

Three Earth-Notes

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I.—EVEN-TIDE

WITHIN a narrow coombe betwixt dark hills
That greenly rise, steep-browed, on either hand,
A little pausing, as the sunset fills
With silence this lone spot in a fair land—
A little lingering on yielding sand,
That, from the sea-ebb's tiny streams and rills,
Is soft and pliant 'neath a white sky spanned
With fleecy clouds—the sleepy birds' last trills
On darkening tree-tops—and the clay is dead:
The sun-light all is faded from the skies,
And, as the star-light to the night is wed,
Are hushed the notes of all the melodies
That brought bright tears into thy brighter eyes.
All songs are sung, and all the legends said;
For Day is joyous, but the Night is wise,
And silence reigns over the path we tread.
Darkness enfolds the dawn, for all the day is sped.

II.—NIGHT

O million worlds that flash and roll and beam!
O silent sea with voiceless longing dumb!
O pines whose odour mingles in my dream
Of nations dead, of empires yet to come!
O nightingales, white-voiced! O murmured hum
From the deep grass! O silver winding stream
That over the white pebbles sings! O gum
That floods with life the trees!—What wide eyes' gleam
Touched all with life? The nightingale may sing,
The stars roll on to destiny, the sea
Still throb in eager pain, while Night doth bring
The words of life together—but for me
The wrappings of the Night hold still in fee,

In songs that thrill with joy, in words that sting,
A song of life—of life forever free
To scan the skies; with ever-rising wing
To merge into the wide, to pierce the outer ring.

III.—THE-SONG

Deep drunken of the morn methought I lay,
Nor knew of light till half the day was gone;
But passing footsteps led my thoughts away,
The murmur of strong voices drew me on.
Then heard I, "*Hard the armour is to don.*
And hard to wear all through the burning day,
But, at the end, the crown is set upon
His head, who laughed when all the world cried 'stay!' "
Straightway I followed. In the clay's fierce gold
I gazed enraptured down the roadway wide,
Whence came the echo of the song that rolled
In silver cadences. With swinging stride
I fast pursued the singer in my pride,
To know the song whose echo e'en could hold
Me thrall'd, and many there I passed had died
In the pursuit. But still the song is trolled,
And still will I pursue, until the tale be told.