

The RYERSON
POETRY
CHAP-BOOKS



Out of the Dusk

By

MARY MATHESON

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The name of Mary Matheson is well-known and loved in the West. Beauty evidently does not perish with the using and so those of us who have known for years that she is a weaver of dreams are glad to know that the circle of enchantment is again about to be widened.

Mrs. Matheson writes out of a full heart and a full experience. She sees the beauty in life and by her art shares it with others whose eyes are duller. And she does more than that for us for she gives us a desire to walk the High Way with her, for under her magic leading we see that the drab road over which we have been stolidly plodding leads us through fields of fragrant clover, where butterflies circle and birds are singing, and the weedy pools we thought so dank and cheerless reflect the sky in their loveliness and carry water-lilies on their bosom. Then when our feet grow weary she gives us lilting melodies for our refreshment and delight.

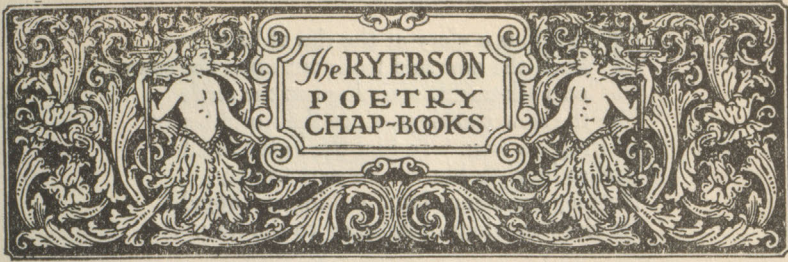
Mrs. Matheson's poems are the living expression of her mind and heart and come to her as easily as the breath she draws. And so to all good people who love the glory of the common day, and can thrill to the beauty of fresh minted patterns of living words, we commend this little book.

—Nellie L. McClung.

Mrs. Mary Matheson, an honours graduate of Queen's University, in English and History, is the author of *Destiny and Other Poems*, *Magic Hill*, *The Prairie Rose*, and *Shining Wings*.

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90 In 250



Out of the Dusk

by *Mary Matheson*

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

OUT OF THE DUSK

SO when the dusk grew deep and blind with smoke
And all the outer world lay dark and chill,
When raiders roared and lightnings flashed their will
Hurling down anguish on peace-loving folk,
Defenceless, unoffending; then there woke
Thousands of children caught in Terror's grip
Clinging to loved ones brave who, white of lip
Yet with high courage, all-undaunted spoke:

"Dear heart, fear not, the light of Dawn will come
When you shall be set free to hear no more
The siren's sound that strikes a terror dumb
Into your soul. After this night of war
You shall rise up, obey the High Command—
The Future waits the moulding of your hand!"

YOUTH

THERE is a glory at the rim of Life
When the new soul looks out upon the span
Of God's allotment, scanning not the strife
Nor the slow markings, since the world began,
Of Progress won. To him the Future's all
And so he girds himself his part to play.
Nothing can daunt him, nothing can appal.
He rides on wings of morning to the fray.

Oh, Youth—I love you! Dauntless, unafraid,
The Past is not, for 'tis not your concern.
Faith, hope and trust alike are undismayed
For tempests wild can neither lash nor burn.
Keep, keep your dreams, cleave ever to the height,
Your sphere the bosom of the Infinite.

DISILLUSION

SOMETIMES I walk through quiet, country lanes
And myriad comrades walk along with me
—So am I not alone; a minstrelsy
Of woodsy choristers followed by long trains
Of lilting voices 'neath the shadowy leaves
Hail me in greeting. And more sombrely
The tall trees bend confiding-like to me
Telling of aught that cheers or aught that grieves

Their tender hearts. Then one day up the street
I started gaily—lured by the city's stir,
But no one smiled or nodded: "Christopher,
Old friend, we're glad to see you and to meet
You once again!" Waiting in vain I stood
For friendly voices from the field and wood.

SO SWIFT THE DAWN

DAWN rides triumphant o'er the silver plain
And shakes his golden head in laughter gay.
Dauntless he drives the night-spun dream away
And flecks with light the drowsy eye again.
A little wind walks through the meadow now
(Like some lost friend who, sudden, finds his clue)
With certain step since he remembers how
To thread the pathway of the morning dew;

With quick, warm hope the wakeful morning fills,
And full of strength the earth smiles as of yore;
Another day his cup of wealth distils,
Then knocks with stealthy hand the self-same door
That opes, then closes to our quick amaze
And hides To-day with all our Yesterdays.

OBSESSION

I DO not know yet what you mean to me—
Life is so complex, but when you depart
And I am left alone, my craven heart
Fears all the ills that come so stealthily
Upon the human race; indignantly
I find this true—that tears unbidden start
When Daylight moves to Dusk and sunbeams dart
Half-splintered o'er the floor, malignantly.

'Tis pity Love and Fear are so allied;
Though dangers lurk about on every hand—
That Love grows strong where Fear may be defied,
And given that stern and final reprimand,
(That causes his retreat, at once dismayed)
To find frustrate the projects he has laid.

GIFTS

HE lives in realms I know not, mingling with
The great of earth till some sweet cloistered Calm
Envelops him, or some soul-stirring psalm
Inspires, or ancient lore or myth;
And his high thoughts find outlet with great ease
In many phrases couched in words that please
Till he is loved by people, praised, admired,
Because his art is all could be desired.

But I find duty in the common task,
The lowly offices of Motherhood
And daily ministering to my brood
Of helpless and dependent ones, I ask
No greater gift, though his may not be mine
Nor mine be his—each is not less divine.

THE HAIL-STORM

I FEAR the woods at eve, wherein I find
Lost silences which wait for some new spell
To break the stillness and anon to tell
In reassuring tones wherefore the wind
Has drawn down the clouds which, like a blind,
Stretch on and on obscuring every light
And leaving only Darkness infinite
In breathless silence wholly unresigned.

Till suddenly from Heaven's majestic height
A white whip wields its perilous wild sway.
I see it cut the tottering landmarks bare,
While trees once motionless now droop in fright,
The tangled weeds bemoan their disarray,
But wheatfields lie all silent in despair.

RESURGENCE

IF I could see the sun set in the west
Beside yon river where the trees hung low
Along the valley where tall grasses blow—
And hear the words of her I loved the best
Of all those friends who, when the stronger test
Of Friendship came, did not forsake my need
But to my importunity gave heed
And helped to conquer when Despair possessed

My very soul,—methinks tonight when Pain
Is stilled within my heart by healing Time
I would be glad to linger there again
And watch the setting sun o'er the sublime
And radiant hills, the babbling river still
Making so light of all I thought so ill.

IN HIS CARE

ISEE tonight that broad and vast expanse
That marks the prairies in their restful sleep
Unconscious of the stars that wake and keep
A faithful vigilance o'er Earth's advance
From out the Silence. Can the mind refuse
To contemplate this trust of Greater Things
Which traverse not the way their wills may choose
Though round their course such mystery still clings?

O Earth unswerving in your onward flight
Toward Him who guides your pilgrimage through space
The Hand which holds the firmament in place
E'er guides your onward Destiny aright.
So shall I, humble part in his design—
Not to His care my anxious life resign?

THE GUARDIAN PINES

I SEE a city fair among the hills
High-crowned with golden glory on her brow,
Her beauty all the dreams of Day fulfils
But Night flings over her its mantle now;
The sun recedes behind the western pines
That guard the city with a solemn vow—
“Naught will befall thee, city of our heart.”
—This vow they take each night ere sun’s depart.

And so within the shadows of the night
The pines stand guard above our city’s homes,
Till when Dawn breaks with her effulgent light
And crimson morn from out dull darkness comes
The pines can see amid their golden grace
A grateful smile light up her fair young face.

RELUCTANCE

I WOULD not mind so much if I should die
Within a city’s limits—then I would
Have but to bid farewell in pensive mood
To sombre buildings, unrelenting, high,
Forbidding—yet revealing in their way
Some semblance, too, of symmetry and grace.
But in the country I’ll not wish to face
Grim Death amid such perfected array

Of Life in Spring. Flow’rs from familiar fields,
Bird-notes and sunlight glinting o’er brown earth
Through blades of green make this a place of Birth—
Not Death. Yea, here my ling’ring spirit yields
Unreadily, reluctant to depart
With happy Springtime hidden in my heart.

BEWITCHED

WHEN summer suns the river-bed unseal
Dismantling all the cliffs of white array—
And all their majesty again reveal
In lights and shadows of departing day;
—When Gothic trees unfold their green attire
Beneath the archway of a cloudless sky
And cliffs above the banks are set on fire
Touched by the evening sun in passing by—

Then shadows deep play down mysterious aisles
And flit along the ridge with dark grimace
To cover up the gold. Mischievous wiles
To rob of beauty my enchanted place;
—Till lo, an angel with bewitching grace
Touches the tapers of the sky—and smiles!

TO MOTHER

WHATE'ER of Womanhood to me there came
I owe to you who held my life so dear.
Nor loving less though now this many a year
I saw you not nor breathed your cherished name.
But Memory is strong within my heart
And comes with silence far adown the night
When Loneliness, refusing to depart
Sees through the gloom a sudden, friendly light

And out of far, abysmal avenues
Familiar hands are pointing to the Dawn,
Urging me still that I must hasten on
Nor turn to byways mine own will might choose;
All through the years my best bows at the shrine
Of Truths you taught me—Mother dear of mine!

RETROSPECTION

ITROD today the quiet, homely ways
Where Youth long since walked with me side by side,
Till Time insisted that with backward gaze
I turn to where his treasures still abide,
Some undiscovered as I passed along
And some misused by ruthless, hurried hands,
And some made weak where but courageous, strong
And steady will could fashion Time's demands.

Then as I turned with eager gaze, intent
Within those grottoes Memory has prized,
And still lights up though Life be well-nigh spent,
I could not feel regret, for visualized
From this long way, the patterns were not rent
But subtly wrought from Dreams Unrealized.

FEAR

ITHINK I never knew a hint of Fear
Until one night afar from town or friend
Where my first home loomed up around the bend
Of a long northern trail—was it last year
Or many years ago?—ah, well meseems
It was but Yesternight, when in the deep
Profound unconsciousness of one's first sleep
Admitting neither verity nor dreams—

I heard a stealthy step outside my door,
A shuffling sound of feet, a smothered curse,
And looking out—ah! nothing could be worse—
Not one I saw but husky persons four
Who shouted ere the blind was well withdrawn
“Which trail, sir, leads to Fort Saskatchewan?”

The Ryerson Poetry Chap-Books

Lorne Pierce—Editor

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