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COLLECTED POEMS

1901-1918

BY

WALTER DE LA MARE

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

1920

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SONGS OF CHILDHOOD: 1901

TO JILL

SLEEPYHEAD

As I lay awake in the white moonlight,
 I heard a faint singing in the wood,

"Out of bed,
 Sleepyhead,
 Put your white foot, now;
 Here are we
 Beneath the tree
 Singing round the root now."

I looked out of window, in the white moonlight,
The leaves were like snow in the wood--

"Come away,
Child, and play
Light with the gnomies;
In a mound,
Green and round,
That's where their home is."

"Honey sweet,
Curds to eat,
Cream and frumenty,
Shells and beads,
Poppy seeds,
You shall have plenty."

But, as soon as I stooped in the dim moonlight
To put on my stocking and my shoe,
The sweet shrill singing echoed faintly away,
And the grey of the morning peeped through,
And instead of the gnomies there came a red robin
To sing of the buttercups and dew.

BLUEBELLS

Where the bluebells and the wind are,

Fairies in a ring I spied,
And I heard a little linnet

Singing near beside.

Where the primrose and the dew are--

Soon were sped the fairies all:
Only now the green turf freshens,

And the linnets call.

LOVELOCKS

I watched the Lady Caroline
Bind up her dark and beauteous hair;
Her face was rosy in the glass,
And 'twixt the coils her hands would pass,

White in the candleshine.

Her bottles on the table lay,
Stoppered, yet sweet of violet;
Her image in the mirror stooped

To view those locks as lightly looped

As cherry boughs in May.

The snowy night lay dim without,
I heard the Waits their sweet song sing;
The window smouldered keen with frost;
Yet still she twisted, sleeked and tossed

Her beauteous hair about.

TARTARY

If I were Lord of Tartary,
Myself and me alone,
My bed should be of ivory,
Of beaten gold my throne;
And in my court would peacocks flaunt,
And in my forests tigers haunt,
And in my pools great fishes slant
Their fins athwart the sun.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
Trumpeters every day
To every meal should summon me,
And in my courtyard bray;
And in the evening lamps would shine,
Yellow as honey, red as wine,
While harp, and flute, and mandoline,
Made music sweet and gay.

If I were Lord of Tartary,
I'd wear a robe of beads,
White, and gold, and green they'd be--
And clustered thick as seeds;
And ere should wane the morning-star,
I'd don my robe and scimitar,
And zebras seven should draw my car
Through Tartary's dark glades.

Lord of the fruits of Tartary,
Her rivers silver-pale!
Lord of the hills of Tartary,
Glen, thicket, wood, and dale!
Her flashing stars, her scented breeze,
Her trembling lakes, like foamless seas,
Her bird-delighting citron-trees
In every purple vale!

THE BUCKLE

I had a silver buckle,

I sewed it on my shoe,
 And 'neath a sprig of mistletoe
 I danced the evening through.

I had a bunch of cowslips,
 I hid them in a grot,
 In case the elves should come by night
 And me remember not.

I had a yellow riband,
 I tied it in my hair,
 That, walking in the garden,
 The birds might see it there.

I had a secret laughter,
 I laughed it near the wall:
 Only the ivy and the wind
 May tell of it at all.

THE HARE

In the black furrow of a field
 I saw an old witch-hare this night;
 And she cocked a lissome ear,
 And she eyed the moon so bright,
 And she nibbled of the green;
 And I whispered "Wh-s-st! witch-hare,"
 Away like a ghostie o'er the field
 She fled, and left the moonlight there.

BUNCHES OF GRAPES

"Bunches of grapes," says Timothy;
 "Pomegranates pink," says Elaine;
 "A junket of cream and a cranberry tart

For me," says Jane.

"Love-in-a-mist," says Timothy;
 "Primroses pale," says Elaine;
 "A nosegay of pinks and mignonette

For me," says Jane.

"Chariots of gold," says Timothy;
 "Silvery wings," says Elaine;
 "A bumpity ride in a waggon of hay

For me," says Jane.

JOHN MOULDY

I spied John Mouldy in his cellar,
 Deep down twenty steps of stone;
 In the dusk he sat a-smiling,

Smiling there alone.

He read no book, he snuffed no candle;
 The rats ran in, the rats ran out;
 And far and near, the drip of water

Went whispering about.

The dusk was still, with dew a-falling,
 I saw the Dog Star bleak and grim,
 I saw a slim brown rat of Norway

Creep over him.

I spied John Mouldy in his cellar,
 Deep down twenty steps of stone;
 In the dusk he sat a-smiling,

Smiling there alone.

THE FLY

How large unto the tiny fly
 Must little things appear!--
 A rosebud like a feather bed,
 Its prickle like a spear;

A dewdrop like a looking-glass,
 A hair like golden wire;
 The smallest grain of mustard-seed
 As fierce as coals of fire;

A loaf of bread, a lofty hill;
 A wasp, a cruel leopard;
 And specks of salt as bright to see
 As lambkins to a shepherd.

SONG

O for a moon to light me home!
 O for a lanthorn green!
 For those sweet stars the Pleiades,
 That glitter in the darkling trees;
 O for a lovelorn taper! O
 For a lanthorn green!

O for a frock of tartan!
 O for clear, wild grey eyes!

For fingers light as violets,
 'Neath branches that the blackbird frets;
 O for a thistly meadow! O
 For clear, wild grey eyes!

O for a heart like almond boughs!
 O for sweet thoughts like rain!
 O for first-love like fields of grey
 Shut April-buds at break of day!
 O for a sleep like music!
 Dreams still as rain!

I SAW THREE WITCHES

I saw three witches
 That bowed down like barley,
 And straddled their brooms 'neath a louring sky,

And, mounting a storm-cloud,
 Aloft on its margin,
 Stood black in the silver as up they did fly.

I saw three witches
 That mocked the poor sparrows
 They carried in cages of wicker along,

Till a hawk from his eyrie
 Swooped down like an arrow,
 Smote on the cages, and ended their song.

I saw three witches
 That sailed in a shallop,
 All turning their heads with a snickering smile,

Till a bank of green osiers
 Concealed their grim faces,
 Though I heard them lamenting for many a mile.

I saw three witches
 Asleep in a valley,
 Their heads in a row, like stones in a flood,

Till the moon, creeping upward,
 Looked white through the valley,
 And turned them to bushes in bright scarlet bud.

THE SILVER PENNY

"Sailorman, I'll give to you
 My bright silver penny,
 If out to sea you'll sail me
 And my dear sister Jenny."

"Get in, young sir, I'll sail ye
 And your dear sister Jenny,
 But pay she shall her golden locks
 Instead of your penny."

They sail away, they sail away,
 O fierce the winds blew!
 The foam flew in clouds,
 And dark the night grew!

And all the wild sea-water
 Climbed steep into the boat;
 Back to the shore again
 Sail they will not.

Drowned is the sailorman,
 Drowned is sweet Jenny,
 And drowned in the deep sea
 A bright silver penny.

THE RAINBOW

I saw the lovely arch
 Of Rainbow span the sky,
 The gold sun burning
 As the rain swept by.

In bright-ringed solitude
 The showery foliage shone
 One lovely moment,
 And the Bow was gone.

THE FAIRIES DANCING

I heard along the early hills,
 Ere yet the lark was risen up,
 Ere yet the dawn with firelight fills
 The night-dew of the bramble-cup,--
 I heard the fairies in a ring
 Sing as they tripped a lilting round
 Soft as the moon on wavering wing.
 The starlight shook as if with sound,
 As if with echoing, and the stars
 Prankt their bright eyes with trembling gleams;
 While red with war the gusty Mars
 Rained upon earth his ruddy beams.
 He shone alone, low down the West,
 While I, behind a hawthorn-bush,
 Watched on the fairies flaxen-tressed
 The fires of the morning flush.
 Till, as a mist, their beauty died,
 Their singing shrill and fainter grew;

And daylight tremulous and wide
 Flooded the moorland through and through;
 Till Urdon's copper weathercock
 Was reared in golden flame afar,
 And dim from moonlit dreams awoke
 The towers and groves of Arroar.

REVERIE

When slim Sophia mounts her horse
 And paces down the avenue,
 It seems an inward melody

She paces to.

Each narrow hoof is lifted high
 Beneath the dark enclustering pines,
 A silver ray within his bit

And bridle shines.

His eye burns deep, his tail is arched,
 And streams upon the shadowy air,
 The daylight sleeks his jetty flanks,

His mistress' hair.

Her habit flows in darkness down,
 Upon the stirrup rests her foot,
 Her brow is lifted, as if earth

She heeded not.

'Tis silent in the avenue,
 The sombre pines are mute of song,
 The blue is dark, there moves no breeze

The boughs among.

When slim Sophia mounts her horse
 And paces down the avenue,
 It seems an inward melody

She paces to.

THE THREE BEGGARS

'Twas autumn daybreak gold and wild,
 While past St. Ann's grey tower they shuffled,
 Three beggars spied a fairy-child

In crimson mantle muffled.

The daybreak lighted up her face
 All pink, and sharp, and emerald-eyed;
 She looked on them a little space,

And shrill as hautboy cried:--

"O three tall footsore men of rags
 Which walking this gold morn I see,
 What will ye give me from your bags

For fairy kisses three?"

The first, that was a reddish man,
 Out of his bundle takes a crust:
 "La, by the tombstones of St. Ann,

There's fee, if fee ye must!"

The second, that was a chestnut man,
 Out of his bundle draws a bone:
 "Lo, by the belfry of St. Ann,

And all my breakfast gone!"

The third, that was a yellow man,
 Out of his bundle picks a groat,
 "La, by the Angel of St. Ann,

And I must go without."

That changeling, lean and icy-lipped,
 Touched crust, and bone, and groat, and lo!
 Beneath her finger taper-tipped

The magic all ran through.

Instead of crust a peacock pie,
 Instead of bone sweet venison,
 Instead of groat a white lily

With seven blooms thereon.

And each fair cup was deep with wine:
 Such was the changeling's charity,
 The sweet feast was enough for nine,

But not too much for three.

O toothsome meat in jelly froze!
 O tender haunch of elfin stag!
 O rich the odour that arose!

O plump with scraps each bag!

There, in the daybreak gold and wild,
Each merry-hearted beggar man
Drank deep unto the fairy child,

And blessed the good St. Ann.

THE DWARF

"Now, Jinnie, my dear, to the dwarf be off,
That lives in Barberry Wood,
And fetch me some honey, but be sure you don't laugh,--
He hates little girls that are rude, are rude,
He hates little girls that are rude."

Jane tapped at the door of the house in the wood,
And the dwarf looked over the wall,
He eyed her so queer, 'twas as much as she could
To keep from laughing at all, at all,
To keep from laughing at all.

His shoes down the passage came clod, clod, clod,
And when he opened the door,
He croaked so harsh, 'twas as much as she could
To keep from laughing the more, the more,
To keep from laughing the more.

As there, with his bushy red beard, he stood,
Pricked out to double its size,
He squinted so cross, 'twas as much as she could
To keep the tears out of her eyes, her eyes,
To keep the tears out of her eyes.

He slammed the door, and went clod, clod, clod,
But while in the porch she bides,
He squealed so fierce, 'twas as much as she could
To keep from cracking her sides, her sides,
To keep from cracking her sides.

He threw a pumpkin over the wall,
And melons and apples beside,
So thick in the air that to see them all fall,
She laughed, and laughed, till she cried, cried, cried;
Jane laughed and laughed till she cried.

Down fell her teardrops a pit-apat-pat,
And red as a rose she grew;--
"Kah! kah," said the dwarf, "is it crying you're at?
It's the very worst thing you could do, do, do,
It's the very worst thing you could do."

He slipped like a monkey up into a tree,
 He shook her down cherries like rain;
 "See now," says he, cheeping, "a blackbird I be,
 Laugh, laugh, little Jinnie, again--gain--gain,
 Laugh, laugh, little Jinnie, again."

Ah me! what a strange, what a gladsome duet
 From a house in the deeps of a wood!
 Such shrill and such harsh voices never met yet
 A-laughing as loud as they could, could, could,

A-laughing as loud as they could.

Come Jinnie, come dwarf, cocksparrow, and bee,
 There's a ring gaudy-green in the dell,
 Sing, sing, ye sweet cherubs, that flit in the tree;
 La! who can draw tears from a well, well, well,
 Who ever drew tears from a well!

ALULVAN

The sun is clear of bird and cloud,
 The grass shines windless, grey and still,
 In dusky ruin the owl dreams on,
 The cuckoo echoes on the hill;
 Yet soft along Alulvan's walks

The ghost at noonday stalks.

His eyes in shadow of his hat
 Stare on the ruins of his house;
 His cloak, up-fastened with a brooch,
 Of faded velvet grey as mouse,
 Brushes the roses as he goes:

Yet wavers not one rose.

The wild birds in a cloud fly up
 From their sweet feeding in the fruit;
 The droning of the bees and flies
 Rises gradual as a lute;
 Is it for fear the birds are flown,

And shrills the insect-drone?

Thick is the ivy over Alulvan,
 And crisp with summer-heat its turf;
 Far, far across its empty pastures
 Alulvan's sands are white with surf:
 And he himself is grey as the sea,

Watching beneath an elder-tree.

All night the fretful, shrill Banshee
 Lurks in the ivy's dark festoons,
 Calling for ever, o'er garden and river,
 Through magpie changing of the moons:
 "Alulvan, O, alas! Alulvan,
 The doom of lone Alulvan!"

THE PEDLAR

There came a pedlar to an evening house;
 Sweet Lettice, from her lattice looking down,
 Wondered what man he was, so curious
 His black hair dangled on his tattered gown:
 Then lifts he up his face, with glittering eyes,--
 "What will you buy, sweetheart?--Here's honeycomb,
 And mottled pippins, and sweet mulberry pies,
 Comfits and peaches, snowy cherry bloom,
 To keep in water for to make night sweet:
 All that you want, sweetheart,--come, taste and eat!"

Even with his sugared words, returned to her
 The clear remembrance of a gentle voice:
 "And O! my child, should ever a flatterer
 Tap with his wares, and promise of all joys,
 And vain sweet pleasures that on earth may be,
 Seal up your ears, sing some old happy song,
 Confuse his magic who is all mockery:
 His sweets are death." Yet, still how she doth long
 But just to taste, then shut the lattice tight,
 And hide her eyes from the delicious sight!

"What must I pay?" she whispered. "Pay!" says he,
 "Pedlar I am who through this wood to roam,
 One lock of her hair is gold enough for me,
 For apple, peach, comfit, or honeycomb!"
 But from her bough a drowsy squirrel cried,
 "Trust him not, Lettice, trust, oh trust him not!"
 And many another woodland tongue beside
 Rose softly in the silence--"Trust him not!"
 Then cried the Pedlar in a bitter voice,
 "What, in the thicket, is this idle noise?"

A late, harsh blackbird smote him with her wings,
 As through the glade, dark in the dim, she flew;
 Yet still the Pedlar his old burden sings,--
 "What, pretty sweetheart, shall I show to you?
 Here's orange ribands, here's a string of pearls,
 Here's silk of buttercup and pansy glove,
 A pin of tortoiseshell for windy curls,
 A box of silver, scented sweet with clove:
 Come now," he says, with dim and lifted face,
 "I pass not often such a lonely place."

"Pluck not a hair!" a hidden rabbit cried,
 "With but one hair he'll steal thy heart away,
 Then only sorrow shall thy lattice hide:
 Go in! all honest pedlars come by day."
 There was dead silence in the drowsy wood;
 "Here's syrup for to lull sweet maids to sleep;
 And bells for dreams, and fairy wine and food
 All day thy heart in happiness to keep";--
 And now she takes the scissors on her thumb,--
 "O, then, no more unto my lattice come!"

Sad is the sound of weeping in the wood!
 Now only night is where the Pedlar was;
 And bleak as frost upon a quickling bud
 His magic steals in darkness, O alas!
 Why all the summer doth sweet Lettice pine?
 And, ere the wheat is ripe, why lies her gold
 Hid 'neath fresh new-plucked sprigs of eglantine?
 Why all the morning hath the cuckoo tolled,
 Sad, to and fro, in green and secret ways,
 With solemn bells the burden of his days?

And, in the market-place, what man is this
 Who wears a loop of gold upon his breast,
 Stuck heartwise; and whose glassy flatteries
 Take all the townfolk ere they go to rest
 Who come to buy and gossip? Doth his eye
 Remember a face lovely in a wood?
 O people! hasten, hasten, do not buy
 His woeful wares; the bird of grief doth brood
 There where his heart should be; and far away
 There mourns long sorrowfulness this happy day.

THE OGRE

'Tis moonlight on Trebarwith Vale,
 And moonlight on an Ogre keen,
 Who, prowling hungry through the dale,
 A lone cottage hath seen.

Small, with thin smoke ascending up,
 Three casements and a door--
 The Ogre eager is to tap,
 And here seems dainty store.

Sweet as a larder to a mouse,
 So to him staring down,
 Seemed the small-windowed moonlit house,
 With jasmine overgrown.

He snorted, as the billows snort
 In darkness of the night;

Betwixt his lean locks tawny-swart,
He glowered on the sight.

Into the garden sweet with peas
He put his wooden shoe,
And bending back the apple trees
Crept covetously through;

Then, stooping, with a gloating eye
Stared through the lattice small,
And spied two children which did lie
Asleep, against the wall.

Into their dreams no shadow fell
Of his disastrous thumb
Groping discreet, and gradual,
Across the quiet room.

But scarce his nail had scraped the cot
Wherein these children lay,
As if his malice were forgot,
It suddenly did stay.

For faintly in the ingle-nook
He heard a cradle-song,
That rose into his thoughts and woke
Terror them among.

For she who in the kitchen sat
Darning by the fire,
Guileless of what he would be at,
Sang sweet as wind or wire:--

"Lullay, thou little tiny child,
By-by, lullay, lullie;
Jesu in glory, meek and mild,
This night remember thee!

"Fiend, witch, and goblin, foul and wild,
He deems them smoke to be;
Lullay, thou little tiny child,
By-by, lullay, lullie!"

The Ogre lifted up his eyes
Into the moon's pale ray,
And gazed upon her leopard-wise,
Cruel and clear as day;

He snarled in gluttony and fear--
"The wind blows dismally--
Jesu in storm my lambs be near,
By-by, lullay, lullie!"

And like a ravenous beast which sees
 The hunter's icy eye,
 So did this wretch in wrath confess
 Sweet Jesu's mastery.

Lightly he drew his greedy thumb
 From out that casement pale,
 And strode, enormous, swiftly home,
 Whinnying down the dale.

DAME HICKORY

"Dame Hickory, Dame Hickory,
 Here's sticks for your fire,
 Furze-twigs, and oak-twigs,
 And beech-twigs, and briar!"
 But when old Dame Hickory came for to see,
 She found 'twas the voice of the False Faerie.

"Dame Hickory, Dame Hickory,
 Here's meat for your broth,
 Goose-flesh, and hare's flesh,
 And pig's trotters both!"
 But when old Dame Hickory came for to see,
 She found 'twas the voice of the False Faerie.

"Dame Hickory, Dame Hickory,
 Here's a wolf at your door,
 His teeth grinning white,
 And his tongue wagging sore!"
 "Nay!" said Dame Hickory, "ye False Faerie!
 But a wolf 'twas indeed, and famished was he.

"Dame Hickory, Dame Hickory,
 Here's buds for your tomb,
 Bramble, and lavender,

And rosemary bloom!"
 "Wh-s-st!" said Dame Hickory, "ye False Faerie,
 Ye cry like a wolf, ye do, and trouble poor me."

THE PILGRIM

"Shall we carry now your bundle,
 You old grey man?
 Over hill and dale and meadow
 Lighter than an owlet's shadow
 We will whirl it through the air,
 Through blue regions shrill and bare,
 So you may in comfort fare--
 Shall we carry now your bundle,

You old grey man?"

The Pilgrim lifted up his eyes
And saw three fiends, in the skies,
Stooping o'er that lonely place

Evil in form and face.

"Nay," he answered, "leave me, leave me,
Ye three wild fiends!
Far it is my feet must wander,
And my city lieth yonder
I must bear my bundle alone,

Till the day be done."
The fiends stared down with leaden eye,
Fanning the chill air duskily,
'Twixt their hoods they stoop and cry:--

"Shall we smooth the path before you,

You old grey man?
Sprinkle it green with gilded showers,
Strew it o'er with painted flowers,
Lure bright birds to sing and flit
In the honeyed airs of it?
Shall we smooth the path before you,

Grey old man?"

"O, 'tis better silence, silence,

Ye three wild fiends!
Footsore am I, faint and weary,
Dark the way, forlorn and dreary,
Beaten of wind, torn of briar,
Smitten of rain, parched with fire:
O, silence, silence, silence,

Ye three wild fiends!"

It seemed a smoke obscured the air,
Bright lightning quivered in the gloom,
And a faint voice of thunder spake
Far in the lone hill-hollows--"Come!"
Then, half in fury, half in dread,
The fiends drew closer down, and said:

"Nay, thou stubborn fond old man,

Hearken awhile!
Thorn, and dust, and ice and heat,

Tarry now, sit down and eat:
 Heat, and ice, and dust and thorn;
 Stricken, footsore, parched, forlorn--
 Juice of purple grape shall be
 Youth and solace unto thee.
 Music of tambour, wire and wind,
 Ease shall bring to heart and mind;
 Wonderful sweet mouths shall sigh
 Languishing and lullaby;
 Turn then! Curse the dream that lures thee;
 Turn thee, ere too late it be,
 Lest thy three true friends grow weary

Of comforting thee!"

The Pilgrim crouches terrified
 As stooping hood, and glassy face,
 Gloating, evil, side by side,
 Terror and hate brood o'er the place;
 He flings his withered hands on high
 With a bitter, breaking cry:--
 "Leave me, leave me, leave me, leave me,

Ye three wild fiends!
 If I lay me down in slumber,
 Then I lay me down in wrath;
 If I stir not in dark dreaming,
 Then I wither in my path;
 If I hear sweet voices singing,
 'Tis a demon's lullaby:
 And, in 'hideous storm and terror,'

Wake but to die."

And even as he spake, on high
 Arrows of sunlight pierced the sky.
 Bright streamed the rain. O'er burning snow
 From hill to hill a wondrous bow
 Of colour and fire trembled in air,
 Painting its heavenly beauty there.
 Wild flapped each fiend a batlike hood
 Against that 'frighting light, and stood
 Beating the windless rain, and then
 Rose heavy and slow with cowering head,
 Circled in company again,
 And into darkness fled.

Marvellous sweet it was to hear
 The waters gushing loud and clear;
 Marvellous happy it was to be
 Alone, and yet not solitary;
 Oh, out of terror and dark to come

In sight of home!

THE GAGE

"Lady Jane, O Lady Jane!
Your hound hath broken bounds again,
And chased my timorous deer, O;
If him I see,
That hour he'll dee;
My brakes shall be his bier, O."

"Hoots! lord, speak not so proud to me!
My hound, I trow, is fleet and free,
He's welcome to your deer, O;
Shoot, shoot you may,
He'll gang his way,
Your threats we nothing fear, O."

He's fetched him in, he's laid him low,
Drips his lifeblood red and slow,
Darkens his dreary eye, O;
"Here is your beast,
And now at least
My herds in peace shall lie, O."

"In peace!" my lord, O mark me well!
For what my jolly hound befell
You shall sup twenty-fold, O!
For every tooth
Of his, in sooth,
A stag in pawn, I hold, O.

"Huntsman and horn, huntsman and horn,
Shall scour your heaths and coverts lorn,
Braying 'em shrill and clear, O;
But lone and still
Shall lift each hill,
Each valley wan and sere, O.

"Ride up you may, ride down you may,
Lonely or trooped, by night or day,
My hound shall haunt you ever:
Bird, beast, and game
Shall dread the same,
The wild fish of your river."

Her cheek burns angry as the rose,
Her eye with wrath and pity flows:
He gazes fierce and round, O--
"Dear Lord!" he says,
"What loveliness
To waste upon a hound, O.

"I'd give my stags, my hills and dales,
 My stormcocks and my nightingales
 To have undone this deed, O;
 For deep beneath
 My heart is death
 Which for her love doth bleed, O."

He wanders up, he wanders down,
 On foot, a-horse, by night and noon:
 His lands are bleak and drear, O;
 Forsook his dales
 Of nightingales,
 Forsook his moors of deer, O,

Forsook his heart, ah me! of mirth;
 There's nothing gladsome left on earth;
 All thoughts and dreams seem vain, O,
 Save where remote
 The moonbeams gloat,
 And sleeps the lovely Jane, O.

Until an even when lone he went,
 Gnawing his beard in dreariment--
 Lo! from a thicket hidden,
 Lovely as flower
 In April hour,
 Steps forth a form unbidden.

"Get ye now down, my lord, to me!
 I'm troubled so I'm like to dee,"
 She cries, 'twixt joy and grief, O;
 "The hound is dead,
 When all is said,
 But love is past belief, O.

"Nights, nights I've lain your lands to see,
 Forlorn and still--and all for me,
 All for a foolish curse, O;
 Now here am I
 Come out to die--
 To live unloved is worse, O!"

In faith, this lord, in that lone dale,
 Hears now a sweeter nightingale,
 And lairs a tenderer deer, O;
 His sorrow goes
 Like mountain snows
 In waters sweet and clear, O!

What ghostly hound is this that fleet
 Comes fawning to his mistress' feet,
 And courses round his master?

How swiftly love
 May grief remove,
 How happy make disaster!

Now here he smells, now there he smells,
 Winding his voice along the dells,
 Till grey flows up the morn, O
 Then hies again
 To Lady Jane
 No longer now forlorn, O.

Ay, as it were a bud, did break
 To loveliness for her love's sake,
 So she in beauty moving
 Rides at his hand
 Across his land,
 Beloved as well as loving.

AS LUCY WENT A-WALKING

As Lucy went a-walking one morning cold and fine,
 There sate three crows upon a bough, and three times three is nine: Then "O!" said Lucy, in the snow, "it's
 very plain to see
 A witch has been a-walking in the fields in front of me."

Then slept she light and heedfully across the frozen snow,
 And plucked a bunch of elder-twigs that near a pool did grow: And, by and by, she comes to seven shadows in
 one place
 Stretched black by seven poplar-trees against the sun's bright face.

She looks to left, she looks to right, and in the midst she sees A little pool of water clear and frozen 'neath the
 trees;
 Then down beside its margent in the crusty snow she kneels, And hears a magic belfry a-ringing with sweet
 bells.

Clear sang the faint far merry peal, then silence on the air, And icy-still the frozen pool and poplars standing
 there:
 Then lo! as Lucy turned her head and looked along the snow
 She sees a witch--a witch she sees, come frisking to and fro.

Her scarlet, buckled shoes they clicked, her heels a-twinkling high; With mistletoe her steeple-hat bobbed as
 she capered by;
 But never a dint, or mark, or print, in the whiteness for to see, Though danced she high, though danced she
 fast, though danced she lissomely.

It seemed 'twas diamonds in the air, or little flakes of frost; It seemed 'twas golden smoke around, or
 sunbeams lightly tossed; It seemed an elfin music like to reeds and warblers rose:
 "Nay!" Lucy said, "it is the wind that through the branches flows."

And as she peeps, and as she peeps, 'tis no more one, but three, And eye of bat, and downy wing of owl within
 the tree,
 And the bells of that sweet belfry a-pealing as before,

And now it is not three she sees, and now it is not four--

"O! who are ye," sweet Lucy cries, "that in a dreadful ring, All muffled up in brindled shawls, do caper, frisk, and spring?" "A witch, and witches, one and nine," they straight to her reply, And looked upon her narrowly, with green and needle eye.

Then Lucy sees in clouds of gold green cherry trees upgrow, And bushes of red roses that bloomed above the snow;

She smells, all faint, the almond-boughs blowing so wild and fair, And doves with milky eyes ascend fluttering in the air.

Clear flowers she sees, like tulip buds, go floating by like birds, With wavering tips that warbled sweetly strange enchanted words; And, as with ropes of amethyst, the boughs with lamps were hung, And clusters of green emeralds like fruit upon them clung.

"O witches nine, ye dreadful nine, O witches seven and three! Whence come these wondrous things that I this Christmas morning see?" But straight, as in a clap, when she of Christmas says the word, Here is the snow, and there the sun, but never bloom nor bird;

Nor warbling flame, nor gloaming-rope of amethyst there shows, Nor bunches of green emeralds, nor belfry, well, and rose,

Nor cloud of gold, nor cherry-tree, nor witch in brindled shawl, But like a dream that vanishes, so vanished were they all.

When Lucy sees, and only sees three crows upon a bough,

And earthly twigs, and bushes hidden white in driven snow,

Then "O!" said Lucy, "three times three is nine--I plainly see Some witch has been a-walking in the fields in front of me."

THE ENGLISHMAN

I met a sailor in the woods,

A silver ring wore he,

His hair hung black, his eyes shone blue,

And thus he said to me:--

"What country, say, of this round earth,

What shore of what salt sea,

Be this, my son, I wander in,

And looks so strange to me?"

Says I, "O foreign sailorman,

In England now you be,

This is her wood, and there her sky,

And that her roaring sea."

He lifts his voice yet louder,

"What smell be this," says he,

"My nose on the sharp morning air

Snuffs up so greedily?"

Says I, "It is wild roses

Do smell so winsomely,
 And winy briar, too," says I,
 "That in these thickets be."

"And oh!" says he, "what leetle bird
 Is singing in yon high tree,
 So every shrill and long-drawn note
 Like bubbles breaks in me?"

Says I, "It is the mavis
 That perches in the tree,
 And sings so shrill, and sings so sweet,
 When dawn comes up the sea."

At which he fell a-musing,
 And fixed his eye on me,
 As one alone 'twixt light and dark
 A spirit thinks to see.

"England!" he whispers soft and harsh,
 "England!" repeated he,
 "And briar, and rose, and mavis,
 A-singing in yon high tree.

"Ye speak me true, my leetle son,
 So--so, it came to me,
 A-drifting landwards on a spar,
 And grey dawn on the sea.

"Ay, ay, I could not be mistook;
 I knew them leafy trees,
 I knew that land so witchery sweet,
 And that old noise of seas.

"Though here I've sailed a score of years,
 And heard 'em, dream or wake,
 Lap small and hollow 'gainst my cheek,
 On sand and coral break;

"Yet now,' my leetle son, says I,
 A-drifting on the wave,
 'That land I see so safe and green,
 Is England, I believe.

"And that there wood is English wood,
 And this here cruel sea,
 The selfsame old blue ocean
 Years gone remembers me.

"A-sitting with my bread and butter
 Down ahind yon chitterin' mill;
 And this same Marinere'--(that's me),

'Is that same leetle Will!--

"That very same wee leetle Will
Eating his bread and butter there,
A-looking on the broad blue sea
Betwixt his yaller hair!"

"And here be I, my son, thrown up
Like corpses from the sea,
Ships, stars, winds, tempests, pirates past,
Yet leetle Will I be!"

He said no more, that sailorman,
But in a reverie
Stared like the figure of a ship
With painted eyes to sea.

THE PHANTOM

"Upstairs in the large closet, child,
This side the blue room door,
Is an old Bible, bound in leather,
Standing upon the floor;

"Go with this taper, bring it me;
Carry it so, upon your arm;
It is the book on many a sea
Hath stilled the waves' alarm."

Late the hour, dark the night,
The house is solitary;
Feeble is a taper's light
To light poor Ann to see.

Her eyes are yet with visions bright
Of sylph and river, flower and fay,
Now through a narrow corridor
She goes her lonely way.

Vast shadows on the heedless walls
Gigantic loom, stoop low:
Each little hasty footfall calls
Hollowly to and fro.

In the cold solitude her heart
Remembers sorrowfully
White winters when her mother was
Her loving company.

Now in the dark clear glass she sees
A taper, mocking hers,--
A phantom face of light blue eyes,

Reflecting phantom fears.

Around her loom the vacant rooms,
Wind the upward stairs,
She climbs on into a loneliness
Only her taper shares.

Out in the dark a cold wind stirs,
At every window sighs;
A waning moon peers small and chill
From out the cloudy skies,

Casting faint tracery on the walls;
So stony still the house
From cellar to attic rings the shrill
Squeak of the hungry mouse.

Her grandmother is deaf with age;
A garden of moonless trees
Would answer not though she should cry
In anguish on her knees.

So that she scarce can breathe--so fast
Her pent up heart doth beat--
When, faint along the corridor,
Falleth the sound of feet:--

Sounds lighter than silk slippers make
Upon a ballroom floor, when sweet
Violin and 'cello wake
Music for twirling feet.

O! 'neath an old unfriendly roof,
What shapes may not conceal
Their faces in the open day,
At night abroad to steal?

Even her taper seems with fear
To languish small and blue;
Far in the woods the winter wind
Runs whistling through.

A dreadful cold plucks at each hair,
Her mouth is stretched to cry,
But sudden, with a gush of joy,
It narrows to a sigh.

It is a phantom child which comes
Soft through the corridor,
Singing an old forgotten song,
This ancient burden bore:--

"Thorn, thorn, I wis,
 And roses twain,
 A red rose and a white,
 Stoop in the blossom, bee, and kiss
 A lonely child good-night.

"Swim fish, sing bird,
 And sigh again,
 I that am lost am lone,
 Bee in the blossom never stirred
 Locks hid beneath a stone!"--

Her eye was of the azure fire
 That hovers in wintry flame;
 Her raiment wild and yellow as furze
 That spouteth out the same;

And in her hand she bore no flower,
 But on her head a wreath
 Of faded flowers that did yet
 Smell sweetly after death....

Gloomy with night the listening walls
 Are now that she is gone,
 Albeit this solitary child
 No longer seems alone.

Fast though her taper dwindles down,
 Heavy and thick the tome,
 A beauty beyond fear to dim
 Haunts now her alien home.

Ghosts in the world, malignant, grim,
 Vex many a wood and glen,
 And house and pool--the unquiet ghosts,
 Of dead and restless men.

But in her grannie's house this spirit--
 A child as lone as she--
 Pining for love not found on earth,
 Ann dreams again to see.

Seated upon her tapestry stool,
 Her fairy-book laid by,
 She gazes into the fire, knowing
 She has sweet company.

THE MILLER AND HIS SON

A twangling harp for Mary,
 A silvery flute for John,
 And now we'll play, the livelong day,

"The Miller and his Son." ...

"The Miller went a-walking
All in the forest high,
He sees three doves a-flitting
Against the dark blue sky:

"Says he, 'My son, now follow
These doves so white and free,
That cry above the forest,
And surely cry to thee.'

"I go, my dearest Father,
But O! I sadly fear,
These doves so white will lead me far,
But never bring me near.'

"He kisses the Miller,
He cries, 'Awhoop to ye!
And straightway through the forest
Follows the wood-doves three.

"There came a sound of weeping
To the Miller in his Mill:
Red roses in a thicket
Bloomed over near his wheel;

"Three stars shone wild and brightly
Above the forest dim:
But never his dearest son
Returns again to him.

"The cuckoo shall call 'Cuckoo!'
In vain along the vale--
The linnet, and the blackbird,
The mournful nightingale;

"The Miller hears and sees not,
Thinking of his son;
His toppling wheel is silent;
His grinding done.

"'You doves so white,' he weepeth,
'You roses on the tree,
You stars that shine so brightly,
You shine in vain for me!

"'I bade him follow, follow!'
He said, 'O Father dear,
These doves so white will lead me far
But never bring me near.'" ...

A twangling harp for Mary,
 A silvery flute for John,
 And now we'll play, the livelong day,
 "The Miller and his Son."

DOWN-ADOWN-DERRY

Down-adown-derry,
 Sweet Annie Maroon,
 Gathering daisies
 In the meadows of Doone,
 Hears a shrill piping,
 Elflike and free,
 Where the waters go brawling
 In rills to the sea;
 Singing down-adown-derry.

Down-adown-derry,
 Sweet Annie Maroon,
 Through the green grasses
 Peeps softly; and soon
 Spies under green willows
 A fairy whose song
 Like the smallest of bubbles
 Floats bobbing along;
 Singing down-adown-derry.

Down-adown-derry,
 Her cheeks were like wine,
 Her eyes in her wee face
 Like water-sparks shine,
 Her niminy fingers
 Her sleep tresses preen,
 The which in the combing
 She peeps out between;
 Singing down-adown-derry.

Down-adown-derry,
 Shrill, shrill was her tune:--
 "Come to my water-house,
 Annie Maroon:
 Come in your dimity,
 Ribbon on head,
 To wear siller seaweed
 And coral instead";
 Singing down-adown-derry.

"Down-adown-derry,
 Lean fish of the sea,
 Bring lanthorns for feasting
 The gay Faërie;
 'Tis sand for the dancing,

A music all sweet
 In the water-green gloaming
 For thistledown feet";
 Singing down-adown-derry.

Down-adown-derry,
 Sweet Annie Maroon
 Looked large on the fairy
 Curled wan as the moon;
 And all the grey ripples
 To the Mill racing by,
 With harps and with timbrels
 Did ringing reply;
 Singing down-adown-derry.

"Down-adown-derry,"
 Sang the Fairy of Doone,
 Piercing the heart
 Of sweet Annie Maroon;
 And lo! when like roses
 The clouds of the sun
 Faded at dusk, gone
 Was Annie Maroon;
 Singing down-adown-derry.

Down-adown-derry,
 The daisies are few;
 Frost twinkles powdery
 In haunts of the dew;
 And only the robin
 Perched on a thorn,
 Can comfort the heart
 Of a father forlorn;
 Singing down-adown-derry.

Down-adown-derry,
 There's snow in the air;
 Ice where the lily
 Bloomed waxen and fair;
 He may call o'er the water,
 Cry--cry through the Mill,
 But Annie Maroon, alas!
 Answer ne'er will;
 Singing down-adown-derry.

THE SUPPER

A wolf he pricks with eyes of fire
 Across the night's o'ercrusted snows.

Seeking his prey,
 He pads his way

Where Jane benighted goes,
Where Jane benighted goes.

He curdles the bleak air with ire,
Ruffling his hoary raiment through,

And lo! he sees
Beneath the trees
Where Jane's light footsteps go,
Where Jane's light footsteps go.

No hound peals thus in wicked joy,
He snaps his muzzle in the snows,

His five-clawed feet
Do scamper fleet
Where Jane's bright lanthorn shows,
Where Jane's bright lanthorn shows.

Now his greed's green doth gaze unseen
On a pure face of wilding rose,

Her amber eyes
In fear's surprise
Watch largely as she goes,
Watch largely as she goes.

Salt wells his hunger in his jaws,
His lust it revels to and fro,

Yet small beneath
A soft voice saith,
"Jane shall in safety go,
Jane shall in safety go."

He lurched as if a fiery lash
Had scourged his hide, and through and through

His furious eyes
O'erscanned the skies,
But nearer dared not go,
But nearer dared not go.

He reared like wild Bucephalus,
His fangs like spears in him uprose,

Even to the town
Jane's flitting gown
He grins on as she goes,
He grins on as she goes.

In fierce lament he howls amain,

He scampers, marvelling in his throes

What brought him there
To sup on air,
While Jane unharmèd goes,
While Jane unharmèd goes.

THE ISLE OF LONE

Three dwarfs there were which lived in an isle,
And the name of that Isle was Lone,
And the names of the dwarfs were Alliolyle,
Lallerie, Muziomone.

Alliolye was green of een,
Lallerie light of locks,
Muziomone was mild of mien,
As ewes in April flocks.

Their house was small and sweet of the sea,
And pale as the Malmsey wine;
Their bowls were three, and their beds were three,
And their nightcaps white were nine.

Their beds they were made of the holly-wood,
Their combs of the tortoise's shell,
Three basins of silver in corners there stood,
And three little ewers as well.

Green rushes, green rushes lay thick on the floor,
For light beamed a gobbet of wax;
There were three wooden stools for whatever they wore
On their humpity-dumpity backs.

So each would lie on a drowsy pillow
And watch the moon in the sky--
And hear the parrot scream to the billow,
The billow roar reply:

Parrots of sapphire and sulphur and amber,
Scarlet, and flame, and green,
While five-foot apes did scramble and clamber,
In the feathery-tufted treen.

All night long with bubbles a-glisten
The ocean cried under the moon,
Till ape and parrot, too sleepy to listen,
To sleep and slumber were gone.

Then from three small beds the dark hours' while
In a house in the Island of Lone
Rose the snoring of Lallerie, Alliolyle,

The snoring of Muziomone.

But soon as ever came peep of sun
 On coral and feathery tree,
 Three night-capped dwarfs to the surf would run
 And soon were a-bob in the sea.

At six they went fishing, at nine they snared
 Young foxes in the dells,
 At noon on sweet berries and honey they fared,
 And blew in their twisted shells.

Dark was the sea they gambolled in,
 And thick with silver fish,
 Dark as green glass blown clear and thin
 To be a monarch's dish.

They sate to sup in a jasmine bower,
 Lit pale with flies of fire,
 Their bowls the hue of the iris-flower,
 And lemon their attire.

Sweet wine in little cups they sipped,
 And golden honeycomb
 Into their bowls of cream they dipped,
 Whipt light and white as foam.

Now Alliolyle, where the sand-flower blows,
 Taught three old apes to sing--
 Taught three old apes to dance on their toes
 And caper around in a ring.

They yelled them hoarse and they croaked them sweet,
 They twirled them about and around,
 To the noise of their voices they danced with their feet,
 They stamped with their feet on the ground.

But down to the shore skipped Lallerie,
 His parrot on his thumb,
 And the twain they scotched in mockery,
 While the dancers go and come.

And, alas! in the evening, rosy and still,
 Light-haired Lallerie
 Bitterly quarrelled with Alliolyle
 By the yellow-sanded sea.

The rising moon swam sweet and large
 Before their furious eyes,
 And they rolled and rolled to the coral marge
 Where the surf for ever cries.

Too late, too late, comes Muziomone:
 Clear in the clear green sea
 Alliolyle lies not alone,
 But clasped with Lallerie.

He blows on his shell plaintiff notes;
 Ape, parraquito, bee
 Flock where a shoe on the salt wave floats,--
 The shoe of Lallerie.

He fetches nightcaps, one and nine,
 Grey apes he dowers three,
 His house as fair as the Malmsey wine
 Seems sad as cypress-tree.

Three bowls he brims with sweet honeycomb
 To feast the bumble bees,
 Saying, "O bees, be this your home,
 For grief is on the seas!"

He sate him lone in a coral grot,
 At the flowing in of the tide;
 When ebbd the billow, there was not,
 Save coral, aught beside.

So hairy apes in three white beds,
 And nightcaps, one and nine,
 On moonlit pillows lay three heads
 Bemused with dwarfish wine.

A tomb of coral, the dirge of bee,
 The grey apes' guttural groan
 For Alliolyle, for Lallerie,
 For thee, O Muziomone!

SLEEPING BEAUTY

The scent of bramble fills the air,
 Amid her folded sheets she lies,
 The gold of evening in her hair,
 The blue of morn shut in her eyes.

How many a changing moon hath lit
 The unchanging roses of her face!
 Her mirror ever broods on it
 In silver stillness of the days.

Oft flits the moth on filmy wings
 Into his solitary lair;
 Shrill evensong the cricket sings
 From some still shadow in her hair.

In heat, in snow, in wind, in flood,
 She sleeps in lovely loneliness,
 Half-folded like an April bud
 On winter-haunted trees.

THE HORN

Hark! is that a horn I hear,
 In cloudland winding sweet--
 And bell-like clash of bridle-rein,
 And silver-shod light feet?

Is it the elfin laughter
 Of fairies riding faint and high,
 Beneath the branches of the moon,
 Straying through the starry sky?

Is it in the globèd dew
 Such sweet melodies may fall?
 Wood and valley--all are still,
 Hushed the shepherd's call.

CAPTAIN LEAN

Out of the East a hurricane
 Swept down on Captain Lean--
 That mariner and gentleman
 Will never again be seen.

He sailed his ship against the foes
 Of his own country dear,
 But now in the trough of the billows
 An aimless course doth steer.

Powder was violets to his nostrils,
 Sweet the din of the fighting-line,
 Now he is flotsam on the seas,
 And his bones are bleached with brine.

The stars move up along the sky,
 The moon she shines so bright,
 And in that solitude the foam
 Sparkles unearthly white.

This is the tomb of Captain Lean,
 Would a straiter please his soul?
 I trow he sleeps in peace,
 Howsoever the billows roll!

THE PORTRAIT OF A WARRIOR

His brow is seamed with line and scar;

His cheek is red and dark as wine;
The fires as of a Northern star
Beneath his cap of sable shine.

His right hand, bared of leathern glove,
Hangs open like an iron gin,
You stoop to see his pulses move,
To hear the blood sweep out and in.

He looks some king, so solitary
In earnest thought he seems to stand,
As if across a lonely sea
He gazed impatient of the land.

Out of the noisy centuries
The foolish and the fearful fade;
Yet burn unquenched these warrior eyes,
Time hath not dimmed, nor death dismayed.

HAUNTED

From out the wood I watched them shine,--
The windows of the haunted house,
Now ruddy as enchanted wine,
Now dark as flittermouse.

There went a thin voice piping airs
Along the grey and crooked walks,--
A garden of thistledown and tares,
Bright leaves, and giant stalks.

The twilight rain shone at its gates,
Where long-leaved grass in shadow grew;
And black in silence to her mates
A voiceless raven flew.

Lichen and moss the lone stones greened,
Green paths led lightly to its door,
Keen from her hair the spider leaned,
And dusk to darkness wore.

Amidst the sedge a whisper ran,
The West shut down a heavy eye,
And like last tapers, few and wan,
The watch-stars kindled in the sky.

THE RAVEN'S TOMB

"Build me my tomb," the Raven said,
"Within the dark yew-tree,
So in the Autumn yewberries
Sad lamps may burn for me.

Summon the haunted beetle,
 From twilight bud and bloom,
 To drone a gloomy dirge for me
 At dusk above my tomb.
 Beseech ye too the glowworm
 To rear her cloudy flame,
 Where the small, flickering bats resort,
 Whistling in tears my name.
 Let the round dew a whisper make,
 Welling on twig and thorn;
 And only the grey cock at night
 Call through his silver horn.
 And you, dear sisters, don your black
 For ever and a day,
 To show how true a raven
 In his tomb is laid away."

THE CHRISTENING

The bells chime clear,
 Soon will the sun behind the hills sink down;
 Come, little Ann, your baby brother dear
 Lies in his christening-gown.

His godparents,
 Are all across the fields stepped on before,
 And wait beneath the crumbling monuments,
 This side the old church door.

Your mammie dear
 Leans frail and lovely on your daddie's arm;
 Watching her chick, 'twixt happiness and fear,
 Lest he should come to harm.

All to be blest
 Full soon in the clear heavenly water, he
 Sleeps on unwitting of it, his little breast
 Heaving so tenderly.

I carried you,
 My little Ann, long since on this same quest,
 And from the painted windows a pale hue
 Lit golden on your breast;

And then you woke,
 Chill as the holy water trickled down,
 And, weeping, cast the window a strange look,
 Half smile, half infant frown.

I scarce could hear
 The shrill larks singing in the green meadows,
 'Twas summertide, and, budding far and near,

The hedges thick with rose.

And now you're grown
A little girl, and this same helpless mite
Is come like such another bud half-grown,
Out of the wintry night.

Time flies, time flies!
And yet, bless me! 'tis little changed am I;
May Jesu keep from tears those infant eyes,
Be love their lullaby!

THE FUNERAL

They dressed us up in black,
Susan and Tom and me--
And, walking through the fields
All beautiful to see,
With branches high in the air
And daisy and buttercup,
We heard the lark in the clouds--
In black dressed up.

They took us to the graves,
Susan and Tom and me,
Where the long grasses grow
And the funeral tree:
We stood and watched; and the wind
Came softly out of the sky
And blew in Susan's hair,
As I stood close by.

Back through the fields we came,
Tom and Susan and me,
And we sat in the nursery together,
And had our tea.
And, looking out of the window,
I heard the thrushes sing;
But Tom fell asleep in his chair,
He was so tired, poor thing.

THE MOTHER BIRD

Through the green twilight of a hedge
I peered, with cheek on the cool leaves pressed,
And spied a bird upon a nest:
Two eyes she had beseeching me
Meekly and brave, and her brown breast
Throbbled hot and quick above her heart;
And then she opened her dagger bill,--
'Twas not a chirp, as sparrows pipe
At break of day; 'twas not a trill,

As falters through the quiet even;
 But one sharp solitary note,
 One desperate, fierce, and vivid cry
 Of valiant tears, and hopeless joy,
 One passionate note of victory;
 Off, like a fool afraid, I sneaked,
 Smiling the smile the fool smiles best,
 At the mother bird in the secret hedge
 Patient upon her lonely nest.

THE CHILD IN THE STORY GOES TO BED

I prythee, Nurse, come smooth my hair,
 And prythee, Nurse, unloose my shoe,
 And trimly turn my silken sheet
 Upon my quilt of gentle blue.

My pillow sweet of lavender
 Smooth with an amiable hand,
 And may the dark pass peacefully by
 As in the hour-glass droops the sand.

Prepare my cornered manchete sweet,
 And in my little crystal cup
 Pour out the blithe and flowering mead
 That forthwith I may sup.

Withdraw my curtains from the night,
 And let the crispèd crescent shine
 Upon my eyelids while I sleep,
 And soothe me with her beams benign.

Dark looks the forest far-away;
 O, listen! through its empty dales
 Rings from the solemn echoing boughs
 The music of its nightingales.

Now quench my silver lamp, prythee,
 And bid the harpers harp that tune
 Fairies which haunt the meadowlands
 Sing clearly to the stars of June.

And bid them play, though I in dreams
 No longer heed their pining strains,
 For I would not to silence wake
 When slumber o'er my senses wanes.

You Angels bright who me defend,
 Enshadow me with curvèd wing,
 And keep me in the darksome night.
 Till dawn another day do bring.

THE LAMPLIGHTER

When the light of day declines,
 And a swift angel through the sky
 Kindles God's tapers clear,
 With ashen staff the lamplighter
 Passes along the darkling streets
 To light our earthly lamps;

Lest, prowling in the darkness,
 The thief should haunt with quiet tread,
 Or men on evil errands set;
 Or wayfarers be benighted;
 Or neighbors, bent from house to house,
 Should need a guiding torch.

He is like a needlewoman
 Who deftly on a sable hem
 Stitches in gleaming jewels;
 Or, haply, he is like a hero,
 Whose bright deeds on the long journey
 Are beacons on our way.

And when in the East comes morning,
 And the broad splendour of the sun,
 Then, with the tune of little birds
 Rings on high, the lamplighter
 Passes by each quiet house,
 And he puts out the lamps.

I MET AT EVE

I met at eve the Prince of Sleep,
 His was a still and lovely face,
 He wandered through a valley steep,
 Lovely in a lonely place.

His garb was grey of lavender,
 About his brows a poppy-wreath
 Burned like dim coals, and everywhere
 The air was sweeter for his breath.

His twilight feet no sandals wore,
 His eyes shone faint in their own flame,
 Fair moths that gloomed his steps before
 Seemed letters of his lovely name.

His house is in the mountain ways,
 A phantom house of misty walls,
 Whose golden flocks at evening graze,
 And witch the moon with muffled calls.

Upwelling from his shadowy springs
 Sweet waters shake a trembling sound,
 There flit the hoot-owl's silent wings,
 There hath his web the silkworm wound.

Dark in his pools clear visions lurk,
 And rosy, as with morning buds,
 Along his dales of broom and birk
 Dreams haunt his solitary woods.

I met at eve the Prince of Sleep,
 His was a still and lovely face,
 He wandered through a valley steep,
 Lovely in a lonely place.

LULLABY

Sleep, sleep, lovely white soul;
 The little mouse cheeps plaintively,
 The night-bird in the chestnut-tree--
 They sing together, bird and mouse,
 In starlight, in darkness, lonely, sweet,
 The wild notes and the faint notes meet--
 Sleep, sleep, lovely white soul.

Sleep, sleep, lovely white soul;
 Amid the lilies floats the moth,
 The mole along his galleries goeth
 In the dark earth; the summer moon
 Looks like a shepherd through the pane
 Seeking his feeble lamp again--
 Sleep, sleep, lovely white soul.

Sleep, sleep, lovely white soul;
 Time comes to keep night-watch with thee,
 Nodding with roses; and the sea
 Saith "Peace! Peace!" amid his foam.
 "O be still!"
 The wind cries up the whispering hill--
 Sleep, sleep, lovely white soul.

ENVOI

Child, do you love the flower
 Ashine with colour and dew
 Lighting its transient hour?

So I love you.

The lambs in the mead are at play,
 'Neath a hurdle the shepherd's asleep;
 From height to height of the day

The sunbeams sweep.

Evening will come. And alone
The dreamer the dark will beguile;
All the world will be gone

For a dream's brief while.

Then I shall be old; and away:
And you, with sad joy in your eyes,
Will brood over children at play

With as loveful surmise.

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