

IN A WOOD

See "THE WOODLANDERS"

Pale beech and pine-tree blue,

Set in one clay,

Bough to bough cannot you

Bide out your day?

When the rains skim and skip,

Why mar sweet comradeship,

Blighting with poison-drip

Neighbourly spray?

Heart-halt and spirit-lame,

City-opprest,

Unto this wood I came

As to a nest;

Dreaming that sylvan peace

Offered the harrowed ease--

Nature a soft release

From men's unrest.

But, having entered in,

Great growths and small

Show them to men akin -

Combatants all!
Sycamore shoulders oak,
Bines the slim sapling yoke,
Ivy-spun halters choke
Elms stout and tall.

Touches from ash, O wych,
Sting you like scorn!
You, too, brave hollies, twitch
Sidelong from thorn.
Even the rank poplars bear
Illy a rival's air,
Cankering in black despair
If overborne.

Since, then, no grace I find
Taught me of trees,
Turn I back to my kind,
Worthy as these.
There at least smiles abound,
There discourse trills around,
There, now and then, are found
Life-loyalties.

1887: 1896.