

Wolf-Edith

By Nora Hopper

WOLF-EDITH dwells on the wild grey down
Where the gorse burns gold and the bent grows
brown.

She goes as light as a withered leaf,
She has not tasted of joy or grief.

With wild things' beauty her face is fair,
A bramble-flower in a web of hair,

Fine as thistle-down tossed abroad
When the soul of the thistle goes home to God.

Her lips know songs that will lure away
A dull-eared clown from his buxom may.

But never a man she hath hearkened sing
And followed home from her wandering—

And never a man the bents above
Might call Wolf-Edith his mate and love.

Oh

Oh fair are the women of stead and town,
And winds are sharp on the barren down :

Yet heather blooms in the wind's despite,
And wild-fire burns in the blackest night :

And out on the moor and the mists thereof
Wild Wolf-Edith has found her a love.

She knows not his kindred's place and name,
But her sleeping soul he hath set aflame.

He has kindled her soul with his first long kiss :
How shall she quit such a grace as this ?

A barrow far on the windy heath,
Her love is a handful of dust beneath.

For here when Senlac was lost and won,
Her lover perished for Godwin's son :

Died, and was laid here to sleep his fill
While Saxons bent to a Norman's will.

Still Normans sit on the Saxon throne ;
A Saxon girl to the moor has gone,

A Saxon's ghost is her lover sworn
And who shall sever them, night or morn ?

One in the barrow and one above ;
Wild Wolf-Edith has found her a love.

And

And sweeter than ever her wild songs go
Drifting down to the thorpes below.

Wolf-Edith's pale as a winter-rose
When lonely over the bents she goes,

Though sweet i' the gorses the wild bees hum—
But when the night and her lover come,

He lifts her soul as a flickering fire
Is lifted up, with the wind's desire.

His eyes drink light from Wolf-Edith's face,
'Gainst the time he goes to his sleeping place :

Dead and living the bents above
Wild Wolf-Edith has found her a love.