

Robert Louis Stevenson

**The Works of  
Robert Louis Stevenson –  
Swanston Edition. Volume...**



Robert Stevenson

**The Works of Robert Louis  
Stevenson – Swanston  
Edition. Volume 14**

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**Robert Louis Stevenson**  
**The Works of Robert Louis Stevenson**  
**– Swanston Edition, Vol. 14**

**TO**

**ALISON CUNNINGHAM**

**FROM HER BOY**

For the long nights you lay awake  
And watched for my unworthy sake:  
For your most comfortable hand  
That led me through the uneven land:  
For all the story-books you read:  
For all the pains you comforted:  
For all you pitied, all you bore,  
In sad and happy days of yore: —  
My second Mother, my first Wife,  
The angel of my infant life —  
From the sick child, now well and old,  
Take, nurse, the little book you hold!

And grant it, Heaven, that all who read  
May find as dear a nurse at need,  
And every child who lists my rhyme,  
In the bright, fireside, nursery clime,  
May hear it in as kind a voice  
As made my childish days rejoice!

*R. L. S.*

## A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES

### I BED IN SUMMER

In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle-light.  
In summer, quite the other way, —  
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree,  
Or hear the grown-up people's feet  
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?



## **II A THOUGHT**

It is very nice to think  
The world is full of meat and drink,  
With little children saying grace  
In every Christian kind of place.

### III

## AT THE SEA-SIDE

When I was down beside the sea,  
A wooden spade they gave to me  
To dig the sandy shore.  
My holes were empty like a cup,  
In every hole the sea came up,  
Till it could come no more.

## IV YOUNG NIGHT THOUGHT

All night long, and every night,  
When my mamma puts out the light,  
I see the people marching by,  
As plain as day, before my eye.

Armies and emperors and kings,  
All carrying different kinds of things,  
And marching in so grand a way,  
You never saw the like by day.

So fine a show was never seen  
At the great circus on the green;  
For every kind of beast and man  
Is marching in that caravan.

At first they move a little slow,  
But still the faster on they go,  
And still beside them close I keep  
Until we reach the town of Sleep.

## **V**

### **WHOLE DUTY OF CHILDREN**

A child should always say what's true,  
And speak when he is spoken to,  
And behave mannerly at table:  
At least as far as he is able.

## **VI RAIN**

The rain is raining all around,  
It falls on field and tree,  
It rains on the umbrellas here,  
And on the ships at sea.

## VII PIRATE STORY

Three of us afloat in the meadow by the swing,  
Three of us aboard in the basket on the lea.  
Winds are in the air, they are blowing in the spring,  
And waves are on the meadow like the waves there are at sea.

Where shall we adventure, to-day that we're afloat,  
Wary of the weather, and steering by a star?  
Shall it be to Africa, a-steering of the boat,  
To Providence, or Babylon, or off to Malabar?

Hi! but here's a squadron a-rowing on the sea —  
Cattle on the meadow a-charging with a roar!  
Quick, and we'll escape them, they're as mad as they can be,  
The wicket is the harbour and the garden is the shore.

## VIII FOREIGN LANDS

Up into the cherry-tree  
Who should climb but little me?  
I held the trunk with both my hands  
And looked abroad on foreign lands.

I saw the next-door garden lie,  
Adorned with flowers, before my eye,  
And many pleasant places more  
That I had never seen before.

I saw the dimpling river pass  
And be the sky's blue looking-glass;  
The dusty roads go up and down  
With people tramping in to town.

If I could find a higher tree,  
Farther and farther I should see  
To where the grown-up river slips  
Into the sea among the ships,

To where the roads on either hand  
Lead onward into fairy-land,  
Where all the children dine at five,  
And all the playthings come alive.

## **IX WINDY NIGHTS**

Whenever the moon and stars are set,  
Whenever the wind is high,  
All night long in the dark and wet,  
A man goes riding by.  
Late in the night when the fires are out,  
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,  
And ships are tossed at sea,  
By, on the highway, low and loud,  
By at the gallop goes he.  
By at the gallop he goes, and then  
By he comes back at the gallop again.



## **X TRAVEL**

I should like to rise and go  
Where the golden apples grow; —  
Where below another sky  
Parrot islands anchored lie,  
And, watched by cockatoos and goats,  
Lonely Crusoes building boats; —  
Where in sunshine reaching out  
Eastern cities, miles about,  
Are with mosque and minaret  
Among sandy gardens set,  
And the rich goods from near and far  
Hang for sale in the bazaar; —  
Where the Great Wall round China goes,  
And on one side the desert blows,  
And with bell and voice and drum,  
Cities on the other hum; —  
Where are forests, hot as fire,  
Wide as England, tall as a spire,  
Full of apes and cocoa-nuts  
And the negro hunters' huts; —  
Where the knotty crocodile  
Lies and blinks in the Nile,  
And the red flamingo flies  
Hunting fish before his eyes; —  
Where in jungles, near and far,  
Man-devouring tigers are,  
Lying close and giving ear  
Lest the hunt be drawing near,  
Or a comer-by be seen  
Swinging in a palanquin; —  
Where among the desert sands  
Some deserted city stands,  
All its children, sweep and prince,  
Grown to manhood ages since,  
Not a foot in street or house,  
Nor a stir of child or mouse,  
And when kindly falls the night,  
In all the town no spark of light.  
There I'll come when I'm a man  
With a camel caravan;  
Light a fire in the gloom  
Of some dusty dining-room;  
See the pictures on the walls,  
Heroes, fights, and festivals;

And in a corner find the toys  
Of the old Egyptian boys.

## **XI SINGING**

Of speckled eggs the birdie sings  
And nests among the trees;  
The sailor sings of ropes and things  
In ships upon the seas.

The children sing in far Japan,  
The children sing in Spain;  
The organ with the organ man  
Is singing in the rain.

## **XII**

### **LOOKING FORWARD**

When I am grown to man's estate  
I shall be very proud and great,  
And tell the other girls and boys  
Not to meddle with my toys.

## **XIII**

### **A GOOD PLAY**

We built a ship upon the stairs  
All made of the back-bedroom chairs  
And filled it full of sofa pillows  
To go a-sailing on the billows.

We took a saw and several nails,  
And water in the nursery pails;  
And Tom said, “Let us also take  
An apple and a slice of cake”; —  
Which was enough for Tom and me  
To go a-sailing on, till tea.

We sailed along for days and days,  
And had the very best of plays;  
But Tom fell out and hurt his knee,  
So there was no one left but me.

## **XIV WHERE GO THE BOATS?**

Dark brown is the river,  
Golden is the sand.  
It flows along for ever,  
With trees on either hand.

Green leaves a-floating,  
Castles of the foam,  
Boats of mine a-boating —  
Where will all come home?

On goes the river,  
And out past the mill,  
Away down the valley,  
Away down the hill.

Away down the river,  
A hundred miles or more,  
Other little children  
Shall bring my boats ashore.

## **XV AUNTIE'S SKIRTS**

Whenever Auntie moves around,  
Her dresses make a curious sound;  
They trail behind her up the floor,  
And trundle after through the door.

## **XVI**

### **THE LAND OF COUNTERPANE**

When I was sick and lay a-bed,  
I had two pillows at my head,  
And all my toys beside me lay  
To keep me happy all the day.

And sometimes for an hour or so  
I watched my leaden soldiers go,  
With different uniforms and drills,  
Among the bed-clothes, through the hills;

And sometimes sent my ships in fleets  
All up and down among the sheets;  
Or brought my trees and houses out,  
And planted cities all about.

I was the giant great and still  
That sits upon the pillow-hill,  
And sees before him, dale and plain,  
The pleasant land of counterpane.



## **XVII THE LAND OF NOD**

From breakfast on all through the day  
At home among my friends I stay;  
But every night I go abroad  
Afar into the land of Nod.

All by myself I have to go,  
With none to tell me what to do —  
All alone beside the streams  
And up the mountain-sides of dreams.

The strangest things are there for me,  
Both things to eat and things to see,  
And many frightening sights abroad  
Till morning in the land of Nod.

Try as I like to find the way,  
I never can get back by day,  
Nor can remember plain and clear  
The curious music that I hear.

## **XVIII MY SHADOW**

I have a little shadow that goes in and out with me,  
And what can be the use of him is more than I can see.  
He is very, very like me from the heels up to the head;  
And I see him jump before me, when I jump into my bed.

The funniest thing about him is the way he likes to grow —  
Not at all like proper children, which is always very slow;  
For he sometimes shoots up taller like an india-rubber ball,  
And he sometimes gets so little that there's none of him at all.

He hasn't got a notion of how children ought to play,  
And can only make a fool of me in every sort of way.  
He stays so close beside me, he's a coward you can see;  
I'd think shame to stick to nursie as that shadow sticks to me!

One morning, very early, before the sun was up,  
I rose and found the shining dew on every buttercup;  
But my lazy little shadow, like an arrant sleepy-head,  
Had stayed at home behind me and was fast asleep in bed.

## **XIX SYSTEM**

Every night my prayers I say,  
And get my dinner every day;  
And every day that I've been good,  
I get an orange after food.

The child that is not clean and neat,  
With lots of toys and things to eat,  
He is a naughty child, I'm sure —  
Or else his dear papa is poor.

## **XX**

### **A GOOD BOY**

I woke before the morning, I was happy all the day,  
I never said an ugly word, but smiled and stuck to play.

And now at last the sun is going down behind the wood,  
And I am very happy, for I know that I've been good.

My bed is waiting cool and fresh, with linen smooth and fair,  
And I must off to sleeps-in-by, and not forget my prayer.

I know that, till to-morrow I shall see the sun arise,  
No ugly dream shall fright my mind, no ugly sight my eyes,

But slumber hold me tightly till I waken in the dawn,  
And hear the thrushes singing in the lilacs round the lawn.

## **XXI**

### **ESCAPE AT BEDTIME**

The lights from the parlour and kitchen shone out  
Through the blinds and the windows and bars;  
And high overhead and all moving about,  
There were thousands of millions of stars.  
There ne'er were such thousands of leaves on a tree,  
Nor of people in church or the Park,  
As the crowds of the stars that looked down upon me,  
And that glittered and winked in the dark.  
The Dog, and the Plough, and the Hunter, and all,  
And the star of the sailor, and Mars,  
These shone in the sky, and the pail by the wall  
Would be half full of water and stars.  
They saw me at last, and they chased me with cries,  
And they soon had me packed into bed;  
But the glory kept shining and bright in my eyes,  
And the stars going round in my head.

## **XXII**

### **MARCHING SONG**

Bring the comb and play upon it!  
Marching, here we come!  
Willie cocks his Highland bonnet,  
Johnnie beats the drum.

Mary Jane commands the party,  
Peter leads the rear;  
Feet in time, alert and hearty,  
Each a Grenadier!

All in the most martial manner  
Marching double-quick;  
While the napkin like a banner  
Waves upon the stick!

Here's enough of fame and pillage,  
Great commander Jane!  
Now that we've been round the village,  
Let's go home again.

## **XXIII THE COW**

The friendly cow, all red and white,  
I love with all my heart:  
She gives me cream with all her might,  
To eat with apple-tart.

She wanders lowing here and there,  
And yet she cannot stray,  
All in the pleasant open air,  
The pleasant light of day;

And blown by all the winds that pass,  
And wet with all the showers,  
She walks among the meadow grass  
And eats the meadow flowers.

## **XXIV HAPPY THOUGHT**

The world is so full of a number of things,  
I'm sure we should all be as happy as kings.



## **XXV**

### **THE WIND**

I saw you toss the kites on high  
And blow the birds about the sky;  
And all around I heard you pass,  
Like ladies' skirts across the grass —  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

I saw the different things you did,  
But always you yourself you hid.  
I felt you push, I heard you call,  
I could not see yourself at all —  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

O you that are so strong and cold,  
O blower, are you young or old?  
Are you a beast of field and tree,  
Or just a stronger child than me?  
O wind, a-blowing all day long,  
O wind, that sings so loud a song!

## XXVI KEEPSAKE MILL

Over the borders, a sin without pardon,  
Breaking the branches and crawling below,  
Out through the breach in the wall of the garden,  
Down by the banks of the river, we go.

Here is the mill with the humming of thunder,  
Here is the weir with the wonder of foam,  
Here is the sluice with the race running under —  
Marvellous places, though handy to home!

Sounds of the village grow stiller and stiller,  
Stiller the note of the birds on the hill;  
Dusty and dim are the eyes of the miller,  
Deaf are his ears with the moil of the mill.

Years may go by, and the wheel in the river,  
Wheel as it wheels for us, children, to-day,  
Wheel and keep roaring and foaming for ever,  
Long after all of the boys are away.

Home from the Indies, and home from the ocean,  
Heroes and soldiers we all shall come home;  
Still we shall find the old mill-wheel in motion,  
Turning and churning that river to foam.

You with the bean that I gave when we quarrelled,  
I with your marble of Saturday last,  
Honoured and old and all gaily apparelled,  
Here we shall meet and remember the past.

## XXVII

### GOOD AND BAD CHILDREN

Children, you are very little,  
And your bones are very brittle;  
If you would grow great and stately,  
You must try to walk sedately.

You must still be bright and quiet,  
And content with simple diet;  
And remain, through all bewild'ring,  
Innocent and honest children.

Happy hearts and happy faces,  
Happy play in grassy places —  
That was how, in ancient ages,  
Children grew to kings and sages.

But the unkind and the unruly,  
And the sort who eat unduly,  
They must never hope for glory —  
Theirs is quite a different story!

Cruel children, crying babies,  
All grow up as geese and gabies,  
Hated, as their age increases,  
By their nephews and their nieces.

## XXVIII FOREIGN CHILDREN

Little Indian, Sioux or Crow,  
Little frosty Eskimo,  
Little Turk or Japanee,  
O! don't you wish that you were me?

You have seen the scarlet trees  
And the lions over seas;  
You have eaten ostrich eggs,  
And turned the turtles off their legs.

Such a life is very fine,  
But it's not so nice as mine;  
You must often, as you trod,  
Have wearied *not* to be abroad.

You have curious things to eat,  
I am fed on proper meat;  
You must dwell beyond the foam,  
But I am safe and live at home.

Little Indian, Sioux or Crow  
Little frosty Eskimo,  
Little Turk or Japanee,  
O! don't you wish that you were me?

## **XXIX THE SUN'S TRAVELS**

The sun is not a-bed when I  
At night upon my pillow lie;  
Still round the earth his way he takes,  
And morning after morning makes.

While here at home, in shining day,  
We round the sunny garden play,  
Each little Indian sleepy-head  
Is being kissed and put to bed.

And when at eve I rise from tea,  
Day dawns beyond the Atlantic Sea,  
And all the children in the West  
Are getting up and being dressed.

## **XXX**

### **THE LAMPLIGHTER**

My tea is nearly ready and the sun has left the sky;  
It's time to take the window to see Leerie going by;  
For every night at tea-time and before you take your seat,  
With lantern and with ladder he comes posting up the street.

Now Tom would be a driver and Maria go to sea,  
And my papa's a banker and as rich as he can be;  
But I, when I am stronger, and can choose what I'm to do,  
O Leerie, I'll go round at night and light the lamps with you!

For we are very lucky, with a lamp before the door,  
And Leerie stops to light it as he lights so many more;  
And O! before you hurry by with ladder and with light,  
O Leerie, see a little child and nod to him to-night!

## XXXI MY BED IS A BOAT

My bed is like a little boat;  
Nurse helps me in when I embark;  
She girds me in my sailor's coat  
And starts me in the dark.

At night, I go on board and say  
Good-night to all my friends on shore;  
I shut my eyes and sail away  
And see and hear no more.

And sometimes things to bed I take,  
As prudent sailors have to do:  
Perhaps a slice of wedding-cake,  
Perhaps a toy or two.

All night across the dark we steer:  
But when the day returns at last,  
Safe in my room, beside the pier,  
I find my vessel fast.

## XXXII THE MOON

The moon has a face like the clock in the hall;  
She shines on thieves on the garden wall,  
On streets and fields and harbour quays,  
And birdies asleep in the forks of the trees.

The squalling cat and the squeaking mouse,  
The howling dog by the door of the house,  
The bat that lies in bed at noon,  
All love to be out by the light of the moon.

But all of the things that belong to the day  
Cuddle to sleep to be out of her way;  
And flowers and children close their eyes  
Till up in the morning the sun shall arise.



## XXXIII THE SWING

How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!

Up in the air and over the wall,  
Till I can see so wide,  
Rivers and trees and cattle and all  
Over the countryside —

Till I look down on the garden green,  
Down on the roof so brown —  
Up in the air I go flying again,  
Up in the air and down!

## **XXXIV TIME TO RISE**

A birdie with a yellow bill  
Hopped upon the window sill,  
Cocked his shining eye and said:  
“Ain’t you ’shamed, you sleepy-head?”

## XXXV LOOKING-GLASS RIVER

Smooth it slides upon its travel,  
Here a wimple, there a gleam —  
O the clean gravel!  
O the smooth stream!

Sailing blossoms, silver fishes,  
Paven pools as clear as air —  
How a child wishes  
To live down there!

We can see our coloured faces  
Floating on the shaken pool  
Down in cool places,  
Dim and very cool;

Till a wind or water wrinkle,  
Dipping marten, plumping trout,  
Spreads in a twinkle  
And blots all out.

See the rings pursue each other;  
All below grows black as night,  
Just as if mother  
Had blown out the light!

Patience, children, just a minute —  
See the spreading circles die;  
The stream and all in it  
Will clear by-and-by.

## **XXXVI FAIRY BREAD**

Come up here, O dusty feet!  
Here is fairy bread to eat.  
Here in my retiring room,  
Children, you may dine  
On the golden smell of broom  
And the shade of pine;  
And when you have eaten well,  
Fairy stories hear and tell.

## XXXVII FROM A RAILWAY CARRIAGE

Faster than fairies, faster than witches,  
Bridges and houses, hedges and ditches;  
And charging along like troops in a battle,  
All through the meadows the horses and cattle:  
All of the sights of the hill and the plain  
Fly as thick as driving rain;  
And ever again, in the wink of an eye,  
Painted stations whistle by.  
Here is a child who clambers and scrambles,  
All by himself and gathering brambles;  
Here is a tramp who stands and gazes;  
And there is the green for stringing the daisies!  
Here is a cart run away in the road  
Lumping along with man and load;  
And here is a mill, and there is a river:  
Each a glimpse and gone for ever!

## XXXVIII WINTER-TIME

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,  
A frosty, fiery sleepy-head;  
Blinks but an hour or two; and then,  
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,  
At morning in the dark I rise;  
And shivering in my nakedness,  
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit  
To warm my frozen bones a bit;  
Or with a reindeer-sled explore  
The colder countries round the door.

When, to go out, my nurse doth wrap  
Me in my comforter and cap,  
The cold wind burns my face, and blows  
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;  
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;  
And tree and house, and hill and lake,  
Are frosted like a wedding-cake.

## XXXIX THE HAYLOFT

Through all the pleasant meadow-side  
The grass grew shoulder-high,  
Till the shining scythes went far and wide  
And cut it down to dry.

These green and sweetly smelling crops  
They led in waggons home;  
And they piled them here in mountain tops  
For mountaineers to roam.

Here is Mount Clear, Mount Rusty-Nail,  
Mount Eagle and Mount High; —  
The mice that in these mountains dwell  
No happier are than I!

O what a joy to clamber there,  
O what a place for play,  
With the sweet, the dim, the dusty air,  
The happy hills of hay.

## **XL FAREWELL TO THE FARM**

The coach is at the door at last;  
The eager children, mounting fast  
And kissing hands, in chorus sing:  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

To house and garden, field and lawn,  
The meadow-gates we swang upon,  
To pump and stable, tree and swing,  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

And fare you well for evermore,  
O ladder at the hayloft door,  
O hayloft where the cobwebs cling,  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!

Crack goes the whip, and off we go;  
The trees and houses smaller grow;  
Last, round the woody turn we swing:  
Good-bye, good-bye, to everything!



## **XLI NORTH-WEST PASSAGE**

### **1. GOOD NIGHT**

When the bright lamp is carried in,  
The sunless hours again begin;  
O'er all without, in field and lane,  
The haunted night returns again.

Now we behold the embers flee  
About the firelit hearth; and see  
Our faces painted as we pass,  
Like pictures, on the window-glass.

Must we to bed indeed? Well then,  
Let us arise and go like men,  
And face with an undaunted tread  
The long black passage up to bed.

Farewell, O brother, sister, sire!  
O pleasant party round the fire!  
The songs you sing, the tales you tell,  
Till far to-morrow, fare ye well!

### **2. SHADOW MARCH**

All round the house is the jet-black night;  
It stares through the window-pane;  
It crawls in the corners, hiding from the light,  
And it moves with the moving flame.

Now my little heart goes a-beating like a drum,  
With the breath of the Bogie in my hair;  
And all round the candle the crooked shadows come  
And go marching along up the stair.

The shadow of the balusters, the shadow of the lamp,  
The shadow of the child that goes to bed —  
All the wicked shadows coming, tramp, tramp, tramp,  
With the black night overhead.

### 3. IN PORT

Last, to the chamber where I lie  
My fearful footsteps patter nigh,  
And come from out the cold and gloom  
Into my warm and cheerful room.

There, safe arrived, we turned about  
To keep the coming shadows out,  
And close the happy door at last  
On all the perils that we passed.

Then, when mamma goes by to bed,  
She shall come in with tip-toe tread,  
And see me lying warm and fast  
And in the land of Nod at last.

## THE CHILD ALONE

### I

## THE UNSEEN PLAYMATE

When children are playing alone on the green,  
In comes the playmate that never was seen.  
When children are happy and lonely and good,  
The Friend of the Children comes out of the wood.

Nobody heard him and nobody saw,  
His is a picture you never could draw,  
But he's sure to be present, abroad or at home,  
When children are happy and playing alone.

He lies in the laurels, he runs on the grass,  
He sings when you tinkle the musical glass;  
Whene'er you are happy and cannot tell why,  
The Friend of the Children is sure to be by!

He loves to be little, he hates to be big,  
'Tis he that inhabits the caves that you dig;  
'Tis he when you play with your soldiers of tin  
That sides with the Frenchmen and never can win.

'Tis he, when at night you go off to your bed,  
Bids you go to your sleep and not trouble your head;  
For wherever they're lying, in cupboard or shelf,  
'Tis he will take care of your playthings himself!

## II MY SHIP AND I

O it's I that am the captain of a tidy little ship,  
Of a ship that goes a-sailing on the pond;  
And my ship it keeps a-turning all around and all about;  
But when I'm a little older, I shall find the secret out  
How to send my vessel sailing on beyond.

For I mean to grow as little as the dolly at the helm,  
And the dolly I intend to come alive;  
And with him beside to help me, it's a-sailing I shall go,  
It's a-sailing on the water, when the jolly breezes blow  
And the vessel goes a divie-divie-dive.

O it's then you'll see me sailing through the rushes and the reeds,  
And you'll hear the water singing at the prow;  
For beside the dolly sailor, I'm to voyage and explore,  
To land upon the island where no dolly was before,  
And to fire the penny cannon in the bow.

### III

## MY KINGDOM

Down by a shining water well  
I found a very little dell,  
No higher than my head.  
The heather and the gorse about  
In summer bloom were coming out,  
Some yellow and some red.

I called the little pool a sea;  
The little hills were big to me;  
For I am very small.  
I made a boat, I made a town,  
I searched the caverns up and down,  
And named them one and all.

And all about was mine, I said,  
The little sparrows overhead,  
The little minnows too.  
This was the world, and I was king;  
For me the bees came by to sing,  
For me the swallows flew.

I played there were no deeper seas,  
Nor any wider plains than these,  
Nor other kings than me.  
At last I heard my mother call  
Out from the house at even-fall,  
To call me home to tea.

And I must rise and leave my dell,  
And leave my dimpled water well,  
And leave my heather blooms.  
Alas! and as my home I neared,  
How very big my nurse appeared,  
How great and cool the rooms!

## IV PICTURE-BOOKS IN WINTER

Summer fading, winter comes —  
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs,  
Window robins, winter rooks,  
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone  
Nurse and I can walk upon;  
Still we find the flowing brooks  
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by  
Wait upon the children's eye,  
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,  
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are,  
Seas and cities, near and far,  
And the flying fairies' looks,  
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,  
Happy chimney-corner days,  
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,  
Reading picture story-books?

## V MY TREASURES

These nuts, that I keep in the back of the nest  
Where all my lead soldiers are lying at rest,  
Were gathered in autumn by nursie and me  
In a wood with a well by the side of the sea.

This whistle we made (and how clearly it sounds!)  
By the side of a field at the end of the grounds.  
Of a branch of a plane, with a knife of my own,  
It was nursie who made it, and nursie alone!

The stone, with the white and the yellow and grey,  
We discovered I cannot tell *how* far away;  
And I carried it back, although weary and cold,  
For, though father denies it, I'm sure it is gold.

But of all of my treasures the last is the king,  
For there's very few children possess such a thing;  
And that is a chisel, both handle and blade,  
Which a man who was really a carpenter made.

## VI BLOCK CITY

What are you able to build with your blocks?  
Castles and palaces, temples and docks.  
Rain may keep raining, and others go roam,  
But I can be happy and building at home.

Let the sofa be mountains, the carpet be sea,  
There I'll establish a city for me:  
A kirk and a mill and a palace beside,  
And a harbour as well where my vessels may ride.

Great is the palace with pillar and wall,  
A sort of a tower on the top of it all,  
And steps coming down in an orderly way  
To where my toy vessels lie safe in the bay.

This one is sailing and that one is moored:  
Hark to the song of the sailors on board!  
And see, on the steps of my palace, the kings  
Coming and going with presents and things!

Now I have done with it, down let it go!  
All in a moment the town is laid low.  
Block upon block lying scattered and free,  
What is there left of my town by the sea?

Yet, as I saw it, I see it again,  
The kirk and the palace, the ships and the men,  
And as long as I live, and where'er I may be,  
I'll always remember my town by the sea.



## VII THE LAND OF STORY-BOOKS

At evening when the lamp is lit,  
Around the fire my parents sit;  
They sit at home and talk and sing,  
And do not play at anything.

Now, with my little gun, I crawl  
All in the dark along the wall,  
And follow round the forest track  
Away behind the sofa back.

There, in the night, where none can spy,  
All in my hunter's camp I lie,  
And play at books that I have read  
Till it is time to go to bed.

These are the hills, these are the woods,  
These are my starry solitudes;  
And there the river by whose brink  
The roaring lions come to drink.

I see the others far away  
As if in firelit camp they lay,  
And I, like to an Indian scout,  
Around their party prowled about

So, when my nurse comes in for me,  
Home I return across the sea,  
And go to bed with backward looks  
At my dear land of Story-books.

## VIII ARMIES IN THE FIRE

The lamps now glitter down the street;  
Faintly sound the falling feet;  
And the blue even slowly falls  
About the garden trees and walls.

Now in the falling of the gloom  
The red fire paints the empty room:  
And warmly on the roof it looks,  
And flickers on the backs of books.

Armies march by tower and spire  
Of cities blazing, in the fire; —  
Till as I gaze with staring eyes,  
The armies fade, the lustre dies.

Then once again the glow returns;  
Again the phantom city burns;  
And down the red-hot valley, lo!  
The phantom armies marching go!

Blinking embers, tell me true  
Where are those armies marching to,  
And what the burning city is  
That crumbles in your furnaces!

## IX THE LITTLE LAND

When at home alone I sit  
And am very tired of it,  
I have just to shut my eyes  
To go sailing through the skies —  
To go sailing far away  
To the pleasant Land of Play;  
To the fairy land afar  
Where the Little People are;  
Where the clover-tops are trees,  
And the rain-pools are the seas,  
And the leaves like little ships  
Sail about on tiny trips;  
And above the daisy tree  
Through the grasses,  
High o’erhead the Bumble Bee  
Hums and passes.

In that forest to and fro  
I can wander, I can go;  
See the spider and the fly,  
And the ants go marching by  
Carrying parcels with their feet  
Down the green and grassy street.  
I can in the sorrel sit  
Where the ladybird alit.  
I can climb the jointed grass;  
And on high  
See the greater swallows pass  
In the sky,  
And the round sun rolling by  
Heeding no such things as I.

Through that forest I can pass  
Till, as in a looking-glass,  
Humming fly and daisy tree  
And my tiny self I see  
Painted very clear and neat  
On the rain-pool at my feet.  
Should a leaflet come to land  
Drifting near to where I stand,  
Straight I’ll board that tiny boat  
Round the rain-pool sea to float.

Little thoughtful creatures sit

On the grassy coasts of it;  
Little things with lovely eyes  
See me sailing with surprise.  
Some are clad in armour green —  
(These have sure to battle been!) —  
Some are pied with ev'ry hue,  
Black and crimson, gold and blue;  
Some have wings and swift are gone; —  
But they all look kindly on.

When my eyes I once again  
Open and see all things plain;  
High bare walls, great bare floor;  
Great big knobs on drawer and door;  
Great big people perched on chairs,  
Stitching tucks and mending tears,  
Each a hill that I could climb,  
And talking nonsense all the time —  
O dear me,  
That I could be  
A sailor on the rain-pool sea,  
A climber in the clover-tree,  
And just come back, a sleepy-head,  
Late at night to go to bed.

## GARDEN DAYS

### I NIGHT AND DAY

When the golden day is done,  
Through the closing portal,  
Child and garden, flower and sun,  
Vanish all things mortal.

As the blinding shadows fall,  
As the rays diminish,  
Under evening's cloak, they all  
Roll away and vanish.

Garden darkened, daisy shut,  
Child in bed, they slumber —  
Glow-worm in the highway rut,  
Mice among the lumber.

In the darkness houses shine,  
Parents move with candles;  
Till on all the night divine  
Turns the bedroom handles.

Till at last the day begins  
In the east a-breaking,  
In the hedges and the whins  
Sleeping birds a-waking.

In the darkness shapes of things,  
Houses, trees, and hedges,  
Clearer grow; and sparrows' wings  
Beat on window ledges.

These shall wake the yawning maid;  
She the door shall open —  
Finding dew on garden glade  
And the morning broken.

There my garden grows again  
Green and rosy painted,  
As at eve behind the pane  
From my eyes it fainted.

Just as it was shut away,  
Toy-like, in the even,  
Here I see it glow with day  
Under glowing heaven.

Every path and every plot,  
Every bush of roses,  
Every blue forget-me-not  
Where the dew reposes,

“Up!” they cry, “the day is come  
On the smiling valleys:  
We have beat the morning drum;  
Playmate, join your allies!”

## II NEST EGGS

Birds all the sunny day  
Flutter and quarrel,  
Here in the arbour-like  
Tent of the laurel.

Here in the fork  
The brown nest is seated;  
Four little blue eggs  
The mother keeps heated.

While we stand watching her,  
Staring like gabies,  
Safe in each egg are the  
Bird's little babies.

Soon the frail eggs they shall  
Chip, and upspringing  
Make all the April woods  
Merry with singing.

Younger than we are,  
O children, and frailer,  
Soon in blue air they'll be,  
Singer and sailor.

We, so much older,  
Taller and stronger,  
We shall look down on the  
Birdies no longer.

They shall go flying  
With musical speeches  
High overhead in the  
Tops of the beeches.

In spite of our wisdom  
And sensible talking,  
We on our feet must go  
Plodding and walking.

### III

## THE FLOWERS

All the names I know from nurse:  
Gardener's garters, Shepherd's purse,  
Bachelor's buttons, Lady's smock,  
And the Lady Hollyhock.

Fairy places, fairy things,  
Fairy woods where the wild bee wings,  
Tiny trees for tiny dames —  
These must all be fairy names!

Tiny woods below whose boughs  
Shady fairies weave a house;  
Tiny tree-tops, rose or thyme,  
Where the braver fairies climb!

Fair are grown-up people's trees,  
But the fairest woods are these;  
Where if I were not so tall,  
I should live for good and all.



## IV SUMMER SUN

Great is the sun, and wide he goes  
Through empty heaven without repose;  
And in the blue and glowing days  
More thick than rain he showers his rays.

Though closer still the blinds we pull  
To keep the shady parlour cool,  
Yet he will find a chink or two  
To slip his golden fingers through.

The dusty attic, spider-clad,  
He, through the keyhole, maketh glad;  
And through the broken edge of tiles  
Into the laddered hayloft smiles.

Meantime his golden face around  
He bares to all the garden ground,  
And sheds a warm and glittering look  
Among the ivy's inmost nook.

Above the hills, along the blue,  
Round the bright air with footing true,  
To please the child, to paint the rose,  
The gardener of the World, he goes.

## V THE DUMB SOLDIER

When the grass was closely mown,  
Walking on the lawn alone,  
In the turf a hole I found  
And hid a soldier underground.

Spring and daisies came apace;  
Grasses hide my hiding-place;  
Grasses run like a green sea  
O'er the lawn up to my knee.

Under grass alone he lies,  
Looking up with leaden eyes,  
Scarlet coat and pointed gun,  
To the stars and to the sun.

When the grass is ripe like grain,  
When the scythe is stoned again,  
When the lawn is shaven clear,  
Then my hole shall reappear.

I shall find him, never fear,  
I shall find my grenadier;  
But, for all that's gone and come,  
I shall find my soldier dumb.

He has lived, a little thing,  
In the grassy woods of spring;  
Done, if he could tell me true,  
Just as I should like to do.

He has seen the starry hours  
And the springing of the flowers;  
And the fairy things that pass  
In the forests of the grass.

In the silence he has heard  
Talking bee and ladybird,  
And the butterfly has flown  
O'er him as he lay alone.

Not a word will he disclose,  
Not a word of all he knows.  
I must lay him on the shelf,  
And make up the tale myself.



## **VI AUTUMN FIRES**

In the other gardens  
And all up the vale,  
From the autumn bonfires  
See the smoke trail!

Pleasant summer over,  
And all the summer flowers,  
The red fire blazes,  
The grey smoke towers.

Sing a song of seasons!  
Something bright in all!  
Flowers in the summer,  
Fires in the fall!

## VII THE GARDENER

The gardener does not love to talk,  
He makes me keep the gravel walk;  
And when he puts his tools away,  
He locks the door and takes the key.

Away behind the currant row  
Where no one else but cook may go,  
Far in the plots, I see him dig,  
Old and serious, brown and big.

He digs the flowers, green, red, and blue,  
Nor wishes to be spoken to.  
He digs the flowers and cuts the hay,  
And never seems to want to play.

Silly gardener! summer goes,  
And winter comes with pinching toes,  
When in the garden bare and brown  
You must lay your barrow down.

Well now, and while the summer stays,  
To profit by these garden days,  
O how much wiser you would be  
To play at Indian wars with me!

## VIII HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Dear Uncle Jim, this garden ground,  
That now you smoke your pipe around,  
Has seen immortal actions done  
And valiant battles lost and won.

Here we had best on tip-toe tread,  
While I for safety march ahead,  
For this is that enchanted ground  
Where all who loiter slumber sound.

Here is the sea, here is the sand,  
Here is simple Shepherd's Land,  
Here are the fairy hollyhocks,  
And there are Ali Baba's rocks.

But yonder, see! apart and high,  
Frozen Siberia lies; where I,  
With Robert Bruce and William Tell,  
Was bound by an enchanter's spell.

There, then, a while in chains we lay,  
In wintry dungeons, far from day;  
But ris'n at length, with might and main,  
Our iron fetters burst in twain.

Then all the horns were blown in town;  
And, to the ramparts clanging down,  
All the giants leaped to horse  
And charged behind us through the gorse.

On we rode, the others and I,  
Over the mountains blue, and by  
The Silver River, the sounding sea,  
And the robber woods of Tartary.

A thousand miles we galloped fast,  
And down the witches' lane we passed,  
And rode amain, with brandished sword,  
Up to the middle, through the ford.

Last we drew rein – a weary three —  
Upon the lawn, in time for tea,  
And from our steeds alighted down  
Before the gates of Babylon.



## ENVOYS

### I

#### TO WILLIE AND HENRIETTA

If two may read aright  
These rhymes of old delight  
And house and garden play,  
You two, my cousins, and you only, may.

You in a garden green  
With me were king and queen,  
Were hunter, soldier, tar,  
And all the thousand things that children are.

Now in the elders' seat  
We rest with quiet feet,  
And from the window-bay  
We watch the children, our successors, play.

“Time was,” the golden head  
Irrevocably said;  
But time which none can bind,  
While flowing fast away, leaves love behind.



## **II TO MY MOTHER**

You too, my mother, read my rhymes  
For love of unforgotten times,  
And you may chance to hear once more  
The little feet along the floor.

### III TO AUNTIE

*Chief of our aunts— not only I,  
But all your dozen of nurslings cry —  
What did the other children do?  
And what were childhood, wanting you?*

## IV TO MINNIE

The red room with the giant bed  
Where none but elders lay their head;  
The little room where you and I  
Did for a while together lie,  
And, simple suitor, I your hand  
In decent marriage did demand;  
The great day-nursery, best of all,  
With pictures pasted on the wall  
And leaves upon the blind —  
A pleasant room wherein to wake  
And hear the leafy garden shake  
And rustle in the wind —  
And pleasant there to lie in bed  
And see the pictures overhead —  
The wars about Sebastopol,  
The grinning guns along the wall,  
The daring escalade,  
The plunging ships, the bleating sheep,  
The happy children ankle-deep,  
And laughing as they wade:  
All these are vanished clean away,  
And the old manse is changed to-day;  
It wears an altered face  
And shields a stranger race.  
The river, on from mill to mill,  
Flows past our childhood's garden still;  
But ah! we children never more  
Shall watch it from the water-door!  
Below the yew – it still is there —  
Our phantom voices haunt the air  
As we were still at play,  
And I can hear them call and say:  
*“How far is it to Babylon?”*

Ah, far enough, my dear,  
Far, far enough from here —  
Yet you have farther gone!  
*“Can I get there by candlelight?”*  
So goes the old refrain.  
I do not know – perchance you might —  
But only, children, hear it right,  
Ah, never to return again!  
The eternal dawn, beyond a doubt,  
Shall break on hill and plain,

And put all stars and candles out,  
Ere we be young again.

To you in distant India, these  
I send across the seas,  
Nor count it far across.  
For which of us forgets  
The Indian cabinets,  
The bones of antelope, the wings of albatross,  
The pied and painted birds and beans,  
The junks and bangles, beads and screens,  
The gods and sacred bells,  
And the loud-humming, twisted shells?  
The level of the parlour floor  
Was honest, homely, Scottish shore;  
But when we climbed upon a chair,  
Behold the gorgeous East was there!  
Be this a fable; and behold  
Me in the parlour as of old,  
And Minnie just above me set  
In the quaint Indian cabinet!  
Smiling and kind, you grace a shelf  
Too high for me to reach myself.  
Reach down a hand, my dear, and take  
These rhymes for old acquaintance' sake.

## **V**

### **TO MY NAME-CHILD**

#### **1**

Some day soon this rhyming volume, if you learn with proper speed,  
Little Louis Sanchez, will be given you to read.  
Then shall you discover that your name was printed down  
By the English printers, long before, in London town.

In the great and busy city where the East and West are met,  
All the little letters did the English printer set;  
While you thought of nothing, and were still too young to play,  
Foreign people thought of you in places far away.

Ay, and while you slept, a baby, over all the English lands  
Other little children took the volume in their hands;  
Other children questioned, in their homes across the seas:  
Who was little Louis, won't you tell us, mother, please?

#### **2**

Now that you have spelt your lesson, lay it down and go and play,  
Seeking shells and seaweed on the sands of Monterey,  
Watching all the mighty whalebones, lying buried by the breeze,  
Tiny sandy-pipers, and the huge Pacific seas.

And remember in your playing, as the sea-fog rolls to you,  
Long ere you could read it, how I told you what to do;  
And that while you thought of no one, nearly half the world away  
Some one thought of Louis on the beach of Monterey!

## VI TO ANY READER

As from the house your mother sees  
You playing round the garden trees,  
So you may see, if you will look  
Through the windows of this book,  
Another child, far, far away,  
And in another garden, play.  
But do not think you can at all,  
By knocking on the window, call  
That child to hear you. He intent  
Is all on his play-business bent.  
He does not hear; he will not look,  
Not yet be lured out of this book.  
For, long ago, the truth to say,  
He has grown up and gone away,  
And it is but a child of air  
That lingers in the garden there.

## UNDERWOODS

Of all my verse, like not a single line;  
But like my title, for it is not mine.  
That title from a better man I stole;  
Ah, how much better, had I stol'n the whole!

## DEDICATION

*There are men and classes of men that stand above the common herd: the soldier, the sailor, and the shepherd not unfrequently; the artist rarely; rarelier still, the clergyman; the physician almost as a rule. He is the flower (such as it is) of our civilisation; and when that stage of man is done with, and only remembered to be marvelled at in history, he will be thought to have shared as little as any in the defects of the period, and most notably exhibited the virtues of the race. Generosity he has, such as is possible to those who practise an art, never to those who drive a trade; discretion, tested by a hundred secrets; tact, tried in a thousand embarrassments; and, what are more important, Heracleian cheerfulness and courage. So it is that he brings air and cheer into the sickroom, and often enough, though not so often as he wishes, brings healing.*

*Gratitude is but a lame sentiment; thanks, when they are expressed, are often more embarrassing than welcome; and yet I must set forth mine to a few out of many doctors who have brought me comfort and help: to Dr. Willey of San Francisco, whose kindness to a stranger it must be as grateful to him, as it is touching to me, to remember; to Dr. Karl Ruedi of Davos, the good genius of the English in his frosty mountains; to Dr. Herbert of Paris, whom I knew only for a week, and to Dr. Caissot of Montpellier, whom I knew only for ten days, and who have yet written their names deeply in my memory; to Dr. Brandt of Royat; to Dr. Wakefield of Nice; to Dr. Chepmell, whose visits make it a pleasure to be ill; to Dr. Horace Dobell, so wise in counsel; to Sir Andrew Clark, so unwearied in kindness; and to that wise youth, my uncle, Dr. Balfour.*

*I forget as many as I remember; and I ask both to pardon me, these for silence, those for inadequate speech. But one name I have kept on purpose to the last, because it is a household word with me, and because if I had not received favours from so many hands and in so many quarters of the world, it should have stood upon this page alone: that of my friend Thomas Bodley Scott of Bournemouth. Will he accept this, although shared among so many, for a dedication to himself? and when next my ill-fortune (which has thus its pleasant side) brings him hurrying to me when he would fain sit down to meat or lie down to rest, will he care to remember that he takes this trouble for one who is not fool enough to be ungrateful?*

R. L. S.

Skerryvore,  
Bournemouth.

## BOOK I IN ENGLISH

### I ENVOY

Go, little book, and wish to all  
Flowers in the garden, meat in the hall,  
A bin of wine, a spice of wit,  
A house with lawns enclosing it,  
A living river by the door,  
A nightingale in the sycamore!

### II A SONG OF THE ROAD

The gauger walked with willing foot,  
And aye the gauger played the flute;  
And what should Master Gauger play  
But *Over the hills and far away?*

Whene'er I buckle on my pack  
And foot it gaily in the track,  
O pleasant gauger, long since dead,  
I hear you fluting on ahead.

You go with me the selfsame way —  
The selfsame air for me you play;  
For I do think and so do you  
It is the tune to travel to.

For who would gravely set his face  
To go to this or t'other place?  
There's nothing under heav'n so blue  
That's fairly worth the travelling to.

On every hand the roads begin,  
And people walk with zeal therein;  
But wheresoe'er the highways tend,  
Be sure there's nothing at the end.

Then follow you, wherever hie  
The travelling mountains of the sky.



Or let the streams in civil mode  
Direct your choice upon a road;

For one and all, or high or low,  
Will lead you where you wish to go;  
And one and all go night and day  
*Over the hills and far away!*

*Forest of Montargis, 1878.*

### III THE CANOE SPEAKS

On the great streams the ships may go  
About men's business to and fro.  
But I, the egg-shell pinnace, sleep  
On crystal waters ankle-deep:  
I, whose diminutive design,  
Of sweeter cedar, pithier pine,  
Is fashioned on so frail a mould,  
A hand may launch, a hand withhold:  
I, rather, with the leaping trout  
Wind, among lilies, in and out;  
I, the unnamed, inviolate,  
Green, rustic rivers navigate;  
My dipping paddle scarcely shakes  
The berry in the bramble-brakes;  
Still forth on my green way I wend  
Beside the cottage garden-end;  
And by the nested angler fare,  
And take the lovers unaware.  
By willow wood and water-wheel  
Speedily fleets my touching keel;  
By all retired and shady spots  
Where prosper dim forget-me-nots;  
By meadows where at afternoon  
The growing maidens troop in June  
To loose their girdles on the grass.  
Ah! speedier than before the glass  
The backward toilet goes; and swift  
As swallows quiver, robe and shift  
And the rough country stockings lie  
Around each young divinity.  
When, following the recondite brook,  
Sudden upon this scene I look,  
And light with unfamiliar face  
On chaste Diana's bathing-place,  
Loud ring the hills about and all

The shallows are abandoned...

## IV

It is the season now to go  
About the country high and low,  
Among the lilacs hand in hand,  
And two by two in fairyland.

The brooding boy, the sighing maid,  
Wholly fain and half afraid,  
Now meet along the hazel'd brook  
To pass and linger, pause and look.

A year ago, and blithely paired,  
Their rough-and-tumble play they shared;  
They kissed and quarrelled, laughed and cried,  
A year ago at Eastertide.

With bursting heart, with fiery face,  
She strove against him in the race;  
He unabashed her garter saw,  
That now would touch her skirts with awe.

Now by the stile ablaze she stops,  
And his demurer eyes he drops;  
Now they exchange averted sighs  
Or stand and marry silent eyes.

And he to her a hero is  
And sweeter she than primroses;  
Their common silence dearer far  
Than nightingale and mavis are.

Now when they sever wedded hands,  
Joy trembles in their bosom-strands  
And lovely laughter leaps and falls  
Upon their lips in madrigals.

## V

### THE HOUSE BEAUTIFUL

*A naked house, a naked moor;  
A shivering pool before the door;  
A garden bare of flowers and fruit*

*And poplars at the garden foot:  
Such is the place that I live in,  
Bleak without and bare within.*

Yet shall your ragged moor receive  
The incomparable pomp of eve,  
And the cold glories of the dawn  
Behind your shivering trees be drawn;  
And when the wind from place to place  
Doth the unmoored cloud-galleons chase,  
Your garden gloom and gleam again,  
With leaping sun, with glancing rain.  
Here shall the wizard moon ascend  
The heavens, in the crimson end  
Of day's declining splendour; here  
The army of the stars appear.  
The neighbour hollows, dry or wet,  
Spring shall with tender flowers beset;  
And oft the morning muser see  
Larks rising from the broomy lea,  
And every fairy wheel and thread  
Of cobweb, dew-bediamonded.  
When daisies go, shall winter-time  
Silver the simple grass with rime;  
Autumnal frosts enchant the pool  
And make the cart-ruts beautiful;  
And when snow-bright the moor expands,  
How shall your children clap their hands!  
To make this earth, our hermitage,  
A cheerful and a changeful page,  
God's bright and intricate device  
Of days and seasons doth suffice.

## **VI A VISIT FROM THE SEA**

Far from the loud sea beaches  
Where he goes fishing and crying,  
Here in the inland garden  
Why is the sea-gull flying?

Here are no fish to dive for;  
Here is the corn and lea;  
Here are the green trees rustling.  
Hie away home to sea!

Fresh is the river water

And quiet among the rushes;  
This is no home for the sea-gull,  
But for the rooks and thrushes.

Pity the bird that has wandered!  
Pity the sailor ashore!  
Hurry him home to the ocean,  
Let him come here no more!

High on the sea-cliff ledges  
The white gulls are trooping and crying,  
Here among rooks and roses,  
Why is the sea-gull flying?

## VII TO A GARDENER

Friend, in my mountain-side demesne,  
My plain-beholding, rosy, green  
And linnet-haunted garden-ground,  
Let still the esculents abound.  
Let first the onion flourish there,  
Rose among roots, the maiden-fair,  
Wine-scented and poetic soul  
Of the capacious salad-bowl.  
Let thyme the mountaineer (to dress  
The tinier birds) and wading cress,  
The lover of the shallow brook,  
From all my plots and borders look.  
Nor crisp and ruddy radish, nor  
Pease-cods for the child's pinafore  
Be lacking; nor of salad clan  
The last and least that ever ran  
About great nature's garden-beds.  
Nor thence be missed the speary heads  
Of artichoke; nor thence the bean  
That gathered innocent and green  
Outsavours the belauded pea.

These tend, I prithee; and for me,  
Thy most long-suffering master, bring  
In April, when the linnets sing  
And the days lengthen more and more,  
At sundown to the garden door.  
And I, being provided thus,  
Shall, with superb asparagus,  
A book, a taper, and a cup

Of country wine, divinely sup.

*La Solitude, Hyères.*

## **VIII TO MINNIE**

**(WITH A HAND-GLASS)**

A picture-frame for you to fill,  
A paltry setting for your face,  
A thing that has no worth until  
You lend it something of your grace,

I send (unhappy I that sing  
Laid by a while upon the shelf)  
Because I would not send a thing  
Less charming than you are yourself.

And happier than I, alas!  
(Dumb thing, I envy its delight)  
'Twill wish you well, the looking-glass,  
And look you in the face to-night.

*1869.*

## **IX TO K. de M**

A lover of the moorland bare  
And honest country winds you were;  
The silver-skimming rain you took;  
And love the floodings of the brook,  
Dew, frost and mountains, fire and seas,  
Tumultuary silences,  
Winds that in darkness fied a tune,  
And the high-riding, virgin moon.

And as the berry, pale and sharp,  
Springs on some ditch's counterscarp  
In our ungenial, native north —  
You put your frosted wildings forth,  
And on the heath, afar from man,  
A strong and bitter virgin ran.

The berry ripened keeps the rude  
And racy flavour of the wood.  
And you that loved the empty plain  
All redolent of wind and rain,  
Around you still the curlew sings —  
The freshness of the weather clings —  
The maiden jewels of the rain  
Sit in your dabbled locks again.

**X**  
**TO N. V. de G. S**

The unfathomable sea, and time, and tears,  
The deeds of heroes and the crimes of kings  
Dispart us; and the river of events  
Has, for an age of years, to east and west  
More widely borne our cradles. Thou to me  
Art foreign, as when seamen at the dawn  
Descry a land far off, and know not which.  
So I approach uncertain; so I cruise  
Round thy mysterious islet, and behold  
Surf and great mountains and loud river-bars,  
And from the shore hear inland voices call.  
Strange is the seaman's heart; he hopes, he fears;  
Draws closer and sweeps wider from that coast;  
Last, his rent sail refits, and to the deep  
His shattered prow uncomfited puts back.  
Yet as he goes he ponders at the helm  
Of that bright island; where he feared to touch,  
His spirit re-adventures; and for years,  
Where by his wife he slumbers safe at home,  
Thoughts of that land revisit him; he sees  
The eternal mountains beckon, and awakes  
Yearning for that far home that might have been.

**XI**  
**TO WILL. H. LOW**

Youth now flees on feathered foot,  
Faint and fainter sounds the flute,  
Rarer songs of gods; and still  
Somewhere on the sunny hill,  
Or along the winding stream,  
Through the willows, flits a dream;  
Flits but shows a smiling face,

Flees, but with so quaint a grace,  
None can choose to stay at home,  
All must follow, all must roam.

This is unborn beauty: she  
Now in air floats high and free.  
Takes the sun and makes the blue; —  
Late with stooping pinion flew  
Raking hedgerow trees, and wet  
Her wing in silver streams, and set  
Shining foot on temple roof:  
Now again she flies aloof,  
Coasting mountain clouds and kiss't  
By the evening's amethyst.  
In wet wood and miry lane,  
Still we pant and pound in vain;  
Still with leaden foot we chase  
Waning pinion, fainting face;  
Still with grey hair we stumble on,  
Till, behold, the vision gone!  
Where hath fleeting beauty led?  
To the doorway of the dead.  
Life is over, life was gay:  
We have come the primrose way.

## **XII**

### **TO MRS. WILL. H. LOW**

Even in the bluest noonday of July,  
There could not run the smallest breath of wind  
But all the quarter sounded like a wood;  
And in the chequered silence and above  
The hum of city cabs that sought the Bois,  
Suburban ashes shivered into song.  
A patter and a chatter and a chirp  
And a long dying hiss – it was as though  
Starched old brocaded dames through all the house  
Had trailed a strident skirt, or the whole sky  
Even in a wink had over-brimmed in rain.  
Hark, in these shady parlours, how it talks  
Of the near Autumn, how the smitten ash  
Trembles and augurs floods! O not too long  
In these inconstant latitudes delay,  
O not too late from the unbeloved north  
Trim your escape! For soon shall this low roof  
Resound indeed with rain, soon shall your eyes  
Search the foul garden, search the darkened rooms,

Nor find one jewel but the blazing log.

*12 Rue Vernier, Paris.*

### **XIII TO H. F. BROWN**

#### **(WRITTEN DURING A DANGEROUS SICKNESS)**

I sit and wait a pair of oars  
On cis-Elysian river-shores.  
Where the immortal dead have sate,  
'Tis mine to sit and meditate;  
To re-ascend life's rivulet,  
Without remorse, without regret;  
And sing my *Alma Genetrix*  
Among the willows of the Styx.

And lo, as my serener soul  
Did these unhappy shores patrol,  
And wait with an attentive ear  
The coming of the gondolier,  
Your fire-surviving roll I took,  
Your spirited and happy book;<sup>1</sup>  
Whereon, despite my frowning fate,  
It did my soul so recreate  
That all my fancies fled away  
On a Venetian holiday.

Now, thanks to your triumphant care,  
Your pages clear as April air,  
The sails, the bells, the birds, I know,  
And the far-off Friulan snow;  
The land and sea, the sun and shade,  
And the blue even lamp-inlaid.  
For this, for these, for all, O friend,  
For your whole book from end to end —  
For Paron Piero's mutton-ham —  
I your defaulting debtor am.

Perchance, reviving, yet may I  
To your sea-paven city hie,  
And in a *felze* some day yet  
Light at your pipe my cigarette.

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<sup>1</sup> "Life on the Lagoons," by H. F. Brown, originally burned in the fire at Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench & Co.'s.



## **XIV TO ANDREW LANG**

Dear Andrew, with the brindled hair,  
Who glory to have thrown in air,  
High over arm, the trembling reed,  
By Ale and Kail, by Till and Tweed:  
An equal craft of hand you show  
The pen to guide, the fly to throw:  
I count you happy-starred; for God,  
When He with inkpot and with rod  
Endowed you, bade your fortune lead  
For ever by the crooks of Tweed,  
For ever by the woods of song  
And lands that to the Muse belong;  
Or if in peopled streets, or in  
The abhorred pedantic sanhedrin,  
It should be yours to wander, still  
Airs of the morn, airs of the hill,  
The plovery Forest and the seas  
That break about the Hebrides,  
Should follow over field and plain  
And find you at the window-pane;  
And you again see hill and peel,  
And the bright springs gush at your heel.  
So went the fiat forth, and so  
Garrulous like a brook you go,  
With sound of happy mirth and sheen  
Of daylight – whether by the green  
You fare that moment, or the grey;  
Whether you dwell in March or May;  
Or whether treat of reels and rods  
Or of the old unhappy gods:  
Still like a brook your page has shone,  
And your ink sings of Helicon.

## **XV ET TU IN ARCADIA VIXISTI (TO R. A. M. S.)**

In ancient tales, O friend, thy spirit dwelt;  
There, from of old, thy childhood passed; and there  
High expectation, high delights and deeds,

Thy fluttering heart with hope and terror moved.  
And thou hast heard of yore the Blatant Beast,  
And Roland's horn, and that war-scattering shout  
Of all-unarmed Achilles, ægis-crowned.  
And perilous lands thou sawest, sounding shores  
And seas and forests drear, island and dale  
And mountain dark. For thou with Tristram rod'st  
Or Bedevere, in farthest Lyonesse.  
Thou hadst a booth in Samarcand, whereat  
Side-looking Magians trafficked; thence, by night,  
An Afreet snatched thee, and with wings upbore  
Beyond the Aral Mount; or, hoping gain,  
Thou, with a jar of money, didst embark  
For Balsorah by sea. But chiefly thou  
In that clear air took'st life; in Arcady  
The haunted, land of song; and by the wells  
Where most the gods frequent. There Chiron old,  
In the Pelethronian antre, taught thee lore;  
The plants he taught, and by the shining stars  
In forests dim to steer. There hast thou seen  
Immortal Pan dance secret in a glade,  
And, dancing, roll his eyes; these, where they fell,  
Shed glee, and through the congregated oaks  
A flying horror winged; while all the earth  
To the god's pregnant footing thrilled within.  
Or whiles, beside the sobbing stream, he breathed,  
In his clutched pipe unformed and wizard strains  
Divine yet brutal; which the forest heard,  
And thou, with awe; and far upon the plain  
The unthinking ploughman started and gave ear.

Now things there are that, upon him who sees,  
A strong vocation lay; and strains there are  
That whoso hears shall hear for evermore.  
For evermore thou hear'st immortal Pan  
And those melodious godheads, ever young  
And ever quiring, on the mountains old.

What was this earth, child of the gods, to thee?  
Forth from thy dreamland thou, a dreamer, cam'st  
And in thine ears the olden music rang,  
And in thy mind the doings of the dead,  
And those heroic ages long forgot.  
To a so fallen earth, alas! too late,  
Alas! in evil days, thy steps return,  
To list at noon for nightingales, to grow  
A dweller on the beach till Argo come  
That came long since, a lingerer by the pool  
Where that desired angel bathes no more.

As when the Indian to Dakota comes,  
Or farthest Idaho, and where he dwelt,  
He with his clan, a humming city finds;  
Thereon a while, amazed, he stares, and then  
To right and leftward, like a questing dog,  
Seeks first the ancestral altars, then the hearth  
Long cold with rains, and where old terror lodged,  
And where the dead: so thee undying Hope,  
With all her pack, hunts screaming through the years:  
Here, there, thou fleeëst; but nor here nor there  
The pleasant gods abide, the glory dwells.

That, that was not Apollo, not the god.  
This was not Venus, though she Venus seemed  
A moment. And though fair yon river move,  
She, all the way, from disenchanted fount  
To seas unhallowed runs; the gods forsook  
Long since her trembling rushes; from her plains  
Disconsolate, long since adventure fled;  
And now although the inviting river flows,  
And every poplared cape, and every bend  
Or willowy islet, win upon thy soul  
And to thy hopeful shallop whisper speed;  
Yet hope not thou at all; hope is no more;  
And O, long since the golden groves are dead  
The faëry cities vanished from the land!

## **XVI TO W.E. HENLEY**

The year runs through her phases; rain and sun,  
Spring-time and summer pass; winter succeeds;  
But one pale season rules the house of death.  
Cold falls the imprisoned daylight; fell disease  
By each lean pallet squats, and pain and sleep  
Toss gaping on the pillows.  
But O thou!  
Uprise and take thy pipe. Bid music flow,  
Strains by good thoughts attended, like the spring  
The swallows follow over land and sea.  
Pain sleeps at once; at once, with open eyes,  
Dozing despair awakes. The shepherd sees  
His flock come bleating home; the seaman hears  
Once more the cordage rattle. Airs of home!  
Youth, love, and roses blossom; the gaunt ward  
Dislimns and disappears, and, opening out,  
Shows brooks and forests, and the blue beyond

Of mountains.  
Small the pipe; but O! do thou,  
Peak-faced and suffering piper, blow therein  
The dirge of heroes dead; and to these sick,  
These dying, sound the triumph over death.  
Behold! each greatly breathes; each tastes a joy  
Unknown before, in dying; for each knows  
A hero dies with him – though unfulfilled,  
Yet conquering truly – and not dies in vain.

So is pain cheered, death comforted; the house  
Of sorrow smiles to listen. Once again —  
O thou, Orpheus and Heracles, the bard  
And the deliverer, touch the stops again!

## **XVII**

### **HENRY JAMES**

Who comes to-night? We ope the doors in vain.  
Who comes? My bursting walls, can you contain  
The presences that now together throng  
Your narrow entry, as with flowers and song,  
As with the air of life, the breath of talk?  
Lo, how these fair immaculate women walk  
Behind their jocund maker; and we see  
Slighted *De Mauves*, and that far different she,  
*Gressie*, the trivial sphynx; and to our feast  
*Daisy* and *Barb* and *Chancellor* (she not least!)  
With all their silken, all their airy kin,  
Do like unbidden angels enter in.  
But he, attended by these shining names,  
Comes (best of all) himself – our welcome James.

## **XVIII**

### **THE MIRROR SPEAKS**

Where the bells peal far at sea  
Cunning fingers fashioned me.  
There on palace walls I hung  
While that *Consuelo* sung;  
But I heard, though I listened well,  
Never a note, never a trill,  
Never a beat of the chiming bell.  
There I hung and looked, and there  
In my grey face, faces fair

Shone from under shining hair.  
Well I saw the poisoning head,  
But the lips moved and nothing said;  
And when lights were in the hall,  
Silent moved the dancers all.

So a while I glowed, and then  
Fell on dusty days and men;  
Long I slumbered packed in straw,  
Long I none but dealers saw;  
Till before my silent eye  
One that sees came passing by.  
Now with an outlandish grace,  
To the sparkling fire I face  
In the blue room at Skerryvore;  
Where I wait until the door  
Open, and the Prince of Men,  
Henry James, shall come again.

## **XIX**

### **KATHARINE**

We see you as we see a face  
That trembles in a forest place  
Upon the mirror of a pool  
For ever quiet, clear, and cool;  
And, in the wayward glass, appears  
To hover between smiles and tears,  
Elfin and human, airy and true,  
And backed by the reflected blue.

## **XX**

### **TO F. J. S**

I read, dear friend, in your dear face  
Your life's tale told with perfect grace;  
The river of your life I trace  
Up the sun-chequered, devious bed  
To the far-distant fountain-head.

Not one quick beat of your warm heart,  
Nor thought that came to you apart,  
Pleasure nor pity, love nor pain  
Nor sorrow, has gone by in vain;  
But as some lone, wood-wandering child

Brings home with him at evening mild  
The thorns and flowers of all the wild,  
From your whole life, O fair and true,  
Your flowers and thorns you bring with you!

## **XXI REQUIEM**

Under the wide and starry sky,  
Dig the grave and let me lie.  
Glad did I live and gladly die,  
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:  
*Here he lies where he longed to be;  
Home is the sailor, home from sea,  
And the hunter home from the hill.*

*Hyères, May 1884.*

## **XXII THE CELESTIAL SURGEON**

If I have faltered more or less  
In my great task of happiness;  
If I have moved among my race  
And shown no glorious morning face;  
If beams from happy human eyes  
Have moved me not; if morning skies,  
Books, and my food, and summer rain  
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain: —  
Lord, Thy most pointed pleasure take  
And stab my spirit broad awake;  
Or, Lord, if too obdurate I,  
Choose Thou, before that spirit die,  
A piercing pain, a killing sin,  
And to my dead heart run them in!

## **XXIII OUR LADY OF THE SNOWS**

Out of the sun, out of the blast,  
Out of the world, alone I passed

Across the moor and through the wood  
To where the monastery stood.  
There neither lute nor breathing fife,  
Nor rumour of the world of life,  
Nor confidences low and dear,  
Shall strike the meditative ear.  
Aloof, unhelpful, and unkind,  
The prisoners of the iron mind,  
Where nothing speaks except the bell,  
The unfraternal brothers dwell.

Poor passionate men, still clothed afresh  
With agonising folds of flesh;  
Whom the clear eyes solicit still  
To some bold output of the will,

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