

## III

Yes, eve's quick mood had run its course,  
The night had cooled my hasty madness ;  
I suffered a regretful sadness  
Which deepened into real remorse.

## IV

I thought what pensive patient days  
A soul must know of grain so tender,  
How much of good must grace the sender  
Of such sweet words in such bright phrase.

## V

Uprising then, as things unpriced  
I sought each fragment, patched and mended ;  
The midnight whitened ere I had ended  
And gathered words I had sacrificed.

## VI

But some, alas, of those I threw  
Were past my search, destroyed for ever :  
They were your name and place ; and never  
Did I regain those clues to you.

## VII

I learnt I had missed, by rash unheed,  
My track ; that, so the Will decided,  
In life, death, we should be divided,  
And at the sense I ached indeed.

## VIII

That ache for you, born long ago,  
Throbs on : I never could outgrow it.  
What a revenge, did you but know it !  
But that, thank God, you do not know.

## BEYOND THE LAST LAMP

*(Near Tooting Common)*

## I

WHILE rain, with eve in partnership,  
 Descended darkly, drip, drip, drip,  
 Beyond the last lone lamp I passed  
     Walking slowly, whispering sadly,  
     Two linked loiterers, wan, downcast :  
 Some heavy thought constrained each face,  
 And blinded them to time and place.

## II

The pair seemed lovers, yet absorbed  
 In mental scenes no longer orb'd  
 By love's young rays. Each countenance  
     As it slowly, as it sadly  
     Caught the lamplight's yellow glance,  
 Held in suspense a misery  
 At things which had been or might be.

## III

When I retr'd that watery way  
 Some hours beyond the droop of day,  
 Still I found pacing there the twain  
     Just as slowly, just as sadly,  
     Heedless of the night and rain.  
 One could but wonder who they were,  
 And what wild woe detained them there.

## IV

Though thirty years of blur and blot  
 Have slid since I beheld that spot,  
 And saw in curious converse there  
     Moving slowly, moving sadly  
     That mysterious tragic pair,  
 Its olden look may linger on—  
 All but the couple ; they have gone.

## V

Whither? Who knows, indeed. . . . And yet  
To me, when nights are weird and wet,  
Without those comrades there at tryst  
    Creeping slowly, creeping sadly,  
    That lone lane does not exist.  
There they seem brooding on their pain,  
And will, while such a lane remain.

## THE FACE AT THE CASEMENT

    If ever joy leave  
An abiding sting of sorrow,  
So befell it on the morrow  
    Of that May eve. . . .

    The travelled sun dropped  
To the north-west, low and lower,  
The pony's trot grew slower,  
    Until we stopped.

    " This cosy house just by  
I must call at for a minute,  
A sick man lies within it  
    Who soon will die.

    " He wished to—marry me,  
So I am bound, when I drive near him,  
To inquire, if but to cheer him,  
    How he may be."

    A message was sent in,  
And wordlessly we waited,  
Till some one came and stated  
    The bulletin.

    And that the sufferer said,  
For her call no words could thank her;  
As his angel he must rank her  
    Till life's spark fled.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Slowly we drove away,  
When I turned my head, although not  
Called to: why I turned I know not  
Even to this day:

And lo, there in my view  
Pressed against an upper lattice  
Was a white face, gazing at us  
As we withdrew.

And well did I divine  
It to be the man's there dying,  
Who but lately had been sighing  
For her pledged mine.

Then I deigned a deed of hell;  
It was done before I knew it;  
What devil made me do it  
I cannot tell!

Yes, while he gazed above,  
I put my arm about her  
That he might see, nor doubt her  
My plighted Love.

The pale face vanished quick,  
As if blasted, from the casement,  
And my shame and self-abasement  
Began their prick.

And they prick on, ceaselessly,  
For that stab in Love's fierce fashion  
Which, unfired by lover's passion,  
Was foreign to me.

She smiled at my caress,  
But why came the soft embowment  
Of her shoulder at that moment  
She did not guess.

Long long years has he lain  
In thy garth, O sad Saint Cleather:  
What tears there, bared to weather,  
Will cleanse that stain!

Love is long-suffering, brave,  
Sweet, prompt, precious as a jewel ;  
But O, too, Love is cruel,  
Cruel as the grave.

## LOST LOVE

I PLAY my sweet old airs—  
The airs he knew  
When our love was true—  
But he does not balk  
His determined walk,  
And passes up the stairs.

I sing my songs once more,  
And presently hear  
His footstep near  
As if it would stay ;  
But he goes his way,  
And shuts a distant door.

So I wait for another morn,  
And another night  
In this soul-sick blight ;  
And I wonder much  
As I sit, why such  
A woman as I was born !

"MY SPIRIT WILL NOT HAUNT THE  
MOUND"

MY spirit will not haunt the mound  
Above my breast,  
But travel, memory-possessed,  
To where my tremulous being found  
Life largest, best.

My phantom-footed shape will go  
When nightfall grays

Hither and thither along the ways  
 I and another used to know  
 In backward days.

And there you'll find me, if a jot  
 You still should care  
 For me, and for my curious air ;  
 If otherwise, then I shall not,  
 For you, be there.

### WESSEX HEIGHTS

(1896)

THERE are some heights in Wessex, shaped as if by a kindly  
 hand  
 For thinking, dreaming, dying on, and at crises when I stand,  
 Say, on Ingpen Beacon eastward, or on Wylls-Neck westwardly,  
 I seem where I was before my birth, and after death may be.

In the lowlands I have no comrade, not even the lone man's  
 friend—  
 Her who suffereth long and is kind ; accepts what he is too weak  
 to mend :  
 Down there they are dubious and askance ; there nobody  
 thinks as I,  
 But mind-chains do not clank where one's next neighbour is  
 the sky.

In the towns I am tracked by phantoms having weird detective  
 ways—  
 Shadows of beings who fellowed with myself of earlier days :  
 They hang about at places, and they say harsh heavy things—  
 Men with a wintry sneer, and women with tart disparagings.

Down there I seem to be false to myself, my simple self that was,  
 And is not now, and I see him watching, wondering what crass  
 cause  
 Can have merged him into such a strange continuator as this,  
 Who yet has something in common with himself, my chrysalis.

I cannot go to the great grey Plain ; there's a figure against the  
 moon,  
 Nobody sees it but I, and it makes my breast beat out of tune ;  
 I cannot go to the tall-spired town, being barred by the forms  
 now passed  
 For everybody but me, in whose long vision they stand there  
 fast.

There's a ghost at Yell'ham Bottom chiding loud at the fall of  
 the night,  
 There's a ghost in Froom-side Vale, thin lipped and vague, in  
 a shroud of white,  
 There is one in the railway train whenever I do not want it near,  
 I see its profile against the pane, saying what I would not hear.

As for one rare fair woman, I am now but a thought of hers,  
 I enter her mind and another thought succeeds me that she  
 prefers ;  
 Yet my love for her in its fulness she herself even did not know ;  
 Well, time cures hearts of tenderness, and now I can let her go.

So I am found on Ingpen Beacon, or on Wylls-Neck to the west,  
 Or else on homely Bulbarrow, or little Pilsdon Crest,  
 Where men have never cared to haunt, nor women have walked  
 with me,  
 And ghosts then keep their distance ; and I know some liberty.

## IN DEATH DIVIDED

### I

I SHALL rot here, with those whom in their day  
 You never knew,  
 And alien ones who, ere they chilled to clay,  
 Met not my view,  
 Will in your distant grave-place ever neighbour you.

### II

No shade of pinnacle or tree or tower,  
 While earth endures,

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Will fall on my mound and within the hour  
 Steal on to yours ;  
 One robin never haunt our two green covertures.

## III

Some organ may resound on Sunday noons  
 By where you lie,  
 Some other thrill the panes with other tunes  
 Where moulder I ;  
 No selfsame chords compose our common lullaby.

## IV

The simply-cut memorial at my head  
 Perhaps may take  
 A rustic form, and that above your bed  
 A stately make ;  
 No linking symbol show thereon for our tale's sake.

## V

And in the monotonous moils of strained, hard-run  
 Humanity,  
 The eternal tie which binds us twain in one  
 No eye will see  
 Stretching across the miles that sever you from me.

## THE PLACE ON THE MAP

## I

I LOOK upon the map that hangs by me—  
 Its shires and towns and rivers lined in varnished artistry—  
 And I mark a jutting height  
 Coloured purple, with a margin of blue sea.

## II

—'Twas a day of latter summer, hot and dry ;  
 Ay, even the waves seemed drying as we walked on, she and I,  
 By this spot where, calmly quite,  
 She unfolded what would happen by and by.



## III

This hanging map depicts the coast and place,  
 And re-creates therewith our unforeboded troublous case  
     All distinctly to my sight,  
 And her tension, and the aspect of her face.

## IV

Weeks and weeks we had loved beneath that blazing blue,  
 Which had lost the art of raining, as her eyes to-day had too,  
     While she told what, as by sleight,  
 Shot our firmament with rays of ruddy hue.

## V

For the wonder and the wormwood of the whole  
 Was that what in realms of reason would have joyed our double soul  
     Wore a torrid tragic light  
 Under order-keeping's rigorous control.

## VI

So, the map revives her words, the spot, the time,  
 And the thing we found we had to face before the next year's  
     prime ;  
 The charted coast stares bright,  
 And its episode comes back in pantomime.

## THE SCHRECKHORN

*(With thoughts of Leslie Stephen)*

(June 1897)

ALOOE, as if a thing of mood and whim ;  
 Now that its spare and desolate figure gleams  
 Upon my nearing vision, less it seems  
 A looming Alp-height than a guise of him  
 Who scaled its horn with ventured life and limb,  
 Drawn on by vague imaginings, maybe,  
 Of semblance to his personality  
 In its quaint glooms, keen lights, and rugged trim.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

At his last change, when Life's dull coils unwind,  
 Will he, in old love, hitherward escape,  
 And the eternal essence of his mind  
 Enter this silent adamantine shape,  
 And his low voicing haunt its slipping snows  
 When dawn that calls the climber dyes them rose?

## A SINGER ASLEEP

(*Algernon Charles Swinburne, 1837-1909*)

## I

IN this fair niche above the unslumbering sea,  
 That sentrys up and down all night, all day,  
 From cove to promontory, from ness to bay,  
 The Fates have fitly bidden that he should be  
 Pillowed eternally.

## II

—It was as though a garland of red roses  
 Had fallen about the hood of some smug nun  
 When irresponsibly dropped as from the sun,  
 In fulth of numbers freaked with musical closes,  
 Upon Victoria's formal middle time  
 His leaves of rhythm and rhyme.

## III

O that far morning of a summer day  
 When, down a terraced street whose pavements lay  
 Glassing the sunshine into my bent eyes,  
 I walked and read with a quick glad surprise  
 New words, in classic guise,—

## IV

The passionate pages of his earlier years,  
 Fraught with hot sighs, sad laughters, kisses, tears;  
 Fresh-fluted notes, yet from a minstrel who  
 Blew them not naively, but as one who knew  
 Full well why thus he blew.

## V

I still can hear the brabble and the roar  
 At those thy tunes, O still one, now passed through  
 That fitful fire of tongues then entered new!  
 Their power is spent like spindrift on this shore;  
     Thine swells yet more and more.

## VI

—His singing-mistress verily was no other  
 Than she the Lesbian, she the music-mother  
 Of all the tribe that feel in melodies;  
 Who leapt, love-anguished, from the Leucadian steep  
 Into the rambling world-encircling deep  
     Which hides her where none sees.

## VII

And one can hold in thought that nightly here  
 His phantom may draw down to the water's brim,  
 And hers come up to meet it, as a dim  
 Lone shine upon the heaving hydrosphere,  
 And mariners wonder as they traverse near,  
     Unknowing of her and him.

## VIII

One dreams him sighing to her spectral form:  
 "O teacher, where lies hid thy burning line;  
 Where are those songs, O poetess divine  
 Whose very orts are love incarnadine?"  
 And her smile back: "Disciple true and warm,  
     Sufficient now are thine." . . .

## IX

So here, beneath the waking constellations,  
 Where the waves peal their everlasting strains,  
 And their dull subterrene reverberations  
 Shake him when storms make mountains of their plains—  
 Him once their peer in sad improvisations,  
 And deft as wind to cleave their frothy manes—  
 I leave him, while the daylight gleam declines  
     Upon the capes and chines.

BONCHURCH, 1910.

## A PLAINT TO MAN

WHEN you slowly emerged from the den of Time,  
 And gained percipience as you grew,  
 And fleshed you fair out of shapeless slime,

Wherefore, O Man, did there come to you  
 The unhappy need of creating me—  
 A form like your own—for praying to?

My virtue, power, utility,  
 Within my maker must all abide,  
 Since none in myself can ever be,

One thin as a phasm on a lantern-slide  
 Shown forth in the dark upon some dim sheet,  
 And by none but its showman vivified.

"Such a forced device," you may say, "is meet  
 For easing a loaded heart at whiles :  
 Man needs to conceive of a mercy-seat

Somewhere above the gloomy aisles  
 Of this wailful world, or he could not bear  
 The irk no local hope beguiles."

—But since I was framed in your first despair  
 The doing without me has had no play  
 In the minds of men when shadows scare ;

And now that I dwindle day by day  
 Beneath the deicide eyes of seers  
 In a light that will not let me stay,

And to-morrow the whole of me disappears,  
 The truth should be told, and the fact be faced  
 That had best been faced in earlier years :

The fact of life with dependence placed  
 On the human heart's resource alone,  
 In brotherhood bonded close and graced

With loving-kindness fully blown,  
 And visioned help unsought, unknown.

## GOD'S FUNERAL

## I

I SAW a slowly-stepping train—  
Lined on the brows, scoop-eyed and bent and hoar—  
Following in files across a twilit plain  
A strange and mystic form the foremost bore.

## II

And by contagious throbs of thought  
Or latent knowledge that within me lay  
And had already stirred me, I was wrought  
To consciousness of sorrow even as they.

## III

The fore-borne shape, to my blurred eyes,  
At first seemed man-like, and anon to change  
To an amorphous cloud of marvellous size,  
At times endowed with wings of glorious range.

## IV

And this phantasmal variousness  
Ever possessed it as they drew along :  
Yet throughout all it symbolled none the less  
Potency vast and loving-kindness strong.

## V

Almost before I knew I bent  
Towards the moving columns without a word ;  
They, growing in bulk and numbers as they went,  
Struck out sick thoughts that could be overheard :—

## VI

“ O man-projected Figure, of late  
Imaged as we, thy knell whò shall survive ?  
Whence came it we were tempted to create  
One whom we can no longer keep alive ?

## VII

"Framing him jealous, fierce, at first,  
We gave him justice as the ages rolled,  
Will to bless those by circumstance accurst,  
And longsuffering, and mercies manifold.

## VIII

"And, tricked by our own early dream  
And need of solace, we grew self-deceived,  
Our making soon our maker did we deem,  
And what we had imagined we believed.

## IX

"Till, in Time's stayless stealthy swing,  
Uncompromising rude reality  
Mangled the Monarch of our fashioning,  
Who quavered, sank ; and now has ceased to be.

## X

"So, toward our myth's oblivion,  
Darkling, and languid-lipped, we creep and grope  
Sadlier than those who wept in Babylon,  
Whose Zion was a still abiding hope.

## XI

"How sweet it was in years far hied  
To start the wheels of day with trustful prayer,  
To lie down liegely at the eventide  
And feel a blest assurance he was there !

## XII

"And who or what shall fill his place ?  
Whither will wanderers turn distracted eyes  
For some fixed star to stimulate their pace  
Towards the goal of their enterprise ?" . . .

## XIII

Some in the background then I saw,  
Sweet women, youths, men, all incredulous,

Who chimed : "This is a counterfeit of straw,  
This requiem mockery ! Still he lives to us !"

## XIV

I could not buoy their faith : and yet  
Many I had known : with all I sympathized ;  
And though struck speechless, I did not forget  
That what was mourned for, I, too, long had prized.

## XV

Still, how to bear such loss I deemed  
The insistent question for each animate mind,  
And gazing, to my growing sight there seemed  
A pale yet positive gleam low down behind,

## XVI

Whereof, to lift the general night,  
A certain few who stood aloof had said,  
"See you upon the horizon that small light—  
Swelling somewhat ?" Each mourner shook his head.

## XVII

And they composed a crowd of whom  
Some were right good, and many nigh the best. . . .  
Thus dazed and puzzled 'twixt the gleam and gloom  
Mechanically I followed with the rest.

1908-10.

## SPECTRES THAT GRIEVE

"It is not death that harrows us," they lipped,  
"The soundless cell is in itself relief,  
For life is an unfenced flower, benumbed and nipped  
At unawares, and at its best but brief."

The speakers, sundry phantoms of the gone,  
Had risen like filmy flames of phosphor dye,  
As if the palest of sheet lightnings shone  
From the sward near me, as from a nether sky.

And much surprised was I that, spent and dead,  
 They should not, like the many, be at rest,  
 But stray as apparitions; hence I said,  
 "Why, having slipped life, hark you back distressed?"

"We are among the few death sets not free,  
 The hurt, misrepresented names, who come  
 At each year's brink, and cry to History  
 To do them justice, or go past them dumb.

"We are stript of rights; our shames lie undressed,  
 Our deeds in full anatomy are not shown,  
 Our words in morsels merely are expressed  
 On the scripted page, our motives blurred, unknown."

Then all these shaken slighted visitants sped  
 Into the vague, and left me musing there  
 On fames that well might instance what they had said,  
 Until the New-Year's dawn strode up the air.

"AH, ARE YOU DIGGING ON MY GRAVE?"

"Ah, are you digging on my grave  
 My beloved one?—planting rue?"  
 —"No: yesterday he went to wed  
 One of the brightest wealth has bred.  
 'It cannot hurt her now,' he said,  
 'That I should not be true.'"

"Then who is digging on my grave?  
 My nearest dearest kin?"  
 —"Ah, no: they sit and think, 'What use!  
 What good will planting flowers produce?  
 No tendance of her mound can loose  
 Her spirit from Death's gin.'"

"But some one digs upon my grave?  
 My enemy?—prodding sly?"  
 —"Nay: when she heard you had passed the Gate  
 That shuts on all flesh soon or late,  
 She thought you no more worth her hate,  
 And cares not where you lie."



"Then, who is digging on my grave?  
Say—since I have not guessed!"  
—"O it is I, my mistress dear,  
Your little dog, who still lives near,  
And much I hope my movements here  
Have not disturbed your rest?"

"Ah, yes! *You* dig upon my grave . . .  
Why flashed it not on me  
That one true heart was left behind!  
What feeling do we ever find  
To equal among human kind  
A dog's fidelity!"

"Mistress, I dug upon your grave  
To bury a bone, in case  
I should be hungry near this spot  
When passing on my daily trot.  
I am sorry, but I quite forgot  
It was your resting-place."

### SELF-UNCONSCIOUS

ALONG the way  
He walked that day,  
Watching shapes that reveries limn,  
And seldom he  
Had eyes to see  
The moment that encompassed him.

Bright yellowhammers  
Made mirthful clamours,  
And billed long straws with a bustling air,  
And bearing their load  
Flew up the road  
That he followed, alone, without interest there.

From bank to ground  
And over and round  
They sidled along the adjoining hedge;

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Sometimes to the gutter  
 Their yellow flutter  
 Would dip from the nearest slatestone ledge.

The smooth sea-line  
 With a metal shine,  
 And flashes of white, and a sail thereon,  
 He would also descry  
 With a half-wrapt eye  
 Between the projects he mused upon.

Yes, round him were these  
 Earth's artistries,  
 But specious plans that came to his call  
 Did most engage  
 His pilgrimage,  
 While himself he did not see at all.

Dead now as sherds  
 Are the yellow birds,  
 And all that mattered has passed away ;  
 Yet God, the Elf,  
 Now shows him that self  
 As he was, and should have been shown, that day.

O it would have been good  
 Could he then have stood  
 At a clear-eyed distance, and conned the whole,  
 But now such vision  
 Is mere derision,  
 Nor soothes his body nor saves his soul.

Not much, some may  
 Incline to say,  
 To see therein, had it all been seen.  
 Nay! he is aware  
 A thing was there  
 That loomed with an immortal mien.

## THE DISCOVERY

I WANDERED to a crude coast  
Like a ghost ;  
Upon the hills I saw fires—  
Funeral pyres  
Seemingly—and heard breaking  
Waves like distant cannonades that set the land shaking.

And so I never once guessed  
A Love-nest,  
Bowered and candle-lit, lay  
In my way,  
Till I found a hid hollow,  
Where I burst on her my heart could not but follow.

## TOLERANCE

“It is a foolish thing,” said I,  
“To bear with such, and pass it by ;  
Yet so I do, I know not why !”

And at each cross I would surmise  
That if I had willed not in that wise  
I might have spared me many sighs.

But now the only happiness  
In looking back that I possess—  
Whose lack would leave me comfortless—

Is to remember I refrained  
From masteries I might have gained,  
And for my tolerance was disdained ;

For see, a tomb. And if it were  
I had bent and broke, I should not dare  
To linger in the shadows there.

## BEFORE AND AFTER SUMMER

## I

LOOKING forward to the spring  
 One puts up with anything.  
 On this February day  
 Though the winds leap down the street  
 Wintry scourgings seem but play,  
 And these later shafts of sleet  
 —Sharper pointed than the first—  
 And these later snows—the worst—  
 Are as a half-transparent blind  
 Riddled by rays from sun behind.

## II

Shadows of the October pine  
 Reach into this room of mine :  
 On the pine there swings a bird ;  
 He is shadowed with the tree.  
 Mutely perched he bills no word ;  
 Blank as I am even is he.  
 For those happy suns are past,  
 Fore-discerned in winter last.  
 When went by their pleasure, then ?  
 I, alas, perceived not when.

## AT DAY-CLOSE IN NOVEMBER

THE ten hours' light is abating,  
 And a late bird wings across,  
 Where the pines, like waltzers waiting,  
 Give their black heads a toss.

Beech leaves, that yellow the noon-time,  
 Float past like specks in the eye ;  
 I set every tree in my June time,  
 And now they obscure the sky.

And the children who ramble through here  
 Conceive that there never has been  
 A time when no tall trees grew here,  
 A time when none will be seen.

## THE YEAR'S AWAKENING

How do you know that the pilgrim track  
 Along the belting zodiac  
 Swept by the sun in his seeming rounds  
 Is traced by now to the Fishes' bounds  
 And into the Ram, when weeks of cloud  
 Have wrapt the sky in a clammy shroud,  
 And never as yet a tinct of spring  
 Has shown in the Earth's apparelling ;  
     O vespering bird, how do you know,  
     How do you know ?

How do you know, deep underground,  
 Hid in your bed from sight and sound,  
 Without a turn in temperature,  
 With weather life can scarce endure,  
 That light has won a fraction's strength,  
 And day put on some moments' length,  
 Whereof in merest rote will come,  
 Weeks hence, mild airs that do not numb ;  
     O crocus root, how do you know,  
     How do you know ?

*February 1910.*

## UNDER THE WATERFALL

"WHENEVER I plunge my arm, like this,  
 In a basin of water, I never miss  
 The sweet sharp sense of a fugitive day  
 Fetched back from its thickening shroud of gray.  
     Hence the only prime  
     And real love-rhyme

That I know by heart,  
 And that leaves no smart,  
 Is the purl of a little valley fall  
 About three spans wide and two spans tall  
 Over a table of solid rock,  
 And into a scoop of the self-same block ;  
 The purl of a runlet that never ceases  
 In stir of kingdoms, in wars, in peaces ;  
 With a hollow boiling voice it speaks  
 And has spoken since hills were turfless peaks."

"And why gives this the only prime  
 Idea to you of a real love-rhyme ?  
 And why does plunging your arm in a bowl  
 Full of spring water, bring throbs to your soul ?"  
 "Well, under the fall, in a crease of the stone,  
 Though where precisely none ever has known,  
 Jammed darkly, nothing to show how prized,  
 And by now with its smoothness opalized,  
     Is a drinking-glass :  
     For, down that pass  
     My lover and I  
     Walked under a sky  
 Of blue with a leaf-wove awning of green,  
 In the burn of August, to paint the scene,  
 And we placed our basket of fruit and wine  
 By the runlet's rim, where we sat to dine ;  
 And when we had drunk from the glass together,  
 Arched by the oak-copse from the weather,  
 I held the vessel to rinse in the fall,  
 Where it slipped, and sank, and was past recall,  
 Though we stooped and plumbed the little abyss  
 With long bared arms. There the glass still is.  
 And, as said, if I thrust my arm below  
 Cold water in basin or bowl, a throe  
 From the past awakens a sense of that time,  
 And the glass we used, and the cascade's rhyme.  
 The basin seems the pool, and its edge  
 The hard smooth face of the brook-side ledge,  
 And the leafy pattern of china-ware  
 The hanging plants that were bathing there.

“By night, by day, when it shines or lours,  
There lies intact that chalice of ours,  
And its presence adds to the rhyme of love  
Persistently sung by the fall above.  
No lip has touched it since his and mine  
In turns therefrom sipped lovers' wine.”

POEMS OF 1912-13

*Veteris vestigia flammae*

THE GOING

WHY did you give no hint that night  
That quickly after the morrow's dawn,  
And calmly, as if indifferent quite,  
You would close your term here, up and be gone  
    Where I could not follow  
    With wing of swallow  
To gain one glimpse of you ever anon!

    Never to bid good-bye,  
    Or lip me the softest call,  
Or utter a wish for a word, while I  
Saw morning harden upon the wall,  
    Unmoved, unknowing  
    That your great going  
Had place that moment, and altered all.

Why do you make me leave the house  
And think for a breath it is you I see  
At the end of the alley of bending boughs  
Where so often at dusk you used to be ;  
    Till in darkening dankness  
    The yawning blankness  
Of the perspective sickens me !

    You were she who abode  
    By those red-veined rocks far West,



You were the swan-necked one who rode  
 Along the beetling Beeny Crest,  
     And, reining nigh me,  
     Would muse and eye me,  
 While Life unrolled us its very best.

Why, then, latterly did we not speak,  
 Did we not think of those days long dead,  
 And ere your vanishing strive to seek  
 That time's renewal? We might have said,  
     " In this bright spring weather  
     We'll visit together  
 Those places that once we visited."

Well, well! All's past amend,  
 Unchangeable. It must go.  
 I seem but a dead man held on end  
 To sink down soon. . . . O you could not know  
     That such swift fleeing  
     No soul foreseeing—  
 Not even I—would undo me so!

*December 1912.*

### YOUR LAST DRIVE

HERE by the moorway you returned,  
 And saw the borough lights ahead  
 That lit your face—all undiscerned  
 To be in a week the face of the dead,  
 And you told of the charm of that haloed view  
 That never again would beam on you.

And on your left you passed the spot  
 Where eight days later you were to lie,  
 And be spoken of as one who was not;  
 Beholding it with a heedless eye  
 As alien from you, though under its tree  
 You soon would halt everlastingly.

I drove not with you. . . . Yet had I sat  
 At your side that eve I should not have seen

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

That the countenance I was glancing at  
 Had a last-time look in the flickering sheen,  
 Nor have read the writing upon your face,  
 "I go hence soon to my resting-place ;

"You may miss me then. But I shall not know  
 How many times you visit me there,  
 Or what your thoughts are, or if you go  
 There never at all. And I shall not care.  
 Should you censure me I shall take no heed  
 And even your praises no more shall need."

True: never you'll know. And you will not mind.  
 But shall I then slight you because of such ?  
 Dear ghost, in the past did you ever find  
 The thought "What profit," move me much ?  
 Yet abides the fact, indeed, the same,—  
 You are past love, praise, indifference, blame.

*December 1912.*

## THE WALK

You did not walk with me  
 Of late to the hill-top tree  
     By the gated ways,  
     As in earlier days ;  
     You were weak and lame,  
     So you never came,  
 And I went alone, and I did not mind,  
 Not thinking of you as left behind.

I walked up there to-day  
 Just in the former way ;  
     Surveyed around  
     The familiar ground  
     By myself again :  
     What difference, then ?  
 Only that underlying sense  
 Of the look of a room on returning thence.

## RAIN ON A GRAVE

CLOUDS spout upon her  
Their waters amain  
In ruthless disdain,—  
Her who but lately  
Had shivered with pain  
As at touch of dishonour  
If there had lit on her  
So coldly, so straightly  
Such arrows of rain :

One who to shelter  
Her delicate head  
Would quicken and quicken  
Each tentative tread  
If drops chanced to pelt her  
That summertime spills  
In dust-paven rills  
When thunder-clouds thicken  
And birds close their bills.

Would that I lay there  
And she were housed here !  
Or better, together  
Were folded away there  
Exposed to one weather  
We both,—who would stray there  
When sunny the day there,  
Or evening was clear  
At the prime of the year.

Soon will be growing  
Green blades from her mound,  
And daisies be showing  
Like stars on the ground,  
Till she form part of them—  
Ay—the sweet heart of them,  
Loved beyond measure  
With a child's pleasuré  
All her life's round.

*Jan. 31, 1913.*

## "I FOUND HER OUT THERE"

I FOUND her out there  
On a slope few see,  
That falls westwardly  
To the salt-edged air,  
Where the ocean breaks  
On the purple strand,  
And the hurricane shakes  
The solid land.

I brought her here,  
And have laid her to rest  
In a noiseless nest  
No sea beats near.  
She will never be stirred  
In her loamy cell  
By the waves long heard  
And loved so well.

So she does not sleep  
By those haunted heights  
The Atlantic smites  
And the blind gales sweep,  
Whence she often would gaze  
At Dundagel's famed head,  
While the dipping blaze  
Dyed her face fire-red ;

And would sigh at the tale  
Of sunk Lyonesse,  
As a wind-tugged tress  
Flapped her cheek like a flail ;  
Or listen at whiles  
With a thought-bound brow  
To the murmuring miles  
She is far from now.

Yet her shade, maybe,  
Will creep underground  
Till it catch the sound  
Of that western sea

As it swells and sobs  
Where she once domiciled,  
And joys in its throbs  
With the heart of a child.

### WITHOUT CEREMONY

It was your way, my dear,  
To vanish without a word  
When callers, friends, or kin  
Had left, and I hastened in  
To rejoin you, as I inferred.

And when you'd a mind to career  
Off anywhere—say to town—  
You were all on a sudden gone  
Before I had thought thereon,  
Or noticed your trunks were down.

So, now that you disappear  
For ever in that swift style,  
Your meaning seems to me  
Just as it used to be :  
" Good-bye is not worth while ! "

### LAMENT

How she would have loved  
A party to-day !—  
Bright-hatted and gloved,  
With table and tray  
And chairs on the lawn  
Her smiles would have shone  
With welcomings. . . . But  
She is shut, she is shut  
From friendship's spell  
In the jailing shell  
Of her tiny cell.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Or she would have reigned  
 At a dinner to-night  
 With ardours unfeigned,  
 And a generous delight ;  
 All in her abode  
 She'd have freely bestowed  
 On her guests. . . . But alas,  
 She is shut under grass  
     Where no cups flow,  
     Powerless to know  
     That it might be so.

And she would have sought  
 With a child's eager glance  
 The shy snowdrops brought  
 By the new year's advance,  
 And peered in the rime  
 Of Candlemas-time  
 For crocuses . . . chanced  
 It that she were not tranced  
     From sights she loved best ;  
     Wholly possessed  
     By an infinite rest !

And we are here staying  
 Amid these stale things,  
 Who care not for gaying,  
 And those junketings  
 That used so to joy her,  
 And never to cloy her  
 As us they cloy ! . . . But  
 She is shut, she is shut  
     From the cheer of them, dead  
     To all done and said  
     In her yew-arched bed.

## THE HAUNTER

HE does not think that I haunt here nightly :  
 How shall I let him know  
 That whither his fancy sets him wandering  
 I, too, alertly go?—

Hover and hover a few feet from him  
 Just as I used to do,  
 But cannot answer the words he lifts me—  
 Only listen thereto!

When I could answer he did not say them :  
 When I could let him know  
 How I would like to join in his journeys  
 Seldom he wished to go.  
 Now that he goes and wants me with him  
 More than he used to do,  
 Never he sees my faithful phantom  
 Though he speaks thereto.

Yes, I companion him to places  
 Only dreamers know,  
 Where the shy hares print long paces,  
 Where the night rooks go ;  
 Into old aisles where the past is all to him,  
 Close as his shade can do,  
 Always lacking the power to call to him,  
 Near as I reach thereto!

What a good haunter I am, O tell him !  
 Quickly make him know  
 If he but sigh since my loss befell him  
 Straight to his side I go.  
 Tell him a faithful one is doing  
 All that love can do  
 Still that his path may be worth pursuing,  
 And to bring peace thereto.

## THE VOICE

WOMAN much missed, how you call to me, call to me,  
 Saying that now you are not as you were  
 When you had changed from the one who was all to me,  
 But as at first, when our day was fair.

Can it be you that I hear? Let me view you, then,  
 Standing as when I drew near to the town

Where you would wait for me : yes, as I knew you then,  
Even to the original air-blue gown !

Or is it only the breeze, in its listlessness  
Travelling across the wet mead to me here,  
You being ever dissolved to existlessness,  
Heard no more again far or near ?

Thus I ; faltering forward,  
Leaves around me falling,  
Wind oozing thin through the thorn from norward,  
And the woman calling.

*December 1912.*

### HIS VISITOR

I COME across from Mellstock while the moon wastes weaker  
To behold where I lived with you for twenty years and more :  
I shall go in the gray, at the passing of the mail-train,  
And need no setting open of the long familiar door  
As before.

The change I notice in my once own quarters !  
A brilliant budded border where the daisies used to be,  
The rooms new painted, and the pictures altered,  
And other cups and saucers, and no cosy nook for tea  
As with me.

I discern the dim faces of the sleep-wrapt servants ;  
They are not those who tended me through feeble hours and strong,  
But strangers quite, who never knew my rule here,  
Who never saw me painting, never heard my softling song  
Float along.

So I don't want to linger in this re-decked dwelling,  
I feel too uneasy at the contrasts I behold,  
And I make again for Mellstock to return here never,  
And rejoin the roomy silence, and the mute and manifold  
Souls of old.



## A CIRCULAR

As "legal representative"  
 I read a missive not my own,  
 On new designs the senders give  
     For clothes, in tints as shown.

Here figure blouses, gowns for tea,  
 And presentation-trains of state,  
 Charming ball-dresses, millinery,  
     Warranted up to date.

And this gay-pictured, spring-time shout  
 Of Fashion, hails what lady proud?  
 Her who before last year ebbed out  
     Was costumed in a shroud.

## A DREAM OR NO

WHY go to Saint-Juliot? What's Juliot to me?  
     Some strange necromancy  
     But charmed me to fancy  
 That much of my life claims the spot as its key.

Yes. I have had dreams of that place in the West,  
     And a maiden abiding  
     Thereat as in hiding;  
 Fair-eyed and white-shouldered, broad-browed and brown-tressed.

And of how, coastward bound on a night long ago,  
     There lonely I found her,  
     The sea-birds around her,  
 And other than nigh things uncaring to know.

So sweet her life there (in my thought has it seemed)  
     That quickly she drew me  
     To take her unto me,  
 And lodge her long years with me. Such have I dreamed.

But nought of that maid from Saint-Juliot I see ;  
 Can she ever have been here,  
 And shed her life's sheen here,  
 The woman I thought a long housemate with me ?

Does there even a place like Saint-Juliot exist ?  
 Or a Vallency Valley  
 With stream and leafed alley,  
 Or Beeny, or Bos with its flounce flinging mist ?

*February 1913.*

### AFTER A JOURNEY

HERETO I come to view a voiceless ghost ;  
 Whither, O whither will its whim now draw me ?  
 Up the cliff, down, till I'm lonely, lost,  
 And the unseen waters' ejaculations awe me.  
 Where you will next be there's no knowing,  
 Facing round about me everywhere,  
 With your nut-coloured hair,  
 And gray eyes, and rose-flush coming and going.

Yes : I have re-entered your olden haunts at last ;  
 Through the years, through the dead scenes I have tracked  
 you ;  
 What have you now found to say of our past—  
 Scanned across the dark space wherein I have lacked you ?  
 Summer gave us sweets, but autumn wrought division ?  
 Things were not lastly as firstly well  
 With us twain, you tell ?  
 But all's closed now, despite Time's derision.

I see what you are doing : you are leading me on  
 To the spots we knew when we haunted here together,  
 The waterfall, above which the mist-bow shone  
 At the then fair hour in the then fair weather,  
 And the cave just under, with a voice still so hollow  
 That it seems to call out to me from forty years ago,  
 When you were all aglow,  
 And not the thin ghost that I now frailly follow !

Ignorant of what there is flitting here to see,  
 The waked birds preen and the seals flop lazily,  
 Soon you will have, Dear, to vanish from me,  
 For the stars close their shutters and the dawn whitens hazily.  
 Trust me, I mind not, though Life lours,  
 The bringing me here ; nay, bring me here again !  
 I am just the same as when  
 Our days were a joy, and our paths through flowers.

PENTARGAN BAY.

### A DEATH-DAY RECALLED

BEENY did not quiver,  
 Juliot grew not gray,  
 Thin Valency's river  
 Held its wonted way.  
 Bos seemed not to utter  
 Dimmest note of dirge,  
 Targan mouth a mutter  
 To its creamy surge.

Yet though these, unheeding,  
 Listless, passed the hour  
 Of her spirit's speeding,  
 She had, in her flower,  
 Sought and loved the places—  
 Much and often pined  
 For their lonely faces  
 When in towns confined.

Why did not Valency  
 In his purl deplore  
 One whose haunts were whence he  
 Drew his limpid store ?  
 Why did Bos not thunder,  
 Targan apprehend  
 Body and Breath were sunder  
 Of their former friend ?

## BEENY CLIFF

*March 1870—March 1913*

## I

O THE opal and the sapphire of that wandering western sea,  
 And the woman riding high above with bright hair flapping  
 free—  
 The woman whom I loved so, and who loyally loved me.

## II

The pale mews plained below us, and the waves seemed far away  
 In a nether sky, engrossed in saying their ceaseless babbling say,  
 As we laughed light-heartedly aloft on that clear-sunned March  
 day.

## III

A little cloud then cloaked us, and there flew an irised rain,  
 And the Atlantic dyed its levels with a dull misfeatured stain,  
 And then the sun burst out again, and purples prinked the main.

## IV

—Still in all its chasmal beauty bulks old Beeny to the sky,  
 And shall she and I not go there once again now March is nigh,  
 And the sweet things said in that March say anew there by and  
 by?

## V

What if still in chasmal beauty looms that wild weird western  
 shore,  
 The woman now is—elsewhere—whom the ambling pony bore,  
 And nor knows nor cares for Beeny, and will laugh there never-  
 more.

## AT CASTLE BOTEREL

As I drive to the junction of lane and highway,  
 And the drizzle bedrenches the waggonette,  
 I look behind at the fading byway,  
 And see on its slope, now glistening wet,  
 Distinctly yet

Myself and a girlish form benighted  
 In dry March weather. We climb the road  
 Beside a chaise. We had just alighted  
 To ease the sturdy pony's load  
 When he sighed and slowed.

What we did as we climbed, and what we talked of  
 Matters not much, nor to what it led,—  
 Something that life will not be balked of  
 Without rude reason till hope is dead,  
 And feeling fled.

It filled but a minute. But was there ever  
 A time of such quality, since or before,  
 In that hill's story? To one mind never,  
 Though it has been climbed, foot-swift, foot-sore,  
 By thousands more.

Primaeval rocks form the road's steep border,  
 And much have they faced there, first and last,  
 Of the transitory in Earth's long order;  
 But what they record in colour and cast  
 Is—that we two passed.

And to me, though Time's unflinching rigour,  
 In mindless rote, has ruled from sight  
 The substance now, one phantom figure  
 Remains on the slope, as when that night  
 Saw us alight.

I look and see it there, shrinking, shrinking,  
 I look back at it amid the rain  
 For the very last time; for my sand is sinking,  
 And I shall traverse old love's domain  
 Never again.

*March 1913.*

## PLACES

NOBODY says: Ah, that is the place  
 Where chanced, in the hollow of years ago,  
 What none of the Three Towns cared to know—  
 The birth of a little girl of grace—

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

The sweetest the house saw, first or last ;  
 Yet it was so  
 On that day long past.

Nobody thinks : There, there she lay  
 In a room by the Hoe, like the bud of a flower,  
 And listened, just after the bedtime hour,  
 To the stammering chimes that used to play  
 The quaint Old Hundred-and-Thirteenth tune  
 In Saint Andrew's tower  
 Night, morn, and noon.

Nobody calls to mind that here  
 Upon Boterel Hill, where the waggoners skid,  
 With cheeks whose airy flush outbid  
 Fresh fruit in bloom, and free of fear,  
 She cantered down, as if she must fall  
 (Though she never did),  
 To the charm of all.

Nay : one there is to whom these things,  
 That nobody else's mind calls back,  
 Have a savour that scenes in being lack,  
 And a presence more than the actual brings ;  
 To whom to-day is beneaped and stale,  
 And its urgent clack  
 But a vapid tale.

PLYMOUTH, *March* 1913.

## THE PHANTOM HORSEWOMAN

## I

QUEER are the ways of a man I know :  
 He comes and stands  
 In a careworn craze,  
 And looks at the sands  
 And the seaward haze  
 With moveless hands  
 And face and gaze,  
 Then turns to go . . .  
 And what does he see when he gazes so ?

## II

They say he sees as an instant thing  
More clear than to-day,  
A sweet soft scene  
That once was in play  
By that briny green ;  
Yes, notes alway  
Warm, real, and keen,  
What his back years bring—  
A phantom of his own figuring.

## III

Of this vision of his they might say more :  
Not only there  
Does he see this sight,  
But everywhere  
In his brain—day, night,  
As if on the air  
It were drawn rose bright—  
Yea, far from that shore  
Does he carry this vision of heretofore :

## IV

A ghost-girl-rider. And though, toil-tried,  
He withers daily,  
Time touches her not,  
But she still rides gaily  
In his rapt thought  
On that shagged and shaly  
Atlantic spot,  
And as when first eyed  
Draws rein and sings to the swing of the tide.

## THE SPELL OF THE ROSE

“I MEAN to build a hall anon,  
 And shape two turrets there,  
 And a broad newelled stair,  
 And a cool well for crystal water ;  
 Yes ; I will build a hall anon,  
 Plant roses love shall feed upon,  
 And apple-trees and pear.”

He set to build the manor-hall,  
 And shaped the turrets there,  
 And the broad newelled stair,  
 And the cool well for crystal water ;  
 He built for me that manor-hall,  
 And planted many trees withal,  
 But no rose anywhere.

And as he planted never a rose  
 That bears the flower of love,  
 Though other flowers throve  
 Some heart-bane moved our souls to sever  
 Since he had planted never a rose ;  
 And misconceits raised horrid shows,  
 And agonies came thereof.

“I'll mend these miseries,” then said I,  
 And so, at dead of night,  
 I went and, screened from sight,  
 That nought should keep our souls in severance,  
 I set a rose-bush. “This,” said I,  
 “May end divisions dire and wry,  
 And long-drawn days of blight.”

But I was called from earth—yea, called  
 Before my rose-bush grew ;  
 And would that now I knew  
 What feels he of the tree I planted,  
 And whether, after I was called  
 To be a ghost, he, as of old,  
 Gave me his heart anew !



Perhaps now blooms that queen of trees  
I set but saw not grow,  
And he, beside its glow—  
Eyes couched of the mis-vision that blurred me—  
Ay, there beside that queen of trees  
He sees me as I was, though sees  
Too late to tell me so!

## ST. LAUNCE'S REVISITED

SLIP back, Time!  
Yet again I am nearing  
Castle and keep, uprearing  
Gray, as in my prime.

At the inn  
Smiling nigh, why is it  
Not as on my visit  
When hope and I were twin?

Groom and jade  
Whom I found here, moulder;  
Strange the tavern-holder,  
Strange the tap-maid.

Here I hired  
Horse and man for bearing  
Me on my wayfaring  
To the door desired.

Evening gloomed  
As I journeyed forward  
To the faces shoreward,  
Till their dwelling loomed.

If again  
Towards the Atlantic sea there  
I should speed, they'd be there  
Surely now as then? . . .

Why waste thought,  
 When I know them vanished  
 Under earth ; yea, banished  
 Ever into nought !

## WHERE THE PICNIC WAS

WHERE we made the fire  
 In the summer time  
 Of branch and briar  
 On the hill to the sea,  
 I slowly climb  
 Through winter mire,  
 And scan and trace  
 The forsaken place  
 Quite readily.

Now a cold wind blows,  
 And the grass is gray,  
 But the spot still shows  
 As a burnt circle—aye,  
 And stick-ends, charred,  
 Still strew the sward  
 Whereon I stand,  
 Last relic of the band  
 Who came that day !

Yes, I am here  
 Just as last year,  
 And the sea breathes brine  
 From its strange straight line  
 Up hither, the same  
 As when we four came.  
 —But two have wandered far  
 From this grassy rise  
 Into urban roar  
 Where no picnics are,  
 And one—has shut her eyes  
 For evermore.

## MISCELLANEOUS PIECES

### THE WISTFUL LADY

“LOVE, while you were away there came to me—  
From whence I cannot tell—  
A plaintive lady pale and passionless,  
Who laid her eyes upon me critically,  
And weighed me with a wearing wistfulness,  
As if she knew me well.”

“I saw no lady of that wistful sort  
As I came riding home.  
Perhaps she was some dame the Fates constrain  
By memories sadder than she can support,  
Or by unhappy vacancy of brain,  
To leave her roof and roam?”

“Ah, but she knew me. And before this time  
I have seen her, lending ear  
To my light outdoor words, and pondering each,  
Her frail white finger swayed in pantomime,  
As if she fain would close with me in speech,  
And yet would not come near.

“And once I saw her beckoning with her hand  
As I came into sight  
At an upper window. And I at last went out;  
But when I reached where she had seemed to stand,  
And wandered up and down and searched about,  
I found she had vanished quite.”

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Then thought I how my dead Love used to say,  
 With a small smile, when she  
 Was waning wan, that she would hover round  
 And show herself after her passing day  
 To any newer Love I might have found,  
 But show her not to me.

## THE WOMAN IN THE RYE

"WHY do you stand in the dripping rye,  
 Cold-lipped, unconscious, wet to the knee,  
 When there are firesides near?" said I.  
 "I told him I wished him dead," said she.

"Yea, cried it in my haste to one  
 Whom I had loved, whom I well loved still;  
 And die he did. And I hate the sun,  
 And stand here lonely, aching, chill;

"Stand waiting, waiting under skies  
 That blow reproach, the while I see  
 The rooks sheer off to where he lies  
 Wrapt in a peace withheld from me!"

## THE CHEVAL - GLASS

WHY do you harbour that great cheval-glass  
 Filling up your narrow room?  
 You never preen or plume  
 Or look in a week at your full-length figure—  
 Picture of bachelor gloom!

"Well, when I dwelt in ancient England,  
 Renting the valley farm,  
 Thoughtless of all heart-harm,  
 I used to gaze at the parson's daughter,  
 A creature of nameless charm.

"Thither there came a lover and won her,  
 Carried her off from my view.

O it was then I knew  
 Misery of a cast undreamt of—  
 More than, indeed, my due !

“ Then far rumours of her ill-usage  
 Came, like a chilling breath  
 When a man languisheth ;  
 Followed by news that her mind lost balance,  
 And, in a space, of her death.

“ Soon sank her father ; and next was the auction—  
 Everything to be sold :  
 Mid things new and old  
 Stood this glass in her former chamber,  
 Long in her use, I was told.

“ Well, I awaited the sale and bought it. . . .  
 There by my bed it stands,  
 And as the dawn expands  
 Often I see her pale-faced form there  
 Brushing her hair's bright bands.

“ There, too, at pallid midnight moments  
 Quick she will come to my call,  
 Smile from the frame withal  
 Ponderingly, as she used to regard me  
 Passing her father's wall.

“ So that it was for its revelations  
 I brought it oversea,  
 And drag it about with me. . . .  
 Anon I shall break it and bury its fragments  
 Where my grave is to be.”

### THE RE-ENACTMENT

BETWEEN the folding sea-downs,  
 In the gloom  
 Of a wailful wintry nightfall,  
 When the boom  
 Of the ocean, like a hammering in a hollow tomb,

Throbb'd up the copse-clothed valley  
 From the shore  
 To the chamber where I darkled,  
 Sunk and sore  
 With gray ponderings why my Loved one had not come before

To salute me in the dwelling  
 That of late  
 I had hired to waste a while in—  
 Dim of date,  
 Quaint, and remote—wherein I now expectant sate ;

On the solitude, unsignalled,  
 Broke a man  
 Who, in air as if at home there,  
 Seemed to scan  
 Every fire-flecked nook of the apartment span by span.

A stranger's and no lover's  
 Eyes were these,  
 Eyes of a man who measures  
 What he sees  
 But vaguely, as if wrapt in filmy phantasies.

Yea, his bearing was so absent  
 As he stood,  
 It bespoke a chord so plaintive  
 In his mood,  
 That soon I judged he would not wrong my quietude.

“ Ah—the supper is just ready ! ”  
 Then he said,  
 “ And the years'-long-binned Madeira  
 Flashes red ! ”  
 (There was no wine, no food, no supper-table spread.)

“ You will forgive my coming,  
 Lady fair ?  
 I see you as at that time  
 Rising there,  
 The self-same curious querying in your eyes and air.

Yet no. How so? You wear not  
 The same gown,  
 Your locks show woful difference,  
 Are not brown :  
 What, is it not as when I hither came from town ?

“ And the place. . . . But you seem other—  
 Can it be ?  
 What's this that Time is doing  
 Unto me ?  
*You* dwell here, unknown woman ? . . . Whereabouts, then,  
 is she ?

“ And the house-things are much shifted.—  
 Put them where  
 They stood on this night's fellow ;  
 Shift her chair :  
 Here was the couch : and the piano should be there.”

I indulged him, verily nerve-strained  
 Being alone,  
 And I moved the things as bidden,  
 One by one,  
 And feigned to push the old piano where he had shown.

“ Aha—now I can see her !  
 Stand aside :  
 Don't thrust her from the table  
 Where, meek-eyed,  
 She makes attempt with matron-manners to preside.

“ She serves me : now she rises,  
 Goes to play. . . .  
 But you obstruct her, fill her  
 With dismay,  
 And embarrassed, scared, she vanishes away !”

And, as 'twere useless longer  
 To persist,  
 He sighed, and sought the entry  
 Ere I wist,  
 And retreated, disappearing soundless in the mist.

That here some mighty passion  
 Once had burned,  
 Which still the walls enghosted,  
 I discerned,  
 And that by its strong spell mine might be overturned.

I sat depressed ; till, later,  
 My Love came ;  
 But something in the chamber  
 Dimmed our flame,—  
 An emanation, making our due words fall tame,

As if the intenser drama  
 Shown me there  
 Of what the walls had witnessed  
 Filled the air,  
 And left no room for later passion anywhere.

So came it that our fervours  
 Did quite fail  
 Of future consummation—  
 Being made quail  
 By the weird witchery of the parlour's hidden tale,

Which I, as years passed, faintly  
 Learnt to trace,—  
 One of sad love, born full-winged  
 In that place  
 Where the predestined sorrowers first stood face to face.

And as that month of winter  
 Circles round,  
 And the evening of the date-day  
 Grows embrowned,  
 I am conscious of those presences, and sit spellbound.

There, often—lone, forsaken—  
 Queries breed  
 Within me ; whether a phantom  
 Had my heed  
 On that strange night, or was it some wrecked heart indeed ?



## HER SECRET

THAT love's dull smart distressed my heart  
 He shrewdly learnt to see,  
 But that I was in love with a dead man  
 Never suspected he.

He searched for the trace of a pictured face,  
 He watched each missive come,  
 And a sheet that seemed like a love-line  
 Wrought his look lurid and numb.

He dogged my feet to the city street,  
 He followed me to the sea,  
 But not to the nigh, still churchyard  
 Did he dream of following me!

## "SHE CHARGED ME"

SHE charged me with having said this and that  
 To another woman long years before,  
 In the very parlour where we sat,—

Sat on a night when the endless pour  
 Of rain on the roof and the road below  
 Bent the spring of the spirit more and more. . . .

—So charged she me; and the Cupid's bow  
 Of her mouth was hard, and her eyes, and her face,  
 And her white forefinger lifted slow.

Had she done it gently, or shown a trace  
 That not too curiously would she view  
 A folly flown ere her reign had place,

A kiss might have closed it. But I knew  
 From the fall of each word, and the pause between,  
 That the curtain would drop upon us two  
 Ere long, in our play of slave and queen.

## THE NEWCOMER'S WIFE

HE paused on the sill of a door ajar  
 That screened a lively liquor-bar,  
 For the name had reached him through the door  
 Of her he had married the week before.

"We called her the Hack of the Parade ;  
 But she was discreet in the games she played ;  
 If slightly worn, she's pretty yet,  
 And gossips, after all, forget :

"And he knows nothing of her past ;  
 I am glad the girl's in luck at last ;  
 Such ones, though stale to native eyes,  
 Newcomers snatch at as a prize."

"Yes, being a stranger he sees her blent  
 Of all that's fresh and innocent,  
 Nor dreams how many a love-campaign  
 She had enjoyed before his reign !"

That night there was the splash of a fall  
 Over the slimy harbour-wall :  
 They searched, and at the deepest place  
 Found him with crabs upon his face.

## A CONVERSATION AT DAWN

HE lay awake, with a harassed air,  
 And she, in her cloud of loose lank hair,  
     Seemed trouble-tried  
 As the dawn drew in on their faces there.

The chamber looked far over the sea  
 From a white hotel on a white-stoned quay,  
     And stepping a stride  
 He parted the window-drapery.

Above the level horizon spread  
The sunrise, firing them foot to head  
    From its smouldering lair,  
And painting their pillows with dyes of red.

"What strange disquiets have stirred you, dear,  
This dragging night, with starts in fear  
    Of me, as it were,  
Or of something evil hovering near?"

"My husband, can I have fear of you?  
What should one fear from a man whom few,  
    Or none, had matched  
In that late long spell of delays undue!"

He watched her eyes in the heaving sun:  
"Then what has kept, O reticent one,  
    Those lids unlatched—  
Anything promised I've not yet done?"

"O it's not a broken promise of yours  
(For what quite lightly your lip assures  
    The due time brings)  
That has troubled my sleep, and no waking cures!" . . .

"I have shaped my will; 'tis at hand," said he;  
"I subscribe it to-day, that no risk there be  
    In the hap of things  
Of my leaving you menaced by poverty."

"That a boon provision I'm safe to get,  
Signed, sealed by my lord as it were a debt,  
    I cannot doubt,  
Or ever this peering sun be set."

"But you flung my arms away from your side,  
And faced the wall. No month-old bride  
    Ere the tour be out  
In an air so loth can be justified?"

"Ah—had you a male friend once loved well,  
Upon whose suit disaster fell  
    And frustrance swift?  
Honest you are, and may care to tell."

She lay impassive, and nothing broke  
 The stillness other than, stroke by stroke,  
     The lazy lift  
 Of the tide below them ; till she spoke :

" I once had a friend—a Love, if you will—  
 Whose wife forsook him, and sank until  
     She was made a thrall  
 In a prison-cell for a deed of ill. . . .

" He remained alone ; and we met—to love,  
 But barring legitimate joy thereof  
     Stood a doorless wall,  
 Though we prized each other all else above.

" And this was why, though I'd touched my prime,  
 I put off suitors from time to time—  
     Yourself with the rest—  
 Till friends, who approved you, called it crime,

" And when misgivings weighed on me  
 In my lover's absence, hurriedly,  
     And much distrest,  
 I took you. . . . Ah, that such could be ! . . .

" Now, saw you when crossing from yonder shore  
 At yesternoon, that the packet bore  
     On a white-wreathed bier  
 A coffined body towards the fore ?

" Well, while you stood at the other end,  
 The loungers talked, and I couldn't but lend  
     A listening ear,  
 For they named the dead. 'Twas the wife of my friend.

" He was there, but did not note me, veiled,  
 Yet I saw that a joy, as of one unjailed,  
     Now shone in his gaze ;  
 He knew not his hope of me just had failed !

" They had brought her home : she was born in this isle ;  
 And he will return to his domicile,  
     And pass his days  
 Alone, and not as he dreamt erstwhile ! "

“—So you've lost a sprucer spouse than I!”  
 She held her peace, as if fain deny  
     She would indeed  
 For his pleasure's sake, but could lip no lie.

“One far less formal and plain and slow!”  
 She let the laconic assertion go  
     As if of need  
 She held the conviction that it was so.

“Regard me as his he always should,  
 He had said, and wed me he vowed he would  
     In his prime or sere  
 Most verily do, if ever he could ;

“And this fulfilment is now his aim,  
 For a letter, addressed in my maiden name,  
     Has dogged me here,  
 Reminding me faithfully of his claim ;

“And it started a hope like a lightning-streak  
 That I might go to him—say for a week—  
     And afford you right  
 To put me away, and your vows unspeak.

“To be sure you have said, as of dim intent,  
 That marriage is a plain event  
     Of black and white,  
 Without any ghost of sentiment,

“And my heart has quailed.—But deny it true  
 That you will never this lock undo !  
     No God intends  
 To thwart the yearning He's father to !”

The husband hemmed, then blandly bowed  
 In the light of the angry morning cloud.  
     “So my idyll ends,  
 And a drama opens !” he mused aloud ;

And his features froze. “You may take it as true  
 That I will never this lock undo  
     For so depraved  
 A passion as that which kindles you !”

Said she: "I am sorry you see it so;  
I had hoped you might have let me go,  
And thus been saved  
The pain of learning there's more to know."

"More? What may that be? Gad, I think  
You have told me enough to make me blink!  
Yet if more remain  
Then own it to me. I will not shrink!"

"Well, it is this. As we could not see  
That a legal marriage would ever be,  
To end our pain  
We united ourselves informally;

"And vowed at a chancel-altar nigh,  
With book and ring, a lifelong tie;  
A contract vain  
To the world, but real to Him on High."

"And you became as his wife?"—"I did."—  
He stood as stiff as a caryatid,  
And said, "Indeed! . . .  
No matter. You're mine, whatever you've hid!"

"But is it right! When I only gave  
My hand to you in a sweat to save,  
Through desperate need  
(As I thought), my fame, for I was not brave!"

"To save your fame? Your meaning is dim,  
For nobody knew of your altar-whim?"

"I mean—I feared  
There might be fruit of my tie with him;

"And to cloak it by marriage I'm not the first,  
Though, maybe, morally most accurst

Through your unpeered  
And strict uprightness. That's the worst!

"While yesterday his worn contours  
Convinced me that love like his endures,  
And that my troth-plight  
Had been his, in fact, and not truly yours."

"So, my lady, you raise the veil by degrees. . . .  
I own this last is enough to freeze  
    The warmest wight!  
Now hear the other side, if you please :

"I did say once, though without intent,  
That marriage is a plain event  
    Of black and white,  
Whatever may be its sentiment :

"I'll act accordingly, none the less  
That you soiled the contract in time of stress,  
    Thereto induced  
By the feared results of your wantonness.

"But the thing is over, and no one knows,  
And it's nought to the future what you disclose.  
    That you'll be loosed  
For such an episode, don't suppose !

"No : I'll not free you. And if it appear  
There was too good ground for your first fear  
    From your amorous tricks,  
I'll father the child. Yes, by God, my dear !

"Even should you fly to his arms, I'll damn  
Opinion, and fetch you ; treat as sham  
    Your mutinous kicks,  
And whip you home. That's the sort I am !"

She whitened. "Enough. . . . Since you disapprove,  
I'll yield in silence, and never move  
    Till my last pulse ticks  
A footstep from the domestic groove."

"Then swear it," he said, "and your king uncrown."  
He drew her forth in her long white gown,  
    And she knelt and swore.

"Good. Now you may go and again lie down.

"Since you've played these pranks and given no sign,  
You shall crave this man of yours ; pine and pine  
    With sighings sore,  
Till I've starved your love for him ; nailed you mine !

"I'm a practical man, and want no tears ;  
 You've made a fool of me, it appears ;  
     That you don't again  
 Is a lesson I'll teach you in future years."

She answered not, lying listlessly  
 With her dark dry eyes on the coppery sea,  
     That now and then  
 Flung its lazy flounce at the neighbouring quay.

1910.

### A KING'S SOLILOQUY

#### ON THE NIGHT OF HIS FUNERAL

FROM the slow march and muffled drum,  
     And crowds distrest,  
 And book and bell, at length I have come  
     To my full rest.

A ten years' rule beneath the sun  
     Is wound up here,  
 And what I have done, what left undone,  
     Figures out clear.

Yet in the estimate of such  
     It grieves me more  
 That I by some was loved so much  
     Than that I bore,

From others, judgment of that hue  
     Which over-hope  
 Breeds from a theoretic view  
     Of regal scope.

For kingly opportunities  
     Right many have sighed ;  
 How best to bear its devilries  
     Those learn who have tried !

I have eaten the fat and drunk the sweet,  
     Lived the life out



From the first greeting glad drum-beat  
To the last shout.

What pleasure earth affords to kings  
I have enjoyed  
Through its long vivid pulse-stirrings  
Even till it cloyed.

What days of drudgery, nights of stress  
Can cark a throne,  
Even one maintained in peacefulness,  
I too have known.

And so, I think, could I step back  
To life again,  
I should prefer the average track  
Of average men,

Since, as with them, what kingship would  
It cannot do,  
Nor to first thoughts however good  
Hold itself true.

Something binds hard the royal hand,  
As all that be,  
And it is That has shaped, has planned  
My acts and me.

*May 1910.*

### THE CORONATION

AT Westminster, hid from the light of day,  
Many who once had shone as monarchs lay.

Edward the Pious, and two Edwards more,  
The second Richard, Henrys three or four ;

That is to say, those who were called the Third,  
Fifth, Seventh, and Eighth (the much self-widowed) ;

And James the Scot, and near him Charles the Second,  
And, too, the second George could there be reckoned.

Of women, Mary and Queen Elizabeth,  
And Anne, all silent in a musing death ;

And William's Mary, and Mary, Queen of Scots,  
And consort-queens whose names oblivion blots ;

And several more whose chronicle one sees  
Adorning ancient royal pedigrees.

—Now, as they drowsed on, freed from Life's old thrall,  
And heedless, save of things exceptional,

Said one : " What means this throbbing thudding sound  
That reaches to us here from overground ;

" A sound of chisels, augers, planes, and saws,  
Infringing all ecclesiastic laws ?

" And these tons-weight of timber on us pressed,  
Unfelt here since we entered into rest ?

" Surely, at least to us, being corpses royal,  
A meet repose is owing by the loyal ? "

"—Perhaps a scaffold ! " Mary Stuart sighed,  
" If such still be. It was that way I died. "

—" Ods ! Far more like, " said he the many-wived,  
" That for a wedding 'tis this work's contrived.

" Ha-ha ! I never would bow down to Rimmon,  
But I had a rare time with those six women ! "

" Not all at once ? " gasped he who loved confession.

" Nay, nay ! " said Hal. " That would have been transgression. "

"—They build a catafalque here, black and tall,  
Perhaps, " mused Richard, " for some funeral ? "

And Anne chimed in : " Ah, yes : it may be so ! "

" Nay ! " squeaked Eliza. " Little you seem to know—

" Clearly 'tis for some crowning here in state,  
As they crowned us at our long bygone date ;

" Though we'd no such a power of carpentry,  
But let the ancient architecture be ;

"If I were up there where the parsons sit,  
In one of my gold robes, I'd see to it!"

"But you are not," Charles chuckled. "You are here,  
And never will know the sun again, my dear!"

"Yea," whispered those whom no one had addressed;  
"With slow, sad march, amid a folk distressed,  
We were brought here, to take our dusty rest.

"And here, alas, in darkness laid below,  
We'll wait and listen, and endure the show. . . .  
Clamour dogs kingship; afterwards not so!"

1911.

### AQUAE SULIS

THE chimes called midnight, just at interlune,  
And the daytime parle on the Roman investigations  
Was shut to silence, save for the husky tune  
The bubbling waters played near the excavations.

And a warm air came up from underground,  
And a flutter, as of a filmy shape unsepulchred,  
That collected itself, and waited, and looked around:  
Nothing was seen, but utterances could be heard:

Those of the goddess whose shrine was beneath the pile  
Of the God with the baldachined altar overhead:  
"And what did you win by raising this nave and aisle  
Close on the site of the temple I tenanted?"

"The notes of your organ have thrilled down out of view  
To the earth-clogged wrecks of my edifice many a year,  
Though stately and shining once—ay, long ere you  
Had set up crucifix and candle here.

"Your priests have trampled the dust of mine without rueing,  
Despising the joys of man whom I so much loved,  
Though my springs boil on by your Gothic arcades and pewing,  
And sculptures crude. . . . Would Jove they could be removed!"

"Repress, O lady proud, your traditional ire;  
You know not by what a frail thread we equally hang;

It is said we are images both—twitched by people's desires ;  
And that I, like you, fail as a song men yesterday sang !”

“What—a Jumping-jack you, and myself but a poor Jumping-jill,  
Now worm-eaten, times agone twitched at Humanity's bid ?  
O I cannot endure it !—But, chance to us whatso there will,  
Let us kiss and be friends ! Come, agree you ?”—None heard if  
he did. . . .

And the olden dark hid the cavities late laid bare,  
And all was suspended and soundless as before,  
Except for a gossamery noise fading off in the air,  
And the boiling voice of the waters' medicinal pour.

BATH.

#### SEVENTY-FOUR AND TWENTY

HERE goes a man of seventy-four,  
Who sees not what life means for him,  
And here another in years a score  
Who reads its very figure and trim.

The one who shall walk to-day with me  
Is not the youth who gazes far,  
But the breezy sire who cannot see  
What Earth's ingrained conditions are.

#### THE ELOPEMENT

“A WOMAN never agreed to it !” said my knowing friend to me.  
“That one thing she'd refuse to do for Solomon's mines in fee :  
No woman ever will make herself look older than she is.”  
I did not answer ; but I thought, “you err there, ancient Quiz.”

It took a rare one, true, to do it ; for she was surely rare—  
As rare a soul at that sweet time of her life as she was fair,  
And urging heart-heaves, too, were strong, for ours was a passionate  
case,  
Yea, passionate enough to lead to freaking with that young face.

I have told no one about it, should perhaps make few believe,  
 But I think it over now that life looms dull and years bereave,  
 How blank we stood at our bright wits' end, two blown barks in  
     distress,  
 How self-regard in her was slain by her large tenderness.

I said: "The only chance for us in a crisis of this kind  
 Is going it thorough!"—"Yes," she calmly breathed. "Well,  
     I don't mind."

And we blanched her dark locks ruthlessly: set wrinkles on her  
     brow;

Ay—she was a right rare woman then, whatever she may be now.

That night we heard a coach drive up, and questions asked  
     below.

"A gent with an elderly wife, sir," was returned from the bureau.  
 And the wheels went rattling on, and free at last from public ken  
 We washed all off in her chamber and restored her youth again.

How many years ago it was! Some fifty can it be  
 Since that adventure held us, and she played old wife to me?  
 But in time convention won her, as it wins all women at last,  
 And now she is rich and respectable, and time has buried the  
     past.

### "I ROSE UP AS MY CUSTOM IS"

I ROSE up as my custom is  
     On the eve of All-Souls' day,  
 And left my grave for an hour or so  
 To call on those I used to know  
     Before I passed away.

I visited my former Love  
     As she lay by her husband's side;  
 I asked her if life pleased her, now  
 She was rid of a poet wrung in brow,  
     And crazed with the ills he eyed;

Who used to drag her here and there  
     Wherever his fancies led,  
 And point out pale phantasmal things,

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

And talk of vain vague purposings  
That she discredited.

She was quite civil, and replied,  
"Old comrade, is that you?  
Well, on the whole, I like my life.—  
I know I swore I'd be no wife,  
But what was I to do?"

"You see, of all men for my sex  
A poet is the worst;  
Women are practical, and they  
Crave the wherewith to pay their way,  
And slake their social thirst.

"You were a poet—quite the ideal  
That we all love awhile:  
But look at this man snoring here—  
He's no romantic chanticleer,  
Yet keeps me in good style.

"He makes no quest into my thoughts,  
But a poet wants to know  
What one has felt from earliest days,  
Why one thought not in other ways,  
And one's Loves of long ago."

Her words benumbed my fond faint ghost;  
The nightmares neighed from their stalls,  
The vampires screeched, the harpies flew,  
And under the dim dawn I withdrew  
To Death's inviolate halls.

## A WEEK

ON Monday night I closed my door,  
And thought you were not as heretofore,  
And little cared if we met no more.

I seemed on Tuesday night to trace  
Something beyond mere commonplace  
In your ideas, and heart, and face.

On Wednesday I did not opine  
 Your life would ever be one with mine,  
 Though if it were we should well combine.

On Thursday noon I liked you well,  
 And fondly felt that we must dwell  
 Not far apart, whatever befell.

On Friday it was with a thrill  
 In gazing towards your distant vill  
 I owned you were my dear one still.

I saw you wholly to my mind  
 On Saturday—even one who shrined  
 All that was best of womankind.

As wing-clipt sea-gull for the sea  
 On Sunday night I longed for thee,  
 Without whom life were waste to me!

### HAD YOU WEPT

HAD you wept ; had you but neared me with a hazed uncertain ray,  
 Dewy as the face of the dawn, in your large and luminous eye,  
 Then would have come back all the joys the tidings had slain that  
 day,

And a new beginning, a fresh fair heaven, have smoothed the  
 things awry.

But you were less feebly human, and no passionate need for  
 clinging

Possessed your soul to overthrow reserve when I came near ;  
 Ay, though you suffer as much as I from storms the hours are  
 bringing

Upon your heart and mine, I never see you shed a tear.

The deep strong woman is weakest, the weak one is the strong ;  
 The weapon of all weapons best for winning, you have not used ;  
 Have you never been able, or would you not, through the evil  
 times and long ?

Has not the gift been given you, or such gift have you refused ?

When I bade me not absolve you on that evening or the morrow,  
 Why did you not make war on me with those who weep like rain?  
 You felt too much, so gained no balm for all your torrid sorrow,  
 And hence our deep division, and our dark undying pain.

## BEREFT, SHE THINKS SHE DREAMS

I DREAM that the dearest I ever knew  
 Has died and been entombed.  
 I am sure it's a dream that cannot be true,  
 But I am so overgloomed  
 By its persistence, that I would gladly  
 Have quick death take me,  
 Rather than longer think thus sadly;  
 So wake me, wake me!

It has lasted days, but minute and hour  
 I expect to get aroused  
 And find him as usual in the bower  
 Where we so happily housed.  
 Yet stays this nightmare too appalling,  
 And like a web shakes me,  
 And piteously I keep on calling,  
 And no one wakes me!

## IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

"WHAT do you see in that time-touched stone,  
 When nothing is there  
 But ashen blankness, although you give it  
 A rigid stare?"

"You look not quite as if you saw,  
 But as if you heard,  
 Parting your lips, and treading softly  
 As mouse or bird.

"It is only the base of a pillar, they'll tell you,  
 That came to us



From a far old hill men used to name  
Areopagus."

—"I know no art, and I only view  
A stone from a wall,  
But I am thinking that stone has echoed  
The voice of Paul,

"Paul as he stood and preached beside it  
Facing the crowd,  
A small gaunt figure with wasted features,  
Calling out loud

"Words that in all their intimate accents  
Pattered upon  
That marble front, and were wide reflected,  
And then were gone.

"I'm a labouring man, and know but little,  
Or nothing at all ;  
But I can't help thinking that stone once echoed  
The voice of Paul."

## IN THE SERVANTS' QUARTERS

"MAN, you too, aren't you, one of these rough followers of the  
criminal ?

All hanging hereabout to gather how he's going to bear  
Examination in the hall." She flung disdainful glances on  
The shabby figure standing at the fire with others there,  
Who warmed them by its flare.

"No indeed, my skipping maiden : I know nothing of the trial  
here,  
Or criminal, if so he be.—I chanced to come this way,  
And the fire shone out into the dawn, and morning airs are cold  
now ;  
I, too, was drawn in part by charms I see before me play,  
That I see not every day."

“Ha, ha!” then laughed the constables who also stood to warm  
 themselves,  
 The while another maiden scrutinized his features hard,  
 As the blaze threw into contrast every line and knot that wrinkled  
 them,  
 Exclaiming, “Why, last night when he was brought in by the  
 guard,  
 You were with him in the yard!”

“Nay, nay, you teasing wench, I say! You know you speak  
 mistakenly.  
 Cannot a tired pedestrian who has legged it long and far  
 Here on his way from northern parts, engrossed in humble  
 marketings,  
 Come in and rest awhile, although judicial doings are  
 Afoot by morning star?”

“O, come, come!” laughed the constables. “Why, man, you  
 speak the dialect  
 He uses in his answers; you can hear him up the stairs.  
 So own it. We sha’n’t hurt ye. There he’s speaking now!  
 His syllables  
 Are those you sound yourself when you are talking unawares,  
 As this pretty girl declares.”

“And you shudder when his chain clinks!” she rejoined. “O  
 yes, I noticed it.  
 And you winced, too, when those cuffs they gave him echoed to  
 us here.  
 They’ll soon be coming down, and you may then have to defend  
 yourself  
 Unless you hold your tongue, or go away and keep you clear  
 When he’s led to judgment near!”

“No! I’ll be damned in hell if I know anything about the man!  
 No single thing about him more than everybody knows!  
 Must not I even warm my hands but I am charged with  
 blasphemies?” . . .  
 —His face convulses as the morning cock that moment crows,  
 And he droops, and turns, and goes.

## THE OBLITERATE TOMB

“MORE than half my life long  
 Did they weigh me falsely, to my bitter wrong,  
 But they all have shrunk away into the silence  
 Like a lost song.

“And the day has dawned and come  
 For forgiveness, when the past may hold it dumb  
 On the once reverberate words of hatred uttered  
 Half in delirium. . . .

“With folded lips and hands  
 They lie and wait what next the Will commands,  
 And doubtless think, if think they can: ‘Let discord  
 Sink with Life’s sands!’

“By these late years their names,  
 Their virtues, their hereditary claims,  
 May be as near defacement at their grave-place  
 As are their fames.”

—Such thoughts bechanced to seize  
 A traveller’s mind—a man of memories—  
 As he set foot within the western city  
 Where had died these

Who in their lifetime deemed  
 Him their chief enemy—one whose brain had schemed  
 To get their dingy greatness deeplier dingied  
 And disesteemed.

So, sojourning in their town,  
 He mused on them and on their once renown,  
 And said, “I’ll seek their resting-place to-morrow  
 Ere I lie down,

“And end, lest I forget,  
 Those ires of many years that I regret,  
 Renew their names, that men may see some liegeness  
 Is left them yet.”

Duly next night he went  
 And sought the church he had known them to frequent,  
 And wandered, lantern-bearing, in the precincts,  
 Where they lay pent,

Till by remembrance led  
 He stood at length beside their slighted bed,  
 Above which, truly, scarce a line or letter  
 Could now be read.

"Thus years obliterate  
 Their graven worth, their chronicle, their date!  
 At once I'll garnish and revive the record  
 Of their past state,

"That still the sage may say  
 In pensive progress here where they decay,  
 'This stone records a luminous line whose talents  
 Told in their day.'"

While dreaming thus he turned,  
 For a form shadowed where they lay inurned,  
 And he beheld a stranger in foreign vesture,  
 And tropic-burned.

"Sir, I am right pleased to view  
 That ancestors of mine should interest you,  
 For I have fared of purpose here to find them. . . .  
 They are time-worn, true,

"But that's a fault, at most,  
 Carvers can cure. On the Pacific coast  
 I have vowed for long that relics of my forbears  
 I'd trace ere lost,

"And hitherward I come,  
 Before this same old Time shall strike me numb,  
 To carry it out."—"Strange, this is!" said the other;  
 "What mind shall plumb

"Coincident design!  
 Though these my father's enemies were and mine,  
 I nourished a like purpose—to restore them  
 Each letter and line."

“Such magnanimity  
Is now not needed, sir; for you will see  
That since I am here, a thing like this is, plainly,  
Best done by me.”

The other bowed, and left,  
Crestfallen in sentiment, as one bereft  
Of some fair object he had been moved to cherish,  
By hands more deft.

And as he slept that night  
The phantoms of the ensepulchred stood upright  
Before him, trembling that he had set him seeking  
Their charnel-site.

And, as unknowing his ruth,  
Asked as with terrors founded not on truth  
Why he should want them. “Ha,” they hollowly hacked,  
“You come, forsooth,

“By stealth to obliterate  
Our graven worth, our chronicle, our date,  
That our descendant may not gild the record  
Of our past state,

“And that no sage may say  
In pensive progress near where we decay:  
‘This stone records a luminous line whose talents  
Told in their day.’”

Upon the morrow he went,  
And to that town and churchyard never bent  
His ageing footsteps till, some twelvemonths onward,  
An accident

Once more detained him there;  
And, stirred by hauntings, he must needs repair  
To where the tomb was. Lo, it stood still wasting  
In no man’s care.

And so the tomb remained  
Untouched, untended, crumbling, weather-stained,  
And though the one-time foe was fain to right it  
He still refrained.

"I'll set about it when  
I am sure he'll come no more. Best wait till then."  
But so it was that never the kinsman entered  
That city again.

Till doubts grew keen  
If it had chanced not that the figure seen  
Shaped but in dream on that dim doubtful midnight :  
Such things had been. . . .

So, the well-meander died  
While waiting tremulously unsatisfied  
That no return of the family's foreign scion  
Would still betide.

And many years slid by,  
And active church-restorers cast their eye  
Upon the ancient garth and hoary building  
The tomb stood nigh.

And when they had scraped each wall,  
Pulled out the stately pews, and smartened all,  
"It will be well," declared the spruce church-warden,  
"To overhaul

"And broaden this path where shown ;  
Nothing prevents it but an old tombstone  
Pertaining to a family forgotten,  
Of deeds unknown.

"Their names can scarce be read,  
Depend on't, all who care for them are dead."  
So went the tomb, whose shards were as path-paving  
Distributed.

Over it and about  
Men's footsteps beat, and wind and waterspout,  
Until the names, aforetime gnawed by weathers,  
Were quite worn out.

So that no sage can say  
In pensive progress near where they decay,  
"This stone records a luminous line whose talents  
Told in their day."

"REGRET NOT ME"

REGRET not me ;  
Beneath the sunny tree  
I lie uncaring, slumbering peacefully.

Swift as the light  
I flew my faery flight ;  
Ecstatically I moved, and feared no night.

I did not know  
That heydays fade and go,  
But deemed that what was would be always so.

I skipped at morn  
Between the yellowing corn,  
Thinking it good and glorious to be born.

I ran at eves  
Among the piled-up sheaves,  
Dreaming, "I grieve not, therefore nothing grieves."

Now soon will come  
The apple, pear, and plum,  
And hinds will sing, and autumn insects hum.

Again you will fare  
To cider-makings rare,  
And junketings; but I shall not be there.

Yet gaily sing  
Until the pewter ring  
Those songs we sang when we went gipsying.

And lightly dance  
Some triple-timed romance  
In coupled figures, and forget mischance ;

And mourn not me  
Beneath the yellowing tree ;  
For I shall mind not, slumbering peacefully.

## THE RECALCITRANTS

LET us off and search, and find a place  
 Where yours and mine can be natural lives,  
 Where no one comes who dissects and dives  
 And proclaims that ours is a curious case,  
 Which its touch of romance can scarcely grace.

You would think it strange at first, but then  
 Everything has been strange in its time.  
 When some one said on a day of the prime  
 He would bow to no brazen god again  
 He doubtless dazed the mass of men.

None will recognize us as a pair whose claims  
 To righteous judgment we care not making ;  
 Who have doubted if breath be worth the taking,  
 And have no respect for the current fames  
 Whence the savour has flown while abide the names.

We have found us already shunned, disdained,  
 And for re-acceptance have not once striven ;  
 Whatever offence our course has given  
 The brunt thereof we have long sustained.  
 Well, let us away, scorned, unexplained.

## STARLINGS ON THE ROOF

"No smoke spreads out of this chimney-pot,  
 The people who lived here have left the spot,  
 And others are coming who knew them not.

"If you listen anon, with an ear intent,  
 The voices, you'll find, will be different  
 From the well-known ones of those who went."

"Why did they go? Their tones so bland  
 Were quite familiar to our band ;  
 The comers we shall not understand."



“They look for a new life, rich and strange ;  
They do not know that, let them range  
Wherever they may, they will get no change.

“They will drag their house-gear ever so far  
In their search for a home no miseries mar ;  
They will find that as they were they are,

“That every hearth has a ghost, alack,  
And can be but the scene of a bivouac  
Till they move perforce—no time to pack!”

## THE MOON LOOKS IN

## I

I HAVE risen again,  
And awhile survey  
By my chilly ray  
Through your window-pane  
Your upturned face,  
As you think, “Ah—she  
Now dreams of me  
In her distant place!”

## II

I pierce her blind  
In her far-off home :  
She fixes a comb,  
And says in her mind,  
“I start in an hour ;  
Whom shall I meet ?  
Won't the men be sweet,  
And the women sour !”

## THE SWEET HUSSY

IN his early days he was quite surprised  
 When she told him she was compromised  
 By meetings and lingerings at his whim,  
 And thinking not of herself but him ;  
 While she lifted orbs aggrieved and round  
 That scandal should so soon abound,  
 (As she had raised them to nine or ten  
 Of antecedent nice young men) :  
 And in remorse he thought with a sigh,  
 How good she is, and how bad am I !—  
 It was years before he understood  
 That she was the wicked one—he the good.

## THE TELEGRAM

“O HE’S suffering—maybe dying—and I not there to aid,  
 And smooth his bed and whisper to him ! Can I nohow go ?  
 Only the nurse’s brief twelve words thus hurriedly conveyed,  
 As by stealth, to let me know.

“He was the best and brightest !—candour shone upon his brow,  
 And I shall never meet again a soldier such as he,  
 And I loved him ere I knew it, and perhaps he’s sinking now,  
 Far, far removed from me !”

—The yachts ride mute at anchor and the fulling moon is fair,  
 And the giddy folk are strutting up and down the smooth parade,  
 And in her wild distraction she seems not to be aware  
 That she lives no more a maid,

But has vowed and wived herself to one who blessed the ground  
 she trod

To and from his scene of ministry, and thought her history known  
 In its last particular to him—aye, almost as to God,  
 And believed her quite his own.

So rapt her mind’s far-off regard she droops as in a swoon,  
 And a movement of aversion mars her recent spousal grace,

And in silence we two sit here in our waning honeymoon  
At this idle watering-place. . . .

What now I see before me is a long lane overhung  
With lovelessness, and stretching from the present to the grave.  
And I would I were away from this, with friends I knew when  
young,  
Ere a woman held me slave.

## THE MOTH-SIGNAL

(*On Egdon Heath*)

"WHAT are you still, still thinking,"  
He asked in vague surmise,  
"That you stare at the wick unblinking  
With those deep lost-luminous eyes?"

"O, I see a poor moth burning  
In the candle flame," said she,  
"Its wings and legs are turning  
To a cinder rapidly."

"Moths fly in from the heather,"  
He said, "now the days decline."  
"I know," said she. "The weather,  
I hope, will at last be fine."

"I think," she added lightly,  
"I'll look out at the door.  
The ring the moon wears nightly  
May be visible now no more."

She rose, and, little heeding,  
Her life-mate then went on  
With his mute museful reading  
In the annals of ages gone.

Outside the house a figure  
Came from the tumulus near,  
And speedily waxed bigger,  
And clasped and called her Dear.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

"I saw the pale-winged token  
 You sent through the crack," sighed she.  
 "That moth is burnt and broken  
 With which you lured out me.

"And were I as the moth is  
 It might be better far  
 For one whose marriage troth is  
 Shattered as potsherds are!"

Then grinned the Ancient Briton  
 From the tumulus treed with pine:  
 "So, hearts are thwartly smitten  
 In these days as in mine!"

## SEEN BY THE WAITS

THROUGH snowy woods and shady  
 We went to play a tune  
 To the lonely manor-lady  
 By the light of the Christmas moon.

We violed till, upward glancing  
 To where a mirror leaned,  
 It showed her airily dancing,  
 Deeming her movements screened;

Dancing alone in the room there,  
 Thin-draped in her robe of night;  
 Her postures, glassed in the gloom there,  
 Were a strange phantasmal sight.

She had learnt (we heard when homing)  
 That her roving spouse was dead:  
 Why she had danced in the gloaming  
 We thought, but never said.

## THE TWO SOLDIERS

JUST at the corner of the wall  
We met—yes, he and I—  
Who had not faced in camp or hall  
Since we bade home good-bye,  
And what once happened came back—all—  
Out of those years gone by.

And that strange woman whom we knew  
And loved—long dead and gone,  
Whose poor half-perished residue,  
Tombless and trod, lay yon!  
But at this moment to our view  
Rose like a phantom wan.

And in his fixed face I could see,  
Lit by a lurid shine,  
The drama re-enact which she  
Had dyed incarnadine  
For us, and more. And doubtless he  
Beheld it too in mine.

A start, as at one slightly known;  
And with an indifferent air  
We passed, without a sign being shown  
That, as it real were,  
A memory-acted scene had thrown  
Its tragic shadow there.

## THE DEATH OF REGRET

I OPENED my shutter at sunrise,  
And looked at the hill hard by,  
And I heartily grieved for the comrade  
Who wandered up there to die.

I let in the morn on the morrow,  
And failed not to think of him then,  
As he trod up that rise in the twilight,  
And never came down again.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

I undid the shutter a week thence,  
 But not until after I'd turned  
 Did I call back his last departure  
 By the upland there discerned.

Uncovering the casement long later,  
 I bent to my toil till the gray,  
 When I said to myself, "Ah—what ails me,  
 To forget him all the day!"

As daily I flung back the shutter  
 In the same blank bald routine,  
 He scarcely once rose to remembrance  
 Through a month of my facing the scene.

And ah, seldom now do I ponder  
 At the window as heretofore  
 On the long valued one who died yonder,  
 And wastes by the sycamore.

## IN THE DAYS OF CRINOLINE

A PLAIN tilt-bonnet on her head  
 She took the path across the leaze.  
 —Her spouse the vicar, gardening, said,  
 "Too dowdy that, for coquetries,  
 So I can hoe at ease."

But when she had passed into the heath,  
 And gained the wood beyond the flat,  
 She raised her skirts, and from beneath  
 Unpinned and drew as from a sheath  
 An ostrich-feathered hat.

And where the hat had hung she now  
 Concealed and pinned the dowdy hood,  
 And set the hat upon her brow,  
 And thus emerging from the wood  
 Tripped on in jaunty mood.

The sun was low and crimson-faced  
 As two came that way from the town,

And plunged into the wood untraced. . . .  
 When severally therefrom they paced  
     The sun had quite gone down.

The hat and feather disappeared,  
 The dowdy hood again was donned,  
 And in the gloom the fair one neared  
 Her home and husband dour, who conned  
     Calmly his blue-eyed blonde.

“To-day,” he said, “you have shown good sense,  
 A dress so modest and so meek  
 Should always deck your goings hence  
 Alone.” And as a recompense  
     He kissed her on the cheek.

### THE ROMAN GRAVEMOUNDS

By Rome's dim relics there walks a man,  
 Eyes bent ; and he carries a basket and spade ;  
 I guess what impels him to scrape and scan ;  
 Yea, his dreams of that Empire long decayed.

“Vast was Rome,” he must muse, “in the world's regard,  
 Vast it looms there still, vast it ever will be” ;  
 And he stoops as to dig and unmine some shard  
 Left by those who are held in such memory.

But no ; in his basket, see, he has brought  
 A little white furred thing, stiff of limb,  
 Whose life never won from the world a thought ;  
 It is this, and not Rome, that is moving him.

And to make it a grave he has come to the spot,  
 And he delves in the ancient dead's long home ;  
 Their fames, their achievements, the man knows not ;  
 The furred thing is all to him—nothing Rome !

“Here say you that Cæsar's warriors lie?—  
 But my little white cat was my only friend !  
 Could she but live, might the record die  
 Of Cæsar, his legions, his aims, his end !”

Well, Rome's long rule here is oft and again  
 A theme for the sages of history,  
 And the small furred life was worth no one's pen ;  
 Yet its mourner's mood has a charm for me.

*November 1910.*

### THE WORKBOX

"SEE, here's the workbox, little wife,  
 That I made of polished oak."  
 He was a joiner, of village life ;  
 She came of borough folk.

He holds the present up to her  
 As with a smile she nears  
 And answers to the profferer,  
 "'Twill last all my sewing years !"

"I warrant it will. And longer too.  
 'Tis a scantling that I got  
 Off poor John Wayward's coffin, who  
 Died of they knew not what.

"The shingled pattern that seems to cease  
 Against your box's rim  
 Continues right on in the piece  
 That's underground with him.

"And while I worked it made me think  
 Of timber's varied doom ;  
 One inch where people eat and drink,  
 The next inch in a tomb.

"But why do you look so white, my dear,  
 And turn aside your face ?  
 You knew not that good lad, I fear,  
 Though he came from your native place ?"

"How could I know that good young man,  
 Though he came from my native town,  
 When he must have left far earlier than  
 I was a woman grown ?"



"Ah, no. I should have understood!  
It shocked you that I gave  
To you one end of a piece of wood  
Whose other is in a grave?"

"Don't, dear, despise my intellect,  
Mere accidental things  
Of that sort never have effect  
On my imaginings."

Yet still her lips were limp and wan,  
Her face still held aside,  
As if she had known not only John,  
But known of what he died.

## THE SACRILEGE

A BALLAD-TRAGEDY

*(Circa 182-)*

## PART I

"I HAVE a Love I love too well  
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor;  
I have a Love I love too well,  
To whom, ere she was mine,  
'Such is my love for you,' I said,  
'That you shall have to hood your head  
A silken kerchief crimson-red,  
Wove finest of the fine.'

"And since this Love, for one mad moon,  
On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor,  
Since this my Love for one mad moon  
Did clasp me as her king,  
I snatched a silk-piece red and rare  
From off a stall at Priddy Fair,  
For handkerchief to hood her hair  
When we went gallanting.

"Full soon the four weeks neared their end  
Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor;

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

And when the four weeks neared their end,  
 And their swift sweets outwore,  
 I said, 'What shall I do to own  
 Those beauties bright as tulips blown,  
 And keep you here with me alone  
 As mine for evermore?'

'And as she drowsed within my van  
 On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor—  
 And as she drowsed within my van,  
 And dawning turned to day,  
 She heavily raised her sloe-back eyes  
 And murmured back in softest wise,  
 'One more thing, and the charms you prize  
 Are yours henceforth for aye.

'And swear I will I'll never go  
 While Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor  
 To meet the Cornish Wrestler Joe  
 For dance and dallyings.  
 If you'll to yon cathedral shrine,  
 And finger from the chest divine  
 Treasure to buy me ear-drops fine,  
 And richly jewelled rings.'

'I said: 'I am one who has gathered gear  
 From Marlbury Downs to Dunkery Tor,  
 Who has gathered gear for many a year  
 From mansion, mart and fair;  
 But at God's house I've stayed my hand,  
 Hearing within me some command—  
 Curbed by a law not of the land  
 From doing damage there!'

'Whereat she pouts, this Love of mine,  
 As Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor,  
 And still she pouts, this Love of mine,  
 So cityward I go.  
 But ere I start to do the thing,  
 And speed my soul's imperilling  
 For one who is my ravishing  
 And all the joy I know,

“I come to lay this charge on thee—  
 On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor—  
 I come to lay this charge on thee  
     With solemn speech and sign :  
 Should things go ill, and my life pay  
 For botchery in this rash assay,  
 You are to take hers likewise—yea,  
     The month the law takes mine.

“For should my rival, Wrestler Joe,  
 Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor—  
 My reckless rival, Wrestler Joe,  
     My Love's possessor be,  
 My tortured spirit would not rest,  
 But wander weary and distress  
 Throughout the world in wild protest :  
     The thought nigh maddens me !”

## PART II

Thus did he speak—this brother of mine—  
 On Exon Wild by Dunkery Tor,  
 Born at my birth of mother of mine,  
     And forthwith went his way  
 To dare the deed some coming night . . .  
 I kept the watch with shaking sight,  
 The moon at moments breaking bright,  
     At others glooming gray.

For three full days I heard no sound  
 Where Dunkery frowns on Exon Moor,  
 I heard no sound at all around  
     Whether his fay prevailed,  
 Or one malign the master were,  
 Till some afoot did tidings bear  
 How that, for all his practised care,  
     He had been caught and jailed.

They had heard a crash when twelve had chimed  
 By Mendip east of Dunkery Tor,  
 When twelve had chimed and moonlight climbed ;  
     They watched, and he was tracked  
 By arch and aisle and saint and knight

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Of sculptured stonework sheeted white  
 In the cathedral's ghostly light,  
 And captured in the act.

Yes ; for this Love he loved too well  
 Where Dunkery sights the Severn shore,  
 All for this Love he loved too well  
     He burst the holy bars,  
 Seized golden vessels from the chest  
 To buy her ornaments of the best,  
 At her ill-witchery's request  
     And lure of eyes like stars. . . .

When blustering March confused the sky  
 In Toneborough Town by Exon Moor,  
 When blustering March confused the sky  
     They stretched him ; and he died.  
 Down in the crowd where I, to see  
 The end of him, stood silently,  
 With a set face he lipped to me—  
     "Remember." "Ay!" I cried.

By night and day I shadowed her  
 From Toneborough Deane to Dunkery Tor,  
 I shadowed her asleep, astir,  
     And yet I could not bear—  
 Till Wrestler Joe anon began  
 To figure as her chosen man,  
 And took her to his shining van—  
     To doom a form so fair !

He made it handsome for her sake—  
 And Dunkery smiled to Exon Moor—  
 He made it handsome for her sake,  
     Painting it out and in ;  
 And on the door of apple-green  
 A bright brass knocker soon was seen,  
 And window-curtains white and clean  
     For her to sit within.

And all could see she clave to him  
 As cleaves a cloud to Dunkery Tor,  
 Yea, all could see she clave to him,  
     And every day I said,

“A pity it seems to part those two  
That hourly grow to love more true :  
Yet she's the wanton woman who  
Sent one to swing till dead !”

That blew to blazing all my hate,  
While Dunkery frowned on Exon Moor,  
And when the river swelled, her fate  
Came to her pitilessly. . . .  
I dogged her, crying : “Across that plank  
They use as bridge to reach yon bank  
A coat and hat lie limp and dank ;  
Your goodman's, can they be ?”

She paled, and went, I close behind—  
And Exon frowned to Dunkery Tor,  
She went, and I came up behind  
And tipped the plank that bore  
Her, fleetly flitting across to eye  
What such might bode. She slid awry ;  
And from the current came a cry,  
A gurgle ; and no more.

How that befell no mortal knew  
From Marlbury Downs to Exon Moor ;  
No mortal knew that deed undue  
But he who schemed the crime,  
Which night still covers. . . . But in dream  
Those ropes of hair upon the stream  
He sees, and he will hear that scream  
Until his judgment-time.

### THE ABBEY MASON

INVENTOR OF THE “PERPENDICULAR” STYLE OF  
GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE

*(With Memories of John Hicks, Architect)*

THE new-vamped Abbey shaped apace  
In the fourteenth century of grace ;

(The church which, at an after date,  
Acquired cathedral rank and state.)

Panel and circumscribing wall  
Of latest feature, trim and tall,

Rose roundabout the Norman core  
In prouder pose than theretofore,

Encasing magically the old  
With perpend ashlar manifold.

The trowels rang out, and tracery  
Appeared where blanks had used to be.

Men toiled for pleasure more than pay,  
And all went smoothly day by day,

Till, in due course, the transept part  
Engrossed the master-mason's art.

—Home-coming thence he tossed and turned  
Throughout the night till the new sun burned.

"What fearful visions have inspired  
These gaingivings?" his wife inquired;

"As if your tools were in your hand  
You have hammered, fitted, muttered, planned;

"You have thumped as you were working hard:  
I might have found me bruised and scarred.

"What then's amiss. What eating care  
Looms nigh, whereof I am unaware?"

He answered not, but churchward went,  
Viewing his draughts with discontent;

And fumbled there the livelong day  
Till, hollow-eyed, he came away.

—'Twas said, "The master-mason's ill!"  
And all the abbey works stood still.

Quoth Abbot Wymore: "Why, O why  
Distress yourself? You'll surely die!"

The mason answered, trouble-torn,  
"This long-vogued style is quite outworn!"

"The upper archmould nohow serves  
To meet the lower tracery curves :

"The ogees bend too far away  
To give the flexures interplay.

"This it is causes my distress. . . .  
So it will ever be unless

"New forms be found to supersede  
The circle when occasions need.

"To carry it out I have tried and toiled,  
And now perforce must own me foiled !

"Jeerers will say: 'Here was a man  
Who could not end what he began !'"

—So passed that day, the next, the next ;  
The abbot scanned the task, perplexed ;

The townsmen mustered all their wit  
To fathom how to compass it,

But no raw artistries availed  
Where practice in the craft had failed. . . .

—One night he tossed, all open-eyed,  
And early left his helpmeet's side.

Scattering the rushes of the floor  
He wandered from the chamber door

And sought the sizing pile, whereon  
Struck dimly a cadaverous dawn

Through freezing rain, that drenched the board  
Of diagram-lines he last had scored—

Chalked phantasies in vain begot  
To knife the architectural knot—

In front of which he dully stood,  
Regarding them in hopeless mood.

He closelier looked ; then looked again :  
The chalk-scratched draught-board faced the rain,

Whose icicled drops deformed the lines  
Innumerable of his lame designs,

So that they streamed in small white threads  
From the upper segments to the heads

Of arcs below, uniting them  
Each by a stalactitic stem.

—At once, with eyes that struck out sparks,  
He adds accessory cusping-marks,

Then laughs aloud. The thing was done  
So long assayed from sun to sun. . . .

—Now in his joy he grew aware  
Of one behind him standing there,

And, turning, saw the abbot, who  
The weather's whim was watching too.

Onward to Prime the abbot went,  
Tacit upon the incident.

—Men now discerned as days revolved  
The ogive riddle had been solved ;

Templates were cut, fresh lines were chalked  
Where lines had been defaced and balked,

And the work swelled and mounted higher,  
Achievement distancing desire ;

Here jambs with transoms fixed between,  
Where never the like before had been—

There little mullions thinly sawn  
Where meeting circles once were drawn.

"We knew," men said, "the thing would go  
After his craft-wit got aglow,

"And, once fulfilled what he has designed,  
We'll honour him and his great mind !"

When matters stood thus poised awhile,  
And all surroundings shed a smile,



The master-mason on an eve  
 Homed to his wife and seemed to grieve. . . .

—“The abbot spoke to me to-day;  
 He hangs about the works alway.

“He knows the source as well as I  
 Of the new style men magnify.

“He said: ‘You pride yourself too much  
 On your creation. Is it such?’

“‘Surely the hand of God it is  
 That conjured so, and only His!—

“‘Disclosing by the frost and rain  
 Forms your invention chased in vain;

“‘Hence the devices deemed so great  
 You copied, and did not create.’

“I feel the abbot’s words are just,  
 And that all thanks renounce I must.

“Can a man welcome praise and pelf  
 For hatching art that hatched itself? . . .

“So, I shall own the deft design  
 Is Heaven’s outshaping, and not mine.”

“What!” said she. “Praise your works ensure  
 To throw away, and quite obscure

“Your beaming and beneficent star?  
 Better you leave things as they are!

“Why, think awhile. Had not your zest  
 In your loved craft curtailed your rest—

“Had you not gone there ere the day  
 The sun had melted all away!”

—But, though his good wife argued so,  
 The mason let the people know

That not unaided sprang the thought  
 Whereby the glorious fane was wrought,

But that by frost when dawn was dim  
The method was disclosed to him.

“Yet,” said the townspeople thereat,  
“’Tis your own doing, even with that !”

But he—chafed, childlike, in extremes—  
The temperament of men of dreams—

Aloofly scrupled to admit  
That he did aught but borrow it,

And diffidently made request  
That with the abbot all should rest.

—As none could doubt the abbot’s word,  
Or question what the church averred,

The mason was at length believed  
Of no more count than he conceived,

And soon began to lose the fame  
That late had gathered round his name. . . .

—Time passed, and like a living thing  
The pile went on embodying,

And workmen died, and young ones grew,  
And the old mason sank from view

And Abbots Wygmore and Staunton went  
And Horton sped the embellishment.

But not till years had far progressed  
Chanced it that, one day, much impressed,

Standing within the well-graced aisle,  
He asked who first conceived the style ;

And some decrepit sage detailed  
How, when invention nought availed,

The cloud-cast waters in their whim  
Came down, and gave the hint to him

Who struck each arc, and made each mould ;  
And how the abbot would not hold

As sole begetter him who applied  
Forms the Almighty sent as guide ;

And how the master lost renown,  
And wore in death no artist's crown.

—Then Horton, who in inner thought  
Had more perceptions than he taught,

Replied : “ Nay ; art can but transmute ;  
Invention is not absolute ;

“ Things fail to spring from nought at call,  
And art-beginnings most of all.

“ He did but what all artists do,  
Wait upon Nature for his cue.”

—“ Had you been here to tell them so,  
Lord Abbot, sixty years ago,

“ The mason, now long underground,  
Doubtless a different fate had found.

“ He passed into oblivion dim,  
And none knew what became of him !

“ His name ? ’Twas of some common kind  
And now has faded out of mind.”

The Abbot : “ It shall not be hid !  
I’ll trace it.” . . . But he never did.

—When longer yet dank death had wormed  
The brain wherein the style had germed

From Gloucester church it flew afar—  
The style called Perpendicular.—

To Winton and to Westminster  
It ranged, and grew still beautifuller :

From Solway Frith to Dover Strand  
Its fascinations starred the land,

Not only on cathedral walls  
But upon courts and castle halls,

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Till every edifice in the isle  
Was patterned to no other style,

And till, long having played its part  
The curtain fell on Gothic art.

—Well : when in Wessex on your rounds,  
Take a brief step beyond its bounds,

And enter Gloucester : seek the quoin  
Where choir and transept interjoin,

And, gazing at the forms there flung  
Against the sky by one unsung—

The ogee arches transom-topped,  
The tracery-stalks by spandrels stopped,

Petrified lacework—lightly lined  
On ancient massiveness behind—

Muse that some minds so modest be  
As to renounce fame's fairest fee,

(Like him who crystallized on this spot  
His visionings, but lies forgot,

And many a mediaeval one  
Whose symmetries salute the sun)

While others boom a baseless claim,  
And upon nothing rear a name.

## THE JUBILEE OF A MAGAZINE

*(To the Editor)*

YES ; your up-dated modern page—  
All flower-fresh, as it appears—  
Can claim a time-tried lineage,

That reaches backward fifty years  
(Which, if but short for sleepy squires,  
Is much in magazines' careers).

—Here, on your cover, never tires  
The sower, reaper, thresher, while  
As through the seasons of our sires

Each wills to work in ancient style  
With seedlip, sickle, share and flail,  
Though modes have since moved many a mile!

The steel-roped plough now rips the vale,  
With cog and tooth the sheaves are won,  
Wired wheels drum out the wheat like hail;

But if we ask, what has been done  
To unify the mortal lot  
Since your bright leaves first saw the sun,

Beyond mechanic furtherance—what  
Advance can rightness, candour, claim?  
Truth bends abashed, and answers not.

Despite your volumes' gentle aim  
To straighten visions wry and wrong,  
Events jar onward much the same!

—Had custom tended to prolong,  
As on your golden page engrained,  
Old processes of blade and prong,

And best invention been retained  
For high crusades to lessen tears  
Throughout the race, the world had gained! . . .  
But too much, this, for fifty years.

### THE SATIN SHOES

“If ever I walk to church to wed,  
As other maidens use,  
And face the gathered eyes,” she said,  
“I’ll go in satin shoes!”

She was as fair as early day  
Shining on meads unmown,

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

And her sweet syllables seemed to play  
Like flute-notes softly blown.

The time arrived when it was meet  
That she should be a bride ;  
The satin shoes were on her feet,  
Her father was at her side.

They stood within the dairy door,  
And gazed across the green ;  
The church loomed on the distant moor,  
But rain was thick between.

“ The grass-path hardly can be stepped,  
The lane is like a pool ! ”—  
Her dream is shown to be inept,  
Her wish they overrule.

“ To go forth shod in satin soft  
A coach would be required ! ”  
For thickest boots the shoes were doffed—  
Those shoes her soul desired. . . .

All day the bride, as overborne,  
Was seen to brood apart,  
And that the shoes had not been worn  
Sat heavy on her heart.

From her wrecked dream, as months flew on,  
Her thought seemed not to range.  
“ What ails the wife,” they said anon,  
“ That she should be so strange ? ” . . .

Ah—what coach comes with furtive glide—  
A coach of closed-up kind ?  
It comes to fetch the last year’s bride,  
Who wanders in her mind.

She strove with them, and fearfully ran  
Stairward with one low scream :  
“ Nay—coax her,” said the madhouse man,  
“ With some old household theme.”

"If you will go, dear, you must fain  
Put on those shoes—the pair  
Meant for your marriage, which the rain  
Forbade you then to wear."

She clapped her hands, flushed joyous hues ;  
"O yes—I'll up and ride  
If I am to wear my satin shoes  
And be a proper bride !"

Out then her little foot held she,  
As to depart with speed ;  
The madhouse man smiled pleasantly  
To see the wile succeed.

She turned to him when all was done,  
And gave him her thin hand,  
Exclaiming like an enraptured one,  
"This time it will be grand !"

She mounted with a face elate,  
Shut was the carriage door ;  
They drove her to the madhouse gate,  
And she was seen no more. . . .

Yet she was fair as early day  
Shining on meads unmown,  
And her sweet syllables seemed to play  
Like flute-notes softly blown.

## EXEUNT OMNES

## I

EVERYBODY else, then, going,  
And I still left where the fair was ? . . .  
Much have I seen of neighbour loungers  
Making a lusty showing,  
Each now past all knowing.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

## II

There is an air of blankness  
 In the street and the littered spaces ;  
 Thoroughfare, steeple, bridge and highway  
 Wizen themselves to lankness ;  
 Kennels dribble dankness.

## III

Folk all fade. And whither,  
 As I wait alone where the fair was ?  
 Into the clammy and numbing night-fog  
 Whence they entered hither.  
 Soon do I follow thither !

*June 2, 1913.*

## A POET

ATTENTIVE eyes, fantastic heed,  
 Assessing minds, he does not need,  
 Nor urgent writs to sup or dine,  
 Nor pledges in the rosy wine.

For loud acclaim he does not care  
 By the august or rich or fair,  
 Nor for smart pilgrims from afar,  
 Curious on where his hauntings are.

But soon or later, when you hear  
 That he has doffed this wrinkled gear,  
 Some evening, at the first star-ray,  
 Come to his graveside, pause and say :

“ Whatever his message—glad or grim—  
 Two bright-souled women clave to him ” ;  
 Stand and say that while day decays ;  
 It will be word enough of praise.

*July 1914.*



# SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

## IN FIFTEEN GLIMPSES

*(First published April 1911)*

### I

#### AT TEA

THE kettle descants in a cosy drone,  
And the young wife looks in her husband's face,  
And then at her guest's, and shows in her own  
Her sense that she fills an envied place ;  
And the visiting lady is all abloom,  
And says there was never so sweet a room.

And the happy young housewife does not know  
That the woman beside her was first his choice,  
Till the fates ordained it could not be so. . . .  
Betraying nothing in look or voice  
The guest sits smiling and sips her tea,  
And he throws her a stray glance yearningly.

### II

#### IN CHURCH

"AND now to God the Father," he ends,  
And his voice thrills up to the topmost tiles :  
Each listener chokes as he bows and bends,  
And emotion pervades the crowded aisles.

## SATIRES OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Then the preacher glides to the vestry-door,  
And shuts it, and thinks he is seen no more.

The door swings softly ajar meanwhile,  
And a pupil of his in the Bible class,  
Who adores him as one without gloss or guile,  
Sees her idol stand with a satisfied smile  
And re-enact at the vestry-glass  
Each pulpit gesture in deft dumb-show  
That had moved the congregation so.

## III

## BY HER AUNT'S GRAVE

"SIXPENCE a week," says the girl to her lover,  
"Aunt used to bring me, for she could confide  
In me alone, she vowed. 'Twas to cover  
The cost of her headstone when she died.  
And that was a year ago last June ;  
I've not yet fixed it. But I must soon."

"And where is the money now, my dear ?"  
"O, snug in my purse . . . Aunt was *so* slow  
In saving it—eighty weeks, or near." . . .  
"Let's spend it," he hints. "For she won't know.  
There's a dance to-night at the Load of Hay."  
She passively nods. And they go that way.

## IV

## IN THE ROOM OF THE BRIDE-ELECT

"WOULD it had been the man of our wish !"  
Sighs her mother. To whom with vehemence she  
In the wedding-dress—the wife to be—  
"Then why were you so mollyish  
As not to insist on him for me !"  
The mother, amazed : "Why, dearest one,  
Because you pleaded for this or none !"

“But Father and you should have stood out strong!  
 Since then, to my cost, I have lived to find  
 That you were right and that I was wrong;  
 This man is a dolt to the one declined. . . .  
 Ah!—here he comes with his button-hole rose.  
 Good God—I must marry him I suppose!”

## V

## AT A WATERING-PLACE

THEY sit and smoke on the esplanade,  
 The man and his friend, and regard the bay  
 Where the far chalk cliffs, to the left displayed,  
 Smile sallowly in the decline of day.  
 And saunterers pass with laugh and jest—  
 A handsome couple among the rest.

“That smart proud pair,” says the man to his friend,  
 “Are to marry next week. . . . How little he thinks  
 That dozens of days and nights on end  
 I have stroked her neck, unhooked the links  
 Of her sleeve to get at her upper arm. . . .  
 Well, bliss is in ignorance: what’s the harm!”

## VI

## IN THE CEMETERY

“YOU see those mothers squabbling there?”  
 Remarks the man of the cemetery.  
 “One says in tears, ‘*Tis mine lies here!*’  
 Another, ‘*Nay, mine, you Pharisee!*’  
 Another, ‘*How dare you move my flowers*  
*And put your own on this grave of ours!*’  
 But all their children were laid therein  
 At different times, like sprats in a tin.

“And then the main drain had to cross,  
 And we moved the lot some nights ago,

And packed them away in the general foss  
 With hundreds more. But their folks don't know,  
 And as well cry over a new-laid drain  
 As anything else, to ease your pain !”

## VII

## OUTSIDE THE WINDOW

“ My stick !” he says, and turns in the lane  
 To the house just left, whence a vixen voice  
 Comes out with the firelight through the pane,  
 And he sees within that the girl of his choice  
 Stands rating her mother with eyes aglare  
 For something said while he was there.

“ At last I behold her soul undraped !”  
 Thinks the man who had loved her more than himself ;  
 “ My God !—’tis but narrowly I have escaped.—  
 My precious porcelain proves it delf.”  
 His face has reddened like one ashamed,  
 And he steals off, leaving his stick unclaimed.

## VIII

## IN THE STUDY

HE enters, and mute on the edge of a chair  
 Sits a thin-faced lady, a stranger there,  
 A type of decayed gentility ;  
 And by some small signs he well can guess  
 That she comes to him almost breakfastless.

“ I have called—I hope I do not err—  
 I am looking for a purchaser  
 Of some score volumes of the works  
 Of eminent divines I own,—  
 Left by my father—though it irks  
 My patience to offer them.” And she smiles

As if necessity were unknown ;  
 " But the truth of it is that oftenwhiles  
 I have wished, as I am fond of art,  
 To make my rooms a little smart,  
 And these old books are so in the way."  
 And lightly still she laughs to him,  
 As if to sell were a mere gay whim,  
 And that, to be frank, Life were indeed  
 To her not vinegar and gall,  
 But fresh and honey-like ; and Need  
 No household skeleton at all.

## IX

## AT THE ALTAR-RAIL

" My bride is not coming, alas ! " says the groom,  
 And the telegram shakes in his hand. " I own  
 It was hurried ! We met at a dancing-room  
 When I went to the Cattle-Show alone,  
 And then, next night, where the Fountain leaps,  
 And the Street of the Quarter-Circle sweeps.

" Ay, she won me to ask her to be my wife—  
 'Twas foolish perhaps !—to forsake the ways  
 Of the flaring town for a farmer's life.  
 She agreed. And we fixed it. Now she says :  
 '*It's sweet of you, dear, to prepare me a nest,  
 But a swift, short, gay life suits me best.  
 What I really am you have never gleaned ;  
 I had eaten the apple ere you were weaned.*' "

## X

## IN THE NUPTIAL CHAMBER

" O THAT mastering tune ? " And up in the bed  
 Like a lace-robed phantom springs the bride ;  
 " And why ? " asks the man she had that day wed,  
 With a start, as the band plays on outside.

"It's the townfolk's cheery compliment  
Because of our marriage, my Innocent."

"O but you don't know! 'Tis the passionate air  
To which my old Love waltzed with me,  
And I swore as we spun that none should share  
My home, my kisses, till death, save he!  
And he dominates me and thrills me through,  
And it's he I embrace while embracing you!"

## XI

## IN THE RESTAURANT

"BUT hear. If you stay, and the child be born,  
It will pass as your husband's with the rest,  
While, if we fly, the teeth of scorn  
Will be gleaming at us from east to west;  
And the child will come as a life despised;  
I feel an elopement is ill-advised!"

"O you realize not what it is, my dear,  
To a woman! Daily and hourly alarms  
Lest the truth should out. How can I stay here,  
And nightly take him into my arms!  
Come to the child no name or fame,  
Let us go, and face it, and bear the shame."

## XII

## AT THE DRAPER'S

"I STOOD at the back of the shop, my dear,  
But you did not perceive me.  
Well, when they deliver what you were shown  
I shall know nothing of it, believe me!"

And he coughed and coughed as she paled and said,  
"O, I didn't see you come in there—  
Why couldn't you speak?"—"Well, I didn't. I left  
That you should not notice I'd been there."

"You were viewing some lovely things. 'Soon required  
*For a widow, of latest fashion*' ;  
And I knew 'twould upset you to meet the man  
Who had to be cold and ashen

"And screwed in a box before they could dress you  
*'In the last new note in mourning,'*  
As they defined it. So, not to distress you,  
I left you to your adorning."

## XIII

## ON THE DEATH-BED

"I'LL tell—being past all praying for—  
Then promptly die . . . He was out at the war  
And got some scent of the intimacy  
That was under way between her and me ;  
And he stole back home, and appeared like a ghost  
One night, at the very time almost  
That I reached her house. Well, I shot him dead,  
And secretly buried him. Nothing was said.

"The news of the battle came next day ;  
He was scheduled missing. I hurried away,  
Got out there, visited the field,  
And sent home word that a search revealed  
He was one of the slain ; though, lying alone  
And stript, his body had not been known.

"But she suspected. I lost her love,  
Yea, my hope of earth, and of Heaven above ;  
And my time's now come, and I'll pay the score,  
Though it be burning for evermore."

## XIV

## OVER THE COFFIN

THEY stand confronting, the coffin between,  
 His wife of old, and his wife of late,  
 And the dead man whose they both had been  
 Seems listening aloof, as to things past date.  
 —“I have called,” says the first. “Do you marvel or not?”  
 “In truth,” says the second, “I do—somewhat.”

“Well, there was a word to be said by me! . . .  
 I divorced that man because of you—  
 It seemed I must do it, boundenly;  
 But now I am older, and tell you true,  
 For life is little, and dead lies he;  
 I would I had let alone you two!  
 And both of us, scorning parochial ways,  
 Had lived like the wives in the patriarchs’ days.”

## XV

## IN THE MOONLIGHT

“O LONELY workman, standing there  
 In a dream, why do you stare and stare  
 At her grave, as no other grave there were?”

“If your great gaunt eyes so importune  
 Her soul by the shine of this corpse-cold moon,  
 Maybe you’ll raise her phantom soon!”

“Why, fool, it is what I would rather see  
 Than all the living folk there be;  
 But alas, there is no such joy for me!”

“Ah—she was one you loved, no doubt,  
 Through good and evil, through rain and drought,  
 And when she passed, all your sun went out?”

“Nay: she was the woman I did not love,  
 Whom all the others were ranked above,  
 Whom during her life I thought nothing of.”



MOMENTS OF VISION  
AND MISCELLANEOUS VERSES



## MOMENTS OF VISION

THAT mirror  
Which makes of men a transparency,  
Who holds that mirror  
And bids us such a breast-bared spectacle see  
Of you and me ?

That mirror  
Whose magic penetrates like a dart,  
Who lifts that mirror  
And throws our mind back on us, and our heart,  
Until we start ?

That mirror  
Works well in these night hours of ache ;  
Why in that mirror  
Are tincts we never see ourselves once take  
When the world is awake ?

That mirror  
Can test each mortal when unaware ;  
Yea, that strange mirror  
May catch his last thoughts, whole life foul or fair,  
Glassing it—where ?

## THE VOICE OF THINGS

FORTY Augusts—aye, and several more—ago,  
When I paced the headlands loosed from dull employ,  
The waves huzza'd like a multitude below,  
In the sway of an all-including joy  
Without cloy.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Blankly I walked there a double decade after,  
 When thwarts had flung their toils in front of me,  
 And I heard the waters wagging in a long ironic laughter  
 At the lot of men, and all the vapoury  
 Things that be.

Wheeling change has set me again standing where  
 Once I heard the waves huzza at Lammas-tide ;  
 But they supplicate now—like a congregation there  
 Who murmur the Confession—I outside,  
 Prayer denied.

## “WHY BE AT PAINS?”

(*Wooer's Song*)

WHY be at pains that I should know  
 You sought not me ?  
 Do breezes, then, make features glow  
 So rosily ?  
 Come, the lit port is at our back,  
 And the tumbling sea ;  
 Elsewhere the lampless uphill track  
 To uncertainty !

O should not we two waifs join hands ?  
 I am alone,  
 You would enrich me more than lands  
 By being my own.  
 Yet, though this facile moment flies,  
 Close is your tone,  
 And ere to-morrow's dewfall dries  
 I plough the unknown.

## “WE SAT AT THE WINDOW”

(*Bournemouth, 1875*)

WE sat at the window looking out,  
 And the rain came down like silken strings  
 That Swithin's day. Each gutter and spout  
 Babbled unchecked in the busy way  
 Of witless things :

Nothing to read, nothing to see  
 Seemed in that room for her and me  
 On Swithin's day.

We were irked by the scene, by our own selves; yes,  
 For I did not know, nor did she infer  
 How much there was to read and guess  
 By her in me, and to see and crown  
 By me in her.  
 Wasted were two souls in their prime,  
 And great was the waste, that July time  
 When the rain came down.

## AFTERNOON SERVICE AT MELLSTOCK

(Circa 1850)

ON afternoons of drowsy calm  
 We stood in the panelled pew,  
 Singing one-voiced a Tate-and-Brady psalm  
 To the tune of "Cambridge New."

We watched the elms, we watched the rooks,  
 The clouds upon the breeze,  
 Between the whiles of glancing at our books,  
 And swaying like the trees.

So mindless were those outpourings!—  
 Though I am not aware  
 That I have gained by subtle thought on things  
 Since we stood psalming there.

## AT THE WICKET-GATE

THERE floated the sounds of church-chiming,  
 But no one was nigh,  
 Till there came, as a break in the loneliness,  
 Her father, she, I.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

And we slowly moved on to the wicket,  
 And downlooking stood,  
 Till anon people passed, and amid them  
 We parted for good.

Greater, wiser, may part there than we three  
 Who parted there then,  
 But never will Fates colder-featured  
 Hold sway there again.  
 Of the churchgoers through the still meadows  
 No single one knew  
 What a play was played under their eyes there  
 As thence we withdrew.

## IN A MUSEUM

## I

HERE'S the mould of a musical bird long passed from light,  
 Which over the earth before man came was winging ;  
 There's a contralto voice I heard last night,  
 That lodges in me still with its sweet singing.

## II

Such a dream is Time that the coo of this ancient bird  
 Has perished not, but is blent, or will be blending  
 Mid visionless wilds of space with the voice that I heard,  
 In the full-fuged song of the universe unending.

EXETER.

## APOSTROPHE TO AN OLD PSALM TUNE

I MET you first—ah, when did I first meet you ?  
 When I was full of wonder, and innocent,  
 Standing meek-eyed with those of choric bent,  
 While dimming day grew dimmer  
 In the pulpit-glimmer.

Much riper in years I met you—in a temple  
 Where summer sunset streamed upon our shapes,

And you spread over me like a gauze that drapes,  
 And flapped from floor to rafters,  
 Sweet as angels' laughers.

But you had been stripped of some of your old vesture  
 By Monk, or another. Now you wore no frill,  
 And at first you startled me. But I knew you still,  
 Though I missed the minim's waver,  
 And the dotted quaver.

I grew accustomed to you thus. And you hailed me  
 Through one who evoked you often. Then at last  
 Your raiser was borne off, and I mourned you had passed  
 From my life with your late outsetter ;  
 Till I said, "'Tis better !"

But you waylaid me. I rose and went as a ghost goes,  
 And said, eyes-full : " I'll never hear it again !  
 It is overmuch for scathed and memoried men  
 When sitting among strange people  
 Under their steeple."

Now, a new stirrer of tones calls you up before me  
 And wakes your speech, as she of Endor did  
 (When sought by Saul who, in disguises hid,  
 Fell down on the earth to hear it)  
 Samuel's spirit.

So, your quired oracles beat till they make me tremble  
 As I discern your mien in the old attire,  
 Here in these turmoiled years of belligerent fire  
 Living still on—and onward, maybe,  
 Till Doom's great day be !

*Sunday, August 13, 1916.*

#### AT THE WORD "FAREWELL"

SHE looked like a bird from a cloud  
 On the clammy lawn,  
 Moving alone, bare-browed  
 In the dim of dawn,

## MOMENTS OF VISION

The candles alight in the room  
 For my parting meal  
 Made all things withoutdoors loom  
 Strange, ghostly, unreal.

The hour itself was a ghost,  
 And it seemed to me then  
 As of chances the chance furthest  
 I should see her again.  
 I beheld not where all was so fleet  
 That a Plan of the past  
 Which had ruled us from birthtime to meet  
 Was in working at last :

No prelude did I there perceive  
 To a drama at all,  
 Or foreshadow what fortune might weave  
 From beginnings so small ;  
 But I rose as if quickened by a spur  
 I was bound to obey,  
 And stepped through the casement to her  
 Still alone in the gray.

"I am leaving you. . . . Farewell!" I said,  
 As I followed her on  
 By an alley bare boughs overspread ;  
 "I soon must be gone!"  
 Even then the scale might have been turned  
 Against love by a feather,  
 —But crimson one cheek of hers burned  
 When we came in together.

## FIRST SIGHT OF HER AND AFTER

A DAY is drawing to its fall  
 I had not dreamed to see ;  
 The first of many to enthrall  
 My spirit, will it be ?  
 Or is this eve the end of all  
 Such new delight for me ?



I journey home : the pattern grows  
Of moonshades on the way :  
" Soon the first quarter, I suppose,"  
Sky-glancing travellers say ;  
I realize that it, for those,  
Has been a common day.

## THE RIVAL

I DETERMINED to find out whose it was—  
The portrait he looked at so, and sighed ;  
Bitterly have I rued my meanness  
And wept for it since he died !

I searched his desk when he was away,  
And there was the likeness—yes, my own !  
Taken when I was the season's fairest,  
And time-lines all unknown.

I smiled at my image, and put it back,  
And he went on cherishing it, until  
I was chafed that he loved not the me then living,  
But that past woman still.

Well, such was my jealousy at last,  
I destroyed that face of the former me ;  
Could you ever have dreamed the heart of woman  
Would work so foolishly !

## HEREDITY

I AM the family face ;  
Flesh perishes, I live on,  
Projecting trait and trace  
Through time to times anon,  
And leaping from place to place  
Over oblivion.

The years-heired feature that can  
In curve and voice and eye

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Despise the human span  
Of durance—that is I ;  
The eternal thing in man,  
That heeds no call to die.

## "YOU WERE THE SORT THAT MEN FORGET"

YOU were the sort that men forget ;  
Though I—not yet !—  
Perhaps not ever. Your slighted weakness  
Adds to the strength of my regret !

You'd not the art—you never had  
For good or bad—  
To make men see how sweet your meaning,  
Which, visible, had charmed them glad.

You would, by words inept let fall,  
Offend them all,  
Even if they saw your warm devotion  
Would hold your life's blood at their call.

You lacked the eye to understand  
Those friends offhand  
Whose mode was crude, though whose dim purport  
Outpriced the courtesies of the bland.

I am now the only being who  
Remembers you  
It may be. What a waste that Nature  
Grudged soul so dear the art its due !

## SHE, I, AND THEY

I WAS sitting,  
She was knitting,  
And the portraits of our fore-folk hung around ;  
When there struck on us a sigh ;  
"Ah—what is that ?" said I :  
"Was it not you ?" said she. "A sigh did sound."

I had not breathed it,  
 Nor the night-wind heaved it,  
 And how it came to us we could not guess ;  
 And we looked up at each face  
 Framed and glazed there in its place,  
 Still hearkening ; but thenceforth was silentness.

Half in dreaming,  
 "Then its meaning,"  
 Said we, "must be surely this ; that they repine  
 That we should be the last  
 Of stocks once unsurpassed,  
 And unable to keep up their sturdy line."

1916.

NEAR LANIVET, 1872

THERE was a stunted handpost just on the crest,  
 Only a few feet high :  
 She was tired, and we stopped in the twilight-time for her rest,  
 At the crossways close thereby.

She leant back, being so weary, against its stem,  
 And laid her arms on its own,  
 Each open palm stretched out to each end of them,  
 Her sad face sideways thrown.

Her white-clothed form at this dim-lit cease of day  
 Made her look as one crucified  
 In my gaze at her from the midst of the dusty way,  
 And hurriedly "Don't," I cried.

I do not think she heard. Loosing thence she said,  
 As she stepped forth ready to go,  
 "I am rested now.—Something strange came into my head ;  
 I wish I had not leant so !"

And wordless we moved onward down from the hill  
 In the west cloud's murked obscure,  
 And looking back we could see the handpost still  
 In the solitude of the moor.

"It struck her too," I thought, for as if afraid  
 She heavily breathed as we trailed ;  
 Till she said, "I did not think how 'twould look in the shade,  
 When I leant there like one nailed."

I, lightly: "There's nothing in it. For *you*, anyhow!"  
 —"O I know there is not," said she . . .  
 "Yet I wonder . . . If no one is bodily crucified now,  
 In spirit one may be!"

And we dragged on and on, while we seemed to see  
 In the running of Time's far glass  
 Her crucified, as she had wondered if she might be  
 Some day.—Alas, alas!

### JOYS OF MEMORY

WHEN the spring comes round, and a certain day  
 Looks out from the brume by the eastern copsetrees  
 And says, Remember,  
 I begin again, as if it were new,  
 A day of like date I once lived through,  
 Whiling it hour by hour away ;  
 So shall I do till my December,  
 When spring comes round.

I take my holiday then and my rest  
 Away from the dun life here about me,  
 Old hours re-greeting  
 With the quiet sense that bring they must  
 Such throbs as at first, till I house with dust,  
 And in the numbness my heartsome zest  
 For things that were, be past repeating  
 When spring comes round.

### TO THE MOON

"WHAT have you looked at, Moon,  
 In your time,  
 Now long past your prime?"  
 "O, I have looked at, often looked at  
 Sweet, sublime,

Sore things, shudderful, night and noon  
In my time."

"What have you mused on, Moon,  
In your day,  
So aloof, so far away?"

"O, I have mused on, often mused on  
Growth, decay,  
Nations alive, dead, mad, aswoon,  
In my day!"

"Have you much wondered, Moon,  
On your rounds,  
Self-wrapt, beyond Earth's bounds?"  
"Yea, I have wondered, often wondered  
At the sounds  
Reaching me of the human tune  
On my rounds."

"What do you think of it, Moon,  
As you go?  
Is Life much, or no?"  
"O, I think of it, often think of it  
As a show  
God ought surely to shut up soon,  
As I go."

## COPYING ARCHITECTURE IN AN OLD MINSTER

(*Wimborne*)

How smartly the quarters of the hour march by  
That the jack-o'-clock never forgets;  
Ding-dong; and before I have traced a cusp's eye,  
Or got the true twist of the ogee over,  
A double ding-dong ricochetts.

Just so did he clang here before I came,  
And so will he clang when I'm gone  
Through the Minster's cavernous hollows—the same  
Tale of hours never more to be will he deliver  
To the speechless midnight and dawn!

I grow to conceive it a call to ghosts,  
 Whose mould lies below and around.  
 Yes ; the next "Come, come," draws them out from their posts,  
 And they gather, and one shade appears, and another,  
 As the eve-damps creep from the ground.

See—a Courtenay stands by his quatre-foiled tomb,  
 And a Duke and his Duchess near ;  
 And one Sir Edmund in columned gloom,  
 And a Saxon king by the presbytery chamber ;  
 And shapes unknown in the rear.

Maybe they have met for a parle on some plan  
 To better ail-stricken mankind ;  
 I catch their cheepings, though thinner than  
 The overhead creak of a passer's pinion  
 When leaving land behind.

Or perhaps they speak to the yet unborn,  
 And caution them not to come  
 To a world so ancient and trouble-torn,  
 Of foiled intents, vain lovingkindness,  
 And ardours chilled and numb.

They waste to fog as I stir and stand,  
 And move from the arched recess,  
 And pick up the drawing that slipped from my hand,  
 And feel for the pencil I dropped in the cranny  
 In a moment's forgetfulness.

## TO SHAKESPEARE

AFTER THREE HUNDRED YEARS

BRIGHT baffling Soul, least capturable of themes,  
 Thou, who display'dst a life of commonplace,  
 Leaving no intimate word or personal trace  
 Of high design outside the artistry  
 Of thy penned dreams,  
 Still shalt remain at heart unread eternally.

Through human orbits thy discourse to-day,  
 Despite thy formal pilgrimage, throbs on

In harmonies that cow Oblivion,  
 And, like the wind, with all-uncared effect  
     Maintain a sway  
 Not fore-desired, in tracks unchosen and unchecked.

And yet, at thy last breath, with mindless note  
 The borough clocks but samely tongued the hour,  
 The Avon just as always glassed the tower,  
 Thy age was published on thy passing-bell  
     But in due rote  
 With other dwellers' deaths accorded a like knell.

And at the strokes some townsman (met, maybe,  
 And thereon queried by some squire's good dame  
 Driving in shopward) may have given thy name,  
 With, "Yes, a worthy man and well-to-do ;  
     Though, as for me,  
 I knew him but by just a neighbour's nod, 'tis true.

"I' faith, few knew him much here, save by word,  
 He having elsewhere led his busier life ;  
 Though to be sure he left with us his wife."  
 —"Ah, one of the tradesmen's sons, I now recall. . . .  
     Witty, I've heard. . . .  
 We did not know him. . . . Well, good-day. Death comes  
 to all."

So, like a strange bright bird we sometimes find  
 To mingle with the barn-door brood awhile,  
 Then vanish from their homely domicile—  
 Into man's poesy, we wot not whence,  
     Flew thy strange mind,  
 Lodged there a radiant guest, and sped for ever thence.

1916.

### QUID HIC AGIS?

#### I

WHEN I weekly knew  
 An ancient pew,  
 And murmured there  
 The forms of prayer

And thanks and praise  
 In the ancient ways,  
 And heard read out  
 During August drought  
 That chapter from Kings  
 Harvest-time brings ;  
 —How the prophet, broken  
 By griefs unspoken,  
 Went heavily away  
 To fast and to pray,  
 And, while waiting to die,  
 The Lord passed by,  
 And a whirlwind and fire  
 Drew nigher and nigher,  
 And a small voice anon  
 Bade him up and be gone,—  
 I did not apprehend  
 As I sat to the end  
 And watched for her smile  
 Across the sunned aisle,  
 That this theme of a seer  
 Which came once a year  
 Might, when sands were heaping,  
 Be like a sweat creeping,  
 Or in any degree  
 Bear on her or on me !

## II

When later, by chance  
 Of circumstance,  
 It befel me to read  
 On a hot afternoon  
 At the lectern there  
 The selfsame words  
 As the lesson decreed,  
 To the gathered few  
 From the hamlets near—  
 Folk of flocks and herds  
 Sitting half aswoon,  
 Who listened thereto  
 As women and men  
 Not overmuch



Concerned at such—  
 So, like them then,  
 I did not see  
 What drought might be  
 With me, with her,  
 As the Kalendar  
 Moved on, and Time  
 Devoured our prime.

## III

But now, at last,  
 When our glory has passed,  
 And there is no smile  
 From her in the aisle,  
 But where it once shone  
 A marble, men say,  
 With her name thereon  
 Is discerned to-day ;  
 And spiritless  
 In the wilderness  
 I shrink from sight  
 And desire the night,  
 (Though, as in old wise,  
 I might still arise,  
 Go forth, and stand  
 And prophesy in the land),  
 I feel the shake  
 Of wind and earthquake,  
 And consuming fire  
 Nigher and nigher,  
 And the voice catch clear,  
 "What doest thou here?"

*The Spectator* : 1916.

## ON A MIDSUMMER EVE

I IDLY cut a parsley stalk,  
 And blew therein towards the moon ;  
 I had not thought what ghosts would walk  
 With shivering footsteps to my tune.

I went, and knelt, and scooped my hand  
 As if to drink, into the brook,  
 And a faint figure seemed to stand  
 Above me, with the bygone look.

I lipped rough rhymes of chance, not choice,  
 I thought not what my words might be ;  
 There came into my ear a voice  
 That turned a tenderer verse for me.

## TIMING HER

*(Written to an old folk-tune)*

LALAGE'S coming :  
 Where is she now, O ?  
 Turning to bow, O,  
 And smile, is she,  
 Just at parting,  
 Parting, parting,  
 As she is starting  
 To come to me ?

Where is she now, O,  
 Now, and now, O,  
 Shadowing a bough, O,  
 Of hedge or tree  
 As she is rushing,  
 Rushing, rushing,  
 Gossamers brushing  
 To come to me ?

Lalage's coming ;  
 Where is she now, O ;  
 Climbing the brow, O,  
 Of hills I see ?  
 Yes, she is nearing,  
 Nearing, nearing,  
 Weather unfearing  
 To come to me.

Near is she now, O,  
 Now, and now, O ;  
 Milk the rich cow, O,  
 Forward the tea ;  
 Shake the down bed for her,  
 Linen sheets spread for her,  
 Drape round the head for her  
 Coming to me.

Lalage's coming,  
 Nearer is she now, O,  
 End anyhow, O,  
 To-day's husbandry !  
 Would a gilt chair were mine,  
 Slippers of vair were mine,  
 Brushes for hair were mine  
 Of ivory !

What will she think, O,  
 She who's so comely,  
 Viewing how homely  
 A sort are we !  
 Nothing resplendent,  
 No prompt attendant,  
 Not one dependent  
 Pertaining to me !

Lalage's coming ;  
 Where is she now, O ?  
 Fain I'd avow, O,  
 Full honestly  
 Nought here's enough for her,  
 All is too rough for her,  
 Even my love for her  
 Poor in degree.

Nearer is she now, O,  
 Now, and now, O,  
 She it is, I vow, O,  
 Passing the lea.  
 Rush down to meet her there,  
 Call out and greet her there,

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Never a sweeter there  
Crossed to me !

Lalage's come ; aye,  
Come is she now, O ! . . .  
Does Heaven allow, O,  
A meeting to be ?  
Yes, she is here now,  
Here now, here now,  
Nothing to fear now,  
Here's Lalage !

## BEFORE KNOWLEDGE

WHEN I walked roseless tracks and wide,  
Ere dawned your date for meeting me,  
O why did you not cry Halloo  
Across the stretch between, and say :

“ We move, while years as yet divide,  
On closing lines which—though it be  
You know me not nor I know you—  
Will intersect and join some day ! ”

Then well I had borne  
Each scraping thorn ;  
But the winters froze,  
And grew no rose ;  
No bridge bestrode  
The gap at all ;  
No shape you showed,  
And I heard no call !

## THE BLINDED BIRD

So zestfully canst thou sing ?  
And all this indignity,  
With God's consent, on thee !  
Blinded ere yet a-wing  
By the red-hot needle thou,

I stand and wonder how  
So zestfully thou canst sing!

Resenting not such wrong,  
Thy grievous pain forgot,  
Eternal dark thy lot,  
Groping thy whole life long,  
After that stab of fire;  
Enjailed in pitiless wire;  
Resenting not such wrong!

Who hath charity? This bird.  
Who suffereth long and is kind,  
Is not provoked, though blind  
And alive ensepulchred?  
Who hopeth, endureth all things?  
Who thinketh no evil, but sings?  
Who is divine? This bird.

### “THE WIND BLEW WORDS”

THE wind blew words along the skies,  
And these it blew to me  
Through the wide dusk: “Lift up your eyes,  
Behold this troubled tree,  
Complaining as it sways and plies;  
It is a limb of thee.

“Yea, too, the creatures sheltering round—  
Dumb figures, wild and tame,  
Yea, too, thy fellows who abound—  
Either of speech the same  
Or far and strange—black, dwarfed, and browned,  
They are stuff of thy own frame.”

I moved on in a surging awe  
Of inarticulateness  
At the pathetic Me I saw  
In all his huge distress,  
Making self-slaughter of the law  
To kill, break, or suppress.

## THE FADED FACE

How was this I did not see  
 Such a look as here was shown  
 Ere its womanhood had blown  
 Past its first felicity?—  
 That I did not know you young,  
     Faded Face,  
         Know you young!

Why did Time so ill bestead  
 That I heard no voice of yours  
 Hail from out the curved contours  
 Of those lips when rosy red;  
 Listed not the songs they sung,  
     Faded Face,  
         Songs they sung!

By these blanchings, blooms of old,  
 And the relics of your voice—  
 Leavings rare of rich and choice  
 From your early tone and mould—  
 Let me mourn,—aye, sorrow-wrung,  
     Faded Face,  
         Sorrow-wrung!

## THE RIDDLE

## I

STRETCHING eyes west  
 Over the sea,  
 Wind foul or fair,  
 Always stood she  
 Prospect-impressed;  
 Solely out there  
 Did her gaze rest,  
 Never elsewhere  
 Seemed charm to be.

## II

Always eyes east  
 Ponders she now—  
 As in devotion—  
 Hills of blank brow  
 Where no waves plough.  
 Never the least  
 Room for emotion  
 Drawn from the ocean  
 Does she allow.

## THE DUEL

“ I AM here to time, you see ;  
 The glade is well-screened—eh?—against alarm ;  
 Fit place to vindicate by my arm  
 The honour of my spotless wife,  
 Who scorns your libel upon her life  
 In boasting intimacy !

“ All hush-offerings you'll spurn,  
 My husband. Two must come ; one only go,'  
 She said. ‘ That he'll be you I know ;  
 To faith like ours Heaven will be just,  
 And I shall abide in fullest trust  
 Your speedy glad return.’ ”

“ Good. Here am also I ;  
 And we'll proceed without more waste of words  
 To warm your cockpit. Of the swords  
 Take you your choice. I shall thereby  
 Feel that on me no blame can lie,  
 Whatever Fate accords.”

So stripped they there, and fought,  
 And the swords clicked and scraped, and the onsets sped ;  
 Till the husband fell ; and his shirt was red  
 With streams from his heart's hot cistern. Nought  
 Could save him now ; and the other, wrought  
 Maybe to pity, said :

## MOMENTS OF VISION

“Why did you urge on this?  
 Your wife assured you; and 't had better been  
 That you had let things pass, serene  
 In confidence of long-tried bliss,  
 Holding there could be nought amiss  
 In what my words might mean.”

Then, seeing nor ruth nor rage  
 Could move his foeman more—now Death's deaf thrall—  
 He wiped his steel, and, with a call  
 Like turtledove to dove, swift broke  
 Into the copse, where under an oak  
 His horse cropt, held by a page.

“All's over, Sweet,” he cried  
 To the wife, thus guised; for the young page was she.  
 “'Tis as we hoped and said 't would be.  
 He never guessed. . . . We mount and ride  
 To where our love can reign uneyed.  
 He's clay, and we are free.”

## AT MAYFAIR LODGINGS

How could I be aware,  
 The opposite window eyeing  
 As I lay listless there,  
 That through its blinds was dying  
 One I had rated rare  
 Before I had set me sighing  
 For another more fair?

Had the house-front been glass,  
 My vision unobscuring,  
 Could aught have come to pass  
 More happiness-insuring  
 To her, loved as a lass  
 When spouseless, all-alluring?  
 I reckon not, alas!

So, the square window stood,  
 Steadily night-long shining  
 In my close neighbourhood,



Who looked forth undivining  
 That soon would go for good  
 One there in pain reclining,  
 Unpardoned, unadieu'd.

Silently screened from view  
 Her tragedy was ending  
 That need not have come due  
 Had she been less unbending.  
 How near, near were we two  
 At that last vital rending,—  
 And neither of us knew!

## TO MY FATHER'S VIOLIN

DOES he want you down there  
 In the Nether Glooms where  
 The hours may be a dragging load upon him,  
 As he hears the axle grind  
     Round and round  
 Of the great world, in the blind  
     Still profound  
 Of the night-time? He might liven at the sound  
 Of your string, revealing you had not forgone him.

In the gallery west the nave,  
 But a few yards from his grave,  
 Did you, tucked beneath his chin, to his bowing  
 Guide the homely harmony  
     Of the quire  
 Who for long years strenuously—  
     Son and sire—  
 Caught the strains that at his fingering low or higher  
 From your four thin threads and eff-holes came outflowing.

And, too, what merry tunes  
 He would bow at nights or noons  
 That chanced to find him bent to lute a measure,  
 When he made you speak his heart  
     As in dream,

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Without book or music-chart,  
 On some theme  
 Elusive as a jack-o'-lanthorn's gleam,  
 And the psalm of duty shelved for trill of pleasure.

Well, you can not, alas,  
 The barrier overpass  
 That screens him in those Mournful Meads hereunder,  
 Where no fiddling can be heard  
 In the glades  
 Of silentness, no bird  
 Thrills the shades ;  
 Where no viol is touched for songs or serenades,  
 No bowing wakes a congregation's wonder.

He must do without you now,  
 Stir you no more anyhow  
 To yearning concords taught you in your glory ;  
 While, your strings a tangled wreck,  
 Once smart drawn,  
 Ten worm-wounds in your neck,  
 Purflings wan  
 With dust-hoar, here alone I sadly con  
 Your present dumbness, shape your olden story.

1916.

## THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

THIS statue of Liberty, busy man,  
 Here erect in the city square,  
 I have watched while your scrubbings, this early morning,  
 Strangely wistful,  
 And half tristful,  
 Have turned her from foul to fair ;

With your bucket of water, and mop, and brush,  
 Bringing her out of the grime  
 That has smeared her during the smokes of winter  
 With such glumness  
 In her dumbness,  
 And aged her before her time.

You have washed her down with motherly care—  
 Head, shoulders, arm, and foot,  
 To the very hem of the robes that drape her—  
 All expertly  
 And alertly,  
 Till a long stream, black with soot,

Flows over the pavement to the road,  
 And her shape looms pure as snow :  
 I read you are hired by the City guardians—  
 May be yearly,  
 Or once merely—  
 To treat the statues so ?

“ Oh, I'm not hired by the Councilmen  
 To cleanse the statues here.  
 I do this one as a self-willed duty,  
 Not as paid to,  
 Or at all made to,  
 But because the doing is dear.”

Ah, then I hail you brother and friend !  
 Liberty's knight divine.  
 What you have done would have been my doing,  
 Yea, most verily,  
 Well, and thoroughly,  
 Had but your courage been mine !

“ Oh I care not for Liberty's mould,  
 Liberty charms not me ;  
 What's Freedom but an idler's vision,  
 Vain, pernicious,  
 Often vicious,  
 Of things that cannot be !

“ Memory it is that brings me to this—  
 Of a daughter—my one sweet own.  
 She grew a famous carver's model,  
 One of the fairest  
 And of the rarest :—  
 She sat for the figure as shown.

“ But alas, she died in this distant place  
 Before I was warned to betake

Myself to her side! . . . And in love of my darling,  
 In love of the fame of her,  
 And the good name of her,  
 I do this for her sake."

Answer I gave not. Of that form  
 The carver was I at his side;  
 His child, my model, held so saintly,  
 Grand in feature,  
 Gross in nature,  
 In the dens of vice had died.

## THE BACKGROUND AND THE FIGURE

*(Lover's Ditty)*

I THINK of the slope where the rabbits fed,  
 Of the periwinks' rockwork lair,  
 Of the fuchsias ringing their bells of red—  
 And the something else seen there.

Between the blooms where the sod basked bright,  
 By the bobbing fuchsia trees,  
 Was another and yet more eyesome sight—  
 The sight that richened these.

I shall seek those beauties in the spring,  
 When the days are fit and fair,  
 But only as foils to the one more thing  
 That also will flower there!

## THE CHANGE

OUT of the past there rises a week—  
 Who shall read the years O!—  
 Out of the past there rises a week  
 Enringed with a purple zone.  
 Out of the past there rises a week  
 When thoughts were strung too thick to speak,  
 And the magic of its lineaments remains with me alone.

In that week there was heard a singing—  
 Who shall spell the years, the years!—  
 In that week there was heard a singing,  
 And the white owl wondered why.  
 In that week, yea, a voice was ringing,  
 And forth from the casement were candles flinging  
 Radiance that fell on the deodar and lit up the path thereby.

Could that song have a mocking note? —  
 Who shall unroll the years O!—  
 Could that song have a mocking note  
 To the white owl's sense as it fell?  
 Could that song have a mocking note  
 As it trilled out warm from the singer's throat,  
 And who was the mocker and who the mocked when two felt all  
 was well?

In a tedious trampling crowd yet later—  
 Who shall bare the years, the years!—  
 In a tedious trampling crowd yet later,  
 When silvery singings were dumb;  
 In a crowd uncaring what time might fate her,  
 Mud murks of night I stood to await her,  
 And the twanging of iron wheels gave out the signal that she was  
 come.

She said with a travel-tired smile—  
 Who shall lift the years O!—  
 She said with a travel-tired smile,  
 Half scared by scene so strange;  
 She said, outworn by mile on mile,  
 The blurred lamps wanning her face the while,  
 "O Love, I am here; I am with you!" . . . Ah, that there should  
 have come a change!

O the doom by someone spoken—  
 Who shall unseal the years, the years!—  
 O the doom that gave no token,  
 When nothing of bale saw we:  
 O the doom by someone spoken,  
 O the heart by someone broken,  
 The heart whose sweet reverberances are all time leaves to me.

## SITTING ON THE BRIDGE

*(Echo of an old song)*

SITTING on the bridge  
 Past the barracks, town and ridge,  
 At once the spirit seized us  
 To sing a song that pleased us—  
 As "The Fifth" were much in rumour;  
 It was "Whilst I'm in the humour,  
 Take me, Paddy, will you now?"  
 And a lancer soon drew nigh,  
 And his Royal Irish eye  
 Said, "Willing, faith, am I,  
 O, to take you anyhow, dears,  
 To take you anyhow."

But, lo!—dad walking by,  
 Cried, "What, you lightheels! Fie!  
 Is this the way you roam  
 And mock the sunset gleam?"  
 And he marched us straightway home,  
 Though we said, "We are only, daddy,  
 Singing, 'Will you take me, Paddy?'"  
 —Well, we never saw from then,  
 If we sang there anywhen,  
 The soldier dear again,  
 Except at night in dream-time,  
 Except at night in dream.

Perhaps that soldier's fighting  
 In a land that's far away,  
 Or he may be idly plighting  
 Some foreign hussy gay;  
 Or perhaps his bones are whiting  
 In the wind to their decay! . . .  
 Ah!—does he mind him how  
 The girls he saw that day  
 On the bridge, were sitting singing  
 At the time of curfew-ringing,  
 "Take me, Paddy; will you now, dear?  
 Paddy, will you now?"

GREY'S BRIDGE.

## THE YOUNG CHURCHWARDEN

WHEN he lit the candles there,  
 And the light fell on his hand,  
 And it trembled as he scanned  
 Her and me, his vanquished air  
 Hinted that his dream was done,  
 And I saw he had begun  
 To understand.

When Love's viol was unstrung,  
 Sore I wished the hand that shook  
 Had been mine that shared her book  
 While that evening hymn was sung,  
 His the victor's, as he lit  
 Candles where he had bidden us sit  
 With vanquished look.

Now her dust lies listless there,  
 His afar from tending hand,  
 What avails the victory scanned?  
 Does he smile from upper air:  
 "Ah, my friend, your dream is done;  
 And 'tis *you* who have begun  
 To understand!"

## "I TRAVEL AS A PHANTOM NOW"

I TRAVEL as a phantom now,  
 For people do not wish to see  
 In flesh and blood so bare a bough  
 As Nature makes of me.

And thus I visit bodiless  
 Strange gloomy households often at odds,  
 And wonder if Man's consciousness  
 Was a mistake of God's.

And next I meet you, and I pause,  
 And think that if mistake it were,  
 As some have said, O then it was  
 One that I well can bear!

1915.

### LINES

#### TO A MOVEMENT IN MOZART'S E-FLAT SYMPHONY

Show me again the time  
 When in the Junetide's prime  
 We flew by meads and mountains northerly!—  
 Yea, to such freshness, fairness, fulness, fineness, freeness,  
 Love lures life on.

Show me again the day  
 When from the sandy bay  
 We looked together upon the pestered sea!—  
 Yea, to such surging, swaying, sighing, swelling, shrinking,  
 Love lures life on.

Show me again the hour  
 When by the pinnacled tower  
 We eyed each other and feared futurity!—  
 Yea, to such bodings, broodings, beatings, blanchings, blessings,  
 Love lures life on.

Show me again just this:  
 The moment of that kiss  
 Away from the prancing folk, by the strawberry-tree!—  
 Yea, to such rashness, ratheness, rareness, ripeness, richness,  
 Love lures life on.

*Begun November 1898.*

### "IN THE SEVENTIES"

"Qui deridetur ab amico suo sicut ego."—JOB.

IN the seventies I was bearing in my breast,  
 Penned tight,  
 Certain starry thoughts that threw a magic light  
 On the worktimes and the soundless hours of rest



In the seventies ; aye, I bore them in my breast  
Pinned tight.

In the seventies when my neighbours—even my friend—  
Saw me pass,  
Heads were shaken, and I heard the words, "Alas,  
For his onward years and name unless he mend!"  
In the seventies, when my neighbours and my friend  
Saw me pass.

In the seventies those who met me did not know  
Of the vision  
That immuned me from the chillings of misprision  
And the damps that choked my goings to and fro  
In the seventies ; yea, those noddors did not know  
Of the vision.

In the seventies nought could darken or destroy it,  
Locked in me,  
Though as delicate as lamp-worm's lucency ;  
Neither mist nor murk could weaken or alloy it  
In the seventies !—could not darken or destroy it,  
Locked in me.

## THE PEDIGREE

### I

I BENT in the deep of night  
Over a pedigree the chronicler gave  
As mine ; and as I bent there, half-unrobed,  
The uncurtained panes of my window-square let in the watery  
light  
Of the moon in its old age :  
And green-rheumed clouds were hurrying past where mute and  
cold it globed  
Like a drifting dolphin's eye seen through a lapping wave.

### II

So, scanning my sire-sown tree,  
And the hieroglyphs of this spouse tied to that,  
With offspring mapped below in lineage,  
Till the tangles troubled me,

The branches seemed to twist into a seared and cynic face  
 Which winked and tokened towards the window like a Mage  
 Enchanting me to gaze again thereat.

## III

It was a mirror now,  
 And in it a long perspective I could trace  
 Of my begetters, dwindling backward each past each  
 All with the kindred look,  
 Whose names had since been inked down in their place  
 On the recorder's book,  
 Generation and generation of my mien, and build, and brow.

## IV

And then did I divine  
 That every heave and coil and move I made  
 Within my brain, and in my mood and speech,  
 Was in the glass portrayed  
 As long forestalled by their so making it ;  
 The first of them, the primest fuglemen of my line,  
 Being fogged in far antiqueness past surmise and reason's reach.

## V

Said I then, sunk in tone,  
 "I am merest mimicker and counterfeit !—  
 Though thinking, *I am I,*  
 And what I do I do myself alone."  
 —The cynic twist of the page thereat unknit  
 Back to its normal figure, having wrought its purport wry,  
 The Mage's mirror left the window-square,  
 And the stained moon and drift retook their places there.

1916.

## HIS HEART

## A WOMAN'S DREAM

AT midnight, in the room where he lay dead  
 Whom in his life I had never clearly read,  
 I thought if I could peer into that citadel  
 His heart, I should at last know full and well

What hereto had been known to him alone,  
 Despite our long sit-out of years foreflown,  
 "And if," I said, "I do this for his memory's sake,  
 It would not wound him, even if he could wake."

So I bent over him. He seemed to smile  
 With a calm confidence the whole long while  
 That I, withdrawing his heart, held it and, bit by bit,  
 Perused the unguessed things found written on it.

It was inscribed like a terrestrial sphere  
 With quaint vermiculations close and clear—  
 His gravings. Had I known, would I have risked the stroke  
 Its reading brought, and my own heart nigh broke!

Yes, there at last, eyes opened, did I see  
 His whole sincere symmetric history;  
 There were his truth, his simple singlemindedness,  
 Strained, maybe, by time's storms, but there no less.

There were the daily deeds from sun to sun  
 In blindness, but good faith, that he had done;  
 There were regrets, at instances wherein he swerved  
 (As he conceived) from cherishings I had deserved.

There were old hours all figured down as bliss—  
 Those spent with me—(how little had I thought this!)  
 There those when, at my absence, whether he slept or waked,  
 (Though I knew not 'twas so!) his spirit ached.

There that when we were severed, how day dulled  
 Till time joined us anew, was chronicled:  
 And arguments and battlings in defence of me  
 That heart recorded clearly and ruddily.

I put it back, and left him as he lay  
 While pierced the morning pink and then the gray  
 Into each dreary room and corridor around,  
 Where I shall wait, but his step will not sound.

## WHERE THEY LIVED

DISHEVELLED leaves creep down  
 Upon that bank to-day,  
 Some green, some yellow, and some pale brown ;  
 The wet bents bob and sway ;  
 The once warm slippery turf is sodden  
 Where we laughingly sat or lay.

The summerhouse is gone,  
 Leaving a weedy space ;  
 The bushes that veiled it once have grown  
 Gaunt trees that interlace,  
 Through whose lank limbs I see too clearly  
 The nakedness of the place.

And where were hills of blue,  
 Blind drifts of vapour blow,  
 And the names of former dwellers few,  
 If any, people know,  
 And instead of a voice that called, "Come in, Dears,"  
 Time calls, "Pass below!"

## THE OCCULTATION

WHEN the cloud shut down on the morning shine,  
 And darkened the sun,  
 I said, "So ended that joy of mine  
 Years back begun."

But day continued its lustrous roll  
 In upper air ;  
 And did my late irradiate soul  
 Live on somewhere ?

## LIFE LAUGHS ONWARD

RAMBLING I looked for an old abode  
Where, years back, one had lived I knew ;  
Its site a dwelling duly showed,  
    But it was new.

I went where, not so long ago,  
The sod had riven two breasts asunder ;  
Daisies throve gaily there, as though  
    No grave were under.

I walked along a terrace where  
Loud children gambolled in the sun ;  
The figure that had once sat there  
    Was missed by none.

Life laughed and moved on unsubdued,  
I saw that Old succumbed to Young :  
'Twas well. My too regretful mood  
    Died on my tongue.

## THE PEACE-OFFERING

It was but a little thing,  
Yet I knew it meant to me  
Ease from what had given a sting  
To the very birdsinging  
    Latterly.

But I would not welcome it ;  
And for all I then declined  
O the regrettings infinite  
When the night-processions flit  
    Through the mind !

## "SOMETHING TAPPED"

SOMETHING tapped on the pane of my room  
 When there was never a trace  
 Of wind or rain, and I saw in the gloom  
 My weary Belovéd's face.

"O I am tired of waiting," she said,  
 "Night, morn, noon, afternoon ;  
 So cold it is in my lonely bed,  
 And I thought you would join me soon !"

I rose and neared the window-glass,  
 But vanished thence had she :  
 Only a pallid moth, alas,  
 Tapped at the pane for me.

*August 1513.*

## THE WOUND

I CLIMBED to the crest,  
 And, fog-festooned,  
 The sun lay west  
 Like a crimson wound :

Like that wound of mine  
 Of which none knew,  
 For I'd given no sign  
 That it pierced me through.

## A MERRYMAKING IN QUESTION

"I WILL get a new string for my fiddle,  
 And call to the neighbours to come,  
 And partners shall dance down the middle  
 Until the old pewter-wares hum :  
 And we'll sip the mead, cyder, and rum !"

From the night came the oddest of answers :  
 A hollow wind, like a bassoon,  
 And headstones all ranged up as dancers,  
 And cyresses droning a croon,  
 And gurgoyles that mouthed to the tune.

“I SAID AND SANG HER EXCELLENCE”

*(Fickle Lover's Song)*

I SAID and sang her excellence :  
 They called it laud undue.  
 (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
 Yet what was homage far above  
 The plain deserts of my olden Love  
 Proved verity of my new.

“She moves a sylph in picture-land,  
 Where nothing frosts the air :”  
 (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
 “To all winged pipers overhead  
 She is known by shape and song,” I said,  
 Conscious of licence there.

I sang of her in a dim old hall  
 Dream-built too fancifully,  
 (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
 But lo, the ripe months chanced to lead  
 My feet to such a hall indeed,  
 Where stood the very She.

Strange, startling, was it then to learn  
 I had glanced down unborn time,  
 (Have your way, my heart, O !)  
 And prophesied, whereby I knew  
 That which the years had planned to do  
 In warranty of my rhyme.

BY RUSHY-POND.

## A JANUARY NIGHT

(1879)

THE rain smites more and more,  
 The east wind snarls and sneezes ;  
 Through the joints of the quivering door  
 The water wheezes.

The tip of each ivy-shoot  
 Writhes on its neighbour's face ;  
 There is some hid dread afoot  
 That we cannot trace.

Is it the spirit astray  
 Of the man at the house below  
 Whose coffin they took in to-day ?  
 We do not know.

## A KISS

By a wall the stranger now calls his,  
 Was born of old a particular kiss,  
 Without forethought in its genesis ;  
 Which in a trice took wing on the air.  
 And where that spot is nothing shows :  
     There ivy calmly grows,  
     And no one knows  
 What a birth was there !

That kiss is gone where none can tell—  
 Not even those who felt its spell :  
 It cannot have died ; that know we well.  
 Somewhere it pursues its flight,  
 One of a long procession of sounds  
     Travelling aethereal rounds  
     Far from earth's bounds  
 In the infinite.



## THE ANNOUNCEMENT

THEY came, the brothers, and took two chairs  
In their usual quiet way ;  
And for a time we did not think  
They had much to say.

And they began and talked awhile  
Of ordinary things,  
Till spread that silence in the room  
A pent thought brings.

And then they said : "The end has come.  
Yes : it has come at last."  
And we looked down, and knew that day  
A spirit had passed.

## THE OXEN

CHRISTMAS EVE, and twelve of the clock.  
"Now they are all on their knees,"  
An elder said as we sat in a flock  
By the embers in hearthside ease.

We pictured the meek mild creatures where  
They dwelt in their strawy pen,  
Nor did it occur to one of us there  
To doubt they were kneeling then.

So fair a fancy few would weave  
In these years ! Yet, I feel,  
If someone said on Christmas Eve,  
"Come ; see the oxen kneel

"In the lonely barton by yonder coomb  
Our childhood used to know,"  
I should go with him in the gloom,  
Hoping it might be so.

## THE TRESSES

“WHEN the air was damp  
 It made my curls hang slack  
 As they kissed my neck and back  
 While I footed the salt-aired track  
 I loved to tramp.

“When it was dry  
 They would roll up crisp and tight  
 As I went on in the light  
 Of the sun, which my own sprite  
 Seemed to outvie.

“Now I am old ;  
 And have not one gay curl  
 As I had when a girl  
 For dampness to unfurl  
 Or sun uphold !”

## THE PHOTOGRAPH

THE flame crept up the portrait line by line  
 As it lay on the coals in the silence of night's profound,  
 And over the arm's incline,  
 And along the marge of the silkwork superfine,  
 And gnawed at the delicate bosom's defenceless round.

Then I vented a cry of hurt, and averted my eyes ;  
 The spectacle was one that I could not bear,  
 To my deep and sad surprise ;  
 But, compelled to heed, I again looked furtivewise  
 Till the flame had eaten her breasts, and mouth, and hair.

“Thank God, she is out of it now !” I said at last,  
 In a great relief of heart when the thing was done  
 That had set my soul aghast,  
 And nothing was left of the picture unsheathed from the past  
 But the ashen ghost of the card it had figured on.

She was a woman long hid amid packs of years,  
 She might have been living or dead ; she was lost to my sight,  
 And the deed that had nigh drawn tears  
 Was done in a casual clearance of life's arrears ;  
 But I felt as if I had put her to death that night! . . .

—Well ; she knew nothing thereof did she survive,  
 And suffered nothing if numbered among the dead ;  
 Yet—yet—if on earth alive  
 Did she feel a smart, and with vague strange anguish strive ?  
 If in heaven, did she smile at me sadly and shake her head ?

## ON A HEATH

I COULD hear a gown-skirt rustling  
 Before I could see her shape,  
 Rustling through the heather  
 That wove the common's drape,  
 On that evening of dark weather  
 When I hearkened, lips agape.

And the town-shine in the distance  
 Did but baffle here the sight,  
 And then a voice flew forward :  
 " Dear, is't you ? I fear the night !"  
 And the herons flapped to norward  
 In the firs upon my right.

There was another looming  
 Whose life we did not see ;  
 There was one stilly blooming  
 Full nigh to where walked we ;  
 There was a shade entombing  
 All that was bright of me.

## AN ANNIVERSARY

IT was at the very date to which we have come,  
 In the month of the matching name,  
 When, at a like minute, the sun had upswum,  
 Its couch-time at night being the same.

And the same path stretched here that people now follow,  
 And the same stile crossed their way,  
 And beyond the same green hillock and hollow  
 The same horizon lay ;  
 And the same man pilgrims now hereby who pilgrimed here that  
 day.

Let so much be said of the date-day's sameness ;  
 But the tree that neighbours the track,  
 And stoops like a pedlar afflicted with lameness,  
 Knew of no sogged wound or wind-crack.  
 And the stones of that wall were not enshrouded  
 With mosses of many tones,  
 And the garth up afar was not overcrowded  
 With a multitude of white stones,  
 And the man's eyes then were not so sunk that you saw the  
 socket-bones.

KINGSTON-MAURWARD EWELEASE.

### "BY THE RUNIC STONE"

*(Two who became a story)*

By the Runic Stone  
 They sat, where the grass sloped down,  
 And chattered, he white-hatted, she in brown,  
 Pink-faced, breeze-blown.

Rapt there alone  
 In the transport of talking so  
 In such a place, there was nothing to let them know  
 What hours had flown.

And the die thrown  
 By them heedlessly there, the dent  
 It was to cut in their encompassment,  
 Were, too, unknown.

It might have strown  
 Their zest with qualms to see,  
 As in a glass, Time toss their history  
 From zone to zone !

## THE PINK FROCK

"O MY pretty pink frock,  
I sha'n't be able to wear it!  
Why is he dying just now?  
I hardly can bear it!

"He might have contrived to live on;  
But they say there's no hope whatever:  
And must I shut myself up,  
And go out never?

"O my pretty pink frock?  
Puff-sleeved and accordion-pleated!  
He might have passed in July,  
And not so cheated!"

## TRANSFORMATIONS

PORTION of this yew  
Is a man my grandsire knew,  
Bosomed here at its foot:  
This branch may be his wife,  
A ruddy human life  
Now turned to a green shoot.

These grasses must be made  
Of her who often prayed,  
Last century, for repose;  
And the fair girl long ago  
Whom I often tried to know  
May be entering this rose.

So, they are not underground,  
But as nerves and veins abound  
In the growths of upper air,  
And they feel the sun and rain,  
And the energy again  
That made them what they were!

## MOMENTS OF VISION

## IN HER PRECINCTS

HER house looked cold from the foggy lea,  
 And the square of each window a dull black blur  
 Where showed no stir :  
 Yes, her gloom within at the lack of me  
 Seemed matching mine at the lack of her.

The black squares grew to be squares of light  
 As the eveshade swathed the house and lawn,  
 And viols gave tone ;  
 There was glee within. And I found that night  
 The gloom of severance mine alone.

KINGSTON-MAURWARD PARK.

## THE LAST SIGNAL

(*Oct. 11, 1886*)

A MEMORY OF WILLIAM BARNES

SILENTLY I footed by an uphill road  
 That led from my abode to a spot yew-boughed ;  
 Yellowly the sun sloped low down to westward,  
 And dark was the east with cloud.

Then, below the shadow of that livid sad east,  
 Where the light was least, and a gate stood wide,  
 Flashed back the fire of the sun that was facing it,  
 Like a brief blaze on that side.

Looking hard and harder I knew what it meant—  
 The sudden shine sent from the livid east scene ;  
 It meant the west mirrored by the coffin of my friend there,  
 Turning to the road from his green,

To take his last journey forth—he who in his prime  
 Trudged so many a time from that gate athwart the land !  
 Thus a farewell to me he signalled on his grave-way,  
 As with a wave of his hand.

WINTERBORNE-CAME PATH.

## THE HOUSE OF SILENCE

“THAT is a quiet place—  
 That house in the trees with the shady lawn.”  
 “—If, child, you knew what there goes on  
 You would not call it a quiet place.  
 Why, a phantom abides there, the last of its race,  
 And a brain spins there till dawn.”

“But I see nobody there,—  
 Nobody moves about the green,  
 Or wanders the heavy trees between.”  
 “—Ah, that’s because you do not bear  
 The visioning powers of souls who dare  
 To pierce the material screen.

“Morning, noon, and night,  
 Mid those funereal shades that seem  
 The uncanny scenery of a dream,  
 Figures dance to a mind with sight,  
 And music and laughter like floods of light  
 Make all the precincts gleam.

“It is a poet’s bower,  
 Through which there pass, in fleet arrays,  
 Long teams of all the years and days,  
 Of joys and sorrows, of earth and heaven,  
 That meet mankind in its ages seven,  
 An aion in an hour.”

## GREAT THINGS

SWEET cyder is a great thing,  
 A great thing to me,  
 Spinning down to Weymouth town  
 By Ridgway thirstily,  
 And maid and mistress summoning  
 Who tend the hostelry:  
 O cyder is a great thing,  
 A great thing to me!

## MOMENTS OF VISION

The dance it is a great thing,  
 A great thing to me,  
 With candles lit and partners fit  
 For night-long revelry ;  
 And going home when day-dawning  
 Peeps pale upon the lea :  
 O dancing is a great thing,  
 A great thing to me !

Love is, yea, a great thing,  
 A great thing to me,  
 When, having drawn across the lawn  
 In darkness silently,  
 A figure flits like one a-wing  
 Out from the nearest tree :  
 O love is, yes, a great thing,  
 Aye, greatest thing to me !

Will these be always great things,  
 Greatest things to me ? . . .  
 Let it befall that One will call,  
 " Soul, I have need of thee " :  
 What then ? Joy-jaunts, impassioned flings,  
 Love, and its ecstasy,  
 Will always have been great things,  
 Greatest things to me !

## THE CHIMES

THAT morning when I trod the town  
 The twitching chimes of long renown  
 Played out to me  
 The sweet Sicilian sailors' tune,  
 And I knew not if late or soon  
 My day would be :

A day of sunshine beryl-bright  
 And windless ; yea, think as I might,  
 I could not say,  
 Even to within years' measure, when  
 One would be at my side who then  
 Was far away.



When hard utilitarian times  
 Had stilled the sweet Saint-Peter's chimes  
 I learnt to see  
 That bale may spring where blisses are,  
 And one desired might be afar  
 Though near to me.

## THE FIGURE IN THE SCENE

IT pleased her to step in front and sit  
 Where the cragged slope was green,  
 While I stood back that I might pencil it  
 With her amid the scene ;  
 Till it gloomed and rained ;  
 But I kept on, despite the drifting wet  
 That fell and stained  
 My draught, leaving for curious quizzings yet  
 The blots engrained.

And thus I drew her there alone,  
 Seated amid the gauze  
 Of moisture, hooded, only her outline shown,  
 With rainfall marked across.  
 —Soon passed our stay ;  
 Yet her rainy form is the Genius still of the spot,  
 Immutable, yea,  
 Though the place now knows her no more, and has known her not  
 Ever since that day.

*From an old note.*

## "WHY DID I SKETCH"

WHY did I sketch an upland green,  
 And put the figure in  
 Of one on the spot with me?—  
 For now that one has ceased to be seen  
 The picture waxes akin  
 To a wordless irony.

If you go drawing on down or cliff  
 Let no soft curves intrude  
 Of a woman's silhouette,  
 But show the escarpments stark and stiff  
 As in utter solitude ;  
 So shall you half forget.

Let me sooner pass from sight of the sky  
 Than again on a thoughtless day  
 Limn, laugh, and sing, and rhyme  
 With a woman sitting near, whom I  
 Paint in for love, and who may  
 Be called hence in my time !

*From an old note.*

### CONJECTURE

If there were in my kalendar  
 No Emma, Florence, Mary,  
 What would be my existence now—  
 A hermit's?—wanderer's weary?—  
 How should I live, and how  
 Near would be death, or far?

Could it have been that other eyes  
 Might have uplit my highway?  
 That fond, sad, retrospective sight  
 Would catch from this dim byway  
 Prized figures different quite  
 From those that now arise?

With how strange aspect would there creep  
 The dawn, the night, the daytime,  
 If memory were not what it is  
 In song-time, toil, or pray-time.—  
 O were it else than this,  
 I'd pass to pulseless sleep !

## THE BLOW

THAT no man schemed it is my hope—  
 Yea, that it fell by will and scope  
     Of That Which some enthrone,  
 And for whose meaning myriads grope.

For I would not that of my kind  
 There should, of his unbiassed mind,  
     Have been one known  
 Who such a stroke could have designed ;

Since it would augur works and ways  
 Below the lowest that man assays  
     To have hurled that stone  
 Into the sunshine of our days !

And if it prove that no man did,  
 And that the Inscrutable, the Hid,  
     Was cause alone  
 Of this foul crash our lives amid,

I'll go in due time, and forget  
 In some deep graveyard's oubliette  
     The thing whereof I groan,  
 And cease from troubling ; thankful yet

Time's finger should have stretched to show  
 No aimful author's was the blow  
     That swept us prone,  
 But the Immanent Doer's That doth not know,

Which in some age unguessed of us  
 May lift Its blinding incubus,  
     And see, and own :  
 "It grieves me I did thus and thus !"

## LOVE THE MONOPOLIST

*(Young Lover's Reverie)*

THE train draws forth from the station-yard,  
 And with it carries me.  
 I rise, and stretch out, and regard  
 The platform left, and see  
 An airy slim blue form there standing,  
 And know that it is she.

While with strained vision I watch on,  
 The figure turns round quite  
 To greet friends gaily; then is gone. . . .  
 The import may be slight,  
 But why remained she not hard gazing  
 Till I was out of sight?

"O do not chat with others there,"  
 I brood. "They are not I.  
 O strain your thoughts as if they were  
 Gold bands between us; eye  
 All neighbour scenes as so much blankness  
 Till I again am by!

"A troubled southing in the breeze  
 And the sky overhead  
 Let yourself feel; and shadeful trees,  
 Ripe corn, and apples red,  
 Read as things barren and distasteful  
 While we are separated!

"When I come back uncloak your gloom,  
 And let in lovely day;  
 Then the long dark as of the tomb  
 Can well be thrust away  
 With sweet things I shall have to practise,  
 And you will have to say!"

AT MIDDLE-FIELD GATE IN FEBRUARY

THE bars are thick with drops that show  
As they gather themselves from the fog  
Like silver buttons ranged in a row,  
And as evenly spaced as if measured, although  
They fall at the feeblest jog.

They load the leafless hedge hard by,  
And the blades of last year's grass,  
While the fallow ploughland turned up nigh  
In raw rolls, clammy and clogging lie—  
Too clogging for feet to pass.

How dry it was on a far-back day  
When straws hung the hedge and around,  
When amid the sheaves in amorous play  
In curtained bonnets and light array  
Bloomed a bevy now underground!

BOCKHAMPTON LANE.

THE YOUTH WHO CARRIED A LIGHT

I SAW him pass as the new day dawned,  
Murmuring some musical phrase ;  
Horses were drinking and floundering in the pond,  
And the tired stars thinned their gaze ;  
Yet these were not the spectacles at all that he conned,  
But an inner one, giving out rays.

Such was the thing in his eye, walking there,  
The very and visible thing,  
A close light, displacing the gray of the morning air,  
And the tokens that the dark was taking wing ;  
And was it not the radiance of a purpose rare  
That might ripe to its accomplishing ?

What became of that light ? I wonder still its fate !  
Was it quenched ere its full apogee ?

Did it struggle frail and frailer to a beam emaciate?  
 Did it thrive till matured in verity?  
 Or did it travel on, to be a new young dreamer's freight,  
 And thence on infinitely?

1915.

### THE HEAD ABOVE THE FOG

SOMETHING do I see  
 Above the fog that sheets the mead,  
 A figure like to life indeed,  
 Moving along with spectre-speed,  
 Seen by none but me.

O the vision keen!—  
 Tripping along to me for love  
 As in the flesh it used to move,  
 Only its hat and plume above  
 The evening fog-fleece seen.

In the day-fall wan,  
 When nighted birds break off their song,  
 Mere ghostly head it skims along,  
 Just as it did when warm and strong,  
 Body seeming gone.

Such it is I see  
 Above the fog that sheets the mead—  
 Yea, that which once could breathe and plead!—  
 Skimming along with spectre-speed  
 To a last tryst with me.

### OVERLOOKING THE RIVER STOUR

THE swallows flew in the curves of an eight  
 Above the river-gleam  
 In the wet June's last beam:  
 Like little crossbows animate  
 The swallows flew in the curves of an eight  
 Above the river-gleam.

Planing up shavings of crystal spray  
 A moor-hen darted out  
 From the bank thereabout,  
 And through the stream-shine ripped his way ;  
 Planing up shavings of crystal spray  
 A moor-hen darted out.

Closed were the kingcups ; and the mead  
 Dripped in monotonous green,  
 Though the day's morning sheen  
 Had shown it golden and honeybee'd ;  
 Closed were the kingcups ; and the mead  
 Dripped in monotonous green.

And never I turned my head, alack,  
 While these things met my gaze  
 Through the pane's drop-drenched glaze,  
 To see the more behind my back. . . .  
 O never I turned, but let, alack,  
 These less things hold my gaze !

### THE MUSICAL BOX

LIFELONG to be  
 Seemed the fair colour of the time ;  
 That there was standing shadowed near  
 A spirit who sang to the gentle chime  
 Of the self-struck notes, I did not hear,  
 I did not see.

Thus did it sing  
 To the mindless lyre that played indoors  
 As she came to listen for me without :  
 " O value what the nonce outpours—  
 This best of life—that shines about  
 Your welcoming ! "

I had slowed along  
 After the torrid hours were done,  
 Though still the posts and walls and road

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Flung back their sense of the hot-faced sun,  
 And had walked by Stour-side Mill, where broad  
 Stream-lilies throng.

And I descried  
 The dusky house that stood apart,  
 And her, white-muslined, waiting there  
 In the porch with high-expectant heart,  
 While still the thin mechanic air  
 Went on inside.

At whiles would flit  
 Swart bats, whose wings, be-webbed and tanned,  
 Whirred like the wheels of ancient clocks :  
 She laughed a hailing as she scanned  
 Me in the gloom, the tuneful box  
 Intoning it.

Lifelong to be  
 I thought it. That there watched hard by  
 A spirit who sang to the indoor tune,  
 "O make the most of what is nigh!"  
 I did not hear in my dull soul-swoon—  
 I did not see.

## ON STURMINSTER FOOT-BRIDGE

RETICULATIONS creep upon the slack stream's face  
 When the wind skims irritably past,  
 The current clucks smartly into each hollow place  
 That years of flood have scabbled in the pier's sodden base ;  
 The floating-lily leaves rot fast.

On a roof stand the swallows ranged in wistful waiting rows,  
 Till they arrow off and drop like stones  
 Among the eyot-withies at whose foot the river flows :  
 And beneath the roof is she who in the dark world shows  
 As a lattice-gleam when midnight moans.



## ROYAL SPONSORS

“THE king and the queen will stand to the child ;  
 ’Twill be handed down in song ;  
 And it’s no more than their deserving,  
 With my lord so faithful at Court so long,  
 And so staunch and strong.

“O never before was known such a thing !  
 ’Twill be a grand time for all ;  
 And the beef will be a whole-roast bullock,  
 And the servants will have a feast in the hall,  
 And the ladies a ball.

“While from Jordan’s stream by a traveller,  
 In a flagon of silver wrought,  
 And by caravan, stage-coach, wain, and waggon  
 A precious trickle has been brought,  
 Clear as when caught.”

The morning came. To the park of the peer  
 The royal couple bore ;  
 And the font was filled with the Jordan water,  
 And the household awaited their guests before  
 The carpeted door.

But when they went to the silk-lined cot  
 The child was found to have died.  
 “What’s now to be done? We can disappoint not  
 The king and queen!” the family cried  
 With eyes spread wide.

“Even now they approach the chestnut-drive !  
 The service must be read.”

“Well, since we can’t christen the child alive,  
 By God we shall have to christen him dead !”  
 The marquis said.

Thus, breath-forsaken, a corpse was taken  
 To the private chapel—yea—  
 And the king knew not, nor the queen, God wot,  
 That they answered for one returned to clay  
 At the font that day.

## OLD FURNITURE

I KNOW not how it may be with others  
 Who sit amid relics of householdry  
 That date from the days of their mothers' mothers,  
 But well I know how it is with me  
 Continually.

I see the hands of the generations  
 That owned each shiny familiar thing  
 In play on its knobs and indentations,  
 And with its ancient fashioning  
 Still dallying :

Hands behind hands, growing paler and paler,  
 As in a mirror a candle-flame  
 Shows images of itself, each frailer  
 As it recedes, though the eye may frame  
 Its shape the same.

On the clock's dull dial a foggy finger,  
 Moving to set the minutes right  
 With tentative touches that lift and linger  
 In the wont of a moth on a summer night,  
 Creeps to my sight.

On this old viol, too, fingers are dancing—  
 As whilom—just over the strings by the nut,  
 The tip of a bow receding, advancing  
 In airy quivers, as if it would cut  
 The plaintive gut.

And I see a face by that box for tinder,  
 Glowing forth in fits from the dark,  
 And fading again, as the linden cinder  
 Kindles to red at the flinty spark,  
 Or goes out stark.

Well, well. It is best to be up and doing,  
 The world has no use for one to-day  
 Who eyes things thus—no aim pursuing!  
 He should not continue in this stay,  
 But sink away.

## A THOUGHT IN TWO MOODS

I SAW it—pink and white—revealed  
 Upon the white and green ;  
 The white and green was a daisied field,  
 The pink and white Ethleen.

And as I looked it seemed in kind  
 That difference they had none ;  
 The two fair bodiments combined  
 As varied miens of one.

A sense that, in some mouldering year,  
 As one they both would lie,  
 Made me move quickly on to her  
 To pass the pale thought by.

She laughed and said : " Out there, to me,  
 You looked so weather-browned,  
 And brown in clothes, you seemed to be  
 Made of the dusty ground ! "

## THE LAST PERFORMANCE

" I AM playing my oldest tunes," declared she,  
 " All the old tunes I know,—  
 Those I learnt ever so long ago."  
 —Why she should think just then she'd play them  
 Silence cloaks like snow.

When I returned from the town at nightfall  
 Notes continued to pour  
 As when I had left two hours before :  
 " It's the very last time," she said in closing ;  
 " From now I play no more."

A few morns onward found her fading,  
 And, as her life outflew,  
 I thought of her playing her tunes right through ;  
 And I felt she had known of what was coming,  
 And wondered how she knew.

## "YOU ON THE TOWER"

## I

"YOU on the tower of my factory—  
 What do you see up there?  
 Do you see Enjoyment with wide wings  
 Advancing to reach me here?"  
 —"Yea; I see Enjoyment with wide wings  
 Advancing to reach you here."

## II

"Good. Soon I'll come and ask you  
 To tell me again thereon. . . .  
 Well, what is he doing now? Hoi, there!"  
 —"He still is flying on."  
 "Ah, waiting till I have full-finished.  
 Good. Tell me again anon. . . ."

## III

Hoi, Watchman! I'm here. When comes he?  
 Between my sweats I am chill."  
 —"Oh, you there, working still?  
 Why, surely he reached you a time back,  
 And took you miles from your mill?  
 He duly came in his winging,  
 And now he has passed out of view.  
 How can it be that you missed him?  
 He brushed you by as he flew."

## THE INTERLOPER

THERE are three folk driving in a quaint old chaise,  
 And the cliff-side track looks green and fair;  
 I view them talking in quiet glee  
 As they drop down towards the puffins' lair  
 By the roughest of ways;  
 But another with the three rides on, I see,  
 Whom I like not to be there!

No : it's not anybody you think of. Next  
 A dwelling appears by a slow sweet stream  
 Where two sit happy and half in the dark :  
 They read, helped out by a frail-wick'd gleam,  
     Some rhythmic text ;  
 But one sits with them whom they don't mark,  
     One I'm wishing could not be there.

No : not whom you knew and name. And now  
 I discern gay diners in a mansion-place,  
 And the guests dropping wit—pert, prim, or choice,  
 And the hostess's tender and laughing face,  
     And the host's bland brow ;  
 But I cannot help hearing a hollow voice,  
     And I'd fain not hear it there.

No : it's not from the stranger you met once. Ah,  
 Yet a goodlier scene than that succeeds ;  
 People on a lawn—quite a crowd of them. Yes,  
 And they chatter and ramble as fancy leads ;  
     And they say, " Hurrah !"  
 To a blithe speech made ; save one, mirthless,  
     Who ought not to be there.

Nay : it's not the pale Form your imagings raise,  
 That waits on us all at a destined time,  
 It is not the Fourth Figure the Furnace showed ;  
 O that it were such a shape sublime  
     In these latter days !  
 It is that under which best lives corrode ;  
     Would, would it could not be there !

## LOGS ON THE HEARTH

A MEMORY OF A SISTER.

THE fire advances along the log  
 Of the tree we felled,  
 Which bloomed and bore striped apples by the peck  
 Till its last hour of bearing knelled.

The fork that first my hand would reach  
 And then my foot  
 In climbings upward inch by inch, lies now  
 Sawn, sapless, darkening with soot.

Where the bark chars is where, one year,  
 It was pruned, and bled—  
 Then overgrew the wound. But now, at last,  
 Its growings all have stagnated.

My fellow-climber rises dim  
 From her chilly grave—  
 Just as she was, her foot near mine on the bending limb,  
 Laughing, her young brown hand awake.

*December 1915.*

### THE SUNSHADE

AH—it's the skeleton of a lady's sunshade,  
 Here at my feet in the hard rock's chink,  
 Merely a naked sheaf of wires!—  
 Twenty years have gone with their livers and diers  
 Since it was silked in its white or pink.

Noonshine riddles the ribs of the sunshade,  
 No more a screen from the weakest ray;  
 Nothing to tell us the hue of its dyes,  
 Nothing but rusty bones as it lies  
 In its coffin of stone, unseen till to-day.

Where is the woman who carried that sunshade  
 Up and down this seaside place?—  
 Little thumb standing against its stem,  
 Thoughts perhaps bent on a love-stratagem.  
 Softening yet more the already soft face!

Is the fair woman who carried that sunshade  
 A skeleton just as her property is,

Laid in the chink that none may scan ?  
 And does she regret—if regret dust can—  
 The vain things thought when she flourished this ?

SWANAGE CLIFFS.

### THE AGEING HOUSE

WHEN the walls were red  
 That now are seen  
 To be overspread  
 With a mouldy green,  
 A fresh fair head  
 Would often lean  
 From the sunny casement  
 And scan the scene,  
 While blithely spoke the wind to the little sycamore tree.

But storms have raged  
 Those walls about,  
 And the head has aged  
 That once looked out ;  
 And zest is suaged  
 And trust grows doubt,  
 And slow effacement  
 Is rife throughout,  
 While fiercely girds the wind at the long-limbed sycamore tree !

### THE CAGED GOLDFINCH

WITHIN a churchyard, on a recent grave,  
 I saw a little cage  
 That jailed a goldfinch. All was silence save  
 Its hops from stage to stage.

There was inquiry in its wistful eye,  
 And once it tried to sing ;  
 Of him or her who placed it there, and why,  
 No one knew anything.

## AT MADAME TUSSAUD'S IN VICTORIAN YEARS

" THAT same first fiddler who leads the orchéstra to-night  
 Here fiddled four decades of years ago ;  
 He bears the same babe-like smile of self-centred delight,  
 Same trinket on watch-chain, same ring on the hand with the bow.

" But his face, if regarded, is woefully wanner, and drier,  
 And his once dark beard has grown straggling and gray ;  
 Yet a blissful existence he seems to have led with his lyre,  
 In a trance of his own, where no wearing or tearing had sway.

" Mid these wax figures, who nothing can do, it may seem  
 That to do but a little thing counts a great deal ;  
 To be watched by kings, councillors, queens, may be flattering  
 to him—  
 With their glass eyes longing they too could wake notes that  
 appeal."

Ah, but he played staunchly—that fiddler—whoever he was,  
 With the innocent heart and the soul-touching string :  
 May he find the Fair Haven ! For did he not smile with good  
 cause ?  
 Yes ; gamuts that graced forty years' flight were not a small  
 thing !

## THE BALLET

THEY crush together—a rustling heap of flesh—  
 Of more than flesh, a heap of souls ; and then  
 They part, enmesh,  
 And crush together again,  
 Like the pink petals of a too sanguine rose  
 Frightened shut just when it blows.

Though all alike in their tinsel livery,  
 And indistinguishable at a sweeping glance,  
 They muster, maybe,  
 As lives wide in irrelevance ;



A world of her own has each one underneath,  
Detached as a sword from its sheath.

Daughters, wives, mistresses ; honest or false, sold, bought ;  
Hearts of all sizes ; gay, fond, gushing, or penned,  
Various in thought  
Of lover, rival, friend ;  
Links in a one-pulsed chain, all showing one smile,  
Yet severed so many a mile !

### THE FIVE STUDENTS

THE sparrow dips in his wheel-rut bath,  
The sun grows passionate-eyed,  
And boils the dew to smoke by the paddock-path ;  
As strenuously we stride,—  
Five of us ; dark He, fair He, dark She, fair She, I,  
All beating by.

The air is shaken, the high-road hot,  
Shadowless swoons the day,  
The greens are sobered and cattle at rest ; but not  
We on our urgent way,—  
Four of us ; fair She, dark She, fair He, I, are there,  
But one—elsewhere.

Autumn moulds the hard fruit mellow,  
And forward still we press  
Through moors, briar-meshed plantations, clay-pits yellow,  
As in the spring hours—yes,  
Three of us ; fair He, fair She, I, as heretofore,  
But—fallen one more.

The leaf drops : earthworms draw it in  
At night-time noiselessly,  
The fingers of birch and beech are skeleton-thin,  
And yet on the beat are we,—  
Two of us ; fair She, I. But no more left to go  
The track we know,

Icicles tag the church-aisle leads,  
 The flag-rope gibbers hoarse,  
 The home-bound foot-folk wrap their snow-flaked heads,  
 Yet I still stalk the course—  
 One of us. . . . Dark and fair He, dark and fair She, gone :  
 The rest—anon.

### THE WIND'S PROPHECY

I TRAVEL on by barren farms,  
 And gulls glint out like silver flecks  
 Against a cloud that speaks of wrecks,  
 And bellies down with black alarms.  
 I say : " Thus from my lady's arms  
 I go ; those arms I love the best !"  
 The wind replies from dip and rise,  
 " Nay ; toward her arms thou journeyest."

A distant verge morosely gray  
 Appears, while clots of flying foam  
 Break from its muddy monochrome,  
 And a light blinks up far away.  
 I sigh : " My eyes now as all day  
 Behold her ebon loops of hair !"  
 Like bursting bonds the wind responds,  
 " Nay, wait for tresses flashing fair !"

From tides the lofty coastlands screen  
 Come smittings like the slam of doors,  
 Or hammerings on hollow floors,  
 As the swell cleaves through caves unseen.  
 Say I : " Though broad this wild terrene,  
 Her city home is matched of none !"  
 From the hoarse skies the wind replies :  
 " Thou shouldst have said her sea-bord one."

The all-prevailing clouds exclude  
 The one quick timorous transient star ;  
 The waves outside where breakers are  
 Huzza like a mad multitude.

"Where the sun ups it, mist-imbued,"  
 I cry, "there reigns the star for me!"  
 The wind outshrieks from points and peaks:  
 "Here, westward, where it downs, mean ye!"

Yonder the headland, vulturine,  
 Snores like old Skrymer in his sleep,  
 And every chasm and every steep  
 Blackens as wakes each pharos-shine.  
 "I roam, but one is safely mine,"  
 I say. "God grant she stay my own!"  
 Low laughs the wind as if it grinned:  
 "Thy Love is one thou'st not yet known."

*Rewritten from an old copy.*

### DURING WIND AND RAIN

THEY sing their dearest songs—  
 He, she, all of them—yea,  
 Treble and tenor and bass,  
 And one to play;  
 With the candles mooning each face. . . .  
 Ah, no; the years O!  
 How the sick leaves reel down in throngs!

They clear the creeping moss—  
 Elders and juniors—aye,  
 Making the pathways neat  
 And the garden gay;  
 And they build a shady seat. . . .  
 Ah, no; the years, the years;  
 See, the webbed white storm-birds wing across.

They are blithely breakfasting all—  
 Men and maidens—yea,  
 Under the summer tree,  
 With a glimpse of the bay,  
 While pet fowl come to the knee. . . .  
 Ah, no; the years O!  
 And the rotten rose is ript from the wall.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

They change to a high new house,  
 He, she, all-of them—aye,  
 Clocks and carpets and chairs  
     On the lawn all day,  
 And brightest things that are theirs. . . .  
     Ah, no ; the years, the years ;  
 Down their chiselled names the rain-drop ploughs.

## HE PREFERS HER EARTHLY

THIS after-sunset is a sight for seeing,  
 Cliff-heads of craggy cloud surrounding it.  
     —And dwell you in that glory-show ?  
 You may ; for there are strange strange things in being,  
     Stranger than I know.

Yet if that chasm of splendour claim your presence  
 Which glows between the ash cloud and the dun,  
     How changed must be your mortal mould !  
 Changed to a firmament-riding earthless essence  
     From what you were of old :

All too unlike the fond and fragile creature  
 Then known to me. . . . Well, shall I say it plain ?  
     I would not have you thus and there,  
 But still would grieve on, missing you, still feature  
     You as the one you were.

## THE DOLLS

“WHENEVER you dress me dolls, mammy,  
     Why do you dress them so,  
 And make them gallant soldiers,  
     When never a one I know ;  
 And not as gentle ladies  
     With frills and frocks and curls,  
 As people dress the dollies  
     Of other little girls ?”

Ah—why did she not answer :—  
 “ Because your mammy’s heed  
 Is always gallant soldiers,  
 As well may be, indeed.  
 One of them was your daddy,  
 His name I must not tell ;  
 He’s not the dad who lives here,  
 But one I love too well.”

## MOLLY GONE

No more summer for Molly and me ;  
 There is snow on the tree,  
 And the blackbirds plump large as the rooks are, almost,  
 And the water is hard  
 Where they used to dip bills at the dawn ere her figure was lost  
 To these coasts, now my prison close-barred.

No more planting by Molly and me  
 Where the beds used to be  
 Of sweet-william ; no training the clambering rose  
 By the framework of fir  
 Now bowering the pathway, whereon it swings gaily and blows  
 As if calling commendment from her.

No more jauntings by Molly and me  
 To the town by the sea,  
 Or along over Whitesheet to Wynyard’s green Gap,  
 Catching Montacute Crest  
 To the right against Sedgmoor, and Corton-Hill’s far-distant cap,  
 And Pilsdon and Lewsdon to west.

No more singing by Molly to me  
 In the evenings when she  
 Was in mood and in voice, and the candles were lit,  
 And past the porch-quoin  
 The rays would spring out on the laurels ; and dumbledores hit  
 On the pane, as if wishing to join.

Where, then, is Molly, who’s no more with me ?  
 —As I stand on this lea,

Thinking thus, there's a many-flamed star in the air,  
 That tosses a sign  
 That her glance is regarding its face from her home, so that there  
 Her eyes may have meetings with mine.

### A BACKWARD SPRING

THE trees are afraid to put forth buds,  
 And there is timidity in the grass ;  
 The plots lie gray where gouged by spuds,  
 And whether next week will pass  
 Free of sly sour winds is the fret of each bush  
 Of barberry waiting to bloom.

Yet the snowdrop's face betrays no gloom,  
 And the primrose pants in its heedless push,  
 Though the myrtle asks if it's worth the fight  
 This year with frost and rime  
 To venture one more time  
 On delicate leaves and buttons of white  
 From the selfsame bough as at last year's prime,  
 And never to ruminare on or remember  
 What happened to it in mid-December.

*April 1917.*

### LOOKING ACROSS

#### I

IT is dark in the sky,  
 And silence is where  
 Our laughs rang high ;  
 And recall do I  
 That One is out there.

#### II

The dawn is not nigh,  
 And the trees are bare,

And the waterways sigh  
That a year has drawn by,  
And Two are out there.

## III

The wind drops to die  
Like the phantom of Care  
Too frail for a cry,  
And heart brings to eye  
That Three are out there.

## IV

This Life runs dry  
That once ran rare  
And rosy in dye,  
And fleet the days fly,  
And Four are out there.

## V

Tired, tired am I  
Of this earthly air,  
And my wraith asks: Why,  
Since these calmly lie,  
Are not Five out there?

*December 1915.*

## AT A SEASIDE TOWN IN 1869

*(Young Lover's Reverie)*

I WENT and stood outside myself,  
Spelled the dark sky  
And ship-lights nigh,  
And grumbling winds that passed thereby.

Then next inside myself I looked,  
And there, above  
All, shone my Love,  
That nothing matched the image of.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Beyond myself again I ranged ;  
 And saw the free  
 Life by the sea,  
 And folk indifferent to me.

O 'twas a charm to draw within  
 Thereafter, where  
 But she was ; care  
 For one thing only, her hid there !

But so it chanced, without myself  
 I had to look,  
 And then I took  
 More heed of what I had long forsook :

The boats, the sands, the esplanade,  
 The laughing crowd ;  
 Light-hearted, loud  
 Greetings from some not ill-endowed ;

The evening sunlit cliffs, the talk,  
 Hailings and halts,  
 The keen sea-salts,  
 The band, the Morgenblätter Waltz.

Still, when at night I drew inside  
 Forward she came,  
 Sad, but the same  
 As when I first had known her name.

Then rose a time when, as by force,  
 Outwardly wooed  
 By contacts crude,  
 Her image in abeyance stood. . . .

At last I said ; This outside life  
 Shall not endure ;  
 I'll seek the pure  
 Thought-world, and bask in her allure.

Myself again I crept within,  
 Scanned with keen care  
 The temple where  
 She'd shone, but could not find her there.



I sought and sought. But O her soul  
 Has not since thrown  
 Upon my own  
 One beam! Yea, she is gone, is gone.

*From an old note.*

### THE GLIMPSE

SHE sped through the door  
 And, following in haste,  
 And stirred to the core,  
 I entered hot-faced;  
 But I could not find her,  
 No sign was behind her.  
 "Where is she?" I said:  
 —"Who?" they asked that sat there;  
 "Not a soul's come in sight."  
 —"A maid with red hair."  
 —"Ah." They paled. "She is dead.  
 People see her at night,  
 But you are the first  
 On whom she has burst  
 In the keen common light."

It was ages ago,  
 When I was quite strong:  
 I have waited since,—O,  
 I have waited so long!  
 —Yea, I set me to own  
 The house, where now lone  
 I dwell in void rooms  
 Booming hollow as tombs!  
 But I never come near her,  
 Though nightly I hear her.  
 And my cheek has grown thin  
 And my hair has grown gray  
 With this waiting therein;  
 But she still keeps away!

## THE PEDESTRIAN

AN INCIDENT OF 1883

"SIR, will you let me give you a ride ?

*Nax venit*, and the heath is wide."

—My phaeton-lantern shone on one

Young, fair, even fresh,

But burdened with flesh :

A leathern satchel at his side,

His breathings short, his coat undone.

'Twas as if his corpulent figure slopped  
With the shake of his walking when he stopped,

And, though the night's pinch grew acute,

He wore but a thin

Wind-thridded suit,

Yet well-shaped shoes for walking in,

Artistic beaver, cane gold-topped.

"Alas, my friend," he said with a smile,

"I am daily bound to foot ten mile—

Wet, dry, or dark—before I rest.

Six months to live

My doctors give

Me as my prospect here, at best,

Unless I vamp my sturdiest !"

His voice was that of a man refined,

A man, one well could feel, of mind,

Quite winning in its musical ease ;

But in mould maligned

By some disease ;

And I asked again. But he shook his head ;

Then, as if more were due, he said :—

"A student was I—of Schopenhauer,

Kant, Hegel,—and the fountained bower

Of the Muses, too, knew my regard :

But ah—I fear me

The grave gapes near me ! . . .

Would I could this gross sheath discard,  
And rise an ethereal shape, unmarred !”

How I remember him !—his short breath,  
His aspect, marked for early death,  
As he dropped into the night for ever ;  
    One caught in his prime  
    Of high endeavour ;  
From all philosophies soon to sever  
Through an unconscienced trick of Time !

“WHO’S IN THE NEXT ROOM?”

- “WHO’S in the next room ?—who ?  
    I seemed to see  
Somebody in the dawning passing through,  
    Unknown to me.”
- “Nay : you saw nought. He passed invisibly.”
- “Who’s in the next room ?—who ?  
    I seem to hear  
Somebody muttering firm in a language new  
    That chills the ear.”
- “No : you catch not his tongue who has entered there.”
- “Who’s in the next room ?—who ?  
    I seem to feel  
His breath like a clammy draught, as if it drew  
    From the Polar Wheel.”
- “No : none who breathes at all does the door conceal.”
- “Who’s in the next room ?—who ?  
    A figure wan  
With a message to one in there of something due ?  
    Shall I know him anon ?”
- “Yea he ; and he brought such ; and you’ll know him anon.”

## AT A COUNTRY FAIR

At a bygone Western country fair  
 I saw a giant led by a dwarf  
 With a red string like a long thin scarf;  
 How much he was the stronger there  
     The giant seemed unaware.

And then I saw that the giant was blind,  
 And the dwarf a shrewd-eyed little thing;  
 The giant, mild, timid, obeyed the string  
 As if he had no independent mind,  
     Or will of any kind.

Wherever the dwarf decided to go  
 At his heels the other trotted meekly,  
 (Perhaps—I know not—reproaching weakly)  
 Like one Fate bade that it must be so,  
     Whether he wished or no.

Various sights in various climes  
 I have seen, and more I may see yet,  
 But that sight never shall I forget,  
 And have thought it the sorriest of pantomimes,  
     If once, a hundred times!

## THE MEMORIAL BRASS: 186—

“WHY do you weep there, O sweet lady,  
 Why do you weep before that brass?—  
 (I'm a mere student sketching the mediaeval)  
 Is some late death lined there, alas?—  
 Your father's? . . . Well, all pay the debt that paid he!”

“Young man, O must I tell!—My husband's! And under  
 His name I set mine, and my *death*!—  
 Its date left vacant till my heirs should fill it,  
 Stating me faithful till my last breath.”  
 —“Madam, that you are a widow wakes my wonder!”

“O wait! For last month I—remarried!  
 And now I fear 'twas a deed amiss.  
 We've just come home. And I am sick and saddened  
 At what the new one will say to this;  
 And will he think—think that I should have tarried?”

“I may add, surely,—with no wish to harm him—  
 That he's a temper—yes, I fear!  
 And when he comes to church next Sunday morning,  
 And sees that written . . . O dear, O dear!”  
 —“Madam, I swear your beauty will disarm him!”

### HER LOVE-BIRDS

WHEN I looked up at my love-birds  
 That Sunday afternoon,  
 There was in their tiny tune  
 A dying fetch like broken words,  
 When I looked up at my love-birds  
 That Sunday afternoon.

When he, too, scanned the love-birds  
 On entering there that day,  
 'Twas as if he had nought to say  
 Of his long journey citywards,  
 When he, too, scanned the love-birds,  
 On entering there that day.

And billed and billed the love-birds,  
 As 'twere in fond despair  
 At the stress of silence where  
 Had once been tones in tenor thirds,  
 And billed and billed the love-birds  
 As 'twere in fond despair.

O, his speech that chilled the love-birds,  
 And smote like death on me,  
 As I learnt what was to be,  
 And knew my life was broke in sherds!  
 O, his speech that chilled the love-birds,  
 And smote like death on me!

## PAYING CALLS

I WENT by footpath and by stile  
 Beyond where bustle ends,  
 Strayed here a mile and there a mile  
 And called upon some friends.

On certain ones I had not seen  
 For years past did I call,  
 And then on others who had been  
 The oldest friends of all.

It was the time of midsummer  
 When they had used to roam ;  
 But now, though tempting was the air,  
 I found them all at home.

I spoke to one and other of them  
 By mound and stone and tree  
 Of things we had done ere days were dim,  
 But they spoke not to me.

## THE UPPER BIRCH-LEAVES

WARM yellowy-green  
 In the blue serene,  
 How they skip and sway  
 On this autumn day !  
 They cannot know  
 What has happened below,—  
 That their boughs down there  
 Are already quite bare,  
 That their own will be  
 When a week has passed,—  
 For they jig as in glee  
 To this very last.

But no ; there lies  
 At times in their tune  
 A note that cries  
 What at first I fear

I did not hear :  
 "O we remember  
 At each wind's hollo—  
 Though life holds yet—  
 We go hence soon,  
 For 'tis November ;  
 —But that you follow  
 You may forget !"

"IT NEVER LOOKS LIKE SUMMER"

"It never looks like summer here  
 On Beeny by the sea."  
 But though she saw its look as drear,  
 Summer it seemed to me.

It never looks like summer now  
 Whatever weather's there ;  
 But ah, it cannot anyhow,  
 On Beeny or elsewhere !

BOSCASTLE.

*March 8, 1913.*

EVERYTHING COMES

"THE house is bleak and cold  
 Built so new for me !  
 All the winds upon the wold  
 Search it through for me ;  
 No screening trees abound,  
 And the curious eyes around,  
 Keep on view for me."

"My Love, I am planting trees  
 As a screen for you  
 Both from winds, and eyes that tease  
 And peer in for you.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Only wait till they have grown,  
 No such bower will be known  
 As I mean for you."

"Then I will bear it, Love,  
 And will wait," she said.  
 —So, with years, there grew a grove.  
 "Skill how great!" she said.  
 "As you wished, Dear?" — "Yes, I see!  
 But—I'm dying; and for me  
 'Tis too late," she said.

## THE MAN WITH A PAST

THERE was merry-making  
 When the first dart fell  
 As a heralding,—  
 Till grinned the fully bared thing,  
 And froze like a spell—  
 Like a spell.

Innocent was she,  
 Innocent was I,  
 Too simple we!  
 Before us we did not see,  
 Nearing, aught wry—  
 Aught wry!

I can tell it not now,  
 It was long ago;  
 And such things cow;  
 But that is why and how  
 Two lives were so—  
 Were so.

Yes, the years matured,  
 And the blows were three  
 That time ensured  
 On her, which she dumbly endured;  
 And one on me—  
 One on me.



## HE FEARS HIS GOOD FORTUNE

THERE was a glorious time  
 At an epoch of my prime ;  
 Mornings beryl-bespread,  
 And evenings golden-red ;  
     Nothing gray :  
 And in my heart I said,  
 " However this chanced to be,  
 It is too full for me,  
 Too rare, too rapturous, rash,  
 Its spell must close with a crash  
     Some day ! "

The radiance went on  
 Anon and yet anon,  
 And sweetness fell around  
 Like manna on the ground.  
     " I've no claim, "  
 Said I, " to be thus crowned :  
 I am not worthy this :—  
 Must it not go amiss ?—  
 Well . . . let the end foreseen  
 Come duly !—I am serene. "  
     —And it came.

## HE WONDERS ABOUT HIMSELF

No use hoping, or feeling vex,  
 Tugged by a force above or under  
 Like some fantocine, much I wonder  
 What I shall find me doing next !

Shall I be rushing where bright eyes be ?  
 Shall I be suffering sorrows seven ?  
 Shall I be watching the stars of heaven,  
 Thinking one of them looks like thee ?

Part is mine of the general Will,  
 Cannot my share in the sum of sources  
 Bend a digit the poise of forces,  
 And a fair desire fulfil?

*Nov. 1893.*

### JUBILATE

"THE very last time I ever was here," he said,  
 "I saw much less of the quick than I saw of the dead."  
 —He was a man I had met with somewhere before,  
 But how or when I now could recall no more.

"The hazy mazy moonlight at one in the morning  
 Spread out as a sea across the frozen snow,  
 Glazed to live sparkles like the great breastplate adorning  
 The priest of the Temple, with Uriim and Thummim aglow.

"The yew-tree arms, glued hard to the stiff stark air,  
 Hung still in the village sky as theatre-scenes  
 When I came by the churchyard wall, and halted there  
 At a shut-in sound of fiddles and tambourines.

"And as I stood hearkening, dulcimers, hautboys, and shawms,  
 And violoncellos, and a three-stringed double-bass,  
 Joined in, and were intermixed with a singing of psalms ;  
 And I looked over at the dead men's dwelling-place.

"Through the shine of the slippery snow I now could see,  
 As it were through a crystal roof, a great company  
 Of the dead minueting in stately step underground  
 To the tune of the instruments I had before heard sound.

"It was 'Eden New,' and dancing they sang in a chore,  
 'We are out of it all!—yea, in Little-Ease cramped no more!'  
 And their shrouded figures pacing with joy I could see  
 As you see the stage from the gallery. And they had no heed of  
 me.

"And I lifted my head quite dazed from the churchyard wall  
 And I doubted not that it warned I should soon have my call.  
 But—" . . . Then in the ashes he emptied the dregs of his cup,  
 And onward he went, and the darkness swallowed him up.

## HE REVISITS HIS FIRST SCHOOL

I SHOULD not have shown in the flesh,  
 I ought to have gone as a ghost ;  
 It was awkward, unseemly almost,  
 Standing solidly there as when fresh,  
     Pink, tiny, crisp-curved,  
     My pinions yet furled  
     From the winds of the world.

After waiting so many a year  
 To wait longer, and go as a sprite  
 From the tomb at the mid of some night  
 Was the right, radiant way to appear ;  
     Not as one wanzing weak  
     From life's roar and reek,  
     His rest still to seek :

Yea, beglimpsed through the quaint quarried glass  
 Of green moonlight, by me greener made,  
 When they'd cry, perhaps, " There sits his shade  
 In his olden haunt—just as he was  
     When in Walkingame he  
     Conned the grand Rule-of-Three  
     With the bent of a bee."

But to show in the afternoon sun,  
 With an aspect of hollow-eyed care,  
 When none wished to see me come there,  
 Was a garish thing, better undone.  
     Yes ; wrong was the way ;  
     But yet, let me say,  
     I may right it—some day.

## " I THOUGHT, MY HEART "

I THOUGHT, my Heart, that you had healed  
 Of those sore smartings of the past,  
 And that the summers had oversealed  
     All mark of them at last.

But closely scanning in the night  
 I saw them standing crimson-bright  
     Just as she made them :  
     Nothing could fade them ;  
     Yea, I can swear  
     That there they were—  
     They still were there !

Then the Vision of her who cut them came,  
 And looking over my shoulder said,  
 " I am sure you deal me all the blame  
     For those sharp smarts and red ;  
 But meet me, dearest, to-morrow night,  
 In the churchyard at the moon's half-height,  
     And so strange a kiss  
     Shall be mine, I wis,  
     That you'll cease to know  
     If the wounds you show  
     Be there or no !"

## FRAGMENT

AT last I entered a long dark gallery,  
 Catacomb-lined ; and ranged at the side  
 Were the bodies of men from far and wide  
 Who, motion past, were nevertheless not dead.

" The sense of waiting here strikes strong ;  
 Everyone's waiting, waiting, it seems to me ;  
 What are you waiting for so long ?—  
 What is to happen ?" I said.

" O we are waiting for one called God," said they,  
 " (Though by some the Will, or Force, or Laws ;  
 And, vaguely, by some, the Ultimate Cause ;)  
 Waiting for him to see us before we are clay.  
 Yes ; waiting, waiting, for God *to know it*." . . .

" To know what ?" questioned I.

" To know how things have been going on earth and below it :  
 It is clear he must know some day."  
 I thereon asked them why.

“ Since he made us humble pioneers  
Of himself in consciousness of Life’s tears,  
It needs no mighty prophecy  
To tell that what he could mindlessly show  
His creatures, he himself will know.

“ By some still close-cowled mystery  
We have reached feeling faster than he,  
But he will overtake us anon,  
If the world goes on.”

## MIDNIGHT ON THE GREAT WESTERN

In the third-class seat sat the journeying boy,  
And the roof-lamp’s oily flame  
Played down on his listless form and face,  
Bewrapt past knowing to what he was going,  
Or whence he came.

In the band of his hat the journeying boy  
Had a ticket stuck ; and a string  
Around his neck bore the key of his box,  
That twinkled gleams of the lamp’s sad beams  
Like a living thing.

What past can be yours, O journeying boy  
Towards a world unknown,  
Who calmly, as if incurious quite  
On all at stake, can undertake  
This plunge alone ?

Knows your soul a sphere, O journeying boy,  
Our rude realms far above,  
Whence with spacious vision you mark and mete  
This region of sin that you find you in,  
But are not of ?

## HONEYMOON TIME AT AN INN

AT the shiver of morning, a little before the false dawn,  
 The moon was at the window-square,  
 Deedily brooding in deformed decay—  
 The curve hewn off her cheek as by an adze ;  
 At the shiver of morning a little before the false dawn  
 So the moon looked in there.

Her speechless eyeing reached across the chamber,  
 Where lay two souls opprest,  
 One a white lady sighing, "Why am I sad !"  
 To him who sighed back, "Sad, my Love, am I !"  
 And speechlessly the old moon coned the chamber,  
 And these two reft of rest.

While their large-pupilled vision swept the scene there,  
 Nought seeming imminent,  
 Something fell sheer, and crashed, and from the floor  
 Lay glittering at the pair with a shattered gaze,  
 While their large-pupilled vision swept the scene there,  
 And the many-eyed thing outleant.

With a start they saw that it was an old-time pier-glass  
 Which had stood on the mantel near,  
 Its silvering blemished,—yes, as if worn away  
 By the eyes of the countless dead who had smirked at it  
 Ere these two ever knew that old-time pier-glass  
 And its vague and vacant leer.

As he looked, his bride like a moth skimmed forth, and kneeling  
 Quick, with quivering sighs,  
 Gathered the pieces under the moon's sly ray,  
 Unwitting as an automaton what she did ;  
 Till he entreated, hasting to where she was kneeling,  
 "Let it stay where it lies !"

"Long years of sorrow this means !" breathed the lady  
 As they retired. "Alas !"  
 And she lifted one pale hand across her eyes.  
 "Don't trouble, Love ; it's nothing," the bridegroom said.  
 "Long years of sorrow for us !" murmured the lady,  
 "Or ever this evil pass !"

And the Spirits Ironic laughed behind the wainscot,  
And the Spirits of Pity sighed.

“It’s good,” said the Spirits Ironic, “to tickle their minds  
With a portent of their wedlock’s aftergrinds.”

And the Spirits of Pity sighed behind the wainscot,  
“It’s a portent we cannot abide!

“More, what shall happen to prove the truth of the portent?”

—“Oh; in brief, they will fade till old,

And their loves grow numbed ere death, by the cark of care.”

—“But nought see we that asks for portents there?—

’Tis the lot of all.”—“Well, no less true is a portent  
That it fits all mortal mould.”

### THE ROBIN

WHEN up aloft  
I fly and fly,  
I see in pools  
The shining sky,  
And a happy bird  
Am I, am I!

When I descend  
Towards their brink  
I stand, and look,  
And stoop, and drink,  
And bathe my wings,  
And chink and prink.

When winter frost  
Makes earth as steel  
I search and search  
But find no meal,  
And most unhappy  
Then I feel.

But when it lasts,  
And snows still fall,  
I get to feel  
No grief at all,  
For I turn to a cold stiff  
Feathery ball!

## "I ROSE AND WENT TO ROU'TOR TOWN"

*(She, alone)*

I ROSE and went to Rou'tor Town  
 With gaiety and good heart,  
 And ardour for the start,  
 That morning ere the moon was down  
 That lit me off to Rou'tor Town  
 With gaiety and good heart.

When sojourn soon at Rou'tor Town  
 Wrote sorrows on my face,  
 I strove that none should trace  
 The pale and gray, once pink and brown,  
 When sojourn soon at Rou'tor Town  
 Wrote sorrows on my face.

The evil wrought at Rou'tor Town  
 On him I'd loved so true  
 I cannot tell anew :  
 But nought can quench, but nought can drown  
 The evil wrought at Rou'tor Town  
 On him I'd loved so true !

## THE NETTLES

THIS, then, is the grave of my son,  
 Whose heart she won ! And nettles grow  
 Upon his mound ; and she lives just below.

How he upbraided me, and left,  
 And our lives were cleft, because I said  
 She was hard, unfeeling, caring but to wed.

Well, to see this sight I have fared these miles,  
 And her firelight smiles from her window there,  
 Whom he left his mother to cherish with tender care !

It is enough. I'll turn and go ;  
 Yes, nettles grow where lone lies he,  
 Who spurned me for seeing what he could not see.



## IN A WAITING-ROOM

ON a morning sick as the day of doom  
 With the drizzling gray  
 Of an English May,  
 There were few in the railway waiting-room.  
 About its walls were framed and varnished  
 Pictures of liners, fly-blown, tarnished.  
 The table bore a Testament  
 For travellers' reading, if suchwise bent.

I read it on and on,  
 And, thronging the Gospel of Saint John,  
 Were figures—additions, multiplications—  
 By some one scrawled, with sundry emendations ;  
 Not scoffingly designed,  
 But with an absent mind,—  
 Plainly a bagman's counts of cost,  
 What he had profited, what lost ;  
 And whilst I wondered if there could have been  
 Any particle of a soul  
 In that poor man at all,  
 To cypher rates of wage  
 Upon that printed page,  
 There joined in the charmless scene  
 And stood over me and the scribbled book  
 (To lend the hour's mean hue  
 A smear of tragedy too)  
 A soldier and wife, with haggard look  
 Subdued to stone by strong endeavour ;  
 And then I heard  
 From a casual word  
 They were parting as they believed for ever.

But next there came  
 Like the eastern flame  
 Of some high altar, children—a pair—  
 Who laughed at the fly-blown pictures there.  
 "Here are the lovely ships that we,  
 Mother, are by and by going to see !  
 When we get there it's 'most sure to be fine,  
 And the band will play, and the sun will shine !"

It rained on the skylight with a din  
As we waited and still no train came in ;  
But the words of the child in the squalid room  
Had spread a glory through the gloom.

## THE CLOCK-WINDER

It is dark as a cave,  
Or a vault in the nave  
When the iron door  
Is closed, and the floor  
Of the church relaid  
With trowel and spade.

But the parish-clerk  
Cares not for the dark  
As he winds in the tower  
At a regular hour  
The rheumatic clock  
Whose dilatory knock  
You can hear when praying  
At the day's decaying,  
Or at any lone while  
From a pew in the aisle.

Up, up from the ground  
Around and around  
In the turret stair  
He clammers, to where  
The wheelwork is,  
With its tick, click, whizz,  
Reposefully measuring  
Each day to its end  
That mortal men spend  
In sorrowing and pleasuring.  
Nightly thus does he climb  
To the trackway of Time.

Him I followed one night  
To this place without light,  
And, ere I spoke, heard

Him say, word by word,  
At the end of his winding,  
The darkness unminding :—

“ So I wipe out one more,  
My Dear, of the sore  
Sad days that still be,  
Like a drying Dead Sea,  
Between you and me ! ”

Who she was no man knew :  
He had long borne him blind  
To all womankind ;  
And was ever one who  
Kept his past out of view.

## OLD EXCURSIONS

“ WHAT'S the good of going to Ridgeway,  
Cerne, or Sydling Mill,  
Or to Yell'ham Hill,  
Blithely bearing Casterbridge-way  
As we used to do ?  
She will no more climb up there,  
Or be visible anywhere  
In those haunts we knew.”

But to-night, while walking weary,  
Near me seemed her shade,  
Come as 'twere to upbraid  
This my mood in deeming dreary  
Scenes that used to please ;  
And, if she did come to me,  
Still solicitous, there may be  
Good in going to these.

So, I'll care to roam to Ridgeway,  
Cerne, or Sydling Mill,  
Or to Yell'ham Hill,  
Blithely bearing Casterbridge-way  
As we used to do,

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Since her phasm may flit out there,  
 And may greet me anywhere  
 In those haunts we knew.

*April 1913.*

## THE MASKED FACE

I FOUND me in a great surging space,  
 At either end a door,  
 And I said: "What is this giddy place,  
 With no firm-fixed floor,  
 That I knew not of before?"  
 "It is Life," said a mask-clad face.

I asked: "But how do I come here,  
 Who never wished to come;  
 Can the light and air be made more clear,  
 The floor more quiet some,  
 And the doors set wide? They numb  
 Fast-locked, and fill with fear."

The mask put on a bleak smile then,  
 And said, "O vassal-wight,  
 There once complained a goosequill pen  
 To the scribe of the Infinite  
 Of the words it had to write  
 Because they were past its ken."

## IN A WHISPERING GALLERY

THAT whisper takes the voice  
 Of a Spirit, speaking to me,  
 Close, but invisible,  
 And throws me under a spell  
 At the kindling vision it brings;  
 And for a moment I rejoice,  
 And believe in transcendent things  
 That would mould from this muddy earth  
 A spot for the splendid birth

Of everlasting lives,  
Whereto no night arrives ;  
And this gaunt gray gallery  
A tabernacle of worth  
On this drab-aired afternoon,  
When you can barely see  
Across its hazed lacune  
If opposite aught there be  
Of fleshed humanity  
Wherewith I may commune ;  
Or if the voice so near  
Be a soul's voice floating here.

## THE SOMETHING THAT SAVED HIM

It was when  
Whirls of thick waters laved me  
Again and again,  
That something arose and saved me ;  
Yea, it was then.

In that day  
Unseeing the azure went I  
On my way,  
And to white winter bent I,  
Knowing no May.

Reft of renown,  
Under the night clouds beating  
Up and down,  
In my needfulness greeting  
Cit and clown.

Long there had been  
Much of a murky colour  
In the scene,  
Dull prospects meeting duller ;  
Nought between.

Last, there loomed  
A closing-in blind alley,

## MOMENTS OF VISION

Though there boomed  
A feeble summons to rally  
Where it gloomed.

The clock rang ;  
The hour brought a hand to deliver ;  
I upsprang,  
And looked back at den, ditch and river,  
And sang .

## THE ENEMY'S PORTRAIT

HE saw the portrait of his enemy, offered  
At auction in a street he journeyed nigh,  
That enemy, now late dead, who in his lifetime  
Had injured deeply him the passer-by.  
"To get that picture, pleased be God, I'll try,  
And utterly destroy it ; and no more  
Shall be inflicted on man's mortal eye  
A countenance so sinister and sore !"

And so he bought the painting. Driving homeward,  
"The frame will come in useful," he declared,  
"The rest is fuel." On his arrival, weary,  
Asked what he bore with him, and how he fared,  
He said he had bid for a picture, though he cared  
For the frame only : on the morrow he  
Would burn the canvas, which could well be spared,  
Seeing that it portrayed his enemy.

Next day some other duty found him busy :  
The foe was laid his face against the wall ;  
But on the next he set himself to loosen  
The straining-strips. And then a casual call  
Prevented his proceeding therewithal ;  
And thus the picture waited, day by day,  
Its owner's pleasure, like a wretched thrall,  
Until a month and more had slipped away.

And then upon a morn he found it shifted,  
Hung in a corner by a servitor.

“Why did you take on you to hang that picture?  
 You know it was the frame I bought it for.”  
 “It stood in the way of every visitor,  
 And I just hitched it there.”—“Well, it must go:  
 I don't commemorate men whom I abhor.  
 Remind me 'tis to do. The frame I'll stow.”

But things become forgotten. In the shadow  
 Of the dark corner hung it by its string,  
 And there it stayed—once noticed by its owner,  
 Who said, “Ah me—I must destroy that thing!”  
 But when he died, there, none remembering,  
 It hung, till moved to prominence, as one sees;  
 And comers pause and say, examining,  
 “I thought they were the bitterest enemies?”

### IMAGININGS

SHE saw herself a lady  
 With fifty frocks in wear,  
 And rolling wheels, and rooms the best,  
 And faithful maidens' care,  
 And open lawns and shady  
 For weathers warm or drear.

She found herself a striver,  
 All liberal gifts debarred,  
 With days of gloom, and movements stressed,  
 And early visions marred,  
 And got no man to wive her  
 But one whose lot was hard.

Yet in the moony night-time  
 She steals to stile and lea  
 During his heavy slumberous rest  
 When homecome wearily,  
 And dreams of some blest bright-time  
 She knows can never be.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

## ON THE DOORSTEP

THE rain imprinted the step's wet shine  
 With target-circles that quivered and crossed  
 As I was leaving this porch of mine ;  
 When from within there swelled and paused  
     A song's sweet note ;  
 And back I turned, and thought,  
     " Here I'll abide."

The step shines wet beneath the rain,  
 Which prints its circles as heretofore ;  
 I watch them from the porch again,  
 But no song-notes within the door  
     Now call to me  
 To shun the dripping lea ;  
 And forth I stride.

*Jan. 1914.*

## SIGNS AND TOKENS

SAID the red-cloaked crone  
 In a whispered moan :

" The dead man was limp  
 When laid in his chest ;  
 Yea, limp ; and why  
 But to signify  
 That the grave will crimp  
 Ere next year's sun  
 Yet another one  
 Of those in that house—  
 It may be the best—  
 For its endless drowse !"

Said the brown-shawled dame  
 To confirm the same :

" And the slothful flies  
 On the rotting fruit



Have been seen to wear  
While crawling there  
Crape scarves, by eyes  
That were quick and acute ;  
As did those that had pitched  
On the cows by the pails,  
And with flaps of their tails  
Were far away switched."

Said the third in plaid,  
Each word being weighed :

"And trotting does  
In the park, in the lane,  
And just outside  
The shuttered pane,  
Have also been heard—  
Quick feet as light  
As the feet of a sprite—  
And the wise mind knows  
What things may betide  
When such has occurred."

Cried the black-craped fourth,  
Cold faced as the north :

"O, though giving such  
Some head-room, I smile  
At your falterings  
When noting those things  
Round your domicile !  
For what, what can touch  
One whom, riven of all  
That makes life gay,  
No hints can appal  
Of more takings away !"

## PATHS OF FORMER TIME

No ; no ;  
 It must not be so :  
 They are the ways we do not go.

Still chew  
 The kine, and moo  
 In the meadows we used to wander through ;

Still purl  
 The rivulets and curl  
 Towards the weirs with a musical swirl ;

Haymakers  
 As in former years  
 Rake rolls into heaps that the pitchfork rears ;

Wheels crack  
 On the turfy track  
 The waggon pursues with its toppling pack.

“Why then shun—  
 Since summer's not done—  
 All this because of the lack of one ?”

Had you been  
 Sharer of that scene  
 You would not ask while it bites in keen

Why it is so  
 We can no more go  
 By the summer paths we used to know !

1913.

## THE CLOCK OF THE YEARS

“A spirit passed before my face ; the hair of my flesh stood up.”

AND the Spirit said,  
 “I can make the clock of the years go backward,  
 But am loth to stop it where you will”  
 And I cried, “Agreed

To that. Proceed :  
It's better than dead !”

He answered, “Peace” ;  
And called her up—as last before me ;  
Then younger, younger she freshed, to the year  
I first had known  
Her woman-grown,  
And I cried, “Cease !—

“Thus far is good—  
It is enough—let her stay thus always !”  
But alas for me—He shook his head :  
No stop was there ;  
And she waned child-fair,  
And to babyhood.

Still less in mien  
To my great sorrow became she slowly,  
And smalled till she was nought at all  
In his checkless griff ;  
And it was as if  
She had never been.

“Better,” I plained,  
“She were dead as before ! The memory of her  
Had lived in me ; but it cannot now !”  
And coldly his voice :  
“It was your choice  
To mar the ordained.”

1916.

### AT THE PIANO

A WOMAN was playing,  
A man looking on ;  
And the mould of her face,  
And her neck, and her hair,  
Which the rays fell upon  
Of the two candles there,  
Sent him mentally straying  
In some fancy-place  
Where pain had no trace.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

A cowed Apparition  
 Came pushing between ;  
 And her notes seemed to sigh ;  
 And the lights to burn pale,  
 As a spell numbed the scene.  
 But the maid saw no bale,  
 And the man no monition ;  
 And Time laughed awry,  
 And the Phantom hid nigh.

## THE SHADOW ON THE STONE

I WENT by the Druid stone  
 That broods in the garden white and lone,  
 And I stopped and looked at the shifting shadows  
 That at some moments there are thrown  
 From the tree hard by with a rhythmic swing,  
 And they shaped in my imagining  
 To the shade that a well-known head and shoulders  
 Threw there when she was gardening.

I thought her behind my back,  
 Yea, her I long had learned to lack,  
 And I said : " I am sure you are standing behind me,  
 Though how do you get into this old track ? "  
 And there was no sound but the fall of a leaf  
 As a sad response ; and to keep down grief  
 I would not turn my head to discover  
 That there was nothing in my belief.

Yet I wanted to look and see  
 That nobody stood at the back of me ;  
 But I thought once more : " Nay, I'll not unvision  
 A shape which, somehow, there may be."  
 So I went on softly from the glade,  
 And left her behind me throwing her shade,  
 As she were indeed an apparition—  
 My head unturned lest my dream should fade.

## IN THE GARDEN

(M. H.)

WE waited for the sun  
 To break its cloudy prison  
 (For day was not yet done,  
 And night still unbegun)  
 Leaning by the dial.

After many a trial—  
 We all silent there—  
 It burst as new-arisen,  
 Throwing a shade to where  
 Time travelled at that minute.

Little saw we in it,  
 But this much I know,  
 Of lookers on that shade,  
 Her towards whom it made  
 Soonest had to go.

1915.

## THE TREE AND THE LADY

I HAVE done all I could  
 For that lady I knew! Through the heats I have shaded her,  
 Drawn to her songsters when summer has jaded her,  
 Home from the heath or the wood.

At the mirth-time of May,  
 When my shadow first lured her, I'd donned my new bravery  
 Of greenth: 'twas my all. Now I shiver in slavery,  
 Icicles grieving me gray.

Plumed to every twig's end  
 I could tempt her chair under me. Much did I treasure her  
 During those days she had nothing to pleasure her;  
 Mutely she used me as friend.

I'm a skeleton now,  
 And she's gone, craving warmth. The rime sticks like a skin  
 to me ;  
 Through me Arcturus peers ; Nor'lights shoot into me ;  
 Gone is she, scorning my bough !

## AN UPBRAIDING

Now I am dead you sing to me  
 The songs we used to know,  
 But while I lived you had no wish  
 Or care for doing so.

Now I am dead you come to me  
 In the moonlight, comfortless ;  
 Ah, what would I have given alive  
 To win such tenderness !

When you are dead, and stand to me  
 Not differenced, as now,  
 But like again, will you be cold  
 As when we lived, or how ?

## THE YOUNG GLASS-STAINER

"THESE Gothic windows, how they wear me out  
 With cusp and foil, and nothing straight or square,  
 Crude colours, leaden borders roundabout,  
 And fitting in Peter here, and Matthew there !

"What a vocation ! Here do I draw now  
 The abnormal, loving the Hellenic norm ;  
 Martha I paint, and dream of Hera's brow,  
 Mary, and think of Aphrodite's form."

## LOOKING AT A PICTURE ON AN ANNIVERSARY

BUT don't you know it, my dear,  
 Don't you know it,  
 That this day of the year  
 (What rainbow-rays embow it!)  
 We met, strangers confessed,  
 But parted—blest?

Though at this query, my dear,  
 There in your frame  
 Unmoved you still appear,  
 You must be thinking the same,  
 But keep that look demure  
 Just to allure.

And now at length a trace  
 I surely vision  
 Upon that wistful face  
 Of old-time recognition,  
 Smiling forth, "Yes, as you say,  
 It is the day."

For this one phase of you  
 Now left on earth  
 This great date must endue  
 With pulsings of rebirth?—  
 I see them vitalize  
 Those two deep eyes!

But if this face I con  
 Does not declare  
 Consciousness living on  
 Still in it, little I care  
 To live myself, my dear,  
 Lone-labouring here!

## THE CHOIRMASTER'S BURIAL

HE often would ask us  
That, when he died,  
After playing so many  
To their last rest,  
If out of us any  
Should here abide,  
And it would not task us,  
We would with our lutes  
Play over him  
By his grave-brim  
The psalm he liked best—  
The one whose sense suits  
"Mount Ephraim"—  
And perhaps we should seem  
To him, in Death's dream,  
Like the seraphim.

As soon as I knew  
That his spirit was gone  
I thought this his due,  
And spoke thereupon.  
"I think," said the vicar,  
"A read service quicker  
Than viols out-of-doors  
In these frosts and hoars.  
That old-fashioned way  
Requires a fine day,  
And it seems to me  
It had better not be."

Hence, that afternoon,  
Though never knew he  
That his wish could not be,  
To get through it faster  
They buried the master  
Without any tune.

But 'twas said that, when  
At the dead of next night



The vicar looked out,  
There struck on his ken  
Thronged roundabout,  
Where the frost was graying  
The headstoned grass,  
A band all in white  
Like the saints in church-glass,  
Singing and playing  
The ancient stave  
By the choirmaster's grave.

Such the tenor man told  
When he had grown old.

## THE MAN WHO FORGOT

AT a lonely cross where bye-roads met  
I sat upon a gate ;  
I saw the sun decline and set,  
And still was fain to wait.

A trotting boy passed up the way  
And roused me from my thought ;  
I called to him, and showed where lay  
A spot I shyly sought.

"A summer-house fair stands hidden where  
You see the moonlight thrown ;  
Go, tell me if within it there  
A lady sits alone."

He half demurred, but took the track,  
And silence held the scene ;  
I saw his figure rambling back ;  
I asked him if he had been.

"I went just where you said, but found  
No summer-house was there :  
Beyond the slope 'tis all bare ground ;  
Nothing stands anywhere.

“A man asked what my brains were worth ;  
 The house, he said, grew rotten,  
 And was pulled down before my birth,  
 And is almost forgotten !”

My right mind woke, and I stood dumb ;  
 Forty years' frost and flower  
 Had fled since I'd used to come  
 To meet her in that bower.

### WHILE DRAWING IN A CHURCHYARD

“It is sad that so many of worth,  
 Still in the flesh,” sougled the yew,  
 “Misjudge their lot whom kindly earth  
 Secludes from view.

“They ride their diurnal round  
 Each day-span's sum of hours  
 In peerless ease, without jolt or bound  
 Or ache like ours.

“If the living could but hear  
 What is heard by my roots as they creep  
 Round the restful flock, and the things said there  
 No one would weep.”

“‘Now set among the wise,’  
 They say : ‘Enlarged in scope,  
 That no god trumpet us to rise  
 We truly hope.’”

I listened to his strange tale  
 In the mood that stillness brings,  
 And I grew to accept as the day wore pale  
 That show of things.

"FOR LIFE I HAD NEVER CARED GREATLY"

FOR Life I had never cared greatly,  
As worth a man's while ;  
Peradventures unsought,  
Peradventures that finished in nought,  
Had kept me from youth and through manhood till lately  
Unwon by its style.

In earliest years—why I know not—  
I viewed it askance ;  
Conditions of doubt,  
Conditions that leaked slowly out,  
May haply have bent me to stand and to show not  
Much zest for its dance.

With symphonies soft and sweet colour  
It courted me then,  
Till evasions seemed wrong,  
Till evasions gave in to its song,  
And I warmed, until living aloofly loomed duller  
Than life among men.

Anew I found nought to set eyes on,  
When, lifting its hand,  
It uncloaked a star,  
Uncloaked it from fog-damps afar,  
And showed its beams burning from pole to horizon  
As bright as a brand.

And so, the rough highway forgetting,  
I pace hill and dale  
Regarding the sky,  
Regarding the vision on high,  
And thus re-illumed have no humour for letting  
My pilgrimage fail.

## POEMS OF WAR AND PATRIOTISM

### "MEN WHO MARCH AWAY"

(SONG OF THE SOLDIERS)

WHAT of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us ;  
What of the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away ?

Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye,  
Who watch us stepping by  
With doubt and dolorous sigh ?  
Can much pondering so hoodwink you !  
Is it a purblind prank, O think you,  
Friend with the musing eye ?

Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see—  
Dalliers as they be—  
England's need are we ;  
Her distress would leave us rueing :  
Nay. We well see what we are doing,  
Though some may not see !

In our heart of hearts believing  
Victory crowns the just,  
And that braggarts must  
Surely bite the dust,

Press we to the field ungrieving,  
In our heart of hearts believing  
Victory crowns the just.

Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away  
Ere the barn-cocks say  
Night is growing gray,  
Leaving all that here can win us ;  
Hence the faith and fire within us  
Men who march away.

*September 5, 1914.*

### HIS COUNTRY

I JOURNEYED from my native spot  
Across the south sea shine,  
And found that people in hall and cot  
Laboured and suffered each his lot  
Even as I did mine.

He travels  
southward,  
and looks  
around ;

Thus noting them in meads and marts  
It did not seem to me  
That my dear country with its hearts,  
Minds, yearnings, worse and better parts  
Had ended with the sea.

and cannot  
discover the  
boundary

I further and further went anon,  
As such I still surveyed,  
And further yet—yea, on and on,  
And all the men I looked upon  
Had heart-strings fellow-made.

of his native  
country ;

I traced the whole terrestrial round,  
Homing the other side ;  
Then said I, "What is there to bound  
My denizenship ? It seems I have found  
Its scope to be world-wide."

or where  
his duties to  
his fellow-  
creatures end ;

nor who are  
his enemies.

I asked me : " Whom have I to fight,  
And whom have I to dare,  
And whom to weaken, crush, and blight ?  
My country seems to have kept in sight  
On my way everywhere."

1913.

### ENGLAND TO GERMANY IN 1914

" O ENGLAND, may God punish thee !"  
—Is it that Teuton genius flowers  
Only to breathe malignity  
Upon its friend of earlier hours ?  
—We have eaten your bread, you have eaten ours,  
We have loved your burgs, your pines' green moan,  
Fair Rhine-stream, and its storied towers ;  
Your shining souls of deathless dowers  
Have won us as they were our own :

We have nursed no dreams to shed your blood,  
We have matched your might not rancorously  
Save a flushed few whose blatant mood  
You heard and marked as well as we  
To tongue not in their country's key ;  
But yet you cry with face aflame,  
" O England, may God punish thee !"  
And foul in onward history,  
And present sight, your ancient name.

*Autumn 1914.*

### ON THE BELGIAN EXPATRIATION

I DREAMT that people from the Land of Chimes  
Arrived one autumn morning with their bells,  
To hoist them on the towers and citadels  
Of my own country, that the musical rhymes

Rung by them into space at meted times  
Amid the market's daily stir and stress,

And the night's empty star-lit silentness,  
Might solace souls of this and kindred climes.

Then I awoke ; and lo, before me stood  
The visioned ones, but pale and full of fear ;  
From Bruges they came, and Antwerp, and Ostend,

No carillons in their train. Foes of mad mood  
Had shattered these to shards amid the gear  
Of ravaged roof, and smouldering gable-end.

*October 18, 1914.*

## AN APPEAL TO AMERICA ON BEHALF OF THE BELGIAN DESTITUTE

SEVEN millions stand  
Emaciate, in that ancient Delta-land :—  
We here, full-charged with our own maimed and dead  
And coiled in throbbing conflicts slow and sore,  
Can poorly soothe these ails unmerited  
Of souls forlorn upon the facing shore !—  
Where naked, gaunt, in endless band on band  
Seven millions stand.

No man can say  
To your great country that, with scant delay,  
You must, perforce, ease them in their loud need :  
We know that nearer first your duty lies ;  
But—is it much to ask that you let plead  
Your lovingkindness with you—wooing-wise—  
Albeit that aught you owe, and must repay,  
No man can say ?

*December 1914.*

## THE PITY OF IT

I WALKED in loamy Wessex lanes, afar  
From rail-track and from highway, and I heard  
In field and farmstead many an ancient word  
Of local lineage like "Thú bist," "Er war,"

"Ich woll," "Er sholl," and by-talk similar,  
 Even as they speak who in this month's moon gird  
 At England's very loins, thereunto spurred  
 By gangs whose glory threats and slaughters are.

Then seemed a Heart crying: "Whosoever they be  
 At root and bottom of this, who flung this flame  
 Between kin folk kin tongued even as are we,

"Sinister, ugly, lurid, be their fame;  
 May their familiars grow to shun their name,  
 And their brood perish everlastingly."

*April 1915.*

#### IN TIME OF WARS AND TUMULTS

"WOULD that I'd not drawn breath here!" some one said,  
 "To stalk upon this stage of evil deeds,  
 Where purposelessly month by month proceeds  
 A play so sorely shaped and blood-bespread."

Yet had his spark not quickened, but lain dead  
 To the gross spectacles of this our day,  
 And never put on the proffered cloak of clay,  
 He had but known not things now manifested;

Life would have swirled the same. Morns would have dawned  
 On the uprooting by the night-gun's stroke  
 Of what the yester noonshine brought to flower;

Brown martial brows in dying throes have wanned  
 Despite his absence; hearts no fewer been broke  
 By Empery's insatiate lust of power.

1915.



IN TIME OF "THE BREAKING OF NATIONS"<sup>1</sup>

I

ONLY a man harrowing clods  
In a slow silent walk  
With an old horse that stumbles and nods  
Half asleep as they stalk.

II

Only thin smoke without flame  
From the heaps of couch-grass ;  
Yet this will go onward the same  
Though Dynasties pass.

III

Yonder a maid and her wight  
Come whispering by :  
War's annals will cloud into night  
Ere their story die.

1915.

CRY OF THE HOMELESS

AFTER THE PRUSSIAN INVASION OF BELGIUM

"INSTIGATOR of the ruin—  
Whichsoever thou mayst be  
Of the masterful of Europe  
That contrived our misery—  
Hear the wormwood-worded greeting  
From each city, shore, and lea  
Of thy victims :  
"Conqueror, all hail to thee !"

<sup>1</sup> Jer. li. 20.

## MOMENTS OF VISION

“Yea: ‘All hail!’ we grimly shout thee  
 That wast author, fount, and head  
 Of these wounds, whoever proven  
 When our times are throughly read.  
 ‘May thy loved be slighted, blighted,  
 And forsaken,’ be it said  
 By thy victims,  
 ‘And thy children beg their bread!’

“Nay: a richer malediction!—  
 Rather let this thing befall  
 In time’s hurling and unfurling  
 On the night when comes thy call;  
 That compassion dew thy pillow  
 And absorb thy senses all  
 For thy victims,  
 Till death dark thee with his pall.”

*August 1915.*

## BEFORE MARCHING AND AFTER

*(In Memoriam F. W. G.)*

ORION swung southward aslant  
 Where the starved Egdon pine-trees had thinned,  
 The Pleiads aloft seemed to pant  
 With the heather that twitched in the wind;  
 But he looked on indifferent to sights such as these,  
 Unswayed by love, friendship, home joy or home sorrow,  
 And wondered to what he would march on the morrow.

The crazed household-clock with its whirr  
 Rang midnight within as he stood,  
 He heard the low sighing of her  
 Who had striven from his birth for his good;  
 But he still only asked the spring starlight, the breeze,  
 What great thing or small thing his history would borrow  
 From that Game with Death he would play on the morrow.

When the heath wore the robe of late summer,  
 And the fuchsia-bells, hot in the sun,

Hung red by the door, a quick comer  
 Brought tidings that marching was done  
 For him who had joined in that game over-seas  
 Where Death stood to win, though his name was to borrow  
 A brightness therefrom not to fade on the morrow.

*September 1915.*

### “OFTEN WHEN WARRING”

OFTEN when warring for he wist not what,  
 An enemy-soldier, passing by one weak,  
 Has tendered water, wiped the burning cheek,  
 And cooled the lips so black and clammed and hot ;

Then gone his way, and maybe quite forgot  
 The deed of grace amid the roar and reek ;  
 Yet larger vision than the tongue can speak  
 He there has reached, although he has known it not

For natural mindsight, triumphing in the act  
 Over the throes of artificial rage,  
 Has thuswise muffled victory's peal of pride,  
 Rended to ribands policy's specious page  
 That deals but with evasion, code, and pact,  
 And war's apology wholly stultified.

1915.

### THEN AND NOW

WHEN battles were fought  
 With a chivalrous sense of Should and Ought,  
 In spirit men said,  
 “End we quick or dead,  
 Honour is some reward !  
 Let us fight fair—for our own best or worst ;  
 So, Gentlemen of the Guard,  
 Fire first !”

In the open they stood,  
 Man to man in his knightlihood :

## MOMENTS OF VISION

They would not deign  
 To profit by a stain  
 On the honourable rules,  
 Knowing that practise perfidy no man durst  
 Who in the heroic schools  
 Was nurst.

But now, behold, what  
 Is warfare wherein honour is not !  
 Rama laments  
 Its dead innocents :  
 Herod breathes : "Sly slaughter  
 Shall rule ! Let us, by modes once called accurst,  
 Overhead, under water,  
 Stab first."

1915.

## A CALL TO NATIONAL SERVICE

UP and be doing, all who have a hand  
 To lift, a back to bend. It must not be  
 In times like these that vaguely linger we  
 To air our vaunts and hopes ; and leave our land

Untended as a wild of weeds and sand.  
 —Say, then, "I come !" and go, O women and men  
 Of palace, ploughshare, easel, counter, pen ;  
 That scareless, scathless, England still may stand.

Would years but let me stir as once I stirred  
 At many a dawn to take the forward track,  
 And with a stride plunged on to enterprize,

I now would speed like yester wind that whirred  
 Through yielding pines ; and serve with never a slack,  
 So loud for promptness all around outcries !

*March 1917.*

## THE DEAD AND THE LIVING ONE

THE dead woman lay in her first night's grave,  
And twilight fell from the clouds' concave,  
And those she had asked to forgive forgave.

The woman passing came to a pause  
By the heaped white shapes of wreath and cross,  
And looked upon where the other was.

And as she mused there thus spoke she :  
"Never your countenance did I see,  
But you've been a good good friend to me!"

Came a plaintive voice from the sod below :  
"O woman whose accents I do not know,  
What is it that makes you approve me so?"

"O dead one, ere my soldier went,  
I heard him saying, with warm intent,  
To his friend, when won by your blandishment :

"I would change for that lass here and now !  
And if I return I may break my vow  
To my present Love, and contrive somehow

"To call my own this new-found pearl,  
Whose eyes have the light, whose lips the curl  
I always have looked for in a girl!"

"—And this is why that by ceasing to be—  
Though never your countenance did I see—  
You prove you a good good friend to me ;

"And I pray each hour for your soul's repose  
In gratitude for your joining those  
No lover will clasp when his campaigns close."

Away she turned, when arose to her eye  
A martial phantom of gory dye,  
That said, with a thin and far-off sigh :

## MOMENTS OF VISION

"O sweetheart, neither shall I clasp you!  
For the foe this day has pierced me through,  
And sent me to where she is. Adieu!—

"And forget not when the night-wind's whine  
Calls over this turf where her limbs recline,  
That it travels on to lament by mine."

There was a cry by the white-flowered mound,  
There was a laugh from underground,  
There was a deeper gloom around.

1915.

## A NEW YEAR'S EVE IN WAR TIME

## I

PHANTASMAL fears,  
And the flap of the flame,  
And the throb of the clock,  
And a loosened slate,  
And the blind night's drone,  
Which tiredly the spectral pines intone!

## II

And the blood in my ears  
Strumming always the same,  
And the gable-cock  
With its fitful grate,  
And myself, alone.

## III

The twelfth hour nears  
Hand-hid, as in shame;  
I undo the lock,  
And listen, and wait  
For the Young Unknown.

## IV

In the dark there careers—  
 As if Death astride came  
 To numb all with his knock—  
 A horse at mad rate  
 Over rut and stone.

## V

No figure appears,  
 No call of my name,  
 No sound but "Tic-toc"  
 Without check. Past the gate  
 It clatters—is gone.

## VI

What rider it bears  
 There is none to proclaim;  
 And the Old Year has struck,  
 And, scarce animate,  
 The New makes moan.

## VII

Maybe that "More Tears!—  
 More Famine and Flame—  
 More Severance and Shock!"  
 Is the order from Fate  
 That the Rider speeds on  
 To pale Europe; and tiredly the pines intone.

1915-1916

## "I MET A MAN"

I MET a man when night was nigh,  
 Who said, with shining face and eye  
 Like Moses' after Sinai:—

"I have seen the Moulder of Monarchies,  
 Realms, peoples, plains and hills,

Sitting upon the sunlit seas!—  
 And, as He sat, soliloquies  
 Fell from Him like an antiphonic breeze  
 That pricks the waves to thrills.

“Meseemed that of the maimed and dead  
 Mown down upon the globe,—  
 Their plenteous blooms of promise shed  
 Ere fruiting-time—His words were said,  
 Sitting against the western web of red  
 Wrapt in His crimson robe.

“And I could catch them now and then :  
 —‘Why let these gambling clans  
 Of human Cockers, pit liege men  
 From mart and city, dale and glen,  
 In death-mains, but to swell and swell again  
 Their swollen All-Empery plans,

“‘When a mere nod (if my malign  
 Compeer but passive keep)  
 Would mend that old mistake of mine  
 I made with Saul, and ever consign  
 All Lords of War whose sanctuaries enshrine  
 Liberticide, to sleep?

“‘With violence the lands are spread  
 Even as in Israel’s day,  
 And it repenteth me I bred  
 Chartered armipotents lust-led  
 To feuds. . . . Yea, grieves my heart, as then I said,  
 To see their evil way!’

—“The utterance grew, and flapped like flame,  
 And further speech I feared ;  
 But no Celestial tongued acclaim,  
 And no huzzas from earthlings came,  
 And the heavens mutely masked as ’twere in shame  
 Till daylight disappeared.”

Thus ended he as night rode high—  
 The man of shining face and eye,  
 Like Moses’ after Sinai.



"I LOOKED UP FROM MY WRITING"

I LOOKED up from my writing,  
And gave a start to see,  
As if rapt in my inditing,  
The moon's full gaze on me.

Her meditative misty head  
Was spectral in its air,  
And I involuntarily said,  
"What are you doing there?"

"Oh, I've been scanning pond and hole  
And waterway hereabout  
For the body of one with a sunken soul  
Who has put his life-light out.

"Did you hear his frenzied tattle?  
It was sorrow for his son  
Who is slain in brutish battle,  
Though he has injured none.

"And now I am curious to look  
Into the blinkered mind  
Of one who wants to write a book  
In a world of such a kind."

Her temper overwrought me,  
And I edged to shun her view,  
For I felt assured she thought me  
One who should drown him too.

## FINALE

### THE COMING OF THE END

How it came to an end !  
The meeting afar from the crowd,  
And the love-looks and laughters unpenned,  
The parting when much was avowed,  
How it came to an end !

It came to an end ;  
Yes, the outgazing over the stream,  
With the sun on each serpentine bend,  
Or, later, the luring moon-gleam ;  
It came to an end.

It came to an end,  
The housebuilding, furnishing, planting,  
As if there were ages to spend  
In welcoming, feasting, and jaunting ;  
It came to an end.

It came to an end,  
That journey of one day a week :  
(" It always goes on," said a friend,  
" Just the same in bright weathers or bleak ;' )  
But it came to an end.

" *How* will come to an end  
This orbit so smoothly begun,  
Unless some convulsion attend ?"  
I often said. " What will be done  
When it comes to an end ?"

Well, it came to an end  
 Quite silently—stopped without jerk ;  
 Better close no prevision could lend ;  
 Working out as One planned it should work  
 Ere it came to an end.

## AFTERWARDS

WHEN the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous  
 stay,

And the May month flaps its glad green leaves like wings,  
 Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,  
 "He was a man who used to notice such things" ?

If it be in the dusk when, like an eyelid's soundless blink,  
 The dewfall-hawk comes crossing the shades to alight  
 Upon the wind-warped upland thorn, a gazer may think,  
 "To him this must have been a familiar sight."

If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,  
 When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,  
 One may say, "He strove that such innocent creatures should  
 come to no harm,  
 But he could do little for them ; and now he is gone."

If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at  
 the door,  
 Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,  
 Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,  
 "He was one who had an eye for such mysteries" ?

And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,  
 And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,  
 Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,  
 "He hears it not now, but used to notice such things" ?

END OF VOL. I



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