

Did barely touch the ground. And they took heed
 Not to disturb the waiting quietness ;
 Nor rouse up fawns, that slept beside their dams ;
 Nor the fair leopard, with her sleek paws laid
 Across her little drowsy cubs ; nor swans,
 That, floating, slept upon a glassy pool ;
 Nor rosy cranes, all slumbering in the reeds,
 With heads beneath their wings. For this, you know,
 Was Eden. She was passing through the trees
 That made a ring about it, and she caught
 A glimpse of glades beyond. All she had seen
 Was nothing to them ; but words are not made
 To tell that tale. No wind was let to blow,
 And all the doves were bidden to hold their peace.
 Why? One was working in a valley near,
 And none might look that way. It was understood
 That He had nearly ended that His work ;
 For two shapes met, and one to other spake,
 Accosting him with, " Prince, what worketh He ?"
 Who whispered, " Lo ! He fashioneth red clay."
 And all at once a little trembling stir
 Was felt in the earth, and every creature woke,
 And laid its head down, listening. It was known
 Then that the work was done ; the new-made king
 Had risen, and set his feet upon his realm,
 And it acknowledged him.

But in her path
 Came some one that withstood her, and he said,
 " What dost thou here ?" Then she did turn and
 flee,
 Among those colored spirits, through the grove,
 Trembling for haste ; it was not well with her
 Till she came forth of those thick banyan-trees,
 And set her feet upon the common grass,
 And felt the common wind.

Yet once beyond,
 She could not choose but cast a backward glance.
 The lovely matted growth stood like a wall,
 And means of entering were not evident, —
 The gap had closed. But Gladys laughed for joy ;
 She said, " Remoteness and a multitude
 Of years are counted nothing here. Behold,
 To-day I have been in Eden. O, it blooms
 In my own island."

And she wandered on,
 Thinking, until she reached a place of palms,
 And all the earth was sandy where she walked, —
 Sandy and dry, — strewed with papyrus-leaves,
 Old idols, rings and pottery, painted lids
 Of mummies (for perhaps it was the way
 That leads to dead old Egypt), and withal
 Excellent sunshine cut out sharp and clear
 The hot prone pillars, and the carven plinths, —
 Stone lotos cups, with petals dipped in sand,
 And wicked gods, and sphinxes bland, who sat
 And smiled upon the ruin. O how still !
 Hot, blank, illuminated with the clear
 Stare of an unveiled sky. The dry stiff leaves
 Of palm-trees never rustled, and the soul
 Of that dead ancients was itself dead.
 She was above her ankles in the sand,
 When she beheld a rocky road, and, lo !
 It bare in it the ruts of chariot wheels,
 Which erst had carried to their pagan prayers
 The brown old Pharaohs ; for the ruts led on
 To a great cliff, that either was a cliff
 Or some dread shrine in ruins, — partly reared
 In front of that same cliff, and partly hewn,
 Or excavate within its heart. Great heaps
 Of sand and stones on either side there lay ;
 And, as the girl drew on, rose out from each,

As from a ghostly kennel, gods unblest,
Dog-headed, and behind them wingèd things
Like angels; and this carven multitude
Hedged in, to right and left, the rocky road.

At last, the cliff, — and in the cliff a door
Yawning: and she looked in, as down the throat
Of some stupendous giant, and beheld
No floor, but wide, worn flights of steps, that led
Into a dimness. When the eyes could bear
That change to gloom, she saw flight after flight,
Flight after flight, the worn, long stair go down,
Smooth with the feet of nations dead and gone.
So she did enter; also she went down
Till it was dark, and yet again went down,
Till, gazing upward at that yawning door,
It seemed no larger, in its height remote,
Than a pin's head. But while, irresolute,
She doubted of the end, yet farther down
A slender ray of lamplight fell away
Along the stair, as from a door ajar:
To this again she felt her way, and stepped
Adown the hollow stair, and reached the light;
But fear fell on her, fear; and she forbore
Entrance, and listened. Ay! 'twas even so, —
A sigh; the breathing as of one who slept
And was disturbed. So she drew back awhile,
And trembled; then her doubting hand she laid
Against the door, and pushed it; but the light
Waned, faded, sank; and as she came within —
Hark, hark! A spirit was it, and asleep?
A spirit doth not breathe like clay. There hung
A cresset from the roof, and thence appeared
A flickering speck of light, and disappeared;
Then dropped along the floor its elfish flakes,
That fell on some one resting, in the gloom, —
Somewhat, a spectral shadow, then a shape

That loomed. It was a heifer, ay, and white,
Breathing and languid through prolonged repose.

Was it a heifer? all the marble floor
Was milk-white also, and the cresset paled,
And straight their whiteness grew confused and
mixed.

But when the cresset, taking heart, bloomed out, —
The whiteness, — and asleep again! but now
It was a woman, robed, and with a face
Lovely and dim. And Gladys while she gazed
Murmured, "O terrible! I am afraid
To breathe among these intermittent lives,
That fluctuate in mystic solitude,
And change and fade. Lo! where the goddess sits
Dreaming on her dim throne; a crescent moon
She wears upon her forehead. Ah! her frown
Is mournful, and her slumber is not sweet.
What dost thou hold, Isis, to thy cold breast?
A baby god with finger on his lips,
Asleep, and dreaming of departed sway?
Thy son. Hush, hush; he knoweth all the lore
And sorcery of old Egypt; but his mouth
He shuts; the secret shall be lost with him,
He will not tell."

The woman coming down!
"Child, what art thou doing here?" the woman said;
"What wilt thou of Dame Isis and her bairn?"
(*Ay, ay, we see thee breathing in thy shroud, —
Thy pretty shroud, all frilled and furbelowed.*)
The air is dim with dust of spiced bones.
I mark a crypt down there. Tier upon tier
Of painted coffers fills it. What if we,
Passing, should slip, and crash into their midst, —
Break the frail ancients, and smothered lie,

Tumbled among the ribs of queens and kings,
And all the gear they took to bed with them!
Horrible! let us hence.

And Gladys said,
"O, they are rough to mount, those stairs;" but she
Took her and laughed, and up the mighty flight
Shot like a meteor with her. "There," said she;
"The light is sweet when one has smelled of graves,
Down in unholy heathen gloom; farewell."
She pointed to a gateway, strong and high,
Reared of hewn stones; but, look! in lieu of gate,
There was a glittering cobweb drawn across,
And on the lintel there were writ these words:
"Ho, every one that cometh, I divide
What hath been from what might be, and the line
Hangeth before thee as a spider's web;
Yet, wouldst thou enter, thou must break the line
Or else forbear the hill."

The maiden said,
"So, cobweb, I will break thee." And she passed
Among some oak-trees on the farther side,
And waded through the bracken round their bolls,
Until she saw the open, and drew on
Toward the edge o' the wood, where it was mixed
With pines and heathery places wild and fresh.
Here she put up a creature, that ran on
Before her, crying, "Tint, tint, tint," and turned,
Sat up, and stared at her with elfish eyes,
Jabbering of gramarye, one Michael Scott,
The wizard that wanned somewhere underground,
With other talk enough to make one fear
To walk in lonely places. After passed
A man-at-arms, William of Deloraine;
He shook his head, "An' if I list to tell,"
Quoth he, "I know, but how it matters not:"

Then crossed himself, and muttered of a clap
Of thunder, and a shape in Amice gray,
But still it mouthed at him, and whimpered, "Tint,
Tint, tint." "There shall be wild work some day
soon,"

Quoth he, "thou limb of darkness: he will come,
Thy master, push a hand up, catch thee, imp,
And so good Christians shall have peace, perdie."

Then Gladys was so frightened, that she ran,
And got away, towards a grassy down,
Where sheep and lambs were feeding, with a boy
To tend them. 'Twas the boy who wears that herb
Called heart's-ease in his bosom, and he sang
So sweetly to his flock, that she stole on
Nearer to listen. "O Content, Content,
Give me," sang he, "thy tender company.
I feed my flock among the myrtles; all
My lambs are twins, and they have laid them down
Along the slopes of Beulah. Come, fair love,
From the other side the river, where their harps
Thou hast been helping them to tune. O come,
And pitch thy tent by mine; let me behold
Thy mouth,—that even in slumber talks of peace,
Thy well-set locks, and dove-like countenance."

And Gladys hearkened, couched upon the grass,
Till she had rested; then did ask the boy,
For it was afternoon, and she was fain
To reach the shore, "Which is the path, I pray,
That leads one to the water?" But he said,
"Dear lass, I only know the narrow way,
The path that leads one to the golden gate
Across the river." So she wondered on;
And presently her feet grew cool, the grass
Standing so high, and thyme being thick and soft.
The air was full of voices, and the scent

Of mountain blossom loaded all its wafts ;
 For she was on the slopes of a goodly mount,
 And reared in such a sort that it looked down
 Into the deepest valleys, darkest glades,
 And richest plains o' the island. It was set
 Midway between the snows majestic
 And a wide level, such as men would choose
 For growing wheat ; and some one said to her,
 " It is the hill Parnassus." So she walked
 Yet on its lower slope, and she could hear
 The calling of an unseen multitude
 To some upon the mountain, " Give us more ;"
 And others said, " We are tired of this old world :
 Make it look new again." Then there were some
 Who answered lovingly — (the dead yet speak
 From that high mountain, as the living do) ;
 But others sang desponding, " We have kept
 The vision for a chosen few : we love
 Fit audience better than a rough huzza
 From the unreasoning crowd."

Then words came up ;

" There was a time, you poets, was a time
 When all the poetry was ours, and made
 By some who climbed the mountain from our midst.
 We loved it then, we sang it in our streets.
 O, it grows obsolete ! Be you as they :
 Our heroes die and drop away from us ;
 Oblivion folds them 'neath her dusky wing,
 Fair copies wasted to the hungry world.
 Save them. We fall so low for lack of them,
 That many of us think scorn of honest trade,
 And take no pride in our own shops ; who care
 Only to quit a calling, will not make
 The calling what it might be : who despise
 Their work, Fate laughs at, and doth let the work
 Dull, and degrade them."

Then did Gladys smile :
 " Heroes !" quoth she ; yet, now I think on it,
 There was the jolly goldsmith, brave Sir Hugh,
 Certes, a hero ready-made. Methinks
 I see him burnishing of golden gear,
 Tankard and charger, and a-muttering low,
 ' London is thirsty ' — (then he weighs a chain) :
 ' Tis an ill thing, my masters. I would give
 The worth of this, and many such as this,
 To bring it water.'

" Ay, and after him

There came up Guy of London, lettered son
 O' the honest lighterman. I'll think on him,
 Leaning upon the bridge on summer eves,
 After his shop was closed : a still, grave man,
 With melancholy eyes. ' While these are hale,'
 He saith, when he looks down and marks the crowd
 Cheerly working ; where the river marge
 Is blocked with ships and boats ; and all the wharves
 Swarm, and the cranes swing in with merchandise, —
 ' While these are hale, 'tis well, 'tis very well.
 But, O good Lord,' saith he, ' when these are sick, —
 I fear me, Lord, this excellent workmanship
 Of Thine is counted for a cumbrance then.
 Ay, ay, my hearties ! many a man of you,
 Struck down, or maimed, or fevered, shrinks away.
 And, mastered in that fight for lack of aid,
 Creeps shivering to a corner, and there dies.'
 Well, we have heard the rest.

" Ah, next I think

Upon the merchant captain, stout of heart
 To dare and to endure. ' Robert,' saith he
 (The navigator Knox to his manful son),
 ' I sit a captive from the ship detained ;
 This heathendry doth let thee visit her.

Remember, son, if thou, alas! shouldst fail
 To ransom thy poor father, they are free
 As yet, the mariners: have wives at home,
 As I have; ay, and liberty is sweet
 To all men. For the ship, she is not ours,
 Therefore, 'beseech thee, son, lay on the mate
 This my command, to leave me, and set sail.
 As for thyself—' 'Good father,' saith the son;
 'I will not, father, ask your blessing now,
 Because, for fair, or else for evil, fate,
 We two shall meet again.' And so they did.
 The dusky men, peeling off cinnamon,
 And beating nutmeg clusters from the tree,
 Ransom and bribe contemned. The good ship
 sailed,—

The son returned to share his father's cell.

"O, there are many such. Would I had wit
 Their worth to sing!" With that, she turned her
 feet.

"I am tired now," said Gladys, "of their talk
 Around this hill Parnassus. And, behold,
 A piteous sight,—an old, blind, graybeard king
 Led by a fool with bells. Now this was loved
 Of the crowd below the hill; and when he called
 For his lost kingdom, and bewailed his age,
 And plained on his unkind daughters, they were
 known

To say, that if the best of gold and gear
 Could have bought him back his kingdom, and made
 kind

The hard hearts that had broken his erewhile,
 They would have gladly paid it from their store,
 Many times over. What is done is done,
 No help. The ruined majesty passed on.
 And, look you! one who met her as she walked
 Showed her a mountain nymph lovely as light.

Her name Ceneone; and she mourned and mourned,
 "O mother Ida," and she could not cease,
 No, nor be comforted.

And after this,

Soon there came by, arrayed in Norman cap
 And kirtle, an Arcadian villager,
 Who said, "I pray you, have you chanced to meet
 One Gabriel?" and she sighed; but Gladys took
 And kissed her hand: she could not answer her,
 Because she guessed the end.

With that it drew

To evening; and as Gladys wandered on
 In the calm weather, she beheld the wave,
 And she ran down to set her feet again
 On the sea-margin, which was covered thick
 With white shell-skeletons. The sky was red
 As wine. The water played among bare ribs
 Of many wrecks, that lay half-buried there
 In the sand. She saw a cave, and moved thereto
 To ask her way, and one so innocent
 Came out to meet her, that, with marvelling mute,
 She gazed and gazed into her sea-blue eyes,
 For in them beamed the untaught ecstasy
 Of childhood, that lives on though youth be come,
 And love just born.

She could not choose but name her shipwrecked
 prince,

All blushing. She told Gladys many things
 That are not in the story,—things, in sooth,
 That Prospero her father knew. But now
 'Twas evening, and the sun dropped; purple stripes
 In the sea were copied from some clouds that lay
 Out in the west. And lo! the boat, and more,
 The freakish thing to take fair Gladys home

She mowed at her, but Gladys took the helm :
 "Peace, peace!" she said; "be good: you shall not
 steer,
 For I am your liege lady." Then she sang
 The sweetest song she knew all the way home.

So Gladys set her feet upon the sand;
 While in the sunset glory died away
 The peaks of that blest island.

"Fare you well,
 My country, my own kingdom," then she said,
 "Till I go visit you again, farewell."

She looked toward their house with whom she
 dwelt, —

The carriages were coming. Hastening up,
 She was in time to meet them at the door,
 And lead the sleepy little ones within;
 And some were cross and shivered, and her dames
 Were weary and right hard to please; but she
 Felt like a beggar suddenly endowed
 With a warm cloak to 'fend her from the cold.
 "For, come what will," she said, "I had *to-day*,
 There is an island."

THE MORAL.

What is the moral? Let us think awhile,
 Taking the editorial WE to help,
 It sounds respectable.

The moral; yes,
 We always read, when any fable ends,
 "Hence we may learn." A moral must be found.
 What do you think of this? "Hence we may learn
 That dolphins swim about the coast of Wales,

And Admiralty maps should now be drawn
 By teacher-girls, because their sight is keen,
 And they can spy out islands." Will that do?
 No, that is far too plain, — too evident.

Perhaps a general moralizing vein —
 (We know we have a happy knack that way.
 We have observed, moreover, that young men
 Are fond of good advice, and so are girls;
 Especially of that meandering kind,
 Which, winding on so sweetly, treats of all
 They ought to be and do and think and wear,
 As one may say, from creeds to comforters.
 Indeed, we much prefer that sort ourselves,
 So soothing). Good, a moralizing vein;
 That is the thing; but how to manage it?
 "Hence we may learn," if we be so inclined,
 That life goes best with those who take it best;
 That wit can spin from work a golden robe
 To queen it in; that who can paint at will
 A private picture gallery, should not cry
 For shillings that will let him in to look
 At some by others painted. Furthermore,
 Hence we may learn, you poets, — (*and we count*
For poets all who ever felt that such
They were, and all who secretly have known
That such they could be; ay, moreover, all
Who wind the robes of ideality
About the bareness of their lives, and hang
Comforting curtains, knit of fancy's yarn,
Nightly betwixt them and the frosty world),
 Hence we may learn, you poets, that of all
 We should be most content. The earth is given
 To us: we reign by virtue of a sense
 Which lets us hear the rhythm of that old verse.
 The ring of that old tune whereto she spins.
 Humanity is given to us; we reign

By virtue of a sense which lets us in
To know its troubles ere they have been told,
And take them home and lull them into rest
With mournfullest music. Time is given to us, —
Time past, time future. Who, good sooth, beside
Have seen it well, have walked this empty world
When she went steaming, and from pulpy hills
Have marked the spurting of their flamy crowns?

Have not we seen the tabernacle pitched,
And peered between the linen curtains, blue,
Purple, and scarlet, at the dimness there,
And, frightened, have not dared to look again?
But, quaint antiquity! beheld, we thought,
A chest that might have held the manna pot,
And Aaron's rod that budded. Ay, we leaned
Over the edge of Britain, while the fleet
Of Cæsar loomed and neared; then, afterwards,
We saw fair Venice looking at herself
In the glass below her, while her Doge went forth
In all his bravery to the wedding.

This,

However, counts for nothing to the grace
We wot of in time future: — therefore add,
And afterwards have done: "*Hence we may learn,*"
That though it be a grand and comely thing
To be unhappy — (and we think it is,
Because so many grand and clever folk
Have found out reasons for unhappiness,
And talked about uncomfortable things, —
Low motives, bores, and shams, and hollowness,
The hollowness o' the world, till we at last
Have scarcely dared to jump or stamp, for fear,
Being so hollow, it should break some day,
And let us in), — yet, since we are not grand,
O, not at all, and as for cleverness,

That may be or may not be, — it is well
For us to be as happy as we can!

Agreed: and with a word to the noble sex,
As thus: We pray you carry not your guns
On the full-cock; we pray you set your pride
In its proper place, and never be ashamed
Of any honest calling, — let us add,
And end: For all the rest, hold up your heads
And mind your English.

SONGS WITH PRELUDES.

WEDLOCK.

THE sun was streaming in: I woke, and said,
"Where is my wife, — that has been made my wife
Only this year?" The casement stood ajar:
I did but lift my head: The pear-tree dropped,
The great white pear-tree dropped with dew from
leaves
And blossom, under heavens of happy blue.

My wife had wakened first, and had gone down
Into the orchard. All the air was calm;
Audible humming filled it. At the roots
Of peony bushes lay in rose-red heaps,
Or snowy, fallen bloom. The crag-like hills
Were tossing down their silver messengers,
And two brown foreigners, called cuckoo-birds,
Gave them good answer; all things else were mute:
An idle world lay listening to their talk,
They had it to themselves.