

Op. I.

Dorothy L. Sayers

Table of Contents

<u>Op. I.</u>	1
<u>Dorothy L. Sayers</u>	1
<u>ALMA MATER</u>	3
<u>LAY</u>	8
<u>I.</u>	8
<u>II.</u>	9
<u>III.</u>	9
<u>IV.</u>	10
<u>V.</u>	10
<u>VI.</u>	10
<u>VII.</u>	11
<u>VIII.</u>	11
<u>IX.</u>	12
<u>X.</u>	12
<u>XI.</u>	13
<u>XII.</u>	13
<u>THE LAST CASTLE</u>	13
<u>WAR-TIME</u>	15
<u>PIPES</u>	15
<u>CAROL</u>	16
<u>RECKONING</u>	16
<u>WOMANLINESS</u>	16
<u>HARVEST</u>	17
<u>SNAP-DRAGONS</u>	17
<u>SELF-DEFENCE</u>	18
<u>SYMBOL</u>	18
<u>THE GATES OF PARADISE</u>	20
<u>THE THREE KINGS</u>	23
<u>MATTER OF BRITTANY</u>	23
<u>A MAN GREATLY GIFTED</u>	25
<u>THE ELDER KNIGHT</u>	26
<u>I.</u>	26
<u>II.</u>	26
<u>III.</u>	27
<u>HYMN IN CONTEMPLATION OF SUDDEN DEATH</u>	28
<u>EPITAPH FOR A YOUNG MUSICIAN</u>	29
<u>RONDELS</u>	29
<u>GOING-DOWN PLAY</u>	29
<u>To M. J.</u>	29
<u>LAST MORNING IN OXFORD</u>	30

Op. I.

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- ALMA MATER.
- LAY.
 - I.
 - II.
 - III.
 - IV.
 - V.
 - VI.
 - VII.
 - VIII.
 - IX.
 - X.
 - XI.
 - XII.
- THE LAST CASTLE.
 - WAR-TIME.
 - PIPES.
 - CAROL.
 - RECKONING.
 - WOMANLINESS.
 - HARVEST.
 - SNAP-DRAGONS.
 - SELF-DEFENCE.
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- THE GATES OF PARADISE.
- THE THREE KINGS.
- MATTER OF BRITTANY.
- A MAN GREATLY GIFTED.
- THE ELDER KNIGHT.
 - I.
 - II.
 - III.
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- EPITAPH FOR A YOUNG MUSICIAN.
- RONDELS.

Op. I.

- GOING-DOWN PLAY.
- To M. J.

- LAST MORNING IN OXFORD.

COME MY FRIENDS *** 'TIS NOT TOO LATE TO SEEK A NEWER WORLD * IT MAY
BE THAT THE GULFS WILL WASH US DOWN * * IT MAY BE WE SHALL TOUCH THE
HAPPY ISLES YET OUR PURPOSE HOLDS *** TO SAIL BEYOND THE SUNSET.

ULYSSES.

To the

Stage-Manager of "Admiral Guinea", the Conductor of the Bach Choir, and the Members of the Mutual
Admiration Society.

*

Many a true word is spoken in jest.

*I WILL build up my house from the stark foundations,
If God will give me time enough,
And search unwearying over the seas and nations
For stones or better stuff.*

*Though here be only the mortar and rough-hewn granite,
I will lay on and not desist
Till it stand and shine as I dreamed it when I began it,
Emerald, amethyst.*

*THERE is no remedy for this:
Good days that will not come again.*

*Since Adam lost the bower of bliss,
There is no remedy for this.*

*Till Oxford stand on Cam, I wis,
Or cedar spring from barley grain,*

*There is no remedy for this:
Good days that will not come again.*

THE "Hymn in Contemplation of Sudden Death" and "Epitaph for a Young Musician" appeared in the *Oxford*

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ALMA MATER.

"Far beneath
My holier passion, in their eyes and ears
Enchantment vast but foolish lingereth."

H. G. Dixey: Sonnet on Oxford.

"Die Zauberin war ehrlich gegen den Ritter," fuhr der Alte fort, "sie sagte ihm gleich voraus, wenn er die reizende Herzogin nach seiner Veste Troja entfuehre, muesse es das sein und seiner Burg und seines ganzen Stammes Untergang werden, aber zehn Jahre lang koenne er sich in Troja vertheidigen, und Helens suesser Liebe froh sein."

"Und er nahm es an, oder er war ein Tropf!" rief der Jeunling.

De la Motte Fouqué: Sintram.

WHEN Aphrodite offered a brief bliss
To the Idalian shepherd-boy,
He chose ten rapturous years of Helen's kiss,
And then, the sack of Troy.

Think you that through the beating hours of night
It set no spur to his desire
To see in fancy the appalling light
Of Ilion in fire?

Or that he panted not to snatch at joy,
Made sharp by pain and eager fear,
Knowing, each kiss drove on the fate of Troy
And brought destruction near?

Love's exile in Elysium, he knew well
That fear and haste bear bitter fruits,
That love left insecure's a tree of hell,
Snake-bitten at the roots.

Therefore, the while he called on Helen's name,
And watched with apprehensive eye
To catch the first avenging glare of flame,
His soul was like to die:

"Ah, Helen! Helen! Helen! thy white breast
And gold hair heaped in shining bands,
Would I might lay me quietly to rest
In thy enfolding hands,

Op. I.

"Lie still, and watch thine eyes grow dark with love,
And feel thy kiss upon my brow,
And think no more, nor ever stir nor move,
Nor count the time, as now.

"O happy lovers that can sleep, nor know
What term is set them by the Fates!
I slumber not, nor shall, until the foe
Strike upon Ilion gates.

"How should I so let slip the precious time
The gods mete out so meagrely?
Each word we speak rings like a dreadful chime,
Marking the hours that flee.

"Years, months and weeks and days and moments pass,
Moments pile up to days and years,
And every fragile hour of joy, alas!
Breaks with its weight of tears.

"High up beyond the beaker's foaming brim
I seek the purple wine to pour;
My hand shakes frenzied at the flooded rim,
The wine spills on the floor.

"Helen, dear spouse! how many things there were
To say to thee and hear again,
Long vows of love, and worship, and sweet prayer
But now, all speech is vain,

"For my tongue stammers and my sense is gone,
Thinking how soon the time is sped;
I try to speak a thousand words in one,
And all is left unsaid.

"Helen, close-girded with immortal spells
Of beauty and of ancient power,
Let the gods slay me on thy breast! How else
Shall I behold the hour

"Foretold, foreseen, that to thy former home,
To other arms and other lips,
Shall drive thee over the unheeding foam
In the thin Grecian ships?

"Ah! Helen, Helen, Helen! will that day
Break on thine eyelids peacefully?
Can Menelaus comfort thee? He may;
But what is there for me?"

So, ere the towers of Ilion fell in smoke,
Like some dear dream that breaks and flies,
And fierce Pelides through the breaches broke,
In grief did Paris rise

To follow fate out to the bitter close,
Feeling the nearness of the end,
And saw, amid the press of angry foes,
Death as his only friend.

But calm-eyed Helen, to her former home
Passed with the tall Achaean ships
Unheeding, over the unheeding foam,
To other arms and lips.

Such was the story that the captives told
To young Idaeus, in the years
When that great tale of Troy was growing old,
A babble in men's ears.

He answered: "While the sack of Troy went by,
I, a weak babe on Helen's breast,
Passed from my father's hand unwittingly,
Duke Menelaus' guest.

"Since then, to manhood grown, I've served in war,
And crossed the ocean's level plain,
But ever came, from journeying afar
To Helen home again.

"Helen, my mother, with the sea-deep eyes
And brow unmarred by any fold,
Crowned with unending beauty Hera-wise
And everlasting gold;

"Helen, my mother, whom I greatly love
Nowise for that majestic grace,
The changeless beauty of the seed of Jove
Set godlike on thy face;

"The songs men made, the tears men shed for thee,
The fire that vexed my father so
A very foolishness they seem to me
That look on thee, and know

"Only thy mother-breast and gentle arms
That wont to shield me from affright,
The voice that sang to quiet my alarms
At the dread fall of night;

"The eyes that watched my going when I bore
Across the stinging ocean—wrack,
The tender smile that greeted me on shore
When the glad ships came back.

"Art thou that one for whom full many a pyre
Reeked up along the war—worn coast?
That maddened Menelaus and my sire?
For whom the Danaean host

"Went out to die? for whom old Priam's town
Bore ten long years of siege and stress,
Until her god—built citadel fell down
Ruined to nothingness?

"What kind of love is this, that rends and slays
And drags high beauty in the dust,
That makes unfruitful even joyous days
By unappeasable lust?

"O happy, holy as the soundless morn
Setting grey feet upon the sea,
Wet with soft, drenching dews, and perfumes borne
On cool winds quietly,

"Comes love like mine upon the fretful heart,
A strong refreshment to the soul;
Love that makes mad has only found a part,
But I have known the whole."

Then Helen, lifting up her eyes, wherein
The secrets of the years held place,
Spake, looking seaward: "How shall I begin
To show thee those old days?"

"Not yet, young son Idaeus, canst thou tell
How many ways there be of love,
Love is a tree whose roots take hold of hell,
That flowers before high Jove.

"I was begot by heaven out of earth,
Travail of earth and joy of heaven,
And in the slow unfolding of my birth
Came power; and I was given

"To man at length, to be a burning brand
And a Promethean fire to be,
Look upon me, my son, and understand
Why men were slain for me.

"Paris, my bridegroom, happy and unknown
From Ida's pleasant hill-slopes came;
I taught him love, and left him overthrown
The world shall know his name.

"If now the second time his choice were made
Of loveless peace and love-made woe,
Think'st thou the balance would be outweighed
And he would let love go?

"Nay, with each trembling moment of delight,
Each precious kiss and passionate,
Snatched, saved, and hoarded jealously, despite
Man's wrath and heaven's hate

"Short glimpses of a glory that the years
Hold not in store for mortal men,
Although their eyes, strained through a mist of tears,
Behold it now and then

"With these he never could be wholly sad
In his great, hallowed town of Troy,
Where passion quickened and made him more than glad
With greater things than joy.

"Wonder not, therefore, that I have no tears
For those that loved me and are dead,
I garner up the loves of all the years
A coronal for my head.

"High o'er the cloud-blue arches, and the dome
Of those celestial palaces
Where age-long Zeus built up his mighty home,
The hall of judgment is.

"There Time the Titan ceaselessly doth guard,
With leaden and relentless mace,
The sleep of young Eternity, his ward,
The last of Saturn's race;

"Who when he wakes, to his full stature grown,
And lays his hand upon the door,
Almighty Zeus shall shudder from his throne,
And Time shall be no more;

"Who, from the swinging bowls of love and pain,
Poised on the balance of despair,
Shall pour the undiminished draughts of gain
For hero souls to share.

Op. I.

"Then first, then only, judged and justified
By perfect working of God's thought,
I too may die, when time and chance have died,
And pass away to naught;

"Not blamed, nor blameless, but the tool of fate,
And seed of lovers unafraid,
Useless, when once they are regenerate
Who made me, whom I made.

"Hell of tall cities, hell of stately ships,
Hell of all men and their desire,
I hold love's life between my bitter lips,
Ruined about by fire.

"O Father Zeus, father of gods and men,
That madest love and madest joy,
Set Helen in the citadel, and then
Do what thou wilt with Troy!"

She spake and ceased. Idaeus, doubtfully,
Leaning on that beloved breast
Smiled in her eyes, while over the dim sea
The sun went down to rest.

LAY.

"Item, quant est des laiz, c'est une chose longue et malaisee a faire et trouver, car il y faut avoir xii. couples, chascune partie en deux, qui font xxiiii. Et est la couple aucunefioz de viii. vers, qui font xvi.; aucunefoiz de ix. qui font xviii.; aucunefoiz de x. qui font xx.; aucunefoiz de xii, qui font xxiiii., de vers entiers ou de vers copepez. Et convient que la taille de chascune couple a deux paragrafes soient d'une rime toute differens l'une a l'autre, excepte tant seulement que la darreniere couple des xii., qui font xxiiii., et qui est et doit estre conclusion du lay, soit le pareille rime, et d'autant de vers, sanz redite, comme la premiere couple."

Eustache Deschamps: L'Art de Dictier.

I.

MUMMERS! let love go by
With his crown upon his head,
Beaten royally
Of gold, heavy and red;
Your tinsel garments fly
To the trip of a lightsome tread,
The gusty gale has fled,
And your garlands are blown awry.

Sniggering, whisperingly,
What was the thing you said?

LAY.

Op. I.

"Poor old love? Oh, ay!
Put him away to bed
With his wearisome song and sigh
We've a ragtime tune instead."
But yours is already dead,
And his can never die.

II.

Oxford! suffer it once again that another should do thee wrong,
I also, I above all, should set thee into a song;
I that am twice thy child have known thee, worshipped thee, loved thee, cried
Thy name aloud to the silence and could not be satisfied,
For my hands were stretched to clutch thee, draw thee up to my side,
And my heart has leapt and my breath has failed, to hear the tongue
Of Tom toll in the dark, and straight unpanoplied
My soul has almost died.

Bear with me as thou hast borne with all thy passionate throng
Of lovers, the fools of love; for the great flood sweeps along
From the hills into the sea, and all their boats go down with the tide;
And thou shalt stand unmoved, when the wreck of the world beside,
When the loveless cities of greed slip down in their ruined pride
And crumble into the gulf of Time. Thou shalt be strong
With Thebes and On and Memphis, where the deathless gods abide,
A city sanctified.

III.

If I shall sing of thee in antique rime,
Stately and cold as moons that near eclipse,
And intricate as bells rung down in time,
It is to keep the madness from my lips,
Whereby the lover's tongue stumbles and trips,
Uttering foolishness, and thy sublime
White brow is marred with mockery garlands to whips,
Sceptres to reeds are turned, and worship to a crime.

Think, magic city, that as each dear chime
Thrills the mute, friendless night, or stealthily drips
Through all the noise of noon from prime to prime,
Continually some new soul comes to grips
With thee and all the power of thee. He slips
To seaward, weighs out anchor from the slime,
Following the wake of countless golden ships,
Thy figure at the prow, to some far western clime.

Op. I.

IV.

Thou art so magical
Thou makest me afraid,
Lest some great bolt of desolation fall,
And thou in dust be laid
With Babylon and Nineveh the tall;
Or some enchanted lake will cover thee all,
And through quadrangle, cloister, colonnade,
Four-coloured fishes swim, and, faint and small,
Up through the waves at midnight the bells of Magdalen call.
Through midnight waters mighty Tom will call.

Or when, perchance, the pall
Of some nocturnal shade
Unstarred, more dewy-dark than usual,
Lifts upon hill and glade,
I fear lest sunrise strike upon no wall,
No winding street not ghost-white pinnacle
Only on level woodlands, lonely made
Of thee, as once, by arts incredible,
The holy castle vanished behind Sir Percival,
At morning light was not, for Percival.

V.

Once Nimue, the lady of the lake,
Wound aged Merlin in the coils of sleep,
And cast the silence of the luminous, deep
Green forest all about him, there to take
His rest for ever; no alarm might shake
The stillness, no wild creature snuff or peep
On him, no knight arouse him with the leap
Of his tall war-horse plunging through the brake.

And that enchantress, Venus, for the sake
Of young Pygmalion, weary to see him creep
Kissing his idol's senseless foot, and weep,
Smote life into the stone, and so did slake
His thirst of love. And thou? The willows quake
By the clear Cher, thick-clustered dewdrops steep
The heads of mossy gargoyles-beasts, that keep
Their wide, shy smile. Age dreams and young men wake.

VI.

Only one painter could have painted thee,
Still mother with the unimpassioned eyes,
Dark with the mystery
Of many centuries,

IV.

Op. I.

Couldst thou have walked in a woman's guise
Under the blue, exulting skies
Of Italy
In the great sunrise.

All things that were, and now are, and shall be
Graven upon thy heart, have made thee wise
To smile inscrutably;
All aid thou couldst despise
Of reeds and fanciful psalteries,
Strange face of kindness and cruelties,
Immutably
Without surprise.

VII.

Thy name is as the scent of things departed
Of myrrh and unremembered frankincense,
Stored in the niches of dim chapels, dense
With hidden tales of penitence,
With wreathed prayer and desperate vows red-hearted,
Whose ancient eloquence
Knocks on the doors of sense
When in thy haunted shrines I kneel without defence;

Like one that sails on ice-dark waters, charted
By wrinkled mariners at dear expense,
Who trims the sails with careful diligence,
And though the pole-star burn intense,
Shudders to know how many ships thus started,
Feeling the wrath commence
Of old experience,
And drowned green ghosts the crawl from unsuspected dens.

VIII.

How shall I let thee go? for thou didst wring
All myself from me; I would not withhold
One citadel, but gave thee everything.
Perhaps a better wisdom had controlled
The gift, had kept some solitary string
Thou couldst not shake, some secret still untold,
So that thou hadst not left me unconsolated
At thy departure. All this sorrowing
Would not be mine to-day had I been strong of old.

But now too late! the fleeing shadows bring
The unsheathed swords of morning, sharp and cold,
Thou breakest from me I am weakening
Last night wast thou so mighty? I behold

Op. I.

Glimmering betwixt the feathers of thy wing,
Westward the stars, eastward the sunrise gold.
O stay! my hands about thy feet are bold.
Curse me or bless, thou godlike, deadly thing,
By the Lord's living face, I will not loose my hold!

IX.

The moonlight over Radcliffe Square,
Small sunset spires that drowse and dream,
Thin bells that ring to evening prayer,
Red willow-roots along the stream,
And perilous grey streets, that teem
With light feet wandering unaware,
And winter nights with lamps agleam,
Globed golden in the violet air;

Odd nightmare carven things, that stare
Spell-stricken in a voiceless scream,
The worn steps of an ancient stair,
With oaken balustrade and beam
Such things are weightier than they seem,
These marks my branded soul must bear,
Pledges that Time cannot redeem.
And yet God knows if I shall care!

X.

"Iseult, Iseult! day follows day
With weary feet; the bitter spray
Flits fitfully over the waterway.
The gull's harsh crying
Is cruel as death. O far away
Are the years when we made holiday;
My hair and beard show very grey
In the bed where I am lying.

"All the wonderful songs of May,
Roundel, madrigal, virelay,
I cannot remember them now to play,
For yesternight I was trying
To bring them back, but the harp-strings fray,
And I only know that the songs were gay."
Thus and thus did Sir Tristram say
In the hour that he was dying.

Op. I.

XI.

They say the waters cannot drown
Love. I believe it. Set this down:
That I believed and uttered thus.
Whatever things the years discrown,
Somehow, love, I would have it known
My youth was not ungenerous,
And I could kneel to kiss thy gown,
As every honest lover does.

For when beneath the winter's frown
Forth to the forest goes the clown,
Whistling, when winds are blustering,
To gather kindling for the town,
There on his faggots sere and brown
A few dry leaves hang dolorous
In witness of the spring's renown
And it is even so with us.

XII.

I, even I,
Have loved in joy and dread.
Now my spinning-wheel I ply
Like the peasant-girl, that wed
With a king (they say), and try
With hands and heart of lead
To spin out a golden thread
From the dusty straws and dry.

I will not weep nor cry
For work unperfected,
Still labouring faithfully
I have no tears to shed.
For love goes harping high,
And is remembered,
Mummers! when you are sped
With all the lips that lie.

THE LAST CASTLE.

FRIENDS, have you found things changed, in very sooth,
Since all we sat beside the silver streams,
And saw the sunshine of unhampered youth
Bathe the green fields till they were white with dreams?
Why then, beware! for I will let the flood
Of memory burst its banks, and with no ruth
Stir up once more the glamour in your blood

Break through and bear away the bonds of truth.

The roads of life wind onward through the plain;
Youth is Knight Percivale, the hero-fool;
The spell-bound lad, that thinks himself in vain
A world-wise man, being yet a boy at school;
He nightly in strange castles comes to lie,
And there, all wonder of wisdom not one grain
Lets pass the Holy Graal unquestioned by,
Through weary years to be desired again.

O that last faery castle, where we met,
And dwelt three years together, you and I!
There was in her no sorrow, no regret
But faded to a purple pageantry,
Joy was a lamp, and love a faint perfume
Her spires were full of secrets; fairer yet
Was every bower, and each enchanted room
When with mysterious rains her courts were wet.

* * * * *

To the last banquet of the appointed days
We came; there was no change; I drew my chair
With heedless hands up to my usual place;
Though afterwards, a strangeness stirred my hair
To think that this was done for the last time;
From wizard windows died the sunset rays
Aslant through jewelled figures of ancient rime,
And down from the heaped beakers dropped the blaze.

And those tall pillars, dim as amethyst,
Soaring like smoke incredibly aloof,
Where, lift on high above the censer-mist,
Pale capitals glimmered in the golden roof
O marvellously, magically went
Our music up among them, coldly kissed
From pipe and reed, or plucked in thin consent
By white, frail fingers of the lutenist.

The spell-bound and unalterable years
Were dying, and the windless night stood by,
Her moon like candle-light, her stars like spears,
At watch; the echo of our minstrelsy
Slid with a strange slight most pitiful
Down the long line of slender, shadowy biers,
Like breezes on the surface of a pool,
Too slight to shake the dew of gossamers.

Those songs of ours were so fantastical

Op. I.

They held faint presage of the time at hand,
Though we knew well, this visionary hall
 Stood on the limits of our faery land,
 That it and all its treasures, howso rare,
Must fade at sunrise with the watchman's call,
 And we in iron harness forward fare,
Departing from our dead youth's funeral.

* This was our singing:

The First Song.

School of Oxford—cult.

WAR—TIME.

The splendour of the year, no less
Is on thy loveliness,
The light in no less glory falls
On thy unchanging walls
Now, than in other days;
No sorrow can displace
The ordered beauty of thy face;
Yet thou dost watch the water—ways
For thy lost lovers, with a grave and panoplied distress;

Like Iseult looking over—sea
With wan face wearily
Under the coils of braided gold
Resplendent fold on fold,
And girded queenliwise
With jewels of rich price,
With vair, and scarlet of fine dyes,
But still with shadow—haunted eyes
Straining to Tristram hard bested in far—off Brittany.

The Second Song.

School of Paradox.

PIPES.

I sat beside the river
 when the summer sun was bright,
And blew brave music
 as loudly as I might,
On the sweet, hollow Pan—pipes
 they were my delight.

On the bare, black mountain
 where the storm had stripped the ground,
I breathed a broken melody
 quite softly; and I found
That all my pipes were shattered
 with the shrillness of the sound.

WAR—TIME.

God keep the river
and God keep the reeds
I am for the City
full of men's deeds,
To build a great organ
for my new needs.

The Third Song.

School of Religious Ornament.

CAROL.

O know you how Queen Mary sits
In heaven's highest bowers,
Tall lilies in her garden-beds,
Set round with gilly-flowers?

And know you how Queen Mary sits
With rings upon her hands,
While the seven blessed Virgins bind
Her hair in golden bands?

And when the Lord will comfort her
For her seven swords of pain,
He comes to stand beside her knee,
A little child again.

The Fourth Song.

School of Strong Simplicity.

RECKONING.

I said to the devil one day,
"What is the price that a man must pay?
What is the end of shameful desire?"
He answered: "Hell-fire."

"You sell sin for a song," I said,
"And the day of reckoning is far ahead;"
Nor knew that, even when he threatens hell-fire,
The devil is a liar.

For the bitter end of shame
Is not any sort of fire or flame,
But the chill of a scorn too sick for laughter,
Here, not hereafter.

The Fifth Song.

School of Sentiment.

WOMANLINESS.

The Master of the house came and sat him down to dine,
And I served him on my bended knees with bread and meat and wine,
With a peacock stuffed with peaches, in his pride for all to see,

CAROL.

Op. I.

And the name of that resplendent dish was "Golden Flattery."

I served him with the bread of Toil, with meat of Strength and Sense,
All on a fair white napkin of utter Reverence,
With every course I brought him a gay and gilded cup
Where God's good wine of Laughter unceasing bubbled up.

And well I know the banquet was all the heart could wish,
For I served the Love I bore him as the salt with every dish,
As salt to the meat, and as savour to the wine
When my great Lord Paramount sat down to dine.

The Sixth Song.

Pastoral School.

HARVEST.

As we walked through the merry, merry meads,
All in the month of May,
'Twas you that wore the gown of green,
And I the gown of grey;
For you I wept, for you I sighed,
For you I very nearly died
Hey, fol the diddle diddle day,
Hey, fol the dero day.

But now as we come harvesting
When the leaves are growing old,
It's you that wear the gown of grey
And I the gown of gold,
For me you weep, for me you sigh,
For me I think that you will die
Hey, fol the diddle diddle day,
Hey, fol the dero day.

The Seventh Song.

School of Metrical Experiment.

SNAP-DRAGONS.

I have the streets in mind
And the yellow sun,
Lad, you are left behind,
All that is done.

Snap-dragons on the wall
Were homely to see,
What was it after all
But vanity?

Snap-dragons on the wall
In my garden too,
There is little to recall

HARVEST.

For me and you.

Dead blossoms adrift
Are falling away,
 You never gave me a gift
 Would last for a day.

Swift is darkness swift
The death of a flower,
 I never gave you a gift
 Would last for an hour.

Gone is the level light
From the wide lands,
 I would be glad to-night
 Of the touch of your hands.

The Eighth Song.

School of Polite Letters.

SELF-DEFENCE.

My merry lord, I wonder when
I shall behold your face again.

Years hence a month a week, may be,
How will you show yourself to me?

If high-enthroned and far away
I will recall our vanished day.

And work for you and worship you
In all things as I used to do.

But should I turn to find you near
I'll have forgotten you, my dear!

The Ninth Song.

Pre-Raphaelite School.

SYMBOL.

I found him in the church-yard,
 My brother who had died,
With white lilies above him,
 And a hemlock by his side.

Men plant the lilies
 In token of God's grace,
But the green and deadly hemlock,
 He grows in his own place.

With the sick lily-odour

SELF-DEFENCE.

I was all faint within,
It was like a sweet and a seemly lie
To cover the reek of sin.

And truth goes trim and decent
In a rich man's funeral,
But rich men will turn rotten,
And so shall we all.

Now the sour smell of the hemlock
Is honest on the breath,
It is like the after-taste of sin,
And the foretaste of death.

* Thus was our singing.

When lo! betwixt the viol and the flute
One struck a sudden and a haunting sound;
Each looked upon his neighbour and was mute,
And let the myrtle branches fall to ground,
Being afraid; for this was like the noise
Of something shifting nightly at the root
Of a tall pleasure-house, whose airy poise
Rests on the restless quicksand dissolute.

The Last Song.

The roadways of the blessed land
Are set with poplar trees,
And when we ride beneath the morn
The glad ears of the bearded corn
Are brushed against our knees.

Look long. To-morrow we shall stand
Thronged in the dreadful street,
And bloody hands of men o'erborne
Will clutch us by the feet.

And the day broke, and there we stood forlorn
Without the gates; a long and piercing blast
Intolerable, came from the warder's horn,
The memory of all the years gone past,
And blank as death the road behind us lay.
So, while we gazed, we heard the heartless scorn
Of ragged wanderers who thronged our way,
Women and men, both wicked and way-worn.

THE GATES OF PARADISE.

*FROM the grave—bed and the winding sheet
Is a long way for dead feet,
A dark road for dead eyes,
That leads to the gates of Paradise.*

When Judas' soul went through the night,
To knock on Hades gate,
His way was over the whin—pricked moor,
And the noise of the wind was great.

He had no lantern to his feet,
Nor candle in his hand,
Such as God gives to every man
That dies at the time planned.

The angels sit in highest Heaven
And trim the lamps of God,
And all day long make lights for those
That travel death's dim road.

And when the cross is on thy breast,
The chrism on thine eyes,
Thy angel will bear down thy light
Out of the starry skies
And thou therewith shalt walk by night
Safely to Paradise.

But whoso doth so deadly sin
To cast his life away,
Finding his lamp not lit betimes
Walks through the midnight grey.

For a long night and half a day
Did Judas walk alone
Through the utter dark, for in that place
Is neither sun nor moon.

For a long night and half a day
Did Judas vainly seek
To reach the gates of Paradise,
The salt tears on his cheek.

With that he saw a candle gleam
Borne by a hasty man,
And Judas caught him by the cloak
So swiftly as he ran.

"O let me walk with thee, kind friend
I grope, I fail, I fall,
I have no lamp nor candle-light
And the night is over all."

"Full gladly, so thou make good speed,
I run to keep the tryst,
That was given to me at the gates of Hell,
By sweet King Jesus Christ.

"I am the thief whom God forgave,
On Calvary's bitter tree,
For 'To-night,' He said, 'thou shalt rest thine head
In Paradise, with Me.'"

"And I am the man that sinned such a sin
As the world remembers not,
That sold for a price the Lord of Life
Judas Iscariot."

"Now God forbid, thou damnèd wretch,
That ever this should be,
That I should tryst with Jesus Christ,
In the company of thee."

The first robber went his way,
And Judas walked alone,
Mirk, mirk was the black midnight,
The heavy wind made moan.

Right so there came a second man
Was walking by the road:
"O brother, let me share thy light
As far as Hell's abode."

"Now well I fear, my brother dear,
Thou never wilt walk with me
I am that thief which railed on Christ
All on His bitter tree.

"I cast shame on King Jesus then,
Wearing His painful crown,
And scorn upon His Royal Head,
Whence the pale sweat dripped down.

"O rudd-red were the five blest wounds
Where nails and spear went in,
A thousand, thousand years of Purgatory fire
Never can cleanse my sin."

"Why never, I ween," said Judas then
"Did two such sinners meet;
I sold King Christ to the bloody Jews
That pierced His Hands and Feet."

"Art thou that man," quoth the robber,
"Most cursed under skies?
God do so to me if I go with thee
To the gates of Paradise!"

The second robber went his way,
And Judas walked alone,
Till he was aware of a grey man,
That sat upon a stone,
And the lamp he had in his right hand
Shone brighter than the moon.

"Come hither, come hither, thou darkling man,
And bear me company,
This lamp I hold will give us light,
Enough for thee and me."

Judas walks with the grey-clad man,
And fear is in his heart:
"Speak yet again, thou man in grey
And tell me what thou art."

"I bought a burden of deadly sin,
And needs must pay the price,
I bear it hither in my hand
To the gates of Paradise."

"Sin cannot lie upon thy heart
So heavy as on mine."
"Nay, sinner, whosoe'er thou art,
'Tis a heavier load than thine."
He hath not askèd Judas' name,
And Judas makes no sign.

"If sin is heavy on thy heart,
And I must bear its weight,
It is fit that we should go together
To tryst at Hades gate."

Judas walked with the grey-clad man
And feared to tell his name,
He clasped his hand in the barren land,
Bright burned the lanthorn's flame,
Brotherliwise and hand in hand,
To Paradise they came.

Satan looked out from Hades gate,
His hand upon the key,
"Good souls, before I let you in,
First tell me who ye be."

"We be two men that died of late
And come to keep Hell's tryst,
This is Judas Iscariot,
And I am Jesus Christ."

THE THREE KINGS.

THE first king was very young,
O balow, balow la lay,
With doleful ballads on his tongue,
O balow, balow la lay,
He came bearing a branch of myrrh
Than which no gall is bitterer,
O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

The second king was a man in prime,
O balow, balow la lay,
The solemn priest of a solemn time,
O balow, balow la lay,
With eyes downcast and reverent feet
He brought his incense sad and sweet,
O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

The third king was very old,
O balow, balow la lay,
Both his hands were full of gold,
O balow, balow la lay,
Many a gaud and glittering toy,
Baubles brave for a baby boy,
O balow, balow la lay,
Gifts for a baby King, O.

MATTER OF BRITTANY.

DRAW to the fire, and let us weave a web
Of sounds and splendours intertwined
Of warriors riding two by two
In silken surcoats stitched with blue,
To seek and strive the whole world through
For a scarlet fruit with silver rind;
Of unsteered ships that drift for miles on miles
Amid the creeks of myriad magic isles

Over enchanted seas, that leave at ebb
A beach of glittering gold behind.

Hark! how the rain is rippling over the roofs
And knocking hard on the window-pane!
It rattles down the gutter-spout
And beats the laurel-leaves about;
So let us tell of a kempy stout
With bells upon his bridle-rein
How, as he rode beneath the chattering boughs,
He clashed the iron visor over his brows,
Hearing upon his heel the hurried hoofs
Of Breunor, Breuse or Agravaine.

Of names like dusky jewels wedged in gold
The tale shall cherish goodly store,
Of Lionel and Lamorak
And of Sir Lancelot du Lak,
And him that bore upon his back
Arms for the Lady Lyonor;
Persant, Perimones and Pertolepe,
And Arthur laid in Avalon asleep,
Dinas and Dinadan and Bors the bold,
And many a mighty warrior more.

And grimly crouched in every woodland way
A dragon with his emerald eyes
Shall sit and blink on passing knights;
In the deep dells, old eremites,
Victors once of a thousand fights,
Shall sing their masses at sunrise;
And weary men shall stumble unaware
On damsels dancing in a garden fair,
And there, like Meraugis of Portlesguez,
Dance, cheated of their memories.

To towns where we shall feast at Pentecost,
Carlion or Kynke Kenadon,
Each day shall come a faery dame,
Or else a giant with eyes of flame
Shall bid to the beheading game
Knights that the king sets store upon;
And some shall find, at hour of day's decline,
The house beside the fountain and the pine,
And learning much of marvel from their host,
Shall hasten greatly to begone.

Some, by the help of charmèd steeds shall just
Leap through the whirling barriers
That guard about the pleasant bower

Where every moment is an hour,
And with an elfin paramour
Drowse and dream for a hundred years,
But setting foot again on Middle Earth,
Or tasting wheaten bread in hour of dearth,
Shall crumble to a little cloud of dust
Blown by the wind across the furze.

Or sometimes through the arches of the wood
The sad Good Friday bells will ring
Loud in the ear of Percivale,
Through many a year of ban and bale
Yet questing after the Sangraal
For comfort of the Fisher King;
And suddenly across a vault of stars
Shall drive a network of enchanted spars,
And Lancelot and Galahad the good
Behold the ship of hallowing.

And first of all I'll tell the tale to you,
And you shall tell the next to me:
How gentle Enid made complaint
While riding with her lord Geraint,
Or how the merry Irish Saint
Went ever westward oversea;
While your dim shadow moving on the wall
Might be Sir Tristram's, as he harped in hall
Before Iseult of Ireland, always true,
Or white Iseult of Brittany.

A MAN GREATLY GIFTED.

YOU are the song that a jester sang,
Gambolling down the woods alone,
When a wide, low, yellow moon
Stared into the dusk of June;

And here and there, among the trees,
Where sudden foxgloves showed like ghosts,
The tiny streams, from edge to edge
Slipped, smothered by the mossy ledge.

The shadow dodged between the stems
Fantastically lengthening,
And like a silly, sweet guitar,
The little bells were all a-jar.

O music swifter than a sword,
Sharper than scent of spikenard,
Thus carelessly, to left and right

A MAN GREATLY GIFTED.

Tossed by a jester in the night!

THE ELDER KNIGHT.

I.

I HAVE met you foot to foot, I have fought you face to face,
I have held my own against you and lost no inch of place,
 And you shall never see
 How you have broken me.

You sheathed your sword in the dawn, and you smiled with careless eyes,
Saying "Merrily struck, my son, I think you may have your prize."
 Nor saw how each hard breath
 Was painfully snatched from death.

I held my head like a rock; I offered to joust again,
Though I shook, and my palsied hand could hardly cling to the rein;
 Did you curse my insolence
 And over-confidence?

You have ridden, lusty and fresh, to the morrow's tournament;
I am buffeted, beaten, sick at the heart and spent.
 Yet, as God my speed be
 I will fight you again if need be.

II.

A white cloud running under the moon
 And three stars over the poplar-trees,
Night deepens into her lambent noon;
 God holds the world between His knees;
Yesterday it was washed with the rain,
But now it is clean and clear again.

Your hands were strong to buffet me,
 But, when my plume was in the dust,
Most kind for comfort verily;
 Success rides blown with restless lust;
Herein is all the peace of heaven:
To know we have failed and are forgiven.

The brown, rain-scented garden beds
 Are waiting for the next year's roses;
The poplars wag mysterious heads,
 For the pleasant secret each discloses
To his neighbour, makes them nod, and nod
So safe is the world on the knees of God.

III.

I have the road before me; never again
Will I be angry at the practised thrust
That flicked my fingers from the lordly rein
To scratch and scabble among the rolling dust.

I never will be angry though your spear
Bit through the pauldron, shattered the camail,
Before I crossed a steed, through many a year
Battle on battle taught you how to fail.

Can you remember how the morning star
Winked through the chapel window, when the day
Called you from vigil to delights of war
With such loud jollity, you could not pray?

Pray now, Lord Lancelot; your hands are hard
With the rough hilts; great power is in your eyes,
Great confidence; you are not newly scarred,
And conquer gravely now without surprise.

Pray now, my master; you have still the joy
Of work done perfectly; remember not
The dizzying bliss that smote you when, a boy,
You faced some better man, Lord Lancelot.

Pray now and look not on my radiant face,
Breaking victorious from the bloody grips
Too young to speak in quiet prayer or praise
For the strong laughter bubbling to my lips.

Angry? because I scarce know how to stand,
Gasping and reeling against the gates of death,
While, with the shaft yet whole within your hand,
You smile at me with undisordered breath?

Not I not I that have the dawn and dew,
Wind, and the golden shore, and silver foam
I that here pass and bid good-bye to you
For I ride forward you are going home.

Truly I am your debtor for this hour
Of rough and tumble debtor for some good tricks
Of tourney-craft; yet see how, flower on flower,
The hedgerows blossom! How the perfumes mix

Of field and forest! I must hasten on
The clover scent blows like a flag unfurled:
When you are dead, or aged and alone,

I shall be foremost knight in all the world

My world, not yours, beneath the morning's gold,
My hazardous world, where skies and seas are blue;
Here is my hand. Maybe, when I am old,
I shall remember you, and pray for you.

HYMN IN CONTEMPLATION OF SUDDEN DEATH.

LORD, if this night my journey end,
I thank Thee first for many a friend,
The sturdy and unquestioned piers
That run beneath my bridge of years.

And next, for all the love I gave
To things and men this side the grave,
Wisely or not, since I can prove
There always is much good in love.

Next, for the power thou gavest me
To view the whole world mirthfully,
For laughter, paraclete of pain,
Like April suns across the rain.

Also that, being not too wise
To do things foolish in men's eyes,
I gained experience by this,
And saw life somewhat as it is.

Next, for the joy of labour done
And burdens shouldered in the sun;
Nor less, for shame of labour lost,
And meekness born of a barren boast.

For every fair and useless thing
That bids men pause from labouring
To look and find the larkspur blue
And marigolds of a different hue;

For eyes to see and ears to hear,
For tongue to speak and thews to bear,
For hands to handle, feet to go,
For life, I give Thee thanks also.

For all things merry, quaint and strange,
For sound and silence, strength, and change,
And last, for death, which only gives
Value to every thing that lives;

For these, good Lord that madest me,
I praise Thy name; since, verily,
I of my joy have had no dearth
Though this night were my last on earth.

EPITAPH FOR A YOUNG MUSICIAN.

HERE was a man for whom time held the chance,
If he had lived, of failure or success:
Failure of fame, which is a sore distress,
The world's applause, maybe, or tolerance.

But God smote England in her dalliance,
And like his fellows, neither more nor less,
Here was a man.

So when death caught him in the haphazard dance,
And robbed him of occasion to transgress,
He lost the chance of failure; perfectness
Was his alone. Stranger, rest here thy glance,
Here was a man.

RONDELS.

GOING-DOWN PLAY.

TO-MORROW, yes, those songs will break my heart,
But I am only very glad to-night,
Thrilling with fear and labour and delight
To go thus gaily robed and play my part;

Joy goes up with a shout quick laughters dart
Between the choruses that ring and smite
To-morrow, yes, those songs will break my heart,
But I am only very glad to-night;

Glad of the music and the jocund art
That flings us all together; very bright
Through the warm darkness streams the candle-light,
More mirthfully our farewell songs upstart.
To-morrow, yes those songs will break my heart.

To M. J.

NOW that we have gone down have all gone down,
I would not hold too closely to the past,
Till it become my staff, or even at last
My crutch, and I be made a helpless clown.

Op. I.

All men must walk alone, not drowse, nor drown,
Their wits, with spells of dead things overcast,
Now that we have gone down, have all gone down,
I would not hold too closely to the past.

Therefore, God love thee, thou enchanted town,
God love thee, leave me, clutch me not so fast;
Lest, clinging blindly we but grope aghast,
Sweet friends, go hence and seek your own renown,
Now that we have gone down have all gone down.

LAST MORNING IN OXFORD.

The great poets . . . are not at the pains of devising careful endings. Thus, Homer ends with lines that might as well be in the middle of a passage." *H. Belloc.*

I DO not think that very much was said
Of solemn requiem for the good years dead.

Like Homer, with no thunderous rhapsody,
I closed the volume of my Odyssey.

The thing that I remember most of all
Is the white hemlock by the garden wall.

June 23rd, 1915.
