

Selected Poetry

"BEHOLD, YOUR HOUSE IS LEFT."

How quiet is the house across the street—
Bare and neglected till one year ago
Two lovers lighted it with hopes aglow,
And made each inmost nook and corner
sweet,

A nest of peace, yet never quite complete.
Young trees they set, persuaded shrubs
to grow,
Worked joyously till dusk descended low,
A nest of peace, yet never quite complete.

How quiet is the little home to-day—
Upon the wall her cherished Rambler red,
The poppies blazing, the nasturtiums gay,
The birds that guard their nestlings over-
head
Are mocking him whose skies are leaden
gray—

For she who loved it all is lying dead.
—MABEL BOURQUIN, in *America*.

THE LITTLE RED CALF.

The little red calf
For a day and a half
Has blinked in the light—
His blue eyes adaze
In the buttercup blaze,
Ho! fancies the world is one bright—
A world where a fellow,
Fresh field, green and yellow,
Whatever betide,
May snuggle in safety his mother's warm
side.

Little brother, I, too,
Once fancied as you;
The world was one fair
Fresh meadow of flowers,
Until the black hours
Burst on me and stripped the mead bare.
O, little red brother,
Keep close to your mother
Whatever betide
And snuggle as long as you may to her side.
—WILFRED GIBSON, in the *Observer*.

PEACE.

As time swings round upon its rusty hinges
And years of doubt and yearning follow,
one by one,
I see an old land girl in silver fringes;
Now tearfully despondent, and in smiles
anon.
She rears her green shores o'er the voiceful
ocean
That takes her in its full and free embrace,
Like some devoted parent in its motion
Caressing this dear child of more than
matchless grace.

Sad days were hers, almost from the begin-
ning,
Tho' saintly lives were spent upon her fer-
tile soil;
Ambition's curse her ranks was ever thin-
ning,
As every age engendered its own luckless
broil.
Partholan, Nemed, Firbolg, great De Da-
naan,
Milesian and bold Norman—each her shores
have tried.

The choice is God's, when all their lots have
been drawn,
And peace and justice her ill-fated tears have
dried.

—BERNARD TANSEY, in the *Irish World*.

IN LONDON.

When I look out on London's teeming streets
On grim grey houses, and on leaden skies,
My courage fails me, and my heart grows
sick,
And I remember that fair heritage
Barter'd by me for what your London gives.
This is not Nature's city: I am kin
To whatsoever is of free and wild,
And here I pine between these narrow walls,
And London's smoke hides all the stars from
me,
Light from mine eyes, and Heaven from my
heart.

For in an island of those Southern seas
That lie behind me, guided by the Cross
That looks all night from out our splendid
skies,

I know a valley opening to the East.
There, hour by hour, the lazy tide creeps in
Upon the sands I shall not pace again—
Save in a dream,—and, hour by hour, the
tide

Creeps lazily out, and I behold it not,
Nor the young moon slow sinking to her
rest

Behind the hills; nor yet the dead white
trees

Glimmering in the starlight: they are ghosts
Of what has been, and shall be never more.
No, never more!

Nor shall I hear again

The wind that rises at the dead of night
Suddenly, and sweeps inward from the sea,
Rustling the tussock, nor the wekas' wail
Echoing at evening from the tawny hills.

In that deserted garden that I lov'd.
Day after day, my flowers drop unseen;
And as your Summer slips away in tears,
Spring wakes our lovely Lady of the Bush.
The Kowhai, and she hastes to wrap herself
All in a mantle wrought of living gold;
Then come the birds, who are her worship-
pers,

To hover round her: tuis swift of wing,
And bell-birds flashing sudden in the sun.
Carolling: ah! what English nightingale,
Heard in the stillness of a summer eve,
From out the shadow of historic elms,
Sings sweeter than our Bell-bird of the Bush?
And Spring is here: now the Veronica,
Our Koromiko, whitens on the cliff,
The honey-sweet Manuka buds, and bursts
In bloom, and the divine Convolvulus,
Most fair and frail of all our forest flowers,
Stars every covert, running riotous.
O quiet valley, opening to the East,
How far from this thy peacefulness am I!
Ah me, how far! and far this stream of
Life

From thy clear creek fast falling to the sea!
Yet let me not lament that these things are
In that lov'd country I shall see no more;
All that has been is mine inviolate,

Lock'd in the secret book of memory.
And though I change, my valley knows no
change.

And when I look on London's teeming
streets,

On grim grey houses, and on leaden skies,
When speech seems but the babble of a crowd
And music fails me, and my lamp of life
Burns low, and Art, my mistress, turns from
me.—

Then do I pass beyond the Gate of Dreams
Into my kingdom, walking unconstrained
By ways familiar under Southern skies;
Nor unaccompanied: the dear dumb things
I lov'd once, have their immortality.
There too is all fulfilment of desire:

In this the valley of my Paradise
I find again lost ideals, dreams too fair
For lasting; there I meet once more mine
own

Whom Death has stolen, or Life estranged
from me:

And thither, with the coming of the dark,
Thou comest, and the night is full of stars.
—DORA WILCOX, in *New Zealand Verse*.

FORSAKEN HOMES AND GRAVES.

These mountain wilds that rest so still,
These woods and wastes so vast and deep,
These ravines round each rocky hill,
Where long-lost cattle roam at will
Beneath the eagle's ken and sweep.

Far from the settlers' haunts are found
Rude vestiges of life and death,
Forsaken home and burial mound
Of those whose names still sling around,
To circling wilderness and heath.

These elden walls, whose ruins low
Are met in many a lonely ride,
Deserted hearths whose fires did glow
With homelight in the long ago
By Ti-tree flat or gully side.

Round them the sheen of summer-day
Falls drearier and desolate;
Thin shadow lines of branches stray
O'er waifs of childhood's broken play,
Untrodden path and fallen gate.

The notes of wild birds, that elsewhere
Bring tones of gladness, seem to change
To echoes of sadness there;
The curlew's cry upon the air
Sounds like a shriek along the range.

The very dreariness seems rife
With low and stealthy undertones,
Footfall and voice of former life;
Wrath-presences of sire and wife
And children cling to wood and stones.

Some woman's hand did plant and train
That runner by the shattered door,
Which clambered through the splintered
pane

And pallid turneth out again,
As if from spectre on the floor.

Once Life o'er Death hath made its moan;
There hath been sorrow even here;
In one small grave with weeds o'ergrown
A child sleeps in the wild alone,
With only silence crooning near.

Here the night-zephyr, passing, wings
At midnight to that she-oak nigh,
Plays, harp-like, on its drooping strings,
And to its dreary cadence sings
The wildwood's soothing lullaby.
—H. H. BLACKHAM, in *Australian Ballads*.