

# WILDE OSCAR

POEMS, WITH THE  
BALLAD OF READING  
GAOL

**Oscar Wilde**  
**Poems, with The**  
**Ballad of Reading Gaol**

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Poems, with The Ballad of Reading Gaol:*

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# Oscar Wilde

## Poems, with The

### Ballad of Reading Gaol

#### NOTE

*This collection of Wilde's Poems contains the volume of 1881 in its entirety, 'The Sphinx', 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol,' and 'Ravenna.' Of the Uncollected Poems published in the Uniform Edition of 1908, a few, including the Translations from the Greek and the Polish, are omitted. Two new poems, 'Désespoir' and 'Pan,' which I have recently discovered in manuscript, are now printed for the first time. Particulars as to the original publication of each poem will be found in 'A Bibliography of the Poems of Oscar Wilde,' by Stuart Mason, London 1907.*

*Robert Ross.*

# POEMS

## HÉLAS!

*To drift with every passion till my soul  
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play,  
Is it for this that I have given away  
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control?  
Methinks my life is a twice-written scroll  
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday  
With idle songs for pipe and virelay,  
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.  
Surely there was a time I might have trod  
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance  
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:  
Is that time dead? lo! with a little rod  
I did but touch the honey of romance—  
And must I lose a soul's inheritance?*

# ELEUTHERIA

## SONNET TO LIBERTY

Not that I love thy children, whose dull eyes  
See nothing save their own unlovely woe,  
Whose minds know nothing, nothing care to know, —  
But that the roar of thy Democracies,  
Thy reigns of Terror, thy great Anarchies,  
Mirror my wildest passions like the sea  
And give my rage a brother – ! Liberty!  
For this sake only do thy dissonant cries  
Delight my discreet soul, else might all kings  
By bloody knout or treacherous cannonades  
Rob nations of their rights inviolate  
And I remain unmoved – and yet, and yet,  
These Christs that die upon the barricades,  
God knows it I am with them, in some things.

## AVE IMPERATRIX

Set in this stormy Northern sea,  
Queen of these restless fields of tide,

England! what shall men say of thee,  
Before whose feet the worlds divide?

The earth, a brittle globe of glass,  
Lies in the hollow of thy hand,  
And through its heart of crystal pass,  
Like shadows through a twilight land,

The spears of crimson-suited war,  
The long white-crested waves of fight,  
And all the deadly fires which are  
The torches of the lords of Night.

The yellow leopards, strained and lean,  
The treacherous Russian knows so well,  
With gaping blackened jaws are seen  
Leap through the hail of screaming shell.

The strong sea-lion of England's wars  
Hath left his sapphire cave of sea,  
To battle with the storm that mars  
The stars of England's chivalry.

The brazen-throated clarion blows  
Across the Pathan's reedy fen,  
And the high steeps of Indian snows  
Shake to the tread of armèd men.

And many an Afghan chief, who lies

Beneath his cool pomegranate-trees,  
Clutches his sword in fierce surmise  
When on the mountain-side he sees

The fleet-foot Marri scout, who comes  
To tell how he hath heard afar  
The measured roll of English drums  
Beat at the gates of Kandahar.

For southern wind and east wind meet  
Where, girt and crowned by sword and fire,  
England with bare and bloody feet  
Climbs the steep road of wide empire.

O lonely Himalayan height,  
Grey pillar of the Indian sky,  
Where saw'st thou last in clanging flight  
Our wingèd dogs of Victory?

The almond-groves of Samarcand,  
Bokhara, where red lilies blow,  
And Oxus, by whose yellow sand  
The grave white-turbaned merchants go:

And on from thence to Ispahan,  
The gilded garden of the sun,  
Whence the long dusty caravan  
Brings cedar wood and vermilion;

And that dread city of Cabool  
Set at the mountain's scarpèd feet,  
Whose marble tanks are ever full  
With water for the noonday heat:

Where through the narrow straight Bazaar  
A little maid Circassian  
Is led, a present from the Czar  
Unto some old and bearded khan, —

Here have our wild war-eagles flown,  
And flapped wide wings in fiery fight;  
But the sad dove, that sits alone  
In England – she hath no delight.

In vain the laughing girl will lean  
To greet her love with love-lit eyes:  
Down in some treacherous black ravine,  
Clutching his flag, the dead boy lies.

And many a moon and sun will see  
The lingering wistful children wait  
To climb upon their father's knee;  
And in each house made desolate

Pale women who have lost their lord  
Will kiss the relics of the slain —  
Some tarnished epaulette – some sword —  
Poor toys to soothe such anguished pain.

For not in quiet English fields  
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,  
Where we might deck their broken shields  
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,  
And many in the Afghan land,  
And many where the Ganges falls  
Through seven mouths of shifting sand.

And some in Russian waters lie,  
And others in the seas which are  
The portals to the East, or by  
The wind-swept heights of Trafalgar.

O wandering graves! O restless sleep!  
O silence of the sunless day!  
O still ravine! O stormy deep!  
Give up your prey! Give up your prey!

And thou whose wounds are never healed,  
Whose weary race is never won,  
O Cromwell's England! must thou yield  
For every inch of ground a son?

Go! crown with thorns thy gold-crowned head,  
Change thy glad song to song of pain;  
Wind and wild wave have got thy dead,

And will not yield them back again.

Wave and wild wind and foreign shore  
Possess the flower of English land —  
Lips that thy lips shall kiss no more,  
Hands that shall never clasp thy hand.

What profit now that we have bound  
The whole round world with nets of gold,  
If hidden in our heart is found  
The care that groweth never old?

What profit that our galleys ride,  
Pine-forest-like, on every main?  
Ruin and wreck are at our side,  
Grim warders of the House of Pain.

Where are the brave, the strong, the fleet?  
Where is our English chivalry?  
Wild grasses are their burial-sheet,  
And sobbing waves their threnody.

O loved ones lying far away,  
What word of love can dead lips send!  
O wasted dust! O senseless clay!  
Is this the end! is this the end!

Peace, peace! we wrong the noble dead  
To vex their solemn slumber so;

Though childless, and with thorn-crowned head,  
Up the steep road must England go,

Yet when this fiery web is spun,  
Her watchmen shall descry from far  
The young Republic like a sun  
Rise from these crimson seas of war.

## TO MILTON

Milton! I think thy spirit hath passed away  
From these white cliffs and high-embattled towers;  
This gorgeous fiery-coloured world of ours  
Seems fallen into ashes dull and grey,  
And the age changed unto a mimic play  
Wherein we waste our else too-crowded hours:  
For all our pomp and pageantry and powers  
We are but fit to delve the common clay,  
Seeing this little isle on which we stand,  
This England, this sea-lion of the sea,  
By ignorant demagogues is held in fee,  
Who love her not: Dear God! is this the land  
Which bare a triple empire in her hand  
When Cromwell spake the word Democracy!

# LOUIS NAPOLEON

Eagle of Austerlitz! where were thy wings  
When far away upon a barbarous strand,  
In fight unequal, by an obscure hand,  
Fell the last scion of thy brood of Kings!

Poor boy! thou shalt not flaunt thy cloak of red,  
Or ride in state through Paris in the van  
Of thy returning legions, but instead  
Thy mother France, free and republican,

Shall on thy dead and crownless forehead place  
The better laurels of a soldier's crown,  
That not dishonoured should thy soul go down  
To tell the mighty Sire of thy race

That France hath kissed the mouth of Liberty,  
And found it sweeter than his honied bees,  
And that the giant wave Democracy  
Breaks on the shores where Kings lay couched at ease.

# SONNET

## ON THE MASSACRE OF THE CHRISTIANS IN BULGARIA

Christ, dost Thou live indeed? or are Thy bones  
Still straitened in their rock-hewn sepulchre?  
And was Thy Rising only dreamed by her  
Whose love of Thee for all her sin atones?  
For here the air is horrid with men's groans,  
The priests who call upon Thy name are slain,  
Dost Thou not hear the bitter wail of pain  
From those whose children lie upon the stones?  
Come down, O Son of God! incestuous gloom  
Curtains the land, and through the starless night  
Over Thy Cross a Crescent moon I see!  
If Thou in very truth didst burst the tomb  
Come down, O Son of Man! and show Thy might  
Lest Mahomet be crowned instead of Thee!

## QUANTUM MUTATA

There was a time in Europe long ago

When no man died for freedom anywhere,  
But England's lion leaping from its lair  
Laid hands on the oppressor! it was so  
While England could a great Republic show.  
Witness the men of Piedmont, chiefest care  
Of Cromwell, when with impotent despair  
The Pontiff in his painted portico  
Trembled before our stern ambassadors.  
How comes it then that from such high estate  
We have thus fallen, save that Luxury  
With barren merchandise piles up the gate  
Where noble thoughts and deeds should enter by:  
Else might we still be Milton's heritors.

## **LIBERTATIS SACRA FAMES**

Albeit nurtured in democracy,  
And liking best that state republican  
Where every man is Kinglike and no man  
Is crowned above his fellows, yet I see,  
Spite of this modern fret for Liberty,  
Better the rule of One, whom all obey,  
Than to let clamorous demagogues betray  
Our freedom with the kiss of anarchy.  
Wherefore I love them not whose hands profane  
Plant the red flag upon the piled-up street  
For no right cause, beneath whose ignorant reign

Arts, Culture, Reverence, Honour, all things fade,  
Save Treason and the dagger of her trade,  
Or Murder with his silent bloody feet.

## **THEORETIKOS**

This mighty empire hath but feet of clay:  
Of all its ancient chivalry and might  
Our little island is forsaken quite:  
Some enemy hath stolen its crown of bay,  
And from its hills that voice hath passed away  
Which spake of Freedom: O come out of it,  
Come out of it, my Soul, thou art not fit  
For this vile traffic-house, where day by day  
Wisdom and reverence are sold at mart,  
And the rude people rage with ignorant cries  
Against an heritage of centuries.  
It mars my calm: wherefore in dreams of Art  
And loftiest culture I would stand apart,  
Neither for God, nor for his enemies.

# THE GARDEN OF EROS

It is full summer now, the heart of June;  
Not yet the sunburnt reapers are astir  
Upon the upland meadow where too soon  
Rich autumn time, the season's usurer,  
Will lend his hoarded gold to all the trees,  
And see his treasure scattered by the wild and spendthrift  
breeze.

Too soon indeed! yet here the daffodil,  
That love-child of the Spring, has lingered on  
To vex the rose with jealousy, and still  
The harebell spreads her azure pavilion,  
And like a strayed and wandering reveller  
Abandoned of its brothers, whom long since June's  
messenger

The missel-thrush has frightened from the glade,  
One pale narcissus loiters fearfully  
Close to a shadowy nook, where half afraid  
Of their own loveliness some violets lie  
That will not look the gold sun in the face  
For fear of too much splendour, – ah! methinks it is a place

Which should be trodden by Persephone  
When wearied of the flowerless fields of Dis!

Or danced on by the lads of Arcady!

The hidden secret of eternal bliss  
Known to the Grecian here a man might find,  
Ah! you and I may find it now if Love and Sleep be kind.

There are the flowers which mourning Herakles  
Strewed on the tomb of Hylas, columbine,  
Its white doves all a-flutter where the breeze  
Kissed them too harshly, the small celandine,  
That yellow-kirtled chorister of eve,  
And lilac lady's-smock, – but let them bloom alone, and leave

Yon spirèd hollyhock red-crocketed  
To sway its silent chimes, else must the bee,  
Its little bellringer, go seek instead  
Some other pleasaunce; the anemone  
That weeps at daybreak, like a silly girl  
Before her love, and hardly lets the butterflies unfurl

Their painted wings beside it, – bid it pine  
In pale virginity; the winter snow  
Will suit it better than those lips of thine  
Whose fires would but scorch it, rather go  
And pluck that amorous flower which blooms alone,  
Fed by the pander wind with dust of kisses not its own.

The trumpet-mouths of red convolvulus  
So dear to maidens, creamy meadow-sweet  
Whiter than Juno's throat and odorous

As all Arabia, hyacinths the feet  
Of Huntress Dian would be loth to mar  
For any dappled fawn, – pluck these, and those fond flowers  
which are

Fairer than what Queen Venus trod upon  
Beneath the pines of Ida, eucharis,  
That morning star which does not dread the sun,  
And budding marjoram which but to kiss  
Would sweeten Cytheræa's lips and make  
Adonis jealous, – these for thy head, – and for thy girdle take

Yon curving spray of purple clematis  
Whose gorgeous dye outflames the Tyrian King,  
And foxgloves with their nodding chalices,  
But that one narciss which the startled Spring  
Let from her kirtle fall when first she heard  
In her own woods the wild tempestuous song of summer's  
bird,

Ah! leave it for a subtle memory  
Of those sweet tremulous days of rain and sun,  
When April laughed between her tears to see  
The early primrose with shy footsteps run  
From the gnarled oak-tree roots till all the wold,  
Spite of its brown and trampled leaves, grew bright with  
shimmering gold.

Nay, pluck it too, it is not half so sweet

As thou thyself, my soul's idolatry!  
And when thou art a-wearied at thy feet  
    Shall oxlips weave their brightest tapestry,  
For thee the woodbine shall forget its pride  
And veil its tangled whorls, and thou shalt walk on daisies  
pied.

And I will cut a reed by yonder spring  
    And make the wood-gods jealous, and old Pan  
Wonder what young intruder dares to sing  
    In these still haunts, where never foot of man  
Should tread at evening, lest he chance to spy  
The marble limbs of Artemis and all her company.

And I will tell thee why the jacinth wears  
    Such dread embroidery of dolorous moan,  
And why the hapless nightingale forbears  
    To sing her song at noon, but weeps alone  
When the fleet swallow sleeps, and rich men feast,  
And why the laurel trembles when she sees the lightning  
east.

And I will sing how sad Proserpina  
    Unto a grave and gloomy Lord was wed,  
And lure the silver-breasted Helena  
    Back from the lotus meadows of the dead,  
So shalt thou see that awful loveliness  
For which two mighty Hosts met fearfully in war's abyss!

And then I'll pipe to thee that Grecian tale  
How Cynthia loves the lad Endymion,  
And hidden in a grey and misty veil  
Hies to the cliffs of Latmos once the Sun  
Leaps from his ocean bed in fruitless chase  
Of those pale flying feet which fade away in his embrace.

And if my flute can breathe sweet melody,  
We may behold Her face who long ago  
Dwelt among men by the Ægean sea,  
And whose sad house with pillaged portico  
And friezeless wall and columns toppled down  
Looms o'er the ruins of that fair and violet cinctured town.

Spirit of Beauty! tarry still awhile,  
They are not dead, thine ancient votaries;  
Some few there are to whom thy radiant smile  
Is better than a thousand victories,  
Though all the nobly slain of Waterloo  
Rise up in wrath against them! tarry still, there are a few

Who for thy sake would give their manlihood  
And consecrate their being; I at least  
Have done so, made thy lips my daily food,  
And in thy temples found a goodlier feast  
Than this starved age can give me, spite of all  
Its new-found creeds so sceptical and so dogmatical.

Here not Cephissos, not Ilissos flows,

The woods of white Colonos are not here,  
On our bleak hills the olive never blows,  
No simple priest conducts his lowing steer  
Up the steep marble way, nor through the town  
Do laughing maidens bear to thee the crocus-flowered gown.

Yet tarry! for the boy who loved thee best,  
Whose very name should be a memory  
To make thee linger, sleeps in silent rest  
Beneath the Roman walls, and melody  
Still mourns her sweetest lyre; none can play  
The lute of Adonais: with his lips Song passed away.

Nay, when Keats died the Muses still had left  
One silver voice to sing his threnody,  
But ah! too soon of it we were bereft  
When on that riven night and stormy sea  
Panthea claimed her singer as her own,  
And slew the mouth that praised her; since which time we  
walk alone,

Save for that fiery heart, that morning star  
Of re-arisen England, whose clear eye  
Saw from our tottering throne and waste of war  
The grand Greek limbs of young Democracy  
Rise mightily like Hesperus and bring  
The great Republic! him at least thy love hath taught to sing,

And he hath been with thee at Thessaly,

And seen white Atalanta fleet of foot  
In passionless and fierce virginity  
Hunting the tuskèd boar, his honied lute  
Hath pierced the cavern of the hollow hill,  
And Venus laughs to know one knee will bow before her still.

And he hath kissed the lips of Proserpine,  
And sung the Galilæan's requiem,  
That wounded forehead dashed with blood and wine  
He hath discrowned, the Ancient Gods in him  
Have found their last, most ardent worshipper,  
And the new Sign grows grey and dim before its conqueror.

Spirit of Beauty! tarry with us still,  
It is not quenched the torch of poesy,  
The star that shook above the Eastern hill  
Holds unassailed its argent armoury  
From all the gathering gloom and fretful fight —  
O tarry with us still! for through the long and common night,

Morris, our sweet and simple Chaucer's child,  
Dear heritor of Spenser's tuneful reed,  
With soft and sylvan pipe has oft beguiled  
The weary soul of man in troublous need,  
And from the far and flowerless fields of ice  
Has brought fair flowers to make an earthly paradise.

We know them all, Gudrun the strong men's bride,  
Aslaug and Olafson we know them all,

How giant Grettir fought and Sigurd died,  
And what enchantment held the king in thrall  
When lonely Brynhild wrestled with the powers  
That war against all passion, ah! how oft through summer  
hours,

Long listless summer hours when the noon  
Being enamoured of a damask rose  
Forgets to journey westward, till the moon  
The pale usurper of its tribute grows  
From a thin sickle to a silver shield  
And chides its loitering car – how oft, in some cool grassy  
field

Far from the cricket-ground and noisy eight,  
At Bagley, where the rustling bluebells come  
Almost before the blackbird finds a mate  
And overstay the swallow, and the hum  
Of many murmuring bees flits through the leaves,  
Have I lain poring on the dreamy tales his fancy weaves,

And through their unreal woes and mimic pain  
Wept for myself, and so was purified,  
And in their simple mirth grew glad again;  
For as I sailed upon that pictured tide  
The strength and splendour of the storm was mine  
Without the storm's red ruin, for the singer is divine;

The little laugh of water falling down

Is not so musical, the clammy gold  
Close hoarded in the tiny waxen town  
Has less of sweetness in it, and the old  
Half-withered reeds that waved in Arcady  
Touched by his lips break forth again to fresher harmony.

Spirit of Beauty, tarry yet awhile!

Although the cheating merchants of the mart  
With iron roads profane our lovely isle,  
And break on whirling wheels the limbs of Art,  
Ay! though the crowded factories beget  
The blindworm Ignorance that slays the soul, O tarry yet!

For One at least there is, – He bears his name  
From Dante and the seraph Gabriel, —  
Whose double laurels burn with deathless flame  
To light thine altar; He too loves thee well,  
Who saw old Merlin lured in Vivien's snare,  
And the white feet of angels coming down the golden stair,

Loves thee so well, that all the World for him  
A gorgeous-coloured vestiture must wear,  
And Sorrow take a purple diadem,  
Or else be no more Sorrow, and Despair  
Gild its own thorns, and Pain, like Adon, be  
Even in anguish beautiful; – such is the empery

Which Painters hold, and such the heritage  
This gentle solemn Spirit doth possess,

Being a better mirror of his age

In all his pity, love, and weariness,  
Than those who can but copy common things,  
And leave the Soul unpainted with its mighty questionings.

But they are few, and all romance has flown,

And men can prophesy about the sun,  
And lecture on his arrows – how, alone,  
Through a waste void the soulless atoms run,  
How from each tree its weeping nymph has fled,  
And that no more 'mid English reeds a Naiad shows her head.

Methinks these new Actæons boast too soon

That they have spied on beauty; what if we  
Have analysed the rainbow, robbed the moon  
Of her most ancient, chastest mystery,  
Shall I, the last Endymion, lose all hope  
Because rude eyes peer at my mistress through a telescope!

What profit if this scientific age

Burst through our gates with all its retinue  
Of modern miracles! Can it assuage  
One lover's breaking heart? what can it do  
To make one life more beautiful, one day  
More godlike in its period? but now the Age of Clay

Returns in horrid cycle, and the earth

Hath borne again a noisy progeny  
Of ignorant Titans, whose ungodly birth

Hurls them against the august hierarchy  
Which sat upon Olympus; to the Dust  
They have appealed, and to that barren arbiter they must

Repair for judgment; let them, if they can,  
From Natural Warfare and insensate Chance,  
Create the new Ideal rule for man!

Methinks that was not my inheritance;  
For I was nurtured otherwise, my soul  
Passes from higher heights of life to a more supreme goal.

Lo! while we spake the earth did turn away  
Her visage from the God, and Hecate's boat  
Rose silver-laden, till the jealous day  
Blew all its torches out: I did not note  
The waning hours, to young Endymions  
Time's palsied fingers count in vain his rosary of suns!

Mark how the yellow iris wearily  
Leans back its throat, as though it would be kissed  
By its false chamberer, the dragon-fly,  
Who, like a blue vein on a girl's white wrist,  
Sleeps on that snowy primrose of the night,  
Which 'gins to flush with crimson shame, and die beneath  
the light.

Come let us go, against the pallid shield  
Of the wan sky the almond blossoms gleam,  
The corncrake nested in the unmown field

Answers its mate, across the misty stream  
On fitful wing the startled curlews fly,  
And in his sedgy bed the lark, for joy that Day is nigh,

Scatters the pearlèd dew from off the grass,  
In tremulous ecstasy to greet the sun,  
Who soon in gilded panoply will pass  
Forth from yon orange-curtained pavilion  
Hung in the burning east: see, the red rim  
O'ertops the expectant hills! it is the God! for love of him

Already the shrill lark is out of sight,  
Flooding with waves of song this silent dell, —  
Ah! there is something more in that bird's flight  
Than could be tested in a crucible! —  
But the air freshens, let us go, why soon  
The woodmen will be here; how we have lived this night of  
June!

# ROSA MYSTICA

## REQUIESCAT

Tread lightly, she is near  
Under the snow,  
Speak gently, she can hear  
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair  
Tarnished with rust,  
She that was young and fair  
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,  
She hardly knew  
She was a woman, so  
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,  
Lie on her breast,  
I vex my heart alone,  
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear

Lyre or sonnet,  
All my life's buried here,  
Heap earth upon it.

*Avignon.*

## **SONNET ON APPROACHING ITALY**

I reached the Alps: the soul within me burned,  
Italia, my Italia, at thy name:  
And when from out the mountain's heart I came  
And saw the land for which my life had yearned,  
I laughed as one who some great prize had earned:  
And musing on the marvel of thy fame  
I watched the day, till marked with wounds of flame  
The turquoise sky to burnished gold was turned.  
The pine-trees waved as waves a woman's hair,  
And in the orchards every twining spray  
Was breaking into flakes of blossoming foam:  
But when I knew that far away at Rome  
In evil bonds a second Peter lay,  
I wept to see the land so very fair.

*Turin.*

**SAN MINIATO**

See, I have climbed the mountain side  
Up to this holy house of God,  
Where once that Angel-Painter trod  
Who saw the heavens opened wide,

And throned upon the crescent moon  
The Virginal white Queen of Grace, —  
Mary! could I but see thy face  
Death could not come at all too soon.

O crowned by God with thorns and pain!  
Mother of Christ! O mystic wife!  
My heart is weary of this life  
And over-sad to sing again.

O crowned by God with love and flame!  
O crowned by Christ the Holy One!  
O listen ere the searching sun  
Show to the world my sin and shame.

## **AVE MARIA GRATIA PLENA**

Was this His coming! I had hoped to see  
A scene of wondrous glory, as was told  
Of some great God who in a rain of gold  
Broke open bars and fell on Danae:  
Or a dread vision as when Semele

Sickening for love and unappeased desire  
Prayed to see God's clear body, and the fire  
Caught her brown limbs and slew her utterly:  
With such glad dreams I sought this holy place,  
And now with wondering eyes and heart I stand  
Before this supreme mystery of Love:  
Some kneeling girl with passionless pale face,  
An angel with a lily in his hand,

*Florence.*

## ITALIA

Italia! thou art fallen, though with sheen  
Of battle-spears thy clamorous armies stride  
From the north Alps to the Sicilian tide!  
Ay! fallen, though the nations hail thee Queen  
Because rich gold in every town is seen,  
And on thy sapphire-lake in tossing pride  
Of wind-filled vans thy myriad galleys ride  
Beneath one flag of red and white and green.  
O Fair and Strong! O Strong and Fair in vain!  
Look southward where Rome's desecrated town  
Lies mourning for her God-anointed King!  
Look heaven-ward! shall God allow this thing?  
Nay! but some flame-girt Raphael shall come down,  
And smite the Spoiler with the sword of pain.

*Venice.*

## SONNET

### WRITTEN IN HOLY WEEK AT GENOA

I wandered through Scoglietto's far retreat,  
The oranges on each o'erhanging spray  
Burned as bright lamps of gold to shame the day;  
Some startled bird with fluttering wings and fleet  
Made snow of all the blossoms; at my feet  
Like silver moons the pale narcissi lay:  
And the curved waves that streaked the great green bay  
Laughed i' the sun, and life seemed very sweet.  
Outside the young boy-priest passed singing clear,  
'Jesus the son of Mary has been slain,  
O come and fill His sepulchre with flowers.'  
Ah, God! Ah, God! those dear Hellenic hours  
Had drowned all memory of Thy bitter pain,  
The Cross, the Crown, the Soldiers and the Spear.

# ROME UNVISITED

## I

The corn has turned from grey to red,  
Since first my spirit wandered forth  
From the drear cities of the north,  
And to Italia's mountains fled.

And here I set my face towards home,  
For all my pilgrimage is done,  
Although, methinks, yon blood-red sun  
Marshals the way to Holy Rome.

O Blessed Lady, who dost hold  
Upon the seven hills thy reign!  
O Mother without blot or stain,  
Crowned with bright crowns of triple gold!

O Roma, Roma, at thy feet  
I lay this barren gift of song!  
For, ah! the way is steep and long  
That leads unto thy sacred street.

## II

And yet what joy it were for me  
To turn my feet unto the south,  
And journeying towards the Tiber mouth  
To kneel again at Fiesole!

And wandering through the tangled pines  
That break the gold of Arno's stream,  
To see the purple mist and gleam  
Of morning on the Apennines

By many a vineyard-hidden home,  
Orchard and olive-garden grey,  
Till from the drear Campagna's way  
The seven hills bear up the dome!

## III

A pilgrim from the northern seas —  
What joy for me to seek alone  
The wondrous temple and the throne  
Of him who holds the awful keys!

When, bright with purple and with gold  
Come priest and holy cardinal,  
And borne above the heads of all  
The gentle Shepherd of the Fold.

O joy to see before I die  
The only God-anointed king,  
And hear the silver trumpets ring  
A triumph as he passes by!

Or at the brazen-pillared shrine  
Holds high the mystic sacrifice,  
And shows his God to human eyes  
Beneath the veil of bread and wine.

## IV

For lo, what changes time can bring!  
The cycles of revolving years  
May free my heart from all its fears,  
And teach my lips a song to sing.

Before yon field of trembling gold  
Is garnered into dusty sheaves,  
Or ere the autumn's scarlet leaves  
Flutter as birds adown the wold,

I may have run the glorious race,  
And caught the torch while yet aflame,  
And called upon the holy name  
Of Him who now doth hide His face.

*Arona.*

## **URBS SACRA ÆTERNA**

Rome! what a scroll of History thine has been;  
In the first days thy sword republican  
Ruled the whole world for many an age's span:  
Then of the peoples wert thou royal Queen,  
Till in thy streets the bearded Goth was seen;  
And now upon thy walls the breezes fan  
(Ah, city crowned by God, discrowned by man!)  
The hated flag of red and white and green.  
When was thy glory! when in search for power  
Thine eagles flew to greet the double sun,  
And the wild nations shuddered at thy rod?  
Nay, but thy glory tarried for this hour,  
When pilgrims kneel before the Holy One,  
The prisoned shepherd of the Church of God.

*Montre Mario.*

# SONNET

## ON HEARING THE DIES IRÆ SUNG IN THE SISTINE CHAPEL

Nay, Lord, not thus! white lilies in the spring,  
Sad olive-groves, or silver-breasted dove,  
Teach me more clearly of Thy life and love  
Than terrors of red flame and thundering.  
The hillside vines dear memories of Thee bring:  
A bird at evening flying to its nest  
Tells me of One who had no place of rest:  
I think it is of Thee the sparrows sing.  
Come rather on some autumn afternoon,  
When red and brown are burnished on the leaves,  
And the fields echo to the gleaner's song,  
Come when the splendid fulness of the moon  
Looks down upon the rows of golden sheaves,  
And reap Thy harvest: we have waited long.

## EASTER DAY

The silver trumpets rang across the Dome:

The people knelt upon the ground with awe:  
And borne upon the necks of men I saw,  
Like some great God, the Holy Lord of Rome.  
Priest-like, he wore a robe more white than foam,  
And, king-like, swathed himself in royal red,  
Three crowns of gold rose high upon his head:  
In splendour and in light the Pope passed home.  
My heart stole back across wide wastes of years  
To One who wandered by a lonely sea,  
And sought in vain for any place of rest:  
'Foxes have holes, and every bird its nest.  
I, only I, must wander wearily,  
And bruise my feet, and drink wine salt with tears.'

## **E TENEBRIS**

Come down, O Christ, and help me! reach Thy hand,  
For I am drowning in a stormier sea  
Than Simon on Thy lake of Galilee:  
The wine of life is spilt upon the sand,  
My heart is as some famine-murdered land  
Whence all good things have perished utterly,  
And well I know my soul in Hell must lie  
If I this night before God's throne should stand.  
'He sleeps perchance, or rideth to the chase,  
Like Baal, when his prophets howled that name  
From morn to noon on Carmel's smitten height.'

Nay, peace, I shall behold, before the night,  
The feet of brass, the robe more white than flame,  
The wounded hands, the weary human face.

## VITA NUOVA

I stood by the unvintageable sea  
Till the wet waves drenched face and hair with spray;  
The long red fires of the dying day  
Burned in the west; the wind piped drearily;  
And to the land the clamorous gulls did flee:  
‘Alas!’ I cried, ‘my life is full of pain,  
And who can garner fruit or golden grain  
From these waste fields which travail ceaselessly!’  
My nets gaped wide with many a break and flaw,  
Nathless I threw them as my final cast  
Into the sea, and waited for the end.  
When lo! a sudden glory! and I saw  
From the black waters of my tortured past  
The argent splendour of white limbs ascend!

## MADONNA MIA

A lily-girl, not made for this world’s pain,  
With brown, soft hair close braided by her ears,

And longing eyes half veiled by slumberous tears  
Like bluest water seen through mists of rain:  
Pale cheeks whereon no love hath left its stain,  
    Red underlip drawn in for fear of love,  
    And white throat, whiter than the silvered dove,  
Through whose wan marble creeps one purple vein.  
Yet, though my lips shall praise her without cease,  
    Even to kiss her feet I am not bold,  
    Being o'ershadowed by the wings of awe,  
Like Dante, when he stood with Beatrice  
    Beneath the flaming Lion's breast, and saw  
    The seventh Crystal, and the Stair of Gold.

## THE NEW HELEN

Where hast thou been since round the walls of Troy  
    The sons of God fought in that great emprise?  
    Why dost thou walk our common earth again?  
Hast thou forgotten that impassioned boy,  
    His purple galley and his Tyrian men  
    And treacherous Aphrodite's mocking eyes?  
For surely it was thou, who, like a star  
    Hung in the silver silence of the night,  
    Didst lure the Old World's chivalry and might  
Into the clamorous crimson waves of war!  
  
Or didst thou rule the fire-laden moon?

In amorous Sidon was thy temple built  
Over the light and laughter of the sea  
Where, behind lattice scarlet-wrought and gilt,  
Some brown-limbed girl did weave thee tapestry,  
All through the waste and wearied hours of noon;  
Till her wan cheek with flame of passion burned,  
And she rose up the sea-washed lips to kiss  
Of some glad Cyprian sailor, safe returned  
From Calpé and the cliffs of Herakles!

No! thou art Helen, and none other one!  
It was for thee that young Sarpedôn died,  
And Memnôn's manhood was untimely spent;  
It was for thee gold-crested Hector tried  
With Thetis' child that evil race to run,  
In the last year of thy beleaguerment;  
Ay! even now the glory of thy fame  
Burns in those fields of trampled asphodel,  
Where the high lords whom Ilion knew so well  
Clash ghostly shields, and call upon thy name.

Where hast thou been? in that enchanted land  
Whose slumbering vales forlorn Calypso knew,  
Where never mower rose at break of day  
But all unswathed the trammelling grasses grew,  
And the sad shepherd saw the tall corn stand  
Till summer's red had changed to withered grey?  
Didst thou lie there by some Lethæan stream  
Deep brooding on thine ancient memory,

The crash of broken spears, the fiery gleam  
From shivered helm, the Grecian battle-cry?

Nay, thou wert hidden in that hollow hill  
With one who is forgotten utterly,  
That discrowned Queen men call the Erycine;  
Hidden away that never mightst thou see  
The face of Her, before whose mouldering shrine  
To-day at Rome the silent nations kneel;  
Who gat from Love no joyous gladdening,  
But only Love's intolerable pain,  
Only a sword to pierce her heart in twain,  
Only the bitterness of child-bearing.

The lotus-leaves which heal the wounds of Death  
Lie in thy hand; O, be thou kind to me,  
While yet I know the summer of my days;  
For hardly can my tremulous lips draw breath  
To fill the silver trumpet with thy praise,  
So bowed am I before thy mystery;  
So bowed and broken on Love's terrible wheel,  
That I have lost all hope and heart to sing,  
Yet care I not what ruin time may bring  
If in thy temple thou wilt let me kneel.

Alas, alas, thou wilt not tarry here,  
But, like that bird, the servant of the sun,  
Who flies before the north wind and the night,  
So wilt thou fly our evil land and drear,

Back to the tower of thine old delight,  
    And the red lips of young Euphorion;  
Nor shall I ever see thy face again,  
    But in this poisonous garden-close must stay,  
    Crowning my brows with the thorn-crown of pain,  
Till all my loveless life shall pass away.

O Helen! Helen! Helen! yet a while,  
    Yet for a little while, O, tarry here,  
    Till the dawn cometh and the shadows flee!  
For in the gladsome sunlight of thy smile  
Of heaven or hell I have no thought or fear,  
    Seeing I know no other god but thee:  
No other god save him, before whose feet  
    In nets of gold the tired planets move,  
    The incarnate spirit of spiritual love  
Who in thy body holds his joyous seat.

Thou wert not born as common women are!  
    But, girt with silver splendour of the foam,  
    Didst from the depths of sapphire seas arise!  
And at thy coming some immortal star,  
Bearded with flame, blazed in the Eastern skies,  
    And waked the shepherds on thine island-home.  
Thou shalt not die: no asps of Egypt creep  
    Close at thy heels to taint the delicate air;  
    No sullen-blooming poppies stain thy hair,  
Those scarlet heralds of eternal sleep.

Lily of love, pure and inviolate!

Tower of ivory! red rose of fire!

Thou hast come down our darkness to illumine:

For we, close-caught in the wide nets of Fate,

Wearied with waiting for the World's Desire,

Aimlessly wandered in the House of gloom,

Aimlessly sought some slumberous anodyne

For wasted lives, for lingering wretchedness,

Till we beheld thy re-arisen shrine,

And the white glory of thy loveliness.

# THE BURDEN OF ITYS

This English Thames is holier far than Rome,  
Those harebells like a sudden flush of sea  
Breaking across the woodland, with the foam  
Of meadow-sweet and white anemone  
To fleck their blue waves, – God is likelier there  
Than hidden in that crystal-hearted star the pale monks bear!

Those violet-gleaming butterflies that take  
Yon creamy lily for their pavilion  
Are monsignores, and where the rushes shake  
A lazy pike lies basking in the sun,  
His eyes half shut, – he is some mitred old  
Bishop in *partibus*! look at those gaudy scales all green and  
gold.

The wind the restless prisoner of the trees  
Does well for Palæstrina, one would say  
The mighty master's hands were on the keys  
Of the Maria organ, which they play  
When early on some sapphire Easter morn  
In a high litter red as blood or sin the Pope is borne

From his dark House out to the Balcony  
Above the bronze gates and the crowded square,  
Whose very fountains seem for ecstasy

To toss their silver lances in the air,  
And stretching out weak hands to East and West  
In vain sends peace to peaceless lands, to restless nations rest.

Is not yon lingering orange after-glow

That stays to vex the moon more fair than all  
Rome's lordliest pageants! strange, a year ago

I knelt before some crimson Cardinal  
Who bare the Host across the Esquiline,  
And now – those common poppies in the wheat seem twice  
as fine.

The blue-green beanfields yonder, tremulous

With the last shower, sweeter perfume bring  
Through this cool evening than the odorous

Flame-jewelled censers the young deacons swing,  
When the grey priest unlocks the curtained shrine,  
And makes God's body from the common fruit of corn and  
vine.

Poor Fra Giovanni bawling at the mass

Were out of tune now, for a small brown bird  
Sings overhead, and through the long cool grass

I see that throbbing throat which once I heard  
On starlit hills of flower-starred Arcady,  
Once where the white and crescent sand of Salamis meets  
sea.

Sweet is the swallow twittering on the eaves

At daybreak, when the mower whets his scythe,  
And stock-doves murmur, and the milkmaid leaves  
Her little lonely bed, and carols blithe  
To see the heavy-lowing cattle wait  
Stretching their huge and dripping mouths across the  
farmyard gate.

And sweet the hops upon the Kentish leas,  
And sweet the wind that lifts the new-mown hay,  
And sweet the fretful swarms of grumbling bees  
That round and round the linden blossoms play;  
And sweet the heifer breathing in the stall,  
And the green bursting figs that hang upon the red-brick wall,

And sweet to hear the cuckoo mock the spring  
While the last violet loiters by the well,  
And sweet to hear the shepherd Daphnis sing  
The song of Linus through a sunny dell  
Of warm Arcadia where the corn is gold  
And the slight lithe-limbed reapers dance about the wattled  
fold.

And sweet with young Lycoris to recline  
In some Illyrian valley far away,  
Where canopied on herbs amaracine  
We too might waste the summer-trancèd day  
Matching our reeds in sportive rivalry,  
While far beneath us frets the troubled purple of the sea.

But sweeter far if silver-sandalled foot  
Of some long-hidden God should ever tread  
The Nuneham meadows, if with reeded flute  
Pressed to his lips some Faun might raise his head  
By the green water-flags, ah! sweet indeed  
To see the heavenly herdsman call his white-fleeced flock to  
feed.

Then sing to me thou tuneful chorister,  
Though what thou sing'st be thine own requiem!  
Tell me thy tale thou hapless chronicler  
Of thine own tragedies! do not contemn  
These unfamiliar haunts, this English field,  
For many a lovely coronal our northern isle can yield

Which Grecian meadows know not, many a rose  
Which all day long in vales Æolian  
A lad might seek in vain for over-grows  
Our hedges like a wanton courtesan  
Unthrifty of its beauty; lilies too  
Ilissos never mirrored star our streams, and cockles blue

Dot the green wheat which, though they are the signs  
For swallows going south, would never spread  
Their azure tents between the Attic vines;  
Even that little weed of ragged red,  
Which bids the robin pipe, in Arcady  
Would be a trespasser, and many an unsung elegy

Sleeps in the reeds that fringe our winding Thames  
Which to awake were sweeter ravishment  
Than ever Syrinx wept for; diadems  
Of brown bee-studded orchids which were meant  
For Cytheræa's brows are hidden here  
Unknown to Cytheræa, and by yonder pasturing steer

There is a tiny yellow daffodil,  
The butterfly can see it from afar,  
Although one summer evening's dew could fill  
Its little cup twice over ere the star  
Had called the lazy shepherd to his fold  
And be no prodigal; each leaf is flecked with spotted gold

As if Jove's gorgeous leman Danae  
Hot from his gilded arms had stooped to kiss  
The trembling petals, or young Mercury  
Low-flying to the dusky ford of Dis  
Had with one feather of his pinions  
Just brushed them! the slight stem which bears the burden of  
its suns

Is hardly thicker than the gossamer,  
Or poor Arachne's silver tapestry, —  
Men say it bloomed upon the sepulchre  
Of One I sometime worshipped, but to me  
It seems to bring diviner memories  
Of faun-loved Heliconian glades and blue nymph-haunted  
seas,

Of an untrodden vale at Tempe where  
On the clear river's marge Narcissus lies,  
The tangle of the forest in his hair,  
The silence of the woodland in his eyes,  
Wooing that drifting imagery which is  
No sooner kissed than broken; memories of Salmacis

Who is not boy nor girl and yet is both,  
Fed by two fires and unsatisfied  
Through their excess, each passion being loth  
For love's own sake to leave the other's side  
Yet killing love by staying; memories  
Of Oreads peeping through the leaves of silent moonlit trees,

Of lonely Ariadne on the wharf  
At Naxos, when she saw the treacherous crew  
Far out at sea, and waved her crimson scarf  
And called false Theseus back again nor knew  
That Dionysos on an amber pard  
Was close behind her; memories of what Mæonia's bard

With sightless eyes beheld, the wall of Troy,  
Queen Helen lying in the ivory room,  
And at her side an amorous red-lipped boy  
Trimming with dainty hand his helmet's plume,  
And far away the moil, the shout, the groan,  
As Hector shielded off the spear and Ajax hurled the stone;

Of wingèd Perseus with his flawless sword  
Cleaving the snaky tresses of the witch,  
And all those tales imperishably stored  
In little Grecian urns, freightage more rich  
Than any gaudy galleon of Spain  
Bare from the Indies ever! these at least bring back again,

For well I know they are not dead at all,  
The ancient Gods of Grecian poesy:  
They are asleep, and when they hear thee call  
Will wake and think 't is very Thessaly,  
This Thames the Daulian waters, this cool glade  
The yellow-irised mead where once young Itys laughed and  
played.

If it was thou dear jasmine-cradled bird  
Who from the leafy stillness of thy throne  
Sang to the wondrous boy, until he heard  
The horn of Atalanta faintly blown  
Across the Cumnor hills, and wandering  
Through Bagley wood at evening found the Attic poets'  
spring, —

Ah! tiny sober-suited advocate  
That pleadest for the moon against the day!  
If thou didst make the shepherd seek his mate  
On that sweet questing, when Proserpina  
Forgot it was not Sicily and leant  
Across the mossy Sandford stile in ravished wonderment, —

Light-winged and bright-eyed miracle of the wood!  
If ever thou didst soothe with melody  
One of that little clan, that brotherhood  
Which loved the morning-star of Tuscany  
More than the perfect sun of Raphael  
And is immortal, sing to me! for I too love thee well.

Sing on! sing on! let the dull world grow young,  
Let elemental things take form again,  
And the old shapes of Beauty walk among  
The simple garths and open crofts, as when  
The son of Leto bare the willow rod,  
And the soft sheep and shaggy goats followed the boyish God.

Sing on! sing on! and Bacchus will be here  
Astride upon his gorgeous Indian throne,  
And over whimpering tigers shake the spear  
With yellow ivy crowned and gummy cone,  
While at his side the wanton Bassarid  
Will throw the lion by the mane and catch the mountain kid!

Sing on! and I will wear the leopard skin,  
And steal the moonèd wings of Ashtaroth,  
Upon whose icy chariot we could win  
Cithæron in an hour ere the froth  
Has over-brimmed the wine-vat or the Faun  
Ceased from the treading! ay, before the flickering lamp of  
dawn

Has scared the hooting owl to its nest,  
And warned the bat to close its filmy vans,  
Some Mænad girl with vine-leaves on her breast  
Will filch their beech-nuts from the sleeping Pans  
So softly that the little nested thrush  
Will never wake, and then with shrilly laugh and leap will rush

Down the green valley where the fallen dew  
Lies thick beneath the elm and count her store,  
Till the brown Satyrs in a jolly crew  
Trample the loosestrife down along the shore,  
And where their hornèd master sits in state  
Bring strawberries and bloomy plums upon a wicker crate!

Sing on! and soon with passion-wearied face  
Through the cool leaves Apollo's lad will come,  
The Tyrian prince his bristled boar will chase  
Adown the chestnut-copses all a-bloom,  
And ivory-limbed, grey-eyed, with look of pride,  
After yon velvet-coated deer the virgin maid will ride.

Sing on! and I the dying boy will see  
Stain with his purple blood the waxen bell  
That overweighs the jacinth, and to me  
The wretched Cyprian her woe will tell,  
And I will kiss her mouth and streaming eyes,  
And lead her to the myrtle-hidden grove where Adon lies!

Cry out aloud on Itys! memory

That foster-brother of remorse and pain  
Drops poison in mine ear, – O to be free,  
To burn one's old ships! and to launch again  
Into the white-plumed battle of the waves  
And fight old Proteus for the spoil of coral-flowered caves!

O for Medea with her popped spell!

O for the secret of the Colchian shrine!  
O for one leaf of that pale asphodel  
Which binds the tired brows of Proserpine,  
And sheds such wondrous dew at eve that she  
Dreams of the fields of Enna, by the far Sicilian sea,

Where oft the golden-girdled bee she chased  
From lily to lily on the level mead,  
Ere yet her sombre Lord had bid her taste  
The deadly fruit of that pomegranate seed,  
Ere the black steeds had harried her away  
Down to the faint and flowerless land, the sick and sunless  
day.

O for one midnight and as paramour

The Venus of the little Melian farm!  
O that some antique statue for one hour  
Might wake to passion, and that I could charm  
The Dawn at Florence from its dumb despair,  
Mix with those mighty limbs and make that giant breast my  
lair!

Sing on! sing on! I would be drunk with life,  
    Drunk with the trampled vintage of my youth,  
I would forget the wearying wasted strife,  
    The riven veil, the Gorgon eyes of Truth,  
The prayerless vigil and the cry for prayer,  
The barren gifts, the lifted arms, the dull insensate air!

Sing on! sing on! O feathered Niobe,  
    Thou canst make sorrow beautiful, and steal  
From joy its sweetest music, not as we  
    Who by dead voiceless silence strive to heal  
Our too untented wounds, and do but keep  
Pain barricadoed in our hearts, and murder pillowed sleep.

Sing louder yet, why must I still behold  
    The wan white face of that deserted Christ,  
Whose bleeding hands my hands did once enfold,  
    Whose smitten lips my lips so oft have kissed,  
And now in mute and marble misery  
Sits in his lone dishonoured House and weeps, perchance for  
me?

O Memory cast down thy wreathèd shell!  
    Break thy hoarse lute O sad Melpomene!  
O Sorrow, Sorrow keep thy cloistered cell  
    Nor dim with tears this limpid Castaly!  
Cease, Philomel, thou dost the forest wrong  
To vex its sylvan quiet with such wild impassioned song!

Cease, cease, or if 't is anguish to be dumb  
Take from the pastoral thrush her simpler air,  
Whose jocund carelessness doth more become  
This English woodland than thy keen despair,  
Ah! cease and let the north wind bear thy lay  
Back to the rocky hills of Thrace, the stormy Daulian bay.

A moment more, the startled leaves had stirred,  
Endymion would have passed across the mead  
Moonstruck with love, and this still Thames had heard  
Pan plash and paddle groping for some reed  
To lure from her blue cave that Naiad maid  
Who for such piping listens half in joy and half afraid.

A moment more, the waking dove had cooed,  
The silver daughter of the silver sea  
With the fond gyves of clinging hands had wooed  
Her wanton from the chase, and Dryope  
Had thrust aside the branches of her oak  
To see the lusty gold-haired lad rein in his snorting yoke.

A moment more, the trees had stooped to kiss  
Pale Daphne just awakening from the swoon  
Of tremulous laurels, lonely Salmacis  
Had bared his barren beauty to the moon,  
And through the vale with sad voluptuous smile  
Antinous had wandered, the red lotus of the Nile

Down leaning from his black and clustering hair,  
To shade those slumberous eyelids' caverned bliss,  
Or else on yonder grassy slope with bare  
High-tuniced limbs unravished Artemis  
Had bade her hounds give tongue, and roused the deer  
From his green ambushade with shrill halloo and pricking  
spear.

Lie still, lie still, O passionate heart, lie still!  
O Melancholy, fold thy raven wing!  
O sobbing Dryad, from thy hollow hill  
Come not with such despondent answering!  
No more thou wingèd Marsyas complain,  
Apollo loveth not to hear such troubled songs of pain!

It was a dream, the glade is tenantless,  
No soft Ionian laughter moves the air,  
The Thames creeps on in sluggish leadenness,  
And from the copse left desolate and bare  
Fled is young Bacchus with his revelry,  
Yet still from Nuneham wood there comes that thrilling  
melody

So sad, that one might think a human heart  
Brake in each separate note, a quality  
Which music sometimes has, being the Art  
Which is most nigh to tears and memory;  
Poor mourning Philomel, what dost thou fear?  
Thy sister doth not haunt these fields, Pandion is not here,

Here is no cruel Lord with murderous blade,  
    No woven web of bloody heraldries,  
But mossy dells for roving comrades made,  
    Warm valleys where the tired student lies  
With half-shut book, and many a winding walk  
Where rustic lovers stray at eve in happy simple talk.

The harmless rabbit gambols with its young  
    Across the trampled towing-path, where late  
A troop of laughing boys in jostling throng  
    Cheered with their noisy cries the racing eight;  
The gossamer, with ravelled silver threads,  
Works at its little loom, and from the dusky red-eaved sheds

Of the lone Farm a flickering light shines out  
    Where the swinked shepherd drives his bleating flock  
Back to their wattled sheep-cotes, a faint shout  
    Comes from some Oxford boat at Sandford lock,  
And starts the moor-hen from the sedgy rill,  
And the dim lengthening shadows flit like swallows up the hill.

The heron passes homeward to the mere,  
    The blue mist creeps among the shivering trees,  
Gold world by world the silent stars appear,  
    And like a blossom blown before the breeze  
A white moon drifts across the shimmering sky,  
Mute arbitress of all thy sad, thy rapturous threnody.

She does not heed thee, wherefore should she heed,  
She knows Endymion is not far away;  
'Tis I, 'tis I, whose soul is as the reed  
Which has no message of its own to play,  
So pipes another's bidding, it is I,  
Drifting with every wind on the wide sea of misery.

Ah! the brown bird has ceased: one exquisite trill  
About the sombre woodland seems to cling  
Dying in music, else the air is still,  
So still that one might hear the bat's small wing  
Wander and wheel above the pines, or tell  
Each tiny dew-drop dripping from the bluebell's brimming  
cell.

And far away across the lengthening wold,  
Across the willowy flats and thickets brown,  
Magdalen's tall tower tipped with tremulous gold  
Marks the long High Street of the little town,  
And warns me to return; I must not wait,  
Hark! 't is the curfew booming from the bell at Christ Church  
gate.

# WIND FLOWERS

## IMPRESSION DU MATIN

The Thames nocturne of blue and gold  
    Changed to a Harmony in grey:  
    A barge with ochre-coloured hay  
Dropt from the wharf: and chill and cold

The yellow fog came creeping down  
    The bridges, till the houses' walls  
    Seemed changed to shadows and St. Paul's  
Loomed like a bubble o'er the town.

Then suddenly arose the clang  
    Of waking life; the streets were stirred  
    With country waggons: and a bird  
Flew to the glistening roofs and sang.

# Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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