

T 9 f

National Library of Scotland



B000109000



VERSES

THE GARDEN OF KAMA ; and other Love
Lyrics from India. Arranged in Verse by LAURENCE
HOPE. Square 8vo, 5s. net.

STARS OF THE DESERT. By LAURENCE
HOPE. Square 8vo, price 5s. net.

Uniform with the above (shortly)

LAST POEMS. By LAURENCE HOPE.

LONDON : WILLIAM HEINEMANN.

VERSES

BY

VIOLET JACOB

(MRS. ARTHUR JACOB)

AUTHOR OF 'THE SHEEP-STEALERS,' 'THE INTERLOPER'



LONDON

WILLIAM HEINEMANN

1905



All rights reserved.

TO
THE IDEAL CRITIC

I have to thank the Editors of the
Westminster Gazette, *The English
Illustrated Magazine*, and *Country
Life* for permission to reprint some
of the following poems.—V. J.

CONTENTS

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| To H. M. C. | 1 |
| Half-way | 2 |
| White Magic | 4 |
| Serenade | 5 |
| The Shadow | 6 |
| The Mill-house | 8 |
| 'I sleep but my Heart waketh' | 13 |
| An Immortelle | 14 |
| The Two Queens | 15 |
| The Lost Track | 16 |
| At a Brookside | 18 |
| Revenant | 18 |
| To Aurelia, with a Pearl Necklace | 19 |
| Beyond the Walls | 20 |
| 'Come on, come up, ye rovers' | 22 |
| An Echo | 24 |
| A Young Moon | 26 |
| The Soul | 27 |
| The Ballad of Hakon | 29 |
| Ignis Fatuus | 33 |
| The Little Nightjar | 34 |
| Possession | 36 |
| Airlie Kirk | 38 |

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| The Flute player | 39 |
| In Lower Egypt | 42 |
| Winter and Spring | 44 |
| A Tryst | 45 |
| The Call | 47 |
| Time and Space | 49 |
| A Translation | 50 |
| Glamour | 52 |
| Lenore in the Oliveyards | 54 |
| New Year's Eve | 55 |
| Three Poems for Children— | |
| I. The Lilacs | 57 |
| II. Dreams | 58 |
| III. The Snow Witch | 61 |
| The Valley of the Kings | 62 |
| The Lowland Ploughman | 65 |
| Late February | 67 |
| From a Train-window | 68 |
| Poems of India— | |
| I. In a Mango-tope | 70 |
| II. Night in the Plains | 73 |
| III. The Resting-place | 75 |
| IV. Evening in the Opium Fields | 77 |
| V. 'God is great' | 78 |
| VI. A Mahomedan Graveyard | 81 |
| VII. Cherry-Blossom at Dagshai | 83 |
| VIII. 'With Military Honours' | 85 |
| IX. The Distant Temple | 87 |

TO H. M. C.

A SILENCE falls on us to-day,
Our lips are closed, we do not speak,
But, in each other's eyes we seek
And find the thing that each would say.

So deep it lies, a rock set fast,
Washed hard by life, by love, by tears,
Beneath the floods of time and years
Built up and rooted in the past.

And sometimes, when the tide is low,
A voice comes up the Northern sea ;
Across the sands to you and me
It calls from lands left long ago.

By marshes lying dim and wide,
Through wet, grey sea-fogs, creeping on,

VERSES

Back from that youth for ever gone
It comes to us across the tide.

How shall we speak? What words can say
The thing for which no words are known,
That calls to us from places lone
Through past, through present, through to-day?



HALF-WAY

THE world is not the dream of living gold
 We dreamed when we were young;
Then, all the glory that the west could hold
 Burned, fold on fold,
A molten veil across its portals flung
Behind whose shade the years lay sleeping still,
 Like tales untold;
But now, beyond the beeches bare and chill,
Beyond the woods set far upon the hill,
 The clouds are cold.

VERSES

And life is not the journey that we planned
As we set out with morn ;
We said, ' We will rest here and view the land,
Or take our stand
Upon these hills and see the ripening corn,
Or step aside along the mere to mark
The wild-fowl band ;'
But now, we know we must tread swift and stark,
If we would cross the desert ere the dark
Creeps on the sand.

And death is not the dim and distant shade
So far against the sky ;
The half-seen trap for others waiting laid,
While we, arrayed
In pride and plume of youth, go sweeping by.
We thought to meet him with a spirit braced
By conquests made ;
But now, we know, when half the road is traced,
Our hope is but to reach him undisgraced
And unafraid.

VERSES

WHITE MAGIC

I saw the moon come out and stand last night
Above the plains of cloud,
Like a lone chief, who, at his tented door,
Looks down upon the forest's silent floor
From a far battlement upon the height,
And drops his mantle proud
Into the swimming vapours of the light.

O watcher on the planet-woven steep
Whose shining feet are set
Above the haunted glamour of the skies!
Draw me, a slave, with thy compelling eyes,
While the slow hours in soundless circle creep,
Out through the world, while yet
The world's heart heaves beneath the veil of
sleep.

VERSES

O pale-faced chief! The earth and heaven are
still

And thou and I awake ;

I come, with outstretched arms and spirit bound,
Forth through the scattered graves where, lying
sound,

The dead are sown by field and fold and hill
And mist-entangled brake ;

O pale chief! Draw me up into the height,
Into the swimming light.



SERENADE

O ROSES, clustering on the sunny wall
In fragrant groups of white and red together,
Bend down, bend down your branches, one
and all,

Beneath the fair June sky and glowing weather ;
And say to her, I send her
A message tender.

VERSES

And thou, convolvulus, upon the gate,
With pale white bells and trails of light leaves
 swinging,
Tell her my love for her is strong as fate,
For ever true and like thy tendrils clinging ;
 And kiss her, soft and shy,
 As she goes by.

O jessamine, in wreaths of scented stars
Across the balconies and stonework meeting,
Climb up and enter at her window-bars
And bear among your buds my loving greeting ;
 Then whisper, sweet and slow,
 ‘ He waits below.’



THE SHADOW

WHAT soul has swept your branches, cypress-
 tree,
 That you should point so high ;
That you, whose root among the graves may be,
 Look ever to the sky ?

VERSES

Dark warden of the long-untended tomb
 Seen o'er some mouldering wall,
Or set where fountained gardens are abloom
 And roses blush and fall.

Scarcely the wind is voiceful as it sways
 Your column, dusk, austere ;
Scarcely the evening breeze that round you plays
 Brings music to the ear.

Your earth-bound foot mortality retains
 Imprisoned in the sod,
Your earth-freed spirit to that ether strains
 Which is the breath of God.

The light o'er southern vineyards dying down
 Smiles on the landscape still,
And lays the lengthening shadow of your
 crown
 On many a Tuscan hill.

VERSES

And, nearer home, where memory's deathless
sun

Enwraps some tear-sown mound,
Your shade, at day's decline, O silent one,
Slants eastward on the ground.

By tomb or pleasure, convent-girdled height,
In countries far or near,
You bear a message from eternal light
To us whose souls are here.

O silent witness ! dark where yonder sky
In saffron splendour burns,
'Tis but the shadow that on earth must lie,
The substance heavenward turns.



THE MILL-HOUSE

BENEATH the drawbridge is the moat,
On broadened leaves the lilies float,
The white bud bursts its oozy coat.

VERSES

Up from the fields of ripened corn
There comes the sound of voices borne
From where the stooks stand newly shorn.

Above her head the banner flies,
A dragon blue with banded eyes,
Grey in the sun the towers rise.

Within, the knights sit in a row,
And ladies, with their hands of snow ;
The golden cup goes to and fro.

She heeds nor feast, nor song, nor wine,
She only sees the weapons shine
Upon the plains of Palestine.

She only hears the trumpets bray
Their summons through the Eastern day,
The tramp of horses far away.

Her heart sees all the far-off scene,
And, with her heart, she hears the green
Wild roll of waters in between.

VERSES

The light from the horizon's rim
Strikes, like the wings of seraphim,
Upon the fountain's circled brim.

A shadow lies before her face,
Sir Hugh has risen and left his place :
" Elayne, the seasons march apace ;

Lo, patience is a good knight's stay,
Yet comes the time when men may say
' Who waits too long will lose the day.'

The dial by the swinging vane
Marks how the long hours wax and wane—
'Tis time the priest were brought, Elayne.

Yon knight who fights in Palestine,
What is his love compared with mine ?
I will load your hair with jewels fine,

You shall lie on silk, you shall sit, a queen,
In costly raiment blue and green
With golden roses wrought in between."

VERSES

To where the crazy mill-house stands
He has borne her with his iron hands,
Her hair hangs down in russet bands ;

He has shorn a long tress of her hair
And bound her feet so slim and fair,
He has borne her out on the mill-house stair.

“ Elayne, Elayne, you are young to die,
There is none to hear should you call or cry,
Shall the water have you or shall I ? ”

She makes no sound ; beneath the ledge
An eddy swirls among the sedge,
He takes a step to the stairs' edge.

The mill-race, roaring far beneath,
Seems like the sound of gloating death,
She looks down and she holds her breath.

“ Elayne, what think you ? Which is best ? ”
Against the black heart in his breast
She keeps her pale face closely prest.

VERSES

The mill-race, winding mile on mile,
Sounds like an angry voice the while ;
He cannot see her drawn lips smile.

Like some slim beast, some snake or stoat,
She meets her teeth upon his throat,
Her fingers grasp his leathern coat.

On the top step they swing and sway,
His breath comes short, his face is grey,
The waters close with a splash of spray.

The mill-race runs till it nears the moat,
What thing does the water raise and float ?
— A drowned dead man with a mark on his
throat.



VERSES

‘I SLEEP BUT MY HEART WAKETH’

HERE in the winding coil of waterways,
Apart among the trees, where no feet pass,
And little woodland rabbits on the grass
Sit lightly cropping through the Autumn days,
The troubling world, with all its weary moods,
Is far away outside the circling woods.

A golden rain of leaf is on the beech
And red and gold the maze of branches glow
To drop their wealth upon the grass below,
As golden silence falls on golden speech ;
In long, wet flats, wherein the heron feeds,
A golden sky is mirrored through the reeds.

No voices come to still that other voice
Which breathes along the labyrinth of trees
To tell the tired soul to dwell at ease
Among the best-loved visions of its choice :
‘Sleep in these groves,’ it says, ‘by spirits trod,
While thine heart waketh to the sound of God.’

VERSES

AN IMMORTELLE

THERE is a secret garden where I dwell
Hedged round about with thorn and Judas-tree,
Barred in with iron like a prison cell
And known to none but me.

Black rocks encircle it; the nightshade wreath
Twines in the bush its leaden-purple spray
And the rank hellebore, with poisoned breath,
Sighs on the air all day.

I loved it not, yet I was wont to go
To gaze my fill and all my plants compare,
To taste the bitter herbs that thrive and
grow,
Spreading a carpet there.

* * * * *

But now, 'tis years, since, in that sorry place,
I swung the wicket; for, all gloriously,
A wingèd figure came with radiant face
And bore away the key.

VERSES

And still—I have a little poison-flower
I gathered there ; and, though I would forget,
I take it out in some friend-haunted hour
To find it living yet.



THE TWO QUEENS

A MAN went down the path of life,
And, where the vines were thick and green
And grapes hung waiting for the knife,
There smiled to him a queen.
Love lit the eyes beneath her brow,
His lips met hers a moment's span ;
He said, ' My heart is glad, for now
I know I am a man.'

And, further on, among the corn,
Another queen whose eyes made dim
The very glory of the morn,
Held out her hand to him.

VERSES

There was no time for speech or vow,
He kissed it, kneeling on the sod,
He said, ' My soul is high, for now
I feel I am a god.'



THE LOST TRACK

WHEN you have passed, and earth, grown dim
behind you,
Lies far upon the outworn verge of time,
When my hand, searching, shall no longer find
you
In any clime ;

If I but dream your step, by hill or hollow,
Has left some echo falling on the wind,
I will arise and gird myself and follow
Though I be blind.

VERSES

Or if, clear-sighted, I may but discover
That, in the dew at dawn, your footsteps lie,
Where, through long fields, the whistling of the
plover
Comes like a sigh ;

And, if they lead me down to Death's black river,
And, by the rocks, I hear the whirlpools spin,
Though heart and soul may faint and body quiver
I will wade in.

O heart ! beyond the tumult of the crossing,
If there should be no sign, nor any trace,
Only strange winds upon the grasses tossing
And the wide space,

Only eternity, with worlds to wander,
A soul among the unknown souls of men,
And, O my heart, no voice, no footstep yonder,
What then ? What then ?

VERSES

AT A BROOKSIDE

A RUNNING melody is in the noon
Of grass-bound rivulet and tangled showers,
Of sunlight, glancing through the cuckoo-flowers
To mingle golden ripples with the tune ;
In the wide light my senses seem to swoon,
Drugged by the monotone of rhythmic hours
And voice of spring-fed watercourse that dowers
This winding meadow-land with music's boon.

Caught in a shimmering net of sight and sound,
And drawn, I know not whither, yet aware
Am I of some soft touch, and, blown around
My face, the plenitude of waving hair—
Nay, let me lie and dream this wondrous thing ;
My hand, one moment, held the hand of Spring !



REVENANT

IN the dark hours I woke and heard the trees
That tossed and buffeted before the blast,

VERSES

Straining and sighing while the gale went past ;
And, as a scourge whose wrath might none
 appease,

The raindrops smote the pane and ran in seas,
Gurgling against the frame ; now thick and fast,
And now like pebbles at the window cast
By some lost spirit that could find no ease.

And from the blackness of the dripping night
I turned me, weary of its sodden gloom,
Smiling to see the glow within the room
And the red embers on the hearth alight ;
Then sudden ceased, and bowed my head again,
Thinking of that one gravestone in the rain.



TO AURELIA, WITH A PEARL NECKLACE

AURELIA, think not to refuse
Or scorn my gift, although
These jewels must their lustre lose
Upon thy neck of snow.

VERSES

But, if thine eyes should glance aside
And deign to mark their shine,
Deem them as emblems of the pride
That fills this heart of mine.

And if, for mine unworthy sake,
The pearls neglected be,
Still keep them ; and the bauble make
Into a rosary.

And when, perchance, desiring grace,
In prayer thy spirit pleads,
String thou thy kisses in their place
And I will tell the beads.



BEYOND THE WALLS

THE firelight plays since dusk began
To gather in the room,
Beyond the pane the daylight's span
Grows to the evening gloom ;
But my heart is out with the gipsy man
In his lair among the broom.

VERSES

Beside the farm both barn and stack
 Dark in the steading rise,
Up in the loaning green, the track
 Along the firwood lies,
Where the gipsy sits with his brows of black,
 And the black light in his eyes.

He marks the swift owl skim the trees
 When twilight turns to grey,
He hears the whisper up the leas
 Before the coming day,
And the secret hours of the world he sees
 And the soul of night at play.

His ceiling is the drooping bough,
 The fir-trees' ragged limb,
When from the hills the western sough
 Sings o'er the lowlands dim ;
And the polestar, hanging above the Plough,
 Is the lantern-flame for him.

VERSES

O weary roof and crowding wall
 That bar the scented air !
O chain and key whose ceaseless thrall
 Lies on a world of care,
There are no bolts shot in the firwood tall
 But the joy of life is there !

O to be out when spring has drest
 The green moss for a bed,
To roam by plain and wooded crest
 Till the rose-hips turn to red ;
And to lay me down for the last long rest,
 With the great sky overhead !



‘COME ON, COME UP, YE ROVERS’

COME on, come up, ye rovers
 Whose ships at anchor ride,
The west wind stirs the clovers,
 And O ! the world is wide :

VERSES

So, up with your chains as the sun goes down
And out upon the tide !

There drives on the Atlantic
The torn scud of the rain,
And lines of foam leap frantic
Against the coast of Spain,
Where the air is full of the souls of men
Who sailed the Spanish Main.

Where Rocca's light is burning
On plunging miles of sea,
Eastward and eastward turning,
By Crete and Tripoli,
There is a spirit abroad in the wind
That cries aloud to me.

The coast drops low behind you,
The gull swoops round the spars ;
Shall small men's limits bind you
Whose milestones are the stars ?
Whose signposts stand where Orion swings
Above earth's locks and bars ?

VERSES

Come up, ye sons of morning,
 This world was built for you !
Far off, Heaven's light 's adorning
 The lands where dreams come true ;
And the Angel that sits at the Gates of the
 East
 Shall open and let you through.



AN ECHO

WHEN all the world is young and apple-bloom
Is rose and white upon the orchard tree,
When all the threads of Spring's ethereal loom
Weave a green garment for her phantasy ;
That voice of youth and growth and vanished
 years
Comes through all time, in floating cadence,
 still,
Through mists of life and long-forgotten tears,
The cuckoo calling faintly from the hill.

VERSES

The hidden streams in many a marshy place
Their chains of little standing pools unfold,
Like silver mirrors for Spring's wanton face
Tossed at her feet and framed in marigold.
Hark to her footsteps down the sloping fields
Dancing in measure to the music shrill,
That, from its budding depth, the coppice
yields,
The cuckoo calling faintly from the hill.

O Youth, O Time, O Change—O haunting
note!

When from our life we shed mortality,
When all our joys and passions are remote,
All that the ear could hear or eye could see ;
Haply, across the gulf where Time lies bound,
Some shadow of a voice may reach us still,
Like that long echo from enchanted ground,
The cuckoo calling faintly from the hill.

VERSES

A YOUNG MOON

A CRESCENT hung above the trees,
A sweep of fading sky ;
A parting shiver in the breeze,
And day lies down to die.

A silver curve above the murk
Where weary cities slave
And heart and hand are seamed with work
Whose goal is but the grave.

Within the young moon's slender arm
The old moon's shadow lies,
That wraith whose evanescent charm
Melts back to Paradise.

O'er one, o'er all, the wonder swings ;
A gleam sad eyes may see ;
A lamp that flies on hidden wings
To light my love and me ;

VERSES

A vigil-taper, lone, apart,
High above field and town
O'er many a spot where some poor heart
Has laid its burden down.



THE SOUL

I LAID a rose upon my loved one's bier
Beside her quiet face ;
A red rose, scented with the fadeless year
When Love's eyes met us in the noonday clear
In a fair place.
I set it very softly down to lie
Amid her heavy hair ;
And then, methought, the Soul that hovered by
Looked towards me through the dimness with
a sigh
As I stood there.

I laid my empty world upon the pyre,
Beside her open hand ;

VERSES

A world that life had stocked with youth and
fire,
Fortune and fame and wealth and world's desire,
And strength to stand.
She knew each aim, fulfilled or unfulfilled,
That ever had been mine ;
And then, methought, the Soul above her willed
Towards me through the dusk, a whisper stilled,
Whisper or sign ?

I laid my heart upon my loved one's breast,
Beside her silent heart ;
Sorrow and vigil shared, the worst, the best,
All, all it held she knew who lay at rest,
Till we did part.
Ah me ! it seemed as if her pale lips shook
With pity as she lay,
As though she wore that unforgotten look ;
And then, methought, the Soul came down and
took
My heart away.

VERSES

THE BALLAD OF HAKON

Across the stretching reed-beds
The dusk and twilight flee,
And thick the sea-fog covers
The roaring Northern Sea.

O Hakon, grey-eyed Hakon
With tawny yellow hair,
Why are you standing all alone?
Why are you waiting there?

Across the stretching reed-beds,
Amid the falling light,
Comes tripping fair maid Mettelil
Among the bents to-night.

'O Mettelil, you have tarried,
The dark is drawing on,
Were you with young Herr Axel
This long long hour that's gone?

VERSES

I watched him by the reed-beds,
I saw him pause and wait,
Till twilight came I looked for you—
O Mettelil, it is late !

Goodbye, goodbye, Maid Mettelil,
The raven cries o'erhead,
A stormy wind rolls in from sea,
Mettelil, my heart is dead !'

* * * *

Across the roaring ocean
The plunging war-ships go,
And Hakon, armed to battle,
Sails out to meet the foe.

Where'er the press is thickest,
Upon the prow he stands ;
Around him fly the arrows
Shot by the foeman's hands.

The air is wild with shrieking
Of those that fight and drown.

VERSES

The blows fall thick round Hakon
But none can strike him down.

' O Death that I am seeking,
Why com'st thou not to me ?
I would my heart lay cold and still
Beneath the rolling sea !'

At home sits fair Maid Mettelil,
The tears are in her eyes,
And, ere a month is come and gone,
In kirkyard ground she lies.

And sadly home comes Hakon,
Weary his face has grown,
All through the night he wanders
Beside the kirkyard lone.

' Mettelil, the leaves are falling,
The north wind whistles free,
The chill mist wraps me in its shroud,
Come back, come back to me !'

VERSES

Between the glimmering headstones,
Beneath the branches black,
A form comes quickly gliding
And stands at Hakon's back.

' Turn round, turn round now, Hakon,
And hold me to your breast
And touch my cold lips once with yours,
For then my soul can rest.'

She wound her white arms round him,
She touched his tawny hair,
' O Hakon, hold me faster,
My grave is opening there !'

He held her close and closer,
Lower he bent his head—
An icy wind swept o'er his heart,
One kiss, and he was dead.



VERSES

IGNIS FATUUS

' LITTLE Goblin at the fire,
Have you found the Heart's Desire ?
Have you seen it in your flitting by night or by
noon ?'

' O it may be in the swell
Of the mist-wreath up the fell,
Or the long clouds trailing at the tail o' the
moon.'

' Little Goblin in the cold,
Have you seen it on the wold,
Where the winds with flying voices run free as
they rave ?'

' O it may be in the sigh
Of a time that is gone by
Or the long grass growing by the brink o' the
grave.'

VERSES

' Little Goblin in the trees,
Looking down the darkening leas,
Have you seen no golden country where the
heart finds rest?'

' O, it may be where the night
Comes to quench the flaming light,
In the far lands lying through the fire o' the
west.'



THE LITTLE NIGHTJAR

WHEN the moon is on the wall
And her shadow on the door,
When darkness on the orchard lies like sea
upon the shore,
The apple-boughs are silver with the silence
swimming through,
With the halo of the dew ;
Hark ! what little shrieking nightjar ever gave
so soft a call
When the moon is on the wall ?

VERSES

When the moon is on the wall
There's a sound among the trees ;
O master on the settle, with the sheep dog at
your knees,
At the little nightjar's voice does he stir to
wake and growl ?
Does the hooting of the owl
Make him prick his ears and quiver, make his
hackles rise and fall
When the moon is on the wall ?

When the moon is on the wall
And the fire has sunk and died,
The maid sits still to listen for the lad that
lurks outside—
Good master, dozing o'er your pipe, how fast is
slumber's thrall
When the moon is on the wall !

* * * *

VERSES

O! but 'tis strange how shadows move that
lay so still, so still,
And stranger yet how close they draw before
the night grows chill,
And the little nightjar shrieks no more from
out the elm-tree tall,
And the moon has left the wall.



POSSESSION

SHE has laid her snare
And her eyes hold midnight's sign,
Like pools in a moonless land
Lit up by the stars that shine ;
With her burning hair
She has bound you, strand by strand,
She holds your heart in her hand,
But your soul is mine.

VERSES

She has set her feet
In a path where roses blow,
She plays with your heart, the sea
Plays thus with its dead below,
 And the game is sweet ;
But your soul is here with me,
O Man ; it is yours and free—
But it cannot go.

We shall stand, we two,
And her lips shall hold the sum
Of notes in a syren's tone,
But mine shall be closed and dumb ;
 And, the whole day through,
Shall her eyes allure your own,
But I will stand like a stone
And your soul shall come.



VERSES

AIRLIE KIRK

A LITTLE spot of tangled ground
Set in the folding hill,
From curlew-haunted braes the sound
Of fitting voices shrill ;
The high October sky unrolled
Above the plough-land's crest,
Rank mallows by the hearthstone cold
With the field-mouse for guest ;
Gudeman, it is long since the fire went out
And time that we went to rest.

The naked rafters overhead
Stand up like withered hands ;
I mind me when the roof-tree spread
Where now the burdock stands.
The threshold's deep between the whin
And fast in briars twined ;

VERSES

Where little feet ran out and in
The track is hard to find ;
Gudeman, it is long since we closed the door
And left what it held behind.

Down in the strath the kirk is set
Upon the running burn ;
It's many roads we've trod, and yet
It's here we must return.
Old lights along the fields are laid,
Old shadows lie as deep,
But new eyes watch them as they fade
Among the grazing sheep,
And it's time we went down to Airlie kirk
And laid ourselves down to sleep.



THE FLUTE PLAYER

IN the window's shade ere the dusk has spread
Over plain and hill,

VERSES

And the tulip-flowers in the garden-bed
Have a glory still ;

When the world of toil and the world of ease
Are alike at rest ;

I can hear him play in the belt of trees
Where the fields slope west.

And the notes run high and the notes run low
In a rambling stream ;

Like an old voice calling from long ago,
A dream of a dream.

His eyes are afire with the secret light
Of a land unknown,

And the tree-stems echo his footsteps' flight
Upon moss and stone.

There is no more staying nor rest for me
When his flute is heard,

It is out, out, out to the melody
Without sign or word.

VERSES

The lamps may be lit in the shuttered room
And the door be fast,

Or a long day faint with a summer's bloom
On the hedges cast ;

Let the path be winding in crowded ways
Or in woods profound,

It is all forgotten when once he plays
And I hear the sound.

Though foot may ache and though heart may fail
And the brain grow numb,

It is follow, follow the flying trail
Till the flute is dumb.

For life was a breath of the early spring,
When at first he came,

And, now that the harvest is ripening,
It is still the same ;

And it well may be when the last dusk falls
On my little day,

When the last sun colours the crumbling walls
Of the house of clay ;

VERSES

I shall hear him playing beyond the hill
Where the fields slope west,
And follow him on till his steps are still
And the flute at rest.



IN LOWER EGYPT

ABOVE the ancient waters of the Nile
The mists of earth and dusk of heaven meet,
Where, slow along the bank, the camel-file
Moves, like a passing dream, on velvet feet ;
And, as the choral voices of a dream,
The night sounds play their chant upon the
stream.

The crane stands silent ; all the fields exhale
A band of fertile damp along the shore ;
The same moon, red and low behind the veil,
That lit Old Egypt, lights for me once more
The mirage of a kingdom that has been,
And, through the mist, the shadow of a queen.

VERSES

Rise up, O Royal Egypt, from the dusk
With all the weight of tresses on thine head
Heavy with golden nets and faint with musk,
Girt with the lotus from the river-bed,
And eyes that once, with their devouring fire,
Lit for men's hearts a sacrificial pyre.

O Serpent, by a serpent slain at last !
Come through the vapourous fields with gar-
ments trailed,
Embroidered with the lotus-leaf, made fast
With gems ; with green and Tyrian purple
veiled ;
Turn but thy face, that I may see and know
The witchcraft throned in Egypt long ago.

There is a sound of flute and wavering reed,
The measured throb of falling oars that beat,
A tall prow swimming noiseless through the
weed,
The shifting glimmer of a silken sheet ;

VERSES

And, from the dim luxuriance drawn nigh,
The feet of Royal Egypt passing by.

And now, her foot is set upon the barge,
The flutes play up, the fans ply to and fro,
The ripples, dying at the river-marge,
Curl, as the prow swings out upon the flow,
And its retreating music and its state
Leave, once again, the dusk inviolate :

Only, across the tillage lying low,
There comes the creak of well-wheels working
late.



WINTER AND SPRING

O WET green winter grass,
Sodden and chill with rain,
There are some footsteps that will never pass
Along the fields again.

VERSES

O fresh blue air of Spring,
When lights lie long upon the slope,
There are two eyes to which you cannot bring
Your lights of youth and hope.

O white syringa-tree,
Year in, year out, below your feet
There is one heart to all eternity
That will not stir nor beat.



A TRYST

HERE, where our two ways part,
That, for a little time, ran side by side,
That now must turn and turning must divide,
Look, look and see how straight through Eden's
heart,
Unbarred, unbroken, lay the double track ;
The dark has fallen and the sun has set,
The world lies round us, limitless, and yet
I will come back.

VERSES

Across the plain of life
There stretches this enchanted forest's band,
Haunted of crying voices, stirred and fanned,
Swept through by airs whose breath, I know, is
rife

In that far bourn wherein no man may lack
His sure fulfilment ; look on leaf and flower—
In the dim dawn of some unnumbered hour
I will come back.

So meet me here : good-bye ;
The light that lies on all this golden time
Shall burn on the horizon and shall climb
Like some vast city's glow into the sky,
Unquenched by darkness or the cloudy wrack ;
In flesh or spirit—which, it matters not,
—Remembered or unlooked for or forgot—
I will come back.



VERSES

THE CALL

THE stars above the apple boughs,
Like distant gazers, stand aloof,
Watching the white walls of the house,
Watching the room below the roof.

There is the night-hush over all
Beneath the crescent hanging low,
And, through the dark, there comes a call
From hidden lips whose voice I know.

And every root and stem and leaf,
Sends out its scented breath to me ;
The fox is waiting like a thief,
The bird is watching from the tree.

And, in the room below the thatch,
While the white house in sleep is drowned,
Up to the open window-latch
There come strange whispers from the ground.

* * * *

VERSES

I will arise and steal upon the stair,
Where the tall clock counts up Time's gathered
hoard

Telling its numbers to the empty air,
My naked feet upon the creaking board.
Out, out across the threshold I will go
Into the night, the sighing, luring night,
And all the eyes above, around, below,
Like lamps upon my path shall peer and glow
Till thorn and thicket are alive with light.

I will lie down upon my mother Earth,
Heart to her heart and soul upon her soul,
Until the sounds that in the night have birth
Above my head their harmonies unroll ;
And over me the little pattering feet
Shall come and go ; and every bush and tree
Shall send from out its shades a cloudy fleet
Of flitting wings whose softly-thronging beat
Shall neither stay nor turn because of me.

VERSES

TIME AND SPACE

‘How far, O friend, are you and I apart
While all these wastes of sea between us roll?’
‘So far, that now, the beating of your heart
Has merged into the flutter of your soul.’

How far, my dear, has your hand gone from mine
In these long days and months since they
 have met?

‘So far that memory has forgot to pine,
Believing that its touch is present yet.’

‘And O! how far, when night has fallen
 between,
Shall we be set in all the years untold?’
‘So near that you, when trouble’s blast is keen,
Shall feel my shade between you and the cold.’

VERSES

A TRANSLATION

(FROM THE GERMAN)

1

IN the valley with moonlight streaming,
In depths of the forest free,
An old and forgotten dreaming
Is weaving its spell round me.

2

Dim columns, ghostlike and lonely,
Range darkly on yonder mound,
To the bat and the owlet only
Familiar trysting ground.

3

From the rocks come memories ringing,
The west wind whispers and calls,
And towers of gold are springing
From ruin and crumbling walls.

VERSES

4

In a haze, through cloudland blowing,
Is wafted the old love—dead ;
She draws me towards her, glowing
With radiance of youth that 's fled.

5

Like bliss from a far past carried
Comes softly her whispered vow ;
And what in the years lay buried
Stands living before me now.

6

Then, soft as it came, the vision
Is gone ; from the forest space,
Where we kissed in the woods Elysian
Has faded her vanished face.

7

The golden dreamland of wonder
Has fled on the passing wind,
The desolate walls up yonder
Are all that remain behind.

51



VERSES

8

And, under the branches sweeping,
I walk in the dawn alone,
For day on the hills is creeping
And the glory of dreams has flown.



GLAMOUR

It seems as though Spring's light and waving
leaves

Were part of youth alone ;
As though the shadows, dancing by the eaves
In shifting web on wall and window thrown,
Forgot how nature weaves.

Still throbs the chorus of the birds content,
Still, clouded with the may,
Cream-white, the hedges trail their load of
scent,
Winding along the border of the way,
The same, yet different.

52

VERSES

It seems as though the pear-tree's bridal veil
Had lost its fluttered lace ;
The butterflies that dart their splendour frail
Through sun and blossom in their endless chase
On duller pinions sail.

What joy has faded out from field and tree ?
What glamour from the air ?
Are not the cowslips grouped as cunningly,
Whispering together like young maidens fair
To wait the errant bee ?

All, all the hues that Springtime ever wore
Return as fair again ;
The ribes hangs its tassels as of yore,
Pungent and sweet beneath the dropping rain
At every cottage door.

But what is lost ? Nay, naught from nature's flow
Of magic infinite ;
Unchanged the earth, the skies of long ago—
Yet, once we saw them through the morning light
And now the sun is low.

VERSES

LENORE IN THE OLIVEYARDS

(FOR MUSIC)

WHEN, stooping from the walls of Heaven, the
night

Lets down on earth her star-bespangled hair,
And all the pavement of the winding stair
Is grey beneath a waning crescent's light,
Look down upon the planted olive-trees,
A maze of twisted stem and silver leaf ;
This is the message sighing on the breeze
' Joy sails on flying wings and youth is brief.'

(HE SINGS)

' Come down, come down, the little Loves are
peeping

Between the stems and shadows on the grass
And all the prying eyes of earth are sleeping,
The sands are running in the hour-glass ;

VERSES

The red anemone a crown shall weave you,
Be-jewelled with the dew and spiked with
flame,

And all the little waiting Loves receive you
Beneath the branches whispering your name.

Come down, Lenore ; the cock will soon be
crowing,

The noisy birds awake that now are dumb ;
Can new hours match the moments that are
going ?

Who knows ? Not you nor I, Lenore. Come.'



NEW YEAR'S EVE

Go far from me, ye brood
Of little Hates and Sins who thus intrude,
Hide with the perished leaf below the mould ;
The Old Year's shade is dim—
A touch, no more, upon the round world's rim—
And all the sky a-glitter in the cold.

VERSES

Stand closer, Faith and Truth
And the long Patience that outlasts its youth,
The hour is at the change ; and, drawing near,
 There is a footstep's sound,
A measured fall upon the iron ground,
And the earth, spell-bound, waits the coming
 year.

Come from your graves, O Lost !
And stand, this once, beside me in the frost
And turn, once more, your eyes upon my own ;
 Leave, for the past's old sake,
Some look, some comrade's sign for me to take,
That, in the tossings of the time unknown,
 I may not be alone.



VERSES

THREE POEMS FOR CHILDREN

I. THE LILACS

THE fields and garden-borders
Are bright because of spring,
The clouds of guelder roses
Are out and blossoming ;
And close beside the gateway,
Tall, upon either hand,
Their green robes shot with sunlight,
Like queens, the Lilacs stand.

And one is crowned with purple,
And one is crowned with white ;
Look ! where the wind is passing
They bow to left and right,
And trails of scent they scatter
As royal gifts to all,
To every creature dwelling
Within the garden-wall.

VERSES

O queen in plumes of purple !
Throw me a breath of joy,
You are all grand and glorious
And I a little boy ;
But ask the lovely lady
With white plumes in her hair
To scent my heart with sweetness,
To make it pure and fair.



II. DREAMS

THIS is a thing that no one knows ;
When every hedge in summer blows
With twining vetch and brier-rose,

When every bud has burst its sheath,
The white convolvulus' wreath
Is hung with blossoms underneath.

They are so faint and pale and shy
They almost look as if they'd die
Before the sun has left the sky.

VERSES

What children, even if they tried,
Could ever guess that, far inside
Each bell, a little sprite may hide ?

And who'd suppose that, in the night,
When no one's there to see the sight,
They all uncloset their trumpets white ?

And, when the world is fast asleep,
Out of the flowers these fairies creep
And down into the lanes they peep.

They see the little tinker-boys
Who have no home, no nurse, no toys,
And O ! so few of children's joys.

And, as they watch them lying there
With weary heads and feet all bare,
They hover round them in the air ;

Such lovely dreams for them they make
That their tired feet no longer ache,
And they are happy when they wake.

VERSES

What do they show them? Glorious things;
Whole palaces of queens and kings
And birds that fly on golden wings.

And silent waters, winding far
Through groves of trees where angels are,
Lit by the trail of one blue star.

And, when they wake, these visions stay
To help them on along their way
And keep them cheerful all the day.

You want such dreams, you say to me?
—Ah, if these wonders you would see
A tinker's child you'd have to be,

To wander far and wander wide
From New Year's Day to Christmastide,
And then—you'd have to sleep outside.

But now the white moon walks the sky,
So, from your beds, thank God on high,
Because so soft and safe you lie.

VERSES

—And yet, some day, however blest,
You too may weary of your rest
And think, perhaps, that dreams are best.



III. THE SNOW WITCH

WHEN all the world is under snow,
And the wind, crying in the north,
Sends its wild choir of voices forth,
Now shrieking loud, now falling low,
The Snow Witch with her ice-crowned hair
Is hurling snowflakes everywhere.

Her garments are the Northern Lights
Beyond the bare arms of the trees ;
And, from her height, she looks and sees
Earth's towns and hamlets lit o' nights ;
And sighs, mayhap, far up above,
For one poor hearth alight with love.

VERSES

THE VALLEY OF THE KINGS

NORTHWARD upon the stream our boat is creep-
ing,

The sky above is pearl, the river pearl,
And soon will coming night her shades unfurl
Like some great bird on stealthy pinions
sweeping,

As the effulgence chills
And young stars stand above the Theban hills
Within whose fastnesses the kings are sleeping.

To them the roll of time is but a dreaming,
To them the lotus, mouldered on their breasts,
Still dripping from the Nile, in beauty rests,
As when the mourners broke those blossoms
streaming

And shook the silver shower,
The pallid glory of the royal flower
Fit guerdon for a royal spirit deeming.

VERSES

To-night it seems that peak and rugged boulder
Stand o'er their soundless dwellings for a sign ;
Surely some cipher of a hand divine
Is graven yonder on the mountain's shoulder,
Hidden in shadows vast
That melt to greyness as the boat slips past
With the slow current, and the sky grows colder.

Mayhap, the phantom of a past endeavour,
Born of that ancient striving to the light,
Has wrapt the secret sepulchres with might
And haunts the valley of the Nile for ever ;
Breathing eternally
A note of immortality to be,
Resounding ceaselessly and dying never.

While, round the sleepers, sounds of feet have
 broken
The stillness that encompassed them so long,
And the loud voices of an idle throng
Within those halls of death have idly spoken ;

VERSES

While sacrilegious hands
Have loosed about them the funeral bands
To rob their bosoms of life's symbolled token,
From one unchanging hope can none divide
 them,
Although its outward emblem be despoiled ;
Though silence and the peace for which they
 toiled
A world whose ways they knew not has denied
 them,
That hope its wings has spread
Within the rifled strongholds of the dead
As the wings shadowed on the wall beside them.
Changeless, unaltered still the soul's desire is,
Fixed as the hills whose heights we leave behind
To merge in fading colours undefined,
Purple and amethyst and rose and iris,
And, to the dripping oar,
The dusk is closing down along the shore,
The brooding dusk of Isis and Osiris.

VERSES

THE LOWLAND PLOUGHMAN

THE team is stabled up, my lass,
The dew lies thick and grey ;
Beyond the world, the long green light
Clings to the edge of day.

By farm and fold the work is still,
Their breath the beanflowers yield,
And, in the dusk, the gowans stand
Like moons along the field.

A little ghost alone, my dear,
The night moth flitters by ;
Beside the hedge I'm lonely too,
Although no ghost am I.

Leave the gudeman to mind the hearth,
The wife to mend the fire,
Nor heed the lads whose voices come
In mirth from yard and byre.

VERSES

The evening star is up, my dear,
And oh! the night is sweet,
Come through the heavy drops that bend
The grasses at your feet.

For I am young and I am strong
And well can work for two,
And 'tis a year, come Martinmas,
I've loved no lass but you.

And, in a year, come Martinmas,
Before the fields are sown,
I will not need to walk nor stray
Between the lights alone.

For then the cot beyond the farm
A happy man will hold,
A wife who wears a golden ring
To match her hair of gold.

VERSES

LATE FEBRUARY

BLUE vistas of an avenue

Range, line on line, against the sky ;
Away, beyond, the low hills lie
To frame this landscape in with blue.

And clear and far the light is spread

As though earth smiled to feel the stir,
The first faint thrill that moves in her
Who, all these months, has lain as dead.

Fresh year, fresh sky, fresh hope—and yet

A sigh is in the lengthening days ;
Between the trunks the blackbird strays
Whose long-drawn note is called regret.

White snowdrops, close among the roots,

Scored at your drooping hearts with green,
What scents from springs that once have been
Cling, like old griefs, among your shoots ?

VERSES

Yes, like old griefs ; and we, who view,
Year after year, life's deathless round,
Feel their spent throb in every wound
And know that they are deathless too.



FROM A TRAIN-WINDOW

WHERE, struck with sunset light, the shining
rails

Converge upon our track,
The smoky canopy of London veils
The distant heaven with black.

Behind us, dropping further in our wake,
The lessening city lies,
And all the landscape has begun to take
A glamour from the skies.

Scarcely a cloud the sun's effulgence shields
From evening's stealthy hand ;
But half the crimson disc beyond the fields
Stares on the level land.

VERSES

Through the moist meadows, broad on either
side,
Merged to one dusky plain,
There sounds, the breathing stillness to divide,
The clanking of the train.

And cooling silence, like a wave of balm,
After the city's heat,
Is spread around us, odourous and calm,
With foam of meadowsweet.

In the damp ditches ranging from the line
Towards the lighted west
Tall spires of blossom, dimly white, define
A sweetness manifest.

And now the last red rim is vanishing,
Leaving the sky-line cold,
And mists, transfigured, to the grasses cling
Like gossamer of gold.

VERSES

The dusk descends ; between us and the town
The gliding miles increase ;
And on our souls there settles softly down
An all-enfolding peace.



POEMS OF INDIA

I. IN A MANGO-TOPE¹

BETWEEN the sky-line and my feet
The stretch of lemon-grass is sere,
And, from some hidden village near,
There comes a single tom-tom's beat.
High noon is grey on bush and tree,
The plain runs on without a change,
As though, for once, the eye could range
Through time into eternity.

¹ Grove.

VERSES

And round me, in the mango-tope,
 No sound disturbs the stillness wide
 But the horse tethered at my side
Cropping the herbage of the slope.

All human stress has died away,
 As if life, pausing, held apart,
 As if this vain world's fretting heart
Stood still to hear the silence pray.

In many a mud-walled haunt of man
 To-night the screaming conch will blare
 —God knows what forces throng the air
Above these plains of Hindoostan.

From under every banyan-tree
 Whose roots entwine the reddened stone
 Carved with some god that lurks alone
Beneath the aërial canopy,

From every grove within the land
 Whose shadows hide a crumbling shrine

VERSES

There seems to come some unknown sign,
Some touch of an undreamed-of hand.

And where, without the village wall,
Some woman's soul went up in fire
And the thick reek above the pyre
Hung in mid-heaven like a pall,

Around that altar in the plain,
Hid though it be in jungle grass,
Forgotten as the seasons pass,
There clings the majesty of pain ;

The life-through-death that has not ceased,
Which cannot drown in Lethe's flood,
That sign of sacrificial blood
That stains and glorifies the East.

O land so near the veil, where life
Is lived beside the shore of death,
Which treads the rose to taste its breath
And wraps the garland round the knife,

VERSES

Beneath the chastening of thy sun,
By tree and plain and jungle-shrine,
Whose soul through silence touches thine,
May know that life and death are one !



II. NIGHT IN THE PLAINS

THE plains lie in the furnace of the year
And sleep, repenting, hides from men his boon,
And flagging life strains fitfully to hear
The tardy footstep of the slow monsoon.
All day the stones, the dust upon the plain,
From never-changing skies the heat have drawn,
And darkness brings no solace in its train
—The breeze will rise an hour before the dawn.

There is no rest ; from out the heavy skies
The burning planets hang ; now near, now far,
Shrilly the women's voices fall and rise,
Crying to Kali in the hot bazaar.

VERSES

There is no nightwatch but will end at last,
There is no vigil but will pass away,
The time wears on, the moon is setting fast
—The breeze will rise an hour before the day.

Life crouches low and fear is with the strong,
On every side the crawling time to mark,
There sound, like fevered pulses all night long,
The tom-toms, throbbing in the stifling dark ;
A puff of odour from the jasmine-tree
Comes by the well across the parching lawn,
See where the hosts of heaven stand patiently,
—The breeze will rise an hour before the dawn.

The sick men toss, the breathless air is still ;
Along the ward one slow, soft whisper falls,
Where Death's grim angel waits to have his will
Within the shadow of the whitewashed walls ;
And women's steadfast eyes are fixed upon
The lurking shape whose hand they keep at bay,
Stand up, O souls of men, fight on, fight on !
—The breeze will rise an hour before the day.

VERSES

Is that a shiver in the tamarind,
Or some awakening bird that stirs the leaves?
Turn, turn to sleep, there comes a breath of
wind

And mainas talk by the verandah-eaves ;
A little space to sleep and to forget
Before the tyrant sun begins his sway,
Ere in the heavens his brazen throne be set
—God give us strength to face the coming day.



III. THE RESTING-PLACE

BROTHER, beside the jungle track, thy stone
Half raised, a nameless, carven slab, I see,
Half hidden by the tangle, secretly ;
Where roots join twisted hands above thy head,
Where scarce a footfall passes save my own,
Nor white man's tread.

VERSES

I have been wandering since noon was high,
And now, because the evening comes apace,
Thy tomb shall be my rest a little space ;
From thy long-vanished hand this loan I take,
Across the years this hospitality
That thou dost make.

The jungle has grown over thee, O friend,
For, scarce a furlong from thy buried dust,
Once stood a city where the great and just
Built high the parapet and mosque and dome,
Where now the creeper flings its tasselled end
Around their home.

How many centuries have come and gone
Since first thou sawest, with awakened eyes,
The green-scarfed houris proffering Paradise ;
Since thy young crescent moon, athwart this
shade,
Son of the Prophet, has in silver shone
Where thou art laid !

VERSES

Mayhap, thy spirit loved what mine loves best ;
The tread of horses and the pride of life,
The jungle's magic and the joy of strife,
The long nights spent beneath the spangled
sky—

O dead Mahomedan ! Thy passing guest
By these accepts from thee this meed of rest
*Salaam, O Bhai !*¹



IV. EVENING IN THE OPIUM FIELDS

As pageants, marshalled by a masterhand,
So are the poppy-fields ; in rose and red
And foam of white and livid purple spread,
Mile upon mile, they stretch on either hand ;
Dark by the well the heavy mangoes stand,
Where labouring oxen pace with dusty tread
And dripping water-skins climb up to shed
Their gush upon the irrigated land.

¹ Brother.

VERSES

So cool the labyrinthine channels run,
Flooding the grey stems with a maze of gold ;
For, as he nears his end, the dying sun
Does all the plain within his arms enfold ;
Beneath the mangoe-trees long shadows creep,
Like sleep's tread falling through the flowers
of sleep.



IV. 'GOD IS GREAT'

" ALLĀH hu akhbar !

Allāh hu akhbar !

La ilahā illalāh ! "

Aslant upon the dusty way
The little mosque has thrown its shade,
A streak of blue at noontime laid,
To lengthen tardily with day ;
And now the hour has come to pray,
Soldier and prince and clod—
' God is great, God is great,
There is no god but God !'

VERSES

He stands upon the outer wall,
His hand upraised, his sunken eyes
Look westward to where Mecca lies ;
Ho ! Islam's men, it is the call
To evening prayer ; he cries to all,
Soldier and prince and clod—
 ' God is great, God is great,
 There is no god but God !'

Close to the wall below his feet
A pomegranate, against the white,
Flaunts, green and scarlet, in the light,
Now glaring day has lost its heat ;
Ho ! Islam's men in field and street,
Soldier and prince and clod—
 ' God is great, God is great,
 There is no god but God !'

Dark figure, seeing inwardly
Through evening mist and evening balms
To Mecca, white among the palms,

VERSES

Across the rolling leagues of sea,
At thy long cry they bend the knee,
Soldier and prince and clod—

‘God is great, God is great,
There is no god but God!’

Spread at thy feet, around, beneath,
The world wears on amid its tears,
And few and evil are their years
Fighting their way from birth to death,
Soldier and prince and clod—

What shining city canst thou see,
Far off, beyond the flood of fate,
Where none are poor or desolate
That thou dost cry eternally?

There comes no answer, early, late,
But ‘God is great, God is great,
There is no god but God!’

“Allah hu akhbar!

Allāh hu akhbar!

La ilahā illalāh!”

VERSES

VI. A MAHOMMEDAN GRAVEYARD

WITHIN the wall their graves are still and white,
Their feet turned ever southward ; all the dust
Is thick in moonlight, and the banyans thrust
 Long roots into the glory of the night ;
Hanging like dusky tresses overhead,
Where, by the highway's side, lie Islam's dead.

Who sighs, who prays one prayer as he perceives,
So near his passing foot, that township set
With crumbling slab and little minaret
 Below the lattice of the banyan leaves ?
Who knows one name in all that silent throng
Whose hands have ceased from work so long—
 so long ?

Each heart round which eternal shadow sleeps
Has spent the hour that we have all to spend,
Has waited for the coming of the end,

VERSES

And now, who thinks, who minds, who cares,
who weeps ?

Who tells us how he faced the figure grim ?
'Tis words to us—it was the world to him.

How shall we nerve our hearts to bear that
sight,
The long horizon of advancing dark,
That dread oblivion with no lamp nor spark
Of love's remembrance to make soft the
night ?

What is there but the dull relief of tears
That weakness wrings from us throughout our
years ?

No, never that. Who stands and fights his pain
Can still endure. But unto him who lies
And seeks to ease him with his coward cries
Relief is not nor any rest again ;
And who can tighten up the string anew
That gives beneath the straining of the screw ?

VERSES

O brothers ! turn and look where courage stands
Serene and still with never-changing eye,
Courage to be forgot—to live—to die,

Stand up like men and clench your failing
hands ;

What man could dare to face the land unknown
With but a coward's heart to call his own ?



VII. CHERRY-BLOSSOM AT DAGSHAI

FAR down below this range to-day

A waft of morning pureness fills

The blue ravines that stretch away

To lose themselves among the hills.

And, like a shrouded diadem,

Beyond the peaks set row on row,

Looms northern India's mystic gem,

The crown of Himalayan snow.

These lower heights which close us in

A more ethereal jewel wear,

VERSES

There seems, where sheer descents begin,
A radiant mirage in the air,

For, with its veil of rose and foam
A-quiver like transparent wings,
To the stern ramparts of its home
The wild hill cherry-blossom clings.

Own sister to the clouds of dawn,
Each magic tree o'erhangs the brink,
Its slender stems like lattice drawn,
Dark, on a fairyland of pink.

Three days ago no sign was ours,
No voice to cry the coming hope
That autumn's wave would break in flowers
And roll in torrents down the slope ;

But as, when darkness rends apart,
A shaft of glory pierces through,
Joy's hand has pierced the mountain's heart
And all the barren world is new.

VERSES

VIII. 'WITH MILITARY HONOURS'

TAKE down the helmet from its dusty board,
Lay down his sword
Upon the flag that drapes his narrow bed ;
Pace, horses, with your load,
Down the white road,
Beneath the glare by Eastern sunlight shed.
And you, ye passing men of other race,
Make way, give place
Before a freight more sacred than the gun ;
Dark eyes of each degree
Look up and see
That well-known pageant passing in the sun.

With clank of chain and wheels the carriage goes,
But his repose
Nor sound of arms nor tramp of horse can dim ;
Forward ; the dead-march rolls,
Keep we our souls
Strong for the last that love can do for him.

VERSES

Flowers, lie soft upon his weary breast,
 He is at rest,
The fight he could but lose is over now ;
Lie light, ye heartsease bands,
 Like parting hands
Laying a last caress upon his brow.

Asters, twine purple like a velvet pall,
 Cry out to all,
Ye heavy grave-flowers, of a new-made grief ;
 A body striving sore
 That strives no more ;
His night was long but daylight brought relief.
O trumpet voice of flaming marigold !
 Tell out with bold
And certain tongue how great a heart lies here,
 Until the Trumpet's tone
 Shall drown your own
And that dear head upon its time-worn bier
 Shall wake and hear.

VERSES

IX. THE DISTANT TEMPLE

BRANCH of the henna-tree,
Blown in a temple garden far away
In that unfading East across the sea,
O for one waft of perfume from your spray
To cheer the heart in me !

Flower of the champa white,
Sown by the evening wind where dusky feet
Have worn the temple pavement with their
 beat,
I would lie down and give my soul to-night
Could I but breathe your sweet !

Note of the temple gong
At sunset clanging through the dusty gold,
Since last I heard your nightly music told
It seems as though the months were ages long
And joy itself grown old.

VERSES

Heart of the East, my heart,
Laden with your remembrance, may not rest ;
The very winds that blow from east to west
From out that far horizon-line, impart
Your whisper, trebly blest.

Sound of the temple drum,
Like distant beating of the march of fate,
Through the long years your voice is never dumb,
Calling, at sundown, from the temple gate
To me, who cannot come.



