

Embers, (Poetry) Complete

Gilbert Parker

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EMBERS, Complete

By Gilbert Parker

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INTRODUCTION

I had not intended that *Embers* should ever be given to the public, but friends whose judgment I respect have urged me to include it in the subscription edition at least, and with real reluctance I have consented. It was a pleasure to me to have one piece of work of mine which made no bid for pence or praise; but if that is a kind of selfishness, perhaps unnecessary, since no one may wish to read the verses, I will now free myself from any chance of reproach. This much I will say to soothe away my own compunctions, that the book will only make the bid for popularity or consideration with near a score of others, and not separately, and that my responsibility is thus modified. The preface to *Embers* says all that need be said about a collection which is, on the whole, merely a book of youth and memory and impressionism in verse. At least it was all spontaneous; it was not made to order on any page of it, and it is the handful left from very many handfuls destroyed. Since the first edition (intended only for my personal friends) was published I have written

"Rosleen," "Where Shall We Betake Us?" "Granada," "Mary Callaghan and Me," "The Crowning" (on the Coronation of King Edward VII), the fragment "Kildare" and "I Heard the Desert Calling"; and I have also included others like "The Tall Dakoon" and "The Red Patrol," written over twenty years ago. "Mary Callaghan and Me" has been set to music by Mr. Max Muller, and has made many friends, and "The Crowning" was the Coronation ode of 'The People', which gave a prize, too ample I think, for the best musical setting of the lines. Many of the other pieces in 'Embers' have been set to music by distinguished composers like Sir Edward Elgar, who has made a song-cycle of several, Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Mr. Arthur Foote, Mrs. Amy Woodforde Finden, Robert Somerville, and others. The first to have musical setting was "You'll Travel Far and Wide," to which in 1895 Mr. Arthur Foote gave fame as "An Irish Folk Song." Like "O Flower of All the World," by Mrs. Amy Woodforde Finden, it has had a world of admirers, and such singers as Mrs. Henschel helped to make Mr. Foote's music loved by thousands, and conferred something more than an ephemeral acceptance of the author's words.

When thou comest to the safe tent of the good comrade,
abide there till thy going forth with a stedfast mind; and
if, at the hospitable fire, thou hast learned the secret of a
heart, thou shalt keep it holy, as the North Wind the
trouble of the Stars.

PROEM

And the Angel said:

"What hast thou for all thy travail--
what dost thou bring with thee out
of the dust of the world?"

And the man answered:

"Behold, I bring one perfect yesterday!"

And the Angel questioned:

"Hast thou then no to-morrow?
Hast thou no hope?"

And the man replied:

"Who am I that I should hope!
Out of all my life I have been granted one
sheaf of memory."

And the Angel said:

"Is this all!"

And the man answered:

"Of all else was I robbed by the way:
but Memory was hidden safely
in my heart--the world found it not."

ROSLEEN

"She's the darlin' of the parish, she's the pride of
Inniskillen;
'Twould make your heart lep up to see her trippin'
down the glen;
There's not a lad of life and fame that wouldn't take
her shillin'
And inlist inside her service--did ye hear her laughin'
then?"

Did ye see her with her hand in mine the day that
Clancy married?
Ah, darlin', how we footed it--the grass it was so
green!
And when the neighbours wandered home, I was the
guest that tarried,
An hour plucked from Paradise--come back to me,
Rosleen!

Across the seas, beyand the hills, by lovely Inniskillen,
The rigiment come marchin'--I hear the call once
more
Shure, a woman's but a woman--so I took the Sergeant's
shillin',
For the pride o' me was hurted--shall I never see
her more?

She turned her face away from me, and black as night
the land became;
Her eyes were jewels of the sky, the finest iver seen;
She left me for another lad, he was a lad of life and
fame,
And the heart of me was hurted--but there's none
that's like Rosleen!"

WILL YOU COME BACK HOME?

Will you come back home, where the young larks are
singin'?
The door is open wide, and the bells of Lynn are ringin';
There's a little lake I know,
And a boat you used to row
To the shore beyond that's quiet--will you come back
home?

Will you come back, darlin'? Never heed the pain and
blightin',
Never trouble that you're wounded, that you bear the
scars of fightin';
Here's the luck o' Heaven to you,

Here's the hand of love will brew you
The cup of peace--ah, darlin', will you come back
home?

MARY CALLAGHAN AND ME

It was as fine a churchful as you ever clapt an eye on;
Oh, the bells was ringin' gaily, and the sun was shinin'
free;
There was singers, there was clargy--"Bless ye both,"
says Father Tryon--
They was weddin' Mary Callaghan and me.

There was gatherin' of women, there was hush upon the
stairway,
There was whisperin' and smilin', but it was no place
for me;
A little ship was comin' into harbour through the
fairway--
It belongs to Mary Callaghan and me.

Shure, the longest day has endin', and the wildest storm
has fallin'--
There's a young gossoon in yander, and he sits upon
my knee;
There's a churchful for the christenin'--do you hear
the imp a-callin'?
He's the pride of Mary Callaghan and me.

KILDARE

He's the man that killed Black Care,
He's the pride of all Kildare;
Shure the devil takes his hat off whin he comes:
'Tis the clargy bow before him,
'Tis the women they adore him,
And the Lord Lieutenant orders out the drums--
For his hangin', all the drums,
All the drums!

YOU'LL TRAVEL FAR AND WIDE

You'll travel far and wide, dear, but you'll come back
again,

You'll come back to your father and your mother in
the glen,
Although we should be lyin' 'neath the heather grasses
then--
You'll be comin' back, my darlin'!

You'll see the icebergs sailin' along the wintry foam,
The white hair of the breakers, and the wild swans as
they roam;
But you'll not forget the rowan beside your father's
home
You'll be comin' back, my darlin'!

New friends will clasp your hand, dear, new faces on
you smile;
You'll bide with them and love them, but you'll long
for us the while;
For the word across the water, and the farewell by the
stile--
For the true heart's here, my darlin'!

You'll hear the wild birds singin' beneath a brighter sky,
The roof-tree of your home, dear, it will be grand and
high;
But you'll hunger for the hearthstone where, a child,
you used to lie--
You'll be comin' back, my darlin'!

And when your foot is weary, and when your heart is sore,
And you come back to the moor that spreads beyand
your father's door,
There'll be many an ancient comrade to greet you on
the shore--
At your comin' back, my darlin'!

Ah, the hillock cannot cover, and the grass it cannot hide
The love that never changeth, whatever wind or tide;
And though you'll not be seein', we'll be standin' by
your side--
You'll be comin' back, my darlin'!

O, there's no home like the old home, there's no pillow
like the breast
You slumbered on in childhood, like a young bird in
the nest:
We are livin' still and waitin', and we're hopin' for the
best--
Ah, you're comin' back, my darlin'--comin' back!

FARCALLADEN RISE

Oh, it's down the long side of Farcalladen Rise,
With the knees pressing hard to the saddle, my men;
With the sparks from the hoofs giving light to the eyes,

And our hearts beating hard as we rode to the glen!

And it's back with the ring of the chain and the spur,
And it's back with the sun on the hill and the moor,
And it's back is the thought sets my pulses astir,--
But I'll never go back to Farcalladen more!

Oh, it's down the long side of Farcalladen Rise,
And it's swift as an arrow and straight as a spear,
And it's keen as the frost when the summer-time dies,
That we rode to the glen, and with never a fear.

And it's hey for the hedge, and it's hey for the wall,
And it's over the stream with an echoing cry;
And there's three fled for ever from old Donegal,
And there's two that have shown how bold Irishmen die!

For it's rest when the gallop is over, my men,
And it's here's to the lads that have ridden their last;
And it's here's to the lasses we leave in the glen,
With a smile for the future, a sigh for the past!

GIVE ME THE LIGHT HEART

Give, me the light heart, Heaven above!
Give me the hand of a friend,
Give me one high fine spirit to love,
I'll abide my fate to the end:
I will help where I can, I will cherish my own,
Nor walk the steep way of the world alone.

WHERE SHALL WE BETAKE US?

"Where shall we betake us when the day's work is over?
(Ah, red is the rose-bush in the lane.)
Happy is the maid that knows the footstep of her lover--
(Sing the song, the Eden song, again.)
Who shall listen to us when black sorrow comes a-reaping?
(See the young lark falling from the sky.)
Happy is the man that has a true heart in his keeping--
True hearts flourish when the roses die."

NO MAN'S LAND

Oh, we have been a-maying, dear, beyond the city gates,
The little city set upon a hill;
And we have seen the jocund smile upon the lips of Fate,
And we have known the splendours of our will.

Oh, we have wandered far, my dear, and we have loved apace;
A little hut we built upon the sand,
The sun without to lighten it, within, your golden face,--
O happy dream, O happy No Man's Land!

The pleasant furniture of spring was set in all the fields,
And gay and wholesome were the herbs and flowers;
Our simple cloth of love was spread with all that nature yields,
And frugal only were the passing hours.

Oh, we have been a-maying, dear, we've left the world behind,
We've sung and danced and gossiped as we strayed;
And when within our little but your fingers draw the blind,
We'll loiter by the fire that love has made.

AT SEA

Through the round window above, the deep palpable blue,
The wan bright moon, and the sweet stinging breath of the sea;
And below, in the shadows, thine eyes like stars,
And Love brooding low, and the warm white glory of thee.

Oh, soft was the song in my soul, and soft beyond thought
were thy lips,
And thou wert mine own, and Eden reconquered was mine
And the way that I go is the way of thy feet, and the breath
that I breathe,
It hath being from thee and life from the life that is thine!

ATHENIAN

Your voice I knew, its cadences and thrill;
It stilled the tumult and the overthrow
When Athens trembled to the people's will;
I knew it--'twas a thousand years ago.

I see the fountains, and the gardens where
You sang the fury from the Satrap's brow;
I feel the quiver in the raptured air,
I heard it in the Athenian grove--I hear you now.

EYES LIKE THE SEA

Eyes like the sea, look up, the beacons brighten,
Home comes the sailor, home across the tide!
Back drifts the cloud, behold the heavens whiten,
The port of Love is open, he anchors at thy side.

UNDER THE CLIFF

The sands and the sea, and the white gulls fleeting,
The mist on the island, the cloud on the hill;
The song in my heart, and the old hope beating
Its life 'gainst the bars of thy will.

OPEN THY GATE

Here in the highway without thy garden wall,
Here in the babel and the glare,
Sick for thy haven, O Sweet, to thee I call:
Open thy gate unto my prayer--
Open thy gate.

Cool is thy garden-plot, pleasant thy shade,
All things commend thee in thy place;
Dwelling on thy perfectness, O Sweet, I am afraid,
But, fearing, long to look upon thy face--
Open thy gate.

Over the ample globe, searching for thee,
Thee and thy garden have I come;
Ended my questing: no more, no more for me,
O Sweet, the pilgrim's sandals, call me home--
Open thy gate.

SUMMER IS COME

Summer is come; the corn is in the ear,
The haze is swimming where the beeches stand;
Summer is come, though winter months be here--
My love is summer passing through the land.

Summer is come; I hear the skylarks sing,
The honeysuckle flaunts it to the bees;

Summer is come, and 'tis not yet the spring--
My love is summer blessing all she sees.

Summer is come; I see an open door,
A sweet hand beckons, and I know
That, winter or summer, I shall go forth no more--
My heart is homing where her summer-roses grow.

O FLOWER OF ALL THE WORLD

O flower of all the world, O flower of all,
The garden where thou dwellest is so fair,
Thou art so goodly, and so queenly tall,
Thy sweetness scatters sweetness everywhere,
O flower of all!

O flower of all the years, O flower of all,
A day beside thee is a day of days;
Thy voice is softer than the throstle's call,
There is not song enough to sing thy praise,
O flower of all!

O flower of all the years, O flower of all,
I seek thee in thy garden, and I dare
To love thee; and though my deserts be small,
Thou art the only flower I would wear,
O flower of all!

WAS IT SOME GOLDEN STAR?

Once in another land,
Ages ago,
You were a queen, and I,
I loved you so:
Where was it that we loved--
Ah, do you know?

Was it some golden star
Hot with romance?
Was it in Malabar,
Italy, France?
Did we know Charlemagne,
Dido, perchance?

But you were a queen, and I
Fought for you then:
How did you honour me--
More than all men!
Kissed me upon the lips;

Kiss me again.

Have you forgotten it,
All that we said?
I still remember though
Ages have fled.
Whisper the word of life,--
"Love is not dead."

I HEARD THE DESERT CALLING

I heard the desert calling, and my heart stood still--
There was winter in my world and in my heart;
A breath came from the mesa, and a message stirred my will,
And my soul and I arose up to depart.

I heard the desert calling, and I knew that over there
In an olive-sheltered garden where the mesquite grows,
Was a woman of the sunrise with the star-shine in her hair
And a beauty that the almond-blossom blows.

In the night-time when the ghost-trees glimmered in the moon,
Where the mesa by the water-course was spanned,
Her loveliness enwrapped me like the blessedness of June,

And all my life was thrilling in her hand.

I hear the desert calling, and my heart stands still--
There is summer in my world, and in my heart;
A breath comes from the mesa, and a will beyond my will
Binds my footsteps as I rise up to depart.

THE FORGOTTEN WORD

Once in the twilight of the Austrian hills,
A word came to me, wonderful and good;
If I had spoken it--that message of the stars--
Love would have filled thy blood;
Love would have sent thee pulsing to my arms,
Laughing with joy, thy heart a nestling bird
An instant passed--it fled; and now I seek in vain
For that forgotten word.

WHAT WILL IT MATTER?

What will this matter, dear, when you and I
Have left our sad world for some fairer sky?
What will it matter, dear, when, far apart,
We miss the touch of hand and beat of heart;
When one's at peace, while unto one is given
With lonely feet to walk the hills at even?
What will it matter that one fault more now
Brings clouds upon one eager mortal brow,
That one grace less is given to one poor soul,
When both drink from the last immortal bowl?
For fault and grace, dear love, when we go hence
Will find the same Eternal recompense.

THE COURIER STAR

Into a New World wandered I,
A strong vast realm afar;
And down the white peaks of its sky,
Beckoned my courier star.

It hailed me to mine ancient North,--
The meadows of the Pole;
It whistled my gay hunters forth,
It bugled in my soul.
On plateaux of the constant snow
I heard the meteors whir;
I saw the red wolves nor'ward go
From my low huts of fir.

The dun moose ran the deep ravine,
The musk-ox ranged the plain;
The hunter's song dripped in between
In notes of scarlet rain.

The land was mine: its lonely pride,
Its distant deep desires;
And I abode, as hunters bide,
With joy beside its fires.

Into a New World wandered I,
A world austere, sublime;
And unseen feet came sauntering by;
A voice with ardent chime
Rang down the idle lanes of sleep;
I waked: the night was still;
I saw my star its sentry keep
Along a southern hill.

O flaming star! my courier star!
My herald, fine and tall!
You gestured from your opal car,
I answered to that call.
I rose; the flumes of snow I trod,

I trailed to southward then;
I left behind the camps of God,
And sought the tents of men.

And where a princely face looked through
The curtains of the play
Of life, O star, you paused; I knew
The comrade of my day.
And good the trails that I have trod,
My courier star before;
And good the nor'land camps of God:
And though I lodge no more

Where stalwart deeds and dreams rejoice,
And gallant hunters roam,
Where I can hear your voice, your voice,
I drive the tent-peg home.

THE WORLD IN MAKING

When God was making the world,
(Swift was the wind and white was the fire)
The feet of His people danced the stars;
There was laughter and swinging bells,
And clanging iron and breaking breath,
The hammers of heaven making the hills,
The vales, on the anvils of God.
(Wild is the fire and low is the wind)

When God had finished the world,
(Bright was the fire and sweet was the wind)
Up from the valleys came song,
To answer the morning stars;
And the hand of man on the anvil rang,
His breath was big in his breast, his life
Beat strong 'gainst the walls of the world.
(Glad is the wind and tall is the fire)

HEW

None shall stand in the way of the lord,
The Lord of the Earth--of the rivers and trees,
Of the cattle and fields and vines:
Hew!
Here shall I build me my cedar home,
A city with gates, a road to the sea--
For I am the lord of the Earth:
Hew! Hew!
Hew and hew, and the sap of the tree

Shall be yours, and your bones shall be strong,
Shall be yours, and your heart shall rejoice,
Shall be yours, and the city be yours,
And the key of its gates be the key
Of the home where your little ones dwell.
Hew and be strong! Hew and rejoice!
For man is the lord of the Earth,
And God is the Lord over all.

O SON OF MAN

"Son of man, stand upon thy feet
and I will speak to thee."

O son of man, behold
If thou shouldst stumble on the nameless trail,
The trail that no man rides,
Lift up thy heart,
Behold, O son of man, thou hast a helper near!

O son of man, take heed
If thou shouldst fall upon the vacant plain,
The plain that no man loves,
Reach out thy hand,
Take heed, O son of man, strength shall be given thee!

O son of man, rejoice:
If thou art blinded even at the door,
The door of the Safe Tent,
Sing in thy heart,
Rejoice, O son of man, thy pilot leads thee home!

AT THE END OF THE WORLD

In the lodge of the Mother of Men,
In the land of Desire,
Are the embers of fire,
Are the ashes of those who return.
Who return to the world;
Who flame at the breath
Of the Mockers of Death.
O Sweet, we will voyage again
To the camp of Love's fire,
Nevermore to return!

O love, by the light of thine eyes
We will fare over-sea;
We will be
As the silver-winged herons that rest

By the shallows,
The shallows of sapphire stone;
No more shall we wander alone.
As the foam to the shore
Is my spirit to thine,
And God's serfs as they fly,--
The Mockers of Death--
They will breathe on the embers of fire
We shall live by that breath.
Sweet, thy heart to my heart,
As we journey afar,
No more, nevermore, to return!

WAYFARERS

War does the fire no longer burn?
(I am so lonely)
Why does the tent-door swing outward?
(I have no home)
Oh, let me breathe hard in your face!
(I am so lonely)
Oh, why do you shut your eyes to me?
(I have no home)

Let us make friends with the stars;
(I am so lonely)
Give me your hand, I will hold it;
(I have no home)
Let us go hunting together:
(I am so lonely)
We will sleep at God's camp to-night.
(I have no home)

THE RED PATROL

He stands in the porch of the World--
(Why should the door be shut?)
The grey wolf waits at his heel,
(Why is the window barred?)
Wild is the trail from the Kimash Hills,
The blight has fallen on bush and tree,
The choking earth has swallowed the streams,
Hungry and cold is the Red Patrol--
(Why should the door be shut?)
The Scarlet Hunter has come to bide--
(Why is the window barred?)

He waits at the threshold stone--
(Why should the key-hole rust?)

The eagle broods at his side,
(Why should the blind be drawn?)
Long has he watched and far has he called--
The lonely sentinel of the North--
"Who goes there?" to the wandering soul
Heavy of heart is the Red Patrol--
(Why should the key-hole rust?)
The Scarlet Hunter is sick for home,
(Why should the blind be drawn?)

Heavy of heart is the Red Patrol--
(Why should the key-hole rust?)
The Scarlet Hunter is sick for home,
(Why should the blind be drawn?)
Hungry and cold is the Red Patrol--
(Why should the door be shut?)
The Scarlet Hunter has come to bide,
(Why is the window barred?)

THE YELLOW SWAN

In the flash of the singing dawn,
At the door of the Great One,
The joy of his lodge knelt down,
Knelt down, and her hair in the sun
Shone like showering dust,
And her eyes were as eyes of the fawn.
And she cried to her lord,
"O my lord, O my life,
From the desert I come;
From the hills of the Dawn."
And he lifted the curtain and said,
"Hast thou seen It, the Yellow Swan?"

And she lifted her head, and her eyes
Were as lights in the dark,
And her hands folded slow on her breast,
And her face was as one who has seen
The gods and the place where they dwell;
And she said, "Is it meet that I kneel,
That I kneel as I speak to my lord?"
And he answered her, "Nay, but to stand,
And to sit by my side;
But speak: thou has followed the trail,
Hast thou found It, the Yellow Swan?"
And she stood as a queen, and her voice
Was as one who hath seen the Hills,
The Hills of the Mighty Men,
And hath heard them cry in the night,
Hath heard them call in the dawn,
Hath seen It, the Yellow Swan.
And she said, "It is not for my lord";
And she murmured, "I cannot tell;
But my lord must go as I went,

And my lord must come as I came,
And my lord shall be wise."

And he cried in his wrath,
"What is thine, it is mine,
And thine eyes are my eyes,
Thou shalt speak of the Yellow Swan."
But she answered him, "Nay, though I die.
I have lain in the nest of the Swan,
I have heard, I have known;
When thine eyes too have seen,
When thine ears too have heard,
Thou shalt do with me then as thou wilt."

And he lifted his hand to strike,
And he straightened his spear to slay;
But a great light struck on his eyes,
And he heard the rushing of wings,
And his long spear fell from his hand,
And a terrible stillness came:
And when the spell passed from his eyes
He stood in his doorway alone,
And gone was the queen of his soul
And gone was the Yellow Swan.

THE HEART OF THE PIONEER

My dear love, she waits for me,
None other my world is adorning;
My true love I come to thee,
My dear, the white star of the morning.
Eagles, spread out your wings,--
Behold where the red dawn is breaking!
Hark, 'tis my darling sings,
The flowers, the song-birds, awaking--
See, where she comes to me,
My love, ah, my dear love!

THE NORTH TRAIL

"Oh, where did you get them, the bonny, bonny roses
That blossom in your cheeks, and the morning in your eyes?"
"I got them on the North Trail, the road that never closes,
That widens to the seven gold gates of Paradise."
"O come, let us camp in the North Trail together,
With the night-fires lit and the tent-pegs down."

ALONE

O, O, the winter wind, the North wind--
My snow-bird, where art thou gone?
O, O the wailing wind, the night wind--
The cold nest; I am alone.
O, O my snow-bird!

O, O, the waving sky, the white sky--
My snow-bird, thou fliest far;
O, O the eagle's cry, the wild cry--
My lost love, my lonely star.
O, O my snow-bird!

THE SCARLET HILLS

Brothers, we go to the Scarlet Hills--
(Little gold sun, come out of the dawn.)
There we will meet in the cedar groves--
(Shining white dew, come down.)
There is a bed where you sleep so sound,
The little good folk of the Hills will guard,
Till the morning wakes and your love comes home--
(Fly away, heart, to the Scarlet Hills.)

THE WOODSMAN LOVER

High in a nest of the tam'rac tree,
Swing under, so free, and swing over;
Swing under the sun and swing over the world,
My snow-bird, my gay little lover--
My gay little lover, don, don! . . . don, don!

When the winter is done I will come back home,
To the nest swinging under and over,
Swinging under and over and waiting for me,
Your rover, my snow-bird, your lover--
My lover and rover, don, don! . . . don, don!

QUI VIVE

Qui vive!
Who is it cries in the dawn,
Cries when the stars go down?
Who is it comes through the mist,
The mist that is fine like lawn,
The mist like an angel's gown?
Who is it comes in the dawn?
Qui vive! Qui vive! in the dawn.

Qui vive!
Who is it passeth us by,
Still in the dawn and the mist--
Tall seigneur of the dawn,
A two-edged sword at his thigh,
A shield of gold at his wrist?
Who is it hurrieth by?
Qui vive! Qui vive! in the dawn.

Qui vive!
Who saileth into the morn,
Out of the wind of the dawn?
"Follow, oh, follow me on!"
Calleth a distant horn.
He is here--he is there--he is gone,
Tall seigneur of the dawn!
Qui vive! Qui vive! in the dawn.

THE LITTLE HOUSE

I

Children, the house is empty,
The house behind the tall hill;
Lonely and still is the empty house.
There is no face in the doorway,
There is no fire in the chimney--
Come and gather beside the gate,
Little Good Folk of the Scarlet Hills.

Where has the wild dog vanished?
Where has the swift foot gone?
Where is the hand that found the good fruit,
That made a garret of wholesome herbs?
Where is the voice that awoke the morn,
The tongue that defied the terrible beasts?
Come and listen beside the door,
Little Good Folk of the Scarlet Hills.

II

Sorrowful is the little house,
The little house by the winding stream;
All the laughter has died away

Out of the little house.
But down there come from the lofty hills
Footsteps and eyes a gleam,
Bringing the laughter of yesterday
Into the little house,
By the winding stream and the hills.
Di ron, di ron, di ron-don!

III

What is there like to the cry of the bird
That sings in its nest in the lilac tree?
A voice the sweetest you ever have heard;
It is there, it is here, ci, ci!
It is there, it is here, it must roam and roam,
And wander from shore to shore,
Till I travel the hills and bring it home,
And enter and close my door--
Row along, row along home, ci, ci!

What is there like to the laughing star,
Far up from the lilac tree?
A face that's brighter and finer far;
It laughs and it shines, ci, ci!
It laughs and it shines, it must roam and roam,
And travel from shore to shore,
Till I get me forth and bring it home,
And house it within my door--
Row along, row along home, ci, ci!

SPINNING

Spin, spin, belle Mergaton!
The moon wheels full, and the tide flows high,
And your wedding-gown you must put it on
Ere the night hath no moon in the sky
Gigoton, Mergaton, spin!

Spin, spin, belle Mergaton!
Your gown shall be stitched ere the old moon fade:
The age of a moon shall your hands spin on,
Or a wife in her shroud shall be laid--
Gigoton, Mergaton, spin!

Spin, spin, belle Mergaton!
The Little Good Folk the spell they have cast;
By your work well done while the moon hath shone,
Ye shall cleave unto joy at last--
Gigoton, Mergaton, spin!

FLY AWAY, MY HEART

"O traveller, see where the red sparks rise,"
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)
But dark is the mist in the traveller's eyes.
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)
"O traveller, see far down the gorge,
The crimson light from my father's forge-"
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)

"O traveller, hear how the anvils ring";
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)
But the traveller heard, ah, never a thing:
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)
"O traveller, loud do the bellows roar,
And my father waits by the smithy door-"
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)

"O traveller, see you thy true love's grace,"
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)
And now there is joy in the traveller's face:
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)
Oh, wild does he ride through the rain and mire,
To greet his love by the smithy fire--
(Fly away, my heart, fly away)

SUZON

O mealman white, give me your daughter,
Oh, give her to me, your sweet Suzon!
O mealman dear, you can do no better,
For I have a chateau at Malmaison.

Black charcoalman, you shall not have her
She shall not marry you, my Suzon--
A bag of meal, and a sack of carbon!
Non, non, non, non, non, non, non, non

Go look at your face, my fanfaron,
For my daughter and you would be night and day.
Non, non, non, non, non, non, non, non,
Not for your chateau at Malmaison;
Non, non, non, non, non, non, non, non,
You shall not marry her, my Suzon.

MY LITTLE TENDER HEART

My little tender heart,

O gai, vive le roi!
My little tender heart,
O gai, vive le roi!
'Tis for a grand baron,
Vive le roi, la reine!
'Tis for a grand baron,
Vive Napoleon!

My mother promised it,
O gai, vive le roi!
My mother promised it,
O gai, vive le roi!
To a gentleman of the king,
Vive le roi, la reine!
To a gentleman of the king,
Vive Napoleon!

Oh, say, where goes your love?
O gai, vive le roi!
Oh, say, where goes your love?
O gai, vive le roi!
He rides on a white horse,
Vive le roi, la reine!
He wears a silver sword,
Vive Napoleon!

Oh, grand to the war he goes,
O gai, vive le roi!
Oh, grand to the war he goes,
O gai, vive le roi!
Gold and silver he will bring,
Vive le roi, la reine!
And eke the daughter of a king--
Vive Napoleon!

THE MEN OF THE NORTH

They have wrestled their thews with the Arctic bear,
With tireless moose they've trod;
They have drained heel-deep of a fighting air,
And breasted the winds of God.
They have stretched their beds in the hummocked snow,
They have set their teeth to the Pole;
With Death they have gamed it, throw for throw,
And drunk with him bowl for bowl--
They are all for thee, O England!

In their birch canoes they have run cloud-high,
On the crest of a nor'land storm;
They have soaked the sea, and have braved the sky,
And laughed at the Conqueror Worm.
They reck not beast and they fear no man,
They have trailed where the panther glides;
On the edge of a mountain barbican,

They have tracked where the reindeer hides--
And these are for thee, O England!

They have freed your flag where the white Pole-Star
Hangs out its auroral flame;
Where the bones of your Franklin's heroes are
They have honoured your ancient name.
And, iron in blood and giant in girth,
They have stood for your title-deed
Of the infinite North, and your lordly worth,
And your pride and your ancient greed--
And for love of thee, O England!

THE CROWNING

A thousand years of power,
A thousand marches done,
Lands beyond lands our dower,
Flag with no setting sun--
Now to the new King's sealing,
Come from the farthest seas,
Sons of the croft and sheiling,
Sons of the moor and leas--

Those that went from us, daring
The wastes and the wilds and the wood:
Hither they come to us, sharing
Our glory, the call of the blood;
Hither they come to the sealing--
They or the seed of them come,
Bring the new King the revealing
Of continents yesterday dumb.

Out on the veldt, in the pineland,
Camped by the spring or the hill,
Pressing the grapes of the vineland,
Grinding the wheat at the mill,
Oracles whispered the message
Meant for the ear of the King--
Joyous and splendid the presage,
Lofty the vision they bring!

Each for his new land--he made it;
Each for the Old Land which gave
Treasure, that none should invade it,
Blood its high altars to lave;
Each for the brotherhood nations,
All of the nations for each:
Here giving thanks and oblations,
One in our blood and our speech,

Pledging our love and alliance,
Faith upon faith for the King,
Making no oath in defiance,

Crying, "No challenge we fling,"
Yet for the peace of all people,
Yet for the good of our own,
Here, with our prayers and oblations,
Pledge we our lives to the throne!

CLOSE UP

You heard the bugles calling, comrades, brothers,--
"Close up! Close up!" You mounted to go forth,
You answered "We are coming," and you gathered,
And paraded with your Captains in the North.

From here you came, from there you came, your voices
All flashing with your joy as flash the stars,
You waited, watched, until, the last one riding
Out of the night, came roll-call after wars.

Unslung your swords, off with your knapsacks, brothers!
We'll mess here at headquarters once again;
Drink and forget the scars; drink and remember
The joy of fighting and the pride of pain.

We will forget: the great game rustles by us,
The furtive world may whistle at the door,
We'll not go forth; we'll furlough here together--
Close up! Close up! 'Tis comrades evermore!

And Captains, our dear Captains, standing steady,
Aged with battle, but ever young with love,
Tramping the zones round, high have we hung your virtues,
Like shields along the wall of life, like armaments above:

Like shields your love, our Captains, like armaments your
virtues,
No rebel lives among us, we are yours;
The old command still holds us, the old flag is our one flag,
We answer to a watchword that endures!

Close up, close up, my brothers! Lift your glasses,
Drink to our Captains, pledging ere we roam,
Far from the good land, the dear familiar faces,
The love of the old regiment at home!

W. E. H.

"Henley is dead!" Ah, but the sound and the sight of him,
Buoyant, commanding, and strong, suffering, noble in mind!
Gone, and no more shall we have any discourse or delight of him,

Wearing his pain like a song, casting his troubles behind.

Gallant and fair! Feeling the soul and the ruth of things,
Probing the wounds of the world, healing he brought and surcease--
Laughter he gave, beauty to teach us the truth of things,
Music to march to the fight, ballads for hours of peace.

Now it is done! Fearless the soul of him strove for us,
Viking in blood and in soul, baring his face to the rain,
Facing the storm he fared on, singing for England and love of us,
On to the last corral where now he lies beaten and slain.

Beaten and slain! Yes, but England hath heed of him,
Singer of high degree, master of thought and of word--
She shall bear witness with tears, of the pride and the
 loss and the need of him;
We shall measure the years by the voice and the song unheard.

WHEN BLOWS THE WIND

When blows the wind and drives the sleet,
And all the trees droop down;
When all the world is sad, 'tis meet
Good company be known:
And, in my heart, good company
Sits by the fire and sings to me.

When warriors return, and one
That went returns no more;
When dusty is the road we run,
And garners have no store;
One ingle-nook right warm shall be
Where my heart hath good company.

When man shall flee and woman fail,
And folly mock and hope deceive,
Let cowards beat the breast and wail,
I'll homeward hie; I will not grieve:
I'll curtains draw, I'll there set free
My heart's beloved boon company.

When kings shall favour, ladies call
My service to their side;
When roses grow upon the wall
Of life, and love inside;
I'll get me home with joy to be
In my heart's own good company!

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
Gloweth 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 stedfast 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.

EMBERS

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 3.

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IN CAMDEN TOWN

How many years of sun and snow
Have come to Camden Town,
Since through its streets and in its shade,
I wandered up and down.

Not many more than to you here
These verses hapless flung,
Yet of the Long Ago they seem
To me who am yet young.

We strive to measure life by Time,
And con the seasons o'er,
To find, alas! that days are years,
And years for evermore.

The joys that thrill, the ill that thralls,
Pressed down on heart and brain--
These are the only horologues,
The Age's loss or gain.

And I am old in all of these,
And wonder if I know
The man begotten of the boy,
Who loved that long ago.

A lilac bush close to the gate,
A locust at the door,
A low, wide window flower-filled,
With ivy covered o'er.

A face--O love of childhood dreams,
Lily in form and name--
It comes back now in these day-dreams,
The same yet not the same.

My childhood's friend! Well gathered are
The sheaves of many days,
But this one sheaf is garnered in,
Bound by my love always.

Where have you wandered, child, since when
Together merrily,

We gathered cups of columbine
By lazy Rapanee?

The green spears of the flagflower,
Down by the old mill-race,
Are weapons now for other hands,
Who mimic warfare chase.

You were so tender, yet so strong,
So gentle, yet so free,
Your every word, whenever heard,
Seemed wondrous wise to me.

You marvelled if the dead could hear
Our steps, that passed at will
Their low green houses in the elm-
Crowned churchyard on the hill.

And I, whom your sweet childhood's trust,
Esteemed as most profound,
Thought that they heard, as in a dream,
The shadow of a sound.

We drew the long, rank grass away
From tombstones mossy grown,
To read the verses crude and quaint,
And make the words our own.

One tottering marble, willow-spread,
I well remember yet,
With only this engraved thereon,
"By Joseph to Jeanette."

It held us wondering oft, as we
Peeped through the pickets old:
There was some mystery, we knew,
Some history untold.

Well, better far those simple words,
Where weeping phrase is not,
Than burdened tablet, and the rest
Forgetting and forgot.

And Lily Minden, do you lie
In some forgotten grave,
Where only strangers' feet pass o'er
Your temple's architrave?

Or, by some hearthstone, have you learned
The worst and best of life,
And found sweet greetings in the name
Of mother and of wife?

I cannot tell: I know you but
As bee the clover bloom,
That sips content, and straightway builds
Its mansion and its tomb.

So took I in child-innocence,

So build the House of Life,
And in low tone to thee alone,
As dead or maid or wife,

I sing this song, borne all along
A space of wasted breath;
And build me on from room to room
Unto the House of Death,

Where portals swing forever in
To weary pilgrim guest,
And hearts that here were inly dear
Shall find a Room of Rest.

JEAN

Three times round has the sun gone, Jean,
Since on your lips I pressed
Mute farewells; if that pain was keen
Fair were you in your nest.

Smiling, sweetheart, I left you there;
You had no word to say;
One last touch to your brow and hair,
Then I went on my way.

Time it was when the leaves were grown
Your rose-colour, my queen;
Ere the birds to the south had flown,
While yet the grass was green.

Eyes demure, do you ever yearn,
Bird-wise to summer lands?
Is it to meet your look I turn,
Saying, "She understands,"

Saying, "She waits in her quiet place
Patient till I shall come,
The old sweet grace in her dreaming face
That made a Heav'n her home"?

No! She is there 'neath Northern skies,
And no word does she send;
But near to my heart her image lies,
And shall lie there to the end.

Come what will I am not bereft
Of the memory of that time,
When in her hands my heart I left
There, in a colder clime.

And to my eyes no face is fair,
For one face comes between;
And if a song has a low sweet air,

Through it there whispers, "Jean."

Better for me the world would say,
If I had broke the charm,
Set in the circle she one day
Made by her round white arm.

Never a king in days of eld
Gathered about his throat
Such a circlet; no queen e'er held
Necklace so clear of mote.

It sufficeth the charm was set;
And if it chance that one
Still remembers, though one forget,
Then is the worst thing done--

Done, and I still can say "Let be;
I have no word of blame;
Though her heart is no more for me,
Mine shall be still the same."

I have my life to live and she--
Well, if it be so--so;
She may welcome or banish me
And if I go, I go.

Friend, I pray you repress those tears,
Comfort from this derive:
I am a score--and more-of years
And Jean is only five.

A MEMORY

From buckwheat fields the summer sun
Drew honeyed breezes over
The lanes where happy children run
With bare feet in the clover.

The schoolhouse stood with pines about
Upon the hill, and ever
A creek, where hid the speckled trout,
Ran past it to the river.

And rosy faces gathered there,
With rustic good around them;
With breath of balm blown everywhere,
Pure, ere the world had found them.

Behind sweet purple ambuscades
Of lilacs, laws were broken;
And here a desk with knives was frayed,
There passed forbidden token.

One slipped a butternut between
His pearly teeth; a maiden
Dove-eyed, caressed her cheek; 'twas e'en
With maple sugar laden--

A flock that caught at wiles, because
The shepherd's hand that drove them,
Reached little toward wise human laws,
And less to God above them.

With eyebrows bent and surly look
He only saw before him,
The rule, the lesson, and the book,
Not nature brooding o'er him.

One day through drone of locusts fell
The wood-bird's fitful tapping,
And in his chair at "dinner-spell,"
The teacher grim sat napping.

An urchin creeping in beholds
The tyrant slumber-smitten,
And in his pocket's ample folds
He thrusts the school-yard kitten.

At length the master waked, and clanged
His bell with anger fitting;
His sleep had made it double-fanged,
And crossed like needles knitting.

Slow to their seats the children file,
And wait "Prepare for classes,"
A score of lads across the aisle
From twice a score of lasses.

But two within the throng betray
A mirth suppressed; the sinner,
And Rafe Ridall, the chief at play,
At books the easy winner:

The wildest boy in all the school,
In mischief first and ever,
His daily seat the penance-stool,
Disgraced for weeks together.

Just sound of bone and strong of heart,
Staunch friend and noble foeman;
In life to play the kingly part,
True both to man and woman.

Joe's secret now he holds; a deed
With just enough of danger,
To win his--ah, what's that? 'Tis freed,
The pocket-prisoned stranger!

A moment's riot laughter-filled,
Then fear, white-visaged, follows;
And through the silence there is trilled
The shrill note of the swallows.

And now a fierce form fronts them all,
Two fierce eyes search their faces,
Then flash their fire on Rafe Ridall,
Whose mirth no peril chases.

"You did it, sir!" "Not I!" "You did!"
"No!" "You've one chance for showing
Who in my coat the kitten hid,
Or be well thrashed for knowing."

The master paused, the birch he grasped
Against his trousers flicking;
Rafe said, with hands behind him clasped,
"I'd rather take the licking."

Full many a year has passed since then,
The lilacs still are blooming,
Awaiting childish hands again,
But they are long in coming.

Now wandering swallows build their nests
Where doors and roofs decaying,
No more shut in the master's zest,
Nor out the children's playing.

All, all are gone who gathered there;
Some toil among the masses,
Some, overworn with pain and care,
Wait Death's "Prepare for classes."

And some--the sighing pines sway on
Above them, dreamless lying;
And 'mong them sleeps the master, gone
His anger and their crying.

And Rafe Ridall, brave then, brave now,
Amid the jarring courses
Of man's misrule, still takes the blow
For those of weaker forces.

IN CAMP AT JUNIPER COVE

A little brown sparrow came tripping
Across the green grass at my feet;
A kingfisher poised, and was peering
Where current and calm water meet;

The clouds hung in passionless clusters
Above the green hills of the south;
A bobolink fluttered to leeward
With a twinkle of bells in its mouth.

Ah, the morning was silver with glory

As I lay by my tent on the shore;
And the soft air was drunken with odours,
And my soul lifted up to adore.

Is there wonder I took me to dreaming
Of the gardens of Greece and old Rome,
Of the fair watered meadows of Ida,
And the hills where the gods made their home?

Of the Argonauts sung to by Sirens,
Of Andromache, Helen of Troy,
Of Proserpine, Iphigenia,
And the Fates that build up and destroy?

Of the phantom isle, green Theresea,
And the Naiads and Dryads that give
To the soul of the poet, the dreamer,
The visions of fancy that live

In the lives and the language of mortals
Unconscious, but sure as the sea,
And that make for great losses repayment
To wandering singers like me?

But a little brown sparrow came tripping
Across the green grass at my feet;
And a kingfisher poised, and was peering
Where current and calm water meet;

And Alice, sweet Alice, my neighbour,
Stands musing beneath the pine tree;
And her look says--"I have a lover
Who sails on the turbulent sea:

Does he dream as I dream night and daytime
Of a face that is tender and true;
Will he come to me e'en as he left me?"
Yes, Alice, sweet Alice, for you,

Is the sunlight, and not the drear shadow,
The gentle and fortunate peace:
But he who thus revels in rhyming
Has shadows that never shall cease.

JUNIPER COVE TWENTY YEARS AFTER

The bay gleams softly in the sun,
The morning widens o'er the world:
The bluebird's song is just begun,
And down the skies white clouds are furled.

The boat lies idly by the shore,
The shed I built with happy care
Is fallen; and I see no more

The white tents in the eager air.

The goldenrod holds up its plumes
In the long stretch of meadow grass,
The briarrose shakes its sweet perfumes,
In coverts where the sparrows pass.

Far off, above, the sapphire gleams,
Far off, below, the sapphire flows,
And this, my place of morning dreams,
The bank where my vain visions rose!

Sweet Alice, he came back again,
Across the waste of summer sea,
What time the fields were full of grain,
But not to thee; but not to thee.

She comes no more when evening falls,
To watch the stars wheel up the sky;
Then love and light were over all;
Alas! that light and love should die.

I feel her hand upon my arm,
I see her eyes shine through the mist;
Her life was passionate and warm
As the red jewels at her wrist.

Hearts do not break, the world has said,
Though love lie stark and light be flown;
But still it counts its lost and dead,
And in the solitudes makes moan.

We school our lips to make our hearts
Seem other than in truth they are;
Before the lights we play our part,
And paint the flesh to hide the scar.

Masquers and mummers all, and yet
The slaves of some dead passion's fires,
Of hopes the soul can ne'er forget
Still sobbing in life's trembling wires.

Fate puts our dear desires in pawn,
Youth passes, unredeemed they lie;
The leaves drop from our rose of dawn,
And storms fall from the mocking sky.

I shall come back no more; my ship
Waits for me by the sundering sea;
A prayer for her is on my lip--
And the old life is dead to me.

LISTENING

I have lain beneath the pine trees just to hear the thrush's calling,
I have waited for the throstle where the harvest fields were brown,
I have caught the lark's sweet trilling from the depths of cloud-land
 falling
And the piping of the linnet through the willow branches blown.

But you have some singing graces, you who sing because you love it,
That are higher than the throstle, or the linnet, or the lark;
And, however far my soul may reach, your song is far above it;
And I falter while I follow as a child does in the dark.

In elder days, when all the world was silent save the beating
Of the tempest-gathered ocean 'gainst the grey volcanic walls,
When the light had met the darkness and the mountains sent their greeting
To each other in sharp flashes as the vivid lightning falls,

Then the high gods said, "In token that we love the earth we fashioned,
We will set the white stars singing, and teach man the art of song":
And there rose up from the valleys sounds of love and life impassioned,
Till men cried, with arms uplifted, "Now from henceforth we are strong!"

Adown the ages there have come the sounds of that first singing,
Lifting up the weary-hearted in the fever of the time;
And I, who wait and wander far, felt all my soul upspringing,
To but touch those ancient forces and the energies sublime,

When I heard you who had heard it--that first song--perhaps in dreaming,
Till it filled you with fine fervour and the hopes of its refrain;
And I knew that God was gracious and had led me in the gleaming
Of a song-shine that is holy and that quiets all my pain.

Though the birds sing in the meadows and fill all the air with sweetness,
They sing only in the present, and they sing because they must;
They are wanton in their pureness, and in all their fine completeness,
They trill out their lives forgotten to the silence of the dust.

But if you should pass to-morrow where your songs could never reach us,
There would still be throbbing through us all the music of your voice;
And your spirit would speak through the chords, as though it would
 beseech us
To remember that the noblest ends have ever noblest choice.

NEVERTHELESS

In your onward march, O men,
White of face, in promise whiter,
You unsheathe the sword, and then
Blame the wronged as the fighter.

Time, ah, Time, rolls onward o'er
All these foetid fields of evil,
While hard at the nation's core
Eat the burning rust and weevil!

Nathless, out beyond the stars
Reigns the Wiser and the Stronger,
Seeing in all strifes and wars
Who the wronged, who the wronger.

ISHMAEL

"No man cared for my soul."

Blind, Lord, so blind! I wander far
From Thee among the haunts of men,
Most like some lone, faint, flickering star
Gone from its place, nor knoweth when
The sun shall give it shining dole
Lord! no man careth for my soul.

Blind, Lord, so blind! In loneliness
By crowded mart or busy street,
I fold my hands and feel how less
Am I to any one I meet,
Than to Thee one lost billow's roll:
Lord! no man careth for my soul.

Blind, Lord, so blind! And I have knelt
'Mong myriads in Thy house of prayer;
And still sad desolation felt,
Though heavy freighted was the air
With litanies of love: one ghoul
Cried, "No man careth for thy soul!"

Blind, Lord, so blind! The world is blind;
It feeds me, fainting, with a stone:
I cry for bread. Before, behind,
Are hurrying feet; yet all alone
I walk, and no one points the goal
Lord! no man careth for my soul.

Blind, Lord, Oh very blind am I!
If sin of mine sets up the wall
Between my poor sight and Thy sky,
O Friend of man, Who cares for all,
Send sweet peace ere the last bell toll--
Yea, Lord, Thou carest for my soul!

OVER THE HILLS

Over the hills they are waiting to greet us,
They who have scanned all the ultimate places,
Fathomed the world and the things that defeat us--

Evils and graces.

They have no thought for the toiling or spinning,
Striving for bread that is dust in the gaining,
They have won all that is well worth the winning--
Past all distaining.

Now they have done with the pain and the error,
Nevermore here shall the dark things assail them,
Void man's devices and dreams have no terror--
Shall we bewail them?

They have cast off all the strife and derision,
They have put on all the joy of our yearning;
We falter feebly from vision to vision,
Never discerning.

Faint light before us, and shadows to grope in,
Stretching out hands to the starbeams to guide us,
Finding no place but our life's loves to hope in,
Doubt to deride us--

So we climb upward with eyes growing dimmer,
Looking back only to sigh through our smiling,
Wondering still if the palpitant glimmer
Leads past defiling.

They whom we loved have gone over the mountains,
Hands beckon to us like wings of the swallow,
Voices we knew from delectable fountains
Cry to us, "Follow!"

Some were so young when they left us, that morning
Seemed to have flashed and then died into gloaming,
Leaving us wearier 'neath the world's scorning,
Blinder in roaming.

Some, in the time when the manhood is bravest,
Strongest to bear and the hands to endeavour,
When all the life is the firmest and gravest,
Left us for ever.

Some, when the Springtime had grown to December,
Said, "It is done: now the last thing befall me;
I shall sleep well--ah! dear hearts but remember:
Farewell, they call me!"

So the tale runs, and the end, who shall fear it?
Is it not better to sleep than to sorrow?
Tokens will come from the bourne as we near it--
Time's peace, to-morrow.

THE DELIVERER

How has the cloud fallen, and the leaf withered on the tree,
 The lemontree, that standeth by the door?
 The melon and the date have gone bitter to the taste,
 The weevil, it has eaten at the core--
 The core of my heart, the mildew findeth it;
 My music, it is but the drip of tears,
 The garner empty standeth, the oven hath no fire,
 Night filleth me with fears.
 O Nile that floweth deeply, hast thou not heard his voice?
 His footsteps hast thou covered with thy flood?
 He was as one who lifteth up the yoke,
 He was as one who taketh off the chain,
 As one who sheltereth from the rain,
 As one who scattereth bread to the pigeons flying.
 His purse was at his side, his mantle was for me,
 For any who passeth were his mantle and his purse,
 And now like a gourd is he withered from our eyes.
 His friendship, it was like a shady wood--
 Whither has he gone?--Who shall speak for us?
 Who shall save us from the kourbash and the stripes?
 Who shall proclaim us in the palace?
 Who shall contend for us in the gate?
 The sakkia turneth no more; the oxen they are gone;
 The young go forth in chains, the old waken in the night,
 They waken and weep, for the wheel turns backward,
 And the dark days are come again upon us--
 Will he return no more?
 His friendship was like a shady wood,
 O Nile that floweth deeply, hast thou not heard his voice?
 Hast thou covered up his footsteps with thy flood?
 The core of my heart, the mildew findeth it!
 When his footsteps were among us there was peace;
 War entered not the village, nor the call of war:
 Now our homes are as those that have no roofs.
 As a nest decayed, as a cave forsaken,
 As a ship that lieth broken on the beach,
 Is the house where we were born.
 Out in the desert did we bury our gold,
 We buried it where no man robbed us, for his arm was strong.
 Now are the jars empty, gold did not avail
 To save our young men, to keep them from the chains.
 God hath swallowed his voice, or the sea hath drowned it,
 Or the Nile hath covered him with its flood;
 Else would he come when our voices call.
 His word was honey in the prince's ear--
 Will he return no more?

THE DESERT ROAD

In the sands I lived in a hut of palm,
 There was never a garden to see;
 There was never a path through the desert calm,
 Nor a way through its storms for me.

Tenant was I of a lone domain;
The far pale caravans wound
To the rim of the sky, and vanished again;
My call in the waste was drowned.

The vultures came and hovered and fled;
And once there stole to my door
A white gazelle, but its eyes were dread
With the hurt of the wounds it bore.

It passed in the dusk with a foot of fear,
And the white cold mists rolled in;
And my heart was the heart of a stricken deer,
Of a soul in the snare of sin.

My days they withered like rootless things,
And the sands rolled on, rolled wide;
Like a pelican I, with broken wings,
Like a drifting barque on the tide.

But at last, in the light of a rose-red day,
In the windless glow of the morn,
From over the hills and from far away,
You came-ah, the joy of the morn!

And wherever your footsteps fell there crept
A path--it was fair and wide;
A desert road which no sands have swept,
Where never a hope has died.

I followed you forth, and your beauty held
My heart like an ancient song,
By that desert road to the blossoming plains
I came, and the way was long.

So, I set my course by the light of your eyes;
I care not what fate may send;
On the road I tread shine the love-starred skies,
The road with never an end.

A SON OF THE NILE

Oh, the garden where to-day we, sow and to-morrow we reap;
Oh, the sakkia turning by the garden walls;
Oh, the onion-field and the date-tree growing,
And my hand on the plough--by the blessing of God;
Strength of my soul, O my brother, all's well!

A FAREWELL FROM THE HAREM

Take thou thy flight, O soul! Thou hast no more
The gladness of the morning: ah, the perfumed roses
My love laid on my bosom as I slept!
How did he wake me with his lips upon mine eyes,
How did the singers carol, the singers of my soul,
That nest among the thoughts of my beloved!
All silent now, the choruses are gone,
The windows of my soul are closed; no more
Mine eyes look gladly out to see my lover come.
There is no more to do, no more to say
Take flight, my soul, my love returns no more!

AN ARAB LOVE SONG

The bed of my love I will sprinkle with attar of roses,
The face of my love I will touch with the balm,
With the balm of the tree from the farthermost wood,
From the wood without end, in the world without end.
My love holds the cup to my lips, and I drink of the cup,
And the attar of roses I sprinkle will soothe like the evening dew,
And the balm will be healing and sleep, and the cup I will drink,
I will drink of the cup my love holds to my lips.

THE CAMEL-DRIVER TO HIS CAMEL

Fleet is thy foot: thou shalt rest by the etl tree;
Water shalt thou drink from the blue-deep well;
Allah send his gard'ner with the green bersim,
For thy comfort, fleet one, by the etl tree.
As the stars fly, have thy footsteps flown--
Deep is the well, drink, and be still once more;
Till the pursuing winds, panting, have found thee
And, defeated, sink still beside thee--
By the well and the etl tree.

THE TALL DAKOON

The Tall Dakoon, the bridle rein he shook, and called aloud,
His Arab steed sprang down the mists which wrapped them like a
shroud;
But up there rang the clash of steel, the clanking silver chain,
The war-cry of the Tall Dakoon, the moaning of the slain.

And long they fought--the Tall Dakoon, the children of the mist,
But he was swift with lance and shield, and supple of the wrist,
Yet if he rose, or if he fell, no man hath proof to show--
And wide the world beyond the mists, and deep the vales below!

For when a man, because of love, hath wrecked and burned his ships,
And when a man for hate of love hath curses on his lips,
Though he should be the peasant born, or be the Tall Dakoon,
What matters then, of hap, or place, the mist comes none too soon!

THERE IS SORROW ON THE SEA

Our ship is a beautiful lady,
Friendly and ready and fine;
She runs her race with the storm in her face,
Like a sea-bird over the brine.

In her household work no hand does shirk,--
No need of belaying-pins,--
And the captain dear and the engineer,
They both look after the Twins:

The Twins that drive her to do her best
Where the Roaring Forties rage
From the Fastnet Height to the Liberty Light,
And the Customs landing-stage.

Where the crank-shafts pitch in the iron ditch,
Where the main-shaft swims and glides,
Where the boilers keep, in the sullen deep,
A master-hand on the Tides;

Where the reeking shuttle and booming bar
Keep time in the hum of the toiling hive,--
The men of the deep, while the travellers sleep,
Their steel-clad coursers drive.

And Davy Jones' locker is full
Of the labour that moves the world;
And brave they be who serve the sea
To keep our flags unfurled:

The Union Jack and the Stripes and Stars,
Gallant and free and true,
In a world-wide trade, and a fame well made,
And humanity's work to do.

Now list, ye landsmen, as ye roam,
To the voice of the men offshore,
Who've sailed in the old ship Never Return,
With the great First Commodore.

They fitted foreign (God keeps the sea),
They stepped aboard (God breaks the wind).

And the babe that held by his father's knee,
He leaves, with his lass, behind.

And the lad will sail as his father sailed,
And a lass she will wait again;
And he'll get his scrip in his father's ship,
And he'll sail to the Southern Main;

And he'll sail to the North, and he'll make to the East,
And he'll overhaul the West;
And he'll pass outspent as his father went
From his landbirds in the nest.

There are hearts that bleed, there are mouths to feed,
(Now one and all, ye landsmen, list)
And the rent's to pay on the quarter-day--
(What ye give will never be missed)

And you'll never regret, as your whistle you wet,
In Avenue Number Five,
That you gave your "quid" to the lonely kid
And the widow, to keep 'em alive.

So out with your golden shilling, my lad,
And your bright bank-note, my dear!
We are safe to-night near the Liberty Light,
And the mariner says, What Cheer!

THE AUSTRALIAN STOCKRIDER

I ride to the tramp and shuffle of hoofs
Away to the wild waste land,
I can see the sun on the station roofs,
And a stretch of the shifting sand;
The forest of horns is a shaking sea,
Where white waves tumble and pass;
The cockatoo screams in the myall-tree,
And the adder-head gleams in the grass.

The clouds swing out from beyond the hills
And valance the face of the sky,
And the Spirit of Winds creeps up and fills
The plains with a plaintive cry;
A boundary-rider on lonely beat
Creeps round the horizon's rim;
He has little to do, and plenty to eat,
And the world is a blank to him.

His friends are his pipe, and dog, and tea,
His wants, they are soon supplied;
And his mind, like the weeping myall-tree,
May droop on his weary ride,
But he lives his life in his quiet way,
Forgetting,--perhaps forgot,--

Till another rider will come some day,
And he will have ridden, God wot!

To the Wider Plains with the measureless bounds:
And I know, if I had my choice,
I would rather ride in those pleasant grounds,
Than to sit 'neath the spell of the voice
Of the sweetest seraph that you could find
In all the celestial place;
And I hope that the Father, whose heart is kind,
When I speak to Him face to face,

Will give me something to do up there
Among all the folks that have died,
That will give me freedom and change of air,
If it's only to boundary ride:
For I somehow think, in the Great Stampede,
When the world crowds up to the Bar,
The unluckiest mortals will be decreed
To camp on the luckiest star.

THE BRIDGE OF THE HUNDRED SPANS

It was the time that the Long Divide
Blooms and glows like an hour-old bride;
It was the days when the cattle come
Back from their winter wand'rings home;
Time when the Kicking Horse shows its teeth,
Snarls and foams with a demon's breath;
When the sun with a million levers lifts
Abodes of snow from the rocky rifts;
When the line-man's eyes, like the lynx's, scans
The lofty Bridge of the Hundred Spans.

Round a curve, down a sharp incline,
If the red-eyed lantern made no sign,
Swept the train, and upon the bridge
That binds a canon from ridge to ridge.
Never a watchman like old Carew;
Knew his duty, and did it, too;
Good at scouting when scouting paid,
Saved a post from an Indian raid--
Trapper, miner, and mountain guide,
Less one arm in a lumber slide;
Walked the line like a panther's guard,
Like a maverick penned in a branding-yard.
"Right as rain," said the engineers,
"With the old man working his eyes and ears."

"Safe with Carew on the mountain wall,"
Was how they put it, in Montreal.
Right and safe was it East and West
Till a demon rose on the mountain crest,
And drove at its shoulders angry spears,

That it rose from its sleep of a thousand years,
That its heaving breast broke free the cords
Of imprisoned snow as with flaming swords;
And, like a star from its frozen height,
An avalanche leaped one spring-tide night;
Leaped with a power not God's or man's
To smite the Bridge of the Hundred Spans.

It smote a score of the spans; it slew
With its icy squadrons old Carew.
Asleep he lay in his snow-bound grave,
While the train drew on that he could not save;
It would drop, doom-deep, through the trap of death,
From the light above, to the dark beneath;
And town and village both far and near
Would mourn the tragedy ended here.

One more hap in a hapless world,
One more wreck where the tide is swirled,
One more heap in a waste of sand,
One more clasp of a palsied hand,
One more cry to a soundless Word,
One more flight of a wingless bird;
The ceaseless falling, the countless groan,
The waft of a leaf and the fall of a stone;
Ever the cry that a Hand will save,
Ever the end in a fast-closed grave;
Ever and ever the useless prayer,
Beating the walls of a mute despair.
Doom, all doom--nay then, not all doom!
Rises a hope from the fast-closed tomb.
Write not "Lost," with its grinding bans,
On life, or the Bridge of the Hundred Spans.

See, on the canon's western ridge,
There stands a girl! She beholds the bridge
Smitten and broken; she sees the need
For a warning swift, and a daring deed.
See then the act of a simple girl;
Learn from it, thinker, and priest, and churl.
See her, the lantern between her teeth,
Crossing the quivering trap of death.
Hand over hand on a swaying rail,
Sharp in her ears and her heart the wail
Of a hundred lives; and she has no fear
Save that her prayer be not granted her.
Cold is the snow on the rail, and chill
The wind that comes from the frozen hill.
Her hair blows free and her eyes are full
Of the look that makes Heaven merciful--
Merciful, ah! quick, shut your eyes,
Lest you wish to see how a brave girl dies!
Dies--not yet; for her firm hands clasped
The solid bridge, as the breach out-gasped,
And the rail that had held her downward swept,
Where old Carew in his snow-grave slept.

Now up and over the steep incline,
She speeds with the red light for a sign;

She hears the cry of the coming train,
it trembles like lanceheads through her brain;
And round the curve, with a foot as fleet
As a sinner's that flees from the Judgment-seat,
She flies; and the signal swings, and then
She knows no more; but the enginemen
Lifted her, bore her, where women brought
The flush to her cheek, and with kisses caught
The warm breath back to her pallid lips,
The life from lives that were near eclipse;
Blessed her, and praised her, and begged her name
That all of their kindred should know her fame;
Should tell how a girl from a cattle-ranche
That night defeated an avalanche.
Where is the wonder the engineer
Of the train she saved, in half a year
Had wooed her and won her? And here they are
For their homeward trip in a parlour car!
Which goes to show that Old Nature's plans
Were wrecked with the Bridge of the Hundred Spans.

NELL LATORE

Rebel? . . . I grant you,--my comrades then
Were called Old Pascal Dubois' Men
Half-breeds all of us . . . I, a scamp,
The best long-shot in the Touchwood Camp;
Muscle and nerve like strings of steel,
Sound in the game of bit and heel--
There's your guide-book. . . . But, Jeanne Amray,
Telegraph-clerk at Sturgeon Bay,
French and thoroughbred, proud and sweet,
Sunshine down to her glancing feet,
Sang one song 'neath the northern moon
That changed God's world to a tropic noon;
And Love burned up on its golden floor
Years of passion for Nell Latore--
Nell Latore with her tawny hair,
Glowing eyes and her reckless air;
Lithe as an alder, straight and tall--
Pride and sorrow of Rise-and-Fall!
Indian blood in her veins ran wild,
And a Saxon father called her child;
Women feared her, and men soon found
When they trod on forbidden ground.
Ride! there's never a cayuse knew
Saddle slip of her; pistols, too,
Seemed to learn in her hands a knack
How to travel a dead-sure track.
Something in both alike maybe,
Something kindred in ancestry,
Some warm touch of an ancient pride
Drew my feet to her willing side.
My comrade, she, in the Touchwood Camp,

To ride, hunt, trail by the fire-fly lamp;
To track the moose to his moose-yard; pass
The bustard's doom through the prairie grass;
To hark at night to the crying loon
Beat idle wings on the still lagoon;
To hide from death in the drifting snow,
To slay the last of the buffalo. . . .
Ah, well, I speak of the days that were;
And I swear to you, I was kind to her.
I lost her. How are the best friends lost?
The lightning lines of our souls got crossed--
Crossed, and could never again be free
Till Death should call from his midnight sea.

One spring brought me my wedding day,
Brought me my bright-eyed Jeanne Amray;
Brought that night to our cabin door
My old, lost comrade, Nell Latore.
Her eyes swam fire, and her cheek was red,
Her full breast heaved as she darkly said:
"The coyote hides from the wind and rain,
The wild horse flies from the hurricane,
But who can flee from the half-breed's hate,
That rises soon and that watches late?"
Then went; and I laughed Jeanne's fears afar,
But I thought that wench was our evil star.
Be sure, when a woman's heart gets hard,
It works up war like a navy yard.

Half-breed and Indian troubles came--
The same old story--land and game;
And Dubois' Men were the first to feel
The bullet-sting and the clip of steel;
And last in battle 'gainst thousands sent,
With Gatling guns for our punishment.
Every cause has its traitor; then
How should it fare with Dubois' Men!
Beaten their cause was, and hunted down,
Like to a moose in the chase full blown,
Panting they stood; and a Judas sold
Their hiding-place for a piece of gold.
And while scouts searched for us night and day
Jeanne telegraphed on at Sturgeon Bay.
Picture her there as she stands alone,
Cold, in the glow of the afternoon;
Picture, I ask you, that patient wife,
Numb with fear for her husband's life,
When a sharp click-click awakes her brain
To life, with the needle-points of pain.
A message it was to Camp Pousette--
One that the half-breeds think on yet:
"Dubois' gang are in Rocky Glen,
Take a hundred and fifty men;
Go by the next express," it said,
"Bring them up here, alive or dead!" . . .

"Go by the next express!" and she,
Standing there by the silent key,
Said it over and over again,

Thinking of one of Dubois' Men
Thinking in anguish, heart and head,
Of him, brought up there alive or dead.
Save him, and perish to save him, yes!
But three hours more, and that next express
Would thunder by her, and she, alas!
Must stand there still and let it pass.
Duty was duty, and hers was clear;
God seemed far off, and no friend near.
But the truest friend and the swiftest horse
Must ride that ride on a breakneck course;
And with truest horse and swiftest friend,
To the fast express was the winning end!
And as if one pang was needed more,
There stood in the doorway, Nell Latore--
Nell Latore, with her mocking face,
Restless eyes, and her evil grace;
Quick to read in the wife's sad eyes,
The deep, strange woe, and the hurt surprise.
Slow she said, with piercing breath,
"Rebel fighter dies rebel death!"
Said, and paused; for she seemed to see
Far through the other's misery,
Something that stilled her; triumph fled
Shamed and fast, as the young wife said--
"He keeps his faith with an oath he swore,
For the half-breed's freedom, Nell Latore;
And, did he lie here, eyes death-dim,
You, if you spoke but truth of him,
Truth, truth only, should stand and say,
'He never wronged me, Jeanne Amray.'"
Then, for a moment, standing there,
Hushed and cold as a dead man's prayer,
Nell Latore, with the woman now,
Scorching the past from her eyes and brow
"Trust me," she said, like an angel-call,
"Tell me his danger, tell me all."

Quick resolve to a quick-told tale--
Nell Latore, to the glistening rail
Fled, and on it a hand-car drew,
Seized the handles, and backward threw
One swift, farewell look, and said,
"You shall have him alive, not dead!"
Ah, well for her that her arms were strong,
And cord and nerve like a knotted thong,
And well for Jeanne in her sharp distress,
That Nell was racing the fast express
Her whole life bent to this one deed,
And, like a soul from its prison freed,
Rising, dilating, reached across
Hills of conquest from plains of loss.
Gorges echoed as she passed by,
Wild fowl rose with a plaintive cry;
On she sped; and the white steel rang--
"Save him--save him for her!" it sang.
Once, a lad at a worn-out mine
Strove to warn her with awe-struck sign--
Turned she neither to left nor right,

Strained till the Rock Hills came in sight;
"But two miles more," to herself she said,
"Then she shall have him alive, not dead!"
The merciful gods that moment heard
Her promise, and helped her to keep her word;
For, when the wheels of the fast express
Slowed through the gates of that wilderness,
Round a headland and far away
Sailed the husband of Jeanne Amray.
While all that hundred-and-fifty then,
Hot on the trail of the Dubois Men,
Knew, as they stood by the pine-girt store,
The girl that had foiled them--Nell Latore.
Slow she moved from among them, turned
Where the sky to the westward burned;
Gazed for a moment, set her hands
Over her brow, so! drew the strands
Loose and rich of her tawny hair,
Once through her fingers, standing there;
Then again to the rail she passed.
One more look to the West she cast,
And into the East she drew away:
Backwards and forwards her brown arms play,
Forwards and backwards, till far and dim,
She grew one with the night's dun rim;
Backwards and forwards, and then, was gone
Into I know not what . . . alone.
She came not back, she may never come;
But a young wife lives in a cabin home,
Who prays each night that, alive or dead,
Come God's own rest for her lonely head:
And I--shall I see her then no more,
My comrade, my old love, Nell Latore?

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