

BRETON AFTERNOON



HERE, where the breath of the scented gorse floats through the
sun-stained air,
On a steep hill-side, on a grassy ledge, I have lain hours
long, and heard
Only the faint breeze pass in a whisper like a prayer,
And the river ripple by, and the distant call of a bird.

On the lone hill-side, in the gold sunshine, I will hush me and repose ;
And the world fades into a dream, and a spell is cast on me ;
And what was all the strife about for the myrtle or the rose ?
And why have I wept for a white girl's paleness, passing ivory ?

Out of the tumult of angry tongues, in a world alone, apart,
In a perfumed dream-land set betwixt the bounds of life and death ;
Here will I lie, while the clouds fly by, and delve a hole, where mine heart
May sleep dark down with the gorse above and red, red earth beneath :

Sleep and be quiet for an afternoon, till the rose-white Angelus
Softly steals my way from the village under the hill :
" Mother of God ! O, Mercy ! look down in pity on us,
The weak and blind, who stand in our light, and wreak ourselves such ill !"

ERNEST DOWSON.