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A LOVER'S DIARY

By Gilbert Parker

Volume 2.

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DREAMS

And so life passed. I lived from year to year
With shadows, the strong warders of desire;
I learned through them to seek the golden fire
That hides itself in Song's bright hemisphere.

Through them I grew full of imaginings,
I made strange pictures, conjured images
From my deep longings; wrote the passages

Of life inwrought with half-glad wonderings.

For who can know a majesty of peace,
That wanders, ever waiting for a voice
To say to him, "Behold, at last surcease

Of thy unrest has come, therefore, rejoice"?
Here set I down some dreams that come again,
Almost forgotten in my higher gain.

THE BRIDE

A ship at sea; a port to anchor in;
Not far a starry light upon the shore.
The sheeted lightning, like a golden door,
Swings to and fro to let earth-angels in.

Most bravely has she sailed o'er every sea,
Withstood the storm-rack, spurned the sullen reef;
Cherished her strength; and held her guerdon fief
To him who saith, "My ship comes back to me!

Behold, I sent her forth a stately thing,
To be my messenger to farthest lands,
To Fortunate Isles, and where the silver sands

Girdle a summer sea; that she might bring
My bride, who wist not that I loved her so—
This is no bitter day for me, I trow!"

THE WRAITH

A ship in port; well-crossed the harbour-bar;
The hawser swung, the grinding helm at rest;
Hands clasping hands, and eyes with eager zest
Seeking the loved, returning from afar.

And he, the master, holding little reck
Of all, save but the idol of his soul,
Seeks not his loving ardour to control.
Mark how he proudly treads the whitened deck!

"My bride, my bride, my lone soul's best beloved,
Come forth, come forth! Where art thou, Isobel?—
Pallid, and wan! Lord, hath it thus befell

This is but dust; where has the spirit roved?
O death-cold bride! for this, then, have I strove?
O phantom ship, O loveless wraith of Love!"

SURRENDER

A day of sunshine in a land of snow,
And a soft-curtained room, where ruddy flakes
Of fame fall free, in liquid light that slakes
The soft desire of one cold, paleface: lo,

Close-pressed sweet lips, and eyes of violet,
That are filled up as with a sudden fear—
A storm's prelude upon the expectant mere.
Yet deep behind what never they forget,

Who ever see in life's chance or mischance.
And he who saw, what could he do but say,
"Fold up the tents; the camp is struck; away!

Vain victor who rides not in rest his lance!"
Beside the hearthstone where the flame-flakes fell,
There lay the cold keys of the citadel.

THE CITADEL

A night wind-swept and bound about with blee
Of Erebus; all light and cheer within;
White restless hands that falter, then begin
To weave a music-voiced fantasy.

And life, and death, and love, and weariness,
And unrequital, thrid the maze of sound;
And one voice saith, "Behold, the lost is found!"
And saith not any more for joyfulness.

Out of the night there comes a wanderer,
Who waits upon the threshold, and is still;
And listens, and bows down his head, until

His grief-drawn breath startles the heart of her.
The victor vanquished, at her feet he fell,
A prisoner in his conquered citadel.

MALFEASANCE

Two of one name; they standing where the sun
Makes shadows in the orchard-bloom of spring;
She holding in her palm a jewelled ring,
He speaking on what evil it had done.

"Raise thy pale face and wondrous eyes to mine;
Let not thy poor lips quiver in such pain;
Too young and blindly thou hast drunk the wine

Crushed from the lees of love. Be strong again.

Trail back thy golden hair from thy broad brow,
And raise thy lily neck like some tall tower,
That reck's not any strife nor any hour,

So it but holds its height, heeding not how.
The noblest find their way o'er paths of ire
To the clear summit of God's full desire."

ANNUNCIATION

I think in that far time when Gabriel came
And gave short speech to Mary sweet and wise,
That when the faint fear faded from her eyes,
And they were filled up with a sudden flame

Of joy bewildering and wonderment;
With reverence the angel in her palm
Laid one white lily, dewy with the balm
Of the Lord's garden; saying: "This is sent

For thine espousal, thou the undefiled;
And it shall bloom till all be consummate."
Lo, then he passed. She, musing where she sate,

Felt all her being moved in manner wondrous mild;
Then, laying 'gainst her bosom the white flower,
She bowed her head, and said, "It is God's dower."

VANISHED DREAMS

Dreams, only dreams. They sprang from loneliness
Of outer life; from innermost desire
To reach the soul that now in golden fire
Of cherished song I pray for and caress.

I wandered through the world with longing gaze,
To find her who was my hope's parallel,
That to her I might all my gospel tell
Of changeless love, and bid her make appraise.

I knew that some day I should look within
The ever-deepening distance of her eyes;
For, in my dreams, from veiled Seraphim

Came one, as if in answer to my cries:
And passing near me, pointed down the road
That led me at the last to thy abode.

INTO THY LAND

Into thy land of sunlight I have come,
And live within thy presence, as a ray
Of light lives in the brightness of the day;
And find in thee my heaven and my home.

Yet what am I that thou shouldst ope the gate
Of thy most sweet completeness; and should spend
Rich values of thy life on me thy friend,
For which I have no worthy duplicate!

Nay, lady, I no riches have to give;
I have no name of honour, or the pride
Of place, to priv'lege me to sit beside

Thee in thy kingdom, where thy graces live.
Wilt thou not one day whisper, "You have climbed
Beyond your merits; pray you, fall behind"?

Wish thy friend joy of his journey, but pray in secret
that he have no joy, for then may he return quickly to thee.
—Egyptian Proverb.

DIVIDED

Divided by no act of thine or mine,
Forever parted by a fatal deed,
A fatal feud. Alas! when fathers bleed,
The children shall fulfil the wild design.

A Montague hath killed a Capulet,
A Capulet hath slain a Montague,—
Twin graves, twin sorrows, and oh, mad to-do
Of vengeance! oh, dread entail of regret!

There lie they in their dark, self-chosen graves,
And from them cries Hate's everlasting ghost,—
"Blood hath been shed, and Love and ye are slaves,

Time wrecks, and freedom drifts upon life's coast."
Yet not for us the relish of that doom
Which found a throne upon a Juliet's tomb.

WE MUST LIVE ON

We must live on; a deeper tragedy:
To see, to touch, to know, and to desire;
To feel in every vein the glorious fire
Of Eden, and to cry, "Oh, to be free!"

To cry, "Oh, wipe the gloomy stain away,
Thou who first raised the sword, Who gave the hilt
Into the hand of man. This blood they spilt—
Our fathers—oh, blot out the bitter day!

Erase the hour from out Thy calendar,
Turn back the hands upon the clock of Time,
Oh, Artificer of destroying War—

Their righteous hate who bore us in our crime!"
"Upon the children!"—'Tis the cold reply
Of Him who makes to those who must not die.

YET LIFE IS SWEET

Yet life is sweet. Thy soul hath breathed along,
Thine eyes have cast their glory on the earth,
Thy foot hath touched it, and thine hour of birth
Didst give a new pulse to the veins of song.

Better to stand amid the toppling towers
Of every valiant hope; a Samson's dream,
Than the deep indolence of Lethe's stream,
The loneliness of slow submerging hours.

Better, oh, better thus to see the wreck,
And to have rocked to motion of the spheres;
Better, oh, better to have trod the deck

Of hope, and sailed the unmanageable years—
Ay, better to have paid the price, and known,
Than never felt this tyrannous Alone!

LOST FOOTSTEPS

Upon the disc of Love's bright planet fell
A darkness yestereve, and from your lips
I heard cold words; then came a swift eclipse
Of joy at meeting on hope's it-is-well.

And if I spoke with sadness and with fear;
If from your gentle coldness I drew back,
And felt that I had lost the flowery track
That led to peace in Love's sweet atmosphere:

It was because a woful dread possessed.
My aching heart—the dread some evil star
Had crossed the warm affection in your breast,

Had bade me stand apart from where you are.
The world seemed breaking on my life; I heard
The crash of sorrows in that chiding word.

THE CLOSED DOOR

It is not so, and so for evermore,
That thou and I must live our lives apart;
I with a patient smother at my heart,
And thy hand resting on a closed door?

What couldst thou ever ask me that I should
Not bend me to achieve thy high behest?
What cannot men achieve with lance in rest
Who carry noble valour in their blood?

And some nobility of high emprise,
Lady, couldst thou make possible in me;
If living 'neath the pureness of thy eyes,

I found the key to inner majesty;
And reaching outward, heart-strong, from thy hand,
Set here and there a beacon in the land.

THE CHALICE

Not by my power alone, but thou and I
Together thinking, working, loving on
Achievement-wards, as all brave souls have gone,
Perchance should find new star-drifts in the sky

That curves above humanity, and set
Some new interpretation on life's page;
Should serve the strivings of a widening age,
And fashion wisdom from the social fret.

Deep did Time's lances go; thou pluck'st them forth,
And on my sullen woundings laid the balm
Of thy life's sweetness. Oh, let my love be worth

The keeping. My head beneath thy palm,
Once more I lift Love's chalice to thine eyes:
Not till thou blessest me will I arise.

MIO DESTINO

Here, making count, at every step I see
Something in her, like to a hidden thought
Within my life, that long time I had sought,
But never found till her soul spoke to me.

And if she said a thousand times, "I did
Not call thee, thou cam'st seeking; not my voice
Was it thou heard'st; thy love was not my choice!"
I should straightway reply, "That of thee hid,

Even from thyself, lest it should startle thee,
Hath called me, made me slave and king in one;
And when the mists of Time shall rise, and we

Stand forth, it shall be said, Since Time begun
Ye two were called as one from that high hill,
Where the creating Master hath His will."

I HAVE BEHELD

I have beheld a multitude stand still
In such deep silence that a sudden pain
Struck through the heart in sharing the tense strain,
And all the world seemed bounded by one will.

But when precipitated on the sea
Of human feeling was the incident
That caught their wonder; then the skies were rent
With quivering sound, with passion's liberty.

So have I stood before this parting day,
With chilly fingers pressed upon my breast,
That my heart burst not fleshen bands away,

And my sharp cry break through my lady's rest.
I have shut burning eyelids on the sight
Of this dread time that scorches my sad night.

TOO SOON AWAY

Have I then found thee but to lose thee, friend?
But touched thee ere thou vanished from my gaze?
And when my soul is struggling from the maze
Of many conflicts, must our converse end?

Across the empty space that now shall spread
Between us, shall I never go to thee?

Or thou, beloved, never come to me,
Save but to whisper prayers above the dead?

Ah, cruel thought! Shall not Hope's convoy bear
To thee the reinforcements of my love?
Shall I not on thy white hand drop a tear

Of crowned joy, one day, where thou dost move
In thy place regally; even as now
I place my farewell token on thy brow?

THE TREASURE

And now when from the shore goes out the ship
Wherein is set the treasure that I hold
Closer than miser all his hidden gold,
Dearer than wine Zeus carried to his lip;

My aching heart cries from its pent-up pain,—
"O Love, O Life, O more than life to me,
How can I live without the surety
Of thy sweet presence till we meet again!"

So like a wounded deer I came to thee,
The arrow of mischance piercing my side;
And through thy sorrow-healing ministry

I rose with strength, like giants in their pride.
But now—but now—how shall I stand alone,
Knowing the light, the hope of me is gone?

DAHIN

O brow, so fronted with a stately calm,
O full completeness of true womanhood,
O counsel, pleader for all highest good,
Thou hast upon my sorrow poured thy balm!

Poor soldier he who did not raise his sword,
And, touching with his lips the hilt-cross, swear
In war or peace the livery to wear
Of one that blessed him with her queenly word.

Most base crusader, who at night and morn
Crying Dahin, thought not of her again
From whose sweet power was his knighthood born,

For whom he quells the valiant Saracen.
Shall I not, then, in the tumultuous place
Of my life's warfare ever seek thy face?

LOVE'S USURY

Here count I over all the gentle deeds
Which thou hast done; here summon I thy words,
Sweeter to me than sweetest song of birds;
That came like grace immortal to my needs.

Love's usury has reckoned such a sum
Of my indebtedness, that I can make
No lien large enough to overtake
Its value—and before it I am dumb!

Yet, O my gracious, most kind creditor,
I would not owe to thee one item less
We cannot give the sun requital for

Its liberal light; our office is to bless.
If blessings could be compassed by my prayer,
High heaven should set star-gems in thy hair.

THE DECREE

Last night I saw the warm white Southern moon
Sail upward through a smoky amber sea;
Orion stood in silver majesty
Where the gold-girdled sun takes rest at noon.

I slept; I dreamed. Against a sunset sky
I saw thee stand all garmented in white;
With hand stretched to me, and there in thy sight
I went to meet thee; but I heard thee cry:

"We stand apart as sun from shining sun;
Thou hast thy place; there rolleth far and near
A sea between; until life's all be done

Thou canst not come, nor I go to thee, dear."
Methought I bowed my head to thy decree,
And donned the mantle of my misery.

'TIS MORNING NOW

'Tis morning now, and dreams and fears are gone,
And sleep has calmed the fever in my veins,
And I am strong to drink the cup that drains
The last drop through my lips, and make no moan.

Strength I have borrowed from the outward show
Of spiritual puissance thou dost wear.

Shall I not thy high domination share
Over the shock of feeling? Shall I grow

More fearful than the soldier, when between
The smoke of hostile cannon lies his way;
To carry far the colours of his queen,

While her bright eyes behold him in the fray?
Here do I smile between the warring hosts
Of sad farewells; and reek not what it costs.

SACRIFICE

And O most noble, and yet once again
Most noble spirit, if I ever did
Aught that thy goodness frowns on, be it hid
Forever, and deep-buried. Let the rain

Of coming springs fall on the quiet grave.
Perchance some violets will grow to tell
That I, when uttering this last farewell,
Built up a sacrificial architrave;

That I, who worship thee, have love so great,
To live in the horizon thou may'st set;
To stand but in the shadow of the gate,

Faithful, when coward promptings cry, "Forget."
Ah, lady, when I gave my heart to thee,
It passed into thy lifelong regency.

SHINE ON

Shine on, O sun! Sing on, O birds of song!
And in her light my heart fashions a tune
Not wholly sad, most like a tender rune
Sung by some knight in days gone overlong,

When he with minstrel eyes in Syrian grove
Looked out towards his England, and then drew
From a sweet instrument a sound that grew
From twilight unto morning of his love.

Go, then, beloved, bearing as you go
These songs that have more sunlight far than cloud;
More summer flowers than dead leaves 'neath the snow;

That tell of hopes from which you raised the shroud.
My lady, bright benignant star, shine on—

I lift to thee my low Trisagion!

HE that hath pleasant dreams is more fortunate
than one who hath a cup-bearer.
—Egyptian Proverb.

SO, THOU ART GONE

So, thou art gone; and I am left to wear
Thy memory as a golden amulet
Upon my breast, to sing a chansonnette
Of winter tones, when summer time is here.

And yet, my heart arises from the dark,
Where it fell back in silence when you went
To seaward, and a sprite malevolent
Sat laughing in the white sails of thy barque.

'Twas not moth-wings dashing against the flame,
Burning in love's areanum; 'twas a cry
Struck from soul-crossing chords, that, separate, frame

Life's holy calm, or wasting agony.
But now between the warring strings there grows
A space of peace, as 'tween truce-honoured foes.

THE THOUSAND THINGS

Here one by one come back the thousand things
Which made divinely sweet our intercourse;
Love summons them here straightway to divorce
The heart from melancholy wanderings.

"Here laid she her white hand upon my arm;
To this place came she with slow-gliding grace;
Here smiled she up serenely in my face;
And these sweet notes she sang me for a charm."

I treasure up her words, and say them o'er
With close-shut eyes; with her again I float
Upon the Loire; I see the gems she wore,

The ruby shining at her queenly throat;
I climb with her again the Pyrenees,
And hear her laughter ringing through the trees.

THE SEA

I in my childhood never saw the sea
Save in my dreams. There it was vast and lone,
Splendid in power, breaking against the stone
Walls of the world in thunder symphony.

From it arose mists growing into mists
Making a cool white curtain for the sun,
And melting mornward when the day was done,
A moving sphere where spirits kept their trysts.

A ceaseless swinging with the swinging earth,
A never-tiring ebbing to and fro,
Trenching eternal fastnesses; a girth

Round mountains in their everlasting snow.
It was a vast emotion, fibre-drawn
From all the elements since the first dawn.

THE CHART

Then came in further years the virgin sight
Of the live sea; the sea that marches down,
With sunny phalanxes and flags of foam,
To match its puissance with earth's awful might.

Far off the purple mist drew into mist,
As thought melts into endless thought, and round
The rim of the sheer world was heard a sound,
Floating through palpitating amethyst.

And through the varying waste of elements
There passed a sail, which caught the opposing wind,
Triumphant, as an army in its tents

Beholds the foe it, conquering, left behind.
"And Life," I said,— "Life is but like the sea;
And what shall guide us to our destiny?"

REVEALING

The prescience of dreams struck walls away
From mortal fact, and mortal fact revealed,
With myriad voices, potencies concealed
In the dim birth-place of a coming day.

Even as a blind man's fingers wander o'er
His harpstrings, led by sound to dreams of sound,

Till in his soul an eloquence profound
Rises above the petulance and roar

Of the great globe: as in a rush of song
From feathered throats, one, in a mighty wood,
'Mid sweet interpositions moves along

The avenues of some predestined good;
So I, dream-nurtured, standing by the sea,
Made levy on the wonders that should be.

OVERCOMING

And God is good, I said, and Art is good,
And labour hath its rich reward of sleep;
And recompense will come for all who keep
Dishonour's ill contagion from the blood.

And over us there curves the infinite
Blue heaven as a shield, and at the end
We shall find One who loveth to befriend
E'en those who faint for shame within His sight.

And down the awful passes of the sky
There comes the voice that circumvents the gale;
That makes the avalanche to pass us by,

And saith, "I overcome" to man's "I fail."
"And peradventure now," said I, "the zest
Of all existence waits on His behest."

WHITHER NOW

But man's deliverances intervene
Between the soul's swift speech and God's high will;
That saith to tempests of the thought, "Be still!"
And in life's lazaretto maketh clean

The leprous sense. Ah, who can find his way
Among the many altars? Who can call
Out perfect peace from any ritual,
Or shelter find in systems of a day?

As one sees on some ancient urn, upthrown
From out a tomb, records that none may read
With like interpretation, and the stone

Retains its graven fealty to the dead:
So, on the great palimpsest men have writ
Such lines o'ercrossed that none interprets it.

ARARAT

What marvel that the soul of youth should cry,
"Man builds his temples 'tween me and the face
Of Him whom I would seek; I cannot trace
His purpose in their shadow, nor descry

The wisdom absolute?" What marvel that,
With yearning impotent, ay, impotent
Beyond all measure! his full faith was spent,
And for his soul there rose no Ararat?

Yet out upon the sun-drawn sensate sea
Of elemental pain, there came a word
As if from Him who travelled Galilee,

As fair as any Zion ever heard.
The voice of Love spoke; Love, that writes its name
On Life and Death-and then my lady came.

AS LIGHT LEAPS UP

As light leaps up from star to star, so mounts
Faith from one soul unto another; so
The lower to the higher; till the flow
Of knowledge rises from creation's founts;

Until from human love we come to know
The august presence of the Love Divine;
And feel the light unutterable shine
Upon half-lights that we were wont to show,

Absorbing them. 'Tis Love that beckons us
From low desires, from restlessness and sin,
To heights that else we had not reached; and thus

We find the Heaven we dared not hope to win.
How clearer seem designs immortal when
Our lives are fed on Love's fine regimen

THE DARKENED WAY

"It is no matter;"—thus the noble Dane,
About his heart more ill than one could tell;
Sad augury, that like a funeral bell
Against his soul struck solemn notes of pain.

So 'gainst the deadly smother he could press
With calm his lofty manhood; interpose

Purpose divine, and at the last disclose
For life's great shift a regnant readiness.

To-day I bought some matches in the street
From one whose eyes had long since lost their sight.
Trembling with palsy was he to his feet.

"Father," I said, "how fare you in the night?"
"In body ill, but 'tis no matter, friend,
Strong is my soul to keep me to the end."

DISTRUST not a woman nor a king—it availeth nothing.
—Egyptian Proverb.

WHEN thou journeyest into the shadows, take not sweetmeats
with thee, but a seed of corn and a bottle of tears and wine;
that thou mayst have a garden in the land whither thou goest.
—Egyptian Proverb.

REUNITED

Once more, once more! That golden eventide!
Golden within, without all cold and grey,
Slowly you came forth from the troubled day,
Singing my heart—you glided to my side;

You glided in; the same grave, quiet face,
The same deep look, the never-ending light
In your proud eyes, eyes shining through the night,
That night of absence—distance—from your place.

Calm words, slow touch of hand, but, oh, the cry,
The long, long cry of passion and of joy
Within my heart; the star-burst in the sky—

The world—our world—which time may not destroy!
Your world and mine, unutterably sweet:
Dearest, once more, the old song at thy feet.

SONG WAS GONE FROM ME

Dearest, once more! This I could tell and tell
Till life turned drowsy with the ceaseless note;
Dearest, once more! The words throb in my throat,
My heart beats to them like a muffled bell.

Change—Time and Change! O Change and Time, you come
Not knocking at my door, knowing me gone;
Here have I dwelt within my heart alone,
Watching and waiting, while my muse was dumb

Song was gone from me—sweet, I could not sing,
Save as men sing upon the lonely hills;
Under my hand the old chord ceased to ring,

Hushed by the grinding of the high gods' mills.
Dearest, once more. Those mad mills had their way—
Now is mine hour. To every man his day.

GOOD WAS THE FIGHT

How have I toiled, how have I set my face
Fair to the swords! No man could say I quailed;
Ne'er did I falter; I dare not to have failed,
I dare not to have dropped from out the race.

Good was the fight—good, till a piteous dream
Crept from some direful covert of despair;
Showed me your look, that look so true and fair,
Distant and bleak; for me no more to gleam.

Then was I driven back upon my soul,
Then came dark moments; lady, then I drew
Forth from its place the round unfathomed bowl

Of sorrow, and from it I quaffed to you;
Speaking as men speak who have lost
Their hearts' last prize—and dare not count the cost.

UNCHANGED

But you are here unchanged. You say not so
In words, but when you placed your hands in mine;
But when I saw the same old glory shine
Within your eyes, I read it; and I know.

And when those hands ran up along my arm,
And rested on my shoulder for a space,
A sacred inquisition in your face,
To read my heart, how could I doubt that charm,

That truth ineffable!—I set my soul
In hazard to a farthing, that you kept
The faith, with pride unspeakable, the whole

Course of those years in which communion slept.

Your soul flamed in your look; you read; I knew
How little worth was I, how heavenly you.

ABSOLVO TE

I read your truth. You read—What did you read?
Did you read all, and, reading all, forgive?
How I—O little dwarf of conscience sieve
My soul; bare all before her bare indeed!

And, looking on the remnant and the waste,
Can you absolve me,—me, the doubter, one
Who challenged what God spent His genius on,
His genius and His pride; so fair, so chaste?

I am ashamed. . . . And when I told my dreams,
Shaken and humble,—"Dear, there was no cause,"
Your words; proud, sorrowful, as it beseems

Such as thou art. There never was a cause
Why you should honour me. Ashamed am I.
And you forgive me, bless me, for reply.

BENEDICTUS

You bless me, then you turn away your head—
"Never again, dear. I have blessed you so,
My lips upon your lips; between must flow
The river—Oh the river!" Thus you said.

The river—Oh the river, and the sun;
Stream that we may not cross, sun that is joy:
Flow as thou must; shine on in full employ—
Shine through her eyes thou; let the river run.

O lady, to your liegeman speak. You say:
"Dream no more dreams; yourself be as am I"
Your hands clasped to your face, so shutting out the day.

An instant, then to me, your low good-bye—
Good-night, good-bye; and then the social reign,
The lights, the songs, the flowers—and the pain.

THE MESSAGE

"Oh, hush!" you said; "oh, hush!" The twilight hung
Between us and the world; but in your face,
Flooding with warm inner light, the sovereign grace
Of one who rests the brooding trees among—

Of one who steps down from a lofty throne,
Seeking that peace the sceptre cannot call;
And leaving courtier, page, and seneschal,
Goes down the lane of sycamores alone;

And, going, listens to the notes that swell
From golden throats—stories of ardent days,
And lovers in fair vales; and homing bell:

And the sweet theme unbearable, she prays
The song-bird cease! So, on the tale I dare,
Your "hush!" your wistful "hush!" broke like prayer.

UNAVAILING

"Never," you said, "never this side the grave,
And what shall come hereafter, who may know?
Whether we e'en shall guess the way we go,
Passing beneath Death's mystic architrave

Silence or song, dumb sleep or cheerful hours?"
O lady, you have questioned, answer too.
You—you to die—silence and gloom for you:
Dead song, dead lights, dead graces, and dead flowers?

It is not so: the foolish trivial end,
The inconsequent paltry Nothing—gone—gone all;
The genius of the ageless Something spend

Itself within this little earthly wall:
The commonplace conception, that we reap
Reward of drudge and ploughman—idle sleep!

YOU SHALL LIVE ON

You shall live on triumphant, you shall take
Your place among the peerless, fearless ones;
And those who loved you here shall tell their sons
To honour every woman for your sake.

And those your Peers shall say, "Others are pure,
Others are noble, others too have vowed,

And for a vow have suffered; but she bowed
Her own soul and another's to endure.

She smote the being more to her than all,—
Her own soul and the world,—a truth to hold,
Faith with the dead; and hung a heavy pall

'Tween her and love and life. The world is old,
It hath sent here none queenlier. Of the few,
The royal few is she, martyred and true."

"VEX NOT THIS GHOST"

Upon the rack of this tough world I hear,
As when Cordelia's glories all dissever—
"Never—never—never—never—never,—"
That wild moan of the dispossessed Lear.

O world, vex not this ghost, yea, let it pass,
The Spirit of these songs. The fool hath mocked,
The fool our woe upon us hath unlocked
From where the soul holds to our lips the glass,

To see what breath of life. O fool, poor fool,
Well, we have laughed together, you and I.
O fond insulter, in the healing pool

Of your deep poignant raillery I lie.
Let us be grand again, my fool. The throne
Is gone; but see, the coronation stone!

THE MEMORY

Know you where I, my royal fool, was crowned?
A rock within the great Egean? Where
A strong flood hurrieth on Finistere?
Where at the Pole our valiant men were drowned?

Where the soft creamy wash of Indian seas
Spreads palmward? Where the sunset glides to dawn,
No night between? Where all the tides are drawn
To greet their Sun and bathe their Idol's knees?

Where was I crowned? Dear fool, upon a stone
That standeth where Earth's arches make but one,
Where all the banners of her soul were flown,

And trumpeted the legions of the sun.
The stone is left: 'tis here against the door
Of throne and kingdom. . . . Pray you, mock no more.

THE PASSING

A time will come when we again shall rail—
Not yet, not yet. The flood comes on apace,
That deep dividing river, and her face
Grows dimmer as it widens—pale, so pale.

Have we not railed and laughed these many days,
Mummers before the lights? Dear fool, your hand
Upon your lips—Oh let us once be grand,
Grand as we were when treading royal ways.

Lo, there she moves beyond the river. Gone—
Gone is the sun-lo, starlight in her eyes.
See, how she standeth silent and alone—

Oh, hush! let us not vex her with our cries.
Proud as of old, unto my throne I go. . . .
Cordelia's gone..... Hush, draw the curtain—so.

ENVOY

When you and I have played the little hour,
Have seen the tall subaltern Life to Death
Yield up his sword; and, smiling, draw the breath,
The first long breath of freedom; when the flower

Of Recompense has fluttered to our feet,
As to an actor's; and the curtain down,
We turn to face each other all alone—
Alone, we two, who never yet did meet,

Alone, and absolute, and free: oh, then,
Oh, then, most dear, how shall be told the tale?
Clasped hands, pressed lips, and so clasped hands again;

No words. But as the proud wind fills the sail,
My love to yours shall reach, then one deep moan
Of joy; and then our infinite Alone.

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A LOVER'S DIARY, VOLUME 2 ***

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