

Classic Poetry Series

Sydney Thompson Dobell
- poems -

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Sydney Thompson Dobell(1824-1874)

Sydney Thompson Dobell (April 5, 1824 – August 22, 1874), English poet and critic, was born at Cranbrook, Kent.

His father was a wine merchant, his mother a daughter of Samuel Thompson (1766-1837), a London political reformer. The family moved to Cheltenham when Dobell was twelve years old. He was educated privately, and never attended either school or university. He refers to this in some lines on Cheltenham College in imitation of Chaucer, written in his eighteenth year. After a five years engagement he married, in 1844, Emily Fordham, a lady of good family. An acquaintance with Mr (subsequently Sir James) Stansfeld and with the Birmingham preacher-politician, George Dawson (1821-1876), which afterwards led to the foundation of the Society of the Friends of Italy, fed the young enthusiast's ardour for the liberalism of the day.

Meanwhile, Dobell wrote a number of minor poems, instinct with a passionate desire for political reform. The Roman appeared in 1850, under the nom de plume of Sydney Yendys. Next year he travelled through Switzerland with his wife; and after his return he formed friendships with Robert Browning, Philip Bailey, George MacDonald, Emanuel Deutsch, Lord Houghton, Ruskin, Holman Hunt, Mazzini, Tennyson and Carlyle. His second long poem, Balder, appeared in 1854. The three following years were spent in Scotland.

Perhaps his closest friend at this time was Alexander Smith, in company with whom he published, in 1855, a number of sonnets on the Crimean War, which were followed by a volume on England in Time 4 War. Although by no means a rich man he was always ready to help needy men of letters, and it was through his exertions that David Gray's poems were published. In 1869 a horse, which he was riding, fell and rolled over with him. His health, which had for several years necessitated his wintering abroad, was seriously affected by this accident, and he was from this time more or less of an invalid until his death.

As a poet Dobell belongs to the spasmodic school, as it was named by Professor Aytoun, who parodied its style in Firmilian. The epithet, however, was first applied by Carlyle to Byron. The school includes George Gilfillan, Philip James Bailey, John Stanyan Bigg (1826-1865), Dobell, Alexander Smith, and, according to some critics, Gerald Massey. It was characterized by an under-current of discontent with the mystery of existence, by vain effort, unrewarded struggle, sceptical unrest, and an uneasy straining after the unattainable. It thus faithfully reflected a certain phase of 19th century thought.

The productions of the school are marked by an excess of metaphor and a general extravagance of language. On the other hand, they exhibit freshness and originality often lacking in more conventional writings. Dobell's poem, *The Roman*, dedicated to the interests of political liberty in Italy, is marked by pathos, energy and passionate love of freedom, but it is overlaid with monologue, which is carried to an ecstatically scatological excess in *Balder*, relieved though the latter is by fine descriptive passages, and by some touching songs. Dobell's suggestive, but too ornate prose writings were collected and edited with an introductory note by John Nichol (*Thoughts on Art, Philosophy and Religion*) in 1876.

In his religious views Dobell was a Christian of the Broad Church type; and socially he was one of the most amiable and true-hearted of men. His early interest in the cause of oppressed nationalities, shown in his friendship with Kossuth, Emanuel Deutsch and others, never lessened, although his views of home politics underwent some change from the radical opinions of his youth. In Gloucestershire Dobell was well known as an advocate of social reform, and he was a pioneer in the application of the co-operative system to private enterprise.

The standard edition of his poems (1875) by Professor Nichol includes a memoir.

Sydney Dobell was also famous as an early breeder of Deerhounds. She has no record of pedigree but was given to him by Mr Ronald McDonald of Skye and of pure blood. She was supposed to be descended from the deerhounds of Cher Foreman McDonald. Later generations of his deerhounds were painted by Sydney Dobell's, brother in law, Briton Rivière, notably "*The Empty Chair*", which was first exhibited at the Dudley Gallery in 1869. It was bought for a great deal of money by Howard Dobell his uncle.

A Chanted Calendar

FIRST came the primrose,
On the bank high,
Like a maiden looking forth
From the window of a tower
When the battle rolls below,
So look'd she,
And saw the storms go by.

Then came the wind-flower
In the valley left behind,
As a wounded maiden, pale
With purple streaks of woe,
When the battle has roll'd by
Wanders to and fro,
So totter'd she,
Dishevell'd in the wind.

Then came the daisies,
On the first of May,
Like a banner'd show's advance
While the crowd runs by the way,
With ten thousand flowers about them
they came trooping through the fields.

As a happy people come,
So came they,
As a happy people come
When the war has roll'd away,
With dance and tabor, pipe and drum,
And all make holiday.

Then came the cowslip,
Like a dancer in the fair,
She spread her little mat of green,
And on it danced she.
With a fillet bound about her brow,
A fillet round her happy brow,
A golden fillet round her brow,
And rubies in her hair.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

A Health To The Queen

While the thistle bears
Spears,
And the shamrock is green,
And the English rose
Blows,
A health to the Queen!
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen!
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!

The thistle bears spears round its blossom,
Round its blossom the shamrock is green,
The rose grows and glows round the rose in its bosom,
We stand sword in hand round the Queen!
Our glory is green round the Queen!
We close round the rose, round the Queen!
The Queen, boys, the Queen! a health to the Queen!
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!
Last post I'd a note from that old aunt of mine,
'T was meant for a hook, but she called it a line;
She says, I don't know why we're going to fight,
She's sure I don't know-and I'm sure she's quite right;
She swears I haven't looked at one sole protocol;
Tantara! tantara! I haven't, 'pon my soul!
Soho, blow trumpeter,
Trumpeter, trumpeter!
Soho, blow trumpeter, onward's the cry!
Fall, tyrants, fall-the devil care why!
A health to the Queen; a health to the Queen!
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!

My granny came down-'pour vous voir, mon barbare,'
She brought in her pocket a map-du Tartare-
Drawn up, so she vowed, 'par un homme ah! si bon!'
With a plan for campaigning old Hal, en haut ton.

With here you may trick him, and here you may prick him,
And here-if you do it en roi-you may lick him,
But there he is sacred, and yonder-Oh, la!
He's as dear a sweet soul as your late grandpapa!
Soho, blow trumpeter,
Trumpeter, trumpeter!
Blow the charge, trumpeter, blare, boy, blare!
Fall, tyrants, fall-the devil care where!
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen!
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!

My cousin, the Yankee, last night did his best
To prove 'the Czar-bless you's-no worse than the rest.'
We wheeled the decanters out on to the lawn,
And he argued-and spat-in a circle till dawn.
Quoth I, 'If the game's half as thick as you say,
The more need for hounds, lad! Hunt's up! Harkaway!'
Soho, blow trumpeter!
Trumpeter, trumpeter!
Tally-ho, trumpeter, over the ditch-
Over the ditch, boys, the broad ditch at Dover!
Hands slack, boys, heels back, boys,
Yohoicks! we're well over!
Soho, blow, trumpeter! blow us to cover!
Blow, boy, blow,
Berlin, or Moscow,
Schoenbrun, or Rome,
So Reynard's at home,
The devil care which!
Hark, Evans! hark, Campbell! hark, Cathcart!-Halloo!
Heydey, harkaway! good men and true!
Harkaway to the brook,
You won't land in clover!
Leap and look!
High and dry!
Tantivy, full cry!
Full cry up the hill!
Hurrah, and it's over!
A burst and a kill.
While the thistle bears

Spears,
And the shamrock is green,
And the English rose
Blows,
A health to the Queen!
A health to the Queen, a health to the Queen!
Fill high, boys, drain dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!
The Queen, boys, the Queen! the Queen, boys, the Queen!
Full cry, high and dry, boys,
A health to the Queen!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

A Hero's Grave

O'er our evening fire the smoke is like a pall,
And funeral banners hang about the arches of the hall,
In the gable end I see a catafalque aloof,
And night is drawn up like a curtain to the girders of the roof.
Thou knowest why we silent sit, and why our eyes are dim,
Sing us such proud sorrow as we may hear for him.
Reach me the old harp that hangs between the flags he won,
I will sing what once I heard beside the grave of such a son.

My son, my son,
A father's eyes are looking on thy grave,
Dry eyes that look on this green mound and see
The low weed blossom and the long grass wave,
Without a single tear to them or thee,
My son, my son.

Why should I weep? The grass is grass, the weeds
Are weeds. The emmet hath done thus ere now.
I tear a leaf; the green blood that it bleeds
Is cold. What have I here? Where, where, art thou,
My son, my son?

On which tall trembler shall the old man lean?
Which chill leaf shall lap o'er him when he lies
On that bed where in visions I have seen
Thy filial love? or, when thy father dies,
Tissue a fingered thorn to close his childless eyes?

Aye, where art thou? Men tell me of a fame
Walking the wondering nations; and they say,
When thro' the shouting people thy great name
Goes like a chief upon a battle-day,
They shake the heavens with glory. Well-away!

As some poor hound that thro' thronged street and square
Pursues his loved lost lord, and fond and fast
Seeks what he feels to be but feels not where,
Tracks the dear feet to some closed door at last,
And lies him down and lornest looks doth cast,

So I, thro' all the long tumultuous days,
Tracing thy footstep on the human sands,
O'er the signed deserts and the vocal ways
Pursue thee, faithful, thro' the echoing lands,
Wearing a wandering staff with trembling hands:

Thro' echoing lands that ring with victory,
And answer for the living with the dead,
And give me marble when I ask for bread,
And give me glory when I ask for thee-
It was not glory I nursed on my knee.

And now, one stride behind thee, and too late,
Yet true to all that reason cannot kill,
I stand before the inexorable gate
And see thy latest footstep on the sill,
And know thou canst not come, but watch and wait thee still.

'Old man!'-Ah, darrest thou? yet thy look is kind,
Didst thou, too, love him? 'Thou grey-headed sire,
Seest thou this path which from that grave doth wind
Far thro' those western uplands higher and higher,
Till, like a thread, it burns in the great fire

'Of sunset? The wild sea and desert meet
Eastward by yon unnavigable strand,
Then wherefore hath the flow of human feet
Left this dry runnel of memorial sand
Meandering thro' the summer of the land?

'See where the long immeasurable snake,
Between dim hall and hamlet, tower and shed,
Mountain and mountain, precipice and lake,
Lies forth unfinished to this final head,
This green dead mound of the unfading dead!'

Do they then come to weep thee? Do they kiss
Thy relics? Art thou then as wholly gone
As some old buried saint? My son, my son,
Ah, could I mourn thee so! Such tears were bliss!
'Old man, they do not mourn who weep at graves like this.'

They do not mourn? What! hath the insolent foe
Found out my child's last bed? Who, who, are they
That come and go about him? I cry, 'Who?'
I am his father-I;-I cry 'Who?' 'Aye,
Gray trembler, I will tell thee who are they.

'The slave who, having grown up strong and stark
To the set season, feels at length he wears
Bonds that will break, and thro' the slavish dark
Shines with the light of liberated years,
And still in chains doth weep a freeman's tears.

'The patriot, while the unebbed force that hurled
His tyrant throbs within his bursting veins,
And, on the ruins of a hundred reigns,
That ancient heaven of brass, so long unfurled,
Falls with a crash of fame that fills the world,
And thro' the clangor lo the unwonted strains
Of peace, and, in the new sweet heavens upcurled,
The sudden incense of a thousand plains.

'Youth whom some mighty flash from heaven hath turned
In his dark highway, and who runs forth, shod
With flame, into the wilderness untrod,
And as he runs his heart of flint is burned,

And in that glass he sees the face of God,
And falls upon his knees-and morn is all abroad.

'Age who hath heard amid his cloistered ground
The cheer of youth, and steps from echoing aisles,
And at a sight the great blood with a bound
Melts his brow's winter, which the free sun smiles
To jewels, and he stands a young man crowned
With glittering years among a young world shouting round.

'Girls that do blush and tremble with delight
On the St. John's eve of their maidenhood;
When the unsummered woman in her blood
Glow through the Parian maid, and at the sight
The flushing virgin weeps and feels herself too bright.

'He who first feels the world-old destiny,
The shaft of gold that strikes the poet still,
And slowly in its victim melts away,
Who knows his wounds will heal but when they kill,
And drop by vital drop doth bleed his golden ill.

'All whom the everpassing mysteries
Have rapt above the region of our race,
And, blinded by the glory and the grace,
Break from the ecstatic sphere-as he who dies
In darkness, and in heaven's own light doth rise,
Dazed with the untried glory of the place
Looks up and sees some well-remembered face,
And thro' the invulnerable angels flies
To that dear human breast and hides his dazzled eyes.

'All who, like the sun-ripened seed that springs
And bourgeons in the sun, do hold profound
An antenatal stature, which the round
Of the dull continent flesh hath cribbed and wound
Into this kernelled man; but having found

Such soil as grew them, burst in blossomings
Not native here, or, from the hallowed ground,
Tower their slow height, and spread, like sheltering wings,
Those boughs wherein the bird of omen sings
High as the palms of heaven, while to the sound
Lo kingdoms jocund in the sacred bound
Till the world's summer fills her moon, and brings
The final fruit which is the feast and fate of kings.

'And darest thou mourn? Thy bones are left behind,
But where art thou, Anchises? Dost thou see
Him who once bare the slow paternity,
Foot-burnt o'er stony Troy? So, thou, reclined
Goest thro' the falling years. Here, here where we
Two stand, lies deep the flesh thou hast so pined
To clasp, and shalt clasp never. Verily,
Love and the worm are often of one mind!
God save them from election! Pity thee?
True he lifts not thy load, but he hath signed
And at his beck a nation rose up free;
Thy wounds his living love may never bind,
But at the dead man's touch posterity
Is healed. To thee, thou poor, and halt, and blind,
He is a staff no more: but times to be
Lean on his monumental memory
As the moon on a mountain. Thou shalt find
A silent home, a cheerless hearth: but he
Shall be a fire which the enkindling wind,
Blowing for ever from eternity,
Fans till its universal blaze hath shined
The yule of thankful ages. Pity thee?
A son is lost to thine infirmity;
Poor fool, what then? A son thou hast resigned
To give a father to the virtues of mankind.'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

A Musing On A Victory

Down by the Sutlej shore,
Where sound the trumpet and the wild tum-tum,
At winter's eve did come
A gaunt old northern lion, at whose roar
The myriad howlers of thy wilds are dumb,
Blood-stained Ferozepore!

In the rich Indian night,
And dreaming of his mate beyond the sea,
Toil-worn but grand to sight,
He made his lair, in might,
Beneath thy dark palm-tree,
And thou didst rouse him to the unequal fight-
And woe for thee!

For some of that wild land
Had heard him in the desert where he lay;
And soon he snuffs upon their hurtling way,
The hunters-bandby band;
And up he gat him from the eastern sand
And leaped upon his prey.

Alas for man! Alas for all thy dreams,
Thou great somnambulist, wherein, outlawed
From right and thought, thou workest out unawed
Thy grand fantastic fancies! Thro' the flood,
The pestilence, the whirlwind, the dread plain
Of thunders-thro' the earthquake and the storm,
The deluge and the snows, the whirling ice
Of the wild glacier, every ghastly form
Of earth's most vexed vicissitudes of pain,-
Thro' worlds of fire and seas of mingled bloods
Thou rushest, dreadful as a maniac god;
And only finding that thou wert not sane
When some great sorrow thunders at thy brain
And wakes thee trembling by a precipice.

Alas for thee, thou grey-haired man that still
Art sleeping, and canst hold thy grandchild high
That he may see the gorgeous wrong go by
Which slew his father! And for thee, thou bright
Inheritress of summer-time and light,
Alas for thee, that thy young cheek is flush'd
With dreaming of the lion and the foe,
Tho' it had been yet paler than the snow
Upon the battle-hill, if once had gush'd,
But once before thee, even the feeblest flow
Of that life's blood that swept in floods below.
Alas! that even thy beauty cannot break
The vampyre spell of such a war-dream's woe,-
Alas! tho' waking might have been to know
Things which had made it sweeter not to wake.

Alas for man!-poor hunchback-all so proud
And yet so conscious; man that stalks divine
Because he feels so mortal, speaking loud
To drown the trembling whisper in his heart,
And wildly hurrying on from crowd to crowd,
In hope to shun the faithful shapes that start
Wherever lake doth sleep or streamlet shine
In silent solitudes. When once in youth
Fresh from the spheres, and too severely wise,
Truth drew the face he longed yet feared to view,
Stung with the instinct that confessed it true
He dashed the tablets from her sacred hand;
She drops her singing robes and leaves his land;
And Fiction, decent in the garb of Truth,
While lurking mischief lights her lambent eyes,
Seizes the fallen pencil, and with grave
Historic features paints the lies we crave.

So war became a welcome woe. The grass
Grows tear-bedewed upon a lonely grave,
And we plant sad flow'rs and sweet epitaphs,
And every grief of monumental stone,

Above a single woe; but let men sleep
In thousands, and we choose their hideous heap
For Joy to hold his godless orgies on.
Is it that some strange law's unknown behest
Makes gladness of the greatest woes we have
And leaves us but to sorrow for the less?
Even as in outward nature light's excess
Is blindness, and intensest motion rest;
Or is it not-oh conscious heart declare-
That the vast pride of our o'erwrought despair,
Seeing the infinite grief, and knowing yet
We have no tears to pay such deep distress,
Grown wild, repudiates the direful debt,
And in its very bankrupt madness laughs?-

Yet when this Victory's fame shall pass, as grand
And griefless as a rich man's funeral,
Thro' nations that look on with spell-bound eye,
While echoing plaudits ring from land to land,
Alas! will there be none among the good
And great and brave and free, to speak of all
The pale piled pestilence of flesh and blood,
The common cold corruption that doth lie
Festering beneath the pall?
Alas! when time has deified the thought
Of this day's desperate devilry, and men
(Who scorn to inherit virtue, but will ape
Their sires, and bless them, when they sin) shall shape
A graven image of the thought, and then
Fall down to worship it-will no one dare,
While nations kneel before the idol there,
To stand and tell them it is Juggernaut?
Alas for man! if this new crime shall yield
To truth no harvest for the sighs it cost;
If this crowned corpse, this pale ensceptred ghost
That stalks, Ferozepore, from thy red field
Robed as a king, shall all unchallenged pass
Down the proud scene of Time. Alas, alas!
If there are some to weep and some to pray,
And none to bow their humbled heads and say,
Low sighing,-There hath been a mortal strife;

And thirteen thousand murdered men lie there,
And day and night upon the tainted air
Blaspheme the Lord of Life.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

A Nupial Eve (Excerpt)

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine,
"Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!"

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
And thro' the silver meads;

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

His henchmen sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine!
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says nought that can be told.

Yet, stranger! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood--
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear!

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
Oh, Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

A Shower In War-Time

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain!
Rain, rain, warm and sweet,
Summer wood lush leafy and loud,
With note of a throat that ripples and rings,
Sad sole sweet from her central seat,
Bubbling and trilling,
Filling, filling, filling
The shady space of the green dim place
With an odour of melody,
Till all the noon is thrilling,
And the great wood hangs in the balmy day
Like a cloud with an angel in the cloud,
And singing because she sings!

In the sheltering wood,
At that hour I stood;
I saw that in that hour
Great round drops, clear round drops,
Grew on every leaf and flower,
And its hue so fairly took
And faintly, that each tinted elf
Trembled with a rarer self,
Even as if its beauty shook
With passion to a tenderer look.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain!
Rain, rain, warm and sweet,
Summer wood lush leafy and loud,
With note of a throat that ripples and rings,
Sad sole sweet from her central seat,
Bubbling and trilling,
Filling, filling, filling
The shady space of the green dim place
With an odour of melody,
Till all the noon is thrilling,

And the great wood hangs in the balmy day,
Like a cloud with an angel in the cloud,
And singing because she sings!

Then out of the sweet warm weather
There came a little wind sighing, sighing:
Came to the wood sighing, and sighing went in,
Sighed thro' the green grass, and o'er the leaves brown,
Sighed to the dingle, and, sighing, lay down,
While all the flowers whispered together.
Then came swift winds after her who was flying,
Swift bright winds with a jocund din,
Sought her in vain, her boscage was so good,
And spread like baffled revellers thro' the wood.
Then, from bough, and leaf, and bell,
The great round drops, the clear round drops,
In fitful cadence drooped and fell-
Drooped and fell as if some wanton air
Were more apparent here and there,
Sphered on a favourite flower in dewy kiss,
Grew heavy with delight and dropped with bliss.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain;
Rain, rain, still and sweet,
For the winds have hushed again,
And the nightingale is still,
Sleeping in her central seat.
Rain, rain, summer rain,
Silent as the summer heat.
Doth it fall, or doth it rise?
Is it incense from the hill,
Or bounty from the skies?
Or is the face of earth that lies
Languid, looking up on high,
To the face of Heaven so nigh
That their balmy breathings meet?

Rain, rain, summer rain,

On the wood and on the plain:
Rain, rain, rain, until
The tall wet trees no more athirst,
As each chalice green doth fill,
See the pigmy nations nurst
Round their distant feet, and throw
The nectar to the herbs below.
The droughty herbs, without a sound,
Drink it ere it reach the ground.

Rain, rain, sweet warm rain,
On the wood and on the plain,
And round me like a dropping well,
The great round drops they fell and fell.

I say not War is good or ill;
Perchance they may slay, if they will,
Who killing love, and loving kill.

I do not join yon captive's din;
Some man among us without sin
Perhaps may rightly lock him in.

I do not grant the Tyrant's plea;
The slaves potential to be free
Already are the Powers that be.

Whether our bloodsheds flow or cease,
I know that as the years increase,
The flower of all is human peace.

'The Flower.' Vertumnus hath repute
O'er Flora; yet methinks the fruit
But alter ego of the root;

And that which serves our fleshly need,
Subserves the blossom that doth feed
The soul which is the life indeed.

Nor well he deems who deems the rose
Is for the roseberry, nor knows
The roseberry is for the rose.

And Autumn's garnered treasury,
But prudent Nature's guarantee
That Summer evermore shall be,

And yearly, once a year, complete
That top and culmen exquisite
Whereto the slanting seasons meet.

Whether our bloodsheds flow or cease,
I know that, as the years increase,
The flower of all is human peace.

'The flower.' Yet whether shall we sow
A blossom or a seed? I know
The flower will rot, the seed will grow.

By this the rain had ceased, and I went forth
From that Dodona green of oak and beech.
But ere my steps could reach
The hamlet, I beheld along the verge
A flight of fleeing cloudlets that did urge
Unequal speed, as when a herd is driven
By the recurring pulse of shoutings loud.
I saw; but held the omen of no worth.
For by the footway not a darnel stirred,
And still the noon slept on, nor even a bird
Moved the dull air; but, at each silent hand,
Upon the steaming land

The hare lay basking, and the budded wheat
Hung slumberous heads of sleep.
Then I was 'ware that a great northern cloud
Moved slowly to the centre of the heaven.
His white head was so high
That the great blue fell round him like the wide
And ermined robe of kings. He sat in pride
Lonely and cold; but methought when he spied
From that severe inhospitable height
The distant dear delight,
The meiting world with summer at her side,
His pale brow mellowed with a mournful light,
And like a marble god he wept his stony tears.
The loyal clouds that sit about his feet,
All in their courtier kinds,
Do weep to see him weep.
After the priceless drops the sycophant winds
Leap headlong down, and chase, and swirl, and sweep
Beneath the royal grief that scarce may reach the ground.
To see their whirling zeal,
Unlikely things that in the kennel lie
Begin to wheel and wheel;
The wild tarantula-will spreads far and nigh,
And spinning straws go spiral to the sky,
And leaves long dead leap up and dance their ghastly round.
And so it happened in the street
'Neath a broad eave I stood and mused again,
And all the arrows of the driving rain
Were tipped with slanting sleet.
I mused beneath the straw pent of the bricked
And sodded cot, with damp moss mouldered o'er,
The bristled thatch gleamed with a carcanet,
And from the inner eaves the reeking wet
Dripped; dropping more
And more, as more the sappy roof was sapped,
And wept a mirkier wash that splashed and clapped
The plain-stones, dribbling to the flooded door.
A plopping pool of droppings stood before,
Worn by a weeping age in rock of easy grain.
O'erhead, hard by, a pointed beam o'erlapped,
And from its jewelled tip
The slipping slipping drip

Did whip the fillipped pool whose hopping plashes ticked.

Let one or thousands loose or bind,
That land's enslaved whose sovran mind
Collides the conscience of mankind.

And free-whoever holds the rood-
Where Might in Right, and Power in Good,
Flow each in each, like life in blood.

The age has broken from his kings!
Stop him! Behold his feet have wings.
Upon his back the hero springs.

Tho' Jack's horse run away with Jack,
Who knows, while Jack keeps on his back,
If Jack rule him or he rule Jack?

Cuckoo takes the mud away!
True the sun doth shine all day;
Cuckoo takes the mud away.

Who sneers at heirloom rank? God knows
Each man that lives, each flower that blows.
There may be lords-and a blue rose.

Even to the sod whereon you prate
This land is ours. Do you debate
How we shall manage our estate?

Norman, War granted you your lease:
The very countersign of Peace
Shows the first Lessor can release.

Therefore altho' you cannot guide,
Be wise; and spare the almighty pride
Of that mild monster that you ride.

If England's head and heart were one,
Where is that good beneath the sun
Her noble hands should leave undone!

Small unit, hast thou hardiness
To bid mankind to battle? Yes.
The worm will rout them, and is less.

The world assaults? Nor fight nor fly.
Stand in some steadfast truth, and eye
The stubborn siege grow old and die.

My army is manking. My foe
The very meanest truth I know.
Shall I come back a conqueror? No.

Wouldst light? See Phosphor shines confest,
Turn thy broad back upon the west;
Stand firm. The world will do the rest.

Stand firm. Unless thy strength can climb
Yon alp, and from that height sublime
See, ere we see, the advancing time.

Act for to-day? Friend, this 'to-day'
Washed Adam's feet and streams away
Far into yon Eternity.

Build as men steer, by chart and pole;

Care for each stone as each were sole,
Yet lay it conscious of the whole.

Sow with the signs. The wise man heeds
The seasons. Capricornus feeds
Upon the sluggard's winter seeds.

Each enterprise, or small or great,
Hath its own touchhole; watch and wait,
Find that and fire the loaded fate.

Do in few acts whate'er thou dost;
Let thy oe play to his own cost,
Who moves the oftenest errs the most.

Choose arms from Nature's armouries,
Plagues, conflagrations, storms, and seas,
For God is surety for all these.

Our town is threatened by a bear,
We've manned the thresholds far and near,
Fools! send five men to kill the bear.

Do good to him that hates thee. Good,
Still good. By physic or by food?
By letting or by stanching blood?

Do as thou wouldst be done by. See
What it were well he did to thee,
He pure as thou, thou foul as he.

Lovest thou not Peace? Aye, moralist,
Both Peace and thee. Yet well I wist
They who shut Janus did slay Christ.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

A Statesman

Captain be he, my England, who doth know
Not careful coasts, with inland welcomes warm;
But who, with heart infallible, can go
Straight to the gulf-streams of the World, where blow
The inevitable Winds. Let cockles swarm
The sounded shores. He helms Thee, England! who,
Faced by the very Spirit of the Storm,
Full at the phantom drives his dauntless prow!
And tho' the Vision rend in racks of blood,
And drip in thunder from his reeling spars,
The compass in his hand, beholds the flood
Beneath, o'er-head the everlasting stars
Dim thro' the gory ghost; and calm in these,
Thro' that tremendous dream sails on to happier seas.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Afloat And Ashore

'Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort,
Like a whale to starboard, a whale to port;
Tumble and rumble, and grumble and snort,
And the steamer steams thro' the sea, love!'

'I see the ship on the sea, love,
I stand alone
On this rock,
The sea does not shock
The stone;
The waters around it are swirled,
But under my feet
I feel it go down
To where the hemispheres meet
At the adamant heart of the world.
Oh, that the rock would move!
Oh, that the rock would roll
To meet thee over the sea, love!
Surely my mighty love
Should fill it like a soul,
And it should bear me to thee, love;
Like a ship on the sea, love,
Bear me, bear me, to thee, love!'

'Guns are thundering, seas are sundering, crowds are wondering,
Low on our lee, love.
Over and over the cannon-clouds cover brother and lover, but over and over
The whirl-wheels trundle the sea, love,
And on thro' the loud pealing pomp of her cloud
The great ship is going to thee, love;
Blind to her mark, like a world thro' the dark,
Thundering, sundering, to the crowds wondering,
Thundering ever to thee, love.'

'I have come down to thee coming to me, love,
I stand, I stand

On the solid sand,
I see thee coming to me, love;
The sea runs up to me on the sand,
I start-'t is as if thou hadst stretched thine hand
And touched me thro' the sea, love.
I feel as if I must die
For there's something longs to fly,
Fly and fly, to thee, love.
As the blood of the flower ere she blows
Is beating up to the sun,
And her roots do hold her down,
And it blushes and breaks undone
In a rose,
So my blood is beating in me, love!
I see thee nigh and nigher,
And my soul leaps up like sudden fire,
My life's in the air
To meet thee there,
To meet thee coming to me, love!
Over the sea,
Coming to me,
Coming, and coming to me, love!

'The boats are lowered: I leap in first,
Pull, boys, pull! or my heart will burst!
More! more!-lend me an oar!-
I'm thro' the breakers! I'm on the shore!
I see thee waiting for me, love!'

'A sudden storm
Of sighs and tears,
A clenching arm,
A look of years.
In my bosom a thousand cries,
A flash like light before my eyes,
And I am lost in thee, love!'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Alone

There came to me softly a small wind from the sea.
And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.
But I sang sorrow and ho the heavy day!
And I sang heigho and well-away!

Again there came softly a small wind from the sea,
And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.
And still I sang sorrow and ho the heavy day!
And I sang heigho and well-away!

Once more there came softly that small wind from the sea,
And it lifted a curl as it passed by me.
I hushed my song of sorrow and ho the heavy day,
And I hushed my heigho and well-away.

Then, when I was silent, that small wind from the sea,
It came the fourth time tenderly to me;
To me, to me,
Sitting by the sea,
Sitting sad and solitary thinking of thee.
Like warm lips it touched me-that soft wind from the sea,
And I trembled and wept as it passed by me.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

America

NOR force nor fraud shall sunder us! O ye
Who north or south, on east or western land,
Native to noble sounds, say truth for truth,
Freedom for freedom, love for love, and God
For God; O ye who in eternal youth
Speak with a living and creative flood
This universal English, and do stand
Its breathing book; live worthy of that grand
Heroic utterance—parted, yet a whole,
Far yet unsever'd,—children brave and free
Of the great Mother-tongue, and ye shall be
Lords of an empire wide as Shakespeare's soul,
Sublime as Milton's immemorial theme,
And rich as Chaucer's speech, and fair as Spenser's dream.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

An Autumn Mood

Pile the pyre, light the fire-there is fuel enough and to spare;
You have fire enough and to spare with your madness and gladness;
Burn the old year-it is dead, and dead, and done.
There is something under the sun that I cannot bear:
I cannot bear this sadness under the sun,
I cannot bear this sun upon all this sadness.
Here on this prophecy, here on this leafless log,
Log upon log, and leafless on leafless, I sit.
Yes, Beauty, I see thee; yes, I see, but I will not rejoice.
Down, down, wild heart! down, down, thou hungry dog
That dost but leap and gaze with a want thou canst not utter!
Down, down! I know the ill, but where is the cure?
Moor and stubble and mist, stubble and mist and moor,
Here, on the turf that will feel the snows, a vanishing flutter
Of bells that are ringing farewells,
And overhead, from a branch that will soon be bare,
Is it a falling leaf that disturbs my blood like a voice?
Or is it an autumn bird that answers the evening light?
The evening light on stubble and moor and mist,
And pallid woods, and the pale sweet hamlets of dying men.
Oh, autumn bird! I also will speak as I list.
Oh, woods! oh, fields! oh, trees! oh, hill and glen!
You who have seen my glory, you who wist
How I have walked the mornings of delight-
Myself a morning, summer'd through and lit
With light and summer as the sunny dew
With sun: you saw me then-
You see me now; oh, hear my heart and answer it.
Where is the Nevermore and the land of the Yesterdays?
Aye,
Where are Youth and Joy, the dew and the honey-dew,
The day of the rose, and the night of the nightingale?
Where-
Where are the sights and the sounds that shall ne'er and shall e'er
Come again?
Once more I have cried my cry, once more in vain
I have listen'd; once more, for a moment, the ancient pain
Is less, though I know that the year is dead and done.
Once more I bear

Under the sun the sadness, over the sadness the sun.
Bear? I have borne, I shall bear. But what is a man
That his soul should be seen and heard in the trees and flow'rs of the field?
Have I tintured them mortal? or doth their mortality yield
Me like a fragrance of autumn? Ah! passion of Eve,
Ah! Eve of my passion,-which is it that aches to complain?
Oh, old old Minstrelsy, oh, wafty winds of Romaunt,
Blow me your harps. My sick soul cannot weave
These gossamers of feeling that remain
To any string whereon its ill may grieve.
Blow me your harps-harp, wind-harp, dulcimer,
Citerne, bataunt,
And mandolin, and each string'd woe
Of the sweet olden world, and let them blow
By me, as in sea-streams the sea-gods see
The streaming, streaming hair
Of drownèd girls, and every sorrowy sin
O' the sea.
And so let them blow out the din
Of daylight, and blow in,
With legendary song
Of buried maids,
The evening shades.
And when the thronging harps, and all
The murmurings of wild wind-harps,
Are still;
And shimmer of dim dulcimer,
And thrill of trill'd citerne,
And plaint of quaint bataunt, and throb of long
Long silent mandolin,
And every other sound that grieves,
Hath dropt into its colour on the leaves,
In the silence let me hear
The round and heavy tear
Of orchards fall.
And as I listen let the air unseen
Be stirr'd with words;
Let the ripe husk of what is gape open and shed
What has been;
Through click of gates and the games
Of the living village at play,
Let me hear forgotten names

Of ancient day.
Down like a drop of rain from the evening sky
Let somewhat be said;
Up from the pool, like a bubble, let something reply,
In the tongue of the dead.
Through the swallows that fly their last
Round the grey spire of the past,
In the faded elms by the height,
Let the last hour of light
Strike, and the yellow chimes
Forget and remember
A dream of other times.
And above let the rocks be warm with the mystical day that is not
To-day or to-morrow;
And from the nest in the rock let me hear the croon
Of orphan-doves that yearn
For the wings that will never return.
And below the rocks, on the grassy slopes and scarps,
Let the tender flowering flame of the exquisite crocus of sorrow
Sadden the green of the grass to the pathos of gentle September.
And below the slopes and scarps, where the strangled rill
Blackens to rot,
Let the unrest of the troublous hour
Blossom on through the night, and the running flow'r
O' the fatuous fire flicker, and flicker, and flare,
Through the aimless dark of disaster, the aimless light of despair.
And meantime, let the serious evening star
Contemplative, enlarge her slow pale-brow'd
Regard, until she shake
With tears, and sudden, snatch a hasty cloud
To hide whate'er in those pure realms afar
Is likest human sadness: and, full-soon,
Let night begin to slake
The west; and many-headed darkness peer
From every copse and brake;
While from a cottage nigh,
Where the poor candle of dull Poverty
May barely serve to show
Her stony privilege of woe,
Or if, like her, it try
To leave the cabin'd precincts of its lot,
Steals trembling forth to struggle and expire;

A milkless babe that shall not see the morn
Starves to the fretted ear,
With lullaby and lullaby,
And rocking shadow to and fro
Athwart the lattice low;
And from yon western ridge, black as the bier
Of day, let a faint, far-off horn,
Mourning across the ravish'd fields forlorn,
Sound like a streak of sunset seen through the grief of the moon.
And, further yet, from the slant of the seaward plain,
The bleating and lowing of many-voicèd flocks and herds,
Forced from their fields, mix on the morning breeze
With sob of seas,
Till the long-rising wind be high,
And, from the distant main,
A gale sweep up the vale, and on the gale a wail
Of shipwreck fill and fail,
Fail and fill, fill and fail, like a sinking, sinking sail
In the rain!
But ere all this to us let the dim smoke rise!
To us from the nearest field, from the nearest pyre
Of stubbled corn, let the dim smoke rise; and let
The fire that loosens the stubble corn
Loose the soul like smoke, and let tears in the eyes
Confuse the passionate sense till the heart forget
Whether we be the world, or whether the fading world be
We.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

An Evening Dream

I'm leaning where you loved to lean in eventides of old,
The sun has sunk an hour ago behind the treeless wold,
In this old oriel that we loved how oft I sit forlorn,
Gazing, gazing, up the vale of green and waving corn.
The summer corn is in the ear, thou knowest what I see
Up the long wide valley, and from seldom tree to tree,
The serried corn, the serried corn, the green and serried corn,
From the golden morn till night, from the moony night till morn.
I love it, morning, noon, and night, in sunshine and in rain,
For being here it seems to say, 'The lost come back again.'
And being here as green and fair as those old fields we knew,
It says, 'The lost when they come back, come back unchanged and true.'
But more than at the shout of morn, or in the sleep of noon,
Smiling with a smiling star, or wan beneath a wasted moon,
I love it, soldier brother! at this weird dim hour, for then
The serried ears are swords and spears, and the fields are fields of men.
Rank on rank in faultless phalanx stern and still I can discern,
Phalanx after faultless phalanx in dumb armies still and stern;
Army on army, host on host, till the bannered nations stand,
As the dead may stand for judgment silent on the o'erpeopled land.
Not a bayonet stirs: down sinks the awful twilight, dern and dun,
On an age that waits its leader, on a world that waits the sun.
Then your dog-I know his voice-cries from out the courtyard nigh,
And my love too well interprets all that long and mournful cry!
In my passion that thou art not, lo! I see thee as thou art,
And the pitying fancy brings thee to assuage the anguished heart.
'Oh my brother!' and my bosom's throb of welcome at the word,
Claps a hundred thousand hands, and all my legions hail thee lord.
And the vast unmotioned myriads, front to front, as at a breath,
Live and move to martial music, down the devious dance of death.
Ah, thou smilest, scornful brother, at a maiden's dream of war!
And thou shakest back thy locks as if-a glow-worm for thy star-
I dubbed thee with a blade of grass, by earthlight, in a fairy ring,
Knight o' the garter o' Queen Mab, or lord in waiting to her king.
Brother, in thy plumèd pride of tented field and turretted tower,
Smiling brother, scornful brother, darest thou watch with me one hour?
Even now some fate is near, for I shake and know not why,
And a wider sight is orbing, orbing, on my moistened eye,
And I feel a thousand flutterings round my soul's still vacant field,

Like the ravens and the vultures o'er a carnage yet unkill'd.
Hist! I see the stir of glamour far upon the twilight wold,
Hist! I see the vision rising! List! and as I speak behold!
These dull mists are mists of morning, and behind yon eastern hill,
The hot sun abides my bidding: he shall melt them when I will.
All the night that now is past, the foe hath laboured for the day,
Creeping thro' the stealthy dark, like a tiger to his prey.
Throw this window wider! Strain thine eyes along the dusky vale!
Art thou cold with horror? Has thy bearded cheek grown pale?
'Tis the total Russian host, flooding up the solemn plain,
Secret as a silent sea, mighty as a moving main!
Oh, my country! is there none to rouse thee to the rolling sight?
Oh thou gallant sentinel who has watched so oft so well, must thou sleep this
only night?
So hath the shepherd lain on a rock above a plain,
Nor beheld the flood that swelled from some embowelled mount of woe,
Waveless, foamless, sure and slow,
Silent o'er the vale below,
Till nigher still and nigher comes the seeth of fields on fire,
And the thrash of falling trees, and the steam of rivers dry,
And before the burning flood the wild things of the wood
Skulk and scream, and fight, and fall, and flee, and fly.
A gun! and then a gun! I' the far and early sun
Dost thou see by yonder tree a fleeting redness rise,
As if, one after one, ten poppies red had blown,
And shed in a blinking of the eyes?
They have started from their rest with a bayonet at each breast,
Those watchers of the west who shall never watch again!
'Tis nought to die, but oh, God's pity on the woe
Of dying hearts that know they die in vain!
Beyond yon backward height that meets their dying sight,
A thousand tents are white, and a slumbering army lies.
'Brown Bess,' the sergeant cries, as he loads her while he dies,
'Let this devil's deluge reach them, and the good old cause is lost.'
He dies upon the word, but his signal gun is heard,
Yon ambush green is stirred, yon labouring leaves are tost,
And a sudden sabre waves, and like dead from opened graves,
A hundred men stand up to meet a host.
Dumb as death, with bated breath,
Calm upstand that fearless band,
And the dear old native land, like a dream of sudden sleep,
Passes by each manly eye that is fixed so stern and dry

On the tide of battle rolling up the steep.
They hold their silent ground, I can hear each fatal sound
Upon that summer mound which the morning sunshine warms,
The word so brief and shrill that rules them like a will,
The sough of moving limbs, and the clank and ring of arms.
'Fire!' and round that green knoll the sudden warclouds roll,
And from the tyrant's ranks so fierce an answ'ring blast
Of whirling death came back that the green trees turned to black,
And dropped their leaves in winter as it passed.
A moment on each side the surging smoke is wide,
Between the fields are green, and around the hills are loud,
But a shout breaks out, and lo! they have rushed upon the foe,
As the living lightning leaps from cloud to cloud.
Fire and flash, smoke and crash,
The fogs of battle close o'er friends and foes, and they are gone!
Alas, thou bright-eyed boy! alas, thou mother's joy!
With thy long hair so fair, thou didst so bravely lead them on!
I faint with pain and fear. Ah, heaven! what do I hear?
A trumpet-note so near?
What are these that race like hunters at a chase?
Who are these that run a thousand men as one?
What are these that crash the trees far in the waving rear?
Fight on, thou young hero! there's help upon the way!
The light horse are coming, the great guns are coming,
The Highlanders are coming;-good God give us the day!
Hurrah for the brave and the leal! Hurrah for the strong and the true!
Hurrah for the helmets of steel! Hurrah for the bonnets o' blue!
A run and a cheer, the Highlanders are here! a gallop and a cheer, the light horse
are here!
A rattle and a cheer, the great guns are here!
With a cheer they wheel round and face the foe!
As the troopers wheel about, their long swords are out,
With a trumpet and a shout, in they go!
Like a yawning ocean green, the huge host gulphs them in,
But high o'er the rolling of the flood,
Their sabres you may see like lights upon the sea
When the red sun is going down in blood.
Again, again, again! And the lights are on the wane!
Ah, Christ! I see them sink, light by light,
As the gleams go one by one when the great sun is down,
And the sea rocks in foam beneath the night.
Aye, the great sun is low, and the waves of battle flow

O'er his honoured head; but, oh, we mourn not he is down,
For to-morrow he shall rise to fill his country's eyes,
As he sails up the skies of renown!
Ye may yell, but ye shall groan!
Ye shall buy them bone for bone!
Now, tyrant, hold thine own! blare the trumpet, peal the drum!
From yonder hill-side dark, the storm is on you! Hark!
Swift as lightning, loud as thunder, down they come!
As on some Scottish shore, with mountains frowning o'er,
The sudden tempests roar from the glen,
And roll the tumbling sea in billows to the lee,
Came the charge of the gallant Highlandmen!
And as one beholds the sea tho' the wind he cannot see,
But by the waves that flee knows its might,
So I tracked the Highland blast by the sudden tide that past
O'er the wild and rolling vast of the fight.
Yes, glory be to God! they have stemmed the foremost flood!
I lay me on the sod and breathe again!
In the precious moments won, the bugle call has gone
To the tents where it never rang in vain,
And lo, the landscape wide is red from side to side,
And all the might of England loads the plain!
Like a hot and bloody dawn, across the horizon drawn,
While the host of darkness holds the misty vale,
As glowing and as grand our bannered legions stand,
And England's flag unfolds upon the gale!
At that great sign unfurled, as morn moves o'er the world
When God lifts His standard of light,
With a tumult and a voice, and a rushing mighty noise,
Our long line moves forward to the fight.
Clarion and clarion defying,
Sounding, resounding, replying,
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,
Near and far
The to and fro storm of the never-done hurraing,
Thro' the bright weather banner and feather rising and falling, bugle and fife
Calling, recalling-for death or for life-
Our host moved on to the war,
While England, England, England, England, England!
Was blown from line to line near and far,
And like the morning sea, our bayonets you might see,
Come beaming, gleaming, streaming,

Streaming, gleaming, beaming,
Beaming, gleaming, streaming, to the war.
Clarion and clarion defying,
Sounding, resounding, replying,
Trumpets braying, pipers playing, chargers neighing,
Near and far
The to and fro storm of the never-done hurraing,
Thro' the bright weather, banner and feather rising and falling, bugle and fife
Calling, recalling-for death or for life-
Our long line moved forward to the war.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

At The Grave Of A Spanish Friend

Here lies who of two mighty realms was free;
The English-Spaniard, who lived England's good
With such a Spain of splendour in the blood
As, flaming through our cold utility,
Fired the north oak to the Hesperian tree,
And flower'd and fruited the unyielding wood
That stems the storms and seas. Equal he stood
Between us, and so fell. Twice happy he
On earth: and surely in new Paradise,
Ere we have learn'd the phrase of those abodes,
Twice happy he whom earthly use has given,
Of all the tongues our long confusion tries,
That noblest twain wherein the listening gods
Patient discern the primal speech of Heaven.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Austrian Alliance

Doth this hand live? Trust not a royal coat,
My country! Smite that cheek; there is no stain
But of the clay! no flush of shame or pain.
This is the smell o' the grave. Lift the gold crown
And see that brow. Lo! how the dews drip down
The empty house! The worm is on the walls,
And the half-shuttered lights are dull and dead
With dusty desecration. The soul fled
On a spring-day within thy palace-halls,
Hapsburg! and all the days of all the springs
Of all the ages bring it not again!
Vampyre! we wrench thee from the breathing throat
Of living Man, and he leaps up and flings
Thy rotten carcass at the heads of Kings.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Ballad

Oh Ladye fair, oh Ladye fair and mine,
Where'er thou be,
Canst thou divine
The Love that hungers thus in me?
The secret cell where lone I lie and sigh for thee?
Long, long I wait, but shall I wait in vain?
How long the Summer waited for the Rose!

Ah say, oh say I shall not wait in vain!
How long, ah fairest! must I keep
The vigil of unsleeping eyes?
Summer's sighs avail,
Summer that sang himself to sleep,
Summer that piping in a grove all day
Played out his lovelorn soul upon the nightingale,
Oh songs more blest than mine, ah happier sighs!

For at rich midnight all the bells
Of all the valley-lilies rang a tune
Like moonlight up and down the dells,
And June
As a naked maiden thro' the shades
Slipt thro' the woods and took her throne.

By this the east is red and white,
The queen of months is seen and known,
Like flocks of doves that soar and fall,
Like butterflies that hover and alight,
Like tears of ecstasy when tear on tear
From both wild eyes rains thro' the wreathèd hands,
The blush of morning drops upon the lands,
The Rose, the Rose is here!
And rapture, rapture crowns the passion of the year

Hark, hark,

Something stirs the arching green,
Thro' the verdurous aisles the doves are cooing,
And the birds of smaller quire,
As fairies that do run and sing
Before the bridal of their queen,
Flittering and fondly twittering,
Lead thro' the languid air the sick delight of wooing.

Sure thro' the distance dim I see the morn again!
Leaves that meet and part the hues of dawn disclose.
Has she heard my woes?
Has she pitied all my pain?
'Tis she! 'tis she!
As Summer waited for the Rose
I shall not wait in vain!
As June soft slipping warms the purple Dark,
So thou slippest thro' the shades to me,
So throbs my throbbing heart its thickening throbs to thee.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Bayonet Song

Fire away, fire away, boys must have their play,
There'll be hard work yet
Before sunset:
But what of the day when the boys have had their play?
When the boys have played, why then,
Aha!
'Twill be time for the men,
Hurrah!
And the bayonet!
But, men, as we've nothing to do till then,
And the match is on out there,
I think you and I may as well stand by
And see that the game goes fair.

No drummer! no tambourettes,
The earth is our drum wherever we come,
Bayonets, bayonets, bayonets, bayonets,
Bayonets, bayonets, bayonets, bayonets,
Where's the drumstick that ever could beat,
Where's the drumhead that ever could drum,
Like the mighty foot of our thousand feet,
And the earth that is dumb till we come and come?
Come and come and come and come
Bayonets, bayonets, bayonets, bayonets.

'Love your enemy'-yes, 'tis the Briton's grace!
I love him so well that I'd see his face.
Yon little ninepins all in a row,
How can I tell if I love 'em or no?
So hurrah, lads, up we go!
Here's to our nearer meeting,
And if when we come within greeting
I see my own special foe,
I'll leave him to Tom or John,
And find my work further on,
And perhaps he and I will shake hands by and bye
Side by side as we lie

(To-night on the gory slope of the hill
As the dew-tears drop from the sky above
At the silent thought
Of the friends whom we love
Better still),
And wait for the surgeon's cart
That's always coming and never comes,
And when a couple of bearers pass
I'll give him my turn,
Tho' the flesh-wounds smart,
And the bone-wounds burn,
And the life-tide's running dry
Because he's my enemy.
But that's when I've spiked up John's and Tom's
And Rosie's and Poll's and Marjorie's
And little Jack's and todlin May's
And the victory's won and the bloody day's
Done, and of flesh that is grass
Along the braes the bloody hay's
Made, that is made, hurrah!
With the bayonet.

For till you show me the Sacred Word
I'm for Peter and his good sword,
Only I hope if we'd drilled him here
He'd not have missed the head for the ear.

Gods, I'd give a Life's delights
To have been there that night of nights,
With ten such men as I see here now,
When they spat their sin on the Sinless Brow
And struck Him without let,-
And have heard the ten steels clash at my call
And seen the ten steels flash in the hall
As we did them all up to the wall,
High Priest, low Priest, Romans and all,

Great and small up to the wall,
Up to the wall with the bayonet.

I would keep or lose my right hand
By the love of every man here
For the dear native land.
There is not a man here this day
Of whom come what come can
I could speak with an accent of scorn.

Who feels his courage grow colder
At sight of the foe,
Whose conscience is bolder
Because we are shoulder to shoulder,
Who goes up the hill because we are men
And not because he is man,
He shall serve his country yet
But not with the bayonet.

Well done-I like your eyes,
Neither sunrise
Nor sunset.
Well done-I know the grips
That will tell to barrel and stock
What the beard hides on the lips:
No strain on the rein, no tug on the slips.
No drummer! no tambourettes!
The earth is our drum wherever we come,
Bayonets, bayonets, bayonets, bayonets,
Bayonets, bayonets, bayonets, bayonets,
Where's the drumstick that ever could beat,
Where's the drumhead that ever could drum,
Like the mighty foot of our thousand feet,
And the earth that is dumb till we come and come?
Till we come and come and come and come,
Bayonets, bayonets, bayonets, bayonets!

You are not dogs but Lions, and who
Holds Lions in leash? Hurrah,
My Lions! with just such a pack
I'd hunt down the gods of Olympus! Alack,
This mount is all an Olympus. Up there

You see the bird-popping goddikins-ten
To one I'll warrant you-bah!
What then?
Who cares while theirs is the ten to the one
And ours is the one to the ten?
Were't one to twenty which of us would shirk
The odds or the glory? You see
How the land lies?
This fox-cover up the long rise,
Then fifty paces of open, and then the breast-work.
Scatter the pack in cover, make them cast wide,
From wood-side to wood-side.
Go in like hounds and come out
At the top like men and lions-full swing
Up the wood, but when it's grey-blue
Overhead come together like men.
A halt for breath,
Slow-time and still as death
To the covert-edge, and then
The rush and the roar and the spring!
Hunt's up, my Lions, hie in, hurrah!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Cavalry Charge At Balaclava

Traveller on foreign ground, whoe'er thou art,
Tell the great tidings! They went down that day
A Legion, and came back from victory
Two hundred men and Glory! On the mart
Is this 'to losc?' Yet, Stranger, thou shalt say
These were our common Britons. 'Tis our way
In England. Aye, ye heavens! I saw them part
The Death-Sea as an English dog leaps o'er
The rocks into the ocean. He goes in
Thick as a lion, and he comes out thin
As a starved wolf; but lo! he brings to shore
A life above his own, which when his heart
Bursts with that final effort, from the stones
Springs up and builds a temple o'er his bones.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Childless

The Son thou sentest forth is now a Thought-
A Dream. To all but thee he is as nought
As if he had gone back into the same
Bosom that bare him. Oh, thou grey pale Dame,
With eyes so wan and wide, what! knowest thou where
Thy Dream is such a thing as doth up-bear
The earth out of its wormy place? I' the air
Dost see the very fashion of the stone
That hath his face for clay? Deep, deep, hast found
The texture of that single weight of ground
Which to each mole and mark that thou hast known
Is special burden? Nay, her face is mild
And sweet. In Heaven the evening star is fair,
And there the mother looketh for her child.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Crazed

'The Spring again hath started on the course
Wherein she seeketh Summer thro' the Earth.
I will arise and go upon my way.
It may be that the leaves of Autumn hid
His footsteps from me; it may be the snows.

'He is not dead. There was no funeral;
I wore no weeds. He must be in the Earth.
Oh where is he, that I may come to him
And he may charm the fever of my brain.

'Oh Spring, I hope that thou wilt be my friend.
Thro' the long weary Summer I toiled sore;
Having much sorrow of the envious woods
And groves that burgeoned round me where I came,
And when I would have seen him, shut him in.

'Also the Honeysuckle and wild bine
Being in love did hide him from my sight;
The Ash-tree bent above him; vicious weeds
Withheld me; Willows in the River-wind
Hissed at me, by the twilight, waving wands.

'Also, for I have told thee, oh dear Spring,
Thou knowest after I had sunk outworn
In the late summer gloom till Autumn came,
I looked up in the light of burning Woods
And entered on my wayfare when I saw
Gold on the ground and glory in the trees.

'And all my further journey thou dost know;
My toils and outcries as the lusty world
Grew thin to winter; and my ceaseless feet
In vales and on stark hills, till the first snow

Fell, and the large rain of the latter leaves.

'I hope that thou wilt be my friend, oh Spring,
And give me service of thy winds and streams.
It needs must be that he will hear thy voice,
For thou art much as I was when he woo'd
And won me long ago beside the Dee.

'If he should bend above you, oh ye streams,
And anywhere you look up into eyes
And think the star of love hath found her mate
And know, because of day, they are not stars;
Oh streams, they are the eyes of my beloved!
Oh murmur as I murmured once of old,
And he will stay beside you, oh ye streams,
And I shall clasp him when my day is come.

'Likewise I charge thee, west wind, zephyr wind,
If thou shalt hear a voice more sweet than thine
About a sunset rosetree deep in June,
Sweeter than thine, oh wind, when thou dost leap
Into the tree with passion, putting by
The maiden leaves that ruffle round their dame,
And singest and art silent,-having dropt
In pleasure on the bosom of the rose,-
Oh wind, it is the voice of my beloved;
Wake, wake, and bear me to the voice, oh wind!

'Moreover, I do think that the spring birds
Will be my willing servants. Wheresoe'er
There mourns a hen-bird that hath lost her mate
Her will I tell my sorrow-weeping hers.

'And if it be a Lark whereto I speak,
She shall be ware of how my Love went up
Sole singing to the cloud; and evermore
I hear his song, but him I cannot see.

'And if it be a female Nightingale
That pineth in the depth of silent woods,
I also will complain to her that night
Is still. And of the creeping of the winds
And of the sullen trees, and of the lone
Dumb Dark. And of the listening of the stars.
What have we done, what have we done, oh Night?

'Therefore, oh Love, the summer trees shall be
My watch-towers. Wheresoe'er thou liest bound
I will be there. For ere the spring be past
I will have preached my dolour through the land,
And not a bird but shall have all my woe.
-And whatsoever hath my woe hath me.

'I charge you, oh ye flowers fresh from the dead,
Declare if ye have seen him. You pale flowers,
Why do you quake and hang the head like me?

'You pallid flowers, why do ye watch the dust
And tremble? Ah, you met him in your caves,
And shrank out shuddering on the wintry air.

'Snowdrops, you need not gaze upon the ground,
Fear not. He will not follow ye; for then
I should be happy who am doomed to woe.

'Only I bid ye say that he is there,
That I may know my grief is to be borne,
And all my Fate is but the common lot.'

She sat down on a bank of Primroses,
Swayed to and fro, as in a wind of Thought
That moaned about her, murmuring alow,

'The common lot, oh for the common lot.'

Thus spake she, and behold a gust of grief
Smote her. As when at night the dreaming wind
Starts up enraged, and shakes the Trees and sleeps.

'Oh early Rain, oh passion of strong crying,
Say, dost thou weep, oh Rain, for him or me?
Alas, thou also goest to the Earth
And enterest as one brought home by fear.

'Rude with much woe, with expectation wild,
So dashest thou the doors and art not seen.
Whose burial did they speak of in the skies?

'I would that there were any grass-green grave
Where I might stand and say, 'Here lies my Love;'
And sigh, and look down to him, thro' the Earth.
And look up, thro' the clearing skies, and smile.'

Then the Day passed from bearing up the Heavens,
The sky descended on the Mountain tops
Unclouded; and the stars embower'd the Night.

Darkness did flood the Valley; flooding her.
And when the face of her great grief was hid,
Her callow heart, that like a nestling bird
Clamoured, sank down with plaintive pipe and slow.
Her cry was like a strange fowl in the dark:
'Alas Night,' said she; then like a faint ghost,
As tho' the owl did hoot upon the hills,
'Alas Night.' On the murky silence came
Her voice like a white sea-mew on the waste
Of the dark deep; a-sudden seen and lost
Upon the barren expanse of mid-seas
Black with the Thunder. 'Alas Night,' said she,

'Alas Night.' Then the stagnant season lay
From hill to hill. But when the waning Moon
Rose, she began with hasty step to run
The wintry mead; a wounded bird that seeks
To hide its head when all the trees are bare.
Silent,-for all her strength did bear her dread-
Silent, save when with bursting heart she cried,
Like one who wrestles in the dark with fiends,
'Alas Night.' With a dim wild voice of fear
As though she saw her sorrow by the moon.

The morning dawns: and earlier than the Lark
She murmureth, sadder than the Nightingale.

'I would I could believe me in that sleep
When on our bridal morn I thought him dead,
And dreamed and shrieked and woke upon his breast.

'Oh God, I cannot think that I am blind;
I think I see the beauty of the world.
Perchance but I am blind, and he is near.

'Even as I felt his arm before I woke,
And clinging to his bosom called on him,
And wept, and knew and knew not it was he.

'I do thank God I think that I am blind.
There is a darkness thick about my heart
And all I seem to see is as a dream;
My lids have closed, and have shut in the world.

'Oh Love, I pray thee take me by the hand;
I stretch my hand, oh Love, and quake with dread;
I thrust it, and I know not where. Ah me,
What shall not seize the dark hand of the blind?

'How know I, being blind, I am on Earth?
I am in Hell, in Hell, oh Love! I feel
There is a burning gulph before my feet!
I dare not stir-and at my back the fiends!
I wind my arms, my arms that demons scorch,
Round this poor breast, and all that thou shouldst save
From rapine. Husband, I cry out from Hell;
There is a gulph. They seize my flesh.' (She shrieked.)

'I will sink down here where I stand. All round
How know I but the burning pit doth yawn?
Here will I shrink and shrink to no more space
Than my feet cover.' (She wept.) 'So much up
My mortal touch makes honest. Oh my Life,
My Lord, my Husband! Fool that cryest in vain!
Ah Angel! What hast thou to do with Hell?

'And yet I do not ask thee, oh my Love,
To lead me to thee where thou art in Heaven.
Only I would that thou shouldst be my star,
And whatsoever Fate thy beams dispense
I am content. It shall be good to me.

'But tho' I may not see thee, oh my Love,
Yea, though mine eyes return and miss thee still,
And thou shouldst take another shape than thine,
Have pity on my lot, and lead me hence
Where I may think of thee. To the old fields
And wonted valleys where we once were blest.
Oh Love, all day I hear them, out of sight,
The far Home where the Past abideth yet
Beside the stream that prates of other days.

'My Punishment is more than I can bear.
My sorrow groweth big unto my time.
Oh Love, I would that I were mad. Oh Love,
I do not ask that thou shouldst change my Fate,

I will endure; but oh my Life, my Lord,
Being as thou art a thronèd saint in Heaven,
If thou wouldst touch me and enchant my sense,
And daze the anguish of my heart with dreams.
And change the stop of grief; and turn my soul
A little devious from the daily march
Of Reason, and the path of conscious woe
And all the truth of Life! Better, oh Love,
In fond delusion to be twice betrayed,
Than know so well and bitterly as I.
Let me be mad.' (She wept upon her knees.)

'I will arise and seek thee. This is Heaven.
I sat upon a cloud. It bore me in.
It is not so, you Heavens! I am not dead.
Alas! there have been pangs as strong as Death.
It would be sweet to know that I am dead.

'Even now I feel I am not of this world,
Which sayeth, day and night, 'For all but thee,'
And poureth its abundance night and day
And will not feed the hunger in my heart.

'I tread upon a dream, myself a dream,
I cannot write my Being on the world,
The moss grows unrespective where I tread.

'I cannot lift mine eyes to the sunshine,
Night is not for my slumber. Not for me
Sink down the dark inexorable hours.

'I would not keep or change the weary day;
I have no pleasure in the needless night,
And toss and wail that other lids may sleep.

'I am a very Leper in the Earth.

Her functions cast me out; her golden wheels
That harmless roll about unconscious Babes
Do crush me. My place knoweth me no more.

'I think that I have died, oh you sweet Heavens.
I did not see the closing of the eyes.
Perchance there is one death for all of us
Whereof we cannot see the eyelids close.

'Dear Love, I do beseech thee answer me.
Dear Love, I think men's eyes behold me not.
The air is heavy on these lips that strain
To cry; I do not warm the thing I touch;
The Lake gives back no image unto me.

'I see the Heavens as one who wakes at noon
From a deep sleep. Now shall we meet again!
The Country of the blest is hid from me
Like Morn behind the Hills. The Angel smiles.
I breathe thy name. He hurleth me from Heaven.

'Now of a truth I know thou art on Earth.
Break, break the chains that hold me back from thee.
I see the race of mortal men pass by;
The great wind of their going waves my hair;
I stretch my hands, I lay my cheek to them,
In love; they stir the down upon my cheek;
I cannot touch them, and they know not me.

'Oh God! I ask to live the saddest life!
I care not for it if I may but live!
I would not be among the dead, oh God!
I am not dead! oh God, I will not die!'

So throbb'd the trouble of this crazed heart.
So on the broken mirror of her mind

In bright disorder shone the shatter'd World.
So, out of tune, in sympathetic chords,
Her soul is musical to brooks and birds,
Winds, seasons, sunshine, flowers, and maundering trees.

Hear gently all the tale of her distress.
The heart that loved her loves not now yet lives.
What the eye sees and the ear hears-the hand
That wooing led her thro' the rosy paths
Of girlhood, and the lanten lanes of Love,
The brow whereon she trembled her first kiss,
The lips that had sole privilege of hers,
The eyes wherein she saw the Universe,
The bosom where she slept the sleep of joy,
The voice that made it sacred to her sleep
With lustral vows; that which doth walk the World
Man among Men, is near her now. But He
Who wandered with her thro' the ways of Youth,
Who won the tender freedom of the lip,
Who took her to the bosom dedicate
And chaste with vows, who in the perfect whole
Of gracious Manhood was the god that stood
In her young Heaven, round whom the subject stars
Circled: in whose dear train, where'er he passed
Thronged charmèd powers; at whose advancing feet
Upspringing happy seasons and sweet times
Made fond court carolling; who but moved to stir
All things submissive, which did magnify
And wane as ever with his changing will
She changed the centre of her infinite; He
In whom she worshipped Truth, and did obey
Goodness; in whose sufficient love she felt,
Fond Dreamer! the eternal smile of all
Angels and men; round whom, upon his neck,
Her thoughts did hang; whom lacking they fell down
Distract to the earth; He whom she loved, and who
Loved her of old,-in the long days before
Chaos, the empyrean days!-(Poor heart,
She phrased it so) is no more: and O God!
Thorough all Time, and that transfigured Time
We call Eternity, will be no more.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Czar Nicholas

We could not turn from that colossal foe,
The morning shadow of whose hideous head
Darkened the furthest West, and who did throw
His evening shade on Ind. The polar bow
Behind him flamed and paled, and through the red
Uncertain dark his vasty shape did grow
Upon the sleepless nations. Lay him low!
Aye, low as for our priceless English dead
We lie and groan to-day in England! Oh,
My God! I think Thou hast not finished
This Thy fair world, where, triumph Ill or Good,
We still must weep; where or to lose or gain
Is woe; where Pain is medicined by Pain,
And Blood can only be washed out by Blood.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Daft Jean

Daft Jean,
The waesome wean,
She cam' by the cottage, she cam' by the ha',
The laird's ha' o' Wutherstanelaw,
The cottar's cot by the birken shaw;
An' aye she gret,
To ilk ane she met,
For the trumpet had blawn an' her lad was awa'.

'Black, black,' sang she,
'Black, black my weeds shall be,
My love has widowed me!
Black, black!' sang she.

Daft Jean,
The waesome wean,
She cam' by the cottage, she cam' by the ha',
The laird's ha' o' Wutherstanelaw,
The cottar's cot by the birken shaw;
Nae mair she creepit,
Nae mair she weepit,

She stept 'mang the lasses the queen o' them a',
The queen o' them a',
The queen o' them a',
She stept 'mang the lasses the queen o' them a'.
For the fight it was fought i' the fiel' far awa',
An' claymore in han' for his love an' his lan',
The lad she lo'ed best he was foremost to fa'.

'White, white,' sang she,
'White, white, my weeds shall be,
I am no widow,' sang she,
'White, white, my wedding shall be,
White, white!' sang she.

Daft Jean,
The waesome wean,
She gaed na' to cottage, she gaed na' to ha',

But forth she creepit,
While a' the house weepit,
Into the snaw i' the eerie night-fa'.

At morn we found her,
The lammies stood round her,
The snaw was her pillow, her sheet was the snaw;
Pale she was lying,
Singing and dying,
A' for the laddie wha fell far awa'.

'White, white,' sang she,
'My love has married me,
White, white, my weeds shall be,
White, white, my wedding shall be,
White, white,' sang she!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Dante, Shakespeare, Milton - From

Doctor. Ah! thou, too,
Sad Alighieri, like a waning moon
Setting in storm behind a grove of bays!
Balder. Yes, the great Florentine, who wove his web
And thrust it into hell, and drew it forth
Immortal, having burn'd all that could burn,
And leaving only what shall still be found
Untouch'd, nor with the small of fire upon it,
Under the final ashes of this world.
Doctor. Shakespeare and Milton!
Balder. Switzerland and home.
I ne'er see Milton, but I see the Alps,
As once, sole standing on a peak supreme,
To the extremest verge summit and gulf
I saw, height after depth, Alp beyond Alp,
O'er which the rising and the sinking soul
Sails into distance, heaving as a ship
O'er a great sea that sets to strands unseen.
And as the mounting and descending bark,
Borne on exulting by the under deep,
Gains of the wild wave something not the wave,
Catches a joy of going, and a will
Resistless, and upon the last lee foam
Leaps into air beyond it, so the soul
upon the Alpine ocean mountain-toss'd,
Incessant carried up to heaven, and plunged
To darkness, and still wet with drops of death
Held into light eternal, and again
Cast down, to be again uplift in vast
And infinite succession, cannot stay
The mad momentum, but in frenzied sight
Of horizontal clouds and mists and skies
And the untried Inane, springs on the surge
Of things, and passing matter by a force
Material, thro' vacuity careers,
Rising and falling.
Doctor. And my Shakespeare! Call
Milton your Alps, and which is he among
The tops of Andes? Keep your Paradise,

And Eves, and Adams, but give me the Earth
That Shakespeare drew, and make it grave and gay
With Shakespeare's men and women; let me laugh
Or weep with them, and you—a wager,—aye,
A wager by my faith—either his muse
Was the recording angel, or that hand
Cherubic, which fills up the Book of Life,
Caught what the last relaxing gripe let fall
By a death-bed at Stratford, and hence-forth
Holds Shakespeare's pen. Now strain your sinews, poet,
And top your Pelion,—Milton Switzerland,
And English Shakespeare—
Balder. This dear English land!
This happy England, loud with brooks and birds,
Shining with harvests, cool with dewy trees,
And bloom'd from hill to dell; but whose best flowers
Are daughters, and Ophelia still more fair
Than any rose she weaves; whose noblest floods
The pulsing torrent of a nation's heart:
Whose forests stronger than her native oaks
Are living men; and whose unfathom'd lakes
Forever calm the unforgotten dead
In quiet graveyards willow'd seemly round,
O'er which To-day bends sad, and sees his face.
Whose rocks are rights, consolidate of old
Thro' unremember'd years, around whose base
The ever-surgings roll and roar
Perpetual, as around her cliffs the seas
That only wash them whiter; and whose mountains,
Souls that from this mere footing of the earth
Lift their great virtues thro' all clouds of Fate
Up to the very heavens, and make them rise
To keep the gods above us!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Dead-Maid's-Pool

Oh water, water-water deep and still,
In this hollow of the hill,
Thou helenge well o'er which the long reeds lean,
Here a stream and there a stream,
And thou so still, between,
Thro' thy coloured dream,
Thro' the drownèd face
Of this lone leafy place,
Down, down, so deep and chill,
I see the pebbles gleam!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Bending o'er the well,
Why there thou bendest,
Kind hearts can tell.
'Tis that the pool is deep,
'Tis that-a single leap,
And the pool closes:
And in the solitude
Of this wild mountain wood,
None, none, would hear her cry,
From this bank where she stood
To that peak in the sky
Where the cloud dozes.

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
That art so sweet and good,
If any creeping thing
Among the summer games in the wild roses
Fall from its airy swing,
(While all its pigmy kind
Watch from some imminent rose-leaf half uncurled)-
I know thou hast it full in mind
(While yet the drowning minim lives,
And blots the shining water where it strives),
To touch it with a finger soft and kind,
As when the gentle sun, ere day is hot,

Feels for a little shadow in a grot,
And gives it to the shades behind the world.

And oh! if some poor fool
Should seek the fatal pool,
Thine arms-ah, yes! I know
For this thou watchest days, and months, and years,
For this dost bend beside
The lone and lorn well-side,
The guardian angel of the doom below,
Content if, once an age, thy helping hand
May lift repentant madness to the land:
Content to hear the cry
Of living love from lips that would have died:
To seem awhile endowed
With all thy limbs did save,
And in that voice they drew out of the grave,
To feel thy dumb desire for once released aloud,
And all thy muffled century
Repaid in one wild hour of sobs, and smiles, and tears.

Aye, aye, I envy thee,
Pitiful ash-tree!

Water, water-water deep and still,
In the hollow of the hill,
Water, water, well I wot,
Thro' the weary hours,
Well I wot thee lying there,
As fair as false, as false as fair.
The crows they fly o'er,
The small birds flit about,
The stream it ripples in, the stream it ripples out,
But what eye ever knew
A rinkle wimple thee?
And what eye shall see
A rinkle wimple thee
Evermore?
Thro' thy gauds and mocks,

All thy thin enchantment thro'-
The green delusion of thy bowers,
The cold flush of thy feignèd flowers,
All the treacherous state
Of fair things small and great,
That are and are not,
Well I wot thee shining there,
As fair as false, as false as fair.
Thro' the liquid rocks,
Thro' the watery trees,
Thro' the grass that never grew,
Thro' a face God never made,
Thro' the frequent gain and loss
Of the cold cold shine and shade,
Thro' the subtle fern and moss,
Thro' the humless, hiveless bees,
Round the ghosts of buds asleep,
Thro' the disembodied rose,
Waving, waving in the deep,
Where never wind blows,
I look down, and see far down,
In clear depths that do nothing hide,
Green in green, and brown in brown,
The long fish turn and glide!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Bending o'er the water-
Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Hadst thou a daughter?
Ash-tree, ash-tree, let me draw near,
Ash-tree, ash-tree, a word in thine ear!

Thou art wizen and white, ash-tree;
Other trees have gone on,
Have gathered and grown,
Have bourgeoned and borne:
Thou hast wasted and worn.

Thy knots are all eyes;

Every knot a dumb eye,
That has seen a sight
And heard a cry.

Thy leaves are dry:
The summer has not gone by,
But they're withered and dead,
Like locks round a head
That is bald with a secret sin,
That is scorched by a hell within.

Thy skin
Is withered and wan,
Like a guilty man:
It was thin,
Aye, silken and thin,
It is houghed
And ploughed,
Like a murderer's skin.
Thou hast no shoots nor wands,
All thy arms turn to the deep,
All thy twigs are crooked,
Twined and twisted,
Fingered and fisted,
Like one who had looked
On wringing hands
'Till his hands were wrung in his sleep.

Pardon my doubt of thee,
What is this
In the very groove
Of thy right arm?
There is not a snake
So yellow and red,
There is not a toad
So sappy and dread!
It doth not move,
It doth not hiss-
Ash-tree-for God's sake-

Hast thou known
What hath not been said
And the summer sun
Cannot keep it warm,
And the living wood
Cannot shut it down!
And it grows out of thee
And will be told,
Bloody as blood,
And yellow as gold!

Ash-tree, ash-tree,
That once wert so green!
Ash-tree, ash-tree!
What hast thou seen?
Was I a mother-nay or aye?
Am I childless-aye nor nay?
Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Bending o'er the water!
Ash-tree, ash-tree,
Give me my daughter!
Curse the water,
Curse thee,
Ash-tree,
Bending o'er the water!
Leaf on the tree,
Flower on the stem,
Curse thee,
And curse them!
Trunk and shoot,
Herb and weed,
Bud and fruit,
Blossom and seed,
Above and below,
About and about,
Inside and out,
Grown and to grow,
Curse you all,
Great and small,
That cannot give back my daughter!

But if there were any,
Among so many,
Any small thing that did lie sweet for her,
Any newt or marish-worm that, shrinking
Under the pillow of the water weed,
Left her a cleaner bed,
Any least leaves that fell with little splashes,
And sinking, sinking,
Sank soft and slow, and settled on her lashes,
And did what was so meet for her,
Them I do not curse.

See, see up the glen,
The evening sun agen!
It falls upon the water,
It falls upon the grass,
Thro' the birches, thro' the firs,
Thro' the alders, catching gold,
Thro' the bracken and the brier,
Goes the evening fire
To the bush-linnet's nest.

There between us and the west,
Dost thou see the angels pass?
Thro' the air, with streaming hair,
The golden angels pass?
Hold, hold! for mercy, hold!
I know thee! ah, I know thee!
I know thou wilt not pass me so-
The gray old woman is ready to go.
Call me to thee, call me to thee,
My daughter! oh, my daughter!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Dedicatory

Beauty is One. But that so equal gold,
Run in the apt and kindly difference
Of each receptive and significant sense,
Configures to our many-minded mould.
Therefore, oh Love, though I no more behold
That sometime world where summer eloquence
I saw and spake, (adding nor time nor tense,
But singing forth the silent music old),
Yet walled in winter cities still sing I;
For conscious of thy beauty mere and whole,
The perfect unit of thy face and soul
(Thy face thy soul confest to mortal eye,
Thy soul thy face by new perceptions known),
Thy One becomes my Many. Take thine own.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Deprecating A Gift

(Of Something Made By The Giver)

Child, your effectual hands create too much.
The things they fashion having, thenceforth, less
The type of matter than the preciousness
Of you, how can I serve myself of such?
The kindred in my being doth avouch
Your essence; in the very press and stress
Of action I am foiled to a caress.
Ah! give me something you but meant to touch!
Something your love has ripen'd till I'm 'ware
Of thoughts that came in light and stay'd in sweet,
Or th' apostolic shadow of your care,
Passing by, hath healed of malady,
Or wholed in use and grace: gifts rare and meet,
But not too rarely yours to be for me
Still meet, nor meetly mine to be still yours and rare.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Desolate

From the sad eaves the drip-drop of the rain!
The water washing at the latchel door;
A slow step plashing by upon the moor;
A single bleat far from the famished fold;
The clicking of an embered hearth and cold;
The rainy Robin tic-tac at the pane.

'So as it is with thee
Is it with me,
So as it is and it used not to be,
With thee used not to be,
Nor me.'
So singeth Robin on the willow tree,
The rainy robin tic-tac at the pane.

Here in this breast all day
The fire is dim and low,
Within I care not to stay,
Without I care not to go.

A sadness ever sings
Of unforgotten things,
And the bird of love is patting at the pane;
But the wintry water deepens at the door,
And a step is plashing by upon the moor
Into the dark upon the darkening moor,
And alas, alas, the drip-drop of the rain!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Epigram On The Death Of Edward Forbes

NATURE, a jealous mistress, laid him low.
He woo'd and won her; and, by love made bold,
She show'd him more than mortal man should know,
Then slew him lest her secret should be told.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Epitaph I

On A Portrait Presented To J. Y. Simpson, M.D. (Afterwards Sir James Simpson)

Unto myself my better self you gave.
I give yourself yourself: but ah, my friend,
In how inverse a ratio! To amend
The unjust return these thanks are all I have,
Except a sigh, when that poor 'all' is o'er,
To feel, alas, no less your debtor than before.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Epitaph II

On The Death of Edward Forbes

Nature, a jealous mistress, laid him low.
He woo'd and won her; and, by love made bold,
She showed him more than mortal man should know,
Then slew him lest her secret should be told.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Esse Et Posse

The groan of fallen Hosts; a torrid glare
Of cities; battle-cries of Right and Wrong
Where armies shout to rocking fleets that roar
On thundering oceans to the thundering shore,
And high o'er all-long, long prolonged, along
The moaning caverns of the plaining air,-
The cry of conscious Fate. The firmament
Waves from above me like a tattered flag;
And as a soldier in his lowly tent
Looks up when a shot strikes the helpless rag
From o'er him, and beholds the canopy
Of Heaven, so, sudden to my startled eye,
The Heavens that shall be! The dream fades. I stand
Among the mourners of a mourning land.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Farewell

Can I see thee stand
On the looming land?
Dost thou wave with thy white hand
Farewell, farewell?
I could think that thou art near,
Thy sweet voice is in mine ear,
Farewell, farewell!
While I listen, all things seem
Singing in a singing dream,
Farewell, farewell!
Echoing in an echoing dream,
Farewell, farewell!

Yon boat upon the sea,
It floats 'twixt thee and me,
I see the boatman listless lie;
He cannot hear the cry
That in mine ears doth ring
Farewell, farewell!
Doth it pass him o'er and o'er,
Heard upon the shore behind,
Farewell, farewell!
Heard upon the ship before,
Farewell, farewell!
Like an arrow that can dart
Viewless thro' the viewless wind,
Plain on the quivering string,
And plain in the victim's heart?

Are there voices in the sky,
Farewell, farewell?
Am I mocked by the bright air,
Farewell, farewell?
The empty air that everywhere
Silvers back the sung reply,
Farewell, farewell!
While to and fro the tremulous accents fly,

Farewell, farewell!
Now shown, now shy,
Farewell, farewell!
Now song, now sigh,
Farewell, farewell!
Toy with the grasping heart that deems them nigh,
Come like blown bells in sudden wind and high,
Or far on furthest verge in lingering echoes die,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Oh, Love! what strange dumb Fate
Hath broken into voice to see us hope?
Surely we part to meet again?
Like one struck blind, I grope
In vain, in vain;
I cannot hold a single sense to tell
The meaning of this melancholy bell,
Farewell, farewell!
I touch them with my thought, and small and great
They join the swaying swell,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Aye, when I felt thee falling
On this heaving breast-
Aye, when I felt thee prest
Nearer, nearer, nearer,
Dearer, dearer, dearer-
Aye, while I saw thy face,
In that long last embrace,
The first, the last, the best-
Aye, while I held thee heart to heart,
My soul had pushed off from the shore,
And we were far apart;
I heard her calling, calling,
From the sea of nevermore
Farewell, farewell!
Fainter, fainter, like a bell
Rung from some receding ship,

Farewell, farewell!
The far and further knell
Did hardly reach my lip,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Away, you omens vain!
Away, away!
What! will you not be driven?
My heart is trembling to your augury.
Hence! Like a flight of seabirds at a gun,
A thousand ways they scatter back to Heaven,
Wheel lessening out of sight, and swoop again as one!
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Oh, Love! what fatal spell
Is winding, winding round me to this singing?
What hands unseen are flinging
The tightening mesh that I can feel too well?
What viewless wings are winging
The siren music of this passing bell?
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell!

Arouse my heart! arouse!
This is the sea: I strike these wooden walls:
The sailors come and go at my command:
I lift this cable with my hand:
I loose it and it falls:
Arouse! she is not lost,
Thou art not plighted to a moonlight ghost,
But to a living spouse.
Arouse! we only part to meet again!
Oh thou moody main,
Are thy mermaid cells a-ringing?
Are thy mermaid sisters singing?
The saddest shell of every cell
Ringing still, and ringing

Farewell, farewell!
To the sinking sighing singing,
To the floating flying singing,
To the deepening dying singing,
In the swell,
Farewell, farewell!
And the failing wailing ringing,
The reaming dreaming ringing
Of fainter shell in deeper cell,
To the sunken sunken singing,
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell!
Farewell, farewell, farewell?

Sydney Thompson Dobell

For Charity's Sake

'Oh dark-eyed maid,'
The soldier said,
'I've been wounded in many a fray,
But such a dart
As you shoot to my heart
I never felt till to-day.

Then give to me
Kisses, one, two, three,
All for dear Charity's sake.
And pity my pain,
And meet me again,
Or else my heart must break.'

Peggy was kind,
She would save the blind
Black fly that shimmered the ale,
And her quick hand stopped
If a grass-moth dropped
In the drifted snows of the pail.

One, two, three,
Kisses gave she,
All for dear Charity's sake;
And she pitied his pain,
And she met him again,
For fear his heart should break.

The bugle blew,
The merry flag flew,
The squadron clattered the town;
The twigs were bright on the minster elm,
He wore a primrose in his helm
As they clattered thro' the town.
Heydey, holiday, on we go!

Heydey, holiday, blow boys, blow!
Clattering thro' the town.

And when the minster leaves were sear,
On a far red field by a dark sea drear,
In dust and thunder, and cheer, boys, cheer,
The bold dragoon went down.

Shiver, poor Peggy, the wind blows high;
Beg a penny as I go by,
All for sweet Charity's sake:
Hold the thin hand from the shawl,
Turn the wan face to the wall,
Turn the face, let the hot tears fall,
For fear your heart should break.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Fragment Of A Sleep-Song

SISTER Simplificite,
Sing, sing a song to me,
Sing me to sleep.
Some legend low and long,
Slow as the summer song
Of the dull Deep.

Some legend long and low,
Whose equal ebb and flow
To and fro creep
On the dim marge of gray
'Tween the soul's night and day,
Washing "awake" away
Into "asleep."

Some legend low and long,
Never so weak or strong
As to let go
While it can hold this heart
Withouten sigh or smart,
Or as to hold this heart
When it sighs "No."

Some long low swaying song,
As the sway'd shadow long
Sways to and fro
Where, thro' the crowing cocks,
And by the swinging clocks,
Some weary mother rocks
Some weary woe.

Sing up and down to me
Like a dream-boat at sea,
So, and still so,
Float through the "then" and "when,"
Rising from when to then,
Sinking from then to when
While the waves go.

Low and high, high and low,
Now and then, then and now,
Mow, now;
And when the now is then, and when the then is now,
And when the low is high, and when the high is low,
Low, low;
Let me float, let the boat
Go, go;
Let me glide, let me slide
Slow, slow;
Gliding boat, sliding boat,
Slow, slow;
Glide away, slide away
So, so.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Fragment Of Ballad

How shall I sing? the thing I crave
To say is speechless as a Lover's trance.
How shall I give to thee
What even now is all so wholly thine
That but by losing thee in me
Or me in thee it never can be mine?

As a sliding wave of sliding sea
Before my following hand doth dance
Ever and ever onward to the shore,
And breaks and is a thousand things at once,
And from the moment's multiplicity
Takes itself up again into a wave:

So all I feel and see
Breaks to the thousand-fold of Fate and Chance,
But from the moment's multiplicity
Takes itself up into the thought of thee.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Good-Night In War-Time

(To Alexander Smith)

The stars we saw arise are high above,
And yet our Evensong seems sung too soon.
Good-Night! I lay my hand-with such a love
As thou wert brother of my blood-upon
Thy shoulder, and methinks beneath the moon
Those sisters, Anglia and Caledon,
Lean towards each other. Aye, for Man is one;
We are a host ruled by one trumpet-call,
Where each, armed in his sort, makes as he may
The general motion. The well-tuned array
We see; yet to what victory in what wars
We see not; but like the revolving stars
Move on ourselves. The total march of all
Or men or stars God knows. Lord, lead us on!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Grass From The Battle-Field

Small sheaf
Of withered grass, that hast not yet revealed
Thy story, lo! I see thee once more green
And growing on the battle-field,
On that last day that ever thou didst grow!

I look down thro' thy blades and see between
A little lifted clover leaf
Stand like a cresset: and I know
If this were morn there should be seen
In its chalice such a gem
As decks no mortal diadem
Poised with a lapidary skill
Which merely living doth fulfil
And pass the exquisite strain of subtlest human will.
But in the sun it lifteth up
A dry unjewelled cup,
Therefore I see that day doth not begin;
And yet I know its beaming lord
Hath not yet passed the hill of noon,
Or thy lush blades
Would be more dry and thin,
And every blade a thirsty sword
Edged with the sharp desire that soon
Should draw the silver blood of all the shades.
I feel 't is summer. This whereon I stand
Is not a hill, nor, as I think, a vale;
The soil is soft upon the generous land,
Yet not as where the meeting streams take hand
Under the mossy mantle of the dale.
Such grass is for the meadow. If I try
To lift my heavy eyelids, as in dreams
A power is on them, and I know not why.
Thou art but part; the whole is unconfest:
Beholding thee I long to know the rest.
As one expands the bosom with a sigh,
I stretch my sight's horizon; but it seems,
Ere it can widen round the mystery,

To close in swift contraction, like the breast.
The air is held, as by a charm,
In an enforced silence, as like sound
As the dead man the living. 'T is so still,
I listen for it loud.
And when I force my eyes from thy sole place
And see a wider space,
Above, around,
In ragged glory like a torn
And golden-natured cloud,
O'er the dim field a living smoke is warm;
As in a city on a sabbath morn
The hot and summer sunshine goes abroad
Swathed in the murky air,
As if a god
Enrobed himself in common flesh and blood,
Our heavy flesh and blood,
And here and there
As unaware
Thro' the dull lagging limbs of mortal make,
That keep unequal time, the swifter essence brake.

But hark a bugle horn!
And, ere it ceases, such a shock
As if the plain were iron, and thereon
An iron hammer, heavy as a hill,
Swung by a monstrous force, in stroke came down
And deafened Heaven. I feel a swoond
Of every sense bestunned.
The rent ground seems to rock,
And all the definite vision, in such wise
As a dead giant borne on a swift river,
Seems sliding off for ever,
When my reviving eyes,
As one that holds a spirit by his eye
With set inexorable stare,
Fix thee: and so I catch, as by the hair,
The form of that great dream that else had drifted by.
I know not what that form may be;
The lock I hold is all I see,
And thou, small sheaf! art all the battle-field to me.

The wounded silence hath not time to heal
When see! upon thy sod
The round stroke of a charger's heel
With echoing thunder shod!
As the night-lightning shows
A mole upon a momentary face,
So, as that gnarled hoof strikes the indented place,
I see it, and it goes!
And I hear the squadrons trot thro' the heavy shell and shot,
And wheugh! but the grass is gory!
Forward ho! blow to blow, at the foe in they go,
And 'tis hieover heigho for glory!

The rushing storm is past,
But hark! upon its track the far drums beat,
And all the earth that at thy roots thou hast
Stirs, shakes, shocks, sounds, with quick strong tramp of feet
In time unlike the last.
Footing to tap of drum
The charging columns come;
And as they come their mighty martial sound
Blows on before them as a flaming fire
Blows in the wind; for, as old Mars in ire
Strode o'er the world encompassed in a cloud,
So the swift legion, o'er the quaking ground,
Strode in a noise of battle. Nigh and nigher
I heard it, like the long swell gathering loud
What-time a land-wind blowing from the main
Blows to the burst of fury and is o'er,
As if an ocean on one fatal shore
Fell in a moment whole, and threw its roar
Whole to the further sea: and as the strain
Of my strong sense cracked in the deafened ear,
And all the rushing tumult of the plain
Topped its great arch above me, a swift foot
Was struck between thy blades to the struck root,
And lifted: as into a sheath
A sudden sword is thrust and drawn again
Ere one can gasp a breath.

I was so near,
I saw the wrinkles of the leather grain,
The very cobbler's stitches, and the wear
By which I knew the wearer trod not straight;
An honest shoe it seemed that had been good
To mete the miles of any country lane,
Nor did one sign explain
'T was made to wade thro' blood.
My shoe, soft footstooled on this hearth, so far
From strife, hath such a patch, and as he past
His broken shoelace whipt his eager haste.

An honest shoe, good faith! that might have stood
Upon the threshold of a village inn
And welcomed all the world: or by the byre
And barn gone peaceful till the day closed in,
And, scraped at eve upon some homely gate,
Ah, Heaven! might sit beside a cottage fire
And touch the lazy log to softer flames than war.

Long, long, thou wert alone,
I thought thy days were done,
Flat as ignoble grass that lies out mown
By peaceful hands in June, I saw thee lie.
A worm crawled o'er thee, and the gossamer
That telegraphs Queen Mab to Oberon,
Lengthening his living message, passed thee by.
But rain fell: and thy strawed blades one by one
Began to stir and stir.

And as some moorland bird
Whom the still hunter's stalking steps have stirred,
When he stands mute, and nothing more is heard,
With slow succession and reluctant art
Grows upward from her bed,
Each move a muffled start,
And thro' the silent autumn covert red
Uplifts a throbbing head
That times the ambushed hunter's thudding heart;

Or as a snow-drop bending low
Beneath a flake of other snow
Thaws to its height when spring winds melt the skies,
And drip by drip doth mete a measured rise;

Or as the eyelids of a child's fair eyes
Lift from her lower lashes slow and pale
To arch the wonder of a fairy tale;
So thro' the western light
I saw thee slowly rearing to thy height.

Then when thou hadst regained thy state,
And while a meadow-spider with three lines
Enschemed thy three tall pillars green,
And made the enchanted air between
Mortal with shining signs,
(For the loud carrion-flies were many and late),

Betwixt thy blades and stems
There fell a hand,
Soft, small and white, and ringed with gold and gems;
And on those stones of price
I saw a proud device,
And words I could not understand.

Idly, one by one,
The knots of anguish came undone,
The fingers stretched as from a cramp of woe,
And sweet and slow
Moved to gracious shapes of rest,
Like a curl of soft pale hair
Drying in the sun.
And then they spread,
And sought a wonted greeting in the air,
And strayed
Between thy blades, and with each blade
As with meeting fingers played
And tresses long and fair.

Then again at placid length it lay,
Stretched as to kisses of accustomed lips;
And again in sudden strain
Sprang, falling clenched with pain,
Till the knuckles white,
Thro' the evening gray,
Whitened and whitened as the snowy tips
Of far hills glimmer thro' the night.
But who shall tell that agony
That beat thee, beat thee into bloody clay
Red as the sards and rubies of the rings;
As when a bird, fast by the fowler's net,
A moment doth forget
His fetters, and with desperate wings
A-sudden springs and falls,
And (while from happy clouds the skylark calls)
Still feebler springs
And fainter falls,
And still untamed upon the gory ground
With failing strength renews his deadly wound?
At length the struggle ceased; and my fixed eye
Perceived that every finger wan
Did quiver like the quivering fan
Of a dying butterfly,
Nor long I watched until
Even the humming in the air was still.
Then I gazed and gazed,
Nor once my aching eyeballs raised
Till a poor bird that had a meadow nest
Came down, and like a shadow ran
Among the shadowy grass.
I followed with mine eyes; and with a strain
Pursued her, till six cubits' length beyond
Thy central sheaf, I found
A sight I could not pass.
The hacked and haggard head
Of a huge war-horse dead.
The evening haze hung o'er him like a breath,
And still in death
He stretched drawn lips of rage that grinned in vain;
A sparrow chirped upon
His wound, and in his dying slaver fed,

Or picked those teeth of stone
That bit with lifeless jaws the purple tongue of pain.

But I remembered that dead hand
I left to trace the childless lark,
And back o'er those six cubits of grass-land,
Blade by blade, and stalk by stalk,
As one doth walk
Who, mindful, counts by dark
Along the garden palings to the gate,
I felt along the vision to where late
There lay that dead hand white;
But now methought that there was something more
Than when I looked before,
And what was more was sweeter than the rest;
As when upon the moony half of night
Aurora lays a living light,
Softer than moonshine, yet more bright.
And as I looked I was aware
Another hand was on the hand,
A smaller hand, more fair
But not more white, as is the warm delight
That curves and curls and coyly glows
About the blushing heart of the white rose
More fair but not more white
Than those broad beauties that expand
And fall, and falling blanch the morning air.

Both hands lay motionless,
The living on the dead. But by and by
The living hand began to move and press
The cold dead flesh, and took its silent way
So often o'er the unrespectful clay,
In such long-drawn caress
Of pleading passion, such an ecstasy
Of supplicating touch, that as they lay
So like, so unlike, twined with the fond art
And all the dear delay
And dreadful patience of a desperate heart,
Methought that to the tenement

From which it lately went,
The naked life had come back, and did try
By every gate to enter. While I thought,
With sudden clutch of new intent
The living grasp had caught
The dead compliance. Slowly thro'
The dusky air she raised it, and aloft,
While all her fingers soft
And every starting vein
Tightened as in a rack of pain,
Held it one straining moment fixed and mute,
And let it go.
And with a thud upon the sod,
It fell like falling fruit.

Then there came a cry,
Tearless, bloodless, dry
Of every sap of sorrow but its own-
It had no likeness among living cries;
And to my heart my streaming blood was blown
As if before my eyes
A dead man sprang up dead, and dead fell down.
The carrion-hunting winds that prowl the wold,
Frenzied for prey, sweep in and bear it on,
Far, far and further thro' the shrieking cold,
And still the yelling pack devour it as they run.
And silence, like a want of air,
Was round me, and my sense burned low,
And darkness darkened; and the glow
Of the living hand being gone,
The dead hand showed like a pale stone
Full fathom five
Under a quiet bay.
But still my sight did dive
To reach it where it lay,
And still the night grew dark, and by degrees
The dead thing glimmered with a drownèd light,
As faces seem and sink in depths of darkening seas.
Then, while yet
My set eyes saw it, as the sage doth set
His glass to some dim glimpse afar

That palpitates from mote to star,
It was touched and hid;
Touched and hid, as when a deep sea-weed
Hides some white sea-sorrow. All
My sight uprose, and all my soul
(As one who presses at the pane
When a city show goes by),
Crowded into the fixed eye,
And filled the starting ball.
Nor filled in vain.
I began to feel
The air had something to reveal.
Beyond the blank indifference
Was underlined another sense,
Was rained a gracious influence;
And tho' the darkness was so deep,
I knew it was not wholly dead,
Nor empty, as we feel in sleep
That some one standeth by the bed.
I beheld, as who should look
In trance upon a sealèd book.
I perceived that in a place
The night was lighter, as the face
Of an Indian Queen when love
Draws back the dark blood from her sick
Pale cheek
Behind the sable curtain that doth not move.

No outer light was shed,
But as the mystery
Before my stronger will did slowly yield,
I saw, as in that dark hour before morn
When the shocks of harvest corn
Exhale about the midnight field
The wealth of yellow suns, and breathe a gentle day.
I saw the shape of a fair bended head,
And hair pale streaming long and low
Veiling the face I might not know,
And dabbling all the ground with sweet uncertain woe.
Much I questioned in my mind
Of her form and kind,

But my stern compelling eye
Brought no other answer from the air,
Nor did my rude hand dare
Profane that agony.
I watched apart
With such a sweet awe in my heart
As looks up dumb into the sky
When that goddess, lorn and lone,
Who slew grim winter like a polar bear,
And threw his immemorial white
Upon her granite throne,
Sits all unseen as Death,
Save for the loss of many a hidden star
And for the wintry mystery of her breath,
And at a far-sight that she sees,
Bowed by her great despair,
Bendeth her awful head upon her knees,
And all her wondrous hair
Dishevels golden down the northern night.
At length my weary gaze
Rents: and, haze in haze
Pervolving as in glad release,
I saw each separate shade
Slide from his place and fade,
And all the flowering dark did winter back
Into its undistinguished black.
So the sculptor doth in fancy make
His formèd image in the formless stone,
And while his spells compel,
Can see it there full well,
The ivory kernel in the ivory shell,
But shakes himself and all the god is gone.
Alas!
And have I seen thee but an hour?
And shalt thou never tell
Thy story, oh thou broken flower,
Thou midnight asphodel
Among the battle grass?

Too soon! too soon!
But while I bid thee stay,

Night, like a cloud, dissolves into the day,
And from the city clock I hear the stroke of noon.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

He Is Safe

'And it shall come to pass at eventide
There shall be light.' Lord, it hath come to pass.
As one day to the world so now to me
Thine advent. My dark eve is white as noon;
My year so sour and green is gold and red;
Mine eyes have seen Thy Goodness. All is done.

All things bespeak an end. I am come near
The crown o' this steep earth. My feet still stand
Cold in the western shadow, but my brow
Lives in the living light. The toil is o'er,
Surely 'He giveth His beloved Rest.'

I feel two worlds: one ends and one begins.
Methinks I dwell in both; being much here,
But more hereafter: even as when the nurse
Doth give the babe into the mother's arms,
And she who hath not quite resigned, and she
Who hath not all received, support in twain
The single burden; ne'ertheless the babe
Already tastes its mother. Lord, I come.
Thy signs are in me. 'He shall wipe away
All tears:' Thou see'st my tears are wiped away.
'There shall be no more pain:' Lord, it is done,
Here there is no more pain. 'The sun no more
Shall be their light by day:' even so, Lord,
I need no light of sun or moon! My heart
Is as a lamp of jasper, crystal-clear,
Dark when Thy light is out, but lit with Thee
The sun may be a suckling at this breast,
And milk a nobler glory. Lord, I know
Mine hour. This painful world, that was of thorns,
Is roses. Like a fragrance thro' my soul
I breathe a balm of slumber. Let me sleep.
Bring me my easy pillows, Margery.
I am asleep; this oak is soft: all things
Are rest: I sink as into bliss. O Lord,

Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

He Loves And He Rides Away

'Twas in that island summer where
They spin the morning gossamer,
And weave the evening mist,
That, underneath the hawthorn-tree,
I loved my love, and my love loved me,
And there we lay and kissed,
And saw the happy ships upon the yielding sea.

Soft my heart, and warm his wooing,
What we did seemed, while 'twas doing,
Beautiful and wise;
Wiser, fairer, more in tune,
Than all else in that sweet June,
And sinless as the skies
That warmed the willing earth thro' all the languid noon.

Ah that fatal spell!
Ere the evening fell
I fled away to hide my frightened face,
And cried that I was born,
And sobbed with love and scorn,
And in the darkness sought a darker place,
And blushed, and wept, and blushed, and dared not think of morn.

Day and night, day and night,
And I saw no light,
Night and day, night and day,
And in my woe I lay
And dreamed the dreams they dream who cannot sleep:
My speech was withered, and I could not pray;
My tears were frozen, and I could not weep.

I saw the hawthorn rise
Between me and the skies,
I felt the shadow was from pole to pole,

I felt the leaves were shed,
I felt the birds were dead,
And on the earth I snowed the winter of my soul.

Like to the hare wide eyed,
That with her throbbing side
Pressed to the rock awaits the coming cry,
In my despair I sate
And waited for my fate;
And as the hunted hare returns to die,
And with her latest breath
Regains her native heath,

So, when I heard the feet of destiny
Near and more near, and caught the yelp of death,
Toward the sounding sea,
Toward my hawthorn-tree,
Under the ignorant stars I darkly crept:
'There,' I said, 'they'll find me dead,
Lying within my maidenhead.'
And at my own unwonted voice, I wept;
And for my great heart-ache,
Within a little brake
I lay me weary down and weary slept,
Nor ever oped mine eyes till morn had left the lake.

Her morning bath was o'er,
And on the golden shore
She stood like Flora with her floral train,
And all her track was seen
Among the watery sheen,
That blushed, and wished, and blushing wished again,
And parted still, and closed, with pleasure that had been.

Oh the happy isle,
The universal smile
That met, as love meets love, the smile of day,
And touched and lit delight

Within the common light,
Till all the joy of life was ecstasy,
And morn's wild maids ran each her flowery way,
And shook her dripping locks o'er hill, and dale, and lea!
'At least,' I said, 'my tree is sear and blight,
My tree, my hawthorn-tree!'

With downcast eyes of fear
I drew me near and near,
Dazed with the dewy glory of the hour,
Till under-foot I see
A flower too dear to me:
I pause, and raise my full eyes from the flower,
And lo! my hawthorn-tree!

As a white-limbed may,
In some illumined bay,
Flings round her shining charms in starry rain,
And with her body bright
Dazzles the waters white,
That fall from her fair form, and flee in vain,
Dyed with the dear unutterable sight,
And circle out her beauty thro' the circling main,

So my hawthorn-tree
Stood and seemed to me
The very face that smiled the summer smile:
All lesser light-bearers
Did light their lamps at hers-
She lit her own at heaven's, and looked the while
A purer sweeter sun,
Whence beauty was begun,
And blossomed from her blossoms thro' the blossoming isle.
Then I took heart, and as I looked upon
Her unstained white, I said, 'I am not wholly vile.'

Thus my hawthorn-tree
Was my witness unto me,

And so I answered my impleading sin
Till blossom-time was o'er,
And with the autumn roar
Mine unrebuked accuser entered in,
And I fell down convinced, and strove with shame no more.

Some time after came to me,
An image of the hawthorn-tree,
And bore the old sweet witness; and I heard,
And from among the dead
I lifted up my head,
As one lifts up to hear a little bird,
And finds the night is past and all the east is red.

Small and fair, choice and rare,
Snowy pale with moonlight hair,
My little one blossoms and springs!
Like joy with woe singing to it,
Like love with sorrow to woo it,
So my witty one so my pretty one sings!
And I see the white hawthorn-tree and the bright summer bird singing thro' it,
And my heart is prouder than kings!

While I look on her I seem
Once again in the sweet dream
Of that enchanted day,
When, underneath the hawthorn-tree,
I loved my love and my love loved me:
And lost in love we lay,
And saw the happy ships upon the yielding sea.

While I look on her I seem
Once again in that bright dream,
Beautiful and wise:
Wiser, fairer, more in tune,
Than all else in that sweet June,
And sinless as the skies
That warmed the willing earth thro' all the languid noon.

Like my hawthorn-tree,
She stands and seems to me
The very face that smiles the summer smile:
All lesser light-bearers
Do light their lamps at hers-
She lights her own at heaven's, and looks the while
A sweeter purer sun,
Whence beauty is begun,
To blossom from that blossom thro' the blossoming isle.

Thou shalt not leave me, child!
Come weather fierce or mild,
My babe, my blossom! thou shalt never leave me!
Life shall never wean us,
Nor death shall e'er have room to come between us,
And time may grieve me but shall ne'er bereave me,
Nor see us more apart than he hath seen us.

For I will fall with thee,
As a bird from the tree
Falls with a butterfly petal whitely shed,
And falling-thou and I-
I shall not dread to die,
But like a child I'll take my flower to bed.
And when the long cold death-night hath gone by,
In the great darkness of the sepulchre
I'll feel and find thee near,
My babe, my white white blossom!
And when the trumpet cries,
I shall not fear to rise,
But wear thee o'er the spot upon my bosom,
And come out of my grave and bear the awful eyes.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Home In War-Time

SHE turn'd the fair page with her fairer hand—
More fair and frail than it was wont to be—
O'er each remember'd thing he lov'd to see
She linger'd, and as with a fairy's wand
Enchanted it to order. Oft she fann'd
New motes into the sun; and as a bee
Sings thro' a brake of bells, so murmur'd she,
And so her patient love did understand
The reliquary room. Upon the sill
She fed his favorite bird. "Ah, Robin, sing!
He loves thee." Then she touches a sweet string
Of soft recall, and towards the Eastern hill
Smiles all her soul—for him who cannot hear
The raven croaking at his carrion ear.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Home, Wounded

Wheel me into the sunshine,
Wheel me into the shadow,
There must be leaves on the woodbine,
Is the king-cup crowned in the meadow?

Wheel me down to the meadow,
Down to the little river,
In sun or in shadow
I shall not dazzle or shiver,
I shall be happy anywhere,
Every breath of the morning air
Makes me throb and quiver.

Stay wherever you will,
By the mount or under the hill,
Or down by the little river:
Stay as long as you please,
Give me only a bud from the trees,
Or a blade of grass in morning dew,
Or a cloudy violet clearing to blue,
I could look on it for ever.

Wheel, wheel thro' the sunshine,
Wheel, wheel thro' the shadow;
There must be odours round the pine,
There must be balm of breathing kine.
Somewhere down in the meadow.
Must I choose? Then anchor me there
Beyond the beckoning poplars, where
The larch is snooding her flowery hair
With wreaths of morning shadow.

Among the thicket hazels of the brake
Perchance some nightingale doth shake
His feathers, and the air is full of song;

In those old days when I was young and strong,
He used to sing on yonder garden tree,
Beside the nursery.
Ah. I remember how I loved to wake,
And find him singing on the self-same bough
(I know it even now)
Where, since the flit of bat,
In ceaseless voice he sat,
Trying the spring night over, like a tune,
Beneath the vernal moon;
And while I listed long,
Day rose, and still he sang,
And all his stanchless song,
As something falling unaware,
Fell out of the tall trees he sang among,
Fell ringing down the ringing morn, and rang-
Rang like a golden jewel down a golden stair.

Is it too early? I hope not.
But wheel me to the ancient oak,
On this side of the meadow;
Let me hear the raven's croak
Loosened to an amorous note
In the hollow shadow.
Let me see the winter snake
Thawing all his frozen rings
On the bank where the wren sings.
Let me hear the little bell,
Where the red-wing, top-mast high,
Looks toward the northern sky,
And jangles his farewell.
Let us rest by the ancient oak,
And see his net of shadow,
His net of barren shadow,
Like those wrestlers' nets of old,
Hold the winter dead and cold,
Hoary winter, white and cold,
While all is green in the meadow.

And when you've rested, brother mine,

Take me over the meadow;
Take me along the level crown
Of the bare and silent down,
And stop by the ruined tower.
On its green scarp, by and by,
I shall smell the flowering thyme,
On its wall the wall-flower.

In the tower there used to be
A solitary tree.
Take me there, for the dear sake
Of those old days wherein I loved to lie
And pull the melilote,
And look across the valley to the sky,
And hear the joy that filled the warm wide hour
Bubble from the thrush's throat,
As into a shining mere
Rills some rillet trebling clear,
And speaks the silent silver of the lake.
There mid cloistering tree-roots, year by year,
The hen-thrush sat, and he, her lief and dear,
Among the boughs did make
A ceaseless music of her married time,
And all the ancient stones grew sweet to hear,
And answered him in the unspoken rhyme
Of gracious forms most musical
That tremble on the wall
And trim its age with airy fantasies
That flicker in the sun, and hardly seem
As if to be beheld were all,
And only to our eyes
They rise and all,
And fall and rise,
Sink down like silence, or a-sudden stream
As wind-blown on the wind as streams a wedding-chime.

But you are wheeling me while I dream,
And we've almost reached the meadow!
You may wheel me fast thro' the sunshine,
You may wheel me fast thro' the shadow,

But wheel me slowly, brother mine,
Thro' the green of the sappy meadow;
For the sun, these days have been so fine,
Must have touched it over with celandine,
And the southern hawthorn, I divine,
Sheds a muffled shadow.

There blows
The first primrose,
Under the bare bank roses:
There is but one,
And the bank is brown,
But soon the children will come down,
The ringing children come singing down,
To pick their Easter posies,
And they'll spy it out, my beautiful,
Among the bare brier-roses;
And when I sit here again alone,
The bare brown bank will be blind and dull,
Alas for Easter posies!
But when the din is over and gone,
Like an eye that opens after pain,
I shall see my pale flower shining again;
Like a fair star after a gust of rain
I shall see my pale flower shining again;
Like a glow-worm after the rolling wain
Hath shaken darkness down the lane
I shall see my pale flower shining again;
And it will blow here for two months more,
And it will blow here again next year,
And the year past that, and the year beyond;
And thro' all the years till my years are o'er
I shall always find it here.
Shining across from the bank above,
Shining up from the pond below,
Ere a water-fly wimple the silent pond,
Or the first green weed appear.
And I shall sit here under the tree,
And as each slow bud uncloses,
I shall see it brighten and brighten to me,
From among the leafing brier-roses,

The leaning leafing roses,
As at eve the leafing shadows grow,
And the star of light and love
Draweth near o'er her airy glades,
Draweth near thro' her heavenly shades,
As a maid thro' a myrtle grove.
And the flowers will multiply,
As the stars come blossoming over the sky,
The bank will blossom, the waters blow,
Till the singing children hitherward hie
To gather May-day posies;
And the bank will be bare wherever they go,
As dawn, the primrose-girl, goes by,
And alas for heaven's primroses!

Blare the trumpet, and boom the gun,
But, oh, to sit here thus in the sun,
To sit here, feeling my work is done,
While the sands of life so golden run,
And I watch the children's posies,
And my idle heart is whispering
'Bring whatever the years may bring,
The flowers will blossom, the birds will sing,
And there'll always be primroses.'

Looking before me here in the sun,
I see the Aprils one after one,
Primrosed Aprils one by one,
Primrosed Aprils on and on,
Till the floating prospect closes
In golden glimmers that rise and rise,
And perhaps are gleams of Paradise,
And perhaps-too far for mortal eyes-
New years of fresh primroses,
Years of earth's primroses,
Springs to be, and springs for me
Of distant dim primroses.

My soul lies out like a basking hound,

A hound that dreams and dozes;
Along my life my length I lay,
I fill to-morrow and yesterday,
I am warm with the suns that have long since set,
I am warm with the summers that are not yet,
And like one who dreams and dozes
Softly afloat on a sunny sea,
Two worlds are whispering over me,
And there blows a wind of roses
From the backward shore to the shore before,
From the shore before to the backward shore,
And like two clouds that meet and pour
Each thro' each, till core in core
A single self reposes,
The nevermore with the evermore
Above me mingles and closes;
As my soul lies out like the basking hound,
And wherever it lies seems happy ground,
And when, awakened by some sweet sound,
A dreamy eye uncloses,
I see a blooming world around,
And I lie amid primroses-
Years of sweet primroses,
Springs of fresh primroses,
Springs to be, and springs for me
Of distant dim primroses.

Oh to lie a-dream, a-dream,
To feel I may dream and to know you deem
My work is done for ever,
And the palpitating fever
That gains and loses, loses and gains,
And beats the hurrying blood on the brunt of a thousand pains
Cooled at once by that blood-let
Upon the parapet;
And all the tedious taskèd toil of the difficult long endeavour
Solved and quit by no more fine
Than these limbs of mine,
Spanned and measured once for all
By that right hand I lost,
Bought up at so light a cost

As one bloody fall
On the soldier's bed,
And three days on the ruined wall
Among the thirstless dead.
Oh to think my name is crost
From duty's muster-roll;
That I may slumber tho' the clarion call,
And live the joy of an embodied soul
Free as a liberated ghost.
Oh to feel a life of deed
Was emptied out to feed
That fire of pain that burned so brief a while-
That fire from which I come, as the dead come
Forth from the irreparable tomb,
Or as a martyr on his funeral pile
Heaps up the burdens other men do bear
Thro' years of segregated care,
And takes the total load
Upon his shoulders broad,
And steps from earth to God.

Oh to think, thro' good or ill,
Whatever I am you'll love me still;
Oh to think, tho' dull I be,
You that are so grand and free,
You that are so bright and gay,
Will pause to hear me when I will,
As tho' my head were gray;
And tho' there's little I can say,
Each will look kind with honour while he hears.
And to your loving ears
My thoughts will halt with honourable scars,
And when my dark voice stumbles with the weight
Of what it doth relate
(Like that blind comrade-blinded in the wars-
Who bore the one-eyed brother that was lame),
You'll remember 'tis the same
That cried 'Follow me,'
Upon a summer's day;
And I shall understand with unshed tears
This great reverence that I see,

And bless the day-and Thee,
Lord God of victory!

And she,
Perhaps oh even she
May look as she looked when I knew her
In those old days of childish sooth,
Ere my boyhood dared to woo her.
I will not seek nor sue her,
For I'm neither fonder nor truer
Than when she slighted my love-lorn youth,
My giftless, graceless, guinealess truth,
And I only lived to rue her.
But I'll never love another,
And, in spite of her lovers and lands,
She shall love me yet, my brother!
As a child that holds by his mother,
While his mother speaks his praises,
Holds with eager hands,
And ruddy and silent stands
In the ruddy and silent daisies,
And hears her bless her boy,
And lifts a wondering joy,
So I'll not seek nor sue her,
But I'll leave my glory to woo her,
And I'll stand like a child beside,
And from behind the purple pride
I'll lift my eyes unto her,
And I shall not be denied.
And you will love her, brother dear,
And perhaps next year you'll bring me here
All thro' the balmy April-tide,
And she will trip like spring by my side,
And be all the birds to my ear.
And here all three we'll sit in the sun,
And see the Aprils one by one,
Primrosed Aprils on and on,
Till the floating prospect closes
In golden glimmers that rise and rise,
And perhaps, are gleams of Paradise,
And perhaps, too far for mortal eyes,

New springs of fresh primroses,
Springs of earth's primroses,
Springs to be and springs for me,
Of distant dim primroses.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

How's My Boy?

"HO, Sailor of the sea!
How's my boy—my boy?"
"What's your boy's name, good wife,
And in what good ship sail'd he?"
"My boy John— He that went to sea—
What care I for the ship, sailor?
My boy's my boy to me.
"You come back from sea,
And not know my John?
I might as well have ask'd some landsman
Yonder down in the town.
There 's not an ass in all the parish
But he knows my John.

"How's my boy—my boy?
And unless you let me know
I'll swear you are no sailor,
Blue jacket or no,
Brass buttons or no, sailor,
Anchor and crown or no!
Sure his ship was the 'Jolly Briton'"—
"Speak low, woman, speak low!"
"And why should I speak low, sailor,
About my own boy John?
If I was loud as I am proud
I'd sing him over the town!
Why should I speak low, sailor?"
"That good ship went down."

"How's my boy—my boy?
What care I for the ship, sailor?
I was never aboard her.
Be she afloat or be she aground,
Sinking or swimming, I'll be bound,
Her owners can afford her!
I say, how's my John?"
"Every man on board went down,
Every man aboard her."
"How's my boy—my boy?"

What care I for the men, sailor?
I'm not their mother—
How's my boy—my boy?
Tell me of him and no other!
How 's my boy—my boy?"

Sydney Thompson Dobell

I: In A Great House By The Sea I Sat

In a great house by the wide Sea I sat,
And down slow fleets and waves that never cease
Looked back to the first keels of War and Peace;
I saw the Ark, what time the shoreless flat
Began to rock to rising Ararat;
Or Argo, surging home, with templed Greece
To leeward, while, mast-high, the lurching fleece
Swung morn from deep to deep. Then in a plat
Of tamarisk a bird called me. When again
My soul looked forth I ponder'd not the main
Of waters but of time; and from our fast
Sure Now, with Pagan joy, beheld the pain
Of tossing heroes on the triremed Past
Obtest the festive Gods and silent stars in vain.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Ii: And As I Mused On All We Call Our Own

And as I mused on all we call our own,
And (in the words their passionate hope had taught
Expressing this late world for which they fought
And prayed) said, lifting up my head to the sun,
'Ne quibus diis immortalibus,'-one
Ran with fear's feet, and lo! a voice distraught
'The Prince' and 'Dead.' And at the sound methought
The bulwark of my great house thunder'd down.
And, for an instant,-as some spell were sapping
All place-the hilly billows and billowy hills
Heaved through my breast the lapping wave that kills
The heart; around me the floor rises and falls
And jabbling stones of the unsteady walls
Ebb and flow together, lapping, lapping.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

In War-Time A Psalm Of The Heart

Scourge us as Thou wilt, oh Lord God of Hosts;
Deal with us, Lord, according to our transgressions;
But give us Victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Lift Thy wrath up from the day of battle,
And set it on the weight of other days!
Draw Thy strength from us for many days,
So Thou be with us on the day of battle,
And give us victory.
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Let the strong arm be as the flag o' the river,
The withered flag that flappeth o'er the river,
When all the flood is dried out of the river;

Let the brave heart be as a drunkard's bosom,
When the thick fume is frozen in the bosom,
And the bare sin lies shivering in the bosom;

Let the bold eye be sick and crazed with midnight,
Strained and cracked with aching days of midnight,
Swarmed and foul with creeping shapes of midnight;

So Thou return upon the day of battle,
So we be strong upon the day of battle,
Be drunk with Thee upon the day of battle,
So Thou shine o'er us in the day of battle,
Shine in the faces of our enemies,
Hot in the faces of our enemies,
Hot o'er the battle and the victory.
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!

Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Shame us not, oh Lord, before the wicked!
In our hidden places let Thy wrath
Afflict us; in the secret of our sin
Convince us; be the bones within our flesh
Marrowed with fire, and all the strings of life
Strung to the twang of torture; let the stench
Of our own strength torment us; the desire
Of our own glorious image in the sea
Consume us; shake the darkness like a tree,
And fill the night with mischiefs,-blights and dwales,
Weevils, and rots, and cankers! But, oh Lord,
Humble us not upon the day of battle,
Hide not Thy face upon the day of battle,
Let it shine o'er us on the day of battle,
Shine in the faces of our enemies,
Hot in the faces of our enemies,
Hot o'er the battle and the victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Tho' Thou shouldst glorify us above measure,
Yet will we not forget that Thou art God!
Honour our land, oh Lord! honour our land!

Be Thou her armour in the day of battle,
Whereon the sword of man shall strike in vain!
For Thou canst find the place and leave no scar,
Sting of bee, nor fairy-spot nor mole,
Yet kill the germ within the core of life.

Oh lead her in the glory of her beauty,
So that the nations wonder at her beauty!
For Thou canst take her beauty by the heart
And throw the spout of sorrow from the fountain,
The flood of sorrow thro' the veins of joy.

Let her soul look out of her eyes of glory,
Lighten, oh Lord, from awful eyes of glory!
For Thou canst touch the soul upon its throne,
The fortified soul upon its guarded throne,
Nor scorch the sweet air of the populous splendour
That comes and goes about a leprous king.
Therefore fear not to bless us, oh Lord God!
And give us victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Sight of home, if Thou wilt; kiss of love,
If Thou wilt; children at the knees of peace,
If Thou wilt; parents weeping in the door
Of welcome, if Thou wilt; but victory,
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Pangs if Thou wilt, oh Lord! Death if Thou wilt!
Labour and famine, frost and fire and storm,
Silent plague, and hurricane of battle,
The field-grave, and the wolf-grave, and the sea!
But victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Consider, Lord, the oppressions of the oppressor,
And give us victory!
The tyrant sitteth on his golden throne
In palaces of silver, to his gates
The meeting winds blow good from all the world.
Who hath undone the mountain where he locks
His treasure? In the armoury of hell
Which engine is not his? His name infects
The air of every zone, and to each tongue
From Hecla to the Ganges adds a word
That kills all terms of pride. His servants sit
In empires round his empire; and outspread
As land beneath the water, oh, my God,

His kingdoms bear the half of all Thy stars!
Who hath out-told his princes? Who hath summed
His captains? From the number of his hosts
He should forget a nation and not lack!
Therefore, oh Lord God, give us victory!

The serf is in his hut; the unsacred sire
Who can beget no honour. Lo his mate
Dim thro' the reeking garlic-she whose womb
Doth shape his ignorant shame, and whose young slave
In some far field thickens a knouted hide
For baser generations. Their dull eyes
Are choked with feudal welfare; their rank limbs
Steam in the sty of plenty; their rude tongues,
That fill the belly from the common trough,
Discharge in gobbets of as gross a speech
That other maw the heart. Nor doth the boor
Refuse his owner's chattel tho' she breed
The rich man's increase, nor doth she disdain
The joyless usage of such limbs as toil
Yoked with the nobler ox, and take as mute
A beast's infliction; at her stolid side
The girl that shall be such a thing as she,
Suckles the babe she would not, with the milk
A bondmaid owes her master. Lord, Thou seest!
Therefore, oh Lord God, give us victory!

The captive straineth at the dungeon-grate.
Behold, oh Lord, the secret of the rock,
The dungeon, and the captive, and the chain!
Tho' it be hidden under forest leaves,
Tho' it be on the mountains among clouds,
Tho' they point to it as a crag o' the hill,
And say concerning it that the wind wailleth,
Thou knowest the inner secret and the sin!
I see his white face at the dungeon bars,
As snow between the bars of winter trees.
He sinketh down upon the dungeon stones,
His white face making light within the dungeon,
The claspèd whiteness of his praying hands

Flickering a little light within the dungeon.
And thro' the darkness, thro' the cavern darkness,
Like to a runnel in a savage wood,
Sweet thro' the horror of the hollow dark
He sings the song of home in the strange land.

How long, oh Lord of thunder? Victory!
Lord God of vengeance, give us victory!
Victory, victory! oh, Lord, victory!
Oh, Lord, victory! Lord, Lord, victory!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

In War-Time: A Prayer Of The Understanding

Lo, this is night. Hast thou, oh sun, refused
Thy countenance, or is thy golden arm
Shortened, or from thy shining place in heaven
Art thou put down and lost? Neither hast thou
Refused thy constant face, nor is thine arm
Shortened, nor from thy principality
Art thou deposed, oh sun. Ours, ours, the sin,
The sorrow. From thy steadfast noon we turned
Into the eastern shade-and this is night.

Yet so revolves the axle of the world,
And by that brief aversion wheels us round
To morn, and rolls us on the larger paths
Of annual duty. Thou observant moon,
That dancest round the seasonable earth
As David round the ark, but half thy ring
In process, yet, complete, the circular whole
Promotes thee, and expedes thy right advance,
And all thy great desire of summer signs.
And thou, oh sun, our centre, who thyself
Art satellite, and, conscious of the far
Archelion, in obedience of free will
And native duty, as the good man walks
Among the children's faces, with thine house
About thee, least and greatest, first and last,
Makest of the blue eternal holiday
Thy glad perambulation; and thou, far
Archelion, feudatory still, of one
Not sovran nor in fee of paramount power;
Moons round your worlds, worlds round your suns, suns round
Such satraps as in orderly degree
Confess a lordlier regent and pervade
A vaster cycle-ye, so moved, commoved,
Revolving and convolving, turn the heavens
Upon the pivot of that summery star,
Centre of all we know: and thou, oh star,
Centre of all we know, chief crown of crowns,
Who art the one in all, the all in one,

And seest the ordered whole-nought uninvolved
But all involved to one direct result
Of multiform volution-in one pomp,
One power, one tune, one time, upon one path
Move with thee moving, Thou, amid thy host
Marchest-ah whither?
--Oh God, before Whom
We marshal thus Thy legioned works to take
The secret of Thy counsel, and array
Congress and progress, and, with multitude
As conquerors and to conquer, in consent
Of universal law, approach Thy bound,
Thine immemorial bound, and at Thy face
Heaven and earth flee away; oh Thou Lord God,
Whether oh absolute existence, Thou,
The Maker, makest, and this fair we see
Be but the mote and dust of that unseen
Unsought unsearchable; or whether Thou
Whose goings forth are from of old, around
Thy going in mere effluence without care
Breathest creation out into the cold
Beyond Thee, and, within Thine ambient breath,
So walkest everlasting as we walk
The unportioned snows; or whether, meditating
Eternity, self-centred, self-fulfilled,
Self-continent, Thou thinkest and we live,
A little while forgettest and we fade,
Rememberest and we are, and this bright vision
Wherein we move, nay all our total sum
And story, be to Thee as to a man
When in the drop and rising of a lid
Lo the swift rack and fashion of a dream,
No more; oh Thou inscrutable, whose ways
Are not as ours, whose form we know not, voice
Hear not, true work behold not, mystery
Conceive not, who-as thunder shakes the world
And rings a silver bell-hast sometime moved
The tongue of man, but in Thy proper speech
Wearest a human language on a word
As limpets on a rock, who, as Eternal,
Omnipotent, Infinite, Allwise,
In measure of Thine operation hast

No prime or term, in subject as in scheme
No final end, in eidol as in act
Nought but the perfect God; oh Thou Supreme,
Inaudible, Invisible, Unknown,
Thy will be done.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

In War-Time: An Aspiration Of The Spirit

Lord Jesus, as a little child,
Upon some high ascension day
When a great people goes to pay
Allegiance, and the tumult wild

Roars by its thousand streets, and fills
The billowy nation on the plain,
As roar into the heaving main
A thousand torrents from the hills,

Caught in the current of the throng
Is drawn beneath the closing crowd,
And, drowning in the human flood,
Is whirled in its dark depths along;

And low under the ruthless feet,
Or high as to the awful knees
Of giants that he partly sees,
Blinded with fear and faint with heat,

Mindless of all but what doth seem,
And shut out from the upper light,
Maddens within a monstrous night
Of limbs that crush him like a dream;

And when his strength no more can stand,
And while he sinks in his last swoond,
Is lifted from the deadly ground,
And led by a resistless hand,

And thro' the opening agony
Goes on and knows not where, beside
The mastery of his guardian guide,

Goes on, and knows not where nor why,

Till, when the sky no more is hid,
Between the rocking heads he sees
A mount that rises by degrees
Above them like a pyramid,

And on the summit of the mount
A vacant throne, and round the throne
Bright-vestured princes, zone by zone,
In circles that he cannot count.

And feels, at length, a slanting way,
And labours by his guardian good
Till forth, as from a lessening wood,
They step into the dazzling day,

And from the mount he sees below
The maivel of the marshalled plain,
And what was tumult is a reign,
And, as he climbs, the princes know

His guide, and fall about his feet,
Before his face the courtiers fall,
And lo! it is the Lord of all,
And on his throne he takes his seat;

And, while strong fears transfix the boy,
The mighty people far and near
Throw up upon the eye and ear
The flash and thunder of their joy,

And, round the royal flag unfurled,
In sequent love and circling awe
The legions lead their living law,

And what was Chaos is a World:

So, Lord, Thou seest this mortal me,
Deep in Titanic days that press
Incessant from unknown access
To issues that I cannot see.

Caught in the current stern and strong
I sink beneath the closing crowd,
And drowning in the awful flood
Am whirled in its dark depths along,

Struggling with shows so thronged and thrust
On these wide eyes which bruise and burn,
And flash with half-seen sights, or turn
To that worse darkness thick with dust,

That mindful of but what doth seem,
And hopeless of the upper light,
I madden in a monstrous night
Of shapes that crush me like a dream.

Then when my strength no more can stand,
And while I sink in my last swoon,
Lo! I am lifted from the ground,
And led by a resistless hand;

And thro' the opening agony
Go on and know not where, beside
The mastery of my guardian guide,
Go on, and know not where or why;

Nor, tho' I cannot see Thy brow,
Distrust the hand I feel so dear,
Nor question how Thou wert so near,

Nor ask Thee whither goest Thou,

Nor whence Thy footsteps first began.
Whence, Lord, Thou knowest: whither, Lord,
Thou knowest: how Thou knowest. Oh Word
That can be touched, oh Spoken Man,

Enough, enough, if Thou wilt lead,
To know Thou knowest: enough to know
That darkling at Thy side I go,
And this strong hand is Thine indeed.

Yet by that side, unspent, untrod,
Oh let me, clinging still to Thee,
Between the swaying wonders see
The throne upon the mount of God.

And-tho' they close before mine eye,
And all my course is choked and shut-
Feel Time grow steeper under foot,
And know the final height is nigh.

And as one sees, thro' cambered straits
Of forests, on his forward way,
Horizons green of coloured day,
Oh let me thro' the crowding Fates

Behold the light of skies unseen,
Till on that sudden Capitol
I step forth to the sight of all
That is, and shall be, and hath been,

And Thou, O King, shalt take Thine own
Triumphant; and, Thy place fulfilled,
The flaw of Nature shall be healed,

And joyous round Thy central throne

I see the vocal ages roll,
And all the human universe
Like some great symphony rehearse
The order of its perfect whole;

And seek in vain where once I fell,
Nor know the anarchy I knew
In those congenial motions due
Of this great work where all is well,

And smile, with dazzled wisdom dumb,
-Remembering all I said and sung-
That man asks more of mortal tongue
Than skill to say, 'Thy kingdom come.'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Isabel

In the most early morn
I rise from a damp pillow, tempest-tost,
To seek the sun with silent gaze forlorn,
And mourn for thee, my lost
Isabel.

That early hour I meet
The daily vigil of my life to keep,
Because there are no other lights so sweet,
Or shades so long and deep,
Isabel.

And best I think of thee
Beside the duskest shade and brightest sun,
Whose mystic lot in life it was to be
Outshone, outwept by none,
Isabel.

Men said that thou wert fair:
There is no brightness in the heaven above,
There is no balm upon the summer air
Like thy warm love,
Isabel.

Men saw that thou wert bright:
There is no wildness in the winds that blow,
There is no darkness in the winter's night
Like thy dark woe,
Isabel.

And yet thy path did miss
Men's footsteps: in their haunts thou hadst no joy;
The thoughts of other worlds were thine in this;
In thy sweet piety, and in thy bliss
And grief, for life too coy,
Isabel.

And so my heart's despair

Looks for thee ere the firstling smoke hath curled;
While the rapt earth is at her morning pray'r,
Ere yet she putteth on her workday air
And robes her for the world,
Isabel.

When the sun-burst is o'er,
My lonely way about the world I take,
Doing and saying much, and feeling more,
And all things for thy sake,
Isabel.

But never once I dare
To see thine image till the day be new,
And lip hath sullied not the unbreathed air,
And waking eyes are few,
Isabel.

Then that lost form appears
Which was a joy to few on earth but me:
In the young light I see thy guileless glee,
In the deep dews thy tears,
Isabel.

So with Promethean moan
In widowhood renewed I learn to grieve;
Blest with one only thought-that I alone
Can fade: that thou thro' years shalt still shine on
In beauty, as in beauty art thou gone,
Thou morn that knew no eve,
Isabel.

In beauty art thou gone;
As some bright meteor gleams across the night,
Gazed on by all, but understood by none,
And dying by its own excess of light,
Isabel.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Jerusalem

If God so raise the Dead, shall He pass by
The Captive and the immemorable chain?
Fud(ce)a capta!-taken but not slain-
And cursèd not to die-ah, not to die?
Then come out of thine ages, thou art free!
Live but one Greek in old Thermopylæ,
And Greece is saved! Dark stands the Northern Fate
At Europe's open door; upon her nod
To pass that breach a hundred nations wait.
What! shall we meet her with the bayonet?
As the West sets the Sun 'twixt sea and sky
In that Great Gate, Immortal! let us set
Thy doom; quit Destiny with Destiny,
Meet Fate by Fate, and fill the gap with God.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

John Bohun Martin

Keeping his word, the promised Roman kept
Enough of worded breath to live till now.
Our Regulus was free of plighted vow
Or tacit debt: skies fell, seas leapt, storms swept;
Death yawned: with a mere step he might have stepped
To life. But the House-master would know how
To do the master's honours; and did know,
And did them to the hour of rest, and slept
The last of all his house. Oh, thou heart's-core
Of Truth, how will the nations sentence thee?
Hark! as loud Europe cries 'Could man do more?'
Great England lifts her head from her distress,
And answers 'But could Englishman do less?'
Ah England! goddess of the years to be!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Keith Of Ravelston

The murmur of the mourning ghost
That keeps the shadowy kine,
'O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The merry path that leads
Down the golden morning hill,
And thro' the silver meads;

Ravelston, Ravelston,
The stile beneath the tree,
The maid that kept her mother's kine,
The song that sang she!

She sang her song, she kept her kine,
She sat beneath the thorn,
When Andrew Keith of Ravelston
Rode thro' the Monday morn.

His henchman sing, his hawk-bells ring,
His belted jewels shine;
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Year after year, where Andrew came,
Comes evening down the glade,
And still there sits a moonshine ghost
Where sat the sunshine maid.

Her misty hair is faint and fair,
She keeps the shadowy kine;
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

I lay my hand upon the stile,
The stile is lone and cold,
The burnie that goes babbling by
Says naught that can be told.

Yet, stranger! here, from year to year,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Step out three steps, where Andrew stood -
Why blanch thy cheeks for fear?
The ancient stile is not alone,
'Tis not the burn I hear!

She makes her immemorial moan,
She keeps her shadowy kine;
O Keith of Ravelston,
The sorrows of thy line!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Lady Constance

My Love, my Lord,
I think the toil of glorious day is done.
I see thee leaning on thy jewelled sword,
And a light-hearted child of France
Is dancing to thee in the sun,
And thus he carols in his dance.

'Oh, a gallant sans peur
Is the merry chasseur,
With his fanfaron horn and his rifle ping-pang!
And his grand havresack
Of gold on his back,
His pistol cric-crac!
And his sword cling-clang!

Oh, to see him blithe and gay
From some hot and bloody day,
Come to dance the night away till the bugle blows 'au rang,'
With a wheel and a whirl
And a wheeling waltzing girl,
And his bow, 'place aux dames!' and his oath 'feu et sang!'
And his hop and his fling
Till his gold and silver ring
To the clatter and the clash of his sword cling-clang!

But hark,
Thro' the dark,
Up goes the well-known shout!
The drums beat the turn out!
Cut short your coarting, Monsieur l' Amant!
Saddle! mount! march! trot!
Down comes the storm of shot,
The foe is at the charge! En avant!

His jolly havresack

Of gold is on his back,
Hear his pistol cric-crac! hear his rifle ping-pang!

Vive l' Empereur!
And where's the Chasseur?

He's in
Among the din
Steel to steel cling-clang!

And thou within the doorway of thy tent
Leanest at ease with careless brow unbent,
Watching the dancer in as pleased a dream
As if he were a gnat i' the evening gleam,
And thou and I were sitting side by side
Within the happy bower
Where oft at this same hour
We watched them the sweet year I was a bride.

My Love, my Lord,
Leaning so grandly on thy jewelled sword,
Is there no thought of home to whisper thee,
None can relieve the weary guard I keep,
None wave the flag of breathing truce for me,
Nor sound the hours to slumber or to weep?
Once in a moon the bugle breaks thy rest,
I count my days by trumpets and alarms:
Thou liest down in thy warcloak and art blest,
While I, who cannot sleep but in thine arms,
Wage night and day fresh fields unknown to fame,
Arm, marshal, march, charge, fight, fall, faint, and die,
Know all a soldier can endure but shame,
And every chance of warfare but to fly.
I do not murmur at my destiny:
It can but go with love, with whom it came,
And love is like the sun-his light is sweet,
And sweet his shadow-welcome both to me!
Better for ever to endure that hurt

Which thou canst taste but once than once to lie
At ease when thou hast anguish. Better I
Be often sad when thou art gay than gay
One moment of thy sorrow. Tho' I pray
Too oft I shall win nothing of the sky
But my unfilled desire and thy desert
Can take it and still lack. Oh, might I stay
At the shut gates of heaven! that so I meet
Each issuing fate, and cling about his feet
And melt the dreadful purpose of his eye,
And not one power pass unimpleaded by
Whose bolt might be for thee! Aye, love is sweet
In shine or shade! But love hath jealousy,
That knowing but so little thinks so much!
And I am jealous of thee even with such
A fatal knowledge. For I wot too well
In the set season that I cannot tell
Death will be near thee. This thought doth deflour
All innocence from time. I dare not say
'Not now,' but for the instant cull the hour,
And for the hour reap all the doubtful day,
And for the day the year: and so, forlorn,
From morn till night, from startled night till morn,
Like a blind slave I bear thine heavy ill
Till thy time comes to take it: come when 't will
The broken slave will bend beneath it still.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Laus Deo

IN the hall the coffin waits, and the idle armourer stands.
At his belt the coffin nails, and the hammer in his hands.
The bed of state is hung with crape--the grand old bed where she was
wed--
And like an upright corpse she sitteth gazing dumbly at the bed.
Hour by hour her serving-men enter by the curtain'd door,
And with steps of muffled woe pass breathless o'er the silent floor,
And marshal mutely round, and look from each to each with eyelids red;

'Touch him not,' she shriek'd and cried, 'he is but newly dead!'
'O my own dear mistress,' the ancient Nurse did say,
'Seven long days and seven long nights you have watch'd him where he
lay.'

'Seven long days and seven long nights,' the hoary Steward said;
'Seven long days and seven long nights,' groan'd the Warrener gray;
'Seven,' said the old Henchman, and bow'd his aged head;
'On your lives!' she shriek'd and cried, 'he is but newly dead!'

Then a father Priest they sought,
The Priest that taught her all she knew,
And they told him of her loss.
'For she is mild and sweet of will,
She loved him, and his words are peace,
And he shall heal her ill.'

But her watch she did not cease.
He bless'd her where she sat distraught,
And show'd her holy cross,--
The cross she kiss'd from year to year--
But she neither saw nor heard;
And said he in her deaf ear
All he had been wont to teach,
All she had been fond to hear,
Missall'd prayer, and solemn speech,
But she answer'd not a word.

Only when he turn'd to speak with those who wept about the bed,
'On your lives!' she shriek'd and cried, 'he is but newly dead!'
Then how sadly he turn'd from her, it were wonderful to tell,
And he stood beside the death-bed as by one who slumbers well,
And he lean'd o'er him who lay there, and in cautious whisper low,
'He is not dead, but sleepeth,' said the Priest, and smooth'd his

brow.

'Sleepeth?' said she, looking up, and the sun rose in her face!

'He must be better than I thought, for the sleep is very sound.'

'He is better,' said the Priest, and call'd her maidens round.

With them came that ancient dame who nursed her when a child;

O Nurse!' she sigh'd, 'O Nurse!' she cried 'O Nurse!' and then she smiled,

And then she wept; with that they drew

About her, as of old;

Her dying eyes were sweet and blue,

Her trembling touch was cold;

But she said, 'My maidens true,

No more weeping and well-away;

Let them kill the feast.

I would be happy in my soul.

"He is better," saith the Priest;

He did but sleep the weary day,

And will waken whole.

Carry me to his dear side,

And let the halls be trim;

Whistly, whistly,' said she,

'I am wan with watching and wail,

He must not wake to see me pale,

Let me sleep with him.

See you keep the tryst for me,

I would rest till he awake

And rise up like a bride.

But whistly, whistly!' said she.

'Yet rejoice your Lord doth live;

And for His dear sake

Say Laus, Domine.'

Silent they cast down their eyes,

And every breast a sob did rive,

She lifted her in wild surprise

And they dared not disobey.

'Laus Deo,' said the Steward, hoary when her days were new;

'Laus Deo,' said the Warrener, whiter than the warren snows;

'Laus Deo,' the bald Henchman, who had nursed her on his knee.

The old Nurse moved her lips in vain,

And she stood among the train

Like a dead tree shaking dew.

Then the Priest he softly stept

Midway in the little band,
And he took the Lady's hand.
'Laus Deo,' he said aloud,
'Laus Deo,' they said again,
Yet again, and yet again,
Humbly cross'd and lowly bow'd,
Till in wont and fear it rose
To the Sabbath strain.
But she neither turn'd her head
Nor 'Whistly, whistly,' said she.
Her hands were folded as in grace,
We laid her with her ancient race
And all the village wept.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

L'Avenir

I saw the human millions as the sand
Unruffled on the starlit wilderness.
The day was near, and every star grew less
In universal dawn. Then woke a band
Of wheeling winds, and made a mighty stress
Of morning weather; and still wilder went
O'er shifting plains, till, in their last excess,
A whirlwind whirled across the whirling land.
Heaven blackened over it; a voice of woes
Foreran it; the great noise of clanging foes
Hurtled behind; beneath the earth was rent,
And howling Death, like an uncaverned beast,
Leaped from his lair. Meanwhile morn oped the East,
And thro' the dusty tumult God arose.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Liberty To M. Le Diplomate

Thou fool who treatest with the sword, and not
With the strong arm that wields it! Thou insane
Who seest the dew-drops on the lion's mane,
But dost forget the lion! Oh thou sot,
Hugging thy drunken dream! Thou idiot
Who makest a covenant against the rain
With autumn leaves! Thou atheist who dost chain
This miserable body that can rot,
And thinkest it Me! Fool! for the swordless arm
Shall strike thee dead. Madman, the lion wakes,
And with one shake is dry. Sot, the day breaks
Shall sober even thee. Idiot, one storm
And thou art bare. Atheist, the corse is thine,
But lo, the unfettered soul immortal and divine!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Lord Robert

Tall and young and light of tongue,
Gallantly riding by wood and lea,
He was ware of a maiden fair
And turned and whispered, 'Remember me.'
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;
Under their feet where the cross-roads meet
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

Day by day she walks that way
Never hoping by wood or lea
To be ware of the stranger gay
Who turned and whispered, 'Remember me.'
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;
Under their feet where the cross-roads meet
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

Chance for chance he rides that way,
And again by wood or by lea
He was ware of the maiden fair,
And again he whispered, 'Remember me.'
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;
Under their feet where the cross-roads meet
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

Chance for chance that way rode he,
And again where he was ware,
Debonnair to that maiden fair
He turned and said, 'You remember me.'
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;

Under their feet where the cross-roads meet
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

Chance for chance on a summer-day,
Meeting her still by wood and lea,
He leaped gay from his gallant grey
And said, 'I see you remember me.'
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;
Under their feet where the cross-roads meet
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

Chance for chance when they hap'd to meet
He pressed on her lip, he breathed in her ear,
Dear dear words and kisses sweet,
Words and kisses too sweet, too dear.
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;
Under their feet where the cross-roads meet,
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

When the morn enchants the east,
When the south is dazed with noon,
When the eve weeps to the west,
When the night beguiles the moon,
The maid moon that sat so lowly,
Sat so lowly with bended head,
Sat so lowly and rose so slowly,
Rose so slowly and walked so lowly,
Ever, ever with bended head,
Till the black, black hour of the starless sky,
The black, black hour and the dark, dark bed,
And live maids weep as they turn in their sleep,
Weep in their sleep and know not why,
And the white owls shriek and the dead men croon.

Now all ye gentlemen, grand and gay,
When you meet a maid by wood or lea,
Sir Knight, I pray, ride on thy way,
Nor turn and whisper, 'Remember me.'
Lest you drink no wine so strong or fine
But out of the cup, like a shell of the sea,
Thou shalt learn how slaves from their wormy graves
Can do that bidding, 'Remember me.'
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;
Under their feet where the cross-roads meet
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

Lest never in hall when the knights stand tall
And the goblets flash and the ladies shine,
And thou risest up the king of them all,
To drink to wassail and woman and wine,
Risest up with thy jewelled cup,
But out of the cup, like the sea in a shell,
A voice thou hast known by hill and wood,
A voice, a voice thou hast known too well!
And the cold wine boils on the lip like blood,
And the blood streams cold to the heart like wine,
Cold and hot to the heart like wine.
(Oh Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert,
Oh Lord Robert, 'tis I, 'tis I;
Under their feet where the cross-roads meet
Dost thou think I can lie and lie,
Lord Robert, Lord Robert, Lord Robert?)

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Love And Beauty: Ii: To The Same

Oh Soul! that this fair flower dost so mirrour,
Ask of thyself, saying-'Soul beautiful,
Oh Soul-in-love, oh happy, happy Soul,
That wert so dull and poor, and this sweet hour
Art so more floral even than a flower,
That in thee it is better'd to a full,
Whereto each former rose is poor and dull,
Ah, what doth thus enlarge thee and empower,
That thou who, at thy most, wert a priesthood,
A vassal strength, a bliss feudatory,
Hast grown a final joy, an absolute good,
A god that, for being god, believest in God
The more?' Thou canst not clear this mystery,
Ah happy, happy soul, whose fruit of life is nigh.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Love And Beauty: Iii: To A Fair Woman, Unsatisfied With Woman's Work

If Beauty is a name for visible Love,
And Love for Beauty in the conscious soul,
Which when commoving to its highest whole,
Or making that whole part of wholes above
Itself, feels, like an eye, that it doth move,
But cannot see the motion visible
To others and in others; if the sole
Difference is ours who see the spirit a dove,
Or feel the dove a spirit; and if in
All worlds Love, Love, as song and text allege,
Sums the full good of life, who shall not bow
To Beauty? Thou, born in her shrine, if thou
Shouldst dare profane her, what would be thy sin?
The sacrilegious priest does more than sacrilege.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Love: To A Little Girl

When we all lie still
Where churchyard pines their funeral vigil keep,
Thou shalt rise up early
While the dews are deep;
Thee the earliest bird shall rouse
From thy maiden sleep,
Thy white bed in the old house
Where we all, in our day,
Lived and loved so cheerly.
And thou shalt take thy way
Where the nodding daffodil
Tells thee he is near;
Where the lark above the corn
Sings him to thine ear;
Where thine own oak, fondly grim,
Points to more than thou canst spy;
And the beckoning beechen spray
Beckons, beckons thee to him,
Thee to him and him to thee;
Him to thee, who, coy and slow,
Stealest through dim paths untrod
Step by step, with doubtful glance,
Taking witness quick and shy
Of each bud and herb and tree
If thou doest well or no.
Haste thee, haste thee, slow and coy!
What! art doubting still, though even
The white tree that shakes with fear
When no other dreams of ill,
The girl-tree whom best thou knowest,
Waves the garlands of her joy,
And, by something more than chance,
Of all paths in one path only
The primroses where thou goest
Thicken to thy feet, as though
Thou already wert in heaven
And walking in the galaxy.
Do those stars no longer glisten
To thy steps, ah! shivering maid,

That, where upper light doth fade
At yon gnarled and twisted gate,
Thou dost pause and tremble and so,
Listening stir, and stirring listen?
Not a blossom will illumine
That chill grove of cambering yew
Wherein Night seems to vegetate,
And, through bats and owls, a dew
Of darkness fills the mortal gloom.
Haste thee, haste thee, gaze not back!
Of all hours since thou wert born,
Now thou may'st not look forlorn;
Though the blackening grove is dread,
Shall he plead in vain who pled
'To-morrow?' Through the tree-gloom lonely
One more shudder, and the track
Softens: this is upland sod,
Thou canst smell the mountain air,
What was heavy overhead
Lightens, the black whitens, the white brightens!
Ah, dear and fair,
Lo the dazzling east, and lo,
Someone tall against the sky
Coming. coming, like a god,
In the rising morn!
And when the lengthening days whose light we never saw
Have melted his sweet awe,
And thy fond fear is like a little hare,
Large-eyed and passionately afraid,
That peepeth from the covert of her rest
Into the narrow glade
Between two woods, and doth a moment dare
The sunshine, and leap back; yet forth will fare
Again, and each time ventures further from the nest,
Till, having past the midst ere she be 'ware,
Bold with fear to be so much confest
She flees across the sun into the other shade;
Flees as thou that didst so coyly draw
Near him and nearer, and art trembling there
Midway 'twixt giving all and nought,
In a moment, at a thought,
Bashful to panic, hidest on his breast;

Once again beneath the hill
Where round our graves these funeral pines refuse
The clamorous morning, thou shalt rise up early
When we all lie still.

Thou shalt rise up early while
Down the chimney, ample and deep,
Dreaming swallows gurgle, and shrill
In window-nook the mossy wren
Chirps an answer cheerly,
Chirps and sinks to sleep.

In the crossed and corbelled bay
Of that ivied oriel, thou
Lovest at morn and eve to muse;
But this once thou shalt not stay
To mark the forming earth. and how
Far and near, in equal grey
Of growing dawn, thy well-known land
Now to the strained gaze appears
The nebulous umbrage of itself, and now,
Ere one can say this or this,
Divides upon the sense into the world that is,
As the slow suffusion that doth fill
Tender eyes with soft uncertainties,
Suddenly, we know not when,
Shapes to tears we understand;
Such tears as blind thy eyes with light,
When thou shalt rise up, white from white,
In thy virgin bed
On that morn, and, by and by,
In thy bloom of maidenhead
Beam softly o'er the shadowy floor,
And softly down the ancient stairs,
And softly through the ancestral door,
And o'er the meadow by the house
Where thy small feet shall not rouse
From the grass those unrisen pray'rs,
The skylarks, though thy passing smile
Shall touch away the dews.
And thou shalt take thy way,
Ah whither? Where is the dear tryst to-day?
Trembler, doth he wait for thee
By the ash or the beech-tree?

With the lightest earliest breeze
The dodder in the hedge is quaking,
But the mighty ash is still a-slumber;
All its tender multiplicity
Drooped with a common sleep, by twos and threes,
That triple into companies,
Which, in turn, do multiply
Each by each into an all
So various, so symmetrical,
That the membered trunk on high
Lifts a colour'd cloud that seems
The numberless result of number.
Now still as thy still sleep, soft as thy dreams,
They slumber; but when morning bids
The world awake, the giant sleeper, waking,
Shall lift at once his shapely myriads up,
As thou at once upliftest thy two lids.
Ah, guileless eyes, from whom those lids unclose;
Ah, happy, happy eyes! if morning's beams
Awake the trees, how can they sleep in yours?
Look up and see them start from their repose!
Yet nay, I think thou wouldst forbid them hear
What some one comes this morn to say;
Therefore, sweet eyes, shine only on the ground,
Nor venture to look round,
Lest thou behold how subtly the flow'rs sigh
Among the whispering grasses tall,
And see thy secret pale the lily's cheeks,
Or redden on the daisy's lips,
Or tremble in the tremulous tear
Wherewith the warmer light of day fulfils
That frigid beauty of the wort whose stars
Look, thro' the summer darkness, like the scars
Of those lunar arrows shot
From the white string of that silver bow
Wherewith, as we all wot,
Because it was a keepsake of her Greek,
Diana shooteth still on every moony night.
What is it, then, that this close buttercup
Is shutting down into a golden shrine?
What hath the wind betrayed to the wind-flow'r,
That, on either side, it so adjures

Thy passing beauty, by such votive hands
Point to point with praying finger-tips?
I know not how such secrets go astray,
Nor how so dear a mystery
Foreslipped the limits of its destined hour;
Perhaps, the mustered spring, in whatsoe'er
Deep cavern of the earth, ere it come here,
It takes the flowery order of the year,
Heard the soft powers speak of this loveliness
That in due season should be done and said,
As if it were a part o' the white and red
Of summer; or perchance some zephyr, willing
To sweeten the stol'n fragrance of a rose,
Caught one of thy breaths, and blew it
To the flow'rs that suck the evening air,
And in it some unspoken words of thine
Went thro' the floral beauty, and somewhere
Therein came to themselves, and made the fields aware.
Thus, or not thus, surely the cowslips knew it;
Else wherefore did they press
Their march to this sole day, and long ago
Set their annual dances to it?
This day of all the days that summer yields?
Didst thou not mark how sure and slow
They came upon thee with exact emprise?
First a golden stranger, meek and lone,
Then the vanward of a fairy host
Following the nightingales,
Bashful and bold, in sudden troops and bands,
Takes the willowy depths of all the dales,
And, on unsuspected nights,
Makes vantage-ground of mounts and heights
Till, ere one knew, a south wind blew,
And a fond invasion holds the fields!
Over the shadowy meadowy season, up and down from coast to coast,
A pigmy folk, a yellow-haired people stands,
Stands and hangs its head and smiles!
And art thou conscious that they smile, and why?
That with such palpitating flight
Thou fleest toward the linden-aisles?
Ah, yet a moment pause among
The lime-trees, where, from the rich arches o'er thee,

The nightingale still strews his falling song
As if the trees were shaken and dropt sweetness;
No heed? More speed? Ah, little feet,
Is the ground soaked with music that ye beat
Silver echoes thence, and keep
Such quick time and dainty unison
With the running cadence of the bird
That he hath not heard
A note to fright him or offend,
While down the tell-tale path from end to end
Such a ringing scale has run thro' his retreat?
The limes are past, and ye speed on;
Ah, little feet, so fond, so fleet,
Fleeter than ever-why this fleetness?
Who is this? a start, a cry!
A blind moment of alarms,
And the tryst is in his arms!
Fluttering, fluttering heart, confess
Truly, didst thou never guess
That he would be here before thee?
Didst thou never dream that ere
The last glow-worm 'gan to dim,
Or the dear day-star to burn,
Or the elm-top rooks to talk,
Or the hedge-row nests to threep,
He was waiting for thee here?
Ah! ne'er so fair, ah! ne'er so dear,
For his love's sake pardon him,
Smile on him again, and turn
With him thro' the sweetbrier glade,
With him thro' the woodbine shade;
In the sweetbrier wilderness,
To his side, ah! closer creep,
In the honeysuckle walk
Let him make thee blush and weep,
While the wooing doves, unseen,
Move the air with fond ado,
And, lest the long morning shine
Show you to some vulgar eye,
To ye, passing side by side,
With a grace that copies thine,
Favouring trees their boughs incline;

While, where'er ye wander by,
Hawthorn and sweet eglantine
From among their laughing leaves
Stretch and pluck ye by the sleeves:
And all flow'rs the hedge doth hide
Sigh their fragrance after you;
And sly airs, with soft caresses,
Letting down thy golden tresses,
Marry those dear locks with his;
While from the rose-arch above thee,
Where the bowery gate uncloses,
Budded tendrils, lithe and green,
Loosen on the wind and lean
Each to each, and leaning kiss,
Kiss and redden into roses.
Oh, you Lovers, warm and living!
And ah, our graves, so deep and chill!
As ye stand in upper light
Murmuring love that never dies,
While your happy cheeks are burning,
Will ye feel a distant yearning?
Will a sudden dim surprise
Lift up your happy eyes
From what you are taking and giving,
To where the pines their funeral vigil keep,
And we all lie still?
Love on, plight on, we cannot hear or see.
Oh beautiful and young and happy! ye
Have the rich earth's inheritance.
For you, for you, the music and the dance
That moves and plays for all who need it not,
That moved and played for us, who, thus forgot,
In the dark house where the heart cannot sing
Nor any pulse mete its own joyous measure,
See not the world, nor any pleasant thing;
And ye, in your good time, have come into our pleasure.
Ah, while the time is good, love on, plight on!
Leap from yourselves into the light of gladness!
The light, the light! surely the light is sweet?
And, if descending from those ecstasies,
Ye touch the common earth with wavering feet,
Your life is at your will; whate'er betide,

We shall not check or chide.
The hand is dust that might restrain;
The voice whose warning should distress ye
By any augury of doubt or sadness,
Can never speak again.
The angel that so many woo in vain
Descends, descends! Ah, seize him ere he soar;
Ah, seize him by the skirt or by the wing;
What matter, so that, like the saint of yore,
Ye do not let him hence until he bless ye?
In our youth we had our madness,
In the grave ye may be wise.
Love on, love on, for Love is all in all!
Manners, that make us and are made of us,
Who with the self-will of an infant king
Do fashion them that have our fashioning,
And make the shape of our correction;
Virtue, that fruit whose substance ripens slow,
And in one semblance having past from crude
To sweet, rots slowly in the form of good;
Joy, the involuntary light and glow
Of this electric frame mysterious,
That, radiant from our best activities,
Complexion their fine colours by our own;
And Duty, the sun-flower of knowledge,-these
Change and may change with changing time and place:
But Love is for no planet and no race.
The summer of the heart is late or soon,
The fever in the blood is less or more;
But while the moons of time shall fill and wane,
While there is earth below and heaven above,
Wherever man is true and woman fair,
Through all the circling cycles Love is Love!
And when the stars have flower'd and fall'n away,
And of this earthly ball
A little dust upon eternity
Is all that shall remain,
Love shall be Love: in that transcendent whole
Clear Nature from the swift euthanasia
Of her last change, transfigured, shall arise;
And we, whose wonted eyes
Seek vainly the familiar universe,

Shall feel the living worlds in the immortal soul.
But nor of this,
Nor anything of Love except its bliss,
On that summer morning shalt thou know;
Nor, in that moment's apotheosis
When, like the sudden sun
That, rising round and rayless, bursts in rays,
And is himself and all the heavens in one,
Love in the sun-burst of our own delight
Makes us for an instant infinite,
Owning no first or last, before or after,
Child of Love, shalt thou divine
That, years and years before thy day,
In the little Arcady
And planted Eden of thy line,
On such mornings such a maid
Lived and loved as thou art living and loving,
Through the flowery fields where thou art roving,
And in the favourite bowers and by the wonted ways,
Stepped the morning music with thy grace;
Smiled the sunshine which thou with her face
Smilest; so, with sweeter voice,
Helped the vernal birds rejoice,
Or, when passing envy stayed
Matins green and leafy virilays
Startled her sole self to hear,
Like a scared bird hushed for fear;
Or, more frightened by my passionate praise,
Rippled the golden silence with shy laughter.
Yet I saw her standing there,
While my happy love I made,
Standing in her long fair hair,
And looking (so thou lookest now)
As when beneath an April bough
In an April meadow,
Light is netted into place
By a lesser light of shadow;-
Standing by that tree where he
This morn of thine makes love to thee
Leaning to his half-embrace,
Leaning where, full well I know,
While slow day grows ripe to noon

Thou untired shalt still be leaning,
Still, entranced by Love's beguiling,
Listening, listening, smiling, smiling;
Leaning by the tree-Ah me,
Leaning on the name I cut
In the bark which, while she tarried here,
Chased it with duteous silver year by year;
But from the hour that heard her coffin shut
Blindly closed over the withered meaning,
Till argent vert and verdant argentrie
Encharged each simple letter to a rune.
Ah me, ah me! the very name
To which-another yet the same-
(The same, since all thy loveliness is she,
Another, since thou dost forget me)-
Thou answerest, as she answered me
When on summer morns she met me,
While the dews were deep,-
She whom earliest bird did rouse
From her maiden sleep,
From her bed in the old house,
Her white bed in the old house,-
She whom bird arouseth never
From that sleep upon the hill
Where we all lie still.

For what is, was, will be. Suns rise and set
And rise: year after year, as when we met,
In one brief season the epiphany
Of perfect life is shown, and is withdrawn;
As maidens bloom and die: but Maidenhood for ever
Walks the eternal Spring in everlasting Dawn.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Mentana

'Mother, I hear a word
In the air!
Play on, play on, my son,
The word thou hast heard is some bright sweet bird
That singeth, why and where
Who knows?
As who knows why and whither
The little wind blows
That bloweth hither and thither
But hardly stirs thy hair,
Hardly stirs the gossamers
Or a film of thy golden hair.

'Oh Mother, Mother dear,
Bend down, bend down to me!
Ah Mother, what dost thou hear?'
Hush, hush, my son,
I hear a word in the air.
'Ah Mother, why is thy face so white?
Ah Mother, Mother, why
Are thine eyes alight?
Ah Mother, why is thy face so red?
Mother, Mother, the hair of thine head-'

Silence, boy, we are near them,
Silence, boy, the dead, the dead,
I hear them, I hear them, I hear them!
They come, they come, they are here, they are gone,
And they cried, with a single cry,
'Mentana!'
The word is said, the night is fled,
Ere we knew it dawn 'tis day,
The graves are wide, the dead are up and away,
On the racing winds they race
To call the living land.
Boy, I am again a wife!
Boy, I saw thy father's face!

Round him rode the self-same band,
That went round him that great day
To Glory's latest Altar-place-
Went around and fell around,
When the red-legged assassin on the hill
With conjurations bloody and base
Jabbered the slanting sunset to his will,
And by such pests did so incriminate
The air with murder, that, when, weary and late,
Upon the well-won field the conqueror stood
Masters of all the eye could see,
The star-cracked and berotted victory
Burst in each glorious hand
And tore the sacred limits of sweet life,
And sluiced the dear heart's blood.
Ah God! if such blood could sink into the ground!

Up, up, my son, up, up, my soldier-son!
On with thy white-cross cap, while I
Bind me around with tri-colour
And let us go.
Whither? Whither they have gone before!
Haste! The dead have fleeter feet than ours.
See, the answering vales already move!
What is that, that like a moving sea
Floods towards the citted lilies of the towers
That soon shall ring
'Mentana!'

Well done, well done,
Thy little sword and gun,
Thou shalt wave the sword while I will cry
'Mentana!'
See, as we run the hamlets run,
The little towns are waving in the sun,
'Mentana!'
Hark the bells thunder, hark the trumpets blow
'Mentana!'
The mountains hear, the mists divide,
Look, look, on high,

The great tops crowned with joy and pride
Clang to the clanging vales below,
'Mentana!'
A thousand clarions blaze from side to side
'Mentana!'

What, must we rest again the little feet?
Cub of the Lion is thy dam too fleet?
Yet thou hast proved thy kind,
For see the misty miles behind,
And lo, before us what was dim is clear.
The city-walls, the city-gate,
The towers, the towers
That from our mountain seemed like flowers,
But hence like Pedestals that wait
The Statue of our Italy divine.

That Italy who, tho' she hath been hewn
In pieces,-as when the demons hew
An angel, whose immortal substance true
To his Eternal Image is not slain,
But from a thousand falchions rears again
Still undivided by division
His everlasting beauty, whole and one-
When sounds the trump whereat the nations rise
Shall lift her unseamed body to the skies
And in her flesh see (God)-

Sydney Thompson Dobell

New-Year's Eve

As when at twelve o'clock
Strong January opens the gates of Life
And we that were so cabined and so dark
Within the round tower of the rounded year
Feel the far Spring blown in on us and look
Straight to the primroses, and with the swallow
Skim thro' the dawns of daffodils and up
To bluebell skies, and from the bluebell skies,
Like a wild hawk upon a flight of doves,
Swoop upon June and Paradise, and on
Beyond the bounds of Eden to an Earth
Boss'd with great purples of new-clustered wine
Betwixt the tented harvests red and gold,
And so into a cloud, and know no more--

Sydney Thompson Dobell

On A Recently Finished Statue

Said Sculptor to immaculate marble-'Show
Thine essence; into necessary space
Most pure describe thine unshaped Purity!'
And lo this Image! As a bubble blown,
Swiftly her charms, dilating, went through all
The zones of sphered Perfection, till the stone
Smiled as to speak. Some coming thought half-shown
Forms on her parting lips, so that her face
Is as a white flow'r whence a drop of dew,
White with the fragrant flow'r, inclines to fall.
'Oh Everlasting Silence keep her so!
Immortalise this moment, lest she grow
To such a living substance as can die!'
He cried. Consent Eternal heard his cry.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

On Love And Beauty: I: To A Promessa Sposa

Look on this flower, which, from its little tree
Of bodily stem and branches and leaves green,
Leans lovelier, being toucht, and smelt, and seen
A Rose, a Rose, a Rose! and, though thy three
Senses praise it triply unto thee,
And all their parlous difference intervene,
Yet unto thee, who knowest what they mean,
Thee who art one, and hast been, and shalt be,
Is one as thou; one Rose, one beauteous Rose,
One rosy Beauty. Who shall reason why
The slow stem, on a sudden season, shows
It can be worm unto this butterfly?
We know but this, that when yon ecstasy
Transfigures the green tree, its time of fruit is nigh.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

On Reading A Dictacted Letter

Dear Friend, methinks when thus thy plenary soul
Speaks from yon pale default that lies so low,
The hale and stalwart by thy couch must know
Such fond intoleration to be whole
As he, who, where the storms of battle roll,
Himself unthrown beholds the cannon throw
His father at his feet, and, while a woe
Of splendid shame dements him to that sole
Passion, above the fallen field looks round
The red conversion of the baptized ground
For aught whereon to spend his sanguine wealth
And, seeking not the value but the cost,
Rushes to win whatever, won or lost,
May end this gross unwounded infamy of health.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

On Receiving A Book From

Oh, great-eyed contemplation whom I saw
Walk by the blue shores of the Northern Sea
Leaning upon a giant, who for thee
Seemed gentle, while black Night far west did gnaw
The jagged Eve, and, near, the flapping caw
Round Beatoun's shadowy Tower croaked down on me
More than the gloom of Night: ere thou couldst see
Beyond the inhuman ruin, or withdraw
Thy soul from eyes, which, as one tune can fill
Two voices, made the pathos of that soul
A double passion, standing dim and still
I saw and wondered. Is this book thy scroll,
Ah Sybil? Hast thou writ the unheard cry
I saw thee look that eve to Earth and Sea and Sky?

Sydney Thompson Dobell

On Receiving A Book From Dante Rossetti

Since he is Poet of whom gods ordain
Some most anthropic and perhuman act
Whereby his manhood shall so man his fact
That but his man of man is born again,
And since humanity is most humane,
Not at our pyramid's base, where we have tact
Of dust and supersurge the common tract
Of being, but up there, where form doth reign
To apex, let a Poet ask no fame
But that which, high o'er floods of Life and Death
From singing arks Ararat echoeth
To Ararat, and let him rather be,
Oh Poet, writ on yonder page by thee
Than hear what vulgar breath should make his world-wide name.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

On The Death Of Mrs. Browning

WHICH of the Angels sang so well in Heaven
That the approving Archon of the quire
Cried, "Come up hither!" and he, going higher,
Carried a note out of the choral seven;
Whereat that cherub to whom choice is given
Among the singers that on earth aspire
Beckon'd thee from us, and thou, and thy lyre
Sudden ascended out of sight? Yet even
In Heaven thou weapest! Well, true wife, to weep!
Thy voice doth so betray that sweet offence
That no new call should more exalt thee hence
But for thy harp. Ah, lend it, and such grace
Shall still advance thy neighbor that thou keep
Thy seat, and at thy side a vacant place!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Perhaps

Ten heads and twenty hearts! so that this me,
Having more room and verge, and striking less
The cage that galls us into consciousness,
Might drown the rings and ripples of to be
In the smooth deep of being: plenary
Round hours; great days, as if two days should press
Together, and their wine-press'd night accresce
The next night to so dead a parody
Of death as cures such living: of these ordain
My years; of those large years grant me not seven,
Nor seventy, no, nor only seventy sevens!
And then, perhaps, I might stand well in even
This rain of things; down-rain, up-rain, side-rain;
This rain from Earth and Ocean, air and heaven,
And from the Heaven within the Heaven of Heavens.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Poland - Italy - Hungary

In the great Darkness of the Passion, graves
Were oped, and many Saints which slept arose.
So in this latter Darkness, which doth close
Upon our noon. That Peace Divine which saves
And blesses, and from the celestial waves
Of whose now-parted garment our worst woes
Did touch a healing virtue, by our foes
Is crucified. The inextricable slaves
Have slain what should have set them free. Behold
The vail is rent! Earth yawns; the rocks are hurled
In twain; and Kingdoms long since low and cold,
Each with his dead forgotten brow enfurled
In that proud flag he fell upon of old,
Come forth into the City of the World.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Return!

RETURN, return! all night my lamp is burning,
All night, like it, my wide eyes watch and burn;
Like it, I fade and pale, when day returning
Bears witness that the absent can return,
Return, return.

Like it, I lessen with a lengthening sadness,
Like it, I burn to waste and waste to burn,
Like it, I spend the golden oil of gladness
To feed the sorrowful signal for return,
Return, return.

Like it, like it, whene'er the east wind sings,
I bend and shake; like it, I quake and yearn,
When Hope's late butterflies, with whispering wings,
Fly in out of the dark, to fall and burn--
Burn in the watchfire of return,
Return, return.

Like it, the very flame whereby I pine
Consumes me to its nature. While I mourn
My soul becomes a better soul than mine,
And from its brightening beacon I discern
My starry love go forth from me, and shine
Across the seas a path for thy return,
Return, return.

Return, return! all night I see it burn,
All night it prays like me, and lifts a twin
Of palmed praying hands that meet and yearn--
Yearn to the impleaded skies for thy return.
Day, like a golden fetter, locks them in,
And wans the light that withers, tho' it burn
As warmly still for thy return;
Still thro' the splendid load uplifts the thin
Pale, paler, palest patience that can learn
Naught but that votive sign for thy return--
That single suppliant sign for thy return,
Return, return.

Return, return! lest haply, love, or e'er
Thou touch the lamp the light have ceased to burn,
And thou, who thro' the window didst discern
The wonted flame, shalt reach the topmost stair
To find no wide eyes watching there,
No wither'd welcome waiting thy return!
A passing ghost, a smoke-wreath in the air,
The flameless ashes, and the soulless urn,
Warm with the famish'd fire that lived to burn--
Burn out its lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life to light thy late return,
Return, return.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Samuel Brown

He came with us to thy great gates, oh Thou
Unopened Age. Our noise was like the wind
Chafing the wordy Deep; but broad and blind
They stood unmoved. Then He,-we knew not how,-
Laid forth his hand upon them. Lo, they grind
Revolving thunders! Lo, on his dark brow
The unknown light! Lo
Azrael came behind
And touched him. They clanged back, and all was Now.
We wondered and forgot; but He, unbent,
With eye still strained to the forbidden day,
Towered in the likeness of his great intent
As if his act should be his monument,
Till Azrael pitied such sublime dismay,
And led him onward by another way.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Sea Ballad - From

"HOW many?" said our good Captain.

"Twenty sail and more."

We were homeward bound,

Scudding in a gale with our jib towards the Nore.

Right athwart our tack,

The foe came thick and black,

Like Hell-birds and foul weather—you might count them by the score.

The Betsy Jane did slack

To see the game in view.

They knew the Union-Jack,

And the tyrant's flag we knew!

Our Captain shouted "Clear the decks!" and the Bo'sun's whistle blew.

Then our gallant Captain,

With his hand he seiz'd the wheel,

And pointed with his stump to the middle of the foe.

"Hurray, lads, in we go!"

(You should hear the British cheer,

Fore and aft.)

"There are twenty sail," sang he,

"But little Betsy Jane bobs to nothing on the sea!"

(You should hear the British cheer,

Fore and aft.)

"See you ugly craft

With the pennon at her main!

Hurrah, my merry boys,

There goes the Betsy Jane!"

(You should hear the British cheer,

Fore and aft.)

The foe, he beats to quarters, and the Russian bugles sound;

And the little Betsy Jane she leaps upon the sea.

"Port and starboard!" cried our Captain;

"Pay it in, my hearts!" sang he.

"We 're old England's sons,

And we 'll fight for her to-day!"
(You should hear the British cheer.
Fore and aft.)
 "Fire away!"
In she runs,
And her guns
Thunder round.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

She Touches A Sad String Of Soft Recall

Return, return! all night my lamp is burning,
All night, like it, my wide eyes watch and burn;
Like it, I fade and pale, when day returning
Bears witness that the absent can return,
Return, return.

Like it, I lessen with a lengthening sadness,
Like it, I burn to waste and waste to burn,
Like it, I spend the golden oil of gladness
To feed the sorrow signal for return,
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Consumes me to its nature. While I mourn
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All night it prays like me, and lifts a twin
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And wans the light that withers, tho' it burn
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Still thro' the splendid load uplifts the thin

Pale, paler, palest patience that can learn
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Thou touch the lamp the light have ceased to burn,
And thou, who thro' the window didst discern
The wonted flame, shalt reach the topmost stair
To find no wide eyes watching there,
No withered welcome waiting thy return!
A passing ghost, a smoke-wreath in the air,
The flameless ashes, and the soulless urn,
Warm with the famished fire that lived to burn-
Burn out its lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life for thy return,
Its last of lingering life to light thy late return,
Return, return.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Sister To Sister

'When I received that love which is a face,
When I perceived that face which is a love,
Two voices, like those two old nations, strove
Within my heart, and the first-born gave place
And served the younger. 'Ah this golden space
Doth cage the airy pinions of my dove!
And ah this value, which might prove and more
Another love, seems simony to the grace
Of ours!' Thus while one passion doth protest,
The other cries: 'I care not how it be!
For, givest thou much or little, worst or best,
Nor am I richer nor thou dispossesest;
My fond subtraction is still thine in me,
And all thy dear remainder mine in thee!''

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Sleeping And Waking

I Had a dream-I lay upon thy breast,
In that sweet place where we lay long ago:
I thought the morning woodbine to and fro
With playful shadows whipped away my rest,
And in my sleep I cried to thee, too blest,

'Rise, oh my love, the morning sun is bright,
Let us arise, oh love, let us arise;
The flowers awake, the lark is in the skies,
I will array myself in my delight,
And we will-' and I woke to death and night!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Snowdrops

Have you heard the Snowdrops ringing
Their bells to themselves?
Smaller and whiter than the singing
Of any fairy elves
Who follow Mab their Queen
When she is winging
On a moth across the night
And calls them all
With a far-twinkling call
Like the tiniest ray of tiniest starlight
That ever was seen?

Far and near, high and low,
Don't you hear the little bells go?
Not in the big winds that blow
The roaring beeches to and fro,
Not in the lower rivers
Of the breeze
Below the trees,
When the stiff bracken shines,
And the thin bent quivers,
And the limp green waves to and fro,
You shall hear the little bells go,

But in the jets and rivulets
That sputter from the melting snows
When against the mighty bole
Of a beech they dash and swirl
And twist and twirl,
The licking leaves throw
A thousand airy drops invisible
Down the strong perpendicular
To where the snowdrops are;
Tiny drops that fall and meet,
And swift and sweet
Run dim viewless course of fitful force,
Like an airy waterfall

You shall hear the little bells go
All the tiny snowbells swinging,
Tiny chauntlets high and low.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Song Of A Mad Girl, Whose Lover Has Died At Sea

Under the green white blue of this and that and the other,
That and the other, and that and the other, for ever and ever,
Under the up and down and the swaying ships swingswonging,
There they flung him to sleep who will never come back to my longing.
The Father comes back to his child and the son comes back to his Mother,
But neither by land or sea
Will he ever come back to me,
Never, never, never
Will he come back to me.
All day I run by the Cliff, all night I stand in the sand,
All day I furrow and burrow the holmes and the heights.
But whether by night or day
There's never a trace or a track,
Never a word or a breath,
In the swill and the swoop and the flash and the foam and the wind,
Never a fleck or a speck
Coming, coming my way.
The mew comes back to the strand and the ship comes back to the land,
But he will never come back
To all the prayers that I pray thro' the scorching black of the day
And the freezing black of the nights,
Never, never come back
To the ear that harks itself deaf and the eye that strains itself blind,
And the heart that is starving to death.
He was chill and they threw him to cold,
He was dead and they threw him to drown,
He was weary and wanted rest-
They should have laid him on my breast,
He would have slept on my breast,
But they threw him into the boiling boil and bubble,
The wheel and the whirl, the driff and the draff
Of the everlasting trouble.
I swear to you he was mine! I swear to you he was my own.
Madam, if I may make so bold,
Do you know what the dead men do
In the black and blue, in the green and brown?
Deep, deep, you think they sleep
Where the mermen moan and the mermaids weep?
Ah, ah, you make me laugh!

I'm not yet twenty years old,
But lean your ear
And you shall hear
A little thing that I know.
Up and up they come to the top,
Down and down they go down.
To and fro the finny fish go,
But slow and slow, and so and so,
Low over high, high under low,
Up and up they come to the top,
Down and down they go down:
When the sun comes up they come to the top,
When the sun sinks they go down.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Army Surgeon

Over that breathing waste of friends and foes,
The wounded and the dying, hour by hour,-
In will a thousand, yet but one in power,-
He labours thro' the red and groaning day.
The fearful moorland where the myriads lay
Moved as a moving field of mangled worms.
And as a raw brood, orphaned in the storms,
Thrust up their heads if the wind bend a spray
Above them, but when the bare branch performs
No sweet parental office, sink away
With hopeless chirp of woe, so as he goes
Around his feet in clamorous agony
They rise and fall; and all the seething plain
Bubbles a cauldron vast of many-coloured pain.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Botanist's Vision

The sun that in Breadalbane's lake doth fall
Was melting to the sea down golden Tay,
When a cry came along the peopled way,
'Sebastopol is ours!' From that wild call
I turned, and leaning on a time-worn wall
Quaint with the touch of many an ancient day,
The mappèd mould and mildewed marquetry
Knew with my focussed soul; which bent down all
Its sense, power, passion, to the sole regard
Of each green minim, as it were but born
To that one use. I strode home stern and hard;
In my hot hands I laid my throbbing head,
And all the living world and all the dead
Began a march which did not end at morn.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Captain's Wife

I do not say the day is long and weary,
For while thou art content to be away,
Living in thee, oh Love, I live thy day,
And reck not if mine own be sad and dreary.

I do not count its sorrows or its charms:
It lies as cold, as empty, and as dead,
As lay my wedding-dress beside my bed
When I was clothed in thy dear arms.

Yet there is something here within this breast
Which, like a flower that never blossoms, lieth;
And tho' in words and tears my sorrow crieth,
I know that it hath never been exprest.

Something that blindly yearneth to be known,
And doth not burn, nor rage, nor leap, nor dart;
But struggles in the sickness of my heart,
As a root struggles in a vault of stone.

Now, by my wedding-ring,
I charge thee do not move
That heavy stone that on the vault doth lie;
I charge thee be of merry cheer, my love,
Nor ever let me know that thou dost sigh,
For, ah! how light a thing
Would shake me with the sorrow I deny!

I am as one who hid a giant's child
In her deep prison, and, from year to year,
He grew to his own stature, fierce and wild,
And what she took for love she kept for fear.

Oh, thou enchanter, who dost hold the spells
Of all my sealèd cells,
Oh Love, that hast been silent all too long,
A little longer, Love, oh, silent be;
My secret hath waxed strong,
My giant hath grown up to angry age;
Do thou but say the word that sets him free,
And, lo! he tears me in his rage!

I do not say the day is sad and dreary,
For while thou art content to be away,
Living in thee, oh Love, I live thy day,
And reck not if mine own be wan and weary.

I look down on it from my far love-dream,
As some drowned saint may see with musing eyes
Her lifeless body float adown the stream,
While she is smiling in her skies.

But do thou silence keep!
For I am one who walketh on the ledge
Of some great rock's sheer edge:
I walk in beauty and in light,
Self-balanced on the height:
A breath!-and I am breathless in the deep.

Oh, my own Love, I warn
Thy grief to be as still as they who tread
The snow of alpine peak,
And see the pendulous avalanche o'erhead
Hang like a dew-drop on a thorn!

I charge thee silence keep!
My life stands breathless by her agony,
Oh, do not bid her leap!
I am as calm as air
Before a summer storm;

The ocean of my thoughts hath ceased to roll;
This living heart that doth not beat is warm;
I think the stillness of my face is fair;
The cloud that fills my soul
Is not a cloud of pain.
Beware, beware! one rash
Sweet glance may be the flash
That brings it raving down in thunder and in rain!

No, do not speak:
Nor, oh! let any tell of thy pale cheek,
Nor paint the silent sorrow of thine eye,
Nor tell me thou art fond, or gay, or glad;
For, ah! so tuned and lightly strung am I,
That howsoe'er thou stir, I ring thereby.

Thy manly voice is deep,
But if thou touch from sleep
The woman's treble of my shrill reply,
Ah, who shall say thine echoes may not weep?
A jester's ghost is sad,
The shades of merriest flowers do mow and creep,
And oh, the vocal shadows that should fly
About the simplest word that thou canst say,
What after spell shall ever lay?

Hast thou forgot when I sat down to sing
To my forsaken harp, long, long ago,
How thou, for sport, wouldst strike a single string,
And hark the hovering chorus come and go,
Low and high, high and low,
Till round the throbbing wire
Rose such a quivering quire,
As all King David's wives were echoing
The tenor of their king.

Like those dear strings, my silent soul is full
Of cries, as a ripe fruit is full of wine.

The fruit is hanging fair and beautiful,
And dry-eyed as a rose in the sunshine,
But try it with a single touch of thine,
And, lo! the drops that start,
And all the golden vintage of its heart!

So, thinking of thy debt to Love and me,
In some dull hour beyond the sea,
Do thou but only say-
As carelessly as men do pay their debts-
'Oh, weary day!'
And that one sigh o'ersets
The hive of my regrets,
'Ah, weary, weary day,
Oh, weary, weary day,
Oh, day so weary, oh, day so dreary,
Oh, weary, weary, weary, weary, weary,
Oh, weary, weary!'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Common Grave

Last night beneath the foreign stars I stood
And saw the thoughts of those at home go by
To the great grave upon the hill of blood.
Upon the darkness they went visibly,
Each in the vesture of its own distress.
Among them there came One, frail as a sigh,
And like a creature of the wilderness
Dug with her bleeding hands. She neither cried
Nor wept; nor did she see the many stark
And dead that lay unburied at her side.
All night she toiled, and at that time of dawn,
When Day and Night do change their More and Less,
And Day is More, I saw the melting Dark
Stir to the last, and knew she laboured on.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Convalescent To Her Physician

Friend, by whose cancelling hand did Fate forgive
Her debtor, and rescribe her stern award,
Oh with that happier light wherein I live
May all thine after, years be sunned and starred!
May God, to Whom my daily bliss I give
In tribute, add it to thy day's reward,
And mine uncurrent joy may'st thou receive
Celestial sterling! Aye and thou shalt thrive
Even by my vanished woes: for as the sea
Renders its griefs to Heaven, which fall in rains
Of sweeter plenty on the happy plains,
So have my tears exhaled; and may it be
That from the favouring skies my lifted pains
Descend, oh friend, in blessings upon thee!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Gaberlunzie's Walk

The Laird is dead, the laird is dead,
An' dead is cousin John,
His henchmen ten, an' his sax merrie men,
Forbye the steward's son.

An' his ain guid gray that he strode sae gay
When hunt was up an' on,
An' the win' blew fair, an' the grews pu'd sair,
An' dawn was on Maol-don,
An' the skeigh steeds neigh'd, an' the slot-hounds bay'd,
An' up gaed the mornin' sun,
An' awa' gaed the deer wi' the merrie men's cheer,
Awa' owre the auld Maol-don,
An' awa' wi' a shout ran the rabble an' the rout,
An' awa' rode cousin John,
Wi' his horn, his horn, thro' the merry merry morn,
His hunter's horn sae shrill!
An' 't was 'Ho, heigho, hereawa',
Hereawa', hereawa'!
Ho, heigho, hereawa'!
A' roun' the hill!

Walie! walie! they're a' gane dead,
A' owre the seas an' awa'
The laird an' his men, the sax an' the ten,
They gaed to fight and to fa'.
An' walie, an' wae, an' hech! the weary day!
The laird is dead an' a'!

A' in ae grave by the margent o' the wave
Thegither they lay doun,
Sax feet deep, where dead men sleep,
A' i' the faeman's grun'.

Foremost i' the van, wi' his bagpipes i' his han',

The steward's ae brow son,
An' next the young laird-gin the guid Lord had spared!-
A' as he led them on,
Wi' his bonnie brow bare an' his lang fair hair,
An' his bluidy braid-sword drawn;
An' hard by his chief, that in life was sae lief,
In death cam cousin John,
Wi' his horn, his horn, thro' the merry merry morn,
His hunter's horn sae shrill
When 't was 'Ho, heigho, hereawa',
Hereawa', hereawa'!
Ho, heigho, hereawa'!
A' roun' the hill!

Gin ony uphauld the young Laird lies cauld,
An' cauld lies cousin John,
Sax feet deep, as dead men sleep,
A' i' the faeman's grun,'
A' in ae grave by the margent o' the wave,
Where doun they lay that day,
Wi' the henchmen ten, an' the sax merrie men,
Ask the gaberlunzie gray.
Step an' step, step an' step, gaed the gaberlunzie gray,
Faint an' lame, wi' empty wame, he hirples on his way.
Step an' step, step an' step, an' owre the hill maun he,
His head is bent, his pipe is brent, he has na a bawbee.
Step an' step, step an' step, he totters thro' the mirk,
He hears the fox amang the cocks, the houlet by the kirk.
Step an' step, step an' step, an' as he climbs the hill
The auld auld moon is gaun doun; the nicht grows cauld an' still,
The breathin' kye aroun' him lie, the ingle-light is gane,
He wakes the yowes amang the knowes, an' still he gangs his lane.
His slow steps rouse the blethrin' grouse, the peewit fa's an' squeals,
The nicht-goat bleats amang the peats, an' still he speils an' speils,
Step an' step, step an' step, an' up the craigie stark,
An' mony a stane ane after ane gangs snirtlin' doun the dark.
Step an' step, step an' step, that gaberlunzie gray,
A' win's seem tint far far ahint as he gangs on his way.
He hears the burn amang the fern, he hears the stoatie cheep,
He hears the rustle, an' flit an' fussle, as the kae shifts her roost in her sleep.
Step an' step, step an' step, he gangs wi' troubled breath,

He feels the silence a' aboon, he feels the warl beneath;
 Wheet an' wheet about his feet the startit mousie ran,
 An' as he gaes his riskin' claes aye gar him start an' stan';
 An' as he stan's wi' knotted han's, an' leans his chitterin' head,
 He hears the sod his steps have trod a-tirlin' to his tread;
 An' crisp foot-fa', an' sibblin sma' o' stealthy cony crappin',
 An' click o' bat aboon his hat, like fairy fingers snappin',
 An' ilka yird that ticked an' stirred, where swairdie there is nae,
 As elfin shoos the tittlin' mools gar'd rinkle down the brae;
 An' safter soun' along the groun' the grass-taps thro' an' thro',
 Gin owre the fiel's the wee bit chiel's were dealin' out the dew.
 Step an' step, step an' step, an' hech! his freezin' bluid!
 He gaes into the silence as ane gaes into a wood.
 The mair the height, mair still the nicht, an' faster did he gang,
 Step an' step, an' then a step, an' he listens hard an' lang!
 He listens twice, he listens thrice, but why he disna ken;
 His cauld skin skeared, an' clipped his beard; he stops an' lists agen.
 There's somethin' creepin' thro' his banes, there's somethin' stirs his hair:
 'Tis mair than use, he canna choose, he listens ten times mair!
 He pits his pack fra his auld back, he sits him on a stane,
 His eyelids fa', he gapes his jaw, an' harks wi' might an' main,
 The mair he list the mair uprist his gray-locks wi' affright,
 Till ilka hair that he might wear was stiff an' stark upright.
 His sick heart stops, the low moon drops, the nicht is eerie chill!
 Wi' sudden shout the dead cry out, like hunters at a kill,
 Full cry, full cry, the win's sweep by, a horn, a horn is shrill!
 An' 'tis 'Ho, heigho, hereawa',
 Hereawa', hereawa'!
 Ho, heigho, hereawa'!
 A' roun' the hill!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The German Legion

In the cot beside the water,
In the white cot by the water,
The white cot by the white water,
There they laid the German maid.

There they wound her, singing round her,
Deftly wound her, singing round her,
Softly wound her, singing round her,
In a shroud like a cloud.

And they decked her as they wound her,
With a wreath of leaves they bound her,
Lornest leaves they scattered round her,
Singing grief with every leaf.

Singing grief with every leaf.
Sadder grief with sadder leaf,
Sweeter leaf with sweeter grief,
So't was sung in a dark tongue.

Like a latter lily lying,
O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,
And Autumn vapours crying,
Pale and cold on misty mould,

So I saw her sweet and lowly,
Shining shining pale and holy,
Thro' the dim woe slowly slowly,
Said and sung in that dark tongue.

Such an awe her beauty lent her,
While they sang I dared not enter
That charmed ring where she was centre,
But I stood with stirring blood

Till the song fell like a billow,
And I saw them leave her pillow,
And go forth to the far willow,
For the wreath of virgin death.

And I stood beside her pillow,
While they plucked the distant willow,
And my heart rose like a billow
As I said to the pale dead-

'Oh, thou most fair and sweet virginity,
Of whom this heart that beats for thee doth know
Nor name nor story, that these limbs can be
For no man evermore, that thou must go
Cold to the cold, and that no eye shall see
That which thine unsolved womanhood doth owe
Of the incommunicable mystery
Shakes me with tears. I could kneel down by thee,
And o'er thy chill unmarriageable rest
Cry, 'Thou who shalt no more at all be prest
To any heart, one moment come to this!
And feel me weeping with thy want of bliss,
And all the unpraisèd beauties of thy breast-
Thy breast which never shall a lover kiss!'"

Then I slowly left her pillow,
For they came back with the willow,
And my heart sinks as a billow
Doth implore towards the shore,

As I see the crown they weave her,
And I know that I must leave her,
And I feel that I could grieve her
Sad and sore for evermore.

And again they sang around her,
In a richer robe they wound her,
With the willow wreath they bound her,
And the loud song like a cloud

Of golden obscuration,
With the strange tongue of her nation,
Filled the house of lamentation,
Till she lay in melody,

Like a latter lily lying,

O'er whom falling leaves are sighing,
And the Autumn vapours crying,
In a dream of evening gleam.

And I saw her sweet and lowly,
Shining shining pale and holy,
Thro' the dim woe slowly slowly
Said and sung in a dark tongue.

In the cot beside the water,
The white cot by the white water,
English cot by English water
That shall see the German sea.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Harps Of Heaven

On a solemn day
I clomb the shining bulwark of the skies:
Not by the beaten way,
But climbing by a prayer,
That like a golden thread hung by the giddy stair
Fleck'd on the immemorial blue,
By the strong step-stroke of the brave and few,
Who, stirr'd by echoes of far harmonies,
Must either lay them down and die of love,
Or dare
Those empyrean walls that mock their starward eyes.
But midway in the dread emprize
The faint and fainter footsteps cease;
And, all my footing gone,
Like one who gathers samphire, I hold on,
And in the swaying air look up and down:
And up and down through answering vasts descry
Nor Earth nor Heaven;
Above,
The sheer eternal precipice; below,
The sheer eternal precipice.
Then when I,
Gigantic with my desperate agony,
Felt even
The knotted grasp of bodily despair
Relaxing to let go,
A mighty music, like a wind of light,
Blew from the imminent height,
And caught me in its splendour; and, as flame
That flickers and again aspires,
Rose in a moment thither whence it came;
And I, that thought me lost,
Pass'd to the top of all my dear desires,
And stood among the everlasting host.
Then turn'd I to a seraph whose swift hands,
That lived angelic passion, struck his soul
Upon a harp-a seraph fair and strong,
And faultless for his harp and for his throne,
And yet, among

The Strength and Beauty of the heavenly bands,
No more to be remember'd than some one
Poor warrior, when a king of many kings
Stamps on the fields, and rears his glittering crop
Of standing steel, and the vex'd spirit wings
Above the human harvest, and in vain
Begins from morn till eve to sum the embattled plain;
Or when,
After a day of peace, sudden and late
The beacon flashes and the war-drums roll,
And through the torches of the city gate,
All the long winter night a martial race
Streams to the nation's gathering-place,
And, like as water-drop to water-drop,
Pour on in changeless flood the innumerable men.
I turn'd, and as from footing in mid-seas
Looking o'er lessening waves thou may'st behold
The round horizon of unshadow'd gold,
I, standing on an amethyst, look'd round
The moving Heaven of Harpers throned and crown'd,
And said, 'Was it from these
I heard the great sound?' And he said, 'What sound?'
Then I grown bolder, seeing I had thriven
To win reply-'This that I hear from thee,
This that everywhere I hear,
Rolling a sea of choristry
Up and down the jewel of Heaven;
A sea which from thy seat of light,
That seems more loud and bright
Because more near,
To the white twinkle of yon furthest portal,
Swells up those circling shores of chrysolite,
And, like an odorous luminous mist, doth leap the eternal walls,
And falls
In wreaths of melody
Adown the azure mountain of the sky;
And round its lower slopes bedew'd
Breathes lost beatitude;
And far away,
Low, low, below the last of all its lucent scarps,
Sprinkles bewildering drops of immortality.
O angel fair, thou know'st what I would say-

This sound of harpers that I hear,
This sound of harpers harping on their harps.'
Then he bent his head
And shed a tear
And said,
'I perceive thou art a mortal.'
Then I to him-'Not only, O thou bright
Seraphic Pity! to a mortal ear
These sacred sounds are dear,
Or why withholdest not thy ceaseless hand?
And why,
Far as my dazzled eye
Can pierce the lustre of the radiant land,
See I the rapt celestial auditory,
Each, while he blessed hears, gives back his bliss
With never-tiring touch from golden harps like this?'
Then he to me-'Oh, wherefore hast thou trod
Beyond the limit of thine earthly lot?
These that we bear
Within our hands are instruments of glory,
Wherewith, day without night,
We make the glory of immortal light
In the eyes of God.
As for the sound, we hear it not;
Yet, speaking to thee, child of ignorance,
I do remember that I loved it once,
In the sweet lower air.'
Yet he spake once more,-
'But thou return to the remember'd shore;
Why shouldst thou leave thy nation,
Thy city, and the house of all most dear?
Do we not all dwell in eternity?
For we have been as thou, and thou
Shalt be as we.'
And he lean'd and kissèd me,
Saying, 'But now
Rejoice, O child, in other joys than mine
Hear the dear music of thy mortal ear
While yet it is the time with thee,
Nor make haste to thine exaltation,
Though our state be better than thine.'

The Little Girl's Song

Do not mind my crying, Papa, I am not crying for pain.
Do not mind my shaking, Papa, I am not shaking with fear;
Tho' the wild wild wind is bideous to hear,
And I see the snow and the rain.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Somebody else that you love, Papa,
Somebody else that you dearly love
Is weary, like me, because you're away.
Sometimes I see her lips tremble and move,
And I seem to know what they're going to say;
And every day, and all the long day,
I long to cry, 'Oh Mamma, Mamma,
When will Papa come back again?'
But before I can say it I see the pain
Creeping up on her white white cheek,
As the sweet sad sunshine creeps up the white wall,
And then I am sorry, and fear to speak;
And slowly the pain goes out of her cheek,
As the sad sweet sunshine goes from the wall.
Oh, I wish I were grown up wise and tall,
That I might throw my arms round her neck
And say, 'Dear Mamma, oh, what is it all
That I see and see and do not see
In your white white face all the livelong day?'
But she hides her grief from a child like me.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Where were you going, Papa, Papa?
All this long while have you been on the sea?
When she looks as if she saw far away,
Is she thinking of you, and what does she see?
Are the white sails blowing,
And the blue men rowing,
And are you standing on the high deck

Where we saw you stand till the ship grew gray,
And we watched and watched till the ship was a speck,
And the dark came first to you, far away?
I wish I could see what she can see,
But she hides her grief from a child like me.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Don't you remember, Papa, Papa,
How we used to sit by the fire, all three,
And she told me tales while I sat on her knee,
And heard the winter winds roar down the street,
And knock like men at the window pane,
And the louder they roared, oh, it seemed more sweet
To be warm and warm as we used to be,
Sitting at night by the fire, all three?
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Papa, I like to sit by the fire;
Why does she sit far away in the cold?
If I had but somebody wise and old,
That every day I might cry and say,
'Is she changed, do you think, or do I forget?
Was she always as white as she is to-day?
Did she never carry her head up higher?'
Papa, Papa, if I could but know!
Do you think her voice was always so low?
Did I always see what I seem to see
When I wake up at night and her pillow is wet?
You used to say her hair it was gold-
It looks like silver to me.
But still she tells the same tale that she told,
She sings the same songs when I sit on her knee,
And the house goes on as it went long ago,
When we lived together, all three.
Sometimes my heart seems to sink, Papa,
And I feel as if I could be happy no more.
Is she changed, do you think, Papa,
Or did I dream she was brighter before?

She makes me remember my snowdrop, Papa,
That I forgot in thinking of you,
The sweetest snowdrop that ever I knew!
But I put it out of the sun and the rain:
It was green and white when I put it away,
It had one sweet bell and green leaves four;
It was green and white when I found it that day,
It had one pale bell and green leaves four,
But I was not glad of it any more.
Was it changed, do you think, Papa,
Or did I dream it was brighter before?

Do not mind my crying, Papa,
I am not crying for pain.
Do not mind my shaking, Papa,
I am not shaking for fear;
Tho' the wild wild wind is hideous to hear,
And I see the snow and the rain.
When will you come back again,
Papa, Papa?

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Magyar's New-Year-Eve

By Temèsvar I hear the clarions call:
The year dies. Let it die. It lived in vain.
Gun booms to gun along the looming wall,
Another year advances o'er the plain.
The Despot hails it from his bannered keep:
Ah, Tyrant, is it well to break a bondsman's sleep?

He might have dreamed, and solved the conscious throes
Of Time and Fate in some soft vision blest:
Sighed his thick breath in childhood's happy woes,
Or spent the starry tumult of the breast
On some dear dreamland maid, nor known how high
The blind heart beats to hours like this. 'Tis nigh!

Lo in the air a trouble and a strife;
I feel the future. Mighty days to come
Strain the strong leash a moment into Life:
Shapes beckon: voices clamour and are dumb:
And viewless nations charge upon the blast
That blows the spectral host to silence, and is past.

Hark, hark! the great hour strikes! The stroke peals 'one;'
Again! again! God! Have the earth and sky
Stopped breathing? Will it never end? 'Tis done.
The years are rent asunder with a cry,
The big world groans from all her gulphs and caves,
And sleeping Freedom stirs, and rocks the martyrs' graves.

Oh. ye far Few, who, battle-worn and grey,
Watch from wild peaks the plains where once ye bled,
Oh ye who but in fortune less than they
Keep the lone vigil of the immortal Dead,
Behold! And, like a fire from steep to steep,
Draw, draw the dreadful swords whereon ye lean and weep!

And oh you great brave harvest, that, war-ploughed
And sown with men, a grateful country yields,
You bearded youth who, beardless, saw the proud
Ancestral glories of those smoking fields
That now beneath ten grassy years lie cold,
Rise! Shew your children how your fathers fought of old!

But we are fettered, and a bondsman's ire,
Howe'er it flash, can only end in show'rs.
Who shall unlade these limbs? Alas, the fire
Of passion will not melt such chains as ours;
We have but heated them in wrath of men
To harden them in women's tears. What then?

Less than both hands at once what Freeman gives
To Freedom? Stand up where the Tyrant stands,
Draw in one breath the strength of slavish lives,
Lift the twin justice of your loaded hands,
And with that double thunder in the veins
Launch on his fated head the vengeance of your chains!

They hear! I see them thro' dissolving night!
Like sudden woods they rise upon the hills!
The mountains stream with a descending sight,
The hollow ear of vacant landscape fills,
From side to side the living landscape warms,
To arms! Yon bleeding cloud is spread! Day breaks! To arms!

Aye, Tyrant, the day breaks. Look up and fear.
To arms! A greater day than day is born!
To arms! A larger light than light is near!
A blacker night than midnight foams with morn!
Arise, arise, my Country, from the flood!
Arise, thou god of day, and dye the east with blood!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Market-Wife's Song

The butter an' the cheese weel stowit they be,
I sit on the hen-coop the eggs on my knee,
The lang kail jigs as we jog owre the rigs,
The gray mare's tail it wags wi' the kail,
The warm simmer sky is blue aboon a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I sit on the coop, I look straight before,
But my heart it is awa' the braid ocean owre,
I see the bluidy fiel' where my ain bonny chiel',
My wee bairn o' a', gaed to fight or to fa',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

I see the gran' toun o' the big forrin' loun,
I hear the cannon soun', I see the reek aboon;
It may be lang John lettin' aff his gun,
It may be the mist-your mither disna wist-
It may be the kirk, it may be the ha',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

An' I ken the Black Sea, ayont the rock o' dool,
Like a muckle blot o' ink in a buik fra' the schule,
An' Jock! it gars me min' o' your buikies lang syne,
An' mindin' o' it a' the tears begin to fa',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the old wheels twa.

Then a bull roars fra' the scaur, ilka rock's a bull agen,
An' I hear the trump o' war, an' the carse is fu' o' men,
Up an' doun the morn I ken the bugle horn,
Ilka birdie sma' is a fleein' cannon ba',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Guid Heavens! the Russian host! We maun e'en gie up for lost!
Gin ye gain the battle hae ye countit a' the cost?

Ye may win a gran' name, but wad wee Jock come hame?
Dinna fecht, dinna fecht! there's room for us a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

In vain, in vain, in vain! They are marchin' near and far!
Wi' swords an' wi' slings an' wi' instruments o' war!
Oh, day sae dark an' sair! ilka man seven feet an' mair!
I bow my head an' say, 'Gin the Lord wad smite them a'!
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Then forth fra' their ban' there steps an armed man,
His tairge at his breast an' his claymore in his han',
His gowd pow glitters fine an' his shadow fa's behin',
I think o' great Goliath as he stan's before them a',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

To meet the Philistine leaps a laddie fra' our line,
Oh, my heart! oh, my heart! 'tis that wee lad o' mine!
I start to my legs-an' doun fa' the eggs-
The cocks an' hens a' they cackle an' they ca',
An' whiddie, whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad-oh, Jock, my Hielan' lad,
Never till I saw thee that moment was I glad!
Aye sooner sud thou dee before thy mither's ee'
Than a man o' the clan sud hae stept out but thee!
An' sae I cry to God-while the hens cackle a',
An' whiddie. whuddie, whaddie, gang the auld wheels twa.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Milkmaid's Song

Turn, turn, for my cheeks they burn,
Turn by the dale, my Harry!
Fill pail, fill pail,
He has turned by the dale,
And there by the stile waits Harry.
Fill, fill,
Fill, pail, fill,
For there by the stile waits Harry!
The world may go round, the world may stand still
But I can milk and marry,
Fill pail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh!
O, if we two
Stood down there now by the water,
I know who'd carry me over the ford
As brave as a soldier, as proud as a lord,
Though I don't live over the water.
Wheugh, wheugh! he's whistling through,
He's whistling 'The Farmer's Daughter.'
Give down, give down,
My crumpled brown!
He shall not take the road to the town,
For I'll meet him beyond the water.
Give down, give down,
My crumpled brown!
And send me to my Harry.
The folk o' towns
May have silken gowns,
But I can milk and marry,
Fill pail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh! he has whistled through
He has whistled through the water.
Fill, fill, with a will, a will,
For he's whistled through the water,
And he's whistling down

The way to the town,
And it's not 'The Farmer's Daughter!'
Churr, churr! goes the cockchafer,
The sun sets over the water,
Churr, churr! goes the cockchafer,
I'm too late for my Harry!
And, O, if he goes a-soldiering,
The cows they may low, the bells they may ring,
But I'll neither milk nor marry,
Fill pail,
Neither milk nor marry.

My brow beats on thy flank, Fill pail,
Give down, good wench, give down!
I know the primrose bank, Fill pail,
Between him and the town.
Give down, good wench, give down, Fill pail,
And he shall not reach the town!
Strain, strain! he's whistling again,
He's nearer by half a mile.
More, more! O, never before
Were you such a weary while!
Fill, fill! he's crossed the hill,
I can see him down by the stile,
He's passed the hay, he's coming this way,
He's coming to me, my Harry!
Give silken gowns to the folk o' towns,
He's coming to me, my Harry!
That she walks to-night with Harry!
Come late, come soon, come sun, come moon,
O, I can milk and marry,
Fill pail,
I can milk and marry.

Wheugh, wheugh! he has whistled through,
My Harry! my lad! my lover!
Set the sun and fall the dew,
Heigh-ho, merry world, what's to do
That you're smiling over and over?
Upon the hill and down in the dale,
And along the tree-tops over the vale
Shining over and over,

Low in the grass and high on the bough,
Shining over and over,
O world, have you ever a lover!
You were so dull and cold just now,
O world, have you ever a lover?
I could not see a leaf on the tree,
And now I could count them, one, two, three,
Count them over and over,
Leaf from leaf like lips apart,
Like lips apart for a lover.
And the hillside beats with my beating heart,
And the apple-tree blushes all over,
And the May bough touched me and made me start,
And the wind breathes warm like a lover.

Pull, pull! and the pail is full,
And milking's done and over,
Who would not sit here under the tree?
What a fair fair thing's a green field to see!
Brim, brim, to the rim, ah me!
I have set my pail on the daisies!
It seems so light, - can the sun be set?
The dews must be heavy, my cheeks are wet.
I could cry to have hurt the daisies!
Harry is near, Harry is near,
My heart's as sick as if he were here,
My lips are burning, my cheeks are wet,
He hasn't uttered a word as yet,
But the air's astir with his praises.
My Harry!
The air's astir with your praises.

He has scaled the rock by the pixy's stone,
He's among the kingcups, - he picks me one,
I love the grass that I tread upon
When I go to my Harry!
He has jumped the brook, he has climbed the knowe,
There's never a faster foot I know,
But still he seems to tarry.
O Harry! On Harry! my love, my pride,
My heart is leaping, my arms are wide!
Roll up, roll up, you dull hillside,

Roll up, and bring my Harry!
They may talk of glory over the sea,
But Harry's alive, and Harry's for me,
My love, my lad, my Harry!
Come spring, come winter, come sun, come snow,
What cares Dolly, whether or no,
While I can milk and marry?
Right or wrong, and wrong or right,
Quarrel who quarrel, and fight who fight,
But I'll bring my pail home every night
To love, and home, and Harry!
We'll drink our can, we'll eat our cake,
There's beer in the barrel, there's bread in the bake,
The world may sleep, the world may wake,
But I shall milk and marry,
And marry,
I shall milk and marry.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Mother's Lesson

Come hither an' sit on my knee, Willie,
Come hither an' sit on my knee,
An' list while I tell how your brave brither fell,
Fechtin' for you an' for me:
Fechtin' for you an' for me, Willie,
Wi' his guid sword in his han'.
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

Ye min' o' your ain brither dear, Willie,
Ye min' o' your ain brither dear,
How he pettled ye aye wi' his pliskies an' play,
An' was aye sae cantie o' cheer:
Aye sae cantie o' cheer, Willie,
As he steppit sae tall an' sae gran',
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye min' when the bull had ye doun, Willie,
D'ye min' when the bull had ye doun?
D'ye min' wha grippit ye fra the big bull,
D'ye min' o' his muckle red woun'?
D'ye min' o' his muckle red woun', Willie,
D'ye min' how the bluid doun ran?
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye min' when we a' wanted bread, Willie,
the year when we a' wanted bread?
How he smiled when he saw the het parritch an' a',
An' gaed cauld an' toom to his bed:
Gaed awa' toom to his bed, Willie,
For the love o' wee Willie an' Nan?
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

Next simmer was bright but an' ben, Willie,
Next simmer was bright but an' ben,
When there cam a gran' cry like a win' strang an' high
By loch, an' mountain, an' glen:
By loch, an' mountain, an' glen, Willie,
The cry o' a far forrin lan',
An' up loupit ilka brave man, Willie,
Up loupit ilka brave man.

For the voice cam saying, 'Wha 'll gang?' Willie,
The voice cam saying, 'Wha'll gang
To fecht owre the sea that the slave may be free,
An' the weak be safe fra' the strang?'
The weak be safe fra' the strang, Willie;
Rab looked on Willie an' Nan,
An' hech, but he was a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but he was a brave man!

I kent by his een he was gaun, Willie,
I kent by his een he was gaun,
An' he rose like a chief: twice we spak in our grief-
'Dinna gang!' 'My mither, I maun!'
When he said, 'My mither, I maun,' Willie,
I gied him his sword to his han'.
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

An' sae it happened afar, Willie,
Sae it happened afar,
In the dead midnight there rose a great fecht,
An' Rab was first i' the war:
First i' the haur o' the war, Willie,
Wi' his guid sword in his han'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

An' there cam' a dark wicked lord, Willie,

There cam' a dark wicked lord,
An' oh my guid God! on my bauld bairn he rode,
An' smote him wi' his sword:
Smote him wi' his sword, Willie,
But Rab had his guid sword in han'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

He rushed on the fae in his might, Willie,
In his might to the fecht thro' the night,
An' he grippit him grim, an' the fae grippit him,
An' they rolled owre i' the fecht:
They rolled owre i' the fecht, Willie,
Rab wi' his guid sword in han'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

When the gran' stowre cleared awa', Willie,
When the gran' stowre cleared awa',
An' the mornin' drew near in chitter an' in fear,
Still, still, in death they lay twa:
Still, still, in death they lay twa, Willie,
Rab wi' his guid sword in han'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

Then up fra the death-sod they bore him, Willie,
The young men an' maidens they bore him,
An' they mak the rocks ring 'gin my bairn were a king,
An' a' the sweet lassies greet owre him:
A' the sweet lassies greet owre him, Willie,
An' their proud lips kiss his cauld han',
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' they big him a green grass grave, Willie,
They big him a green grass grave,
My ain lad! my ain! an' they write on the stane,

'Wha wad na sleep wi' the brave?'
An' wha wad na sleep wi' the brave, Willie?
Wha wad na dee for his lan'?'
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man!

Noo come to yon press wi' me, Willie,
Come to yon press wi' me,
And I'll show ye somethin' o' auld lang syne,
When he was a bairnie like thee:
When he was a bairnie like thee, Willie,
And stood at my knee where ye stan',
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye see this wee bit bannet, Willie,
-I min' weel the day it was new-
See how I haud it here to my heart,
His wee bit bannet o' blue:
His wee bit bannet o' blue, Willie,
Wi' its wee bit cockie an' ban'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

D'ye see his ba' and his stickie, Willie,
When he played at the ba';
Na, na, ye 're no to tak it in han',
Ye 're no sae brave an' sae braw!
But gin ye grow braw an' brave, Willie,
Aiblins I'se gie 't to your han',
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' this was his Guid Buik, Willie,
The Guid Buik that he lo'ed,
Where he read the Word o' the great guid Lord
Wha bought us wi' His bluid.
An' will we spare our bluid, Willie,

To buy the dear auld Ian?
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

They say he's dead an' gane, Willie,
They say he's dead and gane.
Wad God my bairnies a' were sons,
That ten might gang for ane:
Ten might gang for ane, Willie,
To save the dear auld Ian!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

I'd no be lorn an' lane, Willie,
I'd no be lorn an' lane,
For gin I had him here by the han'
He could na be mair my ain:
He'd no be mair my ain, Willie,
Gin I grippit him by the han'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' oh! gin ye gang fra me, Willie,
Gin ye gang as he gaed fra me,
Ye'll aye be still as near to my heart
As the noo when ye sit on my knee:
As the noo when ye sit on my knee, Willie,
An' I haud ye by the han'.
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

'An' wad ye no greet at a', mither?
Wad ye no greet at a?'
Aye, wad I greet my bonnie bonnie bairn!
'An' will ye no greet when I fa?'
Will I no greet when ye fa', Willie?
God bless your bonnie wee han'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,

I kent weel ye'd be a brave man!

Aye, will I greet day an' night, Willie,
Aye, will I greet day an' night!
But gin ye can see fra your heaven doun to me,
Ye'se no be wae at the sight:
Ye'se no be wae at the sight, Willie,
E'en in your bright blessed lan'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
I kent weel ye'd be a brave man.

Ye ken how I greet sae sair, Willie,
Ye ken how I greet sae sair,
When ye're no my ain guid bairnie the day,
An' my een are cloudy wi' care:
My een are cloudy wi' care, Willie,
An' I lean doun my head on my han',
An' think 'Will ye be a guid man, Willie,
Ah, will ye grow a guid man?'

Ye ken when I did na greet sae, Willie,
Ye ken when I did na greet sae!
Gran' gran' are a proud mither's tears,
An' the gate that she gangs in her wae:
The gate that she gangs in her wae, Willie,
Wi' her foot on her ain proud lan'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

Ye min' how ye saw me greet, Willie,
Ye min' how ye saw me greet,
When the great news cam' to the toun at e'en,
An' we heard the shout in the street:
We heard the shout in the street, Willie,
An' the death-word it rode an' it ran.
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

Ye min' how I lift up mine ee', Willie,
Ye min' how I lift up mine ee',
An' smiled as I smile when I stan' i' the door,
An see ye come toddlin' to me:
See ye come toddlin' to me, Willie,
An' smile afar off where I stan'.
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

Thank God for ilk tear I let fa', Willie,
Thank God for ilk tear I let fa',
For oh, where they wipe awa' tears fra' a' een,
Sic tears they wad no wipe awa':
Sic tears they wad no wipe awa', Willie,
Tho' there's nane may be sad i' that lan'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

Noo to your play ye maun gang, Willie,
Noo to your play ye maun gang,
An' belyve, my ain wee, ye'll come back to my knee,
And I'se sing ye an auld Scots sang:
I'se sing ye an auld Scots sang, Willie,
A sang o' the dear auld lan'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

An' aye d'ye min' what I say, Willie,
What ye heard your auld mither say,
Better to dee a brave man an' free,
Than to live a fause coward for aye:
Than to live a fause coward for aye, Willie,
An' stan' by the shame o' your lan'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

It's brave to be first at the schule,

It's brave to be cock o' the class,
It's brave to thwack a strang fule,
It's brave to win a wee lass,
It's brave to be first wi' the pleugh,
An' first i' the reel an' strathspey,
An' first at the tod i' the cleugh,
An' first at the stag at bay.

It's brave to be laird o' the glen,
It's brave to be chief o' the clan,
But he that can dree for his neebor to dee,
Oh, he's the true brave man:
He's the true brave man, Willie,
An' the fame o' his name sall be gran'!
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man, Willie,
Hech, but ye'll be a brave man.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Olive

I have heard a friar say
That the Olive learned to pray
In Gethsemane,-
A holy man was he,
Jacopo by name,-
All upon his bended knees
From Jerusalem
He crossed Kedron brook
And to the garden came
Of Gethsemane,
And the very olive-trees
Are there to this day.
And I would have you know,
For I loved to hear him speak,
Good Friar Jacopo!-
That on an Easter-week,
In the time long ago
Of bloody Pilate 'King of Rome,'
Lord Jesus
To the garden-gate did come
Of Gethsemane.
And as He came at the dear look
O' the Lord a sudden shudder shook
The wood, and wooden moans and groans
Allowed the silence of the stones.
(The stones that next day, as 'tis said,
Oped their mouths and spake the dead.)
And when He bent His sacred knees
The shame of limbs that could not bend
Suppled every bough's end
To a lythe
And pliant wythe.
But ere He spake a-silent stood
Every tree in all the wood,
And the silence began to fill
Inly, as the ears with blood
When the outer world is still.
And when He spake at the first
'Let this cup' did somewhat swell

Every twig and tip asunder,
Like the silence in the head
When the veins are nigh to burst;
And at the second was nothing seer
To stir, but all the swollen green
Blackened as a cloud with thunder;
But in the final agony,
When His anguish brake its bands
And the bloody sweat down-fell,
At the third 'Let this cup'
As He lifted up His hands
Black drops fell from every tree
And all the forest lifted up.

The Lord went to Calvary-
Well, perhaps, for you and me,
Brother, who being men are fain
To profit by the blessed loss
That quivers overhead while we
At the foot of the cross-mast
With the hereditary face
Reckon up our selfish gain,
Rend his sacred weeds and cast
Lots for the vesture of His grace,-
Aye, at the dabbled foot of the Cross
While that dear blood doth flow.
The Olive cannot chaffer so,
Not being a man, altho'
Since the pallors of that hour
It hath kept a human power
And is not quite a tree;
Now and then
Round the unbelief of men
It lifts up praying hands,
Because it is so much a tree
And cannot tell its tale
Nor reach
To clear its knowledge into speech.
And whether on that awful day
In Gethsemane
There was wind,

Or whether because day and night
And day again all winds that blew
From the City on the height
Shuddered with the things they knew
I know not, but you shall find
An Almighty Memory-
That yearly grows and flowers and fruits
And strikes the blindness of its roots
And suckers forth, but howsoe'er
It blindly beat itself beyond
Its planted first can do no more
Than stretch the measure of its bond
And shape as it had shaped before
The arborous passion that can ne'er
Be paroled into shriving air-
Sicken in the leafy blood
And turn it deadly pale.
And as when a strong malady
Of tertian and quaternian pain,
Turning the cause whence it began
Into the woe of man,
By loops and conduits else too fine
For an incarnadine,
Hath shaken, shaken it from the body into space,
When life and health again co-reign,
And all youth's rosy cheer
Tunes every nerve and summers every vein,
Some crucial habit of the brain
Sudden repeats the unforgotten throe-

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Orphan's Song

I had a little bird,
I took it from the nest;
I prest it, and blest it,
And nurst it in my breast.

I set it on the ground,
I danced round and round,
And sang about it so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And oh but I love thee dearly!'

I make a little feast
Of food soft and sweet,
I hold it in my breast,
And coax it to eat;

I pit, and I pat,
I call it this and that,
And sing about it so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

I may kiss, I may sing,
But I can't make it feed,
It taketh no heed
Of any pleasant thing.

I scolded, and I socked,
But it minded not a whit,
Its little mouth was locked,
And I could not open it.

Tho' with pit, and with pat,
And with this, and with that,
I sang about it so cheerly,
And 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly.'

But when the day was done,

And the room was at rest,
And I sat all alone
With my birdie in my breast,

And the light had fled,
And not a sound was heard,
Then my little bird
Lifted up its head,

And the little mouth
Loosed its sullen pride,
And it opened, it opened,
With a yearning strong and wide.

Swifter than I speak
I brought it food once more,
But the poor little beak
Was locked as before.

I sat down again,
And not a creature stirred,
I laid the little bird
Again where it had lain;

And again when nothing stirred,
And not a word I said,
Then my little bird
Lifted up its head,
And the little beak
Loosed its stubborn pride,
And it opened, it opened,
With a yearning strong and wide.

It lay in my breast,
It uttered no cry,
'Twas famished, 'twas famished,
And I couldn't tell why.

I couldn't tell why,
But I saw that it would die,
For all that I kept dancing round and round,
And singing above it so cheerly,

With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

I never look sad,
I hear what people say,
I laugh when they are gay
And they think I am glad.

My tears never start,
I never say a word,
But I think that my heart
Is like that little bird.

Every day I read,
And I sing, and I play,
But thro' the long day
It taketh no heed.

It taketh no heed
Of any pleasant thing,
I know it doth not read,
I know it doth not sing.

With my mouth I read,
With my hands I play,
My shut heart is shut,
Coax it how you may.

You may coax it how you may
While the day is broad and bright,
But in the dead night
When the guests are gone away,

And no more the music sweet
Up the house doth pass,
Nor the dancing feet
Shake the nursery glass;

And I've heard my aunt
Along the corridor,
And my uncle gaunt
Lock his chamber door;

And upon the stair
All is hushed and still,
And the last wheel
Is silent in the square;

And the nurses snore,
And the dim sheets rise and fall,
And the lamplight's on the wall,
And the mouse is on the floor;

And the curtains of my bed
Are like a heavy cloud,
And the clock ticks loud,
And sounds are in my head;

And little Lizzie sleeps
Softly at my side,
It opens, it opens,
With a yearning strong and wide!

It yearns in my breast,
It utters no cry,
'Tis famished, 'tis famished,
And I feel that I shall die,
I feel that I shall die,
And none will know why.
Tho' the pleasant life is dancing round and round
And singing about me so cheerly,
With 'Hey my little bird, and ho my little bird,
And ho but I love thee dearly!'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Recruit's Ball

Fiddler loquitur

Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddlestick, fiddlestick,
Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddle for a king!
Heigh, pretty Kitty! heigh, jolly Polly!
Up with the heels, girls! fling, lasses, fling!
Heigh there! stay there! that's not the way there!
Oh Johnny, Johnny,
Oh Johnny, Johnny,
Ho, ho, everybody all round the ring!

Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddlestick, fiddlestick,
Heigho, fiddlestick, fiddle for a king!
Heigh, pretty Kitty! heigh, jolly Polly!
Up with the heels, girls! swing, girls, swing!
Foot, boys! foot, boys! to 't, boys! do 't, boys!
Ho, Bill! ho, Jill! ho, Will! ho, Phil!
Ho, Johnny, Johnny,
Ho, Johnny, Johnny,
Ho, ho, everybody, all round the ring!

Deuce take the fiddle,
Deuce take the fiddle,
Deuce take the jolly fiddle, deuce take the fiddler!
Here goes the fiddle,
Here goes the fiddle,
Here goes the jolly fiddle, here goes the fiddler!

Ned, boy! your head, boy!
She'll strike you dead, boy!
There she goes at your nose!
Deuce strike you dead, boy!

Call, boys! bawl, boys!
Deuce take us all, boys!

Here we go, yes or no,
Deuce take us all, boys!

Deuce take the wall, boys,
Deuce take the floor, boys,
Deuce take the jolly floor,
Deuce take us all, boys!

There goes the wall, boys!
There goes the door, boys!
Round they swing in a ring!
There goes the floor, boys!

Lad, wench, roof, floor,
Wench, lad, wall, door!
Curse the ground, spin it round!
Deuce take us all, boys!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Sailor's Return

This morn I lay a-dreaming,
This morn, this merry morn,
When the cock crew shrill from over the hill,
I heard a bugle horn.

And thro' the dream I was dreaming,
There sighed the sigh of the sea,
And thro' the dream I was dreaming,
This voice came singing to me.

'High over the breakers,
Low under the lee,
Sing ho
The billow,
And the lash of the rolling sea!

'Boat, boat, to the billow,
Boat, boat, to the lee!
Love on thy pillow,
Art thou dreaming of me?

'Billow, billow, breaking,
Land us low on the lee!
For sleeping or waking,
Sweet love, I am coming to thee!

'High, high, o'er the breakers,
Low, low, on the lee,
Sing ho!
The billow
That brings me back to thee!'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Snowdrop In The Snow

O full of Faith! The Earth is rock,-the Heaven
The dome of a great palace all of ice,
Russ-built. Dull light distils through frozen skies
Thickened and gross. Cold Fancy droops her wing,
And cannot range. In winding-sheets of snow
Lies every thought of any pleasant thing.
I have forgotten the green earth; my soul
Deflowered, and lost to every summer hope,
Sad sitteth on an iceberg at the Pole;
My heart assumes the landscape of mine eyes
Moveless and white, chill blanched with hoarest rime;
The Sun himself is heavy and lacks cheer
Or on the eastern hill or western slope;
The world without seems far and long ago;
To silent woods stark famished winds have driven
The last lean robin-gibbering winds of fear!
Thou only darest to believe in spring,
Thou only smilest, Lady of the Time!
Even as the stars come up out of the sea
Thou risest from the Earth. How is it down
In the dark depths? Should I delve there, O Flower,
For beauty? Shall I find the summer there
Met manifold, as in an ark of peace?
And Thou, a lone white Dove, art thou sent forth
Upon the winter deluge? It shall cease,
But not for thee-pierced by the ruthless North
And spent with the Evangel. In what hour
The flood abates thou wilt have closed thy wings
For ever. When the happy living things
Of the old world come forth upon the new
I know my heart shall miss thee; and the dew
Of summer twilights shall shed tears for me
-Tears liker thee, ah, purest! than mine own-
Upon thy vestal grave, O vainly fair!

Thou should'st have noble destiny, who, like
A Prophet, art shut out from kind and kin:
Who on the winter silence comest in

A still small voice. Pale Hermit of the Year,
Flower of the Wilderness! oh, not for thee
The jocund playmates of the maiden spring.
For when she danceth forth with cymballed feet,
Waking a-sudden with great welcoming,
Each calling each, they burst from hill to dell
In answering music. But thou art a bell,
A passing bell, snow-muffled, dim and sweet.
As is the Poet to his fellow-men,
So mid thy drifting snows, O Snowdrop, Thou.
Gifted, in sooth, beyond them, but no less
A snowdrop. And thou shalt complete his lot
And bloom as fair as now when they are not.
Thou art the wonder of the seasons, O
First-born of Beauty. As the Angel near
Gazed on that first of living things which, when
The blast that ruled since Chaos o'er the sere
Leaves of primeval Palms did sweep the plain,
Clung to the new-made sod and would not drive,
So gaze I upon thee amid the reign
Of Winter. And because thou livest, I live.
And art thou happy in thy loneliness?
Oh couldst thou hear the shouting of the floods,
Oh couldst thou know the stir among the trees
When-as the herald-voice of breeze on breeze
Proclaims the marriage pageant of the Spring
Advancing from the South-each hurries on
His wedding-garment, and the love-chimes ring
Thro' nuptial valleys! No, serene and lone,
I will not flush thy cheek with joys like these.
Songs for the rosy morning; at grey prime
To hang the head and pray. Thou doest well.
I will not tell thee of the bridal train.
No; let thy Moonlight die before their day
A Nun among the Maidens, thou and they.
Each hath some fond sweet office that doth strike
One of our trembling heartstrings musical.
Is not the hawthorn for the Queen of May?
And cuckoo-flowers for whom the cuckoo's voice
Hails, like an answering sister, to the woods?
Is not the maiden blushing in the rose?
Shall not the babe and buttercup rejoice,

Twins in one meadow! Are not violets all
By name or nature for the breast of Dames?
For them the primrose, pale as star of prime,
For them the wind-flower, trembling to a sigh,
For them the dew stands in the eyes of day
That blink in April on the daisied lea?
Like them they flourish and like them they fade,
And live beloved and loving. But for thee-
For such a bevy how art thou arrayed,
Flower of the Tempests? What hast thou with them?
Thou shalt be pearl unto a diadem
Which the Heavens jewel. They shall deck the brows
Of joy and wither there. But thou shalt be
A Martyr's garland. Thou who, undismayed,
To thy spring dreams art true amid the snows
As he to better dreams amid the flames.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Sodger's Lassie

A'the toun is to the doun
Puin' o' the blaeberry.
Ab's gane, Rab's gane,
Aggie's gane, Maggie's gane,
A' the toun is to the doun,
An's left the house to wae and me.

Heigho the blaeberry!
Wha'll hae a blaeberry?
Ah, to min' o' auld lang syne,
Puin' o' the blaeberry!

Sodger Tam, he cam an' cam,
Puin' o' the blaeberry;
Still I went, an' still I bent,
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Berries high, an' berries low,
Heigho the blaeberry!
Tam maun come where berries grow,
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Heigho the blaeberry!
Wha'll hae a blaeberry?
Ah, to min' o' auld lang syne,
Puin' o' the blaeberry!

Never ance I looked at Tam,
Heigho the blaeberry!
Weel I kent him when he cam,
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Baith our faces to the groun',
Puin' o' the blaeberry,
Tam cam near without a soun',

Heigho the blaeberry!

Wow! but we were near, I ween,
Puin' o' the blaeberry!
A' the air was warm between,
Heigho the blaeberry!

Could a lassie think o' ill,
Puin' o' the blaeberry?
Berries e'en grow where they will,
Heigho the blaeberry!

Berries here, an' berries there,
Heigho the blaeberry!
I was kissed or I was ware,
Puin' o' the blaeberry.

Wha wad fash wi' ane anither
Puin' o' the blaeberry?
Berries whiles will grow thegither,
Heigho the blaeberry!

I was kissed or I could speer,
Heigho the blaeberry!
Hech! that folk sud come sae near,
A' to pu' a blaeberry!

While I grat and chid forbye,
Heigho the blaeberry!
Doun we sat-I ken na why-
A' amang the blaeberry.

Heigho the blaeberry!
Wha 'll hae a blaeberry?
Oh, to min' o' auld lang syne,

A' amang the blaeberrie!

Sidelong Tam he cam an' cam
A' amang the blaeberrie.
Wha could tell he meant na fair?
Weel I ken I chid him sair,
But that day we gaed na mair
Puin' o' the blaeberrie!

Heigho the blaeberrie!
Wha 'll hae a blaeberrie?
Oh, to min' o' auld lang syne,
Doun amang the blaeberrie!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Widow's Lullaby

She droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

The sun comes up from the lea,
As he who will never come more
Came up that first day to her door,
When the ship furl'd her sails by the shore,
And the spring leaves were green on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

The sun goes down in the sea,
As he who will never go more
Went down that last day from her door,
When the ship set her sails from the shore,
And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!
The year comes glad o'er the lea,
As he who will never come more,
Never, ah never!
Came up that first day to her door,
When the ship furl'd her sails by the shore,
And the spring leaves were green on the tree.
Never, ah never!
He who will come again, never!

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!

Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!

The year goes sad to the sea,
As he who will never go more
For ever went down from her door,
Ever, for ever!
When the ship set her sails by the shore,
And the dead leaves were sere on the tree.
Ever, for ever!
For ever went down from her door.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!

A gun, and a flash, and a gun,
The ship lies again where she lay!
High and low, low and high, in the sun,
There's a boat, a boat on the bay!
High and low, low and high, in the sun,
All as she saw it that day,
When he came who shall never come more,
And the ship furled her sails by the shore.

But she droops like a dew-dropping lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!

All as she saw it that day,
With a gun, and a flash, and a gun,
The ship lies again where she lay,
And they run, and they ride, and they run,
Merry, merry, merry, down the merry highway,
To the boat, high and low in the sun.
Nearer and nearer she hears the rolling drum,
Clearer and clearer she hears the cry, 'They come,'
Far and near runs the cheer to her ear once so dear,

Merry, merry, merry, up the merry highway,
As it ran when he came that day
And said, 'Wilt thou be my dearie?
Oh, wilt thou be my dearie?
My boat is dry in the bay,
And I'll love till thou be weary!
And she could not say him nay,
For his bonny eyes o' blue,
And never was true-love so true,
To never so kind a dearie,
As he who will never love more,
When the ship furls her sails by the shore.

Then she shakes like a wind-stricken lily,
'Whisht thee, boy, whisht thee, boy Willie!
Whisht whisht o' thy wailing, whisht thee, boy Willie!'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Wounded

'Thou canst not wish to live,' the surgeon said.
He clutched him, as a soul thrust forth from bliss
Clings to the ledge of Heaven! 'Would'st thou keep this
Poor branchless trunk?' 'But she would lean my head
Upon her breast; oh, let me live!' 'Be wise.'
'I could be very happy; both these eyes
Are left me; I should see her; she would kiss
My forehead: only let me live.'-He dies
Even in the passionate prayer. 'Good Doctor, say
If thou canst give more than another day
Of life?' 'I think there may be hope.' 'Pass on.
I will not buy it with some widow's son!'
'Help,' 'help,' 'help,' 'help!' 'God curse thee!' 'Doctor, stay,
Yon Frenchman went down earlier in the day.'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Young Man's Song

At last the curse has run its date!
The heavens grow clear above,
And on the purple plains of Hate,
We'll build the throne of Love!

One great heroic reign divine
Shall mock the Elysian isles,
And love in arms shall only shine
Less fair than Love in smiles!

Old Clio, burn thine ancient scroll,
The scroll of Rome and Greece!
Our war shall be a parable
On all the texts of peace,

And saints look down, with eyes of praise,
Where on our modern field
The new Samaritan forelays
The wrongs that other healed!

What virtue is beyond our prize?
What deed beneath you sun
More Godlike than the prodigies
We mortal men have done

We wearied of the lagging steed,
The dove had not a quill
To fledge the imaginable speed
Of our wild shaft of will;

'Ah, could each word be winged with wind,
And speech be swift as sight!'
We cursed the long arms of that blind
Dumb herald on the height,

Dark struggling with a mystery
He daily hid in shades,
As a ghost steams up on the eye,
Begins a Fate and fades.

'If, like a man, dull space could hear!
If, like a man, obey!'
We seized this earthly hemisphere,
This senseless skull of clay.

We drew from Heaven a breath of flame,
And thro' the lifeless whole
Did breathe it till the orb became
One brain of burning soul.

As he o'er whom a tyrant reigns,
It waits our sovran word,
And thinks along the living veins
The lightnings of its lord!

What Force can meet our matchless might?
What Power is not our slave?
We bound the angel of the light,
We scourged him in a cave.

And when we saw the prisoner pine
For his immortal land,
We wrung a ransom, half divine,
From that celestial hand

Whose skill the heavy chain subdued,
And all a captive's woe
Did tame to such a tempered good
As mortal eyes can know.

Who comes, who comes, o'er mountains laid,
Vales lifted, straightened ways?
'Tis he! the mightier horse we made
To serve our nobler days!

But now, unheard, I saw afar
His cloud of windy mane,
Now, level as a blazing star,
He thunders thro' the plain!

The life he needs, the food he loves,

This cold earth bears no more;
He foddens on the eternal groves
That heard the dragons roar,

Strong with the feast he roars and runs,
And, in his maw unfurled,
Evolves the folded fires of suns
That lit a grander world!

Yon bird, the swiftest in the sky,
Before him sprang, but he
Has passed her as a wind goes by
A struggler in the sea.

With forward beak and forward blows,
She slides back from his side;
While ever as the monster goes,
With needless power and pride,

Disdainful from his fiery jaws
He snorts his vital heat,
And, easy as his shadow, draws,
Long-drawn, the living street.

He's gone! Methinks that over him,
Like Curtius in the abyss,
I see great gulphs close rim to rim,
And Past and Future kiss!

Oh, Man! as from the flood sublime
Some alp rose calm and slow,
So from the exhaling floods of time
I see thy stature grow.

Long since thy royal brow, uncrowned,
Allegiant nature saw,
Long since thine eye of empire frowned
The heavenly thrones to awe;

And now the monarch's breast apart
Divides the sinking spray,
Fit dome for such gigantic heart

As warms so vast a sway.

Far o'er the watery wilds I see
Thy great right-arm upsurge,
Thy right-hand, armed with victory,
Is sunburst on the verge!

Arise, arise! oh, sword! and sweep
One universal morn!
Another throe, thou labouring Deep,
And all the god is born!

So sang a youth of glorious blood.
Below, the wind-hawk shook her wings,
And lower, in its kingdom, stood
A tower of ancient kings.

Above, the autumn sky was blue,
Far round the golden world was fair,
And, gun by gun, the ramparts blew
A battle on the air.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

The Youth Of England To Garibaldi's Legend

O ye who by the gaping earth
Where, faint with resurrection, lay
An empire struggling into birth,
Her storm-strown beauty cold with clay,
The free winds round her flowery head,
Her feet still rooted with the dead,

Leaned on the unconquered arms that clave
Her tomb like Judgment, and foreknew
The life for which you rent the grave,
Would rise to breathe, beam, beat for you,
In every pulse of passionate mood,
A people's glorious gratitude,-

But heard, far off, the mobled woe
Of some new plaintiff for the light;
And leave your dear reward, and go
In haste, yet once again to smite
The hills, and, like a flood, unlock
Another nation from the rock;

Oh ye who, sure of nought but God
And death, go forth to turn the page
Of life, and in your heart's best blood
Date anew the chaptered age;
Ye o'er whom, as the abyss
O'er Curtius, sundered worlds shall kiss,

Do ye dream what ye have done?
What ye are and shall be? Nay,
Comets rushing to the sun,
And dyeing the tremendous way
With glory, look not back, nor know
How they blind the earth below.

From wave to wave our race rolls on,
In seas that rise, and fall, and rise;
Our tide of Man beneath the moon
Sets from the verge to yonder skies;
Throb after throb the ancient might
In such a thousand hills renews the earliest height.

'Tis something, o'er that moving vast,
To look across the centuries
Which heave the purple of a past
That was, and is not, and yet is,
And in that awful light to see
The crest of far Thermopylæ,

And, as a fisher draws his fly
Ripple by ripple, from shore to shore,
To draw our floating gaze, and try
The more by less, the less by more,
And find a peer to that sublime
Old height in the last surge of time.

'Tis something: yet great Clío's reed,
Greek with the sap of Castaly,
In her most glorious word midway
Begins to weep and bleed;
And Clío, lest she burn the line
Hides her blushing face divine,

While that maternal muse, so white
And lean with trying to forget,
Moves her mute lips, and, at the sight,
As if all suns that ever set
Slanted on a mortal ear
What man can feel but cannot hear,

We know, and know not how we know,

That when heroic Greece uprist,
Sicilia broke a daughter's vow,
And failed the inexorable tryst,-
We know that when those Spartans drew
Their swords-too many and too few!-

A presage blanched the Olympian hill
To moonlight: the old Thunderer nods;
But all the sullen air is chill
With rising Fates and younger gods.
Jove saw his peril and spake: one blind
Pale coward touched them with mankind.

What, then, on that Sicanian ground
Which soured the blood of Greece to shame,
To make the voice of praise resound
A triumph that, if Grecian fame
Blew it on her clarion old,
Had warmed the silver trump to gold!

What, then, brothers! to brim o'er
The measure Greece could scarcely brim,
And, calling Victory from the dim
Of that remote Thessalian shore,
Make his naked limbs repeat
What in the harness of defeat

He did of old; and, at the head
Of modern men, renewing thus
Thermopylæ, with Xerxes fled
And every Greek Leonidas,
Untitle the proud Past and crown
The heroic ages in our own!

Oh ye, whom they who cry 'how long'
See, and-as nestlings in the nest
Sink silent-sink into their rest;

Oh ye, in whom the Right and Wrong
That this old world of Day and Night
Crops upon its black and white,

Shall strike, and, in the last extremes
Of final best and worst, complete
The circuit of your light and heat;
Oh ye who walk upon our dreams,
And live, unknowing how or why
The vision and the prophecy,

In every tabernacled tent-
Eat shew-bread from the altar, and wot
Not of it-drink a sacrament
At every draught and know it not-
Breathe a nobler year whose least
Worst day is as the fast and feast

Of men-and, with such steps as chime
To nothing lower than the ears
Can hear to whom the marching spheres
Beat the universal time
Thro' our Life's perplexity,
March the land and sail the sea,

O'er those fields where Hate hath led
So oft the hosts of Crime and Pain-
March to break the captive's chain,
To heal the sick, to raise the dead,
And, where the last deadliest rout
Of furies cavern, to cast out

Those Dæmons,-ay, to meet the fell
Foul belch of swarming Satan hot
From Ætna, and down Ætna's throat
Drench that vomit back to hell-
In the east your star doth burn;

The tide of Fate is on the turn;

The thrown powers that mar or make
Man's good lie shed upon the sands,
Or on the wave about to break
Are flotsam that nor swims nor stands;
Earth is cold and pale, a-swoon
With fear; to the watch-tower of noon

The sun climbs sick and sorrowful,
Or, like clouded Cæsar, doth fold
His falling greatness to behold
Some crescent evil near the full.
Hell flickers; and the sudden reel
Of fortune, stopping in mid-wheel

Till the shifted current blows,
Clacks the knocking balls of chance
And the metred world's advance
Pauses at the rhythmic close;
One stave is ended, and the next
Chords its discords on the vext

And tuning Time: this is the hour
When weak Nature's need should be
The Hero's opportunity,
And heart and hand are Right and Power,
And he who will not serve may reign,
And who dares well dares nought in vain.

Behind you History stands a-gape;
On either side the incarnadine
Hot nations in whom war's wild wine
Burns like vintage thro' the grape,
See you, ruddy with the morn
Of Freedom, see you, and for scorn

As on that old day of wrath
The hosts drew off in hope and doubt,
And the shepherd-boy stept out
To sling Judæa upon Gath,
Furl in two, and, still as stone,
Like a red sea let you on.

On! ay tho' at war's alarms
That sea should flood into a foe!
On! the horns of Jericho
Blow when Virtue blows to arms.
Numberless or numbered-on!
Men are millions, God is one.

On! who waits for favouring gales?
What hap can ground your Argosy?
A nation's blessings fill your sails,
And tho' her wrongs scorched ocean dry,
Yet ah! her blood and tears could roll
Another sea from pole to pole.

On! day round ye, summer bloom
Beneath, in your young veins the bliss
Of youth! Who asks more? Ask but this,
-And ask as One will ask at Doom-
If lead be true, if steel be keen?
If hearts be pure, if hands be clean?

On! night round ye, the worst roak
Of Fortune poisoning all youth's bliss;
Each grass a sword, each Delphic oak
An omen! Who dreads? Dread but this,-
Blunted steel and lead unsure,
Hands unclean and hearts impure!

Full of love to God and man

As girt Martha's wageless toil;
Gracious as the wine and oil
Of the good Samaritan;
Healing to our wrongs and us
As Abraham's breast to Lazarus;

Piteous as the cheek that gave
Its patience to the smiter, still
Rendering nought but good for ill,
Tho' the greatest good ye have
Be iron, and your love and ruth
Speak but from the cannon's mouth-

On! you servants of the Lord,
In the right of servitude
Reap the life He sowed, and blood
His frenzied people with the sword,
And the blessing shall be yours,
That falls upon the peacemakers!

Ay, tho' trump and clarion blare,
Tho' your charging legions rock
Earth's bulwarks, tho' the slaughtered air
Be carrion, and the encountered shock
Of your clashing battles jar
The rung heav'ns, this is Peace, not War

With that two-edged sword that cleaves
Crowned insolence to awe,
And whose backward lightning leaves
Licence stricken into law,
Fill, till slaves and tyrants cease,
The sacred panurgy of peace!

Peace, as outraged peace can rise
When her eye that watched and prayed
Sees upon the favouring skies

The great sign, so long delayed,
And from hoofed and trampled sod
She leaps transfigured to a god,

Meets amid her smoking land
The chariot of careering War,
Locks the whirlwind of his car,
Wrests the thunder from his hand,
And, with his own bolt down-hurl'd,
Brains the monster from the world!

Hark! he comes! His nostrils cast
Like chaff before him flocks and men.
Oh proud, proud day, in yonder glen
Look on your heroes! Look your last,
Your last: and draw in with the passionate eye
Of love's last look the sights that paint eternity.

He comes-a tempest hides their place!
'Tis morn. The long day wanes. The loud
Storm lulls. Some march out of the cloud,
The princes of their age and race;
And some the mother earth that bore
Such sons hath loved too well to let them leave her more.

But oh, when joy-bells ring
For the living that return,
And the fires of victory burn,
And the dancing kingdoms sing,
And beauty takes the brave
To the breast he bled to save,

Will no faithful mourner weep
Where the battle-grass is gory,
And deep the soldier's sleep
In his martial cloak of glory,
Sleeps the dear dead buried low?

Shall they be forgotten? Lo,

On beyond that vale of fire
This babe must travel ere the child
Of yonder tall and bearded sire
His father's image hath fulfilled,
He shall see in that far day
A race of maidens pale and grey.

Theirs shall be nor cross nor hood,
Common rite nor convent roof,
Bead nor bell shall put to proof
A sister of that sisterhood;
But by noonday or by night
In her eyes there shall be light.

And as a temple organ, set
To its best stop by hands long gone,
Gives new ears the olden tone
And speaks the buried master yet,
Her lightest accents have the key
Of ancient love and victory.

And, as some hind, whom his o'erthrown
And dying king o'er hill and flood
Sends laden with the fallen crown,
Breathes the great trust into his blood
Till all his conscious forehead wears
The splendid secret that he bears,

For ever, everywhere the same,
Thro' every changing time and scene,
In widow's weeds and lowly name
She stands a bride, she moves a queen;
The flowering land her footstep knows;
The people bless her as she goes,

Whether upon your sacred days
She peers the mightiest and the best,
Or whether, by the common ways,
The babe leans from the peasant's breast,
While humble eyelids proudly fill,
And momentary Sabbaths still

The hand that spins, the foot that delves,
And all our sorrow and delight
Behold the seraph of themselves
In that pure face where woe grown bright
Seems rapture chastened to the mild
And equal light of smiles unsmiled.

And if perchance some wandering king,
Enamoured of her virgin reign,
Should sue the hand whose only ring
Is the last link of that first chain,
Forged by no departed hours, and seen
But in the daylight that hath been,

She pauses ere her heart can speak,
And, from below the source of tears,
The girlhood to her faded cheek
Goes slowly up thro' twenty years,
And, like the shadow in her eyes,
Slowly the living Past replies,

In tones of such serene eclipse
As if the voices of Death and Life
Came married by her mortal lips
To more than Life or Death-'A wife
Thou woost; on yonder field he died
Who lives in all the world beside.'

Oh, ye who, in the favouring smile

Of Heaven, at one great stroke shall win
The gleaming guerdons that beguile
Glory's grey-haired Paladin
Thro' all his threescore jousts and ten,
-Love of women, and praise of men,

The spurs, the bays, the palm, the crown,-
Who, from your mountain-peak among
Mountains, thenceforth may look along
The shining tops of deeds undone,
And take them thro' the level air
As angels walk from star to star,

We from our isle-the ripest spot
Of the round green globe-where all
The rays of God most kindly fall,
And warm us to that temperate lot
Of seasoned change that slowly brings
Fruition to the orb of things,

We from this calm in chaos, where
Matter running into plan
And Reason solid in a man
Mediate the earth and air,
See ye winging yon far gloom,
Oh, ministering spirits! as some

Blest soul above that, all too late,
From his subaltern seat in heaven
Looks round and measures fate with fate,
And thro' the clouds below him driven
Beholds from that calm world of bliss
The toil and agony of this,

And, warming with the scene rehearst,
Bemoans the realms where all is won,
And sees the last that shall be first,

And spurns his secondary throne,
And envies from his changeless sphere
The life that strives and conquers here.

But ere toward fields so old and new
We leap from joys that shine in vain,
And rain our passion down the blue
Serene-once more-once more-to drain
Life's dreadful ecstasy, and sell
Our birthright for that oxymel

Whose stab and unction still keep quick
The wound for ever lost and found,
Lo, o'erhead, a cherubic
And legendary lyre, that round
The eddying spaces turns a dream
Of ancient war! And at the theme

Harps to answering harps, on high,
Call, recall, that but a strait
Of storm divides our happy state
From that pale sleepless Mystery
Who pines to sit upon the throne
He served ere falling to his own.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To 1862

(In Prospect Of War With America)

I

Oh worst of years, by what signs shall we know
So dire an advent? Let thy New-Year's-day
Be night. At the east gate let the sun lay
His crown: as thro' a temple hung with woe
Unkinged by mortal sorrow let him go
Down the black noon, whose wan astrology
Peoples the skyey windows with dismay,
To that dark charnel in the west where lo!
The mobled Moon! For so, at the dread van
Of wars like ours, the great humanity
In things not human should be wrought and wrung
Into our sight, and creatures without tongue
By the dumb passion of a visible cry
Confess the coming agony of Man.

II

Even now, this spring in winter, like some young
Fair Babe of Empire, ere his birth-bells ring,
Shewn to the people by a hoary King,
Stirs me with omens. What fine shock hath sprung
The fairy mines of buried life among
The clods? Above spring flow'rs a bird of spring
Makes February of the winds that sing
Yule-chants: while March, thro' Christmas brows, rimehung,
Looks violets: and on yon grave-like knoll
A girlish season sheds her April soul.
Ah is this day that strains the exquisite
Strung sense to finer fibres of delight
An aimless sport of Time? Or do its show'rs,
Smiles, birds and blooms betray the heart of conscious Pow'rs?

III

Methinks the innumerable eyes of ours

That must untimely close in endless night
Take in one sum their natural due of light:
Feather'd like summer birds their unliv'd hours
Sing to them: at their prison pitying flow'rs
Push thro' the bars a Future red and white,
Purple and gold: for them, for them, yon bright
Star, as an eye, extills and fills, and pours
Its tear, and fills and weeps, to fill and weep:
For them that Moon from her wild couch on high
Now stretches arms that wooed Endymion,
Now swooning back against the sky stares down
Like some white mask of ancient tragedy
With orbless lids that neither wake nor sleep.

IV

Hark! a far gun, like all war's guns in one,
Booms. At that sign, from the new monument
Of him who held the plough whereto he bent
His royal sword, and meekly laboured on,
Till when the verdict of mankind had gone
Against our peace, he, waiving our consent,
Carried the appeal to higher courts, and went
Himself to plead-She whom he loved and won,
The Queen of Earth and Sea,-her unrisen head
Bowed in a sorrowful cloud-takes her slow way
To her great throne, and, lifting up her day
Upon her land, and to that flag unfurl'd
Where wave the honour and the chastity
Of all our men and maidens living and dead,
Points westward, and thus breaks the silence of the world:-

V

'Since it is War, my England, and nor I
On you nor you on me have drawn down one
Drop of this bloody guilt, God's Will be done,
Here upon earth in woe, in bliss on high!
Peace is but mortal and to live must die,
And, like that other creature of the sun,
Must die in fire. Therefore, my English, on!
And burn it young again with victory!

For me, in all your joys I have been first
And in this woe my place I still shall keep,
I am the earliest widow that must weep,
My children the first orphans. The divine
Event of all God knows: but come the worst
It cannot leave your homes more dark than mine.'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To A Cathedral Tower: On The Evening Of The Thirty-Fifth Anniversay Of Waterloo

And since thou art no older, 'tis to-day!
And I, entranced,-with the wide sense of gods
Confronting Time-receive the equal touch
Of Past and Present. Yet I am not moved
To frenzy; but, with how much calm befits
The insufficient passions of a soul
Expanding to celestial limits, take
Ampler vitality, and fill, serene,
The years that are and were. Unchanging Pile!
Our schoolboy fathers play in yonder streets,
Wherethro' their mothers, new from evening prayer,
Speak of the pleasant eve, and say Good Night.
Say on! to whom, oh never more shall night
Seem good; to whom for the last time hath eve
Been pleasant! Look up to the sunset skies
As a babe smiles into his murderer's face,
Nor see the Fate that flushes all the heaven,
Unconscious Mother! Hesper thro' the trees
Palpitates light; and thou, beholding peace,
Keepest thy vigil and art fond to think
His heart is beating for a world of bliss.
'Oh Sabbath Land!' Ah Mother, doth thine ear
Discern new silence? Dost thou dream what right
The earth may have to seem so still to thee?
Oh Sabbath Land! but on the Belgian plain
The bolt has fallen; and the storm draws off
In scattered thunders groaning round the hills
And tempest-drops of woe upon the field.
The king of men has turned his charger's head
Whose hoofs did shake the world, but clatter now
Unheeding sod. He turns, and in his track
The sorrows of the centuries to come
Cry on the air. He rides into the night,
Which as a dreadful spirit hails him in
With lightnings and with voices. Far behind,
In the War-marish, Victory and Glory
Fall by each other's hands, like friends of old,

Unconquered. And the genius of his race,
Pale, leaning on a broken eagle, dies.
High in the midst departing Freedom stands
On hills of slain; her wings unfurled, her hands
Toward heaven, her eyes turned, streaming, on the earth,
In act to rise. And all the present Fortunes,
Hopes, Oracles, and Omens of the world
Sitting alow, as mourners veiled and dumb,
Draw, with weird finger, in the battle-slime
The signs of Fate. Behold whom War salutes
Victor of victors. War, red-hot with toil,
Spokesman of Death. Death, pale with sated lust
And hoarse with greed. Behold! At his strong call
The bloody dust takes life, and obscene shapes
Clang on contending wings, wild wheeling round
His head exulting. How they hate the light
And rout the fevered sunset that looks back
Obtesting! How they scream up at the stars
And smite in rage the invisible air! How, like
A swoop of black thoughts thro' a stormy soul,
They rush about the Victor and snatch joys
For all the tyrants of the darkened globe.
Who shall withstand him? Him the evening star
Trembled to see. Our despots, from the first,
Bequeathed him each a feature, and he walks
The sum of all oppression and the sign.
O Earth! O Heaven! O Life! O Death! O Man!
Flesh of my flesh, my brother! Is there hope?
Soul, soul! behold the portent of the time.
High in the Heaven, the angels, much-attent,
With conscious faces and averted eyes
(As one who feels the wrong he will not see,)
Gaze upon God, and neither frown nor smile.
Grey Pile,
Who lookest with thy kindred hills upon
This quiet England, shadow-robed for sleep,
I also speak to thee as one whom kin
Emboldens. Demigod among the gods,
I charge thee by thy human nature speak!
Doth she sleep well? Thou who hast watched her face,
Tell me, for thou canst tell, doth the flesh creep?
Ah! and the soil of Albion stirred that day!

Ah! and these fields, at midnight, heaved with graves!

The vision ends. Collapsing to a point
In Time, I see thee, O red Waterloo,
A deadly wound now healed. From whose great scar
Upon the brow of Man, the bloody husks
Have newly fallen. 'Twas a Felon's blow
On one who reeling, drunk with life, above
A precipice, fell by the timely steel;
Bled, and, deplete, was whole; saw with sane eyes
The gulph that yawned; and rises, praising God,
To bind the Assassin.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To A Friend In Bereavement

No comfort, nay, no comfort. Yet would I
In Sorrow's cause with Sorrow intercede.
Burst not the great heart,-this is all I plead-
Ah sentence it to suffer, not to die.
'Comfort?' If Jesus wept at Bethany,
-That doze and nap of Death-how may we bleed
Who watch the long sleep that is sleep indeed!
Pointing to Heaven I but remind you why
On earth you still must mourn. He who, being bold
For life-to-come, is false to the past sweet
Of Mortal life, hath killed the world above.
For why to live again if not to meet?
And why to meet if not to meet in love?
And why in love if not in that dear love of old?

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To An American Embassy

Written At Florence, 1866:

Since Sovereign Nature, at the happy best,
Is rightful and sole paragon of Art,
Who, tho' she but in part, and part by part,
Paints, carves, or sings the whole, is still possest
By thee, all thee, oh somewhere unconfest
Apollo! in the worlds of men who art
A man, and, with a human body and heart,
Lookest her visible truths, and livest the rest;
Surely that strategy was well design'd
Which, laying siege to Art's proud Capital,
Armed not, against her matchless pow'rs-that-be,
Music, Painting, Sculpture, Poetry,
But sent a living womanhood of all
To queen, by their own laws, the masters of mankind.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To James H.

Without Life's toil to win Life's earthly prize
What was thy mystery, oh, early Dead?
The careless world but counted thy young head
Among the multifarious heads that rise
And sink, forgot. For thee, no watching eyes
Starred darkness; no torch led thee to the bed
Of clay. Yet (if the Apostle justly said
Of all oblation) who or lives or dies
So well as to achieve a fairer fame
Than henceforth should be thine, oh, unknown youth,
Since on your votive marble, for once, Truth
Indites an Epitaph, and, 'neath thy name,
Transcends all laudatory verse in one,
'To him John Hunter raised this tributary stone.'

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To James Y. Simpson

Oh teeming heart, that, for this once, in vain
Big with our good, didst undeliver'd die,
Had some god got thee with a progeny
O'er-great, that, born, might even dispute the reign
Of Death, as Death had seen the realms of Pain
Won by thine elder brood? We marvell'd why,
So seeming-careless of his sovereignty,
He spared and spared thee: doth this day explain
The Fabian greed that grudged a needless blow?
Knowing too well what deity possest
Thee, did the dead-eyed strategist foreknow
How the huge god must choke the mortal breast?
The mortal breast, deep under clod and sod,
Out of the half-saved world drag down the abortive god?

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To Mrs. J.S. Blackie

Dear Friend, once, in a dream, I, looking o'er
The Past, saw the Four Seasons slow advance
Dancing, and, dancing, each her cognizance
So gave and took that neither dancer bore
Her sign, but in another's symbol wore
An amulet to lessen or enhance
Herself: till as they fast and faster dance
I see a dance and lose the dancing four.
Thus thy dear Poet, at his sportive will,
Commingling every seasonable mood
Of old and young, and the peculiar ill
Of each still healing with the other's good,
Bends to a circle life's proverbial span
Where childhood, youth, and age are unity in man.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To Professor And Mrs. J.S. Blackie

If Time that feeds love dies to die no more,
Immortal hours, dear friends, were yours and mine;
For Morn that on the hills oped eyes divine,
And Eve that walked like Mary by the shore
Where that old Dreamer, as he built, of yore,
Saw her, and told his dream in such a shrine
As was a kind of Mary, and the shine
Of Noon, and starry censers swinging o'er
With Night, all made ye dearer: thou whose soul,
Palimpsest of a dead and living world,
Taketh no dust from that nor stain from this,
And thou who with thyself hast so empearled
The writing-knowing well how rare it is-
That the scrolled jewels and the jewelled scroll
In total more than both complete a married whole.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To The Authoress Of

Were Shakspeare born a twin, his lunar twin
(Not of the golden but the silver bow)
Should be like thee: so, with such eyes and brow,
Sweeten his looks, so, with her dear sex in
His voice, (a king's words writ out by the queen,)
Unman his bearded English, and, with flow
Of breastfull robes about her female snow,
Present the lordly brother. Oh Last-of-kin,
There be ambitious women here on earth
Who will not thank thee to have sung so well!
Apollo and Diana are one birth,
Pollux and Helen break a single shell.
Who now may hope? While Adam was alone
Eve was to come. She came; God's work was done.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To The Same

Töchterchenlein, by whom the least became
The greatest title of dear Daughterhood,
Who hast not laid down life, nor spilled thy blood
For me, but throbb'd them thro' the living frame
Of duteous days less different than the same,
Yet not too much the same to be construed
In number, that still multiplied thy good,
And, by the figure of a changing name
For changeless love, helped my weak utterance
Of thy desert; as step by step we climb
A height, or by a thousand measure one:
I verse this Poetry which thou hast done,
As he who gazing on a rhythmic dance
Finds even his common speech a little keep the time.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To The Tiber

On its late (in 1871) Inundation of Rome

Well done, old Flood, that, hiding a clear eye
Beneath thy yellow veil, dost wend among
Those epic hills and dales of seven-topp'd song,
To keep watch on the stone eternity
Whereof the mortal tenants die and die;
One more is gone, the deadliest of the long
Line, the foul vast of whose unmeasured wrong
Twined to its summit in the triple Lie
Of that thrice-cursèd Crown. And thou, brave flood,
Enterest a thousand years of carrion
To swill away the deeps of dung and blood,
And drown the garbaged tribes that stank thereon,
That so, at least, the new investiture
Be on clean threshold and a hearth-stone pure.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

To Tochterchen: On Her Birthday

As one doth touch a flower wherein the dew
Trembles to fall, as one unplaits the ply
Of morning gossamer, so tenderly
My spirit touches thine. Yet, daughter true
And fair, great Launcelot's mighty nerve and thew
Best clove a king or caught a butterfly,
(Since each extreme is perfect mastery
-Accurate cause repaid in the fine due
Of just effect-) and, child, it should be so
With Love. The same that nicely plundereth
The honeyed zephyrs for thy cates and wine
Should train thee with the tasks of toil and woe,
Or hold thee against adverse life and death,
Or give thee from my breast to dearer arms than mine.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Tommy's Dead

YOU may give over plough, boys,
You may take the gear to the stead,
All the sweat o' your brow, boys,
Will never get beer and bread.
The seed's waste, I know, boys,
There's not a blade will grow, boys,
'Tis cropped out, I trow, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

Send the colt to fair, boys,
He's going blind, as I said,
My old eyes can't bear, boys,
To see him in the shed;
The cow's dry and spare, boys,
She's neither here nor there, boys,
I doubt she's badly bread;
Stop the mill to-morn, boys,
There'll be no more corn, boys,
Neither white nor red;
There's no sign of grass, boys,
You may sell the goat and the ass, boys,
The land's not what it was, boys,
And the beasts must be fed:
You may turn Peg away, boys,
You may pay off old Ned,
We've had a dull day, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

Move my chair on the floor, boys,
Let me turn my head:
She's standing there in the door, boys,
Your sister Winifred!
Take her away from me, boys,
Your sister Winifred!
Move me round in my place, boys,
Let me turn my head,
Take her away from me, boys,
As she lay on here death-bed,
The bones of her thin face, boys,

As she lay on her death-bed!
I don't know how it be, boys,
When all's done and said,
But I see her looking at me, boys,
Whenever I turn my head;
Out of the big oak tree, boys,
Out of the garden-bed,
And the lily as pale as she, boys,
And the rose that used to be red.

There's something not right, boys,
But I think it's not in my head,
I've kept my precious sight, boys, --
The Lord be hallowéd!
Outside and in
The ground is cold to my tread,
The hills are wizen and thin,
The sky is shrivelled and shred,
The hedges down by the loan
I can count them bone by bone,
The leaves are open and spread,
But I see the teeth of the land,
And hands like a dead man's hand,
And the eyes of a dead man's head.
There's nothing but cinders and sand,
The rat and the mouse have fed,
And the summer's empty and cold;
Over valley and wold
Wherever I turn my head
There's a mildew and a mould,
The sun's going out overhead,
And I'm very old,
And Tommy's dead.

What am I staying for, boys,
You're all born and bred,
'Tis fifty years and more, boys,
Since wife and I were wed,
And she'd gone before, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

She was always sweet, boys,

Upon his curly head,
She knew she'd never see't, boys,
And she stole off to bed;
I've been siting up alone, boys,
For he'd come home, he said,
But it's time I was gone boys,
For Tommy's dead.

Put the shutters up, boys,
Bring out the beer and bread,
Make haste and sup, boys,
For my eyes are heavy as lead:
There's something wrong i' the cup, boys,
There's something ill wi' the bread,
I don't care to sup, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

I'm not right, I doubt, boys,
I've such a sleepy head,
I shall nevermore be stout, boys,
You may carry me to bed.
What are you about, boys?
The prayers are all said,
The fire's raked out, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

The stairs are too steep, boys,
You may carry me to the head,
The night's dark and deep, boys,
Your mother's long in bed,
'Tis time to go to sleep, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

I'm not used to a kiss, boys,
You may shake my hand instead.
All things go amiss, boys,
You may lay me where she is, boys,
And I'll rest my old head:
'Tis a poor world, this, boys,
And Tommy's dead.

Under Especial Blessing

Lord Christ, Lord Christ, ah for a little space
Turn hence. Some day, when I again am low
In the new dust of whatsoever blow
Time hath in license, from Thy perfect place
Oh let the awful solace of thy face
Sun me, but not now! Lord, Thou seest me! How
Can I, o'erborne by what Thy hands bestow,
Bear what Thine eyes? Now, therefore, of Thy grace
I ask but that if ever, as of yore,
Thou lookest up and sigh'st, my kneeling thought
May kiss Thy skirt, and Thou, who know'st if aught
Touch Thee, mayst know, and through Thee, what no more
Is I, but, ne'ertheless, began in me,
May rise to Him Whom no man hath seen, nor can see.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Voxpopuli

What if the Turk be foul or fair? Is't known
That the sublime Samaritan of old
Withheld his hand till the bruised wretch had told
His creed? Your neighbour's roof is but a shed,
Yet if he burns shall not the flame enfold
Your palace? Saving his, you save your own.
Oh ye who fall that Liberty may stand,
The light of coming ages shines before
Upon your graves! Oh ye immortal band,
Whether ye wrestled with this Satan o'er
A dead dog, or the very living head
Of Freedom, every precious drop ye bled
Is holy. 'Tis not for his broken door
That the stern goodman shoots the burglar dead.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Warning

Virtue is Virtue, writ in ink or blood.
And Duty, Honour, Valour, are the same
Whether they cheer the thundering steps of Fame
Up echoing hills of Alma, or, more blest,
Walk with her in that band where she is least
Thro' smiling plains and cities doing good.
Yet, oh to sing them in their happier day!
Yon glebe is not the hind whose manhood mends
Its rudeness, yet it gains but while he spends,
And mulcts him rude. Even that sinless Lord
Whose feet wan Mary washed, went not His way
Uncoloured by the Galilean field;
And Honour, Duty, Valour, seldom wield
With stainless hand the immedicable sword.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

When The Rain Is On The Roof

Lord, I am poor, and know not how to speak,
But since Thou art so great,
Thou needest not that I should speak to Thee well.
All angels speak unto Thee well.

Lord, Thou hast all things: what Thou wilt is Thine.
More gold and silver than the sun and moon;
All flocks and herds, all fish in every sea;
Mountains and valleys, cities and all farms;
Cots and all men, harvests and years of fruit.
Is any king arrayed like Thee, who wearest
A new robe every morning? Who is crowned
As Thou, who settest heaven upon thy head?
But as for me-
For me, if he be dead, I have but Thee!
Therefore, because Thou art my sole possession,
I will not fear to speak to Thee who art mine,
For who doth dread his own?

Lord, I am very sorrowful. I know
That Thou delightest to do well; to wipe
Tears from all eyes; to bind the broken-hearted;
To comfort them that mourn; to give to them
Beauty for ashes, and to garb with joy
The naked soul of grief. And what so good
But Thou that wilt canst do it? Which of all
Thy works is less in wonder and in praise
Than this poor heart's desire? Give me, oh Lord,
My heart's desire! Wilt Thou refuse my prayer
Who givest when no man asketh? How great things,
How unbesought, how difficult, how strange,
Thou dost in daily pleasure! Who is like Thee,
Oh Lord of Life and Death? The year is dead;
It smouldered in its smoke to the white ash
Of winter: but Thou breathest and the fire
Is kindled, and Thy summer bounty burns.
This is a marvel to me. Day is buried;

And where they laid him in the west I see
The mounded mountains. Yet shall he come back;
Not like a ghost that rises from his grave.
But in the east the palace gates will ope,
And he comes forth out of the feast, and I
Behold him and the glory after him,
Like to a messaged angel with wide arms
Of rapture, all the honour in his eyes,
And blushing with the King. In the dark hours
Thou hast been busy with him: for he went
Down westward, and he cometh from the east,
Not as toil-stained from travel, tho' his course
And journey in the secrets of the night
Be far as earth and heaven. This is a sum
Too hard for me, oh Lord; I cannot do it.
But Thou hast set it, and I know with Thee
There is an answer. Man also, oh Lord,
Is clear and whole before Thee. Well I know
That the strong skein and tangle of our life
Thou holdest by the end. The mother dieth-
The mother dieth ere her time, and like
A jewel in the cinders of a fire,
The child endures. Also, the son is slain,
And she who bore him shrieks not while the steel
Doth hack her sometime vitals, and transfix
The heart she throbbed with. How shall these things be?
Likewise, oh Lord, man that is born of woman,
Who built him of her tenderness, and gave
Her sighs to breathe him, and for all his bones-
Poor trembler!-hath no wherewithal more stern
Than bowels of her pity, cometh forth
Like a young lion from his den. Ere yet
His teeth be fangled he hath greed of blood,
And gambols for the slaughter: and being grown,
Sudden, with terrible mane and mouthing thunder,
Like a thing native to the wilderness
He stretches toward the desert; while his dam,
As a poor dog that nursed the king of beasts,
Strains at her sordid chain, and, with set ear,
Hath yet a little longer, in the roar
And backward echo of his windy flight,
Him, seen no more. This also is too hard-

Too hard for me, oh Lord! I cannot judge it.
Also the armies of him are as dust.
A little while the storm and the great rain
Beat him, and he abideth in his place,
But the suns scorch on him, and all his sap
And strength, whereby he held against the ground,
Is spent; as in the unwatched pot on the fire,
When that which should have been the children's blood
Scarce paints the hollow iron. Then Thou callest
Thy wind. He passeth like the stowre and dust
Of roads in summer. A brief while it casts
A shadow, and beneath the passing cloud
Things not to pass do follow to the hedge,
Swift heaviness runs under with a show,
And draws a train, and what was white is dark;
But at the hedge it falleth on the fields-
It falleth on the greenness of the grass;
The grass between its verdure takes it in,
And no man heedeth. Surely, oh Lord God,
If he has gone down from me, if my child
Nowhere in any lands that see the sun
Maketh the sunshine pleasant, if the earth
Hath smoothed o'er him as waters o'er a stone,
Yet is he further from Thee than the day
After its setting? Shalt Thou not, oh Lord,
Be busy with him in the under dark,
And give him journey thro' the secret night,
As far as earth and heaven? Aye, tho' Thou slay me
Yet will I trust in Thee, and in his flesh
Shall he see God! But, Lord, tho' I am sure
That Thou canst raise the dead, oh what has he
To do with death? Our days of pilgrimage
Are three-score years and ten; why should he die?
Lord, this is grievous, that the heathen rage,
And because they imagined a vain thing,
That Thou shouldst send the just man that feared Thee,
To smite it from their hands. Lord, who are they,
That this my suckling lamb is their burnt-offering?
That with my staff, oh Lord, their fire is kindled,
My ploughshare Thou dost beat into Thy sword,
The blood Thou givest them to drink is mine?
Let it be far from Thee to do to mine

What if I did it to mine own, Thy curse
Avengeth. Do I take the children's bread
And give it to the dogs? Do I rebuke
So widely that the aimless lash comes down
On innocent and guilty? Do I lift
The hand of goodness by the elbowed arm
And break it on the evil? Not so. Not so.
Lord what advantageth it to be God
If Thou do less than I?

Have mercy on me!
Deal not with me according to mine anger!
Thou knowest if I lift my voice against Thee,
'Tis but as he who in his fierce despair
Dasheth his head against the dungeon-stone,
Sure that but one can suffer. Yet, oh Lord,
If Thou hast heard-if my loud passion reached
Thine awful ear-and yet, I think, oh Father,
I did not rage, but my most little anger
Borne in the strong arms of my mighty love
Seemed of the other's stature-oh, good Lord,
Bear witness now against me. Let me see
And taste that Thou art good. Thou who art slow
To wrath, oh pause upon my quick offence,
And show me mortal! Thou whose strength is made
Perfect in weakness, ah, be strong in me,
For I am weak indeed! How weak, oh Lord,
Thou knowest who hast seen the unlifted sin
Lie on the guilty tongue that strove in vain
To speak it. Call my madness from the tombs!
Let the dumb fiend confess Thee! If I sinned
In silence, if I looked the fool i' the face
And answered to his heart, 'There is no God,'
Now in mine hour stretch forth Thy hand, oh Lord,
And let me be ashamed. As when in sleep
I dream, and in the horror of my dream
Fall to the empty place below the world
Where no man is: no light, no life, no help,
No hope! And all the marrow in my bones
Leaps in me, and I rend the night with fear!
And he who lieth near me thro' the dark

Stretcheth an unseen hand, and all is well.
Tho' Thou shouldst give me all my heart's desire,
What is it in Thine eyes? Give me, oh God,
My heart's desire! my heart's desire, oh God!
As a young bird doth bend before its mother,
Bendeth and crieth to its feeding mother,
So bend I for that good thing before Thee.
It trembleth on the rock with many cries,
It bendeth with its breast upon the rock,
And worships in the hunger of its heart.
I tremble on the rock with many cries,
I bend my beating breast against the rock,
And worship in the hunger of my heart.
Give me that good thing ere I die, my God!
Give me that very good thing! Thou standest, Lord,
By all things, as one standeth after harvest
By the threshed corn, and, when the crowding fowl
Beseech him, being a man and seeing as men,
Hath pity on their cry, respecting not
The great and little barley, but at will
Dipping one hand into the golden store
Straweth alike; nevertheless to them
Whose eyes are near their meat and do esteem
By conscience of their bellies, grain and grain
Is stint or riches. Let it, oh my God,
Be far from Thee to measure out Thy gifts
Smaller and larger, or to say to me
Who am so poor and lean with the long fast
Of such a dreary dearth-to me whose joy
Is not as Thine-whose human heart is nearer
To its own good than Thou who art in heaven-
'Not this but this:' to me who if I took
All that these arms could compass, all pressed down
And running over that this heart could hold,
All that in dreams I covet when the soul
Sees not the further bound of what it craves,
Might filch my mortal infinite from Thine
And leave Thee nothing less. Give me, oh Lord,
My heart's desire! It profiteth Thee nought
Being withheld; being given, where is that aught
It doth not profit me? Wilt Thou deny
That which to Thee is nothing, but to me

All things? Not so. Not so. If I were God
And Thou--Have mercy on me! oh Lord! Lord!

Lord, I am weeping. As Thou wilt, oh Lord,
Do with him as Thou wilt; but oh, my God,
Let him come back to die! Let not the fowls
O' the air defile the body of my child,
My own fair child that when he was a babe
I lift up in my arms and gave to Thee!
Let not his garment, Lord, be vilely parted,
Nor the fine linen which these hands have spun
Fall to the stranger's lot! Shall the wild bird
-That would have pilfered of the ox-this year
Disdain the pens and stalls? Shall her blind young,
That on the fleck and moult of brutish beasts
Had been too happy, sleep in cloth of gold
Whereof each thread is to this beating heart
As a peculiar darling? Lo, the flies
Hum o'er him! Lo, a feather from the crow
Falls in his parted lips! Lo, his dead eyes
See not the raven! Lo, the worm, the worm
Creeps from his festering horse! My God! my God!

Oh Lord, Thou doest well. I am content.
If Thou have need of him he shall not stay.
But as one calleth to a servant, saying
'At such a time be with me,' so, oh Lord,
Call him to Thee! Oh bid him not in haste
Straight whence he standeth. Let him lay aside
The soiled tools of labour. Let him wash
His hands of blood. Let him array himself
Meet for his Lord, pure from the sweat and fume
Of corporal travail! Lord, if he must die,
Let him die here. Oh take him where Thou gavest!

And even as once I held him in my womb
Till all things were fulfilled, and he came forth,
So, oh Lord, let me hold him in my grave
Till the time come, and Thou, who settest when

The hinds shall calve, ordain a better birth;
And as I looked and saw my son, and wept
For joy, I look again and see my son,
And weep again for joy of him and Thee!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Where Are You Poets?

Where are you, Poets, that a Hero dies
Unsung? He who, when Duty brought too soon
His billet of rest toiled on till he had won
The countersign of Glory? There he lies,
And in the silence of your poesies
He looks a Poem; yea, so made and done
As if the Bardic Heavens had thrown him down
In model to your making. Close his eyes,
That yours may learn him. To fulfil the Law
In Gospel, force the seeds of use to flower
In Beauty, to enman invisible Truth
And then transfigure-this is Poetry.
And this the World and his dear Country saw
Hymned unawares in that unconquer'd youth
Who, scorning to give less than all his power,
Having bled for us, then aspired to die;
And, dying thus, left one more pledge behind
That England may again deserve to lead Mankind.

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Wind

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the winter stark,
Oh the level dark,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the mystery
Of the blasted tree
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the owlet's croon
To the haggard moon,
To the waning moon,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the fleshless stare,
Oh the windy hair,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!
Oh the cold sigh,
Oh the hollow cry,
The lean and hollow cry,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Oh the wold, the wold,
Oh the wold, the wold!

Oh the white sight,
Oh the shuddering night,
The shivering shuddering night,
On the wold, the wold, the wold!

Sydney Thompson Dobell

Woe Is Me

Far in the cradling sky,
Dawn opes his baby eye,
Then I awake and cry,
Woe is me!

Morn, the young hunter gay,
Chases the shadows gray,
Then I go forth and say,
Woe is me!

Noon! drunk with oil and wine,
Tho' not a grief is thine,
Yet shalt thou shake with mine!
Woe is me!

Eve kneeleth sad and calm,
Bearing the martyr's palm;
I shriek above her psalm,
Woe is me!

Night, hid in her black hair
From eyes she cannot dare,
Lies loud with fierce despair;
Then I sit silent where
She cries from her dark lair
Woe is me!

Sydney Thompson Dobell