

## THE LITTLE PRINCE

*To Dorothea Taylor*

I N the depths so dark and cool,  
Where the elms are twisted,  
I'll lie by the forest pool  
Talking to the King's old fool,  
Of olden lore loose-fisted.

I will watch the pennons float  
From the battlements over the moat;  
I'll see the fishermen clean the boat  
They draw up from the river;  
Under the shade of the forest trees  
I'll blow my kisses on the breeze,  
While the dark boughs wave and shiver.

A flag floats on the topmost tower,  
With stars of silver dark-grounded,  
And thereon is a lily-flower  
In the mouth of a dragon; his feet full of power  
In yellow flames are founded

The little scudding clouds that fly  
Over the light-blue heaven  
Change the faces I see in the sky,  
And the red flamingoes scud, scud by,  
Bright as the skies at even.

Here's the purple iris-flower,  
And the pimpernel tiny and scarlet,  
And the little blue speedwell that grows in an hour  
Under the sun less blue in power,  
Oh! what a shy little varlet!

I hear the scullion kill the goose,  
And the clap of the spoon of the dishes,  
And the old hen-wife brings apple-juice  
To stew with the little red fishes,  
And they're one of my loveliest wishes.

And Jeanne de Luce looks out from the tower  
As her hair in the wind's a-drying,  
And there's my father, ruddy and stout,  
Talking to Father Giles de Prout,  
And there the new pennon flying.

Under the trees I love to lie,  
Watching the cloudlets over the sky,  
And the green sward down to the river;  
The little green leaves prate of the spring,  
And the wild geese all are on the wing,  
And the shy little branches quiver.

And the King's old fool talks still to me  
Of the Holy Land and the tourney,  
And the great green river men call the sea,  
And how the King made his journey,  
And slew of the Saracens thirty and three,  
And set the Christian captives free,

And how there are cannibals over the sea,  
Who care not for armour or lances;  
And men whose heads in their bellies be,  
And witches with wicked dances,  
Who shriek when the foe advances,  
And charm him with evil fancies.

The King's wise fool knows songs of love,  
And fables that kill you with laughter,  
The Wonderful Rose, and the Silver Dove,  
And the Hams on the Cottage Rafter.

So I fall asleep under the sun,  
And I wake when they call me to dinner,  
And the jolly old jester away has run,  
And I'll have the fish that the cook has done;  
Father Prout will pray for me, a sinner.