

TO CAPTAIN FRYATT

Trampled yet red is the last of the embers, Red the last cloud of a sun that
has set; What of your sleeping though Flanders remembers, What of your
waking, if England forget?

Why should you share in the hearts that we harden, In the shame of our
nature, who see it and live? How more than the godly the greedy can pardon,
How well and how quickly the hungry forgive.

Ah, well if the soil of the stranger had wrapped you, While the lords that you
served and the friends that you knew Hawk in the marts of the tyrants that
trapped you, Tout in the shops of the butchers that slew.

Why should you wake for a realm that is rotten, Stuffed with their bribes
and as dead to their debts? Sleep and forget us, as we have forgotten; For
Flanders remembers and England forgets.

FOR FOUR GUILDS:

I. THE GLASS-STAINERS

To every Man his Mystery, A trade and only one: The masons make the
hives of men, The domes of grey or dun, But we have wrought in rose and
gold The houses of the sun.

The shipwrights build the houses high, Whose green foundations sway
Alive with fish like little flames, When the wind goes out to slay. But we
abide with painted sails The cyclone of the day.

The weavers make the clothes of men And coats for everyone; They walk
the streets like sunset clouds; But we have woven and spun In scarlet or in
golden-green The gay coats of the sun.

You whom the usurers and the lords With insolent liveries trod, Deep in
dark church behold, above Their lance-lengths by a rod, Where we have
blazed the tabard Of the trumpeter of God.

II. THE BRIDGE-BUILDERS

In the world's whitest morning As hoary with hope, The Builder of Bridges
Was priest and was pope: And the mitre of mystery And the canopy his,
Who darkened the chasms And domed the abyss.

To eastward and westward Spread wings at his word The arch with the
key-stone That stoops like a bird; That rides the wild air And the daylight
cast under; The highway of danger, The gateway of wonder.

Of his throne were the thunders That rivet and fix Wild weddings of
strangers That meet and not mix; The town and the cornland; The bride
and the groom: In the breaking of bridges Is treason and doom.

But he bade us, who fashion The road that can fly, That we build not too
heavy And build not too high: Seeing alway that under The dark arch's
bend Shine death and white daylight Unchanged to the end.

Who walk on his mercy Walk light, as he saith, Seeing that our life Is a
bridge above death; And the world and its gardens And hills, as ye heard,
Are born above space On the wings of a bird.

Not high and not heavy Is building of his: When ye seal up the flood
And forget the abyss, When your towers are uplifted, Your banners unfurled,
In the breaking of bridges Is the end of the world.

III. THE STONE-MASONS

We have graven the mountain of God with hands, As our hands were graven
of God, they say, Where the seraphs burn in the sun like brands And the
devils carry the rains away; Making a thrift of the throats of hell, Our
gargoyles gather the roaring rain, Whose yawn is more than a frozen yell
And their very vomiting not in vain.

Wilder than all that a tongue can utter, Wiser than all that is told in words,
The wings of stone of the soaring gutter Fly out and follow the flight of the
birds; The rush and rout of the angel wars Stand out above the astounded
street, Where we flung our gutters against the stars For a sign that the first
and the last shall meet.

We have graven the forest of heaven with hands, Being great with a mirth
too gross for pride, In the stone that battered him Stephen stands And Peter
himself is petrified: Such hands as have grubbed in the glebe for bread Have
bidden the blank rock blossom and thrive, Such hands as have stricken a live
man dead Have struck, and stricken the dead alive.

Fold your hands before heaven in praying, Lift up your hands into heaven
and cry; But look where our dizziest spires are saying What the hands of a
man did up in the sky: Drenched before you have heard the thunder, White
before you have felt the snow; For the giants lift up their hands to wonder
How high the hands of a man could go.

IV. THE BELL-RINGERS

The angels are singing like birds in a tree In the organ of good St. Cecily:
And the parson reads with his hand upon The graven eagle of great St. John:
But never the fluted pipes shall go Like the fifes of an army all a-row, Merrily
marching down the street To the marts where the busy and idle meet; And
never the brazen bird shall fly Out of the window and into the sky, Till men
in cities and shires and ships Look up at the living Apocalypse.

But all can hark at the dark of even The bells that bay like the hounds of
heaven, Tolling and telling that over and under, In the ways of the air like a
wandering thunder, The hunt is up over hills untrod: For the wind is the
way of the dogs of God: From the tyrant's tower to the outlaw's den Hunting
the souls of the sons of men. Ruler and robber and pedlar and peer, Who
will not harken and yet will hear; Filling men's heads with the hurry and hum
Making them welcome before they come.

And we poor men stand under the steeple Drawing the cords that can draw
the people, And in our leash like the leaping dogs Are God's most deafening
demagogues: And we are but little, like dwarfs underground, While hang up
in heaven the houses of sound, Moving like mountains that faith sets free,
Yawning like caverns that roar with the sea, As awfully loaded, as airily
buoyed, Armoured archangels that trample the void: Wild as with dancing
and weighty with dooms, Heavy as their panoply, light as their plumes.

Neither preacher nor priest are we: Each man mount to his own degree:
Only remember that just such a cord Tosses in heaven the trumpet and sword;
Souls on their terraces, saints on their towers, Rise up in arms at alarum like
ours: Glow like great watchfires that redden the skies Titans whose wings
are a glory of eyes, Crowned constellations by twelves and by sevens, Domed
dominations more old than the heavens, Virtues that thunder and thrones that
endure Sway like a bell to the prayers of the poor.