

"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,

Might peer afraid where shadows change and mix
 Till the dark ferryman shall come for him;
 And past all hope a long ray in his sight,
 Fall'n trickling down the steep crag Hades-black
 Reveals an upward path to life and light,
 Nor any let but he should mount that track:
 As with the sudden shock of joy amazed,
 He might a motionless sweet moment stand,
 So doth that mortal lover, silent, dazed,
 For hope had died and loss was near at hand.
 "Wilt thou?" his quest. Unready but for "Nay,"
 He stands at fault for joy, she whispering "Ay."

—◆—
 THE SLEEP OF SIGISMUND.

THE doom'd king pacing all night through the
 windy fallow.
 "Let me alone, mine enemy, let me alone,"
 Never a Christian bell that dire thick gloom to
 hallow,
 Or guide him, shelterless, succorless, thrust from
 his own.
 Foul spirits riding the wind do flout at him friend-
 less,
 The rain and the storm on his head beat ever at
 will;
 His weird is on him to grope in the dark with end-
 less
 Weariful feet for a goal that shifteth still.

A sleuth-hound baying! The sleuth-hound bayeth
 behind him,
 His head he flying and stumbling turns back to the
 sound,
 Whom doth the sleuth-hound follow? What if it
 find him;
 Up! for the scent lieth thick, up from the level
 ground.
 Up, on, he must on, to follow his weird essaying,
 Lo you, a flood from the crag cometh raging past,
 He falls, he fights in the water, no stop, no stay-
 ing,
 Soon the king's head goes under, the weird is dreed
 at last.

I.

"Wake, O king, the best star worn
 In the crown of night, forlorn
 Blinks a fine white point — 'tis morn."
 Soft! The queen's voice, fair is she,
 "Wake!" He waketh, living, free,
 In the chamber of arras lieth he.
 Delicate dim shadows yield
 Silken curtains overhead
 All abloom with work of need,
 Martagon and milleflower spread.
 On the wall his golden shield,
 Dinted deep in battle-field,
 When the host o' the Khalif fled.
 Gold to gold! Long sunbeams flit
 Upward, tremble and break on it.
 "Ay, 'tis over, all things writ

Of my sleep shall end awake,
 Now is joy, and all its bane
 The dark shadow of after pain."
 Then the queen saith, "Nay, but break
 Unto me for dear love's sake
 This thy matter. Thou hast been
 In great bitterness I ween
 All the night-time." But "My queen,
 Life, love, lady, rest content,
 Ill dreams fly, the night is spent,
 Good day draweth on. Lament
 'Vaileth not, — yea peace," quoth he;
 "Sith this thing no better may be,
 Best were held 'twixt thee and me."
 Then the fair queen, "Even so
 As thou wilt, O king, but know
 Mickle nights have wrought thee woe,
 Yet the last was troubled sore
 Above all that went before."
 Quoth the king, "No more, no more."
 Then he riseth, pale of blee,
 As one spent, and utterly
 Master'd of dark destiny.

II.

Comes a day for glory famed
 Tidings brought, the enemy shamed,
 Fallen; now is peace proclaimed.
 And a swarm of bells on high
 Make their sweet din scale the sky,
 "Hail! hail! hail!" the people cry
 To the king his queen beside,
 And the knights in armor ride
 After until eventide.

III.

All things great may life afford,
 Praise, power, love, high pomp, fair gaud,
 Till the banquet be toward
 Hath this king. Then day takes flight,
 Sinketh sun and fadeth light,
 Late he coucheth — Night: 'tis night.

The proud king heading the host on his red-roan
 charger.

Dust. On a thicket of spears glares the Syrian
 sun,
 The Saracens swarm to the onset, larger aye larger
 Loom their fierce cohorts, they shout as the day
 were won.

Brown faces fronting the steel-bright armor, and
 ever
 The crash o' the combat runs on with a mighty
 cry,
 Fell tumult; trampling and carnage — then fails
 endeavor,
 O shame upon shame — the Christians falter and
 fly.

The foe upon them, the foe afore and behind them,
 The king borne back in the mêlée; all, all is
 vain;
 They fly with death at their heels, fierce sun-rays
 blind them,
 Riderless steeds affrighted, tread down their
 ranks amain.

Disgrace, dishonor, no rally, ah no retrieving,
 The scorn of scorns shall his name and his nation
 brand,
 'Tis a sword that smites from the rear, his helmet
 cleaving,
 That hurls him to earth, to his death on the desert
 sand.

Ever they fly, the cravens, and ever reviling
 Flies after. Athirst, ashamed, he yieldeth his
 breath,
 While one looks down from his charger; a calm
 slow smiling
 Curleth his lip. 'Tis the Khalif. And this is
 death.

IV.

"Wake, yon purple peaks arise,
 Jagged, bare, through saffron skies;
 Now is heard a twittering sweet,
 For the mother-martins meet,
 Where wet ivies, dew-besprent,
 Glisten on the battlement.
 Now the lark at heaven's gold gate
 Aiming, sweetly chides on fate
 That his brown wings wearied were
 When he, sure, was almost there.
 Now the valley mist doth break,
 Shifting sparkles edge the lake,
 Love, Lord, Master, wake, O wake!"

V.

Ay, he wakes, — and dull of cheer,
 Though his queen be very dear,

Though a respite come with day
 From the abhorred flight and fray,
 E'en though life be not the cost,
 Nay, nor crown nor honor lost;
 For in his soul abideth fear
 Worse than of the Khalif's spear,
 Smiting when perforce in flight
 He was borne, — for that was night,
 That his weird. But now 'tis day,
 "And good sooth I know not — nay,
 Know not how this thing could be.
 Never, more it seemeth me
 Than when left the weird to dree,
 I am I. And it was I
 Felt or ever they turned to fly,
 How, like wind, a tremor ran,
 The right hand of every man
 Shaking. Ay, all banners shook,
 And the red all cheeks forsook,
 Mine as theirs. Since this was I,
 Who my soul shall certify
 When again I face the foe
 Manful courage shall not go?
 Ay, it is not thrust o' a spear,
 Scorn of infidel eyes austere,
 But mine own fear — is to fear."

VI.

After sleep thus sore bested,
 Beaten about and buffeted,
 Featly fares the morning spent
 In high sport and tournament.

VII.

Served within his sumptuous tent,
 Looks the king in quiet wise,
 Till this fair queen yield the prize
 To the bravest; but when day
 Falleth to the west away,
 Unto her i' the silent hour,
 While she sits in her rose-bower
 Come, "O love, full oft," quoth she,
 "I at dawn have prayèd thee
 Thou would'st tell o' the weird to me,
 Sith I might some counsel find
 Of my wit or in my mind
 Thee to better." "Ay, e'en so,
 But the telling shall let thee know,"
 Quoth the king, "is neither scope
 For sweet counsel nor fair hope,
 Nor is found for respite room,
 Till the uttermost crack of doom."

VIII.

Then the queen saith, "Woman's wit
 No man asketh aid of it,
 Not wild hyssop on a wall
 Is of less account; or small
 Glossy gnats that flit i' the sun
 Less worth weighing — light so light!
 Yet when all's said — ay, all done,
 Love, I love thee! By love's might
 I will counsel thee aright,
 Or would share the weird to-night."
 Then he answer'd, "Have thy way.
 Know 'tis two years gone and a day

Since I, walking lone and late,
 Pondered sore mine ill estate;
 Open murmurers, foes concealed,
 Famines dire i' the marches round,
 Neighbor kings unfriendly found,
 Ay, and treacherous plots revealed
 Where I trusted. I bid stay
 All my knights at the high crossway,
 And did down the forest fare
 To bethink me, and despair.
 Ah! thou gilded toy a throne,
 If one mounts to thee alone,
 Quoth I, mourning while I went,
 Haply he may drop content
 As a lark wing-weary down
 To the level, and his crown
 Leave for another man to don;
 Throne, thy gold steps raised upon.
 But for me — O as for me
 What is named I would not dree,
 Earn, or conquer, or forego
 For the barring of overthrow.

IX.

"Aloud I spake, but verily
 Never an answer looked should be.
 But it came to pass from shade
 Pacing to an open glade,
 Which the oaks a mighty wall
 Fence about, methought a call
 Sounded, then a pale thin mist
 Rose, a pillar, and fronted me,
 Rose and took a form I wist,

And it wore a hood on 'ts head,
And a long white garment spread,
And I saw the eyes thereof.

x.

"Then my plumèd cap I doff,
Stooping. 'Tis the white-witch. 'Hail,'
Quoth the witch, 'thou shalt prevail
An thou wilt; I swear to thee
All thy days shall glorious shine,
Great and rich, ay, fair and fine,
So what followeth rest my fee,
So thou'lt give thy sleep to me.'

xi.

"While she spake my heart did leap.
Waking is man's life, and sleep—
What is sleep?—a little death
Coming after, and methought
Life is mine and death is naught
Till it come, — so day is mine
I will risk the sleep to shine
In the waking.

And she saith,

In a soft voice clear and low,
'Give thy plumèd cap also
For a token.'

"Didst thou give?"

Quoth the queen; and "As I live,"
He makes answer, "none can tell.
I did will my sleep to sell,
And in token held to her
That she asked. And it fell

To the grass. I saw no stir
In her hand or in her face,
And no going; but the place
Only for an evening mist
Was made empty. There it lay,
That same plumèd cap, alway
On the grasses — but I wist
Well, it must be let to lie,
And I left it. Now the tale
Ends, the events do testify
Of her truth. The days go by
Better and better; naught doth ail
In the land, right happy and hale
Dwell the seely folk; but sleep
Brings a reckoning; then forth creep
Dreaded creatures, worms of might
Crested with my plumèd cap
Loll about my neck all night,
Bite me in the side, and lap
My heart's blood. Then oft the weird
Drives me, where amazed, afeard,
I do safe on a river strand
Mark one sinking hard at hand
While fierce sleuth-hounds that me track
Fly upon me, bear me back,
Fling me away, and he for lack
Of man's aid in piteous wise
Goeth under, drowns and dies.

xii.

"O sweet wife, I suffer sore —
O methinks aye more and more
Dull my day, my courage numb,

Shadows from the night to come.
 But no counsel, hope, nor aid
 Is to give; a crown being made
 Power and rule, yea all good things
 Yet to hang on this same weird
 I must dree it, ever that brings
 Chastening from the white-witch feared.
 O that dreams mote me forsake,
 Would that man could alway wake."

XIII.

Now good sooth doth counsel fail,
 Ah this queen is pale, so pale.
 "Love," she sigheth, "thou didst not well
 Listening to the white-witch fell,
 Leaving her doth thee advance
 Thy plumèd cap of maintenance."

XIV.

"She is white, as white snow flake,"
 Quoth the king; "a man shall make
 Bargains with her and not sin."
 "Ay," she saith, "but an he win,
 Let him look the right be done
 Else the rue shall be his own."

XV.

No more words. The stars are bright,
 For the feast high halls be dight,
 Late he coucheth. Night — 'tis night.

The dead king lying in state in the Minster holy.
 Fifty candles burn at his head and burn at his
 feet,

A crown and royal apparel upon him lorn and lowly,
 And the cold hands stiff as horn by their cold
 palms meet.

Two days dead. Is he dead? Nay, nay — but is
 he living?

The weary monks have ended their chantings
 manifold,

The great door swings behind them, night winds
 entrance giving,

The candles flare and drip on him, warm and he
 so cold.

Neither to move nor to moan, though sunk and
 though swallow'd

In earth he shall soon be trodden hard and no
 more seen.

Soft you the door again! Was it a footstep followed,
 Falter'd, and yet drew near him? — Malva, Malva
 the queen!

One hand o' the dead king liveth (e'en so him
 seemeth)

On the purple robe, on the ermine that folds his
 breast

Cold, very cold. Yet e'en at that pass esteemeth

The king, it were sweet if she kissed the place of
 its rest.

Laid her warm face on his bosom, a fair wife grieved
 For the lord and love of her youth, and bewailed
 him sore;

Laid her warm face on the bosom of her bereaved
 Soon to go under, never to look on her more.

His candles guide her with pomp funereal flaring,
 Out of the gulfy dark to the bier whereon he lies.
 Cometh this queen i' the night for grief or for daring,
 Out o' the dark to the light with large affrighted
 eyes?

The pale queen speaks in the Presence with fear
 upon her,
 "Where is the ring I gave to thee, where is my
 ring?
 I vowed — 'twas an evil vow — by love, and by
 honor,
 Come life or come death to be thine, thou poor
 dead king."

The pale queen's honor! A low laugh scathing
 and sereing —
 A mumbling as made by the dead in the tombs ye
 wot.
 Braveth the dead this queen? "Hear it, whoso
 hath hearing,
 I vowed by my love, cold king, but I loved thee
 not."

Honor! An echo in aisles and the solemn portals,
 Low sinketh this queen by the bier with its freight
 forlorn;
 Yet kneeling, "Hear me!" she crieth, "you just im-
 mortals,
 You saints bear witness I vowed and am not for-
 sworn.
 "I vowed in my youth, fool-king, when the golden
 fetter
 Thy love that bound me and bann'd me fall
 weary I wore,

But all poor men of thy menai I held them better,
 All stalwart knights of thy train unto me were
 more.

"Twenty years I have lived on earth and two beside
 thee,
 Thirty years thou didst live on earth, and two on
 the throne:
 Let it suffice there be none of thy rights denied thee,
 Though I dare thy presence — I — come for my
 ring alone."

She risen shuddereth, peering, afraid to linger.
 Behold her ring, it shineth! "Now yield to me,
 thou dead,
 For this do I dare the touch of thy stark stiff finger."
 The queen hath drawn her ring from his hand, the
 queen hath fled.

"O woman fearing sore, to whom my man's heart
 cleavèd,
 The faith enwrought with love and life hath mocks
 for its meed" —
 The dead king lying in state, of his past bereavèd,
 Twice dead. Ay, this is death. Now dieth the
 king indeed.

xvi.

"Wake, the seely gnomes do fly,
 Drenched across yon rainy sky,
 With the vex'd moon-mother'd elves,
 And the clouds do weep themselves
 Into morning. All night long
 Hath thy weird thee sore opprest;