

Embers, Volume 2.

Gilbert Parker

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EMBERS

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 2.

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DOLLY

King Rufus he did hunt the deer,
With a hey ho, come and kiss me, Dolly!
It was the spring-time of the year--
Hey ho, Dolly shut her eyes!
King Rufus was a bully boy,
He hunted all the day for joy,
Sweet Dolly she was ever coy:
And who would e'er be wise

That looked in Dolly's eyes?

King Rufus he did have his day,
With a hey ho, come and kiss me, Dolly!
So get ye forth where dun deer play--
Hey ho, Dolly comes again!
The greenwood is the place for me,
For that is where the dun deer be,
And who would stay at home,
That might with Dolly roam?
Sing hey ho, come and kiss me, Dolly!

LIFE'S SWEET WAGES

Who would lie down and close his eyes
While yet the lark sings o'er the dale?
Who would to Love make no replies,
Nor drink the nut-brown ale,
While throbs the pulse, and full's the purse
And all the world's for sale?

Though wintry blasts may prove unkind,
When winter's past we do forget;
Love's breast in summer-time is kind,
And all's well while life's with us yet.
Hey ho, now the lark is mating--
Life's sweet wages are in waiting!

TO THE VALLEY

Come hither, oh come hither,
There's a bride upon her bed;
They have strewn her o'er with roses,
There are roses 'neath her head:
Life is love and tears and laughter,
But the laughter it is dead--
Sing the way to the Valley, to the Valley-
Hey, but the roses they are red!

THE LILY FLOWER

Oh, love, it is a lily flower,
(Sing, my captain, sing, my lady!)
The sword shall cleave it, Life shall leave it--
Who shall know the hour?

(Sing, my lady, still!)

LOVE IN HER COLD GRAVE LIES

Love in her cold grave lies,
But that is not my love:
My love hath constant eyes,
My love her life doth prove;
That love, the poorer, dies--
Ah, that is not my love!

Love in her cold grave lies,
But she will wake again;
With trembling feet will rise,
Will call this love in vain,
That she doth now despise
Ah, love shall wake again!

GRANADA, GRANADA

Granada, Granada, thy gardens are gay,
And bright are thy stars, the high stars above;
But as flowers that fade and are grey,
But as dusk at the end of the day
Are ye to the light in the eyes of my love--
In the eyes, in the soul, of my love.

Granada, Granada, oh, when shall I see
My love in thy garden, there waiting for me!
Beloved, beloved, have pity and make
Not the sun shut its eyes, its hot envious eyes;
And the world in the darkness of night,
Be debtor to thee for its light.
Turn thy face, turn thy face from the skies
To the love, to the pain in my eyes.

Granada, Granada, oh, when shall I see
My love in thy garden, there waiting for me!

THE NEW APHRODITE

What though the gods of the old be dead,
Here are the mountains of azure and snow,
Here are the valleys where loves are wed,

And lilies in blow.

Here are the hands that are lucid, sweet,
Wound at the wrist with an amber beading,
Folds of the seafoam to cover the feet,
Mortals misleading.

Down to the opaline lips of the sea
Wander the lost ones, fallen but mighty,
Stretching out hands, crying, "Turn unto me,
O Aphrodite!"

See where they lift up their faces and scan,
Over the wave-heaps, thy coming; despite thee,
Thou canst not fetter the soul of a man,
O Aphrodite!

Nay, but our bodies we bend, and we give
All that the heart hath, loving, not knowing
Whether the best is to die or to live,
Coming or going.

We shall be taken, but thou shalt live on,
Swallowed in sea-drifts that never affright thee;
Smiling, thou'lt lift up thy sweet hands alone,
Ah, Aphrodite!

Over thy face is a veil of white sea-mist,
Only thine eyes shine like stars; bless or blight me,
I will hold close to the leash at thy wrist,
O Aphrodite!

Rosy and proud are the skies of the East,
Love-dowered moons to enswathe thee, delight thee:
Thy days and our days--are thine then the least,
O Aphrodite?

Thou in the East and I here in the West,
Under our newer skies purple and pleasant:
Who shall decide which is better, attest,
Saga or peasant?

Thou with Serapis, Osiris, and Isis,
I with Jehovah, in vapours and shadows;
Thou with the gods' joy-enhancing devices,
Sweet-smelling meadows.

What is there given us?--Food and some raiment,
Toiling to reach to a Patmian haven,
Giving up all for uncertain repayment,
Feeding the raven.

Striving to peer through the infinite azure,
Alternate turning to earthward and falling,
Measuring life with Damastian measure,
Finite, appalling.

What does it matter! They passed who with Homer
Poured out the wine at the feet of their idols:

Passing, what found they? To-come a misnomer,
It and their idols?

Who knows, ah, who knows! Here in this garden,
Heliotrope, hyacinth, soft suns to light me,
Leaning out, peering, thou, thou art my warden-
Thou, Aphrodite!

Up from the future of all things there come,
Marching abreast in their stately endeavour,
Races unborn, to the beat of the drum,
Of the Forever.

Resting not, beating down all the old traces,
Falls the light step of the new-coming nations,
Burning on altars of our loved graces,
Their new oblations.

What shall we know of it, we who have lifted
Up the dark veil, done sowing and reaping;
What shall we care if our burdens be shifted,
Waking or sleeping?

Sacristan, acolyte, player or preacher,
Each to his office, but who holds the key?
Death, only death, thou, the ultimate teacher,
Will show it to me.

I am, Thou art, and the strong-speaking Jesus,
One in the end of an infinite truth?--
Eyes of a prophet or sphinx may deceive us,
Bearing us ruth,

But when the forts and the barriers fall,
Shall we not find One, the true, the almighty,
Wisely to speak with the worst of us all,
O Aphrodite?

Waiting, I turn from the futile, the human,
Gone is the life of me, laughing with youth;
Steals to learn all in the face of a woman,
Mendicant Truth.

AN ANCIENT PLEDGE

Fair be the garden where their loves may dwell,
Safe be the highway where their feet may go;
Rich be the meadows where their hands may toil,
The fountains many where the good wines flow;
Full be their harvest bins with corn and oil,
And quick their hearts all wise delights to know;
To sorrow may their humour be a foil,
Tardy their footsteps to the gate Farewell.

Deep be your cups. Our hearts the gods make light:
Drink, that their joy may never know good-night!

THE TRIBUTE OF KING HATH

Oh, bring to me a cup of gold,
And bring a platter fair,
And summon forth my Captain old,
Who keeps the royal stair.

And fetch a stoup of that rare wine
That hailed my father's fame;
And bear some white bread from the shrine
Built to my mother's name.

Then, good my gentlemen, bring down
My robe of soft samite;
And let the royal horn be blown,
For we ride far to-night.

Within the pleasant Vale of Loe
Beside the Sea of Var,
The Daughter of our ancient foe
Dwells where her people are.

Tribute her fathers paid to mine--
Young prince to elder crown;
But for a jest 'twixt bread and wine,
They struck our banner down.

And we had foes from Blymar Hills,
From Gathan and Dagost,
And pirates from Bagol that spills
Its refuse on our coast.

And we were girded South and North;
And there beyond the Var,
They drove our goodly fighters forth,
And dimmed our ancient star.

Now they have passed us, home for home,
And matched us town for town;
Their daughters to our sons now come--
Our feud it weareth down.

Between their cups, the hill-men cry,
"The Lady of the Loe!"
The sea-kings swing their flags peak-high
Where'er her galleons go.

Once when the forge of battle sang
'Tween Varan and Thogeel;
And when ten thousand stirrups rang
'Twixt girth and bloody heel,

I saw her ride 'mid mirk and fire,
Unfearing din and death,
Her eyes upflaming like a pyre,
Her fearless smile beneath.

Nor'land 'gainst Southland then she drove,
A million serfs to free;
The reeking shuttle lifeward wove,
Through death from land to sea.

And perched upon the Hill of Zoom,
My gentlemen beside,
I saw the weft shake in the loom,
The revel blazon wide,

Until a thousand companies--
Serf-lords from out Thogeel
Their broadswords brake across their knees,
Good captives to her steel.

And then I sware by name and crown,
And by the Holy Ghost,
When Peace should ride with pennon blown,
From Gathan to Dagost,

Unto her kingdom I should get,
And come not back again,
Until a queen's hand I had set
Upon my bridle rein.

Our ships now nestle at Her coast,
Her corn our garner fills;
And all is quiet at Dagost,
And on the Blymar Hills.

And I will do a deed to bind
An ancient love once more;
My gentlemen shall ride behind,
My Captain on before;

And we will journey forth to-night
Towards the Sea of Var,
Until the vale shall come in sight,
Where Her great cities are.

And to the Daughter of that land,
Which once was kin to mine,
My Captain, he shall bear in hand
This sacred bread and wine.

And he shall show her soft and fair
This peace-spread sacrament:
Her banner it shall ride the air
Upon my Captain's tent.

And if the wine to lip she raise,
With morsel of my bread;
Then as we loved in ancient days,

These lands of ours shall wed.

But mine the tribute. I will bring
My homage to her door,
My gentlemen behind their king,
My Captain on before.

And we aslant will set our spears,
Our good swords dipping free;
And we will ravel back the years
For love of her and me.

And I will prove my faith in this
As never king was proved--
For kings may fight for what they kiss,
And die for what they loved!

But I will bring my court afar,
My throne to hers shall go;
And I will reign beside the Var,
And in the Vale of Loe.

The younger kingdom, it shall be
The keeper of my crown;
And she, my queen, shall reign with me
Within her own good town.

And men shall speak me kind, shall tell
Her graces day and night
So bring my steed that serves me well,
My robe of soft samite,

And bring me here the cup of gold,
And bring the platter fair,
And summon me my Captain old,
That keeps the royal stair.

For well know I the way I go;
I follow but my star:
My home is in the Vale of Loe,
And by the Sea of Var.

THERE IS AN ORCHARD

There is an orchard beyond the sea,
And high is the orchard wall;
And ripe is the fruit in the orchard tree--
Oh, my love is fair and tall!

There is an orchard beyond the sea,
And joy to its haven hies;
And a white hand opens its gate to me--
Oh, deep are my true love's eyes!

There is an orchard beyond the sea,
Its flowers the brown bee sips;
But the stateliest flower is all for me--
Oh, sweet are my true love's lips!

There is an orchard beyond the sea,
Where the soft delights do roam;
To the Great Delight I have bent my knee--
Oh, good is my true love's home!

There is an orchard beyond the sea,
With a nest where the linnets hide;
Oh, warm is the nest that is built for me--
In my true love's heart I bide!

HEART OF THE WORLD

Heart of the World give heed,
Tongues of the World be still!
The richest grapes of the vine shall bleed
Till the greeting-cup shall spill;
The kine shall pause in the pleasant mead,
The eagle upon the hill--
Heart of the World give heed!

Heart of the World break forth,
Tongues of the World proclaim!
There cometh a voice from out the North
And a face of living flame--
A man's soul crying, Behold what worth
Was life till her sweet soul came--
Heart of the World break forth!

Heart of the World be strong,
Tongues of the World be wise!
The White North glows with a morning song
Or ever the red sun dies;
For Love is summer and Love is long,
And the good God 's in his skies--
Heart of the World be strong!

EPITAPHS

THE BEGGAR

Poor as a sparrow was I,
But I was saved like a king;
I heard the death-bells ring,

Yet I saw a light in the sky:
And now to my Father I wing.

THE MAID

A little while I saw the world go by--
A little doorway that I called my own,
A loaf, a cup of water, and a bed had I,
A shrine of Jesus, where I knelt alone
And now, alone, I bid the world good-bye.

THE FOOL

I was a fool; nothing had I to know
Of men, and naught to men had I to give.
God gave me nothing; now to God I go,
Now ask for pain, for bread,
Life for my brain: dead,
By God's love I shall then begin to live.

THE FIGHTER

Blows I have struck, and blows a-many taken,
Wrestling I've fallen, and I've rose up again;
Mostly I've stood--
I've had good bone and blood;
Others went down though fighting might and main.
Now Death steps in,
Death the price of sin:
The fall it will be his; and though I strive and strain,
One blow will close my eyes, and I shall never waken.

THE SEA-REAPERS

When the Four Winds, the Wrestlers, strive with the Sun,
When the Sun is slain in the dark;
When the stars burn out, and the night cries
To the blind sea-reapers, and they rise,
And the water-ways are stark--
God save us when the reapers reap!
When the ships sweep in with the tide to the shore,
And the little white boats return no more;
When the reapers reap,
Lord, give Thy sailors sleep,
If Thou cast us not upon the shore,
To bless Thee evermore
To walk in Thy sight as heretofore,
Though the way of the Lord be steep!
By Thy grace,
Show Thy face,

Lord of the land and the deep!

THE WATCHER

As the wave to the shore, as the dew to the leaf,
As the breeze to the flower,
As the scent of a rose to the heart of a child,
As the rain to the dusty land--
My heart goeth out unto Thee--unto Thee!
The night is far spent and the day is at hand.

As the song of a bird to the call of a star,
As the sun to the eye,
As the anvil of man to the hammers of God,
As the snow to the earth--
Is my word unto Thy word--to Thy word!
The night is far spent and the day is at hand

THE WAKING

To be young is to dream, and I dreamed no more;
I had smothered my heart as the fighter can:
I toiled, and I looked not behind or before--
I was stone; but I waked with the heart of a man.

By the soul at her lips, by the light of her eyes,
I dreamed a new dream as the sleeper can,
That the heavenly folly of youth was wise--
I was stone; but I waked with the heart of a man.

She came like a song, she will go like a star:
I shall tread the hills as the hunter can,
Mine eyes to the hunt, and my soul afar--
I was stone; but I waked with the heart of a man.

WHEN ONE FORGETS

When one forgets, the old things are as dead things;
The grey leaves fall, and eyes that saw their May
Turn from them now, and voices that have said things
Wherein Life joyed, alas! are still to-day--
When one forgets.

The world was noble, now its sordid casement
Glow but with garish folly, and the plains
Of rich achievement lie in mean abasement--

Ah, Hope is only midwife to our pains!

When one forgets, but maimed rites come after:
To mourn, be priest, be sexton, bear the pall,
Remembrance-robed, the while a distant laughter
Proclaims Love's ghost--what wonder skies should fall,
When one forgets!

ALOES AND MYRRH

Dead, with the dew on your brow,
Dead, with the may in your face,
Dead: and here, true to my vow,
I, who have won in the race,
Weave you a chaplet of song
Wet with the spray and the rime
Blown from your love that was strong--
Stronger than Time.

August it was, and the sun
Streamed through the pines of the west;
There were two then--there is one;
Flown is the bird from the nest;
And it is August again,
But, from this uttermost sea,
Rises the mist of my pain--
You are set free.

"Tell him I see the tall pines,
Out through the door as I lie--
Red where the setting sun shines--
Waving their hands in good-bye;
Tell him I hold to my breast,
Dying, the flowers he gave;
Glad as I go I shall rest
Well in my grave."

This is the message they send,
Warm with your ultimate breath;
Saying, "And this is the end;
She is the bride but of death."
Is death the worst of all things?
What but a bursting of bands,
Then to the First of All Things
Stretching out hands!

Under the grass and the snow
You will sleep well till I come;
And you will feel me, I know,
Though you are motionless, dumb.
I shall speak low overhead--
You were so eager to hear--
And even though you are dead,
You will be near.

Dead, with the dew on your brow,
Dead, with the May in your face,
Dead: and here, true to my vow,
I, who have won in the race,
Weave you a chaplet of song
Wet with the spray and the rime
Blown from your love that was strong--
Stronger than Time.

IN WASTE PLACES

The new life is fief to the old life,
And giveth back pangs at the last;
The new strife is like to the old strife
A token and tear of the Past.
We change, but the changes are only
New forms of the old forms again,
We die and some spaces are lonely,
But men live in lives of new men.

We hate, and old wrongs lift their faces,
To fill up the ranks of the new;
We love, and the early love's graces
Are signs of the false and the true;
We clasp the white hands that are given
To greet us in devious ways,
But meet the old sins, all unshriven,
To sadden the burden of days.

Though we lose the green leaves of the first days,
Though the vineyards be trampled and red,
We know, in the gloom of our worst days,
That the dead are not evermore dead:
December is only December,
A space, not the infinite whole;
Though the hearthstone bear but the one ember,
There still is the fire of the soul.

The end comes as came the beginning,
And shadows fall into the past;
And the goal, is it not worth the winning,
If it brings us but home at the last?
While over the pain of waste places
We tread, 'tis a blossoming rod
That drives us to grace from disgraces,
From the plains to the Gardens of God.

LAST OF ALL

Wave, walls to seaward,
Storm-clouds to leeward,
Beaten and blown by the winds of the West,
Sail we encumbered
Past isles unnumbered,
But never to greet the green island of Rest.

Lips that now tremble,
Do you dissemble
When you deny that the human is best?
Love, the evangel,
Finds the Archangel--
Is that a truth when this may be a jest?

Star-drifts that glimmer
Dimmer and dimmer,
What do ye know of my weal or my woe?
Was I born under
The sun or the thunder?
What do I come from, and where do I go?

Rest, shall it ever
Come? Is endeavour
Still a vain twining and twisting of cords?
Is faith but treason;
Reason, unreason,
But a mechanical weaving of words?

What is the token,
Ever unbroken,
Swept down the spaces of querulous years,--
Weeping or singing--
That the Beginning
Of all things is with us, and sees us, and hears?

What is the token?
Bruised and broken,
Bend I my life to a blossoming rod?
Shall then the worst things
Come to the first things,
Finding the best of all, last of all, God?

AFTER

Bands broken, cords loosened, and all
Set free. Well, I know
That I turned my cold face to the wall,
Was silent, strove, gasped, then there fell
A numbness, a faintness, a spell
Of blindness, hung as a pall,
On me, falling low,
And a far fading sound of a knell.

Then a fierce stretching of hands
In gloom; and my feet,
Treading tremulous over hard sands;
A wind that wailed wearily slow,
A plashing of waters below,
A twilight on bleak lone lands,
Spread out; and a sheet
Of the moaning sea shallows aflow.

Then a steep highway that leads
Somewhere, cold, austere;
And I follow a shadow that heeds
My coming, and points, not in wrath,
Out over: we tread the sere path
Up to the summit; recedes
All gloom; and at last
The beauty a flower-land hath.

REMEDIAL

Well it has come and has gone,
I have some pride, you the same;
You will scarce put willow on,
I will have buried a name.

A stone, "Hic Jacet"--no more;
Let the world wonder at will;
You have the key to the door,
I have the cenotaph still.

A tear--one tear, is it much,
Dropped on a desert of pain?
Had you one passionate touch
Of Nature there had been rain.

Purpose, oh no, there was none!
You could not know if you would;
You were the innocent one.
Malice? Nay, you were too good.

Hearts should not be in your way,
You must pass on, and you did;
Ah, did I hurt you? you say:
Hurt me? Why, Heaven forbid!

Inquisitorial ways
Might have hurt, truly, but this,
Done in these wise latter days,
It was too sudden, I wis.

"Painless and pleasing," this is
No bad advertisement, true;
Painless extinction was his,
And it was pleasing-to you.

Still, when the surgery's done
(That is the technical term),
Which has lost most, which has won?
Rise now, and truly affirm.

You carry still what we call
(Poets are dreamy we know)
A heart, well, 'tis yours after all,
And time hath its wonders, I trow.

You may look back with your eyes
Turned to the dead of the Past,
And find with a sad surprise,
That yours is the dead at the last.

Seeing afar in the sands,
Gardens grown green, at what cost!
You may reach upward your hands,
Praying for what you have lost.

THE TWILIGHT OF LOVE

Adieu! and the sun goes awearily down,
The mist creeps up o'er the sleepy town,
The white sails bend to the shuddering mere,
And the reapers have reaped, and the night is here.

Adieu! and the years are a broken song,
The right grows weak in the strife with wrong,
The lilies of love have a crimson stain,
And the old days never will come again.

Adieu! where the mountains afar are dim
'Neath the tremulous tread of the seraphim,
Shall not our querulous hearts prevail,
That have prayed for the peace of the Holy Grail?

Adieu! Some time shall the veil between
The things that are, and that might have been
Be folded back for our eyes to see,
And the meaning of all be clear to me.

IRREVOCABLE

What you have done may never be undone
By day or night,
What I have seen may never be unseen
In my sad sight.

The days swing on, the sun glows and is gone,
From span to span;
The tides sweep scornfully the shore, as when
The tides began.

What we have known is but a bitter pledge
Of Ignorance,
The human tribute to an ageless dream,
A timeless trance.

Through what great cycles hath this circumstance
Swept on and on,
Known not by thee or me, till it should come,
A vision wan,

To our two lives, and yours would seem to me
The hand that kills,
Though you have wept to strike, and but have cried,
"The mad Fate wills!"

You could not, if you would, give what had been
Peace, not distress;
Some warping cords of destiny had held
You in duress.

Nay, not the Fates, look higher; is God blind?
Doth He not well?
Our eyes see but a little space behind,
If it befell,

That they saw but a little space before,
Shall we then say,
Unkind is the Eternal, if He knew
This from alway,

And called us into being but to give
To mother Earth
Two blasted lives, to make the watered land
A place of dearth?

The life that feeds upon itself is mad--
Is it not thus?
Have I not held but one poor broken reed
For both of us?

Keep but your place and simply meet
The needs of life;
Mine is the sorrow, mine the prayerless pain:
The world is rife

With spectres seen and spectres all unseen
By human eyes,
Who stand upon the threshold, at the gates,
Of Paradise.

Well do they who have felt the spectres' hands
Upon their hearts,
And have not fled, but with firm faith have borne

Their brothers' parts,

Upheld the weary head, or fanned the brow
Of some sick soul,
Pointed the way for tired pilgrim eyes
To their far goal.

So let it be with us: perchance will come
In after days,
The benison of happiness for us
Always, always.

THE LAST DREAM

One more dream in the slow night watches,
One more sleep when the world is dumb,
And his soul leans out to the sweet wild snatches
Of song that up from dreamland come.

Pale, pale face with a golden setting,
Deep, deep glow of steadfast eyes;
Form of one there is no forgetting,
Wandering out of Paradise.

Breath of balm, and a languor falling
Out of the gleam of a sunset sky;
Peace, deep peace and a seraph's calling,
Folded hands and a pleading cry.

One more dream for the patient singer,
Weary with songs he loved so well;
Sleeping now--will the vision bring her?
Hark, 'tis the sound of the passing bell!

WAITING

When shall I see thee again?
Weary the years and so long;
When shall be buried the wrong,
Phantom-like rising between?
Seeking for surcease of pain,
Pilgrim to Lethe I came;
Drank not, for pride was too keen--
Stung by the sound of a name.

Soft, ardent skies of my youth
Come to me over the sea,
Come in a vision to me,
Come with your shimmer and song;

Ye have known all of the truth,
Witness to both shall ye bear;
Read me the riddle of wrong,
Solve me the cords of the snare.

Love is not won in a breath,
Idle, impassioned and sure;
Why should not love then endure,
Challenging doubt to the last?
True love is true till the death,
Though it bear aloes and myrrh;
Try me and judge me, O Past,
Have I been true unto her?

What should I say if we met,
Knowing not which should forbear?
E'en if I plead would she care?--
Sweet is the refuge of scorn.
Close by my side, O Regret
Long we have watched for the light!
Watchman, what of the morn?
Well do we know of the night.

IN MAYTIME

The apple blossoms glisten
Within the crowned trees;
The meadow grasses listen
The din of busy bees;
The wayward, woodland singer
Carols along the leas,
Not loth to be the bringer
Of summer fantasies.

But you and I who never
Meet now but for regret,
Forever and forever,
Though flower-bonds were set
In Maytime, if you wonder
That falling leaves are ours,
Yours was it cast asunder,
Mine are the faded flowers.

The fluted wren is sobbing
Beneath the mossy eaves;
The throstle's chord is throbbing
In coronal of leaves;
The home of love is lilies,
And rose-hearts, flaming red,
Red roses and white lilies--
Lo, thus the gods were wed!

But we weep on, unheeding
The earth's joys spread for us;

And ever, far receding,
Our fair land fades from us:
One waited, patient, broken,
High-hearted but opprest,
One lightly took the token--
The mad Fates took the rest.

High mountains and low valleys,
And shreds of silver seas,
The lone brook's sudden sallies,
And all the joys of these,--
These were, but now the fire
Volcanic seeks the sea,
And dark wave walls retire
Tyrannic seeking me.

Spirit of dreams, a vision
Well hast thou wrought for us;
Fold high the veil Elysian,
The past held naught for us;
Years, what are they but spaces
Set in a day for me?
Lo, here are lilled places--
My love comes back to me!

INSIDE THE BAR

I knows a town, an' it's a fine town,
And many a brig goes sailin' to its quay;
I knows an inn, an' it's a fine inn,
An' a lass that's fair to see.
I knows a town, an' it's a fine town;
I knows an inn, an' it's a fine inn--
But Oh my lass, an' Oh the gay gown,
Which I have seen my pretty in!

I knows a port, an' it's a good port,
An' many a brig is ridin' easy there;
I knows a home, an' it's a good home,
An' a lass that's sweet an' fair.
I knows a port, an' it's a good port,
I knows a home, an' it's a good home--
But Oh the pretty that is my sort,
What's wearyin' till I come!

I knows a day, an' it's a fine day,
The day a sailor man comes back to town;
I knows a tide, an' it's a good tide,
The tide that gets you quick to anchors down.
I knows a day, an' it's a fine day,
I knows a tide, an' it's a good tide--
And God help the lubber, I say,
What's stole the sailor man's bride!

THE CHILDREN

Mark the faces of the children
Flooded with sweet innocence!
God's smile on their foreheads glisten
Ere their heart-strings have grown tense.

And they know not of the sadness,
Of the palpitating pain
Drawn through arid veins of manhood,
Or the lusts that life disdain.

Little reek they of the shadows
Fallen through the steep world's space
God hath touched them with His chrism
And their sunlight is His grace.

And the green grooves of the meadows
They are fair to look upon;
And the silver thrush and robin
Sing most sweetly on and on.

But the faces of the children-
They are fairer far than these;
And the songs they sing are sweeter
Than the thrushes' in the trees.

Little hands, our God has given
All the flower-bloom for you;
Gather violets in the meadows,
Trailing your sweet fingers through.

The swift tears that sometimes glisten
On their faces dashed with pain
Weave a rosy bow of promise,
Like the afterglow of rain.

The soft, verdant fields of childhood,
Certes, are the softer for
The dissolving dew of morning,
Noon's elate ambassador.

Looking skyward, do they wonder--
They, the children palm to palm-
What is out beyond the azure
In the infinite of calm?

Though they murmur soft "Our Father,"
Angel wings to speed it on
Past the bright wheels of the Pleiads,
Have they thought of benison?

Nay! the undefiled children
Say it bound by ignorance;

But the saying is the merit,
And the loving bans mischance.

Oh the mountain heights of childhood,
And the waterfalls of dreams,
And the sleeping in the shadows
Of the willows by the streams!

Toss your gleaming hair, O children,
Back in waving of the wind!
Flash the starlight 'neath your eyelids
From the sunlight of the mind!

See, we strain you to our bosoms,
And we kiss your lip and brow;
Human hearts must have some idols,
And we shrine you idols now.

Time, the ruthless idol-breaker,
Smileless, cold iconoclast,
Though he rob us of our altars,
Cannot rob us of the past.

Dull and dead the gods' bright nectar,
Disencrowned of its foam;
Duller, deader far the empty,
Barren hearthstone of a home.

Smile out to our age and give us,
Children, of the dawn's desire;
We have passed morn's gold and opal,
We have lost life's early fire.

LITTLE GARAINÉ

"Where do the stars grow, little Garaine?
The garden of moons, is it far away?
The orchard of suns, my little Garaine,
Will you take us there some day?"

"If you shut your eyes," quoth little Garaine,
"I will show you the way to go
To the orchard of suns and the garden of moons
And the field where the stars do grow.

"But you must speak soft," quoth little Garaine,
"And still must your footsteps be,
For a great bear prowls in the field of the stars,
And the moons they have men to see.

"And the suns have the Children of Signs to guard,
And they have no pity at all--
You must not stumble, you must not speak,
When you come to the orchard wall.

"The gates are locked," quoth little Garaine,
"But the way I am going to tell--
The key of your heart it will open them all:
And there's where the darlings dwell!"

TO A LITTLE CHILD

(M. H.)

When you were born, my dear, when you were born,
A glorious Voice came singing from the sun,
An Ariel with roses of the morn,
And through the vales of Arcady danced one
All golden as the corn.

These were the happy couriers of God,
Bearing your gifts: a magic all your own,
And Beauty with her tall divining rod;
While tiny star-smiths, bending to your throne,
Your feet with summer shod.

Into my heart, my dear, you flashed your way,
Your rosy, golden way: a fairy horn
Proclaimed you dancing light and roundelay;--
I thank my generous Fates that you were born
One lofty joyous day.

L'EMPEREUR, MORT

(M. H., AGED FIVE)

My dear, I was thy lover,
A man of spring-time years;
I sang thee songs, gave gifts and songs most poor,
But they were signs; and now, for evermore,
Thou farest forth! My heart is full of tears,
My dear, my very dear.

My dear, I was thy lover,
I wrote thee on my shield,
I cried thy name in goodly fealty,
Thy champion I. And now, no more for me
Thy face, thy smile: thou goest far afield,
My dear, my very dear.

My dear, I am thy lover:
Afield thy spirit goes,
And thou shalt find that Inn of God's delight,

Where thou wilt wait for us who say good night,
To thy sweet soul. The rest--the rest, God knows,
My dear, my dear!

PHYLLIS

Phyllis, I knew you once when I was young,
And travelled to your land of Arcady.
Do you, of all the songs, wild songs, before you flung,
Remember mine--its buoyant melody,
Its hope, its pride; do you remember it?
It was the song that makes the world go round;
I bought it of a Boy: in scars I paid for it,
Phyllis, to you who jested at my wound.

BAIRNIE

Did ye see the white cloud in the glint o' the sun?
That's the brow and the eye o' my bairnie.
Did ye ken the red bloom at the bend o' the crag?
That's the rose in the cheek o' my bairnie.
Did ye hear the gay lilt o' the lark by the burn?
That's the voice of my bairnie, my dearie.
Did ye smell the wild scent in the green o' the wood?
That's the breath o' my ain, o' my bairnie.
Sae I'll gang awa' hame, to the shine o' the fire,
To the cot where I lie wi' my bairnie.

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