

To lead a good, true, working life. He wrote,  
And let this so be seen, that Laurance went  
And took the child, and took the money down  
To pay."

And Muriel found her talking sweet,  
And asked once more, the rather that she longed  
To speak again of Laurance, "And you think  
He knows I love him?"

"Ay, good sooth, he knows  
No fear; but he is like his father, love.  
His father never asked my pretty child  
One prying question; took her as she was;  
Trusted her; she has told me so: he knew  
A woman's nature. Laurance is the same.  
He knows you love him; but he will not speak;  
No, never. Some men are such gentlemen!"

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SONGS OF THE NIGHT WATCHES.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SONG OF EVENING, AND A  
CONCLUDING SONG OF THE EARLY DAY.

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INTRODUCTORY.

(Old English Manner.)

APPRENTICED.

"COME out and hear the waters shoot, the owlet hoot,  
the owlet hoot;  
Yon crescent moon, a golden boat, hangs dim be-  
hind the tree, O!  
The dropping thorn makes white the grass, O sweetest  
lass, and sweetest lass;  
Come out and smell the ricks of hay adown the  
croft with me, O!"

"My granny nods before her wheel, and drops her  
reel, and drops her reel;  
My father with his crony talks as gay as gay can  
be, O!  
But all the milk is yet to skim, ere light wax dim,  
ere light wax dim;  
How can I step adown the croft, my 'prentice lad,  
with thee, O!"

"And must ye bide, yet waiting's long, and love is  
strong, and love is strong;  
And O! had I but served the time, that takes so  
long to flee, O!  
And thou, my lass, by morning's light wast all in  
white, wast all in white,  
And parson stood within the rails, a-marrying me  
and thee, O!"

---

THE FIRST WATCH.

TIRED.

I.

O, I would tell you more, but I am tired;  
For I have longed, and I have had my will;  
I pleaded in my spirit, I desired:  
"Ah! let me only see him, and be still  
All my days after."

Rock, and rock, and rock,  
Over the falling, rising watery world,  
Sail, beautiful ship, along the leaping main;  
The chirping land-birds follow flock on flock  
To light on a warmer plain.  
White as weaned lambs the little wavelets curled,



Fall over in harmless play,  
As these do far away;  
Sail, bird of doom, along the shimmering sea,  
All under thy broad wings that overshadow thee.

## II.

I am so tired,  
If I would comfort me, I know not how,  
For I have seen thee, lad, as I desired,  
And I have nothing left to long for now.

Nothing at all. And did I wait for thee,  
Often and often, while the light grew dim,  
And through the lilac branches I could see,  
Under a saffron sky, the purple rim  
O' the heaving moorland? Ay. And then would  
float

Up from behind — as it were a golden boat,  
Freighted with fancies, all o' the wonder of life,  
Love — such a slender moon, going up and up,  
Waxing so fast from night to night,  
And swelling like an orange flower-bud, bright,  
Fated, methought, to round as to a golden cup,  
And hold to my two lips life's best of wine.

Most beautiful crescent moon,

Ship of the sky!

Across the unfurrowed reaches sailing high.  
Methought that it would come my way full soon,  
Laden with blessings that were all, all mine,—  
A golden ship, with balm and spiceries rife,  
That ere its day was done should hear thee call me  
wife.

## III.

All over! the celestial sign hath failed;  
The orange flower-bud shuts; the ship hath sailed,

And sunk behind the long low-lying hills.  
The love that fed on daily kisses dieth;  
The love kept warm by nearness lieth,  
Wounded and wan;  
The love hope nourished bitter tears distils,  
And faints with nought to feed upon.  
Only there stirreth very deep below  
The hidden beating slow,  
And the blind yearning, and the long-drawn breath  
Of the love that conquers death.

## IV.

Had we not loved full long, and lost all fear,  
My ever, my only dear?  
Yes; and I saw thee start upon thy way.  
So sure that we should meet  
Upon our trysting-day.  
And even absence then to me was sweet,  
Because it brought me time to brood  
Upon thy dearness in the solitude.  
But ah! to stay, and stay,  
And let that moon of April wane itself away,  
And let the lovely May  
Make ready all her buds for June;  
And let the glossy finch forego her tune  
That she brought with her in the spring,  
And nevermore, I think, to me can sing;  
And then to lead thee home another bride,  
In the sultry summer-tide,  
And all forget me save for shame full sore,  
That made thee pray me, absent, "See my face no  
more."

## V.

O hard, most hard! But while my fretted heart,  
Shut out, shut down, and full of pain,  
Sobbed to itself apart,  
Ached to itself in vain.



One came who loveth me  
 As I love thee. . . .  
 And let my God remember him for this,  
 As I do hope He will forget thy kiss,  
 Nor visit on thy stately head  
 Aught that thy mouth hath sworn, or thy two eyes  
 have said. . . .  
 He came, and it was dark. He came, and sighed  
 Because he knew the sorrow, — whispering low,  
 And fast, and thick, as one that speaks by rote :  
 “The vessel lieth in the river reach,  
 A mile above the beach,  
 And she will sail at the turning o’ the tide.”  
 He said, “I have a boat,  
 And were it good to go,  
 And un beholden in the vessel’s wake,  
 Look on the man thou lovedst, and forgive,  
 As he embarks, a shameful fugitive.  
 Come, then, with me.”

## VI.

O, how he sighed ! The little stars did wink,  
 And it was very dark. I gave my hand, —  
 He led me out across the pasture land,  
 And through the narrow croft,  
 Down to the river’s brink.  
 When thou wast full in spring, thou little sleepy  
 thing,  
 The yellow flags that broidered thee would stand  
 Up to their chins in water, and full off  
 We pulled them and the other shining flowers,  
 That all are gone to-day :  
 We two, that had so many things to say,  
 So many hopes to render clear :  
 And they are all gone after thee, my dear, —  
 Gone after those sweet hours,

That tender light, that balmy rain ;  
 Gone “as a wind that passeth away,  
 And cometh not again.”

## VII.

I only saw the stars, — I could not see  
 The river, — and they seemed to lie  
 And far below as the other stars were high.  
 I trembled like a thing about to die :  
 It was so awful ’neath the majesty  
 Of that great crystal height, that overhung  
 The blackness at our feet,  
 Unseen to fleet and fleet,  
 The flocking stars among,  
 And only hear the dipping of the oar,  
 And the small wave’s caressing of the darksome shore

## VIII.

Less real it was than any dream.  
 Ah, me ! to hear the bending willows shiver,  
 As we shot quickly from the silent river,  
 And felt the swaying and the flow  
 That bore us down the deeper, wider stream,  
 Whereto its nameless waters go :  
 O ! I shall always, when I shut mine eyes,  
 See that weird sight again ;  
 The lights from anchored vessels hung ;  
 The phantom moon, that sprung  
 Suddenly up in dim and angry wise  
 From the rim o’ the moaning main,  
 And touched with elfin light  
 The two long oars whereby we made our flight  
 Along the reaches of the night ;  
 Then furrowed up a lowering cloud,  
 Went in, and left us darker than before,  
 To feel our way as the midnight watches wore,



And lie in HER lee, with mournful faces bowed,  
That should receive and bear with her away  
The brightest portion of my sunniest day, —  
The laughter of the land, the sweetness of the shore

## IX.

And I beheld thee : saw the lantern flash  
Down on thy face when thou didst climb the side.  
And thou wert pale, pale as the patient bride  
That followed : both a little sad,  
Leaving of home and kin. Thy courage glad,  
That once did bear thee on,  
That brow of thine had lost ; the fervor rash  
Of unforeboding youth thou hadst foregone.  
O, what a little moment, what a crumb  
Of comfort for a heart to feed upon !

And that was all its sum :

A glimpse, and not a meeting, —

A drawing near by night,

To sigh to thee an unacknowledged greeting.

And all between the flashing of a light

And its retreating.

## X.

Then after, ere she spread her wafting wings,  
The ship, — and weighed her anchor to depart,  
We stole from her dark lee, like guilty things ;

And there was silence in my heart,

And silence in the upper and the nether deep.

O sleep ! O sleep !

Do not forget me. Sometimes come and sweep.

Now I have nothing left, thy healing hand

Over the lids that crave thy visits bland,

Thou kind, thou comforting one :

For I have seen his face, as I desired,

And all my story is done.

O, I am tired !

## THE MIDDLE WATCH.

## I.

I WOKE in the night, and the darkness was heavy  
and deep ;

I had known it was dark in my sleep,

And I rose and looked out,

And the fathomless vault was all sparkling, set thick  
round about

With the ancient inhabitants silent, and wheeling too  
far

For man's heart, like a voyaging frigate to sail,  
where remote

In the sheen of their glory they float,

Or man's soul, like a bird, to fly near, of their beams  
to partake,

And dazed in their wake,

Drink day that is born of a star.

I murmured, "Remoteness and greatness, how deep  
you are set,

How afar in the rim of the whole ;

You know nothing of me, nor of man, nor of earth,  
O, nor yet

Of our light-bearer, — drawing the marvellous moons  
as they roll,

Of our regent, the sun.

I look on you trembling, and think, in the dark with  
my soul,

"How small is our place 'mid the kingdoms and  
nations of God :

These are greater than we, every one."

And there falls a great fear and a dread cometh  
over, that cries,



"O my hope! Is there any mistake?  
 Did He speak? Did I hear? Did I listen aright, if  
 He spake?  
 Did I answer Him duly? for surely I now am awake,  
 If never I woke until now."  
 And a light, baffling wind, that leads nowhither,  
 plays on my brow.  
 As a sleep, I must think on my day, of my path as  
 untrod,  
 Or trodden in dreams, in a dreamland whose coasts  
 are a doubt;  
 Whose countries recede from my thoughts, as they  
 grope round about,  
 And vanish, and tell me not how.  
 Be kind to our darkness, O Fashioner, dwelling in  
 light,  
 And feeding the lamps of the sky;  
 Look down upon this one, and let it be sweet in Thy  
 sight,  
 I pray Thee, to-night.  
 O watch whom Thou madest to dwell on its soil,  
 Thou Most High!  
 For this is a world full of sorrow (there may be but  
 one);  
 Keep watch o'er its dust, else Thy children for aye  
 are undone,  
 For this is a world where we die.

## II.

With that, a still voice in my spirit that moved and  
 that yearned  
 (There fell a great calm while it spake),  
 I had heard it erewhile, but the noises of life are so  
 loud,  
 That sometimes it dies in the cry of the street and  
 the crowd:

To the simple it cometh,—the child, or asleep, or  
 awake,  
 And they know not from whence; of its nature the  
 wise never learned  
 By his wisdom; its secret the worker ne'er earned  
 By his toil; and the rich among men never bought  
 with his gold;  
 Nor the times of its visiting monarchs controlled,  
 Nor the jester put down with his jeers  
 (For it moves where it will), nor its season the  
 aged discerned  
 By thought, in the ripeness of years.  
 O elder than reason, and stronger than will!  
 A voice, when the dark world is still:  
 Whence cometh it? Father Immortal, Thou know-  
 est! and we,—  
 We are sure of that witness, that sense which is sent  
 us of Thee;  
 For it moves, and it yearns in its fellowship mighty  
 and dread,  
 And let down to our hearts it is touched by the tears  
 that we shed;  
 It is more than all meanings, and over all strife;  
 On its tongue are the laws of our life,  
 And it counts up the times of the dead.

## III.

I will fear you, O stars, never more.  
 I have felt it! Go on, while the world is asleep.  
 Golden islands, fast moored in God's infinite deep.  
 Hark, hark to the words of sweet fashion, the harp-  
 ings of yore!  
 How they sang to Him, seer and saint, in the far  
 away lands:  
 "The heavens are the work of Thy hands;



They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure ;  
 Yea, they all shall wax old, —  
 But Thy throne is established, O God, and Thy years  
 are made sure ;  
 They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure, —  
 They shall pass like a tale that is told."

Doth He answer, the Ancient of Days?  
 Will He speak in the tongue and the fashion of  
 men?  
 Hist! hist! while the heaven-hung multitudes shine  
 in His praise,  
 (His language of old.) Nay, He spoke with them  
 first; it was then  
 They lifted their eyes to His throne:  
 "They shall call on Me, 'Thou art our Father, our  
 God, Thou alone!'  
 For I made them, I led them in deserts and desolate  
 ways;  
 I have found them a Ransom Divine;  
 I have loved them with love everlasting, the children  
 of men;  
 I swear by Myself, they are Mine."

#### THE MORNING WATCH.

##### THE COMING IN OF THE "MERMAIDEN."

THE moon is bleached as white as wool,  
 And just dropping under;  
 Every star is gone but three,  
 And they hang far asunder, —  
 There's a sea-ghost all in gray,  
 A tall shape of wonder!

I am not satisfied with sleep, —  
 The night is not ended.  
 But look how the sea-ghost comes,  
 With wan skirts extended,  
 Stealing up in this weird hour,  
 When light and dark are blended.

A vessel! To the old pier-end  
 Her happy course she's keeping;  
 I heard them name her yesterday:  
 Some were pale with weeping;  
 Some with their heart-hunger sighed:  
 She's in, — and they are sleeping.

O! now with fancied greetings blest,  
 They comfort their long aching:  
 The sea of sleep hath borne to them  
 What would not come with waking,  
 And the dreams shall most be true  
 In their blissful breaking.

The stars are gone, the rose-bloom comes, —  
 No blush of maid is sweeter;  
 The red sun, half way out of bed,  
 Shall be the first to greet her.  
 None tell the news, yet sleepers wake,  
 And rise, and run to meet her.

Their lost they have, they hold; from pain  
 A keener bliss they borrow.  
 How natural is joy, my heart!  
 How easy after sorrow!  
 For once, the best is come that hope  
 Promised them "to-morrow."



## CONCLUDING SONG OF DAWN.

*(Old English Manner.)*

A MORN OF MAY.

ALL the clouds about the sun lay up in golden  
creases

(Merry rings the maiden's voice that sings at dawn  
of day);

Lambkins woke and skipped around to dry their  
dew fleeces,

So sweetly as she carolled, all on a morn of May.

Quoth the Sergeant, "Here I'll halt; here's wine of  
joy for drinking;

To my heart she sets her hand, and in the strings  
doth play;

All among the daffodils, and fairer to my thinking,  
And fresh as milk and roses, she sits this morn of  
May."

Quoth the Sergeant, "Work is work, but any ye  
might make me,

If I worked for you, dear lass, I'd count my holiday.  
I'm your slave for good and all, an' if ye will but  
take me,

So sweetly as ye carol upon this morn of May."

"Medals count for worth," quoth she, "and scars  
are won for honor;

But a slave an' if ye be, kind wooer, go your way."

All the nodding daffodils woke up and laughed upon  
her,

O! sweetly did she carol, all on that morn of May.

Gladsome leaves upon the bough, they fluttered fast  
and faster.

Fretting brook, till he would speak, did chide the  
dull delay:

"Beauty! when I said a slave, I think I meant a  
master;

So sweetly as ye carol all on this morn of May.

"Lass, I love you! Love is strong, and some men's  
hearts are tender."

Far she sought o'er wood and wold, but found not  
ought to say;

Mounting lark nor mantling cloud would any coun-  
sel render,

Though sweetly she had carolled upon that morn of  
May.

Shy, she sought the wooer's face, and deemed the  
wooing mended;

Proper man he was, good sooth, and one would have  
his way:

So the lass was made a wife, and so the song was  
ended.

O! sweetly she did carol all on that morn of May.

## A STORY OF DOOM.

BOOK I.

NILOIYA said to Noah, "What aileth thee,  
My master, unto whom is my desire,

The father of my sons?" He answered her,

"Mother of many children, I have heard

The Voice again." "Ah, me!" she saith, "ah, me!

What spake it?" and with that Niloiya sighed.