

‘ Once I dwelt apart,
 Now I live with all ;
 As shepherd’s lamp on far hill-side
 Seems, by the traveller espied,
 A door into the mountain heart,
 So didst thou quarry and unlock
 Highways for me through the rock.

‘ Now, deceived, thou wanderest
 In strange lands unblest ;
 And my kindred come to soothe me.
 Southwind is my next of blood ;
 He is come through fragrant wood,
 Drugged with spice from climates warm,
 And in every twinkling glade,
 And twilight nook,
 Unveils thy form.
 Out of the forest way
 Forth paced it yesterday ;
 And when I sat by the watercourse,
 Watching the daylight fade,
 It throbbed up from the brook.

‘ River and rose and crag and bird,
 Frost and sun and eldest night,
 To me their aid preferred,
 To me their comfort plight ; —
 “ Courage ! we are thine allies,
 And with this hint be wise, —

The chains of kind
 The distant bind ;
 Deed thou doest she must do,
 Above her will, be true ;
 And, in her strict resort
 To winds and waterfalls
 And autumn’s sunlit festivals,
 To music, and to music’s thought,
 Inextricably bound,
 She shall find thee, and be found.
 Follow not her flying feet ;
 Come to us herself to meet.”

INITIAL, DÆMONIC AND CELESTIAL LOVE

I

THE INITIAL LOVE

VENUS, when her son was lost,
 Cried him up and down the coast,
 In hamlets, palaces and parks,
 And told the truant by his marks, —
 Golden curls, and quiver and bow.
 This befell how long ago !
 Time and tide are strangely changed,
 Men and manners much deranged :

None will now find Cupid latent
 By this foolish antique patent.
 He came late along the waste,
 Shod like a traveller for haste;
 With malice dared me to proclaim him,
 That the maids and boys might name him.

Boy no more, he wears all coats,
 Frocks and blouses, capes, capotes;
 He bears no bow, or quiver, or wand,
 Nor chaplet on his head or hand.
 Leave his weeds and heed his eyes, —
 All the rest he can disguise.
 In the pit of his eye 's a spark
 Would bring back day if it were dark;
 And, if I tell you all my thought,
 Though I comprehend it not,
 In those unfathomable orbs
 Every function he absorbs;
 Doth eat, and drink, and fish, and shoot,
 And write, and reason, and compute,
 And ride, and run, and have, and hold,
 And whine, and flatter, and regret,
 And kiss, and couple, and beget,
 By those roving eyeballs bold.

Undaunted are their courages,
 Right Cossacks in their forages;
 Fleeter they than any creature, —

They are his steeds, and not his feature;
 Inquisitive, and fierce, and fasting,
 Restless, predatory, hasting;
 And they pounce on other eyes
 As lions on their prey;
 And round their circles is writ,
 Plainer than the day,
 Underneath, within, above, —
 Love — love — love — love.
 He lives in his eyes;
 There doth digest, and work, and spin,
 And buy, and sell, and lose, and win;
 He rolls them with delighted motion,
 Joy-tides swell their mimic ocean.
 Yet holds he them with tautest rein,
 That they may seize and entertain
 The glance that to their glance opposes,
 Like fiery honey sucked from roses.
 He palmistry can understand,
 Imbibing virtue by his hand
 As if it were a living root;
 The pulse of hands will make him mute;
 With all his force he gathers balms
 Into those wise, thrilling palms.

Cupid is a casuist,
 A mystic and a cabalist, —
 Can your lurking thought surprise,
 And interpret your device.

He is versed in occult science,
 In magic and in clairvoyance,
 Oft he keeps his fine ear strained,
 And Reason on her tiptoe pained
 For aëry intelligence,
 And for strange coincidence.
 But it touches his quick heart
 When Fate by omens takes his part,
 And chance-dropped hints from Nature's sphere
 Deeply soothe his anxious ear.

Heralds high before him run ;
 He has ushers many a one ;
 He spreads his welcome where he goes,
 And touches all things with his rose.
 All things wait for and divine him, —
 How shall I dare to malign him,
 Or accuse the god of sport ?
 I must end my true report,
 Painting him from head to foot,
 In as far as I took note,
 Trusting well the matchless power
 Of this young-eyed emperor
 Will clear his fame from every cloud
 With the bards and with the crowd.

He is wilful, mutable,
 Shy, untamed, inscrutable,
 Swifter-fashioned than the fairies,

Substance mixed of pure contraries ;
 His vice some elder virtue's token,
 And his good is evil-spoken.
 Failing sometimes of his own,
 He is headstrong and alone ;
 He affects the wood and wild,
 Like a flower-hunting child ;
 Buries himself in summer waves,
 In trees, with beasts, in mines and caves,
 Loves nature like a hornèd cow,
 Bird, or deer, or caribou.

Shun him, nymphs, on the fleet horses !
 He has a total world of wit ;
 O how wise are his discourses !
 But he is the arch-hypocrite,
 And, through all science and all art,
 Seeks alone his counterpart.
 He is a Pundit of the East,
 He is an augur and a priest,
 And his soul will melt in prayer,
 But word and wisdom is a snare ;
 Corrupted by the present toy
 He follows joy, and only joy.
 There is no mask but he will wear ;
 He invented oaths to swear ;
 He paints, he carves, he chants, he prays,
 And holds all stars in his embrace.
 He takes a sovran privilege

Not allowed to any liege ;
 For Cupid goes behind all law,
 And right into himself does draw ;
 For he is sovereignly allied, —
 Heaven's oldest blood flows in his side, —
 And interchangeably at one
 With every king on every throne,
 That no god dare say him nay,
 Or see the fault, or seen betray :
 He has the Muses by the heart,
 And the stern Parcaë on his part.

His many signs cannot be told ;
 He has not one mode, but manifold,
 Many fashions and addresses,
 Piques, reproaches, hurts, caresses.
 He will preach like a friar,
 And jump like Harlequin ;
 He will read like a crier,
 And fight like a Paladin.
 Boundless is his memory ;
 Plans immense his term prolong ;
 He is not of counted age,
 Meaning always to be young.
 And his wish is intimacy,
 Intimater intimacy,
 And a stricter privacy ;
 The impossible shall yet be done,
 And, being two, shall still be one.

As the wave breaks to foam on shelves,
 Then runs into a wave again,
 So lovers melt their sundered selves,
 Yet melted would be twain.

II

THE DÆMONIC LOVE

MAN was made of social earth,
 Child and brother from his birth,
 Tethered by a liquid cord
 Of blood through veins of kindred poured.
 Next his heart the fireside band
 Of mother, father, sister, stand ;
 Names from awful childhood heard
 Throbs of a wild religion stirred ; —
 Virtue, to love, to hate them, vice ;
 Till dangerous Beauty came, at last,
 Till Beauty came to snap all ties ;
 The maid, abolishing the past,
 With lotus wine obliterates
 Dear memory's stone-incarved traits,
 And, by herself, supplants alone
 Friends year by year more inly known.
 When her calm eyes opened bright,
 All else grew foreign in their light.
 It was ever the self-same tale,

The first experience will not fail;
 Only two in the garden walked,
 And with snake and seraph talked.

Close, close to men,
 Like undulating layer of air,
 Right above their heads,
 The potent plain of Dæmons spreads.
 Stands to each human soul its own,
 For watch and ward and furtherance,
 In the snares of Nature's dance;
 And the lustre and the grace
 To fascinate each youthful heart,
 Beaming from its counterpart,
 Translucent through the mortal covers,
 Is the Dæmon's form and face.
 To and fro the Genius hies, —
 A gleam which plays and hovers
 Over the maiden's head,
 And dips sometimes as low as to her eyes.
 Unknown, albeit lying near,
 To men, the path to the Dæmon sphere;
 And they that swiftly come and go
 Leave no track on the heavenly snow.
 Sometimes the airy synod bends,
 And the mighty choir descends,
 And the brains of men thenceforth,
 In crowded and in still resorts,
 Teem with unwonted thoughts:

As, when a shower of meteors
 Cross the orbit of the earth,
 And, lit by fringent air,
 Blaze near and far,
 Mortals deem the planets bright
 Have slipped their sacred bars,
 And the lone seaman all the night
 Sails, astonished, amid stars.

Beauty of a richer vein,
 Graces of a subtler strain,
 Unto men these moonmen lend,
 And our shrinking sky extend.
 So is man's narrow path
 By strength and terror skirted;
 Also (from the song the wrath
 Of the Genii be averted!
 The Muse the truth uncolored speaking)
 The Dæmons are self-seeking:
 Their fierce and limitary will
 Draws men to their likeness still.
 The erring painter made Love blind, —
 Highest Love who shines on all;
 Him, radiant, sharpest-sighted god,
 None can bewilder;
 Whose eyes pierce
 The universe,
 Path-finder, road-builder,
 Mediator, royal giver;

Rightly seeing, rightly seen,
 Of joyful and transparent mien.
 'T is a sparkle passing
 From each to each, from thee to me,
 To and fro perpetually ;
 Sharing all, daring all,
 Levelling, displacing
 Each obstruction, it unites
 Equals remote, and seeming opposites.
 And ever and forever Love
 Delights to build a road :
 Unheeded Danger near him strides,
 Love laughs, and on a lion rides.
 But Cupid wears another face,
 Born into Dæmons less divine :
 His roses bleach apace,
 His nectar smacks of wine.
 The Dæmon ever builds a wall,
 Himself encloses and includes,
 Solitude in solitudes :
 In like sort his love doth fall.
 He doth elect
 The beautiful and fortunate,
 And the sons of intellect,
 And the souls of ample fate,
 Who the Future's gates unbar, —
 Minions of the Morning Star.
 In his prowess he exults,
 And the multitude insults.

His impatient looks devour
 Oft the humble and the poor ;
 And, seeing his eye glare,
 They drop their few pale flowers,
 Gathered with hope to please,
 Along the mountain towers, —
 Lose courage, and despair.
 He will never be gainsaid, —
 Pitiless, will not be stayed ;
 His hot tyranny
 Burns up every other tie.
 Therefore comes an hour from Jove
 Which his ruthless will defies,
 And the dogs of Fate unties.
 Shiver the palaces of glass ;
 Shrivell the rainbow-colored walls,
 Where in bright Art each god and sibyl dwelt
 Secure as in the zodiac's belt ;
 And the galleries and halls,
 Wherein every siren sung,
 Like a meteor pass.
 For this fortune wanted root
 In the core of God's abysm, —
 Was a weed of self and schism ;
 And ever the Dæmonic Love
 Is the ancestor of wars
 And the parent of remorse.

III

THE CELESTIAL LOVE

BUT God said,
 'I will have a purer gift;
 There is smoke in the flame;
 New flowerets bring, new prayers uplift,
 And love without a name.
 Fond children, ye desire
 To please each other well;
 Another round, a higher,
 Ye shall climb on the heavenly stair,
 And selfish preference forbear;
 And in right deserving,
 And without a swerving
 Each from your proper state,
 Weave roses for your mate.

'Deep, deep are loving eyes,
 Flowed with naphtha fiery sweet;
 And the point is paradise,
 Where their glances meet:
 Their reach shall yet be more profound,
 And a vision without bound:
 The axis of those eyes sun-clear
 Be the axis of the sphere:

So shall the lights ye pour amain
 Go, without check or intervals,
 Through from the empyrean walls
 Unto the same again.'

Higher far into the pure realm,
 Over sun and star,
 Over the flickering Dæmon film,
 Thou must mount for love;
 Into vision where all form
 In one only form dissolves;
 In a region where the wheel
 On which all beings ride
 Visibly revolves;
 Where the starred, eternal worm
 Girds the world with bound and term;
 Where unlike things are like;
 Where good and ill,
 And joy and moan,
 Melt into one.

There Past, Present, Future, shoot
 Triple blossoms from one root;
 Substances at base divided,
 In their summits are united;
 There the holy essence rolls,
 One through separated souls;
 And the sunny Æon sleeps
 Folding Nature in its deeps,

And every fair and every good,
 Known in part, or known impure,
 To men below,
 In their archetypes endure.
 The race of gods,
 Or those we erring own,
 Are shadows flitting up and down
 In the still abodes.
 The circles of that sea are laws
 Which publish and which hide the cause.

Pray for a beam
 Out of that sphere,
 Thee to guide and to redeem.
 O, what a load
 Of care and toil,
 By lying use bestowed,
 From his shoulders falls who sees
 The true astronomy,
 The period of peace.
 Counsel which the ages kept
 Shall the well-born soul accept.
 As the overhanging trees
 Fill the lake with images,—
 As garment draws the garment's hem,
 Men their fortunes bring with them.
 By right or wrong,
 Lands and goods go to the strong.
 Property will brutally draw

Still to the proprietor;
 Silver to silver creep and wind,
 And kind to kind.

Nor less the eternal poles
 Of tendency distribute souls.
 There need no vows to bind
 Whom not each other seek, but find.
 They give and take no pledge or oath,—
 Nature is the bond of both:
 No prayer persuades, no flattery fawns,—
 Their noble meanings are their pawns.
 Plain and cold is their address,
 Power have they for tenderness;
 And, so thoroughly is known
 Each other's counsel by his own,
 They can parley without meeting;
 Need is none of forms of greeting;
 They can well communicate
 In their innermost estate;
 When each the other shall avoid,
 Shall each by each be most enjoyed.

Not with scarfs or perfumed gloves
 Do these celebrate their loves:
 Not by jewels, feasts and savors,
 Not by ribbons or by favors,
 But by the sun-spark on the sea,
 And the cloud-shadow on the lea,

THE CELESTIAL LOVE

The soothing lapse of morn to mirk,
 And the cheerful round of work.
 Their cords of love so public are,
 They intertwine the farthest star:
 The throbbing sea, the quaking earth,
 Yield sympathy and signs of mirth;
 Is none so high, so mean is none,
 But feels and seals this union;
 Even the fell Furies are appeased,
 The good applaud, the lost are eased.

Love's hearts are faithful, but not fond,
 Bound for the just, but not beyond;
 Not glad, as the low-loving herd,
 Of self in other still preferred,
 But they have heartily designed
 The benefit of broad mankind.
 And they serve men austere,
 After their own genius, clearly,
 Without a false humility;
 For this is Love's nobility, —
 Not to scatter bread and gold,
 Goods and raiment bought and sold;
 But to hold fast his simple sense,
 And speak the speech of innocence,
 And with hand and body and blood,
 To make his bosom-counsel good.
 He that feeds men serveth few;
 He serves all who dares be true.

THE APOLOGY

THINK me not unkind and rude
 That I walk alone in grove and glen;
 I go to the god of the wood
 To fetch his word to men.

Tax not my sloth that I
 Fold my arms beside the brook;
 Each cloud that floated in the sky
 Writes a letter in my book.

Chide me not, laborious band,
 For the idle flowers I brought;
 Every aster in my hand
 Goes home loaded with a thought.

There was never mystery
 But 't is figured in the flowers;
 Was never secret history
 But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field
 Homeward brought the oxen strong;
 A second crop thine acres yield,
 Which I gather in a song.