

She with a gracious sweetness, calm, not cold,
Acknowledged me, but brought my chance to
naught.

“This vale of imperfection doth not hold
A lovelier bud among its loveliest wrought!
She turns,” methought “O do not quite forget
To me remains forever — that we met.”

And straightway I went forth, I could no less,
Another light unwot of fall’n on me,
And rare elation and high happiness,

Some mighty power set hands of mastery
Among my heartstrings, and they did confess
With wild throbs inly sweet, that minstrelsy
A nightingale might dream so rich a strain,
And pine to change her song for sleep again.

The harp thrilled ever: O with what a round
And series of rich pangs fled forth each note
Oracular, that I had found, had found

(Head waters of old Nile held less remote)
Golden Dorado, dearest, most renowned;
But when as ’twere a sigh did overflow,
Shaping “how long, not long shall this endure,
Au jour le jour” methought, “*Au jour le jour*.”

The minutes of that hour my heart knew well
Were like the fabled pint of golden grain,
Each to be counted, paid for, till one fell,
Grew, shot up to another world amain,
And he who dropped might climb it, there to dwell.

I too, I clomb another world full fain,
But was she there? O what would be the end,
Might she nor there appear, nor I descend?

All graceful as a palm the maiden stood;
Men say the palm of palms in tropic Isles
Doth languish in her deep primeval wood,
And want the voice of man, his home, his smiles,
Nor flourish but in his dear neighborhood;
She too shall want a voice that reconciles,
A smile that charms — how sweet, would heaven so
please —
To plant her at my door over far seas.

I paced without, nor ever liege in truth
His sovran lady watched with more grave eyes
Of reverence, and she nothing ware forsooth,
Did standing charm the soul with new surprise,
Moving flow on a dimpled dream of youth.
Look! look! a sunbeam on her. Ay, but lies
The shade more sweetly now she passeth through
To join her fellow maids returned anew.

I saw (myself to bide unmarked intent)
Their youthful ease and pretty airs sedate,
They are so good, they are so innocent,
Those Islanders, they learn their part so late,
Of life’s demand right careless, dwell content
Till the first love’s first kiss shall consecrate
Their future to a world that can but be
By their sweet martyrdom and ministry.

Most happy of God’s creatures. Afterward
More than all women married thou wilt be,
E’en to the soul. One glance desired afford,
More than knight’s service might’st thou ask of
me.

Not any chance is mine, not the best word,
 No, nor the salt of life withouten thee.
 Must this all end, is my day so soon o'er?
 Untroubled violet eyes, look once,— once more.

No, not a glance: the low sun lay and burned,
 Now din of drum and cry of fife withal,
 Blithe teachers mustering frolic swarms returned,
 And new-world ways in that old market hall,
 Sweet girls, fair women, how my whole heart
 yearned

Her to draw near who made my festival.
 With others closing round, time speeding on,
 How soon she would be gone, she would be gone!

Ay, but I thought to track the rustic wains,
 Their goal desired to note, but not anigh,
 They creaking down long hop ycrested lanes
 'Neath the abiding flush of that north sky.
 I ran, my horse I fetched, but fate ordains
 Love shall breed laughter when the unloving spy.
 As I drew rein to watch the gathered crowd,
 With sudden mirth an old wife laughed aloud.

Her cheeks like winter apples red of hue,
 Her glance aside. To whom her speech—to
 me?

"I know the thing you go about to do—
 The lady—" "What! the lady—" "Sir,"
 saith she,
 "(I thank you kindly, sir), I tell you true
 She's gone," and "here's a coil" methought "will
 be."

"Gone—where?" "'Tis past my wit forsooth to
 say

If they went Malvern way or Hereford way.

"A carriage took her up—where three roads meet
 They needs must pass; you may o'ertake it yet."

And "Oyez, Oyez" peals adown the street,
 "Lost, lost, a golden heart with pearls beset."

"I know her, sir?—not I. To help this treat,
 Many strange ladies from the country met."

O heart beset with pearls! my hope was crost.
 "Farewell, good dame. Lost! oh, my lady lost."

And "Oyez, Oyez" following after me

On my great errand to the sundown went.

Lost, lost, and lost, whenas the cross road flee

Up tumbled hills, on each for eyes attent
 A carriage creepeth.

"Though in neither she,

I ne'er shall know life's worst impoverishment,
 An empty heart. No time, I stake my all,
 To right! and chase the rose-red evenfall.

"Fly up, good steed, fly on. Take the sharp rise

As 'twere a plain. A lady sits; but one.

So fast the pace she turns in startled wise,

She sets her gaze on mine and all is done.

'Persian Roxana' might have raised such eyes

When Alexander sought her. Now the sun

Dips, and my day is over; turn and fleet

The world fast flies, again do three roads meet."

I took the left, and for some cause unknown

Full fraught of hope and joy the way pursued,

Yet chose strong reasons speeding up alone
 To fortify me 'gainst a shock more rude.
 E'en so the diver carrieth down a stone
 In hand, lest he float up before he would,
 And end his walk upon the rich sea-floor,
 Those pearls he failed to grasp never to look on
 more.

Then as the low moon heaveth waxen white,
 The carriage, and it turns into a gate.
 Within sit three in pale pathetic light.
 O surely one of these my love, my fate.
 But ere I pass they wind away from sight.
 Then cottage casements glimmer. All elate
 I cross a green, there yawns with opened latch
 A village hostel capped in comely thatch.

"The same world made for all is made for each.
 To match a heart's magnificence of hope,
 How shall good reason best high action teach
 To win of custom, and with home to cope?
 How warrantably may he hope to win
 A star, that wants it? Shall he lie and grope?
 No, truly. — I will see her; tell my tale,
 See her this once, — and if I fail — I fail."

Thus with myself I spoke. A rough brick floor
 Made the place homely; I would rest me there.
 But how to sleep? Forth of the unlocked door
 I passed at midnight, lustreless white air
 Made strange the hour, that ecstasy not o'er
 I moved among the shadows, all my care —
 Counted a shadow — her drawn near to bless,
 Impassioned out of fear, rapt, motionless.

Now a long pool and water-hens at rest
 (As doughty seafolk dusk, at Malabar),
 A few pale stars lie trembling on its breast.
 Hath the Most High of all His host afar
 One most supremely beautiful, one best,
 Dearest of all the flock, one favorite star?
 His Image given, in part the children know
 They love one first and best. It may be so.

Now a long hedge; here dream the woolly folk;
 A majesty of silence is about.
 Transparent mist rolls off the pool like smoke,
 And Time is in his trance and night devout.
 Now the still house. O an I knew she woke
 I could not look, the sacred moon sheds out
 So many blessings on her rooftree low,
 Each more pathetic that she naught doth know.

I would not love a little, nor my start
 Make with the multitude that love and cease.
 He gives too much that giveth half a heart,
 Too much for liberty, too much for peace.
 Let me the first and best and highest impart,
 The whole of it, and heaven the whole increase!
 For *that* were not too much.

(In the moon's wake
 How the grass glitters, for her sweetest sake.)

I would toward her walk the silver floors.
 Love loathes an average — all extreme things deal
 To love — sea-deep and dazzling height for stores.
 There are on Fortune's errant foot can steal,
 Can guide her blindfold in at their own doors,
 Or dance elate upon her slippery wheel.

Courage! there are 'gainst hope can still advance,
Dowered with a sane, a wise extravagance.

A song

To one a-dreaming: when the dew
Falls, 'tis a time for rest; and when the bird
Calls, 'tis a time to wake, to wake for you.
A long-waking, aye, waking till a word
Come from her coral mouth to be the true
Sum of all good heart wanted, ear hath heard.

Yet if, alas! might love thy dolor be,
Dream, dear heart dear, and do not dream of me.

I sing

To one awakened, when the heart
Cries 'tis a day for thought, and when the soul
Sighs choose thy part, O choose thy part, thy part.
I bring to one belovèd, bring my whole
Store, make in loving, make O make mine art
More. Yet I ask no, ask no wishèd goal.

But this — if loving might thy dolor be,
Wake, O my lady loved, and love not me.

“That which the many win, love's niggard sum,

I will not, if love's all be left behind.

That which I am I cannot unbecome,

My past not unpossess, nor future blind.

Let me all risk, and leave the deep heart dumb

Forever, if that maiden sits enshrined

The saint of one more happy. She is she.

There is none other. Give her then to me.

“Or else to be the better for her face
Beholding it no more.” Then all night through
The shadow moves with infinite dark grace.

The light is on her windows, and the dew
Comforts the world and me, till in my place

At moonsetting, when stars flash out to view,
Comes 'neath the cedar boughs a great repose,
The peace of one renouncing, and then a doze.

There was no dream, yet waxed a sense in me

Asleep, that patience was the better way,
Appeasement for a want that needs must be,

Grew as the dominant mind forbore its sway
Till whistling sweet stirred in the cedar tree —

I started — woke — it was the dawn of day.
That was the end. “Slow solemn growth of light,
Come what come will, remains to me this night.”

It was the end, with dew ordained to melt,

How easily was learned, how all too soon
Not there, not thereabout such maiden dwelt.

What was it promised me so fair a boon?
Heart-hope is not less vain because heart-felt,

Gone forth once more in search of her at noon
Through the sweet country side on hill, on plain,
I sought and sought many long days in vain.

To Malvern next, with feathery woodland hung,

Whereto old Piers the Plowman came to teach,
On her green vasty hills the lay was sung,

He too, it may be, lisping in his speech,

“To make the English sweet upon his tongue.”

How many maidens beautiful, and each

Might him delight, that loved no other fair;
But Malvern blessed not me, — she was not there.

Then to that town, but still my fate the same,
Crowned with old works that her right well be-
seem,

To gaze upon her field of ancient fame
And muse on the sad thrall's most piteous dream,
By whom a "shadow like an angel came,"

Crying out on Clarence, its wild eyes agleam,
Accusing echoes here still falter and flee,
"That stabbed me on the field by Tewkesbury."

It nothing 'vailed that yet I sought and sought,
Part of my very self was left behind,
Till risen in wrath against the o'ermastering thought,

"Let me be thankful," quoth the better mind,
Thankful for her, though utterly to naught

She brings my heart's cry, and I live to find
A new self of the old self exigent
In the light of my divining discontent.

The picture of a maiden bidding "Arise,
I am the Art of God. He shows by me
His great idea, so well as sin-stained eyes
Love aidant can behold it."

Is this she?

Or is it mine own love for her supplies
The meaning and the power? Howe'er this be,
She is the interpreter by whom most near
Man's soul is drawn to beauty and pureness here.

The sweet idea, invisible hitherto,
Is in her face, unconscious delegate;

That thing she wots not of ordained to do:

But also it shall be her votary's fate,
Through her his early days of ease to eschew,
Struggle with life and prove its weary weight.
All the great storms that rising rend the soul,
Are life in little, imaging the whole.

Ay, so as life is, love is, in their ken
Stars, infant yet, both thought to grasp, to keep,
Then came the morn of passionate splendor, when
So sweet the light, none but for bliss could weep,
And then the strife, the toil; but we are men,
Strong, brave to battle with the stormy deep;
Then fear — and then renunciation — then
Appeals unto the Infinite Pity — and sleep.

But after life the sleep is long. Not so
With love. Love buried lieth not straight, not
still,

Love starts, and after lull awakes to know
All the deep things again. And next his will,
That dearest pang is, never to forego.

He would all service, hardship, fret fulfil.
Unhappy love! and I of that great host
Unhappy love who cry, unhappy most.

Because renunciation was so short,
The starvèd heart so easily awaked;
A dream could do it, a bud, a bird, a thought,
But I betook me with that want which ached
To neighbor lands where strangeness with me
wrought.
The old work was so hale, its fitness slaked

Soul-thirst for truth. "I knew not doubt nor fear,"

Its language, "war or worship, sure sincere."

Then where by Art the high did best translate

Life's infinite pathos to the soul, set down

Beauty and mystery, that imperious hate

On its best braveness doth and sainthood frown,

Nay more the MASTER's manifest pity — "wait,

Behold the palmgrove and the promised crown,

He suffers with thee, for thee. — Lo the Child!

Comfort thy heart; He certainly so smiled."

Thus love and I wore through the winter time.

Then saw her demon blush Vesuvius try,

Then evil ghosts white from the awful prime,

Thrust up sharp peaks to tear the tender sky.

"No more to do but hear that English chime,"

I to a kinsman wrote. He made reply,

"As home I bring my girl and boy full soon,

I pass through Evesham, — meet me there at noon.

"The bells your father loved you needs must hear,

Seek Oxford next with me," and told the day.

"Upon the bridge I'll meet you. What! how dear

Soever was a dream, shall it bear sway

To mar the waking?"

I set forth, drew near,

Beheld a goodly tower, twin churches gray,

Evesham. The bridge, and noon. I nothing knew

What to my heart that fateful chime would do.

For suddenly the sweet bells overcame

A world unsouled; did all with man endow;

His yearning almost tell that passeth name

And said they were full old, and they were now

And should be; and their sighing upon the same

For our poor sake that pass they did avow,

While on clear Avon flowed like man's short day

The shining river of life lapsing away.

The stroke of noon. The bell-bird! yes and no.

Winds of remembrance swept as over the foam

Of anti-natal shores. At home is it so,

My country folk? Ay, 'neath this pale blue
dome,

Many of you in the moss lie low — lie low.

Ah! since I have not HER, give me too, home.

A footstep near! I turned; past likelihood,

Past hope, before me on the bridge — SHE STOOD.

A rosy urchin had her hand; this cried,

"We think you are our cousin — yes, you are;

I said so to Estelle." The violet-eyed,

"If this be Geoffrey?" asked; and as from far

A doubt came floating up; but she denied

Her thought, yet blushed. O beautiful! my

Star!

Then, with the lifting of my hat, each wore

That look which owned to each, "We have met

before."

Then was the strangest bliss in life made mine;

I saw the almost worshipped — all remote;

The Star so high above that used to shine,

Translated from the void where it did float,

And brought into relation with the fine

Charities earth hath grown. A great joy smote

Me silent, and the child atween us tway,
We watched the lucent river stealing away.

While her deep eyes down on the ripple fell,
Quoth the small imp, "How fast you go and go,
You Avon. Does it wish to stop, Estelle,
And hear the clock, and see the orchards blow?
It does not care! Not when the old big bell
Makes a great buzzing noise? — Who told you
so?"

And then to me, "I like to hear it hum.
Why do you think that father could not come?"

"Estelle forgot her violin. And he,
O then he said: 'How careless, child, of you;
I must send on for it. 'Twould pity be
If that were lost.'

I want to learn it too;
And when I'm nine I shall."

Then turning, she
Let her sweet eyes unveil them to my view;
Her stately grace outmatched my dream of old,
But ah! the smile dull memory had not told.

My kinsman next, with care-worn kindly brow.
"Well, father," quoth the imp, "we've done our
part.
We found him."

And she, wholly girlish now,
Laid her young hand on his with lovely art
And sweet excuses. O! I made my vow
I would all dare, such life did warm my heart;
We journeyed, all the air with scents of price
Was laden, and the goal was Paradise.

When that the Moors betook them to their sand,
Their domination over in fair Spain,
Each locked, men say, his door in that loved land,
And took the key in hope to come again.
On Moorish walls yet hung, long dust each hand,
The keys, but not the might to use, remain;
Is there such house in some blest land for me?
I can, I will, I do reach down the key.

A country conquered oft, and long before,
Of generations aye ordained to win;
If mine the power, I will unlock the door.
Enter, O light, I bear a sunbeam in.
What, did the crescent wane! Yet man is more,
And love achieves because to heaven akin.
O life! to hear again that wandering bell,
And hear it at thy feet, Estelle, Estelle.

Full oft I want the sacred throated bird,
Over our limitless waste of light which spoke
The spirit of the call my fathers heard,
Saying "Let us pray," and old world echoes woke
Ethereal minster bells that still averr'd,
And with their phantom notes the all silence broke.
"The fanes are far, but whom they shrined is near.
Thy God, the Island God, is here, is here."

To serve; to serve a thought, and serve apart
To meet; a few short days, a maiden won.

"Ah, sweet, sweet home, I must divide my heart,
Betaking me to countries of the sun."

"What straight-hung leaves, what rays that twinkle
and dart,
Make me to like them."

"Love, it shall be done."

"What weird dawn-fire across the wide hill flies."
"It is the flame-tree's challenge to yon scarlet
skies."

"Hark, hark, O hark! the spirit of a bell!
What would it? ("Toll.") An air-hung sacred
call,
Athwart the forest shade it strangely fell" —
"Toll" — "Toll."

The longed-for voice, but ah, withal
I felt, I knew, it was my father's knell
That touched and could the over-sense enthrall.
Perfect his peace, a whispering pure and deep
As theirs who 'neath his native towers by Avon
sleep.

If love and death are ever reconciled,
'Tis when the old lie down for the great rest.
We rode across the bush, a sylvan wild
That was an almost world, whose calm oppressed
With audible silence; and great hills inisled
Rose out as from a sea. Consoling, blest
And blessing spoke she, and the reedflower spread,
And tall rock lilies towered above her head.

Sweet is the light aneath our matchless blue,
The shade below yon passion plant that lies,

And very sweet is love, and sweet are you,
My little children dear, with violet eyes,
And sweet about the dawn to hear anew
The sacred monotone of peace arise.
Love, 'tis thy welcome from the air-hung bell,
Congratulant and clear, Estelle, Estelle.

—◆—
LOSS AND WASTE.

UP to far Osteroe and Suderoe
The deep sea-floor lies strewn with Spanish
wrecks,
O'er minted gold the fair-haired fishers go,
O'er sunken bravery of high carvèd decks.

In earlier days great Carthage suffered bale
(All her waste works choke under sandy shoals);
And reckless hands tore down the temple veil;
And Omar burned the Alexandrian rolls.

The Old World arts men suffered not to last,
Flung down they trampled lie and sunk from view,
He lets wild forest for these ages past
Grow over the lost cities of the New.

O for a life that shall not be refused
To see the lost things found, and waste things used.

—◆—
ON A PICTURE.

As a forlorn soul waiting by the Styx
Dimly expectant of lands yet more dim,