

SONGS OF THE GREY COUNTRY

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LONDON :
THE YEAR BOOK PRESS,
31, MUSEUM STREET.
1916.

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DEDICATION

FROM the Land you left behind you,
 Where the mountains gird our home
Stray my errant songs to find you—
 Will you read them where you roam?

Songs of how we fared together
 O'er the hills and far away,
Through the glory of the heather
 Many a golden Autumn day.

Will you read, with eyes a-dreaming
 Of the windy woods we knew,
And the grassy uplands gleaming
 In the twilight—starred with dew,

Till you hear the brown burns brawling
 O'er the grey rocks, and the scream
Of the peewit and the calling
 Of the hill-wind, through your dream,

Till the half-forgotten faces
 And the voices that are gone
Call you o'er the desert places
 Where you dwell—afar, alone

Will my stray songs set the ember
 Of your dying dreams aglow,
Help you sometimes to remember
 Dreams that faded long ago ?

COVENANTER SONGS

THE SONG OF THE BROWNIE OF BODESBECK

STILL are the woods and silent all the vale,
The wan stars fade, the grey hills dream beneath
Where far faint moon-beams glimmer cold and pale
Athwart the dark cave where I wait for death—
Death that is on the dawn-winds' icy breath.

Morn is not yet, and all the Lowland plain
Dreams to the sky—a silent soul asleep.
I wake, with eyes that look beyond their pain
Into the stars a last long watch to keep—
A last long watch above a world asleep.

How long, how long I watched this Moffat-dale
By foaming Grey Mare's Tail and Blacks-hope Glen,
While Clavers' soldiers rode by hill and vale,
Seeking with bloody sword the weary men
Who worshipped God in yonder hidden glen.

How long we trod, as Scotland's men should tread,
By glen and gully through the starless night,
Onward to Thee, by faith for ever led,
Onward to Thee, O God, through well-fought fight,
Bearing Thy Covenant toward the light.

So long, so long! and purer blood has flowed
And braver hearts than mine will throb no more—
Stilled for the cause wherein my head was bowed.
And these poor features—stained with their own gore—
Were burnt and tortured till they smiled no more.

Changeless the valley lies and o'er the hill
The red dawn wakens, day by day the same
As when it shone o'er bloodstained fields and still,
Dead men who died for God when Clavers' came
"God's Covenant " to-day is but a name.

Unchanged, unchanged the wild white orchids blow,
Starring the crimson mosses. As of yore
The blue hills dream, the Moffat waters flow
Where once we prayed beside their reedy shore.
Do they forget the sorrows gone before ?

Not so, not so, o'er yonder purple heath,
Where other men shall pass through peaceful years,
Will linger dreams of those who sleep beneath—

Song in the sunshine, in the raincloud—tears,
And, over all, the triumph of their death.

Still shine the stars, the Eastern clouds grow pale,
The wan light wakens over all the sky,
A far faint dawnlight glimmers o'er the vale.
I am content—content at last to die,
Where God's dim hills are watching with the sky.

See Note.

THE GARDEN OF THE DEAD

I TROD the Lowland hills when twilight grew
To that wan spirit hour of faded sky
Of dreaming wind and slowly falling dew
And sweet faint scent where broken blossoms die.

Dim Hartfell, whence the brown burns fling their spray,
Dark Swatfell, watching o'er the Lowland plains,
And haunted Gallows Wood where storm-winds play
Remorseless havoc ere the Winter wanes.

Dim hills and haunted woods at Eventide,
I followed where you called through brake and fern,
But shadows wandered, voiceless, at my side,
And shadows met me by the rushy burn.

What shades are these who pass me slowly by
And draw me on o'er pathways old and dim ?
The shades of those who sought the hills to die
For Covenanting psalm and honoured hymn.

Is Heaven dreamless and the grave a goal,
Which, having won, its victors reck no more
Of all the loved Earth thought that stirred their soul
And raised their heart to ecstasy before ?

Is Heaven dreamless, that the strong, proud men,
Who fled Dundee, yet fleeing, still defied,
In death should dream not of the misty glen
Which echoed to their psalm and bred their pride ?

Nay, Bodesbeck's Brownie sleeps and Effie's love
Kept tragic tryst in De'il's Tub long ago ;
O'er nameless graves men tread the heath above,
Where greater men lie sleeping far below.

They sleep, but still they gaze with yearning eyes,
Across the gateless bars that bound their shore,
Toward the purple hills and faded skies,
And misty woodlands that they loved of yore.

Still in the twilit hour, through brake and fern,
They stray where once they prayed and loved and bled,
Dim voiceless shadows by the rushy burn,
Pale blossoms in the Garden of the Dead.

See Note.

TINKER SONGS

THE TINKER'S MARRIAGE SONG

IN the crimson fire of dawnlight I have
seen thy dark eyes shine
With laughter of the morning, I have seen
those hands of thine
Stretched up toward the sunrise, adoring
Gods unknown,
In the red fire of the morning I have claimed
thee for my own.
Moràgh—my Tinker Lass.

In the glory of the mountains I have seen
thee tramping by
With thy pack upon thy shoulder and thy
proud head held so high,
I heard thee sing of faery folk and Gods of
old who rise
To bless thee by the pathway for the laughter
in thine eyes.
Moràgh—my Tinker Lass.

In the grey dusk of the gleaming, alone I
saw thee stray
By crag and torrent mourning for the passing
of the day,
Till shadows from the twilight stole and
called thee by thy name,
And the laughter of thine eyes, lass, flashed
a greeting when they came.
Moràgh—my Tinker Lass.

In the crimson fire of morning thy hands
have sought my own—
No more, no more to wander or worship
Gods unknown.
The dawn of Love is rising, Moràgh, within
thine eyes,
The dawn that shines, for ever, beyond the
farthest skies.
Moràgh, my Tinker Lass.

THE PLACE WHERE TEARS ARE BORN.

(A Song by the Road).

COME, lass of mine, the dewy dusk is falling,
The peat-smoke heavenward curls in wreathing spires ;
Homeward, again, our hearts the hills are calling,
Who ask no hearthlight but the clear star fires,
Only the clear star fires.

Come, Moràgh lass, the long road lies before us—
The rugged pathway by our footsteps worn
Tramping along with God's clear starlight o'er us,
To rest beside the pool where tears are born,
The place where tears are born.

Who but a tinker ever came to love them ?
The still dark waters whence, at close of day,
The tears of earth are born and, far above them,
Blow on the breezes o'er the world away,
So far, so far away.

There bloom no star-white flowers, no purple heather,
Only the reeds beside the marshy brim,
Unresting, rustle in the wind together
Through dreamless years by waters old and dim,
By waters old and dim.

On whirring wings above the silent water
The wild bird hastens in the winter's morn,
For there no echoing gun-shot ever sought her—
Who hunts beside the pool where tears are born ?
The place where tears are born,

Only the tinker seeks that place of sorrows,
And dreams beside the waters dark and still
Of sunlit yesterdays and dark tomorrows,
And winter days that creep across the hill,
Of snow upon the hill.

Rest, lass, awhile—the weary stars are dying,
Too soon they fade amid the mists of morn—
Dream on, Moràgh, where winds of sleep are sighing
Around the pool where tears of Earth are born,
The place where tears are born.

Some day, lass, in the silence of the heather,
We two must meet the night that knows no morn ;

Ah ! Moràgh, might we tread that road together !
Here by the silent pool where tears are born,
The place where tears are born.

FAREWELL, MORÀGH

YOU are dying, will you leave behind you
All the memories of the vanished years,
All the laughter and the foolish tears,
The joy that charmed, the pain that came to blind you ?

When I lay your body in the heather
By the sheepfold, will you never hear
My footsteps on the roadway—far or near—
Tramping alone where once we tramped together ?

You who loved, in June as in December,
The windy upland and the silent vale,
The ragged pine-wood where the hill winds wail,
O ! can it be that you will not remember ?

You always slept with God's clear stars above you,
Dim hills about you and your hand in mine.
Yet you will sleep tonight where no stars shine
And only darkness gathers round to love you.

And I shall listen vainly for your laughter,
Or vainly seek the softness of your hair.
O ! Can it be that you will never share
My night of pain and hopeless dawnlight after ?

Heart of the hills in June as in December !
O, carry with you to the Silent Land
Dreams of the road we followed hand in hand—
That when I join you we may both remember.

Moràgh, I lay your body in the heather
And tramp my lone trail, dreaming of your eyes.
Oh, draw me homeward when the long day dies
That we may tramp the hills of God together.

SONGS OF THE MOFFAT WOODS

THE BEECH WOOD
(A Sacrifice to War.)

Too sad for sighs, and far too proud for tears
 You fell, great grove, upon the silent hill,
 When Red War laid your splendour low and still
Claiming your service in your evening years.

Dim dreams of childhood woke beneath your sway,
 Laughter of lovers whispered through your leaves,
 And gracious sorrow when the old year grieves
At Autumntide was yours until today.

Far, far away, you heard the song of strife,
 Of mighty tumult e'er your dead leaves fell
 Through winter days—each folded in the shell—
Your young buds dreamed of War and shattered life.

Pale Spring awoke, with sorrow in her eyes,
 To bring you death before your leaves were born.
 No more you heard the bird-songs in the morn,
But ringing axes and the woodmen's cries.

Too sad for sighs and far too proud for tears,
 Great grove, you yielded all your splendid life
 To serve your country in her hour of strife
And find fulfilment in your evening years.

Moffat. 1915.

THE GALLOWS WOOD

DARK wood, dim wood where shadowy pathways wind
Through dusky brackens up the windy hill,
In summer days thy trees are never still
And winter gales to thee are never kind,
But all day long they murmur as they blow
Of how they laid thy woody summit bare,
Of how they wreaked remorseless havoc there
With shattered tree and many a broken bough.

And all day long they whisper thy grim name—
The name a felon left thee long ago,
Who trod his weary path of sin and woe
And died upon thy Gallows-tree of shame.
Still haunts his last prayer on thine errant breeze
With old, dead smiles and half-forgotten fears
And deathless echoes of the dying years
Under the twilight of thy windy trees.

Who dreams of faeryland below thy shade
Hath surely seen some faery faces shine
Amid thy golden fern and ragged pine
In twilit hours that all too swiftly fade.
And who has heard the restless winds that blow
Thy boughs—for ever hears them in his sleep,
Blended with voices of the trees that weep
Their sister trees that fell so long ago.

Today, new boughs of green are spreading forth
On thy lone summit. O'er that place of death
New life awakes—O storm wind, guard thy breath
Nor blow too fiercely from the bitter North
That o'er the woodland old, in distant years,
On yonder windy summit—as a crown—
The younger wood may stand and—smiling down—
Bless the old wood and its grim name of tears.

See Note.

THE LARCHWOOD

LITTLE green larchwood, where bird-song and wind song
Carol their joy in the dew of the morn,
What would I give for a sight of your beauty,
The flush of your green on the gold of the corn !
Far, far below you a brown burn is singing
Over the rocks in the heart of the glen,
The hills and the heather are shining above you
Blessing the field they have yielded to men.

Golden the dawnlight breaks o'er you and pierces
The gloom of your shadow with shimmering bars.
Golden the last rays of dying day linger
Over your boughs that are seeking the stars.
Little green larchwood where wild flowers are blowing,
Where bird-song and wind-song are sweet in the morn,
What would I give for a sight of your beauty.
The flush of your green on the gold of the corn !

SONGS OF THE WAYSIDE

ON WINDY WAY

On Windy Way when morning breaks
 Across the dreaming sky,
A little drifting wind awakes
 To kiss the stars goodbye.
On shining wing the sunbeams pass
 Across a world of grey
To steal the jewels from the grass
 On Windy Way, on Windy Way.

On Windy Way your heart will sing
 Through sunlight and through shade,
Where harebells through the heather spring
 And fallen brackens fade.
But where the winds of weary years
 Through broken branches stray,
Perchance your heart will dream of tears
 On Windy Way, on Windy Way.

On Windy Way when daylight dies
 And shadows fall too soon,
Though tears are shining in your eyes
 Yet seek the rising moon.
On silver wing her beam will pass
 Across a world of grey
To scatter jewels o'er the grass
 On Windy Way, on Windy Way.

HOMeward

WILL you come homeward to the Silent Valley ?
Home to the Borderland you used to love,
When winds of Autumn fill the glen with weeping
And grey mist veils the mountain tops above.
Come home, with springing footstep on the pathway
That skirts the shaggy wood and broken wall.
You used to love the pine trees' ragged beauty,
The plaintive sorrow of the curlew's call.

Come home, and tell the story of your wandering,
Smile in our eyes and charm away our tears,
Sing us the songs we cannot sing without you,
Waken the echoes of the vanished years.
Will you come homeward to the Silent Valley
Home to the Borderland of clouded skies ?
You used to love our purple hills of sorrow—
Have they no charm now for your Southern eyes ?

GOLD OF THE KING'S HIGHWAY

WHEN the young moon wakes on the water,
Where lake reeds rustle and sway,
Come seek, come seek for the treasure—
The Gold of the King's Highway.

When heather-winds blow on the hillside
Come, gather the gold of the plain.
Though you rifle the travellers' treasure
'Twill bloom by the lake again.

Does it fade away in your fingers
And die in the dim dawnlight ?
What matter ! 'Twas gold in the moon-hour
And you were a King—for a night.

When the King-cups blow by the water
Where lake-reeds rustle and sway,
Come gather them in the moonlight,
They are Gold of the King's Highway.

See Note.

THE ECHO TOWERS OF THE BORDER

O'ER windy plains of the Lowland
By heathery hill they rise,
The old grey towers of the Border,
The grim grey towers of the Border,
The beacon towers of the Border
Under the windy skies.

They stand by the long white roadway,
In fields of daisied grass,
And over the plains they echo
Echo the traveller's greeting,
The greeting cried from the roadway
By travelling men who pass.

And still in the twilit gloaming
They dream of the raider bands,
Of marching feet on the roadway
Of flashing spears on the roadway,
Carrying Death by the roadway
Into the Borderlands.

The blood-red blaze of the beacons
Burns for a dreaming hour,
While the clash of mortal combat,
The clash of a long-dead combat
Echoes across the silence
Over the Border Tower.

Song that is blent with sorrow,
Laughter and battle cry,
Voices born of the Border—
From old grey Towers of the Border
Echo across the Border
Under the windy sky.

SHEPHERD SONGS

THE RED LOVER

CAN I forget thee, Red Lover of mine,
When the peat fire burns no more
On the empty hearth and the sheeling door
Stands wide and dark, when the dawn-stars shine,
And the grief of a lonely heart is thine ?
Red Lover, Ohone ! Ohone !

Thy love is born of the silent fog
And the burning birth of the day,
Of the restless sea far, far away
And the dark still pools of the reedy bog,
The voiceless love in the eyes of a dog,
This is thy love for me.

When the cold grey mist comes out of the West
And the wan stars fade in the sky,
Tramping the dark hills—thou and I,
We gather the strayed sheep home to rest,
A dew-drenched lamb in the warmth of my breast.
Red Lover, Horo ! Horo !

Far have we followed the path of the wind
Over the purple heather,
Over the hills together.
Under the sun when skies are kind
Into the storm when snow-clouds blind
Red Lover, Horo ! Horo !

The love and the laughter have seen their day
And the joys of my youth are o'er,
Death stands in the dusk at the sheeling door
Waving the dreams of youth away,
Only thy love lives on for aye
Red Lover, Ohone ! Ohone !

Can I forget thee, Red Lover, of mine?
Nay, to the distant shore
Thy love will follow me ever more,
Afar, afar, when the dawn stars shine
And the grief of a lonely heart is thine,
Red Lover, Ohone! Ohone!

MICHAEL COMES HOME NO MORE

LEAN down, O Mother, to the glowing coal,
The red flames light your dim eyes for a space,
But they will light no more your darkened soul
That yearns in vain for Michael's absent face.

He will not come. Watch not the fast shut door
With longing eyes. Oh, whisper not his name
With eager lips, for Michael comes no more
Home from the mountains as of old he came.

Mother, the winter moon was newly born
When Michael's life-blood stained the virgin snow.
Wrapped in his plaid he fell and, e'er the morn,
The hand of Death had stanch'd the crimson flow.

Now wanes the moon and Michael comes no more.
I dug his grave. Another herds his sheep.
Yet still you watch for him and, by the door,
His old dog mourns with eyes that cannot weep.

Ah ! Michael sleeps below the snow to-night—
Gaze not, O Mother, through the frozen pane.
The morn will bring him not to thee. The white
Still stars he loved will shine for him in vain.

The clock ticks on. The dying embers fall.
Lean down, O Mother, to the glowing bars.
Michael will never hear you when you call,
His love is hidden in the cold white stars.

THE OLD SHEPHERD

BESIDE the grey stone dyke he stands—so still—
He seems a statue on the Mountainside
Hewn from the dark rocks scattered o'er the hill.

Weary he bends above his staff. His wide
Eyes roam the purple heath, the golden fern,
The faded tree that whispers by the burn.

The dead leaves rustle down like fallen tears,
A wan light glimmers in the Western skies.
Into the growing dusk the old man peers—
Visions of vanished ages in his eyes—
Dreams of dead youth and words of love that died
By yonder burn some distant eventide.

Far in the vale his cottage window gleams,
A wan star wakens where the twilight dies
Amid the faded clouds. His gathered dreams
Fall from the lonely sorrow of his eyes,
Homeward he turns. The dead, sweet days he knew
Still wand'ring by him through the starry dew.

SONGS OF THE NORTH SEA

THE GRAVE BY THE SEA

THERE is a grave where I have knelt in prayer
In the North land upon the wild sea shore,
Oft have I wept for those who slumber there,
But now I know that I shall weep no more.
For hearts are light beneath your Southern sky
And little joys will swiftly banish pain,
Yet, pray for me that once before I die
I may stand weeping by that grave again—
That lonely grave where lies the hope of years,
That silent grave beside the great North Sea.

There are no blossoms in that place of sleep,
Only the brown weed yielded by the tide,
Only the tall green sand-bents vigil keep
And wailing sea birds wheel their courses wide.
Here, in your Southern garden roses glow,
A thousand birds make music in the trees,
Yet, ah, for one breath of the winds which blow
About that grave beside the great North Seas
That lonely grave where lies the hope of years,
That silent grave beside the great North Sea.

A BROKEN BRANCH

WIND on the sand and white, wind-driven foam,
 Blanching the black rocks in the wan dawn-light.
And still the curling waves draw home, draw home
 That which the storm-wind gave them in the night—
 A broken branch.

Upon the wide wet sand it lay at noon,
 Torn from the Pine-wood on the steep hillside,
Stripped of its sweet green beauty, soon, too soon,
 Tossed on the gale and yielded to the tide—
 A broken branch.

Never again to rise ! Ah! broken bough—
 Cast by the fierce gale to the hungry main—
Pride of the woodland once, and now, and now
 Bird song and wind-song call to you in vain !
 A broken branch.

Golden the young day when the storm-winds fall,
 Black, sodden drift-logs float upon the tide
Commingling with the waves, they call, they call
 Little dark pinewood on the far hillside,
 Farewell, Farewell."

THE BELL

AH ! cold grey sea that sweeps the lonely shore,
And fills the hollows of the rocks with foam,
What bells are those I hear amid the roar
Of thy great voice ; as sailors, drawing home
Hear o'er the water from some steepled tower
Sweet, distant bells ? In this wan twilit hour,
No land bells ring. The storm has spent its wrath.
Yet still thy grey waves thunder, and the swell
Sweeps up and turns to that which sent it forth.
Lo, as it turns, there tolls a mighty bell
Amid the hollows of thy watery caves
Where pale immortals dwell beneath the waves—
Kings of the sea below the blinding spray
They weep the ships that steer for home no more :
And o'er the crested wave for ever sway
The bells of ocean to the lonely shore—
Tolling a knell across the flying foam
For drowning men who dream in vain of home.

See Note

GREY STONES

GREY STONES

*DREAM-HAUNTED memories of an outworn world,
Dim tears that fall, unseen, in twilit hours
And far, faint voices from the vanished years
Of old, dead loves that wake at eventide.
Such memories bravely builded still endure
When shrines of youth are falling to decay,
No hand can crush or seize them—they remain
Changeless through changing years as grey stones stand
Deathless, in dying woods by waters old.*

Some souls there be that suffer instantly
The agony of Life's chastising blow
Upon their heart—suffer with blinding tears,
With hot remorse and anguish of regret
Which, passing swiftly, leave no scar behind,
No kinder tears to fall by lonely fires,
No mellowed grief to haunt an old, sweet dream.
Such spirits weep and soon forget their pain.
Not so the Wanderer—Grief seared his soul.
No sudden pain was his, no swift return
To lighter joy. He strayed across the World,
Seeking a balm to heal his heart—too full
Of woe to find relief in tears—a balm
To soothe his soul and bring forgetfulness
Of all the dead life he would know no more.
He came by long white roadways from the sea,
Through purple mountains in the twilit hour,
With weary feet, to his forgotten home—
The Silent Valley of the Borderland—
High on the hillside e'er the darkness fell
He stood—alone—amid the fading world.

Far, far below the Silent Valley lay—
Locked in the hills—serene and sorrowful—
His old loved home, forgotten in glad years,
Now grown most precious to his empty heart.
“There, surely, I shall find, at last,” he cried,
“The balm I seek—erstwhile in vain, in vain—
“Goodnight, dark hills, the Silent Valley calls
“And I would follow through the growing gloom
“Because the mountains are too sad at night
“For any restless soul to share their sleep.
“Deep in the Valley tears are shed, unseen,
“And shadows fall—Blest veil for weary eyes
“Which yearn, in vain, toward the troublous sky

"Where high above the clouds white stars are born
"To sing the songs that I have longed to learn—
"World-gladdening music I can never hear
"Save in a broken lilt—too far away
"For any star-born note to fill my soul
"Or still the voice of memory that I dread.
"Deep in the Valley by the silent loch
"Come weary hearts to pray and there—at last—
"I too shall rest upon the reedy shore,
"Pouring my pent-up sorrow in the ground,
"The ground that bore my boyhood's eager dream."

So mused he—stepping homeward through the gloom
O'er rugged pathways down the mountainside.
Fast-falling shadows drew him on apace,
Southward the drifting mist arose and fell—
Wraithlike and joyless on the loch's green shore
Where ripples brimming to the rushy strand
Died with the dying wind amid the reeds.
Sudden—across the sky the full moon gleamed,
The clouds rolled back. The Valley—filled with light
Lay radiant and Danae to the hills.
With dim home-yearning eyes the Wanderer sought
The dark bird-haunted woods he knew of old,
The long green pathway through the dewy fern,
The old familiar landmarks on the road.
"How changed," he murmured, "by the passing years,
"Old trees cut down and young plantations grown
"To early beauty. Houses built anew
"And old, loved homesteads fallen to decay.
"New fields are claimed from out the heather waste
"And new built dykes about new sheepfolds stand.
"Only the grey stones by the loch remain—
"Unchanged, unchanging—sentinels of Time—
"The Watchers of the World, remembering all
"And building memory to a structure fair,
"Not fleeing from it as I seek to flee,
"Nor seeking dumb forgetfulness and void
"Far peace that knows no thought of pain.
"Grey stones !" he cried, "you hold the balm I seek,
"Now are my wanderings ended, now I know
"Tis memory—not oblivion I need.
"This balm I seek—deep in my heart it dwells
"Where grievous memories to glorious dreams
"Would turn, could I but face them as these stones
"Have faced each memory for a thousand years
"And woven visions by the waters old.
"Deep in the Silent Valley, far away

"From all the outworn world where young dreams die,
 "They stand when Spring irradiates the Earth,
 "And watch each day pass by on shining wings.
 "The summer blossoms round them. They alone
 "Bloom not nor die. They have no tears to shed
 "When flowers fade and swallows fly away
 "And winter falls. Unchanging still they stand.
 "Are they too sad to weep, too old to smile ?
 "Or does death hold them ever in his grasp ?
 "Nay, dead men oftimes seem to breathe a sigh
 "Through pallid lips—These are too still for death.
 "Theirs is the quietude of memory,
 "The knowledge that all things on Earth are old,
 "That each new day which breaks across the world
 "Is but the counterpart of long-dead days—
 "Born of dead centuries and dying time.
 "That every day men love and women bear
 "With agony new men into the world
 "To work, to wonder and to pass away—
 "Leaving no trace behind, no thought, no word
 "Except a name to linger with a smile
 "On lips that smile at nought but memory.
 "Perpetual memory, perpetual stones—
 "Deep in the Silent Valley still they stand,
 "Keeping their watch where strong men come to pray
 "Above the green grave of some dead desire,
 "Or women, weeping, learn to smile again
 "And then, courageous, grasp at Life anew
 "Defiant of the sweeping scythe of Time
 "Which, having broken, wounds no more the heart
 "Whose great hours pass away to come no more
 "Save in the guise of deathless memory
 "Which stands unchanging as th' unchanging stones—
 "A monument beside a broken road,
 "Engraven— 'I have touched the heights of bliss
 " 'And heard the white stars sing—I too have known
 " 'One great adventure in a little life'."

* * * *

Then came the Wanderer down the mountainside
 And paused—where moon-winds o'er water strayed—
 He saw his broken dreams pass bravely by,
 Listened in vain for one beloved voice,
 One step that came no more across the grass.
 Then built a strange new dream within his heart
 Where sorrow dwelt—admitted as a friend—
 Where joy and peace were reconciled at last

To share their little sovereignty with pain.
He dared to resurrect that memory
Which he had feared and striven to forget.
He found her—not the sad-eyed ghost of old
But radiant, fair, yet deathless as the stones
Which stand for ever by the misty loch—
Unmoved, unchanging, all consolidate
Symbols of memory, of days that died
Within his arms yet will not pass away
From out his heart which holds them 'gainst the world—
His memory, his stone, his monument,
His fragment of the songs the white stars sing,
The great adventure of his little life.

* * * *

The moon rode high—the dark rocks darker grew.
Far, far away one friendly window glowed—
Calling him home to warmth of fire and friend,
To well-spread board and laughter of bright eyes.
“To-night,” he cried, “I face my life anew
“With shining eyes and swift steps o'er the grass.
“For I have realized my inmost soul
“And I have grasped my own heart's deepest wound,
“Oh, I have dared to look on memory
“And, having dared, shall look and look again
“Till all that was will rise within my heart—
“Dear, glad-eyed ghost ! Dear voice, ah dear, dear eyes
“That weep no more but ever watch with me
“Through passing years—unchanging and unmoved
“As these grey stones that watch the world grow old
“Yet still remember her first maidenhood.
“Oh! I could sleep to-night amid the hills—
“No more, no more are they too sad for me.
“Nay, I should hear each song the white stars sing
“And join with them in perfect unison
“Till dawn-wind whispered to the breaking day.
“My crown of sorrow is my crown of life
“Drawn from the shadow to the light I pass—
“Toward my home.”

ONE LAST SONG.

ONE last song when day is dying,
One last tale by twilight told,
See, the leaves are turning gold !
Down the glen the wind is sighing,
Ah ! the year is growing old,
Come away, the light is dying.

Come, your footsteps on the heather,
Crush the brackens where they lie,
Heed no more the yearning cry,
Wind and water blend together
In your heart— "Goodbye, goodbye !"
Darkness hides the dying heather.

Come away, the songs are ended,
All the dreams we wove are flown
All the flowers we plucked are blown,
Purple hills in grey mist blended
Wait the winter's icy gown.
Come away, the dreams are ended,

Who will gather o'er the heather
Ragged robin, scented fern,
Who will cross the foaming burn
By stepping stones we laid together.
When we dream with hearts that yearn
Far away from hills and heather ?

Come away, the day is dying,
Fades the last song with the gold
Of the West. The tale is told,
Down the glen the winds are sighing,
See, the year is growing old,
Close the book, the light is dying.

L'ENVOI

*FAREWELL, farewell,
Ah ! faery dream of faery hour,
Ah ! dim Grey Land where Faeries dwell
Still in the heart of every flower,
Still in the windy grasses swell.
Though gathered sorrows dim the West
And veils of dusk the hills enfold,
Grey Land where dreams come home to rest
Thy woof of tears is warped with gold.
Farewell, Grey Land, farewell.*

NOTES.

THE BROWNIE OF BODESBECK

In the days of his youth the Brownie was a handsome man—well-known and famous in the Lowland Valleys. Claverhouse's men twisted and distorted him with rack and fire, but denied him the death he craved. He sought refuge in the hills that surround the Moffat Valley and hid in a cave whence he emerged under cover of darkness to render services to the farmers in return for food left on the doorstep. For a long while people feared him, taking him for one of the faery folk of the glens, and supposing him to possess evil powers. Slowly he won his way to their hearts till the children would come to his cave and listen to his stories, though they never lost their belief in his supernormal powers. Perhaps they were right. To-day he sleeps in the shadow of the dark hill which bears his name. This is the story as I have gathered it from the people of his own Valley.

THE GARDEN OF THE DEAD

De'il's Tub, or the Devil's Beef Tub, was surely designed by God as a stage setting for tragedy. The miniature valley lies black and sunless under the dark hills, where here and there grey boulders and stunted trees break the steep slopes. Here, by night, came the men of the Covenant, singing their psalms under the friendly stars.

Effie, a farm lassie, made a tryst to meet there her lover, whom the Dundee's men were harrying through the glens ; but her secret was betrayed, and she kept her tryst only to see her man shot down before her eyes in De'il's Tub.

In those lonely places the shadows of the men who gave their life for their faith have been very real to me.

THE GALLOWS WOOD

The Gallow's Wood at Moffat and the hill on which it stands take their name from the Gallows Tree which was once upon its summit. The tree was blown down in a great storm, and little now remains save the grim name and a shadowy tradition of one felon who climbed the hill to his death, and who now, some say, comes to stand by the gate in the darkness and tread the fatal path he trod long since. I have called him a felon, but I would do him justice. He was only a sheep-stealer—probably a thief hanged by a rascal.

GOLD OF THE KING'S HIGHWAY

This is a very old legend which I had from my Highland nurse. King Cups or Marsh Marigolds turn to gold in the light of the young moon.

"Many a beggar," she told me, "knows this and pulls the flowers. Then he is rich as the king

himself all night. But in the morning the gold is gone.”

THE RED LOVER

A sable collie has brown eyes that flash garnet-red in the light. His brown coat is red against the darker brown of the moors when he drives the sheep homeward at set of sun. It was for this reason that Red Lover came by his name and because of the love which he bore his master—passing the love of any man. When the Shepherd died in the sheeling, the Red Lover did not tarry long before he went away to seek his master on those hills which are beyond our sight

THE BELLS

The idea of the Bell should not be taken in any mystical sense. It is an actual fact. Others with whom I have spoken have heard the same sound of bells in the rolling of great waters as the waves draw back from the shore—particularly at night when the Earth sounds are still. It seems as though the waves tolled a knell for the lives they had claimed.

J. R.