

Young Summer

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Originally published in the 26 May 1906 issue of *The Agnostic Journal*; London, England, page 333.

TAKE we now the onward path, joyous 'neath the summer sun,
For the world is wide around us, and the battle almost won:
Ride we hard, for neck to neck, our panting steeds press on for home,
Where the spring is always tender, where there laughs the light sea-foam.

The hawthorn flings its scented love across the path we ride,
The morass and the meadow glow in beauty side by side:
The leafy elms entent us with a roof that changes oft
From the passion-depth of summer's hue to leaves light-edged and soft.

Oh, we pass the winding river, and a thousand swelling hills,
And we hear the brooklets' gossip, and the murmur-haunted rills;
And the bees are in clover, and the speedwell in the shade
Grows pale in fading beauty, of the sunlight all afraid.

Life and love have drawn us onward; on the open road we fare,
And the mighty hills grow taller, and we linger here and there
To catch the breath of panting day, hot-breathed beneath the sun,—
And the world spreads wide around us, and the battle's almost won!

The sun-light brings the thrush's song; the hidden cuckoo's call:
The spring's white veil is cast aside, life enters love's own hall,
The sea's faint murmur floats across the smoothly-sloping hills,
And tender Zephyrs stir to smile the silver-hearted rills.

No stay we make, but hasten on unto the sun-lit goal;
The day's hot breath brings echoes from the summer's mystic soul.
We ride beneath pink chestnut-boughs, and white, entwined with may,
Domes temples, where the bird rejoice, and where the breezes play.

All eagerly we hasten on: the summer-dawn has stirred
To life renewed the mother-earth, and, ah! we two have heard
A song of life forever young,—of pulses never stilled,—
The endless life, the endless song, wherewith the earth is filled.

Ah, trace we still the onward path,—stay to, nor break the spell
That holds as all enthralled by hill, and brake, and steam, and well,—

For us young Summers' feast is spread, for us the earth is green,
For us a thousand colours mingle in the summer-sheen.

And love and life and beauty draw us onward, and we go
With eyes and hearts attuned to earth, with glances all aglow.
And never may we lose the scent that came with early May,
For we have lived and loved and known the meaning of the day.