

Classic Poetry Series

**Wilfrid Scawen Blunt**  
**- poems -**

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## Wilfrid Scawen Blunt(1840 - 1922)

Second son of Francis Blunt and born into an old Sussex family. When he was eighteen he entered the British diplomatic corps and he worked in Athens, Constantinople, Frankfurt, Lisbon, Madrid, Paris and Argentina.

After his retirement in 1872 and his marriage to Anne Isabella Noel (the only known descendant of Lord Byron). They first met in Venice and he observed that 'she thought herself plainer than she was'.

Together with his wife he travelled on horseback through the Mid-East and lived in Cairo. Blunt opposed British rule in Egypt and was also in favor of Irish home rule. For the latter he even served a prison term.

Blunt had an affair with Jane Morris, wife of William Morris and model of Gabriel Dante Rossetti. When he died in 1922 he was buried like a Muslim at the Newbuildings Estate, sixteen miles away from Crabbet.

Work: "The Love Sonnets of Proteus" (1880); "The Wind and the Whirlwind" (1883); "My Diaries (1919, 1920, two volumes).

Many of his letters and diary entries have also been published post humously including the belong transcripts to the coming of the 20th century as seen below:

9th Jan. 1896. The German Emperor has telegraphed his congratulations to Kruger [the Boer leader], and this seems to have produced great anger in England. We have now managed in the last six months to quarrel violently with China, Turkey, Belgium, Ashanti, France, Venezuela, America, and Germany. This is a record performance, and if it does not break up the British Empire nothing will. For myself I am glad of it all, for the British Empire is the greatest engine of evil for the weak races now existing in the world---not that we are worse than the French or Italians or Americans--indeed, we are less actively destructive---but we do it over a far wider area and more successfully. I should be delighted to see England stripped of her whole foreign possessions. We are better off and more respected in Queen Elizabeth's time, the "spacious days," when we had not a stick of territory outside the British Islands, than now, and infinitely more respectable. The gangrene of colonial rowdyism is infecting us, and the habit of repressing liberty in weak nations is endangering our own. I should be glad to see the end....

15th Oct. 1898. All this week has been one of excitement over the quarrel with France about Fashoda. A Blue Book has been published giving the English case, and, imperial plunder being in question, all parties, Tories, Whig, Radical, Churchmen, and Nonconformist have joined in publicly extolling English virtue and denouncing the French. For myself I see nothing in it more respectable than the wrangle of two highwaymen over a captured purse; morally both sides are on a level.

17th Oct. 1898. Arrived at Saighton. I have had it out with George [Wyndham, parliamentary under-secretary in the War Office] about Fashoda. He states the English case with brutal frankness. "The day of talking," he says, "about legality in Africa is over, all the international law there is there consists of interest and understandings. It is generally agreed by all the powers that the end of African operations is to 'civilize' it in the interests of Europe, and that to gain that end all means are good. The only difference between England and France is which of them is to do it in which particular districts. England intends to do it on the Nile, and it makes no difference what the precise legal position is. We may put forward the Khedive's rights if it is convenient or we may put forward a right of conquest, or a right of simply declaring our intentions. One is as good as another to get our end, which is the railway from Cairo to the Cape. We don't care whether the Nile is called English or Egyptian or what it is called, but we mean to have it and we don't mean the French to have it. The Khedive may be kept on for some years as a sort of Indian maharajah, but it will end in a partition of the Ottoman Empire between England, Germany, and Russia. France will be allowed Northwestern Africa. It is not worth while drawing distinctions of right and wrong in the matter, it is a matter entirely of interest."

15th June, 1899. The plot for annexing the Transvaal has taken a new development. Chamberlain [the colonial secretary], to force the hand of the government, has published a despatch of Milner's [governor of Cape Colony] written on the 4th of May of the most aggressive kind, and the newspapers are full of flame and fury, the Daily News leading the chorus. They talk about Milner's "cool and impartial judgment" just as if Milner had not been specially selected by Chamberlain to put the job through. Milner was sent to Egypt ten years ago to convert English liberal opinion to the plan of remaining on there instead of withdrawing the garrison, and having succeeded in that mission he has been sent to the Cape to convert English liberal opinion to the idea of re-annexing the Transvaal. Milner, though an excellent fellow personally. is quite an extremist as an imperial agent, and his journalistic experience on the Pall Mall Gazette has given him the length of John Bull's foot very accurately, so that he is invaluable to the empire builders. Now there will certainly be war in South Africa. They have tried every kind of fraud to get their way, but old Kruger has been too astute for

them, so they will try force. They seem to have squared the German Emperor, France is in chaos, they think their opportunity come. Chamberlain will not rest until he has Kruger's head on a charger.

The Boers, however, will fight, and there is some chance of a general war between the Dutch and the English in South Africa, which may alleviate the condition of the only people there whose interests I really care for in the quarrel, namely the blacks. It will also be a beautiful exposure of our English sham philanthropy, if at the very moment the Peace Congress is sitting at The Hague, we flout its mediation and launch into an aggressive war. Anything is better than the general handshaking of the great white thieves and their amicable division of the spoils....

22nd Dec., 1900. The old century is very nearly out, and leaves the world in a pretty pass, and the British Empire is playing the devil in it as never an empire before on so large a scale. We may live to see its fall. All the nations of Europe are making the same hell upon earth in China, massacring and pillaging and raping in the captured cities as outrageously as in the Middle Ages. The Emperor of Germany gives the word for slaughter and the Pope looks on and approves. In South Africa our troops are burning farms under Kitchener's command, and the Queen and the two houses of Parliament, and the bench of bishops thank God publicly and vote money for the work. The Americans are spending fifty millions a year on slaughtering the Filipinos; the King of the Belgians has invested his whole fortune on the Congo, where he is brutalizing the Negroes to fill his pockets. The French and Italians for the moment are playing a less prominent part in the slaughter, but their inactivity grieves them. The whole white race is reveling openly in violence, as though it had never pretended to be Christian. God's equal curse be on them all! So ends the famous nineteenth century into which we were so proud to have been born....

31st Dec., 1900. I bid good-bye to the old century, may it rest in peace as it has lived in war. Of the new century I prophesy nothing except that it will see the decline of the British Empire. Other worse empires will rise perhaps in its place, but I shall not live to see the day. It all seems a very little matter here in Egypt, with the pyramids watching us as they watched Joseph, when, as a young man four thousand years ago, perhaps in this very garden, he walked and gazed at the sunset behind them, wondering about the future just as I did this evening. And so, poor wicked nineteenth century, farewell!

# A Ballad Of The Heather

We spent a day together,  
One day of all our lives,  
Of love in cloudless weather--  
Such only youth contrives--  
One day in the red heather,  
Alone with our two lives.

The tall grey rocks were near us,  
The birch--trees lent us shade,  
The moorfowl did not fear us,  
Nor was the fox afraid.  
No other life was near us  
Of matron, man or maid.

The glory of the morning  
Had made our pulses beat,  
The dangers we were scorning,  
The pleadings of retreat,  
Her mother's eyes of warning,  
The foes that we might meet.

Earth's silence was our token,  
The sunlight on the hill.  
We whispered things unspoken,  
We stopped and gazed our fill.  
The stillness was not broken,  
Save thus at our own will.

We sat down by the water,  
A green and quiet place.  
She ate what I had brought her  
When she had said her grace.  
She was Eve's fairest daughter.  
I kneeled and kissed her face.

O Love, what deeds thou darest,  
When truth is on thy lips!  
What royal robes thou wearest!  
What wealth is in thy ships!

What glories thou declarest  
With thy mad finger--tips!

We called on the high Heaven  
In witness of our troth,  
From morning until even,  
While time was little loath  
To give and be forgiven  
The dear love in us both.

Aloft the raven scouting  
Gave warning to the glen.  
We heard a sound of shouting  
The tramp of angry men.  
No time was there for doubting,  
And I was one to ten.

I hid her in the braken,  
A brood--bird on its nest.  
She wept as one forsaken  
And held me to her breast.  
We dared not thus be taken.  
I fled, for it was best.

They passed her by unheeded.  
They hunted me in sight.  
I lured them while she needed,  
A lapwing feigning flight.  
Then o'er the hills I speeded  
And left them to the night.

Alas, dear love, together  
No more in all our lives  
Shall we in cloudless weather,  
Outwitting maids and wives,  
Take joy of the red heather  
And love and our two lives.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Chant In Praise

How many hymns have I chaunted, Lady, in laud of thee,  
Each with a sigh for its burthen, tear for its antiphon?  
Love--songs are sweet in the morning. All things in praise of thee  
Evening and morning rejoice, intoning in unison.

Noontide and night have I heard them, birds in the bulrushes,  
Ewes with their lambs in the pastures, winds in the wilderness,  
Doves as they light in the palm--tops, moans of the waterwheel,  
Eagles and ravens exulting, all speak the name of thee.

Fair is thy face, as the first star seen in the western sky  
Robed in the rose of the sunset, pure in its loneliness.  
Angels look down from its windows, smile on the world of men,  
Near yet afar from their grieving. Thou too hast smiled on me.

Crown me with bays, nay, with roses. What should I do with bays,  
Emblems of earthly ambition, I who but live for love?  
Earn me reward of the red rose, thine and love's laureate,  
Thus with the flower of thy kindness crowning my constancy.

Deign to accept an allegiance due to thy royalty.  
Empires are thine. Be my kingdom here at thy kness to kneel.  
Not till thou speak will I raise me, turn to life's emptiness,  
Ashes and dust for my portion, O thou most pitiful!

Verily grief is love's sister. Therefore I weave for thee  
Anthems of grief and of true love born of thy loveliness.  
Read and forget, and to--morrow, lo, where my path hath been,  
Eagles and ravens exulting scream from the wilderness.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Convent Wothout God

A prison is a convent without God.  
Poverty, Chastity, Obedience  
Its precepts are. In this austere abode  
None gather wealth of pleasure or of pence.  
Woman's light wit, the heart's concupiscence  
Are banished here. At the least warder's nod  
Thy neck shall bend in mute subservience.  
Nor yet for virtue--rather for the rod.

Here a base turnkey novice--master is,  
Teaching humility. The matin bell  
Calls thee to toil, but little comforteth.  
None heed thy prayers or give the kiss of peace.  
Nathless, my soul, be valiant. Even in Hell  
Wisdom shall preach to thee of life and death.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# A Cuckoo Song

Crowns are for kings to wear, sad crowns of gold  
Over tired heads that ache, world--cares untold.  
Not on thy happy brows, sweet bird of summer,  
Set we such crowns to--day, thou Spring's new--comer.  
Take from us, rather, thou these our wild posies.  
April's and May's we bring, June's with its roses.  
Nay and love's Cuckoo flowers, O child of glory!  
Cuckoos thine own birds are; these be thy dowry.  
Eve of our heart's shut field, need is we grieve thee,  
Gone to a world more sweet where we must leave thee.  
Russet--clad nightingales, tired of our chaunting,  
Out in the dark we weep, our Queen--bird wanting.  
Such is the fate of birds. Soon as the Spring comes  
Vagrant they flit and fly. Lo! 'tis their King comes.  
Endeth our night plaint only when, through the wild wood,  
New born the day trips in, laughs as a child would.  
O, then we too will laugh, join in the gay chime,  
Run to thy marriage bells, birds of the day--time.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Day In The Castle Of Envy

The castle walls are full of eyes,  
And not a mouse may creep unseen.  
All the window slits are spies;  
And the towers stand sentinel  
High above the gardens green.  
Not a lizard lurking close  
In the brambles of the dell;  
Not a beetle as he goes,  
Toiling in the dust, may tell  
The least secret of his woes  
To the idle butterflies;  
Not a privet moth may flit,  
But the castle looketh wise,  
But the old king knoweth it.

All day long the garden gates  
Open stand for who will in,  
For the old king loveth well  
The reek of human loves and hates.  
Most of all he loveth sin,  
All that sendeth souls to Hell;  
All that hath the earthy smell  
Of a joy that soon shall die.  
And he sitteth there and saith:  
` ` Every creature that hath breath  
Goeth with the taint of death."

There he waiteth overhead,  
Spieth out what he may spy,  
Like an evil--omened gled.  
From the morning till the night,  
There is nothing which doth move,  
There is nothing which can lie  
Still and hidden out of sight,  
But he seeth it above,  
But he feeleth all the pleasure  
Of its basking in the sun.  
And his wisdom taketh measure  
Of the sorrow which shall come

When the summer days are done.  
Life and love are quickly run.  
So he watcheth silently,  
Waiting till the end shall be.

There he sitteth at the dawn  
When the world begins to rouse;  
And the daisies on the lawn  
Open wide their stainless eyes;  
Then he feeleth as in pain  
For the wrinkles on his brows.  
He doth envy the sunrise,  
That it maketh all things gay;  
And his jealous ear hath heard  
The first piping of a bird;  
And he curseth at the day.  
But his curses are in vain  
For the world grows young again.

From the shadow of the rocks,  
Stealing out and stealing in,  
Creeps the hungry foot--pad fox,  
On the wild fowls nestled close.  
Then a weirdly smile and thin  
Curleth on his lip and nose,  
As the red beast winds the flocks.  
And there is an evil mirth,  
In the glitter of his eye;  
For the sun hath warmed the earth,  
And he seeth something stir  
In the grass and then awake,  
Turn and stretch her stealthily;  
And he hisseth at the snake,  
As the heat unfoldeth her.

There he bideth through the noon,  
While the pine tops clash together,  
Till deep silence, like a tune,  
Wrappeth all the earth and air;  
And the old king dreamily  
Noddeth his great heron feather,  
As he sitteth in his chair.

For sleep cometh upon all,  
Rock and castle, flower and tree;  
And the turrets wave and quiver;  
And the battlemented wall  
Bendeth in the haze of noon,  
And the fir--cones one by one,  
Split like thunder in the heat;  
And the old king hearing it,  
Saith, ``It is the angry sun."

But, as noontide slowly wears,  
From the hollows underneath  
Solemn ravens cross in pairs,  
Drop a hollow croak and pass,  
Which the king, who listeneth,  
Readeth for the name of Death.  
And he mocketh at the sound,  
Croaketh back a croak as hoarse:  
For he knoweth they are bound  
To the dell where, on the grass,  
There is that which was a corse.

Suddenly a merry noise  
In the garden makes him glad,  
For he knoweth well what joys  
Noise and merriment shall bring.  
They are children come to tread  
The young daisies on the head;  
And he loveth well their play,  
For they take the butterflies  
And they tear them wing from wing;  
And the old king looketh wise  
At the footstep on the bed,  
And the broken myrtle spray;  
And he readeth all the lies  
Which their innocence shall tell.  
Well it pleaseth him such eyes  
Should have learned the speech of Hell.

But at evening, lovers walk  
Underneath the ilex trees;  
And the king hath heard their talk,

And the vows which they have spoken;  
And he knoweth too the tale  
Of the vows which they have broken,  
And the name and history,  
And the secret which doth lie  
Underneath their smiling pale;  
And the hidden tale of sorrow  
Of the maiden as she goes,  
And the pleasures she doth borrow,  
That her grief may learn to die.  
And he laugheth at her woes  
As his red eye reads the scrawl  
Love once wrote upon the wall,  
Love grown cold, whose tasting is  
Like the last lees of a kiss.

Thus he sitteth till the sun  
Sendeth out long shadows slant  
Till the fish--tanks down beneath  
Hidden lie in vapour dun;  
And the castle rising gaunt  
Slowly stretcheth out its limbs,  
Like a drowsy--headed Hun.  
But when all is deep in shade,  
And the broad sun on the sea  
Lieth on his flaming bed,  
Twisteth, writheth in agony,  
Like a wizard fiery clad,  
Tortured and about to die,  
Then the old king goeth mad.

And he curseth loud thereat;  
Curseth at the setting sun;  
Curseth at the coming night;  
Curseth at the flitting bat,  
And the stars which cannot see;  
Curseth at the pale moonrise,  
And her solemn mockery  
Of a daylight which is done;  
Thinketh, though he should curse the skies,  
Every hour till night is gone  
Naught his curses may devise

For the pale moon's sorceries,  
Or the darkness which shall be.  
This the thought which tortureth him  
That, for all he watcheth close,  
Though his eyes be bright away,  
And, for all that he is king,  
All the knowledge of all he knows  
Telleth not what night may bring,  
Telleth not what steps may stray.

Then he sendeth forth a scout,  
Biddeth shut the garden gate:  
And there is a sudden rout  
Of the children and the lovers  
Whom the warder's eye discovers  
In the twilight lurking late,  
Lovers who are loath to part.  
But their prayers avail them not,  
And the maiden's witching pout  
Cannot melt the warder's heart.  
Straightway he hath turned them out.  
For along the castle wall  
Go the archers stout and tall,  
And the king, who sitteth still,  
In the darkness of the tower,  
Waiteth till the seneschal,  
With his stalwart serving--men,  
Bear him out against his will  
In his chair, while curses shower.

To the banquet he is borne,  
While the cracked bell tolleth slow.  
And the king doth beat his breast  
Slowly to that chime forlorn;  
Beateth on his beard of snow,  
First in anger then in jest,  
First in mirth and then in scorn;  
Singeth low, `` Ring bravely, bell,  
For thy voice is loud and dry.  
Such a tongue as thine is good  
To out--talk the chimes of Hell.  
Laugh we bravely, thou and I,

While the world is in laughing mood.  
We may live to laugh its knell."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Digit Of The Moon

This book is written for Man's ultimate need,  
A creed of joy sent down to the aged Earth  
From days of happier daring and more mirth  
To comfort and console all hearts that bleed.  
Here shall ye find how Love, that mastering weed  
Of tropic growth and paradisal power,  
Sprang in a night and found its fortunate hour  
And was fulfilled of glory, flower, fruit, seed,  
A wonder to the Forest.--O ye souls  
Of men and women, who on Time's whim wait  
Nor clutch her hem when Pleasure turns to flee!  
Read of these two, who ill content with doles  
Rose in their rage and gave assault to Fate  
And won their birth--fruit. Read. Nay, dare it ye!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# A Dream

I dreamed  
A dream of you,  
Not as you seemed  
When you were late unkind  
And blind  
To my eyes' pleading for a debt long due,  
But touched and true  
And all inclined  
To tenderest fancies on love's inmost theme.  
How sweet you were to me and ah, how kind  
In that dear dream!

I felt  
Your lips on mine  
Mingle and melt,  
And your cheek touch my cheek.  
I, weak  
With vain desires and askings for a sign  
Of love divine,  
Found my grief break,  
And wept and wept in an unending stream  
Of sudden joy set free, yet could not speak,  
Dumb in my dream.

I knew  
You loved me then,  
And I knew too  
The bliss of souls in Heaven  
New--shriven,  
Who look with pity on still sinning men,  
And turn again  
To be forgiven  
In the dear arms of their God holding them,  
And spend themselves in praise from morn till even  
Nor break their dream.

I woke  
In my mid bliss,  
At midnight's stroke,

And knew you lost and gone.  
Forlorn  
I called you back to my unfinished kiss,  
But only this  
One word of scorn  
You answered me, ``'Twas better loved to seem  
Than loved to be, since all love is forsworn,  
Always a dream."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Dream Of Good

To do some little good before I die;  
To wake some echoes to a loftier theme;  
To spend my life's last store of industry  
On thoughts less vain than Youth's discordant dream;  
To endow the world's grief with some counter--scheme  
Of logical hope which through all time should lighten  
The burden of men's sorrow and redeem  
Their faces' paleness from the tears that whiten;

To take my place in the world's brotherhood  
As one prepared to suffer all its fate;  
To do and be undone for sake of good,  
And conquer rage by giving love for hate;  
That were a noble dream, and so to cease,  
Scorned by the proud but with the poor at peace.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Glory Gone

What is my thought of you, beloved one,  
Now you have passed from me and gone your ways?  
Glory is gone with you from stars and sun,  
And all wise meaning from the nights and days.  
There is no colour, no delight, no praise  
In the deep forest, where your dear eyes shone,  
Nor any dryad face with cheeks ablaze  
To paint the glades grown sere as Avalon.  
--What is my thought of you? No thought have I  
But just to weep the pity of lost things,  
Grieve with the wind, and rain tears with the rain.  
The sun may smile, who knows, in a blue sky,  
To--morrow? But to--day Hope's passionate wings  
Are folded and Love waits on only Pain.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Lesson In Humility

'Tis time, my soul, thou shouldst be purged of pride.  
What men are these with thee, whose ill deeds done  
Make thee thus shrink from them and be denied?  
They are but as thou art, each mother's son  
A convict in transgression. Here is one,  
Sayest thou, who struck his fellow and he died.  
And yet he weeps hot tears. Do thy tears run?  
This other thieved, yet clasps Christ crucified.

Where is thy greater virtue? Thinkest thou sin  
Is but crime's record on the judgment seat?  
Or must thou wait for death to be bowed down?  
Oh for a righteous reading which should join  
Thy deeds together in an accusing sheet,  
And leave thee if thou couldst, to face men's frown!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Love Secret

Love has its secrets, joy has its revealings.  
How shall I speak of that which love has hid?  
If my beloved shall return to greet me,  
Deeds shall be done for her none ever did.

My beloved loved me. How shall I reveal it?  
We were alone that morning in the street.  
She looked down at the ground, and blushed, and trembled.  
She stopped me with her eyes when these did meet.

``What wouldst thou, sweet one? What wouldst thou with sorrow,  
Thou, the new morning star with me, the night?  
What are those flowers thou holdest to thy bosom?  
What are the thoughts thou hidest from my sight?"

``Thine are these flowers," she said, ``these foolish roses,  
And thine the thoughts, if thus it be thy will.  
I hold them close for fear that thou shouldst mock me,  
I hold them to my heart for fear of ill."

``Nay, what of ill? 'Tis only age is evil,  
Only forgetfulness and grief and pain;  
What dost thou know of grief, that thou shouldst fear it?  
Mine is the grief who cannot love again."

She raised her eyes, she looked at me in wonder,  
``The ache is here," she said, ``by night and day;  
I cannot teach my heart to bear its burden,  
I cannot turn my silence from its way."

``Speak to me, child. I am thy wise physician,  
A man acquainted with all grief can teach;  
There is no sorrow but has joy for sister,  
No silence but finds counterpart in speech."

My beloved laughed. She saw through my dissembling;  
She held to me her hand, that I might kiss,  
The inside of her hand. 'Twas like a petal  
Of her own roses, but more dear than this.

I felt its pulses, like a bird in prison;  
` ` Sweet child," I said, ` ` what wouldst thou I should prove?  
I cannot make thee wiser than thy wisdom,  
Who knowest all things since thou knowest love."

How shall I tell it? How shall I reveal it?  
I led her by the hand, as thus I said,  
Back from the street to where it stood, my dwelling,  
And closed the door on where it stood, my bed.

Her laughter stopped. ` ` Nay, use not thou unkindly.  
Thine is the hand to deal or spare the blame;  
I dare not be to thee thus uninvited,  
Thou dost not know me, hast not learned my name."

How shall I tell it? How shall I reveal it?  
Love in that instant found its latest birth,  
` ` Soul of my soul," I cried, ` ` thy name is Pleasure,  
The sweetest thing to love on this sad Earth."

I held her in my arms, I pressed her fastly.  
` ` Ah, if thou lovedst me indeed," she cried.  
` ` I love thee, and I love thee," was my answer,  
` ` My sister, my beloved one, my bride!"

Love has its secrets. Joy has its revealings.  
I speak of this which love in vain has hid;  
If my beloved shall return to greet me,  
Deeds shall be done for her none ever did.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet I

Care killed a cat, and I have cares at home,  
Which vex me nightly and disturb my bed.  
The things I love have all grown wearisome;  
The things that loved me are estranged or dead.  
I have a house most fair, but tenanted  
With shadows only, gardens of tall trees,  
Fenced in and made secure from every dread  
But this one terror, my soul's lack of ease.  
I have much wealth of pleasure, horse and hound,  
Woods broad for sport, and fields that are my own,  
With neighbours of good cheer to greet me round,  
And servants tried by whom my will is done.  
Here all things live at peace in this dear place,  
All but my pride, which goes companionless.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet II

How shall I ransom me? The world without,  
Where once I lived in vain expense and noise,  
Say, shall it welcome me in this last rout,  
Back to its bosom of forgotten joys?  
Sometimes I hear it whispering with strange voice,  
Asking, ``Are we forever then cast out,  
The things that helped thee once in thy annoys,  
That thou despairest? Nay, away with doubt!  
Take courage to thy heart to heal its woes.  
It still shall beat as wildly as a boy's."  
This tempts me in the night--time, and I loose  
My soul to dalliance with youth's broken toys.  
Ay, wherefore suffer? In this question lies  
More than my soul can answer, and be wise.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Iii

I will break through my bondage. Let me be  
Homeless once more, a wanderer on the Earth,  
Marked with my soul's sole care for company,  
Like Cain, lest I do murder on my hearth.  
I ask not others' goods, nor wealth nor worth,  
Nor the world's kindness, which should comfort me,  
But to forget the story of my birth,  
And go forth naked of all name, but free.  
Where the flowers blow, there let me sit and dream.  
Where the rain falls, ah! leave my tears their way.  
Where men laugh loud, I too will join the hymn,  
And in God's congregation let me pray.  
Only alone--I ask this thing--alone,  
Where none may know me, or have ever known.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Iv

Behold the deed is done. Here endeth all  
That bound my grief to its ancestral ways.  
I have passed out, as from a funeral,  
From my dead home, and in the great world's gaze  
Henceforth I stand, a pilgrim of new days,  
On the high road of life. Where I was thrall,  
See, I am master, being passionless;  
And, having nothing now, am lord of all.  
How glorious is the world! Its infinite grace  
Surprises me--and not as erst with fear,  
But as one meets a woman face to face,  
Loved once and unforgotten and still dear  
In certain moods and seasons. So to me  
The fair world smiles to--day, yet leaves me free.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet IX

These were in truth brave days. From our high perch,  
The box--seat of our travelling chariot, then  
We children spied the world 'twas ours to search,  
And mocked like birds at manners and at men.  
What wonders we beheld, Havre, Rouen, Caen,  
The Norman caps, the Breton crowds in church,  
The loyal Loire, the valorous Vendéen,  
And all the Revolution left in lurch  
That very year--things old as Waterloo.  
But when we neared the mountains crowned with snows,  
And heard the torrents roar, our wonder grew  
Over our wit, and a new pleasure rose  
Wild in our hearts, and stopped our tongues with dread,  
The sense of death and beauty overhead.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet V

The physical world itself is a fair thing  
For who has eyes to see or ears to hear.  
To--day I fled on my new freedom's wind,  
With the first swallows of the parting year,  
Southwards from England. At the Folkestone pier  
I left the burden of my sins behind,  
Noting how gay the noon was, and how clear  
The tide's fresh laughter rising to no wind.  
A hundred souls of men there with my own  
Smiled in that sunshine. 'Tis a little measure  
Makes glad the heart at sea, and not alone  
Do wise men kindle to its pulse of pleasure  
Here all alike, peers, pedlars, squires, and dames  
Forsook their griefs fog--born of Father Thames.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Vi

Away from sorrow! Yes, indeed, away!  
Who said that care behind the horseman sits?  
The train to Paris, as it flies to--day,  
Whirls its bold rider clear of ague fits.  
Who stops for sorrows? Who for his lost wits,  
His vanished gold, his loves of yesterday,  
His vexed ambitions? See, the landscape flits  
Bright in his face, and fleeter far than they.  
Away! away! Our mother Earth is wide;  
And our poor lives and loves of what avail?  
All life is here; and here we sit astride  
On her broad back, with Hope's white wings for sail,  
In search of fortune and that glorious goal,  
Paris, the golden city of our soul.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet VII

Ah, Paris, Paris! What an echo rings  
Still in those syllables of vain delight!  
What voice of what dead pleasures on what wings  
Of Maenad laughters pulsing through the night!  
How bravely her streets smile on me! How bright  
Her shops, her houses, fair sepulchral things,  
Stored with the sins of men forgotten quite,  
The loves of mountebanks, the lusts of kings!  
What message has she to me on this day  
Of my new life? Shall I, a pilgrim wan,  
Sit at her board and revel at her play,  
As in the days of old? Nay, this is done.  
It cannot be; and yet I love her well  
With her broad roads and pleasant paths to Hell.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Viii

I will sit down awhile in dalliance  
With my dead life, and dream that it is young.  
My earliest memories have their home in France,  
The chestnut woods of Bearn and streams among,  
Where first I learned to stammer the French tongue.  
Fair ancient France. No railroad insolence  
Had mixed her peoples then, and still men clung  
Each to his ways, and viewed the world askance.  
We, too, as exiles from our northern shore,  
Surveyed things sparsely; and my own child's scorn  
Remained, how long, a rebel to all lore  
Save its lost English, nor was quite o'erborne  
Till, as I swore I'd speak no French frog's word,  
I swore in French, and so laid down my sword.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet X

Whence is our pleasure in things beautiful?  
We are not born with it, we do not know,  
By instinct of the eye or natural rule,  
That naked rocks are fairest, or flowers blow  
Best in their clefts, or that the world of snow  
Has other glory than of cold and ice.  
From our mother's hand we viewed these things below  
Senseless as goats which browse a precipice,  
Till we were taught to know them. With what tears  
I con the lessons now I learned so well,  
Of mountain shapes, from those dead lips of hers;  
And as she spoke, behold, a miracle  
Proving her words,--for at our feet there grew,  
Beauty's last prodigy, a gentian blue.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xii

Dear royal France! I fix the happy year  
At forty--seven, because that Christmas--tide  
There passed through Pau the Duke of Montpensier,  
Fresh from his nuptials with his Spanish bride;  
And because I, unwilling, shared their pride,  
As youngest of the English children there,  
By offering flowers to the fair glorified  
Daughter of Bourbon standing on the stair--  
A point in history. When we came at last  
To this gay Paris I was doomed to love,  
There were already rumours of the blast  
That swept the Orleans songsters from their grove  
In flight to London, after Polignac  
And the true king, at their King Bourgeois' back.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xiii

And what strange sights have these threewindows seen,  
Mid bonnes and children, in the Tuileries!  
What flights of hero, Emperor and Queen,  
Since first I looked down from them, one of these!  
Here, with his Mornys and his Persignys,  
Louis Napoleon, the Prince President,  
Rode one December past us, on the breeze  
Of his new glory, bloodstained and intent.  
Later, I too my love's diplomacies  
Played at Eugenia's court,--blest Empress! Then  
How did men curse her with their Marseillaise,  
When the foe's horse was watered in her Seine,  
And the flames, lit for her last festival,  
Licked out her palace and its glories all.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xiv

To--day there is no cloud upon thy face,  
Paris, fair city of romance and doom!  
Thy memories do not grieve thee, and no trace  
Lives of their tears for us who after come.  
All is forgotten--thy high martyrdom,  
Thy rage, thy vows, thy vauntings, thy disgrace,  
With those who died for thee to beat of drum,  
And those who lived to see thee kingdomless.  
Indeed thou art a woman in thy mirths,  
A woman in thy griefs which leave thee young,  
A prudent virgin still, despite the births  
Of these sad prodigies thy bards have sung.  
What to thy whoredoms is a vanished throne?  
A chair where a fool sat, and he is gone!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xix

Alas, that words like these should be but folly!  
Behold, the Boulevard mocks, and I mock too.  
Let us away and purge our melancholy  
With the last laughter at the Ambigu!  
Here all is real. Here glory's self is true  
Through each regime to its own mission holy  
Of plying still the world with something new  
To cure its ache, or nobly souled or lowly.  
One title Paris holds above the rest  
Untouched by time or fortune's change or frown,  
One temple of high fame, where she sits dressed  
In youth eternal, and mirth's myrtle crown,  
And where she writes, each night, with deathless hands,  
` `To all the glories--of the stage--of France."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet XI

Here therefore ends my sad soul's pilgrimage,  
In tears for sin and half--redeemed desire.  
She was unworthy her high martyr's rage,  
Or to be wholly purified by fire.  
O Rome, thy ways are narrow and aspire  
Too straitly for the knees of this halt age,  
And, with the multitude, her forces tire,  
Even while she holds thee fast, her heritage.  
Path of sublime perfection upon Earth!  
Your's is it in the clamour of vain days  
To guard the calm eternal of Man's birth  
And like an eagle to renew his days.  
Give me your blessing, angels, ere I go,  
Angels that guard the bridge of Angelo.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xv

For thus it is. You flout at kings to--day.  
To--morrow in your pride you shall stoop low  
To a new tyrant who shall come your way,  
And serve him meekly with mock--serious brow,  
While the world laughs. I shall not laugh at you.  
Your Bourbon, Bonaparte or Boulanger  
Are foils to your own part of ingénue  
Which moves me most, the moral of your play.  
You have a mission in the world, to teach  
All pride its level. Poet, prince and clown,  
Each in your amorous arms has scaled the breach  
Of his own pleasure and the world's renown.  
Till with a yawn you turn, and from your bed  
Kick out your hero with his ass's head.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xvi

Gods, what a moral! Yet in vain I jest.  
The France which has been, and shall be again,  
Is the most serious, and perhaps the best,  
Of all the nations which have power with men.  
France only of the nations has this plain  
Thought in the world, to scorn hypocrisy,  
And by this token she shall purge the stain  
Of her sins yet, though these as scarlet be.  
Let her put off her folly! 'Tis a cloak  
Which hides her virtue. Let her foremost stand,  
The champion of all necks which feel the yoke,  
As once she stood sublime in every land.  
Let her forgo her Tonquins, and make good  
Her boast to man, of man's high brotherhood!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet XVII

For lo! the nations, the imperial nations  
Of Europe, all imagine a vain thing,  
Sitting thus blindly in their generations,  
Serving an idol for their God and King.  
Blindly they rage together, worshipping  
Their lusts of cunning, and their lusts of gold;  
Trampling the hearts of all too weak to bring  
Alms to their Baal which is bought and sold.  
And lo! there is no refuge, none but Baal  
For man's best help, and the mute recreant earth  
Drinks in its children's blood, and hears their wail,  
And deals no vengeance on its last foul birth;  
And there is found no hand to ward or keep  
The weak from wrong, and Pity is asleep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xviii

Therefore do thou at least arise and warn,  
Not folded in thy mantle, a blind seer,  
But naked in thy anger, and new--born,  
As in the hour when thy voice sounded clear  
To the world's slaves, and tyrants quaked for fear.  
Thou hadst a message then, a word of scorn,  
First for thyself, thy own crimes' challenger,  
And next for those who withered in thy dawn.  
An hundred years have passed since that fair day,  
And still the world cries loud, in its desire,  
That right is wronged, and force alone has sway.  
What profit are they, thy guns' tongues of fire?  
Nay, leave to England her sad creed of gold;  
Plead thou Man's rights, clean--handed as of old.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xx

Enough, dear Paris! We have laughed together,  
'Tis time that we should part, lest tears should come.  
I must fare on from winter and rough weather  
And the dark tempests chained within Time's womb.  
Southwards I go. Each footstep marks the tomb  
Of a dead pleasure. Melun, Fontainebleau,--  
How shall I name them with the ghosts that roam  
In their deserted streets of long ago?  
I will not stop to weep. Before me lie  
Lands larger in their purpose, and with dreams  
Peopled more purely; and to these I fly  
For ever from life's idler stratagems.  
France! thy white hand I kiss in suppliant guise,  
Too sad to love thee, and alas! too wise.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxi

To Switzerland, the land of lakes and snow,  
And ancient freedom of ancestral type,  
And modern innkeepers, who cringe and bow,  
And venal echoes, and Pans paid to pipe!  
See, I am come. And here in vineyards, ripe  
With sweet white grapes, I will sit down and read  
Once more the loves of Rousseau, till I wipe  
My eyes in tenderness for names long dead.  
This is the birthplace of all sentiment,  
The fount of modern tears. These hills in me  
Stir what still lives of fancy reverent  
For Mother Nature. Here Time's minstrelsy  
Awoke, some century since, one sunny morn,  
To find Earth fortunate, and Man forlorn.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxii

Unblest discovery of an age too real!  
They needed not the beauty of the Earth,  
Who held Heaven's hope for their supreme ideal,  
And found in worlds unseen a better birth.  
What to the eye of faith were the hills worth,  
The voiceless forests, the unpeopled coasts,  
The wildernesses void of sentient mirth?  
In death men praise thee not, Thou Lord of Hosts!  
But when faith faltered, when the hope grew dim,  
And Heaven was hid with phantoms of despair,  
And Man stood trembling on destruction's brim,  
Then turned he to the Earth, and found her fair;  
His home, his refuge, which no doubt could rob,  
A beauty throbbing to his own heart's throb.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxiii

Voltaire and Rousseau, these were thy twin priests,  
Proud Mother Nature, on thy opening day.  
The first with bitter gibes perplexed the feasts  
Of thy high rival, and prepared the way;  
The other built thy shrine. 'Twas here, men say,  
De Warens lived, whose pleasure was the text  
Of the new gospel of the sons of clay,  
The latest born of time, by faith unvexed.  
Here for a century with reverent feet  
Pilgrims, oppressed with barrenness of soul,  
Toiled in their tears as to a Paraclete.  
On these white hills they heard Earth's thunders roll  
In sneers outpreaching the lost voice of God,  
And shouted ``Ichabod, ay, Ichabod!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxiv

And here too I, the latest fool of Time,  
Sad child of doubt and passionate desires,  
Touched with all pity, yet in league with crime,  
Watched the red sunsets from the Alpine spires,  
And lit my poet's lamp with kindred fires,  
And dared to snatch my share of the sublime.  
There was one with me, master of the choirs  
Of eloquent thought, who listening to my rhyme,  
And seeing in me a soul set on things  
Not wholly base, although my need was sore,  
Bade me take courage and essay new wings.  
And thus it was I first beheld this shore,  
Mourning the loss yet half consoled of gain,  
The passionate pleader of youth's creed of pain.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxix

How strangely now I come, a man of sorrow,  
Nor yet such sorrow as youth dreamed of, blind,  
But life's last indigence which dares not borrow  
One garment more of Hope to cheat life's wind.  
The mountains which we loved have grown unkind,  
Nay, voiceless rather. Neither sound nor speech  
Is heard among them, nor the thought enshrined  
Of any deity man's tears may reach.  
If I should speak, what echo would there come,  
Of laughters lost, and dead unanswered prayers?  
The shadow of each valley is a tomb  
Filled with the dust of manifold despairs.  
` ` Here we once lived": This motto on the door  
Of silence stands, shut fast for evermore.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxv

And what brave life it was we lived that tide,  
Lived, or essayed to live--for who shall say  
Youth garners aught but its own dreams denied,  
Or handles what it hoped for yesterday?  
High prophets were we of the uncultured lay,  
Supremely scorning all that to our pride  
Seemed less than truth. Be truth the thing it may,  
Our Goddess she, deformed but deified.  
Prophets and poets of the Earth's last birth  
Revealed in ugliness, a blind despair,  
Only that we were young and of such worth  
As still can thrive upon life's leanest fare,  
And find in the world's turmoil its full quittance  
Of joy denied, however poor the pittance.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxvi

Youth is all valiant. He and I together,  
Conscious of strength, and unreproved of wrong,  
Strained at the world's conventions as a tether  
Too weak to bind us, and burst forth in song.  
The backs of fools we scourged as with a thong,  
And falsehood stripped to its last borrowed feather,  
And vowed to fact what things to fact belong,  
And of the rest asked neither why nor whether.  
Gravely we triumphed in that Gorgon time,  
Unsexed for us at length thro' lack of faith,  
Our barren mistress, from whose womb sublime  
No beauty more should spring, but only death.  
Like birds we sang by some volcanic brink,  
Leaning on ugliness, and did not shrink.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxvii

The poets, every one, have sung of passion.  
But which has sung of friendship, man with man?  
Love seeks its price, but friendship has a fashion  
Larger to give, and of less selfish plan.  
The world grows old. From Beersheba to Dan  
We find all barren, ruby lips grown ashen,  
Hearts hard with years--and only Jonathan  
Weeping with David o'er a ruined nation.  
Then in the depth of days and our despair,  
We count our treasures, if so be remain  
Some loving letters, rings and locks of hair.  
Nay, mourn not love. These only are not vain,  
Your manlier wounds, when in the front you stood,  
For a friend's sake and your sworn Brotherhood.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxviii

Yet it is pitiful how friendships die,  
Spite of our oaths eternal and high vows.  
Some fall through blight of tongues wagged secretly,  
Some through strifes loud in empty honour's house.  
Some vanish with fame got too glorious,  
And rapt to heaven in fiery chariots fly;  
And some are drowned in sloth and the carouse  
Of wedded joys and long love's tyranny.  
O ye, who with high--hearted valliance  
Deem truth eternal and youth's dreams divine,  
Keep ye from love and fame and the mischance  
Of other worship than the Muses nine.  
So haply shall you tread life's latest strand  
With a true brother still, and hand in hand.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxx

'Tis time I stepped from Horeb to the plain.  
Mountains, farewell. I need a heavier air.  
Youth's memories are not good for souls in pain,  
And each new age has its own meed of care.  
Farewell, sad Alps, you are my barrier  
Now to the North, and hold my passions slain  
For all life's vultures, as I downward fare  
To a new land of love which is not vain.  
How staid is Italy! No gardened rose  
Scattering its leaves is chaster than she is.  
No cloister stiller, no retreat more close.  
There is a tameness even in her seas  
On which white towns look down, as who should say,  
` ` Here wise men long have lived, and live to--day."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxi

Yes, Italy is wise, a cultured prude,  
Stored with all maxims of a statelier age;  
These are her lessons for our northern blood,  
With its dark Saxon madness and Norse rage.  
With these she tempers us and renders sage,  
As long ago she stayed the barbarous flood  
Surging against her, and her heritage  
Snatched from the feet of that brute multitude.  
Calmly she waits us. What to her shall be  
Our fevers of to--day, who erewhile knew  
Caesar's ambitions? What our pruriency,  
Who saw Rome sacked by the lewd Vandal crew?  
What our despair, who, while a world stood mute,  
Saw Henry kneel in tears at Peter's foot?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxii

To--day I was at Milan, in such thought  
As pilgrims bring who at faith's threshold stand,  
Still burdened with the sorrows they have brought,  
And vexed with stranger tongues in a strange land.  
And lo, this sign was given me. At my hand  
Hung that mysterious supper Vinci wrought  
With the sad twelve who were Christ's chosen band,  
A type of vows and courage come to nought.  
And, while I gazed, with a reproachful look  
The bread was broken and the wine was poured,  
And the disciples raised their hands and spoke,  
Each asking ``Is it I? and I too? Lord!"  
And there was answered them this mournful cry:  
``All shall abandon me to--night." So I.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxiii

So I, I am ashamed of my old life,  
Here in this saintly presence of days gone,  
Ashamed of my weak heart's unmeaning strife,  
Its loves, its lusts, its battles lost and won,  
And its long search of pleasure 'neath the sun,  
And its scant courage to endure the knife,  
And its vain longing for good deeds undone,  
Ending in bitter words with railing rife.  
I am unworthy, yet am comforted,  
As one who driving o'er long trackless roads  
Of brake and rock and briar with footsore steed  
And springless chariot, searching for vain gods,  
Finds the high--road before him, where at ease  
The old world plods the rut of centuries.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxiv

O fool! O false! I have abandoned Heaven,  
And sold my wealth for metal of base kind.  
O frail disciple of a fair creed given  
For human hope when all the world was blind!  
What was my profit? Freedom of the mind,  
A little pleasure of the years, some scars  
Of lusty youth, and some few thoughts enshrined  
In worthier record of my manhood's years.  
All else is loss, and unredeemed distress;  
The voiceful seasons uninvited come,  
And bring their tribute of new flowers, and pass:  
Only the reason of the world is dumb;  
Nor does God any more by word or sign  
Speak to our rebel hearts of things divine.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxix

Ancient of days! What word is thy command  
To one befooled of wit and his own way?  
What counsel hast thou, and what chastening hand  
For a lost soul grown old in its dismay?  
What penance shall he do, what ransom pay,  
Of blood poured out for faith in a far land,  
What mute knee--service, weeping here to--day,  
In words of prayer no ear shall understand?  
Let him thy servant be, the least of all  
In the Lord's Courts, but near thy mysteries,  
To touch the crumbs which from thy table fall,  
Let him--. But lo, thou speakest: ``Not with these  
Is God delighted. Get thee homeward hence.  
They need thee more who wait deliverance!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxv

At last I kneel in Rome, the bourne, the goal  
Of what a multitude of laden hearts!  
No pilgrim of them all a wearier soul  
Brought ever here, no master of dark arts  
A spirit vexed with more discordant parts,  
No beggar a scrip barer of all dole;  
No son, alas, steps sorer with the darts  
Of that rebellious sorrow, his sin's toll.  
I kneel and make an offering of my care  
And folly, and hurt reason. Who would not  
In this fair city be the fool of prayer?  
Who would not kneel, if only for the lot  
Of being born again--a soul forgiven,  
Clothed in new childhood and the light of Heaven?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxvi

The majesty of Rome to me is nought;  
The imperial story of her conquering car  
Touches me only with compassionate thought  
For the doomed nations faded by her star.  
Her palaces of Caesars tombstones are  
For a whole world of freedoms vainly caught  
In her high fortune. Throned was she in war;  
By war she perished. So is justice wrought.  
A nobler Rome is here, which shall not die.  
She rose from the dead ashes of men's lust,  
And robed herself anew in chastity,  
And half redeemed man's heritage of dust.  
This Rome I fain would love, though darkly hid  
In mists of passion and desires scarce dead.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxvii

I will release my soul of argument.  
He that would love must follow with shut eyes.  
My reason of the years was discontent,  
My treasure for all hope a vain surmise.  
I will have done with wisdom's sophistries,  
Her insolence of wit. What man shall say  
He comfort takes in the short hour that dies,  
Because he knew it mortal yesterday?  
The tree of knowledge bears a bitter fruit.  
This is that other tree, whose branches hold  
Fair store of faith, peace, pity absolute,  
And deeds of virtue for a world grown cold.  
If by its fruits the tree of life be known,  
Here is a truth undreamed of Solomon.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A New Pilgrimage: Sonnet Xxxviii

I saw one sitting on a kingly throne,  
A man of age, whom Time had touched with white;  
White were his brows, and white his vestment shone,  
And white the childhood of his lips with light,  
Only his eyes gleamed masterful and bright,  
Holding the secrets shut of worlds unknown,  
And in his hand the sceptre lay of might,  
To bind and loose all souls beneath the sun.  
Where is the manhood, where the Godhood here?  
The weak things of the world confound the wise.  
Here is all weakness, let us cast out fear.  
Here is all strength. Ah, screen me from those eyes,  
The terrible eyes of Him who sees unseen  
The thing that is, and shall be, and has been.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Nocturne

The Moon has gone to her rest,  
A full hour ago.  
The Pleiads have found a nest  
In the waves below.  
Slow, the Hours one by one  
In Midnight's footsteps creep.  
Lovers who lie alone  
Soon wake to weep.  
Slow--footed tortoise Hours, will ye not hasten on,  
Till from his prison  
In the golden East  
A new day shall have risen,  
And the last stars be gone,  
Like guests belated from a bridal feast?  
When the long night is done  
Then shall ye sleep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Perfect Sonnet

Oh, for a perfect sonnet of all time!  
Wild music, heralding immortal hopes,  
Strikes the bold prelude. To it from each clime,  
Like tropic birds on some green island slopes,  
Thoughts answering come, high metaphors, brave tropes,  
In ordered measure and majestic rhyme.  
And, presently, all hearts, kings', poets', popes',  
Throb to the truth of this new theme sublime.  
Anon 'tis reason speaks. A note of death  
Strengthens the symphony yet fraught with pain,  
And men seek meanings with abated breath,  
Vexing their souls,--till lo, once more, the strain  
Breaks through triumphant, and Love's master voice  
Thrills the last phrase and bids all joy rejoice.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# A Relapse

I thought that I had done with fleshly things,  
That in the azure of high thought my soul  
Had learned to fly on less substantial wings  
To a new Heaven, a sublimer goal.  
I thought that I was wise beneath the cowl  
Of my dead hopes, beyond all power of Spring's  
Most eloquent music to again cajole,  
And that my service was the King of Kings.  
--But look, alas, how thoughtless thought can be,  
For to me thinking thus one ventured in  
Bearing a letter and I read your name.  
Then in an instant through my limbs a flame  
Of pleasure ran, and wrought such change in me  
That I was eager for all loveliest sin.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Rhapsody

There is a God most surely in the heavens,  
Who smileth always, though His face be hid.  
And young Joy cometh as His messenger  
Upon the Earth, like to a rushing wind,  
Scattering the dead leaves of our discontent  
Ere yet we see him. Then he setteth us  
Upon his back and flieth to God's presence,  
Till on our faces there is seen the light  
Which streameth from His brows for evermore.

There is a God. Ay, by this breath of dawn,  
I swear there is a God, even here on Earth.  
And see, a blush upon the edge of heaven,  
Bearing me witness! There is something changed  
About these woods since yesterday; a look  
Of shame on Nature's face; a consciousness  
In the bent flowers; a troubled tell--tale gleam  
On the lake's brim. This morning, as I passed  
Over the lawn, there was an instant's hush  
Among the trees, and then a whispering  
Which woke the birds; and of a sudden, lo!  
A thousand voices breathed conspiracy;  
And now a silence. There are listening ears  
In all these bushes waiting till I speak.

There is a God. I swear it on the truth  
Of my new joy, which is not of the Earth,  
But grows within my hand, a thing of strength,  
A wonder to the Earth, whose old worn heart  
Has long been joyless. Listen, while I speak,  
Ye autumn woods. Ye ancient forest trees,  
Lend me your ears. Thou little brook, be still  
Till I have spoken, for I have a tale  
For the morning's ear; and O! thou Nature's voice,  
Be silent this one day and hear of joy  
Newer than thine. You friends whom I have loved,  
Listen, and stop me not with word or sign  
Till I have poured my heart into your ears,  
For if you spoke to me I should not hear,

And if you wept with me I should not see,  
And if you mocked me I should not suspect,  
Being this day the fool of happiness.  
And all my blood is full of dancing motes;  
And in my brain are chords of silver tone  
Divinely struck to statelier harmonies  
Than Heaven's own harping; and my eyes have tears  
Which brim and quiver, but they will not fall,  
For they are far too happy in my eyes.  
Tears,--what of tears? which are but new delights,  
New visions of new joys which none have seen,  
And which are mine. Such only Solomon  
Saw when he sat upon his ivory throne,  
And lo! the pageantry of Sheba came,  
Bearing its queen upon a sandal bed,  
And laid her at his feet. These even I,  
Who live and speak with you, have seen to--night.

And mark, how simply wonders come about  
And take our hearts by storm, as in the night  
Fate creeps upon a city. I had fled  
Four months ago, when July nights were young,  
Out to the wilderness to be alone.  
Four months, four summer months among the hills,  
So far from my old life I had forgot  
All to my name. None knew me but my dog,  
And he was secret. Thus, in pedlar's guise,  
With pack and staff, and bartering such small wares  
Of pills and ointments as the vulgar love,  
And gathering simples, I had worked my way  
Through every valley of the Candriote hills.  
Four summer months of silence, and the balm  
Of the green pastures where the cattle go  
In the long droughts; among the giant rocks  
Which are the walls of heaven, the ibex' home;  
Among the dells where the green lizards lurk,  
Waiting for sunrise. Oh, I knew them all,  
The speckled birds which live among the stones.  
I made new friendship with each grass and weed,  
Each moss and lichen. Every flower became  
Like a familiar face, and as I passed  
The harebell nodded to me from her stem,

The gentian opened wide her sapphire eyes,  
And the Alp--roses blushed. But, most of all,  
The butterflies were mine. I marked each one,  
As he came sailing down upon the wind,  
A furlong off. The Argus looked at me  
Out of his hundred eyes and did not move.  
I could have counted you the purple spots  
On great Apollo's wings. The shepherds came,  
And brought their sick, that I might heal their woes  
With my poor knowledge, and I learned in turn  
Much weather--wisdom, and some wisdom too  
Fresh from their human hearts 'twas wealth to know.

And thus I lived and dreamed and drank the wind  
Which snows had cooled; and often I have stood  
On some tall pinnacle above the plain,  
And watched the clouds come flying on the breeze  
To tear their fleeces on the jagged rocks,  
Until they caught and folded me about  
In their damp garments; and, when these were gone,  
And the sun broke through the rain, my very soul  
Laughed with the sun, washed white as a christened child,  
And all was clean forgotten but its joy.  
Such life was mine the short sweet summer through;  
But when the August days were fled away  
And nights grew chill, I came to Bannastal  
On the Uranian sea, and there my fate  
Was waiting for me, though I knew it not.

My fate, and what a fate! Oh, Lytton, now  
I see my life transfigured like a seer's.  
My eyes are open. I read plain the meaning  
Of all that I beheld and heard and knew  
Through the past summer, as in words of fire:  
The sadness of my soul, my pilgrimage  
Among the hills, each flower upon my way,  
The sun, the stars, the passionate face of heaven,  
The virtue of the earth, which expectation  
Peopled for me with signs and prophecies,  
All, all foretold the coming of a god.  
Nay more, each hope, each fancy, each desire,  
Each separate thought which I have thought, each sorrow

Laid on my heart, each unseen accident  
Met in my road, each word, each look, each choice,  
Each idle dream that I have dreamt in folly,  
From my first hour till now, I do acknowledge  
As the great forecast of a glorious fate,  
Of hope made ecstasy and life made love.

And thus it is I learned the very truth  
That God is on this earth. For twenty days  
Are come and gone, and twenty nights have been  
More sunny than those days, since these things were;  
And I still ride upon the back of joy,  
Which bears me bravely. Still the flowers blow.  
St. Martin's summer has brought back the birds  
To sing in these old gardens as in June.  
--Listen. I hear one like the nightingale,  
But sweeter and less sad, and thus she sings:

Oh fly not, Pleasure, pleasant--hearted Pleasure.  
Fold me thy wings, I prithee, yet and stay.  
For my heart no measure  
Knows nor other treasure  
To buy a garland for my love to--day.

And thou too, Sorrow, tender--hearted Sorrow.  
Thou grey--eyed mourner, fly not yet away.  
For I fain would borrow  
Thy sad weeds to--morrow  
To make a mourning for love's yesterday.

The voice of Pity, Time's divine dear Pity,  
Moved me to tears. I dared not say them nay,  
But went forth from the city  
Making thus my ditty  
Of fair love lost for ever and a day.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Storm In Summer

Nature that day a woman was in weakness,  
A woman in her impotent high wrath.  
At the dawn we watched it, a low cloud half seen  
Under the sun; an innocent child's face  
It seemed to us rose--red and fringed with light  
Boding no hurt, a pure translucent cloud,  
Deep in the East where the Sun's disk began.  
We did not guess what strengths in it were pent,  
What terrors of rebellion. An hour more,  
And it had gathered volume and the form  
Of a dark mask, the she--wolf's of old Rome,  
The ears, the brow, the cold unpitying eyes,  
Through which gleams flashed. And, as we watched, the roll  
Of thunder from a red throat muttering  
Gave menace of the wild beast close at hand.  
Anon a wall of darkness in the South  
Black to the Zenith, and a far--off wail,  
The wind among the trees.--And then, behold,  
Flying before it a mad clamorous rout  
Of peewits, starlings, hawks, crows, dishwashers,  
Blackbirds and jays, by hundreds, scattering,  
While the Earth trembled holding as it were its breath;  
Till suddenly an answer from the ground,  
And the fields shook and a new mighty roar  
Crashed through the oaks, and in a pent--up flow  
The storm's rage broke in thunder overhead,  
And all the anger of the passionate heaven  
Burst into tears.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Summer In Tuscany

Do you remember, Lucy,  
How, in the days gone by  
We spent a summer together,  
A summer in Tuscany,  
In the chestnut woods by the river,  
You and the rest and I?

Your house had the largest garden,  
But ours was next to the bridge,  
And we had a mulberry alley  
Which sloped to the water's edge.  
You were always talking and laughing  
On your side of the hedge.

How many sisters and brothers,  
Lucy, then did you own?  
Harriet and Francis and Horace  
And Phyllis, a flower half--blown.  
I liked you more than the others,  
For you had the longest gown.

What has become of the laughter,  
What of the mulberry trees?  
Is there no record in Heaven,  
No echo of days like these?  
Francis is married and happy  
And Horace beyond the seas.

Phyllis was first to desert us,  
She had no soul for the Earth  
But lingered a guest impatient  
Alike of our sorrow and mirth.  
Death's step to her on the threshold  
Seemed news of a glorious birth.

Harriet, whose eyes were the brightest  
The fullest of innocent guile,  
Has hidden her joy and our sorrow  
Under a Carmelite veil.

They call her the ``mother abbess."  
She has hardly leisure to smile.

Do you remember the ponies  
We used to ride on the hill,  
Every knee of them broken,  
Every back like a quill,  
Cesare, Capitano,  
Milor and Jack and Jill?

High o'er the plains and the valleys,  
Wherever our leader led,  
We two, closest of allies,  
Were with him still in his tread,  
Sworn to be first on his footsteps,  
To serve him alive or dead.

Dead--ah dead! Who could think it?  
The laughter so strong on his lips  
Had seemed an elixir of living.  
Where now are his jibes and his quips,  
The fair paradoxes he flung us,  
The fire of him?--Lost in eclipse!

All are scattered and vanished,  
Laughter and smiles and tears,  
Gone with the dust on the sandals  
Which cling to the feet of the years.  
Time has no time to remember,  
And Fortune no face for our fears.

Do you remember, Lucy,  
The day which too soon had come,  
The first sad day of the Autumn,  
The last of our summer home,  
The day of my journey to England  
And yours to your convent at Rome?

We rose with the dawn that morning--  
--The others were hardly awake--  
And took our walk by the river.  
Lucy, did your heart ache?



Or was it the chill of the sunrise  
That made you shiver and shake?

Lucy, the dog rose you gave me  
Still lies in its secret place.  
Lucy, the tears, my fool's answer,  
Have left on my cheeks a trace.  
The kiss you gave me at parting  
I yet can feel on my face.

These are the things I remember.  
These are the things that I grieve,  
The joys that are scattered and vanished,  
The friends I am loath to leave.  
I grudge them to death and silence  
And age which is death's reprieve.

Vanished, forgotten and scattered,  
All but you, Lucy, and I,  
Who cling some moments together  
Till Time shall have hurried us by:  
A moment and yet a moment,  
Till we too forget and die!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Vision Of Folly

I saw one rushing madly in pursuit  
Of Liberty. With frenzied steps he strode.  
Old laws and customs with disdainful foot  
He spurned beneath him in a mire of blood.  
He stood before the wondering world a god,  
A king with Freedom for his spouse and queen.  
He felt his empire was divine and trod,  
As on a footstool, on the necks of men.  
Ruin awhile and havoc strewed his path.  
He had his day of glory and his fall.  
He stood once more upon his father's hearth,  
Sated with pride, and there in frenzy worse  
Wrought foul dishonour on that honoured hall,  
And left its walls forever with a curse.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# A Wedding March

Clash your cymbals, maids, to--day.  
Chaunt the praise of Cynthia.  
You, her virgins, yokeless, free,  
Young Time's choice, his brides--to--be.  
Nymphs in white, who hand in hand  
Next to her high altar stand,  
Take your timbrels, strike your strings;  
Tune them to Love's clamourings.  
Heralds be of her your fairest,  
Her of rarities the rarest.  
Instant all her laud rehearse,  
Idol of your universe;  
And thus armed stand forth and say,  
` ` All is nought but Cynthia."

Clash your cymbals. Beat your drums.  
Cynthia in her glory comes,  
High with him whose duty is  
Her to lead to a new bliss.  
Ah, what fortune his to be  
Angel of her ecstasy!  
Red with roses Love's path lies,  
Rich in rainbows of surprise.  
They that tread it wiser are  
Than the wise kings with their star,  
Eve and morn who went pursuing  
Eve's old hopes to Time's undoing,  
Robbing Time of his vain wrath.  
Run to Love; take all he hath,  
Idle maids! Nay, shout and sing,  
In Love's praise new chorusing,  
Stintless this thrice happy day.  
Shout aloud for Cynthia!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: I

If the past year were offered me again,  
With choice of good and ill before me set.  
Should I be wiser for the bliss and pain  
And dare to choose that we had never met?  
Could I find heart those happy hours to miss,  
When love began unthought of and unspoke  
That first strange day when by a sudden kiss  
We knew each other's secret and awoke?  
Ah, no! not even to escape the smart  
Of that fell agony I underwent,  
Flying from thee and my own traitor heart,  
Till doubts and dreads and battlings overspent,  
I knew at last that thou or love or fate  
Had conquered and repentance was too late.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Ii

Nay, dear one, ask me not to leave thee yet.  
Let me a little longer hold thy hand.  
Too soon it is to bid me to forget  
The joys I was so late to understand.  
The future holds but a blank face for me,  
The past is all confused with tears and grey,  
But the sweet present, while thy smiles I see,  
Is perfect sunlight, an unclouded day.  
Speak not of parting, not at least this hour,  
Though well I know Love cannot Time outlast.  
Let me grow wiser first and gain more power,  
More strength of will to deal with my dead past.  
Love me in silence still, one short hour's space:  
'Tis all I ask of thee, this little grace.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Iii

Where is the pride for which I once was blamed,  
My vanity which held its head so high?  
Who would believe them, seeing me thus tamed,  
Thus subject, here as at thy feet I lie,  
Pleading for love which now is all my life,  
Craving a word for memory's rage to keep,  
Asking a sign to still my inward strife,  
Petitioning a touch to soothe my sleep?  
Who would now guess them, as I kiss the ground  
On which the feet of him I love have trod,  
And bow before his voice whose least sweet sound  
Speaks louder to me than the voice of God;  
And knowing all the while that one dark day,  
Spite of my worship, thou wilt turn away?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Iv

Should ever the day come when this drear world  
Shall read the secret which so close I hold,  
Should taunts and jeers at my bowed head be hurled,  
And all my love and all my shame be told,  
I could not, as some doughtier women do,  
Fling jests and gold and live the scandal down,  
Nor, knowing all fame's bruitings to be true,  
Keep a proud face and brave the talk of town.  
I have no courage for such tricks and ways,  
No wish to flaunt a once well--honoured name.  
I have too dear a thought of earlier days,  
Too deep a dread of my deserved shame.  
So, when it comes, with one last suppliant cry  
For pardon from my wronged ones, I must die.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: IX

The day draws nigh, methinks, when I could stay  
Calm in thy presence with no dream of ill,  
When, having put all earthliness away,  
I could be near thee, touching thee, and still  
Feel no mad throbbing at my foolish heart,  
No sudden rising of unbidden tears,  
Could mark thee come and go, to meet our part,  
Without the gladness and without the fears.  
Have patience with me then for this short space.  
I shall be wise, but may not yet unmoved  
See a strange woman put into my place  
And happy in thy love, as I was loved:  
This were too much. Ah, let me not yet see  
The love--light in thine eyes, and not for me.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## A Woman's Sonnets: V

Whate'er the cost to me, with this farewell,  
I shall not see thee, speak to thee again.  
If some on Earth must feel the pangs of Hell,  
Mine only be it who have earned my pain.  
No matter if my life be blank and dead,  
Bankrupt of pleasure: it is better so  
Than risk dishonour on a once loved head,  
Than link all loved ones with my own sole woe.  
I have no claim to bring grief's shade on these,  
To mix their pure life's waters with my wine,  
To vex the dead, dear dead, in their new peace  
With knowledge of my sin and great decline.  
For these I leave thee, and, though life be rent  
With the rude fight, think not I shall relent.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Vi

What have I lost? The faith I had that Right  
Must surely prove itself than Ill more strong.  
For see how little my poor prayers had might  
To save me, at the trial's pinch, from wrong.  
What have I lost? The truth of my proud eyes  
Scorning deceit. Behold me here to--day  
Leading a double life, at shifts with lies,  
And trembling lest each shadow should betray.  
No longer with my lost ones may I mourn,  
Who came to me in sleep and breathed soft words.  
Sleepless I lie and fearful and forlorn,  
With their love's edge still wounding like a sword's.  
In thy dear presence only I find rest.  
To thee alone naught needs to be confessed.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Vii

What have I gained? A little charity?  
I never more may dare to fling a stone  
At any weakness, nor make boast that I  
A better fence or fortitude had shown;  
Some learning? I in love's lore have grown wise,  
Plucked apples of the evil and the good,  
Made one short trespass into Paradise  
And known the full taste of forbidden food.  
But love, if it be gold, has much alloy,  
And I would gladly buy back ignorance,  
But for the thought which still is my heart's joy  
That once your life grew happier in my hands,  
That in your darkest and most troubled hour  
I had, like Jesse's son, a soothing power.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Viii

I sue thee not for pity on my case.  
If I have sinned, the judgment has begun.  
My joy was but one day of all the days,  
And clouds have blotted it and hid the sun.  
Thou wert so much to me! But soon I knew  
How small a part could mine be in thy life,  
That all a woman may endure or do  
Counts little to her hero in the strife.  
I do not blame thee who deserved no blame;  
Thou hast so many worlds within thy ken.  
I staked my all upon a losing game,  
Knowing the nature and the needs of men,  
And knowing too how quickly pride is spent.  
With open eyes to Love and Death I went.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: X

Love, ere I go, forgive me each least wrong,  
Each trouble I unwittingly have wrought.  
My heart, my life, my tears to thee belong;  
Yet have I erred, maybe, through too fond thought.  
One sin, most certainly, I need to atone:  
The sin of loving thee while yet unwooed.  
Mine only was this wrong, this guilt alone.  
The woman tempted thee from ways of good.  
Forgive me too, ere thy dear pity cease,  
That I denied thee, vexed thee with delay,  
Sought my soul's coward shelter, not thy peace,  
And having won thee still awhile said nay.  
Forgive me this, that I too soon, too late,  
Too wholly gave a love disconsolate.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Xi

Wild words I write, and lettered in deep pain,  
To lay in your loved hand as love's farewell.  
It is the thought we shall not meet again  
Nerves me to write and my whole secret tell.  
For when I speak to you, you only jest,  
And laughing break the sentence with a kiss,  
Till my poor love is never quite confessed,  
Nor know you half its tears and tenderness.  
When the first darkness and the clouds began  
I hid it from you fearing your reproof;  
I would not vex your life's high aim and plan  
With my poor woman's woe, and held aloof.  
But now that all is ended, pride and shame,  
My tumults and my joys I may proclaim.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## A Woman's Sonnets: Xii

'Tis ended truly, truly as was best.  
Love is a little thing, for one short day;  
You could not make it your life's only quest,  
Nor watch the poor corpse long in its decay.  
Go forth, dear, thou hast much to do on earth;  
In life's campaign there waits thee a great part,  
Much to be won and conquered of more worth  
Than this poor victory of a woman's heart.  
For me the daylight of my years is dim.  
I seek not gladness, yet shall find content  
In such small duties as are learned of Him  
Who bore all sorrows, till my youth is spent.  
Yet come what may to me of weal or woe,  
I love thee, bless thee, dear, where'er thou go.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Across The Pampas

Dost thou remember, oh, dost thou remember,  
Here as we sit at home and take our rest,  
How we went out one morning on a venture  
In the West?

Hast thou forgotten, in these English hedgerows,  
How the great Pampas rolled out like the sea?  
Never a daisy in that mighty meadow!  
Never a tree!

Full were our hearts upon that sunny morning;  
Stout--handed and stout--hearted went we forth.  
The warm wind in our faces breathed us fortune  
From the North;

And high in heaven the sun stood for a token.  
We had no other sign by which to steer.  
No landmark is there in the Earth's great ocean,  
For mariner.

Dost thou remember how, when night was falling,  
There in the middle plain, as best we might,  
We set our little tent up as a fortress  
For the night?

Dost thou remember how, through the night watches,  
We listened to the voices of the plain,  
The owls and plovers and the bold bischachas,  
Talking like men?

Drowsy we sat, and watched our horses feeding,  
Dim through the night, while over the tent's mouth  
The Cross was turning like a clock and reeling  
In the South.

But, as the night grew out and we grew chilly,  
Under our blankets safe we crept and warm,  
Full of good heart and each with loaded pistols  
Close to his arm;



And so dreamed pleasant dreams of far off faces,  
And trees and fields which we had loved in youth,  
All in a maze of present apprehension  
Mingled uncouth;

And how we travelled on and ever onwards,  
Still in the red path of the setting sun,  
Until into the heart of a great woodland  
We had come;

And there saw, round about our strange encampment,  
Flocks of bright birds which flew and screamed at us,  
Red cardinals and woodpeckers and parrots  
Multitudinous;

And on the lake black--headed swans were sailing,  
And in the morning to the water's brink  
Flamingoes, like the rising sun, came wading  
Down to drink.

Dost thou remember, oh, dost thou remember  
How, in that fatal wood, the mancaròn  
Found out a poisonous herb before his fellows,  
And fed thereon;

And how we left him, and how Caesar sickened,  
And how the sky grew dark and overcast,  
And how two tragic days we rode on silent  
In the blast;

And how the wind grew icy and more icy,  
Until we could not feel our hands or feet,  
As sick at heart we sought in vain a hiding  
From the sleet;

Lighting at last on a deserted post--house,  
Where we found shelter from the wind, but nought  
Of entertainment for our souls or comfort  
Of any sort;

And how in that wild pass brave Caesar dying

Stretched out his arm towards the promised land,  
And saw as in a dream the white hills lying  
Close at hand,--

For, ere the sun set, suddenly that evening,  
The great plain opened out beneath our feet,  
And, in a valley far below, lay gleaming,  
With square and street,

And spire and dome and pinnacle, uprising  
White on the bosom of a mountain slope,  
To our amazement bodily the city  
Of our hope.

Dost thou remember, oh, dost thou remember  
How the bells rang as, sick and travel--worn,  
A weary crew, we made our solemn entry  
To the town?

Strangely, as phantoms out of the great desert,  
We came into the city, and at last  
Heard sound of Christian singing in the churches  
As we passed:

And laid at length our weary limbs in rapture  
Between the clean sheets of a Christian bed.  
Oh! there are things I think we shall remember  
When we are dead!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Adonis

The gods did love Adonis, and for this  
He died, ere time had furrowed his young cheek.  
For Aphrodité slew him with a kiss.  
He sighed one sigh, as though he fain would speak  
The name he loved, but that his breath grown weak  
Died on his lips. So died the summer breeze;  
And all the wood was hushed a minute's space,  
Where I stood listening underneath the trees,  
Until a wood--chat from her secret place  
Chirped in an undertone, `` He is not dead,  
Not dead, for lo! the bloom upon his face  
Is ruddy as the newly--blossomed rose  
Which even yet is woven round his head.  
But sleep, more sweet than waking dream, doth close  
The laughter of his eyes. He is not dead."

Alone in that fair wood the livelong day  
And through the silent night I watched him near.  
But in the morning he was fled away,  
When broke the dawn upon me cold and clear.  
I looked within the thicket where he lay;  
And lo! the sod, which he had pressed in death,  
Was white with blossoms, scattered from the may,  
Which made the thick air sweet with their sweet breath.  
But he was gone; and I went o'er the heath,  
Clutching, like one distraught, the dim air grey  
With dawning,--for a voice encompassed me,  
Crying, `` Fair boy, thy youth was but a span,  
Yet did it circle in eternity.  
Thy epic was accomplishèd. A man  
Fills but the measure of his destiny,  
And thine was all complete. Ere age began  
To mar the royal palace of thy youth  
With upper storeys of less perfect plan,  
Death, kindly Death, filled with immortal ruth,  
Took back the trowel from the builder's hand,  
And wrote his `fecit' on thy work of truth."



# Alfred Tennyson

Tears, idle tears! Ah, who shall bid us weep,  
Now that thy lyre, O prophet, is unstrung?  
What voice shall rouse the dull world from its sleep  
And lead its requiem as when Grief was young,  
And thou in thy rapt youth, Time's bards among,  
Captured our ears, and we looked up and heard  
Spring's sweetest music on thy mourning tongue  
And knew thee for Pain's paradisaal bird.  
We are alone without thee in our tears,  
Alone in our mute chauntings. Vows are vain  
To tell thee how we loved thee in those years  
Nor dream to look upon thy like again.  
We know not how to weep without thy aid,  
Since all that tears would tell thyself hast said.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# All White

All white, all light, all beautiful she stands,  
Love in her eyes, a glory round her brows,  
Blanched as the lilies chaste in her chaste hands.  
Even so God's saints in their celestial house.  
Red only are her lips, ay, red as those  
Turned by the Queen, that happy day in France,  
As yet unknissed, to him who made his vows,  
Victor in fight, to her his soul's romance.  
Idly she stands in dreams.--Ah, Launcelot,  
Couldst thou but plead here haply and prevail,  
Touch her soft cheek, draw tears from her sweet eyes,  
Open her lips to passionate words unwise,  
Receive her true kiss 'neath thy coat of mail:  
In Love's name, I who love, should grudge it not.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## All White Continued

Ah, beautiful sweet woman, made in vain,  
Since Launcelot is dead and only I,  
Alas for this new world of recreant men,  
Remain in age Love's creed to justify  
And prove his right to fools who would deny!  
Heaven's help shall win her, though she long hath been  
Child of a doubting Age. Or let me die  
At her dear feet, my Guenevere, my queen.  
--Ride therefore forth, my soul, on this last quest.  
Oblivion soon shall fold all in its arms.  
Love, if she love thee or love not. The loss  
Is hers, not thine, since each thing else is dross;  
Not thine, whom Heaven makes whole and no hurt harms,  
Even that of death, so thou have loved thy best.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Ambition

I had ambition once. Like Solomon  
I asked for wisdom, deeming wisdom fair,  
And with much pains a little knowledge won  
Of Nature's cruelty and Man's despair,  
And mostly learned how vain such learnings were.  
Then in my grief I turned to happiness,  
And woman's love awhile was all my care,  
And I achieved some sorrow and some bliss,  
Till love rebelled. Then the mad lust of power  
Became my dream, to rule my fellow--men;  
And I too lorded it my little hour,  
And wrought for weal or woe with sword and pen,  
And wounded many, some, alas, my friends.  
Now I ask silence. My ambition ends.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## An Autumn Sonnet

These little presents of your tenderness,  
Although less grand a gift than was your love,  
Are dear to me in this October stress  
Of wind and war and whirling leaves above.  
They comfort my soul's Autumn, and they prove  
How little time can do, to ban or bless,  
How much ourselves. You willed the years should move  
Back in their cycle. And behold, love, this!  
--Now, therefore, let us mark this fortunate day,  
And use it for our feast day. Every year  
Let us, when winds are high and the leaves fall,  
Hold in this house our love's memorial,  
Sitting thus hand in hand. Still let me lay  
As in the happy days, ere leaves were sere,  
My head upon your lap and call you ``dear."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# An Inscription

At this fair oak table sat  
Whilom he our Laureate,  
Poet, handicraftsman, sage,  
Light of our Victorian age,  
William Morris, whose art's plan  
Laid its lines in ample span,  
Wrought it, trestle board and rib,  
With good help of Philip Webb,  
For an altar of carouse  
In his own home, the Red House.  
Thirty years and five here he  
Made good cheer and company,  
Feasting all with more than bread.  
Had men stored the things he said,  
Jests profound and foolings wise,  
Truths unliveried of lies,  
Basenesses chastised and set  
Like hounds slain beneath his feet,  
Knowledge prodigally poured,  
His best wine, at this free board;  
Nay, if but the crumbs he shed  
Nightly round of heart and head  
Gleaned had we, not this good hall  
Half the wonders might install,  
Wit's wealth lost, which now must sleep  
Dumb when we have ceased to weep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# An Unwritten Tragedy

Ho, ye that thirst beside the running stream!  
Love is a running stream, whose waters flow  
Upon the earth, and who would drink thereof  
Must bend him earthwards. There was such an one  
Who lay upon his belly in the mire  
And was not ashamed. Because he deemed it well  
That love, which is the strength of weaker things,  
Should make of Man a child. And, while he lay  
And summer winds were drowsing in his ears,  
The river of his love went rippling by.

And thus he lived, and thus he might have died,  
Deaf to his fellows' scorn, and held it gain  
To lie a living corse unburied there  
Among the reeds of Time and hidden in  
From the world's stare. But Fate was watching him  
With envious eyes; and he had merited  
In truth much retribution at her hand.  
--Alas that I should have such spite to tell!  
She took her vengeance at the fountain head,  
And made a desolation in the land.

And how he dreamed and half outwitted Fate,  
Because his mind was single in his love;  
And how she took the pitiless winds in pay  
And set a wrack of clouds upon their back;  
And how, because she could not master him,  
She turned the waters of his love away;  
And how that man arose up from his lair,  
Foul with the ooze and with a beard grown grey  
Through his long shame; and how he turned and fled  
From the sun's face to dwell among the tombs,

I would relate. And, if in simple words  
How some have learned the nakedness of truth,  
The carelessness of God, Man's cruelty  
And their own folly, it would be a tale  
To chill the lust of Youth and bend the knees  
Of Manhood's pride before the strength of Fate

Which conquers all;--And this I think would be  
The sum of human tragedy on Earth.  
--But who am I to stay the wings of Death  
And pluck a feather out and write such things?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Antara

How many singers before me! Are there yet songs unsung?  
Dost thou, my sad soul, remember where was her dwellingplace?  
Tents in Jiwá, the fair wádi, speak ye to me of her.  
Fair house of 'Abla my true love, blessing and joy to thee!  
Doubting I paused in the pastures, seeking her camel--tracks,  
high on my swift--trotting nága tall as a citadel,  
Weaving a dream of the past days, days when she dwelt in them,  
'Abla, my true love, in Házzen, Sammán, Mutathéllemi.  
There on the sand lay the hearth--stones, black in their emptiness,  
desolate more for the loved ones fled with Om Héythami,  
Fled to the land of the lions, roarers importunate.  
Daily my quest of thee darkens, daughter of Mákhrami.

Truly at first sight I loved her, I who had slain her kin,  
ay, by the life of thy father, not in inconstancy.  
Love, thou hast taken possession. Deem it not otherwise.  
Thou in my heart art the first one, first in nobility.  
How shall I win to her people? Far in Anéyzateyn  
feed they their flocks in the Spring--time, we in the Gháïlem.  
Yet it was thou, my beloved, willed we should sunder thus,  
bridled thyself the swift striders, black night encompassing.  
Fear in my heart lay a captive, seeing their camel--herds  
herded as waiting a burden, close to the tents of them,  
Browsing on berries of khímkhim, forty--two milch--camels,  
black as the underwing feathers set in the raven's wing.  
Then was it 'Abla enslaved thee showing her tenderness,  
white teeth with lips for the kissing: sweet was the taste of them,  
Sweet as the vials of odours sold by the musk sellers,  
fragrant the white teeth she showed thee, fragrant the mouth of her.  
So is a garden new planted fresh in its greenery,  
watered by soft--falling raindrops, treadless, untenanted.  
Lo, on it rain--clouds have lighted, soft showers, no hail in them,  
leaving each furrow a lakelet bright as a silverling.  
Pattering, plashing they fell there, rains at the sunseting,  
wide--spreading runlets of water, streams of fertility,  
Mixed with the humming of bees' wings droning the day--light long,  
never a pause in their chaunting, gay drinking--choruses.  
Blithe iteration of bees' wings, wings struck in harmony,  
sharply as steel on the flint--stone, light--handed smithy strokes.

Sweet, thou shalt rest till the morning all the night lightly there,  
while I my red horse bestriding ride with the forayers.  
Resting--place more than the saddle none have I, none than he  
war--horse of might in the rib--bones: deep is the girth of him.

Say, shall a swift Shadaníeh bear me to her I love,  
one under ban for the drinker, weaned of the foal of her,  
One with the tail carried archwise, long though the march hath been,  
one with the firm foot atrample, threading the labyrinths?  
Lo, how she spurneth the sand--dunes, like to the ear--less one,  
him with the feet set together: round him young ostriches  
Troop like the cohorts of Yémen, herded by 'Ajemis,  
she--camel cohorts of Yémen, herded by stammerers.  
Watching a beacon they follow, led by the crown of him  
carried aloft as a howdah, howdah where damsels sit,  
Him the small--headed, returning, fur--furnished Ethiop,  
black slave, to Thu--el--Ashíra: there lie his eggs in it.  
Lo, how my nága hath drunken deeply in Dóhradeyn;  
how hath she shrunk back in Déylam, pools of the enemy,  
Shrunk from its perilous cisterns, scared by the hunting one,  
great--headed shrieker of evening, clutched to the flank of her.  
Still to her off--side she shrinketh, deemeth the led--cat there  
Clawing the more that she turneth;--thus is her fear of them.  
Lo, she hath knelt in Ridá--a, pleased there and murmuring  
soft as the sweet--fluting rushes crushed by the weight of her.  
Thickly as pitch from the boiling oozeth the sweat of her,  
pitch from the cauldron new--lighted, fire at the sides of it,  
Oozeth in drops from the ear--roots. Wrathful and bold is she,  
proud in her gait as a stallion hearing the battle--cry.

Though thou thy fair face concealest still in thy veil from me,  
yet am I he that hath captured horse--riders how many!  
Give me the praise of my fair deeds. Lady, thou knowest it,  
kindly am I and forbearing, save when wrong presseth me.  
Only when evil assaileth, deal I with bitterness;  
then am I cruel in vengeance, bitter as colocynth.

Sometime in wine was my solace. Good wine, I drank of it,  
suaging the heat of the evening, paying in white money,  
Quaffing in goblets of saffron, pale--streaked with ivory,  
hard at my hand their companion, the flask to the left of me.  
Truly thus bibbing I squandered half my inheritance;

yet was my honour a wideword. No man had wounded it.  
Since that when sober my dew--fall rained no less generous:  
thou too, who knowest my nature, thou too be bountiful!  
How many loved of the fair ones have I not buffeted,  
youths overthrown! Ha, the blood--streams shrill from the veins of them.  
Swift--stroke two--handed I smote him, thrust through the ribs of him;  
forth flowed the stream of his life--blood red as anemone.  
Ask of the horsemen of Málek, O thou his progeny,  
all they have seen of my high deeds. Then shalt thou learn of them  
How that I singly among them, clad in war's panoply,  
stout on my war--horse the swift one charged at their chivalry.  
Lo, how he rusheth, the fierce one, singly in midst of them,  
waiting anon for the archers closing in front of us.  
They that were nearest in battle, they be my proof to thee  
how they have quailed at my war--cry, felt my urbanity.  
Many and proud are their heroes, fear--striking warriors,  
men who nor flee nor surrender, yielding not easily.  
Yet hath my right arm o'erborne them, thrust them aside from me,  
laid in their proud backs the long spear: slender the shaft of it.  
See, how it splitteth asunder mail--coat and armouring;  
not the most valiant are fuge hath from the point of it.  
Slain on the ground have I left him, prey to the lion's brood,  
feast of the wrists and the fingers. Ha, for the sacrifice!

Heavy his mail--coat, its sutures, lo, I divided them  
piercing the joints of the champion; brave was the badge of him.  
Quick--handed he with the arrows, cast in the winter--time,  
raider of wine--sellers' sign--boards, blamed as a prodigal.  
He, when he saw me down riding, making my point at him,  
showed me his white teeth in terror, nay, but not smilingly.  
All the day long did we joust it. Then were his finger tips  
stained as though dipped in the íthlem, dyed with the dragon's blood,  
Till with a spear--thrust I pierced him, once and again with it,  
last, with a blade of the Indies, fine steel its tempering,  
Smote him, the hero of stature, tall as a tamarisk,  
kinglike, in sandals of dun hide, noblest of all of them.

Oh, thou, my lamb, the forbidden! prize of competitors,  
why did they bid me not love thee? why art thou veiled from me?  
Sent I my hand--maiden spy--like: Go thou, I said to her,  
bring me the news of my true love, news in veracity.  
Go. And she went, and returning: These in unguardedness

sit, and thy fair lamb among them, waiting thy archery.  
Then was it turned she towards me, fawn-necked in gentleness,  
noble in bearing, gazelle-like, milk-white the lip of it.

Woe for the baseness of 'Amru, lord of ingratitude!  
Verily thanklessness turneth souls from humanity.  
Close have I kept to the war-words thy father once spoke to me,  
how I should deal in the death-play, when lips part and teeth glitter,  
When in the thick of the combat heroes unflinchingly  
cry in men's ears their defiance, danger forgot by them.  
Close have I kept them and stood forth their shield from the enemy,  
calling on all with my war-cries, circling and challenging.  
There where the horsemen rode strongest I rode out in front of them,  
hurled forth my war-shout and charged them; no man thought blame of me.  
Antar! they cried; and their lances, well-cords in slenderness,  
pressed to the breast of my war-horse still as I pressed on them.  
Doggedly strove we and rode we. Ha, the brave stallion!  
now is his breast dyed with blood-drops, his star-front with fear of them!  
Swerved he, as pierced by the spear-points. Then in his beautiful  
eyes stood the tears of appealing, words inarticulate.  
If he had learned our man's language, then had he called to me:  
if he had known our tongue's secret, then had he cried to me.

Thus to my soul came consoling; grief passed away from it  
hearing the heroes applauding, shouting: Ho, Antar, ho!  
Deep through the sand-drifts the horsemen charged with teeth grimly set,  
urging their war-steeds, the strong-limbed, weight bearers all of them.  
Swift the delúls too I urged them, spurred by my eagerness  
forward to high deeds of daring, deeds of audacity.  
Only I feared lest untimely drear death should shorten me  
ere on the dark sons of Démdem vengeance was filled for me.  
These are the men that reviled me, struck though I struck them not,  
vowed me to bloodshed and evil or ere I troubled them.  
Nay, let their hatred o'erbear me! I care not. The sire of them  
slain lies for wild beasts and vultures. Ha! for the sacrifice!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# Assassins

Assassins find accomplices. Man's merit  
Has found him three, the hawk, the hound, the ferret.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# At A Funeral

I loved her too, this woman who is dead.  
Look in my face. I have a right to go  
And see the place where you have made her bed  
Among the snow.

I loved her too whom you are burying.  
I have a right to stand beside her bier,  
And to my handful of the dust I fling,  
That she may hear.

I loved her; and it was not for the eyes  
Which you have shut, nor for her yellow hair,  
Nor for the face which in your bosom lies.  
Let it lie there!

Nor for the wild--birds' music of her voice,  
Which we shall hear in dreams till we too sleep;  
Nor for the rest, which made the world rejoice,  
The angels weep.

It was not for the payment of sweet love,  
Though love is often straitened for a kiss,  
Nor for the hope of other joys above,  
But only this,

That she had laid her hand upon my heart  
Once in the summer time when we were young,  
And that her finger--tips had left a smart,  
And that my tongue

Had spoken words which might not be unspoken  
Lest they should make a by--word of love's truth,  
And I had sworn that love should be the token  
Of my youth.

And so I gave her all, and long ago  
The treasure of my youth was put in pawn;  
And she was little richer that I know  
When that was gone.

But I have lived a beggar since that day  
And hide my face it may be from men's eyes;  
For often I have seen them shrink away,  
As in surprise

That such a loathsome cripple should be found  
To walk abroad in daylight with the rest,  
And scarce a rag to cover up the wound  
Upon his breast.

Yet no man stopped to ask how this might be,  
Or I had scared them, and let loose my tongue,  
How I had bought myself this misery  
When I was young.

Yet I have loved her. This must be my pay,  
The pension I have earned me with these tears;  
The right to kneel beside her grave to--day,  
Despite these years,

With all her kisses burning on my cheek,  
As when I left her and our love was dead,  
And our lips trembled though they did not speak,  
The night I fled;

The right to bid you stand aside, nor be  
A witness of our meeting. Did you love  
In joy as I have loved in misery?  
You did not prove

Your love was stronger than the strength of death,  
Or she had never died upon your hand.  
I would have fed her breathing with my breath;  
I would have fanned

A living wind of Heaven to her lips;  
I would have stolen life from Paradise.  
And she is dead, and you have seen eclipse  
Within those eyes.

If I could know that you had loved her well;

If I could hold it for a certainty  
That you had sold your life as I did sell;  
If I could see

The blackness of your soul, and with my tongue  
Taste the full bitterness of tears unshed;  
If I should find your very heart was wrung  
And maimed and dead;

If I should feel your hand's grasp crumble mine,  
And hug the pain when I should grasp in turn;  
If I could dip my fingers in the brine  
Of eyes that burn;

If I could hear your voice call back the dead  
With such a mighty cry of agony  
That she should turn and listen in the bed  
Where she doth lie,

And all the heavens should together roll,  
Thinking they heard the angel's trumpet tone,  
I could forget it that you bought a soul  
Which was my own;

I could forget that she forgot her vows,  
That aught was bartered for the wealth of love;  
I could untell the story of my woes,  
Till God above

Should hold her guiltless and condone the wrong  
Done to His justice; I could take your hand  
And call you brother, as we went along  
To take our stand

Before His judgment--seat with her again  
Where we are hurrying,--for we could not keep  
Our place unchallenged in the ranks of men  
Who do not weep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# At The Gate

Naked I came into the world of pleasure,  
And naked come I to this house of pain.  
Here at the gate I lay down my life's treasure,  
My pride, my garments and my name with men.  
The world and I henceforth shall be as twain,  
No sound of me shall pierce for good or ill  
These walls of grief. Nor shall I hear the vain  
Laughter and tears of those who love me still.

Within, what new life waits me! Little ease,  
Cold lying, hunger, nights of wakefulness,  
Harsh orders given, no voice to soothe or please,  
Poor thieves for friends, for books rules meaningless;  
This is the grave--nay, Hell. Yet, Lord of Might,  
Still in Thy light my spirit shall see light.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## At The Parting Of The Ways

Here our roads part. Go thou by thy green valley,  
Thy youth before thee and the river Nile.  
My path lies o'er the desert, and my galley  
Has rougher seas to plough (and days) the while.  
I know not what to offer you: a smile,  
A blessing, a farewell? I dare not dally  
Even with the thought of tears. 'Twas but a mile  
We walked together, and such things were folly.  
I will not hope, who have no faith in fate,  
That I shall you remember or you me  
Beyond to--morrow. Yet, perhaps the wind  
Blowing some morning through its Eastern gate  
May tell you of my fortune; and behind  
The Western star some evening I may see,  
As in a vision of far days more kind,  
Your dear eyes watching while the night grows blind.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Body And Soul: A Metaphysical Argument

Man openeth the case  
Body, from the arrogance  
Of the Soul thou seekest shield,  
Makest prayer the old mis--chance  
Of your birth--bond be repealed,  
Since, sayest thou, the Soul would wield  
Sovereign power and looks askance  
At her partner in life's dance.

Tell me, Soul, why claimest thou,  
Of what right, this sovereignty?  
Wherefore dost thou cloud thy brow,  
This thy partner standing nigh?  
Scorn is written in thine eye  
Watching him. Speak plain and show  
All thy plaint that I may know.

The Soul speaketh  
Judge most just! Wouldst ask of me  
My being's secret? Ask the fire  
Why he is kindled in the tree,  
And why his flames mount high and higher  
In scorn of the poor tortured pyre  
Which feedeth him. Ask why the Sea  
Thus frets her bed eternally.

The flames their kindred flames would reach;  
The waves leap up towards the Moon,  
And when they foam upon the beach  
Grow pale like her. From morn to noon  
The sun--flower turneth with the Sun.  
A power there is in all and each  
Should lesson thee what I would teach.

For I am subtle as the air  
Which stirs the tree--tops, scattering wide  
The feathered seed--blooms everywhere  
And ordering all, itself unspied,  
And is unchanged while all beside

Change and decay. In me no share  
Is of the death these others bear.

Simple in essence I, to thee  
Known but as one exiled by Fate  
From her old home Eternity,  
And sunk awhile from her estate  
And bound to a material mate,  
Through whose gross shape and quality  
Alone my worth revealed may be.

Yet, shall I doubt me of the power,  
Inborn in me, to seek a throne,  
Although I stumble toward the hour  
Which waits with death, my penance done,  
Body to naught and I to run  
Simple and unconditioned nor  
On quality dependent more?

Or is faith nothing? O I feel  
Pity for this poor thing of dust;  
And that is why I bid him kneel  
And be ennobled, for he must  
Kneel first before his queen in trust.  
Then would I strike him with my steel  
And bind my spurs upon his heel.

But his mistrust defieth me,  
His striving still against the bond  
Which joineth us, nor will he see  
Our wisdom must be straight uncrowned,  
And he but perish of the wound,  
In such divorcement were he free.  
This is my secret, this my plea.

The Judge questioneth  
Body, hast thou heard aright  
How Soul thus doth thee deny?  
She hath claimed in thy despite  
Being from Eternity.  
Hast thou ancestry as high?  
Tell thy title, thou sad wight,



Else her claim will I requite. Body replieth  
Wouldst thou know my lineage?  
Look around thee. Thou shalt trace  
From form to form, from age to age,  
Fossil records of my race.  
I, the latest, claim my place  
Engrossed on Earth's ancestral page  
By right inscribed of heritage.

Tell me, in those days long gone  
Where was Soul? What then her power?  
If to--day she claims a throne,  
Was she fashioned me before?  
Both of us old Matter bore.  
I the elder was, Time's son,  
Ages vast ere Soul was known.

Soul came later. My male might  
Shielded her in her first cell,  
She a frail fair anchorite,  
Guarded by my valiance well,  
Silent, sanct, intangible.  
All my joy she was, and light,  
A new dawning on my night.

Thus the out--set. Tryst we kept  
In good concord I and she.  
Mine the strength which overstepped  
Her weak life's propinquity.  
Or we yielded mutually;  
I was weary and she slept,  
She was wounded and I wept.

Happy days of growth. Ah why  
Must change come with pride of youth?  
She was eager, slow--foot I,  
Glorious she, I all uncouth.  
Her new wit showed little ruth,  
Threw out cunning wings to fly,  
Made as she would pass me by.

And when she found she could not win

Alone upon the blast of Time,  
It irked her we were counted kin,  
Until she held it me a crime  
I should be matched with one sublime  
And noble as she fain had been,  
And last she claimed to be my queen.

Therefore from her arrogance  
And her pride I make appeal  
Praying this the ordinance  
Of our birth--bond, grown unleal,  
Thou wouldst cancel or make real.  
Be our judge in this mis--chance;  
Else decree deliverance. Judgement is given  
I am but by your union.  
With either Soul or Body lost,  
All perisheth. Then work ye on  
Together friends, not corpse and ghost.  
To live and be is a brave boast.  
Learn this; alone ye nothing can,  
Yet both together ye make Man.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Butterflies

O child of Joy! What idle life is thine!  
Thou, in these meadows, while thy skies are blue,  
And while thy joys are new to thee like wine,  
Chasest mad butterflies as children do.  
And lo, thou turnest from them to repine,  
Because it was not love thou didst pursue.

O child of Hope! Thou sighest thy sad sighs,  
Mourning for that which is not nor can be.  
Where is the noon can match with thy sunrise?  
Whose is the heart shall win thy constancy?  
Thou, with thy foolish loves, mad butterflies,  
What dost thou ask of my sad heart and me?

O child of Love, begotten for man's bliss!  
O child of Pleasure, nursed for thy own pain!  
Needs must I weep the day of thy distress,  
The fate that brushes at thy arm in vain,  
Thy skies of blue, thy broken happiness,  
The hopes thou chasest never to attain.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Chancebury Ring

Say what you will, there is not in the world  
A nobler sight than from this upper Down.  
No rugged landscape here, no beauty hurled  
From its Creator's hand as with a frown;  
But a green plain on which green hills look down  
Trim as a garden plot. No other hue  
Can hence be seen, save here and there the brown  
Of a square fallow, and the horizon's blue.  
Dear checker--work of woods, the Sussex Weald!  
If a name thrills me yet of things of earth,  
That name is thine. How often I have fled  
To thy deep hedgerows and embraced each field,  
Each lag, each pasture,--fields which gave me birth  
And saw my youth, and which must hold me dead.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Come With The Summer Leaves

Come with the summer leaves, love, to my grave,  
And, if you doubt among the quiet dead,  
Choose out that mound where greenest grasses wave  
And where the flowers grow thickest and most red.

Come in the morning while the dews of night,  
Which are fair Nature's tears in darkness shed,  
Rim the sad petals nor are garnered quite,  
Like my lost hopes untimely harvested.

Come to my grave--ah gather, love, those flowers!  
Out of my heart they grow for your dear head.  
These are its songs unwritten and all yours,  
The love I loved you with and left unsaid.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Condemned

From Caiphas to Pilate I was sent,  
Who judged with unwashed hands a crime to me.  
Next came the sentence, and the soldiery  
Claimed me their prey. Without, the people rent  
With weeping voices the loud firmament.  
And through the night from town to town passed we  
Mid shouts and drums and stones hurled heavily  
By angry crowds on love and murder bent.

And last the gaol.--What stillness in these doors!  
The silent turnkeys their last bolts have shot,  
And their steps die in the long corridors.  
I am alone. My tears run fast and hot.  
Dear Lord, for Thy grief's sake I kiss these floors  
Kneeling; then turn to sleep, dreams trouble not.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Coronation Ode

O Thou enfolded in grief,  
Man, with thy mantle of scorn!  
Arise and warn!  
Unloved prophet of ill  
Who sittest clothed in thy grief,  
In thy pride of unbelief,  
In thy silence of love forsworn!  
Speak thy word to the world;  
Let it be as a sword to thy will;  
Let it be as a spear that is hurled,  
A banner of wrath unfurled,  
A garment rent and torn.

Speak. They shall listen to thee,  
A single voice at their feast.  
To the last and least,  
They shall hear what they loathe to hear.  
In the day of their Jubilee,  
Of their coronation feast,  
With the wine at their insolent lips,  
Though they lend no ear  
And their shoutings ring  
From the decks of a thousand ships  
Acclaiming their new--crowned king  
With a coronation cheer,  
They shall hear.

Speak, in their jubilant hour,  
In the midst of their might and mirth.  
Be thy theme the Earth,  
The ancient tale of the lands of fame,  
Empires of earlier birth,  
Which held the world in their lust of power  
As their own for dower  
And abused their trust.  
Make thy theme of the wrath that came,  
The smoke that rose, the devouring flame,  
The day of glory, the night of shame  
And the end of dust.

O thou enrobed in thy tears!  
Thou hast heard the children sing,  
The children that pass in the street,  
The innocent ones with their chauntings proud,  
The rhyme of their marching feet.  
How their voices sting!  
What is the word they say  
In their play,  
The hymn their young lips fashion?  
They have marched through the crowded ways  
With flags and glory and shoutings loud  
While the sun has looked down ablaze,  
Amazed at their joyous passion.

Each one carries a sword,  
A wooden sword in his hand,  
With ribbon and belt and cord,  
And a gun on his shoulder glorious,  
Proud each one as a lord.  
"Soldiers," they shout. "We are soldiers come  
From a battle-field. For, hark, the drum!  
From a field of fight victorious."  
"Soldiers! Soldiers! Soldiers!" Weary am I  
Of that word forlorn,  
Of the king's command,  
Of the children's insolent cry,  
A nation's cry whom the nations scorn  
For its childish pride.  
Better were these unborn!

England! Where is she? Where?  
Land of the fortunate free  
Which hath ceased to be?  
What hath she done with her fame?  
The nations that envied her  
Turned to her in their care,  
Sought her light upon land and sea,  
Called as once on her ancient name,  
The name of her liberty.  
But her ears were shut to their prayer;  
Her place was a sepulchre,



She had ceased in her strength to be,  
She was no more free.

She fell as a star from its place,  
As a bird from its path in the sky,  
As a spring run dry,  
A fruit in its rottenness,  
As a drunken woman prone on her face  
While the world went by,  
And she knew not her own disgrace.  
O thou, who hast seen her fall,  
Who hast witnessed her agony,  
Who hast looked on the face of the dead!  
Lift up thy voice in the night and cry  
` `The harvest is harvested.  
As these shall have made their bed,  
So let them lie!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Couplets In Praise

Poet of love, I sing here my whole soul to you.  
Ah, might I all deeds dare, love would I prove to you.

Make I at least your praise, chaplet of sunny verse,  
Each dear delight of your told to the universe.

Let me your sweetnesses, O child, enumerate.  
All the proud wealth of you Love shall remunerate.

``Glory to God," I sigh each time I gaze at you.  
Eyes that have wept all night thrill in amaze at you.

Night in your dark hair sleeps, caught in the net of it,  
Emblem how dear of dreams pure as the jet of it.

Valiant joy crowns your brow, stainless its ivory.  
Incense your sweet lips breathe, rose--red their livery.

Earth has no part in you. Yet do your eyes to--night  
Vanquish all Earth for me, wise in their wise delight.

Evening and morning still watch your feet shod with dew,  
Answering praise and prayer, fearless, your God with you.

Dare to delight our souls steeped in love's tenderness.  
Earn us a wage of joy saved from the wilderness.

Lo, how my heart leaps up new life inheriting.  
Armed for the fight am I, all your praise meriting.

Idly if I have lived, now am I glorious,  
Daring all deeds for you, yours and victorious.

Empires shall bend and break; kingdoms shall crumble down.  
Wise men shall bow the knee; wise ones look humble down.

You are the cause of it. Only your name it is  
Nerves me to fight the fight stern with life's vanities.

Die! Ay, to die for you, foremost in rivalry,  
Heroes to dig my grave: that were true chivalry.

All lovers there should sing, all who had wit any,  
Mourn me and weep with you. Here ends my litany.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Dead Joys

Moan on with thy loud changeless wail,  
Desolate sea,  
Grinding thy pebbles into thankless sand.  
Oh, could I lash my angry heart like thee  
Until it broke upon an iron land,  
The very rocks should tremble and turn pale  
To be the witness of my agony.

Fierce wind, the sob of thy dull pitiless voice  
Is thick with snow.  
Hiss out thy tale into my ice--bound ear  
In sleety whispers, for full well I know  
That in thy wanderings thou hast seen my joys,  
My young joys, dead in some far hemisphere,  
A land of blackness and colossal woe.

Naked they lay, my shipwrecked mariners,  
Upon the shore.  
The low moon pointed her long fingers, red  
As a murderer's hand, between their prison bars  
In the ribbed wreck, which hungry ocean tore  
At the first spring--tide to reclaim the dead  
And hide them in his jaws for evermore.

Tell me, thou silence, what sad death they died,  
Poor castaways!  
What wolfish eyes were on each other there,  
When they had eaten all that hunger stays,  
And thirst no longer could be quenched with pride!  
Didst thou not see their teeth grow white and bare,  
Grinding a savage thought for many days,

Until they fell upon their own red hearts?  
Thou didst not see,  
Or Thou hadst surely had some pity, God,  
When they crept gnawing to the vital parts,  
My joys, which I had nursed so tenderly  
In the very cradle of my love's abode.  
Or art Thou pitiless as wind or sea?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Death In A Ball-Room

Oh many, many thus have died, alas,  
Children, poor things! The grave will have its prey.  
Some flowers must still be mown down with the grass,  
And in life's wild quadrille the dancers gay  
Must trample here and there a weak one in their way.

Yes, thus it is. After the day the night,  
A night that has no waking. Who shall tell?  
A joyous crowd sits down to feast aright,  
But always some one guest, where all seemed well,  
Gets up and leaves his chair and hears the passing bell.

I have seen many go; cheeks rosy pink,  
And blue eyes wide as if entranced with song,  
And forms so frail it seemed that on death's brink  
A bird had bent the branch to which it clung,  
So frail the body was, the tyrant soul so strong.

One knew I who in her delirium  
Uttered a name which troubled all around,  
And then, like a lost chaunt for ever dumb,  
She left us, smiling. In her breast we found  
Some faded violets hid, by a blue ribbon bound.

Poor flowers, poor souls, and only born to die;  
Fair fledglings torn untimely from their nest;  
Halcyons our Earth had borrowed from the sky  
For one short Spring, and then, as if confessed  
Unworthy that high charge, given back to Heaven's breast.

Such have I known; and such, alas was one  
Whom now I picture sadly here. Her eyes  
Had gleams where April's fitful beauty shone.  
I know not why she heaved so many sighs.  
She was sixteen, perhaps, and cared not to be wise.

Yet think not it was love that was her death.  
Love had no song for her of any tone.  
Her heart had never beat too fast for breth.

Though all men called her pretty, there was none  
To whisper that soft fable in her ear alone.

No. It was dancing, dancing which she loved  
Beyond all else, that caused her thus to die.  
Her very dust, methinks, by night is moved  
When the pale moon beneath heaven's canopy  
Holds revel with the clouds in the quick--circling sky.

Balls she adored. Each evening that she danced  
She thought three days and dreamed three nights of it,  
And visions brave where goblin partners pranced  
Beset her pillows, till she could not sit  
Still in her bed but she must rise and dance a bit.

By night and day her fancy framed the sight  
Of scarves and flowers and ribbons bright as noon,  
And jewels gleaming with unearthly light,  
And skirts of gossamer in wild festoon,  
And lace like spiders' webs of spiders in the moon.

When the ball opened, she was first to come  
With her proud father, honest gentleman.  
Like a little mouse she ran about the room.  
Oh how she frowned and rattled with her fan  
And beat her pretty foot, until the dance began!

It did us good to see her dance. Her feet  
Twinkled like stars in a dark firmament.  
They moved so fast they made our pulses beat  
Lest those frail laces should be overspent  
And the white satin shoes be whirled away or rent.

She was all movement, laughter, and mad joy.  
Child! How we followed her with our sad eyes,  
Forgetful of the fever and annoy  
And rush and dust and nameless miseries,  
The punishment of souls too proud or sad or wise.

But she, borne off upon her pleasure's wing,  
Whirled round and round. She never stopped for breath.  
She seemed to drink the fiddler's fiddling in.

She seemed to smell the flowers of every wreath,  
To dance with every step the dancers danced beneath.

'Twas joy to her to leap and bound along,  
To feel as though she had a thousand feet,  
To grow so giddy in the turning throng  
She knew not where she was. Her heart so beat  
She could not see the chairs to find herself a seat.

Alas, alas that ever morn should come  
On such sweet nights! Alas that she must stand  
Those hours of woe in the chill waiting room.  
Oh, often ere the coach was at command,  
The dawn had touched her shoulders with its naked hand.

'Tis ever a sad waking the next day.  
No laughter now, but only a dull cough.  
The crumpled dresses have been put away.  
Pleasure is dead, and there stands Pleasure's scoff,  
Fever with cheeks all red and tongue all white and rough.

She died at sixteen, happy, loved by all.  
Died as she left off dancing. All of us  
Wore mourning long in token of that ball.  
She died upon the threshold of the house  
In her white robe and wreath and sable--lined burnous.

Death took her thus that she might ever be  
Dressed for new dancing. When she wakes again  
She shall be ready for Eternity,  
And, if in Heaven such raptures are not vain,  
Shall tread fair measures still to seraph angels' strain.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# Don Juan's Good-Night

Teach me, gentle Leporello,  
Since you are so wise a fellow,  
How your master I may win.  
Leporello answers gaily  
Slip into his bed and way lay  
Him; anon he shall come in.

Soon as he shall find you laid there  
Fresh and young, so sweet a maid there,  
He shall smile, and joyfully  
` ` I am hungry, Leporello,  
Bring us wine, good wine and mellow,  
Here is one would sup with me."

Wine then will I bring (not water),  
A feast fit for a king's daughter,  
Lay it out in the alcove,  
While my Lord with pleasant fancies  
Makes his court to you, romances  
Of your beauty and his love.

Passion soon shall rise full blossom;  
He shall weep upon your bosom,  
Make you all his soul's display.  
He, in honour as a true man,  
Shall declare you the sole woman  
He has loved until to--day.

At the last he shall possess you,  
And all night. Then with ` ` God bless you"  
Turn to sleep, nor shall you know,  
Curtained in your silks and satins,  
How at dawn he was off ` ` to matins."  
His politeness called it so.

But remember, from next morning  
You must quite forget the adorning  
Of to--night, or earn his curse.  
Gold is yours if you but ask it,

Spain and Flanders in a basket.  
I am keeper of his purse.

To console you be a fortune  
Will not grudge. But to importune  
His more tenderness? Nay, Nay.  
A return to even your beauty  
Were too costly a Duke's duty,  
One his whole wealth could not pay.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## El Harith

Lightly took she her leave of me, Asmá--u,  
went no whit as a guest who outstays a welcome;  
Went forgetting our trysts, Burkát Shemmá--u,  
all the joys of our love, our love's home, Khalsá--u.  
Muhayyátu, she thee forgets, Sifáhu,  
thee, Fitákon, Aádibon, thee Wafá--u.  
Thee, Riád el Katá, thee, vale of Shérbub,  
'Anak, thee, Shobatána, and thee, Ablá--u.  
Nay, ye lost are to me with my lost glory;  
nay, though tears be my meat, weeping wins no woman.  
Yet, a snare to my eyes, afar was kindled  
fire by night on the hill. It was Hind's love--beacon.  
Blindly now do I watch her from Khezáza;  
woe, the warmth of it, woe,--though the hilltops redden!  
Woe its blaze from Akík, its flame from Shákhseyn!  
woe the signal alight for me, Hind's love--incense!

Out on tears and despair! I go free, sundered;  
here stand doors of relief. Who hath fled escapeth.  
Mount I light on my nága. No hen ostrich  
swift as she, the tall trotter, her brood behind her,  
Hearing voices who fled from them, the hunters,  
pressing fast on her way from mid--eve to nightfall.  
Nay, behold her, my noble one, upheaving  
motes and dust on her path, as a cloud pursuing.  
All un--shooed are the feet of her, her sandals  
strewn how wide on her road by the rough rocks loosened.  
Joy thus take I on her, the summer heat through.  
All but I had despaired,--like a blinded camel.

O the curse of men's eyes, of their ill--speaking!  
Danger deep and a wound did their false lips deal us.  
Have not these with their tongues made small things great things,  
telling lies of our lives, our kind kin, the Arákim?  
Mixing blame with un--blame for us, till flouted  
stand we, proven of wrong, with the guilty guiltless.  
All, say these, that have run with us the wild ass,  
ours are they, our allies, as our own tribe their tribes.  
Thus by night did they argue it and plot it,

rose at dawn to their treason and stood forth shouting.  
Loud the noise of their wrath. This called, that answered;  
great the neighings of steeds and the camel roarings.

Ho, thou weaver of wild words, thou tale--painter!  
must it thus be for ever and thus with Amru?  
Not that slanders are strange. Their words we heed not;  
long ere this have we known them, their lips, the liars.  
High above them we live. Hate may not harm us,  
fenced in towers of renown, our unstained bright honour.  
Long hath anger assailed us, rage, denial;  
long hath evil prevailed in the eyes of evil.  
Nathless, let them assault. As well may Fortune  
hurl its spears at the rocks, at the cloud--robed mountains.  
Frowneth wide of it Fear. Fate shall not shake it.  
Time's worst hand of distress shall disturb it never.

O thou king Iramíyan! With thee circle  
riders keen of their steel to cut off thy foemen.  
King art thou, the all--just, of Earth's high walkers  
foremost, first in the World, its all--praise surpassing.  
If of wrong there be aught untamed, unstraightened,  
bring but word to our chiefs; they shall deal out justice  
Set thy gaze on the hills, on Mílha, Sákib.  
See the slain unavenged, while alive their slayers.  
Probe the wounds of our anger, though thou hurt us,  
yet shall truth be approved and the falsehood flouted.  
Else be thou of us silent, and we silent,  
closing lids on our wrong, though the mote lies under.  
Yet, refusing the peace, whomso you question,  
he shall speak in our praise, shall assign us worship.

O the days of the war, of our free fighting,  
raidings made in surprise, the retreats, the shoutings!  
How our nágas we scourged from Sâf el Bahreyn,  
pressing hard to the end, to our goal El Hása!  
Turned had we on Temím before Mohárrem,  
taken their daughters for wives, their maids for handmaids.  
None might stay us nor strive with us. The stoutest  
turned, though turning availed not nor their feet flying,  
Nay, nor mountain might hide nor plain protect them;  
blackness burnt in the sun, it might bring no succour.

Thou, O King, art the master. Where in all lands  
standeth one of thy height? There is none beside thee.

Lo, how stiff was our stand for him, El Móndir.  
Say, were we, as were these, Ibn Hind's base herdsmen?  
Let the Tághlebi slain in their blood answer,  
unavenged where they lie. In the dust we spilled it.  
He, the king, when in that high place Maisúna's  
tent he builded for her who so loved Ausá--u,  
What of turbulent folk did he there gather,  
broken men of the tribes, ragged, hungry vultures!  
Dates and water to all he gave in bounty.  
God's revenge on the guilty they called his soldiers.  
You the weight of them proved with your mad challenge,  
brought them blind on your back by your idle boasting.  
Nay, they gave you no false words, laid no ambush;  
broad before you at noon you beheld them marching.  
Ho, thou bearer of tales to Amru, babbler!  
when of this shall the end be, how soon the silence?  
Proofs he hath at our hands, three honest tokens,  
each enough for his eyes of our faith unswerving.  
First when came from Shakík at him the war--lords,  
all Maád in their tribes, with each clan a banner.  
Mail--clad men were there there, their chieftain Káis,  
he, the Prince Karathíyan, a rock, a stronghold.  
With him sons of the brave, of freeborn ladies;  
naught might stand to their shock save alone our swordblades.  
Them we drove back with wounds like the out--rushing  
streams when goat--skins are pricked; it was thus their blood flowed;  
Drove them back to Thahlána its strong places,  
scattered, drenched in their gore where the thigh wounds spouted.  
Struck we stern at the lives of them; then trembled  
deep our spears in their well, like a long--roped bucket.  
Only God shall appraise how we misused them;  
none hath claimed for their lives the uncounted blood price.  
Next with Hójra it was, Ibn om Katáma;  
with him rode the Iráni: how red their armour!  
Roused, a lion, he chargeth, his feet thudding,  
yet as Spring to the poor in their day of hunger.  
Chains we struck from the hands of Imr el Káis;  
long the days of his grief were, his months of bondage.  
We, when Jaun of Aál Beni 'Aus sought us,

rock--strong with him a band of unyielding horsemen,  
Nothing feared, though the dust of them around us  
swept the plain like a smoke by the war--flame kindled.  
Put we swords on his neck, Ghassán, for Móndir,  
wrath that less than our right was the blood price counted.  
Lastly brought we the nine of the blood royal,  
all their wealth in our hands, an unnumbered booty.  
Amr a son was of ours Ibn Om Eyyási;  
close in kinship he came, when he gave the dowry.  
Let this stand to our count, our power in pleading!  
land with land are we knit, by the strong ones strengthened.  
Hold the tongue of your boasting, your vainglory,  
else be yourselves the blind, on yourselves ill--fortune.

O, remember the oath of Thil Majázi,  
all that was of old time, the fair words, the pledges.  
Flee the evil, the hate! Shall men gainsay it,  
that which stands on the skin, for the whim of any?  
Think how we with yourselves the fair deed signed there,  
did the thing we should do, and no less, our duty.  
Faction all and injustice! As well, when feasting,  
take, for vow of a sheep, a gazelle in payment!  
Was it ours, say, the blame of it all, when Kíndah  
took your booths for a spoil, that of us you claim it?  
Was it ours that foul deed of him, Eyádi?  
are we bound with his rope, like a loaded camel?  
Not by us were these done to their death, nor Káis,  
nay, nor Jéndal by us, nor he Haddá--u.  
Theirs, not ours, were the crimes of Beni Atíkeh;  
clean of blame are our hands since you tore the treaties.  
Eighty went of Temím: in their right hands lances;  
each a sentence of death, when they went against you,  
Left your sons where they lay sword--slashed and blood--stained,  
brought a tumult of spoil till men's ears were deafened.  
Is it ours the ill--deed of the man Hanífa?  
ours the strife of all time, Earth's arrears of evil?  
Ours the wrong of Kodáat? Nay, 'tis all injustice;  
not for these and their sins are our hands indicted.  
Not for these, nor their raid on the Béni Rázah;  
who shall approve their claim in Nitá, in Búrka?  
Long they cringed for a spoil, these camel--cravers,  
yet not one did we give, not a black nor white one;

Left them bare till they fled with their backs broken,  
all unwatered their thirst, unassuaged their vengeance;  
Horsemen hard on their track, El Fellak's riders,  
pity none in their hand, in their heart no sparing.  
Ours it was, the dominion of all these peoples,  
ours till El Móndir ruled, the sweet rain of heaven.

Thou, O King, art the master. Thou our witness  
stoodst the day of Hayáreyn. Our proof is proven!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: I

When is life other than a tragedy,  
Whether it is played in tears from the first scene,  
In sable robes and grief's mute pageantry,  
For loves that died ere they had ever been,  
Or whether on the edge of joys set keen,  
While all the stage with laughter is agog,  
Death stepping forward with an altered mien  
Pulls off his mask, and speaks the epilogue?  
Life is a play acted by dying men,  
Where, if its heroes seem to foot it well  
And go light--tongued without grimace of pain,  
Death will be found anon. And who shall tell  
Which part was saddest, or in youth or age,  
When the tired actor stops and leaves the stage?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Ii

Yes, who shall tell the value of our tears,  
Whether we wept aright or idly grieved?  
There is a tragedy in unloved years,  
And in those passionate hours by love deceived,  
In lips unkissed and hopes too soon bereaved,  
And youth's high courage which no strength could save,  
And manhood's web of fate by folly weaved,  
And grey--haired grief brought down into the grave.  
Who shall distinguish truly and be wise  
'Twixt grief and grief, 'twixt night and night? The sun  
Has its own sorrow and a voice that cries  
Louder than darkness of its joys undone,  
And pleads with that exceeding bitter cry,  
'`I have tasted honey, and behold, I die!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Iii

A little honey! Ay, a little sweet,  
A little pleasure when the years were young,  
A joyous measure trod by dancing feet,  
A tale of folly told by a loved tongue.  
These are the things by which our hearts are wrung  
More than by tears. Oh, I would rather laugh,  
So I had not to choose such tales among  
Which was most laughable. Man's nobler half  
Resents mere sorrow. I would rather sit  
With just the common crowd that watch the play  
And mock at harlequin and the clown's wit,  
And call it tragedy and go my way.  
I should not err, because the tragic part  
Lay not in these, but sealed in my own heart.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Iv

And thus it is. The tale I have to tell  
Is such another. He who reads shall find  
That which he brings to it of Heaven or Hell  
For his best recompense where much is blind,  
A jest--book or a sermon or mere wind,--  
Each as he may,--for life's least godly mirth  
Is mingled strangely here with fate unkind,  
And this is a true story of the Earth.  
The passionate heart of youth with its desires  
Is not all noble, and some baseness clings  
For ever mixed with its eternal fires,  
Else were it single among human things.  
And all life's wisdom learns but this last plan,  
To jest at tears and weep Man's mirth and Man.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: IX

I stopped, I listened, and I entered in,  
With half--a--dozen more, that sight to see.  
` `The Booth of Beauty," 'twas a name of sin  
Which seemed to promise a new mystery.  
There was a crowd already in the place,  
And 'twixt me and the stage, now darkly hid,  
The gathering evening had come down apace,  
And all was dim within and overspread.  
I know not by what instinct or mute proof  
Of Providence it was, but this is true,  
Even as I stepped 'neath that ignoble roof,  
A prescience warned me there of portents new,  
And a voice spoke with no uncertain sound  
Warning me back as from ungodly ground.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Li

When I hear laughter from a tavern door,  
When I see crowds agape and in the rain  
Watching on tiptoe and with stifled roar  
To see a rocket fired or a bull slain,  
When misers handle gold, when orators  
Touch strong men's hearts with glory till they weep,  
When cities deck their streets for barren wars  
Which have laid waste their youth, and when I keep  
Calmly the count of my own life and see  
On what poor stuff my manhood's dreams were fed  
Till I too learned what dole of vanity  
Will serve a human soul for daily bread,  
--Then I remember that I once was young  
And lived with Esther the world's gods among.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Lii

I lived with Esther, not for many days,  
If days be counted by the fall of night  
And the sun's rising, yet through years of praise,  
If truth be timepiece of joys infinite.  
And what a life it was! No vain sweet dream  
Of love in idleness which all men know,  
But a full drama fashioned on the theme  
Of strength victorious over death and woe.  
Here was no faltering. Ours the triumph was  
Of that strong logic which beholds each day  
As a new world to conquer, and the cause  
Itself complete of a more glorious fray.  
To--day our cycle was. In it sublime  
We sat enthroned as on the neck of Time.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Liii

For Esther was a woman most complete  
In all her ways of loving. And with me  
Dealt as one deals who careless of deceit  
And rich in all things is of all things free.  
She did not stop with me to feel her way  
Into my heart, because she all hearts knew,  
But, like some prodigal heir of yesterday  
Just in possession, counted not her due  
And grandly gave. O brave humility!  
O joy that kneels! O pride that stoops to tears!  
She spent where others had demanded fee,  
Served where all service had of right been hers,  
Casting her bread of life upon love's ways,  
Content to find it after many days.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Liv

I must not speak of it. Even yet my heart  
Is but a feeble thing to fret and cry,  
And it might chance to wake and with a start,  
When nights were still and stars were in the sky,  
Sit up and muse upon its lonely state,  
With the same stars to mock at it as then,  
And certain chords that touched might touch it yet,  
And griefs find issue and tears come again.  
I must not venture farther in this mood.  
Grief is forsworn to me. I will not grieve,  
Nor think too much on Esther's womanhood,  
Rather on that which was its make--believe.  
And yet awhile she loved me. In this thought  
I long found rest when all was come to nought.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Lv

We stayed at Lyons three days, only three,  
In Esther's world of wonder and renown,  
She, glorious star, each night immortally  
Playing her Manons to the listening town.  
I glorious too, but in Love's firmament,  
Watching her face by which alone I moved,  
A shadow near her raptured and intent,  
And seeking still the signs that I was loved.  
Thrice happy days! Thrice blessed tragedy!  
Her Des Grieux was I, her lover lorn  
Bound to her fortunes, blest to live or die,  
And faithful ever though to faith forsworn,  
Waiting behind the scenes in that stage--land  
To greet her exits and to squeeze her hand.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Lvi

Who has not wept with Manon? Of all tales  
That thrill youth's fancy or to tears or mirth  
None other is there where such grief prevails,  
Such passionate pity for the loves of Earth.  
Who has not wept with Manon in her sin,  
Wept in her punishment? What angry heart  
Has been unmoved in youth to see her win  
With those sad archers to the inhuman cart?  
Who has not followed her beyond the seas,  
And sold his life for her, and bowed his pride,  
And sinned all sins to buy her back to ease,  
And died all deaths to venge her when she died?  
And I, blest boy, who each new happy night  
When all was done still lived in her delight!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Lvii

This was my term of glory. All who know  
Something of life will guess untold the end.  
In love, one ever kisses for his woe,  
One lends his cheek, alas! or seems to lend,  
One has the pleasure, one the penalties,  
One is in earnest, one has time to laugh,  
One turns impatient from imploring eyes,  
And one in terror spells love's epitaph.  
There was no wisdom in this love of mine,  
Therefore it perished earlier than the rest,  
Although I poured out all my heart like wine  
And watered it with tears, and prayed unblest  
In my soul's rage to all the Saints of heaven  
To give me this and yet to be forgiven.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Lviii

It might not be. Some things are possible,  
And some impossible for even God.  
And Esther had no soul which Heaven or Hell  
Could touch by joy or soften by the rod.  
She could not really love me. The day came,  
How soon, how late, I need not to devise,  
When passion prayed its last, and only shame  
Stood for my portion in a world grown wise,  
And I went forth for ever from her sight  
Knowing the good and evil. On that day  
I did her wrong by anger. Now life's light  
Illumines all, and I behold her gay  
As I first knew her in my love purblind,  
Dear passionate Esther, soulless but how kind!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: V

I had been an hour at Lyons. My breath comes  
Fast when I think of it. An hour, no more,  
I trod those streets and listened to the drums,  
The mirth, the music, and the city's roar,  
And found no sermon for me in her stones.  
It was the evening of St. Martin's fair,  
And all the world, its working bees and drones,  
Had gone out to the quays in the sweet air,  
To taste that thing more sweet to human breath,  
Its own mad laughter at its own mad kind.  
` `An hour of prayer," I mused, ` `for men of faith."  
Yet all these worshippers were only blind.  
And I, no whit less blind, among them went  
In search of pleasure for my punishment.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Vi

The Lyons fair! In truth it was a Heaven  
For idlers' eyes, a feast of curious things,  
Swings, roundabouts, and shows, the Champions Seven,  
Dramas of battles and the deaths of kings,  
The whole Place d'Armes grown white as if with snow,  
With canvas booths arrayed in triple lines,  
And jugglers, lions, snakes from Mexico,  
Dancers on tight ropes, clowns and columbines.  
I went among them all with grave intent,  
I, too, to find it may be some delight.  
I was a boy and knew not what life meant,  
Nor what the pleasures were men seek in it.  
Only I knew that mingling with that throng,  
I was a stranger a strange world among.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Vii

I had made my round, as yet with little gain  
Of undiscovered good in that gay place.  
I had sought my share of pleasure, but in vain.  
Laughter was not for me, and hid her face.  
I had asked for mirth. The oracles were dumb.  
No sound of Folly with her tinkling feet  
Had bid my own feet follow, and no home  
Was mine for merriment or musings sweet.  
I had ceased to hope and almost ceased to seek,  
When, from the farthest booth of all, the bray  
Of brass and drums and fiddling and the shriek  
Of a dwarf's voice invited me to stay.  
The crowd, as scenting some more mirthful thing,  
Surged round that booth agape and wondering.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Viii

It was a booth no larger than the rest,  
No loftier fashioned and no more sublime,  
As poor a shrine as ever youth possessed  
In which to worship truth revealed in time.  
Yet to my soul the mean remembrance clings  
With all the folly of that far fair eve,  
And my pulse throbs with lost imaginings,  
And passion rises from its grave to grieve.  
Vain dreams, brute images! and over all  
The shrill--voiced dwarf its hierarch and priest,  
Vaunting its praise, a pagan prince of Baal.  
It scared me as of some wild idol feast.  
` `The Booth of Beauty," thus it was I read,  
Blazoned in scarlet letters overhead.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: X

An instant, just an instant, and no more,  
And it was gone, and I with eyes unsealed  
Saw the bald pageant stripped to its thought's core,  
And naked there to my scared eyes revealed.  
Upon a throne which filled the upper space  
Two female monsters sat, the first a girl  
Marked like a leopard with pied arms and face,  
And restless eyes aflame and teeth of pearl.  
Her as we ventured near, I heard awhile  
Say she was hungry, and a gleam like blood  
Lighted her lips and died in a fierce smile.  
A woman's hand behind me in the crowd  
Clutched at my arm, and through the booth there went  
A shiver of half fear, half merriment.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xi

Beyond her sat a second monster. She  
In shape and sense was undisguisedly real,  
An ox--eyed queen of full--fed majesty  
And giant height and comeliness ideal.  
She too her tale related, as was due,  
In measured tones, her age, her birth, her name,  
Bourgeois her parents, friends of order too,  
And good Imperialists of honest fame,  
Her age eighteen, her height seven feet, her waist  
An ell and more in its circumference,  
Her leg above the knee, and where was placed  
Its point of full development. . . The sense  
Of the rest I lost, for laughing half aloud  
Again a woman touched me in the crowd.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xii

She was a little woman dressed in black,  
Who stood on tiptoe with a childish air,  
Her face and figure hidden in a sacque,  
All but her eyes and forehead and dark hair.  
Her brow was pale, but it was lit with light,  
And mirth flashed out of it, it seemed in rays.  
A childish face, but wise with woman's wit,  
And something, too, pathetic in its gaze.  
In the bare dusk of that unseemly place  
I noted all, and this besides, a scar  
Which on her cheek had left a paler trace.  
It seemed to tell its tale of love and war.  
That little scar! Doubt whispered of this one,  
Boy as I was, she had not lived a nun.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xiii

A second warning, nor unheeded. Yet  
The thought appealed to me as no strange thing,  
Pure though I was, that love impure had set  
Its seal on that fair woman in her Spring.  
Her broken beauty did not mar her grace  
In form or spirit. Nay, it rather moved.  
It seemed a natural thing for that gay face  
It should have known and suffered and been loved.  
It kindled in me, too, to view it thus,  
A mood of daring which was more than mine,  
And made my shamefaced heart leap valorous,  
And fired its courage to a zeal divine.  
All this, in one short instant, as I gazed  
Into her eyes, admiring, yet amazed.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xiv

Me, too, she doubtless read. For, with her hand  
Raised as for help and pointing to a chair,  
She bade me, with a gesture, part command  
And part entreaty, I would set her there.  
She could not see, she said, the Queen of Love  
My eyes so coveted, and laughed and laid  
Upon my lips the fingers of her glove  
When I protested at the words she said.  
I hardly know how it all came about  
But did her bidding as she would, and she  
From her new vantage bore the humour out  
And mocked the more at each new mockery.  
And still she held my arm and I her dress,  
` ` Lest she should fall," she said, in waywardness.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xix

I fled the booth with feelings as of Cain,  
Yet laughing at my own bewilderment.  
My cheeks had blushed till it was physical pain,  
And my eyes smarted. Through my head there went  
The little woman's last appealing word  
Bidding me stop, in tones that smote afresh.  
And 'twixt my finger and thumb there throbbed and stirred  
The semblance of that monstrous pound of flesh,  
The knee that I had handled. With it too  
The jet beads of the little woman's skirt,  
Where I had held her, left an impress new  
And touched my conscience to a deeper hurt.  
I was ashamed of all with shame intense,  
My youth, my frailty, and my innocence.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: XI

She went on talking like a running stream,  
Without more reason or more pause or stay  
Than to gather breath and then pursue her whim  
Just where it led her, tender, sad, or gay.  
Her moods seemed all alike to her. But soon  
With a little shudder, for the wind was chill  
And we had lingered on there in the moon,  
She bade me follow, and I bowed my will.  
The torrent of her words had drowned in me  
What humour of resistance there had been,  
And the last sense of danger ceased to be  
In the first joy of yielding to such sin.  
There is no pleasure in the world so sweet  
As, being wise, to fall at folly's feet.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xlii

And so we went our way,--yes, hand in hand,  
Like two lost children in some magic wood  
Baffled and baffling with enchanter's wand  
The various beasts that crossed us and withstood.  
Each step was an experience. Every mood  
Of that fair woman a fresh gospelling,  
Which spoke aloud to me and stirred my blood  
To a new faith, I knew not with what sting.  
One thing alone I knew or cared to know,  
Her strange companionship thus strangely won.  
The past, the future, all of weal or woe  
In my old life was gone, for ever gone.  
And still to this I clung as one who clings  
To hope's last hencoop in the wreck of things.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xliii

How shall I tell my fall? The life of man  
Is but a tale of tumbles, this way thrown  
At his beginning by mere haste of plan  
In the first gaping ditch with flowers o'ergrown;  
Anon more cautious for his wounded knees,  
Yet falling still through much expectancy;  
And so to age, the goal of his heart's ease,  
Stumbling in blindness on he knows not why.  
How shall I tell it? As the poets tell  
Who wrap love in a garment of vain light?  
Or plainly naked, the poor child of Hell  
And laughter that it is and starless night?  
I like the truth best. Yet this love, sad thing,  
Mired and defiled, I saw it once a king.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xliv

We came at last, alas! I see it yet,  
With its open windows on the upper floor,  
To a certain house still stirring, with lights set,  
And just a chink left open of the door.  
Here my companion stopped and bade me in;  
Her dressmaker's, she said. And I, who heard  
A sound of women's voices from within,  
Shrank back alarmed and ready at a word  
From any damsel stoutly to deny.  
But ``Madame Blanche," she said to ease my fears,  
``Is a good soul, and far too wise to pry  
Or fancy evil of her customers  
At any hour of the night they choose to come,  
Much less of me." And so I followed dumb.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xlix

I will not tell the secrets of that place.  
When Madame Blanche returned to us again  
I was kneeling there, while Esther kissed my face  
And dried and comforted my tears. O vain  
And happy tears! O griefs thrice comforted!  
I trembled, but not with fear. If I was dumb,  
'Twas not for lack of speech where all was said.  
My doubts were ended and my fears o'ercome,  
And joy had triumphed. Life has given me much  
And pleasure much, and Heaven may yet have store  
Of nobler hopes to kindle and to touch,  
But never for all time, ah, never more,  
That delicate dawn of wonder when lips move  
First to the love of life and love of love.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xlv

I followed dumb and shrinking like a thief  
Close in her shadow from the women's guess,  
Yet ruthlessly betrayed for my cheeks' grief  
From head to foot in the tall pier--glasses.  
My vagabond attire, my coat all rags,  
My tattered plaid stained with the summer's dust,  
The sash which bound my waist all gaps and jags,  
With gaiters frayed and such sad shoes as must  
Have served Ulysses at his journey's close;  
All these I saw revealed to my disgrace,  
My hat still crowned with its last Alpine rose,  
And what she had called my ``John the Baptist's face''  
Red with confusion and the rage of youth,  
I saw it all, the whole remorseless truth.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xlvi

Not so my little sponsor. She, with eyes  
Proudly unconscious of my fool's display,  
Talked volubly to all and scorned disguise,  
While Madame Blanche herself, no less than they,  
Smiled us a welcome, and with upraised hands  
Disclaimed excuse and led us straightway through  
To an inner room as to a Conference.  
There I first saw to my amazement new  
That fair white mystery, a woman's dress,  
And heard its language spoken. Stuffs were brought  
And cards unrolled before us, braids and lace  
Lauded and handled and their merits taught  
To ears that listened and to eyes that saw  
Their secret sense, the law within the law.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xlvii

Sublime discussions! Let who will be wise!  
These are the things that touch us and transcend.  
The logic of all beauty is surprise,  
The reason of all love the unseen end.  
Still as they argued on of this and that,  
Turning perchance to me as arbiter  
Where in my corner I still speechless sat  
To end their strife, my vision seemed to clear,  
The scales fell from my eyes of ignorance,  
The terror from my heart. One thing alone  
Stood plain before me, the supreme fair chance  
Of a first fortune, glorious and unknown,  
Which beckoned me with no uncertain hand  
To touch and taste and learn and understand.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xlviii

Suddenly then my strange companion cried,  
` ` "Bring me the body." In a moment more  
She had thrown off her hat, her veil untied,  
And motioning all the women to the door,  
While I sat speechless by who would have gone,  
Undid her jacket and anon her dress,  
With the jet buttons of it one by one,  
And stood but clothed the more in loveliness,  
A sight sublime, a dream, a miracle,  
A little goddess from some luminous field  
Brought down unconscious on our Earth to dwell,  
And in an age of innocence revealed,  
Naked but not ashamed. Nay, wherefore shame?  
And I, ah, who shall blame me, who shall blame?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xv

Thus it began with laughter. But anon  
The ox--eyed queen, who had resumed by rote  
The tale of her perfections one by one,  
Turned by some ominous chance towards the spot  
Where we two stood. ``And take good note," said she,  
``All here is honest beauty, flesh and blood,  
As any in the world. Yet, if there be  
A doubt between you, let me make it good.  
Which of you two will honour me so near  
As to prove the truth?" My cheeks in spite of me  
Flamed in the dark, and I was seized with fear  
And a wild doubt lest mine the choice should be.  
The little woman on the chair began  
To shout aloud and bid me play the man.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xvi

Oh, 'tis a terrible thing in early youth  
To be assailed by laughter and mute shame,  
A terrible thing to be befooled forsooth  
By one's own foolish face betrayed in flame.  
The little traitor, when she saw me dumb,  
Went on to clap her hands, till all and each  
Took up the jest and called on me to come  
And prove my courage in the manly breach.  
The imperious queen stood waiting for me there,  
Pointing and beckoning, and the crowd closed in.  
Under the cover of a wilder air  
From the brass band, the darkness and the din,  
I know not how it was, in fear or fun,  
I touched that monster's knee, and all was done.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xvii

I touched that knee. She did not show surprise,  
And the earth had not opened at our feet.  
She did not even laugh. Her foolish eyes  
Twinkled a moment in her cheeks, then set  
Like fog--bound stars for ever from my sight.  
And at a signal from the little woman,  
Who clung to me still, a chorus left and right  
Of laughter rose Homeric and inhuman,  
Drowning all further sense in one wild roar.  
I heard the spotted girl with leopard lips  
Complain that she was hungry as before,  
And all the world was merged in an eclipse,  
Darkening the air around and overhead,  
And then I broke away and turned and fled.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xviii

Alas, poor Queen of Beauty! In my heart  
I could weep for you and your sad graceless doom.  
You stand at my life's threshold in the part  
Of king's chief jester in the ante--room,  
And none more near the throne. You made us sport  
According to your folly, and passed on,  
And now you live with pension in Love's Court,  
And privilege to jest and wear the crown.  
Yes, I could weep for you. Your part it was  
To strike the cymbals on a night sublime  
For Love's first bridal dance. Alas, alas!  
Time, the avenger of our manhood's prime,  
Is gathering all life courtiers to his cell,  
And you among the rest. So fare you well.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxi

If I have since done evil in my life,  
I was not born for evil. This I know.  
My soul was a thing pure from sensual strife.  
No vice of the blood foredoomed me to this woe.  
I did not love corruption. Beauty, truth,  
Justice, compassion, peace with God and man,  
These were my laws, the instincts of my youth,  
And hold me still, conceal it as I can.  
I did not love corruption, nor do love.  
I find it ill to hate and ill to grieve.  
Nature designed me for a life above  
The mere discordant dreams in which I live.  
If I now go a beggar on the Earth,  
I was a saint of Heaven by right of birth.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxii

You know the story of my birth, the name  
Which I inherited for good and ill,  
The secret of my father's fame and shame,  
His tragedy and death on that dark hill.  
You know at least what the world knows or knew,  
For time has taken half the lookers--on,  
As it took him, and leaves his followers few,  
And those that loved him scarce or almost none.  
To me, his son, there had remained the story,  
Told and retold by her who knew it best,  
A mystery of love, perhaps of glory,  
A heritage to hold and a bequest.  
Ah, how it loved him, that sad woman's heart,  
What faith was hers and what a martyr's part!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxiii

Nor later, when with her my childhood died,  
Was life less sealed to me. The Church became  
My guardian next and mother deified,  
Who lit within me a more subtle flame  
Of constancy, and clothed me in her mood.  
No sound, no voice within that sanctuary  
Told me of common evil. Unsubdued  
And vast and strange, a thing from which to flee,  
The world lay there without us. We within,  
Fenced in and folded safe in our strong home,  
Knew nothing of the sorrow and the sin.  
'Tis no small matter to have lived in Rome,  
In the Church's very bosom and abode,  
Cloistered and cradled there, a child of God.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxiv

Thus through these griefs I had been set apart,  
As for a double priesthood. Life to me,  
In those first moments when I probed my heart,  
Less an enchantress seemed than enemy.  
My knowledge of the world had nothing human.  
I saw Mankind a tribe, my natural foe,  
Whom I must one day battle with; and Woman,  
Ah! Woman was a snare I did not know.  
Indeed, it may be that already hope  
Knocked at my soul with tales it dared not own  
Of woman's kindness in my horoscope.  
Man, only Man I feared with eyes bent down,  
Man the oppressor, who with pale lips curled  
Sheds blood in the high places of the world.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxix

A glorious triumph. On that day of days  
When, standing on the summit's utmost edge  
Of my first mountain--top, I viewed the maze  
Which I had travelled upwards, ledge on ledge,  
And all that wilderness of rock and plain  
Rolled at my feet, and, when with heel fast set  
On Nature's neck, I knew the giant slain,  
My thrall, my prisoner, on the parapet,  
I was transfigured. Slowly in me rose  
The throb of courage as a sense new born.  
` ` Even Man," I cried, ` ` Man's self, my foe of foes,  
The phantom of my fears, shall feel my scorn  
Yet in a nobler war." And trembling then  
I seemed to stand, I too, a man with men.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxv

My childhood, then, had passed a mystery  
Shrouded by death, my boyhood a shut thing.  
The passion of my soul as it grew free  
With growing youth, a bird with broken wing,  
Knew nothing of its strength to dare or do,  
Or, if it dreamed of battle still to come,  
That was its secret hidden in the blue  
Of life's great vault of tears which was its doom,  
A duty of revenge some day for blood.  
Enough! You know I held me from the press  
To whom base things are nothing, that I stood  
Parted from this world's weekday wickedness  
By a whole legend of romance sublime,  
Perhaps by the dead virtue of a crime.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxvi

I linger on the threshold of my youth.  
If you could see me now as then I was,  
A fair--faced frightened boy with eyes of truth  
Scared at the world yet angry at its laws,  
Plotting all plots, a blushing Cataline  
Betrayed by his own cheeks, a misanthrope  
In love with all things human and divine,  
The very fool of fortune and high hope,  
You would deny you knew me. Oh, the days  
Of our absurd first manhood, rich in force,  
Rich in desire of happiness and praise  
Yet impotent in its heroic course,  
And all for lack of that one worthless thing,  
Knowledge of life and love and suffering!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxvii

At such a time indeed of youth's first morn,  
There is a heaving of the soul in pain,  
A mighty labour as of joys unborn,  
Which grieves it and disquiets it in vain.  
The soul is scared at her own lack of peace,  
Her cradle song is mute, and she has fled  
From her old life as to a wilderness.  
She finds herself awake and without bread.  
'Tis then the body, her new counsellor,  
Speaks in her ear, and still with eloquence  
Pleads for more action, and his voice to her  
Is sweet with love, and sadly she consents.  
There is a day of youth which needs must come  
When each must learn his life and leave his home.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxviii

The summer I had passed in my own fashion  
High in the Alps, a proselyte to toil.  
I was released and free, and spent my passion  
On the bare rocks as on a fruitful soil.  
I had soothed my soul with labour, and its fire  
Borne to those naked heights where I unfurled  
My flag with new ambitions, high and higher  
Even to the last bleak outposts of the world.  
My soul had needed courage, and behold!  
Here in these battles with the hosts of air  
And rock and snow and storm she had grown bold  
And proved her temper for the coming war.  
This was her gain, the strife she must engage  
With physical fear, her childhood's heritage.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxx

Thus was my soul enfranchised. But anon,  
With courage fired to full--fledged enterprise,  
And pushing still the vantage I had won,  
I sought communion with a world less wise,  
The living world. I mixed with not a few,  
Shepherds and countrymen, and village priests,  
Bagmen at inns, and all the motley crew  
Which comes and goes on market days and feasts  
In old--world hostelries of old--world towns.  
These gave a second schooling, till the grace  
Of the summer ended on the upper downs,  
And, carrying still its glory on my face,  
I came to Lyons where these things befell.  
The why and wherefore of it who shall tell?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxi

The booths were shut. The Fair was at an end,  
And the crowd gone with multitudinous feet  
Noisily home, or lingering still to spend  
At Café doors or at the turn of the street  
In twos and threes its laughter with good--night.  
All turned to silence. Even my heart had peace  
As, self--possessed and freed from its vain fright,  
I found myself once more upon the quays.  
I stopped before the theatre grown dark,  
With its extinguished lamps and blank repose  
A scene of melancholy sad to mark,  
Made sadder too by the white moon which rose  
Behind it virginal with vaporious wings,  
Aloof and careless of all earthly things.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxii

I had stopped to read a handbill of the play,  
Caught by the lettering. Thus it was I read,  
` ` Programme of this night's pieces, Saturday  
The twentieth of October, `X. Y. Z.,'  
A piece in one act, and `Les Bergers Fous,'  
These to be followed by the well--known `drame'  
Of `Manon Lescaut,' here brought out anew  
For the first time at Lyons." And a name  
Followed in giant type of one who then  
Illustrious stood in all the world of folly,  
The most sublime Comedian known to men,  
` ` Mademoiselle Esther, Muse of Melancholy."  
She in her part of Manon, so 'twas writ,  
Three nights would play in honour infinite.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxiii

Such was the legend. I had read it through  
Twice ere I thought of thinking what it meant.  
And as I turned with a sigh because I knew  
That I alone perhaps of all who went  
Homewards that night should bid good--night to none,  
From a side door thrust open on the street  
And calling as she passed in petulant tone  
To one within who seemed to rouse her heat,  
' `Ah, mauvais plaisant!" ere she slammed it to,  
Out stepped my little woman of the Fair.  
Her face was altered, but its form and hue,  
If I had doubted in the moonlight there,  
Was marked for me by that unaltered sign,  
The little scar, its beauty's underline.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxiv

She saw me in an instant, and stopped short  
With a sudden change of look from fierce to gay.  
Her black eyes gleamed with triumph as they caught,  
Like some wild bird of chase, their natural prey.  
` ` Ha, ha," she cried, ` ` c'est lui, c'est l'ingénu.  
Ah, vagabond! 'Tis thus you find me out.  
Standing en faction, and at midnight too,  
At the actors door, with no more fear or doubt  
Than any sinner of them all. Oh wise!  
Who would have guessed it? No. You shall not speak.  
You shall not soil your innocent lips with lies  
For any foolish reason in the week,  
Nor for the year together if you told  
Your stories here till both of us grew old.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxix

` ` We shall be friends. How friends? You must know me first.  
What? Like the Pont Neuf? Should you wish it? Well,  
None ever yet repented it who durst.  
Oh! you shall know me as I dare not tell.  
You said I was not pretty. 'Tis the paint  
That ruins the complexion and the hours  
Spent at the footlights. These would rob a saint,  
Much more a sinner, of her natural powers.  
Voilà la casse du métier! Then, this scar,  
Some praise it as a beauty. They are fools.  
At best it but an honour is of war,  
And beauty is not measured by foot--rules.  
So you forgive it me, what need we care?  
Fair faces are but signs of things more fair."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxv

`` Silence. I will not listen!" `` And for what?"  
She added strangely, in a softer mood.  
`` You see I am not angry. Do you not?  
Only soft--hearted, and alas! too good.  
Why did you follow me?" She took my hand  
With a sudden action so devoid of guile  
That I, who could not choose but understand,  
Was softened too and fooled into a smile.  
`` Why did you follow me? Here, feel," she said,  
`` How my heart beats. It frightens me to find  
So much of cunning in so young a head,  
So young a heart,--and mine which is not blind!"  
She pressed my hand to her side. In truth, her heart  
Was beating there, my own heart's counterpart.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxvi

She watched me curiously with mocking eyes,  
Yet tenderly, till once again her mirth  
Prevailed with her, and quick in feigned surprise  
Thrusting me back, ``Ah, traitor!" she broke forth,  
``'Twas not for me then you were waiting there,  
Not me, poor foolish me. The Queen of Love,  
The woman of the booth! She was your care!  
Monster! to dare me thus! And yet you prove  
Your wit in vain, for, look, you foolish boy,  
She cannot walk the streets like you and me,  
Or the town would be at her heels." Convulsed with joy  
At this new jest she laughed remorselessly,  
Till I was almost angry and inclined  
To leave her there. And then she changed her mind.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxvii

She seemed to change as if with a change of the wind,  
And growing serious sighed, ``Now look," she said,  
``You think me a mad woman and unkind,  
But that is nonsense. I am sound of head  
And not unsound of heart, ah, no, not there!  
But you turn my head with your John the Baptist's face.  
I will not be made jealous, so beware."  
She looked entreatingly as if for grace,  
And held me by the arm. ``We are strangers both  
Among these heavy Lyonnese. By right  
We so should hold together. Tell me truth.  
You never saw me, did you, till to--night?"  
I said, ``I came here not twelve hours ago!  
Why should you think it?" ``No," she broke in, ``no.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Esther, A Sonnet Sequence: Xxxviii

`` I do not doubt it. You have a look of truth  
Which is beyond suspicion. But the world  
Is as full of knaves as fools. You have your youth  
And I my wisdom. Then your head is curled  
Just as I like it, and your face is smooth,  
And it can blush like your red innocent hands.  
I saw it in an instant in the booth  
That we should know each other and be friends.  
It does not do to question. Look at me.  
I am not pretty, yet the world's best sense  
Has raved about my beauty foolishly  
These five years past in every mood and tense!  
Say. Would you like we should be friends for good?"  
Not knowing what I said, I said I would.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Farewell Dark Gaol

Farewell, dark gaol. You hold some better hearts  
Than in this savage world I thought to find.  
I do not love you nor the fraudulent arts  
By which men tutor men to ways unkind.  
Your law is not my law, and yet my mind  
Remains your debtor. It has learned to see  
How dark a thing the earth would be and blind  
But for the light of human charity.

I am your debtor thus and for the pang  
Which touched and chastened, and the nights of thought  
Which were my years of learning. See I hang  
Your image here, a glory all unsought,  
About my neck. Thus saints in symbol hold  
Their tools of death and darings manifold.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# For Thee

What woes are there  
I would not choose to bear  
For thy dear sake?  
Curses were blest, the ache  
Of sorrow's scourging and grief's crown of care.  
All pain were dear to me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

A sun grown cold,  
Earth wrapped in vaporous fold,  
The corn--flowers' head  
Robbed of their blue and red,  
The buttercups and daisies of their gold.  
This could I choose to see,  
But it must be  
For thee.

The notes unheard  
Of lark and piping bird,  
Or else their songs  
Replaced by harsher tongues,  
No voice to sing to me or speak a word.  
This too were joy to me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

A life alone,  
One left with others gone,  
A mourning house,  
Where none moves but the mouse  
Or knows the secret of its pale guests flown.  
Grief's tears were sweet to me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

Night without sleep,  
Slow hours that halt and creep,  
A cheerless bed



Where Love nor lays his head  
Nor looks with pity on blind eyes that weep.  
Watching were rest to me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

Passion, once sure,  
With vain expense grown poor,  
Cheeks ruddy white  
Now crocussed with affright,  
And Love the guest all coldly shown the door.  
Love's loss were gain to me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

Glory forsworn,  
The World's praise changed to scorn,  
Silence of friends,  
Foes gaining all their ends  
Through fault of fortune and my sword undrawn.  
Hatred were love to me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

Life's purpose vast  
Turned to base ends and cast  
On lines of ill  
Which faltering downward still  
Shall topple headlong to the gulf at last.  
Life's shame were pride to me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

A guarded cell,  
Where crime and madness dwell,  
Where murder creeps  
And maniac laughter weeps,  
With the undying worm for last farewell.  
There let me die, sad me,  
But it must be  
For thee.

O Soul of mine!  
Thou wert a thing divine,  
But made in vain.  
Then be thou broke in twain  
And spilled upon time's empty sands like wine.  
My soul no Heaven would see,  
But it must be  
For thee.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Friendship's Black And White

Romance is writ for me with many names  
Of fair loved faces, each page a design  
Blazoned and tintured, this with saffron flames  
Enshrining fancy, that with opaline  
Rays of mad hopes, half sunlight, half moonshine,  
This last with the sole gold of passionate blames  
Enjoyed and harvested and made divine  
By Love's long memory far outlasting Fame's.  
--Leave it untouched, the rose--sweet manuscript.  
Youth lies asleep in it, its spellbound knight.  
Turn not the leaves lest he should wake dismayed.  
This page alone stands open, unequipped  
Of any hue save friendship's black and white,  
Named with one name that needs not be afraid.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Ghost Of The Beautiful Past

Ghost of the beautiful past, of the days long gone, of a queen, of a fair sweet woman.

Ghost with the passionate eyes, how proud, yet not too proud to have wept, to have loved, since to love is human.

Angel in fair white garments, with skirts of lawn, by the autumn wind on the pathway fluttered,  
Always close by the castle wall and about to speak. But the whisper dies on her lips unuttered.

Yellow leaves deep strewn on the sward, dead leaves of a far--off glorious summer.

Yea, the leaves of the roses she plucked, petal by petal, with beating heart, for him the delayed loved comer.

Why doth she weep thus year on year? He hath tarried long, ah me, a thousand desolate years.

Why doth she weep? She hath wept enough. For see, dark down in the gardens dim, a lake. It is filled with her tears.

If I should ask her name, her title with men? But I need not ask it. I know it, alas, of old, though of old unspoken.

Is there another name but one for that face divine, for those sad sweet lips, like a bow unbent, like a bent bow broken?

No, it is none but her's, the Queen, the beloved of all, the beloved of one, when the Table Round was set in thy mead, Carleon.

None but hers, who was Guenevere, when the trumpets blew and the knights full clad rode down to joust at noon, with their clamorous shout, ``The Queen!"

Doth she remember all, or is all forgotten, pennon proud and lance in rest, the thunder of hoofs and the light swift tread of the foremost runner?

Dareth she raise her eyes, those passionate eyes, at the crowd that gazed? None of them all might meet her look, save he, her one true passionate knight, who adoring won her.

Surely, surely, she seeth; she knoweth all; she is no lost vision of death.

She hath still a smile deep hidden. She hath a name on her lips. She shall sigh, she shall speak, she shall move, when the light winds breathe from the Western

Seas with the Spring that quickeneth.

Oh, she shall laugh and sing, though the shadow of Death be a cloud behind her!  
Oh, she shall love! Though the dragon of grief keep watch, he shall sleep when  
the trees in the mead grow green, and awaking he shall not find her.

Read me a sweeter meaning, O Lady, O thou whom I serve, of this pictured  
story.

Read. Nay the tale is told. To it's truth I swear, by my sword, by my knightly  
faith, by the fame of the King and the Table Round, and the souls of the Saints in  
glory!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Giacinta

Giacinta sat upon the garden wall  
Among the autumn lilies, and let fall  
Their crimson petals on her lover's head,  
And laughed because her little hands were red.  
She was the fairest child of Italy,  
And it was well the lilies thus should die.

But Giulio shuddered when she made him kiss  
The stains away in her pride's wantonness  
And held them up between him and the sun  
That he might see the red blood flame and run  
In the long finger--clefts from root to tip,  
And still she pressed them closer to his lip,  
And still she laughed. But Giulio looked at her  
And it was half in love and half in fear.

And, when she saw him tremble, childishly  
She laid both hands in his, and with a sigh  
Told him to pity them. And he in vain  
Hid them in his and would have hid his pain,  
And tried to speak but could not for the weight  
Upon his breast. And so the lovers sat  
In a hard silence, while Giacinta's laugh  
Rang in his ears like the discordant half  
Of some fair carol from a tavern flung,  
She watching him above, the flowers among,  
First with her smile and then with a hurt pride  
Kindling to wrath. And ``Fool" at last she cried,  
``You think because this hand of mine is white  
And smooth to touch and wise in love's delight  
It had not dared to dabble in such red,  
The blood--of these dead flowers--for dead is dead;  
And you sit dumb and tremble and turn pale  
Because I laugh to see the lilies fall.  
Why not laugh with me, since you have the heart  
To say you love me in my tragic part?  
Think you that blood can make a hand less white,  
Or all the ink of heaven blot out to--night  
The innocent stars, or kisses steal away

The sweetness of red lips, or memory  
Drive laughter from the world? The moon grows wan  
And wastes and fades and shrivels to a span,  
Yet men watch on beyond the hills at even,  
And lo there is a new moon in the heaven!  
Look in my eyes. Are they less pure and keen  
For all the passion which their depths have seen?  
Is there a stain upon my brows? My cheek  
Is it less fair for what it dares not speak?  
Oh, Simon's blood was not so red a thing  
But it has left my face its colouring.  
Or think you drops from any vein of his  
Could make my fingers blush as deep as this?"

And Giulio's courage sickened when he heard  
Giacinta suddenly speak out this word.  
She was the fairest child of Italy,  
But Giulio thought it had been well to die.

“yet, had it left me pale,” she said, “I know  
It had been all as one to Giulio  
To love a pale face. You will love me yet  
Though I have told you how my hands are wet,  
And when I hold them out to you to kiss  
Your lips will burn to drink away the lees.  
Oh, lovers, lovers! Wherefore will you preach,  
When women laugh at what you dare to teach  
Of truth and honour? Is there one of you,  
One honourable friend, one bosom true,  
That will not sell his virtue for a kiss  
Though the mouth that gave it were a nest of lies,  
And will not soothe his soul with the deceit  
Which swears a rose is not a whit less sweet  
Because an angry bee was in its cell  
An hour ago?—Oh, lovers reason well!  
So take the flower and deign forget the bee.  
But Giulio, do not bid me stop and see  
How beautiful a thing your virtue is,  
And do not cry to the unheeding skies  
‘Did I not love her?’ See, I hate your love  
More than I hate yourself.” And Giulio strove  
With his weak heart and could not bear the pain.

And so he took Giacinta's hand again,  
Without more word. But she in softened mood  
Looked on the boy her beauty had subdued,  
And said `` Poor Giulio! I have never shown  
Much hate to you, and this you needs must own,  
Only beware of loving me. 'Tis strange  
That men are wise, yet cannot take the range  
Of a silly woman's mind, but still devise  
Of their fool's love, as if it were the prize  
For which a woman might forget the cost  
Of her undoing and a world well lost,  
And cannot see that love is only this,  
A pretty word to whisper in a kiss,  
As when one says, ` God bless you' with ` Good--night.'  
But Giulio, who would ever suffer it  
A man should always have the name of God  
Upon his lips?" Her lover only trod  
The lilies with his heel. At last he sighed,  
`` And Simon loved you, and for this he died?"

They sat till dusk upon the garden wall,  
And she began to sing a madrigal  
About the falling leaves and quite forgot  
To answer him. But Giulio heeded not  
Because he held her hand. He could not flee.  
She was the fairest child of Italy.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# Gibraltar

SEVEN weeks of sea, and twice seven days of storm  
Upon the huge Atlantic, and once more  
We ride into still water and the calm  
Of a sweet evening, screen'd by either shore  
Of Spain and Barbary. Our toils are o'er,  
Our exile is accomplish'd. Once again  
We look on Europe, mistress as of yore  
Of the fair earth and of the hearts of men.  
&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;Ay, this is the famed rock which Hercules  
And Goth and Moor bequeath'd us. At this door  
England stands sentry. God! to hear the shrill  
Sweet treble of her fifes upon the breeze,  
And at the summons of the rock gun's roar  
To see her red coats marching from the hill!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Glad Bird, I Do Bewail Thee

Glad bird, I do bewail thee,  
Thy song it was so sweet  
That Earth looked up to hail thee  
Till wings grew to her feet.  
But, ah! thy mate is lying dead  
Among the new--mown hay,  
And a fowler comes to jail thee  
Where thou shalt pine away.

Bright butterfly, I wail thee,  
So dainty was thy wing,  
So bravely didst regale thee  
On every honied thing.  
But thou art all too lightly clad  
For any month but May,  
And Autumn rains shall trail thee  
And wash thy paint away.

Sweet childhood, I bewail thee.  
Thy smile it shifteth ever  
As the ship that thou dost sail thee  
Adown the running river.  
But ah! life's river runneth fast  
And forward lies the sea,  
And what shall then avail thee  
Thy laughter and thy glee?

And youth, I most bewail thee,  
Thy purpose was so great,  
But the fools that did assail thee  
Were stronger than thy fate,  
And thy heart it was so ruddy red  
That every archer knew  
Where he might best impale thee  
And drive his arrows through.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# God Is My Witness

God knows, 'twas not with a fore--reasoned plan  
I left the easeful dwellings of my peace,  
And sought this combat with ungodly Man,  
And ceaseless still through years that do not cease  
Have warred with Powers and Principalities.  
My natural soul, e'er yet these strifes began,  
Was as a sister diligent to please  
And loving all, and most the human clan.

God knows it. And he knows how the world's tear  
Touched me. And He is witness of my wrath,  
How it was kindled against murderers  
Who slew for gold, and how upon their path  
I met them. Since which day the World in arms  
Strikes at my life with angers and alarms.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Good-Bye

Fools! must we ever quarrel with our fate,  
Too late  
Reading the worth of what we did despise,  
And wise  
At the journey's end to weep it scarce begun  
When done?

No more! 'Tis ever the same story told  
As of old.  
Children, we used to wish our childhood past:  
At last  
It ended, as this journey ends, and we  
Are free.

Shall we lament? It were an idle tale  
To wail.  
Can we be wise? Oh wisdom comes too late,  
And fate  
Answers our wicked prayer for liberty:  
`` Good--bye."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Gratitude

If gratitude a poor man's virtue is,  
'Tis one at least my sick soul can afford.  
Bankrupt I am of all youth's charities,  
But not of thanks. No. Thanks be to the Lord!  
Praise be, dear Lady of all grace, to you.  
You were my mediciner, my one sole friend,  
When the world spurned me from its retinue.  
And I am yours, your bond--slave to the end.  
--How shall I tell it you? There was a time  
When I was sordid in my unbelief,  
And mocked at all things less robust than crime,  
A convict in my prison--house of grief.  
But that is past. Your pity was the key  
Which sent me forth, a broken man, but free.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Griselda: A Society Novel In Verse - Chapter I

An idle story with an idle moral!  
Why do I tell it, at the risk of quarrel  
With nobler themes? The world, alas! is so,  
And who would gather truth must bend him low,  
Nor fear to soil his knees with graveyard ground,  
If haply there some flower of truth be found.  
For human nature is an earthy fruit,  
Mired at the stem and fleshy at the root,  
And thrives with folly's mixon best o'erlaid,  
Nor less divinely so, when all is said.  
Brave lives are lived, and worthy deeds are done  
Each virtuous day, 'neath the all--pitying sun;  
But these are not the most, perhaps not even  
The surest road to our soul's modern Heaven.  
The best of us are creatures of God's chance  
(Call it His grace), which works deliverance;  
The rest mere pendulums 'twixt good and ill,  
Like soldiers marking time while standing still.  
'Tis all their strategy, who have lost faith  
In things Divine beyond Man's life and death,  
Pleasure and pain. Of Heaven what know we  
Save as unfit for angels' company,  
Say rather Hell's? We cling to sins confessed,  
And say our prayers still hoping for the best.  
We fear old age and ugliness and pain,  
And love our lives, nor look to live again.

I do but parable the crowd I know,  
The human cattle grazing as they go,  
Unheedful of the heavens. Here and there  
Some prouder, may be, or less hungry steer  
Lifting his face an instant to the sky,  
And left behind as the bent herd goes by,  
Or stung to a short madness, tossing wild  
His horns aloft, and charging the gay field,  
Till the fence stops him, and he vanquished too,  
Turns to his browsing--lost his Waterloo.

The moral of my tale I leave to others

More bold, who point the finger at their brothers,  
And surer know than I which way is best  
To virtue's goal, where all of us find rest,  
Whether in stern denial of things sweet,  
Or yielding timely, lest life lose its feet  
And fall the further. A plain tale is mine  
Of naked fact, unconscious of design,  
Told of the world in this last century  
Of Man's (not God's) disgrace, the XIXth. We  
Have made it all a little as it is  
In our own images and likenesses,  
And need the more forgiveness for our sin.

Therefore, my Muse, impatient to begin,  
I bid thee fearless forward on thy road.  
Steer thou thy honest course 'twixt bad and good:  
Know this, in art that thing alone is evil  
Which shuns the one plain word that shames the Devil.  
Tell truth without preamble or excuse,  
And all shall be forgiven thee--all, my Muse!

In London then not many years ago  
There lived a lady of high fashion, who  
For her friends' sake, if any still there be  
Who hold her virtues green in memory,  
Shall not be further named in this true tale  
Than as Griselda or the Lady L.  
Such, if I err not, was the second name  
Her parents gave when to the font she came,  
And such the initial letter bravely set  
On her coach door, beneath the coronet  
Which bore her and her fortunes--bore, alas!  
For, as in this sad world all things must pass,  
However great and nobly framed and fair:  
Griselda, too, is of the things that were.

But while she lived Griselda had no need  
Of the world's pity. She was proudly bred  
And proudly nurtured. Plenty her full horn  
Had fairly emptied out when she was born,  
And dowered her with all bounties. She was fair  
As only children of the noblest are,

And brave and strong and opulent of health,  
Which made her take full pleasure of her wealth.  
She had a pitying scorn of little souls  
And little bodies, levying heavy tolls  
On all the world which was less strong than she.  
She used her natural strength most naturally,  
And yet with due discretion, so that all  
Stood equally in bondage to her thrall.  
She was of that high godlike shape and size  
Which has authority in all men's eyes:  
Her hair was brown, her colour white and red,  
Nor idly moved to blush. She held her head  
Straight with her back. Her body, from the knee  
Tall and clean shaped, like some well--nurtured tree,  
Rose finely finished to the finger tips.  
She had a noble carriage of the hips,  
And that proportionate waist which only art  
Dares to divine, harmonious part with part.  
But of this more anon, or rather never.  
All that the world could vaunt for its endeavour  
Was the fair promise of her ankles set  
Upon a pair of small high--insteped feet,  
In whose behalf, though modestly, God wot,  
As any nun, she raised her petticoat  
One little inch more high than reason meet  
Was for one crossing a well--besomed street.  
This was the only tribute she allowed  
To human folly and the envious crowd;  
Nor for my part would I be found her judge  
For her one weakness, nor appear to grudge  
What in myself, as surely in the rest,  
Bred strange sweet fancies such as feet suggest.  
We owe her all too much. This point apart,  
Griselda, modesty's own counterpart,  
Moved in the sphere of folly like a star,  
Aloof and bright and most particular.

By girlish choice and whim of her first will  
She had espoused the amiable Lord L.,  
A worthy nobleman, in high repute  
For wealth and virtue, and her kin to boot;  
A silent man, well mannered and well dressed,



Courteous, deliberate, kind, sublimely blessed  
With fortune's favours, but without pretence,  
Whom manners almost made a man of sense.  
In early life he had aspired to fame  
In the world of letters by the stratagem  
Of a new issue, from his private press,  
Of classic bards in senatorial dress,  
` ` In usum Marchionis." He had spent  
Much of his youth upon the Continent,  
Purchasing marbles, bronzes, pictures, gems,  
In every town from Tiber unto Thames,  
And gaining store of curious knowledge too  
On divers subjects that the world least knew:  
Knowledge uncatalogued, and overlaid  
With dust and lumber somewhere in his head.  
A slumberous man, in whom the lamp of life  
Had never quite been lighted for the strife  
And turmoil of the world, but flickered down,  
In an uncertain twilight of its own,  
With an occasional flash, that only made  
A deeper shadow for its world of shade.  
When he returned to England, all admired  
The taste of his collections, and inquired  
To whose fair fortunate head the lot should fall  
To wear these gems and jewels after all.  
But years went by, and still unclaimed they shone,  
A snare and stumbling--block to more than one,  
Till in his fiftieth year 'twas vaguely said,  
Lord L. already had too long delayed.  
Be it as it may, he abdicated life  
The day he took Griselda to his wife.

And then Griselda loved him. All agreed,  
The world's chief sponsors for its social creed,  
That, whether poor Lord L. was or was not  
The very fool some said and idiot,  
Or whether under cloak of dulness crass,  
He veiled that sense best suited to his case,  
Sparing his wit, as housewives spare their light,  
For curtain eloquence and dead of night;  
And spite of whispered tales obscurely spread,  
Doubting the fortunes of her nuptial bed,

Here at this word all sides agreed to rest:  
Griselda did her duty with the best.

Yet, poor Griselda! When in lusty youth  
A love--sick boy I stood unformed, uncouth,  
And watched with sad and ever jealous eye  
The vision of your beauty passing by,  
Why was it that that brow inviolate,  
That virginal courage yet unscared by fate,  
That look the immortal queen and huntress wore  
To frightened shepherds' eyes in days of yore  
Consoled me thus, and soothed unconsciously,  
And stilled my jealous fears I knew not why?  
How shall I tell the secret of your soul  
Which then I blindly guessed, or how cajole  
My boyhood's ancient folly to declare  
Now in my wisdom the dear maid you were,  
Though such the truth? Griselda's early days  
Of married life were not that fitful maze  
Of tears and laughter which betoken aught,  
Changed or exchanged, of pain with pleasure bought,  
Of maiden freedom conquered and subdued,  
Of hopes new born and fears of womanhood.  
Those who then saw Griselda saw a child  
Well pleased and happy, thoughtlessly beguiled  
By every simplest pleasure of her age,  
Gay as a bird just issued from its cage,  
When every flower is sweet. No eye could trace  
Doubt or disquiet written on her face,  
Where none there was. And, if the truth be told,  
Griselda grieved not that Lord L. was old.  
She found it well that her sweet seventeen  
Should live at peace with fifty, and was seen  
Just as she felt, contented with her lot,  
Pleased with what was and pleased with what was not  
She held her husband the more dear that he  
Was kind within the bounds of courtesy,  
And love was not as yet within her plan,  
And life was fair, and wisdom led the van.

For she was wise--oh, wise! She rose at eight  
And played her scales till breakfast, and then sat

The morning through with staid and serious looks,  
Counting the columns of her household books,  
Her daily labour, or with puzzled head  
Bent over languages alive and dead,  
Wise as alas! in life those only are  
Who have not yet beheld a twentieth year.  
Wealth had its duties, time its proper use,  
Youth and her marriage should be no excuse;  
Her education must be made complete!  
Lord L. looked on and quite approved of it.  
The afternoons, in sense of duty done,  
Went by more idly than the rest had gone.  
If in the country, which Lord L. preferred,  
She had her horse, her dogs, her favourite bird,  
Her own rose--garden, which she loved to rake,  
Her fish to feed with bread crumbs in the lake,  
Her schools, old women, poor and almshouses,  
Her sick to visit, or her church to dress.  
Lord L. was pleased to see her bountiful:  
They hardly found the time to find it dull.

In London, where they spent their second year,  
Came occupations suited to the sphere  
In which they lived; and to the just pretence  
Of our Griselda's high--born consequence,  
New duties to the world which no excuse  
Admitted. She was mistress of L. House  
And heir to its traditions. These must be  
Observed by her in due solemnity.  
Her natural taste, I think, repelled the noise,  
The rush, and dust, and crush of London joys;  
But habit, which becomes a second sense,  
Had reconciled her to its influence  
Even in girlhood, and she long had known  
That life in crowds may still be life alone,  
While mere timidity and want of ease  
She never ranked among youth's miseries.  
She had her parents too, who made demand  
Upon her thoughts and time, and close at hand  
Sisters and friends. With these her days were spent  
In simple joys and girlish merriment.  
She would not own that being called a wife

Should make a difference in her daily life.

Then London lacks not of attractions fit  
For serious minds, and treasures infinite  
Of art and science for ingenious eyes,  
And learning for such wits as would be wise,  
Lectures in classes, galleries, schools of art:  
In each Griselda played conspicuous part--  
Pupil and patron, ay, and patron--saint  
To no few poor who live by pens and paint.  
The world admired and flattered as a friend,  
And only wondered what would be the end.

And so the days went by. Griselda's face,  
Calm in its outline, of romantic grace,  
Became a type even to the vulgar mind  
Of all that beauty means when most refined,  
The visible symbol of a soul within,  
Conceived immaculate of human sin,  
And only clothed in our humanity  
That we may learn to praise and better be.  
Where'er she went, instinctively the crowd  
Made way before her, and ungrudging bowed  
To one so fair as to a Queen of Earth,  
Ruling by right of conquest and of birth.

And thus I first beheld her, standing calm  
In the swayed crowd upon her husband's arm,  
One opera night, the centre of all eyes,  
So proud she seemed, so fair, so sweet, so wise.  
Some one behind me whispered ``Lady L!  
His Lordship too! and thereby hangs a tale."

His Lordship! I beheld a placid man,  
With gentle deep--set eyes, and rather wan,  
And rather withered, yet on whose smooth face  
Time seemed to have been in doubt what lines to trace  
Of youth or age, and so had left it bare,  
As it had left its colour to his hair.  
An old young man perhaps, or really old,  
Which of the two could never quite be told.  
I judged him younger than his years gave right,

His looks betrayed him least by candlelight.  
Yet, young or old, that night he seemed to me  
Sublime, the priest of her divinity  
At whose new shrine I worshipped. But enough  
Of me and my concerns! More pertinent stuff  
My tale requires than this first boyish love,  
Which never found the hour its fate to prove.  
My Lady smiling motions with her hand;  
The crowd falls back; his Lordship, gravely bland,  
Leads down the steps to where his footmen stay  
In state. Griselda's carriage stops the way!

And was Griselda happy? Happy?--Yes,  
In her first year of marriage, and no less  
Perhaps, too, in her second and her third.  
For youth is proud, nor cares its last sad word  
To ask of fate, and not unwilling clings  
To what the present hour in triumph brings.  
It was enough, as I have said, for her  
That she was young and fortunate and fair.  
The world that loved her was a lovely world,  
The rest she knew not of. Fate had not hurled  
A single spear as yet against her life.  
She would not argue as 'twixt maid and wife,  
Where both were Woman, Human Nature, Man,  
Which held the nobler place in the world's plan.  
Her soul at least was single, and must be  
Unmated still through its eternity.  
And, even here in life, what reason yet  
To doubt or question or despair of Fate?  
Her youth, an ample web, before her shone  
For hope to weave its subtlest fancies on,  
If she had cared to dream. Her lot was good  
Beyond the common lot of womanhood,  
And she would prove her fortune best in this,  
That she would not repine at happiness.  
Thus to her soul she argued as the Spring  
Brought back its joy to each begotten thing--  
Begotten and begetting. Who shall say  
Which had the better reason, she or they?

In the fourth year a half acknowledged grief

Made its appearance in Griselda's life.  
Her sisters married, younger both than she,  
Mere children she had thought, and happily.  
Each went her way engrossed by her new bliss,  
Too gay to guess Griselda's dumb distress.  
Her home was broken. In their pride they wrote  
Things that like swords against her bosom smote,  
The detail of their hopes, and loves, and fears.  
Griselda read, and scarce restrained her tears.  
Her mother too, the latest fledgling flown,  
Had vanished from the world. She was alone.

When she returned to London, earlier  
Than was her custom, in the following year,  
She found her home a desert, dark and gaunt;  
L. House looked emptier, gloomier than its wont.  
Griselda sighed, for on the table lay  
Two letters, which announced each in its way  
The expected tidings of her sisters' joy.  
Either was brought to bed--and with a boy.  
Her generous heart leaped forth to these in vain,  
It could not cheat a first sharp touch of pain,  
But yielded to its sorrow. That same night,  
Lord L., whose sleep was neither vexed nor light,  
And who for many years had ceased to dream,  
Beheld a vision. Slowly he became  
Aware of a strange light which in his eyes  
Shone to his vast discomfort and surprise;  
And, while perplexed with vague mistrusts and fears,  
He saw a face, Griselda's face, in tears  
Before him. She was standing by his bed  
Holding a candle. It was cold, she said,  
And shivered. And he saw her wrap her shawl  
About her shoulders closely like a pall.  
Why was she there? Why weeping? Why this light,  
Burning so brightly in the dead of night?  
These riddles poor Lord L.'s half--wakened brain  
Tried dimly to resolve, but tried in vain.

``I cannot sleep to--night," went on the voice,  
``The streets disturb me strangely with their noise,  
The cabs, the striking clocks." Lord L.'s distress

Struggled with sleep. He thought he answered ``Yes."  
``What can I do to make me sleep? I am ill,  
Unnerv'd to--night. This house is like a well.  
Do I disturb you here, and shall I go?"  
Lord L. was moved. He thought he answered ``No."  
``If you would speak, perhaps my tears would stop.  
Speak! only speak!" Lord L. here felt a drop  
Upon his hand. She had put down the light,  
And sat upon his bed forlornly white  
And pale and trembling. Her dark hair unbound  
Lay on her knees. Her lips moved, but their sound  
Came strangely to his ears and half--unheard.  
He only could remember the last word:  
``I am unhappy--listen L!--alone."  
She touched his shoulder and he gave a groan.  
``This is too much. You do not hear me. See,  
I cannot stop these tears. Too much!" And he  
Now well awake, looked round him. He could catch  
A gleam of light just vanished, and the latch  
Seemed hardly silent. This was all he knew.  
He sat some moments doubting what to do,  
Rose, went out, shivered, hearing nothing, crept  
Back to his pillow where the vision wept  
Or seemed to weep awhile ago, and then  
With some disquiet went to sleep again.

Next morning, thinking of his dream, Lord L.  
Went down to breakfast in intent to tell  
The story of his vision. But he met  
With little sympathy. His wife was late,  
And in a hurry for her school of art.  
His lordship needed time to make a start  
On any topic, and no time she gave.  
Griselda had appointments she must save,  
And could not stop to hear of rhyme or reason--  
The dream must wait a more convenient season.  
And so it was not told. Alas, alas!  
Who shall foretell what wars shall come to pass,  
What woes be wrought, what fates accomplishèd,  
What new dreams dreamt, what new tears vainly shed,  
What doubts, what anguish, what remorse, what fears  
Begotten in the womb of what new years!--

And all because of this, that poor Lord L.  
Was slow of speech, or that he slept too well!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Griselda: A Society Novel In Verse - Chapter Iii

Who has not seen the falls of Tivoli,  
The rocks, the foam--white water, and the three  
Fair ruined temples which adorn the hill?  
Who has not sat and listened to the shrill  
Sweet melody of blackbirds, and the roar  
Of Anio's voice rebounding from the shore,  
Nor would have given his very soul to greet  
Some passing vision of a white nymph's feet,  
And waving arms, as the wild chasm's spray  
Beat on his face, for ever answering ``Nay"?  
Who has not turned away with sadder face,  
Abashed before the genius of the place,  
A wiser man, and owned upon his knees,  
The dull transmontaine Goth and boor he is?  
Who that was born to feel? What sons of clay  
Are these that stand among your shrines to--day,  
Gods of the ancient rivers! and who set  
The heavy impress of barbarian feet  
Upon your classic shores, and dare to love  
Your ruined homes in temple, rock, and grove!  
What new rude sons of Japhet! What mad crew,  
Whose only creed is what it dares to do  
Through lack of knowledge, whose undoubting heart,  
Here in the very temples of old art,  
Brings out its little tribute, builds its shrines,  
Wreathes its sad garlands of untutored lines,  
Writes, paints, professes, sculptures its new gods,  
And dares to have its home in your abodes!

Oh, if I had a soul oppressed with song,  
A tongue on fire to prophesy among  
My brother prophets, if I had a hand  
Which needs must write its legend on life's sand  
With brush or chisel, I at least would choose  
Some soil less fair, less sacred to the Muse,  
Some younger, wilder land, where no sad voice  
Had ever stammered forth its tale of joys  
And loves and sorrows, or in tones less rude  
Than the brute pulsing of its human blood;

If I would build a temple, it should be  
At least not here, not here in Italy,  
Where all these temples stand. My thought should shape  
Its fancies in rough granite on some cape  
O'erlooking the Atlantic, from whose foam  
No goddess ever leaped, and not in Rome,  
Beneath the mockery of immortal eyes,  
Gazing in marble down, so coldly wise!

Such was Griselda's thought, which, half aloud,  
She uttered one May morning 'mid a crowd  
Of pleasure--seekers, come from Rome to see  
The wonder of these falls of Tivoli,  
And Belgirate's villa, where the Prince  
Was offering entertainment (for his sins),  
And dancing, to all such as called him friend  
That Spring in Rome, now nearly at an end;--  
A thought suggested by the place and by  
A German painter, who undauntedly  
Was plying a huge canvas just begun,  
With brush and palette seated in the sun.  
She had hardly meant to speak, and when Lord L.  
Objected (for he knew his classics well)  
That landscape--painting was an unknown trade  
In the days of Horace, blushed for her tirade,  
And turned to Belgirate, who stood near,  
Playing the host to all the world and her.

The Prince appealed to, though his care was less  
With what was spoken than the speaker's face,  
Took up the parable, confessed the truth  
Of all each ventured, and agreed with both.  
Nature, he said, and art, though now allied,  
Had not in all times thus walked side by side.  
Indeed the love of Nature, now so real,  
Was alien to the love of the ideal,  
The classic love which claimed as though of need  
Some living presence for each fountain--head,  
Each grove, each cavern, satyr, nymph, or god,  
A human shape unseen yet understood.  
This was the thought which lived in ancient art,  
Eschewing the waste places of the heart,

And only on compulsion brought to face  
Brute Nature's aspect in its nakedness.  
Nature as Nature was a thought too rude  
For these, untempered in its solitude.  
It had no counterpart in our new love  
Of mountain, sea, and forest. Then each grove  
Asked for its statue, each perennial spring  
Its fountain. Solitude itself must bring  
Its echo. Every mountain top of Greece  
Beheld fair temples rise. A law of peace  
Reigned over art in protest at the mood  
Of social life which drenched the world in blood.  
All now had been reversed. Our modern creed  
Scouted the law that men were born to bleed.  
It turned from human nature, if untaught,  
And wrought mankind, perhaps and overwrought  
Into trim shapes, and then for its relief  
Rushed to the wilderness to vent its grief  
In lonely passion. Here it neither sought  
Nor found a presence which it needed not.  
It chose wild hills and barren seas. It saw  
Beauty in tumult, in revolt a law.  
Here it gave reins to its brute instincts. Here  
It owned no god, no guide, no arbiter.  
Its soul it must avenge of discipline,  
And Nature had gone naked from the shrine.  
This was its consolation. Of the score  
Who stood around him and who praised his lore,  
Perhaps no single listener understood  
The thought which underlay the Prince's mood,  
Or guessed its bitterness--not even she  
Who lent the moral to his mockery.  
Yet she was moved. In her too was a need  
Of consolation for too fair a creed,  
An impulse of rebellion. In her blood  
There lived a germ of Nature unsubdued,  
Which would not be appeased. She too had sought  
A refuge from the tyranny of thought  
In the brute impulses of sea and plain  
And cloud and forest far from haunts of men.  
A vain mad search. The fetters of her pride  
Galled her like sores. Griselda turned and sighed.

That evening on the terrace, vaguely lit  
 With paper lanterns and the infinite  
 Display of those fair natural lamps, the stars,  
 And 'neath the influence of the planet Mars  
 Or Venus or another--which it was  
 We best may judge by that which came to pass--  
 The Prince essayed his fortune. From the hour  
 Of their first flash of eloquence, some power,  
 Some most persistent and ingenious fate  
 Of idle tongues had held them separate,  
 Griselda and the Prince--him in his part  
 Of host, with cares not wholly of the heart  
 Demanding his attention, while on her  
 Friends fastened more than dull and less than dear.  
 In vain they stopped, and loitered, and went on,  
 Leaving no trick untried, unturned no stone;  
 In vain they waited. Still the hope deferred  
 Failed of its object, one consoling word,  
 One little sigh as of relief thus given:  
 ``Well, they are gone at last, and thanked be Heaven."  
 But hour on hour went by, and accident  
 Seemed still at pains to frustrate their intent,  
 Piling up grief for them and poor Lord L.,  
 On whom, in fault of foes, their vengeance fell.  
 'Twas worst for her. She knew not whom to strike,  
 Lord L., her friends, the Prince? 'Twas now alike.  
 She had lost in fact her temper, if I dare  
 Thus speak of one so wise and one so fair,  
 And to the point that now there was no room  
 For other thought, but L. should take her home,  
 Away and speedily. The Prince, who knew  
 No word of what a storm Fate held in brew,  
 And who had sought, in innocence of all,  
 Griselda's hand to lead the opening ball,  
 And sought in vain, now found, to his despair,  
 My lady cloaked and standing on the stair.  
 She was alone. ``Lord L. had gone," she said,  
 ``To bid the Prince good night. Her foolish head  
 Had played her false, and ached with the new heat  
 Of the May sun (even L. complained of it).  
 They must be home betimes. Next day was Sunday,

And they had much to do 'twixt that and Monday,  
In view of their departure." ``Whither? whence?  
In Heaven's name," exclaimed the astounded Prince.  
``Why, home to England, she had thought he knew:  
She must have told him. L. was more than due  
In London, where his place in Parliament  
Required his presence. He had missed the Lent,  
And dared not miss the Easter session. She  
Thought he was right, altho'," and suddenly  
She burst in tears. The Prince, in dire distress,  
Besought her to be calm. But she, with face  
Hid in both hands, and turning from the light,  
Broke from his arms, and rushed into the night.  
Across the hall, beneath the portico,  
And down the steps she fled, to where below  
The garden lay all dim with starlit shade,  
And the white glimmer of the main facade.  
Here Belgirate found her on a seat,  
Crouched in an angle of the parapet,  
And sobbing as in terror. His surprise  
Was changed to resolution. To his eyes  
The world became transfigured. ``Lady L.,"  
He whispered, ``what is this? You love me? Well,  
Why do you weep?" He took her hands in his  
And pressed them to his lips; and at the kiss  
Griselda started from the heap she was  
And sat upright, with pale pathetic face  
Turned to the night. By the dim starlight he  
Beheld, half--awed and half in ecstasy,  
The strange emotion of her countenance.  
She made no gesture to withdraw her hands,  
No sign of disagreement with his words.  
Her eyes looked scared and troubled like a bird's  
Caught in a net, and seemed to ask of Fate  
Where the next blow should fall. 'Twas thus she sat  
Speechless, inanimate, nor seemed to breathe.  
The Prince could hear the chattering of her teeth,  
And feel her shiver in the warm night wind,  
And yet its touch was hardly thus unkind.

He too, poor soul, in hope and tenderness,  
Still kissed her hands, and kissed her gloves and dress,

And kneeling at her feet embraced her knees  
With soothing arms and soft cajoleries.  
She dared not turn nor speak. The balustrade  
Served as a pretext for her with its shade  
Hiding his face. She would not seem to guess  
All that his fondness asked of her distress:  
A word might break the spell. She only knew  
She was a poor sad woman, doomed to do  
Sorrow to all who loved her, that the Prince  
Had spoken truly, and her long pretence  
Of innocence was o'er. She scorned to make  
An idle protest now for honour's sake.  
He had a right to ask for what he would  
Now that she loved him, and her womanhood  
Reserved one tearful right, and only one,  
To hide her face an instant and be gone.

How long they sat thus silent who shall say?  
Griselda knew not. Time was far away;  
She wanted courage to prepare her heart  
For that last bitterest word of all, ``We part."  
And he cared naught for time. His Heaven was there,  
Nor needed thought, nor speech, nor even prayer.

A sound of music roused them. From the house  
Voices broke in and strains tumultuous,  
Proving the dance begun. Then with a sigh  
Griselda turned her head, and piteously  
Looked in his face. She moved as if to go,  
And when he held her still, ``For pity, no,  
Let me be gone," she cried. ``I ask it thus,"  
Clasping her hands. ``You will not? No! alas!  
You must not doubt me when I speak the truth;  
This is a great misfortune for us both."  
``Griselda," he began. ``Oh, stop," she said,  
``You know not what you ask." She bent her head  
Close to his own. ``I am not what I seem,  
A woman to be loved, not even by him  
Whom I might choose to worship. Mine must be  
An unfinished life, not quite a tragedy,  
Even to my friends, an idle aimless life,  
Not worth an argument, still less a strife.

You must forget, forgive me. We were friends,  
Friends still perhaps; but, oh! this first day ends  
Our love for ever. What you said was true,  
Only I never guessed it." The Prince knew  
That she was weeping, and a single sob  
Broke from her lips. She seemed her wounds to probe.  
` ` Yes, I have loved you, loved you from the first,  
The day we met at Terni, when you burst  
Like sunshine on the storm of my dark life--  
You, wise and free--I, only the sad wife  
Of one you called a friend. The fault was mine  
And mine alone. In you there was no sin:  
You stood too far from me, too high above  
My woman's follies even to dream of love.  
There, do not answer, you were kind to me,  
Good, patient, wise--you could no other be--  
But, oh! you never loved me." Here again  
The Prince broke in protesting (but in vain):  
Her words were madness and his heart was hers.  
She would not listen nor control her tears.  
` ` You never loved me. This one thought I hold  
In consolation of my manifold  
Deceits and errors. You at least are free  
From all deceptions and remorse and me:  
I cannot cause you sorrow, else it were  
Indeed too pitiful, too hard to bear."

She stooped and kissed his forehead reverently,  
As one would kiss a relic; and when he  
Still would have spoken, stopped him with a hand  
Laid on his lips, half--prayer and half--command.  
She would not let him speak. The prince, tho' mute,  
Now pleaded with his hands and pressed his suit  
With better eloquence, for this to her  
Seemed less a crime than speech. Her ignorant fear  
Had hardly fathomed yet the troubled sea  
On which her lot was cast thus dangerously.  
She only feared his words to prove him right,  
And these caresses in the dim still night  
Soothed and consoled her. They were too unreal,  
Too strange to her experience, quite to feel  
Or quite to question. She, with half--shut eyes,

And face averted, ceased to feel surprise,  
And ceased to think. She was a child again,  
Caressed and fondled. She forgot her pain,  
And almost even his presence in the place.  
He was too near and could not see her face.  
Besides, Griselda loved him. Only once  
She made a silent protest with her hands,  
As one might make asleep, and in her dream  
Opened her eyes, and seemed to question him  
With the pathetic instinct as of doom.  
The Prince in rapture judged his hour was come.

Alas! poor Prince. If thou hadst had thy bliss,  
I would not then have grudged thy happiness,  
Thine nor Griselda's. Happiness is not  
A merchandise men buy or leave unbought  
And find again. It is a wild bird winging  
Its way through heaven, in joyous circles ringing,  
Aloft, at its own will. Then, ere we wist,  
It stooped and sat a moment on our wrist,  
And fondled with our fingers, and made play  
With jess and hood as if it meant to stay.  
And we, if we were wise and fortunate,  
And if the hour had been decreed of fate,  
Seized the glad bird and held it in our hand,  
And forced it to obey our least command,  
Knowing that never more, if not made sure,  
It would come again to voice, or sign, or lure.

Oh, such is happiness. That night for them  
Fate stood, a genius, suppliant and tame,  
Demanding to do service. Had they willed,  
The treasure--house of Heaven had been unfilled  
And emptied in their lap. They too, even they,  
Mere mortals born, inheritors of clay,  
Had known eternal life, and been as gods.  
Only the will between them was at odds,  
Only the word was wanting. What one thing  
It was that frightened Fate to taking wing,  
And scared for ever the celestial bird,  
And left them desolate, if I have heard  
I do not now remember nor would say



Even if I knew. 'Twas told me not to--day  
Nor yesterday, but in a time long since,  
By one of the two who knew, in confidence,  
And then not quite perhaps the utter truth.  
Whoever tells it? But there came to both  
A moment when, as Belgirate knew,  
There was no further power to plead or sue:  
They had played with Fate too long. Their hour was over;  
She was no more his love nor he her lover.  
His courage was exhausted. One by one  
His fingers, which still held Griselda's gown,  
Relaxed their hold. His hands dropped by his side,  
His head upon his bosom, and the pride,  
Which was the reason of his being, quailed.  
Grief in that hour and tenderness prevailed,  
And tears rushed to his eyes, long strangers there,  
And to his lips, Italian--like, a prayer,  
While he lay prostrate, his face turned from heaven,  
Under the stars. The tower clock struck eleven  
And roused him. He had neither heard nor known  
Griselda's going, but he was alone.

And she? Griselda? In a whirl of grief,  
Tortured, distracted, hopeless of relief,  
And careless now what eye should see her tears,  
Whom none could mock with bitterer jibes than hers,  
And speechless to all question of her lord,  
Who sought to learn what portent had occurred,  
And still reverted to the theme begun  
Of Roman fever and the Roman sun;  
She was driven back to Rome. Two days her door  
Was shut to all the world, both rich and poor,  
And on the third she went to Ostia,  
Pleading a wild desire to see the sea.

The sea! What virtue is there in the sea  
That it consoles us thus in misery?  
In joy we do not love it, and our bliss  
Scoffs at its tears and scorns its barrenness.  
Our pride of life is in the fruitful Earth,  
The mother of all joy, which gave us birth,  
The Earth so touching in its hopes to be,

So green, so tender in its sympathy.  
But when life turns to bitterness--ah! then,  
Where is Earth's message to the sons of men?  
How does she speak? What sound of grief is hers  
To match our grief? What tale of pity stirs  
Her jubilant heart? The laughing woods give back  
Naught of their happiness to those who lack.  
The beauty of the uplands bars relief,  
The prosperous fields are insolent to grief;  
There is no comfort in the lowing herds,  
The hum of bees, the songs, the shouts of birds;  
There is no sob in all the living earth,  
Naught but the flutter of discordant mirth,  
On which, as on a pageant, morn and even  
The careless sun shines mockingly from heaven.  
There is no grief in all the world save one,  
The ocean's voice, as tearful as our own.  
Then from the Earth we turn--too potent mother,  
Too joyous in her offspring--to that other,  
The childless, joyless, unproductive sea,  
And mourn with her her dread virginity.  
We clasp her naked rocks with our two hands,  
Barefoot we tread her barren waste of sands,  
Her breadths of shingle and her treeless shore,  
Knowing her griefs are as our griefs, and more,  
An eternal lack of love. 'Twas in this guise  
Griselda cradled her soul's miseries,  
And nursed it in its anguish like a child,  
And soothed it to oblivion. The sea smiled  
With its eternal smile upon her sorrow,  
The selfsame yesterday, to--day, to--morrow,  
And kept its tears in its own bosom sealed,  
A mystery of passion unrevealed,  
Save in the tremor of its voice at noon,  
When the wind rose and played wild chords thereon.  
So she. The memory of that place long stood  
In her remembrance as a dream of good,  
Dividing life as sleep divides the day,  
A place of utter weakness. Let those say  
Who will, that deeds of strength life's milestones are.  
The dearest days are not the days of war,  
And victory is forgotten in the peace

Of certain hours gone by in helplessness,  
When the soul ceased to battle, and lay still  
As on a deathbed dumb to good and ill.  
These are its treasures. Nor was silence all  
Griselda's ointment. Hard by the sea--wall,  
Where daily her steps turned fresh peace to find,  
A convent stood, inviting to the mind.  
Here she found entrance at the chapel gate,  
And knelt in prayer half--inarticulate,  
Bowed to the earth. For patron saints it had  
The Marys three-- ``two virtuous, and one bad,"  
Griselda thought, ``like her own self"--who came  
In flight together from Jerusalem,  
And landed there; and these in her great need,  
She suppliant asked for her soul's daily bread,  
Using all fondest words her lips could frame,  
To speak her secret wishes without blame.  
Six candlesticks she vowed, to each a pair,  
So they would listen to and grant her prayer.  
The superstition pleased her. In her pride  
She bowed and begged like any peasant's bride,  
For what? for whom? she hardly could explain  
Even to her, the dear St. Magdalen.  
``And yet," she argued, ``she at least will know  
And understand me if no other do."

All this was folly, but it comforted  
And gave her strength. Then with a calmer head,  
If not a calmer heart, she turned once more  
From love to life. Her first strong grief was o'er.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Griselda: A Society Novel In Verse - Chapter Iv

How shall I take up this vain parable  
And ravel out its issue? Heaven and Hell,  
The principles of good and evil thought,  
Embodied in our lives, have blindly fought  
Too long for empire in my soul to leave  
Much for its utterance, much that it can grieve.  
A soldier on the battlefield of life,  
I have grown callous to the signs of strife,  
And feel the wounds of others and my own  
With scarce a tremor and without a groan.  
I have seen many perish in their sins,  
Known much of frailty and inconsequence,  
And if I laughed once, now I dare not be  
Other than sad at man's insanity.  
Therefore, in all humility of years,  
Colder and wiser for hopes drowned in tears,  
And seeking no more quarries for my mirth,  
Who most need pity of the sons of earth,  
I dip in kindlier ink my chastened pen,  
And fill of my lost tale what leaves remain.

Years passed. Griselda from my wandering sight  
Had waned and vanished, like a meteor bright,  
Leaving no pathway in my manhood's heaven  
Save only memories vaguely unforgiven  
Of something fair and sad, which for a day  
Had lit its zenith and had gone its way.  
Rome and the Prince, the tale that I had heard,  
Griselda's beauty--all that once had stirred  
My curious thought to wonder and regret,  
In the vexed problem of her woman's fate,  
Had yielded place to the world's work--day cares,  
The wealth it covets and the toil it dares.  
I was no more a boy, when idle chance  
And that light favour which attends romance  
Brought me once more within the transient spell  
Of other days, and dreams of Lady L.

'Twas in September--(I have always found

That month in my life's record dangerous ground,  
Whether it be due to some unreasoned stress  
Of the mad stars which dog our happiness,  
Or whether, since in truth most things are due  
To natural causes, if our blindness knew,  
To the strong law of Nature's first decay,  
Warning betimes of time that cannot stay,  
And summer perishing, and hours to come,  
Lit by less hope in the year's martyrdom;  
And so we needs must seize at any cost  
Fleet pleasure's hem lest all our day be lost)--  
'Twas in September, at a country house  
In the Midland shires, where I had come, God knows,  
Without a fancy but of such light sort  
As manhood ventures in the realms of sport  
With that dear god of slaughter England's sons  
Adore with incense--smoke and roar of guns,  
That this new chapter opens. Who had guessed  
So rare a phoenix housed in such a nest?

For we, in truth, were no wise company,  
Men strong and joyous, keen of hand and eye,  
And shrewd for pleasure, but whose subtlest wit  
Was still to jest at life while using it,  
And jest at love, as at a fruit low hung  
To all men's lips, no matter whence it sprung.  
A fool's philosophy, yet dear to youth  
Bred without knowledge of the nobler truth,  
And seeming wisdom, till the bitter taste  
Of grief has come to cure its overhaste.  
Naught was there, in the scene nor in the parts  
Played by the actors, worthy serious hearts,  
Or worthy her whose passion trod a stage  
High o'er the frailties of our prurient age,  
Griselda and her unattained fair dream  
Of noble deeds and griefs unknown to them.  
How came she there? Our hostess was a woman  
Less famed for wisdom than a heart all human  
Rich in life's gifts, a wealthy generous soul,  
But still too fair and still too bountiful.  
The rest, mad hoydens of the world, whose worth  
Lay mired with folly, earthiest of the earth.

How came she there? When I, unconscious all  
Of such high presence at our festival,  
Heard her name bandied in the general hum  
Of hungry tongues, which told the guests had come,  
And saw in converse with our host the form,  
Familiar once in sunshine and in storm,  
Of her who was to me the type and sign  
Of all things noble, not to say Divine,  
Breathing the atmosphere of that vain house,  
My heart stopped beating. Half incredulous,  
I looked and questioned in my neighbours' eyes,  
Seeking the sense of this supreme surprise.  
My thought took words, as at the table set  
Men's lips were loosed, discoursing while they ate,  
And each to each. Beside me, of the crew  
Of gilded youths who swelled the retinue  
Of our fair hostess in her daily lot  
Of hunting laughter when field sports were not,  
Sat one, a joyous boy, whom fashion's freak,  
A mad--cap purse--string and a beardless cheek,  
Had set pre--eminent in pleasure's school  
To play the hero and to play the fool  
For those few years which are the summer's day  
Of fashion's foils ere they are cast away.  
Young Jerry Manton! Happy fortune's son!  
What heights of vanity your creed had won,  
Creed of adventure, and untiring words  
And songs and loves as brainless as a bird's.  
Who would not envy you your lack of sense,  
Your lawless jibes, your wealth of insolence,  
The glory of your triumphs unconcealed  
In pleasure's inmost and most sacred field?  
Who would not share the sunshine of your mirth,  
Your god--like smile, your consciousness of worth,  
The keenness of your wit in the world's ways,  
Your heart so callous to its blame or praise?  
Him I addressed, in pursuance of my doubt  
How such a prodigy had come about.

Young Manton eyed me. ``Every road," he said,  
``Leads--well--to Rome." He laughed and shook his head,  
As if in censure of a thought less sage.

`` My lady's thirty is a dangerous age,  
 And of the three where most misfortunes come  
 Is the worst strewn with wrecks in Christendom."  
 `` You see," he added, `` we are not all wise  
 In all dilemmas and all companies,  
 And there are times and seasons when the best  
 Has need of an hour's frolic with the rest,  
 If only to set free the importunate load  
 Of trouble pressing on an uphill road.  
 Women's first snare is vanity. At twenty  
 Praises are pleasant, be they ne'er so plenty;  
 And some, the foolish ones, are thus soon caught  
 Seeking to justify the flattery taught.  
 These are the spendthrifts, dear ingenuous souls,  
 Whose names emblazoned stand on pleasure's rolls,  
 Manning the hosts of mirth. Apart from them,  
 More serious or less eager in their aim,  
 The wise ones wait like birds that hold aloof,  
 Conscious of danger and the cloven hoof.  
 Yet there are times." He paused awhile and sighed.  
 `` The second snare," said he `` is set less wide;  
 It stands midway between the dawn of youth  
 And beauty's sunset, with its naked truth,  
 A danger hidden cunningly in flowers  
 And the wild drowsing of the noontide hours.  
 Here fall the elect, the chosen virtuous few,  
 Who have outlived the worst the storm could do,  
 But faint when it is over, through mere stress  
 Of their mortality's first weariness.  
 'Tis hard to see youth perish, even when  
 Ourselves to the mad warrant have set pen;  
 And for the wisest there are days of grief  
 And secret doubts and hours of unbelief  
 In all things but the one forbidden bliss  
 Churchmen forbid and poets call a kiss.  
 Why should we wonder? 'Tis a kindlier fate  
 At least than that, the last, which comes too late,  
 The old fool's folly nursed at forty--five.  
 Griselda is an angel, but alive,  
 Believe me, to her wings." A fatuous flush  
 Mantled his face, not quite perhaps a blush,  
 But something conscious, as of one who knows.

``Virtue and pleasure are not always foes,"  
He sighed. ``And much depends upon the man."

I turned impatient. There, behind her fan,  
At the far table's end, Griselda's eyes  
Were watching us, half hid by its disguise,  
But conscious too, as if a secret string  
Had vibrated 'twixt her and that vain thing.  
The cynic boy, whose word was in my ear,  
Dishonouring to me and him and her.  
Our eyes met, and hers fell; a sudden pain  
Touched me of memory, and in every vein  
Ran jealous anger at young Manton's wit,  
While, half aloud, I flung my curse on it.

Later, I found Griselda gravely gay,  
And glad to see me in the accustomed way  
Of half affection my long zeal had won,  
Her face no older, though the years had spun  
Some threads unnoticed in her fair brown hair  
Of lighter hue than I remembered there,  
Less silver streaked than gold. All else had grown  
Fairer with time, and tenderer in its tone,  
As when in August woods a second burst  
Of leaves is seen more golden than the first.  
A woman truly to be loved--but loving?  
There was the riddle wit despaired of proving,  
For who can read the stars? I sat with her  
The evening through, and rose up happier.  
In all that crowd there was no single face  
Worthy her notice, not to say her grace,  
And once again her charm was on my soul.  
``If she love any"--this was still the goal  
Of my night thoughts in argument with fear--  
``Say what they will, the lover is not here."  
Not here! And yet, at parting, she had pressed  
Manton's sole hand, and nodded to the rest.

Four days I lived in my fool's paradise,  
Importuning Griselda's changing eyes  
With idle flattery. I found her mood  
Softer than once in her young womanhood,



Yet restless and uncertain. There were hours  
Of a wild gaiety, when all the powers  
Of her keen mind were in revolt with folly,  
Others bedimmed with wordless melancholy.  
Once too or twice she shocked me with a phrase  
Of doubtful sense, revealing thoughts and ways  
New to her past, an echo of the noise  
Of that mad world we lived in and its joys:  
Such things were sacrilege. I could not see  
Unmoved my angel smirched with vanity,  
Even though, it seemed at moments, for my sake.  
Her laughter, when she laughed, made my heart ache,  
And I had spared some pain to see her sad  
Rather than thus unseasonably glad.

Who would have dreamed it? Each new idle day,  
When, tired with sport, we rested from the fray,  
Five jovial shooters, jaded by the sun,  
Seeking refreshment at the stroke of noon,--  
There, with the luncheon carts all trimly dight,  
Stood Lady L., to the fool crowd's delight.  
You would have thought her life had always been  
Passed in the stubbles, as, with questions keen,  
She eyed the bags and parleyed with the ``guns";  
Rome's matron she with us the Goths and Huns.  
Young Manton proudly spread for her his coat  
Under a hedge, and she resented not.  
Resented! Why resent? Nay, smiles were there,  
And a swift look of pleasure, still more rare,  
Pleasure and gratitude, as though the act  
Had been of chivalry in form and fact  
Transcending Raleigh's. Ay, indeed! Resent!  
That eye were blind which doubted what it meant.

And still I doubted. Vanity dies hard.  
And love, however starving of reward,  
And youth's creed of belief. It seemed a thing  
Monstrous, impossible, bewildering,  
As tales of dwarfs and giants gravely told  
By men of science, and transmuted gold,  
And magic potions turning men to beasts,  
And lewd witch Sabbaths danced by unfrocked priests.

Griselda! Manton! In what mood or tense  
Could folly conjugate such dreams to sense,  
Or draw the contract not in terms absurd  
Of such a friendship or of act or word?  
Where was the common thought between the two--  
Even of partridges--the other knew?  
Manton--Griselda! Nay 'twere fabulous,  
A mere profanity, to argue thus;  
Only I watched them closer when they strayed  
To gather blackberries, as boy and maid  
In a first courting, and her eager eyes  
Turned as he spoke, and laughter came unwise  
Before she answered, and an hour was flown,  
Before he joined the rest and she was gone.

O Love! what an absurdity thou art,  
How heedless of proportion, whole or part!  
Time, place, occasion, what are they to thee?  
Thou playest the wanton with Solemnity,  
The prince with Poverty, the rogue with Worth,  
The fool with all the Wisdoms of the Earth.  
Thou art a leveller, more renowned than Death,  
For he, when in his rage he stops our breath,  
Leaves us at least the harvest of our years,  
The right to be heroic in our tears.  
But thou dost only mock. Thou art a king  
Dealing with slaves, who waits no questioning  
But gives--to this a province and a crown,  
To that a beggar's staff and spangled gown;  
And when some weep their undeserved disgrace,  
Plucks at their cheeks and smites them in the face.  
Thou hast no reverence, no respect for right.  
Virtue to thee is a lewd appetite,  
Remorse a pastime, modesty a lure,  
And love, the malady, love's only cure.

Griselda, in her love at thirty--three  
Was the supreme fool of felicity.  
Reason and she had taken separate roads,  
A spectacle of mirth for men and gods.  
And the world laughed--discreetly in its sleeves--  
At her poor artless shifts and make--believes.

For it was true, true to the very text,  
This whispered thing that had my soul perplexed,  
Manton was her beloved--by what art,  
What mute equation of the human heart,  
What blind jibe of dame Fortune, who shall say?  
The road of passion is no king's highway,  
Mapped out with finger--posts for all to see,  
But each soul journeys on it separately,  
And only those who have walked its mazes through  
Remember on what paths the wild flowers grew.

Ay, who shall say? Nor had the truth been sung,  
Save for the incontinence of Manton's tongue,  
Wagging in argument on certain themes,  
With boast of craft in pleasure's stratagems.  
` ` For Love" ('twas thus he made his parable  
In cynic phrase, as hero of his tale,  
One evening when the others were abed,  
And we two sat on smoking, head to head,  
Discoursing in that tone of men scarce friends,  
Who prate philosophy to candle ends),  
` ` Love, though its laws have not as yet been written  
By any Balzac for our modern Britain,  
And though perhaps there is no strategy  
Youth can quite count upon or argue by,  
Is none the less an art, with some few rules  
Wise men observe, who would outrun the fools.  
Now, for myself" (here Manton spread his hands  
With professorial wave in white wrist--bands)  
` ` I hold it as a maxim always wise  
In making love to deal with contraries.  
Colours, books tell us, to be strongly blent,  
Need opposite colours for their complement,  
And so too women whose ill--reasoning mind  
Requires some contradiction to be kind.

It is not enough in this late year of grace  
To answer fools with their own foolishness--  
Rather with your best wisdom. You will need  
Your folly to perplex some wiser head.  
And so my maxim is, whatever least  
Women expect, that thing will serve you best.

Thus, with young souls in their first unfledged years,  
Ask their opinion as philosophers:  
Consult their knowledge in the ways of life.  
The repute of sin will please a too chaste wife.  
Your deference keep for harlots: these you touch  
Best by your modesty, which makes them blush.  
With a proud beauty deal out insolence,  
And bear her fence down with a stronger fence.  
She will be angry, but a softer cheek  
Turn to the smiter who has proved her weak.  
And so with wisdom: meet it with surprise,  
Laugh at it idly gazing in its eyes,  
Leave it no solid ground for its fair feet,  
And lead it lightly where love's waters meet.  
Even virtue--virtue of the noblest type,  
The fair sad woman, whose romance is ripe,  
Needs but a little knowledge to be led,  
Perhaps less than the rest if truth be said.  
You must not parley with her. Words are vain,  
And you might wake some half forgotten pain.  
Avoid her soul. It is a place too strong  
For your assaulting, and a siege were long.  
Others have failed before it. Touch it not,  
But march beyond, nor fire a single shot.  
The fields of pleasure less defended lie:  
These are your vantage--ground for victory.  
Strike boldly for possession and command;  
An hour may win it, if you hold her hand.  
I knew one once:" . . . I would have stopped him here  
But for the shame which held me prisoner;  
And his undaunted reassuring smile,  
Commanding confidence. `` I knew once on a while,"  
He said, `` a woman whom the world called proud,  
A saintly soul, untouched by the vain crowd,  
Who had survived all battle, siege, and sack,  
Love ever led with armies at his back,  
Yet fell at last to the mere accident  
Of a chance meeting, for another meant,  
Her lover had not dared it, had he known,  
But faces in the dark are all as one.  
You know the rhyme." But at this point I rose,  
Fearing what worse his folly might disclose,

And having learned my lesson of romance,  
A sadder man and wiser for the chance,  
Bade him good night: (it was in truth good--bye,  
For pretexting next morning some small lie  
Of business calling me in haste to town,  
I fled the house). He looked me up and down,  
Yawned, rose to light his candle at the lamp,  
Pressed with warm hand my own hand which was damp,  
And as he sauntered cheerily to bed,  
I heard him sing--they linger in my head--  
The first staves of a ballad, then the fashion  
With the young bloods who shape their love and passion  
At the music--halls of the Metropolis;  
What I remember of the song was this:

But, no, I cannot write it. There are things  
Too bitter in their taste, and this one stings  
My soul to a mad anger even yet.  
I seem to hear the voices of the pit  
Lewdly discoursing of incestuous scenes,  
Bottom the weaver's and the enamoured queen's.  
Alas, Titania! thou poor soul, alas!  
How art thou fallen, and to what an ass!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Griselda: A Society Novel In Verse - Chapter V

Griselda's madness lasted forty days,  
Forty eternities! Men went their ways,  
And suns arose and set, and women smiled,  
And tongues wagged lightly in impeachment wild  
Of Lady L.'s adventure. She was gone,  
None knew by whom escorted or alone,  
Or why or whither, only that one morning,  
Without pretext, or subterfuge, or warning,  
She had disappeared in silence from L. House,  
Leaving her lord in multitudinous  
And agonised conjecture of her fate:  
So the tale went. And truly less sedate  
Than his wont was in intricate affairs,  
Such as his Garter or his lack of heirs,  
Lord L. was seen in this new tribulation.  
Griselda long had been his life's equation,  
The pivot of his dealings with the world,  
The mainstay of his comfort, all now hurled  
To unforeseen confusion by her flight:  
There was need of action swift and definite.  
Where was she? Who could tell him? Divers visions  
Passed through his fancy--thieves, and street collisions,  
And all the hundred accidents of towns,  
From broken axle trees to broken crowns.  
In vain he questioned; no response was made  
More than the fact that, as already said,  
My lady, unattended and on foot,  
(A sad imprudence here Lord L. took note),  
Had gone out dressed in a black morning gown  
And dark tweed waterproof, 'twixt twelve and one,  
Leaving no orders to her maid, or plan  
About her carriage to or groom or man.  
Such was in sum the downstairs' evidence.  
The hall porter, a man of ponderous sense,  
Averred her ladyship had eastward turned  
From the front door, and some small credit earned  
For the suggestion that her steps were bent  
To Whitechapel on merciful intent,  
A visit of compassion to the poor,

A clue which led to a commissioner  
Being sent for in hot haste from Scotland Yard.  
And so the news was bruited abroad.

It reached my ears among the earliest,  
And from Lord L. himself, whose long suppressed  
Emotion found its vent one afternoon  
On me, the only listener left in town.  
His thoughts now ran on `` a religious craze  
Of his poor wife's," he said, `` in these last days  
Indulged beyond all reason." The police  
Would listen to no talk of casualties,  
Still less of crime, since they had nothing found  
In evidence above or under ground,  
But held the case to be of simpler kind,  
Home left in a disordered state of mind.  
Lord L. had noticed, now they talked of it,  
Temper less equable and flightier wit,  
`` A craving for religious services  
And sacred music." Something was amiss,  
Or why were they in London in September?  
Griselda latterly, he could remember,  
Had raved of a conventual retreat  
In terms no Protestant would deem discreet  
As the sole refuge in a world of sin  
For human frailty, grief's best anodyne.  
`` The Times was right. Rome threatened to absorb us:  
The convents must be searched by habeas corpus."

And so I came to help him. I had guessed  
From his first word the vainness of his quest,  
And half was moved to serve him in a strait  
Where her fair fame I loved was in debate,  
Yet held my peace, nor hazarded a word  
Save of surprise at the strange case I heard,  
Till, fortune aiding, I should find the clue  
My heart desired to do what I would do.  
And not in vain. Night found me duly sped,  
Lord L.'s ambassador accredited,  
With fullest powers to find and fetch her home,  
If need should be, from the Pope's jaws in Rome.

Gods! what a mission! First my round I went  
Through half the slums of Middlesex and Kent,  
Surrey and Essex--this to soothe Lord L.,  
Though witless all, as my heart told too well;  
The hospitals no less and casual wards,  
Each house as idly as his House of Lords,  
And only at the week's end dared to stop  
At the one door I knew still housing hope,  
Young Manton's chambers. There, with reddened cheek  
I heard the answer given I came to seek.  
Manton was gone, his landlady half feared  
He too, in some mishap, and disappeared,--  
Proof all too positive. His letters lay  
A fortnight deep untouched upon the tray.  
She could not forward them or risk a guess  
As to his last or likeliest address.  
He was in Scotland often at this season,  
` ` But not without his guns"--a cogent reason.  
And leaving, too, his valet here in town,  
Perplexed of what to do or leave undone.  
Abroad? Perhaps. If so, his friends might try  
As a best chance the Paris Embassy.  
He had been there last Spring, and might be now.

Paris! It was enough, I made my bow,  
And took my leave. I seemed to touch the thread  
Of the blind labyrinth 'twas mine to tread.  
Where should they be, in truth, these too fond lovers,  
But in the land of all such lawless rovers?  
The land of Gautier, Bourget, Maupassant,  
Where still ` ` you can" makes answer to ` ` I can't."  
The fair domain where all romance begins  
In a light borderland of venial sins,  
But deepening onwards, till the fatal day  
Vice swoops upon us, plead we as we may.  
Griselda's bonnet o'er the windmills thrown,  
Had surely crossed the Seine ere it came down.  
And I, if I would find and win her back,  
Must earliest search the boulevards for her track.  
And so to Paris in my zeal I passed,  
Breaking my idol, mad Iconoclast.



There is a little inn by Meudon wood  
Dear to Parisians in their amorous mood,  
A place of rendezvous, where bourgeois meet  
Their best beloved in congregation sweet;  
Clandestine, undisturbed, illicit loves,  
Made half romantic by the adjoining groves,  
So beautiful in Spring, with the new green  
Clothing the birch stems scattered white between,  
Nor yet, in Autumn, when the first frosts burn  
And the wind rustles in the reddening fern,  
Quite robbed of sentiment for lovers' eyes,  
Who seek Earth's blessing on a bliss unwise,  
And find the happy sanction for their state  
In nature's face, unshocked by their debate,  
As who should say ``Let preachers frown their fill,  
Here one approves. 'Tis Eden with us still."

Such fancy, may be, in her too fond heart  
Had led Griselda--with her friend--apart,  
Yet not apart, from the world's curious gaze,  
To this secluded, ill--frequented place:  
A compromise of wills and varying moods,  
His for gay crowds, her own for solitudes.  
Manton knew Paris well, and loved its noise,  
Its mirthful parody of serious joys,  
Its pomp and circumstance. His wish had been  
To flaunt the boulevards with his captured queen,  
And make parade of a last triumph won  
In the chaste field of prudish Albion,  
Outscandalising scandal. Love and he  
In any sense but of male vanity,  
And the delirium of adventures new  
In the world's eye--the thing he next should do--  
Were terms diverse and incompatible.  
Griselda, to his eyes was Lady L.,  
The fair, the chaste, the unapproached proud name  
Men breathed in reverence, woman, all the same,  
And not as such, and when the truth was said,  
Worth more than others lightlier credited.  
It all had been a jest from the beginning,  
A tour de force, whose wit was in the winning,  
A stroke of fortune and of accident,

The embrace he had told of for another meant,  
While she stood grieving for a first grey hair  
(A psychologic moment) on the stair,  
And, kneeling down, he had adored her foot,  
The one weak spot where her self--love had root,  
And laughed at her, and told her she was old,  
Yet growing tenderer as he grew more bold.  
And so from jest to jest, and chance to chance,  
To that last scene at the mad country dance  
Where she had played the hoyden, he the swain,  
Pretending love till love was in their brain,  
And he had followed to her chamber door,  
And helped her to undo the dress she wore.

Then the elopement. That had been her doing,  
Which he accepted to make good his wooing,  
And careless what to both the result might be,  
So it but served his end of vanity.  
It all had been to this vain boy a whim,  
Something grotesque, a play, a pantomime,  
Where nothing had been serious but her heart,  
And that was soon too tearful for its part.  
He wearied in a week of her mature  
Old maidish venturings in ways obscure,  
Her agony of conscience dimly guessed,  
The silences she stifled in her breast,  
Her awkwardness--it was his word--in all  
That love could teach; her sighs funereal,  
And more the unnatural laughter she essayed  
To meet the doubtful sense of things he said.  
She was at once too tender and too prim,  
Too prudish and too crazed with love and him.  
At a month's end his flame had leaped beyond  
Already to friends frailer and less fond;  
The light Parisian world of venal charms  
Which welcomed him with wide and laughing arms:  
There he was happier, more at home, more gay,  
King of the ``High Life," hero of the day.

Griselda, in her sad suburban nook  
Watched his departures with a mute rebuke,  
Yet daring not to speak. The choice was hers

To stay at home or run the theatres  
With her young lover in such company  
As her soul loathed. She had tried despairingly  
To be one, even as these, for his loved sake,  
And would have followed spite of her heart's ache,  
But that he hardly further cared to press,  
After one failure stamped with ``dowdiness."  
That too had been his word, a bitter word,  
Biting and true, which smote her like a sword,  
Or rather a whip's sting to her proud cheek,  
Leaving her humbled, agonised and weak.

Poor beautiful Griselda! What was now  
The value of thy beauty, chaste as snow  
In thy youth's morning, the unchallenged worth  
Of thy eyes' kindness, queenliest of the earth;  
The tradition of thy Fra--angelic face,  
Blessed as Mary's, and as full of grace;  
The fame which thou despisedst, yet which made  
A glory for thee meet for thy dear head?  
What, if in this last crisis of thy fate,  
When all a Heaven and Hell was in debate,  
And thy archangel, with the feet of clay,  
Stood mocking there in doubt to go or stay,  
The unstable fabric of thy woman's dower,  
Thy beauty, failed and left thee in their power  
Whose only law of beauty was the sting  
Lent to man's lust by light bedizening?  
What use was in thy beauty, if, alas!  
Thou gavest them cause to mock (those tongues of brass)  
At thy too crude and insular attire,  
Thy naïvetés of colour, the false fire  
Of thy first dallings with the red and white,  
Thy sweet pictorial robe, Pre--Raphaelite,  
Quaint in its tones and outré in design,  
Thy lack of unity and shape and line,  
Thy English angularity--who knows,  
The less than perfect fitting of thy shoes?

Griselda, in her flight, had left behind  
All but the dress she stood in, too refined,  
In her fair righteousness of thought and deed,

To make provision for a future need,  
However dire. She was no Israelite  
To go forth from her Pharaoh in the night,  
With spoils of the Egyptians in her hands,  
And had thrown herself on Manton and on France,  
With a full courage worth a nobler cause,  
Grandly oblivious of prudential laws.  
Her earliest trouble, marring even the bliss  
Of love's first ecstasy, had come of this,  
Her want of clothes--a worse and weightier care  
At the mere moment than her soul's despair  
For its deep fall from virtuous estate.  
How should she dress herself, she asked of Fate,  
With neither maid, nor money, nor a name?  
It was her first experiment in shame.  
Now, after all her poor economies,  
This was the ending read in his vexed eyes,  
And spoken by his lips: her utmost art  
Had failed to please that idle thing, his heart,  
Or even to avert his petulant scorn  
For one so little to love's manner born.

And thus I found them, at the angry noon  
Of their ``red month," the next to honeymoon:  
Two silent revellers at a loveless feast,  
Scared by hate's morning breaking in their East--  
A dawn which was of penance and despair,  
With pleasure's ghost to fill the vacant chair.  
I took it, and was welcomed rapturously,  
As a far sail by shipwrecked souls at sea,  
An opportune deliverer, timely sent  
To break the autumn of their discontent,  
And give a pretext to their need grown sore  
Of issue from joys dead by any door.

Manton, all confidential from the first,  
Told me the tale of his last sins and worst,  
As meriting a sympathy not less  
Than the best actions virtuous men confess.  
He was overwhelmed with women and with debt--  
Women who loved him, bills which must be met.  
What could he do? Her ladyship was mad--

It was her fault, not his, this escapade.  
He had warned her from the first, and as a friend,  
That all such frolics had a serious end,  
And that to leave her home was the worst way  
A woman would who wanted to be gay.

``For look," said he, ``we men, who note these things,  
And how the unthinking flutterers burn their wings,  
Know that a woman, be she what she will,  
The fairest, noblest, most adorable,  
Dowered in her home with all seraphic charms,  
Whom heaven itself might envy in your arms,  
A paragon of pleasure undenied  
At her own chaste respectable fireside,  
Becomes, what shall I say, when she steps down  
From the high world of her untouched renown?  
A something differing in no serious mood  
From the sad rest of the light sisterhood;  
Perhaps indeed more troublesome than these,  
Because she keenlier feels the agonies:  
A wounded soul, who has not even the wit  
To hide its hurt and make a jest of it;  
A maid of Astolat, launched in her barge,  
A corpse on all the world, a femme à charge."

``'Tis not," he argued, ``our poor human sins  
That make us what we are when shame begins,  
But the world pointing at our naked state:  
Then we are shocked and humbled at our fate,  
Silent and shamed in all we honour most--  
For what is virtue but the right to boast?  
A married woman's love, three weeks from home,  
Is the absurdest thing in Christendom,  
Dull as a ménage in the demi--monde  
And dismaller far by reason of the bond.  
All this I told my lady ere we went,  
But warning wasted is on sentiment.  
You see the net result here in one word,  
A crying woman and a lover bored."

So far young Manton. She for whom I came,  
Griselda's self, sweet soul, in her new shame

Essayed awhile to hide from me the truth  
Of this last hap of her belated youth,  
Her disillusion with her graceless lover.  
She made sad cloaks for him which could not cover  
His great unworthiness and her despair,  
All with a frightened half--maternal air,  
Most pitiful and touching. To my plea,  
Urging her home, she answered mournfully,  
That she was bound now to her way of life,  
And owed herself no less than as his wife  
To him she had chosen out of all mankind.  
'Twas better to be foolish, even blind,  
If he had faults, so she could serve him still--  
And this had been her promise and her will.  
She would not hear of duties owed elsewhere:  
What was she to Lord L., or he to her?  
I need not speak of it. And yet she clung  
To my protecting presence in her wrong;  
And once, when Manton's jibes made bitterer play,  
Implored me with appealing eyes to stay.  
And so I lingered on. Those autumn days,  
Spent with Griselda in the woodland ways  
Of Meudon with her lover, or alone,  
When his mad fancies carried him to town,  
Remain to me an unsubstantial act  
Of dreaming fancy, rather than the fact  
Of any waking moment in my past,  
The sweetest, saddest and with her the last--  
For suddenly they ended. We had been  
One Sunday for a jaunt upon the Seine,  
We two--in Manton's absence, now prolonged  
To a third night--and in a steamboat, thronged  
With idle bourgeois folk, whom the last glory,  
Of a late autumn had sent forth in foray  
To Passy and St. Cloud, from stage to stage  
Had made with heavy souls our pilgrimage;  
And homeward turning and with little zest,  
The fair day done, to love's deserted nest  
Had come with lagging feet and weary eyes,  
Expectant still of some new dark surprise,  
When the blow fell unsparing on her head,  
Already by what fortunes buffeted.

How did it happen, that last tragedy?--  
For tragedy it was, let none deny,  
Though all ignoble. Every soul of us  
Touches one moment in death's darkened house  
The plane of the heroic, and compels  
Men's laughter into tears--ay, Heaven's and Hell's.  
How did it happen? There was that upon  
Their faces at the door more than the tone  
Of their replies, that warned us of the thing  
We had not looked for in our questioning;  
And our lips faltered, and our ears, afraid,  
Shrank from more hearing. What was it they said  
In their fool's jargon, that he lay upstairs?  
He? Manton? The dispenser of our cares?  
The mounteback young reveller? Suffering? Ill?  
And she, poor soul, that suffered at his will!  
A sinister case? Not dying? Pitiful God!  
Truly Thou smitest blindly with Thy rod.  
For Manton was not worthy to die young,  
Beloved by her with blessings on her tongue.  
And such a cause of death! She never heard  
The whole truth told, for each one spared his word,  
And he lay mute for ever. But to me  
The thing was storied void of mystery,  
And thus they told it. Hardly had we gone  
On our sad river outing, when from town  
Manton had come with a gay troop of friends,  
Such as the coulisse of the opera lends,  
To breakfast at the inn and spend the day  
In mirthful noise, as was his vagrant way.  
A drunken frolic, and most insolent  
To her whose honour with his own was blent,  
To end in this last tragedy. None knew  
Quite how it happened, or a cause could shew  
Further than this, that, rising from the table,  
The last to go with steps perhaps unstable--  
For they had feasted freely, and the stair  
Was steep and iron--edged, and needed care;  
And singing, as he went, the selfsame song,  
Which I remembered, to the laughing throng,  
He had slipped his length, and fallen feet--first down.

When they picked him up his power to move was gone,  
Though he could speak. They laid him on a bed,  
Her bed, Griselda's, and called in with speed  
Such help of doctors and commissioners  
As law prescribed, and medicine for their fears.  
'Twas his last night. There, in Griselda's hands,  
Young Jerry Manton lay with the last sands  
Of his life's hour--glass trickling to its close,  
Griselda watching, with what thoughts, God knows.  
We did not speak. But her lips moved in prayer,  
And mine too, in the way of man's despair.  
I did not love him, yet a human pity  
Softened my eyes. Afar, from the great city,  
The sound came to us of the eternal hum,  
Unceasing, changeless, pregnant with all doom  
Of insolent life that rises from its streets,  
The pulse of sin which ever beats and beats,  
Wearing the ears of God. O Paris, Paris!  
What doom is thine for every soul that tarries  
Too long with thee, a stranger in thy arms.  
Thy smiles are incantations, thy brave charms  
Death to thy lovers. Each gay mother's son,  
Smitten with love for thee, is straight undone.  
And lo the chariot wheels upon thy ways!  
And a new garland hung in Père la Chaise!

Poor soul! I turned and looked into the night,  
Through the uncurtained windows, and there bright  
Saw the mute twinkle of a thousand stars.  
One night! the least in all time's calendars,  
Yet fraught with what a meaning for this one!  
One star, the least of all that million!  
One room in that one city! Yet for him  
The universe there was of space and time.  
What were his thoughts? In that chaotic soul,  
Home of sad jests, obscene, unbeautiful,  
Mired with the earthiest of brute desires,  
And lit to sentience only with lewd fires,  
Was there no secret, undisturbed, fair place  
Watered with love and favoured with God's grace  
To which the wounded consciousness had fled  
For its last refuge from a world of dread?



Was his soul touched to tenderness, to awe,  
To softer recollection? All we saw  
Was the maimed body gasping forth its breath,  
A rigid setting of the silent teeth,  
And the hands trembling. Death was with us there.  
But where was he? O Heaven of pity! where?

We watched till morning by the dying man,  
She weeping silently, I grieved and wan,  
And still he moved not. But with the first break  
Of day in the window panes we saw him make  
A sign as if of speaking. Pressing near--  
For his lips moved, Griselda deemed, in prayer--  
We heard him make profession of his faith,  
As a man of pleasure face to face with death,  
A kind of gambler's Athanasian Creed,  
Repeated at the hour of his last need.  
` ` Five sovereigns," said he, steadying his will,  
As in defiance of death's power to kill,  
And with that smile of a superior mind,  
Which was his strength in dealing with mankind,  
The world of sporting jargon and gay livers.  
` ` Five sovereigns is a fiver, and five fivers  
A pony, and five ponies are a hundred--  
No, four," he added, seeing he had blundered.  
` ` Four to the hundred and five centuries  
Make up the monkey." From his dying eyes  
The smile of triumph faded. ` ` There, I've done it,"  
He said, ` ` but there was no great odds upon it,  
You see with a broken back." He spoke no more,  
And in another hour had passed the door  
Which shuts the living from eternity.  
Where was he? God of pity, where was he?

This was the end of Lady L.'s romance.

When we had buried him (as they do in France,  
In a tomb inscribed ` ` à perpétuité,"  
Formally rented till the Judgment Day),  
She put off black, and shed no further tears;  
Her face for the first time showed all its years,  
But not a trace beyond. Without demur

She gave adhesion to my plans for her,  
And we went home to London and Lord L.,  
Silent together, by the next night's mail.  
She had been six weeks away. The interview  
Between them was dramatic. I, who knew  
Her whole mad secret, and had seen her soul  
Stripped of its covering, and without control,  
Bowed down by circumstance and galled with shame,  
Yielding to wounds and griefs without a name,  
Had feared for her a wild unhappy scene.  
I held Lord L. for the least stern of men,  
And yet I dared not hope even he would crave  
No explanation ere he quite forgave.

I was with them when they met, unwilling third,  
In their mute bandying of the unspoken word.  
Lord L. essayed to speak. I saw his face  
Made up for a high act of tragic grace  
As he came forward. It was grave and mild,  
A father's welcoming a truant child,  
Forgiving, yet intent to mark the pain  
With hope ``the thing should not occur again."  
His lips began to move as to some speech  
Framed in this sense, as one might gently preach  
A word in season to too gadding wives  
Of duties owed, at least by those whose lives  
Moved in high places. But it died unsaid.  
There was that about Griselda that forbade  
Marital questionings. Her queenly eyes  
Met his with a mute answer of surprise,  
Marking the unseemliness of all display  
More strongly than with words, as who should say  
Noblesse oblige. She took his outstretched hand,  
And kissed his cheek, but would not understand  
A word of his reproaches. Even I,  
With my full knowledge and no more a boy,  
But versed by years in the world's wickedness,  
And open--eyed to her, alas! no less  
Than to all womanhood, even I felt shame,  
And half absolved her in my mind from blame.  
And he, how could he less? He was but human,  
The fortunate husband of how fair a woman!

He stammered his excuses. What she told  
When I had left them (since all coin is gold  
To those who would believe, and who the key  
Hold of their eyes, in blind faith's alchemy)  
I never learned. I did not linger on,  
Seeing her peril past and the day won,  
But took my leave. She led me to the door  
With her old kindness of the days of yore,  
And thanked me as one thanks for little things.  
` `You have been," she said, ` `an angel without wings,  
And I shall not forget,--nor will Lord L.;  
And yet," she said, with an imperceptible  
Change in her voice, ` `there are things the world will say  
Which are neither just nor kind, and, if to--day  
We part awhile, remember we are friends,  
If not now later. Time will make amends,  
And we shall meet again." I pressed her hand  
A moment to my lips. ` `I understand,"  
I said, and gazed a last time in her eyes;  
` `Say all you will. I am your sacrifice."

And so, in truth, it was. Henceforth there lay  
A gulf between us, widening with delay,  
And which our souls were impotent to pass,  
The gulf of a dead secret; and, alas!  
Who knows what subtle treacheries within,  
For virtue rends its witnesses of sin,  
And hearts are strangely fashioned by their fears.  
We met no more in friendship through the years,  
Although I held her secret as my own,  
And fought her battles, her best champion,  
On many a stricken field in scandal's war,  
Till all was well forgotten. From afar  
I watched her fortunes still with tenderness,  
Yet sadly, as cast out of Paradise.  
For ever, spite her promise, from that day,  
When I met L., he looked another way;  
And she, Griselda, was reserved and chill.  
I had behaved, her women friends said, ill,  
And caused a needless scandal in her life,  
--They told not what. Enough, that as a wife  
She had been compelled to close her doors on me,

And that her lord knew all the iniquity.

And so I bore the burden of her sin.

What more shall I relate? The cynic vein  
Has overwhelmed my tale, and I must stop.  
Its heroine lived to justify all hope  
Of her long--suffering lord, that out of pain  
Blessings would grow, and his house smile again  
With the fulfilled expectance of an heir.  
Griselda sat no longer in despair,  
Nor wasted her full life on dreams of folly;  
She had little time for moods of melancholy,  
Or heart to venture further in love's ways;  
She was again the theme of all men's praise,  
And suffered no man's passion. Once a year,  
In the late autumn, when the leaves grew sere  
She made retreat to a lay sisterhood,  
And lived awhile there for her soul's more good,  
In pious meditation, fasts and prayer.  
Some say she wore concealed a shirt of hair  
Under her dresses, even at court balls,  
And certain 'tis that all Rome's rituals  
Were followed daily at the private Mass  
In her new chantry built behind Hans Place.  
Lord L. approved of all she did, even this,  
Strange as it seemed to his old--fashionedness.

He, gentle soul, grown garrulous with years,  
Prosed of her virtues to all listeners,  
And of their son's, the child of his old age,  
A prodigy of beauty and ways sage.  
It was a vow, he said, once made in Rome,  
Had brought them their chief treasure of their home.  
A vow! The light world laughed--for miracles  
Are not believed in now, except as Hell's.  
And yet the ways of God are passing strange.  
And this is certain (and therein the range  
Of my long tale is reached, and I am free),  
--There is at Ostia, close beside the sea,  
A convent church, the same where years ago  
Griselda kneeled in tears and made her vow;

And in that shrine, beneath the crucifix,  
They show a votive offering, candlesticks  
Of more than common workmanship and size,  
And underneath inscribed the votary's  
Name in initials, and the date, all told,  
Hall--marked in England, and of massive gold.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## He Makes An End

What shall I tell you, dear, who have told all,  
What do, whose wish, whose will is manacled,  
What dare, whose duty at your festival  
Is but to light the candles round Love's bed?  
How can I sing to you uncomforted  
By any crumb of kindness Joy lets fall?  
Unsexed am I by service, heart and head.  
Nay, let me sleep and turn me to the wall.  
--Alas there is a day when all joy dies,  
Through stress of time and tears' thin nourishment  
And that dumb peace of Age which veils the end.  
Here am I come, and here I close my eyes,  
With what I may of dreams (they naught portend),  
Framing your face, the last before Love went.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Her Name Liberty

I thought to do a deed of chivalry,  
An act of worth, which haply in her sight  
Who was my mistress should recorded be  
And of the nations. And, when thus the fight  
Faltered and men once bold with faces white  
Turned this and that way in excuse to flee,  
I only stood, and by the foeman's might  
Was overborne and mangled cruelly.

Then crawled I to her feet, in whose dear cause  
I made this venture, and ``Behold," I said,  
``How I am wounded for thee in these wars."  
But she, ``Poor cripple, wouldst thou I should wed  
A limbless trunk?" and laughing turned from me.  
Yet was she fair, and her name ``Liberty."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Honour Dishonoured

Honoured I lived e'erwhile with honoured men  
In opulent state. My table nightly spread  
Found guests of worth, peer, priest and citizen,  
And poet crowned, and beauty garlanded.  
Nor these alone, for hunger too I fed,  
And many a lean tramp and sad Magdalen  
Passed from my doors less hard for sake of bread.  
Whom grudged I ever purse or hand or pen?

To--night, unwelcomed at these gates of woe  
I stand with churls, and there is none to greet  
My weariness with smile or courtly show  
Nor, though I hunger long, to bring me meat.  
God! what a little accident of gold  
Fences our weakness from the wolves of old!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# How Grey The World Was

How grey the world was with its memories,  
How dark even this gay room where the motes run!  
How black these curtains, thick with murder cries,  
These chairs, this floor with things slain in the sun!  
'Twas here I strangled love, a year ago,  
And hid it 'neath these pillows drenched in blood,  
As a mad mother her sweet babe of woe,  
Too strong to die, too fair, which shrieks aloud.  
How black and bare and bitter the world was  
Just yesterday! To--day, this room, dear Heaven,  
What laughters fill it! what light footsteps pass!  
See, the white chairs dance round me pleasure--driven,  
And these sad pillows, where I wept, blab out  
The news that you are here, in psalm and shout!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## How Shall I Build

How shall I build my temple to the Lord,  
Unworthy I, who am thus foul of heart?  
How shall I worship who no traitor word  
Know but of love to play a suppliant's part?  
How shall I pray, whose soul is as a mart,  
For thoughts unclean, whose tongue is as a sword  
Even for those it loves to wound and smart?  
Behold how little I can help Thee, Lord.

The Temple I would build should be all white,  
Each stone the record of a blameless day;  
The souls that entered there should walk in light,  
Clothed in high chastity and wisely gay.  
Lord, here is darkness. Yet this heart unwise,  
Bruised in Thy service, take in sacrifice.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## I Will Smile No More

No, I will smile no more. If but for pride  
And the high record of these days of pain,  
I will not be as these, the uncrucified  
Who idly live and find life's pleasures vain.  
The garment of my love is rent in twain,  
Parted by love and pity. Some have died  
Of a less hurt than 'twas my luck to gain,  
And live with God, nor dare I be denied.

No, I will smile no more. Love's touch of pleasure  
Shall be as tears to me, fair words as gall,  
The sun as blackness, friends as a false measure,  
And Spring's blithe pageant on this earthly ball,  
If it should brag, shall earn from me no praise  
But silence only to my end of days.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## If I Forget Thee

If I forget thee! How shall I forget thee?  
Sword of the mighty! Prince and Lord of War!  
Captive I bind me  
To the spears that blind me,  
Rage in my heart and love for evermore.

If I forget thee! How shall I forget thee?  
Man the destroyer! Life that made mine move!  
They that come after  
Let them earn my laughter,  
Ay, but my anger, never, nor my love.

If I forget thee! How should I forget thee?  
One man there is no woman dares despise.  
Hate him it may be,  
Wound him if the way be,  
Nay, but forget him? Not before she dies!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## If I Had Known You

If I had known you--oh, if I had known you!  
In other days when youth and love were strong,  
I would have raised a temple to enthrone you  
On some fair pinnacle of cloudless song.

If you had touched me then with your dear laughter,  
As now its echo smites me in my grief,  
I would have given my soul to you, and after  
Lived in my love, grown old in my belief.

If you had loved me,--oh, you would have loved me!  
Earth would have worshipped us, its seers sublime,  
My song had been a psalm, and Saints had proved me  
Prophet and priest, your poet for all time.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## If We Had Met

If we had met when leaves were green,  
And fate to us less hard had proved,  
And naught had been of what has been,  
We might have loved as none have loved.

If we had met as girl and boy,  
The world of pleasure at our feet,  
Our joy had been a perfect joy;  
We might have met, but did not meet.

Nor less in youth's full passionate day,  
A woman you and I a man,  
We might have loved and found a way  
No laws could check, no vows could ban.

Too late! Too sad! A year ago,  
Even then perhaps, in spite of fate  
It might have been,--but ah! not now,  
I dare not love you, 'tis too late.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## In Memoriam W.M & E.B.J.

Mad are we all, maids, men, young fools alike and old,  
All we that wander blind and want the with to dare.  
Dark through the world we go, dazed sheep, across life's wold,  
Edged from the flowers we loved by our herd's crook of care.  
Life? Have we lived it? No. We were not as these were,  
Intent, untiring souls who proved time till their death.  
Nay we were sluggards, all, how crazed in our despair  
Each day of their fame won here nobly witnesseth.  
--What is life's wealth? To do. Its loss? To dream and wait.  
Years vanish unfulfilled; but work achieved lives on.  
Not all Time's beauty died when these two fell asleep.  
Dear Madeline, if we grieve our own less strenuous fate,  
Heaven send us still this strength, this joy, now they are gone  
At least like these to love, even though mad fools we weep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# In The Night

Where art thou, thou lost face,  
Which, yet a little while, wert making mirth  
At these new years which seemed too sad to be?  
Where art thou fled which for a minute's space  
Shut out the world and wert my world to me?  
And now a corner of this idle Earth,  
A broken shadow by the day forgot,  
Is wide enough to be thy hiding place,  
And thou art shrunk away and needest not  
The darkness of this night to cover thee.

Where art thou hidden? In the boundless air  
My hands go forth to thee, and search and feel  
As through the universe. I hold the night  
Caught in my arms, and yet thou art not there.  
Where art thou? What if I should strike a light  
So suddenly that thou couldst never steal  
Back to thy shadows? What if I should find  
Thee standing close to me with all thy hair  
Trailing about me and thine eyes grown blind  
With looking at me vainly through the night?

There are three rings upon thy hand to--night,  
One with a sapphire stone, and one there is  
Coiled like a snake, and one on which my name  
Is written in strange gems. By this dim light  
I cannot read if it be writ the same.  
See, I have worn no other ring but this!  
Why dost thou look at it with eyes estranged?  
Is it not thine?--Ah, God! Thou readest right!  
And it is changed, and thou and I are changed,  
And I have written there another name.

Oh happiness, how has it slipped away!  
We, who once lived and held it in our hand!  
What is the rest that these new years can bring?  
Did we not love it in our love's to--day,  
And pleasure which was so divine a thing,  
The sweetest and most strange to understand?



And that is why it left regret behind,  
As though a wild bird suddenly should stay  
A moment at our side and we should find  
When we looked up that it had taken wing.

And thou, hast thou forgotten how to love?  
Hast thou no kissing in thy lips? Thy tongue,  
Has it no secret whisper for my ear?  
I have been watching thee to see thee move  
A little closer to my side in fear  
Of the long night. Oh, there is room among  
The pillows for thy head if thou wouldst sleep!  
And thou art cold, and I would wrap my love  
To my warm breast and so my vigil keep  
And be alone with darkness and with her.

Thou standest with thy hand upon my heart,  
As once thou used to stand, to feel it beat.  
Doth it beat calmer now than in those days?  
Thy foolish finger--tips will leave a smart,  
If they so press upon my side. Thy gaze  
Is burning me. Oh speak a word and cheat  
This darkness into pain, if pain must be,  
And wake me back to sorrow with a start,  
For I am weary of the night and thee  
And thy strange silence and thy stranger face.

Canst thou not speak? Thy tale was but begun.  
How can I answer thee a tale untold?  
Whisper it quick before the morning break.  
How loud thou weapest! Listen, there is one  
Dreaming beside me who must not awake.  
Close in my ear!--Ah! child, thy lips are cold,  
Because thou art forsaken.--Misery!  
Is there not room enough beneath the sun  
For her, and thee, and me?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Ireland's Vengeance

This is thy day, thy day of all the years.  
Ireland! The night of anger and mute gloom,  
Where thou didst sit, has vanished with thy tears.  
Thou shalt no longer weep in thy lone home  
The dead they slew for thee, or nurse thy doom,  
Or fan the smoking flax of thy desire  
Their hatred could not quench. Thy hour is come;  
And these, if they would reap, must reap in fire.  
--What shall thy vengeance be? In that long night  
Thou hast essayed thy wrath in many ways,  
Slaughter and havoc and Hell's deathless spite.  
They taught thee vengeance who thus schooled thy days,  
Taught all they knew, but not this one divine  
Vengeance, to love them. Be that vengeance thine!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Jacinths And Jessamines

Jacinths and jessamines and jonquils sweet,  
All odorous pale flowers from Orient lands,  
No vain red roses strew I at thy feet,  
Emblems of grief and thee, with reverent hands.  
Mine is no madrigal of passionate joy,  
Or orison of aught less chaste than tears.  
Ruth on thy brow sits fairest. Its annoy  
Rends not thy beauty's raiment, nor the years.  
In thy shut lips what secrets! Who am I  
Should seek a sign at that dread sanctuary?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Jewelled Offering

Jewelled offering bring I none,  
Jade or pearl or precious stone,  
Urn of crystal, bale of spice,  
Unguent culled in Paradise,  
Dye how deep of rainbow hue,  
Dust of gold from Cambalu,  
Ivory throne with sandal--wood  
Inlaid all and scented ood,  
Tent of silk whose tapestries  
Tell of tears in ladies' eyes,  
Heavenly tears, 'neath moon and star,  
Hopes that were and joys that are,  
Ambient ever in love's soul  
Armed with might and near the goal.  
Nought, alas, of these I bring.  
Necklace, chain, nor nuptial ring.  
No bold bridegroom I, to be  
Nerved to dreams of chivalry,  
Expedited at your word  
Earth's whole realm to win by sword,  
Daring all things, briar and brake,  
Dole and Death for your dear sake,  
Onward, upward, heavenward borne,  
(O thou rose without a thorn!)  
Rivalry in deeds to show,  
Rodomont or Romeo.

Out, alas! Such love for us  
Outlawed is and vanitous.  
Time can touch it not nor cure.  
'Tis an ill we must endure,  
Howsoever long our days,  
Howsoever rich in praise.  
Even in Heaven we may not win  
Ear for this too sweet a sin,  
And no angel voice shall say,  
'` Ask it, souls, and have your way."  
Be consoled then if I make  
But this rhyme for birthday's sake,

Leaving love gifts all aside  
Light to him shall call you bride,  
Unacknowledged and untold,  
Useless as Utopian gold.  
Nonsense rhymes! Ah me, such sense  
Nesting bird to nestling lends,  
Trills of pale parental hue  
Tragic only because true.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Laughter And Death

THERE is no laughter in the natural world  
Of beast or fish or bird, though no sad doubt  
Of their futurity to them unfurled  
Has dared to check the mirth-compelling shout.  
The lion roars his solemn thunder out  
To the sleeping woods. The eagle screams her cry.  
Even the lark must strain a serious throat  
To hurl his blest defiance at the sky.  
Fear, anger, jealousy, have found a voice.  
Love's pain or rapture the brute bosoms swell.  
Nature has symbols for her nobler joys,  
Her nobler sorrows. Who had dared foretell  
That only man, by some sad mockery,  
Should learn to laugh who learns that he must die?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Le Roi Est Mort. Vive Le Roi!

Why wait for Arthur? He too long has slept.  
He shall not hear you--no, nor heed your moan,  
More than the wail of those fair Queens that kept  
Their watch for him what months in Avalon!  
He shall not wake for any mother's son  
Nor mother's daughter of them all in tears,  
His knights, his ladies. How then for this one,  
You the last blossom of our world's lost years?  
--Ah, let him sleep. For see how in the wood,  
Under the dead oak, green new saplings spring,  
How the thorn blossoms, while birds cry aloud  
In scorn of grief. And, Lady, by the rood!  
There rides a knight, new--armed and questing proud,  
Who shouts, ``The king is dead. Long live the King!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Lebid

Gone are they the lost camps, light flittings, long sojournings  
in Miná, in Gháula, Rijám left how desolate.  
Lost are they. Rayyán lies lorn with its white torrent beds,  
scored in lines like writings left by the flood--water.  
Tent--floors smooth, forsaken, bare of all that dwelt in them,  
years how long, the war--months, months too of peace--pleasures.  
Spots made sweet with Spring--rains fresh--spilled from the Zodiac,  
showers from clouds down--shaken, wind--wracks and thunder--clouds;  
Clouds how wild of night--time, clouds of the dawn darkening,  
clouds of the red sunset,--all speak the name of her.

Here, in green thorn--thickets, does bring forth how fearlessly;  
here the ostrich--troops come, here too the antelopes.  
Wild cows, with their wild calf--sucklings, standing over them,  
while their weanlings wander wide in the bare valleys.  
Clean--swept lie their hearth--stones, white as a new manuscript  
writ with texts fresh--graven, penned by the cataracts,  
Scored with lines and circles, limned with rings and blazonings,  
as one paints a maid's cheek point--lined in indigo.  
All amazed I stood there. How should I make questionings?  
Dumb the rocks around me, silent the precipice,  
Voices lost, where these dwelt who at dawn abandoning  
tent and thorn--bush fencing fled to the wilderness.  
Now thy sad heart acheth, grieveth loud remembering  
girls how closely howdahed, awned with what canopies.  
Every howdah curtained, lined with gauze embroideries,  
figured with festoons hung red from the pole of it.  
Trooped they there the maid--folk, wild white cows of Túdiha,  
ay, or does of Wújra, long--necked, their fawns with them,  
Fled as the miráge flees, fills the vale of Bíshata,  
fills the tree--cladwádies, íthel and rock--mazes.

What of her, Nowára, thy lost love, who fled from thee,  
every heart--link sundered, close loop and free fetter!  
Hers the Mórra camp--fires lit how far in Fáïda,  
in Hejáz what marches! How shalt thou win to her?  
Eastward move they marching, to Muhájjer wandering  
camped in Táí, in Férda, ay, in Rukhám of it.  
Southward on to Yémen, to Sowéyk their sojournings,



to Waháf el Káhri, ay, and Tilkhám of it.  
Man, have done! forget her, one too far to comfort thee!  
Who would his love garner first let him sunder it.  
Shed the love that fails thee. Strong be thou, and break with her.  
Keep thy gifts for friendship, freed from thy wilderment.  
Mount thee on thy nága. Travel--trained and hard she is,  
low her back withleanness, lessened the hump of her;  
Shrunk her sides and wasted, jaded with long journeyings,  
spare as her hide shoe--straps frayed by her road--faring.  
Light she to her halter, to thy hand that guideth her,  
as a red cloud southwards loosed from its rain--burden.  
Nay a fair wild--ass she; at her side the white--flanked one,  
he the scarred ass--stallion, bitten and struck for her.  
Climbed they two the hill--top, he the bite--scarred ass--tyrant  
her new mood resenting, being in foal to him  
On the crags high posted watcheth he from Thálabut  
all the plain to guard her, ambushes laid for her.  
Six months of Jumáda wandered have they waterless,  
browsing the moist herbage, he her high sentinel.  
Till returned their thirsting, need of the far water clefts,  
all their will to win there speeding them waterwards.  
What though with heels wounded, still the hot wind driveth them,  
as a furnace burning, fire--scorched the breath of it.  
In their trail a dust--cloud, like a smoke it wavereth,  
like a fire new--lighted, kindling the flame of it,  
Flame fanned by the North--wind, green wood mixed with dry fuel,  
smoke aloft high curling. So is the dust of them.  
He, when her pace slackened, pushed her still in front of him.  
Nay, she might not falter, tyrant he urged her on,  
Till they reached the streamlet, plunged and slaked their thirst in it,  
A spring welling over, crest--high the reeds of it;  
All its banks a cane--brake, thick with stems o'ershadowing;  
bent are some, some standing, night--deep the shade of them.

Say is this her likeness? Or a wild cow wolf--raided  
of her sweet calf loitering, she in the van of them.  
She, the short--nosed, missed it. Lows she now unendingly,  
roams the rocks, the sand--drifts, mourning and bellowing,  
Lows in rage beholding that white shape, the limbs of it,  
dragged by the grey wolf--cubs: who shall their hunger stay?  
Theirs the chance to seize it, hers the short forgetfulness.  
Death is no mean archer. Mark how his arrows hit.

Stopped she then at night--fall, while the rain in long furrows  
scored the bush--grown hill--slopes, ceaseless the drip of it,  
Dripped on her dark back--line, poured abroad abundantly:  
not a star the heaven showed, cloud--hung the pall of it;  
One tree all her shelter, standing broad--branched, separate  
at the sand--hills' edge--line, steep--set the sides of them.  
She, the white cow, shone there through the dark night luminous,  
like a pearl of deep--seas, freed from the string of it.  
Thus till morn, till day--dawn folded back night's canopy;  
then she fled bewildered, sliding the feet of her,  
Fled through the rain lakelets, to the pool Suwáyada,  
all a seven nights' fasting twinned with the days of them,  
Till despaired she wholly, till her udder milk--stricken  
shrank, so full to feed him suckling or weaning him.  
Voices now she hears near, human tones, they startle her,  
though to her eye naught is: Man! he, the bane of her!  
Seeketh a safe issue, the forenoon through listening,  
now in front, behind now, fearing her enemy.  
And they failed, the archers. Loosed they then to deal with her  
fine--trained hounds, the lop--eared, slender the sides of them.  
These outran her lightly. Turned she swift her horns on them,  
like twin spears of Sámhar, sharp--set the points of them.  
Well she knew her danger, knew if her fence failed with them  
hers must be thered death. Hence her wrath's strategy.  
And she slew Kasábi, foremost hound of all of them,  
stretched the brach inblood there, ay, and Sukhám of them.  
Thus is she, my nága. When at noon the plains quiver  
and the hills dance sun--steeped, cloaked in the heat--tremors,  
Ride I and my deeds do, nor forbear from wantoning,  
lest the fools should shame me, blame me the fault--finders.

Do not thou misprize me, thou Nowára. One am I  
binder of all love--knots, ay, and love's sunderer;  
One who when love fails him, wails not long but flies from it;  
one whom one alone holds, hard death the hinderer.  
What dost thou of mirth know, glorious nights, ah, how many:  
cold nor heat might mar them, spent in good company?  
Came I thus discoursing to his sign, the wine--seller's,  
drank at the flag--hoisting, drank till the wine grew dear,  
Bidding up each full skin: black with age the brand of it,  
pouring forth the tarred jars, breaking the seals of them;  
Pure deep draughts of morning, while she played, the sweet singer

fingering the lute--strings, showing her skill to me.  
Ere the cock had crowed once, a first cup was quaffed by me:  
ere slow man had stretched him, gone was the second cup.  
On what dawns sharp--winded clothed have I the cold with it,  
dawns that held the North--wind reined in the hands of them.  
Well have I my tribe served, brought them aid and armament,  
slept, my mare's reins round me, night--long their sentinel;  
Ridden forth at day--dawn, climbed the high--heaped sand--ridges  
hard by the foe's marches, dun--red the slopes of them;  
Watched till the red sun dipped hand--like in obscurity,  
till the night lay curtained, shrouding our weaknesses;  
And I came down riding, my mare's neck held loftily  
as a palm fruit--laden: woe to the gatherer!  
Swift was she, an ostrich; galloped she how wrathfully,  
from her sides the sweat streamed, lightening the ribs of her;  
Strained on her her saddle; dripped with wet the neck of her,  
the white foam--flakes wreathing, edging the girth of her;  
Thrusteth her neck forward, shaketh her reins galloping;  
flieth as the doves fly bound for the water--springs.

At the King's Court strangers thronged from what far provinces,  
each athirst for bounty, fearing indignity.  
Stiff--necked they as lions in their hate, the pride of them,  
came with stubborn proud feet, Jinns of the wilderness.  
Stopped I their vain boastings, took no ill--tongued words from them,  
let them not take licence. What were their chiefs to me?  
I it was provided camels for their slaughtering,  
I who their shares portioned, drawing the lots for them.  
Every mouth I feasted. Barren mount and milch--camel  
slew I for all daily. All shared the meat of them.  
Far guest and near neighbour, every man rose satisfied,  
full as in Tebála, fed as in green valleys.  
Ay, the poor my tent filled, thin poor souls like sick--camels,  
nágas at a tomb tied, bare--backed, no shirt on them.  
Loud the winter winds howled; piled we high the meat--dishes;  
flowed the streams of fatness, feeding the fatherless.  
Thus the tribes were trysted; nor failed we the provident  
to name one, a wiseman, fair--tongued, as judge for them,  
One who the spoil portioned, gave to each his just measure,  
spake to all unfearing, gave or refused to give,  
A just judge, a tribe--sheykh, wise, fair--worded, bountiful,  
sweet of face to all men, feared by the warriors.

Noble we; our fathers wielded power bequeathed to them,  
dealt law to the nations, each tribe its lawgiver.  
All our lineage faultless, no light words our promises;  
not for us the vain thoughts, passions of common men.  
Thou fool foe, take warning, whatso the Lord portioneth  
hold it a gift granted, dealt thee in equity.  
Loyalty our gift was, faith unstained our heritage;  
these fair things He gave us, He the distributor.  
For for us a mansion built He, brave the height of it,  
lodged therein our old men, ay, and the youths of us,  
All that bore our burdens, all in our tribe's sore sorrow,  
all that were our horsemen, all our high councillors.  
Like the Spring are these men, joy to them that wait on them,  
to the weak, the widows, towers in adversity.  
Thus our kin stands faith--firm, purged of tribe--malingerers.  
Woe be to all false friends! Woe to the envious!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Liberty, Equality, Fraternity

Long have I searched the Earth for liberty  
In desert places and lands far abroad  
Where neither Kings nor constables should be,  
Nor any law of Man, alas, or God.  
Freedom, Equality and Brotherhood,  
These were my quarries which eternally  
Fled from my footsteps fast as I pursued,  
Sad phantoms of desire by land and sea.

See, it is ended. Sick and overborne  
By foes and fools, and my long chase, I lie.  
Here, in these walls, with all life's souls forlorn  
Herded I wait,--and in my ears the cry,  
` ` Alas, poor brothers, equal in Man's scorn  
And free in God's good liberty to die."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Lilac And Gold And Green

Lilac and gold and green!

Those are the colours I love the best,  
Spring's own raiment untouched and clean,  
When the world is awake and yet hardly dressed,  
And the stranger sun, her bridegroom shy,  
Looks at her bosom and wonders why  
She is so beautiful, he so blest.

Lilac and green and gold!

Those were the colours you wore to--day,  
Robed you were in them fold on fold,  
Clothed in the light of your love's delay.  
And I held you thus in my arms, once only,  
And wondered still, as you left me lonely,  
How the world's beauty was changed to grey.

Lilac and gold and green!

I would die for the truth of those colours true!  
Lilac for loyalty, gold for my queen,  
And green the faith of my love for you.  
Here is a posy of all the three.  
My heart is with it. So think of me,  
And our weeping skies shall once more be blue.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Love After Sorrow

Behold, this hour I love, as in the glory of morn.  
I too, the accursèd one, whom griefs pursue  
Like phantoms through a land of deaths forlorn,  
Have felt my heart leap up with courage new.

Behold, I love. The tragedy of hate's derision  
Has like a storm--cloud vanished and is done.  
High in its path my hope has burst its prison  
And stands transfigured, a resplendent sun.

Where are the ghosts of sorrow that beset my road,  
The foes that mocked, the fools that fled from me?  
Peace be their portion all who sought my blood.  
I care not for fear's bondage who am free.

O days of youth renewed! Love's voice, a singing bird's,  
Thrills me to tears more sweet than laughters are.  
His silence godlike speaks to me in words  
Dearer than minstrelsy in lands afar.

These halls, e'erwhile of pride, my sorrow's palaces,  
Are decked for joy, and with high pomps and shows  
Proclaim his lordship of all life that is  
In passionate echoes of remembered vows.

The gardens are grown thick once more with scent of flowers  
Moss--roses by the wall, sweet lavenders,  
Larkspurs, red lilies. Who shall tell what dowers  
Of musks and mallows golden shall be hers?

Hers? Whose? Oh, if a tongue should tell of dreams unwise  
And love might blazon love to ears abroad,  
How would I speak! But let this word suffice,  
That to my lips one name leaps like a sword,

And that I live once more and love all sentient things,  
The spirit of the Earth, and the Sun's fire,  
And the night's silence and hushed wanderings,  
And her who is the soul of my desire.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# Love In The Summer Hills

Love in the summer hills,  
With youth to mock at ills,  
And kisses sweet to cheat  
Our idle tears away.  
What else has Time in store,  
Till Life shall close the door?  
Still let me sing love's lore,  
Come sorrow when it may.

Rain on the weeping hills,  
With Death to end our ills,  
And only thought unsought  
To point our joys' decay.  
Oh Life is wounded sore  
And Grief's mad waters roar.  
Yet will I love once more  
To--day as yesterday.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Love Is Best

Dare all things for Love's sake, since love is best,  
Of Fate ask nothing, rather by your deeds  
Rebuke it for its niggard ways unblest,  
And trust to Love to shield you in your needs.  
Remember in the shade of the new years  
Only what Love has given. This shall be  
Daily your dole, a safeguard from your tears,  
Outwitting change and Time's inconstancy.  
--Knock loudly at Love's door. He is awake.  
Offer him roses. 'Tis his month of June.  
Watch all his ways. Do worship for his sake.  
Seek out his service. He shall serve you soon.  
Know this of Love, who fears not Fate's disaster  
Answers for both and is of Time the master.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Love Is Master Still

Since that it may not be,  
The thing my soul desires,  
And that Love's tenderer fires  
Are doomed to loss and Time's sterility,  
Ours be it this one day  
Flowers at Love's feet to lay,  
For Love is master still, or be we bond or free.

We may not quite be blest.  
Time's treasure is too great,  
And ours too weak a fate,  
And Joy burns low, a sun--flame in the West.  
Night comes, the while we stand  
Forlornly hand in hand,  
And then the tears begin, the dreams that have no rest.

Yet, since it may not be,  
And Love can not be wise,  
And in each other's eyes  
We still must seek Time's lost felicity,  
Ours be it this last day  
Flowers on Love's grave to lay,  
For Love is master still, or be we bond or free.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Love Me A Little

Love me a little, love me as thou wilt,  
Whether a draught it be of passionate wine  
Poured with both hands divine,  
Or just a cup of water spilt  
On dying lips and mine.  
Give me the love thou wilt,  
The purity, the guilt,  
So it be thine.

Love me a little. Let it be thy cheek  
With its red signals. That were dear to kiss.  
Or, if thou mayest not this,  
A finger--tip my own to seek  
At nightfall when none guess.  
Eyes have the wit to speak,  
And sighs send messages:  
Even give less.

Love me a little. Let it be in words  
Of happy omen heralding thy choice,  
Or in a veiled sad voice  
Of warning, like a frightened bird's.  
How should I not rejoice,  
Though swords be crossed with swords  
And discord mar love's chords  
And tears thy voice?

Love me a little. All my world thou art.  
Thy much were Heaven: thy little Earth shall be.  
If not Eternity,  
Then Time be mine, the human part,  
A single hour with thee.  
Love as thou wilt and art,  
With all or half a heart,  
So thou love me.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Love Rides Disguised

What name is his, thy knight's? Nay, ask it not.  
If fate should hear thee, child, what griefs might come.  
Love rides disguised. He fears a counterplot  
For his own plot of joy in heathendom.  
Restrained he goes; a single rose--red plume  
Is all his badge. No blazon hath he wrought,  
Device nor sign; his motto ``sum qui sum."  
Silent is he of Court and Camelot.  
--Be wise, sweetheart, nor tempt time to mischance.  
Love at his own hour shall his whole face show.  
Oh, if thou hast not seen him, thou shalt see!  
Undo shalt thou his helm with thy blest hands,  
Nurse his tired head upon thy pitying knee.  
Then shall he tell all, and thou all shalt know.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Love's Likenings

He.

To what, love, shall I liken thee?  
Thou, methinks, shalt firstly be  
A blue flower with nodding bells  
In the hollow of a tree.  
When the wind blows wantonly,  
Thou shalt ever shake thy head  
At the idle tale he tells.  
But at evening from the clover,  
When the world is all abed,  
And the noisy day is over,  
And the birds have gone to rest,  
In the darkness will I hover  
Till thou bid me come to thee,  
Till I creep into thy nest,  
I thy long--expected lover,  
I thy sweet, thy honey bee.  
To what, love, shall I liken thee?  
Tell me, love, what wouldst thou be?

She.

I would be a white cloud lying  
In the bosom of the sky,  
And at noon, when Earth is sighing  
For the sun my fleeces hide,  
I would bask in his bright eye,  
Till he drew me up on high,  
Till he took me for his bride.  
Thou shalt be my sun to me.

Love, but I would be a well  
In the sands of Araby,  
So thyself wert a gazelle  
Which must either drink or die.  
Bend above me, love, and lo!  
In my waters thou shalt spy  
All that my heart cares to show,  
Thy own face against the sky.

He.

To what more shall I liken thee?  
Thou, my love, shalt lastly be  
A clear silver--tongued brook  
Running downwards to the Sea,  
And the reeds shall seek to stay thee  
Under every shaded nook,  
And the pebbles shall waylay thee,  
With their bald heads to dismay thee,  
Till thy pretty face grows white,  
Half in anger, half in fright.  
See, thy troubles are forgot  
In the still pool suddenly,  
And a smile has found thee out,  
Taking shape of thy delight,  
Laughing, weeping, onward ever  
Till thou join thyself to me,  
For my love shall be the river.  
Thou and I shall run together  
Ever till we meet the Sea.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Many Are Called

Many are called, dear heart, to happiness,  
But few are chosen, even for a wild short year.  
Love calls us from our sleep, and we make stress  
To rise and greet him in a world austere  
With a sweet dawn, while blithe as chanticleer  
He carols his brave message, and we loosen  
The shutters of our grief to find him near.  
Many are called by Love, but few are chosen.

Love's voice is truth. He speaks his messages  
In tones we dare not doubt, and we give ear  
As to a prophet of our wilderness,  
The glorious lord of a new hemisphere.  
And we run, we too, glorious, without fear,  
Like children on bright ice too thinly frozen,  
Gay to our doom. Ah me! The plunge was sheer.  
Many are called by Love, but few are chosen.

Love chooses whom he will to ban or bless.  
My fate was a wild shepherd's on the drear  
Plains of wan hope, whose one--time shepherdess  
Was lost even in the winning, and whose cheer  
Has since been of the yellow leaf and sere,  
(Scorned is the rose--tree Time finds no last rose on)  
And silence claims him and the end is near.  
Many are called by Love, but few are chosen.

Queen of my life! I do not love you less  
Because you choose not me to cast your woes on.  
It is enough for me you once said ``Yes."  
Many are called by Love, but few are chosen.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# Mitigations

My prison has its pleasures. Every day  
At breakfast--time, spare meal of milk and bread,  
Sparrows come trooping in familiar way  
With head aside beseeching to be fed.  
A spider too for me has spun her thread  
Across the prison rules, and a brave mouse  
Watches in sympathy the warders' tread,  
These two my fellow--prisoners in the house.

But about dusk in the rooms opposite  
I see lamps lighted, and upon the blind  
A shadow passes all the evening through.  
It is the gaoler's daughter fair and kind  
And full of pity (so I image it)  
Till the stars rise, and night begins anew.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Moonstruck

I have quarrelled with the Moon. I loved her once,  
As all boys love one face supremely fair.  
I had heard her praised, and I too, happy dunce,  
Let my tongue wag and made her my heart's prayer.  
My prayer! For what, great heaven? The midnight air  
Seemed trembling in her presence, and those nuns  
The worshipping host knelt round her, star and star,  
And sobbed ``magnificat'' in antiphons.  
She was my saint, queen, goddess. Then, one night,  
Another face I saw, which, not a god's,  
Moved me to dreams more sweet than reverence,  
And we were near our bliss, when from the clouds  
Her angry eyes looked down and drove us thence  
Moonstruck and blind and robbed of our delight.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# My Only Title

My only title to her grace  
Is her sad, too silent face;  
All my right to call her mine  
The twin tears that on it shine,  
Tears that tell of griefs long hid  
In the shadows of each lid,  
And of doubts that wound her sore  
Our twin lives shall meet no more.  
Nay, my right and title this,  
That she gave me one shy kiss  
'Twixt the dawning and the day,  
Benediction on my way,  
When the vain world was asleep  
And no ear to hear us weep,  
And that once my fingers pressed  
The warm treasures of her breast,  
Just a moment, and the truth  
Learned of her close--hidden youth  
With its joys and sweetnesses  
Deep beyond all wit to guess,  
All but mine, and what might be  
Were she wholly joined with me.

Such my title is and treasure,  
Such my glory beyond measure,  
Such my thought for the new years,  
Burdened with what doubts and fears,  
Yet one day to claim her mine.  
Here, beyond this shadowy Rhine,  
Far from her and journeying still,  
Feel I her young pulses thrill,  
Her warm body nestled close  
To my own with all its woes.  
And I know that some far hour  
I shall call to her with power,  
When the sun is fast in prison  
And the midnight stars have risen  
Clear and kind in a warm sky,

And the shepherd's hour is nigh,  
In a language she shall heed,  
` ` Life is fleeting, love hath need.  
Time it is tears should not be.  
Come, my love, and dwell with me."  
And I know that without stay,  
'Twixt the dawning and the day,  
When the vain world is asleep  
And no ear to hear her weep,  
She shall dry her tears and come;  
And we too through Christendom  
And beyond this shadowy Rhine,  
With its fields of corn and wine,  
And the snow--clad Alps and Rome,  
And the blue sea capped with foam,  
And far--famed Constantinople  
With its domes of pearl and opal,  
And the sea of Marmora,  
Where the dolphins sport and play,  
And the utmost isles of Greece  
Guarding still their golden fleece,  
As when Paris to them came  
With his Helen all aflame  
On their glorious honeymoon;  
And so on from noon to noon  
Journeying still and still beyond,  
Fond as they and yet more fond,  
To the ancient tearless East  
Shall be borne as to a feast,  
And sit down there our lives long,  
With Love's silence for our song  
And Love's guile for our disguise,  
While I teach her to be wise.  
And my title to her grace  
Shall the smiles be on her face,  
Her blue eyes, where no tears be,  
Being wholly joined with me.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet I

Oh! woe is me for beauty idly blown!  
And woe for passionate youth and joys that wait!  
And woe for foolish love that is undone  
By woman's fear, and fortune come too late!  
And woe for empty words and hours that were  
Squandered in weeping! Woe, because of Death  
Who was at hand, and, while joy languished near  
Fearing to enter, quickly from its sheath  
Drew out his sword and laid its point unto  
That virgin breast, and there in stern embrace  
Did all that happiness had dared not do,  
Rifling the treasures of that holy place,  
And heeding not Love's shriek. Alas, poor Love!  
Death will not spare what thou hast spared to prove.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet II

'Twas thus with my Natalia, suppliant soul,  
Who loved young Adrian to her heart's despite,  
And loved him dearly, yet could not cajole  
Her fears of ill nor use her woman's right  
To grant his wish, but ever put away  
The sweet fulfilment of each day's desire  
To a new to--morrow void as yesterday.  
Adrian in vain, with wild hopes high and higher,  
Essayed to make her convert to his creed.  
No laggard he to do, devise or dare.  
But still she failed him ever at his need,  
And still she gave but tears to his heart's prayer.  
And days and nights went cheerless for them both,  
And not a flower was gathered of love's troth.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Iii

Matron was she of a great Roman house,  
And wed in youth to one she might not love;  
Her birth, her fortune, her name luminous,  
Such as all noblest virtues most behove.  
How dare she trifle with ignoble things,  
Or yield her fair fame to a stranger's care,  
Or let her passionate desire take wings,  
Or be of those unchastely debonnaire?  
Yet with him she was well, and far from him  
A bird shaft--stricken which no more may fly.  
She deemed his smile as of the seraphim,  
And in his frown she was one like to die.  
For his dear sake 'twixt niggard hopes and fears  
She lived in death for two long weary years.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Iv

But Adrian, who was young and all athirst  
For human joy, and turbulent and strong,  
Grew discontent with her despairs and curst,  
Nor spared he her the jibings of his tongue.  
He mocked at her vain virtue and the words  
She used to comfort him when sometimes she  
With weak heart battling, like a troubled bird's  
Which sees the nets, would ease his misery  
With telling her own pain and making show  
Of her soul's hunger to his hungry soul.  
It only angered him, this prate of woe,  
And back he thrust on her her beggar's dole  
Of idle sighs. And ``If I have not bread,  
For pity let me be and starve," he said.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet IX

Thus Adrian learned it. And behold, his heart,  
Which he had hardened against all dismay,  
And wrapped up secretly and laid apart  
As something which should not be used to--day,  
Woke with a pang, and tremulously wan  
Started and listened. There in the new morn  
Of this grey waking, like a long drowned man  
Brought back to life, he knew the world forlorn  
By the dull ache which was in every limb.  
The ghastly pleasures which had gorged his care  
Paled as he looked at them. His dead lusts dim  
Stank like lost corpses in the morning air.  
And yet 'twas passing sweet, despite the pain,  
To feel and move and live and love again.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet V

Until it happened, as such things will be,  
That she, who had a proud man for her spouse  
None the less loving that unloved was he,  
Must bear a child, the heir to his high house.  
Then Adrian left her. It was idle sorrow  
Longer to wait a suppliant at her door,  
Weeping the promise of a lost to--morrow  
Which never could be his nor valued more.  
And he was tired of tears and nightly needed  
To feed his manhood's strength on stronger meat,  
And neither word of hers nor vow he heeded,  
Who was thus proved a daughter of deceit;  
And he was wrath with her and womanhood,  
And with himself, and chiefly wrath with God.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Vi

So he departed angry and in haste,  
A bitter wanderer on the ways of life:  
He cared not whither so he found a feast  
Spread for his hunger which should need no strife.  
He went out silent, scornful and alone,  
That none might pity him. He would not make  
Of his too public grief a public moan,  
Nor yet feign laughter for his manhood's sake,  
For now that love was lost he less had heart  
To cast his pride too on the dunghill there,  
And his were griefs where none could bear a part,  
And his a cup of pain no lips could share.  
He went his way, to Germany some said,  
And some to Naples, some that he was dead.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Vii

But where he fared and how, it matters not.  
He and his mourning ere a month had run  
Were out of mind with all and clean forgot,  
Kinsman and friend and foe: save only one,  
Only Natalia. She with tightened breath  
Heard his name spoken in reproof's vain way  
And gave her melancholy soul to death.  
Foolish Natalia, who in love's full day  
Had spent her grief, had nothing now to give  
Of greater woe to her soul's agonies.  
Living she yet had hardly dared to live.  
She had wept dry the fountains of her eyes,  
And never on her sorrow broke a gleam  
Of that assuagement tears on others stream.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Viii

And so it was that, sitting ever thus  
Dumb to all speech of those that knew her woe  
And bare with her sole sorrow in the house,  
And ever watching with sad eyes below  
To see if any came with help for her  
Whom none could help with pity or with pride  
Or word of patience, ere her time was near,  
She bore her yet unliving child and died.  
There was great mourning for her in those days  
Because of her high lineage and fair youth.  
Men knowing her spoke nobly in her praise,  
Or knowing not yet mourned for very ruth.  
And all Rome wept for her, and far and wide  
The fame was noised how of her love she died.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet X

But with full daylight finding no relief,  
Though he had spent the newness of his fears  
And looked with altered eyes upon his grief,  
For sorrow often drowns in its tears,  
And men sleep deepest on a wound, he rose  
And taking horse made in all haste for Rome,  
Thinking if thus he might assuage his woes  
By visiting his dead Natalia's tomb  
And asking of her dear new--buried lips  
What secret thought had been of love and him  
When the world left her in its last eclipse.  
And still in passionate words he made his theme,  
That she was waiting yet to hear his cry:  
` `O my soul's soul, I did not bid thee die."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xi

So in his agony at noon he came,  
On the third day, to where without the walls  
Stood San Lorenzo with its front of flame,  
Where mourners wait the accustomed funerals.  
Here to a cypress having tied his steed,  
He lighted down sore weary on the grass,  
Seeking such comfort for his body's need  
As rest could lend till the day's heat should pass  
And no man stopped him, either friend or foe  
Or knight or citizen or friar or priest;  
Nor sought he more companionship of woe  
Than the dumb presence of his jaded beast.  
There, hidden in the shade where he had crept,  
Adrian o'erspent with sorrow soundly slept.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xii

He slept as only under the free heaven  
It is given to sleep, a slumber shadowless  
As the broad river to whose banks at even  
That spirit comes which brings forgetfulness,  
A silence undisturbed by the world's tread,  
Which sees not, hears not, feels not, yet is girt  
With sound and light and sense; which seeming dead  
Drinks in Earth's life in cure of every hurt  
And so takes consolation. Dreams anon  
Come for the soul's refreshment, apparitions  
Begot of heaven's beauty and the sun,  
No meaningless expectance of sad visions  
But tales prophetic of new days more fair  
And to be numbered with the things that are,

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xiii

A heritage for ever. Such a sleep  
Came upon Adrian and such a dream,  
As in the shade he lay a weary heap.  
For, while he rested, still it seemed to him  
He rode towards the city of his love,  
Only in mirth not sadness. And, behold,  
In his soothed bosom Hope, a brooding dove,  
Had made again her nest, and manifold  
Fair pleasures round him seemed to perch and sing  
Like wild birds in the branches overhead,  
And his heart leaped in joy with everything,  
As in the days ere yet his joys were dead,  
Until he found himself, it seemed, in Rome  
And knocking at the doors of his own home.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xix

And still the music sounded near and near,  
Loud and more loud on Adrian's nuptial way,  
Preluding soft, as 'twere a dulcimer,  
But gathering strength and volume with delay,  
And sadness too. In truth, as strange a chaunt  
As ever bridegroom's ear might choose to know,  
Or lover's voice to listening lover vaunt,  
(Thus Adrian argued in his dream) for, lo,  
The dirge resolved itself to words of pain,  
And ``Miserere mei Domine"  
Became the burden of its dolorous strain,  
Till the love faded from Natalia's glee,  
And with a sudden shudder in the sun  
Adrian awoke and his brave dream was done.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xv

Anon, ere yet his pleasure was aware  
Of other presence with him in that place,  
A growing murmur in the jubilant air,  
With hum of voices gathering apace,  
And laughter interchanged, and tones well known,  
And steps approaching him familiar--wise,  
And names that seemed an echo of his own,  
Broke on his musing. Turning in surprise  
He saw around him a gay company,  
Faces of kinsmen or of friends as near,  
But dead or changed or wed: all now in joy,  
Such as they showed him once in days more dear  
Ere yet his manhood had been touched with pain,  
Stood forth to greet him to their hearts again.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xvi

Among the rest ('twas thus his dream went on  
While Adrian slept) in more than courteous mood  
And smiling welcome, fairer scarce was none,  
That noble knight Natalia's husband stood,  
A gentle man whom of a truth in life,  
Alas for jealous youth and wit too keen!  
Adrian loved little though he loved his wife,  
But now beheld as the most blest of men,--  
Because Natalia was not dead, he thought,  
Seeing him thus unconscious of all grief,--  
And in that cloudless face where pain was not  
Adrian found omen to his soul's relief,  
And looked beyond if haply he should see  
Her face too following fixed in constancy.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xvii

Nor yet in vain. For to him through the rout  
Behold, 'mid herald whispers of her name  
And laughing eyes and welcome hands held out,  
Natalia's self behind her husband came,  
Her face arrayed in smiles, as who should say  
She held a secret string of happiness  
Joined to her heart grief could not take away.  
And Adrian gazed at her in rapturous bliss,  
Knowing his love had triumphed o'er the grave  
And she at last was his, a heritage  
For ever for his heart to hold and have,  
In spite of change and death's untimely rage  
And the long tempest of forgotten tears,  
The pain, the anger and the grief of years.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xviii

Nor were the rest astonished. Even he,  
Natalia's lord, in all complacent grace  
Looked on approving of her act when she  
Stepped forward with her face to Adrian's face,  
And touched his lips and told him of the truth  
How all was ended now of her old life,  
With the sad barrier that had marred their youth:  
Husband no longer and no longer wife,  
Natalia had grown free. Then the proud lover  
Gave thanks to God and took her arm in his,  
Fearless how now their love they should discover  
To any anger of suspicious eyes,  
And led her forth his bride before them all  
With solemn music to the banquet--hall.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xx

Oh, pitiful awaking! What was Adrian's pleasure,  
That it had earned for him such bitterness?  
What his soul's pride that its new tender measure  
Should find its echo in a dirge like this?  
The chaunters chaunting slow were sable priests  
Robed for a requiem; the laughters clear,  
Women that wept; the untasted marriage feasts,  
Death's banquet spread, and she upon the bier,  
Natalia's self in her white robe of death,  
Mourned by the hard eyes of unfriendly men,  
And with them he, her husband, with set teeth  
And visage pale which ne'er should smile again  
In any welcome. Adrian neither moved  
Nor spoke, but gazed upon the form he loved.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxi

But when they had gone past him every one,  
With new resolve begotten of his dream,  
Adrian arose and followed where the stone  
Yawned for his love, and there unseen by them  
In the dark chauntry he beheld them lay  
Her body in the grave with his own heart.  
A bitter jest it seemed to him that they  
Should all stand near and only he apart,  
And through his soul a wind of anger swept  
When any in the sad crowd chanced to be  
Betwixt him and the woman he so wept,  
And oftentimes he cursed them bitterly  
That hands not his should touch her in the tomb,  
Waiting till night and his revenge should come.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxii

The thought of night consoled him. To his vision  
Natalia was dead only in false death,  
The sleeping treason of some false misprision,  
Some silent mystery of shortened breath,  
Not dead in truth for ever and to him,  
Or to that other life his dream foretold:--  
Her murderers these. And in his heart the whim  
Rose he should draw her from her cincture cold,  
And set his lips upon her lips once more,  
And free her spirit thus from its dull trance,  
And all should be between them as before,  
Only more dear for her deliverance.  
And darkly there he smiled as, their work done,  
The mourners left him with their dead alone.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxiii

But, when the church was hushed in the night wind,  
And all were gone who might his zeal disclaim,  
Or hinder the firm purpose of his mind,  
A silent man among the tombs he came,  
Stooping to listen if so be some sound  
Of living thing with speech or power to breathe  
Should issuant be from the dark underground,--  
And last to hers. There on that home of death  
He kneeled him down and called aloud to her,  
` ` Natalia, O Natalia, my beloved,  
Am I not here thy soul's petitioner  
Whom thou so lovedst?" And around him moved  
The phantoms of the night. And the wind's sigh  
Answered his prayer, ` ` Beloved, it is I."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxiv

And, feeling round him, lo, upon the mould  
A pick and spade cast down by accident.  
And Adrian laughed when in those engines cold  
He guessed the furtherers of his heart's intent.  
And all night through he wrought with them in rage,  
As miners do who know the prize at hand.  
Blest Adrian! Now thy lips thou shalt engage  
In the full solace thy long love has planned.  
Her face is near thee. Speed thee on thy task.  
Her breast's fair purity is thine to kiss.  
She shall not now deny though thou shouldst ask  
Her whole soul's prize in ransom of thy bliss.  
Thrice happy Adrian! See, thy hands have slid  
Trembling on thy Natalia's coffin lid.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxix

He bore her to his home 'twixt life and death,  
By mute connivance of the slumbering streets,  
Bore her redeemed to a new world of breath  
And peace divine, belike the Paraclete's.  
There lay she in his hands for many days  
Speechless, unasking,--only in her soul  
The wonder grew at love's mysterious ways  
Which had outwitted grief and proved her fool.  
Ay, fool in sooth, unblest by her own will,  
Yet now by chiding of love's guidance blest,  
Who, sparing all, of all now found her fill,  
And lost to love was now of love the guest.  
Dreaming she lay, with visions in her eyes  
Of a new world where women all were wise.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxv

Oh, miracle of love! That death, which seems  
So hard a master when he holds his prize,  
Whom no cajoleries, nor stratagems  
Of beauty's power, nor wisdom's sophistries,  
E'er turned aside from his appointed way,  
But falcon--like, who with relentless foot  
And pinions spread above his captured prey,  
Holds his high way in heaven absolute,  
Nor heeds our questionings: that this same death  
Should have grown soft and yielded to love's tears,  
And drawn his talons from their fleshly sheath,  
And spared awhile his harvest of the years!  
Oh, miracle in sooth renowned above  
All other wonders of miraculous love!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxvi

Yet so it was. Adrian had hardly set  
His lips to those cold lips where death had been,  
His eyes those clammy eyelids scarce had wet  
With his warm tears and poured his soul between,  
Nor yet with eager hands had he undone  
That bosom's fastness of its snowy fold,  
Ere, lo, on his rapt ear there fell a moan  
As of one waking in the night grown cold.  
And, even as he held her in his arms,  
And gazed into her face by the dim light,  
He saw her blue eyes open in alarms,  
As wondering who was with her in the night,  
And a long shudder pass through all her frame,  
And her lips move as half she breathed his name.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxvii

She wakes, she breathes, she rises from her bed,  
That bed of death where she has lain so long;  
The flowers they set there fall from her fair head  
Withered, while she, sweet soul, has known no wrong.  
Forth from her grave miraculously white,  
And all unstained by the dull earth's decay,  
Natalia rises, a last star of night,  
Just as the dawn is breaking into day.  
Upon the stones they kneeled them down and prayed,  
For hearts grow soft with a long danger past,  
And both were young and for a while dismayed  
At their great joy nor deemed they held it fast;  
Then, having kissed and wept, they turned to go  
Through the dark church with faltering steps and slow.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxviii

Away! Away! Away with her, young lover,  
Away with her in haste lest dawn should break;  
If that her kinsmen should thy deed discover  
Ill might it fare with thee for her love's sake.  
Away with her to thine own palace walls,  
Where thou shalt cherish her, and none may know.  
Thy grief alone in those sad funerals  
Was left behind and thou art quit of woe.  
Oh, happy bridal! Now let songs be sung,  
Lead forth the dances, let the minstrels play,  
Bring her thou lovest thy own kith among,  
A stranger bride, and who shall say thee nay?  
Death's mighty river whoso hath passed through  
Stands clear of blame, do fate what it may do.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxviii

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Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxx

Thus was Natalia loved and lost and won.  
Some say that Adrian, having gained the goal  
Of his long hopes, and being of those who run  
Too lightly for their constancy of soul,  
Or finding maybe that in spite of fate  
She he had saved from death was ill at ease,  
And halted still in doubt 'twixt this and that,  
Grudging her frightened soul its ecstasies,  
At a high feast in presence of her kin  
Gave back Natalia to her husband's care:  
A fair resolve, mayhap, and lesser sin,  
If that sin be which love hath made so fair.  
Yet do I doubt me all so blindly ended,  
Since both from Adam were and Eve descended.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Natalia's Resurrection: Sonnet Xxxi

Rather I hold with those that tell it thus,  
That they, who had made proof of their great faith,  
Were joined no less with honour in love's house  
By Holy Church, which binding looseneth,  
Since it is written that 'twixt maid and man  
The wedded contract joining hand and heart  
For this life is and passeth not the span  
Of victor death which all our bonds doth part.  
And it were grievous one should suffer all,  
Even death's last pang and an untimely grave,  
If overcoming he again should fall  
Prisoner to penance and to sorrow slave.  
Ah, no! They lived the life their love had given,  
And we too all, so grant it kindly Heaven!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## New Things Are Best

What shall I tell you, child, in this new Sonnet?  
Life's art is to forget, and last year's sowing  
Cast in Time's furrow with the storm winds blowing  
Bears me a wild crop with strange fancies on it.  
Last year I wore your sole rose in my bonnet.  
This year--who knows--who, even the All--knowing,  
What to my vagrant heart, for its undoing,  
Of weeds shall blossom ere my tears atone it?  
--New Spring is in the air with new desirings;  
New wonders fructify Earth, Sea, and Heaven,  
And happy birds sing loud from a new nest.  
Ah, why then grieve Love's recreant aspirings,  
His last year's hopes, his vows forgot, forgiven?  
Child, be we comforted! New things are best.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Night On Our Lives

Night on our lives, ah me, how surely has it fallen!  
Be they who can be deceived. I dare not look before.  
See, sad years, to your own; your little wealth long hoarded,  
How sore it was to win, how soon it perished all!  
Beauty, the one face loved, the pure eyes mine so worshipped,  
So true, so touching once, so tender in their dreams!  
Find me that hour again. I yield the rest uncounted,  
Urns for the dust of time, divine in her sole tears.  
--Unseen one! Unforgotten! Oh, if your eyes behold it  
By chance, this page revealed which trembling hides your name,  
Merged in the ultimate wreck of fame and meaner joys!  
Co--partner be with me in this my soul's last sorrow,  
Pearl of my hidden life, this grief, that not again  
Unspoiled love's rose shall blow, the dear love which was ours.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Not A Word

Love, my heart is faint with waiting,  
Faint with hope and joy deferred,  
All night long at this sad grating,  
Sleepless like a prisoned bird,  
Singing low,  
Singing slow:  
Come, ah come, love.--Not a word!

Love, in vain for thee this token  
Did I tie, poor silken cord,  
To my window. See, 'tis broken  
And the strands fly heavenward.  
All are free,  
All but me.  
Come, ah come, love.--Not a word!

Lo, the first sad streak of morning  
Cleaves the heaven like a sword.  
Love, too late I hear the warning,  
Of thy footstep on the sward.  
Yet, ah yet,  
Though 'tis late,  
Come; but mind, love, not a word!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## O For A Soul

O for a soul surrendered of all guile!  
A plain white soul with nothing on it writ,  
No creed of mockery to make men smile,  
No boast of wisdom travestied as wit;  
Only a clean soul where the infinite  
Calm of the heavens, as on some tropic isle,  
Should have looked down and on the face of it,  
Inscribed in sunlight, ``Nothing here was vile."  
--Thus to my life I argue it to--day,  
Thus chide my heart its too long vanity,  
Its lawless strength, its insolence of play,  
Its ancient rage of storm--tossed chivalry.  
And yet, God wot, should Love's wind breathe my way,  
My heart would rise still, a tumultuous Sea.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Oh For A Day Of Spring

Oh for a day of Spring,  
A day of flowers and folly,  
Of birds that pipe and sing  
And boyhood's melancholy!  
I would not grudge the laughter,  
The tears that followed after.

Oh for a day of youth,  
A day of strength and passion,  
Of words that told the truth  
And deeds the truth would fashion!  
I would not leave untasted  
One glory while it lasted.

Oh for a day of days,  
A day with you and pleasure,  
Of love in all its ways  
And life in all its measure!  
Win me that day from sorrow,  
And let me die to--morrow.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Oh, Fly Not, Pleasure

Oh fly not, Pleasure, pleasant--hearted Pleasure.  
Fold me thy wings, I prithee, yet and stay.  
For my heart no measure  
Knows nor other treasure  
To buy a garland for my love to--day.

And thou too, Sorrow, tender--hearted Sorrow.  
Thou grey--eyed mourner, fly not yet away.  
For I fain would borrow  
Thy sad weeds to--morrow  
To make a mourning for love's yesterday.

The voice of Pity, Time's divine dear Pity,  
Moved me to tears. I dared not say them nay,  
But went forth from the city  
Making thus my ditty  
Of fair love lost for ever and a day.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## On A Grave In The Forest

Hush, gentle stranger. Here lies one asleep  
In the tall grass whom we must not awaken.  
For see, the wildest winds hush here and keep  
Silence for her and not a leaf is shaken,  
Lest she should wake and find herself forsaken.  
Close to my feet weary did she creep  
And slept, and she is sweetly still mistaken  
Deeming I stand by her and watch her sleep.  
--Hush, gentle stranger! One as gentle lies  
In this poor grave, and weep before you go  
For one who knew no weeping, yet abode  
Among our human sorrows and was wise  
With tenderer sympathy than tears can show,  
The gentlest kindest creature made by God.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## On Her Lightheartedness

I WOULD I had thy courage, dear, to face  
This bankruptcy of love, and greet despair  
With smiling eyes and unconcerned embrace,  
And these few words of banter at "dull care."  
I would that I could sing and comb my hair  
Like thee the morning through, and choose my dress,  
And gravely argue what I best should wear,  
A shade of ribbon or a fold of lace.  
I would I had thy courage and thy peace,  
Peace passing understanding; that mine eyes  
Could find forgetfulness like thine in sleep;  
That all the past for me like thee could cease  
And leave me cheerfully, sublimely wise,  
Like David with washed face who ceased to weep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# On The Way To Church

There is one I know. I see her sometimes pass  
In the morning streets upon her way to Mass,  
A calm sweet woman with unearthly eyes.  
Men turn to look at her, but ever stop,  
Reading in those blue depths the death of hope  
And a wise chastisement for thoughts unwise.

Pure is her brow as of a marble Saint.  
Her brown hair pencils it with ripples faint.  
There is no shadow on it and no light.  
Her cheeks are pale like lilies in eclipse.  
Hardly a little redness on her lips  
Paints the sad smile where all the rest is white.

Tall is she and bent forward like a reed  
Which the wind toys with as she walks with speed:  
Girl--like her limbs and virginal her waist.  
Of the world's wonders there is none so sweet  
As this, the summer lightning of her feet,  
Speeding her onward like a fawn in haste.

What is her secret? All the world has tried  
To guess it. One I knew in guessing died  
And was no wiser for his mortal pain.  
Each has turned sadder from the thankless quest,  
And gone back silent, even if he guessed,  
Knowing all answer would be counted vain.

I knew her once. I know her not to--day.  
Our eyes meet sometimes, but hers turn away  
Quicker from mine than from the rest that look.  
Her pale cheek quivers, a flush comes and goes,  
As in the presence of a soul that knows,  
And her hands tighten on her missal book.

Men have done evil yet have won to Heaven,  
Lived in blood guiltiness yet died forgiven.  
May I not, I too, one day win my grace?  
Ah no. The sacrilege of this worst sin

Outweighs all grace. I dare not enter in  
Nor kneel, God's robber, near that angel face.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Pictures On Enamel

When Astraled was lying, like to die  
Of love's green sickness, all his bed was strown  
With buds of crocus and anemone,  
For other flowers yet were barely none,  
And these he loved. And so it came to pass  
That, when they deemed he slept, then one by one  
The watchers left him for the Candlemas;  
And thus he chanced upon his bed alone  
When the day broke. You might have deemed he was  
An image of Hope slain by drear Oblivion.

The chamber where he lay was hushed as sorrow,  
Which is joy's anteroom. The holy night,  
In silent expectation of the morrow,  
Gazed on the moon, as some fair anchorite  
On her own chastity, until the sight  
Made her heart ache. But, as the morning broke,  
Down the dim lobby came Somandolin,  
With her thick hair around her like a cloak,  
Even to her feet. I wot she might have been  
The dawn's own sister. Clad in mystic white,  
More beautiful than awe, came that fair woman in.

Long while she stood before the dreaming boy,  
Still as he lay on crimson cushions piled.  
And when she bent o'er him, her breath did toy  
With his dank hair. Long while she stood and smiled  
As smiled Elisha on the widow's child  
In Shunam. For although her lips were sad  
As a broken bow, if you had read their meaning  
You would have learned the sense that smiling had  
Was less of sorrow than of joy beguiled  
To grief at the sad world and its revealing,  
As when the name of Death is whispered to a child.

Doubtless that lady knew the spell to win  
The life--blood back; for, when she bent her down  
And laid her cheek to his that was so thin,  
The shut lips quivered and let fall a moan,

As in sweet pain. And next Somandolin  
Put her white hand upon the sleeper's arm  
Entangled in his tresses. She could feel  
The curls crisp back like leaves when they grow warm  
Before a watchfire. Then she took his chin  
In her two palms, and bade his eyes unseal  
Their close--shut lids, and laid her lips upon his own.

Slowly, as in a trance of wonderment,  
Those blue eyes opened wide, as from the dead  
His spirit stole. Old memories came and went  
Like summer lightnings, and a murmur sped  
To his dull ear, until he deemed it said,  
In a new tongue which none might heed but he,  
``Arise and worship, for behold thy bed  
And all about thee is as holy ground!"  
And then he cried, ``Behold, dear love, I rise!"  
And on a sudden, waking from his swoon,  
A countenance of tearful majesty  
And strange ecstatic love looked in his eyes.

These things were written for a mystery  
In the Book of Life, lest lovers in their need  
Should faint for hunger by the road and die.  
Thus were they written. Though a god should read,  
He could not choose but learn a newer creed,  
Transcending his own knowledge. For anon,  
The Mass being ended, came the rest with speed,  
Bearing with them the blest viaticum  
And holy oils, nor guessed he needed not,  
Who sought him a long hour. The warder told  
Erewhile a knight, belike Sir Astraed,  
With a white lady rode the castle out,  
And all his harness was of burnished gold,  
Who, pricking fast towards the rising sun,  
Was gone beyond the hills upon his battle--steed.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Pour Qui Sait Attendre

All things, they say, come home to those that wait,  
Riches, power, fame, lost fortune, hope deferred,  
Health to our friends, ill hap to those we hate,  
Even love, that glorious paradisal bird,  
The woman unattained, whose thought has stirred  
Desire to its last chord importunate;  
All shall be ours (so runs the common word)  
If but our patience lag not on our fate.  
--O, indigent consoling, even if true!  
Crumbs for the hungry, who thus fasting live  
And die deceived in impotence of bliss!  
And we, the god--like fortune--favoured few,  
Full dowered of joy? What ransom shall we give,  
In thanks to Heaven, who did not wait to kiss?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Quatrains Of Life

What has my youth been that I love it thus,  
Sad youth, to all but one grown tedious,  
Stale as the news which last week wearied us,  
Or a tired actor's tale told to an empty house?

What did it bring me that I loved it, even  
With joy before it and that dream of Heaven,  
Boyhood's first rapture of requited bliss,  
What did it give? What ever has it given?

'Let me recount the value of my days,  
Call up each witness, mete out blame and praise,  
Set life itself before me as it was,  
And--for I love it--list to what it says.

Oh, I will judge it fairly. Each old pleasure  
Shared with dead lips shall stand a separate treasure.  
Each untold grief, which now seems lesser pain,  
Shall here be weighed and argued of at leisure.

I will not mark mere follies. These would make  
The count too large and in the telling take  
More tears than I can spare from seemlier themes  
To cure its laughter when my heart should ache.

Only the griefs which are essential things,  
The bitter fruit which all experience brings;  
Nor only of crossed pleasures, but the creed  
Men learn who deal with nations and with kings.

All shall be counted fairly, griefs and joys,  
Solely distinguishing 'twixt mirth and noise,  
The thing which was and that which falsely seemed,  
Pleasure and vanity, man's bliss and boy's.

So I shall learn the reason of my trust  
In this poor life, these particles of dust  
Made sentient for a little while with tears,  
Till the great ``may--be" ends for me in ``must."

My childhood? Ah, my childhood! What of it  
Stripped of all fancy, bare of all conceit?  
Where is the infancy the poets sang?  
Which was the true and which the counterfeit?

I see it now, alas, with eyes unsealed,  
That age of innocence too well revealed.  
The flowers I gathered--for I gathered flowers--  
Were not more vain than I in that far field.

Self was my god, the self I most despise,  
Blind in its joys and swine--like gluttonies,  
The rule of the brute beast that in us is,  
Its heaven a kitchen and a gorge its prize.

No other pleasures knew I but of sense,  
No other loves but lusts without pretence.  
Oh, childhood is but Nature unredeemed,  
Blind in desire, unshamed in ignorance.

I was all vanity and greed, my hand  
Uncaring, as a panther's, whom it pained,  
My nurse, my sisters, the young birds my prey.  
I saw them grieve nor stopped to understand.

My mother loved me. Did I love her? Yes,  
When I had need of her to soothe distress  
Or serve my wants. But when the need was by,  
Others were there more dear in idleness.

These coaxed and flattered me. Their wit afforded  
Edge to my wit, and I would strut and lord it  
Among them a young god--for god I seemed--  
Or goose--for goose I was--they still encored it.

Alas, poor mother! What a love was yours!  
How little profit of it all endures!  
What wasted vigils, what ill--omened prayers;  
What thankless thanks for what disastrous cures!

Why did you bind yourself in such harsh fetter,

To serve a heart so hard? It had been better  
Surely to take your rest through those long nights,  
Than watching on to leave me thus your debtor.

I heard but heeded not her warning voice;  
I grudged her face its sadness in my joys,  
And when she looked at me I did not guess  
The secret of her sorrow and my loss.

They told me she was dying, but my eyes  
Brimmed not with tears. I hardly felt surprise,  
Nay, rather anger at their trouble when  
I asked them ``what it was one does who dies."

She threw her weak arms round me, and my face  
Pressed to her own in one supreme embrace;  
I felt her tears upon my cheeks all wet,  
And I was carried frightened from the place.

I lost her thus who was indeed my all,  
Lost her with scarce a pang whom now I call  
Aloud to in the night a grieving man,  
Hoar in his sins, and only clasp the wall.

This the beginning. Next my boyhood came,  
Childhood embittered, its brute joys the same,  
Only in place of kindness cruelty,  
For courage fear, and for vain--glory shame.

Here now was none to flatter or to sue.  
My lords were of the many, I the few;  
These gave command nor heeded my vain prayers.  
It was their will, not mine, my hands must do.

I was their slave. My body was the prey  
Of their rude sports, more savage still than they,  
My every sense the pastime of their whim,  
My soul a hunted thing by night and day.

Pain was my portion, hunger, wakefulness,  
And cold more bitter still, and that distress  
Which is unnamed of tears that dare not fall,

When the weak body grieves and none may guess.

There was no place where I might lay my head,  
No refuge from the world which was my dread,  
No shrine inviolate for me from my foes,  
No corner quite my own, not even my bed.

I would have changed then with the meanest thing  
Which has its home in the free fields in Spring,  
And makes its lair in the Earth's secret dells,  
Or hides in her dark womb by burrowing.

I used to gaze into the depths of Earth,  
And watch the worms and beetles that have birth  
Under the stones secure from outer ills,  
And envy them their loneliness in mirth.

One treasure had I, one thing that I loved,  
A snail with shell most delicately grooved,  
And a mute patient face which seemed to see,  
And horns which moved towards me as I moved.

It was like me a creature full of fear,  
But happier far for its strong household gear,  
The living fortress on its back wherein  
Its griefs could shrink away and disappear.

I kept it in a nest, the hollow bole  
Of a dead elm, and for its daily dole,  
And my own comfort in its luckier state,  
Brought it a lettuce I in secret stole.

It waited for my coming each new noon,  
When from my fellows I could steal so soon,  
And there I fed it and arranged its cell,  
All through a single happy month of June.

And then--ah, then--who even now shall tell,  
The terror of that moment, when with yell  
Of triumph on their prize they broke and me,  
And crushed it 'neath their heels, those hounds of Hell!

Even yet the thought of it makes my blood rush  
Back to my temples with an angry flush;  
And for an instant, if Man's race could be  
Crushed with it, God forgive me, I would crush.

Ay, God forgive me! 'Tis an evil thought,  
And thus it is that wrong on wrong is wrought,  
Vengeance on vengeance by a single deed  
Of violent ill or idleness untaught.

Nay, rather let me love. I will not be  
Partner with Man even thus in cruelty  
For one least instant, though the prize should stand,  
Hate slain for ever and the Nations free.

Thus for four years I lived of slaves the slave,  
Too weak to fight, too beaten to be brave.  
Who mocks at impotence and coward fear  
Knows little of the pangs mute creatures have.

Yet wherefore grieve? Perhaps of all my days  
This is the thing I mostly need to praise,  
My chiefest treasure to have suffered wrong,  
For God is cunning in His works and ways.

The sense of justice which He gives to Man  
Is his own suffering, and His pity's plan  
Man's own great need of pity which brims o'er  
In alms to Africa and Hindostan.

And he who has not suffered nothing knows;  
Therefore I chide not at these ancient woes,  
But keep them as a lesson to my pride,  
Lest I should smite the meanest of my foes.

And it is ended. Kindly Death drew near  
And warned them from me with his face of fear.  
I did not fear him, but the rest stood awed,  
As at the frown of some dread minister.

I passed out of their sight, one living still,  
But dead to sense who knows not good or ill,

Their blessings were the last thing that I heard  
In that dark house. I wish them only well.

What next befell me was as some have found,  
Peace to their wounds upon a battle ground,  
Who sleep through days of pain and nights of fear,  
Conscious of nothing but their dream profound.

My dream was of a convent with smooth floors,  
And whitewashed walls, a place of corridors,  
Where the wind blew in summer all day long,  
And a shut garden filled with altar flowers.

Here lived in piety a score of men,  
Who, having found the world a place of pain,  
Or fearing it ere yet they knew it well,  
Sought in God's service their eternal gain.

With these it was my privilege to be  
The pensioner of their great pity's fee,  
Nor favoured less for my dim soul's dark ways,  
Awhile 'twixt boyhood and maturity.

My sorrow to their zeal was fruitful soil,  
My wounds their pride as needing wine and oil;  
All knowledge had they to redeem and save,  
Mirth, silence, prayer, and that best opiate, toil.

The garden was my task. I learned to dig,  
To nail the fruit--trees, pear, and peach, and fig;  
To trim the grass plots and the box make good,  
And keep the gravel smooth from leaf or twig.

Dear blessed garden! In this night of days  
I see it still with its fair formal face,  
Where even the flowers looked prim, as who should ask  
Pardon for beauty in so pure a place.

This for the summer. But when winter fell,  
A gentler service called me from my cell,  
As suited to the frailty of my needs,  
To serve the mass and ring the chapel bell.

Mine was the sacristy, the care of copes,  
Albs, censers, pyxes, gifts of kings and popes,  
Of lace and linen and the lamps which hung  
For ever lit with oil of human hopes.

There on the altar steps, as one at home,  
I hourly knelt the servant of old Rome,  
And learned her ritual, and assuaged my soul  
With the high lessons of her martyrdom.

Not seldom in those hours the dream was mine  
Of voices speaking and a call divine.  
God in all ages thus has shown to men  
His secret will, and I too sought a sign.

The voice that called me was a voice of good.  
It spoke of feasts less vain than the world's food,  
And showed me my place set a guest for aye  
Of heavenly things in that calm brotherhood.

Why did I shrink? What profit to my soul  
Has the world proved that I must yield it toll?  
What its ambitions that for these my zeal  
Turned backward then from its eternal goal?

Yet thus it is. Our fallen human blood  
Is ever a mixed stream 'twixt bad and good;  
And mine, perhaps, worse mingled than the rest,  
Flowed in a baser, a more prurient flood.

And so it might not be. There came a day  
When I must grasp my fate and choose my way,  
And when my will was weaker than a child's,  
And pride stood in rebellion and said nay.

There in the garden, while the thrushes sang,  
I listened to his prayer with a mute pang.  
That man of God who argued with my soul,  
And still the vesper chorus rang and rang.

Below us a pool lay with depths profound,

And in its face I gazed as if to sound  
His reason's meaning, while the rain of grace  
Was shed on all things but my heart around.

``For lo," he said, ``thus near us lies the end;  
A step--no more--may mar our lives or mend.  
This side a little, and Hell gapes for us;  
On that side Heaven holds out strong hands, a friend.

``And he who fears is wise. Oh look," he cried,  
``Here in this pool lies Death with its arms wide.  
Speak. Shall I buy you life at cost of mine?  
Nay; I would drown, though in my sin I died."

Thus Moses argued with his people, these  
Than I less stubborn and less hard to please.  
God on that night spoke loudly to my soul,  
And I refused Him--weeping--on my knees.

Here my dream ended. From that hidden life  
I went out hungry to a world of strife,  
The world of pleasure, and with heart keen set  
For human joy as having felt the knife.

What is the root of pleasure in Man's heart?  
The need to know made practical in part,  
The shaping of the thing the soul has dreamed,  
In gold or clay, with art or little art.

Youth knows not how to fashion its own pleasure;  
It deals with Fortune without scale or measure.  
And so is cheated of the gold life holds,  
A treasure house of hope without the treasure.

The need is there, as swallows need to fly,  
The strength of wing which longs for liberty;  
The courage of the soul which upward tends,  
And the eye's light, a truth which is no lie.

Behind us the past sinks, too tedious night,  
Whose shadows brighter show the world of light.  
And who shall say that laughter is not good,



When the blood pulses in the veins aright?

An April morning with the birds awake;  
The sound of waters lapping by a lake;  
The scent of flowers, the rhyme of dancing feet;  
The breath of midnight with the heart aquake.

These are the moods of pleasure. And no less  
The soul itself has need of wantonness.  
The thirst of knowledge fired not only Eve,  
And youth grieves still to guess and only guess.

We ask for wisdom. Knowledge first of all  
Demands our vows from her high pedestal.  
We wish ourselves in act as wise as gods,  
Nor even in age dare quite our oath recall.

The truth !--to hold the actual thing and be  
Bound by no law but hers and liberty.  
Such was my youth's ambition, the fruit fair  
And good for food of the forbidden tree.

Two things I was resolved my soul should know;  
The physical meaning of the Earth below,  
With its dumb forces armed for good and ill,  
And its blind fires which in their cycles go;

This, and the power of Love. Here doubly set,  
The riddle stood which holds life's alphabet.  
What of a very truth were God and Man?  
I dared not die till I had answered it.

And first of God. What Quixote on what steed  
Of foundered folly urged to headlong speed,  
Ere chose his path more madly, or fell down  
Proner on life's least lenient stones to bleed?

Striding my horse of reason with loose rein,  
I tilted at all shadows in disdain.  
To each eternal I my question put,  
` ` What art thou, for Man's pleasure or his pain?"

The Maker I had worshipped, where was He,  
In the Earth's fields, or the circumfluent sea?  
The footsteps of His presence on the wind,  
How should I trace them through infinity?

The huge world in its naked shape unclad,  
Mocked me with silence, as a thing gone mad.  
A brainless virgin, passionless and blind,  
Reeling through space, unsentient--yet how sad!

The stars of heaven! Their voices once went out  
Through all a firmament in psalm and shout.  
What word have they to--night? Nay, Jesse's son  
Had only mocked in our new world of doubt.

I searched them, and I numbered, and I came  
To numbers only, flame evolved of flame,  
Orb wheeled on orb, a meaningless machine,  
A handless clock without the maker's name.

Where was my God the Father? Not in space,  
Which needs no god for glory or disgrace,  
Being itself eternal. He I sought  
Knew not the stars but smiled with human face.

Darkly the night looked at me; darker still  
The inner Earth with its tumultuous will,  
Its legion of destroyers and destroyed,  
Its law of hunger and the need to kill.

In this too was no god, or--monstrous thought--  
A god of endless wrong, of treason wrought  
Through countless ages still against the weak.  
Out on such truth if this be all it taught!

Out on such reason! From that cave of dread  
Like one despoiled of thieves I naked fled,  
My thirst for knowledge slaked in bitterness,  
And Earth's blank riddle all too sternly read.

What has my youth been that I love it thus?  
The love of Woman? Ah, thou virtuous

Dear face of wisdom which first filled my heaven,  
How art thou fled from life's deserted house!

I see thee pure and noble as a vision,  
Rapt in the joy of thy sublime derision  
Of all things base, yet tender to the pain  
Of him that loved thee spite of love's misprision.

Joyous thou wert as a Spring morning filled  
With mirth of birds which strive and wive and build,  
A presence of all pleasure on the Earth  
Transformed through thee and with thy laughter thrilled.

True were thy eyes and pitiful thy voice,  
The colour of thy cheeks how rare a choice,  
The smiling of thy lips how strangely dear  
When thy wit moved and made our souls rejoice!

Few years thou countedst to thy wisdom's score,  
But more than mine and than thy pleasure more  
I deemed thee roof and crown of womanhood,  
Framed for all fame to blazon and adore.

Why wert thou fashioned thus for Earth and Man,  
If only Heaven was to possess thy plan?  
Why wert thou beautiful as God to me,  
If only God should see thee and should scan?

Oh, thou wert cruel in thy ignorance,  
Thou first beloved of my time's romance.  
The love within thee was a light of death,  
Set for a snare and luring to mischance.

What didst thou think of him, the boy untried,  
To whom thou spakest of Heaven as speaks a bride?  
The love of Heaven! Alas, thou couldst not guess  
The fires he nursed or surely thou hadst lied.

His secret springs of passion had no art,  
Nor loosed his tongue to any counterpart  
Of mastering words. You neither feared nor knew  
The rage of cursing hidden in his heart.

If thou hadst seen it, wouldst thou not have said  
A soul by Satan tortured and misled?  
Thou didst not guess the truth, that in thy hand  
The scourges lay, the pincers, and the lead.

Or haply didst thou love me? Not so heaven  
Possessed thee then but sometimes there were given  
Glimpses which, to my later eyes of light,  
Have shown new worlds as if by lightnings riven.

How had it been if I had ventured quite  
That first enchanted, unforgotten night,  
When I surprised thee weeping and in fear  
Forbore the wrong that should have proved me right?

How had it been if youth had been less weak,  
And love's mute hand had found the wit to speak.  
If thou hadst been less valiant in thy tears,  
And I had touched the heaven which was thy cheek?

Would life have been to me what now it is,  
A thing of dreams half wise and half unwise,  
A web unpatterned where each idler's hand  
Has woven his thoughts, flowers, scrolls, and butterflies?

Or rather, had it not, redeemed of bliss,  
Grasped at new worlds less impotent than this,  
And made of love a heaven? for depths of fate  
Lie in the issue of a woman's kiss.

Alas, it was not, and it may not be  
Now, though the sun were melted in the sea,  
And though thou livedst, and though I still should live,  
Searching thy soul through all Eternity.

The ideal love, how fondly it gives place  
To loves all real--alas, and flavourless.  
The heart in hunger needs its meat to live,  
And takes what dole it finds of happiness.

Then are strange spectacles of treason seen,

Earthquakes and tempests and the wars of men,  
Shipwrecks of faith, ungodly interludes  
And pagan rites to Moloch on the green.

Lust travestied as love goes nightly forth,  
Preaching its creed unclean from South to North,  
Using the very gestures of true love,  
Its words, its prayers, its vows--how little worth!

Where are ye now, ye poor unfortunates,  
Who once my partners were in these mad gaits,  
Sad souls of women half unsexed by shame,  
In what dire clutches of what felon fates?

Dark--eyed I see her, her who caused my fall,  
Nay, caused it not who knew it not at all.  
I hear her babble her fool's creed of bliss,  
While I lie mute, a swine--like prodigal.

Her chamber redolent of unctuous glooms  
Prisons me yet with its profane perfumes,  
A cell of follies used and cast aside,  
Painted in pleasure's likeness--and a tomb's.

Oh, those dead flowers upon her table set,  
How loud they preach to me of wisdom yet,  
Poor slaughtered innocents there parched in Hell,  
Which Heaven had seen at dawn with dewdrops wet!

Littered they lay, those maidenheads of saints,  
Mid pots of fard and powder--puffs and paints,  
Egregious relics of lost purity  
Tortured on wires with all that mars and taints.

Beneath, upon the floor her slippers lay  
Who was the queen of all that disarray,  
Left where she dropped them when she fled the room  
To speed her latest gallant on his way.

The pictures on the wall--by what strange chance--  
Showed sacred scenes of Biblical romance;  
Among them Pilate on his judgment--seat

Washing before the multitude his hands.

Smiling he sat while in reproachful mood  
He they led forth to crucifixion stood.  
` ` "Innocent am I," thus the legend ran  
Inscribed beneath it, ` ` of this just One's blood."

Innocent! Ah, the sad forgotten thought  
Of that mute face my convent dreams had sought.  
And while I sighed, behold the arms of sin  
In my own arms enlatticed and enwrought.

A life of pleasure is a misnamed thing,  
Soulless at best, an insect on the wing,  
But mostly sad with its unconquered griefs,  
The noise that frets, the vanities that sting.

The weapons of youth's armoury are these--  
The chase, the dance, the gambler's ecstasies.  
Each in its turn I handled with the rest,  
And drained my cup of folly to the lees.

What days I murdered thus without design,  
What nights deflowered in madness and lewd wine!  
The ghosts of those lost hours are with me still,  
Crying, ` ` Give back my life, and mine, and mine!"

Yet was it glorious on the scented morn  
To wake the woods with clamouring hound and horn,  
To ride red--coated where the red fox ran,  
And shout with those who laughed to see him torn.

Glorious to lie 'neath the tall reeds in wait  
For the swift fowl at flight returning late,  
And pull them from their path with lightning shot,  
The bolt of Jove less certain in its fate.

Glorious to battle with the crested wave  
For the full nets engulfed in the sea's grave,  
And see the fishes flash entangled there,  
With only courage and strong arms to save.

And glorious more, with sword high--poised and still,  
To meet the bull's rush with o'ermastering skill,  
And watch the stricken mass in anger die,  
Tamed by the potency of human will.

All glorious and vain--glorious and most sad,  
Because of the dark death their doing made,  
And of the nothingness that swept the track,  
Leaving no footprint or of good or bad.

The light--heeled love of laughter and the dance  
Held me, yet held not, in its transient trance.  
The hours were few when, fired with love and wine,  
I trod the Bacchanalian maze of France.

Yet do I mind me of one afternoon  
In Meudon wood, when night came all too soon;  
And then again the morning, and unstayed  
We pranced our measure out from noon to noon.

That day of dancing in my memory stands  
A thing apart and almost of romance,  
A day of pleasure physical and strong,  
Unwearied and unwearying, feet, lips, hands.

The ``Coq de Bruyère" was the fortunate sign  
Of the lone inn where we had met to dine,  
And found a score companions light as we  
To turn our rustic hostel to a shrine.

If it still stands, how strangely it must view  
This older world with hopes of paler hue!  
Or was it youth so painted the grass green,  
The apple--blossoms pink, the heavens blue?

Alas! I know not, nor remember yet  
Her name with whom those foolish hours seemed sweet,  
Only that she laughed on and danced with me,  
And that my fingers just could span her feet.

How far away! And Meudon, too, how far!  
And all those souls of women lost in care,

And even fair France herself how merged in pain!  
It was the Spring before the Prussian war.

One day, one only day, and then the light  
Waned in the place and hid our faces white,  
And, our score paid, we left the empty room  
And met no more on this side of the night.

Who speaks of play speaks treason to youth's state.  
Youth is the heir to passion, love and hate,  
The passion of the body in its strength,  
The passion of the soul commensurate.

Nought needs it in its force of whip or goad,  
Say rather a strong bridle for the road.  
He who would spur it to a fiercer heat  
Is an ill rider whom no fortunes bode.

Shame is it that the glory of youth's eyes  
Should be lack--lustred with the grape's disguise,  
And doubly shame its vast desires should swoon  
In maniac clutchings at a vagrant prize.

Gold is the last least noble stake of life,  
When all is gone, friends, fashion, fame, love's strife,  
The thing men still can chase when dotage stings  
And joy is dead and gout is as the knife.

Youth, seeking gold at Fortune's hand, goes bare  
Of its best weapons with the humblest there,  
As impotent to win a smile from fate  
As the least valiant, the most cursed with care.

Watch well the doors of Fortune. Who goes in?  
The prince, the peasant, the gay child of sin,  
The red--cheeked soldier, the mad crook--backed crone,  
Which shall prevail with Fortune? Which shall win?

Nay, who shall tell? Luck levels all pretence,  
Manhood's high pride, youth's first concupiscence.  
The arbiter of fame it stands and wit,  
The judge supreme of sense and lack of sense.



The gambler's heaven is Youth's untimely Hell.  
And I, who dwelt there as lost spirits dwell,  
There touched the bottom of the pit. Even yet  
I dare not nakedly its secrets tell.

What saved me from the gulf? All ye who preach  
Art the physician and consoling leech  
Of fallen souls, if but a single spark  
Of genius lives, behold the text you teach.

In Art's high hall for whoso holds the key  
Honour does service on a suppliant knee,  
Virtue his handmaid is, to work his will,  
And beauty crowns him, be he bond or free.

His sad soul's raiment from his shoulders fall,  
Light pure is given, and he is clothed withal,  
His eye grows single and his madness parts  
As once in song the raging mood of Saul.

What saved me from the gulf? Thrice generous hand,  
A king's in gifts, a prophet's in command,  
All potent intellect designed to guide,  
Transforming grief as with a master's wand!

This life, if it be worthy grown, is thine;  
These tears made sweet once bitter with such brine,  
This impotence of will to purpose fired,  
This death fenced out with mine and countermine.

For I insensate had resolved to fly  
From life's despairs and sick pride's misery,  
A craven braggart to the arms of death,  
And die dishonoured as the wretched die.

Thou stoodst, how oft, between me and my fate,  
Bidding me cheer, or, if I dared not, wait,  
From morn to night and then from night to morn  
Pointing to Fame as to an open gate;

Till Time, the healer, had half closed the wound,

And Spring in the year's mercy came back crowned  
With leaves and blossoms, and I could not choose  
To lie unknown forgotten underground.

If there be aught of pleasure worth the living  
'Tis to be loved when trouble has done grieving,  
And the sick soul, resigned to her mute state,  
Forgets the pain forgiven and forgiving.

With wan eyes set upon life's door ajar  
She waits half conscious of the rising star,  
And lo! 'tis Happiness on tip--toe comes  
With fruits and flowers and incense from afar.

Scarcely she heeds him as he stops and smiles.  
She does not doubt his innocent lips' wiles.  
She lies in weakness wondering and half won,  
While beauty cunningly her sense beguiles.

Then at her feet he sets his stores unrolled  
Of spice and gums and treasure manifold.  
All kingdoms of the Earth have tribute paid  
To heap the myrrh and frankincense and gold.

These are his gifts, and tenderly he stands  
With eyes of reverence and mute folded hands,  
Pleading her grace, and lo! her heaven is filled  
With music as of archangelic bands.

What saved me from the gulf? A woman's prayer  
Sublimely venturing all a soul might dare,  
A saint's high constancy outwitting Fate  
And dowered with love supreme in its despair.

I had done naught to merit such high lot,  
Given naught in hostage and adventured naught.  
The gift was free as heaven's own copious rains,  
And came like these unseeking and unsought.

O noble heart of woman! On life's sea  
Thou sailedst bravely, a proud argosy,  
Freighted with wisdom's wealth and ordered well,

Defiant of all storms--since storms must be.

On thy high way thou passedst pursuant only  
Of Virtue's purpose and Truth's instinct thronely.  
Strength's symbol wert thou, self--contained and free,  
Lone in thy path of good but never lonely.

What glory of the morning lit thy shrouds!  
What pure thought limned thee white on thunder--clouds!  
I from my shattered raft afar in pain  
Kneeled to thy form and prayed across the floods.

In godlike patience, to my soul's surprise,  
Thou paused and parleyed wise with me unwise.  
Ah, dearest soul seraphic! Who shall paint  
The heaven revealed of pity in thine eyes?

She took me to her riches. All the gladness  
Of her great joy she gave to cure my sadness,  
All her soul's garment of unearthly hopes  
To ease the ache which fructified to madness.

She took me to her pleasure, wealth long stored  
Of silent thought and fancy in full hoard,  
Treasures of wisdom and discerning wit,  
And dreams of beauty chaste and unexplored.

She took me to her heart,--and what a heart,  
Vast as all heaven and love itself and art!  
She gave it royally as monarchs give  
Who hold back nothing when they give a part.

A king I rose who had knelt down a slave,  
A soul new born who only sought a grave,  
A victor from the fight whence I had fled,  
A hero crowned with bays who was not brave.

Blest transformation! Circe's ancient curse  
See here interpreted in plain reverse.  
Love, generous love, in me devised a spell  
Ennobling all and subtler far than hers.

Thus was I saved. Yet, mark how hardly Fate  
Deals with its victors vanquished soon or late.  
The ransomed captive of his chains goes free.  
She pines in durance who has paid the debt.

Behold this woman of all joy the heir,  
Robed in high virtue and worth's worthiest wear,  
A saint by saints esteemed, a matron wise  
As Rome's Cornelia chastely debonnaire.

Behold her touched with my own soul's disease,  
Grieving in joy and easeless still in ease,  
The gall of sorrow and the thorn of shame  
Twined ever in the wreaths love framed to please.

Behold her languishing for honour's loss,  
Her pride nailed daily to a nameless cross,  
Her vesture sullied with the dust of sin,  
Her gold of purity transfused with dross.

The echo of her voice has tones that thrill:  
I hear her weeping with a blind wild will.  
A name she speaks to the dim night, his name  
Her virtue spared not yet remembered still.

`` Say, shall I comfort thee?" `` O soul of mine,  
Thy comfort slays me with its joys like wine.  
Thy love is dear to me--then let me go.  
Bid me fare forth for aye from thee and thine."

`` Is there no pleasure?" `` Pleasure is not sweet  
When doors are shut and veiled Man's mercy--seat.  
My heaven thou wert, but heaven itself is pain  
When God is dumb and angels turn their feet."

`` Is there no beauty? See, the sun is fair  
And the world laughs because the Spring is there.  
Hast thou no laughter?" `` Ay, I laugh as Eve  
Laughed with her lord the night of their despair."

`` The past is passed." `` Nay, 'tis a ghost that lives."  
`` Grief dies." `` We slew it truly and it thrives.

Pain walks behind us like a murdered man  
Asking an alms of joy which vainly gives.

`` Give me thy tears: their bitterness is true.  
Give me thy patience: it is all my due.  
Give me thy silence, if thou wilt thy scorn,  
But spare thy kisses, for they pierce me through."

I saw her perish, not at once by death,  
Which has an edge of mercy in its sheath.  
No bodily pleadings heralded decay;  
No violence of pity stopped her breath.

Only the eternal part which was her mind  
Had withered there as by a breath unkind.  
Only the reason of her eyes was mute;  
Their meaning vanished, leaving naught behind.

`` No bells shall ring my burial hour," she said.  
`` No prayers be sung, no requiem for the dead.  
Only the wind shall chaunt in its wild way,  
And be thou there to lay flowers on my head."

I laid them on her grave. Alas! dear heart,  
What love can follow thee where now thou art?  
Sleep on. My youth sleeps with thee--and the rest  
Would but disturb. We are too far apart.

What has my life been? What life has the wind  
Wandering for ever on in change of mind  
Winter and summer, chasing hopes as vain  
And seeking still the rest it may not find?

When she was dead I rose up in my place,  
Like Israel's king, and smiled and washed my face.  
My grief had died in me with her long tears,  
And I was changed and maimed and passionless.

I said, `` There are griefs wider than this grief,  
Hopes broader harvested, of ampler sheaf.  
Man may not live the caged bird of his pride,  
And he who wends afar shall win relief."

The world of sea and mountain shape high browed  
Lured me to dreams of nobler solitude,  
Fair plains beyond the limits of the dawn,  
And desert places lawless and untrod.

Beyond youth's lamp of bitter--sweet desires  
And manhood's kindling of less lawful fires  
A star I sought should lead me to my dream  
Of a new Bethlehem and angelic choirs.

This passionate England with its wild unrest,  
How has it straitened us to needs unblest!  
Need is that somewhere in the world there be  
A better wisdom, seek it East or West.

I sought it first on that great Continent  
Which is the eldest born of man's intent.  
All that the race of Japhet has devised  
Of wit to live lives there pre--eminent.

The record of the ages proudly stand  
Revealed in constancy and close at hand,  
Man's march triumphant against natural foes,  
His conquest of the air and sea and land,

From that far day when, wielding shafts of stone,  
He drove the bear back from the banks of Rhone,  
And built his dwelling on the fair lake's shore  
He earliest learned to love and call his own,

On thro' the generations of wild men,  
The skin--clad hunters of the field and fen,  
At war with life, all life than theirs less strong  
Less fenced with cunning in its lawless den,

Until the dawn broke of a larger age,  
With milder fortunes and designs more sage,  
And men raised cities on the naked plains  
With wine and corn and oil for heritage.

Etruscan Italy! Pelasgic Greece!

How did they labour in the arts of peace!  
If strong men were before the time of Troy,  
What of the wise who planned their palaces?

The men of cunning who, ere letters came  
To hand their learning down from fame to fame,  
Dealt with Titanic square and basalt slab  
And found the law of parallelogram?

Unnamed discoverers, or of those who gave  
Its rule to beauty, line and curve and wave,  
Smelters of bronze, artificers in gold,  
Painters of tear--cups for the hero's grave?

Or those, the last, who of Man's social state  
Devised the code his lusts to mitigate,  
Who set a bridle on his jaws of pride,  
And manacled with law his limbs of hate,

Till each fair town its separate polity  
Enjoyed in its own walls well--fenced and free,  
With king and court and poet and buffoon  
And burgess roll inscribed of chivalry?

This was the old world's golden age renowned  
Shown thro' dim glimpses of a past spell--bound.  
Some shadow of it lives in Homer's story.  
In vain we search. Its like shall not be found.

It vanished in the impatient march of Man  
When Empires rose, with Cyrus in the van,  
The Assyrian tyranny, the Persian scourge,  
And his the all--conquering boy of Macedon.

Then were the little freedoms swept aside,  
The household industries for fields more wide.  
With heavy hand Rome weighed upon the world  
A blind Colossus, order classified.

And what of the new world, the world that is?  
Ah, Europe! What a tragedy there lies!  
Thy faiths forgotten and thy laws made void,

Hunger and toil thy sole known destinies.

The sombre livery of thy bastard races  
Proclaims thee slave and their ignoble faces,  
Gaul, Teuton, Serb, all fortunes merged in one,  
All bloods commingled in thy frail embraces.

No type, no image of the God in thee,  
No form survives of nobler ancestry,  
No mark is on thy brow, even that of Cain,  
By which to learn thy soul's lost pedigree.

Thou toilest blindly in thy central hive  
Of the world's hopes impatient and alive,  
Waiting the reason which shall light thy years  
To a new gospel of initiative,

Rueful, unconscious, to thy labour bound  
And dumb to love, above or underground.  
He were the Sage of the new discipline  
Who first should wake thy silence into sound.

Where is the poet who shall sing of Man  
In his new world, a better Caliban,  
And show him Heaven? What nobler Prospero  
To cure his ache on an Eternal plan?

The voice that should arouse that slumbering clod  
Must echo boldly as to steps unshod  
Of angels heralding the advent day  
Of a new Saviour and a latest God.

But whose the voice? And where the listeners?  
I sought and found not. Rather in my ears  
The discord grew of that ungodly host  
Whose laughter mocks the music of the Spheres.

``Glory of glories!" Thus it was they chaunted,  
But not to Heaven for which men blindly panted,  
Rather to that Hell's master who hath held  
Their backs to pain in labour covenanted.



To him the honour and obedience due  
Of their lost Moab where the bluebells blew,  
Now the sad washpot of his engines' slime,  
Their childhood's Edom darkened by his shoe.

Through that dim murk no glimpse of the Divine  
Shall pierce with song where the sun dares not shine,  
No praise of beauty in a land all bleared  
With poison--smoke and waters aniline?

Better they died unchronicled. Their room  
Would then be for each weed that wreathed their tomb,  
More beautiful than they with all their love  
It is not worth a spray of butcher's broom.

All this I read as in an open book  
Wandering in bye paths with my pilgrim's crook,  
Through Alp and Apennine and Eastward on  
To where the Balkans on the Danube look.

On Trajan's wall I lay in the tall grass  
And watched the Tartar shepherds wandering pass.  
A boy was blowing in his flute below;  
Afar the river shone, a sea of glass.

This was the world's once boundary; and beyond  
What terrors reigned for fearful hearts and fond,  
The Scythian wilderness, where were--wolves were  
And night for ever lay in frozen bond!

The subtle wonder of the desert came  
And touched my longing with its breath of flame.  
I too, methought, sad child of a new age,  
Would learn its mystery and inscribe my name,

Clothed in the garments of its ancient past,  
My race forgotten and my creed outcast,  
On some lone pile whence centuries look down  
On days unchanged the earliest with the last.

As Abraham was at Mamre on the leas,  
I too would be, or Ur of the Chaldees,

Feeding my flocks in patience at God's hand,  
Guided by signs and girt with mysteries.

With staff in hand and wallet for all need,  
Footing the goat--tracks or with ass for steed,  
Clad in mean raiment, with attendants none,  
And fed on locusts as the prophets feed.

Climbing the dunes each morning to behold  
The world's last miracle of light enfold  
The Eastern heaven, and see the victor sun  
Press back the darkness with his spears of gold.

The fair Earth, pure in her sweet nakedness,  
Should smile for me each day with a new face,  
Her only lover; and her virgin sands  
Should be my daily sacrilege to press.

The deep blue shadows of the rocks at noon  
My tent should be from a burnt world in swoon,  
Rocks scored with what dead names of worshippers,  
Of Gods as dead, the sun and stars and moon.

There would I stand in prayer, with unshod feet  
And folded arms, at Time's true mercy seat,  
Making my vows to the one God of gods  
Whose praise the Nations of the East repeat.

Haply some wonder of prophetic kind  
My eyes should see to the world's reason blind,  
Some ladder to the Heaven, or a face  
Speaking in thunder to me from the wind.

I lay in the tall grass, and overhead  
The ravens called who once Elisha fed.  
It was a message meet for my desires,  
And I arose and followed where they led,

Arose and followed;--and behold, at hand,  
With tinkling bells and tread as if on sand,  
Toward me spectral from the Orient came  
The pilgrim camels of that holy Land.

The rock of Horeb is the holiest place  
Of all Earth's holies. In the wilderness  
It stands with its gaunt head bare to the heaven  
As when God spake with Moses face to face.

Red in the eternal sunset of the years,  
Crowned with a glory the world's evening wears,  
Where evening is with morning a first day  
Unchanged in the mute music of the Spheres.

From base to top the boulder crags high thrown  
Fortress the plain which Israel camped upon,  
A living presence in the unliving waste,  
A couchant lion with a mane of stone.

Aloft in the dread shadow of his brows  
And shut from summer suns and winter snows,  
When snows there be in the parched wilderness,  
A cell I found and of it made my house.

A single hewn stone chamber, carved of old  
By hermits' hands, of rocks with labour rolled,  
Undoored, unwindowed, with the earth for floor,  
Within, an altar where their beads they told.

Without, a rood of soil and a scant spring,  
Their garden once, where deep in the vast ring  
Of those grave granite domes they delved and prayed,  
One thorn tree its sole life left blossoming.

There laid I down the burden of my care  
And dwelt a space in the clean upper air.  
I dwelt, how many days or months or years  
I know not, for I owned no calendar;

Only the rising of the winter's sun  
Daily more northward as the months moved on,  
Only the sun's return along his ways  
When summer slackened his first rage outrun;

Only the bee--birds passing overhead

With their Spring twitter and eyes crimson red,  
The storks and pelicans in soldier bands,  
The purple doves that stayed to coo and wed;

These and the shepherds of the waste, the few  
Poor Bedouin clansmen, with their weak flocks, who  
Strayed through the valleys at appointed days,  
As water failed them or the herbage grew,

Lean hungry--eyed wild sons of Ishmael  
Who climbed the rocks and sought me in my cell  
With their poor wares of butter, dates and corn  
And almond--cake in skins and hydromel,

Unwise in the world's learning, yet with gleams  
Of subtler instinct than the vain world deems,  
Glimpses of faiths transmitted from afar  
In signs and wonders and revealed in dreams.

They taught me their strange knowledge, how to read  
The forms celestial ordered to Man's need,  
To count on sand the arrow heads of fate  
And mark the bird's flight and the grey hare's speed.

The empty waste informed with their keen eyes  
Became a scroll close writ with mysteries  
Unknown to reason yet compelling awe  
With that brave folly which confounds the wise.

Nor less the faith was there of the revealed  
God of their fathers, Ishmael's sword and shield,  
Their own, the Merciful, the Compassionate,  
By martyrs witnessed in the stricken field.

His name was on their lips, a living name.  
His law was in their hearts, their pride in shame.  
His will their fortitude in hours of ill  
When the skies rained not and the locusts came.

I learned their creed in this as in the rest,  
Making submission to God's ways as best.  
What matter if in truth the ways were His,

So I should abdicate my own unblest!

And thus I might have lived--and died, who knows,  
A Moslem saint, on those high mountain brows,  
Prayed to by alien lips in alien prayer  
As intercessor for their mortal woes,

Lived, died, and been remembered for some good  
In the world's chronicle of brotherhood,  
Nor yet through strife with his own Bedlam kind,  
The Hydra--headed Saxon multitude.

But for the clamour of untimely war,  
The sound of Nations marching from afar.  
Their voice was on the tongue of winds and men,  
Their presaging in sun and moon and star.

I dreamed a dream of our fair mother Earth  
In her first beauty, ere mankind had birth,  
Peopled with forms how perfect in design,  
How rich in purpose, of what varied worth,

Birds, four--foot beasts and fishes of the Sea  
Each in its kind and order and degree  
Holding their place unchid, her children all,  
And none with right to strain her liberty.

Her deep green garment of the forest glade  
Held monsters grim, but none was there afraid.  
The lion and the antelope lay down  
In the same thicket for their noon--day shade.

The tyranny of strength was powerless all  
To break her order with unseemly brawl.  
No single kind, how stout soe'er of limb,  
Might drive her weakest further than the wall.

All was in harmony and all was true  
On the green Earth beneath her tent of blue.  
When lo, the advent of her first born lie,  
The beast with mind from which her bondage grew.

O woeful apparition! what a shape  
To set the world's expectancy agape,  
To crown its wonders! what lewd naked thing  
To wreck its Paradise! The human ape!

Among the forms of dignity and awe  
It moved a ribald in the world of law,  
In the world's cleanness it alone unclean,  
With hairless buttocks and prognathous jaw.

Behold it in that Eden once so fair,  
Pirate and wanton, a blind pillager,  
With axe and fire and spade among the trees  
Blackening a league to build itself a lair.

Behold it marshalling its court,--soft kine,  
And foolish sheep and belly--lorded swine,  
Striding the horse anon, high--mettled fool,  
And fawned on by the dog as one divine.

Outrage on sense and decent Nature's pride!  
Feast high of reason--nay of Barmecide,  
Where every guest goes hungry but this one,  
The Harpy--clawed, too foul to be denied!

I saw it, and I blushed for my Man's race,  
And once again when in the foremost place  
Of human tyranny its latest born  
Stood threatening conquest with an English face.

Chief of the sons of Japhet he, with hand  
Hard on the nations of the sea and land,  
Intolerant of all, tongues, customs, creeds,  
Too dull to spare, too proud to understand.

I saw them shrink abashed before his might,  
Like tropic birds before the sparrow's flight.  
The world was poorer when they fled. But he  
Deemed he had done ``God" service and ``his right."

I saw it and I heard it and I rose  
With the clear vision of a seer that knows.

I had a message to the powers of wrong  
And counted not the number of my foes.

I stood forth in the strength of my soul's rage  
And spoke my word of truth to a lewd age.  
It was the first blow struck in that mad war,  
My last farewell to my fair hermitage.

O God of many battles! Thou that art  
Strong to withstand when warriors close and part,  
That art or wast the Lord of the right cause!  
How has thy hand grown feeble in its smart!

How are the vassals of thy power to--day  
Set in rebellion mastering the fray!  
Blaspheming Thee they smite with tongues obscene,  
While these Thy saints lie slaughtered where they pray.

How is the cauldron of thy wrath the deepest,  
Cold on its stones? No fire for it thou heapest.  
Thou in the old time wert a jealous God.  
Thieves have dishonoured Thee. And lo, Thou sleepest!

Between the camps I passed in the still night,  
The breath of heaven how pure, the stars how bright.  
On either hand the life impetuous flowed  
Waiting the morrow which should crown the fight.

How did they greet it? With what voice, what word,  
What mood of preparation for the sword?  
On this side and on that a chaunt was borne  
Faint on the night--wind from each hostile horde.

Here lay the camps. The sound from one rose clear,  
A single voice through the thrilled listening air.  
` `There is no God but God," it cried aloud.  
` `Arise, ye faithful, 'tis your hour of prayer."

And from the other? Hark the ignoble chorus,  
Strains of the music halls, the slums before us.  
Let our last thought be as our lives were there,  
Drink and debauchery! The drabs adore us.

And these were proved the victors on that morrow,  
And those the vanquished, fools, beneath war's harrow.  
And the world laughed applauding what was done,  
And if the angels wept none heard their sorrow.

What has my life been in its last best scene  
Stripped of Time's violence, its one serene  
Experience of things fair without a flaw,  
Its grasp of Heaven's own paradisaal green?

After the storm the clouds white laughters fly;  
After the battle hark the children's cry!  
After the stress of pain, if God so will,  
We too may taste our honey ere we die.

What little secret 'tis we need discover!  
How small a drop to make the cup brim over!  
A single word half spoken between two,  
And Heaven is there, the loved one and the lover.

Tell me not, thou, of youth as Time's last glory.  
Tell not of manhood when it strikes its quarry.  
The prime of years is not the prime of pleasure.  
Give me life's later love when locks are hoary,

Love, when the hurry and the rush are past,  
Love when the soul knows what will fade what last,  
The worth of simple joys youth trampled on,  
Its pearl of price upon the dunghill cast.

Time was, I mocked, I too, at life's plain blisses,  
The rustic treasure of connubial kisses,  
The bourgeois wealth of amorous maid and man  
Made man and wife in legal tenderesses.

Time was, but is not, since the scales of pride  
Fell from my eyes and left me glorified.  
Now 'tis the world's turn. Let it laugh at me,  
Who care not, having Love's self on my side.

How came I by this jewel, this sweet friend,



This best companion of my lone life's end?  
So young she was, so fair, of soul so gay,  
And I with only wisdom to commend.

I looked into her eyes and saw them seek  
My own with questions, roses on her cheek.  
One sign there is of love no words belie,  
The soul's wide windows watching where lips speak.

What wouldst thou with me, thou dear wise one, say?  
My face is withered, my few locks are grey.  
Time has dealt with me like a dolorous Jew.  
My gold he holds; in silver now I pay.

How shall I serve thee? Shall I be thy priest,  
To read thy dear sins to the last and least?  
I have some knowledge of the ways of men,  
Some too of women. Wilt thou be confessed?

Nay, but thou lovest? A gay youth and fair?  
Is he less kind to thee than lovers are?  
Shall I chastise him for his backward ways,  
Teach him thy whole worth and his own despair?

Thou dost deny? Thou lovest none? To thee  
Youth, sayest thou, is void, mere vanity.  
Yet how to build up life and leave out love,  
The corner stone of all its joys to be?

Thou wouldst be wise. Thou swearest to me this.  
Know then, all wisdom is but happiness.  
So thou art happy, there is none more sage  
Than thou of the wise seven famed of Greece.

She did not answer me, but heaved a sigh  
And raised her eyes, where tears stood, silently.  
I kissed her hands, the outside and the in,  
"Child, dost thou love me?" And she whispered "Ay."

Thus the thing happened. And between us two  
Was now a secret beautiful and new.  
We hid it from all eyes as fearing ill,

And cherished it in wonder, and it grew.

Some say that Heaven is but to be with God,  
Hell--but without God--the same blest abode.  
How wide the difference only those may know  
Whose eyes have seen the glory and the cloud.

We two beheld the glory. Every morn  
We rose to greet it with the day new born;  
No laggards we when Love was in the fields  
Waiting to walk there with us in the corn.

O those first hours of the yet folded day,  
While Man still sleeps and Nature has its play,  
When beast and bird secure from death and him  
Wander and wanton in their own wild way.

These were our prize untroubled by the whim  
Of slugging fools still wrapped in dreamings dim.  
In these we lived a whole life ere their day  
And heard the birds chaunt and the seraphim.

How good it was to see her through the grass,  
Pressing to meet me with her morning face  
Wreathed in new smiles by the sweet thought within  
Triumphant o'er the world and worldlings base!

How good to mark her beauty decked anew  
With leaf and blossom, crimson, white and blue!  
The beechen spray fresh gathered in her hand  
Was her queen's sceptre diamonded with dew.

I heard her young voice long ere she was near,  
Calling her call--note of the wood dove clear.  
It was our signal. And I answered low  
In the same note, ``Beloved, I am here."

And then the meeting. Who shall count the bliss  
Of sweet words said and sweeter silences.  
It was agreed between us we should wed  
Some happy day nor yet forestall a kiss.

Sublime convention by true lovers made  
To try their joy more nearly in the shade.  
` ` Not yet, dear love! Thy mad lips take from mine,  
Lest thou shouldst harm me and the world upbraid."

Who says a wedding day is not all white  
From dawn to dusk, nay far into the night?  
The man who makes not that one day divine  
Dullard is he and dastard in Love's sight.

First day of the new month, the honeymoon,  
Last of the old life naked and alone.  
The apparent heirship come to actual reign,  
The entrance in possession of a throne.

Why grudge rejoicings? The vain world is there.  
It sees the feast spread that it may not share.  
God's angels envy thee; then why not these?  
Let them make merry with thy wealth to spare.

Nay, join it thou. The foolish old life waits,  
A slave discharged, to see thee to the gates.  
Give it thy bounty, though it claim thy all,  
Thy clothes, thy bed, thy empty cups and plates.

The world hath loved thee, or it loved thee not,  
What matter now! Thou needest raise no doubt.  
All smile on thee to--day, the false, the true.  
The new king pardons. Shout then with their shout.

Thy friends surround thee, sceptics of thy reason.  
They ply thee gaily in and out of season.  
Thou in thy heart the while art far away  
True to thy god. Thou heedest not their treason.

Proud in the face of all thou vowest thy vow,  
Love in thine eyes and glory on thy brow,  
Thou hast sworn to cherish her, to have, to hold,  
` ` Till death us twain do part." Ah she! Ah thou!

What has my life been? Nay, my life is good.  
Dear life, I love thee, now thou art subdued.

Thou hast fled the battle, cast thine arms away,  
And so art victor of the multitude.

Thou art forgotten wholly of thy foes,  
Of thy friends wholly, these alike with those.  
One garden of the world thy kingdom is  
Walled from the wicked, and there blooms thy rose.

She that I love lives there and lives with me.  
Enough, kind heaven, I make my terms with thee.  
Worth, wealth, renown, power, honour--shadows all!  
This is the substance, this reality.

O world that I have known! how well, things, men,  
Glories of vanity, the sword, the pen!  
Fair praise of kings, applause of crowds--nay more,  
Saints' pure approval of the loss and gain!

High deeds of fame which made the eyelids brim  
With tears of pride grief's anguish could not dim,  
The day of triumph crowning all the days,  
The harvest of the years brought home by Time!

What are you to Man's heart, his soul, his sense  
Prouder than this, more robed in incidence?  
The cry of the first babe, his own, and hers,  
Thrilling to joy? Ah matchless eloquence!

The wisdom of all Time is in that cry,  
The knowledge of Life's whence, at last, and why,  
The root of Love new grafted in the tree,  
Even as it falls, which shall not wholly die.

To rest in a new being! Here it stands  
The science of all ages in all lands,  
The joy which makes us kin with the Earth's life,  
And knits us with all Nature joining hands,

Till we forget our heritage of gloom,  
Our dark humanity how near its doom.  
Away! Man's soul was a disease. 'Tis fled  
Scared by this infant face of perfect bloom.

And so, farewell, poor passionate Life, the past.  
I close thy record with this word, ``Thou wast."  
Why wait upon the Future? Lo To--day  
Smiles on our tears, Time's toy, his best and last.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Queen Mary's Letter To Bothwell

Pitiful gods! Have pity on my passion.  
Teach me the road how I a certain proving  
Shall make to him I love of my great loving,  
My faith unchanged, nor plead it in fool's fashion.

Ah, is he weary of too full possession,  
Of this poor body's zeal which naught denied him,  
Of a Queen's pride enthroned too near beside him,  
Her parliament of joy in too long session?

Nay, but she held as naught for him her honour,  
Naught her friends' loyalty, their wrath her foemen.  
Less than as naught the proud eyes of her women,  
The load of a realm's anger laid upon her.

If it might vantage him! Behold me dying,  
To prove my constancy, bequeathing all,  
Fame, fortune, faith, my life's memorial,  
The one son born to me, nor ought denying.

Queen am I with no subjects. Subject I  
To my sole king. My country? 'Tis his pleasure.  
There would I reign, who find in it my treasure,  
For treasure--house his arms, and there would lie.

Without those frontiers would I wander never.  
I am no vagrant to take ship and go.  
This is my haven. Whatso winds shall blow,  
They shall not tempt me to a new endeavour.

And yet he doubteth! Lo, the proof I offer:  
Not tears, not prayers; a manlier test is mine.  
Let others plead in weakness; my soul's wine  
Has a strong logic which shall find no scoffer.

She, thy right lady for her own pride's sake,  
Vowed thee obedience. 'Twas her debt of duty.  
I for my shame made free gift of my beauty,  
Holding it royaller to give than take.

She to her profit bindeth thee her lover,  
Being thus mistress of thy wealth and name;  
I to my hurt, in peril of my fame,  
And dreading all men should my shame discover.

She dreadeth nothing; I have lost my daring.  
She of her parents took thee proud to give;  
I in despite of mine, who still must live  
Fearing worse fortune through my too much caring.

And thou believest her! Although she reapeth  
All her delight of thee, her place, her glory,  
Her noble name who had no name in story,  
(And I a queen!) Half of thy love she keepeth,

Love which was mine! And in exchange for what?  
A girl's fool fancy for a boy aspirant.  
How should she love thee not, thou master tyrant,  
Her wedded lord, in room of that sad sot?

Mad were she else, since thou of all art master,  
Supreme in valour, beauty and men's praise,  
Thee in whose light I live out all my days.  
How should I pity her her soul's disaster?

When first you wooed her, it was she the colder,  
You the more fierce; your flame raged as a furnace,  
She shrank from you abashed at love's sweet harness,  
Raised a maid's finger as your zeal grew bolder.

No pleasure took she in your strength. She doubted  
Naught of your constancy who least could care.  
Small joy she made for you of braided hair  
Or happy raiment, going meanly clouted.

Why should she deck herself? Her heart no faster  
Beat, nor when even at death's door you lay.  
Calmly she watched you in that disarray,  
Nor trembled for you till Fate's fear had passed her.

And she lamenteth now, and moan she maketh,

Noting the petulance of her first folly,  
Waileth aloud in wifely melancholy,  
And blindeth thee with feint of that she lacketh.

What tales are hers! What flatteries now she weaveth,  
In her false letters, as one more than I  
Vowed to thy worship in long constancy  
To a loved paramour! And he believeth!

Lies all! tales taken from some alien rhymer  
Richer than she in words to cozen you.  
Her woes are painted every week anew  
On her green cheeks, each than the last sublimer.

And you give faith to her, to me light credence,  
Though all my joy, my constancy is yours,  
A flame which needs no kindling and endures,  
Claiming its place by right of long precedence.

Too plain, alas, it is you hold me lightly,  
Deem me with heart of wax, with words of wind,  
A woman indiscreet and all too kind  
To all the world, with a new lover nightly.

This is your ill thought which the more inflames me,  
Humbling my pride, till I no longer crave  
More than a share to--day of that you gave  
So wholly yesterday. Your doubting shames me.

To--day I ask but this, to do you reverence,  
To heap you worship and make full your fame,  
To work for you the building of your name  
Joined to my own. For this I bar our severance.

It is for you I supplicate my fortune,  
My health restored, my strength, that you may learn  
The fullness of my love and sweet concern  
So dear to serve you. Thus do I importune;

Since that no wish have I but still to merit  
Your life's companionship, who first of men  
Possessed my body though less wholly then



My joy of heart which I of you inherit.

How many tears for you have I not wasted,  
How much of anguish suffered and disgrace!  
That day I saw the blood flow on your face  
I knew you mine; 'twas my own death I tasted.

A day that was the last of my high queenship,  
Of my life's honour held to--day in scorn,  
Of my friends' faith even here where I was born  
With those that nursed me or were near in kinship.

To--day I put aside their tried alliance.  
Yours only do I seek, which shall sustain  
My woman's weakness and make strong my reign,  
And give meet answer to my foes' defiance.

This my presumption is, my reckoning this is,  
The one desire of her who is your friend,  
Who would your mistress be to her life's end  
And serve you with her tenderest tenderesses,

You who to her are as her soul's sole brother,  
A woman in subjection to your will,  
To live and die for you your servant still,  
You only of all men and not another.

Take it, my heart, my life, my blood, my all,  
The pleasure of my days, my nights of anguish,  
The lovelessness of hours where lone I languish,  
And build them with me to a festival.

For now my heart is palsied with long fearings  
Of this, of that, the fear lest you forget,  
Lest tales be told of me, lest snares be set  
To lure you from my arms to new endearings,

Some pitiful sad accident of sorrow,  
Which may God shield us from with his good grace.  
My fears I write who cannot see your face  
Yet know my love as yesterday to--morrow.

And so farewell. Nay answer not in censure.  
Be bountiful of praise nor count the cost.  
Learn that that man is king who dareth most,  
And his the victory who most shall venture.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Red, Red Gold

Red, red gold, a kingdom's ransom, child,  
To weave thy yellow hair she bade them spin.  
At early dawn the gossamer spiders toiled,  
And wove the sunrise in.

She took the treasures of the deep blue noon,  
She took the clear eyes of the morning star,  
The pale--faced lilies of a seven--days moon,  
The dust of Phoebus' car.

She painted thee with dewdrops from the flowers,  
Stained with their petals, hyacinth and rose,  
And violets all wet with April showers  
And snowdrops from the snows.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Requiescit

I cannot tell his story. He was one  
To whom the riddle of our human life  
Was strangely put, and who, because of that  
And that he could not read it, died. But a short hour  
Before he passed, the woman who stood by,  
Weeping as once she had wept to see him born,  
Tired with her watching looked into his face  
And saw the heavy eyelids dropping down  
Loaded with sleep. And she, for all her tears,  
Bent for the hundredth time to ease his bed.  
And, as she almost touched him, smoothing out  
The ruffled pillows, close into her ear  
He whispered, never lifting up his eyes:  
` ` No matter now. I shall be soon asleep."  
And then, as if he would pursue the thought  
A little way as once he loved to do,  
And yet too weak to catch it, he went on:  
` ` And what a trouble it has been to keep  
This pillow smooth! And in a little while  
It will not want another touch; and then--  
This aching head of mine will have done with thought.  
Thought! Thought!" But loud the aged woman sobbed,  
` ` Poor soul, poor gentleman." So they remained  
For a brief space, the goodwife standing there  
Knotting her wrinkled hands and he hard by  
Upon the bed and breathing heavily.  
For he seemed sunk again in that dull trance  
Through which men often pass away from life,  
When death, as the lion does, has shaken his prey  
And he lies numb and dumb and powerless.

She listened. He was telling slowly over  
The names of those whom he had loved in youth.  
Many were strange to her; and then there came  
One she knew well. She started at the sound  
She had not heard for years, and bending near  
Heard him repeat it twice. She whispered hoarsely:  
` ` Have you no word for her?"--yet stopped again  
Because his eyes were open. Doubtingly

They wandered to her own and seemed to say  
` `Who, and what is it that you ask?" And she  
Spoke it again. He seemed to catch the name  
And said it after her, but like a child  
Which knows not what it speaks; and afterwards:  
` `Ah! Bridget, I have quite forgot that story,  
And now, in half an hour, it is not long,  
I shall have clean forgotten the name too."  
She cried, ` `Oh Sir, it is a life too late.  
Would God you had forgot it long ago!"

The tears stole slowly down her withered cheeks  
And fell upon his hands. She did not move  
While he went murmuring on: ` `'Tis very well  
Thus to forget. And what a wonder too  
It now is"--and there came a sudden light  
Into his eyes--` `that one should ever care  
To recollect a single day of life.  
I used to think and plan and plot and scheme  
How I might build my life in such a way  
That I should take fine memories to my grave.  
And now what a small matter 'tis to know  
How the years went, when death in half an hour  
Is all that is left of them! No matter now,  
But only to sleep sound in any bed  
And have no dreams." His eyes grew dim again  
As he ceased speaking. And the woman knew  
That he was dying. ` `He is gone," she said.  
And then she started muttering half aloud  
` `They cannot pass without the sacraments,  
These gentle--folks." And so she hurried out.

The dying man smiled. When they came again,  
She whispered in his ear, and looking down  
Saw him still smiling; so she lit in haste  
A candle by the bed and knelt aside.  
They put the holy oils upon his hands,  
Which closed upon the fingers of the priest.  
The priest bent over him and laid his ear  
To the half--open mouth and presently,  
Thinking he heard some words, gave absolution.  
But, when they would have gone on with the rest,

They found that he was dead. They buried him  
With some small pomp to comfort the old dame,  
Who said her master was a gentleman  
And must be followed with a mourning coach  
And mutes and weepers. There was no one else.

His name is cut upon a stone. His dreams  
Were written on Time's hem; and Time has fled  
And taken him and them. The grass is green  
Upon his grave. I cannot doubt he sleeps.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Sancho Sanchez

Sancho Sanchez lay a--dying in the house of Mariquita,  
For his life ebbed with the ebbing of the red wound in his side.  
And he lay there as they left him when he came from the Corrida  
In his gold embroidered jacket and his red cloak and his pride.

But at cockcrow in the morning, when the convents of Sevilla  
Suddenly rang loud to matins, Sanchez wakened with a cry,  
And he called to Mariquita, bade her summon his cuadrilla,  
That they all might stand around him in the hour when he should die.

For he thought in his bold bosom, ``I have ventured with them often,  
And have led the way to honour upon every ring in Spain.  
And now in this the hardest of the fields that I have fought in  
I would choose that every face of them were witness of my pain.

``For their stern eyes would upbraid me if I went down to the battle  
Without a friend to cheer me, or at least a fool to hiss.  
And they hold it all unworthy men should die like fatted cattle  
Stricken singly in the darkness at the shambles of Cadiz."

Then he bade the lamps be lighted, and he made them bring a mirror,  
Lest his cheeks should have grown paler in the watches of the night.  
For he feared lest his disciples should mistrust his soul of terror,  
When they came to look upon him, if they saw his face was white.

Oh, long time in the mirror did he look with awful smiling  
At the eyes which gazed out at him, while the women watched him mute.  
And he marked how death's white fingers had been clammily defiling  
The redness of God's image and had wiped the sunburns out.

Then he spake, ``Go fetch the carmine from the side drawer of the table,  
Where Mariquita keeps it." But, when it was not found,  
``'Tis no matter," answered Sanchez, ``we must do what we are able."  
And he painted his cheeks' paleness with the red blood of his wound.

And anon there came a murmur as of voices and a humming  
On the staircase, and he knew them by their footsteps at the door.  
And he leant up on his pillow that his eyes might see them coming  
In their order of the plaza as they strode across the floor.

And when they stood around him, in their stately mantas folded,  
With a solemn grief outawing the brute laughter of their eyes,  
You had deemed them in the lamplight to be bronzen statues moulded  
Of the powers of Nature yielding a brave man in sacrifice.

But the soul of Sanchez quailed not, and he laughed in their sad faces,  
Crying loud to Mariquita for the Valdepeñas wine.

`` A fair pig--skin, Caballeros, blushes here for your embraces.  
And I drink to you your fortune, and I pray you drink to mine."

Then they filled their leathern flagons, and they held them up together  
In a ghastly expectation till their chief should give the sign.  
And the red wine in the silence flowed like blood adown the leather.  
And the red blood from the pillow trickled drop by drop like wine.

Spake the Master, `` Ere I pledge you, look upon me, men, and hearken,  
For I have a thing to utter, and a dying man is wise.  
Death is weighing down my eyelids. Silently your faces darken.  
But another torch is lighted than the daylight in my eyes.

`` Life, I see it now as never I had thought to comprehend it,  
Like the lines which old Manola used to write upon the sand,  
And we looked on in wonder nor guessed till it was ended  
The birds and trees and faces which were growing from her hand.

`` Meaning was there from the outset, glorious meaning in our calling,  
In the voice of emulation and our boyhood's pride of soul,  
From the day when first, the capa from our father's shoulders falling,  
We were seized with inspiration and rushed out upon the bull.

`` Meaning was there in our courage and the calm of our demeanour,  
For there stood a foe before us which had need of all our skill.  
And our lives were as the programme, and the world was our arena,  
And the wicked beast was death, and the horns of death were hell.

`` And the boast of our profession was a bulwark against danger  
With its fearless expectation of what good or ill may come,  
For the very prince of darkness shall burst forth on us no stranger  
When the doors of death fly open to the rolling of the drum.

`` As I lay here in the darkness, I beheld a sign from Heaven:



Standing close a golden angel by the footpost of my bed,  
And in his hand a letter with the seal and arms engraven  
Of the glorious San Fernando which he bade me read and read.

`` And the message of his master, the blessed king my patron,  
Was to bid me in his honour to hold myself at need  
For this very day and morning of his feast and celebration,  
And in pledge of his high favour he had sent me his own steed.

`` For the lists of Heaven were open, and that day they had decreed it  
There should be a special function for the glory of his name.  
And the beasts were Sevillanos, and a master's hand was needed  
Lest the swords of Heaven should falter and the Saint be put to shame.

`` And I heard the potro stamping in the street, and would have risen  
But that Mariquita held me and the women and my wound.  
And, though the angel left me, it was truth and not a vision,  
And I know the Saint has called me, and the place where I am bound.

`` I shall fight this day in Heaven, and, though all Hell shall assail me,  
I have hope of a good issue, for perhaps I have some skill,  
And perhaps, if I should stumble or if my hand should fail me,  
There are others in the plaza who have vowed me less than ill.

`` And my mantle of salvation is the faith which is our charter,  
And the Virgin of the Pillar my protector and reward,  
And the hosts of Heaven my witness and each Spanish Saint and Martyr,  
And our lord Don Santiago himself has lent the sword."

Thus he spoke, and on his speaking fell a silence and a wonder,  
While the eyes of his companions turned in awe from each to each,  
And they waited in expectance for the gates to roll asunder  
And the voices of the angels to command him to the breach,--

Waited till the sun uprising sent his glory through the chamber,  
And the spent lamps paled and flickered on the shame of their dismay,  
And the dying man transfigured passed in silence from his slumber,  
Like a king to coronation, in the light of his new day.

Only they that stood the closest say the pale lips curved and parted,  
And the eyes flashed out in battle, and the fingers sought the sword.  
`` 'Tis the President has called him," said Fernandez the true hearted,

`` He has thrown his hat behind him for the glory of the Lord!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Satan Absolved

(In the antechamber of Heaven. Satan walks alone. Angels in groups conversing.)

Satan. To--day is the Lord's ``day." Once more on His good pleasure  
I, the Heresiarch, wait and pace these halls at leisure  
Among the Orthodox, the unfallen Sons of God.  
How sweet in truth Heaven is, its floors of sandal wood,  
Its old--world furniture, its linen long in press,  
Its incense, mummeries, flowers, its scent of holiness!  
Each house has its own smell. The smell of Heaven to me  
Intoxicates and haunts,--and hurts. Who would not be  
God's liveried servant here, the slave of His behest,  
Rather than reign outside? I like good things the best,  
Fair things, things innocent; and gladly, if He willed,  
Would enter His Saints' kingdom--even as a little child.

[Laughs. I have come to make my peace, to crave a full amoun,  
Peace, pardon, reconciliation, truce to our daggers--drawn,  
Which have so long distraught the fair wise Universe,  
An end to my rebellion and the mortal curse  
Of always evil--doing. He will mayhap agree  
I was less wholly wrong about Humanity  
The day I dared to warn His wisdom of that flaw.  
It was at least the truth, the whole truth, I foresaw  
When He must needs create that simian `` in His own  
Image and likeness." Faugh! the unseemly carrion!  
I claim a new revision and with proofs in hand,  
No Job now in my path to foil me and withstand.  
Oh, I will serve Him well!

[Certain Angels approach. But who are these that come  
With their grieved faces pale and eyes of martyrdom?  
Not our good Sons of God? They stop, gesticulate,  
Argue apart, some weep,--weep, here within Heaven's gate!  
Sob almost in God's sight! ay, real salt human tears,  
Such as no Spirit wept these thrice three thousand years.  
The last shed were my own, that night of reprobation  
When I unsheathed my sword and headed the lost nation.  
Since then not one of them has spoken above his breath  
Or whispered in these courts one word of life or death  
Displeasing to the Lord. No Seraph of them all,

Save I this day each year, has dared to cross Heaven's hall  
And give voice to ill news, an unwelcome truth to Him.  
Not Michael's self hath dared, prince of the Seraphim.  
Yet all now wail aloud.--What ails ye, brethren? Speak!  
Are ye too in rebellion? Angels. Satan, no. But weak  
With our long earthly toil, the unthankful care of Man.

Satan. Ye have in truth good cause.

Angels. And we would know God's plan,  
His true thought for the world, the wherefore and the why  
Of His long patience mocked, His name in jeopardy.  
We have no heart to serve without instructions new.

Satan. Ye have made a late discovery.

Angels. There is no rain, no dew,  
No watering of God's grace that can make green Man's heart,  
Or draw him nearer Heaven to play a godlier part.  
Our service has grown vain. We have no rest nor sleep;  
The Earth's cry is too loud.

Satan. Ye have all cause to weep  
Since you depend on Man. I told it and foretold.

Angels. Truly thou didst.

Satan. Dear fools! But have ye heart to hold  
Such plaint before the Lord, to apprise Him of this thing  
In its full naked fact and call your reckoning?

Angels. We dare not face His frown. He lives in ignorance.  
His pride is in His Earth. If He but looks askance  
We tremble and grow dumb.

Satan. And ye will bear it then?

Angels. We dare not grieve His peace. He loves this race of men.

Satan. The truth should hardly grieve.

Angels. He would count it us for pride.

He holds Mankind redeemed, since His Son stooped and died.  
We dare not venture.

Satan. See, I have less than you to lose.  
Give me your brief.

Angels. Ay, speak. Thee He will not refuse.  
Mayhap thou shalt persuade Him.

Satan. And withal find grace.  
The Lord is a just God. He will rejudge this case,  
Ay, haply, even mine. O glorious occasion!  
To champion Heaven's whole right without shift or evasion  
And plead the Angels' cause! Take courage, my sad heart,  
Thine hour hath come to thee, to play this worthiest part  
And prove thy right, thine too, to Heaven's moralities,  
Not worse than these that wait, only alas more wise!

Angels. Hush! Silence! The Lord God!

(Entereth the Lord God, to whom the Angels minister. He taketh His seat upon  
the throne.)

The Lord God. Thank ye, My servants all.  
Thank ye, good Seraphim. To all and several,  
Sons of the House, God's blessing

(aside) who ne'er gave God pain.  
Impeccable white Spirits, tell Me once again  
How goeth it with the World, My ordered Universe,  
My Powers and Dominations? Michael, thou, rehearse  
The glory of the Heavens. Tell Me, star and star,  
Do they still sing together in their spheres afar?  
Have they their speech, their language? Are their voices heard?

Michael. All's well with the World. Each morn, as bird to answering bird,  
The Stars shout in Thy glory praise unchanged yet new.  
They magnify Thy name.

The Lord God. Truth's self were else untrue.  
Time needs be optimist nor foul its own abode.  
Else were Creation mocked  
(aside)and haply I not God.

In sooth all's well with the World. And thou My Raphael,  
How fare the Spirit hosts? Say, is thy world, too, well?

Raphael. All's well with the World. We stand, as aye, obedient.  
We have no thought but Thee, no asking, no intent  
More than to laud and worship, O most merciful,  
Being of those that wait.

Satan

(aside). The contemplative rule  
Out--ministers the active. These have right to boast,  
Who stand aye in His presence, beyond the Angel host.

The Lord God. And none of ye grow weary?

Raphael. Nay in truth.

The Lord God. Not one?

Satan

(aside). God is a jealous God. He doubteth them.

Raphael. Nay, none.

We are not as the Angels.

The Lord God. These have their devoirs,  
The search, the novelty. Ye drowse here in your choirs,  
Sleep--walkers all,--while these, glad messengers, go forth  
Upon new joyous errands, Earthwards, South and North,  
To visit men and cities. What is strange as Man?  
What fair as his green Globe in all Creation's plan?  
What ordered as his march of life, of mind, of will?  
What subtle as his conscience set at grips with ill?  
Their service needs no sleep who guide Man's destinies!

(After a pause). Speak, Gabriel, thou the last. Is Man grown grand andwise?  
Hath he his place on Earth, prince of Time's fashionings,  
Noblest and fairest found, the roof and crown of things?  
Is the World joyful all in his most perfect joy?  
Hath the good triumphed, tell, o'er pain and Time's annoy,  
Since Our Son died, who taught the way of perfect peace?  
Thou knowest it how I love these dear Humanities.

Is all quite well with Man?

Gabriel. All's well with the World, ay well.  
All's well enough with Man.

Satan

(aside). Alas, poor Gabriel.

The Lord God. How meanest thou ``enough"? Man holdeth then Earth's seat,  
Master of living things. He mild is and discreet,  
Supreme in My Son's peace. The Earth is comforted  
With its long rest from toil, nor goeth aught in dread,  
Seeing all wars have ceased, the mad wars of old time.  
The lion and the lamb lie down in every clime.  
There is no strife for gold, for place, for dignities,  
All holding My Son's creed! The last fool hath grown wise.  
He hath renounced his gods, the things of wood and stone!

Gabriel. The Christian name prevaieth. Its dominion  
Groweth in all the land. From Candia to Cathay  
The fear of Christ is spread, and wide through Africa.

The Lord God. The fear? And not the love?

Gabriel. Who knoweth Man's heart? All bow,  
And all proclaim His might. The manner and the how  
It were less safe to argue, since some frailties be.  
We take the outward act to prove conformity.  
All's well enough with Man--most well with Christendom.

The Lord God. Again thou sayest ``enough." How fareth it in Rome?  
Hath My vicegerent rest?

Gabriel. He sitteth as of old  
Enthroned in Peter's chair with glories manifold.  
He sang a mass this morning and I heard his prayer.

The Lord God. For Peace?

Gabriel. And Power on Earth.

The Lord God. For Power? Hath he no care

Other than his temporal rule?

Gabriel. He hath his pastime too.

He is Italian born and doeth as these do,  
He is happy uccellando, deeming it no sin  
In his own Vatican, its garden walls within,  
Watching his fowling--nets. ``I watch and pray," saith he:  
``Vigilate et orate."

Satan

(aside). O simplicity!

The Lord God. And are the Kings with him? Do all pray with one breath?

Gabriel. Some priests and poor I saw,--

Satan

(aside). The poor he always hath.

Gabriel His guards, his chamberlains.

The Lord God. The mighty ones, the proud,  
Do they not kneel together daily in one crowd?  
Have they no common counsel?

Gabriel. Kings have their own needs,  
Demanding separate service.

Satan

(aside). Ay, and their own creeds.  
One cause alone combines them, and one service--mine.

The Lord God Thou sayest?

Gabriel. Man still is Man.

The Lord God. We did redeem his line  
And crown him with new worship. In the ancient days  
His was a stubborn neck. But now he hath found grace,  
Being born anew. His gods he hath renounced, sayest thou?  
He worshippeth the Christ? What more?



Gabriel. Nay, 'tis enow.

He is justified by faith. He hath no fear of Hell

Since he hath won Thy grace. All's well with Man,--most well.

The Lord God. ``All's well!" The fair phrase wearieeth. It hath a new false ring.

Truce, Gabriel, to thy word--fence. Mark my questioning.

Or rather no--not thou, blest Angel of all good,

Herald of God's glad tidings to a world subdued,

Thou lover tried of Man. I will not question thee,

Lest I should tempt too sore and thou lie cravenly.

Is there no other here, no drudge, to do that task

And lay the secret bare, the face behind the mask?

One with a soul less white, who loveth less, nay hates;

One fit for a sad part, the Devil's advocate's;

One who some wrong hath done, or hath been o'erborne of ill,

And so hath his tongue loosed? O for a Soul with will!

O for one hour of Satan!

Satan. He is here, Lord God,

Ready to speak all truths to Thy face, even ``Ichabod,

Thy glory is departed," were that truth.

The Lord God. Thou? Here?

Satan. A suppliant for Thy pardon, and in love, not fear,

One who Thou knowest doth love Thee, ay, and more than these.

The Lord God. That word was Peter's once.

Satan. I speak no flatteries;

Nor shall I Thee deny for this man nor that maid,

Nor for the cock that crew.

The Lord God. Thou shalt not be gainsaid.

I grant thee audience. Speak.

Satan. Alone?

The Lord God. 'Twere best alone,

Angels, ye are dismissed.

(The Angels depart.) Good Satan, now say on.

Satan

(alone with The Lord God). Omnipotent Lord God! Thou knowest all. I speak  
Only as Thy poor echo, faltering with words weak,  
A far--off broken sound, yet haply not unheard.  
Thou knowest the Worlds Thou madest, and Thine own high word  
Declaring they were good. Good were they in all sooth  
The mighty Globes Thou mouldedst in the World's fair youth,  
Launched silent through the void, evolving force and light.  
Thou gatheredst in Thy hand's grasp shards of the Infinite  
And churnedst them to Matter; Space concentrated,  
Great, glorious, everlasting. The Stars leaped and fled,  
As hounds, in their young strength. Yet might they not withdraw  
From Thy hand's leash and bond. Thou chainedst them with law.  
They did not sin, those Stars, change face, wax proud, rebel.  
Nay, they were slaves to Thee, things incorruptible.  
I might not tempt them from Thee.

The Lord God. And the reason?

Satan. Hear.

Thou gavest them no Mind, no sensual atmosphere,  
Who wert Thyself their Soul. Though thou should drowse for aye,  
They should not swerve, nor flout Thee, nor abjure Thy way,  
Not by a hair's breadth, Lord.

The Lord God. Thou witnessest for good.

Satan. I testify for truth. In all that solitude  
Of spheres involved with spheres, of prodigal force set free,  
There hath been no voice untrue, no tongue to disagree,  
No traitor thought to wound with less than perfect word.  
Such was Thy first Creation. I am Thy witness, Lord.  
'Twas worthy of Thyself.

The Lord God. And of the second?

Satan. Stop.

How shall I speak of it unless Thou give me hope;  
I who its child once was, though daring to rebel;  
I who Thine outcast am, the banished thief of Hell,  
Thy too long reprobate? Thou didst create to Thee  
A world of happy Spirits for Thy company,

For Thy delight and solace, as being too weary grown  
Of Thy sole loneliness. 'Twas ill to be alone.  
And Thou didst make us pure, as Thou Thyself art pure.  
Yet was there seed of ill. What Spirit may endure  
The friction of the Spirit? Where two are, Strife is.  
Thou gavest us Mind, Thought, Will; all snares to happiness.

The Lord God. Unhappy blinded one! How sinnedst thou? Reveal.

Satan. Lord, through my too great love, through my excess of zeal.  
Listen. Thy third Creation. . . .

The Lord God. Ha! The Earth? Speak plain.  
Now will I half forgive thee. What of the Earth, of men?  
Was that not then the best, the noblest of the three?

Satan. Ah, glorious Lord God! Thou hadst Infinity  
From which to choose Thy plan. This plan, no less than those,  
Was noble in conception, when its vision rose  
Before Thee in Thy dreams. Thou deemedst to endow  
Time with a great new wonder, wonderful as Thou,  
Matter made sensitive, informed with Life, with Soul.  
It grieved Thee the Stars knew not. Thou couldst not cajole  
Their music into tears, their beauty to full praise.  
Thou askedst one made conscious of Thy works and ways,  
One dowered with sense and passion, which should feel and move  
And weep with Thee and laugh, one that, alas, should love.  
Thus didst Thou mould the Earth. We Spirits, wondering, eyed  
Thy new--born fleshly things, Thy Matter deified.  
We saw the sea take life, its myriad forms all fair.  
We saw the creeping things, the dragons of the air,  
The birds, the four--foot beasts, all beautiful, all strong,  
All brimming o'er with joyance, new green woods among,  
Twice glorious in their lives. And we, who were but spirit,  
Envied their lusty lot, their duplicated merit,  
Their feet, their eyes, their wings, their physical desires,  
The anger of their voices, the fierce sexual fires  
Which lit their sentient limbs and joined them heart to heart,  
Their power to act, to feel, all that corporeal part  
Which is the truth of love and giveth the breathing thing  
The wonder of its beauty incarnate in Spring.  
What was there, Lord, in Heaven comparable with this,

The mother beast with her young? Not even Thy happiness,  
Lord of the Universe! What beautiful, what bold,  
What passionate as she? She doth not chide nor scold  
When at her dugs he mumbleth. Nay, the milk she giveth  
Is as a Sacrament, the power by which he liveth  
A double life with hers. And they two in one day  
Know more of perfect joy than we, poor Spirits, may  
In our eternity of sober loneliness.  
This was the thing we saw, and praised Thee and did bless.

The Lord God. Where then did the fault lie? Thou witnessest again.  
Was it because of Death, Life's complement,--or Pain,  
That thou didst loose thy pride to question of My will?

Satan. Nay, Lord, Thou knowest the truth. These evils are not ill.  
They do but prove Thy wisdom. All that lives must perish,  
Else were the life at charge, the bodily fires they cherish,  
Accumulating ills. The creatures Thou didst make  
Sink when their day is done. They slough time like the snake  
How many hundred sunsets? Yet night comes for rest,  
And they awake no more,--and sleep,--and it is best.  
What, Lord, would I not give to shift my cares and lie  
Enfolded in Time's arms, stone--dead, eternally?  
No. 'Twas not Death, nor Pain; Pain the true salt of pleasure,  
The condiment that stings and teaches each his measure,  
The limit of his strength, joy's value in his hand.  
It was not these we feared. We bowed to Thy command,  
Even to that stern decree which bade the lion spring  
Upon the wealking steer, the falcon bend her wing  
To reive the laggard fowl, the monster of the deep  
Devour and be devoured. He who hath sown shall reap.  
And we beheld the Earth by that mute law controlled,  
Grow ever young and new, Time's necklace of pure gold  
Set on Creation's neck. We gazed, and we applauded  
The splendour of Thy might, Thy incarnated Godhead.  
And yet (Lord God, forgive. Nay, hear me) Thou wert not  
Content with this fair world in its first glorious thought:  
Thou needs must make thee Man. Ah, there Thy wisdom strayed.  
Thou wantedst one to know Thee, no mere servile jade,  
But a brave upright form to walk the Earth and be  
Thy lieutenant with all and teach integrity,  
One to aspire, adorn, to stand the roof and crown

Of thy Creation's house in full dominion,  
The fairest, noblest, best of Thy created things;  
One Thou shouldst call Thy rose of all Time's blossomings.  
And Thou evolvedst Man!--There were a thousand forms,  
All glorious, all sublime, the riders of Thy storms,  
The battlers of Thy seas, the four--foot Lords of Earth,  
From which to choose Thy stem and get Thee a new birth.  
There were forms painted, proud, bright birds with plumes of heaven  
And songs more sweet than angels' heard on the hills at even,  
Frail flashing butterflies, free fishes of such hue  
As rainbows hardly have, sleek serpents which renew  
Their glittering coats like gems, grave brindle--hided kine,  
Large--hearted elephants, the horse how near divine,  
The whale, the mastodon, the mighty Behemoth,  
Leviathan's self awake and glorious in his wrath.  
All these Thou hadst for choice, competitors with Thee  
For Thy new gift and prize, Thy co--divinity.  
Yet didst Thou choose, Lord God, the one comedian shape  
In Thy Creation's range, the lewd bare--buttocked ape,  
And calledst him, in scorn of all that brave parade,  
King of Thy living things, in Thine own likeness made!  
Where, Lord, was then Thy wisdom? We, who watched Thee, saw  
More than Thyself didst see. We recognised the flaw,  
The certainty of fault, and I in zeal spake plain.

The Lord God. Thou didst, rebellious Spirit, and thy zeal was vain.  
Thou spakest in thy blindness. Was it hard for God,  
Thinkest thou, to choose His graft, to wring from the worst clod  
His noblest fruiting? Nay. Man's baseness was the test,  
The text of His all--power, its proof made manifest.  
There was nought hard for God.

Satan. Except to win Man's heart.  
Lord, hear me to the end. Thy Will found counterpart  
Only in Man's un--Will. Thy Truth in his un--Truth,  
Thy Beauty in his Baseness, Ruth in his un--Ruth,  
Order in his dis--Order. See, Lord, what hath been  
To Thy fair Earth through him, the fount and origin  
Of all its temporal woes. How was it ere he came  
In his high arrogance, sad creature without shame?  
Thou dost remember, Lord, the glorious World it was,  
The beauty, the abundance, the unbroken face

Of undulent forest spread without or rent or seam  
From mountain foot to mountain, one embroidered hem  
Fringing the mighty plains through which Thy rivers strayed,  
Thy lakes, Thy floods, Thy marshes, tameless, unbetrayed,  
All virgin of the spoiler, all inviolate,  
In beauty undeflowered, where fear was not nor hate.  
Thou knowest, Lord of all, how that sanct solitude  
Was crowded with brave life, a thousand forms of good  
Enjoying Thy sweet air, some strong, some weak, yet none  
Oppressor of the rest more than Thy writ might run.  
Armed were they, yet restrained. Not even the lion slew  
His prey in wantonness, nor claimed beyond his due.  
He thinned their ranks,--yet, lo, the Spring brought back their joy.  
Short was his anger, Lord. He raged not to destroy.  
Oh, noble was the World, its balance held by Thee,  
Timely its fruits for all, 'neath Thy sole sovereignty.  
But he! he, the unclean! The fault, Lord God, was Thine.  
Behold him in Thy place, a presence saturnine,  
In stealth among the rest, equipped as none of these  
With Thy mind's attributes, low crouched beneath the trees,  
Betraying all and each. The wit Thou gavest him  
He useth to undo, to bend them to his whim.  
His bodily strength is little, slow of foot is he,  
Of stature base, unclad in mail or panoply.  
His heart hath a poor courage. He hath beauty none.  
Bare to the buttocks he of all that might atone.  
Without Thy favour, Lord, what power had he for ill?  
Without Thy prompting voice his violence had scant skill.  
The snare, the sling, the lime, who taught him these but Thou?  
The World was lost through Thee who fashioned him his bow.  
And Thou hast clean forgot the fair great beasts of yore,  
The mammoth, aurochs, elk, sea--lion, cave--bear, boar,  
Which fell before his hand, each one of them than he  
Nobler and mightier far, undone by treachery.  
He spared them not, old, young, calf, cow. With pitfall hid  
In their mid path they fell, by his guile harvested,  
And with them the World's truth. Hence forth all walked in fear,  
Knowing that one there was turned traitor, haply near.  
This was the wild man's crime.

The Lord God. He erred in ignorance.  
As yet he was not Man. Naught but his form was Man's.

Satan. Well had he so remained. Lord God, Thou thoughtest then  
To perfect him by grace, among the sons of men  
To choose a worthiest man. ``If he should know," saidst Thou  
``The evil from the good, the thing We do allow  
From that We do forbid! If We should give him shame,  
The consciousness of wrong, the red blush under blame!  
If he should walk in light beholding truth as We!"  
Thou gavest him Conscience, Creed, Responsibility,  
The power to worship Thee. Thou showedst him Thy way.  
Thou didst reveal Thyself. Thou spakest, as one should say  
Conversing mouth to mouth. Old Adam and his Eve  
Thou didst array in aprons Thy own hands did weave.  
Enoch was taken up. To Noah Thou didst send  
Salvation in Thine ark. Lord Abraham was Thy friend.  
These are the facts recorded, facts (say fables) yet  
Impressed with the large truth of a new value set  
Upon Man's race and kind by Thy too favouring will.  
Man had become a Soul, informed for good and ill  
With Thy best attributes, Earth's moral arbiter,  
Tyrant and priest and judge. Woe and alas for her!  
Think of the deeds of Man! the sins! No wilding now,  
But set in cities proud, yet marked upon his brow  
With label of all crime.

The Lord God. The men before the Flood?  
We did destroy them all.

Satan. Save Noah and his brood.  
In what were these more worthy? Did they love Thee more,  
The men of the new lineage? Was their sin less sore,  
Their service of more zeal? Nay. Earth was hardly dry  
Ere their corruption stank and their sin sulphurously  
Rose as a smoke to Heaven, Ur, Babel, Nineveh,  
The Cities of the Plain. Bethink Thee, Lord, to--day  
What their debasement was, who did defile Thy face  
And flout Thee in derision, dogs in shamelessness!

The Lord God. Nay, but there loved Me one.

Satan. The son of Terah?

The Lord God. He.

Satan. I give Thee Thy one friend. Nay, more, I give Thee three--  
Moses, Melchisedec.

The Lord God. And Job.

Satan. Ay, Job. He stands  
In light of the new Gospel, Captain of Thy bands,  
And prince of all that served Thee, fearing not to find  
Thy justice even in wrong with no new life behind,  
Thy justice even in death. In all, four men of good  
Of the whole race of Shem, Heaven's stars in multitude.  
(I speak of the old time and the one chosen Nation  
To whom Thou gavest the law.)

The Lord God. Truce to that dispensation.  
It was an old--world hope, made void by Jacob's guile.  
His was a bitter stem. We bore with it awhile,  
Too long, till We grew weary. But enough. 'Tis done.  
What sayest thou of the new, most wise Apollyon?

Satan. Ah, Lord, wilt Thou believe me? That was a mighty dream,  
Sublime, of a world won by Thy Son's stratagem  
Of being Himself a Man--the rueful outcast thing!  
And of all men a Jew! for poor Earth's ransoming.  
Thrice glorious inspiration! Who but He had dared  
Come naked, as He came, of all His kingship bared,  
Not one of us to serve Him, neither praised nor proud  
But just as the least are, the last ones of the crowd.  
He had not Man's fierce eye. No beast fell back abashed  
To meet Him in the woods, as though a flame had flashed.  
He lay down with the foxes. The quails went and came  
Between His feet asleep. They did not fear His blame.  
He had not Man's hard heart. He had not Man's false hand.  
His gesture was as theirs. Their wit could understand  
He was their fellow flesh. To Him, so near to God,  
What difference lay 'twixt Man and the least herb He trod?  
He came to save them all, to win all to His peace.  
What cared He for Man, Jew, more than the least of these?  
And yet He loved His kind, the sick at heart, the poor,  
The impotent of will, those who from wrong forbore,



Those without arms to strike, the lost of Israel.  
Of these He made His kingdom--as it pleased Him well--  
Kingdom without a king. His thought was to bring back  
Earth to its earlier way, ere Man had left the track,  
And stay his rage to slay. ``Take ye no thought," said He,  
``Of what the day may bring. Be as the lilies be.  
They toil not, nore do spin, and yet are clothed withal.  
Choose ye the lowest place. Be guileless of all gall.  
If one shall smite you, smile. If one shall rob, give more.  
The first shall be the last, and each sould hold its store.  
Only the eyes that weep--only the poor in spirit--  
Only the pure in heart God's kingdom shall inherit."  
On this fair base of love Thy Son built up His creed,  
Thinking to save the world. And Man, who owned no need  
Of any saving, slew Him.

The Lord God. It was the Jews that slew  
In huge ingratitude Him who Himself was Jew.  
O perfidi Judaei! Yet His creed prevailed.  
Thou hast thyself borne witness. If Shem's virtue failed,  
Japhet hath found us sons who swear all by His name.  
Nay, thou hast testified the Christian faith finds fame  
In every western land. It hath inherited  
All that was once called Rome. The Orient bows its head  
Perturbed by the white vision of a purer day.  
Ham's heritage accepts new salves for its decay,  
And there are worlds reborn beyond the ocean's verge  
Where men are not as men, mad foam on the salt surge,  
But live even as He taught them in love's noblest mood,  
Under the law of Jesus.

Satan. Where, O glorious God?  
In what land of the heathen--and I know them all,  
From China to Peru, from Hind to Senegal,  
And onward through the isles of the great Southern main.  
Where is this miracle? Nay, nay, the search were vain.

The Lord God. It is the angels' hearsay.

Satan. A romance, Lord. Hear  
The word of one Thy wanderer, sphere and hemisphere,  
For ever on Thy Earth, who, shepherding Thy seas

No less than Thy green valleys, hath nor rest nor peace,  
But he must learn the way of all who in them dwell;  
To whom there is no secret, naught untold, no Hell  
Where any sin may hide but he hath wormed it out  
From silence to confession till his ears grew hot;  
Who knoweth the race of Man as his own flesh; whose eye  
Is cruel to evasion and the lips that lie,  
And who would tell Thee all, all, all to the last act  
Of tragic fooling proved which seals Man's counterpact.  
--What was the true tale, think Thee, of Thy Son that died?  
What of the souls that knew Him, Him the crucified,  
After their Lord was gone? They waited for Him long,  
The sick He had made whole, the wronged consoled of wrong,  
The women He had loved, the fisher folk whose ears  
Had drunk in His word's wisdom those three wondrous years,  
And deemed Him prophet, prince, His kingdom yet to come,  
Nay from the grave new--risen and had been seen of some.  
What did they teach? Awhile, they told His law of peace,  
His rule of unresistance and sweet guilelessness,  
His truce with mother Earth, His abstinence from toil,  
His love of the least life that wanton hands despoil,  
The glory of His tears, His watching, fasting, prayer,  
The patience of His death, His last word of despair.  
And as He lived they lived--awhile--expectant still  
Of His return in power to balance the Earth's ill.  
They would not deem Him dead. But, when He came not, lo,  
Their reason went astray. Poor souls, they loved Him so,  
They had such grief for Him, their one true God in Man  
Revealed to their sad eyes in all a World grown wan,  
That they must build a creed, a refuge from their fears  
In His remembered words and so assuage their tears.  
His kingdom? It was what? Not all a dream? Forbid  
That fault, that failure, Heaven, for such were death indeed.  
His promises of peace, goodwill on earth to men,  
Which needed a fulfilment, lest faith fail? How then  
Since no fulfilment came, since He had left them lone  
In face of the world's wolves, for bread had given a stone?  
How reconcile His word with that which was their life,  
Man's hatred and God's silence in a world of strife?  
Was there no path, no way? Nay, none on this sad Earth  
Save with their Lord to suffer and account it mirth.  
And so awhile they grieved. Then rose a subtlety.

(Lord God, Thou knowest not wholly how men crave to lie  
In face of a hard truth too grievous to their pride.)  
To these poor fisher folk, thus of their Lord denied,  
Came a new blinding vision. They had seen Thy Son  
How often after death, no ghost, no carrion,  
But a plain man alive, who moved among them slow,  
And showed His feet and hands, the thorn prints on His brow,  
The spear wound in His side. He had come to comfort them,  
Confirm them in the faith, by His love's stratagem.  
How if this thing were real? if this, that proved Him God,  
Proved also themselves spirits, not mere flesh and blood  
One with the beasts that perish, but immortal souls,  
Even as we angels are who fill Heaven's muster rolls  
And so shall live for aye? ``Here," argued they, ``it stands  
The kingdom of His Heaven, a house not made with hands,  
Wherein we too new--born, but in no earthly case,  
Shall enter after death." On this fair fragile base  
Their sorrow built its nest. It gave a hope to men  
And pandered to their pride. And lo the world's disdain  
Was changed to acclamation. Kings and emperors kneeled  
Before the Crucified, a living God revealed,  
Who made them heirs with Him of His own glory. (Mark  
The ennobling phrase and title.) No base Noah's ark  
Man's fount of honour now, but God's eternal choice  
Made of His human race, predestined to His joys  
From the first dawn of time,--the very Universe  
Resolved to a mere potsherd, shattered to rehearse  
The splendour of Man's advent, the one act and end  
To which Creation moved, and where even we must tend,  
The spirit hosts of Heaven! Stark mad insolence!  
Rank blasphemy proclaimed in Rome's halls and Byzance,  
Through all the Imperial lands, as though, forsooth, Thou, Lord,  
Couldst, even if Thou wouldst, raise this fantastic horde  
Of bodies to Thy glory, shapes dispersed and gone  
As lightly as Time's wracks swept to oblivion!  
Yet all believed this creed. Space, straightway grown too strait,  
Shrank from these Christened kings, who held Earth reprobate  
Save for their own high calling. Heaven had become their throne,  
A fief for their new pride, in which they reigned alone,  
In virtue of their faith, above Time's humbler show,  
And Earth became their footstool. All were masters now  
Of the brute beasts despised who had no sould to save,

And lords too of the heathen doomed beyond the grave.  
God's kingdom had begun. It compassed all the lands  
And trafficked wealth and power. It issued its commands,  
And in default it slew in Thy high holy name,  
Thine the all merciful! Alas for the world's shame!  
Alas for the world's reason, for Thy Son's sane creed  
Of doing only good each day to its own need,  
Of being as the least of these in wise humility!  
Behold our Christian Saints, too proud to live or die  
As all flesh dies and lives, their emperors and kings  
Clothed in the robes of life as with an eagle's wings,  
Their Popes dispensing power, their priests absolving sin.  
Nay. They have made a Hell their damned shall dwell within,  
With me for their gaolmaster in a world to come  
Of which they hold the keys! God's curse on Christendom!

The Lord God. Hush, traitor, thou blasphemest. If things once were so,  
'Twas in a darkened age, the night of long ago.  
None now believe in Hell.

Satan. Or Heaven. Forgive it, Lord,  
I spoke it in my haste. See, I withdraw the word.  
Thy Christendom is wise, reformed. None buy nor sell  
Seats now at Thy right hand;  
(aside)grown quite unsaleable.  
None now believe nor tremble. Yet is their sin as sore.  
(Lord, hear me to the end.) Thou dravest me out of yore  
An exile from Thy sight, with mission to undo  
And tempt Man to his death. I had fallen from Heaven's blue  
By reason of my pride. Thou wouldst have service done  
Unreasoning, on the knees, as flowers bend to the Sun,  
Which withers them at noon, nor ask of his white fires  
Why they consume and slay. I had fallen by my desires  
Which were too large for one not God, because I would  
Have shown Thee the truth bare, in no similitude  
As a slave flattering speaks and half despises him  
He fawns on, but in love, which stands erect of limb  
Claiming an equal part, which reasons, questions, dares,  
And calls all by its name, the wheat wheat, the tares tares,  
The friend friend, the foe foe. Thou wast displeased at this,  
And deemed I envied Man his portion in Thy bliss,  
The Man that Thou hadst made and in Thy royal faith

Held worthy of all trust, Thy lord of life and death,  
One to be proved and tried, as gold is tried by fire,  
And fare the purer forth. Of me Thou didst require  
The sad task of his tempting. I, forsooth, must sue  
And prompt to evil deeds, make the false thought seem true,  
The true thought false, that he, thus proved, thus tried, might turn  
And hurl me a dog's word, as Jesus did, in scorn:

``Get thee behind Me, Satan!" To this penance chained  
I bowed me in despair, as Thou, Lord, hadst ordained,  
Cast out from Thee and cursed. It was a rueful task  
For one who had known Thee to wear the felon's mask  
And tempt this piteous child to his base sins of greed,  
His lusts ignoble, crimes how prompt in act and deed,  
To urge him to rebellion against God and good  
Who needed none to urge. His savage simian blood  
Flamed at a word, a sign. He lied, he thieved, he slew,  
By instinct of his birth. No virtue but he knew  
Its countervice and foil, without my wit to aid.  
No fair thought but he chose the foul thought in its stead.  
Ah, sad primaeval race! Thou saidst it was not Man  
This thing armed with the stone which through thy forests ran,  
Intent to snare and slay. Not Man the senseless knave  
Who struck fire from his flint to burn Thy gorses brave,  
Thy heaths for his lean kine, who, being the one unclean,  
Defiled thy flower--sweet Earth with ordure heaps obscene  
To plant his rice, his rye. Not Man, saidst Thou, because  
He knew not of Thy way nor had he learned Thy laws,  
And was stark savage still. Not Man? Behold to--day  
Thy tamed Man as he lives, Thy Son of Japhet, nay  
Thy new true--Christened King, the follower of Thy Christ,  
Who sweareth by Thy name and his own mailed fist  
That Thou art Lord of all and he the Lord of Thee,  
Heaven's instrument ordained to teach integrity.  
Thinkest Thou the man is changed, the ape that in him is,  
Because his limbs are clothed which went in shamelessness?  
Are his lusts bridled more because his parts are hid?  
Nay, Lord, he doeth to--day as those forefathers did,  
Only in greater guile. I will tell Thee his full worth,  
This Man's, the latest born, Thy creature from his birth  
Who lords it now, a king, this white Man's who hath pressed  
All Earth to his sole bondage and supreme behest,  
This Man of all Mankind. Behold him in Thy place,

Administering the World, vicegerent of Thy grace  
And agent named of Thee, the symbol and the sign  
Of Thy high will on Earth and purposing divine,  
Clothed in his robes of power. Whence was he? What is he  
That he asserteth thus his hand's supremacy?  
His lineage what? Nay, Lord, he cometh of that mad stem  
Harder in act than Ham's, more subtle than of Shem,  
The red Japhetic stock of the bare plains which rolled  
A base--born horde on Rome erewhile in lust of gold,  
Tide following tide, the Goth, Gaul, Vandal, Lombard, Hun,  
Spewed forth from the white North to new dominion  
In the fair southern lands, with famine at their heel  
And rapine in their van, armed to the lips with steel.  
These made their spoil of all, the pomp of the world's power,  
Its wealth, its beauty stored, all Rome's imperial dower,  
Her long renown, her skill, her art, her cultured fame,  
And with the rest her faiths bearing the Christian name.  
From this wild bitter root of violent lust and greed  
New Christendom upsprang, a pagan blood--stained creed,  
Pagan in spite of Christ, for the old gods cast down  
Still ruled it in men's hearts and lured them to renown,  
Ay in Thy name, Lord God, by glamour of the sword,  
And for Thy dead Son's sake, as in the days abhorred.  
Like bulls they strove, they slew, like wolves they seized the prey,  
The hungriest strongest first, and who should say them nay?  
After the Goth the Gaul, after the Gaul the Dane,  
Kings in descent from Thor, peace sued to them in vain.  
Thou knowest, Lord God, their story. It is writ in blood,  
The blood of beast and man, by their brute hands subdued,  
Down to the latest born, the hungriest of the pack,  
The master wolf of all, men call the Sassenach,  
The Anglo--Norman dog, who goeth by land and sea  
As his forefathers went in chartered piracy,  
Death, fire in his right hand.

The Lord God. Satan, once more beware.  
Thy tongue hath a wide license, yet it runneth far.  
This Anglo--Saxon man hath a fair name with some.  
He standeth in brave repute, a priest of Christendom,  
First in civility, so say the Angel host,  
Who speak of him with awe as one that merits most.

Satan. The Angels fear him, Lord.

The Lord God. How fear?

Satan. They fear his tongue,  
Unscrupulous to speak, the right he hath in wrong,  
The wrong he hath in right. They doubt he hath Thine ear,  
Lord of the Universe. They are excused of fear.  
They see his long success, his victory over good,  
They count the nations lost which were of kindlier blood  
But could not stand before him, his great subtlety,  
His skill in the arts, the crafts. They mark the powers that be  
In earth, air, water, fire, all banded in his plan  
And used to the world's hurt as never yet by Man.  
They look on Thee, Lord God, as one that careth not,  
On him as Thy supplanter and the iron as hot  
Which shall reforge the chain by which the Earth is bound.  
They fear to awaken Thee from Thy long sleep profound.  
He hath become their God, one impious and profane,  
But strong and unreprieved, ascendant on Thy wane.  
They kneel to the new--comer as all courtiers use  
Who fear a change of king. Their news is an ill news.  
Nay, Lord, 'tis but a lie. I know it well, their story.  
'Tis but the man's own boast, his mouthings of vain glory  
Repeated day by day with long reiterate stress,  
Till the world half believes in sheer ear--weariness,  
And they, who think to please, retail it as their own.  
What say they of him, Lord? That he hath one God alone,  
Is not as the lewd nations, keepeth Thy Sabbath holy,  
Nor Thy name vainly taketh in the ways of folly,  
Hath a wise polity, his Church and State close blent,  
A lordly bench of bishops, peers of Parliament,  
A Convocation House which yearly witnesseth,  
A King by grace of God, Defender of the Faith,  
Thy ten commandments set in all his Courts of Law.  
They show his fanes restored by highway, hedge and shaw,  
His missions to the Jews, his Church societies,  
The zeal of his free sects, each than the rest more wise,  
The wealth of his chief priests, his weekly public prayer,  
Things proving him devout more than the nations are.  
They cite his worldly worth, his virtue these beyond,  
His high repute in trade, his word held as his bond,

The valour of his dealings, his long boast of truth,  
 The prudent continence of his unwedded youth,  
 Uxorious faith in marriage, husband of one wife,  
 Nor taking her next sister to his widowed life.  
 These tales they hear and bring, some true, some false, but all  
 Of the common Saxon brag for first original.  
 So too of his world--science, social schemes, reforms,  
 His school--boards, gaols new systemed, signalling of storms,  
 Posts, railways, Homes for orphans, Charities organised,  
 His Mansion House funds floated, alms economised,  
 His hospitals, museums, baths, parks, workhouses,  
 And that last glorious marvel, his free Daily Press.  
 A wonderful Saxon truly, each day interviewed  
 By his own wondering self and found exceeding good.  
 All this and more they cite. That he hath virtues, well,  
 Let it be granted him. Those pay who most would sell,  
 And more who most would buy. Alms to his credit stand  
 In his account with time, and add strength to his hand,  
 Serving his best advantage in the enlarged domain  
 Of his Man's selfishness, which works for the World's bane  
 More surely than his vices. He hath outlived the day  
 Of the old single graspings, where each went his way  
 Alone to plunder all. He hath learned to curb his lusts  
 Somewhat, to smooth his brawls, to guide his passionate gusts,  
 His cry of ``mine, mine, mine" in inarticulate wrath.  
 He dareth not make raid on goods his next friend hath  
 With open violence, nor loose his hand to steal,  
 Save in community and for the common weal  
 'Twixt Saxon man and man. He is more congruous grown,  
 Holding a subtler plan to make the world his own  
 By organised self--seeking in the paths of power.  
 He is new drilled to wait. He knoweth his appointed hour  
 And his appointed prey. Of all he maketh tool,  
 Even of his own sad virtues, to cajole and rule,  
 Even of Thee, Lord God.--I will expound this thing,  
 The creed of these white thieves which boast of Thee, their King,  
 As partner in their crimes. The head knaves of the horde,  
 Those who inspire the rest and give the masterword,  
 The leaders of their thought, their lords political,  
 Sages, kings, poets, priests, in their hearts one and all  
 (For all their faith avowed and their lip service done  
 In face of Thy high fires each day beneath the sun),



Ay, and their prelates too, their men of godliest worth,  
 Believe no word of Thee as Master of their Earth,  
 Controller of their acts, no word of Thy high right  
 To bend men to obedience and at need to smite,  
 No word of Thy true law, the enforcement of Thy peace,  
 Thy all--deciding arm in the world's policies.  
 They ignore Thee on the Earth. They grant Thee, as their ``God,"  
 The kingdom of the heavens, seeing it a realm untrod,  
 Untreadable by man, a space, a res nullius  
 Or No--Man's Land, which they as loyal men and pious  
 Leave and assign to Thee to deal with as Thou wilt,  
 To hold as Thy strong throne or loose as water spilt  
 For sun and wind to gather in the wastes of air.  
 Whether of a truth Thou art they know not, Lord, nor care;  
 Only they name Thee ``God," and pay Thee their prayers vain,  
 As dormant over--lord and pensioned suzerain,  
 The mediatised blind monarch of a world, outgrown  
 Of its faith's swaddling--clothes, which wills to walk alone,  
 The Earth? Not so. 'Tis theirs, the prize of the strong hand,  
 The strongest being their own by sea alike and land.  
 ``Thy Will be done," they cry, ``Father which art in Heaven"  
 (Where Thou canst harm nor hurt not one day in the seven).  
 And if they add ``on Earth" they deem Thee impotent,  
 Seeing Thee drowse thus long and leave men to their bent.  
 They mean ``Thy Will in Heaven," or in their ``World to come."  
 ``Terram autem dedit filiis hominum."  
 So think their chiefs, their lords. For the blind mass of men,  
 Which live and toil and die heart--hungry in their pen,  
 They have no god but gold, the lord of their distress,  
 And gold's slave, drink, that buys a night's forgetfulness.  
 Of Thee they have no heed to chide them or to cheer.  
 The fear of Thee with these is their law's officer.  
 Lord God, if Thou but saw the pagan hearts they hide,  
 The base greeds of their being, the lusts undenied,  
 The Mammons that they worship! But Thou dost not see,  
 Or Thou hadst purged long since this worst profanity  
 From the World's better way and thereby saved Thy name  
 Profaned in their foul mouths from its long daily shame.  
 Thou dost not hear, nor see. The smoke of their foul dens  
 Broodeth on Thy fair Earth as a black pestilence,  
 Hiding the kind day's eye. No flower, no grass there groweth,  
 Only their engines' dung which the fierce furnace throweth.

Their presence poisoneth all and maketh all unclean.  
Thy streams they have made sewers for their dyes aniline.  
No fish therein may swim, no frog, no worm may crawl,  
No snail for grime may build her house within their wall.  
Thy beasts they have enslaved in blindness underground.  
The voice of birds that sang to them is a lost sound.  
Nay, they have tarred Time's features, pock--marked Nature's face,  
Brought all to the same jakes with their own lack of grace.  
In all Thy living World there is no sentient thing  
Polluteth and defileth as this Saxon king,  
This intellectual lord and sage of the new quest,  
The only wanton he that fouleth his own nest.  
And still his boast goeth forth. Nay, Lord, 'tis shame to Thee  
This slave, being what he is, should ape divinity,  
The poorest saddest drudge, the least joy--lifted heart  
In all a World where tears are sold in open mart,  
That he should stand, Thy choice, to preach Thy law, and set  
His impress on the Earth in full apostolate,  
Thy missionary and priest. He goeth among the nations,  
Saith he, to spread Thy truth, to preach Thy law of patience,  
To glorify Thy name! Not selfishly, forsooth,  
But for their own more good, to open them the truth,  
To teach them happiness, to civilise, to save,  
To smite down the oppressor and make free the slave.  
To bear the ``White Man's Burden," which he yearns to take  
On his white Saxon back for his white conscience' sake.  
Huge impudent imposture!--Lord, there were fair lands  
Once on Thy Earth, brave hills, bright isles, sweet coral strands,  
Noble savannahs, plains of limitless waving green,  
Lakes girt with giant forests, continents unseen,  
Unknown by these white thieves, where men lived in the way  
Of Thy good natural law with Thy free beasts at play  
And partners with Thy birds, men who nor toiled nor span,  
Nor sowed, nor reaped, nor delved for the red curse of Man,  
The gold that kills the soul; who knew nought of the fire  
Which in his guns he storeth, naught of the desire  
More deadly still concealed in his fire--drink of death;  
Who went unclothed, unshamed, for garment a flower wreath;  
Whose women lived unsold and loved their natural kin,  
Nor gave aught to the stranger in the wage of sin;  
Who blessed Thee for their babes and through the woods, like Eve,  
Wandered in happy laughter, glorying to conceive.

Yea, Lord, and there were others,--shut communities  
 Of souls still on Thy path and strange to the new lies,  
 Yet not, as these were, wild, but held in discipline  
 Of orderly commandment, servants true of Thine  
 And doers of Thy law, though ignorant, untaught  
 Save by an inward grace of self--restraining thought  
 And light intuitive. No shedders they of blood,  
 But with all creatures friends, with men in brotherhood,  
 Blameless of wine, of strife; in innocent arts well skilled  
 But schoolless of all guile as an unchristened child.  
 To these with mouthings fine come the white gossellers,  
 Our Saxon mission--men black--coated to the ears.  
 -- `` Which be your gods?" ask they; `` Do ye adore the Christ?  
 Know ye the Three in One, or walk ye in the mist?"  
 `` Sirs, we have One, not Three. Our poor ancestral wit  
 Encompasseth no more." `` Then be ye damned for it.  
 This is our Bible, read. In the long after--death  
 Ye shall be burned with fire. It is God's self that saith."  
 `` We do not live again." `` In this life, ye shall live  
 According to our gospel, nor profanely wive  
 Save with one spouse alone." `` Our law hath given us three.  
 Three Gods to one sole wife were multiplicity."  
 `` These pagans are blasphemers! Who is on our side?  
 See, we have gold to give. We may not be denied."--  
 And they baptize them Christians. Cometh the trader next,  
 His bible too in hand, its free--trade for his text.  
 He teacheth them to buy.-- `` We nothing need." `` Yet take.  
 The want will come anon and keep your wits awake.  
 Here are the goods we sell, cloth, firelocks, powder, rum,  
 Ye shall go clothed like lords, like kings of Christendom."  
 `` We live best naked." `` Fie." `` We have no use for arms.  
 The fire--drink is forbid." `` The thing forbid hath charms.  
 Nay. We will make you men, soldiers to brawl and fight  
 As all good Christians use, and God defend the right.  
 The drink will give you courage. Take it. 'Tis the sign  
 Of manhood orthodox, its sacramental wine,  
 Or how can you be worthy your new Christian creed?  
 Drink."--And they drink to Jesus and are borne to bed.  
 He teacheth them to sell.-- `` We need coin for our draught.  
 How shall we bring the price, since ye give naught for naught?  
 We crave the fire--drink now." `` Friends, let not that prevent.  
 We lend on all your harvests, take our cent per cent."

``Sirs, but the crop is gone." ``There is your land in lots."  
 ``The land? It was our fathers'." ``Curse ye for idle sots,  
 A rascal lazing pack. Have ye no hands to work?  
 Off to the mines and dig, and see it how ye shirk."  
 ``As slaves?" ``No, not as slaves. Our principles forbid.  
 Free labourers, if you will. We use that word instead.  
 The `dignity of labour' ye shall learn for hire.  
 No paltering. No excuse. The white man hates a liar,  
 And hates a grumbling hand. Enough if we provide  
 Tools with the drink and leave your backs with a whole hide.  
 These lands are ours by Charter. If you doubt it, bring  
 Your case before the Courts, which will expound the thing.  
 As for your women folk. Look, there are ways well known  
 All women have of living in a Christian town.  
 Moreover you do ill. One wife the law allows,  
 And you, you say, have four. Send three round to our house."  
 --Thus is Thy gospel preached. Its issue, Lord, behold  
 In the five Continents, the new world and the old,  
 The happier tribes of Man despoiled, enslaved, betrayed  
 To the sole white Man's lust, husband and wife and maid,  
 Their laughter drowned in tears, their kindness in mad wrath,  
 Their dignity of joy in a foul trance of death,  
 Till at the last they turn and in their anguish rend.  
 Then loud the cry goeth forth, the white man's to each friend:  
 ``Help! Christians, to our help! These black fiends murder us."  
 And the last scene is played in death's red charnel house.  
 The Saxon anger flames. His ships in armament  
 Bear slaughter on their wings. The Earth with fire is rent,  
 And the poor souls misused are wiped from the world's face  
 In one huge imprecation from the Saxon race,  
 In one huge burst of prayer and insolent praise to Thee,  
 Lord God, for Thy high help and proved complicity.  
 Nay Lord, 'tis not a lie, the thing I tell Thee thus.  
 Their bishops in their Churches lead, incredulous,  
 The public thanks profane. They sanctify the sword:  
 ``Te Deum laudamus. Give peace in our time, O Lord."  
 Hast Thou not heard their chaunting? Nay, Thou dost not hear,  
 Or Thou hadst loosed Thy hand like lightning in the clear  
 To smite their ribald lips with palsy, these false priests,  
 These Lords who boast Thine aid at their high civic feasts,  
 The ignoble shouting crowds, the prophets of their Press,  
 Pouring their daily flood of bald self--righteousness,

Their poets who write big of the ``White Burden." Trash!  
The White Man's Burden, Lord, is the burden of his cash.  
--There! Thou hast heard the truth. Thy world, Lord God of Heaven,  
Lieth in the hands of thieves who pillage morn and even.  
And Thou still sleepest on! Nay but Thou needs must hear  
Or abdicate Thy name of High Justiciar  
Henceforward and for ever. It o'erwhelmeth Thee  
With more than temporal shame. Thy silence is a Sea  
Crying through all the spheres in pain and ceasing not  
As blood from out the ground to mark crime's murder spot:  
``There is no hope--no truth. He hath betrayed the trust.  
The Lord God is unjust. The Lord God is unjust."  
[A cry without. This is their cry in Heaven who give Thee service true.  
Arise, Lord, and avenge as was Thy wont to do.

[The Angels re--enter in disorder, weeping.  
The Lord God. What tears be these, my Sons? What ails ye that ye weep?  
Speak, Shepherds of the flock! Ye that have cared my sheep!  
Ye that are charged with Man! Is it as this One saith?  
Is Satan then no liar who loudly witnesseth  
Man's ruin of the World?

The Angel of Pity  
(coming forward). Lord, it is even so.  
Thy Earth is a lost force, Man's lazar--house of woe,  
Undone by his lewd will. We may no longer strive.  
The evil hath prevailed. There is no soul alive  
That shall escape his greed. We spend our days in tears  
Mourning Thy world's lost beauty in the night of years.  
All pity is departed. Each once happy thing  
That on Thy fair Earth went, how fleet of foot or wing,  
How glorious in its strength, how wondrous in design,  
How royal in its raiment tintured opaline,  
How rich in joyous life, the inheritor of forms  
All noble, all of worth, which had survived the storms,  
The chances of decay in the World's living plan  
From the remote fair past when still ignoble Man  
On his four foot--soles went and howled through the lone hills  
In moody bestial wrath, unclassed among Earth's ills:  
Each one of them is doomed. From the deep Central Seas  
To the white Poles, Man ruleth pitiless Lord of these,  
And daily he destroyeth. The great whales he driveth

Beneath the northern ice, and quarter none he giveth,  
Who perish there of wounds in their huge agony.  
He presseth the white bear on the white frozen sea  
And slaughtereth for his pastime. The wise amorous seal  
He flayeth big with young; the walrus cubs that kneel  
But cannot turn his rage, alive he mangleth them,  
Leaveth in breathing heaps, outrooted branch and stem.  
In every land he slayeth. He hath new engines made  
Which no life may withstand, nor in the forest shade  
Nor in the sunlit plain, which wound all from afar,  
The timorous with the valiant, waging his false war,  
Coward, himself unseen. In pity, Lord, look down  
On the blank widowed plains which he hath made his own  
By right of solitude. Where, Lord God, are they now,  
Thy glorious bison herds, Thy ariels white as snow,  
Thy antelopes in troops, the zebras of Thy plain?  
Behold their whitened bones on the dull track of men.  
Thy elephants, Lord, where? For ages thou didst build  
Their frames' capacity, the hide which was their shield  
No thorn might pierce, no sting, no violent tooth assail,  
The tusks which were their levers, the lithe trunk their flail.  
Thou strengthenedst their deep brain. Thou madest them wise to know  
And wiser to ignore, advised, deliberate, slow,  
Conscious of power supreme in right. The manifest token  
Of Thy high will on earth, Thy natural peace unbroken,  
Unbreakable by fear. For ages did they move  
Thus, kings of Thy deep forest swayed by only love.  
Where are they now, Lord God? A fugitive spent few  
Used as Man's living targets by the ignoble crew  
Who boast their coward skill to plant the balls that fly,  
Thy work of all time spoiled, their only use to die  
That these sad clowns may laugh. Nay, Lord, we weep for Thee,  
And spend ourselves in tears for Thy marred majesty.  
Behold, Lord, what we bring--this last proof in our hands,  
Their latest fiendliest spoil from Thy fair tropic lands,  
The birds of all the Earth unwinged to deck the heads  
Of their unseemly women; plumage of such reds  
As not the sunset hath, such purples as no throne,  
Not even in heaven, showeth (hardly, Lord, Thine own),  
Such azures as the sea's, such greens as are in Spring  
The oak trees' tenderest buds of watched--for blossoming,  
Such opalescent pearls as only in Thy skies

The lunar bow revealeth to night's sleep--tired eyes.  
Behold them, Lord of Beauty, Lord of Reverence,  
Lord of Compassion, Thou who metest means to ends,  
Nor madest Thy world fair for less than Thine own fame,  
Behold Thy birds of joy lost, tortured, put to shame  
For these vile strumpets' whim! Arise, or cease to be  
Judge of the quick and dead! These dead wings cry to Thee!  
Arise, Lord, and avenge!

The Angels. We wait upon Thy word.

[The Lord God covereth His face.  
Satan. Thou hearest them, Lord God.

The Lord God. Good Satan, I have heard.  
Thou art more just than I--alas, more just than I.

The Angels. Behold the Lord God weepeth.

The Angel of Pity. What eyes should be dry  
If for a crime eyes weep? This crime transcendeth crime.  
And the Lord God hath pity.

Satan. In His own good time.

The Lord God. Alas, the time is late. I do repent Me sore  
The wrong I did thee, Satan, in those griefs of yore,  
The wrong I did the Earth. Yet is Eternity  
A long day for atonement. Thou thyself shalt be  
My instrument here of wrath to purge this race of Man  
And cast him on Time's dunghill, whence he first began.  
What, Angel, is thy counsel? Shall we unseal again  
The fountains of the heavens, send our outpoured rain,  
And flood him with new waters? Shall it be by fire?  
Shall we embraize the earth in one vast funeral pyre  
By impact of a star? Let loose a sulphurous wind?  
Belch rocks from the Earth's bowels? Shall we strike Man blind  
With an unbearable light? Shall we so shake the hills,  
The plains, that he fall palsied, grind him in the mills  
Of a perpetual hail, importune him with snow,  
Scourge him with noise unceasing, or the glutinous flow  
Of a long pestilent stench? Speak, Satan, all thy thought,

Thou who the traitor knowest. How may he be brought  
Best to annihilation?

Satan. Lord, by none of these,  
Thy floods, Thy flames, Thy storms were puerilities.  
He hath too large a cunning to be taken thus.  
He would outride Thy waves, outblast Thy sulphurous  
Winds with his counter--winds. He liveth on foul air  
As on the breath of heaven. He hath nor thought nor care  
For Thy worst lightning strokes, holding their principle  
Rock--firm in his own hand. All natural powers fulfil  
His brain's omnipotence. He standeth at each point  
Armed for defiant war in harness without joint.  
Though Thou shouldst break the Earth in twain he should not bend.  
Thou needest a force to aid Thee, an ally, a friend,  
A principle of good which shall outwit his guile  
With true white guilelessness, his anger with a smile,  
His force with utter weakness. Only thus, Lord God,  
Shalt Thou regain Thy Earth, a purified abode,  
And rid it of the Human.

The Lord God. And the means? Thy plan  
Needeth a new redemption.

Satan. Ay, but not of Man.  
He is beyond redeeming, or Thy Son had died  
Not wholly to this loss. Who would be crucified  
To--day must choose another, a young fleshly form,  
Free from the simian taint, were it but flower or worm,  
Or limpet of the rock, or grieving nightingale,  
Wherein to preach his gospel. Yet should he prevail,  
If only for truth's sake and that this latest lie  
Should be laid bare to shame, Time's fraud, Humanity.  
Choose Thee an Angel, Lord; it were enough. Thy Son  
Was a price all too great even had the world been won.  
Nor can it be again. An Angel shall suffice  
For Thy new second sending, so Thou guide the choice  
To a more reasoned issue--so Thou leave Mankind  
Henceforth to his sole ways as at his outset, blind  
To all but his own lusts, untutored by Thy grace.  
This is the road, Lord God. I bow before Thy face.  
I make Thee my submission to do all Thy will,



So Thou absolve and pardon.

The Lord God. O incomparable  
Good servant, Satan! Thou art absolved indeed.  
It was thy right to pardon thy God's lack of heed,  
His wrath at thy wise counsel. Nay, thou shamest Me.  
Be thou absolved, good Angel, Ego absolvo te  
Ab omnibus peccatis. Once more be it thy right  
To stand before God's throne for ever in His sight,  
And trusted more than these. Speak, Satan, what thou wilt,  
All shall be granted thee, the glory with the guilt  
Of the Earth lost and won. Who is it thou wouldst send  
Agent and messenger to work to this new end?  
What Angel of them all? I pledge thee My full faith  
It shall be as thou wilt.

Satan. Who goeth must die the death,  
Since death is all life's law, and taste of corporal pain.  
And whoso dieth must die, nor think to live again.

The Lord God. Shall it be Michael? Speak.

Satan. Nay, Lord, nor Gabriel.  
They are Thy servants tried, who love Thy Heaven too well.  
Thou shalt not drive them forth to the wild wastes of Earth.  
What should they do, Lord God, with a terrestrial birth,  
With less than Thy long joys? Nay, rather choose Thee one  
Already marred with grief with Time's disunion,  
One all too sad for Heaven, to whom Eternity  
Is as a charge o'erspent, who hath no fear to die,  
But gladly would lie down and be for aye no more,  
The flotsam of Time's waves upon Death's outer shore,  
Forgotten and forgetting. Grant me, Lord God, this,  
In penance for the past, Death's full forgetfulness.

The Lord God. And thou wouldst be incarnate?

Satan. As the least strong thing,  
The frailest, the most fond, an insect on the wing,  
Which shall prevail by love, by ignorance, by lack  
Of all that Man most trusteth to secure his back,  
To arm his hand with might. What Thy Son dreamed of Man

Will I work out anew as some poor cateran,  
The weakest of the Earth, with only beauty's power  
And Thy good grace to aid, the creature of an hour  
Too fugitive for fight, too frail even far to fly,  
And at the hour's end, Lord, to close my wings and die.  
Such were the new redemption.

The Lord God. Thou good angel! Nay,  
The World were all unworthy such high price to pay.  
I will not have thee die.

Satan. 'Tis not for the World's sake,  
Lord God of Heaven and Earth, that I petition make,  
But for Thy justice foiled. It irketh me to know  
That I have tutored Man against Thee, to this woe,  
And given him sure success. Yet is the World's self good,  
And I would prove it Thee, lest Man's ingratitude  
Should so affect all truth, all honour, all high faith,  
That Thou Thyself, Lord God, shouldst fall a prey to death  
And leave him in dominion. What to me were Heaven  
With this thought unappeased--even thus absolved, forgiven,  
Yet by myself condemned?

The Lord God. Ah, Satan. Thy old pride  
Still lingereth in the clefts. Yet art thou not denied  
Since I have sworn thee faith. Go, thou good messenger,  
And God's peace go with thee. Ho! ye without! Give ear!  
Bow down to the Lord Satan, Our anointed priest,  
The new incarnate Word.

The Angels. All hail!

Michael  
(aside). The Anti--Christ!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Sea-Lavender

Lavender, sea lavender!  
Pale sweet flower how full of her!  
Flower discreet, with your priest's eyes  
Trained in all time's mysteries,  
Yet how chastely calmly sealed!  
Flower of passions unrevealed,  
Stainless eyes, but none the less  
Wise in life's most nakedness,  
With its inward hours of sin,  
Known to thee, and all therein;  
And how soul with soul found might,  
In the watches of the night,  
Cherishing an unseen joy,  
Man with woman, girl with boy,  
Under the sky's multitude,  
Till the pulsings of their blood  
Led them into ways unknown,  
Flesh of flesh and bone of bone  
Clasped in one, till doubt was over,  
And they went forth loved and lover  
Bride and groom to their new home.

See, to--day to you I come,  
Flower of wisdom who know all,  
To your mute confessional,  
Wanting love and wanting her,  
(Lavender, sea lavender!)  
In a world where she is not,  
Mined with plot and counterplot  
Built against our happiness.  
You, who know her most, can guess  
What her thought is far from me,  
What soft wind of memory  
Fans her with a scent of pleasure,  
What sweet song in what sweet measure  
Trilled by birds when day was breaking  
And each tremulous throat awaking  
Strained to make its passion heard  
Louder there than other bird,

While we listened, we too, straining  
Heart to heart, and watched the waning  
Moon fade slowly like a feather  
In the red East, close together,  
Near, how near, who now are far.  
Tell me what her fancies are.  
Does she love still? Does she cherish,  
In the waste of days that perish  
That one dawn, which cannot die?  
Nay, I know it, nor will I  
Doubt of love or doubt of her,  
(Lavender, sea lavender!)  
Since she knows and understands  
That my hands still hold her hands.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# She Shall Not Guess

Even if I died no sound should tell it her.  
Death babbles, but the calm of her dear eyes  
In vain would ask, no tell--tale breath should stir  
The lips still treasuring a thought unwise.  
How vain my life has been in its disguise,  
Left unregarded, her least pensioner,  
Yielding to all, unasking even with sighs  
The dole of hope not Heaven could quite confer.  
--To--day behold me on this page her name  
Over my own inscribing, with no prayer,  
Nor daring even to kneel in my distress.  
What I have written in this candle's flame  
Shrinks ere 'tis finished, and the incensed air  
Bears but betrays it not. She shall not guess.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# Song Of The Desert Lark

Love, love, in vain  
We count the days of Spring.  
Lost is all love's pain,  
Lost the songs we sing.  
Sunshine and Summer rain,  
Winter and Spring again  
Still the years shall bring,  
But we die.

Love, what a noon  
Of happy love was ours!  
Grief came too soon,  
Touched the Autumn flowers,  
Grief and the doubt of death,  
Mixed with the roses' breath.  
Darkly the Winter lowers,  
And we die.

His torch, love, the Sun  
Turns to the stormy West,  
Like a fair dream begun  
Changing to jest.  
Love, while our souls are one,  
Still let us sing the Sun,  
Sing and forget the rest  
And so die.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt





# Tarafa

The tent lines these of Kháula in stone--stricken Tháhmadi.  
See where the fire has touched them, dyed dark as the hands of her.  
'Twas here thy friends consoled thee that day with thee comforting,  
cried; Not of grief, thou faint--heart! Men die not thus easily.  
Ay, here the howdahs passed thee at day--dawn, how royally!  
stood for the Dédi pastures: a white fleet they seemed to thee,  
Ships tall--rigged from Adáuli--of Yámin the build of them--  
wandering wide the night through, to meet at the sunrising.  
Thus climbed they the long wave--lines, their prows set how loftily!  
ploughing the drifted ridges, sand heaped by the sandseers.

Alas for the dark--lipped one, the maid of the topazes,  
hardly yet grown a woman, sweet fruit--picking loiterer!  
A girl, a fawn still fawnless, which browses the thorn--bushes,  
close to the doe--herd feeding, aloof in the long valleys.  
I see her mouth--slit smiling, her teeth,--nay, a camomile  
white on the white sand blooming and moist with the night--showers.  
Sun--steeped it is, pure argent, white all but the lips of her,  
these are too darkly painted to shrink from the sunburning.  
The face of her how joyous, the day's robe enfolding her,  
clean as a thing fresh fashioned, untouched by sad time--fingers.

Enough! New joys now claim me. Ay, mount and away from her!  
Here on my swift--foot camel I laugh at love's bitterness.  
Ship--strong is she, my nága, my stout--timbered road--goer,  
footing the long--lined path--way--a striped cloak--in front of us.  
Steel tempered are her sinews. She runs like an ostrich--hen,  
one which has fled defying the ash--plumed proud lord of her.  
Out--paces she the best--born, shank still on shank following,  
threading the mazes lightly. Ah, what foot shall follow her?  
The spring--long on Kufféyn she has wandered, her kind with her,  
pastured in pleasant places, the rain--watered thyme--valleys,  
Has turned to her herd's calling, aloft in wrath brandishing,  
scared by the thick--furred red thief, that proud tuft the tail of her.  
Her tail sways this and that way--a falcon, the wings of him  
bating her flanks impatient: erect stands the bone of it--  
So lasheth she in anger anon her croup--rider's knee,  
then her own shrunken udder, a drought--withered water--skin.  
Note well her limbs' perfection, her thighs like the elbow--worn

jambes of a city gateway, two smooth shafts of porphyry.  
Her barrel, a stone well--mouth, like bent bows the curves of it,  
caved where the neck--shaft enters, ends in an arched hollow.  
Deep dens are her two arm--pits, a tree--trunk with cavities.  
Bows are her rib--bones bended, her spine the hands holding them.  
Her elbows are twin buckets, the pails of a water--man  
wide--set, the neck between them the strong man who carries them.  
Bridge--like, and Roman--builded! How swore he its architect  
none should leave work or loiter, its key--stone unlaid by them!  
Red chestnut is her chin--tuft, a vast vault the back of her.  
Swift--step her hind--feet follow the path of her fore--footing.  
Her legs are a cord twisted. Towards them the arms of her  
slant from the shoulders outward, a tent--roof the slope of them.  
So sways she, the strong--skulled one, and lightly her shoulder blades  
rise from her spine alternate, arhyme with the march of her.  
Like rain--pools in the smooth rock, so, flecking the sides of her,  
white stand the girth--marks, witness once of the sores on them.  
Her neck, how tall, how proud--set! Behold her! She raises it  
high as in ships of Díjleh the point of a stern--rudder.  
Her head--piece a stout anvil, and, joined to it hardily  
sharp as a file the neck--ridge, fixed as a vice to it.  
Her jowl a Syrian parchment, clean vellum the lip of her,  
smooth as a hide of Yémen, no skin--crease nor fold in it.  
Her eyes two mirrors shining, her bent brows the shade of them, pitted with  
deep--set hollows, as rock--holes for rain--water.  
Eyes dark--rimmed, pure of dust--stains. You gaze in the depths of them as in a  
wild cow's wide eyes, scared for the calf of her.  
Ears fearful of the night--sounds, the whispers, the murmurings  
caught in the darkness passing--night--day: they can rest never.  
Their thorn--tips tell her lineage, a wild bull's of Háumala  
raging alone forsaken; her breeding you read in them.  
Heart watchful of strange dangers, yet stout in the face of them.  
Firm as a test--stone standing where cleft lie the base pebbles.  
Lip slit, nose pierced for nose--ring, how slender its cartilage!  
Nobly she lowers it running and stretched to the front of her.  
I strike at her, my nága: I force her: I hurry her,  
while in our path the false--lights lure us to follow them.  
The gait of her how rhythmic! She sways like a dancing--girl,  
one with the white skirts trailing, who bends to the lord of her.  
Obedient to your riding, she slackens her outrunning,  
watches the hide--thong twisted, the speed that you need of her.  
Her head by your hand close held, your knee--crutch how near to it!

Then with her fore--arms swimming, an ostrich, she flies with you.

Thus rode I, and thus spake he, the friend of my tear--sheddings:  
O for the wit to cure thee, but and my own sorrows!  
His soul within him trembled; it seemed to his hardihood  
death and a sure destruction, though far we from roadfarers.  
For which of us is valiant? When men speak of true valour,  
I feel my own the name named. Straight am I roused by it.  
No recreant I, my tent--ridge I hide from no enemy.  
Nor in the far hills build it who bring men a swift succour.  
The hand that seeks shall find me. I stand at the gatherings.  
Ay, where men tap the wine--skin, 'tis there they shall speak with me.  
What day the tribes assemble, behold me conspicuous,  
sitting as fits my lineage, nor go I in fear of them.  
Beside me my companions, bright stars of nobility.  
Dyed is her robe with saffron the girl who pours out to us.  
O sweet is her shirt's neck--slit, set wide to the eyes of us.  
Soft is the thing it hides there. We bade her: Now, sing to us.  
Ay sing to us: we prayed her. And she, with monotony  
striking a low note slowly, chaunted unchangingly.  
O strange it was that cadence: it came back the wail of it,  
grave as a mother's grieving the one son new--slain from her.

Thus sang she. And I spared not the full cups of revelry,  
not till my spoil was wasted, my whole wealth's inheritance.  
Then left me they that loved me. Then shunned me my tribe--fellows.  
Sat I alone forsaken, a mange--stricken male camel.  
Nathless the poor showed pity, the sons of Earth's particles,  
these and the alien tent--lords, the far chiefs befriended me.  
You only did revile me. Yet, say, ye philosophers,  
was that same wealth eternal I squandered in feasting you?  
Could all you my fate hinder? Friends, run we ahead of it,  
rather our lives enjoying, since Time will not wait for us.  
And, truly, but for three things in youth's day of vanity,  
fain would I see them round me the friends at my deathbedding,  
As first: to outstrip the sour ones, be first at the winebibbing,  
ay, at the blink of day--dawn when mixed the cup foams for me;  
And next, to ride their champion, who none have to succour them,  
fierce on my steed, the led one, a wolf roused and thirst--stricken;  
And third, to lie the day--long, while wild clouds are wildering,  
close in her tent of goat's hair, the dearest beloved of me.  
O noble she, a tree--stem unpruned in her maidenhood,

tall as a branch of Khírwa, where men hang their ornaments.  
'Tis thus I slake my soul's rage, the life--thirst so wild in me.  
If we two died to--morrow, think, which would go thirstier?  
For lo, his grave the miser's! Lo, next it the prodigal's!  
Both are alike, scant favour to hoarder or squanderer.  
'Neath mounds of earth the twain lie, a low stone atop of them,  
heavy and broad and shapeless, with new slabs o'erlaying it.  
Death is no subtle chooser. He takes all, the free--givers,  
ay, and the rogues close--fisted, the fast--handed goldhidiers.  
And life's heap lies unguarded. The night--thieves make spoil of it.  
All that these leave the day--thieves straightway come plundering.  
Nay, by thy life--I swear it, though fast fly the heels of him,  
Death has a lead--rope round him, loose though it seem to you.

Ha! How is this? My kinsman? my fool--cousin Máleki?  
Daily, as I draw near him, he turns his mad back on me.  
He frowns I know not wherefore. He flouts me, as once with them  
Kurt, in the face of all men, flouted and jibed at me.  
His help he has denied me; and, truly, our brotherhood  
tried in the fire of asking lies dead in love's sepulchre.  
My word his words discredit. Yet all I for Mábadi  
asked was a poor assistance to gather his lost camels,  
I who hold fast to kinship. I swear by the luck of thee,  
when they shall want hard riding, that day they shall fawn on me,  
What day their tribes need succour, when loudly their womenfolk  
cry from his hand the oppressor's to hands that are mightier.  
Be but their honour tainted, I straight will pour out for them  
death as from brimming cisterns, nor ask for an argument.  
They rail at and revile me, who know me no ill--doer;  
me, who have borne their burdens, cast would they out from them.  
Yet, had my friend been other, this Málek of larger soul,  
long had my pain been ended, a respiting found for me.  
Shame on him for his baseness. His black hand would strangle me,  
whether I thanked or sued him, or turned but my back on him.  
O cruel is the sword--stroke: it bites with an Indian edge:  
yet is their temper keener, the clowns I call kin to me.  
Then leave me to my own ways, my tent set in Dárghadi,  
far from the eyes of all men, and earn thee my gratitude.  
Had he, the Lord, so willed it, my name had been Kháldi,  
or had he willed it Ámer, or Káis, or Márthadi.  
Wealth had been mine and increase, ay, all that men most covet,  
sons as a gift of heaven, a proud--lined posterity.

Yet see me a man subtle, one lithe--souled and lithe--bodied,  
quick as a snake for wounding, whose head is a hurt to them.  
The oath my tongue has sworn to is this, to keep close to me  
ever my sword--blade loosened; of Indies the edge of it.  
Such blade, if I take vengeance and rise up and smite with it,  
needs not a second down--stroke; I wield me no wood--chopper.  
My sword is my true brother. It grudges no blood--spilling.  
Called on to spare, it answers: My lord alone holdeth me.  
Thus was I when men armed them and rushed to the battle--field:  
grasped I my sword--hilt foremost, nor feared what fate doomed for me.

Herds knelt, their necks stretched earth--long. How scared them the eyes of me,  
me with my sword drawn marching, its sheath cast away from me.  
There passed a strong fair nága, a full--uddered milch--camel,  
joy of her lord, the gray--beard, a hot man, though time--troubled.  
He shouted when she fell there, her stout sinews houghed by me:  
Man, art thou blind who seest not thy sword hath done robbery?  
He spake, and to his friends turned: Behold him, this wine--bibber!  
What is his rage against us, his wild words, his drinkfolly?  
Yet paused: Nay, give him wide room and leave it to profit him: herd  
we the scared ones rather, lest more he should slay of them.  
Then fell the maids aroasting its fair flesh the foal of her,  
nor of the fat denied us, the whole hump our prize of it.  
We cast the arrows gaily, the dun shafts, the fire--hardened:  
each time the holder held them, straightway I won with them.

When I am dead, speak kindly, thou daughter of Mábadi:  
rend for my sake thy garments as one worth the love of thee.  
Nor count me with the lewd folk, the night--knives, the roysterers,  
men with nor wit nor wisdom nor will to do weightily,  
Men slow to deeds of virtue, men swift but in ill--doing,  
men by the brave held lightly, with spread palms and brow--knitting.  
For, had I been a weakling, know well, their mad hate of me  
long had been my destruction, their blind wrath my butchery.  
Only it wards me from them the fear of my hand's valour,  
this, and my faith untainted, my fame too of ancestry.  
Once on a time I bound me with vows, on the battlefield  
ever to guard the weak posts, points where the foe threatened,  
Points where the bravest faltered, where pale men stood panic--struck,  
where they the strong--hearts trembled, faint through the fear in them.  
Nay, by thy life, I fear not. I hold not time weariness;  
neither hath day distressed me, nor night what it brought to me.

Because I see Death spares none. It smites with an even hand,  
bows not to names exalted, nor knows it men's dignities;  
Because with Death behind me, my flight can avail me not,  
neither can I outwit him, he lying in wait for me.  
Because if one be proved vain by those who seek aid of him,  
helpless to hurt the harmful, better he perished.  
The days to come, what are they? A handful, a borrowing:  
vain is the thing thou fearest. To--day is the life of thee.  
And death is as a well--spring; to it men pass and pass:  
near them is each to--morrow; near them was yesterday.  
Only shall Age, the slow--foot, arraign thee of ignorance:  
only shall One bring tidings, when least thou desirest him,  
One who is hard to deal with, of whom thou art ransomer  
neither for pay nor raiment, nor madest thou tryst with him.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Broken Pitcher

Accursed be the hour of that sad day  
The careless potter put his hand to thee,  
And dared to fashion out of common clay  
So pure a shape as thou didst seem to me.

An idle boy, when vintage was begun,  
I passed and saw thy beauty for my sin,  
And poured unheedingly till it was done  
The red wine of my love's first gathering in.

And thou, ah! thou didst look at me and smile  
To see me give with such ungrudging hand,  
As taking all to thy dear heart, the while  
It only fell upon the thirsty sand.

Sad pitcher, thou wast broken at the well,  
Ere yet the shepherd's lip had tasted thine.  
A god had lost in thee his hydromel,  
As I have wasted my poor wealth of wine.

Yet, wherefore wast thou made so fair a thing?  
Or why of clay, whose fabric rightly were  
Of finest gold, new--fashioned for a king,  
And framed by some divine artificer?

I will not curse thee, thou poor shape of clay,  
That thou art other than thou seemed to be,  
Yet I will break thee, that no passer may  
Unthinking break another heart on thee.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Camel-Rider

There is no thing in all the world but love,  
No jubilant thing of sun or shade worth one sad tear.  
Why dost thou ask my lips to fashion songs  
Other than this, my song of love to thee?

See where I lie and pluck the thorns of grief,  
Dust on my head and fire, as one who mourns his slain.  
Are they not slain, my treasures of dear peace?  
This their red burial is, sand heaped on sand.

Here came I in the morning of my joys.  
Before the dawn was born, through the dark downs I rode.  
The low stars led me on as with a voice,  
Stars of the scorpion's tail in the deep South.

Sighing I came, and scattering wide the sand.  
No need had I to urge her speed with hand or heel,  
The creature I bestrode. She knew my haste,  
And knew the road I sought, the road to thee.

Jangling her bells aloud in wantonness,  
And sighing soft, she too, her sighs to my soul's sighs.  
Behind us the wind followed thick with scents  
Of incense blossoms and the dews of night.

The thorn trees caught at us with their crook'd hands;  
The hills in blackness hemmed us in and hid the road;  
The spectres of the desert howled and warned;  
I heeded nothing of their words of woe.

Thus till the dawn I sped in my desire,  
Breasting the ridges, slope on slope, till morning broke;  
And lo! the sun revealed to me no sign,  
And lo! the day was widowed of my hope.

Where are the tents of pleasure and dear love,  
Set in the Vale of Thyme, where winds in Spring are fain?  
The highways of the valley, where they stood  
Strong in their flocks, are there. But where are they?



The plain was dumb, as emptied of all voice;  
No bleat of herds, no camels roaring far below  
Told of their presence in the pastures void,  
Of the waste places which had been their homes.

I climbed down from my watch--tower of the rocks,  
To where the tamarisks grow, and the dwarf palms, alarmed.  
I called them with my voice, as the deer calls,  
Whose young the wolves have hunted from their place.

I sought them in the foldings of the hill,  
In the deep hollows shut with rocks, where no winds blow.  
I sought their footstep under the tall cliffs,  
Shut from the storms, where the first lambs are born.

The tamarisk boughs had blossomed in the night,  
And the white broom which bees had found, the wild bees' brood.  
But no dear signal told me of their life,  
No spray was torn in all that world of flowers.

Where are the tents of pleasure and dear love,  
For which my soul took ease for its delight in Spring,  
The black tents of her people beautiful  
Beyond the beauty of the sons of kings?

The wind of war has swept them from their place,  
Scattering them wide as quails, whom the hawk's hate pursues;  
The terror of the sword importunate  
Was at their backs, nor spared them as they flew.

The summer wind has passed upon their fields;  
The rain has purged their hearth--stones, and made smooth their floors;  
Low in the valley lie their broken spears,  
And the white bones which are their tale forlorn.

Where are the sons of Saba in the South,  
The men of mirth and pride to whom my songs were sung,  
The kinsmen of her soul who is my soul,  
The brethren of her beauty whom I love?

She mounted her tall camel in the waste,

Loading it high for flight with her most precious things;  
She went forth weeping in the wilderness,  
Alone with fear on that far night of ill.

She fled mistrusting, as the wild roe flees,  
Turning her eyes behind her, while fear fled before;  
No other refuge knew she than her speed,  
And the black land that lies where night is born.

Under what canopy of sulphurous heaven,  
Dark with the thunderclouds unloosing their mad tongues,  
Didst thou lie down aweary of thy burden,  
In that dread place of silence thou hadst won?

Close to what shelter of what naked rocks,  
Carved with what names of terror of what kings of old,  
Near to what monstrous shapes unmerciful,  
Watching thy death, didst thou give up thy soul?

Or dost thou live by some forgotten well,  
Waiting thy day of ransom to return and smile,  
As the birds come when Spring is in the heaven,  
And dost thou watch me near while I am blind?

Blind in my tears, because I only weep,  
Kindling my soul to fire because I mourn my slain,  
My kindred slain, and thee, and my dear peace,  
Making their burial thus, sand heaped on sand.

For see, there nothing is in all the world  
But only love worth any strife or song or tear.  
Ask me not then to sing or fashion songs  
Other than this, my song of love to thee.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Canon Of Aughrim

You ask me of English honour, whether your Nation is just?  
Justice for us is a word divine, a name we revere,  
Alas, no more than a name, a thing laid by in the dust.  
The world shall know it again, but not in this month or year.

Honour? Oh no, you profane it. Justice? What words! What deeds!  
Look at the suppliant Earth with its living burden of men.  
Here and to Hindostan the nations and kings and creeds  
Praise your name as a god's, the god of their children slain.

Which of us doubts your justice? It is not here in the West,  
After six hundred years of pitiless legal war,  
The sons of our soil are in doubt. They know, who have borne it, best:  
The world is famished for justice. You give us a stone, your law.

These are its fruits. Yet, think you, the Ireland where men weep  
Once was a jubilant land and dear to the Saints of God.  
All you have made it to--day is a hell to conquer and keep,  
Yours by the right of the strongest hand, the right of the rod.

History tells the story in signs deep writ on the soil,  
Plain and clear in indelible type both for fools and wise.  
Here is no need of books, of any expositor's coil.  
He who runs may read, and he may weep who has eyes.

This is the plain of Aughrim, renowned in our Irish story  
Because of the blood that was shed, the last in arms by our sons,  
A fight in battle array, with more of grief than of glory,  
Where as a Nation we died to dirge of your English guns.

So the Chroniclers tell us, and turn in silence their page,  
Ending the fighting here. I tell you the Chroniclers lie.  
Spite of the hush of the dead, the battle from age to age  
Flames on still through the land, and still at men's hands men die.

Look! I will show you the footsteps of those who have died at your hand,  
Done to death by your law, alas, and not by the sword,  
Only their work remaining, a nations's track in the sand,  
Ridge and furrow of ancient fields half hid in the sward.

Step by step they retreated. You fenced them out with your Pale,  
Back from township and city and cornland fair by the Sea.  
Waterford, Youghal and Wexford you took and the Golden Vale.  
Tears were their portion assigned: for you their demesnes in fee.

Back to the forest and bog. They shouldered their spades like men,  
Fought with the wolf and the rock and the hunger which holds the hill.  
Still new homesteads arose where fever lurked in the fen,  
Still your law was a sword that hunted and dogged them still.

Magistrate, landlord, bailiff, process--server and spy,  
These were the dogs of your pack, which scented the land's increase.  
Vainly, like hares, they lay in the forms they had fashioned to die.  
Justice hunted them forth by the hand of the Justice of Peace.

Look at it closer, thus, and shading your eyes with your hand,  
Far as a bird could reach, to the utmost edge of the plain,  
What do you see but grass! And what do you understand?  
Cattle that graze on the grass.--Alas, you have looked in vain.

See with my eyes. They are older than yours, but more keen in their love.  
See what I saw as a boy in the fields, as a priest by the ways.  
See what I saw in anger with angels watching above  
Hiding their faces for shame in the day of the terrible days.

Horsemen and footmen and guns. They were here. I have seen them, though  
some  
Say that two hundred years have passed since the battle was stilled.  
Ay, and the cry of the wounded, drowned by the beat of the drum.  
Did I not hear with my ears how it rose like the wail of a child?

I was a student then, a boy, in the days now forgotten,  
When for our school--house the chapel must serve, for our master the priest.  
Many a Latin theme have I scrawled on the altar rails rotten,  
Thinking no more of the house of God than the house of the least.

Yet we were saints in Aughrim. An Eden the plain then stood,  
Covered with gardens round, a happy and holy place,  
Rich in the generations of those who had shed their blood,  
Bound to their faith by the martyr's bond and the power of grace.

They do us wrong who affirm the Irish people are sad.  
Sad we are in the lands afar, but not in our home.  
Oh, if you knew the gladness with which our people are glad,  
Well might you grieve for your own, the poor in your towns of doom.

Here, God knows it, we hunger. But hunger, a little, is well,  
Man with full stomach is proud, his heart is shut to the poor.  
Well, too, is persecution, since thus through its sting we rebel,  
Clinging yet more to our love and our hate in the homes we adore.

Mine is a mission of peace, to save men's souls in the world,  
Not to make converts to Hell, for Ireland's sake even, you say.  
Why should I preach of rebellion, and hatred, words impotent hurled  
Each like a spear from the lips to strike whom it lists in the fray?

Hark. You shall hear it. This parish was mine. I remember it all  
Tilled in squares, like a chess--board, each house and holding apart.  
Down where the nettles grow you may mark the line of the wall  
Bounding the chapel field where our dead lie heart on heart.

It was not the famine killed them. God knows in that evil year  
He pressed us a little hard, but he spared us our lives and joy.  
Only the old and weak were taken. The rest stood clear,  
Quit of their debt to Death. God struck, but not to destroy.

The wolves of the world were fiercer. The wolves of the world to--day  
Go in sheep's clothing all, with names that the world applauds.  
Nobody now draws sword or spear with intent to slay.  
Death is done with a sigh, and mercy tightens the cords.

It was a woman did it. Her father, the lawyer Blake,  
Purchased the land for a song,--some say, or less, for a debt  
Owed by the former Lord, a broken spendthrift and rake--  
And left it hers when he died with all he could grip or get.

Timothy Blake was not loved. He had too much in his heart  
Of the law of tenures, for love. No word men spoke in his praise.  
Yet, in his lawyer's way, and deeds and titles apart,  
All were allowed to live who paid their rent in his days.

Little Miss Blake was his daughter. A pink--faced school--girl she came  
First from Dublin city to live in her father's house,

She and her dogs and horses, unconscious of shame or blame.  
Who would have guessed her cruel with manners meek as a mouse?

Nothing in truth was further, or further seemed, from her heart,  
Set as it was on pleasure and undisturbed with pain,  
So she might ride with the hounds when winter brought round its sport,  
Or angle a trout from the river, than war with her fellow men.

She was fastidious, too, with her English education,  
And pained at want and squalor, things hard she should understand.  
The sight of poverty touched the sense of what was due to her station,  
And still in her earlier years she gave with an open hand.

The village was poor to look at, a row of houses, no more,  
With just four walls and the thatch in holes where the fowls passed through.  
A shame to us all, she averred, and her, so near to her door,  
She sent us for slates to the quarry and bade us build them anew.

The Chapel, too, was unsightly. A Protestant she, and yet  
Decency needs must be in a house of prayer, she said.  
Perched on a rising ground in sight of her windows set,  
Its shapeless walls were her grief. She built it a new facade.

What was it changed her heart? God knows. I know not. Some say  
She set her fancy on one above her in rank and pride.  
Young Lord Clair at the Castle had danced with her. Then one day  
Dancing and she were at odds. He had taken an English bride.

This, or it may be less, a foolish word from a friend,  
A jest repeated to ears already wounded and sore,  
A pang of jealousy roused for the sake of some private end,  
Or only the greed of gain, of more begotten of more.

These were the days of plenty, of prices rising, men thought  
Still to rise for ever, and all were eager to buy.  
Landlord with landlord vied, and tenant with tenant bought.  
Riches make selfish souls, and gain has an evil eye.

Oh! the economist fraud, with wealth of nations for text,  
How has it robbed the poor of their one poor right to live!  
Only the fields grow fat. The men that delve them are vexed,  
Scourged with the horse--leech cry of the daughter of hunger, ``give."

Why should I blame this woman? She practised what all men preach,  
Duty to Man a little, but much to herself and land.  
She made two blades of grass to grow in the place of each.  
She took two guineas for one. What more would your laws demand?

If in her way men died, Economy's rules are stern,  
Stern as the floods and droughts, the tempests and fires and seas.  
Men but cumber the land whose labour is weak to earn  
More than their board and bed; much cattle were worthy these.

So those argued who served her. What wonder if she too grew  
Hard in her dealings around, and grudged their lands to the poor?  
Cary, her agent, died. The day she engaged the new,  
Grief stepped into the village, and Death sat down at the door.

Rent? Who speaks of the rent? We Irish who till the soil,  
Are ever ready to pay the tribute your laws impose;  
You, the conquering race, have portioned to each his toil;  
We, the conquered, bring the ransom due to our woes.

Here is no case of justice, of just debts made or unjust.  
Contracts 'twixt freemen are, not here, where but one is free.  
No man argues of right, who pays the toll that he must;  
Life is dear to all, and rent is the leave to be.

No. None argued of rent. Each paid, or he could not pay,  
Much as the seasons willed, in fatness or hungry years.  
Blake's old rental was high. She raised it, and none said nay;  
Then she raised it again, and made a claim for arrears.

Joyce was her agent now. The rules of Charity bind  
Somewhat my tongue in speech, for even truths wrongs endured;  
All I will say is this, in Joyce you might see combined,  
Three worst things, a lawyer, money--lender, and steward.

His was the triple method, to harass by legal plan,  
Ruin by note of hand, and serve with the Crown's decree;  
One by one in his snare he trapped the poor to a man,  
Left them bare in the street, and turned in their doors the key.

How many Christian hearts have I seen thus flouted with scorn,

Turned adrift on the world in the prime of life and their pride!  
How many lips have I heard curse out the day they were born,  
Souls absolved in their anger to die on the bare hill--side!

All for Miss Blake and the law, and Joyce's profit on fees!  
All for Imperial order, to see the Queen's writ run!  
All for the honour of England, mistress of half the seas!  
All in the name of justice, the purest under the sun!

Pitiful God of justice! You speak of order and law?  
Order! the law of blood which sets the stoat on the track;  
Law! the order of death which has glutted the soldier's maw,  
When Hell lies drunk in a city the morning after a sack.

Order and law and justice! All noble things, but defiled,  
Made to stink in men's nostrils, a carrion refuse of good,  
Till God Himself is debased in the work of His hands beguiled,  
And good and bad are as one in the mind of the multitude.

All in vain we argue who preach submission to Heaven.  
Even to us who know it, such mercy is hard to find.  
How then submission to Man by whom no quarter is given?  
Vainly and thrice in vain. That nut has too hard a rind.

Then men rise in their anger. Another justice they seek.  
Maxims of right prevail traced down from a pagan age;  
These take the place of the gospel your laws have robbed from the weak.  
Who shall convince them of wrong, or turn the worm from his rage?

Which are the first fruits of freedom? Truth, Courage, Compassion. A man,  
Nursed from his childhood in right and guarded close by the law,  
Why should he trifle with virtue or doubt to do what he can  
Fearless in sight of the world, his life without failure or flaw?

All things come to the strong, power, riches, fair living, repute,  
Conscience of worth and of virtue, plain speaking and dealing as plain.  
Oh, fair words are easy to speak when the world spreads its pearls at your foot.  
Free is humanity's fetter with pleasure gilding the chain.

The Englishman's word, who shall doubt it? The poor Celt, truly, he lies.  
Fie on his houghing of cattle, his blunderbuss fired from the hedge!  
Witness swears falsely to murder. You throw up your innocent eyes,



Rightly, for murder and lying set honest teeth upon edge.

Yet, mark how circumstance alters. You plant your Englishman down  
Strange on the banks of the Nile or Niger to shift with new life.  
All things are stronger than he. He fears men's fanatic frown,  
Straightway fawns at their knees, his fingers clutching the knife.

He is kindly. Yet, think you he spares them, the servant, the cattle, the child,  
The wife he has wedded in falsehood, the Prince who clothed him in gold?  
Out on such womanly scruples! He boasts the friends he beguiled,  
The poisoned wells on his track, the poor slaves starved on the wold.

This is necessity's law? Ay, truly. Necessity teaches  
Sternly the Devil's truth, and he that hath ears may hear.  
Only the grace of God interprets the wrong Hell preaches.  
Only the patience of perfect love can cast out fear.

Joyce was found on his doorstep, stone dead, one Sunday morning,  
Shot by an unknown hand, a charge of slugs in his chest,  
The blow had fallen unheard, without either sign or warning,  
Save for the notice--to--quit pinned to the dead man's breast.

Oh, that terrible morning of grief to angels and men!  
I who knew, none better, the truth that until that day  
Sin in its larger sense was hardly within the ken  
Of these poor peasant souls, what dared I devise or say?

A deed of terror? Yes. A murder? Yes. A foul crime?  
True, but a signal of battle, the first blood spilt in a war.  
Who could foresee the sequence of wrong to the end of time?  
Who would listen to peace with the red flag waving afar?

War, war, war, was the issue in all men's minds as they stood  
Watching the constable force paraded that afternoon,  
War of the ancient sort when men lay wait in a wood  
Spying the Norman camps low crouched in a waning moon.

Group with group they whispered. Their eyes looked strangely and new,  
Lit with the guilty knowledge as thoughts of the dead would pass.  
It was a pitiful sight to mark how the anger grew  
In souls that had prayed as children that very morning at Mass.

The answer to Joyce's murder was swift. Two strokes of the pen,  
Set by Miss Blake's fair hand on parchment white as her face,  
Gave what remained of the parish, lands, tenements, chapel, and mill,  
All to a Scotch stock farmer to hold on a single lease.

Here stands the story written. The parchment itself could show  
Hardly more of their death than this great desolate plain.  
The poor potato trenches they dug, how greenly they grow!  
Grass, all grass for ever, the graves of our women and men!

And did all die? You ask it. I ask you in turn, ``What is death?"  
Death by disease or battle, with gaping wounds for a door:  
Through it the prisoned soul runs forth with the prisoned breath,  
And what is lost for the one the other gains it and more:

This is the death of the body. Some died thus, fortunate ones,  
Here and there a woman taken in labour of birth,  
Here and there a man struck down on his cold hearth stones,  
Here and there a child, or grey beard bent to the earth.

Heaven in pity took them. Their innocent souls received  
All that the Church can give of help on the onward way.  
Here as they lived they died, believing all they believed.  
Here their bodies rest, clay kneaded with kindred clay.

Every eviction in Ireland brings one such physical loss,  
Weak ones left by the road, grief touching the feeble brain.  
None of us mourn such dead who hold the creed of the Cross,  
Counting as sure their certain hope of eternal gain.

Not for these is my anger. Love grieves, but the cicatrice closes,  
Ending in peace of heart. The dead are doubly our own.  
But what of that other death for which love strews no roses,  
Death of the altered soul, lost, perished, forever gone?

Deep in the gulf of your cities they lie, the poor lorn creatures,  
Made in God's image once, His folded innocent sheep,  
Now misused and profaned, in speech and form and features  
Living like devils and dying like dogs in incestuous sleep.

Seek them where I have found them, in New York, Liverpool, London,  
Cursing and cursed of all, a pustulous human growth,

These same Irish children God made for His glory, undone,  
Ay, and undoing your law, while black Hell gapes for you both.

There! You asked for the truth. You have it plain from my lips.  
Scientists tell us the world has no direction or plan,  
Only a struggle of Nature, each beast and nation at grips,  
Still the fittest surviving and he the fittest who can.

You are that fittest, the lion to--day in your strength. To--morrow?  
Well, who knows what other will come with a wider jaw?  
Justly, you say, the nations give place and yield in their sorrow;  
Vainly, you say, Christ died in face of the natural law.

Would you have me believe it? I tell you, if it were so,  
If I were not what I am, a priest instructed in grace,  
Knowing the truth of the Gospel and holding firm what I know,  
Where should I be at this hour? Nay, surely not in this place.

Granted your creed of destruction, your right of the strong to devour,  
Granted your law of Nature that he shall live who can kill,  
Find me the law of submission shall stay the weak in his hour,  
His single hour of vengeance, or set a rein on his will.

Where should I be, even I? Not surely here with my tears,  
Weeping an old man's grief at wrongs which are past regret,  
Healing here a little and helping there with my prayers,  
All for the sake of Nature, to fill the teeth she has whet!

Not a priest at Aughrim. My place would be down with those  
Poor lost souls of Ireland, who, loving her far away,  
Not too wisely but well, deep down in your docks lie close,  
Waiting the night of ruin which needs must follow your day.

England's lion is fat. Full--bellied with fortune he sleeps;  
Why disturb his slumber with ominous news of ill?  
Softly from under his paw the prey he has mangled creeps,  
Deals his blow in the back, and all the carcass is still.

Logic and counter--logic. You talk of cowardice rarely!  
Dynamite under your ships might make even your cheek white.  
Tracherous? Oh, you are jesting. The natural law works fairly,  
He that has cunning shall live, and he that has poison bite.

Only I dare not believe it. I hold the justice of Heaven  
Larger than all the science, and welled from a purer fount;  
God as greater than Nature, His law than the wonders seven,  
Darwin's sermon on Man redeemed by that on the Mount.

Thus spoke the Canon of Aughrim, and raised in silence his hands,  
Seeming to bless the battle his eyes had seen on the plain.  
Order and law, he murmured, a Nation's track in the sands,  
Ridge and furrow of grass, the graves of our women and men.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Court Of Penance

Behold the Court of Penance. Four gaunt walls  
Shutting out all things but the upper heaven.  
Stone flags for floor, where daily from their stalls  
The human cattle in a circle driven  
Tread down their pathway to a mire uneven,  
Pale--faced, sad--eyed, and mute as funerals.  
Woe to the wretch whose weakness unforgiven  
Falters a moment in the track or falls!

Yet is there consolation. Overhead  
The pigeons build and the loud jackdaws talk,  
And once in the wind's eye, like a ship moored,  
A sea--gull flew and I was comforted.  
Even here the heavens declare thy glory, Lord,  
And the free firmament thy handiwork.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Days Of Our Youth

These are the days of our youth, our days of glory and honour.  
Pleasure begotten of strength is ours, the sword in our hand.  
Wisdom bends to our will, we lead captivity captive,  
Kings of our lives and love, receiving gifts from men.

Why do I speak of wisdom? The prize is not for the wisest.  
Reason, the dull ox, ploughs a soil which no joy shall reap.  
Folly is fleeter far 'neath the heel of the fearless rider,  
Folly the bare--backed steed we bestride, the steed of the plains.

Mine is a lofty ambition, as wide as the world I covet.  
Vast is the empire I claim for thee, thou spouse of my soul.  
Show me new lands to win, and, by God in heaven, I swear it:  
These shall be mine and thine to--night for all time to hold.

Time is our slave and Fortune's. We need not years for fruition.  
Here in our hands behold a key which unlocks the world.  
Each new day is a life. For us there is no to--morrow.  
Love no yesterday knows nor we, but to--day is ours.

See, what a wealth I bring thee, what treasure of myrrh and spices!  
Every kingdom of Earth have I sacked to procure thee gold.  
All the knowledge that fools have learned at the feet of women,  
All that the wise have been taught in tears for thy sake I know.

Give thyself up to Love. There is naught divine but madness.  
Give thyself up to me Love's priest in his inmost shrine.  
Shut thy eyes on the world, sublime in thy abnegation.  
Only the wise who have bowed their will shall receive the prize.

Shut thy eyes on the light. I have nobler dreams to read thee,  
Here in the shades of this darkened room, than the sun can show.  
Is there not light in my eyes to--night more light than the dreamlight?  
See it breaks in streams on thy face; it illumines thy soul.

Let me persuade thy weakness. I sue thee here with my reason.  
Let me convince thee of love with my lips till thou cease to think.  
Let me enfold thee with words more sweet than the prayers of angels,  
Speaking thus with my hand on thy heart till it cease to beat.

Let me assuage thy grief with laughter, thy fear with kisses.  
Let me cajole thy doubts with surprise, thy pride with tears.  
Let me outshame the shame of thy face, outblush thy blushes.  
Let me teach thee what Love can dare and yet dream no shame.

Let me uncover thy bosom and prove to thee its glory.  
Let me preach to thee of thyself the live night long.  
Let me chaunt new hymns to thy praise as I kneel and worship,  
Rising still like a god from my knees from eve till morn.

Let me discourse of love with my hands and lips and bosom.  
Let me explain with my limbs the joy that a soul can feel.  
Let me unveil to thy bodily sense thy god incarnate  
Taking flesh in a visible form for thy body's need.

Lo, on the mount of Love, the holiest place of holies,  
Incense and prayer and the people's shout and the fires have risen.  
Love descends on the feast. He mounts the pyre in silence,  
Victim and priest and god in one, to thy dreams revealed.

There, the rite is accomplished. Whatever Love knows thou knowest.  
Sudden the victim staggers and falls. In the dust it lies.  
See the hot blood flows for thy sake, it o'erflows the altar.  
Dost thou not feel it stream in thy veins? It still lives in thee.

These are the days of our youth, the days of our dominion.  
All the rest is a dream of death and a doubtful thing.  
Here we at least have lived, for love is all life's wisdom,  
Joy of joys for an hour to--day; then away, farewell!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Death Of The Rose

Ah! life, dear life, thy summer days have flown  
Swiftly yet all too late, for they did wither.  
Joy should be joy for one short hour alone,  
Or it will lose its loveliness for ever.

I did not spare to use the cruel knife,  
But cut the rose as soon as it was day,  
And gave it to my love. Its little life  
Passed, like a sigh, from Nature's breast away.

Full--hearted flower, thou didst not shrink nor flee  
When the steel touched thee. No sad memories  
Made what thou knew not terrible to thee,  
And death came on thee like a sad surprise.

Too happy flower! I would my love had died  
At unawares, by such a death as thine.  
I should have slain my love in its full pride,  
So had it lived and been for ever mine,

A treasure for all joy to ponder on,  
Laid up for aye in old Time's palaces,  
A ``thing of beauty" which my soul had won,  
And death had made undying with a kiss.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Deeds That Might Have Been

There are wrongs done in the fair face of heaven  
Which cry aloud for vengeance, and shall cry;  
Loves beautiful in strength whose wit has striven  
Vainly with loss and man's inconstancy;  
Dead children's faces watched by souls that die;  
Pure streams defiled; fair forests idly riven;  
A nation suppliant in its agony  
Calling on justice, and no help is given.

All these are pitiful. Yet, after tears,  
Come rest and sleep and calm forgetfulness,  
And God's good providence consoles the years.  
Only the coward heart which did not guess,  
The dreamer of brave deeds that might have been,  
Shall cureless ache with wounds for ever green.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Desert Wind

I went with happy heart (how happy!) a while since  
Behind my camel flocks,  
Piping all day where the Nile pastures end  
And the white sand begins  
Among the rocks.  
The wheeling eagles mocked me high there from the skies,  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

I saw a lady pass, (what lady?) none could tell,  
Nor of her tribe nor race,  
Of Roum or Franjistan or Fars or Hind;  
None knew. But I knew well  
That her sweet face  
Had blossomed first within the gates of Paradise.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

Within a tasselled frame, rich wrought, she sat and sang  
A song of love so sweet,  
That beast and bird and serpent came behind,  
And lizard with shut fang  
And faltering feet.  
My flocks strayed after them, and I who heard likewise.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

Upon a camel tall (how tall!) she rode by me  
Enrobed in white and red,  
And veiled to her bright eyes in bands that bind  
But hide not all souls see;  
And on her head  
A crown entwined of wool with gold and various dyes.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

Out to the wilderness, all day, we followed her.  
By winding paths untrod,  
O'er rock and plain none knew nor I could find,

Although my home was there;  
And still we rode.  
The creatures tired and stopped; but I went on with sighs.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

We came to a deep pool (how deep!) I knew of none  
In all that land accursed,  
A pool of waters clear with white shells lined,  
And there we lighted down  
And suaged our thirst,  
And bathed our weary limbs, we two without disguise.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

Upon the brink we sat (ah me!) alone, we two,  
In that fair empty place.  
I kissed her hands and told her all my mind,  
And dared her grace to sue,  
Her utter grace.  
And she with smiles said ``yea" to my too blest surprise.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

Ah me, that night of stars, those bridal stars of heaven!  
Ah me, those eyes of hers,  
So sweet, so near, of that same starry kind,  
Which drank their light ungiven,  
(Poor blinded stars!)  
And left them dark as they have left me wise.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

How shall I tell it? All three months of happy love  
I lived with her, blest queen,  
Fed on sole joy and what God's care might send  
Of milk and treasure--trove  
Of sorrels green,  
And roots and tubers fine and samh which we made prize.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

Since when I search the Earth (sad Earth!) in vain to win  
Once more her wondrous voice,  
Which led me forth to doom and left me blind,  
Bereft of flocks and kin  
And homely joys,  
Of wife and children's love and to behold the skies.  
The red blast of the desert wind  
Hath seared mine eyes.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt





# The Eviction

Unruly tenant of my heart,  
Full fain would I be quit of thee.  
I've played too long a losing part.  
Thou bringest me neither gold nor fee.

'Tis time thou shouldst thy holding yield,  
Thy will and mine no longer meet.  
With cockle hast thou sowed my field,  
With squanderings all the public street.

Thy presence doth disturb my pride.  
Let me be owner of my own.  
I fling thee with thy goods outside  
And bar re--entry with a stone.

Begone and hide thee from my face.  
I will not see thee chiding there.  
Away, to live in my disgrace!  
Away, to die in thy despair!

O impotence of human wit!  
The law is mine, the fault in thee,  
And yet in vain I serve the writ,  
In vain I scourge thee with decree.

For lo, in stillness of the night,  
O'erturning stone and guard and door,  
Thou art come with thy lost tenant--right  
And hast possession as before.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Grief Of Love

Love, I am sick for thee, sick with an absolute grief,  
Sick with the thought of thy eyes and lips and bosom.  
All the beauty I saw, I see to my hurt revealed.  
All that I felt I feel to--day for my pain and sorrow.

Love, I would fain forget thee, hide thee in deeper night,  
Shut thee where no thought is, in the grave with tears.  
Love, I would turn my face to the wall and, if needs be, die;  
Death less cruel were than thy eyes which have blinded me.

Since thou art gone from me, glory is gone from my life;  
Dumb are the woods and streams, and dumb the voice of my soul;  
Dead are the flowers we loved, blackened and sere with blight;  
Earth is frost--bound under my foot where our footsteps trod.

Give me back for my sorrow the days of senseless peace,  
Days when I thought not of thee, or thought in wisdom;  
Let me see thee once more as thou to my folly wert,  
A woman senseless as sounding brass or as tinkling cymbal.

Why didst thou show me thy heart, which I thought not of?  
Why didst thou bare me thy soul, who to me wert soulless?  
Why didst thou kiss my mouth, when my mouth did mock?  
Why didst thou speak to my lips of love, ere my lips had spoken?

Love, thou hast made me thine, thine, and in my despite,  
Laying thy hand on my heart in the soft Spring weather;  
Love, thou hast bought my soul at a price, the price of thine,  
Never again to mock at love, ah, never, never!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. April

## TROUT--FISHING

This morning, through my window, half awake,  
I felt the south wind blow; and presently,  
With a tumultuous thrill and then a shake,  
The nightingale broke forth in melody.  
I rose in haste, and looked at the grey sky,  
And read an omen. From its corner next  
A book I drew, blest book, where fly on fly  
Are all the letters of its well--thumbed text.

I chose my cast, a march--brown and a dun,  
And ran down to the river, chasing hope.  
At the first throw a mighty trout was on,  
A very Samson, fit to burst a rope,  
Yet tamed by one sad hank of yielding hair  
And Fate, the fisherman of King and Pope.  
Upon the grass he lies, and gasps the air,  
Four silver pounds, sublimely fat and fair.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. August

## ON THE THAMES

The river Thames has many a dear delight  
In summer days for souls which know not guile,  
Or souls too careless of the vain world's spite  
To heed its frowning while the heavens smile.  
In boyhood all our pleasure was in toil,  
As with bent backs we laboured at the oar;  
We loved to spend our strength in the turmoil  
Of speed disputed, conquered, conqueror.

But other years brought other joys. Alas!  
Where is fair Rosamund, our heart's first queen,  
Whose foot so lightly trod with us the grass,  
Though burdened with the hundred loves of men,  
At Kew, at Skindle's? But no more of this.  
We still have joys, and still old Thames is green.  
Still on his back we float awhile and press  
His hand in hope, and call it happiness.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. December

## AWAY TO EGYPT

Enough, enough! This winter is too rude,  
Too dark of countenance, of tooth too keen.  
Nature finds rebels now in flesh and blood,  
And hearts grow sick for change and eyes for green.  
Let us away! What profits it that men  
Are wise as gods, if winter holds its sway,  
If blood be chilled, and numbness clasp the brain?  
Frost is too stubborn. Let us then away!

Away to Egypt! There we may forget  
All but the presence of the blessed sun.  
There in our tents well--housed, sublimely set  
Under a pyramid, with horse and gun,  
We may make terms with Nature and, awhile,  
Put as it were our souls to grass, and run  
Barefooted and barehearted in the smile  
Of that long summer which still girds the Nile.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. February

## UNDER THE SPEAKER'S GALLERY

In all the comedy of human things  
What is more mirthful than for those, who sit  
Far from the great world's vain imaginings,  
To mingle in its war of words and wit,  
A listener here, when Greek meets Greek, Fox Pitt,  
At question--time in the Queen's Parliament?  
'Tis the arena of old Rome. Here meet  
More than mere Dacians on mere slaughter bent.

Yonder and close to Mr. Speaker's chair,  
Enfolding all things in a net of words,  
Stands our first gymnast. Let the rest beware.  
The Tory Stafford, with voice sweet as bird's,  
Shall answer him anon, or bolder borne  
And if luck favours, from the nether herds  
A voice of patriot wrath shall rise in scorn,  
Or even young Cassius blow his windy horn.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. January

## COVER SHOOTING

The week at Whinwood next to Christmas week.  
Six guns, no more, but all good men and true,  
Of the clean--visaged sort, with ruddy cheek  
Which knows not care. Light--hearted Montagu  
At the cover's end, as down the wind they flew,  
Has stopped his score of pheasants, every beak,  
Without more thought of Juliet than of you;  
And still I hear his loud--mouthed Purdeys speak.

Tybalt and Paris, with a bet on hand,  
Have fired at the same woodcock. ``Truce," say I,  
``To civil jars." For look, as by command,  
Bunch following bunch, a hundred pheasants fly.  
Now battle, murder, death on every side!  
Right, left, left, right, we pile up agony,  
Till night stops all. Then home in chastened pride,  
With aching heads, our slaughter satisfied.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. July

GOODWOOD

To the high breezes of the Goodwood Down  
London has fled, and there awhile forgets  
Its weariness of limb on lawns new--mown  
And in green shadows all its wars and frets.  
Thither we too will bring our calumets  
In sign of peace restored o'er fashion slain,  
Weaning our souls from folly with small bets  
Of gloves and crowns with laughing ringwomen.

The sport is fair, luck fair, and Nature's face  
Fairest of all. We neither make nor mar  
A fortune here. Yet we were rich with less  
Than this week's pleasure conquered from the year.  
I would not for a million not have seen  
Fred Archer finish upon Guinevere.  
Hark! They are off again, a half mile spin,  
Four of the dozen backed and bound to win.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. June

## A DAY AT HAMPTON COURT

It is our custom, once in every year,  
Mine and two others', when the chestnut trees  
Are white at Bushey, Ascot being near,  
To drive to Hampton Court, and there, at ease  
In that most fair of English palaces,  
Spend a long summer's day. What better cheer  
Than the old ``Greyhound's," seek it where you please?  
And where a royal garden statelier?

The morning goes in tennis, a four set,  
With George the marker. 'Tis a game for gods,  
Full of return and volley at the net,  
And laughter and mirth--making episodes  
Not wholly classic. But the afternoon  
Finds us punt--fishing idly with our rods,  
Nodding and half in dreams, till all too soon  
Darkness and dinner drive us back to town.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. March

## A WEEK AT PARIS

When loud March from the East begins to blow,  
And earth and heaven are black, then off we hie  
By the night train to Paris, where we know  
Three windows set to the meridian sky,  
A third floor in the Rue de Rivoli.  
There we will stop and see the fair world move  
For our sole pleasure past us, you and I,  
And make pretence we are once more in love.

We need not fret at loss of pence or time,  
Though Father Bignon's smiles are paid in gold.  
This life in idleness is more sublime  
Than all our toil and all our wealth twice told.  
We need not fret. To--night for us shall Faure,  
Sara, Dupuis, or L'heritier unfold  
New stores of mirth and music, and once more  
We two shall sup, and at the Maison d'or.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. May

## THE LONDON SEASON

I still love London in the month of May,  
By an old habit, spite of dust and din.  
I love the fair adulterous world, whose way  
Is by the pleasant banks of Serpentine.  
I love the worshippers at fashion's shrine,  
The flowers, the incense, and the pageantry  
Of generations which still ask a sign  
Of that dear god, whose votary am I.

I love the "greetings in the market--place,"  
The jargon of the clubs. I love to view  
The "gilded youth" who at the window pass,  
For ever smiling smiles for ever new.  
I love these men and women at their task  
Of hunting pleasure. Hope, mysterious too,  
Touches my arm and points, and seems to ask  
"And you, have you no Juliet in the masque?"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. November

## ACROSS COUNTRY

November's here. Once more the pink we don,  
And on old Centaur, at the coverside,  
Sit changing pleasant greetings one by one  
With friend and neighbour. Half the county's pride  
Is here to--day. Squire, parson, peer, bestride  
Their stoutest nags, impatient to be gone.  
Here, schoolboys on their earliest ponies ride,  
And village lads on asses, not out--done.

But hark! That sounds like music. Ay, by God!  
He's off across the fallow. ``No, sirs, no;  
``Not yet a minute, just another rod!  
``Then let him have it. Ho, there, tallyho!"  
Now that's worth seeing! Look! He's topped the wall,  
Leaving his whole field pounded in a row.  
A first flight place to--day was worth a fall.  
So forward each, and Heaven for us all!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. October

## GAMBLING AT MONACO

A jewelled kingdom set impregnable  
In gardens green which front the violet sea,  
A happy fortress shut and guarded well,  
And cradled ever on the mountain's knee:  
Here Monsieur Blanc, sad prince of industry,  
Has reared the palace which men call his hell:  
And here in autumn days, when winds blow free,  
Pleasure shall lead us to sin's citadel.

Alas for vice! Yet, who dares moralize,  
In the hushed rooms, where fortune reigns alway?  
Her solemn priest, with chink of coin, replies  
` ` Messieurs, faites votre jeu. Le jeu est fait."  
Who dares be wise, lest wisdom's self be vexed?  
For all who come to preach remain to play.  
Nay, leave poor vice, say I, her pleasant text,  
Nor grudge her Heaven in this world with the next.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Idler's Calendar. Twelve Sonnets For The Months. September

## FEAST OF ST. PARTRIDGE

The only saint in all our calendar  
Is good St. Partridge. 'Tis his feast to--day,  
The happiest day of all a happy year,  
And heralded as never yet was May.  
The dawn has found us marshalled for the fray,  
Striding the close--shorn stubbles ranked in line,  
With lust of battle and with lust of play  
Made glorious drunk as men are drunk with wine.

There go the coveys, forward birds and strong,  
Bound for the mangold where they wheel and stop.  
Now, steady, men, and bring the left along.  
A fortune waits us in each turnip--top.  
With a wild shriek, and then a whirr of wings,  
The covey rises. Brace and brace they drop,  
Joining the dead ranks of forgotten things  
In glorious death, the fierce delight of kings.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. I

## TO ONE IN A HIGH POSITION

To you, a poet, glorious, heaven--born,  
One who is not a poet but a son  
Of the earth earthy, sick and travel--worn  
And weary with a race already run,  
A battle lost e'er yet his day is done,  
Comes with this tribute, shattered banners torn  
From a defeat. You reign in Macedon,  
My Alexander, as at earlier morn  
You reigned upon Parnassus, hero, king.  
I reign no more, not even in those hearts  
For which these songs were made, and if I sing  
'Tis with a harsh and melancholy note  
At which my own heart like an echo starts.  
Yet sometimes I can deem you listening,  
And then all else is instantly forgot.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: IX

## ON HER WAYWARDNESS

This is rank slavery. It better were  
To till the thankless earth with sweat of brow,  
Following dull oxen 'neath a goad of care  
To a boor's grave agape behind the plough.  
It better were to linger in some slow  
Unnatural case, the sport of flood or fire,  
To be undone by some inhuman vow  
And robbed in youth of youth and its desire.  
It better were to perish than thus live  
Thy pensioner and bondsman, day by day  
Doing fool's service thus for love of thee.  
How shall I save thee if thou wilt not grieve  
Even for shames like these? How shall I slay  
The foes thou lovest, thou, their enemy?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: V

ON THE POWER OF HER BEAUTY

I am lighthearted now. An hour ago  
There was a tempest in my heaven, a flame  
Of sullen lightning under a bent brow  
And a dull muttering which breathed no name.  
Now all is changed. The very winds are tame,  
And the birds sing aloud from every bough,  
And my heart leaps. What empire dost thou claim,  
Child, o'er this Earth, that nature serves thee so?  
Sublime magician! Well may Earth and Heaven  
Change at thy bidding, and the hearts of men.  
Didst thou but know the power that beauty hath,  
The sea should leave his bed, the rocks be riven,  
And wise men, deeming chaos come again,  
Should kneel before thee and conjure thy wrath.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Vi

## IN PRAISE OF HIS FATE

When I hear others speak of this and that  
In our fools' lives which might have better gone,  
Complaining idly of too niggard fate  
And wishing still their senseless past undone,  
I feel a childish tremor through me run,  
Stronger than reason, lest by some far chance  
Fate's ear to our sad complaints should yet be won  
And these our lives be thrown back on our hands.  
I tremble when I think of my past years,  
My hopes, my aims, my wishes. All these days  
I might have wandered far from Love and thee.  
But kind fate held me, heedless of my prayers,  
A prisoner to its wise mysterious ways,  
And forced me to thy feet--ah fortunate me!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Vii

## ON HER VANITY

What are these things thou lovest? Vanity.  
To see men turn their heads when thou dost pass;  
To be the signboard and the looking--glass  
Where every idler there may glut his eye;  
To hear men speak thy name mysteriously,  
Wagging their heads. Is it for this, alas,  
That thou hast made a placard of a face  
On which the tears of love were hardly dry?  
What are these things thou lovest? The applause  
Of prostitutes at wit which is not thine;  
The sympathy of shop--boys who would weep  
Their shilling's worth of woe in any cause,  
At any tragedy.--Their tears and mine,  
What difference? Oh truly tears are cheap!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Viii

AS TO HIS CHOICE OF HER

If I had chosen thee, thou shouldst have been  
A virgin proud, untamed, immaculate,  
Chaste as the morning star, a saint, a queen,  
Scarred by no wars, no violence of hate.  
Thou shouldst have been of soul commensurate  
With thy fair body, brave and virtuous  
And kind and just; and, if of poor estate,  
At least an honest woman for my house.  
I would have had thee come of honoured blood  
And honourable nurture. Thou shouldst bear  
Sons to my pride and daughters to my heart,  
And men should hold thee happy, wise, and good.  
Lo, thou art none of this, but only fair.  
Yet must I love thee, dear, and as thou art.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: X

ON HER FORGIVENESS OF A WRONG

This is not virtue. To forgive were great  
If love were in the issue and not gold.  
But wrongs there are 'tis treason to forget,  
And to forgive before the deed was cold  
Was a strange jest. Ah, Manon, you have sold  
The keys of heaven at a vulgar rate,  
A sum of money for the wealth untold  
Of a just anger and the right to hate.  
--Well. It is done and the price paid. Now make  
Haste to betray them as you me betrayed.  
These are no longer foes to be forgiven.  
Remember they are friends, that peace is made,  
That you are theirs. Then rend them for love's sake,  
And let your hatred with your love be even.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xii

## ON READING CERTAIN LETTERS

Reading these lines, this record of lost days  
Where I am not, and yet where love has been,  
This tale of passions consecrate to men  
Other than me, unwitting of my ways,  
I seem to hear some pagan chaunt of praise  
Hymned to an idol shrine in gardens green,  
Some wild soft worship of a god obscene,  
Some idle homage to an idol face.  
I shut my ears, yet hear it still. My eyes  
See not, yet see the unchaste the unlawful fire;  
I scent the odour of the sacrifice,  
And feel the victim's shriek. Then in my ire  
I rise up, as on Horeb, and I cry,  
` `There is none other god, but only I!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xiii

HE DARES NOT DIE

Four hours by the clock! How strange it is! Four hours  
Since love and life, the future and the past,  
Died with the shutting of these silent doors,  
And thought became to me one purpose vast.  
I have not moved from where she sat. The cast  
Of her fingers on this cushion lightly scores  
Its surface still; and still I hear the last  
Tones of her laughter, and here lie her flowers.  
Poor flowers! The ugliness of grief has wrought  
Your change already. No besotted bloom  
Of a false dawn has lured you to base life.  
You at the pinch were brave and trifled not,  
Going ungrudging to our common doom.  
And I? Ah God! I have not faced the knife!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xiv

HE HAS FALLEN FROM THE HEIGHT OF HIS LOVE  
Love, how ignobly hast thou met thy doom!  
Ill--seasoned scaffolding by which, full--fraught  
With passionate youth and mighty hopes, we clomb  
To our heart's heaven, fearing, doubting, naught!  
Oh love, thou wert too frail for such mad sport,  
Too rotten at thy core, designed too high:  
And we who trusted thee our death have bought,  
And bleeding on the ground must surely die.  
--I will not see her. What she now may be  
I care not. For the dream within my brain  
Is fairer, nobler, and more kind than she;  
And with that vision I can mock at pain.  
God! Was there ever woman half so sweet,  
Or death so bitter, or at such dear feet?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xix

HE PROTESTS, NOTWITHSTANDING, HIS LOVE  
To be cast forth from the fair light of heaven  
Into the outer darkness and there lie,  
Through unrecorded years of agony,  
Unseen, unheard, unpitied, unforgiven;  
To be forgotten of the earth and sky,  
Forgotten of the womb that once did bear,  
The eyes that cheered, the voice that comforted,  
The very breast where love had laid his head;  
To be alone with darkness and despair,  
Alone with endless death, and not to die:  
All these be punishments within the hand  
Of an avenging deity to deal.  
To these I bow in weakness as behoves.  
Yet not in anger but in love I stand  
'Gainst heaven, a new Prometheus, and appeal  
From God to my own soul which ceaseless loves.  
His be the wrath, the burning and the rod.  
Hell shall not make me traitor to my God.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xv

COMPLAINING THAT HE HAD FALLEN AMONG THIEVES

Oh, Lytton, I have gambled with my soul,  
And, like a spendthrift, pawned my heritage  
To pitiless Jews, and paid a monstrous toll  
To knaves and usurers,--and all to wage  
Fair war with black--legs, men who dared to gauge  
My youth's bright honour as an antique thing,  
A broadsword to their fencing point and edge.  
So the game went. And even yet I cling  
To my mad humour, reckoning up each stake,  
Each fair coin lost.--O miserable slaves,  
Who for the sake of gold, the poorest thing  
Man ever won from the earth's bosom, take  
To rope or poison, and who labour not  
Even to ``dig dishonourable graves,"  
See one who has lost a pound for every groat,  
For every penny of your squandering!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xvi

HE ARGUES WITH HIS LIFE

My life, what strange mad garments hast thou on,  
Now that I see thee truly and am wise!  
Thou wild, lost Proteus, strangling and undone!  
What shapes are these, what metamorphoses  
Of a god's soul in pain? I hear thy cries  
And see thee writhe and take fantastic forms,  
And strike in blindness at the destinies  
And at thyself, and at thy brother worms.  
Ah, foolish worm, thou canst not change thy lot,  
And all like thee must perish 'neath the sun.  
Why struggle with thy fellows? Nay, be kind,  
Kinder than these. Behold, the flower--pot  
Of fate is emptied out, and one by one  
The fisher takes you, and his hooks are blind.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xvii

## JOY'S TREACHERY

I had a live joy once and pampered her,  
For I had brought her from the ``golden East,"  
To lie when nights were cold upon my breast  
And sit beside me the long days and purr,  
Until her whole soul should be lapped in fur,  
Deep as her claws; a beautiful sleek beast,  
Which I might love.--But, when I deemed it least,  
Her topaz eyes were on my stomacher,  
Athirst for blood. Thus, for I loathed her since  
I learned her guile, one night I had her slain  
And thrown upon a dunghill to the flies,  
Who bred in her fair limbs a pestilence,  
Whereof I sickened.--Thus it ever is:  
Dead joys unburied breed us death and pain.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xviii

HE LAMENTS THAT HIS LOVE IS DEAD

My love is dead, dead and in spite of me,--  
Dead while I lived,--while yet my blood was rife  
With hope and pleasure and the pride of life.  
For my love ended unexpectedly  
During the Winter, stricken like a tree  
By a night's cold, and frozen to the blood,  
Whose leaves fell off and never were renewed  
By any promise of the years to be.  
And, when the Spring came, and the birds, to mate  
Among its branches, lo! they found it bare,  
Though all around was Summer in the wood.  
Yet they took heart awhile, incredulous  
That such a tree should be for ever dead.  
``'Tis early yet," they cried. ``The Spring is late.  
It shall still be as in the days that were."  
But Summer came and went while the tree stood  
Bare in the sun like a deserted house.  
--Then the birds suddenly despaired and fled.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xx

ON FALLING ILL THROUGH GRIEF

Truce to thee, Soul! I have a debt to pay,  
Which I acknowledge and without thy pleading.  
I like thee little that thou barrest my way  
With prayers too late for one well past thy heeding,  
Truce to these tears! Thy fellow lieth bleeding,  
Wounded by thee; and thou, forsooth, dost say,  
` ` I have a servant who is sick and needing  
Care at men's hands." The care was thine to pay.  
--When this same Soul was sick, a while ago,  
The Body watched her, till his eyes grew dim  
And his cheeks pale for very sympathy,  
Because she grieved. His love has wrought him woe,  
For he is sick and she despiseth him.  
Poor Body, I must take some thought of thee.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part I: To Manon: Xxi

HIS BONDAGE TO MANON IS BROKEN  
From this day forth I lead another life,  
Another life! A life without a tear!  
To--day has ended the unequal strife;  
My service and my sorrow finish here.  
See, my soul cuts her cable of belief  
And sails towards the ocean. She shall steer  
Sublime henceforth o'er accidents of grief.  
Her storm has rolled to a new Hemisphere.  
I have loved too much, too loyally, too long.  
To--day I am a pirate of the sea.  
Let others suffer. I have suffered wrong.  
Let others love, and love as tenderly.  
Oh, Manon, there are women yet unborn  
Shall rue thy frailty, else am I forsworn.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Ii: To Juliet: Li

THE SAME CONTINUED

We planted love, and lo it bred a brood  
Of lusts and vanities and senseless joys.  
We planted love, and you have gathered food  
Of every bitter herb which fills and cloyes.  
Your meat is loud excitement and mad noise,  
Your wine the unblest ambition of command  
O'er hearts of men, of dotards, idiots, boys.  
These are the playthings fitted to your hand,  
These are your happiness. You weep no more,  
But I must weep. My Heaven has been defiled.  
My sin has found me out and smites me sore,  
And folly, justified of her own child,  
Rules all the empire where love reigned of yore,  
Folly red--cheeked but rotten to the core.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Lii

THE SAME CONTINUED

Lame, impotent conclusion to youth's dreams  
Vast as all heaven! See, what glory lies  
Entangled here in these base stratagems,  
What virtue done to death! O glorious sighs,  
Sublime beseechings, high cajoleries,  
Fond wraths, brave ruptures, all that sometime was  
Our daily bread of gods beneath the skies,  
How are ye ended, in what utter loss!  
Time was, time is, and time is yet to come,  
Till even time itself shall have its end.  
These were eternal. And behold, a tomb!  
Come, let us laugh and eat and drink. God send  
What all the world must need one day as we,  
Speedy oblivion, rest for memory.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Liii

THE SAME CONTINUED

Farewell, then. It is finished. I forgo  
With this all right in you, even that of tears.  
If I have spoken hardly, it will show  
How much I loved you. With you disappears  
A glory, a romance of many years.  
What you may be henceforth I will not know.  
The phantom of your presence on my fears  
Is impotent at length for weal or woe.  
Your past, your present, all alike must fade  
In a new land of dreams where love is not.  
Then kiss me and farewell. The choice is made  
And we shall live to see the past forgot,  
If not forgiven. See, I came to curse,  
Yet stay to bless. I know not which is worse.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: XI

THE SAME CONTINUED

'Tis strange we are thus parted, not by death  
Or man's device, but by our own mad will,  
We who have stood together on life's path  
Through half a youth of good repute and ill,  
Friends more than lovers. See, Love's citadel  
We held so stoutly 'gainst a world in arms  
Lies all dismantled now, a sight to fill  
The Earth with lamentations and alarms.  
Whose was the fault? I dare not ask nor say.  
If there was treachery, 'tis best untold.  
The price of treason we receive to--day  
Is paid to both of us in evil gold.  
Ay, take thy bitter freedom. 'Tis the fee  
Of love betrayed and faith's apostasy.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xli

THE SAME CONTINUED

We may not meet. I could not for pride's sake  
Dissemble further, and I suffer pain,  
A palpable distinct and physical ache,  
When our eyes meet by accident, and when  
I hear you talk in your pathetic strain  
Which always moved me. Only yesterday,  
As I was standing with a crowd of men  
In the long corridor, you came my way  
And chanced to stop, and thus by chance I heard  
A score of phrases uttered in that sad  
Half--suppliant voice which once my spirit stirred  
To its foundations. Yet your theme was glad--  
Strangers your hearers. What was in these spells  
To move me still? A trick, and nothing else!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xlii

THE SAME CONTINUED

We vex each other with our presence, I  
By my regrets and by my mocking face,  
You by your laughter and mad gaiety,  
And both by cruel thoughts of happier days.  
Is then the world so narrow that we pace  
These streets like prisoners still with eyes askance,  
As bound together in the fell embrace  
Of a dark chain which bars deliverance?  
Nay, go your ways. I will not vex you more.  
Make your own terms with life, while you are fair.  
There is none better learned in woman's lore.  
You yet may take revenge on grief and care,  
And 'twas your nature ever to be gay,  
Why should I scoff? Be merry while you may.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xliii

THE SAME CONTINUED

I do not love you. To have said this once  
Had seemed to both of us a monstrous lie,  
An idle boast, love's last extravagance  
Or the mere paradox of vanity.  
Now it is true and yet more hideously  
More strangely monstrous. I, no less than you,  
Here own at length the worm which cannot die,  
The burden of a pain for ever new.  
This is the "pang of loss," the bitterest  
Which Hell can give. We are shut out from Heaven  
And never more shall look upon Love's face,  
Being with those who perish unforgiven.  
Never to see Love's face! Ah, pain in pain,  
Which we do well to weep and weep again!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: XLIV

THE SAME CONTINUED

Yet we shall live without love, as some live  
Without their limbs, their senses, maimed or deaf.  
We even shall forget love, and shall thrive  
And prosper and grow fat upon our grief.  
You are consoled already more than half,  
And wear your sorrow lightly. I will boast  
No longer the refusal of relief  
Than as a decent mourner of hopes crossed.  
We yet shall laugh, and laughter is more loud  
When following tears. The men who drive a hearse  
Are not the least lighthearted of the crowd.  
See, we have made love's epitaph in verse  
And fairly buried him. God's ways are best.  
Then home to pleasure and the funeral feast.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xlix

THE SAME CONTINUED

A ``woman with a past." What happier omen  
Could heart desire for mistress or for friend?  
Phoenix of friends, and most divine of women,  
Skilled in all fence to venture or defend  
And with love's science at your fingers' end,  
No tears to vex, no ignorance to bore,  
A fancy ripe, the zest which sorrows lend!--  
I would to God we had not met before!  
--I would to God! and yet to God I would  
That we had never met. To see you thus  
Is grief and wounds and poison to my blood.  
Oh, this is sacrilege and foul abuse.  
You were a thing for honour not vile use,  
Not for the mad world's wicked sinks and stews.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xlv

THE SAME CONTINUED

Do you remember how I laughed at you  
In the Beaulieu woods, and how I made my peace?  
It was your thirtieth birthday, and you threw  
Stones like a school--girl at the chestnut trees.  
The heavens were light above us and the breeze.  
Your Corydon and all the merry crew  
Had wandered to a distance, busier bees  
Than we, who cared not where the hazels grew.  
We were alone at last. I had been teasing  
You with the burden of years left behind.  
You were too fair to find my wit displeasing,  
And I too tender to be less than kind.  
Your pebbles struck me. ``Wretch," I cried. The word  
Entered our hearts that instant like a sword.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Ii: To Juliet: Xlvi

THE SAME CONTINUED

Thrice happy fools! What wisdom shall we learn  
In this world or the next, if next there be,  
More deep, more full, more worthy our concern  
Than that first word of folly taught us? We  
Had suddenly grown silent. I could see  
Your cheek had lost a little of its hue,  
And your lips trembled, and beseechingly  
Your blue eyes turned to mine, and well I knew  
Your woman's instinct had divined my speech,  
The meaning of a word so lightly spoken.  
The word was a confession, clear to each,  
A pledge as plain and as distinct a token  
As that of Peter at his master's knees,  
` `Thou knowest that I love thee more than these."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xlvii

## THE SAME CONTINUED

I see you, Juliet, still, with your straw hat  
Loaded with vines, and with your dear pale face,  
On which those thirty years so lightly sat,  
And the white outline of your muslin dress.  
You wore a little fichu trimmed with lace  
And crossed in front, as was the fashion then,  
Bound at your waist with a broad band or sash,  
All white and fresh and virginally plain.  
There was a sound of shouting far away  
Down in the valley, as they called to us,  
And you, with hands clasped seeming still to pray  
Patience of fate, stood listening to me thus  
With heaving bosom. There a rose lay curled.  
It was the reddest rose in all the world.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xlviii

THE SAME CONTINUED

I think there never was a dearer woman,  
A better, kinder, truer than you were,  
A gentler spirit more divinely human  
Than yours with your sweet melancholy air  
Of tender gaiety, which seemed like care,  
And in your voice a sob as of distress  
At the world's ways, its sin and its despair,  
Being yourself all strange to wickedness.  
Now you are neither gentle, kind, nor good,  
And you have sorrows of your own to grieve,  
And in your mirth compassion has no mood;  
You wear no more your heart upon your sleeve,  
And if your voice still sobs 'tis with a sense  
Of sorrow's power, grief's wealth, experience.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: XXii

ON THE NATURE OF LOVE

You ask my love. What shall my love then be ?

A hope, an aspiration, a desire?

The soul's eternal charter writ in fire

Upon the earth, the heavens, and the sea?

You ask my love. The carnal mystery

Of a soft hand, of finger--tips that press,

Of eyes that kindle and of lips that kiss,

Of sweet things known to thee and only thee?

You ask my love. What love can be more sweet

Than hope or pleasure? Yet we love in vain.

The soul is more than joy, the life than meat.

The sweetest love of all were love in pain,

And that I will not give. So let it be.

--Nay, give me any love, so it be love of thee.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxiii

### ASKING FOR HER HEART

Give me thy heart, Juliet, give me thy heart!  
I have a need of it, an absolute need,  
Because my own heart has thus long been dead.  
I live but by thy life. The very smart  
Of this new pain which has been born of thee  
Is thine, thy own great pleasure's counterpart.  
I stand before thee naked. Clothe thou me.  
Bring out a robe,--thy truth, thy chastity.  
Put rings upon my fingers,--honour's meed.  
For thou canst give, nor ever reck the cost,  
Being the royal creature that thou art,  
The fountain of all honour, whose high boast  
Is to be greatest when thou givest most.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: XXIV

THE SAME CONTINUED

Give me thy soul, Juliet, give me thy soul!  
I am a bitter sea, which drinketh in  
The sweetness of all waters, and so thine.  
Thou, like a river, pure and swift and full  
And freighted with the wealth of many lands,  
With hopes, and fears, and death and life, dost roll  
Against the troubled ocean of my sin.  
Thou doubttest not, though on these desert sands  
The billows surge against thee black with brine,  
Unwearied. For thy love is fixed and even  
And bears thee onward, and thy faith is whole.  
Though thou thyself shouldst sin, yet surely Heaven  
Hath held thee guiltless and thou art forgiven.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: XXIX

TO HER WHO WOULD COMFORT HIM

I did not ask your pity, dear. Your zeal  
I know. It cannot cure me of my woes.  
And you, in your sweet happiness, who knows,  
Deserve it rather I should pity feel  
For what the coming years from you conceal.  
I did but cry, thou dear Samaritan,  
Out of my bitterness of soul. Each man  
Has his own sorrow treading on his heel,  
Ready to strike him, and must keep his shield  
To his own back. Fate's arrows thickly fly,  
And, if they strike not now, will strike at even.  
And so I ask no pity. On life's field  
The wounded crawl together, but their cry  
Is not to one another but to Heaven.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxv

THE SAME CONTINUED

Give me thy kiss, Juliet, give me thy kiss!  
I with my body worship thee and vow  
Such service to thy needs as man can do.  
I ask no nobler servitude than this.  
Am I not thine, the bondsman of thy love,  
Whom thou hast bought and ransomed with a price,  
And therefore worthy to be ranked above  
The very stars that in the heavens move?  
And, Juliet, since I thus am one with you,  
And kinglier than Plantagenet or Guelph,  
What price were meet for my high mightiness?  
What gold of joy, what hope, what heavenly pelf  
Hast thou to give? Nay, sweetest, give thyself.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxvi

### THE SAME--A CHRISTMAS SONNET

Since thou hast given me these, Juliet, given me these,  
There have been tidings told of a great joy,  
Of peace on Earth, good--will without annoy.  
Thou hast put on my soul's infirmities  
And stooped to succour me, and thou hast trod  
The way of sorrows with me, on thy knees,  
Making thyself a little less than God,  
That I might worship him in womanhood,  
A new redemption. Therefore, Juliet,  
The choirs of Heaven multitudinous  
Make all their songs to thee this happy night,  
In praise of thy great love incarnate thus,  
A very ``word made flesh" to dwell with us.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: XXVII

ASKING THE FULFILMENT OF HER LOVE

I ask for love who famished am in plenty,  
Not scorning the dear manna of your tears  
But being vexed with that too froward twenty  
Which heads the sum of my rebellious years.  
My soul is fallen ` ` in lust of cucumbers,  
Of fish, of melons," through its long abstaining.  
Unworthy Egypt yet enslaves my fears.  
Ah, love, I thirst, but not for heaven's raining.  
Why speak to me, alas, of heavenly joys  
Who ask for joys of earth these cannot cheat?  
What are these clouds, these pillars of fire to me?  
The wilderness is long. Youth cannot be  
For ever fed on these unnatural toys  
And needs must murmur if it have not meat.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxviii

IN ANSWER TO A QUESTION

Why should I hate you, love, or why despise  
For that last proof of tenderness you gave?  
The battle is not always to the brave,  
Nor life's sublimest wisdom to the wise.  
True courage often is in frightened eyes,  
And reason in sweet lips that only rave.  
There is a weakness stronger than the grave,  
And blood poured out has overcome the skies.  
--Nay, love, I honour you the more for this,  
That you have rent the veil, and ushered in  
A fellow soul to your soul's holy place.  
And why should either blush that we have been  
One day in Eden, in our nakedness?  
--'Tis conscience makes us sinners, not our sin.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxx

### THE RELIGION OF LOVE

So thou but love me, dear, with thy whole heart  
What care I for the rest, for good or ill?  
What for the peace of soul good deeds impart,  
What for the tears unholy dreams distil?  
These cannot make my joy, nor shall they kill.  
Thou only perfect peace and virtue art  
And holiness for me and strength and will,  
So thou but love me with a perfect heart.  
I ask thee now no longer to be wise;  
No longer to be good, but loving me.  
I ask thee nothing now but only this.  
Henceforth my Bible, dear, shall be thine eyes,  
My beads thy lips, my prayers thy constancy,  
My heaven thine arms, eternity thy kiss.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxi

TO ONE WHO LOVED HIM

I cannot love you, love, as you love me,  
In singleness of soul, and faith untried:  
I have no faith in any destiny,  
In any Heaven, even at your side.  
Our hearts are all too weak, the world too wide,  
You but a woman. If I dare to give  
Some thought, some tenderness, a little pride,  
A little love, 'tis yours, love, to receive.  
And do not grieve, though now the gift appear  
A drop to your love's ocean. Time shall see.  
--Oh, I could prophesy:--That day is sure,  
Though not perhaps this week, nor month, nor year,  
When your great love shall clean forgotten be,  
And my poor tenderness shall yet endure.  
'Tis not the trees that make the tallest show,  
Which stand out stoutest when the tempests blow.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxii

### EXHORTING HER TO PATIENCE

Why do we fret at the inconstancy  
Of our frail hearts, which cannot always love?  
Time rushes onward, and we mortals move  
Like waifs upon a river, neither free  
To halt nor hurry. Sweet, if destiny  
Throws us together for an hour, a day,  
In the back--water of this quiet bay,  
Let us rejoice. Before us lies the sea,  
Where we must all be lost in spite of love.  
We dare not stop to question. Happiness  
Lies in our hand unsought, a treasure trove.  
Time has short patience of man's vain distress;  
And fate grows angry at too long delay;  
And floods rise fast, and we are swept away.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxiii

### REMINDING HER OF A PROMISE

Oh, Juliet, we have quarrelled with our fate,  
And fate has struck us. Wherefore do we cry?  
We prayed for liberty, and now too late  
Find liberty is this, to say ``good--bye."  
The Winter which we loved not has gone by,  
And Spring is come. The gardens, which were bare  
When we first wandered through them, you and I,  
The prisoners of our own vain wishes, are  
Now full of golden flowers. The very lane  
Down to the sea is green. The cactus hedge  
We saw cut down has sprouted new again,  
And swallows have their nests on the cliff's edge  
Where we so often sat and dared complain  
Because our joy was new, and called it pain.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxiv

THE SAME CONTINUED

Yes, Spring is come, but joy alas is gone,--  
Gone ere we knew it, while our foolish eyes,  
Which should have watched its motions every one  
Were looking elsewhere, at the hills, the skies,  
Chasing vain thoughts, as children butterflies,  
Until the hour struck and the day was done,  
And we looked up in passionate surprise  
To find that clouds had blotted out our sun.  
Our joys are gone. And what is left to us,  
Who loved not even love when it was here?  
What but a voice which sobs monotonous  
As these sad waves upon the rocks, the dear  
Fond voice which once made music with our own,  
And which our hearts now ache to think upon.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxix

### FAREWELL TO JULIET

Juliet, farewell. I would not be forgiven  
Even if I forgave. These words must be  
The last between us two in Earth or Heaven,  
The last and bitterest. You are henceforth free  
For ever from my bitter words and me.  
You shall not at my hand be further vexed  
With either love, reproach or jealousy  
(So help me Heaven), in this world or the next.  
Our souls are single for all time to come  
And for eternity, and this farewell  
Is as the trumpet note, the crack of doom,  
Which heralds an eternal silence. Hell  
Has no more fixed and absolute decree.  
And Heaven and Hell may meet,--yet never we.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxv

### THE SAME CONTINUED

Old memories are sweet, but these are new  
And smart like wounds yet green. But one there is  
Which, for the cause that it was dear to you  
In days which counted upon greater bliss,  
Is fairer now and dearer far than these;  
And this the memory is of some hours spent  
One afternoon when, seated at your knees,  
I made narration (it was middle Lent  
And you with Judas flowers had filled your lap),  
Of the wise secret of these rhymes of mine,  
And gave a promise, which behold I keep,  
To write them out for you, each idle line,  
Throwing you all my rubbish in one heap.  
Poor stuff perhaps. And yet it made you weep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxvi

### FEAR HAS CAST OUT LOVE

'Tis not that love is less or sorrow more  
Than in the days when first these things began.  
Even then you doubted, and our hearts were sore  
And you rebelled because I was a man.  
Even then you fought and wrestled with my plan  
Of earthly bliss. What bitter anguish too  
When at the hour decreed our passion ran  
Out of our keeping and love claimed its due!  
'Tis not love's fault we part, or grief's. Alas,  
One mightier now compels us with His nod.  
The fire of Heaven has touched us, and we pass  
From pleasure's chastenings to a fiercer rod;  
And fear has cast out love, for flesh is grass  
And we are withered with the wrath of God.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part II: To Juliet: Xxxviii

TO ONE NOW ESTRANGED

Why did you love me? Was it not enough  
That the world loved you, all the world and I?  
Or was your heart of so sublime a stuff  
That it might trifle with inconstancy  
And love and cease to love and yet not die?  
Heaven was your throne by right of happiness  
And Earth your footstool. All things great and high  
Waited your bidding, love itself no less.  
Yet, if you deigned to love, if from your place  
In Heaven you stooped, if, when your heart was moved,  
A thrill of human pleasure tinged your face,  
If 'twas in weakness not in strength you loved,  
Then there was cause to blush. Yet, loving, how  
Shall you blush less to be apostate now?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Liv

HE DESIRES THE IMPOSSIBLE

If it were possible the fierce sun should,  
Standing in heaven unloved, companionless,  
Enshrined be in some white--bosomed cloud,  
And so forget his rage and loneliness;  
If it were possible the bitter seas  
Should suddenly grow sweet, till at their brink  
Birds with bright eyes should stoop athirst and drink;  
--If these were possible; and if to these  
It should be proved that love has sometimes been  
'Twixt lambs and leopards, doves and hawks, that snow  
Clasps the bare rocks, that rugged oaks grow green  
In the west wind, that pinkest blossoms blow  
Upon May's blackest thorn;--then, only then,  
I might believe that love between us two  
Was still in heaven's gift, sweet child.--And you?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lix

## THE HAUNTED HOUSE

How loud the storm blew all that bitter night!  
The loosened ivy tapping on the pane  
Woke me and woke, again and yet again,  
Till I was full awake and sat upright.  
I listened to the noises of the night,  
And presently I heard, disguised yet plain,  
A footstep on the stair which mounted light  
Towards me, and my heart outbeat the rain.  
I knew that it was you. I knew it even  
Before the door, which by design ajar  
Waited your coming, had disclosed my fate.  
I felt a wind upon my face from heaven.  
I felt the presence of a life. My hair  
Was touched as by a spirit. Insensate  
I drew you to my bosom. Ah, too late!  
I clutched the darkness. There was nothing there.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lvi

TO ONE WHOM HE DARED NOT LOVE  
As one who, in a desert wandering  
Alone and faint beneath a pitiless sky,  
And doubting in his heart if he shall bring  
His bones back to his kindred or there die,  
Finds at his feet a treasure suddenly  
Such as would make him for all time a king,  
And so forgets his fears and with keen eye  
Falls to a--counting each new precious thing:  
--So was I when you told me yesterday  
The tale of your dear love. Awhile I stood  
Astonished and enraptured, and my heart  
Began to count its treasures. Now dismay  
Steals back my joy, and terror chills my blood,  
And I remember only ``We must part."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lvii

ON A LOST OPPORTUNITY

We might, if you had willed, have conquered Heaven.  
Once only in our lives before the gate  
Of Paradise we stood, one fortunate even,  
And gazed in sudden rapture through the grate.  
And, while you stood astonished, I, our fate  
Venturing, pushed the latch and found it free.  
There stood the tree of knowledge fair and great  
Beside the tree of life. One instant we  
Stood in that happy garden, guardianless.  
My hands already turned towards the tree  
And in another moment we had known  
The taste of joy and immortality  
And been ourselves as gods. But in distress  
You thrust me back with supplicating arms  
And eyes of terror, till the impatient sun  
Had time to set and till the heavenly host  
Rushed forth on us with clarions and alarms  
And cast us out for ever, blind and lost.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lviii

TO ONE ON HER WASTE OF TIME

Why practise, love, this small economy  
Of your heart's favours? Can you keep a kiss  
To be enjoyed in age? And would the free  
Expense of pleasure leave you penniless?  
Nay, nay. Be wise. Believe me, pleasure is  
A gambler's token, only gold to--day.  
The day of love is short, and every bliss  
Untasted now is a bliss thrown away.  
'Twere pitiful, in truth, such treasures should  
Lie by like miser's crusts till mouldy grown.  
Think you the hand of age will be less rude  
In touching your sweet bosom than my own?  
Alas, what matter, when our heads are grey,  
Whether you loved or did not love to--day?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxi

TO ONE EXCUSING HIS POVERTY

Ah! love, impute it not to me a sin  
That my poor soul thus beggared comes to thee.  
My soul a pilgrim was, in search of thine,  
And met these accidents by land and sea.  
The world was hard, and took its usury,  
Its toll for each new night in each new inn;  
And every road had robber bands to fee;  
And all, even kindness, must be paid in coin.  
Behold my scrip is empty, my heart bare.  
I give thee nothing who my all would give.  
My pilgrimage is finished, and I fare  
Bare to my death, unless with thee I live.  
Ah! give, love, and forgive that I am poor.  
Ah! take me to thy arms and ask no more.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxiv

HE APPEALS AGAINST HIS BOND

In my distress Love made me sign a bond,  
A cruel bond. 'Twas by necessity  
Wrung from a foolish heart, alas, too fond,  
Too blindly fond, its error to foresee.  
And now my soul's estate, in jeopardy,  
Lies to a pledge it never can redeem.  
Love's loan was love, one hour of ecstasy,  
His penalty eternal loss of him.  
--See, I am penniless, the forfeit paid,  
And go a beggar forth from thy dear sight,  
My pound of more than flesh too strictly weighed  
And cut too near the heart. Fair Israelite,  
Thy plea was just. Thy right has been confessed.  
And yet a work of mercy were twice blessed.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxix

SIBYLLINE BOOKS

When first, a boy, at your fair knees I kneeled,  
'Twas with a worthy offering. In my hand  
My young life's book I held, a volume sealed,  
Which none but you, I deemed, might understand.  
And you I did entreat to loose the band  
And read therein your own soul's destiny.  
But, Tarquin--like, you turned from my demand,  
Too proudly fair to find your fate in me.  
When now I come, alas, what hands have turned  
Those virgin pages! Some are torn away,  
And some defaced, and some with passion burned,  
And some besmeared with life's least holy clay.  
Say, shall I offer you these pages wet  
With blood and tears? And will your sorrow read  
What your joy heeded not?--Unopened yet  
One page remains. It still may hold a fate,  
A counsel for the day of utter need.  
Nay, speak, sad heart, speak quick. The hour is late.  
Age threatens us. The Gaul is at the gate.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxv

TO ONE WHO SPOKE ILL OF HIM

What is your quarrel with me, in love's name,  
Fair queen of wrath? What evil have I done,  
What treason to the thought of our dear shame  
Subscribed or plotted? Is my heart less one  
In its obedience to your stern decrees  
Than on the day when first you said ``I please,"  
And with your lips ordained our union?  
Am I not now, as then, upon my knees?  
You bade me love you, and the deed was done,  
And when you cried ``Enough" I stopped, and when  
You bade me go I went, and when you said  
``Forget me" I forgot. Alas, what wrong  
Would you avenge upon a loyal head,  
Which ever bowed to you in joy and pain,  
That you thus scourge me with your pitiless tongue?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxvi

## THE THREE AGES OF WOMAN

Love, in thy youth, a stranger, knelt to thee,  
With cheeks all red and golden locks all curled,  
And cried, `` Sweet child, if thou wilt worship me,  
Thou shalt possess the kingdoms of the world."  
But you looked down and said, `` I know you not,  
Nor want I other kingdom than my soul."  
Till Love in shame, convicted of his plot,  
Left you and turned him to some other goal.  
And this discomfiture which you had seen  
Long served you for your homily and boast,  
While, of your beauty and yourself the queen,  
You lived a monument of vain love crossed,  
With scarce a thought of that which might have been  
To scare you with the ghost of pleasures lost.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxvii

THE SAME CONTINUED

Your youth flowed on, a river chaste and fair,  
Till thirty years were written to your name.  
A wife, a mother, these the titles were  
Which conquered for you the world's fairest fame.  
In all things you were wise but in this one,  
That of your wisdom you yourself did doubt.  
Youth spent like age, no joy beneath the sun.  
Your glass of beauty vainly running out.  
Then suddenly again, ere well you knew,  
Love looked upon you tenderly, yet sad:  
` ` Are these wise follies, then, enough for you?"  
He said;-- ` ` Love's wisdom were itself less mad."  
And you: ` ` What wouldst thou of me?" ` ` My bare due,  
In token of what joys may yet be had."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxviii

THE SAME CONTINUED

Again Love left you. With appealing eyes  
You watched him go, and lips apart to speak.  
He left you, and once more the sun did rise  
And the sun set, and week trod close on week  
And month on month, till you had reached the goal  
Of forty years, and life's full waters grew  
To bitterness and flooded all your soul,  
Making you loathe old things and pine for new.  
And you into the wilderness had fled,  
And in your desolation loud did cry,  
`` Oh for a hand to turn these stones to bread!"  
Then in your ear Love whispered scornfully,  
`` Thou too, poor fool, thou, even thou," he said,  
`` Shalt taste thy little honey ere thou die."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxx

ON READING THE MEMOIRS OF M. D'ARTAGNAN

Why was I born in this degenerate age?  
Or rather why, a thousand times, with soul  
Of such degenerate stuff that a mute rage  
Is all its reason, tears the only toll  
It takes on life, and impotence its goal?  
Why was I born to this sad heritage  
Of fierce desires which cannot fate control,  
Of idle hopes life never can assuage?  
Why was I born thus weak?--Oh to have been  
A merry fool, at jest with destiny;  
A free hand ready and a heart as free;  
A ruffler in the camps of Mazarin!  
Oh for the honest soul of d'Artagnan,  
Twice happy knave, a Gascon and a man!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxii

FROM THE FRENCH OF ANVERS

My heart has its secret, my soul its mystery,  
A love which is eternal begotten in a day.  
The ill is long past healing. Why should I speak to--day?  
For none have ears to hear, and, least of all, she.  
Alas I shall have lived unseen tho' ever near,  
For ever at her side, for ever too alone.  
I shall have lived my life unknowing and unknown,  
Asking naught, daring naught, receiving naught from her.  
And she, whom Heaven made kind and chaste and fair,  
Shall go undoubting on, the while upon her way  
The murmur of my love shall fill the land,  
Till, reading here perchance severe and unaware  
These lines so full of her, she shall look up and say  
``Who was this woman then?" and shall not understand.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxiii

TO ONE TO WHOM HE HAD BEEN UNJUST  
If I was angry once that you refused  
The bread I asked and offered me a stone,  
Deeming the rights of bounty thus abused  
And my poor beggary but trampled on,  
Believe me now I would that wrong atone  
With such submission as a heart can show,  
Asking no bread of life but that alone  
Your dear heart proffered and my pride let go.  
Give me your help, your pity, what you will,  
Your pardon for a sin, your act of grace  
For a rebellion vanquished and undone,  
The stone I once refused, that precious stone  
Your friendship, so my thoughts may serve you still  
Even if I never more behold your face.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxiv

## THE MOCKERY OF LIFE

God! What a mockery is this life of ours!  
Cast forth in blood and pain from our mother's womb,  
Most like an excrement, and weeping showers  
Of senseless tears: unreasoning, naked, dumb,  
The symbol of all weakness and the sum:  
Our very life a sufferance.--Presently,  
Grown stronger, we must fight for standing--room  
Upon the earth, and the bare liberty  
To breathe and move. We crave the right to toil.  
We push, we strive, we jostle with the rest.  
We learn new courage, stifle our old fears,  
Stand with stiff backs, take part in every broil.  
It may be that we love, that we are blest.  
It may be, for a little space of years,  
We conquer fate and half forget our tears.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxix

AMOUR OBLIGE

I could forgive you, dearest, all the folly  
Your heart has dreamed. Alas, as we grow old,  
We need more vigorous cures for melancholy,  
A stronger nutriment for hearts grown cold.  
We need in face of weakness to be bold.  
We need our folly to keep fate at bay.  
Oh, we need madness in the manifold  
Doubts and despairs which herald our decay.  
I could forgive you all and more than all.  
Yet, dearest, though for us fate waves his hand  
And we accept it as the common lot  
To meet no more at this life's festival,  
It were unseemly you should take your stand,  
Now my heart's citadel is laid in siege,  
In open field with those who love me not.  
Love has a rank which surely should oblige.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxv

THE SAME CONTINUED

And then fate strikes us. First our joys decay.  
Youth, with its pleasures, is a tale soon told.  
We grow a little poorer day by day.  
Old friendships falter. Loves grow strangely cold.  
In vain we shift our hearts to a new hold  
And barter joy for joy, the less for less.  
We doubt our strength, our wisdom, and our gold.  
We stand alone, as in a wilderness  
Of doubts and terrors. Then, if we be wise,  
We make our terms with fate and, while we may,  
Sell our life's last sad remnant for a hope.  
And it is wisdom thus to close our eyes.  
But for the foolish, those who cannot pray,  
What else remains of their dark horoscope  
But a tall tree and courage and a rope?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxvi

THE SAME CONTINUED

And who shall tell what ignominy death  
Has yet in store for us; what abject fears  
Even for the best of us; what fights for breath;  
What sobs, what supplications, what wild tears;  
What impotence of soul against despairs  
Which blot out reason?--The last trembling thought  
Of each poor brain, as dissolution nears,  
Is not of fair life lost, of Heaven bought  
And glory won. 'Tis not the thought of grief;  
Of friends deserted; loving hearts which bleed;  
Wives, sisters, children who around us weep.  
But only a mad clutching for relief  
From physical pain, importunate Nature's need;  
The search as for a womb where we may creep  
Back from the world, to hide,--perhaps to sleep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxvii

WHO WOULD LIVE AGAIN?

Oh who would live again to suffer loss?  
Once in my youth I battled with my fate,  
Grudging my days to death. I would have won  
A place by violence beneath the sun.  
I took my pleasures madly as by force,  
Even the air of heaven was a prize.  
I stood a plunderer at death's very gate,  
And all the lands of life I did o'errun  
With sack and pillage. Then I scorned to die,  
Save as a conqueror. The treasuries  
Of love I ransacked; pity, pride and hate.  
All that can make hearts beat or brim men's eyes  
With living tears I took as robes to wear.  
--But see, now time has struck me on the hip.  
I cannot hate nor love. My senses are  
Struck silent with the silence of my lip.  
No courage kindles in my heart to dare,  
No strength to do. The world's last phantoms slip  
Out of my grasp, and naught is left but pain.  
Love, life, vain strength!--Oh who would live again?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxviii

## COLD COMFORT

There is no comfort underneath the sun.  
Youth turns to age; riches are quickly spent;  
Pride breeds us pain, our pleasures punishment.  
The very courage which we count upon  
A single night of fever shall break down,  
And love is slain by fear. Death last of all  
Spreads out his nets and watches for our fall.  
There is no comfort underneath the sun!  
--When thou art old, O man, if thou wert proud  
Be humble; pride will here avail thee not.  
There is no courage which can conquer death.  
Forget that thou wert wise. Nay, keep thy breath  
For prayer, that so thy wisdom be forgot  
And thou perhaps get pity of thy God.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxx

TO ONE UNFORGOTTEN

You are not false perhaps, as lovers say  
Meaning the act,--Alas, that guilt was mine.  
Nor, maybe, have you bowed at other shrine  
Than the true god's where first you learned to pray.  
I know the idols round you. They are clay,  
Mere Dagon's to the courage half divine  
Which bears you scathless still thro' sap and mine  
And breach and storm upon your virgin way.  
Alas, I know your virtue. But your heart,  
How have you treated it? I sometimes see,  
When nights are long, a vision chaste and true  
Of pale pathetic eyes which gaze on me  
In love and grief eternal. Then I start,  
Crying aloud, and reach my arms to you.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxxix

TO ONE WHOM HE HAD LOVED TOO LONG  
Why do I cling to thee, sad love? Too long  
Thou bringest me neither pleasure to my soul  
Nor profit to my reason save in song,  
My daily utterance. See, thy beggar's dole  
Of foolish tears cannot my tears cajole;  
Thy laughter doth my laughter grievous wrong;  
Thy anger angereth me; thou heapest coal  
Of fire upon my head the drear night long  
With thy forgiveness. What is this thou wilt?  
Mine ears have ceased to hear, my tongue to speak,  
And naught is left for my spent heart to do.  
Love long has left the feast; the cup is spilt.  
Let us go too. The dawn begins to break,  
And there is mockery in this heaven of blue.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iii: Gods And False Gods: Lxxxii

HE WOULD LEAD A BETTER LIFE

I am tired of folly, tired of my own ways,  
Love is a strife. I do not want to strive.  
If I had foes I now would make my peace.  
If I less wedded were I now would wive.  
I would do service to my kind, contrive  
Something of good for men, some happiness  
For those who in the world still love and live,  
And, as my fathers did, so end my days.  
I would earn praise, I too, of honest men.  
I would repent in sackcloth if needs be.  
I would serve God and expiate my sin,  
Abjuring love and thee--ay, even thee.  
I would do this, dear love. But what am I  
To will or do? As we have lived we die.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: C

AGE

O Age, thou art the very thief of joy,  
For thou hast rifled many a proud fool  
Of all his passions, hoarded by a rule  
Of stern economy. Him, yet a boy,  
Harsh wisdom governed. Others turned to toy  
With lusty passion. He was chaste and cool  
As a young Dorian in Lycurgus' school.  
Ah me, that thou such souls shouldst dare annoy.  
Thus did he gather him a store of pleasure,  
Nor cared to touch what he so hardly won,  
But led long years of solitary strife;  
And, when the rest should have consumed their treasure,  
He thought to sit him in the evening sun  
And taste the sweet fruits of a sober life.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Ci

THE SAME CONTINUED

But thou didst come upon him ere he wist,  
A silent highwayman, and take his all  
And leave him naked, when the night should fall  
And all the road was conjured in a mist.  
Too well thou keepedst thy unholy tryst,  
As long ago that eastern seneschal  
Rode all day long to meet at evenfall  
Him he had fled ere yet the sun uprist.  
--But I have spent me like a prodigal  
The treasure of my youth, and, long ago,  
Have eaten husks among the hungry swine,  
And when I meet thee I will straightway fall  
Upon thy neck, and if the tears shall flow,  
They shall be tears of love for thee and thine.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cii

## THE VENUS OF MILO

What art thou? Woman? Goddess? Aphrodite?  
Yet never such as thou from the cold foam  
Of ocean, nor from cloudy heaven might come,  
Who wast begotten on her bridal night  
In passionate Earth's womb by Man's delight,  
When Man was young. I cannot trace in thee  
Time's handiwork. Say, rather, where is he  
For whom thy face was red which is so white?  
Thou standest ravished, broken, and thy face  
Is writ with ancient passions. Thou art dumb  
To my new love. Yet, whatsoe'er of good,  
Of crime, of pride, of passion, or of grace  
In woman is, thou, woman, hast in sum.  
Earth's archetypal Eve. All Womanhood.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Civ

THE SAME CONTINUED

O world, in very truth thou art too young,  
They gave thee love who measured out thy skies,  
And, when they found for thee another star,  
Who made a festival and straightway hung  
The jewel on thy neck. O merry world,  
Hast thou forgot the glory of those eyes  
Which first looked love in thine? Thou hast not furled  
One banner of thy bridal car for them.  
O world, in very truth thou art too young.  
There was a voice which sang about thy Spring,  
Till Winter froze the sweetness of his lips,  
And lo, the worms had hardly left his tongue  
Before thy nightingales were come again.  
O world, what courage hast thou thus to sing?  
Say, has thy merriment no secret pain  
No sudden weariness that thou art young?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cv

PALAZZO PAGANI

This is the house where, twenty years ago,  
They spent a Spring and Summer. This shut gate  
Would lead you to the terrace, and below  
To a rose garden long since desolate.  
Here they once lived. How often I have sat  
Till it was dusk among the olive trees,  
Waiting to hear their coming horse--hoofs grate  
Upon the gravel; till the freshening breeze  
Bore down a sound of voices. Even yet  
A broken echo of their laughter rings  
Through the deserted terraces; and see,  
While I am speaking, from the parapet  
There is a hand put forth, and some one flings  
Her very window open overhead.  
--How sweet it is, this scent of rosemary!  
--These are the last tears I shall ever shed.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cvi

## THE SUBLIME

To stand upon a windy pinnacle,  
Beneath the infinite blue of the blue noon,  
And underfoot a valley terrible  
As that dim gulf, where sense and being swoon  
When the soul parts; a giant valley strewn  
With giant rocks; asleep, and vast, and still,  
And far away. The torrent, which has hewn  
His pathway through the entrails of the hill,  
Now crawls along the bottom and anon  
Lifts up his voice, a muffled tremulous roar,  
Borne on the wind an instant, and then gone  
Back to the caverns of the middle air;  
A voice as of a nation overthrown  
With beat of drums, when hosts have marched to war.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cvii

THE SAME CONTINUED

Clutching the brink with hands and feet and knees,  
With trembling heart, and eyes grown strangely dim,  
A part thyself and parcel of the frieze  
Of that colossal temple raised to Time,  
To gaze on horror, till, as in a crime,  
Thou and the rocks become accomplices.  
There is no voice, no life 'twixt thee and them.  
No life! Yet, look, far down upon the breeze  
Something has passed across the bosom bare  
Of the red rocks, a leaf, a shape, a shade.  
A living shadow! Ay, above thee there,  
Weaving majestic circles overhead,  
Others are watching.--This is the sublime  
To be alone, with eagles in the air.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cviii

## A FOREST IN BOSNIA

Spirit of Trajan! What a world is here,  
What remnant of old Europe in this wood,  
Of life primaeval rude as in the year  
When thy first legions by the Danube stood.  
These are the very Dacians they subdued,  
Swineherds and shepherds clad in skins of deer  
And fox and marten still, a bestial brood,  
Than their own swine begotten swinelier.  
The fair oak--forest, their first heritage,  
Pastures them still, and still the hollow oak  
Receives them in its bosom. Still o'erhead  
Upon the stag--head tops, grown hoar with age,  
Calm buzzards sit and ancient ravens croak,  
And all with solemn life is tenanted.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cx

### THE OASIS OF SIDI KHALED

How the earth burns! Each pebble underfoot  
Is as a living thing with power to wound.  
The white sand quivers, and the footfall mute  
Of the slow camels strikes but gives no sound,  
As though they walked on flame, not solid ground.  
'Tis noon, and the beasts' shadows even have fled  
Back to their feet, and there is fire around  
And fire beneath, and overhead the sun.  
Pitiful heaven! What is this we view?  
Tall trees, a river, pools, where swallows fly,  
Thickets of oleander where doves coo,  
Shades, deep as midnight, greenness for tired eyes.  
Hark, how the light winds in the palm--tops sigh.  
Oh this is rest. Oh this is paradise.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cxi

TO THE BEDOUIN ARABS

Children of Shem! Firstborn of Noah's race,  
But still forever children; at the door  
Of Eden found, unconscious of disgrace,  
And loitering on while all are gone before;  
Too proud to dig; too careless to be poor;  
Taking the gifts of God in thanklessness,  
Not rendering aught, nor supplicating more,  
Nor arguing with Him when He hides His face.  
Yours is the rain and sunshine, and the way  
Of an old wisdom by our world forgot,  
The courage of a day which knew not death.  
Well may we sons of Japhet in dismay  
Pause in our vain mad fight for life and breath,  
Beholding you. I bow and reason not.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cxiii

TO ONE WITH HIS SONNETS

This is the book. For evil and for good,  
What my life was in it is written plain.  
These are no dreams, but things of flesh and blood,  
The past that lived and shall not live again.  
This is the book. I dare not bid you read.  
Too much of my poor soul you would unlock.  
Your own soul, if it tender were, might bleed.  
I could not bear that you should only mock.  
My life lies here. And yet in vain, dear heart,  
The tale is told. One page it yearns to see,  
One play where one best actor should find part.  
But that, alas for love! shall never be.  
Yet, if a sign you seek between these lines,  
One hidden lies for you, a sign of signs.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Cxiv

## A LATER DEDICATION

To her the sweetest, fairest, worthiest one,  
Who the inspirer is of my new praise,  
Whom lately once, one Autumn afternoon,  
I walked with nor told aught a lover says,  
And yet who knows I love her in all ways  
A maiden dreams: the suppliant at her throne,  
The counsellor of strength, the lord of lays  
Loyal to chastity and her alone,  
These rhymes I dedicate. Oh, if there be  
Still in this world of vanished creeds and kings  
Some faith in royal blood and right divine,  
Some lingering reverence paid to majesty,  
Here seek it and here find it, for it clings  
To each hushed verse like incense to a shrine.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Lxxxiv

IN ANNIVERSARIO MORTIS

If I can bring no tribute of fresh tears  
To mingle with the dust which covers thee;  
If in this latest dawn of evil years  
My rebel eyes withhold their sympathy;  
If of a truth my thoughts so barren be  
Of their old griefs, so numb to tenderness  
That they nor hear nor taste nor feel nor see  
The sweetness of thy presence in this place;  
If I now drowse,--'tis that the flesh is weak  
More than the spirit. See, by thy dear bed  
Once more I kneel in sorrow and in love.  
See, I still watch by thee if thou shouldst move,  
If thou shouldst raise thy hand or turn thy head,  
Or speak my name. And yet thou dost not speak.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Lxxxix

## THE LIMIT OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

There is a vice in the world's reasoning. Man  
Has conquered knowledge. He has conquered power;  
He has traced out the universal plan  
Of the Earth's being; and in this last hour  
He has unmade the God which he had made.  
I cannot doubt but he at length has read  
The riddle of the Earth; that he is wise.  
He also hath dominion charterèd  
Over the lands, the oceans, and the skies,  
Which toil and sweat to give him daily bread.  
--Knowledge he hath, and power upon the Earth,  
And long ago he had himself been God,  
But for the cruel secret of his birth,  
Which gave him kindred with the dust he trod,  
And for the hideous ending of his mirth,  
A fly--blown carrion festering 'neath the sod.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Lxxxv

THE SAME CONTINUED

These flowers shall be my offering, living flowers  
Which here shall die with you in sacrifice,  
Flowers from the empty fields which once were yours  
And now are mine. No gold, nor myrrh, nor spice,  
Nor any dead man's offering may suffice.  
I love not flowers: but thus to deck a grave  
Which has no need of things of greater price.  
Life is the only tribute death would have.  
--Ah, thou art dead. Mine is this fair domain  
With all its living beauty and brave shows  
Of lawn, and lake, and garden; mine the increase  
Of the year's harvest, the slow growth of trees,  
And that fair natural wealth we loved in vain,  
Flowers, which shall never more adorn my house.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Lxxxvi

THE SAME CONTINUED

It is not true the dead unhonoured were  
If they returned to life. Nay, claim thine own,  
And see how gladly I, thy ``thankless heir,"  
Will yield thee back possession of thy throne.  
I am not so in love with riches grown  
That such can comfort me. Alas, too long  
The fields are furrowed and the wheat is sown  
For my sole grief that these should do thee wrong.  
I hold these things not wholly as in fee,  
But thinking that perhaps some happy day  
We yet may walk together, and devise  
Of the old lands we loved, in Paradise,  
And I shall give account, as best I may,  
How I thy tenant was awhile for thee.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Lxxxvii

THE SAME CONTINUED

Thy ways were not my ways. Thy life was peace,  
And mine has been a battle. Thou didst store  
Thy soul's wealth sternly to a sure increase,  
And thy revenue's much still swelled to more.  
Thou squanderedst nothing on the pomp of war,  
The lust of glory. No mad covetous eyes  
Were thine upon thy neighbour's lands afar,  
His wealth, his wife, his fenceless vanities.  
Thou wert a brave, just man, whom all men knew  
And trusted, and some loved, and thou to me  
Wert as a tower of strength, a sanctuary  
To which I fled from the world's maddened crew,  
Wounded by me, and there with bloodstained hands  
Clung to the altar of thy innocence.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Lxxxviii

THE SAME CONTINUED

There were two with thee in thine agony,  
I and another. In that hour supreme  
We stood beside thy cross and gazed at thee,  
Waiting till death should wake thee from thy dream.  
Thy hands held both our hands and clung to them  
And drew them to each other. We could see  
Thy dumb lips open as to either name  
And thy eyes turn to our eyes wistfully.  
O eloquent eyes! Ye were not closed in vain.  
Still from the grave ye speak, `` Behold a son,  
Behold a mother." From that rite of pain  
We two went home together bone of bone  
And flesh of flesh, distinguished among men,  
Thy witnesses till death shall come again.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xc

### THE PRIDE OF UNBELIEF

When I complained that I had lost my hope  
Of life eternal with the eternal God;  
When I refused to read my horoscope  
In the unchanging stars, or claim abode  
With powers and dominations, but, poor clod,  
Clung to the earth and grovelled in my tears,  
Because I soon must lie beneath the sod  
And close the little number of my years,--  
Then I was told that pride had barred the way,  
And raised this foul rebellion in my head.  
Yet, strange rebellion! I, but yesterday,  
Was God's own son in His own likeness bred.  
And thrice strange pride! who thus am cast away  
And go forth lost and disinherited.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xcii

WRITTEN IN DISTRESS

We sometimes sit in darkness. I long while  
Have sat there, in a shadow as of death.  
My friends and comforters no longer smile,  
And they who grudge me wrongfully my breath  
Are strong and many. I am bowed beneath  
A weight of trouble and unjust reproach  
From many fools and friends of little faith.  
The world is little worth, yet troubles much.  
But I am comforted in this, that I,  
Although my face is darkened to men's eyes  
And all my life eclipsed with angry wars,  
Now see things hidden; and I seem to spy  
New worlds above my heaven. Night is wise  
And joy a sun which never guessed the stars.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xciii

## A DISAPPOINTMENT

Spring, of a sudden, came to life one day.  
Ere this, the Winter had been cold and chill.  
That morning first the Summer air did fill  
The world, making bleak March seem almost May.  
The daffodils were blooming golden gay;  
The birch trees budded purple on the hill;  
The rose, that clambered up the window--sill,  
Put forth a crimson shoot. All yesterday  
The winds about the casement chilly blew,  
But now the breeze that played before the door  
So caught the dead leaves that I thought there flew  
Brown butterflies up from the grassy floor.  
--But someone said you came not. Ah, too true!  
And I, I thought that Winter reigned once more.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xciv

A YEAR AGO

A year ago I too was proud of May,  
I too delighted in the blackbird's song.  
When the sun shone my soul made holiday.  
When the rain fell I felt it as a wrong.  
Then for me too the world was fresh and young.  
Oh what a miracle each bluebell was!  
How my heart leaped in union with my tongue,  
When first I lit upon a stag's horn moss!  
--A year ago! Alas, one Summer's fire,  
One autumn's chill, one Winter's discontent,  
And now one Spring of joy and hope deferred  
Have brought me to this pass of undesire  
That I behold May's veil of beauty rent  
And stand unmoved by sun and flower and bird.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xcix

YOUTH

Youth, ageless youth, the old gods' attribute!  
--To inherit cheeks a--tingle with such blood  
As wood nymphs blushed, who to the first--blown flute  
Went out in endless dancing through the wood.  
To live, and taste of that immortal food  
After the wild day's waste prepared for us  
By deathless hands, and straightway be renewed,  
Like the god's entrails upon Caucasus.  
To rise at dawn with eye and brain and sense  
Clear as the pale green edge where dawn began,  
While each bold thought full shapen should arise,  
Cutting the horizon of experience,  
Sharp as an obelisk.--Ah, wretched Man!  
'Tis little wonder that the gods are wise.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xcv

HE IS NOT A POET

I would not, if I could, be called a poet.  
I have no natural love of the ``chaste muse."  
If aught be worth the doing I would do it;  
And others, if they will, may tell the news.  
I care not for their laurels but would choose  
On the world's field to fight or fall or run.  
My soul's ambition will not take excuse  
To play the dial rather than the sun.  
The faith I held I hold, as when a boy  
I left my books for cricket--bat and gun.  
The tales of poets are but scholars' themes.  
In my hot youth I held it that a man  
With heart to dare and stomach to enjoy  
Had better work to his hand in any plan  
Of any folly, so the thing were done,  
Than in the noblest dreaming of mere dreams.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xcvi

## ON THE SHORTNESS OF TIME

If I could live without the thought of death,  
Forgetful of time's waste, the soul's decay,  
I would not ask for other joy than breath  
With light and sound of birds and the sun's ray.  
I could sit on untroubled day by day  
Watching the grass grow, and the wild flowers range  
From blue to yellow and from red to grey  
In natural sequence as the seasons change.  
I could afford to wait, but for the hurt  
Of this dull tick of time which chides my ear.  
But now I dare not sit with loins ungirt  
And staff unlifted, for death stands too near.  
I must be up and doing--ay, each minute.  
The grave gives time for rest when we are in it.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Love Sonnets Of Proteus. Part Iv: Vita Nova: Xcviii

## SONNET IN ASSONANCE

A thousand bluebells blossom in the wood,  
Shut in a tangled brake of briar roses,  
And guarded well from every wanton foot,  
A treasure by no eye of man beholden,  
No eye but mine. No other tongue hath spoken  
Out to the joyless world what hidden joys  
Lie there untasted, mines of wealth unnoted,  
While a starved world without lives blank and void.  
--Ah, couldst thou know, poor wretch, what I have known,  
See what I saw upon that bank enshrined,  
Soft pity had not wholly left thy soul  
And tears had dimmed thy hard eyes uninvited.  
Eyes that are cruel--bright with hunger's brightness,  
Hunger for beauty, solitude, and peace.  
There hadst thou found a beauty and a silence,  
Such as nor tongue can tell nor fancy dream.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Old Squire

I LIKE the hunting of the hare  
Better than that of the fox;  
I like the joyous morning air,  
And the crowing of the cocks.

I like the calm of the early fields,  
The ducks asleep by the lake,  
The quiet hour which Nature yields  
Before mankind is awake.

I like the pheasants and feeding things  
Of the unsuspecting morn;  
I like the flap of the wood-pigeon's wings  
As she rises from the corn.

I like the blackbird's shriek, and his rush  
From the turnips as I pass by,  
And the partridge hiding her head in a bush,  
For her young ones cannot fly.

I like these things, and I like to ride,  
When all the world is in bed,  
To the top of the hill where the sky grows wide,  
And where the sun grows red.

The beagles at my horse heels trot  
In silence after me;  
There 's Ruby, Roger, Diamond, Dot,  
Old Slut and Margery,—

A score of names well used, and dear,  
The names my childhood knew;  
The horn, with which I rouse their cheer,  
Is the horn my father blew.

I like the hunting of the hare  
Better than that of the fox;  
The new world still is all less fair  
Than the old world it mocks.

I covet not a wider range  
Than these dear manors give;  
I take my pleasures without change,  
And as I lived I live.

I leave my neighbors to their thought;  
My choice it is, and pride,  
On my own lands to find my sport,  
In my own fields to ride.

The hare herself no better loves  
The field where she was bred,  
Than I the habit of these groves,  
My own inherited.

I know my quarries every one,  
The meuse where she sits low;  
The road she chose to-day was run  
A hundred years ago.

The lags, the gills, the forest ways,  
The hedgerows one and all,  
These are the kingdoms of my chase,  
And bounded by my wall;

Nor has the world a better thing,  
Though one should search it round,  
Than thus to live one's own sole king,  
Upon one's own sole ground.

I like the hunting of the hare;  
It brings me, day by day,  
The memory of old days as fair,  
With dead men passed away.

To these, as homeward still I ply  
And pass the churchyard gate,  
Where all are laid as I must lie,  
I stop and raise my hat.

I like the hunting of the hare;

New sports I hold in scorn.  
I like to be as my fathers were,  
In the days e'er I was born.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Pleasures Of Love

I do not care for kisses. 'Tis a debt  
We paid for the first privilege of love.  
These are the rains of April which have wet  
Our fallow hearts and forced their germs to move.  
Now the green corn has sprouted. Each new day  
Brings better pleasures, a more dear surprise,  
The blade, the ear, the harvest--and our way  
Leads through a region wealthy grown and wise.  
We now compare our fortunes. Each his store  
Displays to kindred eyes of garnered grain,  
Two happy farmers, learned in love's lore,  
Who weigh and touch and argue and complain--  
Dear endless argument! Yet sometimes we  
Even as we argue kiss. There! Let it be.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Pre-Adamite World

Who shall declare the glory of the World,  
The natural World before Man's form was seen?  
Fair stainless planet through the heavens hurled,  
And clothed in garments of immortal green!  
What depths of forest girt her! What serene  
Pastures were hers for cattle numberless  
Owning no lord save her, their guileless queen,  
Dear Nature's self who ruled them but to bless!  
If there was war in Heaven, peace reigned on Earth.  
Not by disease did the world's life grow tame,  
But by the hand of God, in drought or dearth  
Or sudden palsy when the lion came.  
Death! who should fear him or his mercy sue,  
Whose last pang was the first each creature knew?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Rowfant Catalogue

Friends had he many, neighbours next to none.  
Rowfant and Crabbet lay few fields apart.  
Each Sunday saw him here, his church drill done,  
Duly stroll in to talk of books and art,  
Entrapped, may--be, to share my modest tart,  
Roast fowl and claret, and an evening won  
In stealth from Sabbath bonds strange to his heart.  
Childlike he prized these truant bursts of fun.  
--Long years ago! It needs his wit to jog  
Old time to life. Yet I remember well  
Companioning him home to the hill's top  
Keen on his books, and how he paused to tell  
Eager the first news of this Catalogue.  
Reading it, see, the tears come and I stop.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Soul's Mutiny

I saw a galley passing to the West,  
Its silken sails aglow as if with blood,  
When the red sun dropped down into his nest,  
And hurled his level spears across the flood.  
And at its prow a mighty woman stood  
With braided locks of blackest ebony,  
While from the thick--fringed eyes her haughty mood  
Flashed forth in all disdainful majesty.

For she was tall and vested like a queen,  
And from her shoulders in imperial fold  
A striped tunic, wrought of black and green  
With strange device of dragons manifold,  
Fell to her waist and rippled o'er with gold,  
Where caught up in a girdle loosely bound,  
Then freely down in potent masses rolled  
And clung about her feet and clasped the ground.

And ever and anon, with gracious smile  
Lighting the royal sculpture of her face,  
She gave commands. And each his joyful toil  
Plied at her word, and with redoubled grace  
Bent to his oar, and working still in place  
Did all her bidding. And the ship moved on  
As one which, wagered in a mighty race,  
Sailed surely to the front and surely won.

And next I saw a slender child who seemed  
Sprung from the river god's unearthly dew,  
And in his face the light of wisdom gleamed  
And round about in flashing circles flew.  
And he arose and whispered to the few  
Who sat beside him, and to each in turn  
He told his counsel thus to all the crew  
In honied words which I had wished to learn.

And at his voice each rower dropped his oar,  
And the sail flapped unguided on the mast,  
And discord rose, the while upon the shore

Drifted the galley down the current fast.  
And she who stood upon the prow had cast  
Her angry words upon the storm in vain,  
Though her deep tones came peeling down the blast  
As though the heavens should be rent in twain.

And then I marked her, when she first espied  
The fair child which had made this harm to be.  
There was great wonder mingled with her pride  
That one so tenderly designed as he  
Should dare dispute with her old mastery.  
And yet nor anger nor proud looks might quell  
The fearless eyes which smiled out mutiny,  
Till her own heart seemed stricken with the spell,

With wonderment fast quickening to dismay,  
And a dull rage which smouldered 'neath her brows.  
And then rage, wonder, pride did fade away  
Before the cruel thought which lastly rose  
From out her mad heart with colossal throes,  
A thought so heavy--black that I did guess  
It came full freighted with the immortal woes  
Of an old god dethroned and heavenless.

For, sudden, with a shout, her arms she threw  
High o'er her head, a torch in either hand,  
And round the ship the flames triumphant flew,  
The shrivelling sails fell low, while still she fanned  
With tempest voice the leaping fire which spanned  
The sinking galley with an arch of flame.  
I heard her thunder forth her last command  
And bid the traitors perish in their shame.

The ship went down, and a sad cry arose,  
Stifled with smoke and rushing waters in.  
The silent stream, as heedless of men's woes,  
Went on its way as they had never been.  
The brave ship rots upon the ooze, I ween,  
And naked limbs lie stark upon the shore,  
Long ripples lap that angry--hearted queen  
And wash those mutinous eyes for evermore.



# The Stealing Of The Mare - I

In the name of God the Merciful, the Compassionate! He who narrateth this tale is Abu Obeyd, and he saith:

When I took note and perceived that the souls of men were in pleasure to hear good stories, and that their ears were comforted and that they made good cheer in the listening, then called I to mind the tale of the Agheyli Jaber and his mare, and of all that befell him and his people. For this is a story of wonderful adventure and marvellous stratagems, and a tale which when one heareth he desireth to have it evermore in remembrance as a delight tasted once by him and not forgotten.

And the telling of it is this:

The Emir Abu Zeyd the Helali Salameh was sitting one morning in his tent with the Arabs of the Beni Helal and the Lords of the tribe. And lo, there appeared before them in the desert the figure of one wandering to and fro alone. And this was Ghanimeh. And the Emir Abu Zeyd said to his slave Abul Komsan, ``Go forth thou, and read me the errand of this fair Lady and bring me word again." And Abul Komsan went forth as he was bidden, and presently returned to them with a smiling countenance, and he said, ``O my Lord, there is the best of news for thee, for this is one that hath come a guest to thee, and she desireth something of thee, for fate hath oppressed her and troubles sore are on her head. And she hath told me all her story and the reason of her coming, and that it is from her great sorrow of mind; for she had once an husband, and his name was Dagher abul Jud, a great one of the Arabs. And to them was born a son named Amer ibn el Keram, and the boy's uncle's name was En Naaman. And when the father died, then the uncle possessed himself of all the inheritance, and he drove forth the widow from the tribe; and he hath kept the boy as a herder of his camels; and this for seven years. And Ghanimeh all that time was in longing for her son. But at the end of the seventh year she returned to seek the boy. Then Naaman struck her and drove her forth. And Amer, too, the boy, his nephew, is in trouble, for Naaman will not now yield to the boy that he should marry his daughter, though she was promised to him, and he hath betrothed her to another. And when Amer begged him for the girl (for the great ones of the tribe pitied the boy, and there had interceded for him fifty--and--five of the princes), he answered, `Nay, that may not be, not though in denying it I should taste of the cup of evil things. But, if he be truly desirous of the girl and would share all things with me in my good fortune, then let him bring me the mare of the Agheyli Jaber,--and the warriors be witness of my word thereto.' But when the men of the tribe heard this talk, they said to one another: `There is none able to do this thing but only Abu Zeyd.' And thus hath this lady come to thee. And I entreat thee, my lord, look into her business and do for her what is

needful."

And when Abu Zeyd heard this word of his slave Abul Komsan he rejoiced exceedingly, and his heart waxed big within him, and he threw his cloak as a gift to Abul Komsan, and he bade him go to the Lady Ghanimeh and treat her with all honour, for, ``I needs," said he, ``must see to her affairs and quiet her mind." So Abul Komsan returned to her, and he built for her a tent, and did all that was needed. And Abu Zeyd bade him attend upon her and bring her dresses of honour and all things meet for her service.

Then began the Narrator to sing:

Saith the hero Abu Zeyd the Helali Salameh:

(Woe is me, my heart is a fire, a fire that burneth!)

On a Friday morning once, I sat with three companions,

I in my tent, the fourth of four, with the sons of Amer.

Sudden I raised my eyes and gazed at the breadth of the desert,

Searching the void afar, the empty hills and the valleys;

Lo, in the midmost waste a form, where the rainways Sundered,

Wandering uncertain round in doubt, with steps of a stranger.

Turned I to Abul Komsan, my slave, and straightway I bade him,

``Ho, thou master of signs, expound to us this new comer."

Abul Komsan arose and went, and anon returning,

``Fortune fair," said he, ``I bring and a noble token.

O my Lord Abu Zeyd," he cried, and his lips were smiling,

``Here is a guest of renown for thee, a stranger, a lady,

One for the wounding of hearts, a dame of illustrious lineage,

One whose heart is on fire with grief, and sorely afflicted."

The dark one threw off his cloak to Abul Komsan in guerdon,

Even I, Abu Zeyd Salameh, the while my companions

Rose with me all as I rose in my place, we four rejoicing,

Hassan and Abu Kheyl Diab, and the Kadi Faïd.

And first of them Hassan spake and said, ``Is my name not Hassan?

Sultan and chief and lord am I of the lords of the Bedu.

Shall not my tent stand free to all, to each guest that cometh?

So God send her to me, be they hers, two thousand camels."

And Abu Kheyl uprose, and with him the Kadi Faïd.

``And I," said he, ``no less will give to this dame two thousand."

Nor was the Kadi slow to speak: ``Though this pen and paper

All my poor fortune be," said he, ``I will name her thirty."

But I, Salameh, said, ``By my faith, these gifts were little;

Mine be a larger vow." And I swore an oath and I promised

All that she would to bring, nay, all her soul demanded,

Even a service of fear, a thing from the land of danger.



And thus they sat in discourse till the hour of noon was upon them,  
 And the caller called to prayer, and the great ones prayed assembled;  
 And these too in their place, and they stood in prayer together.  
 And when they had made an end of praises and prostrations,  
 Back to the tent came they, and still behold the lady  
 Wandering in doubt uncertain there with steps of a stranger.  
 Then to the desert went I forth, and I called and I shouted,  
 ``Marhaba, welcome to thee," I cried, ``thou illustrious lady,  
 Welcomes as many be to thee as the leagues thou hast wandered."  
 And she, ``I seek the hero, the Knight of Helal ibn Amer,  
 Bring me to him, the renowned of might, the hero of Amer."  
 And I, ``I hear and obey, though I am not of the great ones.  
 Raise thy eyes and behold him here, the Sultan Hassan,  
 And with him Abu Musa Diab, the light of Zoghbat,  
 Best of the swordsmen he, and our learned Kadi Faïd,  
 The reader of the word, the learnedest of the learned,  
 And with them Aziz ed Din and El Hajin and Amer,  
 Fifty and five of the best, Fulano and Fulano.  
 These be men of their word; asking thou shalt obtain it:  
 Ask thou all that thou wilt, even all thy soul desireth."  
 But she, ``Nay, thou dost mock, thou slave and idle talker,  
 Not of these would I hear nor of other than Salameh,  
 Salameh Abu Zeyd, Chief of Helal ibn Amer.  
 Why art thou mute of him for whom my soul is kindled?"  
 And I, ``Myself am he, the Helali Salameh,  
 Welcome to thee, and welcome as wide as thou hast wandered."  
 And she prayed, ``O Abu Zeyd, behold me here thy stranger.  
 A boon I ask, O dark one, a mighty deed of daring.  
 Thy suppliant am I, thou son of Risk Salameh,  
 From the distress of time behold my tears are flowing.  
 For this one boon behold me pleading here before thee.  
 I have tasted Fortune's change. I plead by the day of judgment."  
 And I, ``What is thy want, O Lady, that I grant it?  
 All, to the cord, I give, so thy tears cease from flowing."  
 And she, ``O man admired! A great one was my husband,  
 A knight, a prince of lineage, Abul Jud Dagher,  
 A man of mighty wealth, stored up in many houses,  
 Wealth whose sole catalogue were a library of volumes.  
 He dying left behind with me our one son Amer,  
 To me and to the hate of an ill--minded uncle.  
 For when that Abul Jud was gathered to his fathers,  
 And sent from his loved home to death's unjoyful dwellings,

Behold this Naaman, this man he called his brother,  
In arms against our house, he with his evil--doers,  
Raiding all our wealth and making Amer captive.  
Thus weeping did I flee, and seven long years an exile  
Bore I his heart with me like a bird ever flying.  
And then, the seven years done, to the dear place forbidden  
Turned I in my love and my sweet son's remembrance.  
And when he saw me near he called to me, `O mother,  
Behold me in what straits I lie through men of evil  
(And these may God requite!). Seven years behold me outcast,  
Herding the flocks afar each day in the lone desert,  
And in my uncle's tent nightly a guest unwelcome.  
Yet was there one with me, his daughter fair, Betina,  
Whom I, as of little count, might wander with unquestioned  
Until but few days since. But now another suitor  
Asking her hand hath come, and with him brave companions.  
And for this suitor's sake am I forbid her presence.  
And what then, O my mother, shall I do, my mother,  
Who have neither riches, though my soul is generous,  
Nor wile nor stratagem in my life's little wisdom?  
How shall I win to her, this fair child of my uncle?  
How shall I answer her, her greetings night and morning?  
Thus spake he, and I heard, and with a heart of anger  
Went I forth with him my son, and to the tribesmen  
Pleaded in every tent his cause, we two as suppliants,  
Calling on all their chiefs to give the hand of succour.  
And fifty and five of them were those who lent agreement,  
This one and that with joy, Fulano and Fulano.  
And with them Selman was, Abul Jud el Aser.  
And Jafferi was there, Khalifa ibn Nasser,  
And many more of note. And they rose and went assembled  
To the council of the king, and found him there in judgment  
Set with his valiant men, and meting out obedience.  
And when En Naaman saw them he cried to them in welcome:  
`Sit ye, O chiefs, with me,' and made their place beside him,  
And when he found them mute and of their manner bashful,  
`Ye have come,' said he, `to speak of him, my brother's orphan.'  
And they, `Ay, of a truth. We ask for him Betina.'  
And he, `Be short of words. From me ye shall get no lying.  
Nasser hath come for her, and with him a brave dowry.  
This one, what hath he (speak) beside his beggar's portion?'  
And they, `But we will give. So be thy mind unburdened,

And his, too, of the doubt. We stand to thee his guarants.'  
 And Selman spake, 'Behold it, to the last coin, his dowry.'  
 And Jafferi, 'Nor less, things needed for the wedding.  
 All that thou wilt we bring, a gift to thee and Amer.'  
 Then answered them the hero, En Naaman, the chieftain:  
 'List to my word, O chiefs, O generous--minded princes.  
 Let him but bring one thing, the thing my soul desireth,  
 So shall I stand content, nor ask a further dowry,  
 Necklace, nor chain, nor ring, nor ornament of silver,  
 Nor silk, nor broidered robe, and, lo, my word is on it.  
 He shall be to me a son, and I will love him truly,  
 More than a brother's son, in all things first and foremost.  
 But come he empty--handed, the girl shall be another's.'  
 And so with a pious phrase the hero left them wondering.  
 And straightway questioned all, 'And what is this, O Naaman?'  
 Laughing he made reply, 'The mare of Agheyli Jaber.'  
 Then on the chiefs assembled there fell as it were a tremor,  
 And each man looked at each, nor made they further pleading,  
 Only with whispered looks the thought passed round in silence,  
 'This thing can no man bring, nor he were a Jinn in cunning,  
 Not though on wings he flew.' But Amer in his longing,  
 Swore he the deed would do for sake of her, Betina.  
 And when I learned it all, how it had fared in council,  
 From my poor head the wits, O Sheykh Salameh, wandered.  
 And since that day of trouble (listen, O Helali!)  
 Around the world of men have I in anguish wandered,  
 Seeking of kings and chiefs and princes of the Arabs  
 Which one shall help our case, and all in turn have answered,  
 'This is a deed of deeds meet only for Salameh.  
 There is but one thy help, he of Helal ibn Amer.'  
 Thus have I come to thee on my soul's faith, Salameh,  
 Thee the champion proved of all whose hearts are doubting,  
 Thee the doer of right, the scourge of the oppressor,  
 Thee the breeze in autumn, thee the winter's coolness,  
 Thee the morning's warmth after a night of watching,  
 Thee the wanderer's joy, well of the living water,  
 Thee to thy foeman's lips as colocynth of the desert,  
 Thee the river Nile, in the full day of his flooding,  
 When he hath mounted high and covereth the islands.  
 Behold me thus for thee clothed in the robes of amber.  
 Beyond thee there is none save the sole Lord of pity.  
 Thou art my last appeal, O Helali Salameh,

Glory of the Arabs, beauty of all beholders."  
Thus then spoke Ghanimeh, and Abu Zeyd made answer,  
``Nay, but a thousand welcomes, O thou mother of Amer,  
Welcomes as many be as the leagues thy feet have wandered.  
Fear thou nought at our hand, nay, only but fair dealing."  
And the hero Abu Zeyd called to his servant loudly:  
``Forth, O Abul Komsan, nor let thy footsteps linger."  
And the slave said, ``Yes and yes, O thou beloved of the Arabs."  
And he, ``Go with this lady and build her a pavilion,  
With breadths of perfumed silk, and bid prepare all dainties  
That she may eat of the best, and serve her in due honour.  
For well it is in life to be of all things generous,  
Ere we are called away to death's unjoyful dwellings,  
Even of the shoulder meat, that the guests may rise up praising."  
And Abul Komsan went and all things set in order,  
Even as he was bid, at the word of his lord Salameh.

Said the Narrator:

And, when the lady had made an end of talking, then agreed the Emir Abu Zeyd to all her desires, and he delivered her into the hand of Abul Komsan, and bade him to do her honour and to serve her in his own person, and not through the persons of others, and he gave him his commands, saying: ``Take charge of her thus and thus, the while I go forth and see diligently to her affairs." And Abul Komsan did as he was commanded.

And immediately the Emir Abu Zeyd arose and went into his own tent and took out a herdsman's wallet and a lute, and went forth in disguise as a singer, of the singers of ballads. And thus travestied he came to the Assembly that he might take his leave of the Sultan Hassan and of the rest. And Hassan said to him, ``O Mukheymer, whither goest thou, and what is thy design?" And Abu Zeyd made answer, ``I am of a mind to journey abroad, even to the land of the Agheyli Jaber." And so he disclosed to him all his plan, both what was without and what was within, the manifest and the hidden. And as he spoke behold the Sultan's countenance changed, and he grew pale, and ``Goest thou," said he, ``to the land of our enemy, and takest thou from us the light of thy countenance? Leave now this adventure, and we will determine all things as is best for the fair lady." But Abu Zeyd said: ``Nay, for the like of me that were a disgrace and a shame, and need is that I go: ay, though I were given to drink of the cup of confusion, yet must I go forward." And Diab said, ``May no such disgrace befall thee, nor confusion, for this would be to us all a sign that thou lackedst understanding." And Abu Zeyd said, ``Lengthen not thy words." And the Kadi calling to the others, said, ``My mind is that you should prevent him, even if it were by force, from his purpose, nor let him go." But when Abu Zeyd heard that word of the

Kadi his wrath flamed forth, and he said, ``How! would ye deal with me in this wise, with me, the Emir Abu Zeyd?"

Now the ears of the tribe were filled with these sayings, and their mouths with the noise of them. But none was able to turn Abu Zeyd from his way. And his sister Rih came to dissuade him. Yet he listened not to her words, but soothed and consoled her only, and bade her farewell. And he departed on his quest, going by the desolate valleys of the desert.

Then once more the Narrator singeth:

Saith the hero, Abu Zeyd Salameh Mukheymer:

``Needs must I haste abroad to the wide breadths of desert,  
What though I fare afar to death's unjoyful dwellings?  
Constrained of my guest I go to do her pleasure's bidding."  
And speaking thus he turned and went to his pavilion,  
And clothed himself anew in his most cheerful raiment,  
Lengthening his kaftan's sleeves and rolling broad his turban,  
Till in disguise he stood, a singer of the singers,  
With wallet in his hand and lute for his sole armour,  
But in his head what store of strategy and cunning!  
And thus to the Divan, wherein the chiefs assembled  
Crowded all the floor as it were the market of Amer.  
And when the Sultan Hassan beheld him at the tent ropes,  
Loudly he cried to him, ``Thou goest forth? And whither?  
Tell us, O Abu Zeyd, what meaneth this thy venture?"  
And I, Salameh, said, ``It is a thing of honour.  
A lady came to me, O Hassan, one a stranger,  
To ask a deed of me, and my own tongue hath bound me.  
For when I cried to her, `What is thy need, O lady?'  
She answered, `This I need, the mare of Agheyli Jaber.'"  
And the Sultan Hassan hearing, struck his two palms together,  
And he cried, ``O Abu Helal, thine is a case of evil.  
How hast thou staked thy life? Nay, rather leave this daring.  
Thine shall the camels be--ay, even the two thousand."  
And I, ``Alas, for shame! Such failure were unseemly.  
Or will I bring the mare or stand no more among ye,  
Nay, though my way be death." Then answered Abu Musa,  
``Madman thou art and fool. This is beyond thy winning,  
Not though thy back grew wings." And I, ``Forbear vain pleadings.  
Base surely were the man less prompt to do than promise."  
But next the Kadi came and fingered at his turban,  
And with him Rih my sister, and she called to him, ``Helali,  
Wilt thou not stay this champion?" And I, ``Nay, hold thy clamour

Lest I should cut thee short, even with this sword, my sister."  
And the Kadi: ``Hear, O people. This warrior is foolhardy.  
Bring forth the brazen fetters to bind this Father of Patience."  
And hearing, Abu Zeyd was wrath with wrath exceeding,  
And his hand set to his sword and ``Ho," said he, ``ye mad ones!  
Talk ye to lay in fetter me who am named Salameh,  
Me, the strength of Helal, who clothed the tribe in glory?  
Nay, were it not for shame I would hew ye all in pieces."  
And Rih cried, ``Woe is me, the burning of my trouble!  
How shall I quench this flame? Yet shall he take our blessing."  
And I, ``The word farewell is but a wound to the goer.  
Cease, therefore, from thy tears." And weeping thus she left me.  
But I my camel mounted and went my way in silence,  
Going by paths unknown in the wide, trackless desert,  
Nor turned my head again when they had turned back silent.  
Thus was our parting done. Shame rest with the gainsayer.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Stricken Hart

The stricken hart had fled the brake,  
His courage spent for life's dear sake.  
He came to die beside the lake.

The golden trout leaped up to view,  
The moorfowl clapped his wings and crew,  
The swallow brushed him as she flew.

He looked upon the glorious sun,  
His blood dropped slowly on the stone,  
He loved the life so nearly won,

And then he died. The ravens found  
A carcase couched upon the ground,  
They said their god had dealt the wound.

The Eternal Father calmly shook  
One page untitled from life's book.  
Few words. None ever cared to look.

Yet woe for life thus idly riven.  
He blindly loved what God had given,  
And love, some say, has conquered Heaven.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Toad

O who shall tell us of the truth of things?  
The day was ending blood--red in the West  
After a storm. The sun had smelted down  
As in a furnace all the clouds to gold.  
Upon a cart track by a pool of rain,  
Dumbly with calm eyes fixed upon the heavens,  
A toad sat thinking. It was wretchedness  
That gazed on majesty. Ah, who shall tell  
The very truth of things, the hidden law  
Of pain and ugliness? Byzantium bred  
Growths of Augustuli, Great Rome her crimes,  
As Earth breeds flowers, the firmament its suns,  
And the toad too his crop of ulcerous sores.

The leaves turned purple on the vermeil trees;  
The rain lay like a mirror in the ruts;  
The dying sun shook his last banners out;  
Birds sang in whispers, and the world grew dumb  
With the hush of evening and forgetfulness.  
Then too the toad forgot himself and all  
His daylight shame, as he looked out bright--eyed  
Into the sweet face of the coming night.  
For who shall tell? He too the accursed one  
Dreamt of a blessing. There is not a creature  
On whom the infinite heaven hath not smiled  
Wildly and tenderly; no thing impure  
Monstrous deformed and hideous but he holds  
The immensity of the starlight in his eyes.

A priest came by and saw the unholy thing,  
And with his foot, even as his prayers he read,  
Trod it aside and shuddered and went on.  
A woman with a wild flower in her bosom  
Came next and at the eye's light mirrored there  
Aimed her umbrella point. Now he was old,  
And she was beautiful. Then home from school  
Ran four boys with young faces like the dawn.  
` ` I was a child, was weak, was pitiless":  
Thus must each man relate who would begin



The true tale of his life. A child hath all,  
Joy, laughter, mirth. He is drunk with life's delight.  
Hope's day--star breaketh in his innocent eyes.  
He hath a mother. He is just a boy,  
A little man who breathes the untrammelled air  
Clean--winded and clean--limbed, and he is free  
And the world loves him. Why should he not then  
For lack of sorrow strike the sorrowful?

The toad dragged down the deep track of the road.  
It was the hour when from the hollows round  
Blue mists steal creeping low upon the fields.  
His wild heart sought the night. Just then the children  
Came on the fugitive and all together  
Cried ``Let us kill him. We will punish him  
For being so ugly." And at the word they laughed.  
(For children laugh when they do murder.) Then  
They thrust at him with sticks and where the eye  
Bulged from its socket made a ghastlier wound  
Opening his sores. The passers by looked on,  
And they too laughed. And then the night fell down  
Black on the blackness of his martyrdom  
Who was so dumb. And when the blood flowed out  
It was horrible blood. And he was horrible.  
That was his crime. And still along the lane  
The creature sprawled. One foot had been shorn away  
By a child's spade, and at each new blow aimed  
Its jaws foamed blood, poor damnéd suffering thing,  
Which even when the sun had soothed its hide  
Had skulked in holes. And the children mocked the more:  
``Wretch. Would you spit at us?" O strange child's heart!  
What rage is thine to pluck thus at the robe  
Of misery and taunt it with its pain?

And so from clod to clod, from briar to briar,  
But breathing still, in his dull fear he fled  
Seeking a shelter from their tyrannous eyes.  
So mean a thing, it seemed Death shrank from him  
Refusing aid of his all pitying scythe.  
And the children followed on with rushes noosed  
To take him, but he slipped between their hands  
And fell, so chanced it, where the rut gaped deepest,

Into a mire of mud; cool hiding place  
It was and refuge for his mangled limbs,  
And there he quaking lay. The anointing slime  
Soothed his hurt body like a sacrament,  
An extreme unction for his utter need.  
Nor yet was safety won. The children's eyes,  
Abominable eyes, were on him still  
With their hard mirth. ``Is there no stone?" they cried,  
``To end him with? Here, Jeremiah, Jim,  
Lend us a hand." And willing hands were lent.

Once more, O child of Man! I ask it. Say  
What is the goal of thy desire? What aim  
Is thine? What target wouldst thou hit? What win?  
Say. Is it death or life? The stone was brought,  
A ponderous mass, broad as a paving flag,  
But light in his young hands that bore it in,  
Pride giving strength to lift, and the lust to kill.  
``You shall see what this will do," the young giant cried.  
And all stood near expectant of the end.

And then a new thing happened, a new chance.  
A coster's dray, drawn by an ancient ass,  
Passed down the lane. With creaking wheels it came  
And slow harsh jolts in the ruts. The ass was lean  
And stiff with age, spavined, with foundered feet,  
And dead to blows which rained on his dull hide.  
Each step he stumbled. He was near his home,  
After a long day's labour in the field,  
And began to scent his stable, while the cart  
Lagged in the ruts, or with shafts forward thrown  
Pressed his galled sides and thrust its load on him,  
At the downward slope where the lane left the hill,  
More than his strength. A mist was in his eyes  
And that dull stupor which foreshadows death.  
Thus the cart moved, its driver cursing loud,  
Its driven dumb, while the whip cracked in time.  
The ass was in his dreams beyond our thought,  
Plunged in those depths of soul where no man strays.

And the children heard the cart upon the road.  
It gave them a new thought. And ``Stop," they cried,

` ` Let the stone be. We shall have better sport  
Here with the wheels. This ass will do the thing."  
And they stood aside and watched what next should come.  
And the cart drew near, its wheels sunk in the rut  
Where the toad lay, the ass with his dull eyes  
Fixed on the path before him, his head down  
Nosing the ground in apathy of thought.  
And the ass stopped. He, the sad slave of pain,  
Had seen the vision of a sadder slave  
Needing his pity, and being as it were the judge  
To save or slay he had been moved to grace;  
He had seen and understood. And, gathering up  
In a single act supreme of his poor weakness  
All that remained to him of combative pride,  
He made the grand refusal, mastering  
By his last strength the load which pressed on him  
With terrible connivance of the hill,  
And wrenched the cart wheel from its track of doom  
Spite of his tyrant's voice of blasphemy  
And its mad curses and his own huge pain,  
And so, the victory won, passed on his road.

Then also was it that that child with the stone,  
He who now tells this story, from his hands  
Let the flag drop. A voice had cried to him  
Too loud for denial: ` ` Fool. Be merciful."

O, wisdom of the witless! Law of pity  
Loud on the lips of pain! Nature's pure light  
Lightening the darkness of Man's gulfs of crime!  
Lessons of courage taught by coward hearts,  
Of joy by the joyless! Eyes that cannot weep  
Pleading with grief and pointing consolation!  
The eloquent call of one poor damnéd soul  
Preaching to souls elect, the beast to man!  
Know this: hours are there, twilight hours of grace,  
When, be he what he may, beast, bird or slave,  
Each living thing gets glimpses of God's heaven  
And knows himself own brother to the stars,  
Being one with these in ancestry of love,  
Kindred in kindness. Learn that this poor ass,  
Facing his pain rather than add to pain,

Was master of his soul in verier deed  
Than Socrates was saint, than Plato sage.

Who is the teacher here? O man of mind!  
Wouldst thou touch truth? The true truth in thee lies,  
Thy lack of light. Nay kneel, weep, pray, believe,  
Grovel on the Earth. She shall thy teacher be.  
A corner of their Heaven thou too shalt win  
When thou art dust with these. Then shalt thou too  
Get glimpses of their world's ingenuous dawn  
And purchase back thy soul's lost purity,  
The love that casts out fear and conquers pain,  
The link which binds its weak ones with its strong  
And equals all in one divine accord,  
The unknowing ass with the all--knowing God.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# The Two Voices

There are two voices with me in the night,  
Easing my grief. The God of Israel saith,  
` ` I am the Lord thy God which vanquisheth.  
See that thou walk unswerving in my sight,  
So shall thy enemies thy footstool be.  
I will avenge." Then wake I suddenly,  
And, as a man new armoured for the fight,  
I shout aloud against my enemy.

Anon, another speaks, a voice of care  
With sorrow laden and akin to grief,  
` ` My son," it saith, ` ` What is my will with thee?  
The burden of my sorrows thou shalt share.  
With thieves thou too shalt be accounted thief,  
And in my kingdom thou shalt sup with me."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Wanderer's Return

An old heart's mourning is a hideous thing,  
And weeds upon an aged weeper cling  
Like night upon a grave. The city there,  
Gaunt as a woman who has once been fair,  
Lay black with winter, and the silent rain  
Fell thro' the heavens darkly, like a stain  
Upon her face. The dusky houses rose,  
Unlovely shapes laid naked on the ooze,  
Grimed with long sooty tears. The night fell down,  
And gathered all the highways in its frown.  
This was my home. I saw men pass and pass  
Nor stop to look into a neighbour's face.  
I dared not look in their's because my eyes  
Were faint and travel--jarred and would not rise  
From the dull earth, and hunger made them dim,  
The hunger of a seven years' angry dream  
Of love and peace and home unsatisfied.  
And now my heart thus grievously denied  
Rose, like a caged bird in the nesting time  
Who beats against the bars that prison him,  
In all its greenness of youth's wounds and pain  
And would not cease till these should bleed again.

For I had gone a hunter through the world,  
And set my tent in every land, and hurled  
My spears at life because my joys were dead;  
And many a fair field of the Earth was red  
Where I had passed, and many a wind might tell  
Of stricken souls that to my arrows fell.  
I would not stop to listen to their cries  
But went my way and thought that I was wise.

A wanderer's life, whether his lone chase be man  
Or only those poor outlaws under ban  
The creatures of the field his hand destroys  
Through rage of wantonness or need of noise,  
Is the fierce solace of its anger given  
To a hurt soul which dares not turn to Heaven.  
With me it was a vengeance of love lost,

A refuge proved for passions tempest--tossed,  
An unguent for despairs that could not kill.  
I wandered in the desert and the hill  
Seeking dry places, and behold my grief  
Fled with my footprints and I found relief.  
And it had happened to me, as befalls  
Men bred in cities who have left their walls  
For gain or pleasure, that the wilderness  
Grew lastly wearisome. I loved it less.

And once a desperate chase had led me on  
To an unknown land when daylight was near done,  
And I sat weary by my slaughtered prey  
And watched the cranes which northward fled away  
Rank upon rank into the depths of air,  
And still the horizon lifeless vast and bare  
Stretched wide around, and like a vault of dread  
The arch of heaven hemmed me overhead,  
And the great eye of the dead beast was set  
Upon my own. I felt my cheek was wet.  
Oh surely then, for all man's heart be hard,  
Though he have taken Nature by the beard  
And lived alone as to the manner born,  
And though his limbs be strung with toil, and worn  
To all Earth's dangers, yet at such a time  
His coward soul will overmaster him,  
Saying ``Beware, thou child of Earth, even now  
Look at the world how wide it is and thou  
How small! And thou hast dared to be alone."  
And lo, the last long flight of cranes was gone,  
And darkness with its folding pity crept  
Over the plain. I hid my face and wept,  
Till sleep fell on me. But, when dawn was come,  
I turned my steps to what had been my home.

The palace gardens! I had fled aside  
From the gaunt streets in easement of my pride  
After the lamps were lit, for to my brain  
The tumult and the passers--by were pain:  
The gardens where in those far summer times  
A boy I came to watch the pantomimes  
Among a laughing crowd of white--capped bonnes



And red--cheeked children and loud country clowns,  
Or where, along the wall in graver sense  
And screened from winds in their petite Provence,  
With the first chestnut blossoms old men sat  
And cheered their melancholy souls with chat,  
Thawing like frozen apples in the sun!  
The old men and the children all were gone.  
The leaves, their canopy, lay torn and dead  
And crushed in spongy heaps beneath my tread.  
The fountains recreant to their laughter lay  
Murk pools of silence shrouded from the day,  
As though no doves had ever at their brink  
Stooped in full June to plume themselves and drink.  
Only the trees stood, witness of the past.  
Sad trees, I greeted them. I held them fast  
Like a friend's hands. They were as changed and bare  
As my own life, but calm in the despair  
Of their long winter's martyrdom, and I  
A very child in my philosophy!  
Till I remembered that no Spring would come  
To mock the winter of my own long doom  
With any merriment. And ``Trees" I cried,  
``Your hearts within are all too greenly dyed  
To match with mine." I let their branches go  
And sat upon a bench to feed my woe  
With memories long hidden out of mind,  
But which trooped back that night and rode the wind.

These wooden benches, what sad ghosts of pleasures  
Had used them nightly crouching o'er their treasures,  
My own long murdered joys, since there we sat  
Blind in our love and insolent to Fate!  
Each one a witness proved of our lost vows,  
Our prayers, our protests, all our souls' carouse;  
Each one inscribed through the unheeding years  
With letters of a name I wrote in tears.  
'Twas here I saw her first, a pure sweet woman  
Fair as a goddess but with smile all human,  
Her children at her knees who went and came  
At each new wayward impulse of their game,  
And she reproving with her quiet eyes  
Veiling the mirth they could not all disguise.

The echo of her voice with its mute thrill  
Lived in these glades and stirred my pulses still,  
Though I had lived to hear it in what tone  
Of passionate grief and souls' disunion.  
She stood, a broken lily, by that tree,  
Sunlight and shade for ever changingly  
Chequering the robe she wore of virgin white,  
When first I touched the goal of my delight  
Her woman's hand and hid it in my hands.  
Here shone the glory of her countenance  
Nobler for tears when weakness for a space  
Held full dominion in that heaven her face  
And she confessed herself of grief divine  
And love grown young, a vintage of new wine,  
And I was crowned her king. O silent trees,  
You heard it and you know how to the lees  
We drained the cup of life and found it good,  
Gathering love's manna for our daily food,  
In scorn of the vain rest. You heard and knew  
What the world only guessed where all was true.  
And have you dreamed on in your quiet grove  
While seven years were built against our love!

'Twas on this bench I sat that day of June  
Thinking of death a whole sweet afternoon,  
Till I was sick of sorrow and my tongue  
Weary of its long silence (I was young  
And the birds sang so loud); and when the night  
Came as it now came, and the lamps grew bright  
In the long street, lit like a diamond chain,  
I rose and said: ``I will not bear the pain.  
What is my pride worth that for it this smart  
Should harrow up the green things of my heart  
For twelve importunate hours in such a sort?  
And pleasure is so sweet and life so short."  
And as a martyr, who long time has lain  
Frozen in a dungeon, sees amid his pain,  
When he has fasted on for many days,  
Bright visions of hot feasts and hearths ablaze  
With welcome, and who sells his gloomy creed,  
And is overcome of pleasure, so my need  
Conquered my pride; and I arose and went

Striding, with smiles at my new found intent,  
Down these same gravel alleys to the gate  
And so beyond, like one inebriate,  
Thinking the while of the brave baths and food  
Set for the renegade, until I stood  
Once more before her door I had forsworn.  
I did not stop to question thoughts forlorn,  
But knocked as I had knocked a thousand times.  
St. Roch's was ringing its last evening chimes,  
And I still thought about the martyr's dream.  
I saw the light within the threshold gleam  
Which opened to me, and the voice I knew  
Said in all sweetness, as the door swung to,  
` `Come. We are just in time. How fortunate  
You too like me have happened to be late."  
I swear I said no word of the sad plans  
I had plotted on this bench of ignorance.  
There have been kings called happy, but not one  
As I that night. Ah God! to be alone,  
Alone, and never more to hear her voice  
Calling me back, blest martyr, to my joys!

I sat there grieving in the cold and rain  
Until my heart had half forgot its pain,  
And when I rose I scarce could guide my feet,  
They were so numb, to the unlovely street.  
And yet need was my steps should bear me on  
To some mad corner of that Babylon;  
And I must feed the gnawings of my soul  
With broken meat. ` `The seven years may roll,"  
I said, ` `and men may change and she be dead,  
Yet the house stands, God knows how tenanted."

I leaned my head against the colonnade  
Which skirts the square. I think I had not prayed  
Through all those years, but now I said a prayer,  
And hope in spite of reason seemed to wear  
Green buds upon its branches. Who shall know  
If 'twas a vision sent me in my woe  
To prove the power of prayer? But, when I turned  
And looked across the square, the candles burned  
In the old upper windows, and, before,

A shadow crossed the curtain, and the door  
Opened towards me, and a voice there cried  
` `Come. You are just in time." I put out wide  
My arms into the darkness, and I fell.

When I awoke, 'twas as one passed from Hell  
Who fears and feels no longer. I was tired.  
I scarcely cared to know when I inquired  
After the house. The girl who held the glass  
To my lips (a flower--girl it seemed she was)  
Told me that house and square alike were gone  
Swept by new boulevards to oblivion.  
Why should I grieve? The new was worth the old.  
I listened to the story as 'twas told,  
And lingered with her all the evening there  
Because she pitied me and she was fair,  
And held me with her hand upon the latch.  
` `Seven years," I said, ` `it is a long night's watch  
For any soul alone upon life's way,  
And mine is weary at the break of day."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Wind And The Whirlwind

I have a thing to say. But how to say it?  
I have a cause to plead. But to what ears?  
How shall I move a world by lamentation,  
A world which heeded not a Nation's tears?

How shall I speak of justice to the aggressors,  
Of right to Kings whose rights include all wrong,  
Of truth to Statecraft, true but in deceiving,  
Of peace to Prelates, pity to the Strong?

Where shall I find a hearing? In high places?  
The voice of havock drowns the voice of good.  
On the throne's steps? The elders of the nation  
Rise in their ranks and call aloud for blood.

Where? In the street? Alas for the world's reason!  
Not Peers not Priests alone this deed have done.  
The clothes of those high Hebrews stoning Stephen  
Were held by all of us,--ay every one.

Yet none the less I speak. Nay, here by Heaven  
This task at least a poet best may do,  
To stand alone against the mighty many,  
To force a hearing for the weak and few.

Unthanked, unhonoured,--yet a task of glory,  
Not in his day, but in an age more wise,  
When those poor Chancellors have found their portion  
And lie forgotten in their dust of lies.

And who shall say that this year's cause of freedom  
Lost on the Nile has not as worthy proved  
Of poet's hymning as the cause which Milton  
Sang in his blindness or which Dante loved?

The fall of Guelph beneath the spears of Valois,  
Freedom betrayed, the Ghibelline restored:  
Have we not seen it, we who caused this anguish,  
Exile and fear, proscription and the sword?

Or shall God less avenge in their wild valley  
Where they lie slaughtered those poor sheep whose fold  
In the grey twilight of our wrath we harried  
To serve the worshippers of stocks and gold?

This fails. That finds its hour. This fights. That falters.  
Greece is stamped out beneath a Wolseley's heels.  
Or Egypt is avenged of her long mourning,  
And hurls her Persians back to their own keels.

'Tis not alone the victor who is noble.  
'Tis not alone the wise man who is wise.  
There is a voice of sorrow in all shouting,  
And shame pursues not only him who flies.

To fight and conquer: 'tis the boast of heroes.  
To fight and fly: of this men do not speak.  
Yet shall there come a day when men shall tremble  
Rather than do misdeeds upon the weak,

A day when statesmen baffled in their daring  
Shall rather fear to wield the sword in vain  
Than to give back their charge to a hurt nation,  
And own their frailties, and resign their reign,

A day of wrath when all fame shall remember  
Of this year's work shall be the fall of one  
Who, standing foremost in her paths of virtue,  
Bent a fool's knee at War's red altar--stone,

And left all virtue beggared in his falling,  
A sign to England of new griefs to come,  
Her priest of peace who sold his creed for glory  
And marched to carnage at the tuck of drum.

Therefore I fear not. Rather let this record  
Stand of the past, ere God's revenge shall chase  
From place to punishment His sad vicegerents  
Of power on Earth.--I fling it in their face!

I have a thing to say. But how to say it?

Out of the East a twilight had been born.  
It was not day. Yet the long night was waning,  
And the spent nations watched it less forlorn.

Out of the silence of the joyless ages  
A voice had spoken, such as the first bird  
Speaks to the woods, before the morning wakens,  
And the World starting to its feet had heard.

Men hailed it as a prophecy. Its utterance  
Was in that tongue divine the Orient knew.  
It spoke of hope. Men hailed it as a brother's.  
It spoke of happiness. Men deemed it true.

There in the land of Death, where toil is cradled,  
That tearful Nile, unknown to Liberty,  
It spoke in passionate tones of human freedom,  
And of those rights of Man which cannot die,

Till from the cavern of long fear, whose portals  
Had backward rolled, and hardly yet aloud,  
Men prisoned stole like ghosts and joined the chorus,  
And chaunted trembling, each man in his shroud:

Justice and peace, the brotherhood of nations,  
Love and goodwill of all mankind to man:  
These were the words they caught and echoed strangely,  
Deeming them portions of some Godlike plan,

A plan thus first to their own land imparted.  
They did not know the irony of Fate,  
The mockery of man's freedom, and the laughter  
Which greets a brother's love from those that hate.

Oh for the beauty of hope's dreams! The childhood  
Of that old land, long impotent in pain,  
Cast off its slough of sorrow with its silence,  
And laughed and shouted and grew new again.

And in the streets, where still the shade of Pharaoh  
Stalked in his sons, the Mamelukian horde,  
Youth greeted youth with words of exultation

And shook his chains and clutched as for a sword:

Student and merchant, Jew, and Copt, and Moslem,  
All whose scarred backs had bent to the same rod,  
Fired with one mighty thought, their feuds forgotten,  
Stood hand in hand and praising the same God.

I have a thing to say. But how to say it?  
As in the days of Moses in the land,  
God sent a man of prayer before his people  
To speak to Pharaoh, and to loose his hand.

Injustice, that hard step--mother of heroes,  
Had taught him justice. Him the sight of pain  
Moved unto anger, and the voice of weeping  
Made his eyes weep as for a comrade slain.

A soldier in the bands of his proud masters  
It was his lot to serve. But of his soul  
None owned allegiance save the Lord of Armies.  
No worship from his God's might him cajole.

Strict was his service. In the law of Heaven  
He comfort took and patience under wrong.  
And all men loved him for his heart unquailing,  
And for the words of pity on his tongue.

Knowledge had come to him in the night--watches,  
And strength with fasting, eloquence with prayer.  
He stood a Judge from God before the strangers,  
The one just man among his people there.

Strongly he spoke: `` Now, Heaven be our witness!  
Egypt this day has risen from her sleep.  
She has put off her mourning and her silence.  
It was no law of God that she should weep.

`` It was no law of God nor of the Nations  
That in this land, alone of the fair Earth,  
The hand that sowed should reap not of its labour,  
The heart that grieved should profit not of mirth.



` ` How have we suffered at the hands of strangers,  
Binding their sheaves, and harvesting their wrath!  
Our service has been bitter, and our wages  
Hunger and pain and nakedness and drouth.

` ` Which of them pitied us? Of all our princes,  
Was there one Sultan listened to our cry?  
Their palaces we built, their tombs, their temples.  
What did they build but tombs for Liberty?

` ` To live in ignorance, to die by service,  
To pay our tribute and our stripes receive:  
This was the ransom of our toil in Eden,  
This, and our one sad liberty--to grieve.

` ` We have had enough of strangers and of princes  
Nursed on our knees and lords within our house.  
The bread which they have eaten was our children's,  
For them the feasting and the shame for us.

` ` The shadow of their palaces, fair dwellings  
Built with our blood and kneaded with our tears,  
Darkens the land with darkness of Gehennem,  
The lust, the crime, the infamy of years.

` ` Did ye not hear it? From those muffled windows  
A sound of women rises and of mirth.  
These are our daughters--ay our sons--in prison,  
Captives to shame with those who rule the Earth.

` ` The silent river, by those gardens lapping,  
To--night receives its burden of new dead,  
A man of age sent home with his lord's wages,  
Stones to his feet, a grave--cloth to his head.

` ` Walls infamous in beauty, gardens fragrant  
With rose and citron and the scent of blood.  
God shall blot out the memory of all laughter,  
Rather than leave you standing where you stood.

` ` We have had enough of princes and of strangers,  
Slaves that were Sultans, eunuchs that were kings,

The shame of Sodom is on all their faces.  
The curse of Cain pursues them, and it clings.

`` Is there no virtue? See the pale Greek smiling.  
Virtue for him is as a tale of old.  
Which be his gods? The cent per cent in silver.  
His God of gods? The world's creator, Gold.

`` The Turk that plunders and the Frank that panders,  
These are our lords who ply with lust and fraud.  
The brothel and the winepress and the dancers  
Are gifts unneeded in the lands of God.

`` We need them not. We heed them not. Our faces  
Are turned to a new Kebla, a new truth,  
Proclaimed by the one God of all the nations  
To save His people and renew their youth.

`` A truth which is of knowledge and of reason;  
Which teaches men to mourn no more and live;  
Which tells them of things good as well as evil,  
And gives what Liberty alone can give,

`` The counsel to be strong, the will to conquer,  
The love of all things just and kind and wise,  
Freedom for slaves, fair rights for all as brothers,  
The triumph of things true, the scorn of lies.

`` O men, who are my brethren, my soul's kindred!  
That which our fathers dreamed of as a dream,  
The sun of peace, and justice, has arisen,  
And God shall work in you His perfect scheme.

`` The rulers of your Earth shall cease deceiving,  
The men of usury shall fly your land.  
Your princes shall be numbered with your servants,  
And peace shall guide the sword in your right hand.

`` You shall become a nation with the nations.  
Lift up your voices, for the night is past.  
Stretch forth your hands. The hands of the free peoples  
Have beckoned you the youngest and the last.

`` And in the brotherhood of Man reposing,  
Joined to their hopes and nursed in their new day,  
The anguish of the years shall be forgotten  
And God, with these, shall wipe your tears away."

I have a thing to say. But how to say it?  
How shall I tell the mystery of guile,  
The fraud that fought, the treason that disbanded,  
The gold that slew the children of the Nile?

The ways of violence are hard to reckon,  
And men of right grow feeble in their will,  
And Virtue of her sons has been forsaken,  
And men of peace have turned aside to kill.

How shall I speak of them, the priests of Baal,  
The men who sowed the wind for their ill ends!  
The reapers of the whirlwind in that harvest  
Were all my countrymen, were some my friends.

Friends, countrymen and lovers of fair freedom,  
Souls to whom still my soul laments and cries!  
I would not tell the shame of your false dealings,  
Save for the blood which clamours to the skies.

A curse on Statecraft, not on you, my Country!  
The men you slew were not more foully slain  
Than was your honour at their hands you trusted.  
They died, you conquered,--both alike in vain.

Crimes find accomplices, and Murder weapons.  
The ways of Statesmen are an easy road.  
All swords are theirs, the noblest with the neediest.  
And those who serve them best are men of good.

What need to blush, to trifle with dissembling?  
A score of honest tongues anon shall swear.  
Blood flows. The Senate's self shall spread its mantle  
In the world's face, nor own a Caesar there.

`` Silence! Who spoke?" `` The voice of one disclosing

A truth untimely." `` With what right to speak?  
Holds he the Queen's commission?" `` No, God's only."  
A hundred hands shall smite him on the cheek.

The `` truth" of Statesmen is the thing they publish,  
Their `` falsehood" the thing done they do not say,  
Their `` honour" what they win from the world's trouble,  
Their `` shame" the `` ay" which reasons with their `` nay."

Alas for Liberty, alas for Egypt!  
What chance was yours in this ignoble strife?  
Scorned and betrayed, dishonoured and rejected,  
What was there left you but to fight for life?

The men of honour sold you to dishonour.  
The men of truth betrayed you with a kiss.  
Your strategy of love too soon outplotted,  
What was there left you of your dreams but this?

You thought to win a world by your fair dealing,  
To conquer freedom with no drop of blood.  
This was your crime. The world knows no such reasoning.  
It neither bore with you nor understood.

Your Pharaoh with his chariots and his dancers,  
Him they could understand as of their kin.  
He spoke in their own tongue and as their servant,  
And owned no virtue they could call a sin.

They took him for his pleasure and their purpose.  
They fashioned him as clay to their own pride.  
His name they made a cudgel to your hurting,  
His treachery a spear--point to your side.

They knew him, and they scorned him and upheld him.  
They strengthened him with honours and with ships.  
They used him as a shadow for seditions.  
They stabbed you with the lying of his lips.

Sad Egypt! Since that night of misadventure  
Which slew your first--born for your Pharaoh's crime,  
No plague like this has God decreed against you,

No punishment of all foredoomed in Time.

I have a thing to say. Oh how to say it!  
One summer morning, at the hour of prayer,  
And in the face of Man and Man's high Maker,  
The thunder of their cannon rent the air.

The flames of death were on you and destruction.  
A hail of iron on your heads they poured.  
You fought, you fell, you died until the sunset;  
And then you fled forsaken of the Lord.

I care not if you fled. What men call courage  
Is the least noble thing of which they boast.  
Their victors always are great men of valour.  
Find me the valour of the beaten host!

It may be you were cowards. Let them prove it,--  
What matter? Were you women in the fight,  
Your courage were the greater that a moment  
You steeled your weakness in the cause of right.

Oh I would rather fly with the first craven  
Who flung his arms away in your good cause,  
Than head the hottest charge by England vaunted  
In all the record of her unjust wars!

Poor sheep! they scattered you. Poor slaves! they bowed you.  
You prayed for your dear lives with your mute hands.  
They answered you with laughter and with shouting,  
And slew you in your thousands on the sands.

They led you with arms bound to your betrayer:  
His slaves, they said, recaptured for his will.  
They bade him to take heart and fill his vengeance.  
They gave him his lost sword that he might kill.

They filled for him his dungeons with your children.  
They chartered him new gaolers from strange shores:  
The Arnaout and the Cherkess for his minions,  
Their soldiers for the sentries at his doors.

He plied you with the whip, the rope, the thumb--screw.  
They plied you with the scourging of vain words.  
He sent his slaves, his eunuchs, to insult you.  
They sent you laughter on the lips of Lords.

They bound you to the pillar of their firmans.  
They placed for sceptre in your hand a pen.  
They cast lots for the garments of your treaties,  
And brought you naked to the gaze of men.

They called on your High Priest for your death mandate.  
They framed indictments on you from your laws.  
For him men loved they offered a Barabbas.  
They washed their hands and found you without cause.

They scoffed at you and pointed in derision,  
Crowned with their thorns and nailed upon their tree.  
And at your head their Pilate wrote the inscription:  
` `This is the land restored to Liberty!"

Oh insolence of strength! Oh boast of wisdom!  
Oh poverty in all things truly wise!  
Thinkest thou, England, God can be outwitted  
For ever thus by him who sells and buys?

Thou sellest the sad nations to their ruin.  
What hast thou bought? The child within the womb,  
The son of him thou slayest to thy hurting,  
Shall answer thee, ` `An Empire for thy tomb."

Thou hast joined house to house for thy perdition.  
Thou hast done evil in the name of right.  
Thou hast made bitter sweet and the sweet bitter,  
And called light darkness and the darkness light.

Thou art become a by--word for dissembling,  
A beacon to thy neighbours for all fraud.  
Thy deeds of violence men count and reckon.  
Who takes the sword shall perish by the sword.

Thou hast deserved men's hatred. They shall hate thee.  
Thou hast deserved men's fear. Their fear shall kill.

Thou hast thy foot upon the weak. The weakest  
With his bruised head shall strike thee on the heel.

Thou wentest to this Egypt for thy pleasure.  
Thou shalt remain with her for thy sore pain.  
Thou hast possessed her beauty. Thou wouldst leave her.  
Nay. Thou shalt lie with her as thou hast lain.

She shall bring shame upon thy face with all men.  
She shall disease thee with her grief and fear.  
Thou shalt grow sick and feeble in her ruin.  
Thou shalt repay her to the last sad tear.

Her kindred shall surround thee with strange clamours,  
Dogging thy steps till thou shalt loathe their din.  
The friends thou hast deceived shall watch in anger.  
Thy children shall upbraid thee with thy sin.

All shall be counted thee a crime,--thy patience  
With thy impatience. Thy best thought shall wound.  
Thou shalt grow weary of thy work thus fashioned,  
And walk in fear with eyes upon the ground.

The Empire thou didst build shall be divided.  
Thou shalt be weighed in thine own balances  
Of usury to peoples and to princes,  
And be found wanting by the world and these.

They shall possess the lands by thee forsaken  
And not regret thee. On their seas no more  
Thy ships shall bear destruction to the nations,  
Or thy guns thunder on a fenceless shore.

Thou hadst no pity in thy day of triumph.  
These shall not pity thee. The world shall move  
On its high course and leave thee to thy silence,  
Scorned by the creatures that thou couldst not love.

Thy Empire shall be parted, and thy kingdom.  
At thy own doors a kingdom shall arise,  
Where freedom shall be preached and the wrong righted  
Which thy unwisdom wrought in days unwise.

Truth yet shall triumph in a world of justice.  
This is of faith. I swear it. East and west  
The law of Man's progression shall accomplish  
Even this last great marvel with the rest.

Thou wouldst not further it. Thou canst not hinder.  
If thou shalt learn in time, thou yet shalt live.  
But God shall ease thy hand of its dominion,  
And give to these the rights thou wouldst not give.

The nations of the East have left their childhood.  
Thou art grown old. Their manhood is to come;  
And they shall carry on Earth's high tradition  
Through the long ages when thy lips are dumb,

Till all shall be wrought out. O Lands of weeping,  
Lands watered by the rivers of old Time,  
Ganges and Indus and the streams of Eden,  
Yours is the future of the world's sublime.

Yours was the fount of man's first inspiration,  
The well of wisdom whence he earliest drew.  
And yours shall be the flood--time of his reason,  
The stream of strength which shall his strength renew.

The wisdom of the West is but a madness,  
The fret of shallow waters in their bed.  
Yours is the flow, the fulness of Man's patience  
The ocean of God's rest inherited.

And thou too, Egypt, mourner of the nations,  
Though thou hast died to--day in all men's sight,  
And though upon thy cross with thieves thou hangedest,  
Yet shall thy wrong be justified in right.

'Twas meet one man should die for the whole people.  
Thou wert the victim chosen to retrieve  
The sorrows of the Earth with full deliverance.  
And, as thou diest, these shall surely live.

Thy prophets have been scattered through the cities.



The seed of martyrdom thy sons have sown  
Shall make of thee a glory and a witness  
In all men's hearts held captive with thine own.

Thou shalt not be forsaken in thy children.  
Thy righteous blood shall fructify the Earth.  
The virtuous of all lands shall be thy kindred,  
And death shall be to thee a better birth.

Therefore I do not grieve. Oh hear me, Egypt!  
Even in death thou art not wholly dead.  
And hear me, England! Nay. Thou needs must hear me.  
I had a thing to say. And it is said.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# The Wisdom Of Merlyn

These are the time--words of Merlyn, the voice of his age recorded,  
All his wisdom of life, the fruit of tears in his youth, of joy in his manhood  
hoarded,  
All the wit of his years unsealed, to the witless alms awarded.

These are his time--gifts of song, his help to the heavy--laden,  
Words of an expert of life, who has gathered its sins in his sack, its virtues to  
grieve and gladden,  
Speaking aloud as one who is strong to the heart of man, wife and maiden.

For he is Merlyn of old, the once young, the still robed in glory,  
Ancient of days though he be, with wisdom only for wealth and the crown of his  
locks grown hoary,  
Yet with the rage of his soul untamed, the skill of his lips in story.

He dares not unhoucelled die, who has seen, who has known, who has tasted  
What of the splendours of Time, of the wise wild joys of the Earth, of the  
newness of pleasures quested,  
All that is neither of then nor now, Truth's naked self clean--breasted,

Things of youth and of strength, the Earth with its infinite pity,  
Glories of mountain and plain, of streams that wind from the hills to the insolent  
human city,  
Dark with its traders of human woe enthroned in the seats of the mighty.

Fair things nobler than Man before the day of his ruling,  
Free in their ancient peace, ere he came to change, to destroy, to hinder with his  
schooling,  
Asking naught that was his to give save freedom from his fooling.

Beautiful, wonderful, wise, a consonant law--ruled heaven,  
Garden ungardened yet, in need yet hardly of God to walk there noon or even,  
Beast and bird and flower in its place, Earth's wonders more than seven.

Of these he would speak and confess, to the young who regard not their heirship,  
Of beauty to boys who are blind, of might to the impotent strong, to the women  
who crowd Time's fair ship,  
Of pearls deep hid in Love's Indian seas, the name of the God they worship.

Thus let it be with Merlyn before his daylight is ended,  
One last psalm of his life, the light of it lipped with laughter, the might of it  
mixed and blended  
Still with the subtle sweet need of tears than Pleasure's self more splendid,

Psalm and hymn of the Earth expounding what Time teaches,  
Creed no longer of wrath, of silent issueless hopes, of a thing which beyond  
Man's reach is,  
Hope deferred till the heart grows sick, while the preacher vainly preaches.

Nay but a logic of life, which needeth no deferring,  
Life with its birthright love, the sun the wind and the rain in multiple pleasure  
stirring  
Under the summer leaves at noon, with no sad doubt of erring,

No sad legend of sin, since his an innocent Eden  
Is, and a garden of grace, its gateway clear of the sword, its alleys not angel--  
ridden,  
Its tree of life at the lips of all and never a fruit forbidden.

Merlyn is no vain singer to vex men's ears in the street,  
Nay, nor a maid's unbidden. He importuneth none with his song, be it never so  
wild and sweet.  
She that hath ears to hear, let her hear; he will not follow her feet.

Merlyn makes no petition. He asketh of no man alms.  
Prince and prophet is he, a monarch, a giver of gifts, a lord of the open plams,  
Sueth he naught, not at God's own hand, though he laudeth the Lord in psalms.

Merlyn would speak his message only to hearts that are strong,  
To him that hath courage to climb, who would gather time's samphire flowers,  
who would venture the crags among.  
To her who would lesson her soul to fear, with love for sermon and song.

Merlyn hath arms of pity, the weak he would hold to his soul,  
Make them partakers of truth, of the ancient weal of the Earth, of the life--throb  
from Pole to Pole.  
He would hold them close; he would dry their tears; with a kiss he would make  
them whole.

Thus would he sing and to thee, thou child with the eyes of passion  
Watching his face in the dark, in the silent light of the stars, while he in his

godlike fashion

Maketh his mock at the fears of men, nor spareth to lay the lash on.

Thus would thy Merlyn devise, ere the days of his years be numbered,  
Now at threescore and ten. He would leave his word to the world, his soul of its  
load uncumbered.

Then would he lay his ear to the grave, and sleep as his childhood slumbered.

What is the fruit of Wisdom? To learn the proportion of things;  
To know the ant from the lion, the whale from the crest of the wave, the ditty the  
grasshopper sings  
From the chaunt of the full--fledged Paradise bird as he shakes the dew from his  
wings.

There is one thing more than knowledge, a harvest garnered by few:  
To tutor the heart to achieve, to fashion the act to the hand, to do and not yearn  
to do,  
To say to the wish of the soul ``I will," to have gathered the flower where it  
grew.

I was young, and they told me ``Tarry. The rash in the nets are taken.  
If there be doubt of thy deed, abstain, lest the day of danger behold thee by  
these forsaken,  
Lest thou lie in the lion's den thou hast roused, with the eyes thou hast dared to  
waken."

They spake, but I answered ``Nay, who waiteth shall take no quarry.  
Pleasure is fleet as the roe; in the vales he feedeth to--day, but at nightwhen the  
eyes grow weary  
Lo, he hath passed to the desolate hills; he is gone. Nay, he may not tarry."

For Joy too needeth a net. He cometh tame to thy hand,  
Asketh an alms of thy life, to serve thee, thy jubilant slave, if thou wouldst but  
understand.  
Then is thy moment, O Man, for the noose, be it steel or a silken band.

Therefore, where doubt is, do! Thou shalt stumble in thine endeavour,  
Ay, till thy knees be sore, thy back with the arrows of grief, and thou stand with  
an empty quiver.  
Yet shall thy heart prevail through its pain, for pain is a mastering lever.

Wouldst thou be wise, O Man? At the knees of a woman begin.

Her eyes shall teach thee thy road, the worth of the thing called pleasure, the joy of the thing called sin.

Else shalt thou go to thy grave in pain for the folly that might have been.

For know, the knowledge of women the beginning of wisdom is.

Who had seven hundred wives and concubines hundreds three, as we read in the book of bliss?

Solomon, wisest of men and kings, and ``all of them princesses."

Yet, be thou stronger than they. To be ruled of a woman is ill.

Life hath an hundred ways, beside the way of her arms, to give thee of joy thy fill.

Only is love of thy life the flower. Be thine the ultimate will.

A right way is to be happy, a wrong way too. Then beware.

Leave the colt in his stall, he shall grow to a thankless jade, be he never so fat and fair.

Sloth is a crime. Rise up, young fool, and grasp thy joy by the hair.

What is the motto of youth? There is only one. Be thou strong.

Do thy work and achieve, with thy brain, with thy hands, with thy heart, the deeds which to strength belong.

Strike each day thy blow for the right, or failing strike for the wrong.

He that would gain let him give. The shut hand hardly shall win.

Open thy palms to the poor, O thou of the indigent heart. There shall pleasure be poured therein.

Use thy soul to the cord of joy. If thou sin must, strongly sin.

Cast thy whole heart away. The Earth, philosophers tell,

Leaps to a pebble thrown, be it never so little; it moved to the bidding of that which fell.

Throw thy heart! Thou shalt move the world, though thou fall on the floor of Hell.

Few have the courage of loving. Faint hearts! The loss is theirs.

Few of their idlest whims. ``I would win to Rome ere I die," one cried in his daily cares,

Yet plods on on 'Change to his grave, the slave of his stocks and shares.

Learn to appraise thy desires, to weigh the wares of thy heart.

If thou wouldst play with pleasure, avoid Love's passionate tides, its perilous Ocean chart,

Hug the shores of Love's inland seas, and buy thy joys in the mart.

Love lightly, but marry at leisure. Wild Love is a flower of the field  
Waiting all hands to gather and ours. If we leave it another will win it and kneel  
where we kneeled.

Marriage is one tame garden rose in a garden fenced and sealed.

O thou who art sitting silent! Youth, with the eyelids of grief!  
How shall I rouse thee to wit? Thou hast stolen the joy of our world.  
Thouscornest its vain relief.  
Nay, she is here. Be thy tongue set free. Play up, thou eloquent thief.

Doubt not thy absolution, sinner, who darest to sin.  
So thou prevail in the end, she shall hold thee guiltless of guile, a hero, a  
paladin.  
The end in her eyes hath thee justified, whatever thy means have been.

Love is of body and body, the physical passion of joy;  
The desire of the man for the maid, her nakedness strained to his own; the  
mother's who suckles her boy  
With the passionate flow of her naked breast. All else is a fraudulent toy.

Of the house where Love is the master thy beauty may hold the key.  
It shall open the hall--door wide, shout loud thy name to its lord. Yet, wouldst  
thou its full guest be,  
Bring with thee other than beauty, wit. Then sit at the feast made free.

``To talk of love is to make love." Truly, a maxim of price.  
Nathless the noblest soul, shouldst thou tell her of passionate things and fail to  
gaze in her eyes,  
Shall hold thee cheap in her woman's pride, a clown for thy courtesies.

Love hath two mountain summits, the first where pleasure was born  
Faint in the cloud--land of light, a vision of possible hope; the second a tempest--  
torn  
Crag where passion is lord and king. Betwixt them what vales forlorn!

Happiness needs to be learned. In youth the ideal woman  
Gazed at afar was a dream, a priceless untouchable prize, while she in your  
arms, too human,  
Mocked you with love. 'Tis an art learned late; alas, and the whole by no man.

O! thou in the purple gendered. Thou needst pain for thy case.  
Lose thy health or thy heart. Be bowed in thy soul's despond. Be whelmed in a  
world's disgrace.  
So shall thy eyes be unsealed of pride and see Love face to face.

If thou wouldst win love, speak. She shall read the truth on thy lips.  
Spoken vows shall prevail, the spell of thy eloquent hand, the flame of thy finger-  
-tips.  
Write? She is reading another's eyes while thy sad pen dips and dips.

Thou hast ventured a letter of passion, in ease of thy passionate heart?  
Nay, be advised; there is fear, mischance in the written word, when lovers are  
far apart.  
Pain is betrayed by the subtle pen where lips prevailed without art.

Love is a fire. In the lighting, it raiseth a treacherous smoke,  
Telling its tale to the world; but anon, growing clear in its flame, may be hid by  
an old wife's cloak,  
And the world learn nothing more and forget the knowledge its smouldering  
woke.

Comes there a trouble upon thee? Be silent, nor own the debt.  
Friendship kicks at the goda; thy naked state is its shame; thou hast angered  
these with thy fret.  
Wait. The world shall forgive thy sin. It asks but leave to forget.

The world is an indolent house--shrew. It scolds but cares not to know  
Whether in fancy or fact. What it thinks we have done, that it scourges; the true  
thing we did it lets go.  
What matter? We fare less ill than our act, ay, all of us; more be our woe!

There are days when wisdom is witless, when folly is noble, sublime.  
Let us thank the dear gods for our madness, the rush of the blood in our veins,  
the exuberant pulsings of Time,  
And pray, while we sin the forbidden sin, we be spared our penance of crime.

There are habits and customs of passion. Long loves are a tyrannous debt.  
But to some there is custom of change, the desire of the untrodden ways, with  
sunshine of days that were wet,  
Of the four fair wives of love's kindly law by licence of Mahomet.

Experience all is of use, save one, to have angered a friend.

Break thy heart for a maid; another shall love thee anon. The gold shall return  
thou didst spend,  
Ay, and thy beaten back grow whole. But friendship's grave is the end.

Why do I love thee, brother? We have shared what things in our youth,  
Battle and siege and triumph, together, always together, in wanderings North  
and South.  
But one thing shared binds nearer than all, the kisses of one sweet mouth.

He that hath loved the mother shall love the daughter no less,  
Sister the younger sister. There are tones how sweet to his ear, gestures that  
plead and press,  
Echoes fraught with remembered things that cry in the silences.

Fly from thy friend in his fortune, his first days of wealth, of fame;  
Or, if thou needest to meet him, do thou as the children of Noah, walk back  
wards and guard thee from blame.  
He who saw found forgiveness none. With thee it were haply the same.

Bridegroom, thy pride is unseemly. Thou boastest abroad, with a smile,  
Thou hast read our humanity's riddle. Nay, wait yet a year with thy bride; she  
shall lesson thee wiser the while.  
Then shalt thou blush for thy words to--day, the shame of thy innocent guile.

The love of a girl is a taper lit on a windy night.  
Awhile it lightens our darkness, consoles with its pure sudden flame, and the  
shadows around it grow white.  
Anon with a rain--gust of tears it is gone, and we blink more blind for the light.

Sage, thou art proud of thy knowledge, what mountains and marvels seen!  
Thou hast loved how madly, how often! hast known what wiles of the heart, what  
ways of maid, wife and quean!  
Yet shalt thou still be betrayed by love, befooled like a boy on the green.

Oh, there is honour in all love. Have lips once kissed thee, be dumb,  
Save in their only praise. To cheapen the thing thou hast loved is to bite at  
thyself thy thumb,  
To shout thy own fool's fault to the world, and beat thy shame on a drum.

Who hath dared mock at thy beauty, Lady? Who deemeth thee old?  
If he had seen thee anon in the tender light of thine eyes, as I saw thee, what  
tales had he told



Of ruined kingdoms and kings for one, of misers spending their gold!

Friendship or Love? You ask it: which binds with the stronger tether?  
Friendship? Thy comrade of youth, who laughed with thee on thy road? What  
ailed him in that rough weather,  
When to thy bosom Love's angel crept, twin tragedies locked together?

Friendship is fostered with gifts. Be it so; little presents? Yes.  
Friendship! But ah, not Love, since love is itself Love's gift and it angereth him to  
have less.  
Woe to the lover who dares to bring more wealth than his tenderness.

This to the woman: Forbear his gifts, the man's thou wouldst hold.  
Cheerfully he shall give and thou nothing guess, yet anon he shall weigh thee in  
scales of his gold.  
Woe to thee then if the charge be more than a heartache's cost all told.

Thou art tempted, a passion unworthy? Long struggle hath dulled thy brain?  
How shalt thou save thee, poor soul? How buy back the peace of thy days? If of  
rest thou be fain,  
Oft is there virtue in yielding all; thou shalt not be tempted again.

Sacrifice truly is noble. Yet, Lady, ponder thy fate.  
Many a victory, won in tears by her who forbore, hath ruined her soul's estate.  
Virtue's prize was too dear a whim, the price agreed to too great.

Virtue or vice? Which, think you, should need more veil for her face?  
Virtue hath little fear; she goeth in unchaste guise; she ventureth all disgrace.  
Poor Vice hid in her shame sits dumb while a stranger taketh her place.

Chastity? Who is unchaste? The church--wed wife, without blame  
Yielding her body nightly, a lack--love indolent prize, to the lord of her legal  
shame?  
Or she, the outlawed passionate soul? Their carnal act is the same.

In youth it is well thou lovest. The fire in thee burneth strong.  
Choose whom thou wilt, it kindleth; a beggar--maid or a queen, she shall carry  
the flame along.  
Only in age to be loved is best; her right shall repair thy wrong.

Lady, wouldst fly with thy lover? Alas, he loves thee to--day.  
How shall it be to--morrow? He saw thee a bird in the air, a rose on its thorny

spray.

He would take thee? What shalt thou be in his hand? A burden to bear away.

Women love beauty in women, a thing to uphold, to adore,  
To vaunt for all womanhood's fame, a seemly sweet fitness of body, adorned  
with all virtuous lore.

Beauty, but not of the kind men prize. On that they would set small store.

What is there cruel as fear? A falcon rending her prey  
Showeth an evil eye, but to him she loveth is kind; her rage she shall put away.  
But a frightened woman hath pity none. Though she love thee, yet shall she slay.

Show not thy sin to thy son. He shall judge thee harder than these.  
All the servants of Noah beheld his shame in the house and loyally held their  
peace.

Ham alone at his father laughed, made jest of his nakedness.

Cast not loose thy religion, whether believing or no.  
Heavy it is with its rule, a burden laid on thy back, a sombre mask at the show.  
Yet shall it cloak thee in days of storm, a shield when life's whirlwinds blow.

As to the tree its ivy, so virtue is to the soul.  
All the winter long it clothed us in leafage green, and the forest paid us its toll.  
Now it is Spring and the rest rejoice while we stand drear in our dole.

Thy love of children is well. Yet a peril lurketh therein.  
See lest thy sloth take excuse of thy fondness. Nay, coward art thou, and thine is  
the pestilent sin.  
Shift wouldst thou thy burden of life, the blame of thy `` might have been."

Courage we all find enough to bear the mischance of our friends.  
How many tortured souls have gone to their self--made graves through wreck of  
their own mad ends:  
But no man yet hath his weazand slit for his neighbour's pain in amends.

Fear not to change thy way, since change is of growth, life's sign.  
The Child in his growing body, the Sage in his gathered lore, the Saint in his  
growths divine,  
All find pleasure but Age which weeps the unchanging years' decline.

Whence is our fountain of tears? We weep in childhood for pain,  
Anon for triumph in manhood, the sudden glory of praise, the giant mastered and

slain.

Age weeps only for love renewed and pleasure come back again.

What is our personal self? A fading record of days  
Held in our single brain, memory linked with memory back to our childhood's  
ways.

Beyond it what? A tradition blurred of gossip and nursemaid says.

Why dost thou plain of thine age, O thou with the beard that is thin?  
Art thou alone in thy home? Is there none at thy side, not one, to deem thee a  
man among men?

Nay, thou art young while she holds thy hand, be thy years the threescore and  
ten.

The world is untimely contrived. It gives us our sunshine in summer,  
Its laughing face in our youth, when we need it not to be gay, being each one his  
own best mummer.

All its frown is for life that goes, its smile for the last new comer.

Europe a horologe is, ill mounted and clogged with grime,  
Asia a clock run down. Its hands on the dial are still; its hours are told by no  
chime.

Nathless, twice in the twenty--four, it shall tell thee exactly the time.

What is the profit of knowledge? Ah none, though to know not is pain!  
We grieve like a child in the dark; we grope for a chink at the door, for a way of  
escape from the chain;  
We beat on life's lock with our bleeding hands, till it opens. And where is the  
gain?

I have tried all pleasures but one, the last and sweetest; it waits.  
Childhood, the childhood of age, to totter again on the lawns, to have done with  
the loves and the hates,  
To gather the daisies, and drop them, and sleep on the nursing knees of the  
Fates.

I asked of the wise man ``Tell me, what age is the age of pleasure?  
Twenty years have I lived. I have spread my meshes in vain. I have taken a  
paltry treasure.

Where is the heart of the gold?" And he, ``I will tell thee anon at leisure."

I pleaded at thirty ``Listen. I have played, I have lost, I have won.

I have loved in joy and sorrow. My life is a burden grown with the thought of its sands outrun.

Where is the joy of our years? At forty?" `` Say it is just begun."

At forty I made love's mourning. I stood alone with my foes,  
Foot to foot with my Fate, as a man at grips with a man, returning blows for blows.

In the joy of battle `` 'Tis here" I cried. But the wise man, `` Nay, who knows?"

At fifty I walked sedately. At sixty I took my rest.

I had learned the good with the evil. I troubled my soul no more, I had reached the Isles of the Blest.

The sage was dead who had warned my fears. I was wise, I too, with the best.

What do we know of Being? Our own? How short lived, how base!

That which is not our own? The eternal enrolment of stars, the voids and the silences!

The enormous might of the mindless globes whirling through infinite space!

The infinite Great overhead, the infinite Little beneath!

The turn of the cellular germ, the giddy evolving of life in the intricate struggle for breath,

The microbe, the mote alive in the blood, the eyeless atom of death!

Yet which is the greater Being? We have dreamed of a life--giving God,

Him, the mind of the Sun, the conscious brain--flower of Space, with a cosmic form and abode,

With thought and pity and power of will, Humanity's ethical code.

We have dreamed, but we do not believe. Be He here, be He not, 'tis as one.

His Godhead, how does it help? He is far. He is blind to our need. Nay, nay, He is less than the Sun,

Less than the least of the tremulous stars, than our old scorned idols of stone.

For He heareth not, nor seeth. As we to the motes in our blood,

So is He to our lives, a possible symbol of power, a formula half understood.

But the voice of Him, where? the hand grip, where? A child's cry lost in a wood.

Therefore is Matter monarch, the eternal the infinite Thing,

The `` I that am" which reigneth, which showeth no shadow of change, while humanities wane and spring,

Which saith `` Make no vain Gods before me, who only am Lord and King."

What then is Merlyn's message, his word to thee weary of pain,  
Man, on thy desolate march, thy search for an adequate cause, for a thread, for  
a guiding rein,  
Still in the maze of thy doubts and fears, to bring thee thy joy again?

Thou hast tried to climb to the sky; thou hast called it a firmament;  
Thou hast found it a thing infirm, a heaven which is no haven, a bladder  
punctured and rent,  
A mansion frail as the rainbow mist, as thy own soul impotent.

Thou hast clung to a dream in thy tears; thou hast stayed thy rage with a hope;  
Thou hast anchored thy wreck to a reed, a cobweb spread for thy sail, with sand  
for thy salvage rope;  
Thou hast made thy course with a compass marred, a toy for thy telescope.

What hast thou done with thy days? Bethink thee, Man, that alone,  
Thou of all sentient things, hast learned to grieve in thy joy, hast earned thee the  
malison  
Of going sad without cause of pain, a weeper and woebegone.

Why? For the dream of a dream of another than this fair life  
Joyous to all but thee, by every creature beloved in its spring--time of passion  
rife,  
By every creature but only thee, sad husband with sadder wife,

Scared at thought of the end, at the simple logic of death,  
Scared at the old Earth's arms outstretched to hold thee again, thou child of an  
hour, of a breath,  
Seeking refuge with all but her, the mother that comforteth.

Merlyn's message is this: he would bid thee have done with pride.  
What has it brought thee but grief, thy parentage with the Gods, thy kinship with  
beasts denied?  
What thy lore of a life to come in a cloud--world deified?

O thou child which art Man, distraught with a shadow of ill!  
O thou fool of thy dreams, thou gatherer rarely of flowers but of fungi of evil  
smell,  
Posion growths of the autumn woods, rank mandrake and mort--morell!

Take thy joy with the rest, the bird, the beast of the field,

Each one wiser than thou, which frolic in no dismay, which seize what the seasons yield,  
And lay thee down when thy day is done content with the unrevealed.

Take the thing which thou hast. Forget thy kingdom unseen.  
Lean thy lips on the Earth; she shall bring new peace to thy eyes with her healing vesture green.  
Drink once more at her fount of love, the one true hippocrene.

O thou child of thy fears! Nay, shame on thy childish part  
Weeping when called to thy bed. Take cheer. When the shadows come, when the crowd is leaving the mart,  
Then shalt thou learn that thou needest sleep, Death's kindly arms for thy heart.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# They Shall Not Know

When thou art happy, thou dear heart of pleasure,  
Because men love thee and the feasts are spread,  
And Fortune in thy lap has poured her treasure,  
And Spring is there and roses crown thy head,  
Then think of one who loved thee for his woe,  
And, if thou sigh  
With others by,  
They shall not know.

When thou art silent in thy day of trouble,  
Because fools vex and thou hast rivals found  
And love has played thee falser than a bubble  
And memory stings and grief is as a wound,  
Then think of one whose hand first soothed thy brow,  
And, if a smile  
Thy tears beguile,  
These shall not know.

When all is ended, thou pale ghost of sorrow,  
And time's last flower is gathered from the grove,  
And yesterday to thee is as to--morrow  
And there is none to speak to thee of love,  
Then sing these songs one made thee long ago,  
And men shall swear  
Thou still art fair--  
Yet shall not know.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Think No More Of Me

Think no more of me,  
If we needs must part.  
Mine was but a heart.  
Think no more of me.  
Think no more of me.  
For Love's sake forget.  
Love grows hard which cannot see,  
It may wound us yet.

Think no more of me.  
Love has had his day.  
Now Love runs away.  
Think no more of me.  
Think no more of me.  
If we loved or not  
Hidden is 'twixt me and thee.  
It were best forgot.

Think no more of me.  
We shall need our tears  
For the coming years.  
Think no more of me.  
Think no more of me.  
In the world above  
Sadder far it were if we  
Met and did not love.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## Three Pictures

I have seen many things in many lands,  
And many sorrows known and many joys,  
And clutched at pleasure's cup with lawless hands,  
And drunk my fill of mirth and lust and noise,  
Nor spared to make of human hearts my toys,  
But fed with life the brute strength of my pride,  
As with a tribute of fair living boys  
The monstrous lord of Crete him satisfied.  
--But of all pictures laid up in my soul  
Are three most beautiful and passionate,  
The illumined margin of an ancient scroll,  
Which moraliseth pity, love and hate;  
And these, when she is sad, she doth unroll  
And on their common meaning meditate.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Three Pictures Continued

The first, a woman, nobly limbed and fair,  
Standeth at sunset by a famed far sea.  
Red are her lips as Love's own kisses were,  
Yet speak they never though they smile on me.  
An old knight, next, and arméd cap--à--pie,  
Watcheth the slaughtered clay that was his heir.  
The winding--sheet is not more white than he,  
Hath sat since dawn and hath not shed a tear.  
The third a tortured bull about to die  
In the arena. No proud infidel  
E'er laid his dripping spears more scornfully  
In Spanish dust; for he too, ere he fell,  
Hath slain a man. Ah Christ! That murderous eye  
Burneth athirst like the red pit of Hell.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To A Dead Journalist

The busy trade of life is over now,  
The intricate toil which was so hard for bread,  
The strife each day renewed 'neath this poor brow  
By this frail hand to be interpreted,  
The zeal, the forethought, the heart's wounds that bled,  
The anger roused, the stark blow answering blow,  
All that was centred in that aching head  
Of black necessity for weal or woe.  
--Its use, its purpose what? Nay, less than none,  
More blindly naught than even the dull clay  
Left on this bed, its corporal union done,  
Which we must shovel to its grave to--day.  
O soul of Man, thou pilgrim of distress  
Lost in Time's void! Thou wind of nothingness!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To A Disciple Of William Morris

Stand fast by the ideal. Hero be,  
You in your youth, as he from youth to age.  
Dare to be last, least, in good modesty,  
Nor fret thy soul for speedier heritage.  
Even as he lived, live thou, laborious, sage,  
Yielding thy flower, leaf, fruitage seasonably,  
Content if but some beauty in Time's page  
Out of thy being spring and live through thee.  
Churl Fame shall grudge (ah, let it grudge!) thee glory.  
Knaves have earned that. Behold, the blossoming thorn  
Emblazoneth the hedge where fools made foray,  
Redeemeth their sad flouts and jibes forlorn.  
Ere thou shalt guess, the nightingale thy story  
Learning shall speak of thee and shame their scorn.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To A Happy Warrior

Glory to God who made a man like this!  
To God be praise who in the empty heaven  
Set Earth's gay globe  
With its green vesture given  
And nuptial robe  
To be the home enthroned of happiness!  
Who from the silences  
Of the dumb Universe,  
For listening ears,  
Constructed song  
And fashioned the first note  
Of the first linnet's throat,  
His audible whisper the deep woods among!  
Who, with His dance--masters,  
The dappled deer  
And their fleet fawns,  
With rhythmic beat  
Of their light feet  
Upon the thyme--sweet lawns,  
Framed the free gamut of the wakening year  
And gave command to mirth His minister  
That all things young and glad  
And mad,  
In this fair world's expanse  
Should dance!  
Praise be! and most for these,  
The lyric ecstasies  
Sublime in each least lot,  
The passionate plot  
Subtly contrived to propagate their kind  
By beast and bird and in Man's livelier mind  
To make of life new life,  
Of joy new joy, in corporal bliss  
Entwined,  
Man's who is man and wife,  
Though neither he have thought  
Nor she, in their love blind,  
Of that child's smile  
Half hers half his

Unborn, the while  
They clasp and kiss!  
These are the vastnesses  
That bid us give God glory for his depths of guile.

And he? The ultimate man,  
The heir of their delight,  
Whose keener sight  
Grasped the full vision of Time's master--plan,  
And who, because he knew,  
Found power to do  
What the rest dared not and was thus the priest  
Of the divine high feast  
Of Love on Earth? Poet, whose prosody  
Embraced heaven's infinite blue  
And the white light of stars,  
The moon's proud chastity  
And the sea beating on its prison bars;  
Whose ritual  
Was the procession of the months and days  
In ordered praise  
Of ceremonial flowers, Earth's virginal  
Patchwork of shredded colours in the grass;  
Whose incense was  
The mist of morning, and whose sacrifice  
The sun in splendour by whose light all live?  
How shall we give  
To one thus wise  
Our homage who so loved him and alas  
Now weep for him with unavailing eyes?

For what is wisdom more than this one thought,  
To harvest happiness? Time has its wheat,  
Its rule of life discreet,  
By scholars taught,  
For daily bread; and its weeds too,  
Its wild crop of the woods which is not bought,  
Its way that fools call folly,  
Choke--pear, crab, holly,  
All the riot  
Of the bird's diet,  
For maid and boy,

Their winter--pick of joy,  
If they but knew!  
And these to learn and gather in their prime  
Is youth's sublime.

Here lay his victory. Not flowers alone  
Nor fruits were his,  
But the world's sadnesses  
He gathered also, its loves lost and gone,  
The tragic things that are  
As the maple leaves  
Of the fast dying year,  
Crowning its funeral car,  
The glory of its passing set on fire  
In the late hedges,  
The wreathed bryony  
Black with the Autumn saltings of the Sea,  
And those lone sedges at the lake's edges  
Which winter winds have whitened on the mere.  
These, as the symbols of his Soul's romance  
In antique lands,  
He bound into the sheaves  
Of his desire,  
A wreath,  
Nobler for death.  
Of these he fashioned a new chivalry  
For days to be,  
Incorporate with the glories of all Time,  
The immortal rhyme  
Of Roland and the paladins of France,  
Of Charlemagne,  
The Cid Bivar of Spain,  
And those pround questers of the Holy Grail  
Who rode with Arthur cap à pie in mail,  
Till in his hands  
It seemed the actual lance  
Of Lancelot trembled and took edge and shook  
Defiance at his foes in Lyonnaise,  
No less than those  
Of whom it is written in the old French book  
That he pursued and slew and scattering rent  
Their ranks in fear,

While the Earth trembled his glad shout to hear.  
So he in his high rage in Parliament.

Anon, too, at the feasts  
Where with the knights and ladies crowned he sat,  
Their laureate  
Of that famed Table Round, its pleasure's lord,  
His was the tongue  
To celebrate their praise,  
Theirs the adored,  
With virile minstrelsy and mirth and song,  
And generous wine  
Outpoured  
In draughts divine from flagons  
Rich with the mellow fruitage of the vine;  
His was the tongue  
To tell of valorous deeds  
Done for high honour's needs  
On pestilent dragons in dank forest places  
Vanquished and slain, and felon knights laid low,  
For fair loved faces  
In days long ago;  
Amorous sad tales of dolorous mistakes  
At hands that sought to save;  
Ancient heart--aches,  
Each laid to rest in its forgotten grave.  
And with them griefs, which venturing found their hour,  
Fruitage and flower,  
And were fulfilled of joy;--and chiefly hers,  
Royal sad Guinevere's  
Noblest of all among the tragic dead.  
Of her he loved to tell.  
And he did well;  
For she, the lady of his dreams, one night,  
As it is said,  
In Glastonbury,  
Hearing his young steps hurry  
As to a goal,  
To kneel at her dead feet,  
Where as she lay with her sleep--folded palms  
In the long calms  
Of a passed soul,



Did from her cerements white  
Awake,  
And feel her passionate heart beat  
To his desire,  
And in new bride's attire  
Arise and live a woman for his sake,  
A woman and no dream.  
These were the rhapsodies of life to him,  
The things that his heart's zeal  
Made real.

And who shall wonder if to--day we weep  
Our Prince of happiness,  
Our warrior dead?  
If we, who saw  
These wonders beyond law,  
And his proud soul's essay  
To live the great life of the Fellowship  
In our late day,  
Should mourn him fled,  
Yet, none the less,  
Give praise  
To God, with chastened but undoubting lip,  
For this exemplar of His works and ways?  
Since that we know that in His scheme of bliss  
No permanent anguish is,  
But beauty only and high ruth and truth,  
And that Life's law is this:  
Pleasure is duty, duty pleasure  
In equal measure;  
And Time's happiness  
God's all--sufficient reason with the wise,  
As with this man  
Who sleeps in Paradise.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To Her Whose Name

To her whose name,  
With its sweet sibilant sound like sudden showers  
Splashing the grass and flowers,  
Hath set my April heart aflame;

To her whose face,  
The flower and crown of all created things,  
Dearer than even Spring's,  
Hath been to me a sacrament of grace;

Whose luminous mind,  
Stored with all gladness of the earth and sky,  
Hath lightened my sad eye  
And made it wise in love which erst was blind;

Whose voice of pleasure,  
Calling to joys as a blithe wedding bell  
When ringers ring it well,  
Hath tuned my soul to its own happy measure;

Whose blessed hand,  
With its white mystery of fingers five,  
Each one a soul alive,  
Hath taught me truths no angels understand;

Whose arms within,  
Should she once clasp me to her very heart,  
God knoweth we should not part  
But live for aye in Heaven's own bliss divine;

To her, alas,  
Who is so near, yet standeth still so far,  
Seeing the mortal bar  
Betwixt us ever which we cannot pass,

These lines I send  
With my heart's tears to--night beseeching her,  
Of her dear love more dear,  
To be no less to me my sweetest soul and friend.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To Hester On The Stair

Hester, creature of my love,  
What is this? You love not me?  
On the stair you stand above,  
Looking down distrustfully  
With the corners of your eyes  
Watching me in mute surprise,  
Me, your father, only me.

Hester, why this foolish terror,  
You who know me and my ways?  
Was my love so writ in error  
That it needed your disgrace?  
Is your doubt of locks grown thin  
Or the beard which hides his chin  
His, your father's chin and face?

Hester, we were fools of passion  
When our last goodbyes were smiled.  
Now you stand in your strange fashion  
By my kisses unbeguiled,  
With your light foot turned to flee  
While I press you to my knee,  
You, my child, my only child.

Listen, Hester, I am able  
Still to flatter and be fond:  
You the wise crow of the fable  
Perched above me and beyond.  
Foolish! Not one word you speak  
To my praises of your cheek,  
Not one sound, one only sound!

Be it so. My love you mock it,  
And my sighs are empty wind.  
See, I shut my heart and lock it  
From your laughing eyes unkind.  
Yet, remember this last word,  
Love is two--edged like a sword.  
Mind this only, only mind!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To Manon, Comparing Her To A Falcon

BRAVE as a falcon and as merciless,  
With bright eyes watching still the world, thy prey,  
I saw thee pass in thy lone majesty,  
Untamed, unmated, high above the press.  
The dull crowd gazed at thee. It could not guess  
The secret of thy proud aerial way,  
Or read in thy mute face the soul which lay  
A prisoner there in chains of tenderness.  
—Lo, thou art captured. In my hand today  
I hold thee, and awhile thou deignest to be  
Pleased with my jesses. I would fain beguile  
My foolish heart to think thou lovest me. See,  
I dare not love thee quite. A little while  
And thou shalt sail back heavenwards. Woe is me!

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



# To Nimue

I had clean forgotten all, her face who had caused my trouble.  
Gone was she as a cloud, as a bird which passed in the wind, as a glittering  
stream--borne bubble,  
As a shadow set by a ship on the sea, where the sail looks down on its double.

I had laid her face to the wall, on the shelf where my fancies sleep.  
I had laid my pain in its grave, in its rose--leaf passionless grave, with the things  
I had dared not keep.  
I had left it there. I had dried my tears. I had said, ``Ah, why should I weep?"

I will not be fooled by her, by the spell of her fair child's face.  
What is its meaning to me, who have seen, who have known, who have loved  
what miracle forms of grace?  
What are its innocent wiles, its smiles, its idle sweet girlishness?

I will not love without love. I despise the ways of a fool.  
Let me prevail as of old, as lover, as lord, as king, or have done with Love's  
tyrant rule.  
I was born to command, not serve, not obey. No boy am I in Love's school.

I have fled to the fields, the plains, the desert places of rest,  
To the forest's infinite smile, where the cushat calls from the trees and the yaffle  
has lined her nest,  
To the purple hills with the spray of the sea, when the wind blows loud from the  
west.

I have done with her love and her, the wine--draughts of human pleasure.  
The voice of nature is best, the cradle song of the trees which is hymned to  
Time's stateliest measure,  
As once a boy in the woods I heard it and held it an exquisite treasure.

I had clean forgotten all. I had sung to the indolent hills  
Songs of joy without grief, since grief is of human things the shadow of human  
ills.  
I sang aloud in my pride of song to the chime of the answering rills.

And, behold, the whole world heard, the dull mad manridden Earth.  
And they cried, ``A prophet hath risen, a sage with the heart of a child, a bard of  
no human birth,



A soul that hath known nor pain, nor sin, a singer of infinite mirth."

And she too heard it and came. And she knew it was I grown wise.  
And she stood from the rest apart, and I watched her with pitying scorn, and  
then with a sad surprise,  
And last with a new sweet passionate joy, for I saw there were tears in her eyes.

And she came and sat at my feet, as in days ere our grief began.  
And I saw her a woman grown. And I was a prophet no more, but a desolate  
voiceless man.  
And I clasped her fast in my arms in joy and kissed her tears as they ran.

And I shall not be fooled by her, though her face is fair as a rose.  
And I shall not live without love, though the world should forget my songs and I  
should forget its woes,  
And the purple hills should forget the sea and the spray when the west wind  
blows.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## To One In A Garden

If I were other than, alas, I am,  
A soul in strife, whom banded foemen vex,  
If toil were folly and good deeds a sham,  
And hydra wrong had shed its serpent necks,  
And life's dark problems could no more perplex,  
How sweet it were, forgotten of all blame,  
In that far garden which your summer decks  
To dream with you that grief was but a name.  
--Ay, dream! For waking which of us were wise  
To spell grief's epitaph? Some tears must be  
Even in the herald hour of your sunrise.  
And in the night? Ah, child, what misery,  
Think you, awaits us when life's flood--gates strain  
To the full deluge of the descending rain?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To One In A Hostile Camp

How dare I, Juliet, in love's kindness be  
Your counsellor for these mad days of war,  
I, a sworn Montagu, to liberty  
Bound by all oaths which men least lightly swear?  
How shall I aid you, who enlisted are  
In a strange camp, 'neath a strange captaincy,  
Nor urge rebellion to that lurid star  
Which mocks the captive nations held in fee?  
--Nay, bid me not thus falsify my griefs.  
I cannot turn my creed nor change my King.  
Around me crumble my life's last beliefs,  
But in the wreck of faiths to faith I cling.  
Lo, this my message is, till Time shall die,  
'` Though all abandon these, yet never I."

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# To One Who Would Make A Confession

Oh! leave the past to buy its own dead.  
The past is naught to us, the present all.  
What need of last year's leaves to strew Love's bed?  
What need of ghosts to grace a festival?  
I would not, if I could, those days recall,  
Those days not ours. For us the feast is spread.  
The lamps are lit, and music plays withal.  
Then let us love and leave the rest unsaid.  
This island is our home. Around it roar  
Great gulfs and oceans, channels, straits and seas.  
What matter in what wreck we reached the shore,  
So we both reached it? We can mock at these.  
Oh! leave the past, if past indeed there be;  
I would not know it; I would know but thee.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## To The Same

I WOULD I had thy courage, dear, to face  
This bankruptcy of love, and greet despair  
With smiling eyes and unconcerned embrace,  
And these few words of banter at "dull care."  
I would that I could sing and comb my hair  
Like thee the morning through, and choose my dress,  
And gravely argue what I best should wear,  
A shade of ribbon or a fold of lace.  
I would I had thy courage and thy peace,  
Peace passing understanding; that mine eyes  
Could find forgetfulness like thine in sleep;  
That all the past for me like thee could cease  
And leave me cheerfully, sublimely wise,  
Like David with washed face who ceased to weep.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Twenty Days

Twenty days are barely gone,  
I was merry all the day.  
Folly was my butt of scorn.  
Now the fool myself I play.

Wit and learning ruled my head,  
Logic and economy.  
All the books I ever read  
Taught me only vanity.

Most of all it moved my mirth  
Womankind the world should rule.  
Man, the lord of all the Earth!  
He, forsooth, a woman's tool!

Cherry lip and glancing eye!  
What were rosy cheeks to me?  
Beauty's truth was but a lie--  
Witness tomes of history!

Twenty days had barely run.  
Twenty years they well might be.  
All my wisdom was undone,  
Reason bade good--night to me.

Her hair was of the red red gold,  
Her blue eyes looked me through and through.  
She was twenty--three years old,  
I was twenty years and two.

Fortune, fame, I freely give,  
Honour's self, if so she please,  
Sweetly in her smile to live  
Other twenty days like these.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Une Feuille Morte

Je rêve debout devant la porte  
Qui vient de se fermer sur moi.  
Je colle mes yeux en triste sorte  
Sur ce carré de sombre bois.  
Je tourne entre mes deux doigts  
Une fleur, une petite fleur; qu'importe?  
Elle était bien bleue autrefois.  
Ce n'est plus qu'une feuille morte.  
Pauvre fleur, la douleur t'enlaidit  
Les pétales mornes et pendues.  
Tu sens mauvais, tu noircis.  
Hélas fidèle, que fais--tu?  
Mourir! C'est vite prendre ton parti!  
Et moi donc, qui ai tant perdu?

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Whom The Gods Love

Whom the gods love die young. Ah, do not doubt of it.  
Laura did well to die. Our loss was a gain for her,  
Ours who so loved her laughter, ours who at thought of it  
Shrink from a wound yet tender, wailing in vain for her.

Full was her life, a well--spring, brimmed to the brink of it,  
Giving of its abundance alms to humanity.  
We, with our life's cup empty, paused there to drink of it,  
Rose with our souls ennobled, purged of their vanity.

Which of us all but loved her, knelt to her, prayed to her?  
She was our queen, our Soul--saint, first in our Calendar.  
``Laura," our lips breathed, ``Laura," vowing our aid to her,  
Each as her fame's proclaimer, champion and challenger.

Which but might deem she loved him? Which, when she smiled on him,  
Nursed not for his consoling dreams of felicity?  
Which, in her eyes, read no hope, when like a child on him  
Turned she those orbs appealing masked in simplicity?

Nay, there was none went wounded, even when ``No" to him  
Came as the last sad answer ending his argument.  
``No?" 'Twas hope's affirmation, boding no woe to him,  
Rather a sweet postponing framed for encouragement.

Why should he weep? He wept not. Dear was her way with him.  
Had she not given of all things more than he gave to her?  
Had not her lips poured plenty, wise words and gay with him?  
Why should his farewell falter, fool hands not wave to her?

I too with these essayed love. I too my joy with her  
Sought in her wild girl's garden, idly, a censurer,  
Learned what the rest had learned there, deemed like a boy with her  
I too, that Laura loved me, kneeled my heart's venturer,

Wooed her and went forth weeping, yet with her name for me  
Stored as a sweet remembrance deep in the heart of me,  
Grieving my day departed; still as high fame for me  
Chaunting it, each sad evening, proud as a part of me.



Whom the gods love! Ay truly. Why should we mourn for her  
Dowered with all youth for portion, spared our infirmity?  
Nay, 'twere for her to pity us, the forlorn for her,  
Laughing her gay girl's laughter, glad through Eternity.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Why Do I Love?

Why do I love?

Is it for men to choose

The hour of the hushed night when crowned with dews

From its sea grave the morning star shall wake?

Lo, while we drowsed, it rose on our heart's ache,

And all our heaven was red with the day's hues,

And glad birds chaunted from the trees above.

So was it with my heart that might not choose

But woke to love.

Why do I love?

The aureole of lost days

Is on thy brow and unforgotten face;

Faith's guiding light, the same which of old time

Sent men on knightly quests to deeds sublime

And the high prize which was their lady's grace.

Thither I follow, careless what shall prove,

So only at thy knees a little space

I too may love.

Why do I love?

The paths of life are steep,

And dark the issues and the gulfs how deep!

This wayside shrine invites my knees to kneel.

Thou, dearest Saint, in witness of my zeal

Biddest me walk in joy who only weep,

And fare forth comforted who vainly strove.

See how my steps in thy sweet service leap!

See how I love!

Why do I love?

There is a dream that stirs

My soul to its last depth of lost desires,

Music of waters in a thirsty land,

A step, a touch, the lingering of a hand,

Fingers that are the soft Spring's messengers,

And lips that to my kisses part and move

With passionate words which yet--how strange!--are hers,

Pleading for love.

Why do I love?  
If one had told me this,  
When I erewhile in the world's wilderness  
Wandered uncertain of Heaven or Hell,  
How had I laughed as at a time--worn tale!  
To--day, behold. I too speak prophecies,  
And hang my votive garland in the grove,  
And supplicate my god, and kneel and kiss  
Her feet for love.

Why do I love?  
Ah, love, I will not make  
A longer reasoning even for thy sake;  
Be it enough that I am pleasure's thrall.  
Tell me thy will, in song or madrigal  
Or word unspoken. Bid me bend or break,  
And brave all wraths of Earth or Heaven above,  
But not thy wrath. Ah! bid me not awake.  
Bid me still love.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Wilt Thou Take Me For Thy Slave?

Wilt thou take me for thy slave,  
With my folly and my love?  
Wilt thou take me for the bondsman of thy pride?  
Thou who dearer art to me than all the world beside;  
For I love thee as no other man can love.

Wilt thou take me to thy soul,  
For the truth which thou shalt prove?  
Wilt thou clothe me with the riches of thy care?  
Thou who dearer art to me than gold and jewels rare;  
For I love thee as no other man can love.

Wilt thou take me for thy king,  
While the sun and stars shall move?  
Wilt thou pay me back the homage I have given?  
Oh thou dearer unto me than sun and stars and heaven!  
For I love thee as no other man can love.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt



## With Eternity Standing By

How shall I bid you good--bye,  
Dear, without tears?  
Only once in the years,  
The idle vanishing years,  
We met, with Eternity standing by,  
And loved, a little forgotten space,  
I for the sake of your beautiful face,  
You I hardly know how or why,  
Or whether you loved me indeed, alas,  
With Eternity standing by.

We played our comedy parts,  
Scene after scene.  
You were to be my queen,  
My dear sweet comedy queen,  
I your lover and knave of hearts  
Who kissed your hand in the make--believe  
And looked for the bee in your royal sleeve,  
And stopped, because of the pain that smarts,  
The pangs that soften, the sighs that grieve,  
And the rest of the tragic parts.

We did not know that we loved,  
Not at the first of it.  
That, ah that was the worst of it,  
The aching sorrowful worst of it,  
Not till I saw that your soul was moved  
At the sound of my voice, as in tears I read  
Of Guinevere and the days long dead,  
And the knights and ladies who lived and loved  
And went to their graves and were harvested.  
Then, ah then, it was proved.

So I dare not bid you good--bye,  
Dear, without tears.  
Things there are in the years,  
The coming ominous years,  
All too sad for us not to cry.  
Other joys shall forgotten be,

But not the pilgrimage made with me,  
The Severn's flood and the angry sky,  
And the love we talked of, which could not be  
With Eternity standing by.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

## Worth Forest

Come, Prudence, you have done enough to--day--  
The worst is over, and some hours of play  
We both have earned, even more than rest, from toil;  
Our minds need laughter, as a spent lamp oil,  
And after their long fast a recompense.  
How sweet the evening is with its fresh scents  
Of briar and fern distilled by the warm wind!  
How green a robe the rain has left behind!  
How the birds laugh!--What say you to a walk  
Over the hill, and our long promised talk  
About the rights and wrongs of infancy?  
Our patients are asleep, dear angels, she  
Holding the boy in her ecstatic arms,  
As mothers do, and free from past alarms,  
The child grown calm. If we, an hour or two,  
Venture to leave them, 'tis but our hope's due.  
My tongue is all agog to try its speed  
To a new listener, like a long--stalled steed  
Loosed in a meadow, and the Forest lies  
At hand, the theme of its best flatteries.  
See, Prudence, here, your hat, where it was thrown  
The night you found me in the house alone  
With my worst fear and these two helpless things.  
Please God, that worst has folded its black wings,  
And we may let our thoughts on pleasure run  
Some moments in the light of this good sun.  
They sleep in Heaven's guard. Our watch to--night  
Will be the braver for a transient sight--  
The only one perhaps more fair than they--  
Of Nature dressed for her June holiday.

This is the watershed between the Thames  
And the South coast. On either hand the streams  
Run to the great Thames valley and the sea,  
The Downs, which should oppose them, servilely  
Giving them passage. Who would think these Downs,  
Which look like mountains when the sea--mist crowns  
Their tops in autumn, were so poor a chain?  
Yet they divide no pathways for the rain,



Nor store up waters, in this pluvius age,  
More than the pasteboard barriers of a stage.  
The crest lies here. From us the Medway flows  
To drain the Weald of Kent, and hence the Ouse  
Starts for the Channel at Newhaven. Both  
These streams run eastward, bearing North and South.  
But, to the West, the Adur and the Arun  
Rising together, like twin rills of Sharon,  
Go forth diversely, this through Shoreham gap,  
And that by Arundel to Ocean's lap.  
All are our rivers, by our Forest bred,  
And one besides which with more reverend heed  
We need to speak, for her desert is great  
Beyond the actual wealth of her estate.  
For Spenser sang of her, the River Mole,  
And Milton knew her name, though he, poor soul,  
Had never seen her, as I think being blind,  
And so miscalled her sullen. Others find  
Her special merit to consist in this:  
A maiden coyness, and her shy device  
Of mole--like burrowing. And in truth her way  
Is hollowed out and hidden from the day,  
Under deep banks and the dark overgrowth  
Of knotted alder roots and stumps uncouth,  
From source to mouth; and once at Mickleham,  
She fairly digs her grave, in deed and name,  
And disappears. There is an early trace  
Of this propensity to devious ways  
Shown by the little tributary brook  
Which bounds our fields, for lately it forsook  
Its natural course, to burrow out a road  
Under an ash tree in its neighbourhood.  
But whether this a special virtue is,  
Or like some virtues but a special vice,  
We need not argue. This at least is true,  
That in the Mole are trout, and many too,  
As I have often proved with rod and line  
From boyhood up, blest days of pins and twine!  
How many an afternoon have our hushed feet  
Crept through the alders where the waters meet,  
Mary's and mine, and our eyes viewed the pools  
Where the trout lay, poor unsuspecting fools,

And our hands framed their doom,--while overhead  
His orchestra of birds the backbird led.  
In those lost days, no angler of them all  
Could boast our cunning with the bait let fall,  
Close to their snouts, from some deceiving coigne,  
Or mark more notches when we stopped to join  
Our fishes head to tail and lay them out  
Upon the grass, and count our yards of trout.  
'Twas best in June, with the brook growing clear  
After a shower, as now. In dark weather  
It was less certain angling, for the stream  
Was truly ``sullen" then, so deep and dim.  
'Tis thus in mountain lakes, as some relate,  
Where the fish need the sun to see the bait.  
The fly takes nothing in these tangled brooks,  
But grief to fishermen and loss of hooks;  
And all our angling was of godless sort,  
With living worm,--and yet we loved the sport.

But wait. This path will lead us to the gill,  
Where you shall see the Mole in her first rill,  
Ere yet she leaves the Forest, and her bed  
Is still of iron--stone, which stains her red,  
Yet keeps her pure and lends a pleasant taste  
To her young waters as they bubble past.  
You hear her lapping round the barren flanks  
Of these old heaps we call the ``Cinder--banks,"  
Where our forefathers forged their iron ore,  
When Paul's was building. Now, the rabbits bore  
In the still nights, beneath these ancient heaps,  
A very honeycomb. See, where she peeps,  
The infant river. You could hardly wet  
Your ankles in her midmost eddy yet.  
She has a pretty cunning in her look  
Mixed with alarm, as in her secret nook  
We find her out, half fugitive, half brave,  
A look that all the Forest creatures have.  
Let us away. Perhaps her guilelessness  
Is troubled at a guilty human face,  
(Mine, Prudence,--not your own). I know a dell  
Knee deep in fern, hard by, the very cell  
For an elf hermit. Here stag--mosses grow,

Thick as a coverlet, and fox--gloves blow  
Purple and white, and the wild columbine,  
And here in May there springs that thing divine,  
The lily of the valley, only here  
Found in the Forest, blossoming year on year;  
A place o'ershadowed by a low--crowned oak.  
The enchanted princess never had been woke  
If she had gone to sleep in such a spot,  
In spite of fortune. Why, a corpse forgot  
Might lie, with eyes appealing to the sky,  
Unburied here for half a century.  
And this the woodcocks, as I take it, knew,  
Who stayed to breed here all the summer through,  
When other birds were gone. I flushed a pair  
On the longest day last year; the nest was there;  
And found some egg--shells chipped among the moss.  
The sight is rarer now than once it was.

There! We have gathered breath and climbed the hill,  
And now can view the landscape more at will.  
This is the Pilgrim road, a well--known track,  
When folk did all their travelling on horseback,  
Now long deserted, yet a right of way,  
And marked on all our maps with due display.  
Beneath this yew--tree, which perhaps has seen  
Our fathers riding to St. Thomas' shrine,  
(For this was once the way of pilgrimage  
From the south--west for all who would engage  
Their vows at Canterbury), we will sit,  
As doubtless they too sat, and rest a bit.  
I love this solitude of birch and fern,  
These quags and mosses, and I love the stern  
Black yew--trees and the hoary pastures bare,  
Or tufted with long growths of withered hair  
And rank marsh grass. I love the bell--heath's bloom,  
And the wild wealth which passionate Earth's womb  
Throws in the Forest's lap to clothe unseen  
Its ancient barrenness with youth and green.  
I love the Forest; 'tis but this one strip  
Along the watershed that still dares keep  
Its title to such name. Yet once wide grown  
A mighty woodland stretched from Down to Down,

The last stronghold and desperate standing--place  
 Of that indigenous Britannic race  
 Which fell before the English. It was called  
 By Rome ``Anderida," in Saxon ``Weald."  
 Time and decay, and Man's relentless mood,  
 Have long made havock of the lower wood  
 With axe and plough; and now, of all the plain,  
 These breadths of higher ground alone remain,  
 In token of its presence. Who shall tell  
 How long, in these lost wilds of brake and fell,  
 Or in the tangled groves of oak below,  
 Gathering his sacred leaf, the mistletoe,  
 Some Druid priest, forgotten and in need,  
 May here have kept his rite and owned his creed  
 After the rest? For hardly yet less rude,  
 Here later dwelt that patron of our wood,  
 The Christian Hermit Leonard, he who slew  
 The last authentic dragon England knew;  
 A man of prayer and penitential vows,  
 Whose tale survives in many a forest house.  
 For, having slain his monster, he was given  
 To choose whate'er he would in gift from Heaven,  
 And took for his sole recompense this thing:  
 ``Snakes should not bite, nor nightingales should sing  
 Within the Forest precincts." Thus, thought he,  
 His orisons should unmolested be  
 By mundane joys and troubles. Yonder ridge,  
 Cutting the sky--line at the horizon's edge,  
 Is the Surrey Hills. Beneath the chalk pit, set  
 Like a white cloud upon the face of it,  
 Lies Dorking, famed for fowls, and, further still,  
 Wotton and Shere. In front you have Leith Hill,  
 Which looks upon St. Paul's and on the sea,  
 A point of note in our geography.  
 All this is Evelyn's land, who long ago  
 Left us his record of the vale below  
 And wrote the ``Silva" now to hands as good  
 Passed, the descendant's of his name and blood,  
 That doughty squire's, who lately stood in fight  
 With the new dragons of the Primrose rite,  
 And broke a lance for Ireland and the cause  
 Of freedom, flouted by coercion laws.

Strange change! For long in history these same hills  
Were held as ominous of lowland ills,  
A source of robber fear, in foul repute,  
And natural fortress since the days of Knute,  
And earlier still when Saxon Sussex stood  
A home--ruled kingdom of primaeval wood.  
A camp, an eagle's nest, a foot set down  
Into the Weald, and evil of renown  
With the free dwellers of the plain, who saw  
A menace brooding of imperial law.  
Saxon or Dane or Norman, each in turn,  
Set there his camp to pillage and to burn;  
For history, just as now, was mainly then  
A tale of wars 'twixt regiments and men.  
We, forest dwellers, show with honest boast  
Our Slaughter Bridge, where the Norse horde was lost,  
Drowned in the red Mole waters, when the Dane  
Fled from his eyrie, nor returned again.

The farthest point of all, and looking west,  
Is the line of Hindhead, on whose triple crest,  
With a good glass, a three--inch telescope,  
You might make out the cross upon the top:  
It used to be a gibbet. As a child  
What tales I treasured of that headland wild,  
With its three murderers, who in chains there hung,  
Rocked by the winds and tempest--tossed and swung!  
Three Portsmouth sailors were they who their mate  
Murdered for gold and grog, which guineas get,  
And in the ``Punch Bowl" made their brute carouse,  
Leaving him dead, in a lone public--house,  
Where retribution seized them as was due,--  
For in that age of simple faiths and true  
Murder did always out,--and so apace  
Brought them to justice in that self--same place;  
And many years they hung. At last its sway  
Humanity, that child of yesterday,  
Asserted in their case, and craved their bones  
For Christian sepulture and these trim stones.  
I half regret the leniency thus lent:  
Their gallows--tree was their best monument;  
But ours is a trim age. There, farther down,

Is a tower, or ``folly," built of late by one  
We call in these parts ``Chevalier de Malt,"  
(The brewers love high places, and no fault).  
Behind us the chief ridge. And, as I speak,  
Out of its bowels, with an angry shriek,  
And rushing down the valley at our feet,  
The train has found us out in our retreat.  
It came from Balcombe tunnel and is bound  
To be in London ere an hour is round.  
It scarcely scares our solitude away;  
And yonder Royston crows, the black and grey,  
Sit on unmoved upon their oak. This ridge  
Is only thirty miles from London Bridge,  
And, when the wind blows north, the London smoke  
Comes down upon us, and the grey crows croak,  
For the great city seems to reach about  
With its dark arms, and grip them by the throat.  
Time yet may prove them right. The wilderness  
May be disforested, and Nature's face  
Stamped out of beauty by the heel of Man,  
Who has no room for beauty in his plan.

Such things may be, for things as strange have been.  
This very place, where peace and sylvan green  
And immemorial silence and the mood  
Of solemn Nature, virgin and unwooded,  
Seem as a heritage,--this very place  
Was once the workshop of a busy race  
Which dug and toiled and sweated. Here once stood,  
Amid the blackened limbs of tortured wood,  
And belching smoke and fury from its mouth,  
A monstrous furnace, to whose jaws uncouth  
A race as monstrous offered night and day  
The Forest's fairest offspring for a prey.  
Here stood a hamlet, black and populous,  
With human sins and sorrows in each house,  
A mining centre. Which of us could guess  
Each yew--tree yonder marks a dwelling--place  
Of living men and women?--nay, a tomb?  
Of all the secrets hidden in Earth's womb,  
None surely is more pitiful and strange  
Than this of human death and human change

Amid the eternal greenness of the Spring.  
All we may guess of what the years shall bring,  
Is this: that about April every year,  
White blossoms shall burst forth upon the pear  
And pink upon the apple. Nothing else.  
Earth has a silent mockery which repels  
Our questioning. Her history is not ours,  
And overlays it with a growth of flowers.

Ah, Prudence, you who wonder, being town bred,  
What troubles grieve us in the lives we lead,  
What cause we have for sorrow in these fields  
Whose beauty girds us with its thousand shields,--  
This is our tragedy. You cannot know,  
In your bald cities, where no cowslips blow,  
How dear life is to us. The tramp of feet  
Brushes all older footsteps from the street,  
And you see nothing of the graves you tread.  
With us they are still present, the poor dead,  
And plead with us each day of life, and cry  
` `Did I not love my life, I too, even I?"  
You wonder!--Wonder rather we are not  
All touched with madness and disease of thought,  
Being so near the places where they sleep  
Who sowed these fields we in their absence reap.  
It were more logical. And here in truth  
No few of our Weald peasants in their youth  
Lose their weak wits, or in their age go mad,  
Brooding on sights the world had deemed most glad.  
I have seen many such. The Hammer Ponds,  
So frequent in the Forest's outer bounds,  
Have all their histories of despairing souls  
Brought to their depths to find their true life's goals.  
You see one in the hollow, where the light  
Touches its blackness with a gleam of white,  
Deep down, and over--browed with sombre trees  
Shutting its surface primly from the breeze,  
The landscape's innocent eye, set open wide  
To watch the heavens,--yet with homicide  
Steeped to the lids. 'Tis scarce a year ago  
The latest sufferer from our rural woe  
Found there his exit from a life too weak

To shield him from despairs he dared not speak.  
A curious lad. I knew young Marden well,  
Brought up, a farmer's son, at the plough's tail,  
And used for all romance to mind the crows  
At plain day--wages in his father's house.  
A ``natural" he, and weak in intellect,  
His fellows said, nor lightly to be pricked  
To industry at any useful trade;  
His wits would go wool--gathering in the shade  
At harvest time, when all had work on hand,  
Nor, when you spoke, would seem to understand.  
At times his choice would be for days together  
To leave his work and idle in the heather,  
Making his bed where shelter could be found  
Under the fern--stacks or on open ground,  
Or oftenest in the charcoal burners' hives,  
When he could win that pity from their wives.  
Poor soul! He needed pity, for his face,  
Scarred by a burn, and reft of human grace,  
And for his speech, which faltering in his head  
Made a weak babble of the words he said.  
His eyes too--what a monster's! did you ever  
Watch a toad's face at evening by a river  
And note the concentrated light which lies  
In the twin topazes men call his eyes?  
Like these were Marden's. From the square of clay  
Which was his face, these windows of his day  
Looked out in splendour, but with a fixed stare  
Which made men start who missed the meaning there.  
Yet he had thoughts. Not seldom he and I  
Made in these woods discourse of forestry,  
Walking together, I with dog and gun,  
He as a beater, or, if game was none,  
Marking the timber trees and underwoods.  
He knew each teller in these solitudes,  
And loved them with a quite unreasoned art,  
Learned from no teacher but his own wild heart.  
Of trees he quaintly talked in measured saws  
Which seemed the decalogue of Nature's laws,  
Its burden being as erst, ``Thou shalt not kill"  
Things made by God, which shall outlive thee still.  
For larch and fir, newcomers from the North,



He pleaded scantily when their doom went forth,  
Knowing they needs must die, and the birch stems,  
Since Spring renews them, yet with stratagems  
Framed to delay the moment of their fate.  
For beech he battled with more keen debate  
Of hand and eye, in deprecating tone,  
Holding their rights coeval with our own.  
But when we came to oak, good Sussex oak,  
The flame burst forth, and all his being spoke  
In words that jostled in his throat with tears,  
` `An oak which might outlive a thousand years."  
He held this sacrilege. Perhaps some strains  
Of Druid blood were mingled in his veins,  
Which gave authority to guard the tree  
Sacred of yore, and thus he vanquished me.

How came he to his end, poor Marden? Well,  
All stories have their reason, as some tell,  
In Eves that give the fruit for which men grieve,  
Or, what is often worse, refuse to give.  
This last was Marden's unprotected case,  
Whose virtue failed him, and his ugliness,  
To escape the common fate of all mankind.  
He fell in love egregious and purblind,  
Just like the wisest. She who caused his flame  
Was not, I think, in honesty to blame  
If she was less than serious at his suit.  
Marden, as lover, was grotesquely mute,  
And his strange eyes were not the orbs to move  
A maiden's fancy to a dream of love.  
In truth they were scarce human. Still 'twas hard  
His passion should be met, for sole reward,  
With sermon phrases and such gospel talk  
As preachers license for a Sunday walk,  
Mixed with her laughter. This was all she gave,  
An endless course of things beyond the grave,  
Till he lost reckoning and, poor witless man,  
Began to reason on the cosmic plan,  
Which meted this scant mercy in his case,  
And placed him in such straits for happiness.  
Can you not see it? All our rustics live  
In their small round of thoughts as in a hive,

Each cell they build resembling each each day,  
Till their wits swarm, and then they are away.  
Marden went mad, misled by his queen bee,  
Through a deep slough of black theology,  
Which ended in destruction and this pool,  
With Hell beyond him for his poor dumb soul.  
He sought her final pity for love lost.  
She talked of Heaven, and sent him tracts by post.  
He pleaded. She reproved. She prayed. He swore.  
She bade him go. He went, and came no more.  
Such was the history, no whit uncommon.  
I neither blame the boy nor blame the woman,  
Only the hardness of a fate which laid  
Its iron flail upon too weak a head.  
She watched him go, half doubting what would come,  
Her last tract crushed betwixt his angry thumb  
And his clenched fingers, and his lips grown white,  
And his eyes gleaming with their maniac light,  
And so towards the hill. That afternoon,  
The last of a late autumn, saw the sun  
Set in unusual splendour (it is said  
A disc of gold in a whole heaven of red),  
The herald of a frost, the earliest  
Known for a lifetime. There, for summer dressed,  
The trees stood stiff and frozen in their green,  
Belated revellers in some changing scene  
Of sudden winter and June left behind.  
In all the forest was no breath of wind  
For a full fortnight, nor was a leaf shed  
Long after Nature in her shroud lay dead,  
A beautiful black frost which held the land  
In unseen fetters, but with iron hand.  
The pools were frozen over in the night,  
Without a flaw or ripple; and their light  
Reflected every stem of every tree  
In perfect mirrors of transparency.  
Boys, who a week before were in the field  
With bat and ball, now ventured, iron--heeled,  
On the ice skating, yet awhile in fear,  
Seeing no footing on the water there.  
And thus it fell about the corpse was found  
(You will have guessed it) in the ice fast bound.

Two boys, the brothers of the girl he wooed,  
Tired of their pastime stopped awhile and stood  
Over a shallow place where rushes grow,  
And peering down saw a man's face below  
Watching their own (his eyes were open laid,  
Fixed in that terrible stare poor Marden's had);  
And thought they saw a vision. Running back,  
Loud in their fear, with spectres on their track,  
They spread the news through all the frightened farms,  
Filling the cottagers with wild alarms,  
Till some made bold with spades, and hewed away  
The ice above to where the dead man lay.  
There, sure enough, was Marden, his fool's mouth  
Stuffed for all solace of his sad soul's drouth  
With the girl's tracts. Thus primed, he had plunged in  
And ended all, with a last deed of sin,  
Grotesque and tragic as his life. No less  
Let us persuaded be he rests in peace,  
Or where were Heaven's justice? One last tale,  
As we walk back,--of worthy Master Gale,  
Our house's founder, who in a dark age  
Won us the lands we hold in heritage,  
Working his forge here in the civil wars,  
And welding fortunes out of iron bars.  
A story with a moral too, at least,  
For money makers, of how wealth increased,  
And most of all for us, to whom his toil  
Has proved a mine of ease and endless spoil,  
Though of a truth we are unlineal heirs,  
Not true descendants of his toils and cares.  
His history stands recorded in a book  
Himself achieved, ere Death his anvil broke,  
A volume full of wisdom and God's praise,  
Trust in himself, and scorn of human ways.

He was a blacksmith, born at Sevenoke  
In Kent, the toilsome son of toilsome folk,  
And honourable too, as honour then  
Was understood among commercial men.  
He paid his way through life. He owed to none  
Beyond their will to let the debt run on,  
Nor trusted any farther than he need.

He held the race of man a bastard breed,  
An evil generation, bred of dust,  
And prone to spending, idleness and lust.  
God was his friend. Of Him he counsel took,  
How he should make new ventures with new luck,  
Praying each night continuance of health,  
Increase of wisdom and increase of wealth;  
Nor ever in his yearly balance sheet  
Forgot to inscribe himself in Heaven's debt.  
A virtuous man, and holding with good cause  
The eternal justice of the social laws  
Which give to industry its well--earned meed,  
And leave the weak and idle to their need.  
From childhood up, he clutched the staff of life,  
As if it were a cudgel for the strife,  
And wielded it throughout relentlessly.  
His parents, brothers, all by God's decree,  
Died of the plague when he was scarce sixteen.  
The date, as I have reckoned, should have been  
The very year the patriots raised their backs  
To the new pressure of the shipping tax.  
His first fight was a battle for the pence  
Left by his father, when, at dire expense  
Of lawyers' fees and charges without end,  
He found himself with fifty pounds to spend,  
And a small stock--in--trade of iron sows,  
A fireless smithy and an empty house.  
With these and God's compassion, and a man  
To strike and blow for him, his trade began,  
Till in four years his industry had grown  
To a fair substance in his native town.

When he was twenty--one, an accident  
Brought him to Sussex; and, as Saul was sent  
To find his father's asses and therewith  
Met with a kingdom, so this honest smith,  
While chasing a bad debtor through the Weald,  
Lit on his fortune in this very field.  
For, failing of his money, in its stead  
He took his debtor's forge and smelting shed;  
Sold his goodwill at Sevenoke, and set  
His smithy in the Forest next to it.

This brought him trade. The civil wars began  
And each man's hand was set against each man,  
And sword to sword. But, while his neighbours fought,  
Gale, like a Gallio, cared for these things nought,  
And sold his iron with indifferent zeal  
To kings and Parliaments in need of steel;  
Or, if a prejudice his thought divides,  
It is for Cromwell and his Ironsides.  
But God's be all the glory, His alone  
Who to His servant Gale such grace had shown!

Thus, in an iron age, this thrifty man  
Got gold and silver, and, while others ran  
Out of their fortunes, he with pockets full  
Bought up their lands and held the world a fool.  
'Tis now two hundred years since Father Gale  
Laid down his pick and hammer. He had won,  
By forty years of toil beneath the sun,  
The right to work no longer, for himself  
And for his heirs for ever. This is Wealth!  
He was a prudent buyer, and died possessed  
Of some four thousand acres of the best  
Land in the parish. His first purchases  
Were in Worth Forest, to his vulgar eyes  
I fear mere wood for burning. Pease--pottage  
And Frog's--hole farms came next; and in his age,  
Wishing, as he says, to have a good estate  
And house to live in, though the day was late  
To think of building, and he most abhorred  
To waste his substance upon brick and board,  
Holding with prudent minds that such intent  
Is but at best a ``sweet impoverishment''  
And that the wise man doth more soundly hit  
Who turns another's folly to his wit,  
He purchased Caxtons, manor and domain,  
To be the home of a new race of men.

His last words, as recorded by his son,  
A man of taste and letters and who won  
A seat in Parliament in William's reign,  
Were uttered in the ancient Biblic strain  
Dear to the age he lived in and to him.

They might be David's in their cadence grim.  
` `When I am dead and gone," he said, ` `my son,  
Trust in the Lord and in none other, none.  
Be wary of thy neighbours. They are vile,  
A brood of vipers, to oppose whose guile  
I have been at constant charges all my life.  
Take thee an honest woman for thy wife,  
And get thee sons who shall inherit all  
Thy God hath given thee, spite of Adam's fall.  
Guard well thy rights, and cease not to pull down  
All gates that block thy highway to the town,  
Such as that man of Belial, Jacob Sears  
Has set in Crawley Lane these thirty years.  
Let no man venture to enclose the wastes.  
Be on thy guard against such ribald priests  
As Lee and Troughton. They are an ill brood,  
A bastard generation, bone and blood.  
Hold fast to thy religion. Go not thou  
After lewd women and the worldly show  
Of rich apparel. Keep thy substance close  
In thy own chamber for the fear of loss,  
And thy own counsel closer, lest men find  
Their way to rob thee of thy peace of mind.  
But, more than all, be quit of vain pretence,  
And see thy income equal thy expense,  
So shalt thou have thy God with thee always."

Thus runs the story. You have seen to--day  
The latest shoot of his posterity,  
The boy we left there sleeping. His shall be  
One day the guardianship of this domain,  
As other Gales have held it. It were vain  
In me to speak of all the goodly fruit  
Begotten on the stem of this old root,  
This sour crab--apple, worthy master Gale.  
This child perhaps. . . . But that will be a tale  
For new historians. Listen! Did you hear  
Just now, down in the valley, someone cheer  
Or hail us? Stop. Ay, there there comes a man,  
Running and shouting loud as a man can.  
He sees us too, and slowly through the fern  
Now climbs to meet us. Something we shall learn

Without a doubt. God grant it be not ill!  
And yet he seems to falter and stand still.  
What is your message, Penfold? Why this haste?  
A little closer. Speak man! Here at last  
You have found us. Come. What is it that you said!  
See, we have courage. ``Sir, the child is dead!"

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt





# Written At Sea

What is my quarrel with thee, beautiful sea,  
That thus I cannot love thy waves or thee,  
Or hear thy voice but it tormenteth me?

Why do I hate thee, who art beautiful  
Beyond all beauty, when the nights are cool,  
And the stars fade because the moon is full?

Why do I hate thee? Thou art new and young,  
And life is thine for loving, and thy tongue  
Hath tones that I have known and loved and sung.

Thou hast a smile which would my smiling greet;  
Thy brave heart beateth as my own doth beat,  
And thou hast tears which should be true and sweet.

Thou art a creature, strong and fair and brave,  
Such as I might have given the world to have  
And love and cherish;--and thou art my slave.

I have my home in thee. Thy arms enfold  
Me all night long, and I am rocked and rolled,  
And thou art never weary of thy hold.

Thou art a woman in thy constancy,  
And worthy better love than mine could be;  
And yet, behold, I cannot suffer thee.

If thou wert dumb; if thou wert like the sky,  
Which has not learned to speak our misery  
In any voice less rude than the wind's cry;

If thou wert wholly young and didst not know  
The secret of our ancient human woe,  
Or if thou knewest it wholly as I know;

Or yet if thou wert old with all these years;  
If thou wert dull to hopes and loves and fears;  
If thou wert blind and couldst not see our tears;

If thou wert bounded by some rocky shore,  
And hadst not given thyself thus wholly o'er  
To our poor single selves with all thy store;

If thou wert not in thy immensity,  
A single circle circling with the sky,  
Where we must still be centres changelessly;

If thou wert other than thou art; alas,  
If thou wert not of water, but a mass  
Of formless earth, a waveless plain of grass;

If thou wert shapeless as the mountains are;  
If thou wert clad in some discordant wear;  
If thou wert not so blue and trim and fair;

If thou wert decked with towns and villages;  
If there was heard, across the silent seas,  
The music of church bells upon the breeze;

If thou wert this; or if thou wert not near,  
But I could only sit apart and hear  
The beating of thy waves, and find it drear,

But wild and quite unknown, and far from me;  
Sea, if thou couldst no longer be the sea,  
Then I could love thee as thou lovest me.

If thou wouldst have me love thee, beautiful sea,  
Build up a wall of dark 'twixt thee and me;  
Let me not see thee; call the night to thee.

League with the winds; rise up, and send them driven  
To roll mad clouds about thy back at even.  
Make thee a desolation of the heaven.

Thou shouldst compel me, with thy angry voice,  
To choose 'twixt death and thee; and, at the choice,  
If my cheek grew not pale, thou might'st rejoice,

And I might love thee, oh thou monstrous sea;

But now I cannot love thy waves or thee,  
Or bear thy beauty in my misery.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# You Have Let The Beauty Of The Day Go Over

You have let the beauty of the day go over,  
You have let the glory of the noon go by.  
Clouds from the West have gathered close and cover  
All but a remnant now of our proud sky.

Dumbly the rain beats on our darkened faces.  
Hushed are the woods. Alas, for us no bird  
Shall sing to--day of pleasure in green places,  
No touch shall thrill, no soul of leaves be stirred.

Why did we wait? What faith was ours in fortune?  
What was our pride that fate should kneel to us?  
Oh, we were fools. Love loves not to importune,  
And he is silent here in this sad house.

Alas, dear love, the day for us is ended,  
The pleasure of green fields, of streams, of skies.  
One hour remains, one only of joy blended  
With coming night. Ah, seize it ere it flies.

Draw fast the curtains. Close the door on sorrow.  
Shut out the dusk. It only makes us grieve.  
Here we may live a life,--and then, to--morrow,  
If fate still wills it, we may take our leave.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Youth And Knowledge

What price, child, shall I pay for your bright eyes  
(How large a debt!) the light they shed on me?  
What for your cheeks, so red in their surprise,  
Your lips, your hands, your maiden gestures free,  
Your fair brows crowned with grave nobility,  
All the delight which in your presence lies,  
The words unsaid, the deeds which dare not be,  
The dreams undreamed, my meed of Paradise?  
--Nay, I can pay naught; your poor bankrupt I,  
Since gold may not nor frankincense nor myrrh  
Serve my account nor any gift of kings.  
Yet be my wealth yours, joys that fools deny,  
Knowledge of life, love, power as presbyter,  
The wit to teach youth's zeal to use its wings.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt

# Zoheyr

Woe is me for 'Ommi 'Aufa! Woe for the tents of her  
lost on thy stony plain, Durráj, on thine, Mutethéllemi!  
In Rákmatéyn I found our dwelling, faint lines how desolate,  
tent--markstraced like the vein--tracings blue on the wrists of her.  
Large--eyed there the wild--kine pastured, white roes how fearlessly,  
leaped, their fawns beside them, startled: I in the midst of them.  
Twenty years abroad I wander. Lo, here I stand to--day,  
hardly know the remembered places, seek I how painfully.  
Here our hearth--stones stand, ay, blackened still with her cooking--pots,  
here our tent--trench squarely graven, grooved here our camel--trough.  
Love, when my eyes behold thy dwelling, to it I call aloud:  
Blessed be thou, O house of pleasure, greeting and joy to thee!

Friend of my soul! Dost thou behold them? Say, are there maidens there,  
camel--borne, high in their howdahs, over the Júrthum spring?  
Say, are their curtains lined with scarlet, sanguine embroideries,  
veiling them from eyes of all men, rose--tinted coverings?  
Slantwise up El Subáan they mounted: high--set the pass of it.  
With them the new--born morning's beauty, fair--faced and fortunate.  
At the blink of dawn they rose and laded. Now, ere the sun is up,  
point they far to Wády Ras, straight as hand points to mouth.  
Joy! Sweet joy of joys! Fair visions, human in tenderness,  
dear to the human eye that truly sees them and understands!  
As the scarlet fringe of féнна seed--pods no lip hath browsed upon,  
so is the dye of their scarlet wool new--fringing the camping--grounds.  
And they came to the watering pool in the red rocks: blue--black the depths of it.  
And they planted the tent--poles, straight and fairly, firm for a dwelling--place.  
They have left Kanáan on the far right hand: dark--crowned the crest of it.  
How many foes in El Kanáan! And friends, too, ah, how many!  
But they came to El Subáan in their might, impetuous, beautiful,  
they in their howdahs of scarlet wool. O friend, dost thou look on them?

I have sworn by the most illustrious dwelling, shrine of processioners,  
house revered of Koréysh and Júrhum, founded in piety.  
I have sworn my praise to the two chieftains, men of what hardihood,  
prompt todo when need shall call them, light deeds and doughty deeds.  
Strove ye well, ye Lords of Mórra, what though the clans of you  
long had drwoned in blood their friendship, drowned it in war--clamours.  
Ye with Abs and Dóbián that day ye persuaded them,

spite of feud and their death--dealing perfumes of mínshami.  
For thus ye spake: Let peace be garnered, all the fair wealth of it,  
based on pay and fair exchanges, ours to establish it.  
Theirs the peace and yours the glory, high names and dignities,  
you the nobletwain prevailing, purging the rage of them.  
Lo, in Maád ye stand exalted, ye the high--guided ones.  
He who a booty brings of glory, shall he not share in it?  
Healing of wounds ye dealt in hundreds, hundreds of debt--camels,  
guiltless you for the death--guilty, ending the feud of them.  
Tribe and tribe, you paid the ransom, what though the hands of you  
clean were of blood and the red shedding, ay, the least cup of it.  
Yet ye brought the payment bravely, all your fair heritage,  
camels yours by right of plunder, these and your earmarked ones.

Ho! To the oath--bound tribes a greeting: Have ye not sworn to it?  
Ay, and to Dóbián a message: Will ye not keep the peace?  
For you may not hide from God your dealings, what though in secrecy  
deep in your heart of hearts you seal it. Nathless He knoweth it,  
Knoweth and taketh note in patience, sure of His reckoning  
till the day of the great counting, waiteth or hasteneth.  
War! Ye have learned it all, its teachings, well have ye tasted them.  
These no tales are that I tell you. Each is a certainty.  
A smouldering coal ye flung it lightly, blindly despising it.  
Lo, into raging flame it leapeth, wind--lit, destroyeth you.  
Ye are ground as corn by Hate's ill--grinding, flat on her grinding--skin.  
Nay, a too fruitful camel she. Twins hath she borne to you,  
Sinister sons of fear and anger, milk--fed on bitterness;  
dark as his, Aád's, their nursing. Lo, she is weaned of them.  
And her hand is large to rain you harvests, evil the wealth of them.  
No such plenty Irák hath garnered, hell--grain and hate--money.

Ay, by my life, the kin was noble. Yet did it fare with them  
ill when they the peace--terms flouted. Démdem's the sin of it,  
His, Huséyn's, who held his counsel, hiding the thought in him,  
yielding naught and naught revealing, steeled in his stubbornness.  
For he thought: My end will I accomplish. No ill shall come to me,  
fenced and armed, with might behind me, warriors, horse--riders.  
Proud he stood, nor feared the tent--lords, what though Om--Káshami  
watched them near, the vulture--mother, eyeing the multitude.  
Strode he forth, full--armed, a wild beast, fierce for the blood--letting,  
mane and claws unclipped, a lion. Who shall his anger brave?  
Fearless, one who doth his vengeance swift on his wrongdoer,

one who unassailed yet rendeth, he the first injurer.  
And they pastured there their fair milch--camels, drove to the waterings,  
drank of the full pools brimming over, gall in the hearts of them,  
This side and that by blood divided, rank hate the meat of them,  
poison--grass to their herds' hurting, mired in blood--bitterness.  
Yet, by thy life, not these the guilty. Clean was the steel of them,  
pure of blood, Nahík's. They slew not him nor Muthéllemi,  
Shareless sharers of the death--due. No blood of Náufali  
stood to their account, nor Wáhab's, nay, nor Mukházzemi's.  
Blameless! Clean! Yet have I seen them drive to the ransoming  
camel herds untouched, unblemished, fresh from the rock--valleys.  
Succour to the tribe that succoured! Who but shall haste to them  
in their night of fear, of blackness! All men shall speed to them,  
Since they gave, since them the avenger gained not to ill--willing,  
nay, nor suppliant failed of favour. Him they abandoned not.

I am weary of life who bear its burdens fourscore and how many  
years of glory and grief counted. Well may he weary be.  
I know to--day, the day before it, ay, and the days that were,  
yet of to--morrow I know nothing. Blind are the eyes of me.  
I have seen Fate strike out in the darkness, strike like a blind camel:  
some it touched died straight, some lingered on to decrepitude.  
I have learned that he who giveth nothing, deaf to his friends' begging,  
loosed shall be to the world's tooth--strokes: fools' feet shall tread on him;  
That he that doeth for his name's sake fair deeds shall further it,  
but he that of men's praise is careless dwindleth in dignity;  
That he, the lord of wealth, who spendeth naught of his heaped money,  
him his kinsfolk shall hold lightly: children shall mouth at him;  
That he who keepeth faith shall find faith; who in simplicity  
shall pursue the ways accustomed, no tongue shall wag at him;  
That he who flieth his fate shall meet it, not, though a sky--ladder  
he should climb, shall his fear fend him: dark death shall noose him down;  
That he who gifteth the unworthy, spendthrift through idleness,  
praised shall be to his dispraising, shamed at his fooldoing;  
That he, who shall refuse the lance--butts borne by the peace--bearers,  
him the lance--heads shall find fenceless, naked the flesh of him;  
That he who guardeth not his tent--floor, with the whole might of him,  
cold shall be his hearth--stone broken, ay, though he smote at none;  
That he who fleeth his kin shall fare far, foes for his guest--fellows;  
that he who his own face befouleth none else shall honour him;  
That he, who casteth not the burdens laid on the back of him,  
sheer disgrace shall be his portion, waged as he merited;



That whatso a man hath by nature, wit--wealth or vanity,  
hidden deep, the day shall prove it: all shall be manifest.  
For how many sat wise while silent, yet was their foolishness  
proved when their too much, too little, slid through their mouth--slitting!  
The tongue is the strong man's half; the other half is the heart of him:  
all the rest is a brute semblance, rank corporality.  
Truly, folly in the old is grievous; no cure is known for it:  
yet may the young their soul's unwisdom win to new sanity.

We asked once, and you gave a guerdon,--twice and again you gave:  
only the mouth that hath no silence endeth in emptiness.

Wilfrid Scawen Blunt