

On the lips we once clung to.  
Be it so ! O too loved, and too lovely,  
to linger  
Where Age in its bareness  
Creeps slowly, and Time with his  
terrible finger  
Effaces all fairness.  
Thy being was but beauty, thy life  
only rapture,  
And, ere both were over,  
Or yet one delight had escaped from  
thy capture,  
Death came,—thy last lover,  
And found thee, . . . no care on thy  
brow, in thy tresses  
No silver—all gold there !  
On thy lips, when he kissed them,  
their last human kisses  
Had scarcely grown cold there.  
Thine was only earth's joy, not its  
sorrow, its sinning,  
Its friends that are foes too.  
O, fair was thy life in its lovely begin-  
ning,  
And fair in its close too !  
But I ? . . . since we parted, both  
mournful and many  
Life's changes have been to me :  
And of all the love-garlands Youth  
wove me, not any  
Remain that are green to me.  
O, where are the nights, with thy  
touch and thy breath in them,  
Faint with heart-beating ?  
The fragrance, the darkness, the life  
and the death in them,  
—Parting and meeting ?  
All the world ours in that hour ! . . .  
O, the silence,  
The moonlight, and, far in it,  
O, the one nightingale singing a mile  
hence ! [it !  
The oped window—one star in  
Sole witness of stolen sweet mo-  
ments, unguest of  
By the world in its primness :—  
Just one smile to adore by the star-  
light : the rest of  
Thy soul in the dimness !  
If I glide through the door of thy  
chamber, and sit there,

The old, faint, uncertain  
Fragrance, that followed thee, surely  
will flit there,—  
O'er the chairs,—in the cur-  
tain :—  
But thou ? . . . O thou missed, and  
thou mourned one ! O never,  
Nevermore, shall we rove  
Through chamber, or garden, or by  
the dark river  
Soft lamps burn above !  
O dead, child, dead, dead—all the  
shrunken romance  
Of the dream life begun with !  
But thou, love, canst alter no more—  
smile or glance ;  
Thy last change is done with.  
As a moon that is sunken, a sunset  
that's o'er,  
So thy face keeps the semblance  
Of the last look of love, the last grace  
that it wore,  
In my mourning remembrance.  
As a strain from the last of thy songs,  
when we parted,  
Whose echoes thrill yet,  
Through the long dreamless nights  
of sad years, lonely-hearted,  
With their haunting regret,—  
Though nerveless the hand now, and  
shattered the lute too,  
Once vocal for me,  
There floats through life's ruins,  
when all's dark and mute too,  
The music of thee !  
Beauty, how brief ! Life, how long !  
. . . well, love's done now !  
Down the path fate arranged for  
me  
I tread faster, because I must tread  
it alone now.  
—This is all that is changed for  
me.  
My heart must have broken, ere I  
broke the fetter  
Thyself didst undo, love.  
—Ah, there's many a purer, and  
many a better,  
But more loved, . . . O, how few,  
love !

## BOOK V.—IN HOLLAND.

## AUTUMN.

So now, then, Summer's over—by  
degrees.  
Hark ! 'tis the wind in yon red  
region grieves.  
Who says the world grows bet-  
ter, growing old ?  
See ! what poor trumpery on those  
pauper trees,  
That cannot keep, for all their fine  
gold leaves,  
Their last bird from the cold.  
This is Dame Nature, puckered,  
pinched, and sour,  
Of all the charms her poets  
praised, bereft,  
Scowling and scolding (only hear  
her, there !)  
Like that old spiteful Queen, in her  
last hour,  
Whom Spenser, Shakespeare, sung  
to . . . nothing left  
But wrinkles and red hair !

## LEAFLESS HOURS.

THE pale sun, through the spectral  
wood,  
Gleams sparely, where I pass :  
My footstep, silent as my mood,  
Falls in the silent grass.  
Only my shadow points before me,  
Where I am moving now :  
Only sad memories murmur o'er me  
From every leafless bough :  
And out of the nest of last year's  
Redbreast  
Is stolen the very snow.

ON MY TWENTY-FOURTH  
YEAR.

THE night's in November : the  
winds are at strife :  
The snow's on the hill, and the ice  
on the mere :

The world to its winter is turned  
and my life  
To its twenty-fourth year.

The swallows are flown to the south  
long ago :  
The roses are fallen : the wood-  
land is sere.  
Hope's flown with the swallows :  
Love's rose will not grow  
In my twenty-fourth year.

The snow on the threshold : the cold  
at the heart :  
But the fagot to warm, and the  
wine-cup to cheer :  
God's help to look up to : and cour-  
age to start  
On my twenty-fourth year.

And 'tis well that the month of the  
roses is o'er !  
The last, which I plucked for  
Neræa to wear,  
She gave her new lover. A man  
should do more  
With his twenty-fourth year

Than mourn for a woman, because  
she's unkind,  
Or pine for a woman, because she  
is fair.  
Ah, I loved you, Neræa ! But now  
. . . never mind,  
'Tis my twenty-fourth year !

What a thing ! to have done with  
the follies of Youth,  
Ere Age brings ITS follies ! . . .  
though many a tear  
It should cost, to see Love fly away,  
and find Truth  
In one's twenty-fourth year.

The Past's golden valleys are drained.  
I must plant  
On the Future's rough upland new  
harvests, I fear.

Ho, the plough and the team ! . . .  
 who would perish of want  
 In his twenty-fourth year ?  
 Man's heart is a well, which forever  
 renews  
 The void at the bottom, no sound-  
 ing comes near :  
 And Love does not die, though its  
 object I lose  
 In my twenty-fourth year.  
 The great and the little are only in  
 name.  
 The smoke from my chimney casts  
 shadows as drear  
 On the heart, as the smoke from  
 Vesuvius in flame :  
 And my twenty-fourth year,  
 From the joys that have cheered it,  
 the cares that have troubled,  
 What is wise to pursue, what is  
 well to revere,  
 May judge all as fully as though life  
 were doubled  
 To its forty-eighth year !  
 If the prospect grow dim, 'tis be-  
 cause it grows wide.  
 Every loss hath its gain. So, from  
 sphere on to sphere,  
 Man mounts up the ladder of Time :  
 so I stride  
 Up my twenty-fourth year !  
 Exulting ? . . . no . . . sorrowing ?  
 . . . no . . . with a mind  
 Whose regret chastens hope, whose  
 faith triumphs o'er fear :  
 Not repining : not confident : no,  
 but resigned  
 To my twenty-fourth year.

## JACQUELINE,

COUNTESS OF HOLLAND AND HAIN-  
 AULT.\*

Is it the twilight, or my fading sight,  
 Makes all so dim around me ? No,  
 the night

\* Who was married to the impotent and  
 worthless John of Brabant, affianced to

Is come already. See ! through yon-  
 der pane,  
 Alone in the gray air, that star  
 again—  
 Which shines so wan, I used to call  
 it mine  
 For its pale face : like Countess  
 Jacqueline  
 Who reigned in Brabant once . . .  
 that's years ago.  
 I called so much mine, then : so  
 much seemed so !  
 And see, my own !—of all those  
 things, my star  
 (Because God hung it there, in  
 heaven, so far  
 Above the reach and want of those  
 hard men) [Then  
 Is all they have not taken from me.  
 I call it still My Star. Why not ?  
 The dust  
 Hath claimed the dust : no more.  
 And moth and rust  
 May rot the throne, the kingly pur-  
 ple fray :  
 What then ? Yon star saw king-  
 doms rolled away  
 Ere mine was taken from me. It  
 survives.  
 But think, Belovéd,—in that high  
 life of lives,  
 When our souls see the suns them-  
 selves burn low  
 Before that Sun of Righteousness,—  
 and know  
 What is, and was, before the suns  
 were lit,—  
 How love is all in all . . . Look, look  
 at it,  
 My star,—God's star,—for being  
 God's 'tis mine :  
 Had it been man's . . . no matter  
 . . . see it shine—

"good Duke Humphry," of Gloucester,  
 and finally wedded to Frank von Borseien,  
 a gentleman of Zealand, in consequence of  
 which marriage she lost even the title of  
 Countess. She died at the age of thirty-  
 six, after a life of unparalleled adventure  
 and misfortune. See any Biographical  
 Dictionary, or any History of the Nether-  
 lands.

The old wan beam, which I have  
 watched ere now  
 So many a wretched night, when this  
 poor brow  
 Ached 'neath the sorrows of its  
 thorny crown.  
 Its crown ! . . . ah, droop not, dear,  
 those fond eyes down.  
 No gem in all that shattered coro-  
 net  
 Was half so precious as the tear  
 which wet  
 Just now this pale sick forehead. O  
 my own,  
 My husband, need was, that I should  
 have known  
 Much sorrow,—more than most  
 Queens,—all know some,—  
 Ere, dying, I could bless thee for the  
 home  
 Far dearer than the Palace,—call thy  
 tear,  
 The costliest gem that ever sparkled  
 here.  
 Infold me, my Belovéd. One more  
 kiss.  
 O, I must go ! 'Twas willed I should  
 not miss  
 Life's secret, ere I left it. And now  
 see,—  
 My lips touch thine—thine arm en-  
 circles me—  
 The secret's found—God beckons—  
 I must go.  
 Earth's best is given.—Heaven's  
 turn is come to show  
 How much its best earth's best may  
 yet exceed,  
 Lest earth's should seem the very  
 best indeed.  
 So we must part a little ; but not  
 long.  
 I seem to see it all. My lands be-  
 long  
 To Philip still ; but thine will be  
 my grave,  
 (The only strip of land which I could  
 save !)  
 Not much, but wide enough for some  
 few flowers,

Thou'lt plant there, by and by in  
 later hours :  
 Duke Humphry, when they tell him  
 I am dead  
 (And so young too !) will sigh, and  
 shake his head,  
 And if his wife should chide, " Poor  
 Jacqueline,"  
 He'll add, " You know she never  
 could be mine."  
 And men will say, when some one  
 speaks of me,  
 " Alas, it was a piteous history,  
 The life of that poor countess !"  
 For the rest  
 Will never know, my love, how I  
 was blest.  
 Some few of my poor Zealanders,  
 perchance,  
 Will keep kind memories of me ; and  
 in France  
 Some minstrel sing my story. Piti-  
 less John  
 Will prosper still, no doubt, as he  
 has done,  
 And still praise God with blood up-  
 on the Rood.  
 Philip will, doubtless, still be called  
 " The Good."  
 And men will curse and kill : and  
 the old game  
 Will weary out new hands : the love  
 of fame  
 Will sow new sins : thou wilt not be  
 renowned :  
 And I shall lie quite quiet under  
 ground.  
 My life is a torn book. But at the  
 end  
 A little page, quite fair, is saved, my  
 friend,  
 Where thou didst write thy name.  
 No stain is there,  
 No blot,—from marge to marge, all  
 pure—no tear ;—  
 The last page, saved from all, and  
 writ by thee,  
 Which I shall take safe up to Hea-  
 ven with me.  
 All's not in vain, since this be so.  
 Dost grieve ?

Belovéd, I beseech thee to believe  
 Although this be the last page of my  
 life,  
 It is my heart's first, only one. Thy  
 wife,  
 Poor though she be, O thou sole  
 wealth of mine,  
 Is happier than the Countess Jacque-  
 line!  
 And since my heart owns thine, say,  
 —am I not  
 A Queen, my chosen, though by all  
 forgot?  
 Though all forsake, yet is not this  
 thy hand?  
 I, a lone wanderer in a darkened  
 land,  
 I, a poor pilgrim with no staff of  
 hope,  
 I, a late traveller down the evening  
 slope,  
 Where any spark, the glow-worm's  
 by the way,  
 Had been a light to bless . . . have  
 I, O say,  
 Not found, Belovéd, in thy tender  
 eyes,  
 A light more sweet than morning's?  
 As there dies  
 Some day of storm all glorious in its  
 even,  
 My life grows loveliest as it fades in  
 heaven.  
 This earthly house breaks up. This  
 flesh must fade.  
 So many shocks of grief slow breach  
 have made  
 In the poor frame. Wrongs, insults,  
 treacheries,  
 Hopes broken down, and memory  
 which sighs  
 In, like a night-wind! Life was  
 never meant  
 To bear so much in such frail tene-  
 ment.  
 Why should we seek to patch and  
 plaster o'er  
 This shattered roof, crusht windows,  
 broken door  
 The light already shines through?  
 Let them break.

Yet would I gladly live for thy dear  
 sake,  
 O my heart's first and last, if that  
 could be!  
 In vain! . . . yet grieve not thou.  
 I shall not see  
 England again, and those white  
 cliffs; nor ever  
 Again those four gray towers beside  
 the river,  
 And London's roaring bridges: never  
 more  
 Those windows with the market-  
 stalls before,  
 Where the red-kirtled market-girls  
 went by  
 In the great square, beneath the  
 great gray sky,  
 In Brussels: nor in Holland, night  
 or day,  
 Watch those long lines of siege, and  
 fight at bay  
 Among my broken army, in default  
 Of Gloucester's failing forces from  
 Hainault:  
 Nor shall I pace again those gardens  
 green,  
 With their clipt alleys, where they  
 called me Queen,  
 In Brabant once. For all these  
 things are gone.  
 But thee I shall behold, my chosen  
 one,  
 Though we should seem whole  
 worlds on worlds apart,  
 Because thou wilt be ever in my  
 heart.  
 Nor shall I leave thee wholly. I  
 shall be  
 An evening thought,—a morning  
 dream to thee,—  
 A silence in thy life when, through  
 the night,  
 The bell strikes, or the sun, with  
 sinking light,  
 Smites all the empty windows. As  
 there sprout  
 Daisies, and dimpling tufts of vio-  
 lets, out  
 Among the grass where some corpse  
 lies asleep.

So round thy life, where I lie buried  
 deep,  
 A thousand little tender thoughts  
 shall spring,  
 A thousand gentle memories wind  
 and cling.  
 O, promise me, my own, before my  
 soul  
 Is houseless,—let the great world  
 turn and roll  
 Upon its way unvest . . . Its  
 pomps, its powers!  
 The dust says to the dust, . . . "the  
 earth is ours."  
 I would not, if I could, be Queen  
 again  
 For all the walls of the wide world  
 contain.  
 Be thou content with silence. Who  
 would raise  
 A little dust and noise of human  
 praise,  
 If he could see, in yonder distance  
 dim, [him?  
 The silent eye of God that watches  
 Oh! couldst thou see all that I see  
 to-night  
 Upon the brinks of the great Infi-  
 nite!  
 "Come out of her, my people, lest ye  
 be  
 Partakers of her sins!" . . . My  
 love, but we  
 Our treasure where no thieves break  
 in and steal,  
 Have stored, I trust. Earth's weal  
 is not our weal.  
 Let the world mind its business—  
 peace or war,  
 Ours is elsewhere. Look, look,—my  
 star, my star!  
 It grows, it glows, it spreads in light  
 unfurled;—  
 Said I "my star?" No star—a  
 world—God's world!  
 What hymns adown the jasper sea  
 are rolled,  
 Even to these sick pillows! Who  
 infold  
 White wings about me? Rest, rest,  
 rest . . . I come!

O Love! I think that I am near my  
 home.  
 Whence was that music? Was it  
 Heaven's I heard?  
 Write "Blesséd are the dead that  
 die?" the Lord,  
 Because they rest," . . . because  
 their toil is o'er.  
 The voice of weeping shall be heard  
 no more  
 In the Eternal city. Neither dying,  
 Nor sickness, pain nor sorrow, nei-  
 ther crying,  
 For God shall wipe awa, all tears.  
 Rest, rest,  
 Thy hand, my husband,—so—upon  
 thy breast!

MACROMICROS.

It is the star of solitude  
 Alight in yon lonely sky.  
 The sea is silent in its mood,  
 Motherlike moaning a lullaby  
 To hush the hungering mystery  
 To sleep on its breast subdued.  
 The night is alone, and I.

It is not the scene I am seeing,  
 The lonely sky and the sea,  
 It is the pathos of Being  
 That is making so dark in me  
 This silent and solemn hour:—  
 The bale of baffled power,  
 The wail of un baffled desire,  
 The fire that must ever devour  
 The source by which it is fire.

My spirit expands, expands!  
 I spread out my soul on the sea-  
 I feel for yet unfound lands,  
 And I find but the land where She  
 Sits, with her sad white hands,  
 At her golden broidery,  
 In sight of the sorrowful sands,  
 In an antique gallery,  
 Where, ever beside her, stands  
 (Moodily mimicking me)  
 The ghost of a something her heart  
 demands  
 For a blessing which cannot be.

And broider, broider by night and day  
 The brede of thy blazing broidery!  
 Till thy beauty be wholly woven away  
 Into the desolate tapestry.  
 Let the thread be scarlet, the gold be gay,  
 For the damp to dim, and the moth to fray:  
 Weave in the azure, and crimson, and green!  
 Till the slow threads, needling out and in,  
 To take a fashion and form begin:  
 Yet, for all the time and toil, I see  
 The work is vain, and will not be  
 Like what it was meant to have been.

O woman, woman, with face so pale!  
 Pale woman, weaving away  
 A frustrate life at a lifeless loom,  
 Early or late, 'tis of little avail  
 That thou lightest the lamp in the gloom.  
 Full well, I see, there is coming a day  
 When the work shall forever rest incomplete.  
 Fling, fling the foolish blazon away,  
 And weave me a winding-sheet!

It is not for thee in this dreary hour,  
 That I walk, companionless here by the shore.  
 I am caught in the eddy and whirl of a power  
 Which is not grief, and is not love,  
 Though it loves and grieves,  
 Within me, without me, wherever I move  
 In the going out of the ghostly eves,  
 And is changing me more and more.

I am not mourning for thee, although  
 I love thee, and thou art lost:  
 Nor yet for myself, albeit I know

That my life is flawed and crost:  
 But for that sightless, sorrowing Soul  
 That is feeling blind with immortal pain,  
 All round, for what it can never attain;  
 That prisoned, pining, and passionate soul,  
 So vast, and yet so small;  
 That seems, now nothing, now all,  
 That moves me to pity beyond control,  
 And repulses pity again.  
 I am mourning, since mourn I must,  
 With those patient Powers that bear,  
 'Neath the unattainable stars up there,  
 With the pomp and pall of funeral,  
 Subject and yet august,  
 The weight of this world's dust:—

The ruined giant under the rock:  
 The stricken spirit below the ocean:  
 And the winged things wounded of old by the shock  
 That set the earth in motion.

Ah yet, . . . and yet, and yet,  
 If She were here with me,  
 If she were here by the sea,  
 With the face I cannot forget,  
 Then all things would not be  
 So fraught with my own regret,  
 But what I should feel and see,  
 And seize it at last, at last,—  
 The secret known and lost in the past,  
 To unseal the Genii that sleep  
 In vials long hid in the deep;  
 By forgotten, fashionless spells held fast,  
 Where through streets of the cities of coral, aghast,  
 The sea-r-ympus wander and weep.

#### MYSTERY.

THE hour was one of mystery,  
 When we were sailing, I and she,

Down the dark, the silent stream,  
 The stars above were pale with love,  
 And a wizard wind did faintly move,  
 Like a whisper through a dream.

Her head was on my breast,  
 Her loving little head!  
 Her hand in mine was prest,  
 And not a word we said;  
 But round and round the night we wound,  
 Till we came at last to the Isle of Fays;  
 And, all the while, from the magic isle,  
 Came that music, that music of other days!

The lamps in the garden gleamed.  
 The Palace was all alight.  
 The sound of the viols streamed  
 Through the windows over the night.

We saw the dancers pass  
 At the windows, two by two.  
 The dew was on the grass,  
 And the glow-worm in the dew.

We came through the grass to the cypress-tree.  
 We stood in its shadow, I and she.  
 "Thy face is pale, thine eyes are wild.  
 What aileth thee, what aileth thee?"

"Naught aileth me," she murmured mild,  
 "Only the moonlight makes me pale;  
 The moonlight, shining through the veil  
 Of this black cypress-tree."

"By yonder moon, whose light so soon  
 Will fade upon the gloom,  
 And this black tree, whose mystery  
 Is mingled with the tomb,—  
 By Love's brief moon, and Death's dark tree,  
 Lovest thou me?"

Upon my breast she leaned her head;  
 "By yonder moon and tree,  
 I swear that all my soul," she said,  
 "Is given to thee."

"I know not what thy soul may be,  
 Nor canst thou make it mine.  
 Yon stars may all be worlds: for me  
 Enough to know they shine.  
 Thou art mine evening star. I know  
 At dawn star-distant thou wilt be:  
 I shall not hear thee murmuring low;  
 Thy face I shall not see.  
 I love thy beauty: 'twill not stay  
 Let it be all mine while it may.  
 I have no bliss save in the kiss  
 Thou givest me."

We came to the statue carved in stone,  
 Over the fountain. We stood there alone.  
 "What aileth thee, that thou dost sigh?  
 And why is thy hand so cold?"  
 "'Tis the fountain that sighs,"  
 . . . she said, "not I;  
 And the statue, whose hand thou dost hold."

"By yonder fount, that flows forever,  
 And this statue, that cannot move,—  
 By the fountain of Time, that ceases never,  
 And the fixedness of Love,—  
 By motion and immutability  
 Lovest thou me?"

"By the fountain of Time, with its ceaseless flow,  
 And the image of Love that rests,"  
 sighed she,  
 "I love thee, I swear, come joy,  
 come woe,  
 For eternity!"

"Eternity is a word so long  
That I cannot spell it now ;  
For the nightingale is singing her  
    song  
From yon pomegranate bough.  
Let it mean what it may—Eternity,  
If thou lovest me now as I love thee,  
As I love thee !"

We came to the Palace. We  
    mounted the stair.  
The great hall-doors wide open  
    were.  
And all the dancers that danced in  
    the hall  
Greeted us to the festival.

There were ladies, as fair as fair  
    might be,  
But not one of them all was as fair  
    as she.  
There were knights that looked at  
    them lovingly,  
But not one of them all was loving  
    as I.

Only, each noble cavalier  
Had his throat red-lined from ear  
    to ear ;  
'Twas a collar of merit, I have  
    heard,  
Which a Queen upon each had once  
    conferred.  
And each lovely lady that oped her  
    lip  
Let a little mouse's tail outslip ;  
'Twas the fashion there, I know not  
    why,  
But fashions are changing con-  
    stantly.  
From the crescented naphtha lamps  
    each ray  
    Streamed into a still enchanted  
    blaze ;—  
And forth from the deep-toned  
    orchestra  
    That music, that music of other  
    days !

My arm enlaced her winsome waist,  
And down the dance we flew :

We flew, we raced : our lips em-  
    braced :  
And our breath was mingled too.  
Round, and round, to a magic  
    sound—

(A wizard waltz to a wizard  
    air !)  
Round and round, we whirled, we  
    wound,

In a circle light and fine :  
My cheek was fanned by her  
    fragrant hair,  
And her bosom beat on mine :  
And all the while, in the winding  
    ways,  
That music, that music of other  
    days,  
With its melodies divine !

The palace clock stands in the hall,  
And talks, unheard, of the flight  
    of time :  
With a face too pale for a festival  
It telleth a tale too sad for rhyme.

The palace clock, with a silver note,  
Is chanting the death of the hour  
    that dies.

"What aileth thee ? for I see float  
A shade into thine eyes."

"Naught aileth me," . . . low  
    murmured she,

"I am faint with the dance, my  
    love,  
Give me thine arm : the air is  
    warm :  
Lead me unto the grove."

We wandered into the grove. We  
    found  
A bower by woodbine woven round.

Upon my breast she leaned her  
    head :

I drew her into the bower apart.  
"I swear to thee, my love," she  
    said,  
"Thou hast my heart !"

"Ah, leave thy little heart at rest !  
For it is so light, I think, so  
    light.

Some wind would blow it away to-  
    night,  
If it were not safe in thy breast.  
But the wondrous brightness on  
    thine hair  
Did never seem more bright :  
And thy beauty never looked more  
    fair

Than thy beauty looks to-night :  
And this dim hour, and this wild  
    bower,

Were made for our delight :  
Here we will stay, until the day,  
In yon dark east grows white."  
"This may not be," . . . she an-  
    swered me,

"For I was lately wed  
With a diamond ring to an Ogre-  
    king.  
And I am his wife," . . . she  
    said.

"My husband is old, but his crown  
is of gold :

And he hath a cruel eye :  
And his arm is long, and his hand is  
    strong,

And his body is seven ells high :  
And alas ! I fear, if he found us  
    here,  
That we both should surely die.

"All day I take my harp, and  
    play

To him on a golden string :  
Thorough the weary livelong day  
I play to him, and sing :  
I sing to him till his white hair  
    begins to curl and creep :

And his wrinkles old slowly unfold,  
And his brows grow smooth as  
    sleep.

But at night, when he calls for his  
    golden cup,

Into his wine I pour  
A juice which he drinks duly up,  
And sleeps till the night is o'er.  
For one moment I wait : I look at  
    him straight,

And tell him for once how much  
    I detest him :  
I have no fear lest he should hear,

The drug he hath drained hath so  
    opprest him.

Then, finger on lip, away I slip,  
And down the hills, till I reach the  
    stream : [pear,  
I call to thee clear, till the boat ap-  
And we sail together through dark  
    and dream.

And sweet it is, in this Isle of Fays,  
To wander at will through a garden  
    of flowers,

While the flowers that bloom, and  
    the lamps that blaze,  
And the very nightingales seem  
    ours ! [ways

And sweeter it is, in the winding  
Of the waltz, while the music falls  
    in showers,  
While the minstrel plays, and the  
    moment stays,  
And the sweet brief rapture of  
    love is ours !

"But the night is far spent ; and  
before the first rent

In yon dark blue sky overhead,  
My husband will wake, and the spell  
    will break,  
And peril is near," . . . she said.  
"For if he should wake, and not find  
    me,

By bower and brake, thorough bush  
    and tree,

He will come to seek me here ;  
And the Palace of Fays, in one vast  
    blaze,

Will sink and disappear ;  
And the nightingales will die in the  
    vales,

And all will be changed and  
    drear !

For the fays and elves can take care  
of themselves :

They will slip on their slippers,  
    and go :

In their little green cloaks they will  
    hide in the oaks,  
And the forests and brakes, for  
    their sweet sakes,  
Will cover and keep them, I  
    know.

And the knights, with their spurs,  
and velvets and furs,  
Will take off their heads, each  
one,  
And to horse, and away, as fast as  
they may,  
Over brook, and bramble, and  
stone ;  
And each dame of the house has a  
little dun mouse,  
That will whisper her when to be  
gone ;  
But we, my love, in this desolate  
grove,  
We shall be left alone ;  
And my husband will find us, take  
us and bind us :  
In his cave he will lock me up,  
And pledge me for spite in thy blood  
by night  
When he drains down his golden  
cup."

"Thy husband, dear, is a monster,  
'tis clear,  
But just now I will not tarry  
Thy choice to dispute—how on earth  
such a brute  
Thou hadst ever the fancy to  
marry.  
For wherefore, meanwhile, are we  
two here,  
In a fairy island under a spell,  
By night, in a magical atmosphere,  
In a lone enchanted dell,  
If we are to say and do no more  
Than is said and done by the dull  
daylight,  
In that dry old world, where both  
must ignore,  
To-morrow, the dream of to-  
night."

Her head drooped on my breast.  
Fair foolish little head !  
Her lips to mine were prest.  
Never a word was said.

If it were but a dream of the night,  
A dream that I dreamed in sleep—  
Why, then, is my face so white,  
And this wound so red and deep ?

But whatever it was, it all took place  
In a land where never your steps  
will go,  
Though they wander, wherever they  
will, through space ;  
In an hour you never will know,  
Though you should outlive the  
crow  
That is like to outlive your race.

And if it were but a dream, it broke  
Too soon, albeit too late I woke,  
Waked by the smart of a sounding  
stroke  
Which has so confused my wits,  
That I cannot remember, and never  
shall,  
What was the close of that festival,  
Nor how the Palace was shat-  
tered to bits :  
For all that, just now, I think I  
know,  
Is what is the force of an Ogre's  
blow,  
As my head, by starts and fits,  
Aches and throbs ; and, when I look  
round,  
All that I hear is the sickening  
sound  
Of the nurse's watch, and the doc-  
tor's boots,  
Instead of the magical fairy flutes ;  
And all that I see, in my love's lost  
place,  
Is that gin-drinking hag, with her  
nut-cracker face,  
By the earth's half-burned out  
wood :  
And the only stream is this stream  
of blood  
That flows from me, red and wide :  
Yet still I hear,—as sharp and clear,  
In the horrible, horrible silence out-  
side,  
The clock that stands in the empty  
hall,  
And talks to my soul of the flight of  
time ;  
With a face like a face at a fu-  
neral,  
Telling a tale too sad for rhyme :

And still I hear, with a little cheer,  
In the yet more horrible silence  
inside,  
Chanted, perchance, by elves and  
fays,  
From some far island, out of my  
gaze,  
Where a house has fallen, and  
some one has died,  
That music, that music of other  
days,  
With its minstrelsy undescried !  
For time, which surviveth every-  
thing,  
And Memory which surviveth  
Time :—  
These two sit by my side, and sing,  
A song too sad for rhyme.

## THE CANTICLE OF LOVE.

I ONCE heard an angel, by night, in  
the sky,  
Singing softly a song to a deep  
golden lute :  
The polestar, the seven little planets,  
and I,  
To the song that he sung listened  
mute.  
For the song that he sung was so  
strange and so sweet,  
And so tender the tones of his  
lute's golden strings,  
That the Seraphs of Heaven sat  
husht at his feet,  
And folded their heads in their  
wings.

And the song that he sung by those  
Seraphs up there  
Is called . . . "Love." But the  
words, I had heard them else-  
where.

For, when I was last in the nether-  
most Hell,  
On a rock 'mid the sulphurous  
surges, I heard  
A pale spirit sing to a wild hollow  
shell,

And his song was the same, every  
word.  
But so sad was his singing, all Hell  
to the sound  
Moaned, and, wailing, complained  
like a monster in pain,  
While the fiends hovered near o'er  
the dismal profound,  
With their black wings weighed  
down by the strain.

And the song that was sung by the  
Lost Ones down there  
Is called . . . "Love." But the  
spirit that sung was Despair.

When the moon sets to-night, I will  
go down to ocean,  
Bare my brow to the breeze, and  
my heart to its anguish ;  
And sing till the Siren with pining  
emotion  
(Unroused in her sea-caves) shall  
languish.  
And the Sylphs of the water shall  
crouch at my feet,  
With their white wistful faces  
turned upward to hear,  
And the soft Salamanders shall float,  
in the heat  
Of the ocean volcanoes, more near.

For the song I have learned, all that  
listen shall move :  
But there's one will not listen, and  
that one I love.

## THE PEDLER.

THERE was a man, whom you might  
see,  
Toward nightfall, on the dusty  
track,  
Faring, footsore and wearily—  
A strong box on his back.

A speck against the flaring sky,  
You saw him pass the line of  
dates,  
The camel-drivers loitering by  
From Bagdadt's dusking gates.

The merchants from Bassora stared,  
And of his wares would question  
him.  
But, without answer, on he fared  
Into the evening dim.

Nor only in the east : but oft  
In northern lands of ice and snow,  
You might have seen, past field and  
croft,  
That figure faring slow.

His cheek was worn ; his back bent  
double  
Beneath the iron box he bore ;  
And in his walk there seemed such  
trouble,  
You saw his feet were sore.

You wondered if he ever had  
A settled home, a wife, a child :  
You marvelled if a face so sad  
At any time had smiled.

The cheery housewife oft would  
fling  
A pitying alms, as on he strode,  
Where, round the hearth, a rosy  
ring,  
Her children's faces glowed :

In the dark doorway, oft the maid,  
Late-lingering on her lover's arm,  
Watched through the twilight, half  
afraid,  
That solitary form.

The traveller hailed him oft, . . .  
"Good night :  
The town is far : the road is lone :  
God speed !" . . . already out of  
sight,  
The wayfarer was gone.

But, when the night was late and  
still,  
And the last star of all had crept  
Into his place above the hill,  
He laid him down and slept.

His head on that strong box he laid :  
And there, beneath the star-cold  
skies,  
In slumber, I have heard it said,  
There rose before his eyes

A lovely dream, a vision fair,  
Of some far-off, forgotten land,  
And of a girl with golden hair,  
And violets in her hand.

He sprang to kiss her . . . "Ah !  
once more  
Return, beloved, and bring with  
thee  
The glory and delight of yore,—  
Lost evermore to me !

Then, ere she answered, o'er his  
back  
There fell a brisk and sudden  
stroke,—  
So sound and resolute a thwack  
That, with the blow, he woke . . .

There comes out of that iron box  
An ugly hag, an angry crone ;  
Her crutch about his ears she  
knocks :  
She leaves him not alone :

"Thou lazy vagabond ! come, budge,  
And carry me again," . . . she  
says :  
"Not half the journey's over . . .  
trudge !"  
. . . He groans, and he obeys.

Oft in the sea he sought to fling  
That iron box. But witches swim:  
And wave and wind were sure to  
bring  
The old hag back to him ;

Who all the more about his brains  
Belabored him with such hard  
blows,  
That the poor devil, for his pains,  
Wished himself dead, heaven  
knows !

*Love, is it thy hand in mine ? . . .*  
Behold !  
I see the crutch uplifted high.  
The angry hag prepares to scold.  
*O, yet we might . . . . . Good  
by !*

## A GHOST STORY.

I LAY awake past midnight :  
The moon set o'er the snow :  
The very cocks, for coldness,  
Could neither sleep nor crow.

There came to me, near morning,  
A woman pale and fair :  
She seemed a monarch's daughter,  
By the red gold round her hair.

The ring upon her finger  
Was one that well I know  
I knew her fair face also,  
For I had loved it so !

But I felt I saw a spirit,  
And I was sore afraid ;  
For it is many and many a year  
Ago, since she was dead.

I would have spoken to her,  
But I could not speak, for fear :  
Because it was a homeless ghost  
That walked beyond its sphere ;

Till her head from her white shoul-  
ders  
She lifted up : and said . . .  
"Look in ! you'll find I'm hollo  
Pray do not be afraid !"

## SMALL PEOPLE.

THE warm moon was up in the sky,  
And the warm summer out on the  
land.

There trembled a tear from her eye:  
There trembled a tear on my hand.

Her sweet face I could not see clear,  
For the shade was so dark in the  
tree :

I only felt touched by a tear,  
And I thought that the tear was  
for me.

In her small ear I whispered a word—  
With her sweet lips she laughed in  
my face

And, as light through the leaves as a  
bird,  
She flitted away from the place.

Then she told to her sister, the  
Snake,  
All I said, and her cousin the  
Toad.

The Snake slipped away to the brake,  
The Toad went to town by the  
road.

The Toad told the Devil's coach-  
horse,  
Who cock'd up his tail at the  
news.

The Snake hissed the secret, of  
course,  
To the Newt, who was changing  
her shoes.

The Newt drove away to the ball,  
And told it the Scorpion and Asp.  
The Spider, who lives in the wall,  
Overheard it, and told it the Wasp.

The Wasp told the Midge and the  
Gnat :  
And the Gnat told the Flea and  
the Nit.

The Nit dropped an egg as she sat :  
The Flea shrugged his shoulders,  
and bit.

The Nit and the Flea are too small,  
And the Snake slips from under  
my foot :

I wish I could find 'mid them all  
A man,—to insult and to shoot !

## METEMPSYCHOSIS.

SHE fanned my life out with her soft  
little sighs :  
She hushed me to death with her  
face so fair :

I was drunk with the light of her  
wild blue eyes,  
And strangled dumb in her long  
gold hair.