

I, hoverer of late by this dark valley, by
its confines, having glimpses of it,
Here enter lists with thee, claiming my
right to make a symbol too.
For I have seen many wounded soldiers
die,
After dread suffering — have seen their
lives pass off with smiles;
And I have watch'd the death-hours of the
old; and seen the infant die;
The rich, with all his nurses and his doc-
tors;
And then the poor, in meagreness and
poverty;
And I myself for long, O Death, have
breath'd my every breath
Amid the nearness and the silent thought
of thee.

And out of these and thee,
I make a scene, a song (not fear of thee,
Nor gloom's ravines, nor bleak, nor dark
— for I do not fear thee,
Nor celebrate the struggle, or contortion,
or hard-tied knot),
Of the broad blessed light and perfect air,
with meadows, rippling tides, and trees
and flowers and grass,
And the low hum of living breeze — and
in the midst God's beautiful eternal right
hand,
Thee, holiest minister of Heaven — thee,
envoy, usherer, guide at last of all,
Rich, florid, loosener of the stricture-knot
call'd life,
Sweet, peaceful, welcome Death.

1896. (1897.)

SIDNEY LANIER

[The poems from Lanier are printed by the kind permission of Mrs. Sidney Lanier, and of Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, the authorized publishers of Lanier's Works.]

THE DYING WORDS OF STONE-
WALL JACKSON

'Order A. P. Hill to prepare for battle.'
'Tell Major Hawks to advance the Commissary train.'
'Let us cross the river and rest in the shade.'

THE stars of Night contain the glittering
Day
And rain his glory down with sweeter grace
Upon the dark World's grand, enchanted
face —
All loth to turn away.

And so the Day, about to yield his breath,
Utters the stars unto the listening Night,
To stand for burning fare-thee-wells of
light
Said on the verge of death.

O hero-life that lit us like the sun!
O hero-words that glittered like the stars
And stood and shone above the gloomy
wars
When the hero-life was done!

The phantoms of a battle came to dwell
I' the fitful vision of his dying eyes —
Yet even in battle-dreams, he sends sup-
plies
To those he loved so well.

His army stands in battle-line arrayed:
His couriers fly: all's done: now God de-
cide!
— And not till then saw he the Other Side
Or would accept the shade.

Thou Land whose sun is gone, thy stars
remain!
Still shine the words that miniature his
deeds.
O thrice-beloved, where'er thy great heart
bleeds,
Solace hast thou for pain!

1865.

1884.

NIGHT AND DAY

THE innocent, sweet Day is dead.
Dark Night hath slain her in her bed.
O, Moors are as fierce to kill as to wed!
— Put out the light, said he.

A sweeter light than ever rayed
From star of heaven or eye of maid
Has vanished in the unknown Shade.
— She's dead, she's dead, said he.

Now, in a wild, sad after-mood
The tawny Night sits still to brood
Upon the dawn-time when he wooed.
— I would she lived, said he.

Star-memories of happier times,
Of loving deeds and lovers' rhymes,
Throng forth in silvery pantomimes.
— Come back, O Day! said he.

1866.

1884.

SONG FOR 'THE JACQUERIE'¹

THE hound was cuffed, the hound was
kicked,
O' the ears was cropped, o' the tail was
nicked,

(All.) Oo-hoo-o, howled the hound.
The hound into his kennel crept;
He rarely wept, he never slept.

¹ One of Lanier's early plans was for a long poem in heroic couplets, with lyric interludes, on the insurrection of the French peasantry in the fourteenth century. 'Although,' says Mrs. Lanier, 'The Jacquerie' remained a fragment for thirteen years, Mr. Lanier's interest in the subject never abated. Far on in this interval he is found planning for leisure to work out in romance the story of that savage insurrection of the French peasantry, which the *Chronicles of Froissart* had impressed upon his boyish imagination. 'It was the first time,' says Lanier himself, in a letter of November 15, 1874, 'that the big hungers of the *People* appear in our modern civilization; and it is full of significance.' Five chapters of the story, and three lyrics, were completed. See the *Poems*, pp. 191-214.

His mouth he always open kept
Licking his bitter wound,
The hound,

(All.) U-lu-lo, howled the hound.

A star upon his kennel shone
That showed the hound a meat-bare bone.

(All.) O hungry was the hound!
The hound had but a churlish wit.
He seized the bone, he crunched, he bit.
'An thou wert Master, I had slit
Thy throat with a huge wound,'
Quo' hound.

(All.) O, angry was the hound.

The star in castle-window shone,
The Master lay abed, alone.

(All.) Oh ho, why not? quo' hound.
He leapt, he seized the throat, he tore
The Master, head from neck, to floor,
And rolled the head i' the kennel door,
And fled and salved his wound,
Good hound!

(All.) U-lu-lo, howled the hound.
1868.

MY SPRINGS

In the heart of the Hills of Life, I know
Two springs that with unbroken flow
Forever pour their lucent streams
Into my soul's far Lake of Dreams.

Not larger than two eyes, they lie
Beneath the many-changing sky
And mirror all of life and time,
— Serene and dainty pantomime.

Shot through with lights of stars and dawns,
And shadowed sweet by ferns and fawns, 10
— Thus heaven and earth together vie
Their shining depths to sanctify.

Always when the large Form of Love
Is hid by storms that rage above,
I gaze in my two springs and see
Love in his very verity.

Always when Faith with stifling stress
Of grief hath died in bitterness,
I gaze in my two springs and see
A Faith that smiles immortally. 20

Always when Charity and Hope,
In darkness bounden, feebly grope,

I gaze in my two springs and see
A Light that sets my captives free.

Always, when Art on perverse wing
Flies where I cannot hear him sing,
I gaze in my two springs and see
A charm that brings him back to me.

When Labor faints, and Glory fails,
And coy Reward in sighs exhales, 30
I gaze in my two springs and see
Attainment full and heavenly.

O Love, O Wife, thine eyes are they,
— My springs from out whose shining gray
Issue the sweet celestial streams
That feed my life's bright Lake of Dreams.

Oval and large and passion-pure
And gray and wise and honor-sure;
Soft as a dying violet-breath
Yet calmly unafraid of death; 40

Thronged, like two dove-cotes of gray
doves, 1884.
With wife's and mother's and poor-folk's
loves,
And home-loves and high glory-loves
And science-loves and story-loves,

And loves for all that God and man
In art and nature make or plan,
And lady-loves for spidery lace
And broderies and supple grace

And diamonds and the whole sweet round
Of littles that large life compound, 50
And loves for God and God's bare truth,
And loves for Magdalen and Ruth,

Dear eyes, dear eyes and rare complete —
Being heavenly-sweet and earthly-sweet,
— I marvel that God made you mine,
For when He frowns, 't is then ye shine!
1874. 1882.

THE SYMPHONY¹

'O TRADE! O Trade! would thou wert
dead!
The Time needs heart—'t is tired of
head: 20

¹ I have so many fair dreams and hopes about music
in these days. It is a gospel whereof the people are in
great need. As Christ gathered up the ten command-

We're all for love,' the violins said.¹
'Of what avail the rigorous tale
Of bill for coin and box for bale?
Grant thee, O Trade! thine uttermost hope:
Level red gold with blue sky-slope,
And base it deep as devils grope:
When all's done, what hast thou won
Of the only sweet that's under the sun? 10
Ay, canst thou buy a single sigh
Of true love's least, least ecstasy?'
Then, with a bridegroom's heart-beats
trembling,

All the mightier strings assembling
Ranged them on the violins' side
As when the bridegroom leads the bride,
And, heart in voice, together cried:
'Yea, what avail the endless tale
Of gain by cunning and plus by sale?
Look up the land, look down the land, 20
The poor, the poor, the poor, they stand
Wedged by the pressing of Trade's hand
Against an inward-opening door
That pressure tightens evermore:
They sigh a monstrous foul-air sigh
For the outside leagues of liberty,
Where Art, sweet lark, translates the sky
Into a heavenly melody.

"Each day, all day" (these poor folks say),
"In the same old year-long, drear-long
way, 30

We weave in the mills and heave in the
kilns,
We sieve mine-meshes under the hills,
And thief much gold from the Devil's
bank tills,

To relieve, O God, what manner of ills? —
The beasts, they hunger, and eat, and die;
And so do we, and the world's a sty;
Hush, fellow-swine: why nuzzle and cry?
Swinehood hath no remedy
Say many men, and hasten by,
Clamping the nose and blinking the eye. 40
But who said once, in the lordly tone,
Man shall not live by bread alone
But all that cometh from the Throne?
Hath God said so?
But Trade saith No:

ments and re-distilled them into the clear liquid of that
wondrous eleventh — Love God utterly, and thy neigh-
bor as thyself — so I think the time will come when
music, rightly developed to its now-little-foreseen gran-
deur, will be found to be a later revelation of all gospels
'n one. (LANIER, in a letter of March 12, 1875. *The*
Letters of Sidney Lanier, p. 113.)

¹ Music . . . is utterly unconscious of aught but
Love. (LANIER, in a letter of October, 1866. *The Letters*
of Sidney Lanier, p. 66.)

And the kilns and the curt-tongued mills
say Go!
There's plenty that can, if you can't: we
know.

Move out, if you think you're underpaid.
The poor are prolific; we're not afraid;
Trade is trade." 50

Thereat this passionate protesting
Meekly changed, and softened till
It sank to sad requesting
And suggesting sadder still:
'And oh, if men might sometime see
How piteous-false the poor decree
That trade no more than trade must be!
Does business mean, *Die, you — live, I?*
Then "Trade is trade" but sings a lie:
'T is only war grown miserly. 60

If business is battle, name it so:
War-crimes less will shame it so,
And widows less will blame it so.
Alas, for the poor to have some part
In yon sweet living lands of Art,
Makes problem not for head, but heart.
(Vainly might Plato's brain revolve it:
Plainly the heart of a child could solve it.)

And then, as when from words that seem
but rude

We pass to silent pain that sits abroad 70
Back in our heart's great dark and solitude,
So sank the strings to gentle throbbing
Of long chords change-marked with sob-
bing —

Motherly sobbing, not distinctlier heard
Than half wing-openings of the sleeping
bird,
Some dream of danger to her young hath
stirred.

Then stirring and demurring ceased, and lo!
Every least ripple of the strings' song-flow
Died to a level with each level bow
And made a great chord tranquil-surfaced
so, 80

As a brook beneath his curving bank doth
go
To linger in the sacred dark and green
Where many boughs the still pool overlean
And many leaves make shadow with their
sheen.

But presently
A velvet flute-note fell down pleasantly
Upon the bosom of that harmony,
And sailed and sailed incessantly,
As if a petal from a wild-rose blown
Had fluttered down upon that pool of tone

And boatwise dropped o' the convex side 91
 And floated down the glassy tide
 And clarified and glorified
 The solemn spaces where the shadows bide.
 From the warm concave of that fluted
 note
 Somewhat, half song, half odor, forth did
 float,
 As if a rose might somehow be a throat:
 'When Nature from her far-off glen
 Flutes her soft messages to men,
 The flute can say them o'er again; 100
 Yea, Nature, singing sweet and lone,
 Breathes through life's strident polyphone
 The flute-voice in the world of tone.
 Sweet friends,
 Man's love ascends
 To finer and diviner ends
 Than man's mere thought e'er compre-
 hends
 For I, e'en I,
 As here I lie,
 A petal on a harmony, 110
 Demand of Science whence and why
 Man's tender pain, man's inward cry,
 When he doth gaze on earth and sky?
 I am not overbold:
 I hold
 Full powers from Nature manifold.
 I speak for each no-tongued tree
 That, spring by spring, doth nobler be,
 And dumbly and most wistfully
 His mighty prayerful arms outspreads 120
 Above men's oft-unheeding heads,
 And his big blessing downward sheds.
 I speak for all-shaped blooms and leaves,
 Lichens on stones and moss on eaves,
 Grasses and grains in ranks and sheaves;
 Broad-fronded ferns and keen-leaved canes,
 And briery mazes bounding lanes,
 And marsh-plants, thirsty-cupped for rains,
 And milky stems and sugary veins;
 For every long-armed woman-vine 130
 That round a piteous tree doth twine;
 For passionate odors, and divine
 Pistils, and petals crystalline;
 All purities of shady springs,
 All shynesses of film-winged things
 That fly from tree-trunks and bark-rings;
 All modesties of mountain-fawns
 That leap to covert from wild lawns,
 And tremble if the day but dawns;
 All sparklings of small beady eyes 140
 Of birds, and sidelong glances wise
 Wherewith the jay hints tragedies;

All piquancies of prickly burs,
 And smoothnesses of downs and furs,
 Of eiders and of minevers;
 All limpid honeys that do lie
 At stamen-bases, nor deny
 The humming-birds' fine roguery,
 Bee-thighs, nor any butterfly;
 All gracious curves of slender wings, 150
 Bark-mottlings, fibre-spiralings,
 Fern-wavings and leaf-flickerings;
 Each dial-marked leaf and flower-bell
 Wherewith in every lonesome dell
 Time to himself his hours doth tell;
 All tree-sounds, rustlings of pine-cones,
 Wind-sighings, doves' melodious moans,
 And night's unearthly under-tones;
 All placid lakes and waveless deeps,
 All cool reposing mountain-steeps, 160
 Vale-calms and tranquil lotos-sleeps; —
 Yea, all fair forms, and sounds, and lights,
 And warmths, and mysteries, and might,
 Of Nature's utmost depths and heights,
 — These doth my timid tongue present,
 Their mouthpiece and leal instrument
 And servant, all love-eloquent.
 I heard, when "All for love" the violins
 cried:
 So, Nature calls through all her system
 wide,
 Give me thy love, O man, so long denied. 170
 Much time is run, and man hath changed
 his ways,
 Since Nature, in the antique fable-days,
 Was hid from man's true love by proxy
 fays,
 False fauns and rascal gods that stole her
 praise.
 The nymphs, cold creatures of man's colder
 brain;
 Chilled Nature's streams till man's warm
 heart was fain
 Never to lave its love in them again.
 Later, a sweet Voice *Love thy neighbor* said;
 Then first the bounds of neighborhood out-
 spread
 Beyond all confines of old ethnic dread. 180
 Vainly the Jew might wag his covenant
 head:
 "All men are neighbors," so the sweet Voice
 said.
 So, when man's arms had circled all man's
 race,
 The liberal compass of his warm embrace
 Stretched bigger yet in the dark bounds of
 space;

With hands a-grope he felt smooth Nature's
 grace,
 Drew her to breast and kissed her sweet-
 heart face:
 Yea, man found neighbors in great hills and
 trees
 And streams and clouds and suns and birds
 and bees,
 And throbbled with neighbor-loves in loving
 these. 190
 But oh, the poor! the poor! the poor!
 That stand by the inward-opening door
 Trade's hand doth tighten ever more,
 And sigh their monstrous foul-air sigh
 For the outside hills of liberty,
 Where Nature spreads her wild blue sky
 For Art to make into melody!
 Thou Trade! thou king of the modern days!
 Change thy ways,
 Change thy ways; 200
 Let the sweaty laborers file
 A little while,
 A little while,
 Where Art and Nature sing and smile.
 Trade! is thy heart all dead, all dead?
 And hast thou nothing but a head?
 I'm all for heart,' the flute-voice said,
 And into sudden silence fled,
 Like as a blush that while 't is red
 Dies to a still, still white instead. 210
 Thereto a thrilling calm succeeds,
 Till presently the silence breeds
 A little breeze among the reeds
 That seems to blow by sea-marsh weeds:
 Then from the gentle stir and fret
 Sings out the melting clarionet,
 Like as a lady sings while yet
 Her eyes with salty tears are wet.
 'O Trade! O Trade!' the Lady said,
 'I too will wish thee utterly dead' 220
 If all thy heart is in thy head.
 For O my God! and O my God!
 What shameful ways have women trod
 At beckoning of Trade's golden rod!
 Alas when sighs are traders' lies,
 And heart's-ease eyes and violet eyes
 Are merchandise!
 O purchased lips that kiss with pain!
 O cheeks coin-spotted with smirch and stain!
 O trafficked hearts that break in twain! 230
 — And yet what wonder at my sisters'
 crime?
 So hath Trade withered up Love's sinewy
 prime,

Men love not women as in olden time.
 Ah, not in these cold merchantable days
 Deem men their life an opal gray, where
 plays
 The one red Sweet of gracious ladies'-praise.
 Now, comes a suitor with sharp prying
 eye —
 Says, *Here, you Lady, if you'll sell, I'll buy:*
Come, heart for heart—a trade? What!
weeping? why?
 Shame on such woovers' dapper mercery!
 I would my lover kneeling at my feet 241
 In humble manliness should cry, *O sweet!*
I know not if thy heart my heart will greet:
I ask not if thy love my love can meet:
Whate'er thy worshipful soft tongue shall say,
I'll kiss thine answer, be it yea or nay:
I do but know I love thee, and I pray
To be thy knight until my dying day.
 Woe him that cunning trades in hearts con-
 trives!
 Base love good women to base loving
 drives. 250
 If men loved larger, larger were our lives;
 And wooed they nobler, won they nobler
 wives.
 There thrust the bold straightforward horn
 To battle for that lady lorn,
 With heartsome voice of mellow scorn,
 Like any knight in knighthood's morn.
 'Now comfort thee,' said he,
 'Fair Lady.
 For God shall right thy grievous wrong,
 And man shall sing thee a true-love song,
 Voiced in act his whole life long, 261
 Yea, all thy sweet life long,
 Fair Lady.
 Where's he that craftily hath said,
 The day of chivalry is dead?
 I'll prove that lie upon his head,
 Or I will die instead,
 Fair Lady.
 Is Honor gone into his grave?
 Hath Faith become a caitiff knave, 270
 And Selfhood turned into a slave
 To work in Mammon's cave,
 Fair Lady?
 Will Truth's long blade ne'er gleam again?
 Hath Giant Trade in dungeons slain
 All great contempts of mean-got gain
 And hates of inward stain,
 Fair Lady?
 For aye shall name and fame be sold,
 And place be hugg'd for the sake of gold,

And smirch-robed Justice feebly scold 281
 At Crime all money-bold,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall self-wrapt husbands aye forget
 (Kiss-pardons for the daily fret)
 Wherewith sweet wifely eyes are wet —
 (Blind to lips kiss-wise set —
 Fair Lady?
 Shall lovers higgie, heart for heart,
 Till wooing grows a trading mart 290
 Where much for little, and all for part,
 Make love a cheapening art,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall woman scorch for a single sin
 That her betrayer may revel in,
 And she be burnt, and he but grin
 When that the flames begin,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall ne'er prevail the woman's plea,
W^o maids would far, far whiter be 300
If that our eyes might sometimes see
Men maids in purity,
 Fair Lady?
 Shall Trade aye salve his conscience-aches
 With jibes at Chivalry's old mistakes —
 The wars that o'erhot knighthood makes
 For Christ's and ladies' sakes,
 Fair Lady?
 Now by each knight that e'er hath prayed
 To fight like a man and love like a maid, 310
 Since Pembroke's life, as Pembroke's blade,
 I' the scabbard, death, was laid,
 Fair Lady,
 I dare avouch my faith is bright
 That God doth right and God hath might.
 Nor time hath changed His hair to white,
 Nor His dear love to spite,
 Fair Lady.
 I doubt no doubts: I strive, and shrive my
 clay,
 And fight my fight in the patient modern
 way 320
 For true love and for thee — ah me! and
 pray
 To be thy knight until my dying day,
 Fair Lady.
 Made end that knightly horn, and spurred
 away
 Into the thick of the melodious fray.
 And then the hautboy played and smiled,
 And sang like any large-eyed child,
 Cool-hearted and all undefiled.
 'Huge Trade!' he said,
 'Would thou wouldst lift me on thy head

And run where'er my finger led! 331
 Once said a Man — and wise was He —
Never shalt thou the heavens see,
Save as a little child thou be.'
 Then o'er sea-lashings of commingling
 tunes
 The ancient wise bassoons,
 Like weird
 Gray-beard
 Old harpers sitting on the high sea-dunes,
 Chanted runes: 340
 'Bright-waved gain, gray-waved loss,
 The sea of all doth lash and toss,
 One wave forward and one across:
 But now 't was trough, now 't is crest,
 And worst doth foam and flash to best,
 And curst to blest.

'Life! Life! thou sea-fugue, writ from
 east to west,
 Love, Love alone can pore
 On thy dissolving score
 Of harsh half-phrasings, 350
 Blotted ere writ,
 And double erasings
 Of chords most fit.
 Yea, Love, sole music-master blest,
 May read thy weltering palimpsest.
 To follow Time's dying melodies through,
 And never to lose the old in the new,
 And ever to solve the discords true —
 Love alone can do.
 And ever Love hears the poor-folks' cry-
 ing, 360
 And ever Love hears the women's sighing,
 And ever sweet knighthood's death-defy-
 ing,
 And ever wise childhood's deep implying,
 But never a trader's glozing and lying.

'And yet shall Love himself be heard,
 Though long deferred, though long de-
 ferred:
 O'er the modern waste a dove hath whirred:
 Music is Love in search of a word.' 1875.

EVENING SONG

Look off, dear Love, across the sallow
 sands,
 And mark yon meeting of the sun and
 sea,
 How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.
 Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the
 sun,
 As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,
 And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,
 Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort
 heaven's heart;
 Glimmer, ye waves, round else unlighted
 sands.

O night! divorce our sun and sky apart
 Never our lips, our hands. 1876. 1877.

THE WAVING OF THE CORN¹

PLOUGHMAN, whose gnarly hand yet
 kindly wheeled
 Thy plough to ring this solitary tree
 With clover, whose round plat, reserved
 a-field,
 In cool green radius twice my length may
 be —
 Scanting the corn thy furrows else might
 yield,
 To pleasure August, bees, fair thoughts,
 and me,
 That here come oft together — daily I,
 Stretched prone in summer's mortal
 ecstacy,
 Do stir with thanks to thee, as stirs this
 morn
 With waving of the corn. 10

Unseen, the farmer's boy from round the
 hill
 Whistles a snatch that seeks his soul un-
 sought,
 And fills some time with tune, howbeit
 shrill;
 The cricket tells straight on his simple
 thought —
 Nay, 't is the cricket's way of being still;
 The peddler bee drones in, and gossips
 naught;
 Far down the wood, a one-desiring
 dove
 Times me the beating of the heart of
 love:
 And these be all the sounds that mix, each
 morn,
 With waving of the corn. 20

¹ Compare the *Letters of Sidney Lanier*, p. 172, letter
 from Bayard Taylor.

From here to where the louder passions
 dwell,
 Green leagues of hilly separation roll:
 Trade ends where yon far clover ridges
 swell.
 Ye terrible Towns, ne'er claim the trem-
 bling soul
 That, craftless all to buy or hoard or sell,
 From out your deadly complex quarrel
 stole
 To company with large amiable trees,
 Suck honey summer with unjealous
 bees,
 And take Time's strokes as softly as this
 morn
 Takes waving of the corn. 30
 1876. 1877.

SONNETS ON COLUMBUS

FROM THE PSALM OF THE WEST

COLUMBUS stands in the night alone, and,
 passing grave,
 Yearns o'er the sea as tones o'er under-
 silence yearn.
 Heartens his heart as friend befriends his
 friend less brave,
 Makes burn the faiths that cool, and
 cools the doubts that burn: —

I

'Twixt this and dawn, three hours my
 soul will smite
 With prickly seconds, or less tolerably
 With dull-blade minutes flatwise slapping
 me.
 Wait, Heart! Time moves. — Thou lithe
 young Western Night,
 Just-crowned king, slow riding to thy right,
 Would God that I might straddle mu-
 tiny 10
 Calm as thou sitt'st yon never-managed
 sea,
 Balk'st with his balking, fliest with his
 flight,
 Giv'st supple to his rearings and his falls,
 Nor dropp'st one coronal star about thy
 brow
 Whilst ever dayward thou art steadfast
 drawn!
 Yea, would I rode these mad contentious
 brawls

No damage taking from their If and How,
Nor no result save galloping to my Dawn!

II

'My Dawn? my Dawn? How if it never
break?

How if this West by other Wests is
pieced,

And these by vacant Wests on Wests in-
creased —

One Pain of Space, with hollow ache on
ache

Throbbing and ceasing not for Christ's own
sake? —

Big perilous theorem, hard for king and
priest:

*Pursue the West but long enough, 't is
East!*

Oh, if this watery world no turning take!
Oh, if for all my logic, all my dreams,

Provings of that which is by that which
seems,

Fears, hopes, chills, heats, hastes, patiences,
drougts, tears,

Wife-grievings, slights on love, embezzled
years,

Hates, treaties, scorns, upliftings, loss and
gain, —

This earth, no sphere, be all one sickening
plane!

III

'Or, haply, how if this contrarious West,
That me by turns hath starved, by turns
hath fed,

Embraced, disgraced, beat back, solicited,
Have no fixed heart of Law within his
breast,

Or with some different rhythm doth e'er
contest

Nature in the East? Why, 't is but three
weeks fled

I saw my Judas needle shake his head
And flout the Pole that, east, he Lord con-
fessed!

God! if this West should own some other
Pole,

And with his tangled way perplex my
soul

Until the maze grow mortal, and I die
Where distraught Nature clean hath gone
astray,

On earth some other wit than Time's at
play,

Some other God than mine above the sky!

IV

'Now speaks mine other heart with cheer-
ier seeming:

*Ho, Admiral! o'er-defalking to thy crew
Against thyself, thyself far overfew*

To front yon multitudes of rebel scheming? 50

Come, ye wild twenty years of heavenly
dreaming!

Come, ye wild weeks since first this canvas
drew

Out of vexed Palos ere the dawn was
blue,

O'er milky waves about the bows full-
creaming!

Come set me round with many faithful
spears

Of confident remembrance — how I crushed
Cat-lived rebellions, pitfalled treasons,
hushed

Scared husbands' heart-break cries on dis-
tant wives,

Made cowards blush at whining for their
lives,

Watered my parching souls, and dried their
tears. 60

V

'Ere we Gomera cleared, a coward cried,
Turn, turn: here be three caravels ahead,

From Portugal, to take us: we are dead!

Hold Westward, pilot, calmly I replied.

So when the last land down the horizon
died,

*Go back, go back! they prayed: our hearts
are lead. —*

*Friends, we are bound into the West, I
said.*

Then passed the wreck of a mast upon our
side.

*See (so they wept) God's Warning! Admi-
ral, turn! —*

*Steersman, I said, hold straight into the
West. 70*

Then down the night we saw the meteor
burn.

*So do the very heavens in fire protest:
Good Admiral, put about! O Spain, dear
Spain! —*

Hold straight into the West, I said again.

VI

'Next drive we o'er the slimy-weeded
sea.

*Lo! herebeneath (another coward cries)
The cursed land of sunk Atlantis lies:*

*This slime will suck us down — turn while
thou'rt free! —*

But no! I said, Freedom bears West for me!

Yet when the long-time stagnant winds
arise, 80

And day by day the keel to westward flies,
My Good my people's Ill doth come to
be:

*Ever the winds into the West do blow;
Never a ship, once turned, might homeward
go;*

*Meanwhile we speed into the lonesome main.
For Christ's sake, parley, Admiral! Turn,
before*

*We sail outside all bounds of help from
pain! —*

Our help is in the West, I said once more.

VII

'So when there came a mighty cry of
Land!

And we clomb up and saw, and shouted
strong 90

*Salve Regina! all the ropes along,
But knew at morn how that a counterfeit
band*

Of level clouds had aped a silver strand;
So when we heard the orchard-bird's small
song,

And all the people cried, *A hellish throng
To tempt us onward by the Devil planned,*

*Yea, all from hell — keen heron, fresh green
weeds,*

*Pelican, tunny-fish, fair tapering reeds,
Lie-telling lands that ever shine and die*

In clouds of nothing round the empty sky. 100

*Tired Admiral, get thee from this hell, and
rest! —*

Steersman, I said, hold straight into the West.

VIII

'I marvel how mine eye, ranging the Night,
From its big circling ever absently

Returns, thou large low Star, to fix on
thee.

*Maria! Star? No star: a Light, a Light!
Would'st leap ashore, Heart? Yonder burns
— a Light.*

Pedro Gutierrez, wake! come up to me.
I prithee stand and gaze about the sea:

What seest? *Admiral, like as Land — a
Light! 110*

Well! Sanchez of Segovia, come and try:
What seest? *Admiral, naught but sea and
sky!*

Well! But I saw It. Wait! the Pinta's
gun!

Why, look, 't is dawn, the land is clear:
't is done!

Two dawns do break at once from Time's
full hand —

God's, East — mine, West: good friends,
behold my Land!

1876.

1876.

TO BEETHOVEN

IN o'er-strict calyx lingering,
Lay music's bud too long unblown,

Till thou, Beethoven, breathed the spring.
Then bloomed the perfect rose of tone.

O Psalmist of the weak, the strong,
O Troubadour of love and strife,

Co-Litanist of right and wrong,
Sole Hymner of the whole of life,

I know not how, I care not why, —
Thy music sets my world at ease, 10

And melts my passion's mortal cry
In satisfying symphonies.

It soothes my accusations sour
'Gainst thoughts that fray the restless
soul:

The stain of death; the pain of power;
The lack of love 'twixt part and whole;

The yea-nay of Freewill and Fate,
Whereof both cannot be, yet are;

The praise a poet wins too late
Who starves from earth into a star; 20

The lies that serve great parties well,
While truths but give their Christ a
cross;

The loves that send warm souls to hell,
While cold-blood neuters take no loss;

Th' indifferent smile that nature's grace
On Jesus, Judas, pours alike;

Th' indifferent frown on nature's face
When luminous lightnings strangely
strike

The sailor praying on his knees 29
And spare his mate that's cursing God;

How babes and widows starve and freeze,
Yet Nature will not stir a clod;

Why Nature blinds us in each act
Yet makes no law in mercy bend,
No pitfall from our feet retract,
No storm cry out, *Take shelter, friend*;

Why snakes that crawl the earth should ply
Rattles, that whoso hears may shun,
While serpent lightnings in the sky,
But rattle when the deed is done; 40

How truth can e'er be good for them
That have not eyes to bear its strength,
And yet how stern our lights condemn
Delays that lend the darkness length;

To know all things, save knowingness;
To grasp, yet loosen, feeling's rein;
To waste no manhood on success;
To look with pleasure upon pain;

Though teased by small mixt social claims,
To lose no large simplicity, 50
And midst of clear-seen crimes and shames
To move with manly purity;

To hold, with keen, yet loving eyes,
Art's realm from Cleverness apart,
To know the Clever good and wise,
Yet haunt the lonesome heights of Art;

O Psalmist of the weak, the strong,
O Troubadour of love and strife,
Co-Litanist of right and wrong,
Sole Hymner of the whole of life, 60

I know not how, I care not why,
Thy music brings this broil at ease,
And melts my passion's mortal cry
In satisfying symphonies.

Yea, it forgives me all my sins,
Fits life to love like rhyme to rhyme,
And tunes the task each day begins
By the last trumpet-note of Time.
1876-77. 1877.

THE MOCKING BIRD

SUPERB and sole, upon a plumèd spray
That o'er the general leafage boldly grew,
He summ'd the woods in song; or typic
drew

The watch of hungry hawks, the lone dismay
Of languid doves when long their lovers
stray,

And all birds' passion-plays that sprinkle
dew

At morn in brake or bosky avenue.
Whate'er birds did or dreamed, this bird
could say.

Then down he shot, bounced airily along
The sward, twitched in a grasshopper, made
song

Midflight, perched, prinked, and to his art
again.

Sweet Science, this large riddle read me
plain:

How may the death of that dull insect be
The life of yon trim Shakspeare on the
tree? 1

1877.

TAMPA ROBINS

THE robin laughed in the orange-tree:
'Ho, windy North, a fig for thee:

While breasts are red and wings are bold
And green trees wave us globes of gold,
Time's scythe shall reap but bliss for me
—Sunlight, song, and the orange-tree.

'Burn, golden globes in leafy sky,
My orange-planets: crimson I
Will shine and shoot among the spheres
(Blithe meteor that no mortal fears)
And thrid the heavenly orange-tree
With orbits bright of minstrelsy.

'If that I hate wild winter's spite —
The gibbet trees, the world in white,
The sky but gray wind over a grave —
Why should I ache, the season's slave?
I'll sing from the top of the orange-tree
Gramercy, winter's tyranny.

'I'll south with the sun, and keep my clime;
My wing is king of the summer-time;
My breast to the sun his torch shall hold;
And I'll call down through the green and
gold

*Time, take thy scythe, reap bliss for me,
Bestir thee under the orange-tree.'*

1877.

1877.

1 . . . Yon trim Shakspeare on the tree

leads back, almost twenty years from its writing, to the poet's college note-book, where we find the boy reflecting: 'A poet is the mocking-bird of the spiritual universe. In him are collected all the individual songs of all individual natures.' (Mrs. LANIER, note, in the *Poems*, 1884.)

FROM THE FLATS

WHAT heartache — ne'er a hill!
Inexorable, vapid, vague and chill
The drear sand-levels drain my spirit low.
With one poor word they tell me all they
know;

Whereat their stupid tongues, to tease my
pain,

Do drawl it o'er again and o'er again.
They hurt my heart with griefs I cannot
name:

Always the same, the same.

Nature hath no surprise,
No ambuscade of beauty 'gainst mine eyes
From brake or lurking dell or deep defile;
No humors, frolic forms — this mile, that
mile;

No rich reserves or happy-valley hopes
Beyond the bend of roads, the distant slopes.
Her fancy fails, her wild is all run tame:
Ever the same, the same.

Oh, might I through these tears
But glimpse some hill my Georgia high
uprears,

Where white the quartz and pink the pebble
shine,
The hickory heavenward strives, the mus-
cadine

Swings o'er the slope, the oak's far-falling
shade

Darkens the dogwood in the bottom glade,
And down the hollow from a ferny nook
Lull sings a little brook!

1877.

1877.

THE STIRRUP-CUP

DEATH, thou'rt a cordial old and rare:
Look how compounded, with what care!
Time got his wrinkles reaping thee
Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distillage went,
Keats, and Gotama excellent,
Omar Khayyám, and Chaucer bright,
And Shakspeare for a king-delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:
Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt;
'T is thy rich stirrup-cup to me;
I'll drink it down right smilingly.

1877.

1877.

SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

OUT of the hills of Habersham,
Down the valleys of Hall,
I hurry amain to reach the plain,
Run the rapid and leap the fall,
Split at the rock and together again,
Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,
And flee from folly on every side
With a lover's pain to attain the plain
Far from the hills of Habersham,
Far from the valleys of Hall. 10

All down the hills of Habersham,
All through the valleys of Hall,
The rushes cried *Abide, abide*,
The willful waterweeds held me thrall,
The laving laurel turned my tide,
The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay*,
The dewberry dipped for to work delay,
And the little reeds sighed *Abide, abide*,
Here in the hills of Habersham,
Here in the valleys of Hall. 20

High o'er the hills of Habersham,
Veiling the valleys of Hall,
The hickory told me manifold
Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall
Wrought me her shadowy self to hold,
The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the
pine,
Overleaning, with flickering meaning and
sign,
Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*
Deep shades of the hills of Habersham,
These glades in the valleys of Hall. 30

And oft in the hills of Habersham,
And oft in the valleys of Hall,
The white quartz shone, and the smooth
brook-stone
Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,
And many a luminous jewel lone
— Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,
Ruby, garnet and amethyst —
Made lures with the lights of streaming
stone

In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,
In the beds of the valleys of Hall. 40

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,
And oh, not the valleys of Hall
Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.
Downward the voices of Duty call —

Downward, to toil and be mixed with the
main,
The dry fields burn, and the mills are to
turn,
And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,
And the lordly main from beyond the plain
Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,
Calls through the valleys of Hall. 50
1877. 1877.

THE MARSHES OF GLYNN¹

GLOOMS of the live-oaks, beautiful-braided
and woven
With intricate shades of the vines that my-
riad-cloven
Clamber the forks of the multiform
boughs, —
Emerald twilights, —
Virginal shy lights,
Wrought of the leaves to allure to the
whisper of vows,
When lovers pace timidly down through
the green colonnades
Of the dim sweet woods, of the dear dark
woods,
Of the heavenly woods and glades,
That run to the radiant marginal sand-beach
within 10
The wide sea-marshes of Glynn; —

Beautiful glooms, soft dusks in the noon-
day fire, —
Wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire,
Chamber from chamber parted with waver-
ing arras of leaves, —
Cells for the passionate pleasure of prayer
to the soul that grieves,
Pure with a sense of the passing of saints
through the wood,
Cool for the dutiful weighing of ill with
good; —

O braided dusks of the oak and woven
shades of the vine,
While the riotous noon-day sun of the June-
day long did shine
Ye held me fast in your heart and I held
you fast in mine; 20

¹ The salt marshes of Glynn County, Georgia, im-
mediately around the sea-coast city of Brunswick.
The three 'Hymns of the Marshes' . . . are the only
written portions of a series of six 'Marsh Hymns' that
were designed by the author to form a separate volume.
(Mrs. LANIER.)

But now when the noon is no more, and
riot is rest,
And the sun is a-wait at the ponderous gate
of the West,
And the slant yellow beam down the wood-
aisle doth seem
Like a lane into heaven that leads from a
dream, —
Ay, now, when my soul all day hath drunken
the soul of the oak,
And my heart is at ease from men, and the
wearisome sound of the stroke
Of the scythe of time and the trowel of
trade is low,
And belief overmasters doubt, and I know
that I know,
And my spirit is grown to a lordly great
compass within,
That the length and the breadth and the
sweep of the Marshes of Glynn 30
Will work me no fear like the fear they
have wrought me of yore
When length was fatigue, and when breadth
was but bitterness sore,
And when terror and shrinking and dreary
unnamable pain
Drew over me out of the merciless miles of
the plain, —

Oh, now, unafraid, I am fain to face
The vast sweet visage of space.
To the edge of the wood I am drawn, I am
drawn,
Where the gray beach glimmering runs,
as a belt of the dawn,
For a mete and a mark
To the forest-dark : — 40
So:
Affable live-oak, leaning low, —
Thus — with your favor — soft, with a rev-
erent hand
(Not lightly touching your person, Lord of
the land!),
Bending your beauty aside, with a step I
stand
On the firm-packed sand,
Free
By a world of marsh that borders a world
of sea.
Sinuous southward and sinuous northward
the shimmering band
Of the sand-beach fastens the fringe of
the marsh to the folds of the land. 50
Inward and outward to northward and south-
ward the beach-lines linger and curl

As a silver-wrought garment that clings to
and follows the firm sweet limbs of
a girl.
Vanishing, swerving, evermore curving
again into sight,
Softly the sand-beach wavers away to a dim
gray looping of light.
And what if behind me to westward the
wall of the woods stands high?
The world lies east: how ample, the marsh
and the sea and the sky!
A league and a league of marsh-grass, waist-
high, broad in the blade,
Green, and all of a height, and unflecked
with a light or a shade,
Stretch leisurely off, in a pleasant plain,
To the terminal blue of the main. 60

Oh, what is abroad in the marsh and the
terminal sea?
Somehow my soul seems suddenly free
From the weighing of fate and the sad
discussion of sin,
By the length and the breadth and the
sweep of the marshes of Glynn.

Ye marshes, how candid and simple and no-
thing-withholding and free
Ye publish yourselves to the sky and offer
yourselves to the sea!
Tolerant plains, that suffer the sea and the
rains and the sun,
Ye spread and span like the catholic man
who hath mightily won
God out of knowledge and good out of
infinite pain
And sight out of blindness and purity out
of a stain. 70

As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the
watery sod,
Behold I will build me a nest on the great-
ness of God:
I will fly in the greatness of God as the
marsh-hen flies
In the freedom that fills all the space
'twixt the marsh and the skies:
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends
in the sod
I will heartily lay me a-hold on the great-
ness of God:
Oh, like to the greatness of God is the
greatness within
The range of the marshes, the liberal
marshes of Glynn.

And the sea lends large, as the marsh: lo,
out of his plenty the sea
Pours fast: full soon the time of the flood-
tide must be: 80
Look how the grace of the sea doth go
About and about through the intricate
channels that flow
Here and there,
Everywhere,
Till his waters have flooded the uttermost
creeks and the low-lying lanes,
And the marsh is meshed with a million
veins,
That like as with rosy and silvery essences
flow
In the rose-and-silver evening glow.
Farewell, my lord Sun!
The creeks overflow: a thousand rivulets
run 90
'Twixt the roots of the sod; the blades of
the marsh-grass stir;
Passeth a hurrying sound of wings that
westward whirr;
Passeth, and all is still; and the currents
cease to run;
And the sea and the marsh are one.

How still the plains of the waters be!
The tide is in his ecstasy.
The tide is at his highest height:
And it is night.

And now from the Vast of the Lord wil-
the waters of sleep
Roll in on the souls of men, 100
But who will reveal to our waking ken
The forms that swim and the shapes that
creep
Under the waters of sleep?
And I would I could know what swimmeth
below when the tide comes in
On the length and the breadth of the mar-
vellous marshes of Glynn.
1878. 1878.

THE REVENGE OF HAMISH
It was three slim does and a ten-tined buck
in the bracken lay;
And all of a sudden the sinister smell of
a man,
Awaft on a wind-shift, wavered and ran
Down the hillside and sifted along through
the bracken and passed that way.