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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SILHOUETTES ***

SILHOUETTES

BY

ARTHUR SYMONS

SECOND EDITION

REVISED AND ENLARGED

LONDON: LEONARD SMITHERS

EFFINGHAM HOUSE: ARUNDEL STREET

STRAND: MDCCCXCVI

TO

KATHERINE WILLARD,

NOW

KATHERINE BALDWIN.

Paris: May, 1892.

London: February, 1896.

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* The Preface, and the nineteen Poems marked with an asterisk, were not contained in the first edition. One Poem has been omitted, and many completely rewritten.

PREFACE:

BEING A WORD ON BEHALF OF PATCHOULI.

AN ingenuous reviewer once described some verses of mine as "unwholesome," because, he said, they had "a faint smell of Patchouli about them." I am a little sorry he chose Patchouli, for that is not a particularly favourite scent with me. If he had only chosen *Peau d'Espagne*, which has a subtle meaning, or *Lily of the Valley*, with which I have associations! But Patchouli will serve. Let me ask, then, in republishing, with additions, a collection of little pieces, many of which have been objected to, at one time or another, as being somewhat deliberately frivolous, why art should not, if it please, concern itself with the artificially charming, which, I suppose, is what my critic means by Patchouli? All art, surely, is a form of artifice, and thus, to the truly devout mind, condemned already, if not as actively noxious, at all events as needless. That is a point of view which I quite understand, and its conclusion I hold to be absolutely logical. I have the utmost respect for the people who refuse to read a novel, to go to the theatre, or to learn dancing. That is to have convictions and to live up to them. I understand also the point of view from which a work of art is tolerated in so far as it is actually militant on behalf of a religious or a moral idea. But what I fail to understand are those delicate, invisible degrees by which a distinction is drawn between this form of art and that; the hesitations, and compromises, and timorous advances, and shocked retreats, of the Puritan conscience once emancipated, and yet afraid of liberty. However you may try to convince yourself to the contrary, a work of art can be judged only from two standpoints: the standpoint from which its art is measured entirely by its morality, and the standpoint from which its morality is measured entirely by its art.

Here, for once, in connection with these "Silhouettes," I have not, if my recollection serves me, been accused of actual immorality. I am but a fair way along the "primrose path," not yet within singeing distance of the "everlasting bonfire." In other words, I have not yet written "London Nights," which, it appears (I can scarcely realize it, in my innocent abstraction in aesthetical matters), has no very salutary reputation among the blameless moralists of the press. I need not, therefore, on this occasion, concern myself with more than the curious fallacy by which there is supposed to be something inherently wrong in artistic work which deals frankly and lightly with the very real charm of the lighter emotions and the more fleeting sensations.

I do not wish to assert that the kind of verse which happened to reflect certain moods of mine at a certain period of my life, is the best kind of verse in itself, or is likely to seem to me, in other years, when other moods may have made me their own, the best kind of verse for my own expression of myself. Nor do I affect to doubt that the creation of the supreme emotion is a higher form of art than the reflection of the most exquisite sensation, the evocation of the most magical impression. I claim only an equal liberty for the rendering of every mood of that variable and inexplicable and contradictory creature which we call ourselves, of every aspect under which we are gifted or condemned to apprehend the beauty and strangeness and curiosity of the visible world.

Patchouli! Well, why not Patchouli? Is there any "reason in nature" why we should write exclusively about the natural blush, if the delicately acquired blush of rouge has any attraction for us? Both exist; both, I think, are charming in their way; and the latter, as a subject, has, at all events, more novelty. If you prefer your "new-mown hay" in the hayfield, and I, it may be, in a scent-bottle, why may not my individual caprice be allowed to find expression as well as yours? Probably I enjoy the hayfield as much as you do; but I enjoy quite other scents and sensations as well, and I take the former for granted, and write my poem, for a change, about the latter. There is no necessary difference in artistic value between a good poem about a flower in the hedge and a good poem about the scent in a sachet. I am always charmed to read beautiful poems about nature in the country. Only, personally, I prefer town to country; and in the town we have to find for ourselves, as best we may, the *décor* which is the town equivalent of the great natural *décor* of fields and hills. Here it is that artificiality comes in; and if any one sees no beauty in the effects of artificial light, in all the variable, most human, and yet most factitious town landscape, I can only pity him, and go on my own way.

That is, if he will let me. But he tells me that one thing is right and the

other is wrong; that one is good art and the other is bad; and I listen in amazement, sometimes not without impatience, wondering why an estimable personal prejudice should be thus exalted into a dogma, and uttered in the name of art. For in art there can be no prejudices, only results. If we are to save people's souls by the writing of verses, well and good. But if not, there is no choice but to admit an absolute freedom of choice. And if Patchouli pleases one, why not Patchouli?

Arthur Symons.

London, *February*, 1896.

AT DIEPPE.

AFTER SUNSET.

THE sea lies quieted beneath
The after-sunset flush
That leaves upon the heaped grey clouds
The grape's faint purple blush.
Pale, from a little space in heaven
Of delicate ivory,
The sickle-moon and one gold star
Look down upon the sea.

ON THE BEACH.

NIGHT, a grey sky, a ghostly sea,
The soft beginning of the rain:
Black on the horizon, sails that wane
Into the distance mistily.

The tide is rising, I can hear
The soft roar broadening far along;
It cries and murmurs in my ear
A sleepy old forgotten song.

Softly the stealthy night descends,
The black sails fade into the sky:
Is this not, where the sea-line ends,
The shore-line of infinity?

I cannot think or dream: the grey
Unending waste of sea and night,
Dull, impotently infinite,
Blots out the very hope of day.

RAIN ON THE DOWN.

NIGHT, and the down by the sea,
And the veil of rain on the down;
And she came through the mist and the rain to me
From the safe warm lights of the town.
The rain shone in her hair,
And her face gleamed in the rain;
And only the night and the rain were there
As she came to me out of the rain.

BEFORE THE SQUALL.

THE wind is rising on the sea,
White flashes dance along the deep,
That moans as if uneasily
It turned in an unquiet sleep.
Ridge after rocky ridge upheaves
A toppling crest that falls in spray
Where the tormented beach receives
The buffets of the sea's wild play.
On the horizon's nearing line,
Where the sky rests, a visible wall.
Grey in the offing, I divine
The sails that fly before the squall.

UNDER THE CLIFFS.

BRIGHT light to windward on the horizon's verge;
To leeward, stormy shadows, violet-black,
And the wide sea between
A vast unfurrowed field of windless green;
The stormy shadows flicker on the track
Of phantom sails that vanish and emerge.

I gaze across the sea, remembering her.
I watch the white sun walk across the sea,
This pallid afternoon,
With feet that tread as whitely as the moon,
And in his fleet and shining feet I see
The footsteps of another voyager.

REQUIES.

O IS it death or life
That sounds like something strangely known
In this subsiding out of strife,
This slow sea-monotone?
A sound, scarce heard through sleep,
Murmurous as the August bees
That fill the forest hollows deep
About the roots of trees.
O is it life or death,
O is it hope or memory,
That quiets all things with this breath
Of the eternal sea?

MASKS AND FACES.

PASTEL.

THE light of our cigarettes
Went and came in the gloom:
It was dark in the little room.
Dark, and then, in the dark,
Sudden, a flash, a glow,
And a hand and a ring I know.
And then, through the dark, a flush
Ruddy and vague, the grace—
A rose—of her lyric face.

HER EYES.

BENEATH the heaven of her brows'
Unclouded noon of peace, there lies
A leafy heaven of hazel boughs
In the seclusion of her eyes;
Her troubling eyes that cannot rest;
And there's a little flame that dances
(A firefly in a grassy nest)
In the green circle of her glances;
A frolic Faun that must be hid,
Shyly, in some fantastic shade,
Where pity droops a tender lid
On laughter of itself afraid.

MORBIDEZZA.

WHITE girl, your flesh is lilies
Grown 'neath a frozen moon,
So still is
The rapture of your swoon
Of whiteness, snow or lilies.

The virginal revealment,
Your bosom's wavering slope,
Concealment,
'Neath fainting heliotrope,
Of whitest white's revealment,

Is like a bed of lilies,
A jealous-guarded row,
Whose will is
Simply chaste dreams:—but oh,
The alluring scent of lilies!

MAQUILLAGE.

THE charm of rouge on fragile cheeks,
 Pearl-powder, and, about the eyes,
The dark and lustrous Eastern dyes;
 The floating odour that bespeaks
A scented boudoir and the doubtful night
Of alcoves curtained close against the light
 Gracile and creamy white and rose,
 Complexioned like the flower of dawn,
Her fleeting colours are as those
 That, from an April sky withdrawn,
Fade in a fragrant mist of tears away
When weeping noon leads on the altered day.

IMPRESSION.

TO M. C.

THE pink and black of silk and lace,
Flushed in the rosy-golden glow
Of lamplight on her lifted face;
Powder and wig, and pink and lace,
And those pathetic eyes of hers;
But all the London footlights know
The little plaintive smile that stirs
The shadow in those eyes of hers.

Outside, the dreary church-bell tolled,
The London Sunday faded slow;
Ah, what is this? what wings unfold
In this miraculous rose of gold?

AN ANGEL OF PERUGINO.

HAVE I not seen your face before
Where Perugino's angels stand
In those calm circles, and adore
With singing throat and lifted hand?
So the pale hair lay crescent-wise,
About the placid forehead curled,
And the pale piety of eyes
Was as God's peace upon the world.
And you, a simple child serene,
Wander upon your quiet way,
Nor know that any eyes have seen
The Umbrian halo crown the day.

AT FONTAINEBLEAU.

IT was a day of sun and rain,
Uncertain as a child's quick moods;
And I shall never pass again
So blithe a day among the woods.
The forest knew you and was glad,
And laughed for very joy to know
Her child was with her; then, grown sad,
She wept, because her child must go.
And you would spy and you would capture
The shyest flower that lit the grass:
The joy I had to watch your rapture
Was keen as even your rapture was.
The forest knew you and was glad,
And laughed and wept for joy and woe.
This was the welcome that you had
Among the woods of Fontainebleau.

ON THE HEATH.

HER face's wilful flash and glow
Turned all its light upon my face
One bright delirious moment's space,
And then she passed: I followed slow
Across the heath, and up and round,
And watched the splendid death of day
Upon the summits far away,
And in her fateful beauty found
The fierce wild beauty of the light
That startles twilight on the hills,
And lightens all the mountain rills,
And flames before the feet of night.

IN THE ORATORY.

THE incense mounted like a cloud,
A golden cloud of languid scent;
Robed priests before the altar bowed,
Expecting the divine event.

Then silence, like a prisoner bound,
Rose, by a mighty hand set free,
And dazzlingly, in shafts of sound,
Thundered Beethoven's Mass in C.

She knelt in prayer; large lids serene
Lay heavy on the sombre eyes,
As though to veil some vision seen
Upon the mounts of Paradise.

Her dark face, calm as carven stone.
The face that twilight shows the day,
Brooded, mysteriously alone,
And infinitely far away.

Inexplicable eyes that drew
Mine eyes adoring, why from me
Demand, new Sphinx, the fatal clue
That seals my doom or conquers thee?

PATTIE.

COOL comely country Pattie, grown
A daisy where the daisies grow,
No wind of heaven has ever blown
Across a field-flower's daintier snow.
Gold-white among the meadow-grass
The humble little daisies thrive;
I cannot see them as I pass,
But I am glad to be alive.
And so I turn where Pattie stands,
A flower among the flowers at play;
I'll lay my heart into her hands,
And she will smile the clouds away.

IN AN OMNIBUS.

YOUR smile is like a treachery,
A treachery adorable;
So smiles the siren where the sea
Sings to the unforgetting shell.
Your fleeting Leonardo face,
Parisian Monna Lisa, dreams
Elusively, but not of streams
Born in a shadow-haunted place.
Of Paris, Paris, is your thought,
Of Paris robes, and when to wear
The latest bonnet you have bought
To match the marvel of your hair.
Yet that fine malice of your smile,
That faint and fluctuating glint
Between your eyelids, does it hint
Alone of matters mercantile?
Close lips that keep the secret in,
Half spoken by the stealthy eyes,
Is there indeed no word to win,
No secret, from the vague replies
Of lips and lids that feign to hide
That which they feign to render up?
Is there, in Tantalus' dim cup,
The shadow of water, nought beside?

ON MEETING AFTER.

HER eyes are haunted, eyes that were
Scarce sad when last we met.
What thing is this has come to her
That she may not forget?
They loved, they married: it is well!
But ah, what memories
Are these whereof her eyes half tell,
Her haunted eyes?

IN BOHEMIA.

DRAWN blinds and flaring gas within,
And wine, and women, and cigars;
Without, the city's heedless din;
Above, the white unheeding stars.
And we, alike from each remote,
The world that works, the heaven that waits,
Con our brief pleasures o'er by rote,
The favourite pastime of the Fates.
We smoke, to fancy that we dream,
And drink, a moment's joy to prove,
And fain would love, and only seem
To love because we cannot love.
Draw back the blinds, put out the light:
'Tis morning, let the daylight come.
God! how the women's cheeks are white,
And how the sunlight strikes us dumb!

EMMY.

EMMY'S exquisite youth and her virginal air,
Eyes and teeth in the flash of a musical smile,
Come to me out of the past, and I see her there
As I saw her once for a while.

Emmy's laughter rings in my ears, as bright,
Fresh and sweet as the voice of a mountain brook,
And still I hear her telling us tales that night,
Out of Boccaccio's book.

There, in the midst of the villainous dancing-hall,
Leaning across the table, over the beer,
While the music maddened the whirling skirts of the ball,
As the midnight hour drew near,

There with the women, haggard, painted and old,
One fresh bud in a garland withered and stale,
She, with her innocent voice and her clear eyes, told
Tale after shameless tale.

And ever the witching smile, to her face beguiled,
Paused and broadened, and broke in a ripple of fun,
And the soul of a child looked out of the eyes of a child,
Or ever the tale was done.

O my child, who wronged you first, and began
First the dance of death that you dance so well?
Soul for soul: and I think the soul of a man
Shall answer for yours in hell.

EMMY AT THE ELDORADO.

TO meet, of all unlikely things,
Here, after all one's wanderings!
But, Emmy, though we meet,
What of this lover at your feet?

For, is this Emmy that I see?
A fragile domesticity
I seem to half surprise
In the evasions of those eyes.

Once a child's cloudless eyes, they seem
Lost in the blue depths of a dream,
As though, for innocent hours,
To stray with love among the flowers.

Without regret, without desire,
In those old days of love on hire,
Child, child, what will you do,
Emmy, now love is come to you?

Already, in so brief a while,
The gleam has faded from your smile;
This grave and tender air
Leaves you, for all but one, less fair.

Then, you were heedless, happy, gay,
Immortally a child; to-day
A woman, at the years' control:
Undine has found a soul.

AT THE CAVOUR.

WINE, the red coals, the flaring gas,
Bring out a brighter tone in cheeks
That learn at home before the glass
The flush that eloquently speaks.
The blue-grey smoke of cigarettes
Curls from the lessening ends that glow;
The men are thinking of the bets,
The women of the debts, they owe.
Then their eyes meet, and in their eyes
The accustomed smile comes up to call,
A look half miserably wise.
Half heedlessly ironical.

IN THE HAYMARKET.

I DANCED at your ball a year ago,
To-night I pay for your bread and cheese,
"And a glass of bitters, if you please,
For you drank my best champagne, you know!"
Madcap ever, you laugh the while,
As you drink your bitters and munch your bread;
The face is the same, and the same old smile
Came up at a word I said.
A year ago I danced at your ball,
I sit by your side in the bar to-night;
And the luck has changed, you say: that's all!
And the luck will change, you say: all right!
For the men go by, and the rent's to pay,
And you haven't a friend in the world to-day;
And the money comes and the money goes:
And to-night, who cares? and to-morrow, who knows?

AT THE LYCEUM.

HER eyes are brands that keep the angry heat
Of fire that crawls and leaves an ashen path.
The dust of this devouring flame she hath
Upon her cheeks and eyelids. Fresh and sweet
In days that were, her sultry beauty now
Is pain transfigured, love's impenitence,
The memory of a maiden innocence,
As a crown set upon a weary brow.

She sits, and fain would listen, fain forget;
She smiles, but with those tragic, waiting eyes,
Those proud and piteous lips that hunger yet
For love's fulfilment. Ah, when Landry cries
"My heart is dead!" with what a wild regret
Her own heart feels the throb that never dies!

THE BLIND BEGGAR.

HE stands, a patient figure, where the crowd
Heaves to and fro beside him. In his ears
All day the Fair goes thundering, and he hears
In darkness, as a dead man in his shroud.
Patient he stands, with age and sorrow bowed,
And holds a piteous hat of ancient year;
And in his face and gesture there appears
The desperate humbleness of poor men proud.
What thoughts are his, as, with the inward sight,
He sees those mirthful faces pass him by?
Is the long darkness darker for that light.
The misery deeper when that joy is nigh?
Patient, alone, he stands from morn to night,
Pleading in his reproachful misery.

THE OLD LABOURER.

HIS fourscore years have bent a back of oak,
His earth-brown cheeks are full of hollow pits;
His gnarled hands wander idly as he sits
Bending above the hearthstone's feeble smoke.
Threescore and ten slow years he tilled the land;
He wrung his bread from out the stubborn soil;
He saw his masters flourish through his toil;
He held their substance in his horny hand.
Now he is old: he asks for daily bread:
He who has sowed the bread he may not taste
Begs for the crumbs: he would do no man wrong.
The Parish Guardians, when his case is read,
Will grant him (yet with no unseemly haste)
Just seventeen pence to starve on, seven days long.

THE ABSINTHE DRINKER.

GENTLY I wave the visible world away.
Far off, I hear a roar, afar yet near,
Far off and strange, a voice is in my ear,
And is the voice my own? the words I say
Fall strangely, like a dream, across the day;
And the dim sunshine is a dream. How clear,
New as the world to lovers' eyes, appear
The men and women passing on their way!
The world is very fair. The hours are all
Linked in a dance of mere forgetfulness.
I am at peace with God and man. O glide,
Sands of the hour-glass that I count not, fall
Serenely: scarce I feel your soft caress.
Rocked on this dreamy and indifferent tide.

JAVANESE DANCERS,

TWITCHED strings, the clang of metal, beaten drums.
Dull, shrill, continuous, disquieting;
And now the stealthy dancer comes
Undulantly with cat-like steps that cling;
Smiling between her painted lids a smile,
Motionless, unintelligible, she twines
Her fingers into mazy lines,
Twining her scarves across them all the while.
One, two, three, four step forth, and, to and fro,
Delicately and imperceptibly,
Now swaying gently in a row,
Now interthreading slow and rhythmically,
Still with fixed eyes, monotonously still,
Mysteriously, with smiles inanimate,
With lingering feet that undulate,
With sinuous fingers, spectral hands that thrill,
The little amber-coloured dancers move,
Like little painted figures on a screen,
Or phantom-dancers haply seen
Among the shadows of a magic grove.

LOVE'S DISGUISES.

LOVE IN SPRING.

GOOD to be loved and to love for a little, and then
Well to forget, be forgotten, ere loving grow life!
Dear, you have loved me, but was I the man among men?
Sweet, I have loved you, but scarcely as mistress or wife.
Message of Spring in the hearts of a man and a maid,
Hearts on a holiday: ho! let us love: it is Spring.
Joy in the birds of the air, in the buds of the glade,
Joy in our hearts in the joy of the hours on the wing.
Well, but to-morrow? To-morrow, good-bye: it is over.
Scarcely with tears shall we part, with a smile who had met.
Tears? What is this? But I thought we were playing at lover.
Play-time is past. I am going. And you love me yet!

GIPSY LOVE.

THE gipsy tents are on the down,
The gipsy girls are here;
And it's O to be off and away from the town
With a gipsy for my dear!

We'd make our bed in the bracken
With the lark for a chambermaid;
The lark would sing us awake in the mornings
Singing above our head.

We'd drink the sunlight all day long
With never a house to bind us;
And we'd only flout in a merry song
The world we left behind us.

We would be free as birds are free
The livelong day, the livelong day;
And we would lie in the sunny bracken
With none to say us nay.

The gipsy tents are on the down,
The gipsy girls are here;
And it's O to be off and away from the town
With a gipsy for my dear!

IN KENSINGTON GARDENS.

UNDER the almond tree,
Room for my love and me!
Over our heads the April blossom;
April-hearted are we.

Under the pink and white,
Love in her eyes alight;
Love and the Spring and Kensington Gardens:
Hey for the heart's delight!

REWARDS.

BECAUSE you cried, I kissed you, and,
Ah me! how should I understand
That piteous little you were fain
To cry and to be kissed again?

Because you smiled at last, I thought
That I had found what I had sought.
But soon I found, without a doubt,
No man can find a woman out.

I kissed your tears, and did not stay
Till I had kissed them all away.
Ah, hapless me! ah, heartless child!
She would not kiss me when she smiled.

PERFUME.

SHAKE out your hair about me, so,
That I may feel the stir and scent
Of those vague odours come and go
The way our kisses went.

Night gave this priceless hour of love,
But now the dawn steals in apace,
And amorously bends above
The wonder of your face.

"Farewell" between our kisses creeps,
You fade, a ghost, upon the air;
Yet, ah! the vacant place still keeps
The odour of your hair.

SOUVENIR.

HOW you haunt me with your eyes!
Still that questioning persistence,
Sad and sweet, across the distance
Of the days of love and laughter,
Those old days of love and lies.

Not reproaching, not reproving,
Only, always, questioning,
Those divinest eyes can bring
Memories of certain summers,
Nights of dreaming, days of loving,

When I loved you, when your kiss,
Shyer than a bird to capture,
Lit a sudden heaven of rapture;
When we neither dreamt that either
Could grow old in heart like this.

Do you still, in love's December,
Still remember, still regret
That sweet unavailing debt?
Ah, you haunt me, to remind me
You remember, I forget!

TO MARY.

IF, Mary, that imperious face,
And not in dreams alone,
Come to this shadow-haunted place
And claim dominion;

If, for your sake, I do unqueen
Some well-remembered ghost,
Forgetting much of what hath been
Best loved, remembered most;

It is your witchery, not my will,
Your beauty, not my choice:
My shadows knew me faithful, till
They heard your living voice.

TO A GREAT ACTRESS.

SHE has taken my heart, though she knows not, would care not.
It thrills at her voice like a reed in the wind;
I would taste all her agonies, have her to spare not,
 Sin deep as she sinned,
To be tossed by the storm of her love, as the ocean
 Rocks vessels to wreck; to be hers, though the cost
Were the loss of all else: for that moment's emotion
 Content to be lost!
To be, for a moment, the man of all men to her,
 All the world, for one measureless moment complete;
To possess, be possessed! To be mockery then to her,
 Then to die at her feet!

LOVE IN DREAMS.

I LIE on my pallet bed,
And I hear the drip of the rain;
The rain on my garret roof is falling,
And I am cold and in pain.

I lie on my pallet bed,
And my heart is wild with delight;
I hear her voice through the midnight calling,
As I lie awake in the night.

I lie on my pallet bed,
And I see her bright eyes gleam;
She smiles, she speaks, and the world is ended,
And made again in a dream.

MUSIC AND MEMORY.

To K.W.

ACROSS the tides of music, in the night,
Her magical face,
A light upon it as the happy light
Of dreams in some delicious place
Under the moonlight in the night.

Music, soft throbbing music in the night,
Her memory swims
Into the brain, a carol of delight;
The cup of music overbrims
With wine of memory, in the night.

Her face across the music, in the night,
Her face a refrain,
A light that sings along the waves of light,
A memory that returns again,
Music in music, in the night.

SPRING TWILIGHT.

To K. W.

THE twilight droops across the day,
I watch her portrait on the wall
Palely recede into the grey
That palely comes and covers all.
The sad Spring twilight, dull, forlorn,
The menace of the dreary night:
But in her face, more fair than morn,
A sweet suspension of delight.

IN WINTER.

PALE from the watery west, with the pallor of winter a-cold,
Rays of the afternoon sun in a glimmer across the trees;
Glittering moist underfoot, the long alley. The firs, one by one,
Catch and conceal, as I saunter, and flash in a dazzle of gold
Lower and lower the vanishing disc: and the sun alone sees
At I wait for my love in the fir-tree alley alone with the sun.

QUEST.

I CHASE a shadow through the night,
A shadow unavailing;
Out of the dark, into the light,
I follow, follow: is it she?
Against the wall of sea outlined,
Outlined against the windows lit,
The shadow flickers, and behind
I follow, follow after it.
The shadow leads me through the night
To the grey margin of the sea;
Out of the dark, into the light,
I follow unavailingly.

TO A PORTRAIT.

A PENSIVE photograph
Watches me from the shelf:
Ghost of old love, and half
Ghost of myself!
How the dear waiting eyes
Watch me and love me yet:
Sad home of memories,
Her waiting eyes!
Ghost of old love, wronged ghost,
Return, though all the pain
Of all once loved, long lost,
Come back again.
Forget not, but forgive!
Alas, too late I cry.
We are two ghosts that had their chance to live,
And lost it, she and I.

SECOND THOUGHTS.

WHEN you were here, ah foolish then!
I scarcely knew I loved you, dear.
I know it now, I know it when
You are no longer here.

When you were here, I sometimes tired,
Ah me! that you so loved me, dear.
Now, in these weary days desired,
You are no longer here.

When you were here, did either know
That each so loved the other, dear?
But that was long and long ago:
You are no longer here.

APRIL MIDNIGHT.

SIDE by side through the streets at midnight,
Roaming together,
Through the tumultuous night of London,
In the miraculous April weather.
Roaming together under the gaslight,
Day's work over,
How the Spring calls to us, here in the city,
Calls to the heart from the heart of a lover!
Cool the wind blows, fresh in our faces,
Cleansing, entrancing,
After the heat and the fumes and the footlights,
Where you dance and I watch your dancing.
Good it is to be here together,
Good to be roaming;
Even in London, even at midnight,
Lover-like in a lover's gloaming.
You the dancer and I the dreamer,
Children together,
Wandering lost in the night of London,
In the miraculous April weather.

DURING MUSIC.

THE music had the heat of blood,
A passion that no words can reach;
We sat together, and understood
Our own heart's speech.

We had no need of word or sign,
The music spoke for us, and said
All that her eyes could read in mine
Or mine in hers had read.

ON THE BRIDGE.

MIDNIGHT falls across hollow gulfs of
night

As a stone that falls in a sounding well;
Under us the Seine flows through dark and light,
While the beat of time—hark!—is audible.

Lights on bank and bridge glitter gold and red,
Lights upon the stream glitter red and white;
Under us the night, and the night overhead.
We together, we alone together in the night.

"I DREAM OF HER."

I DREAM of her the whole night long,
The pillows with my tears are wet.
I wake, I seek amid the throng
The courage to forget.
Yet still, as night comes round, I dread,
With unavailing fears,
The dawn that finds, beneath my head,
The pillows wet with tears.

TEARS.

O HANDS that I have held in mine,
That knew my kisses and my tears,
Hands that in other years
Have poured my balm, have poured my wine;
Women, once loved, and always mine,
I call to you across the years,
I bring a gift of tears,
I bring my tears to you as wine.

THE LAST EXIT.

OUR love was all arrayed in pleasantness,
A tender little love that sighed and smiled
At little happy nothings, like a child,
A dainty little love in fancy dress.
But now the love that once was half in play
Has come to be this grave and piteous thing.
Why did you leave me all this suffering
For all your memory when you went away?
You might have played the play out, O my friend,
Closing upon a kiss our comedy.
Or is it, then, a fault of taste in me,
Who like no tragic exit at the end?

AFTER LOVE.

O TO part now, and, parting now,
Never to meet again;
To have done for ever, I and thou,
With joy, and so with pain.
It is too hard, too hard to meet
As friends, and love no more;
Those other meetings were too sweet
That went before.
And I would have, now love is over,
An end to all, an end:
I cannot, having been your lover,
Stoop to become your friend!

ALLA PASSERETTA BRUNA.

IF I bid you, you will come,
If I bid you, you will go,
 You are mine, and so I take you
To my heart, your home;
Well, ah, well I know
 I shall not forsake you.
I shall always hold you fast,
I shall never set you free,
 You are mine, and I possess you
Long as life shall last;
You will comfort me,
 I shall bless you.
I shall keep you as we keep
Flowers for memory, hid away,
 Under many a newer token
Buried deep,
Roses of a gaudier day,
Rings and trinkets, bright and broken.
Other women I shall love,
Fame and fortune I may win,
 But when fame and love forsake me
And the light is night above,
You will let me in,
 You will take me.

NOCTURNES.

NOCTURNE.

ONE little cab to hold us two,
Night, an invisible dome of cloud,
The rattling wheels that made our whispers loud,
As heart-beats into whispers grew;
And, long, the Embankment with its lights,
The pavement glittering with fallen rain,
The magic and the mystery that are night's,
And human love without the pain.

The river shook with wavering gleams,
Deep buried as the glooms that lay
Impenetrable as the grave of day,
Near and as distant as our dreams.
A bright train flashed with all its squares
Of warm light where the bridge lay mistily.
The night was all about us: we were free,
Free of the day and all its cares!

That was an hour of bliss too long,
Too long to last where joy is brief.
Yet one escape of souls may yield relief
To many weary seasons' wrong.
"O last for ever!" my heart cried;
It ended: heaven was done.
I had been dreaming by her side
That heaven was but begun.

HER STREET.

(IN ABSENCE.)

I PASSED your street of many memories.
A sunset, sombre pink, the flush
Of inner rose-leaves idle fingers crush,
Died softly, as the rose that dies.
All the high heaven behind the roof lay thus,
Tenderly dying, touched with pain
A little; standing there I saw again
The sunsets that were dear to us.
I knew not if 'twere bitter or more sweet
To stand and watch the roofs, the sky.
O bitter to be there and you not nigh,
Yet this had been that blessed street.
How the name thrilled me, there upon the wall!
There was the house, the windows there
Against the rosy twilight high and bare,
The pavement-stones: I knew them all!
Days that have been, days that have fallen cold!
I stood and gazed, and thought of you,
Until remembrance sweet and mournful drew
Tears to eyes smiling as of old.
So, sad and glad, your memory visibly
Alive within my eyes, I turned;
And, through a window, met two eyes that burned,
Tenderly questioning, on me.

ON JUDGES' WALK.

THAT night on Judges' Walk the wind
Was as the voice of doom;
The heath, a lake of darkness, lay
As silent as the tomb.
The vast night brooded, white with stars,
Above the world's unrest;
The awfulness of silence ached
Like a strong heart repressed.
That night we walked beneath the trees,
Alone, beneath the trees;
There was some word we could not say
Half uttered in the breeze.
That night on Judges' Walk we said
No word of all we had to say;
But now there shall be no word said
Before the Judge's Day.

IN THE NIGHT.

THE moonlight had tangled the trees
Under our feet as we walked in the night,
And the shadows beneath us were stirred by the breeze
In the magical light;
And the moon was a silver fire,
And the stars were flickers of flame,
Golden and violet and red;
And the night-wind sighed my desire,
And the wind in the tree-tops whispered and said
In her ear her adorable name.

But her heart would not hear what I heard,
The pulse of the night as it beat,
Love, Love, Love, the unspeakable word,
In its murmurous repeat;
She heard not the night-wind's sigh,
Nor her own name breathed in her ear,
Nor the cry of my heart to her heart,
A speechless, a clamorous cry:
"Love! Love! will she hear? will she hear?"
O heart, she will hear, by and by,
When we part, when for ever we part.

FÊTES GALANTES.

AFTER PAUL VERLAINE.

MANDOLINE,

THE singers of serenades
Whisper their faded vows
Unto fair listening maids
Under the singing boughs.
Tircis, Aminte, are there,
Clitandre is over-long,
And Damis for many a fair
Tyrant makes many a song.
Their short vests, silken and bright,
Their long pale silken trains,
Their elegance of delight,
Twine soft blue silken chains.
And the mandolines and they,
Faintlier breathing, swoon
Into the rose and grey
Ecstasy of the moon.

DANS L'ALLÉE.

AS in the age of shepherd king and queen,
Painted and frail amid her nodding bows,
Under the sombre branches, and between
The green and mossy garden-ways she goes,
With little mincing airs one keeps to pet
A darling and provoking perroquet.
Her long-trained robe is blue, the fan she holds
With fluent fingers girt with heavy rings,
So vaguely hints of vague erotic things
That her eye smiles, musing among its folds.
—Blonde too, a tiny nose, a rosy mouth,
Artful as that sly patch that makes more sly,
In her divine unconscious pride of youth,
The slightly simpering sparkle of the eye.

CYTHÈRE.

BY favourable breezes fanned,
A trellised arbour is at hand
To shield us from the summer airs;
The scent of roses, fainting sweet,
Afloat upon the summer heat,
Blends with the perfume that she wears.
True to the promise her eyes gave,
She ventures all, and her mouth rains
A dainty fever through my veins;
And Love, fulfilling all things, save
Hunger, we 'scape, with sweets and ices,
The folly of Love's sacrifices.

LES INDOLENTS.

BAH! spite of Fate, that says us nay,
Suppose we die together, eh?

—A rare conclusion you discover!

—What's rare is good. Let us die so,
Like lovers in Boccaccio.

—Hi! hi! hi! you fantastic lover!

—Nay, not fantastic. If you will,
Fond, surely irreproachable.

Suppose, then, that we die together?

—Good sir, your jests are fitlier told
Than when you speak of love or gold.

Why speak at all, in this glad weather?

Whereat, behold them once again,
Tircis beside his Dorimène,

Not far from two blithe rustic rovers,

For some caprice of idle breath
Deferring a delicious death.

Hi! hi! hi! what fantastic lovers!

FANTOCHES.

SCARAMOUCHE waves a threatening hand
To Pulcinella, and they stand,
Two shadows, black against the moon.

The old doctor of Bologna pries
For simples with impassive eyes,
And mutters o'er a magic rune.

The while his daughter, scarce half-dressed,
Glides slyly 'neath the trees, in quest
Of her bold pirate lover's sail;

Her pirate from the Spanish main,
Whose passion thrills her in the pain
Of the loud languorous nightingale.

PANTOMIME.

PIERROT, no sentimental swain,
Washes a pâté down again
With furtive flagons, white and red.
Cassandre, to chasten his content,
Greets with a tear of sentiment
His nephew disinherited.
That blackguard of a Harlequin
Pirouettes, and plots to win
His Colombine that flits and flies.
Colombine dreams, and starts to find
A sad heart sighing in the wind,
And in her heart a voice that sighs.

L'AMOUR PAR TERRE.

THE wind the other evening overthrew
The little Love who smiled so mockingly
Down that mysterious alley, so that we,
Remembering, mused thereon a whole day through.

The wind has overthrown him! The poor stone
Lies scattered to the breezes. It is sad
To see the lonely pedestal, that had
The artist's name, scarce visible, alone,

Oh! it is sad to see the pedestal
Left lonely! and in dream I seem to hear
Prophetic voices whisper in my ear
The lonely and despairing end of all.

Oh! it is sad! And thou, hast thou not found
One heart-throb for the pity, though thine eye
Lights at the gold and purple butterfly
Brightening the littered leaves upon the ground.

À CLYMÈNE.

MYSTICAL strains unheard,
A song without a word,
Dearest, because thine eyes.
 Pale as the skies,
 Because thy voice, remote
As the far clouds that float
Veiling for me the whole
 Heaven of the soul,
 Because the stately scent
Of thy swan's whiteness, blent
With the white lily's bloom
 Of thy perfume,
 Ah! because thy dear love,
The music breathed above
By angels halo-crowned,
 Odour and sound,
 Hath, in my subtle heart,
With some mysterious art
Transposed thy harmony,
 So let it be!

FROM ROMANCES SANS PAROLES.

TEARS in my heart that weeps,
Like the rain upon the town,
What drowsy languor steeps
In tears my heart that weeps?

O sweet sound of the rain
On earth and on the roofs!
For a heart's weary pain
O the song of the rain!

Vain tears, vain tears, my heart!
What, none hath done thee wrong?
Tears without reason start,
From my disheartened heart.

This is the weariest woe,
O heart, of love and hate
Too weary, not to know
Why thou hast all this woe.

MOODS AND MEMORIES.

CITY NIGHTS.

I. IN THE TRAIN.

THE train through the night of the town,
Through a blackness broken in twain
By the sudden finger of streets;
Lights, red, yellow, and brown,
From curtain and window-pane,
The flashing eyes of the streets.
Night, and the rush of the train,
A cloud of smoke through the town,
Scaring the life of the streets;
And the leap of the heart again,
Out into the night, and down
The dazzling vista of streets!

II. IN THE TEMPLE.

THE grey and misty night,
Slim trees that hold the night among
Their branches, and, along
The vague Embankment, light on light.
The sudden, racing lights!
I can just hear, distinct, aloof,
The gaily clattering hoof
Beating the rhythm of festive nights.
The gardens to the weeping moon
Sigh back the breath of tears.
O the refrain of years on years
'Neath the weeping moon!

A WHITE NIGHT.

THE yellow moon across the clouds
That shiver in the sky;
White, hurrying travellers, the clouds,
And, white and aching cold on high,
Stars in the sky.
Whiter, along the frozen earth,
The miracle of snow;
Close covered as for sleep, the earth
Lies, mutely slumbering below
Its shroud of snow.
Sleepless I wander in the night,
And, wandering, watch for day;
Earth sleeps, yet, high in heaven, the night
Awakens, faint and far away,
A phantom day.

IN THE VALLEY.

DOWN the valley will I wander, singing songs forlorn,
Waiting for the maiden coming up between the corn.

Down below I hear the river babbling to the breeze,
And I see the sunlight kiss the tresses of the trees.

All the corn is shining with the tears of early rain:
Come, thou sunlight of mine eyes, and bring the dawn again!

Down the valley will I wander, singing songs forlorn,
Till I meet the maiden coming up between the corn.

PEACE AT NOON.

HERE there is peace, cool peace,
Upon these heights, beneath these trees;
Almost the peace of sleep or death,
To wearying brain, to labouring breath.

Here there is rest at last,
A sweet forgetting of the past;
There is no future here, nor aught
Save this soft healing pause of thought.

IN FOUNTAIN COURT.

THE fountain murmuring of sleep,
A drowsy tune;
The flickering green of leaves that keep
The light of June;
Peace, through a slumbering afternoon,
The peace of June.
A waiting ghost, in the blue sky,
The white curved moon;
June, hushed and breathless, waits, and I
Wait too, with June;
Come, through the lingering afternoon,
Soon, love, come soon.

AT BURGOS.

MIRACULOUS silver-work in stone
Against the blue miraculous skies,
The belfry towers and turrets rise
Out of the arches that enthrone
That airy wonder of the skies.
Softly against the burning sun
The great cathedral spreads its wings;
High up, the lyric belfry sings.
Behold Ascension Day begun
Under the shadow of those wings!

AT DAWN.

SHE only knew the birth and death
Of days, when each that died
Was still at morn a hope, at night
A hope unsatisfied.

The dark trees shivered to behold
Another day begin;
She, being hopeless, did not weep
As the grey dawn came in.

IN AUTUMN.

FRAIL autumn lights upon the leaves
Beacon the ending of the year.
The windy rains are here,
Wet nights and blowing winds about the eaves.
Here in the valley, mists begin
To breathe about the river side
The breath of autumn-tide.
The dark fields wait to take the harvest in.
And you, and you are far away.
Ah, this it is, and not the rain
Now loud against the pane,
That takes the light and colour from the day!

ON THE ROADS.

THE road winds onward long and white,
It curves in mazy coils, and crooks
A beckoning finger down the height;
It calls me with the voice of brooks
To thirsty travellers in the night.

I leave the lonely city street,
The awful silence of the crowd;
The rhythm of the roads I beat,
My blood leaps up, I shout aloud,
My heart keeps measure with my feet.

Nought know, nought care I whither I wend:
'Tis on, on, on, or here or there.
What profiteth it an aim or end?

I walk, and the road leads anywhere.
Then forward, with the Fates to friend!

'Tis on and on! Who knows but thus
Kind Chance shall bring us luck at last?
Adventures to the adventurous!

Hope flies before, and the hours slip past:
O what have the hours in store for us?

A bird sings something in my ear,
The wind sings in my blood a song
Tis good at times for a man to hear;
The road winds onward white and long,
And the best of Earth is here!

PIERROT IN HALF-MOURNING.

I THAT am Pierrot, pray you pity me!
To be so young, so old in misery:
See me, and how the winter of my grief
Wastes me, and how I whiten like a leaf,
And how, like a lost child, lost and afraid,
I seek the shadow, I that am a shade,
I that have loved a moonbeam, nor have won
Any Diana to Endymion.
Pity me, for I have but loved too well
The hope of the too fair impossible.
Ah, it is she, she, Columbine: again
I see her, and I woo her, and in vain.
She lures me with her beckoning finger-tip;
How her eyes shine for me, and how her lips
Bloom for me, roses, roses, red and rich!
She waves to me the white arms of a witch
Over the world: I follow, I forget
All, but she'll love me yet, she'll love me yet!

FOR A PICTURE OF WATTEAU.

HERE the vague winds have rest;
The forest breathes in sleep,
Lifting a quiet breast;
It is the hour of rest.

How summer glides away!
An autumn pallor blooms
Upon the cheek of day.
Come, lovers, come away!

But here, where dead leaves fall
Upon the grass, what strains,
Languidly musical,
Mournfully rise and fall?

Light loves that woke with spring
This autumn afternoon
Beholds meandering,
Still, to the strains of spring.

Your dancing feet are faint,
Lovers: the air recedes
Into a sighing plaint,
Faint, as your loves are faint.

It is the end, the end,
The dance of love's decease.
Feign no more now, fair friend!
It is the end, the end.

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