

LANG ANDREW

RHYMES A LA
MODE

Andrew Lang

Rhymes a la Mode

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Andrew Lang Rhymes a la Mode

BALLADE DEDICATORY

TO

MRS. ELTON

OF WHITE STAUNTON

The painted Briton built his mound,
And left his celts and clay,
On yon fair slope of sunlit ground
That fronts your garden gay;
The Roman came, he bore the sway,
He bullied, bought, and sold,
Your fountain sweeps his works away
Beside your manor old!

But still his crumbling urns are found
Within the window-bay,
Where once he listened to the sound
That lulls you day by day; —
The sound of summer winds at play,
The noise of waters cold
To Yarty wandering on their way,
Beside your manor old!

The Roman fell: his firm-set bound
Became the Saxon's stay;
The bells made music all around
For monks in cloisters grey,
Till fled the monks in disarray
From their warm chantry's fold,
Old Abbots slumber as they may,
Beside your manor old!

Envoy

Creeds, empires, peoples, all decay,
Down into darkness, rolled;
May life that's fleet be sweet, I pray,
Beside your manor old.

THE FORTUNATE ISLANDS

A DREAM IN JUNE

In twilight of the longest day
I lingered over Lucian,
Till ere the dawn a dreamy way
My spirit found, untrod of man,
Between the green sky and the grey.

Amid the soft dusk suddenly
More light than air I seemed to sail,
Afloat upon the ocean sky,
While through the faint blue, clear and pale,
I saw the mountain clouds go by:
My barque had thought for helm and sail,
And one mist wreath for canopy.

Like torches on a marble floor
Reflected, so the wild stars shone,
Within the abysmal hyaline,
Till the day widened more and more,
And sank to sunset, and was gone,
And then, as burning beacons shine
On summits of a mountain isle,
A light to folk on sea that fare,
So the sky's beacons for a while
Burned in these islands of the air.

Then from a starry island set
Where one swift tide of wind there flows,
Came scent of lily and violet,
Narcissus, hyacinth, and rose,
Laurel, and myrtle buds, and vine,
So delicate is the air and fine:
And forests of all fragrant trees
Sloped seaward from the central hill,
And ever clamorous were these

With singing of glad birds; and still
Such music came as in the woods
Most lonely, consecrate to Pan,
The Wind makes, in his many moods,
Upon the pipes some shepherd Man,
Hangs up, in thanks for victory!
On these shall mortals play no more,

But the Wind doth touch them, over and o'er,
And the Wind's breath in the reeds will sigh.

Between the daylight and the dark
That island lies in silver air,
And suddenly my magic barque
Wheeled, and ran in, and grounded there;
And by me stood the sentinel
Of them who in the island dwell;
All smiling did he bind my hands,
With rushes green and rosy bands,
They have no harsher bonds than these
The people of the pleasant lands
Within the wash of the airy seas!

Then was I to their city led:
Now all of ivory and gold
The great walls were that garlanded
The temples in their shining fold,
(Each fane of beryl built, and each
Girt with its grove of shadowy beech,)
And all about the town, and through,
There flowed a River fed with dew,
As sweet as roses, and as clear
As mountain crystals pure and cold,
And with his waves that water kissed
The gleaming altars of amethyst
That smoke with victims all the year,
And sacred are to the Gods of old.

There sat three Judges by the Gate,
And I was led before the Three,
And they but looked on me, and straight
The rosy bonds fell down from me
Who, being innocent, was free;
And I might wander at my will
About that City on the hill,
Among the happy people clad
In purple weeds of woven air
Hued like the webs that Twilight weaves
At shut of languid summer eves
So light their raiment seemed; and glad
Was every face I looked on there!

There was no heavy heat, no cold,
The dwellers there wax never old,
Nor wither with the waning time,
But each man keeps that age he had
When first he won the fairy clime.

The Night falls never from on high,
Nor ever burns the heat of noon.
But such soft light eternally
Shines, as in silver dawns of June
Before the Sun hath climbed the sky!

Within these pleasant streets and wide,
The souls of Heroes go and come,
Even they that fell on either side
Beneath the walls of Ilium;
And sunlike in that shadowy isle
The face of Helen and her smile
Makes glad the souls of them that knew
Grief for her sake a little while!
And all true Greeks and wise are there;
And with his hand upon the hair
Of Phaedo, saw I Socrates,
About him many youths and fair,
Hylas, Narcissus, and with these
Him whom the quoit of Phoebus slew
By fleet Eurotas, unaware!

All these their mirth and pleasure made
Within the plain Elysian,
The fairest meadow that may be,
With all green fragrant trees for shade
And every scented wind to fan,
And sweetest flowers to strew the lea;
The soft Winds are their servants fleet
To fetch them every fruit at will
And water from the river chill;
And every bird that singeth sweet
Throstle, and merle, and nightingale
Brings blossoms from the dewy vale, —
Lily, and rose, and asphodel —
With these doth each guest twine his crown
And wreath his cup, and lay him down
Beside some friend he loveth well.

There with the shining Souls I lay
When, lo, a Voice that seemed to say,
In far-off haunts of Memory,
Whoso death taste the Dead Men's bread,
Shall dwell for ever with these Dead,
Nor ever shall his body lie
Beside his friends, on the grey hill
Where rains weep, and the curlews shrill
And the brown water wanders by!

Then did a new soul in me wake,
The dead men's bread I feared to break,
Their fruit I would not taste indeed
Were it but a pomegranate seed.
Nay, not with these I made my choice
To dwell for ever and rejoice,
For otherwhere the River rolls
That girds the home of Christian souls,
And these my whole heart seeks are found
On otherwise enchanted ground.

Even so I put the cup away,
The vision wavered, dimmed, and broke,
And, nowise sorrowing, I woke
While, grey among the ruins grey
Chill through the dwellings of the dead,
The Dawn crept o'er the Northern sea,
Then, in a moment, flushed to red,
Flushed all the broken minster old,
And turned the shattered stones to gold,
And wakened half the world with me!

L'Envoi

To E. W. G

(Who also had rhymed on the Fortune Islands of Lucian)

Each in the self-same field we glean
The field of the Samosatene,
Each something takes and something leaves
And this must choose, and that forego
In Lucian's visionary sheaves,
To twine a modern posy so;
But all any gleanings, truth to tell,
Are mixed with mournful asphodel,
While yours are wreathed with poppies red,
With flowers that Helen's feet have kissed,
With leaves of vine that garlanded
The Syrian Pantagruelist,
The sage who laughed the world away,
Who mocked at Gods, and men, and care,
More sweet of voice than Rabelais,
And lighter-hearted than Voltaire.

THE NEW MILLENIUM
(THE UNFORTUNATE ISLANDS.)

A VISION IN THE STRAND

The jaded light of late July
Shone yellow down the dusty Strand,
The anxious people bustled by,
Policeman, Pressman, you and I,
And thieves, and judges of the land.

So swift they strode they had not time
To mark the humours of the Town,
But I, that mused an idle rhyme,
Looked here and there, and up and down,
And many a rapid cart I spied
That drew, as fast as ponies can,
The Newspapers of either side,
These joys of every Englishman!

The *Standard* here, the *Echo* there,
And cultured ev'ning papers fair,
With din and fuss and shout and blare
Through all the eager land they bare,
The rumours of our little span.

'Midst these, but ah, more slow of speed,
A biggish box of sanguine hue
Was tugged on a velocipede,
And in and out the crowd, and through,
An earnest stripling urged it well
Perched on a cranky tricycle!

A seedy tricycle he rode,
Perchance some three miles in the hour,
But, on the big red box that glowed
Behind him, was a name of Power,
Justice, (I read it e'er I wist,) *The Organ of the Socialist!*

The paper carts fled fleetly by
And vanished up the roaring Strand,
And eager purchasers drew nigh
Each with his penny in his hand,
But *Justice*, scarce more fleet than I,
Began to permeate the land,
And dark, methinks, the twilight fell,
Or ever *Justice* reached Pall Mall.

Oh Man, (I stopped to moralize,)

How eager thou to fight with Fate,
To bring Astraea from the skies;
Yet ah, how too inadequate
The means by which thou fain wouldst cope
With Laws and Morals, King and Pope!
“Justice!” – how prompt the witling’s sneer, —
“Justice! Thou wouldst have Justice here!
And each poor man should be a squire,
Each with his competence a year,
Each with sufficient beef and beer,
And all things matched to his desire,
While all the Middle Classes should
With every vile Capitalist
Be clean reformed away for good,
And vanish like a morning mist!

“Ah splendid Vision, golden time,
An end of hunger, cold, and crime.
An end of Rent, an end of Rank,
An end of balance at the Bank,
An end of everything that’s meant
To bring Investors five per cent!”

How fair doth Justice seem, I cried,
Yet oh, how strong the embattled powers
That war against on every side
Justice, and this great dream of ours,
And what have we to plead our cause
’Gainst Masters, Capital, and laws,
What but a big red box indeed,
With copies of a weekly screed,
That’s slowly jolted, up and down,
Behind an old velocipede
To clamour *Justice* through the town:
How touchingly inadequate
These arms wherewith we’d vanquish Fate!

Nay, the old Order shall endure
And little change the years shall know,
And still the Many shall be poor,
And still the Poor shall dwell in woe;
Firm in the iron Law of things
The strong shall be the wealthy still,
And (called Capitalists or Kings)
Shall seize and hoard the fruits of skill.
Leaving the weaker for their gain,
Leaving the gentler for their prize
Such dens and husks as beasts disdain, —
Till slowly from the wrinkled skies

The fireless frozen Sun shall wane,
Nor Summer come with golden grain;
Till men be glad, mid frost and snow
To live such equal lives of pain
As now the hutted Eskimo!
Then none shall plough nor garner seed,
Then, on some last sad human shore,
Equality shall reign indeed,
The Rich shall be with us no more,
Thus, and not otherwise, shall come
The new, the true Millennium!

ALMAE MATRES

(ST. ANDREWS, 1862. OXFORD, 1865)

*St. Andrews by the Northern sea,
A haunted town it is to me!*
A little city, worn and grey,
The grey North Ocean girds it round.
And o'er the rocks, and up the bay,
The long sea-rollers surge and sound.
And still the thin and biting spray
Drives down the melancholy street,
And still endure, and still decay,
Towers that the salt winds vainly beat.
Ghost-like and shadowy they stand
Dim mirrored in the wet sea-sand.

St. Leonard's chapel, long ago
We loitered idly where the tall
Fresh budded mountain ashes blow
Within thy desecrated wall:
The tough roots rent the tomb below,
The April birds sang clamorous,
We did not dream, we could not know
How hardly Fate would deal with us!

O, broken minster, looking forth
Beyond the bay, above the town,
O, winter of the kindly North,
O, college of the scarlet gown,
And shining sands beside the sea,
And stretch of links beyond the sand,
Once more I watch you, and to me
It is as if I touched his hand!

And therefore art thou yet more dear,
O, little city, grey and sere,
Though shrunken from thine ancient pride
And lonely by thy lonely sea,
Than these fair halls on Isis' side,
Where Youth an hour came back to me!

A land of waters green and clear,
Of willows and of poplars tall,
And, in the spring time of the year,

The white may breaking over all,
And Pleasure quick to come at call.
And summer rides by marsh and wold,
And Autumn with her crimson pall
About the towers of Magdalen rolled;
And strange enchantments from the past,
And memories of the friends of old,
And strong Tradition, binding fast
The “flying terms” with bands of gold, —

All these hath Oxford: all are dear,
But dearer far the little town,
The drifting surf, the wintry year,
The college of the scarlet gown,
St. Andrews by the Northern sea,
That is a haunted town to me!

DESIDERIUM

IN MEMORIAM S. F. A

The call of homing rooks, the shrill
Song of some bird that watches late,
The cries of children break the still
Sad twilight by the churchyard gate.

And o'er your far-off tomb the grey
Sad twilight broods, and from the trees
The rooks call on their homeward way,
And are you heedless quite of these?

The clustered rowan berries red
And Autumn's may, the clematis,
They droop above your dreaming head,
And these, and all things must you miss?

Ah, you that loved the twilight air,
The dim lit hour of quiet best,
At last, at last you have your share
Of what life gave so seldom, rest!

Yes, rest beyond all dreaming deep,
Or labour, nearer the Divine,
And pure from fret, and smooth as sleep,
And gentle as thy soul, is thine!

So let it be! But could I know
That thou in this soft autumn eve,
This hush of earth that pleased thee so,
Hadst pleasure still, I might not grieve.

RHYMES A LA MODE

BALLADE OF MIDDLE AGE

Our youth began with tears and sighs,
With seeking what we could not find;
Our verses all were threnodies,
In elegiacs still we whined;
Our ears were deaf, our eyes were blind,
We sought and knew not what we sought.
We marvel, now we look behind:
Life's more amusing than we thought!

Oh, foolish youth, untimely wise!
Oh, phantoms of the sickly mind!
What? not content with seas and skies,
With rainy clouds and southern wind,
With common cares and faces kind,
With pains and joys each morning brought?
Ah, old, and worn, and tired we find
Life's more amusing than we thought!

Though youth "turns spectre-thin and dies,"
To mourn for youth we're not inclined;
We set our souls on salmon flies,
We whistle where we once repined.
Confound the woes of human-kind!
By Heaven we're "well deceived," I wot;
Who hum, contented or resigned,
"Life's more amusing than we thought!"

Envoy

O nate mecum, worn and lined
Our faces show, but *that* is naught;
Our hearts are young 'neath wrinkled rind:
Life's more amusing than we thought!

THE LAST CAST

THE ANGLER'S APOLOGY

Just one cast more! how many a year
Beside how many a pool and stream,
Beneath the falling leaves and sere,
I've sighed, reeled up, and dreamed my dream!

Dreamed of the sport since April first
Her hands fulfilled of flowers and snow,
Adown the pastoral valleys burst
Where Ettrick and where Teviot flow.

Dreamed of the singing showers that break,
And sting the lochs, or near or far,
And rouse the trout, and stir "the take"
From Urigil to Lochinvar.

Dreamed of the kind propitious sky
O'er Ari Innes brooding grey;
The sea trout, rushing at the fly,
Breaks the black wave with sudden spray!

* * * * *

Brief are man's days at best; perchance
I waste my own, who have not seen
The castled palaces of France
Shine on the Loire in summer green.

And clear and fleet Eurotas still,
You tell me, laves his reedy shore,
And flows beneath his fabled hill
Where Dian drave the chase of yore.

And "like a horse unbroken" yet
The yellow stream with rush and foam,
'Neath tower, and bridge, and parapet,
Girdles his ancient mistress, Rome!

I may not see them, but I doubt
If seen I'd find them half so fair

As ripples of the rising trout
That feed beneath the elms of Yair.

Nay, Spring I'd meet by Tweed or Ail,
And Summer by Loch Assynt's deep,
And Autumn in that lonely vale
Where wedded Avons westward sweep,

Or where, amid the empty fields,
Among the bracken of the glen,
Her yellow wreath October yields,
To crown the crystal brows of Ken.

Unseen, Eurotas, southward steal,
Unknown, Alpheus, westward glide,
You never heard the ringing reel,
The music of the water side!

Though Gods have walked your woods among,
Though nymphs have fled your banks along;
You speak not that familiar tongue
Tweed murmurs like my cradle song.

My cradle song, – nor other hymn
I'd choose, nor gentler requiem dear
Than Tweed's, that through death's twilight dim,
Mourned in the latest Minstrel's ear!

TWILIGHT

SONNET

(AFTER RICHEPIN.)

Light has flown!
Through the grey
The wind's way
The sea's moan
Sound alone!
For the day
These repay
And atone!

Scarce I know,
Listening so
To the streams
Of the sea,
If old dreams
Sing to me!

BALLADE OF SUMMER

TO C. H. ARKCOLL

When strawberry pottles are common and cheap,
Ere elms be black, or limes be sere,
When midnight dances are murdering sleep,
Then comes in the sweet o' the year!
And far from Fleet Street, far from here,
The Summer is Queen in the length of the land,
And moonlit nights they are soft and clear,
When fans for a penny are sold in the Strand!

When clamour that doves in the lindens keep
Mingles with musical plash of the weir,
Where drowned green tresses of crowsfoot creep,
Then comes in the sweet o' the year!
And better a crust and a beaker of beer,
With rose-hung hedges on either hand,
Than a palace in town and a prince's cheer,
When fans for a penny are sold in the Strand!

When big trout late in the twilight leap,
When cuckoo clamoureth far and near,
When glittering scythes in the hayfield reap,
Then comes in the sweet o' the year!
And it's oh to sail, with the wind to steer,
Where kine knee deep in the water stand,
On a Highland loch, on a Lowland mere,

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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