

THE ROCK

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The grasses confer as I pass them by,
The squirrel looks down with a questioning eye,
And the willow leans in a kindly way,—
“Let me just touch you,” it seems to say.
But the towering, bare and ancient rock
Silently stands, as if to mock,—
“Can you conquer the ages, the flood, the fire,
You vanishing shadow of dream and desire?”

Then I answer the rock, “O loveless thing
That cannot rejoice at the birth of spring;
Although you may stand when I drift as dust,
You only remain because you must;
And you envy the freedom I shall know
When I merge with the seas and the winds and go
To colour the morning, to mould the flower,—
But wait: in my dust is also power!

“Your crown shall roll where the land lies low
When you bear the weight of my cloak of snow,
And your sides shall be seamed and levelled again
When my feet are the feet of the living rain.
Full well you shall know that I have not died
When, slowly, your face is cloven wide
By the hungering root of a mighty tree;—
Rock, it is I who shall set you free!”