

BUT ONE.

THE year has but one June, dear friend,
 The year has but one June;
 And when that perfect month doth end,
 The robin's song, though loud, though long,
 Seems never quite in tune.

The rose, though still its blushing face
 By bee and bird is seen,
 May yet have lost that subtle grace—
 That nameless spell the winds know well—
 Which makes its gardens queen.

Life's perfect June, love's red, red rose,
 Have burned and bloomed for me.
 Though still youth's summer sunlight glows;
 Though thou art kind, dear friend, I find
 I have no heart for thee.

GUILO.

YES, yes! I love thee, Guilo; thee alone.
 Why dost thy sigh, and wear that face of
 sorrow?

The sunshine is to-day's, although it shone
 On yesterday, and may shine on to-morrow.

I love but thee, my Guilo! be content,
 The greediest heart can claim but present pleasure.
 The future is thy God's. The past is spent.
 To-day is thine; clasp close the precious treasure.

See how I love thee, Guilo! Lips and eyes
 Could never under thy fond gaze dissemble.
 I could not feign these passion-laden sighs,
 Deceiving thee, my pulses would not tremble.

"And Paul?" Well, what of Paul? Paul had blue
eyes,

And Romney gray, and thine are darkly tender!
One finds fresh feelings under change of skies—
A new horizon brings a newer splendor.

As I love thee, I never loved before;

Believe me, Guilo, for I speak most truly.
What though to Romney and to Paul I swore
The selfsame words; my heart now worships newly.

We never feel the same emotion twice:

No two ships ever ploughed the selfsame billow
The waters change, with every fall and rise;
So, Guilo, go contented to thy pillow.

THE DUET.

I WAS smoking a cigarette;
Maud, my wife, and the tenor McKey,
Were singing together a blithe duet,
And days it were better I should forget
Came suddenly back to me.
Days when life seemed a gay masque ball,
And to love and be loved was the sum of it all.

As they sang together, the whole scene fled,
The room's rich hangings, the sweet home air,
Stately Maud, with her proud blonde head,
And I seemed to see in her place instead
A wealth of blue-black hair,
And a face, ah! your face,—yours, Lisette,
A face it were wiser I should forget.

We were back—well, no matter when or where,
But you remember, I know, Lisette,

I saw you, dainty, and debonnaire,
 With the very same look that you used to wear
 In the days I should forget.
 And your lips, as red as the vintage we quaffed,
 Were pearl-edged bumpers of wine when you
 laughed.

Two small slippers with big rosettes,
 Peeped out under your kilt-skirt there,
 While we sat smoking our cigarettes
 (Oh, I shall be dust when my heart forgets!)
 And singing that selfsame air;
 And between the verses for interlude,
 I kissed your throat, and your shoulders nude.

You were so full of a subtle fire,
 You were so warm and so sweet, Lisette;
 You were everything men admire
 And there were no fetters to make us tire,
 For you were—a pretty grisette.

But you loved, as only such natures can,
 With a love that makes heaven or hell for a man.

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They have ceased singing that old duet,
 Stately Maud and the tenor McKey.
 "You are burning your coat with your cigarette,
 And qu'avez vous, dearest, your lids are wet,"
 Maud says, as she leans o'er me,
 And I smile, and lie to her, husband-wise,
 "Oh, it is nothing but smoke in my eyes."

LITTLE QUEEN.

DO you remember the name I wore—
 The old pet-name of Little Queen—
 In the dear, dead days, that are no more,
 The happiest days of our lives, I ween?
 For we loved with that passionate love of youth
 That blesses but once with its perfect bliss,—
 A love that, in spite of its trust and truth,
 Seems never to thrive, in a world like this.

I lived for you, and you lived for me;
 All was centered in "Little Queen";
 And never a thought in our hearts had we
 That strife or trouble could come between.
 What utter sinking of self it was!
 How little we cared for the world of men!
 For love's fair kingdom, and love's sweet laws,
 Were all of the world and life to us then.

But a love like ours was a challenge to fate;
 She rang down the curtain and shifted the scene,
 Yet sometimes now, when the day grows late,
 I can hear you calling for Little Queen;
 For a happy home and a busy life
 Can never wholly crowd out our past;
 In the twilight pauses that come from strife,
 You will think of me while life shall last.

And however sweet the voice of fame
 May sing to me of a great world's praise,
 I shall long sometimes for the old pet-name
 That you gave to me in the dear, dead days;
 And nothing the angel band can say,
 When I reach the shores of the great Unseen,
 Can please me so much as on that day
 To hear your greeting of "Little Queen."

WHEREFORE.

WHEREFORE in dreams are sorrows born
anew,

A healed wound opened, or the past revived?
Last night in my deep sleep I dreamed of you—

Again the old love woke in me, and thrived
On looks of fire, and kisses, and sweet words

Like silver waters purling in a stream,
Or like the amorous melodies of birds:

A dream—a dream.

Again upon the glory of the scene

There settled that dread shadow of the cross
That, when hearts love too well, falls in between—

That warns them of impending wo and loss.
Again I saw you drifting from my life,

As barques are rudely parted in a stream;
Again my heart was torn with awful strife:

A dream—a dream.

Again the deep night settled on me there,
Alone I groped, and heard strange waters roll.

Lost in that blackness of supreme despair
That comes but once to any living soul.

Alone, afraid, I called your name aloud—

Mine eyes, unveiled, beheld white stars a gleam,
And lo! awake, I cried "Thank God, thank God,

A dream—a dream!"

DELILAH.

X
 I N the midnight of darkness and terror,
 When I would grope nearer to God,
 With my back to a record of error
 And the highway of sin I have trod,
 There come to me shapes I would banish—
 The shapes of the deeds I have done;
 And I pray and I plead till they vanish—
 All vanish and leave me, save one.
 That one, with a smile like the splendor
 Of the sun in the middle-day skies—

 That one, with a spell that is tender—
 That one with a dream in her eyes—
 Cometh close, in her rare Southern beauty,
 Her languor, her indolent grace;
 And my soul turns its back on its duty,
 To live in the light of her face.

She touches my cheek, and I quiver—
 I tremble with exquisite pains;
 She sighs—like an overcharged river
 My blood rushes on through my veins;
 She smiles—and in mad-tiger fashion,
 As a she-tiger fondles her own,
 I clasp her with fierceness and passion,
 And kiss her with shudder and groan.

Once more, in our love's sweet beginning,
 I put away God and the World;
 Once more, in the joys of our sinnings,
 Are the hopes of eternity hurled.
 There is nothing my soul lacks or misses
 As I clasp the dream-shape to my breast;
 In the passion and pain of her kisses
 Life blooms to its richest and best.

O ghost of dead sin unrelenting,
 Go back to the dust, and the sod!
 Too dear and too sweet for repenting,

Ye stand between me and my God.
 If I, by the Throne, should behold you,
 Smiling up with those eyes loved so well,
 Close, close in my arms I would fold you,
 And drop with you down to sweet Hell!

LOVE SONG.

ONCE in the world's first prime,
 When nothing lived or stirred;
 Nothing but new-born Time,
 Nor was there even a bird—
 The Silence spoke to a Star;
 But I do not dare repeat
 What it said to its love afar,
 It was too sweet, too sweet.

But there, in the fair world's youth,
 Ere sorrow had drawn breath
 When nothing was known but Truth
 Nor was there even death,
 The Star to Silence was wed,
 And the Sun was priest that day,
 And they made their bridal-bed
 High in the Milky Way.

For the great white star had heard
 Her silent lover's speech;
 It needed no passionate word
 To pledge them each to each.
 O lady fair and far
 Hear, oh, hear, and apply!
 Thou the beautiful Star—
 The voiceless Silence, I.

TIME AND LOVE.

TIME flies. The swift hours hurry by
 And speed us on to untried ways;
 New seasons ripen, perish, die,
 And yet love stays.
 The old, old love—like sweet at first,
 At last like bitter Wine—
 I know not if it blest or curst,
 Thy life and mine.

Time flies. In vain our prayers, our tears
 We cannot tempt him to delays;
 Down to the past he bears the years,
 And yet love stays.
 Through changing task and varying dream
 We hear the same refrain,
 As one can hear a plaintive theme
 Run through each strain.

Time flies. He steals our pulsing youth,
 He robs us of our care-free days,
 He takes away our trust and truth,
 And yet love stays.
 O Time! take love! When love is vain,
 When all its best joys die—
 When only its regrets remain—
 Let love, too, fly.

CHANGE.

CHANGED? Yes, I will confess it—I have
 changed.

I do not love you in the old fond way.
 I am your friend still—time has not estranged
 One kindly feeling of that vanished day.

But the bright glamour which made life a dream,
 The rapture of that time, its sweet content,
 Like visions of a sleeper's brain they seem—
 And yet I cannot tell you how they went.

Why do you gaze with such accusing eyes
 Upon me, dear? Is it so very strange
 That hearts, like all things underneath God's skie:
 Should sometimes feel the influence of change?

The birds, the flowers, the foliage of the trees,
 The stars which seem so fixed, and so sublime,
 Vast continents, and the eternal seas,—
 All these do change, with ever-changing time.

The face our mirror shows us year on year
 Is not the same; our dearest aim, or need
 Our lightest thought, or feeling, hope, or fear,
 All, all the law of alternation heed.

How can we ask the human heart to stay,
 Content with fancies of Youth's earliest hours?
 The year outgrows the violets of May,
 Although, maybe, there are no fairer flowers.

And life may hold no sweeter love than this,
 Which lies so cold, so voiceless, and so dumb.
 And will I miss it, dear? Why, yes, we miss
 The violets always—till the roses come!

DESOLATION.

I THINK that the bitterest sorrow or pain
 Of love unrequited, or cold death's wo,
 Is sweet, compared to that hour when we know
 That some grand passion is on the wane.

When we see that the glory, and glow, and grace
 Which lent a splendor to night and day,
 Are surely fading, and showing the gray
 And dull groundwork of the commonplace.

When fond expressions on dull ears fall,
 When the hands clasp calmly without one thrill,
 When we cannot muster by force of will
 The old emotions that came at call.

When the dream has vanished we fain would keep,
 When the heart, like a watch, runs out of gear,
 And all the savor goes out of the year,
 Oh, then is the time—if we could—to weep!

But no tears soften this dull, pale wo,
 We must sit and face it with dry, sad eyes,
 If we seek to hold it, the swifter joy flies—
 We can only be passive, and let it go.

ISAURA.

DOST thou not tire, Isaura, of this play?
 What play? Why, this old play of winning
 hearts!

Nay, now, lift not thine eyes in that feigned way;
 'Tis all in vain—I know thee, and thine arts,

Let us be frank, Isaura. I have made
 A study of thee; and while I admire
 The practiced skill with which thy plans are laid,
 I can but wonder if thou dost not tire.

Why, I tire even of Hamlet and Macbeth!
 When overlong the season runs, I find
 Those master-scenes of passion, blood, and death,
 After a time, do pall upon my mind.

Dost thou not tire of lifting up thine eyes
 To read the story thou hast read so oft—
 Of ardent glances, and deep quivering sighs,
 Of haughty faces suddenly grown soft?

Is it not stale, oh, very stale, to thee,
 The scene that follows? Hearts are much the same;
 The loves of men but vary in degree—
 They find no new expressions for the flame.

Thou must know all they utter ere they speak,
 As I know Hamlet's part, whoever plays.
 Oh, does it not seem sometimes poor and weak?
 I think thou must grow weary of their ways.

I pity thee, Isaura! I would be
 The humblest maiden with her dream untold,
 Rather than live a Queen of Hearts, like thee,
 And find life's rarest treasures stale and old.

I pity thee; for now, let come what may,
 Fame, glory, riches, yet life will lack all.
 Wherewith can salt be salted? And what way,
 Can life be seasoned after love doth pall?

NOT QUITE THE SAME.

NOT quite the same the springtime seems to me,
 Since that sad season when in separate ways
 Our paths diverged. There are no more such days
 As dawned for us in that lost time when we
 Dwelt in the realm of dreams, illusive dreams;
 Spring may be just as fair now, but it seems
 Not quite the same.

Not quite the same in life, since we two parted,
 Knowing it best to go our ways alone.
 Fair measures of success we both have known,
 And pleasant hours; and yet something departed
 Which gold, nor fame, nor anything we win,
 Can all replace. And either life has been
 Not quite the same.

Love is not quite the same, although each heart
 Has formed new ties, that are both sweet and true;
 But that wild rapture, which of old we knew,

Seems to have been a something set apart
 With that lost dream. There is no passion, now,
 Mixed with this later love, which seems, somehow,
 Not quite the same.

Not quite the same am I. My inner being
 Reasons and knows that all is for the best.
 Yet vague regrets stir always in my breast,
 As my soul's eyes turn sadly backward, seeing
 The vanished self, that ever more must be
 This side of what we call eternity,
 Not quite the same.

FROM THE GRAVE.

WHEN the first sere leaves of the year were
 falling,

I heard, with a heart that was strangely thrilled,
 Out of the grave of a dead Past calling,
 A voice I fancied forever stilled.
 All through winter, and spring, and summer,
 Silence hung over that grave like a pall;
 But, borne on the breath of the last sad comer,
 I listen again to the old-time call.
 It is only a love of a bygone season,

A senseless folly that mocked at me,
 A reckless passion that lacked all reason;
 So I killed it, and hid it where none could see.
 I smothered it first to stop its crying,
 Then stabbed it through with a good sharp blade;
 And cold and pallid I saw it lying,
 And deep—ah! deep was the grave I made.
 But now I know that there is no killing