

A thing like Love, for it laughs at Death.
 There is no hushing, there is no stilling
 That which is part of your life and breath.
 You may bury it deep, and leave behind you
 The land, the people that knew your slain;
 It will push the sods from its grave, and find you
 On wastes of water or desert plain.

You may hear but tongues of a foreign people,
 You may list to sounds that are strange and new;
 But, clear as a silver bell in a steeple,
 That voice from the grave shall call to you.
 You may rouse your pride, you may use your reason,
 And seem for a space to slay Love so;
 But, all in its own good time and season,
 It will rise and follow wherever you go.
 You shall sit sometimes, when the leaves are falling,
 Alone with your heart, as I sit to-day,
 And hear that voice from your dead Past calling
 Out of the graves that you hid away.

A WALTZ-QUADRILLE.

THE band was playing a waltz-quadrille,
 I felt as light as a wind-blown feather,
 As we floated away, at the caller's will,
 Through the intricate, mazy dance together.
 Like mimic armies our lines were meeting,
 Slowly advancing, and then retreating,
 All decked in their bright array;
 And back and forth to the music's rhyme
 We moved together, and all the time
 I knew you were going away.

The fold of your strong arm sent a thrill
 From heart to brain as we gently glided
 Like leaves on the wave of that waltz-quadrille;
 Parted, met, and again divided—
 You drifting one way, and I another,
 Then suddenly turning and facing each other,
 Then off in the blithe chasse,

Then airily back to our places swaying,
While every beat of the music seemed saying
That you were going away.

I said to my heart, "Let us take our fill
Of mirth, and music, and love, and laughter;
For it all must end with this waltz-quadrille.
And life will be never the same life after.
Oh, that the caller might go on calling,
Oh, that the music might go on falling
Like a shower of silver spray,
While we whirled on to the vast Forever,
Where no hearts break, and no ties sever,
And no one goes away."

A clamor, a crash, and the band was still,
'Twas the end of the dream, and the end of the
measure:

The last low notes of that waltz-quadrille
Seemed like a dirge o'er the death of Pleasure.
You said good-night, and the spell was over—

Too warm for a friend, and too cold for a lover—
There was nothing else to say;
But the lights looked dim, and the dancers weary,
And the music was sad and the hall was dreary,
After you went away.

BEPPO.

WHY art thou sad, my Beppo? But last eve,
 Here at my feet, thy dear head on my breast,
 I heard thee say thy heart would no more grieve
 Or feel the olden ennui, and unrest.

What troubles thee? Am I not all thine own—
 I, so long sought, so sighed for and so dear?
 And do I not live but for thee alone?
 "Thou hast seen Lippo, whom I loved last year!"

Well, what of that? Last year is naught to me—
 'Tis swallowed in the ocean of the past.
 Art thou not glad 'twas Lippo, and not thee,
 Whose brief bright day in that great gulf was cast?

Thy day is all before thee. Let no cloud,
 Here in the very morn of our delight,
 Drift up from distant foreign skies, to shroud,
 Our sun of love whose radiance is so bright.

"Thou art not first?" Nay, and he who would be
 Defeats his own heart's dearest purpose then.
 No truer truth was ever told to thee—
 Who has loved most, he best can love again.

If Lippo (and not he alone) has taught
 The arts that please thee, wherefore art thou sad?
 Since all my vast love-lore to thee is brought,
 Look up and smile, my Beppo, and be glad.

TIREB.

I AM tired tonight, and something,
 The wind maybe, or the rain,
 Or the cry of a bird in the copse outside,
 Has brought back the past and its pain.
 And I feel, as I sit here thinking,
 That the hand of a dead old June
 Has reached out hold of my heart's loose strings,
 And is drawing them up in tune.

I am tired tonight, and I miss you,
 And long for you, love, through tears;
 And it seems but today that I saw you go—
 You, who have been gone for years.
 And I seem to be newly lonely—
 I, who am so much alone;
 And the strings of my heart are well in tune
 But they have not the same old tone.

I am tired; and that old sorrow
 Sweeps down the bed of my soul,
 As a turbulent river might suddenly break
 Away from a dam's control.
 It beareth a wreck on its bosom,
 A wreck with a snow-white sail,
 And the hand on my heart-strings thrums away,
 But they only respond with a wail.

THE SPEECH OF SILENCE.

THE solemn Sea of Silence lies between us;
 I know thou livest, and thou lovest me;
 And yet I wish some white ship would come sailing
 Across the ocean, bearing word from thee.

The dead-calm awes me with its awful stillness.
 No anxious doubts or fears disturb my breast;
 I only ask some little wave of language,
 To stir this vast infinitude of rest.

I am oppressed with this great sense of loving;
 So much I give, so much receive from thee,
 Like subtle incense, rising from a censer,
 So floats the fragrance of thy love round me.

All speech is poor, and written words unmeaning;
 Yet such I ask, blown hither by some wind,
 To give relief to this too perfect knowledge,
 The Silence so impresses on my mind.

How poor the love that needeth word or message,
 To banish doubt or nourish tenderness;
 I ask them but to temper love's convictions
 The Silence all too fully doth express.

Too deep the language which the spirit utters;
 Too vast the knowledge which my soul hath stirred.
 Send some white ship across the Sea of Silence,
 And interrupt its utterance with a word.

CONVERSION.

I HAVE lived this life as the skeptic lives it,
 I have said the sweetness was less than the gall,
 Praising, nor cursing, the Hand that gives it,
 I have drifted aimlessly through it all.
 I have scoffed at the tale of a so-called heaven,
 I have laughed at the thought of a Supreme
 Friend;
 I have said that it only to man was given
 To live, to endure; and to die was the end.
 But now I know that a good God reigneth
 Generous-hearted, and kind and true;
 Since unto a worm like me He deigneth
 To send so royal a gift as you.
 Bright as a star, you gleam on my bosom,
 Sweet as a rose that the wild bee sips;
 And I know, my own, my beautiful blossom,
 That none but a God could mould such lips.

And I believe, in the fullest measure
 That ever a strong man's heart could hold,
 In all the tales of heavenly pleasure
 By poets sung, or by prophets told;
 For in the joy of your shy, sweet kisses,
 Your pulsing touch and your languid sigh,
 I am filled and thrilled with better blisses
 Than ever were claimed for souls on high.
 And now I have faith in all the stories
 Told of the beauties of unseen lands;
 Of royal splendors and marvelous glories
 Of the golden city not made with hands
 For the silken beauty of falling tresses,
 Of lips all dewy and cheeks aglow,
 With—what the mind in a half tranced guesses,
 Of the twin perfection of drifts of snow.
 Of limbs like marble, of thigh and shoulder,
 Carved like a statue in high relief—
 These, as the eyes and the thoughts grow bolder,
 Leave no room for an unbelief.

So my lady, my queen most royal,
My skepticism has passed away;
If you are true to me, true and loyal,
I will believe till the Judgment day.

LOVE'S COMING.

SHE had looked for his coming as warriors come,
With the clash of arms and the bugle's call;
But he came instead with a stealthy tread,
Which she did not hear at all.

She had thought how his armor would blaze in the
sun,
As he rode like a prince to claim his bride:
In the sweet dim light of the falling night
She found him at her side.

She had dreamed how the gaze of his strange, bold
eye
Would wake her heart to a sudden glow:
She found in his face the familiar grace
Of a friend she used to know.

She had dreamed how his coming would stir her soul,
As the ocean is stirred by the wild storm's strife:
He brought her the balm of a heavenly calm,
And a peace which crowned her life.

OLD AND NEW.

LONG have the poets vaunted, in their lays,
 Old times, old loves, old friendship, and old
 wine.

Why should the old monopolize all praise?
 Then let the new claim mine.

Give me strong new friends, when the old prove
 weak,

Or fail me in my darkest hour of need;
 Why perish with the ship that springs a leak,
 Or lean upon a reed?

Give me new love, warm, palpitating, sweet,
 When all the grace and beauty leaves the old;
 When like a rose it withers at my feet,
 Or like a hearth grows cold.

Give me new times, bright with a prosperous cheer,
 In place of old, tear-blotted, burdened days;

I hold a sunlit present far more dear,
 And worthy of my praise.

When the old creeds are threadbare, and worn
 through,
 And all too narrow for the broadening soul,
 Give me the fine, firm texture of the new,
 Fair, beautiful and whole!

PERFECTNESS.

ALL perfect things are saddening in effect.
 The autumn wood robed in its scarlet clothes,
 The matchless tinting on the royal rose
 Whose velvet leaf by no least flaw is flecked
 Love's supreme moment, when the soul unchecked
 Soars high as heaven, and its best rapture knows,
 These hold a deeper pathos than our woes,
 Since they leave nothing better to expect.

 Resistless change, when powerless to improve,
 Can only mar. The gold will pale to gray—
 No thing remains tomorrow as today,—
 The rose will not seem quite so fair, and love
 Must find its measures of delight made less.
 Ah, how imperfect is all Perfectness!

BLEAK WEATHER.

DEAR Love, where the red lilies blossomed and
 grew
 The white snows are falling;
 And all through the woods where I wandered with
 you
 The loud winds are calling;
 And the robin that piped to us tune upon tune,
 Neath the oak, you remember,
 O'er hilltop and forest has followed the June
 And left us December.

 He has left like a friend who is true in the sun
 And false in the shadows;
 He has found new delights in the land where he's
 gone,
 Greener woodlands and meadows.
 Let him go! what care we? let the snow shroud the
 lea,
 Let it drift on the heather;

We can sing through it all: I have you, you have me,
And we'll laugh at the weather.

The old year may die and a new year be born
That is bleaker and colder:

It cannot dismay us; we dare it, we scorn,
For our love makes us bolder.

Ah, Robin! sing loud on your far distant lea,
You friend in fair weather!

But here is a song sung that's fuller of glee
By two warm hearts together.

ATTRACTION.

THE meadow and the mountain with desire
Gazed on each other, till a fierce unrest
Surged 'neath the meadow's seemingly calm breast,
And all the mountain's fissures ran with fire.

A mighty river rolled between them there.

What could the mountain do but gaze and burn?

What could the meadow do but look and yearn,
And gem its bosom to conceal despair?

Their seething passion agitated space,

Till lo! the lands a sudden earthquake shook,

The river fled: the meadow leaped, and took
The leaning mountain in a close embrace.

GRACIA.

NAY, nay, Antonio! nay, thou shalt not blame her,
 My Gracia, who hath so deserted me.
 Thou art my friend; but if thou dost defame her
 I shall not hesitate to challenge thee.
 "Curse and forget her?" so I might another
 One not so bounteous natured or so fair;
 But she, Antonio, she was like no other—
 I curse her not, because she was so rare.
 She was made out of laughter and sweet kisses;
 Not blood, but sunshine, through her blue veins
 ran;
 Her soul spilled over with its wealth of blisses,—
 She was too great for loving but a man.
 None but a god could keep so rare a creature—
 I blame her not for her inconstancy;
 When I recall each radiant smile, and feature,
 I wonder she so long was true to me.

Call her not false or fickle. I, who love her,
 Do hold her not unlike the royal sun,
 That, all unmated, roams the wide world over
 And lights all worlds, but lingers not with one.

If she were less a goddess, more a woman,
 And so had dallied for a time with me,
 And then had left me, I, who am but human,
 Would slay her, and her newer love, may be.

But since she seeks Apollo, or another
 Of those lost gods (and seeks him all in vain),
 And has loved me as well as any other
 Of her men-loves, why, I do not complain.

AD FINEM.

ON the white throat of the useless passion
 That scorched my soul with its burning breath,
 I clutched my fingers in murderous fashion,
 And gathered them close in a grip of death;
 For why should I fan, or feed with fuel,
 A love that showed me but blank despair?
 So my hold was firm, and my grasp was cruel—
 I meant to strangle it then and there!

I thought it was dead. But with no warning,
 It rose from its grave last night, and came
 And stood by my bed till the early morning,
 And over and over it spoke your name.
 Its throat was red where my hands had held it,
 It burned my brow with its scorching breath;
 And I said, the moment my eyes beheld it,
 "A love like this can know no death."

For just one kiss that your lips have given
 In the lost and beautiful past to me,
 I would gladly barter my hopes of Heaven
 And all the bliss of Eternity.
 For never a joy are the angels keeping
 To lay at my feet in Paradise,
 Like that of into your strong arms creeping,
 And looking into your love-lit eyes.

I know, in the way that sins are reckoned,
 This thought is a sin of the deepest dye;
 But I know, too, if an angel beckoned,
 Standing close by the Throne on High,
 And you, adown by the gates infernal,
 Should open your loving arms and smile,
 I would turn my back on things supernal,
 To lie on your breast a little while.

To know for an hour you were mine completely—
 Mine in body and soul, my own—
 I would bear unending tortures sweetly,
 With not a murmur and not a moan.

A lighter sin or a lesser error
 Might change through hope or fear divine;
 But there is no fear, and hell has no terror
 To change or alter a love like mine.

NEW AND OLD.

I AND new love, in all its living bloom,
 Sat vis-a-vis, while tender twilight hours
 Went softly by us, treading as on flowers.
 Then suddenly I saw within the room
 The old love, long since lying in its tomb.
 It dropped the cerecloth from its fleshless face
 And smiled on me, with a remembered grace
 That, like the noontide, lit the gloaming's gloom.

Upon its shroud there hung the grave's green mould,
 About it hung the odor of the dead;
 Yet from its cavernous eyes such light was shed
 That all my life seemed gilded, as with gold;
 Unto the trembling new love "Go," I said,
 "I do not need thee, for I have the old."