A Dome of Many-Coloured Glass

by Amy Lowell

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A DOME OF MANY-COLOURED GLASS

by Amy Lowell

[American (Massachusetts) poet and critic — 1874-1925.]

[This etext has been transcribed from the 3rd printing (1916), of the 1912 (original) edition.]

"Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, Stains the white radiance of Eternity." Shelley, "Adonais".

"Le silence est si grand que mon coeur en frissonne, Seul, le bruit de mes pas sur le pave resonne." Albert Samain.

CONTENTS

LYRICAL POEMS

Before the Altar

Suggested by the Cover of a Volume of Keats's Poems

Apples of Hesperides

Azure and Gold

Petals

Venetian Glass

Fatigue

A Japanese Wood-Carving

A Little Song

Behind a Wall

A Winter Ride

A Coloured Print by Shokei

Song

The Fool Errant

The Green Bowl

Hora Stellatrix

Fragment

Loon Point

Summer

"To-morrow to Fresh Woods and Pastures New"

The Way

Diya {original title is Greek, Delta-iota-psi-alpha}

Roads

Teatro Bambino. Dublin, N. H.

The Road to Avignon

New York at Night

A Fairy Tale

Crowned

To Elizabeth Ward Perkins

The Promise of the Morning Star

J—K. Huysmans

March Evening

SONNETS

Leisure

On Carpaccio's Picture: The Dream of St. Ursula

The Matrix

Monadnock in Early Spring

The Little Garden

To an Early Daffodil

Listening

The Lamp of Life

Hero-Worship

In Darkness

Before Dawn

The Poet

At Night

The Fruit Garden Path

Mirage

To a Friend

A Fixed Idea

Dreams

Frankincense and Myrrh

From One Who Stays

Crepuscule du Matin

Aftermath

The End

The Starling

Market Day

Epitaph in a Church-Yard in Charleston, South Carolina

Francis II, King of Naples

To John Keats

THE BOSTON ATHENAEUM

VERSES FOR CHILDREN

Sea Shell

Fringed Gentians

The Painted Ceiling

The Crescent Moon

Climbing

The Trout

Wind

The Pleiades

LYRICAL POEMS

Before the Altar

Before the Altar, bowed, he stands With empty hands; Upon it perfumed offerings burn Wreathing with smoke the sacrificial urn. Not one of all these has he given, No flame of his has leapt to Heaven Firesouled, vermilion-hearted, Forked, and darted, Consuming what a few spare pence Have cheaply bought, to fling from hence In idly-asked petition. His sole condition Love and poverty. And while the moon Swings slow across the sky, Athwart a waving pine tree, And soon Tips all the needles there With silver sparkles, bitterly He gazes, while his soul Grows hard with thinking of the poorness of his dole. "Shining and distant Goddess, hear my prayer Where you swim in the high air! With charity look down on me, Under this tree, Tending the gifts I have not brought, The rare and goodly things I have not sought. Instead, take from me all my life! "Upon the wings Of shimmering moonbeams I pack my poet's dreams For you. My wearying strife, My courage, my loss, Into the night I toss For you. Golden Divinity, Deign to look down on me Who so unworthily Offers to you: All life has known, Seeds withered unsown, Hopes turning quick to fears, Laughter which dies in tears. The shredded remnant of a man

Is all the span And compass of my offering to you. "Empty and silent, I Kneel before your pure, calm majesty. On this stone, in this urn I pour my heart and watch it burn, Myself the sacrifice; but be Still unmoved: Divinity." From the altar, bathed in moonlight, The smoke rose straight in the quiet night.

Suggested by the Cover of a Volume of Keats's Poems

Wild little bird, who chose thee for a sign To put upon the cover of this book? Who heard thee singing in the distance dim, The vague, far greenness of the enshrouding wood, When the damp freshness of the morning earth Was full of pungent sweetness and thy song? Who followed over moss and twisted roots, And pushed through the wet leaves of trailing vines Where slanting sunbeams gleamed uncertainly, While ever clearer came the dropping notes, Until, at last, two widening trunks disclosed Thee singing on a spray of branching beech, Hidden, then seen; and always that same song Of joyful sweetness, rapture incarnate, Filled the hushed, rustling stillness of the wood? We do not know what bird thou art. Perhaps That fairy bird, fabled in island tale, Who never sings but once, and then his song Is of such fearful beauty that he dies From sheer exuberance of melody. For this they took thee, little bird, for this They captured thee, tilting among the leaves, And stamped thee for a symbol on this book. For it contains a song surpassing thine, Richer, more sweet, more poignant. And the poet Who felt this burning beauty, and whose heart Was full of loveliest things, sang all he knew A little while, and then he died; too frail To bear this untamed, passionate burst of song.

Apples of Hesperides

Glinting golden through the trees, Apples of Hesperides! Through the moon-pierced warp of night Shoot pale shafts of yellow light, Swaying to the kissing breeze Swings the treasure, golden-gleaming, Apples of Hesperides! Far and lofty yet they

glimmer, Apples of Hesperides! Blinded by their radiant shimmer, Pushing forward just for these; Dew-besprinkled, bramble-marred, Poor duped mortal, travel-scarred, Always thinking soon to seize And possess the golden-glistening Apples of Hesperides! Orbed, and glittering, and pendent, Apples of Hesperides! Not one missing, still transcendent, Clustering like a swarm of bees. Yielding to no man's desire, Glowing with a saffron fire, Splendid, unassailed, the golden Apples of Hesperides!

Azure and Gold

April had covered the hills With flickering yellows and reds, The sparkle and coolness of snow Was blown from the mountain beds. Across a deep-sunken stream The pink of blossoming trees, And from windless appleblooms The humming of many bees. The air was of rose and gold Arabesqued with the song of birds Who, swinging unseen under leaves, Made music more eager than words. Of a sudden, aslant the road, A brightness to dazzle and stun, A glint of the bluest blue, A flash from a sapphire sun. Blue-birds so blue, 't was a dream, An impossible, unconceived hue, The high sky of summer dropped down Some rapturous ocean to woo. Such a colour, such infinite light! The heart of a fabulous gem, Many-faceted, brilliant and rare. Centre Stone of the earth's diadem! . . . . . Centre Stone of the Crown of the World, "Sincerity" graved on your youth! And your eyes hold the blue-bird flash, The sapphire shaft, which is truth.

Petals

Life is a stream On which we strew Petal by petal the flower of our heart; The end lost in dream, They float past our view, We only watch their glad, early start. Freighted with hope, Crimsoned with joy, We scatter the leaves of our opening rose; Their widening scope, Their distant employ, We never shall know. And the stream

as it flows Sweeps them away, Each one is gone Ever beyond into infinite ways. We alone stay While years hurry on, The flower fared forth, though its fragrance still stays.

Venetian Glass

As one who sails upon a wide, blue sea Far out of sight of land, his mind intent Upon the sailing of his little boat, On tightening ropes and shaping fair his course, Hears suddenly, across the restless sea, The rhythmic striking of some towered clock, And wakes from thoughtless idleness to time: Time, the slow pulse which beats eternity! So through the vacancy of busy life At intervals you cross my path and bring The deep solemnity of passing years. For you I have shed bitter tears, for you I have relinquished that for which my heart Cried out in selfish longing. And to-night Having just left you, I can say: "'T is well. Thank God that I have known a soul so true, So nobly just, so worthy to be loved!"

Fatigue

Stupefy my heart to every day's monotony, Seal up my eyes, I would not look so far, Chasten my steps to peaceful regularity, Bow down my head lest I behold a star. Fill my days with work, a thousand calm necessities Leaving no moment to consecrate to hope, Girdle my thoughts within the dull circumferences Of facts which form the actual in one short hour's scope. Give me dreamless sleep, and loose night's power over me, Shut my ears to sounds only tumultuous then, Bid Fancy slumber, and steal away its potency, Or Nature wakes and strives to live again. Let each day pass, well ordered in its usefulness, Unlit by sunshine, unscarred by storm; Dower me with strength and curb all foolish eagerness — The law exacts obedience. Instruct, I will conform.

A Japanese Wood-Carving

High up above the open, welcoming door It hangs, a piece of wood with colours dim. Once, long ago, it was a waving tree And knew the sun and shadow through the leaves Of forest trees, in a thick eastern wood. The winter snows had bent its branches down, The spring had swelled its buds with coming flowers, Summer had run like fire through its veins, While autumn pelted it with chestnut burrs, And strewed the leafy ground with acorn cups. Dark midnight storms had roared and crashed among Its branches, breaking here and there a limb; But every now and then broad sunlit days Lovingly lingered, caught among the leaves. Yes, it had known all this, and yet to us It does not speak of mossy forest ways, Of whispering pine trees or the shimmering birch; But of quick winds, and the salt, stinging sea! An artist once, with patient, careful knife, Had fashioned it like to the untamed sea. Here waves uprear themselves, their tops blown back By the gay, sunny wind, which whips the blue And breaks it into gleams and sparks of light. Among the flashing waves are two white birds Which swoop, and soar, and scream for very joy At the wild sport. Now diving quickly in, Questing some glistening fish. Now flying up, Their dripping feathers shining in the sun, While the wet drops like little glints of light, Fall pattering backward to the parent sea. Gliding along the green and foam-flecked hollows, Or skimming some white crest about to break, The spirits of the sky deigning to stoop And play with ocean in a summer mood. Hanging above the high, wide open door, It brings to us in quiet, firelit room, The freedom of the earth's vast solitudes, Where heaping, sunny waves tumble and roll, And seabirds scream in wanton happiness.

A Little Song

When you, my Dear, are away, away, How wearily goes the creeping day. A year drags after morning, and night Starts another year of candle light. O Pausing Sun

and Lingering Moon! Grant me, I beg of you, this boon. Whirl round the earth as never sun Has his diurnal journey run. And, Moon, slip past the ladders of air In a single flash, while your streaming hair Catches the stars and pulls them down To shine on some slumbering Chinese town. O Kindly Sun! Understanding Moon! Bring evening to crowd the footsteps of noon. But when that long awaited day Hangs ripe in the heavens, your voyaging stay. Be morning, O Sun! with the lark in song, Be afternoon for ages long. And, Moon, let you and your lesser lights Watch over a century of nights.

Behind a Wall

I own a solace shut within my heart, A garden full of many a quaint delight And warm with drowsy, poppied sunshine; bright, Flaming with lilies out of whose cups dart Shining things With powdered wings. Here terrace sinks to terrace, arbors close The ends of dreaming paths; a wanton wind Jostles the half-ripe pears, and then, unkind, Tumbles a-slumber in a pillar rose, With content Grown indolent. By night my garden is o'erhung with gems Fixed in an onyx setting. Fireflies Flicker their lanterns in my dazzled eyes. In serried rows I guess the straight, stiff stems Of hollyhocks Against the rocks. So far and still it is that, listening, I hear the flowers talking in the dawn; And where a sunken basin cuts the lawn, Cinctured with iris, pale and glistening, The sudden swish Of a waking fish.

A Winter Ride

Who shall declare the joy of the running! Who shall tell of the pleasures of flight! Springing and spurning the tufts of wild heather, Sweeping, wide-winged, through the blue dome of light. Everything mortal has moments immortal, Swift and God-gifted, immeasurably bright. So with the stretch of the white road before me, Shining snowcrystals rainbowed by the sun, Fields that are white, stained with long,

cool, blue shadows, Strong with the strength of my horse as we run. Joy in the touch of the wind and the sunlight! Joy! With the vigorous earth I am one.

A Coloured Print by Shokei

It winds along the face of a cliff This path which I long to explore, And over it dashes a waterfall, And the air is full of the roar And the thunderous voice of waters which sweep In a silver torrent over some steep. It clears the path with a mighty bound And tumbles below and away, And the trees and the bushes which grow in the rocks Are wet with its jewelled spray; The air is misty and heavy with sound, And small, wet wildflowers star the ground. Oh! The dampness is very good to smell, And the path is soft to tread, And beyond the fall it winds up and on, While little streamlets thread Their own meandering way down the hill Each singing its own little song, until I forget that 't is only a pictured path, And I hear the water and wind, And look through the mist, and strain my eyes To see what there is behind; For it must lead to a happy land, This little path by a waterfall spanned.

Song

Oh! To be a flower Nodding in the sun, Bending, then upspringing As the breezes run; Holding up A scent-brimmed cup, Full of summer's fragrance to the summer sun. Oh! To be a butterfly Still, upon a flower, Winking with its painted wings, Happy in the hour. Blossoms hold Mines of gold Deep within the farthest heart of each chaliced flower. Oh! To be a cloud Blowing through the blue, Shadowing the mountains, Rushing loudly through Valleys deep Where torrents keep Always their plunging thunder and their misty arch of blue. Oh! To be a wave Splintering on the sand, Drawing back, but leaving Lingeringly the land. Rainbow light Flashes bright Telling tales of coral caves half hid in yellow sand. Soon they die, the flowers; Insects live a day; Clouds dissolve in showers; Only waves at play Last forever.

Shall endeavor Make a sea of purpose mightier than we dream to-day?

The Fool Errant

The Fool Errant sat by the highway of life And his gaze wandered up and his gaze wandered down, A vigorous youth, but with no wish to walk, Yet his longing was great for the distant town. He whistled a little frivolous tune Which he felt to be pulsing with ecstasy, For he thought that success always followed desire, Such a very superlative fool was he. A maiden came by on an ambling mule, Her gown was rose-red and her kerchief blue, On her lap she carried a basket of eggs. Thought the fool, "There is certainly room for two." So he jauntily swaggered towards the maid And put out his hand to the bridle-rein. "My pretty girl," quoth the fool, "take me up, For to ride with you to the town I am fain." But the maiden struck at his upraised arm And pelted him hotly with eggs, a score. The mule, lashed into a fury, ran; The fool went back to his stone and swore. Then out of the cloud of settling dust The burly form of an abbot appeared, Reading his office he rode to the town. And the fool got up, for his heart was cheered. He stood in the midst of the long, white road And swept off his cap till it touched the ground. "Ah, Reverent Sir, well met," said the fool, "A worthier transport never was found. "I pray you allow me to mount with you, Your palfrey seems both sturdy and young." The abbot looked up from the holy book And cried out in anger, "Hold your tongue! "How dare you obstruct the King's highroad, You saucy varlet, get out of my way." Then he gave the fool a cut with his whip And leaving him smarting, he rode away. The fool was angry, the fool was sore, And he cursed the folly of monks and maids. "If I could but meet with a man," sighed the fool, "For a woman fears, and a friar upbraids." Then he saw a flashing of distant steel And the clanking of harness greeted his ears, And up the road journeyed knights-at-arms, With waving plumes and glittering spears. The fool took notice and slowly arose, Not quite so sure was his foolish heart. If priests and women would

none of him Was it likely a knight would take his part? They sang as they rode, these lusty boys, When one chanced to turn toward the highway's side, "There's a sorry figure of fun," jested he, "Well, Sirrah! move back, there is scarce room to ride." "Good Sirs, Kind Sirs," begged the crestfallen fool, "I pray of your courtesy speech with you, I'm for yonder town, and have no horse to ride, Have you never a charger will carry two?" Then the company halted and laughed out loud. "Was such a request ever made to a knight?" "And where are your legs," asked one, "if you start, You may be inside the town gates to-night." "'T is a lazy fellow, let him alone, They've no room in the town for such idlers as he." But one bent from his saddle and said, "My man, Art thou not ashamed to beg charity! "Thou art well set up, and thy legs are strong, But it much misgives me lest thou'rt a fool; For beggars get only a beggar's crust, Wise men are reared in a different school." Then they clattered away in the dust and the wind, And the fool slunk back to his lonely stone; He began to see that the man who asks Must likewise give and not ask alone. Purple tree-shadows crept over the road, The level sun flung an orange light, And the fool laid his head on the hard, gray stone And wept as he realized advancing night. A great, round moon rose over a hill And the steady wind blew yet more cool; And crouched on a stone a wayfarer sobbed, For at last he knew he was only a fool.

The Green Bowl

This little bowl is like a mossy pool In a Spring wood, where dogtooth violets grow Nodding in chequered sunshine of the trees; A quiet place, still, with the sound of birds, Where, though unseen, is heard the endless song And murmur of the never resting sea. 'T was winter, Roger, when you made this cup, But coming Spring guided your eager hand And round the edge you fashioned young green leaves, A proper chalice made to hold the shy And little flowers of the woods. And here They will forget their sad uprooting, lost In pleasure that this circle of bright leaves

Should be their setting; once more they will dream They hear winds wandering through lofty trees And see the sun smiling between the leaves.

Hora Stellatrix

The stars hang thick in the apple tree, The south wind smells of the pungent sea, Gold tulip cups are heavy with dew. The night's for you, Sweetheart, for you! Starfire rains from the vaulted blue. Listen! The dancing of unseen leaves. A drowsy swallow stirs in the eaves. Only a maiden is sorrowing. 'T is night and spring, Sweetheart, and spring! Starfire lights your heart's blossoming. In the intimate dark there's never an ear, Though the tulips stand on tiptoe to hear, So give; ripe fruit must shrivel or fall. As you are mine, Sweetheart, give all! Starfire sparkles, your coronal.

Fragment

What is poetry? Is it a mosaic Of coloured stones which curiously are wrought Into a pattern? Rather glass that's taught By patient labor any hue to take And glowing with a sumptuous splendor, make Beauty a thing of awe; where sunbeams caught, Transmuted fall in sheafs of rainbows fraught With storied meaning for religion's sake.

Loon Point

Softly the water ripples Against the canoe's curving side, Softly the birch trees rustle Flinging over us branches wide. Softly the moon glints and glistens As the water takes and leaves, Like golden ears of corn Which fall from loose-bound sheaves, Or like the snow-white petals Which drop from an overblown rose, When Summer ripens to Autumn And the freighted year must close. From the shore come the scents

of a garden, And between a gap in the trees A proud white statue glimmers In cold, disdainful ease. The child of a southern people, The thought of an alien race, What does she in this pale, northern garden, How reconcile it with her grace? But the moon in her wayward beauty Is ever and always the same, As lovely as when upon Latmos She watched till Endymion came. Through the water the moon writes her legends In light, on the smooth, wet sand; They endure for a moment, and vanish, And no one may understand. All round us the secret of Nature Is telling itself to our sight, We may guess at her meaning but never Can know the full mystery of night. But her power of enchantment is on us, We bow to the spell which she weaves, Made up of the murmur of waves And the manifold whisper of leaves.

Summer

Some men there are who find in nature all Their inspiration, hers the sympathy Which spurs them on to any great endeavor, To them the fields and woods are closest friends, And they hold dear communion with the hills; The voice of waters soothes them with its fall, And the great winds bring healing in their sound. To them a city is a prison house Where pent up human forces labour and strive, Where beauty dwells not, driven forth by man; But where in winter they must live until Summer gives back the spaces of the hills. To me it is not so. I love the earth And all the gifts of her so lavish hand: Sunshine and flowers, rivers and rushing winds, Thick branches swaying in a winter storm, And moonlight playing in a boat's wide wake; But more than these, and much, ah, how much more, I love the very human heart of man. Above me spreads the hot, blue mid-day sky, Far down the hillside lies the sleeping lake Lazily reflecting back the sun, And scarcely ruffled by the little breeze Which wanders idly through the nodding ferns. The blue crest of the distant mountain, tops The green crest of the hill on which I sit; And it is summer, glorious, deep-toned summer, The very crown of nature's changing year When all her surging

life is at its full. To me alone it is a time of pause, A void and silent space between two worlds, When inspiration lags, and feeling sleeps, Gathering strength for efforts yet to come. For life alone is creator of life, And closest contact with the human world Is like a lantern shining in the night To light me to a knowledge of myself. I love the vivid life of winter months In constant intercourse with human minds, When every new experience is gain And on all sides we feel the great world's heart; The pulse and throb of life which makes us men!

"To-morrow to Fresh Woods and Pastures New"

As for a moment he stands, in hardy masculine beauty, Poised on the fircrested rock, over the pool which below him Gleams in the wavering sunlight, waiting the shock of his plunging. So for a moment I stand, my feet planted firm in the present, Eagerly scanning the future which is so soon to possess me.

The Way

At first a mere thread of a footpath half blotted out by the grasses Sweeping triumphant across it, it wound between hedges of roses Whose blossoms were poised above leaves as pond lilies float on the water, While hidden by bloom in a hawthorn a bird filled the morning with singing. It widened a highway, majestic, stretching ever to distant horizons, Where shadows of tree-branches wavered, vague outlines invaded by sunshine; No sound but the wind as it whispered the secrets of earth to the flowers, And the hum of the yellow bees, honey-laden and dusty with pollen. And Summer said, "Come, follow onward, with no thought save the longing to wander, The wind, and the bees, and the flowers, all singing the great song of Nature, Are minstrels of change and of promise, they herald the joy of the Future." Later the solitude vanished, confused and distracted the road Where many were seeking and jostling. Left behind were the trees and the flowers, The half-realized

beauty of quiet, the sacred unconscious communing. And now he is come to a river, a line of gray, sullen water, Not blue and splashing, but dark, rolling somberly on to the ocean. But on the far side is a city whose windows flame gold in the sunset. It lies fair and shining before him, a gem set betwixt sky and water, And spanning the river a bridge, frail promise to longing desire, Flung by man in his infinite courage, across the stern force of the water; And he looks at the river and fears, the bridge is so slight, yet he ventures His life to its fragile keeping, if it fails the waves will engulf him. O Arches! be strong to uphold him, and bear him across to the city, The beautiful city whose spires still glow with the fires of sunset!

Diya {original title is Greek, Delta-iota-psi-alpha}

Look, Dear, how bright the moonlight is to-night! See where it casts the shadow of that tree Far out upon the grass. And every gust Of light night wind comes laden with the scent Of opening flowers which never bloom by day: Night-scented stocks, and four-o'clocks, and that Pale yellow disk, upreared on its tall stalk, The evening primrose, comrade of the stars. It seems as though the garden which you love Were like a swinging censer, its incense Floating before us as a reverent act To sanctify and bless our night of love. Tell me once more you love me, that 't is you Yes, really you, I touch, so, with my hand; And tell me it is by your own free will That you are here, and that you like to be Just here, with me, under this sailing pine. I need to hear it often for my heart Doubts naturally, and finds it hard to trust. Ah, Dearest, you are good to love me so, And yet I would not have it goodness, rather Excess of selfishness in you to need Me through and through, as flowers need the sun. I wonder can it really be that you And I are here alone, and that the night Is full of hours, and all the world asleep, And none can call to you to come away; For you have given all yourself to me Making me gentle by your willingness. Has your life too been waiting for this time, Not only mine the sharpness of this joy? Dear Heart, I

love you, worship you as though I were a priest before a holy shrine. I'm glad that you are beautiful, although Were you not lovely still I needs must love; But you are all things, it must have been so For otherwise it were not you. Come, close; When you are in the circle of my arm Faith grows a mountain and I take my stand Upon its utmost top. Yes, yes, once more Kiss me, and let me feel you very near Wanting me wholly, even as I want you. Have years behind been dark? Will those to come Bring unguessed sorrows into our two lives? What does it matter, we have had to-night! To-night will make us strong, for we believe Each in the other, this is a sacrament. Beloved, is it true?

Roads

I know a country laced with roads, They join the hills and they span the brooks, They weave like a shuttle between broad fields, And slide discreetly through hidden nooks. They are canopied like a Persian dome And carpeted with orient dyes. They are myriad-voiced, and musical, And scented with happiest memories. O Winding roads that I know so well, Every twist and turn, every hollow and hill! They are set in my heart to a pulsing tune Gay as a honey-bee humming in June. 'T is the rhythmic beat of a horse's feet And the pattering paws of a sheep-dog bitch; 'T is the creaking trees, and the singing breeze, And the rustle of leaves in the road-side ditch. A cow in a meadow shakes her bell And the notes cut sharp through the autumn air, Each chattering brook bears a fleet of leaves Their cargo the rainbow, and just now where The sun splashed bright on the road ahead A startled rabbit quivered and fled. O Uphill roads and roads that dip down! You curl your sun-spattered length along, And your march is beaten into a song By the softly ringing hoofs of a horse And the panting breath of the dogs I love. The pageant of Autumn follows its course And the blue sky of Autumn laughs above. And the song and the country become as one, I see it as music, I hear it as light; Prismatic and

shimmering, trembling to tone, The land of desire, my soul's delight. And always it beats in my listening ears With the gentle thud of a horse's stride, With the swift-falling steps of many dogs, Following, following at my side. O Roads that journey to fairyland! Radiant highways whose vistas gleam, Leading me on, under crimson leaves, To the opaline gates of the Castles of Dream.

Teatro Bambino. Dublin, N. H.

How still it is! Sunshine itself here falls In quiet shafts of light through the high trees Which, arching, make a roof above the walls Changing from sun to shadow as each breeze Lingers a moment, charmed by the strange sight Of an Italian theatre, storied, seer Of vague romance, and time's long history; Where tiers of grass-grown seats sprinkled with white, Sweet-scented clover, form a broken sphere Grouped round the stage in hushed expectancy. What sound is that which echoes through the wood? Is it the reedy note of an oaten pipe? Perchance a minute more will see the brood Of the shaggy forest god, and on his lip Will rest the rushes he is wont to play. His train in woven baskets bear ripe fruit And weave a dance with ropes of gray acorns, So light their touch the grasses scarcely sway As they the measure tread to the lilting flute. Alas! 't is only Fancy thus adorns. A cloud drifts idly over the shining sun. How damp it seems, how silent, still, and strange! Surely 't was here some tragedy was done, And here the chorus sang each coming change? Sure this is deep in some sweet, southern wood, These are not pines, but cypress tall and dark; That is no thrush which sings so rapturously, But the nightingale in his most passionate mood Bursting his little heart with anguish. Hark! The tread of sandalled feet comes noiselessly. The silence almost is a sound, and dreams Take on the semblances of finite things; So potent is the spell that what but seems Elsewhere, is lifted here on Fancy's wings. The little woodland theatre seems to wait, All tremulous with hope and wistful joy, For something that is sure to come at last, Some deep emotion,

satisfying, great. It grows a living presence, bold and shy, Cradling the future in a glorious past.

The Road to Avignon

A Minstrel stands on a marble stair, Blown by the bright wind, debonair; Below lies the sea, a sapphire floor, Above on the terrace a turret door Frames a lady, listless and wan, But fair for the eye to rest upon. The minstrel plucks at his silver strings, And looking up to the lady, sings: — Down the road to Avignon, The long, long road to Avignon, Across the bridge to Avignon, One morning in the spring. The octagon tower casts a shade Cool and gray like a cutlass blade; In sun-baked vines the cicalas spin, The little green lizards run out and in. A sail dips over the ocean's rim, And bubbles rise to the fountain's brim. The minstrel touches his silver strings, And gazing up to the lady, sings: — Down the road to Avignon, The long, long road to Avignon, Across the bridge to Avignon, One morning in the spring. Slowly she walks to the balustrade, Idly notes how the blossoms fade In the sun's caress; then crosses where The shadow shelters a carven chair. Within its curve, supine she lies, And wearily closes her tired eyes. The minstrel beseeches his silver strings, And holding the lady spellbound, sings: — Down the road to Avignon, The long, long road to Avignon, Across the bridge to Avignon, One morning in the spring. Clouds sail over the distant trees, Petals are shaken down by the breeze, They fall on the terrace tiles like snow; The sighing of waves sounds, far below. A humming-bird kisses the lips of a rose Then laden with honey and love he goes. The minstrel woos with his silver strings, And climbing up to the lady, sings: — Down the road to Avignon, The long, long road to Avignon, Across the bridge to Avignon, One morning in the spring. Step by step, and he comes to her, Fearful lest she suddenly stir. Sunshine and silence, and each to each, The lute and his singing their only speech; He leans above her, her eyes unclose, The humming-bird enters another

rose. The minstrel hushes his silver strings. Hark! The beating of humming-birds' wings! Down the road to Avignon, The long, long road to Avignon, Across the bridge to Avignon, One morning in the spring.

New York at Night

A near horizon whose sharp jags Cut brutally into a sky Of leaden heaviness, and crags Of houses lift their masonry Ugly and foul, and chimneys lie And snort, outlined against the gray Of lowhung cloud. I hear the sigh The goaded city gives, not day Nor night can ease her heart, her anguished labours stay. Below, straight streets, monotonous, From north and south, from east and west, Stretch glittering; and luminous Above, one tower tops the rest And holds aloft man's constant quest: Time! Joyless emblem of the greed Of millions, robber of the best Which earth can give, the vulgar creed Has seared upon the night its flaming ruthless screed. O Night! Whose soothing presence brings The quiet shining of the stars. O Night! Whose cloak of darkness clings So intimately close that scars Are hid from our own eyes. Beggars By day, our wealth is having night To burn our souls before altars Dim and tree-shadowed, where the light Is shed from a young moon, mysteriously bright. Where art thou hiding, where thy peace? This is the hour, but thou art not. Will waking tumult never cease? Hast thou thy votary forgot? Nature forsakes this man-begot And festering wilderness, and now The long still hours are here, no jot Of dear communing do I know; Instead the glaring, man-filled city groans below!

A Fairy Tale

On winter nights beside the nursery fire We read the fairy tale, while glowing coals Builded its pictures. There before our eyes We saw the vaulted hall of traceried stone Uprear itself, the distant ceiling hung With pendent stalactites like frozen vines; And all along the walls at intervals, Curled upwards into pillars, roses

climbed, And ramped and were confined, and clustered leaves Divided where there peered a laughing face. The foliage seemed to rustle in the wind, A silent murmur, carved in still, gray stone. High pointed windows pierced the southern wall Whence proud escutcheons flung prismatic fires To stain the tessellated marble floor With pools of red, and quivering green, and blue; And in the shade beyond the further door, Its sober squares of black and white were hid Beneath a restless, shuffling, wide-eyed mob Of lackeys and retainers come to view The Christening. A sudden blare of trumpets, and the throng About the entrance parted as the guests Filed singly in with rare and precious gifts. Our eager fancies noted all they brought, The glorious, unattainable delights! But always there was one unbidden guest Who cursed the child and left it bitterness. The fire falls asunder, all is changed, I am no more a child, and what I see Is not a fairy tale, but life, my life. The gifts are there, the many pleasant things: Health, wealth, long-settled friendships, with a name Which honors all who bear it, and the power Of making words obedient. This is much; But overshadowing all is still the curse, That never shall I be fulfilled by love! Along the parching highroad of the world No other soul shall bear mine company. Always shall I be teased with semblances, With cruel impostures, which I trust awhile Then dash to pieces, as a careless boy Flings a kaleidoscope, which shattering Strews all the ground about with coloured sherds. So I behold my visions on the ground No longer radiant, an ignoble heap Of broken, dusty glass. And so, unlit, Even by hope or faith, my dragging steps Force me forever through the passing days.

Crowned

You came to me bearing bright roses, Red like the wine of your heart; You twisted them into a garland To set me aside from the mart. Red roses to crown me your lover, And I walked aureoled and apart. Enslaved and encircled, I bore it, Proud

token of my gift to you. The petals waned paler, and shriveled, And dropped; and the thorns started through. Bitter thorns to proclaim me your lover, A diadem woven with rue.

To Elizabeth Ward Perkins

Dear Bessie, would my tired rhyme Had force to rise from apathy, And shaking off its lethargy Ring word-tones like a Christmas chime. But in my soul's high belfry, chill The bitter wind of doubt has blown, The summer swallows all have flown, The bells are frost-bound, mute and still. Upon the crumbling boards the snow Has drifted deep, the clappers hang Prismed with icicles, their clang Unheard since ages long ago. The rope I pull is stiff and cold, My straining ears detect no sound Except a sigh, as round and round The wind rocks through the timbers old. Below, I know the church is bright With haloed tapers, warm with prayer; But here I only feel the air Of icy centuries of night. Beneath my feet the snow is lit And gemmed with colours, red, and blue, Topaz, and green, where light falls through The saints that in the windows sit. Here darkness seems a spectred thing, Voiceless and haunting, while the stars Mock with a light of long dead years The ache of present suffering. Silent and winter-killed I stand, No carol hymns my debt to you; But take this frozen thought in lieu, And thaw its music in your hand.

The Promise of the Morning Star

Thou father of the children of my brain By thee engendered in my willing heart, How can I thank thee for this gift of art Poured out so lavishly, and not in vain. What thou created never more can die, Thy fructifying power lives in me And I conceive, knowing it is by thee, Dear other parent of my poetry! For I was but a shadow with a name, Perhaps by now the very name's forgot; So strange is Fate that it has been my lot To learn through thee the presence of that aim Which evermore must guide me.

All unknown, By me unguessed, by thee not even dreamed, A tree has blossomed in a night that seemed Of stubborn, barren wood. For thou hast sown This seed of beauty in a ground of truth. Humbly I dedicate myself, and yet I tremble with a sudden fear to set New music ringing through my fading youth.

J—K. Huysmans

A flickering glimmer through a window-pane, A dim red glare through mud bespattered glass, Cleaving a path between blown walls of sleet Across uneven pavements sunk in slime To scatter and then quench itself in mist. And struggling, slipping, often rudely hurled Against the jutting angle of a wall, And cursed, and reeled against, and flung aside By drunken brawlers as they shuffled past, A man was groping to what seemed a light. His eyelids burnt and quivered with the strain Of looking, and against his temples beat The all enshrouding, suffocating dark. He stumbled, lurched, and struck against a door That opened, and a howl of obscene mirth Grated his senses, wallowing on the floor Lay men, and dogs and women in the dirt. He sickened, loathing it, and as he gazed The candle guttered, flared, and then went out. Through travail of ignoble midnight streets He came at last to shelter in a porch Where gothic saints and warriors made a shield To cover him, and tortured gargoyles spat One long continuous stream of silver rain That clattered down from myriad roofs and spires Into a darkness, loud with rushing sound Of water falling, gurgling as it fell, But always thickly dark. Then as he leaned Unconscious where, the great oak door blew back And cast him, bruised and dripping, in the church. His eyes from long sojourning in the night Were blinded now as by some glorious sun; He slowly crawled toward the altar steps. He could not think, for heavy in his ears An organ boomed majestic harmonies; He only knew that what he saw was light! He bowed himself before a cross of flame And shut his eyes in fear lest it should fade.

March Evening

Blue through the window burns the twilight; Heavy, through trees, blows the warm south wind. Glistening, against the chill, gray sky light, Wet, black branches are barred and entwined. Sodden and spongy, the scarce-green grass plot Dents into pools where a foot has been. Puddles lie spilt in the road a mass, not Of water, but steel, with its cold, hard sheen. Faint fades the fire on the hearth, its embers Scattering wide at a stronger gust. Above, the old weathercock groans, but remembers Creaking, to turn, in its centuried rust. Dying, forlorn, in dreary sorrow, Wrapping the mists round her withering form, Day sinks down; and in darkness to-morrow Travails to birth in the womb of the storm.

SONNETS

Leisure

Leisure, thou goddess of a bygone age, When hours were long and days sufficed to hold Wide-eyed delights and pleasures uncontrolled By shortening moments, when no gaunt presage Of undone duties, modern heritage, Haunted our happy minds; must thou withhold Thy presence from this over-busy world, And bearing silence with thee disengage Our twined fortunes? Deeps of unhewn woods Alone can cherish thee, alone possess Thy quiet, teeming vigor. This our crime: Not to have worshipped, marred by alien moods That sole condition of all loveliness, The dreaming lapse of slow, unmeasured time.

On Carpaccio's Picture: The Dream of St. Ursula

Swept, clean, and still, across the polished floor From some unshuttered casement, hid from sight, The level sunshine slants, its greater light Quenching the little lamp

which pallid, poor, Flickering, unreplenished, at the door Has striven against darkness the long night. Dawn fills the room, and penetrating, bright, The silent sunbeams through the window pour. And she lies sleeping, ignorant of Fate, Enmeshed in listless dreams, her soul not yet Ripened to bear the purport of this day. The morning breeze scarce stirs the coverlet, A shadow falls across the sunlight; wait! A lark is singing as he flies away.

The Matrix

Goaded and harassed in the factory That tears our life up into bits of days Ticked off upon a clock which never stays, Shredding our portion of Eternity, We break away at last, and steal the key Which hides a world empty of hours; ways Of space unroll, and Heaven overlays The leafy, sun-lit earth of Fantasy. Beyond the ilex shadow glares the sun, Scorching against the blue flame of the sky. Brown lily-pads lie heavy and supine Within a granite basin, under one The bronze-gold glimmer of a carp; and I Reach out my hand and pluck a nectarine.

Monadnock in Early Spring

Cloud-topped and splendid, dominating all The little lesser hills which compass thee, Thou standest, bright with April's buoyancy, Yet holding Winter in some shaded wall Of stern, steep rock; and startled by the call Of Spring, thy trees flush with expectancy And cast a cloud of crimson, silently, Above thy snowy crevices where fall Pale shrivelled oak leaves, while the snow beneath Melts at their phantom touch. Another year Is quick with import. Such each year has been. Unmoved thou watchest all, and all bequeath Some jewel to thy diadem of power, Thou pledge of greater majesty unseen.

The Little Garden

A little garden on a bleak hillside Where deep the heavy, dazzling mountain snow Lies far into the spring. The sun's pale glow Is scarcely able to melt patches wide About the single rose bush. All denied Of nature's tender ministries. But no, — For wonder-working faith has made it blow With flowers many hued and starry-eyed. Here sleeps the sun long, idle summer hours; Here butterflies and bees fare far to rove Amid the crumpled leaves of poppy flowers; Here four o'clocks, to the passionate night above Fling whiffs of perfume, like pale incense showers. A little garden, loved with a great love!

To an Early Daffodil

Thou yellow trumpeter of laggard Spring! Thou herald of rich Summer's myriad flowers! The climbing sun with new recovered powers Does warm thee into being, through the ring Of rich, brown earth he woos thee, makes thee fling Thy green shoots up, inheriting the dowers Of bending sky and sudden, sweeping showers, Till ripe and blossoming thou art a thing To make all nature glad, thou art so gay; To fill the lonely with a joy untold; Nodding at every gust of wind to-day, To-morrow jewelled with raindrops. Always bold To stand erect, full in the dazzling play Of April's sun, for thou hast caught his gold.

Listening

'T is you that are the music, not your song. The song is but a door which, opening wide, Lets forth the pent-up melody inside, Your spirit's harmony, which clear and strong Sings but of you. Throughout your whole life long Your songs, your thoughts, your doings, each divide This perfect beauty; waves within a tide, Or single notes amid a glorious throng. The song of earth has many different chords; Ocean has many moods and many tones Yet always ocean. In the damp Spring woods The painted trillium smiles, while crisp pine cones Autumn alone can ripen.

So is this One music with a thousand cadences.

The Lamp of Life

Always we are following a light, Always the light recedes; with groping hands We stretch toward this glory, while the lands We journey through are hidden from our sight Dim and mysterious, folded deep in night, We care not, all our utmost need demands Is but the light, the light! So still it stands Surely our own if we exert our might. Fool! Never can'st thou grasp this fleeting gleam, Its glowing flame would die if it were caught, Its value is that it doth always seem But just a little farther on. Distraught, But lighted ever onward, we are brought Upon our way unknowing, in a dream.

Hero-Worship

A face seen passing in a crowded street, A voice heard singing music, large and free; And from that moment life is changed, and we Become of more heroic temper, meet To freely ask and give, a man complete Radiant because of faith, we dare to be What Nature meant us. Brave idolatry Which can conceive a hero! No deceit, No knowledge taught by unrelenting years, Can quench this fierce, untamable desire. We know that what we long for once achieved Will cease to satisfy. Be still our fears; If what we worship fail us, still the fire Burns on, and it is much to have believed.

In Darkness

Must all of worth be travailled for, and those Life's brightest stars rise from a troubled sea? Must years go by in sad uncertainty Leaving us doubting whose the conquering blows, Are we or Fate the victors? Time which shows All inner

meanings will reveal, but we Shall never know the upshot. Ours to be Wasted with longing, shattered in the throes, The agonies of splendid dreams, which day Dims from our vision, but each night brings back; We strive to hold their grandeur, and essay To be the thing we dream. Sudden we lack The flash of insight, life grows drear and gray, And hour follows hour, nerveless, slack.

Before Dawn

Life! Austere arbiter of each man's fate, By whom he learns that Nature's steadfast laws Are as decrees immutable; O pause Your even forward march! Not yet too late Teach me the needed lesson, when to wait Inactive as a ship when no wind draws To stretch the loosened cordage. One implores Thy clemency, whose wilfulness innate Has gone uncurbed and roughshod while the years Have lengthened into decades; now distressed He knows no rule by which to move or stay, And teased with restlessness and desperate fears He dares not watch in silence thy wise way Bringing about results none could have guessed.

The Poet

What instinct forces man to journey on, Urged by a longing blind but dominant! Nothing he sees can hold him, nothing daunt His never failing eagerness. The sun Setting in splendour every night has won His vassalage; those towers flamboyant Of airy cloudland palaces now haunt His daylight wanderings. Forever done With simple joys and quiet happiness He guards the vision of the sunset sky; Though faint with weariness he must possess Some fragment of the sunset's majesty; He spurns life's human friendships to profess Life's loneliness of dreaming ecstasy.

At Night

The wind is singing through the trees to-night, A deep-voiced song of rushing cadences And crashing intervals. No summer breeze Is this, though hot July is at its height, Gone is her gentler music; with delight She listens to this booming like the seas, These elemental, loud necessities Which call to her to answer their swift might. Above the tossing trees shines down a star, Quietly bright; this wild, tumultuous joy Quickens nor dims its splendour. And my mind, O Star! is filled with your white light, from far, So suffer me this one night to enjoy The freedom of the onward sweeping wind.

The Fruit Garden Path

The path runs straight between the flowering rows, A moonlit path, hemmed in by beds of bloom, Where phlox and marigolds dispute for room With tall, red dahlias and the briar rose. 'T is reckless prodigality which throws Into the night these wafts of rich perfume Which sweep across the garden like a plume. Over the trees a single bright star glows. Dear garden of my childhood, here my years Have run away like little grains of sand; The moments of my life, its hopes and fears Have all found utterance here, where now I stand; My eyes ache with the weight of unshed tears, You are my home, do you not understand?

Mirage

How is it that, being gone, you fill my days, And all the long nights are made glad by thee? No loneliness is this, nor misery, But great content that these should be the ways Whereby the Fancy, dreaming as she strays, Makes bright and present what she would would be. And who shall say if the reality Is not with dreams so pregnant. For delays And hindrances may bar the wished-for end; A thousand misconceptions may prevent Our souls from coming near enough to blend; Let me but think we have the same intent, That each one needs to call the other, "friend!" It may be vain

illusion. I'm content.

To a Friend

I ask but one thing of you, only one, That always you will be my dream of you; That never shall I wake to find untrue All this I have believed and rested on, Forever vanished, like a vision gone Out into the night. Alas, how few There are who strike in us a chord we knew Existed, but so seldom heard its tone We tremble at the half-forgotten sound. The world is full of rude awakenings And heaven-born castles shattered to the ground, Yet still our human longing vainly clings To a belief in beauty through all wrongs. O stay your hand, and leave my heart its songs!

A Fixed Idea

What torture lurks within a single thought When grown too constant, and however kind, However welcome still, the weary mind Aches with its presence. Dull remembrance taught Remembers on unceasingly; unsought The old delight is with us but to find That all recurring joy is pain refined, Become a habit, and we struggle, caught. You lie upon my heart as on a nest, Folded in peace, for you can never know How crushed I am with having you at rest Heavy upon my life. I love you so You bind my freedom from its rightful quest. In mercy lift your drooping wings and go.

Dreams

I do not care to talk to you although Your speech evokes a thousand sympathies, And all my being's silent harmonies Wake trembling into music. When you go It is as if some sudden, dreadful blow Had severed all the strings with savage ease. No, do not talk; but let us rather seize This intimate gift of silence which we know. Others may guess your thoughts from what you say, As storms are guessed from

clouds where darkness broods. To me the very essence of the day Reveals its inner purpose and its moods; As poplars feel the rain and then straightway Reverse their leaves and shimmer through the woods.

Frankincense and Myrrh

My heart is tuned to sorrow, and the strings Vibrate most readily to minor chords, Searching and sad; my mind is stuffed with words Which voice the passion and the ache of things: Illusions beating with their baffled wings Against the walls of circumstance, and hoards Of torn desires, broken joys; records Of all a bruised life's maimed imaginings. Now you are come! You tremble like a star Poised where, behind earth's rim, the sun has set. Your voice has sung across my heart, but numb And mute, I have no tones to answer. Far Within I kneel before you, speechless yet, And life ablaze with beauty, I am dumb.

From One Who Stays

How empty seems the town now you are gone! A wilderness of sad streets, where gaunt walls Hide nothing to desire; sunshine falls Eery, distorted, as it long had shone On white, dead faces tombed in halls of stone. The whir of motors, stricken through with calls Of playing boys, floats up at intervals; But all these noises blur to one long moan. What quest is worth pursuing? And how strange That other men still go accustomed ways! I hate their interest in the things they do. A spectre-horde repeating without change An old routine. Alone I know the days Are still-born, and the world stopped, lacking you.

Crepuscule du Matin

All night I wrestled with a memory Which knocked insurgent at the gates of

thought. The crumbled wreck of years behind has wrought Its disillusion; now I only cry For peace, for power to forget the lie Which hope too long has whispered. So I sought The sleep which would not come, and night was fraught With old emotions weeping silently. I heard your voice again, and knew the things Which you had promised proved an empty vaunt. I felt your clinging hands while night's broad wings Cherished our love in darkness. From the lawn A sudden, quivering birdnote, like a taunt. My arms held nothing but the empty dawn.

Aftermath

I learnt to write to you in happier days, And every letter was a piece I chipped From off my heart, a fragment newly clipped From the mosaic of life; its blues and grays, Its throbbing reds, I gave to earn your praise. To make a pavement for your feet I stripped My soul for you to walk upon, and slipped Beneath your steps to soften all your ways. But now my letters are like blossoms pale We strew upon a grave with hopeless tears. I ask no recompense, I shall not fail Although you do not heed; the long, sad years Still pass, and still I scatter flowers frail, And whisper words of love which no one hears.

The End

Throughout the echoing chambers of my brain I hear your words in mournful cadence toll Like some slow passing-bell which warns the soul Of sundering darkness. Unrelenting, fain To batter down resistance, fall again Stroke after stroke, insistent diastole, The bitter blows of truth, until the whole Is hammered into fact made strangely plain. Where shall I look for comfort? Not to you. Our worlds are drawn apart, our spirit's suns Divided, and the light of mine burnt dim. Now in the haunted twilight I must do Your will. I grasp the cup which over-runs, And with my trembling lips I touch the rim.

The Starling

"'I can't get out', said the starling." Sterne's 'Sentimental Journey'.

Forever the impenetrable wall Of self confines my poor rebellious soul, I never see the towering white clouds roll Before a sturdy wind, save through the small Barred window of my jail. I live a thrall With all my outer life a clipped, square hole, Rectangular; a fraction of a scroll Unwound and winding like a worsted ball. My thoughts are grown uneager and depressed Through being always mine, my fancy's wings Are moulted and the feathers blown away. I weary for desires never guessed, For alien passions, strange imaginings, To be some other person for a day.

Market Day

White, glittering sunlight fills the market square, Spotted and sprigged with shadows. Double rows Of bartering booths spread out their tempting shows Of globed and golden fruit, the morning air Smells sweet with ripeness, on the pavement there A wicker basket gapes and overflows Spilling out cool, blue plums. The market glows, And flaunts, and clatters in its busy care. A stately minster at the northern side Lifts its twin spires to the distant sky, Pinnacled, carved and buttressed; through the wide Arched doorway peals an organ, suddenly — Crashing, triumphant in its pregnant tide, Quenching the square in vibrant harmony.

Epitaph in a Church-Yard in Charleston, South Carolina

GEORGE AUGUSTUS CLOUGH A NATIVE OF LIVERPOOL, DIED SUDDENLY OF "STRANGER'S FEVER" NOV'R 5th 1843 AGED 22

He died of "Stranger's Fever" when his youth Had scarcely melted into manhood, so The chiselled legend runs; a brother's woe Laid bare for epitaph. The savage ruth Of a sunny, bright, but alien land, uncouth With cruel caressing dealt a mortal blow,

And by this summer sea where flowers grow In tropic splendor, witness to the truth Of ineradicable race he lies. The law of duty urged that he should roam, Should sail from fog and chilly airs to skies Clear with deceitful welcome. He had come With proud resolve, but still his lonely eyes Ached with fatigue at never seeing home.

Francis II, King of Naples

Written after reading Trevelyan's "Garibaldi and the making of Italy"

Poor foolish monarch, vacillating, vain, Decaying victim of a race of kings, Swift Destiny shook out her purple wings And caught him in their shadow; not again Could furtive plotting smear another stain Across his tarnished honour. Smoulderings Of sacrificial fires burst their rings And blotted out in smoke his lost domain. Bereft of courtiers, only with his queen, From empty palace down to empty quay. No challenge screamed from hostile carabine. A single vessel waited, shadowy; All night she ploughed her solitary way Beneath the stars, and through a tranquil sea.

To John Keats

Great master! Boyish, sympathetic man! Whose orbed and ripened genius lightly hung From life's slim, twisted tendril and there swung In crimson-sphered completeness; guardian Of crystal portals through whose openings fan The spiced winds which blew when earth was young, Scattering wreaths of stars, as Jove once flung A golden shower from heights cerulean. Crumbled before thy majesty we bow. Forget thy empurpled state, thy panoply Of greatness, and be merciful and near; A youth who trudged the highroad we tread now Singing the miles behind him; so may we Faint throbbings of thy music overhear.

THE BOSTON ATHENAEUM

The Boston Athenaeum

Thou dear and well-loved haunt of happy hours, How often in some distant gallery, Gained by a little painful spiral stair, Far from the halls and corridors where throng The crowd of casual readers, have I passed Long, peaceful hours seated on the floor Of some retired nook, all lined with books, Where reverie and quiet reign supreme! Above, below, on every side, high shelved From careless grasp of transient interest, Stand books we can but dimly see, their charm Much greater that their titles are unread; While on a level with the dusty floor Others are ranged in orderly confusion, And we must stoop in painful posture while We read their names and learn their histories. The little gallery winds round about The middle of a most secluded room, Midway between the ceiling and the floor. A type of those high thoughts, which while we read Hover between the earth and furthest heaven As fancy wills, leaving the printed page; For books but give the theme, our hearts the rest, Enriching simple words with unguessed harmony And overtones of thought we only know. And as we sit long hours quietly, Reading at times, and at times simply dreaming, The very room itself becomes a friend, The confidant of intimate hopes and fears; A place where are engendered pleasant thoughts, And possibilities before unguessed Come to fruition born of sympathy. And as in some gay garden stretched upon A genial southern slope, warmed by the sun, The flowers give their fragrance joyously To the caressing touch of the hot noon; So books give up the all of what they mean Only in a congenial atmosphere, Only when touched by reverent hands, and read By those who love and feel as well as think. For books are more than books, they are the life, The very heart and core of ages past, The reason why men lived, and worked, and died, The essence and quintessence of their lives. And we may know them better, and divine The inner motives whence their actions sprang, Far better than the men who only knew Their bodily presence, the soul forever hid From those with no

ability to see. They wait here quietly for us to come And find them out, and know them for our friends; These men who toiled and wrote only for this, To leave behind such modicum of truth As each perceived and each alone could tell. Silently waiting that from time to time It may be given them to illuminate Dull daily facts with pristine radiance For some long-waited-for affinity Who lingers yet in the deep womb of time. The shifting sun pierces the young green leaves Of elm trees, newly coming into bud, And splashes on the floor and on the books Through old, high, rounded windows, dim with age. The noisy city-sounds of modern life Float softened to us across the old graveyard. The room is filled with a warm, mellow light, No garish colours jar on our content, The books upon the shelves are old and worn. 'T was no belated effort nor attempt To keep abreast with old as well as new That placed them here, tricked in a modern guise, Easily got, and held in light esteem. Our fathers' fathers, slowly and carefully Gathered them, one by one, when they were new And a delighted world received their thoughts Hungrily; while we but love the more, Because they are so old and grown so dear! The backs of tarnished gold, the faded boards, The slightly yellowing page, the strange old type, All speak the fashion of another age; The thoughts peculiar to the man who wrote Arrayed in garb peculiar to the time; As though the idiom of a man were caught Imprisoned in the idiom of a race. A nothing truly, yet a link that binds All ages to their own inheritance, And stretching backward, dim and dimmer still, Is lost in a remote antiquity. Grapes do not come of thorns nor figs of thistles, And even a great poet's divinest thought Is coloured by the world he knows and sees. The little intimate things of every day, The trivial nothings that we think not of, These go to make a part of each man's life; As much a part as do the larger thoughts He takes account of. Nay, the little things Of daily life it is which mold, and shape, And make him apt for noble deeds and true. And as we read some much-loved masterpiece, Read it as long ago the author read, With eyes that brimmed with tears as he saw The message he believed in stamped in type Inviolable for the slow-coming years;

We know a certain subtle sympathy, We seem to clasp his hand across the past, His words become related to the time, He is at one with his own glorious creed And all that in his world was dared and done. The long, still, fruitful hours slip away Shedding their influences as they pass; We know ourselves the richer to have sat Upon this dusty floor and dreamed our dreams. No other place to us were quite the same, No other dreams so potent in their charm, For this is ours! Every twist and turn Of every narrow stair is known and loved; Each nook and cranny is our very own; The dear, old, sleepy place is full of spells For us, by right of long inheritance. The building simply bodies forth a thought Peculiarly inherent to the race. And we, descendants of that elder time, Have learnt to love the very form in which The thought has been embodied to our years. And here we feel that we are not alone, We too are one with our own richest past; And here that veiled, but ever smouldering fire Of race, which rarely seen yet never dies, Springs up afresh and warms us with its heat. And must they take away this treasure house, To us so full of thoughts and memories; To all the world beside a dismal place Lacking in all this modern age requires To tempt along the unfamiliar paths And leafy lanes of old time literatures? It takes some time for moss and vines to grow And warmly cover gaunt and chill stone walls Of stately buildings from the cold North Wind. The lichen of affection takes as long, Or longer, ere it lovingly enfolds A place which since without it were bereft, All stript and bare, shorn of its chiefest grace. For what to us were halls and corridors However large and fitting, if we part With this which is our birthright; if we lose A sentiment profound, unsoundable, Which Time's slow ripening alone can make, And man's blind foolishness so quickly mar.

VERSES FOR CHILDREN

Sea Shell

Sea Shell, Sea Shell, Sing me a song, O Please! A song of ships, and sailor men, And parrots, and tropical trees, Of islands lost in the Spanish Main Which no man ever may find again, Of fishes and corals under the waves, And seahorses stabled in great green caves. Sea Shell, Sea Shell, Sing of the things you know so well.

Fringed Gentians

Near where I live there is a lake As blue as blue can be, winds make It dance as they go blowing by. I think it curtseys to the sky. It's just a lake of lovely flowers And my Mamma says they are ours; But they are not like those we grow To be our very own, you know. We have a splendid garden, there Are lots of flowers everywhere; Roses, and pinks, and four o'clocks And hollyhocks, and evening stocks. Mamma lets us pick them, but never Must we pick any gentians — ever! For if we carried them away They'd die of homesickness that day.

The Painted Ceiling

My Grandpapa lives in a wonderful house With a great many windows and doors, There are stairs that go up, and stairs that go down, And such beautiful, slippery floors. But of all of the rooms, even mother's and mine, And the bookroom, and parlour and all, I like the green dining-room so much the best Because of its ceiling and wall. Right over your head is a funny round hole With apples and pears falling through; There's a big bunch of grapes all purply and sweet, And melons and pineapples too. They tumble and tumble, but never come down Though I've stood underneath a long while With my mouth open wide, for I always have hoped Just a cherry would drop from the pile. No matter how early I run there to look It has always begun to fall through; And one night when at bedtime I crept in to see, It was falling by candle-light too. I am sure they are magical fruits, and each one Makes you hear things, or see things, or go Forever invisible; but it's no use, And of course

I shall just never know. For the ladder's too heavy to lift, and the chairs Are not nearly so tall as I need. I've given up hope, and I feel I shall die Without having accomplished the deed. It's a little bit sad, when you seem very near To adventures and things of that sort, Which nearly begin, and then don't; and you know It is only because you are short.

The Crescent Moon

Slipping softly through the sky Little horned, happy moon, Can you hear me up so high? Will you come down soon? On my nursery window-sill Will you stay your steady flight? And then float away with me Through the summer night? Brushing over tops of trees, Playing hide and seek with stars, Peeping up through shiny clouds At Jupiter or Mars. I shall fill my lap with roses Gathered in the milky way, All to carry home to mother. Oh! what will she say! Little rocking, sailing moon, Do you hear me shout — Ahoy! Just a little nearer, moon, To please a little boy.

Climbing

High up in the apple tree climbing I go, With the sky above me, the earth below. Each branch is the step of a wonderful stair Which leads to the town I see shining up there. Climbing, climbing, higher and higher, The branches blow and I see a spire, The gleam of a turret, the glint of a dome, All sparkling and bright, like white sea foam. On and on, from bough to bough, The leaves are thick, but I push my way through; Before, I have always had to stop, But to-day I am sure I shall reach the top. Today to the end of the marvelous stair, Where those glittering pinacles flash in the air! Climbing, climbing, higher I go, With the sky close above me, the earth far below.

The Trout

Naughty little speckled trout, Can't I coax you to come out? Is it such great fun to play In the water every day? Do you pull the Naiads' hair Hiding in the lilies there? Do you hunt for fishes' eggs, Or watch tadpoles grow their legs? Do the little trouts have school In some deep sun-glinted pool, And in recess play at tag Round that bed of purple flag? I have tried so hard to catch you, Hours and hours I've sat to watch you; But you never will come out, Naughty little speckled trout!

Wind

He shouts in the sails of the ships at sea, He steals the down from the honeybee, He makes the forest trees rustle and sing, He twirls my kite till it breaks its string. Laughing, dancing, sunny wind, Whistling, howling, rainy wind, North, South, East and West, Each is the wind I like the best. He calls up the fog and hides the hills, He whirls the wings of the great windmills, The weathercocks love him and turn to discover His whereabouts — but he's gone, the rover! Laughing, dancing, sunny wind, Whistling, howling, rainy wind, North, South, East and West, Each is the wind I like the best. The pine trees toss him their cones with glee, The flowers bend low in courtesy, Each wave flings up a shower of pearls, The flag in front of the school unfurls. Laughing, dancing, sunny wind, Whistling, howling, rainy wind, North, South, East and West, Each is the wind I like the best.

The Pleiades

By day you cannot see the sky For it is up so very high. You look and look, but it's so blue That you can never see right through. But when night comes it is quite plain, And all the stars are there again. They seem just like old friends to me, I've known them all my life you see. There is the dipper first, and there Is Cassiopeia in her chair, Orion's belt, the Milky Way, And lots I know but cannot say. One group looks like a swarm of bees, Papa says they're the Pleiades; But I think they must be the toy

Of some nice little angel boy. Perhaps his jackstones which to-day He has forgot to put away, And left them lying on the sky Where he will find them bye and bye. I wish he'd come and play with me. We'd have such fun, for it would be A most unusual thing for boys To feel that they had stars for toys!

THE END

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