

When the wind veered a few points to the west,
And the tide turned ruffling along the roads,
He sent eight fireships forging down to them.

Terrible! Terrible!

Blood-red pillars of reek
They looked on that vast host and troubled it,
As on th' Egyptian host One looked of old.

Then all the heavens were rent with a great cry,
The red avengers went right on, right on,
For none could let them; then was ruin, reek,
flame;

Against th' unwieldy huge leviathans
They drave, they fell upon them as wild beasts,
And altogether they did plunge and grind,
Their reefed sails set a-blazing, these flew loose
And forth like banners of destruction sped.
It was to look on as the body of hell
Seething; and some, their cables cut, ran foul
Of one the other, while the ruddy fire
Sped on aloft. One ship was stranded. One
Foundered, and went down burning; all the sea
Red as an angry sunset was made fell
With smoke and blazing spars that rode upright,
For as the fireships burst they scattered forth
Full dangerous wreckage. All the sky they scored
With flying sails and rocking masts, and yards
Licked of long flames. And flitting tinder sank
In eddies on the plagued mixed mob of ships
That cared no more for harbor, and were fain
At any hazard to be forth, and leave
Their berths in the blood-red haze.

It was at twelve
O' the clock when this fell out, for as the eight
Were tolled, and left upon the friendly tide
To stalk like evil angels over the deep
And stare upon the Spaniards, we did hear
Their midnight bells. It was at morning dawn
After our mariners thus had harried them
I looked my last upon their fleet,— and all,
That night had cut their cables, put to sea,
And scattering wide towards the Flemish coast
Did seem to make for Greveline.

As for us,
The captains told us off to wait on them,
Bearers of wounded enemies and friends,
Bearers of messages, bearers of store.

We saw not aught, but heard enough: we heard
(And God be thanked) of that long scattering chase
And driving of Sidonia from his hope,
Parma, who could not aught without his ships
And looked for them to break the Dutch blockade,
He meanwhile chafing lion-like in his lair.
We heard -- and he -- for all one summer day,
Fenning and Drake and Raynor, Fenton, Cross,
And more, by Greveline, where they once again
Did get the wind o' the Spaniards, noise of guns.
For coming with the wind, wielding themselves
Which way they listed (while in close array
The Spaniards stood but on defence), our own
Went at them, charged them high and charged
them sore,
And gave them broadside after broadside. Ay,
Till all the shot was spent both great and small.

It failed; and in regard of that same want
They thought it not convenient to pursue
Their vessels farther.

They were huge withal,
And might not be encounter'd one to one,
But close conjoined they fought, and poured great
store

Of ordnance at our ships, though many of theirs,
Shot thorow and thorow, scarce might keep afloat.

Many were captured fighting, many sank.
This news they brought returned perforce, and left
The Spaniards forging north. Themselves did
watch

The river mouth, till Howard, his new store
Gathered, encounter coveting, once more
Made after them with Drake.

And lo! the wind
Got up to help us. He yet flying north
(Their doughty Admiral) made all his wake
To smoke, and would not end to fight, but strewed
The ocean with his wreckage. And the wind
Drave him before it, and the storm was fell,
And he went up to th' uncouth northern sea.

There did our mariners leave him. Then did joy
Run like a sunbeam over the land, and joy
Rule in the stout heart of a regnant Queen.

But now the counsel came, "Every man home,
For after Scotland rounded, when he curves
Southward, and all the batter'd armament,
What hinders on our undefended coast
To land where'er he listeth? Every man
Home."

And we mounted and did open forth
Like a great fan, to east, to north, to west,
And rumor met us flying, filtering
Down through the border. News of wicket joy,
The wreckers rich in the Faroes, and the Isles
Orkney, and all the clansmen full of gear
Gathered from helpless mariners tempted in
To their undoing; while a treacherous crew
Let the storm work upon their lives its will,
Spoiled them and gathered all their riches up.
Then did they meet like fate from Irish kernes,
Who dealt with them according to their wont.

In a great storm of wind that tore green leaves
And dashed them wet upon me, came I home.
Then greeted me my dame, and Rosamund,
Our one dear child, the heir of these my fields —
That I should sigh to think it! There, no more.

Being right weary I betook me straight
To longed-for sleep, and I did dream and dream
Through all that dolorous storm; though noise of
guns

Daunted the country in the moonless night,
Yet sank I deep and deeper in the dream
And took my fill of rest.

A voice, a touch,
"Wake." Lo! my wife beside me, her wet hair
She wrung with her wet hands, and cried, "A ship!
I have been down the beach. O pitiful!
A Spanish ship ashore between the rocks,
And none to guide our people. Wake." Then I
Raised on mine elbow looked; it was high day;

In the windy pother seas' came in like smoke
 That blew among the trees as fine small rain,
 And then the broken water sun-besprent
 Glitter'd, fell back and showed her high and fast
 A caravel, a pinnacle that methought
 To some great ship had longed; her hap alone
 Of all that multitude it was to drive
 Between this land of England her right foe,
 And that most cruel, where (for all their faith
 Was one) no drop of water mote they drink
 For love of God nor love of gold.

I rose
 And hasted; I was soon among the folk,
 But late for work. The crew, spent, faint, and
 bruised,
 Saved for the most part of our men, lay prone
 In grass, and women served them bread and mead,
 Other the sea laid decently along
 Ready for burial. And a litter stood
 In shade. Upon it lying a goodly man,
 The govourner or the captain as it seemed,
 Dead in his stiff gold-broider'd bravery,
 And epaulet and sword. They must have loved
 That man, for many had died to bring him in,
 Their boats stove in were stranded here and there.
 In one — but how I know not — brought they him,
 And he was laid upon a folded flag,
 Many times doubled for his greater ease,
 That was our thought — and we made signs to them
 He should have sepulture. But when they knew
 They must needs leave him, for some marched
 them off
 For more safe custody, they made great moan.

After, with two my neighbors drawing nigh,
 One of them touched the Spaniard's hand and said,
 "Dead is he but not cold;" the other then,
 "Nay in good truth methinks he be not dead."
 Again the first, "An if he breatheth yet
 He lies at his last gasp." And this went off,
 And left us two, that by the litter stayed,
 Looking on one another, and we looked
 (For neither willed to speak), and yet looked on.
 Then would he have me know the meet was fixed
 For nine o' the clock, and to be brief with you
 He left me. And I had the Spaniard home.
 What other could be done? I had him home.
 Men on his litter bare him, set him down
 In a fair chamber that was nigh the hall.

And yet he waked not from his deathly swoon,
 Albeit my wife did try her skill, and now
 Bade lay him on a bed, when lo the folds
 Of that great ensign covered store of gold,
 Rich Spanish ducats, raiment, Moorish blades
 Chased in right goodly wise, and missals rare,
 And other gear. I locked it for my part
 Into an armory, and that fair flag
 (While we did talk full low till he should end)
 Spread over him. Methought, the man shall die
 Under his country's colors; he was brave,
 His deadly wound to that doth testify.

And when 'twas seemly order'd, Rosamund,
 My daughter, who had looked not yet on death,
 Came in, a face all marvel, pity, and dread —
 Lying against her shoulder sword-long flowers,

White hollyhocks to cross upon his breast.
 Slowly she turned as of that sight afeard,
 But while with daunted heart she moved anigh,
 His eyelids quiver'd, quiver'd then the lip;
 And he, reviving, with a sob looked up
 And set on her the midnight of his eyes.

Then she, in act to place the burial gift
 Bending above him, and her flaxen hair
 Fall'n to her hand, drew back and stood upright
 Comely and tall, her innocent fair face
 Cover'd with blushes more of joy than shame.
 "Father," she cried, "O father, I am glad,
 Look you! the enemy liveth." "'Tis enough,
 My maiden," quoth her mother, "thou may'st forth,
 But say an Ave first for him with me."

Then they with hands upright at foot o' his bed
 Knelt, his dark dying eyes at gaze on them,
 Till as I think for wonder at them, more
 Than for his proper strength, he could not die.

So in obedient wise my daughter risen,
 And going, let a smile of comforting cheer
 Lift her sweet lip, and that was all of her
 For many a night and day that he beheld.

And then withal my dame, a leech of skill,
 Tended the Spaniard fain to heal his wound,
 Her women aiding at their best. And he
 'Twixt life and death awaken'd in the night
 Full oft in his own tongue would make his moan,
 And when he whisper'd any word I knew,

If I was present, for to pleasure him,
 Then made I repetition of the same.
 "Cordova," quoth he faintly, "Cordova,"
 'Twas the first word he mutter'd. "Ay, we know,"
 Quoth I, "the stoutness of that fight ye made
 Against the Moors and their Mahometry,
 And dispossess'd the men of fame, the fierce
 Khalifs of Cordova — thy home belike,
 Thy city. A fair city Cordova."

Then after many days, while his wound healed,
 He with abundant seemly sign set forth
 His thanks, but as for language had we none,
 And oft he strove and failed to let us know
 Some wish he had, but could not, so a week,
 Two weeks went by. Then Rosamund my girl,
 Hearing her mother plain on this, she saith,
 "So please you, madam, show the enemy
 A Psalter in our English tongue, and fetch
 And give him that same book my father found
 Wrapped in the ensign. Are they not the same
 Those holy words? The Spaniard being devout,
 He needs must know them."

"Peace, thou pretty fool!
 Is this a time to teach an alien tongue?"
 Her mother made for answer. "He is sick,
 The Spaniard." "Cry you mercy," quoth my girl,
 "But I did think 'twere easy to let show
 How both the Psalters are of meaning like;
 If he know Latin, and 'tis like he doth,
 So might he choose a verse to tell his thought."

Then said I (ay, I did!) "The girl shall try,"
 And straight I took her to the Spaniard's side,

And he, admiring at her, all his face
 Changed to a joy that almost showed as fear,
 So innocent holy she did look, so grave
 Her pitiful eyes.

She sat beside his bed,
 He covered with the ensign yet; and took
 And showed the Psalters both, and she did speak
 Her English words, but gazing was enough
 For him at her sweet dimple, her blue eyes
 That shone, her English blushes. Rosamund,
 My beautiful dear child. He did but gaze,
 And not perceive her meaning till she touched
 His hand, and in her Psalter showed the word.

Then was all light to him; he laughed for joy,
 And took the Latin Missal. O full soon,
 Alas, how soon, one read the other's thought!
 Before she left him, she had learned his name
 Alonzo, told him hers, and found the care
 Made night and day uneasy — Cordova,
 There dwelt his father, there his kin, nor knew
 Whether he lived or died, whether in thrall
 To the Islanders for lack of ransom pined
 Or rued the galling yoke of slavery.

So did he cast him on our kindness. I —
 And care not who may know it — I was kind,
 And for that our stout Queen did think foul scorn
 To kill the Spanish prisoners, and to guard
 So many could not, liefer being to rid
 Our country of them than to spite their own,
 I made him as I might that matter learn,
 Eking scant Latin with my daughter's wit
 And told him men let forth and driven forth

Did crowd our harbors for the ports of Spain
 By one of whom he with good aid of mine
 Should let his tidings go and I plucked forth
 His ducats that a meet reward might be.
 Then he, the water standing in his eyes,
 Made old King David's words due thanks convey.

Then Rosamund, this all made plain, arose
 And curtesy'd to the Spaniard. Ah, methinks
 I yet behold her gracious, innocent
 And flaxen-haired and blushing maidenly,
 When turning she retired, and his black eyes,
 That hunger'd after her, did follow on;
 And I bethought me, "Thou shalt see no more,
 Thou goodly enemy, my one ewe lamb."

O, I would make short work of this. The wound
 Healed, and the Spaniard rose, then could he stand,
 And then about his chamber walk at ease.

Now we had counsell'd how to have him home,
 And that same trading vessel beating up
 The Irish Channel at my will, that same
 I charter'd for to serve me in the war,
 Next was I minded should mine enemy
 Deliver to his father, and his land.
 Daily we looked for her, till in our cove,
 Upon that morn when first the Spaniard walked,
 Behold her rocking; and I hasted down
 And left him waiting in the house.

Woe's me!
 All being ready speed I home, and lo
 My Rosamund, that by the Spaniard sat

Upon a cushion'd settle, book in hand.
I needs must think how in the deep alcove
Thick chequer'd shadows of the window-glass
Did fall across her kirtle and her locks,
For I did see her thus no more.

She held
Her Psalter, and he his, and slowly read
Till he would stop her at the needed word.
"O well is thee," she read, my Rosamund,
"O well is thee, and happy shalt thou be.
Thy wife —" and there he stopped her, and he took
And kissed her hand, and show'd in 's own a ring,
Taking no heed of me, no heed at all.

Then I burst forth, the choler red i' my face
When I did see her blush, and put it on.
"Give me," quoth I, and Rosamund, afraid,
Gave me the ring. I set my heel on it,
Crushed it, and sent the rubies scattering forth,
And did in righteous anger storm at him.
"What! what!" quoth I, "before her father's eyes,
Thou universal villain, thou ingrate,
Thou enemy whom I shelter'd, fed, restored,
Most basest of mankind!" And Rosamund,
Arisen, her forehead pressed against mine arm,
And "Father," cries she, "father."

And I stormed
At him, while in his Spanish he replied
As one would speak me fair. "Thou Spanish
hound!"
"Father," she pleaded. "Alien vile," quoth I,
"Plucked from the death, wilt thou repay me thus?
It is but three times thou hast set thine eyes

On this my daughter." "Father," moans my girl;
And I, not willing to be so withstood,
Spoke roughly to her. Then the Spaniard's eyes
Blazed — then he stormed at me in his own tongue,
And all his Spanish arrogance and pride
Broke witless on my wrathful English. Then
He let me know, for I perceived it well,
He reckon'd him mine equal, thought foul scorn
Of my displeasure, and was wroth with me
As I with him. "Father," sighed Rosamund.
"Go, get thee to thy mother, girl," quoth I.
And slowly, slowly, she betook herself
Down the long hall; in lowly wise she went
And made her moan.

But when my girl was gone
I stood at fault, th' occasion master'd me;
Belike it master'd him, for both fell mute.
I calmed me, and he calmed him as he might,
For I bethought me I was yet an host,
And he bethought him on the worthiness
Of my first deeds.

So made I sign to him
The tide was up, and soon I had him forth,
Delivered him his goods, commended him
To the captain o' the vessel, then plucked off
My hat, in seemly fashion taking leave,
And he was not outdone, but every way
Gave me respect, and on the deck we two
Parted, as I did hope, to meet no more.
Alas! my Rosamund, my Rosamund!
She did not weep, no. Plain upon me, no.
Her eyes mote well have lost the trick of tears:

As new-washed flowers shake off the down-dropt
 rain,
 And make denial of it, yet more blue
 And fair of favor afterward, so they.
 The wild woodrose was not more fresh of blee
 Than her soft dimpled cheek: but I beheld,
 Come home, a token hung about her neck,
 Sparkling upon her bosom for his sake
 Her love, the Spaniard, she denied it not,
 All unaware, good sooth, such love was bale.
 And all that day went like another day,
 Ay, all the next; then was I glad at heart;
 Methought, "I am glad thou wilt not waste thy
 youth
 Upon an alien man, mine enemy,
 Thy nation's enemy. In truth, in truth,
 This likes me very well. My most dear child,
 Forget yon grave dark mariner. The Lord
 Everlasting," I besought, "bring it to pass."
 Stealeth a darker day within my hall,
 A winter day of wind and driving foam.
 They tell me that my girl is sick — and yet
 Not very sick. I may not hour by hour,
 More than one watching of a moon that wanes,
 Make chronicle of change. A parlous change
 When he looks back to that same moon at full.
 Ah! ah! methought, 'twill pass. It did not pass,
 Though never she made moan. I saw the rings
 Drop from her small white wasted hand. And I,
 Her father, tamed of grief, I would have given
 My land, my name to have her as of old.

Ay, Rosamund I speak of with the small
 White face. Ay, Rosamund. O near as white,
 And mournfuller by much, her mother dear
 Drooped by her couch; and while of hope and fear
 Lifted or left, as by a changeful tide,
 We thought "The girl is better," or we thought
 "The girl will die," that jewel from her neck
 She drew, and prayed me send it to her love;
 A token she was true e'en to the end.
 What matter'd now? But whom to send, and how
 To reach the man? I found an old poor priest,
 Some peril 'twas for him and me, she writ
 My pretty Rosamund her heart's farewell,
 She kissed the letter, and that old poor priest,
 Who had eaten of my bread, and shelter'd him
 Under my roof in troublous times, he took,
 And to content her on this errand went,
 While she as done with earth did wait the end.

Mankind bemoan them on the bitterness
 Of death. Nay, rather let them chide the grief
 Of living, chide the waste of mother-love
 For babes that joy to get away to God;
 The waste of work and moil and thought and thrift
 And father-love for sons that heed it not,
 And daughters lost and gone. Ay, let them chide
 These. Yet I chide not. That which I have done
 Was rightly done; and what thereon befell
 Could make no right a wrong, e'en were 't to do
 Again.

I will be brief. The days drag on,
 My soul forebodes her death, my lonely age.
 Once I despondent in the moaning wood

Look out, and lo a caravel at sea,
A man that climbs the rock, and presently
The Spaniard!

I did greet him, proud no more.
He had braved durance, as I knew, ay death,
To land on th' Island soil. In broken words
Of English he did ask me how she fared.
Quoth I, "She is dying, Spaniard; Rosamund
My girl will die;" but he is fain, saith he,
To talk with her, and all his mind to speak;
I answer, "Ay, my whilome enemy,
But she is dying." "Nay, now nay," quoth he,
"So be she liveth," and he moved me yet
For answer; then quoth I, "Come life, come death,
What thou wilt, say."

Soon made we Rosamund
Aware, she lying on the settle, wan
As a lily in the shade, and while she not
Believed for marvelling, comes he roundly in,
The tall grave Spaniard, and with but one smile,
One look of ruth upon her small pale face,
All slowly as with unaccustom'd mouth,
Betakes him to that English he hath conned,
Setting the words out plain:

"Child! Rosamund!
Love! An so please thee, I would be thy man.
By all the saints will I be good to thee.
Come."
Come! what think you, would she come? Ay, ay.
They love us, but our love is not their life.
For the dark mariner's love lived Rosamund.
Soon for his kiss she bloomed, smiled for his smile.

(Te Spaniard depare'eh en as th' Evangel saith
And bore in 's bosom forth my golden sheaf.)
She loved her father and her mother well,
But loved the Spaniard better. It was sad
To part, but she did part; and it was far
To go, but she did go. The priest was brought,
The ring was bless'd that bound my Rosamund,
She sailed, and I shall never see her more.

One soweth and another reapeth. Ay,
Too true! too true!

ECHO AND THE FERRY.

Ay, Oliver! I was but seven, and he was eleven;
He looked at me pouting and rosy. I blushed
where I stood.
They had told us to play in the orchard (and I only
seven!
I small guest at the farm); but he said, "Oh, a girl
was no good!"
So he whistled and went, he went over the stile to
the wood.
It was sad, it was sorrowful! Only a girl — only
seven!
At home in the dark London smoke I had not found
it out.
The pear-trees looked on in their white, and blue
birds flash'd about,
And they too were angry as Oliver. Were they
eleven?