CLASSIC REPRINT SERIES

POEMS

by
Lionel Johnson

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BY

LIONEL JOHNSON.

P·O·E·M·S

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LONDON · ELKIN MATHEWS
BOSTON · COPELAND & DAY

POEMS

BY

LIONEL JOHNSON

1895

LONDON * ELKIN MATHEWS
BOSTON * COPELAND & DAY

TO THE HONOURED AND GREATLY LOVED SAINT
MARY COLLEGE OF WINCHESTER NEAR
WINCHESTER A WYKEHAMIST
COME OF WYKEHAMISTS
I DEDICATE THIS
BOOK.

Gulielmum Wickamum, ut optimum parentem agnosco, suscipio, colo, cui si quid in me doctrinae, virtutis, pietatis, et Catholicae religionis, maxime acceptum refero. Quippe qui ab ineunte aetate, in Wintoniensi primum, deinde et

Oxontensi eius collegio, ad omnem ingenii, doctrinae, et pietatis cultum capessendum institutus sim.

HARPSFIELD.

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POEMS

WINCHESTER.

To the fairest!
Then to thee
Consecrate and bounden be,
Winchester! this verse of mine.
Ah, that loveliness of thine!
To have lived enchaunted years
Free from sorrows, free from fears,
Where thy Tower's great shadow falls
Over those proud buttressed walls;
Whence a purpling glory pours
From high heaven's inheritors,
Throned within the arching stone!
To have wandered, hushed, alone,
Gently round thy fair, fern-grown
Chauntry of the Lilies, lying
Where the soft night winds go sighing
Round thy Cloisters, in moonlight
Branching dark, or touched with white:
Round old, chill aisles, where moon-smitten
Blanches the *Orate*, written
Under each worn, old-world face
Graven on Death's holy place!

To the noblest!
None but thee.
Blest our living eyes, that see
Half a thousand years fulfilled
Of that age, which Wykeham willed
Thee to win; yet all unworn,
As upon that first March morn,
When thine honoured city saw
Thy young beauty without flaw,
Born within her water-flowing,
Ancient hollows, by wind-blowing

Hills enfolded ever more.
Thee, that lord of splendid lore,
Orient from old Hellas' shore,
Grocyn, had to mother: thee,
Monumental majesty
Of most high philosophy
Honours, in thy wizard Browne:
Tender Otway's dear renown,
Mover of a perfect pity,
Victim of the iron city,
Thine to cherish is: and thee,
Laureate of Liberty;
Harper of the Highland faith,
Elf, and faery, and wan wraith;
Chaunting softly, chaunting slowly,
Minstrel of all melancholy;
Master of all melody,
Made to cling round memory;
Passion's poet, Evening's voice,
Collins glorified. Rejoice,
Mother! in thy sons: for all
Love thine immemorial
Name, august and musical.
Not least he, who left thy side,
For his sire's, thine earlier pride,
Arnold: whom we mourn to-day,
Prince of song, and gone away
To his brothers of the bay:
Thine the love of all his years;
His be now thy praising tears.

To the dearest!
Ah, to thee!
Hast thou not in all to me
Mother, more than mother, been?
Well toward thee may Mary Queen

Bend her with a mother's mien;
Who so rarely dost express
An inspiring tenderness,
Woven with thy sterner strain,
Prelude of the world's true pain.
But two years, and still my feet
Found thy very stones more sweet,
Than the richest fields elsewhere:
Two years, and thy sacred air
Still poured balm upon me, when
Nearer drew the world of men;
When the passions, one by one,
All sprang upward to the sun:
Two years have I lived, still thine;
Lost, thy presence! gone, that shrine,
Where six years, what years! were mine.
Music is the thought of thee;
Fragrance, all thy memory.
Those thy rugged Chambers old,
In their gloom and rudeness, hold
Dear remembrances of gold.
Some first blossoming of flowers
Made delight of all the hours;
Greatness, beauty, all things fair
Made the spirit of thine air:
Old years live with thee; thy sons
Walk with high companions.
Then, the natural joy of earth,
Joy of very health and birth!
Hills, upon a summer noon:
Water Meads, on eves of June:
Chamber Court, beneath the moon:
Days of spring, on Twyford Down,
Or when autumn woods grew brown;
As they looked, when here came Keats,
Chaunting of autumnal sweets;

Through this city of old haunts,
Murmuring immortal chaunts;
As when Pope, art's earlier king,
Here, a child, did nought but sing;
Sang, a child, by nature's rule,
Round the trees of Twyford School:
Hours of sun beside Mead's Wall,
Ere the may begin to fall;
Watching the rooks rise and soar,
High from lime and sycamore:
Wanderings by old-world ways,
Walks and streets of ancient days;
Closes, churches, arches, halls,
Vanished men's memorials.
There was beauty, there was grace,
Each place was an holy place:
There the kindly fates allowed
Me too room; and made me proud,
Prouder name I have not wist!
With the name of Wykehamist.
These thy joys: and more than these:
Ah, to watch beneath thy trees,
Through long twilights linden-scented,
Sunsets, lingering, lamented,
In the purple west; prevented,
Ere they fell, by evening star!
Ah, long nights of Winter! far
Leaps and roars the faggot fire;
Ruddy smoke rolls higher, higher,
Broken through by flame's desire;
Circling faces glow, all eyes
Take the light; deep radiance flies,
Merrily flushing overhead
Names of brothers, long since fled;
And fresh clusters, in their stead,
Jubilant round fierce forest flame.

Friendship too must make her claim:
But what songs, what memories end,
When they tell of friend on friend?
And for them, I thank thy name.

Love alone of gifts, no shame
Lessens, and I love thee: yet
Sound it but of echoes, let
This my maiden music be,
Of the love I bear to thee,
Witness and interpreter,
Mother mine: loved Winchester!

1888.

TO MORFYDD.

A voice on the winds,
A voice by the waters,
  Wanders and cries:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
  Mine are your eyes!

Western the winds are,
And western the waters,
  Where the light lies:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
  Mine are your eyes!

Cold, cold, grow the winds,
And wild grow the waters,

Where the sun dies:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Mine are your eyes!

And down the night winds,
And down the night waters,
The music flies:
Oh! what are the winds?
And what are the waters?
Cold be the winds,
And wild be the waters,
So mine be your eyes!

1891

PLATO IN LONDON.

To Campbell Dodgson.

The pure flame of one taper fall
Over the old and comely page:
No harsher light disturb at all
This converse with a treasured sage.
Seemly, and fair, and of the best,
If Plato be our guest,
Should things befall.

Without, a world of noise and cold:
Here, the soft burning of the fire.
And Plato walks, where heavens unfold,
About the home of his desire.
From his own city of high things,

He shows to us, and brings,
Truth of fine gold.

The hours pass; and the fire burns low;
The clear flame dwindles into death:
Shut then the book with care; and so,
Take leave of Plato, with hushed breath:
A little, by the falling gleams,
Tarry the gracious dreams:
And they too go.

Lean from the window to the air:
Hear London's voice upon the night!
Thou hast bold converse with things rare:
Look now upon another sight!
The calm stars, in their living skies:
And then, these surging cries,
This restless glare!

That starry music, starry fire,
High above all our noise and glare:
The image of our long desire,
The beauty, and the strength, are there.
And Plato's thought lives, true and clear,
In as august a sphere:
Perchance, far higher.

1889.

IN FALMOUTH HARBOUR.

To Frank Mathew.

I.

The large, calm harbour lies below
Long, terraced lines of circling light:
Without, the deep sea currents flow:
    And here are stars, and night.

No sight, no sound, no living stir,
But such as perfect the still bay:
So hushed it is, the voyager
    Shrinks at the thought of day.

We glide by many a lanterned mast;
Our mournful horns blow wild to warn
Yon looming pier: the sailors cast
    Their ropes, and watch for morn.

Strange murmurs from the sleeping town,
And sudden creak of lonely oars
Crossing the water, travel down
    The roadstead, the dim shores.

A charm is on the silent bay;
Charms of the sea, charms of the land.
Memories of open wind convey
    Peace to this harbour strand.

Far off, Saint David's crags descend
On seas of desolate storm: and far
From this pure rest, the Land's drear End,
    And ruining waters, are.

Well was it worth to have each hour
Of high and perilous blowing wind:
For here, for now, deep peace hath power
    To conquer the worn mind.

I have passed over the rough sea,

And over the white harbour bar:
And this is Death's dreamland to me,
    Led hither by a star.

And what shall dawn be? Hush thee, nay!
Soft, soft is night, and calm and still:
Save that day cometh, what of day
    Knowest thou: good, or ill?

Content thee! Not the annulling light
Of any pitiless dawn is here;
Thou art alone with ancient night:
    And all the stars are clear.

Only the night air, and the dream;
Only the far, sweet-smelling wave;
The stilly sounds, the circling gleam,
    And thine: and thine a grave.

1887.

II.

Hence, by stern thoughts and strong winds borne,
Voyaged, with faith that could not fail,
Who cried: *Lead, kindly Light!* forlorn
    Beneath a stranger sail.

Becalmed upon a classic sea;
Wandering through eternal Rome;
Fighting with Death in Sicily:
    He hungered for his home.

These northern waves, these island airs!
Dreams of these haunted his full heart:
Their love inspired his songs and prayers,

Bidding him play his part.

The freedom of the living dead;
The service of a living pain:
He chose between them, bowed his head,
And counted sorrow, gain.

Ah, sweetest soul of all! whose choice
Was golden with the light of lights:
But us doubt's melancholy voice,
Wandering in gloom, unites.

Ah, sweetest soul of all! whose voice
Hailed morning, and the sun's increase:
We of the restless night rejoice,
We also, at thy peace.

1887.

A FRIEND.

To H. B. Irving.

All, that he came to give,
He gave, and went again:
I have seen one man live,
I have seen one man reign,
With all the graces in his train.

As one of us, he wrought
Things of the common hour:
Whence was the charmed soul brought,
That gave each act such power;

The natural beauty of a flower?

Magnificence and grace,
Excellent courtesy:
A brightness on the face,
Airs of high memory:
Whence came all these, to such as he?

Like young Shakespearian kings,
He won the adoring throng:
And, as Apollo sings,
He triumphed with a song:
Triumphed, and sang, and passed along.

With a light word, he took
The hearts of men in thrall:
And, with a golden look,
Welcomed them, at his call
Giving their love, their strength, their all.

No man less proud than he,
Nor cared for homage less:
Only, he could not be
Far off from happiness:
Nature was bound to his success.

Weary, the cares, the jars,
The lets, of every day:
But the heavens filled with stars,
Chanced he upon the way:
And where he stayed, all joy would stay.

Now, when sad night draws down,
When the austere stars burn:
Roaming the vast live town,
My thoughts and memories yearn
Toward him, who never will return.

Yet have I seen him live,
And owned my friend, a king:
All that he came to give,
He gave: and I, who sing
His praise, bring all I have to bring.

1889.

A BURDEN OF EASTER VIGIL.

Awhile meet Doubt and Faith:
For either sigheth and saith,
That He is dead
To-day: the linen cloths cover His head,
That hath, at last, whereon to rest; a rocky bed.

Come! for the pangs are done,
That overcast the sun,
So bright to-day!
And moved the Roman soldier: come away!
Hath sorrow more to weep? Hath pity more to say?

Why wilt thou linger yet?
Think on dark Olivet;
On Calvary stem:
Think, from the happy birth at Bethlehem,
To this last woe and passion at Jerusalem!

This only can be said:
He loved us all; is dead;
May rise again.
But if He rise not? Over the far main,
The sun of glory falls indeed: the stars are plain.

1888.

BY THE STATUE OF KING CHARLES AT CHARING CROSS.

To William Watson.

Sombre and rich, the skies;
Great glooms, and starry plains.
Gently the night wind sighs;
Else a vast silence reigns.

The splendid silence clings
Around me: and around
The saddest of all kings
Crowned, and again discrowned.

Comely and calm, he rides
Hard by his own Whitehall:
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.

Gone, too, his Court: and yet,
The stars his courtiers are:
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.

Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.

Which are more full of fate:

The stars; or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great:
Those brows; or the dark skies?

Although his whole heart yearn
In passionate tragedy:
Never was face so stern
With sweet austerity.

Vanquished in life, his death
By beauty made amends:
The passing of his breath
Won his defeated ends.

Brief life, and hapless? Nay:
Through death, life grew sublime.
Speak after sentence? Yea:
And to the end of time.

Armoured he rides, his head
Bare to the stars of doom:
He triumphs now, the dead,
Beholding London's gloom.

Our wearier spirit faints,
Vexed in the world's employ:
His soul was of the saints;
And art to him was joy.

King, tried in fires of woe!
Men hunger for thy grace:
And through the night I go,
Loving thy mournful face.

Yet, when the city sleeps;
When all the cries are still:
The stars and heavenly deeps

Work out a perfect will.

1889

LALEHAM.

To Arthur Galton.

Only one voice could sing aright
His brother poet, lost in night:
His voice, who lies not far away,
The pure and perfect voice of Gray.
The sleep of humble men he sang,
For whom the tolling church bells rang
Over their silent fields and vales,
Whence no rude sound their calm assails.
He knew their melancholy rest,
And peaceful sleep, on earth's kind breast;
Their patient lives, their common doom,
The beauty of their simple tomb.
One thing he left unsung: how some,
To share those village slumbers, come:
Whose voices filled the world with joy,
Who made high thoughts their one employ.
Ah, loving hearts! Too great to prize
Things whereon most men set their eyes:
The applauding crowd; the golden lure
Of wealth, insatiate and unsure;
A life of noise! a restless death:
The sanctities of life's last breath
Profaned with ritual pride and state;
Last pageant of the little great!
But these, to whom all crowns of song,

And all immortal praise, belong,
Turn from each garish sight and sound,
To lay them down in humble ground:
Choosing that still, enchaunted sleep
To be, where kindly natures keep:
In sound of pleasant water rills,
In shadows of the solemn hills.
Earth's heart, earth's hidden way, they knew:
Now on their grave light falls her dew.
The music of her soul was theirs:
They sleep beneath her sweetest airs.

Beside the broad, gray Thames one lies,
With whom a spring of beauty dies:
Among the willows, the pure wind
Calls all his wistful song to mind;
And, as the calm, strong river flows,
With it his mightier music goes;
But those winds cool, those waters lave,
The country of his chosen grave.
Go past the cottage flowers, and see,
Where Arnold held it good to be!
Half church, half cottage, comely stands
An holy house, from Norman hands:
By rustic Time well taught to wear
Some lowly, meditative air:
Long ages of a pastoral race
Have softened sternness into grace;
And many a touch of simpler use
From Norman strength hath set it loose.
Here, under old, red-fruited yews,
And summer suns, and autumn dews,
With his lost children at his side,
Sleeps Arnold: Still those waters glide,
Those winds blow softly down their breast:
But he, who loved them, is at rest.

1889

OUR LADY OF FRANCE.

To Ernest Dowson.

Leave we awhile without the turmoil of the town;
Leave we the sullen gloom, the faces full of care:
Stay we awhile and dream, within this place of prayer,
Stay we, and pray, and dream: till in our hearts die down
Thoughts of the world, unkind and weary: till Christ crown
Laborious day with love. Hark! on the fragrant air,
Music of France, voices of France, fall piercing fair:
Poor France, where Mary star shines, lest her children drown.

Our Lady of France! dost thou inhabit here? Behold,
What sullen gloom invests this city strange to thee!
In Seine, and pleasant Loire, thou gloriest from of old;
Thou rulest rich Provence; lovest the Breton sea:
What dost thou far from home? Nay! here my children fold
Their exiled hands in orison, and long for me.

1891.

IN MEMORY.

I.

Under the clear December sun,
  Perishing and cold,
Sleep, Malise! who hast early won
  Light of sacred gold.
Sleep, be at rest: we still will keep
Dear love for thee lain down to sleep.

Youth, loving faces, holy toil,
  These death takes from thee:
But of our love, none shall despoil
  Thy fair soul set free.
The labours of thy love are done:
Thy labour's crown of love is won.

Sleep, Malise! While the winds blow yet
  Over thy quiet grave:
We, labouring deathward, will forget
  Thee never: wherefore have
Hope, and pure patience: we, too, come
Presently to thee, in thine home.

1885.

II.

Ah! fair face gone from sight,
  With all its light
Of eyes, that pierced the deep
  Of human night!
Ah! fair face calm in sleep.

Ah! fair lips hushed in death!
  Now their glad breath
Breathes not upon our air
  Music, that saith
Love only, and things fair.

Ah! lost brother! Ah! sweet
  Still hands and feet!
May those feet haste to reach,
  Those hands to greet,
Us, where love needs no speech.

1886.

III.

Sea-gulls, wheeling, swooping, crying,
  Crying over Maes Garmon side!
Cold is the wind for your white wings' flying:
  Cold and dim is our gray springtide.

But an hundred miles and more away,
  In the old, sweet city,
Birds of spring are singing to the May,
  Their old, sweet ditty.

There he lies, whom I loved so well,
  And lies, whom I love so dearly:
At thought of his youth, our buds will swell;
  Of his face, our sun shine clearly.

Sea-gulls, wheeling, swooping, crying,
  Crying over Maes Garmon side!
Spirits of fire with him are flying,
  Souls of flame, to the Crucified.

Yet, far away from the ancient places,
Ancient pleasures, and ancient days:
He too thinks of our exiled faces,
Far away from his whiter ways.

Sea-gulls, over Maes Garmon side,
Flying and crying! flying and crying!
You and all creatures, since Malise died,
I have loved the more, both singing and sighing.

1887.

IV.

Glimmering lake, waters of Windermere!
Winchester your name must be:
Or is all an evening dream?
Nay! Winton waters wander here,
Delighting me,
Down through that ancient bridge, that old-world stream.

I lean against the old, pillared balustrade:
Now upon the red, worn mill,
Now upon the rapid race,
Poring: or where, within the shade
Of freshly chill,
Low arches, wallflowers hide their homely grace.

Swiftly descend those waters of the weir:
Sweeping past old cottages,
Curving round, ah, happy tide!
Into sight of towers most dear,
Of ancient trees
Loved all by heart: glad stream, who there may

glide!

Farewell, whom I have loved so in gone years!
Up the little climbing street,
To the memoried Church I pass,
Church of Saint John: whence loving tears
Made the way sweet,
Saddest of ways, unto the holy grass.

Up the slow hill, people and holy Cross
Bore thee to the sleeping place,
Malise! whom thy lovers weep.
Spring lilies crown from the soft moss
Thy silent face,
All peaceful, Malise! in thy perfect sleep.

Ah! far away, far by the watered vale,
By the seaward-rolling hills,
Lies he, by the gray-towered walls.
Northern calm lake, wild northern dale,
Gently fulfils,
Each, its serene enchauntment: and night falls.

Windermere gleams: as would some shadowy space
Out from willowed dream-world drawn.
Under the pure silence, earth
Looks up to heaven, with tranquil face:
And patient dawn,
Behind the purple hills, dreams toward the birth.

V.

To think of thee, Malise! at Christmas time!
The Glory of the world comes down on earth,
Malise! at Christmas: but the Yule bells chime

Over thy perfect sleep: and though Christ's birth
Wake other men to melody of heart,
Thou in their happy music hast no part.

Or dost thou wake awhile, to feel thy gloom
Illuminated by the shepherds' light?
To stretch out longing hands from thy still tomb,
And think on days, that were: before that night
Fell on thee, Malise? and the world as well
Was darkened over us, when that night fell!

1888.

VI.

Whenas I knew not clearly, how to think,
Malise! about thee dead: God showed the way.
Thine holy soul among soft fires can drink
The dew of all the prayers, that I can pray.

Prayers for thy sake shall pierce thy prison gate;
Prayers to the Mother of Misericord:
Mary, the mighty, the immaculate;
Mary, whose soul welcomed the appointed sword.

Malise! thy dear face from my wall looks down:
The Crucifix above its beauty lies.
Now, while I look and long, I see a crown
Bright on thy brow, and heaven within thine eyes,

1892.

THE PRECEPT OF SILENCE.

I know you: solitary griefs,
Desolate passions, aching hours!
I know you: tremulous beliefs,
Agonized hopes, and ashen flowers!

The winds are sometimes sad to me;
The starry spaces, full of fear:
Mine is the sorrow on the sea,
And mine the sigh of places drear.

Some players upon plaintive strings
Publish their wistfulness abroad:
I have not spoken of these things,
Save to one man, and unto God.

1893.

HILL AND VALE.

Not on the river plains
Wilt thou breathe loving air,
O mountain spirit fine!
Here the calm soul maintains
Calm: but no joy like thine,
On hill-tops bleak and bare,
Whose breath is fierce and rare.

Were beauty all thy need,
Here were an haunt for thee.
The broad laborious weald,
An eye's delight indeed,

Spreads from rich field to field:
And full streams wander free
Under the alder tree.

Throw thee upon the grass,
The daisied grass, and gaze
Far to the warm blue mist:
Feel, how the soft hours pass
Over, before they wist,
Into whole day: and days
Dream on in sunny haze.

Each old, sweet, country scent
Comes, as old music might
Upon thee: old, sweet sounds
Go, as they ever went,
Over the red corn grounds:
Still sweeping scythes delight
Charmed hearing and charmed sight

Gentle thy life would be:
To watch at morning dew
Fresh water-lilies: tell,
How bears the walnut tree:
Find the first foxglove bell,
Spare the last harebell blue:
And wander the wold through.

Another love is thine:
For thee the far world spied
From the far mountain top:
Keen scented, sounding pine,
The purple heather crop:
And night's great glorious tide
Of stars and clouds allied.

1887.

GWYNEDD.

To Ernest Rhys.

The children of the mingling mists: can they,
Born by the melancholy hills, love thee,
Royal and joyous light? From dawn of day,
We watch the trailing shadows of the waste,
The waste moors, or the ever-mourning sea:
What, though in speedy splendour thou hast raced
Over the heather or wild wave, a ray
Of travelling glory and swift bloom? Still thou
Inhabitest the mighty morning's brow:
And hast thy flaming and celestial way,
Afar from our sad beauties, in thine haste.

Have thou thy circling triumph of the skies,
Horseman of Goldwhite Footsteps! Yet all fire
Lives not with thee: for part is in our eyes,
Beholding the loved beauty of cold hills:
And part is patron of dear home desire,
Flashing upon the central hearth: it fills
Ingle and black-benched nook with radiances,
Hearts with responding spirit, ears with deep
Delicious music of the ruddy leap,
And streaming strength, and kindling confluences:
The hearth glows, and the cavernous chimney thrills,

Pale with great heat, panting to crimson gloom,
Quiver the deeps of the rich fire: see there!
Was not that your fair face, in burning bloom
Wrought by the art of fire? O happy art!
That sets in living flames a face so fair:

The face, whose changes dominate mine heart,
And with a look speak my delight or doom:
Nay, now not doom, for I am only thine,
And one in thee and me the fire divine!
The fire, that wants the whole vast world for room:
Yet dwells in us contented and apart.

The flames' red dance is done: and we crouch close
With shadowy faces to the dull, red glow.
Your darkling loveliness is like the rose,
Its dusky petals, and its bower of soft
Sweet inner darkness, where the dew lies low:
And now one tongue of flame leaps up aloft,
Brightening your brows: and now it fails, and throws
A play of flushing shadows, the rich mist
Of purple grapes, that many a sun hath kissed;
The delicate darkness, that with autumn grows
On red ripe apples in a mossy croft.

Nay! leave such idle southern imageries,
Vineyard and orchard, flowers and mellow fruit:
Great store is ours of mountain mysteries.
Look, where the embers fade, from ruddy gold
Into gray ashes falling without bruit!
Yet is that ruddy lustre bought and sold,
Elf with elf trafficking his merchandise:
Deep at the strong foot of the eagles' pass,
They store the haunting treasure, and amass
The spirit of dead fire: there still it lies,
Phantom wealth, goodlier than Ophir old.

Across the moor, over the purple bells,
Over the heather blossom, the rain drives:
Art fired enough to dare the blowing fells,
And ford the brawling brooks? Ah, come we then!
Great good it is to see, how beauty thrives
For desolate moorland and for moorland men;

To smell scents, rarer than soft honey cells,
From bruised wild thyme, pine bark, or mouldering peat;
To watch the crawling gray clouds drift, and meet
Midway the ragged cliffs. O mountain spells,
Calling us forth, by hill, and moor, and glen!

Calling us forth, to be with earth again,
Her memories, her splendours, her desires!
The fires of the hearth are fallen: now the rain
Stirs its delight of waters, as the flame
Stirred its delight of heat and spirited fires.
Come! by the lintel listen: clouds proclaim,
That thunder is their vast voice: the winds wane,
That all the storm may gather strength, and strive
Once more in their great breath to be alive;
And fill the angry air with such a strain,
As filled the world's war, when the world first came.

Desolate Cornwall, desolate Brittany,
Are up in vehement wind and vehement wave:
Ancient delights are on their ancient sea,
And nature's violent graces waken there;
And there goes loveliness about the grave,
And death means dreaming, not life's long despair.
Our sister lands are they, one people we,
Cornwall desolate, Brittany desolate,
And Wales: to us is granted to be great:
Because, as winds and seas and flames are free,
We too have freedom full, as wild and rare.

And therefore, on a night of heavenly fires;
And therefore, on a windy hour of noon;
Our soul, like nature's eager soul, aspires,
Finding all thunders and all winds our friends:
And like the moving sea, love we the moon;
And life in us the way of nature wends,

Ardent as nature's own, that never tires.
Born of wild land, children of mountains, we
Fear neither ruining earth, nor stormy sea:
Even as men told in Athens, of our sires:
And as it shall be, till the old world ends.

Your eyes but brighten to the streaming wind,
But lighten to the sighing air, but break
To tears before the labouring hills: your mind
Moves with the passionate spirit of the land.
Now crystal is your soul, now flame: a lake,
Proud and calm, with high scaurs on either hand;
Or a swift lance of lightning, to strike blind.
True child of Gwynedd, child of wilds and fields!
To you earth clings, to you strange nature yields
Far learning, sudden light, fierce fire: these find
Home in your heart, and thoughts that understand.

We will not wander from this land; we will
Be wise together, and accept our world:
This world of the gray cottage by the hill,
This gorge, this lusty air, this loneliness:
The calm of drifting clouds; the pine-tops whirled
And swayed along the ridges. Here distress
Dreams, and delight dreams: dreaming, we can fill
All solitary haunts with prophecy,
All heights with holiness and mystery;
Our hearts with understanding, and our will
With love of nature's law and loveliness.

Old voices call, old pleasures lure: for now
The wet earth breathes ancient fair fragrance forth;
And dying gales hang in the branches, blow
And fall, and blow again: our widest home
Is with rich winds of West, loud winds of North,
Sweeping beneath a gray and vasty dome.
Not with the hearth, whose consolations go,

Our home of homes: but where our eyes grown tired
Of straitened joys, with stretching joys are fired:
Joys of the rolling moor and cloudy brow,
Or worn, precipitous bastions of the foam.

Our fires are fallen from their blossoming height,
And linger in sad embers: but gray bloom
Is on the heather, an enchaunting light
Of purple dusk and vesper air: rich rain
Falls on our hearts, through eve and gentle gloom,
More than upon our foreheads. The world's pain
And joy of storm are proven our delight,
And peace enthroned for ever: ours the mirth,
And melancholy of this ancient earth:
Ours are the mild airs and the starred twilight;
And we, who love them, are not all in vain.

1888

A CORNISH NIGHT.

To William Butler Yeats.

Merry the night, you riders of the wild!
A merry night to ride your wilderness.
Come you from visionary haunts, enisled
Amid the northern waters pitiless,
Over these cliffs white-heathered? Upon mild
Midnights of dewy June, oh, rare to press
Past moonlit fields of white bean-flowers! nor less
To wander beside falling waves, beguiled
By soft winds into still dreams! Yet confess,
You chivalries of air, unreconciled

To the warm, breathing world! what ghostly stress
Compels your visit unto sorrow's child?

What would you here? For here you have no part:
Only the sad voices of wind and sea
Are prophets here to any wistful heart:
Or white flowers found upon a glimmering lea.
What would you here? Sweep onward, and depart
Over the ocean into Brittany,
Where old faith is, and older mystery!
Though this be western land, we have no art
To welcome spirits in community:
Trafficking, in an high celestial mart,
Slumber for wondrous knowledge: setting free
Our souls, that strain and agonize and start.

The wind hath cried to me, all the long day,
That you were coming, chivalries of air!
Between the waters and the starry way.
Fair lies the sea about a land, as fair:
Moonlight and west winds move upon the bay
Gently: now down the rough path sweet it were
To clamber, and so launching out to fare
Forth for the heart of sea and night, away
From hard earth's loud uproar, and harder care!
But you at will about the winds can stray:
Or bid the wandering stars of midnight bear
You company: or with the seven stay.

And yet you came for me! So the wind cried,
So my soul knows: else why am I awake
With expectation and desire, beside
The soothed sea's murmuring nocturnal lake?
Not sleep, but storm, welcomes a widowed bride:
Storms of sad certainty, vain want, that make
Vigil perpetual mine; so that I take
The gusty night in place of him, who died,

To clasp me home to heart. That cannot break,
The eternal heart of nature far and wide!
So now, your message! while the clear stars shake
Within the gleaming sea, shake and abide.

So now, your message! Breathe words from the wave,
Or breathe words from the field, into mine ears:
Or from the sleeping shades of a cold grave
Bring comfortable solace for my tears.
Something of my love's heart could nature save:
Some rich delight to spice the tasteless years,
Some hope to light the valley of lone fears.
Hear! I am left alone, to bear and brave
The sounding storms: but you, from starry spheres,
From wild wood haunts, give me, as love once gave
Joy from his home celestial, so, love's peers!
Give peace awhile to me, sorrow's poor slave!

In sorrow's order I dwell passionist,
Cloistered by tossing sea on weary land.
O vain love! vain, to claim me votarist:
O vain my heart! that will not understand,
He is dead! I am lonely! Love in a Mist
My flower is: and salt tangle of the strand,
The crownals woven by this failing hand:
In the dark kingdom, walking where I list,
I walk where Lethe glides against the sand.
But vain love is a constant lutanist,
Playing old airs, and able to withstand
Sweet sleep: vain love, thou loyal melodist!

You wanderers! Would I were wandering
Under the white moon with you, or among
The invisible stars with you! Would I might sing
Over the charmed sea your enchaunting song,
Song of old autumn, and of radiant spring:

Might sing, how earth the mother suffers long;
How the great winds are wild, yet do no wrong;
How the most frail bloom is at heart a king!
I could endure then, strenuous and strong:
But now, O spirits of the air! I bring
Before you my waste soul: why will you throng
About me, save to take even such a thing?

Only for this you ride the midnight gloom,
Above the ancient isles of the old main.
The spray leaps on the hidden rocks of doom:
The ripples break, and wail away again
Upon the gathering wave: gaunt headlands loom
In the lone distance of the heaving plain.
And now, until the calm, the still stars wane,
You wait upon my heart, my heart a tomb.
Though I dream, life and dreams are alike vain!
Then love me, tell me news of dear death: whom
Circle you, but a soul astray, one fain
To leave this close world for death's larger room?

If barren be the promise I desire,
The promise that I shall not always go
In living solitariness: break fire
Out of the night, and lay me swiftly low!
Soft spirits! you have wings to waft me higher,
Than touch of each my most familiar woe:
Am I unworthy, you should raise me so?
If barren be that trust, my dreams inspire
Only despair; my brooding heart must grow
Heavy with miseries; a mourning quire,
To tell the heavy hours, how sad, how slow,
Are all their footsteps, of whose sound I tire.

Bright seafire runs about a plunging keel
On vehement nights: and where black danger lies,
Gleam the torn breakers. But all days reveal

Drear dooms for me, nor any nights disguise
Their menace: never rolls the thunder peal
Through my worn watch, nor lightning past mine eyes
Leaps from the blue gloom of its mother skies,
One hour alone, but all, while sad stars wheel.
This hour, was it a lie, that bade me rise;
Some laughing dream, that whispered me to steal
Into the sea-sweet night, where the wind cries,
And find the comfort, that I cannot feel?

My lord hath gone your way perpetual:
Whether you be great spirits of the dead,
Or spirits you, that never were in thrall
To perishing bodies, dust-born, dustward led.
Sweet shadows! passing by this ocean wall,
Tarry to pour some balm upon mine head,
Some pity for a woman, who hath wed
With weariness and loneliness, from fall
To fall, from bitter snows to maybloom red:
The hayfields hear, the cornlands hear, my call!
From weariness toward weariness I tread;
And hunger for the end: the end of all.

1888

MYSTIC AND CAVALIER.

To Herbert Percy Horne.

Go from me: I am one of those, who fall.
What! hath no cold wind swept your heart at all,
In my sad company? Before the end,

Go from me, dear my friend!

Yours are the victories of light: your feet
Rest from good toil, where rest is brave and sweet.
But after warfare in a mourning gloom,
I rest in clouds of doom.

Have you not read so, looking in these eyes?
Is it the common light of the pure skies,
Lights up their shadowy depths? The end is set:
Though the end be not yet.

When gracious music stirs, and all is bright,
And beauty triumphs through a courtly night;
When I too joy, a man like other men:
Yet, am I like them, then?

And in the battle, when the horsemen sweep
Against a thousand deaths, and fall on sleep:
Who ever sought that sudden calm, if I
Sought not? Yet, could not die.

Seek with thine eyes to pierce this crystal sphere:
Canst read a fate there, prosperous and clear?
Only the mists, only the weeping clouds:
Dimness, and airy shrouds.

Beneath, what angels are at work? What powers
Prepare the secret of the fatal hours?
See! the mists tremble, and the clouds are stirred:
When comes the calling word?

The clouds are breaking from the crystal ball,
Breaking and clearing: and I look to fall.
When the cold winds and airs of portent sweep,
My spirit may have sleep.

O rich and sounding voices of the air!

Interpreters and prophets of despair:
Priests of a fearful sacrament! I come,
To make with you mine home.

1889

PARNELL.

To John McGrath.

The wail of Irish winds,
The cry of Irish seas:
Eternal sorrow finds
Eternal voice in these.

I cannot praise our dead,
Whom Ireland weeps so well:
Her morning light, that fled;
Her morning star, that fell.

She of the mournful eyes
Waits, and no dark clouds break:
Waits, and her strong son lies
Dead, for her holy sake.

Her heart is sorrow's home.
And hath been from of old:
An host of griefs hath come,
To make that heart their fold.

Ah, the sad autumn day,
When the last sad troop came
Swift down the ancient way,

Keening a chieftain's name!

Gray hope was there, and dread;
Anger, and love in tears:
They mourned the dear and dead,
Dirge of the ruined years.

Home to her heart she drew
The mourning company:
Old sorrows met the new,
In sad fraternity.

A mother, and forget?
Nay! all her children's fate
Ireland remembers yet,
With love insatiate.

She hears the heavy bells:
Hears, and with passionate breath
Eternally she tells
A rosary of death.

Faithful and true is she,
The mother of us all:
Faithful and true! may we
Fail her not, though we fall.

Her son, our brother, lies
Dead, for her holy sake:
But from the dead arise
Voices, that bid us wake.

Not his, to hail the dawn:
His but the herald's part.
Be ours to see withdrawn
Night from our mother's heart.

1893.

IN ENGLAND.

To Charles Furse.

Bright Hellas lies far hence,
Far the Sicilian sea:
But England's excellence
Is fair enough for me.

I love and understand
One joy: with staff and scrip
To walk a wild west land,
The winds my fellowship.

For all the winds will blow,
Across a lonely face,
Rough wisdom, good to know:
An high and heartening grace.

Wind, on the open down!
Riding the wind, the moon:
From town to country town,
I go from noon to noon.

Cities of ancient spires,
Glorious against high noon;
August at sunset fires;
Austere beneath the moon.

Old, rain-washed, red-roofed streets,
Fresh with the soft South-west:
Where dreaming memory meets
Brave men long since at rest.

Evening, from out the green
Wet boughs of clustered lime.
Pours fragrance rich and keen,
Balming the stilly time.

Old ramparts, gray and stern;
But comely clothed upon
With wealth of moss and fern,
And scarlet snapdragon.

Harbours of swaying masts,
Beneath the vesper star:
Each high-swung lantern casts
A quivering ray afar.

From round the ancient quay,
Ring songs with rough refrains:
Strong music of the sea,
Chaunted in lusty strains.

Freshness of early spray,
Blown on me off the sea:
Morning breaks chilly gray,
And storm is like to be.

A cliff of rent, black rock,
About whose stern height flies
The wrangling sea-gull flock,
With querulous, thin cries.

The sea-gulls' wrangling cry
Around the black cliff rings:
I watch them wheel and fly,
A snowstorm of white wings.

With savoury blossoms graced,
A craggy, rusted height:

Where thrift and samphire taste
The sea and wind and light.

A light prow plunges: red,
Red as the ruddy sand,
The tall sail fills: well sped,
The fair boat leaves the land.

I wander with delight
Among the great sea gales:
Exulting in their might,
They thunder through the vales.

Cries of the North-west wind,
Crying from roseless lands:
From countries cold and blind,
Hard seas and unsunned strands.

A dark forest, where freeze
My very dreams: gaunt rows
Rise up, the forest trees;
Black, from a waste of snows.

Long, fragrant pine tree bands,
Behind whose black, straight ranks
The dusky red sun stands,
On clouds in purple banks.

In tree-tops the worn gale
Hangs, weakened to a sigh:
The rooks with sunrise hail
From out the tree-tops fly.

A deep wood, where the air
Hangs in a stilly trance:
While on rich fernbanks fair
The sunlights flash and dance.

I hear the woodland folks,
Each well-swung axe's blow:
And boughs of mighty oaks,
Murmuring to and fro.

My step fills, as I go,
Shy rabbits with quick fears:
I see the sunlight glow
Red through their startled ears.

Mild, red-brown April woods.
When spring is in the air:
And a soft spirit broods
In patience, everywhere.

Primroses fill the fields,
And birds' light matin cries:
The lingering darkness yields,
Before the sun's uprise.

Deep meadows, white with dew,
Where faeries well may dance;
Or the quaint fawnskin crew,
Play in a red moon's glance.

Quivering poplar trees,
Silvered upon the wind:
In watermeads and leas,
With silver streams entwined.

Waters in alder shade,
Where green lights break and gleam
Betwixt my fingers, laid
Upon the rippling stream.

In merry prime of June,
Birds sun themselves and sing:

Mine heart beats to the tune;
The world is on the wing.

The sun, golden and strong,
Leaps: and in flying choirs
The birds make morning song,
Across the morning fires.

Old gardens, where long hours
But find me happier,
Beside the misty flowers
Of purple lavender.

Heaped with a sweet hay load,
Curved, yellow waggons pass
Slow down the high-hedged road;
I watch them from the grass:

A pleasant village noise
Breaks the still air: and all
The summer spirit joys,
Before the first leaves fall.

Red wreckage of the rose,
Over a gusty lawn:
While in the orchard close,
Fruits redden to their dawn.

September's wintering air,
When fruits and flowers have fled
From mountain valleys bare,
Save rowan berries red.

These joys, and such as these,
Are England's and are mine:
Within the English seas,
My days have been divine.

Oh! Hellas lies far hence,
Far the blue Sicel sea:
But England's excellence
Is more than they to me.

1892.

TO OCEAN HAZARD: GIPSY.

Burning fire, or blowing wind;
Starry night, or glowing sun:
All these thou dost bring to mind,
All these match thee, one by one:
Ocean is thy name, most fair!
Strangest name, for thee to bear.

Daughter of the sun, and child
Of the wind upon the waste;
Daughter of the field and wild:
Thee, what oceans have embraced?
What great waves have cradled thee,
That thy name is of the sea?

In thy beauty, the red earth,
Full of gold and jewel stone,
Flames and burns: thy happy birth
Made and marked thee for her own.
Winds held triumph in the trees:
Thou wast lying on earth's knees.

For thine ancient people keep
Still their march from land to land:
Ever upon earth they sleep,

Woods and fields on either hand.
Not upon the barren sea
Have thy people dandled thee.

Closer they, than other men,
To the heart of earth have come:
First the wilderness, and then
Field and forest, gave them home:
All their days, their hearts, they must
Give to earth: and then their dust.

Was it, that they heard the sea
In the surging pinewood's voice:
As they pondered names, for thee
Fair enough; so made their choice,
Hailed thee Ocean, hailed thee queen
Over glades of tossing green?

1888

UPON A DRAWING.

To Manmohan Ghose.

Not in the crystal air of a Greek glen,
Not in the houses of imperial Rome,
Lived he, who wore this beauty among men:
No classic city was his ancient home.
What happy country claims his fair youth then,
Her pride? and what his fortunate lineage?
Here is no common man of every day,
This man, whose full and gleaming eyes assuage
Never their longing, be that what it may:

Of dreamland only he is citizen,
Beyond the flying of the last sea's foam.

Set him beneath the Athenian olive trees,
To speak with Marathonians: or to task
The wise serenity of Socrates;
Asking, what other men dare never ask.
Love of his country and his gods? Not these
The master thoughts, that comfort his strange heart,
When life grows difficult, and the lights dim:
In him is no simplicity, but art
Is all in all, for life and death, to him:
And whoso looks upon that fair face, sees
No nature there: only a magic mask.

Or set this man beside the Roman lords,
To vote upon the fate of Catiline;
Or in a battle of stout Roman swords,
Where strength and virtue were one thing divine:
Or bind him to the cross with Punic cords.
Think you, this unknown and mysterious man
Had played the Roman, with that wistful smile,
Those looks not moulded on a Roman plan,
But full of witcheries and secret guile?
Think you, those lips had framed true Roman words,
Whose very curves have something Sibylline?

Thou wouldst but laugh, were one to question thee:
Laugh with malign, bright eyes, and curious joy.
Thou'rt fallen in love with thine own mystery!
And yet thou art no Sibyl, but a boy.
What wondrous land within the unvoyaged sea
Haunts then thy thoughts, thy memories, thy dreams?
Nay! be my friend; and share with me thy past:
If haply I may catch enchaunting gleams,
Catch marvellous music, while our friendship last:
Tell me thy visions: though their true home be

Some land, that was a legend in old Troy.

1890.

THE ROMAN STAGE.

To Hugh Orange.

A man of marble holds the throne,
With looks composed and resolute:
Till death, a prince whom princes own,
Draws near to touch the marble mute.

The play is over: good my friends!
Murmur the pale lips: *your applause!*
With what a grace the actor ends:
How loyal to dramatic laws!

A brooding beauty on his brow;
Irony brooding over sin:
The next imperial actor now
Bids the satiric piece begin.

"TO WEEP IRISH."

To the Rev. Dr. William Barry.

Long Irish melancholy of lament!
Voice of the sorrow, that is on the sea:

Voice of that ancient mourning music sent
From Rama childless: the world wails in thee.

The sadness of all beauty at the heart,
The appealing of all souls unto the skies,
The longing locked in each man's breast apart,
Weep in the melody of thine old cries.

Mother of tears! sweet Mother of sad sighs!
All mourners of the world weep Irish, weep
Ever with thee: while burdened time still runs,
Sorrows reach God through thee, and ask for sleep.

And though thine own unsleeping sorrow yet
Live to the end of burdened time, in pain:
Still sing the song of sorrow! and forget
The sorrow, in the solace, of the strain.

1893.

SUMMER STORM.

To Harold Child.

The wind, hark! the wind in the angry woods:
And low clouds purple the west: there broods
  Thunder, thunder; and rain will fall;
  Fresh fragrance cling to the wind from all
    Roses holding water wells,
  Laurels gleaming to the gusty air;
    Wilding mosses of the dells,
  Drenched hayfields, and dripping hedgerows fair.

The wind, hark! the wind dying again:
The wind's voice matches the far-off main,
In sighing cadences: Pan will wake,
Pan in the forest, whose rich pipes make
Music to the folding flowers,
In the pure eve, where no hot spells are:
Those be favourable hours
Hymned by Pan beneath the shepherd star.

1887.

TO A TRAVELLER.

The mountains, and the lonely death at last
Upon the lonely mountains: O strong friend!
The wandering over, and the labour passed,
Thou art indeed at rest:
Earth gave thee of her best,
That labour and this end.

Earth was thy mother, and her true son thou:
Earth called thee to a knowledge of her ways,
Upon the great hills, up the great streams: now
Upon earth's kindly breast
Thou art indeed at rest:
Thou, and thine arduous days.

Fare thee well, O strong heart! The tranquil night
Looks calmly on thee: and the sun pours down
His glory over thee, O heart of might!
Earth gives thee perfect rest:
Earth, whom thy swift feet pressed:
Earth, whom the vast stars crown.

1889.

IN MEMORY OF M. B.

Old age, that dwelt upon thy years
With softest and with stateliest grace,
Hath sealed thine eyes, hath closed thine ears,
And stilled the sweetness of thy face.

That gentle and that gracious look
Sleeps now, and wears a marble calm:
Death took no more away, but took
All cares away, and left the balm

Of pure repose and peacefulness
Upon thy forehead touched by time:
So shall I know thee, none the less
Than earth unwintered, come the prime.

Gone, the white snows, the lingering leaves,
That once endeared the wintry days:
But the new bloom of spring receives
The old love, and has an equal praise.

Fare then thee well! In Winchester,
Sleep thy last fearless sleep serene.
Friends fail me not; but kindlier
Can no friend be, than thou hast been.

The city that we two loved best,
No fairer place of sleep for thee:
There lay thee down, and take thy rest,
And this farewell of love from me.

1888

HAWTHORNE.

To Walter Alison Phillips.

Ten years ago I heard; ten, have I loved;
Thine haunting voice borne over the waste sea.
Was it thy melancholy spirit moved
Mine, with those gray dreams, that invested thee?
Or was it, that thy beauty first reproved
The imperfect fancies, that looked fair to me?

Thou hast both secrets: for to thee are known
The fatal sorrows binding life and death:
And thou hast found, on winds of passage blown,
That music, which is sorrow's perfect breath:
So, all thy beauty takes a solemn tone,
And art, is all thy melancholy saith.

Now therefore is thy voice abroad for me,
When through dark woodlands murmuring sounds make way:
Thy voice, and voices of the sounding sea,
Stir in the branches, as none other may:
All pensive loneliness is full of thee,
And each mysterious, each autumnal day.

Hesperian soul! Well hadst thou in the West
Thine hermitage and meditative place:
In mild, retiring fields thou wast at rest,
Calmed by old winds, touched with aerial grace:
Fields, whence old magic simples filled thy breast,

And unforgotten fragrance balmed thy face.

1889

GLORIES.

To Theodore Peters.

Roses from Paestan rosaries!
More goodly red and white was she:
Her red and white were harmonies,
Not matched upon a Paestan tree.

Ivories blaunched in Alban air!
She lies more purely blaunched than you:
No Alban whiteness doth she wear,
But death's perfection of that hue.

Nay! now the rivalry is done,
Of red, and white, and whiter still:
She hath a glory from that sun,
Who falls not from Olympus hill.

1893.

LINES TO A LADY UPON HER THIRD BIRTHDAY.

Dear Cousin: to be three years old,

Is to have found the Age of Gold:
That Age foregone! that Age foretold!
What wondrous names, then, wait thy choice,
High sounding for thine helpless voice!
I choose instead: and hail in thee
A queen of lilied Arcady,
Or lady of Hesperides:
Or, if Utopia lie near these,
Utopian thou, by right divine,
On whom all stars of favour shine.
Vainly the cold Lycean sage
Withheld his praise from childhood's age;
Denied thine happiness to thee;
Nor as a little child would be!
Man to the world he could present,
Magnanimous, magnificent:
Children, he knew not: for of thee
Dreamed not his calm philosophy;
Or Pythias was no Dorothy!
Thou hast good right to laugh in scorn
At us, of simple dreams forlorn:
At us, whose disenchaunted eyes
Imagination dare despise.
Thou hast that freshness, early born,
Which roses have; or billowy corn,
Waving, and washed in dews of morn:
And yet, no flower of woodlands wild,
But overwhelming London's child!
About thy sleep are heard the feet
And turmoil of the sounding street:
Thou hearest not! The land of dreams
More closely lies, and clearlier gleams.
Thou watchest, with thy grave eyes gray,
Our world, with looks of far away:
Eyes, that consent to look on things
Unlike their own imaginings;

And, looking, weave round all, they see,
Charms of their own sweet sorcery.
Thus very London thou dost change
To wonderland, all fair and strange:
The ugliness and uproar seem
To soften, at a child's pure dream:
And each poor dusty garden yields
The fresh delight of cowslip fields.
What is the secret, and the spell?
Thou knowest: for thou hast it well.
Wilt thou not pity us, and break
Thy silent dreaming, for our sake?
Wilt thou not teach us, how to make
Worlds of delight from things of nought,
Or fetched from faery land, and wrought
With flowers and lovely imageries?
Pity us! for such wisdom dies:
Pity thyself! youth flies, youth flies.
Thou comest to the desert plain,
Where no dreams follow in thy train:
They leave thee at the pleasaunce close;
Lonely the haggard pathway goes.
Thou wilt look back, and see them, deep
In the fair glades, where thou didst keep
Thy summer court, thy summer sleep:
But thou wilt never see them more,
Till death the golden dreams restore.
Now, ere the hard, dull hours begin
Their sad, destroying work within
Thy childhood's delicate memory,
Wilt thou not tell us, Dorothy?
Nay! thou art in conspiracy
With all those faeries, children styled,
To keep the secret of the child.
Ah! to be only three years old!
That is indeed an Age of Gold:

And, care not for mine idle fears!
Thou need'st not lose it: the far years,
Touching with love and gentle tears
The treasures of thy memory,
May mould them into poetry.
Then, of those deep eyes, gray and grave,
The world will be a willing slave:
Then, all the dreams of dear dreamland
Wait with their music at thine hand,
And beauty come at thy command.
But now, what counts the will of time?
Enough, thou livest! And this rhyme,
Unworthy of the Golden Age,
Yet hails thee, in that heritage,
Happy and fair: then, come what may,
Thou hast the firstfruits of the day.
Fair fall each morn to thee! And I,
Despite all dark fates, Dorothy!
Will prove me thine affectionate
Cousin, and loyal Laureate.

1889

CELTIC SPEECH.

To Dr. Douglas Hyde.

Never forgetful silence fall on thee,
  Nor younger voices overtake thee,
Nor echoes from thine ancient hills forsake thee;
Old music heard by Mona of the sea:
And where with moving melodies there break thee
Pastoral Conway, venerable Dee.

Like music lives, nor may that music die,
  Still in the far, fair Gaelic places:
The speech, so wistful with its kindly graces,
Holy Croagh Patrick knows, and holy Hy:
The speech, that wakes the soul in withered faces,
And wakes remembrance of great things gone by.

Like music by the desolate Land's End
  Mournful forgetfulness hath broken:
No more words kindred to the winds are spoken,
Where upon iron cliffs whole seas expend
That strength, whereof the unalterable token
Remains wild music, even to the world's end.

1887.

WAYS OF WAR.

To John O'Leary.

A terrible and splendid trust
Heartens the host of Inisfail:
Their dream is of the swift sword-thrust,
A lightning glory of the Gael.

Croagh Patrick is the place of prayers,
And Tara the assembling place:
But each sweet wind of Ireland bears
The trump of battle on its race.

From Dursey Isle to Donegal,
From Howth to Achill, the glad noise
Rings: and the heirs of glory fall,

Or victory crowns their fighting joys.

A dream! a dream! an ancient dream!
Yet, ere peace come to Inisfail,
Some weapons on some field must gleam,
Some burning glory fire the Gael.

That field may lie beneath the sun,
Fair for the treading of an host:
That field in realms of thought be won,
And armed minds do their uttermost:

Some way, to faithful Inisfail,
Shall come the majesty and awe
Of martial truth, that must prevail
To lay on all the eternal law.

1893.

THE COMING OF WAR.

To John Davidson.

Gather the people, for the battle breaks:
  From camping grounds above the valley,
Gather the men-at-arms, and bid them rally:
  Because the morn, the battle, wakes.
High throned above the mountains and the main,
Triumphs the sun: far down, the pasture plain
  To trampling armour shakes.

This was the meaning of those plenteous years,
  Those unarmed years of peace unbroken:

Flashing war crowns them! Now war's trump hath spoken
  This final glory in our ears.
The old blood of our pastoral fathers now
Riots about our heart, and through our brow:
  Their sons can have no fears.

This was our whispering and haunting dream,
  When cornfields flourished, red and golden:
When vines hung purple, nor could be withholden
  The radiant outburst of their stream.
Earth cried to us, that all her laboured store
Was ours: that she had more to give, and more:
  For nothing, did we deem?

We give her back the glory of this hour.
  O sun and earth! O strength and beauty!
We use you now, we thank you now: our duty
  We stand to do, mailed in your power.
A little people of a favoured land,
Helmed with the blessing of the morn we stand:
  Our life is at its flower.

Gather the people, let the battle break:
  An hundred peaceful years are over.
Now march each man to battle, as a lover:
  For him, whom death shall overtake!
Sleeping upon this field, about his gloom
Voices shall pierce, to thrill his sacred tomb,
  Of pride for his great sake.

With melody about us: heart and feet
  Responding to one mighty measure;
Glad with the splendour of an holy pleasure;
  Swayed, one and all, as wind sways wheat:
Answering the sunlight with our eyes aglow;
Serene, and proud, and passionate, we go

Through airs of morning sweet.

Let no man dare to be disheartened now!
We challenge death beyond denial.
Against the host of death we make our trial:
Lord God of Hosts! do thou,
Who gavest us the fulness of thy sun
On fields of peace, perfect war's work begun:
Warriors, to thee we bow.

O life-blood of remembrance! Long ago
This land upheld our ancient fathers:
And for this land, their land, our land, now gathers
One fellowship against the foe.
The spears flash: be they as our mothers' eyes!
The trump sounds: hearken to our fathers' cries!
March we to battle so.

1889

IRELAND'S DEAD.

To John O'Mahony.

Immemorial Holy Land!
At thine hand, thy sons await
Any fate: they understand
Thee, the all compassionate.

Be it death for thee, they grieve
Nought, to leave the fight aside:
Thou their pride, they undeceive
Death, by death unterrified.

Mother, dear and fair to us,
Ever thus to be adored!
Is thy sword grown timorous,
Mother of misericord?

For thy dead is grief on thee?
Can it be, thou dost repent,
That they went, thy chivalry,
Those sad ways magnificent?

What, and if their heart's blood flow?
Gladly so, with love divine,
Since not thine the overthrow,
They thy fields incarnadine.

Hearts afire with one sweet flame,
One loved name, thine host adores:
Conquerors, they overcame
Death, high Heaven's inheritors.

For their loyal love, nought less,
Than the stress of death, sufficed:
Now with Christ, in blessedness,
Triumph they, imparadised.

Mother, with so dear blood stained!
Freedom gained through love befall
Thee, by thraldom unprofaned,
Perfect and imperial!

Still the ancient voices ring:
Faith they bring, and fear repel.
Time shall tell thy triumphing,
Victress and invincible!

1893.

HARMONIES.

To Vincent O'Sullivan.

I.

Sweet music lingers
From her harpstrings on her fingers,
When they rest in mine:
And her clear glances
Help the music, whereto dances,
Trembling with an hope divine,
Every heart: and chiefly mine.

Could she discover
All her heart to any lover,
She who sways them all?
Yet her hand trembles,
Laid in mine: and scarce dissembles,
That its music looks to fall
Into mine, and Love end all.

1889

II.

The airs, that best belong,
Upon the strings devoutly playing,
Your heart devoutly praying:
Now sound your passion, full and strong,
Past all her fond gainsaying.

First, strangely sweet and low,
Slowly her careless ears entrancing:
Then set the music dancing,
And wild notes flying to and fro;
Like spirited sunbeams glancing.

The melodies will stir
Spirits of love, that still attend her:
That able are to bend her,
By subtile arts transforming her;
And all their wisdom fend her.

Last, loud and resolute,
Ring out a triumph and a greeting!
No call for sad entreating,
For she will grant you all your suit,
Her song your music meeting.

1889

THE LAST MUSIC.

To Frederic Herbert Trench.

Calmly, breathe calmly all your music, maids!
Breathe a calm music over my dead queen.
All your lives long, you have nor heard, nor seen,
Fairer than she, whose hair in sombre braids
With beauty overshades
Her brow, broad and serene.

Surely she hath lain so an hundred years:
Peace is upon her, old as the world's heart.

Breathe gently, music! Music done, depart:
And leave me in her presence to my tears,
    With music in mine ears;
    For sorrow hath its art.

Music, more music, sad and slow! she lies
Dead: and more beautiful, than early morn.
Discrowned am I, and of her looks forlorn:
Alone vain memories immortalize
    The way of her soft eyes,
    Her musical voice low-borne.

The balm of gracious death now laps her round,
As once life gave her grace beyond her peers.
Strange! that I loved this lady of the spheres,
To sleep by her at last in common ground:
    When kindly sleep hath bound
    Mine eyes, and sealed mine ears.

Maidens! make a low music: merely make
Silence a melody, no more. This day,
She travels down a pale and lonely way:
Now, for a gentle comfort, let her take
    Such music, for her sake,
    As mourning love can play.

Holy my queen lies in the arms of death:
Music moves over her still face, and I
Lean breathing love over her. She will lie
In earth thus calmly, under the wind's breath:
    The twilight wind, that saith:
    Rest! worthy found, to die.

1889

A DREAM OF YOUTH.

To Lord Alfred Douglas.

With faces bright, as ruddy corn,
Touched by the sunlight of the morn;
With rippling hair; and gleaming eyes,
Wherein a sea of passion lies;
Hair waving back, and eyes that gleam
With deep delight of dream on dream;
With full lips, curving into song;
With shapely limbs, upright and strong:
The youths on holy service throng.

Vested in white, upon their brows
Are wreaths fresh twined from dewy boughs
And flowers they strow along the way,
Still dewy from the birth of day.
So, to each reverend altar come,
They stand in adoration: some
Swing up gold censers; till the air
Is blue and sweet, with smoke of rare
Spices, that fetched from Egypt were.

In voices of calm, choral tone,
Praise they each God, with praise his own:
As children of the Gods, is seen
Their glad solemnity of mien:
So fair a spirit of the skies
Is in their going: and their eyes
Look out upon the peopled earth,
As theirs were some diviner birth:
And clear and courtly is their mirth.

Lights of the labouring world, they seem:

Or, to the tired, like some fresh stream.
Their dignity of perfect youth
Compels devotion, as doth truth:
So right seems all, they do, they are.
Old age looks wistful, from afar,
To watch their beauty, as they go,
Radiant and free, in ordered row;
And fairer, in the watching, grow.

Fair though it be, to watch unclose
The nestling glories of a rose,
Depth on rich depth, soft fold on fold:
Though fairer be it, to behold
Stately and sceptral lilies break
To beauty, and to sweetness wake:
Yet fairer still, to see and sing,
One fair thing is, one matchless thing:
Youth, in its perfect blossoming.

The magic of a golden grace
Brings fire and sweetness on each face:
Till, from their passage, every heart
Takes fire, and sweetness in the smart:
Till virtue lives, for all who own
Their majesty, in them alone:
Till careless hearts, and idle, take
Delight in living, for their sake;
Worship their footsteps, and awake.

Beside the tremulous, blue sea,
Clear at sunset, they love to be:
And they are rarely sad, but then.
For sorrow touches them, as men,
Looking upon the calm of things,
That pass, and wake rememberings
Of holy and of ancient awe;
The charm of immemorial Law:

What we see now, the great dead saw!

Upon a morn of storm, a swan,
Breasting the cold stream, cold and wan,
Throws back his neck in snowy length
Between his snowy wings of strength:
Against him the swift river flows,
The proudlier he against it goes,
King of the waters! For his pride
Bears him upon a mightier tide:
May death not be by youth defied?

But the red sun is gone: and gleams
Of delicate moonlight waken dreams,
Dreams, and the mysteries of peace:
Shall this fair darkness ever cease?
Here is no drear, no fearful Power,
But life grows fuller with each hour,
Full of the silence, that is best:
Earth lies, with soothed and quiet breast,
Beneath the guardian stars, at rest.

At night, behold them! Where lights burn
By moonlit olives, see them turn
Full faces toward the sailing moon,
Nigh lovelier than beneath high noon!
Throw back their comely moulded throats,
Whence music on the night wind floats!
And through the fragrant hush of night
Their lustrous eyes make darkness bright:
Their laugh loads darkness with delight.

Almost the murmuring sea is still:
Almost the world obeys their will.
Such youth moves pity in stern Fates,
And sure death wellnigh dominates:
Their passion kindles such fair flame,

As from divine Achilles came:
A vehement ardour thrills their breasts,
And beauty's benediction rests
On earth, and on earth's goodliest guests.

The music of their sighing parts
A silence: and their beating hearts
Beat to a measure of despair:
Ah! how the fire of youth is fair?
Yet may not be for ever young!
But night hath yielded; there hath sprung
Morning upon the throne of night:
Day comes, with solemnizing light:
Consuming sorrows take to flight.

Magnificent in early bloom,
Like Gods, they triumph over gloom:
All things desirable are theirs,
Of beauty and of wonder, heirs:
Their cities, vassals are, which give
Them thanks and praise, because they live:
Strong, they are victors of dismay;
Fair, they serve beauty every day;
Young, the sun loves to light their way.

Where now is death? Where that gray land?
Those fearless eyes, those white brows grand,
That take full sunlight and sweet air
With rapture true and debonair,
These have not known the touch of death!
The world hath winds: these forms have breath,
But, should death come, should dear life set,
Calm would each go: *Farewell! forget*
Me dead: live you serenely yet.

See them! The springing of the palm
Is nought, beside their gracious calm:

The rippling of cool waters dies
To nought, before their clear replies:
The smile, that heralds their bright thought,
Brings down the splendid sun to nought.
See them! They walk the earth in state:
In right of perfect youth, held great:
On whom the powers of nature wait.

No sceptre theirs, but they are kings:
Their forms and words are royal things.
Their simple friendship is a court,
Whither the wise and great resort.
No homage of the world, they claim:
But in all places lives their fame.
Sun, moon, and stars; the earth, the sea;
Yea! all things, that of beauty be,
Honour their true divinity.

1889

ROMANS.

To Arthur Galton.

How shall I praise thee, Caesar? Thou art he,
Through whom all Europe's greatness came to be
And the world's central crime is thy swift death.
And thou too, Cicero! the voice of Rome!
The listening world is thy perpetual home:
Earth's plain, thy floor; the embracing sky, thy dome.
No greater things than these, great history saith:
Caesarian sword, and Ciceronian breath.

You were no friends: but you are brothers now:
Equal, the laurels on each victor's brow:
Triumphing generations throng each car.
This night, I hear those measured tides of sound,
Surging above that crownless king discrowned,
Dead on that sacred senatorial ground:
Low in the dark hangs, burning from afar,
With pale and solemn fires, the Julian Star.

1889

THE TROOPSHIP.

At early morning, clear and cold,
Still in her English harbour lay
The long, white ship: while winter gold
Shone pale upon her outward way.

Slowly she moved, slowly she stirred,
Stately and slow, she went away:
Sounds of farewell, the harbour heard;
Music on board began to play.

Old, homely airs were thine, great ship!
Breaking from laughter into tears:
And through them all good fellowship
Spoke of a trust beyond all fears.

Still, as the gray mists gathered round,
Embracing thee, concealing thine;
Still, faintly from the Outward Bound
Came melodies of *Auld Lang Syne*.

Oh, sad to part! Oh, brave to go
Between the Piers of Hercules,
And through the seas of fame, and so
Meet eastern sun on eastern seas!

O richly laden! swiftly bear,
And surely, thy two thousand men;
Till round them burn the Indian air:
And English lips will hail them then.

NEW YEAR'S DAY: 1890.

DEAD.

To Olivier Georges Destrée.

In Merioneth, over the sad moor
Drives the rain, the cold wind blows:
Past the ruinous church door,
The poor procession without music goes.

Lonely she wandered out her hour, and died.
Now the mournful curlew cries
Over her, laid down beside
Death's lonely people: lightly down she lies.

In Merioneth, the wind lives and wails,
On from hill to lonely hill:
Down the loud, triumphant gales,
A spirit cries Be strong! and cries Be still!

1887.

SANCTA SILVARUM.

To the Earl Russell.

I.

Deep music of the ancient forest!
Through glades and coverts with thy magic winding;
And in the silence of our hushed hearts finding
Tremulous echoes of thy murmur,
Unshapen thoughts thronging and throbbing:
O music of the mystery, that embraces
All forest depths, and footless far-off places!
Thou art the most high voice of nature,
Thou art the voice of unseen singers,
Vanishing ever deeper through the clinging
Thickets, and under druid branches winging
A flight, that draws our eyes to follow:
Yet, following, find they only forest;
But lonely forest, stately melancholy,
A consecrated stillness, old and holy;
Commanding us to hail with homage
Powers, that we see not, hid in beauty:
A majesty immeasurable; a glorious
Conclave of angels: wherewithal victorious,
The Lord of venerable forests,
Murmuring sanctuaries and cloisters,
Proclaims his kingdom over our emotion:
Even as his brother Lord of the old ocean
Thunders tremendous laws, in tempest
Embattled between winds and waters.
O mighty friendship of mysterious forces,

O servants of one Will! Stars in their courses,
  Flowers in their fragrance, in their music
  Winged winds, and lightnings in their fierceness!
These are the world's magnalities and splendours:
At touch of these, the adoring spirit renders
Glory, and praise, and passionate silence.

1886.

II.

The moon labours through black cloud,
Through the vast night, dark and proud:
  The windy wood dances.
Still the massed heavens drive along:
And, of all night's fiery throng,
  The moon alone glances.

How the lights are wild and strange!
Only one light doth not change,
  From living fires flowing:
Where, on fragrant banks of fern,
Steadily and stilly burn
  The greenwood worms glowing.

Going down the forest side,
The night robs me of all pride,
  By gloom and by splendour.
High, away, alone, afar,
Mighty wills and workings are:
  To them I surrender.

The processions of the night,
Sweeping clouds and battling light,
  And wild winds in thunder,

Care not for the world of man,
Passionate on another plan:
   O twin worlds of wonder!

Ancients of dark majesty!
Priests of splendid mystery!
   The Powers of Night cluster:
In the shadows of the trees,
Dreams, that no man lives and sees,
   The dreams! the dreams! muster.

Move not! for the night wind stirs:
And the night wind ministers
   To dreams, and their voices:
Ah! the wild moon earthward bowed
From that tyranny of cloud:
   The dim wood rejoices.

What do I here? What am I,
Who may comprehend nor sky,
   Nor trees, nor dreams thronging?
Over moonlight dark clouds drive:
The vast midnight is alive
   With magical longing.

1889.

III.

Through the fresh woods there fleet
Fawns, with bright eyes, light feet:
Bright eyes, and feet that spurn
      The pure green fern.

Headed by leaping does,
The swift procession goes

Through thickets, over lawns:
Followed by fawns.

Over slopes, over glades,
Down dells and leafy shades,
Away the quick deer troop:
A wildwood group.

Under the forest airs,
A life of grace is theirs:
Courtly their look; they seem
Things of a dream.

Some say, but who can say?
That a charmed troop are they:
Once youths and maidens white!
These may be right.

IV.

Over me, beeches broad beneath blue sky
In light winds through their cooling leaves rejoice:
Now, the red squirrel, lithe and wild, runs by;
Anon the wood dove from deep glades, with voice
Of mellow music, lulls the air:
All murmurs of the forest, stirs and cries,
Come stilly down green coverts; the high fern
Smells of rich earth aglow from burning skies.
Hither my greenwood ways love best to turn:
Hither my lone hours gladliest fare.

But not for melancholy solitude;
Not for the fond delight of loneliness:
Though here nor voice, nor alien feet, intrude.
Lone am I: but what lone dreams dare repress

High presences of vanished days?
Long billowy reaches of unnumbered trees
Roll downward from this haunt, and break at length
Against such walls, as no man unmoved sees,
But hails the past of splendour and of strength:
And heights of immemorial praise.

That Castle gray, marvellous with mighty years,
Crowning the forest deeps in pride of place:
Towers, royal in their histories of tears,
And royal in their chronicles of grace:
Am I alone, beholding those?
The solitary forest bowers me round:
Yet companies august go through the glade,
Crowned and resplendent! stately and discrowned!
All, solemn from the tragedies they played:
Remembering, each the doom, the close.

Alone! Nay, but almost, would that I were
Alone: too high are these great things for me.
Immeasurable glooms and splendours here
Usurp the calm noon, where my rest should be:
O proud, O ancient Towers! farewell.
I turn from you, and take the world of men:
Gladly I mix me with the common day:
But should they vex me with their tumult: then,
Hither my feet will find the accustomed way;
Then cast once more your heightening spell.

1889

BAGLEY WOOD.

To Percy Addleshaw.

The night is full of stars, full of magnificence:
Nightingales hold the wood, and fragrance loads the dark.
Behold, what fires august, what lights eternal! Hark,
What passionate music poured in passionate love's defence!
Breathe but the wafting wind's nocturnal frankincense!
Only to feel this night's great heart, only to mark
The splendours and the glooms, brings back the patriarch,
Who on Chaldaean wastes found God through reverence.

Could we but live at will upon this perfect height,
Could we but always keep the passion of this peace,
Could we but face unshamed the look of this pure light,
Could we but win earth's heart, and give desire release:
Then were we all divine, and then were ours by right
These stars, these nightingales, these scents: then shame would cease.

1890.

CORONA CRUCIS.

To the Rev. Father Goldie, S. J.

Deficit inter tenebras cor triste:

Unde fulgebit mihi lux petita?
O cor infidum! Nonne dicis, Christe!
Ego sum Via, et Veritas, et Vita.

Via amara Tu, Veritas dura,
Vita difficilis, tremende Deus!
Deliciarum Via, Veritas pura,
Vita vitarum Tu, et amor meus!

Non Te relinquam, carae Dator crucis,
Rex caritatis, Domine dolorum!
Splendet longinqua mihi patria lucis,
Et diadema omnium amorum.

1893.

A SONG OF ISRAEL.

To the Rev. Stewart Headlam.

Praise ye Him, with virginals and organs:
  Praise ye Him, with timbrel and flute!
Come from the field, glorify His temple,
  With red corn, with the ripe first fruit.

He is God, who brought us out from Egypt,
  Gave us lands of vineyard and oil:
He is God, who made the Kings of Canaan,
  Made their kingdoms, to be our spoil.

Praise ye Him, with psaltery and cymbal:
  Praise ye Him, with viol and harp!
Through the Wilderness, through the rough places,

Led He us, for whom Death grew sharp.

Sinai, with thunders and with voices,
Praised our God, the Giver of Law:
Jordan stayed the rushing of his waters;
Israel passed over, and saw:

Saw the plenty, saw the Land of Promise,
Saw, and praised Him, the Lord of lords:
King of armies, terrible and holy;
Light to our eyes, and strength to our swords.

Where be now the gods of all the nations?
Where is Baal? Where Ashtaroth?
Fallen! fallen! before the God of Jacob:
None withstood the day of His wrath.

Praise ye Him, with virginals and organs:
Praise ye Him, with music and voice!
Praise the Name of the Lord God Jehovah:
Praise Him, praise Him, ye Tribes His choice!

1889

THE DARK ANGEL.

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust
To rid the world of penitence:
Malicious Angel, who still dost
My soul such subtile violence!

Because of thee, no thought, no thing,
Abides for me undesecrate:

Dark Angel, ever on the wing,
Who never reachest me too late!

When music sounds, then changest thou
Its silvery to a sultry fire:
Nor will thine envious heart allow
Delight untortured by desire.

Through thee, the gracious Muses turn
To Furies, O mine Enemy!
And all the things of beauty burn
With flames of evil ecstasy.

Because of thee, the land of dreams
Becomes a gathering place of fears:
Until tormented slumber seems
One vehemence of useless tears.

When sunlight glows upon the flowers,
Or ripples down the dancing sea:
Thou, with thy troop of passionate powers,
Beleaguerest, bewilderest, me.

Within the breath of autumn woods,
Within the winter silences:
Thy venomous spirit stirs and broods,
O Master of impieties!

The ardour of red flame is thine,
And thine the steely soul of ice:
Thou poisonest the fair design
Of nature, with unfair device.

Apples of ashes, golden bright;
Waters of bitterness, how sweet!
O banquet of a foul delight,
Prepared by thee, dark Paraclete!

Thou art the whisper in the gloom,
The hinting tone, the haunting laugh:
Thou art the adorner of my tomb,
The minstrel of mine epitaph.

I fight thee, in the Holy Name!
Yet, what thou dost, is what God saith:
Tempter! should I escape thy flame,
Thou wilt have helped my soul from Death

The second Death, that never dies,
That cannot die, when time is dead:
Live Death, wherein the lost soul cries,
Eternally uncomforted.

Dark Angel, with thine aching lust!
Of two defeats, of two despairs:
Less dread, a change to drifting dust,
Than thine eternity of cares.

Do what thou wilt, thou shalt not so,
Dark Angel! triumph over me:
Lonely, unto the Lone I go;
Divine, to the Divinity.

1893.

A FRIEND.

His are the whitenesses of soul,
That Virgil had: he walks the earth
A classic saint, in self-control,
And comeliness, and quiet mirth.

His presence wins me to repose:
When he is with me, I forget
All heaviness: and when he goes,
The comfort of the sun is set.

But in the lonely hours I learn,
How I can serve and thank him best:
God! trouble him: that he may turn
Through sorrow to the only rest.

1894.

TO A PASSIONIST.

Clad in a vestment wrought with passion-flowers;
Celebrant of one Passion; called by name
Passionist: is thy world, one world with ours?
Thine, a like heart? Thy very soul, the same?

Thou pleadest an eternal sorrow: we
Praise the still changing beauty of this earth.
Passionate good and evil, thou dost see:
Our eyes behold the dreams of death and birth.

We love the joys of men: we love the dawn,
Red with the sun, and with the pure dew pearled
Thy stern soul feels, after the sun withdrawn,
How much pain goes to perfecting the world.

Canst thou be right? Is thine the very truth?
Stands then our life in so forlorn a state?
Nay, but thou wrongest us: thou wrong'st our youth,
Who dost our happiness compassionate.

And yet! and yet! O royal Calvary!
Whence divine sorrow triumphed through years past:
Could ages bow before mere memory?
Those passion-flowers must blossom, to the last.

Purple they bloom, the splendour of a King:
Crimson they bleed, the sacrament of Death:
About our thrones and pleasaunces they cling,
Where guilty eyes read, what each blossom saith.

1888.

ADVENTUS DOMINI.

To the Rev. Radclyffe Dolling.

Et cherubim et seraphim descendit Rex:
Caelos caelorum linquit salvaturus nos.
Deserit, ne per saecula stet mortis lex,
Angelos Deus noster et Archangelos.

Tu, miserator! Tu, Christe misericors!
Tu, peccatores nos qui solus redimis:
Ut caeli gaudeant, ut moriatur mors,
Veni cum Angelis et cum Archangelis!

1890.

MEN OF ASSISI.

To Viscount St. Cyres.

A crown of roses and of thorns;
A crown of roses and of bay:
Each crown of loveliness adorns
Assisi, gleaming far away
On Umbrian heights, in Umbrian day.

One bloomed, when Cynthia's lover sang
Cynthia, and revelry, and Rome:
And one his wounded hands did hang,
Whose heart was lovelier Love's dear home;
And his, an holier martyrdom.

Are the spring roses round thine head,
Propertius! as they were of old?
In the gray deserts of the dead,
Glows any wine in cups of gold?
Not all the truth, dead Cynthia told!

And round thine head, so lowly fair,
Saint Francis! thorns no longer close:
Paradise roses may be there,
And Mary lilies: only those.
Thy sister, Death, hurt not thy rose.

We to thy shade, with song and wine,
Libation make, Propertius!
While suns or stars of summer shine,
Thy passionate music thrills through us:
Hail to thee, hail! We crown thee, thus.

But when our hearts are chill and faint,
Pierced with true sorrow piteous:
Francis! our brother and God's Saint,
We worship thee, we hail thee, thus:
Praying, *Sweet Francis! pray for us.*

O city on the Umbrian hills:
Assisi, mother of such sons!
What glory of remembrance fills
Thine heart, whereof the legend runs:
These are among my vanished ones.

1890.

MEN OF AQUINO.

To Charles Mulvany.

Those angry fires, that clove the air,
Heavy with Rome's imperial lust:
Those bitter fires, that burn and flare
Unquenched, above their kindler's dust:
Aquinum can their birth declare.

The wicked splendours of old time,
Juvenal! stung thy passionate heart.
Wrath learned of thee a scorn sublime;
The Muses, a prophetic art:
Yet pride and lust kept still their prime.

A greater birth, Aquinum knows:
Rank upon rank, in stately wise;
Rank upon rank, in ordered rows;
Like sacred hosts and hierarchies,
The march of holy science goes.

Vain, a man's voice, to conquer men!
Rome fell: Rome rose: Aquinum lent
The world her greater citizen:

Armed for Rome's war, Saint Thomas went,
Using God's voice: they listened, then.

Ah, Juvenal! thy trumpet sound:
Woe for the fallen soul of Rome!
But the high saint, whose music found
The altar its eternal home,
Sang: *Lauda Sion!* heavenward bound.

A fourfold music of the Host,
He sang: the open Heavens shone plain.
Then back he turned him to his post,
And opened heavenly Laws again,
From first to last, both least and most.

O little Latin town! rejoice,
Who hast such motherhood, as this:
Through all the worlds of faith one voice
Chaunts forth the truth; yet stays not his,
Whose anger made a righteous choice.

1890

LUCRETIUS.

To William Nash.

I.

Visions, to sear with flame his worn and haunted eyes,
Throng him: and fears unknown invest the black night hours.

His royal reason fights with undefeated Powers,
Armies of mad desires, legions of wanton lies;
His ears are full of pain, because of their fierce cries:
Nor from his tended thoughts, for all their fruits and flowers,
Comes solace: for Philosophy within her bowers
Falls faint, and sick to death. Therefore Lucretius dies.

Dead! And his deathless death hath him, so still and stark!
No change upon the deep, no change upon the earth,
None in the wastes of nature, the starred wilderness.
Wandering flames and thunders of the shaken dark:
Among the mountain heights, winds wild with stormy mirth:
These were before, and these will be: no more, no less.

1890.

II.

Lucretious! King of men, that are
  No more, they think, than men:
Who, past the flaming walls afar,
  Find nought within their ken:

The cruel draught, that wildered thee,
  And drove thee upon sleep,
Was kinder than Philosophy,
  Who would not let thee weep.

Thou knowest now, that life and death
  Are wondrous intervals:

The fortunes of a fitful breath,
  Within the flaming walls.

Without them, an eternal plan,
  Which life and death obey:
Divinity, that fashions man,
  Its high, immortal way.

Or was he right, thy past compare,
  Thy one true voice of Greece?
Then, whirled about the unconscious air,
  Thou hast a vehement peace.

No calms of light, no purple lands,
  No sanctuaries sublime:
Like storms of snow, like quaking sands,
  Thine atoms drift through time.

1889.

III.

Mightiest-minded of the Roman race,
        Lucretius!
In thy predestined, purgatory place,
Where thou and thine Iphigenia wait:
What think'st thou of the Vision and the Fate,
Wherewith the Christ makes all thine outcries vain?
Art learning Christ through sweet and bitter pain,
        Lucretius?

Heaviest-hearted of the sons of men,
        Lucretius!
Well couldst thou justify severe thoughts then,
Considering thy lamentable Rome:
But thou wilt come to an imperial home,

With walls of jasper, past the walls of fire:
To God's proud City, and thine heart's desire,
Lucretius!

1887.

ENTHUSIASTS.

To the Rev. Percy Dearmer.

Let your swords flash, and wound the golden air of God:
Bright steel, to meet and cleave the splendour of His sun!
Now is a war of wars in majesty begun:
Red shall the cornfields ripen, where our horses trod,
Where scythe nor sickle swept, but smote war's iron rod:
Where the stars rose and set, and saw the blood still run.
So shall men tell of us, and dread our deeds, though done:
New annals yet shall praise time's fiercest period.

Let your swords flash, and wound the glowing air: now play
A glorious dance of death, with clash and gleam of sword.
Did Syrian sun and moon stand still on Israel's day?
Those orbs halt over Ajalon at Joshua's word?
Of us, who ride for God, shall Christian children say:
To battle, see! flash by armed angels of the Lord.

1891.

CADGWITH.

To Laurence Binyon.

Man is a shadow's dream!
Opulent Pindar saith:
Yet man may win a gleam
Of glory, before death.

Saith golden Shakespeare: *Man*
Is a dream's shadow! Yet,
Though death do all death can,
His soul toward life is set.

I, living with delight
This rich autumnal day,
Mark the gulls' curving flight
Across the black-girt bay.

And the sea's working men,
The fisher-folk, I mark
Haul down their boats, and then
Launch for the deep sea dark.

Far out the strange ships go:
Their broad sails flashing red
As flame, or white as snow:
The ships, as David said.

Winds rush and waters roll:
Their strength, their beauty, brings

Into mine heart the whole
Magnificence of things:

That men are counted worth
A part upon this sea,
A part upon this earth,
Exalts and heartens me.

Ah, Glaucus, soul of man!
Encrusted by each tide,
That, since the seas began,
Hath surged against thy side:

Encumbering thee with weed,
And tangle of the wave!
Yet canst thou rise at need,
And thy strong beauty save!

Tides of the world in vain
Desire to vanquish thee:
Prostrate, thou canst again
Rise, lord of earth and sea:

Rise, lord of sea and earth,
And winds, and starry night.
Thine is the greater birth
And origin of light.

1892.

II.

My windows open to the autumn night,
In vain I watched for sleep to visit me:
How should sleep dull mine ears, and dim my sight,
Who saw the stars, and listened to the sea?

Ah, how the City of our God is fair!
If, without sea, and starless though it be,
For joy of the majestic beauty there,
Men shall not miss the stars, nor mourn the sea.

1892.

III.

Mary Star of the Sea!
Look on this little place:
Bless the kind fisher race,
Mary Star of the Sea!

Send harvest from the deep,
Mary Star of the Sea!
Mary Star of the Sea!
Let not these women weep.

Mary Star of the Sea!
Give wife and mother joy
In husband and in boy:
Mary Star of the Sea!

With intercession save,
Mary Star of the Sea!
Mary Star of the Sea!
These children of the wave.

Mary Star of the Sea!
Pour peace upon the wild
Waves, make their murmurs mild:
Mary Star of the Sea!

Now in thy mercy pray,
Mary Star of the Sea!

Mary Star of the Sea!
For sailors far away.

Mary Star of the Sea!
Now be thy great prayers said
For all poor seamen dead:
Mary Star of the Sea!

1892

VISIONS.

To Mrs. de Paravicini.

I.

Each in his proper gloom;
Each in his dark, just place:
The builders of their doom
Hide, each his awful face.

Not less than saints, are they
Heirs of Eternity:
Perfect, their dreadful way;
A deathless company.

Lost! lost! fallen and lost!
With fierce wrath ever fresh:
Each suffers in the ghost
The sorrows of the flesh.

O miracle of sin!
That makes itself an home,

So utter black within,
Thither Light cannot come!

O mighty house of hate!
Stablished and guarded so,
Love cannot pass the gate,
Even to dull its woe!

Now, Christ compassionate!
Now, bruise me with thy rod:
Lest I be mine own fate,
And kill the Love of God.

1893.

II.

O place of happy pains,
And land of dear desires!
Where Love divine detains
Glad souls among sweet fires.

Where sweet, white fires embrace
The red-scarred, red-stained soul:
That it may see God's Face,
Perfectly white and whole.

While with still hope they bear
Those ardent agonies:
Earth pleads for them, in prayer
And wistful charities.

O place of patient pains,
And land of brave desires!
Us now God's Will detains
Far from those holy fires.

Us the sad world rings round
With passionate flames impure:
We tread an impious ground,
And hunger, and endure:

That, earth's ordeal done,
Those white, sweet fires may fit
Us for our home, and One,
Who is the Light of it.

1892.

III.

Since, O white City! I may be,
I, a white citizen of thee:
  I claim no saint's high grace
  Mine, but a servant's place.

I think not vainly to become
A king, who knew no martyrdom:
  Nor crown, nor palm, I crave;
  But to be Christ's poor slave.

Angels! before the Lord of lords,
Shine forth, His spiritual swords!
  Flash round the King of kings
  The snow of your white wings!

But I, too fresh from the white fire,
Humble the dreams of all desire:
  Nay! let me shine afar,
  Who am Heaven's faintest star.

Upon the eternal borders let
My still too fearful soul be set:

There wait the Will of God,
A loving period.

Closer I dare not come, nor see
The Face of Him, Who died for me.
Child! thou shalt dwell apart:
But in My Sacred Heart.

1893.

TO LEO XIII.

Leo! Vicar of Christ,
His voice, His love, His sword:
Leo! Vicar of Christ,
Earth's Angel of the Lord:

Leo! Father of all,
Whose are all hearts to keep:
Leo! Father of all,
Chief Shepherd of the sheep:

Leo! Lover of men,
Through all the labouring lands:
Leo! Lover of men,
Blest by thine holy hands:

Leo! Ruler of Rome,
Heir of its royal race:
Leo! Ruler of Rome,
King of the Holy Place:

Leo! Leo the Great!

Glory, and love, and fear,
Leo! Leo the Great!
We give thee, great and dear:

Leo! God grant this thing:
Might some, so proud to be
Children of England, bring
Thine England back to thee!

1892.

AT THE BURIAL OF CARDINAL MANNING.

To James Britten.

Victor in Roman purple, saint and knight,
In peace he passes to eternal peace:
Triumph so proud, knew not Rome's ancient might;
She knew not to make poor men's sorrow cease:
For thousands, ere he won the holiest home,
Earth was made homelier by this Prince of Rome.

1892.

VIGILS.

To C. K. P.

Song and silence ever be
All the grace, life bring to me:
Song well winged with sunrise fire;
Silence holy and entire:
Silence of a marble sea,
Song of an immortal lyre.

Take my thanks, who profferest
Wistful song and musical:
Melodies memorial,
Melancholy, augural:
Meaning, that Old World is best:
Ours, a witless palimpsest.

Not cool glades of Fontainebleau
Hold the secret; not French plains,
Crowned with monumental fanes;
Not the Flemish waters' flow:
Light the fair days come, light go:
But the mystery remains.

Here, beneath the carven spires,
We have dreams, revolts, desires:
Here each ancient, haunted Hall
Holds its Brocken carnival;
Where Philosophy attires
All her forms, to suit us all.

In a ring her witches crowd:
Faces passionate and proud,
Luring eyes and voices loud:
Death ends life: And life is death:
Man is dust: The soul a breath:
Who knows aught? Each fair Lie saith.

Master of the revel rout,
Flaunts him Mephistopheles:

Leading up, to where he sees
Faith, alone and ill at ease,
Many a winning, light-foot Doubt:
Knows each other: dance it out!

Ah, the whirling, bacchant dance!
Then no more Faith's crystal glance
Pierces the benighted skies:
Then, for her inheritance,
Hath she but each dream, that lies
Dying in her wildered eyes.

Breaking hearts! For you the lark
Cries at morn: for you the deep
Silence deepens in the dark,
When invisible angels mark
Your tired eyes, that burn and weep,
Hardly wearied into sleep.

Fearful hearts! For you all song
Sighs, and laughs, and soars: for you
Low-preluding winds prolong
Meditative music through
Twilight: till for you there throng
Calm stars, unprofaned and true.

Song and silence ever be
All the grace, life bring to me:
Song of Mary, mighty Mother;
Song of whom she bare, my Brother:
Silence of an ecstasy,
When I find Him, and none other.

Song thou sendest, singing fair:
But what music past compare
That must be when, gathered home,
Poor strayed children kneel in prayer:

Confessors of Christendom
Unto thee, O royal Rome!

Silence all is mine alone
Now, before the altar throne
Darkling, waiting, happier thus,
Till the night watches be gone.
Holy Aloysius!
Holy Mother! pray for us.

1887.

THE CHURCH OF A DREAM.

To Bernhard Berenson.

Sadly the dead leaves rustle in the whistling wind,
Around the weather-worn, gray church, low down the vale:
The Saints in golden vesture shake before the gale;
The glorious windows shake, where still they dwell enshrined;
Old Saints, by long dead, shrivelled hands, long since designed:
There still, although the world autumnal be, and pale,
Still in their golden vesture the old saints prevail;
Alone with Christ, desolate else, left by mankind.

Only one ancient Priest offers the Sacrifice,
Murmuring holy Latin immemorial:
Swaying with tremulous hands the old censer full of spice,

In gray, sweet incense clouds; blue, sweet clouds mystical:
To him, in place of men, for he is old, suffice
Melancholy remembrances and vesperal.

1890.

THE AGE OF A DREAM.

To Christopher Whall.

Imageries of dreams reveal a gracious age:
Black armour, falling lace, and altar lights at morn.
The courtesy of Saints, their gentleness and scorn,
Lights on an earth more fair, than shone from Plato's page:
The courtesy of knights, fair calm and sacred rage:
The courtesy of love, sorrow for love's sake borne.
Vanished, those high conceits! Desolate and forlorn,
We hunger against hope for that lost heritage.

Gone now, the carven work! Ruined, the golden shrine!
No more the glorious organs pour their voice divine;
No more rich frankincense drifts through the Holy Place:
Now from the broken tower, what solemn bell still tolls,
Mourning what piteous death? Answer, O saddened souls!
Who mourn the death of beauty and the death of grace.

1890.

OXFORD NIGHTS.

To Victor Plarr.

About the august and ancient *Square*,
Cries the wild wind; and through the air,
The blue night air, blows keen and chill:
Else, all the night sleeps, all is still.
Now, the lone *Square* is blind with gloom:
Now, on that clustering chestnut bloom,
A cloudy moonlight plays, and falls
In glory upon *Bodley's* walls:
Now, wildlier yet, while moonlight pales,
Storm the tumultuary gales.
O rare divinity of Night!
Season of undisturbed delight:
Glad interspace of day and day!
Without, an world of winds at play:
Within, I hear what dead friends say.
Blow, winds! and round that perfect *Dome*,
Wail as you will, and sweep, and roam:
Above *Saint Mary's* carven home,
Struggle, and smite to your desire
The sainted watchers on her spire:
Or in the distance vex your power
Upon mine own *New College* tower:
You hurt not these! On me and mine,
Clear candlelights in quiet shine:
My fire lives yet! nor have I done
With *Smollett*, nor with *Richardson*:

With, gentlest of the martyrs! *Lamb*,
Whose lover I, long lover, am:
With *Gray*, whose gracious spirit knew
The sorrows of art's lonely few:
With *Fielding*, great, and strong, and tall;
Sterne, exquisite, equivocal;
Goldsmith, the dearest of them all:
While *Addison's* demure delights
Turn *Oxford*, into *Attic*, nights.
Still *Trim* and *Parson Adams* keep
Me better company, than sleep:
Dark sleep, who loves not me; nor I
Love well her nightly death to die,
And in her haunted chapels lie.
Sleep wins me not: but from his shelf
Brings me each wit his very self:
Beside my chair the great ghosts throng,
Each tells his story, sings his song:
And in the ruddy fire I trace
The curves of each *Augustan* face.
I sit at *Doctor Primrose'* board:
I hear *Beau Tibbs* discuss a lord.
Mine, *Matthew Bramble's* pleasant wrath;
Mine, all the humours of the *Bath*.
Sir Roger and the *Man in Black*
Bring me the *Golden Ages* back.
Now white *Clarissa* meets her fate,
With virgin will inviolate:
Now *Lovelace* wins me with a smile,
Lovelace, adorable and vile.
I taste, in slow alternate way,
Letters of *Lamb*, letters of *Gray*:
Nor lives there, beneath *Oxford* towers,
More joy, than in my silent hours.
Dream, who love dreams! forget all grief:
Find, in sleep's nothingness, relief:

Better my dreams! Dear, human books,
With kindly voices, winning looks!
Enchaunt me with your spells of art,
And draw me homeward to your heart:
Till weariness and things unkind
Seem but a vain and passing wind:
Till the gray morning slowly creep
Upward, and rouse the birds from sleep:
Till *Oxford* bells the silence break,
And find me happier, for your sake.
Then, with the dawn of common day,
Rest you! But I, upon my way,
What the fates bring, will cheerlier do,
In days not yours, through thoughts of you!

1890.

TO A SPANISH FRIEND.

Exiled in America
From thine old Castilia,
Son of holy Avila!
Leave thine endless tangled lore,
As in childhood to implore
Her, whose pleading evermore
Pleads for her own Avila.

Seraph Saint, Teresa burns
Before God, and burning turns
To the Furnace, whence she learns
How the Sun of Love is lit:
She the Sunflower following it.
O fair ardour infinite:

Fire, for which the cold soul yearns!

Clad in everlasting fire,
Flame of one long, lone desire,
Surely thou too shalt aspire
Up by Carmel's bitter road:
Love thy goal and love thy goad,
Love thy lightness and thy load,
Love thy rose and love thy briar.

Leave the false light, leave the vain:
Lose thyself in Night again,
Night divine of perfect pain.
Lose thyself, and find thy God,
Through a prostrate period:
Bruise thee with an iron rod;
Suffer, till thyself be slain.

Fly thou from the dazzling day,
For it lights the downward way:
In the sacred Darkness pray,
Till prayer cease, or seem to thee
Agony of ecstasy:
Dead to all men, dear to me,
Live as saints, and die as they.

Stones and thorns shall tear and sting,
Each stern step its passion bring,
On the Way of Perfecting,
On the Fourfold Way of Prayer:
Heed not, though joy fill the air;
Heed not, though it breathe despair:
In the City thou shalt sing.

Without hope and without fear,
Keep thyself from thyself clear:
In the secret seventh sphere

Of thy soul's hid Castle, thou
At the King's white throne shalt bow:
Light of Light shall kiss thy brow,
And all darkness disappear.

1894.

TO MY PATRONS.

The spear rent Christ, when dead for me He lay:
My sin rends Christ, though never one save He
Perfectly loves me, comforts me. Then pray,
Longinus Saint! the Crucified, for me.

Hard is the holy-war, and hard the way:
At rest with ancient victors would I be.
O faith's first glory from our England! pray,
Saint Alban! to the Lord of Hosts, for me.

Fain would I watch with thee, till morning gray,
Beneath the stars austere: so might I see
Sunrise, and light, and joy, at last. Then pray,
John Baptist Saint! unto the Christ, for me.

Remembering God's coronation day;
Thorns, for His crown; His throne, a Cross: to thee
Heaven's kingdom dearer was than earth's. Then pray
Saint Louis! to the King of kings, for me.

Thy love loved all things: thy love knew no stay,
But drew the very wild beasts round thy knee.
O lover of the least and lowest! pray,
Saint Francis! to the Son of Man, for me.

Bishop of souls in servitude astray,
Who didst for holy service set them free:
Use still thy discipline of love, and pray,
Saint Charles! unto the world's High Priest, for me.

1893.

BRONTË.

To Hubert Crackanthorpe.

Upon the moorland winds blown forth,
Your mighty music storms our heart:
Immortal sisters of the North!
Daughters of nature: Queens of art.

Becomingly you bore that name,
Your Celtic name, that sounds of Greece:
Children of thunder and of flame;
Passion, that clears the air for peace.

Stoic, thy chosen title: thou,
Whose soul conversed with vehement nights,
Till love, with lightnings on his brow,
Met anguish, upon *Wuthering Heights*.

Thou, Stoic! Though the heart in thee
Never knew fear, yet always pain:
Not Stoic, thou! whose eyes could see
Passion's immeasurable gain:

Not standing from the war apart,
Not cancelling the lust of life;

But loving with triumphant heart
The impassioned glory of the strife.

Oh, welcome death! But first, to know
The trials and the agonies:
Oh, perfect rest! But ere life go,
To leave eternal memories.

Then down the lone moors let each wind
Cry round the silent house of sleep:
And there let breaths of heather find
Entrance, and there the fresh rains weep.

Rest! rest! The storm hath surged away:
The calm, the hush, the dews descend.
Rest now, ah, rest thee! night and day:
The circling moorlands guard their friend.

Thou too, before whose steadfast eyes
Thy conquering sister greatly died:
By grace of art, that never dies.
She lives: thou also dost abide.

For men and women, safe from death,
Creatures of thine, our perfect friends:
Filled with imperishable breath,
Give thee back life, that never ends.

Oh! hearts may break, and hearts forget,
Life grow a gloomy tale to tell:
Still through the streets of bright *Villette*,
Still flashes *Paul Emanuel*!

Still, when your Shirley laughs and sings,
Suns break the clouds to welcome her:
Still winds, with music on their wings,
Drive the wild soul of *Rochester*.

Children of fire! The Muses filled
Hellas, with shrines of gleaming stone:
Your wasted hands had strength to build
Gray sanctuaries, hard-hewn, wind-blown.

Over their heights, all blaunched in storm,
What purple fields of tempest hang!
In splendour stands their mountain form,
That from the sombre quarry sprang.

Now the high gates lift up their head:
Now stormier music, than the blast,
Swells over the immortal dead:
Silent and sleeping, free at last.

But from the tempest, and the gloom,
The stars, the fires of God, steal forth:
Dews fall upon your heather bloom,
O royal sisters of the North!

1890.

COMFORT.

To Claud Schuster.

Winter is at the door,
Winter! Winter!
Winter is at the door:
For all along the worn oak floor
Waver the carpets; and before
The once warm southern orchard wall,
The last October peaches fall;

In vain behind their fellows all
Belated.

Winter is come apace,
Winter! Winter!
Winter is come apace.
The fireside is the cheeriest place,
To wear unfeigned a merry face:
While music tells, though now 'tis chill,
How merle, and maid, and mavis, will,
When spring comes dancing down the hill,
Be mated.

1887.

MOEL FAMMAU.

To Arthur Clutton-Brock.

In purple heather is my sleep
On Moel Fammau: far below,
The springing rivulets leap,
The firs wave to and fro.

This morn, the sun on Bala Lake
Broke out behind me: morrow morn
Near Rhual I shall wake,
Before the sun is born;

High burning over Clywyd Vale,
And reddening the mountain dew:
While the moon lingers frail,
High up in skies of blue.

Lovely and loved, O passionate land!
Dear Celtic land, unconquered still!
  Thy mountain strength prevails:
  Thy winds have all their will.

They have no care for meaner things;
They have no scorn for brooding dreams:
  A spirit in them sings,
  A light about them beams.

1887.

SORTES VIRGILIANAE.

To John Barlas.

Lord of the Golden Branch, Virgil! and Caesar's friend:
Leader of pilgrim Dante! Yes: *things have their tears*:
So sighed thy song, when down sad winds pierced to thine ears
Wandering and immemorial sorrows without end.
And things of death touch hearts, that die: Yes: but joys blend,
And glories, with our little life of human fears:
Rome reigns, and Caesar triumphs! Ah, the Golden Years,
The Golden Years return: this also the Gods send.

O men, who have endured an heavier burden yet!
Hear you not happy airs, and voices augural?
For you, in these last days by sure foreknowledge

set,
Looms no Italian shore, bright and imperial?
Wounded and worn! What Virgil sang, doth God forget?
Virgil, the melancholy, the majestical.

1891.

CONSOLATION.

Sighing and grief are all my portion now,
    Sighing and grief:
But thou art somewhere smiling: thou,
    Like a frail leaf,

By winter's mercy spared a little yet,
    Canst put aside
The coming shadow: happy to forget,
    How thy companion died.

1883.

ORACLES.

I.

Let not any withering Fate,
With her all too sombre thread,
Flying from the Ivory Gate,

Make thy soul discomforted:
From the nobler Gate of Horn,
Take the blessing of the morn.

Eyes bent full upon the goal,
Whatso be the prize of it:
Tireless feet, and crystal soul,
With good heart, the salt of wit:
These shall set thee in the clear
Spirits' home and singing sphere.

Hush thy melancholy breath,
Wailing after fair days gone:
Make thee friends with kindly Death,
That his long dominion,
With a not too bitter thrall,
Hold thee at the end of all.

Sorrow, angel of the night,
Sorrow haughtily disdains
Invocation by our light
Agonies, and passing pains:
Sorrow is but under pure
Cloven hearts their balm and cure.

1886.

II.

And yet, what of the sorrowing years,
Their clouds and difficult event?
Here is a kindlier way than tears,
A fairer way than discontent:
The passionate remembrances,
That wake at bidding of the air:

Fancies, and dreams, and fragrances,
  That charmed us, when they were.

So breathed the hay, so the rose bloomed,
Ah! what a thousand years ago!
So long imprisoned and entombed,
Out of our hearts the old joys flow:
Peace! present sorrows: lie you still!
You shall not grow to memories:
The ancient hours live yet, to kill
  The sorry hour, that is.

1887.

THE DESTROYER OF A SOUL.

To ——.

I hate you with a necessary hate.
First, I sought patience: passionate was she:
My patience turned in very scorn of me,
That I should dare forgive a sin so great,
As this, through which I sit disconsolate;
Mourning for that live soul, I used to see;
Soul of a saint, whose friend I used to be:
Till you came by! a cold, corrupting, fate.

Why come you now? You, whom I cannot cease
With pure and perfect hate to hate? Go, ring
The death-bell with a deep, triumphant toll!
Say you, my friend sits by me still? Ah, peace!
Call you this thing my friend? this nameless thing?
This living body, hiding its dead soul?

1892.

OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS.

Upon reading the poem of that name in the Underwoods of Mr. Stevenson.

Far from the world, far from delight,
Distinguishing not day from night;
Vowed to one sacrifice of all
The happy things, that men befall;
Pleading one sacrifice, before
Whom sun and sea and wind adore;
Far from earth's comfort, far away,
We cry to God, we cry and pray
For men, who have the common day.
Dance, merry world! and sing: but we,
Hearing, remember Calvary:
Get gold, and thrive you! but the sun
Once paled; and the centurion
Said: *This dead man was God's own Son*.
Think you, we shrink from common toil,
Works of the mart, works of the soil;
That, prisoners of strong despair,
We breathe this melancholy air;
Forgetting the dear calls of race,
And bonds of house, and ties of place;
That, cowards, from the field we turn,
And heavenward, in our weakness, yearn?
Unjust! unkind! while you despise
Our lonely years, our mournful cries:
You are the happier for our prayer;

The guerdon of our souls, you share.
Not in such feebleness of heart,
We play our solitary part;
Not fugitives of battle, we
Hide from the world, and let things be:
But rather, looking over earth,
Between the bounds of death and birth;
And sad at heart, for sorrow and sin,
We wondered, where might help begin.
And on our wonder came God's choice,
A sudden light, a clarion voice,
Clearing the dark, and sounding clear:
And we obeyed: behold us, here!
In prison bound, but with your chains:
Sufferers, but of alien pains.
Merry the world, and thrives apace,
Each in his customary place:
Sailors upon the carrying sea,
Shepherds upon the pasture lea,
And merchants of the town; and they,
Who march to death, the fighting way;
And there are lovers in the spring,
With those, who dance, and those, who sing:
The commonwealth of every day.
Eastward and westward, far away.
Once the sun paled; once cried aloud
The Roman, from beneath the cloud:
This day the Son of God is dead!
Yet heed men, what the Roman said?
They heed not: we then heed for them,
The mindless of Jerusalem;
Careless, they live and die: but we
Care, in their stead, for Calvary.
O joyous men and women! strong,
To urge the wheel of life along,
With strenuous arm, and cheerful strain,

And wisdom of laborious brain:
We give our life, our heart, our breath,
That you may live to conquer death;
That, past your tomb, with souls in health,
Joy may be yours, and blessed wealth;
Through vigils of the painful night,
Our spirits with your tempters fight:
For you, for you, we live alone,
Where no joy comes, where cold winds moan:
Nor friends have we, nor have we foes;
Our Queen is of the lonely Snows.
Ah! and sometimes, our prayers between,
Come sudden thoughts of what hath been:
Dreams! And from dreams, once more we fall
To prayer: *God save, Christ keep, them all.*
And thou, who knowest not these things,
Hearken, what news our message brings!
Our toils, thy joy of life forgot:
Our lives of prayer forget thee not.

1887.

ASH WEDNESDAY.

To the Rev. Father Strappini, S.J.

Ashen cross traced on brow!
Iron cross hid in breast!
Have power, bring patience, now:
Bid passion be at rest.

O sad, dear, days of Lent!
Now lengthen your gray hours:

If so we may repent,
Before the time of flowers.

Majestical, austere,
The sanctuaries look stern:
All silent! all severe!
Save where the lone lamps burn.

Imprisoned there above
The world's indifferency:
Still waits Eternal Love,
With wounds from Calvary.

Come! mourning companies;
Come! to sad Christ draw near:
Come! sin's confederacies;
Lay down your malice here.

Here is the healing place,
And here the place of peace:
Sorrow is sweet with grace
Here, and here sin hath cease.

1893.

DESIDERIA.

To Mrs. Hinkson.

The angels of the sunlight clothe
In England the corn's golden ears,
Round me: yet would that I to-day
Saw sunlight on the Hill of Howth,
And sunlight on the Golden Spears,
And sunlight upon Dublin Bay.

In hunger of the heart I loathe
These happy fields: I turn with tears
Of love and longing, far away:
To where the heathered Hill of Howth
Stands guardian, with the Golden Spears,
Above the blue of Dublin Bay.

1894.

ARMA VIRUMQUE.

To Edmund Phipps.

Ah! the keen, blue-bladed sword,
In the strong hands of thy lord
Living, vibrating, inspired!
Thou hast drunk the draught desired,
Blood of battle: now, restored
To the shrouding sheath, thou hatest,
For the trump of war thou waitest.

But thy bright steel grows not dim,
While thou hangest yet by him,
In whose hands thou hast thy life.
Fear not! Thou shalt swell more strife,
Ere death come: last foe most grim!
And shalt lie, that onset over,
Close beside thy lord and lover.

1889.

THE DAY OF COMING DAYS.

To J. P. Quinn.

Bright seas cast far upon her shore
  White flowers of flying spray:
The blossoms of her fields are more,
  Than blossomed yesterday:
The music of her winds and birds
Alone can tell the triumph words,
  Her children cannot say.

The stars from solemn deeps look down
  In favour and delight:
The glories of her day, they crown
  With splendours of her night:
The queen of the adoring Gael,
Their radiant mother, Inisfail,
  Reigns, by divinest right.

1894.

RENEGADE.

To Arthur Chamberlain.

But all that now is over.
Dreamers of dreams shall not in me discover
Fallen remembrances of Holy Land;
Looks in mine eyes, that seem to understand
A banished secret; in my common mien,
A charmed communion with high things unseen

For all that now is over.
Mere merchant of earth's market-place, no lover,
I keep the dusty, trodden road of all.
Though broken echoes fill the mart, and call
Back to my silent memories: down chill air
They die away, and leave me to my care.

Since all that now is over,
And not at any cost can I recover
The abdicated throne, the abandoned crown:
I sit me at the heart of the vast town,
To wear old love looks down to the dull look,
Befitting love unthought on, or forsook.

1887.

WALES.

To T. W. Rolleston.

Mother of holy fire! Mother of holy dew!
Thy children of the mist, the moor, the mountain side,
These change not from thine heart, these to thine heart allied:
These, that rely on thee, as blossoms on the blue.
O passionate, dark faces, melancholy's hue!
O deep, gray eyes, so tragic with the fires they hide!
Sweet Mother, in whose light these live! thou dost abide,
Star of the West, pale to the world: these know thee true.

No alien hearts may know that magic, which acquaints
Thy soul with splendid passion, a great fire of dreams;
Thine heart with lovelier sorrow, than the wistful sea.
Voices of Celtic singers and of Celtic Saints
Live on the ancient air: their royal sunlight gleams
On moorland Merioneth and on sacred Dee.

1890.

HARVEST.

To Nowell Smith.

Not now the rejoicing face of summer glows
In splendour to a blue and splendid sky:
For now hath died each lingering wild rose
Off tangled river banks: and autumn shows

Fields of red corn, that on the downside lie
Beneath a gentle mist, a golden haze.
So shrouded, the red cornlands take an air
Trembling with warm wind: sickle-girt, forth fare
Harvesting hinds, with swift arms brown and bare;
Revering well toil's venerable ways.

Most golden music is among the corn,
Played by the winds wavering over it:
A murmuring sound, as when against the morn,
Orient upon calm seas, their noise is borne
Innumerably rippling and sunlit.
Most golden music is in either tide:
And this of radiant corn, before it fall,
Wills not that summer die unmusical,
By no rich surge of murmurs glorified:
Nay! the fields rock and rustle, sounding all
Praise of the fruitful earth on every side.

Good, through the yellow fields to ponder long:
Good, long to meditate the stilly sight.
Afar shone down a brazen sunlight strong,
Over the harvested hillside, along
The laboured meadows, burning with great light:
The air trembled with overflow of heat
In the low valley, where no movement was
Of soft-blown wind, ruffling the scytheless grass
Thick-growing by the waters, cool and sweet:
No swing of boughs; there were no airs to pass
Caressing them: all winds failed, when all wheat,

All fair crops murmuring their soft acclaim,
Fell, golden rank on golden rank, and lay
Ruddily heaped along the earth: the flame
Of delicate poppies, rich and frail, became
Wan dying weed; convolvulus, astray
Out from its hedgerows far into the field,

In clinging coils of leaf and tender bloom,
Shared with the stalks it clung and clasped, their doom.
So went the work: so gave the ripened weald
Its fruits and pleasant flowers; and made a room,
Wherein fresh winds might wave a fresh year's yield.

1886.

TO CERTAIN FRIENDS.

I thank Eternal God, that you are mine,
Who are His too: courageous and divine
Must friendship be, through this great grace of God;
And have Eternity for period.

1892

THE PETITION.

To Selwyn Image.

Fair, gracious, daughter of those skies,
Wherein nor star, nor angel, flies
More radiant than thy royal beauty:
To thee the Hours bring all they have
Of rich, and wonderful, and brave:
Yet do they but their natural duty.

Excelling all, thou cancellest
Their praise, and art alone the best:
Alone the theme of prayers and praises.
Wilt thou not bow thee, and be kind,
As lilies to a pleading wind,
When fragrance the wan air amazes?

The holy angels of God's court
With humble men still deign consort:
For dear love's piteous sake discarding
Their state and their celestial home,
To company poor souls, that roam
Sad and distraught, for lack of guarding.

Fair, gracious, daughter of the spheres!
Be not more proud than those thy peers,
Citizens of so high a city!
Behold the captive of thy chains:
Turn from thy palace to his pains,
And keep thy prisoner by pity.

1892.

THE CLASSICS.

To Ion Thynne.

Fain to know golden things, fain to grow wise,
Fain to achieve the secret of fair souls:
His thought, scarce other lore need solemnize,
Whom Virgil calms, whom Sophocles controls:

Whose conscience Æschylus, a warrior voice,

Enchaunted hath with majesties of doom:
Whose melancholy mood can best rejoice,
When Horace sings, and roses bower the tomb:

Who, following Caesar unto death, discerns
What bitter cause was Rome's, to mourn that day:
With austere Tacitus for master, learns
The look of empire in its proud decay:

Whom dread Lucretius of the mighty line
Hath awed, but not borne down: who loves the flame,
That leaped within Catullus the divine,
His glory, and his beauty, and his shame:

Who dreams with Plato and, transcending dreams,
Mounts to the perfect City of true God:
Who hails its marvellous and haunting gleams,
Treading the steady air, as Plato trod:

Who with Thucydides pursues the way,
Feeling the heart-beats of the ages gone:
Till fall the clouds upon the Attic day,
And Syracuse draw tears for Marathon:

To whom these golden things best give delight:
The music of most sad Simonides;
Propertius' ardent graces; and the might
Of Pindar chaunting by the olive trees:

Livy, and Roman consuls purple swathed:
Plutarch, and heroes of the ancient earth:
And Aristophanes, whose laughter scathed
The souls of fools, and pealed in lyric mirth:

Æolian rose-leaves blown from Sappho's isle;
Secular glories of Lycean thought:

Sallies of Lucian, bidding wisdom smile;
Angers of Juvenal, divinely wrought:

Pleasant, and elegant, and garrulous,
Pliny: crowned Marcus, wistful and still strong:
Sicilian seas and their Theocritus,
Pastoral singer of the last Greek song:

Herodotus, all simple and all wise:
Demosthenes, a lightning flame of scorn:
The surge of Cicero, that never dies:
And Homer, grand against the ancient morn.

1890.

APRIL.

To Richard Le Gallienne.

A pleasant heat breathes off the scented grass,
  From bright green blades, and shining daisies:
Now give we joy, who sometime cried, Alas!
Now set we forth our melodies, and sing
  Soft praises to the spring,
    Musical praises.

The flying winds are lovely with the sun:
  Now all in sweet and dainty fashion
Goes life: for royal seasons are begun.
Now each new day and each new promise add
  Fresh cause of being glad,
    With vernal passion.

Few leaves upon the branches dare the spring:
  But many buds are making ready,
Trusting the sun, their perfect summer king.
Likewise we put away our wintry cares:
  We hear but happy airs;
    Our hopes are steady.

Cold were the crystal rivers, bitter cold;
  And snows upon the iron mountains;
And withering leaves upon the trodden mould.
Hark to the crystal voices of the rills,
  Falling among the hills,
    From secret fountains!

Long not for June with roses: nor for nights
  Loud with tumultuary thunder:
Those hours wax heavy with their fierce delights.
But April is all bright, and gives us first,
  Before the roses burst,
    Her joy and wonder.

Clear lie the fields, and fade into blue air:
  Here, sweet concerted birds are singing
Around this lawn of sweet grass, warm and fair.
And holy music, through the waving trees,
  Comes gently down the breeze,
    Where bells are ringing.

1889.

A PROSELYTE.

Heart of magnificent desire:

O equal of the lordly sun!
Since thou hast cast on me thy fire,
My cloistral peace, so hardly won,
Breaks from its trance:
One glance
From thee hath all its joy undone.

Of lonely quiet was my dream;
Day gliding into fellow day,
With the mere motion of a stream:
But now in vehement disarray
Go time and thought,
Distraught
With passion kindled at thy ray.

Heart of tumultuary might,
O greater than the mountain flame,
That leaps upon the fearful night!
On me thy devastation came,
Sudden and swift;
A gift
Of joyous torment without name.

Thy spirit stings my spirit: thou
Takest by storm and ecstasy
The cloister of my soul. And now,
With ardour that is agony,
I do thy will;
Yet still
Hear voices of calm memory.

1894.

BEYOND.

All was for you: and you are dead.
For, came there sorrow, came there splendour,
You still were mine, and I yours only:
Then on my breast lay down your head,
Triumphant in its dear surrender:
One were we then: though one, not lonely.

Oh, is it you are dead,
Both! both dead, since we are asunder:
You, sleeping: I, for ever walking
Through the dark valley, hard and dry.
At times I hear the mourning thunder:
And voices, in the shadows, talking.

Dear, are there dreams among the dead:
Or is it all a perfect slumber?
But I must dream and dream to madness.
Mine eyes are dark, now yours are fled:
Yet see they sorrows without number,
Waiting upon one perfect sadness.

So long, the melancholy vale!
So full, these weary winds, of sorrow!
So harsh, all things! For what counts pity?
Still, as each twilight glimmers pale
Upon the borders of each morrow,
I near me to your sleeping city.

EXPERIENCE.

To George Arthur Greene.

The burden of the long gone years: the weight,
The lifeless weight, of miserable things
Done long ago, not done with: the live stings
Left by old joys, follies provoking fate,
Showing their sad side, when it is too late:
Dread burden, that remorseless knowledge brings
To men, remorseful! But the burden clings:
And that remorse declares that bitter state.

Wisdom of ages! Wisdom of old age!
Written, and spoken of, and prophesied,
The common record of humanity!
Oh, vain! The springtime is our heritage
First, and the sunlight on the flowing tide:
Then, that old truth's confirming misery.

1889.

ESCAPE.

To Charles Weekes.

She bared her spirit to her sorrow:
On the circling hills the morrow
    Trembled, but it broke not forth:
    Winds blew from the snowy North.

My soul! my sorrow! What wind bloweth,
Knows the wayless way, it goeth?
    But before all else, we know
    Death's way is the way to go.

She knew no more than that: she only

Knew, that she was left and lonely.
  Left? But she had loved! And lone?
  She had loved! But love had gone.

So out into the wintry weather
Soul and sorrow fled together:
  On the moor day found her dead:
  Snow on hands, and heart, and head.

1888.

TRENTALS.

To Charles Sayle.

Now these lovers twain be dead,
And together buried:
Masses only shall be said.
Hush thee, weary melancholy!
Music comes, more rich and holy:
Through the aged church shall sound
Words, by ancient prophets found;
Burdens in an ancient tongue,
By the fasting Mass-priest sung.

Gray, without, the autumn air:
But pale candles here prepare,
Pale as wasted golden hair.
Let the quire with mourning descant
Cry: *In pace requiescant!*
For they loved the things of God.
Now, where solemn feet have trod,
Sleep they well: and wait the end,

Lover by lover, friend by friend.

1889.

THE RED WIND.

To Dr. Todhunter.

Red Wind from out the East:
Red Wind of blight and blood!
Ah, when wilt thou have ceased
Thy bitter, stormy flood?

Red Wind from over sea,
Scourging our lonely land!
What Angel loosened thee
Out of his iron hand?

Red Wind! whose word of might
Winged thee with wings of flame?
O fire of mournful night,
What is thy master's name?

Red Wind! who bade thee burn,
Branding our hearts? Who bade
Thee on and never turn,
Till waste our souls were laid?

Red Wind! from out the West
Pour winds of Paradise:
Winds of eternal rest,
That weary souls entice.

Wind of the East! Red Wind!
Thou witherest the soft breath
Of Paradise the kind:
Red Wind of burning death!

O Red Wind! hear God's voice:
Hear thou, and fall, and cease.
Let Inisfail rejoice
In her Hesperian peace.

1894.

SERTORIUS.

To Basil Williams.

Beyond the straits of Hercules,
Behold! the strange Hesperian seas,
A glittering waste at break of dawn:
High on the westward plunging prow,
What dreams are on thy spirit now,
Sertorius of the milk-white fawn?

Not sorrow, to have done with home!
The mourning destinies of Rome
Have exiled Rome's last hope with thee:
Nor dost thou think on thy lost Spain.
What stirs thee on the unknown main?
What wilt thou from the virgin sea?

Hailed by the faithless voice of Spain,
The lightning warrior come again,
Where wilt thou seek the flash of swords,

Voyaging toward the set of sun?
Though Rome the splendid East hath won,
Here thou wilt find no Roman lords.

No Tingis here lifts fortress walls;
And here no Lusitania calls:
What hath the barren sea to give?
Yet high designs enchaunt thee still;
The winds are loyal to thy will:
Not yet art thou too tired, to live.

No trader thou, to northern isles,
Whom mischief-making gold beguiles
To sunless and unkindly coasts:
What spirit pilots thee thus far
From the tempestuous tides of war,
Beyond the surging of the hosts?

Nay! this thy secret will must be.
Over the visionary sea,
Thy sails are set for perfect rest:
Surely thy pure and holy fawn
Hath whispered of an ancient lawn,
Far hidden down the solemn West.

A gracious pleasaunce of calm things;
There rose-leaves fall by rippling springs:
And captains of the older time,
Touched with mild light, or gently sleep,
Or in the orchard shadows keep
Old friendships of the golden prime.

The far seas brighten with gray gleams:
O winds of morning! O fair dreams!
Will not that land rise up at noon?
There, casting Roman mail away,
Age long to watch the falling day,

And silvery sea, and silvern moon.

Dreams! for they slew thee: Dreams! they lured
Thee down to death and doom assured:
And we were proud to fall with thee.
Now, shadows of the men we were,
Westward indeed we voyage here,
Unto the end of all the sea.

Woe! for the fatal, festal board:
Woe! for the signal of the sword,
The wine-cup dashed upon the ground:
We are but sad, eternal ghosts,
Passing far off from human coasts,
To the wan land eternal bound.

1889.

SAINT COLUMBA.

To Dr. Sigerson.

Dead is Columba: the world's arch
Gleams with a lighting of strange fires.
They flash and run, they leap and march,
Signs of a Saint's fulfilled desires.

Live is Columba: golden crowned,
Sceptred with Mary lilies, shod
With angel flames, and girded round
With white of snow, he goes to God.

No more the gray eyes long to see

The oakwoods of their Inisfail;
Where the white angels hovering be:
And ah, the birds in every vale!

No more for him thy fierce winds blow,
Iona of the angry sea!
Gone, the white glories of thy snow,
And white spray flying over thee!

Now, far from the gray sea, and far
From sea-worn rocks and sea-birds' cries,
Columba hails the morning star,
That shines in never nighted skies.

High in the perfect Land of Morn,
He listens to the chaunting air:
The Land, where music is not born,
For music is eternal there.

There, bent before the burning Throne,
He lauds the Lover of the Gael:
Sweet Christ! Whom Patrick's children own:
Glory be Thine from Inisfail!

1894.

BELLS.

To John Little.

From far away! from far away!
  But whence, you will not say:
Melancholy bells, appealing chimes,

Voices of lands and times!

Your toll, O melancholy bells!
Over the valley swells:
O touching chimes! your dying sighs
Travel our tranquil skies.

But whence? And whither fade away
Your echoes from our day?
You take our hearts with gentle pain,
Tremble, and pass again.

Could we lay hold upon your haunts,
The birthplace of your chaunts:
Were we in dreamland, deathland, then?
We, sad and wondering men?

1887.

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