

PS

3515

.0913 D7

1921

DRY POINTS

1887-1920

BY

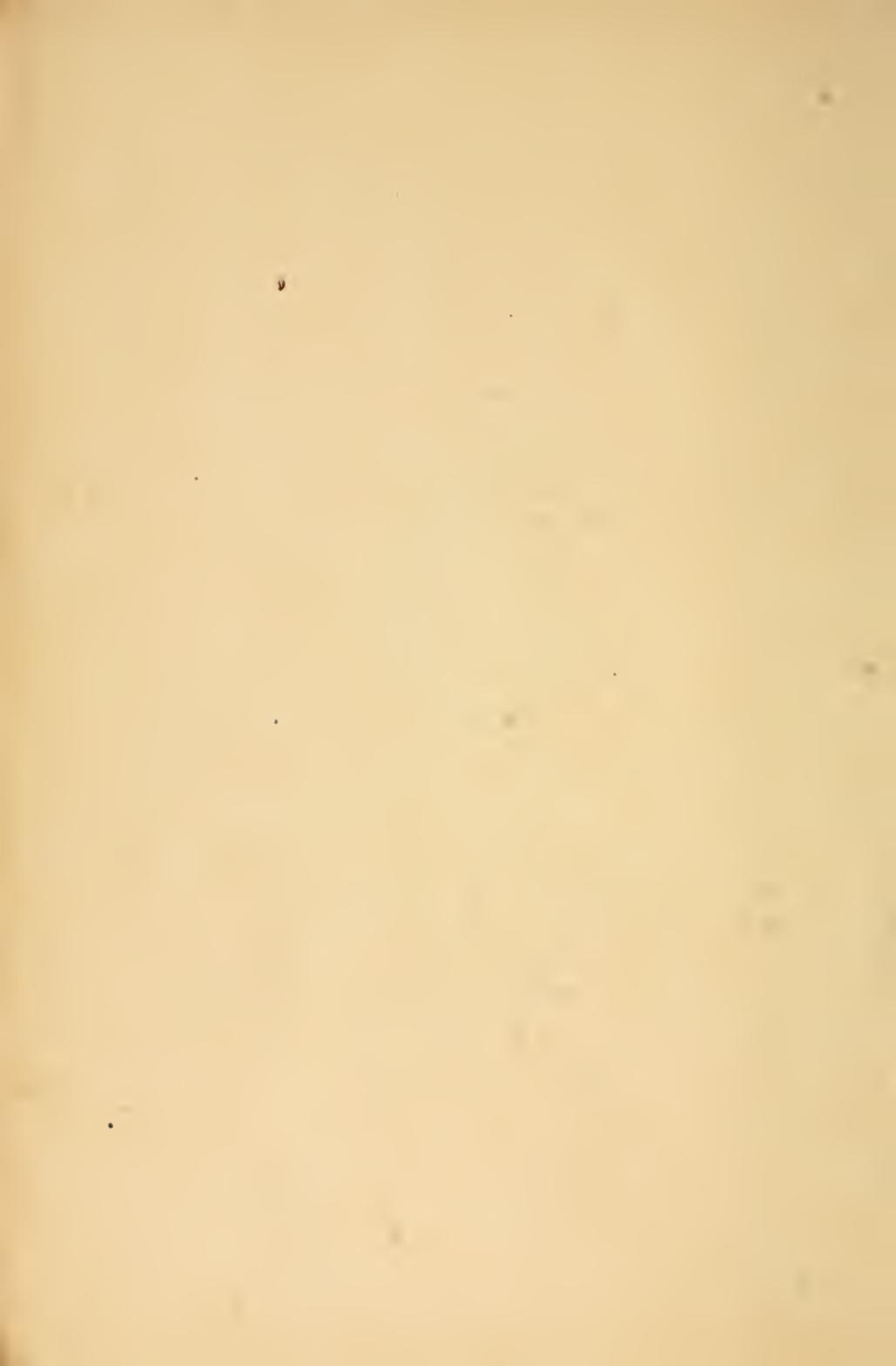
HENRY MARTYN HOYT



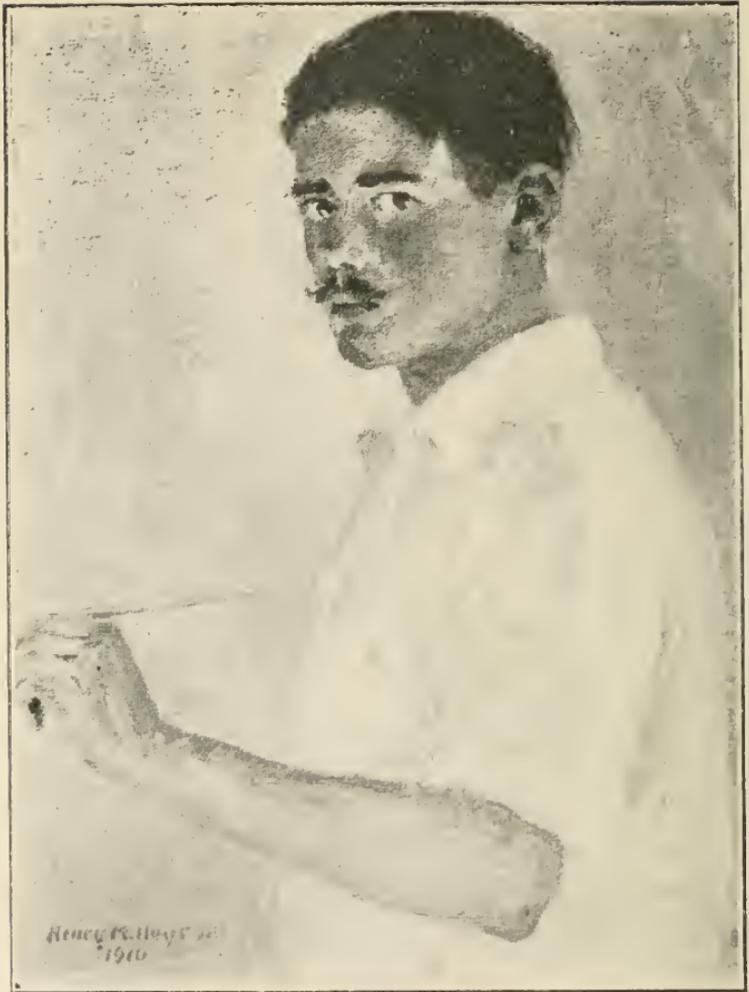
Class PS 3515

Book, 0973 II7

PRESENTED BY 1921



DRY POINTS



HENRY MARTYN HOYT
Self Portrait

DRY POINTS

STUDIES IN BLACK AND WHITE

BY

HENRY MARTYN HOYT

1887—1920

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH BY
WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT

0
3
3
3
3

NEW YORK
FRANK SHAY
1921

PS 3515
0973 II 7
1921

COPYRIGHT, 1921, BY
FRANK SHAY

^{Gift}
Mrs Henry M. Hoyt
Jan. 13 '22



LIST OF CONTENTS.

Early Poems (1908-1911)

- The Land of Dreams, 23
- Rome, Sunset, 24
- John Keats, 25
- The Pawn Shop, 26
- Before a Portrait of Rembrandt, 27
- The Fishers, 28
- The Spell, 31
- The Wee Mannie, 33
- The Tower Casement, 36

Poems Written During 1920

- Dedicatory, 39
- Nomad, 40
- Coliseum, 41
- On the Fly-Leaf of "Renescence," 42
- 1917-1919, 43
- Hyperion to a Satyr, 44

The Master of The World

- A Comedy in One Act, 51

“HENRY”

Thirteen years ago this summer there were three of us on a hillside in Northern California, one sitting on a campstool with a field easel and color-box before him, one sprawled out beside the painter, his eyes shaded by a very old hat,—the third, some twelve years younger than the two recent Yale graduates, a small boy in knickerbockers, watching through goblinlike glasses the antics of a curly brown dog who ran and yelped, chasing red-winged blackbirds through sunflecked ripples of silvery wild-oats on the slope below.

In the company of myself and my brother, “Henry” was quietly painting, his very thick, black eyebrows drawn together with concentration, his very white teeth gleaming in a sudden smile as we exchanged serious theories mixed with badinage. He was full of oddly apposite quotations from many well-loved books. One of

his favorite brightly-colored bow-ties showed like a large butterfly at the throat of his painter's smock. His fine erect head with its dark hair, his vivid coloring, made an arresting "composition." Extraordinarily sympathetic hazel eyes he had, that flashed with pleasure in beauty, sparkled with amusement, roved from mine to the tableau of Stephen watching "Prince"—back to his canvas—out again to the landscape. He talked animatedly. His fund of literary reference and typically Henryesque catchwords seemed inexhaustible.

That is the first picture that comes into my mind, a snapshot of one morning in a particularly golden summer, when Youth possessed all the ages, when Time moved slowly and majestically over us with the tranced beauty of a summer cloud.

"Henry"—his full name was Henry Martyn Hoyt—was born at Rosemont, Pennsylvania, in 1887, the son of Henry Martyn Hoyt, Jr., and Anne McMichael, his wife. He was of Colonial American stock on both sides, English on his father's, Scotch-Irish and French on his mother's. His paternal grandfather was Governor of Pennsylvania and his maternal great-grandfather an early Mayor of Philadelphia.

His father was Solicitor-General of the United States, under President Roosevelt. From both parents he inherited high integrity, intelligence, wit and imagination. He and I first met at college on both being elected to the editorial board of the Yale Record. He drew pictures and made verse. I also made verse.

We enjoyed many glorious evenings. And we were always talking Keats, Kipling or Browning. It was to Henry that I owed my perseverance into the intricacies of Browning, having been bothered by Robert's "obscurity" before that. We sat up late reciting favorite poetry and discussing all the people we didn't like. We sat up late questioning the universe and planning great futures. We were together as much as possible, with one member of the firm in "Academic" and the other way down College Street in the fastnesses of Sheff. We liked each other on sight and continued to like each other. We strove occasionally, in fantastic ways, to annoy others.

His complete independence of attitude and the individuality with which he did or said anything marked him out immediately from among all the other men I knew. He observed the life around him keenly. His comments were usually

unexpected and always pungent. He loved his own group of friends and enjoyed their society. He was always witty and instinctively on the side of the underdog.

But under all his nonsense and enjoyment of the hour you felt a constructive, logical mind at work, almost austere in its desire for the truth about things. No one could fool Henry or put him off with an insufficient explanation. Neither could he be "talked down." Younger than most of the men in his class, his mind was far more alive, alert, restless and questioning than the average. And he was always ready to express himself with biting vehemence where sham was detected.

Yet I think he was one of the most fundamentally friendly, kind and guileless men I have ever known. His heart responded instantly to any genuine appeal. By converse it never responded to merely bogus sentimentality, which he hated and ridiculed.

College life usually casts men in a mould from which they never wholly escape. No one enjoyed more keenly the academic environment on its aesthetic side than Henry. But nothing could ever have cast him in a mould. He was *sui generis* from the start—and to the end.

He had a very high quality of spiritual courage. His presence was engaging. And steadily there grew within him the desire for genuinely artistic expression. He graduated from Yale one month after his twentieth birthday, and a first compromise between the study of the law and his own wish to paint sent him to the Harvard Architectural School in Boston the next fall, after a summer spent abroad.

The following summer (1908) he came out to visit me and my family in California. I was then endeavoring to make a start at independent writing. During the summer Henry and I wrote and criticized poetry together. Some of his earliest poems were written at the big study-table we both remembered so well for years afterward, in a large French-windowed room in the Commanding Officer's quarters at Benicia Arsenal. When he returned to the East we kept up a lavish correspondence for a year or more, its paper and envelopes fantastically decorated with drawings in colored inks. Of course his own drawings were joys forever, and far superior to my own in technique. I remember one in which we were depicted as pouring oil upon the Hudson River, and applying the torch. We had the dream then of living to-

gether in "a garret aloof" in New York and working out highly artistic—and incidentally penniless—Bohemian destinies. But when I finally did come East, Henry was studying art at the Boston Museum, under Tarbell and Benson and Philip Hale. He paid several visits, however, to New York, to foregather with myself and Sinclair Lewis, rooming together then down in Greenwich Village.

Henry travelled abroad again in France, Germany and Italy. In his twenty-fifth year he married Alice Gordon Parker. His wife was also an artist. As I myself married in the following year and became a Long Island commuter, Henry and I necessarily saw much less of each other than formerly.

He had gone to Spain on his wedding-trip and often afterward maintained that Spain was *the* country of the world to live in.

Meanwhile his draughtsmanship had perfected itself, his mastery of both painting and etching had rapidly increased. Before the War came he had made great advances as an independent artist. He followed with utter sincerity, fine instinct and constant discrimination the dictates of his own artistic conscience. He

strove for the very highest development of great and genuine gifts.

His first child, Constance, was born a year after his marriage. His second, Henry M. Hoyt, 4th, several years later. Both children adored him. His amusing simplicity and lively sympathy always drew children to him. His diverting personality fascinated them.

For he could always play with the greatest gaiety; but his intellect became more and more vitally interested in the new revolt that was changing the industrial situation in America, in the new order of thought that was replacing the old, in all modern social developments and experiments. A juvenile admirer of Robin Hood, Malory and Mark Twain, an early "discoverer" of H. G. Wells, one who as an undergraduate read Ibsen and Shaw with gusto, delighting also in the poems of John Davidson, the novels of Thomas Hardy, the socialistic ideas of William Morris,—Henry was never likely to ossify into philosophical or political conservatism. There was always in him a strong and decided strain of sympathy for the lot of the common laborer, and a desire for what William James called "tough-mindedness" in facing the grimmest facts of life. His admiration went out to any

writer or philosopher who endeavored to unveil any actual truth about life. He read modern economics and did a deal of thinking. I fear my own persistent aesthetic romanticism irritated him a good deal at one time, though he always retained a fine appreciation for the full flavor of old books—Burton's "Anatomy," Rabelais, the Elizabethan dramatists, the numerous old ballads and catches that he could troll so divertingly. And surely no one could give to a fine Spring day more romance and glamour than he!

He liked to call himself a Socialist. Yet there was never a more ingrained individualist. I do not mean in any selfish sense—but the independence of his personality was too intense for it to be otherwise. So his revolt remained largely intellectual. He never attached himself to any organized movement.

On the other hand, Henry never worshipped any art in the sense that he felt it the most important thing in the world. An art to him was, rather, a jolly craft at which to work, important in its place, but not nearly so important as the evolution of human society or the living of a full and useful life. He would have been unbelievably happy in a Wellsian Utopia—per-

haps even happier as a Renaissance guildsman or artist. He always had a great interest in other professions and other trades. He could, I feel sure, have made himself either a good physician or a highly skilled carpenter. He was clever with his hands and thoroughly enjoyed making himself useful in many ways about his own home. In the Air Service in France he took the same vivid interest in photography. I have known few men who could talk as entertainingly or with such a fund of information upon such a variety of subjects—from the philosophies of William James and Bergson to the dexterity of John J. McGraw at playing “baby ball.” As his friend, John Storrs, the sculptor, said to me, “What an eye he had! He enjoyed everything from a masterpiece of painting to a prizefight!”

If this picture seems highly colored, I can only say that the man’s personality was vivid in the extreme. He carried himself with a certain air, often slightly aggressive, his grave or brightly amused eyes taking in everything that went on about him. “He wore an overcoat of glory.”

Well, “what’s become of Waring?” He has left us his brilliant paintings, his admirable

etchings and drawings, these poems and this play, chosen from among the scattered work he contributed occasionally to various magazines. The play and some of the poems here included have never before been published. But they are at best such fragmentary testimony to what he might have lived to do in literature! Who can really recapture the man from them, who did not actually know him? In five minutes of his energetic talk I have found more genuine amusement and authentic inspiration than in nine out of any ten books I read. In his letters—but his correspondence was a delight.

Yes, I loved my friend. I loved him better than any man I have ever known. We were constantly together during his last year, and I found him, one evening, August 25, 1920, dead in his studio apartment where we were temporarily living together. With what fortitude he met the bitterest period of his life—that last year on earth—I know deeply. His efforts to help others, his intense desire to find some way of life that would be regenerative, some sort of leaven. He and I passed through hours of the greatest happiness and hours of the greatest and blackest bitterness together. My efforts to help him were futile, of no avail.

But no, he wouldn't want me to say that. It was perhaps impossible for any friend to have helped him much during the final period—though I feel others helped him more than I. In any event, such confidences as passed between us are forever sacred. And Henry is gone.

But one remembers small last things,—like our standing at the open window of the studio in the blue evening and his breathing, of the still and wistful-starred night sky, "*Such beauty!*"—like his last words to me at the foot of the Sixth Avenue Elevated stairs, that last morning, "Well, I'll see you—later." We cannot possibly know just when he made up his mind to end his life.

All it meant to him—this life! It meant so much. It tortured him so deeply and yet he wrung from it so much and such exquisite pleasure. And the times when he was most happy were of such an utter simplicity—friends, his family, summer evenings, talk to the accompaniment of some handiwork, snatches of song, Italian restaurant suppers, lamplight, the reading of poetry, firelight, mildly hilarious pilgrimages through moonlit streets,—friends, friends, friends. . . . He made many and

various friends that last year. He spent himself in friendship, in the causes of his friends, in exuberance over their success, in sympathy for their troubles.

I cannot, for myself, believe that a spirit such as Henry's is wasted. Certainly it is anything but wasted in the sense that he did not leave behind him lasting evidence of his great artistic versatility. And his personality will remain an inspiration and a splendid memory in the hearts and minds of all who knew him. Beyond that, however, I myself believe in a reason and a purpose for such spirits which does not exhaust itself merely upon this imperfect world. It is this faith, largely, that helps me to live.

The work that follows speaks for itself. He enlisted upon America's entry into the war and served as a sergeant aviator in Italy and as a First Lieutenant in the Photographic Section of the Air Service in France. He did not believe in war as a true solution of anything. Neither do I. He felt bitterly disappointed in the reactionary aftermath of the War. So do many of us still. He was an honest man and a brave, intellectually as well as physically. Of old and thoroughly American stock he was yet one of a new generation of pioneers, sworn to service

against dulness, deadness, contemporary cant and tyranny, and ancient sham. He lived and died in that service—in the service of truth and of Man's immortal soul.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT..

New York City, February, 1921.

EARLY POEMS

1908-1911

THE LAND OF DREAMS

Ah, give us back our dear dead Land of Dreams!
The far, faint misty hills, the tangled maze
Of brake and thicket; down green woodland
ways

The hush of summer, and on amber streams
Bright leaves afloat, amid the foam that creams
Round crannied boulders, where the shallows
blaze.

Then life ran joyous through glad, golden days
And silver nights beneath the moon's pale beams.

Now all is lost. There glooms a dark morass
Where throbbed the thrush across the dappled
lawn.

Oh, never more shall fairy pageants pass,
Nor dance of light-limbed satyr, nymph and
faun,

Adrift among the whispering meadow-grass,
On wind-swept uplands, yearning toward the
dawn.

ROME, SUNSET

A rosy flush spreads sweeping o'er the tiles
Flaming from dome and portico, and where
Some slim gold cross spires upward like a
prayer,

Flashes a misty halo to the miles
Of tiering roof-tops. Where the distance smiles
The clouds go slowly streaming down the fair
Far vistas of the sunset seas that flare
Saffron, afoam round pearl and silver isles.

Palely the quiet hem of twilight falls,
And, as a far-off bell begins to peal
Along the valley, cloaks the rise and slips
Over the lifting skyline's serried walls.
The city pauses, vespereal, to feel
The timid breath of evening on her lips.

JOHN KEATS

Seer of a beauty inexpressible,
Master of melody and quiet thought,
Thou art the real world-teacher, one who
 wrought
Magic undreamed of by the gods, until
The earth stood breathless, captive to thy will,
Who recked not of earth's favors, heeding
 naught
But high ambition, fantasies that sought
Only thy perfect mission to fulfill.

Thou raised the vanished days of Greece again,
Clothed in new splendor, and the Orient land
Was thy familiar garden; then death smote
Thy life out with excess of joy and pain,
As when, upon some all-too-poignant note,
The harpstring snaps beneath the player's hand.

THE PAWNSHOP

The spectres of a thousand hopes and fears,
Gathered together from the ends of earth,
Have found a haven. In this house of dearth
They crouch amid the dust of faded years,
Hostages held to settle waste's arrears.
Worthless is their unutterable worth,
Tinged with the gayness of a far-off mirth,
Stained by the sadness of forgotten tears.

Wild Caprice has her will of them, and flings
Each one aside. For brighter baubles, Life
Has passed them by. Dead passions intermix
Among a motley of discarded things—
A broken music-box, a rusty knife,
A baby's rattle by a crucifix.

BEFORE A PORTRAIT OF
REMBRANDT AS AN OLD MAN

Rembrandt, thy youth was splendid as some tale
Of one who held a genie's secret spell
By which to charm the world,—unlock each cell
And rock-built treasure house, and to prevail
Over all chance of danger, like the mail
Of famed Achilles, when so many fell
Round Troy's high towers and golden citadel,—
So conquering, it seemed thou couldst not fail.

Out of the darkness of thy later years
Rose that full glowing light, the utmost art,
Born of the poignant searchings of thy heart,
Perfect, untouched by either hopes or fears:
The triumph all too great for joy, apart,—
The tragedy of life too deep for tears.

THE FISHERS

The swaying tackle dips and droops
Down from the star-beseeking mast,
The bent-back sculler swings and stoops,
The caster makes his cast ;
While fast and fast and still more fast
The little floats run down to lee,
An arc across the evening sea,
To net who knows what mystery.

For when they draw the dripping meshes,
Sagging with unknown weight,
Will they be bright with silver fishes,
A shining mass that slips and threshes
Among the cruel, baffling meshes,
A goodly ocean freight,
Or weed and kelp and coarse sea cress,
Or only emptiness?

Green, glancing fathoms under us
What sunken wreckage sleeps?
What age-old treasure wondrous,
Great spoil of tempests thunderous
White-maned across the deeps?
Scarce swinging in the ebbing tide
The weighted seine slips sheer.

A ripple whispers overside—
What salt sea spectre pearly-eyed?
The murdered buccaneer!

Some night, perchance, of starry wonder,
Of slight and subtle air,
Some stranger form may cleave asunder
The waves in phosphor garlands fair.
Such wealth of yellow hair!
A drowned girl? Nay, but mark the twining,
Green-darkening and silver-shining,
Below the rope-scarred rail;
Such terror-stricken, captured splashing,
Such fear, and swiftly struggling lashing
Of gorgeous fish's tail;
White shaken breasts and startled eyes
Above the straining coils,
Pleading with sea-wild, dumb surprise
A world of unguessed agonies—
A mermaid in the toils!

The swinging tackle droops and dips
Down from the star-beseeking mast,
The sculler's oar-blade slides and slips,
From swell to swell the coble trips,
The caster makes his cast,
While fast and fast and still more fast

The bubbles spin from depths below,
Whenas the nets in silence go
Down through the many-shifting sea
To snare who knows what mystery.

THE SPELL *

As I came up the sandy road that lifts above the
 sea,

 Thrice and thrice the red cock crew,
 And thrice an elfin bugle blew
From the Gates of Faerie.

And riders passed me on the left, and riders on
 the right,

 Clad in cramoisie so fine,
 Phantom riders nine and nine,
That faded with the night.

The dawn was flushing in the east as I won to
 my door,

 And there within the ingle dark
 One had drawn a cantrip mark
Upon the earthen floor.

The thatch was matted o'er with weeds, the well
 was choked with stones,

 There lay a shroud upon the bed
 Draped and drawn from foot to head,
As white as dead men's bones.

I ran and shouted down the street, but none
would heed my cry.

I screamed across the market-place.

Never a burgher turned his face.

In silence they passed by.

Oh, none could hear and none could see the man
they used to know.

For he is witched for seven years,

He who in the dawning hears

The elfin bugles blow.

*As I came up the sandy road that lifts above the
sea,*

Thrice and thrice the red cock crew,

And thrice an elfin bugle blew

From the Gates of Faerie.

* This poem, written some ten years before, was accepted for magazine publication on the morning of the day of the author's death.

THE WEE MANNIE

The dusk was dropping yesternight as I came
o'er the down,
And syne I saw a mannie small,
Bent and crooked, swart and small,
Standing by the kirkyard wall
And peering toward the town.

Then soft I put the highway's width between the
wall and me,
He looked so eerie in the dark,
Strange and eerie in the dark;
And thrice I heard the wolf-hound bark
That crouched beside his knee.

But oh, his eyes were unco' sharp to pierce
through mist and mirk.
He called me softly by my name,
Woed and called me by my name,
Woed me till at last I came
And stopped before the kirk.

And as I stopped before the kirk, my heart was
cold with dread,
My heart was cold with dread and fear,

Clutched by icy hands of fear,
For faintly, faintly I could hear
The wailing of the dead.

They wailed and whispered in the wind that
whispered down the sky,
They drifted 'mongst the headstones white,
Like the headstones weird and white,
Saints! It was a fearsome sight
To watch them whirling by.

Then straight the mannie clasped my hand, and
straight he clasped my waist,
He whistled shrill an elfin tune,
Shrill and sweet a magic tune,
And drew me toward their rigadoon.
I crossed myself in haste.

The stars spun round above my head, the earth
beneath my feet.
I clung against the cross of stone,
Clutched the holy cross of stone. . .
Faith, I stood there all alone
Upon the naked street!

· And nevermore at dusk of day will I come o'er
the down

Lest I should see that mannie small,
Bent and crooked, swart and small,
Standing by the kirkyard wall
And peering toward the town.

THE TOWER CASEMENT

Dumb trembling lips of darkness brushed my
face,

The crawling shadows clung around my feet,
As slowly I toiled upward toward the place
Where love and I might meet.

Harsh hissed the stone beneath my weary tread.
Mocking my labor. Could my quest be vain?
I knew not if by falsehood I was led
Whither my soul was fain.

Then, clear against the rosy death of night,
Showed the pale, narrow window. All the
stair
Was paved with glory in the morning light
I knew my love was there.

POEMS WRITTEN DURING

1920

DEDICATORY

I could not feel
That I had crowned
Your brow around
With flowers meet,
Till at your feet
I laid this song,
Not fine, not strong,
And incomplete.

But from a heart
Too full to speak
Aptly, the weak
Words fall; ah, hear!
Or far or near,
Through good or ill,
For their plain will
Accept them, dear.

NOMAD

From the far, secret sources of the Nile,
Lost springs among the creepers that festoon
The foothills of the Mountains of the Moon
Whose loins bear whispering jungle, mile on
mile

Upward, toward changeless snow, your chang-
ing smile

Leads back across the ages, like some tune
Wrung from the wailing pipe where women
croon

Minor, around the acrid fires the while.

Strange beasts, strange burdens, and still
stranger tents

Patched from the lion's golden skin, whose lair
Only the burning desert knows, come down,
Pitching between the river and the town
Their nomad camp; strange sounds and stranger
scents

Beat round, but in the midst is only you
Smiling beneath crisped elf-locks starred with
dew,

Midnight's pale planets in your midnight hair.

COLISEUM

Love, I can see you standing starry-eyed
Above the struggle in the sun-drenched cirque
Untouched, untroubled by the savage work
Of man, or finer fury of the pied,
Striped, maned, or dappled beasts that crouched
and cried
Below the parapet, or from the murk
Of the barred beast-pits snarled and turned to
lurk
Low in the sand some mumbled bones beside.

Over the purple-patched campagna clouds
Go marching westward orderly and fair,
Rank on close rank; the green and orient sky
Roofs the far Adriatic where mists lie
Dreaming on mountainous Dalmatia
And cliff-built hill-towns lost to stinking crowds,
Dust, and salt sweat, bright blood and shining
fascia.
Still you stand rapt, look forth beneath your
crown
Of myrtle, while faint breezes of the town
Twist the mysterious mazes of your hair.

ON THE FLY-LEAF OF "RENASCENCE"

Brown hermit thrush, heart's flame in checkered
shade

Where the high meadow reaches to the pines
And birches, silver-slender in long lines
Broken by fire-slain russet deadwood made
Glorious when golden, slanted sunbeams fade
Into profundity verdurous. Like bright wines
You pour your wild melodious anodynes
Down to a world unwonted, unafraid
Of the world's heedless, harsh stupidity,
Loud laughter, sudden vip'rous hate, weak tears.
With "all the lost adventurers your peers"
You sound your heaven-high clarion to destroy
The fool's heart,—that same poignant cry set
free

New England, England, Italy, and Troy!

1917-1919

There are a few things I shall not forget:
Midnight on Montmartre—Sacre Coeur—and
 where
The hill drops westward down that plunging
 stair,
The few blue lights, a fine-drawn, far-flung net
Where once the boulevards blazed; aloft, the
 fret
And chatter of the rotaries—and there,
There shrieks the siren, wheeling searchlights
 flare,
The raiders' rhythm drugs my ear-drums yet.

Midnight in Tours against some moonlight wall,
Piedmont in chestnut-time, at Rimini
Red sails acluster,—going to the wars,
Breasting the night-chop of the Irish Sea,
The transport's deck in darkness, over all
Lifeboats swung outboard, black against the
 stars!

HYPERION TO A SATYR

Friend, I can see you there among the reeds,
With that bright, onyx eye, aslant to catch
My every movement, and brown, flattened
 thighs

Showing each corded muscle flex and roll
As you shift weight to this heel and to that,
Squatting among crushed leafage and sweet
 grass.

Ah, goat-legs, are you still as sensitive
As once you were, with ear attuned to catch
The smallest breath of all the forest sounds,
The farthest hollo, rumored Echo's call
Fainting and frail from some blue, misty hill,
The booming hive or just one wind-blown bee,
The leap of fish through thunderous waterfalls?
If but your mind could match the senses' edge,
So keen, it more than takes the place of mind,
And builds a primitive greatness round your
 soul!

For what is mind but something shallow, bright
As this small polished disk of bronze I hold
So aptly in the hollow of my hand
To watch you, plumb you, study you at ease?
Thus you grow bolder, hold yourself secure,

Feeling that since my back is squarely turned
And eyes are ever in the front of heads
There is no slightest chance to be observed.
Well, instinct is at fault, but there's no need
To feel superior about a bit
Of polished metal for itself, its trick
Of showing, if one hold it close enough,
Earth, air, and water in this little round
My hand encompasses with such an ease.
Move I it slightly, and the giddy clouds
Go pouring slantwise in a cataract,
And the sun reels and riots in the sky.
Now once more back to hold the water-weeds,
Mallow and marsh-grass by the river's edge,
And you drawn down between close-sheltering
 stalks,
A little frightened by the gesture made
When the sun rolled, a gold bead, in my palm.
Do you remember our first meeting, our
Instant and certain friendship, sympathy?
How much I loved you—loved you?—love you
 still.
But that was long, so very long ago,
And earth and heaven have grown old toward
 death,
Weary and desperate and full of tears.
We will not think on that, for when there yawns

Between the far, fair hills we left and those
High, austere mountains that were our first
goal,
A chasm full of meagreness and stones,
When we draw first breath on the hard-won
height,
We but glance downward, then look far across,
With a slight, certain sadness for the past.
That land was beautiful, those hills were fair,
Earth was a course to run and heaven a hope,
A wider field to master in good time.
Do you remember? Still, I do not know
If memory is quite the thing I mean,
For I am certain that you felt as I
Felt then, and if the image of that time
Is gone, or never lived beyond its one
Moment, it makes no difference at all.
At least rate, satyr, I got much of you,—
A trick of treading, soft as thistle-down,
To steal upon shy creatures and surprise
Their ways, their loves, and all their little
life,—
A brood of querulous, downy pheasant chicks,
The business and importance of the ant,
Serpents impersonal, liquid and aloof,
Or butterflies that have no will at all

Once they have burst their cerements, got
free. . .

If, as we rubbed warm shoulders, poring down
Rapt, on some little drama of the dust,
You reached a brown hand, rapid as the flash
A fish makes, striking at a summer fly,
Catching and crushing the life out with a laugh,
After the first cold impact of surprise
I knew that it was nothing to be held
Blameworthy, brutal in you, but the drive
Of sphynx-faced nature working toward her
ends. . .

[*Uncompleted*]

THE MASTER OF THE WORLD

THE MASTER OF THE WORLD

SCENE: *A street in the outskirts of the town of Corinth. On the right a house-wall, with two windows, one above the other, the lower one protected by a bronze grill. Front, a deep archway, no door visible. At the back, and continuing the wall of the house, a garden wall. Above the wall a few branches of laurel show against a cold blue sky. On the left two small shops, scarcely more than booths. That toward the front is a wine shop with a bush over the door, a wisp of awning over the window, and a long rough wooden bench in front. The second is no more than a stall the whole front of which is open. A few fowls, bunches of onions and cheeses in nets hanging from the lintel-beam, and some wooden measures full of barley in front show it to be the shop of a food-vendor. A willow cage holding a magpie hangs on a bracket at the rear corner. The whole scene is flooded with early morning sunlight, left to right. The food-vendor comes out of his booth.*

He is a small man, fattish and growing bald. He is drest in a dirty greyish-yellow chiton, rather too short for him, and a pair of worn sandals. He surveys his stock with a rather rueful air.

THE FOODVENDOR. A fine show it makes, but what can I do? These accursed farmers bring what they want, when they want. And the prices they demand! [*He makes a move to rearrange a bunch of onions, draping it against one of the wooden measures.*] What chance is there for the honest tradesman to make a living? [*Pause.*] The citizens are as bad; such a to-do over the smallest rise in prices. You would think that a few coppers more for a fowl or a bunch of onions was a crime on *my* part. Now by the gods, was there ever a scurvier bit of fortune than this: on the very day when I needs must make a brave show of my wares to catch the trade of the newcomers across the way, there isn't a countryman has come crying his truck along the street, and it long after sun-rise. Sloth I can't abide, nor immorality. They must be up to all sorts of beastliness on the farms to lie so late of a morning.

[*The wine seller comes out of his shop and*

leans against the door-jamb. He is a huge man with a round red face on which he keeps an expression of mock gravity. His sleeves are rolled up to his shoulders and an enormous wine-stained apron covers his chiton from armpit to knee.]

THE WINE SELLER. Still talking, neighbor? If it's to yourself you are speechifying, you had better look to your wits; they'll soon be addled on that fare. If it's the magpie who is the audience, he's as deaf as a post, and if it's *me*, why I've other things to listen to. I'm married myself.

THE FOODVENDOR. Good morning, neighbor. I suppose you are right and one should not shout one's troubles to the street, but it's as empty as an old wine-skin of yours.

THE WINE SELLER. Empty, yes. But you mentioned the new arrivals and who knows but they may be looking out one of those windows to see what all the noise is, and overhearing your little plots to get their trade. Put a brave front on it and they'll be the making of you yet.

THE FOODVENDOR. It's easy for you to talk, friend, and be cheerful. Your trade's good, without any shifts and tricks, and pretending a prosperity you haven't got. With *us* it's all a

question of the tone of the establishment: if you've a choice thing, the early artichoke, the milk-fed capon, the rich will pay any price for it and no miserable haggling over the last copper. But I've no capital. And the wealthy farmers never even stop to ask me if I want to buy.

THE WINE SELLER. Ho, ho! And no wonder, when they hear you bargaining with some half-starved yokel to beat down the price of his wizened pippins. You have such a desperate pleading way with you, friend, it would melt a heart of brass.

THE FOODVENDOR. Well, I don't know why it is this world should be such a mad place. We all know it is necessary to eat to live, and that it is not necessary to drink,—I don't drink. [*The wine seller raises his eyebrows as though expressing doubt of the foodvendor's really living.*] And yet they'll haggle with me over a mere nothing and then waste a score as much making hogs of themselves, sitting on your bench swilling wine. [*Plaintively*] It isn't good for the tone of my shop to have them there, shouting their bawdy songs and laughing. It frightens the maidservants so that they go down the street to my rivals.

THE WINE SELLER. Our old argument, friend. When will the world settle it? As for me, I hold with Epicurus, by inclination, and because it's good business. [*With excitement*] Why, Zeus, man, one year of good wine and good talk is worth more than a lifetime of pale. . . . But what's the use, and anyway, here comes the newcomers' servant girl, so I'll leave you to make an impression with the "tone" of your shop. [*The wine seller goes into his shop.*] She'd only have eyes for my beauty if I stayed.

[*The maidservant enters from the archway right. She is a girl of about fifteen, with a merry face browned by the sun. Her hair is tied up in a woolen cloth, from under which red curls show. She wears a long white chiton with a green border (Greek fret) and carries a basket on her arm. As she is turning right, the food-vendor coughs in what he considers to be a fetching manner.*]

THE FOODVENDOR. Ahem! Good morning, my girl. [*Suddenly afraid that he is being too dignified, and descending swiftly to a wheedling manner*] Aren't you looking for a nice fat fowl, or a fine cheese, or maybe a bunch of onions to

boil in white sauce? Come, look, here's of the best, straight from the farms this morning.

[*The girl pauses uncertainly, smiles at the foodvender in a friendly fashion, showing strong white teeth, and turns left toward his shop.*]

THE FOODVENDOR [*at her elbow*] Just look. My stock is rather short this morning, because I've sold almost everything already to the steward of a noble who is giving a great feast today. But what is left is of the freshest.

THE MAID. The freshest, you say? [*Pulling a few feathers from the breast of one of the fowls*] Why, what do you take me for. I wasn't born and raised on a farm for nothing. Your fowls were killed last week and your onions have gone to seed.

THE FOODVENDOR [*whining*] I do my best, young woman. It's all this unfair competition with those who have capital back of them. [*Coaxingly*] You may know all about a farm, but you've things to learn of our city ways. Look you, it will be worth your while to buy from me. I'll *make* it worth your while. That's something you didn't know. Now this is the way it is. . . .

THE MAID [*interrupting*] Oh, I know all about that. I may be a country girl but I

wasn't born yesterday. They will make me the same offer at all the other shops. But I've some pride in what I do know and so you needn't hope that I'll buy poor when I can find the best, all for a bit of ribbon or even a pair of gilt sandals, come to that. [*Changing the subject crisply*] That cheese is good; I'll take it.

[*She unhooks the cheese, places it in her basket, and gives money.*]

THE FOODVENDOR. Bu-but wait; you haven't paid me enough. I gave more than that to the farmer's wife who . . .

THE MAID. Nonsense! I know what you give for a cheese of that size and quality. Now I'm off to see if the other dealers are as bad as you are. But we'll understand each other sooner or later, never fear. That is, you'll understand *me*. I understand you now. [*Goes off right front.*]

[*The hawker enters from left rear, around corner of the foodvender's shop. He is a tall, skinny man with a red nose and an air of great sophistication. He has a short russet chiton and a faded blue cloak flung over one shoulder in what is now the Spanish manner. He cocks his head at the magpie, resting his tray on one hip.*]

THE HAWKER. Well, old timer, and how are you today? Poorly, thanks be to the gods? You always were a sardonic fellow. But with more sense in one of your tail-feathers than your master has in all of his pursy little body.

[*The foodvender starts angrily and goes off right front, bristling with offended dignity.*]

THE FOODVENDOR [*muttering as he goes*] Professional jealousy! [*Exit.*]

THE HAWKER [*taking something from his tray and holding it between thumb and forefinger*] Here's something for you, my brave one, my little pied actor. Oh, how he can strut, and rant in pantomime. Take it, take it, it's wholesome. They all eat them, from prince to beggar, and spit the skins out anywhere, till the seats at the theatre are as dirty as the floor of your cage. But now I'm fouling my own nest and a wise bird never does that, unless he's locked up in a prison as you are, my prince of fowls. [*Confidentially*] Speaking of princes, I'll tell you a secret that they don't know in this sleepy suburb. Guess who is coming to town today? Incognito, of course, as the barbarians of Rome have it, but here just the same. [*In an impressive whisper*] ALEXANDER THE GREAT!

THE MAGPIE. Alexander the Great!

THE HAWKER. So that breaks your silence, does it? I'd no idea you were impressed by worldly pomp and magnificence. I thought you were the perfect philosopher, the complete cynic, like Diogenes. Well, I must hawk my wares to the crowds which will gather like flies over carrion when the rumor gets about. [*Going*] Empty-heads! Wind in the skull, wind in the mouth, wind in the belly. [*He goes out right front, crying, off*] BEANS! WHO'S FOR BOILED BEANS? [*Farther off*] Golden beans—golden as amber from the Sicilies, golden as honey, golden as a little hen pheasant's eye! Who's for be-e-eans?

[*As the sound of the hawker's cries grow fainter, a rumbling is heard from left rear and an old man appears, rolling before him a great empty cask. He settles it with its open end toward the front, in the angle formed by the wall of the house and the garden wall. Up to this time his face has not been turned toward the audience, and there is nothing impressive in the bowed figure clad in one shapeless grey woolen garment like a voluminous sack, which reaches to within two or three inches of the knee. He wears no sandals.*]

THE OLD MAN [*Turning and facing front,*

with one hand on the rim of the cask] Beans. [*His face is remarkable, with a lofty, craggy forehead, around which grow thick grey curls in great disorder. His eyebrows, bushy and tangled, almost hide his eyes, which are surrounded by wrinkles of laughter and deep thought. His nose is large and formless, his mouth broad and mobile under the curling beard, which is only streaked with grey.*] Golden beans! What is gold? Mere dross, an inferior metal except for the chance that it is difficult to find. Amber, they say is unlucky, honey is cloying, and a little hen pheasant's eye is hard and lustful. Why not say golden as—sunlight. I must suggest it to him, in such a way as not to hurt his feelings. [*He smiles and shakes his head.*] I'm getting soft and sentimental in my old age, but this weather and this sun-drenched corner [*sits down in opening of cask and stretches out his legs*] would make anybody's peace with the world. [*He half closes his eyes and his face takes on a look of great gentleness. Musing*] After all, these simple spots show me that humanity is not so bad and stupid as I sometimes think.

[*The foodvender enters right front with his arms laden with vegetables and a large basket.*

He does not notice the old man but goes straight to his shop-front and begins to arrange his new stock, muttering to himself.]

THE FOODVENDOR. Slipped out to the city gate and found a farmer very drunk. Ho, ho! They think they are sharp, these country boors, but I was one too many for him. Bought him three cups of wine and saved their price five times over in what I paid for his truck.

THE WINE SELLER [*appearing in his doorway*] So, my moral friend. You are not blind to the virtues of Bacchus after all!

THE FOODVENDOR [*whining and on the defensive*] Well, you know that in driving a bargain it is everybody for himself. Besides, if I were to . . . [*He turns and catches sight of the cask with the old man half asleep in it. As the latter does not look at all dangerous, he adopts a blustering manner.*] We-el, what are you doing there, old fellow? You must be off now, with your cask. We don't allow that sort of thing in this neighborhood. It's bad for the tone and it's bad for trade.

THE OLD MAN [*raising his head and looking at the foodvender with such fury that the latter jumps as though he had been stung*] WE! [*With cold scorn*] Where got you the brilliant

and quaint idea to use that word "we"? You've no title to the land where your miserable hut stands, the hut itself is as leaky as an old sieve—a breath would blow it away. [*Lowering his voice*] But don't think that would make me scorn you. This house of mine [*rapping with his knuckles on the side of the cask*] well, it is not impressive architecturally speaking, nor especially spacious. But it is weather-proof, and—it suits me, it suits me.

THE FOODVENDOR [*taking heart at the milder tone and beginning to bluster again*] I'll have you know that I am an honest tradesman and you are [*he searches for the most crushing word*] a beggar.

THE OLD MAN [*barking*] A beggar? Homer begged his bread. And you an honest man, you shadow, you lousy wisp? By Zeus, he calls it virtue to lie by his wife through cowardice and lust after the little maidservants who buy his stale carrots. He calls it sobriety to be too mean and too dyspeptic to drink a glass of wine himself, and yet if it is a question of cheating some poor befuddled oaf, he will do his all to make him as drunk as a pig. There's not a fine thought conceived, there's not a beautiful word spoken in that sty of yours. A blue-faced ape

would think shame to have you claim cousinship with him. Now go, and don't dare to so much as to look askance at me again.

[The foodvender, utterly crushed and outraged in his feelings, shuffles over to the bench in front of the wine-shop and collapses on it. He is almost in tears. During the whole of the preceding dialogue the wine seller has been leaning against the door-jamb with his arms clasped across his stomach to control his laughter.]

THE WINE SELLER. Don't you know who it is?

THE FOODVENDOR. Know who it is? I should hope not. Why, he isn't human! I never had anybody speak to me like that in my life—not the finest gentleman among all the nobles, not the bravest soldier in the army. *[Sobbing]* It isn't fair to outrage a man's feelings that way, it isn't decent. He knows I'm afraid of him and he takes advantage of that. I'll never be able to hold up my head again. It is enough to break the spirit of an Alexander.

THE WINE SELLER. Oh, cheer up, you'll get over it, you'll live it down, in fact I wouldn't be surprised to hear you boast of the conversation with pride, after a few days.

THE FOODVENDOR [*almost speechless*] With pride?

THE WINE SELLER. Yes, because it isn't everybody who could get such a flow of language out of him.

THE FOODVENDOR. But who *is* he?

THE WINE SELLER. Just—Diogenes.

THE FOODVENDOR. Diogenes? [*He glances furtively in the direction of the old man, looks away as the latter stirs slightly, and begins to feel himself all over, very gently, as though he had just had a miraculous escape. Brightening*] Diogenes? Well, really you know, that changes the state of affairs. That's very interesting and, now,—interesting. Why, he's a famous character. He's *very* well known. He'd even be fashionable if he would let people make a fuss over him. At least so I've been told. But I'd as soon ask a wild boar to a feast, he's that savage. But he *is* a privileged character. Oh, yes, and if he'll only stay here, he'll be very good for trade. I wonder if there is any way to suggest an arrangement, an arrangement of mutual advant— . . .

THE WINE SELLER [*interrupting*] Good Pol-lux, and will you be sticking your head into *that* hornet's nest again? That's the worst of you

smart business men, with your hole and corner suggestions and your arrangements of mutual advantage. You've no sense of proportion and think that the hook that will hold a minnow will serve for a whale. You might as well suggest an arrangement with Mount Olympus.

[Enter three carters right front. They are covered with dust and hold ox-goads with the rather graceful solemnity of the half-drunk.]

FIRST CARTER. Well, boys, what did I tell you? As pretty a little wine shop as ever thirsty eyes gazed on, and a bench which will just hold us three. *[Singing in a maudlin manner]*

As pretty as thirsty eyes could see,
And a bench which will hold us three.

SECOND CARTER. If you don't hold your tongue, and hold your liquor, the bench will hold only two. I can't stand mixed metaphors or mixed drinks, and nobody can stand your singing.

THIRD CARTER. He means no harm. Anyway, let's drink. Mine host, three cups of wine, and swiftly, as we want to get back where the crowd is thickest. *[The wine seller goes in and returns almost immediately with three leather*

cups and a skin of wine. Handing a cup to each, he fills them from the skin.]

THE THREE CARTERS [*together, drinking*]
Good stuff. [*They wipe their mouths and rise.*]

[*The maidservant enters right front, crying, with her basket hanging empty from one hand.*]

FIRST CARTER. Don't cry, my little one, don't cry, my pretty duck.

SECOND CARTER. Leave her alone, fool!

THIRD CARTER. Don't snap at him like that. Can't you enjoy a drink or so without criticizing everybody? Be courtly, as I am. Like this: [*Turning to the girl with a deep bow*] Fair one, why these tears? Though they become your cheeks like pearly dewdrops on the damask rose, yet . . .

MAIDSERVANT. Stop!

FOODVENDOR. Hoity-toity, where are your manners, miss? Is this the way they teach you to answer a civil question in the country? And how about your market basket? Empty, eh? We aren't so smart as we thought we were when making game of the stock of a humble merchant!

SECOND CARTER. Damn you, don't speak to her like that!

FIRST CARTER. And the man who says a

word against the country will have to reckon with me!

THIRD CARTER. You little sneering scorpion, somebody ought to step on you.

[At this general outburst of disapproval the foodvender backs toward his shop followed by the three carters in a chorus of criticism. The girl, forgotten by attacker and defenders alike, stands irresolute, wiping her eyes on her bare arm and grimacing like a small child, to keep down her sobs.]

DIOGENES [*softly*] Come here, child. [*He rises, takes the basket from her gently, reverses it so that it forms a low stool, and makes her sit down on it. In the meantime, the foodvender has slipped round the corner of his shop, left rear, and disappeared, followed by the three carters.*] Let's see, the basket is empty. But don't cry any more, I'm sure we can fix it all right if we only think. Don't cry. You can tell me about it in a minute or so. Or I will begin. You went down the street and bought a fowl.

MAIDSERVANT. A peahen.

DIOGENES [*nodding*] Yes, a peahen. And then you were looking for early artichokes.

MAIDSERVANT [*brightening*] Yes, and carrots, and I found such good ones. And figs. The

figs are wonderful this year. There was a crowd and it got thicker all the time.

DIOGENES. Crowds do. That's why I avoid them now.

MAIDSERVANT. And there was a long man, a man with a funny nose who . . .

DIOGENES. The beanseller?

MAIDSERVANT. The beanseller. He cried out in a loud voice, hawking his beans. [*Breathlessly*] And then there were soldiers, oh such beautiful men, like young gods. And the crowd pressed forward, and I saw a young man among the soldiers. A god he was, with fair copper colored hair in tight curls like carved metal, and the bridge of his nose was like the prow of a swift ship. At least, I never saw such a ship, but it made me think of that, and lots of exciting things. Then I stood on tiptoe, for I am very small, and my basket slipped and everything tumbled in the dust. But the crowd only laughed and trampled by me, and the soldiers closed in and I did not see my beautiful man any more. [*Sobs.*]

DIOGENES [*patting her head*] Crowds, crowds. Here we are, with our little baskets full of household virtues, and we see the rare thing, the fine thing, or anyway the thing that seems fine

to us. And our souls stand on tiptoe with joy. Then the crowd pitches all our little virtues in the dust, and laughs. [*Shaking himself, to throw off his disgust.*] Anyway, we can fill your basket again, so cheer up, child.

MAIDSERVANT. Oh, I wasn't crying about the marketing. My mistress can beat me for that, but it was really an accident and I can stand it. I had to cry because the young man was so beautiful.

DIOGENES. Oh. [*A long pause.*] Just like a philosopher to overlook that.

MAIDSERVANT. And that's why I was so furious at that silly fool of a carter who tried to speak like a poet.

DIOGENES. I see.

[*The foodvender enters, left rear, rubbing his hands and chuckling. He approaches the wine seller, who has been leaning against his doorway half asleep and shows him in pantomime how he defied and worsted the three tipsy carters. The wine seller, utterly bored, closes his eyes.*]

DIOGENES [*looking at the foodvender in a terrifying manner*] Worm! [*The foodvender trembles.*] Bring me a peafowl, artichokes and carrots. [*The foodvender, as though hypnotized, gets the things and brings them over,*

standing before Diogenes in a panic. Diogenes rises, helps the maidservant to her feet, picks up her basket and places the things in it.]

DIOGENES. Here, child. [*Hands her the basket.*] And if your mistress asks whom you were talking with, say that the philosopher greets the daughter of the philosopher, and that he was sitting at the feet of wisdom. She will understand.

FOODVENDOR [*aside*] That's more than I do.

MAIDSERVANT. Yes, father. And how can I thank you for being so nice to me?

DIOGENES [*smiling*] Well, if you should be dusting and sweeping the upper chamber, and if your heart should feel like singing, I shall be here to listen and enjoy.

[*The maidservant smiles and runs out right through the archway.*]

FOODVENDOR. And who's to pay for all this? I'm a virtuous man and . . .

DIOGENES. Out of your own mouth you are answered. Virtue is its own reward. [*Turns his back on the foodvender who retires into his shop, shaking his head. The wine seller smiles, then lies down on his bench and sleeps.*]

Song [*off*]

“MAN HAS A SOUL—”

Man has a soul must be wed to sorrow,
Scourged by passion and faith and joy;
Spurning today to attain tomorrow,
Spending the blood he cannot re-borrow,
Building on what he must first destroy.

Crushed, dispirited, broken, faithless,
Sunk to the rock-walled belly of earth
He shall stand up, and old scars na'theless
Quit his body and leave it scatheless,
Cold, impersonal in rebirth.

And when the new soars up and over,—
As spring succeeds to the months of rain,
With fresh life starring mead and cover,
The earth gives back to her perfect lover
Passion and faith and joy again.

DIOGENES [*looking up at the window*] Youth,
lyric youth. So hopeful, so passionate, mys-
terious and sad. But [*changing his tone and
walking over to the magpie's cage*] I can think
until my brain reels, and there is always some-
thing, some simple thing that I cannot foretell.
I should have known why she was crying, but—
I'll never learn everything.

THE MAGPIE. Never learn everything.

DIOGENES Poor pie, have you found that out in your bitter prison? Poor pie. [*With a sudden characteristic change to fury.*] By the gods, the stupid cruelty of man is beyond belief. To keep a live thing, a winged thing that can scale the heavens and sport among the clouds mewed up in a filthy bundle of willow wythes! Here. [*Takes down the cage and opens its door.*] Go, fly, be free! [*The magpie makes no effort to get out but clings fast to his perch.*] There is a symbol of man's soul. Freedom, the greatest gift of all, becomes something to shrink from with terror, to hound, to stamp out when the world gets too used to metes and bounds. Oh, for a few, a very few wild spirits who dare look freedom in the face, to take her like lovers. [*He closes the door of the cage and rehangs it on its hook.*] Friend, you are right, the time has gone for you. [*He walks over to his cask and crawls inside as the hawk enters right front. The latter is swinging his empty tray by one hand and is in great spirits.*]

THE HAWKER. If one grew lusty on laughing, Hercules would be a stripling by comparison. Gods, what a quaint animal it is, our citizenry. Fill its eyes with the sight of soldiers,

its ears with the squalling of brass trumpets, and its belly with boiled beans. Then it will purr like a barred tomcat on top of a sun-lit wall. [*He sees the wine seller sleeping and goes over and places the empty tray on his stomach.*] Ho, my Spartan youth, you have come home beneath your shield! [*The wine seller opens his eyes and heaves the tray off with a slight motion of his body.*] Or maybe I should call you Polyphemus heaving the Sicilian villages into the sea.

THE WINE SELLER. If I'd known your tray was empty, I would have saved my strength, jackdaw. What, all the beans sold? Industry, industry, what a jewel thou art.

THE HAWKER. Industry nothing. They rushed at me with money in their hands and had the whole stock off my tray and bulging their fat cheeks before you could empty a cup of wine. Which reminds me, I've earned a slight libation to the fair god Bacchus. [*The wine seller starts to rise.*] No, friend, don't trouble yourself. I can get it; and shall I draw for two? [*The wine seller nods.*] Good. [*The hawker goes into the shop and returns with two cups of wine.*] Drink, my golden tapster, my little terra-cotta Ganymede! [*The wine seller sits*

up and they drink. The hawker throws back his head.] How it glads the gullet. I like to stretch my neck and make flat the throat; then I can feel it all the way down.

THE WINE SELLER. Good wine. And there are madmen who say that it is wicked to drink. But I won't call them men. Stupid cows; camels. [*He tosses the empty cup through the door.*] Great Olympus, as if fools and knaves couldn't spoil the finest things in this world. It's all in the way you take life. There's no harm in the good grape, it's in the . . .

THE HAWKER. I know. But don't you remember how we had to call for the barber-surgeon, the little Esculapius, and he put a round dozen of leeches on your neck to break the fit the last time you got on that subject?

[*Two men enter right. They are both young, in the early twenties, and have the physique and clear bronzed skin of people who spend their lives in the open. They are dressed in long woolen cloaks which fall in great simple folds from shoulder to heel, so that it is impossible to tell their rank, except that they follow the profession of arms. The taller is dark-haired and rather slight in build, though powerful. The other arrests attention immediately, the atten-*

tion first being drawn to the superb set of the round head on the great neck, which rises like a Doric column from the grey cloak. His hair is red-gold and curls in archaic rings all over his head and around the small, beautifully set ears. His eyes, intensely blue, have the rapt, inscrutable look of the great idealist or great egoist. The way he handles his body shows perfect coordination and his voice, even when pitched in a whisper, has the flexibility and power of an organ. His bearing is that of a demi-god. There are blue circles under the eyes of both and a slight pallor showing through the tan.]

DARK SOLDIER [*moving toward the archway*]
Where can he have taken himself off to? He's as elusive as a squadron of Parthian horse. And it's like his pleasant habit of charging out of the theatre when the crowd begins arriving, to slip out to this suburb on the day of days.

FAIR SOLDIER. If he was trying to pique my interest he could not have adopted a better shift. But his strength is that he does not care.

DARK SOLDIER. Sire, I am not sure of that. It is one thing to scorn the ordinary pomps and powers of life and another to be indifferent to

world power. Lives there a man whose soul can put aside the offers of the master of the world?

ALEXANDER. I do not know, friend, but [*catching sight of the cask*] I think we have run the lion to his lair.

DARK SOLDIER. Yes, surely. That's his new house. They say that when that gross army contractor, grown proud of his sudden riches, was boasting of his marvelous morals, Diogenes answered that the god Bacchus had dyed the walls of his bedchamber with Tyrian purple.

[*They advance toward the cask and regard the sleeping philosopher. The wine seller and the hawker sit up straight on the bench. The latter shows rising excitement, which he communicates to his huge companion by indicating in dumb show that the newcomer is Alexander. The foodvender appears, eyeing the two cloaked figures, appraising them as possible customers; starts forward, thinks better of it, and remains half in his shop with his neck craned forward.*]

ALEXANDER. What a daunting thing is sleep. How that mimic death does take the beholder by the throat, and give him pause. A great purge for pride.

[*The maidservant comes out of the arched doorway, right, and begins to sprinkle the*

ground with water from an earthenware jar, dipping it out with her hand.]

MAIDSERVANT. Down, dust! Shall I be always sweeping and driving you outside to the kitchen-midden, and you flying in gaily by the window again? [*Sings*]

*The earth gives back to her perfect lover
Passion and faith and joy again.*

[*At the sound of the singing, Alexander glances toward her, smiling, and she sees him for the first time. Her face goes white, she sets down the jar very gently and leans against the arch as though faint. In a whisper to herself*]

MAIDSERVANT. My beautiful one!

[*Three or four people enter left rear, among them one of the carters. Two women enter right front and all stand as though sensing something great about to happen.*]

DARK SOLDIER. Diogenes.

DIOGENES [*waking and sitting up in his cask, with a look of annoyance*] Who are you, and what do you mean by disturbing me?

ALEXANDER [*slipping his cloak from his shoulders with the born actor's sure instinct for the dramatic, so that it slides to the ground, leaving him superb in his golden armor, over a vermilion tunic*] The son of Philip.



DARK SOLDIER. Alexander the Great!

ALL [*except the maidservant, in varying tones of wonder, awe and admiration*] Alexander the Great!

DIOGENES. Yes. And I the son of Icesias the swindler.

ALEXANDER [*calling on all his art to draw some response from the philosopher*] Diogenes, I greet you. Though conqueror of the world, with armies at my back whose mastery is such that none has ever seen the like, I stand before you as man to man, as equal, and only ask: what, from my power, can I do for you?

[*Carried away by his own half-unconscious pentameters, he steps forward and casts a shadow on the reclining figure. The dark soldier stoops and picks up the cloak. Diogenes looks at the resplendent figure for several moments, apparently quite unmoved. The crowd stands breathless with tension.*]

DIOGENES [*quietly*] You can stand out of the sunshine.

[*Alexander does not take in the import of the answer for a few seconds, and, puzzled, steps backward out of the light. Slowly his face darkens as the full quality of the rebuff sinks into his brain. The dark soldier stands like a*

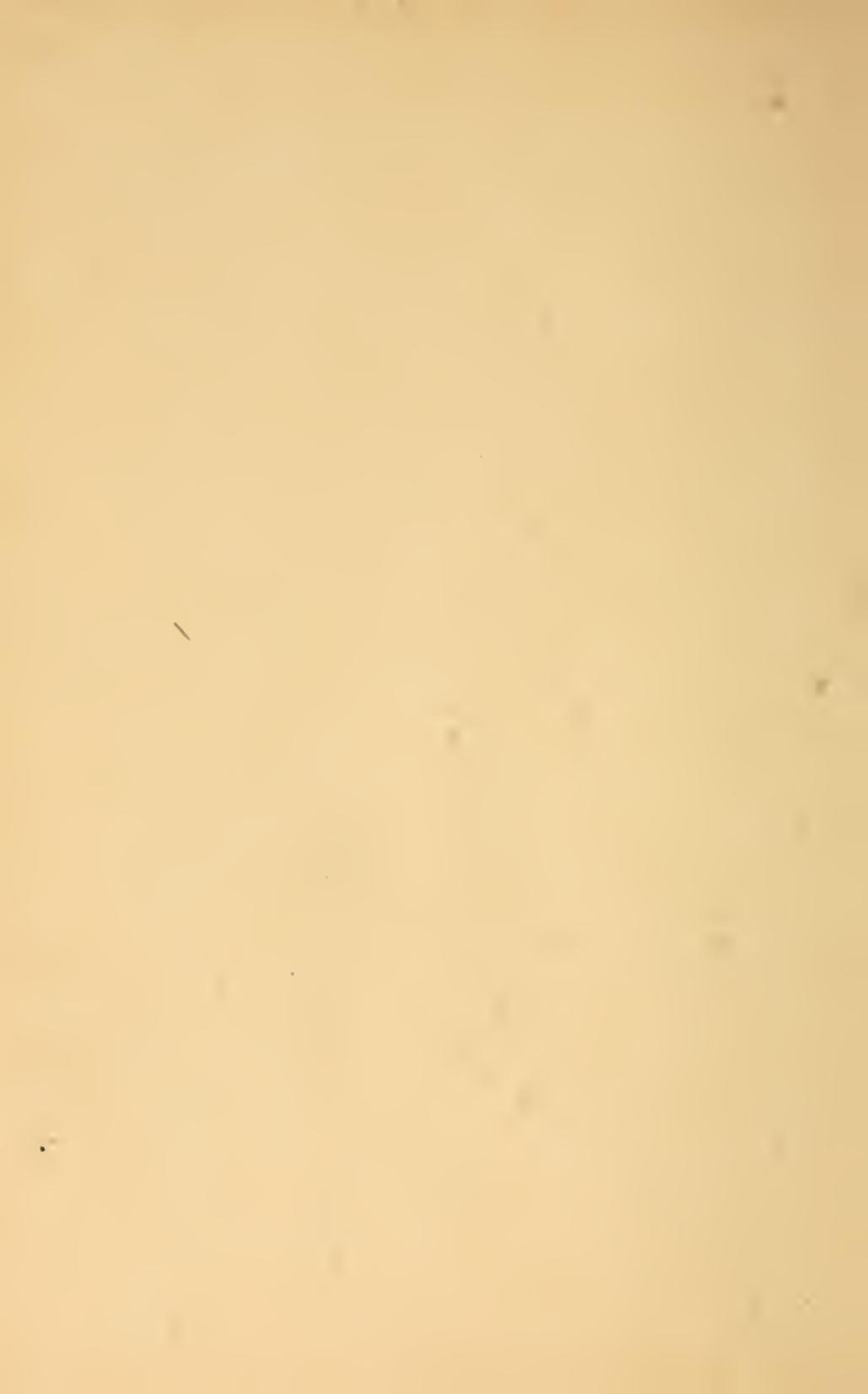
statue, with Alexander's cloak over his left arm and his right hand half drawing his sword from under his cloak. Alexander's fury reaches a climax and his face passes into an expression of deep thought, touched with sadness. He bows silently to Diogenes, then turns to the dark soldier, takes the cloak and wraps it around himself.]

ALEXANDER [*to the dark soldier, gently*] And I was weeping for new worlds to conquer! [*He walks slowly front, his head bowed, and then turning to his left with military precision, goes out right front, followed by the dark soldier.*]

[*The whole crowd has stood as though turned to stone and remain so for a minute or two. Then the maidservant, coming to life, darts from the arch and stands before Diogenes.*]

MAIDSERVANT [*with passion, stamping her foot*] YOU HORRID OLD MAN!

CURTAIN



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 015 908 466 8

D R Y P O I N T S

1887-1920

BY

HENRY MARTYN HOYT
