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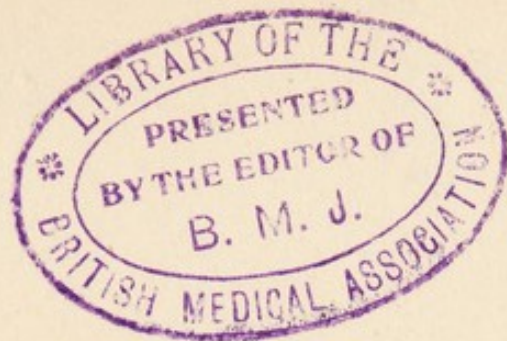
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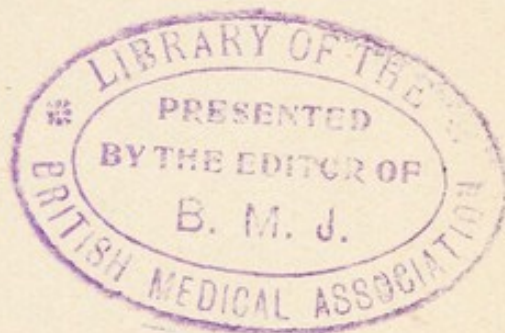


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# DESTROYERS

## AND OTHER VERSES



BY  
HENRY HEAD, M.D., F.R.S.

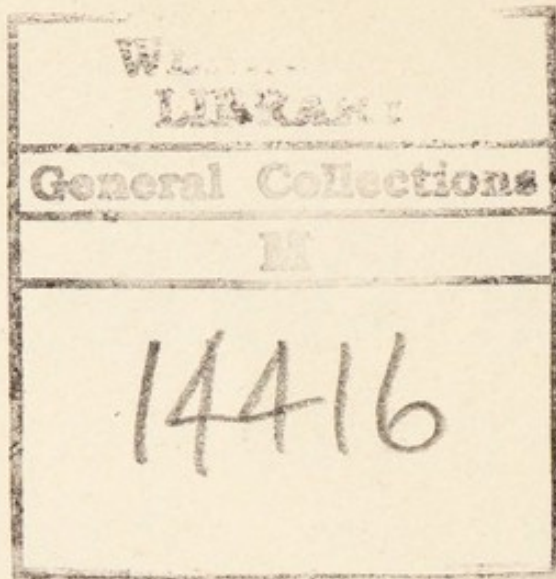
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To *The Yale Review*, Newhaven, Con., for "I cannot Stand and Wait," "Destroyers," and "Died of His Wounds."


To *The English Review* for "Homing Wings" and "The Price."

To *The Dublin Review* for "To Courage, Seated."

To Her

without whose touch the  
strings would have been  
mute





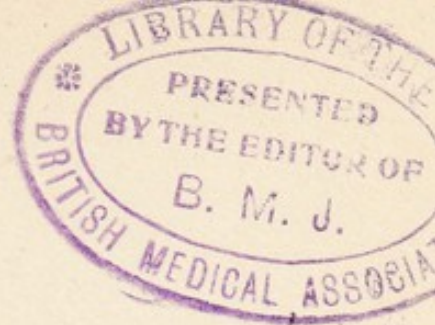
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1914 TO 1918







1914 TO 1918

I CANNOT STAND AND WAIT.

How can I serve who am too old to fight?  
I cannot stand and wait  
With folded hands, and lay me down at  
night  
In restless expectation that the day  
Will bring some stroke of Fate  
I cannot help to stay.  
Once, like the spider in his patterned web,  
Based on immutable law,  
Boldly I spun the strands of arduous  
thought,  
Now seeming naught,  
Rent in the sudden hurricane of war.

Within my corner I will take my place,  
And grant me grace  
Some delicate thing to perfect and complete  
With passionate contentment, as of old  
Before my heart grew cold.  
This in the Temple I will dedicate,  
A widow's mite,  
Among more precious gifts, obscured from  
sight  
By the majestic panoply of state.  
But when triumphal candles have burned  
low  
And valorous trophies crumbled into dust,  
Perchance my gift may glow,  
Still radiating sacrificial joy  
Amid the ravages of moth and dust.



1914 TO 1918

HOMING WINGS.

Poised like the black-winged swallow born  
to roam  
And find a living in the ambient air,  
We sacrificed our home  
For unpolluted realms of natural law.  
Must we despair  
Because the neutral tissue of our dreams  
Dissolves like ravelled mist before the heat,  
And at our feet  
The radiant prospect of this ancient land,  
Grey hamlets, happy fields, sequestered  
streams,  
Unconquerable stand?  
E'en the world-wandering bird suspends  
her nest  
Beneath the overhanging cottage eaves  
In fecund rest;  
And breezes ocean-born  
In brooding oaks scarce stir the crumpled  
leaves,  
Where poppies flame among the ripening  
corn.  
So we return to worship homely things,  
That filled our baby hands, ancestral springs  
Resurgent and intense  
Stirring the reverent heart  
Of childhood's innocence.

1914 TO 1918

PARIS. APRIL, 1916.

*"Ils vantaient notre esprit, jamais notre endurance."*

How silent are the streets of this grave  
town;  
Discordant vanity is swept away,  
And mourners everywhere pass up and  
down,  
Sombring the radiance of an April day.  
Here all men wear the inward, brooding  
look  
Of a young mother, when her time is near,  
Devoid of fear.  
She knows the agony of hope still-born,  
And, once before, her body racked and torn  
Was at the last denied its victory.

How can we understand,  
Whose land inviolate was clogged with  
dreams?  
They with a single purpose are imbued,  
That like a mighty river onward streams  
In multitudinous channels ruthlessly,  
Past tangled isles and barriers of sand,  
Until its irresistible waters roll  
To their triumphal goal,  
With all-embracing, silent fortitude.



1914 TO 1918

THE PRICE.

Night hovers blue above the sombre square,  
The solitary amber lanterns throw  
A soft penumbra on the path below,  
And through the plumed pavilion of the  
trees

A solemn breeze  
Bears faintly from the river midnight bells;  
While at this peaceful hour my spirit tells  
Its tale of arduous joys,  
Pain conquered, Fear resolved, or Hope  
regained,  
Swift recognition of some law divine,  
Shy gratitude that could not be restrained,  
All these were mine,  
And so, supremely blest,  
I sink to rest.

Through labyrinthine sleep I grope my way,  
Feeble of purpose, sick at heart, and sure  
Some unknown ill will lead my steps astray,  
Till, cold and gray,  
The dawn rays through my shuttered  
windows steal  
And with closed eyes I thank my God for  
light,  
For the fierce purpose of another day,  
When work and thought forbid the heart  
to feel.



1914 TO 1918

DESTROYERS.

On this primeval strip of western land,  
With purple bays and tongues of shining  
sand,  
Time, like an echoing tide,  
Moves drowsily in idle ebb and flow;  
The sunshine slumbers in the tangled grass  
And homely folk with simple greeting pass,  
As to their worship or their work they go.  
Man, earth, and sea  
Seem linked in elemental harmony,  
And my insurgent sorrow finds release  
In dreams of peace.

But silent, gray,  
Out of the curtained haze,  
Across the bay  
Two fierce destroyers glide with bows  
a-foam  
And predatory gaze,  
Like cormorants that seek a submerged prey.  
An angel of destruction guards the door  
And keeps the peace of our ancestral home;  
Freedom to dream, to work, and to adore,  
These vagrant days, nights of untroubled  
breath,  
Are bought with death.

1914 TO 1918

DIED OF HIS WOUNDS.

Death set his mark and left a mangled thing,  
With palsied limbs no science could restore,  
To weary out the weeks or months or years,  
Amidst the tumult of a mother's tears  
Behind the sick-room door,  
Where tender skill and subtle knowledge  
bring  
Brief respite only from the ultimate  
Decree of fate.

Then, like the flowers we planted in his  
room,  
Bud after bud we watched his soul unfold;  
Each delicate bloom  
Of alabaster, violet, and gold  
Struggled to light,  
Drawing its vital breath  
Within the pallid atmosphere of death.

That valiant spirit has not passed away,  
But lives and grows  
Within us, as a penetrating ray  
Of sunshine on a crystal surface glows  
With many-hued refraction. He has fled  
Into the unknown silence of the night,  
But cannot die till human hearts are dead.



1914 TO 1918

EPIPHANY.

No starry candles lit this festal time,  
And round our Twelfth Night table there  
    was none  
Who did not mourn a husband, brother, son  
Gone in his prime;  
Not with the customary pomp of death,  
With sick-bed ritual and with flickering  
    breath,  
But like the blossom of tempestuous May,  
In one night swept away;  
And of its radiance no memorial seen  
Beyond the empty place where it had been.

So we stand sorrow-laden at the feast,  
Where wisdom knelt in homage to a Child,  
And three world-weary pilgrims from the  
    East  
Laid at His feet  
Gold, and a healing balm, and odours sweet.  
We too must bring our offering, pay the  
    price  
To gain the goal of sacramental peace  
Where doubts dissolve, insurgent longings  
    cease,  
And sorrow is sublimed in sacrifice.



1914 TO 1918

TO COURAGE, SEATED.

We wandered through the chill autumnal  
Park,  
And spoke of courage and the youthful dead,  
And how the boldest spirit may be cowed  
By indiscriminate terror. Overhead,  
The moon rode high on her predestined arc,  
Steadfast through tidal waves of sombre  
cloud.  
Like vast antennæ, search-lights swept the  
sky,  
When, suddenly, as if in swift reply,  
Out of the south, with jets of luminous  
smoke,  
And coughing clatter, hidden guns awoke.

And we fell silent at the thought of death.  
We were too old to leap with panting breath  
Into the turmoil of the bloody strife,  
And dance upon the razor-edge of life  
To fame or to oblivion. We must wait  
Like senators of old, with folded hands,  
In silence, seated, for the stroke of Fate.  
One boon alone an ardent soul demands,  
To die before its passion waxes cold,  
Enthusiasm fails, or Love grows old.

1914 TO 1918

ELAN VITAL.

All things that live and grow are full of  
hope.

The slender primrose on the woodland  
slope,

Tangled and overgrown,

Unfolds its crumpled florets one by one

To seek the sun;

The snow-bound crocus thrusts an amber  
cone

Through frozen earth; even the fallen elm

Fringes with tender green its ancient bole.

But Death exacts a toll

From Beauty, Courage, innocent Desire,

And tempests overwhelm

The fruit-tree blossom, trampled in the mire,

Sweet harbinger of unfulfilled delight.

When terror keeps the watches of the night

And childhood's faith is gone,

And passion spent,

We stagger to our feet and stumble on

In pain, in sorrow and bewilderment

Impelled to hope by man's instinctive soul.



1914 TO 1918

PEGASUS.

The wind is still; from far and wide the air  
Resounds with Sabbath bells, calling to  
    prayer,  
And from the vast, unfathomable blue  
Hums a propeller's penetrating drone.  
We stand enchanted, and our eyes pursue  
An aeroplane, that climbs the summer sky  
To drift alone  
On mountainous clouds of ever-virgin snow,  
Suspended like a black-winged dragon-fly,  
That turning gleams,  
Dove-gray and silver in the morning beams;  
Or like a dead leaf, loosened from a height,  
Spins in its perilous flight.  
We catch our breath like children at a show,  
Of martial music and heroic deeds,  
On every glittering incident intent,  
Forgetting for a time terrestrial creeds  
For joy that man now rides the firmament.



SONGS OF LA MOUCHE



### "LA MOUCHE."

Elise K——, or, as she preferred to be called in later life, "Camille Selden," was born in Saxony in 1829. She was adopted in infancy by a childless married couple, and her foster parents emigrated to Paris whilst she was still young.

In August, 1847, her foster father went to America to found a business, and she accompanied him as far as Havre. On the return journey from Havre to Paris, she travelled with Alfred Meissner, the Austrian poet and play-wright, then a young man forced to travel abroad for a time by the political unrest in Bohemia. The day after this encounter Meissner left Paris for Germany, and knew his fellow traveller by the name of "Margot" only.

In 1849, Meissner was again in Paris. One April morning, whilst sitting in his



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

hotel, he was surprised by a visit from "Margot," who, hearing he had returned, obtained his address from a bookseller. This meeting was the forerunner of a number of excursions in and around Paris. But "Margot" his friend still remained, and she forbade him to enquire who she was and whence she came. This friendship was ended in May by Meissner's journey to England.

In July of the same year when walking down Regent Street, he saw two ladies alight from a carriage in front of a jeweller's shop. In spite of her changed surroundings, he fancied the younger must be "Margot," and rushing forward through the crowd impetuously greeted her by her pet name—the only name he knew. She "regretted that Monsieur had made a mistake as she had not the pleasure of knowing him."

Then followed "Camille Selden's" unhappy marriage to a Frenchman who ran through her money, and shut her up in a lunatic asylum. She was, however, speedily released, and shortly afterwards obtained a separation from her husband.

In 1855 she was living in Paris with her mother, supporting herself by teaching. Heine had always been one of her heroes, and a chance commission gave her the



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

opportunity of calling upon him in the Avenue Matignon. He was entirely confined to his bed by the disease that ultimately proved fatal, and found pleasure in her brightness and in the activity of her mind. He begged her to repeat her visits, and under the name of "La Mouche," she acted as his secretary, companion, and translator of his poems into French.

This association was only broken in June, 1855, by a journey to the Black Forest, undertaken on account of her health. After her return in July, her visits to Heine were of almost daily occurrence, in spite of the jealousy of his wife, "Frau Mathilde," who saw the place she had voluntarily resigned in her daily search for pleasure, filled by another.

After Heine's death, on February 17th, 1856, Meissner was sent to Paris by the publishers, to save, if possible, Heine's papers from the destructive activity of his wife. Whilst engaged upon this work, he again met his "Margot," whose identity with Heine's "Mouche" he had not suspected. She took him to her home, poured out before him the letters and poems sent to her by the poet, and permitted him to publish some of them in his memoir of Heine.



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

"Camille Selden" then disappeared from history until 1885, when she published "Les derniers Jours de Henri Heine," as a monument of their friendship.

She died in 1896, at Rouen, where she had long been teaching.

**PART I.**

**ALFRED MEISSNER.**





## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *The Journey from Havre.*

We raced through midsummer weather—  
A dust cloud danced in the heat—  
Through a country of gardens and  
orchards  
And patches of simmering wheat.

You spoke of the chances that made you  
An exile in foreign lands,  
Of life and death and hereafter—  
But gazed on my slender hands.

"Thrones totter and empires crumble,  
The times are in a whirl"—  
And then your thoughts went wandering  
In the tangle of a curl.

But when it came to parting,  
You were dumb, for you dared not  
speak  
A wish that was born of the dimple  
That nestles in either cheek.

The dingy lamplight flickered,  
But a silver midsummer moon  
Smiled through the dusky branches  
On the joy of an unasked boon.

*Paris, August, 1847.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Masqueraders.*

Life is but a masquerade—  
You must choose some well-worn part,  
Play, and be for playing paid,  
Take your money and depart.

Yet the spangled Harlequin,  
Agile dandy full of jest,  
Hides beneath a cloak of sin  
The mystic's heart within his breast.

Columbine with flaunting frills  
Makes an all-devoted wife;  
Gigantic hidden laughter fills  
The fur-robed Doctor's solemn life.

And the slippered Pantaloon  
Suffers from a broken heart,  
Sings his sorrows to the moon,  
Tender lyrics, full of art.

So beneath each daily task  
Life flows on, a hidden stream—  
Every wise man wears a mask,  
Only fools are what they seem.

*Paris, April, 1849,*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *In the Garden of the Luxembourg.*

My idle hours of spring  
Beneath the chestnut trees  
Float on like clouds that string  
White streamers to the breeze.

Each thought that upward floats  
Its wanton course doth take,  
Wind-tossed like baby boats  
Upon a mimic lake.

My spirit leaps and bounds,  
Propelled by childish joy,  
And merrily resounds  
With laugh of girl and boy.

Come where the chestnut trees  
Their new-found shadows fling,  
Cast care away and seize  
The idle hours of spring.

*Paris, Spring, 1849.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

*Watteauesque.*

There he stands, in exquisite array,  
    Bending forward with half-opened lips,  
Wondering if perchance he dare to pay  
    Homage to her rosy finger tips.

She is gay with every tender grace,  
    Artificial, admirably vain—  
And the smile on her averted face  
    Fills his shallow heart with jealous pain.

Overhead the pearly storm clouds brood;  
    To the twang of lute and mandolin,  
She must be fantastically wooed,  
    Prelude to a love he cannot win.

Hand in hand we'll dance a little while,  
    As they danced a hundred years ago;  
Then you 'll ask my favour—I shall smile,  
    And our separate journeys we will go.

*Paris, Spring, 1849.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Sur la Rive Gauche.*

My heart is full of music,  
For the world is a-dance to-day,  
And my feet go tripping, tripping  
To the melody of May.

The hum of a stirring city  
Comes pulsing up and down,  
Wind borne across the river  
The cadence of the town.

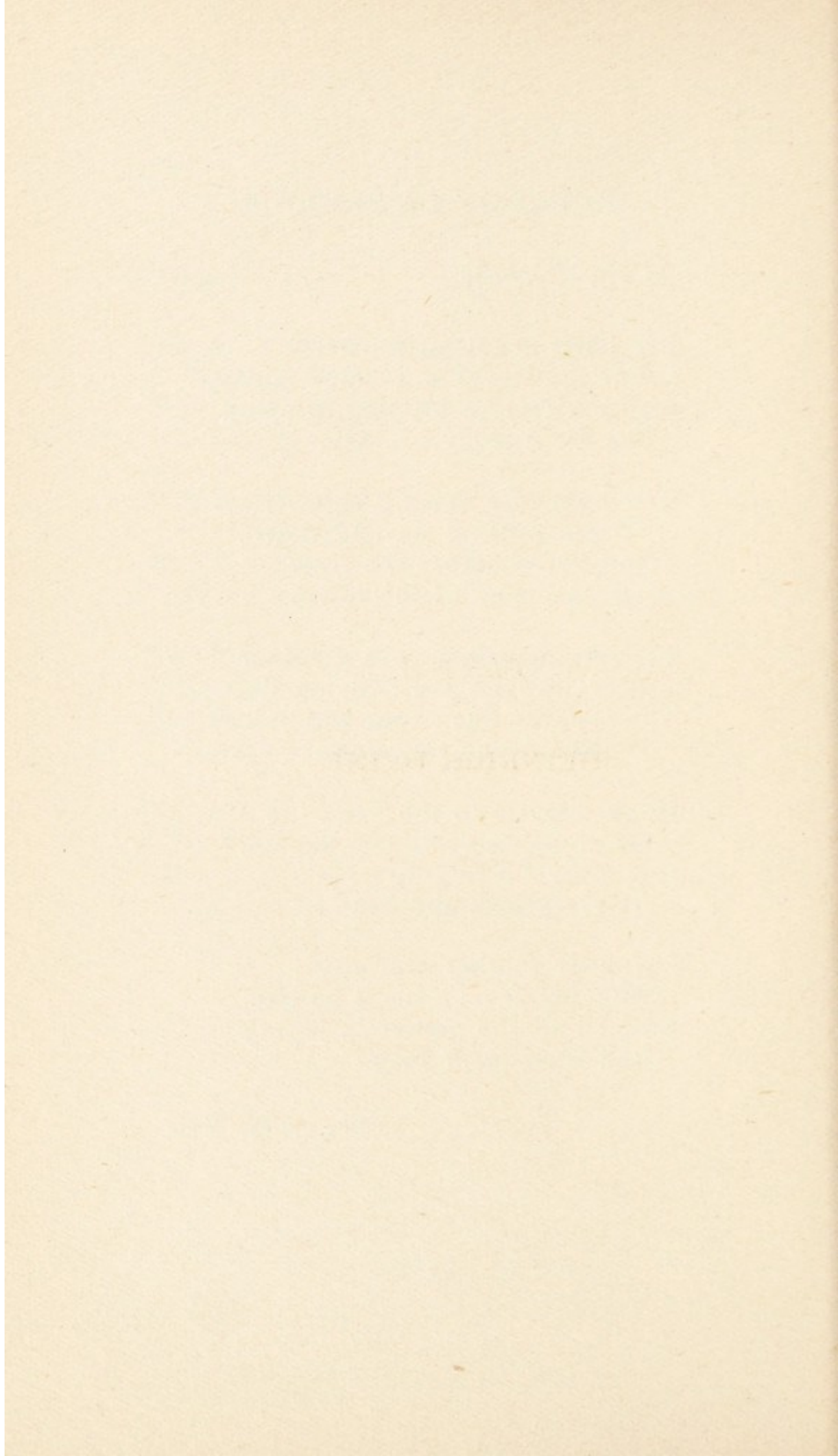
And sturdy plane-trees glimmer  
Grey through the eddyding dust—  
Their leaves like paper windmills  
Whirl in each tiny gust.

Bright ripples in the sunshine  
Go waltzing down the stream,  
And gaily set to corners  
At every balk and beam.

I wonder waiting, waiting,  
Will my lover's heart be gay,  
Attuned to the generous piping  
And melody of May.

*Paris, Spring, 1849.*





PART II.

HEINRICH HEINE.





## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *The New Spring.*

A March wind whirls and eddies  
In gusts of rain and sleet,  
I stand at my lonely window  
And gaze on the empty street.

In a lull of the boisterous whirlwind  
Floats upward from afar  
A thin metallic tinkle,  
The twang of a guitar.

The dreamy warmth of girlhood  
Comes back to me again,  
And my fingers are idly beating  
Time on the window-pane.

*Paris, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

Mother of Heaven, I pray thee  
Hear but this prayer of mine,  
And my scoffing lover shall worship  
Each Sunday at thy shrine.

Let him rise again and stand upright,  
Heal thou his hideous pain:  
Let him see the leaves in the spring-time,  
The sweet earth after rain.

Perhaps his sins are so many  
Thou wilt not make him whole;  
Grant only that on crutches  
He may come, to save his soul.

For thy great fame 'twere better  
He were not healed outright:  
For then no shrine he'd visit,  
But royster through the night.

*Paris, April, 1855.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

My tender ways and laughter  
Have gained me lovers twain.  
I flouted the one, but the other  
I bitterly love again.

One loved me for my great virtue;  
I was sweet, and pure, and good.  
He worshipped in me incarnate,  
Mysterious womanhood.

To the other my soul lies open—  
I never could play my part—  
He thinks that virtue's scarcely  
The thing I've most at heart.

*Paris, May, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Fantasy.*

The Poplars on the highway,  
Court ladies all a-row,  
Bowed whispering "May good fortune  
Attend the way you go."

I left my home in the sunshine,  
I rode in a coach and four,  
But now with the world behind me,  
I creep to my father's door.

And the Poplars in the night-wind  
Rock groaning to and fro,  
They hiss like village gossips,  
"'Tis right the world should know."

*Germany, June, 1855.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *The Post.*

Hark! a distant post-horn winding  
Underneath the purple hills,  
Sets my languid pulses racing  
Like the tumbling mountain-rills.

See, the slow post-carriage crawling  
Like a little yellow toy,  
Cracking whip, and three white horses  
Fill my silly heart with joy.

Hark! I hear the post-bells jangle,  
And the drum of clattering hoofs  
Comes to me in windy snatches  
Up above the pointed roofs.

See, it halts before the post-house;  
And the message that it brings,  
Stirs within me depths of gladness,  
And the flutter of Love's wings.

*The Black Forest, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

Last night the summer thunder  
Lashed the dark wood with rain:  
I lie at ease and wonder,  
It is so still again.

The silver rain-drops glitter  
And patter to the ground:  
Birds call and chirp and twitter,  
A happy distant sound.

Now we sleep far asunder,  
And I lie here alone  
So peacefully, I wonder  
How calm my love has grown.

*The Black Forest, 1855.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Home-coming.*

Where men of every nation  
Go up and down the Rhine,  
Within Cologne Cathedral  
Three wise men have a shrine.

League upon league in the darkness,  
By the light of a shining star,  
To seek their soul's salvation,  
They journey'd from afar.

But when they turned them homeward,  
No star was then in sight,  
Deep in each heart lay treasured  
The memory of its light.

By the light of your love I have  
travelled,  
Till I 'm weary and sick and sore,  
But I dread my lonely journey,  
When that star will shine no more.

*Cologne, July, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

August is blazing through the dingy win-  
dow;  
Splotches of sunlight on carpet, wall and  
ceiling,  
Glow through the sickroom, its tawdry and  
dust-stained  
    Meanness revealing.

Silent he dreams, stretched out upon a  
mattress  
With eyelids closed and waxen hands to-  
gether,  
Dreams, and a youth again, bids death  
defiance.  
    Midsummer weather

Glimmers through rifts in the canopied  
pinetops,  
Glints on the brown stream that tumbles  
and races  
To join a blue river, and lights up its  
flowery,  
    Precipitous places.

Grasshoppers whirr, and the resinous carpet  
Springs at his tread, as once more with arms  
swinging,  
Free and exultant he climbs the dark hill-  
tops,  
    Splendidly singing.

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

With a sigh he awakes; from a neighbouring  
casement  
Pours a piano's impudent jangle:  
Down in the courtyard a man and a woman  
Bitterly wrangle.

*Paris, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *East and West.*

Twilight has veiled the East in sundown  
grey,

And the dun wold  
Stretches in one unbroken sheet away  
To climb the sky: a rich autumnal day  
Dies colourless and cold.

Grey silent poplars, straight as grenadiers,  
Guard the King's way—  
A long white streak that winds and dis-  
appears  
Into the darkness, far from hopes and fears  
And joyless play.

Though all the East seems full of quiet  
prayer,  
The west wind flings  
In upward gusts the frolic of a fair,  
A tinkling dissonance and murky glare  
Of booths and swings.

*Paris, September, 1855.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Lullaby.*

A child in the dark,  
I am frightened and cold,  
But the sound of your voice  
Turns the shadows to gold.

At your tender rebuke  
My night-terrors cease;  
I lay me down gently,  
Relaxed, and at peace.

The soft words you croon  
Are a sovereign charm;  
As a child in its cot  
I am happy and warm.

*Paris, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

You dominate my lightest thought,  
Even in words that I was taught  
Nightly to pray I seem to hear  
The long-drawn chuckle of your sneer.

And when I lay me down in bed,  
Your words go trooping through my head,  
Your kisses on my body burn  
And hot with shame I toss and turn.

You kiss my hands, you kiss my hair,  
And when I cry in my despair,  
"God save me from so fierce a bane,"  
I hear your voice in mine again.

Where'er I go, what'er I do,  
I suffer for my thoughts of you;  
Must my tormented senses pay  
The price of pity night and day?

*Paris, 1855.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

When each morning I awaken,  
Conscience cries, "Go not again";  
Every night I boldly answer,  
'Tis to ease a heart in pain.

"Little fool, he cannot want thee"—  
That may be, but still I'll go;  
For a lark is gaily singing  
In my heart once dumb with woe.

*Paris, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Frau Mathilde's Parrot.*

Up five long flights my poet lies,  
Inch by inch his body dies;  
No ray of sunshine lights the gloom  
Within that solitary room;  
No loving hands upon him wait,  
He lies alone from dawn till late;  
Each groan of pain, each lonely sigh  
Is answered by a parrot's cry.

There, when the winter's fitful light  
Faded with on-coming night,  
His loneliness would find relief  
In taunting my too timid grief;  
With song and story grave and gay  
He 'd chase his gloomy ghosts away—  
With many a bitter jest defy  
The world's malignant parrot-cry.

But when to quiet my despair  
At some rude word, he smoothed my  
    hair,  
And stooped to kiss my faded cheek,  
All the thoughts I dared not speak  
Surged in a tempestuous tide  
Of wayward tears—I could not hide  
The love I 'd striven to deny,  
And shivered at that parrot's cry.

*Paris, 1855.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

When I am old it may be I shall sit,  
The sober guardian of a merry throng,  
Where one will praise your passion, one  
your wit,  
And one the flood of your melodious  
song.

Some tender maid will then about me fling  
Soft arms, and nestling, whisper in my ear,  
"He is my poet, for he knows each thing  
My lover loves to say and I to hear."

But I shall silent sit, with downcast eyes,  
Intent upon my toil, with lips compressed,  
Fearing lest she, by love grown overwise,  
Divine the kindred tumult in my breast.

*Paris, 1855.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

My love welled up in a dry and desolate  
land,  
A hidden spring that trickled away unseen,  
Revealed alone by blossoming bowers that  
stand,  
Where no blossoms had been.

But my tiny spring is swollen by summer  
rain  
To an open flood, and the stagnant pools  
are filled  
With eddying joy from a torrent that races  
to gain  
The sea, and be stilled.

Flowerets quicken, sweet birds with melody  
wake  
The silent valley and slopes of the echoing  
hills,  
For over the thirsty meadows fresh waters  
break  
In a thousand rills.

So joy sprang up from a tempest of way-  
ward tears,  
And my lonely life is gay with awakening  
song:  
Open and unashamed my love appears  
Careless and strong.

*Paris, 1856.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

Thin rain drifts across the pavement;  
Love confessed  
Burns, an intermittent fever,  
In my breast.  
Hours of joy bring nights of sorrow:  
I am very tired—to-morrow  
Let me rest.

Will the weariness and aching  
Never cease?  
Shall I never from my hunger  
Gain release?  
Grant to-night I may be taken,  
Sleep and nevermore awaken,  
Sleep in peace.

*Paris, February, 1856.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

I heard them say, "He died last night,"  
Paused on the threshold, drawn and white,  
Entered that dear familiar room;  
Two candles on the curtained gloom  
Cast orange light.

Beside his bed, in my wonted chair  
I took my place; but he lay there,  
Stiff and straight from head to feet,  
Half revealed through a winding sheet,  
In the heavy air.

No petulant greeting, no sombre jest,  
Silent, his hands crossed over his breast,  
He lay, the carven monument  
Of a warrior, whose last bolt is spent,  
Taking his rest.

Majestic in death's stern array,  
Wrapped in a passionless calm he lay—  
A stranger usurping my lover's place—  
I could not weep, but covered his face  
And went my way.

*February 17th, 1856.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

My soul revolves in helpless grief,  
Alone, a prey to pain,  
In quivering silence I am scourged  
Back to my fault again.

For as a harassed mother waits,  
Nor hastens to her baby's bed,  
Neglecting his familiar wail,  
And coming, finds her infant dead,

So I, who tarried at Love's call,  
Must bear that bitter sting,  
And at the last his spirit found  
My love a faithless thing.

*February 18th, 1856.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

Yesterday to the grave they silently bore  
him,  
Chanting no lament of the children of Zion,  
Mass, nor prayer, nor word of farewell  
greeting  
Said they at parting.

I, alone, his passionate servant unbidden,  
Dare not veil my face nor cry for pity,  
Dare not creep for a moment aside to  
bewail him,  
Shaken with sorrow.

But, when the twilight thickens, with lamp  
unlighted,  
Aching I lie on my lonely bed in the  
darkness,  
Prone and swept by gusts of familiar  
weeping,  
Toss until day-dawn.

*February 21st, 1856.*

## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Anniversary.*

I dreamt I through a cemetery went,  
Where lay the dead it seemed so hard to  
lose,  
And by each tombstone, mound and monu-  
ment,  
Stood a down-trodden, dust-stained pair  
of shoes.

And one beside me whispered, "Do not  
weep,  
They but await the call that must begin  
Another day; each body here doth sleep  
Throughout the night, as at a quiet Inn.

"Though many fell asleep with tired eyes,  
Stained by the dust on life's malodorous  
way,  
With that new dawn each traveller will arise,  
Cleansed and refreshed to face another  
day."

*February 17th, 1857.*



## SONGS OF LA MOUCHE

### *Envoy.*

At length beside the stagnant quay,  
Like some tall ship to harbour brought,  
The sport of a tempestuous sea,  
I wait my end; nor care I aught  
Whate'er it be.

For Time his mouldering havoc plays,  
And Duty stiffens roving wings,  
The sluggish peace of measured days,  
Like sodden weed about me clings.

But when the dying year grows cold,  
Old wounds reopen; once again  
I face the stormy days of old,  
When persecution, sorrow and pain  
Were lined with gold.

Steering a half-remembered course,  
My vagrant fancy tacks and veers,  
Swung by an unknown current's force,  
Deflected by forgotten fears.

And drifting on, I find no clue  
To my strange life's disordered plan;  
Were storms so fierce? was heaven so  
blue?  
Now all is grey, I wonder can  
My tale be true?

*Rouen, 1885.*

SEEDTIME AND  
HARVEST



THE END OF THE WORLD

Is the beginning of the end  
The end of the world  
So we must be ready  
For the end of the world

For the end of the world  
Is the beginning of the end  
The end of the world  
So we must be ready

Who now weeps at the end of the world  
Must weep at the end of the world  
The end of the world  
So we must be ready

The end of the world  
Is the beginning of the end  
The end of the world  
So we must be ready  
The end of the world  
Is the beginning of the end  
The end of the world  
So we must be ready

## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

In the beginning God created man,  
Perfect in all things, Lord of land and sea:  
So close the creature to Creator ran,  
It seemed a form to ape divinity.

From Adam's side a rib He therefore took,  
And making woman halved that form  
divine:  
Who now would on God's perfect image  
look  
Must every grace of man and maid  
combine.

The severed halves of man's once perfect  
soul,  
Dwelling apart, their wailing never cease  
Till they be joined in one primeval whole,  
And in reunion find eternal peace.



## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

Above the Church, above the clock,  
The haughty gilded weathercock  
Swings upon a towering steeple,  
Beacon to a lowland people.

Facing windward, there it stands,  
And overlooks the windswept lands,  
But cannot watch the seaward gale  
Strike the peaceful flapping sail.

To every wind it crows in scorn,  
"I can tell where you were born:"  
The tiniest breeze can secret keep  
Where he lays him down to sleep.

Am I destined to remain  
An ever veering weather-vane,  
Swung by all the winds that blow,  
Whither I can never know?

## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

I am loved by little children:  
Happy girl and laughing boy  
Cast their tender arms around me,  
Clamorous with joy.

Baby waking out of slumber  
To a solitary land  
Gathers open-eyed contentment  
From my out-stretched hand.

On my arm, he stills his sorrow,  
At my breast his wailings cease:  
To be loved by little children  
Brings me hope and peace.



## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

When the copse is grey with bud,  
And spring is surging in my blood,  
Year by year beneath the hill  
I sought a simple for my ill.

Blushing at a word o'erbold,  
Praying when the world seemed cold,  
Loveliest of flowers to me  
Was the wood anemone.

On simple homely cares intent,  
A spring of passive self-content  
Led me where among the kine  
Gleams the golden celandine.

Yellow primroses that vie  
With the dawn tints of the sky;  
Violets with a joyous sense  
Of hidden, scented opulence;

Palm that on a leafless tree  
Flowers foretelling Calvary,  
Each has caught a fleeting mood  
Of my budding womanhood.

Doomed a maid to dwell apart,  
Within my solitary heart,  
When bitter milk-streams upward surge,  
I go to pluck the woodland spurge.

## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

Long ago I used to pray  
To be loved and to be wooed,  
Spotlessly as maidens may,  
Ignorant of motherhood.

Now I am to woman grown,  
Love seems but an idle mood,  
For I hear in every tone  
Overtures to motherhood.

And I lie and pray to thee,  
Mary Virgin, pure and good,  
Thou canst calm the raging sea,  
Still my cry for motherhood.

Grant my breasts may yield reply  
To an infant's cry for food;  
May his dimpled fingers lie  
On those springs of motherhood.

I would brave the hideous pain  
Of thy death-watch by the rood,  
If by sorrow I could gain  
That fierce joy of motherhood.



## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

Within my arms my lord becomes a little  
child,  
And softly as a nurseling babe on mother's  
breast  
Lays on my shoulder his dear head, and  
sinks to rest  
With limbs relaxed, in my embrace to sleep  
beguiled.

With equal breath my bosom rocks his  
cradled head,  
My pulses learn in true accord with joy to  
beat.  
Straight grow the sombre winding ways,  
and at my feet  
My narrow path with starry flowers like  
heaven is spread.

And I who am so little worth, so poor and  
weak,  
Alone about the source of life my watch  
can keep,  
Hold in my arms the labouring world  
subdued to sleep,  
As in the hollow of my hand I hold his  
cheek.

## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

No longer, when the cold and sterile moon  
Paces her virgin watch across the sky,  
Calling the hours of life's long afternoon,  
Must I from out the deep in answer cry.  
With rhythmic tides she swept the fore-  
shoreland,  
Whereon I often set my heart's desire,  
Leaving a barren strip of watery sand,  
A mirror for the moon's chaste silver fire.  
For I have built a barrier 'gainst the sea:  
No more the moon-swept tide my fruit  
devours;  
The seed is set, and in security,  
I watch the silent passage of life's hours.  
May that sea-wall till harvest-time  
abide,  
Steadfast against the ever restless  
tide.



## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

To her there came at dawn, as she lay still,  
A sense of moth-wings fluttering in the dark;  
Then the swift stroke of the imprisoned lark,  
Beating his lowly cage; whereat a thrill  
Shot through her members, and as clouds  
distil

In heavy drops, unloaded by a spark,  
She wept for joy, though she must now  
embark

Upon that lonely journey fraught with ill.

Yet never word she spake to him that lay  
Beside her: but her carriage was so proud,  
Her secret became plain, as it may be  
A child reveals some hidden joy in play:  
She bore herself as if she were endowed  
A tabernacle for some mystery.

## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

The first fruits of a pregnant soul's increase  
Like little flames of newly-kindled fire  
Lie on life's threshold nearest unto death;  
And her life ebbs till she encompasseth  
The tender offspring of fulfilled desire  
And sinks into impenetrable peace.

Sleep, my darling, naught can harm thee,  
May no sudden fear alarm thee,  
Let my singing rock thy slumber,  
Baby, sleep!

Once within a lowly manger,  
Mary hid our Lord from danger:  
Soft and silent swings thy cradle,  
Baby, sleep!

God shall hold thee in His keeping,  
Angel-wings about thee sleeping,  
Sleep, my darling, Lord and master,  
Baby, sleep!



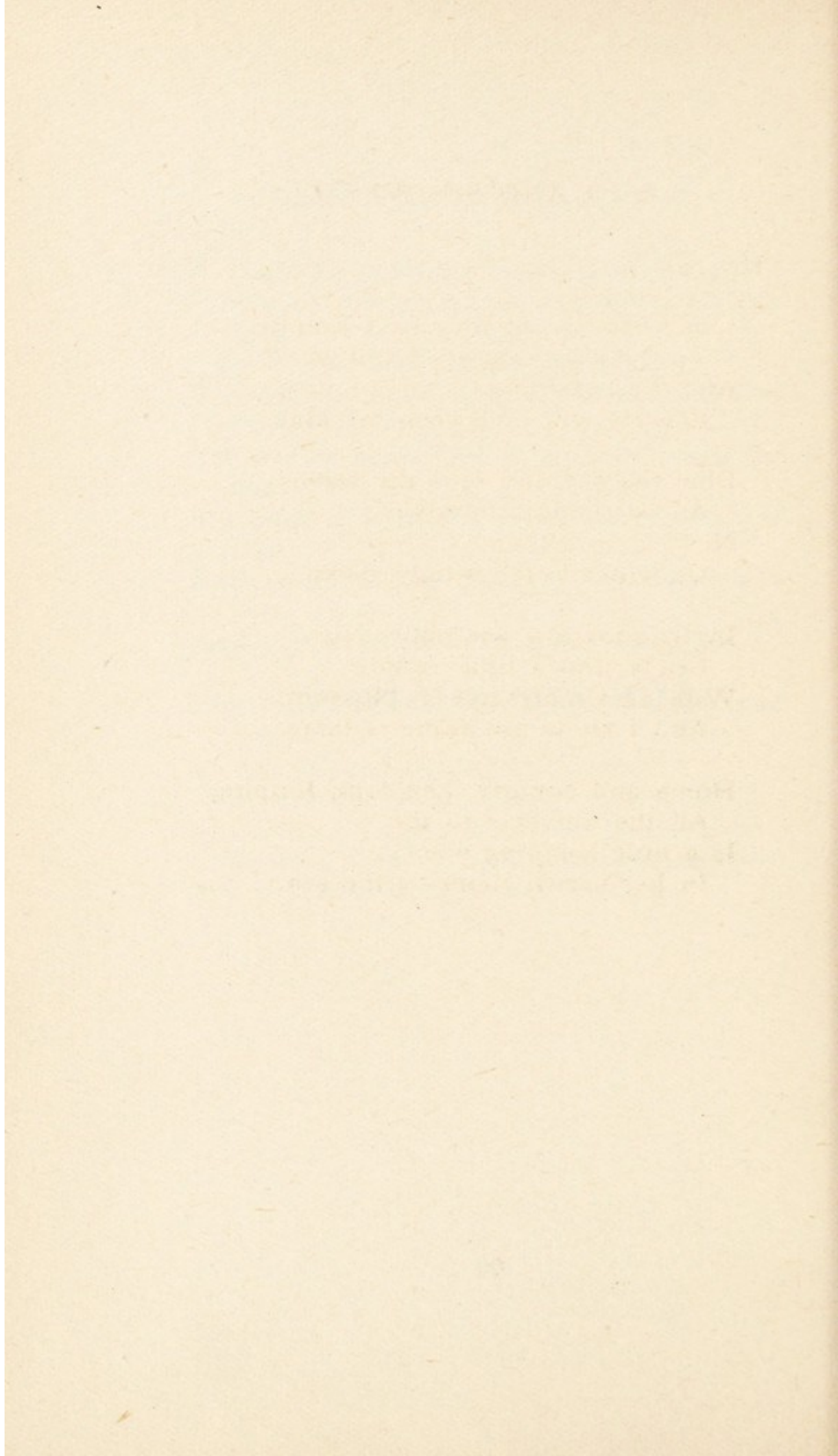
## SEEDTIME AND HARVEST.

A sparkling coldness in the morning air  
Proclaims the death of summer; without  
fear,  
I greet this herald of the dying year,  
Whose icy breath cries; "Winter comes!  
Prepare!"  
Let winter come; for though the wold be  
bare,  
My corn is garnered: now the leaves are  
sere,  
Each orchard-twigh droops with its russet  
tear,  
And I greet winter with a harvest prayer.

The restless hopes of spring have dropped  
away  
In fruitful generation, and desire  
Died with the virgin petals' snowy fall,  
But many a fruitful hour and glorious day  
Close soul to soul, beside the evening fire,  
We celebrate with harvest festival.

## SUN AND SHOWER





## SUN AND SHOWER

He . . .

I have wandered round an Empire  
To the kingdom whence it grew,  
And the coast-line of my country  
Flashes white between the blue.

Blue the sky and blue the water,  
And a ruddy little town  
Nestles in a sunny hollow  
Underneath the windy down.

In that town a winding alley  
Leads into a little square  
With an almond-tree in blossom,  
And I know my home is there.

Home and country, kingdom, Empire,  
All the universe to me  
Is a little laughing woman  
In her brown room by the sea.



## SUN AND SHOWER

She . . .

In my copse a blackbird whistles,  
Whistles like a saucy boy:  
Rain-drops glitter in the sunshine—  
Sorrow turned to joy.

Rain and sun have swelled my lilacs,  
Golden leaf and purple flower,  
And my longing turns to you-ward  
Set by sun and shower.

Come, my lilacs are in blossom,  
Come, and to my dwelling bring  
Joy that makes the happy blackbird  
Harbinger of Spring.

## SUN AND SHOWER

He . . .

About an upland meadow  
A vagrant cuckoo cried;  
From far below came stealing  
The whisper of the tide;  
And my words had died away,  
I watched you as you lay  
With your hands among the cowslips  
In the idle month of May.

Low down upon the housetops  
A dusky orange moon  
Glowes at the heart of Midnight  
Through the purple haze of June.  
As my dreams go sailing by,  
I kiss you as you lie  
With your hands among the cowslips,  
And I hear the Cuckoo cry.



## SUN AND SHOWER

She . . .

Grey flowed the river, high up in the sky  
Flocculent clouds hung silver-grey:  
Cool and clean the wind went by  
With a scent of spring, when you and I  
    Made holiday.

You found an inn where the river's bow  
Encloses a garden of sandy weeds;  
And a ferryman's boat plies to and fro  
From bank to bank, and kingcups glow  
    In the yellow reeds.

We climbed the wood to an open space  
And looked on a valley clothed in green,  
With a poplar fringe of orange lace;  
No drifting shadow marred the face  
    Of that happy scene.

We watched the horizontal light  
Of the sunset silver each shallow pool—  
And wondered, at home in the city that  
    night  
Was ever a day of rich delight  
    So calm and cool.

## SUN AND SHOWER

He . . .

Last night there came a dream that it was  
day,  
Day, where tall houses shut the darkness in,  
Where noise and tumult at the dawn begin,  
And with the dawn all peace has passed  
away.

Half dreaming I awoke and could regain  
No sunlit memory of our resting-place,  
No vision of your happy up-turned face,  
Rippling like meadow-grass before the rain.

Then through my bedroom window poured  
the sun,  
A lark sang, and a soft wind from the south  
Stirring the leaves, and salt upon my mouth,  
Told me our golden day had scarce begun.



## SUN AND SHOWER

She . . .

Would you might bear me away!  
You, my companion and friend!  
Into a land where the day  
No parting could end!

There with no thought but of you  
Softly the white hours would pass,  
Fresh as the dawn with the dew  
On the untrodden grass.

Never a thought would I hide,  
And, when night covered the land,  
You would draw close to my side,  
And perhaps touch my hand.

## SUN AND SHOWER

He . . .

I rode in gathering twilight,  
Through mist and wind and rain,  
By valley and by hill-side,  
Across the darkening plain.

Almost despair had caught me,  
And courage in me died,  
When you, it seemed, Beloved,  
Rode onward at my side.

The full moon to the eastward  
Swept from a cloudy screen,  
Whitened the rain-swept meadows,  
Glittered on summer-green.

About the water-courses,  
The mist in cloudlets streamed,  
Like nymphs from out a fountain,  
And silver elders gleamed.

With joyfulness and wonder,  
My feet grew light as air,  
My wheels were winged, and gaily  
I sped, for you were there.



## SUN AND SHOWER

She . . .

Deep within me springs a fountain,  
Leaping upward to the sunlight,  
At the sport of little breezes  
Rudely scattered.

Dearest, all my veering sorrows  
In your warmth are turned to beauty,  
And the clear spring of my longing  
Sobbing gently,

Ever constant, gay or tearful,  
Breaks to dewdrops in the sunshine,  
Falling back into my bosom,  
Rainbow tinted.

## SUN AND SHOWER

He . . .

Deep runs a silent music  
Through my laborious days:  
I set your name, Beloved,  
To a hundred thousand lays.

The clang of a distant organ  
At the corner leaps and falls.  
I go my way rejoicing,  
In the love that it recalls.

Through the din of many journeys  
A song within me peals,  
To a running bass of the rattle,  
The endless roar of wheels.



## SUN AND SHOWER

She . . .

High upon the hill you slumber;  
I sit watching by your side,  
Coloured figures without number,  
Through the checkered lowland glide.

Far off in a shallow runnel,  
Silently the brown trains pass,  
Slip to earth within the tunnel,  
Like a blind-worm in the grass.

Down the white road by the river  
Like a hawk a quick wheel skims,  
And the darting sunbeams quiver,  
Flashing from its silver rims.

Far from trouble you are sleeping,  
New-created to arise:  
Watch beside you I am keeping,  
Calm as Eve in Paradise.

## SUN AND SHOWER

He . . .

Hid from sight of pasture lands,  
Behind the Church a yew-tree stands,  
Banished from the cheerful fields,  
For the deadly fruit it yields.

Year by year it waxes tall,  
Hemmed within the Church-yard wall;  
For the Church must ever keep  
Poisoned fruit from silly sheep.

Without a knot its branches grow,  
Each to form a yeoman's bow,  
Evergreen and never old,  
For they spring from churchyard mould.

A solitary from the throng,  
I fashion weapons for the strong:  
But every thought within my head  
Has its roots among the dead.



## SUN AND SHOWER

She . . .

Willows are white as a breath upon silver  
    Beneath a dark sky:  
On a grey waste of waters the promise of  
    summer  
    Floats eddying by.

And the nest that we built in the grass by  
    the river,  
    The home of our dream,  
Far from men, where we sang through the  
    soft summer weather  
    Lies under the stream.

Come quickly, the night will bring silence  
    and darkness  
    To cover my tears  
And stars will shine brighter above the dark  
    waters  
    And shadowy weirs.

## SUN AND SHOWER

He . . .

I gallop, I gallop along,  
To save you from death or from shame.  
The burden and lilt of my song,  
Beloved, you cried and I came.

Why trouble to find the world's way?  
As I gallop, I gallop along;  
One look in your eyes will repay  
The whispers and jeers of the throng.

Do I hurry to save you from wrong?  
From the claws of some treacherous  
beast?

Or gallop and gallop along,  
The one bidden guest at your feast?

To the rhythm of galloping feet,  
Urgent, pulsating and strong,  
My heart sets your name to the beat,  
As I gallop, I gallop along.



## SUN AND SHOWER

She . . .

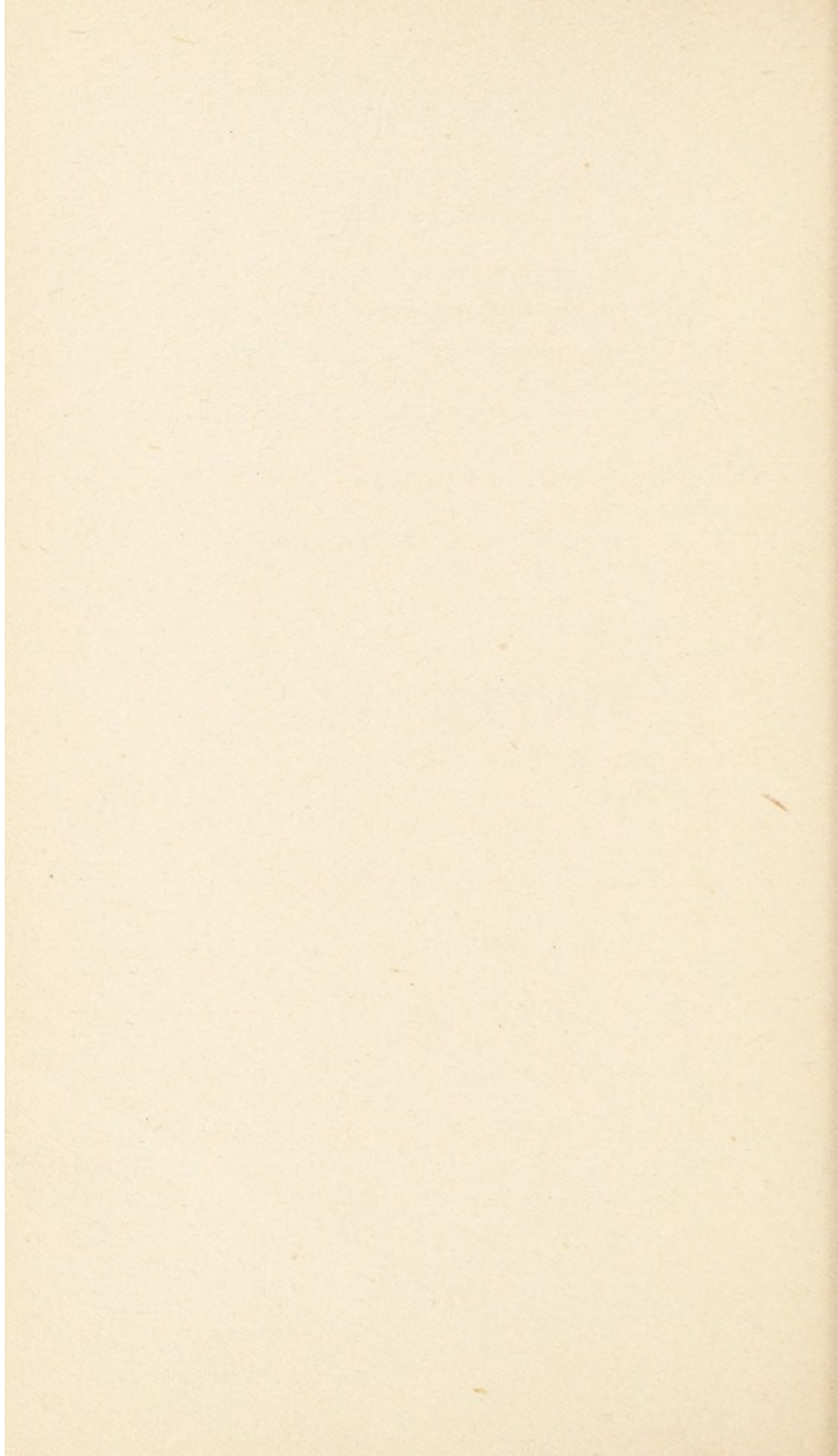
A wood-fire bright and candle-light  
Cast golden shadows on the gloom.  
You came, my dear, and with you fear  
Fled from the corners of my room.

My sad heart swells with gladness: bells  
Ring peace to earth and mercy mild  
On Christmas-Eve, and I believe  
With rapture like a little child.

So year by year for you, my dear,  
I set my radiant Christmas-tree,  
Tall, green and straight to celebrate  
My little love's nativity.

SPRING DEATH





## SPRING DEATH.

*IN MEMORY OF J. W.,  
who died on Active Service, 1901*

I will bear forth my sorrow to the sun,  
For dumb and cold I sit at home with grief.  
Eddies of spring-tide through the dark limbs  
run

Of this foul city, over park and square  
Ripple in golden leaf.  
Each solitary tree, once dank and bare,  
Poised in a fluttering skirt of gauzy green,  
Whirls to the rhythm of awakening earth;  
Through murky lane and highway throbs a  
clean  
Bass note of birth.

The chestnut spreads her fingers to the  
breeze,  
Adorned with perfumed candles for the  
feast.  
Once more the little murmurs haunt the  
trees,  
And all that buds has cast the pall of sleep.  
From grimy bonds released,  
Over the churchyard paling, lilacs peep,  
Each golden leaflet quick with gentle rain,  
And all the world that once was tired and  
old,  
Decked out with new desires, grows young  
again,  
Lilac and gold.



## SPRING DEATH

But death has stripped me bare of all desire:  
An outcast from earth's generous festival,  
I go to warm me by the altar fire,  
Whereat we worshipped. Happy little  
    shrine—

Soft garlands on the wall,  
The music and the laughter and the wine,  
Talk, like a fountain pulsing to the blue,  
To fall in rainbow droplets on the grass,  
Warm human joys—they shall my heart  
    renew,  
They cannot pass.

What shadow haunts that dear familiar room  
And, like a night-bird poised on silent wing,  
Hovers upon the violet-scented gloom?  
Our instruments of joy lie untouched there  
And, scarcely whispering,  
We say not what we would but all we dare,  
Quelling the tumult of forbidden tears;  
No more to wander with the roving throng,  
Bowed by resentment for remembered  
    years—  
Our years of song.

Together through the blue transparent  
    nights,  
Together through the hum of London  
    streets,  
Our path was like a garden gay with lights,  
Tall lilies among tulips gold and red;

## SPRING DEATH

Where with insistent beats  
Love called, and all the world a-trysting  
    sped.  
Beneath the whispering plane-trees passion  
    burned,  
Glowed like illumined green in every breast,  
Then piping happy songs we homeward  
    turned,  
Turned home to rest.

Over the housetop climbs a cowslip moon,  
To join the expectant company of stars,  
New-risen—And I little care how soon  
My feet turn homeward by familiar ways.  
No fellowship unbars  
That narrow dwelling, where the measured  
    days  
Pass, and leave naught to show that they  
    are fled.  
I am grown weary, and to me alone  
Love pipes a foolish tune, for thou art dead,  
And youth is gone.

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