

VI.

O it breaks my heart, the face dejected that looks
not on us,
A beautiful face — I remember now, though long I
forgot.”

“Ay and I loved it. I love him to-day, and to see
him thus!
Saying ‘I go if she bids it, for work her woe — I
will not.’”

VII.

There! weep not, wring not your hands, but think,
think with your heart and soul.”
“Was he innocent, mother? If he was, I sure had
been told.”

“He said so.” “Ah, but they do.” “And I hope
— and long was his dole,
And all for the signing a name (if indeed he signed)
for gold.”

VIII.

“To find us again, in the far far West, where hid,
we were free —
But if he was innocent — O my heart, it is riven in
two,
If he goes how hard upon him — or stays — how
harder on me,
For O my Ronald, my Ronald, my dear, — my best
what of you!”

IX.

“Peace; think, my Laura — I say he will go there,
weep not so sore.
And the time is come, Ronald knows nothing, your
father will go,

As the shadow fades from its place will he, and be
seen no more.”

“There’ll be time to think to-morrow, and after,
but to-day, no.”

X.

I’m going down the garden, mother.” “Laura!”
“I’ve dried my tears.”

“O how will this end?” “I know not the end, I
can but begin.”

“But what will you say?” “Not ‘Welcome, father,’
though long were those years,
But I’ll say to him, ‘O my poor father, we wait
you, come in.’”

LOVERS AT THE LAKE SIDE.

I.

“AND you brought him home?” “I did, ay Ronald,
it rested with me.”

“Love!” “Yes.” “I would fain you were not so
calm.” “I cannot weep. No.”

“What is he like, your poor father?” “He is —
like — this fallen tree

Prone at our feet, by the still lake taking on rose
from the glow,

II.

Now scarlet, O look! overcoming the blue both lake
and sky,

While the waterfalls waver like smoke, then leap
in and are not.

And shining snow-points of high sierras cast down,
there they lie."

"O Laura — I cannot bear it. Laura! as if I forgot."

III.

"No, you remember, and I remember that evening
— like this

When we come forth from the gloomy Canyon, lo,
a sinking sun.

And, Ronald, you gave to me your troth ring, I
gave my troth kiss."

"Give me another, I say that this makes no difference,
none.

IV.

It hurts me keenly. It hurts to the soul that you
thought it could."

"I never thought so, my Ronald, my love, never
thought you base.

No, but I look for a nobler nobleness, loss understood,

Accepted, and not that common truth which can
hold through disgrace.

V.

O! we remember, and how ere that noon through
deeps of the lake

We floating looked down and the boat's shadow
followed on rocks below,

So clear the water. O all pathetic as if for love's
sake

Our life that is but a fleeting shadow 'twould under
us show.

VI.

O we remember forget-me-not pale, and white columbine

You wreathed for my hair; because we remember
this cannot be.

Ah! here is your ring — see, I draw it off — it must
not be mine,

Put it on, love, if but for the moment and listen to
me.

VII.

I look for the best, I look for the most, I look for
the all

From you, it consoles this misery of mine, there is
you to trust.

O if you can weep, let us weep together, tears may
well fall

For that lost sunsetting and what it promised,—
they may, they must.

VIII.

Do you say nothing, mine own beloved, you know
what I mean,

And whom. — To her pride and her love from you
shall such blow be dealt. . . .

. . . Silence uprisen, is like a presence, it comes
us between . . .

As once there was darkness, now is there silence
that may be felt.

IX.

Ronald, your mother, so gentle, so pure, and you
are her best,

'Tis she whom I think of, her quiet sweetness, her
gracious way.

How could she bear it?" — "Laura!" "Yes, Ronald." "Let that matter rest."
 "You might give your name to my father's child?"
 "My father's name. Ay,

x.

Who died before it was soiled." "You mutter."
 "Why, love, are you here?"
 "Because my mother fled forth to the West, her
 trouble to hide,
 And I was so small, the lone pine forest, and tier
 upon tier,
 Far off Mexican snowy sierras pushed England
 aside."

xi.

"And why am I here?" "But what did you mut-
 ter?" "O pardon, sweet."
 "Why came I here and — my mother? In truth
 then I cannot tell."
 "Yet you drew my ring from your finger — see — I
 kneel at your feet.
 Put it on. 'Twas for no fault of mine." "Love!
 I knew that full well."

xii.

"And yet there be faults that long repented, are aye
 to deplore,
 Wear my ring, Laura, at least till I choose some
 words I can say,
 If indeed any word need be said." "No! wait,
 Ronald, no more;
 What! is there respite? Give me a moment to
 think 'nay' or 'ay,'

xiii.

I know not, but feel there is. O pardon me, par-
 don me — peace;
 For naught is to say, and the dawn of hope is a
 solemn thing,
 Let us have silence. Take me back, Ronald, full
 sweet is release."
 "Laura! but give me my troth kiss again." "And
 give me my ring."

THE WHITE MOON WASTETH.

THE white moon wasteth,
 And cold morn hasteth
 Athwart the snow,
 The red east burneth
 And the tide turneth,
 And thou must go.

Think not, sad rover,
 Their story all over
 Who come from far —
 Once, in the ages
 Won goodly wages
 Led by a star.

Once, for all duly
 Guidance doth truly
 Shine as of old,
 Opens for me and thee
 Once, opportunity
 Her gates of gold.

Enter, thy star is out,
 Traverse nor faint nor doubt
 Earth's antres wild,
 Thou shalt find good and rest
 As found the Magi blest
 That divine Child.

—◆—
 AN ARROW-SLIT.

I CLOMB full high the belfry tower
 Up to yon arrow-slit, up and away,
 I said "Let me look on my heart's fair flower
 In the wallèd garden where she doth play."

My care she knoweth not, no nor the cause,
 White rose, red rose about her hung,
 And I aloft with the doves and the daws,
 They coo and call to their callow young.

Sing, "O an she were a white rosebud fair
 Dropt, and in danger from passing feet,
 'Tis I would render her service tender,
 Upraised on my bosom with reverence meet."

Playing at the ball, my dearest of all,
 When she grows older how will it be,
 I dwell far away from her thoughts to-day
 That heed not, need not, or mine or me.

Sing, "O an my love were a fledgling dove
 That flutters forlorn o'er her shallow nest,
 'Tis I would render her service tender,
 And carry her, carry her on my breast."

WENDOVER.

UPLIFTED and lone, set apart with our love
 On the crest of a soft swelling down,
 Cloud shadows that meet on the grass at our feet
 Sail on above Wendover town.

Wendover town takes the smile of the sun
 As if yearning and strife were no more,
 From her red roofs float high neither plaint neither
 sigh,
 All the weight of the world is our own.

Would that life were more kind and that souls
 might have peace
 As the wide mead from storm and from bale,
 We bring up our own care, but how sweet over there
 And how strange is their calm in the vale.

As if trouble at noon had achieved a deep sleep,
 Lapped and lulled from the weariful fret,
 Or shot down out of day, had a hint dropt away
 As if grief might attain to forget.

Not if we two indeed had gone over the bourne
 And were safe on the hills of the blest,
 Not more strange they might show to us drawn
 from below,
 Come up from long dolor to rest.

But the peace of that vale would be thine, love, and
 mine
 And sweeter the air than of yore,

And this life we have led as a dream that is fled
Might appear to our thought evermore.

"Was it life, was it life?" we might say, "'twas
scarce life,"

"Was it love? 'twas scarce love," looking down,
"Yet we mind a sweet ray of the red sun one day
Low lying on Wendover town."

THE LOVER PLEADS.

I.

WHEN I had guineas many a one
Naught else I lackèd 'neath the sun,
I had two eyes the bluest seen,
A perfect shape, a gracious mien,
I had a voice might charm the bale
From a two days' widowed nightingale,
And if you ask how this I know
I had a love who told me so.

The lover pleads, the maid hearkeneth,
Her foot turns, his day darkeneth.
Love unkind, O can it be
'Twas your foot false did turn from me?

II.

The gear is gone, the red gold spent,
Favor and beauty with them went,
Eyes take the veil, their shining done,
Not fair to him is fair to none,

Sweet as a bee's bag 'twas to taste
His praise. O honey run to waste,
He loved not! spoiled is all my way
In the spoiling of that yesterday.

The shadows wax, the low light alters,
Gold west fades, and false heart falters.
The pity of it! — Love's a rover,
The last word said, and all over.

SONG IN THREE PARTS.

I.

THE white broom flatt'ring her flowers in calm June
weather,

"O most sweet wear;
Forty-eight weeks of my life do none desire me,
Four am I fair."

Quoth the brown bee,
"In thy white wear
Four thou art fair.
A mystery
Of honeyed snow
In scented air
The bee lines flow
Straight unto thee.
Great boon and bliss
All pure I wis,
And sweet to grow,

Ay, so to give
 That many live.
 Now as for me,
 I," quoth the bee,
 "Have not to give,
 Through long hours sunny
 Gathering I live:
 Aye debonair
 Sailing sweet air
 After my fare,
 Bee-bread and honey.
 In thy deep coombe
 O thou white broom,
 Where no leaves shake,
 Brake,
 Bent nor clover,
 I a glad rover
 Thy calms partake,
 While winds of might
 From height to height
 Go bodily over.
 Till slanteth light,
 And up the rise
 Thy shadow lies,
 A shadow of white,
 A beauty-lender
 Pathetic, tender.

Short is thy day?
 Answer with 'Nay,'
 Longer the hours
 That wear thy flowers
 Than all dull, cold

Years manifold
 That gift withhold.
 A long liver,
 O honey-giver,
 Though by all showing
 Art made, bestowing,
 I envy not
 Thy greater lot,
 Nor thy white wear.
 But, as for me,
 I," quoth the bee,
 "Never am fair."

II.

The nightingale lorn of his note in darkness brood-
ing

Deeply and long,
 "Two sweet months spake the heart to the heart.
 Alas! all's over,
 O lost my song."

One in the tree,
 "Hush now! Let be:
 The song at ending
 Left my long tending
 Over alsò.
 Let be, let us go
 Across the wan sea.
 The little ones care not,
 And I fare not
 Amiss with thee.

Thou hast sung all,
 This hast thou had.

Love, be not sad;
 It shall befall
 Assuredly,
 When the bush buddeth
 And the bank studdeth —
 Where grass is sweet
 And damps do fleet,
 Her delicate beds
 With daisy heads
 That the Stars Seven
 Leaned down from heaven
 Shall sparkling mark
 In the warm dark
 Thy most dear strain
 Which ringeth aye true —
 Piercing vale, croft
 Lifted aloft
 Dropt even as dew
 With a sweet quest
 To her on the nest
 When damps we love
 Fall from above.
 'Art thou asleep?
 Answer me, answer me,
 Night is so deep
 Thy right fair form
 I cannot see;
 Answer me, answer me,
 Are the eggs warm?
 Is't well with thee?'

Ay, this shall be
 Assuredly.

Ay, thou full fain
 In the soft rain
 Shalt sing again."

III.

A fair wife making her moan, despised, forsaken,
 Her good days o'er;
 "Seven sweet years of my life did I live beloved,
 Seven — no more."

Then Echo woke — and spoke

"No more — no more,"

And a wave broke

On the sad shore

When Echo said

"No more."

Naught else made reply,

Nor land, nor loch, nor sky

Did any comfort try,

But the wave spread

Echo's faint tone

Alone,

All down the desolate shore,

"No more — no more."

—◆—
 "IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM."

Out of the melancholy that is made
 Of ebbing sorrow that too slowly ebbs,
 Comes back a sighing whisper of the reed,
 A note in new love-pipings on the bough,

Grieving with grief till all the full-fed air
 And shaken milky corn doth wot of it,
 The pity of it trembling in the talk
 Of the beforetime merrymaking brook —
 Out of that melancholy will the soul,
 In proof that life is not forsaken quite
 Of the old trick and glamour which made glad,
 Be cheated some good day and not perceive
 How sorrow ebbing out is gone from view,
 How tired trouble fall'n for once on sleep,
 How keen self-mockery that youth's eager dream
 Interpreted to mean so much is found
 To mean and give so little — frets no more,
 Floating apart as on a cloud — O then
 Not e'en so much as murmuring "Let this end,"
 She will, no longer weighted, find escape,
 Lift up herself as if on wings and flit
 Back to the morning time.

"O once with me

It was all one, such joy I had at heart,
 As I heard sing the morning star, or God
 Did hold me with an Everlasting Hand,
 And dip me in the day.

O once with me,"

Reflecting "'twas enough to live, to look
 Wonder and love. Now let that come again.
 Rise!" And ariseth first a tanglement
 Of flowering bushes, peonies pale that drop
 Upon a mossy lawn, rich iris spikes,
 Bee-borage, mealy-stemmed auricula,
 Brown wallflower, and the sweetbriar ever sweet,
 Her pink buds pouting from their green.

To these

Add thick espaliers where the bullfinch came
 To strew much budding wealth, and was not chid
 Then add wide pear trees on the warmed wall,
 The old red wall one cannot see beyond.
 That is the garden.

In the wall a door
 Green, blistered with the sun. You open it,
 And lo! a sunny waste of tumbled hills
 And a glad silence and an open calm.
 Infinite leisure, and a slope where rills
 Dance down delightedly, in every crease,
 And lambs stoop drinking and the finches dip.
 Then shining waves upon a lonely beach.
 That is the world.

An all-sufficient world,
 And as it seems an undiscovered world,
 So very few the folk that come to look.
 Yet one has heard of towns; but they are far.
 The world is undiscovered, and the child
 Is undiscovered that with stealthy joy
 Goes gathering like a bee who in dark cells
 Hideth sweet food to live on in the cold.
 What matters to the child? — it matters not
 More than it mattered to the moons of Mars,
 That they for ages undiscovered went
 Marked not of man, attendant on their king.

A shallow line of sand curved to the cliff,
 There dwelt the fisherfolk, and there inland
 Some scattered cottagers in thrift and calm.
 Their talk full oft was of old days,— for here
 Was once a fosse, and by this rock-hewn path
 Our wild fore-elders as 'tis said would come

To gather jetsam from some Viking wreck,
 Like a sea-beast wide-breasted (her snake head
 Reared up as staring while she rocked ashore)
 That split, and all her ribs were on their fires
 The red whereof at their wives' throats made bright
 Gold gauds which from the weed they picked ere yet
 The tide had turned.

"Many," methought, "and rich
 They must have been, so long their chronicle.
 Perhaps the world was fuller then of folk,
 For ships at sea are few that near us now."

Yet sometimes when the clouds were torn to rags,
 Flying black before a gale, we saw one rock
 In the offing, and the mariner folk would cry,
 "Look how she labors; those aboard may hear
 Her timbers creak e'en as she'd break her heart."

'Twas then the gray gulls blown ashore would light
 In flocks, and pace the lawn with flat cold feet.

And so the world was sweet, and it was strange,
 Sweet as a bee-kiss to the crocus flower,
 Surprising, fresh, direct, but ever one.
 The laughter of glad music did not yet
 In its echo yearn, as hinting aught beyond,
 Nor pathos tremble at the edge of bliss
 Like a moon halo in a watery sky,
 Nor the sweet pain alike of love and fear
 In a world not comprehended touch the heart —
 The poetry of life was not yet born.
 'Twas a thing hidden yet that there be days
 When some are known to feel "God is about,"

As if that morn more than another morn
 Virtue flowed forth from Him, the rolling world
 Swam in a soothèd calm made resonant
 And vital, swam as in the lap of God
 Come down; until she slept and had a dream
 (Because it was too much to bear awake),
 That all the air shook with the might of Him
 And whispered how she was the favorite world
 That day, and bade her drink His essence in.

'Tis on such days that seers prophesy
 And poets sing, and many who are wise
 Find out for man's wellbeing hidden things
 Whereof the hint came in that Presence known
 Yet unknown. But a seer — what is he?
 A poet is a name of long ago.

Men love the largeness of the field — the wild
 Quiet that sooths the moor. In other days
 They loved the shadow of the city wall,
 In its stone ramparts read their poetry;
 Safety and state, gold, and the arts of peace,
 Law-giving, leisure, knowledge, all were there.

This to excuse a child's allegiance and
 A spirit's recurrence to the older way.
 Orphan'd, with aged guardians kind and true,
 Things came to pass not told before to me.

Thus, we did journey once when eve was near.
 Through carriage windows I beheld the moors,
 Then, churches, hamlets cresting of low hills.
 The way was long, at last I, fall'n asleep,

Awoke to hear a rattling 'neath the wheels
And see the lamps alight. This was the town.

Then a wide inn received us, and full soon
Came supper, kisses, bed.

The lamp without
Shone in; the door was shut, and I alone.
An ecstasy of exultation took
My soul, for there were voices heard and steps,
I was among so many,—none of them
Knew I was come!

I rose, with small bare feet,
Across the carpet stole, a white-robed child,
And through the window peered. Behold the town.

There had been rain, the pavement glistened yet
In a soft lamplight down the narrow street;
The church was nigh at hand, a clear-toned clock
Chimed slowly, open shops across the way
Showed store of fruit, and store of bread,—and one
Many caged birds. About were customers,
I saw them bargain, and a rich high voice
Was heard,—a woman sang, her little babe
Slept 'neath her shawl, and by her side a boy
Added wild notes and sweet to hers.

Some passed
Who gave her money. It was far from me
To pity her, she was a part of that
Admired town. E'en so within the shop
A rosy girl, it may be ten years old,
Quaint, grave. She helped her mother, deftly
weighed
The purple plums, black mulberries rich and ripe

For boyish customers, and counted pence
And dropped them in an apron that she wore.
Methought a queen had ne'er so grand a lot,
She knew it, she looked up at me, and smiled.

But yet the song went on, and in a while
The meaning came; the town was not enough
To satisfy that singer, for a sigh
With her wild music came. What wanted she?
Whate'er she wanted wanted all. O how
'Twas poignant, her rich voice; not like a bird's.
Could she not dwell content and let them be,
That they might take their pleasure in the town,
For — no, she was not poor, witness the pence.

I saw her boy and that small saleswoman;
He wary, she with grave persuasive air,
Till he came forth with filberts in his cap,
And joined his mother, happy, triumphing.

This was the town; and if you ask what else,
I say good sooth that it was poetry
Because it was the all, and something more,—
It was the life of man, it was the world
That made addition to the watching heart,
First conscious its own beating, first aware
How, beating it kept time with all the race;
Nay, 'twas a consciousness far down and dim
Of a Great Father watching too.

But lo! the rich lamenting voice again;
She sang not for herself; it was a song
For me, for I had seen the town and knew,
Yearning I knew the town was not enough.

What more? To-day looks back on yesterday,
Life's yesterday, the waiting time, the dawn,
And reads a meaning into it, unknown
When it was with us.

It is always so.

But when as ofttimes I remember me
Of the warm wind that moved the beggar's hair,
Of the wet pavement, and the lamps alit,
I know it was not pity that made yearn
My heart for her, and that same dimpled boy.
How grand methought to be abroad so late,
And barefoot dabble in the shining wet;
How fine to peer as other urchins did
At those pent huddled doves they let not rest;
No, it was almost envy. Ay, how sweet
The clash of bells; they rang to boast that far
That cheerful street was from the cold sea-fog,
From dark ploughed field and narrow lonesome lane.
How sweet to hear the hum of voices kind,
To see the coach come up with din of horn,
Quick tramp of horses, mark the passers-by
Greet one another, and go on.

But now

They closed the shops, the wild clear voice was still,
The beggars moved away — where was their home?
The coach which came from out dull darksome fells
Into the light, passed to the dark again
Like some old comet which knows well her way,
Whirled to the sun that as her fateful loop
She turns, forebodes the destined silences.
Yes, it was gone; the clattering coach was gone,
And those it bore I pitied even to tears,
Because they must go forth, nor see the lights,
Nor hear the chiming bells.

In after days,
Remembering of the childish envy and
The childish pity, it has cheered my heart
To think e'en now pity and envy both
It may be are misplaced, or needed not.
Heaven may look down in pity on some soul
Half envied, or some wholly pitied smile,
For that it hath to wait as it were an hour
To see the lights that go not out by night,
To walk the golden street and hear a song;
Other-world poetry that is the all
And something more.

NATURE, FOR NATURE'S SAKE.

WHITE as white butterflies that each one dons
Her face their wide white wings to shade withal,
Many moon-daisies throng the water-spring,
While couched in rising barley titlarks call,
And bees alit upon their martagons
Do hang a-murmuring, a-murmuring.

They chide, it may be, alien tribes that flew
And rifled their best blossom, counted on
And dreamed on in the hive ere dangerous dew
That clogs bee-wings had dried; but when out-
shone
Long shafts of gold (made all for them) of power
To charm it away, those thieves had sucked the
flower.