

The RYERSON
POETRY
CHAP-BOOKS



The Artisan

By

SARA CARSLY

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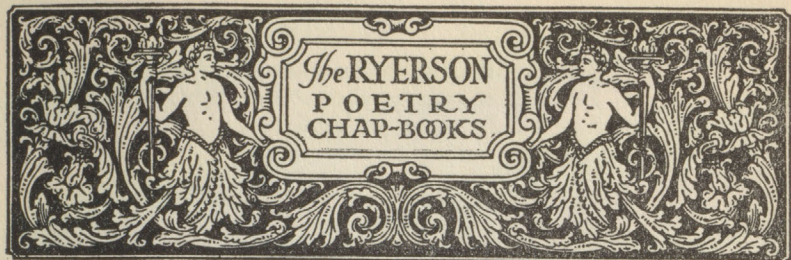
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MRS. CARSLY was born in Northern Ireland and educated in Belfast. She has been for many years a citizen of Canada, and is now Latin instructor in the Central High School in Calgary. She has been prize winner in many Dominion-wide poetry contests, her poems having appeared in many Canadian papers and magazines, including the *Canadian Home Journal*, *Saturday Night* and *Canadian Poetry Magazine*. Mrs. Carsley is the author of *Alchemy and Other Poems*. Her comic opera, *Lallapaloo*, a musical fantasy of the Gilbert and Sullivan type, has been charmingly set to music by Clifford Higgin and performed with outstanding success.

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The Artisan

By Sara Carsley

OUT of corruption and mould,
 Dark in decaying repose,
 Perfume and damask and gold,
 He made the rose.

Out of the waves of the air,
 Silent through centuries long,
 Breathing His ecstasy there,
 He fashioned song.

From the mute, brainless, and blind
 Cell where our being began,
 Shaping the hand and the mind,
 He moulded man.

From greedy and brutish desire—
 Splendour all splendours above—
 Seraph of dew and of fire,
 He fashioned love.

Master, unerring of hand,
 Lord of the life-giving breath,
 What is Your miracle, planned
 To blossom from death?

DEATH OF THE HONEY-BEE

HERE in the lily, the luminous chamber,
Built of argent and crystalline light,
Perfumed and glowing, with pillars of amber,
Halt in your flight.

Rifle her hoard, strip the treasury bare;
Hasten, oh hasten! the wing of disaster
Darkens and drifts on the sun-scented air;
Faster; speed faster!

Far is your city, her excellent towers
Carven of fragrant and delicate gold,
Honeyed and sweet with the soul of the flowers
From turret to hold.

Vain is your labour, poor seeker of spoil;
Merciless Time knows not pity nor pardon;
Vain, little valiant heart, broken with toil,
Sleep in the garden.

Die for the dream, whose insatiate beauty
Burned in your frail and invincible breast;
Lover of loveliness, bond-slave of duty,
Soft be your rest!

PORTRAIT OF A VERY OLD MAN

THE thrusting glance grows dim,
Falters the fiery tread;
Once life was wine to him,
That now is bread.

Beauty was once the prize
He sought by field and stream;
But now the questing eyes
Are fixed in dream.

At every pool of fate
His eager thirst drank deep;
The heart insatiate
Is quenched with sleep.

All knowledge he desired,
All ecstasy, all mirth;
He, who to heaven aspired,
Needs only earth.

A FAREWELL TO MUSIC

NOW the day of song is done;
Happy folk of hill and plain
Turn from singing in the sun
Back to man's red trade again.

Pipe and honey-throated flute,
And the chiming choir, are dumb,
While the howling gun's salute
Answers to the quickening drum.

Earth, that once with clear delight
Sang among the listening stars,
Now affronts the patient night
With the maniac voice of wars.

Yet shall Earth's foundations stand;
When, on ravaged hill and shore
Slaughter drops his wearied hand,
Men shall raise their song once more—

Broken men, awry with pain,
Men too old to march and die,
These shall lift a quavering strain
Faintly, to the listening sky.

LIFE TRIUMPHANT

I SHALL lay by the heavens and the earth;
Put off life's shining folds and lay them by;
Behold in dust Love's dear enchantment die;
Say long farewell to music and to mirth.
I, too, whose spirit stormed the gates of birth,
Fierce with desire for that adventure high,
Unmurmuring in drowsy dust shall lie,
Plundered of all life's beauty and its worth,

O fool! whom Power Immeasurable found
In the blind crypt of immemorial night,
And led rejoicing forth to life, and crowned
With knowledge, strength, desire, and all delight,
He vanquished Chaos; shall proud Death withstand
The thunder-stroke of His victorious hand?

FALLEN IN ACTION

THEY have not spent their youthful treasure
For silken ease, for warm repose,
Idle delight, or rose-crowned pleasure,
Still briefer than the rose.

Gladly they paid away for ever
Their few bright years' new-minted gold
For the great deed, the high endeavour,
The heart serenely bold.

We felt, on sunlit stream and meadow,
A stiller hush that dimmed the day,
When down the road of endless shadow
Singing they marched away.

IMMORTAL HOUR

THIS is Love's hour; the winds on every hill
Sing, and the withered wastes break forth in flower.
Yet with far-echoing footstep, faint and chill,
Draws on the darker hour.
The lonely shadow of the cypress lies
Even on Paradise.

So brief our blossom; then, the falling year,
The folding of life's petals into sleep,
Drifting upon the still and shadowy mere
Where our lost dreams lie deep.
And all whom Love enriched with golden store
Remember Love no more.

This is Love's hour; from his far world he brings
A lovelier light than ours, that shall illumine
With alien glory all earth's common things,
Even to the brink of doom.
When Time's tall battlements of night and day
Pass like a mist away.

O Flower of all delight! how strong a Power
From formless night, from unimpassioned clay,
Has drawn us, and with this immortal hour
Has crowned our mortal day!
Drink deep the joy from His own vintage pressed.
And leave with Him the rest!

CONJURING TRICK

WHAT fuel feeds the fires of song
In thrush, and lark, and nightingale?
The worm, unbeautifully long,
The all-too-luscious snail.
From humble substances like these
They shape their heavenly melodies.

All day the screaming sea-gulls fight;
Offal and carrion are their prize;
Yet what rich arabesques of flight
From these mean tastes arise!
So the whole realm of beast and bird
Is marvellous and yet absurd.

And man, how greedy, coarse, and vain!
A mere baboon de luxe! yet he
With teeming marvels of his brain
Fills earth and air and sea.
Life conjures thus, with crafty hand,
Lily and pearl from slime and sand.

THE TOKEN

ROSE of joy, whose silken petals glowing
Scatter brief beauty on the sombre stream
Of time for ever flowing
Down to the shores of unremembered dream,
By that dark flood we strive in vain to stay
The swift delight that glides away, away.

And while we mourn, with sorrow bowed and broken,
The tree from whose ambrosial branches fell
This rose, his glowing token,
Above us lifts his lovely miracle,
Imperishable joy, upholding high
His flowering glory to the jubilant sky.

TO THE HESITANT

DEAR LOVE, who will not love me till tomorrow,
Think, of what gossamer stuff is made the day.
While it endures, forestall the foot of sorrow,
Love while you may.

For like this living hour, so quickly ended,
The sons of men, and all their brief delight,
Are wraiths of cloud, that passing swift and splendid
Merge into night.

The voice of desolation may be calling
Through all your world tomorrow, Love, and I
Only a shadow on the moonlight falling,
Only a sigh.

THE STEADFAST STAR

AGE-LONG, the stars with grave disdain
Have watched while eager men have died
For dreams and loyalties as vain
As the brief lives they cast aside.

Burn, Courage, man's eternal star,
Steadfast above disastrous seas!
Still blaze, when dust and darkness are
Polaris and the Pleiades.

THE COMEDIAN

I GAVE you heartsease when my heart was breaking,
And joy, that kindles courage like a fire;
And now comes night, and brings my heart's desire—
The sleep with no awaking.

I woke your fainting strength with winds of laughter,
Your daily wounds with healing mirth I bound;
Now for my sleepless grief this balm is found—
No need to smile hereafter.

THE LITTLE BOATS OF BRITAIN

(A Ballad of Dunkirk.)

ON many a lazy river, in many a sparkling bay,
The little boats of Britain were dancing, fresh and gay;
The little boats of Britain, by busy wharf and town,
A cheerful, battered company, were trading up and down.

A voice of terror through the land ran like a deadly frost:
"King Leopold has left the field, our men are trapped and lost.
No battle-ship can reach the shore, through shallows loud with
foam;
Then who will go to Dunkirk town, to bring our armies home?"

From bustling wharf and lonely bay, from river-side and coast,
On eager feet came hurrying a strange and motley host,
Young lads and grandsires, rich and poor, they breathed one
frantic prayer:
"O send us with our little boats to save our armies there!"

Never did such a motley host put out upon the tide:
The jaunty little pleasure-boats in gaudy, painted pride,
The grimy tugs and fishing-smacks, the tarry hulks of trade,
With paddle, oar, and tattered sail, went forth on their Crusade.

And on that horror-haunted coast, through roaring bomb and
shell,
Our armies watched around them close the fiery fangs of hell,
Yet backward, backward to Dunkirk they grimly battled on,
And the brave hearts beat higher still, when hope itself was
gone.

And there beneath the bursting skies, amid the mad uproar,
The little boats of Britain were waiting by the shore;
While from the heavens, dark with death, a flaming torrent fell,
The little boats undaunted lay beside the wharves of hell.

Day after day, night after night, they hurried to and fro;
The screaming planes were loud above, the snarling seas below.
And haggard men fought hard with sleep, and when their strength
was gone,
Still the brave spirit held them up, and drove them on and on.

Seven

And many a grimy little tramp, and skiff of painted pride
Went down in thunder to a grave beneath the bloody tide,
But from the horror-haunted coast, across the snarling foam,
The little boats of Britain brought our men in safety home.

Full many a noble vessel sails the shining seas of fame,
And bears, to ages yet to be, an unforgotten name:
The ships that won Trafalgar's fight, that broke the Armada's
pride,—
And the little boats of Britain shall go sailing by their side!

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Lorne Pierce—Editor

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