NIGHT IN THE WOODS

(From Pierre Louys's 'Les Chansons de Bilitis'

Translated by F. W. STELLA BROWNE

'The black depth of the night flows through mine eyes.'
The serried trees close on thy beating heart,
And in the forest thou wilt lose thy way.

'The rush of falling waters in mine ears
Laughs loud in exultation.'
Though he stood
Three ells away, thou couldst not hear his voice.

'The white syringa and the moon flowers
Will make me swoon with perfume —'
Faint and fall,
And never find him, should he pass this way.

'Ah, he is far from here, the mountain lies
Black under all the stars, between us twain:
And yet I see his face, and hear him speak,
And feel him touch me in the night, alone.'

The Nation

ON THE RIVER

From the Chinese

I have hidden my little boat among the river grasses;
It is dusk and the stars are out.
My boat rocks quietly on the gray waters
That the rising moon spangles with silver.

The wild duck seeks her nest and the trout leaps no more.
I am alone with the night about me,
Sorrow in my heart. The cool wind
Touches my temples with phantom kisses.

O Sister Moon, you do not bring comfort to me, waiting;
Now I think only of lost loves,
And old memories and old regrets
Troop like sad ghosts before me, peering into my eyes.

The Nation

DARKNESS

BY RICHARD CHURCH

Now the last bird has ended, and the bats
Flitter and twitch about the hazel bushes,
Where the young green grows deeper as light fades.
Now ends the blackbird's song; a little grumble,
And silence gathers round him. From the hills
Sleep comes, and westward droops and sleeps the sky.

Ah! very dim your face has grown — the rose
Is lost in ivory, the warmth in moon-color;
And those eyes, that lately gleamed with fire,
Are sinking in the night, receding, luring —
But never to be taken, made to yield
Their secrets up with light, as the morning flowers
Shine from an eastern shore up to the sun
Who comes, sea-risen, eager for their love.

Oh, tantalizing love, thus to surround—
Even at the very crest and consummation —
The final joy with darkness — nay, to draw
Most cunningly, with subtle dexterous fingers,
Film after film of light away — first light —
Twilight — gloom — then fantasy — and last,
Where love should be aflame — maddening darkness!

The Nation

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