

TWO POEMS CONCERNING PEASANT VISIONARIES

A CRADLE SONG



THE faery children laugh in cradles of wrought gold,
And clap their hands together, and half close their eyes,
For winds will bear them gently when the eagle flies,
With heavy whitening wings, and a heart fallen cold :
I kiss my wailing child and press it to my breast,
And hear the narrow graves calling my child and me

Desolate winds that cry over the wandering sea ;
Desolate winds that hover in the flaming West ;
Desolate winds that beat the doors of Heaven, and beat
The doors of Hell, and blow there many a whimpering ghost ;
And heart the winds have shaken ; the unappeasable host
Is comelier than candles before Maurya's feet.

“THE VALLEY OF THE BLACK PIG”

The Irish peasantry have for generations comforted themselves, in their misfortunes, with visions of a great battle, to be fought in a mysterious valley called, “The Valley of the Black Pig,” and to break at last the power of their enemies. A few years ago, in the barony of Lisadell, in county Sligo, an old man would fall entranced upon the ground from time to time, and rave out a description of the battle ; and I have myself heard said that the girths shall rot from the bellies of the horses, because of the few men that shall come alive out of the valley.



THE dew drops slowly ; the dreams gather : unknown spears
Suddenly hurtle before my dream-awakened eyes ;
And then the clash of fallen horsemen, and the cries
Of unknown perishing armies beat about my ears.

We, who are labouring by the cromlech on the shore,
The gray cairn on the hill, when day sinks drowned in dew,
Being weary of the world's empires, bow down to you,
Master of the still stars, and of the flaming door.

W. B. YEATS.