

Canvas, brushes, hues, to catch  
Fleeting forms in vale or moun-  
tain :  
And an evening star to watch  
When all 's still, save one sweet  
fountain.

Ah ! I idle time away  
With impossible fond fancies !  
For a lover lives all day  
In a land of lone romances.

But the hot light o'er the city  
Drops,—and see ! on fire departs.  
And the night comes down in pity  
To the longing of our hearts.

Bind thy golden hair from falling,  
O my love, my one, my own !  
'Tis for thee the cuckoo's calling  
With a note of tenderer tone.

Up the hillside, near and nearer,  
Through the vine, the corn, the  
flowers,  
Till the very air grows dearer,  
Neighboring our pleasant bowers.

Now I pass the last Poderè :  
There, the city lies behind me.  
See her fluttering like a fairy  
O'er the happy grass to find me !

## ONCE.

A FALLING star that shot across  
The intricate and twinkling dark  
Vanisht, yet left no sense of loss  
Throughout the wide ethereal arc

(Of those serene and solemn skies  
That round the dusky prospect  
rose,  
And ever seemed to rise, and rise,  
Through regions of unreached re-  
pose.

Far, on the windless mountain-  
range,  
One crimson sparklet died : the  
blue  
Flushed with a brilliance, faint and  
strange,  
The ghost of daylight, dying too.

But half-revealed, each terrace urn  
Glimmered, where now, in filmy  
flight,

We watched return, and still return,  
The blind bats searching air for  
sight.

With sullen fits of fleeting sound,  
Borne half asleep on slumbrous  
air,  
The drowsy beetle hummed around,  
And passed, and oft repassed us,  
there ;

Where, hand in hand, our looks  
alight

With thoughts our pale lips left  
untold,

We sat, in that delicious night,  
On that dim terrace, green and  
old.

Deep down, far off, the city lay,  
When forth from all its spires was  
swept

A music o'er our souls ; and they  
To music's midmost meanings  
leapt ;

And, crushing some delirious cry  
Against each other's lips, we clung  
Together silent, while the sky  
Throbbing with sound around us  
hung ;

For, borne from bells on music soft,  
That solemn hour went forth  
through heaven,  
To stir the starry airs aloft,  
And thrill the purple pulse of  
even.

O happy hush of heart to heart !  
O moment molten through with  
bliss !

O Love, delaying long to part  
That first, fast, individual kiss !

Whereon two lives on glowing lips  
Hung claspt, each feeling fold in  
fold,

Like daisies closed with crimson  
tips,  
That sleep about a heart of gold.

Was it some drowsy rose that  
moved ?

Some dreaming dove's pathetic  
moan ?

Or was it my name from lips be-  
loved ?

And was it thy sweet breath, mine  
own,

That made me feel the tides of sense  
O'er life's low levels rise with  
might,

And pour my being down the im-  
mense

Shore of some mystic Infinite ?

"O, have I found thee, my soul's  
soul !

My chosen forth from time and  
space !

And did we then break earth's con-  
trol ?

And have I seen thee face to face ?

"Close, closer to thy home, my  
breast,

Closer thy darling arms enfold !  
I need such warmth, for else the rest  
Of life will freeze me dead with  
cold.

"Long was the search, the effort  
long,

Ere I compelled thee from thy  
sphere,

I know not with what mystic song  
I know not with what nightly  
tear :

"But thou art here, beneath whose  
eyes

My passion falters, even as some  
Pale wizard's taper sinks, and dies,  
When to his spell a spirit is come.

"My brow is pale with much of  
pain :

Though I am young, my youth is  
gone,

And, shouldst thou leave me lone  
again,

I think I could not live alone.

"As some idea, half divined,  
With tumult works within the  
brain

Of desolate genius, and the mind  
Is vassal to imperious pain,

"For toil by day, for tears by night,  
Till, in the sphere of vision  
brought,

Rises the beautiful and bright  
Predestined, but relentless  
Thought ;

"So, gathering up the dreams of  
years,

Thy love doth to its destined seat  
Rise sovran, through the light of  
tears—

Achieved, accomplisht, and com-  
plete !

"I fear not now lest any hour  
Should chill the lips my own have  
prest ;

For I possess thee by the power  
Whereby I am myself possess.

"These eyes must lose their guiding  
light :

These lips from thine, I know,  
must sever ;

O looks and lips may disunite,  
But ever love is love forever !"

## SINCE.

WORDS like to these were said, or  
dreamed

(How long since !) on a night di-  
vine,

By lips from which such rapture  
streamed

I cannot deem those lips were  
mine.

The day comes up above the roofs,  
All fallow from a night of rain ;

The sound of feet, and wheels, and  
hoofs

In the blurred street begins again :



The same old toil—no end—no aim!  
The same vile babble in my ears;  
The same unmeaning smiles: the  
same  
Most miserable dearth of tears.

The same dull sound: the same dull  
lack  
Of lustre in the level gray:  
It seems like Yesterday come back  
With his old things, and not To-  
day.

But now and then her name will fall  
From careless lips with little  
praise,  
On this dry shell, and shatter all  
The smooth indifference of my  
days.

They chatter of her—deem her  
light—  
The apes and liars! they who  
know  
As well to sound the unfathomed  
Night  
As her impenetrable woe!

And here, where Slander's scorn is  
spilt,  
And gabbling Folly clucks above  
Her addled eggs, it feels like guilt,  
To know that far away, my love

Her heart on every heartless hour  
Is bruising, breaking, for my sake:  
While, coiled and numbed, and void  
of power,  
My life sleeps like a winter snake.

I know that at the mid of night,  
(When she flings by the glittering  
stress  
Of Pride, that mocks the vulgar sight,  
And fronts her chamber's loneli-  
ness,)

She breaks in tears, and, overthrown  
With sorrowing, weeps the night  
away,  
Till back to his unlovely throne  
Returns the unrelenting day.

All treachery could devise hath  
wrought  
Against us:—letters robbed and  
read:  
Snares hid in smiles: betrayal  
bought:  
And lies imputed to the dead.

I will arise, and go to her,  
And save her in her own despite;  
For in my breast begins to stir  
A pulse of its old power and might.

They cannot so have slandered me  
But what, I know, if I should call  
And stretch my arms to her, that she  
Would rush into them, spite of all.

In Life's great lazar-house, each  
breath  
We breathe may bring or spread  
the pest; [death  
And, woman, each may catch his  
From those that lean upon his  
breast.

I know how tender friends of me  
Have talked with broken hint, and  
glance:  
—The choicest flowers of calumny,  
That seem, like weeds, to spring  
from chance;—

That small, small, imperceptible  
Small talk, which cuts like pow-  
dered glass  
Ground in Tophana—none can tell  
Where lurks the power the poison  
has!

I may be worse than they would  
prove,  
(Who knows the worst of any  
man?)  
But, right or wrong, be sure my  
love  
Is not what they conceive, or can.

Nor do I question what thou art.  
Nor what thy life, in great or  
small,  
Thou art, I know, what all my heart  
Must beat or break for. That is  
all.

## A LOVE-LETTER.

My love,—my chosen,—but not  
mine! I send  
My whole heart to thee in these  
words I write;

So let the blotted lines, my soul's  
sole friend,  
Lie upon thine, and there be blest  
at night.

This flower, whose bruised purple  
blood will stain  
The page now wet with the hot  
tears that fall—

(Indeed, indeed, I struggle to re-  
strain  
This weakness, but the tears come,  
spite of all!)

I plucked it from the branch you  
used to praise,  
The branch that hides the wall.  
I tend your flowers.

I keep the paths we paced in happier  
days.  
How long ago they seem, those  
pleasant hours.

The white laburnum's out. Your  
judas-tree  
Begins to shed those crimson buds  
of his. [ously

The nightingales sing—ah, too joy-  
Who says those birds are sad? I  
think there is

That in the books we read, which  
deeper wrings  
My heart, so they lie dusty on the  
shelf.

Ah me, I meant to speak of other  
things  
Less sad. In vain! they bring me  
to myself.

I know your patience. And I would  
not cast  
New shade on days so dark as  
yours are grown

By weak and wild repining for the  
past,  
Since it is past forever, O mine  
own!

For hard enough the daily cross you  
bear,  
Without that deeper pain reflec-  
tion brings;  
And all too sore the fretful house-  
hold care,  
Free of the contrast of remembered  
things.

But ah! it little profits, that we  
thrust  
For all that's said, what both must  
fell, unnamed.  
Better to face it boldly, as we must,  
Than feel it in the silence, and be  
shamed.

Irene, I have loved you, as men  
love  
Light, music, odor, beauty, love it-  
self!—  
Whatever is apart from, and above  
Those daily needs which deal with  
dust and pelf.

And I had been content, without one  
thought  
Our guardian angels could have  
blusht to know,  
So to have lived and died, demand-  
ing nought  
Save, living dying, to have loved  
you so.

My youth was orphaned, and my age  
will be  
Childless. I have no sister. None,  
to steal  
One stray thought from the many  
thoughts of thee,  
Which are the source of all I  
think and feel.

My wildest wish was vassal to thy  
will:  
My haughtiest hope, a pensioner  
on thy smile,  
Which did with light my barren be-  
ing fill,  
As moonlight glorifies some desert  
isle.



I never thought to know what I  
have known,—  
The rapture, dear, of being loved  
by you :  
I never thought, within my heart, to  
own  
One wish so blest that you should  
share it too :

Nor ever did I deem, contemplat-  
ing  
The many sorrows in this place of  
pain,  
So strange a sorrow to my life could  
cling,  
As, being thus loved, to be beloved  
in vain.

But now we know the best, the  
worst. We have  
Interred, and prematurely, and un-  
known,  
Our youth, our hearts, our hopes, in  
one small grave,  
Whence we must wander, wid-  
owed, to our own.

And if we comfort not each other,  
what  
Shall comfort us, in the dark days  
to come ?

Not the light laughter of the world,  
and not  
The faces and the firelight of fond  
home.

And so I write to you ; and write,  
and write,  
For the mere sake of writing to  
you, dear.

What can I tell you, that you know  
not ? Night  
Is deepening through the rosy  
atmosphere

About the lonely casement of this  
room,  
Which you have left familiar with  
the grace  
That grows where you have been.  
And on the gloom  
I almost fancy I can see your face.

Not pale with pain, and tears re-  
strained for me,  
As when I last beheld it ; but as  
first,  
A dream of rapture and of poesy,  
Upon my youth, like dawn on  
dark, it burst.

Perchance I shall not ever see again  
That face. I know that I shall  
never see  
Its radiant beauty as I saw it then,  
Save by this lonely lamp of  
memory,

With childhood's starry graces linger-  
ing yet  
'T the rosy orient of young woman-  
hood ;  
And eyes like woodland violets newly  
wet ;  
And lips that left their meaning  
in my blood !

I will not say to you what I might  
say  
To one less worthily loved, less  
worthy love.

I will not say . . . "Forget the past.  
Be gay.  
And let the all ill-judging world  
approve

"Light in your eyes, and laughter  
on your lip."  
I will not say . . . "Dissolve in  
thought forever  
Our sorrowful, but sacred, fellow-  
ship."  
For that would be, to bid you,  
dear, disserve

Your nature from its nobler heritage  
In consolations registered in hea-  
ven,  
For griefs this world is barren to as-  
suage,  
And hopes to which, on earth, no  
home is given.

But I would whisper, what forever-  
more  
My own heart whispers through  
the wakeful night. . . .

"This grief is but a shadow, flung  
before,  
From some refulgent substance  
out of sight."

Wherefore it happens, in this riddling  
world,  
That, where sin came not, sorrow  
yet should be ;  
Why heaven's most hurtful thunders  
should be hurled  
At what seems noblest in human-  
ity ;

And we are punished for our purest  
deeds,  
And chastened for our holiest  
thoughts ; . . . alas !  
There is no reason found in all the  
creeds,  
Why these things are, nor whence  
they come to pass.

But in the heart of man, a secret  
voice  
There is, which speaks, and will  
not be restrained,  
Which cries to Grief . . . "Weep  
on, while I rejoice,  
Knowing that, somewhere, all will  
be explained."

I will not cant that commonplace of  
friends,  
Which never yet hath dried one  
mourner's tears,  
Nor say that grief's slow wisdom  
makes amends  
For broken hearts and desolated  
years.

For who would barter all he hopes  
from life,  
To be a little wiser than his kind ?  
Who arm his nature for continued  
strife,  
Where all he seeks for hath been  
left behind ?

But I would say, O pure and perfect  
pearl  
Which I have dived so deep in life  
to find,

Locked in my heart thou liest. The  
wave may curl,  
The wind may wail above us.  
Wave and wind,

What are their storm and strife to  
me and you ?  
No strife can mar the pure heart's  
inmost calm.

This life of ours, what is it ? A very  
few  
Soon-ended years, and then,—the  
ceaseless psalm,

And the eternal sabbath of the  
soul !  
Hush ! . . . while I write, from  
the dim Carminé

The midnight angelus begins to roll,  
And float athwart the darkness up  
to me.

My messenger (a man by danger  
tried)  
Waits in the courts below ; and  
ere our star <sup>[died,</sup>  
Upon the forehead of the dawn hath  
Beloved one, this letter will be far

Athwart the mountain, and the mist,  
to you.  
I know each robber hamlet. I  
know all

This mountain people. I have  
friends, both true  
And trusted, sworn to aid whate'er  
befall.

I have a bark upon the gulf. And I,  
If to my heart I yielded in this  
hour,  
Might say . . . "Sweet fellow-suf-  
ferer, let us fly !  
I know a little isle which doth em-  
bower

"A home where exiled angels might  
forbear  
A while to mourn for paradise." . .  
But no !  
Never, whate'er fate now may bring  
us, dear,  
Shalt thou reproach me for that  
only woe



Which even love is powerless to con-  
sole ;  
Which dwells where duty dies :  
and haunts the tomb  
Of life's abandoned purpose in the  
soul ;  
And leaves to hope, in heaven it-  
self, no room.

Man cannot make, but may ennoble,  
fate,  
By nobly bearing it. So let us  
trust,  
Not to ourselves, but God, and calm-  
ly wait  
Love's orient, out of darkness and  
of dust.

Farewell, and yet again farewell, and  
yet  
Never farewell,—if farewell mean  
to fare  
Alone and disunited. Love hath set  
Our days, in music, to the self-  
same air ;

And I shall feel, wherever we may  
be,  
Even though in absence and an  
alien clime,  
The shadow of the sunniness of  
thee,  
Hovering, in patience, through a  
clouded time.

Farewell ! The dawn is rising, and  
the light  
Is making, in the east, a faint en-  
deavor  
To illuminate the mountain peaks.  
Good-night.  
Thine own, and only thine, my  
love, forever.

#### CONDEMNED ONES.

ABOVE thy child I saw thee bend,  
Where in that silent room we sat  
apart.  
I watched the involuntary tear de-  
scend ;

The firelight was not all so dim, my  
friend,  
But I could read thy heart.

Yet when, in that familiar room,  
I strove, so moveless in my place,  
To look with comfort in thy face,  
That child's young smile was all that  
I could see  
Ever between us in the thoughtful  
gloom,—  
Ever between thyself and me,—  
With its bewildering grace.

Life is not what it might have been,  
Nor are we what we would !  
And we must meet with smiling  
mien,  
And part in careless mood,  
Knowing that each retains unseen,  
In cells of sense subdued,  
A little lurking secret of the blood—  
A little serpent - secret rankling  
keen—  
That makes the heart its food.

Yet is there much for grateful tears,  
if sad ones,  
And Hope's young orphans Memory  
mothers yet ;  
So let them go, the 'sunny days we  
had once,  
Our night hath stars that will not  
ever set.  
And in our hearts are harps, albeit  
not glad ones,  
Yet not all unmelodious, through  
whose strings  
The night-winds murmur their fa-  
miliar things,  
Unto a kindred sadness : the sea  
brings  
The spirits of its solitude, with  
wings  
Folden about the music of its lyre,  
Thrilled with deep duals by sublime  
desire,  
Which never can attain, yet ever  
must aspire,  
And glorify regret.

What might have been, I know, is  
not :  
What must be, must be borne :  
But, ah ! what hath been will not  
be forgot,  
Never, oh ! never, in the years to  
follow !  
Though all their summers light a  
waste forlorn,  
Yet shall there be (hid from the care-  
less swallow  
And sheltered from the bleak wind  
in the thorn)  
In Memory's mournful but beloved  
hollow,  
One dear green spot !

Hope, the high will of Heaven  
To help us hath not given,  
But more than unto most of consolati-  
on :  
Since heart from heart may borrow  
Healing for deep heart-sorrow,  
And draw from yesterday, to soothe  
to-morrow,  
The sad, sweet divination  
Of that unuttered sympathy, which  
is  
Love's sorceress, and for Love's dear  
sake,  
About us both such spells doth  
make,  
As none can see, and none can  
break,  
And none restrain :—a secret pain  
Claspt to a secret bliss.

A tone, a touch,  
A little look, may be so much !  
Those moments brief, nor often,  
When, leaning laden breast to  
breast,  
Pale cheek to cheek, life, long re-  
prest,  
May gush with tears that leave half  
blest  
The want of bliss they soften.  
The little glance across the crowd,  
None else can read, wherein there  
lies  
A life of love at once avowed—

The embrace of pining eyes. . . .  
So little more had made earth heav-  
en,  
That hope to help us was not given !

#### THE STORM.

BOTH hollow and hill were dumb as  
death,  
While the skies were silently  
changing form ;  
And the dread forecast of the  
thunder-storm  
Made the crouched land hold in its  
breath.

But the monstrous vapor as yet was  
unriven  
That was breeding the thunder  
and lightning and rain ;  
And the wind that was waiting to  
ruin the plain  
Was yet fast in some far hold of  
heaven.

So, in absolute absence of stir or  
strife,  
The red land lay as still as a  
drifted leaf :  
The roar of the thunder had been  
a relief,  
To the calm of that death-brooding  
life.

At the wide-flung casement she stood  
full height,  
With her long rolling hair tumbled  
all down her back ;  
And, against the black sky's super-  
natural black,  
Her white neck gleamed scornfully  
white.

I could catch not a gleam of her  
angered eyes  
(She was sullenly watching the  
slow storm roll),  
But I felt they were drawing down  
into her soul  
The thunder that darkened the skies.



And how could I feign, in that heart-  
less gloom,  
To be carelessly reading that  
stupid page?  
What harm, if I flung it in anguish  
and rage,  
Her book, to the end of the room?

"And so, do we part thus forever?"  
. . . I said,  
"O, speak only one word, and I  
pardon the rest!"  
She drew her white scarf tighter  
over her breast,  
But she never once turned round  
her head.

"In this wicked old world is there  
naught to disdain?  
Or"—I groaned—"are those  
dark eyes such deserts of  
blindness,  
That, O Woman! your heart must  
hoard all its unkindness,  
For the man on whose breast it hath  
lain?"

"Leave it nameless, the grave of the  
grief that is past;  
Be its sole sign the silence we  
keep for its sake.  
I have loved you—lie still in my  
heart till it break:  
As I loved, I must love to the last.

"Speak! the horrible silence is  
stifling my soul."  
She turned on me at once all the  
storm in her eyes;  
And I heard the low thunder aloof  
in the skies,  
Beginning to mutter and roll.

She turned—by the lightning re-  
vealed in its glare,  
And the tempest had clothed her  
with terror: it clung  
To the folds of her vaporous gar-  
ments, and hung  
In the heaps of her heavy wild hair.

But one word broke the silence; but  
one; and it fell  
With the weight of a mountain  
upon me. Next moment  
The fierce levin flashed in my eyes,  
From my comment  
She was gone when I turned. Who  
can tell

How I got to my home on the  
mountain? I know  
That the thunder was rolling, the  
lightning still flashing,  
The great bells were tolling, my  
very brain crashing  
In my head, a few hours ago:

Then all hushed. In the distance  
the blue rain receded;  
And the fragments of storm were  
spread out on the hills;  
Hard by, from my lattice, I heard  
the far rills  
Leaping down their rock-channels,  
wild-weeded.

The round, red moon was yet low in  
the air. . . .  
O, I knew it, foresaw it, and felt  
it, before  
I heard her light hand on the  
latch of the door!  
When it opened at last,—she was  
there.

Childlike, and wistful, and sorrow-  
ful-eyed,  
With the rain on her hair, and the  
rain on her cheek;  
She knelt down, with her fair  
forehead fallen and meek  
In the light of the moon at my side.

And she called me by every caressing  
old name  
She of old had invented and chosen  
for me:  
She crouched at my feet, with her  
cheek on my knee.  
Like a wild thing grown suddenly  
tame.

In the world there are women  
enough, maids or mothers;  
Yet, in multiplied millions, I never  
should find  
The symbol of aught in her face,  
or her mind.  
She has nothing in common with  
others:

And she loves me! This morning the  
earth, pressed beneath  
Her light foot, keeps the print.  
'Twas no vision last night,  
For the lily she dropped, as she  
went, is yet white  
With the dew on its delicate sheath!

## THE VAMPIRE.

I FOUND a corpse, with golden hair,  
Of a maiden seven months dead.  
But the face, with the death in it,  
still was fair,  
And the lips with their love were  
red.  
Rose leaves on a snow-drift shed,  
Blood-drops by Adonis bled,  
Doubtless were not so red.

I combed her hair into curls of gold,  
And I kissed her lips till her lips  
were warm,  
And I bathed her body in moonlight  
cold,  
Till she grew to a living form:  
Till she stood up bold to a magic of  
old,  
And walked to a muttered  
charm—  
Life-like, without alarm.

And she walks by me and she talks  
by me,  
Evermore, night and day;  
For she loves me so, that, wherever  
I go,  
She follows me all the way—  
This corpse—you would almost  
say  
There pined a soul in the clay.

Her eyes are so bright at the dead of  
night  
That they keep me awake with  
dread;  
And my life-blood fails in my veins,  
and pales  
At the sight of her lips so red:  
For her face is as white as the pillow  
by night  
Where she kisses me on my bed:  
All her gold hair outspread—  
Neither alive nor dead.

I would that this woman's head  
Were less golden about the hair:  
I would her lips were less red,  
And her face less deadly fair.  
For this is the worst to bear—  
How came that redness there?

'Tis my heart, be sure, she eats for  
her food;  
And it makes one's whole flesh  
creep  
To think that she drinks and drains  
my blood  
Unawares, when I am asleep.  
How else could those red lips  
keep  
Their redness so damson-deep?

There's a thought like a serpent,  
slips  
Ever into my heart and head,—  
There are plenty of women, alive  
and human,  
One might woo, if one wished, and  
wed—  
Women with hearts, and brains,—ay  
and lips  
Not so very terribly red.

But to house with a corpse—and she  
so fair,  
With that dim, unearthly, golden  
hair,  
And those sad, serene, blue eyes.  
With their looks from who knows  
where,  
Which Death has made so wise,  
With the grave's own secret  
there—



It is more than a man can bear !  
 It were better for me, ere I came  
 nigh her, [her,  
 This corpse—ere I looked upon  
 Had they burned my body in flame  
 and fire  
 With a sorcerer's dishonor.  
 For when the Devil hath made his  
 lair,  
 And lurks in the eyes of a fair  
 young woman  
 (To grieve a man's soul with her  
 golden hair,  
 And break his heart if his heart  
 be human),  
 Would not a saint despair  
 To be saved by fast or prayer  
 From perdition made so fair ?

## CHANGE.

SHE is unkind, unkind !  
 On the windy hill, to-day,  
 I sat in the sound of the wind.  
 I knew what the wind would say.  
 It said . . . . or seemed to my  
 mind . . . .  
 The flowers are falling away.  
 The summer, . . . it said, . . . .  
 "will not stay,  
 And Love will be left behind."  
 The swallows were swinging them-  
 selves  
 In the leaden-gray air aloft ;  
 Flitting by tens and twelves,  
 And returning oft and oft ;  
 Like the thousand thoughts in me,  
 That went, and came, and went,  
 Not letting me even be  
 Alone with my discontent.  
 The hard-vest weary vane  
 Rattled, and moaned and was still,  
 In the convent over the plain,  
 By the side of the windy hill.  
 It was sad to hear it complain,  
 So fretful, and weak, and shrill,  
 Again, and again, and in vain,  
 While the wind was changing his  
 will.

I thought of our walks last summer  
 By the convent-walls so green ;  
 On the first kiss stolen from her,  
 With no one near to be seen.  
 I thought (as we wandered on,  
 Each of us waiting to speak)  
 How the daylight left us alone,  
 And left his last light on her cheek.

The plain was as cold and gray  
 (With its villas like glimmering  
 shells)  
 As some north-ocean bay.  
 All dumb in the church were the  
 bells.  
 In the mist, half a league away,  
 Lay the little white house where she  
 dwells.

I thought of her face so bright,  
 By the firelight bending low  
 O'er her work so neat and white ;  
 Of her singing so soft and slow ;  
 Of her tender-toned "Good-night;"  
 But a very few nights ago.

O'er the convent doors, I could see  
 A pale and sorrowful-eyed  
 Madonna looking at me,  
 As when Our Lord first died.

There was not a lizard or spider  
 To be seen on the broken walls.  
 The ruts, with the rain, had grown  
 wider  
 And blacker since last night's falls.  
 O'er the universal dulness  
 There broke not a single beam.  
 I thought how my love at its fulness  
 Had changed like a change in a  
 dream.

The olives were shedding fast  
 About me, to left and right,  
 In the lap of the scornful blast  
 Black berries and leaflets white.  
 I thought of the many romances  
 One wintry word can blight ;  
 Of the tender and timorous fancies  
 By a cold look put to flight.

How many noble deeds  
 Strangled perchance at their birth !  
 The smoke of the burning weeds  
 Came up with the steam of the  
 earth,  
 From the red, wet ledges of soil,  
 And the sere vines, row over row,—  
 And the vineyard-men at their toil,  
 Who sang in the vineyard below.

Last Spring, while I thought of her  
 here,  
 I found a red rose on the hill.  
 There it lies, withered and sere !  
 Let him trust to a woman who will.

I thought how her words had grown  
 colder,  
 And her fair face colder still,  
 From the hour whose silence had  
 told her  
 What has left me heart-broken and  
 ill ;  
 And "Oh !" I thought, . . . "if I  
 behold her  
 Walking there with him under the  
 hill !"

O'er the mist, from the mournful  
 city  
 The bleat lamps gleamed aghast,—  
 —"She has neither justice, nor  
 pity,"

I thought, . . . "all's over at last,"  
 The cold eve came. One star  
 Through a ragged gray gap forlorn  
 Fell down from some region afar,  
 And sickened as soon as born.  
 I thought, "How long and how lone  
 The years will seem to be,  
 When the last of her looks is gone,  
 And my heart is silent in me !"

One streak of scornful gold,  
 In the cloudy and billowy west,  
 Burned with a light as cold  
 As love in a much-wronged breast.  
 I thought of her face so fair ;  
 Of her perfect bosom and arm ;  
 Of her deep sweet eyes and hair ;  
 Of her breath so pure and warm ;

Of her foot so fine and fairy  
 Through the meadows where she  
 would pass ;  
 Of the sweep of her skirts so airy  
 And fragrant over the grass.

I thought . . . "Can I live without  
 her  
 Whatever she do, or say ?"  
 I thought . . . "Can I dare to doubt  
 her,  
 Now when I have given away  
 My whole self, body and spirit,  
 To keep, or to cast aside,  
 To dower or disinherit,—  
 To use as she may decide ?"

The West was beginning to close  
 O'er the last light burning there.  
 I thought . . . "And when that  
 goes,  
 The dark will be everywhere !"

Oh ! well is it hidden from man  
 Whatever the Future may bring.  
 The bells in the church began  
 On a sudden to sound and swing.  
 The chimes on the gust were caught,  
 And rolled up the windy height.  
 I rose, and returned, and thought . . .  
 "I SHALL NOT SEE HER TO-  
 NIGHT."

## A CHAIN TO WEAR.

AWAY ! away ! The dream was  
 vain.  
 We meet too soon, or meet too  
 late :  
 Still wear, as best you may, the  
 chain  
 Your own hands forged about your  
 fate,  
 Who could not wait !

What ! . . . you had given your life  
 away  
 Before you found what most life  
 misses ?  
 Forsworn the bridal dream, you say,  
 Of that ideal love, whose kisses  
 Are vain as this is !



Well, I have left upon your mouth  
The seal I know must burn there  
yet ;  
My claim is set upon your youth ;  
My sign upon your soul is set :  
Dare you forget ?

And you 'll haunt, I know, where  
music plays,  
Yet find a pain in music's tone ;  
You 'll blush, of course, when others  
praise  
That beauty scarcely now your  
own.

What's done, is done !

For me, you say, the world is  
wide,—  
Too wide to find the grave I seek !  
Enough ! whatever now betide,  
No greater pang can blanch my  
cheek.

Hush ! . . . do not speak.

#### SILENCE.

WORDS of fire, and words of scorn,  
I have written. Let them go !  
Words of love—heart-broken, torn,  
With this strong and sudden woe.  
All my scorn, she could not doubt,  
Was but love turned inside out.

Silence, silence, still unstirred ;  
Long, unbroken, unexplained :  
Not one word, one little word,  
Even to show her touched or  
pained :

Silence, silence, all unbroken :  
Not a sound, a sign, a token.

Well, let silence gather round  
All this shattered life of mine.  
Shall I break it by a sound ?  
Let it grow, and be divine—  
Divine as that Prometheus kept  
When for his sake the sea-nymphs  
wept.

Let silence settle, still and deep ;  
As the mist, the thunder-cloud,  
O'er the lonely blasted steep,  
Which the red bolt hath not  
bowed,

Settle, to drench out the star,  
And cancel the blue vales afar.

In this silence I will sheafhe  
The sharp edge and point of all  
Not a sigh my lips shall breathe ;  
Not a groan, whate'er befall.  
And let this sworded silence be  
A fence 'twixt prying fools and me.

Let silence be about her name,  
And o'er the things which once  
have been :

Let silence cover up my shame,  
And annul that face, once seen  
In fatal hours, and all the light  
Of those eyes extinguish quite.

In silence, I go forth alone  
O'er the solemn mystery  
Of the deeds which, to be done,  
Yet undone in the future lie.  
I peer in Time's high nests, and there  
Espy the callow brood of Care,

The fledgeless nurselings of Regret,  
With beaks forever stretched for  
food :

But why should I forecount as yet  
The ravage of that vulture brood ?  
O'er all these things let silence stay,  
And lie, like snow, along my way.

Let silence in this outraged heart  
Abide, and seal these lips forever ;  
Let silence dwell with me apart  
Beside the ever-babbling river  
Of that loud life in towns, that runs  
Blind to the changes of the suns.

Ah ! from what most mournful star,  
Wasting down on evening's edge,  
Or what barren isle afar  
Flung by on some bare ocean ledge,  
Came the wicked hag to us,  
That changed the fairy revel thus ?

There were sounds from sweet gui-  
tars  
Once, and lights from lamps of  
amber ;

Both went up among the stars  
From many a perfumed palace-  
chamber :  
Suddenly the place seemed dead ;  
Light and music both were fled.

Darkness in each perfumed chamber ;  
Darkness, silence, in the stars ;  
Darkness on the lamps of amber ;  
Silence in the sweet guitars :  
Darkness, silence, evermore  
Guard empty chamber, moveless  
door.

#### NEWS.

News, news, news, my gossiping  
friends !

I have wonderful news to tell.  
A lady, by me, her compliments  
sends ;  
And this is the news from Hell :

The Devil is dead. He died resigned,  
Though somewhat opprest by  
cares ;

But his wife, my friends, is a woman  
of mind,  
And looks after her lord's affairs.

I have just come back from that  
wonderful place,  
And kist hands with the Queen  
down there ;  
But I cannot describe Her Majesty's  
face.  
It has filled me so with despair.

The place is not what you might  
suppose :  
It is worse in some respects.  
But all that I heard there, I must  
not disclose,  
For the lady that told me objects.

The laws of the land are not Salique,  
But the King never dies, of course ;  
The new Queen is young, and pretty,  
and *chic*,  
There are women, I think, that are  
worse.

But however that be, one thing I  
know,  
And this I am free to tell ;  
The Devil, my friends, is a woman,  
just now ;  
'Tis a woman that reigns in Hell.

#### COUNT RINALDO RINALDI.

'Tis a dark-purple, moonlighted mid-  
night :  
There is music about on the air.  
And, where, through the water, fall  
flashing

The oars of each gay gondolier,  
The lamp-lighted ripples are dashing,  
In the musical moonlighted air,  
To the music, in merriment ; wash-  
ing,  
And splashing, the black marble  
stair

That leads to the last garden-terrace,  
Where many a gay cavalier  
And many a lady yet loiter,  
Round the Palace in festival there.

'Tis a terrace all paven mosaic,—  
Black marble, and green malachite ;  
Round an ancient Venetian Palace,  
Where the windows with lampions  
are bright.

'Tis an evening of gala and festival,  
Music, and passion, and light.  
There is love in the nightingales'  
throats,

That sing in the garden so well :  
There is love in the face of the moon :  
There is love in the warm languid  
glances

Of the dancers adown the dim  
dances :

There is love in the low languid notes  
That rise into rapture, and swell,  
From viol, and flute, and bassoon.

The tree that bends down o'er the  
water  
So black, is a black cypress-tree.  
And the statue, there, under the  
terrace,  
Mnemosyne's statue must be.



There comes a black gondola slowly  
To the Palace in festival there :  
And the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi  
Has mouted the black marble stair.

There was nothing but darkness, and  
midnight,  
And tempest, and storm, in the  
breast

Of the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi,  
As his foot o'er the black marble  
prest :—

The glimmering black marble stair  
Where the weed in the green ooze  
is clinging,

That leads to the garden so fair,  
Where the nightingales softly are  
singing,—

Where the minstrels new music  
are stringing,  
And the dancers for dancing prepare.

There rustles a robe of white satin :  
There's a footstep falls light by the  
stair :

There rustles a robe of white satin :  
There's a gleaming of soft golden  
hair :

And the Lady Irene Ricasoli  
Stands near the cypress-tree  
there,—

Near Mnemosyne's statue so fair,—  
The Lady Irene Ricasoli,  
With the light in her long golden  
hair.

And the nightingales softly are sing  
ing  
air ;

In the mellow and moonlighted  
And the minstrels their viols are  
stringing ;

And the dancers for dancing pre-  
pare.

"Siora," the Count said unto her,  
"The shafts of ill-fortune pursue  
me ;

The old grief grows newer and newer,  
The old pangs are never at rest ;  
And the foes that have sworn to  
undo me

Have left me no peace in my  
breast.

They have slandered, and wronged,  
and maligned me :

Though they broke not my sword  
in my hand,

They have broken my heart in my  
bosom [manned.

And sorrow my youth has un-  
But I love you, Irene, Irene,  
With such love as the wretched  
alone

Can feel from the desert within them  
Which only the wretched have  
known !

And the heart of Rinaldo Rinaldi  
Dreads, Lady, no frown but your  
own.

To others be all that you are, love—  
A lady more lovely than most ;  
To me—be a fountain, a star, love,  
That lights to his haven the lost ;

A shrine that with tender devotion,  
The mariner kneeling, doth deck  
With the dank weeds yet dripping  
from ocean,

And the last jewel saved from the  
wreck.

"None heeds us, beloved Irene !  
None will mark if we linger or fly.  
Amid all the mad masks in you revel,  
There is not an ear or an eye,—

Not one,—that will gaze or will  
listen ;

And, save the small star in the sky  
Which, to light us, so softly doth  
glisten,

There is none will pursue us, Irene.  
O love me, O save me, I die !  
I am thine, O be mine, O beloved !

"Fly with me, Irene, Irene !  
The moon drops : the morning is  
near,

My gondola waits by the garden  
And fleet is my own gondolier !"  
What the Lady Irene Ricasoli,  
By Mnemosyne's statue in stone,  
Where she leaned, 'neath the black  
cypress-tree,

To the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi  
Replied then, it never was known,  
And known, now, it never will be.

But the moon hath been melted in  
morning :

And the lamps in the windows are  
dead :

And the gay cavaliers from the ter-  
race,  
And the ladies they laughed with,  
are fled ;

And the music is husht in the viols :  
And the minstrels, and dancers,  
are gone ;

And the nightingales now in the  
garden, [one :

From singing have ceased, one by  
But the Count Rinaldo Rinaldi  
Still stands, where he last stood,  
alone,

'Neath the black cypress-tree, near  
the water,  
By Mnemosyne's statue in stone.

O'er his spirit was silence and mid-  
night,  
In his breast was the calm of de-  
spair.

He took, with a smile, from a casket  
A single soft curl of gold hair,—  
A wavy warm-curl of gold hair,  
And into the black-bosomed water  
He flung it athwart the black stair.

The skies they were changing above  
him ;

The dawn, it came cold on the air ;  
He drew from his bosom a kerchief—  
"Would," he sighed, "that her  
face was less fair !

That her face was less hopelessly  
fair."

And folding the kerchief, he covered  
The eyes of Mnemosyne there.

#### THE LAST MESSAGE.

FLING the lattice open,  
And the music plain you'll hear ;  
Lean out of the window,  
And you'll see the lamplight clear.

There, you see the palace  
Where the bridal is to-night.  
You may shut the window.  
Come here, to the light.

Take this portrait with you,  
Look well before you go.  
She can scarce be altered  
Since a year ago.

Women's hearts change lightly,  
(Truth both trite and olden !)  
But blue eyes remain blue ;  
Golden hair stays golden.

Once I knew two sisters :  
One was dark and grave  
As the tomb ; one radiant  
And changeful as the wave.

Now away, friend, quickly !  
Mix among the masks :  
Say you are the bride's friend,  
If the bridegroom asks.

If the bride have dark hair,  
And an olive brow,  
Give her this gold bracelet ;—  
Come and let me know.

If the bride have bright hair,  
And a brow of snow,  
In the great canal there  
Quick the portrait throw :

And you'll merely give her  
This poor faded flower.  
Thanks ! now leave your stilet  
With me for an hour.

You're my friend : whatever  
I ask you now to do,  
If the case were altered,  
I would do for you.

And you'll promise me, my mother  
Shall never miss her son,  
If anything should happen  
Before the night is done.

#### VENICE.

THE sylphs and ondines,  
And the sea-kings and queens,  
Long ago, long ago, on the waves  
built a city,  
As lovely as seems  
To some bard, in his dreams,  
The soul of his latest love-ditty.