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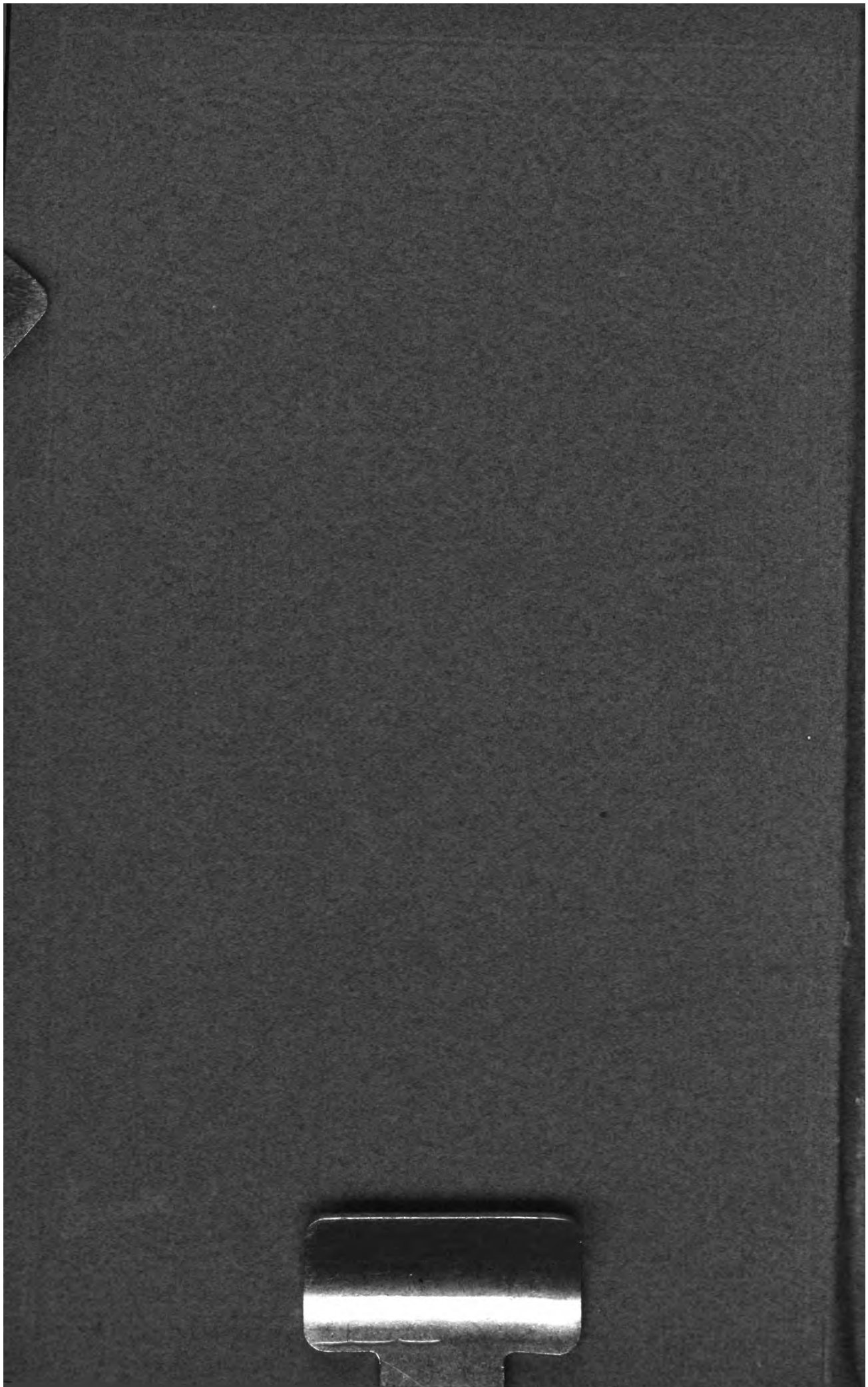
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in the Hills of Drean

FIONA MACI



280. e. 1857

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Pharais : A Romance of the Isles.

The Mountain Lovers : A Romance.

The Sin-Eater : and other Tales.

The Washer of the Ford.

Green Fire : A Romance.

From the Hills of Dream
Mountain Songs and
Island Runes

BY

FIONA MACLEOD

PATRICK GEDDES & COLLEAGUES
THE LAWNMARKET, EDINBURGH



TO ARTHUR ALLHALLOW

THE HILLS OF DREAM,
HALLOWE'EN

My dear Babikin,

Some day, when you are a man, you will perhaps glance at this book, inscribed to you on your first birthday.

You will wonder why I, who shall then be in a remote country whither you too must one day fare, have dedicated "From the Hills of Dream" to YOU.

Well, it is because this book has been warmed at my heart, and because in my heart is enshrined the love of one of the best women and one of the best men I have ever known. Others, and you too perhaps, may lose all memory of this volume that is now yours. That will be a matter of small moment. But do not forget to keep in green remembrance the fair example of your mother, do not merit the reproach of those who bear in mind the unselfish aims, the high achievement, the enduring influence for good, of your father.

So that is why, Babikin, I write to you from the Hills of Dream: because you are the child of these dear friends.

FIONA MACLEOD.

**“The waves of the sea have spoken to me ;
the wild birds have taught me ; the music of
many waters has been my master.”**

The Poet of the Finnish Epic “Kalevala.”



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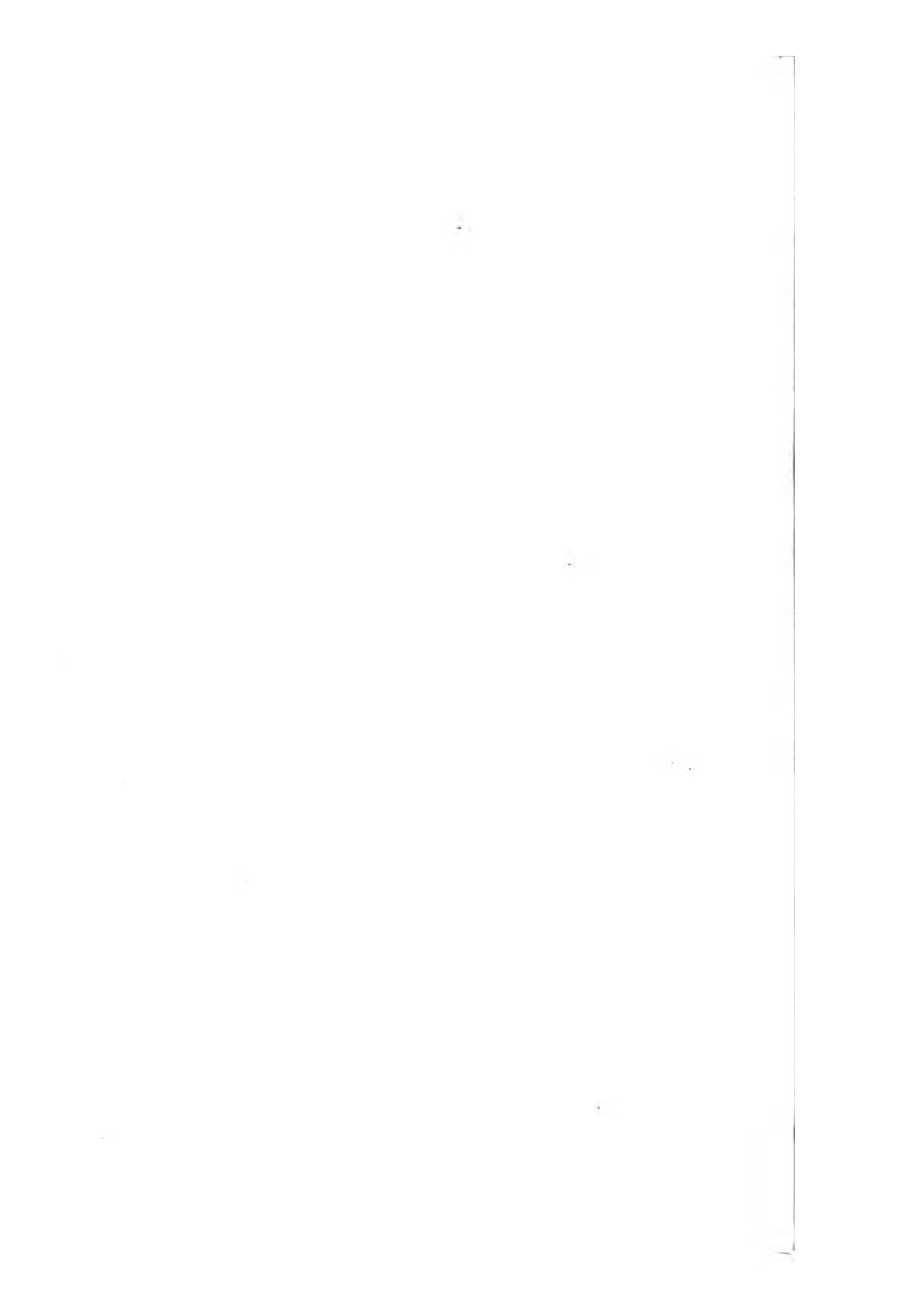
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FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM



FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 3

From the Hills of Dream.



CROSS the silent stream
Where the slumber-shadows go,
From the dim blue Hills of Dream
I have heard the west wind blow.

Who hath seen that fragrant land,
Who hath seen that unscanned west?
Only the listless hand
And the unpulsing breast.

But when the west wind blows
I see moon-lances gleam
Where the Host of Faerie flows
Athwart the Hills of Dream.

And a strange song I have heard
By a shadowy stream,
And the singing of a snow-white bird
On the Hills of Dream.

4 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The White Peace.



I lies not on the sunlit hill
Nor on the sunlit plain :
Nor ever on any running stream
Nor on the unclouded main—

But sometimes, through the Soul of Man,
Slow moving o'er his pain,
The moonlight of a perfect peace
Floods heart and brain.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 5

Cathair-Sith.



FROM green to white, from white to green,
I watch the waves that wash between
The Rainbow-Pillars none hath seen.

God takes a wind from out the sky :
It spreads its cloud-white wings to fly ;
Its time hath come to it to die.

God takes a wind from out the pines :
It spreads its green-gloom wings, and shines
Gold-green against the Rainbow-Signs.

The weaving of the Sea is made
Green, thus, with sacred pine-tree shade ;
White with cloud feathers overlaid.

Forever thus the green is spun,
The white across the surface run :
This is the rune that I have won.

This is the rune hath come to me
Out of the mystery of the sea ;
When dreaming, where, far-off, may be
The Rainbow-Pillars of Caershee.

Cathair-Sith (pron. Caershee).

6 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Love-Kiss of Dermid and Grainne.



WHEN by the twilit sea these twain were
come

Dermid spake no one word, Grainne was
dumb,

And in the hearts of both deep silence
was.

"Sorrow upon me, love," whispered the grass;

"Sorrow upon me, love," the sea-bird cried;

"Sorrow upon me, love," the lapsed wave sighed.

"For what the King has willed, that thing must be,
O Dermid! As two waves upon this sea
Wind-swept we are,—the wind of his dark mind,
With fierce inevitable tides behind."

"What would you have, O Grainne: he is King."

"I would we were the birds that come with Spring,
The purple-feathered birds that have no home,
The birds that love, then fly across the foam."

"Give me thy mouth, O Dermid," Grainne said
Thereafter, and whispering thus she leaned her head—
Ah, supple, subtle snake she glided there
Till, on his breast, a kiss-deep was her hair
That twisted serpent-wise in gold-red pain
From where his lips held high their proud disdain.
"Here, here," she whispered low, "here on my mouth
The swallow, Love, hath found his haunted South."

Then Dermid stooped and passionlessly kissed.
But therewith Grainne won what she had missed,

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 7

And that night was to her, and all sweet nights
Thereafter, as Love's flaming swallow-flights
Of passionate passion beyond speech to tell.
But Dermid knew how vain was any spell
Against the wrath of Finn : and Grainne's breath
To him was ever chill with Grainne's death ;
And well he knew that in a shadowy place
His own wraith stood and with a moon-white face
Watched its own shadow laugh and shake its spear
Far in a shadowy dell against a shadowy deer.

8 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Burthen of the Tide.



THE tide was dark an' heavy with the burden
that it bore.
I heard it talkin', whisperin', upon the
weedy shore:
Each wave that stirred the sea-weed was
like a closing door,
'Tis closing doors they hear at last who hear no more,
no more,

My Grief,
No more!

The tide was in the salt sea-weed, and like a life it
tore,
The wild sea-weed went moaning, soeing, moaning o'er
and o'er,
The deep sea-heart was brooding deep upon its ancient
lore,
I heard the sob, the soeing sob, the dying sob at its
core,

My Grief,
Its core!

The white sea-waves were wan and grey its ashy lips
before;
The yeast within its ravening mouth was red with
streaming gore—
O red sea-weed, O red sea-waves, O hollow baffled
roar,
Since one thou hast, O dark dim Sea, why callest thou
for more,

My Grief,
For more!

The Moon-Child.



LITTLE lonely child am I
That have not any soul:
God made me but a homeless wave,
Without a goal.

A seal my father was, a seal
That once was man:
My mother loved him tho' he was
'Neath mortal ban.

He took a wave and drown'd her,
She took a wave and lifted him:
And I was born where shadows are
I' the sea-depths dim.

All through the sunny blue-sweet hours
I swim and glide in waters green:
Never by day the mournful shores
By me are seen.

But when the gloom is on the wave
A shell unto the shore I bring:
And then upon the rocks I sit
And plaintive sing.

O what is this wild song I sing,
With meanings strange and dim?
No soul am I, a wave am I,
And sing the Moon-Child's hymn.

10 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

Day and Night.



FROM grey of dusk, the veils unfold
To pearl and amethyst and gold—
Thus is the new day woven
and spun :

From glory of blue to rainbow-spray,
From sunset-gold to violet-grey—
Thus is the restful Night re-won.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM II

An Old Tale of Three.



AH, bonnie darling, lift your dark eyes dream-
ing!

See, the firelight fills the gloaming, though
deep darkness grows without—

[Hush, dear, hush, I hear the sea-birds screaming,
And down beyond the haven the tide comes with a shout !]

Ah, birdeen, sweetheart, sure he is not coming,
He who has your hand in fee, while I have all your heart—

[Hush, dear, hush, I hear the wild bees humming
Far away in the underworld where true love shall not part !]

Darling, darling, darling, all the world is singing,
Singing, singing, singing a song of joy for me!

[Hush, dear, hush, what wild sea-wind is bringing
Gloom o' the sea about thy brow, athwart the eyes of thee?]

Ah, heart o' me, darling, darling, all my heart's aflame!
Sure, at the last we are all in all, all in all we two!

At the Door.

A VOICE.

This is the way I take my own, this is the boon I
claim!

*(Later, in the dark, the living brooding beside the
dead:—)*

Sure, at the last, ye are all in all, all in all, ye two—
Ah, hell of my heart! Ye are dust to me—and dust
with dust may woo!

From the Gaelic of Una Urquhart.

12 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

In the Shadow.



H, she will have the deep dark heart, for
all her face is fair ;
As deep and dark as though beneath the
shadow of her hair :
For in her hair a spirit dwells that no
white spirit is,
And hell is in the hopeless heaven of that lost spirit's
kiss.

She has two men within the palm, the hollow of her
hand :
She takes their souls and blows them forth as idle
drifted sand :
And one falls back upon her breast that is his quiet
home,
And one goes out into the night and is as wind-blown
foam.

And when she sees the sleep of one, oftentimes she rises
there
And looks into the outer dark and calleth soft and fair :
And then the lost soul that afar within the dark doth
roam
Comes laughing, laughing, laughing, and crying, Home !
Home !

And is there any home for him whose portion is the
night ?
And is there any peace for him whose doom is endless
flight ?
O wild sad bird, O wind-spent bird, O bird upon the
wave
There is no home for thee, wild bird, but in the cold
sea-grave !

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 13

Morag of the Glen.



WHEN Morag of the Glen was fëy
They took her where the Green Folk
stray :
And there they left her, night and day,
A day and night they left her, fëy.

And when they brought her home again,
Aye of the Green Folk was she fain :
They brought her leannan, Roy M'Lean,
She looked at him with proud disdain.

For I have killed a man, she said,
A better man than you to wed :
I slew him when he clasped my head,
And now he sleepeth with the dead.

And did you see that little wren?
My sister dear it was flew, then !
That skull her home, that eye her den,
Her song is, Morag o' the Glen !

For when she went I did not go,
But washed my hands in blood-red woe :
O wren, trill out your sweet song's flow,
Morag is white as the driven snow !

14 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Green Lady.



WILD fawn, wild fawn,
Hast seen the Green Lady?
The merles are singing,
The ferns are springing,
The little leaves whisper from dusk to
dawn—

Green Lady! Green Lady!
The little leaves whisper from dusk to dawn—
Wild fawn, wild fawn!

Wild fawn, wild fawn,
Hast seen the Green Lady?
The bird in the nest,
And the child at the breast,
They open wide eyes as she comes down the dawn—
The bonnie Green Lady,
Bird and child make a whisper of music at dawn,
Wild fawn, wild fawn!

Wild fawn, wild fawn,
Dost thou flee the Green Lady?
Her wild flowers will race thee,
Her sunbeams will chase thee,
Her laughter is ringing aloud in the dawn—
O the Green Lady
With yellow flowers strewing the ways of the dawn,
Wild fawn, wild fawn!

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 15

Sheiling Song.



GO where the sheep go,
With the sheep are my feet :
I go where the kye go,
Their breath is so sweet :
O lover who loves me,
Art thou half so fleet ?
Where the sheep climb, the kye go,
There shall we meet !

A Milking Song.

(Sweet St Bride.)



H, sweet St Bride of the
Yellow, yellow hair :
Paul said, and Peter said,
And all the saints alive or dead
Vowed she had the sweetest head,
Bonnie, sweet St Bride of the
Yellow, yellow hair.

White may my milking be,
White as thee :
Thy face is white, thy neck is white,
Thy hands are white, thy feet are white,
For thy sweet soul is shining bright—
O dear to me,
O dear to see
St Bridget white !

Yellow may my butter be,
Soft, and round :
Thy breasts are sweet,
Soft, round and sweet,
So may my butter be :
So may my butter be, O
Bridget sweet !

Safe thy way is, safe, O
Safe, St Bride :
May my kye come home at even,
None be fallin', none be leavin',
Dusky even, breath-sweet even,

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 17

Here, as there, where, O
St Bride, thou
Keepst tryst with God in heav'n,
Seest the angels bow
And souls be shriven—
Here, as there, 'tis breath-sweet even
Far and wide—
Singeth thy little maid
Safe in thy shade
Bridget, Bride!

18 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

A Milking Song.

(Aillsha-bàn.)



AILLSHA-BÀN, Aillsha-bàn,
Give way to the milking !
The Holy St Bridget
Is milking, milking
This self-same even
The white kye in heaven—

Ay, sure, my eyes scan
The green place she is in,
Aillsha-bàn, Aillsha-bàn :
And her hand is so soft
And her crooning is sweet
As my milking is soft
Upon thee, Aillsha-bàn—
As my crooning is sweet
Upon thee, Aillsha-bàn,
Aillsha-bàn—
So soft is my hand and
My crooning so sweet,
Aillsha-bàn !

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 19

Milking Sian.



GIVE up thy milk to her who calls
Across the low green hills of Heaven
And stream-cool meads of Paradise!

Across the low green hills of Heaven
How sweet to hear the milking call,
The milking call i' the meads of Heaven:

Stream-cool the meads of Paradise,
Across the low green hills of Heaven.

Give up thy milk to her who calls,
Sweet voiced amid the Starry Seven,
Give up thy milk to her who calls!

St Bride's Lullaby.



O H, Baby Christ, so dear to me,
Sang Bridget Bride:
How sweet thou art,
My baby dear,
Heart of my heart!

Heavy her body was with thee,
Mary, beloved of One in Three,
Sang Bridget Bride—
Mary, who bore thee, little lad:
But light her heart was, light and glad
With God's love clad.

Sit on my knee,
Sang Bridget Bride:
Sit here
O Baby dear,
Close to my heart, my heart:
For I thy foster-mother am,
My helpless lamb!
O have no fear,
Sang good St Bride.

None, none,
No fear have I:
So let me cling
Close to thy side
While thou dost sing,
O Bridget Bride!

My Lord, my Prince, I sing:
My Baby dear, my King!
Sang Bridget Bride.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 21

St Bride's Warning.



ON O, an' O, St Bride's sweet song 'tis I am
hearing, dearie,
Dearie, dearie, dearie, my wee white babe
that's weary,
Weary, weary, weary, with this my womb
sae weary,
And Bride's sweet song ye hear it too, and stir and
sigh, my dearie!

Oh, oh, lennavan-mo,
Wee hands that give me pain and woe:
Pain and woe, but be it so,
'Tis his dear self that now doth grow,
Lennavan-mo, lennavan-mo,
'Tis his dear self one day you'll know,
Lennavan-mo, lennavan-mo!

St Bridget dear, the cradle show,
My baby comes, and I must go,
Lennavan-mo, lennavan-mo!
Arone! . . . Arò!
Arone! . . . Arò!

22 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Bandruidh.

*With woven green branches
All of the quicken
The Bandruidh waveth
The soft airs nigh.*

THE BANDRUIDH.



COME, air of the mountain, what news of the
mountain?
Does the green moss cling to the claw of
the eagle?

THE MOUNTAIN AIR.

The green moss clings to the claw of the eagle.

THE BANDRUIDH.

Come, air of the hill-slope, what news of the hill-slope?
Does the red stag sniff at the coming of green?

THE UPLAND AIR.

The red stag sniffs at the coming of green.

THE BANDRUIDH.

Come, air of the corries, what news of the corries?
Does the hartstongue sprout where the waterfalls leap?

THE AIR OF THE CORRIES.

The hartstongue sprouts where the waterfalls
leap.

The Bandruidh—literally, the Druidess; commonly,
the Sorceress; poetically, the Green Lady—i.e. Spring.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 23

THE BANDRUIDH.

Come, air of the pine-wood, what news of the forest?
Do the seedlings stir in the needle-strewn mould?

THE FOREST AIR.

The seedlings stir in the needle-strewn mould.

THE BANDRUIDH.

Come, air of the braes, what news of the braes now?
Do the curled young bracken unsheath their green claws?

THE AIR OF THE BRAES.

The curled young bracken unsheath their green
claws.

THE BANDRUIDH.

Come, air of the glen, what news of the birdeens?
Is song on the birds yet, and leaves on the lime?

THE AIR OF THE GLEN.

Green song to the birds now, green leaves to
the lime.

THE BANDRUIDH.

My robe is of green,
My crown is of stars,
The grass is the green
And the daisies the stars:
O'er lochan and streamlet
My breath moveth sweet,
Blue lochan so bonnie, brown burnie
So sweet.

24 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The song in my heart
Is the song of the birds,
And the wind in my heart
Is the lowing of herds :
The light in my eyes,
And the breath of my mouth,
Are the clouds of spring-skies
And the sound of the South.

THE AIRS.

Grass-green from thy mouth
The sweet sound of the South!

The Rainbow Bird.



IN the heart, a bird of sunshine
Singeth a sweet song :
None can do it wrong
Sweet breath of sunshine !

What is this sunny bird
With the rainbow-wings,
That singeth of secret things
The heart only hath heard ?

I know not : but lo
The sun shines, and far,
In the blue sky a star
Leapeth white as snow.

And when the night-tides flow
And the stars glisten
In the dark, I listen,
And the bird of moonshine
Sings, where erst
The sun-song burst
From the bird of sunshine.

The Bugles of Dreamland.



WIFTLY the dews of the gloaming are
falling :

Faintly the bugles of Dreamland are calling.

O hearken, my darling, the elf-flutes are
blowing

The shining-eyed folk from the hillside
are flowing,

I' the moonshine the wild-apple blossoms are snowing,
And louder and louder where the white dews are
falling

The far-away bugles of Dreamland are calling.

O what are the bugles of Dreamland calling

There where the dews of the gloaming are falling?

Come away from the weary old world of tears,

Come away, come away to where one never hears

The slow weary drip of the slow weary years,

But peace and deep rest till the white dews are
falling

And the blithe bugle-laughters through Dreamland
are calling.

Then bugle for us, where the cool dews are falling,

O bugle for us, wild elf-flutes now calling—

For Isla and I are too weary to wait

For the dim drowsy whisper that cometh too late,

The dim muffled whisper of blind empty fate—

O the world's well lost now the dream-dews are
falling,

And the bugles of Dreamland about us are calling.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 27

When the Dew is Falling.



WHEN the dew is falling
I have heard a calling
Of aerial sweet voices o'er the low green
hill:
And when the noon is dying
I have heard a crying
Where the brown burn slippeth thro' the hollows green
and still.

And O the sorrow upon me,
The grey grief upon me,
For a voice that whispered once, and now for aye is
still:
O heart forsaken, calling
When the dew is falling,
To the one that comes not ever o'er the low green hill.

The Shepherd.

"Verily, those herdsmen also were of the sheep!"

I.



HE loved me, as he said, in every part,
And yet I could not, would not, give
him all :
Why should a woman forfeit her whole
heart
At bidding of a single shepherd's call?
One vast the deep, and yet each wave is free
To answer to the noonshine's drowsy smile
Or leap to meet the storm-wind's rapturous glee :
This heart of mine a wave is oftenwhile.
Depth below depth, strange currents cross, re-cross,
The anguished eddies darkly ebb and flow,
But on the placid surface seldom toss
The reckless flotsam of what seethes below :
O placid calms and maelstrom heart of me,
Shall it be thus till there be no more sea?

II.


"I am thy shepherd, love, that on this hill
Of life shall tend and guard thee evermore."
These were thy words that far-off day, and still
Lives on thy echoing lips this bond of yore.
Yet who wert thou, O soul as I am, thus
To take so blithely gage of shepherding?
Were we not both astray where perilous
Steps might each into the abysmal darkness fling?
Lo, my tired soul even as a storm-stayed ewe
Across the heights unto my shepherd cried:
But to the sheltered vale at last I drew
And laid me weary by thy sleeping side.
Thou didst not hear The Shepherd calling us,
Nor far the night-wind, vibrant, ominous.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 29

III.

O shepherd of mine, lord of my little life,
Guard me from knowledge even of the stress :
And if I stray, take heed thou of thy wife,
Errant from mere womanhood's wantonness.
Even as the Lord of Hosts, lo in thy hand,
The hollow of thy hand, my soul support :
Guide this poor derelict back unto the land
And lead me, pilot, to thy sheltering port !
No—no—keep back—away—not now thy kiss :
O shepherd, pilot, wake ! awake ! awake !
The deep must overwhelm us both ! Hark, the waves hiss,
And as a shaken leaf the land doth shake !
Awake, O shepherding soul, and take command !—
—Nay, vain vain words : how shall he understand ?

The Hills of Ruel.

VER the hills and far away"—
That is the tune I heard one day,
When heather-drowsy I lay and listened
And watched where the stealthy sea-tide
glistened.

Beside me there on the Hills of Ruel
An old man stooped and gathered fuel—
And I asked him this: if his son were dead,
As the folk in Glendaruel all said,
How could he still believe that never
Duncan had crossed the shadowy river.

Forth from his breast the old man drew
A lute that once on a rowan-tree grew:
And, speaking no words, began to play
“Over the hills and far away.”

“But how do you know,” I said, thereafter,
“That Duncan has heard the fairy laughter?
How do you know he has followed the cruel
Honey-sweet folk of the Hills of Ruel?”
“How do I know?” the old man said,
“Sure I know well my boy’s not dead:
For late on the morrow they hid him, there
Where the black earth moistens his yellow hair
I saw him alow on the moor close by,
I watched him low on the hillside lie,
An’ I heard him laughin’ wild up there,
An’ talk, talk, talkin’ beneath his hair—
For down o’er his face his long hair lay
But I saw it was cold and ashy grey.”

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 31

Ay, laughin' and talkin' wild he was,
An' that to a Shadow out on the grass,
A Shadow that made my blood go chill,
For never its like have I seen on the hill.
An' the moon came up, and the stars grew white,
An' the hills grew black in the bloom o' the night,
An' I watched till the death-star sank in the moon
And the moonmaid fled with her moonwhite shoon,
Then the Shadow that was on the moorside there
Rose up and shook its shadowy hair,
And Duncan he laughed no more, but grey
As the rainy dust of a rainy day,
Went over the hills and far away."

"Over the hills and far away"—
That is the tune I heard one day.
O that I too might hear the cruel
Honey-sweet folk of the Hills of Ruel.

32 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

A Summer Air.



WAVING trees,
And waving wind,
And waving seas,
And waving mind—
Where, far and wide,
Am I to roam

To find my bride,
To reach my home?

My soul is my bride :
Ah, whither fled ?
She hath not died,
Nor am I dead :
But somehow, somewhere,
A song she heard,
And she flashed thro' the air
A sunfire bird.

My bride, she is
Where the rainbows are ;
Sweet, sweet her kiss
Awaits afar :
My goal is where
The sea-waves meet
The Sands of Youth
Stirred by her feet.

O waving leaves,
O waving grass,
My heart grieves
That it may not pass.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 33

“Summer is fleet,
Summer is long,”—
I know not, Sweet,
'Tis an empty Song.

Where, far and wide,
Across what foam,
On what strange tide,
Shall I be come?
Meet me, O Bride,
Where, lost, I roam:
Leap to my side
And lead me home!

34 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Soul's Armageddon.



KNOW not where I go,
O Wind, that calls afar :
O Wind that calls for war,
Where the Death-Moon doth glow
In a darkness without star.

Nor do I know the blare
Of the bugles that call :
Nor who rise, nor who fall :
Nor if the torches flare
Where the gods laugh, or crawl.

But I hear, I hear the hum,
The multitudinous cry,
Where myriads fly,
And I hear a voice say, Come :
And the same voice say, Die !

What is the war, O Wind ?
Lo, without shield or spear
How can I draw near ?
I am deaf and dumb and blind
With immeasurable fear.

The Voice Among the Dunes.



HAVE heard the sea-wind sighing
Where the dune-grasses grow,
The sighing of the dying
Where the salt tides flow.

For where the salt tides flow
The sullen dead are lifting
Tired arms, and to and fro
Are idly drifting.

So through the grey dune-grasses
Not the wind only cries,
But a dim sea-wrought Shadow
Breathes drownéd sighs.

The Summer Wind.



THE bugling of the summer wind
Is sweet upon the hill :
I love to hear its eddies
The heather-crannies fill.

It plays upon the bracken
A blithe fanfaronade :
And thro' the moss-cups whistleth
"The Fairy Raid."

It leaps from birch to rowan,
And laugheth long and loud :
Then with a spring is vanished,
And rideth on a cloud !

The Vision.



IN a fair place
Of whin and grass,
I heard feet pass
Where no one was.

I saw a face
Bloom like a flower—
Nay, as the rainbow-shower
Of a tempestuous hour.

It was not man, or woman :
It was not human :
But, beautiful and wild,
Terribly undefiled,
I knew an unborn child.

38 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Lost Star.



STAR was loosed from heaven ;
All saw it fall, in wonder,
Where universe clashed universe
With solar thunder.

The angels praised God's glory,
To send this beacon-flare
To show the terror of darkness
Beneath the Golden Stair.

But God was brooding only
Upon new births of light ;
The star was a drop of water
On the lips of Eternal Light.

The Hollow Land.



THROUGH the Hollow Land I wandered
On the silent wings of Sleep :
And the darkness was about me
As the furtive things that creep
From the shadow of the forest
Round the Shadow still more deep.

On a dark wing I was lifted
And was borne beyond the Gate,
Past the Portals of two Shadows
Which are the self-same Fate,—
Sleep, clad in dusk, and dreaming,
Death, clad in night, her Mate.

And so thence across the valley
Where unborn things agleam
Shine wanly athwart the gloaming
Beside each undreamed dream,
Till the Hollow Land was entered
By a silent stream.

The River of Oblivion
It was that wended there,
Till lost in the immensity
Of that unwinnowed air :
Yet onward, and as for ever,
My soul was borne there.

O soul, that thing which was uttered,
O soul, that thing which thou saw,
What memory hast thou of either
Though thrilling still with the awe—
Not more than of harvest lingers
In wind-whirled straw !

40 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

Yet, soul, in the shadowy silence
That clothes thee round about,
Thou knowest thou viewed vast armies
In fierce bewildered rout,
And, 'mid the seething clamour,
Heard, as a blast, thy shout!

O soul, wast thou a victor
Or led'st thou a failing host :
Or were thy banners flying
Along a dismal coast :
Wert thou crown'd with life, O spirit,
Or crown'd with death, poor ghost ?

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 41

Dream Fantasy.

“If Death Sleep’s brother be,
And souls bereft of sense have so
sweet dreams,
How could I wish thus still to dream
and die!” (“Madrigal”)

William Drummond
of Hawthornden.



HERE is a land of Dream ;
I have trodden its golden ways :
I have seen its amber light
From the heart of its sun-swept days ;
I have seen its moonshine white
On its silent waters gleam—
Ah, the strange sweet lonely delight
Of the Valleys of Dream.

Ah, in that Land of Dream,
The mystical moon-white land,
Comes from what unknown sea—
Adream on what unknown strand—
A sound as of feet that flee,
As of multitudes that stream
From the shores of that shadowy sea
Through the Valleys of Dream.

It is dark in the Land of Dream.
There is silence in all the Land.
Are the dead all gathered there—
In havens, by no breath fanned ?
This stir i’ the dawn, this chill wan air—
This faint dim yellow of morning-gleam—
O is this sleep, or waking where
Lie hush’d the Valleys of Dream ?

42 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Sorrow of Delight.



WILL death be filled with darkness
And life be filled with light,
The Sorrow of ancient sorrows
Shall be the sorrow of Night :
But then the Sorrow of Sorrows
Shall be the Sorrow of Delight.

Heart's-joy must fade with sorrow,
For both are sprung from clay :
But the Joy that is one with Sorrow,
Treads an immortal way :
Each hath in fee To-morrow,
And their soul is Yesterday.

Joy that is clothed with shadow
Is the joy that is not dead :
For the joy that is clothed with the rainbow
Shall with the bow be sped :
Where the Sun spends his fires is she,
And where the Stars are led.

FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM 43

The Rose of Flame.



OH, fair immaculate rose of the world, rose of
my dream, my Rose!
Beyond the ultimate gates of dream I have
heard thy mystical call:
It is where the rainbow of hope suspends
and the river of rapture flows—
And cool sweet dew from the wells of peace forever fall.

And all my heart is aflame because of the rapture and
peace,
And I dream, in my waking dreams and deep in the
dreams of sleep,
Till the high sweet wonderful call that shall be the call
of release
Shall ring in my ears as I sink from gulf to gulf and
from deep to deep—

Sink deep, sink deep beyond the ultimate dreams of all
desire—
Beyond the uttermost limit of all that the craving spirit
knows:
Then, then, oh then I shall be as the inner flame of thy
fire,
O fair immaculate rose of the world, Rose of my Dream,
my Rose!

44 FROM THE HILLS OF DREAM

The Stone of Sorrow.



WEARILY dawns the morning o'er the world.
The sea, muttering, moans his primeval
pain.
The brooding mists upon the brooding
hills are lain ;
The banners of the wild wandering
mountain-winds are furled :
Wearily, wearily, dawns the morning o'er the world.

O wearily dawns this morning of the world.
Beautiful spirit, whither hast thou fled ?
They tell me thou art here no more, that thou
art dead :
That shall not be till God afar the sun and stars hath
whirled,
And saith, So sets the last wild dawn of any world.

The Mourners.

(From the Breton.)



WHEN they had made the cradle
Of ivory and of gold,
Their hearts were heavy still
With the sorrow of old.

And ever as they rocked, the tears
Ran down, sad tears :
Who is it lieth dead therein,
Dead all these weary years ?

And still they rock that cradle there
Of ivory and gold :
For in their brains the shadow is
The Shadow of Old.

They weep, and know not what they weep ;
They wait a vain re-birth :
Vanity of vanities, alas,
For there is but one birth
On the wide green earth.

FOAM OF THE PAST

NOTE.—*The poems included in this section (except the first, which is from The Harping of Cravetheen in “The Sin-Eater”) are from “The Washer of the Ford.” Although necessarily they suffer through severance from the context, I have thought it best to reprint them as they appeared.*

The Song of Cormac Conlingas.



OIMÉ, Oimé, woman of the white breasts,
Eilidh!

Woman of the golden hair, and lips of the
red, red rowan!

Oimé, O-rì, Oimé!

Where is the swan that is whiter, with breast more
soft,
Or the wave on the sea that moves as thou movest,
Eilidh—

Oimé, a-rò ; Oimé, a-rò!

It is the marrow in my bones that is aching, aching,
Eilidh :
It is the blood in my body that is a bitter wild tide,
Oimé!

O-rì, Ohion, O-rì, aròne!

Is it the heart of thee calling that I am hearing, Eilidh,
Or the wind in the wood, or the beating of the sea,
Eilidh,

Or the beating of the sea?

Shule, shule agràh, shule agràh, shule agràh, Shule!
Heart of me, move to me! move to me, heart of me,
Eilidh, Eilidh,

Move to me!

Ah! let the wild hawk take it, the name of me, Cormac
Conlingas,
Take it and tear at thy heart with it, heart that of old
was so hot with it,

Eilidh, Eilidh, O-rì, Eilidh, Eilidh!

Eilidh is pronounced Eily.

The Death-Faring of Cathal.



OUT of the wild hills I am hearing a voice,
 O Cathal!
 And I am thinking it is the voice of a
 bleeding sword.
 Whose is that sword? I know it well: it
 is the sword of the Slayer—
 Him that is called Death, and the song that it sings
 I know:—
 O where is Cathal mac Art, that is the cup for
 the thirst of my lips?

Out of the cold greyness of the sea I am hearing, O
 Cathal,
 I am hearing a wave-muffled voice, as of one who
 drowns in the depths:
 Whose is that voice? I know it well: it is the voice of
 the Shadow—
 Her that is called the Grave, and the song that she
 sings I know:—
 O where is Cathal mac Art, that has warmth
 for the chill that I have?

Out of the hot greenness of the wood I am hearing, O
 Cathal,
 I am hearing a rustling step, as of one stumbling blind.
 Whose is that rustling step? I know it well: the rust-
 ling walk of the Blind One—
 She that is called Silence, and the song that she sings
 I know:—
 O where is Cathal mac Art, that has tears to
 water my stillness?

The Moon-Song of Cathal.



O YELLOW lamp of Ioua that is having a cold
pale flame there,

Put thy honey-sheen upon me who am
close-caverned with Death :

Sure it is little I see now who have seen
too much and too little :

O moon, thy breast is softer and whiter than hers who
burneth the day.

Put thy white light on the grave where the dead man
my father is,

And waken him, waken him, wake !

And put thy soft shining on the breast of the woman my
mother,

So that she stir in her sleep and say to the viking
beside her,

“Take up thy sword, and let it lap blood, for it thirsts
with long thirst.”

And O Ioua, be as the sea-calm upon the hot heart of
Ardanna, the girl :

Tell her that Cathal loves her, and that memory is
sweeter than life.

I list her heart beating here in the dark and the silence,
And it is not lonely I am, because of that, and remem-
brance.

O yellow flame of Ioua, be a spilling of blood out of the
heart of Ecta,

So that he fall dead, inglorious, slain from within, as a
greybeard ;

And light a fire in the brain of Molios, so that he shall
go moonstruck,

And men will jeer at him, and he will die at the last,
idly laughing !

52 FOAM OF THE PAST

For lo, I worship thee, Ioua; and if thou canst give
my message to Neis,—

Neis the helot out of Iondu, that is in Iona, bondman to
Colum,—

Tell him I hail thee as Bandia, as god-queen and
mighty,

And that he had the wisdom and I was a fool with
trickling ears of moss.

But grant me this, O goddess, a bitter moon-drinking
for Colum!

May he have the moonsong in his brain, and in his
heart the moonfire:

Flame take him to heart of flame, and may he wane as
wax at the furnace,

And his soul drown in tears, and his body be a nothing-
ness upon the sands!

The Sun-Chant of Cathal.



HOT yellow fire that streams out of the sky,
sword-white and golden,
Be a flame upon the monks that are pray-
ing in their cells in Iona!
Be a fire in the veins of Colum, and the
hell that he preacheth be his,
And be a torch to the men of Lochlin that they discover
the isle and consume it!

For I see this thing, that the old gods are the gods
that die not:
All else is a seeming, a dream, a madness, a tide ever
ebbing.
Glory to thee, O Grian, lord of life, first of the gods,
Allfather,
Swords and spears are thy beams, thy breath a fire that
consumeth!

And upon this isle of A-rinn send sorrow and death and
disaster,
Upon one and all save Ardanna, who gave me her
bosom,
Upon one and all send death, the curse of a death slow
and swordless,
From Molios of the Cave to Múrta and Diarmid my
doomsmen!

The Chant of Ardan the Pict.



COLUM and monks of Christ,
It is peace we are having this night:
Sure, peace is a good thing,
And I am glad with the gladness.

We worship one God,
Though ye call him Dè—
And I say not, O Dia!
But cry Bea'uil!

For it is one faith for man,
And one for the living world,
And no man is wiser than another—
And none knoweth much.

None knoweth a better thing than this:
The Sword, Love, Song, Honour, Sleep.
None knoweth a surer thing than this:
Birth, Sorrow, Pain, Weariness, Death.

Sure, peace is a good thing;
Let us be glad of Peace:
We are not men of the Sword,
But of the Rune and the Wisdom.

I have learned a truth of Colum,
He hath learned of me:
All ye on the morrow shall see
A wonder of the wonders.

The thought is on you, that the Cross
Is known only of you:
Lo, I tell you the birds know it
That are marked with the Sorrow.

Listen to the Birds of Sorrow,
They shall tell you a great Joy:
It is Peace you will be having,
With the Birds.

The Bird of Christ.



HOLY, Holy, Holy,
Christ upon the Cross:
My little nest was near,
Hidden in the moss.

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Christ was pale and wan:
His eyes beheld me singing
Bron, Bron, mo Bron!*

Holy, Holy, Holy,
"Come near, O wee brown bird!"
Christ spake, and lo, I lighted
Upon the Living Word.

Holy, Holy, Holy,
I heard the mocking scorn!
But Holy, Holy, Holy,
I sang against a thorn!

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Ah, his brow was bloody:
Holy, Holy, Holy,
All my breast was ruddy.

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Christ's-Bird shalt thou be:
Thus said Mary Virgin
There on Calvary.

* "O my Grief, my Grief!"

56 FOAM OF THE PAST

Holy, Holy, Holy,
A wee brown bird am I :
But my breast is ruddy
For I saw Christ die.

Holy, Holy, Holy,
By this ruddy feather,
Colum, call thy monks, and
All the birds together.

The Thanksgiving of Colum.

After the Miracle of the Fishes and
the Flies.

I.



RAISE be to God, and a blessing too at
that, and a blessing !
For Colum the White, Colum the Dove,
hath worshipped ;
Yea he hath worshipped and made of a
desert a garden,
And out of the dung of men's souls hath made a sweet
savour of burning.

II.

A savour of burning, most sweet, a fire for the altar,
This he hath made in the desert; the hell-saved all
gladden.
Sure he hath put his benison, too, on milch-cow and
bullock,
On the fowls of the air, and the man-eyed seals, and
the otter.

III.

But where in his Dún in the great blue mainland of
Heaven
God the Allfather broodeth, where the harpers are
harping His glory ;
There where He sitteth, where a river of ale poureth
ever,
His great sword broken, His spear in the dust, He
broodeth.

58 FOAM OF THE PAST

IV.

And this is the thought that moves in His brain, as a
cloud filled with thunder

Moves through the vast hollow sky filled with the dust
of the stars:

What boots it the glory of Colum, since he
maketh a Sabbath to bless me

And hath no thought of my sons in the deeps
of the air and the sea?

The War-Song of the Vikings.



LET loose the hounds of war,
The whirling swords!
Send them leaping afar,
Red in their thirst for war;
Odin laughs in his car
At the screaming of the swords!

Far let the white-ones fly,
The whirling swords!
Afar off the ravens spy
Death-shadows cloud the sky.
Let the wolves of the Gael die
'Neath the screaming swords!

The Shining Ones yonder
High in Valhalla
Shout now, with thunder,
Drive the Gaels under,
Cleave them asunder—
Swords of Valhalla!

War-Chant of the Islesmen.



'TIS a good song the sea makes when blood
is on the wave,
And a good song the wave makes when
its crest o' foam is red !
For the rovers out of Lochlin the sea is a
good grave,
And the bards will sing to-night to the sea-moan of the
dead !
Yo-ho—a-h'eily—a-yo, eily, ayah, a yo !
Sword and Spear and Battle-Axe sing the Song
of Woe :
Ayah, eily, a yo !
Eily, ayah, a yo !

The Washer of the Ford.



HERE is a lonely stream afar in a lone dim
land :

It hath white dust for shore it has, white
bones bestrew the strand :

The only thing that liveth there is a naked
leaping sword ;

But I, who a seer am, have seen the whirling hand
Of the Washer of the Ford.

A shadowy shape of cloud and mist, of gloom and dusk,
she stands,

The Washer of the Ford :

She laughs, at times, and strews the dust through the
hollow of her hands.

She counts the sins of all men there, and slays the red-
stained horde—

The ghosts of all the sins of men must know the
whirling sword

Of the Washer of the Ford.

She stoops and laughs when in the dust she sees a
writhing limb :

“Go back into the ford,” she says, “and hither and
thither swim ;

Then I shall wash you white as snow, and shall take
you by the hand,

And slay you here in the silence with this my whirling
brand,

And trample you into the dust of this white windless
sand”—

This is the laughing word
Of the Washer of the Ford
Along that silent strand.

The Laughter of the Sword.



OH 'tis a good thing the red blood, by Odin
his word!
And a good thing it is to hear it bubbling
deep.
And when we hear the laughter of the
Sword,
Oh, the corbies croak, and the old wail, and the women
weep!

And busy will she be there where she stands,
Washing the red out of the sins of all this slaying
horde;
And trampling the bones of them into white powdery
sands,
And laughing low at the thirst of her thirsty sword—
The Washer of the Ford!

The Death Shadow.



H, death of Fergus, that is lying in the boat
here,
Betwixt the man of the red hair and him
of the black beard,
Rise now, and out of thy cold white eyes
take out the fear,
And let Fergus mac Art mhic Fheargus see his weird!

Sure, now, it's a blind man I am, but I'm thinking I
see
The shadow of you crawling across the dead.
Soon you will twine your arm around his shaking knee,
And be whispering your silence into his listless head.

The Ford of Death.



HERE the winds gather
The souls of the dead,
O Torcall, my father,
My soul is led!

In Hildyr-mead
I was thrown, I was sown:
Out of thy seed
I am sprung, I am blown!

But where is the way
For Hildyr and me,
By the hill-moss grey
Or the grey sea?

For a river is here,
And a whirling Sword—
And a Woman washing
By a Ford!

The Washer of Souls.



GLORY to the great Gods, it is no Sword I
am seeing :
Nor do I see aught but the flowing of a
river.
And I see shadows on the flow that are
ever fleeing,
And I see a Woman washing shrouds for ever and
ever.

“Glory to God on high, and to Mary, Mother of Jesus,
Here am I washing away the sins of the shriven,
O Torcall of Lochlin, throw off the red sins that ye
cherish
And I will be giving you the washen shroud that they
wear in Heaven.”

O well it is I am seeing, Woman of the Shrouds,
That you have not for me any whirling of the Sword :
I have lost my gods, O woman, so what will the name
be
Of thee and thy gods, O woman that art Washer of
the Ford?

“It is Mary Magdalene my name is, and I loved Christ,
And Christ is the Son of God, and of Mary the
Mother of Heaven.
And this river is the river of death, and the shadows
Are the fleeing souls that are lost if they be not
shriven.”

The Dance of Death.



ARONE a-ree, eily arone, arone!
 'Tis a good thing to be sailing across the
 seas!
 How the women smile and the children are
 laughing glad
 When the galleys go out into the blue sea
 —arone!
 O eily arone, arone!

But the children may laugh less when the wolves come,
 And the women may smile less in the winter-cold—
 For the Summer-sailors will not come again, arone!
 O arone a-ree, eily arone, arone!

I am thinking they will not sail back again, O no!
 The yellow-haired men that came sailing across the sea:
 For 'tis wild apples they would be, and swing on green
 branches,
 And sway in the wind for the corbies to preen their
 eyne,
 O eily arone, eily a-ree!

And it is pleasure for Scathach the Queen to see this:
 To see the good fruit that grows on the Tree of the
 Stones;
 Long black fruit it is, wind-swayed by its yellow roots,
 And like men they are with their feet dancing in the
 void air!
 O, O, arone, a-ree, eily arone!

O arone a-ree, eily arone, arone,
 O, O, arone, a-ree, eily arone!

The End of Aodh-of-the-Songs.



THE swift years slip and slide adown the
steep;
The slow years pass; neither will come
again.
Yon huddled years have weary eyes that
weep,
These laugh, these moan, these silent frown, these
plain,
These have their lips acurl with proud disdain.

O years with tears, and tears through weary years,
How weary I who in your arms have lain:
Now, I am tired: the sound of slipping spears
Moves soft, and tears fall in a bloody rain,
And the chill footless years go over me who am slain.

I hear, as in a wood, dim with old light, the rain,
Slow falling; old, old, weary, human tears:
And in the deepening dark my comfort is my Pain,
Sole comfort left of all my hopes and fears,
Pain that alone survives, gaunt hound of the shadowy
years.

LYRIC RUNES

NOTE

I do not use the word "Rune" in its ancient or exact significance, but rather as a suitable analogue for "Chant"; occasionally, however, with something of the significance of the old word Rún, meaning a mystery, or the more or less occult expression of mystery. In other instances I use it as equivalent to a rude chant: as, for example, Longfellow does in "Tegner's Death":

*"Runes were upon his tongue
As on the warrior's sword"*

—or again, as a Sian, or Eolas, or Incantation. Obviously the word "Rune" should not in Gaelic be used for "Sian" or "Eolas," but it is a better word in English.

The Rune of Age is from "The Mountain Lovers"; The Prayer of Women from "Pharais, a Romance": the third and fourth have not hitherto been published. The three ruder compositions that follow are from "The Sin-Eater," the opening lines of the first of these being the English of a Gaelic invocation familiar in the isles. This Faring of the Tide is a metrical reminiscence of an impromptu Gaelic invocation chanted by a fisherman of one of the Southern Hebrides. The Rune of Manus MacCodrum should not, perhaps, be separated from its context in the tale of the Seal-Man (The Dan-Nan-Ron) in "The Sin-Eater." The Spell of the Sight (the invocation of one having the Second Sight), is from The Shadow Seers in "The Washer of the Ford."

“ My wisdom became pregnant on lonely mountains ; upon rugged stones she bore her young.

Now she runneth strangely through the hard desert and seeketh, and ever seeketh for soft grass, mine own old wisdom.”

NIETZSCHE.

The Rune of Age.



THOU that on the hills and wastes of Night
 art Shepherd,
 Whose folds are flameless moons and icy
 planets,
 Whose darkling way is gloomed with
 ancient sorrows :

Whose breath lies white as snow upon the olden,
 Whose sigh it is that furrows breasts grown milkless,
 Whose weariness is in the loins of man
 And is the barren stillness of the woman :
 O thou whom all would 'scape, and all must meet,
 Thou that the Shadow art of Youth Eternal,
 The gloom that is the hush'd air of the Grave,
 The sigh that is between last parted love,
 The light for aye withdrawing from weary eyes,
 The tide from stricken hearts forever ebbing !

O thou the Elder Brother whom none loveth,
 Whom all men hail with reverence or mocking,
 Who broodest on the brows of frozen summits
 Yet dreamest in the eyes of babes and children :
 Thou, Shadow of the Heart, the Brain, the Life,
 Who art that dusk What-is that is already Has-Been,
 To thee this rune of the fathers-to-the-sons
 And of the sons to the sons, and mothers to new
 mothers—
 To thee who art Aois,
 To thee who art Age !

Breathe thy frosty breath upon my hair, for I am weary !
 Lay thy frozen hand upon my bones that they support
 not,
 Put thy chill upon the blood that it sustain not ;

Place the crown of thy fulfilling on my forehead ;
Throw the silence of thy spirit on my spirit ;
Lay the balm and benediction of thy mercy
On the brain-throb and the heart-pulse and the life-
spring—

For thy child that bows his head is weary,
For thy child that bows his head is weary.
I the shadow am that seeks the Darkness.
Age, that hath the face of Night unstarr'd and moonless,
Age, that doth extinguish star and planet,
Moon and sun and all the fiery worlds,
Give me now thy darkness and thy silence !

Prayer of Women.



SPIRIT that broods upon the hills
 And moves upon the face of the deep,
 And is heard in the wind,
 Save us from the desire of men's eyes,
 And the cruel lust of them.
 Save us from the springing of the cruel seed

In that narrow house which is as the grave
 For darkness and loneliness . . .
 That women carry with them with shame, and weariness,
 and long pain,
 Only for the laughter of man's heart,
 And for the joy that triumphs therein,
 And the sport that is in his heart,
 Wherewith he mocketh us,
 Wherewith he playeth with us,
 Wherewith he trampleth upon us . . .
 Us, who conceive and bear him;
 Us, who bring him forth;
 Who feed him in the womb, and at the breast, and at
 the knee:
 Whom he calleth mother and wife,
 And mother again of his children and his children's
 children.
 Ah, hour of the hours,
 When he looks at our hair and sees it is grey;
 And at our eyes and sees they are dim;
 And at our lips straightened out with long pain;
 And at our breasts, fallen and seared as a barren hill;
 And at our hands, worn with toil!
 Ah, hour of the hours,
 When, seeing, he seeth all the bitter ruin and wreck of
 us—
 All save the violated womb that curses him—
 All save the heart that forbearth . . . for pity—
 All save the living brain that condemneth him—

All save the spirit that shall not mate with him—
All save the soul he shall never see
Till he be one with it, and equal ;
He who hath the bridle, but guideth not ;
He who hath the whip, yet is driven ;
He who as a shepherd calleth upon us,
But is himself a lost sheep, crying among the hills !
O Spirit, and the Nine Angels who watch us,
And Thy Son, and Mary Virgin,
Heal us of the wrong of man :
We whose breasts are weary with milk,
Cry, cry to Thee, O Compassionate !

The Rune of the Sorrow of Women.

*This is the rune of the women who bear in sorrow :
Who, having anguish of body, die in the pangs of bearing,
Who, with the ebb at the heart, pass ere the wane of the
babe-month.*

THE RUNE.



WE are tired, we are tired, all we who
are weary :

Heavy the breasts with milk that never
shall nourish :

Heavy the womb that never again shall be
weighty.

For we have the burthen upon us, we have the burthen,
The long slow pain, and the sorrow of going, and the
parting.

O little hands, O little lips, farewell and farewell.

Bitter the sorrow of bearing only to end with the
parting.

THE DREAM.

Far away in the east of the world a Woman had
sorrow.

Heavy she was with child, and the pains were upon
her.

Then God looked forth out of heaven, and he spake in
his pity :

“O Mary, thou bearest the Prince of Peace, and thy
seed shall be blesséd.”

But Mary the Mother sighed, and God the All-Seeing
wondered,

For this is the rune he heard in the heart of Mary the
Virgin.

Man blindfold soweth the seed, and blindly he reapeth :
And lo the word of the Lord is a blessing upon the
sower.

O what of the blessing upon the field that is sown,
What of the sown, not the sower, what of the mother,
the bearer ?

Sure it is this that I see: that everywhere over the
world

The man has the pain and the sorrow, the weary womb
and the travail !

Everywhere patient he is, restraining the tears of his
patience,

Slow in upbraiding, swift in passion unselfish,
Bearing his pain in silence, in silence the shame and the
anguish :

Slow, slow he is to put the blame on the love of the
woman :

Slow to say that she led him astray, swift ever to love
and excuse her :

O 'tis a good thing, and glad I am at the seeing,
That man who has all the pain and the patient sorrow
and waiting

Keepeth his heart ever young and never upbraideth the
woman

For that she laughs in the sun and taketh the joy of her
living

And holdeth him to her breast, and knoweth pleasure,
And plighteth troth akin to the starry immortals,
And soon forgetteth, and lusteth after another,
And plighteth again, and again, and yet again and
again,

And asketh one thing only of man who is patient and
 loving,—
 This: that he swerve not ever, that faithful he be and
 loyal,
 And know that the sorrow of sorrows is only a law of
 his being,
 And all is well with woman, and the world of woman,
 and God.
 O 'tis a good thing, and glad I am at the seeing!
 And this is the rune of man the bearer of pain and
 sorrow,
 The father who giveth the babe his youth, his joy and
 the life of his living!

(And high in His Heaven God the All-Seeing
 troubled.)

THE RUNE.

O we are tired, we are tired, all we who are weary:
 Heavy the breasts with milk that never shall nourish:
 Heavy the womb that never again shall be fruitful:
 Heavy the hearts that never again shall be weighty.
 For we have the burthen upon us, we have the burthen,
 The long slow pain, and the sorrow of going, and the
 parting.
 O little hands, O little lips, farewell and farewell:
 Bitter the sorrow of bearing only to end with the
 parting,
 Bitter the sorrow of bearing only to end with the
 parting.

The Rune of the Passion of Women.



who love are those who suffer,
We who suffer most are those who most
do love.

O the heartbreak come of longing love,
O the heartbreak come of love deferred,
O the heartbreak come of love grown listless.

Far upon the lonely hills I have heard the crying,
The lamentable crying of the ewes,
And dreamed I heard the sorrow of poor mothers
Made lambless too and weary with that sorrow :
And far upon the waves I have heard the crying,
The lamentable crying of the seamews,
And dreamed I heard the wailing of the women
Whose hearts are flamed with love above the grave-
stone,

Whose hearts beat fast but hear no fellow-beating.
Bitter, alas, the sorrow of lonely women,
When no man by the ingle sits, and in the cradle
No little flower-like faces flush with slumber :
Bitter the loss of these, the lonely silence,
The void bed, the hearthside void,
The void heart, and only the grave not void :
But bitterer, oh more bitter still, the longing
Of women who have known no love at all, who
never,

Never, never, have grown hot and cold with rapture
'Neath the lips or 'neath the clasp of longing,
Who have never opened eyes of heaven to man's
devotion,

Who have never heard a husband whisper "wife,"
Who have lost their youth, their dreams, their fair-
ness,

In a vain upgrowing to a light that comes not.

Bitter these: but bitterer than either,
 O most bitter for the heart of woman
 To have loved and been beloved with passion,
 To have known the height and depth, the vision
 Of triple-flaming love—and in the heart-self
 Sung a song of deathless love, immortal,
 Sunrise-haired, and starry-eyed, and wondrous:
 To have felt the brain sustain the mighty
 Weight and reach of thought unspanned and spanless,
 To have felt the soul grow large and noble,
 To have felt the spirit dauntless, eager, swift in hope
 and daring,
 To have felt the body grow in fairness,
 All the glory and the beauty of the body
 Thrill with joy of living, feel the bosom
 Rise and fall with sudden tides of passion,
 Feel the lift of soul to soul, and know the rapture
 Of the rising triumph of the ultimate dream
 Beyond the pale place of defeated dreams:
 To know all this, to feel all this, to be a woman
 Crowned with the double crown of lily and rose
 And have the morning star to rule the golden hours
 And have the evening star thro' hours of dream,
 To live, to do, to act, to dream, to hope,
 To be a perfect woman with the full
 Sweet, wondrous, and consummate joy
 Of womanhood fulfilled to all desire—
 And then . . . oh then, to know the waning of the
 vision,
 To go through days and nights of starless longing,
 Through nights and days of gloom and bitter sorrow:
 To see the fairness of the body passing,
 To see the beauty wither, the sweet colour
 Fade, the coming of the wintry lines
 Upon pale faces chilled with idle loving,
 The slow subsidence of the tides of living.
 To feel all this, and know the desolate sorrow

Of the pale place of all defeated dreams,
 And to cry out with aching lips, and vainly ;
 And to cry out with aching heart, and vainly ;
 And to cry out with aching brain, and vainly ;
 And to cry out with aching soul, and vainly ;
 To cry, cry, cry with passionate heartbreak, sobbing,
 To the dim wondrous shape of Love Retreating—
 To grope blindly for the warm hand, for the swift
 touch,
 To seek blindly for the starry lamps of passion,
 To crave blindly for the dear words of longing !
 To go forth cold, and drear, and lonely, O so lonely,
 With the heart-cry even as the crying,
 The lamentable crying on the hills
 When lambless ewes go desolately astray—
 Yea, to go forth discrowned at last, who have worn
 The flower-sweet lovely crown of rapturous love :
 To know the eyes have lost their starry wonder ;
 To know the hair no more a fragrant dusk is
 Wherein to whisper secrets of deep longing,
 To know the breasts shall henceforth be no haven
 For the dear weary head that loved to lie there—
 To go, to know, and yet to live and suffer,
 To be as use and wont demand, to fly no signal
 That the soul founders in a sea of sorrow,
 But to be "true," "a woman," "patient," "tender,"
 "Divinely acquiescent," all-forbearing,
 To laugh, and smile, to comfort, to sustain,
 To do all this—oh this is bitterest,
 O this the heaviest cross, O this the tree
 Whereon the woman hath her crucifixion.

But O ye women, what avail? Behold,
 Men worship at the tree, whereon is writ
 The legend of the broken hearts of women.

And this is the end : for young and old the end :
For fair and sweet, for those not sweet nor fair,
For loved, unloved, and those who once were loved,
For all the women of all this weary world
Of joy too brief and sorrow far too long,
This is the end : the cross, the bitter tree,
And worship of the phantom raised on high
Out of your love, your passion, your despair,
Hopes unfulfilled, and unavailing tears.

The Faring of the Tide.



“**FATHER, Son, and Holy Spirit,**
Be the Three-in-one with us day and
night,
On the crested wave, when waves run
high!”

Out of the place in the West
 Where Tir-na'n-Òg, the Land of Youth
 Is, the Land of Youth everlasting,
 Send the great tide that carries the sea-weed
 And brings the birds, out of the North :
 And bid it wind as a snake through the bracken,
 As a great snake through the heather of the sea,
 The fair blooming heather of the sunlit sea.
 And may it bring the fish to our nets,
 And the great fish to our lines :
 And may it sweep away the sea-hounds
 That devour the herring :
 And may it drown the heavy pollack
 That respect not our nets
 But fall into and tear them and ruin them wholly.
 And may I, or any that is of my blood,
 Behold not the Wave-Haunter who comes in with the
 Tide ;
 Or the Maighdeann-màra who broods in the shallows,
 Where the sea-caves are, in the ebb.
 And fair may my fishing be, and the fishing of those
 near to me,
 And good may this Tide be, and good may it bring :
 And may there be no calling in the Flow, this Srùth-
 màra,
 And may there be no burden in the ebb ! ochone !

The Rune of the Black Seal.



O, ro, O black Seal, O black Seal!
 In the name of the Father,
 And of the Son,
 And of the Holy Ghost,
 O Seal of the deep sea, O black Seal!

Hearken the thing that I say to thee,
 I, Phadric MacAlastair MhicCrae,
 Who dwells in a house on the Island
 That you look on night and day from Soa!
 For I put rosad upon thee,
 And upon the woman-seal that won thee,
 And the women-seal that are thine,
 And the young that thou hast;
 Ay, upon thee and all thy kin
 I put rosad, O Ron dubh, O Ron-à-mhàra!

And may no harm come to me or mine,
 Or to any fishing or snaring that is of me;
 Or to any sailing by storm or dusk,
 Or when the moonshine fills the blind eyes of the dead,
 No harm to me or mine
 From thee or thine!

The Rune of M̀anus MacCodrum.



IT is I, M̀anus MacCodrum,
 I am telling you that, you, Anndra of my
 blood,
 And you, Neil my grandfather, and you,
 and you, and you!
 Ay, ay, M̀anus my name is, M̀anus
 MacM̀anus!

It is I myself, and no other,
 Your brother, O Seals of the Sea!
 Give me blood of the red fish,
 And a bite of the flying sgadan:
 The green wave on my belly,
 And the foam in my eyes!
 I am your bull-brother, O Bulls of the Sea,
 Bull-better than any of you, snarling bulls!
 Come to me, mate, seal of the soft furry womb,
 White am I still, though red shall I be,
 Red with the streaming red blood if any dispute me!
 Aoh, aoh, aoh, ar̀, ho-r̀!
 A man was I, a seal am I,
 My fangs churn the yellow foam from my lips:
 Give way to me, give way to me, Seals of the Sea;
 Give way, for I am f̀ey of the sea
 And the sea-maiden I see there,
 And my name, true, is M̀anus MacCodrum,
 The bull-seal that was a man, Ar̀! Ar̀!

The moment is that where M̀anus, the Seal-Man, plunges into the sea and hails the seals as his blood-kindred. ("The Sin-Eater": p. 204.)

The Spell of the Sight.



BY that which dwells within thee,
 By the lamps that shine upon me,
 By the white light I see litten
 From the brain now sleeping stilly,
 By the silence in the hollows,
 By the wind that slow subsideth,
 By the life-tide slowly ebbing,
 By the death-tide slowly rising,
 By the slowly waning warmth,
 By the chill that slowly groweth,
 By the dusk that slowly creepeth,
 By the darkness near thee,
 By the darkness round thee,
 By the darkness o'er thee—
 O'er thee, round thee, on thee—
 By the one that standeth
 At thy side and waiteth
 Dumb and deaf and blindly,
 By the one that moveth,
 Bendeth, riseth, watcheth,
 By the dim Grave-Spell upon thee,
 By the Silence thou hast wedded. . . .
 May the way thy feet are treading,
 May the tangled lines now crookèd,
 Clear as moonlight lie before me!
Oh! oh! ochrone, ochrone! green the branches bonnie:
Oh! oh! ochrone, ochrone! red the blood-drop berries:
Achrone, arone, arone, arone, I see the green-clad Lady,
She walks the road that's wet with tears, with rustling sorrows
shady . . .
Oh! oh! mo ghraidh,
Mo ghraidh, mo ghraidh!

The Rune of the Four Winds.



By the Voice in the corries
When the Polestar breatheth :

By the Voice on the summits
The dead feet know :

By the soft wet cry
When the Heat-star troubleth :

By the plaining and moaning
Of the Sigh of the Rainbows :

By the four white winds of the world,
Whose father the golden Sun is,
Whose mother the wheeling Moon is,
The North and the South and the East and the West :
By the four good winds of the world,
That Man knoweth,
That One dreadeth,
That God blesseth—

Be all well
On mountain and moorland and lea,
On loch-face and lochan and river,
On shore and shallow and sea !

By the Voice of the Hollow
Where the worm dwelleth :

By the Voice of the Hollow
Where the sea-wave stirs not :

By the Voice of the Hollow
That sun hath not seen yet :

LYRIC RUNES

89

By the three dark winds of the world ;
The chill dull breath of the Grave,
The breath from the depths of the Sea,
The breath of To-morrow :
By the white and dark winds of the world,
The four and the three that are seven,
That Man knoweth,
That One dreadeth,
That God blesseth—

Be all well
On mountain and moorland and lea,
On loch-face and lochan and river,
On shore and shallow and sea !



THE LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR

The first three poems are from The Daughter of the Sun and Silk o' the Kine in "The Sin-Eater." The eleventh and last is in some degree a reminiscence of a haunting quatrain by a young French poet.

LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR 93

Alona.



THOU art the Daughter of the Sun,
Alona!
Even as the sun in a green place,
The light that is upon thy face!
When thou art gone there is dusk on my ways,
Alona!

Thy soul is of sun-fire wrought in clay,
Alona,
The white warm clay that hath for name,
Alona—and for word of fame,
Eilidh—and is for me a Flame
To burn against the Eternal Day,
Alona!

The hills know thee, and the green woods,
Alona,
And the wide sea, and the blue loch, and the stream:
On thy brow, Daughter of the Sun, is a gleam
The mystery of Dream,—
Alona!

The fires of the sun that burn thee,
Alona,
O, heart of my heart, are in me!
Thy fire burns, thy flame killeth, thy sea
Of light blazeth continually—
Is there no rest in joy, no rest, no rest for me
Whom rapture slayeth utterly,
Alona, Alona!

Alona is the Anglicised form of an old Gaelic word signifying "exquisitely beautiful." The name Eilidh used here and throughout the following poems is pronounced Eily (Isle-ih).

94 LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR

Eilidh.



COME to my life that is already yours, and at
one with you :

Come to my blood that leaps because of
you,

Come to my heart that holds you, Eilidh,
Come to my heart that holds you as the
green earth clasps and holds the
sunlight,

Come to me! Come to me, Eilidh!

LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR 95

Silk o' the Kine.



ILIDH, Eilidh, heart of my life, my pulse,
my flame,

There are two men loving thee and two
who are calling thee wife :

But only one husband to thee, Eilidh, that art my wife,
and my joy ;

Ay, sure, thy womb knows me, and the child thou
bearest is mine.

Thou to me, I to thee, there is nought else in the
world, Eilidh Silk o' the Kine ;

Nought else in the world, no, no other man for thee, no
woman for me !

96 LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR

Thy Dark Eyes to Mine.



THY dark eyes to mine, Eilidh,
Lamps of desire!
O how my soul leaps
Leaps to their fire!

Sure, now, if I in heaven,
Dreaming in bliss,
Heard but the whisper,
But the lost echo even
Of one such kiss—

All of the Soul of me
Would leap afar—
If that called me to thee,
Aye, I would leap afar
A falling star!

LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR 97

Eilidh, my Fawn.



"**FAR** away upon the hills at the lighting
of the dawn
I saw a stirring in the fern and out there
leapt a fawn:
And O my heart was up at that and like
the wind it blew
Till its shadow hovered o'er the fawn as 'mid the fern
it flew.

And Eilidh! Eilidh! Eilidh! was the wind song on
the hill,
And Eilidh! Eilidh! Eilidh! did the echoing corries
fill:
My hunting heart was glad indeed, at the lighting of
the dawn,
For O it was the hunting then of my bonnie bonnie
Fawn!

98 LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR
Cor Cordium.




SWEET Heart, true heart, strong heart, star
of my life, oh never
For thee the lowered banner, the lost
endeavour!
The weapons are still unforged that thee
and me shall dissever,
For I in thy heart have dwelling, and thou too in mine
for ever.

Can a silken cord strangle love, or a steel sword sever?
Or be as a bruised reed, the flow'r of joy for ever?
Love is a beautiful dream, a deathless endeavour,
And for thee the lowered banner, O Sweet Heart, never!

LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR 99

Love in Absence.

“ND dost thou love me not a whit the less:
And is thy heart as tremulous as of yore,
And do thine eyes mirror the wonderful-
ness,
And do thy lips retain their magic lore?”
What, Sweet, can these things be, ev'n
in thy thought,

And I so briefly gone, so swiftly come?
Nay, if the pulse of life its beat forgot
This speaking heart would not thereby be dumb.

I love thee, love thee so, O beautiful Hell
That dost consume heart, brain, nerves, body, soul,
That even my immortal birthright I would sell
Were Heaven to choose, or Thee, as my one goal.
Sweet love fulfilled, they say, the common lot!
He, who speaks thus, of real love knoweth not!

100 LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR

The Unborn Child.



CHILD of no mortal birth, that yet doth live,
Where loiterest thou, O blossom of our joy?
Unsummon'd hence, dost thou, knowing
all, forgive?
Thy rainbow-rapture, doth it never cloy?
O exquisite dream, dear child of our desire,
On mounting wings flitt'st thou afar from here?
We cannot reach thee who dost never tire,—
Sweet phantom of delight, appear, appear!
How lovely must thou be, wrought of her womb,
With eyes as proud as hers and face as fair,
And round about thee as a fragrant gloom
The falling twilight of her shadowy hair,
And all the love and passion of thy sire
With hers re-wed in thy white heart of fire!

The Closing Doors.



EILIDH, Eilidh, Eilidh, heart of me, dear
and sweet!
In dreams I am hearing the whisper, the
sound of your coming feet:
The sound of your coming feet that like
the sea-hoofs beat
A music by day and night, Eilidh, on the sands of my
heart, my sweet!

O sands of my heart, what wind moans low along thy
shadowy shore?
Is that the deep sea-heart I hear with the dying sob at
its core?
Each dim lost wave that lapses is like a closing door:
'Tis closing doors they hear at last who soon shall hear
no more,
Who soon shall hear no more.

Eilidh, Eilidh, Eilidh, come home, come home to the
heart o' me:
It is pain I am having ever, Eilidh, a pain that will
not be:
Come home, come home, for closing doors are as the
waves o' the sea,
Once closed they are closed for ever, Eilidh, lost, lost,
for thee and me,
Lost, lost, for thee and me.

102 LOVE SONGS OF IAN MÒR

Home.



HEART that is breaking,
Breaking, breaking :
O for the home that I canna, canna win !
The weary aching,
The weary, weary aching
To be in the home that I canna, canna
win !

For O the long home sickness,
The long, long home sickness !
'Tis slow, slow death for me who longs for home, for
home !
And a heart is breaking,
I know a heart that's breaking,
All to be at home at last, to be at home, at home,
O Eilidh, Eilidh,
Home, Home, Home !

At the Last.



HE cometh no more :
Time, too, is dead.
The last tide is led
From the last shore.
Eternity
What is Eternity
But the sea coming,
The sea going,
For evermore.

FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN

*“Praised be the fathomless universe,
For life and joy . . . and for love, sweet love.”*

WALT WHITMAN.

“A secret vision in our soul will hallow life.”

White Star of Time.



ACH love-thought in thy mind doth rise
As some white cloud at even,
Till in sweet dews it falls on me
Athirst for thee, my Heaven!

My Heaven, my Heaven, thou art so far!
Stoop, since I cannot climb:
I would this wandering fire were lost
In thee, white Star of Time!

Green Branches.



WAVE, wave, green branches, wave me far
away
To where the forest deepens and the hill-
winds, sleeping, stay :
Where Peace doth fold her twilight wings,
and through the heart of day
There goes the rumour of passing hours grown faint
and grey.

Wave, wave, green branches, my heart like a bird doth
hover
Above the nesting-place your green-gloom shadows
cover :
O come to my nesting heart, come close, come close,
bend over,
Joy of my heart, my life, my prince, my lover !

FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN 109

Shule, Shule, Shule, agrah !



His face was glad as dawn to me,
His breath was sweet as dusk to me,
His eyes were burning flames to me,
Shule, Shule, Shule, agrah!

The broad noon-day was night to me,
The full-moon night was dark to me,
The stars whirled and the poles span
The hour God took him far from me.

Perhaps he dreams in heaven now,
Perhaps he doth in worship bow,
A white flame round his foam-white brow,
Shule, Shule, Shule, agrah!

I laugh to think of him like this,
Who once found all his joy and bliss
Against my heart, against my kiss,
Shule, Shule, Shule, agrah!

Star of my joy, art still the same
Now thou hast gotten a new name?
Pulse of my heart, my Blood, my Flame,
Shule, Shule, Shule, agrah!

I do not give the correct spelling of the Gaelic.
The line signifies "Move, move, move to me, my
Heart."

110 FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN

Lord of My Life.



HE laid his dear face next to mine,
His eyes aflame burned close to mine,
His heart to mine, his lips to mine,
O he was mine, all mine, all mine.

Drunk with old wine of love I was,
Drunk as the wild bee in the grass :
Yea, as the wild bee in the grass,
Drunk, drunk, with wine of love I was !

His lips of life to me were lief,
Beneath him I was but a leaf
Blown by the wind, a shaken leaf,
Yea, as the sickle reaps the sheaf,
My Grief!
He reaped me as a gathered sheaf !

His to be gathered, his the bliss,
But not a greater bliss than this !
All of the empty world to miss
For wild redemption of his kiss !
My Grief !

For hell was lost, though heaven was brief
Sphered in the universe of thy kiss—
So cries to thee thy fallen leaf,
Thy gathered sheaf,
Lord of my life, my Pride, my Chief,
My Grief !

FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN III

An Inscription.



REEN Fire of Joy, Green Fire of Life,
Be with you thro' the Stress and Strife—
Be with you thro' the Shadow and Shine,
The immortal Ichor, the immortal Wine.

Drink deep of the immortal Wine,
It gives the laughter to the Strife,
Drink deep, and thro' the Shadow and Shine
Rejoice in the Green Fire of Life.

112 FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN

Pulse of my Heart.



ARE these your eyes, Ian,
That look into mine?
Is this smile, this laugh,
Thine?

Heart of me, dear,
O pulse of my heart,
This is our child, our child—
And . . . we apart!

Wrought of thy life, Ian,
Wrought in my womb,
Never to feel thy kiss!—
Ah, bitter doom!

Live, live, thou laughing boy,
We meet again!
Here do we part, we twain:
I to my death-sweet pain,
Thou to thy span of joy.

Hush, hush: within thine eyes
His eyes I see.
Sure, death is Paradise
If so my soul can be,
Ian, with thee!

FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN 113

My Birdeen.



O H bonnie birdeen,
Sweet bird of my heart—
Tell me, O tell me,
How shall we part?

He calls me, he cries,
Who is father to thee:
O birdeen, his eyes
In these blue eyes I see.

Thou art wrought of our joy,
Of our joy that was slain:
My birdeen, my boy,
My passion, my pain.

114 FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN

Isla.



ISLA, Isla, heart of my heart, it is you alone
I am loving—
Pulse of my life, my flame, my joy, love is
a bitter thing!
Love has its killing pain, they say—and
you alone I am loving—
Isla, Isla, my pride, my king, love is a bitter thing!

Isla, Isla, in the underworld where the elfin-music is,
There we shall meet one day at last, as the wave
with the wind o' the south!
Then you shall cry, "My Dream, my Queen!" and
crown me with your kiss,
And I to my kingdom come, my king, my mouth to
thy mouth!

Isla, a frequent name in the West, is pronounced
Isle-ă.

Hushing Song.



EILIDH, Eilidh,
My bonnie wee lass :
The winds blow,
And the hours pass.

But never a wind
Can do thee wrong,
Brown Birdeen, singing
Thy bird-heart song.

And never an hour
But has for thee
Blue of the heaven
And green of the sea :

Blue for the hope of thee,
Eilidh, Eilidh ;
Green for the joy of thee,
Eilidh, Eilidh.

Swing in thy nest, then,
Here on my heart,
Birdeen, Birdeen,
Here on my heart,
Here on my heart !

As it occurs here and in the ensuing poems, I may repeat that the name Eilidh is pronounced Eily. In the verses entitled "Mo-Lennav-a-Chree" (My darling wee wean) there is a partial repetition of lines used in "The Closing Doors" (p. 101).

116 FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN

Lullaby.



ENNAVAN-MO,

Lennavan-mo,
Who is it swinging you to and fro,
With a long low swing and a sweet low
croon,
And the loving words of the mother's rune?

Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo,
Who is it swinging you to and fro?
I am thinking it is an angel fair,
The Angel that looks on the gulf from the lowest stair
And swings the green world upward by its leagues of
sunshine hair.

Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo,
Who swingeth you and the Angel to and fro?
It is He whose faintest thought is a world afar,
It is He whose wish is a leaping seven-moon'd star,
It is He, Lennavan-mo,
To whom you and I and all things flow.

Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo,
It is only a little wee lass you are, Eilidh-mo-chree,
But as this wee blossom has roots in the depths of the
sky,
So you are at one with the Lord of Eternity—
Bonnie wee lass that you are,
My morning-star,
Eilidh-mo-chree, Lennavan-mo,
Lennavan-mo.

FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN 117

Mo-Lennav-a-Chree.



EILIDH, Eilidh, Eilidh, dear to me, dear and
sweet,

In dreams I am hearing the noise of your
little running feet—

The noise of your running feet that like
the sea-hoofs beat

A music by day and night, Eilidh, on the sands of my
heart, my Sweet!

Eilidh, blue i' the eyes, as all babe-children are,
And white as the canna that blows with the hill-breast
wind afar,

Whose is the light in thine eyes—the light of a star?—
a star

That sitteth supreme where the starry lights of heaven
a glory are!

Eilidh, Eilidh, Eilidh, put off your wee hands from the
heart o' me,

It is pain they are making there, where no more pain
should be:

For little running feet, an' wee white hands, an' croodlin'
as of the sea,

Bring tears to my eyes, Eilidh, tears, tears, out of the
heart o' me—

Mo-lennav-a-chree,
Mo-lennav-a-chree!

118 FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN

The Lonely Hunter.



GREEN branches, green branches, I see you
beckon ; I follow !
Sweet is the place you guard, there in the
rowan-tree hollow.
There he lies in the darkness, under the
frail white flowers,
Heedless at last, in the silence, of these sweet mid-
summer hours.

But sweeter, it may be, the moss whereon he is sleep-
ing now,
And sweeter the fragrant flowers that may crown his
moon-white brow :
And sweeter the shady place deep in an Eden hollow
Wherein he dreams I am with him—and, dreaming,
whispers, " Follow ! "

Green wind from the green-gold branches, what is the
song you bring ?
What are all songs for me, now, who no more care to
sing ?
Deep in the heart of Summer, sweet is life to me
still,
But my heart is a lonely hunter that hunts on a lonely
hill.

Green is that hill and lonely, set far in a shadowy
place ;
White is the hunter's quarry, a lost-loved human
face :

FROM THE HEART OF A WOMAN 119

O hunting heart, shall you find it, with arrow of failing
breath,
Led o'er a green hill lonely by the shadowy hound of
Death?

Green branches, green branches, you sing of a sorrow
olden,
But now it is midsummer weather, earth-young, sun-
ripe, golden:
Here I stand and I wait, here in the rowan-tree hollow,
But never a green leaf whispers, "Follow, oh, Follow,
Follow!"

O never a green leaf whispers, where the green-gold
branches swing:
O never a song I hear now, where one was wont to
sing.
Here in the heart of Summer, sweet is life to me still,
But my heart is a lonely hunter that hunts on a lonely
hill.

THE SILENCE OF AMOR

“ Are they gone, these twain, who loved with deathless love? Or is this a dream that I have dreamed ?

“ Afar in an island-sanctuary that I shall not see again, where the wind chants the blind oblivious rune of Time, I have heard the grasses whisper: Time never was, Time is not.”

“ ULA AND URLA.”

TO
ESCLARMOUNDO.

There is one word never spoken in these estrays of passion and longing. But you, White Flower of these fugitive blossoms, know it: for the rustle of the wings of Amor awakens you at dawn, and in the last quietudes of the dark your heart is his dear haven of dream.

For, truly, that wandering voice, that twilight-whisper, that breath so dewy-sweet, that flame-wing'd luteplayer whom none sees but for a moment, in a rainbow-shimmer of joy, or a sudden lightning-flare of passion, this exquisite mystery we call Amor, comes, to some rapt visionaries at least, not with a song upon the lips that all may hear, or with blithe viol of a public music, but as one wrought by ecstasy, dumbly eloquent with desire, ineffable, silent.

For Amor is oftentimes a dreamer, and when he dreams it is through lovely analogies. He speaks not, he whispers not, who in the flight of the wild swan against the frosty stars, or the interlaceries of

*black branches against the moonlight, or the abrupt
song of a bird in the green-gloom of the forest, hears
the voice that is all Music for him, sees the face
of his unattainable Desire. These things are his
silences, wherein his heart and his passion commune.
And being his, they are mine : to lay before you,
Dear ; as a worshipper, wrought to incommunicable
pain, lays white flowers before the altar, which is
his Sanctuary and the Ivory Gate of his Joy.*

The Shadowy Woodlands.



ABOVE the shadowy woodlands I hear the voice of the cuckoo, sailing like a silver skiff upon the moonflood.

I hear the far-off plaint of the cuckoo sink deep through the moonshine above the shadowy woodlands. At last, in the dense shadow of the wood, the moonlight sleeps.

At the Rising of the Moon.



At the rising of the moon I heard the falling
echo of a song, down by the linn where
the wild-brier hangs over the swirling
foam. Ah swirling foam, ah poignant
breath of the wild brier, now that I hear
no haunting-sweet echo of a falling song at the rising
of the moon.

Nocturne.

BY dim, mauve and dream-white bushes of lilac I pass to the cypress alley, and to the mere which lies breathless in the moonshine. A fish leaps, a momentary flame of fire. Then all is still again on the moonlit mere, where, breathless, it lies beyond the cypress alley. In the vague moonshine of the cypress alley I pass again, a silent shadow, by the dim, mauve and dream-white bushes of lilac.

Lances of Gold.

THE afternoon has drowsed through the sun-flood. The green leaves have grown golden, saturated with light. And now, at the sudden whirling of the lances of gold, a cloud of wild-doves arises from the pines, wheels against the sunblaze, and flashes out of sight, flames of purple and rose, of foam-white and pink. I know the green hidden nests of the wild doves, when ye come again, O whirling lances of gold!

The Nightjar.



LOW upon a pine-branch a nightjar leans and sings his churring song. He sings his churring song to his mate, who, poised upon a juniper hard by, listens with quivering wings.

The whirring of the nightjar fills the dusk, heavy with the fragrance of new-mown hay. There is neither star nor moon in the dim, flowing darkness, only the red and yellow wayfaring flames where the glow-worms are. Like a wandering wave, in the dewy dark, the churring note of the nightjar rises and falls against the juniper bush hard by.

The Twilit Waters.



UPON the dim seas in the twilight I hear the tide forging slowly through the still waters. There is not a sound else : neither the scream of a sea-mew, nor the harsh cry of the heron, nor the idle song of the wind : only the steadfast forging of the tide through the still waters of the twilit seas. O steadfast onward tide, O gloaming-hidden palpitating seas !

Evoë!



OCEANWARD, the sea-horses sweep magnificently, champing and whirling white foam about their green flanks, and tossing on high their manes of sunlit rainbow-gold, dazzling white and multitudinous far as sight can reach.

O champing horses of my soul, toss, toss on high your sunlit manes, your manes of rainbow-gold, dazzling white and multitudinous: for I too rejoice, rejoice!

Grey and Rose.



I WATCHED the greying of the dawn suspiring into rose. Then a yellow ripple came out of the narrow corrie at the summit of the hill. The yellow ripple ran like the running tide through the flushing grey, and washed in among the sprays of a birch beside me and among the rowan-clusters of a mountain-ash. But at the falling of the sun the yellow ripple was an ebbing tide, and the sprays of the birch were as a perishing flame and the rowan-berries were red as drops of blood. Thereafter I watched the rose slow fading into the grey veils of dusk. O greying of my dawn suspiring into rose: O grey veils of dusk that obscure the tender flushing of my rose-lit dawn!

High Noon.



TO-DAY, as I walked at high noon, listening to the larks filling the April blue with a spray of delicate song, I saw a shadow pass me, where no one was, and where nothing moved, above me or around.

It was not my shadow that passed me, nor the shadow of one for whom I longed. That other shadow came not.

I have heard that there is a god clothed in shadow who goes to and fro among the human kind, putting silence between hearts with his waving hands, and breathing a chill out of his cold breath, and leaving a gulf as of deep waters flowing between them because of the passing of his feet.

Thus, thus it was that that other shadow for which I longed came not. Yet, in the April blue I heard the wild aerial chimes of song, and watched the golden fulfilment of the day under the high illimitable arch of noon.

The White Merle.



LONG, long ago, a white merle flew out of Eden. Its song has been in the world ever since, but few there are who have seen the flash of its white wings through the green-gloom of the living wood—the sun-splashed, rain-drenched, mist-girt, storm-beat wood of human life.

But to-day, as I came through the wood, under an arch of tempest, and led by lightnings, I passed into a green sun-splashed place. There, there, I heard the singing of a rapt song of joy! there, ah there I saw the flash of white wings!

The Immortals.



I SAW the Weaver of Dream, an immortal shape of star-eyed Silence; and the Weaver of Death, a lovely Dusk with a heart of hidden flame: and each wove with the shuttles of Beauty and Wonder and Mystery.

I knew not which was the more fair: for Death seemed to me as Love, and in the eyes of Dream I saw Joy. Oh, come, come to me, Weaver of Dream! Come, come unto me, O Lovely Dusk, thou that hast the heart of hidden flame!


The Weaver of Hope.



AGAIN I saw a beautiful lordly one. He too lifted the three shuttles of Beauty and Wonder and Mystery, and wove a mist of rainbows. Rainbow after rainbow he wrought out of the mist of glory that he made, and sent each forth to drift across the desert of the human soul, and o'er every haunted valley of defeated dreams.

O drifting rainbows of Hope, I know a pale place, a haunted valley of defeated dreams.

The Golden Tides.

HE moon lay low above the sea, and all the flowing gold and flashing silver of the rippling running water seemed to be a flood going that way and falling into the shining hollow of the moon. O, that the tides of my heart, for ever flowing one way, might fall to rest in the hollow of a golden moon.

Nocturne.



PALE golden flame illumines the suspended billows of the forest. Star after star emerges, where the moongold laps the velvet-soft shores of dusk. Slowly the yellowing flame arises like smoke among the dark-blue depths. The white rays of the stars wander over the moveless, over the shadowless and breathless green lawns of the tree-tops. O would that I were a star lost deep within the paling yellow flame that illumines the suspended billows of the forest.

The Reed Player.



SAW one put a hollow reed to his lips. It was a forlorn, sweet air that he played, an ancient forgotten strain learned of a shepherding woman upon the hills. The Song of Songs it was that he played: and the beating of hearts was heard, and I heard sighs, and a voice like a distant bird-song rose and fell.

"Play me a song of Death," I said. Then he who had the hollow reed at his lips smiled, and he played again the Song of Songs.

Hy Bràsil.



I HEARD the voice of the wind among the pines. It was as the tide coming over smooth sands. On the red pine-boles the sun flamed goldenly out of the west. In falling cadences the cuckoos called across the tides of light.

In dreams, now, I hear the cuckoos calling across a dim sea of light, there where a sun that never rose nor set flames goldenly upon ancient trees, in whose midst the wind goes sighingly, with a sound as of the tide slipping swift over smooth sands. And I hear a solitary voice singing there, where I stand beside the gold-flamed pine-boles and look with hungry eyes against the light of a sun that never rose nor set.

The Wild Bees.

THERE was a man, seeking Peace, who found a precious treasure in the heather, when the bells were sweet with honey-ooze. Did the wild bees know of it? Would that I could hear the soft hum of their gauzy wings.

Where blooms that heather, and what wind is it that moveth the bells that are sweet with the honey-ooze? Only the wild bees know of it; but I think they must be the bees of Magh-Mell, the bees that make a sweet sound in the drowsy ears of those who beneath the heather have indeed found rest by the dim waysides of Peace.

Whirled Stars.



THE rain has ceased falling softly through the dusk. A cool green wind flows through the deeps of air. The stars are as wind-whirled fruit blown upward from the tree-tops. Full-orbed, and with a pulse of flame, the moon leads a tide of quiet light over the brown shores of the world.

But here, here where I stand upon the brown shores of the world, in the shine of that quiet flame where, full-orbed, the moon uplifts the dark, I think only of the stars as wind-whirled fruit blown upward from the tree-tops. I think only of that wind that blew upon the tree-tops, where the whirling stars spun in a mazy dance, when, at last, the rain had ceased falling softly through the dusk. O wind-whirled stars, O secret falling rain!

Orchil.



DREAMED of Orchil, the dim goddess who is under the brown earth, in a vast cavern, where she weaves at two looms. With one hand she weaves life upward through the grass; with the other she weaves death downward through the mould: and the sound of the weaving is Eternity, and the name of it in the green world is Time. And, through all, Orchil weaves the web of Eternal Beauty, that passeth not, though its soul is Change.

This is my comfort, O Beauty that art of Time, who am faint and hopeless in the strong sound of that other Weaving, where Orchil, the dim goddess, sits dreaming at her loom under the brown earth.

Fuit Ilium.



SEE the lift of the dark, the lovely advance of the lunar twilight, the miracle of the yellow bloom—golden here and here white as frost-fire—upon sea and land. I see, and yet see not. I hear the muffled voice of ocean and soft recurrent whisperings of the foam-white runnels at my feet: I hear, and yet hear not. But one sound, one voice, I hear: one gleam, one vision, I see: O irrevocable, ineffable Desire!

The Sea Shell.



IN the heart of the shell a wild-rose flush lies shut from wind or wave; lies close, and dreams to the unceasing lullaby that the sea-shell sings.

O would that I were that wild-rose flush, shut close from wind or wave: O would that I were that wild-rose flush to dream for ever to the unceasing song my sea-shell sings.

The White Procession.



ONE by one the stars come forth—solemn eyes watching for ever the white procession move onward orderly where there is neither height, nor depth, nor beginning, nor end.

In the vast stellar space the moonglow wanes until it grows cold, white, ineffably remote. Only upon our little dusky earth, upon our restless span of waters, the light descends in a tender warmth.

Deep gladness to me, though but the creature of an hour, that I am on this little moonlit dusky earth. Too cold, too white, too ineffably remote the moonglow in these vast wastes of Infinity where, one by one, the constellations roam—solemn witnesses watching for ever the white procession move onward orderly where there is neither height, nor depth, nor beginning, nor end.

The Two Eternities.



TIME never was, Time is not. Thus I heard the grasses whisper, the green lips of the wind that chants the blind oblivious rune of Time, far in that island-sanctuary that I shall not see again.

Time never was, Time is not. O Time that was! O Time that is!

The Hills of Dream.

THE tide of noon is upon the hills. Amid leagues of purple heather, of pale amethyst ling, stand isled great yellow-lichened granite boulders, fringed with tawny bracken. In the vast dome of blue there is nought visible save a speck of white, a gannet that drifts above the invisible sea. And through the hot tide of noon goes a breath as of the heart of flame. Far off, far off, I know dim hills of dream, and there my heart suspends as a white bird longing for home: and there, oh there, is a heart of flame, and the breath of it is as the tide of noon upon these hills of dream.

Aerial Chimes.



THROUGH the blue deeps of noon I heard
the cuckoo tolling his infrequent peals from
skiey belfries built of sun and mist.
And now, through the blue deeps of
night, from skiey belfries built of dusk and
stars, I hear the tolling of infrequent peals.

Explicit



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