

SELECTED
POEMS *and* BALLADS *of*
PAUL FORT

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY
JOHN STRONG NEWBERRY

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**SELECTED POEMS AND BALLADS OF
PAUL FORT**



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PAUL FORT

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POEMS AND BALLADS
OF
PAUL FORT

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY
JOHN STRONG NEWBERRY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
LUDWIG LEWISOHN

AND AN APPRECIATION BY
CARL SANDBURG

WITH FRONTISPIECE



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CONTENTS

FRENCH BALLADS—1897	
THE ROUND	3
THE WEDDING	3
THE MAIDEN DEAD IN THE ECSTASY OF LOVE	4
THE SKIES ARE GAY, 'TIS MERRY MAY	5
A QUEEN IN THE SEA	5
THE WHALES	7
THE COMPLAINT OF THE SOLDIERS	7
MY JOY HAS FALLEN IN THE GRASS	8
I HAVE SMALL, BLUE FLOWERS	8
THE DEVIL IN THE NIGHT	9
LIFE	9
THE SWEETEST SONG	9
<i>From BALLADS OF THE STORM</i>	
CRADLE SONG FOR THE DYING	10
<i>From BALLADS OF THE NIGHT</i>	
THE LAMENT OF THE KING AND QUEEN	11
THE RESPONSES OF DAWN AND NIGHT	12
<i>From MY LEGENDS</i>	
ORPHEUS CHARMING THE ANIMALS	12
<i>From A PORTFOLIO OF SKETCHES</i>	
THE LITTLE ANNUITANT	16
THE VISIT OF DEATH	16
THE TWO CLOWNS	17
MOUNTAIN—1898	
IMAGES OF MY DREAMS	18
IN THE WOOD	19
EVENING CLOUDS	19
HYMN TO THE SEA	20
HYMN TO THE AUTHOR OF THESE HYMNS	21
THE STORY OF LOUIS XI—1898	
THE STORY OF LOUIS XI	21
THE ENTRANCE INTO ROUEN OF CHARLES THE BOLD	26

JOACHIM	27
THE PITEOUS BATTLE OF MONT-L'HÉRY	28
SOUNDS OF BELLS AND OF PRECIOUS STONES	32
THE MIRACULOUS CATCH	32
THE HEROIC RESISTANCE OF THE CITY OF BEAUVAIS	35
LET PASS MY SWEET LITTLE LOUIS XI	39
ANTIQUE IDYLLS AND HYMNS—1900	
THE CUP OF MENALCHUS	42
MORPHEUS	44
ICARUS	45
THE VOYAGE OF JASON	47
SAILOR'S LOVE—1900	
THE CORD	52
A SONG OF FATE	52
YOU CAN DEPART	53
THE KISSES	53
SONG OF THE SUNBURNED SAILORS	54
THE ONE-EYED CAT	54
THE CURÉ OF LANGRUNE-SUR-MER	54
THE SNUFF-TAKER	55
SONG AT DAWN	56
PARIS SENTIMENTAL—1902	
THE MEETING	57
FIRST APPOINTMENT	58
ON THE PONT AU CHANGE	60
BULLIER	62
<i>From THE BOHEMIA OF THE HEART and PENNY ROMANCES</i>	
MY PORTRAIT	65
MEUDON	65
THE GREAT DRUNKENNESS	66
HYMNS OF FLAME—1903	
THE DOLPHIN	67
<i>From</i> LUCIENNE	71
COXCOMB—1906	
COXCOMB (FRAGMENT: FIRST PAGES)	73
<i>From THE BOOK OF VISIONS</i>	
THE SADNESS OF PAN	78
PHILOMEL	80
THE RETURN	81
THE LITTLE LIGHTS	82

CONTENTS

vii

ETERNITY	82
HENRI III	83
ILE-DE-FRANCE—1908	
<i>From COUCY-LE-CHATEAU</i>	
THE ARRIVAL AT COUCY-LE-CHATEAU	90
<i>From SENLIS</i>	
SENLIS—EARLY MORNING	92
THE LITTLE SILENT STREET	93
<i>From MARGOT, MY PAGE</i>	
MOONLIGHT	93
THE HUNTER	94
MORTCERF—1909	
THE BEAUTIFUL NAMES	95
THE FOREST OF CRÉCY	96
SALE OF THE "COIN MUSARD"	97
<i>From NEMOURS</i>	
HORIZONS	100
<i>From VELIZY</i>	
THE MYSTIC HOUR	101
<i>From BALLADS AND CANTILENAS</i>	
OPHELIA	101
THE QUEEN AND THE KING	101
HAMLET	102
KING CLAUDIUS	102
FORTINBRAS	103
LAMENT OF THE LITTLE WHITE HORSE	104
THE SADNESS OF MAN—1910	
THROUGH MELANCHOLY	104
THE TERROR	105
SHADE OF THE WOODS	107
THE HAPPY MAN	107
<i>From REPOSE OF THE SOUL IN THE WOOD OF L'HAUTIL</i>	
DREAM OF THE FIRST DAY	108
THE MARRIAGE OF THE OISE AND THE SEINE	109
ODE TO PISSEFONTAINE	110
THE GOD OF SUNNY DAYS	111
PRAYER TO CONJURE AWAY THE RAIN	111
THE ABANDONED CHAPEL	112
<i>From NOTE BOOK OF ROMANCES AND LAMENTS</i>	
THE ITALIAN	113

LAMENT OF THE RUINED CHATEAUX IN WINTER	113
THE ETERNAL ADVENTURE—1911	
THE ETERNAL ADVENTURE. BOOK I (FIRST PAGES)	115
<i>From IN GÂTINAIS</i>	
DEDICATION TO THE LAND	123
REPOSE AT NOON	124
LIVING AS A GOD—1912	
MATINAL SURVEY OF THE CITY	126
THE SEVEN HOUSES OF JEAN RACINE	129
NOCTURNAL CRIME AT THE CHATEAU	132
THE VIGIL OF THE POET	133
CANTILENA AND CRY OF ADIEU ON THE HILL OF THE MANOR	133
THE MEMORY	135
THE ETERNAL ADVENTURE. BOOK III (FIRST PAGES)	136
SONGS TO CONSOLE ME FOR BEING HAPPY—1913	
RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION	138
<i>From IN ANDELYS</i>	
PRAYER TO THE GREAT NORMAN WATER-SPRITES	142
ON THE BANK OF THE SEINE	143
PROSE—TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LIGHT	144
HAVE I LEISURE TO DEVOTE MYSELF TO POESY?	145
LONG LIVE THE SKIES OF NORMANDY	146
<i>From LAMENTS AND SAYINGS</i>	
CHIME AT DAWN	147
IF PEAU D'ANE WERE TOLD TO ME—1916	
SAINT HUBERT OF GAMBaiseUIL	147
TWO COTTAGES IN THE LAND OF THE YVELINE—1916	
THE DAUGHTERS OF THE KING OF SPAIN—A FRENCH SONG	154
THE JOURNEY	156
THE LITTLE CALVES OF LES HAIZETTES	157
OUR COTTAGE IN YVELINE	157
THE AZURE FROG	158
THE POACHER'S TIME-PIECE	159
A SORCERER BEFORE MY HOUSE	159
SONG OF THE EVENING	161
THE AXE	161
THE ADIEU TO HAIZETTES	162
THE NEW COTTAGE	163
THE THRILL OF THE FOREST	165
FIRST DAY OF WAR	166

CONTENTS

ix

	POEMS OF FRANCE—1914-1915	
THE CATHEDRAL OF RHEIMS		167
THE TRAITOR		171
THE MARSEILLAISE		173
	IN TIME OF WAR—1917	
THAT IS WHY OUR SONS ARE HEROES		176
	IN THE LAND OF THE WINDMILLS—1921	
FORGOTTEN		179

The translator thanks the editors of *Poetry*,
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print certain of the poems in this book.

INTRODUCTION

Paul Fort has likened himself to Shelley. His lyrical gift is so pure and strong that the comparison seems neither arrogant nor absurd. But his difference from Shelley is more important than any kinship: he is at home not only in the world but in the universe. No essential conflicts rend the harmony or darken the lucidity of his soul. Nor has he had to win this peace. It has always been his; he has always known it, as he declares all things must be known—by heart.

To Paul Fort life and the world are a beautiful and eternal pageant of rivers and stars and fields, of people and of things made with hands. And the passions that have moved this pageant are, to his vision, an integral part of it, but one that he perceives pictorially and in which he sees pictorial and poetic values wherewith to feed his unending interest in gesture and color and form. He is not oblivious of pain nor of ugliness. But he has let all things flow through his refashioning soul and found them good.

He is the blithest and most limpid of poets. Yet he constantly escapes the danger of shallowness by virtue of a pagan earnestness at the root of his delight, a harmony with the great procession of appearances, a deep and instinctive union with the sun's warmth, the star's glitter, the flight of birds, the tread of wayfarers, the splendor of antique raiment. "All nature," he says, "is on the threshold of my heart." "The earth and the sun are but one fatherland." "I would caress nature with my fingers as though she were an instrument that answers to my dream." This is perhaps, as I started by saying, the central point of Paul Fort's creative psychology: the universe answers his dream. Joy is his chief note. If ever he loses joy he is astonished as a child might be astonished or a faun. His habitual mood is one of a glad, swift swimmer whose strong limbs flash through the seas and rivers of the world. "Quickly the goal I'd reach, softly descend the breeze. My laughter I would teach to the Eumenides." He is indeed "the gay sprite of cosmic fire no curb restrains."

Fort's untroubled acceptance of all things as beautiful and inter-

esting in their own nature has made him one of the most copious and one of the most realistic of modern poets. He has rightly called his poems ballads. He is a ballad singer, a minstrel of the universe. He wanders the roads of the world. He sees a landscape, a vivid gesture: an historical incident floats into his mind. He indites a ballad. Since he loves all things, he makes no false distinctions between noble and ignoble. A sailor's sweethearting is as fine a subject as the subtle machinations of a great king. And he treats all these subjects, even the most intricate ones, with something of the ballad singer's straight simplicity of development in action and with a constant heightening and deepening of the spiritual overtones which the old minstrels had. For this purpose he revives the refrain and uses parallelism and the haunting laconic implications of speech of the old folk-songs.

This brings me to the much debated question of his metrical innovations which are not so startling as many have supposed. By printing his verse in the typographical manner of prose he has marked several devices. He has carried enjambement to its last necessary conclusion. He has liberated the rhythmic unit from any coincidence with the syntactical one. Furthermore, he hears staves rather than lines and has often, though not as often as has been asserted, broken with the line regularity of the French tradition and has allied himself, unconsciously perhaps, to the Germanic variation of melodic structure. This appears most clearly so soon as we print a stanza in the ordinary manner:

I am happy! I alone
This gift from Fate could wring
Because my lyre has known
How to sing everything.

Thus his form combines new elements with very ancient ones and lends itself with exquisite appropriateness to that spirit of balladist and folk-singer which he has brought to the poetry of modern France. The imitations of his method by the ultra-sophisticated, the makers of glittering images, do him wrong. His deepest note, his most enduring accent, is found in such lyrics as (*vide infra*) "The Complaint of the Soldiers" or "The Kisses," in which simple and old and recurrent things are treated with healthy realism, passionate brevity, and that unquestioning acceptance of man's lot which is always and everywhere the possession of the folk and its singers.

To translate a poet who is, from one point of view, so original and

daring and from another so simple and naive is a formidable task. It is easy to succeed with a few pieces; it is difficult to succeed even tolerably when many are attempted. Mr. Newberry's versions are many and I think that very nearly all of them are extraordinarily beautiful and faithful at once. A number of them are not below the originals in grace and significance; all are notably interesting for both their workmanship and their poetic feeling. Hence this volume not only introduces to American readers one of the most eminent and attractive of French poets but forms an admirable addition to our own rather small store of first rate poetical scholarship and skill.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN.

AN APPRECIATION

Paul Fort is a phenomenon of nature. He should be recommended as one would recommend a bird, a spider, a tree, or a strip of larkspur up a mountainside, in the matter of human companionship.

For those who love and enjoy the poetry of Paul Fort to explain why they do so is to tell why they love and enjoy the thing which they choose to call poetry or art.

It might be easy to say what America needs more than anything else is a something made up of the stuffs and fluids that constitute the phenomenon of nature known as Paul Fort. It might be easy to say that and yet, easy as the saying of it would be, it might be a portentous truth that would dawn the keener as the writings of Paul Fort were read.

The poetry of North America nearest like that of Paul Fort is to be found in songs and legends of the Red Indian. The early copper-faces would have said they understood the phantoms and intangibles that march, fly and turn somersaults in the lines of our Frenchman.

I am thankful personally, and I am glad for the sake of many young men and women I know, that John Strong Newberry has done a work of translation that will bring closer home the art of a gay, deep-singing Frenchman.

CARL SANDBURG.

**SELECTED POEMS AND BALLADS OF
PAUL FORT**

SELECTED POEMS AND BALLADS OF PAUL FORT

FRENCH BALLADS.

1897.

THE ROUND.

Should all the girls of the world be fain to join their hands and form a chain, the round would reach along the beach and girdle all the main.

Should all the lads of the world agree that they would jolly sailors be, the boats they'd man would form a span that stretched across the sea.

Then 'twould be found that one could dance the world around, ah, happy chance! should all folk of the world be fain to join their hands and form a chain.

THE WEDDING.

Ah, day of joy! The sound of pipe and flute with sweetly blending tone doth charm the sense, and young and old approach with eager foot, lured by the call of sweet-voiced instruments.

Gay, gay, let us be wed, coifs and ribbons and bridal bell. Gay, gay, let us be wed, and this happy couple as well.

Fair blossoms fill the church from side to side. Bells great and small chime out the wedding tunc,—three hundred small bells for the eyes of the bride, a clanging tocsin for the heart of the groom.

Gay, gay, let us be wed, coifs and ribbons and bridal bell. Gay, gay, let us be wed, and this happy couple as well.

The pealing chime has silenced every tongue. Ah, sorrow, when it rings for us no more! Weep o'er your prayer-books, ye that are not young. Soon it will toll to say your life is o'er.

Gay, gay, let us be wed, coifs and ribbons and bridal veil. Gay, gay, let us be wed, and this happy couple as well.

Now it is done and the church bells abate. Dance to the pair with passion's over plus. Cheer for the lad and the lass and the fête! Ah, we are glad when it is not for us!

Gay, gay, let us be wed, coifs and ribbons and bridal bell. Gay, gay, let us be wed, and this happy couple as well.

Ah, day of joy! With sound of pipe and flute old age awhile forgets its impotence. Dance, boys and girls! The world is 'neath your foot! O, the delight of sweet-voiced instruments! ..

THE MAIDEN DEAD IN THE ECSTASY OF LOVE.

This maiden she is dead, is dead, while love was fresh and new.

They laid her in the earth, the earth, before the night was through.

They bedded her alone, alone, wrapped in a bride's array.

They bedded her alone, alone, low-coffined in the clay.

They left her merrily, merrily, when dawn made bright the way.

A-singing merrily, merrily. "Each in his turn," sang they.

"This maiden she is dead, is dead, while love was fresh and new."

They went to till the fields, the fields, as every day they do. . . .

THE SKIES ARE GAY, 'TIS MERRY MAY.

Beyond the hedge the sea doth glint. Never shell shone so well. One longs to go a-fishing in't. The skies are gay, 'tis merry May.

Sweet is the sea beyond the hedge, soft and bland as baby's hand. One longs to kiss its crinkled edge. The skies are gay, 'tis merry May.

'Tis with the breeze's fingers clever, all ashine with needles fine, that hedge and sea are sewn together. The skies are gay, 'tis merry May.

Upon the hedge the waves display their fluttering bits of foamy spray. White sails are flashing o'er the bay. The skies are gay, 'tis merry May.

The hedge, it is an ocean deep where golden scarab beetles sleep. Black whales are ungainlier far. The skies are gay, 'tis merry May.

Soft as a tear upon the cheek the sea's a tear upon the hedge that softly seeks the water's edge. But one has no desire to weep.

"A lad has fallen in the wave." "Dead in the sea! A goodly grave!" One cannot weep his fate to-day. The skies are gay, 'tis merry May.

A QUEEN IN THE SEA.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

A queen of high descent once loved a sailor rude. To India he went with greed of gain imbued.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

With tall, black ships a King conquered the Queen's countree! Ah, bitter was the sting! She leaped into the sea.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

"Queen in the sea!" A whale in search of cod or mullet wagged a contented tail and stowed her in his gullet.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

In that black ventral part a sorry time she had, but still, with faithful heart, she loved her sailor lad.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

So that good whale, the most considerate of mammals, swam to the Indian coast, a land where there are camels.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

One of these beasts above, throned in a palanquin, she recognized her love, now monarch of Tonkin.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

“Sailor, console your queen. Come back my throne to share.” “Not I! In my hareem are many maids more fair.”

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

“You smell of the sepulchre.” “A whale devoured me. Sailor, ’tis not of the sepulchre I smell, but of the sea.”

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

“Each houri of my string of fine rice-powder smells, like the Queen to the King that they say in Paris dwells.”

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

Then weeping she returned into the waiting whale and for her native land sorrowfully set sail.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous flood.

With tall, black ships a King conquered the Queen’s countree. Her pain has lost its sting and like a lamb is she.

With our good boats brave the tempestuous sea.

THE WHALES.

In the days when still one went to look for whales, cruising so far, sailor, it made our sweethearts weep, there was on every road a Christ upon the cross, there were marquises covered with lace, there was the Holy Virgin and there was the King.

In the days when still one went to look for whales, cruising so far, sailor, it made our sweethearts weep, there were mariners who kept the faith, and mighty lords who spat upon it, there was the Holy Virgin and there was the King.

Well, nowadays, the whole world is content, 'tis no mere empty phrase, Christ, in truth one is content! . . . There are no more mighty lords nor Christs upon the cross, but there is the republic and there is the president, and there are no more whales.

THE COMPLAINT OF THE SOLDIERS.

When they were come back from the wars their heads were seamed with bleeding scars,

their hearts betwixt clenched teeth they gripped, in rivulets their blood had dripped,

when they were come back from the wars, the blue, the red, the sons of Mars,

they sought their snuff-boxes so fine, their chests, their sheets all spotless showing,

they sought their kine, their grunting swine, their wives and sweethearts at their sewing,

their roguish children, like as not crowned with a shining copper pot,

they even sought their homes, poor souls . . . they only found the worms and moles.

The carrion raven clamored o'er them.—They spat their broken hearts before them!

MY JOY HAS FALLEN IN THE GRASS.

My joy has fallen in the grass, good people of the plain, fortunate folk, bring all your lanterns, help me to find it again.

My sweetheart went away with a great white cavalier. I followed, heavy-hearted. I followed far in the plain. My arrow found its mark. And my sweetheart fell from her great black steed in the plain, and when the night grew dark the cavalier departed.

Bring all your lanterns, good people of the plain, fortunate folk, my joy has fallen in the grass, help me to find it again.

“It was not she you should have slain of the two, ’twas the great white cavalier. You would have found your joy again still alive and for love still fain. Perhaps she would have pardoned you.” “I did not dare to shoot at him, that great cavalier in his pride, he had an air too menacing with his sabre by his side.”

My joy has fallen in the grass, good people of the plain, fortunate folk, bring all your lanterns, help me to find it again.

If it was she that you saw indeed, your joy, you can make a cross above. Though your search for a hundred years should last you will only find the earth and the grass, or the snow beneath the wintry blast, twinkling glow-worms the turf may cover, but never will you find your love.

Bring all your lanterns, good people of the plain, fortunate folk, my joy has fallen in the grass, help me to find it again.

I HAVE SMALL, BLUE FLOWERS.

I have small, blue flowers, I have small, blue flowers, clearer than your eyes.—Then on your love bestow one!—They are mine, they belong to no one. High on the mountain’s crest, my love, high on the mountain’s crest.

I have carbuncles, I have carbuncles, more vivid than your mouth.—
Then on your love bestow one!—They are mine, they belong to no one.
Under the ashes at home, my love, under the ashes at home.

I have found a heart, I have found two hearts, I have found a thou-
sand hearts.—Show them to me!—I have found love, it belongs to all
the world. Everywhere on the road, my love, everywhere on the road.

THE DEVIL IN THE NIGHT.

With ruby eyes a-peer the devil, all night long, stalks squeaking mice
to spear upon his little prong.

A million mice so fat he bags ere dawn is pale. They sizzle in a vat,
stirred by his red-hot tail.

He gives the broth thereof to lovers impolite, who, fondling day and
night, publish abroad their love.

When they their hearts disgorge into the vat, until it's o'er-brimming,
in his forge he shapes them into skillets.

Skillets that he employs, tied to his greenish tail, to make a noise,
a noise, all night long in the gale.

LIFE.

With the first chime they said " 'Tis Christ in manger laid. . . ."

The bells ring out full tide: "O happiness! My bride!"

Then soon the great bells toll for a departed soul.

THE SWEETEST SONG.

I would sing no louder than the shepherd's pipe, nor than the croon
my osier cradle weaves, less loud than the lark, no louder than the ripe
barley that sways, beneath the belfry's height, at dawn's immaculate
threshold rustling sheaves—no louder than the rain upon the leaves. . . .

I long for song more soft than murmuring leaves, daintier than
the brook through osiers singing, remoter than the soaring lark that
cleaves the skies of June, unfathomed azure winging, more fugitive than

at dawn the bell's faint ringing, or the hid sweet note that in my oboe grieves.

But, oh! the song of love . . . O, to recapture the pensive, nonchalant, caressing air with which the Virgin mild, to wide-eyed rapture, beguiled the lovely Christchild heavenly-fair, the tune that Joseph whistled, debonair, above his joiner's bench one holy morn when, to its lilt, the Dream of the Babe was born.

O frailest sounds! O song's supreme delight that Jesus breathed to the skies of Bethlehem, or that the Syrians murmur in the night, waking their citharas, while over them, with slender shafts to the wistful cadence bent, their hearkening fountains form a firmament.

From BALLADS OF THE STORM.

CRADLE SONG FOR THE DYING.

Do not believe in death. See how the sunlight streams through space to gladden your sad face. Let no vain tears be shed. Clear as your soul are the skies. Through dark oblivion strikes a sudden beam—and death is all a gleam.

Do not believe in death. The birds are freed from the cages of the dark and silent wood where they so long were pent. Let no vain tears be shed, like your soul the skies are singing. No longer are they mute. —And death is radiant!

Death stands before you luminous and singing, and it is life! In the calm an angel dislodges the pearl of your soul amid the musical, radiant voices of archangels.

They sing unheeded by this careless world that has forgot the splendour of man's celestial home in skies afar. But faithful death has come. And the stars are singing in the skies towards that remembered star.

And lo! the luminous end! Pure as your soul are the skies. Do not believe in death. All tranquil is your face. Your soul is fresh as morning's first embrace. Young as your soul are the skies.

And death is o'er and life at last shines clear, unrecognized before.
On every side bright souls appear, forever luminous, purged from muddy
sins, filling with splendour all the void of space. The other life was
but a tempest's roar. Pure is your face—and happy life begins.

From BALLADS OF THE NIGHT.

THE LAMENT OF THE KING AND QUEEN.

All in the woodland green, sombrely dight, wandered a king and
queen at the fall of night.

She has the chain, and he bears the lamb of gold—"Take back the
chain," said she, "All our love is cold."

"You loved me, queen. Can I cancel love's pain? Then take this
lamb of gold, and the chain retain."

"Let us be still, be still, where moonlight blanches. Farewell requites
farewell 'neath sighing branches."

One shade to the château, lonely, returns. One shade, with gold
aglow, flees through the ferns.

What, that has not been said, what shall I say of loves so quickly
dead 'mid nights of May?

Say that the heaven's seem ne'er to agree with life's eternal dream,
love's fantasy?

O'er the dead loves we mourn gold skies are bending. Splendid criterion
of loves unending!

Love, 'tis a chilling rain falls on us soon. Suffer, above our pain bright
shines the moon.

Here the lament dies, dies of melancholy.—"A king and queen once
loved, loved with tender folly."

Ah, passion's brittleness! Weary refrain!—"Alas, the littleness of
our loves mundane. . . ."

SELECTED POEMS AND BALLADS OF
THE RESPONSES OF DAWN AND NIGHT

- Do you hear the stars that tremble in the sky?
- Do you hear my heart each moment grow more pale?
- Do you hear Dawn lift her rustling veils on high?
- Listen, a heart assumes the ultimate veil.
- Like a rich trophy the great sun mounts the sky.
- Of too much victory my heart is dying.
- Do you hear the weeping of the fountains?
- Do you hear the fairies' sighing breath?
- I hear the sobbing of the fountains . . .
- The ivory horn of death.

From MY LEGENDS.

ORPHEUS CHARMING THE ANIMALS.

'Neath dawn's caress a silvery mountain shone.

And this was, on every hand, like a full surgeless sea whose ebb unveils the gleam of some far-sunken hoard, when penetrating dawn tanned with its pallid beam the sward of dewy glades deep in the sleeping wood.

On the silvered mountain at daybreak, Orpheus sang.

And this was, on every hand, beneath the murmurous leaves the wakened forest merged in one concerted theme by many voices urged, harsh from the trail's dark edge, clear from the crests and the sedge of many a woodland stream.

The lion's voice towards the lyre of Orpheus rose.

It was he who came, at dawn suddenly to appear! Growling, 'twas he who came. . . . And the singer was erect before the flaming dawn, erect before the ravening beast of prey, clasping the glittering lyre between his hands, comely and free from fear.

Flattened against the rocks, the lion listened.

The mingled voices of the man and lyre, cadenced the mounting hour, rhythmized the skies on fire. The lion came with humble tongue to lick the sandaled feet sublime of him whose soaring song, farflung, seemed like the golden voice of Time.

All came to hear that voice and all were charmed.

The tiger stretched himself, long as a tenuous shrub, and savored those sweet sounds as shrub soft breezes cool. The ourang-outang, bemused, his brow upon his club, unchecked from nose and throat discharged a silver drool.

Great numbers of them came and all were charmed.

Like a crumbling crag, with shambling shock that cadenced broad hill-sides, the great bear danced. On a dawn-red rock's outstanding jag, like a lyre that is clasped in the hand of a man, like a lyre that is strung with sable cords, a youthful zebra reared and pranced.

They came in multitudes and all were charmed.

The elephant, all ears, allowed the morning breeze to swell his massive sail. He went as in a dream, and softly as a ship upon a sleeping stream.—The peacock with the notes unfurled or reefed his tail.

The proud beasts came, the timid beasts as well.

Half-fainting, the gazelle seemed lost to sight and sound, yet from her liquid eyes most happy tear-drops fell imaging forth her dream 'mid music's spell profound, the lovely, tender, mild and amorous gazelle.

They came from jungles far, from forests near at hand, from the plateau's rich grass and from Sahara's sand.

Buffalo, aurochs, ram, and fabled unicorn pressed in their zest for song huge horn against huge horn. The gilded marmoset whose thirst an orange stanches, the rhythmic strain rehearsed with gently swaying haunches.

They came from the Orient, they came from the Occident. They came from everywhere—they even came from heaven.

Chaplets of blissful doves on eagles' necks aswoon, bright zones of lustrous bees with dark drones overlaid, the swallows' twittering cavalcade, that transcendent tune had heard. And that nightmare with great eyes astare, the prowling owl, had left his lair to follow the iridescent flight of an unreal humming bird.

The humus and the sand had their ambassadors.

The spider and the crab, wise as Confucius, with little vitreous eyes their rival virtues scanned. Locked in a close embrace two boas made in space (a sunbeam being at hand) a giant caduceus.

The stout beasts came, likewise the slender ones.

O the air of the fair giraffe, that gracious, glorious air! Rapt, with veiled eyes it listened, gazing on high where glistened dawn's earliest blush that flushed a fleecy cloud. It made the penguin swear, one foot in air, that ne'er in all his life had he seen a mien so sweetly proud.

Showers of rosy spurge watered the velvet wind.

The beauty of the slug in scarlet freshness showed, the shivering lizard shed an opalescent gleam, in the bright morning light a frog beside them glowed and with this triple beam a rock was diamonded.

Through the blue air they came, they came from out the stones.

In the pure firmament music had mobilized the flies, afar the wasp's shrill trump hurled forth its resonant blast. And over all the world a gentle murmur passed as though the Day of Wrath were done in miniature.

They came from everywhere—from the bowels of the deep.

The whale himself had come, His Majesty the Whale, from the Mediterranean, his bulk borne like a bale by a bank of herrings, piscatory ocean freighters, that frisk before a horde of glutton alligators.

They were resuscitated from depths of legend.

The Roc its black wings spread from the gold egg of the sun, dusking blue depths of air with slow-expanding pinions. And, risen from Hell's dominions, one saw, a portent dread, in the lurid Pit's red glare the ghost of Leviathan.

They came from Stygian gulfs, they came from shining stars, from everywhere, from lairs unknown to even the gods.

But the lion suddenly growled and Orpheus ceased his song. They had seen in the shadowy path that crossed a sylvan dale, a shepherd with his flock, his shepherd-dog, his horse. Songs that bewitched the brutes for these were void of force. No sounds divine availed with ears by commerce dulled.

Orpheus dropped his lyre—and the lyre wept.

But straightway one perceived the land's whole wealth of bloom, slower to yield itself to the singer's magic strains, surge o'er the plains, ascend, and, where the bare crests loom, spread 'neath the dawn's first glows its fresh, eternal snows.

All lyreless, Orpheus sang the beauty of the flowers, and the enraptured blooms, enthralled by that sweet song, forsook their parent bough, vibrating butterflies, soon to recrystallise, bright stars about his brow.

Orpheus grasped his lyre again, and the gray rocks wept at his glad refrain, jetting the fountains of their joys to greet the accents of his voice.

Then, prodigy divine, one saw the horizon dim sway with the music's spell its floating, misty hem, with each melodious swell uncovering its mountains and when the silence fell again re-covering them.

Orpheus sang this day, he sang the sun! And the heavens listened, all their clouds in leash. And the charmed lightning slept beneath its storm.

But violently the night on Orpheus having closed, the trees, the birds, the mists revealed, with headlong pace and oscillating flight, unwontedly

imposed, that drunk with song the world more swiftly whirled through space.

From A PORTFOLIO OF SKETCHES.

THE LITTLE ANNUITANT.

He has departed by the road, the poor man, summoning up such fortitude as old men can, with little faltering steps counted by trembling cane, he has departed. He will not come again.

His constitutional covers no great distance, the dear man. Conservative for eighteen hundred years, none has he wronged, no enemy he fears. He has always led so prudent an existence since Time began.

Two rods of road and then a path we trace, a tiny little path, to reconduct the man, the worthy little man, back to his starting place. And why should Fate select as victim of its spleen that honest little man in his little by-path green?

He trudges there, he coughs, he spits, he gnaws, he mumbles to himself, he blinks applause, content with all. He roasts his doddering heart in the bright sun's warm beam. He dreams his way through life. He takes no part in strife, and he is happy in his dream.

Yes, why should evil Fate have grudged felicity to that good man and wished to do him wrong, when nothing came his peace to mar save that he sometimes trudged too far? Of course there's death the icy breath that solveth all our sums. Ah, death, the broad highway, there one marches long. But bah, is there not this good abbé to graft you on a good little path—this excellent little abbé who so opportunely comes?

THE VISIT OF DEATH.

A small, pale hand brushes against the lock, lengthens, and with one finger upsets my sleeping-draught.

Discreetly a light foot tiptoes by.
I call.
But there is no reply.

Can it be that it is snowing in my warm room?

Disdainfully Death sits beside my fire, he waits my hour, his tower of little bones, ranged on my chair, gleams in the embers glare like a plant of strawberries. On his knees a living toy he dances that twinkles and blinks and gives soft glances.

Tinkle of bells. . . . Is this delirium? Are the horses there? Has the hour for departure come?

No, 'tis Death that rises. The slim tower rocks. It is white and rose like a minaret. No, Death stands, all his joints he cracks, he stoops on a moon-stone his toy to whet.—Good, he touches my shoulder, calm and steady.

“My son, are you ready?”

Inadvertently, a little random blow of that glistening plaything sets my spirit free, and I can feel it go, in rhythmic ecstasy, to wash its linen in the light of the moon.

THE TWO CLOWNS.

—Synthetic Clown-Clown, hip, hip, whirl!

—Six pirouettes blue white, white blue, it is the Sky! six pirouettes blue green, green blue, it is the Sea! six pirouettes green yellow, yellow green, it is the Desert! six pirouettes gold yellow, yellow gold, it is the Sun!

—Bravo, bravo, a little bravo, gentlemen. Analytic Clown-Clown, 'tis your turn. Whirl!

—So be it, gentlemen, let us resolve things into their elements. Follow me well: Violet, two pirouettes, Indigo, three pirouettes, Blue, five pirouettes, Green, two pirouettes, Yellow, three pirouettes, Orange, five pirouettes, Red, ten pirouettes. Total: thirty pirouettes. Attention,

gentlemen. Have a look at Noah's rainbow. . . . Two three five, two three five ten, rrrrrran!

—Stop, Analytic, stop, enough I say! He is going to burst. . . . Good God! . . . Ah!

Synthetic writhes and then, in the tan-bark of the ring, writes with a thumb profound this sombre epitaph:

Here lies
ANALYTIC
this clown reputed sage
—quite insane
and dead of rage
that he could not whirl a hurricane.

MOUNTAIN

FOREST—PLAIN—SEA.

1898.

IMAGES OF MY DREAMS.

The wooded hill o'ershades the river's placid brim and in its tranquil depths still further slopes one sees. The dusky half reflects a forest, green and dim, its azure counterpart, the clouds' profundities.

Here sails the little skiff of cloudy pearl, and there, not far removed, a raft of branches slowly rides. . . . Sudden beneath my eyes the surges of a weir whelm sail and raft. Dull mist the troubled mirror hides.

Images of my dreams, is this your shipwreck drear, raft, wandering sail, to find your harbor in the wave, black vision, vision blue, broken upon the weir, by foaming billows drowned and mingled in the grave?

The wooded-hill o'ershades the river's placid brim. On the other bank gold buttercups sway. In the stormy sky cold lightning-flashes pierce the gathering cloud-wrack grim. . . . And still more images will come, alas, to die!

IN THE WOOD.

A brooklet flows beneath the vaulted wood.

Between the mosses emerald pale, lianas frail pursue its song, others enshroud its bed with shadows moist and blue; a dead birch huddles on its bank; the scarab beetles o'er it skim. Fallen birch leaves, tinged with red, choke that channel dank and dim. Among the mosses a wild and lonely thought fixes my dream with its minute regard. . . .

Why, O my God, should things that are so small (a brooklet flows beneath the vaulted wood) with their little life of moving shadow call this horrible despair to dusk my mood?—Is it because of this monotonous song of a current almost stifled in its bed, or of these things that seem a phantom throng, their sleep with endless sorrow overspread, is it because of life that is so brief, thinking how strait and narrow is our world, that I should see no cause for death's reprieve, nor any reason why mankind was born, save that beyond the border of the wood, like some clear beacon-fire by Nature set, like a summons of this world to light and joy, there shines the vivid green of growing corn?

A brooklet flows beneath the vaulted wood.

EVENING CLOUDS.

The hour has made transparent mountains of ruddy cloud. Upon the fruitful plain there is no fairer hour. Dissolving topaz clouds let fall a golden shower. The evening wind, pursues, and guides them home again.

The setting sun strikes in their flight bright birds, all the birds of the day, and 'tis an ardent and a golden rain glancing across the surge of gently swaying grain.

The setting sun and the wind have fused their charms divine, in twilight's crucible colour and scent combine.

Far from the dying sun, through depths of stainless air, an Oriental pageant glides. Long, bleeding rubies deck an emperor beneath the

balancing of tall, gold parasols. Behind, a mighty people, clothed all in violet pale, sway at the tips of slender golden wands lanterns whereon are limned, in characters of silver, the poppies of sleep.

Have you seen the talons of the Night go past? In the wind she also was of gold. . . . And already the birds are sleeping on the plain, the ruddy heads of the grain are bowed in slumber, and the broad moon awakes.

HYMN TO THE SEA.

Great Sea, too much have fools impugned your empire's might, boasting your random powers in mutual combat fight! Great Sea, whose flashing fire and roaring bolts are hurled when you would fain reflect the turmoil of the world!

Ah, do your thoughts recall of storied Greece or Rome the fleets engulfed like lead to rest beneath your foam? Before and since that day where sail man's swift triremes? The Argo, Spanish galleons, gone like forgotten dreams,

the shattered galleys, bent above your mirror's gloom, which, with uplifted prow, were sucked beneath your flood? The ships submerged, once more your mirrors, filled with blood, united, of great names the all-effacing tomb.

Can nothing mortal, Sea, afford the life you crave and calm the thirst for heaven of your drunk mirrors vast? Is it the Other World you most reflect at last to appease the bounding glass of your insatiate wave?

'Tis at the heaven's high verge that tempests tire and cease, upreared like soaring Hope in the trembling azure air. 'Tis when, at the planet's call, towards the white clouds you fare that, in reflecting them, you dream of love and peace.

In freshets of the Spring, flood your confining bars, and through pale wastes of space mount frenziedly on high to where the sea of Chaos, on far shores of the sky, deposits evermore the infinite salt of stars.

HYMN TO THE AUTHOR OF THESE HYMNS.

O'er realms of song an uncrowned King all things beneath the sun I sing. I have sung the seasons, the hills, the sea, my joyous moods, my cloudy woes. I have sung the calm serenity that from the forest flows. Since life began all things I've proved, all things have suffered, all things loved. O'er realms of song an uncrowned King all things beneath the sun I sing.

Ah, I have sung in admirable phrase when I could raise in air, free, my two hands to the sun. My voice has read the glorious symbols drawn in an unknown and mystic book of prayer. From my lips and from my heart imperious, soaring echoes start from the hid and secret ways. Ah, I have sung in admirable phrase when I could raise in air, free, my two hands to the sun.

All I have hymned, I have sung the golden sun, ogive of brightness set in the infinite of the skies, the winged dawn with shimmering rays that flit from hedge to hedge, aurora, one great rose above the glimmering wood, the noon's red glows that tint the air with glints of ripened fruit, and the silver moon that rocks the dream of night. All things composed my song. I have sung the light. In the harmony of eve I have sung the infinite.

But what I sang with faith most free from base alloy, what I have understood with the profoundest joy, is your deep calm, your solitary heart, enchanted wood! It is your shade, your shade, your shade, O dreaming wood! . . .

 THE STORY OF LOUIS XI.

1898.

Extracts from Book I.

Louis XI, Curious Man.

EN ROUTE FOR GLORY AND ECONOMY.

In the room of the writer. The writer exclaims thus:

Louis XI, for trifles fain, I love you, curious man. Dear chafferer in chestnuts, astutely did you plan to pluck the chestnuts of fair Bur-

gundy! You seemed all friendliness and courtesy. Your hood was hung with images of lead and copper medals. Watchers would have said your pious thoughts were fixed on things above. Sudden you stooped, your long arms outward drove. Gently, not even ruffling your sleek glove, you flehed a chestnut, another, half a dozen, beneath the menacing gauntlet of your cousin.

But if by chance he let his great fists fall upon your back, your scrawny back, you roared with laughter and his stolen goods restored. 'Twas but an empty shell. Void were the chestnuts all. Your gentle industry served your fortunes well.

So I, good singer, sage of little worth, pilfer both heaven and earth, provinces of my brain, under the hands of the Lord, all light. I deftly pull from his fingers the roses of the dawn, the rings of the storm, the lilies of starry nights and gain little ineffable images, a heap of shining things stored up beneath my skull.

To fleh by slow degrees but sure, sweet Louis XI, O man most rare! May God, good politician, O rare among the Louis, hold you in His good care and as, in days of old, when you were pleased, your favorite greyhound stretched beneath your breeches, mildly to judge by that grateful warmth appeased, beneath His golden slippers in Paradise may you be, blest little King at rest, His most fervent counsellor.

And, for having praised you, counter to my teachers, and with all candour having kept your law, when the day of my doom is at hand, when I, in my turn, shall stand awaiting judgment at the bar above, pluck at God's robe that he place me in His love.

Here Commences the Story of Louis XI.

When good Pierre Crolavoine and Jean Le Damoisel, followed with furry pace by all the parliament, in the lurid flaring of two hundred torches, had enriched the basilique of Saint Denis with one more royal body, when Charles Seventh was laid beside Charles Sixth and each sad rite was consummated with all due ceremony.

Then when this was noised abroad, set down in history, honestly cried through all the provinces, that a prince had perished in the Realm of France, when 'twas well averred that they had buried him, tranquilly

agile the worthy dauphin Louis slipped back again from exile with the dream of reconciling economy and glory.

Silvering earth with the lustre of all his chivalry, inheritor of Flanders and heir to Burgundy, called the Terror of the world, Count Charles of Charolais, preceding his cousin, impetuously towards Paris urged his way.

With more sympathetic grace, at a mournful little pace, the proper lullaby sad musings to efface, making that journey hard in a manner fair to see, twenty Burgundians for guard, Louis came back from Burgundy. In panoply of black and brown, perched on a black and yellow mare, perceiving Rheims upon his road it was his whim to sojourn there, in honor of that ancient town graciously there his tour to break and lay his pilgrim's burden down for such a space as it would take to consecrate a royal heir, letting the folk rich feasts prepare, ambrosial breakfasts, savory suppers, since Charles's father paid, elate with princely prodigality, his ancient uncle of Burgundy who followed him, in ducal state,—white beard and violent in the wind beneath his pennon, and behind a thousand staunch Burgundian troopers.

Three days from summer's hoard each pelted each with flowers, while Rheimsian Bacchus poured his fiery-hearted powers. Long they recount those hours 'neath the ogive and the thatch. And long through fair Champagne, bald of the fur of hares, the forests of Ardennes, all virgin of wild boars, the vacant field and fen no sustenance affords to the poachers' sharp-eyed watch.

Nevertheless King Louis, now no more to be Louis as before, a King without a Kingdom, yet a King I trow, without a weight more royal his good mare's back to bow, after this brief cessation resumed the rocking gait of his gentle canter slow, so justly iodine to his silent meditation.

—King without a Kingdom, true King, though, none the less. . . . A doleful destiny! he thought with heaviness.

—In his own land to seem a little exiled King. . . . Ah, bitter is my cup! Such was his sombre dream.

—Behind, my uncle fell, my cousin bold before. . . . Portable prison cell. . . .

—My wits are growing dull, I ween. By the Risen Christ, if in my domain my kinsmen have a conquering mien and for the scepter seem full fain. Reflect, good dauphin Louis . . . no, Louis Eleventh! I mistake. For whom does yonder barley grow? Whose thirst will those fat melons slake?—That of their owners.—If I take and hang them?—Straight their crops revert to the King! So Gallic laws assert.—Where sprouts the grain? Good uncle, say!—Fair nephew, where but in the earth?—And the melons grow in heaven, eh?—No, similarly.—That thing of mirth, a King without a Kingdom! Fie! What man presumed to say it? I? Not more dull, your Lordship, than was my sire, the late Charles Seventh, (may God above embrace him in eternal love and pardon the son that stirred his ire, yet no gall in the royal goblet mixed that he poured not himself in the cup of Charles Sixth) who said to you, “Brother, what manner of thing should you say that I am?” “You are the King!”—but he who suavely thus replied either had some after-thought or lied.

And suddenly, more light, loosing his bridle rein to a rattling pace that rendered sore profane more than one gentle Knight who dallied in the race left to his own devices, slow ambling to refresh his tongue with generous, juicy slices of melons, fresh-cut from the vine beneath a burning sun*: “Bah, if a dupe I be I conquer Paris still, if Uncle Burgundy, complacent, pays the bill, and gives me all Gaul free!” Then stroking his palfry (his mare you opine), “My cousin may shine for his King in the tourney. What matter to me! But three Kings? Two too many!” Such were the thoughts that day of dauphin Louis, nay, of the King I wish to say.

A sunken road in bright sunlight. The King makes a grimace. Behind him, his valet savours a delicious melon.

—“By the Risen Christ, ‘it is hot! Philippe Pot, a slice.’ . . . Come hither, gentle spirit, talk with your King. Although you spring from

*Whoever has crossed Champagne in the heart of summer will not blame them.—P. F.

humble stock I know your merit. I love you, Philippe Pot, you love to whisper low.—What do you think of that ancient fox who follows my journey's course?

—That he is old, and too old a fox has only half his force.

—And of that gallant crimson lion who goes in front of me?

—He has pride to sell. . . .

—'Tis sold!

—And therewith the taint of treachery.

—That I'll repay, believe me, giving him guile for guile. Paris is weary of wars. I think 'twill scarcely smile upon my martial cousin.

—Paris? Ah, who can say what it loved yesteryear? What it will love to-day . . .

—Well said! I shall Paris's proxy be and love what it will love to-morrow. You, I love you, Philippe Pot. Since from no books you borrow your wit, you talk well. By the Risen Christ, a scorching heat! Philippe Pot, a slice. . . . Attend! and retain. Draw near, 'tis a mystery nefarious, a clanking skeleton grim, the lid of whose coffin should be clapped well on! It concerns our cousin. Know that a secret here is hid—where are you looking?—here! 'Tis this. It doth appear Charles the Terrible should be changed to Charles the Temerarious! . . . ” So saying, he tapped his brow, sooth to say, with the slice of melon.

And this gesture, soon made current with commentaries gay, thanks to that babbler arrant, Philippe Pot, who looked so sage, gained more than his madness stark for good Charles the Sixth had won, more than the Maid, Jeanne D'Arc, accomplished for his son, as much, should we wish indeed to pry through history's page and read of times afar, as, in a later age, with victories or without, the paleness of a plume for King Henry of Navarre, the éclat of a jet-black steed with a stratagem blond to pair,—this gesture debonair put prejudice to rout, dispelled suspicion's gloom till the chronicler attests even Burgundian breasts bore witness to the fame of this Louix Rex, so like the rest, eleventh monarch to bear that name.

Red and gold in the night before them Paris glowed.

—Look more closely, uncle dear, if that *enfant terrible* of yours makes no sign, the sign is good.

But this crimson and this gold were the blossoms of a fête, the banners and the flames, 'mid the rocket's soaring fire, were the flaring torches gold, the banners and the flowers that Paris, that good city, waved towards her royal sire.

—Did you ever taste, good uncle, a sweeter summer night?

—An odor honey-sweet blown from the stars there came. Through skies o'erlaid with gold the blue stars took their flight. And they, the stars, were a swarm of bright bees flying fleet with blue, adoring wings round a lily's golden flame.

—Ah, gentle presages of the summer night! From a height of the moon, dear uncle, bright beams of hope are sent. . . .

—Why, hoity toity, nephew! Hope did I hear you say? Does aught obstruct your way? Are you not quite content?

Softly the King of France began to whistle a non-committal air,—while Luna about his tattered hood ran a silver hem of moonlight fair.

THE ENTRANCE INTO ROUEN OF CHARLES THE BOLD.

Counts, barons, captains, chevaliers, all gentlemen of lineage high, and, proudest of the Frankish peers, the greatest, the most glorious one with whom no lesser light might vie, brave Charles of Charolais, eclipsing all the rest, on a day when pure the azure shone and bells were ringing into Rouen, that goodly city pressed. And 'twas sweet pleasure to behold casques and cuirasses all ashine and gleaming housings manifold, bright housings cut from cloth of gold or velvet edged with ermine fine, while some pure damask did combine with fur of sable, and some, (God wot their cost was high), all of gold were wrought; and 'twas sweet pleasure to behold the scurrying pages, children fair, most richly dressed, and, dancing there, before that lordly legislature, rude peasants in a state of nature and lovely women nude, and, whirling 'mid the horses' hoofs dwarfs, pink, red, green, and maidens, too, in rustic coifs and o'er the roofs to see the floating standards blue sprinkled with golden stars, and gules, where, sable, a rampant lion cools his wrath, that with banners all white were blent, and, from the cathedral's sacred fount, in incensed pomp, across the square to see the violet elergy mount

King Louis to hail, the envoy pale, of so grand a count, of so grand a count,* and the blue sky laughed through belfries high, all the bells rang out with joy or pain, how the gun-butts shone, how the lances gleamed! . . . 'Twas sweet pleasure to watch the crimson rain of jetting fountains where sweet wine streamed, hypoeras, that all the assemblage quaffed: and, naked, on a scantling stage, three sirens like Eve in Paradise, that played on lutes sweet, grave and rare, suave and imperial melodies; squires, on the great bridge o'er the Seine, unhooded ouselets painted blue and scattered all the city through one could find a thousand pleasures more that cost full many a louis d'or.

And then it was that the turn of the tourney came.

Charles, in black armour dressed, where glinted golden fires, laying his lance in rest cried, "For the King, messires!" and on his war-horse good he rode with headlong force towards stout Jean des Moulins, erect upon his horse. Mighty the onset was. Sonorous was the shock.

Alas, Sir Jean, alas! He fell as falls a block.

Whereat one saw the strong shudders of grief that ran through all the seated throng in hennin, scarf or fan, and, as in dreams, one heard a hum as when hives are stirred that many lips prolong to a faint and sibilant breeze, the flattering buzz of hushed applause through all the galleries.

JOACHIM.

The night glides, chill and murk, through Paris. In its shades two trembling shadows lurk, two meagre little shades that shiver frigidly, then glide away through the dark.

—Sweet Sire, I have sworn. This night we must depart.

—'Tis well, but follow, follow.

From little street to little street two little, meagre shades stir in the cold,—then stop.

There, before a half-buried hovel, a voice, a little voice, faintly acrid, bitter-sweet, a little voice that steepes itself in tears.

—I am neither lion nor wolf nor fox. I am a man. Croy, gently knock at that door and call, "Dame Simonne of the chains!"

* As a matter of fact, Louis XI, wishing to keep away from Charles the Bold, was not a member of the party.

—Dame Simonne of the chains!

—Good. Listen! Listen! . . . Ask if yesterday some member of her household did not die.

—Dame Simonne, was Death here yesterday?

—Alas, sweet Lord, then you have heard, you also. My son Joachim, my son, last night.

—I am neither lion nor wolf nor fox. I am a man. Croy, aid me, comfort me! Joachim! . . . Croy! I am neither lion nor wolf nor fox, being all three. Croy, I'm a man. Adieu, O little being! . . . Joachim! Come. So be it! Let us go. Dame Simonne has been to me . . . Dame Simonne was to me . . . Croy, I am human. Croy, I weep a little life . . . Joachim! Alas! . . . my little child. . . .

Night, thick and cold and murk, through Paris glides, one spies two little meagre shades that slide and sway in the dark. . . . O that little voice, steeped in tears, steeped in tears. . . . O those little broken cries!

Extracts from Book II.

The League.

THE PITEOUS BATTLE OF MONT-L'HÉRY.

After many a round-about they encountered man to man.

Broached casks being trundled out, archers to drink began (this on both sides of the line) preparedness their plan. ("To guard oneself from funk in the deadly breach," they'd say, "'tis best to start the day by getting slightly drunk.")

Proud Burgundy's left wing messire Saint Pol commands, while on the right wing stands the Count of Charolais. On the right wing of France rides the King while on t'other wing is discrete Messire de Main. The battle is complete.

Between those serried files the château Mont-L'Héry perched on a little height half-smiles, ambiguously.

My God, from these lips released shall there sound no trumpet's swell? Archers, their thirst appeased, joined battle. It is well.

Count Charles of Charolais, advancing with his right against the left of France, routed Messire de Main who, being forced to fly, still flies across the plain.

King Louis with his right thrusting against St. Pol who, as these lines recite, formed Burgundy's left, beheld Saint Pol and all his men, swifter than partridges that hurtle down the breeze, despatched in head-long flight from out our story's ken, not choosing to be killed.

Louis Eleventh and Charolais, each one sure of the victory, from his place, as I scarcely need to say, rubbed hands together full gleefully.

Towards the centre of the fray doth each in turn repair.

And what did they see?—Alas! Sheer emptiness was there.

Their zealous knights, having watched the combat and seen the fugitive crowds that pressed rearward both to the east and west, to the defeat having taken oath, followed their comrades, nothing loth, slipping away without drum or trumpet. And on the embattled plain the princes twain remain.

Alone? Not wholly so. The château Mont-L'Héry (châteaux have got no legs so far as one can see or if they own such things they tread upon the air), that warrior battle-scarred, no more content to wear its demi-smile, in the face of such unsoldierly gyrations, grunted its contumely from attic to foundations.

—Left alone, though, none the less.

To such a point that, by all the press of living men being quite forsaken, Louis Eleventh, that gallant Frenchman, and Charles of Charolais, his henchman (loving each other passing well), the fair occasion might have taken on this sweet summer morn to cry (with gesturing hands the more to tell their mutual trust and amity), "Why, what a welcome meeting! Sweet coz, a cordial greeting!"

But each, alas! in deadly fear rearward pell-mell did ride as though he saw some knacker near hankering for his hide.

The truth I tell, whate'er betide.

Yet at that selfsame hour approximately (for pray what in the sight of God is the space of an hour? of a day? a month? a year?—a year, why, one may well declare that for God 'tis the twink of time that 'twould take to eat a pear), then at that selfsame hour Earl Warwick, who had planned, with Lancaster for liege, Fame's portals to unlock, in an Homeric shock twixt ten thousand Englishmen, unhappily was slain by Edward's baleful hand; in Spain, John Second, intent to purge that princely paragon, Carlos, in whose proud breast the seeds of treason stir, at one blow despatched two thousand grandees of Arragon; the fierce Mohammed Second, Ottoman emperor, put a brusque end to the oldest of the old world, terror-stunned, with one, titanic cimetar stroke destroying Trebizond: of Greeks and Turks a greater horde unshriven went to Jesus than the gold doubloons in cellar stored not by Louis Eleventh, but Cræsus; avenging Venice, more bloody than a heart, her scaffold watered with those inquisitors malign who long in safety slaughtered; briefly, in England, Spain, Venice, Asia, one beheld a greater tide of gore upon the green earth spilled than at Mont-l'Héry, what do I say? than in France, known for knightly deeds, and more famous cavaliers dig spurs in flying steeds.

None the less in no flattering sense 'tis meant.

“By the Risen Christ!” quoth the King, content to regain the lines he had left that morning, “this warning is opportunely sent. Upon my scutcheon's fame a shameful blot 'twould fix, with clashing steel to vent the broils of politics.” And to himself he smiles, “Success will swell my sails if against cunning wiles brute strength no more prevails!”—When his attendants came by his chaplet's beads beguiled he blessed the Holy Name, most happy and most mild.

Extracts from Book III.

Master Oliver Le Dain.

SOUNDS OF BELLS AND OF PRECIOUS STONES.

Bruges. Palace of the Duke of Burgundy, June 15th, 1467.

The old duke Philip died one night in the arms of his jesters three. A thousand follies did he recite of Charles the Seventh's court, then, in full cry, stopped short,—and paling suddenly.

—“If you love me, gentle sirs, ring all your bells,” said he. “To man’s eternal home I think God summons me. My life’s iniquity to you I now confess and my latest words as well, a web of groundless lies. Good Jehanne of Lorraine ’mongst men loved Charles the most but, of this be well advised, mistress she ne’er has been save to King Jesus Christ.”

Then bowed his head and rendered up the ghost.

Tinkling their bells most mournfully (glide, glide, pointed shoe), through many a vacant corridor filed the jesters three, straining on tiptoe, one finger in air.

They stopped at every open door. “Monsieur de Commines! Monsieur de Commines!” they whispered. Never a voice replied. “No buffoon can with Death compare,” one of the three fools sighed.

From attic to cellar their way they wended, from cellar to attic re-ascended. All was deserted. No. The moon followed their search from room to room. From window to window they saw her glide. “She mocks us with that steady stare,” one of the three fools sighed.

On the towers to the East, to the West, to the South, one tom-cat, two tom-cats, three tom-cats screech. Miaou-oo! Miaou-oo! Long live lean tom-cats and lean fools, too!—“Nothing can make the moon digress,” one of the three fools sighed.

On the tiles of the tower that is toward the North since that night no tom-cat ventures forth. There the good duke defunct doth too often rove to shine the moon with his golden glove,—scrip! scrap! the better to light his drinking, much having striven, the storms in his casque—scrip! scrap! the better to light his drinking. . . .

—“Do our wits begin to craze?” muttered that trio of fools. All the world is at Liège, and monseigneur Charles.

But thinking this they erred.

For a chronicler, ’tis plain, that in fools to put belief is to take the flooding rain for a pocket-handkerchief.

In truth, monseigneur Charles, adroitly insinuated into a cabinet’s black recess, since dawn had watched and waited, hid from the heaven’s clear gaze to pry through the key-hole’s chink with his great blue eye. Curled in that snug and secret nook he had seen the last grimace at the world on the face of the aged duke.

And when our trio of fools, as dawn made bright the east (poor bumpkins that they were), after all this futile pother, reclimbed the

spiral stair to the room of the late deceased, what sight confronts them there? . . . monseigneur Charles tenderly weeping before the duke his father.

Low in the dust he kneeled, with frantic pantomime pardon for his misdeeds imploring. He besought a parting benediction, alas! from that good aged duke so rigidly congealed, his breast still arrogant with store of jewels rare, gems that he left to sing 'neath the fingers of his heir.

But never a word replied the good old gaffer, and for cause.

In costly velvet clad, cuirassed with a scintillating Alladin's treasure, for three days now he had tasted scarcely a morsel of food, starved to death like a beggar, perishing of hunger, in a happy vision of angels, of bells and precious stones.

So, while grim tocsins through belfried Bruges clanged the hoarse fanfare that calls to war and, in the morning's cloudy air an armed host wakened, their souls on fire with the gentle hope that they soon might go to sack Liége with savage glee, ravage and loot to their hearts' desire till the very walls should know their ire, Charles, Duke of Burgundy, went forth from his château.

THE MIRACULOUS CATCH.

The tidings seemed so Heaven-sent,—an uncle dead so à propos—my dear little Louis Eleventh was fain to properly express his glee and gain additional content with a modest fête, but intimately, in pleasant society.

Master Tristan, all imagination, counseled a picnic in the plain, and as he blinked with his sly red eyes, "I consent," said the King. "'Tis good advice. You're an old villain, though, just the same."

Next day, 'neath skies of celestial blue, gay and content, my sweet little King, Louis Eleventh, with Tristan L'Ermite and their fair, frail friends, Simonne of the Chains and Perrette of the Treasure, together came to fish for the gudgeon that swim in the Seine, at the reedy foot of the Tower of Nesle.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet.

Agape in boredom's black abyss no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

Simonne of the Chains, soul and heart fast bound to the heart and soul of her well-loved King, like a dainty water-lily bent above an ancient nenuphar, on her lover's threadbare shoulder leant her bosom's snows, her brow of milk, her little nose of swan-white silk; and, now and then, the gracious King, Louis of France, with a tender look, would bid his lovely handmaid bring a squirming maggot to bait his hook. Then 'twas with such a melting charm that into a small, green box she poured one, 'twas with such a sweet and profound appeal that she gave the creature, all quivering, to that reclining King, her adored one, that Louis the impulse no more restrains but kisses an ear (not the ear of the maggot but that of Simonne of the Chains), amorously whispering into its hollow, meekly bent, "You shall be present when I call the Three Estates to Parliament."

Perrette of the Treasure (formerly King Louis' light-o'-love, your pardon!—now bequeathed, a charming guerdon, to Tristan by royal clemency) was plump and fresh as a Rambler rose, cheeks like a peach, ample bosom bare, where, in duplicate glows the rising sun, each breast an orb, but a pointed one, starred with grains of beauty ambulant (fleas I would say), whereon the gaunt Tristan from underneath his hood full often lets his glances brood. And when good Tristan, his line drawn taut, a fresher maggot would fain acquire, 'twas with a manner so languor-fraught the plump dame granted this slight desire, that, quite transported with Cupid's blisses, he dropped his line her side to gain! The line, released, went flic, flac, floe, and sank beneath the Seine, while Perrette received on her neck, all warm, two or three hearty headsmen's kisses.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin. He strides along his tedious beat, crushing the grass with careless feet. Agape in boredom's black abyss no consolation can he find. The fall of Buridan it is that occupies his mind.

He saw with inattentive eyes, like a flower beside the river's brim, a certain Master Villon skim the reeds in chase of dragon-flies. From eyes ablaze with anarchy a side-long glance he sometimes sends towards the place where those boon-companions ply the angler's art with their gentle friends. Master Oliver, still a virgin, having other fish to fry,

that advent scarcely heeds. Vaguely he saw Master Villon disrobe among the reeds, but merely murmured in slumbrous tone, like one who speaks in dreams, "That naked gentleman is not unknown to me, it seems."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. The maggots spun in vain, in vain. . . . And Master François Villon, now swimming in mid-Seine, as he floated, whispered to his brother fish, "Liberty forever! Don't let yourselves be caught!"

"Gossip," said Tristan, "if you are good, and sage withal, I here engage to give you a pass, wherewith to break the cordon of the Scottish guard when I hang and when I decapitate." Quoth Perrette of the Treasure, "A neat reward." "And," continued Tristan, in merry vein, "if your heart does not bid you the fatal view shun, some fine Spring morning you shall see the rapid and joyous execution of the virgin Oliver le Dain." "I'll be there, I'll be there," responded Perrette, clapping her hands with glee.

—"Peace!" cried the King, "or this turbot I miss."

—"A turbot, seigneur, is a fish of the sea," . . . timidly ventured the tender Simonne. "With my mother I've sold full many a one in the market-place of Saint-Honoré in the time of my virginity."—"A fish of the sea, eh? Then that was why I missed him!" the monarch made reply, not disconcerted in the least!

"Days that are o'er will return no more," hummed Perrette, on her hose intent. "Yes, youth has only a single time," Tristan intoned in hearty assent. Thereat the timid, the tender Simonne cooed to an air that is little known, "'Twas twenty years ago my mother died." It needed only that. Tristan dissolved in tears. While the King as he fished the wind chanted stentorianly, "No, no, my friends, I do not wish a thing of naught to be! . . ."

And Tristan L'Ermite landed naught. And Louis Eleventh landed naught. In vain the tempting maggot spins. The æsthetic gudgeons loud applaud, clapping their frantic fins. Applaud no doubt, is figurative but who knows what fantastic dream is truth in the depths where fishes live at the bottom of the stream?

At the reedy foot of the Tower of Nesle, those cronies good, headsman and King, in chorus sing like birds of the wood. And about their floats the little fish waltz as sweetly as heart could wish.

Master Oliver, still a virgin, stands sentry near the river's margin.

Then suddenly Perrette smothered a laugh in her skirt. My sweet little Louis Eleventh, feeling his line drawn taut and heaving it up with ardour, a king-fisher had caught. "A wager," Tristan said. Simonne, "A wingèd gudgeon," cried. And Master Oliver halted dead in the middle of his stride.

"On my word, the judgment was too empiric," mused Villon, swimming beneath the stream. "To fish for a gudgeon and catch a bird. . . . In the bourgeois soul of that curmudgeon mean, somewhere survives the germ of a lyric!"

And about their floats the little fish waltzed as sweetly as heart could wish.

Extracts from Book XII.

In Complicity with Heaven.

THE HEROIC RESISTANCE OF THE CITY OF BEAUVAIS.

It seemed that Master Tristan L'Ermite was not deceived. Burgundy judged herself considerably aggrieved, what do I say? dreamed only of vengeance, and lusted after war. To be just, when I speak of Burgundy one must substitute therefor Monseigneur Charles, those honest carles, the Burgundians, if interviewed, I know full well would have made reply, "Better it is one's phiz to dye with ruddy wine than with blood." What would you have? They are men of sense who naught of frontiers know save of the rustic sort that fence the fields where their harvests grow.

The cities of the Somme regained beneath his caressing mittens, and the wealth he drew from Guyenne close-snuggled against his slippered feet, our clever King Louis found himself more powerful than ever. His royal soul could bask in happiness complete.

Charles did not hesitate, but mustered up his rage, and, as one rends a garment weakened with wear and age, with a great and sudden blow he tore the truce asunder. The Flemish gold had aided him new armies to prepare. With these once more he invaded France, led by the lure of plunder.

Simultaneously he published a haughty proclamation bidding all peers and gentle-folk throughout the Gallie nation to unite for the overthrow of that villainous fratricide,—puffed up with spleen and pride 'twas thus that his monarch he maligned, that good King who had crossed himself from his brow to the earth beneath when he heard the heavy tidings of his younger brother's death—to unite in avenging that most unnatural murder whose pitcous parallel you could not find in the annals of Christian Europe for all of thirty years.

Proclamation and spleen well sewed with fair white thread.

Apparently the Duke of Burgundy within this specious snare was netted, but it was not he who had invented the thread to cut the ambrosial butter minted in his fair domain. From his side he waited Fortune's chances, keeping his lances whetted.

Charles, from the other, took and pillaged Nesle, which city, formerly his appurtenance, but ravished from him by King Louis of France some time since, in the alien interim had yielded to King Louis of France twice the love that it owed to him. For that grim countenance gave fear to all the world.

Citizens, garrison, bowmen, burghers, wives, and babes were the object of a wholesale massacre, paying the price of defeat beneath the knives of their foemen till each street was softly paved with piles of slain. The blood above their bodies flowed in a current several inches deep.—When the Duke rode into the city great was his satisfaction. The tail of his horse was trailing in the blood.

His face was lit by a wide and savage smile.

“Behold the fruit,” he cried, “that grows on the tree of war. A goodly sight, in sooth! By the rood, I have good butchers in my employ.”

Then he spurred full tilt through the midst of the corpses. weeping with joy the while.

King Louis, being a man experienced, swift and wise, upon that crimson card let fall a trump with speed. He had just concocted a plan of campaign, a simple strategy whereby to neutralize his enemy at need.

Around the armies of Duke Charles, which gaped thereat in great amaze, the light-armed archers of the King, under the conduct of Dammartin, ravaged the country, set ablaze the crops, and drove away the cattle.—Yet scrupulously avoided battle.—These skirmishers the swallow aped. If at the verge of the far horizon, uplifted 'gainst the heaven's blue, they for an instant clapped their eyes on a standard with a lion, pfuitt! at topmost speed away they flew, leaving around Duke Charles a barren plain bereft of harvests, villages and foes.

Yet forward, none the less, he goes.

He marches with close-clenched teeth, while his gut with hunger grapples.

He marches to join with Brittany, his ally, persisting ever in the fond belief that his brother-duke, having conquered in Normandy, with toothsome spoils is sated, being stayed with foaming milk and comforted with apples.

More weak, more thin, with every step he needs must stop some day. He stopped before Beauvais, which grimly awaited him.

* * * * *

Antoine Canard, whose surname was de Latre, equerry in the stable of the King, precipitately left the royal court, on the morning of July the twelfth, to bring a missive to the inhabitants of Beauvais under the seal of their most gracious King, Louis Eleventh, wherein he did convey "to his most deer and well-loved subjects" thanks for their vigorous, their leonine, resistance to Duke Charles of Burgundy, whose stubborn ranks besieged them with unshakable persistence.

Though naught redounded to Duke Charles thereby save increments of shame and infamy. Always springing to the assault, always hurled back again. But if the point of his warlike lance was somewhat worn away, the edge of his robust appetite grew keener day by day.

Alas! the victuals were in Beauvais.

When with his warriors true he strove their walls to scale, Beauvais' bold burghers threw, what, think you? roasted quail? No. Butter, radishes? Pray try another guess. Lambs? Oxen? Well, not often. Fresh strawberries with cream? Canteloupe? Salsifies? Fie! You either mock or dream. Molten lead on their eye-balls dropped. 'Gainst their noses flaming torches fell, (full-blown roses, good to smell), and o'er all their bodies a joyous pell-mell, hurtled down from the ram-

part's brink, comprised of furniture, paving stones, roofing-slates, bullets, half-gnawed bones, excrements of various sorts, sledges, anvils, nails, both big and little, wooden casks and steel retorts, casseroles, kitchen dishes, spittle, spoons, forks, frying-pans, urine, ink, hot grease and lots of boiling oil that sudden conflagration spreads, tomb-stones, well-curbs, gutters, walls, the belfry with the bell that calls a last alarm, and small bells, too, which graciously tintinnabulate rained down on those devoted heads.

What did they throw besides, naught but the truth to state?

Ah, many objects, sharp, contusing, slitting, cutting, smashing, bruising, rough, protuberant, horned and jointed, toothed like a saw, like a plough-share pointed. Earth, sheet-metal, iron, steel, and chiselled stone were taken, humped, bristling, twisted, ragged, confused, irregular, misshapen, coated with rust and moss, in shreds, in strips, in wedges, pocked, riddled, shaped like a cross, like a jack, like a hook, with slashing, jagged edges, crashing, roaring, whistling, snoring, going humph, ouf, louf, pouf, pang, srang, trangl, balaám, bottóm, bettáng, batár, arará, raraboúm, bul, bul, brelóc, relíc, reláps, mil, bomb, marl, broug, batócl, miroból, pec, poc, quett, strict, pac, dyex, mec, pitt, see, seef, swahf, fleek, fang, breec, brrrrr . . . that crushed the skulls, enlarged the noses, knit the ears, slit the mouths, sent in jumbled rout, teeth, chins, cheek-bones, elbows, arms, legs, toes, as, scorning one for an omelet no doubt, they wedded eye to eye, denuded the shoulder-blades, caved the thorax and chest in, chilled hearts past the pit of the paunch protruded, through the right buttock, then through the left one went prying, spinning them into a false intestine, bashed to a jelly the testacles, made knee-pans into billiard-balls, ravelled the feet into strange abortions, in an instant's span deftly cleft a man into five, six, seven quivering portions.

Yes, indeed, and now once more, what was it that they flung?

Taunts, dead bodies, arrows, dung?

Still better! (tremble with me)—dwellings. And had aught increased the martial ire that swelled their bosoms, I suppose they'd have pitched the town entire on the helmets of their foes!

Happily Dammartin, anticipating this crisis, privily entered into Beauvais with his nimble bands of bowmen and bade the burghers stay these glorious disbursements. Estimating, wise warrior that he was, that 'twould embarrass his monarch such expenses to defray, he quickly brought the city to its senses, from that time forth conducting the defenses on lines conforming to the accepted mode. For from every side

a vast array of troops each day towards the postern port press, eager to raise the siege of that valiant civic fortress. Duke Charles, a Cæsar every inch, in his haste to ease his hunger-pineh with a crusty loaf, and his thirst to quench were it but with a firkin of unfermented wine, while with air-drawn dainties his mind made free, had omitted to militarily invest Beauvais on the side of Paris. And troops, troops, troops continuously through that open pathway flowed.

On this side, as on the other, one might suppose a joyous truce would soon protrude its nose.—The King, then, gave his valorous subjects thanks and by the missive Master Antoine Canard, chief equerry of his stable, did consign into their hands this fourteenth of July, exempted them from villein-tax and gabel, restored the ancient privileges bestowed upon Beauvais in the days of Philip the Fair, called them, to crown their honors' shining load, the worthy progeny of Charlemagne, saviours of the proud empire of the Franks, promising they should be perpetually objects of his especial love and care. Then, in conclusion, begged, nay commanded them, to lay his royal homage at the feet of a certain Dame Laisné, thenceforward known to fame as Jeanne Hachette.

A glorious and an almost national fête was held in Beauvais that fourteenth of July. In default of chiming bells, that had gone to coif the climbing Burgundian, the martial trumpets blared their loud acclaim. Banners brilliant with sunlight around the ramparts wound, the great procession of Saint Angedresme; and, to disgruntle Charles, with his faithful bastion-stormers, who, foiled and furious, watched them from the plain, tartlets were munched by public and performers.

LET PASS
MY SWEET LITTLE LOUIS XI.

By easy stages, my sweet little Louis XI from Nantes to his little Plessis-le-Tour jaunted contentedly; fine and dark, supple and sweet, perched on his orange mare, oftentimes little Louis XI in the first gray dawn of day sniffing the odor of hay in the dewy breeze;

oftentimes on the white road and whistling to the lark, at the edge of the nodding wheat that chimes 'neath the southern sky;

skirting the hawthorn hedge, all armoured with snowy sheets that wave and dry in an ocean wind, surcharged with the salt of the sea;

oftentimes little Louis Eleventh slumbering peacefully, lulled by the drowsy motion of his mare;

little Louis XI shaded by azure forests deep (do you hear the voice of the cuckoo?—no, I am asleep).

by the brink of the fountains where young virgins laugh between slim reeds with arrowy rain agleam, little Louis XI one eye uncloses, amply sufficient it would seem.

by the reach of the stream where the curlews skim one drowzes, one rouses, one lives in a dream, a vision vague and dim;

in front of the wind-mills that signal each to each, little Louis XI raised his hand in salute;

not far from isolated granges where freely the fattened porker ranges, where the pigeon, beside the embastilled hare, in the quiet coos so sad an air that the heart is like to drown with sorrow, where at times a band of ducks and geese with gilded beaks in panic flees from the coming of a King of France who, in the farm-yard court perchance, from two sun-burned women, who smile beneath their sheaves, a bowl of fresh milk would borrow;

or on a wherry crossing o'er the waters of the lovely Loire, his fingers clutching the nostrils of his mare, his eyes on the rower of the ferry, a specimen extremely hairy, uncompromisingly hirsute;

or under the rosy favors a friendly tempest waves while crackling thunders surge the tufted cloud-wrack through; little Louis XI, without more ado, crosses himself with both hands yet saves the reins that he may more certainly be kept from hurtling earthward to crush some clump of spurge beneath his somewhat thinly cushioned rear: yet lets his frightened mare, in headlong flight, tear through the meadows, rush through flowering broom, splash under-foot the innocent marguerite, crush with her hoof the cowslips' petals five;—in the midst of the storm's mad strife, quite calm upon his beast, he waits the rainbow to raise his head again, then emerges from the proof muddied from head to feet; clever little Louis XI had never the least complaint to urge;

near great châteaux, perched on hillsides olive-gray that skies blue-of-France surround with fleecy mist, little Louis XI rapidly steered his way; and if to relieve his boredom, a country count appeared, whistle in teeth and bird on wrist, little Louis XI, one finger pressed to lips that a secret smile caressed, in his servitor's ear would whisper low this single word "Incognito . . .";

near villages, grouped together like flotsam, on the plain behind the heather's gently heaving swell;

infinitely rocking billows of the plain! O all those shining villages by waves of herbage lulled! . . . (someone nods on his mare);

when at evening he passed through the back-streets of the towns, a strain of martial music often accompanied him: a troop of gamins beating on pots in the sunset-crimsoned dust; little Louis XI marked the measure with his chin;

the hood pulled low o'er his brow he travelled tranquilly and though now and then a cow stared at him curiously, though an occasional cur or thistle-cropping ass with meditative gaze beheld their monarch pass, yet in truth the King on his tawny mare passed unrecognized everywhere:

oftentimes little Louis XI listening to the angelus in a wind that is laden with clustered memories;

oftentimes little Louis XI gnawing a crusty loaf (the white bread of our Lord, but with golden cheese above), for little Louis XI with never-failing zeal sought for his little oesophagus a palatable meal;

oftentimes little Louis XI in the twilight's dusky deeps: it seems that he advances, one would say that he retreats;

or Louis XI, fine and dark, against a background of stars, lulled in a ray from the moon, little Louis XI his face upraised to heaven, his little bottom cradled on his mare, fine Valois head envisaging in dream force universal, little Louis XI probing the provinces of the firmament, slyly in search of his accomplice, God.

Plessis-les-Tours!—one crept in quietly . . . Charlotte slept. King Louis of France soon after did the same,—not without having seized the chance a little to tickle the dame.

ANTIQUE IDYLLS

and

HYMNS.

followed by

THE SPORTS OF WINTER AND SPRING.

1900.

THE CUP OF MENALCHUS.

Tityrus, on my cup warmly the season glows! Beneficent Tityrus, the wine you pour for me in its scented boxwood bowl doth range most amorously, like showery pearls that poise in the bosom of a rose.

For round its bowl are wrought bright figures manifold, which vividly depict such gay adventuring, the beverage, clear wine or crystal from the spring, rejoices, through itself such pageants to behold.

And oft their sight consoles my ennui, as I quaff, more than the Sabine wine so fresh from cups of wood.—Beneficent Tityrus, I have drunk. The wine is good. Follow my finger's end, regard, and learn to laugh.

Here, first, I've shown a tree and, 'neath its leafy tent, four charming, naked babes, chubby and innocent, like monkeys who rehearse their master's every move, mimic the gesturings invented by young love.

Tityrus dost thou know how, furious and blind, tyrannous love subdues all amorous mankind? Look, Tityrus. Approach. Your artist eyes to please, carved to the life behold the virtuous Herecules.

He, thread by thread, unwinds, beneath the moon's pale mask, that which he wove by day under importunate eyes. At his lady's feet his club is dropped. Relaxed he lies, profoundly sunk in sleep above his little task.

O'er all the amorous swains Love triumphs. By his doom Phœbus Apollo, god of circling planets, came a shepherd's humble cloak eagerly to assume. My great-coat is portrayed above his shoulder's flame.

See, and 'tis I, Menalchus,—here, is it not well done?—who seize the reins and houp! drive headlong up the sky clear to the goblet's brim the coursers of the sun. Yet I cling to my car o'erturned in heaven's profundity.

He who goes hurtling down is not I, be it understood. 'Tis Phaeton, indeed, at whom Menalchus mocks. Sheer to my flagon's depths see how he falls, and shocks, crushing his hapless head, on its sonorous wood.

At her open casement there fair Danae inclines, and, trembling all at once, her heart with joy astir, at a dawn in whose dim light a golden shower shines, takes to her passionate breast the minted Jupiter.

Do but behold this stream drawn with an art so true one hears the gentle strain its flowing waters sing. Nude Psyche, plunged waist deep in the wave and murmuring, combs out her golden hair, the breeze, the vaulting blue.

Furling, unfurling, furling their wings three cupids fair, flutter about her head, dazed by so sweet a prize, one by the foot made fast is tangled in her hair. One burns his tongue with beams from those resplendent eyes.

The third, through the wave perceiving the marvel of a thigh, recurving tumbled locks where golden lustres gleam, and sleeking ruffled plumes, plunges besottedly, and drowns his silly self in the centre of the stream.

With luminous belly, see, 'neath branches beauteous, tippling from that great cask the fat Silenus pours, Bacchus, god of fruitful vines.—But 'tis enough discourse. . . . Hum! Hum! . . . the season's warm on my cup, good Tityrus!

MORPHEUS

Through lyric summers gay, when sunlight floods the air, while lush and verdant grass makes all the world more fair, swift gods and agile nymphs, in lovely multitude, speed o'er the plains, by the swarm of their golden hair pursued.

On their shoulders, azure drones of snoring ease partake. The lady-birds clasp flowers about their calves and thighs. At the rosy breasts of nymphs great yellow butterflies palpitate; and their heels trail scarabs in their wake.

Poised on the flank of hills, where silver sunlight pours, brown oreads emerge from temples white and small. Dryads, the light of groves, come trooping, one and all, slipping their naked forms through blue, arboreal doors.

With May and roses crowned, or rushes from the weir, to the tawny arms of fauns the nymphs their waists resign. "Raise like a dawn your arms through the troubled atmosphere, Eunice, Aeglea, Naïs, Eione, Proserpine."

Beneath the wheat unveil your suppleness, Phrixa! Pan follows you, both horns burning with solar fire. The frou-frou of your course through murmurous grass, Phrixa, has wakened in his heart full many a fell desire.

And thou, Pan, lithe and dark, fleet god, in mid-pursuit, bend down, on the bluets snuff the print of a lovely foot, pluck at a heel, entire the vermeil blossom pull. Thanks to your heat the wheat unfolds in baskets-full.

Sudden, what frantic nymphs seek the horizon's rim, what sprites dissolved in dew back to their fountains flee! Lo, Morpheus comes, thick-veiled in shadowy gauzes dim. Each dryad, terror-struck, takes refuge in her tree.

Swiftly the scrambling fauns attain the craggy height. Like will-o'-the-wisps their horns efface each shining speck. Morpheus, god of shades, comes from the dawn in flight. The hot fist of the sun brandished above his neck.

With summer's heady tufts his nostrils over-full, he staggers, Morpheus, the god with feet of wool! Drunken with heated air himself the god assails, rending, with out-stretched arm, his dimly shimmering veils.

In softest shade the grass his drowsy form doth fold. He sprawls along the grass regarding stainless skies. Zenithed Apollo plumbs the pupils of his eyes. He falls. His aqueous eyes smoke under lids of gold.

Still Morpheus, proud-necked, defies the sunlight's force, and towards that orb, whose fires with frenzied poppies swarm, upheaves a streaming breast where silver planets course. . . . Infinite azure, now, is mirrored in his form.

But soon, his ruddy hair, alluring many a bee, a bed of murmur soothes his flaming countenance. Swollen with veins, his fists relax upon his paunch. And on warm turf I hear a snoring deity.

But hark! With sounding horn Diana is awake! High o'er the forest's verge she calls her greyhounds fleet, the color of the moon, in many a dim retreat scaring the stags deep-couched in berry-scented brake.

From summer nights the god doth greatest pomp derive. Morpheus mounts superb amid fresh verdure's scent. Shaking his locks, with bees he fills the firmament. And stars in myriads buzz beneath the heaven's blue hive.

ICARUS

Impetuous, ocean winds whipping his sun-bright hair, what man with dauntless feet thus spurneth vertigo. His long, triumphant shout enwreaths the vales below with circling echoes long, swirled down through eddying air.

Aurora, has some soul escaped hell's scarlet mesh? What man with two gold wings dares heaven's uncharted ways? Shouting he traverses a sky the hue of flesh that emerald-glinting dawn with laurels fair doth glaze.

He soars. The sun appears. He gains its aureate glows, with rays like golden plumes enrobed resplendently. Piercing them with his wings,

more swiftly still he goes. His image and his shade attend him o'er the sea.

He mounts, he runs, he swims the far aethereal meres, sporting and rolling there. What man and bird have mated? Backward he plunges down. 'Tis azure sky! O spheres! . . . His shoulder has, through space, more largely palpitated.

How soft the yielding blue! What matter though he falls? Like water's flow his flight ascends a gentle hill. He traverses, he tears the tempests' azure grill, and laughs at having wrecked those fragile prison walls.

Earth watches. One faint spark still shines uncertainly, one golden point that fades where dusky swallows flit. Seeking his image vague down heaven's swift-deepening pit, he laughs at Icarus decreasing on the sea.

He laughs, he flies, he mounts, he laughs, he has wide wings. For his delight the air he conquers. Mild and meek about his shining limbs the gentle azure clings and amorously rubs his shoulder and his cheek.

Earth and mankind pursued in exultation fond, men's eyes and mountain crests. The force of one, alone, O love! inertia's sway has vanquished and o'erthrown, and the sea, that mirrors him, has risen, vagabond.

New mountain ranges rise created in a cry. Earth speaks and heaves. The oaks, the granite cliffs profound, the heathery plateaus where Titan midnights lie, are its voice. O speak, ye plains, shaping yourselves with sound.

And men in myriads rise to emulation stirred. Standing, high pinnaled, on the precipice's rim, uplifting eyes and arms towards that bold human bird they feel their foreheads' veins pulse with their love for him.

Yet Icarus flies on. It suits his pleasure well. He would find whence fire first came to kindle human clods, see, as medusas dim appear on ocean's swell from azure depths emerge the faces of the gods.

What does he come to gain? He fain would know. He loves. What would he undertake? He would see, the more to prize. What waits behind the blue? The deities one loves? "If 'tis but I who pass? If naught is in the skies?"

"Still I am Icarus! If there is only I, I love myself. O then to proclaim to man, 'My brother, none can blaspheme, except against himself. Great sky, if each is his own god can men not love each other?'"

—And his waxen wings were fused.—O deities barbarous! His perishable wings Jove's thunder-bolts annul. Go, fall, pursue the storm, return, sweet Icarus!—Let us mingle tears of love with the drops innumerable.

But thou, Greece, land of gulfs and of wings, O glorious land! limpid with crystal vales that softly sheltered lie, fairer in pose of faith vertiginous, doth stand forevermore upraised towards the azure of the sky.

THE VOYAGE OF JASON

Argo, great wingèd ship, shaped for adventurous quest, when fifty mighty sweeps from out your flanks respired, cleaving air and reaping seas, toward your far goal you pressed, and fifty heroes bold upon your benches choired.

Was Jason drawn by you or was it he who led, poised on the prow, his arms crossed on the Gorgon's head, parting the wine-dark waves with bent glance unafraid that sped heroic hearts toward glory's accolade?

Uplifted on your keel was that divining tree, Dodona's oak. O Argo, that made your mast. Reared high, it stabbed with bare, lopped trunk the azure of the sky. Slitting its fragile silk, from west to east it passed.

Black, to its topmost spar athrill with strange unrest, it offered unto space an oracle supreme, demanding access there for man's eternal dream, and all the sea and sky unclosed at Jason'shest.

Climbing the mountainous wave it seemed as if you flew, soaring above the spray, and your weight cradling you. High o'er the swollen

sea you faced the tempest's hiss. Then headlong plunged again, whelmed in a green abyss.

From wave to wave you went, breasting the wind's black spate, traversing azure, reaping seas, o'er foamy summits blown, Argo, great wingèd ship, designed to subjugate the uncharted universe, seas, lands, and skies unknown.

You let along your track the human odour float from bare loins, shoulders, arms, bronze-lustred, lithe as steel, of fifty heroes bent above your gliding keel, then dazzling with raised eyes the clouded skies remote.

You furrowed virile winds that glory's breath outblew. O'er his great club Hercules dreamed, at the base of the druid mast. Orpheus touched his lyre, 'neath heavens obscure and vast, and sang that to wanderers the waves of stars are due.

Jason forsook the prow, 'mid driving vapors dank, and saw his rowers' brows rocked to that rhythm rare. Castor and Pollux there swayed in the foremost rank, uniting, like two flames, the beacons of their hair.

Deucalion, Phalerus, Theseus, Amphidamus, Iphis and Telamon, Piri-thoüs, Actor, Mopsus, Laocoon, Iolas and Lynceus, Polyphemus, Glaucus, Meleager, Alector,

the race of giants merged with the offspring of the gods, young men superb, old men in radiant majesty, sounders of each abyss of the soul or of the clouds, the shepherd-boys, the poets, the warriors, knee to knee,

those who had plumbed the world down to its burning mud, the conquerors of the Titans, the sons of Prometheus, ravishers of red flame, purgers of iron's dross, all those your call, stark ship, launched on the heaving flood,

Amphion, Philoctetus, Aeneas, from Neptune sprung, Aeneas, Lycurgus' son, and Aesculapius, Oileus, Argus, Nauplius, Augias, bred by the sun, Phlias the son of Bacchus, Laërtes, Peleus,

near Cepheus, that stern priest, Almenus, son of Mars, young Nestor,

bent to greet Atalanta *beauteous*. With one accord they sang above their flying oars, the heroic burden led by the voice of Orpheus!

Orpheus had arisen, you voyaged toward azure heaven. Blue banners of the winds clacked at your masthead's tip; then a great wave of stars by the lyre's sweet accents driven, upbore you to the sky where still you bounded, ship!

Force, wisdom, pride, and will, by obstacles unbent, in dazzling splendour glowed heroic brows above, and, with a bound, each brow upraised, magnificent, the insatiate thirst to know and the deep desire to love.

Across the starry gulf they steered. Dodona's oak, moistened with cosmic dew, in human accents spoke. Amid their cloudy hair, the heroes, as they flew, felt the inchoate birth of constellations new.

Eternal gravitations the Argonauts embrace. Cadencing hosts of stars, the lyre was lifted high. No more could Orpheus doubt the singing lyre of Thrace was the sonorous soul and centre of the sky.

Staunch Tiphys at the helm sent worlds to fly like foam, eddying down through space, still other worlds to lave. Argus and Nauplius bent, deciphering each wave. Polyphemus kneeled to night's illimitable dome.

Hercules laughed with rage. Swift doom he fain would loose on the Olympian gods in their ingratitude, since Hera, scornful-eyed, hailed him as demigod, while lightly her white hand caressed his eudgel, Zeus.

Iphis and Telamon, toward heaven's dark incubus raising their eyes, in the zenith their valour's goal could trace; and, amazed at the great number of the eyes of Uranus, the exhilarated giants toured genially through space.

Aesculapius and Oileus reframed philosophies, in friendly chat. What words sublime and strange were these? Within each silver beard there rolled a starry dew. Atalanta in their fires annealed her darts anew.

With deft, creative hands, Deucalion the wise, moulding the luminous sleet that down his oar-blade rolls, fashioned in myriad swarms those silver butterflies that, low in Theseus' ear, he called immortal souls.

Pirithoüs, laughing loud, stretched forth his mighty fists, helfting the stars like eggs, orb'd Venus rosy-hued, irised Juno, Saturn gold, Mars ringed with whirling mists the colour of the moon, Jupiter red as blood.

Regarding Orpheus, hearing his song's exultant swell, Amphidamus wept, the worthy, susceptible old man. The agile Meleager up to the mast-head ran, there to refresh his hands with the world invisible.

The young, mild Nestor whistled a tune beneath the moon's pale beam. Those stars that were their brows the Brethren merged in one. The pensive Philoctetus of solitude did dream. Augias watched the dawn, being blond Apollo's son.

Towards the rounded globe of Earth the eyes of Jason strain, spun in a god's great fist, creation's humble cog. He gives a cry. His hands stretch towards the furrowed main, where famed Atlantis lifts two triangles of fog.

Its sombre forests deep indented Europe shows, and on the foamy wave that bathes its rugged rim, 'tis like some Stygian night 'gainst morning's molten glows. Green lakes and glacier-floes illumine its shadows dim.

There burning Asia rears a buckler of bright gold. The mirrored isles of Greece, a flight of azure bees, plunge thither. And above the Afric deserts old, he sees the sand storms swirl their pillared vortices.

The Sea above its bounds uplifts an azure breast where the fair coral isles like scarlet blood-drops roll. He sees the Earth, all white, as if in armour dressed, and the flaring boreal light that fans the frozen pole.

In dizzying bounds, O ship, you scaled the heavens' blue height. The spheres engulfed themselves in your wake's unwavering line. The Milky Way gushed forth from your poop; and gods divine with bludgeoning thunderbolts delayed your deathless flight.

As streaming vapours blend, when Boreas pursues, their daunted forms recoil in unaccustomed fear. Hera expands her veils, flushed Ares shakes his spear, and fierce the lightnings flare in the bare fist of Zeus.

Hurled from his brandished fist, a sudden bolt of fire traversed the seven cords that laced the throbbing lyre. Orpheus dropped his hands. 'Midst hootings, Hercules, seizing her pliant bow from Atalanta's knees,

fired! Reeking comets filled the ether. Wild with pain Hera reeled back through space, her breast all blood-besprent. Heaving his giant sledge through half the firmament, Vulcan smote your mounting prow and dashed you down again.

At every jutting peak a planet crystallised, and you appeared, brave ship, with shimmering ice endued. You stopped, you bounded back and left emparadised, a new-born constellation, your white similitude.

When downward you returned from night's profound demesne, proud hearts ecstatic beat with Olympus dimly seen. When 'neath your plunging prow the white foam spattered high, the phosphorescent sea was like a star-filled sky.

High up above the mast each pensive hero sees, deep in celestial floods, their mirrored vessel bright. In the fixed eyes of Orpheus gazed haggard Hercules. Great-hearted Jason turned to interrogate the night.

Towards what goal of his dream, for what vow of his soul, had you crossed the void of space, O buoyant vessel brave? He scanned the seas. The sirens that sang above the shoal quenched their regards and songs beneath the sheltering wave.

Was Jason drawn by you, or was it he who led, poised on the prow, his arms crossed on the gorgon's head, parting the wine-dark waves with bent glance unafraid, that sped heroic hearts toward glory's accolade?

Fair on the prow was Jason in that effulgent day, with lifted, luminous arms to dawn's first light upborne. O'er all the heroes' brows one saw the lightning play. And Tiphys steered his course straight toward the roseate morn.

"Land! Land!" and in the skies, kindling their quiet peace, stretching dishevelled folds towards Jason's hands, there lay, billowing o'er all Asia the burnished Golden Fleece . . . Assembled on the prow which still pursued its way,

Hereules with his club, with his wrecked lyre Orpheus bold, all that heroic crew with flashing oars outthrown, and Jason, with both hands grasping the Fleece of Gold, assaulting heaven's vault rose, and soared toward the Unknown.

SAILOR'S LOVE.

1900.

THE CORD.

Why knot the amoret again? Lass, is loving worth the pain? The hawser has been snapped in two. Who pulled too hard then? Was it you?

Was it I or was it some other one? The good god of the Christians? Who can tell? At all events the thing was done through nobody's fault, one knows it well.

Into so many hearts love slips! His cable moors so many ships, and through so many rings is passed! Whose fault if it frays and breaks at last?

Too many an amorous man and maid in this world on the selfsame sin do strain. And is it love that is to blame if one finds his cord is somewhat frayed?

Why knot the amoret again? Lass, is loving worth the pain? The hawser has been snapped in two. Who pulled too hard? In faith, 'twas you!

A SONG OF FATE.

Life is short, the sea is wide, my sweet. Our eyes will rarely meet 'tis plain. I am no sailor incomplete. Dead calms occur upon the main.

One must be resigned.

Life is short, the sea is wide.—And so this scares you? Ah, you love but me. If you a little loved the sea you would bid me go.

One must be resigned.

One must submit to death, nor chide, taking it like your love for me.
Sweet, life is short, the sea is wide, and what must be must be.

One must be resigned.

Flat calms and hurricanes that rave, delays and distances remote, the
sombre shoal, the hungry wave that gaping will engulf my boat.

One must be resigned.

And our love and your long waiting true and the new love that will
come to you.

YOU CAN DEPART. . . .

You can depart. The sadness is for me. What do you care that I'm
no longer fair? Forget you? Ah! Our youngsters three are there.
You can depart. The sadness is for me.

You stay despite yourself. Our youngsters three resemble you. The
sadness is for me. They all have sombre eyes. My eyes are blue. They
kiss me, then they run away. Like you!

You can depart. Oh, I will faithful be! You can depart. Remem-
brance is for me. Go, Jean, another love awaits, your heart to snare.
Go, Jean, my husband, go. The sea is very fair.

THE KISSES.

When we two parted never a word was spoken. Almost we thought
our love was sheer pretence. The silence, long drawn out, remained un-
broken. One would have said it was indifference.

Yet our embraces had been warm of yore. You said to me, "Five
days." We thought together. "Five days of kisses, they are quickly
o'er. 'Tis like a fleeting spell of sunny weather."

Tomorrow, storm, today, blue skies adream. One must not ask too
much of love, you know. And then, these sailors, always on the go!
Ships touch and pass. . . . How short our kisses seem!

SONG OF THE SUNBURNED SAILORS.

To the sea their hearts they vow. They will not come again. And even if they came would you recognise them now?

The ocean masks a man. If they return a while, we know not if they smile or weep beneath their tan.

Do they bring back their souls? No. Still at sea they toil. How ardently it rolls, greedy for precious spoil!

They will not come again. They choose waste seas to roam. And even if they came would they have really come?

THE ONE-EYED CAT.

To the kelp the dame is gone, in Guiana is the man, and the little house stands alone all the day.

Alone? Through the closed green blinds in the darkness, something shines like a droplet of the sea.

When the prison takes the man the ocean claims the dame and the one-eyed cat owns the little house all day.

THE CURÉ OF LANGRUNE-SUR-MER.

When the fields are violet with heat in the mid-autumn evenings fair the curé of Langrune-sur-mer, plump, pensive priest with ruddy phiz, his breviary in his hand, surveys with eyes of absinthe sweet the violet, flower-besprinkled land. The guest of the parish road he is, rector rotund who lolls at ease, and till that hour compassionate when twilight spills abroad its dreams a bible ambulant he seems, who drags, with staid and pious gait, where devastated poplars arch, black boots and leaf-encumbered march.

The priest of Langrune-on-the-sea, I have seen him. He has conquered me. It is my whim to be for him, Seigneur, another Lamartine. His phiz is erimson like my heart, but in his eyes of absinthe-green I have seen an ancient anguish start, as he heaved his paunch across the plain, ere day's last glimmerings were dead. In his eyes, pale, moist, and clear, I read regret and longing for the main. This little round curé— Ah, I am sly, you see. Now did I guess it pray? Did someone tell it

me?—wished at sixteen, a lad of grace, a sailor's calling to embrace, this little, round curé.

I would have you watch with me his eyes, the hue of day, when at dusk he hears the sea, to watch the tender ray of his glance when, rapt, he hears the sea climb sombre lands, on his cheeks and priestly bands to catch the glint of tears, when he sees its whiteness dim o'er ploughed fields. Left and right, hat and breviary fly to strew the roadside herb. In the furrows fast he flees, his white hair in the breeze, his eyes ablaze with light, towards the flood that summons him, that he craves all things above, this little, round curé in his lunaey superb!

And you would know that day how great a thing is love.

THE SNUFF-TAKER.

With melancholy gaze fixed on the distant sails, the poor old crone inhales the pinch that comfort gives, and, as her snuff she sniffs, inhales the breeze as well, breathes the offing and the spray and all the memories sere in ocean's depths that dwell, the love she cherished once, lulled to rest its weeds among, her smoke-dried mariner who has gone to Davy Jones.

Ah, the snuff, the pungent air, titillate all her soul and a vanished time recall, deep in her life entombed, the memory of a day drowned in the depth of days, the day the plighted pair, robust beneath the ribbons, among their wedding guests, seated and drinking sweet, the open snuff-box passed, an heirloom of their race, wrought from the fragrant wood by a carver of figureheads.

All that her life has known is regret and bitterness, yet the first of Fortune's smarts, the husband self-immersed, children that had no hearts! To be beaten, sweet it is when one loves the hand that smites. . . . by a husband, by a son, but by one's own flesh and blood. 'Tis still sweet, it is they! But how when they are gone? If prayer like arid sand is only bitterness to the mouth, all creased and lined from too much praying God, then little human means come to bring consolation, tobacco by the waves: old memories . . . she sniffs.

Ah, my God! 'Tis sweet to rest, crinkling her nose in dream, her poor old-woman's nose that formerly was fair, and to be borne away

upon the wings that spread from out the ancient brain cased in that scarred, gray head. Here she received a blow from her grown son, ah, ya-yaie! there from her wedded spouse, the temple was his choice, there from Marie-Annette, so big, her littlest one! and there from Marie-Jean, the child she loved the best.

And then, what would you have? What to do beneath the sun? Gather the slimy help? 'Twere better far to beg. For whom then should one keep one's dignity antique? 'Tis not for the good God who has left you thus alone. Two sous, three sous, four sous, that in your basket toss Parisian demi-mondes in the good months, toil's reward. Slight wind-falls such as these, one knows the end thereof. Two sous for the Eucharist and two to spend for snuff.

SONG AT DAWN.

Where then is my pain? I have no more pain. Where then is my love? Naught I reckon thereof.

On the sweet strand withdrawn, in this hour's serenity, in the innocence of dawn, O the distant sea!

Where then is my pain? I have no more pain. Where then is my love? Naught I reckon thereof.

Waves of ribbons bright, breeze from out the main, waves of ribbons bright twixt my fingers white.

Where then is my love? I have no more pain. Where then is my pain? Naught I reckon thereof.

O'er heaven's pearly way dreaming eyes pursue a sea-gull's plumage gray, all shining with the dew.

I have no more pain. Where then is my love? Where then is my pain? I have no more love.

In the innocent dawn, O the distant sea! 'Tis but a murmuring at the margin of the sun.

Where then is my pain? I have no more pain. 'Tis but a murmuring at the margin of the sun.

PARIS SENTIMENTAL

OR

THE ROMANCE OF OUR TWENTIETH YEAR.

1902.

Extracts from the First Book.

I.

THE MEETING.

(Boulevard Sebastopol.)

Dawn tints the earth with rose, and all the balconies' gold palimpsest.
'Tis the boulevard Sebastopol. On the sky-line glooms the *gare de l'Est*.

All night I must have tramped the mire, an airing to my griefs to give. No longer did I care to live. Then to catch cold was my desire.

Sunlight at heart, 'tis a romance! Well, my heart is warmed again, I find. I have seen, in a heaven blue-of-France, the wandering clouds, all crimson-lined.

In rose I see black buildings high. The trees are rose, the air is rose. It has rained, and all the roofs are rose. The pavement mirrors back the sky.

I hear my heart. The sun's gold ball mounts. Chestnut-trees are flowering bright on the boulevard Sebastopol grown infinitely pure and light.

All gleams, the *gare de l'Est* itself, the puddle that I splatter through. I laugh, as does that little elf with rosy mud upon her shoe.

I'm cold no more. I laugh, I run. How brisk one feels at dawn of day! And I pursue a little fay who wades through pools of dazzling sun.

There's no more thought of dying now. Dawn! And I see the gold signs flare. I see flushed trees and crimsoned air, and, aglow, my heart to you I vow,

O little maiden, splashing gay through the roses of the Boulevard, and I forget, dawn's little fay, all evening's daughters, grim and hard.

A kiss, yes! and I give you all the roses on the soil's fair breast, and the balconies' gold palimpsest, and the boulevard Sebastopol, on the horizon the *gare de l'Est!*

Triumph! . . . as that sweet kiss I take each building to its roof-tree glows.—Will you accept, for a poet's sake, Paris, that wondrous, burning rose?

and the Victory's gold wings above the fountain of the Châtelet? Two crowns to deck the primrose-way, if you but willed it, of our love?

II.

FIRST APPOINTMENT.

(Monge Square.)

Intoxication of spring! The plot of grass is whirling round the statue of Voltaire.—In the green dress vernal sunbeams bring, 'tis an idyllic spot, Monge Square: green grass, green gratings, benches green, green guardian. In warm sunlight swirled, 'tis a fair corner of the world.—Intoxication of spring! The plot of grass is whirling round the statue of Voltaire.

And birds are thronging through the branches pale where heaven unfolds its flowers of blue.—The pigeons love with tender coo. The sparrows flirt a jaunty tail. I wait. What happiness I gain in this

delay's delicious pain! I am gay. I am mad! A lover true!—And birds are thronging through the branches pale where heaven unfolds its flowers of blue.

Upon a bench the hue of hope I mount, or rather poise with balanced stance, o'er the arches of the gay parterre, before the statue of Voltaire. Long life to all, to me, to France! In my breast springs hope's eternal fount. I have the wings of young romance.—To quit the earth upon a bench I mount, or rather poise with balanced stance.

“At one,” she said. It is no more than noon. To those who love the hour is fleet.—Birds sing. The languid sun-beams swoon. Each time that Eve and Adam meet they need a paradise complete. The omnibus, in torpid state, muses on this beyond the gate.—“At one,” she said. It is no more than noon. To those who love the hour is fleet.

Before the statue, two cats, tawny and white—and one is a she, the tawny one,—roll, tumble on the sunny lawn, cuff at each other miaul and fight. The sunlight amplifies your smile, O mild Voltaire, my worthy faun.—Before your statue two cats, tawny and white. roll and tumble on the sunny lawn.

To the song of birds the trees put forth their leaves. I feel the bud of my heart unfold!—And I tremble only to behold the diamonds that the sprinkler sprays o'er the grass, a haze of droplets fine. A rainbow leaves the sage's spine and through a spreading chestnut weaves.—To the song of birds the trees put forth their leaves. I feel the bud of my heart unfold!

The azure flames. 'Neath the bench where the guardian sleeps, a dog sniffs a dog with quivering nose.—Her skipping-rope a school-girl leaps. At her heels come others, rows on rows. The concourse of their shadows sweeps now large, now small, along the ground, while rivalling voices chant the round: “Little flame! Great flame! 'Tis to light the Blessed Name!”—The azure flames. 'Neath the bench where the guardian sleeps a dog sniffs a dog with quivering nose.

Here is the vendor of cocoa musical. Charged with gold taps he comes before us. His taps are gleaming serpents all whence squirts his beverage sonorous in cups the clamouring children hold. Our appetite let us content. Quick, of your brew a penny-worth, dazzling Laocoon! I

toast all Nature and the teeming earth. I toast thy bronze ebullient, thou who art smiling at me there, good, old Voltaire, sly, genial host.—Here is the vendor of cocoa musical. His taps are gleaming serpents all.

Ah, Spring, what fire arises from the ground! What fire descends from heavens fair!—Before the statue of Voltaire I await my Manon, newly found. And yet, though she is late, Voltaire still sits urbanely pondering. I follow his regard to where an Easter daisy breaks the turf. I wait—I wait, O heaven! I wait, O earth! I wait 'neath all the flames of Spring.

'Tis two o'clock. Let us pluck this marguerite. "A little, much, most passionately. . . ." Most passionately, Manon, be fleet! Come soon, come soon, I beg of thee.—Cynic you smile at me as though scant content to my soul to bring. Wretched encyclopaedist!—O! . . . She comes 'neath all the flames of Spring! . . .

And the trees revolve, and all the grass-plot turns around the statue of Voltaire.—In its tender greenness, one discerns 'tis a delicious spot, Monge Square. Green grass, green gratings, benches green, green guardian. In warm sunlight swirled 'tis a fair corner of the world.—I mount a bench the hue of true romance. They must see me now from every nook in France!

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V.

ON THE PONT AU CHANGE.

(On the evening of a quarrel with Manon.)

They are selling flowers tonight the Pont au Change along. The air with every gust distills the tube-rose balm blent with the scent of dust. Tomorrow is the day to the Virgin sanctified. An hour all golden-bright streams through depths of western sky and sheds a tawny light amidst the sauntering throng. One sees the troubled stir of the *place du Châtelet* where crowded street-cars glide, where hansoms jolt and sway. From a square that sprinklers spray a light mist mounts on high to undulate

and blur the soaring Tour Saint-Jacques. The air with every gust distills the tube-rose balm blent with the scents of dust.

Upon the perfumed bridge I wander with the throng. Roses and pinks that ridge the concrete railings long, in odorous cascade come tumbling to the street to mix their petals sweet with the wheels' slow cavalcade, in whirling spokes enwound, with skirts that brush the ground, with the heedless rush of feet.

Seven strokes will shortly sound from the clock of the *Palais*. O'er Paris roofs the west is like a lake of gold. A dubious storm doth scold from out the cloudy east. The air is warm in gusts. And thinking of Manon I sigh, and sigh again. The air is warm in gusts, and rocks the ample smell of flowers my feet have crushed, and I sigh to but behold fresh, violet currents run 'neath the arch of the *Pont Neuf* under the dying sun. "Manon, your heart can say if I have loved you well!" Thunder growls from far away. The air is warm in gusts.

Between the pots of flowers, the sheaves, the fresh bouquets, and each glimmering aperture of the balustrades, one sees a sluggish river glide 'neath glints of sombre gold. It seems as though the Seine, oppressed, were soon to die with the passing of the sun whither turns its yearning tide. Its troubled water rolled in violet agonies bears far the rosy sprays dropped from the parapets. From the sun that sets in pain a final, feverish ray twixt the still quays doth touch the wideness of the Seine. With its burning pulse it beats each little wave that sighs. Disconsolate I lean on the railing of the quay. The air surcharged with sweets is full of memories and my thought is of Manon who has made me bear so much.

What starry ray doth glint o'er the Louvre where, far away, heaven still preserves the tint of hope? Ah, now I guess. Manon sang of it of yore: "It is the star of love. Do men and maids that yearn, there, on high, love evermore? . . ." You burn through flowing tears, Venus, with diamond sheen, but a dark smoke comes between, your image fair to blast, as a bitter present conceals a happy past. What matter to the smoke the tears, the wretchedness of lovers sad who lean on the parapet at eve. "I will make fast my heart 'gainst all the dreams that grieve." What though a starry dew envelopes all the night or the swart tempest's gloom dusks heavens of apple-green. Nothing can touch the heart that beats for self

alone. Once Manon sang to me "Love is ephemeral." "Even as your beauty is," I answered, "and your flesh . . ." Swift doom will blight these flowers that tremble 'neath the storm. Heaven thunders, lightnings flare. I feel my strength return.

O downpour grave, austere, where mounts the soul of stones, and which, in plashing zones, diffuses frigid light, congeal my soul on fire, render my heart severe, impose your freshness sweet on the hands I hold to you! The rain a little clears. Its force declines . . . I wait. . . . What! The full moon appears? What! The clouds are passed and gone? What! All the heavens in bloom? And the air with every gust distills the tube-rose balm, roses, and pinks, and dust? A star of love doth soar above the Louvre? I buy bouquets in goodly store, laugh from my heart's ripe core. What! Am I a brain-sick child? And to Manon I fly, my arms with roses piled, her pardon to implore.

BULLIER.

Pals of an hour, lovers' content, pocket-book and sentiment.

Bullier whose splendour Ottoman, adorned with globed electric lights, a bevy of fair maids delights from the Tavern of the Pantheon, the East for twenty cents displayed, each odalisque in whose hareem for a five franc piece may be seen, save when the Lenten world repents, Bullier in gay mode Ottoman makes welcome all the sentiments that stir the pulsing youth of France 'neath its electric colonnade.

Loves of a year, loves of a night, pals of an hour or an instant slight, fancies of students, passion-bent, the whims of future notaries,—pocket-book and sentiment, young process-servers' lunacies! if this should last one's life entire would one's good parents be content?—Hark to that churl in passion's fire: the lightning stroke, to die thereof, that old quack-doctor who'd aspire to little Esmeralda's love. "Dost thou remember when they played "España" since that hour malign my heart bleeds . . ." We may well opine the doctor will not die of it. Later 'tis we the world will quit scared by the lightning of his trade.—Pals of an hour, lovers' content, pocket-book and sentiment.—And the prizes of the lotteries: Venus' loveliest devisings: these glorious passions of a year, and the sizings, the sizings, like the sweet butter that they smear baby's

wheaten slice above, the sizings that each day we shear from the soft loaf of love!

I shine at Bullier, Passion's bard, I, Grand-Master of Sentiment. There I bring my hat à la Rembrandt and my cravat of dark foulard where gleams a Cæsar's effigy and my frock-coat such as one might see on a Berlioz or Delacroix or an 1830 Hamlet, fain to the Courtille to fetch his pain, and my indolent acridity to seek Manon who flies from me. She sees my shade on the stair extend when black in Bullier, I descend, dragged at my heels as if 'twould be the mantle of Mounet-Sully!

The East for twenty cents displayed each odalisque in whose harem for a five franc piece may be seen, save when the Lenten world repents, Bullier in gay mode Ottoman makes welcome all the sentiments that stir the pulsing youth of France 'neath its electric colonnade.—Naught of the music I have said.

Yet it is sweet tonight. It earns a place. I must not leave it out. They play "España" and the rout of Bullier all about me turns, or ought to turn beyond a doubt. But breast to breast, limb brushing limb, the muses of the Pantheon, with painters' botching 'prentices or blackamoors of all degrees (as with embryo servants of the State whom seats in Parliament await), mechanically are Bostonning. A dance precise as cudgelling. Arms stiffly held, like levers staid. No more the terpsichorean wealth, impetuous bound, heroic spring, kick to unhook the moon on high! But the air of having not the air. One is American, my dear. And why increase the pace at all? One is not epileptical. "Shun, shun hysterics!" is the cry. "'Neath the electric colonnade one caters to one's precious health.

Manon takes her fill of joy, alone, beneath her hat of roses white. From arm to arm she passes on. She whirls, half-swooning with delight. Each that desires her favour wins. 'Tis that one sweeps her off her feet, and round the pair the ball-room spins. Useless to aid her. Flying fleet, already other arms have clasped her. Her charms a negro's arms eclipse, whom amorous tremblings overmaster. A kiss from those full, blubber-lips . . . and Manon lifts her eyes of blue towards a brow enormous that displays round beads of sweat, a gleaming dew. "A negro's kiss, this one repays! They say felicity 'twill bring." Manon hoists herself to tip-toes' height and gives her lovely head a toss that some-

what lifts the roses white, drooping, Ophelia-like, across dishevelled hair. A woolly head bends 'neath the nails of fingers ten, and, with pursed, heart-shaped lips, Manon impairs her mouth's fictitious red on that enormous, sweating brow. "Good! I will pay my homage now to your fair eyes, Jeanne la Roquine.—Have you seen her 'gainst her negro there? What, must one dote on blacking then?—Courage, 'tis but a silly prank.—Sweet child, I know the charm I lack. 'Tis but my garments that are black. All negroes boast a sultan's rank.

Pals of an hour, lovers' content, pocket-book and sentiment. Here blacks obtain a sultan's power.

Jeanne la Roquine, come, leave the throng and sit beside this charming hedge.—Thanks! Poetry sets my teeth on edge.—Tender heart, do you think I read you wrong? Your ruddy hair is ravishing. Come 'neath the grot; 'tis sombre blue. . . . Your fingers steal to my cravat? I'm no tame pigeon. None of that! Drop your paws, Roquine. No, let them be. Beneath your snowy fingers, see, my Cæsar sparkles in the gloom. Past praising is your deathly hue."

In the room a pistol shot rings out. "Roquine, do you smell the powder-reek?" But still Roquine is pale of cheek. More pallors come, in ghastly rout, amid the murmuring crowd to spread, now in mid-Boston halted dead, with the orchestra's arrested bows, gesticulations stopped in air— You were there? You saw it, I suppose. What occurred?—*Miserere*. Be it so! 'Tis that old pseudo-medico who killed himself in his despair.—Ah, 'tis no every-day affair.—There by the shooting-booth he bleeds . . . His cocktail was but half consumed. Esmeralda drank a gin. They called each other names obscene.—To thoughts of death my soul was bowed but aloud the epigram I spoke which suited the occasion's needs.—"You have it there, the lightning-stroke. You said beside the shooting-booth he bled? His shot is paid, in truth."—"Esmeralda drank a gin. They called each other names obscene. This piques my curiosity," suddenly cried Jeanne la Roquine and towards the shooting-booth took flight.—When I arrived beside the blood among the foremost Manon stood. Then I saw her nodding roses white above a smile of artless youth.

Loves of a year, loves of a night, loves of an hour or an instant slight. 'Neath its electric colonnade Bullier, in gay mode Ottoman, makes welcome all the sentiments that stir the pulsing youth of France.

Extracts from

THE BOHEMIA OF THE HEART
and
PENNY ROMANCES.

MY PORTRAIT.

My eyes like two black diamonds shine 'neath my Rembrandt hat.
The coat I choose is wrought of raven broadcloth fine, and jet-black are
my polished shoes.

Black locks profuse 'round pallid chaps, long Valois nose that droops
askance. A hint of mockery, perhaps. The rigid pose of arrogance.

Ironic smile and frank regard (Nature, you also love to mock!) and
the air of biting something hard when with a scheming knave I talk.

Before the church of Saint-Germain, my shade beneath its steps supine,
at times to watch the Louvre I'm fain, sad in the sunset's slow decline.

A king I should have loved to be: some luckless Louis XIII, no doubt.
—He's sly, indeed, who'd ferret out the sentimental poet in me.

Yet for me, alas, as for all the rest, God fashioned a heart. Our
Heavenly Sire, creating all things, loves to jest and seals in ice a raging
fire.

All the sounding lyres of earth I need. The human soul I make my
creed. My mind's an alembic. Gold is mixed there with blood, with
roses and with Shakespeare.

MEUDON.

The blue eyes of a Clementine, her white arms raised, in brilliant light,
to greet each spray of hawthorn white, the morn of young love's golden
prime,

the swing, the bowers where roses twine, someone that whistles in
the oats, our ravenous bites, your little slaps, the chuckling gurgle of
red wine,

on the cloth a ray of dazzling sun, the clink of forks, the gay romance
sung by a young Italian who gazes skyward while he chants;

the wood that spreads an azure gloom, our good naps of the after-
noon, your soft hand o'er my heart that broods, chance wakings, tender
attitudes,

the return, to the echo of our feet, your burdened breast, your sigh-
ings sweet, and Nature that unfolds its charms and flowers, delicious
as your arms,

o'er a ruined wall the sunset dying (O the ivy of Bas-Meudon!) the
darkling path that ends so soon, the Seine, the fish, potatoes frying,

green skies where one faint star intrudes, Saint Cloud illuming, our
regret, visions of the pale path that yet might reconduet us to the woods,

(it leads us home, day fades amain)—the scent as from a milky udder
of summack, windows of a train that flashes past, your little shudder;

the spring, our love, your faith, my vows, tears and romances, pace
by pace, the dusk beneath the forest boughs, the silence of our long
embrace,

ah, foolishness, one's heart to pain with vanished things that now are
not, woes that our dreams alone retain and that already are forgot!

THE GREAT DRUNKENNESS.

Through the blue summer nights when the cicadas sing, God over
France a cup o'er-brimmed with stars doth pour. A taste of summer
skies to my lips the breezes bring! I fain would drink all space, so
freshly silvered o'er.

A goblet's frigid rim is evening's air to me, whence, with my eyes half-closed, I quaff with greedy zest, like to the cooling juice from a pomegranate pressed, starred freshness slow diffused from heaven's immensity.

Couched on a velvet sward, whose grasses warm betray how they had sprawled at ease beneath the breath of day, O I would drain tonight with what divine content, the cup immense and blue where wheels the firmament!

Am I Bacchus? Am I Pan? I tippie space. Elate, with the freshness of the nights I slake my fever-fit, my mouth agape to heaven where planets scintillate. O, let heaven flow in me or let me melt in it!

With their inebriate souls in heaven's starred cup immersed, Byron and Lamartine, Hugo and Shelly died. Yet changeless space is there. It rolls creation-wide. Scarce drunk it bears me hence, and I was still athirst!

HYMNS OF FLAME.

Followed by LUCIENNE, little lyric romancee.

1903.

THE DOLPHIN.

Take me, O sea! I plunge. My suit do not contemn! Of metamorphosis you own the magic spark? How happy I should be if, by a strategem, I went to join the troop of supple dolphins dark. Lend me their breath, their eyes, like tropic waters blue, that underneath your waves with sight undimmed can glide, and, that I may disport with greater ease in you, of a voluptuous form the sleek and sinuous hide.

I leap the waves, I toy with every foaming crest. But 'tis the tempest's surge that crowns my heart's desire. In the hollow of its swell towards heaven's high portals pressed, to slither back, enmeshed in flakes of humid fire! . . . The storm still hangs aloof. I must await its call. Patient I'll be, O waves. My live caresses thus you will repay

again in that moment prodigal. And my white breast shall be your mistress amorous.

On the surface now I swim, my skin with sunbeams bright. Like fronds of silver wrack my furrow follows me. I abandon it and plunge and go to find the night. But the sun's wheel still turns in depths of tossing sea. With the sun's wheel I turn beneath the surges there, and reascend to day. I am here, my skin ashine. Shivers of happiness make langorous my spine. The wave respire beneath. O, but the sky is fair!

Sweet flying-fish that skim above my head demure, with vivid lightning-flares you streak heaven's azure dome. Transparent o'er the bones I watch you go and come. I have good eyes for you and sudden gapings sure. Snap! There are pleasures rare in the sky and on the sea. Snap! Sweet and succulent fish! Snap! Creatures small and bright, I am greedy for your flesh and 'tis felicity that in my gulping you I also gulp the light.

The foam about me swirls, vibrant. I loll at ease. Blue, oblong bubbles dart. Capsizing, waist in air, I give chase. O the big one there! I will have him. No, he's gone. And on I undulate across the seven seas.—A singing fills my ears. To a sound my eyes are drawn. Spume spatters! A typhoon! I see it's rain. . . . But no, 'tis a jetting whale. Too warm in ocean's tepid flow it spouts a cooling drench while dreaming in the sun.

The shark disquiets me. Red-eyed and long of head, his lantern jaws convey I know not what vile dread. A while we fly his track's tumultuous, cleaving surge. Voracious, brutal force! 'Tis ended! I submerge. A glimmering coral-bush its refuge offers me. I watch through waving fronds the Long-Head search the sea with red and roving eye. Does he spy me? Neptune aid! The beast! He comes! The beast! . . . No, it is but his shade.

O wood of flaccid weeds with oily tangles strong, where the pale light of day escapes in tenuous shreds from the cradling summit reared so high above our heads, how I love the calm, green sea beneath your branches long! With indolent fins I swim your muffled waves among and ever as I move I feel the faint caress, the gently-brushing touch where my white belly gleams, along my back, my sides, and stroking

every part, the subtle laziness of weedy fingers lean, of waves soft languors steep, of rays in druid sleep, till tremblings somnolent, prolonged within my heart, leave me suspended there enmeshed in lulling dreams.

The things I've always loved I now behold again: the splendour maritime of morning's crimson birth, winds marine that everywhere bright-shimmering silks upraise, the sweetness infinite of sunset in the bays, and the dishevelled robe nocturnal of the crags; I see in the spray the gray reflections of the strands; I dream of lunar seas, gold lands with harvests graced, and, vaguely glimpsed, the huge blue billows of the earth, whence sometimes, sheaf-like, jags an unexpected flame, uphurling blackened rocks in the blue sky laid waste: and my heart is emulous of the unmounted main.

A flight of circling gulls my memory doth dower. Led by its scarf of moire the whole day long I went. O delicate delight of vision when the shower falls from its source divine, in silver palpitant, upon the torrid breast of the respiring sun. Into what amorous dream has my rapt fancy gone, O dolphin? Skies of pearl, clouds shot with carmine gleams, fair, fluttering butterflies about a perfumed isle, waves whispering in dreams, wide evening's tranquil smile, green rocks with pendulous weeds whence the ebb'd ocean drips, a bright, full moon whose light filters to oysters' lips; I feel the night approach with fluctuant shades for guard; and see from the vaulting nave of the grotto myriad-starred that the sky-line lifts and shuts at the blue zenith's height, stalactite-like descend long rays of silver bright. A sudden clamour leaps from waves with tumult ta'en, and my heart is emulous of the unmounted main.

Come, O my dream, behold to what ardour intimate doth palpitate and yield Ocean's eternal flow. The current's tepid sheath to ribbands I have split. Onward I fly upborne by madrepores aglow. Thou that synthesized all life, obscure and mighty vat, to which the universe owes dolphins and their dreams,—Life's heaving forces burst in phosphorescent streams within thy tide robust where, luminous, I plunge. In deep abyssms blue seethe primal growths of sponge. Hill vertebrae upthrust crests perpendicular. What things I see! O gulfs! O my distracted flight! All the soft azure swarm of medusas there respire. There, wreathing emerald whorls, the giant mosses thrive. Was that heat-lightning's flare, round the horizon swirled? This waste of golden sand is nothing but a light . . . Here is death, and just beyond the whole of life astir. Black quiverings of kelp above a crumbled world where a

precipice's brow lets roam its forest red. How much the ocean's bed is ruined and alive!

Let us plumb these depths profound, O my dream, for I would glut my eyes with caverns rent by travailing earth. Full fain the craters I would see, pressed close above their vent, distend their igneous throat to slake the whirlwind's rut and shake the mountain-tops' gigantic porous chain. I know them well. But the sea is jealous of their charms. More heavy let us be. More deep my vision bends, searching. From secret caves a gentle light ascends. I see (the lesser death through all my being goes), I have seen again these peaks upheaved by cosmic throes. Ocean in them fulfills her savage destiny. It overruns the earth, it lies with lava-floes. With all its vital force their sombre breasts it sows, and myriad flaming mouths exude a froth of shell. With the hot fires of your heart, volcanoes, burn the sea! The sparks are vitalized! How swift the fishes dart! The bright sparks die. In this is all your task comprised? You draw the dead who come, a never-ending train, in your eternal flux life's heart to find again. O ashes, ashes, ashes. Sparks . . . in a little space coral and kelp have hid that barren, craggy face, green jungles, swarming crabs and these devil-fishes fair, invading Ocean's lair with rope-like amorous arms; the hippocampi black your molten streams elude; blue holothurias shine: thine is the labour hard; the humble sludge is starred and patterned like the skies. Though one day all this dies, the ashes you will guard. Imbibing death, the sea with phosphorescence gleams. You breathe it and your fires already are renewed—and mounting sea-birds soar to the creative sun.

“If it is good to dream, then what should living be?” Within my dorsal fin this thought has taken shape. Seized with gay vertigo it has awakened me. My tail undulates. Ho! ho! A trembling thrills my nape. Where am I and with what do I reel? O lovely eve! . . . Could I in the sea so long with dreams my senses snare, when all its surface gray tumultuously doth heave? Fair is the storm, the sky. The flying foam is fair. Behold the mighty surge that brings me happiness. 'Tis no tempest, truth to tell, but what is that to me! I leap in air, upborne by the roaring billows' ire. Rain lacks, but I've the spray. My heart is mad with glee. In the curve of vaulting waves towards heaven's high dome I press, to slither back, enmeshed in flakes of humid fire. I would bite the lightning-flash should it denounce me here to the injurious thunder-bolt. Ah, let me journey free! How red I must appear beneath this copper sun! What madness prompted me to make dim dreams

my care? One must live. I am made for heaven, sea, and the space between. I chase a gleaming wave made amorously bare. She blinds me all at once. 'Tis to make my bliss more keen. This other has a breast defaced with hydras pale. Come on her back to see what will the jealous one. For I adore them all. Towards none my love shall fail. Gay, passionate, perverse alike I must possess, and my white breast has found myriads of mistresses. How many do I make cry when tempests roar above? As well enumerate the planets' grains of sand, for dolphin never yet wearied of making love. Some are like stately trees that grow upon the land, some like smooth columns are, and some like sirens fair, but which my favorite is shall never be betrayed. I needs must go to scan the mighty sun, austere, who holds high court a while ere gliding in the crowds of the majestic stir and turning of the clouds. For that proud pilgrimage a road of gold is made. I shall leap, or rather fly, from crest to crest, press on, heading the dolphin troop through ambient seas of air, o'er all the waves of light till I attain the sun!

Extracts from LUCIENNE

XXIV.

“This morn in the lily a bee doth sing: upon your finger chants a ring. From the forget-me-nots bird-song flashes: your brown eye laughs at me 'neath its lashes.

'Tis thus I sing to you words without significance, sweet phrases that intoxicate preparing, as I lull you in my arms—my charms being words so pure you would say that they were silence, which reassure you, nonchalant one, which reassure you of your lover's daring.

“The moon's in the pool, in the rushes cool . . . like a bee in heaven the bright sun is . . . the cuckoo's refrains ring once and again.—To your white bosom sings my kiss.

XXXVIII.

Since our loves can ne'er agree, let's be gay, let's be gay!—since our loves can ne'er agree, laugh and while the hours away.

If you loved, my love would make reply. Let's be gay, let's be gay!—
I would love, with loathing you repay, I fain would laugh until I die.

What does love bring but pain and fret? Let's be gay, let's be gay.—
Is love then worth the least regret? Laugh and while the hours away.

LI.

From a little violet wine at not too dear a fee, my love, I have deduced a whole philosophy.

This wine, this sweet wine, unto sadness leads, and sadness in its turn to melancholy.

and from there, my love, to blank forgetfulness.

I forget the evenings 'neath the arbor's shade when the sweet wine filled my heart with glee since you were there and just for me.

All the false, fair skies with hope's bright hue o'erlaid, ah! swiftly did they fade in our lifted glasses' shine, drunk with the wine they have fled!

Far you have sped but forgetfulness is mine.

The little violet wine to sadness leads and the sadness in its turn to melancholy.

LV.

Alone in my blood I hold the whole of poesy. Death lingers far aloof till all things I have sung—even to you, O blue mirage the sands among: some day I wish to sing your infidelity.

Alone in my blood I hold the whole of poesy, some day I shall be dead, having sung each least detail—excepting you, perhaps, mistress admirable! Ah me, how shall I sing, undone, of one with faith so frail?

COXCOMB

or

THE MAN WHO FELL NAKED FROM PARADISE.

Followed by

THE BOOK OF VISIONS and HENRY III.

1906.

COXCOMB

or

THE MAN WHO FELL NAKED FROM PARADISE.

(Fragment: first pages.)

I.

Silence, the hay is sweet, and 'tis the hour of grain.

O soft, green heaven! Happy souls of those who scythe and sickle ply! The metal shines. The arms are bare. O'er the hill a horn of the moon doth bend. Let fair arms nonchalantly extend! As yet no shrilling cricket's cry troubles the evening atmosphere. The day strews clouds, a roseate rain: one would say it shed its leaves to die, in the silence, at the horizon clear.

Yes. I feel that the world is but a dream. The sun sets. The pale moon doth beam. Yes. . . . I pass, they see my form appear, remote on the roadway's dusty reaches—in silhouette between the beeches—and they call to me and I make reply: "Come, lads, have done with drudgeries! Enough you have laboured for today. Lay down the scythes, put the sickles by. Group yourselves about me. I am here. Hark to the seller of images.

From the crest of the hill I have not seen, approaching like a bank of mist, the cart that every eve keeps tryst to bring you to your hearth-fire's boon, nor, circling 'gainst the heaven's dull green, the whip of Toby. No. I've seen only the rising of the moon, and I have come to tell you this.

This slope is more steep with every sun. Each day a day older are my shanks. Help me then—thanks—in my descent. Almost I upset you, little one?—Great eyes of blue . . . Do they love to dream? O fair, attentive chin! Come here, that I may kiss you, sweet, and then hark to a true word in your ear. "The sun sets. The pale moon doth beam. My child, this world is but a dream."

Heigh, don't forget what I told you all! I've come to move your hearts to laughter. Last night I fathomed the hereafter, reading in palms what must befall. Bah! For this evening I devise a legend strange and rare.

And first—do you wish to please me well?—Go, little ones, and dance a round so wild you will tumble to the ground, dizzied. Thereafter, I will tell the story of Coxcomb, he who fell naked from Paradise.

Without so much as a blouse, poor wight, bare and pink, like a frog without its hide, arrived on earth in such a plight, judge if he was not mortified.

Turn, turn, sweet lads and maidens shy, till you make the round indeed a round. See how they wreathe a goodly crown upon the front of Cybele!

—Coxcomb, fallen sheer from the tempest's brow, thought himself god, seven times a man. Yet he was costumed God knows how . . . But the whole matter you shall scan.

Come, you have whirled enough, I wis, for many now are lying prone. Wool-gathering all the wits have gone. Hark to the seller of images.

—Since then he makes the tour of the world, Coxcomb, vendor of Verities, on his head a fool's cap proudly twirled (do you hear it tinkle in the breeze? . . .), in his hand a blade that oft assails the vanguards of the summer gales.

Pell-mell at his heels policemen run, 'neath the rain, through the wind, and in the sun, for 'tis his boast he can invoke crowds of imaginary folk, make the far horizon furnish throughs, and the depths of earth, to hear his songs. And if in a deserted land, Coxcomb, with lifted arm should stand launching a hymn to the Infinite, indubitably you would hear each bush a murmuring transmit, "You have the right of it, Brigadier," and instantly on every hand, through fields, and roads and standing grain, policemen would give chase again.

Who but myself should Coxcomb be? At least 'tis fitting thus to deem. Your pleasure will be more extreme, sweeter will prove your gaiety.

Good folk, attention. I commence. Those who do not comprehend the tale, the dolts and dullards, I'll dispatch to catch me flies in the moonlight pale.

I hear the stars their silence trail like a veil immense o'er the garnered grain. At the far limit of the plain dies the sun. The hour is opportune.

I shall only stop to blow my nose because of the evening dew. I fly on the wings of Fantasy. Remain here, seated, you!

Those that are bored had best embrace, Jack kissing Jill and contrary-wise, and recommence their vows and sighs, not troubling me whate'er their ease.

Silence, the hay is sweet, and 'tis the hour of grain. See also whether . . . the hour is opportune.

I fly on the wings of Fantasy, 'neath the silver of the moon.

II.

Frightened by Destiny, which to him this orb decreed, and dreading, furtively, lest he by chance exceed the sum of human souls that on Earth he should create, that number consecrate, which, where the gods abide, Earth's entity controls, and filled with panic fears lest he Destiny's law transgress, and wounded in his pride at his abasement slow from himself to nothingness, till none his fame might know, our God, one of the

least presiding o'er the spheres, Earth's primal deity, feeling a little old, with memory far from hale whose scope each day decreased, resolved, one summer night, to count his universe, and, foreseeing the approach of the Last Census Day, his company to coach, decided to rehearse the pageant in his Vale.

And 'twas a wondrous sight, but none were there to see.

Some in siestas deep by the Malayan Sea where o'er their honeyed sleep drowns the tulip-tree, others no doubt a prey to opium immense where all of China lay immersed in popped trance, and the shepherds, too, who sat a dormant, pastoral group around Jehosopha, ringed by their bleating troupe, some at Beauvais in France, since night was well advanced, each on his wages bent, as though 'neath Morpheus' wand from Brest to Kohinoor, from Yedo to Golcond the living slept secure, yea slumbered like the dead, the thief beneath his tent, the banker in his bed, and the Cossack stretched, perforce, on the withers of his horse.

Through that midnight, splendour-filled, all of the living slept, letting their souls, in crowds, escape from misty dreams to blend themselves, obscure, with the souls Death's urn had spilled in multi-coloured streams, and those fallen from the clouds like a river of stars that swept down the Vale's declivity And 'twas a wondrous sight but none were there to see.

On high archangels soared to sound the trumpet there, like lightning's vivid glare launching their thunders gold, and angels, garland-wise, sustained the trumpets blare, and the universe gleamed fair in the pavilions gold.

And the sweet child-angels made their small hands shine again with the stars that thither strayed to re-illuminate their flame, or, from the blue-paved lodge allotted to their sway, trotted to play hop-scotch across the Milky Way.

Above a forest, God was glorious at his ease. Bent towards the tawny fires that graced his fingers bland, he shone before the souls without an, "if you please," all in the eternal charm exhaled from each white hand.

Saint Michael, at his side, whirling his keen-edged sword, ærated the Divine ceremoniously. The slopes of Olive's mount prolonged their dreaming, and the Popes, 'neath the roses, Latin sang to hymn the risen Lord.

At the summit Lucifer of his sombre shadow made a screen and to his brows that velvet strove to bring. In vain! His ruby glance consumed the succouring shade till his eyes blinked, half-blind, 'neath the rays' burnishing.

But in truth the fairest thing would have been to hear the song, flush with the mountain line,

the chorus of the stars. The air, so vast their throng, was all in seed-pearls fine,

flush with the mountain line, and blithely did they sing:

"A little living air our radiance still doth shed but we are little, blest religions that are dead. 'Tis true that they declare we are the stars. Ah, well, no prouder for that thought our microcosms swell. We are dead, dead, dead, yet keep unchanged eternally a little living air. Hark rather to the rare tinkling, our secret voice on the robe of Destiny. Have we not still the right to glory in our fire, being Destiny's choice, the gauds that deck her stately gown? 'Tis we, in all renown, spangle her night attire. What does it matter now! Enough of coquetry! There's no more thought of us, lights innocent and fair. Hark to our song, regard where our merged radiance shines. Poised in the evening sky, evil we muse towards none, and 'tis the shepherds come to worship at our shrines.

A STAR.

Yet, my sisters, we retain some curiosity, still doth the living world our ribbed composure nudge. My sisters, you are wise, bend from the skies and see! What doth this stir portend? What might this tumult be?

ANOTHER.

Is it not some deity that they are going to judge?

THE STAR OF THE MORNING.

Ah, my sister, you don't know? According to report 'tis the Christian's god, my sister.

ALL THE STARS.

The Christian's god! . . . Hoho! Then we shall have good sport.

THE STAR OF THE MORNING.

'Twas the Sun that told me the circumstance. I combed his rays with my comb of blue.

ALL THE STARS.

Waltz two by two. Behold our dance.

As I have said above all of the living slept, some in siestas deep by the Malayan Sea where o'er their honeyed sleep drowns the tulip-tree; others no doubt a prey to opium immense where all of China lay immersed in poppiéd trance, souls to oblivion sent, who knows? perchance they snored, the thief beneath his tent, the banker in his bed, and the Cossack stretched, perforce, on the withers of his horse.

III.

All of the living slept?—save Coxcomb only. He to life that evening leapt, breathed by the Deity.

Extracts from the Book of Visions.

THE SADNESS OF PAN.

The rapturous lark has thrown to calm, unechoing skies, his trill's last passionate spray. The harvests, zephyr-stirred, closing above the bird, take the last thought of day. Brushing the ears of grain a redly-

slanting ray remounts to heaven's veiled dome. On the horizon clear it burns, to disappear in the abyss unknown.

Pan, level with the grain has raised his starry eyes. They light the flute that Pan to hairy lips applies. They light the dark, their eyes illumine the ripened wheat, and his ten fingers fleet clasping the reed that gleams.

Swart chest that amber beads, in heaving chain, embrace (can they be moons thus ranged 'neath clouds of sable hue?). O shaggy satyr's chest, those eyes illumine you! They light—is it a dream—in the opal cameo suspended from the chain, pale, dead Diana's face.

And I, who am the fields' reflective guardian, have I recognized god Pan with earthward-drooping horns, who, sighing deep, regards his necklace? Suddenly, breathing a deeper sigh, he droops his head, to lie flush with the evening grain.

And, eradled by its wave, he modulates the strain of his flute with nimble hands.

Oh, how ecstatic song can light the standing wheat! Pan lifts a finger, breathes, and shifts the key, while I, sad watcher of the fields, behold his breath divine and modulated sounds softly create the moon.

Rapidly she has slipped above the sea of wheat, the sweet moon like a bubble, then mounted to the depths of the nocturnal sky.

Pan, propped on elbows, watched from depths of lunar grain.

Then from a wood nearby chanted the nightingale towards that full moon so fair; upon the mounting trills of his voice sustained in air like a white flower that swoons, poised on a fountain's crest.

Pan brooded, head on breast, letting the bird sing on. Sad, heedless of his reed, upon the bare earth laid, with trembling hand he weighed his necklace of dead moons.

Did he think of perished gods? Deeply and long he sighed. Did he think of all the tasks his flute performed again, of rivers, of the breeze, of forests, of the dawn, of all the work contrived by deities dead and

gone? Or did he dream of Hells extinguished by their fall? Was he dreaming of his soul, or of his flute of flame, the god with life aglow?

He saw, regarding him, Diana's cameo.

And suddenly Pan hurled to that still sphere above the final cry of love!

PHILOMEL.

To the heart of silence sing, shy bird that none may see! The garden, listening, ecstatic bends to thee.

The crescent moon reposes enchained in music's spell. No zephyr stirs the roses where chanteth Philomel.

No breath in all the bower, where thicker perfumes throng from souls that lack the power to merge with that sweet song!

Like an appeal to gods of nether shade's desmesne, the panting night-ingale sings in the night serene,

not to the flowers that lie where thicker perfumes throng because they cannot die to that requiem of song!

Is it the silence breathes from its melodious heart? . . . A rose-bush sheds its leaves new torpors to impart.

Silence, with lightnings dressed, like Tempest, dusky-browed, then gently lulled to rest, a floating summer cloud,

by that modulated hymn with pure and strident swell that to the moon exhales the soul of Philomel!

Is it a bird alone breathes that immortal song?—Ah, the enchanting tone forever should prolong.

Or is it out of Hell that voice sings deathlessly. There is no wind at all to let the blossoms die.

Night's shade no breeze discloses. Strange metamorphoses! The moonlight gives its aid to the ruin of the roses.

Already every flower on its stem doth fail, and lo, like a white squall they drift, roses in vertigo,

across the rapid space of dormant grasses dim in terror of your hymn, O secret nightingale!

In shiverings of dread, corollas leave their place. A mask hath overspread the seared moon's shining face.

O'er turf athrill with fears, pale petals shuddering, you oscillate towards earth and towards this thing one hears.

Hark! . . . From the shadows deep what sound profound doth start? Is it the world's great heart that 'neath the garden beats?

Hark! . . . Like the pulse of Fate, a single stroke . . . two . . . three. Muffled, precipitate, they mount sonorously.

Prisoned in depths of earth a heart this way doth pass. Throbs of a mighty heart traverse the shaven grass.

Where fluttering petals drift, earth heaves. What form divine a regal brow doth lift, blued in the soft moonshine?

The immortal goddess, she whose youth no years can quell, the puissant Cybele, listens to Philomel.

THE RETURN.

Ivy has covered all the wall. How many hours, how many tears, since last we loved? How many years?

No roses now. Ivy has crushed the vine. Soul, whither didst thou go? Climbing across the nests of nightingales, ivy has stifled the whole château.

Wind, the deep wells are choked with the roses of yesterday. Is that your hiding-place, O my dead wife?

No one replies? Who would reply? . . . Is it not best to listen to the wind that sighs through the grasses "My sweet love?"

Flush with the roof the ancient, crimson sun is cut through the midst so mournfully!

Shall I bid the gardener come? The gardener? No. It would be better to summon Death to reap the long grass,

so many memories and so much love, and the setting sun at the level of the earth!

THE LITTLE LIGHTS.

Starred nights, white days and days of blue, each chasing each with gladsome mirth above the changing shapes of Earth, soon I'll no longer gaze on you;

suns peeping through the leaves, to throw into the glade the tawny flames of lamps, of hearths, and dancing chains of lights that set the streets aglow,

the flares from heaving barques that glance, the phosphor of an April sea, the planets beaming over France, faint lights I loved so eagerly,

and you, the sweet, dear, trembling eyes, green rogues I did so much adore, I shall behold your dance no more; I shall behold your dance no more;

loves little lights that cheered the dark, lights of France, gold core of summer's husk—tonight there comes a greedy spark to burn the dead leaf of the dusk!

Death's mighty flame, whose golden worth so vastly all my soul invites that I shall close my eyes on Earth to the dancing of the little lights.

ETERNITY.

One does not need to credit death. The human heart to rest is fain. O'er sleeping fields the evening's breath dreams, and I hear eternity chime in the bending ears of grain.

“Hark. An angelus dies in heaven’s blue height.” Be comforted. Hours pass away. Hushed is the belfry? God doth wake. The nightingale salutes the day, hid in the turret’s rose-tree brake, and, in its turn, will mourn the night.

“Hark. Once again the hour doth swell.” But the bell’s already fast asleep. Eternity is chiming deep borne by the sweet, tormented breath of zephyr and of Philomel.

One does not need to credit death.

HENRI III.

I.

The chairs and tables sleep. The tapestries are drawn. At times the royal bed gives forth a mournful groan. It is the wood. The soul of the old oak doth complain. Listen . . . Indeed, it groans scarcely at all.—Again! Listen . . . The hearth obscure with new life trembles. Three blue wisps of dancing flame are flickering weirdly blue. Waving adieu to walls marked with the fleurdelys.

All fades. Obscurity puts the four walls to flight.

A bright flare from the hearth recalls them to the eye. The bed, all shivering, utters a human sigh; and Philip of Valois emerges from a wall. Opens a chest, leaps in, and lets the cover fall.

Dissembling Louis XI slips forth with prudent stealth. On his sombre hood there whirls a white mouse. One perceives, the arms of Brittany embroidered on their sleeves, each gaze devouring each, Charles VIII and Louis XII. Into the chest they leap and let the cover fall.

The impish Francis II to puke in the hearth has gone. With sheets upraised, the bed is like a ghost, indeed. In the chamber of the Kings how reigns to reigns succeed! Regard that cavernous chest. Did you not see it yawn?

All fades. Obscurity puts the four walls to flight.

From the hearth a sudden spurt resummons them, and now Francis I with limping gait Henry II doth precede. Of Diane de Poitiers they dream with drooping brow. Then both together dive and close the oaken lid.

This time 'tis Charles the Fifth whose sceptre shoves it back, the Wise King. Faggots' flare tints him with crimson dyes. He leaps. What checks his leap? The purple he has donned. Purple-enwound he leaps and drops his jewelled wand. Swiftly from lock to lock the hand of Justice flies turning the keys (crie! crac!).

For here is John the Good.

Stoop-shouldered, decked with chains that chime sad threnodies, the tortured smile of Christ and Christ's blue eyes he has. The madman Charles the Sixth lilies of France upheaves, scourging him well therewith from morion to greaves. Snapped petals fall. Charles Sixth, the drunkard, gathers them, and to his pious lips has pressed the ravaged stem. But ominously he reels. He has drunk too much, 'tis plain. 'Neath three sepulchral falls the chest resounds again.

The line of Valois kings in strange commotion move. The great bed shakes. The eleven Valois kings summon another. There, and in the mirrors, see, the oaken coffer gapes. In metamorphoses does Death his talents prove? At each yawning, horns of satyrs raise the lid, then instantly are hid.

A silence dead ensues.

Till out of murky shades there mounts a pallid face as the full moon doth rise. And the bed sees approach Charles IX with sombre eyes. Houp! The chest gulps him down. All disappears. One hears the nibbling of a mouse through infinite depths of space.

II.

The chairs and tables sleep. The tapestries are drawn. At times the royal bed gives forth a mournful groan. It is the wood. The soul of the old oak doth complain. The yawning hearth obscure with new life trembles. Three blue wisps of dancing flame their flickering light pro-

long to reap the crop of walls marked with the fleurdelys. The ceiling, in that glow, attains new height, the bed sinks in the shadows dread beneath its canopy.

In the fluctuant gloom the room to phantoms is a prey.

A last revealing ray strikes on the chest the round that, from its gulfs profound, 'neath the half-closed lid escapes.

On the flanks of the chest a ray illumes the round of shapes that in a tumult turn upon its ancient wood.

The mirrors isolate and make jut forth the round of a dozen satyrs huge who, with lascivious bound, with capering limbs surround a goat half-dead with fright. And, mirrored thirty times in crystal facets bright, a Hercules of bronze whirls his gnarled cudgel's mass.

The smile of him of Béarn, one-half grimace, he has. He himself! The very image!

The gloom is warm. A cry doth brood . . .

In silence, at the gallop, by the storm of Ages and Ages and Ages driven amain, in silence, at the gallop of his steed of iron, lo, the emperor Charlemagne hurtles across the room. Henri of Guise on his great black horse to that vision doth succeed. Having missed the way, a mirror ends his chase. Catherine de Medici's great and lovely face swims through the darkness—horrible to see!

'Tis then that Henri III draws from his lethargy a cry such as at night from depths of plains doth start, the cry of solitudes that shrills despairingly to numb the drowsing blood in the lone traveller's heart, and, on the instant, caught in the swaying curtain wide, at a window toward the west, illumed with sunset's glow, a halberd's glistening head the velvet sweeps aside. Without, the day falls, red, with drifting flakes of snow.

III.

With raiment all of black the king has leaped from bed, and in the mirrors' depths his face interrogates, recoils from that pale mask, and,

trembling, coifs his head. The black hat, sombre-plumed, his paleness isolates. "Will you come to rouse from sleep a blood that stupefies, O thou liqueur?" he cries. The cup falls at his feet. Softly opening the door he harks to the antechamber, lighted with burnished swords, with clinking steel brimmed o'er.

The gloves. The ebony cane. And forth he fares once more.

"The King, gentlemen! The King!"—The halberds ring. Voices, whispering, scraping of chairs pushed to and fro. The sputtering twilight glow underlines the gilded beams. Confused is the antechamber, with vassal shadows filled, bent towards a passageway where a white point draws near.

Behind, the royal bed crouched 'neath its canopy, at the end of a passageway, where a white point draws near.

"The King!"—Second echo.—The halberds ring.

What oval whiteness now at the height of a human face is shaking two long pearls like the full moon's glistening tears. Pale visage and long pearls, Henri the Third appears. And the vassal shadows, all the vassal shadows bow.

Has a flight of withered leaves been tossed here by the blast? . . .

"—You, who risk an eye regard: does the dusk still underline the gilded roof-tree high?

"—Yes, but the King?

"—The King, my son? . . . He has passed by.

"—Quélus, my good friend, this smacks of prodigy.

"—Maugiron, Saint-Mégrin, hear a strange history. Tonight the Shade of the King whirls through the palace, masked with the light of the moon, two tear-drops in its ears.

"—Does it go, among her clouds, Catherine to find once more? Look where it mounts the stair!

"—"Tis at the second floor!"

The halberds ring. Voices, whispering, scraping of chairs pushed to and fro. Without the day falls, red, with drifting flakes of snow.

IV.

While the hurrying King runs up the empty stair, swinging his lantern's flare, who enters but Chicot? They surround the Fool who laughs and slips away and reappears below. His lantern's orange ray like a censer lifts and sways at the bottom of the stair.

"Continue, Gentlemen, I seek a King," he says.

The anteroom is dark with great pale corners there where already torches glow, kindled by many hands. One of them throws a flame of carmine and of snow. The swift hands separate.—One sees the hall entire.—Light at the ends of arms, swords flash in streaks of fire that, two by two, unite, peopling with sparks the air. Some blades there are that hum, others that click and clash. 'Neath shades of lunging forms the wall protrudes and sags. The quick feet of *Mignons* rustle along the flags.

—"Chicot," Quélus cries, "the Ghost of the King doth roam. What are you doing there, Chicot, do you wish to roam? Armed with your candle, you will see the thing ascend."

—"No, I see it coming down."

—Who then?

—Henri of Guise.

—The deuce! He is in Spain. (To you, Monsieur, a hit!)

—Excuse me, my dear Sir, he descends the stairway now.

—Take care of your words, Chicot! . . . It's quite true, gentlemen. I saw him with these eyes."

On the flagstones fall the swords.

Meanwhile the hurrying King up the empty stairway flees to his mother Catherine there, in her clouds, and does not feel the limpid steel cuirass of Monseigneur de Guise who, at the landing's jog, draws back to let him pass. Still he's flesh and blood, this Duke, there's not a doubt of that! His heart with vigour throbs. Yet not enough to rouse a clinking in the chill metal that Monseigneur, as he profoundly bows, conceals beneath his hat.

At the bottom of the stair, all flames. The Duke descends. Step by step descends, like a phantom circumspect. They crowd, they look at

him. The Duke has come from Spain like a phantom circumspect and takes his road direct from the chamber of the Queen.

—“It’s unbelievable,” says Maugiron.

—“This Guise is shrewd,” says Saint-Mégrin.

—“Pray let his Lordship pass!”

The limpid steel cuirass draws after it the rout of swords. All slips away, and all is blotted out.

V.

Meanwhile Henry III, half-couched upon the rail, from the summit of the stair has, this time, seen everything. From his throat he drags a sob like the sobbing of a dove, then stands erect.

A wall gapes open for the King.

VI.

Here, nothing but a lamp illumining a hand.

All, save this single hand and save the parchment scroll o’er whose expanse that hand, plump, oldish, stiff with starch, conducts the goose’s plume, or seeks the stand of ink, here all is plunged in gloom. At intervals the hand desists and disappears, and this is what the flame, that round the characters like a martyr writhes and twists, might then decipher there:

“To Madame my daughter, the Catholic Queen.

“My belovèd daughter, my dear, my docile Isabelle, I have news of you from Spain, brought by Monsieur de Guise. It would be beautiful indeed to see all these wicked heretics flame up in a single torch (in France as you do there). Alas, my darling, here there’s nothing can be done. There is only perversion and pain with us for your good mother. You know the pangs that it has pleased Heaven to send me, the greatest it ever has sent to anyone. Burn the heretics! Ah, yes! Charming bouquet of flames! A splendid bonfire, and a sacrifice acceptable in the sight of God. But what of that, little daughter, naught can be done in France. Here all’s shadow, even to the Shadow on the throne. . . .

In the shadow of a face there hangs a lip, all pale. 'Neath a bonnet of black tulle a forehead bendeth low, with moving wrinkles scored like a belfry bird-befilled, and the more the forehead bends the higher doth it show. Catherine's lashes wet are shot with silver glows. One sees in silhouette the stern and delicate line of the long Italian nose, which the nostrils' fold doth pull as a bowstring curves a bow.

It is the moment when Catherine, her lips apout, with a pacifie pen the impolitie phrase strikes out.

But another visage now has risen in the room. Behind her Catherine feels that a pallor slowly moves. She has ceased to write, of naught but her beating heart aware. Two small hands in gloves upon her shoulders fall, like a pair of bats despatched by a single cudgel blow. And one little hand, circling towards her heart, stiffly clenches there. . . .

With the end of her goose's quill Catherine pensively, softly, caresses it. And *both* dream and the hour is full of indolence.

Trembling, the hand becomes less tense. . . . By one finger! See, the parchment pointed at by but one finger now! "Here all's shadow even to the Shadow on the throne."

Two hands have grasped the neck of Catherine, and the Queen, raising her terrible brow, shrieks, "My King!" A sudden squeak of the parquetry betrays a hasty flight, and soon Henry the Third descends the blankness of the stair.

VII.

He threads the anteroom, deserted and obscure, throws himself against a wall, both arms extended wide, and seeks the passageway along the empty wall.

Vacancy, naught beside.

The King reels, runs forward, reels; he runs to his open door and within would make his way but, with hand on throat, he halts, all livid with dismay, before a halberd tall that sleepily doth sway.

Henry catches at the leg of the guard and wakens him for—O Stupor!—there behind the guard that he awakes, there in his bed reclined, someone or something takes the image of himself (is perhaps himself, indeed), dim black and white, a man, a King or some such thing. A King perhaps? Charles Ninth? Francis? A ghost, outspread upon the royal couch, who sleeps as sleep the dead.

“Guard! Ho there, guard! Who lies on the couch of the King of France? Whose is that pallid brow? Those rags belong to me! Did I go out just now? Is it myself I see? What is that thing?—“Alas!” says the man, his eyes astare, alas, my worthy lord, but I . . . I do not know.”

“Silence,” says a voice. A voice says, “Silence. . . .” And the King, close huddled, gapes and shakes like a frog in bitter cold. The bold halberdier escapes letting his halberd fall.

“Sweet Sire, ’tis naught. Chicot reposes, that is all.”

And Chicot decamps with speed dragging a pair of sheets.

VIII.

Midnight? . . .

Saint-Germain-l’Auxerrois sonorous midnight beats.

ILE-DE-FRANCE.

1908.

Extracts from Coucy-le-Chateau.

THE ARRIVAL AT COUCY-LE-CHATEAU.

I said, “I shall behold white cloudlets, round and fair, in traversing the town, bare to the heaven’s blue shine, each from its neighbor born, like bubbles of the air, above a roof whose ridge the turtle-doves align.”

“To the right a belfry-top the hue of pigeon’s down through the calm atmosphere will softly coo the hours; to the left the donjon-keep with fingers of Spring flowers will place upon its head a battlemented crown.”

I arrive. ’Tis as I dreamed. Clouds, belfry, donjon-keep. ’Tis Coucy-le-Chateau. I have divined it well. And the roof whose ridge aligns the turtle-doves, asleep, by a kind freak of Fate surmounteth my hotel.

The “Apple of Gold” I see, limned on the sign-board staunch, with tightly-twisted stem (a masterpiece, ’tis clear) above the portico beneath whose shade the paunch, white-aproned, of mine host recoils as I draw near.

Sleeves, apron, trousers, cap, whiter than Easter flowers, red hands, pink face of frank Roger Bontemps, and lo, thrust in his belt obese, the knife that carves the towers, on every Sunday noon, of Coucy-le-Gâteau,

these are the traits I see, peace to my heart to bring, of Monsieur-Champion-at-your-service.—My portmanteaus have fled instanter from my hands, soon disinherited. My umbrella disappears. Will he take everything?

I recoil, too, in my turn. Laughing with hearty laughter (mine) I remark, “Madame, in the carriage follows after. She does not care to climb these steep ascents, Madame.” And we laugh, we laugh, we laugh, I and Monsieur Champion.

Enough. I turn my back, in high content once more, and, traveller truly French, I stroll the city o’er to show myself to the yews, to the barber’s flasks, to the shield of the notary, bright with gold, to the lilies of the field,

pansies and gilly-flowers, beloved by shutters blue, to the cobblestones caressed by a young pimpernel, to the fountain of the town, to its hollow-bellied shell, to the cooing belfry-top, in fact, to all the view.

Children, five, six, seven, eight throng at my heels, big-eyed at the salient nose whose glows the velvet cape illumine of this stranger in full day descended from the moon, “with a fried whiting’s eyes,” a shrill-voiced urchin cries.

I buy them a red egg at the grocery. Luscious food! Behold me popular! Ere long a dusty cloud encompassing me round makes me appear a god who from Olympus smiles at the acclaiming crowd.

With fortunes quickly gained, O the sad aftermath! What revolution hath exploded 'gainst my legs? They wish red eggs, red eggs, in ever-fresh supplies.—I buy and throw.—An egg of truly monstrous size

demolishes, *morbleu!* the hat for grand occasions of Suzon as she drives the guide-book sights to view. A leap. I gain her side. We vanish in a hue and cry, a mist of gold, a thunder of ovations.

With the bravo of the stones all Coucy now doth fête us. Our courier's a scared fowl, saved from the horse's hoofs. And over the Place Haute, to better contemplate us, the craning clouds ascend the ladder of the roofs.

Suzon, look closely now! At the corner of the square you will shortly see a man, voracious-eyed, appear, who will greet us from afar with stretched, quadruple chin, then will compress its folds like an accordion

in measure, O Suzon, as our pair august the while, with statures still increased dilating pupils fill. Should he embrace you not, impute no lack of will. His arms already form the basket of his smile.

In spotless napery, behold Monsieur Champion, weapon at paunch. The last of Coucy's sires? . . . I see at his side Madame, his spouse, who curtsies smilingly. A pretty face, hum, hum, I know him well, Suzon."

Half-past eleven doth peal from the belfry. Joyous chimes! In the kitchens casseroles are bubbling on the stoves. Fair Easter, fairest hour of the dial, hour when one dines, while the city fans itself with circling flights of doves!

Extracts from SENLIS.

SENLIS. EARLY MORNING.

I go out. Has all the town this morning dropped from sight? Pray whither has it flown? By what wind, in what land? I find it yet I

scarce dare to extend my hand. Senlis is vaporous, a veil of muslin light.

What? I to tear Senlis? Take care, where has it gone? The roofs and walls are one clear net of vapour fine. Notre-Dame doth to the air her throat of lace resign, her dainty neck, her breast the colour of the moon,

where chimes the hour unreal whose peal can only be heard by angels 'tis so dulled in the pillow of the sky made of their snowy wings expanded dreamily, where God doth rest his brow, bending above Senlis.

THE LITTLE SILENT STREET.

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none that this way comes?

Cobblestones count geraniums. Geraniums count the cobblestones.

Dream, young girl, at your casement high. Shelled green peas before you lie.

They plump the apron white you try with rosy finger-tips to tie.

I pass, in black from head to feet. Is it forked lightning troubles thee, young maiden, or the sight of me? The peas have fallen in the street.

Sombre, I pass. Behind I see cobblestones count each fallen pea.

The stormy silence stirs and hums. Will there be none that this way comes?

From MARGOT, MY PAGE.

MOONLIGHT.

As an aspen quivers, 'gainst this heart of mine be a ray that shivers soft as satin fine.

Blue and alabaster is my goddess bright. Rabbits frolic past her through the summer night.

Pale the perron gleameth. All your nudity to my bosom streameth,
star that falls on me!

How your neck, Margot, with your haunch doth glide! Rabbits far
and wide fluff white tails below.

All things blend and move. Who will laugh to see these poor butts
that prove Dian's archery?

THE HUNTER.

From a great voyage I come again and from the limits of the plain,
gay hunter who through heaven doth chase while ruminating roundelays.

Tarantara! on my shoulders, ah! I bear venison . . . Tarantara! Not
much but I can say with reason 'tis good considering the season.

Margot, within her rosy room, flushed with her hope's effulgent light,
practices Grieg, the selfsame tune I heard her playing yesternight.

With shouldered gun, to hear I pause. The tune my ear already
reaches. Day, in the shelter of the beeches, swift her obscuring curtain
draws.

The scolding wind of autumn comes, shakes the green barrier to and
fro . . . the petals of geraniums through the wide-open doorway blow.

A ring its tangled maze doth weave, on ivory keys to quench its fires,
on a theme of Chopin, the desires of my fond heart, the tranquil eve.

The ring upon her fleeting hand in the player's shadow veils its spark,
as, dropped behind the forests dark, the sun has vanished from the
land.

A joyous cry awakes you. 'Tis your heart's deep instinct thus ex-
pressed. I'm there, against the trellises in a gay hunter's costume
dressed.

New trills, like mad, tumultuous words, unknown to these composer-chaps, simulate mockeries of birds . . . towards that great gun of mine, perhaps.

But to your hand that trembles there in the last rays of evening light, uplifted towards me, blue and white, whistling, I give a slaughtered hare.

“Oh, Nimrod, did it cost a lot?—Hmm! . . . Be that as it may. Pile high the kitchen fire, put on the pot. And let them hang me if I lie.”

The sky is one great emerald from south to septentrion. “Ah, fie on such quarry! What, a hare, Nimrod? Another time 'twill be a lion.”

Piqued, “Play me some *Lecocq*,” I beg. I break the shell of my boiled egg. From a great voyage I come again and from the limits of the plain.

MORTCERF.

Followed by

BALLADS AND CANTILENAS.

1909.

THE BEAUTIFUL NAMES.

To Francis J. . . .

Francis, you realize, from loving Ile-de-France, how a country or a town, adorned with a fair name, more than its neighbours may command our confidence, and this fair name to rank among its gifts may claim.

The forest of Crécy through which proceeds the road that leads me to Mortcerf—its name pronounced aloud charms like a fairy flight that steals from elfin grotts to wheel about a knight who, whelmed by sorrow's load, slumbers beside a spring, 'mid blue forget-me-nots.

A country by its name our senses should delight, or one can never come to full intelligence, complete accord. You love, my Francis, Ile-de-France. To your name its fair name a joyous troth doth plight, and your art and yourself join to its dowry bright.

How the names Nemours, Senlis, my beating heart beguile! When I murmur them aloud, oh! what pure joy I feel! Senlis, Nemours, why, look . . . in faith, I almost kneel. O Nemours, that's all despair, O Senlis, that's all smile, lilies, and turtledoves, farewell, dear names of song! I give myself anew, to Mortcerf I belong.

Mortcerf, the sounding horn, all the Fall in fresco set.

—But it is not autumn yet?—Ah, well, 'tis all the same. Come staff, I take the road for Mortcerf of fair name.

THE FOREST OF CRÉCY.

At a pace to reawake my dreaming fantasy, I started then, my mind for new adventures keen. They say 'tis full of game, the forest of Crécy, but only flowers I saw and tunnels through the green—sometimes the noiseless shots of a tall service-tree—'neath vaulting shrubs whose fronds as lithe as fairies showed, that the blue breeze which sifts the branches and the vines on either side entwines with the whiteness of the road.

Was I alone? Not I, my Francis. With me went my fair one, plucking flowers, the scarlet pimpernel especially, whose bloom adorns my dark lapel and always breaks. One culls another. Singing gay one takes the road again. Ah, if I could but say that morn how we had hearts at ease and minds content! From naught, from everything, Francis, and from the breeze which, scourging here and there, o'er its green empire ranged and from the kisses sweet we in the breeze exchanged.

The road is straight and white and long will last, 'twould seem. We should have liked it well if it had never ended (a thousand years endured the Sleeping Beauty's dream), if for us to the end of love, of life it had extended, or at least till the death of day. O to see, beneath the bough, a hundred tunnels green for a hundred rays unclose long tombs in that grave hour of sunset's burning rose. This thing we did not see. How we regret it now!

What did we see? The squirrel flaunting his tail with glee. The nuthatch with sharp beak drilling the linden-tree. Three baby rabbits steal from a wave of marguerites. The antlered stag uprear that lordly head of his 'neath silver rays to tear the veil of clematis. Such toadstools as might serve King Oberon for seats. And 'neath acacia, beech and birch with silver sheen, hammocks of fern to lull Titania the Queen.—Alas, I lie: we saw no trace of all of this.

From the shady forest verge uprose the scent of mint, crushed by our careless feet, so troubling and so strong, that my love with those green eyes where blue reflections glint, making pretence to faint, poured all my arm along her warm and agile waist, vine that my strife had torn. "A pheasant!" I exclaimed when tired with too much pleasure. Pheasant? A bare-faced lie.—". . . Hark to the distant horn. . . ." "No, 'tis the angelus chiming for noon, my treasure."

At the prick of noon the road, as at a signal given, turned, supple, and became the white neck of a swan, within whose gaping beak a lucent sapphire shone, offered, with gesture mild, to the wide azure heaven. In the midst of the oval sapphire of the clearing (we had strayed for a full hour or more beneath the forest shade) with myriad panes Morteerf through calm air glittered bright, half up a mountainside, all swathed in vapours light, where the hot sun of noon its rainbow poured for me.

For a sapphire, fare thee well, my forest of Crécy!

SALE OF THE "COIN MUSARD."

Tobaccos, wines, liqueurs, grocery "fancy foods" in sooth, bookshop and stationers, arbour and shooting booth, salon for Society, garage of the T.C.F., and "Mutuality of the Citizens of Morteerf"; inn and restaurant to boot, my luckless "Coin Musard," they rip thine entrails out, haphazard empty thee before thine ample sill 'neath the stout, green canopy which keeps the amateur who o'er the stock would squint from in the noontide frying his precious brains until, a bidder mad, delirious, prey to the dog-star Sirius, inopportunately spying a shadowy clock, maybe, which makes a single lot with the handle of a pot and the pot's dim vacancy, and with the mocking glint of a pint of syrup—crying: "A million francs! Not more. The Devil take the rest! Sold."—with his laughter's roar he rips his satin vest. Here naught of this you'll see. All's ranged in order due. Good cloth is the canopy and Phebus can't

bite through. It is municipal, official, honest, laves with freshness magical the caps that crowd in waves, the flood of bonnets white of men and maids who wait with squeaking chalk to write, each on his little slate.

On Monsieur Albin Dumur the brunt of the sale doth weigh. He's brisk, but I am sure he's sweating blood today. Stout he seems, but to light waltz the German waltz his art is (I swear to it, Madame) at your evening dancing-parties, for round a soup-tureen he lightly waltzes there, offered in single lot with nine unshapely spoons, that he agitates as shakes his thunder, Jupiter. In truth his ministry to humour he attunes. "You there, Blanche Lapiné, this shines, eh, what? Some class!

Of silver? Better still, of purest plate, my lass.—Three spoons are gone, you say, Monsieur Petitcornet? In the soup-tureen as well one lacks the *soupe au lait*. Three francs! three francs! three francs! three francs ten! who bids twenty, eh?—Three francs twenty . . ." Silence. "What? Have you no more to say?" The mouths are tightly closed. One does not care to think of the abyss of doubt whence their vexed spirits shrink. "Three francs twenty?—Naught. 'Tis still as death.—Monsieur Albin, what characters are these your journal's page that span? Hush! He is grave: his round visage becomes oblong and—to close the sale he strikes upon a gong.

Gay birds of Paradise, birds tinted like the sky, above this wave of caps for a brief moment fly! Here are the post-girls twain, here's the instructress sweet, in hats from Paris! Ah! How lovely! What a treat! To the hummingbirds they wear the beadle bows his staff, but with a tone . . . To Paris, girls, Paris and a half. The fireman's helmet there with more fastidious art is poised with mien gallant o'er an observant heart. And they talk, since now the sale halts ere it onward goes, of all, of Monsieur Albin, who calmly sniffs a rose. The crowd of country-folk is seated and content (for it's Sunday), 'tis polite and ripe for merriment. This is agreeable and sets the brain aglow. "It's late, and I must say good-bye, Dame Perruchot. I fly. Good-bye."—"So soon, sir Pegasus? Won't you wait? Ah, what inconstancy . . . to thus forget your slate. . . ."—Inconstant, I?—"Indeed, you're always on the wing. Hm! don't we know the nest to which your fancies cling?" Monsieur Pegasus, the beadle, can go, on this to muse, going with eagle eye he had transfixed a goose.

Through ten holes of the canopy the sunlight shining fair, presses between its bars the assembly prisoned there. Red noses shine. You'd

think they live. The quiverings of all these nostrils make a noise of captive wings, noses like owlet's beak, turkey's wattle, goose's bill, as the dimensions grow becoming prouder still, bill of raven, vulture, bird of the rhinoceros, all fenced in the gold coop of fairy Carabosse.—But what aerial nose of those the coop contains, free, soars in graceful flight, winged with a pair of panes? Clerk of the beadle-poet, tell me, if 'tis your nose, borne by its spectacles toward what fair dream it goes! . . . Then all the sunny bars in one gold flood combine. Vague, trembling, and confused, a gentle glow it yields, mixed with the charming rose, friend yonder of the fields, which, circling earth, becomes the sunset's vermeil shine. "Blow your nose there! make haste! speak! I have brooms, I say, from your thousand palaces to brush the dirt away." A scarlet handkerchief to every nose is brought, and long they trumpet there, immersed in pensive thought.

My God, I do not know just how the thing occurred. She must have simply set her casement-window wide. But she is very pure and, all the din unheard, she reads above the sale, like some white saint enskied. I do not know her: 'Tis a young girl; by that curl of jet I know her now, it is *the true young girl* . . . In the house across the way, yonder, I see her turn the page where marching kings in jewelled beauty burn. Her room, in darkened wood bright gildings underline, with an aureole obscure surrounds her profile still. She's fair, entrancingly—indeed, perhaps too fine—propped on her elbow there o'er the red window-sill. Lord! Is she double? Ah! her brow, naught may surpass, is mirrored now nearby in this oval looking-glass. . . . No, 'tis my eyes that twice the vision pure present, so deeply am I moved, so much am I content! Dusky, caressing locks her rosy cheeks enfold, and her white fingers, laid against her cheek. Alas! but nothing human now disturbs her wisdom cold. The page turns. All in gold a strutting prince doth pass. Ah me, how much I yearn to wave a handkerchief, colour of dawn and gold, which from my hope I weave. Ah, let her but look down from her window high above to meet these gazing eyes that overflow with love. Aie! My foot is crushed. Ah, well, o'er my acts I have no power. I leave you here, Margot! My heart "mounts to the tower."

Naught further, window closed.—Apollo, for my pains, a fiery tongue protrudes in the blank window-panes. My heart returns to me, dishevelled. Fatal blow! "Margot . . . give me thy hand. Where art thou then, Margot?" I swoon on all the goods that before me they expose. (In a huff Margot has gone, with cause enough, God knows.)

Fragility of man! and of the oval glass, which mirrored even now my bright divinity. 'Tis smashed to atoms small. Destroyed for aye, alas! Ah! all is dust. . . . Not so, upon a table, see, Monsieur Albin doth arise. "I'll pay! You shall not lose."—"Pay then."—"The price will be, how much?"—"A hundred sous."—"Only a hundred sous?" The bargain soon is sped. All its beaks the poultry-house has raised above my head. "No more than a hundred sous?"—" 'Tis the price of the lot entire."—"Eh, what did you say?"—"I said, good sir, the lot entire." Ophelia of the glass, pale saint unknown to me, thy Hamlet turns again in his dark panoply. Sigh, my heart! What things one may from "the lot entire" derive, an ornamental broom and egg-cups thirty-five.—Stop there! Margot being gone, I seem to hear you say, how did you manage then to take all these away?—Be seated, sceptic throng, readers and readeresses. Here we are not concerned with clocks or oaken presses. Hark, with a flaxen thread, a tether strong but slight, I strung the egg-cups all, that bevy chastely white. Necklace on neck, and broom on shoulder, proud of soul, forth from the sale I went—as rigid as a pole.

Extracts from NEMOURS.

HORIZONS.

Upon the Paris side, but towards Nemours the white, in the boughs a bullfinch sang 'neath morning's silvery light.

Upon the Orléans side, flown towards Nemours, the sweet lark at the heart of day carolled above the wheat.

Upon the Flanders side in twilight's golden ray, the magpie far from Nemours his hoard hath hidden away.

Towards Russia and Germany, cawing, this eventide the troop of carion-crows quitted the countryside.

But in my garden-close, by Nemours protected well, through all the starry night has chanted Philomel!

Extract from VELIZY.

THE MYSTIC HOUR.

All's silent, save a murmuring. This evening, standing in the wheat,
I hear all Nature hearkening. What hour is this that flies so fleet? . . .
All's silent, save this murmuring.

What hour from the far belfry comes in the hollow of my hand to die,
against my ears' attentive drums? or living in my heart doth vie with
its beatings, dreamily?

The earth is a cathedral gray. The host of the moon is lifted there.
The wheat doth murmur an *ave* that, to the belfry, breezes bear, moved
and large and flown away,

and all the wheat is bowed in prayer.

Extracts from BALLADS AND CANTILENAS.

OPHELIA.

To the sad wind of the woods, something the night doth croon

“Ask her on what she broods in the stream, the rosy moon.”

“In the stream where swims a rose, a rush to drink doth stoop.”

Ophelia's cheek doth droop towards the reflected rose of her arm in
waters deep, and all Ophelia goes . . .

What has she said, the moon, to the sad wind of the woods?

“A rush? 'Tis *she*, poor mime, who culls eternal dream.”

THE QUEEN AND THE KING.

—My master dear, my king, dost thou know how much they love, my
breast, these arms that cling, these violet eyes above?

My mouth tells to the wind what to thee it dares not tell. Thou hast taken me to laugh, and to weep and groan as well.

—O queen of lineage high, no more content, impart to the wind that is not I, for the wind torments its heart,

the quest at time that mocks. And all the tale betray to my grey towers' weathercocks where the wind pipes all day!

HAMLET.

Hamlet, whom the cracked brains of others importune, has made the tour of the world; but it avails him naught. He still sees Elsinore beneath the waning moon.

Hamlet has made the tour of the world, as he does all, in thought.

His shadow on the wall that doth towards Rome incline, he hears the nightingale, clear warbler, passion-fraught. Imperial Cæsar's ash between the stones doth shine.

Hamlet has made the tour of the world, as he does all, in thought.

Three times has Hamlet made the tour of his château. And this then is the world! And Yorick is the moon? Yorick's skull? In what a coil of madness he is caught!

Hamlet has made the tour of the world, as he does all, in thought.

Beneath the oblong tower that dusks the esplanade, a father's phantom pale begins his promenade. Why, what a narrow world! "Sire, would you wandering fare?"

Thrice I've made the tour of the world, and was sure I'd meet you there."

KING CLAUDIUS.

Cypress, geraniums, bleak hedge of my parterre, from the chase I come once more, with grief that sharper gnaws. 'Tis still in my black park the entrance sinister, when evening o'er the world its golden mantle draws,

still the entry of a brother that has his brother slain. And 'tis my dame, the Queen, who is the cause of all. To the high tower we mount and gaze upon the main, to dreadful torpor stilled, a sea of pitch and gall.

From his barque Prince Hamlet leaps. Home from the jousts he fares. Is he mad? How red he is! He's sweating, this dear child! Alas! Go sound his heart, sweet Gertrude, mother mild, while We to hide Ourselves descend six hundred stairs.

At each loophole's chink the sun a lowlier beam doth show. 'Tis the hour when in the vaults one sees the rising moon in the eyes of monstrous rats. But, tender mother, go to dry Our noble son lest he contract a rheum.

This evening he shall see this tranquil face of mine (he loves such games) along the lighted passage wend, that in his room is lost—the pathway to the end. Madame, you need not fear. I shall have drunk the wine.

FORTINBRAS.

I, brave Prince Fortinbras, who close this tragic pother, enter to say my phrase. Brief is my rôle and slight. I march upon the son, having o'erleapt the mother. Emotion's at the full and horror at its height.

I come with trump of gold to terminate the play. Alone, for that vast horde, my army, comes not. Bah! What would you? In the gloom of the flies they lose their way, and wander in the wings. At last! Tara-tata!

My blue cloak, since it drags, with blood is doubtless weighed. The curtain a quick veil to my useful phrase affords, hiding the stalwart fists of my army that I aid, I, brave Prince Fortinbras, to haul upon the cords.

Elsinore doth reappear. O stoutly tug the strings! And at my side Shakespeare is pulling in the wings.

LAMENT
OF THE LITTLE WHITE HORSE.

The little horse 'mid winter's height, ah, what a gallant heart he bore! He was a little pony white, all behind and he before.

He never saw the Spring arise to gild the dreary landscape o'er. He never saw the sunny skies, either behind or before.

He was contented, evermore, drawing the lads of the neighbourhood through the rain's unceasing pour, all behind and he before.

His little cart behind him went, chasing the jaunty tail he wore. It was then he was content, all behind and he before.

But one day, beneath the winter's blight, one day when he had been so good, he died of a stroke of lightning white, all behind and he before.

He is dead without seeing the Spring arise. Ah, what a gallant heart he bore! He is dead without seeing the sunny skies either behind or before.

THE SADNESS OF MAN.

THE REPOSE OF THE SOUL IN THE WOOD OF L'HAUTIL.

1910.

THROUGH MELANCHOLY.

When in forest depths I hear the mourning of the mere, red with the eve that fades,

with piercing rushes full rising above the pool, like a heart transfixed with blades,

I say: ah! who would come far from his native home, seduced by love's false dream,

who could with heart unbowed enter this gloomy wood without a pain extreme?

Yet someone's drawing near. 'Neath the alder-grove I hear a man in the shadows trail

dolorous tarn, towards thee! He is in extremity, phantom rancourless and pale.

Call, pool of forests dim, pool where the wild ducks swim, man and night come tardily

toward thy surface so morose where the tawny pinion glows of the sunset slow to die . . .

The stag bellows wearily, and suddenly doth flee, a dog howls in the distant plain.

The owl, in the underwood, shivers, eyes closed, and toward the rising moon doth sigh.

Welcome, O dolorous pool, this being sorrowful who comes to drown his pain

nor could with careless mien enter this gloomy wood were he not in woe supreme,

did not Death his soul invite, through melancholy's blight, to forsake this world . . . 'tis I.

THE TERROR.

No, I did not dare—but find no excuses, for my mind the poet in me impeaches—

I did not dare to die in the pool that shows the sky on fire beneath the beeches,

when I saw before me rise, to the zephyr's dolorous moan, the hypocrite with downcast eyes,

the ghoul with velvet arm (one hand on my heart, and one pressed to my brow)—the Terror

who, directing my scrutiny, this evening showed to me Hell, painted on that mirror,

and there, in yonder glade, beneath the oak's dim shade, crawling running, all astir,

the Phantoms of my soul, lone or in chains they were, on the far side of the pool.

A glade? The cavernous rim, the dire, sepulchral sill, of Hell which cumpers, grim,

The Tree of Good and Ill, kindled suddenly, whence rises the sputtering dew in smoke,

on whose trunk, in that red light, Moses, upright, bent, upright, breaks the Tables of the Law;

the Tree round which Virgil bears, bowed low beneath his yoke, Aeneas, who bears Anchises

beneath the breath and brow of the Bard, that blinded roamer who sang of Troy, old Homer,

eyes like cherries burst, dread ghost who towards his treasure fares, illumined motes disposed

where the thunder flares and peals. Like a pet dog at his heels comes stoop-shouldered Dante, struck

by the whips, that hate doth impel, of his heroes who scourge him well, and 'tis the mercest luck

if by a leap he can surmount the delirious group of Cervantes and Shakespeare

who 'neath the fetters stoop of Othello, Sancho Panza, Don Quixote and King Lear.

Toward the steaming tarn he races o'er whose depths there swim the faces of Milton and Lucifer,

where Baudelaire, rowed thereon by his cold Don Juan, in flames doth disappear

before the shallop fair upon which comes Molière to fall, a statue of stone,

and that's all: the barque goes down. Remaineth gloom alone and at my side the Terror

who, brusquely, by his pallor, forth from the forest wild chases me like a child.

SHADE OF THE WOODS.

I yearn with the weariness of my life, laid waste and lost in the woods the zephyr sways.

I yearn with the dreariness of my undirected days in the tufted forest's shade.

There to groan in my happiness, there I feel that I am lost. All is tuned to my weariness.

I say it. Joy doth brood for me in the tufted wood that by no path is crossed.

THE HAPPY MAN.

I alone, the Heavens decide, gain full felicity. Pray whither shall I flee my happiness to hide?

How fly the crooked thorn that, with malicious spine, is loth to free, untorn, this happy heart of mine?

I bear, o'er the blasted heath where Joy doth wings supply, I bear along with my great happiness, to Death

my iron laughter, rattle that undismayed doth roll, of deathless joys the chattel; my body and my soul.

Quickly the goal I'd reach, softly descend the breeze. My laughter I would teach to the Eumenides.

I am happy! I alone this gift from Fate could wring because my lyre has known how to sing everything.

Extracts from

REPOSE OF THE SOUL IN THE WOOD OF L'HAUTIL.

DREAM OF THE FIRST DAY.

Rest in the wood, my soul, on the past no longer brood, on that vanished bitterness, O soul in lassitude, but the honeysuckle part, your wrinkled joys unfurl. The country is more sweet than is a changing pearl.

In the forest of l'Hautil, my soul, your strength recall. 'Tis a most shady wood, quite young and very small, crowning a towering hill, remote in ether pale, which o'er the Oise and Seine doth dominate the vale.

Fin-d'Oise one sees from here, its swaying barques afloat on clear water, and Triel that gently lulls my thought: of a belfry of Triel the voice to me is borne, its belfry rose-enwreathed that bathes in golden corn.

My woes of those black days in Paris, where are they? Yonder two trains rush past, a pair of swallows gay. One sees where, drunkenly, from Chanteloupe there climbs the path the vintners trace to Tir among the vines,

which, hospitable sight, is with a bench endowed, as green as sprouting hope, whose gestures bid me gain this realm, ascend the throne, god of the vintners proud. Rejoice, rejoice, my soul, one sees Pissefontaine . . .

THE MARRIAGE
OF THE OISE AND THE SEINE.

Here, where are grouped Fin-d'Oise, Maurecourt, Andrésy, Conflans-Sainte-Honorine—what mellow names are they! pæan of chiming bells for a wedding one would say . . . O poesy, O poesy, O poesy! . . .

here, under the blue eyes of these four villages, the radiant Seine made one with the lovely Oise one sees. Good. Mount upon the bridge that rocks suspended there. Embrace your well-beloved, and now gaze elsewhere.

Feminine is the Oise and masculine the Seine. My eyes are witnesses, besides the proof is plain that for their journeying o'er many a green-sward wide the Seine presents his arm to his too-youthful bride.

O vaporous marriage seen from the bridge suspended there, for all an amorous hour beneath my eyes I had this vision, you appeared one of those nuptials glad where 'neath a single veil unite the happy pair,

the bridal veil, *ohé!* Still better. At the call of the image, on I run with fancy uncontrolled. I saw them, 'neath the palms of poplars bright with gold, rush to embrace as 'twere Virginia and her Paul.

Paul and Virginia wed? Indeed, I tell you true. One bore a cap bedecked with a French flag (I attest that so it seemed to me that peaceful barge at rest), t'other a chain of ships, scintillant with the dew.

How pure they were! . . . No doubt before this wooing sweet the Oise had some affairs, the Seine at times did stray. 'Tis no concern of mine. Friends, I've a mind discreet. Besides what man would mar the raptures of this day!

The rattle of a helm turns yonder. Ah, it is a pretty toy, in sooth, the future babe to dower, the heir who will arrive honourably in his hour. He shall be called the Eure, born 'mid the cabbages.

A joyful wedding-dance the rout around you draws, Seine, lordly male, and you, little gosling, little Oise, the banks, the hills, the vines amid the vaporous air dance, and upon my arm dances my sweetheart fair.

Taratata! And now, to the trumpet's martial blare, to leap into the barques the wedding-guests prepare. Let all these joyous scamps be piloted by me. Charming couple, you must run to met your destiny.

"O joy! Then we must run!—Ocean your Fate will be.—Then we must run, alas?—And it is death, the sea.—Sombre reflection.—No. At one end you will die . . . at the other even now the marriage draweth nigh."

And I should like to know how—lovers ever fond—in the multitude of streams that mingle in the sky, you can again retrieve your droplets blue and blonde, to go and hide yourselves in Earth's profundity,

and rise and join again where all delights the eye—here, where are grouped Fin-d'Oise, Maurecourt, Andrésy, Conflans-Sainte-Honorine—What mellow names are they! pæan of chiming bells for a wedding one would say . . .

O poesy, O poesy, O poesy! . . .

ODE TO PISSEFONTAINE.

Muses, I dub myself, despite each rival claim, with haughty heraldry, King of Pissefontaine.—Count if you choose, but king is not too much, I hold.—With lance in rest I charge all the pretenders bold who hie them hither armed though but with stoups of ale, across the fields and vines my title to assail.

Who more than I to sing this village would desire, lover of mornings clear, perched high above them all, where twenty lusty cocks, for lack of village spire, from the roofs, to the countryside the first good-morrow call? Who passes happy days in the free atmosphere to see it on its rock in equipoise appear, to count the houses fair that o'er the bushes spring like herds of little goats buoyantly gambolling?

'Tis I. Is it not I?—more proofs? you're still in doubt? come, drink, and suffer me, drinking, to search them out—who, then, descends superb in dawning's golden shrine, his graceful calf caressed by tendrils of the vine, his flowing cloak bedecked with drops of crystal dew, towards the castle of my choice, this jolly tavern blue, and, glass in hand, without, fearing no whit the prod of horns, to sleeping husbands doth sing this

gay aubade (for a brief instant brushed by kisses circumspect since for eye alone the right of *jambage* do I exact), then in a rocking-chair plunged like a goodly king—this throne a Briton left to pay his reckoning—with rapture o'er the square the slender limes doth view, quivering in the wind as they are wont to do, while in the hollow roads my subject marmots go far as Triel to roll the casks of *picolo*—letting my wits, still sharp, suit to the cadence gay of their stentorian tread the rhythm of my lay?

THE GOD OF SUNNY DAYS.

Proud yearning of the wind above the forest deeps, of a wind that vivifies each barrier that it leaps, perfumed with grain that 'neath its rule is bended low, prompted me all at once to leave this world and go to heaven, among the leaves down far-off vistas lost. Already, both my arms, 'gainst hoary trunks uptossed, I crucified, all myself to the tempest did resign, to Boreas whose pale arms like smoothest marble shine, to let myself depart with all the little trees—But before me dropped the leaves. 'Twas dead calm. Not a breeze. Reclining at my feet mysterious herbage spread, softly. No single flower was missing from its place, and I seemed in woods serene to hear great Pan who said: "Behold, it is Paul Fort, the god of sunny days." Then, as my long, draped arms, too widely stretched, once more became my body's sheath, at that very instant, lo, I felt a pair of horns from out my forehead grow.

PRAYER

TO CONJURE AWAY THE RAIN.

The chirping frog his joy betrays. It rains upon the Seine and Oise. O followers of Saint Nicaise, born at Triel, hard by Pontoise,

Saint Égobille and good Saint Mille, now intercede with God, I pray, that he from heaven may clear away these clouds, the hue of camomile.

Culling strawberries, one gets a chill, picking raspberries, one is numbed, I find.—If this should last my chair too well will know the weight of my behind.

Saint Mille and good Saint Égobille, both natives of Triel, appeal to God! Without this aid of yours my family must stay indoors.

THE PRAYER GRANTED.

A lull!—Then quick, the moment cull! Take full advantage of that lull! Snails shine on every side of me. Egobille and Mille—*merci*.

THE ABANDONED CHAPEL.

In a pool it is reflected fair, where all the frogs to sing are fain, where the moonlight drinks, and where clouds descend to weep their rain.

'Tis a small, abandoned church, that has no cross, no bell, no coloured glass. Saints, Virgin, altar—where are they? No soul doth hither come to pray.

The grass-blades form its flock devout and the stock, that from the fissured wall and ruined window peereth out with shiverings continual.

Scarce seen when on the road you pass, still through the bay one may descry, o'er the heap that once its altar was, the stainless azure of its sky.

Beneath a willow's wan regret, 'tis the swallow's mournful friend. Within its heart uncounted spiders spin webs that with crystal pearls are wet.

'Tis a sweet, small church that holds in fee all treasures on the earth arrayed: dim silence, steadfast poverty, shade, and the chastity of shade.

All treasures? alas, my God, there lies dead in its crypt illusion pale, despite its roof that toward the skies uplifts a swaying birch-tree frail.

Like two hands locked in ardent prayer o'er palms Our Saviour sanctifies, the two halves of the roof arise: 'tis an abandoned chapel bare,

that shakes through all its ivy-leaves, door open to the stranger's tread. The night of stars it there receives; 'tis the cabin of the shepherd-lad,

and 'tis my refuge . . . There I find asylum in my sadness deep. And often it has seen me weep—why? for no cause, to ease my mind—

my temples couched upon the stones, brows that the stock hath coifed
anew (it even takes for orisons the sobbing that my grief betrays),

by day when I have naught to do, at midnight when I bay the fays.

Extracts from the

NOTE BOOK OF ROMANCES AND LAMENTS.

THE ITALIAN.

“Sing, I tell the Italian: bring your barrel-organ. Sing.”—To his
organ he chanted. Ah,

the wretch, he yesterday so wiled my soul away. O *mandoli-mandola!*

The ocean, tawny and rose, tonight, a nonchalant rose, beats the em-
bankment wall,

and I let from my thoughts depart my fair singer or (my heart being
not so prodigal)

I dream him . . . But he: “Signor, if I sing you must not pore on
yourself, the sea, this place

of shining sand: my voice without me is empty noise. Serutinize well
my face.”

LAMENT

OF THE RUINED CHATEAUX IN WINTER.

Lusignan, les Baux, Coucy, white towers in winter’s fee, and autumn’s
king, Saint-Cloud,

where shrewd the wind doth blow, mocked by the whirling snow, is
it not sad for you?

This lake that the reeds enslave, how its shivering wave annuls the
desolate sheen

of Lusignan's château that coldly gleams below in the baths of Melusine!

This hold on the hillside low, stiffly reared les Baux, gapes to all the tempests chill

that o'er its hearth-stones rage. It complains, and perhaps with age its crumbling stones are ill.

The five towers of my Coucy (I also speak to thee), what art thou 'neath the silver stain

of the hoar frost? five white owls that shiver beneath the cowls of a foliage wet with rain?

My friends, this way repair; direct your glances there; remark it well, 'tis Saint-Cloud.

Since one December fell, ah! piteous to tell! there's nothing left to view.

Lusignan, les Baux, Coucy, white towers in winter's fee, (and Saint-Cloud no longer there)

is it not bitter pain life's semblance to retain when death is in the air?

THE ETERNAL ADVENTURE.

Followed by

IN GATINAIS.

1911.

THE ETERNAL ADVENTURE.

Cœur tendre mais affranchi du serment.

PAUL VERLAINE.

BOOK I.

(First pages.)

I.

I felt a limit should be set to these joys that rouse such envious strife
and in the arms of Margaret I had resolved to end my life.

Therefore I said to life, "My dream, thus I would have you close.
You seem like a recital that extends beyond its wonted time, and ends,

ends in a murmuring, alas! where the white bed doth vigil keep,
whither, with drooping head, doth pass the speaker almost fast asleep."

II.

"No," says my love, my faithful friend (what new dawn in thy soul
doth gleam?), "it is not finished yet, your dream, not yet doth your re-
cital end."

I heard, "A free release I give from my arms, dear soul in discontent,"
then wakened, still a prisoner, pent by all this life I yet must live!

“From this life of love devoid of blame.”—I heard—and with heart that could not break sighed toward the hearth: “Extinguished flame,” but straightway found myself *awake*.

III.

Did I against my will obey? Yes, I wish to live in joy profound, chase the daybreak where the chime doth sound—a kick for the hearthstone’s ashes grey,

quite dead: let us run, life glad and feigned!—The heavens with purest rose are stained, the fields an azure dew doth hide. I go, so get you gone, my dear.

The hedge—the road—the world so wide. Even as the day my sight is clear! . . . (this bourne alone is manifest where, ’neath a poplar’s shade, I rest).

IV.

No image through my tears doth pass—tears both of gladness and distress—save of my grief and happiness, a pebble dark, a pebble white.

Two pebbles on the road displayed for my shadow two bright eyes have made. Hark, frenzied soul that doubts, my shade squints in a fashion to affright.

The swallow high in heaven doth fly. Piercing the azure comes his cry. I’ve time enough to scan the sky, all day it will be fair and bright.

V.

Here, by this roadside pastoral, with clasping hands to crown my knees, seated must I in thought recall all of our secret miseries?

Smiling as gentle zephyrs toy with my long hair, my mustaches, pray can I not gain the air of joy while I regard my shadow grey?

Freedom from love have I not found, who down the distant road doth press and gives no sign of turning round? . . . Yes. Then am I contented? Yes.

VI.

Swallows, behold my joy and pride! Towards you I raise this face of mine, and towards thy zenith's silver shine, sweet heaven! I fear the countryside

as I fear the past. Let us agree to theorise upon the themes of time to come, eternity, eyes still directed toward our dreams.

Alas! to seek for naked truth and only images surprise, O heaven, that on thy silver roof spring from the tears that cloud my eyes.

VII.

Face worn with many a scarlet stream whereon the eyes of angels dream, suffusing red doth swift o'errun this gulf that feels thy breath, O sun.

Behold the brazier of the dawn that in my eyes doth lose its sigh: in vapour all my tears have gone, pink mist to merge with flaming sky.

Let us drop our kindled glance to where Nature, all fresh and green, doth shine, to meet the contemplative stare, the fresh regard of browsing kine.

VIII.

Mornings of Spring, their candid light!—Formerly when I was a child, I oft caressed the freshness mild of the dawn upon my curtains white.

The door swings wide. O freshness sweet, stir of my mother's snowy feet, when, all dawn, I gave myself, elate, to her kisses, fresh and delicate.

The window gaped. Joy undefiled! I uttered cries of ecstacy. One cannot always be a child nor evermore a poet be.

IX.

Alas! and as today, indeed, I saw the nonchalant, grazing herd drink the Spring grasses lightly stirred on the blue crystal of the mead.

Trembling with joy and young desire while to those kisses fond I turned eyes where love's fires but newly burned,—houp! I removed my night attire.

Nor did my dressing hold me long. I yearned with instant speed to fly to the curlew's call, the swallow's song, cravated like a butterfly.

X.

Today I fear the past, uncouth mirages that the fields deform, my shadow tinted like the storm, and all the fancies of my youth.

Once as I chased the curlew grey I fell in the pond. Three months I lay in bed and deemed it azure sky, where Mother crooned a lullaby.

Another day with joy aglow. . . . Why does this memory rise and blast its fairness, God? I do not know. But I believe I fear the past.

XI.

Ah, then I wished to die, to search bright Paradise the first of all . . . Softly the pealing bell did call to the painted heavens that decked the church . . .

With the help of God, on His breast to be, His loved one, that fierce angel shy who beats his pinions jealously when other angels come too nigh!

Hosannah! In my fancy wild these arms to beat the skies did seem . . . One cannot always be a child, and who can realise his dream?

XII.

And here I am. (God can testify in youth how proud a lad was I.) Here I am to mourn a vanished day.—“What is that dust-cloud far away?”

Heart, jealous, fervent, quick to trust, what art thou now? This wretched stone! And with my soul what have I done?—“Who's coming yonder in the dust?”

Your heads the hurricane has bowed, flowers of my sensibility. "At present I can plainly see the gypsies come in motley crowd.

XIII.

"They'll soon be here."—To the senses, heart, thou didst resign thy sovereignty. And thou, my soul, the dwelling art of that cold demon, Mockery.

Fervour eestaey, fair childhood's dower, into what limbo were you cast? Why do I still invoke your power since I am frightened by the past?

Before me my remorse pours slowly, in rain that does not tire, black demons sparks have frosted o'er, which, as they take their form, take fire.

XIV.

O, how thy dust is dark and drear, staining with blackness all the plain, grimy road! Ah me, to see again the peasant's golden sunlight clear.

Here's the whole horde of mountebanks. Whips crack. The dust in tumult flees. The horses, heaving wiry flanks, drag the complaining axle-trees.

Great oaths of energetic heads. Clumping shoes. The stir a trumpet spreads. And gypsy faces dark with tan smile at the windows of the van.

XV.

How my regard, at war with fate, O you whose hands the osiers plait, the magic eyes of one doth note who from her car with tuneful throat

chanteth of love's inhuman thrall, to the guzla, thrummed in minor key by a handsome, lithe romanichal on a little horse from Hungary.

Seeking adventure, courting strife, I followed them at twelve years old—singing my tira-lira bold—no matter where, afar, through life!

XVI.

Why could I not remain at home, a faithful child with parents fond?
why must I strive to pass beyond the loving age of Hop-o'-My-Thumb?

He scattered pebbles, to be sure, wishing his home once more to see,
escaping from the wood obscure. 'Tis the *obscure* that tempted me.

The child becomes the youth, and soon the youth is the young man,
who is first man, then slippered pantaloon. How, prithee, will you alter
this?

XVII.

Love? Bah! It has so often been born, in so many lives, and then so
often vanished from our ken, the heart has lost its rights therein.

“Dear, precious pet! A prodigy! Sweetest of babes! Perfection
rare! Take but a step, you're in the snare: all's an enigma instantly.”

Nature's profound and secret lure, all that my school-books did not
say, all that remained to me obscure, combined to make me run away.

XVIII.

My stricken mother wept at home. My father raised the garrison. I
was caught before three days had passed and the gypsy chief in jail
was cast.

My drum, gold, white, and blue (a deft red clown its lore had taught
to me, caustic, compassionate), was left at the threshold of their hos-
telry.

And despite this flattering drum, that went rocking above my heart
content, in that three days' sojourn I can say that I sinned three hundred
sins a day.

XIX.

To whom do I speak? To the winds that pass? To the cows that
drink the pearly grass? Alone I tell it as before, my shadow as sole
auditor.

My ear between harsh fingers (ah! more than three hundred times a day) home I was haled, to my mamma, who, in her love, half-swooning lay.

“College,” my father said, “and soon!”—“Hangman!” my mother cried, aswoon. And I thought, my heart with grief asmother, my father did not love my mother.

XX.

Dark seer o'er tedium's woes that reigns, friend of the streams that lash the panes, of winds that autumn's anger show, of water's sad and sombre flow

o'er the highway's dark declivities, where, like a rat, the evening flees, how this ingrate heart was praised by thee, black wizard of my destiny.

Two months emprisoned in my room each with the other did commune. In vain you strove the hope to tame of a heart already made for fame.

XXI.

No, all thine arts could ne'er have tamed a heart for high adventure framed. Ennui, I drove thee forth to reign far from the crystal window-pane

I opened to the beaming sun.—“Still fresh I hold in memory, Mother, the day you gave to me a ‘Childhood of Napoleon.’ ”

“Mother, all day its leaves I turned! against my trembling knees it burned . . . What gift was this, O Mother mild? . . . Till then I was a little child.”

XXII.

A boy morose, young men among, knowing too well what he would be, he did not play with anyone when all Brienne was plunged in glee

but in the playground's shade remote wandered, with grave, sleep-walking eyes, like the pale, muttering idiot who in the twilight prophesies.

And then at last I understood why boyish games I would forswear, seeking, instead, the gloomy wood to prophesy a little there.

XXIII.

October—and the day malign when I must quit my prison-cell, my chamber white, the house as well, God! and my birth's horizon-line.

I wept so much! But all I won from a father worshipped, none the less, was this walk through morning's loveliness of a mother and her little son.

In her hand she, too, wept bitterly like a child that's overwhelmed with sorrow. "I cannot see him go from me today . . . I cannot . . . Ah! tomorrow! . . ."

XXIV.

The poplars of our meadows fair, bent to the wind of heaven, their fate bemoaning, seemed with mournful air to say: "Call us unfortunate."

The bleating she-goat at her stake, 'neath trailing clouds o'er heaven that streamed, pulling upon her tether seemed to say: "Call me unfortunate,"

the clouds: "Unfortunate we are, we who in tatters skim the sky," and Mother, with her heart at war, said: "How unfortunate am I!"

XXV.

How prophet-like do I appear! Sleet falls . . . Farewell to sunny days . . . Dreamer with no umbrella near, the collar of your coat up-raise.

—Though such a rain as in the Last Judgment will fall our forms harassed, I wept no more. With courage bold, alas! my mother I consoled.

Then, to the house returning slow, college my fancy dwelt upon, and in the mingled rain and snow, I dreamed of young Napoleon.

* * * * *

Extracts from IN GATINAIS.

DEDICATION TO THE LAND.

Green Gâtinais, 'neath whose shade the living waters shine, where gleams the thunderbolt in that confinèd sea, the canal that with its stroke the storm doth underline, if I have made so bold as to sing thee, pardon me.

Not my portion of the world? Thou becomest it, art it now. I regard thee, understand thy soul, and sing of thee. Let him be who wills, I am of no one land, I trow. Since when has Ile-de-France paid me a salary?

And Champagne and this Remois of my nativity, where of crafty Louis Eleventh I have paraded long the mare, and the ample, fresh expanse of Normandy, have they been more prodigal? If you fancy so, you're wrong.

And the land where I was a sailor, the coast of Brittany (gravely and fervently in song I praised its scenes), the smallest obulus has never voted me. All the silver I saw there shone on the sides of its sardines.

From Périgord, in turn, what profit did I draw?—Truffles? Not every day. Santonge and Angoumois, (how fair they were, those days of France, O youthful I of vacations long ago) what funds did they supply?

Turning to foreign lands, what has my verdict been? Stout Belgium—Gallic blood its pulses doth attune: in truth I like thee well, O stub-

born race Walloon—has not marketed my wares for all its store of spleen.

Has thrifty Holland e'er unsewed for me at all the plump heel of her sock with golden écus full? From Italy, where I saw such treasures, did I gain more than the burning vow to view them once again?

And what vantage have I gained from those lands of faery, those countries of a dream my pen doth importune?—the Mountain, whose domain was wholly made by me, Olympus, Paradise, ah, and the moon, the moon? . . .

Tenderly to these lands I vowed my singer's art, their grace, austerity, or languor to express, nor asked reward, but sang to guard the happiness wherewith each man well-born doth satisfy his heart.

I hear this throbbing heart, spiritual and pure, wherein its mirrored self all Nature doth adore, and that I have, my friends, nor ever will abjure to basely compromise with silver I abhor.

Land of grasses and of streams, green Gâtinais, receive my homage. Thee I sing, nor look for any wage, whereof the golden wave of the canal, this eve, mirrors the moon that melts above thy foliage.

REPOSE AT NOON.

Bee, that the thyme doth sing, how clear thy hum doth ring in the hollow of mine ear!

Bee, down the distance borne, no longer sounds thy horn, thy song I do not hear.

Three seconds ere the noon, life in its course doth swoon. It is the hour of heaven.

For the standing harvest even, the finch at the rose's marge, on the canal, a barge.

For the suckling lamb as well: at the white throat of the ewe tinkles no more the bell.

Two seconds ere the noon, life in its course doth swoon. It is the hour of heaven.

Bee, that yonder sang, thy horn to my ear no more is borne. Thy song I do not hear.

Cat, padded paw in air, for what are you waiting there? For a far-off chiming clear?

Dragon-flies above the stream, the sunlight's aureate dream you to the reeds have given.

One second ere the noon, life in its course doth swoon. It is the hour of heaven.

Dew, dew, thy thought disclose. It plunges to the riven heart of a thought morose.

My heart, where is the past? It is the hour of heaven. Thither no fancies cast.

Bee, down the distance borne, no longer sounds thy horn, thy song I do not hear.

On the belfry's an angel white. There a second takes his flight: Ten others are hidden near.

At Nargis twelve strokes resound. Life again resumes its round. Balms distill from the lilies clear.

Bee, that the thyme doth sing, how clear thy hum doth ring in the hollow of mine ear!

LIVING AS A GOD.

BIRTH OF SPRING.

Followed by

THE ETERNAL ADVENTURE (BOOK III).

1912.

MATINAL SURVEY OF THE CITY.*

O justly made divine, unclosethy hands, sweet Dawn, those fingers flushed with rose—but keep thy mittens on: caress the rime of morn o'er glittering roofs. The cold bites? Ah! This instant born my Aurora pale behold.

No more than it does me. But I blow, my sweetheart fair, on my fingers. Hot! hot! hot!—What sovereign joy is there! A tomtit on the mill of the sleeping town doth sing as through its streets I pass in lonely wandering.

Rays of the dawning day, freshness ineffable of this morning, and I go, furtive, to find the key of a city by repute the happiest of all and like Aurora blessed in its calm destiny.

To the tomtit's lisping strain no emulous voice replies. Hushed is the nightingale. The cock has sung his psalm. Do you plan to give the town, O God of paradise, served on a silver tray to the angel proved most calm?

There is indeed—I hark—the murmur crystalline of a fountain, two, no, three. (And this one's silver sheen reflects a candid brow, the brow of Jean Racine.) Of that sound is this a part? (Do these verses bear the sign

* La Ferté-Milon.

of that speaker eloquent of falsehoods most divine? Water flows, the verses sing and fade, 'tis all a dream.) O calm Ferté-Milon, naught has your silence broken save the tomtit, and no doubt for angels I have spoken.

Of the mill upon the Ourcq the parget white doth sway. A supple bridge doth cross canal and rushing stream in two bounds—but with no noise—like those lithe tomcats gray that in silver gutters leap, watched by the lunar beam.

And truly! there remains above the town displayed a slender crescent moon that Dawn, distraught, doth crave. Alas! she wounds her hands against the sickle's blade, and sanguine roses fall to daub the golden wave.

The sparks that blue and rose and gold and crimson burn, silver and grey, those sparks that in this verse return: so sweetly they have come within my eyes to play, to sleep there, there to dream of life that lasts for aye!

Let us softly leap the stream for all is lulled to rest. The street of La Chaussée, the town's main street, I find, like silent desert sands in rosy whiteness dressed, seems to have quite forgot the shadows of mankind.

But I've no shadow . . . ah! 'tis there, but light as down. Like a faint wreath of smoke in air my shadow flees. Am I nothing but a soul?—Now, praise to God, I sneeze.—A little winter wind has swept across the town.

Then 'tis the swallows' joy in circling flight is spread. A creaking weathercock blends with their twittering cry. But in the fountain 'tis that, lifting not my head, there, close beside Racine, I love to see the sky.

Blue shutters, roofs of slate, soft clouds of morning clear, is it by such a stair that one to God may rise? Would you ascend, my soul, and leave my body here below, more drunk to grow with the rapture of my eyes?

Cobblestones charm me first, most worthy of renown, there are hun-

dreds, one, two, three, ten thousand by my guess. All of them I admire (what sparkling cleanliness!) in climbing up the street that dominates the town.

“*Ding!*” The half hour? Magic spell a single peal may bring!
Of its vibration born lo, a whole church uprises. Eh? yes, ’tis Notre-Dame with tower all quivering. “*Ding! ding!*” ’tis seven times thus that the bell evangelises,

and the belfry with each chime soars loftier, broadens vaster, or is it I draw near tilting my chin in air?—Dawn! see this Finger sway ’gainst the horizon there: does it not point for thee thy Maker and thy Master?

Yes, thou canst see him, thou . . . I, better I observe the fifteen hundred roofs of the little town that go down the main street ’neath my eyes, fine and light, and far below on the road to Rheims defile, making a sudden curve.

What chimneys! Ah, Seigneur! What vanes above the eaves! Angels in rosy air what martial trumpets play! Chimneys, in very sooth, warriors one well might say. Windows, no blossoms now, cultivate laurel leaves.

I see the mill, its wheel, set where the Ourcq meanders, its high tower, bushes, signs, Lions and Salamanders, and Racine, three times Racine, half-bare—child—deity of olden times—*Ave!* Hail! Three times hail to thee!

There’s the Hotel de Ville with its French flag there my inn o’er which with eyes of green, my Savage* doth preside, and the other ancient church below; come, courage then!—the hands of citizens push all the shutters wide.

Who now doth over me this sombre shadow throw? Houses somnambulant, who with a bound awake, to your shutters’ noise ascend by swift assault to take the hill all flower-bedecked, the shade of the château!

You remain! . . . Good, I alone shall go to gaze on you from the

* The author during his stay at La Ferté-Milon lived at the Hôtel du Sauvage, the sign of which is a Man-Friday, black and bare like a great radish.

height, then with both hands applaud you frantically, for, though I know not why, it is most sweet to me, against white walls the sound of all these shutters blue!

THE SEVEN HOUSES OF JEAN RACINE.

*Smyrna, Chios, Colophon, Salamis, Rhodos, Argos, Athenae, Orbis
de patriâ certat, Homere, tuâ.*

Homer was born in cities seven. Seven houses saw thy birth, Racine. Thus claim, devoid of reason's leaven but in the most polite of styles—vantage from mighty names to glean—proud Hellas with its storied isles and my Ferté-Milon serene.

The seven houses of Racine are not all dowered with gabled eaves save for the Hôtel Dieu, no doubt, in rue Pomparde, set close about with huts like onion-patches mean. The rue Pomparde, your scribe believes, pompous in naught but name has been.

But see this house in rue Jules-Girbe, number 4; the hold inhabited by this old buffer blanchéd of beard (Racine "old greybeard" would have said), in his courtyard tinkering away at a lamp, though a lampman proud in skill (and indeed I'd wish him artist), still a lamp won't make the light of day.

Next the house in rue Saint-Vaast approach. Like the last 'tis number 4, but pooh! Numbers are naught in such a coil. The number 4 I now espy, poor hut all piteous to view, crushed by its roof so wretchedly, flat as a roach doth pierce the soil.

But this gives no aid to my affair. Let us quickly search rue Jean-Racine. Twenty-five? Where is it? In the air? Seventeen? Alack I'm in despair. They're not in ruins, but I wis, of owners rich the villas fair or profitable factories.

So be it. rue Saint-Vaast again—at 3—I know a bas-relief, cheeks of a hundred nuns to stain, thy grandsire Seonin held in fief.*—Think, Racine, of what mischief 'twas the sign, that thy dam to destinies divine bore thee above that bas-relief.

* It represents the Judgment of Paris.

In rue le Meau we may conclude our quest, and 21 inspect. What beasts superb with naught to fleck their state! Ox, ass, those neighbours good, beside a smoking dunghill triced. But, though perhaps of his elect, Racine could scarcely pose as Christ.

Racine in seven houses saw the light of day. (So Rumour runs.) Since when seven over-reaching ones, the new possessors or the old, have never ceased to quarrel and scold, or frantically invoke the law, to prove the roof where now they cling received the Poet of the King!

To think what strife these owners wage, while thunderous eyes proclaim their hate, would drive one to the cellarage, forcing the Mayor, in times of fête, by threes their numbers to engage . . . or twos, but ne'er, forbid it, Heaven! together all the squabbling seven!

No. But their hate at last appeased, when channeling time had set its flaw there, to end their bickering they were pleased, each keeping for his own the author of but a single tragedy of the seven Voltaire could quote by rote from *Andromaque* to *Athalie*.

These arrant thieves, these rascals bold, when sightseers on the past would ponder—"Milord, 'tis ours you should behold!"—The truth is clear though errors swarm. Now where's the house in which was born the author of *Athalie*—" 'Tis here!"—that of *Iphigénie*—" 'Tis yonder!"

'Twas so for the author of *Ester* and for the scribe of *Mithridate*, and that of *Phédre*, O rebus rare! no less for that of *Andromaque* and he who wrote *Britannicus*. "Milord, you need no omnibus . . . With clear-cut date, see, there's the plaque."

I dare not think what strident yellings rose when the tourist, silly ass! was cursory with the seven dwellings and saw but two or three. Alas! Homeric taunts the vandal shames mixed with the fairest tragic names such as *Plaideurs* could scarce surpass.

Backers of *Phédre* and of *Ester* must hoot derisively whene'er from the dwelling of *Iphigénie* (I synthesize) they chance to see that parasite on genius rare emerge. With erring club, alack, *Mithridate* lays prostrate *Andromaque*,

while valiantly *Britannicus* with *Athalie*, no longer proud, joins in the internecine fuss, urging each other, all the crowding seven to the supreme mêlée of bonnets and perruques.—But pray why seven? And what of *Bajazet*?

Let me a moment scratch my ear. I swear I had forgotten clean that brute! If La Ferté will hear my plan, I'd have it straight begin choosing an eighth abode wherein to stage the birth of Jean Racine.

A sudden thought; since here I stay two days with fortunes most forlorn, might he not, the scribe of *Bajazet*, in my Hôtel du Sauvage be born? In that case, I wish (my shock immense stamps me a painter, so they say) to paint a plaque, and I commence:

“Homer was born in cities seven. Eight houses claim thy birth, Racine. So drew, devoid of reason's leaven, but versed in all civilities, their profit from a mighty name, industrious and clever Greece and sly Ferté-Milon serene.”

The date, then, and the reason why I think the great tragedian, Thomas, within thy house was born, born in thy house especially! . . . (For Thomas is the name, you know, of mine host of the inn where most I go. Gay, rosy, and rotund is he.)

—When I have made him famous thus, straightway in envy's gulf I sink. I buy him out. 'Tis ruinous. For all my friends I ask to drink where Racine his birth would fain have willed, and where, in straits calamitous, Paul Fort soon dies, all pale and chilled.

ENVOI.

FOR ATTENTIVE WITS.

My ditty *Bérénice* doth wrong? A queen in exile doomed to sigh, she has no portion in my song. Hardly—and yet perhaps one may grant her a house not far away at Crépy, that small town nearby, in which Racine was born, they say.

NOCTURNAL CRIME AT THE CHATEAU.

Is the château to spooks a prey, the black château of La Ferté? . . . Is this a fire? Is this the moon? In quick succession through the gloom four windows blaze with fervid light. Are these the shaken torches bright of ghosts, that pace with noiseless feet, tonight, where the plateau is sweet with fragrant herbs the breezes sway.

—Ghosts, I'm alone. What message, pray?

To the owlet's hooting cry remote, the Gothic window now doth flare; to the toad's harsh croaking, on its note, appears the chapel—who goes there! . . . to the ominous raven's cawing drear, three massive tombstones upward rear, and where the window's dyes are shed, a maddened dance begin to tread. Is the château to spooks a prey, the black château of La-Ferté?

—Ghosts, I'm alone. What message, pray?

To the whistling of a train that nears, coming from Villers-Cotteret, rending his slab of granite grey, lo, Alexandre Dumas appears, to another train's ill-omened call, from where you like, to me all's one, bursting another burial stone, starts forth the shade of Paul Féval; to a harsh siren's deafening shrieks, that shake the air despotically—the siren of a steamer—one distinguishes, come, can you not imagine? in his Highland breeks, the phantom of Sir Walter Scott, which, as if inadvertently, slips from the third uplifted stone.

—Ghosts, I'm alone. What message, pray?

From Notre-Dame dread midnight tolls. Three poignards gleam above three souls. From the ruins, 'tis no mortal cry!—Ghosts, I'm alone. What message, pray?—"We assassinate Racine!" reply the tones of Scott, befogged and dim from ancient bumperfulls of gin, reply the droning accents fine of Dumas savouring a wine, replies the low, sepulchral call of hydrophobic Paul Féval, and, thunderstruck, I flee away, leaving the flares to sink and swoon, tombs to disintegrate in sooth, allowing peaceably the moon to mount the manor's slated roof. But that it was to spooks a prey, ill habited by phantoms three—(some other night go there to see)—the black château of La Ferté!

THE VIGIL OF THE POET.*

Pensive, from the high esplanade I stretch my hand, that of a God,
toward the horizon's opening road in the moonlight 'neath my eyes displayed.

I cadence still-expanding space and feel unclosethe heaven's blue
bowl, swelling the spirit of my race up to the measure of my soul.

No. I'm alone on guard, and France that sleeps with unperturbèd
breath, beneath the moonlight's flood immense, has all the majesty of
death.

I think of gods that once were proud, of all the heroes buried deep, of
how the lately-conquered sleep, of France in her funereal shroud.

The god I was has perished now. Humbly I kneel and pray for all.
Why does this peace upon me fall and this sweet hand caress my brow?

Genius of France, consoling Sprite whose veil, transparent with the
light of the month elect when buds are rife and quickening seeds are
thrilled with life,

shines with the lustrous hue of hope!—and 'neath the morning's new
romance a resurrected soul I ope to greet resuscitated France!

CANTILENA AND CRY OF ADIEU
ON THE HILL OF THE MANOR.

A last song? Flushing all the sky Dawn like a rose-bud doth un-
fold. The city is its flower of gold. O Spring, my flower full-blown,
goodby! . . .

The manor's shade, that darkly grieves, increases my departure's pain.
In that shade, how many lovely eyes 'neath the tiered bastions of the
plain!

* This poem became the epigraph of POEMS OF FRANCE (Lyric bulletin of
the war), published in 1916.

I must go. Fate holds me in its clutch. Is the racked soul contented now? Farewell, sweet hill with virgin brow, and you, château I loved so much.

A fragrant flower the town appears, that I to shred no longer dare with my regard; Dawn's sister fair, beheld through eyes all blurred with tears.

Rose at the heart of a rose, farewell! I dare not touch thee . . . How could I, a stranger? My departure's bell chimes slowly from the belfry high.

—The manor's shade, that darkly grieves, increases my departure's pain. In that shade, how many lovely eves 'neath the tiered bastions of the plain!

Flowers, still more flowers, a fragrant lawn enamelling our Valois lands, how I saw them born beneath the dawn whereto I stretched my yearning hands,

dreaming of grasping, high in air, a golden harvest fair to see, Crépy, Dampleux, Crouy, Villers and Longpont with its priory,

or, 'neath what names perfumed still more, these buttercups, these bluets blue, Troësnes, Faverolle, Ivors, Bourg-fontaine, Ecoute-s'il-pleut?

—The manor's shade, that darkly grieves, increases my departure's pain. In that shade, how many lovely eves 'neath the tiered bastions of the plain!

Adieu, dear country of Racine! Adieu, fair land so pure of line, having at heart the rose serene that's of Ferté-Milon the sign

whereon the double dews distill of the azure Ourcq, the blonde canal, where *petit-patapan* there drinks his fill the bee of the spruce and tidy mill.

Farewell the forge, with glow profound, the silence to the anvil's sound, and the shade, that comes to sadden me, of this manor loved so fervidly.

—The manor with its shade one leaves, makes far from light the exile's pain. Adieu forever, my fair eyes 'neath the tiered bastions of the plain!

A last cry! Echoing let it glance from the manor to the Spring divine: "I'd be the foremost poet of France if only I could find the time."

THE MEMORY.

The more on my fair voyage I dream, the more my langours lose their hold, the more I ponder that calm scene whose spell this feeble heart consoled,

the more I fondly think thereon, filled with the fancies of my brain, the more, at ease, I see again manor and moon and forest sun!

You, silver moon, on heaven's fine thread, most faithfully my musings led, till the sun rose for your reprieve. The past I long to disbelieve.

How fair the shadow when the breath of the gale in all its ominous might, was by the rainbow put to flight. I do not wish to credit death.

Hills pure, and made for me complete, spires, stream with tender gesturings, I rouse you with the faith that springs in hearts celestial fire doth heat.

Is this a swallow's twittering clear, this sound that traverses my room? . . . What? The toad chants athwart the gloom. What? 'Tis the rook's harsh cry I hear . . .

Apple and pear trees, flowery close that, shrined in verse, I fain would hold, you snow even as you snowed of old, at dawning, in the zephyr rose.

And you, my golden poplars, bent in wingèd files beneath the stress of murmuring breezes, you caress the stainless azure firmament.

Am I yonder? is it here? this fair, sweet country I so much adore? 'Tis yonder? I am also there. The problem troubles me no more.

La Ferté-Milon, thy fair day, its vistas I in dreams would tread?
That would be saying love is dead, while yet its end is far away.

Manors, do you not feel me near, still in your ruins' charmed desmesne?
Already doth my Shade appear behind the Phantom of Racine:

soundless they roam the rampart's height, 'neath the same veil's uplifted sheen,
o'er the esplanade where comes the night, where glides the night of stars serene.

And one, the greatest of the twain, to the other one that earthward bends,
says, "'Neath the stars, lo, France descends toward the tiered bastions of the plain."

"How perfect the nobility of this Valois land in hushed expanse!
Let us adore, my son." You see two Phantoms kneel, adoring France,

O manor! Yes, 'tis he, I wis, 'tis surely he, that Phantom high; how
he shines! his darker comrade, 'tis . . . I have already said, 'tis I.

—La Ferté-Milon, thy fair days, would I recall their vanished gleams?
—Forever aid me, memories, my life to people with my Dreams!

Grant that my happiness tomorrow, as yesterday, as today, may roll
out of remembered dreams I borrow from this, my self-sufficing soul!

Extracts from THE ETERNAL ADVENTURE.

BOOK III.

(First pages.)

I.

I do not claim a writer's bays. A poet I, who sings his lays.—What!
without art my song were vain? Listening thereto my grief I tame.

I write the joy of words to win, and sing them. Ah! I know not why.
—The flood of little words, that try to weep, instead to laugh begin.

But should misfortune still augment, in a cry my pen is shattered quite.—I do not know when I lament my sorrow if I sing or write.

II.

Nothing on earth so fair has been as natural song. Sweet lark on high twittering, sing the azure sky. Sing thou a tomb, O Lamartine.

Sing, owl, these nights in terror's sway, but thou, de Musset, sing as well. Sing, Keats, sing, passionate Philomel, the fair blue nights that last for aye.

Sing, nightingales, your dolorous pain, like Heinrich Heine or Verlaine, or sing, sing all your ecstasy, living or dead, alas!—like me.

III.

Let us write.—What say I? Let us sing! O hark to my new voice! Give heed! How pure! and such my lyre indeed that, groping, on its vibrant string

my fingers like Blind Homer's press, eyes dark to his song: its music, stirred almost sans art, gives forth no less such tunes as air has never heard.

Therewith my merging voice doth sing. I list. How fair my voice's swell! Is this the Summer or the Spring? Ah, never have I sung so well.

IV.

That which to Moréas I owe is something words can never say. My soul was wearied, dark with woe. Almost he made of it the gay

sprite of cosmic fires no curb restrains. "Make all your words as light as air! Mingle them with these buoyant flames whirling above the torches' flare."

That which from Moréas I learned was my secret. Not for him since he, living—my master! Woe is me!—clear as today all things discerned.

V.

What did I say just now? that art, skill in words, a poet did not need? . . . Knowledge must not protrude, indeed; one must know all things, but—by heart,

after long toil. My sons, 'tis true that faulty writing never pays. The poet I who sings his lays, being perhaps a writer, too.

The loves of night and morning, these form all the art of twilight fair. Knowledge and gift, style and sweet air, unite the two antipodes.

* * * * *

SONGS TO CONSOLE ME FOR BEING HAPPY
RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION—AT ANDELYS
HELENE TOURANGELLE.

1913.

RICHARD CŒUR-DE-LION.

*Pas n'est merveille si j'ai le cœur
dolent, lorsque mon seigneur met
ma terre au pillage.*

Richard Cœur-de-Lion.

(Written in the ruins of the Château-Gaillard at Andelys.)

I.

Beneath the ruddy plume of the carnation wild that the ruin doth perfume in evenings of July, plunged in unfathomed gloom to never be beguiled, what did you think of me that evening green with storm, thoughts of my heart astray,—'neath the carnations wild o'er the donjon-keep that sway in evenings of July.

Towards the tempest's lowering mass I know you reasoned thus, that I've a heart, alas! flawed and adventurous, a heart that grumbles, soon turned silent utterly, like the tempestuous sky o'er yonder nodding

plume; in the air, beneath the flower, I know you reasoned thus that I've a heart for dower, flawed and adventurous,

like him, that luckless slave of fortunes varying, the evil-starred and brave Richard, crusader-king. To-night the tempest's blur parts to reveal the moon at the rampart's verge.—The croon of the wind was my Blondel, 'mid the flowers, with music's swell, Fortune to importune, château of Richard Cœur-de-Lion 'neath the moon.

II.

It happened yesterday where a hundred roses grow, intruding through the hedge a donkey came to bray precisely o'er my brow, and with petals rosy-hued bedecked me, as the sky zigzagging lightnings flecked, that rent the cloud's black edge, dragging the thunder loud, so that, 'mid the roses fair, it happened yesterday—

that never till that time to these ruins drawing near (for I climbed to your château, King Richard) did the ear of chance on me bestow such fairy vistas gay, a music more sublime, so that Paul Fort you spied, O white château Gaillard—who by the lightning saw what happened yesterday—

the donkey's back bestride, to the crackling thunder-peal, and, strewed with petalled rain, in either hand a rose, give himself, in high disdain of the bolts that rent the air, as a new proprietor to the lonely castle there, Richard restored again, lyric but freed from pose—then from the donkey slide, as yesterday befell.

III.

Thus for uncounted days—sans donkey as a rule—I come to chant the praise of grim Château Gaillard, of the silver Seine flowing at its feet, of the donjon with its scar, inflicted by a king unused to dallying, and, in particular, of its blossoms sweet, whereof my art was fain, and a stream of silver cool, flowing at its feet.

and often, even when fierce tempests shake the trees, I sing the flowers, the Seine, the castle, to the breeze that afar my voice doth bear, and laugh to feel the squall through my hair unhindered sweep, for I've no hat: till all is merged to form an air that ne'er was heard till then, the flowers, the donjon-keep, the silver of the Seine.

'tis not up to the sky that, inebriate, I sing its châteaux of dream, unmortised reared on high, crumbling above my head, in shadows wandering, and o'er this ancient wall in ghostly grandeur spread, then falling to obscure the barges drifting by with dusky coverture, and to shroud the murmuring stream whose tide beneath them flows.

IV.

While from each flowery spray before these crumbling walls, siskin and goldfinch gay whistle their cheery calls, soft-couched upon the ling of the sands, I fain would sing of ancient combats rude. 'Tis good to hear the lays blithe birds are carolling, but better still to sing the assaults of other days.

Strong towers the foe besets! Walls that go crashing down enduring toil to crown! Tottering parapets! And when the battle hot, hither and thither slips, little and great at grips in the waters of the moat! Leaping the barriers high of pointed stakes arow from either side they cry: "At them! at them! at them now!"

It makes my heart rejoice, even to its depths, to dream—ranged in the open plain—of the haughty cavaliers; it pleases me to see pavilions dot the ground, to hear the screaming voice of horses riderless, as hosts of knightly peers the battle's din prolong: the song within my heart to that sound is close akin.

V.

To dream, to sing—these are, poets, the selfsame thing!—Ah! the knights press on amain! I see them in my dream. Towards the draw-bridge now they fly, straight, and with reeking spur. They are there! The drawbridge sly raises itself. They gain a charming interval while on their plumes doth fall a rain of boiling oil.

God!—how the battle shout sonorous echo swells! "God with us! Mother of God! Well befall the right!"—Pest! the pioneers must go the chateau to gird about with storming towers of wood, balistas, mangonels, while from the belfry's height on the moat's embattled marge hordes of cross-bowmen stout have trebled their discharge.

Varlets, tumble in the moats, with unrelenting toil, faggots and ponderous rocks and chunks of grassy soil! Pass!—Swift the mine prepare! With picks and axes smite! The perilous gauntlet dare and set the fuse alight! A tower is wrecked and blocks a moat with its débris. Ladders! . . . the standard fair wrought with the fleur-de-lys!

VI.

My heart beats—I hear it pound.—Ye visions great, good-bye! There is no other sound save my heart's and a ericket's ery, and the yellow sun towards its setting goes.—How much my dream is one with the days that near their close!—Let us rise, in twilight's gloom I will botanise forsooth, seeking the herb of youth, the simple of the moon.

Ah, do I know what pain on my poor heart doth weigh? Am I thinking of the love who left me yesterday? . . . The same ill circumstance hither despairing drove thee, Lion-Heart, full fain for that Alix of France whom thy father traitorous loved to insanity: thy rising had for cause a father's felony.

If I could kill my sire through disappointment's rage in order to assuage by cold ambition's quest my amorous disgrace, O Cœur-de-Lion dire! and in my rigorous breast fraternal love efface, like you when you suppressed the Court-Mantel, to reign—if I but could and then, when firm upon the throne, to Jerusalem deliver Lusignan!

VII.

No, I'm doomed to love, in truth. My passion I must trail to weep against a stone, here, in this place apart where I inscribe her name between a rock-rose bloom and a pink the hue of a heart.—My senses fail, benumbed!—I go to botanise in moonlight's shimmering gloss seeking beneath the moss the herb of deathless youth.

Alas! This frustrate love, must it for aye endure? I needs must wait for day to sing the donjon-keep, the towers, the clouds above, the river's silver deep, and the shocks of ancient war. Alas, a lover's woes must they forever cling? The morning's crimson rose alone can make me sing.

No sound the night discloses. A single ghost doth move still at my side to brood: the image of my love. Her floating veil I see that drifts

an ell behind. 'Tis but a gleaming ray from the rising moon inclined. In this calm solitude shall I awaken, pray, couched in the heart of the roses, the gardener's donkey grey?

VIII.

But in morning's roseate glow what thing do I forget? 'Mid the blossom-sweetened air, I forget my amorous pain. And I sing, and sing again, the Seine with silver set and its isles and its strong château. "A tower is wrecked and blocks a moat with its débris. Ladders!—the standard fair, wrought with the fleur-de-lys!"

Richard with one black arm has seized the standard now. On the lilies shall be laid thy blushing cheeks, Alix, Flower of France, when the King implants a kiss on thy charming brow.—May this little wingèd song, with form indefinite, in the selfsame guise have power to my false love to fare; although, in truth, 'twas made that she might slumber there.

Three verses shouted high are by Bertrand de Born. The others are by me: few merits these adorn. Would you have one's judgment cold when love has said good-bye? Is a broken heart the sphere of subtle reasoning? Did you do better here, Cœur-de-Lion bold, Richard, O my King? If so—O troubadour—my inspiration be

since in your château all the world abandons me.

Extracts from IN ANDELYS.

PRAYER

TO THE GREAT NORMAN WATER-SPRITES

TO OBTAIN FROM THEM

A FAVORABLE RECEPTION.

Great spirits of the Seine, in clear light flowing on, pliantly mirroring Andelys and Rouen,

of the Seine where apples rare their reddening globes may sean and Bouilhet and Flaubert and Corneille and Poussin,

welcome without a sneer my country mien. I'm one, like you, not overprone to guzzling ale and beer.

Do my friends in Bacchic glee—La Fontaine and Racine—drink
naught but Castaly and naught but Hippocrene?

no, red wine! A drop I toss of water of Jouvence into my cup that
froths to honour all of France,

and now in fellowship, if spoken it must be, is frothing at my lip to
toast your Normandy.

One drop of the water of youth and I rise, to shout afar, boldly, the
praise, in sooth, of old Château Gaillard,

of its cliffs, of the forests blue of that fair isle Contant, of the lovely
Ile-de-Grâce and of Vexin Normand

and, indeed, at day's decline of a shower of raindrops fine which, my
distant loves, begets a host of sweet regrets.

Great sprites with names divine, permit then that Jouvence—sole
potable fount of France—be wedded to my wine.

This stirs the heart, it is a philtre, truth to tell. You recognise it
well, doers of prodigies!

A drop at least, forsooth, add to your cider's brew: that your work
may keep its youth and grow in merit, too.

Quaff cider and champagne 'mid the green rushes fair of the brook-
side, O Corneille, O Bouilhet, O Flaubert.

gold-wreathed! though Nicholas * portrays us at our ease before a
Roman arch, beneath French apple-trees.

V.

ON THE BANK OF THE SEINE.

A heaven confused pours forth these feeble twilight glows. Fairer
than clearest sky the fleecy clouds appear; this eve the glimmering sun
like suavest moonlight shows, and Earth's conglomerate sweet is wholly
gathered here.

* Nicholas Poussin.

The breeze, that softer grows in evening vapours cold, with calm and tender love upon the reeds doth weigh. The cloud, agape for dreams, allows one to behold that planet which itself forgets, forgets the day.

I tread a river's brim whence, as in dream, I see the image of the sun, whose halo, silver-lit, swims through the rushes green and slowly follows me, while murmurous clouds of gnats are dancing over it.

Farewell, sun, too prone to dream in the river's dark abyss.—From nenuphars arise these hues of gold and milk diffusing furtive gleams like undulating silk. Of flowers that drown themselves how brief the splendour is!

Restored, with fall of night, to the shapes in motion there, the far shore, vaporous sea, your billows have immersed. Pursuing banks of fog across the river fare. Of the bridge I only see a single span, the first.

Soul astray, shall I go to dream, 'mid mists profound and wan, of a bridge to guide my steps to Heaven's resplendent height, or of the Stream that falls into eternal Night? What dreaming, still to dream if all the world is gone!

Poesy, poesy, when sleep the world assails and there is no more moon and there are no more stars, you watch my soul that glides, ample, bereft of veils, a river slow that lulls great, golden nenuphars.

X.

PROSE.

TO THE MOST BEAUTIFUL LIGHT.

Fair evening longed for birth, the firmament was pure. Life and the light of day were softly-tinted blue, the distant trees were blue and in the heavens remote, wandered a little moon, white as a dreaming soul.

It is by such a light that I have seen thee thrice—O Fay—before I lived, in life, and in a dream, in holy Paradise, at five, and at thirteen.

It is by such a light in the bed-room of vacations the slumbering children dream of sheep with white and curly wool.

It is by such a light that young girls play the piano beside great, open windows, dreaming of the young girls of yesterday.

It is by such a light that the eglantine's athrill . . . dream of rambler-roses twining ancient walls and the hens of the cock of the church, grey heads beneath their wings.

It is by such a light that little rabbits close their rounded eyes, thinking of small, pink carrots.

It is by lights like these, it is by such a light, that all that is sweet takes place in the thoughts of children, of animals and of flowers.

It is by such a light that I have seen thee thrice—O Fay—before I lived, in life, and in a dream, in holy Paradise, at five, and at thirteen.

Fair evening longed for birth. The firmament was pure. Life and the light of day were softly-tinted blue, the distant trees were blue and very high in heaven wandered a fine, clear moon, white as a dreaming soul.

XVI.

HAVE I LEISURE TO DEVOTE MYSELF TO POESY?

To see and know absorbs the whole of life's domain. Have I leisure to devote myself to poesy? Such reams of history! Bonaparte! Charlemagne! Here the Prussians, over there Louis Second, the Stammerer. In all things am I versed, or rather wish to be, hoping, with studious care, a point at last to reach where I shall not confound the oak-tree with the beech, noting the salient marks of bark and leaf. To me the briar is colocynth, the leek ambrosia fair. Have I leisure to devote myself to poesy? And to see! I dote upon it to frenzy. None has got a better eye to scan, as it is and as it's not, this infinite universe. My visions swarm. I love to focus them, despite those gypsy ones that rove . . . the flight of a hill beneath the panic of a hare; great banks of floating clouds uniting Dream to Dream, the pomp of barges slow, in evening's purple gleam, heaven's blue that's laughing there in the blue of the washing-place, the images of Kings on tavern bills-of-

fare, or this sluggish, dead canal with its eternal brink, and the forgotten drink beneath the arbour chill, near the crochet-hook—my heart!—and beside the salad dish, and my sweetheart plucking there, with a resigned ennui, this thin cock (ah! to strip the daisies white that way) : I see her eyes ashine with tear-drops in the night, as for me, I scale a fish above the kitten grey. . . . Our lamp lights up, is this the effect of chance? . . . afar, with a sad and poignant strain the air of heaven is rife . . . the Great Bear is the harp of the Château Gaillard. . . . Have I leisure to devote myself to poesy? The wish to see and know will have laid waste my life.

XXII.

LONG LIVE
THE SKIES OF NORMANDY.

Let us sing, to end our lay, Normandy's azure skies, fairest the Kingdom knows, or the Republic rather, so well contrived to cover both hell and paradise, comprised of coal, of blue, and of seraphic grey.

In missals I have conned such heavens have smiled on me, arching above the broils of angels and of fiends, in the world's primal days, or flashing from the high cathedral's jewelled panes in legends of Marie, Clotilde, or Radegonde.

To abase the dragon proud, Saint Michael plunges thence. There the mild virgin sways a Christ, on slender knees. Skies, ever dappled o'er, where, black, the Demon plays on the checker-board of cloud all the good saints of France

'gainst God, who, as his use is, betting his trusting flocks on the virtues of his saints, above the harvests, loses! And fierce the thunder shocks, wind howls, and lightning rends. The hail, in Normandy, intimidates the fowls.

Skies, to exorcise the soul of which I'm the hydra dread, from your pious reservoirs pour holy water down, or, better, if you fear some hole would hide my form, skies, great skies, dappled o'er, rain eider on my head!

Extracts from LAMENTS AND SAYINGS.

I.

CHIME AT DAWN.

This little chime they play, matinal, wandering, revives thy vanished Spring, my heart, at break of day.

This little chime they play, at the fresh heart of day, light, near and far away, has changed my destiny.

What! Since this hour, shall I survive while joys depart, faint, chiming melody that thus renews my heart?

So far, monotonous, and lost, so wholly lost, O little wandering air to heaven's fresh heart uptossed,

you depart, return, chime on, like love you rove and stray, you tremble on my heart in the clear dawn of day.

What! Could one's life be thus, rural, monotonous, sweet even as is, nearby, this little melody?

sweet, simple, far away, as it afar is borne, this little, trembling air at the fresh heart of morn?

From IF PEAU D'ANE WERE TOLD TO ME. . . .

TALES FOR JACQUES BONHOMME.

1916.

SAINT HUBERT OF GAMBAISEUIL.

Of school I'd need an overplus, more lore than is assumed *ad lib* by a writer ranked as frivolous, more style to grace my goose-quill's nib, and many other things, my love (genius would not be least thereof), to tell the marvels I descried in a church of this fair countryside.

A church? And which, my poet, pray? They're thick as mounting larks in May. 'Tis that of Gambaseuil I mean which every day attracts the eye with its belfry leaning all awry, whose bell clangs dull as kitchen pot. (I speak no wicked word, God wot.) I'd need more school undoubtedly.

But I will try, though I suppose I loom not large in poesy. The Muses nine they flout at me, and proud Polymnia thumbs her nose. 'Tis patent that the pen I need justice to such a theme to do is your zealous reed, Saint Chrysostom, or the stylus of Bertrand de Born, et cetera, *turlutu*.

Babbler, your lay is overdue! I'll try with Homer to compare, with Virgil and Madame Tastu, Lord Byron and my god, Voltaire. Ye Muses hither hie amain! Briskly now! Pass the elegie, the satire and the epee that I may sing in every strain.

Reluctant, through the dawning day I went, love, having left your side (A bed's worth naught in summertime. He's an arrant knave who says me nay) and, to descend, descended gay, humming an air for humming's sake, of Gambaseuil the narrow way, by naught constrained this course to take.

The wood, not yet from dreams withdrawn, having heard, 'neath evening's dusky veils, the passion of the nightingales, lay silent in the glimmering dawn. A dung-hill rooster sang afar the death of a belated star. I felt myself still more alone as down the slope I journeyed on.

Spreading their rose-flushed summits high, with filtered dew the pine-trees wet path, bushes, and the spider sly, in the centre of her crystallised net. Suddenly, in the plains beneath, turned towards our forests and the dawn, the hunters blew their echoing horn in a view-halloo that taxed the breath.

'Mid the murmurings of myriad bees, the songs of horns more far away with swelling clamour wound their way into my ears' interstices. The birds, all wakened with a will, shook dulcet pearls from every bough, and pray who now would go and bid the blackbirds' empire to be still.

And the cuckoos and the finches, too! The feathered host, from jay to lark, who chant and cheep the woodland through and tap light beaks against the bark! I, with no wings to soar from earth, sang too, towards

where the morning stirred, feeling myself become a bird amid the universal mirth.

“Paul Fort of France, awake to glory! The promised day has dawned at last, and poesy’s bright standard hoary, uplifted, floats on freedom’s blast.” I saw through glinting forests green, heroic Vendées traversing, our buoyant Gallic songsters bring the lyrics of the new régime.

By a gully’s shelving slope betrayed, head over heels I rolled amain, arriving, without any pain, at the border of a woodland glade, and there my startled glances met . . . (I give you guesses three, my dear) . . . a curé making his toilette beside a royal musketeer.

In the waters of a dreamy brook, to wash his fingers’ unctuous skeins, besmeared and streaked with vivid stains, most ardently he undertook. A rare old man! Methought he bowed finny parishioners to bless. From venerable phalanges the iridescent bubbles flowed.

Not far off on the sward, delighted with such fair presents to be strewed, a canvas and an easel stood a palette and two lanterns, lighted. His buttocks deep in tufted fern, (think not ’tis my imagination), tugging his boots off, D’Artagnan damned with black curses all creation.

“Florent, your words should be deleted, weeded and tended like your flowers,” scolded the priest. “Our task completed we’ll take this huntsman saint of ours and hang him by Our Saviour’s side. How my flock, amazed that sight to see, their eyes and mouths will open wide. ’Tis my masterpiece, apparently.”

I sneezed, when, swift as any breeze, the curé and the musketeer, one seizing the accessories, his boots the other, disappear leaving the lanterns twain alone. I snuffed them ’neath the pallid dawn. Even when fairy-tales befall one should be economical.

Full day beneath the forest’s tent, bathing each leaf in burnished gold, routed all mystery. On I went, when what strange sight should I behold that petrified me in mid course! (Three guesses? Come, take six instead.) A baby’s wooden hobby-horse by a giant stag of ginger-bread.

We are not on earth to fathom all, and naught our souls will know, they

say, when dawns that final, fatal day and Heaven's consuming thunders fall. This Raphael of a later age, plucked from a fable's flowered page, this guardsman in full panoply, whence came they? Fallen from the sky?

For a mystic whom my humour suits, 'tis hard a halo to accord to easel, lantern, colour-board, those folio tail-piece attributes! What would you say if, in the wood, your path to such a tableau led? A stallion from the nursery stud by a giant stag of gingerbread!

Naught surely. So I spoke no word. Silently through the wood I strode and quickly came upon a road where never a hare-brained rascal stirred. I trudged it, thinking I might seek (because it ran beside a bog) my curiosity to wreak on the customs of the azure frog.*

I did not see it. I accuse my little luck or froggie's ruse. Yet in those fair regions all is fair. Charming the daybreak's vaporious air, the trees uplifted fragrant crests, lovely, beneath the lucent morn, as, in creation's genesis, their forebears on the instant born.

For harmony the stage was set, the bravest, the most lyrical! No savage heart have I, and yet to Nimrod is my soul in thrall. Then judge what happiness I knew, what singing blood my heart o'erflowed, when the hunt came streaming down the road, prepared to sound the death-halloo.

No, the beast, the royal quarry, swerves. Farewell the chase! Day will have faded, if well my hunting knowledge serves, ere the death. His crest was scarcely jaded. The dogs lose hope. But, far away, with all my nerves I follow him. Upon his branching horns I skim. "Fly by the road of Rambouillet!"

Red jackets sweep across the glade. Their alternation with the pines' green shafts is like a fusillade. They are gone, the stag with spreading tines, hunters and dogs. 'Tis still as death. One holds a trembling marguerite. Adieu, O chase that flies so fleet! One is sad at the border of a path.

And as the gentle tear-drops fall a cuckoo mocks you with his call.

* It is the land of azure frogs (*Pierre Lelong*). They are found only here and in Russia.

The fantasy's reawakening, to the odour exquisite is due of trodden moss, that maddens you. One lives again, in wistful wise, the ardours of a vanished spring, and sees the golden hair of Lise.

Love, be not vexed, although I know this affinity of sight and scent can be but half a compliment! Your body breathes the soul of roses. But earth's fresh, virginal redolence or the smell of moss in the forest, these bring back one's early innocence. I fear the scent of cypresses.

And, à propos, my love, my flower, most sensitive of hearts that thrill, do you know how odours have the power to summon distant things at will? Objects, and beings dead and gone, friends, kinsmen, cats and doggies dear. Aye, scents can even make appear persons that one has never known.

The smell of oaks has Charlemagne. Jeanne d'Arc from the elder-flower doth start. Which of our hunting Louis but smells of partridge? The Pompadour's perfume is vervain. But if eau de Cologne and snuff conjointly across my ravished senses come sure as the deuce (foul fiend, aroint thee!) I see the first Napoleon.

From Mandreuse to where Germania rests, and from Gambais to Etang Neuf, I heard the jargonning of nests, ogled the blue-embrasured roof where, ending every avenue, idyllie Edens laugh. But soon a rifted bell, with the jangling tune of its cracked heart, beat the hour. 'Twas noon.

O bells of marriage, bells of death, and bells of birth, for all your might, you yield, with no dissenting breath, before the bell of appetite. But at that moment where was I? In Paris? In the Bois du Boulogne? In some far corner of the sky? An azure placard made it known.

I sniffed (with no trace of pride be it spoke. True, I had rested frequently.) Gambaseuil's pungent chimney-smoke, my goal precise . . . Geography and strategy, like Bonaparte, to weary out, one needs the aid of that convenient little chart in his umbrella's depths displayed.

Where the first village huts were set, that brusquely on my vision broke, making a great to-do, I met a clustered throng of happy folk, girls, peasants in their portly prime, babes, serawny spouses. All took part (I give you guesses twelve this time, my love.)—in criticising art.

Oh, sight benign! The village hums with frank and unaffected stricture (while churchward point a score of thumbs):—"Saint Hubert! What a charming picture!"—"The toads! What mummary! An abbé painting his gardener. O I say!"—" 'Tis a treasure for our church to hold. Rothschild would cover it with gold."

"Ah," one declared, to his nose applying a finger trembling with finesse, "last year's Jeanne d'Arc, there's no denying, good gossips, showed more suppleness, contours more pleasing to the eye."—"Oho!" they laughed, "A satyr! Fie!" The school-girls choired, in their precisest of tones, "Saint Hubert's far the nicest!"

I passed them by. The church was there, small and sweet behind its hedge retired, blest belfry cleaving quiet air, sill by a cackling goose admired. White geese and tombs, what candours chaste against the grave-yard's sombre smudge! With paunch compressed, with swelling breast, with eyes alert, I went to judge.

Preceded by a single bee, swiftly I entered, and at once the marvel that at morn the dawn's dark mists had hidden from my eyes arises, flames before them, cries across the chapel's narrow vault: "Sir What's-your-name, attention! Halt!"—hung to the left of the sacristy.

Struck to the bottom of my heart by the smell of pigments just applied, I sniffed the colours, scarcely dried, of that masterpiece of candid art. Yes, 'twas Saint Hubert as my whim in waking dreams imagined him, a guardsman of the king's in green, blue, red, with nose of aubergine,

laced boots that shame the raven's hues, and purple breeches that o'erflow their tops in waves of indigo, blue of the Turco, blue of blues, loose hunter's blouse, a belt of leather in athlete-fashion doth confine; at throat and wrists bleached muslin fine, a green felt hat, a falcon's feather.

"There is a canvas that's sincere! Painting that shows a poet's fire!" I murmured in my ego's ear, and, what I even more admire, no envious shadows interfere to filch, as with a sneak-thief's hand, one half the contours nobly-planned that dower my kneeling musketeer.

But I forget: a flowing mane, like mine, of dusky locks that lie

straighter than drumsticks, mine the eye, black, made for love, I well maintain, Adam's apple, fruit of gullet long—'tis I, but greater!—no, I'm wrong; Heaven ne'er vouchsafed that I should ride a cabbage-cutter at my side.

Besides, I'm clothed in black (my hoary regrets befitting), but observe how this Saint Hubert in his glory seems, though transported, full of verve, so gaily his blue arms are spread towards that stag-of-ten that stands so straight, sculptured in spicy gingerbread, rigid as Justice, firm as Fate.

He has cause, poor beast! He knows the dread encumbrance that his brow adorns, the weight he carries on his head! Does there not die between his horns—wide horns that like a lyre do seem—a mighty Christ in flesh and blood, higher than shepherd's crook, a God a thousand empires to redeem?

As proud as life, a pleasing sight, the sturdy charger made of wood, behind and somewhat to the right, close to the royal guardsman stood. His dwarfish stature to enhance, an ardent breath his nostrils blew. Ah, in your battles, Kings of France, how many steeds have died for you!

But the eye is good, and fine the coat, as black as ink save at the feet, more white than is the snowy stoat, the mane and tail are disparate; one fire-red, t'other water-blue. Girt, coquettishly, between the two, the saddle is that Turco blue already praised anent Saint Hubert.

And all this, stag, steed, musketeer, the great, pale god, the forest screen, bathed in a heavenly ray serene like a baptismal billow clear. Stalactite-like, through leafy mazes, the tale's protagonists between, it sifts from rifts of tender green, and gilds a greensward filled with daisies.

And all this forms so sweet a scene, so fresh and candid it appears, and for the soul so sovereign, you fain would weep with happy tears, before this hymn of colour true. Soon sympathetic tear-drops start. Sharp pity overpowers your heart, and faith and fervour vanquish you.

My face suffused with floods of brine, while mighty sobs new brews were broaching, I knelt before that sacred shrine and felt conversion fast approaching, when a bit of folded paper white below the canvas

came to view. Pushed by the Fiend, I opened it and read the lines I read to you.

“Painted at night, that God, whose eyes in secret see, the work might bless and that my flock I might surprise on my birthday. Freely I confess it was my gardener, Jean Florent, for blest Saint Hubert’s portrait stood. One sees nearby the steed of wood that by his youngest son was lent.

The duchess of Uzain it is, “our duchess” as one says(it suits her whim to act in comedies), who lent hat, sabre, blouse and boots. But, as no breeches could be had, Florent, the embroglio to salve, donated those that, when a lad, he wore in Tunis, a Zouave.

The stag—Lord, hear a sinner’s prayer and pardon me!—a year ago I bought in Montfort at the fair. It cost ten sous. It pleased me though. ’Twas from the Parish Fund I made this little purchase. As I crave the dying Christ my soul may save, ’twas only done the Faith to aid.”

That finished me . . . Posthaste I fled! . . . fainting, I gained your fair retreat, all pale, with hunger nearly dead . . . Come now, what do you say, my sweet?—“Is there a poet in Poesy who is not paid with words?” I ask.—Ambrosia may the gods deny to him who finds his art a task.

THE DAUGHTERS OF THE KING OF SPAIN.

A FRENCH SONG.

Earth and horizons round.
 Sky where three doves are found.
 Sea. Fleecy lambs that bound.
 War. Cannon thunder-toned.
 Love lies asleep. . . .

Inside my father’s close, grows a sweet olive tree. Spain’s royal daughters fair they lie beneath it there.

Alas!

I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! The bells of Love are chiming deep, sound, sound, myriad sound. Earth and horizons round. Love lies asleep. . . .

Spain's royal daughters fair they lie beneath it there, they lie beneath it there. "Look," said the eldest one. "Sisters, the day's begun."

Alas!

I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! The god of Love his pæan shakes, sound, sound, sound. Sky where three doves are found. Sweet love awakes. . . .

"Look," said the eldest one. "Sisters, the day's begun. Sisters, the day's begun." The second said, "Ah me! Where can our lovers be?"

Alas!

I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! The god of Love his pæan shakes, sound, sound, sound, myriad sound. Sea. Fleecy lambs that bound. Sweet love awakes. . . .

The second said, "Ah me! Where can our lovers be? Where can our lovers be?" The youngest, she is dead, in love's felicity.

Alas!

I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! I love the one who loves me, O gay, gay, gay, I've a heart so gay! The bells of Love are chiming deep. Sound, sound, myriad sound. War. Cannon thunder-toned. Love lies asleep. . . .

Earth and horizons round.
 Sky where three doves are found.
 Sea. Fleecy lambs that bound.
 War. Cannon thunder-toned.
 Love lies asleep. . . .

Alas!

TWO COTTAGES
IN THE LAND OF THE YVELINE.

1916.

It is the land of azure frogs. . . .

PIERRE LELONG.

THE JOURNEY.

The train puffs off, and we depart,—fay of my heart, enchanted Muse,
—speeding to summer's azure heart, to that vaunted ground where trees
are found as thick as rushes in the ooze.

'Tis in the land of the Yveline, Muse, a cottage waits for you and me,
there it awaits us, small and fine, a rustic cot, yet half-divine, so clean,
so white, such harmony!

This much alone I know, my love, that it waits 'neath many a heaven
blue, and was chosen for us by Vibert that we might spoil with verses
there his wood-cuts, prefaced by Helleu.*

On we speed: Saint Cyr, farewell to thee, Grignan, Plaisir, Neauphle-
le-Vieux, Montfort, Galluis; and soon La Queue. In a hamlet—sweet
futuraity!—tonight how happy we shall be!

This hamlet christened Les Haizettes, beneath Gros Rouvre, hard by
Baisson, from tonight we there . . . but hurry on, our spirits much re-
joiced, Musette, that with Haizettes doth rhyme "*noisettes*."

Let us love already Yveline, the land where mused the young Racine
when all day he stayed away from school to the horror of Monsieur
Nicole. Shall we be less frivolous, Muse of mine?

* An allusion to the "work" assigned to the author by his friend the art-editor Helleu, which consisted in underlining with poems the wood-engravings of an album composed by the excellent engraver, Eugène Vibert, in honour of the land of the Yveline.

This train goes well. The Yvette I've seen cut, with the blade of its pruning-hook, fields gold in the sunset's ardent sheen, and this one-journey's end I ween—quenches the gleam that lights my book.

Here is La Queue, where we descend. Like an altar doth Vibert extend his arms, his beard, his progeny, then the Lieutel he indicates whose stream I thought was the Yvette's.

I present him, lovely Muse, to thee.

THE LITTLE CALVES OF LES HAIZETTES.

Here in my little hamlet, three most marvelous animals there be, three little calves, three treasures small, white marked with yellow are they all.

Couched on the daisy-dotted leas, like plutocrats they rest at ease, and when I pass them, slow or fleet, follow the cadence of my feet.

So much that, reading yestere'en Francis of Sales, whom I rave about; yes, the introduction rare, supreme, and so tender, to the Life Devout,

going and coming, diligent the well-known path to tread once more, feeling a virgin sentiment born in my soul, a pang obscure,

they marked with gently-swaying head the cadence of my pious tread: three little calves, their gaze intent on me, as to Gambaiseuil I went:

Lamb of God, on the road to Paradise, Elysian hazel-nuts to get, may there follow me the sweet, dark eyes of the little calves of Les Haizettes.

OUR COTTAGE IN YVELINE.

Cottage, your trinkets are the rose, the marguerite;

These colours twined above, these candours at your feet.

Fair cottage, Nature here contrives our lives to bless

In sheltering our hearts with clustered blossoms pure.

Cottage, this will endure as long as happiness.

THE AZURE FROG.

I

PRAYER TO THE GOOD FORESTER.

Good forester, upon our knees we pray you, tell us, if you please, how, here amid his native bog, to know the famous azure frog?

Because bright green the others are? because he's heavy? alert? Because he flees the ducks' voracious maws? or sways upon a nenuphar?

Through his voice that sounds with pearly tone? because he bears a crest, maybe? or is wont to dream in company? beside his mate? or quite alone?

Having reflected carefully, and scanned the bog with glances keen, the good old man replied to me, "By this, because he's never seen."

II.

RESPONSE TO THE FORESTER.

Good forester, you lied! Thus is my joy betrayed. This very morn I spied a sapphire quadruped. Leagued with the sunny sheen, lured by the heaven's clear hue, its glossy form was green, but mirrored stainless blue.

III.

REMORSE.

I erred! the thing exists. Its little heart doth beat. But it dies between my fists, by faltering life forsook, caught by a child who came to try that angling feat, red flannel for his bait, a pin to serve for hook.

Pardon, O little soul that sings so sweet and high when the broad argent moon has its paraselenes, dead thus between my hands, what pain my spirit gleans! and blue, yes, thou art blue, as blue as deepest sky!

Must, on the breeze, thy dust to lands afar be blown! Light fairy, of the woods, a phantom pale thou art. Blue, I mourn thee, green, alas! what would I then have done? I would have tossed thee back. Imperfect is the heart.

THE POACHER'S TIME-PIECE.

In the viewless belfry-top reared by the shades of night the round moon is a clock that marks the hours in flight.—No circling hands are set on the moon's face, you find? Nor any beadle yet its coiling spring doth wind? Yet it chimeth none the less. When midnight once is passed, hark, 'neath the forest vast, to the sounds and silences. One! the finch proclaims it. Two! The warbler sable-crested, and half-past two the quail and the warbler crimson-breasted. Three! The owl's whit-tu-who, and the blackbird's whistle gay. Four! The brown-headed tit trills, and with throat of grey the field-lark answers it. Five, 'tis the sparrows all! (Crazed is the nightingale who, with her dolorous tune, floods the still, moonlit glades from midnight black till day. O'er her wrong, no god hath power.)—What if tonight we lack—like snipping scissor-blades that, small and small, divide Time into tiny shreds—two hands to grace the moon! Did the Great Beadle fail to wind the spring aright? What does the poacher care? In the birds he finds the hour.

A SORCERER BEFORE MY HOUSE.

To Pierre Lelong, my neighbour at Haizettes and the author of that astonishing book: "In the Land of Azure Frogs."

^b We who beheld this sight were two, I swear, Pierre Lelong and I. Pierre, by nature far more sly than I, obtained the better view.

At Haizettes, hard by my woods it was—you must believe our fervent vows—Pierre and I beheld him thus, dancing beneath the pear-tree boughs.

Above, the mellow moon enhanced skies green with evening's waning light. The wizard, screeching as he danced, juggled with roses red and white,

hurled them so high, so swift, despite the obstructing screen of boughs, that soon his garland reached heaven's cloudless height and seemed to wind about the moon.

And we saw the moon—though I attest Pierre Lelong observed it best—into the pear-tree sink, and there sway like a ripe and luscious pear

beneath three leaves its silver blanches; but at once the orb that gently rocked was croaked at, chanted at, and mocked, in the foliage on the fruited branches,

by azure toads, fantastic things, girdled with scarlet, crowned with gold, as in Trees of Jesse you behold the seated effigies of kings.

“My dog at the bishop's self may stare, at confirmation,” quoth Pierre. “Profane observers though we be, let us approach, but warily,

tiptoe.” Our sorcerer deformed, who for a satyr might have posed, hump-backed, knock-kneed, with temples horned, a wild and noble head disclosed.

His mantle was an eglantine where a myriad trembling blossoms twined. The dew in droplets crystalline rolled from his nape to his behind.

And in the grass, his sabots through, his cleft hoofs plainly did appear. They were, these sabots shiny-new gleaming carbuncles glassy-clear.

Now with a knife, as sharp as doom, he cut large slices from the moon, and,—enigmatic stratagem—among the toads divided them.

Was it curiosity alone, or did we wish to have a share of that enormous summer moon, of that translucent, mammoth pear?

a further step we hazarded. The faun, with swiftly lifted head, showed us two swelling tears. “’Tis plain the wizards are the gods that reign

o'er poets. Kneel!” my comrade said. Mistake! For me the vision fled. Lelong beheld the faun aloof hanging beneath my cottage roof.

“At first I took him for an ape,” he said. “Nearby, was this a shape of smoke? . . . or clothes hung out to air? . . . Bah! nearer there was nothing there.”

We who beheld this sight were two, I swear, Pierre Lelong and I. Pierre obtained the better view, for Nature has no fox so sly.

SONG OF THE EVENING.

How does it reach me, the forest wind that lulls the palms at night?

What could it teach me, the forest wind that shakes the hearth-fire bright?

What thing does it want, the forest wind that taps at the pane, then flies?

What sight doth haunt the forest wind that it warns with fearful cries?

What have I done to the forest wind that it tears my soul with dread?

What, to me, is the forest wind, in sum, that so many tears I shed?

THE AXE.

To the soul there is no sound that chimes more dolorously, no sound of more severe, of more religious tone—sudden it holds you mute, it turns you to a stone—than the sonorous shock of steel against a tree.

I love to hear that sound where conquering death intrudes. Yes, I dearly love to hear, seeking the distant sun, the dull blows of the axe resound with muffled tone, amid the silence vast of dim and sombre woods.

Closing my eyes I see, as of the soul I dream, the fatal woodsman strike. No rancour speeds his blows. Taciturn he strikes, he reckons up his woes before his hut of logs, where ravening flame doth gleam.

He strikes. . . . Thus round him death, with axe-blade rapier-keen, strikes, strikes, and strikes again, with strokes no rancour brings. May he gain some trifling joy 'mid such excess of woes! 'Mid dull, resounding blows with friendly voice serene

to the old chopper of oaks the robin blithely sings.

THE ADIEU TO HAIZETTES.

Two glutted barrows we despatch, filled with our things. We cannot wait. The weather-cock above the thatch utters a cry so desolate!

We go . . . to each his mode. . . . For me, sobs bow my head, my eyes are wet. Then fare thee well our, my Haizettes! Cottage, we must depart from thee!

Carlègle, whose talent 'tis to draw, arrives and claims the right to make us to a more modest cot betake us, 'neath narrower thatch of barley-straw.

'Tis not his fault. I'd but to go sooner than he the rent to pay. I did not. What regrets today! He takes tomorrow my château,

our happy cottage of content where such sweet dreams we used to find. There, with his mocking temperament, he'll sketch cartoons of all mankind,

and on the wicker chair repose, sole witness of his labours, ah! and, when his task has reached its close, sleep in our bed like a pasha.

But will he wake at night, half-dead with dread, to hear upon the blast the Ghostly Huntsman thundering past—depart, and after, die of laughter!

And at morning, towards the dewy lea bent from the threshold, will he see thee, bare, thy hair in shimmering rout? Such sights he'll have to do without.

When on the earth sweet evening falls, like a twin radiance will he see softly traverse the cottage walls the angels, Fervour and Mystery?

Door locked and windows shuttered tight, will he have our countless dreams, or chance to see this Lily,* tall and white, 'twixt us and all the shades adance?

Rules underlie the draughtsman's art. But on this day with sorrows full, he strikes us on our anguished heart with an imaginary rule,

this good Carlègle, this worthy man, whom may there save from Fortune's rigour Saint Bamboulibougnabounigger, patron of every artisan.

Two gluttoned barrows we despatch . . . there's no recourse . . . we cannot wait. The weather-cock upon the thatch utters a cry so desolate!

THE NEW COTTAGE

or

THE VALE

OF CHARMS THAT NEVER CEASE.

(Valley of Gambaseuil.)

On earth two lovers can you meet more thrilled and overjoyed than we, before the grace and mystery of a valley so surpassing sweet?

Let it rain! One sees the meads outspread their silks in diapered array; we imitate it on the bed of tender love, when it rains by day.

When it rains by night the vale resounds with singing frogs. Enchanting sounds! And from the beechen coppice sweet, minute, the muffled drums discreet!

The skies (tomorrow will be fine) like old cathedral windows shine beneath the boughs. The birth of morn the vale with carmine will adorn.

Rattle of dew and bubbling springs, how the bright morning Phœbus now toys with you in his wantonings, while roses crown his infant brow!

* The candle.

Their bells evaporated all, paths, bushes, trees and fields appear: a horse that distance renders small crosses the vale in swift career,

the vale that noon's bright pinion grazes, made of a web of irised things, gay dragon-flies and midges wings, and muslin wreathed in shimmering mazes.

The cattle drowse, 'tis a delight, on the meadow's flower-besprinkled breast: their tufted tails, in whisking quest, disturb a tuft of daisies white.

And our cottage, that with mantling leaves the spreading ivy covereth, more easily to draw its breath, unhooks it just below the eaves.

'Tis three o'clock, the calm hour of the bees, the hottest of the day, beneath their wings the blossoms sway while the whole vale is filled with love.

There his warm heart the sunset lays in mystic silence, and the vale with fervour takes it, all ablaze, keeps it and thinks there cannot fail

to rise through night's serenity the star that rules the eventide—Venus with softly-gleaming knee—the bride, 'mid vapours pale, the bride!

And these are magic rites: the moon, the stars are asked, Saint Elmo's fires, and, to declaim the wedding tune, the Milky Way vouchsafes its choirs.

Some evenings we are stay-at-homes. In our garden-close so sweet it is that sweeter still the vale becomes in listening to our destinies.

For our garden is the leaf, of old from the tree of Eden lightly whirled, where two bare glow-worms find their world—made in our semblance we are told.

O fervent nights! O long desires! When the warm zephyrs fan our fires! . . . Is it enough to christen you—eternity's true masterpiece—

the vale of charms that never cease?

THE THRILL OF THE FOREST.

In the green-lit solitudes of the road beneath the woods as clear, reflected light an emerald doth renew—from moss to canopy roams a white butterfly, but,—fleeting memory—already fades from view:

The impact of my tread, beneath the gathering night, makes mystical the shade, the pine-trees' towering height, and the road that's lost to sight where my soul had thought to see the splendour, pale and dead, of the tarn's serenity.

I shrink from every noise. What may the next one prove? And this shrinking dread I love, and this lurking noise I fear. To sorrows as to joys my soul entire I give. Would I wish to perish here? Or, hidden, there to live?

What hour endures for aye 'neath the darkling forest cowl? Is it dawn or death of day, this twilight gloom forlorn? Is it the living souls of trees that from their boles are drawn, or spectres dread of forest monarchs dead that silently return their ancient realms to prowl?

To the gesturing fern, the flight of the pheasant I arouse, to the quiet of my feet, to the murmuring infinite of the silence, to the far gulfs, where star succeeds to star, that leaves of whispering boughs in countless myriads beat,

to the full moon's frigid ball whence a mute wind doth lull the great frost, suddenly between dark branches ta'en, like quicksilver my soul divides itself tonight only immediately to recombine again!

Do I give this soul of mine to sorrows or to joys? I shrink from every noise. What may the next one prove? And this shrinking dread I love and this lurking noise I fear. Would I wish to perish here? Or, hidden, there to live?

That which grips me, to caress, then, like a rapier-stroke, through soul and body goes, is all this: joys or griefs? 'Tis the odour of the moss, and of the forest leaves, pierced by the scent of smoke from distant villages!

FIRST DAY OF WAR.

"Twixt sleep and wakefulness sweet dreams that lightly pass. Calm of the break of day! Tranquillity of dream, when from my bed I see the willows' azure gleam! Beside me Love doth lay his brow. This breathes for sign. Yes, I hear a beating heart not far apart from mine. No! Droll! I am alone. . . . My fair companion now the casement sets ajar. I hear the blind miaul.—Like a cat she must have gone,—O, what a fresh delight, in her contour's gentle curve, is my love, so fair and young, with naught to hide her form save for a floating shawl, as if the gloom of night still to her shoulder clung.

She whose nature is so gay, so tranquil, that her eye finds all about her way causes for ecstasy, can she have left me thus the irised dawn to see o'er our asparagus. . . . What incivility!—Have you not heard the drum?"—"Come, be sensible!" "Have you not heard the village drum?"—What is there left to do? I arise. O love in tears! I wish to know at once the cause of these alarms. "Well, there he is, this dunce of a drummer who doth move my rage. Our ears he charms with a furious tattoo."

"He halts before my door his paper to unwind. As here the village guard is the drummer, I engage he comes to reprobate a cock's nocturnal flight, felonious it appears, or a fat pet rabbit caught by a poaching good-for-naught. This is well worth your tears, well worth your scrutiny!" "——What's all this rumpus?—War!—At first it seems to me that I'm becoming blind. Where am I? All is night. Who touched me then? I see, my sight returns once more. What spirit forces me to gaze while from the sky a rain of frenzied stars crashes eternally?

"Look there!"—"My love!"—It's worse even than the tempest's squall. . . . I feel that I must go, I've no more courage, Paul." On my threshold, what portend this man, arms raised to heaven, who seems about to weep, and the paper that he bears which trembles in the wind? And he is not alone. O, that form in mourning deep, that woman kneeling low to this boy so vowed to Mars. "Help me, kind gentleman. We must change this. I'm the mother of two sons, one is dead and this soldier is the other. What is all this that's said of the Germans? Pity me! Come, this paper thrice accursed, you could tear it easily."

Through the still room a cry shudders, to die unheard. Upon her bed I lay my swooning love.—Absurd, but I know no longer where to find things, come, I mean . . . to soothe her . . . what! I dream twisting her raven hair? Yes, twisting her cold hair, o'er a cold land I see—is it Flanders or Champagne, is it Alsace or Lorraine?—a ploughshare slowly ride, a peasant guides it straight, raising for goad the scythe fashioned by years of hate; sudden I see the sky flame . . . what then do I see? . . . all the furrows tremble now and, 'neath gold gleams outspread, the great, black oxen plough 'twixt crosses of the dead.

POEMS OF FRANCE.

1914-1915.

I.

THE CATHEDRAL OF RHEIMS.

On the 19th of September, 1914, the Cathedral of Rheims was bombarded and set on fire by the German troops. Baron von Plattenberg, general of infantry, aid de camp general, and chief of the Royal Prussian Guard, is the author responsible for this crime.

Infamous general, Baron von Plattenberg, if this song of love for my church from you derives its source, in settlement I give, sure of their lasting force, the buffet of the poets and the scaffold of the Word—but I've good store of blows to pay my votive debt to all the vaunting Huns that I have ever met.

Before its portals, near "The Golden Lion" I was born.—A babe, my eyes yet dimmed by shimmering Paradise, I dreamed it, and perhaps saw hazy towers uprear music diaphanous athwart the morning skies, such as they may appear where subtlest angels range whose senses, light as air, cohere and interchange.

The cathedral, too, was chanted, no doubt, that eventide, real or unreal in fluctuant majesty, by the angel choirs of Rheims for my nativity, or, being but one soul in flower and naught beside, just by my guardian angel, God's blessing to impart. I swear that even then it *enchanted* my French heart.

The angelic murmuring turned, imperceptibly, upon my mother's lips, to a human lullaby. And soon the dire complaint of good king Jean Renaud (albeit in those days the words I did not know) made vanish from my sight in the abysses dim, till the day I die, the chant of the bright cherubim.

Infamous general, Baron von Plattenberg, if this song of love for my church from you derives its source, in settlement I give, sure of their lasting force, the buffet of the poets and the scaffold of the Word—but I've good store of blows to pay my votive debt to all the vaunting Huns that I have ever met.

Mother, one day your song broke off, when scarce begun, on the word "war"; and you, bent toward your little son and, pressing to my brow your fingers' purities, all joyously exclaimed: "He sees! He sees! He sees!" My father smiled to see that child-like haste of thine to turn my virgin eyes toward the great church sublime:

"Look!" Yes! Though certainly my eyes, unsealed but then, could make out naught beyond the blueness of the pane and the snowy curtains there above the ogive calm, and your hands, so white they fed my soul a milky balm. For me the cathedral's birth more gradually took place, immense, broad, real, dreamed, in a single moment's space.

Its birth took place for me, divined by my glad eyes, on a morning in the spring when crying swallows soared. My child's hands clutched at it in the azure of the skies. Reborn with every dawn, it kept a faithful ward, all habited by saints, by heroes and by kings, by angels in mid-flight, a tree athrill with wings.

Great plaything of my soul, French grove of stones, that came with your two towers to be my boyhood's giant toys, you have remained the one sport that my soul enjoys with your three porches high, in triangle of flame, and over them the rose where pigeons in their flight peck with a greedy bill at prised motes of light.

Then, my Cathedral, when in after days I came with your angel-pinions white the wings of a kite to blend, how with my boisterous cries I made your echoes quail, and, following my cries, hair streaming in the wind, surrounded your old walls with many a children's game, but when I was your guest, a lad distraught and pale,

launched on the eager quest of the flower of ecstacy—hands reaching towards the light that your gemmed windows lave—ah! how the sacred fright that doth the soul surprise o'ercame me in the nave where sang those accents grave well-known to children's hearts in the days of Paradise, when I whispered to thee, "I"—how thou returnedst it me!

Infamous general, Baron von Plattenberg, if this song of love for my church from you derives its source, in return I give you, sure of their immortal force, the buffet of the poets and the scaffold of the Word—but I've good store of hate to pay my votive debt to all the vaunting Huns that I have ever met.

And when I once had dreamed, Basilica, of thee, thou didst obsess my dreams above all earthly things. Thy saints and thy apostles, thy angels and our kings, with those two mighty towers the flush of dawn prolongs, and thy windows' miracles in warm, prismatic throngs, Basilica, enthralled my nights of infaney.

Your forest o'er me spreads its faces intertwined, and like great trunks embraced by gnarled lianas stout, buttresses, capitals of an infernal kind, gables and shafts, arouse a diabolic rout, subtle, persuasive fiends, gross demons from the Pit or strange, ethereal shapes, haunting and exquisite.

One portico supports Hell itself: yes, plain to view, on the church's northern wall, its fires congealed by frost. Eh, what of that! They'll still have heat enough to roast prelates that had black souls and croziered abbés, too. But what good humour's there? One would imagine that they quite enjoyed it, trussed in Satan's sulphurous vat.

To the sound of Sabbath bells, the chime my dream attunes, that Portal vast, the door of the Virgin, now doth rief and her rose-windowed walls where blue Heaven échellons ten wingèd legions, decked with mitres

and with crowns (seeming some fragrant bower all échelloned with blooms), bear Our Blessed One and God who crowns her in the skies.

Up from a dais filled with belfries small it surges, as a sweet, country sun doth o'er the sky-line start, and, poised in billowing mist, the Rose its vermeil heart, 'mid tremulous splendours, swift from prisoning night emerges, launched in the dazzling day like some resplendent lance, up to the sky? Ah, no! To where the kings of France

assembled, side by side, fix their regards on France, yonder, beneath the towers, an audience august. Here is the snowy flock of our royal swains robust that a blazing glory now exalts! . . . O flame intense! Lo, all ascends! The turn of these proud towers has come, and, gesturing their love, they mount to Heaven's blue dome.

Infamous general, Baron von Plattenberg, if this song of love and dream from you derives its source, in return I give you, sure of their immortal force the buffet of the poets and the scaffold of the Word—but I've good store of hate to pay my votive debt to all the vaunting Huns that I have ever met.

From the flaming porticos of Christ and of Saint Paul, and the myriad window-flare, the towers like incense rise. On these the fancy broods and just beyond them spies uplifting tree-trunks, dart, great bows in parallel: bushes and trees of stone, how clear one sees them all! Even the wandering Beasts that in the Forest dwell.

Whence comes this high, clear noise the echoes now repeat? A bedside angel sounds his silver trumpet sweet? No, dream deludes my sense. Towards the cathedral square I needs must turn my eyes: this clear sound comes from there. Thither let all the eyes of my rapt vision bend and taste their pleasure there before the dream doth end.

Jeanne d'Are, O ghostly Maid adored, you are there anew! Lifting your standard high the herald sounds, and Charles, in royal purple clothed, doth, docile, follow you. But see, by a people hedged that all about you swirls, calls to you, loves you, seeks, presses and follows you—O Shepherdess!—in sign of mounting hope advance, led by your form the flock of future kings of France.

Infamous general, Baron von Plattenberg, if this song of love and dream from you derives its source in return I leave you, sure of their immortal force, the buffet of the poets and the scaffold of the Word,—but I've good store of shame to pay my votive debt to all the vaunting Huns that I have ever met.

Into the church they plunge, the peoples, kings and knights, to the cry of Jeanne, and now the flag that o'er her streams such fervour propagates almost the tumult seems the sound of sacred fires that God Himself ignites, and lo, it burns indeed! . . . the Cathedral, soul of souls, fervent, to heaven's high vault in roaring gusts it rolls.

O vision of my youth, 'tis needful that you be (and utterly you are!) the Verity for France. Dream where my great Cathedral had thought to frighten me—changed into soaring flame illumining our lands,—lyric yet Gallic still, to you I owed the grace of singing only songs full-flavoured with my race.

The Basilica the form of that keen flame assumed when from the heart of Jean d'Orbais that fire did part. Higher, more quenchless still o'er the pyre of Jeanne it loomed, that holocaust towards God kindled in each French heart. As soon hope to prevail 'gainst starry skies eterne, Baron von Plattenberg, as this to quench or burn.

Then thus, our innocent Baron von Plattenberg, I hail you! This song of love for my church I dedicate to you, *hoch!* and I give you (sure they endure the ages through) the buffet of France, and my Lyre, high yard where now I nail you. Strings broken by my hand, unpitying scourge and ban to all eternity the loathed Barbarian!

September 21, 1914.

THE TRAITOR.

Fain would I drive away the image of the Spring. Each day of lilacs mauve, primroses pale, each day of frisking lambkins white 'mid vernal mists at play, of babbling streams, clear skies, and birds gay jargonning, to the heart of heaven unfolding the marguerite of gold an impassive deity shreds down with finger slow, each day that gilds the grass, whence subtle perfumes pass, although new life I know breathing them once again, is a sin of drunkenness, a long remorse to me.

Sin, perfidy, remorse to me from dawn to dark, false to my brothers, dead for you, France, in the stark nakedness of the plain or horror of the wood, sin 'gainst the dead, the sin of yearning yet to be, original sin, the sin of a voluptuous mood, remorse for being alive, drunk with the Spring's gay feast, fiend that regales the soul with bright hours exquisite, perfidy to the slain, the soldiers dead for me in the great plain to the north, in the great wood to the east!

A felon's heart is mine. Poesy, poesy, who caused me to assign my vital force to thee? What are they worth, those hymns of gladness that employed my powers, those hymns to Spring, scenes of forgotten loves. Old heart, your country's racked and all your strength is void! Nature and nothing more my singing can portray. Sad, when one can but chant the breeze in poplar groves, the sun of orange storm through pine-tops black and still, the swift trout in the stream churned by the clacking mill, the loriote's laugh that falls from the fresh hawthorn-spray.

Hill, butterfly-caressed, with clover overspread, tell me, O lovely hill, tell me the thing you know. As springlike doth it show, the black height of Épargne, at this daylight hour that makes more wounded and more dead? The mountain of black mud heroic charges gain—wall crumbling with the wreck of wounded as with slain—a floundering host, their guns engulfed in pits of slime. Flatter my eyes, fair hill, a felon's heart is mine!

O little stream of May, forget-me-nots enwreath, at this fair hour of eve when calling peewits glide, tell me, O little stream, what happens now beside the bankless Yser's tide whence one sole spire doth start. Say, does the lamb browse there, the golden broom, the air absorb the scent of sage that thrills my soul like wine, or of a deadly gas in vortices of doom? Console me, vernal stream, mine is a felon's heart.

Swallow that earthward dips, a felon's heart is mine.
 Storm with the noise of steps, a felon's heart is mine.
 All my white cherry-trees, a felon's heart is mine.
 My friend, the rainbow arch, a felon's heart is mine.
 My sweetheart, soul of eve, a felon's heart is mine.
 Companionable toad, a felon's heart is mine.
 France of my springtimes, what a traitorous heart have I!

A felon's heart is mine. Poesy, poesy, who caused me to assign my vital force to thee?

THE MARSEILLAISE.

O song that with one blow, at its initial strain, explodes, sets free the air of the void, invades the air, is only air itself and rends the hurricane, tufted with steps, with cries, with trumpets' martial blare,

sole song that frees the soul with but a single blow, so much that soul and song in towering flame are blent, that turns a heedless throng to soaring fire intent—as mad Saint Michael sped the demon to o'erthrow—

on leaping where our life must purge impurities, cleansing the crimes of hate and tyrannous desire, or to eternal deeps hurl down, with deathless fire, the re-arising scourge of men and deities:

the Barbarians on the march! with their burned flesh to fill the yawning Pit whose lure this world can scarce refuse,—hymn of naught else than flame wherein a man pursues the soul that summons him and flies before him still!

Such is the song, the pride that stirs each Gallic sword, this great hymn all aflame, such is the Marseillaise, that our soldiers shall behold burst from their lips, to blaze, terrific, towards the backs of that defeated horde.

Valour's universal song, whose magic accents ring through the Old World and, no less, through the Country of the Free! Ah, from whatever race or party one may be, to the Republic vowed, the Emperor, the King,

whoever sings that song, despite its cruel lines, (no, with them! I blaspheme!), whoe'er that song doth start, arises filled with love, though born with shriveled heart, stands forth with honour filled, though false a hundred times!

Song that no leisure leaves to ponder or delay! Which, when it dwells in you, bursts from you in a breath, and 'tis your soul's best part that thus is borne away. Sons of your country, rise . . . to victory or death!

It shames the wounded men. In a renewing flood of strength they stand erect for fiercer fighting fain! Its slogan propagates such fury in the blood that it is but the dead who do not rise again

to give themselves once more the joy, supreme and grim, of striking down the Boche, once more ere life is fled, ere they forever die. Not yet! Great strengthening hymn, hymn that resuscitates, hymn that awakes the dead!

O hymn that with one blow, at its initial strain explodes, sets free the air of the void, O Marseillaise changed to the air itself where whirls the hurricane of souls that bear gross flesh to the red furnace-blaze,

able to bear to Heaven, purging away their dross, the unbelieving horde by worldly wiles enticed, wherewith to dower the church triumphant, Jesus Christ would with more lingering pangs have suffered on the cross.

Of our strife what does He see, the God in Heaven who reigns? Forever solitude among the dying throng? Ah, all upheaves at last, bounds, flames to this vast song arising towards the clouds from the entrails of the plains:

“To arms, to arms, ye brave!” 'Tis from the Gallic side the soil spits volleying steel, the maddened smoke-wreaths glide, then blue horizons roar. The good God may behold their circle mount on high, in vapour aureoled.

Such is this song whose force so oft has rendered tame the foe—the Barbarian, forsworn on every hand. Shrilled by our marching files, in waves of cadenced flame, it filled our general's souls, partook of their command.

The Pyramids! Fleurus! Arcole and Wattignies! The Marseillaise doth sing a dauntless history, and then 'tis our Jouvence and makes our ranks prevail. 'Tis not the fate of France in wretchedness to fail.

Oft the Teutonic hordes, to cheat our watchful guns, howl it to falling stars in the gloom. 'Tis well averred that straight the air is foul and gasping cries are heard, for like nux vomica our hymn affects the Huns.

From a hundred thousand throats, ah, the effect was fine when the coryphæus' name was Bonaparte. Today Joffre, with more volume still, uplifts the air divine to his wingèd Victory that never shall give way!

Flags, oriflammes that, mute, proclaim our victory, piled eagles, pikes, and guns, the trophies we retain, cannon of Bois-le-Prêtre, cannon of Rivoli, and you, proud azure dome, with glory gorged again,

witness! 'Tis towards this song, as towards its places of doom, there swirled itself, a morn's gigantic hurricane, the Paris Multitude. A million prides were fain low to incline themselves before your quiet tomb,

Rouget de Lisle, the while, in homage to your wraith, from Alsace to the North our soldiers chanted loud, Germans that delve the soil, Germans perplexed and cowed, that song wherein all France explodes in fervent faith!

Tremble, 'tis in the air and in the air will stay. 'Tis all the air of the world. Your swarms 'twill sweep away. This Air will save Alsace, the country of its birth and of your yoke and you forever rid the earth!

Tremble, the hour is near, the hour when you must die, when soldier-singers prove that Pity's hour is past, when Pity's self demands we slay you utterly, you and your children, too, all, to the very last!

Tremble, it is the dawn that sees your crimes' redress. The universe entire arises now, and chants the hymn of resurrection, peace and deliverance . . . do you hear it? . . . and the hymn, the hymn of Vengeances.

To arms, ye citizens! Show your battalions' worth! March! Blood impure shall choke their plea to God on high. We are the dragon-seed their furrows fructify. To arms ye citizens of every land on earth!

SELECTED POEMS AND BALLADS OF
IN TIME OF WAR.

Preceded by

HOW GLAD I AM THAT I AM FRENCH.

1917.

THAT IS WHY OUR SONS ARE HEROES.

I was awaiting something else, my hopes were of a different kind:

I wished to give myself to you, great battles, as to great Nature I have given myself; but I no longer understand you, you have become so supernatural!

Nature at least permitted me to suffer from my loves. But, battles, it is eitherwise with you, who wish us all entire. Oh! I know the reason why, I know it well.

Void of love save for that of the Fatherland, our soldiers, our sons for the nature of France are dying.

But, battles, indeed one need not be too harsh. I, I suffer from love, and my trouble comes from this.

And do you not believe that all our sons—our heroes—suffer more pangs from love than from shrapnel-fire?

One calls them heroes because they fight so well. But was it to be soldiers they were made? I, I call them heroes because they have given their youth and the love they dare not weep.

Weep, yes, weep, O young soldier, shed tears more bitter than gall! If you do not weep when 'tis the time for weeping, you will weep too much when you return, when you come to your fatherland again and find no sweetheart waiting for you there.

* * * * *

Weep, yes, weep, O young soldier, and shed great tears o'er the dwelling of your father, shed in thought great tears o'er the dwelling of your father;—you have not the right to weep.

Your pride forbids it, and your chiefs would remind you of your country. But does not one's country commence with the dwelling of one's father? or no matter what it may be, at the hearth?—No! no! forget all this. Your chiefs are right. Do not weep.

Weep, yes, weep, O young soldier, and shed great tears o'er the soft hands of your mother; shed in thought great tears o'er the hands of your mother;—you no longer have the right to weep.

Your new-fledged pride forbids it; and your reasoning chiefs are right. If your country begins with the tender hands of your mother—or, indeed, better still, alas! with the heart of your love—forget this, forget this, I tell you—you have not the right to weep.

Forget your childhood, forget its days of Spring, forget your father and mother, forget your well-beloved.

Forget your memories, my son,
forget the cuckoos singing o'er the hills,
the slopes of the cliffs, the alder-wood, its curlews,
the bush of mulberries, the tree with its tufts of mistletoe,
the heather flowering on the arid down,
and, running towards the village and its hedges,
the stream that counts its pebbles like little coins,
and the lowing herds of kine, their udders full,
and, set in the very midst
of the prairie populous with capering beasts,
forget your home,
forget your home, forget its windows pure,
the smoke of the roof, the stone of the hearth,
the wise old clock, and the creaking press,
the copper basins in the kitchen's shade,
the scent of thyme and laurel.

Forget your childhood, forget its days of Spring, forget your father and mother, forget your well-beloved.

Forget your memories, my child:

forget the bridge, the bell, your earliest love. . . . Would it not have been better, O my father! O my mother! to envelop with swaddling-bands a piece of wood, to wash little pebbles as does the stream, than to wash your son, than to dress your baby dear, that he might come one day to this miserable pass, to this rending pang of forgetting you—even for his country? Would it not have been better, my poor well-beloved, to embrace the wind than this youth who one day would be false to you?

“But what would they embrace—wounds! our fiancées? Oh! were there ever more atrocious wounds? What will they see, the eyes of those that love us?—My God! if they were, if they were to fly from us? . . .”

That is why our sons are heroes!

Weep, yes, weep, O young soldier, shed tears as bitter as gall! If you do not weep when it is the moment for weeping, you will weep too much when you return, when you come to your fatherland again and find no sweetheart waiting for you there.

But no! no! I blaspheme, no! You have not made a sad exchange. You do not weep?—Go, it is well, my son.—Less your chiefs than your heart laid on you this command. You have thrown yourself with gaiety of heart into this agony. “Long live my Country and nothing but my Country!”—That is your cry—towards death, awaiting death, in the filth, in the horrible sounds of fighting hand to hand, in the streams of burning pitch. . . .

That is why our sons are heroes!

IN THE LAND
OF THE WINDMILLS
followed by
LIKE A SOLEMN MUSIC
1921.

FORGOTTEN.

France, you laugh too much, it seems. War will come to
end your dreams.

But why do you laugh so loud, my dear? Is it that all
your dead may hear?

There's laughter underneath the earth, evil laughter, cold
and thin.

The earth is black, they are within. They watch the
graveworms' ghastly mirth

while wooden crosses feel their tooth. They laugh, but
'tis at you, forsooth,

France! You laugh too much, it seems. War will come
to end your dreams.

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