

Of kindness once spoken by thee !
 But, whatever my path, and what-
 ever
 The future may fashion for thine,
 Thy life, O believe me, can never,
 My beloved, be indifferent to mine.
 When far from the sight of thy
 beauty,
 Pursuing, unaided, alone,
 The path of man's difficult duty
 In the land where my lot may be
 thrown ;
 When my steps move no more in the
 place
 Where thou art : and the brief days
 of yore
 Are forgotten : and even my face
 In thy life is remembered no more ;
 Yet in *my* life will live thy least
 feature ;
 I shall mourn the lost light of thine
 eyes ;
 And on earth there will yet be one
 nature
 That must yearn after thine till it
 dies.

"YE SEEK JESUS OF NAZ-
 ARETH WHICH WAS CRU-
 CIFIED : HE IS RISEN : HE IS
 NOT HERE."

MARK xvi. 6.

If Jesus came to earth again,
 And walked, and talked, in field,
 and street,
 Who would not lay his human pain
 Low at those heavenly feet ?
 And leave the loom, and leave the
 lute,
 And leave the volume on the
 shelf, [mute,
 To follow Him, unquestioning,
 If 'twere the Lord himself ?
 How many a brow with care o'er-
 worn,
 How many a heart with grief o'er-
 laden,
 How many a youth with love for-
 lorn,
 How many a mourning maiden,

Would leave the baffling earthly
 prize
 Which fails the earthly, weak en-
 deavor,
 To gaze into those holy eyes,
 And drink content forever !

The mortal hope, I ask with tears
 Of Heaven, to soothe this mortal
 pain,—
 The dream of all my darkened
 years,—
 I should not cling to them.

The pride that prompts the bitter
 jest—
 (Sharp styptic of a bleeding heart!)
 Would fail, and humbly leave con-
 fest
 The sin that brought the smart,

If I might crouch within the fold
 Of that white robe (a wounded
 bird) ;
 The face that Mary saw behold,
 And hear the words she heard.

I would not ask one word of all
 That now my nature yearns to
 know :—
 The legend of the ancient Fall ;
 The source of human woe :

What hopes in other worlds may
 hide ;
 What griefs yet unexplored in
 this ;
 How fares the spirit within the wide
 Waste tract of that abyss

Which scares the heart (since all we
 know
 Of life is only conscious sorrow)
 Lest novel life be novel woe
 In death's undawned to-morrow ;

I would not ask one word of this,
 If I might only hide my head
 On that beloved breast, and kiss
 The wounds where Jesus bled.

And I, where'er He went, would go,
 Nor question where the path
 might lead,
 Enough to know that, here below,
 I walked with God indeed !

His sheep along the cool, the shade,
 By the still watercourse he leads,
 His lambs upon His breast are laid,
 His hungry ones He feeds.

Safe in His bosom I should lie,
 Hearing, where'er His steps might
 be,
 Calm waters, murmuring, murmur-
 ing by,
 To meet the mighty sea.

If this be thus, O Lord of mine,
 In absence is Thy love forgot ?
 And must I, where I walk, repine
 Because I see Thee not ?

If this be thus, if this be thus
 And our poor prayers yet reach
 Thee, Lord,
 Since we are weak, once more to us
 Reveal the Living Word !

Yet is my heart, indeed, so weak
 My course alone I dare not trace ?
 Alas ! I know my heart must break
 Before I see Thy face.

I loved, with all my human soul,
 A human creature, here below,
 And, though thou bad'st thy sea to
 roll
 Forever 'twixt us two,

And though her form I may not see
 Through all my long and lonely
 life,
 And though she never now may be
 My helpmate and my wife,

Yet in my dreams her dear eyes
 shine,
 Yet in my heart her face I bear,
 And yet each holiest thought of
 mine
 I seem with her to share.

But, Lord, Thy face I never saw,
 Nor ever heard Thy human voice :
 My life, beneath an iron law,
 Moves on without my choice.

No memory of a happier time,
 When in Thine arms, perchance, I
 slept,
 In some lost ante-natal clime,
 My mortal frame hath kept :
 And all is dark—before—behind.
 I cannot reach Thee, where thou
 art,

I cannot bring Thee to my mind,
 Nor clasp Thee to my heart.
 And this is why, by night and day,
 Still with so many an unseen tear
 These lonely lips have learned to
 pray

That God would spare me here,
 While yet my doubtful course I go
 Along the vale of mortal years,
 By life's dull stream, that will not
 flow
 As fast as flow my tears,

One human hand, my hand to take :
 One human heart, my own to
 raise :

One loving human voice, to break
 The silence of my days.

Saviour, if this wild prayer be
 wrong,
 And what I seek I may not find,
 O, make more hard, and stern, and
 strong,
 The framework of my mind !

Or, nearer to me, in the dark
 Of life's low hours, one moment
 stand,
 And give me keener eyes to mark
 The moving of Thy hand.

TO CORDELIA.

I do not blame thee, that my life
 Is lonelier now than even before ;
 For hadst thou been, indeed, my
 wife,
 (Vain dream that cheats no more !)

The fate, which from my earliest
years [tread,
Hath made so dark the path I
Had taught thee too, perchance,
such tears
As I have learned to shed.

And that fixed gloom, which souls
like mine
Are schooled to wear with stub-
born pride,
Had cast too dark a shade o'er
thine,—
Hadst thou been by my side.

I blame thee not, that thou shouldst
flee
From paths where only weeds have
sprung,
Though loss of thee is loss to me
Of all that made youth young.

For 'tis not mine, and 'twas not
thine,
To shape our course as first we
strove :
And powers which I could not com-
bine
Divide me from thy love.

Alas ! we cannot choose our lives,—
We can but bear the burthen
given.
In vain the feverish spirit strives
With unrelenting heaven.

For who can bid those tyrant stars
The injustice of their laws repeal ?
Why ask who makes our prison bars,
Since they are made of steel ?

The star that rules my darkened
hour
Is fixt in reachless spheres on
high :
The curse which foils my baffled
power
Is scrawled across the sky.

My heart knows all it felt, and feels :
But more than this I shall not
know,
Till he that made the heart reveals
Why mine must suffer so.

I only know that, never yet,
My life hath found what others
find,—
That peace of heart which will not
fret
The fibres of the mind.

I only know that not for me
The human love, the clasp, the
kiss ;
My love in other worlds must be,—
Why was I born in this ?

The bee is framed to find her food
In every wayside flower and bell,
And build within the hollow wood
Her own ambrosial cell :

The spider hath not learned her art,
A home in ruined towers to spin ;
But what it seeks, my heart, my
heart
Is all unskilled to win.

The world was filled, ere I was born,
With man and maid, with bower
and brake,
And nothing but the barren thorn
Remained for me to take :

I took the thorn, I wove it round,
I made a piercing crown to wear :
My own sad hands myself have
crowned,
Lord of my own despair.

That which we are, we are. 'Twere
vain
To plant with toil what will not
grow.

The cloud will break, and bring the
rain,
Whether we reap or sow.

I cannot turn the thunder-blast,
Nor pluck the levin's lurid root ;
I cannot change the changeless past,
Nor make the ocean mute.

And if the holt of death must fall
Where, bare of head I walk my
way.
Why let it fall ! I will not call
To bid the Thunderer stay.

'Tis much to know, whate'er betide
The pilgrim path I pace alone,
Thou wilt not miss me from thy side
When its brief course is done.

Hadst thou been mine,—when skies
were drear
And waves were rough, for thy
sweet sake
I should have found in all some fear
My inmost breast to shake :

But now, his fill the blast may blow,
The sea may rage, the thunder
roll,
For every path by which I go
Will reach the self-same goal.

Too proud to fly, too weak to cope,
I yet will wait, nor bow my head.
Those who have nothing left to hope,
Have nothing left to dread.

A LETTER TO CORDELIA.

PERCHANCE, on earth, I shall not
see thee ever
Ever again : and my unwritten
years
Are signed out by that desolating
"Never,"
And blurred with tears.

'Tis hard, so young—so young as I
am still,
To feel forevermore from life de-
part
All that can flatter the poor human
will,
Or fill the heart.

Yet there was nothing in that sweet,
and brief,
And perisht intercourse, now
closed for me,
To add one thought unto my bitter-
est grief
Upbraiding thee.

'Tis somewhat to have known, al-
beit in vain,
One woman in this sorrowful bad
earth,

Whose very loss can yet bequeath
to pain
New faith in worth.

If I have overrated, in the wild
Blind heat of hope, the sense of
aught which hath
From the lost vision of thy beauty
smiled
On my lone path,
My retribution is, that to the last
I have o'errated, too, my power to
cope
With this fierce thought . . . that
life must all be past
Without life's hope ;

And I would bless the chance which
let me see
Once more the comfort of thy face,
although
It were with beauty never born for
me
That face should glow.

To see thee—all thou wilt be—loved
and loving—
Even though another's—in the
years to come—
To watch, once more, thy gracious
sweetness moving
Through its pure home,—

Even this would seem less desolate,
less drear,
Than never, never to behold thee
more—
Never on those beloved lips to hear
The voice of yore !

These weak words, O my friend, fell
not more fast
Than the weak scalding tears that
with them fell.

Nor tears, nor words came, when I
saw thee last . . .
Enough ! . . . Farewell.

Farewell. If that dread Power
which fashioned man
To till this planet, free to search
and find

The secret of his source as best he
can,
In his own mind,

Hath any care, apart from that
which moves
Earth's myriads through Time's
ages as they roll,
For any single human life, or loves
One separate soul,

May He, whose wisdom portions out
for me
The moonless, changeless mid-
night of the heart,
Still all his softest sunshine save for
thee,
Where'er thou art :

And if, indeed, not any human eyes
From human tears be free,—may
Sorrow bring
Only to thee her April-rain, whose
sighs
Soothe flowers in Spring.

FAILURE.

I HAVE seen those that wore Heav-
en's armor worsted :
I have heard Truth lie :
Seen Life, beside the founts for which
it thirsted,
Curse God and die :

I have felt the hand, whose touch
was rapture, braiding
Among my hair
Love's choicest flowerets, and have
found how fading
Those garlands were :

I have watched my first and holiest
hopes depart,
One after one :

I have held the hand of Death upon
my heart,
And made no moan :

I have seen her whom life's whole
sacrifice
Was made to keep.

Pass coldly by me with a stranger's
eyes,
Yet did not weep :

Now even my body fails me ; and
my brow
Aches night and day :
I am weak with over-work : how
can I now
Go forth and play ?

What ! now that Youth's forgotten
aspirations
Are all no more,
Rest there, indeed, all Youth's glad
recreations,
—An untried store ?

Alas, what skills this heart of sad
experience,
This frame o'erwrought,
This memory with life's motion all
at variance,
This aching thought ?

How shall I come, with these, to
follow pleasure
Where others find it ?

Will not their sad steps mar the
merriest measure,
Or lag behind it ?

Still must the man move sadlier for
the dreams
That mocked the boy :
And, having failed to achieve, must
still, it seems,
Fail to enjoy.

It is no common failure, to have
failed
Where man hath given
A whole life's effort to the task as
sailed—
Spent earth on heaven.

If error and if failure enter here,
What helps repentance ?
Remember this, O Lord, in thy se-
vere
Last sentence !

MISANTHROPOS.

Παντα κονις και παντα γελωσ και παντα το
μηδεν.

DAY's last light is dying out.
All the place grows dim and drear :
See ! the grisly bat's about.
There is nothing left to fear ;
Little left to doubt.

Not a note of music flits
O'er the slackened harpstrings yon-
der
From the skeleton that sits
By the broken harp, to ponder
(While the spider knits

Webs in each black socket-hole)
Where is all the music fled.
Music, hath it, then, a goal ? . . .
Broken harp, and brainless head !
Silent song and soul !

Not a light in yonder sky,
Save that single wicked star,
Leering with its wanton eye
Through the shattered window-
bar ;
Come to see me die !

All, save this, the monstrous night
Hath erased and blotted bare
As the fool's brain . . . God's last
light
Winking at the Fiend's work
there,—

Wrong made worse by right !
Gone the voice, the face, of yore !
Gone the dream of golden hair !
Gone the garb that Falsehood wore !
Gone the shame of being bare !
We may close the door.

All the guests are slunk away.
Not a footstep on the stairs !
Not a friend here, left to say
" Amen " to a sinner's prayers,
If he cared to pray !

Gone is Friendship's friendliness,
After Love's fidelity :
Gone is honor in the mess
Spat upon by Charity :
Faith has fled Distress

Those grim tipstaves at the gate
Freely may their work begin.
Let them in ! they shall not wait.
There is little now within
Left for Scorn and Hate.

O, no doubt the air is foul !
'Tis the last lamp spits and stinks,
Shuddering downward in the bowl
Of the socket, from the brinks.
What's a burned-out soul ?

Let them all go, unreprieved !
For the source of tears is dried.
What ! . . . One rests ? . . . hath
nothing moved
That pale woman from my side,
Whom I never loved ?

You, with those dim eyes of yours,
Sadder than all eyes save mine !
That dim forehead which immures
Such faint helpless griefs, that
pine
For such hopeless cures !

Must you love me, spite of loathing ?
Can't you leave me where I'm ly-
ing ?

O, . . . you wait for our betrothing ?
I escape you, though,—by dying !
Lay out my death-clothing.

Well I would that your white face
Were abolisht out of sight,
With the glory and the grace
Swallowed long ago in night,—
Gone,—without a trace !

Reach me down my golden harp.
Set it here, beside my knee.
Never fear that I shall warp
All the chords of ecstasy,
Striking them too sharp !

Crown me with my crown of flowers.
Faded roses every one !
Pluckt in those long-perish bowers,
By the nightshade overrun,—
Fit for brows like ours !

Fill me, now, my golden cup.
Pour the black wine to the brim .
Till within me, while I sup,

All the fires, long quenched and dim,
Flare, one moment, up.

I will sing you a last song,
I will pledge you a last health . . .
Here's to weakness seeming strong !
Herets to Want that follows
Wealth !
Here's to Right gone wrong !

Curse me now the Oppressor's roo,
And the meanness of the weak ;
And the fool that apes the nod ;
And the world at hide and seek
With the wrath of God.

Dreams of man's unvalued good
By mankind's unholy means !
Curse the people in their mud !
And the wicked Kings and Queens,
Lying by the Rood.

Fill ! to every plague . . . and first,
Love, that breeds its own decay ;
Rotten, ere the blossom burst.
Next, the friend that slinks away,
When you need him worst.

O the world's inhuman ways !
And the heartless social lie !
And the coward, cheapening praise !
And the patience of the sky,
Lighting such bad days !

Curséd be the heritage
Of the sins we have not sinned !
Curséd be this boasting age,
And the blind that lead the blind
O'er its creaking stage !

O the vice within the blood,
And the sin within the sense !
And the fallen angelhood,
With its yearnings, too immense
To be understood !

Curse the hound with beaten hide,
When he turns and licks the
hand.
Curse this woman at my side !
And the memory of the land
Where my first love died.

Curséd be the next and most
(With whatever curse most kills),
Me . . . the man whose soul is lost ;
Fouled by each of all these ills,—
Filled with death and dust !

Take away the harp of gold,
And the empty wine-cup too.
Lay me out : for I grow cold.
There is something dim in view,
Which must pass unfold :—

Something dim, and something
vast,—
Out of reach of all I say.
Language ceases . . . husht, aghast.
What am I, to curse or pray ?
God succeeds at last !

BOOK VI.—PALINGENESIS.

A PRAYER.

My Saviour, dare I come to Thee,
Who let the little children come ?
But I ? . . . my soul is faint in me !
I come from wandering to and fro
This weary world. There still his
round
The Accuser goes : but Thee I
found

Not anywhere. Both joy and woe
Have passed me by. I am too weak
To grieve or smile. And yet I know
That tears lie deep in all I do.
The homeless that are sick for home
Are not so wretched. Ere it break,
Receive my heart ; and for the sake,
Not of my sorrows, but of Thine,
Bend down Thy holy eyes on mine,
Which are too full of misery

To see Thee clearly, though they
seek.
Yet, if I heard Thy voice say . . .
"Come,"

So might I, dying, die near Thee.
It shames me not, to have passed by
The temple-doors in every street
Where men profaned Thee : but
that I
Have left neglected, choked with
weeds,

Defrauded of its incense sweet
From holy thoughts and loyal
deeds,

The fane Thou gavest me to en-
shrine
Thee in, this wretched heart of
mine.

The Satyr there hath entered in ;
The Owl that loves the darkened
hour ;
And obscene shapes of night and
sin

Still haunt, where God designed a
bower
For angels.

Yet I will not say
How oft I have aspired in vain,
How toiled along the rugged way,
And held my faith above my pain,
For this Thou knowest. Thou
knowest when

I faltered, and when I was strong ;
And how from that of other men
My fate was different : all the
wrong

Which devastated hope in me :
The ravaged years ; the excited
heart,

That found in pain its only part
Of love : the master misery
That shattered all my early years,
From which, in vain, I sought to
flee :

Thou knowest the long repentant
tears,
Thou heard'st me cry against the
spheres,

So sharp my anguish seemed to be !
All this Thou knowest. Though I
should keep

Silence, Thou knowest my hands
were free
From sin, when all things cried to
me

To sin. Thou knowest that, had I
rolled
My soul in hell-flame fifty-fold,
My sorrow could not be more deep.
Lord ! there is nothing hid from
Thee.

EUTHANASIA.

(WRITTEN AFTER A SEVERE ILLNESS.)

SPRING to the world, and strength
to me, returns ;
And flowers return,—but not the
flowers I knew.

I live : the fire of life within me
burns ;
But all my life is dead. The land
I view

I know not ; nor the life which I re-
gain.
Within the hollow of the hand of
death

I have lain so long, that now I
draw the breath
Of life as unfamiliar, and with pain,
Of life : but not the life which is no
more ;—

That tender, tearful, warm, and
passionate thing ;
That wayward, restless, wistful life
of yore ;

Which now lies, cold, beneath the
clasp of Spring,
As last year's leaves : but such a life
as seems

A strange new-comer, coy and all-
afraid.
No motion leaves the heart where
it is laid,

Save when the past returns to me in
dreams.

In dreams, like memories of another
world :

The beauty, and the passion, and
the pain,