



The poetry of Adela Florence Cory aka Violet Nicolson, is some of the most unique and passionate in the English language. Under the pen name of Laurence Hope, her works were extremely popular in the early years of the 20th century, inspiring popular music, lovers, silent films and even the creation of Shalimar perfume. Her work wades fearlessly into issues of racism, same sex attraction, violence and taboo love, but also transports the reader to a vibrant India of another era, with its exotic peoples, flora, fauna, folklore and larger than life landscapes and intrigues. Even so, Hope's work has the delicacy of fine literature, with the matchless phrasing, rhyming and structure that marks the true poet. Mixing the confessional overtones of the French *poetes maudites* and British *Aesthetes* with the sounds and flavors of the Far East, critics of her day likened her to "a decadent Kipling". Like Elizabeth Browning, Hope's title "India's Love Lyrics" gave the impression she was transcribing the tempestuous poetry of another culture; it is now understood that the work was her own, though she was fluent in Urdu and was certainly inspired by the language and song traditions of the great Subcontinent where she spent her adult life. It is only by an accident of academic oversight that Hope is now hardly known to the public, as 19th century male academics deemed her work "too purple" to be canonized in the same way her peer Kipling was. Her work is now out of print, but with this Librivox recording, you may join the many starry-eyed listeners who have discovered Hope, following her footsteps into the alluring and lost world of "The Teak Forest" and beyond. (Helen Williford-Lower)

Read by Helen Williford-Lower. Total running time: 3:37:59

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