

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Maupassant Schiller  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle Willis  
Baum Henry Nietzsche Dumas Flaubert Turgenev Balzac Crane  
Leslie Stockton Vatsyayana Verne  
Burroughs Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Curtis Homer Tolstoy Darwin Thoreau Twain Plato  
Potter Zola Lawrence Jowett Stevenson Dickens Harte  
Kant Freud Andersen London Descartes Cervantes Burton Hesse  
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke  
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving  
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse  
Doré Dante Swift Pushkin Alcott  
Newton



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

## TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com).



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

# **The Unknown Eros**

Coventry Kersey Dighton Patmore

## Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Coventry Kersey Dighton Patmore

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8424-7389-8

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

## PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION.

To this edition of "The Unknown Eros" are added all the other poems I have written, in what I venture—because it has no other name—to call "catalectic verse." Nearly all English metres owe their existence as metres to "catalexis," or pause, for the time of one or more feet, and, as a rule, the position and amount of catalexis are fixed. But the verse in which this volume is written is catalectic *par excellence*, employing the pause (as it does the rhyme) with freedom only limited by the exigencies of poetic passion. From the time of Drummond of Hawthornden to our own, some of the noblest flights of English poetry have been taken on the wings of this verse; but with ordinary readers it has been more or less discredited by the far greater number of abortive efforts, on the part sometimes of considerable poets, to adapt it to purposes with which it has no expressional correspondence; or to vary it by rhythmical movements which are destructive of its character.

Some persons, unlearned in the subject of metre, have objected to this kind of verse that it is "lawless." But it has its laws as truly as any other. In its highest order, the lyric or "ode," it is a tetrameter, the line having the time of eight iambics. When it descends to narrative, or the expression of a less-exalted strain of thought, it becomes a trimeter, having the time of six iambics, or even a dimeter, with the time of four; and it is allowable to vary the tetrameter "ode" by the occasional introduction of passages in either or both of these inferior measures, but not, I think, by the use of any other. The license to rhyme at indefinite intervals is counterbalanced, in the writing of all poets who have employed this metre successfully, by unusual frequency in the recurrence of the same rhyme. For information on the generally overlooked but primarily important function of catalexis in English verse I refer such readers as may be curious about the subject to the Essay printed as an appendix to the later editions of my collected poems.

I do not pretend to have done more than very moderate justice to the exceeding grace and dignity and the inexhaustible expressiveness of which this kind of metre is capable; but I can say that I have

never attempted to write in it in the absence of that one justification of and prime qualification for its use, namely, the impulse of some thought that "voluntary moved harmonious numbers."

COVENTRY PATMORE.

HASTINGS, 1890.

# CONTENTS

## TO THE UNKNOWN EROS, ETC.

PROEM.

### BOOK I.

- I. SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY
- II. WIND AND WAVE
- III. WINTER
- IV. BEATA
- V. THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW
- VI. TRISTITIA
- VII. THE AZALEA
- VIII. DEPARTURE
- IX. EURYDICE
- X. THE TOYS
- XI. TIRED MEMORY
- XII. MAGNA EST VERITAS
- XIII. 1867
- XIV. 'IF I WERE DEAD'
- XV. PEACE
- XVI. A FAREWELL
- XVII. 1880-85.
- XVIII. THE TWO DESERTS
- XIX. CREST AND GULF
- XX. 'LET BE!'
- XXI. 'FAINT YET PURSUING'
- XXII. VICTORY IN DEFEAT
- XVIII. REMEMBERED GRACE
- XXIV. VESICA PISCIS



## **BOOK II.**

- I. TO THE UNKNOWN EROS
- II. THE CONTRACT
- III. ARBOR VITAE
- IV. THE STANDARDS
- V. SPONSA DEI
- VI. LEGEM TUAM DILEXI
- VII. TO THE BODY
- VIII. 'SING US ONE OF THE SONGS OF SION'
- IX. DELICIAE SAPIENTIAE DE AMORE
- X. THE CRY AT MIDNIGHT
- XI. AURAS OF DELIGHT
- XII. EROS AND PSYCHE
- XIII. DE NATURA DEORUM
- XIV. PSYCHE'S DISCONTENT
- XV. PAIN
- XVI. PROPHETS WHO CANNOT SING
- XVII. THE CHILD'S PURCHASE
- XVIII. DEAD LANGUAGE

## **AMELIA, ETC.**

- AMELIA
- L'ALLEGRO
- REGINA COELI
- THE OPEN SECRET
- VENUS AND DEATH
- MIGNONNE
- ALEXANDER AND LYCON
- SEMELE



## THE UNKNOWN EROS

“Deliciae meae esse cum filiis hominum.”  
PROV. VIII. 31.

### PROEM.

'Many speak wisely, some inerrably:  
Witness the beast who talk'd that should have bray'd,  
And Caiaphas that said  
Expedient 'twas for all that One should die;  
But what avails  
When Love's right accent from their wisdom fails,  
And the Truth-criers know not what they cry!  
Say, wherefore thou,  
As under bondage of some bitter vow,  
Warblest no word,  
When all the rest are shouting to be heard?  
Why leave the fervid running just when Fame  
'Gan whispering of thy name  
Amongst the hard-pleased Judges of the Course?  
Parch'd is thy crystal-flowing source?  
Pierce, then, with thought's steel probe, the trodden ground,  
Till passion's buried floods be found;  
Intend thine eye  
Into the dim and undiscover'd sky  
Whose lustres are the pulsings of the heart,  
And promptly, as thy trade is, watch to chart  
The lonely suns, the mystic hazes and throng'd sparkles bright  
That, named and number'd right  
In sweet, transpicuous words, shall glow alway  
With Love's three-stranded ray,  
Red wrath, compassion golden, lazuline delight.'  
Thus, in reproof of my despondency,  
My Mentor; and thus I:  
O, season strange for song!  
And yet some timely power persuades my lips.  
Is't England's parting soul that nerves my tongue,

As other Kingdoms, nearing their eclipse,  
Have, in their latest bards, uplifted strong  
The voice that was their voice in earlier days?  
Is it her sudden, loud and piercing cry,  
The note which those that seem too weak to sigh  
Will sometimes utter just before they die?  
Lo, weary of the greatness of her ways,  
There lies my Land, with hasty pulse and hard,  
Her ancient beauty marr'd,  
And, in her cold and aimless roving sight,  
Horror of light;  
Sole vigour left in her last lethargy,  
Save when, at bidding of some dreadful breath,  
The rising death  
Rolls up with force;  
And then the furiously gibbering corse  
Shakes, panglessly convuls'd, and sightless stares,  
Whilst one Physician pours in rousing wines,  
One anodynes,  
And one declares  
That nothing ails it but the pains of growth.  
My last look loth  
Is taken; and I turn, with the relief  
Of knowing that my life-long hope and grief  
Are surely vain,  
To that unshapen time to come, when She,  
A dim, heroic Nation long since dead,  
The foulness of her agony forgot,  
Shall all benignly shed  
Through ages vast  
The ghostly grace of her transfigured past  
Over the present, harass'd and forlorn,  
Of nations yet unborn;  
And this shall be the lot  
Of those who, in the bird-voice and the blast  
Of her omniloquent tongue,  
Have truly sung  
Or greatly said,  
To shew as one

With those who have best done,  
And be as rays,  
Thro' the still altering world, around her changeless head.  
Therefore no 'plaint be mine  
Of listeners none,  
No hope of render'd use or proud reward,  
In hasty times and hard;  
But chants as of a lonely thrush's throat  
At latest eve,  
That does in each calm note  
Both joy and grieve;  
Notes few and strong and fine,  
Gilt with sweet day's decline,  
And sad with promise of a different sun.  
'Mid the loud concert harsh  
Of this fog-folded marsh,  
To me, else dumb,  
Uranian Clearness, come!  
Give me to breathe in peace and in surprise  
The light-thrill'd ether of your rarest skies,  
Till inmost absolution start  
The welling in the grateful eyes,  
The heaving in the heart.  
Winnow with sighs  
And wash away  
With tears the dust and stain of clay,  
Till all the Song be Thine, as beautiful as Morn,  
Bedeck'd with shining clouds of scorn;  
And Thou, Inspirer, deign to brood  
O'er the delighted words, and call them Very Good.  
This grant, Clear Spirit; and grant that I remain  
Content to ask unlikely gifts in vain.



## BOOK I.

### I. SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY.

Well dost thou, Love, thy solemn Feast to hold  
In vestal February;  
Not rather choosing out some rosy day  
From the rich coronet of the coming May,  
When all things meet to marry!  
O, quick, praevernal Power  
That signall'st punctual through the sleepy mould  
The Snowdrop's time to flower,  
Fair as the rash oath of virginity  
Which is first-love's first cry;  
O, Baby Spring,  
That flutter'st sudden 'neath the breast of Earth  
A month before the birth;  
Whence is the peaceful poignancy,  
The joy contrite,  
Sadder than sorrow, sweeter than delight,  
That burthens now the breath of everything,  
Though each one sighs as if to each alone  
The cherish'd pang were known?  
At dusk of dawn, on his dark spray apart,  
With it the Blackbird breaks the young Day's heart;  
In evening's hush  
About it talks the heavenly-minded Thrush;  
The hill with like remorse  
Smiles to the Sun's smile in his westering course;  
The fisher's drooping skiff  
In yonder sheltering bay;  
The choughs that call about the shining cliff;  
The children, noisy in the setting ray;  
Own the sweet season, each thing as it may;  
Thoughts of strange kindness and forgotten peace  
In me increase;  
And tears arise  
Within my happy, happy Mistress' eyes,

And, lo, her lips, averted from my kiss,  
Ask from Love's bounty, ah, much more than bliss!  
Is't the sequester'd and exceeding sweet  
Of dear Desire electing his defeat?  
Is't the waked Earth now to yon purpling cope  
Uttering first-love's first cry,  
Vainly renouncing, with a Seraph's sigh,  
Love's natural hope?  
Fair-meaning Earth, foredoom'd to perjury!  
Behold, all-amorous May,  
With roses heap'd upon her laughing brows,  
Avoids thee of thy vows!  
Were it for thee, with her warm bosom near,  
To abide the sharpness of the Seraph's sphere?  
Forget thy foolish words;  
Go to her summons gay,  
Thy heart with dead, wing'd Innocencies fill'd,  
Ev'n as a nest with birds  
After the old ones by the hawk are kill'd.  
Well dost thou, Love, to celebrate  
The noon of thy soft ecstasy,  
Or e'er it be too late,  
Or e'er the Snowdrop die!

## II. WIND AND WAVE.

The wedded light and heat,  
Winnowing the witless space,  
Without a let,  
What are they till they beat  
Against the sleepy sod, and there beget  
Perchance the violet!  
Is the One found,  
Amongst a wilderness of as happy grace,  
To make Heaven's bound;  
So that in Her  
All which it hath of sensitively good  
Is sought and understood  
After the narrow mode the mighty Heavens prefer?

She, as a little breeze  
Following still Night,  
Ripples the spirit's cold, deep seas  
Into delight;  
But, in a while,  
The immeasurable smile  
Is broke by fresher airs to flashes blent  
With darkling discontent;  
And all the subtle zephyr hurries gay,  
And all the heaving ocean heaves one way,  
'Tward the void sky-line and an unguess'd weal;  
Until the vanward billows feel  
The agitating shallows, and divine the goal,  
And to foam roll,  
And spread and stray  
And traverse wildly, like delighted hands,  
The fair and feckless sands;  
And so the whole  
Unfathomable and immense  
Triumphing tide comes at the last to reach  
And burst in wind-kiss'd splendours on the deaf'ning beach,  
Where forms of children in first innocence  
Laugh and fling pebbles on the rainbow'd crest  
Of its untired unrest.

### III. WINTER.

I, singularly moved  
To love the lovely that are not beloved,  
Of all the Seasons, most  
Love Winter, and to trace  
The sense of the Trophonian pallor on her face.  
It is not death, but plenitude of peace;  
And the dim cloud that does the world enfold  
Hath less the characters of dark and cold  
Than warmth and light asleep,  
And correspondent breathing seems to keep  
With the infant harvest, breathing soft below  
Its eider coverlet of snow.

Nor is in field or garden anything  
But, duly look'd into, contains serene  
The substance of things hoped for, in the Spring,  
And evidence of Summer not yet seen.  
On every chance-mild day  
That visits the moist shaw,  
The honeysuckle, 'sdaining to be crost  
In urgency of sweet life by sleet or frost,  
'Voids the time's law  
With still increase  
Of leaflet new, and little, wandering spray;  
Often, in sheltering brakes,  
As one from rest disturb'd in the first hour,  
Primrose or violet bewilder'd wakes,  
And deems 'tis time to flower;  
Though not a whisper of her voice he hear,  
The buried bulb does know  
The signals of the year,  
And hails far Summer with his lifted spear.  
The gorse-field dark, by sudden, gold caprice,  
Turns, here and there, into a Jason's fleece;  
Lilies, that soon in Autumn slipp'd their gowns of green,  
And vanish'd into earth,  
And came again, ere Autumn died, to birth,  
Stand full-array'd, amidst the wavering shower,  
And perfect for the Summer, less the flower;  
In nook of pale or crevice of crude bark,  
Thou canst not miss,  
If close thou spy, to mark  
The ghostly chrysalis,  
That, if thou touch it, stirs in its dream dark;  
And the flush'd Robin, in the evenings hoar,  
Does of Love's Day, as if he saw it, sing;  
But sweeter yet than dream or song of Summer or Spring  
Are Winter's sometime smiles, that seem to well  
From infancy ineffable;  
Her wandering, languorous gaze,  
So unfamiliar, so without amaze,  
On the elemental, chill adversity,

The uncomprehended rudeness; and her sigh  
And solemn, gathering tear,  
And look of exile from some great repose, the sphere  
Of ether, moved by ether only, or  
By something still more tranquil.

#### **IV. BEATA.**

Of infinite Heaven the rays,  
Piercing some eyelet in our cavern black,  
Ended their viewless track  
On thee to smite  
Solely, as on a diamond stalactite,  
And in mid-darkness lit a rainbow's blaze,  
Wherein the absolute Reason, Power, and Love,  
That erst could move  
Mainly in me but toil and weariness,  
Renounced their deadening might,  
Renounced their undistinguishable stress  
Of withering white,  
And did with gladdest hues my spirit caress,  
Nothing of Heaven in thee showing infinite,  
Save the delight.

#### **V. THE DAY AFTER TO-MORROW.**

Perchance she droops within the hollow gulf  
Which the great wave of coming pleasure draws,  
Not guessing the glad cause!  
Ye Clouds that on your endless journey go,  
Ye Winds that westward flow,  
Thou heaving Sea  
That heav'st 'twixt her and me,  
Tell her I come;  
Then only sigh your pleasure, and be dumb;  
For the sweet secret of our either self  
We know.  
Tell her I come,  
And let her heart be still'd.

One day's controlled hope, and then one more,  
And on the third our lives shall be fulfill'd!  
Yet all has been before:  
Palm placed in palm, twin smiles, and words astray.  
What other should we say?  
But shall I not, with ne'er a sign, perceive,  
Whilst her sweet hands I hold,  
The myriad threads and meshes manifold  
Which Love shall round her weave:  
The pulse in that vein making alien pause  
And varying beats from this;  
Down each long finger felt, a differing strand  
Of silvery welcome bland;  
And in her breezy palm  
And silken wrist,  
Beneath the touch of my like numerous bliss  
Complexly kiss'd,  
A diverse and distinguishable calm?  
What should we say!  
It all has been before;  
And yet our lives shall now be first fulfill'd,  
And into their summ'd sweetness fall distill'd  
One sweet drop more;  
One sweet drop more, in absolute increase  
Of unrelapsing peace.  
O, heaving Sea,  
That heav'st as if for bliss of her and me,  
And separatest not dear heart from heart,  
Though each 'gainst other beats too far apart,  
For yet awhile  
Let it not seem that I behold her smile.  
O, weary Love, O, folded to her breast,  
Love in each moment years and years of rest,  
Be calm, as being not.  
Ye oceans of intolerable delight,  
The blazing photosphere of central Night,  
Be ye forgot.  
Terror, thou swarthy Groom of Bride-bliss coy,  
Let me not see thee toy.