

“And yet desert makes brighter not the less,
For nearest his own star he shall not fail
To think those rays unmatched for nobleness,
That distance counts but pale.

“Be pale afar, since still to me you shine,
And must while Nature’s eldest law shall hold;” —
*Ah, there’s the thought which makes his random line
Dear as refined gold!*

*Then shall I drink this draught of oxymel,
Part sweet, part sharp? Myself o’erprised to know
Is sharp: the cause is sweet, and truth to tell
Few would that cause forego,*

*Which is, that this of all the men on earth
Doth love me well enough to count me great —
To think my soul and his of equal girth —
O liberal estimate!*

*And yet it is so; he is bound to me,
For human love makes aliens near of kin;
By it I rise, there is equality:
I rise to thee, my twin.*

“Take courage” — *courage! ay, my purple peer.
I will take courage; for thy Tyrian rays
Refresh me to the heart, and strangely dear
And healing is thy praise.*

“Take courage” *quoth he, “and respect the mind
Your Maker gave, for good your fate fulfil;
The fate round many hearts your own to wind.”
Twin soul, I will! I will!*

HONORS.—PART II.

The Answer.

As one who, journeying, checks the rein in haste
Because a chasm doth yawn across his way
Too wide for leaping, and too steeply faced
For climber to essay —

As such an one, being brought to sudden stand,
Doubts all his foregone path if ’twere the true,
And turns to this and then to the other hand
As knowing not what to do, —

So I, being checked, am with my path at strife
Which led to such a chasm, and there doth end.
False path! it cost me priceless years of life,
My well-beloved friend.

There fell a flute when Ganymede went up —
The flute that he was wont to play upon:
It dropped beside the jonquil’s milk-white cup,
And freckled cowslips wan —

Dropped from his heedless hand when, dazed and
mute,
He sailed upon the eagle’s quivering wing,
Aspiring, panting — ay, it dropped — the flute
Erewhile a cherished thing.

Among the delicate grasses and the bells
Of crocuses that spotted a rill side,
I picked up such a flute, and its clear swells
To my young lips replied.

I played thereon, and its response was sweet;
 But, lo, they took from me that solacing reed.
 "O shame!" they said, "such music is not meet;
 Go up like Ganymede.

"Go up, despise these humble grassy things,
 Sit on the golden edge of yonder cloud."
 Alas! though ne'er for me those eagle wings
 Stooped from their eyrie proud.

My flute! and flung away its echoes sleep;
 But as for me, my life-pulse beateth low;
 And like a last year's leaf enshrouded deep
 Under the drifting snow,

Or like some vessel wrecked upon the sand
 Of torrid swamps, with all her merchandise,
 And left to rot betwixt the sea and land,
 My helpless spirit lies.

Ruing, I think for what then was I made;
 What end appointed for — what use designed?
 Now let me right this heart that was betrayed —
 Unveil these eyes gone blind.

My well-beloved friend, at noon to-day
 Over our cliffs a white mist lay unfurled,
 So thick, one standing on their brink might say,
 Lo, here doth end the world.

A white abyss beneath, and naught beside;
 Yet, hark! a cropping sound not ten feet down;
 Soon I could trace some browsing lambs that hied
 Through rock-paths cleft and brown.

And here and there green tufts of grass peered through
 Salt lavender, and sea thrift; then behold,
 The mist, subsiding ever, bared to view
 A beast of giant mould.

She seemed a great sea monster lying content
 With all her cubs about her: but deep — deep —
 The subtle mist went floating; its descent
 Showed the world's end was steep.

It shook, it melted, shaking more, till, lo,
 The sprawling monster was a rock; her brood
 Were boulders, whereon seamews white as snow
 Sat watching for their food.

Then once again it sank, its day was done:
 Part rolled away, part vanished utterly,
 And glimmering softly under the white sun,
 Behold! a great white sea.

O that the mist which veileth my To-come
 Would so dissolve and yield unto mine eyes
 A worthy path! I'd count not wearisome
 Long toil, nor enterprise.

But strain to reach it; ay, with wrestlings stout
 And hopes that even in the dark will grow
 (Like plants in dungeons, reaching feelers out),
 And ploddings wary and slow.

Is there such path already made to fit
 The measure of my foot? It shall atone
 For much, if I at length may light on it
 And know it for mine own.

But is there none? why, then 'tis more than well:
 And glad at heart myself will hew one out,
 Let me be only sure; for, sooth to tell,
 The sorest dole is doubt —

Doubt, a blank twilight of the heart, which mars
 All sweetest colors in its dimness same;
 A soul-mist, through whose rifts familiar stars
 Beholding, we misname.

A ripple on the inner sea, which shakes
 Those images that on its breast reposed ;
 A fold upon the wind-swayed flag, that breaks
 The motto it disclosed.

O doubt ! O doubt ! I know my destiny ;
 I feel thee fluttering bird-like in my breast ;
 I cannot loose, but I will sing to thee,
 And flatter thee to rest.

There is no certainty, " my bosom's guest,"
 No proving for the things whereof ye wot ;
 For, like the dead to sight unmanifest,
 They are, and they are not.

But surely as they are, for God is truth,
 And as they are not, for we saw them die,
 So surely from the heaven drops light for youth,
 If youth will walk thereby.

And can I see this light ? It may be so ;
 " But see it thus and thus," my fathers said.
 The living do not rule this world ; ah, no !
 It is the dead, the dead.

Shall I be slave to every noble soul,
 Study the dead, and to their spirits bend ;
 Or learn to read my own heart's folded scroll,
 And make self-rule my end ?

Thought from *without* — O shall I take on trust,
 And life from others modelled steal or win ;
 Or shall I heave to light, and clear of rust
 My true life from *within*.

O, let me be myself ! But where, O where,
 Under this heap of precedent, this mound
 Of customs, modes, and maxims, cumbrance rare
 Shall the *Myself* be found ?

O thou *Myself*, thy fathers thee debarred
 None of their wisdom, but their folly came
 Therewith ; they smoothed thy path, but made it hard
 For thee to quit the same.

With glosses they obscured God's natural truth,
 And with tradition tarnished His revealed ;
 With vain protections they endangered youth,
 With layings bare they sealed.

What aileth thee, myself ? Alas ! thy hands
 Are tired with old opinions -- heir and son,
 Thou hast inherited thy father's lands
 And all his debts thereon.

O that some power would give me Adam's eyes !
 O for the straight simplicity of Eve !
 For I see naught, or grow, poor fool, too wise
 With seeing to believe.

Exemplars may be heaped until they hide
 The rules that they were made to render plain ;
 Love may be watched, her nature to decide,
 Until love's self doth wane.

Ah me ! and when forgotten and foregone
 We leave the learning of departed days,
 And cease the generations past to con,
 Their wisdom and their ways --

When fain to learn we lean into the dark,
 And grope to feel the floor of the abyss,
 Or find the secret boundary lines which mark
 Where soul and matter kiss --

Fair world ! these puzzled souls of ours grow weak
 With beating their bruised wings against the rim
 That bounds their utmost flying, when they seek
 The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain like birds against their wires ;
 Are sick to reach the vast and the beyond ; —
 And what avails, if still to our desires
 Those far-off gulfs respond ?

Contentment comes not therefore ; still there lies
 An outer distance when the first is hailed,
 And still for ever yawns before our eyes
 An *UTMOST* — that is veiled.

Searching those edges of the universe,
 We leave the central fields a fallow part ;
 To feed the eye more precious things amerce,
 And starve the darkened heart.

Then all goes wrong : the old foundations rock,
 One scorns at him of old who gazed unshod ;
 One striking with a pickaxe thinks the shock
 Shall move the seat of God.

A little way, a very little way
 (Life is so short), they dig into the rind,
 And they are very sorry, so they say, —
 Sorry for what they find.

But truth is sacred — ay, and must be told :
 There is a story long beloved of man ;
 We must forego it, for it will not hold —
 Nature had no such plan.

And then, "if God hath said it," some should cry
 "We have the story from the fountain head :"
 Why, then, what better than the old reply,
 The first "Yea, *HATH* God said?"

The garden, O the garden, must it go,
 Source of our hope and our most dear regret ?
 The ancient story, must it no more show
 How men may win it yet ?

And all upon the Titan child's decree,
 The baby science, born but yesterday,
 That in its rash unlearned infancy
 With shells and stones at play,

And delving in the outworks of this world,
 And little crevices that it could reach,
 Discovered certain bones laid up, and furled
 Under an ancient beach,

And other waifs that lay to its young mind
 Some fathoms lower than they ought to lie,
 By gain whereof it could not fail to find
 Much proof of ancients,

Hints at a pedigree withdrawn and vast,
 Terrible deeps, and old obscurities,
 Or soulless origin, and twilight passed
 In the primeval seas,

Whereof it tells, as thinking it hath been
 Of truth not meant for man inheritor ;
 As if this knowledge Heaven had ne'er foreseen
 And not provided for !

Knowledge ordained to live ! although the fate
 Of much that went before it was — to die,
 And be called ignorance by such as wait
 Till the next drift comes by.

O marvellous credulity of man !
 If God indeed kept secret, couldst thou know
 Or follow up the mighty Artisan
 Unless He willed it so ?

And canst thou of the Maker think in sooth
 That of the Made He shall be found at fault,
 And dream of wresting from Him hidden truth
 By force or by assault ?

But if he keeps not secret — if thine eyes
 He openeth to His wondrous work of late —
 Think how in soberness thy wisdom lies,
 And have the grace to wait.

Wait, nor against the half-learned lesson fret,
 Nor chide at old belief as if it erred,
 Because thou canst not reconcile as yet
 The Worker and the word.

Either the Worker did in ancient days
 Give us the word, His tale of love and might;
 (And if in truth He gave it us, who says
 He did not give it right?)

Or else He gave it not, and then indeed
 We know not if HE is — by whom our years
 Are portioned, who the orphan moons doth lead,
 And the unfathered spheres.

We sit unowned upon our burial sod,
 And know not whence we come or whose we be,
 Comfortless mourners for the mount of God,
 The rocks of Calvary :

Bereft of heaven, and of the long-loved page
 Wrought us by some who thought with death to cope;
 Despairing comforters, from age to age
 Sowing the seeds of hope :

Gracious deceivers, who have lifted us
 Out of the slough where passed our unknown youth;
 Beneficent liars, who have gifted us
 With sacred love of truth!

Farewell to them : yet pause ere thou unmoor
 And set thine ark adrift on unknown seas;
 How wert thou bettered so, or more secure
 Thou, and thy destinies!

And if thou searchest, and art made to fear
 Facing of unread riddles dark and hard,
 And mastering not their majesty austere,
 Their meaning locked and barred :

How would it make the weight and wonder less,
 If, lifted from immortal shoulders down,
 The worlds were cast on seas of emptiness
 In realms without a crown,

And (if there were no God) were left to rue
 Dominion of the air and of the fire?
 Then if there be a God, "Let God be true,
 And every man a liar."

But as for me, I do not speak as one
 That is exempt: I am with life at feud:
 My heart reproacheth me, as there were none
 Of so small gratitude;

Wherewith shall I console thee, heart o' mine,
 And still thy yearning and resolve thy doubt.
 That which I know, and that which I divine,
 Alas! have left thee out.

I have aspired to know the might of God,
 As if the story of His love was furled,
 Nor sacred foot the grasses e'er had trod
 Of this redeemed world:—

Have sunk my thoughts as lead into the deep,
 To grope for that abyss whence evil grew,
 And spirits of ill, with eyes that cannot weep,
 Hungry and desolate flew;

As if their legions did not one day crowd
 The death-pangs of the Conquering Good to see!
 As if a sacred head had never bowed
 In death for man — for me:

Nor ransomed back the souls beloved, the sons
Of men, from thralldom with the nether kings
In that dark country where those evil ones
Trail their unhallowed wings.

And didst Thou love the race that loved not Thee,
And didst Thou take to heaven a human brow?
Dost plead with man's voice by the marvellous sea?
Art Thou his kinsman now?

O God, O kinsman loved, but not enough!
O man, with eyes majestic after death,
Whose feet have toiled along our pathways rough,
Whose lips drawn human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and Thine,
By that one nature which doth hold us kin,
By that high heaven where, sinless, Thou dost shine
To draw us sinners in,

By Thy last silence in the judgment-hall,
By long foreknowledge of the deadly tree,
By darkness, by the wormwood and the gall,
I pray Thee visit me.

Come, lest this heart should, cold and cast away,
Die ere the guest adored she entertain —
Lest eyes which never saw Thine earthly day
Should miss Thy heavenly reign.

Come weary-eyed from seeking in the night
Thy wanderers strayed upon the pathless wold,
Who wounded, dying, cry to Thee for light,
And cannot find their fold.

And deign, O Watcher, with the sleepless brow,
Pathetic in its yearning — deign reply:
Is there, O is there aught that such as Thou
Wouldst take from such as I?

Are there no briars across Thy pathway thrust?
Are there no thorns that compass it about?
Nor any stones that Thou wilt deign to trust
My hands to gather out?

O, if thou wilt, and if such bliss might be,
It were a cure for doubt, regret, delay —
Let my lost pathway go — what aileth me? —
There is a better way.

What though unmarked the happy workman toil,
And break unthanked of man the stubborn clod?
It is enough, for sacred is the soil,
Dear are the hills of God.

Far better in its place the lowliest bird
Should sing aright to Him the lowliest song,
Than that a seraph strayed should take the word
And sing his glory wrong.

Friend, it is time to work. I say to thee,
Thou dost all earthly good by much excel:
Thou and God's blessing are enough for me:
My work, my work — farewell!

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

O my heart, my heart is sick awishing and awaiting:
The lad took up his knapsack, he went, he went
his way;
And I looked on for his coming, as a prisoner through
the grating
Looks and longs and longs and wishes for its open-
ing day.
On the wild purple mountains, all alone with no
other,
The strong terrible mountains, he longed, he longed
to be:

And he stooped to kiss his father, and he stooped to
 kiss his mother, [me.
 And till I said "Adieu, sweet Sir," he quite forgot
 He wrote of their white raiment, the ghostly capes
 that screen them,
 Of the storm winds that beat them, their thunder-
 rents and scars,
 And the paradise of purple, and the golden slopes
 atween them,
 And fields, where grow God's gentian bells, and
 His crocus stars.
 He wrote of frail gauzy clouds, that drop on them like
 fleeces,
 And make green their fir forests, and feed their
 mosses hoar ;
 Or come sailing up the valleys, and get wrecked and
 go to pieces,
 Like sloops against their cruel strength: then he
 wrote no more.
 O the silence that came next, the patience and long
 aching !
 They never said so much as " He was a dear loved
 son ;"
 Not the father to the mother moaned, that dreary
 stillness breaking :
 " Ah ! wherefore did he leave us so — this, our only
 one ?"
 They sat within, as waiting, until the neighbors
 prayed them,
 At Cromer, by the sea-coast, 'twere peace and
 change to be ;
 And to Cromer, in their patience, or that urgency af-
 frayed them,
 Or because the tidings tarried, they came, and took
 me.

It was three months and over since the dear lad had
 started : [view ;
 On the green downs at Cromer I sat to see the
 On an open space of herbage, where the ling and fern
 had parted,
 Betwixt the tall white lighthouse towers, the old
 and the new.
 Below me lay the wide sea, the scarlet sun was stoop-
 ing,
 And he dyed the waste water, as with a scarlet
 dye ;
 And he dyed the lighthouse towers ; every bird with
 white wing swooping
 Took his colors, and the cliffs did, and the yawn-
 ing sky.
 Over grass came that strange flush, and over ling and
 heather,
 Over flocks of sheep and lambs, and over Cromer
 town ;
 And each filmy cloudlet crossing drifted like a scarlet
 feather
 Torn from the folded wings of clouds, while he set-
 tled down,
 When I looked, I dared not sigh : — In the light of
 God's splendor,
 With His daily blue and gold, who am I? what
 am I?
 But that passion and outpouring seemed an awful
 sign and tender,
 Like the blood of the Redeemer, shown on earth
 and sky.
 O for comfort, O the waste of a long doubt and
 trouble !
 On that sultry August eve trouble had made me
 meek :

I was tired of my sorrow — O so faint, for it was
double

In the weight of its oppression, that I could not
speak!

And a little comfort grew, while the dimmed eyes
were feeding,

And the dull ears with murmur of waters satisfied;
But a dream came slowly nigh me, all my thoughts
and fancy leading

Across the bounds of waking life to the other side.

And I dreamt that I looked out, to the waste waters
turning,

And saw the flakes of scarlet from wave to wave
tossed on;

And the scarlet mix with azure, where a heap of gold
lay burning

On the clear remote sea reaches; for the sun was
gone.

Then I thought a far-off shout dropped across the
still water —

A question as I took it, for soon an answer came
From the tall white ruined lighthouse: "If it be the
old man's daughter

That we wot of," ran the answer, "what then —
who's to blame?"

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless and storm-
broken:

A great white bird sat on it, with neck stretched to
sea;

Unto somewhat which was sailing in a skiff the bird
had spoken,

And a trembling seized my spirit, for they talked
of me.

I was the old man's daughter, the bird went on to
name him; [sun;

"He loved to count the starlings as he sat in the
Long ago he served with Nelson, and his story did
not shame him:

Ay, the old man was a good man — and his work
was done."

The skiff was like a crescent, ghost of some moon
departed,

Frail, white, she rocked and curtseyed as the red
wave she crossed,

And the thing within sat paddling, and the crescent
dipped and darted,

Flying on, again was shouting, but the words
were lost.

I said, "That thing is hooded; I could hear but
that floweth

The great hood below its mouth:" then the bird
made reply,

"If they knew not, more's the pity, for the little
shrewmouse knoweth,

And the kite knows, and the eagle, and the glead
and pye."

And he stopped to whet his beak on the stones of
the coping;

And when once more the shout came, in querulous
tones he spake,

"What I said was 'more's the pity;' if the heart
be long past hoping,

Let it say of death, 'I know it,' or doubt on and
break.

"Men must die — one dies by day, and near him
moans his mother,

They dig his grave, tread it down, and go from it
full loth:

And one dies about the midnight, and the wind
moans, and no other,

And the snow gives him a burial — and God loves
them both.

“The first hath no advantage — it shall not soothe
his slumber

That a lock of his brown hair his father aye shall
keep ;

For the last, he nothing grudgeth, it shall not his
quiet cumber,

That in a golden mesh of his callow eaglets sleep.

“Men must die when all is said, e’en the kite and
glead know it,

And the lad’s father knew it, and the lad, the lad
too ;

It was never kept a secret, waters bring it and winds
blow it,

And he met it on the mountain — why then make
ado?”

With that he spread his white wings, and swept
across the water,

Lit upon the hooded head, and it and all went
down ;

And they laughed as they went under, and I woke,
“the old man’s daughter,”

And looked across the slope of grass, and at Cro-
mer town.

And I said, “Is that the sky, all gray and silver
suited?”

And I thought, “Is that the sea that lies so white
and wan?”

I have dreamed as I remember : give me time — I
was reputed [gone!”

Once to have a steady courage — O, I fear ’tis

And I said, “Is this my heart? if it be, low ’tis
beating, [brood ;

So he lies on the mountain, hard by the eagles’
I have had a dream this evening, while the white
and gold were fleeing,

But I need not, need not tell it — where would be
the good?

“Where would be the good to them, his father and
his mother?

For the ghost of their dead hope appeareth to
them still.

While a lonely watch-fire smoulders, who its dying
red would smother,

That gives what little light there is to a darksome
hill?”

I rose up, I made no moan, I did not cry nor falter,
But slowly in the twilight I came to Cromer town.

What can wringing of the hands do that which is
ordained to alter?

He had climbed, had climbed the mountain, he
would ne’er come down.

But, O my first, O my best, I could not choose but
love thee!

O, to be a wild white bird, and seek thy rocky bed!
From my breast I’d give the burial, pluck the down
and spread above thee ;

I would sit and sing thy requiem on the mountain
head.

Fare thee well, my love of loves! would I had died
before thee! [flow,

O, to be at least a cloud, that near thee I might
Solemnly approach the mountain, weep away my
being o’er thee,

And veil thy breast with icicles, and thy brow
with snow!