

**THE FLOWER OF
OLD JAPAN, AND
OTHER POEMS**

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The flower of old Japan, and other poems by Alfred Noyes

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ALFRED NOYES

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BY

ALFRED NOYES

New York

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' O ciel! toute la Chine est par terre en morceaux !
Ce vase pâle et doux comme un reflet des eaux,
Couvert d'oiseaux, de fleurs, de fruits, et des mensonges
De ce vague idéal qui sort du bleu des songes,
Ce vase unique, étrange, impossible, engourdi,
Gardant sur lui le clair de lune en plein midi,
Qui paraissait vivant, ou luisait une flamme,
Qui semblait presque un monstre et semblait presque
une âme.'

— VICTOR HUGO (*Le Pot Cassé*).

To
CAROL
A Little Maiden
of Miyako

PREFACE

It is a perilous adventure—the writing of a preface, however brief, to one's own poems. For one may be tempted to re-state matters that could find their full elucidation only in the verses themselves. Tennyson once remarked that poetry is like shot silk, glancing with many colours; and any attempt to define its meanings is as great a mistake as the attempt of nineteenth-century materialism to enclose the infinite universe in its logical nut-shells. Through poetry alone, whether of deeds or words, thought or colour, passion or marble, is it possible to approach the Infinite, or as Blake did:—

'To see a world in a grain of sand,
A heaven in a wild flower;
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.'

But this revelation is the sole end and object of all true art; and I hope it may not be