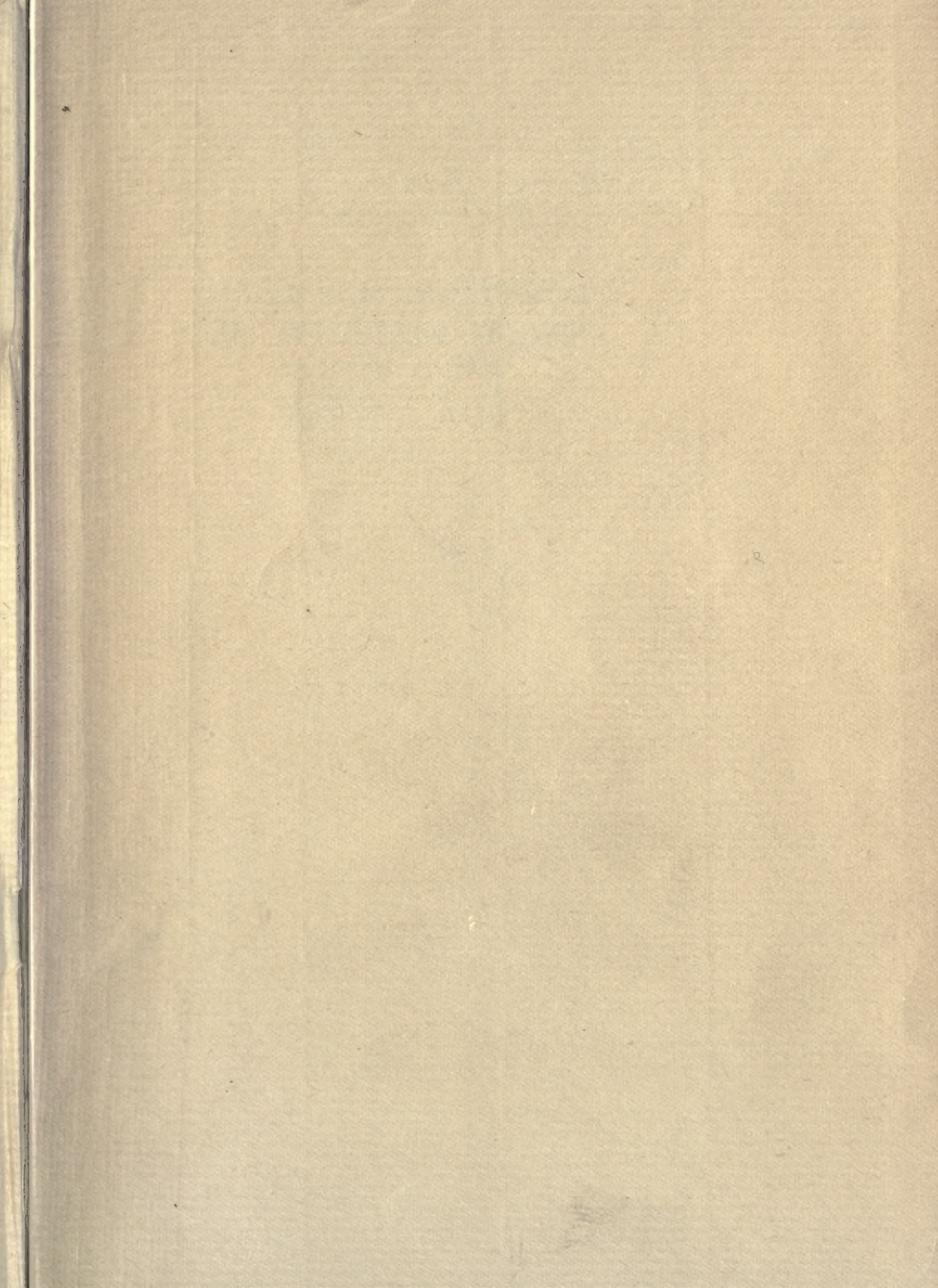
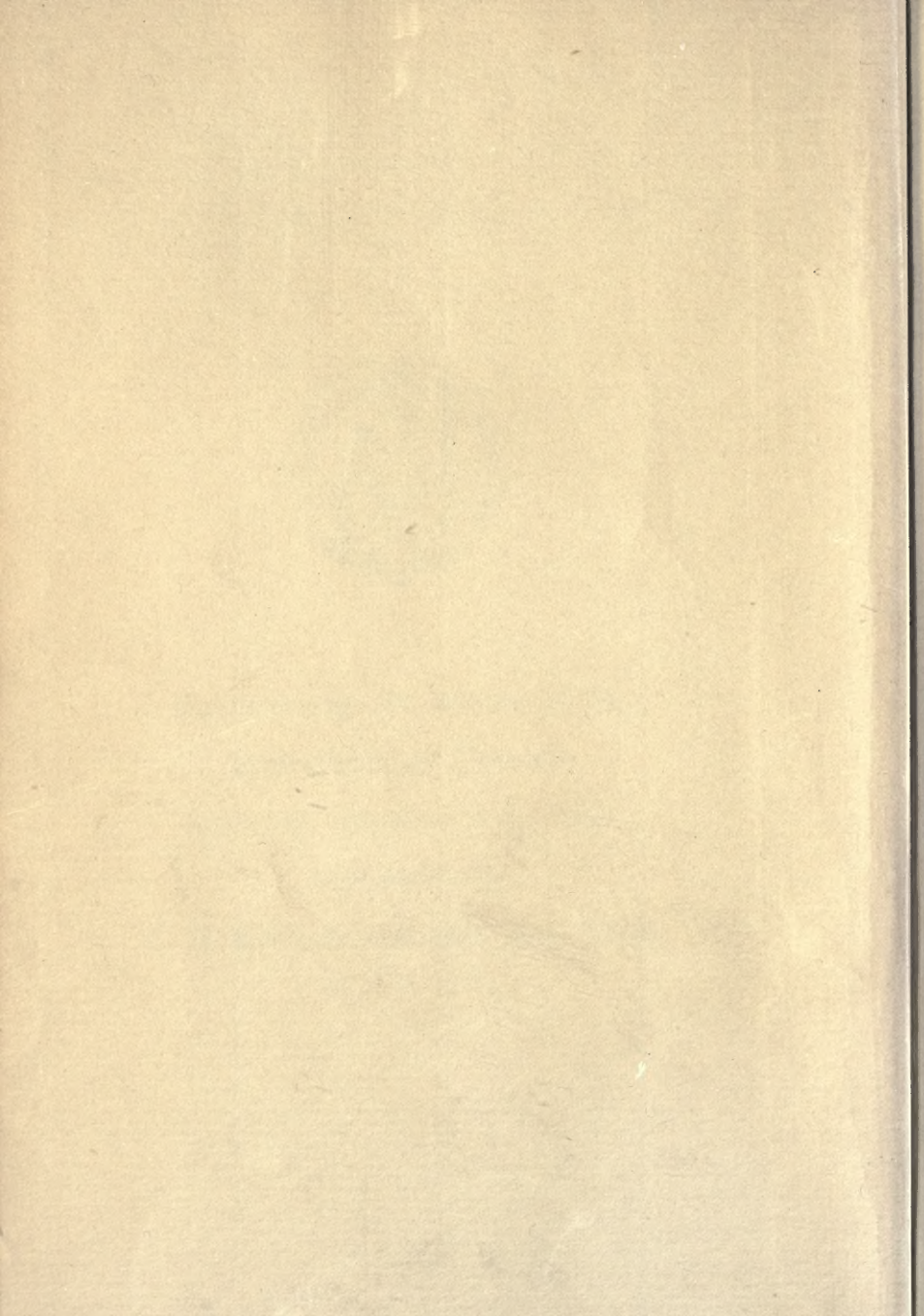






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OF WILLIAM SHARP

UNIFORM EDITION  
ARRANGED BY  
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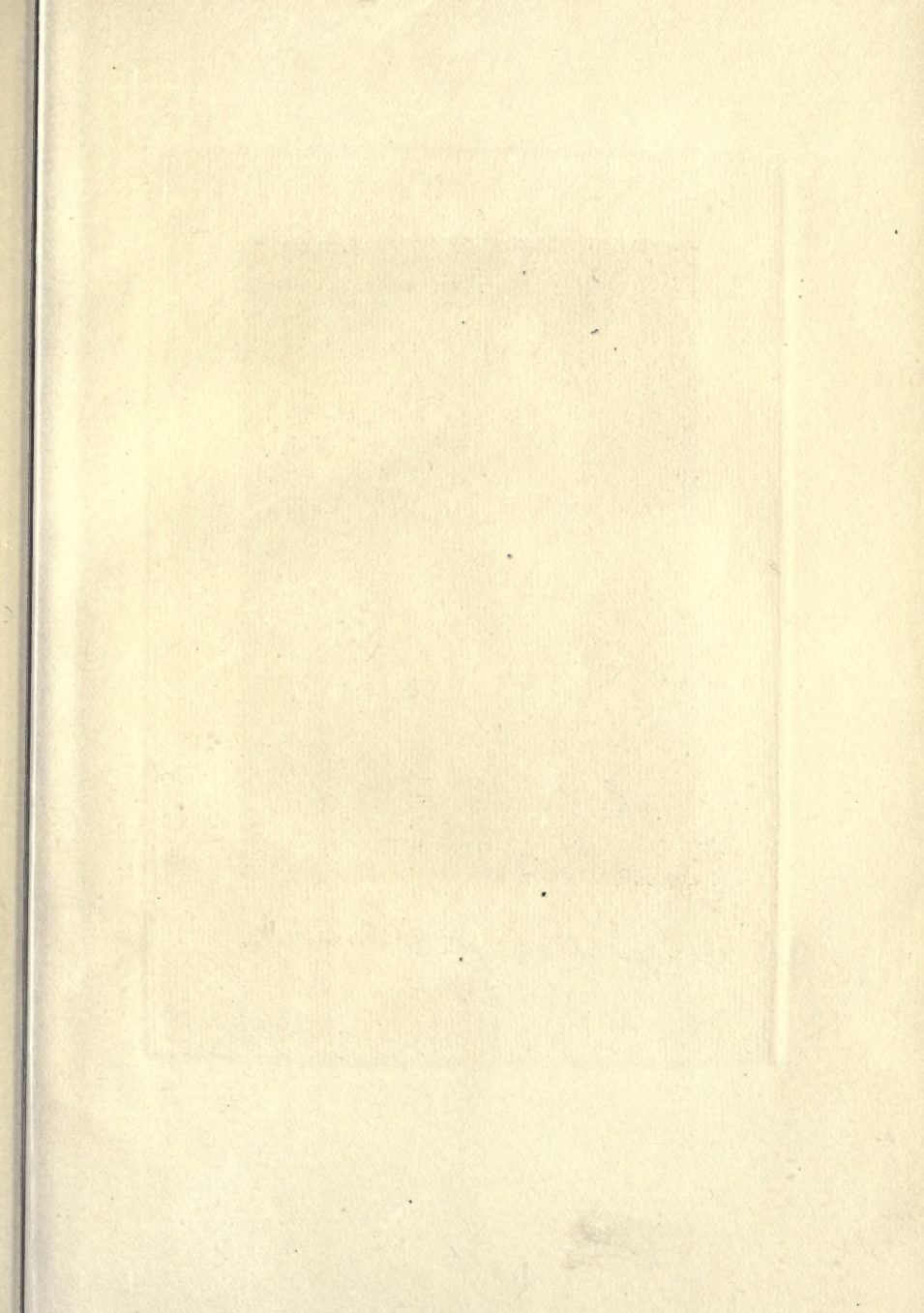




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1894



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# P O E M S

BY WILLIAM SHARP

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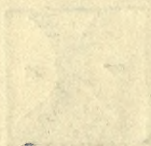


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## FOREWORD

THE writings of William Sharp divide themselves in the midway of his literary life into two distinct phases. The more racially imaginative phase, put forward under shelter of a pseudonym, has been gathered together in the "Fiona Macleod" Series published by Mr. Heinemann; and it seems fitting that a companion Series of writings of William Sharp, signed with his own name, should follow, and be as representative as possible, so that the two phases of his work can be compared conveniently.

As the "W. S." writings extend over a period of thirty years (the "F. M." period coincided with the last twelve years of the author's life), and comprise a wide range of subjects—poems, fiction, biographies, essays critical and reminiscent, and a mass of ephemeral work urged by the necessities of daily life—it has been somewhat difficult to determine on what basis to make a selection for the present Series. Finally, I decided to make choice from among the

## Foreword

shorter poems, from essays and tales, to the exclusion of the longer novel and biography, and thus, moreover, to fulfil certain of his expressed wishes.

In the arrangement of these volumes I have not preserved a definite chronological order, except in that of songs and poems. I have preferred to group the contents according to their subjects: Vol. I. Poems: Vol. II. Critical Essays: Vols. III. and IV. Papers, Biographic and Reminiscent: Vol. V. Short Stories. With the exception of a few of the poems, early experimental work is unrepresented; the earliest prose work included is the essay on the sonnet written in the author's thirty-first year. In accordance with his own wishes his *Life of Rossetti*—considered by him as youthful and unbalanced—also his romance, *The Children of To-morrow*, are not reissued. Of his later novels, *Wives in Exile* and *Silence Farm* (both out of print) were written during the "Fiona Macleod" period out of a desire to strengthen the reputation of "W. S." and thus help to shield the identity of "F. M." My husband considered that *Silence Farm* contained his most successful effort in characterisation. Nevertheless, in it, he deliberately suppressed certain qualities

## Foreword

natural to him, and emphasised others in order to make the style of writing as unlike that of "Fiona Macleod" as possible. Of other excluded mature work, the monographs on Shelley, Browning, and Heine are available among the publications of Messrs. Walter Scott, to whom I am indebted for permission to include in this volume the ballads of "The Weird of Michael Scott," "The Death-Child," and "The Isle of Lost Dreams." *The Life and Letters of Joseph Severn* is out of print; and the *Progress of Art in the XIX Century* is published by Messrs W. and R. Chambers.

The poems in the present volume (1879-1905) are selected from five volumes and a number of miscellaneous poems published in his own name, and not from those written over the pseudonym of "Fiona Macleod" (1893-1905). The earliest volume, *The Human Inheritance* (Elliot Stock, 1882) opened with a long poem in four cycles descriptive of Childhood, Youth, Manhood, and Old Age; and from it are taken "Childhood's Inheritance," "Motherhood," &c. The sonnets "Spring Wind" and "A Midsummer Hour" were included in *The Sonnets of this Century* (Walter Scott),

## Foreword

as were also those "To D. G. Rossetti," to whose memory the anthology was dedicated. *Earth's Voices* (Elliot Stock, 1884), dedicated to Walter Pater, contained a series of lyrics—voices of the forests, rivers, winds, flowers, mountains, oceans—two long poems, "Sospitra" and "Gaspara Stampa," from which "To suffer grief is to be strong" and "Sleep" are taken. "The Record" is autobiographic, inasmuch as it was the beginning of an endeavour to relate memories of past lives that haunted the author.

*Romantic Ballads* (Walter Scott, 1888) was written under "the earnest conviction that a Romantic Revival is imminent in our poetic literature"; that, as he stated in the Preface, "the third great epoch of English poetic literature will be an essentially dramatic one: and its fruitage will necessarily be preceded by a blossoming of the genuinely romantic sentiment . . . of the Romantic spirit—not the formal letter of Romanticism—a renaissance which will be as manifest in realistic as well as in more directly imaginative prose and poetry. . . . In 'The Weird of Michael Scott' [of which two sections are herein included] I have attempted a ballad in enlarged form—that

## Foreword

is, it is meant as a lyrical tragedy of a soul that finds the face of disastrous fate against it whithersoever it turns in the closing moment of mortal life." And he adds, "The thrill of the supernatural is so keen because it touches the most natural part of us."

The poet spent the winter and spring of 1890-91 in Rome and its environments; the immediate literary outcome thereof was a volume of unrhymed, irregular metres, printed at Tivoli, published privately that spring under the title of *Sospiri di Roma* and prefaced by [an etched portrait of him by Sir Charles Holroyd. Concerning his use of unrhymed metre he wrote to a friend: "What can be done in Greek and German can be done in English. This has been proved, for some of Matthew Arnold's finest work is in unrhymed verse. . . . I felt that there is in verse, as in painting, a borderland for impressionism pure and simple, for the suggestion of a certain colour and emotion, a vivid actuality, which are apt to be dissipated by the effort and restrictions of rhyme. . . . In this verse you will find something of my passion for the Campagna, and of that still deeper passion and longing for the Beautiful. All that I attempt to

## Foreword

do is to fashion anew something of the lovely vision I have seen."

"The Coming of Love," "The Untold Story," and "Dionysos in India" appeared originally in *The Pagan Review* (1892), the first and only number of a projected monthly review edited by "W. H. Brooks"—of which William Sharp wrote every word from cover to cover, under the pseudonyms of the Editor and the seven contributors.

Of the section of poems 1893-1905, "Hill Water" was written for the *Evergreen*, 1895, a quarterly issued by Patrick Geddes and Colleagues, and "Spanish Roses" is taken from *A Fellow and His Wife*, a novel written in collaboration with Blanche Willis Howard; the remaining poems in the last section were contributed variously to *Harper's Magazine*, the *Century*, *New York Independent*, *Literature*, *Country Life*, and the *Pall Mall Magazine*.

The Fragment entitled "Persephoneia" is the Prologue to a five-act play, begun in 1903 at Il Castello di Maniace, on Etna; and of it the complete draft, the Prologue, and half the first act only were written.

ELIZABETH A. SHARP



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*Praise be the fathomless universe  
For life and joy . . . and love,  
sweet love.*

## FIRST WORDS

*(To the one who has always first read everything  
I have written.)*

How can I tell thee, dear, what never words  
Have fitly told? How ope my heart to thee  
Wherein thou mightst, as in a well, per-  
ceive

Deep down but the mere shadow of my love?  
But as the wind sweeps from the icy north  
To some lov'd isle in dim Pacific seas,  
Or as the never-ceasing circling waves  
Follow round earth the radiant orb of night,  
So follow I with love unspeakable  
The pathways fill'd with light which are thine  
own.

O love, thou art the flame that burns for me,  
My steady purpose! That no dark can  
quench!

Holding thy hand I fear no more to watch  
The shifting of the changeful lights of Fate.

## CHILDHOOD'S INHERITANCE

### I

Beneath the blue vault of a summer sky,  
Where little clouds with white wings strove  
to fly  
Far from the burning noon, leagues long  
there lay  
Wide heather moors that stretched till far  
away  
Northward faint hills arose, and southward  
rolled  
The ocean gleaming with sun-litten gold.

### II

And 'mid a great swell of the purple waste  
Close to the sea, a rock, which no hand  
placed  
Thus lonely and afar but which was hurled  
A meteor from some ruin'd starry world,  
Rose dark and frowning, with its hoar sides  
scarred  
By winter tempests and the fiercely hard



*Childhood's Inheritance*

Gripe of the death-frosts that from north-  
land heights  
Steal silent through grim January nights,  
And traced with furrows by the many tears  
Of rainy autumns thro' unnumber'd years.

III

The purple moorland waste alone stretched  
wide  
Beneath the sun—no thing was seen beside  
To break the long still sweep that met the sky,  
No mounds of rocks confusedly piled high,  
No single tree with clear boughs limned in  
black  
Against the blue, no white and dusty track,  
But only miles and miles and miles that swept  
Purple to where the leagueless waters leapt.  
The old rock stood forth like an ancient throne  
Great tho' forgotten, where the winds alone  
Paid homage, fair in the sunshine of the day,  
Solemn by night with phosphorescent grey.

IV

Around, the honey-laden bees humm'd loud  
With summer gladness ; in a mazy cloud  
Whirling the grey gnats rose and wheeled  
and spun  
Swift golden notes within the golden sun ;

*Childhood's Inheritance*

And bright with all their royal emblazonries  
Flashed like swift darts of fire great dragon-  
flies.

Away across the glowing moors there rang  
The lapwing's wild complaint, and far off  
sang

Hidden in blue a small rejoicing lark  
Singing against some unseen yearn'd for  
mark :

About the heath the yellowhammer's cry  
Piped sweet and clear, and often suddenly,  
With joyous chirps and jerks, the stonechat  
flew

From spray to spray, and, darting flame-like  
through

The scented heather spires to where beneath  
The ants had silent kingdoms in the heath,  
The green-grey black-eyed lizard flashing shot  
So swift the hawk on poised wings saw it not.

V

O'er all the deep skies arch'd a wondrous  
space

Of ardent azure while the sun had place,  
That changed to dark, deep depths when  
twilight grey

Dreamt into night dark'ning to one vast  
shade

*Childhood's Inheritance*

Of purple-black, when lamplike star by star  
Sparkled or shone or pulsing flamed afar.  
Silence, save for each blent and natural  
    sound  
Of earth and air—where sea-caves made the  
    ground,  
By tidal waves of ages undermined,  
Groan as in travail—when the trumpet wind  
All uncheck'd blew—or swelled the incessant  
    cries  
Of tossed waves in their breaking agonies.

VI

Upon the summit of the ancient stone  
(Whose birth was in Time's youth), and all  
    alone,  
Sat silent, tranced, and motionless a child,  
Like some sweet flow'r chance nurtured in  
    the wild,  
Sat watching seabirds, with his eager eyes  
Full of the deep blue of the vaulted skies.  
A child, for he indeed was little more ;  
A child at heart, such as whom make the  
    door  
Of heaven seem open'd here—to whom the  
    seas  
Breaking in foam, and scattered spray-swept  
    trees

*Childhood's Inheritance*

With long arms wrestling, and the winds on  
wings  
Invisible were wondrous living things.

VII

A flower, for his wind-kissed locks unshorn  
Shone yellow as gold daffodils at morn ;  
His eyes were blue as in the golden grain  
Windflow'rs are blue, and soft as after rain  
Violets that under dripping leaves have lain,  
And tender as a dappled fawn's that yearn  
For pity when the shrew-mice from the fern  
Shake down the dew-drops; 'neath his sunlit  
hair

As early morning, his sweet face was fair  
Beneath the sun-brown—as a white bud rose  
That flushes faintly while the June sun  
glows.

And even as he gazed there deeper grew  
Within his eyes a holier softer blue,  
Where some thought brooded in their sacred  
shade ;

It seemed almost as if some song were laid  
Asleep upon his face that yet would find  
Some perfect utterance for the echoing wind  
To carry to the birds ; in reverie  
Raptured he saw what these could never  
see.

*Childhood's Inheritance*

VIII

Oh blessed time, when all God's world is fair  
And to the soul not foreign ! When the bare  
Wide cruel wastes of death-encumber'd sea  
Seem as the voice of God that thunderingly  
Beats round the recreant earth ; when  
    morning seems

The revelation of one's utmost dreams  
Of beauty ; when the slow death of the day  
Makes all the west one glorious crimson way  
For happy souls that die ; and when the  
    moon,

Wheeling her radiant orb thro' the dark  
    noon

Of night, with conscious splendour makes the  
    seas

Unutterably solemn, and great trees  
Lost in the shadow stand forth with huge  
    limbs

Ghostly and clear ; when bird-songs are all  
    hymns

Of joy and praise, and every wilding flower  
Is known and loved ; and when each pent-  
    up hour

Seems worse than wasted to the eager  
    heart,

That fain would hear the thrush-wings strike  
    apart

*Childhood's Inheritance*

The beech leaves in short flight ere full and  
clear  
Burst the sweet tide of song, or watch the  
deer  
Stand with great eyes amid the fern, or  
high  
Hearken the cuckoo's music fill the sky.

IX

He seemed content just silently to sit  
And watch the breaking waves, the swallows  
flit  
Like arrows through the air, save when along  
The summer wind swept bearing the sweet  
song  
Of happy larks, or the repeated cries  
Of plovers when they caught the hawk's  
keen eyes  
Fixt on their young—and then he seem'd to be  
All sight and ear, as yearning tearfully  
To beat with spirit pinions that fine air  
Where at the gates of heaven exceeding fair  
The bird-songs rose and fell like silver tides,  
Or else to be as that royal bird that prides  
Itself on flinching not before the sun  
But stares undaunted, so he might have spun  
Downward with death upon the fierce pois'd  
hawk,

*Childhood's Inheritance*

Saving the moorland brood : not man or boy  
Seem'd he so much as some incarnate joy  
At one with all things fair, flow'r o' the sod  
And insect, to the Loveliness call'd God.

X

As a red rose that in full bloom doth spread  
Her soft flushed bosom to the wind ere dead  
'Mid fallen leaves her queenliness is gone,  
So the fair westering day in glory shone  
Heedless of coming night though night was  
nigh.

The sunset burned afar ; the holy sky  
Seem'd filled with heavenly forms mail'd in  
clear gold,

Guiding their purple rafts through seas that  
rolled

Immeasurably far off in crimson fire.

The sea lay tranced watching the day expire,  
And tired waves rose and fell as though each  
pray'r

Of rest long sought were granted. Every-  
where

God's blessing brooded. And at last the day  
With one long earthward smile, dissolved away,  
Veiling her head in twilight robes where-  
through

The palpitating stars shone faint and few.

*Childhood's Inheritance*

XI

From out the darkening vault where they  
    had hid  
Through sweltering heats of noon, swiftly  
    there slid  
Star after star, each swimming from the near  
Dark blue of heaven, as from a windless mere  
Rise in calm morning twilights white and  
    clear  
Young lily buds that open golden eyes  
Which joy makes wider when the day doth  
    rise.

XII

Far inland, with an oft-repeated cry  
The curlew wailed, and swelled mysteriously  
Hoarse sounds from the dim sea. The boy's  
    face grew  
White in the dusky shade as swiftly flew  
A great grey gull close by him, like a ghost  
Haunting the desolate margins of the  
    coast :  
Great moths came out, with myriad sharded  
    wings  
Huge beetles droned, and other twilight  
    things  
Hummed their dim lives away, and through  
    the air



*Childhood's Inheritance*

The flittermice wheeled whistling : while the  
glare  
Of summer lightnings flashing furtively  
Blazed for a moment o'er the sleeping sea.

XIII

At last, with a long sigh, he turn'd and slid  
From the old rock, and for a little hid  
His face amongst the heather-spires that  
shook

With cool sweet dews : then one last  
lingering look

Across the twilight seas, whereo'er the moon  
Within her crescent shallop would sail soon,  
When with swift steps he turn'd and west-  
ward fled

Across the moor by a little path that led,  
Almost unseen save known, till suddenly,  
Screened from the vision of the neighbouring  
sea

Low in a dip between two moorland mounds  
A cottage lay ; whereto with rapid bounds  
He sped, and, bearing with him odours of  
salt foam,

Entered the little doorway of his home.

## YOUNG LOVE

On a flower in a forest,  
A lily-bosom'd flower,  
(Where never windy tempest  
Came, nor ever any shower)—  
A golden hour of birthtide,  
(The sky was blue, so blue !)  
Left me lying 'mid a songtide  
Of birds of every hue.

Upon the white flower swaying  
I laughed and sang in glee,  
Till the thrushes long delaying  
Sang back deliciously ;  
And the dear white cloudlets sleeping  
Up in the blue, blue sky,  
Seem'd downy cherubs peeping  
Between the pine boughs high.

A little wind came blowing  
And sang a wild-wood song,  
It whispered of the flowing  
Of bubbling streams along ;  
I laughed, and stood, and rising  
Found I had two small wings—  
So then I flew rejoicing  
Toward the water-springs.

*Young Love*

And ever 'mid my flying,  
    (A little cloud I seem'd !)  
I heard a great deep sighing,  
    As earth in trouble dream'd ;  
And when I reached the river  
    The sound more windlike blew :  
The glad stream lisped " for ever,"  
    But the sighing grew and grew.

And as I laughed and wonder'd  
    Among the flowers and grass,  
All suddenly it thunder'd,  
    The sunlight seem'd to pass :  
A great wind took and blew me  
    Across a grey wet sand,  
And tho' I wept it threw me  
    Far from the joyous land.

And now the salt waves leaping  
    Pursue with hungry springs,  
And baffled, blind, and weeping,  
    I beat my draggled wings :  
This was the great deep sighing  
    I heard when I was young—  
And now, wind-weary, dying,  
    My last sob-note is sung !

## MOTHERHOOD

Beneath the awful full-orb'd moon  
The silent tracts of wild-rice lay  
Dumb since the fervid heat of noon  
Beat through the burning Indian day ;  
And still as some far tropic sea  
Where no winds murmur, no waves be.

The bending seeded tops alone  
Swayed in the sleepy sultry wind,  
Which came and went with frequent moan  
As though some dying place to find ;  
While at sharp intervals there rang  
The fierce cicala's piercing clang.

Deep 'mid the rice-field's green-hued gloom  
A tigress lay with birth-throes ta'en ;  
Her serpent tail swept o'er her womb  
As if to sweep away the pain  
That clutched her by the gold-barred thighs  
And shook her throat with snarling cries.

Her white teeth tore the wild-rice stems ;  
And as she moaned her green eyes grew  
Lurid like shining baleful gems  
With fires volcanic lighten'd through,

### *Motherhood*

While froth fell from her churning jaws  
Upon her skin-drawn gleaming claws.

As in a dream at some strange sound  
The soul doth seem to freeze, so she  
Lay fixed like marble on the ground,  
Changed in a moment : suddenly,  
A far-off roar of savage might  
Boomed through the silent sultry night.

Her eyes grew large and flamed with fire ;  
Her body seem'd to feel the sound  
And thrill therewith, as thrills a lyre  
When wild wind wakes it with a bound  
And sweeps its string-clasp'd soul along  
In waves of melancholy song.

Her answering howl swept back again  
And eddied to her far mate's ear ;  
Then once again the travail-pain  
Beat at the heart that knew no fear,  
But some new instinct seem'd to rise  
And yearn and wonder in her eyes.

Did presage of the coming birth  
Light up her life with mother-love,  
As winds along the morning earth  
Whisper of golden dawn above ?  
Or was it but some sweet wild thought  
Remember'd vaguely ere forgot ?

## *Motherhood*

Some sweet wild thought of that still night  
When underneath the low-lying moon,  
Vast, awful, in its splendour white,  
Two tigers fought for love's last boon :  
Two striped and fire-eyed terrors strove  
Through blood and foam to reach her love.

Of how their fight so deathly still  
Fill'd all her heart with savage glee ;  
The lust to love, to slay, to kill,—  
The fierce desire with him to be  
Whose fangs all bloody from the fray  
Should turn triumphantly away :

Of how at last with one wild cry  
One gript the other's throat and breath,  
And, with hell gleaming thro' each eye,  
Shook the wild life to loveless death ;  
Then stood with waving tail and ire  
Triumphant changed to swift desire ?

But once again the bitter strife  
Of wrestling sinews shook her there ;  
And soon a little mewling life  
Met her bewilder'd yearning stare,  
Till, through her pain, the tigress strove  
With licking tongue her love to prove.

No longer fearless flamed the light  
Of great green eyes straight thro' the  
gloom,

*Motherhood*

Each nerve seem'd laden with affright,  
The eyes expectant of some doom ;  
The very moonlight's steady glare  
Beat hungrily about her lair.

A beetle rose, and hummed, and hung  
A moment ere it fled—but great  
In face of peril to her young  
The tigress rose supreme in hate  
And, with tail switching and lips drawn,  
The unreal foe scowled out upon.

And when a mighty cobra, coiled  
Amid the tangled grass-roots near,  
Hissed out his hunger, her blood boiled  
With rage that left no room for fear,  
Till, with a howl that shook the dark,  
She sprang and left him cold and stark.

But when a feeble hungry wail  
Smote on her yearning ears she turn'd  
With velvet paws and refluent tail  
And eyes that no more flashed and burn'd  
But flamed throughout the solemn night  
Like lamps of soft sweet yellow light

To where her young was ; where she lay  
Silent, and full of some strange love  
Long hours. Along the star-strewn way  
A comet flashed and flamed above,

## *Motherhood*

And where great wastes of solemn blue  
Spread starless sailed the vast moon through,  
No sound disturb'd the tigress, save  
    Stray jackals, or some wild boar's pant  
Where thickest did the tall rice wave,  
    Or trump of distant elephant ;  
Or, when these fill'd the night no more,  
The tiger's deep tremendous roar.

## II

Vast, solitary, gloomful, dark,  
    Primeval forests swept away  
To where the gum and stringy bark  
    Against great granite mountains lay ;  
And through their depths the twilight stole  
And dusk'd still deeper each dark bole.  
Deep in their pathless tracks there reared  
    A huge white gum, whose giant height  
When winds infrequent blew appeared  
    To brush the stars out from the night :  
A mighty column, straight and vast,  
Solemn with immemorial past :  
And at its base upon a bed  
    Of fern-tree leaves strewn o'er the ground  
A woman lay as though lying dead—  
    Dark, rigid still, without one sound :  
Her fixed eyes lifted not, nor saw  
The great stars tremble in strange awe.



*Motherhood*

Crouch'd near upon the tufted grass  
Two wither'd, long-haired women bent  
Two dusky bodies. No sign was  
Made ever them between, nor went  
From swift, slant, startled eyes a glance  
To break the spell of their deep trance.

They crouch'd with heads bent down  
between  
Thin, black uprisen knees ; their hair  
Hid their dark faces like a screen,  
And, scored with thorns, their feet lay  
bare :

Hour after hour had watched them so,  
Three shadows fixt in sphinx-like woe.

At times some wandering parrot's voice  
Clanged through the dusk ; from dead  
trees nigh

A locust whirred its deafening noise  
And shrilled th' opossum's frequent cry :  
And hour by hour some slim snake stole  
Hissing from fallen rotting bole.

At last, above the farthest range  
The full vast moon sail'd o'er the trees :  
The dead-like woman felt some change  
Thrill thro' her body ; from her knees  
Each shadow-watcher raised her head,  
And stared with eyes of moveless dread.

*Motherhood*

Beyond—within the ghastly shade  
Of time-forgotten-gums aglow  
With phosphorescent light that made  
Each trunk burn taper-like—bent low,  
A savage, bearded and long-haired,  
Wild-eyed across the pale gloom stared :

And when his shifting, restless eyes  
Caught the drawn woman's birthtime  
pang,  
He shrilled a wild yell to the skies  
And high with tossing arms upsprang  
Beating with eager blows a drum  
And shivering with some terror dumb :

The list'ning women once again  
Shudder'd and grew more chill with  
fear—  
Not at the harsh drum's maddening strain  
But at the spirits that were near,  
The awful souls of hated dead  
That creep round each wild travail-bed ;

The white-eyed sheeted things that steal  
Down dusky ways, and lie in wait  
And from the shade their death-darts wheel  
And wreak unseen their deathless hate :  
For these the fierce drum clanged and beat  
The summons of a swift retreat.

*Motherhood*

What strange thoughts wander'd thro' the  
mind

Of her who writhed in travail sore ?  
As, bearing scents and sounds, a wind  
Blows pregnant from some distant shore,  
So may have blown some wind of thought  
Memorious from a past forgot,

Drifting across her yearning eyes  
Stray visions of lost happy days,  
And filling with strange vague surprise  
The dreary sameness of her gaze—  
Dim, sweet memorial hours long lost,  
Scorched by long suns, numbed by long frost.

But soon the wafted breaths that blew  
From off the deep drown'd past were  
blown

Aside before some sharp wind new  
Of sudden agony. A moan  
Shook on her lips, and from her womb  
A new life crept to outer gloom.

The watching women rose and went  
With deft hands unto her : the man  
Hush'd his tempestuous instrument,  
And with fleet silent footsteps ran  
To where, asleep in moonlight, lay  
Some huts rough built from branches stray :

*Motherhood*

And soon thereafter, in the light  
Of the full moon, the tribe stole out  
And fill'd with cries the startled night—  
Till, with claspt hands and one wild shout,  
They circled round the riven frame  
Of her whose blank eyes knew no shame.

But as some feeble strength came back  
She stretched out thin and claw-like hands,  
With eyes as one who on a rack  
Yearns for mercy, or on strange lands  
Lifts outspread arms towards his own—  
So yearn'd she, with a mother's moan.

Within her famish'd eyes no more  
The hunger of the body burned,  
But on the fruit her womb long bore  
Their light unspeakable was turned :  
And all the hunger of her love  
Lighten'd the child's eyes from above.

Vast, solitary, gloomful, dark,  
Primeval forests swept away  
To where the gum and stringy bark  
Against the granite mountains lay :  
Till, as the great moon grew more wan,  
Stirred the first heart-beats of the dawn.

And o'er the pathless tracks where reared  
The huge white gum, whose boughs had  
seen

### *Motherhood*

The woman's birth-throes, light appeared  
And lit its leaves with golden green,  
And shone upon the straight trunk vast,  
Solemn with immemorial past.

### III

Faint scent of lilies filled the room,  
Hush'd in sweet silence and asleep  
Within the dim delicious gloom :  
No windy lamp-flame strove to leap  
Amidst the moveless shade, but faint  
A soft light burned from censer quaint.

And dimly through the gloom loomed large  
A carven bed that seem'd to sail  
Like ghost of some great funeral barge  
'Mid shadow-seas no men might hail—  
Till from its depths suffused with night  
The wan sheets dreamed to gleaming white.

And lo, half-hid, like some white flow'r  
Breasting the driven snow, there lay  
Expectant of the awful hour  
A waiting girl, who, far away  
Beyond where vision reacheth, gazed  
With eyes by some strange glory dazed.

### *Motherhood*

Like two strange dreams they were, wherein  
    Played subtle lights of other life,  
Deep depths, scarce cognisant of sin,  
    Serene, beyond all clamorous strife—  
Two seas unsoundable as night  
Yet lit to utmost depths with light.

Silent she lay, as one who low  
    In some dim vast deserted nave  
Bends rapt in mingled love and woe  
    While the wild, passionate, sweeping wave  
Of organ music sweeps and rolls—  
The burden of all suffering souls.

Silent she lay, for as a palm  
    Within a thirsty desert feels  
A low wind break the deathly calm  
    And drinks each rain-drop as it steals  
Between its dry parch'd leaves, so she  
Felt God's breath fill her fitfully.

The soft low wind of life divine  
    Entered the darkened womb, and there  
It cleft the mystic bands that twine  
    The folded bud of childhood fair,  
Which, as an open'd lily, fell  
From death to life's strange miracle.

*Motherhood*

O perfect bud of human flow'r  
Immaculately sweet and pure,  
Shall God's first influence in this hour  
Through all thy coming life endure,  
And thou expand to perfect bloom  
Untouched by crash of neighbouring doom ?

Or, O sweet perfect human bud,  
Shall rains thee dash, and wild winds sweep  
Thy fair head to the mire and mud,  
And, with praying hands, thy mother weep  
Such tears of anguish as no pain  
Shall ever wring from her again ?

Soft, soft, the wind of life doth breathe :—  
Some angel surely fans the while  
The faint new-litten spark beneath,  
And prayeth with a piteous smile  
That it may live, and living be  
A victor 'midst humanity.

Silent she lay who soon should give  
This life to life : her secret thought  
Strove 'mid the happy past to live  
Again that day she ne'er forgot,  
That day when her young love took wing  
From maidenhood's sweet-scented spring :

*Motherhood*

When hand in hand she trod the ways  
    Flow'r-strewn with him, and felt his eyes  
Turn'd full on her with such deep gaze  
    Of love triumphant, that the skies  
Seem'd but a hollow dome where rang  
Sweet tumult, as though angels sang :

How the hush'd drowsy afternoon  
    Slipt through the summertide, till low  
In the dark tranquil east the moon  
    Rose vast and yellow, and more slow  
The flaming star that lights the west  
Lulled the sea-waters to their rest :

How in the bridal chamber shone  
    No other than the full-moon's light,  
And how between the dusk and dawn  
    A wind of passion fill'd the night  
And bore resistless soul with soul  
On to love's utmost crowning goal.

Silent she was, but as her mind  
    Made real once more that perfect day  
Her body trembled, as a wind  
    Had blown upon her where she lay,  
And in her eyes serene and deep  
Joys unforgotten woke from sleep.



### *Motherhood*

As on a mighty midnight sea  
    Wind-swept, and lit by a white glare  
Where intermittent lightnings flee  
    And deafened by the thunderous air  
Split up with tumult, one great wave  
Doth rise and scorn an ocean-grave,

And, gathering volume as it rolls,  
    Doth sweep triumphant till at last  
It thunders up the sounding shoals  
    Of stricken promontory aghast,  
And leaves its crown of foam where high  
The cliffs stare seaward steadily :

So from love's throbbing pulsing sea  
    All lightning-lit by passion, reared  
A mighty wave resistlessly  
    Of mother-love, which as it neared  
Fulfilment broke in one glad cry  
Of sweet half-wond'ring ecstasy.

Hush ! the great sea is still, and low  
    The night-wind wanders ; hush, for calm  
The mother waits the body's woe.  
    Silent she lay ; mayhap a psalm  
Of sacred joy sang deep within  
The maiden heart unstained by sin.

*Motherhood*

Mayhap the inward vision saw  
The unborn soul arise and stand  
Great in a people's love and awe,  
Crown'd not with gold by human hand  
But sacred with the bays that wait  
The victor in the strife of Fate :

And deeper still, beheld afar  
The billows of the ages sweep  
A mightier soul from star to star—  
So ever upwards through the steep  
Dim ways of God's unfathom'd will  
But aye by fuller periods still.

So shall it be for ever : evermore  
The mystic wheel of mother-love shall whirl  
Around the world, and link these three again.

## THE REDEEMER

I know that my Redeemer liveth—but out  
of the depths of time  
He hath not called to me yet. But from th'  
immeasurable tracts  
That widen unending to where beginneth  
eternity  
Falleth at times a voice, heart-thrilling,  
soul-piercing, life-giving ;  
High sometimes and clear, as a lark singing  
in a holy dawn,  
Hush'd and afar off again as a dreaming  
wave upon seas  
Lit by a low vast moon, and windlessly  
sleeping, but ever  
Sweet with a human love, and full of  
ineffable yearning,  
And crying of soul unto soul from infinite  
deep unto deep.  
And sometimes I look and gaze out upon  
uttermost darkness  
And hear the wail of desolate winds moaning  
around the world—

*The Redeemer*

Till the darkness shivers to light, and  
clashing thro' earth and heaven  
I hear great wings make music, and mar-  
vellous thunderous songs  
Shout "Thy Redeemer liveth, O human  
soul, and crieth for thee!"

LINES TO E. A. S.

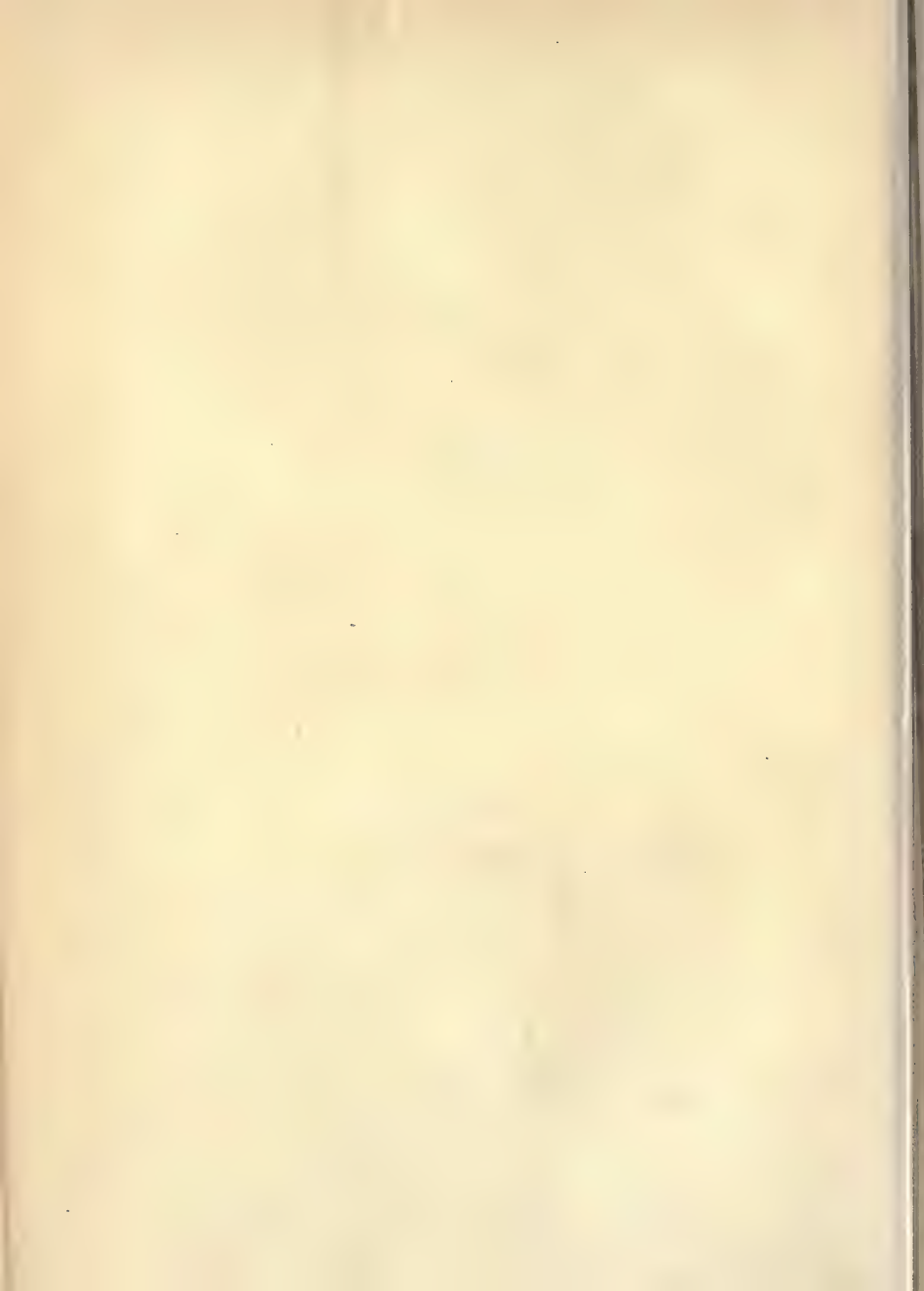
Fair in my sight as white lilies that shine in  
the sunrise :  
Sweeter than flow'rs in the meadows that  
scent the mornings of spring :  
Dearer than vision of truth, for thou art the  
truth revealèd,  
Dearer than faith, for thou art the crown  
of aspiration,  
Dearer than hope, for of hope thou art the  
fulfilment !  
O love, love, love, thou hast turned the  
darkness of the world  
Into ineffable light, and all its intricate  
ways  
To straight, clear paths that lead from the  
depths to the heavens.  
The flower of my soul sways high in the wind  
of thy love,  
Glowing with passionate fervour through  
fulness of joy ;  
Soul with soul are we wedded, beyond the  
decay of the body,

*Lines to E. A. S.*

And spirit hath spirit touched, beyond the  
confines of flesh :  
Desire with mighty wings hath swept the  
chords of our being,  
And flesh and spirit are one in the mystic  
union of love !

SONNETS

1882-1886





## SPRING WIND

O full-voiced herald of immaculate Spring,  
With clarion gladness striking every tree  
To answering raptures, as a resonant sea  
Fills rock-bound shores with thunders echoing—

O thou, each beat of whose tempestuous  
wing  
Shakes the long winter-sleep from hill and  
lea,  
And rouses with loud reckless jubilant glee  
The birds that have not dared as yet to  
sing :

O Wind that comest with prophetic cries,  
Hast thou indeed beheld the face that is  
The joy of poets and the glory of birds—  
Spring's face itself : hast thou 'neath bluer  
skies  
Met the warm lips that are the gates of  
bliss,  
And heard June's leaf-like murmur of  
sweet words ?

## A MIDSUMMER HOUR

There comes not through the o'erarching  
cloud of green

A harsh, an envious sound to jar the ear :  
But vaguely swells a hum, now far, now  
near,

Where the wild honey-bee beyond the  
screen

Of beech-leaves haunts the field of flowering  
bean.

Far, far away the low voice of the weir  
Dies into silence. Hush'd now is the clear  
Sweet song down-circling from the lark  
unseen.

Beyond me, where I lie, the shrew-mice run  
A-patter where of late the streamlet's tones  
Made music : on a branch a drowsy bird  
Sways by the webs that midst dry pools are  
spun—

Yet lives the streamlet still, for o'er flat  
stones

The slow lapse of the gradual wave is  
heard.

## PAIN

I am God's eldest :—I and Love are twin ;  
We look for ever in the other's face ;  
Together our flight wings throughout all  
space—

Sun, Star, Man, God, alike we dwell therein ;  
Some far-off goal together strive to win.

But here on earth I leave the mightier  
trace,

Clasp hands more close with all the  
human race,

And weave the shadow-webs of joy and sin.

And most I dwell in the clear skies at dawn,  
In marvellous eyes when all the stars are  
bright,

In music ere the sweetest chord is gone,  
In woman's beauty still unsoiled and  
white,

In children's slumber in the morning wan,  
And lovers' vows and yearnings in the  
night.

## POSSIBILITIES

As day doth live beyond the sunset skies  
So life may wait us at the silent grave :  
Not windless is the sea because there rave  
Not always the great storm-wind's har-  
monies.  
There may be light too strong for earthly  
eyes ;  
There may be hands to succour and to  
save  
From Death's indifferent o'erwhelming  
wave ;  
Nay, Death may lift to some divine sur-  
prise !

There may be music beyond instruments,  
And Spring for ev'ry frost-nipt shapeless  
clod,  
There may be mightier love sacraments  
Than e'er were seen on consecrated sod ;  
A man there may be with Christ's linea-  
ments  
And 'mid the wheels of Fate a living God.

TO D. G. ROSSETTI

I

From out the darkness cometh never a sound:  
No voice doth reach us from the silent  
place :

There is one goal beyond life's blindfold  
race,

For victor and for victim—burial-ground.

O friend, revered, belov'd, mayst thou have  
found

Beyond the shadowy gates a yearning face,  
A beckoning hand to guide thee with  
swift pace

From the dull wave Lethean gliding round.

Hope dwelt with thee, not Fear ; Faith,  
not Despair :

But little heed thou hadst of the grave's  
gloom.

What though thy body lies so deeply there  
Where the land throbs with tidal surge  
and boom,

Thy soul doth breathe some Paradisal air  
And Rest long sought thou hast where  
amaranths bloom.

TO D. G. ROSSETTI

II

Yet even if Death indeed with pitiful sign  
Bade us drink deep of some oblivious  
draught,  
Is it not well to know, ere we have  
quaffed  
The soul-deceiving popped anodyne,  
That not in vain erewhile we drink the  
wine  
Of life—that not all blankly or in craft  
Of evil went the days wherein we laughed  
And joyed i' the sun unknowing aught  
divine ?

Not so thy doom, whatever fate betide :  
Not so for thee, O poet-heart and true,  
Who fearless watched, as evermore it  
grew,  
The shadow of Death creep closer to thy  
side.  
A glory with thy ebbing life withdrew  
And we inherit now its deathless Pride.

FROM  
EARTH'S VOICES

1884





## MADONNA NATURA

I love and worship thee in that thy ways  
Are fair, and that the glory of past days  
    Haloes thy brightness with a sacred hue.  
Within thine eyes are dreams of mystic  
    things,  
Within thy voice a subtler music rings  
    Than ever mortal from the keen reeds  
    drew ;  
Thou weav'st a web which men have callèd  
    Death  
But Life is in the magic of thy breath.

The secret things of Earth thou knowest  
    well ;  
Thou seest the wild bee build his narrow cell,  
    The lonely eagle wing through lonely skies,  
The lion on the desert roam afar,  
The glow-worm glitter like a fallen star,  
    The hour-lived insect as it hums and flies ;  
Thou seest men like shadows come and go,  
And all their endless dreams drift to and  
    fro.

*Madonna Natura*

In thee is strength, endurance, wisdom,  
truth :

Thou art above all mortal joy and ruth,  
Thou hast the calm and silence of the  
night :

Mayhap thou seest what we cannot see,  
Surely far off thou hear'st harmoniously  
Echoes of flawless music infinite,  
Mayhap thou feelest thrilling through each  
sod  
Beneath thy feet the very breath of God.

*Monna Natura*, fair and grand and great,  
I worship thee, who art inviolate :  
Through thee I reach to things beyond  
this span

Of mine own puny life, through thee I learn  
Courage and hope, and dimly can discern  
The ever noble grades awaiting man :  
Madonna, unto thee I bend and pray—  
Saviour, Redeemer thou, whom none can  
slay !

No human fanes are dedicate to thee,  
But thine the temples of each tameless sea,  
Each mountain-height and forest-glade  
and plain :  
No priests with daily hymns thy praises  
sing,

*Madonna Natura*

But far and wide the wild winds chanting  
    swing,  
    And dirge the sea-waves on the changeless  
    main,  
While songs of birds fill all the fields and  
    woods,  
And cries of beasts the savage solitudes.

Hearken, Madonna, hearken to my cry ;  
Teach me through metaphors of liberty,  
    Till strong and fearing nought in life or  
    death  
I feel thy sacred freedom through me thrill,  
Wise, and defiant, with unquenchèd will  
    Unyielding, though succumb the mortal  
    breath—  
Then if I conquer, take me by the hand  
And guide me onward to thy Promised  
    Land !

## DURING MUSIC

O tears that well up to my eyes,  
And vague thoughts wandering thro' my  
brain,

Whence come ye ? From what alien skies,  
From what dim sorrow, what strange  
pain ?

I hear old memories astir  
In dusky twilights of the past :  
O voices telling me of her,  
My soul, whom now I know at last :

I know her not by any name,  
But she with hope or fear is pale ;  
I see her ere this body came  
From mortal womb with mortal wail.

Later and later through long years,  
Through generations of dead men,  
I see her in her mist of tears,  
I see her in her shroud of pain.

I see her whom the æons have raised  
From one dim birth to endless life ;  
I see her strive, regain, re-fail  
Forever in the endless strife.

*During Music*

I see her, soul of man, and soul  
Of woman, and in many lands :  
Her eyes are fixt on some far goal  
But she hath neither thrall nor bands.

On one day yet to come I see  
This body pale and cold and dead :  
The spirit once again made free  
Hovers triumphant overhead.

Again, again, O endless day,  
I see her in new forms pace on,  
And ever with her on the way  
Fair kindred souls in unison.

O wandering thoughts within my brain,  
O voices speaking low to me,  
O music sweet with stingless pain,  
Bring clear the vision that I see !

O ecstasy of sound, O pain !  
Too sad my heart, too sad the tears  
It bringeth to my eyes again,  
Too strange the hopes, too strange the  
fears.

## SHADOWED SOULS

If the soul withdraweth from the body, what profit  
thereafter hath a man of all the days of his life ?

She died indeed, but to him her breath  
Was more than a light blown out by death :  
He knew that they breathed the self-same  
air,  
That not midst the dead was her pale face  
fair  
But that she waited for him somewhere.

To some dead city, or ancient town,  
Where the mould'ring towers were crumbling  
down,  
Or in some old mansion habited  
By dust and silence and things long dead,  
He knew the Shadows of Souls were led.

For years he wandered a weary way,  
His eyes shone sadder, his hair grew grey :  
But still he knew that she lived for whom  
No grave lay waiting, no white carv'd tomb,  
No earthly silence, no voiceless gloom.

*Shadowed Souls*

But once in a bitter year he came  
To an old dying town with a long dead  
name :  
That eve, as he walked thro' the dusty ways  
And the echoes woke in the empty place,  
He came on a Shadow face to face.

It looked, but uttered no word at all  
Then beckoned him into an old dim hall :  
And lo, as soon as he passed between  
The pillars with age and damp mould green  
His eyes were dazed by a strange wild  
scene.

A thousand lamps fill'd the place with light,  
And fountains glimmered faerily bright ;  
But never a single sound was heard,  
The dreadful silence was never stirred,  
Not even the breath of a single word

Came from the shadowy multitude,  
More dense than leaves in a summer wood,  
Than the sands where the swift tides ebb  
and flow ;  
But ever the Shades moved to and fro  
As windless waves on the sea will go.

Then he who had come to the Shadow-land  
Swift strode by many a group and band ;

*Shadowed Souls*

But never a glimpse he caught of her,  
In fleeting shadow or loiterer,  
For whom the earth held no sepulchre.

He knew that she was not dead whom he  
So loved with bitterest memory,  
To whom through anguish'd years he had  
    prayed ;  
Yet came she never, no sign was made,  
No touch on his haggard frame was laid.

At last to an empty room he came,  
And there he saw in letters of flame :  
" This is a palace no king controls,  
A place unwritten in human scrolls,—  
This is the Haunt of Shadowed Souls :

" If thy Shadow-soul be here no more,  
Seek thine old life's deserted shore :  
And there, mayhap, thou wilt find again,  
Recovered now through sorrow and pain,  
The Soul thou didst thy most to have slain."



## SONG

“ To suffer grief is to be strong,  
And to be strong is beautiful and rare ”—  
'Twas in thy court, O Love, I learned it  
there,  
This sad sweet song !

No one man dwells thy ways among,  
Who shall not learn thy thousand ways  
of grief  
Or how wild fears succeed each poor  
relief  
In dark'ning throng :

There too a man may learn to put away  
The crownèd summit of his heart's  
desire ;  
But O, the bitter burning of love's fire—  
Its bitterer ashes grey !

## SLEEP

While sways the restless sea  
    Beyond the shore,  
And the waves sing listlessly  
    Their secret lore,  
And the soft fragrant air  
    From off the deep  
Scarce stirs thine outspread hair,—  
    Sleep !

Far up in purple skies  
    Great lamps hang out,  
White flames that fall and rise  
    In motley rout ;  
While fall their silvern rays  
    O'er crag and steep,  
Woodlands and meadow-ways,—  
    Sleep !

While the moon's amber gleams  
    Gild rock and flow'r,  
Let no untimely dreams  
    Possess the hour :  
Let no vague fears the heart  
    'Mid slumber keep,  
In dreams love hath no smart,—  
    Sleep !

## MATER DOLOROSA

She, brooding ever, dwells amidst the hills ;  
Her kingdom is call'd Solitude ; her  
name—

More terrible than desolating flame—

Is Silence ; and her soul is Pain.

Day after day some weightier sorrow fills

Her heart, and each new hour she knows

The birth of further woes.

And whoso, journeying, goes

Unto the land wherein she dwells for aye

Shall not come thence until have passed  
away

For evermore the bright joy of his years.

She giveth rest, but giveth it with tears,

Tears that more bitter be

Than drops of the Dead Sea :

But never gives she peace to any soul

For how could she that rarest gift bestow

Who well doth know

That though in dreams she can attain the  
goal,

In dreams alone her steps can thither  
go :—

*Mater Dolorosa*

Solitude, Silence, Pain, for all who live  
    Within the twilit realms that are her own,  
    And even Rest to those who seek her  
        throne,  
    But these her gifts alone :  
Peace hath she not and therefore cannot  
    give.

## THE SONG OF THE THRUSH

When the beech-trees are green in the  
woodlands,

And the thorns are whitened with may,  
And the meadow-sweet blows and the  
yellow gorse blooms

I sit on a wind-waved spray,  
And I sing through the livelong day  
From the golden dawn till the sunset  
comes and the shadows of gloaming  
grey.

And I sing of the joy of the woodlands,  
And the fragrance of wild-wood flowers,  
And the song of the trees and the hum of  
the bees

In the honeysuckle bowers,  
And the rustle of showers  
And the voice of the west wind calling as  
through glades and green branches he  
scours.

When the sunset glows over the woodlands  
More sweet rings my lyrical cry,

*The Song of the Thrush*

With the pain of my yearning to be 'mid  
the burning  
And beautiful colours that lie  
'Midst the gold of the sun-down sky,  
Where over the purple and crimson and  
amber the rose-pink cloud-curls fly.

Sweet, sweet swells my voice thro' the  
woodlands,  
Repetitive, marvellous, rare :  
And the song-birds cease singing as my  
music goes ringing  
And eddyng echoing there,  
Now wild and now debonair,  
Now fill'd with a tumult of passion that  
throbs like a pulse in the hush'd warm  
air !

## THE SONG OF FLOWERS

What is a bird but a living flower ?  
A flower but the soul of some dead bird ?  
And what is a weed but the dying breath  
Of a perjured word ?

A flower is the soul of a singing-bird,  
Its scent is the breath of an old-time song :  
But a weed and a thorn spring forth each  
day  
For a new-done wrong.

Dead souls of song-birds, thro' the green  
grass,  
Or deep in the midst of the golden grain,  
In woodland valley, where hill-streams pass,  
We flourish again.

We flowers are the joy of the whole wide  
earth,  
Sweet nature's laughter and secret tears—  
Whoso hearkens a bird in its spring-time  
mirth  
The song of a flow'r-soul hears !

## SONG OF THE CORNFIELDS

For miles along the sunlit lands  
We sway in waves of gold,  
A yellow sea that past the strands  
Has inland rolled.

The sweet dews feed us thro' the night,  
The soft winds blow around ;  
The dayshine gladdens us with light  
And stores the ground.

We feed a thousand happy birds,  
The field-mice have their share—  
Surely to these the reaping swords  
Some grains can spare.

The deep joy of the joyous earth,  
We feel it throb and thrill ;  
The sweet return of natural mirth,  
Spring's miracle.

All lands rejoice in us, we have  
A glory such as kings  
Might envy—but our gold we wave  
For humbler things.



*Song of the Cornfields*

Our golden harvest is for those  
Who strive and toil through life,  
Who feel its agonies, its throes,  
Its want, its strife.

O'er all the broad lands 'neath the sun,  
We spring, we ripen, glow ;  
The seasons change, the swift days run,—  
Again we grow.

## THE FIELD MOUSE

When the moon shines o'er the corn  
And the beetle drones his horn,  
And the flittermice swift fly,  
And the nightjars swooping cry,  
And the young hares run and leap,  
We waken from our sleep.

And we climb with tiny feet  
And we munch the green corn sweet  
With startled eyes for fear  
The white owl should fly near,  
Or long slim weasel spring  
Upon us where we swing.

We do no hurt at all :  
Is there not room for all  
Within the happy world ?  
All day we lie close curled  
In drowsy sleep, nor rise  
Till through the dusky skies  
The moon shines o'er the corn,  
And the beetle drones his horn.

## THE WEST WIND

I come from out the West,  
And I breathe a breath of rest,  
And the sweet birds greet me singing  
From every tiny nest.

I am the wind of flow'rs—  
I haunt the wild-wood bow'rs—  
And when my song is ringing  
Spring knows her sweetest hours.

But when the autumn days  
Grow short, I rise and race  
Thro' all the woodlands, flinging  
Strewn leaves o'er every place.

When winter comes once more,  
With deep tumultuous roar  
I sweep o'er ocean, bringing  
Wild tempests to each shore.

## HYMN OF THE FORESTS

We are the harps which the winds play,  
A myriad tones in one vast sound  
That the earth hearkens night and day—  
A ceaseless music swaying round  
The whole wide world, each voiceful tree  
Echoing the wave-chants of the sea.

For even as inland waves that moan  
But break not 'midst the unflowing green  
Our trees are : and when tempests groan  
And howl our frantic boughs between,  
Our tumult is as when the deep  
Struggles with winds that o'er it sweep.

'Neath bitter northern skies we stand,  
Silent amidst the unmelting snows,  
Gaunt warders of the desolate land :  
Silent, save when the keen wind blows  
The drifting wreaths about our feet,  
Then moan we mournful music sweet.

Or in vast ancient woods of beech  
Far south we make Spring's dearest home  
The haunt of myriad songsters, each  
A living flow'r made free to roam

*Hymn of the Forests*

From bough to bough, and thence we send  
A forest-music without end.

'Neath tropic suns and ceaseless glow  
With orient splendours we are filled :  
'Midst Austral solitudes we grow,  
Where seldom human voice has thrilled :  
And ever and where'er we rise  
We chant our ancient harmonies.

For aye the sea sings loud and long  
In strange and solemn mystery  
A wonderful transmitted song—  
The echo of all history—  
This song o'er all earth's lands we sing  
While round the circling seasons swing.

## SONG OF THE DESERTS

Wide, open, free, unbounded, vast,  
We leagueless stretch the wide world o'er :  
Above us sweeps the desert blast,  
Or booms the lion's reverberate roar  
Or the long howl of wolves that race  
Like shadows o'er the moonlit space  
In tireless, swift, relentless chase.

We are the haunt of all the winds,  
O'er us as o'er the sea they sweep  
In boundless freedom : each blast finds  
A leagueless waste whereo'er to leap  
And race unchecked,—and day and night  
We hear the wild rush of their flight,  
A desert-music infinite.

Ten thousand leagues of grassy plain  
We stretch, or trackless wastes of sand :  
O'er us no mortal king doth reign,  
But Bedouin or savage band  
And wild-eyed beasts of prey alone  
Wander about our tameless zone ;  
That bondage never yet hath known.

## A RECORD

(*A Fragment*)

For, God wot, not the less a thing is true  
Though every wight may not it chance to see.

CHAUCER.

I hear the dark tempestuous sea  
Boom through the night monotonously,  
The hoarse faint cry of breaking waves  
Lashed by the wind that moans and raves  
Upon the deep—I hear them fall  
Against cliff-bases smooth and tall,  
A music wild, funereal.

I seem to listen to a sound  
That circles earth for ever round,  
The dirge of an eternal song,  
A dull deep music swept along  
The listening coasts of many lands,  
Sighed mournfully o'er level sands,  
Or thunder'd amidst rocky strands.

I sit within my lonely room  
Where the lamp's flame just breaks the  
gloom,

*A Record*

And thro' the darkness of the night  
I see far down a starry light  
Where nestled safely in the chine  
The village street in one long line  
Doth like a glittering serpent shine.

The keen wind blows through the dark  
    skies,  
The stars look down like countless eyes  
That see and know, and therefore stare  
Unmoved 'midst their serene high air :  
And life seems but a dream, a shade  
Which fleeting Time o'er space hath laid;  
But which with Time shall one day fade.

Old memories are mine once more,  
I see strange lives I lived of yore ;  
With dimmed sight see I far-off things,  
I feel the breath of bygone springs,  
And ringing strangely in mine ears  
I hear old laughter, alien tears  
Slow falling, voices of past years.

Far back the soul can never see—  
But dreams restore mysteriously  
Dim visions of a possible past,  
A time ere the last bond was cast  
Aside that bound the struggling soul  
Unto the brute, and first some goal  
Loomed dimly over Life's vast shoal.



*A Record*

And dreaming so I live my dream :  
I see a yellow turbid stream  
Heavily flowing through clustered weeds  
Of tropic growth, and 'midst the reeds  
Of tall green rice upon its bank  
A crouching tiger, long and lank,  
With slow tail swaying from flank to flank.

Its eyes are yellow flames, and burn  
Upon a man who dips an urn  
Into the Ganges' sacred wave,  
Unknowing he has reached his grave—  
A short, hoarse roar, a scream, a blow !  
And even as I shudder, lo,  
My tiger-selt I seem to know.

And dreaming so I live my dream :  
I see a sunrise glory gleam  
Against vast mountain-heights, and there  
Upon a peak precipitous, bare,  
I see an eagle scan the plain  
Immeasurable of his domain,  
With fierce untamable disdain :

When first the stars wax pale his eyes  
Front the wide east where day doth rise,  
And with unflinching gaze look straight  
Against the sun, then proud, elate,  
On tireless wings he swoops on high

*A Record*

O'er countless leagues, and thro' the sky  
Drifts like a dark cloud ominously :

Then as day dies and swift night springs,  
I hear the sudden rush of wings  
And see the eagle from the plain  
Sweep to his eyrie once again  
With fierce keen dauntless eyes aglow—  
And even as I watch them, lo,  
Mine eagle-self I seem to know.

And dreaming so I live my dream :  
I hear a savage voice, a scream  
Scarcely articulate, and far  
I see a red light like a star  
Flashed 'neath old trees, and the first fire  
Made by the brutish tribe burn higher  
Until unfed its flames expire :

I see the savage whose hand drew  
The fire from wood, whose swift breath blew  
The flame until it gained new strength,—  
I see him stand supreme at length,  
And pointing to the burning flame  
Bend low his swart and trembling frame  
And cry aloud a guttural name :

A god at last the tribe hath found,  
A god at whose strange crackling sound

*A Record*

Each man must bend in dread until  
This strange new god hath worked his will :  
But lo, one day the fire spread fast,  
And ere its fury is o'erpast  
The tribe within its furnace-blast

Hath perish'd, save one man alone  
Who far in sudden fear hath flown :  
But with a gleam of new-born thought  
A second flame he soon hath wrought  
Only to tramp it down, aware  
At last that no dead god lies there,  
Or one for whom no man need care.

He looks around to see some god,  
And far upon the fire-scorch'd sod  
He sees his brown-burnt tribesmen lie,  
And thinks their voices fill the sky,  
And dreads some unseen sudden blow—  
And even as I watch him, lo,  
My savage-self I seem to know.

And dreaming so I live my dream :  
I see a flood of moonlight gleam  
Between vast ancient oaks, and round  
A rough-hewn altar on the ground  
Weird Druid priests are gatherèd  
While through their midst a man is led  
With face that is already dead :

*A Record*

A low chant swells throughout the wood,  
Then comes a solemn interlude  
Ere loudlier rings dim aisles along  
Some ancient sacrificial song ;  
Before the fane the victim kneels  
And without sound he forward reels  
When the priest's knife the death-blow deals :

The moonlight falls upon his face,  
His blood is spatter'd o'er the place,  
But now he is ev'n as a flow'r  
Uprooted in some tempest hour,  
Dead, but whose seed shall elsewhere grow :  
And as I look upon him, lo,  
Some old ancestral-self I know.

Thus far dreams bring mysteriously  
Visions of past lives back to me ;  
Visions alone perhaps they are,  
Each one a wandering futile star  
Flash'd o'er the mental firmament,—  
Yet may be thus in past times went  
My soul in gradual ascent.

None sees the slow sure upward sweep  
By which the soul from life-depths deep  
Ascends—unless, mayhap, when free  
With each new death we backward see

### *A Record*

The long perspective of our race,  
Our multitudinous past lives trace  
Since first as breath of God through space

Each came, and filled the lowest thing  
With life's faint pulse scarce quivering ;  
So ever onward upward grew,  
And ever with each death-birth knew  
An old sphere left, a mystic change—  
A sense of exaltation strange  
Thus through a myriad lives to range.

But even in our mortal lives  
At times the eager spirit strives  
To gain through subtle memories  
Some hint of life's past mysteries—  
Brief moments they, that flash before  
Bewilder'd eyes some scene of yore,  
Some vivid hour returned once more.

Swift through the darken'd clouds of  
sense  
A sudden lightning-gleam intense  
Reveals some glimpse of the long past,  
Some memory comes back at last—  
And yet 'twas but a sudden strain  
Of song—a scent—a sound of rain—  
Some trifle—made all clear again.

*A Record*

With a swift glance such glimpses come  
And go—but there are times for some  
When keen the vision is, so keen  
That thenceforth the indelible scene  
Remains within the mind for aye,  
Some reminiscence sad or gay,  
Some action of a bygone day.

Thus came to me memorious gleams  
From the closed past, no sleep-brought  
dreams  
But revelations flashed out swift  
Upon the mind : a sudden lift  
Of the dense cloud of all past years,—  
A moment when the thrilling ears  
Heard, or the eyes slow filled with tears.

Thus has there flashed across my sight  
A desert in a blinding light  
Of scorching sun, a dreary waste  
Of burning sand where seldom paced  
The swift, gaunt camels with their freight  
Of merchandise, but where the weight  
Of silence lay inviolate.

There a few sterile rocks lay white  
In the sun's glare, a band by night  
Of old convulsions thither hurl'd  
In the far days of the young world :

*A Record*

And in their midst a hollow cave  
Was cleft, where dwelt, as in a grave,  
One who came thence his soul to save.

Young, and from out the joyous strife  
Of men he came to this drear life :  
No more for him the wine's swift spell,  
No more for him love's miracle—  
But bitter as the dead sea's dust  
Seem'd all past joys—dread things to thrust  
Aside, all equally accursed.

In fervid prayer all day he sought  
God's grace : in dreams at night he fought  
The fierce temptations born of youth.  
Awake, he strove to reach God's truth—  
Asleep, he felt his passions rise  
And darken all the heav'nly skies  
With dread deceitful lovely lies.

Thus year by year he fell and rose  
In endless conflict, till his woes  
Fill'd all his days with burning tears  
And dreadful never-ending fears :  
Haggard he grew from scanty food,  
With sun and blast and shelter rude  
And terrors of his loneliness.

With long hair streaming out behind  
He raced before the burning wind,  
With wild insane strained eyes alert

*A Record*

For demons lurking to his hurt—  
And though the sun beat fiercely hot  
Upon the sands, he heeded not  
But like a wand'ring shadow shot

Across the burning level waste,  
Oft shouting as he wildly raced  
“ My body is in hell, but I,  
Its soul, thus hither speed and cry  
To God to blow me as a leaf  
From out this agony of grief,  
To slay, and give me death's relief ! ”

Oft as he fled, with from his mouth  
The white froth blown thro' maddening  
drought,  
He pass'd the crouching lion's lair—  
But when his shrill laugh fill'd the air  
The desert monarch shrank, as though  
He feared this raving shadow's woe,  
This haggard wretch with eyes aglow.

But when the sun sank past the west  
The hermit fled the desert, lest  
God's eyes should lose him in the night,  
And foes Satanic guide his flight  
Till soul and body once again  
Made one should with the pangs of twain,  
In hell for ever writhe in pain.



*A Record*

But when sleep came to him he lay  
In peace, and oft a smile would play  
Upon his face as though once more  
In dreams he lived his life of yore,—  
The life he did himself dismiss,  
The old sweet time of joy and bliss,—  
Heard laughter, or felt some loved kiss.

Thus have I seen, and seeing known  
That he who lived afar alone,  
A hermit on a dreary waste,  
Was even that soul mine eyes have traced  
Through brute and savage steadily,  
That he even now is part of me  
Just as a wave is of the sea.

\* \* \* \*

Far out across the deep doth swell  
The hoarse boom of the Black-Rock bell,  
A heavy moan monotonous,  
An inner sea-sound ominous,<sup>4</sup>  
As though throughout the ocean there  
Relentless Conscience aye did bear  
A bitter message of despair.

Still sweeps the old impetuous sea  
Around the green earth ceaselessly—  
Changeless, yet full of change, it seems  
The very mirror of those dreams

*A Record*

We call men's lives—for are not they  
Like life-sea waves Fate's winds doth sway  
And break, yet which pass not away

Through depth of silent air, but blend  
Once more with the deep and lend  
Their never dying music sweet  
To the great choral song complete ;  
Each death is but a birth, a change—  
Each soul through myriad by-ways strange,  
Through birth and death, doth upward  
range.

## MOONRISE FROM IONA

Here, where in dim forgotten days  
A savage people chanted lays  
To long since perished gods, I stand :  
The sea breaks in, runs up the sand,  
Retreats as with a long-drawn sigh,  
Sweeps in again ; again leaves dry  
The ancient beach, so old and yet  
So new that as the strong tides fret  
The island barriers in their flow  
The ebb-hours of each day can know  
A surface change. The day is dead,  
The sun is set, and overhead  
The white north stars shine keen and bright ;  
The wind upon the sea is light  
And just enough to stir the deep  
With phosphorescent gleams and sweep  
The spray from salt waves as they rise :  
And yonder light—is't from the skies  
Some meteor strange, a burning star—  
Or a lamp hung upon a spar  
Of vessel undescribed ? It gleams  
And rises slowly, till it seems

*Moonrise from Iona*

A burning isle, an angel-throne  
Reset on earth, a mountain-cone  
Of gold new-risen from sea-caves—  
Until at last above the waves,  
Salt with Atlantic brine, it swims  
A silver crescent. Now no hymns  
In the wild Runic speech are heard,  
No chant, no sacrificial word :  
But only moans the weary sea,  
And only the cold wind sings free,  
And where the Runic temples stood  
The bat flies and the owl doth brood.

MOONRISE ON THE VENETIAN  
LAGOONS

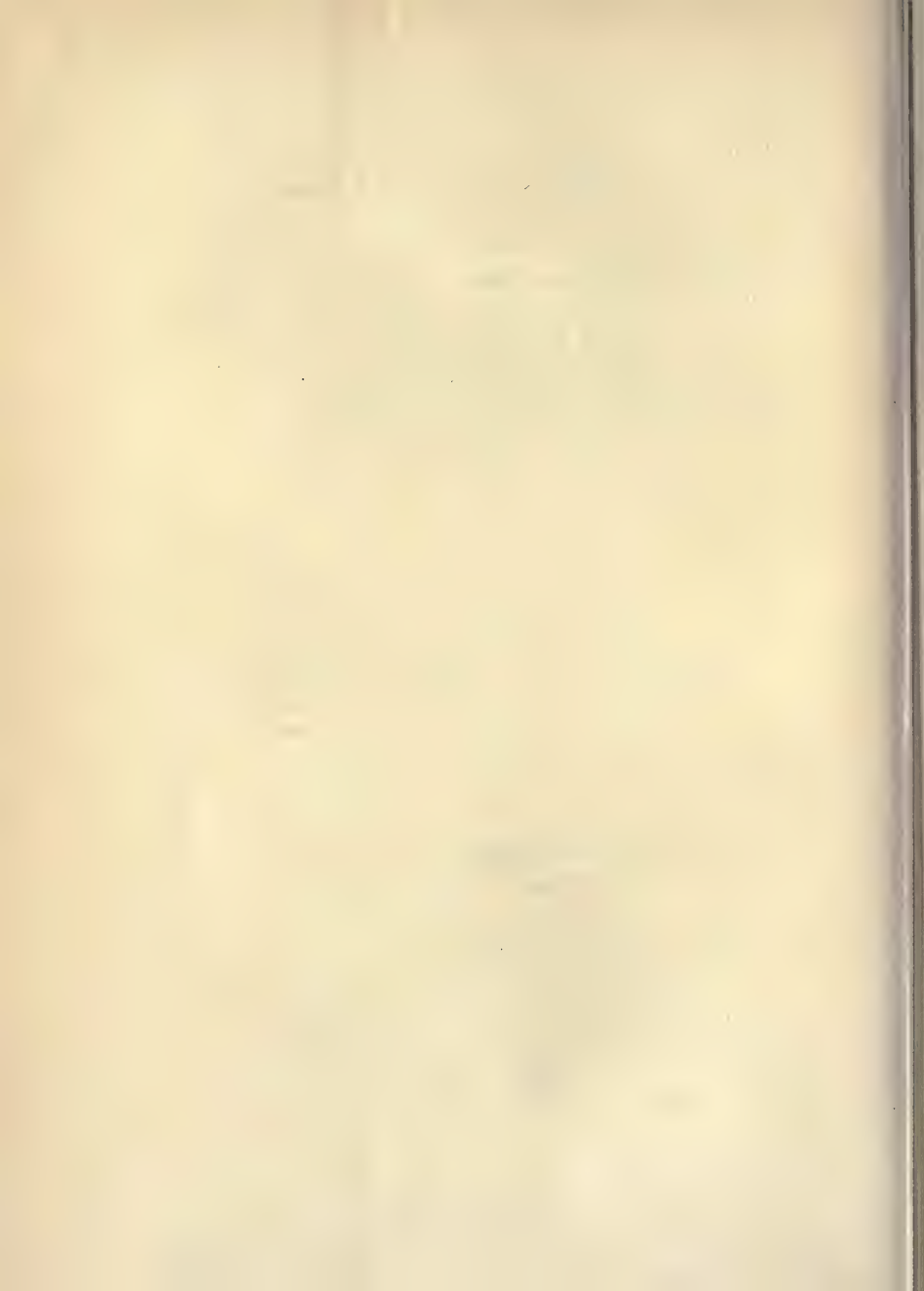
A more than twilight darkness dwells  
Upon the long lagoons : the bells  
Of distant Venice come and go  
Like sounds in dreams ; the tide's soft flow  
Sweeps onward, and a wandering gull  
Flits o'er the track of yon black hull  
Just fading in the gloom—no more  
I see or hear 'tween shore and shore :  
But as I lie and dreamily  
Watch the dark water from the sea  
Slip past the boat, in its blurred sky  
I see the crescent moon on high  
Casting curv'd golden flakes far down  
Amidst the calm lagoon—a crown  
Broken innumerably up,  
The gold bands of a broken cup.  
I take an oar and make a rift  
In the soft tide of the lagoons,—  
And lo, the blade itself doth lift  
A score of quivering crescent moons,  
And as they flash I seem to see  
Each droplet with a small moon flee.

## MOONRISE ON THE ANTARCTIC

The huge white icebergs silently  
Voyage with us through this lonely sea,  
Noiseless and lifeless, yet they seem  
Like haunted islands in a dream  
Holding strange secrets that no one  
May know and live. In the bright sun  
They shine immeasurably fair,  
Bluer than bluest summer air,  
Or clear to the very heart with green  
Pure light, or amethyst as seen  
'Mid sunset-clouds—but now they shine  
With a cold gleam and have no sign  
Of loveliness. The ship swings on,  
Plunging 'mid surging seas whereon  
Few vessels ever sail, and as  
Slowly the long hours come and pass  
The late moon rises cold and white,  
And sends a flood of wintry light  
Along the sweeping waves and round  
Our black and sea-worn hull. A sound  
Far off dies while it grows—some seal  
Long-drifted, frozen, waking but to feel  
Death's grip. And now the spectral isles

*Moonrise on the Antarctic*

Grow whiter, icier still, and seem  
More hollow, with a strange weird gleam  
As though some pale unreal fires  
Consumed them to their utmost spires  
Yet without flame or heat. And still  
The moon doth rise, and seems to fill  
Each berg anew with life : we sail  
Upon a strange sad sea, where pale  
And moonshine isles float all around,  
Voyaging onward without sound.





TRANSCRIPTS  
FROM NATURE

(FROM "THE HUMAN INHERITANCE"  
AND "EARTH'S VOICES")

1882-1886



## WILD ROSES

Against the dim hot summer blue  
Yon wave of white wild-roses lies,  
Watching with listless golden eyes  
The green leaves shutting out their view,  
The tiny leaves whose motions bright  
Are like small wings of emerald light :

White butterflies like snow-flakes fall  
And brown bees drone their honey-call.

## THE EBBING TIDE

A long low gurgle down the strand,  
The sputtering of the drying wrack !  
The tide is slowly ebbing back  
With listless murmuring from the land,  
And the small waves reluctant flow  
Where the broad-bosomed currents go.

The sea has fall'n asleep, and lies  
Dense blue beneath the dense blue skies.

## DAWN AMID SCOTCH FIRS

The furtive lights that herald dawn  
Are shimmering 'mid the steel-blue firs ;  
A slow awakening wind half stirs  
And the long branches breathe upon ;  
The east grows clearer—clearer—lo,  
The day is born ! A refluent flow

Of silver waves along each tree  
For one brief moment dazzlingly.

## A DEAD CALM AND MIST

*(Towards evening)*

The slow heave of the sleeping sea  
With pulse-like motion swells and falls,  
And drowsily a stray gull calls  
The very wail of melancholy ;  
All day the moveless mist has slept  
On the same bosom east winds swept :

No breath of change in the grey mist,  
Save just a dream of amethyst.

## TANGLED SUNRAYS

Aslant from yonder sunlit hill  
The lance-like sunrays stream across  
The meadows where the king-cups toss  
I' the wind, and where the beech-leaves thrill  
With flooding light they twist and turn  
And seem to interlace and burn,

Until at last in tangle spun  
'Mid the damp grass their race is run.

## LOCH CORUIISK (SKYE)

The bleak and barren mountains keep  
A never-ending gloom around  
The lonely loch ; the winds resound,  
The rains beat down, the tempests sweep,  
The days are calm and dark and still,—  
No other changes Coruisk fill.

Scarce living sound is heard, save high  
The eagle's scream or wild swan's cry.

## SUNRISE ABOVE BROAD WHEAT- FIELDS

The pale tints of the twilight fields  
Have turnèd into burnished gold,  
For waves of yellow light have rolled  
From the open'd east across the wealds ;  
While 'mid the wheat spires far behind  
Stirs lazily the awaken'd wind.

A skylark high (a song-made bird)  
Sings as though God his singing heard.

## PHOSPHORESCENT SEA

The sea scarce heaves in its calm sleep,  
The wind has not awakened yet  
Tho' in its dreams it seems to fret ;  
For, ever and again, the deep  
Hearkens a sigh that steals along  
As might some echo of sad song :

Ah, there the wind stirs ! Lo, the dark  
Dim sea's on fire around our barque.

## A GREEN WAVE

Between the salt sea-send before  
And all the flowing gulfs behind,  
Half lifted by the rising wind,  
Half eager for the ungain'd shore,  
A great green wave of shining light  
Sweeps onward crowned with dazzling  
white :

Above, the east wind shreds the sky  
With plumes from the grey clouds that fly.

## A CRYSTAL FOREST

The air is blue and keen and cold,  
With snow the roads and fields are white ;  
But here the forest's clothed with light  
And in a shining sheath enrolled.  
Each branch, each twig, each blade of  
grass,  
Seems clad miraculously with glass :

Above the ice-bound streamlet bends  
Each frozen fern with crystal ends.

## THE WASP

Where the ripe pears droop heavily  
The yellow wasp hums loud and long  
His hot and drowsy autumn song :  
A yellow flame he seems to be,  
When darting suddenly from high  
He lights where fallen peaches lie :

Yellow and black, this tiny thing's  
A tiger-soul on elfin wings.

## AN AUTUMNAL EVENING

Deep black against the dying glow  
The tall elms stand ; the rooks are still ;  
No windbreath makes the faintest thrill  
Amongst the leaves ; the fields below  
Are vague and dim in twilight shades—  
Only the bats wheel in their raids

On the grey flies, and silently  
Great dusky moths go flitting by.



## A WINTER HEDGEROW

The wintry wolds are white ; the wind  
Seems frozen ; in the shelter'd nooks  
The sparrows shiver ; the black rooks  
Wheel homeward where the elms behind  
The manor stand ; at the field's edge  
The redbreasts in the blackthorn hedge

Sit close and under snowy eaves  
The shrewnices sleep 'mid nested leaves.

## THE ROOKERY AT SUNRISE

The lofty elm-trees darkly dream  
Against the steel-blue sky ; till far  
I' the twilit east a golden star  
O'erbrims the dusk in one vast stream  
Of yellow light, and lo ! a cry  
Breaks from the windy nest—the sky

Is filled with wheeling rooks—they sway  
In one black phalanx towards the day.

## MOONRISE

The first snows of the year lie white  
    Upon the branches bending low ;  
    A surging wind the flakes doth blow  
Before the coming feet of Night—  
    Half dusk, half day, betwixt the pines  
    Green-yellow the full moon reclines :

Green-yellow, and now wholly green,  
While faint the windy stars are seen.

## FIREFLIES

Softly sailing emerald lights  
    Above the cornfields come and go,  
    Listlessly wandering to and fro :  
The magic of these July nights  
    Has surely even pierced down deep  
    Where the earth's jewels unharmed sleep,

And filled with fire the emeralds there  
And raised them thus to the outer air.

## THE CRESCENT MOON

As though the Power that made the nautilus  
A living glory o'er seas perilous  
Scathless to roam, had from the utmost  
deep

Called a vast flawless pearl from out its sleep  
And carv'd it crescent-wise, exceeding  
fair,—

So seems the crescent moon that thro' the  
air

With motionless motion glides from out the  
west,

And sailing onward ever seems at rest.

## THE EAGLE

Between two mighty hills a sheer  
Abyss—far down in the ravine  
A thread-like torrent and a screen  
Of oaks like shrubs—and one doth rear  
A dry scarp'd peak above all sound  
Save windy voices wailing round :

At sunrise here, in proud disdain  
The eagle scans his vast domain.

A VENETIAN SUNSET : BEFORE A  
CHANGE

*(Returning from Torcello)*

In violet hues each dome and spire  
Stands outlined against flawless rose ;  
O'er this a carmine ocean flows  
Streak'd with pure gold and amber fire,  
And through the sea of sundown mist  
Float isles of melted amethyst :

Storm-portents, saffron streamers rise,  
Fan-like, from Venice to the skies.

EMPIRE (PERSEPOLIS)

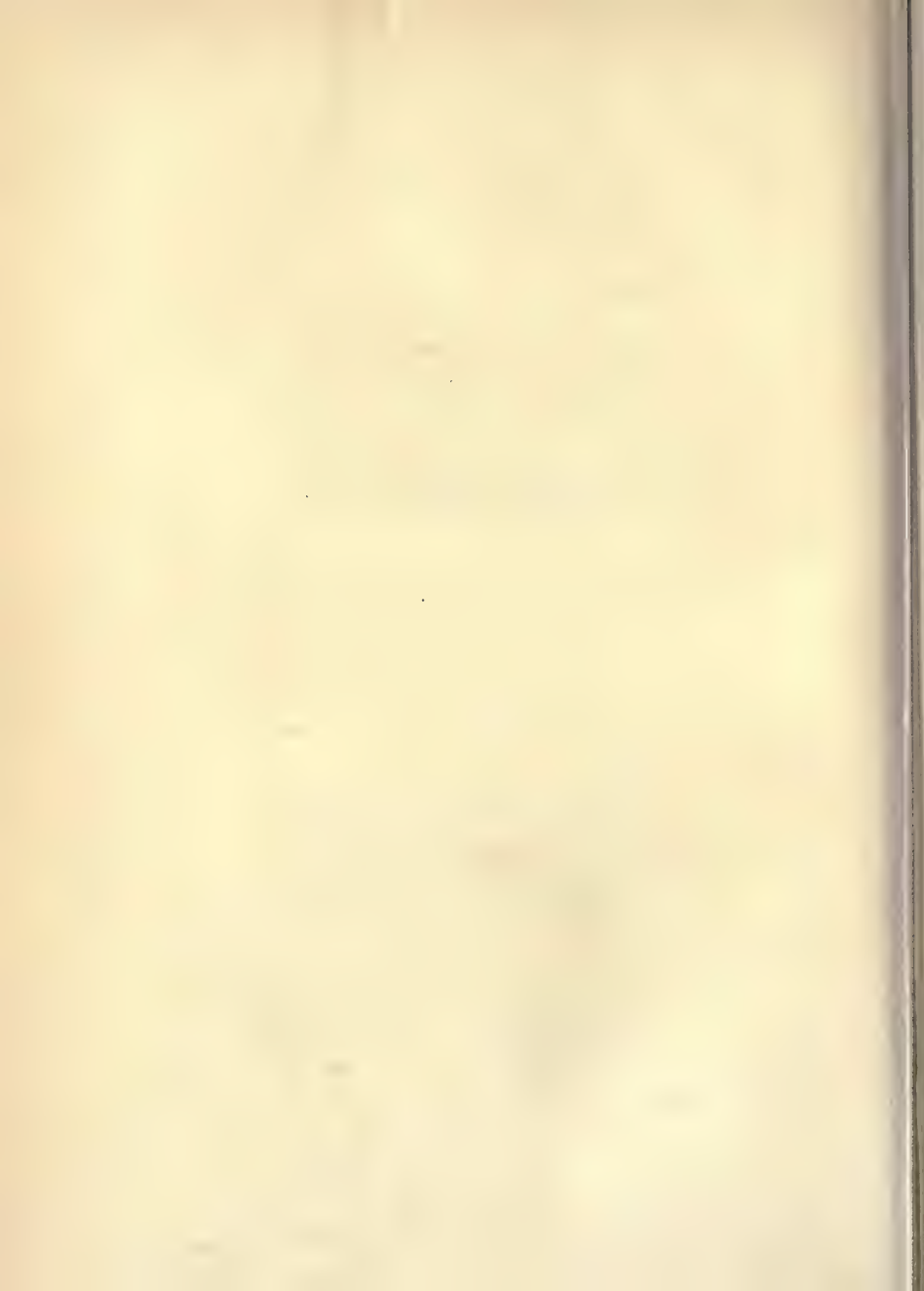
The yellow waste of yellow sands,  
The bronze haze of a scorching sky !  
Lo, what are these that broken lie ;  
Were these once temples made with hands ?  
Once towers and palaces that knew  
No hint of that which one day threw

Their greatness to the winds—made this  
The memory of Persepolis ?

AUSTRALIAN SKETCHES

I

G



## THE LAST ABORIGINAL

I see him sit, wild-eyed, alone,  
Amidst gaunt, spectral, moonlit gums—  
He waits for death : not once a moan  
From out his rigid fixt lips comes ;  
His lank hair falls adown a face  
Haggard as any wave-worn stone,  
And in his eyes I dimly trace  
The memory of a vanished race.

The lofty ancient gum-trees stand,  
Each grey and ghostly in the moon,  
The giants of an old strange land  
That was exultant in its noon  
When all our Europe was o'erturned  
With deluge and with shifting sand,  
With earthquakes that the hills inurned  
And central fires that fused and burned.

The moon moves slowly through the vast  
And solemn skies ; the night is still,  
Save when a warrigal springs past  
With dismal howl, or when the shrill

*The last Aboriginal*

Scream of a parrot rings which feels  
A twining serpent's fangs fixt fast,  
Or when a grey opossum squeals,  
Or long iguana, as it steals

From bole to bole disturbs the leaves :  
But hush'd and still he sits—who knows  
That all is o'er for him who weaves  
With inner speech, malign, morose,  
A curse upon the whites who came  
And gather'd up his race like sheaves  
Of thin wheat, fit but for the flame—  
Who shot or spurned them without shame.

He knows he shall not see again  
The creeks whereby the lyre-birds sing—  
He shall no more upon the plain,  
Sun scorch'd, and void of water-spring,  
Watch the dark cassowaries sweep  
In startled flight, or, with spear lain  
In ready poise, glide, twist, and creep  
Where the brown kangaroo doth leap.

No more in silent dawns he'll wait  
By still lagoons, and mark the flight  
Of black swans near : no more elate  
Whirl high the boomerang aright  
Upon some foe : he knows that now  
He too must share his race's night—  
He scarce can know the white man's plough  
Will one day pass above his brow.



*The last Aboriginal*

Last remnant of the Austral race  
He sits and stares, with failing breath :  
The shadow deepens on his face,  
For 'midst the spectral gums waits death.  
A dingo's sudden howl swells near—  
He stares once with a startled gaze,  
As half in wonder, half in fear,  
Then sinks back on his unknown bier.

## THE COROBBOREE

*(Midnight)*

Deep in the forest-depths the tribe  
A mighty blazing fire have made :  
Round this they spring with frantic yells  
In hideous pigments all arrayed—

One barred with yellow ochre, one  
A skeleton in startling white;  
There one who dances furiously  
Blood-red against the great fire's light,—

With death's insignia on his breast,  
In rude design, the swart chief springs ;  
And loud and long each echoes back  
The savage war-cry that he sings.

Within the forest dark and dim  
The startled cockatoos like ghosts  
Flit to and fro, the mopokes scream,  
And parrots rise in chattering hosts ;

*The Corobboree*

The gins and lubras crouch and watch  
With eager shining brute-like eyes,  
And ever and again shrill back  
Wild echoes of the frantic cries :—

Like some infernal scene it is—  
The forest dark, the blazing fire,  
The ghostly birds, the dancing fiends,  
Whose savage chant swells ever higher.

Afar away gaunt wild-dogs howl,  
And strange cries vaguely call : but white  
The placid moon sails on, and flame  
The silent stars above the night.

## JUSTICE

*(Uncivilised and Civilised)*

Ling-Tso Ah Sin, on Murderer's Flat  
One morning caught an old grey rat :  
" Ah, white man, I have got you now  
But no—dust be upon my brow  
If needless blood I cause to fall—  
So go, there's world-room for us all ! "

That night Ah Sin was somehow shot—  
By *accident* ! For he had got  
From earth a little gold—black sin  
For *thee*, though not for us, Ah Sin !

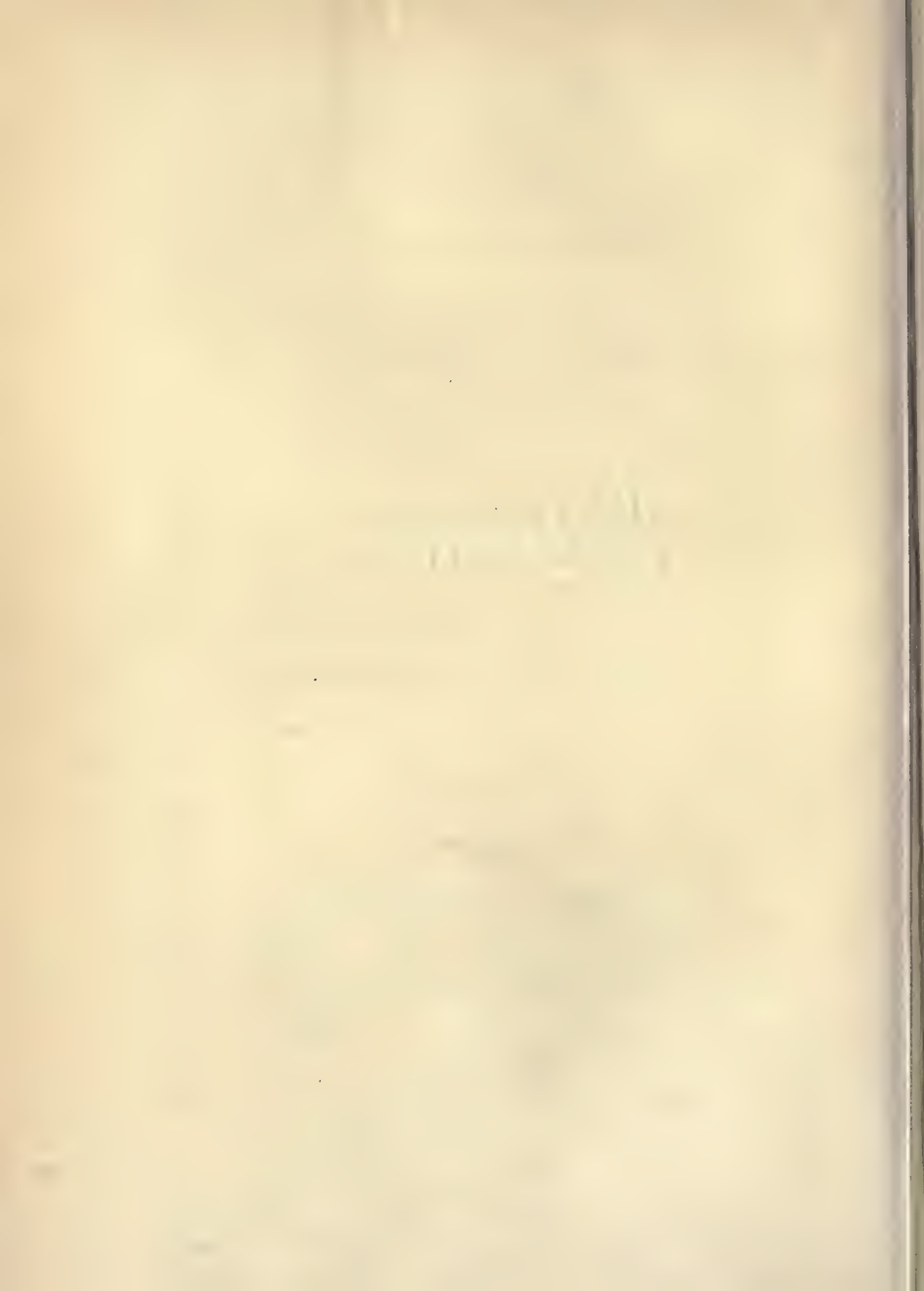
MURDERER'S FLAT, *February 1878.*

## NOON-SILENCE

*(Australian Forest)*

A lyre-bird sings a low melodious song—  
Then all is still : a soft wind breathes along  
The lofty gums and faintly dies away :  
And Silence wakes and knows her dream is  
day.

AUSTRALIAN  
TRANSCRIPTS



## I. AN ORANGE GROVE

(*Victoria*)

The short sweet purple twilight dreams  
Of vanish'd day, of coming night ;  
And like gold moons in the soft light  
Each scented drooping orange gleams  
From out the glossy leaves black-green  
That make through noon a cool dark screen.

The dusk is silence, save the thrill  
That stirs it from cicadas shrill.

## II. BLACK SWANS ON THE MURRAY LAGOONS

The long lagoons lie white and still  
Beneath the great round Austral moon :  
The sudden dawn will waken soon  
With many a delicious thrill :  
Between this death and life the cries  
Of black swans ring through silent skies—  
And the long wash of the slow stream  
Moves as in sleep some bodeful dream.

### III. BREAKING BILLOWS AT SORRENTO

*(Victoria)*

A sky of whirling flakes of foam,  
A rushing world of dazzling blue  
One moment, the sky looms in view—  
The next, a crash in its curved dome,  
A tumult indescribable,  
And eyes dazed with the miracle.  
Here breaks by circling day and night  
In thunder the sea's boundless might.

### IV. SHEA-OAK TREES ON A STORMY DAY

*(S.E. Victoria)*

O'er sandy tracts the shea-oak trees  
Droop their long wavy grey-green trails :  
And inland wandering moans and wails  
The long blast of the ocean-breeze :  
Like loose strings of a viol or harp  
These answering sound—now low, now sharp  
And keen, a melancholy strain :  
A death song o'er the mournful plain.



## V. MID-NOON IN JANUARY

Upon a fibry fern-tree bough  
A huge iguana lies alow,  
Bright yellow in the noonday glow  
With bars of black,—it watcheth now  
A gorgeous insect hover high  
Till suddenly its lance doth fly  
And catch the prey—but still no sound  
Breathes 'mid the green fern-spaces round.

## VI. IN THE FERN

*(Gippsland)*

The feathery fern-trees make a screen  
Wherethrough the sunglare cannot pass—  
Fern, gum, and lofty sassafras :  
The fronds sweep over, palely green,  
And underneath are orchids curl'd  
Adream through this cool shadow-world ;  
A fragrant greenness—like the noon  
Of lime-tree in an English June.

## VII. SUNSET AMID THE BUFFALO MOUNTAINS

*(N.E. Victoria)*

Across the boulder'd majesty  
Of the great hills the passing day  
Drifts like a wind-borne cloud away  
Far off beyond the western sky :  
And while a purple glory spreads,  
With straits of gold and brilliant reds,  
    An azure veil, translucent, strange,  
    Dreamlike steals over each dim range.

## VIII. THE FLYING MOUSE

*(New South Wales—Moonlight)*

The eucalyptus-blooms are sweet  
With honey, and the birds all day  
Sip the clear juices forth : brown-grey,  
A bird-like thing with tiny feet  
Cleaves to the boughs, or with small wings  
Amidst the leafy spaces springs,  
    And in the moonshine with shrill cries  
    Flits bat-like where the white gums rise.

## IX. THE BELL-BIRD

The stillness of the Austral noon  
Is broken by no single sound—  
No lizards even on the ground  
Rustle amongst dry leaves—no tune  
The lyre-bird sings—yet hush ! I hear  
A soft bell tolling, silvery clear !  
    Low soft aerial chimes, unknown  
    Save 'mid these silences alone.

## X. THE WOOD-SWALLOWS \*

*(Sunrise)*

The lightning-stricken giant gum  
Stands leafless, dead—a giant still  
But heedless of this sunrise-thrill :  
What stir is this where all was dumb ?—  
What seem like old dead leaves break swift,  
And lo, a hundred wings uplift  
    A cloud of birds that to and fro  
    Dart joyous midst the sunrise-glow.

\* The wood-swallows of Australia have the singular habit of clustering like bees or bats on the boughs of a dead tree.

## XI. THE ROCK-LILY

*(New South Wales)*

The amber-tinted level sands  
Unbroken stretch for leagues away  
Beyond these granite slabs, dull grey  
And lifeless, herbless—save where stands  
The mighty rock-flow'r towering high,  
With carmine blooms crowned gloriously :  
    A giant amongst flowers it reigns,  
    The glory of these Austral plains.

## XII. THE FLAME-TREE

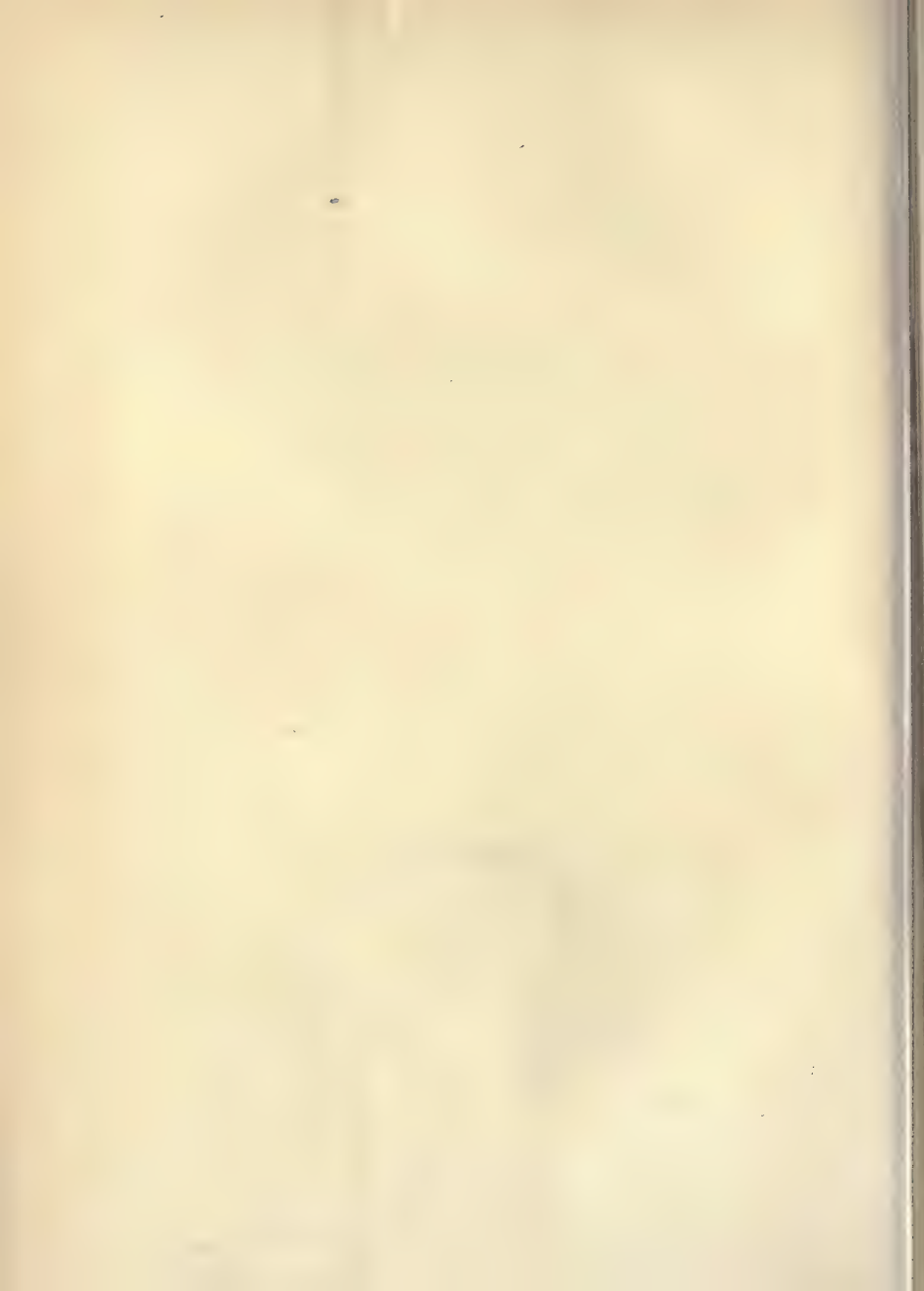
*(New South Wales)*

For miles the Illawarra range  
Runs level with Pacific seas :  
What glory when the morning breeze  
Upon its slopes doth shift and change  
Deep pink and crimson hues, till all  
The leagues-long distance seems a wall  
    Of swift uncurling flames of fire  
    That wander not nor reach up higher.

FROM  
ROMANTIC BALLADS  
1888

I

H



## THE WEIRD OF MICHAEL SCOTT

The wild wind moaned : fast waned the  
light :  
Dense cloud-wrack gloomed the front of  
night :  
The moorland cries were cries of pain :  
Green, red, or broad and glaring white  
The lightnings flashed athwart the main.

The sound and fury of the waves,  
Upon the rocks, among the caves,  
Boomed inland from the thunderous  
strand :  
Mayhap the dead heard in their graves  
The tumult fill the hollow land.

With savage pebbly rush and roar  
The billows swept the echoing shore  
In clouds of spume and swirling spray :  
The wild wings of the tempest bore  
The salt rheum to the Haunted Brae.

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

Upon the Haunted Brae (where none  
Would linger in the noontide sun)

Michael the Wizard rode apace :  
Wildly he rode where all men shun,  
With madness gleaming on his face.

Loud, loud he laugh'd whene'er he saw  
The lightnings split on Lammer-Law,  
“ *Blood, bride, and bier the auld rune saith  
Hell's wind tae me ae nicht sall blaw,  
The nicht I ride unto my death !* ”

Across the Haunted Brae he fled,  
And mock'd and jeer'd the shuddering pead ;  
Wan white the horse that he bestrode,  
The fire-flaughts stricken as it sped  
Flashed thro' the black mirk of the road.

And even as his race he ran,  
A shade pursued the fleeing man,  
A white and ghastly shade it was ;  
“ Like saut sea-spray across wet san'  
Or wind abune the moonlit grass !—

“ Like saut sea-spray it follows me,  
Or wind o'er grass—so fast's I flee :  
In vain I shout, and laugh, and call—  
The thing betwixt me and the sea  
God kens it is my ain lost saul ! ”



*The Weirð of Michael Scott*

Down, down the Haunted Brae, and past  
The verge of precipices vast  
And eyries where the eagles screech ;  
By great pines swaying in the blast,  
Through woods of moaning larch and  
beech ;

On, on by moorland glen and stream,  
Past lonely lochs where ospreys scream,  
Past marsh-lands where no sound is  
heard,  
The rider and his white horse gleam,  
And, aye behind, that dreadful third.

Wild and more wild the wild wind blew,  
But Michael Scott the rein ne'er drew :  
Loud and more loud his laughter shrill,  
His wild and mocking laughter, grew,  
In dreadful cries 'twixt hill and hill.

At last the great high road he gained,  
And now with whip and voice he strained  
To swifter flight the gleaming mare ;  
Afar ahead the fierce sleet rained  
Upon the ruin'd House of Stair.

Then Michael Scott laughed long and loud :  
“ Whan shone the mune ahint yon cloud  
I kent the Towers that saw my birth—  
Lang, lang, sall wait my cauld grey shroud,  
Lang cauld and weet my bed o' earth ! ”

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

But as by Stair he rode full speed  
His horse began to pant and bleed :

“ Win hame, win hame, my bonnie mare,  
Win hame if thou would'st rest and feed,  
Win hame, we're nigh the House of Stair ! ”

But with a shrill heart-bursten yell  
The white horse stumbled, plunged, and fell,  
And loud a summoning voice arose,

“ Is't White-Horse Death that rides frae  
Hell,  
Or Michael Scott that hereby goes ? ”

“ Ah, Lord of Stair, I ken ye weel !  
Avaunt, or I your saul sall steal,  
An' send ye howling through the wood .  
A wild man-wolf—aye, ye maun reel  
An' cry upon your Holy Rood ! ”

Swift swept the sword within the shade,  
Swift was the flash the blue steel made,  
Swift was the downward stroke and rash—  
But, as though leven-struck, the blade  
Fell splintered earthward with a crash.

With frantic eyes Lord Stair out-peered  
When Michael Scott laughed loud and  
jeered :—

“ Forth fare ye now, ye've gat lang room !

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

Ah, by my saul thou'lt dree thy weird !  
Begone, were-wolf, till the day o' doom ! ”

A shrill scream pierced the lonely place ;  
A dreadful change came o'er the face ;  
The head, with bristled hair, swung low ;  
Michael the Wizard turned and fled  
And laughed a mocking laugh of woe.

And through the wood there stole and crept,  
And through the wood there raced and leapt,  
A thing in semblance of a man ;  
An awful look its wild eyes kept  
As howling through the night it ran.

PART II

Athwart the wan bleak moonlit waste,  
With staring eyes, in frantic haste,  
With thin locks back-blown by the wind,  
A grey gaunt haggard figure raced  
And moaned the thing that sped behind.

It followed him, afar or near :  
In wrath he curs'd ; he shrieked in fear ;  
But ever more it followed him :  
Eftsoons he'd stop, and turn, and peer  
To front the following phantom grim.

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

Naught would he see ; in vain would list  
For wing-like sound or feet that hissed  
Like wind-blown snow upon the ice ;  
The grey thing vanished like a mist,  
Or like the smoke of sacrifice :

“ Come forth frae out the mirk,” his cry,  
“ For I maun live or I maun die,  
But na, nae mair I’ll suffer baith ! ”  
Then, with a shriek, would onward fly  
And, swift behind, his following wraith.

Michael the Wizard sped across  
The peat and bracken o’ the moss :  
He heard the muir-wind rise and fall,  
And laughed to see the birk-boughs toss  
An’ the stealthy shadows leap or crawl.

When white St. Monan’s Water streamed  
For leagues athwart the muir, and gleamed  
With phosphorescent marish-fires,  
With wild and sudden joy he screamed,  
For scarce a mile was Kevan-Byres—

Sweet Kevan-Byres, dear Kevan-Byres,  
That oft of old was thronged with squires  
And joyous damsels blithe and gay :  
Alas, alas for Kevan-Byres  
That now is cold and grey.

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

There in bed on linen sheet  
With white soft limbs and love-dreams sweet  
Fair Margaret o' the Byres would be :  
(Ah, when he'd lain and kissed her feet  
Had she not laughed in mockery !)

Aye she had laughed, for what reck'd she  
O' a' the powers of Wizardie !  
" Win up, win up, guid Michael Scott,  
For ye sall ne'er win boon o' me,  
By plea, or sword, or spell, God wot ! "

Aye, these the words that she had said :  
These were the words that as he fled  
Michael the Wizard muttered o'er—  
" My Margaret, bow your bonnie head,  
For ye sall never flout me more ! "

Swiftly he raced, with gleaming eyes,  
And wild, strange, sobbing, panting cries,  
Dire, dire, and fell his frantic mood ;  
Until he gained St. Monan's Rise  
Whereon the House of Kevan stood.

There looked he long and fixed his gaze  
Upon a room where in past days  
His very soul had pled love's boon :  
Lit was it now with the wan rays  
Flick-flickering from the cloud-girt moon.

*The Weir'd of Michael Scott*

“Come forth, May Margaret, come, my  
heart!

For thou and I nae mair sall part—  
Come forth, I bid, though Christ himsel'  
My bitter love should strive to thwart,  
For I have a' the powers o' hell!”

What was the white wan thing that came  
And lean'd from out the window-frame,  
And waved wild arms against the sky?  
What was the hollow echoing name,  
What was the thin despairing cry?

Adown the long and dusky stair,  
And through the courtyard bleak and bare,  
And past the gate, and out upon  
The whistling, moaning, midnight air—  
What is't that Michael Scott has won!

Across the moat it seems to flee,  
It speeds across the windy lea,  
And through the ruin'd abbey-arch;  
Now like a mist all waveringly  
It stands beneath a lonely larch.

“Come Margaret, my Margaret,  
Thou see'st my vows I ne'er forget:  
Come win wi' me across the waste—  
Lang lang I've wandered cauld and wet,  
An' now thy sweet warm lips would taste!”

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

But as a whirling drift of snow,  
Or flying foam the sea-winds blow,  
Or smoke swept thin before a gale  
It flew across the waste—and oh  
'Twas Margaret's voice in that long wail !

Swift as the hound upon the deer,  
Swift as the stag when nigh the mere,  
Michael the Wizard followed fast—  
What though May Margaret fled in fear,  
She should be his, be his, at last !—

O'er broom and whin and bracken high,  
Where the peat bog lay gloomily,  
Where sullenly the bittern boomed  
And startled curlews swept the sky,  
Until St. Monan's Water loomed !

“ The cauld wet water sall na be  
The bride-bed for my love and me—  
For now upon St. Monan's shore  
May Margaret her love sall gie  
To him she mocked and jeered of yore ! ”

Was that a heron in its flight ?  
Was that a mere-mist wan and white ?  
What thing from lonely kirkyard grave ?  
Forlorn it trails athwart the night  
With arms that writhe and wring and wave !

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

Deep down within the mere it sank,  
Among the slimy reeds and rank,  
And all the leagues-long loch was bare—  
One vast, grey, moonlit, lifeless blank  
Beneath a silent waste of air.

“ O God, O God ! her soul it is !  
Christ's saved her frae my blasting kiss !  
Her soul frae out her body drawn,  
The body I maun have for bliss !  
O body dead and spirit gaun ! ”

Hours long o'er Monan's wave he stared ;  
The fire-flaughts flashed and gleamed and  
glared,  
The death-lights o' the lonely place :  
And aye, dead still, he watch'd, till flared  
The sunrise on his haggard face.

Full well he knew that with its fires  
Loud was the tumult 'mong the squires,  
And fierce the bitter pain of all  
Where stark and stift in Kevan-Byres  
May Margaret lay beneath her pall.

Then once he laughed, and twice, and thrice,  
Though deep within his hollow eyes  
Dull-gleamed a light of fell despair.  
Around, Earth grew a Paradise  
In the sweet golden morning air.



*The Weird of Michael Scott*

Slowly he rose at last, and swift  
One gaunt and frantic arm did lift  
And curs'd God in his heav'n o'erhead :  
Then, like a lonely cloud adrift,  
Far from St. Monan's wave he fled.

PART III

All day the curlew wailed and screamed,  
All day the cushat crooned and dreamed,  
All day the sweet muir-wind blew free :  
Beyond the grassy knowes far gleamed  
The splendour of the singing sea.

Above the myriad gorse and broom  
And miles of golden kingcup-bloom  
The larks and yellowhammers sang :  
Where the scaur cast an hour-long  
    gloom  
The lintie's liquid notes out-rang.

Oft as he wandered to and fro—  
As idly as the foam-bells flow  
Hither and thither on the deep—  
Michael the Wizard's face would grow  
From death to life, and he would  
    weep—

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

Weep, weep wild tears of bitter pain  
For what might never be again :  
Yet even as he wept his face  
Would gleam with mockery insane  
And with fierce laughter on he'd race.

At times he watched the white clouds sail  
Across the wastes of azure pale ;  
Or oft would haunt some moorland pool  
Fringed round with thyme and fragrant gale  
And canna-tufts of snow-white wool.

Long in its depths would Michael stare,  
As though some secret thing lay there :  
Mayhap the moving water made  
A gloom where crouched a Kelpie fair  
With death-eyes gleaming through the shade.

Then on with weary listless feet  
He fared afar, until the sweet  
Cool sound of mountain brooks drew nigh,  
And loud he heard the strayed lambs bleat  
And the white ewes responsive cry.

High up among the hills full clear  
He heard the belling of the deer  
Amid the corries where they browsed,  
And, where the peaks rose gaunt and sheer,  
Fierce swirling echoes eagle-roused.

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

He watched the kestrel wheel and sweep,  
He watched the dun fox glide and creep,  
He heard the whaup's long-echoing call,  
Watched in the stream the brown trout leap  
And the grilse spring the waterfall.

Along the slopes the grouse-cock whirred ;  
The grey-blue heron scarcely stirred  
Amid the mossed grey tarn-side stones :  
The burns gurg-gurgled through the yird  
Their sweet clear bubbling undertones.

Above the tarn the dragon-fly  
Shot like a flashing arrow by ;  
And in a moving shifting haze  
The gnat-clouds sank or soared on high  
And danced their wild aerial maze.

As the day waned he heard afar  
The hawking fern-owl's dissonant jar  
Disturb the silence of the hill :  
The gloaming came : star after star  
He watched the skiey spaces fill.

But as the darkness grew and made  
Forest and mountain one vast shade,  
Michael the Wizard moaned in dread—  
A long white moonbeam like a blade  
Swept after him where'er he fled.

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

Swiftly he leapt o'er rock and root,  
Swift o'er the fern his flying foot,  
But swifter still the white moonbeam :  
Wild was the grey-owl's dismal hoot,  
But wilder still his maniac scream.

Once in his flight he paused to hear  
A hollow shriek that echoed near :—  
The louder were his dreadful cries,  
The louder rang adown the sheer  
Gaunt cliffs the echoing replies.

As though a hunted wolf, he raced  
To the lone woods across the waste  
Steep granite slopes of Crammond-Low—  
The haunted forest where none faced  
The terror that no man might know.

Betwixt the mountains and the sea  
Dark leagues of pine stood solemnly,  
Voiceful with grim and hollow song,  
Save when each tempest-stricken tree  
A savage tumult would prolong.

Beneath the dark funereal plumes,  
Slow waving to and fro—death-blooms  
Within the void dim wood of death—  
Oft shuddering at the fearful glooms  
Sped Michael Scott with failing breath.

*The Weirð of Michael Scott*

Once, as he passed a dreary place,  
Between two trees he saw a face—  
A white face staring at his own :  
A weird strange cry he gave for grace,  
And heard an echoing moan.

“ Whate’er ye be, O thing that bides  
Among the trees—O thing that hides  
In yonder moving mass o’ shade  
Come forth tae me ! ”—wan Michael glides  
Swift, as he speaks, athrough the glade :

“ Whate’er ye be, I fear ye nought !  
Michael the Wizard has na fought  
Wi’ men and demons year by year  
To shirk ae thing he has na sought  
Or blanch wi’ any mortal fear ! ”

But not a sound thrilled thro’ the air—  
Not even a she-fox in her lair  
Or brooding bird made any stir—  
All was as still and blank and bare  
As is a vaulted sepulchre.

Then awe, and fear, and wild dismay  
O’ercame mad Michael, ashy grey,  
With eyes as of one newly dead :  
“ If wi’ my sword I canna slay,  
Ye’ll dree my weird when it is said ! ”

*The Weirð of Michael Scott*

“ Whate’er ye be, man, beast, or sprite,  
I wind ye round wi’ a sheet o’ light—  
Aye, round and round your burning frame  
I cast by spell o’ wizard might  
A fierce undying sheet of flame ! ”

Swift as he spoke a thing sprang out,  
A man-like thing, all hemmed about  
With blazing blasting burning fire !  
The wind swoop’d wi’ a demon-shout  
And whirled the red flame higher and higher !

And as, appalled, wan Michael stood  
The flying flaughts swift fired the wood ;  
And even as he shook and stared  
The gaunt pines turned the hue of blood  
And all the waving branches flared.

Then with wild leaps the accursèd thing  
Drew nigh and nigher : with a spring  
Michael escaped its fiery clasp,  
Although he felt the fierce flame sting  
And all the horror of its grasp.

Swift as an arrow far he fled,  
But swifter still the flames o’erhead  
Rushed o’er the waving sea of pines,  
And hollow noises crashed and sped  
Like splitting blasts in ruin’d mines.

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

A burning league—leagues, leagues of fire  
Arose behind, and ever higher  
The flying semi-circle came :  
And aye beyond this dreadful pyre  
There leapt a man-like thing in flame.

With awful scream doom'd Michael saw  
The flying furnace reach Black-Law :  
“ *Blood, bride, and bier, the auld rune saith  
Hell's wind tae me ae nicht sall blaw,  
The nicht I ride unto my death !* ”

“ *The blood of Stair is round me now :  
My bride can laugh to scorn my vow :  
My bier, my bier, ah sall it be  
Wi' a crown o' fire around my brow  
Or deep within the cauld saut sea !* ”

Like lightning, over Black-Law's slope  
Michael fled swift with sudden hope :  
What though the forest roared behind—  
He yet might gain the cliff and grope  
For where the sheep-paths twist and wind.

The air was like a furnace-blast  
And all the dome of heaven one vast  
Expanse of flame and fiery wings :  
To the cliff's edge, ere all be past,  
With shriek on shriek lost Michael springs.

*The Weird of Michael Scott*

But none can hear his bitter call,  
None, none can see him sway and fall—  
Yea, one there is that shrills his name !  
“ *O God, it is my ain lost saul*  
*That I hae girt wi' deathless flame !* ”

With waving arms and dreadful cries  
He cowers beneath those glaring eyes—  
But all in vain—in vain—in vain !  
His own soul clasps him as its prize  
And scorches death upon his brain.

Body and soul together swing  
Adown the night until they fling  
The hissing sea-spray far and wide :  
At morn the fresh sea-wind will bring  
A black corpse tossing on the tide.



## THE TWIN-SOUL

In the dead of the night a spirit came :  
Her moon-white face and her eyes of flame  
Were known to me :—I called her name—  
    The name that shall not be spoken at all  
    Till Death hath this body of mine in thrall !

And she laughed to see me lying there,  
Wrapped in the living-corpse bloody and fair,  
And my soul 'mid its thin films shining bare—  
    And I rose and followed her glance so  
    sweet  
    And passed from the house with noiseless  
    feet.

I know not myself what I knew, what I saw !  
I know that it filled me with trouble and awe,  
With pain that still at my heart doth gnaw :  
    That she with her wild eyes witched my  
    soul  
    And whispered the name of the Unknown  
    Goal.

*The Twin-Soul*

O, wild was her laugh, and wild was my cry  
When with one long flash and a weary sigh  
awoke as from sleep bewilderingly :

Her voice, her eyes, they are with me still,  
O Spirit-Enchantress, O Demon-Will !

## THE ISLE OF LOST DREAMS

There is an isle beyond our ken,  
Haunted by Dreams of weary men.  
Grey Hopes enshadow it with wings  
Weary with burdens of old things :  
There the insatiate water-springs  
Rise with the tears of all who weep :  
And deep within it, deep, oh deep  
The furtive voice of Sorrow sings.  
    There evermore,  
    Till Time be o'er,  
Sad, oh so sad, the Dreams of men  
Drift through the isle beyond our ken.

## THE DEATH-CHILD

She sits beneath the elder-tree  
And sings her song so sweet,  
And dreams o'er the burn that darksome  
Runs by her moon-white feet.

Her hair is dark as starless night,  
Her flower-crown'd face is pale,  
But oh, her eyes are lit with light  
Of dread ancestral bale.

She sings an eerie song, so wild  
With immemorial dule—  
Though young and fair Death's mortal child  
That sits by that dark pool.

And oft she cries an eldritch scream  
When red with human blood  
The burn becomes a crimson stream,  
A wild, red, surging flood :

Or shrinks, when some swift tide of tears—  
The weeping of the world—  
Dark eddying 'neath man's phantom-fears,  
Is o'er the red stream hurl'd.

*The Death-Child*

For hours beneath the elder-tree  
She broods beside the stream ;  
Her dark eyes filled with mystery,  
Her dark soul rapt in dream.

The lapsing flow she heedeth not  
Though deepest depths she scans :  
Life is the shade that clouds her thought,  
As Death's the eclipse of man's.

Time seems but as a bitter thing  
Remember'd from of yore :  
Yet ah (she thinks) her song she'll sing  
When Time's long reign is o'er.

Erstwhiles she bends alow to hear  
What the swift water sings,  
The torrent running darkly clear  
With secrets of all things.

And then she smiles a strange sad smile,  
And lets her harp lie long ;  
The death-waves oft may rise the while,  
She greets them with no song.

Few ever cross that dreary moor,  
Few see that flower-crown'd head ;  
But whoso knows that wild song's lure  
Knoweth that he is dead.

## THE COVES OF CRAIL

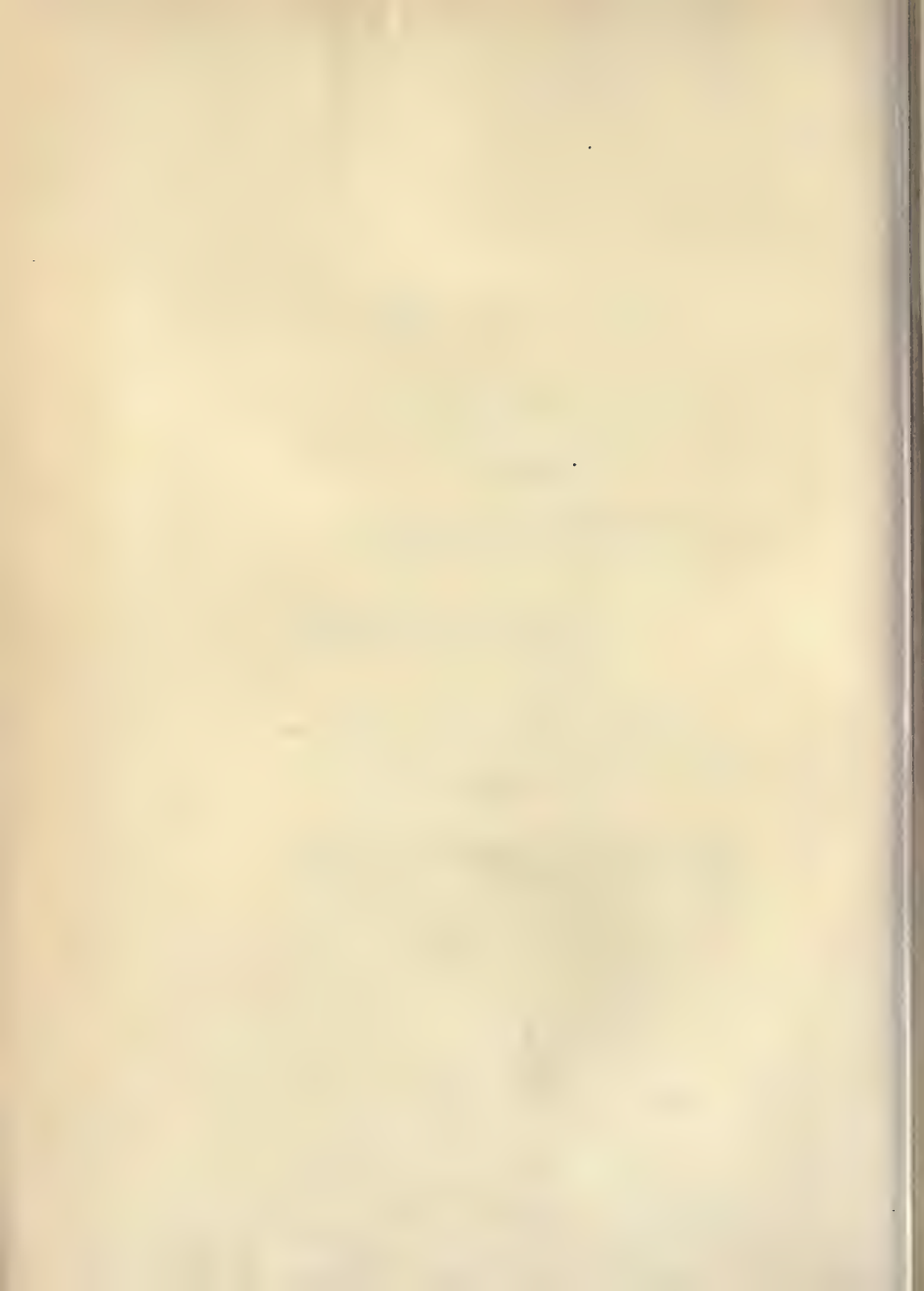
The moon-white waters wash and leap,  
The dark tide floods the Coves of Crail ;  
Sound, sound he lies in dreamless sleep,  
Nor hears the sea-wind wail.

The pale gold of his oozy locks,  
Doth hither drift and thither wave ;  
His thin hands splash against the rocks,  
His white lips nothing crave.

Afar away she laughs and sings—  
A song he loved, a wild sea-strain—  
Of how the mermen weave their rings  
Upon the reef-set main.

Sound, sound he lies in dreamless sleep,  
Nor hears the sea-wind wail,  
Tho' with the tide his white hands creep  
Amid the Coves of Crail.

FROM  
SOSPURI DI ROMA





## PRELUDE

Supra un munti sparman stu bellu ciuri  
Chistu è lu ciuri di la tò billizza!

*Sicilian Canzuno*

In a grove of ilex  
Of oak and of chestnut,  
Far on the sunswept  
Heights of Tusculum,  
There groweth a blossom,  
A snow-white bloom,  
Which many have heard of,  
But few have seen.  
Oft bright as the morning,  
Oft pale as moonlight,  
There in the greenness,  
In shadow and sunshine  
It grows, awaiting  
The hand that shall pluck it :  
For this blossom springeth  
From the heart of a poet  
And of her who loved him  
In the long ago,  
Here on the sunswept

*Prelude*

Heights of Tusculum.  
And them it awaiteth,  
Deep lovers only,  
Kindred of those  
Who loved and passioned  
There, and whose heart's-blood  
Wrought from the Earth  
This marvellous blossom,  
The Shadow-Lily,  
The Flower of Dream.

Few that shall see it,  
Fewer still  
Those that shall pluck it :  
But whoso gathers  
That snow-white blossom  
Shall love for ever,  
For the passionate breath  
Of the Shadow-Lily  
Is Deathless Joy :  
And whoso plucks it, keeps it, treasures it,  
Has sunshine ever  
About the heart,  
Deep in the heart immortal sunshine :  
For this is the gift of the snow-white  
blossom,  
This is the gift of the Flower of Dream.

## SUSURRO

Breath o' the grass,  
Ripple of wandering wind,  
Murmur of tremulous leaves :  
A moonbeam moving white  
Like a ghost across the plain :  
A shadow on the road :  
And high up, high,  
From the cypress-bough,  
A long sweet melancholy note.  
Silence.

And the topmost spray  
Of the cypress-bough is still  
As a wavelet in a pool :  
The road lies duskily bare :  
The plain is a misty gloom :  
Still are the tremulous leaves ;  
Scarce a last ripple of wind,  
Scarce a breath i' the grass.  
Hush : the tired wind sleeps  
Is it the wind's breath, or  
Breath o' the grass.

HIGH NOON AT MIDSUMMER  
ON THE CAMPAGNA

High noon,  
And from the purple-veilèd hills  
To where Rome lies in azure mist,  
Scarce any breath of wind  
Upon this vast and solitary waste,  
These leagues of sunscorch'd grass  
Where i' the dawn the scrambling goats  
    maintain  
A hardy feast,  
And where, when the warm yellow moon-  
    light floods the flats,  
Gaunt laggard sheep browse spectrally for  
    hours  
While not less gaunt and spectral shepherds  
    stand  
Brooding, or with hollow vacant eyes  
Stare down the long perspectives of the  
    dusk.  
Now not a breath :  
No sound ;

*High Noon at Midsummer on the Campagna*

No living thing,  
Save where the beetle jars his crackling  
shards,  
Or where the hoarse cicada fills  
The heavy heated hour with palpitant whirr.  
Yet hark !  
Comes not a low deep whisper from the  
ground,  
A sigh as though the immemorial past  
Breathed here a long, slow, breath ?  
Hush'd nations sleep below ; lost empires  
here  
Are dust ; and deeper still,  
Dim shadowy peoples are the mould that  
warms  
The roots of every flower that blooms and  
blows :  
Even as we, too, bloom and fade,  
Who are so fain  
To be as the Night that dies not, but forever  
Weaves her immortal web of starry fires ;  
To be as Time itself,  
Time, whose vast holocausts  
Lie here, deep buried from the ken of men,  
Here, where no breath of wind  
Ruffles the brooding heat,  
The breathless blazing heat  
Of Noon.

THE FOUNTAIN OF THE  
ACQUA PAOLA

Not where thy turbid wave  
Flowing Maremma-ward,  
Moves heavily, Tiber,  
Through Rome the Eternal,  
Not there her music, not there her joy is :  
But where on Janiculum  
The tall pines  
Sing their high song, with deeper therein,  
    like an echo  
Heard in a mountain-hollow where cataracts  
    break,  
A sound as of surge and of foaming :  
Yes, there where the echoing pines  
Whisper to high wandering winds  
The rush and the surge and the splendour  
Where the Acqua Paola thunders  
Into its fount gigantic,  
With noise like a tempest cleaving  
With mighty wings  
The norland forests.

*The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*

From dayspring, yellow and green  
And grey as a swan's breastfeather,  
To sunset's amber and gold  
And the white star of dusk,  
And through the moon-white hours  
Till only Hesperus hangs  
His quivering tremulous disc  
O'er the faint-flushed forehead of Dawn—  
All hours, all days, forever  
Surgeth the singing flood,  
With chant and paean glorious,  
With foam and splash and splendour,  
A music wild, barbaric,  
That calleth loud over Rome,  
Laughing, mocking, rejoicing :  
The sound of the waves when Ocean  
Laughs at the vanishing land  
And, fronting her shoreless leagues,  
Remembers the ruined empires  
That now are the drift and shingle  
In cavernous hollows under  
Her zone of Oblivion,  
Silence that nought shall break;  
Eternal calm.

Foam, spray and splendour  
Of rushing waters,  
Grey-blue as the pale blue dome  
That circleth the morning star

*The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*

While still his fires are brighter  
Than the wanwhite fire of the moon.  
Foam, spray, and surge  
Of rushing waters !  
O the hot flood of sunshine  
Yellowly pouring  
Over and into thee, jubilant Fountain :  
Thy cataracts filled  
With vanishing rainbows,  
Shimmering lights  
As though the Aurora's  
Wild polar fires  
Flashed in thy happy bubbles, died in thy  
foam.

Ever in joyous laughter  
Thy wavelets are dancing,  
Little waves with crests bright with sun-  
light  
Tossing their foamy arms,  
Laughing and leaping,  
Whirling, inweaving,  
Rippling at last and sleepily laving  
The mossed stone-barriers  
That clasp them round.  
Bright too and joyous,  
They, in the moonshine,  
When the falling waters  
Are as wreaths of snow



*The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*

Falling for ever  
Down mountain-flanks,  
Like melting snows  
In the high hill-hollows  
Seen from the valleys  
And seeming to fall,  
To fall forever  
A flower of water,  
Silent, and stirred not  
By any wind.

Bright too and joyous  
In darkling nights,  
When the moon shroudeth  
Her face in a veil  
Of cloudy vapours,  
Or, like a flower  
I' the wane of its beauty,  
Droopeth and falleth  
Till lost to sight,  
Stoopeth and fadeth  
Into the dark—  
Or when like a sickle  
Thin and silvern  
She moveth slowly  
Through the starry fields,  
Moveth slowly  
'Mid the flowers of the stars  
In the harvest-fields

*The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*

Of Eternity :  
Bright too and joyous,  
For then the shadows  
Play with the foam-lights,  
With the flying whiteness,  
And snowy surging.  
But brighter, more joyous,  
Save when the moon-flower  
In all her splendour  
Floats on thy bosom,  
Or, rather, dreameth  
Deep in the heart of thee  
O happy Fountain :  
Brighter, more joyous,  
Thee, when amidst thee,  
Strewn through thy waters,  
The stars are sown  
As seed multitudinous,  
As silvern seed  
In thy shadowy-furrows :  
Seed of the skiey flowers  
That in the heavens  
Bloom forever,  
Blossoms and blooms of  
Eternal splendour.  
Then is thy joy most,  
O jubilant Fountain,  
Then are thy waters  
Sweetest of song,

*The Fountain of the Acqua Paola*

Then do thy waters  
Surge, leap, rejoicing,  
Lave, and lapse slowly  
To haunted stillness  
And darkling dreams :  
Then is thy music rarest,  
Wildest and sweetest  
Music of Rome—  
Rome the Eternal,  
Through whose heart of shadow  
Moveth slowly  
Flowing Maremma-ward  
Thy murmur, Tiber,  
Thy muffled voice,  
Whom none interpreteth  
But boding, ominous,  
Is as the sound of  
Murmurous seas  
Heard afar inland—  
There, where Maremma-ward  
Flowing heavily,  
Moveth, Tiber,  
Thy turbid wave.

## CLOUDS

*(Agro Romano)*

As though the dead cities  
Of the ancient time  
Were builded again  
In the heights of heaven,  
With spires of amber  
And golden domes,  
Wide streets of topaz and amethyst ways ;  
Far o'er the pale blue waste,  
Oft purple-shadowed,  
Of the Agro Romano,  
Rises the splendid  
City of Cloud.  
There must the winds be soft as the twilight  
Invisibly falling when the day-star has  
wester'd ;  
There must the rainbows trail up through  
the sunlight,  
So fair are the hues on those white snowy  
masses.  
Mountainous glories,

*Clouds*

They move superbly ;  
Crumbling so slowly,  
That none perceives when  
The golden domes  
Are sunk in the valleys  
Of fathomless snow,  
Or when, in silence,  
The loftiest spires  
Fade into smoke, or as vapour that passeth  
When the hot breath of noon  
Thirsts through the firmament.  
Beautiful, beautiful,  
The City of Cloud,  
In splendour ruinous,  
With golden domes,  
And spires of amber,  
Builed superbly  
In the heights of heaven.

## RED POPPIES

*(In the Sabine valleys near Rome)*

Through the seeding grass,  
And the tall corn,  
The wind goes :  
With nimble feet,  
And blithe voice,  
Calling, calling,  
The wind goes  
Through the seeding grass,  
And the tall corn.

What calleth the wind,  
Passing by—  
The shepherd-wind ?  
Far and near  
He laugheth low  
And the red poppies  
Lift their heads  
And toss i' the sun.  
A thousand thousand blooms  
Tost i' the air,

*Red Poppies*

Banners of joy,  
For 'tis the shepherd-wind  
Passing by,  
Singing and laughing low  
Through the seeding grass  
And the tall corn.

## THE WHITE PEACOCK

Here where the sunlight  
Floodeth the garden,  
Where the pomegranate  
Reareth its glory  
Of gorgeous blossom ;  
Where the oleanders  
Dream through the noontides ;  
And, like surf o' the sea  
Round cliffs of basalt,  
The thick magnolias  
In billowy masses  
Front the sombre green of the ilexes :  
Here where the heat lies  
Pale blue in the hollows,  
Where blue are the shadows  
On the fronds of the cactus,  
Where pale blue the gleaming  
Of fir and cypress,  
With the cones upon them  
Amber or glowing  
With virgin gold :



*The White Peacock*

Here where the honey-flower  
Makes the heat fragrant,  
As though from the gardens  
Of Gulistan,  
Where the bulbul singeth  
Through a mist of roses  
A breath were borne :  
Here where the dream-flowers,  
The cream-white poppies  
Silently waver,  
And where the Scirocco,  
Faint in the hollows,  
Foldeth his soft white wings in the sunlight,  
And lieth sleeping  
Deep in the heart of  
A sea of white violets :  
Here, as the breath, as the soul of this  
    beauty  
Moveth in silence, and dreamlike, and slowly,  
White as a snow-drift in mountain-valleys  
When softly upon it the gold light lingers :  
White as the foam o' the sea that is driven  
O'er billows of azure a gleam with sun-  
    yellow :  
Cream-white and soft as the breasts of a girl,  
Moves the White Peacock, as though  
    through the noontide  
A dream of the moonlight were real for a  
    moment.

*The White Peacock*

Dim on the beautiful fan that he spreadeth,  
Foldeth and spreadeth abroad in the sun-  
light,  
Dim on the cream-white are blue adum-  
brations,  
Shadows so pale in their delicate blueness  
That visions they seem as of vanishing  
violets,  
The fragrant white violets veined with  
azure,  
Pale, pale as the breath of blue smoke in far  
woodlands.  
Here, as the breath, as the soul of this  
beauty,  
White as a cloud through the heats of the  
noontide  
Moves the White Peacock.

## THE SWIMMER OF NEMI

*(The Lake of Nemi : September)*

White through the azure,  
The purple blueness,  
Of Nemi's waters  
The swimmer goeth.  
Ivory-white, or wan white as roses  
Yellowed and tanned by the suns of the  
Orient,  
His strong limbs sever the violet hollows ;  
A shimmer of white fantastic motions  
Wavering deep through the lake as he  
swimmeth.  
Like gorse in the sunlight the gold of his  
yellow hair,  
Yellow with sunshine and bright as with  
dew-drops,  
Spray of the waters flung back as he tosseth  
His head i' the sunlight in the midst of his  
laughter :  
Red o'er his body, blossom-white 'mid the  
blueness,

*The Swimmer of Nemi*

And trailing behind him in glory of scarlet,  
A branch of the red-berried ash of the  
mountains.

White as a moonbeam  
Drifting athwart  
The purple twilight,  
The swimmer goeth—  
Joyously laughing,  
With o'er his shoulders,  
Agleam in the sunshine  
The trailing branch  
With the scarlet berries.

Green are the leaves, and scarlet the berries,  
White are the limbs of the swimmer beyond  
them,

Blue the deep heart of the still, brooding  
lakelet,

Pale-blue the hills in the haze of September,  
The high Alban hills in their silence and  
beauty,

Purple the depths of the windless heaven  
Curv'd like a flower o'er the waters of Nemi.

## AL FAR DELLA NOTTE

Hark !

As a bubbling fount  
That suddenly wells  
And rises in tall spiral waves and flying  
    spray,  
The high, sweet, quavering, throbbing voice  
Of the nightingale !  
Not yet the purple veil of dusk has fallen,  
But o'er the yellow band  
That binds the west  
The vesper star beats like the pulse of  
    heaven.

Up from the fields  
The peasants troop  
Singing their songs of love :  
And oft the twang of thin string'd music  
    breaks  
High o'er the welcoming shouts,  
The homing laughter.  
The whirling bats are out,  
And to and fro

*Al Far della Notte*

The blue swifts wheel  
Where, i<sup>n</sup> the shallows of the dusk,  
The grey moths flutter  
Over the pale blooms  
Of the night-flowering bay.  
Softly adown the slopes,  
And o'er the plain,  
*Ave Maria*  
Solemnly soundeth.  
The long day is over.  
Dusk, and silence now :  
And Night, that is as dew  
On the Flower of the World.

## THISTLEDOWN

*(Spring on the Campagna)*

Bloweth like snow  
From the grey thistles  
The thistledown :  
And the fairy-feathers  
O' the dandelion  
Are tossed by the breeze  
Hither and thither :  
Over the grasses,  
The seeding grasses  
Where the poppies shake  
And the campions waver,  
And where the clover,  
Purple and white,  
Fills leagues with the fragrance  
Of sunsweet honey ;  
Hither and thither  
The fairy-feathers  
O' the dandelion,  
And white puff-balls  
O' the thistledown,  
Merrily dancing,  
Light on the breeze,

*Thistledown*

Wheeling and sailing;  
And laughing to scorn  
The butterflies  
And the moths of azure ;  
Blowing like snow  
Or foam o' the sea,  
Hither and thither  
Upward and downward.

Now for a moment  
A thistledown  
On a white ball resteth,  
Sunbleached and hollow ;  
A human skull  
Of the ancient days,  
When Sabines and Latins  
Made all the land here  
As red with blood  
As it now is scarlet  
With flaming poppies.  
Now the feathers,  
O' the dandelion,  
Like sunlit swan's-down  
Long tost by the wind  
O'er the laughter of waters,  
Are blown like surf  
On a hidden rock—  
A broken arch  
Of a Roman temple,



*Thistledown*

Where long, long ago,  
The swarthy priests  
Worshipped their Gods,  
The Gods now less than  
The very dust  
Whence the green grass springeth !  
But for a moment, then the wind takes  
    them,  
Blows them, plays with them,  
Tosses them high through the gold of the  
    sunshine,  
Wavers them upward, wavers them down-  
    ward.  
Hither and thither among the white butter-  
    flies,  
Over and under the blue-moths and honey-  
    bees,  
Over the leagues of blossoming clover,  
Purple and white, the sweet-smelling clover,  
Far o'er the grasses,  
And grey hanging thistles,  
Hither and thither  
Are floating and sailing  
The fairy-feathers  
O' the dandelion,  
Bloweth like snow  
The joy o' the meadows,  
The thistledown.

## THE SHEPHERD

*(Near the Theatre of Marcellus :  
Piazza Montanara)*

Solitary he stands,  
Clad in his goat-skins,  
Though all about him  
The busy throng  
Cometh and goeth.  
Overhead, the vast ruin,  
Wind-worn, time-wrought,  
Gloomily rises.  
Scarce doth he note it,  
Yet doth it give him  
The touch of nearness,  
Which the soul craves for  
In alien places :  
As the strayed mariner,  
Yearning, far inland,  
For sight of the sea,  
Smiles when he fingers a rope, or  
Heareth the wind  
Surge round the hedgerows

### *The Shepherd*

As erst through the cordage ;  
Or, on the endless, dusty, white high-road  
Puts his ear to the pole  
Vibrating with song, as the mast  
Erewhile rang with the hum  
Of the hurricane.

What doth he here,  
Away from the pastures  
On the desolate Campagna ?  
From his haggard face  
Sorrowfully his wild black eyes  
Stare on the weariness,  
The noise, and hurry,  
And surge of the traffic.  
Sometimes, a faint smile  
Flitteth athwart his face,  
When a woman, from the well,  
Passeth by with a conca  
Poised on her head :  
Thus oft hath he seen  
The peasant girls  
In the little hamlets  
Far out on the plain :  
Or when a wine-cart  
With its tall cappoto  
A-swing like a high tent windswayed sidewise,  
Rattles in from the Appian highway,  
White with the dust of the Alban hills.

*The Shepherd*

What doth he here,  
He in whose eyes are  
The passion of the desert :  
He in whose ears rings  
The free music  
Of the winds that wander  
Through the desert-ruins ?  
Not here, O Shepherd,  
Wouldst thou fain dwell,  
Though in the Holy City  
God's Regent lives :  
Better the desolate waste,  
Better the free lone life,  
For there thou canst breathe,  
There silence abideth,  
There, not the Regent,  
But God himself  
Dwelleth and speaketh.

## THE MANDOLIN

*Tinkle-trink, tinkle-trink, trinkle-trinkle,  
trink!*

Hark, the mandolin!  
Through the dusk the merry music falleth  
sweet.

Where the fountain falls,  
Where the fountain falls all shimmering in  
the moonshine white,

*Tinkle-trink, tinkle-trink, trinkle-trinkle,  
trink!*

Where the wind-stirred olives quiver,  
Quiver, quiver, leaves a-quiver,  
White as silver in the moonlight but like  
bat-wings in the dusk,

Where the great grey moths sail slowly  
Slowly, slowly, like faint dreams  
In the wildering woods of Sleep,  
Where no night or day is,  
But only, in dim twilights, the wan sheen  
Of the Moon of Sleep.

Hark, the mandolin!  
Where the dark-coned cypress rises,

*The Mandolin*

Thin, more thin, till threadlike, wavering  
The last spray soars up as smoke,  
As a vanishing breath of incense,  
To the silent stars that glimmer  
In the veil of purple darkness,  
The deep vault of heaven that seemeth  
As a veil that falleth;  
A dark veil that foldeth gently  
The tired day-worn world, breathing stilly  
as a sleeping child.  
Hark, the mandolin :  
And a soft low sound of laughter !  
*Tinkle-trink, tinkle-trink, trinkle-trinkle,*  
*trink !*

Hush : from out the cypress standing  
Black against the yellow moonlight  
What a thrill, what a sob, what a sudden  
rapture flung  
Athwart the dark !  
Passion of song !  
Silence again, save 'mid the whispering  
leaves  
The unquiet wind, that as the tide  
Cometh and goeth.  
Now one long thrilling note, prolonged and  
sweet,  
And then a low swift stir,  
A whirr of fluttering wings,

*The Mandolin*

And, in the laurels near, two nested nightin-  
gales !

Loud, loud, the mandolin,  
*Tinkle-trink, tinkle-trink, trinkle-trinkle,*  
*trink,*

*Trink, trink, trinkle-trink !*

Through the fragrant silent night it draweth  
near,

Ah, the low cry, the little laugh, the rustle :  
*Tinkle-trink—hush, a kiss—tinkle-trink—*  
*hush—hush—*

*Tinkle-trink, tinkle-trink, trinkle-trinkle,*  
*trink !*

Where the shadows massed together  
Make a hollow darkness, girt  
By the yellow flood of moonshine floating  
by,

Where the groves of ilex whisper  
In the silence, fragrant, sweet,  
Where the ilexes are dreaming  
In their depths of darkest shadow,  
Move the fireflies slowly,  
Mazily inweaving,  
Interweaving, interflowing ;  
Wandering fires, like little lanterns  
Borne by souls of birds and flowers  
Seeking ever resurrection  
In the gladsome world of sunshine ;

*The Mandolin*

Seekly vainly through the darkness  
In beneath the ilex-branches  
Where the very moonshine faileth,  
And the dark grey moths wave wanly  
Flitting from the outer gloaming.  
Oh, the fragrance, and the mystery, and the  
silence !

Where the fireflies, 'mid the ilex,  
Rise and fall, recross, inweave  
In an endless wavy motion,  
In a slow aerial dancing  
In a maze of little flames  
In and out the ilex-branches :  
Hush ! the mandolin !  
Louder still, and louder, louder :  
Ah, the happy laugh, and rustle,  
Rustle, rustle,  
Ah, the kiss, the cry, the rapture.  
Silence, where the ilex-branches  
Loom out faintly from their darkness  
Where, slow-wandering flames, the fireflies  
Rise and fall, recross, inweave  
In an endless wavy motion,  
In a slow aerial dancing.

Silence : not a breath is stirring :  
Not a leaflet quivers faintly.  
Silence : even the bats are silent  
Wheeling swiftly through the upper air,



*The Mandolin*

Where the gnat's thin shrilling music  
Fades into the flooding moonlight :  
Hush, low whispered words and kisses,  
Hush, a cry of pain, of rapture.  
Not a sound, a sound thereafter,  
But a low sweet sigh of breathing,  
And, from out the flowering laurel,  
Just a twittering breath of music,  
Just a long-drawn pulsing note  
Of a sweet and passionate answer.  
Silence : hark, a stir—low laughter—  
Whispered words—and rustle—rustle—  
*Trink—trink*—the mandolin !  
Hark, it trinkles down the valley,  
*Trink-trink, trinkle-trink, trinkle-trink !*  
Past the cistus, blooming whitely,  
Past the oleander-bushes,  
Past the ilexes and olives,  
Where the two tall pines are whispering  
With the sleepy wind that foldeth  
His tired pinions ere he sleepeth  
On the flood of amber moonlight.  
Wind o' the night, tired wind o' night—  
*Tinkle-trink, trink, trinkle-trink,*  
*Trink, trinkle-trink,*  
*Trink !*

## BAT-WINGS

Flitter, flitter, through the twilight,  
Pipistrello :

Where the moonshine glitters

Waver thy swart wings,

Darting hither, thither,

Swift as wheeling swallow.

Where the shadows gather

In and out thou fittest,

Flitter, flitter,

Waver, waver,

Pipistrello.

Thin thy faint aerial song is,

Thin and fainter than the shrilling

Of the gnats thou chasest wildly,

But how delicately dainty—

Thin and faint and wavering also,

In the high sweet upper air,

Where the gnats weave endless mazes

In their pyramidal dances—

And thy dusky wings go flutter,

Flutter, flutter,

Waver, waver,

But without a sound or rustle

Through the purple air of twilight.

Flitter, flitter, flutter, flitter,

Pipistrello.

## LA VELIA

*(The Sea-Gull : Pontine Marshes)*

Here where the marsh  
Waves white with ranunculus,  
Where the yellow daffodil  
Flieth his banner  
In the fetid air,  
And oft 'mid the bulrushes  
Rustleth the porcupine  
Or surgeth the boar—  
Though bloweth rarely  
The fresh wind,  
The Tramontana,  
And only Scirocco  
Heavily lifts  
The feathery plumes the tall canes carry :  
What dost thou here,  
O bird of the ocean ?  
Here, where the marshes  
Are never stirred  
By the pulse of the tides ;  
Here where the white mists

*La Velia*

Crawl on the swamp,  
But never the rush and the surge of the  
billows ?  
White as a snowflake thou gleamest, and  
passest :  
Drearier now the chill waste of the Stagno,  
Wearier now the dull silence and boding.  
Would that again  
Thy glad presence were gleaming  
Here where the marsh  
Steams white in the sunshine ;  
For swift on my sight,  
As thy white wings wavered,  
Broke the sea in its beauty,  
With foam, and splendour  
Of rolling waves :  
And loud on my ears (O the longing, the  
yearning)  
When thy cry filled the silence,  
Came the surge of the sea  
And the tumult of waters.

## SPUMA DAL MARE

*(On the Latin Coast)*

Flower o' the wave,  
White foam of the waters,  
The many-coloured :  
Here blue as a hare-bell,  
Here pale as the turquoise ;  
Here green as the grasses  
Of mountain hollows,  
Here lucent as jade when wet in the sun-  
shine,  
Here paler than apples ere ruddied by  
autumn.  
Depths o' the purple !  
Amethyst yonder,  
Yonder as ling on the hills of October,  
With shadows as deep,  
Where islets of sea-wrack  
Wave in the shallows,  
As the sheen of the feathers  
On the blue-green breast  
Of the bird of the Orient,  
The splendid peacock.

*Spuma dal Mare*

Foam o' the waves,  
White crests ashine  
With a dazzle of sunlight !  
Here the low breakers are rolling through  
    shallows,  
Yellow and muddied, the hue of the topaz  
Ere cut from the boulder ;  
Save when the sunlight swims through them  
    slantwise,  
When inward they roll  
Long billows of amber,  
Crowned with pale yellow  
And grey-green spume.  
Here wan grey their slopes  
Where the broken lights reach them,  
Dull grey of pearl, and dappled, and  
    darkling,  
As when 'mid the high  
Northward drift of the clouds,  
Scirocco bloweth  
With soft fanning breath.

Foam o' the waves,  
Blown blossoms of ocean,  
White flowers of the waters,  
The many-coloured.

## THE BATHER

Where the sea-wind ruffles  
The pale pink blooms  
Of the fragrant Daphne,  
And passeth softly  
Over the sward  
Of the cyclamen-blossoms,  
The Bather stands.  
Rosy white, as a cloud at the dawning,  
Silent she stands,  
And looks far seaward,  
As a seabird, dreaming  
On some lone rock,  
Poiseth his pinions  
Ere over the waters  
He moves like a vision  
On motionless wings.

Beautiful, beautiful,  
The sunlit gleam  
Of her naked body,  
Ivory-white 'mid the cyclamen-blossoms

*The Bather*

A wave o' the sea 'mid the blooms of the  
Daphne.

Blue as the innermost heart of the ocean  
The arch of the sky where the wood runneth  
seaward,

Blue as the depths of the innermost heaven  
The vast heaving breast of the slow-moving  
waters :

Green the thick grasses that run from the  
woodland,

Green as the heart of the foam-crested  
billows

Curving a moment ere washing far inland  
Up the long reach of the sands gleaming  
golden.

The land-breath beareth  
Afar the fragrance  
Of thyme and basil  
And clustered rosemary ;  
And o'er the fennel,  
And through the broom,  
It floateth softly,  
As the wind of noon  
That cometh and goeth  
Though none hearkens  
Its downy wings.  
And keen, the seawind  
Bears up the odours  
Of blossoming pinks



*The Bather*

And salt rock-grasses,  
Of rustling seaweed  
And mosses of pools  
Where the rosy blooms  
Of the sea-flowers open  
'Mid stranded waves.  
As a water-lily  
Touched by the breath  
Of sunrise-glory,  
Moveth and swayeth  
With tremulous joy,  
So o'er the sunlit  
White gleaming body  
Of the beautiful bather  
Passeth a quiver  
Rosy-white, as a cloud at the dawning,  
Poised like a swallow that meeteth the wind,  
For a moment she standeth  
Where the sea-wind softly  
Moveth over  
The thick pink sward of the cyclamen-  
blossoms.  
Moveth and rustleth  
With faint susurrus  
The pale pink blooms  
Of the fragrant Daphne.

## THE WILD MARE

Like a breath that comes and goes  
O'er the waveless waste  
Of sleeping Ocean,  
So sweeps across the plain  
The herd of wild horses.  
Like banners in the wind  
Their flying tails,  
Their streaming manes :  
And like spume of the sea  
Fang'd by breakers,  
The white froth tossed from their blood-red  
nostrils.  
Out from the midst of them  
Dasheth a white mare,  
White as a swan in the pride of her beauty :  
And, like the whirlwind,  
Following after,  
A snorting stallion,  
Swart as an Indian  
Diver of coral !  
Wild the gyrations,  
The rush and the whirl ;

*The Wild Mare*

Loud the hot panting  
Of the snow-white mare,  
As swift upon her  
The stallion gaineth :  
Fierce the proud snorting  
Of him, victorious :  
And loud, swelling loud on the wind from  
the mountains,  
The hoarse savage tumult of neighing and  
stamping  
Where, wheeling, the herd of wild horses  
awaiteth—  
Ears thrown back, tails thrashing their  
flanks or swept under—  
The challenging scream of the conqueror-  
stallion.

## SCIROCCO

(June)

Softly as feathers  
That fall through the twilight  
When wild swans are winging  
Back to the northward :  
Softly as waters,  
Unruffled, and tideless,  
Laving the mosses  
Of inland seas :  
Soft through the forest,  
And down through the valley,  
Light as a breath o'er the pools of the  
marish,  
Still as a moonbeam over the pastures,  
Goeth Scirocco.

Warm his breath :  
The night-flowers know it;  
Love it, and open  
Their blooms for its sweetness :  
Warm the tender low wind of his pinions

*Scirocco*

Scarce brushing together the spires of the  
grasses :

Ah, how they whisper, the little green leaflets  
Black in the dusk or grey in the moonlight :

Ah, how they whisper and shiver, the  
tremulous

Leaves of the poplar, and shimmer and rustle  
When soft as a vapour that steals from the  
marshes

The wings of Scirocco fan silently through  
them.

Oft-times he lingers

By ruined nests

Deep in the hedgerows,

And bloweth a feather

In little eddies,

A yellow feather

That once had fluttered

On a breast alive with

A rapture of song ;

But slowly ceaseth,

And passeth sadly.

Oft-times he riseth

Up through the branches

Where the fireflies wander

Up through the branches

Of oak and chestnut,

And stirs so gently

*Scirocco*

With sway of his wings  
That the leaves, dreaming,  
Think that a moonbeam  
Only, or moonshine,  
Moves through the heart of them.  
Upward he soareth  
Oft, silently floating  
Through the purple æther,  
Still as the fern-owl over the covert,  
Or as allocco haunting the woodland,  
Up to the soft curded foam of the cloudlets,  
The white dappled cloudlets the south-  
wind bringeth.  
There, dreaming, he moveth  
Or sails through the moonlight,  
Till chill in the high upper air and the  
silence,  
Slowly he sinketh  
Earthward again,  
Silently floateth  
Down o'er the woodlands :  
Foldeth his wings and slow through the  
branches  
Drifts, scarcely breathing,  
Till tired, 'mid the flowers or the hedgerows  
he creepeth,  
Whispers alow 'mid the spires of the grasses,  
Or swooning at last to motionless slumber  
Floats like a shadow adrift on the pastures.

## THE WIND AT FIDENAE

Fresh from the Sabines,  
The Beautiful Hills,  
The wind bloweth.  
Down o'er the slopes,  
Where the olives whiten  
As though the feet  
Of the wind were snow-clad :  
Out o'er the plain  
Where a paradise  
Of wild blooms waveth,  
And where, in the sunswept  
Leagues of azure,  
A thousand larks are  
As a thousand founts  
'Mid the perfect joy of  
The depth of heaven.  
Swift o'er the heights,  
And over the valleys  
Where the grey oxen sleepily stand,  
Down, like a wild hawk swooping earthward,  
Over the winding reaches of Tiber,  
Bloweth the wind !

*The Wind at Fidenae*

How the wind bloweth,  
Here on the steeps of  
Ancient Fidenae,  
Where no voice soundeth  
Now, save the shepherd  
Calling his sheep ;  
And where none wander  
But only the cloud-shadows,  
Vague ghosts of the past.  
Sweet and fresh from the Sabines,  
Now as of yore,  
When Etruscan maidens  
Laughed as their lovers  
Mocked the damsels  
Of alien Rome,  
Sweet with the same young breath o' the  
world  
Bloweth the wind.



## SORGENDO DA LUNA

No sound,  
Save the hush'd breath,  
The slowly flowing,  
The long and low withdrawing breath of  
Rome.

Not a leaf quivers, where the dark,  
With eyes of rayless shadow and moonlit  
hair,

Dreams in the black  
And hollow cavernous depth of the ilex-  
trees.

No sound,  
Save the hush'd breath of Rome,  
And sweet and fresh and clear  
The bubbling, swaying, ever quavering jet  
Of water fill'd with pale nocturnal gleams,  
That, in the broad low fount,  
Falleth,  
Falleth and riseth,  
Riseth and falleth, swayeth and surgeth;  
ever

A spring of life and joy where ceaselessly

*Sorgendo da Luna*

The shadow of two sovran powers make  
A terror without fear, a night that hath no  
    dark,  
Time, with his sunlit wings,  
Death, with his pinions vast and duskily  
    dim :  
Time, breathing vanishing life :  
Death, breathing low  
From twilights of Oblivion whence Time  
    rose  
A wild and wandering star forlornly whirled,  
Seen for a moment, ere for ever lost.  
Up from the marble fount  
The water leaps,  
Sways in the moonshine, springeth,  
    springeth,  
Falleth and riseth,  
Like sweet faint lapping music,  
Soft gurgling notes of woodland brooks that  
    wander  
Low laughing where the hollowed stones are  
    green  
With slippery moss that hath a trickling  
    sound :  
Leapeth and springeth,  
Singing forever  
A wayward song.  
While the vast wings of Time and Death  
    drift slowly,

*Sorgendo da Luna*

While, faint and far, the tides of life  
Sigh in a long scarce audible breath from  
    Rome,  
Or faintlier still withdraw down shores of  
    dusk ;  
For ever singing  
It leapeth and falleth :  
Falleth and leapeth,  
Falleth,  
And falleth.

## IN JULY

*(South of Rome)*

Pale-rose the dust lying thick upon the  
road :

Grey-green the thirsty grasses by the way.  
The long flat silvery sheen of the vast  
champaign

Shimmers beneath the blazing tide of noon.  
The blood-red poppies flame

Like furnace-breaths :

Like wan vague dreams the misty lavender  
Drifts greyly through the quivering maze;  
or seems

Thus through the visionary glow to drift.

On the far slope, beyond the ruin'd arch,

A grey-white cloudlet rests,

The cluster'd sheep alow : close, moveless  
all,

And silent, save when faintly from their  
midst

A slumberous tinkle comes,

Cometh, and goeth.

*In July*

Low-stretch'd in the blue shade,  
Beneath the ruin  
The shepherd sleeps.  
Nought stirs.  
The wind moves not, nor with the faintest  
breath  
Toucheth the half-fallen blooms of the  
asphodels.  
Here only, where the pale pink ash  
Of the long road doth slowly flush to rose,  
A bronze-wing'd beetle moveth low,  
And sends one tiny puff of smoke-like dust  
Faint through the golden glimmer of the  
heat.

## A DREAM AT ARDEA

*(Maremma)*

Where Ardea, the cliff-girt,  
Looks to the Sea,  
Dreaming forever  
In her desert place  
Of her vanished glory—  
There too in the tall grass,  
Starred with narcissus  
And the flaming poppy,  
I dreamed a dream.

Not of the days when  
The fierce trumpeting  
Of the Asian elephants  
Made the wild horses  
Snort in new terror,  
Snort and wheel wildly,  
Till o'er the Campagna  
They passed like a trail  
Of vanishing smoke.  
No, nor when

*A Dream at Ardea*

The brazen clarions  
Of the Roman legion  
Summoned the hill-folk  
To the Punic War :  
Nor yet when the shadow  
Of the falling star  
Of the House of Tarquin  
Swept unseen o'er the banquet,  
And none, foreseeing,  
Drew forth the pure sword  
For the foul heart of Sextus.  
Nor yet of the ancient days  
When the fierce Rutuli  
Laughed at the boasting of  
The seven-hilled city,  
And when on rude altars  
White victims lay,  
To appease the anger  
Of barbarian Gods—  
Nay, not of these, not even the far-off,  
The ancient time, when the mother of  
Perseus,  
Danaë the beautiful, came hither and  
bullded  
Close to the sea the hill-town which standeth  
Now amid leagues of the inland grasses,  
White with the surf of the blossoming  
asphodels—  
Nay, but only

*A Dream at Ardea*

Of the shrine of her,  
Venus, the Beautiful One,  
The Well-Beloved.  
Lost, it lieth  
Deep 'mid the tangle,  
Deep 'neath the roots of the flowers and the  
grasses  
Drawn like a veil o'er  
The face of Maremma.  
Only the brown lark  
Singing above it,  
Only the grey hare  
Beneath the wild olive,  
Only the linnet afit in the myrtle,  
Only the spotted snake  
Writhing swiftly  
O'er the thyme and the spikenard,  
Only the falcon  
Dusking a moment the gold of the yellow  
broom,  
Only the things of the air and the desert,  
Know where deep in the maze of the under-  
growth  
Lieth the shrine of the sacred Goddess,  
The shrine of Venus.  
Up through the dark blue mist of the hare-  
bells—  
All the wild glory, with trailing convolvulus,  
Lenten lilies asway in the sunlight,



*A Dream at Ardea*

Wine-dark anemones, pasque-flowers of  
ruby,

Iris and daffodil and sweet-smelling violet;  
And high over all the white and gold  
shining

Where the wind raced o'er the asphodel  
meadows :

All the flower-glory of Spring in Maremma.  
But here, just here, a mist of the harebells—  
Up through the dark blue mist of the hare-  
bells

Rose like a white smoke hovering gently  
Over the windless woodlands of Ostia  
Where the charcoal-burners wander like  
shadows,

Rose a white vapour, stealthily, slowly.

Ah, but the wonder! the wan ghost of  
Venus

Rose slowly before me :  
Dark, deep, and awful the eyes of the vision,  
Sad beyond words that wraith of dead  
beauty,

Chill now and solemn  
Austere as the grave,  
The face that had blanched  
The high gods of old,  
The face that had led  
The heroes of men

*A Dream at Ardea*

From the heights of Caucasus  
To the uttermost ends  
Of Earth, as leadeth nightly  
The Moon, her cohorts  
Of perishing billows.

“ I am she whom thou lovest : ”

“ *Nay, whom I worship, Goddess and Queen !* ”

“ I am she whom thou worshippes : ”

“ *For thou art Beauty, and Beauty I worship,  
And thou art Love, and Love—* ”

“ Love is Beauty. They love not nor  
worship,

They who dissever the one from the  
other.”

“ *Hearken, O Goddess !* ”

“ Nay, shadow of shadows, why callest me  
Goddess !

Far from thy world ‘the Goddess’ is  
banished.

Ye have chosen the dark : the dark be  
with you !

Ye have chosen sorrow : and sorrow is  
yours :

O fools that worship vain Gods, and know not  
That life is the breath but of perishing dust—  
They only live in whose hearts there hath  
fallen

The breath of my passion—”

“ *O Goddess, fade not !* ”

*A Dream at Ardea*

“ I pass, and behold,  
With my passing goeth  
The joy of the world ! ”

Darkly austere  
The face of the Goddess.  
Then like a flame  
That groweth wan  
And flickereth forth from the reach of vision,  
The face of Venus  
Was seen no more,  
Though through the mist  
Her eyes gleamed darkly,  
Great fires of joy—  
Of joy disherited,  
But glorious ever  
In their lordly scorn,  
Their high disdain.

Not till the purple-hued  
Wings of the twilight  
Waved softly downward  
From the Alban hills,  
And moved stilly  
Over the vast dim leagues of Maremma,  
Turned I backward  
My wandering steps.  
Far o'er the white-glimmering  
Breast of the Tyrrhene Sea  
(Laid as in sleep at the feet of the hills)

*A Dream at Ardea*

Rose, dropping liquid fires  
Into the wine-dark vault of the heaven,  
The Star of Evening,  
Venus, the Evening Star :  
Eternal, serene,  
In deathless beauty  
Revolving ever  
Through the stellar spheres !

High o'er the shadowy heights  
Of the Volscian summits  
The full moon soared :  
Soared slowly upward  
Like a golden nenuphar  
In a vaster Nilus  
Than that which floweth  
Through the heart of Egypt.  
The moon that maketh  
The world so beautiful,  
That moveth so tenderly  
Over desolate things,  
The moon that giveth  
The amber light,  
Wherein best blossom  
The mystic flowers  
Of human love.

Through the darkness  
Whelming the waste,  
And, like a stealthy tide

*A Dream at Ardea*

Rising around  
Ardea, the cliff-girt,  
Wavered the sound of joyous laughter.  
Sweet words and sweeter  
Fell where the lentisc  
Bloomed, and the rosemary :  
Loving caresses  
Lost in a rustle  
Where the hawthorn-bushes  
Loomed large in the twilight  
Of the fireflies' lanterns.

Deep in the heart of  
A myrtle-thicket  
A nightingale stirred :  
With low sweet note,  
Thrilling strangely,  
And as though moving  
With the breath of its passion  
The midmost leaves.  
But once her plaint :—  
Then wild and glad,  
In a free ecstasy,  
In utter bliss,  
In one high whirl of rapture, sang  
His answering song  
Her mate, low swaying upon a bough,  
With throat full-strained, and quivering wings  
Beating with tremulous whirr.

*A Dream at Ardea*

Then I was glad,  
For surely I knew  
I had dreamed a dream 'neath the spell of  
Maremma.

Not sunk in the drift  
Of antique dust,  
Lost from the ken of Earth  
Within her shrine,  
Venus, the Beautiful,  
The Queen of Love !  
But though no longer  
Beheld of man,  
Still living and breathing  
Through the heart of the world—  
Whether in the song,  
Passionate, beautiful,  
Of the nightingale ;  
Or in the glad rapture  
Of lovers meeting,  
With soft caresses  
Hid in the dusk ;  
In the fair flower of the vast field of heaven ;  
Or in the glow,  
The pulsing splendour,  
Of the white star of joy,  
The Star of Eve.

## DE PROFUNDIS

Whence hast thou gone,  
O vision beloved ?  
There is silence now  
In thy groves, and never  
A voice proclaimeth  
Thy glory come,  
Thy joy rearisen !

O passion of beauty,  
Forsake not thus  
Those who have worshipped thee,  
Body and soul !  
Come to us, come to us,  
Inviolate, Beautiful,  
Thou whose breath  
Is as Spring o'er the world,  
Whose smile is the flowering  
Of the wide green Earth !  
Deep in the heart of thee,  
Like a moonbeam moving  
Through the heart of a hill-lake  
Moveth Compassion :

*De Profundis*

O Belovèd,  
Be with us ever,  
Thou, the Beautiful,  
Passion of Beauty,  
Alma Victrix !



## ULTIMO SOSPIRO

O dolce primavera pien' di olezzo e amor!  
Che fai tu . . . che fai fra tanti fior ?

Colgo le rose amabili dei più soavi odori ;  
Colgo le rose affabili e i lunghi gelsomini,  
Nei olenti miei giardini io vi tengo al cor.

*Roman Folksong.*

Joy of the world,  
O flower-crown'd Spring,  
With thine odorous breath and thy heart of  
love,  
Breathe through this verse thy sweet mes-  
sage of longing.  
Lo, in the gardens of Alma, whose lovers  
Die gladly in worship, but fail not ever,  
Oft have I strayed,  
Oft have I lingered  
When high through the noon the lost lark  
has been singing,  
Or when in the moonlight  
Soft through the silence has whispered the  
ocean,  
Or when, in the dark

*Ultimo Sospiro*

Of the ilex-woods,  
Where the fireflies wavered  
Frail wandering stars,  
Not a sound has been heard  
But Scirocco rustling  
The midmost leaves  
Of the trees where he sleepeth.

Roses of love,  
White lilies of dream,  
Frail blooms that have blossom'd  
Into life with thy breathing :  
Blow them, O wind,  
West wind of the Spring,  
Lift them and take them where gardens  
    await them,  
Lift them and take them to those who  
    hearken,  
Facing the dawn, for the sounds of the  
    morning,  
With wide eyes glad with the beautiful  
    vision,  
O whispers of joy,  
O breaths of passion,  
O sighs of longing.

## EPILOGUE

### IL BOSCO SACRO

Ah, the sweet silence :  
Not a breath stirreth :  
Scarce a leaf moveth.

The Dusk, as a dream,  
Steals slowly, slowly,  
With shadowy feet  
Under the branches  
Here, in the woodland,  
Hushfully seeking  
The Night, her lover.

Sweet are the odours  
Breath'd through the twilight,  
Lovely spirits  
Of lovely things.  
One by one  
Forth-shimmer white stars  
Beyond the skiey  
Boughs of chestnuts;

*Epilogu*

Pale Phosphorescence  
Gleaming and glancing  
As in the wake  
Of a windspent vessel  
That, moonlike, drifts  
With motionless motion.

Peace : utter peace.  
Not a sound riseth  
From where in the hollow  
The town lies dreaming :  
Not a cry from the pastures  
That far below  
Are drowsed in the shadows.  
Only afar,  
On the dim Campagna,  
Peace, utter peace :  
On the pastures, peace  
Low in the hollows,  
Deep in the woodlands,  
High on the hill-slopes,  
Rest, utter rest,  
Utter peace.

Suddenly . . . thrilling  
Long-drawn vibrations !  
Passionate preludes  
Of passionate song  
O the wild music

## *Epilogue*

Tost through the silence,  
As a swaying fountain  
Is swept by the wind's wings  
Far through the sunshine,  
A mist of flashing  
And falling spray.  
How the hush of the stillness  
Deepeneth slowly. . . .  
Till never, never  
Can pain and rapture  
So wild a music,  
So sweet a song,  
List in the moonlight—  
Listen again  
O never, never !

O heart still thy beating :  
O bird, thy song !  
Too deep the rapture  
Of this new sorrow.  
White falls the moonshine  
Here, where we gather'd  
The snow-pure blossoms,  
The Flowers of Dream :  
Here, when the sunlight  
On that glad day  
Flooded the mosses  
With golden wine,  
And deep in the forest,

## *Epilogue*

Joy passed us, laughing;  
Laughing low,  
While ever behind her  
Rose lovely, delicate,  
Beautiful, beautiful,  
The fadeless blossoms,  
The Flowers of Dream.  
Be still, O beating,  
O yearning heart !  
Here there is silence . . .  
Silence . . . Silence . . .  
O beating heart !

Here, in the sunshine,  
Together we gather'd  
The perfect blooms :  
And now in the gloaming,  
Here, where the moonlight,  
Lies like white foam on  
The dark tides of night,  
Here is one only,  
Longing forever,  
Longing, longing  
With passion and pain.

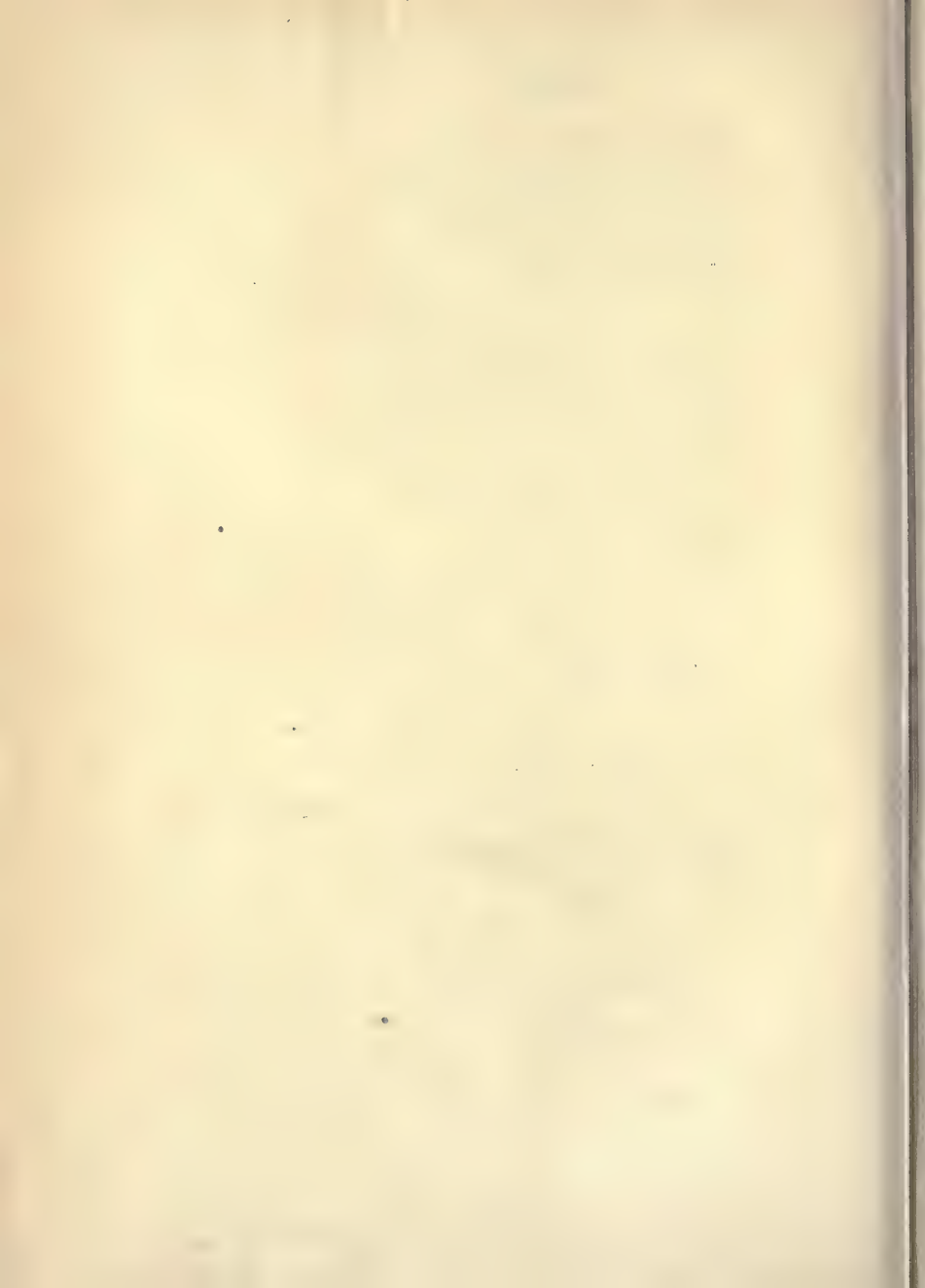
Come, O Belovèd !  
O heart, be still !  
Nay, through the silence  
Cometh no answer,

## *Epilogue*

But only, only  
The sweet subsiding  
Of this wild strain  
Now lost in the thickets  
Down in the hollows.

Hark : . . rapture outwelling !  
O song of joy !  
Glad voice of my passion  
Singing there  
Out of the heart of  
The fragrant darkness !  
O flowers at my feet,  
White beautiful flowers,  
That whisper, whisper  
My soul's desire !  
O never, never  
Lost though afar,  
My Joy, my Dream

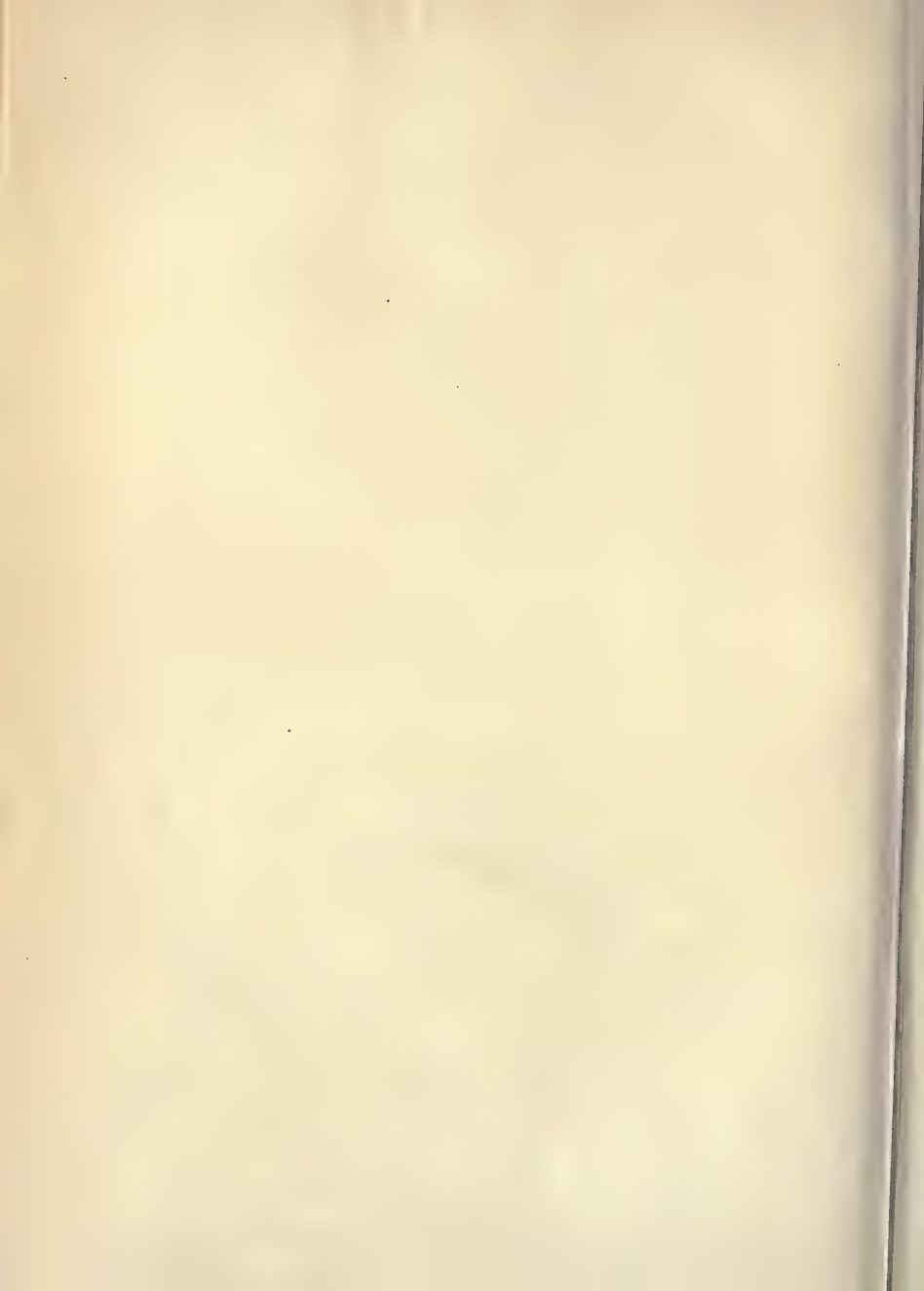
Too deep the rapture  
Of this sweet sorrow,  
Of this glad pain :  
O heart, still thy beating,  
O bird, thy song !





POEMS

1889-1893



## OCEANUS

### I

While still the dusk impends above the  
glimmering waste

A tremor comes : wave after wave turns  
silvery bright :

A sudden yellow gleam athwart the east is  
traced :

The waning stars fade forth, swift perish-  
ing pyres.

The moon lies pearly-wan upon the front  
of Night.

Then all at once upwells a flood of golden  
light

And a myriad waves flash forth a myriad  
fires :

Now is the hour the amplest glory of life to  
taste,

Outswimming towards the sun upon the  
billowy waste.

### II

The pure green waves ! with crests of  
dazzling foam ashine,

Onward they roll : innumerably grand,  
they beat

## *Oceanus*

A wild and jubilant triumph-music all  
divine !

The sea-fowl, their white kindred of the  
spray-swept air,

Scream joyous echoes as with wave-  
dipped pinions fleet

They whirl before the blast or vanish  
'mid blown sleet.

In loud-resounding, strenuous, conquering  
play they fare,

Like clouds, high over head, forgotten lands  
i' the brine—

Great combing deep-sea waves with sunlit  
foam ashine.

### III

On the wide wastes she lives her lawless,  
passionate life :

Enslaved of none, the imperious mighty  
Sea !

How glorious the music of her waves at strife  
With all the winds of heaven that, fiercely  
wooing, blow !

On high she ever chants her psalm of  
Victory ;

Afar her turbulent pæan tells that she is  
free ;

The tireless albatross with wings like  
foam or snow

*Oceanus*

Flies leagues on leagues for days, and yet  
the world seems rife  
With nought save windy waves and the Sea's  
wild free life !

IV

How oft the strange, wild, haunting glamour  
of the Sea,  
The strange, compelling magic of her  
thrilling Voice,  
Have won me, when, 'mid lonely places, wild  
and free  
As any wand'ring wind, I have heard  
along the shore  
The wondrous ever-varying Sea-song loud  
rejoice.  
I have seen a snowy petrel, arising, poise  
Above the green-sloped wave, then pass  
for evermore  
From keenest sight, and I have thought that  
I might be  
Thus also deathward lured by glamour of the  
Sea.

V

Hark to the long resilient surge o' the  
ebbing tide ;  
With shingly rush and roar it foams adown  
the strand :

*Oceanus*

The great Sea heaves her restless bosom far  
and wide—  
Heedless she seems of winds and all the  
forceful laws  
That bar her empire over the usurping  
Land :  
Enough, she dreams, is her imperial  
command  
To make the very torrents, waveward  
falling, pause :  
She scorns the Bridegroom-Land, yet is a  
subject Bride  
For she must come and go with each re-  
current tide.

VI

On moonless nights, when winds are still,  
her stealthy waves  
Creep towards the listening land ; with  
voices soft and low  
They whisper strange sea-secrets 'mid the  
hollow caves :  
A wondrous song it is that rises then and  
falls !  
Deep-buried memories of the ancient long-  
ago,  
Confused strange echoes of some vanished  
old world woe,  
Weird prophecies reverberant round those  
wave-worn walls :

*Oceanus*

When loud the wrathful billows roar and the  
Sea runes  
Her deepest mourning broods beneath the  
foaming waves.

VII

As some aerial spirit weaves a rainbow-veil  
Of mist, his high immortal loveliness to  
hide ;  
So too thy palpitant waters, duskily pale,  
Oft-times take on a sudden splendour wild.  
Then thy sea-horses rise, fierce prancing  
side by side,  
And—like the host of the dead-arisen—ride  
Ghastly afar to bournes where all the dead  
lie piled ! . . .  
Superb, fantastic, crown'd with flying splen-  
dours frail,  
Thou, when in dreams, thou weav'st thy  
phosphorescent veil !

VIII

Vast, vast, immeasurably vast, thy dreadful  
peace  
When heaving with slow mighty breath  
thou liest  
In utter rest, and dost thy ministering winds  
release

*Oceanus*

So that with folded wings they too subside,  
Floating through hollow spaces, though  
the highest  
Stirs his long tremulous pinions when thou  
sighest !  
Then in thy soul, that doth in fathomless  
depths abide;  
All wild desires and turbulent longings cease—  
Profound, immeasurable then, thy dreadful  
peace !

IX

But in thy noon of night, serene as death,  
when under  
The terrible silence of that archèd dome  
Not a lost whisper ev'n of thy wandering  
thunder  
Ascends like the spiral smoke of perishing  
flame;  
Nor dying wave on thy swart bosom sinks  
in foam—  
Then, then the world is thine, thy heri-  
tage, thy home !  
What then for thee, O Sea, thou Terror !  
or what name  
To call thee by, thou Sphinx, thou Mystery,  
thou Wonder—  
Above thou art Living Death, Oblivion  
under !



## A PARIS NOCTURNE

Over the lonesome hollows  
And secret haunts of the river,  
Past fields and homestead and village,  
Past the grey wharves and the piers  
The darkness moves like a veil,  
Save when obscure, vast, nigrescent  
Flakes from the travelling gloom  
Slant westward great fans of blackness.

Then a mist of radiance,  
Lamps with red lights and yellow,  
Foam-white, and blue as an ice-floe,  
Lamps intermingling with gas-light,  
Leagues of wind-wavered gas-light,  
Lamps on the masts of barges,  
Lamps upon sloops and on steamers;  
Lamps below quays and dark bridges,  
Yellow and red and green,  
Like a myriad growths phosphorescent  
When a swamp, erewhile flooded with  
waters,

*A Paris Nocturne*

Lies low to the stare of the moon  
And the stealthy white breath of the wind.

And, over all, one light  
Palpitant, circular, wide,  
Sweeping the city vast—  
Yonder, beyond where in shadow  
The thronged Champs-Elysées are filling  
With echoes of human voices,  
With shadows of human lives,  
With phantoms of vampyre-vices—  
Beyond where the serpentine river  
Curves in a coil gigantic,  
And straight, a thin shaft, through the  
vagueness

Soars the high lighthouse of Paris,  
Soars o'er the sea of the city  
With all its shoals and its terrors,  
Its perilous straits and its breakers,  
High o'er the brightness and splendour  
Of shores where the sirens sing ever.

Then, shadows enmassed once again :  
And the river moving slowly,  
And the hills making darkness deeper.  
The lamps now fewer and fewer—  
Fewer the red lights and yellow,  
Till only a dusky barge  
Moves like a water-snake

*A Paris Nocturne*

On the face of a dark lagoon,  
A stealthy fire 'mid the stillness ;  
While from a weir in the distance  
Comes a sound like the cry of waters  
When the tides and the sea-winds gather  
And the sands of the dunes are scattered  
In the scud of the spray.

## ROBERT BROWNING

One who never turned his back but marched breast  
forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong  
would triumph:  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.

(Died at the Palazzo Rezzonico, Venice, December 12,  
1889.)

So, it is well : what need is there to mourn ?  
What of the darkness was there, of the  
dread,  
Of all the pity of old age forlorn  
When the swift mind and hand are  
though as dead ?  
Nothing : the change was his that comes to  
days  
When, after long, rich, restful afternoons,  
A sudden flush of glory fills the skies :  
Thereafter is the peace of dream-fraught  
moons,  
And then, oh ! then for sure, in the eastern  
ways  
At morn, once more Life's golden floods  
arise.

*Robert Browning*

Ay, it is well : what better fate were his ?  
    Why wish for him the twilight-greyness  
        drear ?  
He hath not known the bitter thing it is  
    To halt, and doubt, grope blindly, tremble,  
        fear :  
The reverend snows above his forehead  
    brought  
    No ominous hints of that which might not  
        be,  
    No chill suggestion of the ephemeral soul :  
    Unto the very end 'twas his to see  
Failure no drear climacteric, but wrought  
    To nobler issues, a victorious goal.

There, where the long lagoons by day and  
    night  
    Feel the swift journeying tides, in ebb and  
        flow,  
Move inward from the deep with sound and  
    light  
    And splendour of the seas, or outward go  
Resurgent from the city that doth rest  
    Upon the flood even as a swan asleep,  
    Or as a lily 'mid encircling streams,  
    Or as a flower a dusky maid doth keep;  
An orient maid, upon her love-warm breast,  
    Thrilled with its inspiration through her  
        dreams—

*Robert Browning*

There, in the city that he loved so well,  
And with the sea-sound in his ears, the  
    sound  
Of healing waters in their miracle  
    Of changeless and regenerative round,  
The strange and solemn silence that is  
    death  
    Came o'er him. 'Mid the loved ones near  
    The deep suspense of the last torturing  
    hope  
    Hung like a wounded bird, ere swift and  
    sheer  
It fall with the last frail exhausted breath  
    And feeble fluttering wings that cannot  
    ope.

There death was his: within his golden  
    prime,  
    Painless, serene; unvanquished, undis-  
    mayed,  
He fronted the dark lapse of mortal time  
    With eyes alit, through all the gathering  
    shade,  
With the strange light that clothes immortal  
    things—  
    Beauty, and Truth, Faith, Hope, and Joy  
    and Peace,  
    The garnished harvest of our human  
    years,

*Robert Browning*

Fair dreams and hopes that triumphed o'er  
    surcease,  
The immaculate sweetness of all bygone  
    Springs,  
The rainbow-glory of transfigured tears.

Over him went the Powers, the Dreams, the  
    Graces;

The invisible Dominations that we know  
Despite the mystic veil that hides their  
    faces,

The immortal faces that divinely glow :  
Fair Hope was there to take him by the  
    hand ;

White Aspirations smiled about his bed ;  
    Desires and Dreams moved gently by  
    his side ;

Beauty stooped low, and shone upon the  
    dead ;

Joy spake not, for, from out the Deathless  
    land;

She led God's loveliest gift, his long-lost  
    Bride.

Oh, what a trivial mockery then was this,  
The change we so involve with alien  
    terror :

How lorn<sup>!</sup> in light of that supernal bliss  
The ruinous wrecking folly of our error !

*Robert Browning*

Sweet beyond words the meeting that was  
there,  
Sweet beyond words the deep-set yearning  
gaze,  
Sweet, sweet the voice that long had  
silent been !  
Ah, how his soul, beleagured by no maze,  
No glooms of Death, i' that Paradisal air  
Knew all was well, since She was there,  
his Queen.

They are not gone, those Dreams, Fair  
Hopes, and Graces;  
Those Powers and Dominations and  
Desires,  
They are not passed, though veiled the  
immortal faces,  
Though dimmed meanwhile their eyes'  
wild starry fires.  
Meanwhile, it may be, on wan wings and  
slender  
Invisible to mortal gaze, they gleam  
In solemn, sad, processional array  
There where the sunshafts through stained  
windows stream,  
And flood the gloomful majesty with  
splendour,  
And charm the aisles from out their  
brooding grey.



*Robert Browning*

They are not gone : nor shall they ever  
vanish,

Those precious ministers of him, our Poet :  
What madness would it be for one to banish,  
To barter his inheritance, forego it,  
For some phantasmal gift, some transient  
boon !

Thus would it be with us were we to turn  
Indifferently aside, when *they* draw  
nigh,  
To look with callous gaze, nor once discern  
How swift they come and go, how all too  
soon  
They evade for ever the unheeding eye.

They are not gone : for wheresoe'er there  
liveth

One hope his song inspired—whom *they*  
inspired—

Yea, wheresoever in one heart there breatheth  
An aspiration by his ardour fired :

Where'er through him are souls made serfs  
to Beauty,

Where'er through him hearts stir with  
lofty aim,

Where'er through him men thrill with  
high endeavour,

There shall these ministers breathe low his  
name,

*Robert Browning*

Linked to ideals of Love and Truth and  
Duty,  
And all high things of mind and soul,  
for ever.

No carven stone, no monumental fane,  
Can equal this : that he hath builded deep  
A cenotaph beyond the assoiling reign  
Of Her whose eyes are dusk with Night  
and Sleep,

Queenly Oblivion : no Pyramid,  
No vast, gigantic Tomb, no Sepulchre  
Made awful with imag'ries of doom,  
Evade her hand who one day shall inter  
Man's proudest monuments, as she hath hid  
The immemorial past within her womb.

For he hath built his lasting monument  
Within the hearts and in the minds of men :  
The Powers of Life around its base have bent  
The Stream of Memory ; our furthest ken  
Beholds no reach, no limit to its rise ;  
It hath foundations sure ; it shall not  
pass ;

The ruin of Time upon it none shall see,  
Till the last wind shall wither the last  
grass,

Nay, while man's Hopes, Fears, Dreams, and  
Agonies

Uplift his soul to Immortality.

## THE MAN AND THE CENTAUR

### THE MAN

Upon the mountain-heights thou goest;  
As swift as some fierce wind-swept flame ;  
Thy doom thou scornest while thou knowest  
Men mock thy name.

But thou—thou hast the mountain-splendour,  
The lonely streams, blue lakes serene,  
Wouldst thou these virgin haunts surrender  
For man's demesne ?

Wouldst thou, for peaks where eagles gather,  
Where moon-white skies slow flush with dawn,  
Where, drenched with dew thy chieftain-father  
Is far withdrawn—

Wouldst thou all these exchange, give over  
Thy wild free joys and all delights,  
Thy proud and passionate mountain-lover,  
Thy starry nights,

*The Man and the Centaur*

For that drear life in huddled places  
Where men like ants move to and fro  
Tired men, with ever on their faces  
The shadow of woe ?

THE CENTAUR

I would not change—did not the waters  
Did not the winds, all living things  
Proclaim that we, the sons and daughters  
Of Time's first kings,

That we must change and pass and perish  
Even as autumnal leaves that fall ;  
Even as the wind the hill-flowers cherish,  
At Winter's call :

That we, even we, should know no morrow,  
For as our body, so our soul :  
O human, fair thy life of sorrow,  
Thou hast a Goal !

DIONYSOS IN INDIA

*(Opening Fragment of a Lyrical Drama)*

*Opening Scene :*

Verge of an upland glade among the Hima-  
layas.

*Time : Sunrise*

FIRST FAUN

. . . Hark ! I hear

Aerial voices—

SECOND FAUN

*Whist !*

FIRST FAUN

It is the wind  
Leaping against the sunrise, on the heights.

SECOND FAUN

No, no, yon mountain-springs—

FIRST FAUN

Hark, hark, oh, hark !—

*Dionysos in India*

SECOND FAUN

Are budding into foam-flowers : see, they  
fall  
Laughing before the dawn—

FIRST FAUN

Oh, the sweet music !

CHILD-FAUN

*(Timidly peeping over a cistus, uncurling  
into blooms.)*

Dear brother, say, oh say, what fills the air ?  
The leaves whisper, yet is not any wind :  
I am afraid.

FIRST FAUN

Be not afraid, dear child :  
There is no gloom.

CHILD-FAUN

But silence : and—and—then,  
The birds have suddenly ceased : and see,  
alow  
The gossamer quivers where my startled  
hare—  
Slipt from my leash—cow'rs 'mid the fox-  
glove-bells,  
His eyes like pansies in a lonely wood !  
Oh, I am afraid—afraid—though glad :—

*Dionysos in India*

SECOND FAUN

Why glad ?

CHILD-FAUN

I know not.

FIRST FAUN

Never yet an evil god

Forsook the dusk. Lo ! all our vales are  
filled

With light : the darkest shimmers in pale  
blue :

Nought is forlorn : no evil thing goeth by.

SECOND FAUN

They say—

FIRST FAUN

What ? who ?

SECOND FAUN

They of the hills : they say

That a lost god—

FIRST FAUN

Hush, hush : beware !

SECOND FAUN

And why ?

There is no god in the blue empty air ?

Where else ?

*Dionysos in India*

FIRST FAUN

There is a lifting up of joy :  
The morning moves in ecstasy. Never !  
Oh, never fairer morning dawned than this.  
Somewhat is nigh !

SECOND FAUN

Maybe : and yet I hear  
Nought, save day's familiar sounds, nought  
see  
But the sweet concourse of familiar things.

FIRST FAUN

Speak on, though never a single leaf but  
hears,  
And, like the hollow shells o' the twisted nuts  
That fall in autumn, aye murmuringly holds  
The breath of bygone sound. We know not  
when—  
To whom—these little wavering tongues  
betray  
Our heedless words, wild wanderers though  
we be.  
What say the mountain-lords ?

SECOND FAUN

That a lost god  
Fares hither through the dark, ever the dark.



*Dionysos in India*

FIRST FAUN

What dark ?

SECOND FAUN

Not the blank hollows of the night :  
Blind is he though a god : forgotten graves  
The cavernous depths of his oblivious eyes.  
His face is as the desert, blanched with ruins.  
His voice none ever heard, though whispers  
say

That in the dead of icy winters far  
Beyond the utmost peaks we ever clomb  
It hath gone forth—a deep, an awful woe.

FIRST FAUN

What seeks he ?

SECOND FAUN

No one knoweth.

FIRST FAUN

Yet a god,

And blind !

SECOND FAUN

Ay so : and I have heard beside  
That he is not as other gods ; but from vast  
age—  
So vast, that in his youth those hills were wet  
With the tossed spume of each returning tide—

*Dionysos in India*

He hath lost knowledge of the things that  
are,  
All memory of what was, in that dim Past  
Which was old time for him ; and knoweth  
nought,  
Nought feels, but inextinguishable pain.  
Titanic woe and burden of long æons  
Of unrequited quest.

FIRST FAUN

But if he be  
Of the Immortal Brotherhood, though blind,  
How lost to them ?

SECOND FAUN

I know not, I. 'Tis said—  
Lython the Centaur told me in those days  
When he had pity on me in his cave  
Far up among the hills—that the lost god  
Is curs'd of all his kin, and that his curse  
Lies like a cloud about their golden home :  
So evermore he goeth to and fro—  
The shadow of their glory . . .

Ay, he knows  
The lost beginnings of the things that are :  
We are but morning-dreams to him, and  
Man

But a fantastic shadow of the dawn :  
The very Gods seem children to his age,

*Dionysos in India*

Who reigned before their birth-throes filled  
the sky  
With the myriad shattered lights that are the  
stars.

FIRST FAUN

Where reigned this ancient God ?

SECOND FAUN

Old Lython said  
His kingdom was the Void, where evermore  
Silence sits throned upon Oblivion.

FIRST FAUN

What wants he here ?

SECOND FAUN

He hateth Helios,  
And dogs his steps. None knoweth more.

FIRST FAUN

Aha !  
I heed no dotard god ! Behold, behold,  
My ears betrayed me not : Oh, hearken now !

CHILD-FAUN

Brother, O brother, all the birds are wild  
With song, and through the sun-splashed  
wood there goes  
A sound as of a multitude of wings.

*Dionysos in India*

SECOND FAUN

The sun, the sun ! the flowers in the grass !  
Oh, the white glory !

FIRST FAUN

'Tis the Virgin God !  
Hark, hear the hymns that thrill the winds  
of morn,  
Wild pæans to the light ! The white  
processionals !  
They come ! They come ! . . .

BALLAD OF THE SONG OF THE  
SEA-WIND

What is the song the sea-wind sings—  
The old, old song it singeth for aye ?  
When abroad it stretches its mighty wings  
And driveth the white clouds far away,—  
What is the song it sings to-day ?  
*From fire and tumult the white world came,  
When all was a mist of driven spray  
And the whirling fragments of a frame !*

What is the song the sea-wind sings—  
The old, old song it singeth for aye ?  
It seems to breathe a thousand things  
Ere the world grew sad and old and grey—  
Of the dear gods banished far astray—  
Of strange wild rumours of joy and shame !  
*The Earth is old, so old, To-day—  
Blind and halt and weary and lame.*

What is the song the sea-wind sings—  
The old, old song it singeth for aye ?  
Like a trumpet blast its voice out-rings,  
*The world spins down the darksome way !*  
It crieth aloud in wild dismay,

*Ballad of the Song of the Sea-Wind*

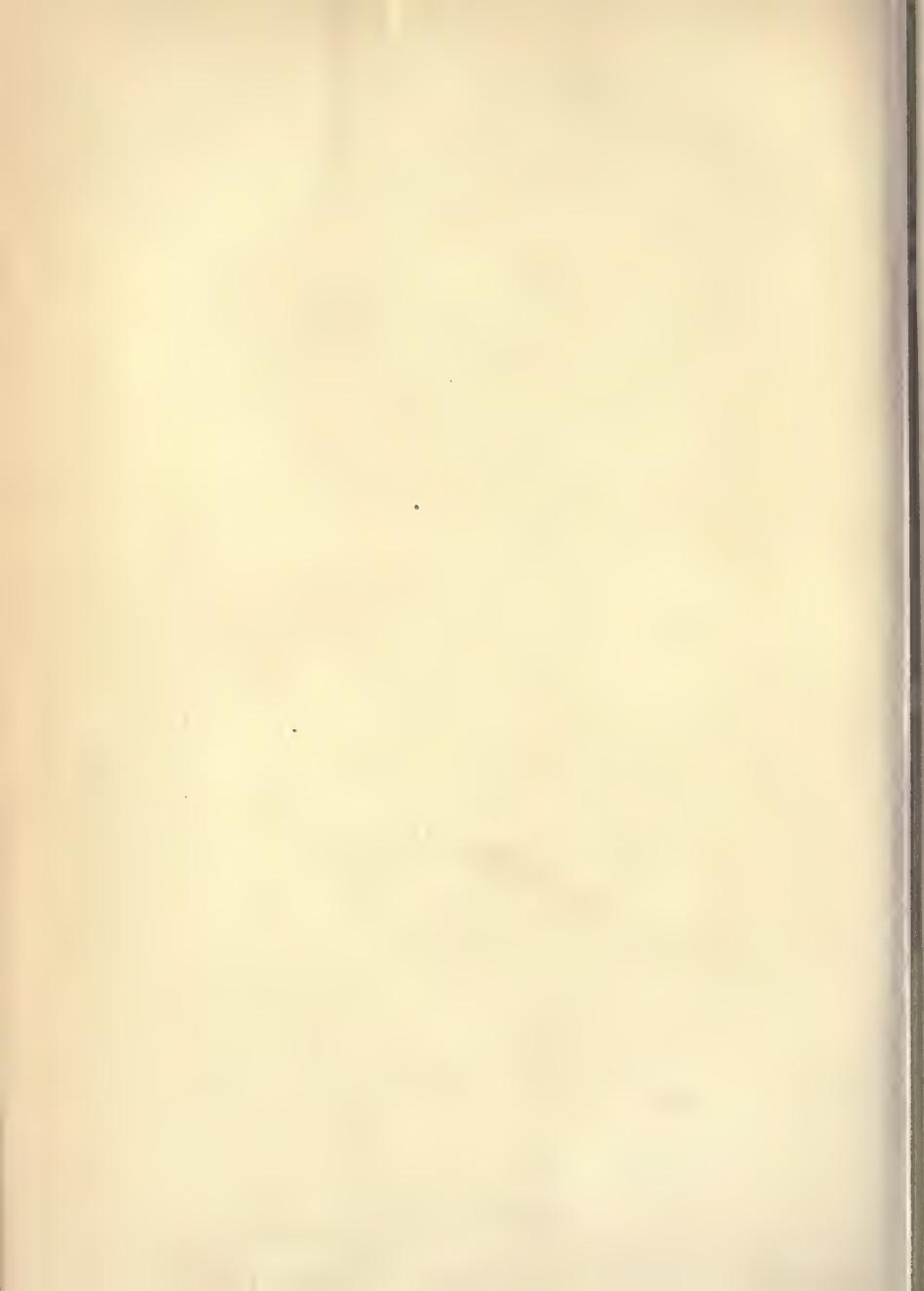
*The Earth that from fire and tumult came  
Draws swift to her weary end To-day,  
Her fires are fusing for that last Flame!*

ENVOY

What singeth the sea-wind thus for aye,  
*From fire and tumult the white world came!*  
What is the sea-wind's cry To-day—  
*Her central fires make one vast flame!*

SONNETS

1893





## SONNET-SEQUENCE

### I

Where have I known thee, dear, in what  
    strange place,  
Midst what caprices of our alien fate,  
Where have I bowed, worshipping this thy  
    face,  
And hunger'd for thee, as now, insatiate ?  
Tell me, white soul, that through those  
    starry veils  
Keep'st steadfast vigil o'er my wavering  
    spirit,  
On what far sea trimm'd we our darkling  
    sails  
When fell the shadow o'er that we now  
    inherit ?  
Two tempest-driven souls were we, or glad  
With the young joy that recks of no to-  
    morrow :  
Or were we as now inexplicably sad  
Before the coming twilight of new Sorrow ?  
Did our flesh quail as now this poor flesh  
    quails.  
Our faces blanch, as mine, as thine that  
    pales !

II

Out of the valley of the Shadow of Death  
Who cometh, through the haunted Hollow  
Land ?

On those tired lips of mine whose quickening  
breath,

In this long yearning clasp whose tremulous  
hand ?

O, is it death or dream, madness, or what  
Fantastic torture of the chemic brain,  
That brings thee here, as thus, when all  
forgot,

Thy body sleeps, as mine doth, free from  
pain ?

What is the brooding word upon thy lips  
O beautiful image of my heart's desire ?  
What is the ominous shadow of eclipse  
That dusks those veiled eyes' redeeming  
fire ?

O soul whom I from life to life have sought,  
What menace haunteth joy so dearly bought ?

III

This menace :—of remembrance that must  
come :

This menace :—of the waking that must be.  
O soul, let the rhythm of life itself grow  
dumb

And be the song of death our litany :  
Let the world perish as a perishing fire,  
For us be less than ashes without flame,  
So that we twain our last breath here  
suspire,

Here where none uttereth word, none calleth  
name.

For in the Hollow Land is utter peace,  
The magic spell which hath no first or last,  
But all that never ceaseth here doth cease  
And what would know no death is long  
since past :

Only one thing endures where all expire—  
The inviolate rapture of fulfilled desire.

*Sonnet-Sequence*

IV

Where art thou, Love ! Lo, I am crucified  
Here on the bitter tree of my suspense,  
And my soul travails in my quivering side  
Wild with the passionate longing to go  
hence.

Where would it voyage, lost, bewildered  
soul

If from the body's warm white home it  
strayed :

Even as the wild-fox would it find its hole,  
Even as the fowls of the air would it find  
shade ?

Yea, dear, with winnowing wings there  
would it fly

To fold them on the whiteness of thy breast,  
And all its passion breathe into thy sigh,  
Fulfil the uttermost peace of perfect rest :  
And passing into thee as its last goal  
Should know no more this bitter-sweet  
control.

*Sonnet-Sequence*

V

Dear, through the silence comes a vibrant  
call,  
Thy voice, thy very voice it is, O Sweet !  
Yet who shall scale the dread invisible wall  
That guards the Eden where our souls  
would meet ?  
O veil of flesh, O dull mortality,  
Is there no vision for the enfranchised eyes :  
Must we stoop low thro' Death's green-  
glooms to see  
The immaculate light known of our wingèd  
sighs ?  
Nay, Love, of body or soul no shadow or  
gloom  
Can always, always, thee and me dispart ;  
Soul of my soul, thro' the very gates of  
Doom  
Even as deep to deep, heart crieth to  
heart—  
Yea, as two moving waves on Life's wild  
sea,  
We meet, we merge, we are one, I thou,  
thou me !

*Sonnet-Sequence*

VI

“ And dost thou love me not a whit the  
less :

And is thy heart as tremulous as of yore,  
And do thine eyes mirror the wonderful-  
ness,

And do thy lips retain their magic lore ? ”

What, Sweet, can these things be, ev'n in  
thy thought,

And I so briefly gone, so swiftly come ?

Nay, if the pulse of life its beat forgot

This speaking heart would not thereby be  
dumb.

I love thee, love thee so, O beautiful Hell

That dost consume heart, brain, nerves,  
body, soul

That even my immortal birthright I would  
sell

Were Heaven to choose, or Thee, as my one  
goal.

Sweet love fulfilled, they say, the common  
lot !

He who speaks thus, of real love knoweth  
not.

*Sonnet-Sequence*

VII

The dull day darkens to its close. The  
sheen

Of a myriad gas-jets lights the squalid night.  
There is no joy, it seems, but what hath  
been :

There is nought left but semblance of  
delight.

Nay, is it so? Down this long darkling  
way

What surety is there for the hungry heart,  
What vistas of white peace, rapt holiday  
Of the tired soul forlorn, thus kept apart?  
Oh, hearken, hearken, love! I cannot  
wait :

Drear is the night without, the night within :  
I am so tired, so tired, so baffled of our  
fate,

The very sport it seems of our sweet sin :  
Oh, open, open now, and bid me stay,  
Who almost am too tired, too weak, to  
pray.

VIII

And so, is it so? the long sweet pain is  
over?

The dear familiar love must know a change?  
No more am I, no more, to be your lover,  
But life be cold once more, and drear, and  
strange.

We have sinned, you say, and sorrow must  
redeem

All the cruel largess of our passionate love,  
And we, at the last, content us with a  
dream

Who have known a hell below, a heaven  
above!

Well, be it so: thy life I shall not darken:  
Thy dream, for me, shall be disturbed no  
more:

Thine ears, by day or night, shall never  
hearken

The coming of the steps thou lovedst of  
yore:

And if, afar, a lost wild soul blaspheme,  
Thou shalt not know it in thy peace supreme.



## AN UNTOLD STORY

### I

When the dark falls, and as a single star  
The orient planets blend in one bright ray  
A-quiver through the violet shadows far  
Where the rose-red still lingers 'mid the  
grey :

And when the moon, half-cirque around her  
hollow,  
Casts on the upland pastures shimmer of  
green :  
And the marsh-meteors the frail lightnings  
follow,  
And wave lapse into wave with amber  
sheen—

O then my heart is full of thee, who never  
From out thy beautiful mysterious eyes  
Givest one glance at this my wild endeavour,  
Who hast no heed, no heed, of all my sighs :  
Is it so well with thee in thy high place  
That thou canst mock me thus even to my  
face ?

II

Dull ash-grey frost upon the black-grey fields:  
Thick wreaths of tortured smoke above the  
town :

The chill impervious fog no foothold yields,  
But onward draws its shroud of yellow  
brown.

No star can pierce the gloom, no moon  
dispart :

And I am lonely here, and scarcely know  
What mockery is "death from a broken  
heart,"

What tragic pity in the one word : Woe.

But I am free of thee, at least, yea free !  
No more thy bondager 'twixt heaven and  
hell !

No more there numbs, no more there  
shroudeth me

The paralysing horror of thy spell :  
No more win'st thou this last frail wor-  
shipping breath,

For twice dead he who dies this second  
death.

## THE VEILS OF SILENCE

Three veils of Silence, Summer draws  
apace.

The noon-tide Peace that broods on hill and  
dale,

That passes o'er the sea and leaves no trace,  
That sleeps in the moveless clouds' move-  
less trail :

The wave of colour deepening day by day,  
The yellow grown to purple on the leas,  
Blue within there beyond the dusky ways ;  
A green-gloom dusk within the grass-green  
trees.

The third veil no man sees. She weaves it  
where

Beneath the fret and fume tired hearts  
aspire

And long for some divine impossible air.  
Out of Man's heart she weaves this veil of  
Rest—

Sweet anodyne for all the feverish quest  
And ache of inarticulate Desire.

## WRITTEN BY THE SEA

Sweet are white dreams i' the dusk, yet  
sweeter far

When the sea-music fills those haunting  
dreams :

When light survives alone in each white star  
And in the far white shine of a myriad  
gleams :

When from white flowers, that through the  
violet gloom

Shine faintly phosphorescent, strange  
breaths steal

And in the lamp-lit silence of the room  
The longing, yearning soul makes mute  
appeal :

When nought is heard, and yet the tired  
hands stray

To meet white dream-like hands soft floating  
by :

When the disanchor'd mind sails far away

'Mid the suspense of an imagined sigh—

'Tis thee, 'tis thee, O dear white soul, 'tis  
thee,

White Joy, white Peace, white Balm that  
healeth me !

## THE MENACE OF AUTUMN

Amber and yellow and russet, gold and red,  
The autumnal leaves dream they are summer  
flowers :

Day after day the windless sunny hours  
With feet of flame pass softly overhead :

Day after day over each perishing leaf  
The windless hours pass with slow-fading  
flame :

No song is heard where floods of music  
came ;

Long garner'd on the fields the final sheaf.

One day a wild and ravishing wind will rise,  
One day a paralysing frost will come,  
And all this glory be taken unaware :

Dark branches then will lean against the  
skies,

Sear leaves will drift the forest-pathways  
dumb,

And wold and woodland lie, austere and  
bare.

## AFTERMATH

The herald redbreast sings his winter lays,  
The fieldfares drift in flocks adown the  
weald :

The turbulent rooks gather on every field,  
And clamorous starlings dare our garden-  
ways :

O beautiful garden-ways, not grown less  
dear

Because the rose has gone, and briony waves  
Where lily and purple iris have their graves,  
Or that, where violets were, the asters rear.

Lo, what a sheen of colour lingers still,  
Though the autumnal rains and frost be  
come :

The tall dishevelled sunflowers, stooping,  
spill

Lost rays of sunshine o'er the tangled  
mould,

While everywhere, touched with a glory of  
gold,

Flaunts the imperial chrysanthemum.

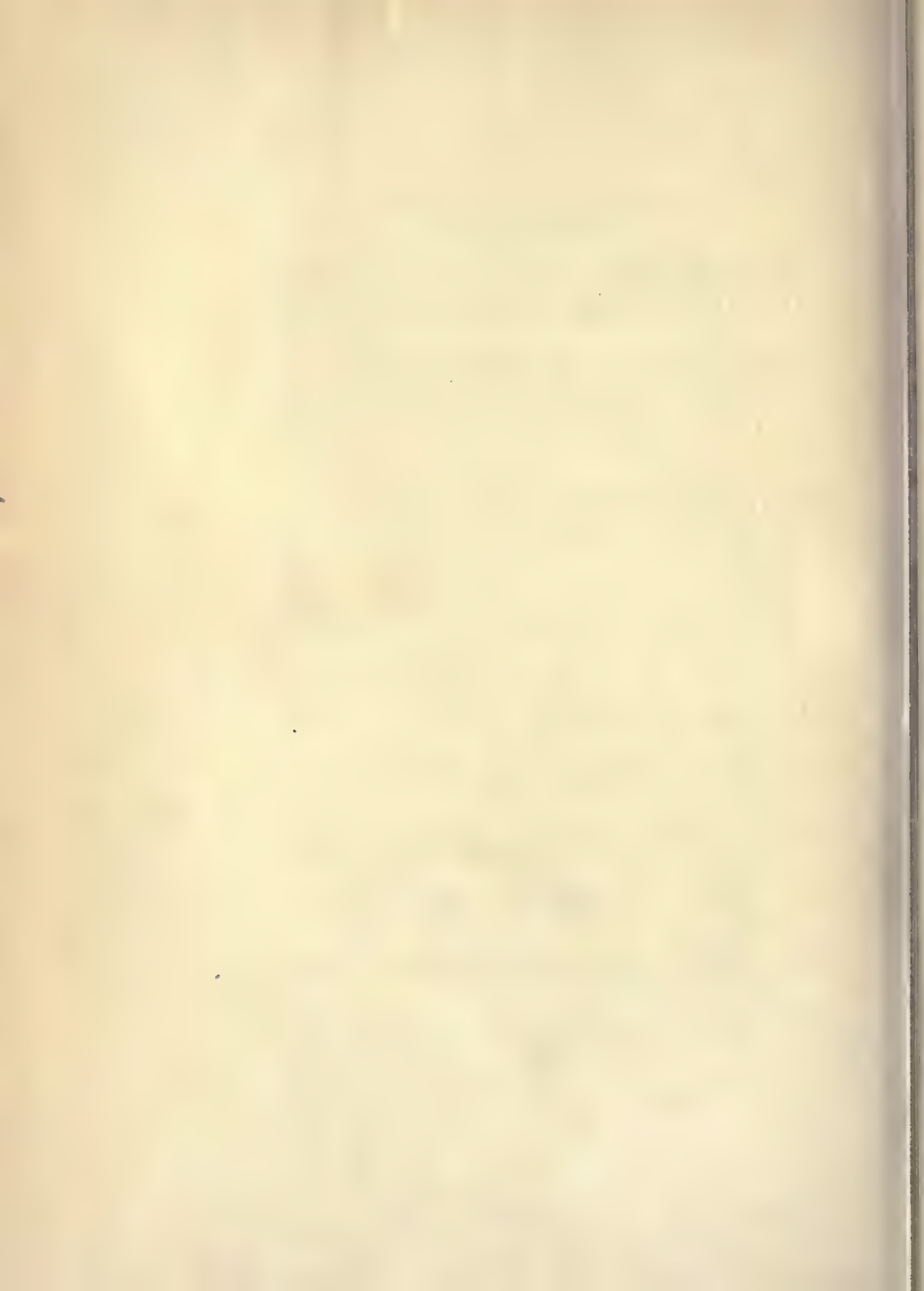
## FLORA IN JANUARY

The goddess slept. About her where she lay  
Dead pansies, fragrant still, and the myriad  
rose :

Adream 'mid the fallen drift, she woke one  
day,  
And the blooms stirred, seeing her eyes  
unclose.

The oaks and beeches stood in disarray,  
Gaunt, spectral, dark, in dismal phantom  
rows ;  
She smiled, and there was a shimmer 'mid  
the grey  
And sudden fall of the first winter-snows.

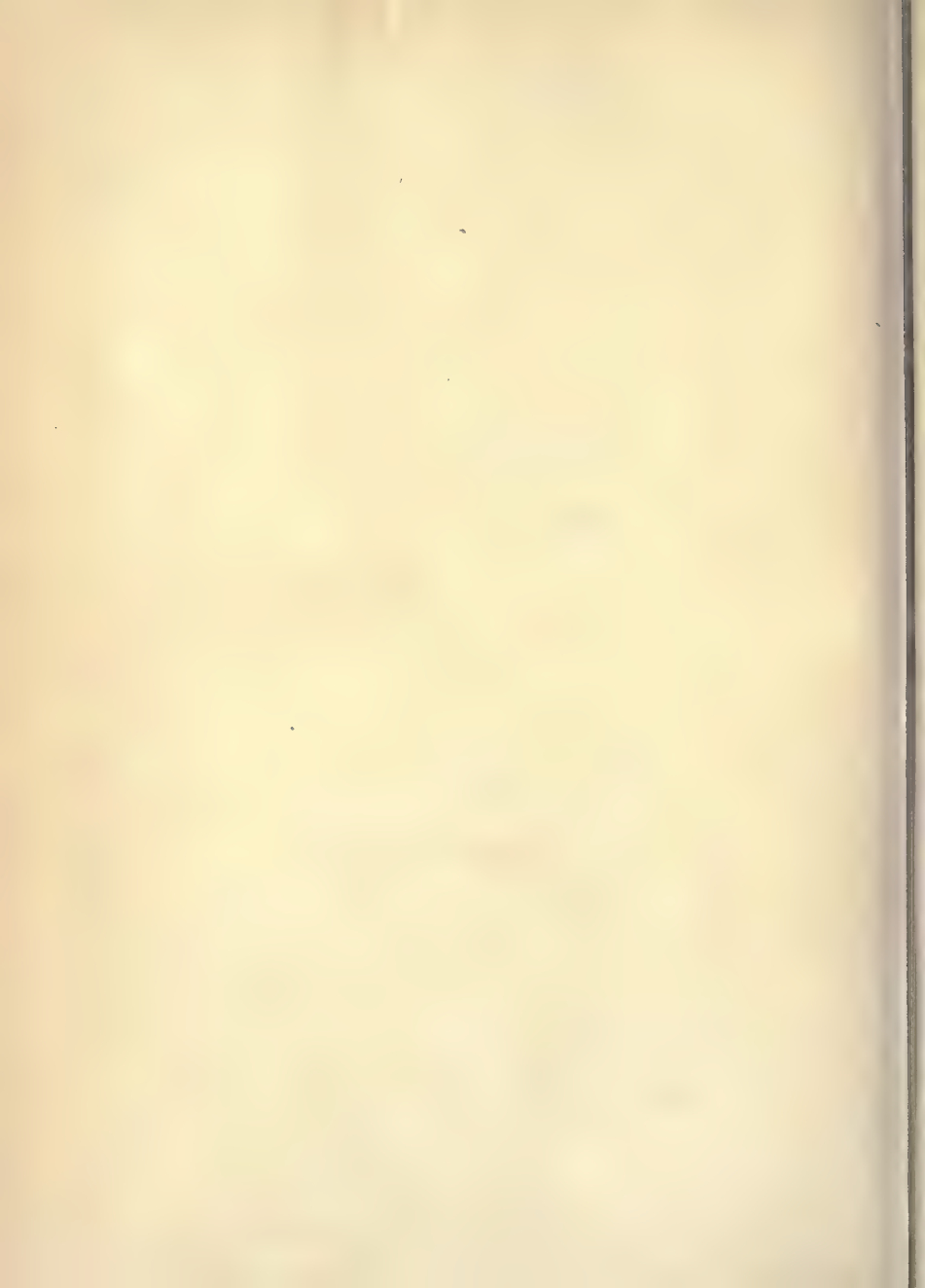
But when, tired with the icy blossoms of the  
air,  
She slept once more, and all the snow was  
over,  
She dreamed of Spring and saw his sunlit  
hair,  
And heard the whisper of her laughing  
lover :  
But while she dreamed, the dead blooms  
had grown fair  
And Christmas-roses made a veil above her.





POEMS

1893-1905



FROM OVERSEA

From oversea—  
    Violets for memories,  
I send to thee ;

Let them bear thoughts of me,  
    With pleasant memories  
To touch the heart of thee,  
    Far oversea.

A little way it is for love to flee,  
    Love wing'd with memories,  
Hither to thither oversea.

## SONG

Love in my heart : oh, heart of me, heart  
of me !

Love is my tyrant, Love is supreme.  
What if he passeth, oh, heart of me, heart  
of me !

Love is a phantom, and Life is a dream !  
What if he changeth, oh, heart of me, heart  
of me !

Oh, can the waters be void of the wind ?  
What if he wendeth afar and apart from me,  
What if he leave me to perish behind ?

What if he passeth, oh, heart of me, heart  
of me !

A flame i' the dusk, a breath of Desire ?  
Nay, my sweet Love is the heart and the  
soul of me

And I am the innermost heart of his  
fire !

Love in my heart : oh, heart of me, heart  
of me !

Love is my tyrant, Love is supreme.  
What if he passeth, oh, heart of me, heart  
of me !

Love is a phantom, and Life is a dream !

## THE SUN LORD

Low laughing, blithely scorning—  
Beware, beware, of flaming wings,  
Love hunts thee down the morning !

His white feet dip i' the hillside springs,  
He mocks thy flying terror !  
The woodland with his laughter rings !

He'll make thee his slave to follow,  
Nor shall he forgive thee, maid, thine error,  
Who spied thee hid in the hollow.

Too late, too late the warning !  
Behold the flash of flaming wings—  
Love hath thee now i' the morning !

## THE SUMMER WOMAN

O wild bee humming in the gorse,  
O wild dove croodling in the woods,  
Know ye not she is false as fair,  
A sweet Caprice with bitter moods ?

For bitter-sweet her wild kiss is,  
And bitter-sweet her haunting voice :  
How oft my eyes have filled with tears  
When she hath bid me to rejoice !

O loved Caprice, is thine the fault  
Or is the bitterness all mine !  
Art thou the quenchless Thirst of Joy  
And I the lees of thy spilt wine ?

Oh, greenness, greenness everywhere,  
Oh, whisper of green leaves, green grass,  
Surely the glory is not gone,  
Surely the glory shall not pass ?

I long for some lost magic thing,  
A voice, a gleam, a joy, a pain :  
Wild doves, your old-time strain once more,  
Wild bees, wild bees, come back again !

## SYCAMORES IN BLOOM

Like flame-wing'd harps the seed blooms lie  
Amid the shadowy sycamores.  
The music of each leaflet's sigh  
Thrills them continually,  
The small harps of the sycamores.

Small birds innumerable find rest  
And shelter 'midst the sycamores.  
Their songs (of love in a warm soft nest)  
Are faintly echoed east and west  
By the red harps o' the sycamores.

The dewfall and the starshine make  
Amidst the shadowy sycamores  
Sweet delicate strains; the gold beams  
shake  
The leaves at morn, and swift awake  
The small harps of the sycamores.

O sweet Earth's music everywhere,  
Though faint as in the sycamores :  
Sweet when buds burst, birds pair ;  
Sweet when as thus there wave in the air  
The red harps of the sycamores.

## SPRING'S ADVENT

The Spirit of Spring is in the air ;  
The daffodils wave blithe and free  
To the wind's minstrelsy,  
And everywhere  
A green rebirth involves each branchlet bare.

Already from the elm-tree boughs  
The jubilant thrush doth cry aloud ;  
From fallow fields new ploughed  
The plovers rouse ;  
In hollow boles no more the squirrels  
drowse.

The blackbird calls his thrilling note ;  
And by each field, and copse, and glade  
The leverets race, the rabbits raid ;  
Where gorse-blooms float  
The yellow-yite pipes o'er and o'er by rote.

In the blue arch of sky, cloud-swept,  
The unseen larks are singing ;  
The green grass is springing :  
While nature slept,  
Leaf-crown'd, bird-haunted Spring hath  
hither leapt.



*Spring's Advent*

O joy of winds, and birds, and flowers,  
Of growing grass, of budding leaves,  
Of green and sappy sheaves,  
Of rustling showers,  
Sunshine, and plenitude of marvellous  
hours.

Thrilled Earth beholds her golden prime  
Returned again ; her heart beats swift.  
Low-laughing, as the spring winds lift  
Their songs sublime,  
Mocking, she dares the circling Shadow of  
Time.

## THE SUMMER WIND

The bugling of the summer wind  
Is sweet upon the hill :  
I love to hear its eddies  
The heather-crannies fill.

It plays upon the bracken  
A blithe fanfarronade :  
And thro' the moss-cups whistleth  
" The Fairy Raid."

It leaps from birch to rowan,  
And laugheth long and loud,  
Then with a spring is vanished,  
And rideth on a cloud !

## THE HILL WATER

There is a little brook,  
I love it well :  
It hath so sweet a sound  
That even in dreams my ears could tell  
Its music anywhere.  
Often I wander there,  
And leave my book  
Unread upon the ground,  
Eager to quell  
In the hush'd air  
That haunts its flowing forehead fair  
All that about my heart hath wound  
A trouble of care :  
Or, it may be, idly to spell  
Its runic music rare  
And with its singing soul to share  
Its ancient lore profound :  
For sweet it is to be the echoing shell  
That lists and inly keeps that murmurous  
    miracle.  
About it all day long  
In this June-tide

*The Hill Water*

There is a myriad song,  
From every side  
There comes a breath, a hum, a voice :  
The hill-wind fans it with a pleasant noise  
As of sweet rustling things  
That move on unseen wings,  
And from the pinewood near  
A floating whisper oftentimes I hear,  
As when, o'er pastoral meadows wide;  
Stealeth the drowsy music of a weir.  
The green reeds bend above it,  
The soft green grasses stoop and trail  
therein :  
The minnows dart and spin :  
The purple-gleaming swallows love it :  
And, hush, its innermost depth within,  
The vague prophetic murmur of the linn.

But not in summer-tide alone  
I love to look  
Upon this rippling water in my glen :  
Most sweet, most dear, my brook,  
And most my own,  
When the grey mists shroud every ben,  
And in its quiet place  
The stream doth bare her face,  
And lets me pore deep down into her eyes,  
Her eyes of shadowy grey,  
Wherein from day to day

*The Hill Water*

My soul is startled with a new surmise,  
Or doth some subtler meaning trace  
Reflected from unseen invisible skies.

Dear mountain-solitary, dear lonely brook,  
Of hillside rains and dews the vagrant  
daughter,

Sweet, sweet, thy music when I bend above  
thee,

When in thy fugitive face I look ;

Yet not the less I love thee;

When, far away, and absent from thee long,

I yearn, my dark hill-water,

I yearn, I strain to hear thy song,

Brown, wandering water,

Dear, murmuring water !

## RAINBOW-SHIMMER

To-day upon the hillside  
I saw a golden fairy ;  
Her name is Rainbow-Shimmer,  
But for you and me she's Mary.

For Mary is the mother  
Of all sweet souls that be,  
From the angels in heaven  
To the best fish in the sea.

And of all sweet souls that are,  
Fairies are the rarest,  
And Mary was a star  
Among the fairest.

She had a golden kingcup  
Her little golden head,  
For dress she had a daisy white  
Just tipped with red.

She danced upon a clover leaf  
Still ashine with dew  
And the blue sky above was not  
As her blue eyes so blue.

*Rainbow-Shimmer*

Her partner was a sunbeam,  
A partner wild and wary,  
Whose reel might even tire  
The patience of a fairy.

Ah, how the two went dancing  
Among the dewy clover ;  
I would that you were Mary  
And I your sunbeam lover !

“ Stop, Mary, stop,” I whispered;  
“ Be not so wild and wary,  
I know a little lassie  
Who'd dearly love a fairy ! ”

But in a twink she vanished,  
The dewshine dance was over !  
Ah, her twinkling laughter  
With her sunbeam lover !

But, hush ! Her hiding-place  
Is not so far apart :  
I'll tell you where it is, dear,  
It's deep in Mother's heart.

## THE YELLOWHAMMER'S SONG

Out on the waste, a little lonely bird, I flit  
and I sing ;  
My breast is yellow as sunshine, and light  
as the wind my wing.

The golden gorse me shelters, in the tufted  
grass is my nest,  
And *Sweet, sweet, sweet the world*, though  
the wind blow east or west.

The harebells chime their music, the canna  
floats white in the breeze :  
But as for me, I flit to and fro and I sing at  
my ease.

When the thyme is dripping with dew, and  
the hill-wind beareth along  
The pungent scent of the gale, loudly I sing  
my morning song.

When the sun beats on the gorse, the broom,  
and the budding heather,  
I flit from spray to spray, and my song is of  
the golden weather.



*The Yellowhammer's Song*

When the moor-fowl sink to their rest, and  
the sky is soft rose-red,  
I sing of the crescent moon and the single  
star overhead,

Out on the waste, out on the waste, I flit  
all day as I sing,  
*Sweet, sweet, sweet is the world—dear world—  
how beautiful everything!*

Only a little lonely bird that loveth the  
moorland waste,  
And little perhaps of the joy of the world  
is that which I taste ;

But out on the wild, free moorlands or the  
gold gorse-boughs I swing;  
And *Sweet, sweet, sweet the world ; oh, sweet !  
ah, sweet!* the song that I sing.

## THE SONG OF THE SEA-WIND

King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea,  
When thou sweepst abroad thy voice  
    crieth;  
Crieth the anguish of living souls  
As with the wild storm-rapt souging of the  
    oaks.

*Breath of the world, O bitter breath,  
King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea !*

King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea,  
Hitherward blow, by our doors, through  
    our souls.  
Blow, blow, Euroclydon . . . and as dead  
    leaves  
Whirl seaward vain hopes and perishing  
    dreams.

*Breath of the world, O bitter breath,  
King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea !*

King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea,  
Uplift us, resurge us out with thy waves,

*The Song of the Sea-Wind*

Out on thine infinite heaving breast  
Where not a wave breaks but is higher than  
    hope.

*Breath of the world, O bitter breath,  
King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea !*

King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea,  
In the sweep and shadow of mighty wings  
Whirl far this Dream that is life, afar  
To the Shores of Joy or the Coasts of Night.

*Breath of the world, O bitter breath,  
King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea !*

King of the winds, O Wind of the Sea,  
Before thee my heart bows, for it may be  
    that God—  
Yea, that it is Thee, O God, who passeth by,  
Voicing Thy Word to our souls out of  
    infinite space—

*Eternal Breath, O bitter-sweet Breath,  
Lord of all winds, O Wind of the Sea !*

## SPANISH ROSES

Roses, roses,  
Yellow and red ;  
A rose for the living,  
A rose for the dead !  
Who'll sip their dew ?  
There are only a few  
Of the yellow and red :  
Youth sells its roses  
Ere youth is sped.

Roses, roses,  
All for delight ;  
What of the night ?  
Hark, the tramp, tramp,  
The scabbard's clasp,  
The flaring lamp !  
Where is the morning dew ?  
Ah, only a few  
Drank ere the yellow and red  
Lay shrivelled, shrivelled,  
Over the dead.

*Spanish Roses*

Roses, roses,  
Buy, oh buy.  
The years fly;  
'Tis the time of roses.  
Here are posies  
For one and all;  
For lovers that sigh  
And for lovers that die :  
And for Love's pall  
And burial !

Roses, roses, roses, buy, buy, oh buy !  
Why delay, why delay, roses also die.  
Pink and yellow, blood-red, snow-white,  
Roses for dayspring, roses for night !

Buy, buy, oh my roses buy !  
A kiss for a kiss, and a sigh for a sigh !

## THE SEA-BORN VINE

(*A Dionysiac Legend*)

The sun leapt up the rose-flushed sky  
And yellowed all the sea's pale blue ;  
The Tyrrhene crew  
Uprose and hailed the God on high.

But Dionysos made no sign :  
The shipmen hailed their Lord again,  
Acclaimed His reign,  
Then stared upon their guest divine.

“ The deep shall swallow thee, fair sir :  
The sea-things shall make thee their  
prey—  
The God obey  
Or meet swift death ere thou canst stir ! ”

“ *Ere ye arose, my spirit bowed  
To the Great God unrisen then :—  
Take heed, O men,  
Your clamour grow not overloud.* ”

*The Sea-Born Vine*

“ A priest of Bacchus thou ! Behold :  
On sea-wave here could whelm thy God—  
His mystic rod  
Would float foam-crown'd 'mid this wave-  
gold.

“ *Ai Evoë !* Thy voice might fill  
The waste of sea, the waste of sky,  
Yet thou wouldst die,  
Thy god supine on some green hill ! ”

*Ai Evoë !* The cry thrilled wide :  
The startled rowers shrank—they saw  
With trembling awe  
The conscious waters surge aside.

*Ai Evoë !* The waves turn green ;  
In tendril masses twist and twine  
A mighty vine  
Uprises and o'erhead doth lean :

*Ai Evoë !* The tendrils cling  
About the shipmen as they swim  
The Bacchic hymn  
The waves chant and the wild winds sing.

*Evoë !* Dionysos cries,  
The seamen and the boat no more  
The shingly shore  
Shall feel 'neath known or alien skies.

*The Sea-Born Vine*

Blue dolphins guide the wave-born vine  
To caves near mystic Ind :  
Only the wind  
Murmurs for aye the tale divine.

Ye who deride the gods, beware :  
They are with us evermore ; they brook  
No scornful look ;  
Their vengeance fills our mortal air.

Yea, of the jealous gods, take heed :  
One day the earth or sea shall ope  
And vanquish hope—  
*Ai Evoē* be vain indeed !



## VENILIA

Exspirare rosas, decrescere lilia vidi . . .

CLAUDIAN.

Along the faint shores of the foamless gulf  
I see pale lilies droop, wan roses fall,  
And Silence stilling the uplifted wave.

And in the movement of the uplifted wave,  
And ere the rose fall, or the lily breathe,  
Silence becomes a lonely voice, like hers,  
Venilia's, who when love was given wings  
And far off flight, mourned ceaseless as a  
dove,

Till bitter Circe made her but a voice  
Still lingering as a fragrance in dim woods  
When on the gay wind swims the yellow  
leaf.

## ON A NIGHTINGALE IN APRIL

The yellow moon is a dancing phantom  
Down secret ways of the flowing shade ;  
And the waveless stream has a murmuring  
whisper  
Where the alders wave.

Not a breath, not a sigh, save the slow  
stream's whisper :  
Only the moon is a dancing blade  
That leads a host of the Crescent warriors  
To a phantom raid.

Out of the Lands of Faerie a summons,  
A long, strange cry that thrills through  
the glade :—  
The grey-green glooms of the elm are  
stirring,  
Newly afraid.

Last heard, white music, under the olives  
Where once Theocritus sang and played—  
Thy Thracian song is the old new wonder  
O moon-white maid !

## THE DIRGE OF THE REPUBLIC

(*In Memoriam.*—E. Z.)

In the great days men heard afar the clarions  
of Hope rejoice :

The hearts of men were shaken as reeds by  
the wind of a Voice.

But now the roll of muffled drums drowns  
'mid the last Retreat

The wild fanfare of perishing hopes, the  
tramp of passing feet.

The winds of heaven are banners lost, are  
pennons of dismay ;

The innumerable legion of the sun toils on  
in disarray ;

The moon that carries freight of gold to  
ransom forth the morn

Sails desolate beneath a myriad starry eyes  
of scorn.

Wild rhetoric, yes : but who shall say what  
metaphors of pain

Are fit for the funeral dirge of a Republic  
slain ?

*The Dirge of the Republic*

High hopes, faiths, dreams, great passions,  
aspirations,  
Prove but the trodden, useless, bitter dust of  
weary nations !

That which was great is fallen, that which  
was high is low :  
The rising star has sunk again, but in a  
blood-red glow :  
The hundred thousand souls that died before  
the golden prime  
Did well, for it is well to miss the Ironies of  
Time.

Faith, Honour, Love, the Noble and the  
True,  
These lofty words are pawns of an ignoble  
crew :  
How better far to light the Torch with  
flames of cheap desire  
Than thus to mock the eyes of man with  
stolen fire !

There is no State broad-based enough upon  
the People's heart  
That some day may not hunted be by the  
People's dart :

*The Dirge of the Republic*

The rebel nerves, the rebel lusts, the rebel  
hounds of life—  
If these be loosened from the whip they  
turn to fratricidal strife.

Is this the end of all high dreams above  
thrones trampled under ?  
Is this the tinsel chorus left after the noble  
thunder ?  
'Twere better, then, than thus to live, thus  
forfeit high renown,  
To be true men, and free, " beneath the  
shadow of a Crown " !

## INTO THE SILENCE

*(A Death in the West Highlands)*

Ungather'd lie the peats upon the moss ;  
No more is heard the shaggy pony's hoof ;  
The thin smoke curls no more above the  
roof ;  
Unused the brown-sailed boat doth idly  
toss  
At anchor in the Kyle ; and all across  
The strath the collie scours without  
reproof ;  
The gather'd sheep stand wonderingly  
aloof ;  
And everywhere there is a sense of loss.  
" Has Sheumais left for over sea ? Nay,  
sir,  
A se'nnight since a gloom came over him ;  
He sicken'd, and his gaze grew vague and  
dim ;  
Three days ago we found he did not stir.  
He has gone into the Silence. 'Neath yon  
fir  
He lies, and waits the Lord in darkness  
grim."

## THE HILL-ROAD TO ARDMORE

There's the hill-road to Ardmore, Mary,  
Here's the glen-road to Ardstrae :  
Your home is younder, Mary,  
And mine lies this way.

Will you come by the glen, Mary,  
Or go the hill-road to Ardmore ?  
It is now and as you will, Mary,  
For I will ask no more.

'Tis but a score years, Mary,  
Since I bade you to Ardstrae ;  
And now you are not there, Mary  
Nor walk the hill-side way.

Is it only a score years, Mary,  
Since we parted by the shore,  
And I watched you go, Mary,  
By the hill-road to Ardmore ?

## WHITE ROSE

Far in the inland valleys  
The Spring her secret tells ;  
The roses lift on the bushes,  
The lilies shake their bells.

To a lily of the valley  
A white rose leans from above :  
“ Little white flower o’ the valley,  
Come up and be my love.”

To the lily of the valley  
A speedwell whispers, “ No !  
Where the roses live are thorns,  
'Tis safe below.”

The lily clomb to the rose-bush,  
A thorn in her side :  
The white rose has wedded a red rose,  
And the lily died.



## ECHOES OF JOY

Only a song of joy  
Wind-blown over the heather,  
Somewhere two little hearts  
Thrill and throb together.

Ah, far 'mid the nethermost spheres  
Life and Death live together ;  
And deep is their love, without tears,  
For they laugh at the shadows of years—  
And yet there rings in my ears  
Only a song of joy  
Wind-blown over the heather.

WHEN THE GREENNESS IS COME  
AGAIN

The west wind lifts the plumes of the fir,  
The west wind swings on the pine ;  
In the sun-and-shadow the cushats stir ;  
For the breath of Spring is a wine  
That fills the wood,  
That thrills the blood,  
When the glad March sun doth shine,  
Once more,  
When the glad March sun doth shine.

When the strong May sun is a song, a song,  
A song in the good green world,  
Then the little green leaves wax long  
And the little fern-fronds are uncurl'd ;  
The banners of green are all unfurl'd,  
And the wind goes marching along, along,  
The wind goes marching along  
The good green world.

## IT HAPPENED IN MAY

A maid forsaken  
A white prayer offered  
Under the snow of the apple-blossom :  
To whom was it proffered ?  
By whom was it taken ?  
Well, I suppose  
Nobody knows.

But somehow, the snows  
Of the apple-blossom  
Were changed one day.  
A kiss was offered,  
A kiss was taken :  
And lo ! when the maiden looked shyly  
away,  
Of bloom of the apple the boughs were  
forsaken !  
But whiter and sweeter grew orange-  
blossom !  
Now this is quite true, I say,  
And it happened in May.

## NIGHTINGALE LANE

Down through the thicket, out of the  
hedges,  
A ripple of music singeth a tune . . .  
Like water that falls  
From mossy ledges  
With a soft low croon :  
Soon  
It will cease !  
No, it falls but to rise—but to rise—but  
to rise !  
It is over the thickets, it leaps in the trees,  
It swims like a star in the purple-black  
skies !  
Ah, once again,  
With its rapture and pain,  
The nightingale singeth under the moon !

## BLOSSOM OF SNOW

“ Sing a song of blossom,”  
Said little Marjory Brown :  
“ Why won't it come down,  
Here in the town,  
Please ? ”  
Said little Marjory Brown.

“ Please,  
Wind, blow just a breath, for me  
To see  
The great white apple-blossoms blow  
Just like snow—  
Just like snow in our garden before we  
Came back to town,”  
Said little Marjory Brown.

All day and all night  
A wind did blow,  
Marjory laughed at the flying snow  
And its whirling riot :  
But at dawn she grew wan and white,  
And was quiet.  
And the doctor said,  
With his hand on a bowed sobbing head,  
“ Too late you came up to town  
With little Marjory Brown.”

## THE DANDELION

A thousand poets have sung the Rose,  
The daisy white, the heather,  
The green grass we lie on  
In summer weather . . .  
Of almost every flower that grows,  
But never of the Dandelion,  
That the winds of Spring have scattered  
hither and thither !

Is there any more fair to see  
Than this bright fellow  
Who, also, " takes the winds of March  
with beauty " ?  
True his coat in a vulgar yellow,  
And his is a very humble duty . . .  
Merely to be  
As joyous as a wave on the sea,  
A wave dancing on the great sea,—  
Merely to be bright, sunshiny, glad, strong,  
and free,  
As free as a beggar, as proud as a king !

*The Dandelion*

And so, quite as good as the Rose,  
The daisy white, the heather,  
The green grass we lie on  
In summer weather,  
Is that flame of the feet of Spring,  
The Dandelion !

## THE DREAM-WIND

*(Written for Music)*

When, like a sleeping child  
Or a bird in the nest,  
The day is gathered  
To the earth's breast . . .  
*Hush!* . . . 'tis the Dream-Wind,  
Breathing peace,  
Breathing rest,  
Out of the Gardens of Sleep in the West.

Oh, come to me, wandering  
Wind of the West !  
Grey doves of slumber  
Come hither to rest ! . . .  
*Hush!* . . . now the wings cease  
Below the dim trees . . .  
And the White Rose of Rest  
Breathes low in the Gardens of Sleep in the  
West.



## TRIAD

From the Silence of Time, Time's Silence  
borrow.

In the heart of To-day is the word of To-  
morrow.

The Builders of Joy are the Children of  
Sorrow.

IN MEMORIAM

He laughed at Life's Sunset Gates  
With vanishing breath :  
Glad soul, who went with the Sun  
To the Sunrise of Death.

PERSEPHONEIA

A FRAGMENT

1903



## PROLOGUE

*An ancient solitary temple of Persephoneia by the sea. A dull sunset, burning slowly over Hybla. Melkos, an old blind priest, attended by a boy. A brazen glow rests on Etna, whence issues a thin column of dusky smoke filled at times with a tongue of red flame.*

### MELKOS

The old dull whisper of the unceasing wave.  
[Sighing.] The slow sound of the unceasing wave.

*[Displaces a stone with his foot.]*

Out of these shadowy hollows of the ocean  
Troop the grey dreams that plague the  
minds of men.

Far off Hadranos hears : Enkelados  
Puts forth his hands and shapes the sound  
to thought :

And on her lonely Mount where the sunset  
burns

Hybla remoulds in pale invisible flame.

*[The boy idly plays a note or two.]*

## *Persephoneia*

I am too old to fear these Holy Ones.  
Hybla Beneficent, why should one fear  
The Twilight Goddess, born where the  
Evening star  
Hangs o'er the abyss where swims the  
unrisen moon.  
Hadrânos loves us not, but hates us not :  
Though dreadful to men's ears the baying  
of the hounds  
That night and day, a thousandfold,  
engird  
His sacred temple with a surge of sound.  
Rather the man I fear, the Titan-slave,  
Who hates the sovran powers who hold him  
thrall,  
And hugs a secret that no god doth know,  
Save only her, Demeter, when the frenzy  
Terribly moves her calm to dreadful storm—  
And him, Poseidon, when in his shell-strewn  
sleep  
Deep in the dim green silences he moans  
Remembering . . . him rather do I fear,  
Enkelados, the Helot of the Gods.

*[The boy half raises himself, looks  
toward the ancient temple.]*

### MELKOS

Why do you stir, Neanthes ? Does the light  
From off Hyblæan hill draw near the roof ?

*Persephoneia*

NEANTHES

The she-goat browsing 'mid the yellow  
spurge  
Yonder, where the lava crouches like a  
lizard  
Nailed to a thorn, looked suddenly up and  
whinnied,  
Her ears swung like figs in the wind, and her  
knees  
Bent, and she shrank shivering to the  
ground.

*[He sinks again, and plays a few notes  
on his reed pipe.]*

MELKOS

That slow sound of the unceasing wave.  
For ages  
These watery fangs have gnawed and torn  
the shore.

*[Again displaces a stone with his foot.]*

When I was young I sailed three days and  
nights,  
Southward three days when the great God  
drowned in fire,  
Southward three nights when lost amid pale  
stars  
The half-moon waned, and never land I saw,  
Nor living thing, save a shadow in the  
calms

*Persephoneia*

Where overhead a white-winged sea-hawk  
flew.

And on the morrow of the fourth I heard  
The stifled laughters of a hidden folk,  
Hoarse murmurings, a dull tumultuous haste,  
With sad sea-voices full of lamentation,  
And a single voice that knew not any peace.

NEANTHES

*[Listlessly, without looking up.]*

Who were these creatures of the salt south  
sea ?

MELKOS

Out of the depths they came, I know not  
whence,  
Or what. Poseidon's offspring, they, who  
made  
A green and dreadful rumour through the  
wave.

NEANTHES

*[Singing.]*

*Fair is the falling wave, and fair  
The paven green sea-halls,  
And one who sleepeth sound is sleeping there.*

MELKOS

And as in some old dream that swims un-  
sought  
Into the unwilling mind, I know once more



*Persephoneia*

The old fear I felt, and all the horror of  
fear,

When out of the foam and the seas and the  
wind

I heard a voice of vengeance and of wrath  
And heard Poseidon calling on the shade  
Of that most sacred, dread, and nameless  
god

Who lives below the root of ancient slime  
Left by forgotten seas and the most deepset  
fires

Enkelados hath watched, Hadranos seen,  
Leaning o'er midnight chasms fill'd with  
flame.

Loudly he called, and billow on billow leapt ;  
Louder, and seas rose, and fell upon seas ;  
Loudlier, till the shaken watery domes  
That moved as a falling city on Etna moves,  
Crag-slipt to gulfs of fathomless abyss,  
I saw far-off steadfast stars involved,  
Spun round like dust about a chariot wheel.  
And all the anguish of his cry was filled  
With one name only—hers, whom he begat  
A thousand thousand years ago, on her  
The stern implacable guardian of mankind  
Demeter-Erinnys, on whose name be peace.  
That name alone I heard. . . Persephoneia.

[NEANTHES *again raises himself, looking  
towards the ancient temple.*

*Persephoneia*

MELKOS

Does the light fall from off the Hyblæan  
hill, Neanthes ?

NEANTHES

Three sea-birds dripping from the foam  
Wheeled inland, yonder where the spotted  
snake  
Has made her lair under the asphodels,  
And one by one withered in fright, and flung  
Heavily downward, and all three lie dead.

MELKOS

[*Again to himself, unheeding the boy.*  
And when like a snowflake blindly up-  
whirled and borne  
My frail boat sung from one gulf to another,  
And I lay breathless, dead, as one long dead,  
Blind, deaf, dumb, senseless, without hope  
or fear,  
Who ploughed the furrow of my flying keel ?  
That thing I do not know, nor how I escaped  
A peril more dire than that which waits for  
ships  
For Cumæ bound when Zankle sinks behind.  
But on one desolate morrow my grey lips  
Knew rain, and all my weary flesh was healed  
With warmth and peace, at the coming of a  
calm

*Persephoneia*

Leaning from heaven on the lapping waters,  
And from the violet hollows heavenward  
risen.

And that day, in the hush of afternoon,  
I heard a shoreward sighing of the sea  
And in my nostrils was the blessed smell  
Of grass and earth and trees : so lifting me,  
And having made my prayer of thankfulness  
To him, the lord Poseidon of the Deep,  
I looked . . . and saw a melancholy shore,  
A long low lifeless melancholy shore,  
Wherefrom, an infinite way, the world  
uprose,

Leaning gigantic . . . the vast womb of her,  
The Mother Mountain, and, purpling in the  
west,

Hybla I saw, the Holy Hill : and else,  
No single home wherefrom the blue smoke  
toiled.

But this I saw with dread, that ancient  
homes  
Hearthless and faded stood among grey  
trees,

And a gaunt bridge hung broken o'er the bed  
Of a great river where no water ran,  
And old-time gardens all unwall'd, un-  
kempt,  
Were green with noisome growth, and fruit-  
less, drear.

*Persephonia*

Some fallen columns lay upon the sand  
Whereon the lizards fled, and in one place  
I saw the image of an unknown God  
Within whose cavernous ruin the adder  
    curled.

Near by, erect, unshaken, stood a fane  
Even that by which this solitary eve  
I stand in these my blind and listless years—  
Fearing so little, with so little hope,  
Yet dimly seeing in the far-off law  
The shaping of divine perfected things.  
Most drear and solitary it rose thereby,  
The columns held the vast grey slab of roof  
That still they hold, in whose wind-haunted  
    places

The sea-crows built, with melancholy cries  
Lifting black wings at sundown and at dawn.  
But on that dayset, from the midmost rose  
A thin and wavering column of spiced smoke  
Such as from altars rise, fragrant with gums,  
With wine and frankincense, where gods are  
    known ;

And even as I watched, the purple bloom  
That Hybla wore, as a priestess wears a robe,  
So that the woman and the robe are one,  
Took fire : or rather, far below, a sea of  
    flame

Swung from its ebb, and with a mighty sigh  
From dim abysms reached a fiery crest,

*Persephoneia*

The conflagration of whose soundless life  
Changed Hybla to a molten brazen mass.  
Therefrom a concentrated stream of light  
Poured near the desolate fane ; but as the  
God

Sank sighing to the underworld his hand  
Lingered a brief while here : and the pale  
smoke

Spired suddenly like the crimson breath of  
roses.

*[The boy again raises himself, looking  
towards the ancient temple.*

Does the light fall from off the Hyblæan  
hill, Neanthes ?

NEANTHES

A little breath of smoke  
Rose from the broken terrace near the  
fane,  
No more than from the white ox idly  
breathes  
When with wet lips he tastes the morning  
grass.

MELKOS

And then ?

NEANTHES

A sudden noisy whirl of sparrows  
Scattered like leaves around the seaward  
columns :

*Persephoneia*

And even as I looked, like leaves they  
fluttered,  
Falling and fallen, and now strewn deep they  
lie.

MELKOS

*[Turning his face seaward again.*

And even as the curling breath of roses  
Wavered again to pale aerial smoke,  
Even in that moment I beheld a woman  
Standing in silence on the ruin'd terrace  
That downward reaches to the lifting wave  
Oozy with slimy frondage of the sea.  
So tall she was, so noble of mien, so great  
In the perfected beauty of repose,  
That for a moment all my thoughts beheld  
A flawless statue simulating life.  
Most pale, most terrible her awful face.  
The dark hair lay adown it in great clusters,  
Like to the wild vine on the ashy cliff  
That on Ætnean Inessa bears the grape  
Wherefrom the grey priests of Demeter brew  
A fatal juice. The sadness of the hills  
Crowned the sheer lonely height that was  
her forehead.

The immemorial whisper of the sea  
Inhabited the silence of her face :  
And in the flamelit darkness of her eyes  
The melancholy of forgotten things  
Was like a rainy dusk in the inlands drear.

*Persephoneia*

In stillness she stood there, immovable,  
As Twilight stands in the passes of the hills  
When the Noon lifts her blazing wing and  
sheers  
Behind the incurring, blank, precipitous  
walls.  
Then well I knew a goddess I beheld.

A VOICE

O bitter and terrible love of the wave for  
the wind,  
Of the north for the flame,  
And the love and the joy and the glory half  
left behind  
For the mockery of a name.

MELKOS

What words were these : what bitter song  
from the sea,  
Out of the hills, or lifted from the slain ?

NEANTHES

Only the wind I heard, and a sigh from the  
sea.  
It is gone now, and the far-off sea is still.

MELKOS

[*Again turning his face to the sea.*  
Then I knew a goddess I beheld.

[*A pause.*

*Persephoneia*

But sad she was, more sad than I had  
dreamed

The high immortal ones could ever be.  
And while I looked I saw that in one hand  
A cluster of flowers she held, anemones  
Wine-dark in hue, the sunbright celandine  
And poppies heavy in a downward flame,  
With pale green blossoms of the yellow  
spurge.

But even as I looked a withering came  
Like a grey bloom upon them, and that  
bloom

Dusked into ash, and in grey ash they fell  
Making an eddy of dust before her feet.  
Then a wild dove with sudden clamorous  
wing

Batted the still air of the dreadful peace ;  
Circling about her, come I know not whence ;  
But even as I looked the grey wing sank  
And as a falling dust the cushat fell.

[*A pause.*

Then all my soul rose up in me, and knew  
Persephoneia. [A pause.

And at that dreadful name,  
Born on my lips as dawn on a moving wave,  
The dark gulfs of her dreadful beautiful  
eyes

Turned slowly upon mine, wherefrom the  
light,



*Persephoneia*

Ebbed, as the withdrawing gleam ebbs from  
a pool

On sundown sands when the seas grow  
suddenly pale.

From that day unto this I have not seen  
Goddess nor mortal, maid nor mortal man :  
No, nor the grey stairs of Poseidon's home,  
Nor Helios lighting torches on the hills,  
Nor any queen hour laughing on the slopes  
Where the watercourses are, nor almond  
blossom

Foaming the pools where purple iris grow.  
No, never once have I beheld my kind ;  
Never the goatherd fluting to his flock  
Black-footed kids amid the lava blocks  
Stained with old lichen, yellow with flower-  
ing spurge ;

Nor the white train of sacred maids down-  
wending

By the fig-bordered ways of holy Inessa,  
Nor the gold filleted ancient men who bow  
At Hybla, nor the blue-robed youths who  
stand

Watching the thousand hounds of Hadranon.  
Yea, all these weary years I have not seen.  
In gracious places I have never heard  
The chorus rave, nor the solitary hymn  
Peal from the heights of Enna when the  
doves

*Persephoneia*

Gather like flames before the Koré's fane :  
Nor laughter in the nightingale-haunted  
woods

When the moon lifts the silver from the  
pools

And ripples it lightly through the rippling  
boughs ;

Never for me the chariot-race, the games,  
The sounds of down-falling cars in gladsome  
havens,

The kiss of wife or child, the choric song  
Of kings and wars and mighty kings of old,  
The bubble from the wine-skin, the gay jibe  
And all familiar things of the old-time day,  
For I am old and blind : for years on years,  
How many years I know not, have been  
blind.

That sorrow came to me because I saw  
Divinity unveiled, and for a moment knew  
The terrible life of immortality.

The high gods rule us hardly. If we fail  
To seek them in their shrines and holy places  
Sorrows are laid on us, and many plagues,  
And the awful weight of the superhuman  
frown.

And, if unseen we come upon these folk,  
Star-trampers, sea-shod, kindred of the  
powers

That are the Eternal balance of the world,

*Persephoneia*

Pitiless are they, or full of dreadful scorn,  
Or mockery worse than flushing of the levin.  
But I have served her faithfully ; Aweful  
One. . . .

Yea, all these years in blindness and in pain,  
In sorrow, loneliness and grievous days  
I have not strayed an hour long from her  
shrine.

Few men come here, to this deserted land :  
These haste away, so dreadful is the air  
Of deathless immemorial decays,  
Cities that were, dis-peopled villages,  
Gardens, with barren founts and fruitless  
trees,

Old roadways gathered to the prickly-pear,  
Dry watercourses where the lizards run  
With withered tongues seeking forbidden dew,  
And this gaunt solitary ruined fane  
Whereon is Silence, terrible and alone.  
Yea, I have kept the sacred fire alit  
From dusk till dawn, and quenched it at the  
dawn,

And every noon have gathered up the ashes  
And thrown them in the grey receding wave.  
Yet never has the goddess deigned to me . . .  
No, not a word, no, not a little word,  
Nor even guerdon given, albeit ease  
Or dreamless sleep, or food, or shade, or  
warmth,

*Persephoneia*

The visitation of unblended hours,  
The gifts of song, of prophecy, of dream.  
But, when I die, the crow will pick mine eyes,  
And if the crawling wave discrown my tomb  
The clammy fins of fish will touch my bones.

*[Raising his arms in supplication.]*

O thou who in thy unknown secret power  
Descendeth hither, coming as a wind  
That eddies in the grass, and as an eddy  
Returning when it wills, in a secret way,  
O thou, Persephoneia, whom men worship  
High in the holy fane of the sacred Koré  
Where Enna rears her consecrated steep  
In frowning flanks of basalt from the wilds  
Hearken, have pity, give at least a sign. . . .  
For I have served thee well, who am broken,  
and blind,

And now am old, and soon shall know no more,  
But be a thing that was not, unrecalled.

*[The boy suddenly gives three sharp  
calls on his reed.]*

MELKOS

Neanthes . . . what ?

NEANTHES

A shadow suddenly falls  
Which nothing casts, where no one is ! . . .  
yonder

*Persephoneia*

Betwixt the columns where the sea gleams  
red,  
As a pomegranate on a dark blue leaf.

MELKOS

Quick, boy! . . . Neanthes . . . does the  
beam of light  
From off the Hyblæan hill yet reach the  
roof?

*[Neanthes, leaping to his feet, covers his  
face, and turns and bounds swiftly  
away.]*

NEANTHES

It comes! It comes!

MELKOS

*[Slowly advancing.]*

Hail to the Koré of Enna, hail!

*[A pause.]*

Persephoneia! Mother of Life and Death!

Hail!

Hail, Unbegotten but by the dreams of the  
gods

Foreshaped by him, Poseidon-Hippios,  
Foreknown of her, Demeter, the veiled  
Queen!

Hail to the Koré! Hail, Persephoneia!

*[A pause.]*

*Persephoneia*

Though many days have sunk and dark  
nights risen,  
Yea, many moons have waxt and waned in  
vain,  
And thou hast not revisited this place,  
Yet art thou come again, O Holy One !  
I know well by the portents, and the awe  
That lies on all this breath-suspended shore.  
[A pause.  
A sign, a sign, O thou whom I have served  
In silent adoration all these years !

A VOICE

Go down to the dim waves and bathe thine  
eyes.  
Maybe other gods may serve thee there :  
Or sleep, or dream. I knew not thou wert  
blind,  
Who have never known nor seen that  
worshipper  
Save as a shadow flickering in the silence.  
Go up to the hill-encircled mountain fane  
That frowns on Enna, and then lay thee  
down  
On the altar-step, that so, perchance, my  
foot  
May for less than a moment burn thy lips.  
Then may thy blindness quicken . . . or  
the dark

*Persephoneia*

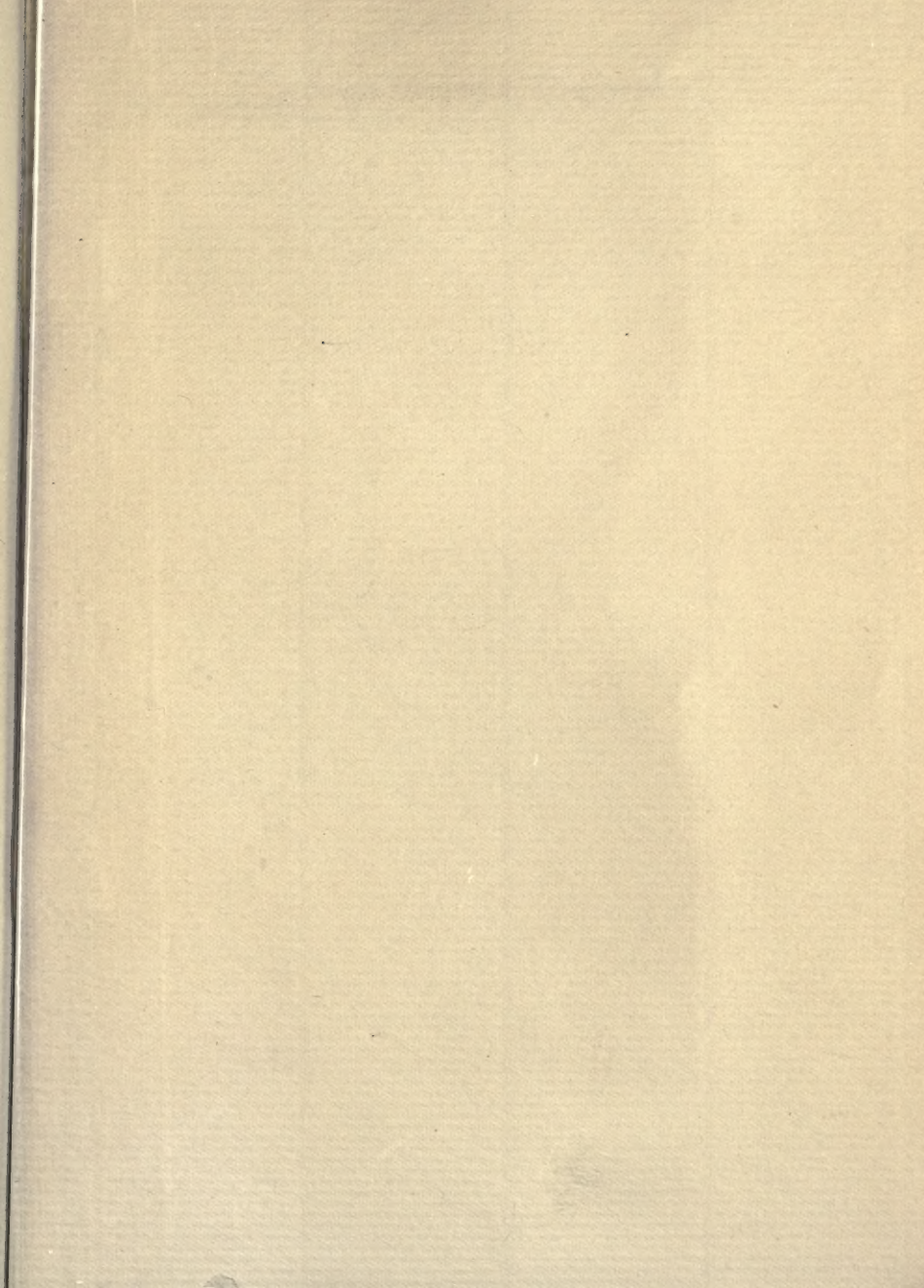
Drown in upon thee with a deeper night.  
But trouble me no more with faithful  
service,  
That, or unfaithful. Here I dwell alone.

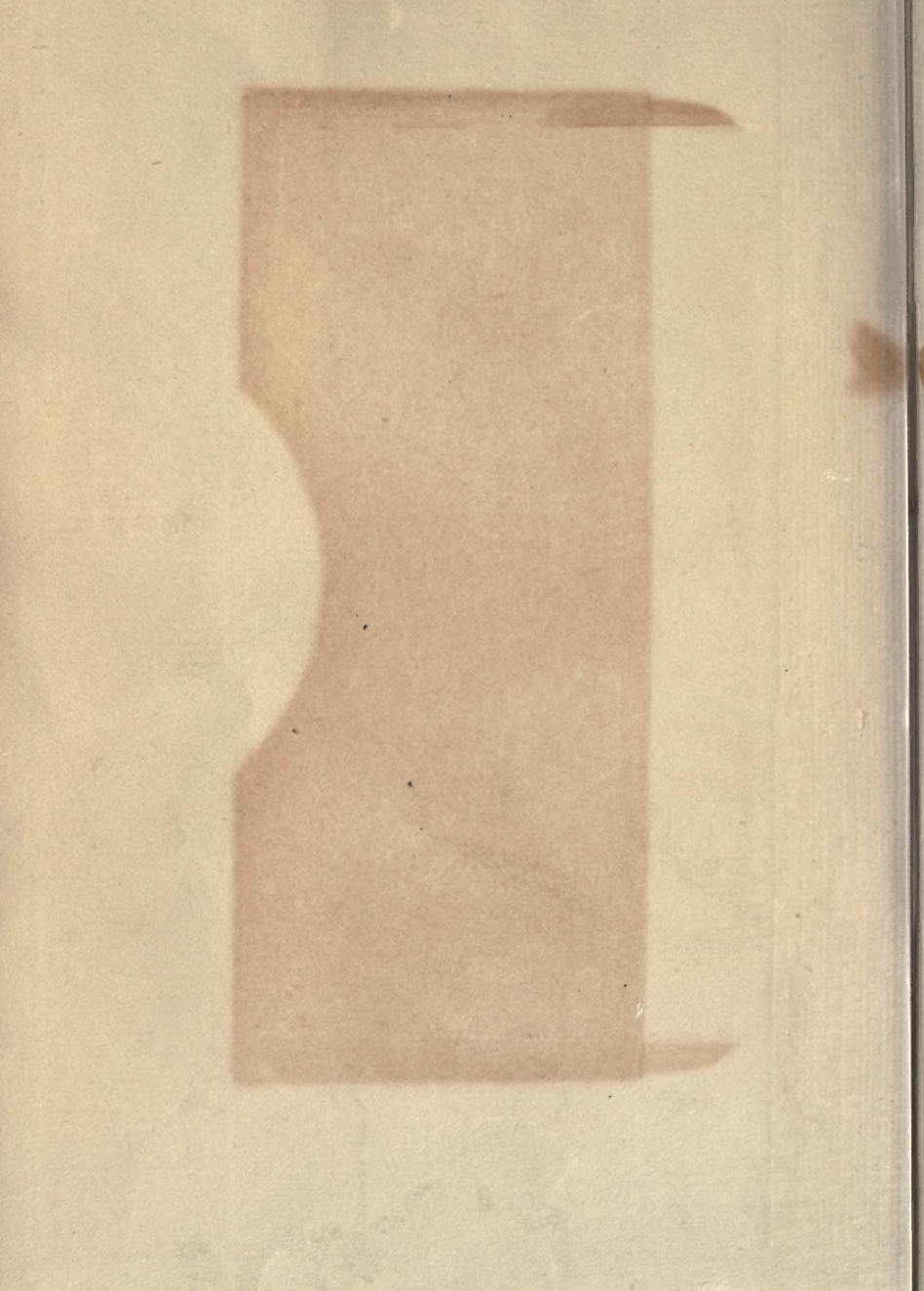
[MELKOS *stands in silence, then slowly  
moves towards the sea. As in a  
dream he walks slowly, through  
lentisk and tamarisk, often look-  
ing back, half in dread, half in  
expectation.*

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