

THE DEAD AND THE LIVING ONE

The dead woman lay in her first night's grave,
And twilight fell from the clouds' concave,
And those she had asked to forgive forgave.

The woman passing came to a pause
By the heaped white shapes of wreath and cross,
And looked upon where the other was.

And as she mused there thus spoke she:
"Never your countenance did I see,
But you've been a good good friend to me!"

Rose a plaintive voice from the sod below:
"O woman whose accents I do not know,
What is it that makes you approve me so?"

"O dead one, ere my soldier went,
I heard him saying, with warm intent,
To his friend, when won by your blandishment:

"I would change for that lass here and now!
And if I return I may break my vow

To my present Love, and contrive somehow

"To call my own this new-found pearl,
Whose eyes have the light, whose lips the curl,
I always have looked for in a girl!"

"--And this is why that by ceasing to be -
Though never your countenance did I see -
You prove you a good good friend to me;

"And I pray each hour for your soul's repose
In gratitude for your joining those
No lover will clasp when his campaigns close."

Away she turned, when arose to her eye
A martial phantom of gory dye,
That said, with a thin and far-off sigh:

"O sweetheart, neither shall I clasp you,
For the foe this day has pierced me through,
And sent me to where she is. Adieu! -

"And forget not when the night-wind's whine
Calls over this turf where her limbs recline,
That it travels on to lament by mine."

There was a cry by the white-flowered mound,

There was a laugh from underground,

There was a deeper gloom around.

1915.