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

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IN CAMDEN TOWN

How many years of sun and snow
Have come to Camden Town,
Since through its streets and in its shade,
I wandered up and down.

Not many more than to you here
These verses hapless flung,
Yet of the Long Ago they seem
To me who am yet young.

We strive to measure life by Time,
And con the seasons o'er,
To find, alas! that days are years,
And years for evermore.

The joys that thrill, the ill that thralls,
Pressed down on heart and brain-
These are the only horologues,
The Age's loss or gain.

And I am old in all of these,
And wonder if I know
The man begotten of the boy,
Who loved that long ago.

A lilac bush close to the gate,
A locust at the door,
A low, wide window flower-filled,
With ivy covered o'er.

A face—O love of childhood dreams,
Lily in form and name—
It comes back now in these day-dreams,
The same yet not the same.

My childhood's friend! Well gathered are
The sheaves of many days,
But this one sheaf is garnered in,
Bound by my love always.

Where have you wandered, child, since when
Together merrily,
We gathered cups of columbine
By lazy Rapanee?

The green spears of the flagflower,
Down by the old mill-race,
Are weapons now for other hands,
Who mimic warfare chase.

You were so tender, yet so strong,
So gentle, yet so free,
Your every word, whenever heard,
Seemed wondrous wise to me.

You marvelled if the dead could hear
Our steps, that passed at will
Their low green houses in the elm-
Crowned churchyard on the hill.

And I, whom your sweet childhood's trust,
Esteemed as most profound,
Thought that they heard, as in a dream,
The shadow of a sound.

We drew the long, rank grass away
From tombstones mossy grown,
To read the verses crude and quaint,
And make the words our own.

One tottering marble, willow-spread,
I well remember yet,
With only this engraved thereon,
"By Joseph to Jeanette."

It held us wondering oft, as we
Peeped through the pickets old:
There was some mystery, we knew,
Some history untold.

Well, better far those simple words,
Where weeping phrase is not,
Than burdened tablet, and the rest
Forgetting and forgot.

And Lily Minden, do you lie
In some forgotten grave,
Where only strangers' feet pass o'er
Your temple's architrave?

Or, by some hearthstone, have you learned
The worst and best of life,
And found sweet greetings in the name
Of mother and of wife?

I cannot tell: I know you but
As bee the clover bloom,
That sips content, and straightway builds
Its mansion and its tomb.

So took I in child-innocence,
So build the House of Life,
And in low tone to thee alone,
As dead or maid or wife,

I sing this song, borne all along
A space of wasted breath;
And build me on from room to room
Unto the House of Death,

Where portals swing forever in
To weary pilgrim guest,
And hearts that here were inly dear
Shall find a Room of Rest.

JEAN

Three times round has the sun gone, Jean,
Since on your lips I pressed
Mute farewells; if that pain was keen
Fair were you in your nest.

Smiling, sweetheart, I left you there;
You had no word to say;
One last touch to your brow and hair,
Then I went on my way.

Time it was when the leaves were grown
Your rose-colour, my queen;
Ere the birds to the south had flown,
While yet the grass was green.

Eyes demure, do you ever yearn,
Bird-wise to summer lands?
Is it to meet your look I turn,
Saying, "She understands,"

Saying, "She waits in her quiet place
Patient till I shall come,
The old sweet grace in her dreaming face
That made a Heav'n her home"?

No! She is there 'neath Northern skies,
And no word does she send;
But near to my heart her image lies,

And shall lie there to the end.

Come what will I am not bereft
Of the memory of that time,
When in her hands my heart I left
There, in a colder clime.

And to my eyes no face is fair,
For one face comes between;
And if a song has a low sweet air,
Through it there whispers, "Jean."

Better for me the world would say,
If I had broke the charm,
Set in the circle she one day
Made by her round white arm.

Never a king in days of old
Gathered about his throat
Such a circlet; no queen e'er held
Necklace so clear of mote.

It sufficeth the charm was set;
And if it chance that one
Still remembers, though one forget,
Then is the worst thing done —

Done, and I still can say "Let be;
I have no word of blame;
Though her heart is no more for me,
Mine shall be still the same."

I have my life to live and she —
Well, if it be so — so;
She may welcome or banish me

And if I go, I go.

Friend, I pray you repress those tears,
Comfort from this derive:
I am a score — and more-of years
And Jean is only five.

A MEMORY

From buckwheat fields the summer sun
Drew honeyed breezes over
The lanes where happy children run
With bare feet in the clover.

The schoolhouse stood with pines about
Upon the hill, and ever
A creek, where hid the speckled trout,
Ran past it to the river.

And rosy faces gathered there,
With rustic good around them;
With breath of balm blown everywhere,
Pure, ere the world had found them.

Behind sweet purple ambuscades
Of lilacs, laws were broken;
And here a desk with knives was frayed,
There passed forbidden token.

One slipped a butternut between
His pearly teeth; a maiden
Dove-eyed, caressed her cheek; 'twas e'en
With maple sugar laden—

A flock that caught at wiles, because
The shepherd's hand that drove them,
Reached little toward wise human laws,

And less to God above them.

With eyebrows bent and surly look
He only saw before him,
The rule, the lesson, and the book,
Not nature brooding o'er him.

One day through drone of locusts fell
The wood-bird's fitful tapping,
And in his chair at "dinner-spell,"
The teacher grim sat napping.

An urchin creeping in beholds
The tyrant slumber-smitten,
And in his pocket's ample folds
He thrusts the school-yard kitten.

At length the master waked, and clanged
His bell with anger fitting;
His sleep had made it double-fanged,
And crossed like needles knitting.

Slow to their seats the children file,
And wait "Prepare for classes,"
A score of lads across the aisle
From twice a score of lasses.

But two within the throng betray
A mirth suppressed; the sinner,
And Rafe Ridall, the chief at play,
At books the easy winner:

The wildest boy in all the school,
In mischief first and ever,
His daily seat the penance-stool,

Disgraced for weeks together.

Just sound of bone and strong of heart,
Staunch friend and noble foeman;
In life to play the kingly part,
True both to man and woman.

Joe's secret now he holds; a deed
With just enough of danger,
To win his — ah, what's that? 'Tis freed,
The pocket-prisoned stranger!

A moment's riot laughter-filled,
Then fear, white-visaged, follows;
And through the silence there is trilled
The shrill note of the swallows.

And now a fierce form fronts them all,
Two fierce eyes search their faces,
Then flash their fire on Rafe Ridall,
Whose mirth no peril chases.

"You did it, sir!" "Not I!" "You did!"
"No!" "You've one chance for showing
Who in my coat the kitten hid,
Or be well thrashed for knowing."

The master paused, the birch he grasped
Against his trousers flicking;
Rafe said, with hands behind him clasped,
"I'd rather take the licking."

Full many a year has passed since then,
The lilacs still are blooming,
Awaiting childish hands again,

But they are long in coming.

Now wandering swallows build their nests
Where doors and roofs decaying,
No more shut in the master's zest,
Nor out the children's playing.

All, all are gone who gathered there;
Some toil among the masses,
Some, overworn with pain and care,
Wait Death's "Prepare for classes."

And some – the sighing pines sway on
Above them, dreamless lying;
And 'mong them sleeps the master, gone
His anger and their crying.

And Rafe Ridall, brave then, brave now,
Amid the jarring courses
Of man's misrule, still takes the blow
For those of weaker forces.

IN CAMP AT JUNIPER COVE

A little brown sparrow came tripping
Across the green grass at my feet;
A kingfisher poised, and was peering
Where current and calm water meet;

The clouds hung in passionless clusters
Above the green hills of the south;
A bobolink fluttered to leeward
With a twinkle of bells in its mouth.

Ah, the morning was silver with glory
As I lay by my tent on the shore;
And the soft air was drunken with odours,
And my soul lifted up to adore.

Is there wonder I took me to dreaming
Of the gardens of Greece and old Rome,
Of the fair watered meadows of Ida,
And the hills where the gods made their home?

Of the Argonauts sung to by Sirens,
Of Andromache, Helen of Troy,
Of Proserpine, Iphigenia,
And the Fates that build up and destroy?

Of the phantom isle, green Theresea,
And the Naiads and Dryads that give
To the soul of the poet, the dreamer,

The visions of fancy that live

In the lives and the language of mortals
Unconscious, but sure as the sea,
And that make for great losses repayment
To wandering singers like me?

But a little brown sparrow came tripping
Across the green grass at my feet;
And a kingfisher poised, and was peering
Where current and calm water meet;

And Alice, sweet Alice, my neighbour,
Stands musing beneath the pine tree;
And her look says – "I have a lover
Who sails on the turbulent sea:

Does he dream as I dream night and daytime
Of a face that is tender and true;
Will he come to me e'en as he left me?"
Yes, Alice, sweet Alice, for you,

Is the sunlight, and not the drear shadow,
The gentle and fortunate peace:
But he who thus revels in rhyming
Has shadows that never shall cease.

JUNIPER COVE TWENTY YEARS AFTER

The bay gleams softly in the sun,
The morning widens o'er the world:
The bluebird's song is just begun,
And down the skies white clouds are furled.

The boat lies idly by the shore,
The shed I built with happy care
Is fallen; and I see no more
The white tents in the eager air.

The goldenrod holds up its plumes
In the long stretch of meadow grass,
The briarrose shakes its sweet perfumes,
In coverts where the sparrows pass.

Far off, above, the sapphire gleams,
Far off, below, the sapphire flows,
And this, my place of morning dreams,
The bank where my vain visions rose!

Sweet Alice, he came back again,
Across the waste of summer sea,
What time the fields were full of grain,
But not to thee; but not to thee.

She comes no more when evening falls,
To watch the stars wheel up the sky;
Then love and light were over all;

Alas! that light and love should die.

I feel her hand upon my arm,
I see her eyes shine through the mist;
Her life was passionate and warm
As the red jewels at her wrist.

Hearts do not break, the world has said,
Though love lie stark and light be flown;
But still it counts its lost and dead,
And in the solitudes makes moan.

We school our lips to make our hearts
Seem other than in truth they are;
Before the lights we play our part,
And paint the flesh to hide the scar.

Masquers and mummers all, and yet
The slaves of some dead passion's fires,
Of hopes the soul can ne'er forget
Still sobbing in life's trembling wires.

Fate puts our dear desires in pawn,
Youth passes, unredeemed they lie;
The leaves drop from our rose of dawn,
And storms fall from the mocking sky.

I shall come back no more; my ship
Waits for me by the sundering sea;
A prayer for her is on my lip—
And the old life is dead to me.