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When Hearts Are Trumps

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Poems

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KINGS & QUEENS & BOWERS

The Perfect Face

The Graces, on a summer day,
Grew serious for a moment; yea,
They thought in rivalry to trace
The outline of a perfect face.

Each used a rosebud for a brush,
And, while it glowed with sunset's blush,
Each painted on the evening sky,
And each a star used for the eye.

They finished. Each a curtaining cloud
Drew back, and each exclaimed aloud:
"Behold, we three have drawn the same,
From the same model!" Ah, her name?

I know. I saw the pictures grow.
I saw them falter, fade, and go.
I know the model. Oft she lures
My heart. The face, my sweet, was yours.

The Moonlight Sonata

The notes still float upon the air,
Just as they did that night.
I see the old piano there,—
Oh, that again I might!

Her young voice haunts my eager ear;
Her hair in the candle-light
Still seems an aureole,—a tear
Is my spectroscope to-night.

I hear her trembling tell me "No,"
And I know that she answered right
But I throw a kiss to the stars, and though
She be wed she will dream to-night.

GLUE WILL BE APPLIED TO THIS AREA

The Kiss

Over the green fields, over the snow,
Something I send thee, something I throw.
No one can guess it; no one can know.

Light as a feather, quick as the eye;
Thin as a sunbeam, deep as the sky;
Worthless, but something a queen could not buy.

Ah, you have caught it, love! How do I know?
Sweet, there are secrets lost ages ago.
Lovers learn all of them. Smile not,—'tis so.

The Bride

Before her mirror, robed in spotless white,
She stands and, wondering, looks at her own face,
Amazed at its new loveliness and grace.
Smiling and blushing at the pretty sight,
So fraught is she with innocent delight,
She feels the tender thrill of his embrace
Crushing her lilies into flowery lace;
Then sighs and starts, even as though from fright.

Then fleets before her eyes the happy past;
She turns from it with petulant disdain,
And tries to read the future,—but in vain.
Blank are its pages from the first to last.
She hears faint music, smiles, and leaves the room
Just as one rosebud more bursts into bloom.

A Problem

Give you a problem for your midnight toil,—
    One you can study till your hair is white
    And never solve and never guess aright,
Although you burn to dregs your midnight oil?
O Sage, I give one that will make you moil.
    Just take one weakling little woman's heart.
    Prepare your patience, furbish up your art.
How now? Did I not see you then recoil?

Tell me how many times it has known pain;
    Tell me what thing will make it feel delight;
Tell me when it is modest, when 'tis vain;
    Tell me when it is wrong and when 'tis right:
But tell me this, all other things above,—
Can it feel, Sage, the thing that man calls "Love"?

My Lady, You Blushed

My lady, you blushed.
Was my love a surprise?
How quickly they hushed!

A curl of yours brushed
All else from my eyes.
My lady, you blushed.

You say that I gushed,
And they all heard my sighs?
How quickly they hushed!

Your roses were crushed;
N'importe wherefores and whys.
My lady, you blushed.

In The Waltz

An echo from a seaside hop

Light as the waves foaming white on the bar,
We dance to the mandolin, harp, and guitar;
One, two, three, waltzing we glide round the room,—
Would you were bride, and ah, would I were groom!

On all the seashore none fairer than you;
What but adore you could any one do?
Cheeks like the pink of an evening sky,
Eyes that might bid a man laughingly die.

Ears like the shells from the Indian sea,
Teeth like white buds on a young apple-tree,
Throat like a lily bent heavy with dew,
Arms just as white and as lily-like too.

Lips that would tempt—ah! you'll pardon me now,
Being so near them suggests, you'll allow,
That the happiest thing e'er a mortal could do,
Would be to be ever thus waltzing with you.

Please Return

Now, all you pretty maids in town,
    Take heed of my sad plight.
I've lost a kiss; I'll give a crown
    To get it back to-night.

I threw it, poet-like, I own,
    Up to a silvery star;
I must confess I might have known
    I could not throw so far.

But, oh, surprise! It circled round,
    And sank as though 't were laden
With love—when almost to the ground
    'T was caught by some young maiden.

And that young maid I wish to find.
    I've lost a kiss, alack!
It is not hers. She'll not be kind
    Unless she give it back.

JOKERS

Theft

The moonlight steals around the pine;
Star-eyes steal radiance from thine.

Low music steals upon the ear;
Can there be theft when thou art near?

I steel my heart for fear of this,—
I steel my heart and steal a kiss.

I'd steal the sacramental wine
If it were sweet as kiss of thine!

Before Her Mirror

I pause before her mirror and reflect
(That's what the mirror does, I take it, too);
Reflect how little it has known neglect,
And think, "O mirror, would that I were you."

She has no secrets that you do not know,
You and yon crescent box of poudre de rose.
And even these long curling irons can show
Much evidence of use, yet naught disclose.

Here, when she smiles, *you* know it is her teeth
She's putting to the test ere she depart
For the gay revel on the lawn beneath,
Or moonlight ramble that may break a heart.

Here she may blush, until she, red as wine,
Knows that her triumphs have not ceased to be.
Here, when she frowns, and looks still more divine,
You know, wise mirror, that she thinks of me.

At Old Point Comfort

You don't think of dresses, or ducats, or dukes;
You don't care for chaperone's rigid rebukes;
    It's just simply grand,
    To lie there on the sand,
        Down at the beach,—
        If a man's within reach.

Some like the moonlight and some like the sun,
Some flirt in earnest and some flirt in fun;
    It's worth all the rash,
    Reckless spending of cash,
    All the dresses you spoil,
    All the tempers you roil,
        Down at the beach,—
        If a man's within reach.

It's better than sleigh-rides, cotillons, or teas,
It makes the dull Patriarch's knickerbocked knees
    Shake in the dance,
    And then one has a chance,
    If one's pretty and smart,
    With a tongue not too tart,
    Of presenting papaw
    With a new son-in-law,
        Down at the beach,—
        If a man's within reach.

A Drop Too Much

I praised her hair, I praised her lips,
She looked up with surprise;
I bowed to kiss her finger-tips,
And then she dropped her eyes.

I said love ruled the world; that I
Adored her; called her "Nan."
She merely looked a little shy,
And then she dropped her fan.

I took the hint, and at her feet
I knelt—yes, quite absurd;
But oh, my fond heart wildly beat
To hear her drop a word.

I told her all: my talents few,
My direful lack of pelf.
(We all have erred.) She said "Adieu,"
And then dropped me myself.