

NEW POEMS

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NEW POEMS

BY

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THE MISTY MID-REGION

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HESPERIAN

(PROEM)

*THE path that winds by wood and stream
Is not the path for me to-day ;
The path I take is one of dream,
That leads me down a twilight way.*

*By towns, where myths have only been ;
By streams, no mortal foot hath crossed ;
To gardens of hesperian sheen,
By halcyon seas for ever lost.*

*By forests, moonlight haunts alone,—
(Diana with her silvery fawn ;)
By fields, whereon the stars are sown,—
(The wildflowers gathered of the Dawn.)*

HESPERIAN

*To orchards of eternal fruit,
That never mortal hand shall take ;
Around whose central tree and root
Is coiled the never-sleeping Snake.*

*The Dragon, lost in listening, curled
Around the trunk whose fruit is gold :
The ancient wisdom of the world
Guarding the glory never old.*

*The one desire, that leads me now
Beyond endeavour still to try
And reach those peaks that overbrow
The islands of the sunset sky.*

*The purple crags, the rosy peaks
Of somewhere, nowhere ; where you will ;—
But the one place where Beauty speaks
With the Greek rapture on her still.*

HESPERIAN

*Where still she joins with old Romance
And Myth and Legend pearl-white hands,
And leads the old immortal dance
Of Song in dim immortal lands.*

‘ THAT NIGHT WHEN I CAME TO THE
GRANGE ’

THE trees took on fantastic shapes
That night when I came to the grange ;
The very bushes seemed to change ;
This seemed a hag’s head, *that* an ape’s :
The road itself seemed darkly strange
That night when I came to the grange.

.

The storm had passed, but still the night
Cloaked with deep clouds its true intent,
And moody on its way now went
With muttered thunder and the light,
Torch-like, of lightning that was spent
Flickering the mask of its intent.

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

Like some hurt thing that bleeds to death,
Yet never moves nor heaves a sigh,
Some last drops shuddered from the sky :
The darkness seemed to hold its breath
To see the sullen tempest die,
That never moved nor heaved a sigh.

Within my path, among the weeds,
The glow-worm, like an evil eye,
Glared malice ; and the boughs on high
Flung curses at me, menaced deeds
Of darkness if I passed them by :
They and the glow-worm’s glaring eye.

The night-wind rose, and raved at me,
Hung in the tree beside the gate ;
The gate that snarled its iron hate
Above the gravel, grindingly,
And set its teeth to make me wait,
Beside the one tree near the gate.

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

The next thing that I knew a bat
Out of the rainy midnight swept
An evil blow : and then there crept,
Malignant with its head held flat,
A hiss before me as I stept,
A fang, that from the midnight swept.

I drew my dagger then, the blade
That never failed me in my need ;
’Twere well to be prepared ; indeed,
Who knew what waited there ? what shade,
Or substance, banded to impede
My entrance of which there was need.

The blade, at least, was tangible
Among the shadows I must face ;
Its touch was real ; and in case
Hate waylaid me, would serve me well ;
I needed something in that place
Among the shadows I must face.

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

The dead thorn took me by surprise,
A hag-like thing with twisted clutch ;
From o'er the wall I felt it touch
My brow with talons ; at my eyes
It seemed to wave a knotted crutch,
A hag-like thing with twisted clutch.

A hound kept howling in the night ;
He and the wind were all I heard :
The wind that maundered some dark word
Of wrong, that nothing would make right,
To every rain-drop that it stirred :
The hound and wind were all I heard.

The grange was silent as the dead :
I looked at the dark face of it :
Nowhere was any candle lit :
It looked like some huge nightmare head
With death's-head eyes. I paused a bit
To study the dark face of it.

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

And then I rang and knocked : I gave
The great oak door loud blow on blow :
No servant answered : wild below
The echoes clanged as in a cave :
The evil mansion seemed to know
Who struck the door with blow on blow.

Silence : no chink of light to say
That he and his were living there,
That sinful man with snow-white hair,
That creature, I had come to slay ;
That wretched thing, who did not dare
Reveal that he was hiding there.

I broke my dagger on the door,
Yet woke but echoes in the hall :
Then set my hands unto the wall
And clomb the ivy as before
In boyhood, to a window tall,
That was my room's once in that hall.

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

At last I stood again where he,
That vile man with the sneering face,
That fiend, that foul spot on our race,
Had sworn none of our family
Should ever stand again : the place
Was dark as his own devil's face.

I stood, and felt as if some crime
Closed in on me, hedged me around :
It clutched at me from closets ; bound
Its arms around me ; time on time
I turned and grasped, but nothing found,
Only the blackness all around.

The darkness took me by the throat :
I could not hear but felt it hiss—
“Take this, you hound ! and this ! and this !” —
Then, all at once, afar, remote,
I heard a door clang.—Murder is
More cautious—yet, *whose* was that hiss ?

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

Oh, for a light ! The blackness jeered
And mouthed at me ; its sullen face
Was as a mask on all the place,
From which two sinister sockets leered ;
A death's-head, that my eyes could trace,
That stared me sullen in the face.

Then silence packed the hall and stair
And crammed the rooms from attic down,
Since that far door had clanged ; its frown
Upon the darkness, everywhere,
Had settled ; like a graveyard gown
It clothed the house from attic down.

And then I heard a groan—and one
Long sigh—then silence.—Who was near ?
Was it the darkness at my ear
That mocked me with a deed undone ?
Or was it he, who waited here,
To kill me when I had drawn near ?

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

I drew my sword then : stood and stared
Into the night, that was a mask
To all the house, that made my task
A hopeless one. Ah ! had it bared
Its teeth at me—what more to ask !—
My sword had gone through teeth and mask !

It was not fair to me ; my cause !
The villain darkness bound my eyes.
Why, even the moon refused to rise.—
It might have helped me in that pause,
Before I groped the room, whose size
Seemed monstrous to my night-bound eyes.

What was it that I stumbled on ?
God ! for a light that I might see !—
There ! something sat that stared at me—
Some loathsome, twisted thing—the spawn
Of hell and midnight.—Was it *he* ?—
God ! for a light that I might see !

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

And then the moon! thank Heaven! the moon
Broke through the clouds, a face chalk-white :
Now then, at last, I had a light!
And then I saw—the thing seemed hewn
From marble at the moment’s sight,
Bathed in the full moon’s wistful white.

He sat, or rather crouched, there—dead :
Her dagger in his heart—that girl’s :
His open eyes as white as pearls—
Malignant—staring overhead :
One hand clutched full of torn-out curls.—
Her dagger in his heart—that girl’s.

I knew the blade. Why, I had seen
The thing stuck in her gipsy hair,
Worn as they wear them over there
In Spain : its gold hilt crusted green
With jade-like gems of cruel glare.
She wore it in her gipsy hair.

‘WHEN I CAME TO THE GRANGE’

She called it her “green wasp,” and smiled
As if of some such deed she dreamed :—
And yet to me she always seemed
A child, a little timid child,
Who at a mouse has often screamed—
And yet of deeds like this she dreamed.

Where was she now ?—Some pond or pool
Would yield her body up some day.—
Poor little waif, that ’d gone astray !
And I !—oh God ! how great a fool
To know so long and yet delay !—
Some pond would yield her up some day.

.
The world was phantomed with the mist
That night when I came from the grange.—
So, she had stabbed him. It was strange.
Who would have thought that she who kiss’d
Would kill him too !—Well, women change.—
Their curse is on the lonely grange !

THE ANGEL WITH THE BOOK

WHEN to that house I came which, long ago,
My heart had builded of its joy and woe,
Upon its threshold, lo ! I paused again,
Dreading to enter ; fearing to behold
The place wherein my Love had lived of old,
And where my other self lay dead and slain.

I feared to see some shape, some Hope once
 dear,

Behind the arras—dead ; some face of Fear,
With eyes accusing, that would sear my soul,
Taking away my manhood and my strength
With heartbreak memories. . . . And yet, at
 length,

Again I stood within that house of dole.

THE ANGEL WITH THE BOOK

Sombre and beautiful with stately things
The long hall lay ; and by the stairs the wings
Of Life and Love rose marble and unmarred :
And all the walls, hung grave with tapestry,
Gesticulated sorrow ; gazed at me,
Strange speculation in their dark regard.

Through one tall oriel the close of day
Glared with its crimson face and laid a ray,
A burning finger, on the stairway where
A trail of tears, as of a wounded heart,
Led to a passage with a room apart,
A room where Love had perished of despair.

Now all was empty ; silent even of sighs ;
And yet I felt within that room were eyes,
Unearthly eyes I dared not look upon,
That had seen God ; within them hell and heaven
Of all the past. I dared not look, yet, even
As I drew back, my feet were slowly drawn

THE ANGEL WITH THE BOOK

Into that room lit with those eyes. . . . I saw
An Angel standing with the Book of Law ;
His raiment lightening from head to feet,
And swords of flame and darkness in his eyes,
He stood, the great Book, open as the skies,
Like some great heart throbbing with rosy heat.

One moment blazed the vision : then I heard,
Not with my ears, but with my soul, this word :—
“ I am the Law through which Love is. Each one
Through me must win unto his heaven or hell.
I build the house in which all memories dwell.
Thy house is finished, and my task is done.”

And where the vision burned—was nothing. Fear
Bowed me to earth ; for, flaming, very near,
I felt that Angel's presence, like a spell,
That turned my eyesight inward where I saw
That this was Love, whose other name is Law,
By whom was built my House of Heaven and Hell.

DREAM ROAD

I took the road again last night
On which my boyhood's hills look down ;
The old road leading from the town,
The village there below the height,
Its cottage homes, all huddled brown,
Each with its blur of light.

The old road, full of ruts, that leads,
A winding streak of limestone-grey,
Over the hills and far away ;
That's crowded here by arms of weeds
And elbows of railfence, asway
With flowers that no one heeds :

DREAM ROAD

That's dungeoned here by rocks and trees
And maundered to by waters ; there
Lifted into the free wild air
Of meadow-land serenities :
The old road, stretching far and fair
To where my tired heart sees.

That says, "Come, take me for a mile ;
And let me show you mysteries :
The things the yellow moon there sees,
And those few stars that 'round her smile :
Come, take me, now you are at ease,
And walk with me a while."

And I—I took it at its word :
And friendships, clothed in olden guise,
Walked with me ; and, as I surmise,
Old dreams for twenty years unheard ;
And love, who gazed into my eyes
As once when youth adored.

DREAM ROAD

And voices, vocal silences ;
And visions, that my youth had seen,
Slipped from each side, in silvery green,
And spoke to me in memories ;
And recollections smiled between
My tear-wet face and trees.

Enchantment walked by field and farm,
And whispered me on either side ;
And where the fallows broadened wide
Dim mystery waved a moon-white arm,
Or, from the woodland, moonbeam-eyed,
Beckoned a filmy form.

Spirits of wind and starlight wove
From fern to fern a drowsy dance ;
Or o'er the wood-stream hung a-trance :
And from the leaves, that dreamed above,
The elfin-dew dropped many a lance
Of light and, glimmering, drove

DREAM ROAD

Star-arrows through the warmth and musk,
That sparkled on the moss and loam,
And shook from bells of wildflower foam
The bee-like music of the dusk,
And rimmed with spars the lily's dome
And morning-glory's tusk.

And, soft as cobwebs, I beheld
The moths, they say that fairies use
As coursers, come by ones and twos
From stables of the blossoms belled :
While busily, among the dews,
Where croaked the toad and swelled,

The nimble spider climbed his thread,
Or diagramed a dim design,
Or flung, above, a slender line
To launder dews on. Overhead
An insect drew its dagger fine
And stabbed the stillness dead.

DREAM ROAD

And there ! far at the lane's dark end,
A light showed, like a glow-worm lamp :
And through the darkness, summer-damp,
An old rose-garden seemed to send
Sweet word to me—as of a camp
Of dreams around the bend.

And there a gate ! whereat, mid deeps
Of honeysuckle dewiness,
She stood—whose lips were mine to press—
How long ago !—for whom still leaps
My heart with longing and, no less,
With passion here that sleeps.

The smiling face of girlhood ; eyes
Of wine-warm brown ; and heavy hair,
Auburn as autumn in his lair,
Took me again with swift surprise,
As oft they took me, coming there
In days of bygone ties.

DREAM ROAD

The cricket and the katydid
Pierced silence with their stinging sounds ;
The firefly went its golden rounds,
Where, lifting slow one sleepy lid,
The baby rosebud dreamed ; and mounds
Of lilies breathed half-hid.

The white moon waded through a cloud,
Like some pale woman through a pool :
And in the darkness, close and cool
I felt a form against me bowed,
Her breast to mine ; and deep and full
Her maiden heart beat loud.

I never dreamed it was a trick
That fancy played me ; memory
And moonlight. . . . Yet, it well may be
The old road, too, *that* night was quick
With dreams that were reality
To every stone and stick.

DREAM ROAD

For instantly when, overhead,
The moon swam—*there!* where soft had gleamed
That vision, now no creature seemed—
Only a ruined house and shed.
Was it a dream the old road dreamed?
Or I—of her long dead?

THE PLACE

I

WHEREIN is it so beautiful?—
In all things dim and all things cool :
In silence, that is built of leaves
And wind and spray of waterfall ;
And, golden as the half-ripe sheaves,
In light that is not light at all.

II

Wherein is it like joy and spring?—
In petaled musk and singing wing :
In dreams, that come like butterflies
And moths, dim-winged with downy grey ;
And myths, that watch with bark-brown eyes
Beauty who sleeps beside the way.

THE PLACE

III

Wherein, heart, is it all in all?—
In what to me did there befall :
The echo of a word once said,
That haunts it still like some sweet ghost ;
Youth's rapture, bright and gold of head,
And the wild love there found and lost.

THE ROAD

ALONG the road I smelt the rose,
The wild-rose in its veil of rain ;
And how it was, God only knows,
But with its scent I saw again
A girl's face at a window-pane,
Gazing through tears that fell like rain.
'Tis twelve years now, so I suppose.

Twelve years ago. 'Twas then I thought,
" Love is a burden bitter-sweet :
And he who runs must not be fraught :
Free must his heart be as his feet."
Again I heard myself repeat,
" Love is a burden bitter-sweet."
Yet all my aims had come to nought.

THE ROAD

I smelt the rose ; I felt the rain
 Lonely I stood upon the road.
Of one thing only was I fain—
 To be delivered of my load.—
 A moment more and on I strode.
 I cared not whither led the road
That led not back to her again.

THE OLD LANE

An old, lost lane ;—where can it lead ?—
To stony pastures, where the weed
Purples its plume, or sails its seed :
And from one knoll, the vetch makes green,
 Trailing its glimmering ribbon on,
Under deep boughs, a creek is seen,
 Flecked with the silver of the dawn.

An old, green lane ;—where can it go ?—
Into the valley-land below,
Where red the wilding lilies blow :
Where, under willows, shadowy grey,
 The blue-crane wades, the heron glides ;
And in each pool the minnows sway,
 Twinkling their slim and silvery sides.

THE OLD LANE

An old, railed lane ;—where does it end ?—
Beyond the log-bridge at the bend,
Towards which our young feet used to wend :
Where, 'neath a dappled sycamore,
 The old mill thrashed its foaming wheel,
And, smiling, at its corn-strewn door
 The miller leant all white with meal.

An old, wild lane ;—I know it well :
The creek, the bridge across the dell :
The old house on the orchard-swell :
The pine-board porch above the creek,
 Where oft we used to sit and dream,
Two children, fair of hair and cheek,
 Dropping our flowers in the stream.

An old, old lane ;—I follow it
In fancy ; and, where branches knit,
Behold a boy and girl who sit

THE OLD LANE

Beside the mill-dam near the mill ;

Or in a flat-boat, old and worn,

Oar lilyward. I see them still—

Her dress is rent, his trousers torn.

An old, lost lane.—Come, let us find,

As here I have it in my mind,

As boyhood left it far behind !

Yes ; let us follow it again,

And meet her, wild of foot and hair,

The tomboy, sweet as sun and rain,

Whom once we worshipped to despair.

A FOREST CHILD

THERE is a place I search for still,
 Sequestered as the world of dreams,
A bushy hollow, and a hill
 That whispers with descending streams,
Cool, careless waters, wandering down,
Like Innocence who runs to town,
 Leaving the wildwood and its dreams,
 And prattling like the forest streams.

But still in dreams I meet again
 The child who bound me, heart and hand,
And led me with a wildflower chain
 Far from our world, to Faeryland :

A FOREST CHILD

Who made me see and made me know
The lovely Land of Long-Ago,
 Leading me with her little hand
 Into the world of Wonderland.

The years have passed : how far away
 The day when there I met the child,
The little maid, who was a fay,
 Whose eyes were dark and undefiled
And crystal as a woodland well,
That holds within its depths a spell,
 Enchantments, featured like a child,
 A dream, a poetry undefiled.

Around my heart she wrapped her hair,
 And bound my soul with lips and eyes,
And led me to a cavern, where
 Grey Legend dwelt in kingly guise,

A FOREST CHILD

Her kinsman, dreamier than the moon,
Who called her Fancy, read her rune,
 And bade her with paternal eyes
 Divest herself of her disguise.

And still I walk with her in dreams,
 Though many years have passed since
 then,
And that high hill and its wild streams
 Are lost as is that faery glen.
And as the years go swiftly by
I find it harder, when I try,
 To meet with her, who led me then
 Into the wildness of that glen.

IN THE WOOD

THE waterfall, deep in the wood,
Talked drowsily with solitude,
A soft, insistent sound of foam,
That filled with sleep the forest's dome,
Where, like some dream of dusk, she stood
Accentuating solitude.

The crickets' tinkling chips of sound
Strewed all the twilight-twinkling ground ;
A whip-poor-will began to cry,
And, staggering through the sober sky,
A bat went on its drunken round,
Its shadow following on the ground.

IN THE WOOD

Then from a bush, an elder-copse,
That spiced the dark with musky tops,
What seemed, at first, a shadow came
And took her hand and called her name,
And kissed her where, in starry drops,
The dew orbed on the elder-tops.

The glaucous glow of fireflies
Flickered the dusk ; and fox-like eyes
Peered from the shadows ; and the hush
Murmured a word of wind and rush
Of fluttering waters, fragrant sighs,
And dreams unseen of mortal eyes.

The beetle flung its burr of sound
Against the hush and clung there, wound
In night's deep mane : then, in a tree,
A grig began deliberately
To file the stillness : all around
A wire of shrillness seem unwound.

IN THE WOOD

I looked for those two lovers there :
His ardent eyes, her passionate hair.
The moon looked down, slow-climbing wan
Heaven's slope of azure : they were gone :
But where they'd passed I heard the air
Sigh, faint with sweetness of her hair.

GARDEN GOSSIP

THIN, chisel-fine a cricket chipped
The crystal silence into sound ;
And where the branches dreamed and dripped
A grasshopper its dagger stripped
And on the humming darkness ground.

A bat, against the gibbous moon,
Danced, imp-like, with its lone delight ;
The glow-worm scrawled a golden rune
Upon the dark ; and, emerald-strewn,
The firefly hung with lamps the night.

GARDEN GOSSIP

The flowers said their beads in prayer,
Dew-syllables of sighed perfume ;
Or talked of two, soft-standing there,
One like a gladiole, straight and fair,
And one like some rich poppy-bloom.

The mignonette and feverfew
Laid their pale brows together :—“ See ! ”
One whispered : “ Did their step thrill through
Your roots ? ”—“ Like rain. ”—“ I touched the two
And a new bud was born in me. ”

One rose said to another :—“ Whose
Is this dim music ? song, that parts
My crimson petals like the dews ? ”
“ My blossom trembles with sweet news—
It is the love of two young hearts. ”

THE OLD GATE MADE OF PICKETS

I

THERE WAS moonlight in the garden and the chirr
and chirp of crickets ;
There was scent of pink and peony and deep
syringa thickets,
When adown the pathway whitely, where the fire-
fly glimmered brightly,
She came stepping, oh, so lightly,
To the old gate made of pickets.

II

There were dew and musk and murmur and a
voice that hummed odd snatches
Of a song while there she hurried, through the
moonlight's silvery patches,

THE OLD GATE MADE OF PICKETS

To the rose-grown gate,—above her and her softly-
singing lover,

With its blossom-tangled cover
And its weight and wooden latches.

III

Whom she met there, whom she kissed there, mid
the moonlight and the roses,

With his arms who there enclosed her,—as a tiger-
lily encloses

Some white moth that frailly settles on its gold
and crimson petals,

Where the garden runs to nettles,
No one knows now or supposes.

IV

Years have passed since that last meeting ; loves
have come and loves departed :

Still the garden blooms unchanging ; there is
nothing broken-hearted

THE OLD GATE MADE OF PICKETS

In its beauty, where the hours lounge with sun
and moon and showers,
Mid the perfume and the flowers
As in days when those two parted.

v

Yet the garden and the flowers and the cheerily
chirring crickets,
And the moonlight and the fragrance, and the
wind that waves the thickets,—
They remember what was spoken, and the rose
that was a token,
And the gentle heart there broken
By the old gate made of pickets.

APRILIAN

I

COME with me where April twilights
Wigwam blue the April hills ;
Where the shadows and the high lights
Swarm the woods that Springtime fills.

Tents where dwell the tribes of beauty,
Tasseled scouts whose camp-fires glow
Over leagues of wild-flower booty
Rescued from the camps of snow.

II

A thousand windflowers blowing !—
They print the ways with palest pearl,
As if with raiment flowing
Here passed some glimmering girl.

APRILIAN

A thousand bluets breaking!—
They take the heart with glad surprise,
As if some wild girl waking
Looked at you with bewildered eyes.

A thousand buds and flowers,
A thousand birds and bees :—
What spirit haunts the bowers!
What dream that no one sees!

III

Her kirtle is white as the wild-plum bloom,
Her girdle is pink as the crab;
Her face is sweet as a wood perfume
Or haw that the sunbeams stab.

Her boddice is green as the beetle's wing
That jewels the light o' the sun;
And the earth and the air around her sing
Wherever her mad feet run.

APRILIAN

Her beautiful feet, that bloom and bud
And print with blossoms each place.—
Oh, let us follow them into the wood
And gaze on her, face to face.

A GHOST AND A DREAM

RAIN will fall on the fading flowers,
Winds will blow through the dripping tree,
When Fall leads in her tattered Hours
With Death to keep them company.

All night long in the weeping weather,
All night long in the garden grey,
A ghost and a dream will talk together—
And sad are the things they will have to say :

Old sad things of the bough that's broken ;
Heartbreak things of the leaf that's dead ;
Old sad things no tongue hath spoken ;
Sorrowful things no man hath said.

TRAMPS

OH, roses, roses everywhere—but only one for
me !

But one wild-rose for me, my boy,—*your* face that's
like the morn's ;

My rose of roses, dear my lad, my dark-eyed
Romany ;

The world may keep its roses now, that gave me
only thorns.

Oh, song and singing everywhere ; the woods are
wild with song :

One simple song I knew, my lad,—you crooned it
in my ears ;

TRAMPS

It cheered my way by night and day ; but, oh, the
way was long !

And all the hard world gave to me was evil words
and sneers.

Oh, song and blossoms everywhere—and nature
full of love :

But one sweet look of love was mine, and that you
gave, my joy :

A look of love, a look of trust—they helped my
heart enough ;

They helped me bear the look of scorn, the world's
black look, my boy.

Oh, spring and love are everywhere ; soft breezes
kiss and woo :

Your kiss was all I had, my son, to ease me of my
woe :

TRAMPS

But, oh, it helped me far, dear heart ; how far I
only knew :

But otherwise nor kiss nor smile, but only curse
and blow.

But now I'm going to die, my boy ; and now I'm
going to rest ;

The road was long, and tired am I ; and only you
will care :

Give me a kiss, O boy I bore !—I did what I
thought best :

But it was bad for me, my lad ; O boy whom I
did bear !

“ Your father ? ”—Ask me not of him !—He was a
tramp, a thief :

And I—I was a country girl—a wayward, so they
say,

TRAMPS

They kept too strict, perhaps, you see ; and he, he
brought relief :

I went with him, a woman tramp, and here I am
to-day.

My dream of bliss was brief, ah me ! Wild spring
had played its part,

A vagabond part in vagabond blood that mates
with any kind.—

I woke one morn upon the straw with you upon
my heart—

The man was gone, my all was gone, and shame
was left behind.

Since then I've tramped the road, my lad, and
faced the rain and sun ;

In snow and sleet I've trudged and begged, with
you hugged in my arms :

TRAMPS

Oh, few would give a wanton work, or kindly word,
dear one !

A baby at her breast, you see—they drove me
from their farms.

Now you are big and strong, my boy ; and you are
twelve years young ;

Oh, grasp your chance, when I am gone, and leave
the past behind :

Perhaps by you, as 'tis your due, some fortune
may be wrung

From what I missed in life and love, some good
luck of some kind.

Now I am going to die, my boy ; just lean me
'gainst that tree,

And dig my grave and lay me in and make no
more delay ;

TRAMPS

Cut all the wildflowers down around, and throw
them there, you see,
And bring a thorn and plant it here when I am
laid away.

Perhaps you'll come again some day when you are
big and grown,
And have a wife and boy yourself—but do not let
them know !
They might not understand it, lad ; so you must
come alone
And tell your mother how it goes, the one who
loved you so.

'Tis birds and blossoms everywhere ; and now, how
strange ! I see
How life and love are smiling down, O face that's
like the morn's !

TRAMPS

Come ! lay me in my gipsy grave you dug beneath
the tree,
Away from all the roses there and deep among the
thorns.

LILITH'S LOVER

“ And round his heart one strangling golden hair ”

I

WHITE art thou, O Lilith! as the foam that
glimmers and quivers,

Glitters and clingingly silvers and snows from the
balm

Of the beautiful breasts of the nymphs of the seas
and rivers

That crystal and pearl by clusters of tropical
palm,

Forests of tenebrous palm.—

Once didst thou beckon and smile, O Lilith! as
givers

Of heavenly gifts smile: and, lo! my heart no
longer was calm.

LILITH'S LOVER

II

Cruel art thou, O Lilith ! as spirits that battle
In tempest and night, in ultimate realms of the
Earth ;
Immaterial hosts, that shimmer and shout and
rattle
Elemental armour and drive, with madness and
mirth,
Down from the mountains, into the sea, like
cattle,
Gaunt and glacial cattle,
Congealèd thunder, the icebergs, gigantic of
girth.

III

Subtle art thou, O Lilith ! as the sylphids that
cover
Dawn with their forms of rose, and breeze it with
breasts and cheeks ;

LILITH'S LOVER

Breasts that are blossoms, and cheeks

Pearls in the morning's creeks :

And wily art thou as the dæmons of beauty that
hover,

Raven of hair, in sunset, trailing its gold with
streaks :

And what man, Lilith, beholding, would not yield
himself thy lover ?

Beautiful one, thy lover ?

Die as I died, Lilith ! for the love that no tongue
speaks ? . . .

IV

Before us, behold, the long white thunder of ocean :

Around us the forest, a whispering world of trees :

Above us the glory and glitter, golden and
silvery motion

Of infinite stars, O Lilith ! and, arrowing out of
these,

LILITH'S LOVER

Down in my soul from these,
A sense of ancient despair, destruction, devotion,
Medusa of beauty, that slays; that is part of
man's destinies.

v

O kisses, again would I die! O kisses that slew
me!

O beautiful body of sin, O sin that was mine!

O splendour and whiteness of wickedness! passion
that drew me,

Golden of hair that drew me,

Draw me again with thine eyes, their azure
divine!

Slay me again with caresses! and let it pierce
through me,

All the poignant desire that made me eternally
thine.

LILITH'S LOVER

VI

And the larvæ, the lamias, that cling to,
encumber

And, bat-like, feed at the Ethiop breasts of
Night,—

Swarms, like bubbles that rise from the shadowy
pools of night—

Owl-eyed, hag-haired, her minions, awoke from
their slumber,

And peering and whispering came, O Lilith the
white! . . .

But thou, with thy beautiful hair, from their
hideous number,

The night of their myriad number,

Covered me, dead at thy feet, and hid me from
sight.

WITCHERY

SHE walks the woods, when evening falls,
With spirits of the winds and leaves ;
And to her side the soul she calls
Of every flower she perceives.

She walks with introspective eyes
That see not as the eyes of man,
But with the dream that in them lies,
And which no outward eyes may scan.

She sits among the sunset hills,
Or trails a silken skirt of breeze,
Then with the voice of whip-poor-wills
Summons the twilight to the trees.

WITCHERY

Among the hollows, dim with musk,
Where wild the stream shows heels of foam,
She sows with firefly-seeds the dusk,
And leads the booming beetle home.

She blows the glow-worm lamps a-glare,
And hangs them by each way like eyes ;
Then, mid the blossoms, everywhere
She rocks to sleep the butterflies.

She calls the red fox from his den,
And, hollowing to her mouth one hand,
Halloos the owlets in the glen,
And hoots awake the purple land.

The cricket knows her foot's light tread
And sings for her an elfin mass ;
She puts the bumble-bee to bed,
And shakes the white moth from the grass.

WITCHERY

And to the mud-wasps, where they top
Their cells of clay, she murmurs *sleep* :
She bids the toad come forth and hop,
The snail put out its horns and creep.

She taps upon the dead tree's trunk :
And 'neath the bark the worm begins ;
And where the rotted wood is punk
Its twinkling web the spider spins.

She claps a night-cap of the dew
On every rosy clover-head ;
And on the lily, pale of hue,
She slips a gown while still in bed.

With kisses cool of drowsy mist
She thrills each wildflower's heart with June ;
And, whispering gold and amethyst,
Sighs legends to them of the moon.

WITCHERY

She bids the black bat forth, to be
The courier of her darker moods ;
She mounts the moon-imp, Mystery,
And speeds him wildly through the woods.

She crowds with ghosts the forest-walks ;
And with the wind's dim words invokes
The spirit that for ever talks
Unto the congregated oaks.

She leans above the flying stream :
Her starry gaze commands it stay :
And in its lucid deeps a dream
Takes shape and glimmers on its way.

She rests upon the lichened stone,
Her moonbeam hair spread bright around :
And in the darkness, one by one,
The unborn flowers break the ground.

WITCHERY

She lays her mouth, like some sweet word,
Against the wild-bird's nest that swings :
And in the speckled egg, that heard,
The young bird stirs its wings and sings.

In her all dreams find permanence :
All mysteries that trance the soul :
And substance, that evades the sense,
Through her wood-magic is made whole.

Oh, she is lovelier than she seems
To any one whose soul may see :
But only they who walk with dreams
Shall meet with her and know 'tis she.

THE FOREST WAY

I

I CLIMBED a forest path and found
A dim cave in the dripping ground,
Where dwelt the spirit of cool sound,
Who wrought with crystal triangles,
And hollow foam of rippled bells,
A music of mysterious spells.

II

Where Sleep her bubble-jewels spilled
Of dreams ; and Silence twilight-filled
Her emerald buckets, star-instilled,
With liquid whispers of lost springs,
And mossy tread of woodland things,
And drip of dew that greenly clings.

THE FOREST WAY

III

Here by those servitors of Sound,
Warders of that enchanted ground,
My soul and sense were seized and bound,
And in a dungeon deep of trees
Entranced, were laid at lazy ease,
The charge of woodland mysteries.

IV

The minions of Prince Drowsihead,
The wood-perfumes, with sleepy tread,
Tip-toed around my ferny bed :
And far away I heard report
Of one who dimly rode to Court,
The Fairy Princess, Eve-Amort.

THE FOREST WAY

v

Her herald winds sang as they passed ;
And there her beauty stood at last,
With wild gold locks, a band held fast,
Above blue eyes, as clear as spar ;
While from a curved and azure jar
She poured the white moon and a star.

HYLAS

THE cuckoo-sorrel paints with pink
The green page of the meadow-land
Around a pool where thrushes drink
As from a hollowed hand.

A hill, long-haired with feathered grass
Combed by the strong incessant wind,
Looks down upon the pool's pale glass
Like some old hag gone blind.

And on a forest grey of beech,
Reserved, mysterious, deep and wild,
That whispers to itself; its speech
Like some old man's turned child.

HYLAS

A forest, through which something speaks
Authoritative things to man,
A something that o'erawed the Greeks,
The universal Pan.

And through the forest falls a stream
Babbling of immemorial things—
The myth, that haunts it like a dream,
The god, that in it sings.

And here it was, when I was young,—
Across this meadow, sorrel-stained,
To this green place where willows wrung
Wild hands, and beech-trees strained

Their mighty strength with winds of spring,
That clutched and tore the wild-witch hair
Of yon gaunt hill,—I heard them sing,
The hylas hidden there.

H Y L A S

The slant gale played soft fugues of rain,
With interludes of sun between,
Where windflowers wove a twinkling chain
Through mosses grey and green.

From every coign of woodland peered
The starry eyes of Loveliness,
As reticently now she neared
Or stood in shy distress.

Then I remembered all the past—
The ancient ships, the unknown seas ;
And him, like some huge, knotted mast,
My master Herakles.

Again I saw the port, the wood
Of Cyzicus ; the landing there ;
The pool among the reeds ; and, nude,
The nymphs with long green hair,

HYLAS

That swarmed to clasp me when I stooped
To that grey pool as clear as glass,
And round my body wrapped and looped
Their hair, like water-grass.

Hylas, the Argonaut, the lad
Beloved of Herakles, was I—
Again with joy my heart grew sad,
Dreaming on days gone by.

Again I felt the drowning pain,
The kiss that slew me long ago ;
The dripping arms drew down again,
And love cried all its woe.

The new world vanished ! 'Twas the old.
Once more I knew the Mysian shore,
The haunted pool, the wood, the cold
Wild wind from sea and moor.—

HYLAS

And then a voice went by ; 'twas his,
The Demigod's who sought me : but
Cold mouths had closed mine with a kiss
And both mine eyes were shut. . . .

And had the hylas ceased to sing ?
Or what ?—For, lo ! I stood again
Between the hill and wood ; and Spring
Gazed at me through the rain.

And in her gaze I seemed to see
This was a dream *she'd* dreamed, not I ;
A figment of a memory
That I had felt go by.

THE WOOD THRUSH

BIRD,—with the voice of gold,
Dropping wild bar on bar,
To which the flowers unfold,
Star upon gleaming star,
Here in the forest old :—

Bird,—with the note as clear,
Cool as a bead of dew,
To which the buds, that hear,
Open deep eyes of blue,
Prick up a rosy ear :—

THE WOOD THRUSH

Shut in your house of leaves,
 Bubbles of song you blow,
Showered whence none perceives,
 Taking the wood below
Till its green bosom heaves

Music of necromance,
 Circles of silvering sound,
Wherein the fairies dance,
 Weaving an elfin round,
Till the whole wood's a-trance.

Till, with the soul, one hears
 Footsteps of mythic things :
Fauns, with their pointed ears,
 Piping to haunted springs,
And the white nymph that nears.

THE WOOD THRUSH

Dryads, that rustle from
Trunks of unclosing trees,
Glimmering shapes that come
Clothed on with bloom and breeze,
Stealthily venturesome.

Spirits of light and air,
Bodied of dawn and dusk,
Peeping from blossoms there,—
Windows of dew and musk,—
Starry with firefly hair.

Moth-winged and bee-like forms,
Rippling with flower-tints,
Waving their irised arms,
Weaving of twilight glints
Wonders and wildwood charms.

THE WOOD THRUSH

Myths of the falling foam,
 Tossing their hair of spray,
Driving the minnows home,
 Shepherding them the way,
Safe from the water-gnome.

Or from the streaming stone
 Drawing with liquid strokes
Many a crystal tone,—
 Music their joy evokes,
Filling the forest lone.

Art thou a voice or bird,
 Lost in the world of trees?
Or but a dream that's heard
 Telling of mysteries,
Saying an unknown word?

THE WOOD THRUSH

Art thou a sprite ? or sound
Blown on a flute of fays ?
Going thy wildwood round,
Haunting the woodland ways,
Making them holy ground.

Art thou a dream that Spring
Utters ? a hope, her soul
Voices ? whose pulses sing
On to some fairer goal,
Wild as a heart or wing.

Art thou the gold and green
Voice of the ancient wood ?
Syllabbling soft, between
Silence and solitude,
All that it dreams unseen . . .

THE WOOD THRUSH

Bird, like a wisp, a gleam,

Lo! you have led me far—

Would I were what you seem,

Or what you really are,

Bird with the voice of dream!

ONE WHO LOVED NATURE

I

HE was not learned in any art ;
But Nature led him by the hand ;
And spoke her language to his heart
So he could hear and understand :
He loved her simply as a child ;
And in his love forgot the heat
Of conflict, and sat reconciled
In patience of defeat.

II

Before me now I see him rise—
A face, that seventy years had snowed
With winter, where the kind blue eyes
Like hospitable fires glowed :

ONE WHO LOVED NATURE

A small grey man whose heart was large,
And big with knowledge learned of need ;
A heart, the hard world made its targe,
That never ceased to bleed.

III

He knew all Nature. Yea, he knew
What virtue lay within each flower,
What tonic in the dawn and dew,
And in each root what magic power :
What in the wild witch-hazel tree
Reversed its time of blossoming,
And clothed its branches goldenly
In fall instead of spring.

IV

He knew what made the firefly glow
And pulse with crystal gold and flame ;
And whence the blood-root got its snow,
And how the bramble's perfume came :

ONE WHO LOVED NATURE

He understood the water's word
And grasshopper's and cricket's chirr ;
And of the music of each bird
He was interpreter.

v

He kept no calendar of days,
But knew the seasons by the flowers ;
And he could tell you by the rays
Of sun or stars the very hours.
He probed the inner mysteries
Of light, and knew the chemic change
That colours flowers, and what is
Their fragrance wild and strange.

vi

If some old oak had power of speech,
It could not speak more wildwood lore,
Nor in experience further reach,
Than he who was a tree at core.

ONE WHO LOVED NATURE

Nature was all his heritage,
And seemed to fill his every need ;
Her features were his book, whose page
He never tired to read.

VII

He read her secrets that no man
Has ever read and never will,
And put to scorn the charlatan
Who botanizes of her still.
He kept his knowledge sweet and clean,
And questioned not of why and what ;
And never drew a line between
What's known and what is not.

VIII

He was most gentle, good, and wise ;
A simpler heart earth never saw :
His soul looked softly from his eyes,
And in his speech were love and awe.

ONE WHO LOVED NATURE

Yet Nature in the end denied
The thing he had not asked for—fame !
Unknown, in poverty he died,
And men forget his name.

AVALON

I DREAMED my soul went wandering in
An island dim with mystery ;
An island that, because of sin,
No mortal eye shall ever see.

And while I walked, one came, unseen,
And gazed into my eyes : ah me !
Her presence was a rose between
The wind and me, blown dreamily.

The lily, that lifts up its dome,
A tabernacle for the bee,
A faery chapel fair as foam,
Had not her absolute purity.

AVALON

The bird, that hymns the falling leaf,
That breaks its heart in melody,
Says to the soul no raptured grief
Such as her presence said to me.

That moment when I felt her eyes,
Their starry transport, instantly
I felt the indomitable skies,
With all their worlds, were less to me.

And when her hand lay in my own,
Far intimations flashed through me
Of all the loves the world has known
And given to immortality.

A look, a touch—and she was gone :
And somewhere near, but shadowy,
A voice said, “ This is Avalon,
And she, thy soul’s old tragedy.”

THE YARROW

I

A TORTURED tree in a huddled hollow,
On whose gnarled boughs three leaves are blowing :
ing :

A strip of path that the hunters follow,
That leads to fields of the wind's wild sowing,
And a rain-washed hill with the wild-thorn
growing.

II

And here one day, when the sky was raining,
And the wind came sharp as an Indian-arrow,
And Winter walked on the hills complaining,
I found a blossom of summer yarrow,
In the freezing wet, where the way was narrow.

THE YARROW

III

Its dim white umble was bravely lifted,
Defying Winter and wind and weather,
Facing the rout as they whirled and shifted,
Twisting its blossom and leaves together,
Its fern-fair leaves that were sweet as the heather.

IV

And I thought, as I saw it there so fearless,
Facing death, that was sure to follow
When the sky and the earth with white were
cheerless,
And the rabbit shivered within its hollow,
That here was a weed that was worth the
swallow.

THE YARROW

v

Its fortitude and its strength reminded
My soul of the souls that are like the yarrow,
That face defeat, though its blows have blinded,
And smile, and fight, in their heart an arrow,
And fall unknown in the path that is narrow.

MIDSUMMER

I

THE mellow smell of hollyhocks
And marigolds and pinks and phlox
Blends with the homely garden scents
Of onions, silvering into rods,
Of peppers, scarlet with their pods ;
And,—rose of all the esculents,—
Of broad plebeian cabbages,
Breathing content and corpulent ease.

II

The buzz of wasp and fly makes hot
The spaces of the garden-plot ;

MIDSUMMER

And from the orchard,—where the fruit
Ripens and rounds, or, loosed with heat,
Rolls, hornet-clung, before the feet,—
One hears the veery's golden flute,
That mixes with the sleepy hum
Of bees that drowsily go and come.

III

The podded musk of gourd and vine
Embower a gate of roughest pine,
That leads into a wood where Day
Sits, leaning o'er a forest pool,
Watching the lilies opening cool,
And dragon-flies at airy play,
While, dim and near, the Quietness
Rustles and stirs her leafy dress.

MIDSUMMER

IV

Far-off a cowbell clangs awake
The Noon who slumbers in the brake :
And now a pewee, plaintively,
Whistles the Day to sleep again :
A cuckoo croaks a rune for rain,
And from the ripest apple-tree
A great gold apple thuds, where, slow,
The red cock curves his neck to crow.

V

Hens cluck their broods from place to place,
While clinking home, with chain and trace,
The cart-horse plods along the road
Where Afternoon sits with his dreams :
Hot fragrance of hay-making streams
Above him, and a high-heaped load
Goes creaking by and with it, sweet,
The aromatic soul of Heat.

MIDSUMMER

VI

“Coo-ee ! Coo-ee !” the Evenfall
Cries, and the hills repeat the call :
“Coo-ee ! Coo-ee !” and by the log
Labour unharnesses his plough,
While to the barn comes cow on cow :
“Coo-ee ! Coo-ee !”—and, with his dog,
Barefooted Boyhood down the lane
“Coo-ees” the cattle home again.

WILLOW WOOD

I

DEEP in the wood of willow-trees
The summer sounds and whispering breeze
Bound me as if with glimmering arms
And spells of witchcraft, sorceries,
That filled the wood with phantom forms,
And held me with their faery charms.

II

Within the wood they laid their snare.
The invisible web was everywhere :
I felt it clasp me with its gleams,
And mesh my soul from feet to hair
In weavings of intangible beams,
Woven with dim and delicate dreams.

WILLOW WOOD

III

As dream by dream passed shadowy,
One came ; an antique pageantry
Of Faeryland : it marched with pride
Of faery horns blown silverly
Around the Elf-prince and his bride,
Who rode on steeds of milk-white stride.

IV

Then from the shadow of a pool
The water-fays rose beautiful ;
I saw them wring their long green hair,
And felt their eyes gaze emerald-cool,
And from their fresh lips, everywhere,
Their rainy laughter dew the air.

V

And through the willow-leaves I saw,
As in a crystal without flaw,

WILLOW WOOD

Slim limbs and faces sly of eye,
Elves, piping on gnat-flutes of straw,—
Thin as the violin of a fly,—
Or clashing cricket-cymbals by.

VI

And then I saw the warted gnomes
Creep, beetle-backed, from rocky combs,
Lamped with their jewelled talismans,
Rubies that torch their caverned homes,
Green grottoes, where their treasure-clans
Intrigue and thwart our human plans.

VII

And near them, foam-frail, flower-fair,
Sun-sylphids shook their showery hair,
And from their blossom-houses blew
Musk wood-rose kisses everywhere,
Or, prisoned in a drop of dew,
Twinkled an eye of sapphire-blue.

WILLOW WOOD

VIII

And imps, wasp-bodied ; ouths, that guard
The Courts of Oberon, their lord,—
Bee-bellied, hornet-headed things,—
Went by, each with his whining sword,
Fanning the heat with courier wings,
Bound on some message of the King's.

IX

And pansy-tunicked, gowned in down,
The lords and ladies of the crown,
Beautiful and bright as butterflies,
Passed, marching to some Faery Town,
While dragoned things, mailed to the eyes,
Soldiered their way in knightly wise.

X

Then, suddenly, the finger-tips,
Faint, moth-like, and the flower-lips

WILLOW WOOD

Of some one on my eye-lids pressed :
And as a moonbeam, silvering, slips
Out of a shadow, tangle-tressed
A Dream, I'd known, stood manifest.

XI

A Dream I'd known when but a child,
That lived within my soul and smiled
Far in the world of faery lore ;
By whom my heart was oft beguiled,
And who invested sea and shore
With her fair presence evermore.

XII

She drew me in that stately band
That marched with her to Faeryland :
Again her words I understood,
Who smiling reached to me her hand,
And filled me with beatitude. . . .
This happened in the willow wood.

ATTRIBUTES

I SAW the daughters of the Dawn come dancing
o'er the hills ;

The winds of Morn danced with them, oh, and
all the sylphs of air :

I saw their ribboned roses blow, their gowns of
daffodils,

As over eyes of sapphire tossed the wild gold
of their hair.

I saw the summer of their feet imprint the earth
with dew,

And all the wildflowers open eyes in joy and
wonderment :

ATTRIBUTES

I saw the sunlight of their hands waved at each
bird that flew,
And all the birds, as with one voice, to their
wild love gave vent.

“ And, oh ! ” I said, “ how fair you are ! how fair !
how very fair !—

Oh, leap, my heart ; and laugh, my heart ! as
laughs and leaps the Dawn !

Mount with the lark and sing with him and cast
away your care !

For love and life are come again and night and
sorrow gone ! ”

I saw the acolytes of Eve, the mystic sons of
Night,

Come pacing through the ancient wood in
hoods of hodden-grey ;

ATTRIBUTES

Their sombre cloaks were pinned with stars, and
each one bore a light,
A moony lanthorn, and a staff to help him on
his way.

I heard their mantles rustle by, their sandals'
whispering, sweep,
And saw the wildflowers bow their heads and
close their lovely eyes :
I saw their shadows pass and pass, and with them
Dreams and Sleep,
Like children with their father, went, in dim
and ghostly guise.

“ And, oh ! ” I said, “ how sad you are ! how sad !
how wondrous sad !
Oh, hush, my heart ! be still, my heart ! and,
like the dark, be dumb !

ATTRIBUTES

Be as the wild-rose there that dreams the perfect
hour it had,
And cares not if the day be past and death and
darkness come."

A SONG OF THE ROAD

I

WHATEVER the path may be, my dear,
Let us follow it far away from here,
Let us follow it back to Yester-Year,
 Whatever the path may be :
Again let us dream where the land lies sunny,
And live, like the bees, on our hearts' old honey,
Away from the world that slaves for money—
 Come, journey the way with me.

II

HOWEVER the road may roam, my dear,
Through sun or rain, through green or sere,
Let us follow it back with hearts of cheer,
 However the road may roam :

A SONG OF THE ROAD

Oh, while we walk it here together,
What care we for wind and weather,
When there on the hills we'll smell the heather,
And see the lights of home !

III

Whatever the path may seem, my sweet,
Let us take it now with willing feet,
And time our steps to our hearts' glad beat,
Whatever the path may seem :
Though the road be rough that we must follow,
What care we for hill or hollow,
While here in our hearts, as high as a swallow,
We bear the same loved dream !

IV

However the road may roam, my sweet,
Let it lead us far from mart and street,
Out where the hills and the heavens meet,
However the road may roam :

A SONG OF THE ROAD

So, hand in hand, let us go together,
And care no more for the wind and weather,
And reach at last those hills of heather,
Where gleam the lights of home.

THE LESSON

THIS is the lesson I have learned of Beauty :
Who gathers flowers finds that flowers fade :
Who sets love in his heart above his duty
Misses the part for which that love was made.

Than passion, haply, there is nothing madder :
Who plucks its red rose plucks with it a thorn :
More than soul's pain what hurt can make us
sadder ?

And yet of this immortal things are born.

VOICES

I

I HEARD the ancient forest talk,
 (Its voice was like a wandering breeze):
It said, “ *Who* is it comes to walk
Along my paths when, white as chalk,
 The moon hangs o’er my sleeping trees?
 What presence is it no one sees? ”

II

And then I heard a voice reply,
 That seemed far off yet very near ;
It sounded from the earth and sky,
 And said, “ A spirit walketh here,
 Whom mortals know as Awe and Fear.
Terrible and beautiful am I.”

VOICES

III

And then I heard the meadows say,
 (Their voice was as the sound of streams,
Or rain that comes from far away):
 “ *Who* sits amid us here and dreams,
 When sunlight on our blossoms gleams,
And keeps us company all day ? ”

IV

And then I heard a voice intone,
 A voice not near yet all around :
“ I am that spirit, yea, thine own,
 Who worketh wonders in the ground :
 Some call me Love that hath no bound,
And I am beautiful alone.”

RAINLESS

THE locust builds its arc of sound
And tops it with a spire ;
The roadside leaves pant to the ground
With dust from hoof and tire.

The insects, day and night, make din,
And with the heat grow shriller ;
And everywhere great spiders spin,
And crawls the caterpillar.

The wells are dry ; the creeks are pools ;
Weeds cram their beds with bristles ;
And when a wind breathes, naught it cools,
The air grows white with thistles.

RAINLESS

For months the drouth has burned and baked
The wood and field and garden ;
The flower-plots are dead ; and, raked,
Or mown, the meadows harden.

The Summer, sunk in godlessness,
From quarter unto quarter,
Now drags, now lifts a dusty dress,
That shows a sloven garter.

The child of Spring, it now appears,
Has turned a drab, a harlot,
Death's doxy ; Death's, who near her leers
In rags of gold and scarlet

AFTER AUTUMN RAIN

THE hillside smokes
With trailing mist around the rosy oaks ;

While sunset builds
A gorgeous Asia in the west she gilds.

Auroral streaks
Sword through the heavens' Himalayan peaks :

In which, behold,
Burn mines of Indian ruby and of gold.

A moment—and
A shadow stalks between it and the land.

A mist, a breath,
A premonition, with the face of death,

AFTER AUTUMN RAIN

Turning to frost

The air it breathes, like some invisible ghost.

Then, wild of hair,

Demons seem streaming to their fiery lair :

A chasm, the same

That splits the clouds' face with a leer of flame.

The wind comes up

And fills the hollow land as wine a cup.

Around and round

It skips the dead leaves o'er the forest's ground.

A myriad fays

And imps seem dancing down the withered ways.

And far and near

It makes of every bush a whisperer ;

AFTER AUTUMN RAIN

Telling dark tales

Of things that happened in the ghostly vales :

Of things the fox

Barks at and sees among the haunted rocks :

At which the owl

Hoots, and the wolf-hound cringes with a growl.

Now on the road

It walks like feet too weary for their load.

Shuffling the leaves,

With stormy sighs, onward it plods and heaves ;

Till in the hills

Among the red death there itself it kills.

And with its death

Earth, so its seems, draws in a mighty breath.

AFTER AUTUMN RAIN

And,—like a clown
Who wanders lost upon a haunted down,

Turns towards the east,
Fearful of coming goblin or of beast,

And sees a light,—
The jack-o'-lantern moon,—glow into sight.

SEASONS

I

I HEARD the forest's green heart beat
As if it heard the happy feet
Of one who came, like young Desire :
At whose fair coming birds and flowers
Sprang up, and Beauty, filled with fire,
Touched lips with Song amid the bowers,
And Love led on the dancing Hours.

II

And then I heard a voice that rang,
And to the leaves and blossoms sang :—
“ My child is Life : I dwell with Truth :
I am the Spirit glad of Birth :
I bring to all things joy and youth :
I am the rapture of the Earth.
Come look on me and know my worth.”

SEASONS

III

And then the woodland heaved a sigh,
As if it saw a shape go by—
A shape of sorrow or of dread,
That seemed to move as moves a mist,
And left the leaves and flowers dead,
And with cold lips my forehead kissed,
While phantoms all around held tryst.

IV

And then I heard a voice that spoke
Unto the fading beech and oak :—
“ I am the Spirit of Decay,
Whose child is Death, that means relief :
I breathe—and all things pass away :
I am Earth's glory and its grief.
Come look on me : thy time is brief.”

GARDEN AND GARDENER

To weed the Garden of the Mind
Of all rank growths of doubt and sin,
And let faith's flowers thrive and win
To blossom ; and, through faith, to find
That lilies, too, can toil and spin,

And roses work for good and right ;
That even the frailest flower that fills
A serious purpose, as God wills,
Is all man needs to give him light,
Is all he needs for all his ills.

GARDEN AND GARDENER

Here is a Garden gone to flowers
While one beside it runs to weeds—
Yet both were sown with similar seeds :
What was it ? Did the World, or Hours,
Bring forth according to *their* needs ?

Or was it that the Gardener
Neglected one ? or did not care
What growths matured to slay and snare ?
Thinking, whatever might occur,
Labour, perhaps, would manage there.

But Labour looked and took his ease,
Saying, "To-morrow I will do ;
Will weed my Garden."—And in view
Of all that work sat down at peace,
Waiting for something to ensue.

GARDEN AND GARDENER

Whose fault?—The Gardener's?—Haply no,
He sowed with fairest flowers the soil.—
And yet, whence came the weeds that spoil?
—From Heaven! brought by winds that blow.—
God give us all the gift to toil!

A PRAYER FOR OLD AGE

I

THESE are the things which I would ask of Time :
 When I am old,
Never to feel in soul doubt's spiritual rime ;
 The heart grow cold
With self ; but in me that which warms my time.

II

Never to feel the drouth, the dearth that kills,
 Before one dies,
Of mind, full-flowering on thought's fertile hills ;
 But, in my skies,
The falcon, Fancy, that no season kills.

A PRAYER FOR OLD AGE

III

Never to see the shadow at my door,
Nor fear its fall ;
But wait serenely, whether rich or poor,
Nor care at all,
So Love sits with me at my open door.

IV

Never to have a dream I dreamed destroyed :
And towards the last
Live o'er again all that I have enjoyed,—
The happy Past,—
Through these, the dreams, no time has yet de-
stroyed.

A PRAYER FOR OLD AGE

v

Never to lose my love for lowly things ;
 To feel the need
For simple beauty still : each bird that sings,
 Each flower and weed
That looks its message of unguessed-at things.

vi

Never to lose my faith in Nature, God :
 But still to find
Worship in trees ; religion in each sod ;
 And in the wind
Sermons that breathe the universal God.

A PRAYER FOR OLD AGE

VII

Never to age in mind ; much less in heart ;
 But keep them young
With song, glad song, that still shall have its
 part,—
 Sung or unsung,—
Within the inmost temple of my heart.

VIII

That I may lose not all my trust in men !
 And, through it, grow
Nearer to Heaven and God : and softly then
 Meet Death and know
He has no terrors for my soul. Amen.

THE SHADOW

I

MOTHER, mother, what is that gazing through the
darkness ?

What is that that looks at me with its awful
eyes ?

Tell me, mother, what it is, freezing me to
starkness ?

Through the house it seems to go with its icy
sighs,—

What is that, oh, what is that, mother, in the dark-
ness ?

II

Child, my child ! my little child ! 'tis a waving
willow,

That the night wind bows and sways near the
window-pane :

THE SHADOW

Here's my breast, my little son.—Let it be your
pillow.

Have no fear, love, in my arms. Go to sleep
again.

Go to sleep and turn your face from the windy
willow.

III

Mother, mother, what is that? going round and
round there?

Round the house and at the door stops and turns
the knob.

Hold me close, O mother love! keep me from
that sound there!—

Hear it how it's knocking now?—Don't you hear
it sob?—

Guard me from the ghostly thing that goes round
and round there.

THE SHADOW

IV

Child, my child ! my little child ! 'tis the wind
that wanders :

'Tis the wandering wind that knocks, crying at
the door.

Hark no more and heed no more what the night
wind maunders.—

Rest your head on mother's heart, list its faery
lore.

Go to sleep and have no fear of the wind that
wanders.

V

Mother, mother, look and see ! what is that that
stands there ?

With its lantern face and limbs, mantled all in
black !

THE SHADOW

Gaunt and grim and horrible with its knuckled
hands there !

Now before me ! now beside me ! now behind my
back !

Mother ! mother ! face it now ! ask it why it stands
there !

VI

Child, my child ! my little child ! 'tis a shadow
only !

Shadow of the lamp-shade here near your little
bed !

No ! it will not come again when the night lies
lonely.

Sleep, oh, sleep, my little son. See ! the thing
is fled.

Mother will not leave her boy with that shadow
only. . . .

THE SHADOW

VII

*Will he live ? or will he die ? Answer, fearful
Shadow !*

*O thou Death who hoverest near, hold thy hands
away !—*

*Oh, that night were past and light lay on hill and
meadow !—*

*Does he sleep ? or is he dead ?—God ! that it were
day !*

*Light to help my love to fight with that crouching
shadow !*

NIGHT AND RAIN

THE night has set her outposts there
Of wind and rain ;
And to and fro, with ragged hair,
At intervals they search the pane.

The fir-trees, creepers redly climb,—
That seem to bleed,—
Like old conspirators in crime,
Drip, whispering of some desperate deed.

'Tis as if wild skirts, flying fast,
Besieged the house ;
The wittol grass, bent to the blast,
Whines as if witches held carouse.

NIGHT AND RAIN

And now dark feet steal to the door
And tap and tip,
Shuffle, and then go on once more—
The eaves keep a persistent drip.

And then a skurry, and a bound ;—
Wild feet again ?—
A wind-wrenched tree that to the ground
Sweeps instantly its weight of rain.

What is it, finger on its lip,
That up and down
Treads, with dark raiment all a-drip,
Trailing a tattered leaf of gown ?

“ O father, I am frightened ! See !
There, at the pane ! ”—

“ Hush ! hush ! my child, 'tis but a tree
That tosses in the wind and rain.”

NIGHT AND RAIN

A rumble, as it were, of hoofs,
And hollow call :

“ O father, what rolls on the roofs,
That sounds like some dark funeral ? ”

“ Hush ! hush ! my child ; it is the storm ;
The autumn wind.”—

“ But, father, see ! what is that form ?
There ! wild against the window-blind.”

“ It is the firelight in the room.”—
The father sighed.—

And then the child : “ ’ Twas dark as doom,
And had the face of her who died.”

HAUNTERS OF THE SILENCE

THERE are haunters of the silence, ghosts that
hold the heart and brain :

I have sat with them and hearkened ; I have
talked with them in vain :

I have shuddered from their coming, yet have run
to meet them there,

And have cursed them and have blessed them and
have loved them to despair.

At my door I see their shadows ; in my walks I
meet their ghosts ;

Where I often hear them weeping or sweep by in
withered hosts :

HAUNTERS OF THE SILENCE

Perished dreams, gone like the roses, crumbling
by like autumn leaves ;
Phantoms of old joys departed, that the spirit eye
perceives.

Oft at night they sit beside me, fix their eyes
upon my face,
Demon eyes that burn and hold me, in whose
deeps my heart can trace
All the past ; and where a passion,—as in Hell
the ghosts go by,—
Turns an anguished face toward me with a love
that cannot die.

In the night-time, in the darkness, in the black-
ness of the storm,
Round my fireplace there they gather, flickering
form on shadowy form :

HAUNTERS OF THE SILENCE

In the daytime, in the noontide, in the golden
sunset glow,
On the hilltops, in the forests, I have met them
walking slow.

There are haunters of the silence, ghosts that hold
the brain and heart :
In the mansion of my being they have placed a
room apart :
There I hear their spectre raiment, see their
shadows on the floor,
Where the raven, Sorrow, darkens Love's pale
image o'er my door.

SOUNDS AND SIGHTS

LITTLE leaves, that lean your ears
From each branch and bough of spring,
What is that your rapture hears ?
Song of bird or flight of wing,
All so eager, little ears ?

“Hush, oh, hush ! Oh, don't you hear
Steps of beauty drawing near ?
Neither flight of bee nor bird—
Hark ! the steps of Love are heard !” . . .

Little buds, that crowd with eyes
Every bush and every tree,
What is this that you surmise ?
What is that which you would see,
So attentive, little eyes ?

SOUNDS AND SIGHTS

“ Look, oh, look ! Oh, can't you see
Loveliness camps 'neath each tree ?
See her hosts and hear them sing,
Marching with the maiden Spring ! ”

FROST IN MAY

MARCH set heel upon the flowers,
Trode and trampled them for hours :
But when April's bugles rang,
Up their starry legions sprang,
Radiant in the sun-shot showers.

April went her frolic ways,
Arm in arm with happy days :
Then from hills that rim the west,
Bare of head and bare of breast,
May, the maiden, showed her face.

FROST IN MAY

Then, it seemed, again returned
March, the iron-heeled, who turned
From his northward path and caught
May about the waist, who fought
And his fierce advances spurned.

What her strength and her disdain
To the madness in his brain !
He must kiss her though he kill ;
Then, when he had had his will,
Go his roaring way again.

Icy grew her finger-tips,
And the wild-rose of her lips
Paled with frost : then loud he laughed,
Left her, like a moonbeam-shaft,
Shattered, where the forest drips. . . .

FROST IN MAY

Mourn for her, O honey-bees !
Mourn, O buds upon the trees !
Birds and blossoms, mourn for May !
Mourn for her, then come away !
Leave her where her flowers freeze.

Leave her. Nothing more may save.
Leave her in her wildwood grave.
Nothing now will waken her,
Loved and lost, and lovelier
For the kiss that wild March gave.

IN THE STORM

I

OVER heaven clouds are drifted ;
In the trees the wind-witch cries ;
By her sieve the rain is sifted,
And the clouds at times are rifted
By her mad broom as she flies.—
Love, there's lightning in the skies,
Swift, as, in your face uplifted,
Leaps the heart-thought to your eyes.

Little face, where I can trace
Dreams for which those eyes are pages,
Whose young magic here assuages
All the heart-storm and alarm.

IN THE STORM

II

Now the thunder tramples slowly,
Like a king, down heaven's arc ;
And the clouds, like armies wholly
Vanquished, break ; and, white as moly,
Sweeps the queen moon on the dark.—
Love, a bird wakes ; is't the lark ?—
Sweet as in your bosom holy
Sings the heart that now I hark.

All my soul *that* song makes whole,
That young song I hear it singing,
Calm and peace for ever bringing
To my heart's storm and alarm.

ROSE AND LEAF

ALL the roses now are gone,
All their glories shed :
Here's a rose that grows not wan,
Rose of love to wear upon
Your fair breast instead.

Everywhere sere leaves are seen
Golden, red and grey :
Here's a leaf for ever green,
Leaf of truth to hold between
Your white hands alway.

ROSE AND LEAF

Here's my leaf and here's my rose.

Take them. They are yours.

In my garden nothing grows,

Garden of my heart, God knows,

That as long endures.

‘SOME RECKON TIME BY STARS’

SOME reckon time by stars,
And some by hours :
Some measure days by dreams,
And some by flowers :
My heart alone records
My days and hours.

Some have a dial, a clock
That strikes a bell :
Some keep a calendar
To con and spell :
But I—I have my love,
Infallible.

'SOME RECKON TIME BY STARS'

My heart is clock enough :

It beats for her.

Both day and night it makes

A happy stir :

It keeps the time quite true

With throbs for her.

The only calendar,

That marks my seasons,

Is that sweet face of hers,

Her moods and reasons,

Wherein no record is

Of winter seasons.

DRAGON-SEED

YE have ploughed the field like cattle,
Ye have sown the dragon-seed,—
Are ye ready now for battle?—
For fighters are what we need.
Have ye done with taking and giving?
The old gods, Give and Take?—
Then into the ranks of the living,
And fight for the fighting's sake.

Let who will thrive by cunning,
And lies be another's cure ;
But girdle your loins for running,
And the goal of Never Sure.

DRAGON-SEED

Enough of idle shirking !
Though you hate like death your part
There is nothing helps like working
When you work with all your heart.

For the world is fact, not fiction,
And its battle is not with words ;
And what helps is not men's diction,
But the temper of their swords.
For what each does is measure
Of that he is, I say :
And not by the ranks of Leisure
Is the battle won to-day.

LINCOLN

(1809—FEBRUARY 12—1909)

I

YEA, this is he, whose name is synonym
Of all that's noble, though but lowly born ;
Who took command upon a stormy morn
When few had hope.—Although uncouth of limb,
Homely of face and gaunt, but never grim,
Beautiful he was with that which none may scorn—
With love of God and man and things forlorn,
And freedom mighty as the soul in him.
Large at the helm of State he leans and looms
With the grave, kindly look of those who die
Doing their duty. Staunch, unswervingly
Onward he steers beneath portentous glooms,
And overwhelming thunders of the sky,
Till, safe in port, he sees a people free.

LINCOLN

II

Safe from the storm ; the harbour-lights of Peace
Before his eyes ; the burden of dark fears
Cast from him like a cloak ; and in his ears
The heart-beat music of a great release,
Captain and pilot, back upon the seas,
Whose wrath he'd weathered, back he looks with
tears,
Seeing no shadow of the Death that nears,
Stealthy and sure, with sudden agonies.
So let him stand, brother to every man,
Ready for toil or battle ; he who held
A Nation's destinies within his hand :
Type of our greatness ; first American,
By whom the hearts of all men are compelled,
And with whose name Freedom unites our Land.

LINCOLN

III

He needs no praise of us, who wrought so well,
Who has the Master's praise ; who at his post
Stood to the last. Yet, now, from coast to coast,
Let memory of him peal like some great bell.
Of him as woodsman, workman let it tell !
Of him as lawyer, statesman, without boast !
And for what qualities we love him most,
And recollections that no time can quell.
He needs no praise of us, yet let us praise,
Albeit his simple soul we may offend,
That liked not praise, being most diffident.
Still let us praise him, praise him in such ways
As his were, and in words, that shall transcend
Marble, and outlast any monument.

POE

(1809—JANUARY 19—1909)

UPON the summit of his Century
He reared a Palace of enduring Art,
From whose wild windows never more depart
Beauty's pale light and starry fantasy :
Within is music, sobbing ceaselessly ;
And phantom terror, spectres of the heart,
And ghosts of grief and love that ever start
From haunted places, fleeing what none may see.
Around its towers the bird, that never dies,
Circles ; the tempest beats with black alarm
On one red window where, beyond the storm,
The Lord of that high Palace dreams and sighs,
His Soul, with its Despair, a kingly form,
And Death with infinite pity in his eyes.

MRS. BROWNING

O VOICE of ecstasy and lyric pain,
Divinely throated and divinely heard
Among old England's songsters ! Sprite or bird,
Haunting the woods of song with raptured strain !
In whose wild music Love is born and slain,
And young Desire cries ever a battle word,
And Passion goes, ready with kiss or sword,
To make us captive or set free again.
Above the flowery meads of English song,
Enchantment-sweet, her golden numbers pour,
Commanding and compelling, like Desire !—
O nightingale and lark, how o'er the throng
Of all thy sister singers thou dost soar,
Filled with seraphic love and Sapphic fire !

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IN OLD NEW ENGLAND

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THE NORTH SHORE

I

SEPTEMBER ON CAPE ANN

THE partridge-berry flecks with flame the way
That leads to ferny hollows where the bee
Drones on the aster. Far away the sea
Points its deep sapphire with a gleam of grey.
Here from this height where, clustered sweet, the
bay

Clumps a green couch,—the haw and barberry
Beading her hair, sad Summer, seemingly,
Has fallen asleep, unmindful of the day.
The chipmunk barks upon the old stone wall ;
And in the shadows, like a shadow, stirs
The woodchuck where the boneset's blossom
creams.—

Was that a phœbe with its pensive call ?
A sighing wind that shook the drowsy firs ?—
Or only Summer waking from her dreams ?

THE NORTH SHORE

II

IN AN ANNISQUAM GARDEN

Old phantoms haunt it of the long ago ;
Old ghosts of old-time lovers and of dreams :
Within the quiet sunlight there, meseems,
I see them walking where those lilies blow.
The hardy phlox sways to some garment's flow ;
The salvia there with sudden scarlet streams,
Caught from some ribbon of some throat that
gleams,
Petunia-fair, in flounce and furbelow.
I seem to hear their whispers in each wind
That wanders mid the flowers.—There they
stand !
Among the shadows of that apple-tree !—
They are not dead, whom still it keeps in mind,
This garden, planted by some lovely hand
That keeps it fragrant with its memory.

THE NORTH SHORE

III

THE ELEMENTS

I saw the spirit of the pines that spoke
With spirits of the ocean and the storm :
Against the tumult rose its tattered form,
Wild rain and darkness round it like a cloak.
Fearful it stood, limbed like some twisted oak,
Gesticulating with one giant arm,
Raised as in protest of the night's alarm,
Defiant still of some impending stroke.
Below it, awful in its majesty,
The spirit of the deep, with rushing locks,
Raved : and above it, lightning-clad and shod,
Thundered the tempest.—Thus they stood, the
 three ;
Terror around them ; while, upon the rocks,
Destruction danced, mocking at man and God.

THE NORTH SHORE

IV

NIGHT AND STORM AT GLOUCESTER

I heard the wind last night that cried and wept
Like some old skipper's ghost outside my door ;
And on the roof the rain that tramped and tore
Like feet of seamen on a deck storm-swept.
Against the pane the Night with shudderings
 crept,
And crouched there wailing ; moaning ever more
Its tale of terror ; of the wrath on shore,
The rage at sea, bidding all wake who slept.
And then I heard a voice as old as Time ;
The calling of the mother of the world,
Ocean, who thundered on her granite crags,
Foaming with fury, meditating crime.—
And then, far off, wild minute guns ; and, hurled
Through roaring surf, the rush of sails in rags.

THE NORTH SHORE

v

THE VOICE OF OCEAN

A cry went through the darkness ; and the moon,
Hurrying through storm, gazed with a ghastly
face,

Then cloaked herself in scud : the merman race
Of surges ceased ; and then th' Æolian croon
Of the wild siren, Wind, within the shrouds
Sunk to a sigh. The ocean in that place
Seemed listening ; haunted, for a moment's space,
By something dread that cried against the clouds.
Mystery and night ; and with them fog and rain :
And then that cry again—as if the deep
Uttered its loneliness in one dark word :
Her horror of herself ; her Titan pain ;
Her monsters ; and the dead that she must keep,
Has kept, alone, for centuries, unheard.

THE NORTH SHORE

VI

WAVES

I saw the daughters of the ocean dance
With wind and tide, and heard them on the
rocks :
White hands they waved me, tossing sunlit locks,
Green as the light an emerald holds in trance.
Their music bound me as with necromance
Of mermaid beauty, that for ever mocks,
And lured me as destruction lures wild flocks
Of light-led gulls and storm-tossed cormorants.
Nearer my feet they crept : I felt their lips :
Their hands of foam that caught at me, to press,
As once they pressed Leander : and, straightway,
I saw the monster-ending of their hips ;
The cruelty hid in their soft caress ;
The siren-passion ever more to slay.

THE NORTH SHORE

VII

A BIT OF COAST

One tree, storm-twisted, like an evil hag,
The sea-wind in its hair, beside a path
Waves frantic arms, as if in wild-witch wrath
At all the world. Gigantic, grey as slag,
Great boulders shoulder through the hills, or crag
The coast with danger, monster-like, that lifts
Huge granite, round which wheel the gulls and
 swifts,
And at whose base the rotting sea-weeds drag.
Inward the hills are wooded; valley-cleft;
Tangled with berries; vistaed dark with pines;
At whose far end,—as 'twere within a frame,—
Some trail of water that the ocean left
Gleams like a painting where one white sail
 shines,
Lit with the sunset's poppy-coloured flame.

THE NORTH SHORE

VIII

AUTUMN AT ANNISQUAM

The bitter-sweet and red-haw in her hands,
And in her hair pale berries of the bay,
She haunts the coves and every Cape Ann way,
The Indian, Autumn, wandered from her bands.
Beside the sea, upon a rock, she stands,
And looks across the foam, and straight the grey
Takes on a sunset tone, and all the day
Murmurs with music of forgotten lands.
Now in the woods, knee-deep among the ferns,
She walks and smiles and listens to the pines,
The sweetheart pines, that kiss and kiss again,
Whispering their love : and now she frowns and
turns—

And in the west the fog in ragged lines
Rears the wild wigwams of the tribes of rain.

THE NORTH SHORE

IX

STORM SABBAT

Against the pane the darkness, wet and cold,
Pressed a wild face and raised a ragged arm
Of cloud, clothed on with thunder and alarm
And terrible with elemental gold.
Above the fisher's hut, beyond the wold,
The wind, a Salem witch, rushed shrieking harm,
And swept her mad broom over every farm
To devil-revels in some forest old.
Hell and its hags, it seemed, held court again
On every rock, trailing a tattered gown
Of surf, and whirling, screaming, to the sea
Elf-locks, fantastic, of dishevelled rain ;
While in their midst death hobbled up and down
Monstrous and black, with diabolic glee.

THE NORTH SHORE

X

THE AURORA

Night and the sea, and heaven overhead
Cloudless and vast, as 'twere of hollowed spar,
Wherein the facets gleamed of many a star,
And the half-moon a crystal radiance shed.
Then suddenly, with burning banners spread,
In pale celestial armour, as for war,
Into the heaven, flaming from afar,
The Northern Lights their phalanxed splendours
led.

Night, for the moment, seemed to catch her
breath,
And earth gazed, silent with astonishment,
As spear on spear the auroral armies came ;
As when, triumphant over hell and death,
The victor angels thronged God's firmament
With sword on sword and burning oriflamme.

THE NORTH SHORE

XI

OGTOWN

Far as the eye can see the land is grey,
And desolation sits among the stones
Looking on ruin who, from rocks like bones,
Stares with a dead face at the dying day.
Mounds, where the barberry and bay hold sway,
Show where homes rose once ; where the village
 crones
Gossiped, and man, with many sighs and groans,
Laboured and loved and went its daily way.
Only the crow now, like a hag returned,
Croaks on the common that its hoarse voice mocks.
Meseems that here the sorrow of the earth
Has lost herself, and, with the past concerned,
Sits with the ghosts of dreams that haunt these
 rocks,
And old despairs to which man's soul gave birth.

THE NORTH SHORE

XII

AN ABANDONED QUARRY

The barberry burns, the rose-hip crimsons warm,
And haw and sumach hedge the hill with fire,
Down which the road winds, worn of hoof and
tire,

Only the blueberry-picker plods now from the farm.
Here once the quarry-driver, brown of arm,
Wielded the whip when, deep in mud and mire,
The axle strained, and earned his daily hire,
Labouring bareheaded in both sun and storm.
Wild-cherry now and blackberry and bay
Usurp the place : the wild-rose, undisturbed,
Riots, where once the workman earned his wage,
Whose old hands rest now, like this granite grey,
These rocks, whose stubborn will whilom he
curbed,

Hard as the toil that was his heritage.

THE NORTH SHORE

XIII

A POOL AMONG THE ROCKS

I know a pool, whose crystalline repose
Sleeps under walls of granite, whence the pine
Leans looking at its image, line for line
Repeated with the sumach and wild-rose
That redden on the rocks ; where, at day's close,
The sunset dreams, and lights incarnadine
Dark waters and the place seems brimmed with
 wine,

A giant cup that splendour overflows.
Night, in her livery of stars and moon,
Stoops to its mirror, gazing steadily ;
And, saddened by her beauty, drops one tear,
A falling star ; while round it sighs the rune
Of winds, conspirators that sweep from sea,
Whispering of things that fill the heart with fear.

THE NORTH SHORE

XIV

HIGH ON A HILL

There is a place among the Cape Ann hills
That looks from fir-dark summits on the sea,
Whose surging sapphire changes constantly
Beneath deep heavens, Morning windowsills
With golden calm, or sunset citadels
With storm, whose towers the winds' confederacy
And bandit thunder hold in rebel fee,
Swooping upon the fisher's sail that swells.
A place, where Sorrow ceases to complain,
And life's old Cares put all their burdens by,
And Weariness forgets itself in rest.
Would that all life were like it ; might obtain
Its pure repose, its outlook, strong and high,
That sees, beyond, far Islands of the Blest.

Annisquam, Mass., September, 1908.

GIPSIES

I

THERE'S a scent of pungent wood smoke in the
chill October air,
And a jack-o'-lantern glare, a wild and dusky
glare,—
'Tis the brush that burns and smoulders in the
woods and by the ways,
The old New England ways,
When Autumn plants her gipsy tents and camps
with all her days,
Along the shore, among the hills, beside the
sounding sea,
And fills the land with haze of dreams and fires
of mystery.

GIPSIES

II

There's a sound of crickets crooning, and an owlet's
quavering tune,

And a rim of frosty moon, a will-o'-wisp of
moon,

And a camp-fire in a hollow of the ocean-haunted
hills,

The old New England hills,

When Autumn keeps her tryst with Earth and
cures his soul of ills :

And day and night he sits with her and hearkens
to her dreams,

While, like a ghost, her camp-fire's smoke trails
over woods and streams.

GIPSIES

III

A frantic rush of faded leaves; a whirl of wind
and rain ;—

And she is gone again; has struck her tents
again.

As Dawn comes up with cold grey eyes that chill
to ice the land,

The old New England land,

Her tents are gone and she is gone and gone her
gipsy band,

And but a *patteran* of leaves to point her wander-
ing way,

And ashes of a fire she lit, it seems, but yesterday.

WITH THE WIND

'Twas when the wind was blowing from the billow-
breaking sea,

The grey and stormy sea, I heard her calling
me,

And in the woods and on the ways where leaves
were whirling down,

And weeds were rustling brown,

I caught a glimpse of face and feet, a glimmer of
her gown.

And there between the forest and a strip of
wandering sea,

Of dark and dreaming sea, I heard her laugh at
me ;

WITH THE WIND

And, oh ! her voice was bugle-wild as are the
wind and rain,

And drew my heart again

With all the lures of all the past and joy more
keen than pain.

Upon a fir-dark hilltop by the sunset-jewelled sea,
The old and wrinkled sea, she shook her hair
at me,

And I caught a misty shimmer of her frosty gown
and veil,

And her hand waved rosy pale,

And my heart was fain to follow her upon the
old-time trail.

Within a ferny hollow by the mermaid-calling sea,
The far and foaming sea, she turned her face
to me :

WITH THE WIND

Again I saw her beauty ; and again she held me
fast,

As she'd held me in the past,
And let her wild heart beat to mine as beats the
autumn blast.

Beside a rib of wreckage by the tempest-haunted
sea,

The sad and severing sea, she bade good-bye
to me :

Oh, paler than the foam her face, and wilder than
the night,

When not a star gives light,
And rain and wind and winter sweep like harpies
from the height.

Oh, she who joined her gipsy joy to sorrow of the
sea,

The gaunt and ghostly sea, will come again to
me :

WITH THE WIND

When Autumn leads the wild-fowl home and
lights, like wandering gleams,
The camp-fires of her dreams,
Again my heart shall hear her call upon the gale
that streams.

WOOD MYTHS

SYLVAN, they say, and nymph are gone ;
And yet I saw the two last night,
When overhead the moon sailed white,
And through the mists, her light made wan,
Each bush and tree doffed its disguise,
And stood revealed to mortal eyes.

The hollow, rimmed with rocks and trees,
And massed with ferns and matted vines,
Seemed an arena mid the pines,
A theatre of mysteries,
Where oread and satyr met,
And all the myths that men forget.

WOOD MYTHS

The rain and frost had carved the rocks
With faces that were wild and strange,
Which Protean fancy seemed to change
Each moment in the granite blocks,
That seemed slow dreaming into form
The gods grotesque of wind and storm.

Then suddenly Diana stood,
Slim as a shaft of moonlight, there,
Immortalizing earth and air
With perfect beauty : through the wood
Her maidens went as brightness goes
Athwart a cloud at evening's close.

And then I saw a faun push through
The thorny berry ; at his lip
Twinkled a pipe that seemed to drip
Dim sounds of crickets and of dew,
Things that, in strange reality,
Seemed born of his frail melody.

WOOD MYTHS

And then I saw the naiad rise

From out her rock ; a form of spar,
In which her heart shone like a star,
And like the moon her hair and eyes ;
She smiled, and at each smile, it seemed,
Some wildflower into being gleamed.

And then the dryad from her beech

Came, silver white as is its bark ;
And slender through the dreaming dark
I saw her go : a whispering speech
Was hers from whose soft murmured words
Is made the language of the birds.

Then satyrs and the centaurs passed :

And then old Pan himself ; and there,
Flying before him, all her hair
About her like a mist, the last
Wild nymph I saw ; and as she went
The woods as with a wind were bent.

WOOD MYTHS

And in the hush, like some slow rose
That knows not yet that it is born,
A premonition of the morn
Bloomed ; and from out its far repose,
Borne over ocean, through the wood,
A sighing swept the solitude.

Then nothing more.—But I had seen
That Pan still lives and all his train,
Whatever *men* say : they remain—
The unseen forces ; they that mean
Nature ; its awe and majesty,
That symbolize mythology.

BY THE ANNISQUAM

A FAR bell tinkles in the hollow,
And heart and soul are fain to follow :
Gone is the rose and gone the swallow :
Autumn is here.

The wild geese draw at dusk their harrow
Above the 'Squam the ebb leaves narrow :
The sea-winds chill you to the marrow :
Sad goes the year.

Among the woods the crows are calling :
The acorns and the leaves are falling :
At sea the fishing-boats are trawling :
Autumn is here.

BY THE ANNISQUAM

The jay among the rocks is screaming,
And every way with crimson streaming :
Far up the shore the foam is creaming :
Sleep fills the Year.

The chipmunk on the stones is barking ;
The red leaf every path is marking,
Where hills lean to the ocean harking :
Autumn is here.

The fields are starry with the aster,
Where Beauty dreams and dim Disaster
Draws near through mists that gather faster :
Farewell, sweet Year.

Beside the coves driftwood is burning,
And far at sea white sails are turning :
Each day seems filled with deeper yearning :
Autumn is here.

BY THE ANNISQUAM

‘ Good-bye ! good-bye ! ’ the Summer’s saying :

“ Brief was my day as songs of Maying :
The time is come for psalms and praying :
Good-bye, sweet Year.”

Brown bend the ferns by rock and boulder ;
The shore seems greyer ; ocean older :
The days are misty ; nights are colder :
Autumn is here.

The cricket in the grass is crying,
And sad winds in the old woods sighing ;
They seem to say, “ Sweet Summer’s dying :
Weep for the Year.

“ She’s wreathed her hair with bay and berry,
And o’er dark pools, the wild-fowl ferry,
Leans dreaming ’neath the wilding cherry :
Autumn is here.

BY THE ANNISQUAM

“ Good-bye ! good-bye to Summer’s gladness :
To all her beauty, mirth and madness :
Come sit with us and dream in sadness :
So ends the Year.”

GAMMER GAFFER

(A BALLAD OF GLOUCESTER)

I

ONE night when trees were tumbled down,
And wild winds shook at sea the sail,
Old Gammer Gaffer, lean and brown,
Chuckled and whistled on her nail ;
Then seized her broom and, mounting it,
Flew up the chimney with her cat ;
All Dogtown bayed to see her flit,
The screech-owl shrieked, and, lightning-lit,
About her head flew black the bat.

II

Her crow-like body, humped and black,
Seemed part and portion of her broom ;
The black cat, crouched upon her back,
Lit with its yellow eyes the gloom.

GAMMER GAFFER

Towards Gloucester Town she took her flight,
And night grew wilder as she went ;
The wind blew out the fisher's light,
And tore his sails in tatters white,
And strewed them through the firmament.

III

*Old shutters clapped and windows rapped,
And shingles shook as if in pain ;
Her besom on each old door slapped
And flapped as, cloaked and conical-capped,
Whisked by old Gammer Gaffer's train.*

IV

To window-panes, where candle-light
Showed some good wife who sat alone,
She pressed her sharp face, skinny white,
And knocked with knuckled hands of bone :

GAMMER GAFFER

Then croaked and mumbled, like the draught
That grumbles in the chimney-flue ;
Or on the gables danced and laughed,
Her old cloak flapping as if daft,
While round her face her wild hair blew.

v

*Old gutters dripped and dead leaves skipped,
And wildly struck the village clock,
As off a shutter here she ripped,
Old Gammer ! or like madness whipped
Around and 'round some weather-cock.*

vi

Then at one door she shook the latch,
And to a cranny set her chin
And croaked : “ Hey ! here’s an egg to hatch.
Eh ? Goodie Brown, come, take it in.—

GAMMER GAFFER

I've news for ye ! *Good news !* he ! he !—
Your old man—*he's* gone down at sea.—
There's something, eh ?—to hearten ye !—
Hey ! what man now shall wear his shoes ? ”

VII

And, chuckling to herself, again
Around the house she rode her broom ;
Then mounted to the weather-vane
And whirled and maundered to the gloom :
“ Aye ! weep, ye women ! weep and wail !
’Twas *I*, who wrought your good men’s
 weird !
’Twas *I* who raised the Gloucester gale !
’Twas *I* who tattered shroud and sail,
And seized and drowned them, by my
 beard ! ”

GAMMER GAFFER

VIII

*Old sign-boards squeaked and gables creaked,
And crazy gates closed with a bang,
As, parrot-beaked and lanthorn-cheeked,
Old Gammer round the belfry shrieked
And made its cracked old bell go clang.*

IX

So round and round the old Cape Town
She whirled and whined as whines the wind ;
Now this way blew her rag of gown,
Now that way, through the blackness blind.
And as she went she crowed and croaked
And crooned some snatch of devil's verse,
While now and then her cat she stroked ;
And, in a wink, all capped and cloaked,
Flew back to Dogtown with a curse.

SILHOUETTES AND SONNETS

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RIDERS IN THE NIGHT

I

MASKS

DEATH rides black-masked to-night ; and through
the land

Madness beside him brandishes a torch.

The peaceful farmhouse with its vine-wreathed
porch

Lies in their way. Death lifts a bony hand

And knocks, and Madness makes a wild demand

Of fierce Defiance : then the night's deep arch

Reverberates, and under beech and larch

A dead face stares ; shot where one took his
stand.

Then down the night wild hoofs ; the darkness
beats ;

And like a torrent through the startled town

RIDERS IN THE NIGHT

Destruction sweeps ; high overhead a flame ;
And Violence that shoots amid the streets.
A piercing whistle : one who gallops down :
And Death and Madness go the way they came.

II

THE RAID

Rain and black night. Beneath the covered
bridge
The rushing Fork that roars among its rocks.
Nothing is out.—Nothing?—What's that which
blocks
The long grey road upon the rain-swept ridge ?
A horseman ! No ! A mask ! As hewn from
jet
With ready gun he waits and sentinels
The open way. Far off he hears wild bells ;
And now a signal shrills through wind and wet.

RIDERS IN THE NIGHT

Was that the thunder, or the rushing stream?
The tunnel of the bridge throbs with mad hoofs;
Now its black throat pours out a midnight
cloud—

Riders! behind whom steadily a gleam
Grows to a glare that silhouettes dark roofs,
Whence armed Pursuit gathers and gallops
loud.

III

THE RENDEZVOUS

A lonely barn, lost in a field of weeds;
A fallen fence, where partly hangs a gate:
The skies are darkening and the hour is late;
The Indian dusk comes,—red in rainy beads.—
Along a path, which from a woodland leads,
Horsemen come riding who dismount and wait:
Here Anarchy conspires with Crime and Hate,
And Madness masks and on its business speeds.

RIDERS IN THE NIGHT

Another Kuklux in another war
Of blacker outrage down the night they ride,
Brandishing a torch and gun before each farm.—
Is Law asleep then? Does she fear? Where
 are
The servants of her strength, the Commonwealth's
 pride?
And where the steel of her restraining arm?

IV

IN BLACK AND RED

The hush of death is on the night. The corn,
That loves to whisper to the wind; the leaves,
That dance with it, are silent: one perceives
No motion mid the fields, as dry as horn.
What light is that?—It cannot be the morn!—
Yet in the east it seems its witchcraft weaves
A fiery rose.—Look! how it grows! it heaves
And flames and tosses!—'Tis a burning barn!

RIDERS IN THE NIGHT

And now the night is rent with shouts and shots.
Dark forms and faces hurry past. The gloom
Gallops with riders.—Homes are less than straw
Before this madness : human lives, mere lots
Flung in and juggled from the cap of Doom,
Where Crime stamps yelling on the face of Law.

AN EPISODE

I

THERE was a man rode into town one day,
Barefooted, hatless, and without a coat.
It was the dead of winter. Round his throat
Were marks of violence : bits and wisps of hay
Bristled his beard and hair. From far away
We saw him coming : desolate and remote
And wild his gaze, that of no man took note,
Or seeming note ; and nothing would he say.
But when he'd had a drink, then drunk some
more,
He told us he had sold tobacco ; see ?
And all was lost.—At that he caught his breath.—
Last night a knock came at his cabin-door.
His son, who answered, was shot dead. And he
Was caught and chok'd and almost beat to death.

AN EPISODE

II

They said he'd sold tobacco ; and he knew
They ought to kill him, burn his house and barn,
And *would* unless he gave them (this with scorn)
The money he'd received. What could he do ?
He had a little money, it was true,
Hid in an old pot underneath the corn
There in the crib, he told them. 'Twas a yarn
To get away. They were a desperate crew.
They set to work upon the crib ; and he
Got loose and on a horse and took to flight :
They shot at him.—Whatever might occur
He did not care now ; they had burned, you see,
His home : for miles its glare lit up the night.—
His wife and daughters ?—God knows where they
were.

THE FEUD

I

ITS BEGINNING

It happened this way : He was just a lad,
Though big for sixteen years ; and there they stood,
He and some others, laughing as youth should,
About some nonsense or some fun they'd had.
Then some one said what made another mad,
And words were passed and oaths, (young blood !
young blood !)

You know how 'tis ! and suddenly, *thud ! thud !*
Two boys were at it. Worse grew out of bad.
One boy went up to him we all admired,
The merry-hearted fellow, handsome one,
And with a curse about—why, God knows what !
Just put a pistol to his heart and fired.—
That was the feud's beginning.—Some one's son
Shot some one's son, and he in turn was shot.

THE FEUD

II

THE END

And so one night they came, in wild carouse,
The father and the kinsmen of the boy,
That young fiend shot. With never an "Ahoy,"
They shot into the windows of that house,
And burnt the barn and in it all the cows.
Not one was saved. They came there to destroy,
And did it thoroughly. Like some new joy
They toyed with death and made it boisterous
vows.
They killed the boy first ; while he blinked and
gaped
They shot him by a tree outside the door :
The women fled : the men they killed like dogs,
The father and the uncle. *One* escaped,
The old grandfather in a gown he wore,
Who hid all night among a pen of hogs.

THE MOUNTAIN-STILL

I

THE MOONSHINER

HE leans far out and watches : Down below
The road seems but a ribbon through the trees :
The bluff, from which he gazes, whence he sees
Some ox-team or some horseman come and go,
Is briered with brush. A man comes riding slow
Around a bend of road. Against his knees
The branches whip. He sits at careless ease.
It is the sheriff, armed for any foe.
A detonation tears the echoes from
Each pine-hung crag ; upon the rider's brow
A smear of red springs out : he shades it now,
His grey eyes on the bluff. The crags are dumb.
Smoke wreathes one spot. The sheriff, with a cough,
Marks well that place, and then rides slowly off.

THE MOUNTAIN-STILL

II

THE SHERIFF

Night and the mountain road: a crag where
burns

What seems a star, low down: three men that
glide

From tree and rock towards it: one a guide
For him who never from his purpose turns,
Who stands for law among these mountain kerns.
At last the torchlit cave, along whose side
The still is seen, and men who have defied
The law so long—law, who the threshold spurns
With levelled weapons now. . . . Wolves in a den
Fight not more fiercely than these fought; wild
fear

In every face, and rage and pale surprise.
The smoke thins off, and in the cave four men
Lie dead or dying: one that mountaineer,
And one the sheriff with the fearless eyes.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

I

LAND-MARKS

THE way is rock and rubbish to a road
That leads through woods of stunted oaks and
 thorns
Into a valley that no flower adorns,
One mass of blackened brier ; overflowed
With desolation ; whence their mighty load
Of lichened limbs,—like two colossal horns,
Two dead trees lift : trees, that the foul earth
 scorns
To vine with poison, spotted like the toad.
Here, on gaunt boughs, unclean, red-beaked, and
 bald,

IN THE MOUNTAINS

The buzzards settle ; roost, since that fierce night
When, torched with pine-knots, grim and
 shadowy,
Judge Lynch held court here ; and the dark,
 appalled,
Heard words of hollow justice ; and the light
Saw, on these trees, dread fruit swing suddenly.

II

THE OX-TEAM

An ox-team, its lean oxen, slow of tread,
Weighed with an old-time yoke, creaked heavily
Along the mountain road. Beside it, three
Walked with no word : A woman with bowed
 head,
A young girl, old before her youth had fled,
Hugging a sleeping baby ; near her knee
A gaunt hound trotted. — Any one could see
The wagon held their all, from box to bed.

IN THE MOUNTAINS

Slowly they creaked into the mountain town
And asked their way. Their men had all been
killed,—

Father and brother,—at some mountain ball,
This girl the cause : a man had shot them down,
The father of the infant.—As God willed,
They sought another State, and that was all.

SONG OF THE NIGHT-RIDERS

It's up and out with the bat and owl !
We ride by night in fair and foul ;
In foul and fair we take the pike,
And no man knows where our hand shall strike ;
For, gun and pistol, and torch and mask,
These are our laws—let any ask :
And should one ask, why, tell him then
That we are the New-Jeans Gentlemen.

It's up and out with owl and bat !
Where the road winds back by wood and flat.
Black clouds are hunting the flying moon—
Let them hunt her down ! and midnight soon

SONG OF THE NIGHT-RIDERS

Shall blossom a wilder light, when down
We gallop and shoot and burn the town.
Who cares a curse who asks us then !—
For we are the New-Jeans Gentlemen.

It's up and on ! give the horse his head !
The rain is out and the world in bed.
Ride on to the village, and then ride back,
Where stands a house by the railroad track :
Riddle its windows and batter its door,
And call him out and shoot some more.
And if he question, why, damn him ! then
Just shoot him down like gentlemen.

Why, he was a wretch beneath all scorn
Who planted the weed instead of corn.
And here is another who sold, by God !—
Just bare his back and ply the rod !

SONG OF THE NIGHT-RIDERS

Now burn his barn ! and, sink or swim,
It's sport for us but Hell for him.
And well he'll know when we leave him then
That we are the New-Jeans Gentlemen.

Yes; we are kin to the bat and owl :
We wait till night, then prey and prowl.
The man who plants or sells this year
Our hounds shall smell him out, no fear.
The hunt is up ! Who'll bid us halt ?—
We'll sow his beds with grass and salt,
Or shoot him down like a dog, and then
Ride off like New-Jeans Gentlemen.

THE TOWN WITCH

CRAB-FACED, crab-tongued, with deep-set eyes that
glared,

Unfriendly and unfriended lived the crone

Upon the common in her hut, alone,

Past which but seldom any villager fared.

Some said she was a witch and rode, wild-haired,

To devils' revels : on her hearth's rough stone

A fiend sat ever with gaunt eyes that shone—

A shaggy hound whose fangs at all were bared.

So one day, when a neighbour's cow had died

And some one's infant sickened, *good* men shut

The crone in prison : dragged to court and tried :

Then hung her for a witch and burnt her hut.—

Days after, on her grave, all skin and bones

They found the dog, and him they killed with
stones.

THE VILLAGE MISER

THE dogs made way for him and snarled and ran ;
And little children to their parents clung,
Big-eyed with fear, when, gruff of look and tongue,
Bent-backed he passed who had the village ban.
In old drab coat and trousers, shoes of tan,
And scarecrow hat,—from some odd fashion
sprung,—

A threadbare cloak about his shoulders flung,
Grasping a crookèd stick, limped by this man.
Unspeaking and unspoken to, but oft
Cursed after for a miser as he passed,
Or barked at by the dogs who feared his cane.—
One day they found him dead ; killed in his loft.
Among his books,—the *hoard* which he had
massed.—

And then they laughed and swore he was insane.

THE INFANTICIDE

SHE took her babe, the child of shame and sin,
And wrapped it warmly in her shawl and went
From house to house for work. Propriety bent
A look of wonder on her ; raised a din
Of Christian outrage. None would take her in.
All that she had was gone ; had long been spent.
Penniless and hungry by the road she leant,
No friend to go to and no one of kin.
The babe at last began to cry for food.
Her breasts were dry ; she had no milk to give.—
She was so tired and cold.—What could she do ?—
. . . The next day in a pool within a wood
They found the babe. . . 'Twas hard enough to
live,
She found, for one ; impossible for two.

THE HERB-GATHERER

A GREY, bald hillside, bristling here and there
With leprous-looking grass, that, knobbed with
stones,

Slopes to a valley where a wild stream moans,
And every bush seems tortured to despair
And shows its teeth of thorns as if to tear
All things to pieces : where the skull and bones
Of some dead beast protrude, like visible groans,
From one bleak place the winter rains washed bare.
Amid the desolation, in decay,

Like some half-rotted fungus, grey as slag,
A hut of lichened logs ; and near it, old,
Unspeakably old, a man, the colour of clay,
Sorting damp roots and herbs into a bag
With trembling hands purple and stiff with cold.

THE RAG-PICKER

A POND of filth a sewer flows into,
Around whose edge the evil ragweeds crowd,
Poison in every breath ; and, cloud on cloud,
Insects that sing and sting, the pool's fierce spew :
All hideousness, from every street and stew,
And every stench weaves for the place a shroud ;
And in its midst a figure, bent and bowed,
A woman who no girlhood ever knew.
Some offal of humanity she seems ;
One with the rags she picks and scrapes among ;
More soiled, perhaps, in soul : the veriest rag
Of womankind, whose squalor looks and dreams
Of nothing higher than the cart that flung
Its last load here from which she crams her bag.

THE BOY IN THE RAIN

SODDEN and shivering, in mud and rain,
Half in the light that serves but to reveal
The blackness of an alley and the reel
Homeward of wretchedness in tattered train,
A boy stands crouched ; big drops of drizzle drain
Slow from a rag that was a hat : no steel
Is harder than his look, that seems to feel
More than his small life's share of woe and pain.
The pack of papers, huddled by his arm,
Is pulp ; and still he hugs the worthless lot. . . .
A door flares open to let out a curse
And drag him in—out of the night and storm.—
Out of the night, you say?—*You* know not
what!—
To blacker night, God knows ! and hell, or worse !

TREES

“TREES,” so he said and laid him lovingly
At a great beech-tree’s root, “are my best friends.
Upon their love it seems my life depends.
No dog or woman for me ! Give me a tree !
In winter saying, ‘ Courage ! hold to me ! ’
In spring, ‘ Look up ! hope’s here, and winter
ends ! ’
In summer, ‘ Come ! here’s peace that naught
transcends ! ’
In autumn, ‘ See ! the dreams I bring to thee ! ’
Why, I have loved a tree until for me
It had a soul. And as the Greeks believed
So I believe : that in *each* dwells a life,
Lovely, ecstatic, that some man may see
Take on material form, and, so perceived,
Hold him for aye. . . . That’s why I have no wife.”

CONSECRATION

I

THIS is the place where visions come to dance,
Dreams of the trees and flowers, glimmeringly ;
Where the white moon and the pale stars can see,
Sitting with Legend and with dim Romance.
This is the place where all the silvery clans
Of Music meet : music of bird and bee ;
Music of falling water ; melody
Mated with magic, with her golden lance.
This is the place made holy by Love's feet,
And dedicate to wonder and to dreams,
The ministers of Beauty. 'Twas with these
Love filled the place, making all splendours meet
And all despairs, as once in woods and streams
Of Ida and the gold Hesperides.

CONSECRATION

II

Here is the place where Loveliness keeps house,
Between the river and the wooded hills,
Within a valley where the Springtime spills
Her firstling wind-flowers under blossoming
boughs :

Where Summer sits braiding her warm, white
brows

With bramble-roses ; and where Autumn fills
Her lap with asters ; and old Winter frills
With crimson haw and hip his snowy blouse.

Here you may meet with Beauty. Here she sits
Gazing upon the moon ; or, all the day,
Tuning a wood-thrush flute, remote, unseen :
Or when the storm is out 'tis she who flits
From rock to rock, a form of flying spray,
Shouting, beneath the leaves' tumultuous green.

CONSECRATION

III

The road winds upward under whispering trees
Through grass and clover where the dewdrop
 winks ;

And at the hill's green crest abruptly sinks
Into a valley boisterous with bees
And brooks and birds. Its beauty seems to seize
And take one's breath with rapture, joy that
 drinks

The soul's cup dry while dreamily it links
Present and past with mortal memories.
Or so it seems to us who, heart to heart,
Come back the old way through the dusk and dew
With all our old dreams with us, blossom-deep
With love : old dreams, this vale has made a part
Of its unchanging self, the dreams come true,
That consecrate it and still guard and keep.

CONSECRATION

IV

Keep it, O dim recorders of grey years,
And memories of bygone happiness !
This vale among the hills where Love's distress
And rapture walked, beautiful with smiles and
tears.

Guard it for Love's sake, and for what endears
Its every tree and flower : each fond caress,
Each look of Love with which he once did bless
The paths he wandered, filled with hopes and fears
Guard it for that sure day when, far apart,
Life's ways have led us ; and with Memory
One shall sit down here where two sat with Love :
Keep it for that time ; keep it, like my heart,
Haunted for ever by that ecstasy
And by those words its bowers still whisper of.

THE GOLDEN HOUR

GOLD-HAIRED she stood among the golden-rod,
A girl, embodying all the Golden Age,
Who made that autumn day a glorious page
Out of a book of gold inspired of God
And made for Him by priests and worshippers
Of Truth and Beauty, putting their praise in
gold.—

The golden blossoms round her and, gold-rolled,
The fields before, were as a golden verse
Of which she was the bright initial : she !
My heart-song's gold beginning, from whom grew
Love's golden ritual, filled with aureate gleams
And music, which my soul read wonderingly
Within Love's book of gold, that mightily drew
Our souls together, binding them with dreams.

OUR DREAMS

SPARE US OUR Dreams, O God!—The dream we
dreamed

When we were children and dwelt near the Land
Of Faery, which our Childhood often planned

To reach, beholding where its towers gleamed :

The dream our Youth put seaward with ; that
streamed

With Love's wild hair, or beckoned with the hand
Of stout Adventure : Then that dream which
spanned

Our Manhood's skies with fame ; that shone, it
seemed,

The one fixed star of purpose, fair and far,

The dream of great achievement, in the heaven

OUR DREAMS

Of our desire, and gave the soul strong wings :
Then that last dream, through which these others
 are
Made true : The dream that holds us at Life's
 even,
The mortal hope of far immortal things.

DROUTH

THE road is drowned in dust ; the winds vibrate
With heat and noise of insect wings that sting
The stridulous noon with sound ; no waters sing ;
Weeds crowd the path and barricade the gate.
Within the garden Summer seems to wait,
Among her flowers, dead or withering ;
About her skirts the teasel's bristles cling,
And to her hair the hot burr holds like hate.
The day burns downward, and with fiery crest
Flames like a furnace ; then the fierce night falls
Dewless and dead, crowned with its thirsty stars :
A dry breeze sweeps the firmament and west
The lightning leaps at flickering intervals,
Like some caged beast that thunders at its bars.

PREMONITION

I SAW the Summer through her garden go,
A marigold hung in her auburn hair,
Her brown arms heaped with harvest, and the
 lair

Of popped plenty, like the peach aglow :
Among the pepper-pods, in scarlet row,
And golden gourds and melons, where the pear
And quince hung heavy, in the languid air
She laid her down and let her eyes close slow.
Not so much breath as blows the thistle by,
Not so much sound as rounds a cricket's croon,
Was in her sleep, and yet about her seemed
The long dark sweep of rain, the whirling cry
And roar of winds beneath a stormy moon.—
Was it a dream of Autumn that she dreamed ?

AFTER A NIGHT OF RAIN

THE rain made ruin of the rose and frayed
The lily into tatters : now the Morn
Looks from the hopeless East with eyes forlorn,
As from her attic looks a dull-eyed maid.
The coreopsis drips ; the sunflowers fade ;
The garden reeks with rain : beneath the thorn
The toadstools crowd their rims where, dim of
 horn,
The slow snail slimes the grasses gaunt and
 greyed.
Like some pale nun, in penitential weeds,
Weary with weeping, telling sad her beads,—

AFTER A NIGHT OF RAIN

Her rosary of pods of hollyhocks,—
September comes, heavy of heart and head,
While in her path the draggled four-o'-clocks
Droop all their flowers, saying, "Summer's dead."

A MIDSUMMER DAY

THE locust gyres ; the heat intensifies :
The rain-crow croaks from hot-leafed tree to tree :
The butterfly, a flame-fleck, aimlessly
Droops down the air and knows not where it flies.
Beside the stream, whose bed in places dries,
The small green heron flaps ; the minnows flee :
And mid the blackberry-lilies, wasp and bee
Drowse where the cattle pant with half-closed
 eyes.

The Summer Day, like some tired labourer,
Lays down her burden here and sinks to rest,
The tan of toil upon her face and hands :
She dreams, and lo, the heavens over her
Unfold her dream :—Along the boundless West
Rolls gold the harvest of the sunset's lands.

THE CLOSE OF SUMMER

THE melancholy of the woods and plains
When summer nears its close ; the drowsy, dim,
Unfathomed sadness of the mists that swim
About the valleys after night-long rains ;
The humming garden, with its tawny chains
Of gourds and blossoms, ripened to the brim ;
And then at eve the low moon's quiet rim,
And the slow sunset, whose one cloud remains,
Fill me with peace that is akin to tears ;
Unutterable peace, that moves as in a dream
Mid fancies, sweeter than it knows or tells :
That sees and hears with other eyes and ears,
And walks with Memory beside a stream
That flows through fields of fadeless asphodels.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

I

THE FOOL

HERE is a tale for children and their grannies :
There was a fool, a man who'd had his chances
But missed them, somehow ; lost them, just for
 fancies,
Tag-ends of things with which he'd crammed the
 crannies
Of his cracked head, as panes are crammed with
 paper :
Fragments of song and bits of worthless writing,
Which he was never weary of reciting,
Fluttered his mind as night a windy taper.
A witless fool ! who lived in some fair Venice
Of his own building where he dreamed of Beauty :

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

Who swore each weed a flower—the sorry
pauper!—

This would not do. Men said he was a menace
To all mankind; and, as it was their duty,
Clapped him in prison where he died—as proper.

II

THE SCARECROW

Here is a tale for prelates and for parsons :
There was a scarecrow once, a thing of tatters
And sticks and straw, to whom men trusted
matters
Of weighty moment—murders, thefts and arsons.
None saw he was a scarecrow. Every worship
And honour his. Men set him in high places,
And ladies primped their bodies, tinged their
faces,
And kneeled to him as slaves to some great
Sirship.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

One night a storm,—none knew it,—blew to
pieces

Our jackstraw friend, and the sweet air of
heaven

Knew him no more, and was no longer tainted.

Then learned doctors put him in their theses :

The State set up his statue : and thought,
even

As thought the Church, perhaps he should be
sainted.

III

SERVICE

Here is a tale for proper men and virgins :

There was a woman once who had a daughter,

A fair-faced wench, as stable as is water,

And frailer than the first spring flower that
burgeons.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

She did not need to work, but then her mother
Thought it more suitable, and circumspectly
Put her with gentlefolks, where, indirectly,
She rose in service as has many another.

The house she served in soon became divided :
The wife and husband parted, with some scandal :
But she remained and, in the end, was married.
What happened then?—You'll say, "The girl
decided

She loved another."—Nay ; not so. The vandal
Wrecked no more homes but lived a life unvaried.

IV

THE APE

Here is a tale for maidens and for mothers :
There was an ape, a very prince of monkeys,
Who capered in the world of fools and flunkies,
The envy of his set and of all others.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

He was the handbook of all social manners :
The beau of beaux, and simian glass of fashion,
To whom all folly functioned, played at passion,
And matrimony waved beleaguering banners.
A girl of girls, one God had given graces
And beauty, more than oft He grants to human,
Captured the creature, and they were united.
And strange to say, she loved him. Saw no
traces
Of ape in him. And, like a very woman,
Reformed *her* countenance, and was delighted.

v

THE PESSIMIST

Here is a tale for uncles and old aunties :
There was a man once who denied the Devil,
Yet in the world saw nothing else but evil ;
A pessimist, with face as sour as Dante's.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

Still people praised him ; men he loathed and hated,
And cursed beneath his breath for wretched sinners,
While still he drank with them and ate their
dinner,

And listened to their talk and tolerated.

At last he wrote a book, full of invective

And vile abuse of earth and all its nations,

Denying God and Devil, Heaven and Hades.

Fame followed this. "*His* was the right
perspective !"

"A *great* philosopher !" — He lost all patience.

But still went out to dine with Lords and Ladies.

VI

AN INCIDENT

Here is a tale for men and women teachers :

There was a girl who'd ceased to be a maiden ;

Who walked by night with heart like Lilith's laden ;

A child of sin anathemaed of preachers.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

She had been lovely once ; but dye and scarlet,
On hair and face, had ravaged all her beauty ;
Only her eyes still did her girl-soul duty,
Showing the hell that hounded her—poor harlot !
One day a fisherman from out the river
Fished her pale body, (like a branch of willow,
Or golden weed) self-murdered, drowned and
broken :—

The sight of it had made a strong man shiver ;—
And on her poor breast, as upon a pillow,
A picture smiled, a baby's, like some token.

VII

VINDICATION

Here is a tale for gossips and chaste people :
There lived a woman once, a straight-laced lady,
Whose only love was slander. Nothing shady
Escaped her vulture eye. Like some prim
steeple

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

Her course of life pointed to Heaven ever ;
And woe unto the sinner, girl or woman,
Whom love undid.—She was their fiercest foeman.
No circumstance excused. Misfortune, never. . . .
As she had lived she died. The mourners
gathered :
Parson and preacher, this one and another,
And many gossips of most proper carriage.
Her will was read. And then . . . a child was
fathered.
Fat Lechery had his day. . . . *She'd* been a
mother.
A *man* was *heir*. . . . There'd never been a
marriage.

VIII

TREASURE

Here is a tale for infants and old nurses :
There was a man who gathered rags; and peddled :

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

Who lived alone : with no one ever meddled :
And this old man was very fond of verses.
His house, a ruin, so the tale rehearses ;
A hovel over-run of rats and vermin ;
Not fit for beast to live in. (Like a sermon
Embodying misery and hell and curses.)
There, one grey dawn of rain and windy weather,
They found him dead ; starved ; o'er a written
 paper ;
Beside a dim and half-expiring taper :
It was a play, the poor fool 'd put together,
Of gnomes and fairies, for his own sad pleasure :
And folks destroyed it, saying,—“ *We seek for
 treasure.*”

IX

THE ASS

Here is a tale for artists and for writers :
There was an ass, in other words, a critic,

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

Who brayed and balked and kicked most
analytic,
And waved long ears above his brother smiters.
He could not tell a rose-tree from a thistle,
But oft mistook the one thing for the other ;
Then wagged his ears most wisely at some
brother,
Sent him his he-haw for the Penny Whistle.
A poet sent his volume to him : kindly
Asking for criticism.—You might know it :
He made one mouthful of it, weed and flower.
There rose a cry that he had done it blindly.—
'Twas poetry !—What ! would he kill a poet !—
Not he ! The ass had *brayed* him into power.

X

THE CABBAGE

Here is a tale for any one who wishes :
There grew a cabbage once among the flowers,

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

A plain, broad cabbage—a good wench, whose
hours

Were kitchen-busy with plebeian dishes.

The rose and lily, toilless, without mottle,

Patricians born, despised her:—"How un-
pleasant!"

They cried; "What odour!—Worse than any
peasant

Who soils God's air! Give us our smelling-
bottle."

There came a gentleman who owned the garden,

Looking about him at both flower and edible,

Admiring here and there; a simple sinner,

Who sought some bud to be his heart's sweet
warden:

But passed the flowers and took—it seems in-
credible!—

That cabbage!—But a man must have his dinner.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XI

THE CRIMINAL

Here is a tale for all who wish to listen :
There was a thief who, in his cut-throat quarter,
Was hailed as chief ; he had a way of barter,
Persuasion, masked, behind a weapon's glisten,
That made it *cockcrow* with each good man's riches.
At last he joined the Brotherhood of Murder,
And rose in his profession ; lived a herder
Of crime in some dark tavern of the ditches.
There was a war. He went. Became a gunner.
And slew, as soldiers should, his many a hundred,
In authorized and most professional manner.
Here he advanced again. Was starred a *oner*.
Was captained, pensioned, and nobody wondered ;
And lived and died respectable as a tanner.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XII

DEATH AND THE FOOL

Here is a tale for any man or woman :

A fool sought Death ; and braved him with his
bauble

Among the graves. At last he heard a hobble,
And something passed him, monstrous, super-
human.

And by a tomb, that reared a broken column,
He heard it stop. And then Gargantuan laughter
Shattered the hush. Deep silence followed after,
Filled with the stir of bones, cadaverous, solemn.
Then said the fool : " Come ! show thyself, old
prancer !

I'll have a bout with thee. I, too, can clatter
My wand and motley. Come now ! Death and Folly,
See who's the better man."—There was no answer ;
Only his bauble broke ; a serious matter
To the poor fool who died of melancholy.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XIII

THE BAGPIPE

Here is a tale for poets and for players :
There was a bagpipe once, that wheezed and
 whistled,
And droned vile discords, notes that fairly
 bristled,
Nasal and harsh, outbraying all the brayers.
And then the thing assumed another bearing :
Boasted itself an organ of God's making,
A world-enduring instrument, Earth-shaking,
Greater than any organ, more sky-daring.
To prove which, lo, upon an elevation
It pranced and blew to its own satisfaction,
Until 'twas heard from Key West far as Fundy.
But while it piped, some schoolboy took
 occasion—
There was a blow ; a sudden sharp impaction ;
The wind-bag burst . . . *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XIV

THE OX

Here is a tale for farmer and for peasant :
There was an ox, who might have ploughed for
 Jason,
So strong was he, his huge head like a bason,
A Gothic helmet with enormous crescent.
Stolid of look and slow of hoof and steady,
Meek was the beast and born but to be driven,
Unmindful of the yoke which toil had given,
Toil with his goad and lash for ever ready.
One day a bull, who was the bullock's neighbour,
Proud as a sultan haremmed with his women,
Lowd to the ox who had received a beating :
" You are a fool ! What have you for your
 labour ?
Blows and bad food !—Go to.—Why don't you
 show men ? "
The ox was but an ox and went on eating.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XV

THE GOOSE

Here is a tale for spinsters at their sewing :
There was a goose, a little gosling surely,
Who went her goose-girl way and looked demurely
As every goose should when 'tis wise and knowing.
Proper was she as every gosling should be,
And innocent as Margarete or Gretchen,
And did her duty in the house and kitchen,
And like a goose was happy as she could be.
Smug was she with a sleek and dove-like dimple,
Great 'gooseberry eyes and cheeks out of the
dairy :

A goose, aye, just a goose, a little dumb thing.
One day the goose was gone.—The tale is
simple :

She had eloped.—'Twas nothing *ordinary* :
A married man with children.—*That* was some-
thing.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XVI

THE BEAST

Here is a tale for sportsmen when at table :
There was a boar, like that Atalanta hunted,
Who gorged and snored and, unmolested, grunted
His fat way through the world as such are able.
Huge-jowled and paunched and porcine-limbed
and marrowed,
King of his kind, deep in his lair he squatted,
And round him fames of many maidens rotted
Where Licence whelped and Lust her monsters
farrowed.
There came a damsel, like the one in Spenser,
A Britomart, as sorcerous as Circe,
Who pierced him with a tract, her spear, and
ended
The beast's career. Made him a man ; a censor
Of public morals ; arbiter of mercy ;
And led him by the nose and called him splendid.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XVII

THE OWL

Here is a tale for ladies with romances :
There was an owl ; composer and musician,
Who looked as wise as if he had a mission,
And at all art cast supercilious glances.
People proclaimed him great because *he* said it ;
And, like the great, he never played, nor printed
His compositions, 'though 'twas whispered, hinted
He'd written something—but no one had read it.
Owl-eyed he posed at functions of position,
Hirsute, and eye-glassed, looking analytic,
Opening his mouth to worshipping female know-
ledge :
And then he married. A woman of ambition.
A singer, teacher, and a musical critic.
Just what he wanted. He became a college.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XVIII

THE TOAD

Here is a tale to tell to rich relations :
There was a toad, a Calibanic monster,
In whose squat head ambition had ensconced her
Most bloated jewel, dear to highest stations.
He was received, though mottled as a lichen
In coat and character, because the creature
Croaked as the devil prompted him, or nature,
And said the right thing both in hall and kitchen.
To each he sang according to their liking,
And purred his flattery in the ear of Leisure,
Cringing attendance on the proud and wealthy.
One day a crane, with features of a Viking,
Swallowed him whole and did it with great
 pleasure :
His system needed such ; *toads* kept him healthy.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XIX

THE CRICKET

Here is a tale for those who sing with reason :
There was a cricket, troubadouring fellow,
Who chirped his lay, or zoomed it like a 'cello,
Day in, day out, no matter what the season.
Great was his love for his own violining ;
He never wearied saying, "*What performing !*"
And oft, when through, would ask, " Was not that
charming ? "

Then play it over, right from the beginning.
A talent, such as his, should be rewarded,
So thought he, all unconscious of intention
Of any one among the violin sects,
Until by some one, lo, he was regarded ;
Lifted, examined ; given special mention ;
And placed within a case with other insects.

MUTATIS MUTANDIS

XX

THE TORRENT

Here is a tale for workmen and their masters :
There was a torrent once that down a mountain
Flashed its resistless way ; a foaming fountain,
Basaltic-built, 'twixt cataract-hewn pilasters.
Down from its eagle eyrie nearer, nearer,
Its savage beauty—born mid rocks and cedars,—
Swept free as tempest, wild as mountain leaders,
Of stars and storms the swiftly moving mirror.
Men found it out ; and set to work to tame it ;
Put it to pounding rock and rafting lumber ;
Made it a carrier of the filth of cities :
Harnessed its joy to engines ; tried to shame it ;
Saying, “ Be civilized ! ” and piled their cumber
Upon it ; bound it.—God of all the Pities !