The Congo, and Other Poems

by Vachel Lindsay

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Title: The Congo, and Other Poems

Author: Vachel Lindsay

Author of introduction, etc.: Harriet Monroe

Release date: August 1, 1997 [eBook #1021] Most recently updated: October 29, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1021

Credits: Produced by Alan R. Light, and David Widger

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THE CONGO AND OTHER POEMS

By Vachel Lindsay

[Nicholas Vachel Lindsay, Illinois Artist. 1879-1931.]

With an introduction by Harriet Monroe Editor of "Poetry"

[Notes: The 'stage-directions' given in "The Congo" and those poems which are meant to be read aloud, are traditionally printed to the right side of the first line it refers to. This is possible, but impracticable, to imitate in a simple ASCII text. Therefore these 'stage-directions' are given on the line BEFORE the first line they refer to, and are furthermore indented 20 spaces and given bold print to keep it clear to the reader which parts are text and which parts directions.]

[This electronic text was transcribed from a reprint of the original edition, which was first published in New York, in September, 1914. Due to a great deal of irregularity between titles in the table of contents and in the text of the original, there are some slight differences from the original in these matters—with the more complete titles replacing cropped ones. In one case they are different enough that both are given, and "Twenty Poems in which...." was originally "Twenty Moon Poems" in the table of contents—the odd thing about both these titles is that there are actually twenty-TWO moon poems.]

THE CONGO AND OTHER POEMS

Introduction. By Harriet Monroe

When 'Poetry, A Magazine of Verse', was first published in Chicago in the autumn of 1912, an Illinois poet, Vachel Lindsay, was, quite appropriately, one of its first discoveries. It may be not quite without significance that the issue of January, 1913, which led off with 'General William Booth Enters into Heaven', immediately

followed the number in which the great poet of Bengal, Rabindra Nath Tagore, was first presented to the American public, and that these two antipodal poets soon appeared in person among the earliest visitors to the editor. For the coming together of East and West may prove to be the great event of the approaching era, and if the poetry of the now famous Bengali laureate garners the richest wisdom and highest spirituality of his ancient race, so one may venture to believe that the young Illinois troubadour brings from Lincoln's city an authentic strain of the lyric message of this newer world.

It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to mention Mr. Lindsay's loyalty to the people of his place and hour, or the training in sympathy with their aims and ideals which he has achieved through vagabondish wanderings in the Middle West. And we may permit time to decide how far he expresses their emotion. But it may be opportune to emphasize his plea for poetry as a song art, an art appealing to the ear rather than the eye. The first section of this volume is especially an effort to restore poetry to its proper place—the audience-chamber, and take it out of the library, the closet. In the library it has become, so far as the people are concerned, almost a lost art, and perhaps it can be restored to the people only through a renewal of its appeal to the ear.

I am tempted to quote from Mr. Lindsay's explanatory note which accompanied three of these poems when they were first printed in 'Poetry'. He said:

"Mr. Yeats asked me recently in Chicago, 'What are we going to do to restore the primitive singing of poetry?' I find what Mr. Yeats means by 'the primitive singing of poetry' in Professor Edward Bliss Reed's new volume on 'The English Lyric'. He says in his chapter on the definition of the lyric: 'With the Greeks "song" was an all-embracing term. It included the crooning of the nurse to the child... the half-sung chant of the mower or sailor... the formal ode sung by the poet. In all Greek lyrics, even in the choral odes, music was the handmaid of verse.... The poet himself

composed the accompaniment. Euripides was censured because Iophon had assisted him in the musical setting of some of his dramas.' Here is pictured a type of Greek work which survives in American vaudeville, where every line may be two-thirds spoken and one-third sung, the entire rendering, musical and elocutionary, depending upon the improvising power and sure instinct of the performer.

"I respectfully submit these poems as experiments in which I endeavor to carry this vaudeville form back towards the old Greek precedent of the half-chanted lyric. In this case the one-third of music must be added by the instinct of the reader. He must be Iophon. And he can easily be Iophon if he brings to bear upon the piece what might be called the Higher Vaudeville imagination....

"Big general contrasts between the main sections should be the rule of the first attempts at improvising. It is the hope of the writer that after two or three readings each line will suggest its own separate touch of melody to the reader who has become accustomed to the cadences. Let him read what he likes read, and sing what he likes sung."

It was during this same visit in Chicago, at 'Poetry's' banquet on the evening of March first, 1914, that Mr. Yeats honored Mr. Lindsay by addressing his after-dinner talk primarily to him as "a fellow craftsman", and by saying of 'General Booth':

"This poem is stripped bare of ornament; it has an earnest simplicity, a strange beauty, and you know Bacon said, 'There is no excellent beauty without strangeness.'"

This recognition from the distinguished Irish poet tempts me to hint at the cosmopolitan aspects of such racily local art as Mr. Lindsay's. The subject is too large for a merely introductory word, but the reader may be invited to reflect upon it. If Mr. Lindsay's poetry should cross the ocean, it would not be the first time that our most indigenous art has reacted upon the art of older nations. Besides Poe—who,

though indigenous in ways too subtle for brief analysis, yet passed all frontiers in his swift, sad flight—the two American artists of widest influence, Whitman and Whistler, have been intensely American in temperament and in the special spiritual quality of their art.

If Whistler was the first great artist to accept the modern message in Oriental art, if Whitman was the first great modern poet to discard the limitations of conventional form: if both were more free, more individual, than their contemporaries, this was the expression of their Americanism, which may perhaps be defined as a spiritual independence and love of adventure inherited from the pioneers. Foreign artists are usually the first to recognize this new tang; one detects the influence of the great dead poet and dead painter in all modern art which looks forward instead of back; and their countrymen, our own contemporary poets and painters, often express indirectly, through French influences, a reaction which they are reluctant to confess directly.

A lighter phase of this foreign enthusiasm for the American tang is confessed by Signor Marinetti, the Italian "futurist", when in his article on 'Futurism and the Theatre', in 'The Mask', he urges the revolutionary value of "American eccentrics", citing the fundamental primitive quality in their vaudeville art. This may be another statement of Mr. Lindsay's plea for a closer relation between the poet and his audience, for a return to the healthier open-air conditions, and immediate personal contacts, in the art of the Greeks and of primitive nations. Such conditions and contacts may still be found, if the world only knew it, in the wonderful song-dances of the Hopis and others of our aboriginal tribes. They may be found, also, in a measure, in the quick response between artist and audience in modern vaudeville. They are destined to a wider and higher influence; in fact, the development of that influence, the return to primitive sympathies between artist and audience, which may make possible once more the assertion of primitive creative power, is recognized as the immediate movement in modern art. It is a movement strong

enough to persist in spite of extravagances and absurdities; strong enough, it may be hoped, to fulfil its purpose and revitalize the world.

It is because Mr. Lindsay's poetry seems to be definitely in that movement that it is, I think, important.

Harriet Monroe.

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The Congo

A Study of the Negro Race

I. Their Basic Savagery Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room, Barrel-house kings, with feet unstable, A deep rolling bass. Sagged and reeled and pounded on the table, Pounded on the table, Beat an empty barrel with the handle of a broom, Hard as they were able, Boom, boom, BOOM, With a silk umbrella and the handle of a broom, Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM. THEN I had religion, THEN I had a vision. I could not turn from their revel in derision. More deliberate. Solemnly chanted. THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK. Then along that riverbank A thousand miles Tattooed cannibals danced in files; Then I heard the boom of the blood-lust song A rapidly piling climax of speed and racket. And a thigh-bone beating on a tin-pan gong. And "BLOOD" screamed the whistles and the fifes of the warriors, "BLOOD" screamed the skull-faced, lean witch-doctors, "Whirl ye the deadly voo-doo rattle, Harry the uplands, Steal all the cattle, Rattle-rattle, rattle-rattle, Bing. Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM," With a philosophic pause. A roaring, epic, rag-time tune From the mouth of the Congo To the Mountains of the Moon. Death is an Elephant, Shrilly and with a heavily accented metre. Torch-eyed and horrible, Foam-flanked and terrible. BOOM, steal the pygmies, BOOM, kill the Arabs, BOOM, kill the white men, HOO, HOO, HOO. Like the wind in the chimney. Listen to the yell of Leopold's ghost Burning in Hell for his hand-maimed host. Hear how the demons chuckle and yell Cutting his hands off, down in Hell. Listen to the creepy proclamation, Blown through the lairs of the forest-nation, Blown past the white-ants' hill of clay, Blown past the marsh where the butterflies play:— "Be careful what you do, All the o sounds very golden. Heavy accents very heavy. Light accents very light. Last line whispered. Or Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo, And all of the other Gods of the Congo, Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."

II. Their Irrepressible High Spirits Rather shrill and high. Wild crap-shooters with a

whoop and a call Danced the juba in their gambling-hall And laughed fit to kill, and shook the town, And guyed the policemen and laughed them down With a boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM. Read exactly as in first section. THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK, CUTTING THROUGH THE FOREST WITH A GOLDEN TRACK. Lay emphasis on the delicate ideas. Keep as light-footed as possible. A negro fairyland swung into view, A minstrel river Where dreams come true. The ebony palace soared on high Through the blossoming trees to the evening sky. The inlaid porches and casements shone With gold and ivory and elephant-bone. And the black crowd laughed till their sides were sore At the baboon butler in the agate door, And the well-known tunes of the parrot band That trilled on the bushes of that magic land. With pomposity. A troupe of skull-faced witch-men came Through the agate doorway in suits of flame, Yea, long-tailed coats with a gold-leaf crust And hats that were covered with diamond-dust. And the crowd in the court gave a whoop and a call And danced the juba from wall to wall. With a great deliberation and ghostliness. But the witch-men suddenly stilled the throng With a stern cold glare, and a stern old song:— "Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you."... With overwhelming assurance, good cheer, and pomp. Just then from the doorway, as fat as shotes, Came the cake-walk princes in their long red coats, Canes with a brilliant lacquer shine, And tall silk hats that were red as wine. With growing speed and sharply marked dance-rhythm. And they pranced with their butterfly partners there, Coal-black maidens with pearls in their hair, Knee-skirts trimmed with the jassamine sweet, And bells on their ankles and little black feet. And the couples railed at the chant and the frown Of the witch-men lean, and laughed them down. (O rare was the revel, and well worth while That made those glowering witch-men smile.) The cake-walk royalty then began To walk for a cake that was tall as a man To the tune of "Boomlay, boomlay, BOOM," With a touch of negro dialect, and as rapidly as possible toward the end. While the witch-men laughed, with a sinister air, And sang with the scalawags prancing there:— "Walk with care, walk with care, Or

Mumbo-Jumbo, God of the Congo, And all of the other Gods of the Congo, Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you. Beware, beware, walk with care, Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom. Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom, Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, boom, Boomlay, boomlay, boomlay, BOOM." Slow philosophic calm. Oh rare was the revel, and well worth while That made those glowering witch-men smile.

III. The Hope of their Religion Heavy bass. With a literal imitation of camp-meeting racket, and trance. A good old negro in the slums of the town Preached at a sister for her velvet gown. Howled at a brother for his low-down ways, His prowling, guzzling, sneak-thief days. Beat on the Bible till he wore it out Starting the jubilee revival shout. And some had visions, as they stood on chairs, And sang of Jacob, and the golden stairs, And they all repented, a thousand strong From their stupor and savagery and sin and wrong And slammed with their hymn books till they shook the room With "glory, glory, glory," And "Boom, boom, BOOM." Exactly as in the first section. Begin with terror and power, end with joy. THEN I SAW THE CONGO, CREEPING THROUGH THE BLACK CUTTING THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH A GOLDEN TRACK. And the gray sky opened like a new-rent veil And showed the apostles with their coats of mail. In bright white steele they were seated round And their fire-eyes watched where the Congo wound. And the twelve Apostles, from their thrones on high Thrilled all the forest with their heavenly cry:— Sung to the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices". "Mumbo-Jumbo will die in the jungle; Never again will he hoo-doo you, Never again will he hoo-doo you." With growing deliberation and joy. Then along that river, a thousand miles The vine-snared trees fell down in files. Pioneer angels cleared the way For a Congo paradise, for babes at play, For sacred capitals, for temples clean. Gone were the skull-faced witch-men lean. In a rather high key—as delicately as possible. There, where the wild ghost-gods had wailed A million boats of the angels sailed With oars of silver, and prows of blue And silken pennants that the sun shone through. 'Twas a

land transfigured, 'twas a new creation. Oh, a singing wind swept the negro nation And on through the backwoods clearing flew:— To the tune of "Hark, ten thousand harps and voices". "Mumbo-Jumbo is dead in the jungle. Never again will he hoo-doo you. Never again will he hoo-doo you." Redeemed were the forests, the beasts and the men, And only the vulture dared again By the far, lone mountains of the moon To cry, in the silence, the Congo tune:— Dying down into a penetrating, terrified whisper. "Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you, Mumbo-Jumbo will hoo-doo you. Mumbo... Jumbo... will... hoo-doo... you."

This poem, particularly the third section, was suggested by an allusion in a sermon by my pastor, F. W. Burnham, to the heroic life and death of Ray Eldred. Eldred was a missionary of the Disciples of Christ who perished while swimming a treacherous branch of the Congo. See "A Master Builder on the Congo", by Andrew F. Hensey, published by Fleming H. Revell.

The Santa Fe Trail

(A Humoresque)

I asked the old Negro, "What is that bird that sings so well?" He answered: "That is the Rachel-Jane." "Hasn't it another name, lark, or thrush, or the like?" "No. Jus' Rachel-Jane."

I. In which a Racing Auto comes from the East To be sung delicately, to an improvised tune. This is the order of the music of the morning:— First, from the far East comes but a crooning. The crooning turns to a sunrise singing. Hark to the calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-horn. Hark to the faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-horn.... To be sung or read with great speed. Hark to the pace-horn, chase-horn, race-horn. And the holy veil of the dawn has gone. Swiftly the brazen car comes on. It burns in the East as the sunrise burns. I see great flashes where the far trail turns. Its eyes are lamps like the eyes of dragons. It drinks gasoline from big red flagons. Butting

through the delicate mists of the morning, It comes like lightning, goes past roaring. It will hail all the wind-mills, taunting, ringing, Dodge the cyclones, Count the milestones, On through the ranges the prairie-dog tills— Scooting past the cattle on the thousand hills.... To be read or sung in a rolling bass, with some deliberation. Ho for the tear-horn, scare-horn, dare-horn, Ho for the gay-horn, bark-horn, bay-horn. Ho for Kansas, land that restores us When houses choke us, and great books bore us! Sunrise Kansas, harvester's Kansas, A million men have found you before us.

II. In which Many Autos pass Westward In an even, deliberate, narrative manner. I want live things in their pride to remain. I will not kill one grasshopper vain Though he eats a hole in my shirt like a door. I let him out, give him one chance more. Perhaps, while he gnaws my hat in his whim, Grasshopper lyrics occur to him. I am a tramp by the long trail's border, Given to squalor, rags and disorder. I nap and amble and yawn and look, Write fool-thoughts in my grubby book, Recite to the children, explore at my ease, Work when I work, beg when I please, Give crank-drawings, that make folks stare To the half-grown boys in the sunset glare, And get me a place to sleep in the hay At the end of a live-and-let-live day. I find in the stubble of the new-cut weeds A whisper and a feasting, all one needs: The whisper of the strawberries, white and red Here where the new-cut weeds lie dead. But I would not walk all alone till I die Without some life-drunk horns going by. Up round this apple-earth they come Blasting the whispers of the morning dumb:— Cars in a plain realistic row. And fair dreams fade When the raw horns blow. On each snapping pennant A big black name:— The careering city Whence each car came. Like a train-caller in a Union Depot. They tour from Memphis, Atlanta, Savannah, Tallahassee and Texarkana. They tour from St. Louis, Columbus, Manistee, They tour from Peoria, Davenport, Kankakee. Cars from Concord, Niagara, Boston, Cars from Topeka, Emporia, and Austin. Cars from Chicago, Hannibal, Cairo. Cars from Alton, Oswego, Toledo. Cars from Buffalo, Kokomo, Delphi, Cars from Lodi, Carmi, Loami. Ho for Kansas, land that restores us When

houses choke us, and great books bore us! While I watch the highroad And look at the sky, While I watch the clouds in amazing grandeur Roll their legions without rain Over the blistering Kansas plain— While I sit by the milestone And watch the sky, The United States Goes by. To be given very harshly, with a snapping explosiveness. Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking. Listen to the quack-horns, slack and clacking. Way down the road, trilling like a toad, Here comes the dice-horn, here comes the vice-horn, Here comes the snarl-horn, brawl-horn, lewd-horn, Followed by the prude-horn, bleak and squeaking:— (Some of them from Kansas, some of them from Kansas.) Here comes the hod-horn, plod-horn, sod-horn, Nevermore-to-roam-horn, loam-horn, home-horn. (Some of them from Kansas, some of them from Kansas.) To be read or sung, well-nigh in a whisper. Far away the Rachel-Jane Not defeated by the horns Sings amid a hedge of thorns:— "Love and life, Eternal youth— Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, Dew and glory, Love and truth, Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet." Louder and louder, faster and faster. WHILE SMOKE-BLACK FREIGHTS ON THE DOUBLE-TRACKED RAILROAD, DRIVEN AS THOUGH BY THE FOUL-FIEND'S OX-GOAD, SCREAMING TO THE WEST COAST, SCREAMING TO THE EAST, CARRY OFF A HARVEST, BRING BACK A FEAST, HARVESTING MACHINERY AND HARNESS FOR THE BEAST. THE HAND-CARS WHIZ, AND RATTLE ON THE RAILS, THE SUNLIGHT FLASHES ON THE TIN DINNER-PAILS. In a rolling bass, with increasing deliberation. And then, in an instant, Ye modern men, Behold the procession once again, With a snapping explosiveness. Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking, Listen to the wise-horn, desperate-to-advise-horn, Listen to the fast-horn, kill-horn, blast-horn.... To be sung or read well-nigh in a whisper. Far away the Rachel-Jane Not defeated by the horns Sings amid a hedge of thorns:— Love and life, Eternal youth, Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet, Dew and glory, Love and truth. Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet. To be brawled in the beginning with a snapping explosiveness, ending in a languorous chant. The mufflers open on a score of cars

With wonderful thunder, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, CRACK-CRACK, CRACK-CRACK, CRACK-CRACK-CRACK,... Listen to the gold-horn... Old-horn... Cold-horn... And all of the tunes, till the night comes down On hay-stack, and ant-hill, and wind-bitten town. To be sung to exactly the same whispered tune as the first five lines. Then far in the west, as in the beginning, Dim in the distance, sweet in retreating, Hark to the faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-horn, Hark to the calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-horn.... This section beginning sonorously, ending in a languorous whisper. They are hunting the goals that they understand:— San Francisco and the brown sea-sand. My goal is the mystery the beggars win. I am caught in the web the night-winds spin. The edge of the wheat-ridge speaks to me. I talk with the leaves of the mulberry tree. And now I hear, as I sit all alone In the dusk, by another big Santa Fe stone, The souls of the tall corn gathering round And the gay little souls of the grass in the ground. Listen to the tale the cotton-wood tells. Listen to the wind-mills, singing o'er the wells. Listen to the whistling flutes without price Of myriad prophets out of paradise. Harken to the wonder That the night-air carries.... Listen... to... the... whisper... Of... the... prairie... fairies Singing o'er the fairy plain:— To the same whispered tune as the Rachel-Jane song— but very slowly. "Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet. Love and glory, Stars and rain, Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet...."

The Firemen's Ball

Section One "Give the engines room, Give the engines room." Louder, faster The little band-master Whips up the fluting, Hurries up the tooting. He thinks that he stands, To be read, or chanted, with the heavy buzzing bass of fire-engines pumping. The reins in his hands, In the fire-chief's place In the night alarm chase. The cymbals whang, The kettledrums bang:— In this passage the reading or chanting is shriller and higher. "Clear the street, Clear the street, Clear the street—Boom, boom. In the

evening gloom, In the evening gloom, Give the engines room, Give the engines room, Lest souls be trapped In a terrible tomb." The sparks and the pine-brands Whirl on high From the black and reeking alleys To the wide red sky. Hear the hot glass crashing, Hear the stone steps hissing. Coal black streams Down the gutters pour. There are cries for help From a far fifth floor. For a longer ladder Hear the fire-chief call. Listen to the music Of the firemen's ball. Listen to the music Of the firemen's ball. To be read or chanted in a heavy bass. "'Tis the NIGHT Of doom," Say the ding-dong doom-bells. "NIGHT Of doom," Say the ding-dong doom-bells. Faster, faster The red flames come. "Hum grum," say the engines, "Hum grum grum." Shriller and higher. "Buzz, buzz," Says the crowd. "See, see," Calls the crowd. "Look out," Yelps the crowd And the high walls fall:— Listen to the music Of the firemen's ball. Listen to the music Of the firemen's ball. Heavy bass. "'Tis the NIGHT Of doom," Say the ding-dong doom-bells. "NIGHT Of doom," Say the ding-dong doom-bells. Whangaranga, whangaranga, Whang, whang, whang, Clang, clang, clangaranga, Bass, much slower. Clang, clang, clang. Clang—a—ranga— Clang—a—ranga— Clang, Clang, Clang. Listen—to—the—music— Of the firemen's ball—

Section Two "Many's the heart that's breaking If we could read them all After the ball is over." (An old song.)

To be read or sung slowly and softly, in the manner of lustful, insinuating music. Scornfully, gaily The bandmaster sways, Changing the strain That the wild band plays. With a red and royal intoxication, A tangle of sounds And a syncopation, Sweeping and bending From side to side, Master of dreams, With a peacock pride. A lord of the delicate flowers of delight He drives compunction Back through the night. Dreams he's a soldier Plumed and spurred, And valiant lads Arise at his word, Flaying the sober Thoughts he hates, Driving them back From the dream-town gates. How can the languorous Dancers know The red dreams come To be read or chanted slowly and softly in the manner of lustful insinuating music. When the good dreams

go? "'Tis the NIGHT Of love," Call the silver joy-bells, "NIGHT Of love," Call the silver joy-bells. "Honey and wine, Honey and wine. Sing low, now, violins, Sing, sing low, Blow gently, wood-wind, Mellow and slow. Like midnight poppies The sweethearts bloom. Their eyes flash power, Their lips are dumb. Faster and faster Their pulses come, Though softer now The drum-beats fall. Honey and wine, Honey and wine. 'Tis the firemen's ball, 'Tis the firemen's ball. With a climax of whispered mourning. "I am slain," Cries true-love There in the shadow. "And I die," Cries true-love, There laid low. "When the fire-dreams come, The wise dreams go." Suddenly interrupting. To be read or sung in a heavy bass. First eight lines as harsh as possible. Then gradually musical and sonorous. BUT HIS CRY IS DROWNED BY THE PROUD BAND-MASTER. And now great gongs whang, Sharper, faster, And kettledrums rattle And hide the shame With a swish and a swirk In dead love's name. Red and crimson And scarlet and rose Magical poppies The sweethearts bloom. The scarlet stays When the rose-flush goes, And love lies low In a marble tomb. "'Tis the NIGHT Of doom," Call the ding-dong doom-bells. "NIGHT Of Doom," Call the ding-dong doom-bells. Sharply interrupting in a very high key. Hark how the piccolos still make cheer. "'Tis a moonlight night in the spring of the year." Heavy bass. CLANGARANGA, CLANGARANGA, CLANG... CLANG... CLANG. CLANG... A... RANGA... CLANG... A... RANGA... CLANG... CLANG... CLANG... LISTEN... TO... THE... MUSIC... OF... THE... FIREMEN'S BALL... LISTEN... TO... THE... MUSIC... OF... THE... FIREMEN'S... BALL....

Section Three

In Which, contrary to Artistic Custom, the moral of the piece is placed before the reader.

(From the first Khandaka of the Mahavagga: "There Buddha thus addressed his disciples: 'Everything, O mendicants, is burning. With what fire is it burning? I declare unto you it is burning with the fire of passion, with the fire of anger, with the

fire of ignorance. It is burning with the anxieties of birth, decay and death, grief, lamentation, suffering and despair.... A disciple,... becoming weary of all that, divests himself of passion. By absence of passion, he is made free.'")

To be intoned after the manner of a priestly service. I once knew a teacher, Who turned from desire, Who said to the young men "Wine is a fire." Who said to the merchants:— "Gold is a flame That sears and tortures If you play at the game." I once knew a teacher Who turned from desire Who said to the soldiers, "Hate is a fire." Who said to the statesmen:— "Power is a flame That flays and blisters If you play at the game." I once knew a teacher Who turned from desire, Who said to the lordly, "Pride is a fire." Who thus warned the revellers:— "Life is a flame. Be cold as the dew Would you win at the game With hearts like the stars, With hearts like the stars." Interrupting very loudly for the last time. SO BEWARE, SO BEWARE, SO BEWARE OF THE FIRE. Clear the streets, BOOM, BOOM, Clear the streets, BOOM, BOOM, GIVE THE ENGINES ROOM, GIVE THE ENGINES ROOM, LEST SOULS BE TRAPPED IN A TERRIBLE TOMB. SAYS THE SWIFT WHITE HORSE TO THE SWIFT BLACK HORSE:— "THERE GOES THE ALARM, THERE GOES THE ALARM. THEY ARE HITCHED, THEY ARE OFF, THEY ARE GONE IN A FLASH, AND THEY STRAIN AT THE DRIVER'S IRON ARM." CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... CLANG... CLANG.... CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... CLANG... CLANG.... CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... A... RANGA.... CLANG... CLANG... CLANG....

The Master of the Dance

A chant to which it is intended a group of children shall dance and improvise pantomime led by their dancing-teacher.

I A master deep-eyed Ere his manhood was ripe, He sang like a thrush, He could

play any pipe. So dull in the school That he scarcely could spell, He read but a bit, And he figured not well. A bare-footed fool, Shod only with grace; Long hair streaming down Round a wind-hardened face; He smiled like a girl, Or like clear winter skies, A virginal light Making stars of his eyes. In swiftness and poise, A proud child of the deer, A white fawn he was, Yet a fawn without fear. No youth thought him vain, Or made mock of his hair, Or laughed when his ways Were most curiously fair. A mastiff at fight, He could strike to the earth The envious one Who would challenge his worth. However we bowed To the schoolmaster mild, Our spirits went out To the fawn-footed child. His beckoning led Our troop to the brush. We found nothing there But a wind and a hush. He sat by a stone And he looked on the ground, As if in the weeds There was something profound. His pipe seemed to neigh, Then to bleat like a sheep, Then sound like a stream Or a waterfall deep. It whispered strange tales, Human words it spoke not. Told fair things to come, And our marvellous lot If now with fawn-steps Unshod we advanced To the midst of the grove And in reverence danced. We obeyed as he piped Soft grass to young feet, Was a medicine mighty, A remedy meet. Our thin blood awoke, It grew dizzy and wild, Though scarcely a word Moved the lips of a child. Our dance gave allegiance, It set us apart, We tripped a strange measure, Uplifted of heart.

II We thought to be proud Of our fawn everywhere. We could hardly see how Simple books were a care. No rule of the school This strange student could tame. He was banished one day, While we quivered with shame. He piped back our love On a moon-silvered night, Enticed us once more To the place of delight. A greeting he sang And it made our blood beat, It tramped upon custom And mocked at defeat. He builded a fire And we tripped in a ring, The embers our books And the fawn our good king. And now we approached All the mysteries rare That shadowed his eyelids And blew through his hair. That spell now was peace The deep strength of the trees, The children of nature We clambered her knees. Our breath and our moods Were in tune with her own, Tremendous her presence, Eternal her throne. The

ostracized child Our white foreheads kissed, Our bodies and souls Became lighter than mist. Sweet dresses like snow Our small lady-loves wore, Like moonlight the thoughts That our bosoms upbore. Like a lily the touch Of each cold little hand. The loves of the stars We could now understand. O quivering air! O the crystalline night! O pauses of awe And the faces swan-white! O ferns in the dusk! O forest-shrined hour! O earth that sent upward The thrill and the power, To lift us like leaves, A delirious whirl, The masterful boy And the delicate girl! What child that strange night-time Can ever forget? His fealty due And his infinite debt To the folly divine, To the exquisite rule Of the perilous master, The fawn-footed fool?

III Now soldiers we seem, And night brings a new thing, A terrible ire, As of thunder awing. A warrior power, That old chivalry stirred, When knights took up arms, As the maidens gave word. THE END OF OUR WAR, WILL BE GLORY UNTOLD. WHEN THE TOWN LIKE A GREAT BUDDING ROSE SHALL UNFOLD! Near, nearer that war, And that ecstasy comes, We hear the trees beating Invisible drums. The fields of the night Are starlit above, Our girls are white torches Of conquest and love. No nerve without will, And no breast without breath, We whirl with the planets That never know death!

The Mysterious Cat

A chant for a children's pantomime dance, suggested by a picture painted by George Mather Richards.

I saw a proud, mysterious cat, I saw a proud, mysterious cat Too proud to catch a mouse or rat— Mew, mew, mew. But catnip she would eat, and purr, But catnip she would eat, and purr. And goldfish she did much prefer— Mew, mew, mew. I saw a cat—'twas but a dream, I saw a cat—'twas but a dream Who scorned the slave that brought her cream— Mew, mew, mew. Unless the slave were dressed in style, Unless the slave were dressed in style And knelt before her all the while— Mew,

mew, mew. Did you ever hear of a thing like that? Did you ever hear of a thing like that? Did you ever hear of a thing like that? Oh, what a proud mysterious cat. Oh, what a proud mysterious cat. Oh, what a proud mysterious cat. Mew... mew... mew.

A Dirge for a Righteous Kitten

To be intoned, all but the two italicized lines, which are to be spoken in a snappy, matter-of-fact way.

Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong. Here lies a kitten good, who kept A kitten's proper place. He stole no pantry eatables, Nor scratched the baby's face. He let the alley-cats alone. He had no yowling vice. His shirt was always laundried well, He freed the house of mice. Until his death he had not caused His little mistress tears, He wore his ribbon prettily, He washed behind his ears. Ding-dong, ding-dong, ding-dong.

Yankee Doodle

This poem is intended as a description of a sort of Blashfield mural painting on the sky. To be sung to the tune of Yankee Doodle, yet in a slower, more orotund fashion. It is presumably an exercise for an entertainment on the evening of Washington's Birthday.

Dawn this morning burned all red Watching them in wonder. There I saw our spangled flag Divide the clouds asunder. Then there followed Washington. Ah, he rode from glory, Cold and mighty as his name And stern as Freedom's story. Unsubdued by burning dawn Led his continentals. Vast they were, and strange to see In gray old regimentals:— Marching still with bleeding feet, Bleeding feet and jesting— Marching from the judgment throne With energy unresting. How their merry quickstep played— Silver, sharp, sonorous, Piercing through with prophecy The demons' rumbling chorus— Behold the ancient powers of sin And slavery

before them!— Sworn to stop the glorious dawn, The pit-black clouds hung o'er them. Plagues that rose to blast the day Fiend and tiger faces, Monsters plotting bloodshed for The patient toiling races. Round the dawn their cannon raged, Hurling bolts of thunder, Yet before our spangled flag Their host was cut asunder. Like a mist they fled away.... Ended wrath and roaring. Still our restless soldier-host From East to West went pouring. High beside the sun of noon They bore our banner splendid. All its days of stain and shame And heaviness were ended. Men were swelling now the throng From great and lowly station— Valiant citizens to-day Of every tribe and nation. Not till night their rear-guard came, Down the west went marching, And left behind the sunset-rays In beauty overarching. War-god banners lead us still, Rob, enslave and harry Let us rather choose to-day The flag the angels carry— Flag we love, but brighter far— Soul of it made splendid: Let its days of stain and shame And heaviness be ended. Let its fifes fill all the sky, Redeemed souls marching after, Hills and mountains shake with song, While seas roll on in laughter.

The Black Hawk War of the Artists

Written for Lorado Taft's Statue of Black Hawk at Oregon, Illinois

To be given in the manner of the Indian Oration and the Indian War-Cry.

Hawk of the Rocks, Yours is our cause to-day. Watching your foes Here in our war array, Young men we stand, Wolves of the West at bay. Power, power for war Comes from these trees divine; Power from the boughs, Boughs where the dew-beads shine, Power from the cones— Yea, from the breath of the pine! Power to restore All that the white hand mars. See the dead east Crushed with the iron cars— Chimneys black Blinding the sun and stars! Hawk of the pines, Hawk of the plain-winds fleet, You shall be king There in the iron street, Factory and forge Trodden beneath your feet. There will proud trees Grow as they grow by streams.

There will proud thoughts Walk as in warrior dreams. There will proud deeds Bloom as when battle gleams! Warriors of Art, We will hold council there, Hewing in stone Things to the trapper fair, Painting the gray Veils that the spring moons wear, This our revenge, This one tremendous change: Making new towns, Lit with a star-fire strange, Wild as the dawn Gilding the bison-range. All the young men Chanting your cause that day, Red-men, new-made Out of the Saxon clay, Strong and redeemed, Bold in your war-array!

The Jingo and the Minstrel

An Argument for the Maintenance of Peace and Goodwill with the Japanese People

Glossary for the uninstructed and the hasty: Jimmu Tenno, ancestor of all the Japanese Emperors; Nikko, Japan's loveliest shrine; Iyeyasu, her greatest statesman; Bushido, her code of knighthood; The Forty-seven Ronins, her classic heroes; Nogi, her latest hero; Fuji, her most beautiful mountain.

The minstrel speaks. "Now do you know of Avalon That sailors call Japan? She holds as rare a chivalry As ever bled for man. King Arthur sleeps at Nikko hill Where Iyeyasu lies, And there the broad Pendragon flag In deathless splendor flies." The jingo answers. "Nay, minstrel, but the great ships come From out the sunset sea. We cannot greet the souls they bring With welcome high and free. How can the Nippon nondescripts That weird and dreadful band Be aught but what we find them here:— The blasters of the land?" The minstrel replies. "First race, first men from anywhere To face you, eye to eye. For that do you curse Avalon And raise a hue and cry? These toilers cannot kiss your hand, Or fawn with hearts bowed down. Be glad for them, and Avalon, And Arthur's ghostly crown. "No doubt your guests, with sage debate In grave things gentlemen Will let your trade and farms alone And turn them back again. But why should brawling braggarts rise With hasty words of shame To drive them back like dogs and swine Who in due honor came?" The jingo answers.

"We cannot give them honor, sir. We give them scorn for scorn. And Rumor steals around the world All white-skinned men to warn Against this sleek silk-merchant here And viler coolie-man And wrath within the courts of war Brews on against Japan!" The minstrel replies. "Must Avalon, with hope forlorn, Her back against the wall, Have lived her brilliant life in vain While ruder tribes take all? Must Arthur stand with Asian Celts, A ghost with spear and crown, Behind the great Pendragon flag And be again cut down? "Tho Europe's self shall move against High Jimmu Tenno's throne The Forty-seven Ronin Men Will not be found alone. For Percival and Bedivere And Nogi side by side Will stand,—with mourning Merlin there, Tho all go down in pride. "But has the world the envious dream— Ah, such things cannot be,— To tear their fairy-land like silk And toss it in the sea? Must venom rob the future day The ultimate world-man Of rare Bushido, code of codes, The fair heart of Japan? "Go, be the guest of Avalon. Believe me, it lies there Behind the mighty gray sea-wall Where heathen bend in prayer: Where peasants lift adoring eyes To Fuji's crown of snow. King Arthur's knights will be your hosts, So cleanse your heart, and go. "And you will find but gardens sweet Prepared beyond the seas, And you will find but gentlefolk Beneath the cherry-trees. So walk you worthy of your Christ Tho church bells do not sound, And weave the bands of brotherhood On Jimmu Tenno's ground."

I Heard Immanuel Singing

(The poem shows the Master, with his work done, singing to free his heart in Heaven.)

This poem is intended to be half said, half sung, very softly, to the well-known tune:—

"Last night I lay a-sleeping, There came a dream so fair, I stood in Old Jerusalem Beside the temple there,—" etc.

Yet this tune is not to be fitted on, arbitrarily. It is here given to suggest the manner of handling rather than determine it.

To be sung. I heard Immanuel singing Within his own good lands, I saw him bend above his harp. I watched his wandering hands Lost amid the harp-strings; Sweet, sweet I heard him play. His wounds were altogether healed. Old things had passed away. All things were new, but music. The blood of David ran Within the Son of David, Our God, the Son of Man. He was ruddy like a shepherd. His bold young face, how fair. Apollo of the silver bow Had not such flowing hair. To be read very softly, but in spirited response. I saw Immanuel singing On a tree-girdled hill. The glad remembering branches Dimly echoed still The grand new song proclaiming The Lamb that had been slain. New-built, the Holy City Gleamed in the murmuring plain. The crowning hours were over. The pageants all were past. Within the many mansions The hosts, grown still at last, In homes of holy mystery Slept long by crooning springs Or waked to peaceful glory, A universe of Kings. To be sung. He left his people happy. He wandered free to sigh Alone in lowly friendship With the green grass and the sky. He murmured ancient music His red heart burned to sing Because his perfect conquest Had grown a weary thing. No chant of gilded triumph— His lonely song was made Of Art's deliberate freedom; Of minor chords arrayed In soft and shadowy colors That once were radiant flowers:— The Rose of Sharon, bleeding In Olive-shadowed bowers:— And all the other roses In the songs of East and West Of love and war and worshipping, And every shield and crest Of thistle or of lotus Or sacred lily wrought In creeds and psalms and palaces And temples of white thought:— To be read very softly, yet in spirited response. All these he sang, half-smiling And weeping as he smiled, Laughing, talking to his harp As to a new-born child:— As though the arts forgotten But bloomed to prophecy These careless, fearless harp-strings, New-crying in the sky. To be sung. "When this his hour of sorrow For flowers and Arts of men Has passed in ghostly music," I asked my wild heart then— What will he sing to-morrow, What wonder, all his own

Alone, set free, rejoicing, With a green hill for his throne? What will he sing to-morrow What wonder all his own Alone, set free, rejoicing, With a green hill for his throne?

Second Section ~~ Incense

An Argument

I. The Voice of the Man Impatient with Visions and Utopias We find your soft Utopias as white As new-cut bread, and dull as life in cells, O, scribes who dare forget how wild we are How human breasts adore alarum bells. You house us in a hive of prigs and saints Communal, frugal, clean and chaste by law. I'd rather brood in bloody Elsinore Or be Lear's fool, straw-crowned amid the straw. Promise us all our share in Agincourt Say that our clerks shall venture scorns and death, That future ant-hills will not be too good For Henry Fifth, or Hotspur, or Macbeth. Promise that through to-morrow's spirit-war Man's deathless soul will hack and hew its way, Each flaunting Caesar climbing to his fate Scorning the utmost steps of yesterday. Never a shallow jester any more! Let not Jack Falstaff spill the ale in vain. Let Touchstone set the fashions for the wise And Ariel wreak his fancies through the rain.

II. The Rhymer's Reply. Incense and Splendor Incense and Splendor haunt me as I go. Though my good works have been, alas, too few, Though I do naught, High Heaven comes down to me, And future ages pass in tall review. I see the years to come as armies vast, Stalking tremendous through the fields of time. MAN is unborn. To-morrow he is born, Flame-like to hover o'er the moil and grime, Striving, aspiring till the shame is gone, Sowing a million flowers, where now we mourn— Laying new, precious pavements with a song, Founding new shrines, the good streets to adorn. I have seen lovers by those new-built walls Clothed like the

dawn in orange, gold and red. Eyes flashing forth the glory-light of love Under the wreaths that crowned each royal head. Life was made greater by their sweetheart prayers. Passion was turned to civic strength that day— Piling the marbles, making fairer domes With zeal that else had burned bright youth away. I have seen priestesses of life go by Gliding in samite through the incense-sea— Innocent children marching with them there, Singing in flowered robes, "THE EARTH IS FREE": While on the fair, deep-carved unfinished towers Sentinels watched in armor, night and day— Guarding the brazier-fires of hope and dream— Wild was their peace, and dawn-bright their array!

A Rhyme about an Electrical Advertising Sign

I look on the specious electrical light Blatant, mechanical, crawling and white, Wickedly red or malignantly green Like the beads of a young Senegambian queen. Showing, while millions of souls hurry on, The virtues of collars, from sunset till dawn, By dart or by tumble of whirl within whirl, Starting new fads for the shame-weary girl, By maggoty motions in sickening line Proclaiming a hat or a soup or a wine, While there far above the steep cliffs of the street The stars sing a message elusive and sweet. Now man cannot rest in his pleasure and toil His clumsy contraptions of coil upon coil Till the thing he invents, in its use and its range, Leads on to the marvellous CHANGE BEYOND CHANGE. Some day this old Broadway shall climb to the skies, As a ribbon of cloud on a soul-wind shall rise. And we shall be lifted, rejoicing by night, Till we join with the planets who choir their delight. The signs in the street and the signs in the skies Shall make a new Zodiac, guiding the wise, And Broadway make one with that marvellous stair That is climbed by the rainbow-clad spirits of prayer.

In Memory of a Child

The angels guide him now, And watch his curly head, And lead him in their games, The little boy we led. He cannot come to harm, He knows more than we know, His light is brighter far Than daytime here below. His path leads on and on, Through pleasant lawns and flowers, His brown eyes open wide At grass more green than ours. With playmates like himself, The shining boy will sing, Exploring wondrous woods, Sweet with eternal spring.

Galahad, Knight Who Perished

A Poem Dedicated to All Crusaders against the International and Interstate Traffic in Young Girls

Galahad... soldier that perished... ages ago, Our hearts are breaking with shame, our tears overflow. Galahad... knight who perished... awaken again, Teach us to fight for immaculate ways among men. Soldiers fantastic, we pray to the star of the sea, We pray to the mother of God that the bound may be free. Rose-crowned lady from heaven, give us thy grace, Help us the intricate, desperate battle to face Till the leer of the trader is seen nevermore in the land, Till we bring every maid of the age to one sheltering hand. Ah, they are priceless, the pale and the ivory and red! Breathless we gaze on the curls of each glorious head! Arm them with strength mediaeval, thy marvellous dower, Blast now their tempters, shelter their steps with thy power. Leave not life's fairest to perish—strangers to thee, Let not the weakest be shipwrecked, oh, star of the sea!

The Leaden-eyed

Let not young souls be smothered out before They do quaint deeds and fully flaunt their pride. It is the world's one crime its babes grow dull, Its poor are ox-like, limp and leaden-eyed. Not that they starve, but starve so dreamlessly, Not that they sow, but that they seldom reap, Not that they serve, but have no gods to serve, Not that

they die, but that they die like sheep.

An Indian Summer Day on the Prairie

(In the Beginning) The sun is a huntress young, The sun is a red, red joy, The sun is an Indian girl, Of the tribe of the Illinois.

(Mid-morning) The sun is a smouldering fire, That creeps through the high gray plain, And leaves not a bush of cloud To blossom with flowers of rain.

(Noon) The sun is a wounded deer, That treads pale grass in the skies, Shaking his golden horns, Flashing his baleful eyes.

(Sunset) The sun is an eagle old, There in the windless west. Atop of the spirit-cliffs He builds him a crimson nest.

The Hearth Eternal

There dwelt a widow learned and devout, Behind our hamlet on the eastern hill. Three sons she had, who went to find the world. They promised to return, but wandered still. The cities used them well, they won their way, Rich gifts they sent, to still their mother's sighs. Worn out with honors, and apart from her, They died as many a self-made exile dies. The mother had a hearth that would not quench, The deathless embers fought the creeping gloom. She said to us who came with wondering eyes— "This is a magic fire, a magic room." The pine burned out, but still the coals glowed on, Her grave grew old beneath the pear-tree shade, And yet her crumbling home enshrined the light. The neighbors peering in were half afraid. Then sturdy beggars, needing fagots, came, One at a time, and stole the walls, and floor. They left a naked stone, but how it blazed! And in the thunderstorm it flared the more. And now it was that men were heard to say, "This light should be beloved by all the town." At last they made the slope a place of prayer, Where marvellous

thoughts from God came sweeping down. They left their churches crumbling in the sun, They met on that soft hill, one brotherhood; One strength and valor only, one delight, One laughing, brooding genius, great and good. Now many gray-haired prodigals come home, The place out-flames the cities of the land, And twice-born Brahmans reach us from afar, With subtle eyes prepared to understand. Higher and higher burns the eastern steep, Showing the roads that march from every place, A steady beacon o'er the weary leagues, At dead of night it lights the traveller's face! Thus has the widow conquered half the earth, She who increased in faith, though all alone, Who kept her empty house a magic place, Has made the town a holy angel's throne.

The Soul of the City Receives the Gift of the Holy Spirit

A Broadside distributed in Springfield, Illinois

Censers are swinging Over the town; Censers are swinging, Look overhead! Censers are swinging, Heaven comes down. City, dead city, Awake from the dead! Censers, tremendous, Gleam overhead. Wind-harps are ringing, Wind-harps unseen— Calling and calling:— "Wake from the dead. Rise, little city, Shine like a queen." Soldiers of Christ For battle grow keen. Heaven-sent winds Haunt alley and lane. Singing of life In town-meadows green After the toil And battle and pain. Incense is pouring Like the spring rain Down on the mob That moil through the street. Blessed are they Who behold it and gain Power made more mighty Thro' every defeat. Builders, toil on. Make all complete. Make Springfield wonderful. Make her renown Worthy this day, Till, at God's feet, Tranced, saved forever, Waits the white town. Censers are swinging Over the town, Censers gigantic! Look overhead! Hear the winds singing:— "Heaven comes down. City, dead city, Awake from the dead."

By the Spring, at Sunset

Sometimes we remember kisses, Remember the dear heart-leap when they came: Not always, but sometimes we remember The kindness, the dumbness, the good flame Of laughter and farewell. Beside the road Afar from those who said "Good-by" I write, Far from my city task, my lawful load. Sun in my face, wind beside my shoulder, Streaming clouds, banners of new-born night Enchant me now. The splendors growing bolder Make bold my soul for some new wise delight. I write the day's event, and quench my drouth, Pausing beside the spring with happy mind. And now I feel those kisses on my mouth, Hers most of all, one little friend most kind.

I Went down into the Desert

I went down into the desert To meet Elijah— Arisen from the dead. I thought to find him in an echoing cave; For so my dream had said. I went down into the desert To meet John the Baptist. I walked with feet that bled, Seeking that prophet lean and brown and bold. I spied foul fiends instead. I went down into the desert To meet my God. By him be comforted. I went down into the desert To meet my God. And I met the devil in red. I went down into the desert To meet my God. O, Lord my God, awaken from the dead! I see you there, your thorn-crown on the ground, I see you there, half-buried in the sand. I see you there, your white bones glistening, bare, The carrion-birds a-wheeling round your head.

Love and Law

True Love is founded in rocks of Remembrance In stones of Forbearance and mortar of Pain. The workman lays wearily granite on granite, And bleeds for his castle 'mid sunshine and rain. Love is not velvet, not all of it velvet, Not all of it banners, not gold-leaf alone. 'Tis stern as the ages and old as Religion. With Patience its watchword, and Law for its throne.

The Perfect Marriage

I I hate this yoke; for the world's sake here put it on: Knowing 'twill weigh as much on you till life is gone. Knowing you love your freedom dear, as I love mine— Knowing that love unchained has been our life's great wine: Our one great wine (yet spent too soon, and serving none; Of the two cups free love at last the deadly one).

II We grant our meetings will be tame, not honey-sweet No longer turning to the tryst with flying feet. We know the toil that now must come will spoil the bloom And tenderness of passion's touch, and in its room Will come tame habit, deadly calm, sorrow and gloom. Oh, how the battle scars the best who enter life! Each soldier comes out blind or lame from the black strife. Mad or diseased or damned of soul the best may come— It matters not how merrily now rolls the drum, The fife shrills high, the horn sings loud, till no steps lag— And all adore that silken flame, Desire's great flag.

III We will build strong our tiny fort, strong as we can— Holding one inner room beyond the sword of man. Love is too wide, it seems to-day, to hide it there. It seems to flood the fields of corn, and gild the air— It seems to breathe from every brook, from flowers to sigh— It seems a cataract poured down from the great sky; It seems a tenderness so vast no bush but shows Its haunting and transfiguring light where wonder glows. It wraps us in a silken snare by shadowy streams, And wildering sweet and stung with joy your white soul seems A flame, a flame, conquering day, conquering night, Brought from our God, a holy thing, a mad delight. But love, when all things beat it down, leaves the wide air, The heavens are gray, and men turn wolves, lean with despair. Ah, when we need love most, and weep, when all is dark, Love is a pinch of ashes gray, with one live spark— Yet on the hope to keep alive that treasure strange Hangs all earth's struggle, strife and scorn, and desperate change.

IV Love?... we will scarcely love our babes full many a time— Knowing their souls

and ours too well, and all our grime— And there beside our holy hearth we'll hide our eyes— Lest we should flash what seems disdain without disguise. Yet there shall be no wavering there in that deep trial— And no false fire or stranger hand or traitor vile— We'll fight the gloom and fight the world with strong sword-play, Entrenched within our block-house small, ever at bay— As fellow-warriors, underpaid, wounded and wild, True to their battered flag, their faith still undefiled!

Darling Daughter of Babylon

Too soon you wearied of our tears. And then you danced with spangled feet, Leading Belshazzar's chattering court A-tinkling through the shadowy street. With mead they came, with chants of shame. DESIRE'S red flag before them flew. And Istar's music moved your mouth And Baal's deep shames rewoke in you. Now you could drive the royal car; Forget our Nation's breaking load: Now you could sleep on silver beds— (Bitter and dark was our abode.) And so, for many a night you laughed, And knew not of my hopeless prayer, Till God's own spirit whipped you forth From Istar's shrine, from Istar's stair. Darling daughter of Babylon— Rose by the black Euphrates flood— Again your beauty grew more dear Than my slave's bread, than my heart's blood. We sang of Zion, good to know, Where righteousness and peace abide.... What of your second sacrilege Carousing at Belshazzar's side? Once, by a stream, we clasped tired hands— Your paint and henna washed away. Your place, you said, was with the slaves Who sewed the thick cloth, night and day. You were a pale and holy maid Toil-bound with us. One night you said:— "Your God shall be my God until I slumber with the patriarch dead." Pardon, daughter of Babylon, If, on this night remembering Our lover walks under the walls Of hanging gardens in the spring, A venom comes from broken hope, From memories of your comrade-song Until I curse your painted eyes And do your flower-mouth too much wrong.

The Amaranth

Ah, in the night, all music haunts me here.... Is it for naught high Heaven cracks and yawns And the tremendous Amaranth descends Sweet with the glory of ten thousand dawns? Does it not mean my God would have me say:— "Whether you will or no, O city young, Heaven will bloom like one great flower for you, Flash and loom greatly all your marts among?" Friends, I will not cease hoping though you weep. Such things I see, and some of them shall come Though now our streets are harsh and ashen-gray, Though our strong youths are strident now, or dumb. Friends, that sweet town, that wonder-town, shall rise. Naught can delay it. Though it may not be Just as I dream, it comes at last I know With streets like channels of an incense-sea.

The Alchemist's Petition

Thou wilt not sentence to eternal life My soul that prays that it may sleep and sleep Like a white statue dropped into the deep, Covered with sand, covered with chests of gold, And slave-bones, tossed from many a pirate hold. But for this prayer thou wilt not bind in Hell My soul, that shook with love for Fame and Truth— In such unquenched desires consumed his youth— Let me turn dust, like dead leaves in the Fall, Or wood that lights an hour your knightly hall— Amen.

Two Easter Stanzas

I The Hope of the Resurrection

Though I have watched so many mourners weep O'er the real dead, in dull earth laid asleep— Those dead seemed but the shadows of my days That passed and left me in the sun's bright rays. Now though you go on smiling in the sun Our love is slain, and love and you were one. You are the first, you I have known so long, Whose death was deadly, a tremendous wrong. Therefore I seek the faith that sets it right Amid

the lilies and the candle-light. I think on Heaven, for in that air so clear We two may meet, confused and parted here. Ah, when man's dearest dies, 'tis then he goes To that old balm that heals the centuries' woes. Then Christ's wild cry in all the streets is rife:— "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

II We meet at the Judgment and I fear it Not

Though better men may fear that trumpet's warning, I meet you, lady, on the Judgment morning, With golden hope my spirit still adorning. Our God who made you all so fair and sweet Is three times gentle, and before his feet Rejoicing I shall say:—"The girl you gave Was my first Heaven, an angel bent to save. Oh, God, her maker, if my ingrate breath Is worth this rescue from the Second Death, Perhaps her dear proud eyes grow gentler too That scorned my graceless years and trophies few. Gone are those years, and gone ill-deeds that turned Her sacred beauty from my songs that burned. We now as comrades through the stars may take The rich and arduous quests I did forsake. Grant me a seraph-guide to thread the throng And quickly find that woman-soul so strong. I dream that in her deeply-hidden heart Hurt love lived on, though we were far apart, A brooding secret mercy like your own That blooms to-day to vindicate your throne.

The Traveller-heart

(To a Man who maintained that the Mausoleum is the Stateliest Possible Manner of Interment)

I would be one with the dark, dark earth:— Follow the plough with a yokel tread. I would be part of the Indian corn, Walking the rows with the plumes o'erhead. I would be one with the lavish earth, Eating the bee-stung apples red: Walking where lambs walk on the hills; By oak-grove paths to the pools be led. I would be one with the dark-bright night When sparkling skies and the lightning wed— Walking on with the vicious wind By roads whence even the dogs have fled. I would be one with

the sacred earth On to the end, till I sleep with the dead. Terror shall put no spears through me. Peace shall jewel my shroud instead. I shall be one with all pit-black things Finding their lowering threat unsaid: Stars for my pillow there in the gloom,— Oak-roots arching about my head! Stars, like daisies, shall rise through the earth, Acorns fall round my breast that bled. Children shall weave there a flowery chain, Squirrels on acorn-hearts be fed:— Fruit of the traveller-heart of me, Fruit of my harvest-songs long sped: Sweet with the life of my sunburned days When the sheaves were ripe, and the apples red.

The North Star Whispers to the Blacksmith's Son

The North Star whispers: "You are one Of those whose course no chance can change. You blunder, but are not undone, Your spirit-task is fixed and strange. "When here you walk, a bloodless shade, A singer all men else forget. Your chants of hammer, forge and spade Will move the prairie-village yet. "That young, stiff-necked, reviling town Beholds your fancies on her walls, And paints them out or tears them down, Or bars them from her feasting-halls. "Yet shall the fragments still remain; Yet shall remain some watch-tower strong That ivy-vines will not disdain, Haunted and trembling with your song. "Your flambeau in the dusk shall burn, Flame high in storms, flame white and clear; Your ghost in gleaming robes return And burn a deathless incense here."

Third Section ~~ A Miscellany called "the Christmas Tree"

This Section is a Christmas Tree

This section is a Christmas tree: Loaded with pretty toys for you. Behold the blocks, the Noah's arks, The popguns painted red and blue. No solemn pine-cone forest-fruit, But silver horns and candy sacks And many little tinsel hearts And

cherubs pink, and jumping-jacks. For every child a gift, I hope. The doll upon the topmost bough Is mine. But all the rest are yours. And I will light the candles now.

The Sun Says his Prayers

"The sun says his prayers," said the fairy, Or else he would wither and die. "The sun says his prayers," said the fairy, "For strength to climb up through the sky. He leans on invisible angels, And Faith is his prop and his rod. The sky is his crystal cathedral. And dawn is his altar to God."

Popcorn, Glass Balls, and Cranberries (As it were)

I. The Lion

The Lion is a kingly beast. He likes a Hindu for a feast. And if no Hindu he can get, The lion-family is upset. He cuffs his wife and bites her ears Till she is nearly moved to tears. Then some explorer finds the den And all is family peace again.

II. An Explanation of the Grasshopper

The Grasshopper, the grasshopper, I will explain to you:— He is the Brownies' racehorse, The fairies' Kangaroo.

III. The Dangerous Little Boy Fairies

In fairyland the little boys Would rather fight than eat their meals. They like to chase a gauze-winged fly And catch and beat him till he squeals. Sometimes they come to sleeping men Armed with the deadly red-rose thorn, And those that feel its fearful wound Repent the day that they were born.

IV. The Mouse that gnawed the Oak-tree Down

The mouse that gnawed the oak-tree down Began his task in early life. He kept so busy with his teeth He had no time to take a wife. He gnawed and gnawed through sun and rain When the ambitious fit was on, Then rested in the sawdust till A month

of idleness had gone. He did not move about to hunt The coteries of mousie-men. He was a snail-paced, stupid thing Until he cared to gnaw again. The mouse that gnawed the oak-tree down, When that tough foe was at his feet— Found in the stump no angel-cake Nor buttered bread, nor cheese, nor meat— The forest-roof let in the sky. "This light is worth the work," said he. "I'll make this ancient swamp more light," And started on another tree.

V. Parvenu

Where does Cinderella sleep? By far-off day-dream river. A secret place her burning Prince Decks, while his heart-strings quiver. Homesick for our cinder world, Her low-born shoulders shiver; She longs for sleep in cinders curled— We, for the day-dream river.

VI. The Spider and the Ghost of the Fly

Once I loved a spider When I was born a fly, A velvet-footed spider With a gown of rainbow-dye. She ate my wings and gloated. She bound me with a hair. She drove me to her parlor Above her winding stair. To educate young spiders She took me all apart. My ghost came back to haunt her. I saw her eat my heart.

VII. Crickets on a Strike

The foolish queen of fairyland From her milk-white throne in a lily-bell, Gave command to her cricket-band To play for her when the dew-drops fell. But the cold dew spoiled their instruments And they play for the foolish queen no more. Instead those sturdy malcontents Play sharps and flats in my kitchen floor.

How a Little Girl Danced

Dedicated to Lucy Bates

(Being a reminiscence of certain private theatricals.)

Oh, cabaret dancer, I know a dancer, Whose eyes have not looked on the feasts that

are vain. I know a dancer, I know a dancer, Whose soul has no bond with the beasts of the plain: Judith the dancer, Judith the dancer, With foot like the snow, and with step like the rain. Oh, thrice-painted dancer, vaudeville dancer, Sad in your spangles, with soul all astrain, I know a dancer, I know a dancer, Whose laughter and weeping are spiritual gain, A pure-hearted, high-hearted maiden evangel, With strength the dark cynical earth to disdain. Flowers of bright Broadway, you of the chorus, Who sing in the hope of forgetting your pain: I turn to a sister of Sainted Cecilia, A white bird escaping the earth's tangled skein:— The music of God is her innermost brooding, The whispering angels her footsteps sustain. Oh, proud Russian dancer: praise for your dancing. No clean human passion my rhyme would arraign. You dance for Apollo with noble devotion, A high cleansing revel to make the heart sane. But Judith the dancer prays to a spirit More white than Apollo and all of his train. I know a dancer who finds the true Godhead, Who bends o'er a brazier in Heaven's clear plain. I know a dancer, I know a dancer, Who lifts us toward peace, from this earth that is vain: Judith the dancer, Judith the dancer, With foot like the snow, and with step like the rain.

In Praise of Songs that Die

After having read a Great Deal of Good Current Poetry in the Magazines and Newspapers

Ah, they are passing, passing by, Wonderful songs, but born to die! Cries from the infinite human seas, Waves thrice-winged with harmonies. Here I stand on a pier in the foam Seeing the songs to the beach go home, Dying in sand while the tide flows back, As it flowed of old in its fated track. Oh, hurrying tide that will not hear Your own foam-children dying near: Is there no refuge-house of song, No home, no haven where songs belong? Oh, precious hymns that come and go! You perish, and I love you so!

Factory Windows are always Broken

Factory windows are always broken. Somebody's always throwing bricks, Somebody's always heaving cinders, Playing ugly Yahoo tricks. Factory windows are always broken. Other windows are let alone. No one throws through the chapel-window The bitter, snarling, derisive stone. Factory windows are always broken. Something or other is going wrong. Something is rotten—I think, in Denmark. End of the factory-window song.

To Mary Pickford

Moving-picture Actress

(On hearing she was leaving the moving-pictures for the stage.)

Mary Pickford, doll divine, Year by year, and every day At the moving-picture play, You have been my valentine. Once a free-limbed page in hose, Baby-Rosalind in flower, Cloakless, shrinking, in that hour How our reverent passion rose, How our fine desire you won. Kitchen-wench another day, Shapeless, wooden every way. Next, a fairy from the sun. Once you walked a grown-up strand Fish-wife siren, full of lure, Snaring with devices sure Lads who murdered on the sand. But on most days just a child Dimpled as no grown-folk are, Cold of kiss as some north star, Violet from the valleys wild. Snared as innocence must be, Fleeing, prisoned, chained, half-dead— At the end of tortures dread Roaring cowboys set you free. Fly, O song, to her to-day, Like a cowboy cross the land. Snatch her from Belasco's hand And that prison called Broadway. All the village swains await One dear lily-girl demure, Saucy, dancing, cold and pure, Elf who must return in state.

Blanche Sweet

Moving-picture Actress

(After seeing the reel called "Oil and Water".)

Beauty has a throne-room In our humorous town, Spoiling its hob-goblins, Laughing shadows down. Rank musicians torture Ragtime ballads vile, But we walk serenely Down the odorous aisle. We forgive the squalor And the boom and squeal For the Great Queen flashes From the moving reel. Just a prim blonde stranger In her early day, Hiding brilliant weapons, Too averse to play, Then she burst upon us Dancing through the night. Oh, her maiden radiance, Veils and roses white. With new powers, yet cautious, Not too smart or skilled, That first flash of dancing Wrought the thing she willed:— Mobs of us made noble By her strong desire, By her white, uplifting, Royal romance-fire. Though the tin piano Snarls its tango rude, Though the chairs are shaky And the dramas crude, Solemn are her motions, Stately are her wiles, Filling oafs with wisdom, Saving souls with smiles; 'Mid the restless actors She is rich and slow. She will stand like marble, She will pause and glow, Though the film is twitching, Keep a peaceful reign, Ruler of her passion, Ruler of our pain!

Sunshine

For a Very Little Girl, Not a Year Old. Catharine Frazee Wakefield.

The sun gives not directly The coal, the diamond crown; Not in a special basket Are these from Heaven let down. The sun gives not directly The plough, man's iron friend; Not by a path or stairway Do tools from Heaven descend. Yet sunshine fashions all things That cut or burn or fly; And corn that seems upon the earth Is made in the hot sky. The gravel of the roadbed, The metal of the gun, The engine of the airship Trace somehow from the sun. And so your soul, my lady— (Mere sunshine, nothing more)— Prepares me the contraptions I work with or adore. Within me cornfields rustle, Niagaras roar their way, Vast thunderstorms and rainbows Are in my thought to-day. Ten thousand anvils sound there By forges flaming white, And many books I read there, And many books I write; And

freedom's bells are ringing, And bird-choirs chant and fly— The whole world works in me to-day And all the shining sky, Because of one small lady Whose smile is my chief sun. She gives not any gift to me Yet all gifts, giving one.... Amen.

An Apology for the Bottle Volcanic

Sometimes I dip my pen and find the bottle full of fire, The salamanders flying forth I cannot but admire. It's Etna, or Vesuvius, if those big things were small, And then 'tis but itself again, and does not smoke at all. And so my blood grows cold. I say, "The bottle held but ink, And, if you thought it otherwise, the worser for your think." And then, just as I throw my scribbled paper on the floor, The bottle says, "Fe, fi, fo, fum," and steams and shouts some more. O sad deceiving ink, as bad as liquor in its way— All demons of a bottle size have pranced from you to-day, And seized my pen for hobby-horse as witches ride a broom, And left a trail of brimstone words and blots and gobs of gloom. And yet when I am extra good and say my prayers at night, And mind my ma, and do the chores, and speak to folks polite, My bottle spreads a rainbow-mist, and from the vapor fine Ten thousand troops from fairyland come riding in a line. I've seen them on their chargers race around my study chair, They opened wide the window and rode forth upon the air. The army widened as it went, and into myriads grew, O how the lances shimmered, how the silvery trumpets blew!

When Gassy Thompson Struck it Rich

He paid a Swede twelve bits an hour Just to invent a fancy style To spread the celebration paint So it would show at least a mile. Some things they did I will not tell. They're not quite proper for a rhyme. But I WILL say Yim Yonson Swede Did sure invent a sunflower time. One thing they did that I can tell And not offend the ladies here:— They took a goat to Simp's Saloon And made it take a bath in beer.

That ENTERprise took MANagement. They broke a wash-tub in the fray. But mister goat was bathed all right And bar-keep Simp was, too, they say. They wore girls' pink straw hats to church And clucked like hens. They surely did. They bought two HOtel frying pans And in them down the mountain slid. They went to Denver in good clothes, And kept Burt's grill-room wide awake, And cut about like jumping-jacks, And ordered seven-dollar steak. They had the waiters whirling round Just sweeping up the smear and smash. They tried to buy the State-house flag. They showed the Janitor the cash. And old Dan Tucker on a toot, Or John Paul Jones before the breeze, Or Indians eating fat fried dog, Were not as happy babes as these. One morn, in hills near Cripple-creek With cheerful swears the two awoke. The Swede had twenty cents, all right. But Gassy Thompson was clean broke.

Rhymes for Gloriana

I. The Doll upon the Topmost Bough

This doll upon the topmost bough, This playmate-gift, in Christmas dress, Was taken down and brought to me One sleety night most comfortless. Her hair was gold, her dolly-sash Was gray brocade, most good to see. The dear toy laughed, and I forgot The ill the new year promised me.

II. On Suddenly Receiving a Curl Long Refused

Oh, saucy gold circle of fairyland silk— Impudent, intimate, delicate treasure: A noose for my heart and a ring for my finger:— Here in my study you sing me a measure. Whimsy and song in my little gray study! Words out of wonderland, praising her fineness, Touched with her pulsating, delicate laughter, Saying, "The girl is all daring and kindness!" Saying, "Her soul is all feminine gameness, Trusting her insights, ardent for living; She would be weeping with me and be laughing, A thoroughbred, joyous receiving and giving!"

III. On Receiving One of Gloriana's Letters

Your pen needs but a ruffle To be Pavlova whirling. It surely is a scalawag A-scamping down the page. A pretty little May-wind The morning buds uncurling. And then the white sweet Russian, The dancer of the age. Your pen's the Queen of Sheba, Such serious questions bringing, That merry rascal Solomon Would show a sober face:— And then again Pavlova To set our spirits singing, The snowy-swan bacchante All glamour, glee and grace.

IV. In Praise of Gloriana's Remarkable Golden Hair

The gleaming head of one fine friend Is bent above my little song, So through the treasure-pits of Heaven In fancy's shoes, I march along. I wander, seek and peer and ponder In Splendor's last ensnaring lair— 'Mid burnished harps and burnished crowns Where noble chariots gleam and flare: Amid the spirit-coins and gems, The plates and cups and helms of fire— The gorgeous-treasure-pits of Heaven— Where angel-misers slake desire! O endless treasure-pits of gold Where silly angel-men make mirth— I think that I am there this hour, Though walking in the ways of earth!

Fourth Section ~~ Twenty Poems in which the Moon is the Principal Figure of Speech

Once More—To Gloriana

Girl with the burning golden eyes, And red-bird song, and snowy throat: I bring you gold and silver moons And diamond stars, and mists that float. I bring you moons and snowy clouds, I bring you prairie skies to-night To feebly praise your golden eyes And red-bird song, and throat so white.

First Section: Moon Poems for the Children/Fairy-tales for the Children

I. Euclid

Old Euclid drew a circle On a sand-beach long ago. He bounded and enclosed it With angles thus and so. His set of solemn greybeards Nodded and argued much Of arc and of circumference, Diameter and such. A silent child stood by them From morning until noon Because they drew such charming Round pictures of the moon.

II. The Haughty Snail-king (What Uncle William told the Children)

Twelve snails went walking after night. They'd creep an inch or so, Then stop and bug their eyes And blow. Some folks... are... deadly... slow. Twelve snails went walking yestereve, Led by their fat old king. They were so dull their princeling had No sceptre, robe or ring— Only a paper cap to wear When nightly journeying. This king-snail said: "I feel a thought Within.... It blossoms soon.... O little courtiers of mine,... I crave a pretty boon.... Oh, yes... (High thoughts with effort come And well-bred snails are ALMOST dumb.) "I wish I had a yellow crown As glistering... as... the moon."

III. What the Rattlesnake Said

The moon's a little prairie-dog. He shivers through the night. He sits upon his hill and cries For fear that I will bite. The sun's a broncho. He's afraid Like every other thing, And trembles, morning, noon and night, Lest I should spring, and sting.

IV. The Moon's the North Wind's Cooky (What the Little Girl Said)

The Moon's the North Wind's cooky. He bites it, day by day, Until there's but a rim of scraps That crumble all away. The South Wind is a baker. He kneads clouds in his den, And bakes a crisp new moon that... greedy North... Wind... eats... again!

V. Drying their Wings (What the Carpenter Said)

The moon's a cottage with a door. Some folks can see it plain. Look, you may catch a glint of light, A sparkle through the pane, Showing the place is brighter still Within, though bright without. There, at a cosy open fire Strange babes are grouped

about. The children of the wind and tide— The urchins of the sky, Drying their wings from storms and things So they again can fly.

VI. What the Gray-winged Fairy Said

The moon's a gong, hung in the wild, Whose song the fays hold dear. Of course you do not hear it, child. It takes a FAIRY ear. The full moon is a splendid gong That beats as night grows still. It sounds above the evening song Of dove or whippoorwill.

VII. Yet Gentle will the Griffin Be (What Grandpa told the Children)

The moon? It is a griffin's egg, Hatching to-morrow night. And how the little boys will watch With shouting and delight To see him break the shell and stretch And creep across the sky. The boys will laugh. The little girls, I fear, may hide and cry. Yet gentle will the griffin be, Most decorous and fat, And walk up to the milky way And lap it like a cat.

Second Section: The Moon is a Mirror

I. Prologue. A Sense of Humor

No man should stand before the moon To make sweet song thereon, With dandified importance, His sense of humor gone. Nay, let us don the motley cap, The jester's chastened mien, If we would woo that looking-glass And see what should be seen. O mirror on fair Heaven's wall, We find there what we bring. So, let us smile in honest part And deck our souls and sing. Yea, by the chastened jest alone Will ghosts and terrors pass, And fays, or suchlike friendly things, Throw kisses through the glass.

II. On the Garden-wall

Oh, once I walked a garden In dreams. 'Twas yellow grass. And many orange-trees grew there In sand as white as glass. The curving, wide wall-border Was marble, like the snow. I walked that wall a fairy-prince And, pacing quaint and slow, Beside

me were my pages, Two giant, friendly birds. Half-swan they were, half peacock. They spake in courtier-words. Their inner wings a chariot, Their outer wings for flight, They lifted me from dreamland. We bade those trees good-night. Swiftly above the stars we rode. I looked below me soon. The white-walled garden I had ruled Was one lone flower—the moon.

III. Written for a Musician

Hungry for music with a desperate hunger I prowled abroad, I threaded through the town; The evening crowd was clamoring and drinking, Vulgar and pitiful—my heart bowed down— Till I remembered duller hours made noble By strangers clad in some surprising grace. Wait, wait, my soul, your music comes ere midnight Appearing in some unexpected place With quivering lips, and gleaming, moonlit face.

IV. The Moon is a Painter

He coveted her portrait. He toiled as she grew gay. She loved to see him labor In that devoted way. And in the end it pleased her, But bowed him more with care. Her rose-smile showed so plainly, Her soul-smile was not there. That night he groped without a lamp To find a cloak, a book, And on the vexing portrait By moonrise chanced to look. The color-scheme was out of key, The maiden rose-smile faint, But through the blessed darkness She gleamed, his friendly saint. The comrade, white, immortal, His bride, and more than bride— The citizen, the sage of mind, For whom he lived and died.

V. The Encyclopaedia

"If I could set the moon upon This table," said my friend, "Among the standard poets And brochures without end, And noble prints of old Japan, How empty they would seem, By that encyclopaedia Of whim and glittering dream."

VI. What the Miner in the Desert Said

The moon's a brass-hooped water-keg, A wondrous water-feast. If I could climb the

ridge and drink And give drink to my beast; If I could drain that keg, the flies Would not be biting so, My burning feet be spry again, My mule no longer slow. And I could rise and dig for ore, And reach my fatherland, And not be food for ants and hawks And perish in the sand.

VII. What the Coal-heaver Said

The moon's an open furnace door Where all can see the blast, We shovel in our blackest griefs, Upon that grate are cast Our aching burdens, loves and fears And underneath them wait Paper and tar and pitch and pine Called strife and blood and hate. Out of it all there comes a flame, A splendid widening light. Sorrow is turned to mystery And Death into delight.

VIII. What the Moon Saw

Two statesmen met by moonlight. Their ease was partly feigned. They glanced about the prairie. Their faces were constrained. In various ways aforetime They had misled the state, Yet did it so politely Their henchmen thought them great. They sat beneath a hedge and spake No word, but had a smoke. A satchel passed from hand to hand. Next day, the deadlock broke.

IX. What Semiramis Said

The moon's a steaming chalice Of honey and venom-wine. A little of it sipped by night Makes the long hours divine. But oh, my reckless lovers, They drain the cup and wail, Die at my feet with shaking limbs And tender lips all pale. Above them in the sky it bends Empty and gray and dread. To-morrow night 'tis full again, Golden, and foaming red.

X. What the Ghost of the Gambler Said

Where now the huts are empty, Where never a camp-fire glows, In an abandoned canyon, A Gambler's Ghost arose. He muttered there, "The moon's a sack Of dust." His voice rose thin: "I wish I knew the miner-man. I'd play, and play to win. In every game in Cripple-creek Of old, when stakes were high, I held my own. Now I

would play For that sack in the sky. The sport would not be ended there. 'Twould rather be begun. I'd bet my moon against his stars, And gamble for the sun."

XI. The Spice-tree

This is the song The spice-tree sings: "Hunger and fire, Hunger and fire, Sky-born Beauty— Spice of desire," Under the spice-tree Watch and wait, Burning maidens And lads that mate. The spice-tree spreads And its boughs come down Shadowing village and farm and town. And none can see But the pure of heart The great green leaves And the boughs descending, And hear the song that is never ending. The deep roots whisper, The branches say:— "Love to-morrow, And love to-day, And till Heaven's day, And till Heaven's day." The moon is a bird's nest in its branches, The moon is hung in its topmost spaces. And there, to-night, two doves play house While lovers watch with uplifted faces. Two doves go home To their nest, the moon. It is woven of twigs of broken light, With threads of scarlet and threads of gray And a lining of down for silk delight. To their Eden, the moon, fly home our doves, Up through the boughs of the great spice-tree;— And one is the kiss I took from you, And one is the kiss you gave to me.

XII. The Scissors-grinder (What the Tramp Said)

The old man had his box and wheel For grinding knives and shears. No doubt his bell in village streets Was joy to children's ears. And I bethought me of my youth When such men came around, And times I asked them in, quite sure The scissors should be ground. The old man turned and spoke to me, His face at last in view. And then I thought those curious eyes Were eyes that once I knew. "The moon is but an emery-wheel To whet the sword of God," He said. "And here beside my fire I stretch upon the sod Each night, and dream, and watch the stars And watch the ghost-clouds go. And see that sword of God in Heaven A-waving to and fro. I see that sword each century, friend. It means the world-war comes With all its bloody, wicked chiefs And hate-inflaming drums. Men talk of peace, but I have seen That emery-wheel

turn round. The voice of Abel cries again To God from out the ground. The ditches must flow red, the plague Go stark and screaming by Each time that sword of God takes edge Within the midnight sky. And those that scorned their brothers here And sowed a wind of shame Will reap the whirlwind as of old And face relentless flame." And thus the scissors-grinder spoke, His face at last in view. And there beside the railroad bridge I saw the wandering Jew.

XIII. My Lady in her White Silk Shawl

My lady in her white silk shawl Is like a lily dim, Within the twilight of the room Enthroned and kind and prim. My lady! Pale gold is her hair. Until she smiles her face Is pale with far Hellenic moods, With thoughts that find no place In our harsh village of the West Wherein she lives of late, She's distant as far-hidden stars, And cold—(almost!)—as fate. But when she smiles she's here again Rosy with comrade-cheer, A Puritan Bacchante made To laugh around the year. The merry gentle moon herself, Heart-stirring too, like her, Wakening wild and innocent love In every worshipper.

XIV. Aladdin and the Jinn

"Bring me soft song," said Aladdin. "This tailor-shop sings not at all. Chant me a word of the twilight, Of roses that mourn in the fall. Bring me a song like hashish That will comfort the stale and the sad, For I would be mending my spirit, Forgetting these days that are bad, Forgetting companions too shallow, Their quarrels and arguments thin, Forgetting the shouting Muezzin:"— "I AM YOUR SLAVE," said the Jinn. "Bring me old wines," said Aladdin. "I have been a starved pauper too long. Serve them in vessels of jade and of shell, Serve them with fruit and with song:— Wines of pre-Adamite Sultans Digged from beneath the black seas:— New-gathered dew from the heavens Dripped down from Heaven's sweet trees, Cups from the angels' pale tables That will make me both handsome and wise, For I have beheld her, the princess, Firelight and starlight her eyes. Pauper I am, I

would woo her. And—let me drink wine, to begin, Though the Koran expressly forbids it." "I AM YOUR SLAVE," said the Jinn. "Plan me a dome," said Aladdin, "That is drawn like the dawn of the MOON, When the sphere seems to rest on the mountains, Half-hidden, yet full-risen soon." "Build me a dome," said Aladdin, "That shall cause all young lovers to sigh, The fullness of life and of beauty, Peace beyond peace to the eye— A palace of foam and of opal, Pure moonlight without and within, Where I may enthrone my sweet lady." "I AM YOUR SLAVE," said the Jinn.

XV. The Strength of the Lonely (What the Mendicant Said)

The moon's a monk, unmated, Who walks his cell, the sky. His strength is that of heaven-vowed men Who all life's flames defy. They turn to stars or shadows, They go like snow or dew— Leaving behind no sorrow— Only the arching blue.

Fifth Section

War. September 1, 1914 Intended to be Read Aloud

I. Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight

(In Springfield, Illinois)

It is portentous, and a thing of state That here at midnight, in our little town A mourning figure walks, and will not rest, Near the old court-house pacing up and down, Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards He lingers where his children used to play, Or through the market, on the well-worn stones He stalks until the dawn-stars burn away. A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black, A famous high top-hat and plain worn shawl Make him the quaint great figure that men love, The prairie-lawyer, master of us all. He cannot sleep upon his hillside now. He is among us:—as in times before! And we who toss and lie awake for long Breathe

deep, and start, to see him pass the door. His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings. Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep? Too many peasants fight, they know not why, Too many homesteads in black terror weep. The sins of all the war-lords burn his heart. He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main. He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now The bitterness, the folly and the pain. He cannot rest until a spirit-dawn Shall come;—the shining hope of Europe free: The league of sober folk, the Workers' Earth, Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea. It breaks his heart that kings must murder still, That all his hours of travail here for men Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace That he may sleep upon his hill again?

II. A Curse for Kings

A curse upon each king who leads his state, No matter what his plea, to this foul game, And may it end his wicked dynasty, And may he die in exile and black shame. If there is vengeance in the Heaven of Heavens, What punishment could Heaven devise for these Who fill the rivers of the world with dead, And turn their murderers loose on all the seas! Put back the clock of time a thousand years, And make our Europe, once the world's proud Queen, A shrieking strumpet, furious fratricide, Eater of entrails, wallowing obscene In pits where millions foam and rave and bark, Mad dogs and idiots, thrice drunk with strife; While Science towers above;—a witch, red-winged: Science we looked to for the light of life. Curse me the men who make and sell iron ships, Who walk the floor in thought, that they may find Each powder prompt, each steel with fearful edge, Each deadliest device against mankind. Curse me the sleek lords with their plumes and spurs, May Heaven give their land to peasant spades, Give them the brand of Cain, for their pride's sake, And felon's stripes for medals and for braids. Curse me the fiddling, twiddling diplomats, Haggling here, plotting and hatching there, Who make the kind world but their game

of cards, Till millions die at turning of a hair. What punishment will Heaven devise for these Who win by others' sweat and hardihood, Who make men into stinking vultures' meat, Saying to evil still "Be thou my good"? Ah, he who starts a million souls toward death Should burn in utmost hell a million years! —Mothers of men go on the destined wrack To give them life, with anguish and with tears:— Are all those childbed sorrows sneered away? Yea, fools laugh at the humble christenings, And cradle-joys are mocked of the fat lords: These mothers' sons made dead men for the Kings! All in the name of this or that grim flag, No angel-flags in all the rag-array— Banners the demons love, and all Hell sings And plays wild harps. Those flags march forth to-day!

III. Who Knows?

They say one king is mad. Perhaps. Who knows? They say one king is doddering and grey. They say one king is slack and sick of mind, A puppet for hid strings that twitch and play. Is Europe then to be their sprawling-place? Their mad-house, till it turns the wide world's bane? Their place of maudlin, slavering conference Till every far-off farmstead goes insane?

IV. To Buddha

Awake again in Asia, Lord of Peace, Awake and preach, for her far swordsmen rise. And would they sheathe the sword before you, friend, Or scorn your way, while looking in your eyes? Good comrade and philosopher and prince, Thoughtful and thoroughbred and strong and kind, Dare they to move against your pride benign, Lord of the Law, high chieftain of the mind?

But what can Europe say, when in your name The throats are cut, the lotus-ponds turn red? And what can Europe say, when with a laugh Old Asia heaps her hecatombs of dead?

V. The Unpardonable Sin

This is the sin against the Holy Ghost:— To speak of bloody power as right divine, And call on God to guard each vile chief's house, And for such chiefs, turn men to wolves and swine:— To go forth killing in White Mercy's name, Making the trenches stink with spattered brains, Tearing the nerves and arteries apart, Sowing with flesh the unreaped golden plains. In any Church's name, to sack fair towns, And turn each home into a screaming sty, To make the little children fugitive, And have their mothers for a quick death cry,— This is the sin against the Holy Ghost: This is the sin no purging can atone:— To send forth rapine in the name of Christ:— To set the face, and make the heart a stone.

VI. Above the Battle's Front

St. Francis, Buddha, Tolstoi, and St. John— Friends, if you four, as pilgrims, hand in hand, Returned, the hate of earth once more to dare, And walked upon the water and the land, If you, with words celestial, stopped these kings For sober conclave, ere their battle great, Would they for one deep instant then discern Their crime, their heart-rot, and their fiend's estate? If you should float above the battle's front, Pillars of cloud, of fire that does not slay, Bearing a fifth within your regal train, The Son of David in his strange array— If, in his majesty, he towered toward Heaven, Would they have hearts to see or understand? ... Nay, for he hovers there to-night we know, Thorn-crowned above the water and the land.

VII. Epilogue. Under the Blessing of Your Psyche Wings

Though I have found you like a snow-drop pale, On sunny days have found you weak and still, Though I have often held your girlish head Drooped on my shoulder, faint from little ill:— Under the blessing of your Psyche-wings I hide to-night like

one small broken bird, So soothed I half-forget the world gone mad:— And all the winds of war are now unheard. My heaven-doubting pennons feel your hands With touch most delicate so circling round, That for an hour I dream that God is good. And in your shadow, Mercy's ways abound. I thought myself the guard of your frail state, And yet I come to-night a helpless guest, Hiding beneath your giant Psyche-wings, Against the pallor of your wondrous breast.

[End of original text.]

Biographical Note:

Nicholas Vachel Lindsay (1879-1931):

(Vachel is pronounced Vay-chul, that is, it rhymes with 'Rachel').

"The Eagle that is Forgotten" and "The Congo" are two of his best-known poems, and appear in his first two volumes of verse, "General William Booth Enters into Heaven" (1913) and "The Congo" (1914).

Lindsay himself considered his drawings and his prose writings to be as important as his verse, all coming together to form a whole. His "Collected Poems" (1925) gives a good selection.

From an anthology of verse by Jessie B. Rittenhouse (1913, 1917):

"Lindsay, Vachel. Born November 10, 1879. Educated at Hiram College, Ohio. He took up the study of art and studied at the Art Institute, Chicago, 1900-03 and at the New York School of Art, 1904-05. For a time after his technical study, he lectured upon art in its practical relation to the community, and returning to his home in Springfield, Illinois, issued what one might term his manifesto in the shape of "The Village Magazine", divided about equally between prose articles, pertaining to beautifying his native city, and poems, illustrated by his own drawings. Soon after this, Mr. Lindsay, taking as scrip for the journey, "Rhymes to be Traded for Bread",

made a pilgrimage on foot through several Western States going as far afield as New Mexico. The story of this journey is given in his volume, "Adventures while Preaching the Gospel of Beauty". Mr. Lindsay first attracted attention in poetry by "General William Booth Enters into Heaven", a poem which became the title of his first volume, in 1913. His second volume was "The Congo", published in 1914. He is attempting to restore to poetry its early appeal as a spoken art, and his later work differs greatly from the selections contained in this anthology."

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE CONGO, AND OTHER POEMS ***

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