
“ The chairs in order set,
“ The floor swept clean, the breakfast laid
“ And all as by a fairy made,
“ When sun shines, to enchant our gaze,
“ Or comfort, when it’s wet.

“ ‘ A house within a house ’ you said,
“ When,—me this thought amazes !—
“ Why, that is just as true to-day !
“ Only, I think, a luckier way
“ Had come into somebody’s head
“ Of singing servants’ praises !

“ How nice to call them fairies, Will,
“ And be as pleased to see
“ In any place about the house
“ Them, as a fairy shy as mouse !
“ It would go far my days to fill
“ With queenliness and glee ! ”

“ A game to last forever, Nance !
“ You’ve hit upon it ; come and dance !

“ Queen Nance’s house, the sprucely kept
“ Shall nightly be by fairies swept—
“ Shy elves as rarely seen
“ By daylight, as are dusky mice,
“ Of any save prince William’s eyes
“ And those of Nance the queen ! ”

(While they are dancing the cat walks into the next
room.)

THE HOUSE WE BUILT

List ! winding ways lead through our wood,
Winding ways that dip and rise ;
For over hills the trees have grown,
Over hills whose dells are mazed
With thickets of such close resort,
For precincts to a fairy court
Those thickets seemed designed, and oh !
Precincts they are, they are ! not for the fairies
though !

Yea, busy builders wove the boughs,
Busy builders planted stakes ;
While active hands tore heather up
Hands active roofed the weather out.
Of no concern there—dreams are all
Ye crowds who call us children, call
Our great concern but romps and games !
Two rooms ! a house built far from voice that
warns or blames !

Oh, it were hard to find
A place so to our mind !
Should one grown up grow wise
He'd leave yon crowd of spies,
Flit from before their eyes,
Glide swift from tree to tree,
Come hither and grow free,
Have royal fun—
Have done
With dullness, even as we.

THE YOUNG CORN IN CHORUS

All we, the young corn, stalwart stand
In millions upright side by side,
And countless acres of the land
In orderly close chorus hide,
Shouting : “ Gold, of his largess,
“ And health he discharges
“ Both far and wide ! ”

Though all the world were brimmed with gold
And valleys with health had over-run,
Who could command his hand to hold,
Contest the giving of the sun ?
Hail him ; vigour for growing
He cometh bestowing
On each weak one !

The winds, with showers on their backs,
His servants, lounge by distant seas ;
And far-seen summits of their packs
Heave up when shifted for their ease,—
Wearied, long there attending
Lest heat of his sending
Cloy those he would please.

LIFE

My life feels like a mouse
In some strange giant's house ;
Or like a single fly
In a Saharan sky :
Small part in life have I,
Yet of one sort with it whole,
Is my small soul.

Bird-life makes glad the trees,
And tree-life throngs our hill,
But life would fill
An airier hive with souls for bees—
More room than, far from shore,
A night-sky coops above wide seas :
Though that were packed, outside were more.

My eyes drink up the swallow's flight :
Swift, smooth and light,
Their joy is free.
The sound that heaves
Like music up from a mile of leaves,
Is glory to me.

Then, there are waters gurgling along,
And ladies together singing a song,
Sounds that, entering my head,
Move more than can be said.
Oh ! and by how much life, thought of, should
Thrill more than flight, song, stream or wood !

THE WILD CHERRY

Though one white bunch would crown the tree
A million blossoms laugh at me,—
Each one exquisite and neat ;
Each with grace to rule a heaven ;
Lavish of joy as is the sun
Of light and heat !
Who could love them every one ?
To whom has such a heart been given ?

A CHILD MUSES

Joy steals through me if I sleek
Damask petals of a rose
Softer than a fairy's cheek ;
While for gladness my hand goes
Through fringes of floss-silk, and guesses
How slowly mermaids comb their tresses.

“ O thou rosy finger-tip,
“ Touch me ! ” pleads the looking-glass :
“ Then muse how palms of feet must trip
“ O'er polished sapphire floors, where pass
“ The seraphs holding hands and singing
“ Songs that through their hearts are ringing.”

How these hands of mine would love,
When, both scooped up, they form a nest,
If down some comfortable dove
Fluttered, and, cooing, there should rest,
While quivered through my arms such blisses
As sleeper feels whom vision kisses !

TONGUES

Tongues there are that naught can say ;
Tongues there are that run away ;
Tongues that lure the fairies nigher ;
Tongues that set the world on fire ;
Bad's the tongue that rules his master ;
Such lead ever to disaster.

Early make your tongue obey ;
Always know what it will say ;
Bid it say what you think best,
Hold it in for all the rest :
Fairies ban all tittle-tattle,
Wise men shun the tongues that rattle.

Neither dumbness nor yet noise
Makes a paradise of life ;
Nor wise nor foolish can rejoice
Where a bitter tongue is rife ;
But friendly tongues with gentle speech,
Morning, evening, or at noon,
Or 'neath the tender silent moon,
Will oftentimes help their owners reach
Bliss that feels like fairyland,
Or where the angels, hand in hand
Pace the gardens of delight
Or coast round clouds at evening bright.

EYES

What pretty words he ought to know
Whose heart is bent on praising eyes !
He must work on till midnight though,
And, ere the sun, be keen to rise
Before his words will flow,
His thoughts be wise.

What pen of pens, in a fine hand,
Should copy clear, praise due to eyes !
Some feather dropped on spice island—
Quill shed by bird of paradise !
Ink stirred by magic wand
That golden dries !

What clean brave pages in what book
Would he trace over, praising eyes !
And writing, what an earnest look !
Then reading, how his heart would prize
That world of pains he took !
The cost in sighs !

For no king ever owned a gem
Was worth the half of his two eyes,
Nor princess bore the diadem ;
So none to name their value tries :
Yet when love blindeth them
It pays the price.

This then is why a mother says
She'd for her baby give her eyes :
Nor could you write them finer praise,
Though you before the sun should rise ;
Words could no freelier flow,
Thought be more wise.

MY FRIEND

I have a friend, and he is gay
As ever in the month of May
Could be a true blue holiday.
He takes a pleasure,
No matter what the game may be,
As great as those who sail a sea
And are the first to sail there ; he
Makes much of leisure.

In school he pores above his book
As, lonely in a woodland nook,
Queen fairy on herself might look
In pool reflected.
And, never taken by surprise,
He answers questions with his eyes
Before his ready tongue replies
Clear and collected.

In battles long ago have fought
Brave men, and I have often thought,
He with the best his best had wrought ;
For none does better :
Once all an afternoon he plied
The sculls and rowed against the tide,
Though she to sea had drifted wide,
If he had let her.

We others gave up, wearied out :
But, though his arms ached, he was stout,
And none who stayed a battle's rout
Could have kept cooler.
So, not to waste his friendship, I
To be like him resolve to try,
And when like me the world thinks, why,
We'll make him ruler.

DAVID AND GOLIATH

With half his arm in running water
David groped for rounded pebbles ;
Kneeling by the brook, he sought there
Till he found five that were good :
O that I had been by then,
When at last he upright stood,
Choicest of the sons of men !
While round his feet in rippling trebles
Water crooned across the pebbles.

He was young and fair to see
In his shepherd's dress ;
His spirit and his limbs felt free,
Quit then of their late distress
When he, caged in king Saul's casque and gaunt
war suit,
Had said, " I cannot go in these,
Since their use I have not tested "—would not
do it
Even a king to please.

He left that clear and purling water ;
Only one of his five stones
Did he use, yet mighty slaughter
On the Philistines ensued :
O that I had heard the shout,
When that stone had been proved good—
Done its work beyond a doubt !
While ended felled Goliath's groans,
And no need for further stones.

It is always good to be
Where long-sighed-for things
Are done with that felicity
Every hero with him brings,—

When he must be up and doing, steps forth lightly,
Nor needs fear's casque and mail to don ;
Sure, he who acteth simply, bravely, rightly,
Hath trustier armour on.

DAVID AND JONATHAN

It was not easier to be brave
When Jonathan to David gave
A prince's for a shepherd's kiss,
And golden bracelets, chains and rings,
And garments such as sons of kings
Wore then to walk where honour is.

It was not easier to be true
And wear as he, a prince, must do,—
Meeting blank wonder or a jeer—
A shepherd's smock, and count it bliss
Merely because that smock was his—
David's, his friend's, whose love cost dear.

It was not easier to be brave
And sleep in lonely den or cave
Where lions prowl, where scorpions crawl,
When, hunted by his friend's mad father,
David risked his own life rather
Than take the life of sleeping Saul.

It was not easier to be true,
When he once more found Saul, and knew
That he might kill him and go free—
To save the man who sought to slay him,
To take his spear and cruse, then pray him
Be friends, calling himself a flea !

Not without effort are friends made ;
Not without suffering are they kept :
Though this is like a friend indeed,
To suffer plaintless and not heed
Though pain have reached him through his friend :
But when such troubles find an end,

And joy is his, then, then to need
His friend, is like a friend indeed.

Oh, often find the time to muse
About the gentle, brave, and good !
There is no better way to choose
When nothing waits that should be done :
Yea, let the mind take flight and run
Like a 'scaped deer that seeks the wood,
To stories of the brave and good !

A DREAM

The body, when a man is dead,
Like an empty dress lies on the bed ;
But that, which in his heart said " I,"
Travels away a butterfly ;
Called Psyche in the old Greek tales,
This wonder-pinioned creature sails
From trees in bloom to open spaces,
Where, amid herbs, glow petalled faces.
Now listen ; in a dream, last night,
My psyche through my mouth takes flight
And soon planes down through warm blue, where
Her grand resplendent fellows fare
On, swallow-tailed or peacock-eyed,
Wings whose colours glint and glide,
And shame the wardrobe of a king
For fairy cut and tailoring.
I cruise on raptly like proud ship,
Then over a pool-mirror dip
And see, not heart-contenting wings,
But glazed rubbed smeary whale-bone things !
Then I remembered yesterday
And how my temper spoiled our play.—
Poor scarecrow, to my chrysalid
I flew straight back, crawled in and hid.

WATER

“ Tell me what hath water done ? ”
“ From highest mountains it hath run
“ And found a way to distant seas,
“ And all the time flowed on with ease,
“ Welcome as those who love to please.”

“ Say, what else hath water done ? ”
“ It hath soared up toward the sun
“ And piled cloud-ranges in the air,
“ Shaped city, ship or white steed there—
“ Forms that with happiest dreams compare.”

“ What hath water done beside ? ”
“ Cleansed the hands we fain would hide,
“ Made soiled faces fit to kiss ;
“ And water’s crowning work it is
“ When tear-washed hearts recapture bliss.”

JOSEPH

To the chamber where he slept
Went Joseph the first time he wept ;
Because he saw them and had heard
His father lived—saw Benjamin,
His little brother ; not a word
Could he venture to them then.

The second time he bade the crowd
Leave the room, then wept aloud :
“ Lo ! I am Joseph—be not grieved—
“ Your brother whom you sold :
“ Yet not by you was I bereaved
“ Of all dear things—my father old
“ And Benjamin, my brother small
“ (Ah, now behold how he is tall !)
“ God only took me from him then,
“ And God restores me Benjamin.”

So came joy washed bright with tears ;
For every day of all those years
Joseph's heart had grown more strong ;
Not in vain, he, in the pit,
Strove with terror, grief, and wrong ;
Not in vain, drawn up from it,
And sold a slave, sought he to know
How even slaves win love and trust ;
And won, and felt his prospects glow ;
And lost ; yet, losing, knew he must
In prison still begin again,
Though all those pains had proved in vain.
Yea, every time his efforts failed
He rose with stronger heart and wit ;
And every time he higher scaled
Till he stood where, for dreaming it,
They had first thrown him in the pit.

Yet he to love must change their hate,
Not blaming them ; for, though so great,
He knew how hardly right is done
And conquest over weakness won—
Had come so near to failure, he
Could but of his love be free.

Rejoice !
Give the heart's gladness voice ;
Encouragement for all he won,
Proving how much may be done
By those who once were weak.
Abound
In effort, courage and success !
Oh seek,
Till all you search for has been found !
Than singing this is better, yes !
Yet songs can hearten too,—
And your voice shall ring true
When you, as he did, do.

MARAUDERS

Glossy and black with yellow beak
He tilts his tail in glee—
The little thief who gaily steals
The cherries from our tree,
And, friendless, keeps a sharp look out
For many an enemy,
Then whistles that delightful song
In praise of robbery.

We thrill at stories told of men
Who lived such lawless lives,—
Pirates and savage chiefs and blades
Who, reckless, slew their wives,
Plundered and dared the whole known world—
Our eyes shine as we read :
Bad though they were, our blood is stirred,
For in them will was deed.

Could I so dauntlessly make mine
The graces they were blind to,
Contented as yon blackbird is
I'd cock my head, and find too
That note of clear contagious joy,
Which takes men, rude or polished.—
Ah! could I charm so, my hid heart's
Wild liveness were abolished.

PLANS FOR A MIDNIGHT PICNIC

Into the schoolroom rushed Tim, where Margaret,
Mary and Bob

Had their heads bowed over the county survey
half an inch to the mile ;

He shouted " It's fixed for to-night ! and sand-
wiches grow in the kitchen,

" Mother is choosing us fruit in the store room,
but Father laughs at us

" And says, we have more need of food for the
mind than the body, and blankly

" Shall stare at the moon without word or idea to
bless the occasion

" Which was to inspire our souls."

" Let us surprise him," cried Bob,

" As we walk on the road,—I have it, Hurrah !
The woods in the dark

" Will tower on either hand, an army command
has arrested ;

" Silent platoon by platoon, they await a terrible
summons,

" Ready to march through the land and trample
the fields of man's tillage.

" Long, long ago, trees stood where now only corn-
stalks are growing ;

" Forest spread over where farms have usurped
both valley and hill ;

" Therefore the tall timber ranks stand alert till,
at signal from Justice,

" War is declared on the two-legged, his works
abandoned to havoc.

" Down shall go factory, mill ; wall, fence and
paling be flattened,

" Beech boles crash in through parlours, pine
trunks stamp upon kitchens,

“ Bridges will lie broken-backed, where the hundred year oak-tree has thundered,
“ Pounding along the high-road, by which so often of old
“ His fathers and brothers were dragged, sawn through at the ankle and branchless,
“ Cruelly lopped and maimed, and chained to a woodcutter’s trolly,
“ Even their roots dug up, wedge-riven, and turned into fuel ! ”

Both girls clapped their hands, and Tim with a “ First rate ! ” continued the fancy :

“ Yes, let us think, as we walk past the miles of their numberless muster,
“ How vengeance may overtake man, and city and town be beleaguered,
“ Wide stretches with mansion and homestead and village rammed-in and down-trodden
“ Dismally tell where their squadrons have wheeled, boughs mightily swinging.”

But Margaret here interposed with a shake of her long hood of tresses :

“ Should we not rather imagine, their patience reproaches us meekly,
“ Like those who, though wronged, can love ; like sorrowful mothers and nurses,
“ Sad elder sisters that stand their full height, and await our repentance,
“ Hurt and yet resolute, dignified, holding themselves at a distance,
“ Brimmed with unspeakable grief and yet ready to flow with forgiveness ? ”

Then Mary’s raised hand claimed the hearing her voice was too low to make sure of :

“ Listen ! in walking to-night through the woods, let us ponder neither

" After this fashion or that, but think of them
 truly and simply,
 " As of trees in full-leaf whose life is a plant's by
 night and by day,
 " And passes like absolute slumber, for neither
 muse they nor dream they ;
 " Nothing they know of revenge, as little of ruffled
 affection,
 " Though warmth and the breeze unfold their
 leaves, though the cool still hour
 " Bedew and refresh their sun-drowsed tops, they
 rejoice not as we do.
 " Yet ours may be joy in their welfare and we be
 enthralled in the starlight
 " By their majesty, lofty and mute, that finds a
 way through our being,
 " Calming and soothing our hearts ; yes, we, in
 their stead, may be conscious,
 " Grieve for their lopping and felling, exult in
 their verdant expansion."

Here Bob, re-inspired, burst forth, " Yes, that is
 the thought to take Father !
 " Our hearts shall thrill near their stems, where
 sap is ceaselessly mounting,
 " Glad that each is so lordly this June and, though
 dolefully beggared
 " In autumn, it yet will, transfigured at Christmas,
 look like a tree-angel,
 " Dazzling in hoar frost or vested in snow, and
 awe us with beauty,—
 " That each will in April be daintily tipped with
 soft green, tender
 " As down is on duckling new-hatched, or hair on
 the head of a baby ! "

" Hush, here he comes ! " called out Tim. " Keep
 all that for midnight ! " and when

Their father had entered the room they were measuring routes on the map,—
Soullessly keen on short-cuts or on choosing a good place to camp in.

ALPINE HOLIDAYS

It is not useless to climb hills
Or toil up mountains ;
Air there is song-like ; the eye thrills ;
The near drops under, distance has replaced it.
How sight bathes in those spaces !
Thought with vastness face to face is ;
Live, in the fountains,
Water is younger, readier to laugh,
And so worth while to quaff
That, thirst appeased, you sip again to taste it.
Earth has a human throb beneath our feet ;
High on a mountain breast
Friendships are born again ; we meet
Each other with new zest.

SNOW

The inexhaustible sky
Has covered the land with flakes ;
So blithe is it, clean and new,
You smile as when your spirit wakes
To sudden splendours
Of shaping power, that reveal
Through song, book or statue,
With what a grand man you can feel,—
He who wrote, thought or made it,—
Your fellow, your comrade, because
You enter it fully—
See and know all it was
To him !—Then snowed-under,
Forgotten, effaced,
Lie past failure and blunder !—
All shall be, nay is, replaced
By a new life as candid as snow,
As much of one piece !
Ah ! but the whole while you know
In a day, or a week, or a month,
The thaw will set in, and brown earth,
And black trees, and dull cloud
Return—admiration of worth
Give place to those moods disavowed.
Yet be not then cowed,
But remember, recall
How this snow can fall
Autumn, summer and spring—where it fell
Lie as long as in winter as well.

THE TALE OF AN ASS

John, son of thunder, went
For a stroll up through the lanes ;
He mused of the robe and throne
That were to repay his pains,
When his master should be king,
And he himself a judge ;
Which time so tarried, he owed
Each day that deferred it a grudge.

Though he darted God's wrath from his eyes ;
Though James was as fiery in speech ;
" What handsome lads ! " said the crowd,
" It's a pleasure to hear them preach ! "
If the poor believed at once
That the rich were wildly astray,
To examine their own hearts' faults
What snail could move slower than they ?
And as for the wealthy, great stones
Were as eager as they to think ;
So he felt like a shepherd, who
Had filled up his troughs to the brink,
And " Hither, ye thirsty ! " had cried,
But whose flock would not gather to drink.

Thus, though the deep lane wound
Among green fields, between gay banks
Loud with the giddy sound
Of grasshopper fiddlers, who waited no thanks,
But played over and over
How they lived in clover,—
This young reformer frowned.

Suddenly, a sharp winding brought him
Right on a little stray ass :
And, in fancy, John had caught him
Before he had plucked the grass,

With which he hoped to lure him near,
Then seize him by a long grey ear.

But the frisky creature led
The apostle no end of a trot,
Till he panted and sighed for breath ;
And the only ' ass ' he got
Was thrown out at himself for ever
Wasting his time on that vain endeavour.

He wiped the blinding sweat from his eyes ;
The creature leaned against a wall,
Like its own shadow, dangle-legged ;
A shade it was ! no ass at all !
But where and what was that which cast it ?
John scarce dared upward glance,
As a voice quite near and laughing,
Said, " Friend, we've had a dance."

No longer a chafed and self-styled ass,
But humble and docile, John
Stood in his girdled smock, a spirit
Angels might wait upon.
For he beholds a Seraph now,
With jewelled band braced round his paps,
And gemmed band round his brow ;
In saffron vest and sandal-straps,
Though fisher-lad-like glow
His naked shins, neck, arms and hands
Clean as the water and brown as the sands.
A nameless one of that host was he,
Who flamed upon the sight
Of shepherds, over the Bethlehem hills
On the first Christmas night.

And he answered John's beseeching
Awed look, as lad might speak to lad

When neither the one or the other had
Dreamed that he might go preaching:
“ Though reason there is for all things queer,
“ It may be hard to find ;
“ So you shall know how I came here
“ In a donkey’s form and mind.

“ When, singing *Unto men goodwill*
“ *And on earth peace* they had had their fill,
“ Our host was star-ward gone
“ From the white hill top, on
“ That night when heaven’s most-admired
“ Was born a baby, Adam’s son,
“ To mother poor and travel-tired :—
“ I, alone, lingered near the flocks
“ And hunted in and out the rocks,
“ Lest Arab bent on sheep-stealing
“ Should find the unguarded fold,
“ While its shepherds were all kneeling
“ Around the one-hour-old.

“ From rock-shadow to rock-shadow
“ I glid, shaped like a cloud ;
“ Then crossed the road, where a lame father
“ Limped slow, and sobbed aloud.
“ His grief was all to think that he
“ Would never, with the others, see
“ What made God’s choir stoop down to earth,
“ And winged the young men’s feet,
“ And flushed his own heart, that cold night,
“ With such a wealth of heat.

“ To see him was to pity him
“ And wish myself an ass.
“ We seraphs never want a thing,
“ But straight it comes to pass :
“ I trotted back into the road,—

“ Which I had crossed a trail
“ Of silvery ground-creeping mist,—
“ Long-eared with tassel-tail.
“ He seized my scruff and led me close
“ Beside a boulder stone,
“ Climbed to my back, patted my neck,
“ And we were quickly gone.

“ No need had he to urge or cheer ;
“ My heart was in the game ;
“ I found him but a feather-weight.
“ We won the race ; though lame
“ He was the first to kneel before
“ The babe all longed to see ;
“ And I myself was the first ass
“ Who dumbly, stolidly
“ Stared at that perfect bud of life,
“ Which, full-blown, shall set free
“ The hearts and thoughts and lips of saints
“ Through ages yet to be.

“ There, you know why, in pleasant vales,
“ On visits to this earth,
“ I find a joy that never fails,
“ And fill my heart with mirth
“ To gallop on a hilly road,
“ Where other asses need the goad.”
He vanished, and John murmured there,
As he knelt down to pray :
“ To help is nobler than to judge ;
“ Kind service is like play ;
“ To appear a donkey in men’s eyes
“ May sometimes be divinely wise.”

TWILIGHT REVERIE

Remembered in the evening,
After a long happy day,
All my moods of work and play
Fold together like a book,—
Collect, compose as, at a look,
A picture shows you miles of land,
Mountain or camel-travelled sand,—
Or as a crowd which may require,
For all its homes, full half a shire.

Remembered in the evening,
After a long happy day,
All my moods of work or play
Gleam like pool at some sea-side
Left by a far-ebbing tide,—
World you could cover with a gown—
Weed-forests, a pebble town
And shell palace, where tiny, proud,
Invisible royalties,
From pearl-fretted balconies,
Gaze at my face, as it were a pink cloud.

THE ROWERS' CHANT

Row till the land dip 'neath
The sea from view.
Row till a land peep up,
A home for you.

Row till the mast sing songs
Welcome and sweet,
Row till the waves, out-stripped,
Give up, dead beat.

Row till the sea-nymphs rise
To ask you why,
Rowing, you tarry not
To hear them sigh.

Row till the stars grow bright
Like certain eyes.
Row till the noon be high
As hopes you prize.

Row till you harbour in
All longing's port.
Row till you find all things
For which you sought.

SOME PRESS OPINIONS

POETRY

THE VINEDRESSER AND OTHER POEMS. 1899

I. Mr. Sturge Moore's volume of poems, "THE VINEDRESSER," discloses a more remarkable gift than any first book of verse of recent years. It has puzzled critics, who have contradicted each other more than usual about it. . . . Fertility and resourcefulness are excellent gifts, but they do not of themselves imply high poetry, and I think Mr. Moore has higher claims than these. He has the creative imagination.—Mr. LAURENCE BINYON in *The Literary Year Book*, 1899.

POEMS. 1906

Mr. Moore's best work is drenched in beauty—he can take these old themes and stories, and tell them over again, in a manner that is full of the great tradition and carries its echoes of the past, recalling the Greek way of telling them, and the romantic way too; yet which is no mere copy of either, but his own manner, and one that has the right touch of our day about it. Sometimes he reminds one of such work as that wonderful drawing of Edward Calvert's "Arcadian Shepherds moving their Flocks by Night," sometimes of Mr. C. H. Shannon's beautiful lithographs; but while as intensely Greek and intensely romantic as either Calvert or Mr. Shannon, he is more modern than either in the handling of these ancient things.

The Times Literary Supplement.

THE SEA IS KIND. 1914.

It is beautiful as a book alone, apart from its contents, for Mr. Sturge Moore is artist, as well as poet, . . . he has designed the cover of his volume and, as one guesses, ordered the fair setting of its type. The result is one of the most beautiful of recent books of poetry. . . . The poetry of Mr. Sturge Moore springs from a serene state remote from squalor and noise, where all fair things inhabit—fair women, and ships and trees and children, and thoughts. The beauty of these poems is intrinsic, an inward shining lamp of steady glow . . . he yet stands among contemporary singers as a modern poet with the additional advantage of being disinclined to fuss about his modernism.

T. P's. Weekly, May 1st, 1914.

PROSE

DÜRER. 1905

There is a brooding quiet, a religious calm, over the whole book, as if the spirit of Dürer in his work and in his writings had passed into his commentator, endowing him with something of the like earnest reasonableness and patience. It is a beautiful and serious book, full of the meditations of a mind that stands aside, weighs, ponders, and decides. . . .

ARTHUR SYMONS in the *Outlook*.

CORREGGIO. 1906

A book that stands out completely from the current criticism of art in its penetrating power and grasp of fundamental ideas. . . . I believe that it is on the main lines of such work as this that æsthetic criticism, if it is to have any vital hold on the intelligent interests of the world, must proceed.

LAURENCE BINYON in the *Saturday Review*.

ART AND LIFE. 1910

In a day rather impatient of large-mindedness and of profound convictions, we are none the less in the presence of a writer who may deal with such men as Flaubert and Blake on terms of assurance ; and, being himself its possessor, may speak of the dangers and obligations of genius without risk of arrogance or lack of sympathy and comprehension.

The Westminster Gazette.

HARK TO THESE THREE. 1915

Crammed into the fifty-four small pages of this little book is the wisdom of a lifetime, the mature conclusions of a critic and of a thinker who is also a poet. To attempt to paraphrase or summarize its conclusions would be to court the failure that awaits the translator of a lyric. But what Stanton chiefly insists on is the sovereign truth that in art, as in life, there can be no standing still.

The Times Literary Supplement.



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