

**THE GARDEN
AND
THE FIRE**

AELFRIDA TILLYARD





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LONDON AGENTS:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO. LTD.

TO
CAMBRIDGE POETS
THE LIVING AND THE DEAD.

THE GARDEN
AND
THE FIRE

BY
AELFRIDA TILLYARD

CAMBRIDGE
W. HEFFER & SONS LTD.
1916

My thanks are due to the Editors of the *Outlook*, the *Cambridge Magazine*, *One Hundred of the Best Poems on the European War*, and the *Quest*, for kind permission to reprint Poems which have appeared in their pages.

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I.

POEMS ABOUT THE WAR.

IN TIME OF WAR.

(*To H. D. H.*)

Ah! if we lose—if this fair countryside,
Where sleep our fathers, where our children play,
Lay dumb beneath the footsteps of the foe ;
If here, our English liberty o'erthrown,
Ruled foreign harshness, foreign pride of race ;
And all the heritage that we might leave our sons
Were slavery, and shame to face the foe—
What comfort then in books, or work, or ease,
Or summer twilight on a rose-bowered lawn,
And whispering winds among the dreaming elms !
Crimson and gold of sunset on the sea
Would seem the fires of Hell, were England dead—
These fields her grave, our tears her memory.

But if we win, and with our victory
Gain lands and gold and hatred of the foe,
Lust of this world, and blood-stained pride
That holds Thy white humility in scorn,
Better forego such spoils ;—nay, best to know
The utter blinding shame of sheer defeat.
Lay Thou, O Lord, Thy lash across our backs,
Bow these our stubborn heads, and from our hands
Strike down the sword. Cut short our triumph-songs
And bind our souls with helplessness and fear.

Then from the ruins of the land we love,
We Thy sad people, scourged with slavery,
Perchance might lift our ravaged hearts to Thee.
And had we neither house nor home nor king,
Nor any name save such as serfs might bear,

God, God alone should be our king ; His name
Our glorious sigil and our pride. Homeless,
We turn to Him, as waters seek the sea ;
Lord God of Hosts, we need no home but Thee !

Cambridge, November 13, 1915.

THE STONES OF BELGIUM.

THE FORT.

Hear me. I was a fortress once—and now a grave.
Silenced, the guns and men beneath my ruins lie.
They spoke, and there was neither man nor God to save.
The very stones aloud for vengeance cry.

A GRAVESTONE.

I am a gravestone cross. Last spring a young wife died.
Deep down she sleeps, her baby by her side.
I stretch my cold grey arms to guard her rest.
Her husband marched away, and—God knows best.

SOME BLACKENED WALLS.

Does He know best ? The lone winds roam
Through shattered casements open to the sky.
I was a warm well-tended cottage home—
A wreckage left, when tides of war swept by.

A BROTHEL.

Sin is eternal—sin and lust and pain—
And men shall haste to build my walls again.
I laughed to see the lads with Hatred make carouse,
For vaunted Peace is but a prim child-ridden spouse.

A MILESTONE.

Five hundred years I stood. Along the endless roads
I watched the men go by, deep-burdened with their loads.
And some were wise and some were fools,
And all have lived in vain.
For those who trod the ways of Peace
By Time at last were slain.

THE FORT.

The dew of death is on the earth's wide brow.
Daylight is fled. We all are gravestones now.

THE EARTH.

Have ye no faith? These winds and lashing rain,
Fire, darkness, and the white dawn's drenching dew
Shall make you pure for happiness anew.
Lie still, O stones. YE SHALL ARISE AGAIN.

Cambridge, March 13, 1915.

A LETTER FROM EALING BROADWAY STATION.

(From E. M. W. T.)

"Night. Fog. Tall through the murky gloom
The coloured lights of signals loom,
And underneath my boot I feel
The long recumbent lines of steel.
As up and down the beat I tramp
My face and hair are wet with damp;
My hands are cold—that's but a trifle—
And I must mind the sentry's rifle.
'Twould be a foolish way to die,
Mistaken for a German spy!

Hardest of all is just to keep
Open my eyelids drugged with sleep.

Stand back ! With loud metallic crash
And lighted windows all a-flash
The train to Bristol past me booms.

I wonder who has got my rooms !
I like to think that Frank is there,
And Willie in the basket-chair,
While Ernest, with his guileless looks,
Is making havoc in my books.
The smoke-rings rise, and we discuss
Friendship, and What Life Means to Us.
What is it that the kitchens lack,
And where we'll take our tramp next vac.

Those girls at Newnham whom I taught
I'll spare them each a friendly thought . . .

An hour to dawn ! I'd better keep
Moving, or I shall fall asleep.

I've had before my eyes these days
The fires of Antwerp all ablaze.
(The startled women scream and weep ;
Only the dead have time to sleep.)
I'd like to feel that I was helping
To send the German curs a-yelping.
Well, if I serve the Belgian nation
By guarding Ealing Broadway station,
I'll guard it gladly, never fear.

Sister, good-night ; the dawn is here.

Cambridge, October 11, 1914.

BELGIUM. AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 1914.

The stricken cities cry ; the wasted land
Shrinks as the bloodstain creeps o'er flower and sod.
Praying, some women by the ruins stand.
Is there no God ?

Who stoops to find His footsteps in the rout
Of these His creatures maddened by the sword,
Or dares in din of fight to raise the shout
" Behold your Lord ! " ?

Perchance, ye think, in some far Heaven on high
He walks His golden streets, aloof, serene,
And scatters peace o'er soldiers called to die,
Like dusk at e'en.

Nay, ye have felt, by starry night and still,
His Spirit brooding o'er the anguished world,
Close round the sleeping forms of plain and hill
As silence curled.

His presence fills the hollows of the skies,
Without His soul is neither earth or sea.
O man, look well within your brother's eyes.
" Thou too art He ! "

Love, love, alone can cleanse what hate defiled.
Love shall the God within mankind set free.
Arise, and to the foe who killed your child
Cry " *Thou art He !* "

Cambridge, September 27, 1914.

A LOAD OF HAY.

(To O. P., hay woman.)

"What does your wagon hold, I pray?"

"A load of hay, a load of hay."

"Wherefore such laden wains you bring?"

"To serve the King, to serve the King—

To feed the nags the soldiers ride.

They'll need all this, and more beside."

"Two trucks of hay—two trucks of English spring . . .

There's something all too sweet about the scent

Of hay. 'Tis grass and flowers and songs of birds

And pale gold sunlight from an English sky ;

A gathered posy of the lavish joys

That springtime strews about our country side.

Perhaps in far-off Alexandria

(Where long tired lines of stamping horses stand,

Dazed with the heat and maddened by the flies.)

Or at some ruined battle-town in France,

Which, near at hand, yet seems so wonder-far,

A soldier, taking down a scented bale,

Will say, "This smells like English hay!"

Behold,

His eyes a vision of the meadow see—

Grey-green and brown, in rose-crowned hedges set,

Sloping on upland hills that gently curve

Towards a soft June sky. Beside a gate

Two strong farm-horses keep the red-wheeled wain,

Strength in simplicity most perfected.

And there's a cottage in the picture too,

With birds a-flutter in and out the thatch,

And honeysuckle o'er the lattice trailed,

Where hive bees come and go on busy wing
To gay flowers, prim beside the garden path.
There stands the church, grey-towered, grey-walled, asleep
Behind the stately trees which sway and dream
Above the grass and earth where lie the dead.
Softly the scent of hay comes drifting by,
Still as white lilies sailing on a stream ;
As fragile joy in dreams, as dreams in sleep,
So frail, so sweet, the perfume of the hay.

“ Farewell, my lady, thus I pray,
God bless you and your load of hay.
God keep the peaceful fields new-mown
And take our country for His own.
Grant us the kindly earth's increase,
To wars an end, to nations peace.
I pray for England when I say,
' God bless you and your load of hay.' ”

Caldecote, September 21, 1915.

A LETTER FROM LAHR, SOUTH GERMANY.

(From H. J. W. T.)

The drowsy hours drag on. These idle days
Seem grey and stagnant as the autumn haze
That blurs the outline of the Baden hills.
I've crept away alone. The peace that fills
The vaulted arches of the forest trees
May rest me too. . .

England is on her knees,
The papers say ! I read that Ireland thrust
The first blow bravely home ; prone in the dust
The foreign chiefs of Ind ignobly lie.
The Lord, the Lord, has heard the Germans' cry—
The flames of London quiver on the breeze
And wrecks of English ships bestrew the seas.
Antwerp, it seems, has fallen ; Paris too.
(If only one could know how much was true !)

Perpetual holiday, says Shaw, is Hell.
It is. These kindly people treat me well.
" Der arme Kerl ! " They send him off to buy
Zehn pfennig worth of wool, some pork (to fry).
(The wool must be a shade of Prussian blue.)
'Tis kind to find him little things to do.
His friends have gone to France to fight—to die.
Send him to buy two pounds of pork (to fry).

What should I do if I were home again ?
Not fight—I cannot add to human pain.
Not wield a sword, but in my steady hand
The torch of learning bear, that through the land
Its flame might pierce the gloom with purest fire.

My cap and gown would seem a priest's attire ;
My grave well-tutored words a gospel be
Of realms of thought where is no rivalry
But who shall serve the king of knowledge best.
Oh, that mankind would learn, and be at rest !
Here are there crowns enough for all, and lands
Unconquered. Here may adventurous bands
Of scholars rove from West to glowing East,
Sail far a-down the stream of Time, and feast
With kings of Babylon and Rome. The stars
And suns shall sing to them—their triumph-cars
Shall bear the secrets of a thousand seas.
Tell me, what conquests can compare with these ?

Darkness around. We've Abendbrot at eight.
Der arme Kerl had better not be late.

Cambridge, October 21, 1914.

AN INCIDENT OF THE FLIGHT FROM POLAND.

(To C. S. S.)

Behind, the foe. In front, an unknown land
Where they might find, perchance, a friend, some rest.
And here—above, below, around—the snow! the snow!
For many leagues the snow had dimmed the road,
Levelled the hedges, filled-in dyke and pool,
And blurred the landmarks into grave-like mounds.
The men walked silently; the women spoke
Softly, to the children, to themselves, to God—
Ever the dull snow tugged their dragging feet,
Seeming so eager-strong to pull them back.
(Could this be German soil?) While from the sky
There fell to earth no benison, but snow.

It was the evening now, and they had come
Unto a little hut, of rough-hewn boughs
Set up on end, and thatched with sheafs of reed.
The door stood just ajar; the place was still.
The cottage-folk had fled, leaving a bench,
A bin, a table there—no food, no fire.
Yet one might sleep. Groaning, the men lay down.
Cheek close to cheek, the elders slumbered soon,
Their tired limbs stretched upon the beaten floor.

Then little Masha to the children spoke.
“We cannot walk another long day through.
Come! let us out into the snow, and there
Find rest. We’ll sleep, and never wake again
Until we reach the golden gates of Heaven.
Surely the saints will bear us in their arms,
And God’s face shine to guide us through the sky.
Come! haste! lest mother wake and see us die.”

Into the night they went. There was a wood,
Of pine trees bent and laden with the snow,
The children halted there,—said prayers—clasped hands.
Far-off, a cannon tolled their passing-bell,
And all night long the shrouding snow-flakes fell.

Cambridge, August 26, 1916.

II.

KINGDOMS.

A DIALOGUE OF NO PARTICULAR TIME AND PLACE.

KINGDOMS.

(To S. N. M.)

The scene represents the king's garden on a terrace cut in the hillside. Below, a city, with white domes and minarets flashing in the evening sun. Below again, a sickle-shaped harbour, where many ships ride at anchor. Above the garden rise vine-clad slopes, and forests growing darker green towards the snowline. The king paces up and down beside a little lake, or stands and gazes at the city roofs. Enter a poet, young, rosy-cheeked, carrying a lyre. He does not seem to notice the king, who speaks to him haughtily.

King. Beggar, salute your king !

Poet. Why should I bow ?

At dawn, breast-deep in waters, I salute
The light and lordship of the kingly sun.
I see no light before me now, but *man*,
Heavy of gait, dark-browed, and dull of eye.

King. Prate not to me of suns ! I am the king,
The light and sun of all these lands you see.
Look once around you. All these hills are mine,
Forest and vineyard, rock and stream and slope ;
If gold they treasure, all the gold is mine ;
Nor can they rear their snow-crowned heads so high,
That my dominion may not yet more high
Surround and compass them. These plains are mine,
Down to the placid sea where pinioned wait
My fleet-winged ships. The city's life is mine,
Men in the shops, and women at their looms ;
Never a child can own a painted doll,
But yet that doll is mine. I am the king,
And here within my kingdoms ample bounds
All things are mine.

Poet. Even the bounds are thine,
O mighty king ! Thyself hast uttered it.
I own a boundless world ; the yokeless sea ;
Deserts of sand or snow ; strange woodlands cool ;
Men's gardens hedged around ; the common road
Where king and beggar, horse and maid and mule,
Children and dogs, must travel till they die.
But I, I wander slowly, for I live
A thousand lives in one—and where I live,
I reign.

*[He is silent for a moment, glances idly round the
garden and plucks a crimson flower.]*

This flower is thine, but canst thou lie
So close in scented velvet of its heart
That the wise bees, the honey-gleaning bees,
Should find thee not ; and restless winds a-search
For kings and lovers that they know not of,
Lightly thy hiding-place pass by ? I can !

King. [*Scornfully*] What witless dreams are these ?

Poet. Dreams, didst thou say ?
This night, when mutterings of distant wars
Shall keep thy lonely eyes awake, I go
Into the crowded halls of sleep, where lie
The quiet souls of men. The air is full
Of rush and stir of wings, and starry lamps
Hung down by threads of darkness and of dawn—
Half light, half perfumes—watch until I come.
Thoughts move in cadence there, and dance
To angels' lute or devils' fiery pipe
Unshepherded—

King. [*Interrupting*] Peace, fool ! I dream too much.
Dread sprang from night, and eyeless lurking fears
Attend our sleep. I love the open day

And covet kingdoms on this world I see.
Thou'rt welcome to thy dreams—that I may have
These lands, this earth; to be my heritage.

Poet. This earth? 'Tis well enough! But—hark to me—
Last year, with half a song, I bought the sky.

King. The sky!

Poet. In truth, the sky, the unconquered sky.
Pinnacles and domes of sunset, rose and gold;
Clouds dim-grey with rain; the pools of light
Cupped in their mountain-craggs of fleecy white,
Like lakes of pearl in snow; wings of thunder
Resonant across the stillness of the airs;
Lightnings, quick as pain; for a song, a song
Are mine! Even these deeps of blue, wherein
My skylark thought in its upsoaring tides.
If, as men say, there's Heaven behind the stars,
I needs have purchased Paradise besides.

King. [*Pityingly, but a little impressed, against his will*]
The lad is crazed! Come, know'st thou aught of POWER?
Thou canst not build at will thy sunset towers,
Nor make thy dream-folk hear. Thy word is naught.
Who doth thy bidding, what man fears thy wrath?
Last night, I killed a man. One moment he
Could eat, see, hear, love, thrust his hate at me;
The next, he was not—blown from out this life,
As 'twere a candle flame. Couldst thou do that?

Poet. Last night, O king of deeds most terrible,
I called the dead to life. First Orpheus came,
Tuning his lyre to mine; and with him Psyché,
Soft-winged and eager, pitiful for love.
On war-horse galloping, Arjuna too,
The Song Celestial bright upon his lips.
Gautama I invoked, the lowliest king.

He came towards me, girt with yellow robe,
Bearing a begging bowl, wherein I laid
The noblest gift I had, a word, a song.
Couldst thou do that?

King. [*Much impressed at last*] Dost thou recall the
dead?

Poet. There are no dead.

[*A long silence*

Come I will sing

A tuneful fragment of the Song of Life.

[*Seeing that the sun has nearly set, he salutes the
light and sings.*]

Lord of all lights, of Whom the sun is shade,
God of all worlds, by Whom the gods were made,
I bring Thee gifts that unto Thee belong,
The breath between my lips, the word, the song.
Be Thou as Fire, to burn my self away,
Thy Breath, Thy Self, the word I dare to say.
Thou art the Song whereof is wrought my soul,
I the swift spark, Thy Light the changeless Whole.

Hessle, July 7-8, 1914.

III.
SONGS ABOUT LOVE.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

(From the Greek of Argyris Ephthalotes.)

The wise man crouches o'er the stream of Life
And asks in vain the meaning of its course.
But lo ! the simple, taking Love to wife,
Wanders unthinking to the river's source.

Hessle, August 4, 1911.

IN AUTUMN.

I loved and yet I cannot love again
Though I am standing in the self-same place
Where first I saw, and straight adored, thy face.
I say good-bye, and weep to feel no pain.

Thy kisses turn my passive lips to stone,
Thy words fall lifeless as the autumn leaves.
Yea, Time has garnered all the golden sheaves
Of bliss, and all the summer days are gone.

Where Love has perished, there is death indeed.
There shall of Love no resurrection be.
Forget my life, the very soul of me.
Such dust hath no eternity in seed.

Emden, October 31, 1910.

THE GODS O'ERTAKE US.

Twine thy arms around me, O my love—
Dost thou remember now,
That, long years since, we twain climbed o'er the brow
Of Heaven
And snatched of the fire that we found burning there,
Bearing it with us in the brazier of our hearts laid bare.
Full seven

Long years the gods have seemed to sleep.
And we knew joy as ne'er had been
On mortal earth, or timeless heaven above.

But now is the gods' breath hot and keen
Upon my neck. Lo, they would thrust us to the deep!
Vengeance is theirs, and they will sure repay
For all we did and dared that wondrous day.
(Dost remember how they lay asleep upon the lawn?
How white their arms, how sweet their eye-lids' close,
How soft the panting of their breath indrawn!)

Then they arose,
Their feet with wingéd shoes of fury shod,
Now o'er all the way we trod,
Blood lies,
Our blood, our kisses maimed, our slaughtered words.
Stifle my cries.

The gods have stripped us of our fire and left us bare.
We will not go among the common herds.
Twine thy arms around me, O my love.
Together let us go down into despair.

Cambridge, Jan. 10, 1913.

FORGETTING.

Like is forgetting to a low sweet song
Drawn from the viol by the plaintive bow,
When all the notes are as a hooded throng
Of wraiths, so sad, so slow.

Like is forgetting to the banks of cloud
All silvered grey, that climb the evening sky,
Still and fantastic as a gathered crowd
Of griefs from days gone by.

To have forgot, is like a shining dream
Of pure pale skies and waveless sea,
When all the beauty that had ever been
Was long dead love of thee.

Emden, Sept. 30, 1911.

CREATION.

There lay the waters. Deep and chill they lay,
Formless and still, formless and very still,
Till at the breathing of The Spirit's will,
They shuddered, rose, and clashed themselves to spray.
Before the passing of that long-drawn day
The earth, from rest beneath the ocean's sill,
Upheaved its form in many a cliff and hill,
With all its drops that in the hollows lay.
So slept my soul, a deep and tranquil pool,
Only the sky it mirrored, blue and cool.
Then, as with passioned piping of a fife,
Came down your love and stirred my shining sea.
And I arose from out its depths to be
For you a tangled Paradise of life.

Cambridge, June 14, 1911.

DIRGE FOR TATYANA'S BRIDAL DAY.

(*Russian Folk-Song.*)

Awake, O my playmates, for night from her keeping
The hounds of the daylight has sent far and wide,
Gather, my sisters, and join me in weeping ;
Our gentle Tatyana will soon be a bride.

[*Chorus.*]

False is the gold with which Love has enriched you,
Bright are the jewels you're casting away.
Men are beguilers, and Love has bewitched you.
Stay with your playfellows, stay with us, stay !

Mothers are loving, but husbands are churlish ;
Mothers will fondle, where husbands will beat.
Goodbye to your laughter so free and so girlish,
Goodbye to the dance of your frolicsome feet !

No more when the magical moon's at her fullest,
To the forest a-gathering mushrooms you'll go.
Of penances, sitting at home is the dullest ;
Like snails on their travels, the minutes creep slow.

Under your window, the girls at their singing
Shall weave dewy garlands with light nimble hand,
Alone in the kitchen your hands you'll be wringing
To think you were once the most gay of the band.

Soon, soon, the old curse of our race shall enslave you,
Gentle Tatyana, from freedom beguiled ;
This is the joy that he promised and gave you—
In sorrow and anguish, to bring forth a child !

Better in arms of the earth to be sleeping
Than marry a husband and lie by his side.
May God and the saints who have maids in their keeping,
Cherish and pity Tatyana the bride !

Cambridge, Nov. 6, 1914.

WINTER.

Long evening hours I sit beside the fire and brood,
Wondering if such a thing as happiness there be.
The winds rove through the wild waste places of my mood,
Between my heart and yours there lies infinity...

le Vésinet, April 28, 1914.

HER LOVER, TO ROSAMUND.

I shall forget your lips, your cool sweet hair,
And how the roses in your cheeks were set ;
The buds and blooms that you were wont to wear
I shall forget.

Why weep that roses fade, or why regret
That where I cared I can no longer care,
Since Love, like Flowers, to Time must pay his debt.

Beauty beyond all Time and Space, I swear,
Blossomed when first your lips with mine were met.
Beauty fades not,—though you, my Rosebud fair
I shall forget.

Cambridge, March 4, 1916.

TO AMRITA. *Indian Love-song.* (To J. D. A.)

Hush, hold your breath, the great god Brahman sleeps,
And all we know, the pageant of his dream.

This unsubstantial earth, this fragile sea,
The glow-worm stars, whose clusters gem the night
As jewels star the darkness of your hair,
These are his dreams.

Dreams are those mountain tops
Of white Himalya's crags and cloud-girt snows ;
The rock-hewn temples where the pilgrims pray
To Lord Ishvara, maker of them all.
Not more substantial these than wind or light,
Than wind about the threshold of the dawn,
Or twinkling rainbow caught and prisonèd
By swords of light within the rain-washed air.

You are a dream, Amrit—your loving eyes
And polished hair, your clash of bangles gold,
This song, our love—these are great Brahman's dream.

He moves in sleep—the dream-world stirs,
And from the poised and breathless stillness comes
The slow unfolding of our earthly life.
Dark raindrops falls ; the lotus breaks and blooms ;
The lips of lovers meet ; the pandit turns
A dreary page and reads and turns again.
Somewhere a king is born, a beggar dies.
My fingers touch the lute—and overhead
The stars swing round the cadence of a dream.

How deep the night ! We are o'erarched with sleep.
The raindrops cease, and I could well-nigh hold
The scented stillness in my outstretched hand....
Come close, Amrit—the god may wake e'er dawn !

Cambridge, April 5, 1916.

IV.

THE OLD RECTORY, CALDECOTE.

THE OLD RECTORY, CALDECOTE.

I've found a house with hanging eaves,
A garden overgrown with leaves,
Where roving morning-glories climb,
And dandelions mark the time....

Here on the leafy ragged lawn,
Wet with dews of autumn dawn,
The tiny winds, like restless bees,
Go flitting past me through the trees,
Along the path and by the gate,
And up the hill, and never wait....
The path has climbed with steady feet
There where the sky and meadows meet,
Right to the hill where daylight breaks
And silver dawn the country wakes ;
Calling to me to come away
And seek the bubbling spring of day,
Find where the wind and day are one,
And shadows cool the acrid sun,
Where winds that turn like homing bees,
Gather to rest beneath the trees.

Alas, alas, I may not come,
My eyes are blind, my lips are dumb,
My heart is hot and dull with flame,
And I have lost my fairy name.
I've cast my fairy shoes away,
O little path that runs away,
And up and up towards the day.

II.

Somewhere beside a liliated pool
Beauty lies sleeping, white and cool,
Naked except for shining hair
Drifting along her bosom bare.
There by the speary flashing reeds
And tangled flower of water-weeds,
Guarded by jewelled dragon-flies,
Far from my garden, Beauty lies.

III.

Oh, but it's hot and airless here !
The sun at noon is rich and drear,
And shadows short as crippled men,
Fall from the trees and roof again.
I look along the path and stare—
It climbs a hill all brown and bare.
The sun will send a burning ray
To suck the liliated pool away,
Because I linger here and stay
Chained to the listless drowsy lawn,
Nor through the swift and pearly dawn
Followed the winds and pathway fleet
Up where the sky and meadows meet.
I cannot go so far alone—
I cannot go—and you are gone.

IV.

Go then. Yours be the hills, the lonely places,
Craggs on the mountain tops, and spanless airs
'Twixt height and height. The deepest woods are
yours

Sunless or gay ; and paths between the trees
Where no one steps but you. The stir and sounds
Of ripening spring ; the summer's maddened joy ;
Full autumn's warm brown twilight ; and the pure
Clear soul of winter, glittering bright and dead.
Look, I will give you all the distant seas,
The foam that reckless breaks and rides their waves,
White as the clouds and swifter wrecked than they.
And you shall have the caves with booming notes,
And all the songs the seas can chant to them.
Yours are the music of the storm, and fires
Of heaven ; stars and the moon ; the soaring clouds
And unimagined glory of the sky.

Leave me the lawn, the dusk around the trees,
The hedges, black and stiff, enfolding me.
The little gate, half-open, and the path,
Mounting the hill alone, to meet the night.

Caldecote, September 17, 1915.

V.

POEMS ABOUT DEATH.

TO ANYONE

Sometimes your eyes wear an expectant look,
As waiting for a step that never came.
Who then the laggard guest ?—Love, riches, fame,
Fair crowds of words to prison in a book ?
Or do you see the day when you forsook
All suddenly the fairies at their game,
Long long ago, before your soul grew lame ;
Or are you marvelling at the paths you took ?
Look yet. The saffron eve, the cool fresh morn
Come still. Though nevermore the fairies ride
A-gallop on the brave strong steed of Time,
You still shall hear the children's footsteps climb
Your own blue hills. Until one day at dawn,
Look up. There stands an angel by your side.

Cambridge, June 7, 1912.

OCTOBER EVENING, TRUMPINGTON ROAD.

The windswept sky, the windswept sky—
On such a night I mean to die.
With ne'er a winking star to peep,
Or wild-eyed moon to stir my sleep,
But only clouds of wind-swept grey
To snatch my restless soul away.
The storm shall lift me like a sea—
I shall be free, I shall be free !

Cambridge, October 28, 1912.

THE WHITE HORSE INN.

(*To F. W. S.*)

" Friend, which charger will you borrow
For your ride into to-morrow ?
You must have a fairy pony,
For the way is rough and stony,
Full of snares and full of danger. . .
Choose your steed, O reckless stranger.'

" Seven names upon the wall,
Seven horses in the stall.

" Love " is an unbridled steed,
Vicious is the horse of " Need,"

" Laughter " goes on wingéd feet,

" Care " will take your heart to eat.

" Hope," the mare, has quiet eyes,

" Power " is only for the wise,

" Sorrow " is an aged hack,

Lean of neck and sharp of back.

" Friend, which charger will you borrow,
For your ride into to-morrow ?

Take the spavined hack of Sorrow.

Often has he trod the way

Through the night and through the day."

" Seven names upon the wall,

Seven horses in the stall ;

By your leave I'll take them all.

" Need " shall find a stubborn master,

" Laughter " make the miles go faster.

" Care " we'll bind with hempen rope

Double in the shafts with " Hope."

What if " Power " should bolt away,

" Sorrow's " feet can never stray.
" Love " shall run without a bridle
Six can work, and one be idle."

" Stranger, sleep until to-morrow,
E'er thus recklessly you borrow
For your woe and for your sorrow."

Seven names upon the wall,
Empty now the quiet stall.

" To saddle, Friend ! " the landlord saith.
And bridled stands the white horse, Death.

le Vésinet, September 13, 1913.

DEATH THE PRIZE.

I stood afar, and saw Death's outstretched hand
Close o'er the hands of those I loved the best,
And lead them one by one away to rest,
Far 'mid the shadows of his lonely land.
I followed him, but first I caught a brand
From out Faith's burning fire, to aid my quest,
And when ashamed, I had my fears confessed
The winds of Prayer arose, my torchlight fanned.
I followed Death unto his shadowed gate,
He turned, " Stand back ! " he cried, " Return and wait.
I am a light to hang before thy eyes.
I am the mother of eternal life.
I crown the hero in the midst of strife.
Yet touch me not, lest I withhold my prize."

Emden, November 9, 1910;

NO WAITING.

I never had to wait for Love.
Not as those who search the heavy sky above,
And say " Why tarrieth he so long,
Who shall be music to my waiting song ? "
My love he broke Youth's tangled briar-rose,
And kissed me on the lips that I arose,
Leading me to golden halls of joy's full prime.

So come thou too, O Death, in thy good time.
I would not have to wait,
And say, " He cometh late."
Looking a-down the ever-lengthening road of years,
Peopled with vanished shapes, and gathering fears.
But come thou as a lover, in the bright midday,
And kiss my lips—I will not say thee nay.

Emden, March 18, 1912.

VI.

POEMS ABOUT ALL SORTS OF THINGS

THOUGHT AND SPEECH.

(*To E. M. S.*)

Sometimes the thoughts come surging through my brain
Like waves from out the lap of sunless sea,
Yet from the ocean's grasp they break not free
And back they fall to troubled depths again.
Recall them not. Such thoughts are born of pain
Of God's first curse on man. So let them dree
Their silent weird in inmost soul of me.
Leave them asleep, untroubled and unslain,
I watch them, wakeful as the watching moon
Broods o'er the waves. The whole sea seeks me soon.
And now on sleeping seas of thought there float
The swift the tiny bright-sailed skiffs of speech.
And lo! the cargo in each fragile boat
Is of the gems the sea cast on its beach.

Emden, February 19, 1911.

THE VOW OF OLGA STANISLOVNA.

" This is the vow I made when you were ill—
That I would look no more into men's eyes,
And watching, see them with desire grow dim.
It was a vow I made. Have I the will
To make it law, and not a worthless whim,
And not to yield, when nightfall gives me chance
To make my eyes a tune and set a-dance
The very blood of men, and make the wise
Pit with the foolish, all their foolish skill—
But rather set my looks unto the skies?
That was the vow I made, when you were ill. . .

Cambridge, September 9, 1911.

THUS SPEAKS DEMOCRACY.

(TO A. R. T.)

" The saints shall leave their visions and their cells
And toil unscathed amid a sordid world.
And kings shall sell their diadems empearled
To build the houses where the workman dwells.
No more shall pilgrims seek the holy wells,
The altar sleeps, where once the incense curled.
The ship of Christ her snow-white sails hath furled
And sheathed her sides in steel, for man rebels.
And Beauty too, must die, for good or ill.
What matter it—I keep my vision still.
Yea, though the Past shall lift her hands in scorn
And say I give men work in lieu of love,
I am the nurse, who smiles in trust above
The tiny babe of Liberty, new-born."

Emden, November 14, 1910.

TRIOLET.

(To C. W. du B.)

A wood, a hill, the distant sea,
Can fill my heart with song.
The wind along a wider lea,
A wood, a hill, the distant sea,
Can set my stagnant spirit free,
And lift me to the starry throng.
A wood, a hill, the distant sea
Can fill my heart with song.

Caldecote, September 21, 1915.

SATISFACTION IN MOTHERHOOD.

When I was young, I thought that death would give
The answer to my riddles still unguessed,
And push away the many hands fast-pressed
Down on my eyes that so for sight did strive.
But when love came, I said, " Now shalt thou drive
Away all dreams, that I may love thee best.
Thou art my answer ; thou shalt be the test
Of whether I can look on gods and live."
And yet I feared to know and love too much,
Lest love of man prove bitter to the touch.
But you my children, born without a taint
Of lovers' strife, of crooked dreams grown wrong;
You are my sight, my joy, my uttered song—
You whom alone I love without restraint.

Hessle, July 27, 1911.

THE BRIGHT CUP OF PAIN.

(To the memory of W. E. Gibraltar.)

I will rejoice that when the flesh is frail,
Out of the darkness of the phantom-show
Of dancing torments, one light seems to glow,
Steady as promises that never fail.

My weary sighs puff out the shining sail
Of vision, and the wind sings soft and low.
And in the land where stars and lilies grow,
Pain is the mystic chalice of the Grail.

Cambridge, December 29, 1912.

FOR OUR WORTHY AGNOSTICS.

This is to honour those who, lacking faith,
Still walk as if the light of faith they had.
Who loving simple good, can scorn the bad,
Even as our own Master Jesus saith.
Untroubled are their minds by any wraith
Of early prayers remembered, and are glad
For wind and sea and sunshine, like a lad
Whom summer morning from his books delayeth.
Yet if they too in time must bear their load
Of heavy fate, and see some sterner code
Than our God's love in sightless Nature's law,
Facing their lives alone, without a spark
Of light which 'twixt the clouds the martyrs saw—
Honour to men who march on in the dark !

Emden, September 17, 1911.

MY MOTHER'S HAIR.

Her silver hair is paler than the ray
The moonlight weaves of unsubstantial air,
And softer than the ocean's foam at play,
Her silver hair.

Chestnut and gold, bright bronze and auburn rare,
The amorous strands and curls that once did stray
Round Youth and Love enmeshed within their snare.

Yet Time the niggard, shall at last repay
The coin she gave him of her beauty rare,
And crown with seven stars of blazing day
Her silver hair.

le Vésinet, October 27, 1913.

TO ALETHEA.

They told me that I should forget
The pain I felt in bearing you.
Never ! I love you all the more,
That pain alone makes dreams come true.

Cambridge, June 14, 1911.

TO A BABY THAT MIGHT LIKE TO BE BORN.

O little one who comes to me in sleep,
Asking of me the wondrous right to live,
I say is life so great a good to give,
That you are fain to climb birth's toilsome steep ?
Are all our earthly tears so sweet to weep,
And is it sweet for mortal joy to strive,
And then to fail, and call on God to shrive—
Yet guarding life as men their treasures keep ?
Oh, if in starry deeps where now you bide,
You have a cradle softer than my arms,
Or if in all the wide unknown above
There lies a corner free from our alarms,
Come not—unless within your heart untried
You bear a power more mighty than my love.

Emden, October 15, 1911.

WIND AT EMDEN.

O sightless wind, with long long streaming hair,
And frantic hands that clash my window pane,
Straight from the troubled womb of sea you came,
Your long locks lashing on your bosom bare.
And, though you could not see, you seemed to stare,
Seeking some living pretty thing to maim,
And wither, as a leaf is licked by flame.
Destruction is the only garb you wear.
Could you but find a rest beside the sea,
Where wild dunes toss their crests of pale star-grass,
And wailing echoes of the sea's voice pass
Like your twin soul upon the shuddering air,
As some sea-beast coil up and slumber there,
Until the trump of judgment sets you free.

Emden, April 8, 1912.

CRITIC AND POET,

- ' You do not care for form ? ' he said,
" Form is a coffin for the dead."
" Words are dead thoughts—you need a hearse."
" *That* isn't my idea of verse."
" Explain (Peccavi ! I have sinned.) "
" I am the pipe—the thought's the wind."
" Wind ! An admission ! Tell me, whence ? "
" Soul of the earth. (Don't be so dense.) "
" What's your conception, then, of metre ? "
" Channels to make the thought run fleeter."
You're claiming, then, to be inspired ? "
" Better, I think, than being hired."
" You poets—whew—I give you up ! "
" Turn on the light. We'd better sup."
le Vésinet, April 29, 1914.

VII.
BORDERLAND POEMS.

EACH MAN MUST MEET GOD ALONE.

(To S. C. V.)

Some men can stand alone. They dare to face the sky
Undazed by myriad glimpse of star on star,
And shrink not when the God, Who seemed so far,
Speaks suddenly than their own hearts more nigh.

I did not dare to meet my God alone,
And so within a kindly Church I crept.
But while, for very comfort, soft I wept,
God looked at me from every niche and stone.

Cambridge, December 11, 1912.

MALISE SPEAKS. I ANSWER.

" Looking on sunset pageant of the west,
I see a golden ship with flame aboard ;
You see the flaming armies of the Lord
The host of God in shining armour dressed.
I see an eagle leave his fiery nest ;
You see an angel with a gleaming sword
Make sharp his blade with ever-living word,
The scourge of sinful men to be his quest."

" And yet it was the selfsame sunset sky
That, hope within our hearts, and hand in hand,
We looked upon together, you and I.
Whom shall we blame that mortals cannot trace
Out truth alike ?—though God they should have scanned,
See not alike the glory of His face ? "

Emden, October 8, 1911.

HEREDITY.

(To my father.)

Not only since through childhood's troubled maze
My eager feet all carefully were led,
Nor yet that kneeling nightly by my bed,
I seek His face with half-averted gaze,
Do I find God, but since within me stays
The living prayer of sires and dames long dead.
I feel them strive within my blood, their dread
Of sin mingling with mighty songs of praise.
As a great river flowing to the sea,
Feels in its flanks a thousand well-springs rise,
From many a rocky source or wide green fen
Borne by the stream to one eternity,
So do I feel aflame upon my eyes
The godward vision of a thousand men.

Cambridge, August 12, 1912.

THE MAGICIAN POET.

By broken wings how shall he reach the starry throng
Of devas? Yea, though their exceeding glory clings
About his heavy hair; how raise his soul so strong
By broken wings?

What can avail his hand the trenchant sword of song?
"Aum tat sat Aum!" Though potent words to heaven he
flings,
And strikes the world resounding as a temple gong.
Yea, we who wingless, to the wingéd earth belong,
Stare dully as the poet sings of starry things,
Finding his curious cry too shamelessly a-wrong.—
"Buy broken wings!"

Cambridge, Aug. 26, 1913.

LISTENING TO A BACH FUGUE PLAYED IN AN EMPTY CATHEDRAL.

First the theme, clear as judgment-trumpet's sound,
Or bright as scythe to reap the prayers long dead,
Here in the fields of God unharvested.
When it had girt the farthest pillar round
And lingered in the roof's remotest bound,
Quick crowds of sound from out the organ sped.
I felt a crowd of souls around my head,
Cold as the cold stone slabs upon the ground.
These were the souls of men who worshipped here.
—O church, how still you are and full of fear.—
It seemed the music gave them golden wings,
To soar aloft and seek their fiery trial.
When lo! "Behold your God!" the organ sings,
Crashing to music every quivering aisle.

Emden, Jan. 11, 1912.

MASS—AND A KENSIT ROW.

(For F. K. St. G.)

The priest is saying Mass. Upon the altar
Are tall lights. Beside the Book and Psalter
The sacred chalice stands, brimful with wine,
To be Thy Blood, O Crucified—Thine, Thine.
Before the choir stalls every candle bright
Shews in the dark a halo round its light.
Heavy with song and perfume seems the air,
Weaving a garment for Our Lord to wear.
And in the dim church here and there
Are kneeling men and women wrapt in prayer.
Around us seems to gather many a wraith

Of prayers departed, and our wistful faith
Joins hands with them.

And now for Christ we look.
His Body, twixt the candles and the Book.
Body and Blood of Christ, Body and Blood—
And hope and torment whelm me in a flood.
What do I here? What Being gave me leave
To give myself, to tremble, to receive?

How shall I find the wine of God
My chaliced heart to fill?
To gain my soul's eternal life,
Must I strike dead my will?

This god-like freedom of my mind,
This ecstasy of thought,
Can such possessions naught avail,
Avail me less than naught?

Asks God a crushed and severed self,
Or claimeth He the whole?
Dare I not give him all the height
And stature of my soul?

Sudden, a shout in the church! A cry, a snarl,
As of angry wolves. There are men standing
Between the kneeling figures, and they cry
"Idolater! He blasphemes, he blasphemes.
Away with him, in the name of God away."

Holy stillness, vesture of God, is torn.
Our prayers lie bruised around us, and the priest
Wavers and is dumb. The men, loud-shouting,
Push their way forward, swarm the chancel steps.
Silent, the choristers face the brawling throng.

One man twists past, leaps to the altar stair,
And breaks the crucifix across his knees.

I thought "So might the rabble of the Jews
Have yelled their execrations at Our Lord,
'Crucify Him! Crucify Him!'" These too,
Act all unknowing of the wrong they do."

Now the police are here, and with firm hands
Lead out the desecrators one by one.
The door clangs to. The lights have dwindled low
And dark and saddened seems the little church.
Was Our Lord there, upon the altar, touched
By such profanity? Can we believe
He saw, with troubled human eyes, our sin,
Forgiving us, as once on Calvary?

Hush! As o'er striving waters of the sea
The Spirit brooding bringeth holy peace,
The priest's voice dominates the dazed church.
Once more we kneel. So may my torments pass!

Hush! God is here. The priest is saying Mass...

Ventnor, Nov. 17, 1912.

GEMS.

(To A. W. G.)

Gems ! I never cared for gems. What's a gem ?
A spark of light in colour prisonéd—
An earth-bound gleam—a radiancy grown cold—
A dewdrop's death— a star in effigy—
Who knows ? A jewel's vivid, soulless, proud.
You'd give a king a gem, to make his crown
—Heavy enough, God knows !—the heavier.
But who would give a child a gem ?

Yet once

It seems, I saw, against the jewelled sky,
Against the sombre-purpled sky of night,
A woman, tall as the hills and quiet
As the sea, clothed and girt about with gems.
In sapphires robed—as flames those stones were blue—
Crownèd with diamonds, like sparks too bright
For colouring, while in her rippled hair
Like sunlight on a golden stream, the gems,
Topaz and pearl, lay shimmering.

And she,

Taking a handful of the glowing gauds,
Flung them to me, so that the bright things lay,
Caught in my lap, as if defiantly.
“ Despise them not ! ” she cried “ These gems have lain
Cool on the lustrous warmth of Helen's throat,
By Cleopatra's brightness has their light
Been paled. They know the thoughts of kings, whose heads
Were held more proudly for their starry weight.
For them have ships gone roving o'er the seas,
And slaves bent grimly at the galley oars.
Something of passion clings around them still—

There's power within the gem—a tiny thing,
A goal to set your hopes upon; 'twill make
A king of you, a harlot, or a priest.—
A little stone, so cold, so bright, so rare.”
“ Their touch defileth me ! ” I cried to her.
But she, casting me another handful—
They clung like living things about my hair—
Answered me thus. “ Thou who canst beauty see
In dull waste spaces of the earth, as in
The ugliest soul that dwells behind the eyes
Of man, shouldst see the loveliness that's here.
I, Beauty, of my substance fashioned them,
Put wonder in them, deathless, pure, serene.
Bid them be lures, and never satisfy
The pilgrim hearts of men ; but, dazzling, call,
Even as call the level rays of sun,
From far horizons blazing hitherwards,
To kindle dreams within the hearts of men.”

le Vésinet, April 30, 1914.

THE MAGICIAN'S BIRTHDAY

I have lived forty years, full forty years.
Not longer in the cruel wilderness,
Did God delude the wayward Israelites...

Perhaps for me, God keeps no promised land.
Perhaps not e'en with thorns incoronate,
I am to die. No resurrection morn
Shall shaft her beams, like trumpet-blasts of light,
Upon my sealéd grave. Yet hear me, Lord!
Nor land, nor crown, nor crucifix I sought,
But Thee alone! Thou, Thou hast been my quest.
(Yea, I would stoop to kiss Thy garment's hem,
So did I know it Thine.) O hear me, Lord.

Have I not climbed the icy peaks of pain,
And stood alone amid unchallenged snows,
Dazed with my solitude, save that one thought,
Even as an eagle, cried and clove the sky;
While far below, among the dead moraine
Of rocks, from out the glacier cave o'erarched
By ice more blue than steel or fire, there sprang
The wild majestic river of my tears?

Have I not crossed the desert of despair,
Still seeking Thee, for that Thou toldest me
That there, behind the dazzling disk of sun
That stretched its dragon-wings o'er sapphire skies,
And with its breath sucked up all life, all moisture,
From these slack veins, and made my swollen tongue
Grow black within its parchéd cavity,
There blazed some whiter light, some crownéd Sun,
That with its very fire could slake the drought
Of men, so that they thirsted nevermore.

Vainly I mastered all the streaming Winds,
Yet in the winds I might not touch Thy hair.
Vainly I clomb the ladder of the Moon,
And from her snatched the knowledge how to still
The deep-drawn breathing of the drowsy sea ;
That in its surface broad and glassy-calm
I there the features of some mirrored God
Might trace. But lo ! when bending eager down,
Oceans throw back a vaster-imaged Self,
With wide eyes vacant at my own dismay !

O Thou than day more wide, than nights more deep,
Whom through terrible days, and nights unslept,
With word and wand and smoking thurible
I would have manacled and chained ! Power
I attained, all power—but this I found,
Might is Thy House, but shall not be Thyself.

March through the dark-resounding halls of Magick,
O my soul ! Here sit the carven gods asleep,
The Riddle coiled behind their painted eyes.
While round them, like the petal-plumèd smoke
Of incense, float many a soulless sprite
Of air and foam. Touch, touch, the carven lips.
Isis shall glow no more ; the flame is dead.
Only the priest's mind is wrought in shapes
Now dark as rock, now formless as the mist.
Gods, sylphs, undines. They flicker in the flame
Of thought ; the shades rise blacker on the walls ;
Thunder resounds ; lightning, like serpent's fangs,
Pierces his brain ! The shattered spirit reels.
The falling Night of all the Gods is here...

Rise, rise, O Bourneless One, from out the smoke
And ruins of my mind ! I cry in vain.
The unutterable darkness of the soul,
Wave on wave, hath compassed me about.

le Vésinet, Oct. 4, 1913.

SULEIMAN BEN DAOUD.

He sleeps alone, beyond the seven seas
By foot of angel or of man untrod.
Enthroned he rests ; his hand still grasps the rod
Of wisdom, and there lies o'er breast and knees
The robe of power, whereon are writ such keys
As make the man to know, and be as God,
Ruling all breath and motion by his nod,
Bid hills bow down, and bind the wandering breeze.
So sleep, Suleiman Ben Daoud ! Thy words
Are shed as leaves from the eternal tree,
And thou art stript and bare. Thy magic ring,
When Death came reaping of the common herds,
Availed thee not.—Yet those who sleep are free ;
Who rules the realms of Death, the wisest king !

le Vésinet, Feb. 15, 1914.

DIEU FAIT SON MÉTIER.

I. *A Misty Morning.*

God sends forth mist to cover all the world.
Like breath upon a glass it dims the sea.
And under it the deeps brood patiently.
Like sleep it drifts above the drowsy lands,
Twisted and fashioned by immortal hands.
Then takes the frame of man within its frail control.
And lo ! from Breath of God grown cold, is born the soul.

II. *Midday in Summer.*

God draws His hand across the sun's gold rays,
And at the touch the whole earth stirs and thrills ;
The note goes rippling down the mountain rills ;
Here in the woods a wild heart 'gins to beat
And gold haze dances circlingly and fleet.
Slow rapture wakes and stirs within the heavy sea ;
I stumble to my feet, half-dazed, to follow Thee.

III. *A Starlit Night, with Lightning.*

Behold God working in the forge of Time.
The four winds, manacled and sullen-tame,
Have lashed the furnace into whips of flame.
He strikes ! Look up ! the blown sparks rise
And shower new stars and suns about the skies.
But in the burning darkness of the forge I see
God beating out the circle of Infinity.

le Vésinet, Sept. 13, 1913.

EVENING—SILENCE—A SHADED LAMP.

Evening—silence—a shaded lamp.
Where's the world ? There's never a tramp
Of horse or men in the dark highway
—At noon all sunlight and children's play—
Never a sound in the woods beyond
Or croak of frogs in the gleaming pond
Where even the fish are laid asleep
In the stagnant cold of the hollows deep.

Evening—silence—a shadowed light...
I glance about me in half affright,
For the air is dim with an angel's wings,
And round my head in a thousand rings
A perfumed cloud from a hidden censer
Has made the gathering mist grow denser.
The painted woodwork upon the walls
Has prayed to become cathedral stalls.
My very table has grown an altar,
This book I touch is a magic psalter.
The pen has blossomed as Aaron's rod,
To turn the ink to the blood of God.

What angels, demons, or elfin sprite
Are fain to share in the holy rite ?
I am here alone with the airy tribe,
Alone with the wonder I here inscribe,
For the world has crumbled away to-night
Evening—silence—A shadowed light !

Evening—silence—a shaded lamp.

The pools are veiled with a vapour damp,
And night has lengthened the winding road
So that even wishes must bear a load
Of groping blindness and dulling pity
For the pain of thought e'er they reach the city.—
And oh ! in the street lamps' acrid glare
How shall my wandering wishes dare
To find your house and to bid you come
Up the guarded path through the doorway dumb...

Evening—silence—a shaded lamp.

I raise my arms and my foot I stamp
And lo ! my wish is a moon-bright ray
That pierces the darkness. All the way
From the silent room where the angels wait
To the noisy chamber where diners sate.—
Arise ! Arise ! from your easy place
And veil your eyes and avert your face,
For here the walls have a thousand eyes,
And blinding lights from the altar rise,
And all the air is a sea of motion
With incense waves from a spirit-ocean.

The very ceiling becomes a star
White as the cup of a nenuphar....

The Sickle is gathering souls to-night...
Evening—silence—a shadowed light.

le Vésinet, Nov. 28, 1913.

THE CHURCH OF OUR LADY AND THE ENGLISH
MARTYRS. CAMBRIDGE.

(For Valentine.)

Challenging, at the four cross-roads you stand,
And at your feet the people pass you by.
Around you, churches rise and grow and die,
And civil wars of thought, in this the land
That once was yours, are waged. Here where you spanned
The gulf 'twixt Heaven and earth with piety,
With clashing words we shout ; and none reply.
Changeless you speak—we cannot understand.
Here in a world where all things change and pass,
And truths that yesterday we knew are fled,
As sounds fly faint and fainter up the skies,
Steadfast one church alone. The God Who lies
Hidden in shroud of Sacrament and Mass,
Soon in His Church shall rise up from the dead.

Cambridge, Easter Day, 1913.

VIII.
MYSTICAL POEMS.

SARASVATI.

" Behold, I am the Pure Soul's flameless light,
The Lamp within the Great Magician's hand.
Without my chrism is neither shrine nor rite,
Nor any god at all.

The church ye planned,
Its nave and dome and darkened door must fall.
I own no meaner temple than the Whole,
Where I, not grasped by roof or floor or wall,
Light the undying lordship of the Soul."

le Vésinet, Oct. 10, 1913.

" NO MAN HATH SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME."

One God sits throned above all prayer and creed.
Creeds build us temples, but our wingéd prayer
Soars through the blinded blue of endless air,
Striving to voice the twisted cry of need
That God will human be, and turn, and heed ;
Come like a king a-down the golden stair,
Or as a shepherd in His pastures fair,
Lay by His pride, and all His creatures feed.
So Jesus came, our prayer made flesh anew,
His soul a light to fill the cup of day,
His body chalice for the soul of light.

Yea, though God's glory veil Him from our view,
Christ flashed upon us, one swift sword-like ray,
Shafted from fire o'erarching, infinite.

Cambridge, June 4, 1913.

THE UNITY OF LIFE.

(To F. M. T.)

There is a soul within these rocks, asleep,
A soul within thy soundless deeps, O sea,
And in the springing sap that mounts the tree,
As in these glaciers mute that footless creep
Down stiff cold bosom of the mountain steep,
So slow that Time himself can hardly see
The motion that their secret life sets free,
So deep their soul is hid, so deathly deep.
Deeper within your sullen hearts, O men,
I find your spark of burning fire is hid,
Still as the life within this silent sod,
Its flickering light too oft beyond your ken.
Yet know, ye fools, no man himself can rid
From flame that makes the very soul of God.

Emden, March 2, 1912.

FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENTIATIONS OF THE ABSOLUTE.

(To E. A.)

But yesterday ye were a crowd
With ugly hands and voices loud,
Strange human beasts with tired eyes.
And I, and I, who felt so wise
Could scarcely bear to look on you.
To-day I know that this is true.
Ye make up God.
The arc that is infinity

Cuts through your souls and of your souls is made.
Not unafraid
Be crowned with this your destiny,
Even as the sod
Beareth a chaplet of bright flowers
A coronet of life.
Now let the pulsing hours
Be still. The strife
Of space, where stars would elbow stars away,
(Striving to clutch their portion of the day)
All silent be.
Silence the body ; bid your Self be dumb ;
Them with wide thunder-wings through all the stillness
numb,
God comes. Crouch, fearfully.
Nay fear ye not, for as the flood
Passes athwart you, as through veins the blood,
Know that ye are God and that His soul
Is but the gathered Spirit of the whole.
Now has the vision passed away,
The wheel of Time swings round the day.
And I who thought myself so wise,
Look on the world with other eyes.
No longer we, of God afraid,
A jealous God like-man have made.
But know that man hath birth divine.—
Yea, Thou art we, and we are Thine.

Cambridge, June 20, 1913.

ECSTACY.

Hush ! Hush !

The moon is high above the trees
And through the woods a panting breeze
Has stepped and touched my bosom bare—
I thought it was a strand of hair.
For Cynthia calls the spirits down
From Heaven's many-mansioned town.—

I've crept here through her maddening light
And made my face all wan and white
Upturned to her, that through my eyes
May filter magic of the skies,
The soul's bright wings may loosened be,
With magic of the sky and sea.

(This body frail is set a-tune
To the cadence of the waxing moon.
And when the moon has crowned the sky
My white-flamed spirit riseth high.
Flame from the glowing pits of earth,
Flame to the moon that gave it birth.
Spirit and soul, a fire of light,
Shall rise and touch the stars' delight.)

The spirits sleep, but by the lake
Where trees a cowl of darkness make,
The boughs are writhing all awake,
And black and gleaming like a snake,
Hiss, as the nightwind passes by,
Hiss, to the moon that rules the sky.
Hark ! Hark !
Up from the dark, around, around,
What frenzy leaps through pipes to sound ?

The winds of all the worlds are here ;
The very pipes are wild with fear,
And crashing through the forest, flee
The souls awaked by minstrelsy.
Like turbid smoke they fill the air—
I felt one touch my stiffened hair,
And on my bosom lithe and bare,
A hand had passed and rested there.

Silence once more. Great clouds have crossed the moon.
The woods are still, and night's black curtain swings
Back to its place. The secrets of the stars
Are hid. The spirit's flame dies down again
And all the sky is very far away.
Now even as the pipes' sound sudden stilled,
Lake and forest, sea, and Cynthia's darkened face,
Slip from me, and my tired head droops and falls.
All silence have I gathered unto me,
And of dead flame and moveless wind
Fashion me sleep.

There in the forest dark, I lay
And from the moon one silver ray
Stabbed through my heart, as stabs the sword
Borne by the angel of the Lord.
And who shall say Who came to me,
What spirit of trees or hills or sea.
Within my nostrils, soft he breathed
Breath of the poppy dew-enwreathed,
Breath that would break the earth at spring,
Such breath as stirs the birds to wing,
Breath to arouse the sleeping sea,
And fan the waves to ecstasy.

And lo ! the breath became a swan with wings of fire,
And I between the wings lay down,
Crying, " Oh, bear me higher,
For the moon hath set a burnished ray
A sword athwart the gates of day."

Slowly the swan rose ; and blown
From his wings, two feathers flew as comets through the
sky.

And I,
Raising my head,
Saw, all around, the drifting hosts of dead,
Bound to the earth with ropes of passion and of lust,
And each one sought his dust,
Some in the sand by the wide sea-shore,
Or on the winnowed threshing floor,
Some, whirling through the city street,
To cling unto his mistress' feet—
And longed to glean his dust again,
Yea, for the very lust of pain.

And now the blazing spire of stars
Stands firmer on the dome of night,
And far far below, half out of sight,
I glimpse the cold moon's bars.
" Oh, bear me higher, fire-plumed swan ! "

Breath of the earth, his wings !
(Yea, there was something earthly in that strength of his.)
Past us a planet swings,
The wind-rush fans my cheek, and it is gone.

" Now shew me Him Who Is ! "
I cried, " Not God Who sets the planets' ordered way—
Nor Him Who first divided night from day,

Nor yet the God Who called me from the clay,
But God Who Is and yet Is Not."

Behold the darkness all around,
Suns blotted out, and not a sound
To pierce the dark.

Only my soul, one fragile spark,
Burned, burned, in me,
Until its light was agony.

"O Dark, receive my light, my Self to Thee I give,
All living things must die, that God alone may live."

Hush! Dawn has risen grey and cold,
Over the lake and forest old,
And through the air all chilly-clear
The dying sound of pipes I hear.
And Earth, so simple and so wise,
Smiles up at me with childlike eyes.

Paris, July 27, 1913.

EPILOGUE. THE CURSE OF DUALITY.

Here in the midst of life I stand
And treasures just beyond my hand
Are born of earth and sky.
Could I but hold one thing as mine,
Then I were as that God, divine,
For Whom the deeps of boundless space
Cast back no shadow to His face,
Whose "I" knows no "not-I."

I look upon the sunset flame
That brands the air with Phoebus' name
And set my very soul to be
Mirror of all the beauty there—

As if in truth a man might dare
To pluck that fiery-petalled rose
And be himself the thing he knows—

I draw that flame to me !

Then how shall human love not cry
“ Not two, but one, are thou and I ! ”
Woman and man in one.

And what the reason of a kiss,
But this, to know more rounded bliss,
Than eyes could shaft or voices sing,
And clasp us twain within a ring
Assailable by none.

Oh curse two-edged, oh cleaving pain,
To love and never to attain
Unto the thing adored !
For God Who smote the earth in twain
The airy sky from leaden main,
And made the man and woman two,
Whereof all hope and torment grew,
Still wields His flaming sword.

*Yet turn to God, thou roving man !
The meanest soul is yet a span
To grasp the mind of Him.
Thy tiny circle is the same
And one with God's unspoken Name.
If thou but see the eternal Sun
His very flame shall be as one
With thine own rushlight dim.*

*Turn unto God, O soul of mine—
Ye twain shall be the one, Divine !*

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