THE PAINTER AND THE FAIRY.

(To Sir Noel Paton.)

I LAY in the depths of dreamland, Above me the sky was clear, And only a single blue-bell Was nodding close to my ear.

I watched it swaying and bending, As if a fairy's hand Had lightly touched it in passing To her home in fairyland.

Then all at once from the blossom
That was nodding at my head
Came the tiniest of voices,
And this was what it said—

"O, poet, dreaming in dreamland, With eyes half hid by the hand, Well is it for one sweet moment Thou canst enter our own sweet land.

"But bring not the toil of the city
To this realm of sinless elves,
For a single echo would alter
The law that rules ourselves.

"We care not at all for mortals, For their nature is not as ours; We are spirits that haunt the woodland, And our kinsfolk are the flowers.

"The seasons pass, but we know not, For us no rough winds blow; We do not know the meaning Of the falling of the snow.

THE PAINTER AND THE FAIRY

- "We come with the flowers of summer, We fade with the flowers that die; But we come up again when April Smiles up at the blue of the sky.
- "We cannot be seen of mortals, For their purer vision is gone, And this is why we may always Be seen of the flowers alone.
- "But what of the dreaming painter Who came to us in his youth? He saw us hold our revels, For his heart was the heart of truth.
- "What of the grand old painter?

 Is he weary of cities and men?

 Will he never come back to our revels

 In our fairyland again?
- "He saw us play in the moonlight, He saw us dance by the stream, He held our hands for a moment, Does he still remember his dream?"
- And I, who was idly lying
 Where the dreams rose dim and sweet,
 Heard the whisper of the blue-bell
 And thus made answer meet—
- "The painter is still in the city, In the throng of the streets of men, But the thoughts in his bosom wander To your haunts by stream and glen.
- "He still can hear you calling,
 Though his hair is as white as snow,
 For the heart in the old man's bosom
 Is the heart of long ago.

THE PAINTER AND THE FAIRY

- "In his quiet hours he is dreaming
 Of the moonlight falling between
 The trees that make arches together
 For the march of your Fairy Queen.
- "He hears in such moments of silence A tiny trumpet blown Far off in the realms of dreamland, And he knows that it is your own.
- "Then his fancy sees the procession Wind downward by the streams, And full on the little pennons A touch of moonlight gleams.
- "He sees the blossoms waving
 Their banners of yellow and blue,
 While the humble bee is piping
 A march to guide it through.
- "Then it halts for a single moment On a spot of brighter green, And the painter feels on his forchead The lips of the Fairy Queen,
- "As light as when in the silence
 The petal falls from the cup,
 And not a breath is stirring,
 Yet the painter wakens up.
- "He smiles at his freaks of fancy, If freaks of fancy they seem; But the tears are wet on his eyelids, For he still remembers his dream.
- "But his thoughts are sadder and higher In the streets of toiling men; He has turned from his early visions, And will never come back again.

THE PAINTER AND THE FAIRY

"No more will he see you playing In the moonlight's tender glow, Though the heart that beats in his bosom Is the heart of long ago."

Then a sigh went through the woodland,
A long soft sigh of regret;
It bowed the head of the primrose,
And it touched the violet.

It shook the leaves of the bindweed Where the summer shadows were cool; It stirred the tiniest ripple On the mirror of the pool.

I woke, but was it from dreamland, And where had my fancies been? Was it the blue-bell's whisper, Or that of the Fairy Queen?

JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

Last of the Scots his country knew so well,
And loved and honoured, ripe and full of years
He slips into his rest, amid our tears
As still we stand, nor care to say farewell.
True heart that beat full stroke to the rich spell
Of Scottish song, and all that most endears
The loyal heart to heart to make them peers
Takes newer strength beneath the passing knell.
Sleep thou in kindly soil, as best beseems
A Scot; thou hast no other wish to crave.

A Scot; thou hast no other wish to crave. Far happier thou than he* who dreamt his dreams, Then passed to where the dreams and shadows flee. He sleeps afar, where night and day the sea

Circles and moans beneath his mountain grave.
*Robert Louis Stevenson.

THAT WEARY GOWF.

I TRIED the gowfin' when at Troon,
The links are bonnie there to see,
A warm September day flung doon
Its licht to gladden heart an' ee;
I had a cleek alang wi' me,
I made it wheel, I wasna slack,
Then to the caddie said, "Now tee
The ba', an' stan' a wee bit back."

A' games o' skill come never wrang
To ane wha has the nerve an' han',
Its just like croonin' a bit sang,
Or what a fule micht understan';
A' that ye need is just the plan,
An' where to fix a steady ee,
Then whirl the cleek, an' strike, an' than
Gang on to where the ba' may be.

I swung on high my shinin' cleek,
I struck, the caddie turned his back;
I thocht it better no' to speak,
Nor enter into ony crack.
But what a day to ha'e a walk,
Sae saft the turf, see green an' sweet,
An' then the sea laid oot a track
O' white waves to my very feet.

I dinna think I need to say
What mair I did in sic a case,
Some things are better hid away,
It gi'es ane better heart o' grace.
A bunker is an awfu' place,
An' tries the temper weel nae doot,
Ye dicht the sweit frae aff your face,
An' tine a' houps o' gettin' oot.

THAT WEARY GOWF

My frien' wha took me roun' the links,
An' got the cleek for me that day,
I aften wonder what he thinks
When he looks back upon my play.
I did my best to mak' my way,
But, O, my shuider-banes were sair,
In fact, it's waur than mawin' hay,
My fingers—but I'll say nae mair.

They tell this story still at Troon,
That just when nicht begins to fa',
They hear a voice, wi' eerie soun',
That cries oot, "Ha'e ye seen a ba'?"
An' then a cleek plays clink, an' a'
The san' springs up twa yairds or three—
What can that story mean ava',
And did that voice belang to me?

WRITTEN ON THE TOP OF BEN CRUACHAN.

Well worth the climbing—what a glorious sight!
An empire all beneath us. Far away,
In the bright sunshine of the summer day,
Loch Awe, one blaze of silver, lies in sight,
With all its islands narrowed from this height
To dots like shadows. Westward, we survey
Loch Etive, and still farther Oban bay,
Morven, and other hills in lonely night,
Gray with old legends, nearer streams that bound
'Mid rocks, as if strong Thor had once held high
Revel with thunder hammer far and near,
Glorious! I stand and bare my brow, and cry
In wild delight at all I see around,
"Well worth the toil to be one moment here."

BROKEN MELODIES.

What lark remembers when he sings, From where the clouds are dim and grey, His brothers of the former springs, Who sang their songs and passed away?

They shrank unseen within the night, Like hearts that sicken at a wrong, Or mounting in the open light Fell from their world of happy song.

Some feathers, left for winds to blow
Among the hills where shepherds tread,
Is all that Nature keeps to show
A little bunch of song is dead.

For she is lavish: all the year Her splendid service daily sings; And perfect to her perfect ear Her immemorial music rings.

If one should fail from out the band, He sinks unknown and dies unwept; And she—she only waves her wand, And still the perfect chord is kept.

But we who stand with feet on earth,
The lesser poets of our time,
Whose songs have most imperfect birth,
And jarring music in their rhyme,

We sing; and discords only rise, Because our hearts are out of tune, And cannot touch the harmonies That round a summer day in June.

Our songs are but of doubts and fears
That haunt us with their shadowy wing;
The rainbows that we see through tears
Fade into sadness as we sing.

BROKEN MELODIES

The sorrows of the singing race
Are with us turn we as we may;
We touch the strings, and only trace
The plaint of others passed away.

The riper spirits sing their songs;
They watch the ever-changing show,
Like Nature, who can see no wrongs,
But lets her seasons come and go.

The weaklings we—our piping bears
Half-light, half-shadow, and the gleam
So mingles with our little cares,
And colours all our daily dream.

Not so the lark. To-day he sings, Unmindful of—though others may— His brethren of the former springs Who sang their songs and passed away.

A CHAMBER HUSHED AND DIM.

THE dead man in the chamber dim Lay, with the silence over him.

The weary feet and weary breast Of eighty-five were now at rest.

Peace held him in its clasp. His face Wore that sad pity for our race

Which seems in gentle words to call, "Thou knowest nothing: I know all."

The bird beside the window sang, Till all the little chamber rang—

Sang with his fullest voice and breath, A song that had no touch of death.

A CHAMBER HUSHED AND DIM

"So strange," I said, in awe and fear, "This song is for his Master's ear,

"Who took delight in him, and brought The little daily wants he sought;

"And for that reason should be known Unto his Master's ear alone."

I crept out of the little room, And left it to its sacred gloom.

Outside the light that summer yields Was resting on the woods and fields.

The hills took shadows, and they drew Upon themselves a greener hue.

The winds were playing soft and low The music of long years ago.

No leaf was stirless in the mirth That overran the joyous earth.

A tiny speck of soft delight, The daisy at my feet was white.

The lark, a higher poet, strong, Sent down his rippling showers of song,

The very stream by which I stood Had lost for once its sadder mood:

And flung a liquid finger up To tempt a backward butter-cup

To blossom, so that it might rest A shadow on its limpid breast.

There was no death in all I saw—Life, full life, was the common law.

I was the only thing that stood An alien from the general good.

A CHAMBER HUSHED AND DIM

For still I saw through all and these The shadows of the mysteries

That follow men from birth to death, To watch the passing of their breath.

And so, as background to the day, With all its manifold display,

I saw a grave beside the wall, Within the distant river's call,

And in a chamber hushed and dim, The dead man—silence over him—

Whose weary feet and weary breast Of eighty-five had now their rest.

And by the window, loud and clear, As though to reach the dead man's ear,

A little bird whose spirit sang Till all the silent chamber rang.

TWO BROWN EYES.

AH, what to me is Homer's song
With Greek and Trojan life alive,
Virgil's that flood-like bears along
The fall of Troy, and all the strive
Of gods and men that now survive
Within its music's rise and fall—
Two eyes when one is twenty-five,
Two soft brown eyes are worth them all.

The Roman Livy, Xenophon,
Whose pages teem with fighting Greeks,
Catullus, with his amorous tone
For lovers whose sweet plaint he speaks.

TWO BROWN EYES

He sings of soft, warm blushing cheeks, And hearts that throb at love's sweet call All in dead tongues the scholar seeks— But two brown eyes are worth them all.

I toss aside my weary books,
Like Faust, and say let others strive
For money, and wear misers' looks,
And all their days and nights contrive
To add a little to their hive,
For me I sing this madrigal,
Two eyes when one is twenty-five,
Two soft brown eyes are worth them all.

LORD OF THE AIR.

(From the German of Schienenleger.)

Over the meadow is singing
A lark as loud as can be;
He is lord of the air, and his music
Falls down with the sunshine on me.

It falls as soft as the murmur
Of faint sweet summer rain,
But the mirth that lies hid in its rapture,
Is a mirth that brings me pain.

I turn away from the river, For its music is sad and strange; It, too, has a whisper of sorrow, And that whisper speaks of change.

I turn from the hills around me,
For every one that I see
Seems to have a rift in its friendship,
And its looks have altered to me.

LORD OF THE AIR

But still above the meadow

The lark is singing his song;

There is no jar in his music,

For his little soul is strong.

And I, who listen, a dreamer,
That is thinking of human things,
Were that heart of his in my bosom,
I could sing to-day as he sings.

LOVE IS SWEET.

Whisper, dear, that love is sweet,
Sweeter far than anything;
Brighter than the flowers that grow
In the nooks of happy spring.
Love is sweet,
Sweeter far than anything;
Whisper, dear, that love is sweet.

Whisper, dear, that love is sweet,
Sweeter than when poets sing;
And the music wanders near,
Soft as waftings of a wing.
Love is sweet,
Sweeter far than anything;
Whisper, dear, that love is sweet.

Whisper, dear, that love is sweet,
Naught upon this earth can bring
Such delight as heart to heart,
When their thoughts together cling.
Love is sweet,
Sweeter far than anything;
Whisper, dear, that love is sweet.

LIFE'S LITTLE DAY.

The gods that dwell within the calm Where winds have never lifted wings, Hear, as they bend, a moaning psalm From lips of men and human things.

It bears the burden of despair,
That finds an ample voice in songs,
The high gods hear it in that air,
And know it speaks a thousand wrongs.

It wails—"Our life is far too brief, Grant us a little longer day; Or make us equal with the leaf, It comes again, we pass away.

"There is so much for us to know— The wider bounds of growing powers; The infant harvests that we sow Are reaped by other hands than ours.

"So much to do, so much to feel, With men still seeking higher goals, Who spin their spider webs of steel To clutch this planet as it rolls;

"Who slowly move amid our fears
At all the wild results we see,
Who work within the toiling years
And shape the miracles to be.

"So much to do for all our kind,
To widen love, to lighten pain,
To move the heart, to shape the mind,
And stand upon a nobler plane.

"Let us but see the end of all,
When brain and thought have had their way,
Let not the shadows on us fall—
Grant us a little longer day."

LIFE'S LITTLE DAY

The gods that dwell without our reach,
They bend and listen all the while;
They answer not—the lips of each
Have scorn that mingles with their smile.

FAREWEEL TO MY HAME.

FAREWEEL to my hame at the fit o' the glen,
To the red rowan tree hingin' owre at the en',
To the burnie near by, that, wi' saft, happy sang,
Made it heaven to me when the simmer was lang.
What though I may rove to far lan's that are fine,
They canna bring back ae sweet glint o' langsyne;
The lintie that sings when the sunshine is braw
Is dearer, an' better, an' sweeter than a'.

The sky may be bricht, an' nae clud may be seen, An' richer the fields an' far deeper the green; But the grey licht o' hame is the licht I wad see, An' the coo o' the cushies are sweeter to me. My father and mother are baith lyin' still In the quate auld kirkyaird on the tap o' the hill; They sleep free frae cares that ha'e now flown awa', Oh! sair is my heart—yet fareweel to them a'.

Though I maunna come back, yet in dreams o' the nicht I will still see their graves lyin' warm in the licht, An' dear will they be in the sunshine or rain, As things that I never may look on again. Fareweel to my hame at the fit o' the glen, To the burnies an' wuds, an' to a' that I ken; My heart grows fu' sair, an' the sad tears doon fa', For noo I maun tak' fond fareweel o' them a'.



" How Sweet was Life Langsyne"

R. MacGregor, R.S.A.

HOW SWEET WAS LIFE LANGSYNE.

How sweet was life langsyne, langsyne, When youth was in its May;
When tears were tears, and love was love, An' flowers grew all the way;
When hopes were thick as simmer dews, An' thochts cam' half-divine;
An' a' the nicht wi' dreams was bricht—How sweet was life langsyne.

How sweet was life langsyne, langsyne,
The sky was blue abune;
The thrush, although nae leaf was seen,
Had simmer in his tune.
He brocht the wast win' as he sang,
The gowans white an' fine;
The heavens cam' nearer to the earth—
How sweet was life langsyne.

How sweet was life langsyne, langsyne, It had nae thocht o' wrang;
The pulse was fleet, an' led the feet
To realms o' love an' sang.
No shadow had the light that fell,
No fennel had the wine—
The glow of heaven was over all—
How sweet was life langsyne.

AULD JOHNNIE NODDLE.

Auld Johnnie Noddle sleeps through a' the day, Sleeps until the sun gangs doon an' a' the licht away; Then he waukens up an' niddles up an' doon, On his heid a great big hat wi' a lang croon.

AULD JOHNNIE NODDLE

When a wean begins to nod an' spurls wi' legs an' han's, Auld Johnnie Noddle at the window stan's, Pits his face against the peen to see what he can see, For Auld Johnnie Noddle—a queer man is he.

Auld Johnnie Noddle do ye no' think shame? Stan'in' glowrin' in at weans when ye should be at hame, Weel I ken what mak's ye wear sic a lang, lang croon— It's to pit the weans in that winna sleep fu' soun'.

Auld Johnnie Noddle gang awa' this nicht, Twenty bairns are waur than mine—gie them a' a fricht; If a wean, an' I ha'e ane lyin' on my knee, Tries wi' a' his micht to sleep, ye should let him be.

Auld Johnnie Noddle—see I draw the blin', Sic a face as yours I ken frichts this bairn o' mine, Daur ye come aboot the door when the wean is soun', Aff will gang your big hat wi' the lang croon.

A BORDER KEEP.

A ROOFLESS Border keep that once Held reiver bold its walls within, Heard question high and stern response, And clash of spear and battle din.

To-day there is no sound at all Save sounds that hint of perfect peace; The cattle grazing by the wall,

The stream whose murmurs never cease.

The bird that whistles for his mate, A low sweet whistle half-aloud; The lark that sings in lonely state Far up upon his throne of cloud.

A HILLSIDE GRAVEYARD.

I push the little gate aside, I leave behind all human pride, For here the grass is waving wide.

With careless eye I read each name That seems to crave a moment's claim From dull oblivion's heavy blame.

And underneath in quiet lie, With faces to the silent sky, The villagers of times gone by.

Vain hope! They cannot come again; They hold no place in field or glen, Nor in the daily talk of men.

Only, perchance, when nights are long, And fires in shepherds' cots are strong, Between the pauses of a song

A name or two may rise and fall, But half remembered at the call— A moment's pause, and that is all.

Enough, they lived their little life, Where pleasant ways and speech were rife, Far from the city's grinding strife.

A simple faith, to soothe and guide, Was theirs from youth to manhood's pride, And closed their eyelids when they died.

I pace a little farther on, Then pause beside a simple stone, Where all the grass is overgrown;

A simple stone whose records keep The tender names of those that sleep, Unheeding time that still will creep.

A HILLSIDE GRAVEYARD

With dull slow footsteps over all They sleep, nor answer any call, Close to the old, grey churchyard wall.

I read each name through misty tears, Their pilgrimage of weary years, With all its little hopes and fears.

At length I reach my father's name, An open space below the same That waits for mine—that space I claim.

HILL SHADOWS.

A BIRD on the moorland is calling
As a spirit may shriek in its dream,
Or a ghost wail forth in the darkness
For a touch of a single beam.

I know not what lonely secret
May be hid in that weary cry,
But it chords with the winds and their music,
And the wide grey vault of the sky.

Can that bird be the spirit of sorrow
That dwells on the moors and the hills,
Where the clouds have darker shadows,
And a sadder voice in the rills?

Can it be that, when crying, he voices
A touch of that dim despair
In the long, wide stretch of the moorland
And the lone mute things that are there?

I know not; but still, as I listen
To the sorrow I hear in his call,
I bear the half in my bosom,

And it gives a colour to all.