

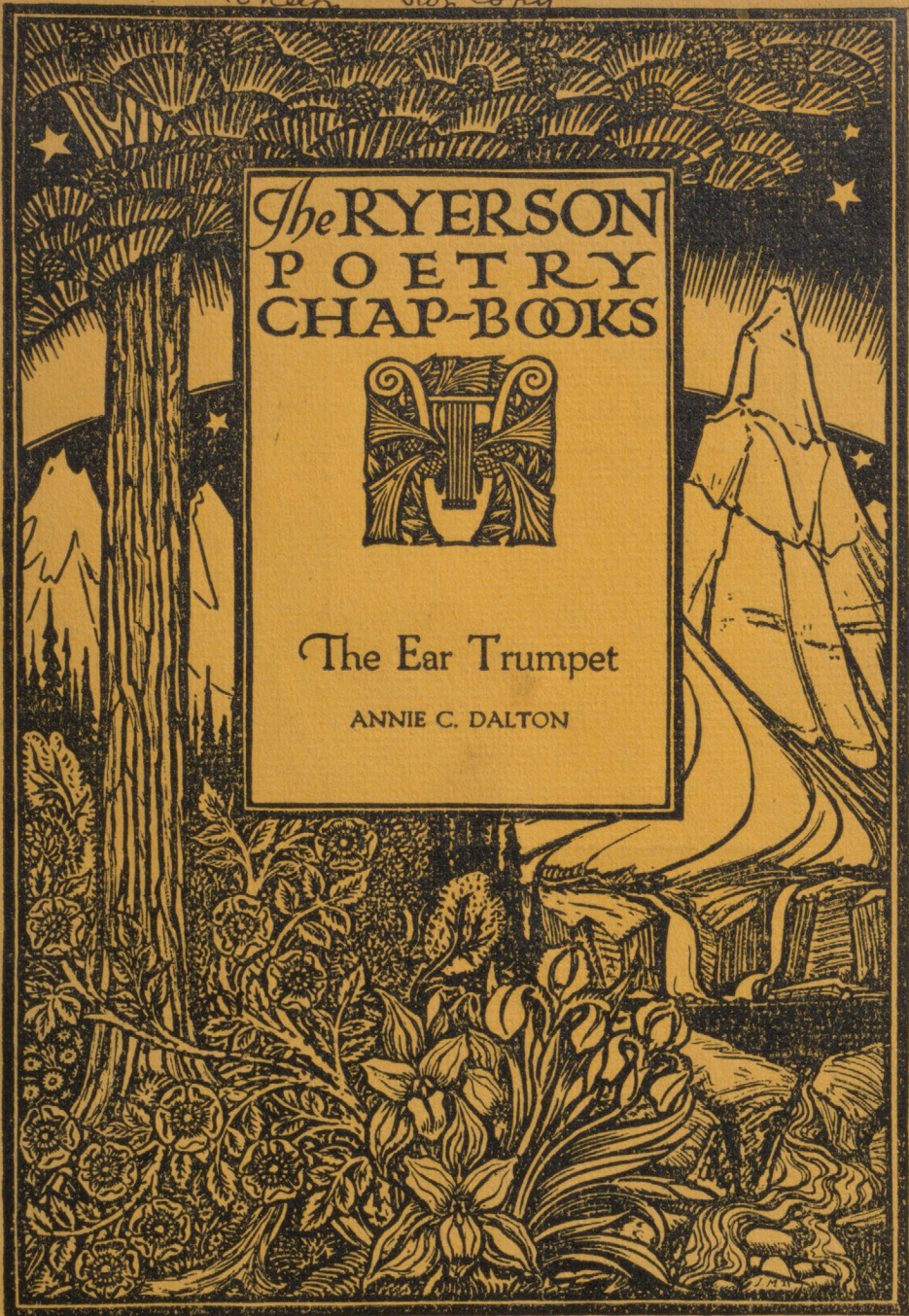
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The RYERSON
POETRY
CHAP-BOOKS



The Ear Trumpet

ANNIE C. DALTON



OF THIS edition of THE EAR TRUMPET, by Annie C. Dalton, two hundred and fifty copies have been printed. This Chap-book is a product of The Ryerson Press, Toronto, Canada.

Copies of this Chap-book may be secured from The Ryerson Press, Toronto, and from Macrae Smith Company, Philadelphia, U.S.A.

Verses of Today

O, I WILL SHUT MY EYES.

Oh, I will shut my eyes to see the moon
Knowing that thus he ever will be there.
Insurgent senses lock your magic up,
Seal up the visual world, however fair.

Then I'll see moons of silver gold and white,
Our fading moons escaping in their mist;
Harsh moons, red-hot, that burn into the night,
Branding the dark with unforgiving light.

I'll shut my ears to each enticing tune
A bird may sing or streams on pebbles play;
Then in my heart such harmonies will ring
As wash the music of the world away.

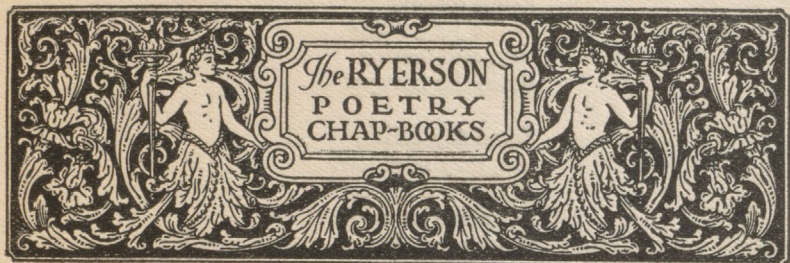
I'll seal my nostrils to each scented thought
That hides in flowered shade or sunlit prison,
Such things as these by senses can't be bought,
Eden itself is growing in my heart.

If I were crippled, deaf and dumb and blind,
And all the colors of the world turned out,
In the grey emptiness I then would find
The answer to the riddle: sight is doubt.

Had I no eyes how clearly would I see;
Had I no ears how deeply would I hear;
Freed of all proof at last myself I'd be
Without confusion, phantasy or fear.

—ELIZABETH BIBESCO.

Vancouver Province
Aug 20 . 1925



The Ear Trumpet

By Annie C. Dalton

Author of *The Marriage Music, Flame and Adventure, etc.*



THE EAR TRUMPET

EDITH SITWELL
made a solo
of her auntie,
her rich auntie
and her trumpet,
such a trumpet
as old ladies
give to stranger-
folk to blow in.

Down the trumpet
scornful Edith
sang and chortled
her fine solo
of the Judgment-
day, and crack of
DOOM. . . .

Auntie prattled
of her boy-scouts,
Edith roaring
of the Judgment-
day, still roaring
down the trumpet—

Some day Edith,
too, may need one.
How she'll shiver
when she knows it,
thinking of that
scornful solo,
thinking of the
Day of Judgment;
of the solo,
of her laughter;
of her laughter
and the trumpet;
of HER dreadful,
dreadful trumpet
and the crashing
Trump of Doom!

Foolish, foolish
Edith Sitwell
sang a solo
of her auntie,
her rich auntie
and her trumpet,
such a trumpet
as old ladies
give to stranger-
folk to blow in.



TO ELIZABETH BIBESCO

OPEN thine eyes and gloat upon the moon,
Now, whilst thou canst lest he no more be there;
Open thine eyes and drink the magic up,
The magic of this world so good and fair.

Oh, speak not of those spectral livid moons,
Of fading moons escaping in their mist,
Red moons, brain-burning through the lurid night,
Searing the mused and hapless exorcist.

Shut not thine ears to each enticing tune,
Lest no bird sing, nor stream on pebble play,
Lest in thy heart such deviltries should ring
As drench and wash thy earth and heaven away.

Seal not thy nostrils to each scented thought
That hides in flowered shade, or sunlit prison,
Oh, lovely things by senses can be bought:
On perfume souls to Eden have arisen.

If thou wert crippled, deaf and dumb, and blind,
With all the odours of the world turned out,
In that grey emptiness thou then shouldst find
No answer to life's riddle, do not doubt.

Hadst thou no eyes, how dimly wouldst thou see;
Hadst thou no ears, how dully wouldst thou hear,
Straining to hold thy waning self, to be
Lost in confusion, phantasy and fear.

Vain as thy moons the words which thou hast said,
Frail as thy moons this fancy thou hast spun,
Nought canst *thou* know of Living-Death—his dead
Salute and pardon thee, mistaken one!

Ah! could we now but hear as thou canst hear—
And if we could but see as thou canst see—
And if we too could run as thou canst run—
How very far from Hades we would flee!

In austere beauty lives thy lovely song,
(Unholily so wed to barren untruth)
Mournful and sweet, that beauty aches, we long
For our lost usage, splendour, power and youth.

TO VIOLA MEYNELL

I

WE WERE just saying—I had not thought
That anyone so moving tale could tell
Of those experiences too dearly bought,
That on them knowing hearts should care to dwell.

We were just saying—Have you thus said
With kindly gesture to a bursting heart?
Have you? . . . Then blessing be upon your head!
Like Mary, you have chosen the loving part.

We were just saying—Was that kind word
Once said to you waiting in silent pain?
And did you know the joy of hope deferred—
The joy of having some dear soul explain?

We were just saying—O simple thing!
But, 'tis the simple things that make life glad;
Deaf though the ears, birds in the heart can sing,
Thrice deafened are the ears when the heart is sad.

We were just saying—Strange tale well told—
How many hearts will bless the loving thought?
How many callous ones will fear the bold
Light, you have thrown on the havoc they have wrought.

II

They were just saying—
But you I may not tell,
'Tis such a dreadful story
It must have been thought out in hell.
The story of your father—
Who died;
The story of your mother too—
A guiltless homicide;
And you sit there in innocence,
In semi-silence, trustful ignorance,
The misery unheard!
Oh, not by a word,
Or ever a glance
Of mine, must pass
To you. . . .

This frightful tragedy that was
Of one, the slain, and one that slew,
Two lovers to each other true.

They were just saying—
Nay! but those innocent eyes,
So eloquently praying
To share the eagerness, the great surprise
Upon their animated faces,
Pierce to my very heart—Ah! what sweet lies
Shall I call up to fill the places
Of those grim tales, so grossly nurtured, vile?
Dear lady with the wistful smile!
Ask me no more what the tart tongues say—
Cold, evil spite their speech debases,
And I—I can but pray,
“Ask me no more!”
Hot is my heart and sore,
Pure is the air without the door,
Ah! come away,
The very furniture grimaces!



MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF SAID—

MARIE BASHKIRTSEFF said,
(From some dim place she said)
So many years I have been dead
To this dull world, and still
Good folks are saying with a will,
“Surely, surely Marie was past praying for.”
Or
“She was wilful, she was wild,
Half a savage, half a child.”
“In such a year,” they say,
“She threw all decency away,
So and so, thus and thus;
Credulous and mutinous,
Calamitous and amorous,
Were the things she gloried in;”
All their humour turned to gall,
One and all
On my reputation fall,
And smack their lips on storied sin.

“Farrago!
Snobbish and selfish farrago!”
That is their name for thee,
Belovèd diary!
Come, let us make enquiry,
Is that all these Philistines can know?
Then let the true and tragic tale begin,
Of that and this,
Right well I wis,
None ever heard
These say a word.

Of this, the horror that I knew,
The serpent grief that coiled and threw
Its small, glittering eyes on me,
Green and snaky eyes that held
All my will, and me compelled
To the numbing misery
Of some fascinated bird—
Of all this,
Well I wis—
Never a word!

Of this, the hooded snake that drew
And watched me circle round and round,
Of how I fluttered, fell, and flew
Frantic spaces from the ground;
Of the singing in my ears,
Hideous clamour, mocking jeers,
Of the devastating fears,
Dear and familiar things unheard,
Of the awful hope deferred—
Oh, well I wis
Of all this—
Never a word!

Of the hidden, dull despair,
Of the grievous lassitude,
Of the crowning horror where
Blossomed love and plenitude;
Of the odious, choking shame,
Dissimulation, anger, blame,
Embarrassment, I overcame,
Of ridicule, mistakes absurd,
Of all this,
Well I wis—
Not a word!

Of all this anguish borne in secret,
Loss of trust in God and man,
Of the great ambition shattered,
Budding hope and darling plan;
Of the soundless wind and rain
Beating on the window-pane;
Of the untruths told in vain;
Of the voiceless bird and beast,
Of the songless, laughless feast,
Of the mind to madness spurred,
Never a word!

Of life's last keen extremity,
Fear of laughter, fear of pity,
Of the death that would not smite,
Of my heart pierced-uncontrite,
Living, thrilling, mad-to-live,
Quick, ceremented, splenitive,
Broken heart!
Of my youth so over-yearred,
Of all this,
Too well I wis,
Not a word. . . .
Ah! never a word.

NOTES

1. "The Ear-Trumpet," an answer to the poem, "Solo for Ear-Trumpet," by Edith Sitwell, in "Modern British Poetry," by Louis Untermeyer.—*Harcourt, Brace & Co.*

2. "To Elizabeth Bibesco," a parody on her poem, "O, I will shut my eyes."

3. "To Viola Meynell," a poem in two parts; the first one addressed to the author of a striking short story, entitled "We Were Just Saying," illustrates that phrase, with which a thoughtful person usually begins an explanation of a conversation to one who is partially deaf, and which is always so welcome and productive of delight.

The second half of the poem portrays the thoughtlessness with which people so often discuss the affairs of the deafened in their presence.

The story is included in Mrs. Meynell's book, "Young Mrs. Cruse."—*Harcourt, Brace & Co.*

4. "Marie Bashkirtseff said;" A protest against the action of her reviewers, who, whilst criticizing her conduct severely, usually omit the agony of her growing deafness, and the remarkable account which she gives of it—the most poignant and comprehensive description of partial deafness ever written.

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Lorne Pierce—Editor

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