

Songs of the Wind on a Southern Shore

By
George E. Merrick



I ripple the fronds of the cocoanut palms,
As I join with the voice of the sea
The somnolent swell of the mystical psalms
That I breathe from the quivering tree.
I hush to the cries of the wandering crane
Out over the shimmering lee;
The murmuring moan of the faraway main,
And the hum of the hovering bee:—
Then I leap to the crest of the towering pine
And I sing of the life that I see...

I sing of the sweep of the fathomless deep
And the leagues of the wallowing trail;
I echo the roar of the wave-battled steep
Over-hung by the vaporous veil;
I murmur the moan of the low-toned dirge,
And the plaint of the ocean gull's wail.
I feather the crest of the breaker-torn surge
As again on the top of the gale
I shriek through the mist, by the dashing spray kissed,
As I hasten the floundering sail.

I sing of the spot far-away in the East
Where the Sun rises out of the sea;
Where the flying-fish plunge for their scattering feast
Midst the porpoises leaping in glee;—
Where the sea-weeded isles in the radiant light.
Are alive with the Life of the Sea.
As the cormorant coveys arise in shrill flight
And go skimming along beside me,
I sing the wild song of the ocean-bred fowl
In the full throbbing voice of the free.

I sing of far isles in the crystalline blue
Where the air ever whispers of May;
Where the seas ever glow with a phosphorent hue
Round the ships that are waiting alway;
Where the skies are ablaze with a slumberous haze
And the clouds,—like the barques of a Fay—
Are hanging becalmed in the odorous maze
As the sails on an enchanted bay.
And the land is sunk deep in a languishing sleep,
And in dreams of an Age Far-Away.

I sing of the depth of the sulphur-blue sky,
And the Realms of its furtherest lease.
I whisper the tale of the visions that lie
Far beyond where my earth-travels cease:—

The mystical place of the outermost space
Where the travel-aged winds are at ease:
And so Faintly there comes with an infinite grace
Through the floods of Eternity’s peace
The dreamy refrain of the measureless worlds,
Like an echo of age-buried seas.

I sing of the quest of the tropical moon—
As it floats like a vessel of gold
Through the silvery floods of a fairy lagoon
On the journey that never is old...
And I faint ‘neath the spell that is left in its way
—As a dream of the loves yet untold,—
An amorous incense that issues always
From the wealth of its magical hold,—
And I murmur the tune,—through the languorous swoon,
—Of the romance I fain would unfold.

I dream of the home of Fairies and Fays
On the isles of the calm southern sky,
Of the fanciful turrets and towers ablaze
In the flood of the rays from on high;
Of the motionless miles of the wonder-lined aisles
Where the curlew and pelican fly
To the flame-gowned peaks of the aerial piles
That arise in the magical sky;

And I catch the faint notes of a music that floats
From the isles,—like a joy-laden sigh.

I breath the perfume of the salt-spraying spume;
The odor of orange-blown bowers;
I gather the wealth of acacia bloom
O’er the ruins of age-crumbled towers
Where on high the saccharine breath of the palms
Exhales from the lotus-like flowers...
As I drowse in the subtle and amorous calm
So sweetly enticing my powers,
I am lulled to a deep and oblivious sleep
Through the fragrance of odorous hours.

And often my song is a-tune with the joy
That is sung by the soft summer sea;—
The swift-tripping notes the fairies employ
As they dance round the rainbow with me;—
The care-distant chords of the light-hearted hordes
That people the isles of the sea,
And my heart bubbles o’er with their volatile lore
That I chatter in merriest glee.
So often my song is a-tune with their joy
Those throbs from the throats of the Free.

But sometimes all breathing of gladness are fled

And my voicings are full of the woe
That burdens the sea for souls that are dead;
Of the tragedies hidden below:—
For I blend in my tone, the ocean’s low moan,
All the comfortless dirge of its flow;
Of soul-shrivings lone on hurricanes blown
E’en the sob of the tidal-trapped doe;—
And I breathe forth my sigh to the sorrowing sky
From the fullness of grief that I know.

I ripple the fronds of the cocoanut palms
As I join with the voice of the sea
The somnolent swell of the mystical psalms
That breath from the quivering trees...
I hush to the cries of the wandering crane
Out over the shimmering lee;
The murmuring moan of the far-away Main;
And the hum of the hovering bee:...
Then I leap to the crest of the towering pine
And I sing of the Life that I see.