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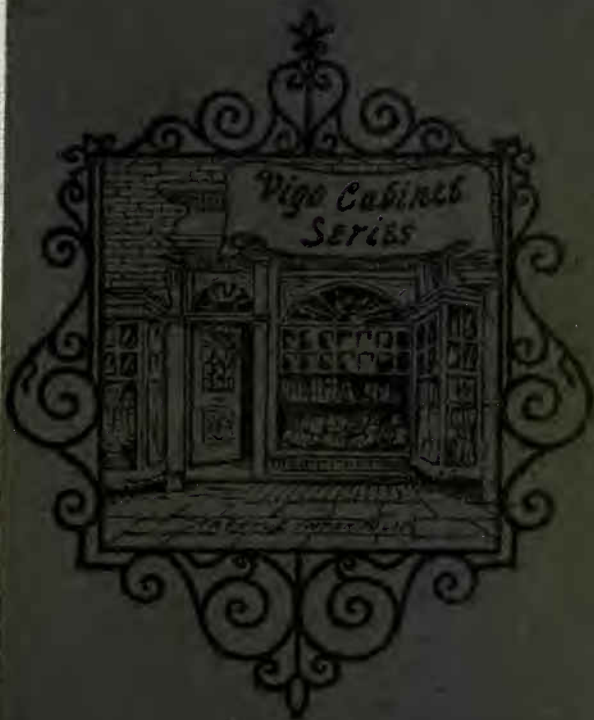
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The burden of love

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Burden of Love
Elizabeth Gibson



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"The resolution of the Institute was that (see page 20), in re-
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likely to be of any use to you, we shall be glad to do so. It is
impossible, however, that the work of the Institute should be
entirely neglected."—*George Bernard Shaw*.

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1st

THE BURDEN OF LOVE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

A CHRISTMAS GARLAND

THE BOOK OF THE BELOVED

THE EVANGEL OF JOY

THE
BURDEN OF LOVE

BY
ELIZABETH GIBSON

LONDON
ELKIN MATHEWS, VIGO STREET
1902



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To J. P. G. AND W. W. G.

SOME of the verses in this book appeared first in *Literature*, *The Dome*, *The Speaker*, *Chambers's Journal*, *The Argosy*, *The Outlook*, *The Week's Survey*, *Madame*, and *The Lady's Realm*.

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The Burden

"I LOVE thee," breathes the greenwood tree
Unto the breeze in ecstasy.

"I love thee," cries the growing grain
To the sweet mercy of the rain.

"I love thee," sighs the day sore-spent
To night, in fulness of content.

"I love thee," sobs the faithful wave,
Returning to the lonely cave.

"I love thee," evermore I cry;
But only cold night-winds reply.

The Birth of Love

IN a lightning flash, with a noise of thunder,
New worlds are born while the old worlds sleep;
New voids yawn under, new skies stream over—
The Spirit moves on the face of the deep.

With wreck and havoc and great dismaying,
With fetters shattered, with sorrows seven,
With pang and throes of the great Earth-mother,
A new star shines in unclouded heaven.

“Come forth into the Night”

COME forth into the night,
Beloved! See
The myriad starry flashing spheres alight
For thee and me!

For us alone the world
Was duly planned,
The Rose-of-Beauty's secret bud unfurled
(Ah, sweet, thy hand!)

Some festival on high
Calm Destiny
In silence holds through these rapt hours while I
Am one with thee.

“ COME FORTH INTO THE NIGHT ”

Strange melodies the wind's
Hand quickeneth,
Nor any forest unresponsive finds,
(Ah, sweet, thy breath !)

The moon upon the sea
A dream of bliss
Bestows, and all her waves thrill visibly.
(Ah, sweet, thy kiss !)

Night folds released day—
His cherished guest—
In tender arms in Love's immortal way.
(Ah, sweet, thy breast !)

The Changing Skies

SHAPE follows cloudy shape across the sky;
In crystal seas float islands of delight;
Gold turrets guard the snow-clad mountain
height;

Here calm the folded flocks of evening lie;
There rosy billows heave, and, breaking, sigh;
See, crimson squadrons marshal in the night;
Archangels meet, their falchions flashing bright;
Pale wanderers' lamps the midnight glorify.

In life's wide sky dream follows dream of thee:
The wild majestic pageant passes on—
Abodes, defences, warriors, flocks, fair seas.
Moods come and go: mould thou my destiny,
Thou who abidest when the dreams are gone—
My strength, my home, my glory, and my peace.

Saint Genevieve

WHOSE hand may pluck fresh flowers, O shep-
herdess,

Your garland to renew ?

“ Only his hand who never gathered earthliness,
Or aught save dew.”

Whose crook may guard your flock when you
lie down

Beneath the noon to rest ?

“ His crook, maybe, who never in the chaffering
town

Has been a guest.”

Whose feet may do your bidding on the wold

Day after happy day ?

SAINT GENEVIEVE

“ His feet who never left the plough to seek for
gold,
Nor ever may.”

Whose eyes may search the night-gloom far and
near,
Wolves from the fold to keep?
“ His eyes who never made a woman shed a tear,
An infant weep.”

Your speech is passing strange to understand,
Your threshold hard to cross.
“ Silver and gold you proffer with unsparing
hand:
Take back your dross.”

At a Bridal

I SHALL be loved to-night: the waves will wind
Strong arms around me, and I shall not know
Thou liest in my lord's arms folded low.
The kindly spray my yearning eyes will blind,
And so I shall not see love's roses blow
In thy fair face what time my lord doth speak
His heart's dear vow. I shall on either cheek
Be kissed by laughing waves; the waters' flow
With soft caress will soothe and satisfy.
What need to wait for age with lingering pain
And torture slow of unfulfilled desire
To rack and waste my body? Clear-souled, ay,
Full-limbed and willing, death's calm rest I gain,
And quench in mid-sea love's consuming fire.

A Song

SMILES for the world and laughter, but for thee
Tears and my griefs and need of sympathy !

Toil all day long without a pause for rest—
Slumber at night upon thy homing breast !

Weaving of veils to hide from curious eyes
The spirit and its sevenfold mysteries :

Communion sweet with *thee*, and ne'er a bar
To sever our betrothèd souls afar.

Except Thou Bless Me

I MUST be blessed of thee :

The setting sun

Day's labour glorifies : my love has won

New kingdoms for thine empire, realms beyond
the sea—

What crown for me ?

I must be kissed of thee :

The parchèd shore

The cool returning tide craves evermore :

At length, at length my longing ends in ecstasy,
My wave, of thee.

EXCEPT THOU BLESS ME

I must be loved of thee :

Tired day in night

Reposes : spent with sound and blind with light,

I shelter 'neath thy wings, O soul of sympathy—

Find room for me !

I must be lost in thee :

Who shall recall

The several drops of rain that singly fall

And in the ocean mingle ? And from thy life's sea

Who shall draw me ?

The Song

If I should sing a song for lovers true,
My heart would be the happiest on the earth ;
Dews from the day's adorning I would steal ;
And from the merry skylark borrow mirth ;
From the fleet rainbow capture many a hue ;
Seize from the thunder's peal

Rude strength, and from the world-encircling
storm

Imperishable force ; glean with the wind
Whereso it gleaneth through the universe ;
The footsteps of the glad showers tread behind,
To reap heaven's kisses on earth's chastest form ;
Gather into my verse

THE SONG

All these, and such strange spoils as spirits bring
Who pierce beyond the stars; who through
mid-sea

At noonday sweep, and reach the shining floor;
Who ride thought's wingèd steeds in questing
free.

Alas, the heart hold all, but cannot sing
Its overflowing store!

Hope and Love

To all the several doors of life Hope came ;
And, knocking low, he craved with suppliant
mien

A little comfort that poor hands might glean ;
A tract of moorland that his skill might tame,
And sow with joys ; a plot where he could frame
A dwelling. To the garden of the queen
Love led him. Into mysteries unseen,
Undreamed, he passed through wide-flung gates
of flame.

O queen, what service wilt thou claim from hands
Made strong by thy sweet touch ? What song
shall rise

HOPE AND LOVE

From lips unsealed by kiss of thine? Or where
Shall speed my new-sprung wings above thy
lands?

My willing feet thy vintage tread; my eyes
Seek thee strange treasure in the sea and air.'

The Gleaners

GLEAN ye for ever from the rude world's face
The lingering sorrows harvesters of care
And death and pain and sin have left behind,
O toilers with the sun and rain and wind :
Change them to wine of joy and flame of prayer,
To bread of life and sheltering leaves of grace.

Warm be your hearths with glow of labour's fire ;
Empty your hands of husks of earthliness ;
Winged be your souls to reach beyond the veil ;
If song be spent, if skill or courage fail,
Kinship with nature ease your loneliness ;
Peace nerve the willing feet that never tire !

Ora Pro Nobis

A Boy.

I DREAMED last night a cursèd thing—
A deathly thought without a name.
“ Turn, son, to me, and thy dark shame
Shall perish in a holy flame,
Nor any evil bring.”

A Wife.

Sweet Mary Mother, day and night
For one unborn my young tears flow ;
I tremble at an unknown woe.
“ Thy babe may be a Christ—a glow
To set the world alight.”

ORA PRO NOBIS

A Priest.

I stricken lie upon the sod :
The weak have sought my steps with tears ;
My words were comfort in their ears.
“ Shall one swift moment stain thy years
Of fruitful toil for God ? ”

A Mourner.

My life is rent with sorrows nine
That leapt in youth through laughing ways :
I travail to the end of days.
“ On Calvary's lone sorrow gaze,
And lose thy griefs in mine.”

The Cry of the Shore

LIFE'S ceaseless tides have swept across my
breast,

Each after each, and still must ebb and flow.
The tides of work and sleep and care I know ;
But who art thou, O passionate unrest,
That o'er my tranquil waterway with crest
Of whelming foam dost triumph, till below
Drowned lie the caves deserted long ago
Of venturous waves, and topmost cliffs are blest ?
Thou wilt recede, Belovèd—who can stay
The course of Time and all he ordereth ?—
I shall again lie open to the skies
Parched, bare, and yearning ; lesser tides will
sway
My being ; but thy hand, thy voice, thy breath,
From undertones of memory will rise.

The Harp

You came and wandered through the ancient
house,

Oft lingering by relics strange or fair ;

Till, chancing on a shadowy recess,

You paused to rest, and softly slumbered there,

You dreamed of song. And, lo, when you awoke,

Among a medley of forgotten things

You saw a time-worn harp neglected stand,

And, musing, drew your hand across the strings—

The strings yet quiver with the melody :

You sang, and evermore the strains resound.

Of the poor instrument you thrilled of late

In all your thought is any memory found ?

THE HARP

You woke to love and joy the lonely life
That waited songless through unnumbered days.
(Was my heart fashioned for Love's harmonies?
Surely some Master wrought it for his praise.)

I wait with trembling joy till you return :
Each wandering zephyr stirs that heavenly
 strain
In broken fragments. Ah, inspirer, come !
Your touch the perfect song will bring again.

Song of the River to the City

THOU art the city, I the fostering stream
That all about thy towered greatness flows.
Thou doest, and I live, O royal one !
Claim such dumb service of me as thou wilt ;
Send forth thine argosies upon my breast,
Bearing the rich creations of thy thought
In plenteous wise, to gladden alien shores.
Lade in far realms the garnered wealth of spoils
They yield thee ; and my waves shall laugh and
 kiss
Thy carvels as I speed them to their port.

Look from thy heights at sundown on my face,
And in that magic mirror see outspread,

SONG OF THE RIVER TO THE CITY

Glowing in deeper shades, in softer tones,
Yet quivering often with the rippling wind,
Thy towers of strength, thy palaces of joy—
My mimic tribute to thy majesty.

Give me thy dead ; my bosom is full-wide,
Mine arms cling closely ; to oblivion's sea,
With tender lapping song, and sweetest dirge,
I'll bear thy strange, still freights—the seeing
souls

Who flee the arrows of the cruel world
In glorious hazard for the grace of God.

A Singer

You came—a god—across the thirsty plain :
Lo, all the toil-worn earth grew young again.

You sang: a dryad leapt from every tree
To drink the rapture of your melody.

You piped: and in the shady woodland ways
The nymphs and satyrs danced in woven maze.

You passed: each tree its lonely secret keeps,
Yet in the flowing stream your music sleeps.

Release

WITH eager eyes I look across the plain
Where long I toiled; but now another wields
My tools, and, at the long day's darkening close,
Thrills with my lute the silence of the fields.

I shall go forth ere long as never yet
On fell and wold, on mountain and o'er sea;
Pierce through the night; in ocean's chambers
 roam;
And lift the morning's veil of mystery.

No feet to weary, and no hands to tire;
No eyes to fail, no faltering voice to mourn;
But free, free, free, by God at length released,
My soul shall through the spacious skies be
 borne.

A Lover's Longing

Love, I would be alone with thee at dawn
Afar upon the sea's tempestuous breast,
While hosts of light with dusky troops contest
The domination of the waking world,
Till by triumphant morn the night is hurled
From earth's high crest,
And we into the splendour of the day are drawn.

Love, I would be alone with thee at night
Beneath the lofty, overarching sky,
While, one by one, God's hand all silently
Unveils the trembling stars, and bids them shine
In their eternal purity divine,
Supreme on high,
Till our souls cast their shrouding, and burn
bright.

A LOVER'S LONGING

Love, I would be alone with thee at noon
Deep in the heart of some wild forest, where
From the great marriage of the earth and air
The myriad buds are born on stem and bough:
I would not dread to ask from thee, nor thou,
Sweetheart, to spare
Ungrudgingly to me love's greatest boon.

*

A Vision of Palestine

IN my chamber wan grey light
Drives the thought of sleep to flight:
Mary, hastening morn's delay, *
Opens wide her gate of day.

On the moor at noon I lie,
Gazing through the open sky.
Where the maids their visions tell
Mary lingers by the well.

Flocks are folded into peace;
All the sounds of labour cease;

A VISION OF PALESTINE

In the blue the pale stars steal :
Mary spreads the evening meal.

.

Down the broken ladder—Time,
From thy legend-shadowed clime,
By thy sweet virginity,
Mary, breathe a prayer for me.

Love's Nearness

Your eyes meet mine—a surging throng between:

Our kindred spirits mingle all-unseen.

Pulse unto pulse, cry answers unto cry,
When comrade soul to comrade soul draws nigh.

Thoughts plead and grant without the need of
speech:

Each hears song quiver in the heart of each.

And, though your arms no trembling form
enfold,

My life is sheltered from the storm and cold.

At Last

You promised life, O Love, but naught I see
Save this blind shade in mocking splendour
dressed.

Lift back, lift back the fragrant turf for me,
For I am very weary, and would rest.

Of hopes you build a palace in the cloud
For one who soon shall lie at peace below.
Your happy music sounds my praises loud,
While softly through the quiet vale I go.

Let be, let be : the clouds unheeded pass ;
The leaves unnoted flutter from the trees ;
Who marks the withered blade among the grass ?
Let be, let be : my soul would fade as these.

AT LAST

You whispered " Rose of roses ! " once ; but now
You would not know me if you saw my face :
My blossoms all to garland Death's calm brow
Are gathered gently in a viewless place.

If you cry " Come ! " what will the answer be ?
Pain clinging closer than warm kisses pressed,
A woodland sigh, a wind from sorrow's sea,
A quenchless hunger in the lonely breast.

Let be. The priest at morn and even cries :
" Is any passing soul a-need of me ? "
Shall they at any mortal call arise
Who drift undreaming to eternity ?

The Blessed Vision

WHAT gleaming circlet on thy brow
More bright than star-set crown appears ?
"No queen am I, that thou shouldst bow ;
I wear the singer's crown of tears."

Such flowers in all our meadow-lands
Of sun and rain have never blown
As those thou holdest in thy hands.
"They bloomed where many joys were strown."

No mortal sheen is on thy hair,
That burns from brown to silver flame.
"The helpless left their kisses there,
And thus the silver glory came."

THE BLESSED VISION

See, see, the snows beneath thy feet
Melt into streams that lave the earth.
“Where wintry waste and pity meet,
Full many a trembling hope has birth.”

Thine eyes are wells of tenderness,
(Dear Lord! was ever draught so cool?)
“The cup thy lips a-fevered press
Was drawn from sorrow's ancient pool.”

Love and Life

I PRAY sweet morn to bring me sight of thee,
Though 'twixt us dim unmeasured spaces lie ;
I breathe my fleeting bliss ; thou standest by,
Unmoved by any flash of sympathy ;
Unstirred by surging of my voiceless cry.

I live through one poor fragment of an hour
With senses lost in thee ; but ah, how fleet
My stolen joy ! My lord, how were it sweet
To lay life's love and labour at thy feet,
Then lift mine eyes new-wakened love to meet !

O well-beloved, for one kind glance from thee
All men hold dear on earth—life, honour, fame,

LOVE AND LIFE

And all that gladdens—in a quenchless flame
Should ever burn. Sweetheart, didst thou but
claim

My love that burns beyond all thought of shame!

Returning round of dreary nights and days!
For all the answering love I have not found,
Shall sorrow fold my lonely life around?
Pursued by Death, hope flutters to the ground,
And nevermore his joyous note will sound.

The Wind Harp

ALL that pass by sweep loving hands o'er me—
A wind-harp hanging from a forest tree.

The infant draws his hand across the strings :
“ Mother, I cannot see the bird that sings.”

Youth wakes the strings to tune of springtide
mirth,

And wild things answer him in heaven and earth.

One, broken, smites my strings with crash of
sin :

Grief, silent-footed, followeth the din.

Grief sighs upon me, and I whisper low
Sweet melody, and tears of healing flow.

Care sinks to sleep beneath me ; wild winds play
Their pæan ; till he gladly greets the day.

“ When We Shall Meet ”

WHEN we shall meet,
The sun will flash a glory through the rain ;
The joy will flash a rapture through the pain.
Ah, come, my sweet !

Upon thy breast
Will all the doubts that lift conflicting cries,
The dreads that in the silent night arise,
Be hushed to rest.

Thy dear arms wound
About me will defend from whelming woes,
And by thy hand with wreaths of fragrant rose
Shall I be crowned.

In thy true eyes
My soul will look, and all my life in thee

“ WHEN WE SHALL MEET ”

Be lost—the snowflake falls into the sea
In such sweet wise.

And to thy feet
My all I'll bring—a glory there to take.
Beloved, my heart's flowers will spring to make
Thy pathway sweet.

When thy clear voice
Shall, sounding, thrill and stir life's slumbering
 chords,
Till spirit-strains attend thy kindling words,
I shall rejoice.

I am alone ;
Though distant far, dear one, my heart ne'er
 grieves
Lest symbols fail to move thee. Love believes
Its thought is known.

A Funeral

WHAT hush adown the busy street
Is this at mid-day swiftly thrust?
What passing sound of muffled feet
Soft-thudding through the summer dust?

“I heard about the market cross
The women breathe a hated name,
That, living, was a nation's loss,
And, dying, is a country's shame.”

You marvel that my quick tears start?
His love once flamed through earth and sky,
And burned to ash a maiden's heart.
Bent dame, young maiden—both am I.

A Spring Song

I LET my prisoned songster loose,
My one small bird, o'er land and sea;
And, lo, its singing was the cry
That swiftly sped my king to me.

O maidens sewing by my side,
At length my flame-girt lord appears!
Lay by, lay by the woven dreams;
Lay by the web of common years.

Go, gather in the greening woods
The gold palms of the willow tree,
And strew a bed of primroses
Whereon to lay my love and me,

A SPRING SONG

Beside the woodland stream whose voice
Has sung through all my maiden years;
And there beneath the midnight stars
Shall mingle all our happy tears.

A Dancer

My merry smile, my lithe young form,
The homage of a moment brought.
I heard a passer-by proclaim
My joyous life a thing of naught.

And yet they watch with charmed gaze
The rhythmic play of limbs and feet,
Who'd fear to breathe the air with me,
And scorn me in the open street.

But think they that their thousand eyes
Alone applaud me night by night?
My body's grace and beauty burn
For God's delight—for God's delight.

Unfulfilled

WHERE is the babe who plucked my breast in
dreams?

Stilled are the cries that soothed mine ears in
sleep;

Mist is the hair that shone in golden gleams;
Dust are the feet my eager hope saw leap.

Hush, heart! For open is the gate of heaven;
Beside the babe that Mary Mother bore,
See there on high amid bambinos seven
The babe of dreams that ne'er earth's shrouding
wore.

At Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome

A Maid.

I, a maiden even as thou,
Gaze across the widening world.
"Sister-maid, above thy brow
Brood the dove with wings unfurled!"

A Young Mother.

Into lands beyond my ken
Fares my love-begotten child.
"He shall through a maze of men
Pass as Jesus undefiled."

A Child.

Mary, pluck with me to-day
Starry flowers among the grass.
'Baby-sister, we will play
Whilst the leaping moments pass."

AT SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE, ROME

A Magdalen.

Mary, Mary, floods of life
Sweep thy spirit far from me.
" Calmed be passion-storm and strife,
While I breathe a prayer for thee."

A Bride.

Woman, of the mystery
Binding soul to wedded soul
Weave a web to cover me.
" Ever be Love's garment whole!"

An Aged Woman.

Desolate, O desolate
Is my house, bereavèd one.
" See, I open heaven's gate :
Share my ever—living Son."

All Souls' Day

I do not seek the place of graves
With wreath and taper; nay, I come
Where God gave our twin spirits life,
And love about us reared a home.

I seek the shore where surges sing
Unceasing harmonies to him
Who hearkens gladly while the world
And things of sense grow far and dim.

O sea that bore us happiness!
O day that brought our love to birth!
O winds that gathered in for us
The trembling joy of all the earth!

ALL SOULS' DAY

Sea, bring his bark to port for me ;
Day, flash his face upon my sight ;
Winds, fling the doors of heaven apart,
That *he* may brim my life with light.

.

He leaps from the invisible :
I feel his breath upon my face ;
The dear God smiles to see our joy ;
My spirit swoons in his embrace.

Day and Night

MEN offered God throughout the day
The homage of their devious toil,
And no man living wrought alone :
God graved the figure on the stone,
God stirred with forceful hands the soil,
God shaped the pitcher from the clay.

Men ceased their toil, and gave their mirth
To God. They slept : dreams and desires,
Remembered joys and hopes, they sent
As incense through the firmament.
God robed Himself in starry fires,
And watched above the silent earth.

A Leavetaking

Love, let me go.

Upon the eastern hills

Young day arises valiant, strong, and free,

And all the hollow world of darkness fills

With stir, with light the land, with life the sea.

Renewed by thee, life's blossoms bravely blow :

Love, let me go.

Love, let me go :

Far down upon the plain

My foes arrive, by all the four winds sped ;

From yonder slopes my hands must reap the
grain ;

A LEAVETAKING

In those sad groves my soul must mourn her
 dead ;

My embassies must cross the ocean-flow :

Love, let me go.

Love, let me go—

But to return to thee

With spoils from princes wrested, wine and
 fruit

For winter-storing, gems from oversea,

And flowers of song plucked at the cypress' root.

My brow to bless, brave heart, once more lean
 low ;

Then I will go.

The Guest of Paradise

CLOSE, close the happy book of life
Wherein my leaping songs are writ.
None heeds its ever-changing tunes :
Why should another open it ?

Heavy with happiness it lies
Upon time's æon-lengthening board,
Where every man must leave at last
The treasure of his singing hoard.

The perfect joy, the strife-won peace,
The quenchless faith, the living dream,
Close, close : I sing another life
To music of the immortal stream.

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QUEEN SQUARE, LONDON, W.C.

No. 7. **DREAM THE HARPER, AND OTHER SONGS.**
By WILLIAM WILSON GIBSON.

"Here, at last, a man who, with the help of his poetry, searches
out places for us and, besides, a responsive heart in the world."

(*Chicago Western Journal*.)

Here Gibson's best work is simply stated, and unaffected, with every line
is saturated with the beauty of life. In "Dream the Harper" the essence of
being and growing is told in lines that burn. There is no more general
sweeping away of the movement, a path has to be shown, not to be
gliding out of sight. And with the "Harper" is his best, least known
character, that is, a life lived with an abundance of craftsmanship. The
magician's hand has created the story of all. — *Dallas News*

No. 8. **IRISH, (SCOTTISH) LYRICAL POEMS.** Selected
and Translated by M. A. STRANDBERG.

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