

The Lonely Crossing And Other Poems

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PREFACE.

“IN putting my house in order” I decided to arrange and publish this unpretentious little collection of verses, some of which were composed before leaving school, and others later on with babe at nurse. Those of widowed years were written for solace when under stress of pain and sorrow. Should they find a place in the hearts of the most humble among my countrywomen I shall feel more than repaid for the trouble and cost of publication.

LOUISA LAWSON.

The Lonely Crossing And Other Poems.

The Lonely Crossing

A man on foot came down to the river,
A silent man, on the road alone,
And dropped his swag with a chill-born shiver,
And sat to rest on a wind-worn stone.

He slid then down to the long grass, bending
His arms above as the resting do,
And watched a snow-white chariot trending
Its wind-made way o'er the wedgewood blue.

In it sat one of the fairest ladies
That mind could mould, in a crown of white,
But close beside came a fiend from Hades
In a chariot black as the heart of night.

The man, he sighed as the fiend would clasp her,
Then smiled as the wind by a wise decree
Her white steeds turned to the streets of Jaspar,
And Satan drave to a sin-black sea.

The wattles waved, and their sweet reflection
In crystal fathoms responses made;
The sunlight silted each soft inflection
And fretted with silver the short'ning shade.

A restless fish made the thin reeds shiver,
A waking wind made the willows moan,
But the resting man by the noon-bright river
Lay dreaming on, in the long grass prone.

* * * * *

The bell-bird called to its tardy lover,
The grebe clouds all to the west had sped,
But the river of death had a soul crossed over,
The man with the swag on the bank was dead.

Coming Home.

Going round the back street,
Through the twilight lane,
While the folk at church meet —
Coming home again.

Faded hat and creasy,
Long since it was new;
ent-fly torn and greasy,
Bluey showing through.

Billy burnt and battered,
Boots all badly burst,
Lace and lace-holes shattered,
Trousers at their worst.

Blankets like a riddle,
With a streak of white
Down the threadbare middle
When against the light.

Young face lined and sunburnt,
Hair just turning grey;
Many a lesson unlearnt
Since he went away.

But he need not bother,
There's a bite and sup;
And for all the other —
Mother'll fix him up.

Back Again.

Oh, my boy, come in, do,
You are back at last;
Years since last we saw you —
How the time has passed!

Have a bath and shave first?
No? A cup of tea?
Think you want a rest worst?
Dear, oh deary me!

Look, dear, at your boots, too,
All cut with the rocks;
And you haven't, have you,
Any mended socks?

They are always tearing?
Threw them all away?
Alberets you are wearing?
Goodness, what are they?

Felt that you were coming,
So I wrote to Bob;
He says things are humming,
And you'll get a job.

Now, dear, don't come near me,
You're all over dust;
Can you smoke? Oh, dear me,
If you really must.

The Hour Is Come.

How did she fight? She fought well.
How did she light? Ah, she fell.
Why did she fall? God, who knows all,
Only can tell.

Those she was fighting for — they
Surely would go to her? Nay!
What of her pain! Their's is the gain.
Ever the way.

Will they not help her to rise
If there is death in her eyes?
Can you not see? She made them free.
What if she dies ?

Can we not help her? Oh, no!
In her good fight it is so
That all who work never must shirk
Suffring and woe.

But she'll not ever lie down -
On her head, in the dust, is a crown
Jewelled and bright, under whose light
She'll rise alone.

A Friend In Need.

Friends will quickly leave you,
Slight you and deceive you,
Or will not believe you
 If you have a wrong.

Those who hurt will hate you,
Enemies will slate you,
And as crank disrate you
 If you have a wrong.

But if you are righted
Those who coolly slighted
Will be so delighted!
 Said so all along!

But you then can show them
That you would forego them,
As too well you know them
 Since you've had a wrong.

But your friends, God bless them!
Take their hands and press them,
You'll not have to guess them
 If you've had a wrong.

Twilight.

Though labour may claim and cover
The best of our waking hours,
Whatever we owe another
We feel that the dusk is ours.

'Tis then that the hard views taken
Of things in the day-glare seen,
Will soften, and tint, and waken,
And tone 'neath a twilight screen.

While the night-bird softly tenders
Sweet trebles in monotone,
And the king of day surrenders
To the queen of night his throne —

When the earth and the sky are lovers,
And present and past are wed,
And the satisfied soul discovers
How surely God hath led.

And then as the heart confesses
The sins of a selfish way,
The spirit of pardon blesses
And closes the gates of day.

The Reformers.

We lead the way, we lead the way,
We rise alert to meet each day,
We start the fight, we head the fray,
We lead the way, we lead the way.

We turn the sod, we stir the pool,
We point the way to those who rule.
We cheek the rogue, we chide the fool,
We point the way to those who rule.

We bear reverse, we breast rebuff,
We force a way o'er passes rough,
We stand the kick, we take the cuff,
Till Death's stern umpire calls "Enough."

The Hill Of Death.

No downward path to death we go,
Through no dark shades or valleys low,
But up and on, o'er rises bright,
Toward the dawn of endless light.

For not in lowlands can we see
The path that was, and that to be;
But on the height, just where the soul
Takes deeper breath to reach the goal.

There we can see the winding way
That we have journeyed all our day;
Then turn and view, with spirits still,
Our future home beyond the hill.

The Digger's Daughter.

The waratah has stained her cheek,
Her lips are even brighter;
Like virgin quartz without a streak
Her teeth are, but far whiter.
Her eyes are large, and soft, and dark,
And clear as running water;
And straight as any stringy bark
Is Lil, the digger's daughter.

She'll wash a prospect quick and well,
And deftly use the ladle;
The weight of gold at sight she'll tell,
And work with tub and cradle.
She was her father's only mate,
And wound up wash and water;
She worked all day and studied late,
And all she knows he taught her.

She stood alone above the shaft —
A test for woman, rather —
When I sprang to the windlass haft
And helped her land her father.
She turned her pretty face to me
To thank me, and I thought her
The grandest girl of all her race —
Sweet Lil, the digger's daughter.

And when my luck began to change
I grew a trifle bolder
And told my love, but thought it strange
She knew before I told her.
She said that she would be my wife;
Then home I proudly brought her,
To be my loving mate for life, —
But still the digger's daughter.

A Libertine.

There's blood in the ink of her writing,
The paper is stiffened with tears,
And I with my conscience am fighting,
And striving to quiet my fears.

And these are the words she is saying:
"My life I no longer can bear,
For death I am constantly praying.
Oh, when will God answer my prayer?"

* * * * *

I met her when first the faint dawning
Of womanhood tinted her youth,
She then had no past, like the morning,
For she was all candour and truth.

She knelt at my feet in confession,
And asked me for leading and light;
To right, where was no retrogression,
To cleanse what was spotless and white.

She held me in deep veneration,
She looked on me almost as God,
And gave her sweet life's conservation
Of love to the vilest that trod.

I taught her that love was the duty
And life of the angels of light,
Then spoiled her sweet spiritual beauty
And turned her away from the right.

I wooed her in delicate fashion,
Then sullied her soul with my lust;
I poisoned her life with my passion,
And murdered her beautiful trust.

And now her sweet spirit is flitting
To where other sweet spirits wait,
While I with soul-lepers am sitting
In torment at hell's awful gate.

Song Of Bacchus.

I laugh ha, ha! and I laugh ho, ho!
For I think it a goodly thing
To curse the high and to curse the low,
And to rule both Beggar and King.

The light will fly from the brightest eye,
And the bloom from the fairest cheek;
And mirth will die in a sob or sigh,
Where I reve and ramp and reek.

I fill with lust and I poison trust,
And I taint the lover's caress;
I love to hate, I'm insatiate
In my hunger for lawlessness.

I take from its kind the brightest mind
And make it with idiots link;
And oft I fly on the gallows high
A grim effigy done by Drink

I curse the lives of innocent wives
Who could never know ought of me;
But what care I for their blighted lives
Nor the terrible wrongs I see?

I bleach the hair and I line with care
Many faces with thoughts of me;
And flout the prayer that my hand would spare
The pride of the family tree.

I curse the land, and I curse the sea,
While tile poets my praises sing;
And Satan is wrath; he envies me
All the souls of the saints I bring.

A Pound A Mile.

The tar-boy looked perplexed to see
Tom Dawson cut the skin,
And Sweeper Bill remarked that he
Had nothing in the bin.

His eyes for want of sleep were red,
And slow his shears did click,
And whispers went around the shed
That Dawson's wife was sick.

Then kindly spoke old Daddy Tonk:
“Don't look so glum, my lad;
Is she, your missus, very cronk?”
“Yes, mate,” said Tom, “she's — bad.”

“Are there no women on the place ?
There should be two or three.”
“There are, but in my poor wife's case
They say they're ‘all at sea.’”

“Then bring a doctor,” Daddy said;
“Don't let the woman die!”
But Tommy Dawson hung his head
And made him no reply.

“Get Pile to come out if you can,
He'll pull the missus through.
Spend all you have to save her, man,
I would if I were you.”

Then Dawson looked up from the ground,
And white his features grew:
“Look, mate! If you had not a pound
Now tell me what you'd do?”

“What would it cost then, now, to send
And fetch out Dr. Pile?
Some of the men the cash would lend.”
Tom groaned, “A pound a mile.”

“That's stiff, by God!” said Monty Styles,
“The doctor does it brown;
There's sixty-five, I know, good miles
Between us and the town.”

“It is a ‘coo-ey’ with her now,”
Said Dawson, in despair.

I cannot save her anyhow —
I'm euchred everywhere.”

Then up sprang Maori, on the job —
“Here, look, see! There's my quid.
And here, look, see! So help me bob!
There's two from Dick and Syd.”

And in his hat the money fell
From willing hands and free.
“A quid a mile,” said Barney Bell;
“Here goes' I'll give yer three.”

The Boss said, “Put me down for ten,
And catch the blood mare, Ted —
And put her in the sulky then —
Don't wait till she is fed.

“Now, wire the doctor, quick, to come,
And meet me mile for mile;
And, Tommy, man, hold up, old chum.”
(Poor Tommy tried to smile.)

The squatter lit his pipe with care
And drew his chin-strap in,
Then took his seat and touched the mare
And started for the spin.

Then slow the hours of night went by
To those around the shed,
For not a man had closed an eye
Not one had gone to bed.

“She's sinking now,” the women said,
“She can't much longer last;
Before an hour she will be dead,
Her strength is failing fast.”

“I'll go and let the sliprails down,”
The black boy slowly said,
For far along the road to town
He heard a horse's tread.

Then everyone sprang up and bent
A watchful eye and ear,
And soon the boss a “coo-ey” sent
To show that he was near.

Then in the middle of the night
The blood mare, limping, came
All tucked and blown, and wet and white,

And panting hard, but game.

The doctor quick and silently
Then with the women went,
And very soon a baby's cry
Was heard in Dawson's tent.

“Thank God,” he said, “My work is done,”
As Tommy's hand he pressed;
“I've saved your wife and little son,
Let Nature do the rest.”

And then they went into the shed —
The men and Dr. Pile —
And drank his health in Queensland red,
And paid him — pound for mile.

Light In Darkness.

Sickness, sorrow, death, disgrace,
All of these I have to face;
Pain of body, fret of mind,
Poverty, with bread to find.

Restless day and sleepless night,
Dread of darkness, fear of light.
Not a soul to care for me,
Not a friend on earth but thee.

And thou hast a frightened stare
'Neath thine eyelids, unaware.
And, like Him Who raised the dead,
Hast not where to lay thy head.

But because thou lovest me,
For thy sake I'll fight us free
From this deadlock of despair,
From this hell, to heav'n, I swear!

Lines Written During A Night Spent In A Bush Inn.

I wish now this heart with its pleading refrain
Would freeze and be still, then this tumult of pain
That mortals call living would end, and the cast
Of life be as nought but a pestilence past.

This robe I am wearing, as white as a cloud,
With neatly sewn border, would do for a shroud,
And thus I'd be ready, pain-shriven and meet,
With only to straighten my hands and my feet.

No sign would I make when Death's hand on me lay,
No sob would I utter when passing away;
For those in the house need the rest, all too short,
To heal the fatigue that a hard day has brought.

Out on the verandah, asleep on the floor,
With weary feet blistered, and aching and sore,
The tramp dreams of home with his head on his swag,
Nor recks he of drought, or the dry water-bag.

And soundly asleep, with a sun-blistered face,
The drover now dreads not the "breaks" he must chase.
But he must be up at the first peep of light
To "fetch up" the yards for his cattle at night.

And while all the sheep in the hurdles are snug
The black boy must rest on his old 'possum rug.
In dust and in heat he has shouted all day,
And sunrise must see him again on his way.

I looked in the face of Death once, when alone,
And met the grim King without shudder or moan,
So I will not shiver nor shriek with affright
If I have to go with him into the night.

And then they would take me to where I love best,
To where I know well that my spirit would rest,
Where gaudy birds chatter and wild cherries wave,
And sunset would throw a red haze o'er my grave —

Away on the gap, 'neath the big kurrajong
That stretches its branches the granites among,
And forms with its shelter a natural tomb
With rest in its stillness, and peace in its gloom.

And some one among them, with grief in his breast,
Might register roughly the place of my rest

By carving in letters cut deep on its bole
These plain words: "A Woman. May God rest her soul."

In ground that is hallowed let happy folk lie,
But give me a grave in the bush when I die.
For have I not lived, loved, and suffered alone?
Thus making it meet that my grave be unknown.

* * * * *

The sound of the stockwhip away on the hill.
Ah, God! It is day, and I'm suffering still!

“Another For The Queen.”

When you have sunk a score of holes,
And drove a hundred more,
And every blessed one has been
Worse than the one before;

And when on top of this the store
Turns off the tucker “tick,”
'Tis time for you to throw aside
The shovel, dish, and pick —

And take the tightest pinch of all
From dire misfortune's screw;
And humbly barrack for a job
The hated cockatoo.

And if you get it after all,
You'll stagger at his cheek
To offer you a ration mean,
And twelve and-six a week.

Then will your thoughts go sweeping back
Across the dreary sea,
To where the finger-points of time
Show what can never be.

And clearly you, with mental eye,
See far across the main
The perfect home, the gentle friends,
And loves of “ne'er again.”

Ah! then you think the fiends in hell
Have consciousness serene —
Compared with one who sunk his all,
In “duffers for the Queen.”

A Plea For Australia.

Come out from among them, ye sons of Australia!
Come out and denounce them with tongue and with pen.
Tear off from each traitor her honoured regalia,
Give back to Australia her birthright again!

The golden tiara that flashed o'er the mountain,
The girdle of opals like fires on the sea,
Were stolen and scattered like drops from a fountain.
Shall ye, her protectors, say thus shall it be?

To robe her in sackcloth, to crown her with ashes,
Cast lots for her raiment and sully her fame?
Rob, wrong and belie her, until with wet lashes
She bows her fair forehead in sorrow and shame?

She who is so queenly — our tender girl-mother —
Beloved of heroes. By white virgins blest.
From pole unto pole find ye never another
Like her — of Earth's daughters, the fairest and best.

Come out from among them, true sons of Australia!
Come out from among them, and show yourselves men
With courage undaunted, and fearing not failure;
Give back to Australia her prestige again!

Australia.

Australia for ever!
Beloved home giver,
Bright haven of rest the wide ocean between
How many in sorrow
Take heart for the morrow,
When nearing thy borders thy beauty is seen.

The weary world ranger,
The poor and the stranger,
Find all that they need on thy bountiful shore;
With hope's sweet annealing
Soft over them stealing
They bless thee, resolving to wander no more.

Australia for ever!
Fond hearts leap and quiver
With pleasure and pride as they echo thy praise;
And ready whenever
The word is "together,"
To beat or to bleed thy proud banner to raise.

The Winter Wind.

The winter wind! e wh-e-e, e wh-e-e!
It bites and smites and chases me,
And pelts with boughs and shrieks with glee,
This winter wind so fierce and free;
Till wide-eyed stars so white and wee
Peer through the scud all fearsomely.

The love-warm rose no longer now
Clings fondly round fair nature's brow;
But in its place the chill winds roam
Through locks as white as frozen foam.
The winter wind so fierce and free
Has wrought this change. Ah me! Ah me!

Her dress that once was green and bright
Is stiffened sheer and bleached to white.
And where did rose and lily be
Are flecks of frosty filagree.
His breath is death, his voice is dree,
This winter wind so fierce and free.

An Australian Song.

Come gather, brave Australian sons,
And join us in a song,
And if you like the way it runs
Then make it roll along.
For we can hold our own, we can,
In fight or friendly fray,
And conquer in the battle van
As on the fields at play.

— Chorus.

For we hail from a land that is great and grand,
And the pride of the Southern Sea;
'Tis a sunny land, 'tis a golden land,
And the home of the brave and free.

Tho' older nations long have tried
To treat our race with scorn,
It is our boast, our highest pride,
That we're Australian born.
And we can render scorn for scorn,
And laugh at all the sneers,
While in our veins there runs the blood
Of Austral's pioneers.

— Chorus.

For we hail from a land that is great and grand,
And the pride of the Southern Sea;
'Tis a sunny land, 'tis a golden land,
And the home of the brave and free.

For honour's sake we can endure,
Our word is sacred sealed;
Our arm is strong, and aim as sure
As any in the field.
And when we give our hand and word
To help a friend in need,
We face the cannon and the sword,
Nor from our vows recede.

— Chorus.

For we hail from a land that is great and grand,
And the pride of the Southern Sea;
'Tis a sunny land, 'tis a golden land,
And the home of the brave and free.

The Squatter's Wife.

Some years ago a squatter, while on a visit to the city, married a beautiful and gifted girl, who accompanied him to his home in the bush, to find, on arriving there, that the homestead consisted of two bark huts — one for herself, and the other for her husband's black mistress and family.

Lonely hut on barren creek,
Where the rotting sheep-yards reek,
Far away from kith and kin,
None save thee and native gin
Many a weary mile within —
Alice Gertler.

On the creaking blue-gum tree
Moans the bronze-wing drearily,
And anon the curlew's cry
Sharp and shrill goes wailing by
Like a weird Litany —
Alice Gertler.

Waterless the wide lagoon
Crazes 'neath a blood-red moon,
And the "hard times" hated cry
Stifles in a stagnant sky,
While the starving cattle die —
Alice Gertler.

Uncongenial sights for thee,
Gruesome sounds of death and dree;
Filling all the nights with fear,
Making dreary days more drear
All the uneventful year —
Alice Gertler.

None to hearken. And despair
Gives to thee a listless air.
Dear, how long the stretch of pain
Ere will turn a woman's brain,
And her sad tears cease to rain?
Alice Gertler.

Bound to one who loves thee not,
Drunken offspring of a sot;
Even now at wayside inn
Riots he in drink and sin,
Mating with an half-caste gin —

Alice Gertler.

When I think what thou hast borne
Painfully my breast is torn.
Meant I but to pity thee
But love came, unsought, to me,
And I'm sad with loving thee

Alice Gertler.

Still I may not tell thee so.
Thou would'st scorn me well, I know.
With thy fair cheek all aflame
Thou would'st talk of sin and shame,
And me with dishonour blame —

Alice Gertler.

Yes, I met thee all too late,
Thou hadst sealed thy fearful fate.
Better long ago had died
One so full of virtuous pride,
Than unto a fiend allied

Alice Gertler.

Careth aught the world for thee,
Or thy life-long misery?
Thou art gifted, good, and fair,
But neglected; hence a snare
Would entrap thee everywhere,

Alice Gertler

Go to those good men again,
They who bound with ring and pen,
Say he's ta'en thy peace away,
Wronged and used thee cruelly.
Will they touch thy burden? Nay

Alice Gertler.

Girl, it fills me with dismay
Seeing thee give thy life away;
Burned thy cheek is by thy tears,
Wrung thy heart is by thy fears;
Pray thou dost, but no one hears,

Alice Gertler.

But I know thee. Thou wilt stay
Even till thy hair is grey.
Faithful to thy vows thou'lt be
Until all is gone from thee,
E'en thy faith in Deity —

Alice Gertler.

Millais makes a face like thine
On the Huguenot to shine;
What would I not give to be
Like him, forced all else to flee,
But beloved by one like thee,
Alice Gertler

May I be forgiven the thought,
Pleasure laden, sorrow fraught;
But, my sweet, unconscious queen,
It cannot be wrong I ween,
Just to think what might have been —
Alice Gertler.

But each wish must I resign,
But for strength to make no sign.
Strength to live, if so it be,
Until Heaven do pity thee,
Or send death to make thee free —
Alice Gertler.

God Give Me Gold.

God give me gold that I may test
The blessed sweets of perfect rest,
For I am ill and hotly pressed.

God give me gold!

God give me gold that I may ease
The sorrow that the city sees —
I cannot help the least of these.

God give me gold!

God give me gold that I may buy
The thing for which my soul doth sigh —
For human love, else, Lord, I die.

God give me gold!

A Life's Dream.

Dream I.

Just as the starving cattle come
To drink at fall of night,
They came to me with falt'ring steps,
And faces wan and white.

And they were there at dawn of day,
With streaming hair and eyes;
And piteous looks that seemed to say:
“Help! help! ere all good dies.”

I lifted up my bleeding feet.
And let the red drops fall,
I raised the oaken yoke and showed
The big hot spots of gall.

I said: “I am myself a slave,
Bound by a man-made law.
I weep a fate that cannot save,
So plead with me no more.”

They cried, “Oh, sister! Hide your feet
And let the hard yoke fall,
You tread the wine press all alone,
But you are strong withal.

“Go to the rulers we have borne,
Plead for the babes we bear,
Sue till the dusk from early morn,
Pray till they needs MUST care.

“Go, while we watch, and weep, and wait,
Leave home, and love, and all,
But when you reach the outer gate
Call as the cattle call.”

I yielded then, and sought alone
A city near the main;
Where prejudice, on iron throne,
Held universal reign.

And oft I gave the conflict o'er,
And fell, beset by pain
And cruel wrong and losses sore,
Then rose and fought again.

Until one fatal day I fell,
 Methought to rise no more,
And years went by ere I was well,
 And then not as before.

A cripple in life's afternoon
 Beside a dead, cold hearth.
With no glad joybell's lingering croon,
 Or hope's bright aftermath.

I listened to the leaden rain
 Drone through the dismal dusk;
And mourned my dreams of golden grain,
 And mead of rue and rusk.

I said: "Oh, heart with sorrow sore,
 What wait we, you and I?
The day is lost, and hope is o'er,
 Why not 'curse God and die?'"

Then hark! a quick step nears my door,
 A woman's form I see,
She comes across my humble floor
 And looks with joy on me.

She gladly says: "I come to thee
 On this thrice-blessed day
To tell thee, sister, we are free,
 To kneel with thee and pray."

I quickly sank upon my knees,
 And looked the thanks I thought,
That He who e'en a sparrow sees
 Had watched us as we fought.

Then as I rose and dried my tears
 It surely did meseem
That they had helped me with their prayers —
 The women of my dream.

Dream II.

And now I see their forms again
All changed from those of yore,
Not like the slaves who sued in vain
For freedom, as before.

Ah, not in sackcloth sit they now
With ashes on each head,
For freedom's crown adorns each brow —

Their dress is Royal Red.

Their yokes are carved to standards light
Held in each firm right hand,
And floating free are letters bright:
“For God and Native Land.”

And hopefully they speak and move,
And sing as on they go;
For they will save the land they love
From sin, and want, and woe.

Lines.

A boy in pain, a mother sigh —
A strong man weep, a fair girl die.
These things do wring my heart well-nigh,
I know not why, I know not why.

The Message Of The Flowers.

Flowers you gave me, fresh and bright;
Sweet as joy and pure as light;
Roses red and lilies white —
Love-born children of delight.

But they faded soon away,
For they ever seemed to say:
“In your life there is no day,
Love we not the twilight grey.”

And I know the flowers were slain
While upon my bosom lain,
By my sad tears' salted rain
And hot sighs of ceaseless pain.

But the flowers red and white,
Left for me this message bright
Whispered softly in the night:
“Sad one, somewhere there is light.”

“So Many A Deed Of Wrong For Right Is Meant.”

We will part now for ever, you and I,
With a frozen smile and a faint good-bye;
And a hand on the poisoned barb hard pressed
To bury it deep in each tortured breast.
We will part just here while our new love dies,
And we'll turn deaf ears to its pleading cries;
For we each could save it, but neither will,
As we stoop to injure and strike to kill.
And the eyes that photo our faces wild
Will haunt us forever. Poor murdered child!
Oh, how the beautiful babe did grow,
Suckled in sorrow and cradled in woe!
Pride was the menace which shadowed its birth,
The beautiful cherub too bright for earth.
For better it were that our souls had lied
Than bring into being a love that died
But tho' you are taking all else away
There is one rare jewel must say you nay —
It is mine, all mine; it is mem'ry's prize.
'Tis the clasp and the kiss of love's first surprise.
I will live it over while life shall last,
And in its soft rapture shall death be passed;
With your lips on mine in a dream I'll be,
And pass in your arms to Eternity.

Renunciation.

Thou sayest that I am heartless and a coward,
That I with blandishments thy passion drew
Until thy will was weakened and o'erpowered,
Then back to thee that love again I threw.

Thou doest me wrong when thou dost call me coward.
To kill a passion one must needs be brave:
To tear a love out, strong and hope en-flowered,
And cast it warm and pulsing in the grave.

I plucked my love while in its virgin beauty
And memorised it, for I was afraid
That it might warm to lust or chill to duty;
Or change to hate, or suffer blight or fade.

If I was cold I was so but in seeming,
If I was calm, then I did well my part.
To suffer torture is not pleasant dreaming,
Nor ease to petrify a living heart.

While love unsatisfied my heart was wringing
I would not kiss thy close and tempting lips,
And while my starving soul to thee was clinging
I would not touch thee e'en with finger tips.

Thou wert my ideal one, my inspiration,
Thou ledst me up and on to high degrees,
And the great plan of a Divine creation
Shewed me, in nature's splendid mysteries.

Forget me now, nor seek to reinstate me;
I have elected hence to walk alone.
I love a love, not man; oh, do not hate me —
A love etherialised that's all my own.

A Dream.

Last night as I lay on my bed
I dreamed a strange, sad dream.
The pathway that I travelled led
Along a sunlit stream

That mirrored, as it swept along,
The oaks that o'er it bent;
And with their weird, tuneless song,
Its own sweet cadence blent.

All things were bathed in golden light,
And flowers from many a nook
Bent down to kiss their faces bright
Reflected in the brook.

A wondrous wealth of dark blue sky
Seemed fallen at my feet,
And o'er its surface silently
There sailed a snowy fleet

Of fleecy clouds that gliding went
Toward a bank beyond
A velvet sward, all thickly sprent
With star-like flower and frond.

Reclining there I saw a form
I had not seen for years;
And o'er me passed a sudden storm
Of mingled hopes and fears.

He quickly rose and came to me,
And said, "Shall we be friends?
And oh, believe, the change in thee
My heart with sorrow rends!"

I answered, "Why dost thou desire
To open wounds half healed,
And fan to flame a dying fire
Deep in my sad heart sealed?"

"Sad heart," I said, "no longer sad,
For I have found a balm
For every sorrow that I had,
For every storm a calm.

"I gave thee honour, due by right
Unto a jealous God,

And in thy causeless, sudden flight
I kissed His chastening rod.

“Hast thou not blasted on my way
Each bud with deadly blight,
And taken from my life each ray
That made my girlhood bright?”

“Why dost thou come to spoil my peace?
Wilt thou no mercy show?
I pray this cruel trifling cease;
In quiet let me go!”

“Yes, false to thee, dear girl, I seemed;
My thoughtlessness I rue.
Thy constant love too cold I deemed —
The wrong I'd fain undo.

“Forgive, and, as a day-star bright,
Beam on me when forgiven;
And turn my wayward thoughts aright
Like thine, from earth to heaven!”

I turned to gaze upon the stream
Where it had rippled by;
'Twas gone. Ah me! deluding dream!
Nor friend of old was nigh.

Then o'er me did rebellion steal;
The fight was lost, not won.
Nor could I say, with righteous zeal
“My God, Thy Will be done.”

A Woman's Love.

I cared not what thy failings were
Thy faults I would not see;
I only knew I loved thee well
And thought thee true to me.

I shunned amid life's busy crowd
Those who would thee defame;
For oh, it pained a trusting heart
To hear men idly blame!

I would not heed when meddling friends
Would whisper aught of thee;
I thought not one so seeming true
Could e'er a traitor be.

And then they knew not of thy tone
Of love and fond caress
That would my soul responsive move
With its great tenderness.

Nor how my hungry, aching heart
Craved the kind word or smile
That did my thoughts, despondent grown,
From my sad life beguile.

They knew not, and nor mortal shall,
All thou hast been to me;
But I forgive thee all because
Thou once wert true to me.

Divided.

Their path had divided, and never again
Would merge into one as before it was twain.
The course of true love had run smoothly until
It suddenly parted, as strong currents will.
But just for a moment— the world is not wide —
They drifted - together; the soul and its bride.
And under the spell of affinity's thrall
A tender love-longing did over them fall;
Which made them to pale in a tremor of fear,
For soul sobbed to soul while the lovers were near;
But she to the right turned, and he to the left,
Still keeping the course pride and anger had cleft.
Which led o'er the breakers of passion and pain
Far out o'er the wide sea of “never again,”
Where no one was ever yet known to forget
The pangs of heart hunger or pain of regret.
In vain did a small voice implore them to stay,
Far pity was not, and they parted for aye.

The Petunia.

Wrung by heart-hunger and pledges unkept,
Sleepless I walked while a silent world slept.
Weeping because I was left by my own,
Crushed by misfortune, to suffer alone!

Looked I then up to the river-blue sky,
“God of the lily stars, if Thou be nigh
Show me a sign.” Then my pleading eyes fell
On a petunia's tender white bell

Looking straight up to the same God as I,
Trustingly; seeking no sign from the sky.
Wafting upon the oblivious air
Exquisite odour — the incense of prayer.

Only God pities whom only God sees,
Only God sends us such lessons as these.
Chastened, I bent o'er the beautiful flower,
Giving Him thanks for the grace of the hour.

A Reverie.

Stern duty calls and I, alas!
Must her behest obey,
Must now in strength myself surpass
Nor wavering thought betray.

It is, it must be fate's decree
That while I sojourn here
To be my lot to turn and flee
From all my heart holds dear.

To shun the thing my soul would prize,
At last within my grasp;
And pass with cold, averted eyes,
The hand I fain would clasp.

Why did I choose this life of pain?
Why do I live it still?
Why drink the dregs, and then again
The cup of sorrow fill?

I do not know, I cannot tell;
Nor why, along the road,
When from my back the burden fell
I took again the load.

I think I love the life of pain
That God has given to me;
For I would live it o'er again,
If such a thing could be.

The sorrows that have come to me
Have taught me how to find
The souls in need of sympathy —
The wrecks among mankind.

Buried Love.

The sigh of the wind in the soft belahs,
Is in tune with my thoughts to-night;
That dwell as I stray 'neath the steel bright stars
On a love that was pure and white.

And I start and thrill as I backward move,
For a face to me close I see;
Oh, surely the pow'r of a deathless love
Must be bringing you back to me!

For the thrill of that dear old love is sweet,
And it sinks to my heart's sad core;
As fresh as it did ere a soul's defeat
O'erwhelmed it in days of yore.

You said I was cold when we said "good-bye,"
And you thought that your words were true.
I tell you now, with my face to the sky,
That I loved far better than you.

But the love we buried deep out of sight
On the day that we said "good-bye,"
Must go back again whence it came, to-night,
And its ghost in the grave must lie.

For the march of time, and the hand of fate,
And the growth of the great and free,
Have built up a wall and have barred a gate
Now and ever 'twixt you and me.

For you love to look on the lotus feast,
And drift in a westering way;
But I've set my face to the pregnant east
Where I watch for a broad new day.

Lines.

Oh, there is a being that haunteth my dreams
When night sendeth slumber to me,
So like thee that of ten in waking it seems
It cannot be other than thee.

But the eyes of the one in dreams I behold
Beam lovingly ever on me,
With tenderness touching, and pathos untold,
So therefore it cannot be thee.

The hand like the hand of an angel of light
Is minist'ring ever to me;
I wake with a sigh from my trance of delight
And murmur, "Love, would it were thee!"

But could that sweet voice to another belong,
That does o'er my dreaming ear sweep?
As soft as the sound of the oak's evensong,
While lulling the lilies to sleep.

Yes, yes, thy bright eyes have the same sunny beam
Ne'er held by another than thee.
And thou, the bright being that haunteth my dreams,
Will make earth an Eden for me.

A Dream.

Just as the grey dawning 'gan faintly to beam
One still summer's morning I dreamt a fair dream.
I thought that my body was tenantless clay,
And friends were preparing to lay it away,
They stood at my bedside, one weeping aloud,
While two with deft fingers placed on me a shroud.
And one who had loved me and knew all my care
Placed flowers about me and braided my hair,
And murmured, "Poor creature, her troubles are o'er,
And they who have vexed her can vex her no more."
Then tenderly crossing my hands on my breast
She kissed me and blessed me and left me to rest.
The kindest words only about me were said
And restfully thought I, "'Tis well to be dead."
I sighed with contentment, so safe did I seem —
Alas, for the sigh! for it banished my dream.

The City Bird.

A city bird once in a desperate rage
 Threw over the bars of his screen
The whole of the seed that was put in his cage,
 And it grew to a miniature green.

Sometimes when my troubles come up in a mass,
 And fate a new sorrow doth send,
I turn my wet eyes to that bright bit of grass
 As I would to the face of a friend.

For often it helps me to face a new day,
 Where Sydney at worst must be seen,
To look on the sparkling dew as it lay
 On the blades of the city-yard green.

Returning again at the end of the day
 When I sit myself wearily down,
The scent of the grass takes me ever away
 From the fret of a dust-covered town.

I wish when they lay me away to my rest,
 And bosom and brain are serene,
Some friend would remember to plant o'er my breast
 A tuft of that city-yard green.

In Memoriam.

The white convolvulus, fair tenuous flower,
Opes its pure petals at day's tenderest hour.
And all who gaze into its virgin face
Know God is good, and take fresh heart of grace:
At morn a joy, at eve a memory sweet,
For it is smitten by the noontide heat;
How fair, how frail, how fated, and — ah me!
How true an emblem, dear dead girl, of thee.

A Grave.

In a quiet country churchyard
Where lilies grow tall and white,
And vie with the moist red roses
In tempting the bees to light:

Where the big ripe briar berry,
Red bead-like and bright and gay,
Allures, with the native cherry,
The bright little birds to stay:

Where butterflies black as aces
Detour from their dainty cones,
To beauty spot sculptured faces
And blot the white marble stones:

There is in the path you enter
This ideal burial plot —
Half way betwixt gate and centre, -
One badly neglected spot.

A large heap covers the holding,
And spreads itself out all around;
As if in its girth enfolding
Some treasure beneath the ground.

No cross does it own, nor coping,
No verdure, nor even shade;
But solid it is, and sloping,
Shield-like and undecayed.

Time does not appear to lessen
This heap of unsightly stones,
Nor does it depend or rest on
Its keeping of nameless bones.

Who is he, I thought, that spurneth
The efforts of time to blight?
Who is it that mutely turneth
All steps to the left and right?

I asked for the chart and read on
Its pages yellow and stiff:
“A Hermit, unknown, found dead on
Rocks at the foot of the cliff.”

To My Sister.

Thou'rt sleeping calmly in thy tomb,
While I from day to day
Still blunder on amid the gloom
Of life's uncertain way.

Thou'rt resting here in perfect peace,
Kind Heaven favoured thee,
In that it willed thee quick release
From all the cares that be.

But thou wert ne'er a child of earth,
Ne'er like the noisy crowd
Who clustered round our father's hearth —
Thy voice was never loud.

And sometimes when the moon at night
Shines through the open door,
And casts a belt of silver light
Across our humble floor —

I fancy then, my sister dear,
That back to earth and me
Thy spirit floats; I feel thee near,
Though thee I cannot see.

I stretch vain arms that would enfold
Thee in a fond embrace,
Forgetting long, long, years have rolled
Since I beheld thy face.

'Twas well thou could'st not long remain
Where care would be thy lot,
Nor would I have thee back again,
God knows, dear, I would not.

In vain in thought I backward stray
And search from year to year
To record find of e'en a day
Unclouded by a care.

Joy never twined a wreath for me
In May-day's sunniest hours,
But sorrow's tares were safe to be
Inwoven with the flowers.

It hovers o'er me through the night
And robs me of my rest,

Nor flies when morning sunbeams light
The dew on nature's breast.

But storms may beat about thy grave
And rage above thy head;
It frets thee not how winds may rave —
Safe in thy silent bed.

And I could oft without regret
Resign each cherished scheme
And rest with thee, so care beset
And weary do I seem.

But not while shines an harvest sun
Must slumber come to me,
At eve, with full day's labour done
Sweeter the rest will be.

I Wonder?

When death's dark waters near me roll,
And reach to draw me under,
Shall consternation fill my soul?
I wonder, oh, I wonder!

And when on high their long arms fly
To claim me as their plunder,
Shall I for help in anguish cry?
I wonder, oh, I wonder!

Or shall a beacon light my soul
As calmly I slip under,
Content to rest where breakers roll?
I wonder, oh, I wonder!

In Memory Of R.E.H.

I linger late alone to-night while all the household sleep,
And sadly o'er the changeful past does memory backward sweep —
Recalling happy girlhood days that did too swiftly glide,
And ever 'midst their brightest scenes I find thee at my side.
Again in the secluded stream we gambol merrily;
Again we climb the mountain spur where sober she-oaks sigh,
To cull a wealth of wattle bloom, and seek the purple vine
That round the rugged ironbarks in velvet circles twine.
And stay we oft to trace o'erhead the screeching cockatoo
Or, wond'ring, watch the bounding pace of the startled kangaroo.
And, all unheeding flight of time, do farther hillward roam
Until the slanting shadows point toward our distant home.
Then hand in hand, with voices blent a school-learnt song we sing
Or make the silent mountain gorge with laughing echoes ring;
Thy cheerful, ever-hoping way had e'er a charm for me,
And if, like mortal, thou had faults, I cared not them to see.
What it did suit thy will to do did ever mine behove
I hated what 'twas thine to hate, and loved what thou didst love;
And when I think that girlish form, with graces never told,
Lay out to-night 'neath wind and rain in Rookwood's greedy fold,
A storm of such deep grief and pain does surging o'er me roll
That e'en I bless the tears that now relieve my troubled soul.
But some will doubtless say such love 'twixt women could not be
So thou art safe, their unbelief will not discomfort me.
I try to think our Father's will in taking thee is best,
For after all an early grave, dear girl, is early rest.
And if it be, as I suppose, that after Heavenly birth
The spirit freed may share the thoughts of those still bound to earth,
Endowed with higher power to see the workings of each breast,
Then fondly thou'lt enrol me with the few who loved thee best.

In Memoriam.

One little blossom cut down in a day,
One little pet called away from her play.
One little struggle — thank God it is brief!
One little stricken one gaining relief.
One little voice breathing ever so low
One little prayer, then it's ready to go.
One little sigh, and we clip from her head
One little tress, for our darling is dead.
One little coffin, a bud in the wreath,
One little emblem of baby beneath.
One little journey from home to the tomb,
One little blossom in Eden to bloom.

My Nettie.

With rapture I gaze, for by faith do I see
The child that my Saviour has taken from me,
Secure in his arms in that beautiful place,
A radiance of glory illuming her face;
While He tells of a love on earth below,
It ne'er was the bright fate of mortal to know.

A mansion, blessed babe, and a welcome for thee,
I said, "Let the little ones come unto Me."
The vision is fading. Thank God for the rest
That steals o'er my worn heart with sorrow oppressed,
Forgetting in grief what our Lord had foretold —

That spirits dwell not in the grave dark and cold.
Ere faded the flowers we placed on her breast
Her soul must have reached its bright haven of rest.
And ever I pray that my portion may be
Where baby — my baby is waiting for me.

In Memoriam.

White and all waxen a fair maiden lay,
White as the snowdrift her beautiful clay.
White raiment clothed her, and over her bier
White lilies faded, sweet emblems they were.
White was her record, and where she is gone
White is the stone that her new name is on.

A Child's Question.

O, why do you weep mother, why do you weep
For baby that fell in the summer to sleep?
You say that you prayed, when she lingered in pain,
That God in His mercy would take her again.
He heeded your prayer, and a beautiful sleep
Stole over our darling; then why do you weep?
You tell how the angels sang paeans of love
To welcome her home to the mansions above,
Where lovingly over her spirit they keep
A bright watch forever; then why do you weep?
And have you not told us again and again
That we will yet see her set free from all pain,
Beyond the bright sun where no dark shadows creep?
Then why do you weep, mother? Why do you weep?

A Mother's Answer.

You ask me, dear child, why thus sadly I weep
For baby the angels have taken to keep;
Altho' she is safe, and for ever at rest,
A yearning to see her will rise in my breast.
I pray and endeavour to quell it in vain,
But stronger it comes and yet stronger again,
Till all the bright thoughts of her happier lot
Are lost in this one — my baby is not.
And while I thus yearn so intensely to see
This child that the angels are keeping for me,
I doubt for the time where her spirit has flown —
If the love e'en of angels can fully atone
For the loss of a mother's, mysterious and deep.
I own that thought sinful, yet owning it — weep.

All's Well.

It is years to-night since alone I sat
By a new-made grave on a burial plat,
With the night dews o'er me falling.

And I cried in my grief, "Oh, God! My God
What can it avail that beneath this sod
My child lies deaf to my calling?"

And the watchman cried on his round, "All's well!"
And oh, at his mocking my heart did swell —
With thoughts of a childless morrow.

But again he is on his midnight round,
And his words to me have a soothing sound;
For the years have brought me sorrow

And have taught me what it was hard to know,
And have made me reap where I did not sow,
And along strange paths have brought me.

They have shown me too, in their painful round
That my girl is safe in the silent ground,
And this, too, faith has taught me:

That I'll see her in a blood-washed throng
Unsoiled by sin, and unseared by wrong.
Amen! to the Watchman's cry to-night,
My heart re-echoes, "All's well all's right."

To A Bird.

I'm listening, father, to a sound
That I have heard thee say
Did come to call thee to thy toil
Just at the break of day.

It's sweet and thrilling melody
Is ringing in the air,
And tells me that the day will break
With promise bright and fair.

I wonder if it is the same
Bright warbler of the sky
That came so oft to waken thee
In busy days gone by.

I bless it though it may not be,
And also fate that led
It hither to dispel a dream
That filled my soul with dread.

For thoughts of that real-seeming dream
Still fill my heart with pain,
And echoes of a stricken scream
Come back to me again.

For thou had weary grown, I thought,
And cast thy burden down,
And I was here for evermore
To toil on earth alone.

But when I woke and heard that bird
Its sweet notes on me fell
With re-assurance calm and sweet
That told me all was well.

I thank it now most fervently
For singing o'er my head;
But, father, may it call in vain
To wake me when thou'rt dead.

But, oh! could we together leave
This weary world, at best,
We'd happy be did song as sweet
Proclaim our dawn of rest.

To A Bird.

Bright little warbler of the air,
The world to thee, I ween, is fair;
And free thy life from shade of care
 So gaily dost thou sing.

While from thy happy throat is sent
That flood of song in ravishment,
Thou shamest me without intent —
 Sad mourner that I be.

To one who knows not grief nor care
I doubt me not this world is fair,
And “pretty” “pretty” everywhere
 As thou dost iterate.

But birdie dear, didst thou but see
The world as it appears to me,
Then “pretty” “pretty” might not be
 The burden of thy song.

But oh! could I like thee arise
And wing my way toward the skies,
Not here, 'mid human miseries,
 One moment would I dwell.

But once released from bonds of clay
I'd upward soar till thy sweet lay
Did in the distance melt away
 Amidst an awful space.

I'd pause not till, through shining breach,
I'd catch, in songs that seraphs teach,
Notes only angel voices reach —
 Where my loved one is gone.

Ah, birdie! were it thine to know
The grief that makes my sad tears flow
Thou couldst not sweetly warble so,
 Thy little heart would break.

A Reverie.

I am sitting by the river,
And I while an hour away
Watching circles start and widen
In their momentary play.

Here a stronger 'whelms a weaker
As its ring expanding flies,
There one ripples to the surface
As another fades and dies.

And I solemn grow while thinking —
As I sit and idly dream
That each life is like a circle
On time's deep, impellant stream.

Do we not upon its bosom
Linger for a little day,
Making faint and fleeting impress,
Then for ever fade away.

While the strong unresting river
Towards Eternity doth glide,
All regardless of the circles
That have pulsed upon its tide.

Lines.

There is no time, there is no time,
And so we rush, and strain, and climb;
And run until we almost fly,
To find it takes no time to die.

Give Me Only Peace.

Rank with all its dower,
Pomp with all its train,
Wealth with all its power,
Give I these again.

Race with all its story,
Place with all its ease,
Fame with all its glory,
Give I also these.

Ask I for them? Never!
Let their mem'ry cease.
Take them all for ever -
Leave me only peace.

Sunset.

I love at eve to wander
Alone upon the hills,
While nature, with her myst'ries,
My soul with wonder fills.

A king in robes of crimson
And ermine seeking rest,
The sun in golden splendour
Sinks in the solemn west.

His grandeur awes and thrills me,
I kneel upon the sod,
Bow down my head and worship
His mighty Maker — God.
