

I can hear in the hush of the still, still night,  
 The ceaseless sound of that mighty river;  
 I can hear it gushing, gurgling, rushing  
 With a wild, delirious strange delight,  
 And a conscious pride in its sense of might,  
 As it hurries and worries my heart forever.

And I wonder oft as I lie awake,  
 And list to the river that seethes and surges  
 Over the wheel that it chides and urges,—  
 I wonder oft if that wheel will break  
 With the mighty pressure it bears, some day,  
 Or slowly and wearily wear away.

For little by little the heart is wearing,  
 Like the wheel of the mill, as the tide goes tearing  
 And plunging hurriedly through my breast,  
 In a network of veins on a nameless quest,  
 From and forth, unto unknown oceans,  
 Bringing its cargoes of fierce emotions,  
 With never a pause or an hour for rest.

## A MEETING.

Q UITE carelessly I turned the newsy sheet;  
 A song I sang, full many a year ago,  
 Smiled up at me, as in a busy street  
 One meets an old-time friend he used to know.  
 So full it was, that simple little song,  
 Of all the hope, the transport, and the truth,  
 Which to the impetuous morn of life belong,  
 That, once again, I seemed to grasp my youth.  
 So full it was of that sweet, fancied pain  
 We woo and cherish ere we meet with wo.  
 I felt, as one who hears a plaintive strain  
 His mother sang him in the long ago.  
 Up from the grave, the years that lay between  
 That song's birthday and my stern present, came  
 Like phantom forms, and swept across the scene,  
 Bearing their broken dreams of love and fame.

Fair hopes and bright ambitions that I knew  
 In that old time, with their ideal grace,  
 Shone for a moment, then were lost to view,  
 Behind the dull clouds of the commonplace.

With trembling hands I put the sheet away;  
 Ah, little song! the sad and bitter truth  
 Struck like an arrow when we met that day!  
 My life has missed the promise of its youth.

## EARNESTNESS.

THE hurry of the times affects us so  
 In this swift rushing hour, we crowd, and press,  
 And thrust each other backward, as we go,  
 And do not pause to lay sufficient stress  
 Upon that good, strong, true word, Earnestness.  
 In our impetuous haste, could we but know  
 Its full, deep meaning, its vast import, oh,  
 Then might we grasp the secret of success!

In that receding age when men were great,  
 The bone, and sinew, of their purpose lay  
 In this one word. God likes an earnest soul—  
 Too earnest to be eager. Soon or late  
 It leaves the spent horde breathless by the way,  
 And stands serene, triumphant, at the goal.

## A PICTURE.

I STROLLED last eve across the lonely down,  
 One solitary picture struck my eye.  
 A distant plowboy stood against the sky—  
 How far he seemed, above the noisy town!

Upon the bosom of a cloud the sod  
 Laid its bruised cheek, as he moved slowly by,  
 And, watching him, I asked myself if I  
 In very truth stood half as near to God.

## MOCKERY.

WHY do we grudge our sweets so to the living,  
 Who, God knows, finds at best too much of  
 gall,  
 And then with generous, open hands kneel, giving  
 Unto the dead our all?

Why do we pierce the warm hearts, sin or sorrow,  
 With idle jests, or scorn, or cruel sneers,  
 And when it cannot know, on some tomorrow,  
 Speak of its woe through tears?

What do the dead care for the tender token—  
 The love, the praise, the floral offerings?  
 But palpitating, living hearts are broken  
 For want of just these things.

## TWIN-BORN.

**H**E who possesses virtue at its best,  
 Or greatness in the true sense of the word,  
 Has one day started even with that herd  
 Whose swift feet now speed, but at sin's behest.  
 It is the same force in the human breast  
 Which makes men gods or demons. If we gird  
 Those strong emotions by which we are stirred  
 With might of will and purpose, heights unguessed  
 Shall dawn for us; or if we give them sway  
 We can sink down and consort with the lost.  
 All virtue is worth just the price it cost.  
 Black sin is oft white truth, that missed its way  
 And wandered off in paths not understood.  
 Twin-born I hold great evil and great good.

## FLOODS.

**I**N the dark night, from sweet refreshing sleep  
 I wake to hear outside my window-pane  
 The uncurbed fury of the wild spring rain,  
 And weird winds lashing the defiant deep,  
 And roar of floods that gather strength, and leap  
 Down dizzy, wreck-strewn channels to the main.  
 I turn upon my pillow, and again  
 Compose myself for slumber.

Let them sweep;

I once survived great floods, and do not fear,  
 Though ominous planets congregate, and seem  
 To foretell strange disasters

From a dream—

Ah! dear God! such a dream!—I woke to hear,  
 Through the dense shadows lit by no star's gleam,  
 The rush of mighty waters on my ear.  
 Helpless, afraid, and all alone, I lay;  
 The floods had come upon me unaware.

I heard the crash of structures that were fair;  
 The bridges of fond hopes were swept away  
 By great salt waves of sorrow. In dismay  
 I saw by the red lightning's lurid glare  
 That on the rock-bound island of despair  
 I had been cast. Till the dim dawn of day  
 I heard my castles falling, and the roll  
 Of angry billows bearing to the sea  
 The broken timbers of my very soul.  
 Were all the pent-up waters from the whole  
 Stupendous solar system to break free,  
 There are no floods now that can frighten me.

## REGRET.

THERE is a haunting phantom called Regret,  
 A shadowy creature robed somewhat like Wo,  
 But fairer in the face, whom all men know  
 By her sad mien, and eyes forever wet.  
 No heart would seek her; but once having met  
 All take her by the hand, and to and fro  
 They wander through those paths of long ago—  
 Those hallowed ways 'twere wiser to forget.

One day she led me to that lost land's gate  
 And bade me enter; but I answered "No!  
 I will pass on with my bold comrade Fate;  
 I have no tears to waste on thee—no time—  
 My strength I hoard for heights I hope to climb,  
 No friend art thou, for souls that would be great."

## A FABLE.

SOME cawing Crows, a hooting Owl,  
 A Hawk, a Canary, an old Marsh-Fowl,  
 One day all met together,  
 To hold a caucus and settle the fate  
 Of a certain bird (without a mate),  
 A bird of another feather.

“My friends,” said the Owl, with a look most wise,  
 “The Eagle is soaring too near the skies,  
 In a way that is quite improper;  
 Yet the world is praising her, so I’m told,  
 And I think her actions have grown so bold  
 That some of us ought to stop her.”

“I have heard it said,” quoth Hawk, with a sigh,  
 “That young lambs died at the glance of her eye,  
 And I wholly scorn and despise her.  
 This, and more, I am told they say—  
 And I think that the only proper way  
 Is never to recognize her.”

“I am quite convinced,” said Crow, with a caw,  
 “That the Eagle minds no moral law,  
 She’s a most unruly creature.”  
 “She’s an ugly thing,” piped Canary Bird;  
 “Some call her handsome—it’s so absurd—  
 She hasn’t a decent feature.”

Then the old Marsh Hen went hopping about,  
 She said she was sure—she hadn’t a doubt—  
 Of the truth of each bird’s story:  
 And she thought it a duty to stop her flight  
 To pull her down from her lofty height,  
 And take the guilt from her glory.

But, lo! from a peak on the mountain grand  
 That looks out over the smiling land  
 And over the mighty ocean,  
 The Eagle is spreading her splendid wings—  
 She rises, rises, and upward swings,  
 With a slow, majestic motion.

Up in the blue of God's own skies,  
With a cry of rapture, away she flies,  
Close to the Great Eternal:  
She sweeps the world with her piercing sight—  
Her soul is filled with the infinite  
And the joy of things supernal.

Thus rise forever the chosen of God,  
The genius-crowned or the power-shod,  
Over the dust-world sailing;  
And back, like splinters blown by the winds,  
Must fall the missiles of silly minds,  
Useless and unavailing.

