

THE PICNIC

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Lyrical day, clean-sanded bay,
Blue-green and sparkling ocean, spray
Crisping in curves to curves of gulls,
Sea-music filling the laughter-lulls
Of two quick sisters quizzing a third,
The youngest, who, so their wits divine
Has found a lover . . .

How liquidly shine
Their eyes in tone with the candid sun
And the fore-shore's overflowing fun.
Like note from throat to throat of bird,
Caught and sent spinning, like irised balls
Cresting a fountain that crystally falls,
Yet keeps the glittering wonder in air,
Is their play of phrase:
"Is he dark, is he fair?
Studious? No? How furtive you are!"

I shall see them ever, sitting, delighted
As children, their back-blown hair united
By the wind, their features keened with stress
Of joy, and woman's inquisitiveness,
Probing the daylight to find a star—
And the youngest, standing, her back to them,
Half-pleased to drop from a careful hem
A crumb for conjecture, drinking the sound
As they build surmises on nearer ground
And laugh as it falls. I see day sink,
And a hint of battle in her eyes,
If only a breath should criticise;
Her look of one descending to prank
From a distant world, of one who drank
The sea-line up, and still could drink.