

AMID JUDEAN HILLS

Slowly the deepening shadows of the day
Grow into twilight, and the stars burn dime,
Like new-lit candles, on the purple hills—
Pale rosaries that light the higher way—
And faint and far, the echo of some hymn
From thankful lips the air with sweetness fills.
Shepherds are taking home their little flocks,
Crying always their inimitable calls.
A silhouette of cubes against the west,
The hamlet lies, and through the narrow streets
A woman passing, with a jar aloft,
Moves as the wraith-like figures do in dreams.
Wind-like, the twilight murmurings come and go.
The moon goes silvering the dusky vale
And tiny gardens, and from out their hearts
The fragrance of uncounted summers lifts,
And faintly trace the old start-lighted trails,
Blazed by the hand of faith, and followed still,
After the silence of the centuries.
The roofless walls and pointed arches stand
Like something alien to the huts and soil,
Eloquent of epochs long since passed,
When armed knights knelt to chant the solemn mass.
The stones that heard the clanking of their swords
And saw the flashing of their helmets bright,
Now lie in crumbling heaps beneath the stars.
The seas and naked hills along endure,
Themselves ephemeral to Him, in Whose sight
“A thousand years are as a single night.”

By: Beth Slater Whitson

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