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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SONGS OF THREE COUNTIES, AND OTHER POEMS ***

SONGS OF THREE COUNTIES

AND OTHER POEMS

**With an Introduction by
R. B. CUNNINGHAME-GRAHAM**

**By
MARGUERITE RADCLYFFE-HALL**

**LONDON
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**Dedicated
to
The Marchioness of Anglesey**

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INTRODUCTION

WITH as much grace as if a monoplane should attempt to write a preface to a book on flying for an albatross, so may a writer of mere prose attempt to pen an introduction to a book of poetry.

The bird and man both use the air, but with a difference. So do the poet and the man of prose use pen and ink.

Familiarity with tools, used in two branches of one art (or trade), is apt to prove a snare.

Music and poetry, the most ethereal of the arts upon the face of them, are in a way more mathematical than prose, for both have formulæ. Hence, their appeal goes quicker to men's minds, and oversteps countries and languages to some degree, and makes it difficult to write about them. Of late, young poets, those who have bulked the largest in the public eye, those that the world has hailed as modern, have often been obscure. What is modernity? To be modern is to touch the senses of the age you write for. To me, a fool who owns a motor-car is just as great a fool as was a fool of the stone age.

The only true modernity is talent, and Lucian of Samosata was as modern to the full as Guy de Maupassant. The poet for whose verses I am writing this my introduction, preface, foreword, call it what you will, is one of those whose meaning he who runs may read.

Does she do well in making herself clear? I think so, for though there are those who prefer a mist of words, holding apparently that poetry should be written in Chinook, or Malagasy, this opinion must of necessity be of the nature of what Ben Jonson called a "humour."

Few men to-day read Eupheus and fewer Gongora. Yet in their time their concepts were considered to be fine flowers of poetry. Those who wrote so that all men could understand, as Sapho, Campion, Jorge Maurique, Petrarca, Villon, and their fellow-singers in the celestial spheres where poets sing, crowned with the bays of the approval of countless generations, all wrote clearly. Their verses all were clear as is the water running over chalk in a south country trout-stream, such as the Itchin or the Test.

I take two specimens of Miss Radclyffe-Hall's poetry to illustrate what I have said. She writes of a blind ploughman, whose prayer is to his friend to set him in the sun.

"Turn my face towards the East
And praise be to God."

One sees him sitting, wrinkled and bent, and ploughworn in the sun, and thanking God according to his faith, for light interior, for that interior vision which all the mystics claim.

"God who made His sun to shine
On both you and me,
God who took away my eyes,
That my *soul* might see."

This shows the poet in an unusual light, for most poets write on far different subjects; but here is one which is eternal, and has been eternal since the time of *Œdipus*.

Again in the verses, "Thoughts at Ajaccio," she shows a love of the earth and of its fulness, a feeling which has been the birthright of all English writers of good verse from the remotest times.

"Fill me with scent of upturned ground,
Soft perfume from thy bosom drawn."

This is the feeling that has inspired so many poets, and shows the writer not striving to be modern or filled with strange conceits; but with a love and trust of the brown earth, from which all poets take their birth, and into which they all return.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.

WALKING OUT

UPON a Sunday afternoon,
When no one else was by,
The little girl from Hanley way,
She came and walked with I.

We climbed nigh to the Beacon top,
And never word spoke we,
But oh! we heard the thrushes sing
Within the cherry tree.

The cherry tree was all a-bloom,
And Malvern lay below,
And far away the Severn wound—
'Twas like a silver bow.

She took my arm, I took her hand,
And never word we said,
But oh! I knew her eyes were brown,
Her lips were sweet and red.

And when I brought her home again,
The stars were up above,
And 'twas the nightingale that swelled
His little throat with love!

THE SHADOW OF RAGGEDSTONE

O RAGGEDSTONE, you darksome hill,
Your shadow fell for sure
Upon my own dear love and I,
Across the purple moor.

For we were such a happy pair,
The day we climbed your crest;
And now my love she lays her head
Upon another's breast.

She sits beside another man,
And walks abroad with he,
And never sheds a single tear,
Or thinks a thought o' me!

My mind it seems a-fire like,
My heart's as cold as lead,
My prayers they dry upon my lips
And somehow won't get said.

I wish that I could lay me down,
Upon the dreary plain
That stretches out to Raggedstone,*
And never rise again!

* A legend is attached to Raggedstone Hill in Worcestershire. The Hill was cursed by a Benedictine Monk. From time to time a great shadow rises up from it, spreading across the surrounding country. Woe betide those on whom the shadow falls, as it brings with it terrible misfortune! Many of the people living near Raggedstone still firmly believe in this legend.

III

THE LONG GREEN LANES OF ENGLAND

Oh! the long green lanes of England!
They be very far away,
And it's there that I'd be walking,
'Mid the hawthorn and the may.

Where the trees are all in blossom,
And the mating birds they sing
Fit to bust their little bodies,
Out of joy because it's Spring.

I'd be courting of my true love,
She'd be in her Sunday best,
With my arm around her shoulder
And her head upon my breast.

For the new land it's a fine land,
Where a man can get a start;
But there's that about the old land
That will grip his very heart:

For he'll mind him o' the cowslips,
Coming up all fresh and new
In the fields of early mornings,
Where the grass is white with dew.

Oh! it's money, money, money,
"Go and try to earn a bit;"
And "America's the country
For the lad as doesn't quit."

Seems that folks go mad on money,
Well, I'll have enough some day,
But the long green lanes of England
They be Oh! so far away!

IV

THE HILLS

WHEN I the hills of Malvern see,
There comes a sadness over me.

The reason why, I cannot tell,
Perhaps I love those hills too well.

But this I know, when I behold
Their springtime green, and autumn gold,

And see that year by year they bear
Such witness that God's earth is fair,

I'm happy for their beauty's sake,
And yet my heart begins to ache.

EASTNOR CHURCHYARD

I BE hopin' you remember,
Now the Spring has come again,
How we used to gather violets
By the little church at Eastnor,
For we were so happy then!

O my love, do you remember
Kisses that you took and gave?
There be violets now in plenty
By the little church at Eastnor,
But they're growing on your grave.

VI

THE MALVERN HILLS

THE Malvern Hills be green some days,
And some days purple-blue,
There never was the like of them
The whole of England through.

From Hanley straight into the Wells
The road runs long and white,
And there the hills they meet your gaze
Against the evening light.

Against the evening light they stand,
So proud, and dark, and old,
The Raggedstone and Hollybush,
And Worcester Beacon bold.

No matter where you chance to be,
However far away,
You'll see the hills awaiting you
At close of every day.

Oh! it's a lovely sight to see
The twilight stealing down
Their steepish banks and little paths,
Along to Malvern town.

And maybe on the Severn side,
Hung low on Bredon's mound,
The big red harvest moon will rise,
So lazy-like and round.

They talks a lot o' foreign parts,
Them as has seen them do,
But give me Malvern Hills at dusk
All green or purple-blue!

VII

THE FIRST CUCKOO

To-DAY I heard the cuckoo call,
Atop of Bredon Hill,
I heard him near the blackthorn bush,
And Oh! my heart stood still!

For it was just a year ago,
That to my love I said,
"When next we hear the cuckoo call,
Then you and I will wed."

My love and I we still be two,
And will be, many Springs;
I think the saddest sound on earth
Is when the cuckoo sings.

VIII

DUSK IN THE LANE

COME, put yer little hand in mine,
And let it be at rest,
It minds me of a tired bird
Within a warm brown nest;
And bend that pretty head o' your'n,
And lay it on my breast.

The lambs they all be wearied out,
I penned them in the fold;
The lights along the Malvern Hills
They shine like stars o' gold;
And yonder rises up the moon,
All round, and big, and bold.

There's not a single passer-by,
Nor sound along the lane,
And Oh! the earth be smelling sweet,
Like meadows after rain.
Then come a little closer, maid,
And kiss me once again.

IX

THE MEETING-PLACE

I MIND me of the hawthorn trees,
With cuckoos flying near;
The hawthorn blossoms smelt so sweet,
The cuckoo called so clear!

The hill was steep enough to climb,
It seemed to touch the sky!
You saw two valleys from the top,
The Severn and the Wye.

The Severn and the Wye you saw,
And they were always green;
I think it was the prettiest sight
That I have ever seen.

And there, so far above the town,
With not a soul to see,
Whenever she could slip away
My love would come to me!

I never smell the hawthorn bloom,
Or hear the cuckoo sing,
But I am minded of my love,
And Malvern Hills in Spring!

14

15

BY THE AVON

IN the meadows by the Avon,
Underneath the slope of Bredon,
There we often used to wander,
My girl and I.

All around the thrushes singing,
And on Sunday, church bells ringing,
Overhead the soft clouds floating,
White in the sky.

Still the waters of the Avon
Flow so gently under Bredon,
And on Sunday bells be ringing,
Clouds floating high.

But I'm sick at heart and lonely,
Nothing here has changed, save only
Just we two, who once were courting,
My girl and I.

JEALOUSY

I SEE'D yer turn the other day
 To watch a chap go by,
 Because he wore a uniform,
 And held his shoulders high.
 And then yer wouldn't even smile,
 Or say a word to I!

A kid he was, all pink and white,
 And strutting like a chick,
 A tassel at his silly side,
 And carrying a stick.
 And yet yer thought the world o' him,
 And started breathin' quick—

The same as when I kissed yer first,
 Oh! maybe you forget!
 But you was desperate sweet on I,
 I mind yer blushes yet.
 But now yer says me hands are rough,
 Me coat will never set.

Me hands they bean't lily white,
 Me coat may not be trim,
 But you may know, if fightin' comes,
 I'll fight as well as him,
 Although they pad his shoulders out
 To make his waist look slim.

I haven't got no buttons on
 A showy coat of red;
 I haven't got no soldier's cap
 To wear upon me head.
 But I can love yer just the same,
 When all be done and said!

XII

IN THE CITY

Oh! City girls are pale-like,
And proud-like, and cold-like,
And nineteen out of twenty
Have never been our way.
I tells them of the tall hills,
The green hills, the old hills,
Where hawthorns are a-blossoming,
And thrushes call all day.

Oh! London is a fine place,
A big place, a rich place,
Where nineteen out of twenty
Of all the girls are fair.
But well I knows a white road,
A long road, a straight road,
That leads me into Bosbury;
I'm wishing I was there!

XIII

I BE THINKIN'

THE hillside green with bracken,
And the red plough land,
The brownish hurrying rivers,
Where the willows stand.
The thickets and the meadows,
And the strong oak trees;
O, tell me traveller, have yer
Seen the like o' these?

The mists along the common,
At the close of day,
They're lovely when the twilight
Makes the vale look grey.
The lanes be long and lonely,
But they all lead home;
I be thinkin' lads are foolish
When they wants to roam!

XIV

SUNDAY EVENING

THE noontide showers have drifted past,
The sunset's on the hill,
The lights be gleaming through the dusk,
Adown by Clincher's Mill.

It's such a pretty evening, maid,
All quiet-like, and blue;
With here and there a darksome cloud
That lets the silver through.

The folk be all in Sunday best,
I see'd 'em passing by;
Then come along the quiet lane,
And walk a bit with I.

THE LEDBURY TRAIN

FROM Wind's Point hill at eventide,
I see the train go by;
The train that goes to Ledbury,
Along the vale of Wye.

It wanders through the clustered hops,
And through the green hedgerows,
It minds me of a fairy thing,
So gliding-like it goes.

And standing there on Wind's Point hill,
Within the sunset glow,
The purple shadows over Wales,
The little train below.

With all the pine trees whispering,
And turning softly blue;
I feel as though I were a child,
With fairy tales come true!

XVI

JILTED

Oh! golden is the gorse-bush,
Beneath an April sky,
The lark is full of singing,
The clouds are white and high;
But my love, my love is faithless,
And she cares no more for I!

Then what's the good of living,
With the bright sun overhead,
When the earth is always ready
And will give a kinder bed,
Where no vows be made or broken,
And no bitter words are said!

CASEND HILL

O CASEND HILL, I be so heavy-hearted,
So lonesome-like since from my love I parted,
That when the bracken on your sides is springing,
And all the mating thrushes start a-singing,
A kind of fear across my mind comes creeping,
I feel as though I'd surely fall a-weeping!

O Casend Hill, the Spring does not forsake you,
At winter's close the sun comes back to wake you;
And year by year the same sweet wind it passes,
To stir the lark that's nesting in your grasses;
But no one comes to ask me how I'm faring,
In all the world there's not a soul that's caring!

THE LEDBURY ROAD

THE road that leads to Ledbury
Oh! it be such a pretty way,
As far as Wales you'll likely see,
Suppose the month be May.

The little birds they sing and sing,
The blackbirds and the thrushes do,
And after rain in early Spring
The grass looks green and new.

I wish that I were walking there,
Along that road so still and wide,
A lad without a thought or care,
My true-love at my side!

THE CALL TO LONDON

Oh! come to London, young lad,
Lots is to be seen!
But he said: "I cannot come, maid,
Till the cuckoos all be dumb, maid,
On the hills of green."

Oh! come to London, brave lad,
Come and leave the plough.
But he said: "The blackthorn's springing,
And a mottled thrush is singing
In the cherry bough."

Oh! come to London, fine lad,
Here's where money flows.
But he said: "There's gold in plenty,
Gold enough and more for twenty,
Where the kingcup grows."

Oh! come to London, strong lad,
I am wanting you.
But he said: "It be a grand sight,
When the stars at midnight
Stretch along the blue."

Oh! come to London, dear lad,
I am fair to see!
But he said: "Along of our way
Trees are thick with white may,
Wonderful they be!"

BREDON

BREDON is a lonesome hill,
It hasn't any brothers;
It stands within the Severn vale,
Apart from all the others.

The Cotswold Hills go hand in hand,
The Malverns touching shoulder;
But Bredon all alone does stand,
More proud than they, and bolder.

Then it's on Bredon I will roam
The livelong summer through;
For I've no brothers, I've no mate,
And I be lonesome too!

OUR DEAD

THE day our dead are laid to rest
We heap the earth upon their breast;
Upon the earth we set a stone,
And then we leave them all alone.

Some folks they weep, and some they pray,
But from the grave they'll turn away.
There's wood to chop, and fires to make,
And food to cook, and bread to bake.

Another takes the empty seat,
For men who live must drink and eat;
And work is waiting to be done,
The work of two, that's now for one.

We sometimes speak of folks that's dead,
Of what they did, and what they said;
We sometimes think of them at night,
But sometimes we forget them quite.

PRIMROSE FLOWERS

I RODE through Eastnor woods to-day,
And all the air did promise May,
Did promise May till every tree
Found voice to make much melody.

And oh, the primrose flowers! they glowed
In thousands all along the road,
Spreading their magic through the grove,
Like countless hoards of treasure-trove.

I said, "Perchance 'tis God who threw
These golden coins from out the blue,
That with such bounty He might buy
The thoughts of one so poor as I!"

TRAMPING

Oh! it's good to be alive, man,
Good to take the road and tramp,
When the morning smells of meadows,
And the lanes are cool and damp.

And the little furry creatures
Think the world is theirs for play,
Sitting still to watch you coming,
Half afraid to run away.

There's just light enough to see by,
Growing stronger as you go;
And the air is sort o' hushed-like,
Breathing very long and slow.

And the mountains near by Monmouth
Seem to melt into the sky;
And the banks along of Ross way
Seem to melt into the Wye.

And there's not a human stirring,
To disturb the field or fen.
Oh! you'll never find your God, man,
If you do not find Him then!

THE BLIND PLOUGHMAN

SET my hands upon the plough,
My feet upon the sod;
Turn my face towards the east,
And praise be to God!

Every year the rains do fall,
The seeds they stir and spring;
Every year the spreading trees
Shelter birds that sing.

From the shelter of your heart,
Brother—drive out sin,
Let the little birds of faith
Come and nest therein.

God has made His sun to shine
On both you and me;
God, who took away my eyes,
That my *soul* might see!

**WHEN THE WIND COMES UP
THE HILL**

Oh! the wind among the trees,
How it stirs their wood to song!
Little whispered melodies,
All the winding road along.

Was there ever such a sound,
Breaking through a noontide still,
As this tune the trees have found,
When the wind comes up the hill!

PEACE

(Sidmouth)

EVENING upon the calm sweet sea,
A little wind asleep,
Dim sails that drift as tranquilly
As dreams in slumber deep.
A seagull on the water's breast
Folds up his wings of white;
As peaceful and as much at rest
As is my heart to-night.

LIME-TREES

LIME-TREES meeting overhead,
Many lovers cold and dead,
Kissed and loved, and kissed again,
In the sunshine and the rain,
Underneath your scented green.

When we two, in Earth's kind breast,
Fall a-sleeping with the rest,
Then to us, who loved our fill,
Sweet to know you whisper still,
Happy leaves—of all that's been!

A LITTLE SONG

A RIPLE and a rush, and a mating thrush,
And, oh! the month must be at May.
A blossom and a tree, and a honey-bee,
And, oh! it's such a perfect day!

A meeting and a smile, and a sunlit mile,
And, oh! the world is very young.
Come winter, storm or cold,
Love never can grow old,
And oh! my little song is sung!

THE SONG OF THE WATCHER

At the early break of day,
When the river mists grow pink,
And the moon begins to sink,
Down along the southern way;
When the gold mimosa tree
Rustles low and pleasantly,
To the little singing bird
That within her heart has stirred;
I, the watcher at the window,
Thank the gods who made dawn lovely,
By creating you for me!

When the stately night steps down,
Silent footed, from the west,
With the moon against her breast
Folded in her cloudy gown;
When the endless, sighing sea
Stretches to eternity,
Yearning for the pale-eyed star,
Long beloved, and yet so far;
I, the watcher at the window,
Thank the gods who made night lovely,
By creating you for me!

BY THE RIVER

THROUGH the rustling river grasses
Warm and sweet the young wind passes,
Blowing shyly soft caresses
To their dewy emerald tresses.

All along the silver sands
Little ripples joining hands,
Dance a quaint fantastic measure,
Making liquid sounds of pleasure.

While away beyond the weir
Calls the cuckoo loud and clear,
Something mystic and remote,
Ringing in his fairy note.

How I wish that I were small,
Swinging on the rushes tall,
Just a humble happy thing,
Born to live a while in Spring!

THE ROAD TO COLLA

THE blossoms of a Judas tree
Deep pink against an azure sea,
A silver moth on thoughtless wing,
A hidden bird that lights to sing,
A little cloud that wanders by,
Across the endless field of sky.

A city in the far away,
Upon the hills beyond the bay,
And over all, the sun divine,
Pouring his stream of burning wine
Like nectar strong with youth and mirth,
Into this goblet of the earth!

PRAYER

If I should pray, my prayer would be
For gratitude unlimited:
For gratitude so vast and deep,
That it would move my soul to weep
Great tears, and all the words I said
To be as organ notes sublime,
Full-throated flowing words of rhyme,
Whose like no mortal eye hath read.

Then would I kneel before the God
Whose matchless genius made the earth;
The Poet-God, who sows the hours
With all the scented hosts of flowers,
Who gives the little winds their birth,
Who doth unloose the sea-song's might
To shake the very stars at night,
And fling the foam-flakes high in mirth.

Whose mind is fragrant as a grove
Of cedar trees in summer rain,
Whose thoughts dead poets gathered up,
And poured within the brimming cup
They offered to the world in vain.
Whose whisper masters caught, and wrote
Into their music note by note,
Immortal, haunting, strain on strain.

Whose image is revealed to all
Great lovers in the loved one's face,
Whose passion mystical and deep
Kindles the holy fires that sleep
Within the heart's most secret place.
Whose breath is incense on the shrine
Of earthly love, burning divine
And changeless, through all time and space!

DAWN

It is the dawn, that wondrous fateful hour
Of strange desires, of thoughts and deeds that stir
Within the womb of possibility.
A wind new-wakened combs the silken sea,
Lifting the foam like some unearthly flower.
The lights still glimmer all along the quay:
And overhead a flight of hurried stars
Seek hiding swiftly, e'er the day shall be.
Ships pass like spectres, little white-sailed ships,
Gliding away towards their destiny.
The earth, expectant, seems to thrill and wait
For some loved being; through the eastern gate
Red clouds come floating. Oh! that I were day,
Resplendent, bountiful, a heaven-born fire,
Filled with the glory of my own desire,
And thou, the trembling earth awaiting me!

TO THE EARTH

Oh! hadst thou kindly arms that could enfold me
While yet I live, sweet Earth, console and hold me
Unto thy bosom, thou, my fruitful Mother.
Oh! hadst thou human lips for soft caresses,
To meet mine own in some pure kiss that blesses,
Whose spell thou knowest, thou dear Earth, none other.

For I am weary of the city's sorrow,
Captive and weary, longing for a morrow
That shall release me from these walls, my prison;
My eyes are sickened with the surging faces,
And fain would gaze across thy sunlit spaces,
Seeking the happy lark but newly risen.

My ears are deafened by the great pulse beating
Along the streets, monotonous, repeating
Its throbs of toil, futile yet never ending.
Would I could hear cool water running seaward,
Or sigh of wind at daybreak sweeping leeward,
Through purple pines whose happy boughs are bending.

O Earth, dear Mother, as my spirit passes,
Make thou sweet fetters of thy flowers and grasses,
To bind it surely, lest it wander lonely
In some far sphere where never wild bird singeth,
Where never leaf at breath of Summer springeth,
For thou indeed art Heaven, O Earth, thou only!

DAWN AMONG THE OLIVE GROVES

ALONG the hills the olives grow,
And almonds bloom in early Spring,
And many are the streams that flow,
And countless are the birds that sing;
The air is cool with distant snow,
And musical with bells that ring.

Beneath my feet the road winds down
In deepening shadow, far away
To where a little peaceful town
Lies sleeping by the quiet bay;
A distant sail, now white, now brown,
Shows phantomlike against the day.

While gradually the Eastern skies
Grow flushed and bright, the late stars flee,
And eager clouds appear, and rise
Above the waves expectantly;
Till lo! before my wondering eyes,
The great sun steps from out the sea!

SILENT PLACES

SWEET are the silent places of the earth,
Green heart of woods through which no wind doth pass,
Long sloping meadows sown with silken grass,
Old gardens thick with scents of death, and birth.

Pale dome of morning, ere the first bird sings,
Stretching above the silent palisade,
Vague and unearthly, wrought of light and shade.
O'er which the dusk still hangs with starlit wings.

The hush of mid-day in the languid south,
Where marble borders rim the limpid pools,
In whose blue depths the ardent noontide cools
Her burning limbs, and bathes her sun-kissed mouth.

And above all things, silent and at rest,
I mind me of a little quiet bay,
Set like a sapphire in the golden day,
With never ship to scourge its tranquil breast.

Oh! happy waters of that quiet bay,
So near my heart—and yet so far away!

ONE EVENING NEAR NICE

PALE depth of sky, serene and wonderful,
Within whose fold the lamps of early stars
Shine far away and faintly luminous;
Whose pensive tones merge from the afterglow
Into this colour indescribable;
This blending of the sea and earth and clouds,
Soft and yet poignant, passionate yet calm.
I know not what the spirit in me feels,
When it beholds thee through my human eyes:
Nor what strange craving for forgotten things
Has stirred my soul to this disquietude!

THOUGHTS AT AJACCIO

KIND Earth, upon whose mother breast
The fruitful trees in time of spring,
Put forth their endless blossoming
From North to South, from East to West,
Whose sweet deep-furrowed soil is blest
With striving seeds and budding flowers,
And all the potent toil of hours,
From sunrise until even's rest—

Stretch forth thy leafy arms at dawn,
And touch me, compass me around,
Fill me with scent of upturned ground,
Soft perfume from thy bosom drawn.
The gifts I bring thou wilt not scorn,
Poor though they must be while I live,
For in my hour of death I give
My heart, that one rose may be born!

THREE CHILD-SONGS

THE THRUSH'S SONG

"Oh! bother," sang the thrush,
"I'm in an awful rush,
For I've got to get ready for the Spring.
With feathers from my breast,
I'll line a cosy nest,
A terribly difficult thing!

"Before it is too late,
I'll have to find a mate,
And she must be dainty and small,
Obedient and sweet,
In jacket brown and neat,
And ready to come when I call.

"The robins are all wed
(Or so I've heard it said),
And the wind from the South it does blow.
The ice has felt the sun,
And winter must be done,
For a primrose is growing in the snow!"

WILLOW WAND

WILLOW wand, willow wand,
Change this little slender frond
To a Princess tall and fair,
With a mass of golden hair,
Of golden hair.

Willow wand, willow wand,
Change this shallow meadow pond
To a deep and crystal pool,
Where she bathes at even cool,
At even cool.

Wand cut from the willow tree,
Build a fairy home for me,
Build a home of light and shade,
Sun and shadow deftly made,
Most deftly made.

There where nothing comes to part,
With the ladye of my heart
I will dwell for ever—ever;
We will quarrel never—never,
Oh! never—*never!*

III

A WINTER SONG

"SWIFT away, swift away,"
Sang the fickle swallow,
Oh! the fickle swallow,
Flying to the sun!
"Come, my little brothers,
Bring your feathered mothers,
Come away, come away,
Each and every one."

"Only stay, only stay,"
Sang the lonely poet,
Oh! the lonely poet,
All among the snow!
Robin Redbreast heard, and said,
"I am here though summer's dead;
Cheer up, cheer up,
I will never go!"

AUTUMN IN SUSSEX

A GLORY is this autumn day,
That stretches far across the land,
To where the sea along the sand
Sings kindly, with a gentle lay
Upon its lips. The gleam and sway
Of burning leaves ignites the air
To strange soft fire; serene and bare
The wide fields lie on either hand.

More lovely than the timid Spring
Who tells her beads of humble flowers,
More perfect than the sun-warmed hours
Of summer, gay with birds that sing,
Is this fulfilment earth doth bring
To offer up to God; this deep
Vast prayer before the winter sleep,
This final tribute to His powers!

**SI PARVA LICET COMPONERE
MAGNIS**

IN the bowl of a shell
Sings the wonderful song of the sea,
All the ebb and the swell,
In the bowl of a shell.

In the heart of a pool
Drifts the fathomless smile of the sky,
All the clouds white and cool,
In the heart of a pool.

In the beam of a star
Shines the light of a far away world,
Out of space, dim and far,
In the beam of a star.

In the cup of a rose
Dwells the languor and passion of June,
Eager life, warm repose,
In the cup of a rose.

In the throat of a bird
Lives the message of God to His earth,
Lo! the mystical word
In the throat of a bird!

TO ITALY

O ITALY of chiming bells,
Of pilgrim shrines and holy wells,
Of incense mist and secret prayers,
Profound and sweet as scented airs
Blown from a field of lily flowers!

O Italy of pagan vine,
That thrills with sap of sun-born wine,
Drenching the Christian soul with red
Warm liquid of a faith long dead,
Wafting it back to sensuous hours.

No mortal woman ever held
Such sweet inconstancies, or welled
With such hot springs of turbid fire;
No being throbbled with such desire,
Thy very air is ecstasy!

O pagan goddess, from whose lips
The gentle Christian worship slips,
I fear thee, knowing what thou art
Yet I adore thee; take my heart
I am thy lover, Italy!

SUNDAY IN LIGURIA

THIS is the Sabbath day, the day of rest,
That breathes so gently in this quiet place,
With such insistent peace that for a space
The silver olives on the mountain's crest
Forget to whisper, folded in the grace
Of lengthening shadows gathered from the noon.
The clouds are golden, yet a placid moon
Slips out among them, calm and pale of face.

O soul of mine, breathe in this holy thing
That steeps the hills down to the dreaming sea;
This endless prayer, this silent ecstasy,
That like a great white bird on sunlit wing
Hovers above the world; 'tis given thee
To merge thyself in this harmonious whole,
And be content, seeking no higher goal;
The earth is God's, to-day eternity!

**GEORGETOWN,
U.S.A.**

If you would hear the thrushes sing,
Then go to Georgetown in the spring,
And wander slowly at your ease
Along the avenues of trees.

The sunshine and the shadows meet
To weave a web across the street,
And in and out its magic strands
Play little children, joining hands.

The sky is washed with showers and dew,
Until it looks the palest blue,
And in the gardens down below
You almost *see* the grasses grow.

There's something very very old
About the place, so we are told,
And yet it's marvellously gay
And young, when seen on such a day!

The silent corners all around
Break up in waves of pleasant sound,
The mansions of Colonial days
Allow the sun to gild their greys.

The paving-stones, with earth between,
Are fringed with shoots of emerald green,
And oh! the song the thrushes sing
In Georgetown, when the year's at spring!

**ON THE POTOMAC RIVER,
U.S.A.**

At close of June's most burning day,
We took a ship and sailed away:
In mid-Potomac stream sailed we,
To Old Point Comfort by the sea.

The heavy hanging air of dusk
Was thick with scent of fainting musk,
And through the tired willow trees
Stirred never sound or breath of breeze.

So still it was, that from afar
We seemed to hear a falling star,
And every drop we heard, that dript
From off the paddle as it dipped.

The fireflies lit their yellow lamps,
And danced along the marshy damp;
They skimmed and shot, and skimmed again,
While beetles droned a dance-refrain.

The old ship pushed the mists apart,
And crawled along with throbbing heart,
Pausing from time to time for breath
Beside some jetty, still as death.

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The moon rose up all reddish gold,
And lit the swirling misty fold
Of fog along the river bank,
Where grew the creepers dark and rank.

Sometimes the lonely "look-out" cried
"All's well": the water swished and sighed
An endless and protesting song,
As stealthily we crept along.

Until at last the wind blew free,
Where the Potomac met the sea;
And not so very far away
The shores of Old Point Comfort lay.

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THE LOST WORD

HIGH above a waveless sea,
On the hills of long ago,
There you lived awhile with me,
And we loved—I know.

For your hair I made a crown,
Twined it with these hands of mine,
Sun-warmed leaves and tendrils brown,
From the happy vine.

You were like some woodland thing,
Fear and rapture in your eyes,
Tender as a breath of Spring
Blown from April skies.

Then I called you, and you heard,
To your lover's arms you came:
Ah! what was that magic word,
Your forgotten name!

COMPARISONS

A FIELD of scented clover
That honey-bees hang over,
A hazel-wood in Spring,
Where thrush and robin sing.
A stream that seaward flows,
Rejoicing as it goes,
A little tower where dwells
The sound of happy bells.
A morning fresh and blue,
Flower-decked, and wet with dew,
All these my love she minds me of—
And other sweet things too.

A FRAGMENT

THE clustering grapes of purple vine
Are crushed to make the crimson wine.

The poppies in the grasses deep
Are crushed to brew the draught of sleep.

The roses, when their glories bloom
Are crushed to yield their soul's perfume.

And hearts, perchance of these the least,
Are crushed for nectar at Love's feast!

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Repeating titles have been removed from the front of the book.

Punctuation has been normalized, including standardization of hyphenation and punctuation between poem titles within the book and those in the Table of Contents.

The division "[Rustic Courting](#)" as placed before the first poem has been added to the [Table of Contents](#).

The contributor R. B. Cunninghame-Graham, as presented on the book's original title page, is otherwise presented as R. B. Cunninghame Graham.

In the poem "[The Meeting-Place](#)", the line "My love would come to me!" has been retained non-indented as in the original, however, there is a possibility this is a printer's error, as that line does not follow the pattern of indentation of the rest of the poem.

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