

The House Desolate

By Rosamund Marriott Watson

So still the old house lies, so dull, so grey,
The dews of dawn forget to hallow it ;
Here come no sweet birds singing, night or day,
From these bare eaves no building swallows flit.

Sunk in dim dreams it lies as in a swoon—
Dreams of a distant city hid from sight,
The enchanted city of the sun and moon,
The golden market of the world's delight.

Pale as the dead are they that dwell herein,
Worn with vain strife and wrung with vain regret ;
Theirs but to watch the world go by to win
That glimmering goal their hearts remember yet.

They lean among the lilacs by the door,
To watch the winding road with wistful eyes,
The long, white, dusty way that nevermore
Shall bear them hope or wonder or surprise.

Sometimes

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Sometimes they call, but answer comes there none ;
Sometimes they beckon—none will turn aside.
The long procession glitters in the sun ;
With echoing tramp the motley pilgrims ride.

Some in the twilight chambers, wide and low,
Around a cold hearth gather, murmuring
Vague, half-remembered tales of long ago,
Songs, half forgot, of Travel and the Spring.

Wan faces peer from the uncurtained pane,
Across the weedy garden, fain to see,
The wayfarers that pass in sun or rain,
The blue, far-shining stream that threads the lea.

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Here falls no word from any passer-by,
None lifts the latch of this forgotten gate ;
Only faint winds about the lintel sigh
“Your house is left unto you desolate.”