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ALONG THE SHORE

BY ROSE HAWTHORNE LATHROP

To
G. P. L.

We see the sky,--we love it day by day;
We feel the wind of Spring, from blossoms winging;
We meet with souls tender as tints in May:
For these large ecstasies what are we bringing?

There is no price, best friend, for greatest meed.
Laid on the altar of our true affection,
Wild flowers of love for me must intercede:
And lo! I win your unexcelled protection.

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ALONG THE SHORE.

* * * * *

INLET AND SHORE.

Here is a world of changing glow,
Where moods roll swiftly far and wide;
Waves sadder than a funeral's pride,
Or bluer than the harebell's blow!

The sunlight makes the black hulls cast
A firefly radiance down the deep;
The inlet gleams, the long clouds sweep,
The sails flit up, the sails drop past.

The far sea-line is hushed and still;
The nearer sea has life and voice;
Each soul may take his fondest choice,--
The silence, or the restless thrill.

O little children of the deep,--
The single sails, the bright, full sails,
Gold in the sun, dark when it fails,
Now you are smiling, then you weep!

O blue of heaven, and bluer sea,
And green of wave, and gold of sky,
And white of sand that stretches by,
Toward east and west, away from me!

O shell-strewn shore, that silent hears
The legend of the mighty main,
And tells to none the lore again,--
We catch one utterance only: "Years!"

IMPERSONALITY

I dreamed within a dream the sun was gold;
And as I walked beneath this golden sun,
The world was like a mighty play-room old,
Made for our pleasure since it was begun.

But when I waked I found the sun was air,
The world was air, and all things only seemed,
Except the thoughts we grow by; for in prayer
We change to spirits such as God has dreamed.

A PROTEAN GLIMPSE.

Time and I pass to and fro,
Hardly greeting as we go,--
Go askant, like crossing wings
Of sea-gulls where the brave sea sings.

Time, the messenger of Fate!
Cunning master of debate,
Cunning soother of all sorrow,
Ruthless robber of to-morrow;
Tyrant to our dallying feet,
Though patron of a life complete;
Like Puck upon a rosy cloud,
He rides to distance while we woo him,--
Like pale Remorse wrapped in a shroud,
He brings the world in sackcloth to him!
O dimly seen, and often met

As shadowings of a wild regret!
O king of us, yet feebly served;
Dispenser of the dooms reserved;
So silent at the folly done,
So deadly when our respite's gone!--
As sea-gulls, slanting, cross at sea,
So cross our rapid flights with thee.

POWER AGAINST POWER.

[Nathaniel Hawthorne, 1864.]

Where spells were wrought he sat alone,
The wizard touching minds of men
Through far-swung avenues of power,
And proudly held the magic pen.

By the dark wall a white Shape gleams,
By morning's light a Shadow falls!
Is it a servant of his brain,
Or Power that to his power calls?

By morning's light the Shadow looms,
And watches with relentless eyes;
In night-gloom holds the glimmering lamp,
While the pen ever slower flies.

By the dark wall it beckons still,
By evening light it darkly stays;
The wizard looks, and his great life
Thrills with the sense of finished days.

A Shape so ghost-like by the sun,
With smiles that chill as dusks descend!
The glancing wizard, stern and pale,
Admits the presence of the End.

Health has forsaken, death is near,
The hand moves slower, eyes grow dim;
The End approaches, and the man
Dreams of no spell for quelling Him.

LIFE'S PRIESTESS.

All to herself a woman never sings
A happy song. Oh no! but it is so

As when the thrush has closed down his wings
Within the wood, and hears his hidden woe
From his own bill fill aisles of leaves, and go
About the wood and come to him again.

LOVE NOW.

The sanctity that is about the dead
To make us love them more than late, when here,
Is not it well to find the living dear
With sanctity like this, ere they have fled?

The tender thoughts we nurture for a loss
Of mother, friend, or child, oh! it were wise
To spend this glory on the earnest eyes,
The longing heart, that feel life's present cross.

Give also mercy to the living here
Whose keen-strung souls will quiver at your touch;
The utmost reverence is not too much
For eyes that weep, although the lips may sneer.

ONE AND ONE.

The thanking heart can only silence keep;
The breaking heart can only die alone:
Our happy love above abysses deep
Of unguessed power hovers, and is gone!

Come, take my hand, O friend I take for life!
You cannot reach my soul through touch or gaze;
Be our full lips with infinite meanings rife:
The longed-for words, which of us ever says?

THE VIOLIN.

Touch gently, friend, and slow, the violin, So sweet and low,
That my dreaming senses may be beckoned so
Into a rest as deep as the long past "years ago!"
So softly, then, begin;

And ever gently touch the violin,
Until an impulse grows of a sudden, like wind
On the brow of the earth,
And the voice of your violin shows its wide-swung girth
With a crash of the strings and a medley of rage and mirth;
And my rested senses spring
Like juice from a broken rind,
And the joys that your melodies bring
I know worth a life-time to win,
As you waken to love and this hour your violin!

GERTRUDE.

[In Memory: 1877.]

What shall I say, my friend, my own heart healing,
When for my love you cannot answer me?
This earth would quake, alas! might I but see
You smile, death's rigorous law repealing!
Pale lips, your mystery so well concealing,
May not the eloquent, varied minstrelsy
Of my inspired ardor potent be
To touch your chords to music's uttered feeling?
Friend, here you cherished flowers: send me now
One ghostly bloom to prove that you are blessed.
No? If denial such as brands my brow
Be in your heavenly regions, too, confessed,
Oh may it prove the truth that your still eyes
Foresee the end of all futurities!

UNITY IN SPACE.

Take me away into a storm of snow
So white and soft, I feel no deathly chill,
But listen to the murmuring overflow
Of clouds that fall in many a frosty rill!

Take me away into the sunset's glow,
That holds a summer in a glorious bloom;
Or take me to the shadowed woods that grow
On the sky's mountains, in the evening gloom!

Give me an entrance to the limpid lake
When moonbeams shine across its purity!
A life there is, within the life we take
So commonly, for which 't were well to die.

THE SHELL AND THE WORLD.

The world was like a shell to me,--
Its voice with distant song was low;
But now its mysteries I know:
I hear the turmoil of the sea.

The whirling, soft, and tender sound
That meant I knew not what of lore,--
I dream its mystery now no more:
Its reckless meaning I have found.

O shell! I held thee to my ears
When I was young, and smiled with pride
To stand aglow at marvel's side!
O world, thy voice is wild with tears!

THE CLOCK-TOWER BELL.

Say not, sad bell, another hour hath come,
Bare for the record of a world of crime;
Toll, rather, friend, the end of hideous Time,
Wherein we bloom, live, die, yet have no home!

Bell, laurels would we o'er thy pulsing twine,
And sing thee songs of triumph with glad tears,
If to the warring of our haggard years
Thy clang should herald peace along the line!

OURS TO ENDURE.

We speak of the world that passes away,--
The world of men who lived years ago,
And could not feel that their hearts' quick glow
Would fade to such ashen lore to-day.

We hear of death that is not our woe,
And see the shadow of funerals creeping
Over the sweet fresh roads by the reaping;
But do we weep till our loved ones go?

When one is lost who is greater than we,
And loved us so well that death should relieve
Of all hearts this one to us; when we must leave
His grave,--the past will break like the sea!

BROKEN WAVES.

The sun is lying on the garden-wall,
The full red rose is sweetening all the air,
The day is happier than a dream most fair;
The evening weaves afar a wide-spread pall,
And lo! sun, day, and rose, no longer there!

I have a lover now my life is young,
I have a love to keep this many a day;
My heart will hold it when my life is gray,
My love will last although my heart be wrung.
My life, my heart, my love shall fade away!

O lover loved, the day has only gone!
In death or life, our love can only go;
Never forgotten is the joy we know,
We follow memory when life is done:
No wave is lost in all the tides that flow.

WHY SAD TO-DAY?

Why is the nameless sorrowing look
So often thought a whim?
God-willed, the willow shades the brook,
The gray owl sings a hymn;

Sadly the winds change, and the rain
Comes where the sunlight fell:
Sad is our story, told again,
Which past years told so well!

Why not love sorrow and the glance
That ends in silent tears?
If we count up the world's mischance,
Grieving is in arrears.

Why should I know why I could weep?
The old urns cannot read

The names they wear of kings they keep
In ashes; both are dead.

And like an urn the heart must hold
Aims of an age gone by:
What the aims were we are not told;
We hold them, who knows why?

THE GHOSTS OF REVELLERS.

At purple eyes beside the grain,
Our loves on altars we had burned,
And mixed our tribute with the dew,
Our tears, when rosy dawn returned.

Our voices we had joined with song
Of bird ecstatic, light, and free;
Our laughter rollicked with the brook
Running through darkness merrily.

At purple eyes beside the rim
Of frozen lakes our loves we burned,
And slid away when stillness reigned:
Deep the vast woods our bodies urned.

In starlit night along the shade
Of our dusk tombs our spirits glide;
We hear the echoing of the wind,
We breathe the sighs we living sighed.

LIFE'S BURYING-GROUND.

My graveyard holds no once-loved human forms,
Grown hideous and forgotten, left alone,
But every agony my heart has known,--
The new-born trusts that died, the drift of storms.

I visit every day the shadowy grove;
I bury there my outraged tender thought;
I bring the insult for the love I sought,
And my contempt, where I had tried to love.

BEYOND UTTERANCE.

There in the midst of gloom the church-spire rose,
And not a star lit any side of heaven;
In glades not far the damp reeds coldly touched
Their sides, like soldiers dead before they fall;
There in the belfry clung the sleeping bat,--
Most abject creature, hanging like a leaf
Down from the bell-tongue, silent as the speech
The dead have lost ere they are laid in graves.

A melancholy prelude I would sing
To song more drear, while thought soars into gloom.
Find me the harbor of the roaming storm,
Or end of souls whose doom is life itself!
So vague, yet surely sad, the song I dream
And utter not. So sends the tide its roll,--
Unending chord of horror for a woe
We but half know, even when we die of it.

THE SUICIDE.

A shadowed form before the light,
A gleaming face against the night,
Clutched hands across a halo bright
Of blowing hair,--her fixed sight
Stares down where moving black, below,
The river's deathly waves in murmurous silence flow.

The moon falls fainting on the sky,
The dark woods bow their heads in sorrow,
The earth sends up a misty sigh:
A soul defies the morrow!

FOR OTHERS.

Weeping for another's woe,
Tears flow then that would not flow
When our sorrow was our own,
And the deadly, stiffening blow
Was upon our own heart given
In the moments that have flown!

Cringing at another's cry

In the hollow world of grief
Stills the anguish of our pain
For the fate that made us die
To our hopes as sweet as vain;
And our tears can flow again!

One storm blows the night this way,
But another brings the day.

ZEST.

Labor not in the murky dell,
But till your harvest hill at morn;
Stoop to no words that, rank and fell,
Grow faster than the rustling corn.

With gladdening eyes go greet the sun,
Who lifts his brow in varied light;
Bring light where'er your feet may run:
So bring a day to sorrow's night.

THE UNPERFECTED.

A broken mirror in a trembling hand;
Sad, trembling lips that utter broken thought:
One of a wide and wandering, aimless band;
One in the world who for the world hath naught.

A heart that loves beyond the shallow word;
A heart well loved beyond its flowerless worth:
One who asks God to answer the prayer heard;
One from the dust returning to the earth.

Can miracle ne'er make the mirror whole
For one who, seeing, could be nobly bold?
Who could well die, to magnify the soul,--
Whose strength of love will shake the graveyard's mould?

GOD-MADE.

Somewhere, somewhere in this heart

There lies a jewel from the sea,
Or from a rock, or from the sand,
Or dropped from heaven wondrously.

Oh, burn, my jewel, in my glance!
Oh, shimmer on my lips in prayer!
Light my love's eyes to read my soul,
Which, wrapt in ashes, yet is fair!

When dead I lie, forgotten, deep
Within the earth and sunken past,
Still shall my jewel light my dust,--
The worth God gives us, first and last!

A SONG BEFORE GRIEF.

Sorrow, my friend,
When shall you come again?
The wind is slow, and the bent willows send
Their silvery motions wearily down the plain.
The bird is dead
That sang this morning through the summer rain!

Sorrow, my friend,
I owe my soul to you.
And if my life with any glory end
Of tenderness for others, and the words are true,
Said, honoring, when I'm dead,--
Sorrow, to you, the mellow praise, the funeral
wreath, are due.

And yet, my friend,
When love and joy are strong,
Your terrible visage from my sight I rend
With glances to blue heaven. Hovering along,
By mine your shadow led,
"Away!" I shriek, "nor dare to work my new-sprung mercies wrong!"

Still, you are near:
Who can your care withstand?
When deep eternity shall look most clear,
Sending bright waves to kiss the trembling land,
My joy shall disappear,--
A flaming torch thrown to the golden sea by your pale hand.

PRIDE: FATE.

Lullaby on the wing
Of my song, O my own!
Soft airs of evening
Join my song's murmuring tone.

Lullaby, O my love!
Close your eyes, lake-like clear;
Lullaby, while above
Wake the stars, with heaven near.

Lullaby, sweet, so still
In arms of death; I alone
Sing lullaby, like a rill,
To your form, cold as a stone.

Lullaby, O my heart!
Sleep in peace, all alone;
Night has come, and your part
For loving is wholly done!

FRANCIE.

I loved a child as we should love
Each other everywhere;
I cared more for his happiness
Than I dreaded my own despair.

An angel asked me to give him
My whole life's dearest cost;
And in adding mine to his treasures
I knew they could never be lost.

To his heart I gave the gold,
Though little my own had known;
To his eyes what tenderness
From youth in mine had grown!

I gave him all my buoyant
Hope for my future years;
I gave him whatever melody
My voice had steeped in tears.

Upon the shore of darkness
His drifted body lies.
He is dead, and I stand beside him,
With his beauty in my eyes.

I am like those withered petals
We see on a winter day,
That gladly gave their color
In the happy summer away.

I am glad I lavished my worthiest
To fashion his greater worth;
Since he will live in heaven,
I shall lie content in the earth.

LOST REALITY.

O soul of life, 't is thee we long to hear,
Thine eyes we seek for, and thy touch we dream;
Lost from our days, thou art a spirit near,--
Life needs thine eloquence, and ways supreme.
More real than we who but a semblance wear,
We see thee not, because thou wilt not seem!

CLOSING CHORDS.

I.

Death's Eloquence.

When I shall go
Into the narrow home that leaves
No room for wringing of the hands and hair,
And feel the pressing of the walls which bear
The heavy sod upon my heart that grieves,
(As the weird earth rolls on),
Then I shall know
What is the power of destiny. But still,
Still while my life, however sad, be mine,
I war with memory, striving to divine
Phantom to-morrows, to outrun the past;
For yet the tears of final, absolute ill
And ruinous knowledge of my fate I shun.
Even as the frail, instinctive weed
Tries, through unending shade, to reach at last
A shining, mellowing, rapture-giving sun;
So in the deed of breathing joy's warm breath,
Fain to succeed,
I, too, in colorless longings, hope till death.

II.

Peace.

An angel spoke with me, and lo, he hoarded
My falling tears to cheer a flower's face!
For, so it seems, in all the heavenly space
A wasted grief was never yet recorded.
Victorious calm those holy tones afforded
Unto my soul, whose outcry, in disgrace,
Changed to low music, leading to the place
Where, though well armed, with futile end awarded,
My past lay dead. "Wars are of earth!" he cried;
"Endurance only breathes immortal air.
Courage eternal, by a world defied,
Still wears the front of patience, smooth and fair."
Are wars so futile, and is courage peace?
Take, then, my soul, thus gently thy release!

GRACE.

Ill-wrought life we look at as we die!
Mistaken, selfish, meagre, and unmeet;
So graven on the hearts that cruelly
We have deprived of many an hour sweet:
O ill-wrought life we look at as we die!

O day of God we look at as we die!
Grace, like a river flowing toward our feet;
Wide pardon blowing with the breezes by;
Love telling us bright tales of the Complete;--
While listening, hoping, thanking, lo, we die!

ENDLESS RESOURCE.

New days are dear, and cannot be unloved,
Though in deep grief we mourn, and cling to death;
Who has not known, in living on, a breath
Of infinite joy that has life's rapture proved?

If I have thought that in this rainbow world
The best we see was but a preface given

Of infinite greater tints in heaven,
And life or no, heaven yet would be unfurl'd,--

I did belie the soul-wide joys of earth,
And feelings deep as lights that dwell in seas.
Can heaven itself outlove such depths as these?
Live on! Life holds more than we dream of worth!

THE BABY.

Pray, have you heard the news?
Sturdy in lungs and thews,
There's a fine baby!
Ring bells of crystal lip,
Wave boughs with blossoming tip;
Think what he may be!

Love cannot love enough,
Winter is never rough
All round such sweetness;
One of a million more
Sent to the glad heart's door
In their completeness!

Such news is never old,
Though in each ear't is told,
As a first birthday.
Welcome, thou ray of light!
In golden prayers bedight,
Sail down thy mirth-way!

A Waltz.

Delicate gayety,
Strains of a violin;
Graceful steps begin--
Roses at her waist!
Clouds of sparkling light,
Whispers of lovers alone
As the couples drift one by one
In the golden sheen of the ball.
Alone in the happy crowd
Each pair glides past each pair;
Delicate strains of an air;
Rainbow gayety:

Pride of the moment throbs,
Smiles, on the youthful cheek,
Fearing no ill-wind's freak,
Warm in the heart of the waltz;--
Moving like melody,
Flowing in light and glee,
Young as the May is she,
Strong as the June I am.

FIRST BLOOM OF LOVE.

O girl of spring! O brown-eyed girl!
Gathering violets near the woods,
Whose coy young petals half unfurl
The mystery of their dulcet moods.

O blushing girl! O girl of spring!
I hear no answer move the air;
Yet eyelids hovering on the wing
Reveal deep meanings curtained there.

O girl of spring! O spring of love!
Let silent violets be the speech
From you to me, and let them prove
What maiden silence will not teach!

A WOOING SONG.

O love, I come; thy last glance guideth me!
Drawn, too, by webs of shadow, like thine hair;
For, Sweet, the mystery
Of thy dark hair the deepening dusk hath caught.
In early moonlight gleamings, lo, I see
Thy white hands beckon to the garden, where
Dim day and silvery darkness are inwrought
As our two lives, where, joining soul with soul,
The tints shall mingle in a fairer whole.
Oh! dost thou hear? I call, beloved, I call,
My stout heart trembling till thy words return;
Hope-lifted, I float faster with the fall
Of fear toward joy such fear alone can earn!

DOROTHY.

Dear little Dorothy, she is no more!
I have wandered world-wide, from shore to shore,
I have seen as great beauties as ever were wed;
But none can console me for Dorothy dead.

Dear little Dorothy! How strange it seems
That her face is less real than the faces of dreams;
That the love which kept true, and the lips which so spoke,
Are more lost than my heart, which died not when it broke!

MORNING SONG.

Turn thy face to me, my love,
I come from out the morning;
Give thy hand to me, my love,
I'm dewy from the dawning.

Touch my lips with thine, my love,
I've tasted air at daybreak;
Gaze into my eyes, my love,
At the sky's waking they wake.

LOOKING BACKWARD.

Gray towers make me think of thee,
Thou girl of olden minstrelsy,
Young as the sunlight of to-day,
Silent as tasselled boughs in May!

A wind-flower in a world of harm,
A harebell on a turret's arm,
A pearl upon the hilt of fame
Thou wert, fair child of some high name.

The velvet page, the deep-eyed knight,
The heartless falcon, poised for flight,
The dainty steed and graceful hound,
In thee their keenest rapture found.

But for old ballads, and the rhyme
And writ of genius o'er the time
When keeps had newly reared their towers,
The winning scene had not been ours.

O Chivalry! thy age was fair,
When even knaves set out to dare
Their heads for any barbarous crime,
And hate was brave, and love sublime.

The bugle-note I send so far
Across Time's moors to thee, sweet star,
Where stands thy castle in its mist,
Hear, if the wandering breezes list!

UNLOVED.

Paler than the water's white
Stood the maiden in the shade,
And more silent than the night
Were her lips together laid;

Eyes she hid so long and still
By lids wet with unshed tears,
Hands she loosely clasped at will,
Though her heart was full of fears.

Never, never, never more
May her soul with joy be moved;
Silent, silent, silent,--for
He was silent whom she loved.

THE CLOCK'S SONG.

Eileen of four,
Eileen of smiles;
Eileen of five,
Eileen of tears;
Eileen of ten, of fifteen years,
Eileen of youth
And woman's wiles;
Eileen of twenty,
In love's land,
Eileen all tender
In her bliss,
Untouched by sorrow's treacherous kiss,
And the sly weapon in life's hand,--
Eileen aroused to share all fate,
Eileen a wife,

Pale, beautiful,
Eileen most grave
And dutiful,
Mourning her dreams in queenly state.
Eileen! Eileen!....

BROKEN-HEARTED.

"Cross my hands upon my breast,"
Read her last behest.
"Turn my cheek upon the pillow,
As resting from life's stormy billow
With sleep's fine zest!"

"Cross my hands upon my breast,"
Read her last behest,
"That the patient bones may lie
In form of thanks eternally,
Grimly expressed!"

We clasped her hands upon her breast:
Oh mockery at misery's hest!
We hid in flowers her body's grief,--
Counting by many a rose and leaf
Her days unblessed!

THE CYNIC'S FEALTY.

We all have hearts that shake alike
Beneath the arias of Fate's hand;
Although the cynics sneering stand,
These too the deathless powers strike.

A trembling lover's infinite trust,
To the last drop of doating blood,
Feels not alone the ocean flood
Of desperate grief, when dreams are dust.

The scornfullest souls, with mourning eyes,
Pant o'er again their ghostly ways;--
Dread night-paths, where were gleaming days
When life was lovelier than the skies!

THE GIRLS WE MIGHT HAVE WED.

Come, brothers, let us sing a dirge,--
A dirge for myriad chances dead;
In grief your mournful accents merge:
Sing, sing the girls we might have wed!

Sweet lips were those we never pressed
In love that never lost the dew
In sunlight of a love confessed,--
Kind were the girls we never knew!

Sing low, sing low, while in the glow
Of fancy's hour those forms we trace,
Hovering around the years that go;
Those years our lives can ne'er replace!

Sweet lips are those that never turn
A cruel word; dear eyes that lead
The heart on in a blithe concern;
White hand of her we did not wed;

Fair hair or dark, that falls along
A form that never shrinks with time;
Bright image of a realm of song,
Standing beside our years of prime;--

When you shall go, then may we know
The heart is dead, the man is old.
Life can no other charm bestow
When girls we might have loved turn cold!

"NEITHER!"

So ancient to myself I seem,
I might have crossed grave Styx's stream
 A year ago;--
 My word, 'tis so;--
And now be wandering with my sires
In that rare world we wonder o'er,
Half disbelieve, and prize the more!

Yet spruce I am, and still can mix
My wits with all the sparkling tricks,
 A youth and girl
 At twenty's whirl
Play round each other's bosom fires,

On this brisk earth I once enjoyed:--
But now I'm otherwise employed!

Am I a thing without a name;
A sort of dummy in the game?
"Not young, not old:"
A world is told
Of misery in that lengthened phrase;
Yet, gad, although my coat be smooth,
My forehead's wrinkled,--that's the truth!

I hardly know which road to go.
With youth? Perhaps. With age? Oh no!
Well, then, with those
Who share my woes,
Doomed to mere fashionable ways,--
Fair matrons, cigarettes, and tea,
Sighs, mirrors, and society?

Is it a folly still to twirl,
And smirk and promenade and querl
About the town?
I'll put this down:
A man becomes downright _blast_
Before he knows that he is either
That, or what I am--call it, "Neither."

Oh, for a hint what we shall do,
We bucks whose comedy is through!
Who'd be sedate?
And yet I hate
To pose persistently to-day
As one just trying flights, you know,
When I _did_ try them long ago!

Suppose I hurry up the tide
Of age, and bravely drift beside
Those hoary dogs
Who lie like logs
Around the clubs where life is hushed?
My blood runs cold! What? Say farewell
To this year's new bewildering belle!

Hold, man, the secret broad and huge,
With every well-known subterfuge!
If bald and gray
And thin, still say
You're only thirty: don't be crushed;
But when your voice shakes o'er a pun,
Be off to China:--your day's done!

USED UP.

Hand me my light gloves, James;
I'm off for the waltzing world,
The kingdom of Strauss and that--
Where is my old crush-hat?
Is my hair properly curled?
Call in the daytime, James.

Think of me, won't you, James,
When I am rosilily twirling
The "Rose of a garden of girls,"
The Pearl among circling pearls,
In a mesh of melodious whirling?
Envy me, won't you, James?

For a heart lost along with her fan,
For a nice sense of honor flown,
For the care of an invalid soul,
And tastes far beyond my control,--
I have for my precious own
The fame of a "waltzing man."

If I don't come, come for me, James.
Ah, the waltz is my mastering passion!
The trip-tripping airs are as sweet
As love to my turning feet,
While I clasp the fair doll of fashion,
My _fiancØe_. But come for me, James.

The heart which I lost--it is strange--
I've been told it will yet be my death;
And I think it quite likely I might
Waltz once too often to-night,
In spite of the music and Beth.
Death's a difficult move to arrange.

Pray smoke by the fire, old boy,
And find yourself whiskey and books.
If I should not turn up, then, at two
Or three, you will know I need you.
If I'm dead, you must pardon my looks
As I lie in the ball-room, old boy.

A YOUTH'S SUICIDE.

He handed his life a poisoned draught,

With a scornful smile and a cold, cold glance,
And the merry bystanders loudly laughed
(For the rollicking world was gay!).

He thought she knew not the juice, perchance;
But her tears fell down to her sobbing lips
While the merry-makers turned to the dance
(The world was mocking fate that day!).

To his life he kissed his finger-tips:
"Drink deep the beaker, and so farewell!"
Then slowly the poisoned draught she sips
(How they laugh at her meek dismay!).

He sprang to her arm, which loosely fell,
Crying: "No! not yet that dire eclipse!"
Now loud laughed the dancers, and whirled pell-mell
(While the echoes hurried away!).

The mad world clustered, it seemed, around.
"Farewell!" she sighed, sinking; then from afar
Flowed the pealing laughter and wassail's sound
(For the dead the world will not stay!).

TWENTY BOLD MARINERS.

Twenty bold mariners went to the wave,
Twenty sweet breezes blew over the main;
All were so hearty, so free, and so brave,--
But they never came back again!

Half the wild ocean rose up to the clouds,
Half the broad sky scowled in thunder and rain;
Twenty white crests rose around them like shrouds,
And they stayed in the dancing main!

This is easy to sing, and often to mourn,
And the breaking of dawn is no newer to-day;
But those who die young, or are left forlorn,
Think grief is no older than they!

IN THE ARTILLERY.

We are moving on in silence,
Save for rattling iron and steel,

And a skirmish echoing round us,
Showering faintly, peal on peal.

Like a lion roars the North wind
As a-horse we sternly clank,
While beside the guns our men drop,
Slyly shot from either flank.

You are musing, love, and smiling
By the hearth-fire of the Mill,
While the tangled oaks are cracking
Boughs upon the windy hill.

I can see the moonlight shining
Over fields of frozen calm;
I can hear the chapel organ,
And the singing of the psalm.

Fare you well, then, English village,
Which of all I loved the most,
Where my ghost alone can wander
Once again, when life is lost.

Fare you well, then, Sally Dorset;
You will never utter wail
For the soldier dead who loved you
With these tears of no avail!

I can see your drowsy lashes
Lifting as you hear them read
Prayers in mercy for our souls' shrift
When we come to our last need.

I forgive you, matchless beauty,
Proudly conscious of your fame,
Loved by many a luckless youngster
Who will ne'er forget your name!

Merry, though so cold of answer,
With a laughing glance of steel,
How your face swept like a banner,
Blushing down the village reel!

As you dance before my vision
On this deadly foreign morn,
Death is charmed into the soothing
Of the love you chose to scorn.

We shall die--our hours are numbered--
As the sunlight dawns serene
Over yonder mountain ridges,
Rimming round this battle scene.

I shall die--few will return, dear;
I shall be of those who stay:
England sent us, but a handful,
Among hordes of heathen clay.

We will show the world how England
Has no dross to spend in war;
When she throws away her soldiers,
They are soldiers to the core.

You will wake to hear the twitter
Of the early sparrow's note:
I shall lie beneath the heavens,
With the death-grip at my throat!

THE LOST BATTLE

To his heart it struck such terror
That he laughed a laugh of scorn,--
The man in the soldier's doublet,
With the sword so bravely worn.

It struck his heart like the frost-wind
To find his comrades fled,
While the battle-field was guarded
By the heroes who lay dead.

He drew his sword in the sunlight,
And called with a long halloo:
"Dead men, there is one living
Shall stay it out with you!"

He raised a ragged standard,
This lonely soul in war,
And called the foe to onset,
With shouts they heard afar.

They galloped swiftly toward him.
The banner floated wide;
It sank; he sank beside it
Upon his sword, and died.

THE OUTGOING RACE.

The mothers wish for no more daughters;

There is no future before them.
They bow their heads and their pride
At the end of the many tribes' journey.

The mothers weep over their children,
Loved and unwelcome together,
Who should have been dreamed, not born,
Since there is no road for the Indian.

The mothers see into the future,
Beyond the end of that Chieftain
Who shall be the last of the race
Which allowed only death to a coward.

The square, cold cheeks, lips firm-set,
The hot, straight glance, and the throat-line,
Held like a stag's on the cliff,
Shall be swept by the night-winds, and vanish!

HIDDEN HISTORY.

I.

There was a maiden in a land
Was buried with all honor fine,
For they said she had dared her pulsing life
To save a silent, holy shrine.

The cannon rode by the church's door,
The men's wild faces flashed in the sun;
The woman had guarded with rifle poised,
While the cassocked priests had run.

Ah, no! To save her pulsing life
The woman like a reindeer turned,
While hostile armies rolled by her in clouds,
And miles of sun and metal burned.

But who should know? For she was dead
Before the leathern curtain's wall,
When came her wide-eyed comrades, and found
Her body and her weapon, all.

II.

There was a woman left to die

Who never told her sacrifice,
But trusted for her crown to God,
As to its value and device.

No land was prouder for her heart,
No word has echoed long her deed,
And where she has lain, the angel flower
Looks like a common weed.

A BALLAD OF THE MIST.

"I love the Lady of Merle," he said.
"She is not for thee!" her suitor cried.
And in the valley the lovers fought
By the salt river's tide.

The braver fell on the dewy sward:
The unloved lover returned once more;
In yellow satin the lady came
And met him at the door.

"Hast thou heard, dark Edith," laughed he grim,
"Poor Hugh hath craved thee many a day?
Soon would it have been too late for him
His low-born will to say.

"I struck a blade where lay his heart's love,
And voice for thee have I left him none,
To brag he still seeks thee over the hills
When thou and I are one!"

Fearless across the wide country
Rode the dark Lady Edith of Merle;
She looked at the headlands soft with haze,
And the moor's mists of pearl.

The moon it struggled to see her pass
Through its half-lit veils of driving gray;
But moonbeams were slower than the steed
That Edith rode away.

Oh, what was her guerdon and her haste,
While cried the far screech-owl in the tree,
And to her heart crept its note so lone,
Beating tremulously?

About her a black scarf floated thin,
And over her cheek the mist fell cold,
And shuddered the moon between its rifts

Of dark cloud's silvery fold.

Oh, white fire of the nightly sky
When burns the moon's wonder wide and far,
And every cloud illumed with flame
Engulfs a shaken star!

* * * * *

Bright as comes morning from the hill,
There comes a face to her lover's eyes;
Her love she tells; and he, dying, smiles,--
And smiles yet in the skies.

He is dead, and closer breathe the mists;
He is dead, the owlet moans remote;
He is buried, and the moon draws near,
To gaze and hide and float.

Fearless within the churchyard's spell
The white-browed lady doth stand and sigh;
She loves the mist, and the grave, and the moon,
And the owl's quivering cry.

THE DREAMING WHEEL.

Down slant the moonbeams to the floor
Through the garret's scented air,
And show a thin-spoked spinning-wheel,
Standing ten years and more
Far from the hearth-stone's woe and weal,--
The ghost of a lost day's care!

And over the dreaming spinning-wheel,
That has not stirred so long,
The weaving spiders spin a veil,
A silvery shroud for its human zeal
And usefulness, with their fingers pale,
The shadowy lights among.

See! in the moonlight cold and gray
A thoughtful maiden stands;
And though she blames not overmuch
With her sweet lips the great world's way,
Yet sad and slow she stoops to touch
The still wheel with her hands.

"Forsaken wheel! when you first came
To clothe young hearts and old,

Our ancestors were glad to wear
Your woof, nor knew the shame
Which later days have bred, to share
The homespun's simple fold!

"My lover's gone to win for me,
With tender pride and care,
Riches to garnish all our days;
But love thrives in simplicity
As well as in the prouder ways,
If noble thought is there!

"When our strong grandsires vowed to wed,
Stout knots of wool, and corn,
Were gathered in, and hardly more
Of what will count not when we're dead!
Life brought them to a happy shore,
Who set their sails at dawn.

"O silent wheel! we weave a sad,
Weak fabric of our days;
The faith that moved thee long is gone;
Forgot, the couple, lass and lad,
Who loved with courage deeply drawn,
Heeding but God's delays!

"On thy long loneliness the sun
Blazes in dread, the moon
Shines with a pitiless, threatening hue!
And while the golden sand-grains run,
Old age comes nearer; and like you
I may be standing silent--soon!

"Then turn, my lover, turn your eyes
Back to the humble door;
Waste not the youthful years in hand.
See where the truest comfort lies,
And join the freer old-time band,
Nor crave a worldly store!

"In Freedom's land let no one know
Even the chain of ease,
Nor bow to royal Luxury's glance.
From peasant-hands fair art can grow;
From the rough brow thought springs with lance
And helmet: God loves these!"

She wept; then raised her head, and swung
The aged wheel with whispering whir;
And as it turned, it softly sung
(In fancy) this response to her:--

"I had not spun the sower's shirt,

I had not kept the children warm,
If I had found a wearing harm
In my monotonous toil alert.

"To those who wait with eager eyes
And ready hands and tender hearts,--
They find the giant year, that parts,
Hath forged strong links with paradise!

"Sigh not that Time doth turn the glass
To let the golden sand-grains run,
While longer shadows of the sun
Fall o'er the spring-time, bonny lass!

"The circumstances of a life
Are little things compared to it;
The way love's shown is ever fit;
Thank God, who gives us love, not strife!

"And if I do not stand beside
The hearth, as fifty years ago,
No current of the years that flow
Can rob the radiance from a bride!

"I know not why the world should change,
I know not why my day is done;
And yet this limit of my zone
Hints of the limit to all range.

"Man's progress always alters tint,
As mountains move from rose to gray;
Yet like their shapes, love still doth stay
The same, complete,--'tis God's imprint.

"And yet I dream Time yet may turn
Its wheel to weave the humbler thought,
As in old days. When joy is sought,
Men find it where the hearth-fires burn."

THE ROADS THAT MEET.

ART.

One is so fair, I turn to go,
As others go, its beckoning length;
Such paths can never lead to woe,
I say in eager, early strength.
What is the goal?

Visions of heaven, wake;
But the wind's whispers round me roll:
"For you, mistake!"

LOVE.

One leads beneath high oaks, and birds
Choose there their joyous revelry;
The sunbeams glint in golden herds,
The river mirrors silently.
Under these trees
My heart would bound or break;
Tell me what goal, resonant breeze?
"For you, mistake!"

CHARITY.

What is there left? The arid way,
The chilling height, whence all the world
Looks little, and each radiant day,
Like the soul's banner, flies unfurled.
May I stand here;
In this rare ether slake
My reverential lips, and fear
No last mistake?

Some spirits wander till they die,
With shattered thoughts and trembling hands;
What jarred their natures hopelessly
No living wight yet understands.
There is no goal,
Whatever end they make;
Though prayers each trusting step control,
They win mistake.

This is so true, we dare not learn
Its force until our hopes are old,
And, skyward, God's star-beacons burn
The brighter as our hearts grow cold.
If all we miss,
In the great plans that shake
The world, still God has need of this,--
Even our mistake.

A PASSING VOICE.

"Turn me a rhyme," said Fate,
"Turn me a rhyme:
A swift and deadly hate
Blows headlong towards thee in the teeth of Time.
Write! or thy words will fall too late."

"Write me a fold," said Fate,
"Write me a fold,
Life to conciliate,
Of words red with thine heart's blood, hotly told.
Then, kings may envy thine estate!"

"Make thee a fame," said Fate,
"Make thee a fame
To storm the heaven-hung gate,
Unbarred alone to the victorious name
Which has Art's conquerors to mate."

"Die in thy shame," said Fate,
"Die in thy shame!
Naught here can compensate
But the proud radiance of that glorious flame,
Genius: fade, thou, unconsecrate!"

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