

HONEYMOON TIME AT AN INN

At the shiver of morning, a little before the false dawn,

The moon was at the window-square,

Deedily brooding in deformed decay -

The curve hewn off her cheek as by an adze;

At the shiver of morning a little before the false dawn

So the moon looked in there.

Her speechless eyeing reached across the chamber,

Where lay two souls opprest,

One a white lady sighing, "Why am I sad!"

To him who sighed back, "Sad, my Love, am I!"

And speechlessly the old moon conned the chamber,

And these two reft of rest.

While their large-pupilled vision swept the scene there,

Nought seeming imminent,

Something fell sheer, and crashed, and from the floor

Lay glittering at the pair with a shattered gaze,

While their large-pupilled vision swept the scene there,

And the many-eyed thing outleant.

With a start they saw that it was an old-time pier-glass

Which had stood on the mantel near,
Its silvering blemished,--yes, as if worn away
By the eyes of the countless dead who had smirked at it
Ere these two ever knew that old-time pier-glass
And its vague and vacant leer.

As he looked, his bride like a moth skimmed forth, and kneeling
Quick, with quivering sighs,
Gathered the pieces under the moon's sly ray,
Unwitting as an automaton what she did;
Till he entreated, hasting to where she was kneeling,
Let it stay where it lies!"

"Long years of sorrow this means!" breathed the lady
As they retired. "Alas!"
And she lifted one pale hand across her eyes.
"Don't trouble, Love; it's nothing," the bridegroom said.
"Long years of sorrow for us!" murmured the lady,
"Or ever this evil pass!"

And the Spirits Ironic laughed behind the wainscot,
And the Spirits of Pity sighed.
It's good," said the Spirits Ironic, "to tickle their minds
With a portent of their wedlock's after-grinds."
And the Spirits of Pity sighed behind the wainscot,
"It's a portent we cannot abide!

"More, what shall happen to prove the truth of the portent?"

--"Oh; in brief, they will fade till old,

And their loves grow numbed ere death, by the cark of care."

- "But nought see we that asks for portents there? -

'Tis the lot of all."--"Well, no less true is a portent

That it fits all mortal mould."