

TIGNES 1946

A stone falls from the bridge, and no one heeds it :
The bridge will last for one more winter.
The old men look their last on barn and hay-loft :
All things must perish.

The Isère, like a young colt, gallops among the rocks ;
But the river-bed will vanish :
All things will vanish on a summer's day :
The meadow and the pathway and the churchyard.

Here, for a thousand years, the bell has tolled :
All things must perish.
The snow has buried in a thousand winters
The meadow and the pathway and the churchyard.

And here in eighteen-fifty-nine came William Mathews
To the Grand Hôtel des Touristes, Révial Florentin,
Condemned by Brockedon, by Forbes and Weld,
' A foul den, dark, dank and dirty.'

All things must perish now, under the level water :
The cobbler's and the Mairie, Rimmer's shop,
The room we danced in, back in 'thirty-one,
All things will vanish.

Under the level water, when the lake
Feeds the great dynamos, all things will sleep :
Old age and age-old quarrels, love and childhood :
The bridge will last for one more winter.

The roaring of the dynamos will drown
The sound of cow-bells and the barking dogs ;
All things will sleep, but not again in silence :
A stone falls from the bridge, and no one heeds it.

MICHAEL ROBERTS.