

OATEN STOP SERIES

VII



**ONE WAY TO  
THE WOODS**  
BY EVALEEN STEIN



**BOSTON COPELAND AND DAY**

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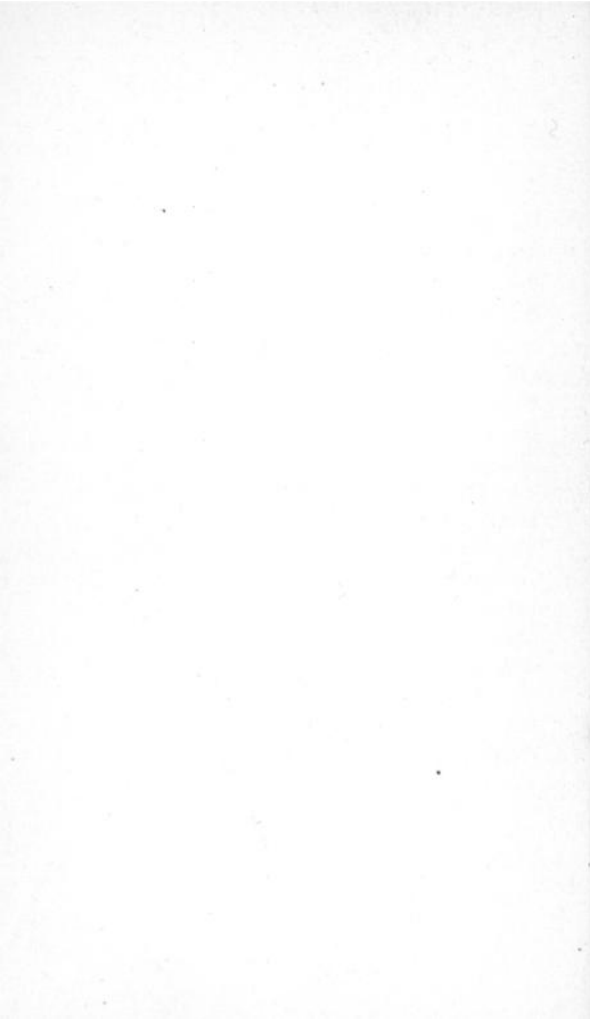
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TO THE MEMORY OF MY  
DEAR FATHER  
JOHN A. STEIN  
I LOVINGLY DEDICATE  
THIS MY FIRST BOOK



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**T**HE song of Nature stirs  
Within the budding trees ;  
Her true interpreters  
The birds and honey-bees ;  
And wintry winds that freeze  
And toss the frosty firs,  
What minstrelsies of these  
That are not wholly hers ?

Dear heart, I pray it be  
Some little song of mine  
May murmur unto thee,  
From out the written line,  
Some note of that divine  
Eternal melody,  
And make the gladness thine  
It brings and sings to me !



## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS



A LEVEL reach of April sun,  
Beside the river, faintly blue,  
That purls and swirls and twinkles through  
The sycamores, but just begun  
    To bud anew ;  
Then up a gently rising hill,  
Beneath tall walnut trees, until  
Some tufts of flaky hawthorns strew  
    And powder all the way with white ;  
On, past a farmhouse hidden quite  
In drifts of cherry bloom ; and still  
    Keep to the north, beyond the bend  
Abreast whose sharply curving turn  
    The distant roadway seems to end  
In banks of brake and lady-fern,  
And willow boughs, in youthful hue  
Of tenderest green that ever grew,  
    Verge into view.

There, facing westward, loiter slow,  
While troops of robins, rollicking  
Among the bluebells, wing and sing ;  
And gladly as the robins, so  
Let Nature's gracious overflow

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Of light and life steep every sense  
In depths of joyous indolence !  
Thus, pacing leisurely, push through  
The wayside weeds and meadow-rue  
And wild witch-hazels, where a few  
White-turbaned bloodroots blossoming,  
Like small green-caftaned pilgrims, bring  
The shrine of Spring  
Their sweet belated offering.

Then loose a leaning gate, and bold  
Fare on, across a cornfield where,  
Half-buried by the busy share,  
The stalks of stubble shine like gold,  
And, freshly turned, the furrowed mold  
Lies rich and bare.

Tall daisy stems already chain  
The farther gate, that leads again  
Into a long, light, grassy lane,  
Where wagon-tracks of tawny brown,  
Inlaid with mosses, wind adown  
Through new green sheen of winter grain.  
The hedges there on either side  
Are leafless yet, but all the more  
In airy, universal, wide  
High-tide,



## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

The golden April sunbeams pour  
Between their ramparts, closely set,  
And filter through their silver net  
Of thorny interlacing boughs ;  
The spreading redbud branches lean  
Like rosy coral in between,  
And in the distance, faintly seen,  
Some white sheep browse,  
And half a score of lazy cows  
Crop off the pasture's tender green.

But by and by, upon the right,  
There breaks a sudden gleam of white ;  
The fitful hum of honey-bees ;  
And, tinkling in its interval,  
You catch the call  
Of orchard orioles, — then all  
The blowing, snowing apple-trees  
Burst into sight !  
Ah, what more exquisite delight,  
What sweets in all the world more sweet,  
With more pure tenderness replete,  
Than some old orchard holds ? And none  
Of all beneath the April sun,  
Can boast aught sweeter than this one !  
— I fancy that I see it now,  
Its sprays of bloom, that sway and toss ;

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

( 'Twas there I broke this little bough,  
Whose waxy clusters, pink and white,  
    Leaned so enticingly across  
The ragged fence-rails, gray with moss,  
The very trees seemed to invite  
    Their own bright loss !)

But then, in truth, one needs must pause  
Beside this self-same spot, because,  
    O'ergrown with dandelions and weeds,  
The roadway ends ; but winding thence,  
    A violet-tufted footpath leads  
        Through scented depths, and ways  
        apart,  
Through shadowed aisles and thickets dense,  
    Down through a deep fern-filled ravine,  
    And on, into the hidden heart  
    Of all the woodland's growing green.

Beneath tall shafts of elm and oak,  
    The trailing, brown, wild grape-vine swings,  
    And in long wreaths the woodbine clings  
    Round tangled undergrowth that springs  
Just high enough for one to stroke  
    The little linden leaves, and feel  
    The downy spice-wood buds, and steal  
    A glimpse into a bluebird's nest.

## THE MARCH FROSTS

In crinkled verdure, here and there,  
The buckeye boughs show newly drest ;  
And dogwood branches whiten where  
A tiny stream slips down below,  
Whose murmurous, faintly-fluting flow,  
Through long lush grass and starweed, frets ;  
There golden-yellow cowslips grow ;  
And there I found these violets.

## THE MARCH FROSTS

THE little leaves that tip the trees  
With palest greenery everywhere,  
O bitter nights, that blight and freeze,  
And hurtling winds, and icy air,  
Forbear ! Forbear !  
Have you no tenderness for these,  
Nor any care ?

No pity for the buds that break  
And fringe the maples, rosy red,  
The starting apple-sprays, that make  
A silver fretwork overhead ?  
When these are dead,  
How shall the April for their sake  
Be comforted ?

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Oh, all my heart is full of pain !  
The hurt they feel is hurt to me !  
The helpless little leaves ! I fain  
Would cherish them so tenderly,  
It might not be  
Such cruel grief should fall again  
On any tree !

I would that I could gently fold  
Against my breast, for sheltering,  
Each tiniest bud the peach-boughs hold,  
And every gracious burgeoning  
Of everything ;  
So fondling them, through frost and cold,  
Until the spring !

## FEAST OF PALMS

ONCE where green palms were laid,  
Rode strangest cavalcade  
Men e'er beheld ;  
For in the midst of it  
Lowly a God did sit,  
It so in holy writ  
Stands chronicled.

## FEAST OF PALMS

What though in triumph proud  
The glad exulting crowd  
    Flung wide the palm,  
The joyful throngs between,  
Over the boughs of green,  
He rode with humble mien,  
    Divinely calm.

Aye, what were earthly prize  
To him whose prescient eyes  
    Foresaw the thorn ;  
Foresaw all things to be,  
And kingliest victory  
Of meek humility,  
    With patience borne ?

Then bring ye palms to-day,  
And holy, lowly pray,  
    Nor nourish pride ;  
Whoso in gentleness  
God's triumph doth confess,  
His heart the King will bless,  
    And therein ride.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

### BUDDING-TIME TOO BRIEF

**O** LITTLE buds, break not so fast !  
The spring's but new.  
The skies will yet be brighter blue,  
And sunny too.  
I would you might thus sweetly last  
Till this glad season's overpast,  
Nor hasten through.

It is so exquisite to feel  
The light, warm sun ;  
To merely know the winter done,  
And life begun ;  
And to my heart no blooms appeal  
For tenderness so deep and real,  
As any one

Of these first April buds, that hold  
The hint of spring's  
Rare perfectness that May-time brings.  
So take not wings !  
Oh, linger, linger, nor unfold  
Too swiftly through the mellow mold,  
Sweet growing things !

## IN MEXICO

And errant birds, and honey-bees,  
Seek not to wile,  
And sun, let not your warmest smile  
Quite yet beguile  
The young peach-boughs and apple-trees  
To trust their beauty to the breeze ;  
Wait yet awhile !

## IN MEXICO

THE cactus towers, straight and tall,  
Through fallow fields of chaparral ;  
And here and there, in paths apart,  
A dusky peon guides his cart,  
And yokes of oxen journey slow,  
In Mexico.

And oft some distant tinkling tells  
Of muleteers, with wagon-bells  
That jangle sweet across the maize,  
And green agave stalks that raise  
Rich spires of blossoms, row on row,  
In Mexico.

Upon the whitened city walls  
The golden sunshine softly falls,  
On archways set with orange trees,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

On paven courts and balconies  
Where trailing vines toss to and fro,  
In Mexico.

And patient little donkeys fare  
With laden saddle-bags, and bear  
Through narrow ways quaint water-jars  
Wreathed round with waxen lily stars  
And scarlet poppy-buds that blow,  
In Mexico.

In liquid syllables, the cries  
Of far fruit-venders faintly rise ;  
And under thick palmetto shades,  
And down cool covered colonnades,  
The tides of traffic gently flow,  
In Mexico.

When twilight falls, more near and clear  
The tender southern skies appear,  
And down green slopes of blooming limes  
Come cascades of cathedral chimes ;  
And prayerful figures worship low,  
In Mexico.

A land of lutes and witching tones,  
Of silver, onyx, opal stones ;



## JANUARY

A lazy land, wherein all seems  
Enchanted into endless dreams ;  
And never any need they know,  
In Mexico,

Of life's unquiet, swift advance ;  
But slipped into such gracious trance,  
The restless world speeds on, unfelt,  
Unheeded, as by those who dwelt  
In olden ages, long ago,  
In Mexico.

## JANUARY

**T**O and fro,  
To and fro,  
Athwart the tingling icy air,  
The linden branches blow, and so,  
With warp of wind and woof of snow,  
The weaver Winter's shuttles go ;  
Such garment rare  
The earth shall wear,  
No softest ermine, neither vair,  
Nor royal robing anywhere,  
Nor any cunning looms may show  
A fabric half so fair.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Upon the peach and apple trees  
A thousand frosty fringes freeze ;  
The moon-vines lace the lattice bars  
In filmy flagrees.

The grass is flecked with flaky stars ;  
The clover-tufts are hid from sight ;  
And, now and then, a bird alight  
With burst of gleeful flutter, jars  
The pearly-laden red rose-hips,  
And tilting airily, so tips  
A tiny tempest, pelting down  
The slender briars bare and brown ;  
Or else some sudden flurry stirs  
The fleecy drifts that freight the firs,  
And swept from silvery tassels slips  
A swirling cloud of trailing, bright,  
Light scarfs of powdered white.

Along the wall the mossy stones  
Have caught and fixed the falling flakes  
Where, in quaint shapes, the grape-vine  
makes  
A low relief, with shadow-tones  
More soft than carven marble takes ;  
And whiter by each gust that blows  
From off the roof, the climbing rose,  
In chiselled wealth of bough and thorn,

## JANUARY

About the doorway swiftly grows  
A skilful sculpture ; but the sprays  
Of honeysuckle, overborne  
By crystal cargoes, cannot raise  
Their icy-fettered maze.

A world of shining hints of hues,  
Wherein all tints so gently fuse  
In loveliness of light and shade,  
No eye may tell whereof is made  
Such pearly radiance ; nor invade  
The violet depth thereof for clues  
To clasp its color-keys, and know  
The subtile secrets of the snow ;  
The gleaming heavens, overlaid  
With loosened spangles, softly fade  
Into the gleaming earth below ;  
And all horizons seem to be  
Lost in white purity.

Aye, richly, Winter, to and fro  
Thus let your silver shuttles go,  
Till every sparkling web is spun ;  
Still, with rare skill, unceasing ply  
Your artful trickeries, and try  
All chill enchantments, every one  
Of all devices to beguile

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

This dreary overweary while  
Wherein we wait the sun ;  
And since the north must yet prevail,  
And bitter cheerless winds assail,  
Come, white-wing'd snows, and over all  
Like shreds of floating feathers fall,  
And lightly lie !  
So, by and by,  
— Ah, by and by ! —  
Like blue flakes from an azure sky,  
The April birds will fly.

## UNFAMILIAR

THE world is all unreal to-day !  
I strive to fathom whence  
There sometimes comes this subtly strange  
Dim sense of difference.

I gaze with gravely open eyes,  
No flaw of sight may be ;  
Still, somewise vaguely out of touch,  
All things seem strange to me.

The grass, the sky, the apple-trees,  
The honeysuckle vine,  
I know I know them all, — and yet,  
I cannot make them mine !

## HEART SONG

Familiar tasks, with careful hand  
And vision, even now  
I fashion out ; although, in truth,  
I scarce remember how.

All purposes, ambitions, aims,  
All vital forces, take  
A value slight as if I slept ;  
But yet I am awake !

And vainly still my being seeks  
To break this baffling spell  
That blurs its clearer consciousness,  
— Wherefore, I cannot tell.

## HEART SONG

**A**S one who holds a charm'd witch-hazel  
rod,  
And, as it veers, divines the hidden springs,  
Whose whispered chimes and muffled mur-  
muring  
Had passed unheeded underneath the sod,  
And as that spot, where careless footsteps  
trod,  
Then sparkles into silver speech and sings  
A liquid song that wakes to burgeonings  
The seeds imbedded in the barren clod,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

So, dearest heart, within my breast have you  
Pierced to the hidden melodies, and freed  
Its singing springs, and touched the buried  
seed  
Of strange, bright buds whereof I never  
knew !  
Sweet beyond words, and of such subtile  
power,  
It seems my whole life breaking into flower.

## THE MARSHES

**P**ALE shimmering skies that lightly  
bear  
Fine filmy clouds that idly fare  
In lazy wavering, wheresoe'er  
The faint, uncertain breezes go ;  
And even so,  
In airy motion down below,  
Tall wild rice, wild rice everywhere !

From out the marshy wilderness,  
With plumes and pennons numberless,  
In endless lines its armies press :  
The very river it besets  
And foils and frets  
With leaves like little bayonets

## THE MARSHES

That pierce the light and glint and gleam  
And glitter in the midmost stream ;  
    And so besieged and closed about,  
    The captive waves lap in and out  
Among the lacing stems, and creep  
Through flowered grasses and through deep  
    Translucent pools wherein they seem  
    To drowse and dream  
In draughts of liquid light, and steep  
    In sunbeams, till, too spent to stir,  
They sink into a golden sleep,  
    So held perpetual prisoner.

And over all there softly plays,  
    Through summer days,  
A marvel of pale violet haze  
That sheathes and wreathes and overlays  
    The thousand swaying plumes that rise  
From all those silvery water-ways  
    Wherein the drowsy river lies,  
    Content to clasp the gracious skies  
That twinkle through its tangled maze,  
    And nestle in it lazywise.

And, now and then, a wild bird flies  
    From hidden haunts among the reeds ;  
Or, faintly heard, a bittern cries

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Across the tasselled water-weeds ;  
Or, floating upward from the green  
Young willow wands, with sunny sheen  
On pearly breast, and wings outspread,  
A white crane journeys overhead.

For leagues on leagues no sign is there  
Of any snare  
For human toil, nor grief nor care ;  
The fields for bread lie elsewhere.  
— Only the wild rice, straight and tall,  
The wild rice waving over all.

## THE DROUGHT

ON laden lands the web of gold,  
Whose shuttles slanting sunbeams ply,  
Lies broken-meshed upon the wheat,  
Where sere stalks die.

The young corn curls its husky blades,  
And bees athirst pale blossoms drain,  
While languid buds bend low to earth  
Between the grain.

The fisher crosses, ankle-deep,  
The shrunken river as it moans



## HYACINTHS

Through bleaching banks of barren sand  
And scorching stones.

Gaunt trees pathetic to the sky  
Their parched and crisping boughs stretch  
out ;  
O winds, go search the nimbus clouds,  
And end the drought !

## HYACINTHS

I PLACED the purple hyacinths  
Above the lips I loved ;  
Across the narrow mound a fret  
Of leafy shadows moved.

Between the branches overhead  
The April sky was blue,  
And now and then a shining drift  
Of little clouds looked through.

The blessed breath of bloomy things  
Enfolded all the air,  
And from the hedge of evergreen  
A robin sang somewhere.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

I strove to see the happy earth,  
But over bud and leaf  
A sudden darkness fell, for I  
Was blinded by my grief.

O dearest heart ! they seemed so long ,  
The lonely, lonely years !  
I laid my face against the grass,  
And showered it with tears.

## THE BAYOU

**B**ELOW the bridge, a little way  
Float downward near the bank, beneath  
The trailing wild-grape vines that  
wreathe

The water-oaks and elms, and sway  
Far out across the current ; down  
Beyond the drift where in deep pools,  
Among the mosses' tawny brown,  
The lazy river-mussels cling ;  
Where little turtles hide, and schools  
Of tiny fishes flash in view,  
And part, and dart, and start anew  
In eager aimless journeying.

## THE BAYOU

On, past the slender reeds that swing  
Their tufts of tasselled bloom, and show  
Where sweet-flags grow ;  
Past willow wands that weave and fling  
Athwart the way a waving screen,  
Through which the tinkling ripples flow,  
And sing, and ring,  
With drowsy murmurs, soft and slow,  
And ceaseless silver cadencing ;  
— But there, just where the bushes lean  
And cross in leafy archway, hung  
With rosy mallow-flowers, and strung  
With ivory button-balls, and green  
With tender freshness everywhere,  
Just there  
Turn, and steer straightway in be-  
tween.

Ah, surely none would ever guess  
That through that tangled wilderness,  
Through those far forest depths remote,  
Lay any smallest path, much less  
A way wherein to guide a boat !  
But whoso knows the stream, and shares  
The rare deep secrets that it hides,  
Nor e'er confides  
Save only unto him who bears

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

True love of nature's lore,  
And dares  
Her inmost pathways to explore,  
— Unto such sympathetic eyes  
The river, oft-times unawares,  
Leads onward to some sweet surprise.

And so, push gently through the dense  
Low button-balls,  
And plummy growths of wild-rice, whence  
At cautious, watchful intervals,  
The brooding hermit-bittern calls ;  
Then steering slowly, in and out,  
Curve close about  
The lofty forest trees, and wind  
Among the willows, intertwined  
And crept across  
By scarlet trumpet-vines, that toss  
In lavish richness unconfined  
Above the blooming water-moss ;  
The trailing, tufted moss, that makes  
A carpet of its starry flakes  
So thick that one may scarcely see  
The long lithe lily-stems that grow  
Far down below  
With buds of pearl and gold enshrined  
Amid vague under-greenery.

## THE BAYOU

And lightly, here and there, among  
The russet rushes, as you go,  
The curling, purling ripples flow,  
And to and fro,  
With fitful motion, faintly stir  
The fine green film the waves have hung  
About the underwood, and flung  
In scarfs of shining gossamer  
Upon the grasses, lush and low ;  
— Then presently,  
Beyond the lily-pads, maybe,  
There breaks the softly vibrant whirl  
Of wafting wings, and through the reeds,  
Uprising — rising — far and free,  
A sweetly-fluting throistle speeds  
With burst of mellow melody.

But from the forest depths profound  
There comes no sound ;  
So dusk, so dense, so wholly still,  
The outer winds that thither stray  
Sweep slowly on, from tree to tree,  
And down long shadowed ways, until,  
Charged with the strange solemnity  
Those hushed and hidden haunts instil,  
All silently, into the day  
They steal away.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

— And there, within the bayou's heart,  
    Adrift, apart  
From all save that untrodden wood,  
    So deep  
Secluded in the solitude  
    Of those tall towering trees, that keep  
The very atmosphere imbued  
    With breath of primal peacefulness,  
— There, clasped in Nature's close  
    caress,  
Slipped sheer from all inquietude,  
    At peace upon the limpid stream,  
I know no other ways that seem  
    So sweet wherein to drift and dream.

There, floating on in tranquil mood,  
    The tire, the tumult, and the stress,  
    The dreary brood  
    Of toil and fret  
    And fevered, never-ending care,  
— All, all this wide world's weariness  
    Seems elsewhere ;  
So far, far elsewhere ! — And yet,  
    Through reason of the peaceful air  
    My own griefs wear,  
That very sense of farness steals  
    Into my heart with strange appeals ;

## THE BAYOU

All distant strife of living pleads  
    Its needs,  
Remote, half-comprehended, — still  
With such insistent pathos, till  
My dream-borne spirit wakes and heeds ;  
    That sentient stillness stirs in me  
    A keener, subtler sympathy ;  
My inmost being throbs, expands,  
    And understands  
More what the restless world may be.

And like the free reed-birds that fly  
From those green tangles to the sky,  
Yet seek the bayou, by and by,  
    So, on a nobler, higher quest,  
New-fledging from its body nest,  
    My eager soul soars up and sees  
    More of God's gracious mysteries ;  
Wherefrom a larger love it learns,  
And then, with humble mien, returns,  
Divines, more near, the perfect rest  
    Of Nature's breast,  
And so, touched tenderly through these,  
Feels more of true humanities.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

### IN YOUTH

NOT lips of mine have ever said :  
“ Would God that I were dead ! ”  
Nay, cruel griefs ! ye cannot break  
My love of life ; nor can ye make  
Oblivion blest in anywise,  
Nor death seem sweet for sorrow's sake.  
Life ! Life ! my every pulse outcries  
For life, and love, and quickened breath,  
O God, — not, *not* for death !

### MIDSUMMER

UPON the fields a golden blur,  
Pink bindweeds trailing through the  
corn ;  
From orchard boughs the muffled whir  
Of bright wings, faintly borne ;  
Along the roads, pale amethyst  
Of plummy banks of bergamot ;  
And in my eyes a rising mist  
Of grief, or joy, — I know not what !

Again I feel the old sweet ache  
That fills the heart for beauty's sake ;  
The yearning tenderness that grieves



## MISTRAL'S POEM "MIRÈIO"

O'er fields, and flowers, and wind-blown  
leaves,

And golden sheaves,  
And loveliness of earth and sky,  
In strange sharp pangs, — we know not  
why.

The pain that baffles him who tries  
In anywise

Its subtile grief to analyze ;  
And yet that is a joy that thrills  
And overfills

The quivering soul, and clarifies  
Its eager vision unto fine  
Undreamed-of raptures, all-divine !

And so I let the surging tears,  
Unquestioned, brim my happy eyes,  
While all my harkening spirit hears  
The great Earth-song uprise.

## MISTRAL'S POEM "MIRÈIO"

A ROSE of song that tops the tree  
In sunny gardens over-sea,  
Where grows the golden fleur-de-lis,  
The myrtle, and  
In scented clusters, dewy wet,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

The blue Provençal violet,  
The land of lilting chansonette,  
The poets' land.

Like music swept from silver strings  
The pure sweet love the poet sings,  
And what though touched with sorrowings  
And grievous woes,  
Yet still the tender tale thereof  
Is dear all other themes above,  
A perfect song of perfect love ;  
For like the rose

That leans against the garden wall,  
Though on its petals raindrops fall  
And chill winds buffet, yet withal,  
When matched with this,  
Not all the shining lily spires  
Nor any scarlet poppy fires  
So satisfy the heart's desires ;  
And so love is.

## THE HILL PASTURE

**I**N silky balls beside the stream  
The pussy-willows stand,  
Where thick the yellow cowslips gleam  
Upon the reedy land.

## THE MIST

And up the hillside, green and steep,  
The lacing dogwood boughs  
In fleeting glimpses show the sheep  
Like blossoms as they browse.

The redbud trees are wrapped in rose,  
The hawthorn throbs and pales,  
And launched by every breeze that blows  
The elm seeds spread their sails.

They float like shining spangles bright  
Adown the sunny air,  
And cargoes sweet of sheer delight  
Unto my heart they bear.

In happy dreams I watch the flocks,  
While, like a lavish king,  
With golden key the day unlocks  
The treasures of the spring.

## THE MIST

**A**BOVE the bayou, softly bright  
With coronal of silver rays,  
Through rifting drifts of pearly haze  
And rings of rosy halo-light,  
Across the sweet October night  
The rising full-moon rode ;

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

And lifting airily its load  
Of leaf and fruit and tangled fret  
Of little twigs, while newly glowed  
Her perfect disk, a linden showed  
In graceful silhouette.

Sometimes the waxing moonbeams fell  
Athwart the river's brink and crossed  
Its still tide with their magic spell,  
Till all the trailing water-grass  
Glittered like traceries of frost  
Upon a pane of glass.

In veils of vapor, far away  
To east and west, the marshes lay ;  
A pallid wilderness, whereon  
Vague ferns and ghostly grasses grew,  
Tall moon-tipped rushes, and a few  
Weird water-willows, faint of hue,  
And sedges slim and wan.

Then presently, slow gathering through  
The gleaming air, like webs that blow  
At autumn time across the blue  
In fleecy garlands white as snow  
And light as any feather, so  
The mist hung quivering, wreath on wreath ;

## OCTOBER SONG

And gently, somewhere underneath,  
The river murmured low.

So spectral, yet so strangely fair,  
All nature softly swept from sight,  
Till soon there only lingered there  
The earth's eidolon, still and white ;  
Whence ever, through that shrouding air,  
Dissolving in the breathless night,  
Fine forces mounted, spirit-wise ;  
In shining wraiths I saw them pass,  
And essences of trees and grass  
Rise soul-like to the skies.

## OCTOBER SONG

**T**HE locust trees are hung with pods  
Of glossy russet-brown,  
And tawny leaves of sycamores  
Are swiftly drifting down.

Their purple clusters, over-ripe,  
The trailing wild-grapes show ;  
And frost-tipped woodbine clambers up  
From scarlet depths below.

Still clinging to the clover stalks  
Are blossoms, white and sweet ;

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

And pricked in tufted rows, the fields  
Are green with winter wheat.

On furrowed mold, where grew the corn,  
Pale, golden stubble stands ;  
And lingering blackbirds pipe and trill  
Through swampy meadow-lands.

Far, far above, within the blue,  
Half hid in lofty flight,  
A hawk sails slow, and sunward turns  
A breast of shining white.

The air is full of milkweed films,  
And floating thistle floss ;  
And busily the spiders spin  
Their silver nets across

The red-oak's tangled undergrowth  
Of lacing boughs, and string  
The yellow lindens, that the winds  
Are rudely pillaging.

And where the ruddy maples blaze  
Athwart the gusty air,  
It lifts their leaves like little flames,  
And puffs them everywhere.

## CONSCIENCE

But what if, loosed with fitful touch,  
The woodland doffs its gown ;  
What if the fallow hillside grass  
Grows slowly crisp and brown !

What matter that the truant sun  
Slips southward, day by day,  
And that, hard by, the winter waits  
To hood the skies in gray !

I'll find but deeper joy in this,  
The autumn's pageantry ;  
And sumac boughs are brighter far  
Than dark forebodings be.

## CONSCIENCE

AH, God ! Ah, God ! if we but knew  
What hosts of haunting griefs we stir,  
What sorrowing spectres will pursue  
The least ungentle acts we do,  
I think we would be patienter !

O throbbing heart and conscience, cease !  
Be still, be still, and give me peace !

How could I guess, how could I know  
That from such blighting words would grow

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Thought-harvests that could trouble so ?  
That in my heart sharp-bladed wrath  
Would reap such bitter aftermath ?

Had I not borne, and borne, and borne ?  
Was not my spirit overworn  
With ceaseless striving to repress ?  
Should blame fall if for one brief space  
Swift scorn gained place ?  
Must burdened wrong seek no redress ?  
— Yet, oh, all arguments how vain !  
The grief remains not any less.  
I only know the tears like rain  
Storm from my eyes ! and I would fain  
Endure again  
The hurt, the heartache, and the pain !  
Oh, rather all that old distress  
Than this most keen remorsefulness !

## EVENING DOWN THE “LONG DRIFT ”

**B**LUE as the forest far and dim  
Upon the vague horizon's rim,  
As softly shadowed as the green  
Rush-tasselled marshlands in between,  
Rose-tinctured as the light that lies



## DOWN THE "LONG DRIFT"

Within the tender evening skies,  
As golden as the afterglow  
That quivers up the west, and so  
As many colored as the tones  
That chase through changeful opal stones,  
    The river ripples by,  
        And I  
    Am floating into fairyland.

On either hand  
The pale, green-wanded willows stand  
    In feathery tufts whose shadows hide  
    Haunts where the shy wild-birds abide ;  
        And through the reeds  
The lush rose-mallow bushes lean,  
Where screened by burgeoned button-balls,  
    And tall wild-rice, the bittern feeds,  
    And, clasped in clinging water-weeds,  
White folded lily buds are seen,  
    And spikes of blazing cardinals,

That like inverted torches show  
    And burn and glow  
Down deep transparent pools and swirls,  
    Where soft as silk the river-moss  
    Spins slender threads of filmy floss  
Strung thick with little lucent seeds,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

While in and out and close across  
The fragile plantain-flower unfurls,  
And, thrusting through the dripping reeds,  
Star-worts, like tiny divers, toss  
Their hoards of blossom pearls.

Through dimpling deeps and eddy whirls,  
Far, far below,  
With fitful motion, swift and slow,  
The shining fishes come and go ;  
And all the limpid pools unfold  
Rare treasures shrined in sands of gold ;  
For so

While down the sheer clear stream I gaze,  
The tempered evening light betrays  
Sweet secrets, that the dazzling days  
With their bewildering fire and glow,  
And over-wealth of sun, withhold.

— Ah, gently, gently, gently blow,  
Sweet winds of heaven now ! for slow  
Upfloating from the dewy mold,  
The mist is rolled !  
O lightly, most divinely breathe,  
While yonder airy vapors sheathe  
The grassy marshes till they grow  
Too faint for any eye to know ;

## DOWN THE "LONG DRIFT"

And see ! like tissue veils that hold  
Fantastic river-genii bold,  
They rise, and rise, and twine and wreathe,  
And all the crystal stream enfold.

On, on through wonderland I go,  
And hear the silvery ebb and flow,  
And chiming cadence, soft and low,  
Of tiny tinkling waves that creep  
Like thousand little liquid flutes  
Among the twisted maple-roots ;  
While from the forest, still and deep,  
The night-owl calls,  
And distant wandering west-winds sweep  
With murmurous melody that falls  
As faintly as a song of sleep,  
With drowsy, dreamful intervals.

To some enchanted tune  
They croon  
Sweet lullabies ;  
While deeper, ever deeper grows  
The violet tinge upon the rose  
Within the water-skies ;  
Where rays of pearl and purple gleam  
From spangling scallop-shells, till soon  
Confusedly through all the stream

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

The stars are strewn ;  
And meshed in mocking greenery  
Of oak, and ash, and willow-tree,  
And trailing tangled grass, I see  
The little crescent moon.

— Oh, keen-felt joy and strange distress  
Of nature's perfect graciousness !  
I feel your sweetly poignant smart  
Within my heart,  
Till, wrought by beauty's sheer excess,  
Quick teardrops start beyond restraint,  
And all my very soul grows faint  
With loveliness.

## BAFFLED

**A**H ! would that I that baffling touch  
Might know,  
That oftentimes, as on a sounding-board,  
Strikes in my soul a strange elusive chord ;  
That, grieving me with unremembered woe,  
Yet hints as surely of some long ago  
Glad life and joy, in lavish wealth out-  
poured,  
Till all my waking memory beats accord,  
And throbs and strives to grasp and prove it  
so.

## EARTH VOICES

But ere its eager message I may learn,  
It sinks back fettered, with a nameless  
pain ;  
Yet evermore I know it must return  
With sense of truth that battles to be  
plain ;  
And in this subtle consciousness I yearn  
For that full knowledge which I seek in  
vain.

## EARTH VOICES

**O** NOT alone in human hearts that throb,  
Do grief and joy find voice ;  
For, even so, the fields and forests sob,  
And, even so, rejoice.

There is no certain, separating line  
That wisest men may trace ;  
Where sentience ceases no one may divine,  
Nor fix its bound or place.

For he who humbly, reverently bends  
To them the harkening ear,  
From trees and grasses straightway compre-  
hends  
Heart-tidings sweet and clear.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

The earth confides, as from a million lips,  
Its gladness and distress ;  
With everything he finds true fellowships,  
And kindred consciousness.

And knows that through the green leaves  
overhead,  
And through the silent clod,  
Through man and nature runs one golden  
thread  
That binds them both to God.

## A LITTLE CASCADE

**T**HE shining water slipped and slipped  
Adown the mossy rocks, and dripped  
From off fine fringing ferns in drops  
Of endless threaded pearls, that tipped  
The tasselled sedge and alder tops  
With flickering light ; and then it sipped  
A drowsy draught of sun, and dipped  
Beneath small, clustering buds, and hid  
Among lush marigolds, and slid  
Between tall, serried ranks of reeds,  
And stroked their little leaves, and lipped  
The flower-spangled jewel-weeds ;  
Then, speeding suddenly amid

## PERSISTENT

Faint shimmering spray, it lightly tripped  
Across white pebbly sand, and stripped  
The marsh-flower's gold, and fled, half-seen,  
A splash of silver through the green.

## PERSISTENT

**A** LITTLE picture haunts me ;  
It comes and comes again :  
It is a tiny bird's nest,  
All ragged from the rain.

It clings within a birch-tree  
Upon the moorland's edge,  
Between the barren branches,  
Above the swaying sedge.

The sky is gray behind it,  
And when the north winds blow,  
The birch-tree bends and shivers,  
And tosses to and fro.

I wonder, does it haunt them,  
The birds that flew away ?  
And will they come to seek it,  
Some sunny summer day ?

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

I wonder, does some redbreast  
Upon an orange bough,  
Still picture it as plainly  
As I can view it now ?

Ah, me ! I would forget it,  
Yet still, with sense of pain,  
I see this little bird's nest  
Within the driving rain.

## FLOOD-TIME ON THE MARSHES

**D**EAR marshes, by no hand of man  
Laboriously sown,  
My river clasps you in its arms  
And claims you for its own !  
It laughs, and laughs, and twinkles on  
Across the reedy soil,  
That heed of harvest vexes not,  
Nor need of any toil.

And in my heart I joy to know  
That safe within this spot  
Sweet nature reigns ; let other fields  
Bear bread, it matters not.  
— What matters aught of anything  
When one may drift away



## FLOOD-TIME ON THE MARSHES

Into the realms of all-delight,  
As I drift on to-day ?

Beneath the budded swamp-rose sprays  
The blue-eyed grasses stand,  
Submerged within a crystal world,  
A limpid wonderland ;  
And where the clustered sedges show  
Their silky-tasselled sheaves,  
The slender arrow-lily lifts  
Its quiver of green leaves.

The tiny waves lap softly past,  
So musical and round,  
I think they must be molded out  
Of sunshine and sweet sound.  
And here and there some little knoll,  
More lofty than the rest,  
Stands out above the happy tide,  
An island of the blest ;

Where fringed with lacy fronds of fern  
The grass grows rich and high,  
And flowering spider-worts have caught  
The color of the sky ;  
Where water-oaks are thickly strung  
With green and golden balls,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

And from tall tilting iris tips  
The wild canary calls.

— O gracious world ! I seem to feel  
A kinship with the trees ;  
I am first-cousin to the marsh,  
A sister to the breeze !  
My heartstrings tremble to its touch,  
In throbs supremely sweet,  
And through my pulses light and life  
And love divinely meet.

Far off, the sunbeams smite the woods,  
And pearly fleeces sail  
Athwart the light, and leave below  
A purple-shadowed trail ;  
The essence of the perfect June  
So subtly is distilled,  
Until my very soul of souls  
Is filled, and overfilled !

## JULY

**S**TILL lingering along the lanes  
A few late elder-blossoms blow,  
And here and there a wild-rose, though  
Within their veins

## AUTUMN COBWEBS

The crimson currents fainter grow,  
The pilgrim south-wind slowly drains  
Their fragile chalices, and slow  
The butterflies forsake the fanes  
Found fair a little while ago.  
Through all the fields, in orange stains  
The flaming milkweeds burn and glow  
Like blazing beacon-fires to show  
July beleaguers June ; and low  
O'erborne, her bloomy banner wanes,  
The while he gains  
Her last sweet citadel, — and so,  
Supreme in conquering splendor reigns !

## AUTUMN COBWEBS

THE grass is veiled with cobwebs,  
Their slender silken strands  
Are looped about the lilacs ;  
And on the fallow lands  
The seeded weeds and brambles  
With shining skeins are bound,  
And scarlet dogwood branches  
Are wound and interwound.

They wrap the thorny hedges,  
And shimmer in between

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

The fruited elder thickets  
With faint elusive sheen ;  
They hang across the wheat blades,  
And in the mellow light  
So fill the fields with splendor  
As gold or silver might.

The orchard boughs are distaffs  
Wherefrom the wind and sun  
Seem reeling filmy flosses  
Of which white threads are spun ;  
They trail from yellow cornstalks  
And wayside thistles, too,  
And fleecy tufts are drifting  
Far up into the blue.

And even as I watch them  
They brush across my lips,  
And float about my forehead  
And touch my finger-tips ;  
It is as if the Autumn,  
In sheer excess of grace,  
Would fondle me and hold me  
In her divine embrace.

## THE OLD GARDEN, IN SEPTEMBER

### THE OLD GARDEN, IN SEPTEMBER

**A** MORNING-GLORY vine has bound  
The leaning gate half-open, so  
    A ragged row  
Of vagrant poppy plants have found  
    The grassy path beyond its bar,  
And, capped in crumpled scarlet, go  
    A bold  
    Bright throng of truants, trooping far  
Adown the wayside's mossy mold,  
    And fallow ground,  
That bits of bloom have bossed and scrolled  
In lavish limning wide around,  
    And tufts of hardy fennel-star  
Have pricked and spangled white and gold.

And high above the paling fence,  
    And thrusting softly in between,  
    The sweet-syringa bushes lean,  
A mass of checkered shadows, whence,  
    With fluttering glints of silver sheen,  
    Half-hid, half-seen,  
    From curving canopies of green  
Close-lapping leaves and thickets dense,  
    White butterflies drift down and bring  
    The hint of spring,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

And mock the May-time's opulence  
And pride of pearly blossoming.

Red coral beads already string  
The unpruned sprays  
A score of briar-roses fling  
And trail across the tangled maze  
Of sunshine, shadow, winding ways,  
And pebbly paths where, fine as down,  
Soft new grass shows,  
That grows  
From seeds the sower South-wind blows  
Off unmown tassels, high and brown.

And since afar the summer goes,  
And lilies wane  
And fade and follow in her train,  
And, lapsed through lessened line, the  
last  
Long glory of the roses' reign  
Is overpast,  
Within the garden's kingdom close  
The year bestows  
A color coronet, that lies  
Upon the marigolds, and vies  
In richness with the regal guise  
Of starry crest and purple stain

## THE OLD GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

The first unfolding aster shows ;  
That proud and princely suzerain  
Of quaint beds edged with crimson  
    phlox,  
    And four o'clocks,  
And files of fluted pinks, and rows  
Of great tall tilting hollyhocks.

The pear-tree leaves are bronze and red ;  
    And overhead,  
Beyond the thick-set barberry hedge,  
    Beneath the vane-tipped gable peak,  
    A yellow streak  
Of burnished sunshine gilds the edge  
    And drips its amber lacquer through  
The lichens of a little ledge  
    Where, verging sharply into view  
    Against the small  
Deep-shadowed squares that pierce the  
    wall,  
    A pair of pigeons preen and coo :  
They turn, and toss, and softly call,  
Then poised with fanning wings outspread,  
With many a sidewise dip and glance,  
    And look askance,  
At last, launched boldly into flight,  
    Speed straight ahead —

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Athwart the blue, a pulsing, bright,  
Swift throb of white.

And loosed and sprinkled as they pass,  
    Upon the grass  
    In gusty storms the red leaves fall ;  
And here and there the way is tinged  
With late-sprung dandelions, and fringed  
    With hoary dusty-miller leaves,  
    And spicy gilly-flowers, and sheaves  
Of ribbon-grasses, stiff and tall ;  
While surging softly over all,  
The sweet September weather creeps  
    Along the paths in sparkling streams,  
And where its happy high-tide sweeps  
    In mellow deeps  
    Of warmth, and light, and limpid  
    beams,  
A lazy kitten basks and sleeps.

And close beside, bright dahlias rear  
    Along the walks  
A horde of nodding tops, and peer  
    Between the leaning sunflower stalks :  
Those veterans of the early year,  
That smitten now with age, and sear  
    In tattered garb of tawny hue,



## THE OLD GARDEN IN SEPTEMBER

Stand feebly swaying through the weeds,  
Whereon, in scattered showers, they  
strew

Thin sifted seeds  
From out the darkened disks they hold,  
And, shorn and rayless, idly swing,  
Nor longer sunward, as of old,  
Lift up in loyal worshipping ;  
— But pause a space ! for, by and by,  
From out the blue  
Far reaches of the autumn sky,  
With buoyant speed and eager wing,  
A feathered flock comes wheeling down,  
So circling in a rapid ring  
Till all at once, on every brown  
And withered head, with grace untold,  
In yellow fringe the finches cling,  
A halo light, a living crown,  
A very aureole of gold,  
Transmuting and transfiguring !

Through plummy grass the crickets whirl ;  
And ever, wavering in the breeze,  
Between the low-boughed pippin trees,  
In lacy films fine cobwebs stir,  
And swing, half-seen, their broideries ;  
Till suddenly some shaft of light

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Strikes out a single silver line

To shine

An instant, and then intertwine,

And fade,

And merge in dusky strands of  
shade,

The overhanging branches braid ;

So

To and fro,

Now bright,

Now quite

Slipped out of sight ;

Then presently a woven blur

Of swaying, silken gossamer.

— Ah, tempered sky, and bloomy things,

And scent, and song, and wafting wings,

All sweetest syllables were vain

To render plain

The garden's dreamy whisperings !

The tender beauty of the spot,

The nameless spell, — I know not what,

Nor have I skill in any way

To so convey

Those gracious secrets I would fain

Find art to say !

But in the sunshine, watching these

## PRESENTIMENT

Slight threads that loop the apple-trees,  
So, too, I weave this web of song,  
Whose tissue, touched by fancy's long  
Bright  
Wand of light,  
Is but the half-caught fitful sheen  
Through that unseen  
Close warp of love, forever bound  
And interwound,  
As fine as floss, yet strong as steel ;  
Whereof I feel  
Not any years that intervene,  
Nor any stress of space, may part  
Its golden ties, that lie between  
This old-time garden and my heart.

## PRESENTIMENT

**O**FTTIMES I feel, yet know not why,  
This haunting prescience stir in me :  
I know that when I come to die  
— It matters not where that may be,  
— Or near or far, on land or sea,  
An overpowering wish to lie  
Beneath the roof I loved so well,  
In that dear shelter wherein we,  
In life's sweet April, used to dwell,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Where first my baby lips drew breath,  
Oh, in the bitterness of death

    This wish will bring fresh agony !  
That hearth where now no fires are lit,  
My heart will break desiring it.

## THE EXILES

**B**ARE blackened boughs  
That seem to press  
    Low skies, storm-swept and pitiless,  
Must be the only roofs to house  
    Or shelter their distress.

They tread by night  
    Beneath the trees ;  
    Before them desert distances,  
Whereon the endless snows are white,  
    And endless tempests freeze.

Their eyes are bound,  
    And iron bands  
    Are heavy on their helpless hands  
Ordained to delve the barren ground  
    Of bleak, unlovely lands.

Week after week,  
    Across the snow

## IN MID-OCTOBER

And weary wastes, they wander so ;  
No human heart wherein to seek  
Surcease of any woe.

Forevermore  
Their footsteps wend  
Afar from hearth, and home, and friend ;  
Nor know they what grief hath in store  
Before the bitter end.

Whate'er their deeds,  
It matters not ;  
Their very names shall be forgot ;  
Their agony, their heartsick needs,  
And their forsaken lot.

## IN MID-OCTOBER

**T**HE dewy morning sky is pale  
Where, steeped in dazzling light,  
The southward-slipping sunbeams veil  
Its pearly depths from sight.

But in the north, more pure and deep  
Than ever summer knew,  
The sweet October heavens keep  
Their rich autumnal blue.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

The little clouds float out so clear,  
    Slow shredding in the breeze,  
I think none ever strayed so near  
    These lofty forest trees.

Along the smoky river's edge  
    Green marsh-moss thickly grows,  
And smart-weeds glisten in the sedge  
    Like coral, white and rose.

And ruby-bodied dragon-flies  
    In shining clusters pause,  
Or dart and sparkle, jewel-wise,  
    On wings of silver gauze,

Where tangled water-plants and grass  
    Come drifting round the reeds,  
To find fresh cargoes, as they pass,  
    Of shells and scarlet seeds.

Adown the current, through the moss,  
    The yellow willows show  
Like golden arras hung across  
    The water-world below.

Yet still the birch and maple trees  
    Have barely felt the frost,

## IN MID-OCTOBER

Nor hint of happy harmonies  
The blackbird notes have lost.

And pink wild-roses, here and there,  
Are blossoming anew,  
While through the prairies everywhere  
The violets are blue.

It is as if the aging year  
A second time has found  
Its childhood, whose first playthings here  
Lie scattered on the ground.

And with such rarest vernal spell  
It touches everything,  
Till tintured, too, I scarce can tell  
If this be fall or spring !

For if the April airs were sweet,  
These are not any less ;  
Nor was the May-time more replete  
With perfect blessedness.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

### PRESENT JOY

O HEART, beat swiftly ! that there may  
No least allotted part  
Of happiness elude thee ; nay,  
Seize quickly that thou canst, nor stay  
Too long in quest of greater, when  
The spring so surely wears away,  
The summer skies grow cold and gray,  
And chill night cometh after day,  
— Beat swifter, then,  
O heart !

For since fleet sorrow still pursues,  
All gladness to destroy ;  
Since wintry winds wait but to bruise  
And break the foolish flower whose  
Bright-petaled buds too late unfold ;  
Oh ! therefore no faint ray refuse  
Of warmth or light, but rather choose  
Each gleam to cherish, lest thou lose  
Thy little hold  
Of joy.

And if it so be given thee  
In anywise to taste  
The brimming crystal purity



## NOVEMBER MORNING

Of life's deep springs, not listlessly  
Let their clear stream go by, but speed  
To sip its sweets while sweet they be ;  
For slipping on they seek the sea,  
The years roll past, and presently  
There is no need  
To haste.

## NOVEMBER MORNING

**A**TINGLING, misty marvel  
Blew hither in the night,  
And now the little peach-trees  
Are clasped in frozen light.

On linden tips and maples  
An icy film is caught,  
With shining threads of cobwebs  
In pearly patterns wrought.

The autumn sun, in wonder,  
Is gayly peering through  
This crystal-tissued network  
Across the frosty blue.

The weather-vane shows silver  
Above the mossy leads

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

That glitter, brightly ice-glazed,  
In rare transparent reds.

And round the eaves are fringes  
Wherein the seven hues,  
That bar the summer rainbows,  
Congeal and interfuse.

Upon the walks the pebbles  
Are each a precious stone ;  
The grass is tasselled hoar-frost,  
The clover jewel-sown.

Such sparkle, sparkle, sparkle,  
In earth and sky and air,  
Oh ! can it be that darkness  
Is ever anywhere ?

## CHRISTMAS EVE IN THE CATHEDRAL

**A** THOUSAND tapers make the mid-  
night bright,  
And blaze about the carved cathedral  
choir,  
And touch the marble angels' wings with  
fire,

## CHRISTMAS CHANT

And fill their faces with a golden light ;  
So fair they are, in folded robes of white,  
It almost seems those parted lips suspire,  
Divinely yearning for the heart's desire,  
The marvel that shall glorify the night.

Then, all at once, from out the ancient  
tower,  
The bells peal forth ! and swelling over  
them  
The grand Te Deum magnifies the power  
Of Him the holy, born in Bethlehem ;  
— O dearest Child ! no gifts nor incense  
sweet,  
But my full heart, I offer at Thy feet.

## CHRISTMAS CHANT ROYAL TO THE KING OF KINGS

**W**HAT God hath wrought, long cen-  
turies ago,  
What man hath cherished in divinest lore,  
Chant, richly chant ! In stately chords and  
slow,  
Intone the marvel done this day of yore.  
Sing of the star that burned so strangely  
bright,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Of angel voices heard that hallowed night,  
When all the folding heavens, east and  
west,  
Betrayed the coming of earth's gracious  
Guest,  
And, steeped in prescient joyfulness, all  
things  
Did glorify a little Babe's behest.  
All hail to Him, the holy King of kings !

Yea ! sing how though unto the Child did go  
The wizard ones, to worship and adore,  
And lowly bending at His feet bestow  
The gold, and myrrh, and frankincense  
they bore ;  
How though high heaven, in starry splendor  
dight,  
Did homage to the promised Prince of light,  
Nathless, below, men idly slept, nor  
guessed  
The priceless gift of great Messiah blest ;  
Nor star, nor song, nor shining angel-wings  
That lordly presence anywise confessed !  
All hail to Him, the holy King of kings !

For so God chose from out a manger low  
The Light divine of all the world to pour ;

## CHRISTMAS CHANT

And so He willed His own dear Son should  
go

In mortal guise from out that stable door ;  
Yet did He gird Him with such matchless  
might

'Gainst death, and wrong, and evilness to  
smite,

That for all souls by sieging sins opprest,  
He made the certain citadel of rest.

What need, indeed, of earthly blazonings,  
Of pomp, of purple, or of regal crest ?

All hail to Him, the holy King of kings !

The Nazarene, reviled, acquaint with woe,  
Who all our mortal garb of sorrow wore ;  
Who meekly proved how that He loved us so,  
Nor shame, nor scorn, nor grievous death  
forbore ;

The risen Monarch, from before whose sight  
All powers of evil flee in sore affright ;

The piteous Lord, whose all-forgiving  
breast

Hath boundless bounty both for worst  
and best ;

The God majestic, whence, eternal, springs  
All glory, grace, and light ineffablest.

All hail to Him, the holy King of kings !

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Aye ! though the years to olden cycles grow,  
Yet still, with newborn gladness, o'er and  
o'er  
Men learn the lesson of the Christ, and so  
Shall all the ages hence forevermore ;  
Forevermore shall earth His praise recite,  
And sound His greatness unto heaven's  
height ;  
Still sinful souls, by His great love  
caressed,  
Shall fain forego each God-forbidden  
quest,  
And seek the ceaseless shelter that He brings  
The hurt, the helpless, and the heart dis-  
tressed.  
All hail to Him, the holy King of kings !

### *Envoy*

And so this day, though loosed in flurried  
flight  
The spangling snows enwrap the world in  
white,  
Let every hearth with holly-boughs be drest,  
This feast's fair honor freshly to attest ;  
Let trolls be trolled, and every bell that rings  
With chiming cadence still the theme invest :  
All hail to Him, the holy King of kings !

## THE MARSH MIST

### THE MARSH MIST

**T**HE sun slipped red behind the haze  
Of distant forest boughs, that raise  
In softened lines along the west,  
    A leafy crest.  
The marshy prairie-land became  
A shining, many-colored maze ;  
A tracery of gold and flame ;  
    An airy blaze  
Of rosy radiance without name !  
Of ruddy fire that crept,  
    And swept,  
Through all the lacing water-ways.

— Then, by-and-by,  
Beyond the rushes, lush and high,  
The June sunset grew overpast,  
The little limpid pools, that lie  
Among the sedges, faintly glassed  
    The last  
Pale afterglow, whose yellow rays  
Flared up the dusky, western sky.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

In tangled lines of silver sheen  
    The long grass leant ;  
    And breeze-tossed birches swayed and bent  
Above tall weeds and reeds, and green  
Wild rice and mosses, where, half-seen,  
Red lilies glowed, and, idly spent,  
    The wandering night-wind lightly went.

Sharp-cut against the eastern blue,  
The deep green forest deeper grew ;  
    The leaves stirred, for a little space ;  
        Then full and near,  
Within the tender violet skies,  
The moon rode up in gracious guise ;  
And drifting darkly, level-wise,  
With wings outspread in lazy grace,  
        Across her face,  
A wild crane voyaged slowly through  
    The clear,  
Sweet depths of dewy atmosphere.

So fell the night ; hushed, slumber-bound ;  
    Not any sound  
In all that wilderness was made ;  
Nor did a single bird invade  
The utter silence, wide and deep,  
Therein the lowland lay asleep.



## THE MARSH MIST

Between the faintly spangling stars,  
    In silver bars,  
The mellow moonlight beamed and streamed ;  
And then — divinely visible — it seemed  
    The marshes dreamed !  
In vaporous wreaths and films unwound  
    Above the ground,  
A strange white vision floated round !

The grass grew hoary ; every blade  
Was rich with rime, that overlaid,  
    In drifts of misty flakes, the frets  
    Of countless, quivering spider-nets ;  
While mocking, frosty filagrees  
    Wrapped all the trees ;  
The reeds took on a sudden chill ;  
    An icy fringe began to freeze  
Upon the tasselled sedge ; — until,  
    Dissolving slow, with dreamful ease,  
That wintry phantasy had merged  
    (But, ah, so subtly, silently !)  
To mimic waves, that swept and surged,  
    Till all the marshes seemed to be  
    A boundless sea,  
In whose vague depths long grasses trailed,  
    Touched out by bright,  
    Swift sparks of phosphorescent light,  
Where gleaming fire-flies flashed and paled.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

So, to and fro, with restless sweep,  
    Borne back and forth by ceaseless swells,  
The tide rolled in ; and here and there  
    Laid bare,  
Within its tossing, billowy deep,  
    The pink marsh-roses shone like shells.

Through lingering change of lessened light,  
    Within the west,  
The moon went waning out of sight ;  
    The little stars glowed half confessed ;  
Across the sedge the eastern gray  
Verged surely onward into day ;  
    The darkness hovered eerily ;  
    A chilling damp the air oppressed ;

— Then freshly, gently as may be,  
Sweet hints of dawning came to fill  
    All things with hushed serenity.  
The misty surge grew calm and still ;  
    The marshes dreamed of perfect rest.

— But suddenly  
A reed-bird piped within its nest !  
And borne with faint presaging thrill,  
From out the margin of the dim  
    Horizon's rim,

## THE MARSH MIST

With cleaving motion from below,  
Some dawn-blown current's underflow  
Ran rippling through that airy sea ;  
And, changed and channelled by such wide  
    Disturbing tide,  
Impalpably it seemed to grow  
More fleecy white, to break and rift,  
And, fanned by viewless force, to lift,  
    — And drift, — and drift, —  
To wander higher, — and more high,  
    — And so,  
Within the sunny summer sky,  
A morning cloud began to blow.

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

### ENVOY

**I**F I had lived among the mountain peaks,  
Through whose fine air  
And purest ether, crystalline and rare,  
The voice of nature most divinely speaks ;  
Where far and free the winds of heaven  
blow,

And from below  
Not any mist nor valley vapor mars  
The little stars ;  
If viewing all things from such lofty height,  
Might it not then been given me to know  
All things more truly, and through keener  
sight ?

And so,  
From off the mountains could I not have  
caught  
Some semblance of their majesty, and  
wrought  
More high and strong  
In song ?

Or had some fate decreed for me to dwell  
Beside the tide  
Of the great ocean, fathomless and wide,

## ENVOY

Whose mighty billows' ceaseless ebb and  
swell

Tell ever of that grand sublimity

Within the sea,

Of storms that gather, and white gulls that  
cry

From out the sky ;

If listening daily to the surges break

Along the shining sand, tumultuously,

Might not some echo of their voice awake

In me ?

Might not my song some subtler essence win,

And would not something, like the sea,  
therein

More deep and clear

Appear ?

— And yet I know not were it loss or gain

Away from these

My native hills, and stream and forest  
trees,

And level fields of richly-growing grain :

I cannot tell if they my song have filled,

Or something stilled,

Nor all that I have lacked, or they have  
lent ;

But am content,

## ONE WAY TO THE WOODS

Nay, more, thrice happy, if it be that they  
    So bid me sing that any pulse is thrilled  
With hint of lightest summer wind, whose  
    play  
        Has spilled  
The honey from the least sweet wild-rose  
    vine ;  
Or if, faint echoing up from any line,  
    Some meadow bird  
        Is heard.

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