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CORNISH CATCHES

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AUTHOR'S NOTE.

The Author begs to thank the Editors of the following papers for their courtesy in allowing him to reprint some of the poems in this book:—The *Academy*, *Country Life*, *Fry's Magazine*, the *Grand Magazine*, the *Sphere*, *T.P's Magazine*, the *Vineyard*, the *Windsor Magazine*, the *Western Morning News*, and the *Westminster Gazette*.

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CORNISH CATCHES

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

BERNARD MOORE



LONDON
ERSKINE MACDONALD

1914

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TO MY MOTHER.

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WELL, THERE 'TIS

Well, there 'tis. You wakes up cryin' an' callin',
 You'm cold an' hungered, an' skeered o' the turble dark;
 It feels most like a gert black cloud's a fallin'
 To crunch you to nothin', an' leave you smuttered an'
 stark.
 But a kind hand comes when the gert black clouds would
 drownd you,
 An' a warm breast holds you tight to cuddle an' kiss,
 An' you know that the world o' Love be all around you.
 Well! there 'tis.

Then you grows a bit, and you finds a mort o' pleasure
 In the rush o' the waves an' the roarin' wind in the sky;
 An' you plays your games at Pirates seekin' treasure,
 Or Penny-come-quick when the Breton Boys go by.
 An' you don't much trouble at difrent kinds o' weather,
 If 'tis sunny 'tis sunny, but rain won't make you miss
 The chance to trample away thro' the moorland heather;
 Well! there 'tis.

But you keeps on growin', an' then you begin in a fashion
 To want some things you'd never a thought on before;
 An' you sees some eyes be blue, an' you gets a passion
 For jest a very perticular cottage door.
 An' you don't feel tired at the end o' the day o' toilin'
 So long as it ends with the sound an' song of a kiss,
 So long as it ends with arms round you coilin';
 Well! there 'tis.

Then you grows old, an' at last you falls on sleepin'.
 Do you count you'll be all alone in the turble dark?
 Do you think you'll be left to the sound o' wailin' an'
 weepin'
 Lonely an' cold in the cloam, unmothered an' stark?
 When you was a baby, helpless an' cryin' an' callin'
 Didn' the kind arms take, an' the warm lips kiss?
 An' won't there be Arms at last, to save you from fallin'?
 Well! there 'tis.

GARDENS

Passun he've a garden, 'tis trim an' nate an' vitty,
 He'm mortal proud o' growin' things that's turble hard to
 grow;
 He'm mighty fond of orchises an' mazed for pellygomiuns,
 An' calls 'em all furrin' names us don't belong to know.

Squire, he have a garden, a gert an' gorjus garden,
 With hollyhocks a standin' like soljers in the sun;
 He likes tremenjus peonies, an' roses crowdin' arches,
 An' thinks as what the passun grows the whishtest sort o'
 fun.

Feyther have a garden, but don't run much to flowers,
 For he've to think o' tatties, an' useful sort o' things;
 His cabbages be famous, an' his collyflowers a wonder,
 An' you should see the runners when they'm scarlet on
 the strings!

But I've a finer garden than the squire or the passun;
 'Tis all along the hedgerows, an' all about the lanes;

It stretches up the hillside an' spreads across the moorland,
'Tis sweet with Cornish sunshine an' green with Cornish
rains.

There's scent of honeysuckle shakin' sweet along the
sunshine,
An' ragged robins sprinklin' scarlet stars among the
grass,
An' foxgloves, with a peal o' bells a swingin' in the steeple,
A ringin' fairy music to the breezes as they pass.

An' where the lanes climb up along, an' break upon the
moorland,
The heather weaves a carpet all acrost the purple hills;
An' gorse gleams in the sunshine like a thousand burnin'
bushes,
An' birds shout happy answers to the ripplin' o' the rills.

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So squire may keep his garden, an' his gardeners a diggin',
An' passun's clanelly welcome to the flowers he counts so
fine,
(I won't say nort o' feyther's, for his tatties be so mealy),
But the bestest of all gardens is the garden that is mine.

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GROCERY

John Pengelly be a clever man,
An' he keeps a grocery store;
He've got a seat on the Burryin' Board,
An' a sow as turns three score;
On Sunday night he holds the plate
An' on Thursday shuts at four.

He talks to Passon on clover crops,
An' Farmer Hain on Sin;
An' keeps the Parish Register,
An' a dog that isn' thin;
An' wears a watch-chain on his chest,
An' a Moses beard on his chin.

He allays takes the rhubarb prize
At the Flower Show every year;
An' if 'ee mind to order it
He'll get 'ee Bottled Beer;
(Though some as don't agree with that)
Besides it's rather dear.

Two different kinds of lard he sells,
But awnly one of tay;
An' he've a yaller oilskin coat
He hopes to sell some day,
But the awnly man it might have fit
Was drowned out to say.

His matches hang in a cabbage net,
An' his onions hang in strings;
An' allays at the Church Bazaar
He sells the Hooplar rings;
An' if us get a concert up
An' there's no one else, *he* sings.

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So be you'm seekin' clever men,
Come down along o' we;
We'll show 'ee John Pengelly then
Behind his grocery;
An' when you taste his peppermints,
Sure 'nuff, tis mazed you'll be.

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EDDICATION

Feyther sez as "Larnin' be the proper trade for boys,"
An' so us have to go to school, an' dursn't make a noise,
But jest sits on a form an' hears what schoolmaister do say,
An' all the time we'm thinkin' how the boats go in the bay.

There's different kinds o' larnin', an' there's some I can't
abide,
They'm worse than swimmin' round the Main at ebbin' o'
the tide.
I likes the tales o' travels an' at readin' do be praised,
An' I'm dacent doin' Adders, but Goseinters send me
mazed.

The Bible stories baint so bad excep' the fat head calf,
An' when schoolmaister tells of 'ee I allays wants to laugh;
Our Kitty likes the donkeys as was found by Sunno Kish,
But I likes best the tale about Ole Peter an' the fish.

Schoolmaister knaws a mort o' things as baint a bit o' use;
I've heered un tell the biggest boys about high potty mews;
But if he had to earn his bread, the same as feyther do,
I count he'd soon belong to know it wasn' much he knew.

One day he gave a sum about a herrin' an' a half,
An' sez as how the boys was rude when they began to
laugh;
He must a been a bufflehead to think as people bought
Half herrins, when we'm bringin' 'em by thousands into port.

I'm allays sittin' thinkin' when he'm talkin' to the board,
About the many things there be a boy can larn aboard;
There's sheets to haul an' gear to staw an' reefs to take an'
tie,
An' wind to watch acomin' in the corner of your eye.

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Now if they larned us some o' these, or how to bend a
hook,
'Twould be a darned sight usefuller than rubbige in a book;
But what's the good o' larnin' how to hold a scriggley pen,
An' spell a lot of orkard words, an' say to ten times ten?

'Tis little use to grumble when 'ee have to keep the rules,
An' jest so long as there be boys, I count there must be
schools;
An' tho' they'm good for larnin' if 'ee awnly knaws the way,
I'd sooner be a whifflin' arter mack'rel in the bay.

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JENNY

When Jenny goes a milkin' in the dewy time o' morn
I allays be contrivin' to be callin' at the farm,
For her cheeks be red as roses an' her hair like rippled
corn,
An' I be fairly mazed to kiss the dimple on her arm.

Jenny, Jenny, won't 'ee let me love 'ee?
You'm brighter far than any star
That's shinin' up above 'ee.
Sartin sure, you make me mazed,
Iss, me deear, a whist an' crazed;
Jenny, Jenny, won't 'ee let me love 'ee?

When Jenny goes to Fairin' with blue ribbons in her hair,
I count the Queen of England never looks a half as sweet,
An' when she'm in the Country dance no other maids be
there,
For I never stops a glazin' at the twinkle of her feet.

Jenny, Jenny, won't 'ee let me love 'ee?
Aw——But!!!

When Jenny goes to Mittin' House dressed in her Sunday
clo'es

She looks so like a hangell in her little pew apart,
That when I try to sing the hymns my throttle seems to
close,
An' I cussn't hear the sermon for the beatin' of my heart.

Jenny, Jenny, won't 'ee let me love 'ee?
You'm brighter far than any star
That's shinin' up above 'ee;
Sartin sure, you make me mazed,
Iss, me deear, a whisht an' crazed;
Jenny, Jenny, won't 'ee let me love 'ee?

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IN THE KITTEREEN

(Kittereen: Cornish for a covered cart).

Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
Drove to Callington Fair;
There wasn' much more than a foot between
Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
For both of us was just thirteen,
An' of course us didn' care.

Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
Drove from Callington Fair;
There wasn' much more than an inch between
Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
For both of us was just fifteen
With a packet of pops to share.

Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
Drove to Callington Fair;
There wasn' much less than a yard between
Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
For both of us was just seventeen
An' both knew the other was there.

Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
Drove from Callington Fair;
There was very much less than an inch between
Jenny an' me in the Kittereen
For wasn' we both of us turned nineteen?
An' wasn' there Love to share?

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MAIDS

I've knawed a many o' Devon maids with cheeks merry an'
red,
They'm pleasant an' 'ansum single, an' homely an' cosy
wed;
But I shan't marry a Devon maid; I reckon I'd rather be
dead.

I've seed a many o' London maids abroad in London Town;
They'm larky an' flittery single, but marryin' calms 'em
down;
But I shan't marry a London maid; I reckon I'd rather
drown.

For I have knawed the Cornish maids, an' like 'em best of
any.
So take the London an' Devon maids, they'm goin' at two a
penny;
An' I shan't marry nobody else, for I be tokened to Jenny.

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CAP'N JOHN

Cap'n John has been to Frisky,
Injy an' Australy too;
Now he runs a lug-an'-mizzen
Arter Pilchers out o' Looe,
Iss, he do.

Cap'n John was braave an' slippey
Till the say caught hold of he;
Now he'm tanned an' tough an' wrinkled,
Simming like mohogany.
Iss, he be.

Cap'n John baint smurt an' 'ansum,
Like a claned up Sarvice Coor;
Stiff hair all aroun' his niddick
Makes him like a hedgaboar.
Iss, be Gor!

Cap'n John don't boast o' beauty,
Beauty don't set down with tar;
But he've got a pair o' patches
Shows how dacent patches are.
Iss, with tar.

Cap'n John thinks books is rubbige;
Sez that printin' spoils his eyes;
But he reads the book o' weather
Written in the say an' skies;
Iss, he's wise.

Cap'n John, us looks towards 'ee,
Wish 'ee luck when shuttin' seine,
Wish 'ee tummals at the jowstin',
Wish 'ee out an' home again.
Clink you'm cider at the call,
"Cap'n John, an' One an' All."

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DOLLY PENTREATH

Dolly Pentreath is dead an' gone, her stone stands up to
Paul;
But Dolly Pentreath her still lives on in the hearts of One
and All.
Her smoked an' snuffed, an' the cusses her knowed was
mortal hard to bate,
But her carried her creel like a Mousehole maid, an' allays
selled out her cate.

Her wern't afeerd at livin' alone, an' many a tale is told,
As shows as how her face was brass, but her heart was
true as gold.
One day a sailor had tooked his leave afore his leave was
given,
An' knowed if they caught him the yard arm rope would
show him the way to Heaven,

So he scatted to Dolly, an' jest in time her thought of the
chimley wide,
An' her collared him hold by the slack of his breeks an'
shoved him up inside.
Cussin' an' fussin' they searchers came, but awnly Dolly
they sees,
Washin' her feet in her old oak keeve, with her petticoat up
to her knees.

An' didn' her give them a tang o' tongue, an' didn' her cuss
them sweet,
For thinkin' her'd let a man bide there an' see her washin'
her feet?
But her called the loudest cusses of all, an' scraiched like a
rat at a stoat,
When the sailor gave a chokely cough for the fuzzen smoke
in his throat.

The storm her raised drove the buffleheads out a
grumpling into the street,
An' the sailor washed hisself in the keeve where Dolly had
washed her feet.

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* * * *

Dolly Pentreath is dead an' gone, her stone stands up to
Paul;
But Dolly Pentreath her still lives on in the hearts of One
and All.

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SUNDAY IN THE CORNISH PORT

There b'aint no fishin' in the bay,
The boats be moored 'longside the kay,
With sails reefed in an' stowed away,
An' all so calm an' still—
Excep' the ripple o' the tide,
An' gulls awheelin' up 'longside
The clifts, to where the Church do bide
Atop the Flag-staff Hill.

Above the Slip where boats be moored
The cottage doors be set abroad,
An' singin' voices praise the Lord
For mercies which endure;
An' happy childer in the street,
Dressed all so vitty, clane, an' neat,
Puts somethin' in the music sweet
It didn' had before.

Now every fisherman be dressed
In shiny suit o' black for best,
As fittin' to the Day o' Rest,
An' sign o' Death to Sin;
The jerseys in the lockers bide,
For Sunday knaws its proper pride,
An' likes to show a clane outside
To match the heart within.

Mid mornin', Church bell clangs a call.
An' some don't take no heed at all,
But some goes up the hill to Paul,
An' some to Chapel goes;
Whilst some strolls down upon the kay,
An' sits an' spits into the say;
But all the same, they knaws the Day,
An' doesn' dirt their clo'es.

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But whether Church be right or b'aint,
Or Mittin' Houses make'ee faint,
Or whether you'm a solemn saint
Or jest a cheerful sinner,
For sartin, not so long by noon,
You'll all be playin' the same tune
Wi' knife an' fork an' mebbe spoon,
Asettin' down to dinner.

Then mos'ly us do strawl away
Along the clifts that line the bay,
Though some prefers a dish o' tay
An' snooze along the settle;
But whether we'm been far or near,
We'm never losted, don't 'ee fear.
We'm allays home in time to hear
The singin' o' the kettle.

An' when the Sun, a lantern red
Asinkin' at the World's mast-head,
Goes down, then us goes home to bed:
An' so us ends the Sunday.
For Sunday 'tis the Day o' days,
When all the fish do as 'em please,

GRANFER'S PROVERBS

Granfer sits in the winder an' looks acrost the bay;
Sure 'nuff he thinks a mort o' things tho' 'tis little he has to
say.

'Tis time he came to his moorin's an' heaved his gear
ashore,
For the sea is a bit too chancy for a man gone eighty-four.

He've caughted a plenty of wisdom in the net inside his
head,
An' often us be tellin' of the clever things he've said.
They'm cleverer nor things you read in books an' papers
too,
Because he dosn' make 'em up, but awnly knows they'm
true.

He've good advice for sailor lads who musn't come to grief:
"Don't try to shine you'm centrebit by cuts acrost the reef.
Don't make you'm mainsail fast an' look for mermaids on
the lew,
An' don't take cider kegs aboard because they spile the
view."

He've good advice for all the maids whom lookin' arter
lads:
"If you baint catchin' mackerel then be content with skads;
An' if you've tried the seinin' an' the fishes won't be took,
Just get a dacent bit o' bait, an' drop a line an' hook."

He've good advice for husbands, which he tells them all
alone:
"Go suant comin' into port an' watch the weather cone;
Jest keep your hellum stiddy if there's tokens of a squall—
Cross words is nigh as useless as a porpus in the trawl."

He've good advice for housewives but he keeps it to hisself:
For he knows they awnly puts it with the jowds upon the
shelf;
His wisest words to women be the words he doesn' say,
For he jest sits in the winder an' looks acrost the bay.

A CORNISH SEINING SONG

The Huer is up on the cliff, me deears,
Glazing out to say;
Slip youm moorin's and ship youm gears,
There's Pilchers in the Bay;
Lift youm faistins on muggoty pie.
Down along an' away.

'Tisn the time for maids, me deears,
Don't 'ee be duffed by they;
There's lashins o' time to taise their ears
An' maze 'em wi' fal-de-lay.
They'll wait till arter the Pilcher's caughted,
Down along an' away.

Us'll be shuttin' soon, me deears,
There's purple on the say,
An' jowstin' this arternoon, me deears,
When us comes back to kay.
Who's for a banger, a bender haul
Down along an' away?

Pilchers is budiful fried, me deears,
Or baked in a bussa o' clay,

So sterry away wi' the tide, me deears,
For Pilchers in the Bay.
Slip youm moorin's an' ship youm gears,
Down along an' away!

[Pg 26]

"HOW BE'EE, ME DEEAR?"

(The Cornish Greeting).
"How be'ee, me deear?" I heard her say,
But I was foached to be far away,
For the breeze was braave an' the boat in the bay,
An' Granny was old an' grey.

I didn' turn back to say "Good-bye,"
For slottery weather was in the sky,
The anchor was up an' the punt stood by,
Yet Granny was old an' grey!

Far I sailed, an' didn' I cast
Many a look at the old times past?
The lil' grey port as I saw it last?
An' Granny old an' grey?

At last I came from the yowlin' main,
Guessin' to see the place again
Jest as it was, as nate an' plain,
An' Granny old an' grey.

Why didn' I seed the end was nigh?
Why didn' I bide to say "Good-bye?"
It's too late now to make reply,
Granny is gone away.

But someday beyond the farthest tide,
At last I shall safely at anchor ride,
An' I shall be hailed as I come 'longside,
"How be'ee, me deear?"

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"WHAT HAVE'EE CATCHED?"

"What have'ee caughted, lil' lad on the shore?"
"Shrimps an' a crayfish out o' the pool,
An' a tinfu' o' lugworms, a tidy score,
To scrig on the night lines after school."

"What have'ee caughted, lil' maid in the lane?"
"The scent o' the thyme an' the cheep of a bird,
An' the sound of a song that is joy an' pain,
But the sweetest song as ever I heard."

"What have'ee caughted, strong man from the say?"
"A seineful o' pilchers, a sailful o' foam,
An' a twenty-knot breeze from the nor'rard away,
That drove me a-scuddin' an' rollickin' home."

"What have'ee caughted, good dame by the door?"
"A lil' brown sail comin' with the tide,
That's bringin' back peace to my heart once more,
An' my man again to the chimley side."

[Pg 28]

A MEVAGISSEY HAUL

(A million pilchards, August 6th, 1912).
A Sou' Sou' West was blowin' up to more than half a gale,
An' a prutty bit o' billow talked ashore,
But there baint no use for seiners as be afear'd to sail,
When the catches have been runnin' light an' poor,

So we plugged out oar to oar.
Out along from old Mevagissey,—
Beatin' out from old Mevagissey,—
With a sky full o' scud blowin' over us,
An' a stiddy brazzle plonkin' at the bow.

We shut the seine, an' watched the lights a dancin' green
an' red,
An' wallowed first to starboard, then to port,
Until the dimsey touched the West, an' we was slowin'
dead,
An' then we knawed 'twas tummals we had caught,
For the corks was bobbin' short.
Out along from old Mevagissey,—
Low lay old Mevagissey,—
When the grey dawn showed the shadows over us,
An' the brazzle came alippin' at the bow.

We lugged the silver net aboard until the bilge was hid,
For crates was little use for such a haul,
An' then we let the main-sheet go, an' home along we slid,
With the hellum nearly buried in a squall,
But we didn' care at all.
For it was home along to old Mevagissey,
Back along to old Mevagissey,
With the dangers of the night blown over us,
An' A MILLION PILCHERS slitherin' below.

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We tacked into the harbour with the ground-say grindin'
hard,
An' we bumped to berth at last 'longside the quay,
Which was chockered up with barrels so you couldn' step a
yard,
When we brought our shinin' harvest from the say:—
Now 'tis salt an' stawed away.
An' we'm home along in old Mevagissey,
Home again in old Mevagissey,
With the cloud o' winter care blown over us,
Whatever winter winds may blow.

[Pg 30]

DICKY

A year agone, a year agone, our Dicky sailed away;
A blue light danced about his eyes like sunshine on the bay,
He whissled passin' down along, his heart was glad an' gay,
A year agone, a year agone, when Dicky sailed away.

A year agone! a year agone! The time do speed so fast,
It scairce do seem a year agone we saw our Dicky last;
It seems as if his steps must come aclatterin' to the door,
An' he be claimin' payment with his breakfast for the score.

He loved the lanes in springtime an' he loved them at the
fall,
But when the honeysuckle bloomed he loved them best of
all;
I mind me how he had a sprig stuck in his cap that day,
A year agone, a year agone, when Dicky sailed away.

There wasn' lad was handier at stawin' of a sail,
There wasn' lad was cheerfuller at stemmin' through a
gale,
There wasn' lad was heartier at fishin' or at play,
A year agone, a year agone, when Dicky sailed away.

A many ships come into port along the flowin' tide,
A many lads come home again an' safe in harbour ride,
But all in vain we watch for one, an' all in vain we pray.

* * * *

A year agone, a year agone, our Dicky sailed away!

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THE OLD FISHERMAN'S LAMENT

'Tis well an' fine for the steam-trawler to sweep the floor of
the say,
But 'tis turble hard for the fisherman as awnly sails the
Bay,
For the fish gets scaircer an' scaircer an' hardly ait at all,
An' what's to be caught with the seinin' be barely wuth the
haul.

Us used to count on the herrin's to buy us Chris'mus cheer,
But the catch runs lighter an' lighter, an' pervisions be
allays dear,
An' what us gets in the crab-pots that don't take long to
sell,
Espécial when most of the pots be gone on a long ground
swell.

'Tis a whisht poor life for a lad to lead, an' mos'ly they wont
abide,
But sterry away to the furrin' ports athurt a keenly tide,
An' us be left, all lone an' long, to moil as best us may,
While the clankin' trawler steams along, an' sweeps the
floor of the say.

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A LOOE LAY

Ole Sammy took fish from Downderry to Looe;
Jest the darnedest thing that Ole Sammy could do;
An' nobody knawed what Ole Sammy was thinkin'
For when he got there the fish was a stinkin'.

He cried them in stores an' he cried them in housen,
But no one would have them at tuppence a thousan';
He cried them in Fore Street an' then on the Pier,
But folks said as "Nothin' was tuppence too dear."

Sure awnly a saftie would ever be carin'
To pay for the fish when they'd had such a airin'!
An' any regreater deserve to be stranded
For carryin' fish to the port where they'm landed!

So Sammy went homeways from Looe to Downderry,
An' on to Torpoint an' acrost by the ferry,
An' up along Plymouth, remarkable flish,
He selled out to wance all his basket of fish.

'Tis sartin that 'tis, an' can't be no 'tisser,
Us knaws fish an' fish from the Rame to the Lizzer;
What's hansun for Devon for us doesn' do,
So don't 'ee be carryin' fish into Looe.

[Pg 33]

ON THE KAY (QUAY).

As I was bendin' a hook one day
A furriner* strawled along the kay.
His cheeks was white as gannet's wing,
An' he looked a whisht an' wakely thing.

His clo'es was nate an' spickety span,
But I sez to meself "Now there's a man!"

An' I sez to meself "Now look at his legs,
They'm like a couple o' crabpot pegs."

An' I sez to meself "A bit of a squall
Would blow his bones to the end of all."

An' I sez—but I didn' had time to say

For a scraith went up from the end o' the kay,

Where a cheeld was aswingin' jest afore,
An' now there wasn' no cheeld no more,

Then a'most afore I could see him go,
That furriner sprang in the say below.

He couldn' swim much, but he kepted afloat
Jest while I tumbled into the boat,

An' I hooked him up an' lugged him aboard,
An' he had that cheeld clipped tight as cord.

He trembled an' shook, he was wake an' white,
But he awnly sez "Is the kid alright?"

Sure 'nuff, an' he simmed to understand
When I gived him a hearty shake o' the hand.

I started abendin' the hook agen,
An' I sez "There's different looks to men,

Braave hearts in whisht poor bodies bide,
An' looks don't count to what's inside."

* To Cornishmen, non-Cornish are "furriners."

[Pg 34]

RICHES

Miss Tregear be a whisht poor woman,
With her big fine house an' her carriage an' pair;
Her keeps four maids, not countin' the tweeny,
An' another especial to do her hair.

Ruth Penwarne be a braave rich woman;
Her lives in a cottage with a warpley door;
Her've got four childer, not countin' the baby,
An' there baint no tellin' but her might have more.

Miss Tregear have a room for dinin',
An' a room for drawin', where her doesn' draw,
An' a room where books be shut in cupboards,
An' others us don't knaw what they'm for.

Ruth Penwarne have a little linhay,
An' there her washes when the rain be nigh,
But when 'tis sunny her goes in the garden,
An' spreads her clo'es on the fuzzen to dry.

Miss Tregear have a pile o' carpets;
Her be frit of a moth or a speck o' dust;
Her be feared that the sun will spile her curtains,
An' the damp will make her fire-irons rust.

Ruth Penwarne have a fine stone kitchen;
An' two rooms aloft as be crammed with beds;
Her don't have carpets, so they can't get dirty,
An' her soon clanes up where the childer treads.

Miss Tregear have a face that's lonely;
Her be often sad, tho' her can't tell why;
Her be allays asayin there's nothin' doin',
An' thinks how slow all the days go by.

Ruth Penwarne haven't time for thinkin',
With makin' an' mendin' an' scrubbin' too,
An' sartin sure, she'm a braave rich woman,
With childer an' home an' her work to do.

[Pg 35]

A FIRESIDE SPELL

"I've spanked young Tom an' sent him to bed, an' I reckon
it sarves him right;
For 'tisin no use asayin' things when the rope's end baint in
sight,
An' he shouldn' go steerin' out along when the tide is
runnin' away,
I've telled him afore; I cussn't keep on atellin' him every
day."

"Now when I was a boy—" "Iss, when you was a boy, you
was jest such a scalliant too,
All'ays athinkin' o' darin' things as you didn' belong to do.
Climbin' they cliffs for saygulls' eggs or clambering ower
the crags
An' heavin' tuffs at the cormorants, an' shyin' stones at the
shags."

"But when I was a boy—" "Iss, when you was a boy you
worried you'm mother a mort,
I mind how'ee tried to swim out to the Point, an' how in the
race'ee was caught;
I know they had dared'ee at doin' their dags, but dags didn'
keep'ee afloat,
An' the say 'ud have catched'ee that mornin', sure 'nuff, if
they hadn' raced out with the boat."

"Well, mebbe I was jest sich a limb, as'ee says, an' all'ays
full sail for a game,
An' I reckon as boys will be boys when they'm boys, but
grows into men what are tame,
An' when Tom is a feyther alarnin' *his* son to feel the
weight of *his* hand,
Mebbe he'll fergive me for spankin' him now, an'
remember, an' understand."

[Pg 36]

CORNISH COMFORT

"Don't 'ee cry, lil' maid, 'tis awnly a broken bussa;
The jowds won't mend, best lave the attle abide.
There's tummals o' bussas left, an' it might be wusser."
But the lil' maid cried.

"Don't 'ee cry, li'l maid. If fellows gets changy and chancy,
Tomorrow a braaver will come than the totle who stepped.
Flushed milk baint no use, an' it isn' wuth scrowlin', I
fancy."
Still the lil' maid wept.

"Don't 'ee cry, li'l maid—Iss, the Say be a terrible net,
An' 'tis wearisome waitin' a meetin' beyont the Big Tide;
Jest try to catch sleep on you'm pellow, mebbe you'll
forget."
Still the lil' maid cried.

"Don't 'ee cry did un say? Well, youm feyther jest wanted to
cheer'ee,
But men doesn' knaw where the best cup o' comfort is
kept.
Cuddle down; cry it out on you'm own mother's bosom, me
dearie."
Then the lil' maid slept.

[Pg 37]

"I MIND ME"

I mind me of the cottage where I used to bide
Just above the harbour on the steep hill-side;
Cobbled was the cause'y to the jasmined door
That looked into the kitchen with the grey stone floor.

I mind me of the dresser with the chainy white,

An' the gurt big Bible as was read a Sunday night;
An' the old cloam tay-pot with the broken spout
As wanted suant dealin' at the pourin' out.

I mind the quiet mornin's an' the tickin' o' the clock,
An' the brath upon the brandiss in the steamin' crock;
An' the goin' of the shadows an' the comin' of the day,
An' the startin' in the dimsey for the fishin' in the bay.

I mind me of the night-times an' wind whisslin' drear,
An' the scraitchin' o' the shingle when I couldn' slape for
fear;
An' the groanin' gropin' darkness with norra gleam nor
star,
An' the boom of the billows on the harbour bar.

But the cosy chimley corner, I mind it best of all,
With the smell of tatie pasties from the oven in the wall,
An' the crackle of the fuzzen with the billies on the blow,
An' the ring o' ruddy faces in the hearth-fire glow.

The cottage still is lookin' from the hill across the bay;
Above the cobbled cause'y swings the jasmine spray;
But the gleam o' ruddy faces an' the hearth-fire glow
Went out in the darkness long long ago.

[Pg 38]

"SURE 'NUFF"

Sure 'nuff, 'twas good when I was a lad
To be in a boat in the bay;
To whiffle the mack'rel, hook the chad,
And haul at the nets away;
'Twas good to feel the wind in my face,
An' scud through a tumble o' foam,
An' see far off the twinklin' lights
Of the lil' grey port, an' home.
An' 'twas good to climb in the craggy cliffs
Where the guillemot raired her brood,
An' go with a laugh in the heart all day;
Sure 'nuff, 'twas good!

Sure 'nuff, 'twas good when I wandered away,
An' saw that the world was wide,
In the wunnerful lands beyont the say,
An' the ports where the big ships ride.
'Twas good to meet men who could strive an' seek,
An' didn' knaw nort o' fear,
An' hail 'em a word in passin' by,
An' answer 'em back with a cheer.
'Twas good to be sailin' the way o' the world,
An' standin' where strong men stood,
An' counted awhile as a man among men;
Sure 'nuff, 'twas good!

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Sure 'nuff, 'tis good, with voyagin' done,
To be anchored in port at last,
An' watch the boys go, one by one,
As I did in days long past;
'Tis good to set in the cottage door,
An' gaze at the sky an' say,
An' knaw that I fared on the flood tide once,
Now 'tis fallin' away;
An' 'tis good to have time to make ready to sail
On the voyage that leads to rest;
An' I trust a Pilot Who will not fail.
Sure 'nuff, 'tis best!

[Pg 40]

THE GARMENT OF TIME

The giant Image of Eternal Time
Sits throned amidst the Infinite of Space;
And through the æons, passing chime by chime,
Heeds not our Race.

Meanwhile we weave upon his robes' array
Embroideries of doubts and hopes and fears,
The golden threads of laughter by the way,
Grey threads of tears.

Careless sits Time of garment grey or gold,
Although our passionate labours never cease
Till weaving hands are weary and we grow old.
And pass to peace.

And who that gazes on that garb of Time
Shall in the far light of a distant day
Catch aught of colour of song or rune of rhyme?
Shall all be grey?

Yet till the end fall—and the day close,
Let me weave in the web of pain and the woof of tears
The colour of sun-bright seas and the red of the rose,
In my Loom of Years.

[Pg 41]

IN A GARDEN

A twilight peace droops tenderly,
The discords of the day depart,
And through the hush there comes to be
A harmony within the heart;
And waking to the quivering strings
Spirits are touched to finer things.

Sweet hand-fast silences of eve,
When love's supremest note is heard
In symphonies the spirits weave
Beyond the need of mortal word,
O! may we keep your music when
We pace the noisy haunts of men.

Give us the strength for daily stress
Of toil about the busy world;
Give us a balm to bitterness
From wounds when cruel shafts are hurled;
And give us courage in a sense
Of Love's divine omnipotence.

For Life can never lonely be
Since Love has broken all the bars
That stayed the soul from unity
With Heaven and its ten thousand stars,
Whose music falls sublimely grand
Through silences of hand in hand.

[Pg 42]

SORROW'S COURAGE

I have loved Beauty. I have seen the sun
Flash snowy mountain tops to shimmer of gold;
I have heard songs where little waters run
Chiming with music that the stars have rolled.

I have loved Beauty. I have seen the sea
Fringe with its silver all the golden shore;
Have heard it crooning music ceaselessly
To ancient tunes frayed from the tempest's roar.

I have loved Beauty. I have seen a smile
Shine from sweet eyes, fair as the sea's own blue,
Whose magic lashes seemed to lift awhile
To send a kindly comrade spirit through.

I have loved Beauty. But nor sun nor sea
Nor stars have characterized God's chiefest grace;
Beyond all other things there beacons me
The star-led pilgrim courage of your face.

[Pg 43]

A CHOOSING

Under the turf the blind mole creeps,
And moulds the mounds of molehill kind.
Above, the skylark soars and sweeps,
The song is swept upon the wind.

To-morrow's eyes the mounds may see;
To-morrow they will mark the plain.
But none shall hear the ecstasy
Of song, that cannot be again.

Well built, old mole! A little heap
To linger to a later day!
Something to show you once did creep
In darkness through your earthy way.

Yet with the lark's glad song of Love
May mine on wandering winds be hurled,
In happy regions far above
The dull mad molehills of the world.

Still let my song be all in all,
Though Earth-born discords soon destroy,
And on no mortal ear may fall
The music of immortal joy.

Break, Spirit, break to boundless things
Beyond the molehill and the clod,
And catch the glory of the strings
That tune the harmonies of God.

[Pg 44]

STAR SIGNS

Primal swirl of the Chaos, out of your nebulous Night
Eddied the primal tides, as the Mind of God decreed,
And the Word of the ultimate Source spake forth "Let there
be Light,"
And all the Firmament blazed with the dust of the star-
sown seed.

Strong and stately and splendid, thronging the limitless
spaces.
Ye are the silver signs to a House not made with hands;
Ye are the Mystic Scroll, where the Mighty Maker traces
Thoughts that the passionate poet dimly understands.

Day, with its drouth and drosses, shrivels our fragile souls,
And, witched with its transient gauds, to the perilous
earth we cling,
But ever the tender night its infinite page unrolls,
And the star-led mind aspires to the Throne of the star-
robed King.

[Pg 45]

THE OLD KNIGHT'S SONG

My lady lives afar in the fair white tower

Hid, like a nest, high among branches swaying.
"Peaceful thoughts be her portion, dreams her dower,"
Here am I on my knees, praying.

To the Winds of the World from the hills and the sea far
blowing,
That they carry their strength to her heart for sorrow's
staying,
That they bring clear hopes and the gladness of freedom
flowing,
Here am I on my knees, praying.

To the Lamp of Day, that the aureate beauty breaking
Find answering smiles in her eyes for the fair displaying
Of colour of gold on the way my Lady is taking,
Here am I on my knees, praying.

To the sentinel Stars through the infinite spaces sweeping,
Guarding the night, and terrors of darkness slaying,
That they bring sweet Peace to the dreams of my Lady
sleeping,
Here am I, on my knees praying.

But my casque is rusted with Time, and my breastplate
battered,
My hauberk worn with ancient fighting and fraying;
Dull is my shield, my banner faded and tattered.
Here am I on my knees, praying.

Here at an outpost, here is my patrol duty:
My Lady's train is for Knights of a fair arraying;
Only from far may I guard her, loving her beauty:
Here am I on my knees, praying.

[Pg 46]

Wandering lights have I followed, the one Light questing,
I have wearied through difficult paths and long delaying;
Perilous peaks have I scaled with feet unresting;
Here I am on my knees, praying.

Star-like my Lady shines in her fair white tower.
"Let nothing come nigh her to lead to her joy's betraying,
No cloud dull aught of the golden dreams, her dower."
Here am I on my knees, praying.

[Pg 47]

FEALTY

When my Lady hath Pleasure and friends to spare,
And riot of roses strewed in her path of days,
And laughter ringing carillons into the air,
She needs not me; I travel the lonely ways.

When my Lady hath Youth uplifting a song
Like the twitter of birds in a springtime hawthorn bough,
And round her the notes of a merry-mad music throng,
She needs not me; my music is sad and low.

But when my Lady hath Sorrow to stress her heart,
And Pain brings up to her eyes the ghosts of fear,
And the music of Youth, and Laughter and Joy depart,
Then she will need me: and lo! am I not here?

Here I stand at the gateway and vigil keep,
Waiting the summoning sob or the calling sigh;
Swift to assuage her tears should my Lady weep;
Happy if sorrow for ever may pass her by.

[Pg 48]

TREASURE TROVE

You did not know that, gazing on your face,
I took its Beauty to my heart for ever,

Where it illumines every day with grace,
Though Time and tides may sever.

You did not know that, looking in your eyes,
I found their Truth, beyond all need for speaking,
And knew their gentleness a paradise
Worth all a wide world's seeking.

You did not know that every word you spoke
Told me the Courage in your heart abiding,
And bade me watch, where through the cloud-rifts broke
One steady star for guiding.

You did not know. But in my heart I know,
The Beauty, Truth, and Courage that enfold you:
And when we part I do not let you go:
Thus in my heart I hold you.

[Pg 49]

ROSES AND RUE

You gave me roses, you have given me Rue.
Yet to the Roses memoried fragrance clings,
And in their faded petals I renew
The first fresh grace of unforgotten things.

God give you Roses all along the way.
So will I wear contentedly the Rue;
And when I greet you with a smile, I pray
Shade of my sorrow never fall on you.

[Pg 50]

DOGMA

Reason's unreasoned castle of defence
With turrets towering into far-off skies,
Whose superstructure, solid and immense,
Is built on shadows and on mysteries.

CREED

Not with light straws, swift swept upon the stream,
Not with light foam, blown up along the shore,
In calm unmeasured deeps my jewels gleam,
Hid in my heart of hearts for evermore.

RELIGION

The one cool joy of all life's broiling day;
The one sweet star that gleams where saints have trod;
The one clear stream beside the dusty way
That leads to God.

PIETY

A quiet garment for eternal wear,
Designed above frail fashion's mortal dress,
Worked with a web of faith, a woof of prayer,
Coloured with love and fair with gentleness.

[Pg 51]

BLUE SKY

(From the French of Marcel Doran).

O! weary waste of shoreless blue
Where weary wing may never rest!

O! awful brightness burning through
The barrier of the gate of rest!
My spirit longs to reach the strand
Of sorrow-soothing shadowland.

But what can this poor spirit wear
To hide the naked wounds, pain-kissed
Beneath the searching, ceaseless glare
Of cloudless burning amethyst?
Where can the sad grey spirit fly
The unrelenting agony?

O! for some shadow-haunted stream
Where tired eyes might fall asleep,
And in the peace of darkling dream
See Sorrow's pageant homeward creep,
Feel angel hands with white caress
Soothe eyelids dark with heaviness!

O! for some minster where the balm
Of cooling touch my wounds might heal;
Where always dwells a Sabbath calm,
Made sweeter by the solemn peal
Of bells, that trembling fill the air
With noble notes of perfect prayer!

[Pg 52]

SHADOWS

Shadows, the pale grey wings of night,
Sweep over the sky,
And low in the west the lingering light
Wanes—like a sigh
From the fervent heart of the day
Passing away:
Then afar
Shineth a star.

Shadows, the pale grey wings of Death,
Sweep over my heart;
And far in the dark a voice calleth,
"Come ye, depart."
There lingers no light from the day
Passing away,
But afar
Shineth a Star!

[Pg 53]

WHEN I WAS A LAD

When I was a lad in Petherick
I often lay me down
And built a beautiful city
And called it London Town.
I filled its streets with heroes
Beautiful strong and wise,
Men who were kings and princes,
Women with kindly eyes.
I spent the gold of the charlock
For paving the city street;
I saw bright flags awaving
Over the billowing wheat;
And loud in the brown bee's buzzing
I heard the far-off hum
Of the mart and the busy merchants,
And the wharves where the big ships come.
When I was a lad in Petherick
I often lay me down,
And built this wonderful city,
And called it London Town.

* * * *
Now I'm a man in London—
Golden dreams I had
Of a golden city of London
Long since when I was a lad.
Here on the long grey pavement
I seek that city still
But there isn't much gold in Fleet Street,
Or glamour on Ludgate Hill.
For the hurrying men look haggard,
And the women have weary eyes,
And the voices of pale-faced children
Mingle in fretful cries.

[Pg 54]

There's gold in the field of charlock,
There's gold on the billowing wheat,
And the bee sucks golden honey
In lanes where the flowers are sweet.
And small ships sail in the distance
To a golden bourne in the west,
And the gentle peace of twilight
Is the purest gold of rest.

* * * *
Dreams of the man in London!
Useless dreams and sad,
Of the far-off village of Petherick
And the far-off Cornish lad.

[Pg 55]

A CALL

Let us go out to the Garden of Pan, and hear what the
Pipes are playing;
Let us go out where the ancient hills mother the rivers that
run to the sea;
Let us go out where the wind wanders, tuning amid the
trees swaying,
Let us go out to the wider world where the thoughts of men
are free.

There on the hills the eye may see the changeless Beauty
changing
On sun-splashed grass and wavering corn, verdant valley
and rolling down,
Clouds steal up from a far-off tryst, like Titans into
battalions ranging,
And the splendid Sun-god marching on to crown the world
with a golden crown.

Here in the City the voices are hoarse. Here is calling and
crying,
Lust and longing for pride of place, vanity, pomp, and the
strain of strife;
Here in the City sobs arise from the battered hosts of the
falling and dying,
Who know not Peace, nor the End of Peace; who know not
Life, nor the End of Life.

Let us away from the webbed town-tangle, where
monstrous Mammon is reigning
Over the small cheap souls of slaves, sudden to cringe and
swift to serve;
Let us go out from the clanging Gates, the squalour of
strife and the sordid straining,
Let us go out by the open road with feet that falter not nor
swerve.

[Pg 56]

Come! and away to the Garden of Pan, and hear what the
Pipes are playing!
Hark to the Voice of a splendid Peace calling from hill and
river and sea!
Come! and away to the old Earth Mother, giver of gifts

without the praying,
There, in the hills Her throne is set, and the thoughts of
men are free.

[Pg 57]

THE RETURN

I must go down to the little grey port that watches the
western sea,
And wander again in the winding street that climbs the
windy hill,
There I shall find in a jasmined porch a door set wide for
me,
There I shall have my will.

For a little window looks out by day on a blue unsleeping
tide,
Where brown-sailed boats sweep up and down for the
harvest of the deep;
And nightly beacons a twinkling light to wanderers
scattered wide,
And guides them home to sleep.

And the flowing tide comes flooding in and chants around
the quay
A roaring song from the Ocean's heart of the lands that are
fair and far;
And the ebbing tide goes sobbing out, murmuring wistfully
Over the harbour bar.

There I shall stand among men who are strong with the
strength of the wind and the wave,
And hold simple talk with men who are wise with the
wisdom of sky and sea;
There I shall find in a patient endurance the sure-set faith
of the brave,
There shall my heart be free.

[Pg 58]

IN THE BAY

The schooner swells its sails for the far-off seas,
The steamer pounds proudly far away,
But I'd sooner be ascudding in a ten-knot breeze
In my little lug and mizzen in the bay.

The schooner sings the wind's song from Bristol to Brazil,
The steamer knows the whole World's way,
But I can see a cottage on a windy hill
From my little lug and mizzen in the bay.

The schooner's up to hatches with her pig-iron, coal, and
mud,
The steamer, plugged with cargo, heaves away,
But I can whiffle mackerel as through the waves I scud
In my little lug and mizzen in the bay.

O! living in a schooner is like living in a tree,
And a steamer's like a big hotel to-day,
If I had my choice of sailing, I know I'd soonest be
In my little lug and mizzen in the bay.

[Pg 59]

SEA-FOAM

The once-flashed beauty borne on a breaking wave
Dies to a requiem sung on the sounding shore;
Beyond all reach of mortal power to save
In spray-crowned glory it passes for evermore.

Would that the heart could capture and hold and keep
The glory of beauty, sped in a moment's space!
Could fix for ever the splendour and strength and sweep
Of the wind-wild wave, in its riotous rapturous race!

Brave brief hopes, are you not sped as the wave—
Sped to a requiem sighed on a wreck-strewn shore?
While memory murmurs in dreams that you once were
brave,
And sadness softly sighs that you are no more.

[Pg 60]

ECHOES

By the way of blowing roses, in the laughter-laden years,
Happy lads and lightsome lasses tripped the song-sweet
lanes with me;
Gladness woke the hillside echoes in the sound of ringing
cheers,
Rapture rippled on the breezes sweeping from the
rippled sea.

Happy lads have left the hillside for a bourne beyond the
bay,
Lightsome lasses know not laughter hid beneath
enduring stone;
Echoes of a strangled sorrow in the sea mist far away,
Haunt the lanes where song is silent and the roses all are
blown.

[Pg 61]

A BALLADE OF CORNWALL

Westward where the latest sunbeam lingers on the brow of
night,
Lies a land of old romance enshrined in amethystine sea,
Where from cairn and cromlech come, to eyes illumed by
subtle sight,
Fays and pixies, sprites and gnomes, in pomp of faery
pageantry.
Shining forms of ghostly knights, and dream-like dames
of chivalry
Gleam among the gorse and furze, and pace the reedy
valleys low,
Moving through a magic mist amid the days of long ago—
Knights and ladies living still in trusted legendary lore
Lilt their lovelorn lays or speed their clamorous
challenge to the foe
In the land where ceaseless surges smite the crag-
crowned rock-strewn shore.

Gauntly glooms Tintagel Castle from its frowning, dizzy
height,
Where the fair Iseult is crooning happy songs in
thoughtless glee;
Softly falls the creeping footstep, sudden flash the sparks
of spite,
Lifeless lies the love-led Tristram lowly at his lady's knee,
Past the stress of wandering sorrow, past the philtred
ecstasy.
Then there breaks the sound of slaughter, clanging blow on
clanging blow,
Clash of brand and crash of axe, while shrieks shrill up
from deeps below,
Where the sea's majestic music mixes with the mortal roar.
Still the ghostly field engages, still the tides of battle flow
In the land where ceaseless surges smite the crag-
crowned rock-strewn shore.

Down the rugged slopes of Rough Tor ancient heroes
armour dight,

[Pg 62]

Charge across the bridge of slaughter where the mist
hangs heavily.
There the brand Excalibur goes flashing through the last
dim fight
Wielded by the stainless king who fighting falls his wield
to dree.
Then across the mere there come a silent, shadowy,
queenly, three,
Golden crowned, who bear him off with bitter tears of
quenchless woe
Unto valleyed Avilon, where falls not rain, nor hail, nor
snow,
Nor the faith unfaithful brings a dolorous doom for ever-
more.
Still across the dream lit waters moves the stately
shadow show
In the land where ceaseless surges smite the crag-
crowned rock-strewn shore.

ENVOI

Friend, these smiling buds of fancy you may gather as you
go.
Still the fairy bells are ringing in the evening's afterglow;
Still the questing knights adventure over mountain, stream,
and moor;
All the ancient splendid beauty understanding hearts may
know
In the land where ceaseless surges smite the crag-
crowned rock-strewn shore.

[Pg 63]

THE FISHERMAN'S PRAYER

Pray God, hear our prayer;
Keep us in Thy calm of care;
Lead us where the haul be good,
So our fishing find us food;
Give us strength our nets to haul
And safe to harbour bring us all.

Pray God, Whose Son did know
Fishermen and sea below,
And Who calmed the tempest when
Terror came to fishermen,
Hear us when for help we call,
And safe to harbour bring us all.

Pray God, Who made the sea,
Hear the fishers' prayer to Thee.
Steer us clear of shoal and reef,
So our boat may bear no grief;
Bear us up through storm and squall,
And safe to harbour bring us all.

Pray God, Who shines afar
Like a friendly pilot star,
Help us set our course aright
By Thy Holy Beacon Light,
For the Port where live the blest,
And in Thy Harbour give us rest.

[Pg 64]

DISTINCTIVE NEW POETRY

The notable nature of the Erskine Macdonald books may be gauged from the following current list:

Cor Cordium

A Book of Love Poems. By Alfred Williams. Large 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d. net.

By Alfred Williams (Author of "Songs in Wiltshire.") Large 8vo, cloth, 5s. net.

The price of "Songs in Wiltshire," (published at 5s.) has been advanced to 7s. 6d. net. "Poems in Wiltshire" has gone out of print.

The Times.—"Wonder and astonishment are great words with great associations. But there are few men living in England today of whom they can be more fairly used, in their most exact and literal sense, than of Mr. Alfred Williams...."

The Observer.—"Those who love poetry look out for the work of Alfred Williams. His poems have the fragrance and simplicity that come from a strong, sincere mind that is in close touch with nature."

Enchantments

By John Gurdon (Author of "Erinna," "Dramatic Lyrics," etc.) Large crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d. net.

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The Outlook.—"There is no mistaking who are Mr. Gurdon's masters. He has spent his days and nights with Swinburne and Keats, and learnt from them the intoxication of fine rhythms and passionate phrases.... Through all the verses in this little volume there is that thing which only the real poets have—a sense of freedom in verse and a great joy in writing it."

ERSKINE MACDONALD, London, W.C.

[Pg 66]

Transcriber's Note: Punctuation has been normalized.

This book contains dialect.

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