



THE ROOM BY THE SEA.

O, room so full of sunlight,
Of sound and scent of sea!
No other room in all the world
Could be so dear to me.

O, room that looks to southland—
That looks to east and west!
Thy four calm walls have held for me
Life's truest, purest, best.

O, room so full of flowers,
Of sound, of wind and sea!
The fairest room in castle grand
Is poor compared to thee.

And, room, when I have left thee,
And stranger eyes peer in,
Be true to me, nor ever speak
Of dreams that dwell herein.

For, room, I love thee fondly,
And hold thee in my heart;
But I have learned with all we love
There comes a time to part.

In the valley of Life there is a mountain, steep and rugged, named Success. There is no path leading up its precipitous side, and he who would ascend must prepare his own way before him, hewing down trees, pressing aside brambles, and rolling huge boulders out of his road, or crushing them into the earth and treading upon them with triumphant, but bleeding, feet. One came to the foot of this mountain one fair, summer day, and looked upward to its dome towering into the skies, and he said: "Tomorrow will I climb it"—and he fell to chasing golden butterflies through the scented air. And the morrow came, but he only looked upward, and said again: "Next week will I climb it"—for who could work when the primroses were yellow on the river's bank? And when a week had passed, he looked upward, and said once more: "Next year will I climb it"—for, hear! how glad the wild birds were in the meadows! Surely, this was no time for work. And when a year had passed, lo! he looked upward, shaking his head. "I am so happy here," he said, "with only the birds and the flowers and the beautiful dreams that steal out of starlight and abide with me. I shall never climb; for he who climbs must leave love behind." But he waved a God speed to the ones who had set out in youth's morning and were climbing away, wearily, in the heat and thirst of the noon. Another came, with flashing eyes, and set out boldly for the mountain top; he climbed swiftly and vigorously, and always, when he had forced a boulder out of his own way, he rolled it into the path of a brother struggling below, and said, between closed teeth: "Let them work as I have," and went on his way. But, as his hand was against every man, and in his heart were only hate and envy, it came to pass that he lost all interest in the valley of Life and in the mountain of Success; and he lay down, weak and bitter-hearted, in the shadow of the rock named Scorn—for he had not strength or hope to roll it out of his path; and he hated the people who patiently climbed past him, and flung thorns and stones in their way, that their poor feet must bleed, for being too bitter and too narrow-minded to climb higher, he would have kept all others bound down to his level. And, lo! one came, with upturned eyes, to the mountain, and set out in the early morning for the summit. He climbed slowly, patiently, faithfully; he put aside the thorns with torn fingers, and pressed bleeding feet where the rocks had lain; his eyes were turned ever upward, and he looked neither to the right nor to the left. Pleasure beckoned to him from glades of flowers and music, reaching out soft, bare arms to tempt him, and haunting him with her beautiful eyes; Rest begged him to stay his feet in a dark bower where cool breezes fanned, and lay his tired, burning head upon her bosom and let her tender fingers press pain from his beating temples; Love, star-eyed and pure-breasted, stood in his path and gave him one look that set his veins to swelling with passionate delight. But he pressed his lips firmly together, and shook his head, and passed on—but one sob burst from him, although he would not look back lest his courage falter. And at sunset, weary, hungry, thirsty, he reached the summit and stood upright in the clear air of Success; his figure towered against the sky, and his name fell, echoing, down to the

listening valley below; then his dulled, sun-worn eyes turned backward, and he saw, with a cry of anguish, lives that he had blackened in passing, and bleeding hearts that he had trampled—one heart he saw which, he knew now, had loved him truly; and he would have given the whole mountain of Success could he have gone back to it. Sad of soul, he looked to see what lay before him on the other side—and, behold! it was only the lone, pale valley men name Death.

A keen, bracing, spring atmosphere, a blue sky, a sunlight sufficiently yellow to bring out freckles, a road that has neither mud nor dust, but runs like a white ribbon between greening fields and leafing trees, a horse champing his bit, with swelling nostrils and flashing eyes, eager to be off—give her these and you see a happy woman. Bend downward, extending your strong hand, you to whom this happy woman belongs—for, you know, they tell us happy women always belong to someone—and in a second a dainty foot will press lightly upon it, in the next she will be settled in her saddle, her reins gathered up with a steady hand, and she will be off like the wind, caring for nothing and for nobody—no, sir, not even you, little as you may relish that part of it—until she comes back, hours after, with starry eyes and glowing cheeks, but with a little weariness nestling at the corners of her mouth, and slips down into your arms and says: "I've had such a lovely time—and I'm so tired—and I wish you had been with us"—us meaning her and the horse—"and you're such an angel," all in one breath, until your poor head is quite turned, and you wish you could give her fifty horses, since one can make her so happy. Now is the time of all times to ride; and the woman who loves this best of all exercises may have a stylish, correct habit of plain Melton cloth, with silk face, short and tight; one of the new, long bodices, with a high seam on the hips and pocket flaps, a striped or checked waistcoat, a notched collar, turned back to display a linen chemisette, with her limbs encased in habit tights instead of heavy trousers, and dainty riding boots; but she will not be one whit happier, and she may not be half so graceful and bold a rider as the farmer's daughter, who leaps upon a bare-back horse and goes scampering along dangerous country roads at a pace that would frighten the life out of a town-bred miss in her tan gauntlets and high beaver. I wish every woman could, and would, ride. Horses are expensive, but, believe me, they will more than repay for economies in other directions. If you ride, you will be strong enough to do your own housework, and save the expense of "help." If I had to take my choice between one gown a year with a horse and two dozen gowns without a horse, I should choose the former, even if I had to mend it and patch it until it resembled Joseph's famous coat, and receive my guests in a room darkened down to such a languid dimness that they could not discover the patches.

I heard a gentleman say the other day of a lovely young lady who is an artist, and who supports not only herself but her mother and sister as well, by her brush: "Oh, yes, she can paint, but her health is too delicate"—the word was a sneer—"for her to cook or do housework. She is delightful to talk to, but she would not be of much use in a home." Well, I thought that one of the most unreasonable things I had ever heard. If you said of a man—which I know you wouldn't, by the way: "Oh, yes, he can paint, but he is too delicate to chop wood or carry up coal," would he not instantly reply, with withering scorn, that he could afford to hire that work done? I have observed that when God bestows upon a woman an unusual gift, she is expected to cultivate not it alone, but a dozen others besides. She must be no less the born housekeeper because she is the born artist.

It is with considerable consternation that I find I wrote recently in these pages of "hillsides green with daisies and dandelions." I insist that the printer must have worn green glasses while "setting up" the lines; and he insists that I accidentally dipped my pen in green ink, or was smitten with sudden color blindness when I looked out my window and wrote. Whichever it was, you will be disappointed if you search for green dandelions on Puget sound.

How many, many thousands of people play daily with fire; and are surprised and reproachful when the flames turn and burn them.

Thy conscience is thy best counselor, thy purest companion, and thy most noble friend.