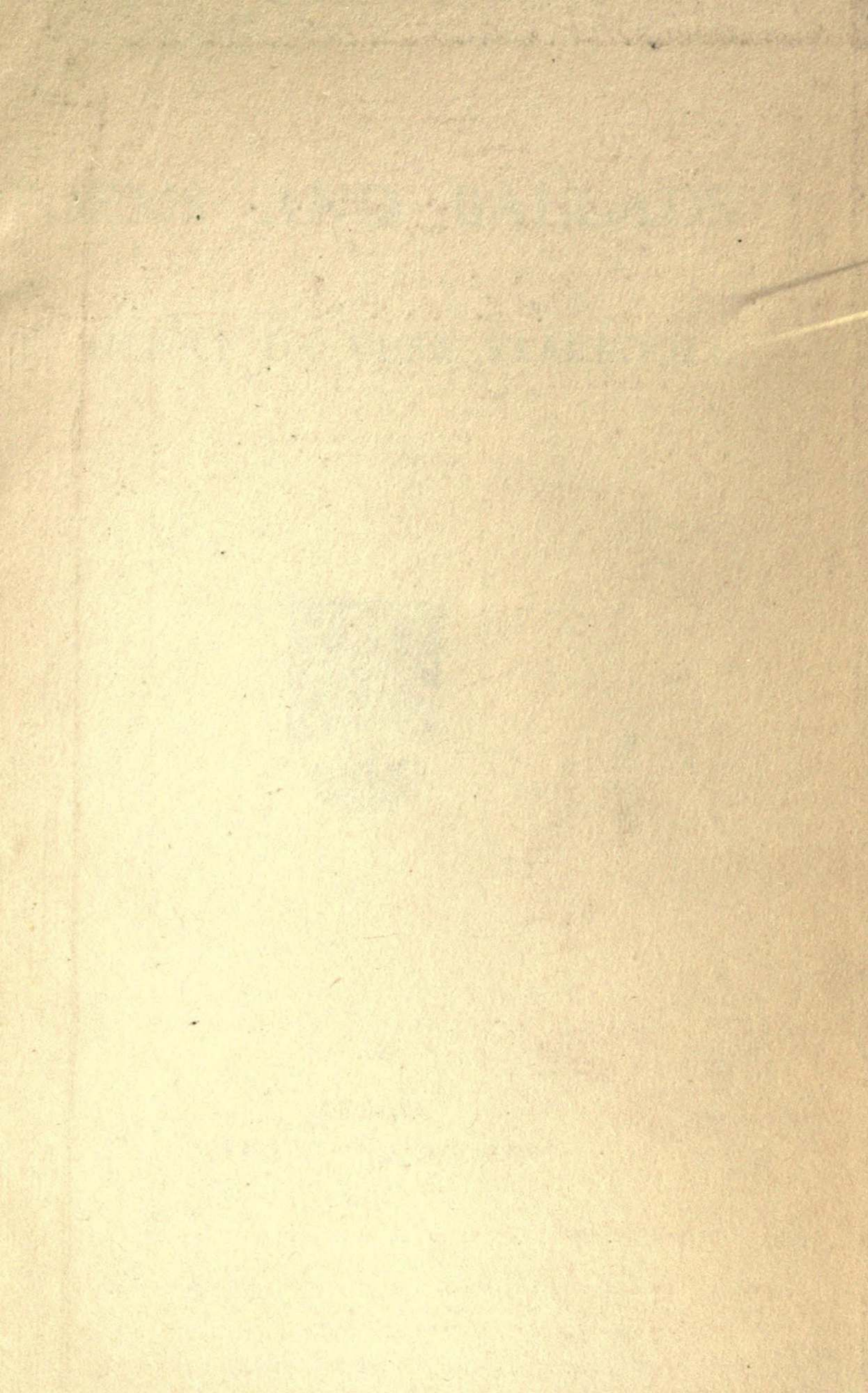




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POEMS AND BALLADS

BY HENRY DE VERE STACPOOLE



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To the Editors of the London *Daily Express*,
Country Life, and *The Outlook*, I must express
my thanks for the hospitality they have given
to some of these verses in their columns, and
for permission to reproduce them.

H. DE V. S.

SONGS OF ENGLAND

A TRIBUTE

[*May 7, 1910*]

AMIDST these English meadow lands,
A thousand years ago,
The kingcups bloomed as now they
bloom,
And grew where now they grow,
And men walked then the earth who
keep
The silences below.

And messengers have ridden here
With news of death of kings,
But never with a tale in words
Such as that far flag flings,
Half-masted by the village spire,
Beneath the dawn's grey wings.

*“ England to-day has lost her king,
And every man a friend—
Yea, every man in all the world,
From west to bleak east end,
From where the champak casts her scent
To where those willows bend,”—*

To where the willows bend beneath
The sky of May, that lowers
Above the country that he loved,
This English land of ours ;
These trees all green, new washed with
rain,
These rain-wet meadow flowers.

Kingcups and cowslips, primroses,
Simple and without stain,
Take them, O King, from us, the poor,
These flowers all wet with rain ;
Love's tribute to the shade that stands
By knightly Charlemagne.

THE BALLAD OF THE *VICTORY*

I

SAIL HO!

UPBREAKS the morning through the skies
And from the fore-top comes a hail.
Far to the east the red dawn dyes
A cloud of forty sail.

II

LINE OF BATTLE

The great ship, with her fighting flags
Seized to the ropes to sink with her,
Drags slowly, as a python drags,
Straight for the eastern blur.
Brave Collingwood with thirteen ships
A thunder-cloud to leeward lies,
Captained by him whose flag ne'er dips
But to the Lord of Destinies.

Lit by the light of morning wide,
 God! what a sight it was to see
 A fleet like that triumphant ride
 The blue, triumphant sea!
 No smoke to blur the vision fair,
 No subterfuge to hide the strong,
 Silent upon the pictured air,
 Yet eloquent as song.

III

ENGLAND EXPECTS

Before him of the bended brow
 The yeoman of the signals stands,
 The halyards fly, the flags out-blow
 Their message to all times and lands.
 "England expects"—the ringing cheers
 That, as the rainbow message climbs,
 Outburst from every ship that steers
 Shall echo through all lands and times,—
 Shall echo from that day to prove
 How grand was life, how great was war,
 When hearts were true, and Villeneuve
 Was captain of the *Bucentaure*.

IV

THE 'TWEEN DECKS OF THE *VICTORY*

Up on the main deck light is free ;
Here in the 'tween decks light is dim,
And song is not, but wind and sea
Are heard joined in one battle-hymn.
Backed by the gun crews stript and stout,
Lit by the light that lives in caves,
The long lines of the guns look out
Upon the blue and flashing waves,
As rolls the great ship to the whine
Of cordage, block, and sheet that starts,
Leading the long-drawn weather line,
The blue sea flashing through her ports.

V

The captains of the guns are there,
The belt tight drawn about each waist,
Great-handed men with pigtailed hair
Whom never flight disgraced.
Brown with the bronze of winds and suns,
With hearts tattooed above their hearts,
True as the metal of their guns,
They stand to play their god-like parts.

The cutlass and the boarding pike
 Speak of the wild work soon to be,
 For these men strike, not as we strike
 Across wide leagues of sea.
 Insult they not the God who gave
 Us arms to fight with, not to play
 With guns that send ships to their grave
 Three long sea leagues away.
 So stand they, as to roll, and whine
 Of stanchion, block, and sheet that starts,
 The *Victory* leads the weather line,
 The sea breeze piping through her ports.

VI

The ships of France, the ships of Spain,
 Are not less beautiful to see
 Than our white ships that spread the
 main,
 Led by the voiceless *Victory*.
 Viewed from the hills where History
 stands
 To watch the old world pass away,
 The sight seems seen from summer
 strands,
 The pageant of a summer's day,—

Till from the fleet of Villeneuve
A cloud of smoke, a flame-red star,
Break with the sound that is to prove
The roar of Trafalgar.

VII

CLEARED FOR ACTION

Two giant tars stand at the wheel,
And every sail draws to the wind,
And from the trucks that skyward reel
Unto the kelson blind,
The ship runs voiceless, save the whine
Of rudder chain and hempen strand,
Steering to break the battle line
Of Villeneuve's command.

VIII

The captains of the guns below,
Amidst the linstock's red display,
Hark as the cannon of the foe
Break up the silence of the bay,
Curse in their beards, and have to stand
With idle hands, nor do, nor die,
Then burst in cheers at the command
That breaks their chains—"Let fly!"

She speaks with no uncertain tongue,
 With rips of light the broadsides roar,
 And flame, and smoke, and death are
 flung
 As if from Hell's outslamming door.
 "Port, hard a port!" the wheel-spokes
 fly,
 The great ship swings, and terrible,
 With topsails backed, the *Victory*
 Attacks the great *Redoubtable*.

IX

THE TWO FLEETS

Whilst ship to ship, and gun to gun,
 Ships fight as heroes fought of yore,
 And battle clouds make dim the sun,
 And deaf the day the battle's roar,
 The clash of steel, the smash of spars,
 The shouts of giant ships that pour
 From deck to deck their fighting tars
 Wake echoes from the distant shore.
 The storm of guns, the storm of cheers
 With which the boarders greet commands,
 Outbursting from each ship that steers,
 Shall echo through all times and lands,—

THE BALLAD OF THE *VICTORY* 17

Shall echo from that day to prove
How great was life, how grand was
war,
When steel was steel, and Villeneuve
Was captain of the *Bucentaure*.

X

Four fleeting hours, the work is done,
And lo! an age has passed away ;
Great silence falls on the last gun
As sunset floods o'er Cadiz bay.
The sea wind lifts the curtain white
Of battle smoke—the sea wind shows
Unto the vague approaching night
The British and their shattered foes :
Tall masts whose trucks once swept the
stars,
Awash with wreckage in the waves ;
Great men who drove the capstan bars
And served the guns, flung to their
graves ;
Great ships, at dawn so fair to see,
By sunset's light so pitiable ;
And in their midst the *Victory*
Fast seized to the *Redoutable*.

XI

As stricken gladiators cling
Together in a fast embrace
Whilst all the watching eyes that ring
The circus seek the Emperor's face,
These two great ships clung fast, alone,
Silent and fierce, till far above,
God gave the *habet* from His Throne,
And broke the power of Villeneuve.
Now side by side they idly lie,
The green sea washing in between ;
The fishing sea-gulls wheel and cry,
As rocks the sea-swell, vast, serene,
The grand bulk of the *Victory*.
The tragic mistress of the scene.

XII

The captain of the fight, no more,
Beyond the sunset, who knows where?
Has gone to meet on some far shore
His officers who wait him there.
And they have gone without their swords
Who dominated once the seas,
Who spoke with cannon-shots for words,
Till God dictated Peace.

THE BALLAD OF THE *VICTORY* 19

XIII

Thus evening fell on that great fray ;
And though long years have passed since
then,
The flag of Britain still, to-day,
Calls to the hearts of Englishmen :
“ Prove to the world your greatness, prove
Yourselves as then, when, grand in war,
Great Nelson lived and Villeneuve
Was captain of the *Bucentaure*.”

CAVALIERS, O CAVALIERS!

MEN of Yorkshire, men of Kent,
Cavaliers, O Cavaliers!
Ye who into battle went
For your faith, and ye who spent
For the King your blood and tears,—

Answer us who call you now,
Speak across the vanished years
From the fields where spring flowers
grow,
Battlefields of long ago,
Cavaliers, O Cavaliers!

Voices call to you to-day:
“Help us, set by craven fears;
Strike sedition, strike decay;
Step forth with us, laughing, gay,
Ghosts of knightly Cavaliers!”

Still the noble forelands stand,
Still her green the oak-tree wears ;
Yet the worm works in the land,
Sapping England's spirit grand,
Sullyng the name she bears.

Little men with little soul
Lead our thought, and meet with jeers
All men with a grander goal,
Drums that round the round world roll,
Cavaliers, O Cavaliers !

Ye had faults, but, God ! how fine
Were ye in those troublous years !
Loved ye women, dice, and wine,
But in battle how divine
Stood ye forth, O Cavaliers !

We have men and we have swords,
And a name the whole world fears ;
Yet by futile men of words
Driven are we like the herds,
Twisted like the vane that veers.

Wake in us, O Spirits grand,
For our turning-point now nears;
By the strength of England's hand
She shall fall or she shall stand
Queenly in the unborn years.

One for King and country, all,
Heedless though the whole world hears,
Sound the bugle, at the call
Help us so we hold the wall!
Cavaliers, O Cavaliers!

BALLAD OF THE TRUMPETER

NASEBY FIELD

FILLED with the breath of me my bugle
led the charge,

Here where the golden corn is growing ;
Over the death of me the battle blossomed
large,

Here where the cornflowers blue are
blowing.

Over the trumpeter who led the Cavaliers,
Over the silence he is keeping,

Over the golden corn the wind of summer
veers,

Over the crimson poppies sleeping.

Yea, but the soul of me still fills the
bugle gay,

Still when the battle calls I hear it ;
Here though my dust may be and far the
fight away,

Here lies my dust, but there my spirit.

24 BALLAD OF THE TRUMPETER

Still as of old it lives, though here my
body lies,

Shrill through the clash of swords that
sever,

Still from the bugle's throat across the
fight it cries,

“ ENGLAND FOR EVER AND FOR EVER ! ”

When, lit by light of sword and riding
knee to knee,

Bright through the battle into story,
England's swift squadrons ride, their
trumpeter is me,

Yea, and their glory is my glory.

THE OLD ENGLISH TOWN

IT is June. 'Neath the bridge where the
blue river strays

The dragonflies pass on their way.

It is June, and the Mendips hang blue
in the haze ;

It is June, and the roses are gay.

From the town wrapped in slumber of
noontide the breeze

Scarce bringeth a sound to the ear,

Save the voices of birds from the gardens
and trees,

Proclaiming the sweet of the year.

So silent the market-place lieth, it seems,

If market were ever held there,

The merchants were surely the people of
dreams,

Sun-banished—no man knoweth where.

And Fore Street and Main Street so
ancient are they,
So silent, the spirit half hears
The echoing tramp of the Ironsides grey
And the drums of the lost Cavaliers.

In many a mind lies the old English town,
And many a heart feels its loss,
Where the tropic wave breaks or the
grass burneth brown
On the Veldt 'neath the Southern
Cross.

Oh to stand on the bridge where the blue
river strays,
When the dragonflies pass on their
way,
In June, when the mountains hang blue
like a haze—
In June, when the roses are gay!

THE *VICTORY*

SIGHTED OFF TARIFA

WHERE Africa Tarifa hails

Across the blue sea's flashing floor,
Like cloud blown after cloud, there sails
A phantom fleet for evermore.

Through open ports their guns we view,
As, piled with canvas white as snow,
To where the pennons flog the blue,

Like cloud blown after cloud, they go.
That ship on which the great sun shines,
She is the *Victory*.

Just as there
She sails, with sunlight on her lines

And topsails trembling into air,
So shall she sail before the eyes

Of men, nor ever an anchor cast,
Until the seas forget the skies,
Until the world forgets its past.

A VISION

FROM THE PICTURE BY MR. C. R. WYLIE

HULLED right down to the water-line,
 Holed between wind and spray,
Forging ahead with pumps a-whine,
 Wireless shot away,
Boats and booms and nettings shed,
 How well she holds her own ;
—And never a dock from Flamborough
 Head
 To far-off Portsmouth town.

The English land that gave her birth
 Broad on the starboard beam,
The headlands and the good brown earth,
 The bays where seagulls scream ;
Six hundred miles of coastline spread
 With tower and church and town,
—And never a dock from Flamborough
 Head
 To where the Tyne runs down !

O good brown earth that gave her birth,
O men who gave her soul,
Behold her now with battered prow
Lipped by the long sea roll ;
Stricken, jackalled, kite-pursued,
And never an open door
From Tynemouth lights and Flamborough
heights
To where the Goodwins roar !

SONGS OF CHILDHOOD

TOY TOWN

ALL April-green 'neath April skies,
Beyond the land of Spring it lies ;
Beyond the hills and far away,
A vanished country quaint and gay.

Sometimes in Spring, when south winds
 blow,
And o'er the blue the white clouds go,
Nodding in dreams I hear from there
Faint sounds as of a distant fair ;
The tap of drums, toy trumpets blown,
The hubbub of a fairy town,—

A town the strange metropolis
Of folk whose curious faith was this :
A firm belief in Noah's Ark
By day, and goblins after dark.

Writer or poet, they were just
Like other mortals made of dust,
But white mice had a glamour there
For ever lost in denser air.

Ah me! the world went well, I ween,
There where the world was mostly green,
Where people's hair was mostly curled,
And every garden was a world.

Could I return and sojourn there,
And find again that joyous fair
Where drums were beaten, trumpets blown,
And unto Gloom no quarter shown,
I would return—but that I trow
No person there would know me now.

THE MOTHER-LAND

SINCE God, to folk of six or seven
Gave strength with which no king may
strive,
Since half the sweetness under heaven
He gave to people under five.

We little knew what we were giving,
Methinks, when we gave play for strife
And for the land where we are living
The country where we played at Life.

O'er wooden trees and toy-church steeple
Burns faintly each man's morning star,
O Mother-land whose laughing people
The dearest of all people are!

To Death some fragment of thy stories
The beggar brings, and to thy song,
Behind the dying Emperor's glories,
His old tin soldiers tramp along.

We turn from thee, new countries take us ;
We change for gold our groats and
pence,
Our broken toys for toys that break us,
For what, God knows, our innocence.

THE LOST CHILDREN

I PIPE beneath the morning star,
Across the fields of early frost
My music leads from near and far
The footsteps of the children lost.
Beyond the lands by light forlorn
I bring them to such fields—— Ah well !
For my beloved ye would not mourn
If they could tell !

—If they could tell !

“ O piper, thou hast led them hence.
What then ? The tale unwritten lies
Of those sweet hearts of Innocence,
Their wanderings under alien skies.
Shines there the sun ? blows there the
wind ?

The butterfly—what share has he ? ”

Oh thou wouldst never more be blind
If thou couldst see !

—If thou couldst see !

SONGS OF SPRING

MAY DAY

FROM where I lie
There stretches for me
Infinite sky
And the foam-flecked free
Blue of the everlasting sea.

White sails of ships
Away and away,
Where the ocean lips
The rim of the day,
Pass to the west on the winds of May.

From the distant braes,
Through the silence deep,
From the flocks that graze
Come the bells of sheep,
Faint like a sound from the hills of
sleep.

And now and again
A great wave dying
Breaks ; through the rain
Of the salt spume flying
I hear whole leagues of the white coast
sighing.

No other sound,
From the light that trills
The arc profound
That the ocean fills
To the highlands bound by the hazy
hills,

Save the wind that sings
Of the hills of heather,
Till the soul takes wings,
And from earthly tether
Freed, ascends through the azure weather ;

Till the sea below
And the land sea-bound
Fade in the glow
Of the light around,
And the soul is lost in the blue pro-
found.

O beauties of sky
And the fields of the sea,
Must ye die when I die,
Though my passion for ye
Is the love of the blue and the bright
and the free?

Will ye give to your lover
No power to roam,
Though his soul would discover
No happier home
Than the fields of the æther, the meadows
of foam?

The fields of the æther
Where waiteth for me,
In halcyon weather,
A white spirit, free
From the form that shall never return
from the sea.

The red sun sinks,
Through the twilight grey
The gull's wing blinks
On the homeward way,
As over the sea comes the moon of May.

From the waves that mourn
In the sea-cave's keep,
From the waves cliff-torn
Comes a sonorous, deep
Sound like a requiem sung by Sleep

For the day now gone
For ever to be
With the sunken sun,
With the visions that flee—
And the ships that shall never come back
from the sea.

THE COUNTRY OF SPRING

TELL me, O Life, where a man may be
 gay,
Wishing life longer, and longer the day?
Where are the dawns most seraphic of
 wing,
Evenings least grey?

In the country of Spring.

Tell me, O Love, where a beggar may
 find
Love? and, O Love, where art thou the
 least blind?
Where are the songs that the lost shep-
 herds sing,
Blown on the wind?

In the country of Spring.

44 THE COUNTRY OF SPRING

Answer me, Age, where those green fields
do lie

Where man returns ere he turns him to
die?

Where lives the Mother to whom all men
cling,

For whom all sigh?

In the country of Spring.

Death! in what land do the violets
blow

Over the women men loved long ago?

Where o'er their graves bloom the lilies,
O King,

Whiter than snow!

In the country of Spring.

THE WOOD OF HEMLOCK

I

OUT from the hemlock wood I came
Into no country of the world;
My steed a hoof of crescent flame
Struck without sound on sward empearled
With flowers, so still they seemed to be
The flowers that bloomed beneath a sea.

Up to a castle old and grey,
With drawbridge chains half worn away
By rust, the red moth of decay,
I rode, and crossed a trembling bridge
Into a courtyard that enclosed
Nor echo, nor the sound of midge
Abuzz, nor whine of hound that dozed.

Amidst the brambles and the thorn,
 Upon the flags a gauntlet lay,
 Flung there upon some hunting morn,
 Gone now as is the winter's day
 That saw to tune of hound and horn
 That chase stream over bank and brae.

II

Gazing from out a casement old,
 A lady drew mine eyes to her.
 Her hair was like ripe corn for gold ;
 A little cloak of fox's fur
 Covered her shoulders, whilst her eyes
 Were fixed upon the far-off skies
 Whose wizard blue no wing might stir.

Then, reining in, to her I cried :
 " O lady at the casement wide,
 What messenger from where doth ride,
 Bearing thee ' Luck ! ' or ' Woe betide ! ' ?
 And is it Love, or is it War,
 Burning before thee like a star ?

“ And who has kept thee lingering so,
 Whilst here the wizard winds do blow
 On fading flowers, on fading snow?
 Whilst here below thee in the keep
 The violets fair have bloomed and
 died ? ”

Vanished the castle as she sighed,
 Leaving on air the whisper “ Sleep.”

III

I reined beside a woodland dell
 Where fiercely, like a red flower, blew
 A battle; archers aiming well
 Sharpened their elbows as they drew
 The bowstrings, and the vanquished fell,
 Mixing their hearts' blood with the dew.

Uprose the white swords one and all,
 And circling blushed red as the rose;
 Columns to soundless trumpet-call
 Advanced, and broke 'neath soundless
 blows.

I sat and watched. Betwixt us lay
 A great old hedge of English may,
 Robbed of its scent since that far day.
 I cried, "O men of arms, ye slay
 For what? And what crown shall ye keep
 Of those ye win?"

"Sleep," answered they,
 Vanishing at the dark word "Sleep."

IV

And then I found a little town.
 It sat within a valley's lap;
 Its battlements at me did frown;
 Its houses each an iron cap
 Did seem to wear.
 An archer paced
 Before its gates with vizor closed,
 And right, and left, and right he faced,
 Whilst at the gates a wolf-hound dozed.

I saw the merchants in the mart,
 Soundless, like figures in brocade;
 Jews with a lean hand to the heart,
 And goldsmiths whose black hammers
 made

No sound upon the ruddy gold ;
 Flax-headed children, women old ;
 And here a man who clasped a maid.

I cried, "Who art thou, Archer, then,
 Guarding these locked by silence in ?
 Who placed thee here, and when, I pray ?"
 Then came the answer from within
 The vizor, like an echo thin,
 "Sleep," as the vision passed away.

V

I reined where in an orchard old,
 Beneath the apples red and gold,
 Fair children chased the butterflies
 Betwixt the trees, beneath the skies.
 And, as I watched them at their play,
 They, tiring, cast themselves and lay
 Where grew in shadow dim and deep
 The crimson poppies strewn by Sleep.

VI

Then said I : "Childhood, Life, and War
 All of this wizard vassals are.
 Is there in time no dream, no star
 That he may touch not, break, nor mar ?"

For answer came a man and maid ;
Across the fields with spring flowers
laid
Grew amaranths where they had strayed,
And said a voice :

“ Behold ! these stray
Taking through all the lands of May,
Taking through life the fairest way,
To find that unknown field where
dwells
Sleep 'midst the ghostly asphodels.”

CREDO

PALE Beauty's fire for ever burns,
No dream of hers can die.
The butterfly of Spring returns
Whence came the butterfly.

The garden rose lies stricken dead—
O dreamer, no man knows,
When she from earth has turned her head,
Into what world she blows.

THE VANQUISHED

SOFT speak the streams :

“ Why lingerest thus,
Held by what dreams,
Harmodius ?

Behold thy seat,
The feast lies spread.

Who stays thy feet,
O Diomed ? ”

Green are the hills,
And where lay snow
Spring's daffodils
Are golden now,
For all save they
Who at their door
Shall hear her gay
Sweet songs no more.

Ah, who can say
 What vanished Springs
Re-bloom when May
 Here beauty brings?
What fragrant tale
 Lost April tells
Amidst the pale,
 Pale asphodels?

I love to dream
 That over there
Spring's cloud and gleam
 The vanquished share;
That through the fleet
 Soft April rain
They hear her sweet,
 Sweet songs again.

THE BUNCH OF COWSLIPS

A BUNCH of cowslips, dead perhaps to-
morrow,
Plucked yesterday, has brought me for
my sorrow
A picture from the land whose pictures
borrow
Their beauty from the souls of things
well slain.
Beneath a sky grey as the cygnet's
feather,
Before the wind pale cowslips press
together
Their heads in converse, whilst the wild
spring weather
Repaints the hedgerows with the brush
of rain.

Oh I would give those wives I have not
married

And all those plans of mine that have
miscarried,

Debts and disasters, blows I have not
parried,

And of my life the sweet remaining span,
To find again those fields where Spring
discloses

The primrose, fairer than all future roses,
And midst those rain-wet lands and wind-
blown closes

Touch life a moment just where life began.

THE ALMOND TREE

BESIDE the wandering river stands
An almond tree in bloom ;
New travelled from the far-off lands
Beyond the Northern gloom,
She casts her tale of loveliness
Upon the winter's tomb
Ere the swallows from the south come
over sea.

Just in the Spring's first hour on earth,
Ere yet the door may close
That here admits the violet,
Yet still excludes the rose,
Some whisper comes from lands un-
known
Where dwell the ghosts of those
Sweet singers who have loved the earth
and sea.

For when the almond tree displays
Her perfect beauty thus,
Sappho, across a thousand Mays
Thy music steals to us!
Some wind here wafts from far-off lands
Thy songs, Theocritus!
As the south wind wafts the swallows
over sea.

THE SKYLARK

(TO THE SHADE OF ERNEST DOWSON)

I HEARD a song as the Morning Star
Died in a dawn of June.
I heard the leaves where the rose-trees are
Dance to the magic tune.
Deep, deep, from the blue and far
Into my heart it fell,
From those meadows of light that are
Trodden by Israfel.

Songs of lovers and songs of war,
Earth in her pride may boast ;
But the sweetest of all songs are
Songs that the earth has lost.

THE WILD HYACINTHS

THE hill-path turned, and in a sunlit
space

Wild hyacinths were bending to the wind.
The veil of time was rent before my face.
I paused, to life, and age, and sorrow,
blind ;

Caught back to youth a moment free
from care,

Old lands lay round me ere I woke to
find

No trace of all that country but the fair
Blue hyacinths all bending to the wind.

Not the dark magic of a woman's glance,
Nor all the tongues of birds that sing in
May,

Can equal in the language of romance
What to the heart a simple flower can say.

THE NIGHTINGALES

(IN THE WOODS OF SICILY)

A THOUSAND years their passion
Has filled the nights of Spring,
Setting in ghostly fashion
The echoes answering.
As now, it filled the closes,
When moonlight fell like snow
Upon the red, red roses,
A thousand years ago.

O strange poetic singers,
Ye vague historians,
Whose half-told story lingers
Ghost-like and sweet o'er Man's!
Of eyes that once made jealous
The blue Sicilian sea
Remains alone to tell us
Theocritus and ye.

Ask of the past its glory,
Its joys, its griefs, its pain,
Where shall ye find the story
But in a poet's brain?
And for the tale of woman
Lost to the world so long,
Seek in no records human
Save in the poet's song.

Theocritus has vanished,
But still we hear his strain;
Nations from earth are banished,
But Lacon shall remain;
And nightingales still tell us
Here, where the roses blow,
How fair was Amaryllis
A thousand years ago.

APPLE BLOSSOMS

(CAMBRIDGESHIRE)

THE apple blossoms round me blow,
Of them my heart makes question :
' Sweet apple blossoms, pure as snow
And fragrant with suggestion,
Ye came from where no man may know,
Called by the wild Spring weather ;
Mortal and beautiful ye go,
Sweet apple blossoms,—whither ? ”

Beside me in the orchard close,
An echo answers ever
The wind that blows the wild dog-rose,
The music of the river.
Child of the Spring, she tells her tale,
Nor hints to who comes hither
Aught of the wind that blows the pale,
Frail apple blossoms—whither ?

The wind that hath all lovers known,
Yet of their fate tells never ;
The wind that, when the flower has blown,
Shall take the flower for ever.

SEA PASTORAL

Blue sea far from land, sea maids tending flocks of ocean. Above are passing butterflies and birds from the south.

SEA MAIDS

WHAT land, O happy birds,
Calls you across our sight,
Ye forms—ye feathered words
Born of the Spring's delight ?

NIGHTINGALES

O'er Ocean's flocks and herds
Seek we the lands of night.

SWALLOWS

Star-guided, swift and far
We pass.

SEA MAIDS

O birds that sweep
The skies, where burns thy star?

SWALLOWS

O'er the lands of Love and Sleep.

SEA MAIDS

Lo! they have passed, and lo!
Butterflies white as snow,
Butterflies blue as day.
Butterflies, where away?
Over our heads ye pass
Whither?

BUTTERFLIES

A magic glass
Shows us 'neath bluer skies
Blossoms and butterflies,
Meadows where maidens sing,
Rivers whose music saith,
"Lovers, come find the Spring
In the country of Love and Death."

SEA MAIDS

Sweet forms, ye pass away,
A mist on the blue of day,
Far from the ocean spray
Where the lone sea maids sing,
Immortal, yet alway
Far from the land of Spring.
Past the blue veils of sea,
Butterflies, would that we,
Immortal, blind
To Love, could find,
The fair land that you see.
Past seas and skies,
O Dove that flies,
Where may that country be?
Whence speaks that voice so filled
With the joy that we would prove?

DOVE

From where, sweet maids, I build
In the land of Death and Love.

BELLONA'S SONG

WAR! War! War!
Face stretched to the heavens I cry,
Through the ultimate depths of the sky.
I am blind to the sun ;
I have dreams but of one
Whose eagles are straining to fly.
Forth driven from hell,
Through the darkness I yell
Till the drums and the trumpets reply,—
Till the drums and the bugles that blare
Re-echo in thunder afar,
Rending the earth and the air,
War! War! War!

THE BUTTERFLY

AS through the gardens fair
Blue-winged he flies,
Heedless of earthly care,
Heedless of sighs,
So be that roses blow,
Heavens are blue ;
Ten thousand years ago
Just so he flew.

Old are the pyramids,
Older is he,
Yet, called by she who bids
Butterflies be,
Over the lilac pale,
Under blue skies,
Once more through June's bright tale
Boldly he flies.

Long ere on Memnon's face
Morning first shone,
Earth knew his fragile grace,
Now here—now gone.
Yet finds he Spring anew
By field, by stream,
Flitting, as once he flew
Through Plato's dream.

Crush him, if so you please,
Shall the bruised wings
Fly not when Winter's trees
Once more are Spring's?
Faithful to earth, unvexed,
Through death he'll pass,
Flitting across the next
Spring's magic glass.

Backgrounded by the sea,
Mountains, and stars,
All Time's immensity,
Stories, and wars

Flutters he from the Past
O'er flower and bloom,
Lighting, mayhap, at last
On man's last tomb.

SONGS OF SUMMER

THE RED, RED ROSE

FROM the sky the red sun sinketh ;
At the doors of the west the Night
From a chalice of azure drinketh
The wine of his crimson light.
And the nightingale sadly crieth
Far in the woods apart,
But the soul of his sadness lieth
In the gloom of thy splendid heart.

As through the warm June weather
Dusk follows the curlews' call,
On thy face the dewdrops gather,
Drop after drop they fall.
And leaving the lilies to languor,
The fireflies make their light
Attendant upon thy splendour,
Queen of the garden's night.

And the nightingale sadly crieth
Far in the woods apart,
But the soul of his sadness lieth
In the gloom of thy splendid heart.

IN THE GARDEN

I SIT where guelder roses blow ;
A bottle of red wine
Before me casts its ruby glow
On rose and eglantine.
Upon my knees a book I hold.
O tales of old romance,
How well ye go with gardens old
And the red wines of France !

Unto the true nobility
Of things do ye belong ;
Never with us ye disagree,
Or work our feelings wrong.
Old books, old gardens, ruby wine,
Ye own one spirit half divine.

Then grow you old in quest of gold,
So be you leave me these,
My library, a cellar cold,
This garden where some breeze
Bears faintly from the far-off years
The trumpets of the Cavaliers.

THE OLD GERMAN FOREST

I LISTEN, no sound fills the air
Of the pine forests perfumed and fair ;
Long leagues of deep twilight lie round,
Long leagues of sweet silence, no sound ;
Till a jay wakes and calls, and the wind
Re-awakens and leaves far behind,
O'er the perfume and gloom of the trees,
A sound like the sigh of the seas.

The wind dies away and away,
And the silence resumes its lost sway,
Till over the forest again
Comes the rush of the wind and the
rain
Of the cones, and most faint and forlorn
The note of a far hunting-horn
Makes ghostly the twilight so deep
With the forms and the phantoms of
sleep.

78 THE OLD GERMAN FOREST

That is all that the pine forests say ;
Though you listen at noontide for aye,
You shall hear nothing more, save the
 fall

Of the red fox's foot, or the call
Of the horn that some ranger does wind,
And on earth or in air you shall find
No sounds that are better than these,
Or filled with such sweetness and peace.

THE ROSE

WHAT says the rose whose life is but an
hour?

“ I am the rose here sent from heaven to
say,

‘ Love once, and you have plucked the
only flower

That dies not in this garden of decay.’ ”

A SONG OF AUTUMN

THE SWALLOWS

THOUGH nests hang empty 'neath the
eaves,

Sweetheart, the swallows still are here;
They came when vernal were the leaves
That now are turning to the sere.
Their joyousness my spirit grieves—
The swallows to thy heart were dear.

By what strange star do swallows steer?
What voice enchants the swallow's
heart,

And from the north in spring cries
“Here!”

And in the autumn days, “Depart”?

Mayhap, that voice led thee past Fear,
Death, and the dim enchanted mere—
The swallows to thy heart were dear.

SONGS OF GREECE

UPON THE HILLS THE SHEP-
HERDS FEED THEIR FLOCKS

(ATHENS)

UPON the hills the shepherds feed their
flocks.

Afar the sea—the violet-tinted sea—
Still floods in foam around the Pontic
rocks,

And with the golden sun holds revelry ;
Lulling the hyacinths with drowsy rhyme,
About Pentelicus still floats the bee ;
All is as fair as in the olden time,

All is as fair as then—

But where are ye?

Sweet spoke the wild birds when ye
sailed away

Across the sea, the dark and sterile sea,
And still they tell the self-same tales to-day
To lovers whispering 'neath the ilex tree

Men's hearts are young and Eros still
doth wear

His magic, and the voiceless poetry
Of violets still fills the warm spring air.

All still is fair as then—

But where are ye?

Where art thou now, O Pindar? in what
land,

Demosthenes, what tongue now dost
thou speak?

Far from the plane trees by the spring
wind fanned,

Far from Piraeus where the blue waves
break.

The plane trees bend them to the winds
of spring,

And echoes answer to the breaking sea ;
Sweet from the olive groves the wild
birds sing

For ever of their love—

But where are ye?

TO A TANAGRA STATUETTE

THY gracefulness we gaze upon,
Lent to our eyes by grace
Of Time, who wrecked the Parthenon,
Yet spared thy rosebud face.
With happy lips that seem to spell
The words the wild birds say,
What is it, then, that thou wouldst tell,
Thou little dream of May?

A thousand years have passed and gone,
Remains thy loveliness,
A thing for men to gaze upon,
A thing the world to bless.
Watching, we wait the words to pass
Those lips that tell for aye
Some tale—eternally, alas!
By silence kissed away.

90 TO A TANAGRA STATUETTE

Time's boasted splendours leave us cold,
Pathetic or sublime ;

His citadels and temples old,
They glorify but Time.

Thou art the warmest thing that he
Has touched, yet left complete—

Yea, thou, thou strange epitome
Of all fair things and sweet.

HYMN TO SELENE

SHE hath watered her steeds at the mystic
wells

Where the spirit of sleep in the lotus
dwells,

Pallid and fair o'er the twilit tides,

O'er the asphodels

And the night she glides.

Above her lieth the steep dark, free,

Swept by the winds of infinity ;

The spume of her steeds as a pale fire
spills

O'er the slumbrous seas,

O'er the silent hills.

Night behind on the dark sea's brink

Watcheth her coursers pale and sink,

Before her day like a dappled fawn

Steals to drink

At the pools of dawn.

Hail! O maiden who casteth thy light
O'er the dark fields and the valleys of
 night,
O'er the wan cities, the woodlands fair;
Earthly delight

—And the world's despair.

THE PIPES OF PAN

*And a voice ran over land and sea, crying, "Pan is dead,
great Pan is dead."*

IT was not so,
For the wild birds know
One dawn in Thessaly long ago
A sweeter song than the south winds blow
Under the olives ran,
And through the dreams of the Oread
 sighed,
And to the ear of the Bassarid cried,
Follow the pipes of Pan!

Then the Haemadryad rose and shook
Her hair from the oak by sorrow strook,
And the Oread cast a long, last look
Where far Penaeus ran.

And through the woods where the dark
 fawns leap,
And mountain paths where the hill winds
 weep,
Into the fair dim land of sleep
They followed the pipes of Pan.

Ah! never a rose may rise to tell
Of the fortunate fate that her befell—
Of the southern land where roses dwell
Under the winter's ban.
Yet the swallows have told, and the poet
 he knows,
That over the time of the northern snows,
The land of the myrtle hides the rose
As the land of our dreams hides Pan.

SONGS OF DREAMLAND

A BALLAD OF DREAMLAND

TO-NIGHT in Dreamland who can rest?

We hear on the night wind falling,
Over the hills in the dim, dark West.

The horn of a huntsman calling.

“Follow!” the horn of the huntsman cries;

On the wind over plain and hollow
A voice from the tarn where Echo lies
Dreamily answers, “Follow!”

We hear the far-off horn, we come,

Into the forest sweepeth

The wild white chase by waters dumb

Where the fern and the hemlock
sleepeth.

Who knows the form of the thing that
flies?

Hath it feet? Hath it wings like a
swallow?

Who cares? The horn of the hunter
cries

To the shadowy huntsmen, ‘Follow!’

The third cock crows, the dawn wind
blows,

The beams of morning quiver ;
Down vale and glade the huntsmen fade
Like mists upon the river.

Whilst o'er the streams and hills of
dreams

Die horn and hunting halloa,
Far, far away where night nor day,
Nor hound nor horse, may follow.

THE SKULL

WARM arms to a breast
Once my beauty did fold,
Once truly at rest
Did I lie.
Though ye shudder who scan
Me upturned from the mould,
I was loved by a man—
Even I.

THE GHOSTLY ORCHARD

WANDERING last night amidst the fields
of sleep,
I met a Spirit white as Death, yet white
As dawn, who led me by the hand, oh,
deep
Into the past beyond the veils of night.
There in a country old he showed to me
An apple orchard painted fresh by Spring,
Amidst whose trees the little birds did
sing
Of Life and Love, and of Eternity.
Across the sky a few white clouds did go
Softly, and white as lambs, or white as
snow ;

And to mine ear the Spirit whispering said,
 "A thousand years have vanished since
 they strayed
 Across that sky, and all this wondrous
 show
 Of blossom died a thousand years ago—
 Ah God! Ah God! what havoc Death
 has made!"

In fields near by the young white lambs
 did leap,
 And daffodils lay in the golden light;
 Now seemed the daffodils all lost in sleep,
 Now on the wind they danced as in
 delight.
 And then there came a man and maid,
 ah me!
 Across that orchard painted fresh by
 Spring,
 Where in the trees the little birds did sing
 Of Love and Life, and of Eternity.
 They paused to hear the thrush, that love
 adept;
 I watched her arm as round his neck it
 crept.

Then to mine ear the Spirit whispering
said,

“Far from the wild sweet Spring these
forms have strayed,

Far from this orchard where the brown
thrush sings

Songs that have echoed through a thou-
sand springs.”

BENEATH THE CYPRESS TREES

BENEATH the cypress trees
Lais her council keeps,
Sappho, the dreamer of the seas,
With Theodora sleeps.

There lies the Phrygian slave,
The Queen, the Emperor's joy,
There Thais lies and she who gave
The kiss that ruined Troy.

Men and the gods above
These held whom none regret,
Who, couldst thou ask them, "What is
Love?"
Would answer, "We forget."

O face so fair to see,
Eyes bluer than the seas,
What shall all beauty profit ye
Beneath the cypress trees?

BALLAD OF THE SLEEPING HOUND

GREAT hound with head upon my knee,
Deep eyes so faithful and so fair,
Face stamped with that nobility
The kings of earth no longer wear;
Hound royal, yet content to share
A crust of mine and find thy bliss
Beside a ruined hearth, if there
Thy well-belovèd master is.

Before that hearth in slumber now,
Thy limbs a-twitch, a white fang
gleams—
It is some royal game I trow
Upon whose spoor the wild chase teems;
Faint bells the horn o'er phantom streams,
And though the kill with thee I miss,
I know the huntsman of thy dreams
Thy well-belovèd master is.

BALLAD OF THE SLEEPING HOUND 105

Dream on, and fortune lend thee wings
O'er lakes unruffled by the swan,
Beneath that sky where no bird sings,
Good luck to fang and foot. Dream on.
Fate lend thy shade such speed upon
The way when, waiting for thy kiss,
In lands beyond the light of sun
Thy well-belovèd master is.

ENVOI

If there be heaven, its joys we'll share ;
Full well I know if heaven I miss,
Hell will not bar thee out—if there
Thy well-belovèd master is.

GHOSTS

GONE is the rain, no flower the garden
graces ;
Over the world the skies of winter
harden ;
Pale at my pane the frost flowers press
their faces,
Ghosts that half veil the ruins of my
garden.

And as they press, so press those other
faces,
Pale at the pane half veiling Life's
December—
Ghosts without stain
Of loved ones I remember.

THE ROAD TO NIKKO

(*From* THE CRIMSON AZALEAS)

UPON the road to Nikko,
The town where pilgrims pray,
Along the road to Nikko,
On either side the way,
Thundering great camellia trees,
Decked with blossoms gay,
Adorn the road to Nikko,
The mountain road to Nikko,
In the month of May.

Then take the road to Nikko,
Where bright azaleas bloom,
Where all is light and shadow
And nothing is of gloom,
Where shout the coloured blossoms,
Where fan ferns whispering say,
"There is no town like Nikko
In all the world of May."

Tokio has her tea-house,
Kioto has her girls,
But look out there where bluely
The great god Distance curls
His arm around that vision
So dim, so far away,
So beautiful—that's Nikko,
Amidst the land of May.

BALLAD OF THE ARRAS

(From DEATH, THE KNIGHT, AND THE LADY)

LO! where are now these armoured hosts
Mailed for the tourney *cap-à-pie*,
These dames and damozelles whose ghosts
Make of the past this pageantry?
O sanguine book of History!
Romance with perfume cloaks thy must,
But he who shakes the page may see—
Dust.

Stiff hangs the arras in the gloom ;
I turn my head awhile to gaze :
Here lordly stallions fret and fume,
Here streams o'er briar and brake the
chase ;
Here sounds a horn, here turns a face
How filled with fires of life and lust!
Wind shakes the arras and betrays—
Dust.

Ephemeral hand inditing this,
Great hound that lolls against my knee,
Heart that the fires of spring shall miss
In years to come, the time shall be
When one may search, but find not ye
For that dim moth whose labours rust
All forms in time or tapestry—
Dust.

HUNTING SONG

(*From* THE DRUMS OF WAR)

HOUND and horn, give voice and tongue,
Fill the woods with echoes gay ;
Let your music sweet be flung
To the Brocken far away.

Jägers with the horns ye wind,
Hounds whose tongues the chase shall
bay,
Let your voice the echoes find
Of the Brocken old and grey.

Hark amidst the bracken green
Bells the buck whose vigil keeps
Danger from the hind unseen,
Danger from the fawn that sleeps.

Hears he us, yet heeds us not,
Dreams he that we are the wind
Phantoms we of hounds forgot,
Ghosts of huntsmen long since blind.

Dreams we are the forest's breath
Waking to the touch of day ;
Recks not 'tis the horn of Death
Dying in the distance grey.

Hound and horn, give voice and tongue—

SONGS OF FRANCE

VERLAINE

RIMBAUD stands at Charleville
Done in stone—a statue shameless,
Paris poets daily fill
Books that in a year are fameless ;
Loti mourns and Rostand crows,
Printers print what years scarce glance on,
Like a stream for ever flows
La Bonne Chanson.

Demi-god turned inside out
With the mortal lining showing,
Face of satyr, form of lout,
Breath the fumes of Pernod throwing ;
Soul besmeared with any stains
That an evil thought may chance on ;
Be it so—yet still remains
La Bonne Chanson.

Who was Verlaine, what was he
That his name shall live for ever?
Ah! could you tell that to me
I would know what you'll know never;
I would know why stands the spring
In dark courts men look askance on,
Why God set Verlaine to sing
La Bonne Chanson.

Let the faultless cast their stone
At this strange form far from faultless,
Standing gloomy, lost, alone
'Neath the empyrean vaultless;
Falls the pebble that they fling,
Rises aye o'er leaves that dance on
The eternal winds of spring
La Bonne Chanson.

PETER AND THE PIERROT

WHO knocks so hard
On heaven's own gate?
'Tis locked and barred;
The hour is late.
Gone twelve, yet wait
A moment's space;
What's this? Great Fate!
A Pierrot's face!!!

Well, by my sleeve!
Nay, do not fret;
I called to leave
A lost Pierrette
These roses wet
And white as frost,
Lest she forget
Her Pierrot lost.

O scamp begone !

And yet—

and yet—

That face so wan,

Those roses wet.

With tears each flower

Weeps for a sin ;—

Though late the hour,

Pierrot, come in

TARASCON

HERE it is raining,
But it rains not there,
No heart's complaining
In the land through where
Spring's now going
Like a maiden bold,
Her blue skirts blowing
In the mistral cold.

Oh the colour! Oh the beauty!
Of that town so small,
Where love's a duty,
And the wild birds call
Loud at the skylights
When the dawn's on wing,
Low in the twilights
Of the blue, blue spring.

I hear the laughter
From the barber's shop,
The song, and after
Comes the shears' "crop, crop,"
Girls' steps straying
As the shadows steal,
The brass band braying
From the *Tour de ville*.

Long am I banished
From that southern town,
Do they miss me vanished?
Are they also flown—
The barber so knowing,
And those maids so bold,
Their sweet skirts blowing
In the mistral cold?



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