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AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO
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JEAN INGELOW
POETICAL
WORKS

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1899.

*Don G. Treviño.
from his friend
R. L. J.*

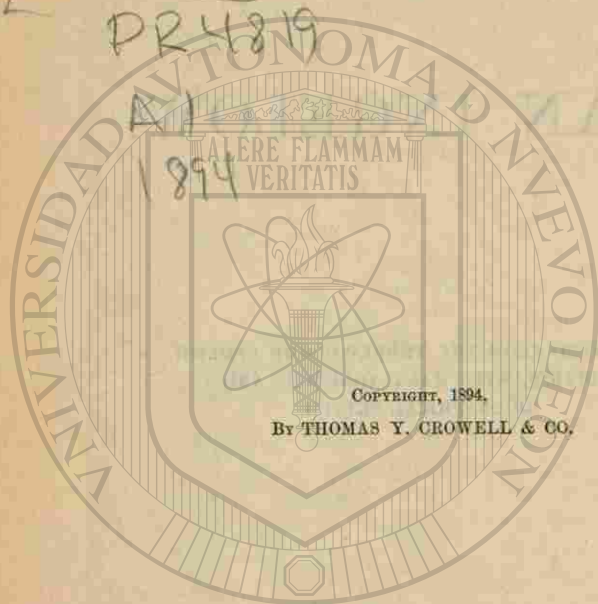


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CONTENTS

DEDICATION.

TO

GEORGE K. INGELOW,

YOUR LOVING SISTER

OFFERS YOU THESE POEMS, PARTLY AS

AN EXPRESSION OF HER AFFECTION, PARTLY FOR THE

PLEASURE OF CONNECTING HER EFFORT

WITH YOUR NAME.

KENSINGTON, June, 1863.

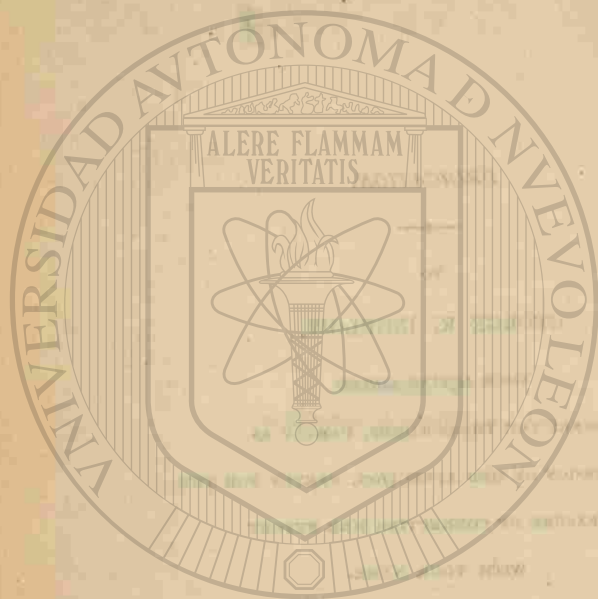
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CONTENTS.

POEMS.

PAGE.

DIVIDED	9
HONORS. — Part I.	13
HONORS. — Part II.	21
REQUIESCAT IN PACE	31
SUPPER AT THE MILL	38
SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER	47
THE STAR'S MONUMENT	58
A DEAD YEAR	81
REFLECTIONS WRITTEN FOR THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY	85
THE LETTER L	88
THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLNSHIRE (1871)	111
AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE	116

SONGS OF SEVEN:

Seven times One. — Exultation	126
Seven times Two. — Romance	127
Seven times Three. — Love	128
Seven times Four. — Maternity	129
Seven times Five. — Widowhood	130
Seven times Six. — Giving in Marriage	131
Seven times Seven. — Longing for Home	132

A COTTAGE IN A CHINE	134
PERSEPHONE	138
A SEA SONG	141
BROTHERS, AND A SERMON	142
A WEDDING SONG	165
THE FOUR BRIDGES	166
A MOTHER SHOWING THE PORTRAIT OF HER CHILD	188
STRIFE AND PEACE	193

A STORY OF DOOM, AND OTHER POEMS.

THE DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE	199
SONGS ON THE VOICES OF BIRDS:	
Introduction. — Child and Boatman	213
The Nightingale heard by the Unsatisfied Heart	215
Sand Martins	216

	PAGE.
Poet in his Youth, and the Cuckoo Bird	218
A Raven in a White Chine	223
The Warbling of Blackbirds	225
Sea-Mews in Winter Time	226
LAURANCE	227
SONGS OF THE NIGHT WATCHES:	
Introductory. — Apprenticed	258
The First Watch. — Tired	259
The Middle Watch	265
The Morning Watch	268
Concluding Song of Dawn	270
A STORY OF DOOM	271
CONTRASTED SONGS:	
Sailing beyond Seas	348
Remonstrance	349
Song for the Night of Christ's Resurrection	350
Song of Margaret	356
Song of the Going Away	357
A Lily and a Lute	358
GLADYS AND HER ISLAND	366
SONGS WITH PRELUDES:	
Wedlock	391
Regret	394
Lamentation	395
Domirion	397
Friendship	400
WINSTANLEY	402
THE MONTIONS OF THE UNSEEN, AND POEMS OF LOVE AND CHILDHOOD.	
THE MONTIONS OF THE UNSEEN	415
A BIRTHDAY WALK	433
NOT IN VAIN I WAITED	435
A GLEANING SONG	436
WITH A DIAMOND	437
FANCY	437
COMPENSATION	438
LOOKING DOWN	438
MARRIED LOVERS	439

	PAGE.
A WINTER SONG	441
BINDING SHEAVES	442
WORK	443
WISHING	443
TO —	444
ON THE BORDERS OF CANNOCK CHASE	444
THE MARINER'S CAVE	445
A REVERIE	453
DEFTON WOOD	456
THE SNOWDROP MONUMENT (IN LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL)	457
AN ANCIENT CHESS KING	459
COMFORT IN THE NIGHT	460
THOUGH ALL GREAT DEEDS	460
THE LONG WHITE SEAM	461
AN OLD WIFE'S SONG	462
COLD AND QUIET	463
A SNOW MOUNTAIN	464
SLEEP	465
PROMISING	465
LOVE	466

POEMS WRITTEN ON THE DEATHS OF THREE CHILDREN:

Henry, aged eight years	467
Samuel, aged nine years	471
Katie, aged five years	474

THE TWO MARGARETS:

I. Margaret by the Mere Side	477
II. Margaret in the Xebec	488

POEMS FROM "MOPSA THE FAIRY."

THE SHEPHERD LADY	506
ABOVE THE CLOUDS	507
LOVE'S THREAD OF GOLD	508
FAILURE	508
ONE MORNING, OH! SO EARLY	509
THE DAYS WITHOUT ALLOY	510
THE LEAVES OF LIGN ALOES	511
ON THE ROCKS BY ABERDEEN	511
FEATHERS AND MOSS	512
SWEET IS CHILDHOOD	512
THE GYPSY'S SELLING SONG	513
MY FAIR LADY	513

	PAGE.
SLEEP AND TIME	514
MASTER, QUOTH THE AULD HOUND	514
LIKE A LAVEROCK IN THE LIFT	515
BEES AND OTHER FELLOW-CREATURES	515
LITTLE BABE	516
A HAND THAT LIVING WARMTH DISOWNS	517
THE PRINCE SHALL TO THE CHASE AGAIN	517
AT ONE AGAIN:	
I. Noonday	518
II. Sunset	519
III. The Dream	520
IV. The Waking	521
V. A Song	521
VI. Lovers	522
VII. Fathers	523
ROSAMUND	524
ECHO AND THE FERRY	533
PRELUDES TO A PENNY READING	560
KISMET	580
DORA	584
SPERANZA	585
THE BEGINNING	594
IN THE NURSERY	598
THE AUSTRALIAN BELL-BIRD	600
LOSS AND WASTE	633
ON A PICTURE	633
THE SLEEP OF SIGISMUND	634
THE MAID-MARTYR	666
A VINE-ARBOR IN THE FAR WEST	684
LOVERS AT THE LAKE SIDE	687
THE WHITE MOON WASTETH	691
AN ARROW-SLIT	692
WENDOVER	693
THE LOVER PLEADS	694
SONG IN THREE PARTS	695
"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM"	699
NATURE, FOR NATURE'S SAKE	707
PERDITA	713
LETTERS ON LIFE AND THE MORNING	719
NOTES	735

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

JEAN INGELow was born in 1830, at Boston, Lincolnshire, at the mouth of the river Witham. She was one of eleven children. Her father was a well-to-do banker at Suffolk; her mother's family came originally from Aberdeenshire in Scotland; her great-grandfather was Primus of Scotland,—in other words, Bishop of Aberdeen. Jean Ingelow in several places speaks of her childhood:—

"As a child," she writes to a friend, "I was very happy at times, and generally wondering at something. . . . I was uncommonly like other children. . . . I remember seeing a star, and that my mother told me of God, who lived up there and made the star. This was on a summer evening. It was my first hearing of God, and made a great impression on my mind. I remember better than anything that certain ecstatic sensations of joy used to get hold of me, and that I used to creep into corners to think out my thoughts by myself. I was, however, extremely timid, and easily overawed by fear. We had a lofty nursery with a bow-window that overlooked the river. My brother and I were constantly wondering at this river. The coming up of the tides, and the ships and the jolly-gangs of towers ragging them on with a monotonous song, made a daily delight for us. The washing of the water, the sunshine upon it, and the reflec-

tions of the waves on our nursery ceiling, supplied hours of talk to us and days of pleasure."

She learned to read when she was about three years old, but she was never sent to school. Her parents, having abundant means, spared her all hardships, and bestowed great care upon her education at home. Her mother, a clever woman of poetic nature, took the general charge of the education of her large family. A succession of private teachers and governesses labored to communicate the usual inoculation of learning, but Jean Ingelow regretfully confesses that she was too much inclined to make game of them. She writes:—

"It was a happy, bright, joyous childhood; there was an originality about us; some of my brothers and sisters were remarkably clever, but all were droll, full of mirth, and could caricature well. We each had a most keen sense of the ridiculous. Two of the boys used to go to a clergyman near by for instruction, where there was a small printing-machine. We got up a little periodical of our own, and used all to write in it, my brothers' school-fellows setting up the type."

Jean Ingelow was a rather shy and reserved nature. She was gifted with the poetic temperament. She began to write verses when very young. She slept in a large upper room, the windows of which had old-fashioned folding shutters. On the flat backs of these shutters she wrote verses and songs, and then folded them in. One day her mother discovered this new form of Sibylline leaves and was much surprised. Some of the poetry of that day has been preserved.

During a visit to friends in Essex, she, and several young companions, wrote some short stories and sent them to *The Youth's Magazine*. Hers were signed "Orris." They were accepted and she was asked to write some more.

"The Tales of Orris" were collected and published in 1860. Previously, in 1850, she had published anony-

mously "A Rhyming Chronicle of Incidents and Feelings," and, the following year, a novel, entitled "Allerton and Dreux."

After the death of her father the Ingelows moved to Upper Kensington and thence to Kensington. In 1863 Miss Ingelow and her mother took a selection of her poems to Mr. Longman, who was at first doubtful, but after examining the work decided to bring them out. The first year four thousand copies were sold, and more than an edition a year has since appeared. Considerably over a hundred thousand copies have been sold in America alone. The English Press was unanimous in its praise. One paper called her the most gifted poetess of England since Mrs. Browning and Adelaide Procter. Among the most popular lyrics in this volume, and those by which her fame as a poet will be secured, are "Divided," "Songs of Seven," "Supper at the Mill," "Looking over a Gate at a Mill," "The Wedding Song," "Honors," "The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire," "Brothers and a Sermon," "Winstanley," and "The Long White Seam." Mr. Stedman says of them:—

"They sprang up suddenly and tunefully, as skylarks from the daisy-spangled, hawthorn-bordered meadows of Old England, with a blitheness then unknown, and in their idyllic underflights moved with the tenderest currents of human life."

"Studies for Stories" came out in 1864. They were professedly written for young girls, but attracted attention by their quiet humor, their gentle satire, and fidelity to nature. *The Athenæum* called them "Prose poems carefully meditated and exquisitely touched in by a teacher ready to sympathize with every joy and sorrow."

In 1865 she published the "Stories told to a Child." Mrs. Black says that, in consequence of the success of her first volume of poems, Mr. Strahan made an immediate application for any other work by the same pen, and accordingly her short tales signed "Orris" were collected

and published under the title of "Stories told to a Child." There seems to be some mistake about this; but Jean Ingelow has been peculiarly unfortunate in regard to her biography; scarcely two accounts agree as to the date of her birth, which may be found placed in 1820, 1825, 1830, and 1832.

One time Jean Ingelow was tempted to set the world right as to her biography and environment. An appreciative article appeared in which "the Ingelow Mansion" was described vaguely as stationed on the sea-beach and flanked by two lighthouses, "between which the lonely child might have been seen to wander for hours together nursing her poetic dreams, dragging the long trails of seaweed after her, and listening to the voice of the waves." Her friends urged her to "disclaim the solitary wanderings and poetic dreams, and to describe the place correctly." But she decided to let the matter drop. She wrote to a friend:—

"I consider that an author should, during her life, be as much as possible impersonal. I never impart myself into my writings, and am much better pleased that others should feel an interest in me and wish to know something of me than that they should complain of egotism."

She, however, gives a little touch of personal interest in a passage quoted by Mrs. Black: "To a poetic nature expression is a necessity; but once expressed, the thought and feeling that inspired it may often be forgotten. I am sure I could not repeat one of my own poems from beginning to end just as I wrote it. I have a distinct theory, too, that one is not taught, one is born to it. I was never able to make a great effort in my life, but what I can do at all, I can do at once; and having thought a good deal on any subject I know very little more than I did at first. Things come to me without striving; besides I am quite unromantic. I never wrote in a hurry. We might all be laughing and talking together, yet if I went up to my room and sat alone,

I could at once write in a most sad and melancholy strain. I was not studious as a child, though I remember a great epoch in my life was reading 'The Pilgrim's Progress' when I was seven years old, and I was perfectly well able to perceive the deep imaginative powers of it; but I always wanted to study what was not in books."

The Ingelows were evangelical in religion, though not narrow. Miss Ingelow rather prides herself on having never entered a theatre; but her reason may be respected. Her parents never took the children, and she stays away "out of habit and affectionate respect for their memory." Instead of the theatre they had travel.

"We had many pleasures and advantages," she says. "There was no dullness or gloom about our home, and everything seemed to give occasion for mirth. We had many trips abroad, too; indeed, we spent most winters on the Continent. I made an excursion with a brother who is an ecclesiastical architect, and in this way I visited every cathedral in France."

"Poor Mat" was published in 1866, and the next year came the semi-epic "Story of Doom," in which the chief characters are Noah, Japhet, the Giants, and the Arch-Fiend. Among the better known of the "Other Poems," which accompanied "A Story of Doom," are "The Dreams that come True," "Songs on the Voices of Birds," "Songs of the Nightwatches," "Gladys and Her Island," "Laurance," and "Contrasted Songs."

In the two years following she published "A Sister's Bye-Hours" and "Mopsa the Fairy," which has been called "A poem in prose for the use of children."

"Off the Skelligs," published in 1872, was her first important novel. There are brilliant and beautiful descriptions, and the scenery is painted with a poet's pencil. The episode of the burning ship and the rescue of the passengers is fine. But the work is popular rather than artistic. The same may be said of its more tragic sequel,

"Fated to be Free," which followed three years later. This opens with a picturesque description of an old manor-house, and introduces a family overshadowed by some mysterious misfortune.

"I am told," she writes in her introduction, "that 'Off the Skelligs' and 'Fated to be Free' are peculiar; and I feel that they must be so, for most stories of human life are, or at least aim at being, works of art, — selections of interesting portions of life, and fitting incidents, put together and presented as a picture is; and I have not aimed at producing a work of art at all, but a piece of nature."

"Sarah de Berenger" followed in 1879, and "Don John" appeared anonymously in the "No Name Series" in 1881.

Jean Ingelow's poems, as collected, leave a distinct impression upon the mind. They are not faultless. She is fond of cloudy obscurities, both of language and thought; she affects archaic and obsolete words; her lines often halt and her rhymes are too frequently imperfect; but after the severest criticism the reader is almost certain to be left under the spell of a vigorous vitality, a sweet and wholesome imagination, a sense of completeness, swallowing up and atoning for the faults which might have been noticed here and there in detail. One may be even annoyed by these perverse blindings of simplicity, but the poem is apt to challenge attention and compel one to read to the end. And the end generally starts a sympathetic tear. Though pathetic, and often sad, Miss Ingelow's poems are not morbid. Their popularity is perhaps due to their homely naturalness. They are also marked by decided originality and quaintness; merits that tend to degenerate into extravagance and obscurity unless kept strictly in hand.

It is by her lyrics, however, that Jean Ingelow is sure of immortality. If she had written nothing but the "Songs of Seven" and "The High Tide," that would have been assured her. And when we take into consideration

how few poems — in some cases only one — keep alive the fame of past poets, it will be found that Jean Ingelow has contributed an unusual number of deathless lyrics to the song-treasures of our common English tongue.

Jean Ingelow's health is never very robust, and she works only two or three hours in the morning. She generally spends her winters in the south of Europe. Her mother died fourteen or fifteen years ago, and she keeps house for two of her brothers in a handsome, square, two-and-a-half-story stone house, cream colored, and standing by itself in Kensington. In front there are handsome grounds, — a garden filled with shrubs and graced by chestnut and almond trees; and in the rear a comfortable lawn bordered with flowers and conservatories.

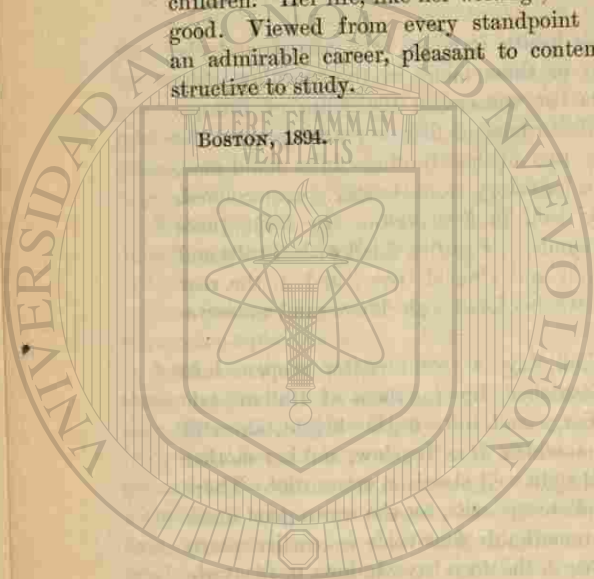
The entrance-hall, says a recent visitor, "opens into a spacious, old-fashioned drawing-room of Italian style on the right. Large and lofty is this bright, cheerful room. A harp, on which Miss Ingelow, and her mother before her, played right well, stands in one corner. There is a grand pianoforte opposite, for she was a good musician and had a remarkably fine voice in earlier years. On the round table in the deep bay-windows in front are many books, various specimens of Tangiers pottery, and some tall plants of arum-lilies in flower. The great glass doors, draped with curtains at the further end, open into a large conservatory, where Miss Ingelow often sits in summer. It is laid down with matting and rugs, and standing here and there are flowering plants and two fine araucarias. The verandah-steps on the left lead into a large and well-kept garden with bright green lawn, at the end of which, through the trees, may be discerned a large stretch of greenhouses and a view beyond of the great trees in the grounds of Holland Park. On the corresponding side of the house at the back is the billiard-room, which is Mr. Ingelow's study, leading into

an ante-room, and in the front is the dining-room, where the author's literary labors are carried on."

Miss Ingelow is extremely charitable and fond of children. Her life, like her writings, is devoted to doing good. Viewed from every standpoint hers has been an admirable career, pleasant to contemplate, and instructive to study.

N. H. D.

Boston, 1891.



POEMS.

DIVIDED.

I.

An empty sky, a world of heather,
Purple of foxglove, yellow of broom;
We two among them wading together,
Shaking out honey, treading perfume.

Crowds of bees are giddy with clover,
Crowds of grasshoppers skip at our feet,
Crowds of larks at their matins hang over
Thanking the Lord for a life so sweet.

Flusheth the rise with her purple favor,
Gloweth the cleft with her golden ring,
'Twixt the two brown butterflies waver,
Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.

We two walk till the purple dieth
And short dry grass under foot is brown,
But one little streak at a distance lieth
Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

II.

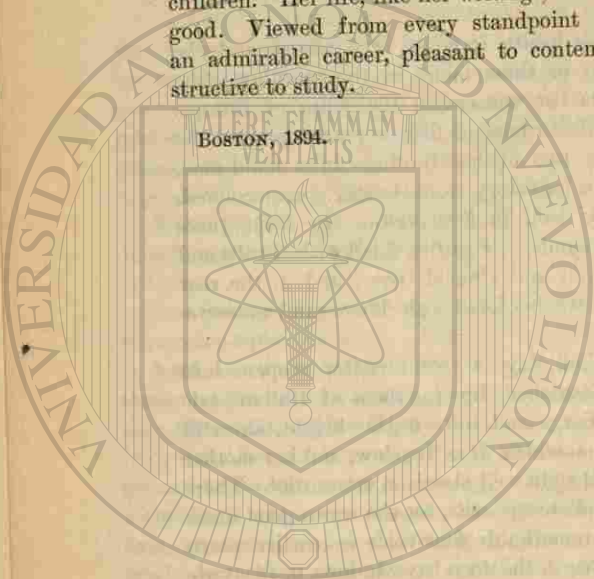
Over the grass we stepped unto it,
And God He knoweth how blithe we were!
Never a voice to bid us eschew it:
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair!

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Lightly settle, and sleepily swing.

We two walk till the purple dieth
And short dry grass under foot is brown,
But one little streak at a distance lieth
Green like a ribbon to prank the down.

II.

Over the grass we stepped unto it,
And God He knoweth how blithe we were!
Never a voice to bid us eschew it:
Hey the green ribbon that showed so fair!

Hey the green ribbon! we kneeled beside it,
 We parted the grasses dewy and sheen;
 Drop over drop there filtered and slid
 A tiny bright beck that trickled between.

Tinkle, tinkle, sweetly it sung to us,
 Light was our talk as of faëry bells —
 Faëry wedding-bells faintly rung to us
 Down in their fortunate parallels.

Hand in hand, while the sun peered over,
 We lapped the grass on that youngling spring:
 Swept back its rushes, smoothed its clover.
 And said, "Let us follow it westering."

III.

A dapple sky, a world of meadows,
 Circling above us the black rooks fly
 Forward, backward; lo, their dark shadows
 Flit on the blossoming tapestry —
 Flit on the beck, for her long grass parteth
 As hair from a maid's bright eyes blown back
 And, lo, the sun like a lover darteth
 His flattering smile on her wayward track.

Sing on! we sing in the glorious weather
 Till one steps over the tiny strand,
 So narrow, in sooth, that still together
 On either brink we go hand in hand.

The beck grows wider, the hands must sever.
 On either margin, our songs all done,
 We move apart, while she singeth ever,
 Taking the course of the stooping sun.

He prays, "Come over" — I may not follow;
 I cry, "Return" — but he cannot come:

We speak, we laugh, but with voices hollow;
 Our hands are hanging, our hearts are numb.

IV.

A breathing sigh, a sigh for answer,
 A little talking of outward things:
 The careless beck is a merry dancer,
 Keeping sweet time to the air she sings.

A little pain when the beck grows wider;
 "Cross to me now — for her wavelets swell:"
 "I may not cross" — and the voice beside her
 Faintly reacheth, though heeded well.

No backward path; ah! no returning;
 No second crossing that ripple's flow:
 "Come to me now, for the west is burning;
 Come ere it darkens;" — "Ah, no! ah, no!"

Then cries of pain, and arms outreaching —
 The beck grows wider and swift and deep:
 Passionate words as of one beseeching —
 The loud beck drowns them; we walk, and weep.

V.

A yellow moon in splendor drooping,
 A tired queen with her state oppressed,
 Low by rushes and swordgrass stooping,
 Lies she soft on the waves at rest.

The desert heavens have felt her sadness;
 Her earth will weep her some dewy tears:
 The wild beck ends her tune of gladness,
 And goeth stilly as soul that fears.

We two walk on in our grassy places
On either marge of the moonlit flood,
With the moon's own sadness in our faces,
Where joy is withered, blossom and bud.

VI.

A shady freshness, chafers whirring,
A little piping of leaf-hid birds;
A flutter of wings, a fitful stirring,
A cloud to the eastward snowy as curds.

Bare glassy slopes, where kids are tethered;
Round valleys like nests all ferny-lined;
Round hills, with fluttering tree-tops feathered,
Swell high in their freckled robes behind.

A rose-flush tender, a thrill, a quiver,
When golden gleams to the tree-tops glide;
A flashing edge for the milk-white river,
The beck, a river — with still sleek tide.

Broad and white, and polished as silver,
On she goes under fruit laden trees;
Sunk in leafage cooeth the culver,
And 'plaineth of love's disloyalties.

Glitters the dew and shines the river,
Up comes the lily and dries her bell;
But two are walking apart forever,
And wave their hands for a mute farewell.

VII.

A braver swell, a swifter sliding;
The river hasteth, her banks recede:
Wing-like sails on her bosom gliding
Bear down the lily and drown the reed.

Stately prows are rising and bowing
(Shouts of mariners winnow the air),
And level sands for banks endowing
The tiny green ribbon that showed so fair.

While, O my heart! as white sails shiver
And crowds are passing, and banks stretch wide,
How hard to follow, with lips that quiver,
That moving speck on the far-off side!

Farther, farther — I see it — know it —
My eyes brim over, it melts away:
Only my heart to my heart shall show it
As I walk desolate day by day.

VIII.

And yet I know past all doubting, truly —
And knowledge greater than grief can dim —
I know, as he loved, he will love me duly —
Yea, better — e'en better than I love him.

And as I walk by the vast calm river,
The awful river so dread to see,
I say, "Thy breadth and thy depth forever
Are bridged by his thoughts that cross to me."

HONORS. — PART I.

A Scholar is musing on his Want of Success.

To strive — and fail. Yes, I did strive and fail,
I set mine eyes upon a certain night
To find a certain star — and could not hail
With them its deep-set light.

*Fool that I was! I will rehearse my fault:
I, wingless, thought myself on high to lift
Among the winged — I set these feet that halt
To run against the swift.*

*And yet this man, that loved me so, can write —
That loves me, I would say, can let me see;
Or fain would have me think he counts but light
These Honors lost to me.*

[The Letter of his Friend.]

“What are they? that old house of yours which gave
Such welcomes oft to me the sunbeams fall
Still down the squares of blue and white which pave
Its hospitable hall.

“A brave old house! a garden full of bees,
Large dropping poppies, and queen hollyhocks,
With butterflies for crowns — tree peonies
And pinks and goldilocks.

“Go, when the shadow of your house is long
Upon the garden — when some new-waked bird
Pecking and fluttering, chirps a sudden song,
And not a leaf is stirred;

“But every one drops dew from either edge
Upon its fellow, while an amber ray
Slants up among the tree-tops like a wedge
Of liquid gold — to play

“Over and under them, and so to fall
Upon that lane of water lying below —
That piece of sky let in, that you do call
A pond, but which I know

“To be a deep and wondrous world; for I
Have seen the trees within it — marvellous things
So thick no bird betwixt their leaves could fly
But she would smite her wings; —

“Go there, I say; stand at the water’s brink,
And shoals of spotted grayling you shall see
Basking between the shadows — look, and think
‘This beauty is for me;

“‘For me this freshness in the morning hours;
For me the water’s clear tranquillity;
For me that soft descent of chestnut flowers;
The cushat’s cry for me.

“‘The lovely laughter of the windswayed wheat;
The easy slope of yonder pastoral hill;
The sedgy brook whereby the red kine meet
And wade and drink their fill.’

“Then saunter down that terrace whence the sea
All fair with wing-like sails you may discern;
Be glad, and say, ‘This beauty is for me —
A thing to love and learn.

“‘For me the bounding in of tides; for me
The lying bare of sands when they retreat;
The purple flush of calms, the sparkling glee
When waves and sunshine meet.’

“So, after gazing, homeward turn, and mount
To that long chamber in the roof; there tell
Your heart the laid-up lore it holds to count
And prize and ponder well.

“The lookings onward of the race before
It had a past to make it look behind;
Its reverent wonders, and its doubtings sore,
Its adorations blind.

"The thunder of its war-songs, and the glow
Of chants to freedom by the old world sung;
The sweet love cadences that long ago
Dropped from the old world tongue.

"And then this new-world lore that takes account
Of tangled star-dust; maps the triple whirl
Of blue and red and argent worlds that mount
And greet the IRISH EARL;

"O float across the tube that HERSCHEL sways,
Like pale-rose chaplets, or like sapphire mist;
Or hang or droop along the heavenly ways,
Like scarfs of amethyst.

"O strange it is and wide the new-world lore,
For next it treateth of our native dust!
Must dig out buried monsters, and explore
The green earth's fruitful crust;

"Must write the story of her seething youth —
How lizards paddled in her luke-warm seas;
Must show the cones she ripened, and forsooth
Count seasons on her trees;

"Must know her weight, and pry into her age,
Count her old beach lines by their tidal swell;
Her sunken mountains name, her craters gauge,
Her cold volcanoes tell;

"And treat her as a ball, that one might pass
From this hand to the other — such a ball
As he could measure with a blade of grass,
And say it was but small.

"Honors! O friend, I pray you bear with me:
The grass hath time to grow in meadow lands,

And leisurely the opal murmuring sea
Breaks on her yellow sands;

"And leisurely the ring-dove on her nest
Broods till her tender chick will peck the shell;
And leisurely down fall from ferny crest
The dew-drops on the well;

"And leisurely your life and spirit grew,
With yet the time to grow and ripen free:
No judgment past withdraws that boon from you,
Nor granteth it to me.

"Still must I plod, and still in cities moil;
From precious leisure, learned leisure far,
Dull my best self with handling common soil;
Yet mine those honors are.

"Mine they are called; they are a name which means
'This man had steady pulses, tranquil nerves;
Here, as in other fields, the most he gleans
Who works and never swerves.

"We measure not his mind; we cannot tell
What lieth under, over, or beside
The test we put him to: he doth excel,
We know, where he is tried;

"But, if he boasts some further excellence —
Mind to create as well as to attain;
To sway his peers by golden eloquence,
As wind doth shift a fane;

"To sing among the poets — we are naught:
We cannot drop a line into that sea
And read its fathoms off, nor gauge a thought,
Nor map a simile.

"It may be of all voices sublunar
The only one he echoes we did try;
We may have come upon the only star
That twinkles in his sky."

"And so it was with me."

O false my friend!

*False, false, a random charge, a blame undue:
Wrest not fair reasoning to a crooked end:
False, false, as you are true!*

But I read on: "And so it was with me,
Your golden constellations lying apart
They neither hailed nor greeted heartily,
Nor noted on their chart.

"And yet to you and not to me belong
Those finer instincts that, like second sight
And hearing, catch creation's under-song,
And see by inner light.

"You are a well, whereon I, gazing, see
Reflections of the upper heavens — a well
From whence come deep, deep echoes up to me —
Some underwave's low swell.

"I cannot soar into the heights you show,
Nor dive among the deeps that you reveal;
But it is much that high things ARE to know,
That deep things ARE to feel.

"Tis yours, not mine, to pluck out of your breast
Some human truth, whose workings recondite
Were unattired in words, and manifest
And hold it forth to light,

"And cry, 'Behold this thing that I have found.'
And though they knew not of it till that day,

Nor should have done with no man to expound
Its meaning, yet they say,

"We do accept it: lower than the shoals
We skim, this diver went, nor did create,
But find it for us deeper in our souls
Then we can penetrate."

"You were to me the world's interpreter,
The man that taught me Nature's unknown tongue,
And to the notes of her wild dulcimer
First set sweet words and sung.

"And what am I to you? A steady hand
To hold, a steadfast heart to trust withal;
Merely a man that loves you, and will stand
By you, whate'er befall.

"But need we praise his tendance tutelar
Who feeds a flame that warms him? Yet 'tis true
I love you for the sake of what you are,
And not of what you do: —

"As heaven's high twins, whereof in Tyrian blue
The one revolveth; through his course immense
Might love his fellow of the damask hue,
For like, and difference.

"For different pathways ever more decreed
To intersect, but not to interfere;
For common goal, two aspects, and one speed,
One centre and one year;

"For deep affinities, for drawings strong,
That by their nature each must needs exert;
For loved alliance, and for union long,
That stands before desert.

"And yet desert makes brighter not the less,
For nearest his own star he shall not fail
To think those rays unmatched for nobleness,
That distance counts but pale.

"Be pale afar, since still to me you shine,
And must while Nature's eldest law shall hold;" —
*Ah, there's the thought which makes his random line
Dear as refined gold!*

*Then shall I drink this draught of oxymel,
Part sweet, part sharp? Myself o'erprised to know
Is sharp: the cause is sweet, and truth to tell
Few would that cause forego,*

*Which is, that this of all the men on earth
Doth love me well enough to count me great —
To think my soul and his of equal girth —
O liberal estimate!*

*And yet it is so; he is bound to me,
For human love makes aliens near of kin;
By it I rise, there is equality:
I rise to thee, my twin.*

"Take courage" — *courage! ay, my purple peer.
I will take courage; for thy Tyrian rays
Refresh me to the heart, and strangely dear
And healing is thy praise.*

"Take courage" *quoth he, "and respect the mind
Your Maker gave, for good your fate fulfil;
The fate round many hearts your own to wind."
Twin soul, I will! I will!*

HONORS. — PART II.

The Answer.

As one who, journeying, checks the rein in haste
Because a chasm doth yawn across his way
Too wide for leaping, and too steeply faced
For climber to essay —

As such an one, being brought to sudden stand,
Doubts all his foregone path if 'twere the true,
And turns to this and then to the other hand
As knowing not what to do, —

So I, being checked, am with my path at strife
Which led to such a chasm, and there doth end.
False path! it cost me priceless years of life,
My well-beloved friend.

There fell a flute when Ganymede went up —
The flute that he was wont to play upon:
It dropped beside the jonquil's milk-white cup,
And freckled cowslips wan —

Dropped from his heedless hand when, dazed and
mute,
He sailed upon the eagle's quivering wing,
Aspiring, panting — ay, it dropped — the flute
Erewhile a cherished thing.

Among the delicate grasses and the bells
Of crocuses that spotted a rill side,
I picked up such a flute, and its clear swells
To my young lips replied.

"And yet desert makes brighter not the less,
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To my young lips replied.

I played thereon, and its response was sweet;
 But, lo, they took from me that solacing reed.
 "O shame!" they said, "such music is not meet;
 Go up like Ganymede.

"Go up, despise these humble grassy things,
 Sit on the golden edge of yonder cloud."
 Alas! though ne'er for me those eagle wings
 Stooped from their eyrie proud.

My flute! and flung away its echoes sleep;
 But as for me, my life-pulse beateth low;
 And like a last year's leaf enshrouded deep
 Under the drifting snow,

Or like some vessel wrecked upon the sand
 Of torrid swamps, with all her merchandise,
 And left to rot betwixt the sea and land,
 My helpless spirit lies.

Ruing, I think for what then was I made;
 What end appointed for — what use designed?
 Now let me right this heart that was bewrayed —
 Unveil these eyes gone blind.

My well-beloved friend, at noon to-day
 Over our cliffs a white mist lay unfurled,
 So thick, one standing on their brink might say,
 Lo, here doth end the world.

A white abyss beneath, and naught beside;
 Yet, hark! a cropping sound not ten feet down;
 Soon I could trace some browsing lambs that hied
 Through rock-paths cleft and brown.

And here and there green tufts of grass peered through
 Salt lavender, and sea thrift; then behold,
 The mist, subsiding ever, bared to view
 A beast of giant mould.

She seemed a great sea monster lying content
 With all her cubs about her: but deep — deep —
 The subtle mist went floating; its descent
 Showed the world's end was steep.

It shook, it melted, shaking more, till, lo,
 The sprawling monster was a rock; her brood
 Were boulders, whereon seamews white as snow
 Sat watching for their food.

Then once again it sank, its day was done:
 Part rolled away, part vanished utterly,
 And glimmering softly under the white sun,
 Behold! a great white sea.

O that the mist which veileth my To-come
 Would so dissolve and yield unto mine eyes
 A worthy path! I'd count not wearisome
 Long toil, nor enterprise.

But strain to reach it; ay, with wrestlings stout
 And hopes that even in the dark will grow
 (Like plants in dungeons, reaching feelers out),
 And ploddings wary and slow.

Is there such path already made to fit
 The measure of my foot? It shall atone
 For much, if I at length may light on it
 And know it for mine own.

But is there none? why, then 'tis more than well:
 And glad at heart myself will hew one out,
 Let me be only sure; for, sooth to tell,
 The sorest dole is doubt —

Doubt, a blank twilight of the heart, which mars
 All sweetest colors in its dinness same;
 A soul-mist, through whose rifts familiar stars
 Beholding, we misname.

A ripple on the inner sea, which shakes
Those images that on its breast reposed;
A fold upon the wind-swayed flag, that breaks
The motto it disclosed.

O doubt! O doubt! I know my destiny;
I feel thee fluttering bird-like in my breast;
I cannot loose, but I will sing to thee,
And flatter thee to rest.

There is no certainty, "my bosom's guest,"
No proving for the things whereof ye wot;
For, like the dead to sight unmanifest,
They are, and they are not.

But surely as they are, for God is truth,
And as they are not, for we saw them die,
So surely from the heaven drops light for youth,
If youth will walk thereby.

And can I see this light? It may be so;
"But see it thus and thus," my fathers said.
The living do not rule this world; ah, no!
It is the dead, the dead.

Shall I be slave to every noble soul,
Study the dead, and to their spirits bend;
Or learn to read my own heart's folded scroll,
And make self-rule my end?

Thought from *without* — O shall I take on trust,
And life from others modelled steal or win;
Or shall I heave to light, and clear of rust
My true life from *within*.

O, let me be myself! But where, O where,
Under this heap of precedent, this mound
Of customs, modes, and maxims, cumbrance rare
Shall the *Myself* be found?

O thou *Myself*, thy fathers thee debarred
None of their wisdom, but their folly came
Therewith; they smoothed thy path, but made it hard
For thee to quit the same.

With glosses they obscured God's natural truth,
And with tradition tarnished His revealed;
With vain protections they endangered youth,
With layings bare they sealed.

What aileth thee, myself? Alas! thy hands
Are tired with old opinions — heir and son,
Thou hast inherited thy father's lands
And all his debts thereon.

O that some power would give me Adam's eyes!
O for the straight simplicity of Eve!
For I see naught, or grow, poor fool, too wise
With seeing to believe.

Exemplars may be heaped until they hide
The rules that they were made to render plain;
Love may be watched, her nature to decide,
Until love's self doth wane.

Ah me! and when forgotten and foregone
We leave the learning of departed days,
And cease the generations past to con,
Their wisdom and their ways —

When fain to learn we lean into the dark,
And grope to feel the floor of the abyss,
Or find the secret boundary lines which mark
Where soul and matter kiss —

Fair world! these puzzled souls of ours grow weak
With beating their bruised wings against the rim
That bounds their utmost flying, when they seek
The distant and the dim.

We pant, we strain like birds against their wires;
Are sick to reach the vast and the beyond; —
And what avails, if still to our desires
Those far-off gulfs respond?

Contentment comes not therefore; still there lies
An outer distance when the first is hailed,
And still for ever yawns before our eyes
An utmost — that is veiled.

Searching those edges of the universe,
We leave the central fields a fallow part;
To feed the eye more precious things amerce,
And starve the darkened heart.

Then all goes wrong: the old foundations rock,
One scorns at him of old who gazed unshod;
One striking with a pickaxe thinks the shock
Shall move the seat of God.

A little way, a very little way —
(Life is so short), they dig into the rind,
And they are very sorry, so they say, —
Sorry for what they find.

But truth is sacred — ay, and must be told:
There is a story long beloved of man;
We must forego it, for it will not hold —
Nature had no such plan.

And then, "if God hath said it," some should cry
"We have the story from the fountain head:"
Why, then, what better than the old reply,
The first "Yea, HATH God said?"

The garden, O the garden, must it go,
Source of our hope and our most dear regret?
The ancient story, must it no more show
How men may win it yet?

And all upon the Titan child's decree,
The baby science, born but yesterday,
That in its rash unlearned infancy
With shells and stones at play,

And delving in the outworks of this world,
And little crevices that it could reach,
Discovered certain bones laid up, and furled
Under an ancient beach,

And other waifs that lay to its young mind
Some fathoms lower than they ought to lie,
By gain whereof it could not fail to find
Much proof of ancientry,

Hints at a pedigree withdrawn and vast,
Terrible deeps, and old obscurities,
Or soulless origin, and twilight passed
In the primeval seas,

Whereof it tells, as thinking it hath been
Of truth not meant for man inheritor;
As if this knowledge Heaven had ne'er foreseen
And not provided for!

Knowledge ordained to live! although the fate
Of much that went before it was — to die,
And be called ignorance by such as wait
Till the next drift comes by.

O marvellous credulity of man!
If God indeed kept secret, couldst thou know
Or follow up the mighty Artisan
Unless He willed it so?

And canst thou of the Maker think in sooth
That of the Made He shall be found at fault,
And dream of wresting from Him hidden truth
By force or by assault?

But if he keeps not secret—if thine eyes
 He openeth to His wondrous work of late—
 Think how in soberness thy wisdom lies,
 And have the grace to wait.

Wait, nor against the half-learned lesson fret,
 Nor chide at old belief as if it erred,
 Because thou canst not reconcile as yet
 The Worker and the word.

Either the Worker did in ancient days
 Give us the word, His tale of love and might;
 (And if in truth He gave it us, who says
 He did not give it right?)

Or else He gave it not, and then indeed
 We know not if He is—by whom our years
 Are portioned, who the orphan moons doth lead,
 And the unfathered spheres.

We sit unowned upon our burial sod,
 And know not whence we come or whose we be,
 Comfortless mourners for the mount of God,
 The rocks of Calvary:

Bereft of heaven, and of the long-loved page
 Wrought us by some who thought with death to cope;
 Despairing comforters, from age to age
 Sowing the seeds of hope:

Gracious deceivers, who have lifted us
 Out of the slough where passed our unknown youth;
 Beneficent liars, who have gifted us
 With sacred love of truth!

Farewell to them: yet pause ere thou unmoor
 And set thine ark adrift on unknown seas;
 How wert thou bettered so, or more secure
 Thou, and thy destinies!

And if thou searchest, and art made to fear
 Facing of unread riddles dark and hard,
 And mastering not their majesty austere,
 Their meaning locked and barred:

How would it make the weight and wonder less,
 If, lifted from immortal shoulders down,
 The worlds were cast on seas of emptiness
 In realms without a crown,

And (if there were no God) were left to rue
 Dominion of the air and of the fire?
 Then if there be a God, "Let God be true,
 And every man a liar."

But as for me, I do not speak as one
 That is exempt: I am with life at feud:
 My heart reproacheth me, as there were none
 Of so small gratitude;

Wherewith shall I console thee, heart o' mine,
 And still thy yearning and resolve thy doubt
 That which I know, and that which I divine,
 Alas! have left thee out.

I have aspired to know the might of God,
 As if the story of His love was furled,
 Nor sacred foot the grasses e'er had trod
 Of this redeemed world:—

Have sunk my thoughts as lead into the deep,
 To grope for that abyss whence evil grew,
 And spirits of ill, with eyes that cannot weep,
 Hungry and desolate flew;

As if their legions did not one day crowd
 The death-pangs of the Conquering Good to see!
 As if a sacred head had never bowed
 In death for man—for me:

Nor ransomed back the souls beloved, the sons
Of men, from thralldom with the nether kings
In that dark country where those evil ones
Trail their unhallowed wings.

And didst Thou love the race that loved not Thee,
And didst Thou take to heaven a human brow?
Dost plead with man's voice by the marvellous sea?
Art Thou his kinsman now?

O God, O kinsman loved, but not enough!
O man, with eyes majestic after death,
Whose feet have toiled along our pathways rough,
Whose lips drawn human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and Thine,
By that one nature which doth hold us kin,
By that high heaven where, sinless, Thou dost shine
To draw us sinners in,

By Thy last silence in the judgment-hall,
By long foreknowledge of the deadly tree,
By darkness, by the wormwood and the gall,
I pray Thee visit me.

Come, lest this heart should, cold and cast away,
Die ere the guest adored she entertain —
Lest eyes which never saw Thine earthly day
Should miss Thy heavenly reign.

Come weary-eyed from seeking in the night
Thy wanderers strayed upon the pathless wold,
Who wounded, dying, cry to Thee for light,
And cannot find their fold.

And deign, O Watcher, with the sleepless brow,
Pathetic in its yearning — deign reply:
Is there, O is there aught that such as Thou
Wouldst take from such as I?

Are there no briars across Thy pathway thrust?
Are there no thorns that compass it about?
Nor any stones that Thou wilt deign to trust
My hands to gather out?

O, if thou wilt, and if such bliss might be,
It were a cure for doubt, regret, delay —
Let my lost pathway go — what aileth me? —
There is a better way.

What though unmarked the happy workman toil,
And break unthanked of man the stubborn clod?
It is enough, for sacred is the soil,
Dear are the hills of God.

Far better in its place the lowliest bird
Should sing aright to Him the lowliest song,
Than that a seraph strayed should take the word
And sing his glory wrong.

Friend, it is time to work. I say to thee,
Thou dost all earthly good by much excel:
Thou and God's blessing are enough for me:
My work, my work — farewell!

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

O my heart, my heart is sick awishing and awaiting:
The lad took up his knapsack, he went, he went
his way;
And I looked on for his coming, as a prisoner through
the grating
Looks and longs and longs and wishes for its open-
ing day.

On the wild purple mountains, all alone with no
other,
The strong terrible mountains, he longed, he longed
to be:

And he stooped to kiss his father, and he stooped to
 kiss his mother, [me.
 And till I said "Adieu, sweet Sir," he quite forgot
 He wrote of their white raiment, the ghostly capes
 that screen them,
 Of the storm winds that beat them, their thunder-
 rents and scars,
 And the paradise of purple, and the golden slopes
 atween them,
 And fields, where grow God's gentian bells, and
 His crocus stars.
 He wrote of frail gauzy clouds, that drop on them like
 fleeces,
 And make green their fir forests, and feed their
 mosses hoar;
 Or come sailing up the valleys, and get wrecked and
 go to pieces,
 Like sloops against their cruel strength: then he
 wrote no more.
 O the silence that came next, the patience and long
 aching!
 They never said so much as "He was a dear loved
 son;"
 Not the father to the mother moaned, that dreary
 stillness breaking:
 "Ah! wherefore did he leave us so — this, our only
 one?"
 They sat within, as waiting, until the neighbors
 prayed them,
 At Cromer, by the sea-coast, 'twere peace and
 change to be;
 And to Cromer, in their patience, or that urgency af-
 frayed them,
 Or because the tidings tarried, they came, and took
 me.

It was three months and over since the dear lad had
 started: [view;
 On the green downs at Cromer I sat to see the
 On an open space of herbage, where the ling and fern
 had parted,
 Betwixt the tall white lighthouse towers, the old
 and the new.
 Below me lay the wide sea, the scarlet sun was stoop-
 ing,
 And he dyed the waste water, as with a scarlet
 dye;
 And he dyed the lighthouse towers; every bird with
 white wing swooping
 Took his colors, and the cliffs did, and the yawn-
 ing sky.
 Over grass came that strange flush, and over ling and
 heather,
 Over flocks of sheep and lambs, and over Cromer
 town;
 And each filmy cloudlet crossing drifted like a scarlet
 feather
 Torn from the folded wings of clouds, while he set-
 tled down,
 When I looked, I dared not sigh: — In the light of
 God's splendor,
 With His daily blue and gold, who am I? what
 am I?
 But that passion and outpouring seemed an awful
 sign and tender,
 Like the blood of the Redeemer, shown on earth
 and sky.
 O for comfort, O the waste of a long doubt and
 trouble!
 On that sultry August eve trouble had made me
 meek:

I was tired of my sorrow — O so faint, for it was
double

In the weight of its oppression, that I could not
speak!

And a little comfort grew, while the dimmed eyes
were feeding,

And the dull ears with murmur of waters satisfied;
But a dream came slowly nigh me, all my thoughts
and fancy leading

Across the bounds of waking life to the other side.

And I dreamt that I looked out, to the waste waters
turning,

And saw the flakes of scarlet from wave to wave
tossed on;

And the scarlet mix with azure, where a heap of gold
lay burning

On the clear remote sea reaches; for the sun was
gone.

Then I thought a far-off shout dropped across the
still water —

A question as I took it, for soon an answer came
From the tall white ruined lighthouse: "If it be the
old man's daughter

That we wot of," ran the answer, "what then —
who's to blame?"

I looked up at the lighthouse all roofless and storm-
broken:

A great white bird sat on it, with neck stretched to
sea;

Unto somewhat which was sailing in a skiff the bird
had spoken,

And a trembling seized my spirit, for they talked
of me.

I was the old man's daughter, the bird went on to
name him;

"He loved to count the starlings as he sat in the
Long ago he served with Nelson, and his story did
not shame him:

Ay, the old man was a good man — and his work
was done."

The skiff was like a crescent, ghost of some moon
departed,

Frail, white, she rocked and curtsied as the red
wave she crossed,

And the thing within sat paddling, and the crescent
dipped and darted,

Flying on, again was shouting, but the words
were lost.

I said, "That thing is hooded; I could hear but
that floweth

The great hood below its mouth:" then the bird
made reply,

"If they knew not, more's the pity, for the little
shrewmouse knoweth,

And the kite knows, and the eagle, and the glead
and pye."

And he stopped to whet his beak on the stones of
the coping;

And when once more the shout came, in querulous
tones he spake,

"What I said was 'more's the pity;' if the heart
be long past hoping,

Let it say of death, 'I know it,' or doubt on and
break.

Men must die — one dies by day, and near him
moans his mother,

They dig his grave, tread it down, and go from it
full loth:

And one dies about the midnight, and the wind
moans, and no other,
And the snow gives him a burial — and God loves
them both.

“The first hath no advantage — it shall not soothe
his slumber
That a lock of his brown hair his father aye shall
keep;

For the last, he nothing grudgeth, it shall not his
quiet cumber,

That in a golden mesh of his callow eaglets sleep.

“Men must die when all is said, e’en the kite and
glead know it,

And the lad’s father knew it, and the lad, the lad
too;

It was never kept a secret, waters bring it and winds
blow it,

And he met it on the mountain — why then make
ado?”

With that he spread his white wings, and swept
across the water,

Lit upon the hooded head, and it and all went
down;

And they laughed as they went under, and I woke,
“the old man’s daughter,”

And looked across the slope of grass, and at Cro-
mer town.

And I said, “Is that the sky, all gray and silver
suited?”

And I thought, “Is that the sea that lies so white
and wan?”

I have dreamed as I remember: give me time — I
was reputed [gone!”

Once to have a steady courage — O, I fear ’tis

And I said, “Is this my heart? if it be, low ’tis
beating, [brood;

So he lies on the mountain, hard by the eagles’

I have had a dream this evening, while the white
and gold were fleeing,

But I need not, need not tell it — where would be
the good?

“Where would be the good to them, his father and
his mother?

For the ghost of their dead hope appeareth to
them still.

While a lonely watch-fire smoulders, who its dying
red would smother,

That gives what little light there is to a darksome
hill?”

I rose up, I made no moan, I did not cry nor falter,
But slowly in the twilight I came to Cromer town.

What can wringing of the hands do that which is
ordained to alter?

He had climbed, had climbed the mountain, he
would ne’er come down.

But, O my first, O my best, I could not choose but
love thee!

O, to be a wild white bird, and seek thy rocky bed!

From my breast I’d give the burial, pluck the down
and spread above thee;

I would sit and sing thy requiem on the mountain
head.

Fare thee well, my love of loves! would I had died
before thee! [flow,

O, to be at least a cloud, that near thee I might
Solemnly approach the mountain, weep away my
being o’er thee,

And veil thy breast with icicles, and thy brow
with snow!

SUPPER AT THE MILL.

Mother. Well, Frances.

Frances. Well, good mother, how are you?

M. I'm hearty, lass, but warm; the weather's warm:

I think 'tis mostly warm on market days.

I met with George behind the mill: said he,

"Mother, go in and rest awhile."

F. Ay, do,

And stay to supper; put your basket down.

M. Why, now, it is not heavy?

F. Willie, man,

Get up and kiss your Granny. Heavy, no!

Some call good churning luck; but, luck or skill,

Your butter mostly comes as firm and sweet

As if 'twas Christmas. So you sold it all?

M. All but this pat that I put by for George;

He always loved my butter.

F. That he did.

M. And has your speckled hen brought off her brood?

F. Not yet; but that old duck I told you of,

She hatched eleven out of twelve to-day.

Child. And, Granny, they're so yellow.

M. Ah, my lad,

Yellow as gold — yellow as Willie's hair.

C. They're all mine, Granny — father says they're mine.

M. To think of that!

F. Yes, Granny, only think!

Why, father means to sell them when they're fat,

And put the money in the savings bank,

And all against our Willie goes to school:

But Willie would not touch them — no, not he;

He knows that father would be angry else.

C. But I want one to play with — O, I want A little yellow duck to take to bed!

M. What! would you rob the poor old mother, then?

F. Now, Granny, if you'll hold the babe awhile; 'Tis time I took up Willie to his crib.

[*Exit FRANCES.*]

[*Mother sings to the infant.*]

Playing on the virginals,

Who but I? Sae glad, sae free,

Smelling for all cordials,

The green mint and marjorie;

Set among the budding broom,

Kingcup and daffodilly,

By my side I made him room:

O love my Willie!

"Like me, love me, girl o' gowd,"

Sang he to my nimble strain;

Sweet his ruddy lips o'erflowed

Till my heartstrings rang again:

By the broom, the bonny broom,

Kingcup and daffodilly,

In my heart I made him room:

O love my Willie!

"Pipe and play, dear heart," sang he,

"I must go, yet pipe and play;

Soon I'll come and ask of thee

For an answer yea or nay;"

And I waited till the flocks

Panted in yon waters stilly,

And the corn stood in the shocks:

O love my Willie!

I thought first when thou didst come
 I would wear the ring for thee,
 But the year told out its sum
 Ere again thou sat'st by me;
 Thou hadst nought to ask that day
 By kingcup and daffodilly;
 I said neither yea nor nay:
 O love my Willie!

Enter GEORGE.

G. Well, mother, 'tis a fortnight now, or more,
 Since I set eyes on you.

M. Ay, George, my dear,
 I reckon you've been busy: so have we.

G. And how does father?

M. He gets through his work,
 But he grows stiff, a little stiff, my dear;
 He's not so young, you know, by twenty years,
 As I am — not so young by twenty years,
 And I'm past sixty.

G. Yet he's hale and stout,
 And seems to take a pleasure in his pipe;
 And seems to take a pleasure in his cows,
 And a pride, too.

M. And well he may, my dear.

G. Give me the little one, he tires your arm;
 He's such a kicking, crowing, wakeful rogue,
 He almost wears our lives out with his noise
 Just at day-dawning, when we wish to sleep.
 What! you young villain, would you clench your fist
 In father's curls? a dusty father, sure,
 And you're as clean as wax.

Ay, you may laugh;
 But if you live a seven years more or so,
 These hands of yours will all be brown and scratched
 With climbing after nest-eggs. They'll go down
 As many rat-holes as are round the mere:

And you'll love mud, all manner of mud and dirt,
 As your father did afore you, and you'll wade
 After young water-birds; and you'll get bogged
 Setting of eel-traps, and you'll spoil your clothes,
 And come home torn and dripping: then, you know
 You'll feel the stick — you'll feel the stick, my lad!

Enter FRANCES.

F. You should not talk so to the blessed babe —
 How can you, George? why, he may be in heaven
 Before the time you tell of.

M. Look at him:
 So earnest, such an eager pair of eyes!
 He thrives, my dear.

F. Yes, that he does, thank God!
 My children are all strong.

M. 'Tis much to say;
 Sick children fret their mothers' hearts to shreds,
 And do no credit to their keep nor care.
 Where is your little lass?

F. Your daughter came
 And begged her of us for a week or so.

M. Well, well, she might be wiser, that she might.
 For she can sit at ease and pay her way;
 A sober husband, too — a cheerful man —
 Honest as ever stepped, and fond of her;
 Yet she is never easy, never glad,
 Because she has not children. Well-a-day!
 If she could know how hard her mother worked,
 And what ado I had, and what a moil
 With my half-dozen! Children, ay, forsooth, [come,
 They bring their own love with them when they
 But if they come not there is peace and rest;
 The pretty lambs! and yet she cries for more:
 Why, the world's full of them, and so is heaven —
 They are not rare.

G. No, mother, not at all;
But Hannah must not keep our Fanny long —
She spoils her.

M. Ah! folks spoil their children now;
When I was a young woman 'twas not so;
We made our children fear us, made them work,
Kept them in order.

G. Were not proud of them —
Eh, mother?

M. I set store by mine, 'tis true,
But then I had good cause.

G. My lad, d'ye hear?
Your Granny was not proud, by no means proud!
She never spoilt your father — no, not she,
Nor ever made him sing at harvest-home,
Nor at the forge, nor at the baker's shop,
Nor to the doctor while she lay abed
Sick, and he crept upstairs to share her broth. [more,

M. Well, well, you were my youngest, and, what's
Your father loved to hear you sing — he did,
Although, good man, he could not tell one tune
From the other.

F. No, he got his voice from you:
Do use it, George, and send the child to sleep.

G. What must I sing?

F. The Ballad of the man
That is so shy he cannot speak his mind.

G. Ay, of the purple grapes and crimson leaves;
But, mother, put your shawl and bonnet off.
And, Frances, lass, I brought some cresses in:
Just wash them, toast the bacon, break some eggs,
And let us to supper shortly.

[Sings.]

My neighbor White — we met to-day —
He always had a cheerful way.

As if he breathed at ease;
My neighbor White lives down the glade,
And I live higher, in the shade
Of my old walnut-trees.

So many lads and lasses small,
To feed them all, to clothe them all,

Must surely tax his wit;
I see his thatch when I look out,
His branching roses creep about,
And vines half smother it.

There white-haired urchins climb his eaves,
And little watch-fires heap with leaves,

And milky filberts hoard;
And there his oldest daughter stands
With downcast eyes and skilful hands
Before her ironing-board.

She comforts all her mother's days,
And with her sweet obedient ways

She makes her labor light
So sweet to hear, so fair to see!

O, she is much too good for me,
That lovely Lettice White!

'Tis hard to feel one's self a fool!

With that same lass I went to school —

I then was great and wise;
She read upon an easier book,
And I — I never cared to look
Into her shy blue eyes.

And now I know they must be there,
Sweet eyes, behind those lashes fair

That will not raise their rim:
If maids be shy, he cures who can;

But if a man be shy — a man —

Why then, the worse for him!

My mother cries, "For such a lad
A wife is easy to be had
And always to be found;
A finer scholar scarce can be,
And for a foot and leg," says she,
"He beats the country round!"

"My handsome boy must stoop his head
To clear her door whom he would wed."
Weak praise, but fondly sung!
"O mother! scholars sometimes fail —
And what can foot and leg avail
To him that wants a tongue?"

When by her ironing-board I sit,
Her little sisters round me flit,
And bring me forth their store;
Dark cluster grapes of dusty-blue,
And small sweet apples, bright of hue
And crimson to the core.

But she abideth silent, fair;
All shaded by her flaxen hair
The blushes come and go;
I look, and I no more can speak
Than the red sun that on her cheek
Smiles as he lieth low.

Sometimes the roses by the latch,
Or scarlet vine-leaves from her thatch,
Come sailing down like birds;
When from their drifts her board I clear
She thanks me, but I scarce can hear
The shyly uttered words.

Oft have I wooed sweet Lettice White
By daylight and by candlelight

When we two were apart.
Some better day come on apace,
And let me tell her face to face,
"Maiden, thou hast my heart."

How gently rock yon poplars high
Against the reach of primrose sky
With heaven's pale candles stored!
She sees them all, sweet Lettice White;
I'll ev'n go sit again to-night
Beside her ironing-board!

Why, you young rascal! who would think it, now?
No sooner do I stop than you look up.
What would you have your poor old father do?
'Twas a brave song, long-winded, and not loud.

M. He heard the bacon sputter on the fork,
And heard his mother's step across the floor.
Where did you get that song? — 'tis new to me.

G. I bought it of a pedler.

M. Did you so?

Well, you were always for the love-songs, George.

F. My dear, just lay his head upon your arm,
And if you'll pace and sing two minutes more
He needs must sleep — his eyes are full of sleep.

G. Do you sing, mother.

F. Ay, good mother, do;

'Tis long since we have heard you.

M. Like enough;

I'm an old woman, and the girls and lads
I used to sing to sleep e'rtop me now.

What should I sing for?

G. Why, to pleasure us.
Sing in the chimney corner, where you sit,
And I'll pace gently with the little one.

[*Mother sings.*]

When sparrows build, and the leaves break forth,
My old sorrow wakes and cries,
For I know there is dawn in the far, far north,
And a scarlet sun doth rise;
Like a scarlet fleece the snow-field spreads,
And the icy founts run free,
And the bergs begin to bow their heads,
And plunge, and sail in the sea.

O my lost love, and my own, own love,
And my love that loved me so!
Is there never a chink in the world above
Where they listen for words from below?
Nay, I spoke once, and I grieved thee sore,
I remember all that I said,
And now thou wilt hear me no more — no more
Till the sea gives up her dead.

Thou didst set thy foot on the ship, and sail
To the ice-fields and the snow;
Thou wert sad, for thy love did naught avail,
And the end I could not know;
How could I tell I should love thee to-day,
Whom that day I held not dear?
How could I know I should love thee away
When I did not love thee anear?

We shall walk no more through the sodden plain
With the faded bents o'erspread,
We shall stand no more by the seething main
While the dark wrack drives o'erhead;
We shall part no more in the wind and the rain,
Where thy last farewell was said:
But perhaps I shall meet thee and know thee again
When the sea gives up her dead.

F. Asleep at last, and time he was, indeed.
Turn back the cradle-quilt, and lay him in;
And, mother, will you please to draw your chair? —
The supper's ready.

SCHOLAR AND CARPENTER.

WHILE ripening corn grew thick and deep,
And here and there men stood to reap,
One morn I put my heart to sleep,
And to the lanes I took my way.
The goldfinch on a thistle-head
Stood scattering seedlets while she fed;
The wrens their pretty gossip spread,
Or joined a random roundelay.

On hanging cobwebs shone the dew,
And thick the wayside clovers grew;
The feeding bee had much to do,
So fast did honey-drops exude:
She sucked and murmured and was gone,
And lit on other blooms anon,
The while I learned a lesson on
The source and sense of quietude.

For sheep-bells chiming from a wold,
Or bleat of lamb within its fold,
Or cooing of love-legends old
To dove-wives make not quiet less;
Ecstatic chirp of winged thing,
Or bubbling of the water-spring,
Are sounds that more than silence bring,
Itself and its delightsomeness.

While thus I went to gladness fain,
I had but walked a mile or twain
Before my heart woke up again,

As dreaming she had slept too late;
The morning freshness that she viewed
With her own meanings she endued,
And touched with her solicitude
The natures she did meditate.

"If quiet is, for it I wait;
To it, ah! let me wed my fate,
And, like a sad wife, supplicate
My roving lord no more to flee;
If leisure is — but, ah! 'tis not —
'Tis long past praying for, God wot
The fashion of it men forgot,
About the age of chivalry.

"Sweet is the leisure of the bird;
She craves no time for work deferred;
Her wings are not to aching stirred
Providing for her helpless ones.

Fair is the leisure of the wheat;
All night the damps about it fleet;
All day it basketh in the heat,
And grows, and whispers orisons.

"Grand is the leisure of the earth;
She gives her happy myriads birth,
And after harvest fears not dearth,
But goes to sleep in snow-wreaths dim.

Dread is the leisure up above
The while He sits whose name is Love,
And waits, as Noah did, for the dove,
To wit if she would fly to him.

"He waits for us, while, houseless things,
We beat about with bruised wings
On the dark floods and water springs,
The ruined world, the desolate sea;
With open windows from the prime
All night, all day, He waits sublime,

Until the fulness of the time
Decreed from His eternity.

"Where is our leisure? — Give us rest.
Where is the quiet we possessed?
We must have had it once — were blest
With peace whose phantoms yet entice.
Sorely the mother of mankind
Longed for the garden left behind;
For we still prove some yearnings blind
Inherited from Paradise."

"Hold, heart!" I cried; "for trouble sleeps;
I hear no sound of aught that weeps;
I will not look into thy deeps —

I am afraid, I am afraid!"

"Afraid!" she saith; "and yet 'tis true
That what man dreads he still should view —
Should do the thing he fears to do,
And storm the ghosts in ambuscade."

"What good?" I sigh. "Was reason meant
To straighten branches that are bent,
Or soothe an ancient discontent,
The instinct of a race dethroned?
Ah! doubly should that instinct go,
Must the four rivers cease to flow,
Nor yield those rumors sweet and low
Wherewith man's life is undertoned."

"Yet had I but the past," she cries,
"And it was lost, I would arise
And comfort me some other wise.

But more than loss about me clings:
I am but restless with my race;
The whispers from a heavenly place,
Once dropped among us, seem to chase
Rest with their prophet-visitations.

"The race is like a child, as yet
 Too young for all things to be set
 Plainly before him with no let
 Or hindrance meet for his degree;
 But ne'ertheless by much too old
 Not to perceive that men withhold
 More of the story than is told,
 And so infer a mystery.

"If the Celestials daily fly
 With messages on missions high,
 And float, our masts and turrets nigh,
 Conversing on Heaven's great intents;
 What wonder hints of coming things,
 Whereto man's hope and yearning clings,
 Should drop like feathers from their wings
 And give us vague presentiments?

"And as the waxing moon can take
 The tidal waters in her wake
 And lead them round and round to break
 Obedient to her drawings dim;
 So may the movements of his mind,
 The first Great Father of mankind,
 Affect with answering movements blind,
 And draw the souls that breathe by Him.

"We had a message long ago
 That like a river peace should flow,
 And Eden bloom again below.
 We heard, and we began to wait;
 Full soon that message men forgot;
 Yet waiting is their destined lot,
 And waiting for they know not what
 They strive with yearnings passionate.
 "Regret and faith alike enchain;
 There was a loss, there comes a gain;
 We stand at fault betwixt the twain,

And that is veiled for which we pant.
 Our lives are short, our ten times seven;
 We think the councils held in heaven
 Sit long, ere yet that blissful leaven
 Work peace amongst the militant.

"Then we blame God that Sin should be:
 Adam began it at the tree,
 'The woman whom Thou gavest me;'
 And we adopt his dark device.
 O long Thou tarriest! come and reign,
 And bring forgiveness in Thy train,
 And give us in our hands again
 The apples of Thy Paradise."

"Far-seeing heart! if that be all,
 The happy things that did not fall,"
 I sighed, "from every coppice call
 They never from that garden went.
 Behold their joy, so comfort thee,
 Behold the blossom and the bee,
 For they are yet as good and free
 As when poor Eve was innocent.

"But reason thus: 'If we sank low,
 If the lost garden we forego,
 Each in his day, nor ever know
 But in our poet souls its face;
 Yet we may rise until we reach
 A height untold of in its speech,
 A lesson that it could not teach
 Learn in this darker dwelling place.'

"And reason on: 'We take the spoil;
 Loss made us poets, and the soil
 Taught us great patience in our toil,
 And life is kin to God through death.
 Christ were not One with us but so,
 And if bereft of Him we go;

Dearer the heavenly mansions grow,
His home, to man that wandereth.

"Content thee so, and ease thy smart."
With that she slept again, my heart,
And I admired and took my part
With crowds of happy things the while:
With open velvet butterflies
That swung and spread their peacock eyes,
As if they cared no more to rise
From off their beds of camomile.

The blackcaps in an orchard met,
Praising the berries while they ate:
The finch that flew her beak to whet
Before she joined them on the tree;
The water mouse among the reeds—
His bright eyes glancing black as beads,
So happy with a bunch of seeds—
I felt their gladness heartily.

But I came on, I smelt the hay,
And up the hills I took my way,
And down them still made holiday,
And walked, and wearied not a whit;
But ever with the lane I went
Until it dropped with steep descent,
Cut deep into the rock, a tent
Of maple branches roofing it.

Adown the rock small runlets wept,
And reckless ivies leaned and crept,
And little spots of sunshine slept
On its brown steeps and made them fair;
And broader beams athwart it shot,
Where martins cheeped in many a knot,
For they had ta'en a sandy plot
And scooped another Petra there.

And deeper down, hemmed in and hid
From upper light and life amid
The swallows gossiping, I thrid
Its mazes, till the dipping land
Sank to the level of my lane:
That was the last hill of the chain,
And fair below I saw the plain

That seemed cold cheer to reprimand.
Half-drowned in sleepy peace it lay,
As satiate with the boundless play
Of sunshine on its green array.

And clear-cut hills of gloomy blue
To keep it safe rose up behind,
As with a charmed ring to bind
The grassy sea, where clouds might find
A place to bring their shadows to.

I said, and blest that pastoral grace,
"How sweet thou art, thou sunny place!
Thy God approves thy smiling face:"

But straight my heart put in her word;
She said, "Albeit thy face I bless,
There have been times, sweet wilderness,
When I have wished to love thee less,
Such pangs thy smile administered."

But, lo! I reached a field of wheat,
And by its gate full clear and sweet
A workman sang, while at his feet
Played a young child, all life and stir—
A three years' child, with rosy lip,
Who in the song had partnership,
Made happy with each falling chip
Dropped by the busy carpenter.

This, reared a new gate for the old,
And loud the tuneful measure rolled,
But stopped as I came up to hold

Some kindly talk of passing things.
 Brave were his eyes, and frank his mien;
 Of all men's faces, calm or keen,
 A better I have never seen
 In all my lonely wanderings.

And how it was I scarce can tell,
 We seemed to please each other well;
 I lingered till a noonday bell

Had sounded, and his task was done.
 An oak had screened us from the heat;
 And 'neath it in the standing wheat,
 A cradle and a fair retreat,

Full sweetly slept the little one.

The workman rested from his stroke,
 And manly were the words he spoke,
 Until the smiling babe awoke

And prayed to him for milk and food.
 Then to a runlet forth he went,
 And brought a wallet from the bent,
 And bade me to the meal, intent

I should not quit his neighborhood.

"For here," said he, "are bread and beer,
 And meat enough to make good cheer:
 Sir, eat with me, and have no fear,

For none upon my work depend,
 Saving this child; and I may say
 That I am rich, for every day
 I put by somewhat; therefore stay,
 And to such eating condescend."

We ate. The child — child fair to see —
 Began to cling about his knee,
 And he down leaning fatherly
 Received some softly-prattled prayer:
 He smiled as if to list were balm,
 And with his labor-hardened palm

Pushed from the baby-forehead calm
 Those shining locks that clustered there.

The rosy mouth made fresh essay —
 "O would he sing or would he play?"
 I looked, my thought would make its way —

"Fair is your child of face and limb,
 The round blue eyes full sweetly shine."
 He answered me with glance benign —
 "Ay, Sir; but he is none of mine,
 Although I set great store by him."

With that, as if his heart was fain
 To open — nathless not complain —
 He let my quiet questions gain

His story: "Not of kin to me,"
 Repeating; "but asleep, awake,
 For worse, for better, him I take,
 To cherish for my dead wife's sake
 And count him as her legacy.

"I married with the sweetest lass
 That ever stepped on meadow grass;
 That ever at her looking-glass
 Some pleasure took, some natural care
 That ever swept a cottage floor
 And worked all day, nor e'er gave o'er
 Till eve, then watched beside the door
 Till her good man should meet her there.

"But I lost all in its fresh prime;
 My wife fell ill before her time —
 Just as the bells began to chime

One Sunday morn. By next day's light
 Her little babe was born and dead,
 And she, unconscious what she said,
 With feeble hands about her spread,
 Sought it with yearnings infinite.

"With mother-longing still beguiled,
 And lost in fever-fancies wild,
 She piteously bemoaned her child
 That we had stolen, she said, away.
 And ten sad days she sighed to me,
 'I cannot rest until I see
 My pretty one! I think that he
 Smiled in my face but yesterday.'
 "Then she would change, and faintly try
 To sing some tender lullaby;
 And 'Ah!' would moan, 'if I should die,
 Who, sweetest babe, would cherish thee?'
 Then weep, 'My pretty boy is grown;
 With tender feet on the cold stone
 He stands, for he can stand alone,
 And no one leads him motherly.'
 "Then she with dying movements slow
 Would seem to knit, or seem to sew:
 'His feet are bare, he must not go
 Unshod:' and as her death drew on,
 'O little baby,' she would sigh:
 'My little child, I cannot die
 Till I have you to slumber nigh,
 You, you to set mine eyes upon.'
 "When she spake thus, and moaning lay,
 They said, 'She cannot pass away,
 So sore she longs:' and as the day
 Broke on the hills, I left her side.
 Mourning along this lane I went:
 Some travelling folk had pitched their tent
 Up yonder: there a woman, bent
 With age, sat meanly canopied.
 "A twelvemonths' child was at her side:
 'Whose infant may that be?' I cried.
 'His that will own him,' she replied;
 'His mother's dead, no worse could be.'

"Since you can give — or else I erred —
 See, you are taken at your word,'
 Quoth I; 'That child is mine; I heard,
 And own him! Rise, and give him me.'
 "She arose amazed, but cursed me too;
 She could not hold such luck for true,
 But gave him soon with small ado.
 I laid him by my Lucy's side:
 Close to her face that baby crept,
 And stroked it, and the sweet soul wept;
 Then, while upon her arm he slept,
 She passed, for she was satisfied.
 "I loved her well, I wept her sore,
 And when her funeral left my door
 I thought that I should never more
 Feel any pleasure near me glow;
 But I have learned though this I had,
 'Tis sometimes natural to be glad,
 And no man can be always sad
 Unless he wills to have it so.
 "Oh, I had heavy nights at first,
 And daily wakening was the worst:
 For then my grief arose, and burst
 Like something fresh upon my head:
 Yet when less keen it seemed to grow,
 I was not pleased — I wished to go
 Mourning adown this vale of woe,
 For all my life uncomfited.
 "I grudged myself the lightsome air,
 That makes man cheerful unaware;
 When comfort came, I did not care
 To take it in, to feel it stir;
 And yet God took with me His plan,
 And now for my appointed span
 I think I am a happier man
 For having wed and wept for her.

"Because no natural tie remains,
On this small thing I spend my gains;
God makes me love him for my pains,
And binds me so to wholesome care:
I would not lose from my past life
That happy year, that happy wife!
Yet now I wage no useless strife
With feelings blithe and debonair.

"I have the courage to be gay,
Although she lieth lapped away
Under the daisies, for I say,
'Thou wouldst be glad if thou couldst see:'
My constant thought makes manifest
I have not what I love the best,
But I must thank God for the rest
While I hold heaven a verity."

He rose; upon his shoulder set
The child, and while with vague regret
We parted, pleased that we had met,
My heart did with herself confer;
With wholesome shame she did repent
Her reasonings idly eloquent,
And said, "I might be more content:
But God go with the carpenter."

THE STAR'S MONUMENT.

IN THE CONCLUDING PART OF A DISCOURSE ON FAME

[*He thinks.*]

If there be memory in the world to come,
If thought recur to some things silenced here,
Then shall the deep heart be no longer dumb,
But find expression in that happier sphere;

It shall not be denied their utmost sum
Of love, to speak without or fault or fear,
But utter to the harp with changes sweet
Words that, forbidden still, then heaven were incom-
plete.

[*He speaks.*]

Now let us talk about the ancient days,
And things which happened long before our birth:
It is a pity to lament that praise
Should be no shadow in the train of worth.
What is it, Madam, that your heart dismays?
Why murmur at the course of this vast earth?
Think rather of the work than of the praise;
Come, we will talk about the ancient days.

There was a Poet, Madam, once (said he):
I will relate his story to you now,
While through the branches of this apple-tree
Some spots of sunshine flicker on your brow,
While every flower hath on its breast a bee,
And every bird in stirring doth endow
The grass with falling blooms that smoothly glide
As ships drop down a river with the tide.

For telling of his tale no fitter place
Than this old orchard, sloping to the west;
Through its pink dome of blossom I can trace
Some overlying azure; for the rest,
These flowery branches round us interlace;
The ground is hollowed like a mossy nest:
Who talks of fame while the religious spring
Offers the incense of her blossoming?

There was a Poet, Madam, once (said he),
Who, while he walked at sundown in a lane,
Took to his heart the hope that destiny
Had singled him this guerdon to obtain,

"Because no natural tie remains,
On this small thing I spend my gains;
God makes me love him for my pains,
And binds me so to wholesome care:
I would not lose from my past life
That happy year, that happy wife!
Yet now I wage no useless strife
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Who, while he walked at sundown in a lane,
Took to his heart the hope that destiny
Had singled him this guerdon to obtain,

That by the power of his sweet minstrelsy
Some hearts for truth and goodness he should gain
And charm some grovellers to uplift their eyes
And suddenly wax conscious of the skies.

"Master, good e'en to ye!" a woodman said,
Who the low hedge was trimming with his shears
"This hour is fine" — the Poet bowed his head.
"More fine," he thought, "O friend! to me
appears

The sunset than to you; finer the spread
Of orange lustre through these azure spheres,
Where little clouds lie still, like flocks of sheep,
Or vessels sailing in God's other deep.

"O finer far! What work so high as mine,
Interpreter betwixt the world and man,
Nature's ungathered pearls to set and shrine,

The mystery she wraps her in to scan;
Her unsyllabic voices to combine,

And serve her with such love as poets can;
With mortal words, her chant of praise to bind,
Then die, and leave the poem to mankind?

"O fair, O fine, O lot to be desired!

Early and late my heart appeals to me,
And says, 'O work, O will — Thou man, be fired
To earn this lot,' — she says, 'I would not be

A worker for mine own bread, or one hired

For mine own profit. O, I would be free
To work for others; love so earned of them
Should be my wages and my diadem.

"Then when I died I should not fall," says she,

'Like drooping flowers that no man noticeth,
But like a great branch of some stately tree
Rent in a tempest, and flung down to death.

Thick with green leafage — so that piteously
Each passer by that ruin shuddereth,

And saith, The gap this branch hath left is wide;
The loss thereof can never be supplied.'"

But, Madam, while the Poet pondered so,

Toward the leafy hedge he turned his eye,
And saw two slender branches that did grow,

And from it rising spring and flourish high;
Their tops were twined together fast, and, lo,

Their shadow crossed the path as he went by —
The shadow of a wild rose and a briar,
And it was shaped in semblance like a lyre.

In sooth, a lyre! and as the soft air played,

Those branches stirred, but did not disunite.

"O emblem meet for me!" the Poet said;

"Ay, I accept and own thee for my right;
The shadowy lyre across my feet is laid,

Distinct though frail, and clear with crimson light:
Fast is it twined to bear the windy strain,
And, supple, it will bend and rise again.

"This lyre is cast across the dusty way,

The common path that common men pursue;

I crave like blessing for my shadowy lay,

Life's trodden paths with beauty to renew,

And cheer the eve of many a toil-stained day.

Light it, old sun, wet it, thou common dew.

That 'neath men's feet its image still may be

While yet it waves about them, living lyre, like thee!"

But even as the Poet spoke, behold

He lifted up his face toward the sky;

The ruddy sun dipt under the gray wold,

His shadowy lyre was gone; and, passing by

The woodman lifting up his shears, was bold

Their temper on those branches twain to try,

And all their loveliness and leafage sweet

Fell in the pathway, at the Poet's feet.

"Ah! my fair emblem that I chose," quoth he,
 "That for myself I coveted but now,
 Too soon, methinks, thou hast been false to me;
 The lyre from pathway fades, the light from brow."
 Then straightway turned he from it hastily,
 As dream that waking sense will disallow;
 And while the highway heavenward paled apace,
 He went on westward to his dwelling-place.
 He went on steadily, while far and fast
 The summer darkness dropped upon the world,
 A gentle air among the cloudlets passed
 And fanned away their crimson; then it curled
 The yellow poppies in the field, and cast
 A dimness on the grasses, for it furled
 Their daisies, and swept out the purple stain
 That eve had left upon the pastoral plain.
 He reached his city. Lo! the darkened street
 Where he abode was full of gazing crowds;
 He heard the muffled tread of many feet;
 A multitude stood gazing at the clouds.
 "What mark ye there," said he, "and wherefore
 meet?"

Only a passing mist the heaven o'ershrouds;
 It breaks, it parts, it drifts like scattered spars —
 What lies behind it but the nightly stars?"

Then did the gazing crowd to him aver
 They sought a lamp in heaven whose light was hid;
 For that in sooth an old Astronomer
 Down from his roof had rushed into their mid,
 Frighted, and fain with others to confer,
 That he had cried, "O sirs!" — and upward bid
 Them gaze — "O sirs, a light is quenched afar;
 Look up, my masters, we have lost a star!"

The people pointed, and the Poet's eyes
 Flew upward, where a gleaming sisterhood

Swam in the dewy heaven. The very skies
 Were mutable; for all-amazed he stood
 To see that truly not in any wise
 He could behold them as of old, nor could
 His eyes receive the whole whereof he wot,
 But when he told them over, one WAS NOT.

While yet he gazed and pondered reverently,
 The fickle folk began to move away.
 "It is but one star less for us to see;
 And what does one star signify?" quoth they;
 "The heavens are full of them." "But ah!" said he,
 "That star was bright while yet she lasted."
 "Ay!"

They answered: "praise her, Poet, an' ye will:
 Some are now shining that are brighter still."

"Poor star! to be disparaged so soon
 On her withdrawal," thus the Poet sighed;
 "That men should miss and straight deny her noon
 Its brightness!" But the people in their pride
 Said, "How are we beholden? 'twas no boon
 She gave. Her nature 'twas to shine so wide
 She could not choose but shine, nor could we know
 Such star had ever dwelt in heaven but so."

The Poet answered sadly, "That is true!"

And then he thought upon unthankfulness;
 While some went homeward; and the residue,
 Reflecting that the stars are numberless,
 Mourned that man's daylight hours should be so few.
 So short the shining that his path may bless:
 To nearer themes then tuned their willing lips,
 And thought no more upon the star's eclipse.

But he, the Poet, could not rest content
 Till he had found that old Astronomer;
 Therefore at midnight to his house he went
 And prayed him be his tale's interpreter.

And yet upon the heaven his eyes he bent,
 Hearing the marvel; yet he sought for her
 That was awanting, in the hope her face
 Once more might fill its reft abiding-place.

Then said the old Astronomer: "My son,
 I sat upon my roof to-night;
 I saw the stars come forth, and scarcely shun
 To fringe the edges of the western light;
 I marked those ancient clusters one by one,
 The same that blessed our old forefather's sight;
 For God alone is older — none but He
 Can charge the stars with mutability:

"The elders of the night, the steadfast stars,
 The old, old stars which God has let us see,
 That they might be our soul's auxiliars,
 And help us to the truth how young we be —
 God's youngest, latest born, as if, some spars
 And a little clay being over of them — He
 Had made our world and us thereof, yet given,
 To humble us, the sight of His great heaven.

"But ah! my son, to-night mine eyes have seen
 The death of light, the end of old renown;
 A shrinking back of glory that had been,
 A dread eclipse before the Eternal's frown.
 How soon a little grass will grow between
 These eyes and those appointed to look down
 Upon a world that was not made on high
 Till the last scenes of their long empire!

"To-night that shining cluster now despoiled
 Lay in day's wake a perfect sisterhood;
 Sweet was its light to me that long had toiled,
 It gleamed and trembled o'er the distant wood;
 Blown in a pile the clouds from it recoiled,
 Cool twilight up the sky her way made good;

I saw, but not believed — it was so strange —
 That one of those same stars had suffered change.

"The darkness gathered, and methought she spread,
 Wrapped in a reddish haze that waxed and waned;
 But notwithstanding to myself I said —
 'The stars are changeless; sure some mote hath
 stained
 Mine eyes, and her fair glory minishèd.'
 Of age and failing vision I complained,
 And thought 'some vapor in the heavens doth swim,
 That makes her look so large and yet so dim.'

"But I gazed round, and all her lustrous peers
 In her red presence showed but wan and white;
 For like a living coal beheld through tears
 She glowed and quivered with a gloomy light;
 Methought she trembled, as all sick through fears,
 Helpless, appalled, appealing to the night;
 Like one who throws his arms up to the sky
 And bows down suffering, hopeless of reply.

"At length, as if an everlasting Hand
 Had taken hold upon her in her place,
 And swiftly, like a golden grain of sand,
 Through all the deep infinitudes of space
 Was drawing her — God's truth as here I stand —
 Backward and inward to itself; her face
 Fast lessened, lessened, till it looked no more
 Than smallest atom on a boundless shore.

"And she that was so fair, I saw her lie,
 The smallest thing in God's great firmament,
 Till night was at the darkest, and on high
 Her sisters glittered, though her light was spent;
 I strained to follow her, each aching eye,
 So swiftly at her Maker's will she went;

I looked again—I looked—the star was gone,
And nothing marked in heaven where she had shone."

"Gone!" said the Poet, "and about to be
Forgotten: O, how sad a fate is hers!"

"How is it sad, my son?" all reverently
The old man answered; "though she ministers
No longer with her lamp to me and thee,

She has fulfilled her mission. God transfers
Or dims her ray; yet was she blest as bright,
For all her life was spent in giving light."

"Her mission she fulfilled assuredly,"
The poet cried: "but, O unhappy star!
None praise and few will bear in memory
The name she went by. O, from far, from far
Comes down, methinks, her mournful voice to me,
Full of regrets that men so thankless are."

So said, he told that old Astronomer
All that the gazing crowd had said of her.

And he went on to speak in bitter wise,
As one who seems to tell another's fate,
But feels that nearer meaning underlies,
And points its sadness to his own estate:

"If such be the reward," he said with sighs,
"Envy to earn for love, for goodness hate—
If such be thy reward, hard case is thine!
It had been better for thee not to shine."

"If to reflect a light that is divine
Makes that which doth reflect it better seen,
And if to see is to condemn the shrine,

"Twere surely better it had never been:
It had been better for her not to shine,
And for me not to sing. Better, I ween,
For us to yield no more that radiance bright,
For them, to lack the light than scorn the light."

Strange words were those from Poet lips (said he);
And then he paused, and sighed, and turned to
look

Upon the lady's downcast eyes, and see
How fast the honey bees in settling shook
Those apple blossoms on her from the tree;
He watched her busy fingers as they took
And slipped the knotted thread, and thought how
much

He would have given that hand to hold—to touch.
At length, as suddenly become aware

Of this long pause, she lifted up her face,
And he withdrew his eyes—she looked so fair
And cold, he thought, in her unconscious grace.
"Ah! little dreams she of the restless care,"

He thought, "that makes my heart to throb apace.
Though we this morning part, the knowledge sends
No thrill to her calm pulse—we are but friends."

Ah! turret clock (he thought), I would thy hand
Were hid behind yon towering maple-trees!
Ah! tell-tale shadow, but one moment stand—
Dark shadow—fast advancing to my knees;
Ah! foolish heart (he thought), that vainly planned
By feigning gladness to arrive at ease;
Ah! painful hour, yet pain to think it ends;
I must remember that we are but friends.

And while the knotted thread moved to and fro,
In sweet regretful tones that lady said:
"It seemeth that the fame you would forego
The Poet whom you tell of coveted;
But I would fain, methinks, his story know.

And was he loved?" said she, "or was he wed?
And had he friends?" "One friend, perhaps," said
he;

"But for the rest, I pray you let it be."

Ah! little bird (he thought), most patient bird,
Breasting thy speckled eggs the long day through,
By so much as my reason is preferred
Above thine instinct, I my work would do
Better than thou dost thine. Thou hast not stirred
This hour thy wing. Ah! russet bird, I sue
For a like patience to wear through these hours —
Bird on thy nest among the apple-flowers.

I will not speak — I will not speak to thee.
My star! and soon to be my lost, lost star.
The sweetest, first, that ever shone on me,
So high above me and beyond so far;
I can forego thee, but not bear to see
My love, like rising mist, thy lustre mar:
That were a base return for thy sweet light.
Shine, though I never more shall see that thou art
bright.

Never! 'Tis certain that no hope is — none?
No hope for me, and yet for thee no fear.
The hardest part of my hard task is done;
Thy calm assures me that I am not dear;
Though far and fast the rapid moments run,
Thy bosom heaveth not, thine eyes are clear;
Silent, perhaps a little sad at heart
She is. I am her friend, and I depart.

Silent she had been, but she raised her face;
“And will you end,” said she, “this half-told
tale?”

“Yes, it were best,” he answered her. “The place
Where I left off was where he felt to fail
His courage, Madam, through the fancy base
That they who love, endure, or work, may rail
And cease — if all their love, the works they wrought,
And their endurance, men have set at naught.”

“It had been better for me not to sing,”
My Poet said, “and for her not to shine;”
But him the old man answered, sorrowing,
“My son, did God who made her, the Divine
Lighter of suns, when down to yon bright ring
He cast her like some gleaming almandine,
And set her in her place, begirt with rays,
Say unto her ‘Give light,’ or say ‘Earn praise’?”
The Poet said, “He made her to give light.”
“My son,” the old man answered, “blest are such
A blessed lot is theirs; but if each night
Mankind had praised her radiance — inasmuch
As praise had never made it wax more bright,
And cannot now rekindle with its touch
Her lost effulgence, it is naught. I wot
That praise was not her blessing nor her lot.”
“Ay,” said the Poet, “I my words abjure,
And I repent me that I uttered them;
But by her light and by its forfeiture
She shall not pass without her requiem.
Though my name perish, yet shall hers endure;
Though I should be forgotten, she, lost gem,
Shall be remembered; though she sought not fame,
It shall be busy with her beauteous name.

“For I will raise in her bright memory,
Lost now on earth, a lasting monument,
And graven on it shall recorded be
That all her rays to light mankind were spent,
And I will sing albeit none heedeth me,
On her exemplar being still intent:
While in men's sight shall stand the record thus —
‘So long as she did last she lighted us.’”
So said, he raised, according to his vow,
On the green grass, where oft his townfolks met,

Under the shadow of a leafy bough
That leaned toward a singing rivulet,
One pure white stone, whereon, like crown on brow,
The image of the vanished star was set;
And this was graven on the pure white stone
In golden letters — "WHILE SHE LIVED SHE SHONE."

Madam, I cannot give this story well —
My heart is beating to another chime;
My voice must needs a different cadence swell;
It is yon singing bird, which all the time
Wooeth his nested mate, that doth dispel
My thoughts. What, deem you, could a lover's
rhyme
The sweetness of that passionate lay excel?
O soft, O low her voice — "I cannot tell."

[*He thinks.*]

The old man — ay, he spoke, he was not hard;
"She was his joy," he said, "his comforter,
But he would trust me. I was not debarred
Whate'er my heart approved to say to her."
Approved! O torn and tempted and ill-starred
And breaking heart, approve not nor demur;
It is the serpent that beguileth thee
With "God doth know" beneath this apple-tree.

Yea, God doth know, and only God doth know.
Have pity, God, my spirit groans to Thee!
I bear Thy curse primeval, and I go;
But heavier than on Adam falls on me
My tillage of the wilderness; for, lo!
I leave behind the woman, and I see
As 'twere the gates of Eden closing o'er
To hide her from my sight for evermore.

[*He speaks.*]

I am a fool, with sudden start he cried,
To let the song-bird work me such unrest;
If I break off again, I pray you chide,
For morning fleeteth, with my tale at best
Half told. That white stone, Madam, gleamed beside
The little rivulet, and all men pressed
To read the lost one's story traced thereon,
The golden legend — "While she lived she shone."

And, Madam, when the Poet heard them read,
And children spell the letters softly through,
It may be that he felt at heart some need,
Some craving to be thus remembered too:
It may be that he wondered if indeed
He must die wholly when he passed from view;
It may be, wished, when death his eyes made dim,
That some kind hand would raise such stone for him.

But shortly, as there comes to most of us,
There came to him the need to quit his home:
To tell you why were simply hazardous.
What said I, Madam? — men were made to roam
My meaning is. It hath been always thus:
They are athirst for mountains and sea foam;
Heirs of this world, what wonder if perchance
They long to see their grand inheritance?

He left his city, and went forth to teach
Mankind, his peers, the hidden harmony
That underlies God's discords, and to reach
And touch the master-string that like a sigh
Thrills in their souls, as if it would beseech
Some hand to sound it, and to satisfy
Its yearning for expression: but no word
Till poet touch it hath to make its music heard.

[He thinks.]

I know that God is good, though evil dwells
Among us, and doth all things holiest share ;
That there is joy in heaven, while yet our knells
Sound for the souls which He has summoned there ;
That painful love unsatisfied hath spells
Earned by its smart to soothe its fellow's care ;
But yet this atom cannot in the whole
Forget itself — it aches a separate soul.

[He speaks.]

But, Madam, to my Poet I return.
With his sweet cadences of woven words
He made their rude untutored hearts to burn
And melt like gold refined. No brooding birds
Sing better of the love that doth sojourn
Hid in the nest of home, which softly girds
The beating heart of life ; and, strait though it be,
Is straitness better than wide liberty.
He taught them, and they learned, but not the less
Remained unconscious whence that lore they drew,
But dreamed that of their native nobleness
Some lofty thoughts, that he had planted, grew ;
His glorious maxims in a lowly dress,
Like seed sown broadcast, sprung in all men's view,
The sower, passing onward, was not known,
And all men reaped the harvest as their own.
It may be, Madam, that those ballads sweet,
Whose rhythmic measures yesterday we sung,
Which time and changes make not obsolete,
But (as a river bears down blossoms flung
Upon its breast) take with them while they fleet —
It may be from his lyre that first they sprung :
But who can tell, since work surviveth fame ? —
The rhyme is left, but lost the Poet's name.

He worked, and bravely he fulfilled his trust —
So long he wandered sowing worthy seed,
Watering of wayside buds that were adust,
And touching for the common ear his reed —
So long to wear away the cankering rust
That dulls the gold of life — so long to plead
With sweetest music for all souls oppressed,
That he was old ere he had thought of rest.

Old and gray-headed, leaning on a staff,
To that great city of his birth he came,
And at its gates he paused with wondering laugh
To think how changed were all his thoughts of
fame
Since first he carved the golden epitaph
To keep in memory a worthy name,
And thought forgetfulness had been its doom
But for a few bright letters on a tomb.

The old Astronomer had long since died ;
The friends of youth were gone and far dispersed ;
Strange were the domes that rose on every side ;
Strange fountains on his wondering vision burst ;
The men of yesterday their business plied ;
No face was left that he had known at first ;
And in the city gardens, lo ! he sees
The saplings that he set are stately trees.

Upon the grass beneath their welcome shade,
Behold ! he marks the fair white monument,
And on its face the golden words displayed,
For sixty years their lustre have not spent ;
He sitteth by it and is not afraid,
But in its shadow he is well content ;
And envies not, though bright their gleamings are
The golden letters of the vanished star.

He gazeth up; exceeding bright appears
 That golden legend to his aged eyes,
 For they are dazzled till they fill with tears,
 And his lost Youth doth like a vision rise;
 She saith to him, "In all these toilsome years,
 What hast thou won by work or enterprise?
 What hast thou won to make amends to thee,
 As thou didst swear to do, for loss of me?"

"O man! O white-haired man!" the vision said,
 "Since we two sat beside this monument
 Life's clearest hues are all vanished,
 The golden wealth thou hadst of me is spent;
 The wind hath swept thy flowers, their leaves are
 shed;
 The music is played out that with thee went."
 "Peace, peace!" he cried; "I lost thee, but, in
 truth,
 There are worse losses than the loss of youth."

He said not what those losses were — but I —
 But I must leave them, for the time draws near.
 Some lose not only joy, but memory
 Of how it felt: not love that was so dear
 Lose only, but the steadfast certainty
 That once they had it; doubt comes on, then fear,
 And after that despondency. I wis
 The Poet must have meant such loss as this.
 But while he sat and pondered on his youth,
 He said, "It did one deed that doth remain,
 For it preserved the memory and the truth
 Of her that now doth neither set nor wane,
 But shine in all men's thoughts; nor sink forsooth.
 And be forgotten like the summer rain.
 O, it is good that man should not forget
 Or benefits foregone or brightness set!"

He spoke and said, "My lot contenteth me:
 I am right glad for this her worthy fame;
 That which was good and great I fain would see
 Drawn with a halo round what rests — its name."
 This while the Poet said, behold, there came
 A workman with his tools anear the tree,
 And when he read the words he paused awhile
 And pondered on them with a wondering smile.

And then he said, "I pray you, Sir, what mean
 The golden letters of this monument?"
 In wonder quoth the Poet, "Hast thou been
 A dweller near at hand, and their intent
 Hast neither heard by voice of fame, nor seen
 The marble earlier?" "Ay," said he, and leant
 Upon his spade to hear the tale, then sigh,
 And say it was a marvel, and pass by.

Then said the Poet, "This is strange to me."
 But as he mused, with trouble in his mind,
 A band of maids approached him leisurely,
 Like vessels sailing with a favoring wind;
 And of their rosy lips requested he,
 As one that for a doubt would solving find,
 The tale, if tale there were, of that white stone,
 And those fair letters — "While she lived she shone."

Then like a fleet that floats becalmed they stay.
 "O, Sir," saith one, "this monument is old;
 But we have heard our virtuous mothers say
 That by their mothers thus the tale was told:
 A Poet made it; journeying then away,
 He left us; and though some the meaning hold
 For other than the ancient one, yet we
 Receive this legend for a certainty: —
 "There was a lily once, most purely white,
 Beneath the shadow of these boughs it grew;

Its starry blossom it unclosed by night,
 And a young Poet loved its shape and hue.
 He watched it nightly, 'twas so fair a sight
 Until a stormy wind arose and blew,
 And when he came once more his flower to greet
 Its fallen petals drifted to his feet.

"And for his beautiful white lily's sake,
 That she might be remembered where her scent
 Had been right sweet, he said that he would make
 In her dear memory a monument:
 For she was purer than a driven flake
 Of snow, and in her grace most excellent;
 The loveliest life that death did ever mar,
 As beautiful to gaze on as a star."

"I thank you, maid," the Poet answered her,
 "And I am glad that I have heard your tale."
 With that they passed; and as an inland,er,
 Having heard breakers raging in a gale
 And falling down in thunder, will aver
 That still, when far away in grassy vale,
 He seems to hear those seething waters bound,
 So in his ears the maiden's voice did sound.

He leaned his face upon his hand, and thought
 And thought, until a youth came by that way;
 And once again of him the Poet sought
 The story of the star. But, well-a-day!
 He said, "The meaning with much doubt is fraught,
 The sense thereof can no man surely say;
 For still tradition sways the common ear,
 That of a truth a star DID DISAPPEAR.

"But they who look beneath the outer shell
 That wraps the 'kernel of the people's lore,
 Hold THAT for superstition; and they tell
 That seven lovely sisters dwelt of yore

In this old city, where it so befell

That one a Poet loved; that, furthermore,
 As stars above us she was pure and good,
 And fairest of that beauteous sisterhood.

"So beautiful they were, those virgins seven,
 That all men called them clustered stars in song,
 Forgetful that the stars abide in heaven:
 But woman bideth not beneath it long;
 For O, alas! alas! one fated even,

When stars their azure deeps began to throng,
 That virgin's eyes of Poet loved waxed dim,
 And all their lustrous shining waned to him.

"In summer dusk she drooped her head and sighed
 Until what time the evening star went down,
 And all the other stars did shining bide
 Clear in the lustre of their old renown,
 And then — the virgin laid her down and died:
 Forgot her youth, forgot her beauty's crown,
 Forgot the sisters whom she loved before,
 And broke her Poet's heart for evermore."

"A mournful tale, in sooth," the lady saith:

"But did he truly grieve for evermore?"

"It may be you forget," he answereth,

"That this is but a fable at the core

Of the other fable." "Though it be but breath,"

She asketh, "was it true?" Then he, "This lore
 Since it is fable, either way may go;
 Then, if it please you, think it might be so."

"Nay, but," she saith, "If I had told your tale,

The virgin should have lived his home to bless,

Or, must she die, I would have made to fail

His useless love." "I tell you not the less,"

He sighs, "because it was of no avail:

His heart the Poet would not dispossess

Thereof. But let us leave the fable now,
My Poet heard it with an aching brow."

And he made answer thus: "I thank thee, youth:

Strange is thy story to these aged ears,
But I bethink me thou hast told a truth

Under the guise of fable. If my tears,
Thou lost beloved star, lost now, forsooth,

Indeed could bring thee back among thy peers,
So new thou shouldst be deemed as newly seen,
For men forget that thou hast ever been.

"There was a morning when I longed for fame,

There was a noontide when I passed it by,

There is an evening when I think not shame

Its substance and its being to deny;
For if men bear in mind great deeds, the name

Of him that wrought them shall they leave to die,

Or if his name they shall have deathless writ,

They change the deeds that first ennobled it.

"O golden letters of this monument!

O words to celebrate a loved renown

Lost now or wrested, and to fancies lent,

Or on a fabled forehead set for crown!

For my departed star, I am content,

Though legends dim and years her memory drown;

For what were fame to her, compared and set

By this great truth which ye make lustrous yet?"

"Adieu!" the Poet said, "my vanished star,

Thy duty and thy happiness were one.

Work is heaven's hest; its fame is sublunar:

The fame thou dost not need — the work is done.

For thee I am content that these things are;

More than content were I, my race being run,

Might it be true of me, though none thereon

Should muse regretful — 'While he lived he shone.'"

So said, the Poet rose and went his way,

And that same lot he proved whereof he spake,

Madam, my story is told out; the day

Draws out her shadows, time doth overtake

The morning. That which endeth call a lay,

Sung after pause — a motto in the break

Between two chapters of a tale not new,

Nor joyful — but a common tale. Adieu!

And that same God who made your face so fair,

And gave your woman's heart its tenderness,

So shield the blessing He implanted there,

That it may never turn to your distress,

And never cost you trouble or despair,

Nor, granted, leave the granter comfortless;

But like a river, blest where'er it flows,

Be still receiving while it still bestows.

Adieu, he said, and paused, while she sat mute

In the soft shadow of the apple-tree;

The skylark's song rang like a joyous flute,

The brook went prattling past her restlessly:

She let their tongues be her tongue's substitute:

It was the wind that sighed, it was not she:

And what the lark, the brook, the wind, had said

We cannot tell, for none interpreted.

Their counsels might be hard to reconcile,

They might not suit the moment or the spot.

She rose, and laid her work aside the while

Down in the sunshine of that grassy plot;

She looked upon him with an almost smile,

And held to him a hand that faltered not.

One moment — bird and brook went warbling on,

And the wind sighed again — and he was gone.

So quietly, as if she heard no more

Or skylark in the azure overhead,

Or water slipping past the cressy shore,
 Or wind that rose in sighs, and sighing fled —
 So quietly, until the alders hoar
 Took him beneath them; till the downward spread
 Of planes engulfed him in their leafy seas
 She stood beneath her rose-flushed apple-trees.

And then she stooped toward the mossy grass,
 And gathered up her work and went her way;
 Straight to that ancient turret she did pass,
 And startle back some fawns that were at play.
 She did not sigh, she never said "Alas!"

Although he was her friend; but still that day,
 Where elm and hornbeam spread a towering dome
 She crossed the dells to her ancestral home.

And did she love him? — what if she did not?
 Then home was still the home of happiest years;
 Nor thought was exiled to partake his lot,
 Nor heart lost courage through foreboding fears;
 Nor echo did against her secret plot,
 Nor music her betray to painful tears;
 Nor life become a dream, and sunshine dim,
 And riches poverty, because of him.

But did she love him? — what and if she did?

Love cannot cool the burning Austral sand,
 Nor show the secret waters that lie hid
 In arid valleys of that desert land.
 Love has no spells can scorching winds forbid,
 Or bring the help which tarries near to hand,
 Or spread a cloud for curtaining faded eyes
 That gaze up dying into alien skies.

A DEAD YEAR.

I took a year out of my life and story —
 A dead year, and said, "I will hew thee a tomb!
 'All the kings of the nations lie in glory;'
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom;
 Swathed in linen, and precious unguents old;
 Painted with cinnabar, and rich with gold.

"Silent they rest, in solemn salvatory,
 Sealed from the moth and the owl and the flitter
 mouse —

Each with his name on his brow.
 'All the kings of the nations lie in glory,
 Every one in his own house:'

Then why not thou?

"Year," I said, "thou shalt not lack
 Bribes to bar thy coming back;
 Doth old Egypt wear her best
 In the chambers of her rest?
 Doth she take to her last bed
 Beaten gold, and glorious red?
 Envy not! for thou wilt wear
 In the dark a shroud as fair;
 Golden with the sunny ray
 Thou withdrawest from my day;
 Wrought upon with colors fine
 Stolen from this life of mine:
 Like the dusty Libyan kings,
 Lie with two wide-open wings
 On thy breast, as if to say,
 On these wings hope flew away;
 And so housed, and thus adorned,
 Not forgotten, but not scorned,
 Let the dark for evermore
 Close thee when I close the door;

Or water slipping past the cressy shore,
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 And so housed, and thus adorned,
 Not forgotten, but not scorned,
 Let the dark for evermore
 Close thee when I close the door;

And the dust for ages fall
In the creases of thy pall;
And no voice nor visit rude
Break thy sealèd solitude."

I took the year out of my life and story,
The dead year, and said, "I have hewed thee a
tomb!"

"All the kings of the nations lie in glory,
Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom;
But for the sword, and the sceptre, and diadem,
Sure thou didst reign like them."

So I laid her with those tyrants old and hoary,

According to my vow;

For I said, "The kings of the nations lie in glory,
And so shalt thou!"

"Rock," I said, "thy ribs are strong,

That I bring thee guard it long;

Hide the light from buried eyes —

Hide it, lest the dead arise."

"Year," I said, and turned away,

"I am free of thee this day;

All that we two only know,

I forgive and I forego,

So thy face no more I meet

In the field or in the street."

Thus we parted, she and I;

Life hid death, and put it by;

Life hid death, and said, "Be free!

I have no more need of thee."

No more need! O mad mistake,

With repentance in its wake!

Ignorant, and rash, and blind,

Life had left the grave behind;

But had locked within its hold,

With the spices and the gold,

All she had to keep her warm
In the raging of the storm.

Scarce the sunset bloom was gone,
And the little stars outshone,
Ere the dead year, stiff and stark,
Drew me to her in the dark;
Death drew life to come to her,

Beating at her sepulchre,
Crying out, "How can I part
With the best share of my heart?"

Lo, it lies upon the bier,
Captive, with the buried year.

O my heart!" And I fell prone,

Weeping at the sealèd stone;

"Year among the shades," I said,

"Since I live, and thou art dead,

Let my captive heart be free

Like a bird to fly to me."

And I stayed some voice to win,

But none answered from within;

And I kissed the door — and night

Deepened till the stars waxed bright

And I saw them set and wane,

And the world turned green again.

"So," I whispered, "open door,

I must tread this palace floor —

Sealèd palace, rich and dim.

Let a narrow sunbeam swim

After me, and on me spread

While I look upon my dead;

Let a little warmth be free

To come after; let me see

Through the doorway, when I sit

Looking out, the swallows flit,

Settling not till daylight goes;

Let me smell the wild white rose,

Smell the woodbine and the may;
 Mark, upon a sunny day,
 Sated from their blossoms rise
 Honey-bees and butterflies.
 Let me hear, O! let me hear,
 Sitting by my buried year,
 Finches chirping to their young,
 And the little noises flung
 Out of clefts where rabbits play,
 Or from falling water-spray;

And the gracious echoes woke
 By man's work: the woodman's stroke,
 Shout of shepherd, whistling blithe.
 And the whetting of the scythe;
 Let this be, lest shut and furled
 From the well-beloved world,
 I forget her yearnings old,
 And her troubles manifold,
 Strivings sore, submissions meet,
 And my pulse no longer beat,
 Keeping time and bearing part
 With the pulse of her great heart.

"So! swing open, door, and shade
 Take me: I am not afraid,
 For the time will not be long;
 Soon I shall have waxen strong —
 Strong enough my own to win
 From the grave it lies within."

And I entered. On her bier
 Quiet lay the buried year;
 I sat down where I could see
 Life without and sunshine free,
 Death within. And I between,
 Waited my own heart to wean

From the shroud that shaded her
 In the rock-hewn sepulchre —
 Waited till the dead should say,
 "Heart, be free of me this day."
 Waited with a patient will —
 AND I WAIT BETWEEN THEM STILL.

I take the year back to my life and story,
 The dead year and say, "I will share in thy tomb,
 'All the kings of the nations lie in glory;'
 Cased in cedar, and shut in a sacred gloom!
 They reigned in their lifetime with sceptre and
 diadem.

But thou excellest them;
 For life doth make thy grave her oratory.
 And the crown is still on thy brow;
 'All the kings of the nations lie in glory,'
 And so dost thou."

REFLECTIONS.

Written for the Portfolio Society, July, 1862.

LOOKING OVER A GATE AT A POOL IN A FIELD.

WHAT change has made the pastures sweet
 And reached the daisies at my feet,
 And cloud that wears a golden hem?
 This lovely world, the hills, the sward —
 They all look fresh, as if our Lord
 But yesterday had finished them.

And here's the field with light aglow;
 How fresh its boundary lime-trees show,
 And how its wet leaves trembling shine!
 Between their trunks come through to me
 The morning sparkles of the sea
 Below the level browsing line.

I see the pool more clear by half
 Than pools where other waters laugh
 Up at the breasts of coot and rail.
 There, as she passed it on her way,
 I saw reflected yesterday
 A maiden with a milking-pail.

There, neither slowly nor in haste,
 One hand upon her slender waist,
 The other lifted to her pail,
 She, rosy in the morning light,
 Among the water-daisies white,
 Like some fair sloop appeared to sail.

Against her ankles as she trod
 The lucky buttercups did nod.
 I leaned upon the gate to see:
 The sweet thing looked, but did not speak;
 A dimple came in either cheek,
 And all my heart was gone from me.

Then, as I lingered on the gate,
 And she came up like coming fate,
 I saw my picture in her eyes —
 Clear dancing eyes, more black than sloes,
 Cheeks like the mountain pink, that grows
 Among white-headed majesties.

I said, "A tale was made of old
 That I would fain to thee unfold;
 Ah! let me — let me tell the tale."
 But high she held her comely head;
 "I cannot heed it now," she said,
 "For carrying of the milking-pail."

She laughed. What good to make ado?
 I held the gate, and she came through,
 And took her homeward path anon.
 From the clear pool her face had fled:

It rested on my heart instead,
 Reflected when the maid was gone.

With happy youth, and work content,
 So sweet and stately on she went,
 Right careless of the untold tale.
 Each step she took I loved her more,
 And followed to her dairy door
 The maiden with the milking-pail.

II.

For hearts where wakened love doth lurk,
 How fine, how blest a thing is work!

For work does good when reasons fail —
 Good; yet the axe at every stroke
 The echo of a name awoke —
 Her name is Mary Martindale.

I'm glad that echo was not heard
 Aright by other men: a bird
 Knows doubtless what his own notes
 And I know not; but I can say
 I felt as shame-faced all that day
 As if folks heard her name right well.

And when the west began to glow
 I went — I could not choose but go —
 To that same dairy on the hill;
 And while sweet Mary moved about
 Within, I came to her without,
 And leaned upon the window-sill.

The garden border where I stood
 Was sweet with pinks and southern-wood
 I spoke — her answer seemed to fail;
 I smelt the pinks — I could not see;
 The dusk came down and sheltered me,
 And in the dusk she heard my tale.

And what is left that I should tell?
 I begged a kiss, I pleaded well:
 The rosebud lips did long decline;
 But yet I think, I think 'tis true,
 That leaned at last into the dew,
 One little instant they were mine.

O life! how dear thou hast become:
 She laughed at dawn, and I was dumb,
 But evening counsels best prevail.
 Fair shine the blue that o'er her spreads,
 Green be the pastures where she treads,
 The maiden with the milking-pail!



THE LETTER L.

ABSENT.

We sat on grassy slopes that meet
 With sudden dip the level strand;
 The trees hung overhead — our feet
 Were on the sand.

Two silent girls, a thoughtful man,
 We sunned ourselves in open light,
 And felt such April airs as fan
 The Isle of Wight;

And smelt the wall-flower in the crag
 Whereon that dainty waft had fed,
 Which made the bell-hung cowslip wag
 Her delicate head;

And let alighting jackdaws fleet
 Adown it open-winged, and pass
 Till they could touch with outstretched feet
 The warmed grass.

The happy wave ran up and rang
 Like service bells a long way off,
 And down a little freshet sprang
 From mossy trough,

And splashed into a rain of spray,
 And fretted on with daylight's loss,
 Because so many blue-bells lay
 Leaning across.

Blue martins gossiped in the sun,
 And pairs of chattering daws flew by,
 And sailing brigs rocked softly on
 In company.

Wild cherry boughs above us spread
 The whitest shade was ever seen,
 And flicker, flicker, came and fled
 Sun-spots between.

Bees murmured in the milk-white bloom
 As babes will sigh for deep content
 When their sweet hearts for peace make room,
 As given, not lent.

And we saw on: we said no word,
 And one was lost in musings rare,
 One buoyant as the waft that stirred
 Her shining hair.

His eyes were bent upon the sand,
 Unfathomed deeps within them lay;
 A slender rod was in his hand —
 A hazel spray.

Her eyes were resting on his face,
 As shyly glad by stealth to glean
 Impressions of his manly grace
 And guarded mien;

And what is left that I should tell?
 I begged a kiss, I pleaded well:
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 As shyly glad by stealth to glean
 Impressions of his manly grace
 And guarded mien;

The mouth with steady sweetness set,
And eyes conveying unaware
The distant hint of some regret
That harbored there.

She gazed, and in the tender flush
That made her face like roses blown,
And in the radiance and the hush,
Her thought was shown.

It was a happy thing to sit
So near, nor mar his reverie;
She looked not for a part in it,
So meek was she.

But it was solace for her eyes,
And for her heart, that yearned to him,
To watch apart in loving wise
Those musings dim.

Lost — lost, and gone! The Pelham woods
Were full of doves that cooed at ease;
The orchis filled her purple hoods
For dainty bees.

He heard not; all the delicate air
Was fresh with falling water-spray;
It mattered not — he was not there,
But far away.

Till with the hazel in his hand,
Still drowned in thought, it thus befell,
He drew a letter on the sand —
The letter L.

And looking on it, straight there wrought
A ruddy flush about his brow;
His letter woke him: absent thought
Rushed homeward now.

And, half-abashed, his hasty touch
Effaced it with a tell-tale care,
As if his action had been much,
And not his air.

And she? she watched his open palm
Smooth out the letter from the sand,
And rose, with aspect almost calm,
And filled her hand

With cherry bloom: and moved away
To gather wild forget-me-not,
And let her errant footsteps stray
To one sweet spot,

As if she coveted the fair
White lining of the silver weed
And cuckoo-pint that shaded there
Empurpled seed.

She had not feared, as I divine,
Because she had not hoped. Alas!
The sorrow of it! for that sign
Came but to pass;

And yet it robbed her of the right
To give, who looked not to receive,
And made her blush in love's despite
That she should grieve.

A shape in white, she turned to gaze;
Her eyes were shaded with her hand
And half-way up the winding ways
We saw her stand.

Green hollows of the fringed cliff,
Red rocks that under waters show,
Blue reaches, and a sailing skiff,
Were spread below.

She stood to gaze, perhaps to sigh,
 Perhaps to think; but who can tell
 How heavy on her heart must lie
 The letter L!

She came anon with quiet grace;
 And "What," she murmured, "silent yet!"
 He answered, "'Tis a haunted place,
 And spell-beset.

"O speak to us, and break the spell!"
 "The spell is broken," she replied.
 "I crossed the running brook, it fell,
 It could not bide.

"And I have brought a budding world
 Of orchis spires and daisies rank,
 And ferny plumes but half uncured,
 From yonder bank;

"And I shall weave of them a crown,
 And at the well-head launch it free,
 That so the brook may float it down,
 And out to sea.

"There may it to some English hands
 From fairy meadow seem to come;
 The fairest of fairy lands —
 The land of home."

"Weave on," he said, and as she wove
 We told how currents in the deep,
 With branches from a lemon grove,
 Blue bergs will sweep.

And messages from shipwrecked folk
 Will navigate the moon-led main,
 And painted boards of splintered oak
 Their port regain.

Then floated out by vagrant thought,
 My soul beheld on torrid sand
 The wasteful water set at naught
 Man's skilful hand,

And suck out gold-dust from the box,
 And wash it down in weedy whirls,
 And split the wine-keg on the rocks,
 And lose the pearls.

"Ah! why to that which needs it not,"
 Methought, "should costly things be given?
 How much is wasted, wrecked, forgot,
 On this side heaven!

So musing, did mine ears awake
 To maiden tones of sweet reserve,
 And manly speech that seemed to make
 The steady curve

Of lips that uttered it defer
 Their guard, and soften for the thought:
 She listened, and his talk with her
 Was fancy fraught.

"There is not much in liberty" —
 With doubtful pauses he began;
 And said to her and said to me,
 "There was a man —

"There was a man who dreamed one night
 That his dead father came to him,
 And said, when fire was low, and light
 Was burning dim —

"Why vagrant thus, my sometime pride,
 Unloved, unloving, wilt thou roam?
 Sure home is best!" The son replied,
 "I have no home."

" 'Shall not I speak?' his father said,
 'Who early chose a youthful wife,
 And worked for her, and with her led
 My happy life.

" 'Ay, I will speak, for I was young
 As thou art now, when I did hold
 The prattling sweetness of thy tongue
 Dearer than gold;

" 'And rosy from thy noonday sleep
 Would bear thee to admiring kin,
 And all thy pretty looks would keep
 My heart within.

" 'Then after, 'mid thy young allies —
 For thee ambition flushed my brow —
 I coveted the schoolboy prize
 Far more than thou.

" 'I thought for thee, I thought for all
 My gamesome imps that round me grew;
 The dews of blessing heaviest fall
 Where care falls too.

" 'And I that sent my boys away,
 In youthful strength to earn their bread,
 And died before the hair was gray
 Upon my head —

" 'I say to thee, though free from care,
 A lonely lot, an aimless life,
 The crowning comfort is not there —
 Son, take a wife.'

" 'Father beloved,' the son replied,
 And failed to gather to his breast,
 With arms in darkness searching wide,
 The formless guest.

" 'I am but free, as sorrow is,
 To dry her tears, to laugh, to talk;
 And free, as sick men are, I wis,
 To rise and walk.

" 'And free, as poor men are, to buy
 If they have naught wherewith to pay;
 Nor hope the debt, before they die,
 To wipe away.

" 'What 'vails it there are wives to win,
 And faithful hearts for those to yearn,
 Who find not aught thereto akin
 To make return?

" 'Shall he take much who little gives
 And dwells in spirit far away,
 When she that in his presence lives,
 Doth never stray,

" 'But, waking, guideth as beseems
 The happy house in order trim,
 And tends her babes; and, sleeping, dreams
 Of them and him?

" 'O base, O cold,' — while thus he spake
 The dream broke off, the vision fled;
 He carried on his speech awake,
 And sighing, said —

" 'I had — ah, happy man! — I had
 A precious jewel in my breast,
 And while I kept it I was glad
 At work, at rest!

" 'Call it a heart, and call it strong
 As upward stroke of eagle's wing;
 Then call it weak, you shall not wrong
 The beating thing.

“ ‘In tangles of the jungle reed,
Whose heats are lit with tiger eyes,
In shipwreck drifting with the weed
’Neath rainy skies,

“ ‘Still youthful manhood, fresh and keen,
At danger gazed with awed delight,
As if sea would not drown, I ween,
Nor serpent bite.

“ ‘I had — ah, happy! but ’tis gone,
The priceless jewel; one came by,
And saw and stood awhile to con
With curious eye,

“ ‘And wished for it, and faintly smiled
From under lashes black as doom,
With subtle sweetness, tender, mild,
That did illumine

“ ‘The perfect face, and shed on it
A charm, half feeling, half surprise,
And brim with dreams the exquisite
Brown blessed eyes.

“ ‘Was it for this, no more but this,
I took and laid it in her hand,
By dimples ruled, to hint submiss,
By frown unmanned?

“ ‘It was for this — and O farewell
The fearless foot, the present mind,
And steady will to breast the swell
And face the wind!

“ ‘I gave the jewel from my breast,
She played with it a little while
As I sailed down into the west,
Fed by her smile;

“ ‘Then weary of it — far from land,
With sighs as deep as destiny,
She let it drop from her fair hand
Into the sea.

“ ‘And watched it sink; and I — and I, —
What shall I do, for all is vain?
No wave will bring, no gold will buy,
No toil attain;

“ ‘Nor any diver reach to raise
My jewel from the blue abyss;
Or could they, still I should but praise
Their work amiss.

“ ‘Thrown, thrown away! But I love yet
The fair, fair hand which did the deed:
That wayward sweetness to forget
Were bitter meed.

“ ‘No, let it lie, and let the wave
Roll over it for evermore;
Whelmed where the sailor hath his grave —
The sea her store.

“ ‘My heart, my sometime happy heart!
And O for once let me complain,
I must forego life’s better part —
Man’s dearer gain.

“ ‘I worked afar that I might rear
A peaceful home on English soil;
I labored for the gold and gear —
I loved my toil.

“ ‘Forever in my spirit spake
The natural whisper, “Well ’twill be
When loving wife and children break
Their bread with thee!”

“The gathered gold is turned to dross,
The wife hath faded into air,
My heart is thrown away, my loss
I cannot spare.

“Not spare unsated thought her food—
No, not one rustle of the fold,
Nor scent of eastern sandalwood,
Nor gleam of gold;

“Nor quaint devices of the shawl,
Far less the drooping lashes meek:
The gracious figure, lithe and tall,
The dimpled cheek;

“And all the wonders of her eyes,
And sweet caprices of her air,
Albeit, indignant reason cries,
Fool! have a care.

“Fool! join not madness to mistake;
Thou knowest she loved thee not a whit;
Only that she thy heart might break—
She wanted it,

“Only the conquered thing to chain
So fast that none might set it free,
Nor other woman there might reign
And comfort thee.

“Robbed, robbed of life's illusions sweet:
Love dead outside her closed door,
And passion fainting at her feet
To wake no more;

“What canst thou give that unknown bride
Whom thou didst work for in the waste,
Ere fated love was born, and cried—
Was dead, ungraced?

“No more but this, the partial care,
The natural kindness for its own,
The trust that waxeth unaware,
As worth is known:

“Observance, and complacent thought
Indulgent, and the honor due
That many another man has brought
Who brought love too.

“Nay, then, forbid it, Heaven!’ he said,
‘The saintly vision fades from me;
O bands and chains! I cannot wed—
I am not free.’”

With that he raised his face to view;
“What think you,” asking, “of my tale?
And was he right to let the dew
Of morn exhale,

“And burdened in the noontide sun,
The grateful shade of home forego—
Could he be right—I ask as one
Who fain would know?”

He spoke to her and spoke to me;
The rebel rose-hue dyed her cheek;
The woven crown lay on her knee;
She would not speak.

And I with doubtful pause—averse
To let occasion drift away—
I answered—“if his case were worse
Than word can say,

“Time is a healer of sick hearts,
And women have been known to choose,
With purpose to allay their smarts,
And tend their bruise,

"These for themselves. Content to give
In their own lavish love complete,
Taking for sole prerogative
Their tendance sweet.

"Such meeting in their diadem
Of crowning love's ethereal fire,
Himself he robs who robbeth them
Of their desire.

"Therefore the man who, dreaming, cried
Against his lot that evensong,
I judge him honest, and decide
That he was wrong."

"When I am judged, ah, may my fate,"
He whispered, "in thy code be read!
Be thou both judge and advocate."
Then turned, he said —

"Fair weaver!" touching, while he spoke
The woven crown, the weaving hand,
"And do you this decree revoke,
Or may it stand?"

"This friend, you ever think her right —
She is not wrong, then?" Soft and low
The little trembling word took flight:
She answered, "No."

PRESENT.

A meadow, where the grass was deep,
Rich, square, and golden to the view,
A belt of elms, with level sweep
About it grew.

The sun beat down on it, the line
Of shade was clear beneath the trees;
There, by a clustering eglantine,
We sat at ease.

And O the buttercups! that field
O' the cloth of gold, where pennons swam —
Where France set up his liliated shield,
His oriflamme.

And Henry's lion-standard rolled:
What was it to their matchless sheen,
Their million million drops of gold
Among the green!

We sat at ease in peaceful trust,
For he had written, "Let us meet;
My wife grew tired of smoke and dust,
And London heat,

"And I have found a quiet grange,
Set back in meadows sloping west,
And there our little ones can range
And she can rest.

"Come down, that we may show the view,
And she may hear your voice again,
And talk her woman's talk with you
Along the lane."

Since he had drawn with listless hand
The letter, six long years had fled,
And winds had blown about the sand,
And they were wed.

Two rosy urchins near him played,
Or watched, entranced, the shapely ships
That with his knife for them he made
Of elder slips.

And where the flowers were thickest shed,
 Each blossom like a burnished gem,
 A creeping baby reared its head,
 And ceced at them.

And calm was on the father's face,
 And love was in the mother's eyes;
 She looked and listened from her place,
 In tender wise.

She did not need to raise her voice
 That they might hear, she sat so nigh;
 Yet we could speak when 'twas our choice,
 And soft reply.

Holding our quiet talk apart
 Of household things; till, all unsealed,
 The guarded outworks of the heart
 Began to yield;

And much that prudence will not dip
 The pen to fix and send away,
 Passed safely over from the lip
 That summer day.

"I should be happy," with a look
 Towards her husband where he lay,
 Lost in the pages of his book,
 Soft did she say;

"I am, and yet no lot below
 For one whole day eludeth care;
 To marriage all the stories flow,
 And finish there:

"As if with marriage came the end,
 The entrance into settled rest,
 The calm to which love's tossings tend,
 The quiet breast.

"For me love played the low preludes,
 Yet life began but with the ring,
 Such infinite solicitudes
 Around it cling.

"I did not for my heart divine
 Her destiny so meek to grow;
 The higher nature matched with mine
 Will have it so.

"Still I consider it, and still
 Acknowledge it my master made,
 Above me by the steadier will
 Of naught afraid.

"Above me by the candid speech;
 The temperate judgment of its own;
 The keener thoughts that grasp and reach
 At things unknown.

"But I look up and he looks down,
 And thus our married eyes can meet;
 Unclouded his, and clear of frown,
 And gravely sweet.

"And yet, O good, O wise and true!
 I would for all my fealty,
 That I could be as much to you
 As you to me;

"And knew the deep secure content
 Of wives who have been hardly won
 And, long petitioned, gave assent,
 Jealous of none.

"But proudly sure in all the earth
 No other in that homage shares,
 Nor other woman's face or worth
 Is prized as theirs."

I said: "*And yet no lot below
For one whole day eludeth care.*
Your thought." She answered, "*Even so,
I would beware*

"*Regretful questionings; be sure
That very seldom do they rise,
Nor for myself do I endure —
I sympathize.*

"*For once*" — she turned away her head,
Across the grass she swept her hand —
"*There was a letter once,*" she said,
"*Upon the sand.*"

"*There was, in truth, a letter writ
On sand,*" I said, "*and swept from view,
But that same hand which fashioned it
Is given to you.*

"*Efface the letter; wherefore keep
An image which the sands forego!*"
"*Albeit that fear had seemed to sleep,*"
She answered low,

"*I could not choose but wake it now;
For do but turn aside your face,
A house on yonder hilly brow
Your eyes may trace.*

"*The chestnut shelters it; ah me,
That I should have so faint a heart!*
But yester eve, as by the sea
I sat apart,

"*I heard a name, I saw a hand
Of passing stranger point that way —
And will he meet her on the strand,
When late we stray?*

"*For she is come, for she is there,
I heard it in the dusk, and heard
Admiring words, that named her fair,
But little stirred*

"*By beauty of the wood and wave,
And weary of an old man's sway!*
For it was sweeter to enslave
Than to obey."

— The voice of one that near us stood,
The rustle of a silken fold,
A scent of eastern sandalwood,
A gleam of gold!

A lady! In the narrow space
Between the husband and the wife,
But nearest him — she showed a face
With dangers rife;

A subtle smile that dimpling fled,
As night-black lashes rose and fell:
I looked, and to myself I said,
"*The Letter L.*"

He, too, looked up, and with arrest
Of breath and motion held his gaze,
Nor cared to hide within his breast
His deep amaze;

Nor spoke till on her near advance
His dark cheek flushed a ruddier hue:
And with his change of countenance
Hers altered too.

"*Lenore!*" his voice was like the cry
Of one entreating; and he said
But that — then paused with such a sigh
As mourns the dead.

And seated near, with no demur
Of bashful doubt she silence broke,
Though I alone could answer her
When first she spoke.

She looked: her eyes were beauty's own;
She shed their sweetness into his;
Nor spared the married wife one moan
That bitterest is.

She spoke, and, lo, her loveliness
Methought she damaged with her tongue:
And every sentence made it less,
So false they rung.

The rallying voice, the light demand,
Half flippant, half unsatisfied;
The vanity sincere and bland—
The answers wide.

And now her talk was of the East,
And next her talk was of the sea;
“And has the love for it increased
You shared with me?”

He answered not, but grave and still
With earnest eyes her face perused,
And locked his lips with steady will,
As one that mused—

That mused and wondered. Why his gaze
Should dwell on her, methought, was plain;
But reason that should wonder raise
I sought in vain.

And near and near the children drew,
Attracted by her rich array,
And gems that trembling into view
Like raindrops lay.

He spoke: the wife her baby took
And pressed the little face to hers;
What pain see'er her bosom shook,
What jealous stirs

Might stab her heart, she hid them so,
The cooing babe a veil supplied;
And if she listened none might know
Or if she sighed;

Or if, forecasting grief and care,
Unconscious solace thence she drew
And lulled her babe, and unaware
Lulled sorrow too.

The lady, she interpreter
For look or language wanted none,
If yet dominion stayed with her—
So lightly won:

If yet the heart she wounded sore
Could yearn to her, and let her see
The homage that was evermore
Disloyalty;

If sign would yield that it had bled,
Or rallied from the faithless blow,
Or sick or sullen stooped to wed,
She craved to know.

Now dreamy deep, now sweetly keen,
Her asking eyes would round him shine;
But guarded lips and settled mien
Refused the sign.

And unbeguiled and unbetrayed,
The wonder yet within his breast,
It seemed a watchful part he played
Against her quest.

Until with accent of regret
 She touched upon the past once more,
 As if she dared him to forget
 His dream of yore.

And words of little weight let fall
 The fancy of the lower mind;
 How waxing life must needs leave all
 Its best behind;

How he had said that "he would fain
 (One morning on the halcyon sea)
 That life would at a stand remain
 Eternally;

"And sails be mirrored in the deep,
 As then they were for evermore,
 And happy spirits wake and sleep
 Afar from shore:

"The well-contented heart be fed
 Ever as then, and all the world
 (It were not small) unshadowed
 When sails were furled.

"Your words" — a pause, and quietly
 With touch of calm self-ridicule:

"It may be so — for then," said he,
 "I was a fool."

With that he took his book, and left
 An awkward silence to my care,
 That soon I filled with questions deft
 And debonair;

And slid into an easy vein,
 The favorite picture of the year;
 The grouse upon her lord's domain —
 The salmon weir;

Till she could feign a sudden thought
 Upon neglected guests, and rise
 And make us her adieux, with naught
 In her dark eyes

Acknowledging or shame or pain;
 But just unveiling for our view
 A little smile of still disdain
 As she withdrew.

Then nearer did the sunshine creep,
 And warmer came the wafting breeze;
 The little babe was fast asleep
 On mother's knees.

Fair was the face that o'er it leant,
 The cheeks with beauteous blushes dyed;
 The downcast lashes, shyly bent,
 That failed to hide

Some tender shame. She did not see;
 She felt his eyes that would not stir;
 She looked upon her babe, and he
 So looked at her.

So grave, so wondering, so content,
 As one new waked to conscious life,
 Whose sudden joy with fear is blent,
 He said, "My wife."

"My wife, how beautiful you are!"
 Then closer at her side reclined;
 "The bold brown woman from afar
 Comes, to me blind.

"And by comparison I see
 The majesty of matron grace,
 And learn how pure, how fair can be
 My own wife's face:

"Pure with all faithful passion, fair
With tender smiles that come and go;
And comforting as April air
After the snow.

"Fool that I was! my spirit frets
And marvels at the humbling truth,
That I have deigned to spend regrets
On my bruised youth.

"Its idol mocked thee, seated nigh,
And shamed me for the mad mistake;
I thank my God he could deny,
And she forsake.

"Ah, who am I, that God hath saved
Me from the doom I did desire,
And crossed the lot myself had craved,
To set me higher?

"What have I done that He should bow
From heaven to choose a wife for me?
And what deserved, He should endow
My home with THEE?

"My wife!" With that she turned her face
To kiss the hand about her neck;
And I went down and sought the place
Where leaped the beck —

The busy beck, that still would run
And fall, and falter its refrain;
And pause and shimmer in the sun,
And fall again.

It led me to the sandy shore,
We sang together, it and I —
"The daylight comes, the dark is o'er,
The shadows fly."

I lost it on the sandy shore,
"O wife!" its latest murmurs fell,
"O wife, be glad and fear no more
The letter L."

THE HIGH TIDE ON THE COAST OF LINCOLN- SHIRE.

(1571.)

THE old mayor climbed the belfry tower,
The ringers ran by two, by three;
"Pull, if ye never pulled before;
Good ringers, pull your best," quoth he.
"Play uppe, play uppe, O Boston bells!
Ply all your changes, all your swells,
Play uppe 'The Brides of Enderby.'"

Men say it was a stolen tyde —
The Lord that sent it, He knows all;
But in myne ears doth still abide
The message that the bells let fall:
And there was naught of strange, beside
The flight of mews and peewits pied
By millions crouched on the old sea wall.

I sat and spun within the doore,
My thread break off, I raised myne eyes;
The level sun, like ruddy ore,
Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,

"Pure with all faithful passion, fair
With tender smiles that come and go;
And comforting as April air
After the snow.

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And marvels at the humbling truth,
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Lay sinking in the barren skies;
And dark against day's golden death
She moved where Lindis wandereth,
My sonne's faire wife, Elizabeth.

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
Ere the early dews were falling,

Farre away I heard her song,
 "Cusha! Cusha!" all along;
 Where the reedy Lindis floweth,
 Floweth, floweth,
 From the meads where melick groweth
 Faintly came her milking song —

"Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
 "For the dews will soone be falling;
 Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot;
 Quit the stalks of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
 Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
 From the clovers lift your head;
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot,
 Come uppe, Jetty, rise and follow,
 Jetty to the milking shed."

If it be long, ay, long ago,
 When I beginne to think howe long,
 Againe I hear the Lindis flow,
 Swift as an arrowe, sharpe and strong;
 And all the aire, it seemeth mee,
 Bin full of floating bells (sayth shee),
 That ring the tune of Enderby.

Alle fresh the level pasture lay,
 And not a shadowe mote be seene,
 Save where full fyve good miles away
 The steeple towered from out the greene;
 And lo! the great bell farre and wide
 Was heard in all the country side
 That Saturday at eventide.

The swanherds where their sedges are
 Moved on in sunset's golden breath,
 The shepherde lads I heard afarre,
 And my sonne's wife, Elizabeth;
 Till floating o'er the grassy sea
 Came downe that kyndly message free,
 The "Brides of Mavis Enderby."

Then some looked uppe into the sky,
 And all along where Lindis flows
 To where the goodly vessels lie,
 And where the lordly steeple shows.
 They sayde, "And why should this thing be?
 What danger lowers by land or sea?
 They ring the tune of Enderby!"

"For evil news from Mablethorpe,
 Of pyrate galleys warping down;
 For shippes ashore beyond the scorpe,
 They have not spared to wake the towne;
 But while the west bin red to see,
 And storms be none, and pyrates flee,
 Why ring 'The Brides of Enderby'?"

I looked without, and lo! my sonne
 Came riding downe with might and main:
 He raised a shout as he drew on,
 Till all the welkin rang again,
 "Elizabeth! Elizabeth!"

(A sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.)

"The olde sea wall (he cried) is downe,
 The rising tide comes on apace,
 And boats adrift in yonder towne
 Go sailing uppe the market-place."
 He shook as one that looks on death:
 "God save you, mother!" straight he saith;
 "Where is my wife, Elizabeth?"

"Good sonne, where Lindis winds her way,
 With her two bairns I marked her long;
 And ere young bells beganne to play
 Afar I heard her milking song."
 He looked across the grassy lea,
 To right, to left, "Ho, Enderby!"
 They rang "The Brides of Enderby!"
 With that he cried and beat his breast;
 For lo! along the river's bed
 A mighty eygre reared his crest,
 And uppe the Lindis raging sped.
 It swept with thunderous noises loud;
 Shaped like a curling snow-white cloud,
 Or like a demon in a shroud.
 And rearing Lindis backward pressed
 Shook all her trembling bankes amaine;
 Then madly at the eygre's breast
 Flung uppe her weltering walls again.
 Then bankes came downe with ruin and rout—
 Then beaten foam flew round about—
 Then all the mighty floods were out.
 So farre, so fast the eygre drave,
 The heart had hardly time to beat
 Before a shallow seething wave
 Sobbed in the grasses at oure feet:
 The feet had hardly time to flee
 Before it brake against the knee,
 And all the world was in the sea.
 Upon the roofe we sate that night,
 The noise of bells went sweeping by;
 I marked the lofty beacon light
 Stream from the church tower, red and high—
 A lurid mark and dread to see;
 And awsome bells they were to mee,
 That in the dark rang "Enderby."

They rang the sailor lads to guide
 From roofe to roofe who fearless rowed;
 And I—my sonne was at my side,
 And yet the ruddy beacon glowed;
 And yet he moaned beneath his breath,
 "O come in life, or come in death!
 O lost! my love, Elizabeth."
 And didst thou visit him no more?
 Thou didst, thou didst, my daughter deare,
 The waters laid thee at his doore,
 Ere yet the early dawn was clear.
 The pretty bairns in fast embrace,
 The lifted sun shone on thy face,
 Downe drifted to thy dwelling-place.
 That flow strewed wrecks about the grass,
 That ebbe swept out the flocks to sea;
 A fatal ebbe and flow, alas!
 To manye more than myne and mee:
 But each will mourn his own (she saith);
 And sweeter woman ne'er drew breath
 Than my sonne's wife, Elizabeth.
 I shall never hear her more
 By the reedy Lindis shore,
 "Cusha! Cusha! Cusha!" calling,
 Ere the early dewes be falling;
 I shall never hear her song,
 "Cusha! Cusha!" all along
 Where the sunny Lindis floweth,
 Goeth, floweth;
 From the meads where melick groweth,
 When the water winding down,
 Onward floweth to the town.
 I shall never see her more
 Where the reeds and rushes quiver,

Shiver, quiver;
 Stand beside the sobbing river,
 Sobbing, throbbing, in its falling
 To the sandy lonesome shore;
 I shall never hear her calling,
 "Leave your meadow grasses mellow,
 Mellow, mellow;
 Quit your cowslips, cowslips yellow;
 Come uppe, Whitefoot, come uppe, Lightfoot;
 Quit your pipes of parsley hollow,
 Hollow, hollow;
 Come uppe, Lightfoot, rise and follow;
 Lightfoot, Whitefoot,
 From your clovers lift the head:
 Come uppe, Jetty, follow, follow,
 Jetty, to the milking shed."

AFTERNOON AT A PARSONAGE.

(THE PARSON'S BROTHER, SISTER, AND TWO CHILDREN.)

Preface.

WHAT wonder man should fail to stay
 A nursling wafted from above,
 The growth celestial come astray,
 That tender growth whose name is Love?
 It is as if high winds in heaven
 Had shaken the celestial trees,
 And to this earth below had given
 Some feathered seeds from one of these.
 O perfect love that dureth long!
 Dear growth, that shaded by the palms,
 And breathed on by the angel's song,
 Blooms on in heaven's eternal calms!

How great the task to guard thee here,
 Where wind is rough, and frost is keen,
 And all the ground with doubt and fear
 Is checkered birth and death between!

Space is against thee -- it can part;
 Time is against thee -- it can chill;
 Words -- but they render half the heart;
 Deeds -- they are poor to our rich will.

Merton. Though she had loved me, I had never
 bound

Her beauty to my darkness; that had been
 Too hard for her. Sadder to look so near
 Into a face all shadow, than to stand
 Aloof, and then withdraw, and afterwards
 Suffer forgetfulness to comfort her.

I think so, and I loved her; therefore I
 Have no complaint; albeit she is not mine:
 And yet -- and yet, withdrawing I would fain
 She would have pleaded duty -- would have said
 "My father wills it;" would have turned away,
 As lingering, or unwillingly; for then
 She would have done no damage to the past:
 Now she has roughly used it -- flung it down
 And brushed its bloom away. If she had said,
 "Sir, I have promised; therefore, lo! my hand" --
 Would I have taken it? Ah, no! by all
 Most sacred, no!

I would for my sole share
 Have taken first her recollected blush
 The day I won her; next her shining tears --
 The tears of our long parting: and for all
 The rest -- her cry, her bitter heartsick cry,
 That day or night (I know not which it was,

The days being always night), that darkest night,
When being led to her I heard her cry,
"O blind! blind! blind!"

Go with thy chosen mate
The fashion of thy going nearly cured
The sorrow of it. I am yet so weak
That half my thoughts go after thee; but not
So weak that I desire to have it so.

JESSIE, seated at the piano, sings.

When the dimpled water slippeth,
Full of laughter, on its way,
And her wing the wagtail dippeth,
Running by the brink at play;
When the poplar leaves atremble
Turn their edges to the light,
And the far-up clouds resemble
Veils of gauze most clear and white;
And the sunbeams fall and flatter
Woodland moss and branches brown,
And the glossy finches chatter
Up and down, up and down:
Though the heart be not attending,
Having music of her own,
On the grass, through meadows wending,
It is sweet to walk alone.

When the falling waters utter
Something mournful on their way,
And departing swallows flutter
Taking leave of bank and brae;
When the chaffinch idly sitteth
With her mate upon the sheaves,
And the wistful robin flitteth
Over beads of yellow leaves;
When the clouds, like ghosts that ponder
Evil fate, float by and frown,

And the listless wind doth wander
Up and down, up and down:
Though the heart be not attending,
Having sorrows of her own,
Through the fields and fallows wending,
It is sad to walk alone.

Merton. Blind! blind! blind!

Oh! sitting in the dark for evermore,
And doing nothing — putting out a hand
To feel what lies about me, and to say
Not "This is blue or red," but "This is cold,
And this the sun is shining on, and this
I know not till they tell its name to me."

O that I might behold once more, my God!
The shining rulers of the night and day;
Or a star twinkling; or an almond-tree,
Pink with her blossom and alive with bees,
Standing against the azure! O my sight!
Lost, and yet living in the sunlit cells
Of memory — that only lightsome place
Where lingers yet the dayspring of my youth:
The years of mourning for thy death are long.

Be kind, sweet memory! O desert me not!
For oft thou show'st me lucent opal seas,
Fringed with their cocoa-palms, and dwarf red crags,
Whereon the placid moon doth "rest her chin;"
For oft by favor of thy visitings
I feel the dimness of an Indian night,
And lo! the sun is coming. Red as rust
Between the latticed blind his presence burns,
A ruby ladder running up the wall;
And all the dust, printed with pigeons' feet,
Is reddened, and the crows that stalk anear

Begin to trail for heat their glossy wings,
And the red flowers give back at once the dew,
For night is gone, and day is born so fast,
And is so strong, that, huddled as in flight
The fleeting darkness paleth to a shade,
And while she calls to sleep and dreams "Come on,"
Suddenly waked, the sleepers rub their eyes,
Which having opened, lo! she is no more.

O misery and mourning! I have felt —
Yes, I have felt like some deserted world
That God had done with, and had cast aside
To rock and stagger through the gulfs of space,
He never looking on it any more —
Untilled, no use, no pleasure, not desired,
Nor lighted on by angels in their flight
From heaven to happier planets, and the race
That once had dwelt on it withdrawn or dead.
Could such a world have hope that some blest day
God would remember her, and fashion her
Anew?

Jessie. What, dearest? Did you speak to me?

Child. I think he spoke to us.

M. No, little elves

You were so quiet that I half forgot
Your neighborhood. What are you doing there?

F. They sit together on the window-mat
Nursing their dolls.

C. Yes, Uncle, our new dolls —
Our best dolls, that you gave us.

M. Did you say
The afternoon was bright?

F. Yes, bright indeed!
The sun is on the plane-tree, and it flames
All red and orange.

C. I can see my father —
Look! look! the leaves are falling on his gown.

M. Where?

C. In the churchyard, Uncle — he is gone;
He passed behind the tower.

M. I heard a bell:
There is a funeral, then, behind the church.

2d Child. Are the trees sorry when their leaves
drop off?

1st Child. You talk such silly words; — no, not
at all.

There goes another leaf.

2d Child. I did not see. [hills,

1st Child. Look! on the grass, between the little
Just where they planted Amy.

F. Amy died —
Dear little Amy! when you talk of her,
Say, she is gone to heaven.

2d Child. They planted her —
Will she come up next year?

1st Child. No, not so soon;
But some day God will call her to come up,
And then she will. Papa knows every thing —
He said she would before he planted her.

2d Child. It was at night she went to heaven
Last night

We saw a star before we went to bed.

1st Child. Yes, Uncle, did you know?

A large bright star,
And at her side she had some little ones —
Some young ones.

M. Young ones! no, my little maid,
Those stars are very old.

1st Child. What! all of them?

M. Yes.

1st Child. Older than our father?

M. Older, far.

2d Child. They must be tired of shining there so long.

Perhaps they wish they might come down.

F. Perhaps!

Dear children, talk of what you understand.

Come, I must lift the trailing creepers up

That last night's wind has loosened.

1st Child. May we help?

Aunt, may we help to nail them!

F. We shall see.

Go, find and bring the hammer, and some shreds.

[Steps outside the window, lifts a branch and sings.]

Should I change my allegiance for rancor

If fortune changes her side?

Or should I, like a vessel at anchor,

Turn with the turn of the tide?

Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky;

An thou wilt, thy gloom forego!

An thou wilt not, he and I

Need not part for drifts of snow.

M. [within]. Lift! no, thou lowering sky, thou wilt not lift—

Thy motto readeth, "Never."

Children. Here they are!

Here are the nails! and may we help?

F. You shall,

If I should want help.

1st Child. Will you want it then?

Please want it—we like nailing.

2d Child. Yes, we do.

F. It seems I ought to want it; hold the bough,
And each may nail in turn,

[Sings.]

Like a daisy I was, near him growing:

Must I move because favors flag,

And be like a brown wall-flower blowing

Far out of reach in a crag?

Lift! O lift, thou lowering sky;

An thou canst, thy blue regain!

And thou canst not, he and I

Need not part for drops of rain.

1st Child. Now, have we nailed enough?

J. [trains the creepers]. Yes, you may go;

But do not play too near the churchyard path.

M. [within]. Even misfortune does not strike so near

As my dependence. O, in youth and strength

To sit a timid coward in the dark,

And feel before I set a cautious step!

It is so very dark, so far more dark

Than any night that day comes after—night

In which there would be stars, or else at least

The silvered portion of a sombre cloud

Through which the moon is plunging.

J. [entering]. Merton!

M. Yes.

J. Dear Merton, did you know that I could hear?

M. No: e'en my solitude is not mine now,

And if I be alone is oftentimes doubt.

Alas! far more than eyesight have I lost;

For manly courage drifteth after it—

E'en as a splintered spar would drift away

From some dismantled wreck. Hear, I complain—

Like a weak ailing woman I complain.

J. For the first time.

M. I cannot bear the dark.

J. My brother! you do bear it—bear it well—
Have borne it twelve long months, and not complained.

Comfort your heart with music: all the air
Is warm with sunbeams where the organ stands.
You like to feel them on you. Come and play.

M. My fate, my fate, is lonely!

J. So it is —

I know it is.

M. And pity breaks my heart.

J. Does it, dear Merton?

M. Yes, I say it does.

What! do you think I am so dull of ear
That I can mark no changes in the tones
That reach me? Once I liked not girlish pride
And that coy quiet, chary of reply,
That held me distant: now the sweetest lips
Open to entertain me — fairest hands
Are proffered me to guide.

J. That is not well?

M. No: give me coldness, pride, or still disdain,
Gentle withdrawal. Give me anything
But this — a fearless, sweet, confiding ease,
Whereof I may expect, I may exact,
Considerate care, and have it — gentle speech,
And have it. Give me anything but this!
For they who give it, give it in the faith
That I will not misdeem them, and forget
My doom so far as to perceive thereby
Hope of a wife. They make this thought too plain;
They wound me — O they cut me to the heart!
When have I said to any one of them,
“I am a blind and desolate man; — come here,
I pray you — be as eyes to me?” When said,
Even to her whose pitying voice is sweet
To my dark ruined heart, as must be hands
That clasp a lifelong captive’s through the grate,
And who will ever lend her delicate aid
To guide me, dark incumbrance that I am! —

When have I said to her, “Comforting voice,
Belonging to a face unknown, I pray
Be my wife’s voice?”

J. Never, my brother — no,
You never have!

M. What could she think of me
If I forgot myself so far? or what
Could she reply?

J. You ask not as men ask
Who care for an opinion, else, perhaps,
Although I am not sure — although, perhaps,
I have no right to give one — I should say
She would reply, “I will!”

Afterthought.

Man dwells apart, though not alone,
He walks among his peers unread;
The best of thoughts which he hath known
For lack of listeners are not said.

Yet dreaming on earth’s clustered isles,
He saith, “They dwell not lone like men.”
Forgetful that their sunflecked smiles
Flash far beyond each other’s ken.

He looks on God’s eternal suns
That sprinkle the celestial blue,
And saith, “Ah! happy shining ones,
I would that men were grouped like you!”

Yet this is sure: the loveliest star
That clustered with its peers we see,
Only because from us so far
Doth near its fellows seem to be.

SONGS OF SEVEN.

SEVEN TIMES ONE. EXULTATION.

THERE'S no dew left on the daisies and clover,
 There's no rain left in heaven :
 I've said my "seven times" over and over,
 Seven times one are seven.

I am old, so old, I can write a letter ;
 My birthday lessons are done ;
 The lambs play always, they know no better ;
 They are only one times one.

O moon ! in the night I have seen you sailing
 And shining so round and low ;
 You were bright ! ah, bright ! but your light is fail-
 ing, —

You are nothing now but a bow.

You moon, have you done something wrong in heaven
 That God has hidden your face ?
 I hope if you have you will soon be forgiven,
 And shine again in your place.

O velvet bee, you're a dusty fellow,
 You've powdered your legs with gold !
 O brave marsh marybuds, rich and yellow.
 Give me your money to hold !

O columbine, open your folded wrapper,
 Where two twin turtle-doves dwell !
 O cuckoopint, toll me the purple clapper
 That hangs in your clear green bell !

And show me your nest with the young ones in it ;
 I will not steal them away ;
 I am old ! you may trust me, linnet, linnet —
 I am seven times one to-day.

SEVEN TIMES TWO. ROMANCE.

You bells in the steeple, ring, ring out your changes.
 How many soever they be.
 And let the brown meadow-lark's note as he ranges
 Come over, come over to me.

Yet birds' clearest carol by fall or by swelling
 No magical sense conveys.
 And bells have forgotten their old art of telling
 The fortune of future days.

"Turn again, turn again," once they rang cheerily,
 While a boy listened alone ;
 Made his heart yearn again, musing so wearily
 All by himself on a stone.

Poor bells ! I forgive you ; your good days are over,
 And mine, they are yet to be ;
 No listening, no longing shall aught, aught discover
 You leave the story to me.

The foxglove shoots out of the green matted heather
 Preparing her hoods of snow ;
 She was idle, and slept till the sunshiny weather :
 O, children take long to grow.

I wish and I wish that the spring would go faster,
 Nor long summer bide so late ;
 And I could grow on like the foxglove and aster,
 For some things are ill to wait.

I wait for the day when dear hearts shall discover,
 While dear hands are laid on my head ;
 "The child is a woman, the book may close over,
 For all the lessons are said."

I wait for my story — the birds cannot sing it,
 Not one, as he sits on the tree;
 The bells cannot ring it, but long years, O bring it!
 Such as I wish it to be.

SEVEN TIMES THREE. LOVE.

I leaned out of window, I smelt the white clover,
 Dark, dark was the garden, I saw not the gate;
 "Now, if there be footsteps, he comes, my one
 lover —

Hush, nightingale, hush! O, sweet nightingale,
 wait

Till I listen and hear
 If a step draweth near,
 For my love he is late!

"The skies in the darkness stoop nearer and nearer,
 A cluster of stars hangs like fruit in the tree,
 The fall of the water comes sweeter, comes clearer:
 To what art thou listening, and what dost thou
 see?

Let the star-clusters grow,
 Let the sweet waters flow,
 And cross quickly to me.

"You night moths that hover where honey brims
 over

From sycamore blossoms, or settle or sleep;
 You glowworms, shine out, and the pathway discover
 To him that comes darkling along the rough steep.

Ah, my sailor, make haste,
 For the time runs to waste,
 And my love lieth deep —

"Too deep for swift telling; and yet, my one lover,
 I've conned thee an answer, it waits thee to-night."
 By the sycamore passed he, and through the white
 clover,

Then all the sweet speech I had fashioned took
 flight;
 But I'll love him more, more
 Than e'er wife loved before,
 Be the days dark or bright.

SEVEN TIMES FOUR. MATERNITY.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
 Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall!
 When the wind wakes how they rock in the grasses,
 And dance with the cuckoo-buds slender and small!
 Here's two bonny boys, and here's mother's own lasses
 Eager to gather them all.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups!
 Mother shall thread them a daisy chain;
 Sing them a song of the pretty hedge sparrow,
 That loved her brown little ones, loved them full
 fain:

Sing, "Heart, thou art wide though the house be
 but narrow" —

Sing once, and sing it again.

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
 Sweet wagging cowslips they bend and they bow;
 A ship sails afar over warm ocean waters,
 And haply one musing doth stand at her prow.
 O bonny brown sons, and O sweet little daughters,
 Maybe he thinks on you now!

Heigh ho! daisies and buttercups,
 Fair yellow daffodils, stately and tall!
 A sunshiny world full of laughter and leisure,
 And fresh hearts unconscious of sorrow and thrall!
 Send down on their pleasure smiles passing its meas-
 ure,

God that is over us all!

SEVEN TIMES FIVE. WIDOWHOOD.

I sleep and rest, my heart makes moan
Before I am well awake;
"Let me bleed! O let me alone,
Since I must not break!"

For children wake, though fathers sleep
With a stone at foot and head:
O sleepless God, forever keep,
Keep both living and dead!

I lift mine eyes, and what to see
And a world happy and fair!
I have not wished it to mourn with me —
Comfort is not there.

O what anear but golden brooms,
But a waste of reedy rills!
O what afar but the fine glooms
On the rare blue hills!

I shall not die, but live forlore —
How bitter it is to part!
O to meet thee, my love, once more!
O my heart, my heart!

No more to hear, no more to see!
O that an echo might wake
And waft one note of thy psalm to me
Ere my heart-strings break!

I should know it how faint soe'er,
And with angel voices blent;
O once to feel thy spirit anear;
I could be content!

Or once between the gates of gold,
While an entering angel trod,
But once — thee sitting to behold
On the hills of God!

SEVEN TIMES SIX. GIVING IN MARRIAGE.

To bear, to nurse, to rear,
To watch, and then to lose:
To see my bright ones disappear,
Drawn up like morning dews —
To bear, to nurse, to rear,
To watch, and then to lose:
This have I done when God drew near
Among his own to choose.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
And with thy lord depart
In tears that he, as soon as shed,
Will let no longer smart. —
To hear, to heed, to wed,
This while thou didst I smiled,
For now it was not God who said,
"Mother, give me thy child."

O fond, O fool, and blind!
To God I gave with tears;
But when a man like grace would find,
My soul put by her fears —
O fond, O fool, and blind!
God guards in happier spheres;
That man will guard where he did bind
Is hope for unknown years.

To hear, to heed, to wed,
Fair lot that maidens choose,
Thy mother's tenderest words are said,
Thy face no more she views:

Thy mother's lot, my dear,
 She doth in nought accuse;
 Her lot to bear, to nurse, to rear,
 To love — and then to lose.

SEVEN TIMES SEVEN. LONGING FOR HOME.

I.

A song of a boat: —

There was once a boat on a billow:
 Lightly she rocked to her port remote,
 And the foam was white in her wake like snow,
 And her frail mast bowed when the breeze would blow,
 And bent like a wand of willow.

II.

I shaded mine eyes one day when a boat
 Went curtseying over the billow,
 I marked her course till a dancing mote
 She faded out on the moonlit foam,
 And I stayed behind in the dear loved home;
 And my thoughts all day were about the boat
 And my dreams upon the pillow.

III.

I pray you hear my song of a boat,
 For it is but short: —
 My boat you shall find none fairer afloat,
 In river or port.
 Long I looked out for the lad she bore,
 On the open desolate sea,
 And I think he sailed to the heavenly shore,
 For he came not back to me —
 Ah me!

IV.

A song of a nest: —

There was once a nest in a hollow:
 Down in the mosses and knot-grass pressed,
 Soft and warm, and full to the brim —
 Vetches leaned over it purple and dim,
 With buttercup buds to follow.

V.

I pray you hear my song of a nest,
 For it is not long: —
 You shall never light, in a summer quest,
 The bushes among —
 Shall never light on a prouder sitter,
 A fairer nestful, nor ever know
 A softer sound than their tender twitter,
 That wind-like did come and go.

VI.

I had a nestful once of my own,
 Ah, happy, happy I!
 Right dearly I loved them: but when they were
 grown
 They spread out their wings to fly —
 O, one after one they flew away
 Far up to the heavenly blue,
 To the better country, the upper day,
 And — I wish I was going too.

VII.

I pray you what is the nest to me,
 My empty nest?
 And what is the shore where I stood to see
 My boat sail down to the west?
 Can I call that home where I anchor yet,
 Though my good man has sailed?
 Can I call that home where my nest was set,
 Now all its hope hath failed?

Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
 And the land where my nestlings be :
 There is the home where my thoughts are sent,
 The only home for me —
 Ah me !

A COTTAGE IN A CHINE

We reached the place by night,
 And heard the waves breaking :
 They came to meet us with candles alight
 To show the path we were taking.
 A myrtle, trained on the gate, was white
 With tufted flowers down shaking.

With head beneath her wing,
 A little wren was sleeping —
 So near, I had found it an easy thing
 To steal her for my keeping
 From the myrtle bough that with easy swing
 Across the path was sweeping.

Down rocky steps rough-hewed,
 Where cup-mosses flowered,
 And under the trees, all twisted and rude,
 Wherewith the dell was dowered,
 They led us, where deep in its solitude
 Lay the cottage, leaf-embowered.

The thatch was all bespread
 With climbing passion flowers ;
 They were wet, and glistened with rain-drops, shed
 That day in genial showers.
 " Was never a sweeter nest," we said,
 " Than this little nest of ours."

We laid us down to sleep :
 But as for me — waking,
 I marked the plunge of the muffled deep
 On its sandy reaches breaking ;
 For heart-joyance doth sometimes keep
 From slumber, like heart-aching.

And I was glad that night,
 With no reason ready,
 To give my own heart for its deep delight,
 That flowed like some tidal eddy,
 Or shone like a star that was rising bright
 With comforting radiance steady.

But on a sudden — hark !
 Music struck asunder
 Those meshes of bliss, and I wept in the dark,
 So sweet was the unseen wonder ;
 So swiftly it touched, as if struck at a mark,
 The trouble that joy kept under.

I rose — the moon outshone :
 I saw the sea heaving,
 And a little vessel sailing alone,
 The small crisp wavelet cleaving ;
 'Twas she as she sailed to her port unknown —
 Was that track of sweetness leaving.

We know they music made
 In heaven, ere man's creation ;
 But when God threw it down to us that strayed,
 It dropt with lamentation,
 And ever since doth its sweetness shade
 With sighs for its first station.
 Its joy suggests regret —
 Its most for more is yearning ;
 And it brings to the soul that its voice hath met

Nay, but the port where my sailor went,
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No rest that cadence learning,
But a conscious part in the sighs that fret
Its nature for returning.

O Eve, sweet Eve! methought
When sometimes comfort winning,
As she watched the first children's tender sport,
Sole joy born since her sinning,
If a bird anear them sang, it brought
The pang as at beginning.

While swam the unshed tear,
Her prattlers, little heeding,
Would murmur, "This bird, with its carol clear,
When the red clay was kneaden,
And God made Adam our father dear,
Sang to him thus in Eden."

The moon went in — the sky
And earth and sea hiding;
I laid me down, with the yearning sigh
Of that strain in my heart abiding;
I slept, and the bark that had sailed so nigh
In my dream was ever gliding.

I slept, but waked amazed,
With sudden noise frightened,
And voices without, and a flash that dazed
My eyes from candles lighted.
"Ah! surely," methought, "by these shouts upraised
Some travellers are benighted."

A voice was at my side —
"Waken, madam, waken!
The long prayed-for ship at her anchor doth ride.
Let the child from its rest be taken,
For the captain doth weary for babe and for bride —
Waken, madam, waken!"

"The home you left but late,
He speeds to it light-hearted;
By the wires he sent this news, and straight
To you with it they started."
O joy for a yearning heart too great,
O union for the parted!

We rose up in the night,
The morning star was shining;
We carried the child in its slumber light
Out by the myrtles twining:
Orion over the sea hung bright,
And glorious in declining.

Mother, to meet her son,
Smiled first, then wept the rather;
And wife, to bind up those links undone,
And cherished words to gather,
And to show the face of her little one,
That had never seen its father.

That cottage in a chine,
We were not to behold it;
But there may the purest of sunbeams shine,
May freshest flowers enfold it,
For the sake of the news which our hearts must twin
With the bower where we were told it!

Now oft, left alone again,
Sit mother and sit daughter,
And bless the good ship that sailed over the main,
And the favoring winds that brought her;
While still some new beauty they fable and feign
For the cottage by the water.

PERSEPHONE.

[Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY, January, 1862.]

Subject given — "Light and Shade."

SHE stepped upon Sicilian grass,
Demeter's daughter fresh and fair,
A child of light, a radiant lass,
And gamesome as the morning air.

The daffodils were fair to see,
They nodded lightly on the lea,
Persephone — Persephone!

Lo! one she marked of rarer growth
Than orchis or anemone;
For it the maiden left them both,
And parted from her company.
Drawn nigh she deemed it fairer still,
And stooped to gather by the rill
The daffodil, the daffodil.

What ailed the meadow that it shook?
What ailed the air of Sicily?

She wondered by the brattling brook,
And trembled with the trembling lea.

"The coal-black horses rise — they rise;
O mother, mother!" low she cries —
Persephone — Persephone!

"O light, light, light!" she cries, "farewell;

The coal-black horses wait for me.

O shade of shades, where I must dwell,
Demeter, mother, far from thee!

Ah, fated doom that I fulfil!

Ah, fateful flower beside the rill!

The daffodil, the daffodil!"

What ails her that she comes not home?

Demeter seeks her far and wide,

And gloomy-browed doth ceaseless roam

From many a morn till eventide.

"My life, immortal though it be,
Is nought," she cries, "for want of thee,
Persephone — Persephone!"

"Meadows of Enna, let the rain

No longer drop to feed your rills,

Nor dew refresh the fields again,

With all their nodding daffodils!

Fade, fade and droop, O lilled lea,

Where thou, dear heart, wert reft from me —

Persephone — Persephone!"

She reigns upon her dusky throne,

'Mid shades of heroes dread to see;

Among the dead she breathes alone,

Persephone — Persephone!

Or seated on the Elysian hill

She dreams of earthly daylight still,

And murmurs of the daffodil.

A voice in Hades soundeth clear,

The shadows mourn and flit below;

It cries — "Thou Lord of Hades, hear.

And let Demeter's daughter go.

The tender corn upon the lea

Droops in her goddess gloom when she

Cries for her lost Persephone.

"From land to land she raging flies,

The green fruit falleth in her wake.

And harvest fields beneath her eyes

To earth the grain unripened shake.

Arise, and set the maiden free;

Why should the world such sorrow dree

By reason of Persephone?"

He takes the cleft pomegranate seeds :
 " Love, eat with me this parting day ;"
 Then bids them fetch the coal-black steeds —
 " Demeter's daughter, wouldst away ?"
 The gates of Hades set her free ;
 " She will return full soon," said he —
 " My wife, my wife Persephone."
 Low laughs the dark king on his throne —
 " I gave her of pomegranate seeds."
 Demeter's daughter stands alone
 Upon the fair Eleusian meads.
 Her mother meets her. " Hail," saith she ;
 " And doth our daylight dazzle thee,
 My love, my child Persephone ?"
 " What moved thee, daughter, to forsake
 Thy fellow-maids that fatal morn,
 And give thy dark lord the power to take
 Thee living to his realm forlorn ?"
 Her lips reply without her will,
 As one addressed who slumbereth still —
 " The daffodil, the daffodil !"
 Her eyelids droop with light oppressed,
 And sunny wafts that round her stir,
 Her cheek upon her mother's breast —
 Demeter's kisses comfort her.
 Calm Queen of Hades, art thou she
 Who stepped so lightly on the lea —
 Persephone, Persephone ?
 When, in her destined course, the moon
 Meets the deep shadow of this world,
 And laboring on doth seem to swoon
 Through awful wastes of dimness whirled —
 Emerged at length, no trace hath she
 Of that dark hour of destiny,
 Still silvery sweet — Persephone.

The greater world may near the less,
 And draw it through her weltering shade,
 But not one biding trace impress
 Of all the darkness that she made :
 The greater soul that draweth thee
 Hath left his shadow plain to see
 On thy dear face, Persephone !

Demeter sighs, but sure 'tis well
 The wife should love her destiny :
 They part, and yet, as legends tell,
 She mourns her lost Persephone ;
 While chant the maids of Enna still —
 " O fateful flower beside the rill —
 The daffodil, the daffodil !"

A SEA SONG.

OLD ALBION sat on a crag of late,
 And sung out — " Ahoy ! ahoy !
 Long life to the captain, good luck to the mate,
 And this to my sailor boy !
 Come over, come home,
 Through the salt foam,
 My sailor, my sailor boy !

" Here's a crown to be given away, I ween,
 A crown for my sailor's head,
 And all for the worth of a widowed queen,
 And the love of the noble dead.
 And the fear and fame
 Of the island's name
 Where my boy was born and bred.

" Content thee, content thee, let it alone,
 Thou marked for a choice so rare :

Though treaties be treaties, never a throne
Was proffered for cause as fair.
Yet come to me home,
Through the salt sea foam,
For the Greek must ask elsewhere.

"'Tis a pity, my sailor, but who can tell?
Many lands they look to me;
One of these might be wanting a Prince as well,
But that's as hereafter may be."
She raised her white head
And laughed; and she said,
"That's as hereafter may be."

BROTHERS, AND A SERMON.

It was a village built in a green rent,
Between two cliffs that skirt the dangerous bay.

A reef of level rock runs out to sea,
And you may lie on it and look sheer down,
Just where the "Grace of Sunderland" was lost,
And see the elastic banners of the dulse
Rock softly, and the orange star-fish creep
Across the laver, and the mackerel shoot
Over and under it, like silver boats
Turning at will and plying under water.

There on that reef we lay upon our breasts,
My brother and I, and half the village lads,
For an old fisherman had called to us [they?"
With "Sirs, the syle be come." "And what are
My brother said. "Good lack!" the old man cried,
And shook his head; "to think you gentlefolk
Should ask what syle be! Look you; I can't say
What syle be called in your fine dictionaries,

Nor what name God Almighty calls them by
When their food's ready and He sends them south:
But our folk call them syle, and nought but syle,
And when they're grown, why then we call them
herring.

I tell you, Sir, the water is as full
Of them as pastures be of blades of grass;
You'll draw a score out in a landing net,
And none of them be longer than a pin.

"Syle! ay, indeed, we should be badly off.
I reckon, and so would God Almighty's gulls,"
He grumbled on in his quaint piety,
"And all His other birds, if He should say
I will not drive my syle into the south;
The fisher folk may do without my syle,
And do without the shoal of fish it draws
To follow and feed on it."

This said, we made
Our peace with him by means of two small coins,
And down we ran and lay upon the reef,
And saw the swimming infants, emerald green,
In separate shoals, the scarcely turning ebb
Bringing them in; while sleek, and not intent
On chase, but taking that which came to hand,
The full-fed mackerel and the gurnet swam
Between; and settling on the polished sea,
A thousand snow-white gulls sat lovingly
In social rings, and twittered while they fed.
The village dogs and ours, elate and brave,
Lay looking over, barking at the fish;
Fast, fast the silver creatures took the bait.
And when they heaved and floundered on the rock,
In beauteous misery, a sudden pat
Some shaggy pup would deal, then back away,
At distance eye them with sagacious doubt,
And shrink half frightened from the slippery things.

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Some shaggy pup would deal, then back away,
At distance eye them with sagacious doubt,
And shrink half frightened from the slippery things.

And so we lay from ebb-tide, till the flow
 Rose high enough to drive us from the reef;
 The fisher lads went home across the sand;
 We climbed the cliff, and sat an hour or more,
 Talking and looking down. It was not talk
 Of much significance, except for this —
 That we had more in common than of old,
 For both were tired, I with overwork,
 He with inaction; I was glad at heart
 To rest, and he was glad to have an ear
 That he could grumble to, and half in jest
 Rail at entails, deplore the fate of heirs,
 And the misfortune of a good estate —
 Misfortune that was sure to pull him down,
 Make him a dreamy, selfish, useless man:
 Indeed he felt himself deteriorate
 Already. Thereupon he sent down showers
 Of clattering stones, to emphasize his words,
 And leap the cliffs and tumble noisily
 Into the seething wave. And as for me,
 I railed at him and at ingratitude,
 While rifling of the basket he had slung
 Across his shoulders; then with right good will
 We fell to work, and feasted like the gods,
 Like laborers, or like eager workhouse folk
 At Yuletide dinner; or, to say the whole
 At once, like tired, hungry, healthy youth,
 Until the meal being o'er, the tilted flask
 Drained of its latest drop, the meat and bread
 And ruddy cherries eaten, and the dogs
 Mumbling the bones, this elder brother of mine —
 This man that never felt an ache or pain
 In his broad, well-knit frame, and never knew
 The trouble of an unforgiven grudge,
 The sting of a regretted meanness, nor
 The desperate struggle of the unendowed
 For place and for possession — he began

To sing a rhyme that he himself had wrought;
 Sending it out with cogitative pause,
 As if the scene where he had shaped it first
 Had rolled it back on him, and meeting it
 Thus unaware, he was of doubtful mind
 Whether his dignity it well beseeemed
 To sing of pretty maiden:

Goldilocks sat on the grass,
 Tying up of posies rare;
 Hardly could a sunbeam pass
 Through the cloud that was her hair.
 Purple orchis lasteth long,
 Primrose flowers are pale and clear;
 O the maiden sang a song
 It would do you good to hear!

Sad before her leaned the boy,
 "Goldilocks that I love well,
 Happy creature fair and coy,
 Think o' me, Sweet Amabel,"
 Goldilocks she shook apart,
 Looked with doubtful, doubtful eyes;
 Like a blossom on her heart
 Opened out her first surprise.

As a gloriole sign o' grace,
 Goldilocks, ah, fall and flow
 On the blooming childlike face,
 Dimple, dimple, come and go.
 Give her time; on grass and sky
 Let her gaze if she be fain:
 As they looked ere he drew nigh,
 They will never look again.
 Ah! the playtime she has known,
 While her goldilocks grew long,
 Is it like a nestling flown,

Childhood over like a song?
 Yes, the boy may clear his brow,
 Though she thinks to say him nay,
 When she sighs, "I cannot now —
 Come again some other day."

"Hold there!" he cried, half angry with himself,
 "That ending goes amiss:" then turned again
 To the old argument that we had held —
 "Now look you!" said my brother, "You may talk
 Till, weary of the talk, I answer 'Ay,
 There's reason in your words;' and you may talk
 Till I go on to say, 'This should be so;'
 And you may talk till I shall further own
 'It is so; yes, I am a lucky dog!'
 Yet not the less shall I next morning wake,
 And with a natural and fervent sigh,
 Such as you never heaved. I shall exclaim
 'What an unlucky dog I am!'" And here
 He broke into a laugh. "But as for you —
 You! on all hands you have the best of me;
 Men have not robbed you of your birthright — work,
 Nor ravaged in old days a peaceful field,
 Nor wedded heiresses against their will,
 Nor sinned, nor slaved, nor stooped, nor overreached,
 That you might drone a useless life away
 'Mid half a score of bleak and barren farms
 And half a dozen bogs."

"O rare!" I cried;
 "His wrongs go nigh to make him eloquent:
 Now we behold how far bad actions reach!
 Because five hundred years ago a Knight
 Drove geese and beehives out from a Franklin's yard;
 Because three hundred years ago a squire —
 Against her will, and for her fair estate —
 Married a very ugly, red-haired maid,
 The blest inheritor of all their pelf.

While in the full enjoyment of the same,
 Sighs on his own confession every day.
 He cracks no egg without a moral sigh,
 Nor eats of beef but thinking on that wrong;
 Then, yet the more to be revenged on them,
 And shame their ancient pride, if they should know,
 Works hard as any horse for his degree,
 And takes to writing verses."

"Ay," he said,
 Half laughing at himself. "Yet you and I,
 But for those tresses which enrich us yet
 With somewhat of the hue that partial fame
 Calls auburn when it shines on heads of heirs,
 But when it flames round brows of younger sons,
 Just red — mere red; why, but for this, I say,
 And but for selfish getting of the land,
 And beggarly entailing it, we two,
 To-day well fed, well grown, well dressed, well read,
 We might have been two horny-handed boors —
 Lean, clumsy, ignorant, and ragged boors —
 Planning for moonlight nights a poaching scheme,
 Or soiling our dull souls and consciences
 With plans for pilfering a cottage roost.

"What chorus! are you dumb? you should have
 cried,
 'So good comes out of evil;'" and with that,
 As if all pauses it was natural
 To seize for songs, his voice broke out again:

Coo, dove, to thy unmarried mate —
 She has two warm eggs in her nest:
 Tell her the hours are few to wait
 Ere life shall dawn on their rest;
 And thy young shall peck at the shells, elate
 With a dream of her brooding breast.

Coo, dove, for she counts the hours,
 Her fair wings ache for flight:
 By day the apple has grown in the flowers,
 And the moon has grown by night,
 And the white drift settled from hawthorn bowers,
 Yet they will not seek the light.

Coo, dove; but what of the sky?
 And what if the storm-wind swell,
 And the reeling branch come down from on high
 To the grass where daisies dwell,
 And the brood beloved should with them lie
 Or ever they break the shell?

Coo, dove; and yet black clouds lower,
 Like fate, on the far-off sea:
 Thunder and wind they bear to thy bower,
 As on wings of destiny.

Ah, what if they break in an evil hour,
 As they broke over mine and me?

What next? — we started like to girls, for lo!
 The creaking voice, more harsh than rusty crane,
 Of one who stooped behind us, cried aloud,
 "Good luck! how sweet the gentleman does sing —
 So loud and sweet, 'tis like to split his throat.
 Why, Mike's a child to him, a two-years child —
 A Chrisom child."

"Who's Mike?" my brother growled
 A little roughly. Quoth the fisherman —
 "Mike, Sir? he's just a fisher lad, no more;
 But he can sing, when he takes on to sing,
 So loud there's not a sparrow in the spire
 But needs must hear. Sir, if I might make bold,
 I'd ask what song that was you sung. My mate,
 As we were shoving off the mackerel boats,
 Said he, 'I'll wager that's the sort o' song
 They kept their hearts up with in the Crimea.'"

"There, fisherman," quoth I, "he showed his wit,
 Your mate; he marked the sound of savage war —
 Gunpowder, groans, hot-shot, and bursting shells,
 And 'murderous messages,' delivered by
 Spent balls that break the heads of dreaming men."

"Ay, ay, Sir!" quoth the fisherman. "Have done!"
 My brother. And I — "The gift belongs to few
 Of sending farther than the words can reach
 Their spirit and expression;" still — "Have done!"
 He cried; and then "I rolled the rubbish out
 More loudly than the meaning warranted,
 To air my lungs — I thought not on the words."

Then said the fisherman, who missed the point,
 "So Mike rolls out the psalm; you'll hear him, Sir,
 Please God you live till Sunday."

"Even so:
 And you, too, fisherman; for here, they say,
 You all are church-goers."

"Surely, Sir," quoth he,
 Took off his hat, and stroked his old white head
 And wrinkled face; then sitting by us said,
 As one that utters with a quiet mind
 Unchallenged truth — "'Tis lucky for the boats."

The boats! 'tis lucky for the boats! Our eyes
 Were drawn to him as either fain would say,
 What! do they send the psalm up in the spire,
 And pray because 'tis lucky for the boats?
 But he, the brown old man, the wrinkled man,
 That all his life had been a church-goer,
 Familiar with celestial cadences,
 Informed of all he could receive, and sure
 Of all he understood — he sat content,
 And we kept silence. In his reverend face

There was a simpleness we could not sound;
 Much truth had passed him overhead; some error
 He had trod under foot; — God comfort him!
 He could not learn of us, for we were young
 And he was old, and so we gave it up;
 And the sun went into the west, and down
 Upon the water stooped an orange cloud,
 And the pale milky reaches flushed, as glad
 To wear its colors; and the sultry air
 Went out to sea, and puffed the sails of ships
 With thymy wafts, the breath of trodden grass:
 It took moreover music, for across
 The heather belt and over pasture land
 Came the sweet monotone of one slow bell,
 And parted time into divisions rare,
 Whereof each morsel brought its own delight.

“They ring for service,” quoth the fisherman;

“Our parson preaches in the church to-night.”

“And do the people go?” my brother asked.

“Ay, Sir; they count it mean to stay away,
 He takes it so to heart. He’s a rare man,
 Our parson; half a head above us all.”

“That’s a great gift, and notable,” said I.

“Ay, Sir; and when he was a younger man
 He went out in the life-boat very oft,
 Before the ‘Grace of Sunderland’ was wrecked.
 He’s never been his own man since that hour;
 For there were thirty men aboard of her,
 Anigh as close as you are now to me,
 And ne’er a one was saved.

They’re lying now,
 With two small children, in a row: the church
 And yard are full of seamen’s graves, and few
 Have any names.

She bumped upon the reef;
 Our parson, my young son, and several more
 Were lashed together with a two-inch rope,
 And crept along to her; their mates ashore
 Ready to haul them in. The gale was high,
 The sea was all a boiling, seething froth,
 And God Almighty’s guns were going off,
 And the land trembled.

“When she took the ground,
 She went to pieces like a lock of hay
 Tossed from a pitchfork. Ere it came to that,
 The captain reeled on deck with two small things,
 One in each arm — his little lad and lass.
 Their hair was long, and blew before his face,
 Or else we thought he had been saved; he fell,
 But held them fast. The crew, poor luckless souls!
 The breakers licked them off; and some were crushed.
 Some swallowed in the yeast, some flung up dead,
 The dear breath beaten out of them: not one
 Jumped from the wreck upon the reef to catch
 The hands that strained to reach, but tumbled back
 With eyes wide open. But the captain lay
 And clung — the only man alive. They prayed —
 ‘For God’s sake, captain, throw the children here!’
 ‘Throw them!’ our parson cried; and then she struck:
 And he threw one, a pretty two-years child;
 But the gale dashed him on the slippery verge,
 And down he went. They say they heard him cry.

“Then he rose up and took the other one,
 And all our men reached out their hungry arms,
 And cried out, ‘Throw her, throw her!’ and he did.
 He threw her right against the parson’s breast,
 And all at once a sea broke over them,
 And they that saw it from the shore have said
 It struck the wreck, and piecemeal scattered it.

Just as a woman might the lump of salt
That 'twixt her hands into the kneading-pan
She breaks and crumbles on her rising bread.

"We hauled our men in: two of them were dead—
The sea had beaten them, their heads hung down;
Our parson's arms were empty, for the wave
Had torn away the pretty, pretty lamb;
We often see him stand beside her grave:
But 'twas no fault of his, no fault of his.

"I ask your pardon, Sirs; I prate and prate,
And never have I said what brought me here.
Sirs, if you want a boat to-morrow morn,
I'm bold to say there's ne'er a boat like mine."
"Ay, that was what we wanted," we replied;
"A boat, his boat;" and off he went, well pleased.

We, too, rose up (the crimson in the sky
Flushing our faces), and went sauntering on,
And thought to reach our lodging, by the cliff.
And up and down among the heather beds,
And up and down between the sheaves, we sped.
Doubling and winding; for a long ravine
Ran up into the land and cut us off,
Pushing out slippery ledges for the birds,
And rent with many a crevice, where the wind
Had laid up drifts of empty egg-shells, swept
From the bare berths of gulls and guillemots.

So as it chanced we lighted on a path
That led into a nutwood; and our talk
Was louder than beseemed, if we had known,
With argument and laughter; for the path,
As we sped onward, took a sudden turn
Abrupt, and we came out on churchyard grass,
And close upon a porch, and face to face
Within those within, and with the thirty graves.

We heard the voice of one who preached within,
And stopped. "Come on," my brother whispered
me;

"It were more decent that we enter now;
Come on! we'll hear this rare old demigod:
I like strong men and large; I like gray heads,
And grand gruff voices, hoarse though this may be
With shouting in the storm."

It was not hoarse,
The voice that preached to those few fishermen,
And women, nursing mothers with the babes
Hushed on their breasts; and yet it held them not:
Their drowsy eyes were drawn to look at us,
Till, having leaned our rods against the wall,
And left the dogs at watch, we entered, sat,
And were apprised that, though he saw us not,
The parson knew that he had lost the eyes
And ears of those before him, for he made
A pause—a long dead pause—and dropped his arms,
And stood awaiting, till I felt the red
Mount to my brow.

And a soft fluttering stir
Passed over all, and every mother hushed
The babe beneath her shawl, and he turned round
And met our eyes, unused to diffidence,
But diffident of his; then with a sigh
Fronted the folk, lifted his grand gray head,
And said, as one that pondered now the words
He had been preaching on with new surprise,
And found fresh marvel in their sound, "Behold!
Behold!" saith He, "I stand at the door and knock."

Then said the parson: "What! and shall He wait,
And must He wait, not only till we say,
'Good Lord, the house is clean, the hearth is swept,
The children sleep, the mackerel-boats are in,
And all the nets are mended; therefore I

Will slowly to the door and open it;'
 But must He also wait where still, behold!
 He stands and knocks, while we do say, 'Good Lord,
 The gentlefolk are come to worship here,
 And I will up and open to Thee soon;
 But first I pray a little longer wait,
 For I am taken up with them; my eyes
 Must needs regard the fashion of their clothes,
 And count the gains I think to make by them;
 Forsooth, they are of much account, good Lord!
 Therefore have patience with me — wait, dear Lord!
 Or come again'?

"What! must He wait for this—
 For this? Ay, He doth wait for this, and still,
 Waiting for this, He, patient, railleth not:
 Waiting for this, e'en this He saith, 'Behold!
 I stand at the door and knock.'

"O patient hand
 Knocking and waiting — knocking in the night
 When work is done! I charge you by the sea
 Whereby you fill your children's mouths, and by
 The might of Him that made it — fishermen!
 I charge you, mothers! by the mother's milk
 He drew, and by His Father, God over all,
 Blessèd forever, that ye answer Him!
 Open the door with shame, if ye have sinned;
 If ye be sorry, open it with sighs.
 Albeit the place be bare for poverty,
 And comfortless for lack of plenishing,
 Be not abashed for that, but open it,
 And take Him in that comes to sup with thee;
 'Behold!' He saith, 'I stand at the door and knock.'

"Now, hear me: there be troubles in this world
 That no man can escape, and there is one

That lieth hard and heavy on my soul,
 Concerning that which is to come: —

I say
 As a man that knows what earthly trouble means,
 I will not bear this ONE — I cannot bear
 This ONE — I cannot bear the weight of you —
 You — every one of you, body and soul;
 You, with the care you suffer, and the loss
 That you sustain; you, with the growing up
 To peril, maybe with the growing old
 To want, unless before I stand with you
 At the great white throne, I may be free of all,
 And utter to the full what shall discharge
 Mine obligation: nay, I will not wait
 A day, for every time the black clouds rise,
 And the gale freshens, still I search my soul
 To find if there be aught that can persuade
 To good, or aught forsooth that can beguile
 From evil, that I (miserable man!
 If that be so) have left unsaid, undone.

"So that when any risen from sunken wrecks,
 Or rolled in by the billows to the edge
 Of the everlasting strand, what time the sea
 Gives up her dead, shall meet me, they may say
 Never, 'Old man, you told us not of this;
 You left us fisher lads that had to toil
 Ever in danger of the secret stab
 Of rocks, far deadlier than the dagger; winds
 Of breath more murderous than the cannon's; waves
 Mighty to rock us to our death; and gulfs,
 Ready beneath to suck and swallow us in:
 This crime be on your head; and as for us —
 What shall we do?' but rather — nay, not so,
 I will not think it; I will leave the dead,
 Appealing but to life: I am afraid
 Of you, but not so much if you have sinned

As for the doubt if sin shall be forgiven.
 The day was, I have been afraid of pride—
 Hard man's hard pride; but now I am afraid
 Of man's humility. I counsel you,
 By the great God's great humbleness, and by
 His pity, be not humble over-much.
 See! I will show at whose unopened doors
 He stands and knocks, that you may never say,
 'I am too mean, too ignorant, too lost;
 He knocks at other doors, but not at mine.'
 "See here! it is the night! it is the night!
 And snow lies thickly, white untrodden snow,
 And the wan moon upon a casement shines—
 A casement crusted o'er with frosty leaves,
 That makes her ray less bright along the floor.
 A woman sits, with hands upon her knees,
 Poor tired soul! and she has naught to do,
 For there is neither fire nor candle light:
 The driftwood ash lies cold upon her hearth;
 The rushlight flickered down an hour ago;
 Her children wail a little in their sleep
 For cold and hunger, and, as if that sound
 Was not enough, another comes to her,
 Over God's undefiled snow—a song—
 Nay, never hang your heads—I say, a song.

"And doth she curse the alehouse, and the sots
 That drink the night out and their earning there,
 And drink their manly strength and courage down,
 And drink away the little children's bread,
 And starve her, starving by the self-same act
 Her tender suckling, that with piteous eyes
 Looks in her face, till scarcely she has heart
 To work, and earn the scanty bit and drop
 That feed the others?

"Does she curse the song?
 I think not, fishermen; I have not heard

Such women curse. God's curse is enough.
 To-morrow she will say a bitter thing,
 Pulling her sleeve down lest the bruises show—
 A bitter thing, but meant for an excuse—
 'My master is not worse than many men:'
 But now, ay, now she sitteth dumb and still:
 No food, no comfort, cold and poverty
 Bearing her down.

"My heart is sore for her;
 How long, how long? When troubles come of God
 When men are frozen out of work, when wives
 Are sick, when working fathers fail and die,
 When boats go down at sea—then naught behooves
 Like patience; but for troubles wrought of men
 Patience is hard—I tell you it is hard.

"O thou poor soul! it is the night—the night;
 Against thy door drifts up the silent snow,
 Blocking thy threshold: 'Fall,' thou sayest, 'fall, fall
 Cold snow, and lie and be trod underfoot.
 Am not I fallen? wake up and pipe, O wind,
 Dull wind, and beat and bluster at my door:
 Merciful wind, sing me a hoarse rough song,
 For there is other music made to-night
 That I would fain not hear. Wake, thou still sea,
 Heavily plunge. Shoot on, white waterfall.
 O, I could long like thy cold icicles
 Freeze, freeze, and hang upon the frosty cliff,
 And not complain, so I might melt at last
 In the warm summer sun, as thou wilt do!

"But woe is me! I think there is no sun;
 My sun is sunken, and the night grows dark:
 None care for me. The children cry for bread,
 And I have none, and naught can comfort me;
 Even if the heavens were free to such as I,
 It were not much, for death is long to wait,
 And heaven is far to go!"

“And speak'st thou thus,
Despairing of the sun that sets to thee,
And of the earthly love that wanes to thee,
And of the heaven that lieth far from thee?
Peace, peace, fond fool! One draweth near thy door
Whose footsteps leave no print across the snow;
Thy sun has risen with comfort in his face,
The smile of heaven, to warm thy frozen heart,
And bless with saintly hand. What! is it long
To wait, and far to go? Thou shalt not go;
Behold, across the snow to thee He comes,
Thy heaven descends; and is it long to wait?
Thou shalt not wait: ‘This night, this night,’ He saith,
‘I stand at the door and knock.’

“It is enough — can such an one be here —
Yea, here? O God forgive you, fishermen!
One! is there only one? But do thou know,
O woman pale for want, if thou art here,
That on thy lot much thought is spent in heaven;
And, coveting the heart a hard man broke,
One standeth patient, watching in the night,
And waiting in the daytime.

“What shall be
If thou wilt answer? He will smile on thee;
One smile of His shall be enough to heal
The wound of man's neglect; and He will sigh,
Pitying the trouble which that sigh shall cure;
And He will speak — speak in the desolate night,
In the dark night: ‘For me a thorny crown
Men wove, and nails were driven in my hands
And feet: there was an earthquake, and I died;
I died, and am alive for evermore.

“‘I died for thee; for thee I am alive,
And my humanity doth mourn for thee,
For thou art mine; and all thy little ones,

They, too, are mine, are mine. Behold, the house
Is dark, but there is brightness where the sons
Of God are singing; and, behold, the heart
Is troubled: yet the nations walk in white:
They have forgotten how to weep; and thou
Shalt also come, and I will foster thee
And satisfy thy soul; and thou shalt warm
Thy trembling life beneath the smile of God.
A little while — it is a little while —
A little while, and I will comfort thee;
I go away, but I will come again.’

“But hear me yet. There was a poor old man
Who sat and listened to the raging sea,
And heard it thunder, lunging at the cliffs
As like to tear them down. He lay at night;
And ‘Lord have mercy on the lads,’ said he,
‘That sailed at noon, though they be none of mine!’
For when the gale gets up, and when the wind
Flings at the window, when it beats the roof,
And lulls, and stops, and rouses up again,
And cuts the crest clean off the plunging wave,
And scatters it like feathers up the field,
Why, then I think of my two lads: my lads
That would have worked and never let me want,
And never let me take the parish pay.
No, none of mine; my lads were drowned at sea —
My two — before the most of these were born.
I know how sharp that cuts, since my poor wife
Walked up and down, and still walked up and down,
And I walked after, and one could not hear
A word the other said, for wind and sea
That raged and beat and thundered in the night —
The awfulest, the longest, lightest night
That ever parents had to spend — a moon
That shone like daylight on the breaking wave.
Ah me! and other men have lost their lads,

And other women wiped their poor dead mouths,
And got them home and dried them in the house,
And seen the driftwood lie along the coast,
That was a tidy boat but one day back,
And seen next tide the neighbors gather it
To lay it on their fires.

Ay, I was strong
And able-bodied — loved my work; — but now
I am a useless hull: 'tis time I sank;
I am in all men's way; I troubled them;
I am a trouble to myself: but yet
I feel for mariners of stormy nights,
And feel for wives that watch ashore. Ay, ay!
If I had learning I would pray the Lord,
To bring them in: but I'm no scholar, no;
Book-learning is a world too hard for me:
But I make bold to say, O Lord, good Lord,
I am a broken-down poor man, a fool
To speak to Thee: but in the Book 'tis writ,
As I hear say from others that can read,
How, when Thou camest, Thou didst love the sea,
And live with fisherfolk, whereby 'tis sure
Thou knowest all the peril they go through,
And all their trouble.

As for me, good Lord,
I have no boat; I am too old, too old —
My lads are drowned; I buried my poor wife;
My little lasses died so long ago
That mostly I forget what they were like.
Thou knowest, Lord; they were such little ones
I know they went to thee, but I forget
Their faces, though I missed them sore.

O Lord,
I was a strong man: I have drawn good food
And made good money out of Thy great sea:
But yet I cried for them at nights; and now,
Although I be so old, I miss my lads,

And there be many folk this stormy night
Heavy with fear for theirs. Merciful Lord,
Comfort them; save their honest boys, their pride,
And let them hear next ebb the blessedest,
Best sound — the boat keels grating on the sand.

“I cannot pray with finer words: I know
Nothing; I have no learning, cannot learn —
Too old, too old. They say I want for naught,
I have the parish pay; but I am dull
Of hearing, and the fire scarce warms me through.
God save me — I have been a sinful man —
And save the lives of them that still can work,
For they are good to me; ay, good to me.
But, Lord, I am a trouble! and I sit,
And I am lonesome, and the nights are few
That any think to come and draw a chair,
And sit in my poor place and talk awhile.
Why should they come, forsooth? Only the wind
Knocks at my door. O long and loud it knocks,
The only thing God made that has a mind
To enter in.”

“Yea, thus the old man spake;
These were the last words of his aged mouth —
BUT ONE DID KNOCK. One came to sup with him,
That humble, weak old man; knocked at his door
In the rough pauses of the laboring wind.
I tell you that One knocked while it was dark,
Save where their foaming passion had made white
Those livid seething billows. What He said
In that poor place where He did talk awhile
I cannot tell; but this I am assured,
That when the neighbors came the morrow morn,
What time the wind had bated, and the sun
Shone on the old man's floor, they saw the smile
He passed away in, and they said, ‘He looks
As he had woke and seen the face of Christ,

And with that rapturous smile held out his arms
To come to Him!

"Can such an one be here,
So old, so weak, so ignorant, so frail?
The Lord be good to thee, thou poor old man;
It would be hard with thee if heaven were shut
To such as have not learning! Nay, nay, nay,
He condescends to them of low estate:
To such as are despised He cometh down,
Stands at the door and knocks.

"Yet bear with me.

I have a message; I have more to say.
Shall sorrow win His pity, and not sin —
That burden ten times heavier to be borne?
What think you? Shall the virtuous have His care
Alone? O virtuous women, think not scorn,
For you may lift your faces everywhere;
And now that it grows dusk, and I can see
None though they front me straight, I fain would tell
A certain thing to you. I say to you;
And if it doth concern you, as methinks
It doth, then surely it concerneth all.
I say that there was once — I say not here —
I say that there was once a castaway,
And she was weeping, weeping bitterly;
Kneeling, and crying with a heart-sick cry
That choked itself in sobs — 'O my good name!
O my good name!' And none did hear her cry!
Nay; and it lightened, and the storm-bolts fell,
And the rain splashed upon the roof, and still
She, storm-tost as the storming elements —
She cried with an exceeding bitter cry,
'O my good name!' And then the thunder-cloud
Stooped low and burst in darkness overhead,
And rolled, and rocked her on her knees, and shook
The frail foundations of her dwelling-place.

But she — if any neighbors had come in
(None did): if any neighbors had come in,
They might have seen her crying on her knees,
And sobbing, 'Lost, lost, lost!' beating her breast —
Her breast forever pricked with cruel thorns,
The wounds whereof could neither balm assuage
Nor any patience heal — beating her brow,
Which ached, it had been bent so long to hide
From level eyes, whose meaning was contempt.

"G ye good women, it is hard to leave
The paths of virtue, and return again.
What if this sinner wept, and none of you
Comforted her? And what if she did strive
To mend, and none of you believed her strife,
Nor looked upon her? Mark, I do not say,
Though it was hard, you therefore were to blame;
That she had aught against you, though your feet
Never drew near her door. But I beseech
Your patience. Once in old Jerusalem
A woman kneeled at consecrated feet,
Kissed them, and washed them with her tears.

What then?

I think that yet our Lord is pitiful:
I think I see the castaway e'en now!
And she is not alone; the heavy rain
Splashes without, and sullen thunder rolls,
But she is lying at the sacred feet
Of One transfigured.

"And her tears flow down,
Down to her lips, — her lips that kiss the print
Of nails; and love is like to break her heart!
Love and repentance — for it still doth work
Sore in her soul to think, to think that she,
Even she, did pierce the sacred, sacred feet,
And bruise the thorn-crowned head.

"O Lord, our Lord,
How great is Thy compassion! Come, good Lord,
For we will open. Come this night, good Lord;
Stand at the door and knock.

"And is this all? —
Trouble, old age and simpleness, and sin —
This all? It might be all some other night;
But this night, if a voice said, 'Give account
Whom hast thou with thee?' then must I reply,
'Young manhood have I, beautiful youth and strength
Rich with all treasure drawn up from the crypt
Where lies the learning of the ancient world —
Brave with all thoughts that poets fling upon
The strand of life, as driftweed after storms:
Doubtless familiar with Thy mountain heads,
And the dread purity of Alpine snows,
Doubtless familiar with Thy works concealed
For ages from mankind — outlying worlds,
And many mooned spheres — and Thy great store
Of stars, more thick than mealy dust which here
Powers the pale leaves of auriculas.

"This do I know, but, Lord, I know not more.

"Not more concerning them — concerning Thee,
I know Thy bounty; where Thou givest much
Standing without, if any call Thee in
Thou givest more.' Speak, then, O rich and strong;
Open, O happy young, ere yet the hand
Of Him that knocks, wearied at last, forbear;
The patient foot its thankless quest refrain,
The wounded heart for evermore withdraw."

I have heard many speak, but this one man —
So anxious not to go to heaven alone —
This one man I remember, and his look,
Till twilight overshadowed him. He ceased,

And out in darkness with the fisher folk
We passed and stumbled over mounds of moss,
And heard, but did not see, the passing beck.
Ah, graceless heart, would that it could regain
From the dim storehouse of sensations past
The impress full of tender awe, that night,
Which fell on me! It was as if the Christ
Had been drawn down from heaven to track us home
And any of the footsteps following us
Might have been His.

A WEDDING SONG.

COME up the broad river, the Thames, my Dane,
My Dane with the beautiful eyes!
Thousands and thousands await thee full fain,
And talk of the wind and the skies.
Fear not from folk and from country to part,
O, I swear it is wisely done;
For (I said) I will bear me by thee, sweetheart,
As becometh my father's son.

Great London was shouting as I went down,
"She is worthy," I said, "of this;
What shall I give who have promised a crown?
O, first I will give her a kiss."
So I kissed her and brought her, my Dane, my Dane,
Through the waving wonderful crowd:
Thousands and thousands, they shouted amain,
Like mighty thunders and loud.

And they said, "He is young, the lad we love,
The heir of the Isles is young:
How we deem of his mother, and one gone above,
Can neither be said nor sung.

He brings us a pledge — he will do his part
 With the best of his race and name; —
 And I will, for I look to live, sweetheart,
 As may suit with my mother's fame.

THE FOUR BRIDGES.

I LOVE this gray old church, the low, long nave,
 The ivied chancel and the slender spire;
 No less its shadow on each heaving grave,
 With growing osier bound, or living briar;
 I love those yew-tree trunks, where stand arrayed
 So many deep-cut names of youth and maid.

A simple custom this — I love it well —
 A carved betrothal and a pledge of truth;
 How many an eve, their linked names to spell,
 Beneath the yew-trees sat our village youth!
 When work was over, and the new-cut hay
 Sent wafts of balm from meadows where it lay.

Ah! many an eve, while I was yet a boy,
 Some village hind has beckoned me aside,
 And sought mine aid, with shy and awkward joy,
 To carve the letters of his rustic bride,
 And make them clear to read as graven stone,
 Deep in the yew-tree's trunk beside his own.

For none could carve like me, and here they stand,
 Fathers and mothers of this present race;
 And underscored by some less practised hand,
 That fain the story of its line would trace,
 With children's names, and number, and the day
 When any called to God have passed away.

I look upon them, and I turn aside,
 As oft when carving them I did erewhile;
 And there I see those wooden bridges wide
 That cross the marshy hollow; there the stile
 In reeds imbedded, and the swelling down,
 And the white road toward the distant town.

But those old bridges claim another look.
 Our brattling river tumbles through the one;
 The second spans a shallow, weedy brook;
 Beneath the others, and beneath the sun,
 Lie two long stilly pools, and on their breasts
 Picture their wooden piles, encased in swallows'
 nests.

And round about them grows a fringe of reeds,
 And then a floating crown of lily-flowers,
 And yet within small silver-budded weeds;
 But each clear centre evermore embowers
 A deeper sky, where, stooping, you may see
 The little minnows darting restlessly.

My heart is bitter, lilies, at your sweet;
 Why did the dewdrop fringe your chalices?
 Why in your beauty are you thus complete,
 You silver ships — you floating palaces?
 O! if need be, you must allure man's eye,
 Yet wherefore blossom here? O why? O why?

O! O! the world is wide, you lily-flowers,
 It hath warm forests, cleft by stilly pools,
 Where every night bathe crowds of stars; and
 bowers
 Of spicery hang over. Sweet air cools
 And shakes the lilies among those stars that lie:
 Why are not ye content to reign there? Why?

That chain of bridges, it were hard to tell
 How it is linked with all my early joy.
 There was a little foot that I loved well,
 It danced across them when I was a boy;
 There was a careless voice that used to sing;
 There was a child, a sweet and happy thing.

Oft through that matted wood of oak and birch
 She came from yonder house upon the hill;
 She crossed the wooden bridges to the church,
 And watched, with village girls, my boasted skill:
 But loved to watch the floating lilies best,
 Or linger, peering in a swallow's nest;

Linger and linger, with her wistful eyes
 Drawn to the lily-buds that lay so white
 And soft on crimson water; for the skies
 Would crimson, and the little cloudlets bright
 Would all be flung among the flowers sheer down,
 To flush the spaces of their clustering crown.

Till the green rushes — O, so glossy green —
 The rushes, they would whisper, rustle, shake;
 And forth on floating gauze, no jewelled queen
 So rich, the green-eyed dragon-flies would break,
 And hover on the flowers — aerial things,
 With little rainbows flickering on their wings.

Ah! my heart dear! the polished pools lie still,
 Like lanes of water reddened by the west,
 Till, swooping down from yon o'erhanging hill,
 The bold marsh harrier wets her tawny breast:
 We scared her oft in childhood from her prey,
 And the old eager thoughts rise fresh as yesterday
 To yonder copse by moonlight I did go.

In luxury of mischief, half afraid,
 To steal the great owl's brood, her downy snow,

Her screaming imps to seize, the while she preyed
 With yellow, cruel eyes, whose radiant glare,
 Fell with their mother rage, I might not dare.

Panting I lay till her great fanning wings [nigh,
 Troubled the dreams of rock-doves, slumbering
 And she and her fierce mate, like evil things,
 Skimmed the dusk fields; then rising, with a cry
 Of fear, joy, triumph, darted on my prey,
 And tore it from the nest and fled away.

But afterward, belated in the wood,
 I saw her moping on the rifled tree,
 And my heart smote me for her, while I stood
 Awakened from my careless reverie;
 So white she looked, with moonlight round her shed,
 So motherlike she drooped and hung her head.

O that mine eyes would cheat me! I behold
 The godwits running by the water edge,
 The mossy bridges mirrored as of old;
 The little curlews creeping from the sedge,
 But not the little foot so gayly light;
 O that mine eyes would cheat me, that I might! —

Would cheat me! I behold the gable-ends —
 Those purple pigeons clustering on the cote;
 The lane with maples overhung, that bends
 Toward her dwelling; the dry grassy moat,
 Thick mullions, diamond-latticed, mossed and gray,
 And walls banked up with laurel and with bay.

And up behind them yellow fields of corn,
 And still ascending countless firry spires,
 Dry slopes of hills uncultured, bare, forlorn,
 And green in rocky clefts with whins and briars;
 Then rich cloud masses dyed the violet's hue,
 With orange sunbeams dropping swiftly through.

Ay, I behold all this full easily;
 My soul is jealous of my happier eyes,
 And manhood envies youth. Ah, strange to see,
 By looking merely, orange-flooded skies;
 Nay, any dewdrop that may near me shine:
 But never more the face of Eglantine!

She was my one companion, being herself
 The jewel and adornment of my days,
 My life's completeness. O, a smiling elf,
 That I do but disparage with my praise—
 My playmate; and I loved her dearly and long.
 And she loved me, as the tender love the strong.

Ay, but she grew, till on a time there came
 A sudden restless yearning to my heart;
 And as we went a-nesting, all for shame
 And shyness, I did hold my peace, and start;
 Content departed, comfort shut me out,
 And there was nothing left to talk about.

She had but sixteen years, and as for me,
 Four added made my life. This pretty bird,
 This fairy bird that I had cherished—she,
 Content, had sung, while I, contented, heard.
 The song had ceased; the bird, with nature's art,
 Had brought a thorn and set it in my heart.

The restless birth of love my soul oppress;
 I longed and wrestled for a tranquil day,
 And warred with that disquiet in my breast
 As one who knows there is a better way;
 But, turned against myself, I still in vain
 Looked for the ancient calm to come again.

My tired soul could to itself confess
 That she deserved a wiser love than mine;
 To love more truly were to love her less,

And for this truth I still awoke to pine:
 I had a dim belief that it would be
 A better thing for her, a blessed thing for me.

Good hast Thou made them—comforters rightsweet;
 Good hast Thou made the world, to mankind lent;
 Good are Thy dropping clouds that feed the wheat;
 Good are Thy stars above the firmament.
 Take to Thee, take, Thy worship, Thy renown;
 The good which Thou hast made doth wear Thy crown.

For, O my God, Thy creatures are so frail,
 Thy bountiful creation is so fair,
 That, drawn before us like the temple veil,
 It hides the Holy Place from thought and care,
 Giving man's eyes instead its sweeping fold,
 Rich as with cherub wings and apples wrought of gold,

Purple and blue and scarlet—shimmering bells
 And rare pomegranates on its broidered rim,
 Glorious with chain and fret work that the swell
 Of incense shakes to music dreamy and dim,
 Till on a day comes loss, that God makes gain,
 And death and darkness rend the veil in twain.

— * * * * *
 Ah, sweetest! my beloved! each outward thing
 Recalls my youth, and is instinct with thee;
 Brown wood-owls in the dusk, with noiseless wing,
 Float from yon hanger to their haunted tree,
 And hoot full softly. Listening, I regain
 A flashing thought of thee with their remembered strain.

I will not pine—it is the careless brook,
 These amber sunbeams slanting down the vale;
 It is the long tree-shadows, with their look

Of natural peace, that make my heart to fail:
The peace of nature — No, I will not pine —
But O the contrast 'twixt her face and mine!
And still I changed — I was a boy no more;
My heart was large enough to hold my kind,
And all the world. As hath been oft before
With youth, I sought, but I could never find
Work hard enough to quiet my self-strife,
And use the strength of action-craving life.
She, too, was changed: her bountiful sweet eyes
Looked out full lovingly on all the world.
O tender as the deeps in yonder skies
Their beaming! but her rosebud lips were curled
With the soft dimple of a musing smile,
Which kept my gaze, but held me mute the while.
A cast of bees, a slowly moving wain,
The scent of bean-flowers wafted up a dell,
Blue pigeons wheeling over fields of grain,
Or bleat of folded lamb, would please her well;
Or cooing of the early coted dove; —
She, sauntering, mused of these; I, following, mused
of love.

With her two lips, that one the other pressed
So poutingly with such a tranquil air,
With her two eyes, that on my own would rest
So dream-like, she denied my silent prayer,
Fronted unuttered words, and said them nay,
And smiled down love till it had naught to say.

The words that through mine eyes would clearly shine
Hovered and hovered on my lips in vain;
If after pause I said but "Eglantine,"
She raised to me her quiet eyelids twain,
And looked me this reply — look calm, yet bland —
"I shall not know, I will not understand."

Yet she did know my story — knew my life
Was wrought to hers with bindings many and
strong;

That I, like Israel, servèd for a wife,
And for the love I bear her thought not long,
But only a few days, full quickly told,
My seven years' service strict as his of old.

I must be brief: the twilight shadows grow,
And steal the rose-bloom genial summer sheds,
And scented wafts of wind that come and go
Have lifted dew from honeyed clover-heads;
The seven stars shine out above the mill,
The dark delightful woods lie veiled and still.

Hush! hush! the nightingale begins to sing,
And stops, as ill contented with her note;
Then breaks from out the bush with hurried wing,
Restless and passionate. She tunes her throat,
Laments a while in wavering trills, and then
Floods with a stream of sweetness all the glen.

The seven stars upon the nearest pool
Lie trembling down betwixt the lily leaves,
And move like glowworms: wafting breezes cool
Come down along the water, and it heaves
And bubbles in the sedge; while deep and wide
The dim night settles on the country side.

I know this scene by heart. O! once before
I saw the seven stars float to and fro,
And stayed my hurried footsteps by the shore
To mark the starry picture spread below:
Its silence made the tumult in my breast
More audible; its peace revealed my own unrest.
I paused, then hurried on; my heart beat quick;
I crossed the bridges, reached the steep ascent,
And climbed through matted fern and hazels thick;

Then darkling through the close green maples went,
And saw — there felt love's keenest pangs begin —
An oriel window lighted from within :

I saw — and felt that they were scarcely cares
Which I had known before. I drew more near,
And O! methought how sore it frets and wears
The soul to part with that it holds so dear:
'Tis hard two woven tendrils to untwine,
And I was come to part with Eglantine.

For life was bitter through those words repressed,
And youth was burdened with unspoken vows;
Love unrequited brooded in my breast,
And shrank, at glance, from the beloved brows:
And three long months, heart-sick, my foot with-
drawn,

I had not sought her side by rivulet, copse, or lawn —
Not sought her side, yet busy thought no less
Still followed in her wake, though far behind;
And I, being parted from her loveliness,
Looked at the picture of her in my mind:
I lived alone, I walked with soul opprest,
And ever sighed for her, and sighed for rest.

Then I had risen to struggle with my heart,
And said: "O heart! the world is fresh and fair,
And I am young; but this thy restless smart
Changes to bitterness the morning air:
I will, I must, these weary fetters break —
I will be free, if only for her sake.

"O let me trouble her no more with sighs!
Heart-healing comes by distance, and with time:
Then let me wander, and enrich mine eyes
With the green forests of a softer clime,
Or list by night at sea the wind's low stave
And long monotonous rockings of the wave.

"Through open solitudes, unbounded meads,
Where, wading on breast-high in yellow bloom,
Untamed of man, the shy white llama feeds —
There would I journey and forget my doom;
O far, O far as sunrise I would see
The level prairie stretch away from me!

"Or would I sail upon the tropic seas,
Where fathom long the blood-red dulces grow,
Droop from the rock and waver in the breeze,
Lashing the tide to foam; while calm below
The muddy mandrakes throng these waters warm,
And purple, gold, and green, the living blossoms
swarm."

So of my father I did win consent,
With importunities repeated long,
To make that duty which had been my bent,
To dig with strangers alien tombs among,
And bound to them through desert leagues to pace,
Or track up rivers to their starting-place.

For this I had done battle and had won,
But not alone to tread Arabian sands,
Measure the shadows of a southern sun,
Or dig out gods in the old Egyptian lands;
But for the dream wherewith I thought to cope —
The grief of love unmated with love's hope.

And now I would set reason in array,
Methought, and fight for freedom manfully,
Till by long absence there would come a day
When this my love would not be pain to me;
But if I knew my rosebud fair and blest
I should not pine to wear it on my breast.

The days fled on; another week should fling
A foreign shadow on my lengthening way;

Another week, yet nearness did not bring
 A braver heart that hard farewell to say.
 I let the last day wane, the dusk begin,
 Ere I had sought that window lighted from within.

Sinking and sinking, O my heart! my heart!
 Will absence heal thee whom its shade doth rend?
 I reached the little gate, and soft within
 The oriel fell her shadow. She did lend
 Her loveliness to me, and let me share
 The listless sweetness of those features fair.

Among thick laurels in the gathering gloom,
 Heavy for this our parting, I did stand;
 Beside her mother in the lighted room,
 She sitting leaned her cheek upon her hand;
 And as she read, her sweet voice, floating through
 The open casement, seemed to mourn me an adieu.

Youth! youth! how buoyant are thy hopes! they
 turn,
 Like marigolds, toward the sunny side.
 My hopes were buried in a funeral urn,
 And they sprang up like plants and spread them
 wide;

Though I had schooled and reasoned them away,
 They gathered smiling near and prayed a holiday.

Ah, sweetest voice! how pensive were its tones,
 And how regretful its unconscious pause!

"Is it for me her heart this sadness owns,
 And is our parting of to-night the cause?"

Ah, would it might be so!" I thought, and stood
 Listening entranced among the underwood.

I thought it would be something worth the pain
 Of parting, to look once in those deep eyes,
 And take from them an answering look again.

"When eastern palms," I thought, "about me rise,
 If I might carve our names upon the rind,
 Betrothed, I would not mourn, though leaving thee
 behind."

I can be patient, faithful, and most fond
 To unacknowledged love; I can be true
 To this sweet thralldom, this unequal bond,
 This yoke of mine that reaches not to you:
 O, how much more could costly parting buy —
 If not a pledge, one kiss, or, failing that, a sigh!

I listened, and she ceased to read; she turned
 Her face toward the laurels where I stood:
 Her mother spoke — O wonder! hardly learned;
 She said, "There is a rustling in the wood;
 Ah, child! if one draw near to bid farewell,
 Let not thine eyes an unsought secret tell.

"My daughter, there is nothing held so dear
 As love, if only it be hard to win.
 The roses that in yonder hedge appear
 Outdo our garden-buds which bloom within;
 But since the hand may pluck them every day,
 Unmarked they bud, bloom, drop, and drift away.

"My daughter, my beloved, be not you
 Like those same roses." O bewildering word!
 My heart stood still, a mist obscured my view:
 It cleared; still silence. No denial stirred.
 The lips beloved; but straight, as one opprest,
 She, kneeling, dropped her face upon her mother's
 breast.

This said, "My daughter, sorrow comes to all;
 Our life is checked with shadows manifold:
 But woman has this more — she may not call
 Her sorrow by its name. Yet love not told,
 And only born of absence and by thought,
 With thought and absence may return to nought."

And my beloved lifted up her face,
 And moved her lips as if about to speak;
 She dropped her lashes with a girlish grace,
 And the rich damask mantled in her cheek:
 I stood awaiting till she should deny
 Her love, or with sweet laughter put it by.

But, closer nestling to her mother's heart,
 She, blushing, said no word to break my trance.
 For I was breathless; and, with lips apart,

Felt my breast pant and all my pulses dance.
 And strove to move, but could not for the weight
 Of unbelieving joy, so sudden and so great,

Because she loved me. With a mighty sigh
 Breaking away, I left her on her knees,
 And blest the laurel bower, the darkened sky,
 The sultry night of August. Through the trees,
 Giddy with gladness, to the porch I went,
 And hardly found the way for joyful wonderment.

Yet, when I entered, saw her mother sit
 With both hands cherishing the graceful head.
 Smoothing the clustered hair, and parting it
 From the fair brow; she, rising, only said,
 In the accustomed tone, the accustomed word,
 The careless greeting that I always heard;

And she resumed her merry, mocking smile,
 Though tear-drops on the glistening lashes hung.
 O woman! thou wert fashioned to beguile:
 So have all sages said, all poets sung.
 She spoke of favoring winds and waiting ships,
 With smiles of gratulation on her lips!

And then she looked and faltered: I had grown
 So suddenly in life and soul a man:
 She moved her lips, but could not find a tone

To set her mocking music to; began
 One struggle for dominion, raised her eyes, [prise.
 And straight withdrew them, bashful through sur-
 The color over cheek and bosom flushed;

I might have heard the beating of her heart,
 But that mine own beat louder; when she blushed,
 The hand within mine own I felt to start,
 But would not change my pitiless decree
 To strive with her for might and mastery.

She looked again, as one that, half afraid,
 Would fain be certain of a doubtful thing;
 Or one beseeching, "Do not me upbraid!"
 And then she trembled like the fluttering
 Of timid little birds, and silent stood,
 No smile wherewith to mock my hardihood.

She turned, and to an open casement moved
 With girlish shyness, mute beneath my gaze,
 And I on downcast lashes unproved
 Could look as long as pleased me; while, the rays
 Of moonlight round her, she her fair head bent,
 In modest silence to my words attent.

How fast the giddy whirling moments flew!
 The moon had set; I heard the midnight chime:
 Hope is more brave than fear, and joy than dread,
 And I could wait unmoved the parting time.

It came; for, by a sudden impulse drawn,
 She, risen, stepped out upon the dusky lawn.

A little waxen taper in her hand,
 Her feet upon the dry and dewless grass,
 She looked like one of the celestial band,

Only that on her cheeks did dawn and pass
 Most human blushes; while, the soft light thrown
 On vesture pure and white, she seemed yet fairer
 grown.

Her mother, looking out toward her, sighed,
 Then gave her hand in token of farewell,
 And with her warning eyes, that seemed to chide,
 Scarce suffered that I sought her child to tell
 The story of my life, whose every line
 No other burden bore than — Eglantine.

Black thunder-clouds were rising up behind,
 The waxen taper burned full steadily;
 It seemed as if dark midnight had a mind
 To hear what lovers say, and her decree
 Had passed for silence, while she, dropped to ground
 With raiment floating wide, drank in the sound.

O happiness! thou dost not leave a trace
 So well defined as sorrow. Amber light,
 Shed like a glory on her angel face,
 I can remember fully, and the sight
 Of her fair forehead and her shining eyes,
 And lips that smiled in sweet and girlish wise.

I can remember how the taper played
 Over her small hands and her vesture white;
 How it struck up into the trees, and laid
 Upon their under leaves unwonted light;
 And when she held it low, how far it spread
 O'er velvet pansies slumbering on their bed.

I can remember that we spoke full low,
 That neither doubted of the other's truth;
 And that with footsteps slower and more slow,
 Hands folded close for love, eyes wet for ruth:
 Beneath the trees, by that clear taper's flame,
 We wandered till the gate of parting came.
 But I forget the parting words she said,
 So much they thrilled the all-attentive soul;
 For one short moment human heart and head

May bear such bliss — its present is the whole:
 I had that present, till in whispers fell
 With parting gesture her subdued farewell.

"Farewell!" she said, in act to turn away,
 But stood a moment still to dry her tears,
 And suffered my enfolding arm to stay
 The time of her departure. O ye years
 That intervene betwixt that day and this!
 You all received your hue from that keen pain and
 bliss.

O mingled pain and bliss! O pain to break
 At once from happiness so lately found,
 And four long years to feel for her sweet sake
 The incompleteness of all sight and sound!
 But bliss to cross once more the foaming brine —
 O bliss to come again and make her mine!

I cannot — O, I cannot more recall!
 But I will soothe my troubled thoughts to rest
 With musing over journeyings wide, and all
 Observance of this active-humored west,
 And swarming cities steeped in eastern day,
 With swarthy tribes in gold and striped array.

I turn from these, and straight there will succeed
 (Shifting and changing at the restless will),
 Imbedded in some deep Circassian mead,

White wagon-tilts, and flocks that eat their fill
 Unseen above, while comely shepherds pass,
 And scarcely show their heads above the grass.

— The red Sahara in an angry glow,
 With amber fogs, across its hollows trailed
 Long strings of camels, gloomy-eyed and slow,
 And women on their necks, from gazers veiled,
 And sun-swart guides who toil across the sand
 To groves of date-trees on the watered land.

Again — the brown sails of an Arab boat,
 Flapping by night upon a glassy sea,
 Whereon the moon and planets seem to float,
 More bright of hue than they were wont to be,
 While shooting-stars rain down with crackling
 sound.

And, thick as swarming locusts, drop to ground.

Or far into the heat among the sands
 The gembok nations, snuffing up the wind,
 Drawn by the scent of water — and the bands
 Of tawny-bearded lions pacing, blind
 With the sun-dazzle in their midst, opprest
 With prey, and spiritless for lack of rest!

What more? Old Lebanon, the frosty-browed,
 Setting his feet among oil-olive trees,
 Heaving his bare brown shoulder through a cloud;
 And after, grassy Carmel, purple seas,
 Flattering his dreams and echoing in his rocks
 Soft as the bleating of his thousand flocks.

Enough: how vain this thinking to beguile,
 With recollected scenes, an aching breast!
 Did not I, journeying, muse on her the while?

Ah, yes! for every landscape comes impressed —
 Ay, written on, as by an iron pen —
 With the same thought I nursed about her then.

Therefore let memory turn again to home;
 Feel, as of old, the joy of drawing near;
 Watch the green breakers and the wind-tossed foam,
 And see the land-fog break, dissolve, and clear;
 Then think a skylark's voice far sweeter sound
 Than ever thrilled but over English ground;

And walk, glad, even to tears, among the wheat,
 Not doubting this to be the first of lands;

And, while in foreign words this murmuring, meet
 Some little village school-girls (with their hands
 Full of forget-me-nots), who, greeting me,
 I count their English talk delightful melody;

And seat me on a bank, and draw them near,

That I may feast myself with hearing it,
 Till shortly they forget their bashful fear,
 Push back their flaxen curls, and round me sit —
 Tell me their names, their daily tasks, and show
 Where wildwood strawberries in the copses grow.

So passed the day in this delightful land:

My heart was thankful for the English tongue —
 For English sky with feathery cloudlets spanned —
 For English hedge with glistening dewdrops hung
 I journeyed, and at glowing eventide
 Stopped at a rustic inn by the wayside.

That night I slumbered sweetly, being right glad
 To miss the flapping of the shrouds; but lo!
 A quiet dream of beings twain I had,
 Behind the curtain talking soft and low:
 Methought I did not heed their utterance fine,
 Till one of them said softly, "Eglantine."

I started up awake, 'twas silence all: [clear,

My own fond heart had shaped that utterance
 And "Ah!" methought, "how sweetly did it fall,
 Though but in dream, upon the listening ear!
 How sweet from other lips the name well known —
 That name, so many a year heard only from mine
 own!"

I thought awhile, then slumber came to me,
 And tangled all my fancy in her maze,
 And I was drifting on a raft at sea,
 The near all ocean, and the far all haze;

Through the white polished water sharks did glide,
And up in heaven I saw no stars to guide.

"Have mercy, God!" but lo! my raft uprose;
Drip, drip, I heard the water splash from it;
My raft had wings, and as the petrel goes,
It skimmed the sea, then brooding seemed to sit
The milk-white mirror, till, with sudden spring,
It flew straight upward like a living thing.

But strange! — I went not also in that flight,
For I was entering at a cavern's mouth;
Trees grew within, and screaming birds of night
Sat on them, hiding from the torrid south.
On, on I went, while gleaming in the dark
Those trees with blanchèd leaves stood pale and stark.

The trees had flower-buds, nourished in deep night.
And suddenly, as I went farther in,
They opened, and they shot out lambent light;
Then all at once arose a railing din
That frightened me: "It is the ghosts," I said,
"And they are railing for their darkness fled."

"I hope they will not look me in the face;
It frighteth me to hear their laughter loud;"
I saw them troop before with jaunty pace,
And one would shake off dust that soiled her
shroud:

But now, O joy unhopèd! to calm my dread,
Some moonlight filtered through a cleft o'erhead.

I climbed the lofty trees — the blanchèd trees —
The cleft was wide enough to let me through;
I clambered out and felt the balmy breeze,
And stepped on churchyard grasses wet with dew.
O happy chance! O fortune to admire!
I stood beside my own loved village spire.

And as I gazed upon the yew-tree's trunk,
Lo, far-off music — music in the night!
So sweet and tender as it swelled and sunk;
It charmed me till I wept with keen delight,
And in my dream, methought as it drew near
The very clouds in heaven stooped low to hear.

Beat high, beat low, wild heart so deeply stirred,
For high as heaven runs up the piercing strain;
The restless music fluttering like a bird
Bemoaned herself, and dropped to earth again,
Heaping up sweetness till I was afraid
That I should die of grief when it did fade.

And it did fade; but while with eager ear
I drank its last long echo dying away,
I was aware of footsteps that drew near,
And round the ivied chancel seemed to stray:
O, soft above the hallowed place they trod —
Soft as the fall of foot that is not shod!

I turned — 'twas even so — yes, Eglantine!
For at the first I had divined the same;
I saw the moon on her shut eyelids shine,
And said, "She is asleep:" still on she came;
Then, on her dimpled feet, I saw it gleam,
And thought, "I know that this is but a dream."

My darling! O my darling! not the less
My dream went on because I knew it such;
She came towards me in her loveliness —
A thing too pure, methought, for mortal touch;
The rippling gold did on her bosom meet,
The long white robe descended to her feet.
The fringed lids dropped low, as sleep-oppressed;
Her dreamy smile was very fair to see,
And her two hands were folded to her breast,

With somewhat held between them heedfully,
O fast asleep! and yet methought she knew
And felt my nearness those shut eyelids through.

She sighed: my tears ran down for tenderness —

“And have I drawn thee to me in my sleep?

Is it for me thou wanderest shelterless,

Wetting thy steps in dewy grasses deep?

O if this be!” I said — “yet speak to me:

I blame my very dream for cruelty.”

Then from her stainless bosom she did take

Two beauteous lily flowers that lay therein,
And with slow-moving lips a gesture make,

As one that some forgotten words doth win:

“They floated on the pool,” methought she said.

And water trickled from each lily’s head.

It dropped upon her feet — I saw it gleam

Along the ripples of her yellow hair,

And stood apart, for only in a dream

She would have come, methought, to meet me
there.

She spoke again — “Ah fair! ah fresh they shine!

And there are many left, and these are mine.”

I answered her with flattering accents meet —

“Love, they are whitest lilies e’er were blown.”

“And sayest thou so?” she sighed in murmurs
sweet:

“I have naught else to give thee now, mine own!

For it is night. Then take them, love!” said she:

“They have been costly flowers to thee — and me.”

While thus she said I took them from her hand,

And, overcome with love and nearness, woke;

And overcome with ruth that she should stand

Barefooted in the grass; that, when she spoke,

Her mystic words should take so sweet a tone
And of all names her lips should choose “My own.”

I rose, journeyed, neared my home, and soon

Beheld the spire peer out above the hill:

It was a sunny harvest afternoon,

When by the churchyard wicket, standing still,

I cast my eager eyes abroad to know

If change had touched the scenes of long ago.

I looked across the hollow; sunbeams shone

Upon the old house with the gable-ends:

“Save that the laurel-trees are taller grown,

No change,” methought, “to its gray wall extends

What clear bright beams on yonder lattice shine!

There did I sometime talk with Eglantine.”

There standing with my very goal in sight,

Over my haste did sudden quiet steal;

I thought to dally with my own delight,

Nor rush on headlong to my garnered weal,

But taste the sweetness of a short delay,

And for a little moment hold the bliss at bay.

The church was open; it perchance might be

That there to offer thanks I might essay,

Or rather, as I think, that I might see

The place where Eglantine was wont to pray.

But so it was; I crossed that portal wide,

And felt my riot joy to calm subside.

The low depending curtains, gently swayed,

Cast over arch and roof a crimson glow;

But, ne’ertheless, all silence and all shade

It seemed, save only for the rippling flow

Of their long foldings, when the sunset air

Sighed through the casements of the house of prayer

I found her place, the ancient oaken stall,
Where in her childhood I had seen her sit,
Most saint-like and most tranquil there of all,
Folding her hands, as if a dreaming fit—
A heavenly vision had before her strayed
Of the Eternal Child in lowly manger laid.

I saw her prayer-book laid upon the seat,
And took it in my hand, and felt more near
In fancy to her, finding it most sweet
To think how very oft, low kneeling here,
In her devout thoughts she had let me share,
And set my graceless name in her pure prayer.

My eyes were dazzled with delightful tears—
In sooth they were the last I ever shed;
For with them fell the cherished dreams of years.
I looked, and on the wall above my head,
Over her seat, there was a tablet placed,
With one word only on the marble traced.—

Ah, well! I would not overstate that woe,
For I have had some blessings, little care;
But since the falling of that heavy blow,
God's earth has never seemed to me so fair;
Nor any of His creatures so divine,
Nor sleep so sweet:—the word was—*EGLANTINE*.

MOTHER SHOWING THE PORTRAIT OF
HER CHILD.

(F. M. L.)

LIVING Child or pictured cherub
Ne'er o'ermatched its baby grace;
And the mother, moving nearer,
Looked it calmly in the face;

Then with slight and quiet gesture,
And with lips that scarcely smiled,
Said, "A portrait of my daughter
When she was a child."
Easy thought was hers to fathom,
Nothing hard her glance to read,
For it seemed to say, "No praises
For this little child I need:
If you see, I see far better,
And I will not fain to care
For a stranger's prompt assurance
That the face is fair."

Softly clasped and half extended,
She her dimpled hands doth lay:
So they doubtless placed them, saying,
"Little one, you must not play."
And while yet his work was growing,
This the painter's hand hath shown,
That the little heart was making
Pictures of its own.

Is it warm in that green valley,
Vale of childhood, where you dwell?
Is it calm in that green valley,
Round whose bournes such great hills swell?
Are there giants in the valley—
Giants leaving footprints yet?
Are there angels in the valley?
Tell me—I forget.

Answer, answer, for the lilies,
Little one, o'ertop you much.
And the mealy gold within them
You can scarcely reach to touch;
O how far their aspect differs,
Looking up and looking down!

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Little one, o'ertop you much.
And the mealy gold within them
You can scarcely reach to touch;
O how far their aspect differs,
Looking up and looking down!

You look up in that green valley —
Valley of renown.

Are there voices in the valley,
Lying near the heavenly gate?
When it opens, do the harp-strings,
Touched within, reverberate?
When, like shooting-stars, the angels
To your couch at nightfall go,
Are their swift wings heard to rustle?
Tell me! for you know.

Yes, you know; and you are silent,
Not a word shall asking win;
Little mouth more sweet than rosebud,
Fast it locks the secret in.
Not a glimpse upon your present
You unfold to glad my view;
Ah, what secrets of your future
I could tell to you!

Sunny present! thus I read it,
By remembrance of my past: —
Its to-day and its to-morrow
Are as lifetimes vague and vast;
And each face in that green valley
Takes for you an aspect mild,
And each voice grows soft in saying —
"Kiss me, little child!"

As a boon the kiss is granted:
Baby mouth, your touch is sweet,
Takes the love without the trouble
From those lips that with it meet;
Gives the love, O pure! O tender!
Of the valley where it grows.
But the baby heart receiveth
MORE THAN IT BESTOWS.

Comes the future to the present —
"Ah!" she saith, "too blithe of mood;
Why that smile which seems to whisper —
'I am happy, God is good?'
God is good: that truth eternal
Sown for you in happier years,
I must tend it in my shadow,
Water it with tears.

"Ah, sweet present! I must lead thee
By a daylight more subdued;
There must teach thee low to whisper —
'I am mournful, God is good!'"
Peace, thou future! clouds are coming,
Stooping from the mountain crest,
But that sunshine floods the valley:
"Let her — let her rest.

Comes the future to the present —
"Child," she saith, "and wilt thou rest?
How long, child, before thy footsteps
Fret to reach yon cloudy crest?
Ah, the valley! — angels guard it,
But the heights are brave to see;
Looking down were long contentment;
Come up, child, to me."

So she speaks, but do not heed her,
Little maid with wondrous eyes,
Not afraid, but clear and tender,
Blue, and filled with prophecies;
Thou for whom life's veil unlifted
Hangs, whom warmest valleys fold,
Lift the veil, the charm dissolveth —
Climb, but heights are cold.
There are buds that fold within them,
Closed and covered from our sight,
Many a richly tinted petal.

Never looked on by the light;
Fain to see their shrouded faces,
Sun and dew are long at strife.
Till at length the sweet buds open —
Such a bud is life.

When the rose of thine own being
Shall reveal its central fold,
Thou shalt look within and marvel,
Fearing what thine eyes behold;
What it shows and what it teaches
Are not things wherewith to part;
Thorny rose! that always costeth
Beatings at the heart.

Look in fear, for there is dimness;
Ills unshapen float anigh.
Look in awe: for this same nature
Once the Godhead deigned to die.
Look in love, for He doth love it,
And its tale is best of lore:
Still humanity grows dearer,
Being learned the more.

Learn, but not the less bethink thee
How that all can mingle tears;
But his joy can none discover,
Save to them that are his peers;
And that they whose lips do utter
Language such as bards have sung —
Lo! their speech shall be to many
As an unknown tongue.

Learn, that if to thee the meaning
Of all other eyes be shown,
Fewer eyes can ever front thee,
That are skilled to read thine own;

And that if thy love's deep current
Many another's far outflows,
Then thy heart must take forever,
LESS THAN IT BESTOWS.

STRIFE AND PEACE.

[Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY, October, 1861.]

THE yellow poplar leaves come down
And like a carpet lay,
No waftings were in the sunny air
To flutter them away;
And he stepped on blithe and debonair
That warm October day.

"The boy," said he, "hath got his own,
But sore has been the fight,
For ere his life began the strife
That ceased but yesternight;
For the will," he said, "the kinsfolk read,
And read it not aright.

"His cause was argued in the court
Before his christening day;
And counsel was heard, and judge demurred,
And bitter waxed the fray;
Brother with brother spake no word
When they met in the way.

"Against each one did each contend,
And all against the heir.
I would not bend, for I knew the end —
I have it for my share,
And nought repent, though my first friend
From henceforth I must spare.

"Moor and moor and farm and wold
 Their greed begrudged him sore,
 And parchments old with passionate hold
 They guarded heretofore;
 And they carped at signature and seal,
 But they may carp no more.

"An old affront will stir the heart
 Through years of rankling pain;
 And I feel the fret that urged me yet
 That warfare to maintain;
 For an enemy's loss may well be set
 Above an infant's gain.

"An enemy's loss I go to prove;
 Laugh out, thou little heir!
 Laugh in his face who vowed to chase
 Thee from thy birthright fair;
 For I come to set thee in thy place:
 Laugh out, and do not spare."

A man of strife, in wrathful mood
 He neared the nurse's door;
 With poplar leaves the roof and eaves
 Were thickly scattered o'er,
 And yellow as they a sunbeam lay
 Along the cottage floor.

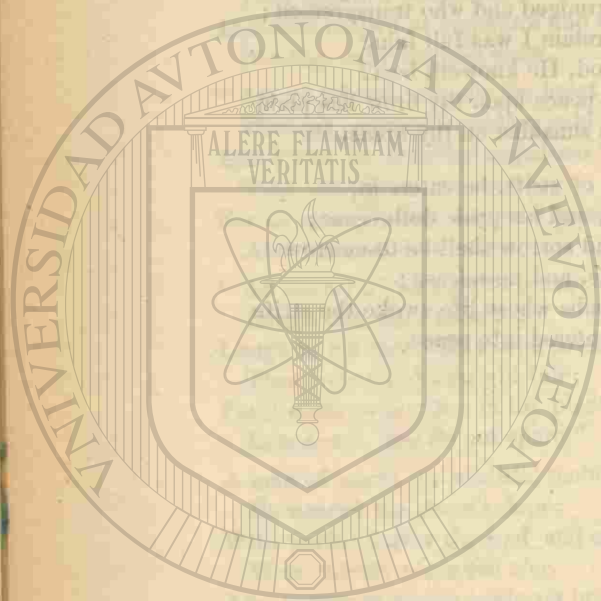
"Sleep on, thou pretty, pretty lamb,"
 He hears the fond nurse say;
 "And if angels stand at thy right hand,
 As now belike they may,
 And if angels meet at thy bed's feet,
 I fear them not this day.

"Come wealth, come want to thee, dear heart,
 It was all one to me,
 For thy pretty tongue far sweeter rung
 Than coined gold and fee;

And ever the while thy waking smile
 It was right fair to see.

"Sleep, pretty bairn, and never know
 Who grudged and who transgressed;
 Thee to retain I was full fain,
 But God, He knoweth best!
 And His peace upon thy brow lies plain
 As the sunshine on thy breast!"

The man of strife, he enters in,
 Looks, and his pride doth cease;
 Anger and sorrow shall be to-morrow
 Trouble, and no release;
 But the babe whose life awoke the strife
 Hath entered into peace.



A STORY OF DOOM AND OTHER POEMS

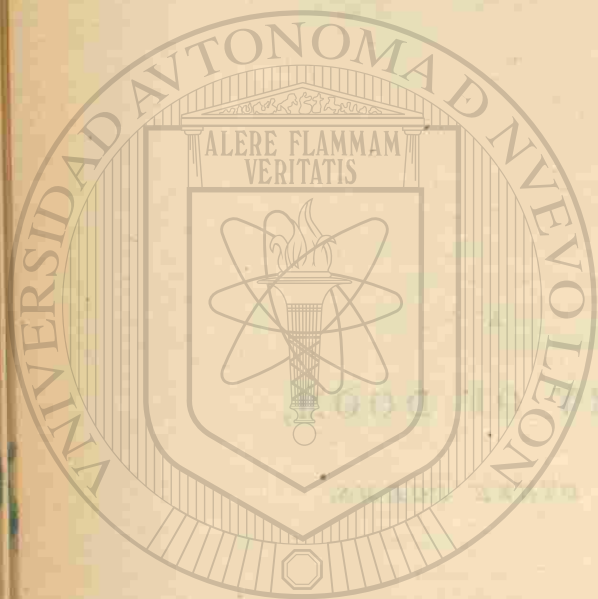
THEY WERE THE FIRST TO SEE

I saw in a vision, they saw in a vision
The world, by the light of the moon, leaning
And falling and falling and falling and falling
And falling and falling and falling and falling
The world, by the light of the moon, leaning
And falling and falling and falling and falling
The world, by the light of the moon, leaning
And falling and falling and falling and falling

STORY OF DOOM,
AND OTHER POEMS.

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN
DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS





A STORY OF DOOM, AND OTHER POEMS.

THE DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE.

I SAW in a vision once, our mother-sphere
The world, her fixed foredoomed oval tracing,
Rolling and rolling on and resting never,
While like a phantom fell, behind her pacing
The unfurled flag of night, her shadow drear
Fled as she fled and hung to her forever.

Great Heaven! methought, how strange a doom to
share.

Would I may never bear
Inevitable darkness after me
(Darkness endowed with drawings strong,
And shadowy hands that cling unendingly),
Nor feel that phantom-wings behind me sweep,
As she feels night pursuing through the long
Illimitable reaches of "the vasty deep."

God save you, gentlefolks. There was a man
Who lay awake at midnight on his bed,
Watching the spiral flame that feeding ran
Among the logs upon his hearth, and shed
A comfortable glow, both warm and dim,
On crimson curtains that encompassed him.
Right stately was his chamber, soft and white
The pillow, and his quilt was eider-down.
What mattered it to him through all that night

The desolate driving cloud might lower and frown,
And winds were up the eddying sleet to chase,
That drave and drave and found no settling-place?

What mattered it that leafless trees might rock,
Or snow might drift athwart his window-pane?
He bare a charmed life against their shock,
Secure from cold, hunger, and weather stain;
Fixed in his right, and born to good estate,
From common ills set by and separate.

From work and want and fear of want apart,
This man (men called him Justice Wilvermore)—
This man had comforted his cheerful heart
With all that it desired from every shore.
He had a right, — the right of gold is strong, —
He stood upon his right his whole life long.

Custom makes all things easy, and content
Is careless, therefore on the storm and cold,
As he lay waking, never a thought he spent,
Albeit across the vale beneath the wold,
Along a reedy mere that frozen lay,
A range of sordid hovels stretched away.

What cause had he to think on them, forsooth?
What cause that night beyond another night?
He was familiar even from his youth
With their long ruin and their evil plight.
The wintry wind would search them like a scout,
The water froze within as freely as without.

He think upon them? No! They were forlorn,
So were the cowering inmates whom they held;
A thriftless tribe, to shifts and leanness born,
Ever complaining: infancy or eld
Alike. But there was rent, or long ago
Those cottage roofs had met with overthrow.

For this they stood; and what his thoughts might be
That winter night, I know not; but I know
That, while the creeping flame fed silently
And cast upon his bed a crimson glow,
The Justice slept, and shortly in his sleep
He fell to dreaming, and his dream was deep.

He dreamed that over him a shadow came;
And when he looked to find the cause, behold
Some person knelt between him and the flame: —
A cowering figure of one frail and old, —
A woman; and she prayed as he descried,
And spread her feeble hands, and shook and sighed.

"Good Heaven!" the Justice cried, and being dis-
traught

He called not to her, but he looked again:
She wore a tattered cloak, but she had naught
Upon her head; and she did quake amain,
And spread her wasted hands and poor attire
To gather in the brightness of his fire.

"I know you, woman!" then the Justice cried;
"I know that woman well," he cried aloud;
"The shepherd Aveland's widow: God me guide!
A pauper kneeling on my hearth:" and bowed
The hag, like one at home, its warmth to share!
"How dares she to intrude? What does she there?"

"Ho, woman, ho!" — but yet she did not stir,
Though from her lips a fitful plaining broke;
"I'll ring my people up to deal with her;
I'll rouse the house," he cried; but while he spoke
He turned, and saw, but distant from his bed,
Another form, — a Darkness with a head.

Then, in a rage, he shouted, "Who are you?"
For little in the gloom he might discern.
"Speak out; speak now; or I will make you rue

The hour!" but there was silence, and a stern,
Dark face from out the dusk appeared to lean,
And then again drew back, and was not seen.

"God!" cried the dreaming man, right impiously,

"What have I done, that these my sleep affray?"

"God!" said the Phantom, "I appeal to Thee,
Appoint Thou me this man to be my prey."

"God!" sighed the kneeling woman, frail and old,
"I pray Thee take me, for the world is cold."

Then said the trembling Justice, in affright,

"Fiend, I adjure thee, speak thine errand here!
And lo! it pointed in the failing light

Toward the woman, answering, cold and clear,
"Thou art ordained an answer to thy prayer;
But first to tell *her* tale that kneeleth there."

"*Her* tale!" the Justice cried. "A pauper's tale!"

And he took heart at this so low behest,
And let the stoutness of his will prevail,
Demanding, "Is't for *her* you break my rest?
She went to jail of late for stealing wood,
She will again for this night's hardihood.

"I sent her; and to-morrow, as I live,
I will commit her for this trespass here."

"Thou wilt not!" quoth the Shadow, "thou wilt
give

Her story words;" and then it stalked anear
And showed a lowering face, and, dread to see,
A countenance of angered majesty.

Then said the Justice, all his thoughts astray,
With that material Darkness chiding him,
"If this must be, then speak to her, I pray,
And bid her move, for all the room is dim
By reason of the place she holds to-night:
She kneels between me and the warmth and light."

"With adjurations deep and drawings strong,
And with the power," it said, "unto me given,
I call upon thee, man, to tell thy wrong,
Or look no more upon the face of Heaven.
Speak! though she kneel throughout the livelong
night,
And yet shall kneel between thee and the light."

This when the Justice heard, he raised his hands,
And held them as the dead in effigy
Hold theirs, when carved upon a tomb. The bands
Of fate had bound him fast: no remedy
Was left: his voice unto himself was strange,
And that unearthly vision did not change.

He said, "That woman dwells anear my door,
Her life and mine began the selfsame day,
And I am hale and hearty: from my store
I never spared her aught: she takes her way
Of me unheeded; pining, pinching care
Is all the portion that she has to share.

"She is a broken-down, poor, friendless wight,
Through labor and through sorrow early old;
And I have known of this her evil plight,
Her scanty earnings, and her lodgment cold;
A patienter poor soul shall ne'er be found:
She labored on my land the long year round.

"What wouldst thou have me say, thou Fiend ab-
horred?"

Show me no more thine awful visage grim.
If thou obey'st a greater, tell thy lord

That I have paid her wages. Cry to him!
He has not *much* against me. None can say
I have not paid her wages day by day.

"The spell! It draws me. I must speak again;
And speak against myself; and speak aloud.

The woman once approached me to complain,—

‘My wages are so low.’ I may be proud;
It is a fault.” “Ay,” quoth the Phantom fell,
“Sinner! it is a fault: thou sayest well.”

“She made her moan, ‘My wages are so low.’”

“Tell on!” “She said,” he answered, “‘My
best days

Are ended, and the summer is but slow
To come; and my good strength for work decays
By reason that I live so hard, and lie
On winter nights so bare for poverty.’”

“And you replied,”—began the lowering Shade,

“And I replied,” the Justice followed on,
“That wages like to mine my neighbor paid;
And if I raised the wages of the one
Straight should the others murmur; furthermore,
The winter was as winters gone before.

“No colder and not longer.” “Afterward?”—
The Phantom questioned. “Afterward,” he
groaned,

“She said my neighbor was a right good lord,
Never a roof was broken that he owned;
He gave much coal and clothing. ‘Doth he so?
Work for my neighbor, then,’ I answered, ‘Go!’

“‘You are full welcome.’ Then she mumbled out
She hoped I was not angry; hoped, forsooth,
I would forgive her: and I turned about,
And said I should be angry in good truth
If this should be again, or ever more
She dared to stop me thus at the church door.”

“Then?” quoth the Shade; and he, constrained,
said on,

“Then she, reproved, curtseyed herself away.”

“Hast met her since?” it made demand anon;

And after pause the Justice answered, “Ay;
Some wood was stolen; my people made a stir:
She was accused, and I did sentence her.”

But yet, and yet, the dreaded questions came:

“And didst thou weigh the matter,—taking
thought

Upon her sober life and honest fame?”

“I gave it,” he replied, with gaze distraught;

“I gave it, Fiend, the usual care; I took
The usual pains; I could not nearer look,

“Because—because their pilfering had got head.

What wouldst thou more? The neighbors pleaded
hard,

‘Tis true, and many tears the creature shed;

But I had vowed their prayers to disregard,
Heavily strike the first that robbed my land,
And put down thieving with a steady hand.

“She said she was not guilty. Ay, ‘tis true

She said so, but the poor are liars all.

O thou fell Fiend, what wilt thou? Must I view

Thy darkness yet, and must thy shadow fall

Upon me miserable? I have done

No worse, no more than many a scathless one.”

“Yet,” quoth the Shade, “if ever to thine ears

The knowledge of her blamelessness was brought,
Or others have confessed with dying tears

The crime she suffered for, and thou hast wrought
All reparation in thy power, and told
Into her empty hand thy brightest gold:—

“If thou hast honored her, and hast proclaimed

Her innocence and thy deplored wrong,
Still thou art naught; for thou shalt yet be blamed

In that she, feeble, came before thee, strong,
And thou, in cruel haste to deal a blow,
Because thou hadst been angered, worked her woe.

"But didst thou right her? Speak!" The Justice
sighed,

And beaded drops stood out upon his brow;
"How could I humble me," forlorn he cried,

"To a base beggar? Nay, I will avow
That I did ill. I will reveal the whole;
I kept that knowledge in my secret soul."

"Hear him!" the Phantom muttered; "hear this
man,

O changeless God upon the judgment throne."
With that, cold tremors through his pulses ran,
And lamentably he did make his moan;
While, with its arms upraised above his head,
The dim dread visitor approached his bed.

"Into these doors," it said, "which thou hast closed,
Daily this woman shall from henceforth come;
Her kneeling form shall yet be interposed,
Till all thy wretched hours have told their sum,—
Shall yet be interposed by day, by night,
Between thee, sinner, and the warmth and light.

"Remembrance of her want shall make thy meal
Like ashes, and thy wrong thou shalt not right.
But what! Nay, verily, nor wealth nor weal
From henceforth shall afford thy soul delight.
Till men shall lay thy head beneath the sod,
There shall be no deliverance, saith my God."

"Tell me thy name," the dreaming Justice cried;
"By what appointment dost thou doom me thus?"
"'Tis well that thou shouldst know me," it replied,
"For mine thou art, and naught shall sever us;

From thine own lips and life I draw my force:
The name thy nation give me is REMORSE."

This when he heard, the dreaming man cried out,
And woke affrighted; and a crimson glow
The dying ember shed. Within, without,
In eddying rings the silence seemed to flow;
The wind had lulled, and on his forehead shone
The last low gleam; he was indeed alone.

"O, I have had a fearful dream," said he;

"I will take warning and for mercy trust;
The fiend Remorse shall never dwell with me:

I will repair that wrong, I will be just,
I will be kind, I will my ways amend."

Now the first dream is told unto its end.

Anigh the frozen mere a cottage stood,

A piercing wind swept round and shook the door,
The shrunken door, and easy way made good,
And drave long drifts of snow along the floor.
It sparkled there like diamonds, for the moon
Was shining in, and night was at the noon.

Before her dying embers, bent and pale,

A woman sat because her bed was cold;
She heard the wind, the driving sleet and hail,
And she was hunger-bitten, weak, and old;
Yet while she cowered, and while the casement shook,
Upon her trembling knees she held a book—

A comfortable book for them that mourn,
And good to raise the courage of the poor;
It lifts the veil and shows, beyond the bourne,
Their Elder Brother, from His home secure,
That for them desolate He died to win,
Repeating, "Come, ye blessed, enter in."

What thought she on, this woman? on her days
 Of toil, or on the supperless night forlorn?
 I think not so; the heart but seldom weighs
 With conscious care a burden always borne;
 And she was used to these things, had grown old
 In fellowship with toil, hunger, and cold.
 Then did she think how sad it was to live
 Of all the good this world can yield bereft?
 No, her untutored thoughts she did not give
 To such a theme; but in their warp and weft
 She wove a prayer: then in the midnight deep
 Faintly and slow she fell away to sleep.
 A strange, a marvellous sleep, which brought a dream,
 And it was this: that ail at once she heard
 The pleasant babbling of a little stream
 That ran beside her door, and then a bird
 Broke out in songs. She looked, and lo! the rime
 And snow had melted; it was summer time!
 And all the cold was over, and the mere
 Full sweetly swayed the flags and rushes green;
 The mellow sunlight poured right warm and clear
 Into her casement, and thereby were seen
 Fair honeysuckle flowers, and wandering bees
 Were hovering round the blossom-laden trees.
 She said, "I will betake me to my door,
 And will look out and see this wondrous sight.
 How summer is come back, and frost is o'er,
 And all the air warm waxen in a night."
 With that she opened, but for fear she cried,
 For lo! two Angels, — one on either side.
 And while she looked, with marvelling measureless,
 The Angels stood conversing face to face,
 But neither spoke to her. "The wilderness."
 One Angel said, "the solitary place,

Shall yet be glad for Him." And then full fain
 The other Angel answered, "He shall reign."
 And when the woman heard, in wondering wise,
 She whispered, "They are speaking of my Lord."
 And straightway swept across the open skies
 Multitudes like to these. They took the word,
 That flock of Angels, "He shall come again,
 My Lord, my Lord!" they sang, "and He shall
 reign!"
 Then they, drawn up into the blue o'erhead,
 Right happy, shining ones, made haste to flee;
 And those before her one to other said,
 "Behold He stands aneath yon almond-tree."
 This when the woman heard, she fain had gazed,
 But paused for reverence, and bowed down amazed.
 After she looked, for this her dream was deep;
 She looked, and there was naught beneath the tree;
 Yet did her love and longing overleap
 The fear of Angels, awful though they be,
 And she passed out between the blessed things,
 And brushed her mortal weeds against their wings.
 O, all the happy world was in its best,
 The trees were covered thick with buds and flowers,
 And these were dropping honey; for the rest,
 Sweetly the birds were piping in their bowers;
 Across the grass did groups of Angels go,
 And Saints in pairs were walking to and fro.
 Then did she pass toward the almond-tree,
 And none she saw beneath it: yet each Saint
 Upon his coming meekly bent the knee,
 And all their glory as they gazed waxed faint.
 And then a lighting Angel neared the place,
 And folded his fair wings before his face.

She also knelt, and spread her aged hands
As feeling for the sacred human feet;
She said, "Mine eyes are held, but if He stands
Anear, I will not let Him hence retreat
Except He bless me." Then, O sweet! O fair!
Some words were spoken, but she knew not where.

She knew not if beneath the boughs they woke,
Or dropt upon her from the realms above;
"What wilt thou, woman?" in the dream He spoke;
"Thy sorrow moveth Me, thyself I love;
Long have I counted up thy mournful years,
Once I did weep to wipe away thy tears."

She said, "My one Redeemer, only blest,
I know Thy voice, and from my yearning heart
Draw out my deep desire, my great request,
My prayer, that I might enter where Thou art.
Call me, O call from this world troublesome,
And let me see Thy face." He answered, "Come."

Here is the ending of the second dream.

It is a frosty morning, keen and cold,
Fast locked are silent mere and frozen stream,
And snow lies sparkling on the desert wold;
With savory morning meats they spread the board,
But Justice Wilvermore will walk abroad.

"Bring me my cloak," quoth he, as one in haste.

"Before you breakfast, sir?" his man replies.

"Ay," quoth he, quickly, and he will not taste

Of aught before him, but in urgent wise,

As he would fain some carking care allay,

Across the frozen field he takes his way.

"A dream! how strange that it should move me so

'Twas but a dream," quoth Justice Wilvermore:

"And yet I cannot peace nor pleasure know,

For wrongs I have not heeded heretofore;

Silver and gear the crone shall have of me,
And dwell for life in yonder cottage free.

"For visions of the night are fearful things,
Remorse is dread, though merely in a dream;
I will not subject me to visitings

Of such a sort again. I will esteem
My peace above my pride. From natures rude,
A little gold will buy me gratitude.

"The woman shall have leave to gather wood
As much as she may need, the long year round;
She shall, I say; moreover, it were good
Yon other cottage roofs to render sound.
Thus to my soul the ancient peace restore,
And sleep at ease," quoth Justice Wilvermore.

With that he nears the door: a frosty rime
Is branching over it, and drifts are deep
Against the wall. He knocks, and there is time—
(For none doth open),—time to list the sweep,
And whistle of the wind along the mere,
Through beds of stiffened reeds and rushes sear.

"If she be out, I have my pains for naught,"
He saith, and knocks again, and yet once more,
But to his ear nor step nor stir is brought;

And, after pause, he doth unlatch the door
And enter. No; she is not out, for see,
She sits asleep 'midst frost-work winterly.

Asleep, asleep before her empty grate,

Asleep, asleep, albeit the landlord call.

"What, dame," he saith, and comes toward her
straight,

"Asleep so early!" But whate'er befall,
She sleepeth; then he nears her, and behold
He lays a hand on hers, and it is cold.

Then doth the Justice to his home return ;
 From that day forth he wears a sadder brow ;
 His hands are opened, and his heart doth learn
 The patience of the poor. He made a vow
 And keeps it, for the old and sick have shared
 His gifts, their sordid homes he hath repaired.

And some he hath made happy, but for him
 Is happiness no more. He doth repent,
 And now the light of joy is waxen dim,
 Are all his steps toward the Highest sent ;
 He looks for mercy, and he waits release
 Above, for this world doth not yield him peace.

Night after night, night after desolate night,
 Day after day, day after tedious day,
 Stands by his fire, and dulls its gleamy light,
 Paceth behind or meets him in the way ;
 Or shares the path by hedge-row, mere, or stream,
 The visitor that doomed him in his dream.

Thy kingdom come.
 I heard a Seer cry : "The wilderness,
 The solitary place,
 Shall yet be glad for Him, and He shall bless
 (Thy kingdom come) with His revealed face
 The forests ; they shall drop their precious gum,
 And shed for Him their balm : and He shall yield
 The grandeur of His speech to charm the field.

"Then all the soothèd winds shall drop to listen,
 (Thy kingdom come,) Comforted waters waxen calm shall glisten
 With bashful tremblement beneath His smile :
 And Echo ever the while
 Shall take, and in her awful joy repeat,

The laughter of His lips — (Thy kingdom come) :
 And hills that sit apart shall be no longer dumb ;
 No, they shall shout and shout,
 Raining their lovely loyalty along the dewy plain :
 And valleys round about,

"And all the well-contented land, made sweet
 With flowers she opened at His feet,
 Shall answer ; shout and make the welkin ring,
 And tell it to the stars, shout, shout, and sing ;
 Her cup being full to the brim,
 Her poverty made rich with Him,
 Her yearning satisfied to its utmost sum —
 Lift up thy voice, O Earth, prepare thy song,
 It shall not yet be long,
 Lift up, O Earth, for He shall come again,
 Thy Lord ; and He shall reign, and He shall reign, —
 Thy kingdom come."

SONGS ON THE VOICES OF BIRDS.

INTRODUCTION.

CHILD AND BOATMAN.

"MARTIN, I wonder who makes all the songs."

"You do, sir?"

"Yes, I wonder how they come."

"Well, boy, I wonder what you'll wonder next!"

"But somebody must make them?"

"Sure enough."

"Does your wife know?"

"She never said she did."

"You told me that she knew so many things."

"I said she was a London woman, sir,

And a fine scholar, but I never said

She knew about the songs."

"I wish she did."

"And I wish no such thing; she knows enough,
She knows too much already. Look you now,
This vessel's off the stocks, a tidy craft."

"A schooner, Martin?"

"No, boy, no; a brig,
Only she's schooner-rigged, — a lovely craft."

"Is she for me? O, thank you, Martin, dear.
What shall I call her?"

"Well, sir, what you please."

"Then write on her 'The Eagle.'"

"Bless the child!

Eagle! why, you know naught of eagles, you.
When we lay off the coast, up Canada way,
And chanced to be ashore when twilight fell,
That was the place for eagles; bald they were,
With eyes as yellow as gold."

"O Martin, dear,
Tell me about them."

"Tell! there's naught to tell,
Only they snored o' nights and frightened us."
"Snored?"

"Ay, I tell you, snored; they slept upright
In the great oaks by scores; as true as time,
If I'd had aught upon my mind just then, [gold;
I wouldn't have walked that wood for unknown
It was most awful. When the moon was full,
I've seen them fish at night, in the middle watch,
When she got low. I've seen them plunge like
stones,

And come up fighting with a fish as long,
Ay, longer than my arm; and they would sail —
When they had struck its life out — they would sail
Over the deck, and show their fell, fierce eyes,
And croon for pleasure, hug the prey, and speed
Grand as a frigate on the wind."

"My ship,

She must be called 'The Eagle' after these.
And, Martin, ask your wife about the songs
When you go in at dinner-time."

"Not I."

THE NIGHTINGALE HEARD BY THE UNSAT- ISFIED HEART.

WHEN in a May-day hush
Chanteth the Missel-thrush,
The harp o' the heart makes answer with murmur
ous stirs;
When Robin-redbreast sings,
We think on budding springs,
And Culvers when they coo are love's remembran-
cers.

But thou in the trance of light
Stayest the feeding night,
And Echo makes sweet her lips with the utterance
wise,
And casts at our glad feet,
In a wisp of fancies fleet,
Life's fair, life's unfulfilled, impassioned prophecies.

Her central thought full well
Thou hast the wit to tell,
To take the sense o' the dark and to yield it so;
The moral of moonlight
To set in a cadence bright,
And sing our loftiest dream that we thought none
did know.

I have no nest as thou,
Bird on the blossoming bough,
Yet over thy tongue outfloweth the song o' my soul,

Chanting, "Forego thy strife,
The spirit out-acts the life,
But much is seldom theirs who can perceive THE
WHOLE.

"Thou drawest a perfect lot
All thine, but holden not,
Lie low, at the feet of beauty that ever shall bide;
There might be sorer smart
Than thine, far-seeing heart,
Whose fate is still to yearn, and not be satisfied."

SAND MARTINS.

I PASSED an inland-cliff precipitate;
From tiny caves peeped many a soot-black poll;
In each a mother-martin sat elate,
And of the news delivered her small soul.
Fantastic chatter! hasty, glad and gay,
Whereof the meaning was not ill to tell:
"Gossip, how wags the world with you to-day?"
"Gossip, the world wags well, the world wags
well."

And hark'ning, I was sure their little ones
Were in the bird-talk, and discourse was made
Concerning hot sea-bights and tropic suns,
For a clear sultriness the tune conveyed;—

And visions of the sky as of a cup
Hailing down light on pagan Pharaoh's sand,
And quivering air-waves trembling up and up,
And blank stone faces marvellously bland.

"When should the young be fledged and with them
hie
Where costly day drops down in crimson light?"

(Fortunate countries of the fire-fly
Swarm with blue diamonds all the sultry night,

"And the immortal moon takes turn with them.)
When should they pass again by that red land,
Where lovely mirage works a brodered hem
To fringe with phantom-palms a robe of sand?

"When should they dip their breasts again and play
In slumberous azure pools, clear as the air,
Where rosy-winged flamingoes fish all day,
Stalking amid the lotos-blossom fair?

"Then, over podded tamarinds bear their flight,
While cassias blossom in the zone of calms,
And so betake them to a south sea-bight,
To gossip in the crowns of cocoa-palms

"Whose roots are in the spray. O, haply there
Some dawn, white-winged they might chance to
find

A frigate, standing in to make more fair
The loneliness unaltered of mankind.

"A frigate come to water: nuts would fall,
And nimble feet would climb the flower-flushed
strand,

While northern talk would ring, and therewithal
The martins would desire the cool north land.

"And all would be as it had been before;
Again, at eve, there would be news to tell;
Who passed should hear them chant it o'er and o'er,
"Gossip, how wags the world?" "Well, gossip,
well."

A POET IN HIS YOUTH, AND THE CUCKOO-
BIRD.

ONCE upon a time, I lay
Fast asleep at dawn of day;
Windows open to the south,
Fancy pouting her sweet mouth
To my ear.

She turned a globe
In her slender hand, her robe
Was all spangled; and she said,
As she sat at my bed's head,
"Poet, poet, what! asleep?
Look! the ray runs up the steep
To your roof." Then in the golden
Essence of romances olden,
Bathed she my entranced heart.
And she gave a hand to me,
Drew me onward; "Come!" said she;
And she moved with me apart,
Down the lovely vale of Leisure.

Such its name was, I heard say,
For some fairies trooped that way;
Common people of the place,
Taking their accustomed pleasure
(All the clocks being stopped), to race
Down the slope on palfreys fleet.
Bridle bells made tinkling sweet;
And they said, "What signified
Faring home till eventide;
There were pies on every shelf,
And the bread would bake itself."
But for that I cared not, fed,
As it were, with angels' bread,

Sweet as honey; yet next day
All foredoomed to melt away;
Gone before the sun waxed hot,
Melted manna that *was not*.

Rock-doves' poetry of plaint,
Or the starling's courtship quaint,
Heart made much of; 'twas a boon
Won from silence, and too soon
Wasted in the ample air:
Building rooks far distant were.
Scarce at all would speak the rills,
And I saw the idle hills,
In their amber hazes deep,
Fold themselves and go to sleep,
Though it was not yet high noon.

Silence? Rather music brought
From the spheres! As if a thought,
Having taken wings, did fly
Through the reaches of the sky.
Silence? No, a sumptuous sigh
That had found embodiment,
That had come across the deep
After months of wintry sleep,
And with tender heavings went
Floating up the firmament.

"O," I mourned, half slumbering yet,
"'Tis the voice of *my* regret, —
Mine!" and I awoke. Full sweet
Saffron sunbeams did me greet;
And the voice it spake again,
Dropped from yon blue cup of light
Or some cloudlet swan's-down white
On my soul, that drank full fain
The sharp joy — the sweet pain —

Of its clear, right innocent,
 Unreprovèd discontent.
 How it came — where it went —
 Who can tell! The open blue
 Quivered with it, and I, too,
 Trembled. I remembered me
 Of the springs that used to be,
 When a dimpled white-haired child,
 Shy and tender and half wild,
 In the meadows I had heard
 Some way off the talking bird,
 And had felt it marvellous sweet,
 For it laughed: it did me greet,
 Calling me: yet, hid away
 In the woods, it would not play.
 No.

And all the world about,
 While a man will work or sing,
 Or a child pluck flowers of spring,
 Thou wilt scatter music out,
 Rouse him with thy wandering note,
 Changeful fancies set afloat,
 Almost tell with thy clear throat,
 But not quite, the wonder-rife,
 Most sweet riddle, dark and dim,
 That he searcheth all his life,
 Searcheth yet, and ne'er expoundeth;
 And so, winnowing of thy wings,
 Touch and trouble thy heart's strings,
 That a certain music soundeth
 In that wondrous instrument,
 With a trembling upward sent,
 That is reckoned sweet above
 By the Greatness surnamed Love.
 "O, I hear thee in the blue;
 Would that I might wing it too!

O to have what hope hath seen!
 O to be what might have been!
 O to set my life, sweet bird,
 To a tune that oft I heard
 When I used to stand alone
 Listening to the lovely moan
 Of the swaying pines o'erhead,
 While, a-gathering of bee-bread
 For their living, murmured round,
 As the pollen dropped to ground,
 All the nations from the hives;
 And the little brooding wives
 On each nest, brown dusky things,
 Sat with gold-dust on their wings.
 Then beyond (more sweet than all)
 Talked the tumbling waterfall;
 And there were, and there were not
 (As might fall, and form anew
 Bell-hung drops of honey-dew)
 Echoes of — I know not what;
 As if some right-joyous elf,
 While about his own affairs,
 Whistled softly otherwheres.
 Nay, as if our mother dear,
 Wrapt in sun-warm atmosphere,
 Laughed a little to herself,
 Laughed a little as she rolled,
 Thinking on the days of old.

"Ah! there be some hearts, I wis,
 To which nothing comes amiss.
 Mine was one. Much secret wealth
 I was heir to: and by stealth,
 When the moon was fully grown,
 And she thought herself alone,
 I have heard her, ay, right well,
 Shoot a silver message down

To the unseen sentinel
Of a still, snow-thatched town.
"Once, awhile ago, I peered
In the nest where Spring was reared.
There she, quivering her fair wings,
Flattered March with chirrupings;
And they fed her; nights and days,
Fed her mouth with much sweet food,
And her heart with love and praise,
Till the wild thing rose and flew
Over woods and water-springs,
Shaking off the morning dew
In a rainbow from her wings.

"Once (I will to you confide
More), — O, once in forest wide,
I, benighted, overheard
Marvellous mild echoes stirred,
And a calling half defined,
And an answering from afar;
Somewhat talked with a star,
And the talk was of mankind.

"Cuckoo, cuckoo!"
Float anear in upper blue:
Art thou yet a prophet true?
Wilt thou say, 'And having seen
Things that be, and have not been,
Thou art free o' the world, for naught
Can despoil thee of thy thought'?
Nay, but make me music yet,
Bird, as deep as my regret;
For a certain hope hath set,
Like a star, and left me heir
To a crying for its light,
An aspiring infinite,
And a beautiful despair!

"Ah! no more, no more, no more
I shall lie at thy shut door,
Mine ideal, my desired,
Dreaming thou wilt open it,
And step out, thou most admired,
By my side to fare, or sit,
Quenching hunger and all drouth
With the wit of thy fair mouth,
Showing me the wished prize
In the calm of thy dove's eyes,
Teaching me the wonder-rife
Majesties of human life,
All its fairest possible sum,
And the grace of its to come.

"What a difference! Why of late
All sweet music used to say,
'She will come, and with thee stay
To-morrow, man, if not to-day.'
Now it rumors, 'Wait, wait, wait!'"

A RAVEN IN A WHITE CHINE.

I saw, when I looked up, on either hand,
A pale high chalk-cliff, reared aloft in white;
A narrowing rent soon closed toward the land, —
Toward the sea, an open yawning bight.
The polished tide, with scarce a hint of blue,
Washed in the bight; above with angry moan
A raven, that was robbed, sat up in view,
Croaking and crying on a ledge alone.
"Stand on thy nest, spread out thy fateful wings,
With sullen hungry love bemoan thy brood,
For boys have wrung their necks, those imp-like
things,
Whose beaks dripped crimson daily at their food.

"Cry, thou black prophetess! cry, and despair;
None love thee, none! Their father was thy foe,
Whose father in his youth did know thy lair,
And steal thy little demons long ago.

"Thou madest many childless for their sake,
And picked out many eyes that loved the light.
Cry, thou black prophetess! sit up, awake,
Forebode; and ban them through the desolate
night."

Lo! while I spake it, with a crimson hue
The dipping sun endowed that silver flood,
And all the cliffs flushed red, and up she flew,
The bird, as mad to bathe in airy blood.

"Nay, thou mayst cry, the omen is not thine,
Thou aged priestess of fell doom, and fate.
It is not blood: thy gods are making wine,
They spilt the must outside their city gate,

"And stained their azure pavement with the lees:
They will not listen though thou cry aloud.
Old Chance, thy dame, sits mumbling at her ease,
Nor hears; the fair hag, Luck, is in her shroud.

"They heed not, they withdraw the sky-hung sign;
Thou hast no charm against the favorite race;
Thy gods pour out for it, not blood, but wine:
There is no justice in their dwelling-place!

"Safe in their father's house the boys shall rest,
Though thy fell brood doth stark and silent lie;
Their unborn sons may yet despoil thy nest:
Cry, thou black prophetess! lift up! cry, cry!"

THE WARBLING OF BLACKBIRDS.

WHEN I hear the waters fretting,
When I see the chestnut letting
All her lovely blossom falter down, I think, "Alas
the day!"
Once, with magical sweet singing,
Blackbirds set the woodland ringing,
That awakes no more while April hours wear them-
selves away.

In our hearts fair hope lay smiling,
Sweet as air, and all beguiling;
And there hung a mist of bluebells on the slope and
down the dell;
And we talked of joy and splendor
That the years unborn would render,
And the blackbirds helped us with the story, for
they knew it well.

Piping, fluting, "Bees are humming,
April's here, and summer's coming;
Don't forget us when you walk, a man with men, in
pride and joy;

Think on us in alleys shady,
When you step a graceful lady; [boy.
For no fairer day have we to hope for, little girl and

"Laugh and play, O lispings waters,
Lull our downy sons and daughters;
Come, O wind, and rock their leafy cradle in thy
wanderings coy;

When they wake, we'll end the measure
With a wild sweet cry of pleasure,
And a 'Hey down derry, let's be merry! little girl
and boy!'"

SEA-MEWS IN WINTER TIME.

I WALKED beside a dark gray sea,
And said, "O world, how cold thou art!
Thou poor white world, I pity thee,
For joy and warmth from thee depart.

"Yon rising wave licks off the snow,
Winds on the crag each other chase,
In little powdery whirls they blow
The misty fragments down its face.

"The sea is cold, and dark its rim,
Winter sits cowering on the wold,
And I, beside this watery brim,
Am also lonely, also cold."

I spoke, and drew toward a rock,
Where many mews made twittering sweet;
Their wings upreared, the clustering flock
Did pat the sea-grass with their feet.

A rock but half submerged, the sea
Ran up and washed it while they fed;
Their fond and foolish ecstasy
A wondering in my fancy bred.

Joy accompanied with every cry,
Joy in their food, in that keen wind,
That heaving sea, that shaded sky,
And in themselves, and in their kind.

The phantoms of the deep at play!
What idlers graced the twittering things;
Luxurious paddlings in the spray,
And delicate lifting up of wings.

Then all at once a flight, and fast
The lovely crowd flew out to sea;
If mine own life had been recast,
Earth had not looked more changed to me.

"Where is the cold? Yon clouded skies
Have only dropped their curtains low
To shade the old mother where she lies,
Sleeping a little, 'neath the snow.

"The cold is not in crag, nor scar,
Not in the snows that lap the lea,
Not in your wings that beat afar,
Delighting, on the crested sea;

"No, nor in yon exultant wind
That shakes the oak and bends the pine.
Look near, look in, and thou shalt find
No sense of cold, fond fool, but thine!"

With that I felt the gloom depart,
And thoughts within me did unfold,
Whose sunshine warmed me to the heart:
I walked in joy, and was not cold.

LAURANCE.

He knew she did not love him; but so long
As rivals were unknown to him, he dwelt
At ease, and did not find his love a pain.
He had much deference in his nature, need
To honor, — it became him: he was frank,
Fresh, hardy, of a joyous mind, and strong, —
Looked all things straight in the face. So when she
came
Before him first, he looked at her, and looked

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No more, but colored to his healthful brow,
 And wished himself a better man, and thought
 On certain things, and wished they were undone,
 Because her girlish innocence, the grace
 Of her unblemished pureness, wrought in him
 A longing and aspiring, and a shame
 To think how wicked was the world, — that world
 Which he must walk in, — while from her (and such
 As she was) it was hidden; there was made
 A clean path, and the girl moved on like one
 In some enchanted ring.

In his young heart
 She reigned, with all the beauties that she had,
 And all the virtues that he rightly took
 For granted; there he set her with her crown,
 And at her first enthronement he turned out
 Much that was best away, for unaware
 His thoughts grew noble. She was always there
 And knew it not, and he grew like to her,
 And like to what he thought her.

Now he dwelt
 With kin that loved him well, — two fine old folk,
 A rich, right honest yeoman, and his dame, —
 Their only grandson he, their pride, their heir.
 To these one daughter had been born, one child,
 And as she grew to woman, "Look," they said,
 "She must not leave us; let us build a wing,
 With cheerful rooms and wide, to our old grange;
 There may she dwell, with her good man, and all
 God sends them." Then the girl in her first youth
 Married a curate, — handsome, poor in purse,
 Of gentle blood and manners, and he lived
 Under her father's roof, as they had planned.
 Full soon, for happy years are short, they filled
 The house with children; four were born to them.

Then came a sickly season; fever spread
 Among the poor. The curate, never slack
 In duty, praying by the sick, or, worse,
 Burying the dead, when all the air was clogged
 With poisonous mist, was stricken; long he lay
 Sick, almost to the death, and when his head
 He lifted from the pillow, there was left
 One only of that pretty flock: his girls,
 His three, were cold beneath the sod; his boy,
 Their eldest born, remained.

The drooping wife
 Bore her great sorrow in such quiet wise,
 That first they marvelled at her, then they tried
 To rouse her, showing her their bitter grief,
 Lamenting, and not sparing; but she sighed,
 "Let me alone, it will not be for long."
 Then did her mother tremble, murmuring out,
 "Dear child, the best of comfort will be soon.
 O, when you see this other little face,
 You will, please God, be comforted."

She said,
 "I shall not live to see it;" but she did, —
 A little sickly face, a wan, thin face.
 Then she grew eager, and her eyes were bright
 When she would plead with them, "Take me away,
 Let me go south; it is the bitter blast
 That chills my tender babe; she cannot thrive
 Under the desolate, dull, mournful cloud."
 Then they all journeyed south together, mute
 With past and coming sorrow, till the sun,
 In gardens edging the blue tideless main,
 Warmed them and calmed the aching at their hearts,
 And all went better for a while; but not
 For long. They sitting by the orange-trees
 Once rested, and the wife was very still:

A woman with narcissus flowers heaped up
 Let down her basket from her head, but paused
 With pitying gesture, and drew near and stooped,
 Taking a white wild face upon her breast.
 The little babe on its poor mother's knees,
 None marking it, none knowing else, had died.
 The fading mother could not stay behind,
 Her heart was broken; but it awed them most
 To feel they must not, dared not, pray for life,
 Seeing she longed to go, and went so gladly.
 After, these three, who loved each other well,
 Brought their one child away, and they were best
 Together in the wide old grange. Full oft
 The father with the mother talked of her,
 Their daughter, but the husband nevermore;
 He looked for solace in his work, and gave
 His mind to teach his boy. And time went on,
 Until the grandsire prayed those other two,
 "Now part with him; it must be; for his good:
 He rules and knows it; choose for him a school,
 Let him have all advantages, and all
 Good training that should make a gentleman."
 With that they parted from their boy, and lived
 Longing between his holidays, and time
 Sped; he grew on till he had eighteen years.
 His father loved him, wished to make of him
 Another parson; but the farmer's wife
 Murmured at that—"No, no, they learned bad ways.
 They ran in debt at college; she had heard
 That many rued the day they sent their boys
 To college;" and between the two broke in
 His grandsire, "Find a sober, honest man,
 A scholar, for our lad should see the world
 While he is young, that he may marry young.
 He will not settle and be satisfied

Till he has run about the world awhile.
 Good lack, I longed to travel in my youth,
 And had no chance to do it. Send him off,
 A sober man being found to trust him with,—
 One with the fear of God before his eyes."
 And he prevailed; the careful father chose
 A tutor, young, the worthy matron thought,—
 In truth, not ten years older than her boy,
 And glad as he to range, and keen for snows,
 Desert, and ocean. And they made strange choice
 Of where to go, left the sweet day behind,
 And pushed up north in whaling ships, to feel
 What cold was, see the blowing whale come up,
 And Arctic creatures, while a scarlet sun
 Went round and round, crowd on the clear blue berg
 Then did the trappers have them; and they heard
 Nightly the whistling calls of forest-men
 That mocked the forest wonders; and they saw
 Over the open, raging up like doom,
 The dangerous dust-cloud, that was full of eyes—
 The bisons. So were three years gone like one;
 And the old cities drew them for awhile,
 Great mothers, by the Tiber and the Seine;
 They have hid many sons hard by their seats,
 But all the air is stirring with them still,
 The waters murmur of them, skies at eve
 Are stained with their rich blood, and every sound
 Means men.

At last, the fourth year running out,
 The youth came home. And all the cheerful house
 Was decked in fresher colors, and the dame
 Was full of joy. But in the father's heart
 Abode a painful doubt. "It is not well;
 He cannot spend his life with dog and gun.
 I do not care that my one son should sleep

Merely for keeping him in breath, and wake
Only to ride to cover."

Not the less

The grandsire pondered. "Ay, the boy must work
Or spend; and I must let him spend; just stay
Awhile with us, and then from time to time
Have leave to be away with those fine folk
With whom, these many years, at school, and now,
During his sojourn in the foreign towns,
He has been made familiar." Thus a month
Went by. They liked the stirring ways of youth,
The quick elastic step, and joyous mind,
Ever expectant of it knew not what,
But something higher than has e'er been born
Of easy slumber and sweet competence.
And as for him, the while they thought and thought
A comfortable instinct let him know
How they had waited for him, to complete
And give a meaning to their lives; and still
At home, but with a sense of newness there,
And frank and fresh as in the school-boy days,
He oft — invading of his father's haunts,
The study where he passed the silent morn —
Would sit, devouring with a greedy joy
The piled-up books, uncut as yet; or wake
To guide with him by night the tube, and search,
Ay, think to find new stars; then, risen betimes,
Would ride about the farm, and list the talk
Of his hale grandsire.

But a day came round,
When, after peering in his mother's room,
Shaded and shuttered from the light, he opened
A door, and found the rosy grandmother
Enconced and happy in her special pride,
Her storeroom. She was corking syrups rare,
And fruits all sparkling in a crystal coat.

Here, after choice of certain cates well known,
He, sitting on her bacon-chest at ease,
Sang as he watched her, till, right suddenly,
As if a new thought came, "Goody," quoth he,
"What, think you, do they want to do with me?
What have they planned for me that I should do?"

"Do, laddie!" quoth she, faltering, half in tears;
"Are you not happy with us? not content?
Why would ye go away? There is no need
That ye should do at all. O, bide at home.
Have we not plenty?"

"Even so," he said;
"I did not wish to go."

"Nay, then," quoth she,
"Be idle; let me see your blessed face.
What, is the horse your father chose for you
Not to your mind? He is? Well, well, remain;
Do as you will, so you but do it here.
You shall not want for money."

But, his arms
Folding, he sat and twisted up his mouth
With comical discomfiture.

"What, then,"
She sighed, "what is it, child, that you would like?"
"Why," said he, "farming."

And she looked at him
Fond, foolish woman that she was, to find
Some fitness in the worker for the work,
And she found none. A certain grace there was
Of movement, and a beauty in the face,
Sun-browned and healthful beauty, that had come
From his grave father; and she thought, "Good lack,
A farmer! he is fitter for a duke."

He walks — why, how he walks! if I should meet
One like him, whom I knew not, I should ask,
'And who may that be?' So the foolish thought
Found words. Quoth she, half laughing, half
ashamed,

"We planned to make of you — a gentleman."
And, with engaging sweet audacity, —
She thought it nothing less, — he, looking up,
With a smile in his blue eyes, replied to her,
"And haven't you done it?" Quoth she, lovingly,
"I think we have, laddie; I think we have."
"Then," quoth he, "I may do what best I like;
It makes no matter. Goody, you were wise
To help me in it, and to let me farm;
I think of getting into mischief else!"
"No! do ye, laddie?" quoth the dame, and laughed.
"But ask my grandfather," the youth went on,
"To let me have the farm he bought last year,
The little one, to manage. I like land;
I want some." And she, womanlike, gave way,
Convinced; and promised, and made good her word,
And that same night upon the matter spoke,
In presence of the father and the son.

"Roger," quoth she, "our Laurance wants to farm;
I think he might do worse." The father sat
Mute, but right glad. The grandson, breaking in,
Set all his wish and his ambition forth;
But cunningly the old man hid his joy,
And made conditions with a faint demur.
Then, pausing, "Let your father speak," quoth he;
"I am content if he is." At his word
The parson took him; ay, and, parson like,
Put a religious meaning in the work,
Man's earliest work, and wished his son God speed.

II.

Thus all were satisfied, and, day by day,
For two sweet years a happy course was theirs;
Happy, but yet the fortunate, the young
Loved, and much cared-for, entered on his strife, —
A stirring of the heart, a quickening keen
Of sight and hearing to the delicate
Beauty and music of an altered world —
Began to walk in that mysterious light
Which doth reveal and yet transform; which gives
Destiny, sorrow, youth, and death, and life,
Intenser meaning; in disquieting
Lifts up; a shining light: men call it Love.
Fair, modest eyes had she, the girl he loved;
A silent creature, thoughtful, grave, sincere.
She never turned from him with sweet caprice,
Nor changing moved his soul to troublous hope,
Nor dropped for him her heavy lashes low,
But excellent in youthful grace came up;
And, ere his words were ready, passing on,
Had left him all a-tremble; yet made sure
That by her own true will, and fixed intent,
She held him thus remote. Therefore, albeit
He knew she did not love him, yet so long
As of a rival unaware, he dwelt
All in the present, without fear, or hope,
Enthralled and whelmed in the deep sea of love,
And could not get his head above its wave
To search the far horizon, or to mark
Whereto it drifted him.

So long, so long;
Then, on a sudden, came the ruthless fate,
Showed him a bitter truth, and brought him bale
All in the tolling out of noon.

'Twas thus:
Snow-time was come; it had been snowing hard;

Across the church-yard path he walked; the clock
 Began to strike, and, as he passed the porch,
 Half turning, through a sense that came to him
 As of some presence in it, he beheld
 His love, and she had come for shelter there;
 And all her face was fair with rosy bloom,
 The blush of happiness; and one held up
 Her ungloved hand in both his own, and stooped
 Toward it, sitting by her. O, her eyes
 Were full of peace and tender light: they looked
 One moment in the ungraced lover's face
 While he was passing in the snow; and he
 Received the story, while he raised his hat
 Retiring. Then the clock left off to strike,
 And that was all. It snowed, and he walked on;
 And in a certain way he marked the snow,
 And walked, and came upon the open heath;
 And in a certain way he marked the cold,
 And walked as one that had no starting-place
 Might walk, but not to any certain goal.
 And he strode on toward a hollow part,
 Where from the hillside gravel had been dug,
 And he was conscious of a cry, and went,
 Dulled in his sense, as though he heard it not;
 Till a small farm-house drudge, a half-grown girl,
 Rose from the shelter of a drift that lay
 Against the bushes, crying, "God! O God,
 O my good God, He sends us help at last."
 Then, looking hard upon her, came to him
 The power to feel and to perceive. Her teeth
 Chattered, and all her limbs with shuddering failed,
 And in her threadbare shawl was wrapped a child
 That looked on him with wondering, wistful eyes.
 "I thought to freeze," the girl broke out with tears;
 "Kind sir, kind sir," and she held out the child,

As praying him to take it; and he did;
 And gave to her the shawl, and swathed his charge
 In the foldings of his plaid; and when it thrust
 Its small round face against his breast, and felt
 With small red hands for warmth, unbearable
 Pains of great pity rent his straitened heart,
 For the poor upland dwellers had been out
 Since morning dawn, at early milking-time,
 Wandering and stumbling in the drift. And now,
 Lamed with a fall, half crippled by the cold,
 Hardly prevailed his arm to drag her on,
 That ill-clad child, who yet the younger child
 Had motherly cared to shield. So toiling through
 The great white storm coming, and coming yet,
 And coming till the world confounded sat
 With all her fair familiar features gone,
 The mountains muffled in an eddying swirl,
 He led or bore them, and the little one [mourn
 Peered from her shelter, pleased; but oft would
 The elder, "They will beat me: O my can,
 I left my can of milk upon the moor."
 And he compared her trouble with his own,
 And had no heart to speak. And yet 'twas keen;
 It filled her to the putting down of pain
 And hunger, — what could his do more?

He brought

The children to their home, and suddenly
 Regained himself, and, wondering at himself,
 That he had borne, and yet been dumb so long,
 The weary wailing of the girl, he paid
 Money to buy her pardon; heard them say,
 "Peace, we have feared for you; forget the milk,
 It is no matter!" and went forth again
 And waded in the snow, and quietly
 Considered in his patience what to do
 With all the dull remainder of his days.

With dusk he was at home, and felt it good
 To hear his kindred talking, for it broke
 A mocking endless echo in his soul,
 "It is no matter!" and he could not choose
 But mutter, though the weariness o'ercame
 His spirit, "Peace, it is no matter; peace,
 It is no matter!" For he felt that all
 Was as it had been, and his father's heart
 Was easy, knowing not how that same day
 Hope with her tender colors and delight
 (He should not care to have him know) were dead;
 Yea, to all these, his nearest and most dear,
 It was no matter. And he heard them talk
 Of timber felled, of certain fruitful fields,
 And profitable markets.

All for him
 Their plans, and yet the echoes swarmed and swam
 About his head, whenever there was pause;
 "It is no matter!" And his greater self
 Arose in him and fought. "It matters much,
 It matters all to these, that not to-day
 Nor ever they should know it. I will hide
 The wound: ay, hide it with a sleepless care.
 What! shall I make these three to drink of rue
 Because my cup is bitter?" And he thrust
 Himself in thought away, and made his ears
 Hearken, and caused his voice, that yet did seem
 Another, to make answer, when they spoke,
 As there had been no snow-storm, and no porch,
 And no despair.

So this went on awhile
 Until the snow had melted from the wold,
 And he, one noonday, wandering up a lane,
 Met on a turn the woman whom he loved.
 Then, even to trembling he was moved; his speech
 Faltered; but, when the common kindly words

Of greeting were all said, and she passed on,
 He could not bear her sweetness and his pain.
 "Muriel!" he cried; and when she heard her name,
 She turned. "You know I love you," he broke out:
 She answered, "Yes," and sighed.

"O, pardon me,
 Pardon me," quoth the lover; "let me rest
 In certainty, and hear it from your mouth:
 Is he with whom I saw you once of late
 To call you wife?" "I hope so," she replied;
 And over all her face the rose-bloom came,
 As, thinking on that other, unaware
 Her eyes waxed tender. When he looked on her,
 Standing to answer him, with lovely shame,
 Submiss, and yet not his, a passionate,
 A quickened sense of his great impotence
 To drive away the doom got hold on him;
 He set his teeth to force the unbearable
 Misery back, his wide-awakened eyes
 Flashed as with flame.

And she, all overawed
 And mastered by his manhood, waited yet,
 And trembled at the deep she could not sound;
 A passionate nature in a storm; a heart
 Wild with a mortal pain, and in the grasp
 Of an immortal love.

"Farewell," he said,
 Recovering words, and when she gave her hand,
 "My thanks for your good candor; for I feel
 That it has cost you something." Then, the blush
 Yet on her face, she said: "It was your due:
 But keep this matter from your friends and kin,
 We would not have it known." Then, cold and
 proud,
 Because there leaped from under his straight lids,

And instantly was veiled, a keen surprise,—
 "He wills it, and I therefore think it well."
 Thereon they parted; but from that time forth,
 Whether they met on festal eve, in field,
 Or at the church, she ever bore herself
 Proudly, for she had felt a certain pain;
 The disapproval hastily betrayed
 And quickly hidden hurt her. "'Twas a grace,"
 She thought, "to tell this man the thing he asked,
 And he rewards me with surprise. I like
 No one's surprise, and least of all bestowed
 Where he bestowed it."

But the spring came on:
 Looking to wed in April, all her thoughts
 Grew loving; she would fain the world had waxed
 More happy with her happiness, and oft
 Walking among the flowery woods she felt
 Their loveliness reach down into her heart,
 And knew with them the ecstasies of growth,
 The rapture that was satisfied with light,
 The pleasure of the leaf in exquisite
 Expansion, through the lovely, longed-for spring.
 And as for him — (Some narrow hearts there are
 That suffer blight when that they are fed upon,
 As something to complete their being, fails,
 And they retire into their holes and pine,
 And long restrained grow stern. But some there are
 That in a sacred want and hunger rise,
 And draw the misery home and live with it,
 And excellent in honor wait, and will
 That somewhat good should yet be found in it,
 Else wherefore were they born?) — and as for him,
 He loved her, but his peace and welfare made
 The sunshine of three lives. The cheerful grange
 Threw open wide its hospitable doors

And drew in guests for him. The garden flowers,
 Sweet budding wonders, all were set for him.
 In him the eyes at home were satisfied,
 And if he did but laugh the ear approved.

What then? He dwelt among them as of old,
 And taught his mouth to smile.

And time went on
 Till on a morning, when the perfect Spring
 Rested among her leaves, he, journeying home
 After short sojourn in a neighboring town,
 Stopped at the little station on the line
 That ran between his woods; a lonely place
 And quiet, and a woman and a child
 Got out. He noted them, but, walking on
 Quickly, went back into the wood, impelled
 By hope, for, passing, he had seen his love,
 And she was sitting on a rustic seat
 That overlooked the line, and he desired,
 With longing indescribable, to look
 Upon her face again. And he drew near.
 She was right happy; she was waiting there.
 He felt that she was waiting for her lord.
 She cared no whit if Laurance went or stayed,
 But answered when he spoke, and dropped her cheek
 In her fair hand.

And he, not able yet
 To force himself away, and nevermore
 Behold her, gathered blossom, primrose flowers,
 And wild anemone, for many a clump
 Grew all about him, and the hazel rods
 Were nodding with their catkins. But he heard
 The stopping train, and felt that he must go;
 His time was come. There was naught else to do
 Or hope for. With the blossom he drew near,

And would have had her take it from his hand;
 But she, half lost in thought, held out her own,
 And then, remembering him and his long love,
 She said, "I thank you; pray you now forget,
 Forget me, Laurance," and her lovely eyes
 Softened; but he was dumb, till through the trees
 Suddenly broke upon their quietude
 The woman and her child. And Muriel said,
 "What will you?" She made answer quick and keen,
 "Your name, my lady; 'tis your name I want,
 Tell me your name." Not startled, not displeased,
 But with a musing sweetness on her mouth,
 As if considering in how short a while
 It would be changed, she lifted up her face
 And gave it, and the little child drew near
 And pulled her gown, and prayed her for the flowers.
 Then Laurence, not content to leave them so,
 Nor yet to wait the coming lover, spoke:
 "Your errand with this lady?" — "And your right
 To ask it?" she broke out with sudden heat
 And passion: "What is that to you? Poor child!
 Madam!" And Muriel lifted up her face
 And looked, — they looked into each other's eyes.
 "That man who comes," the clear-voiced woman
 cried, —
 "That man with whom you think to wed so soon, —
 You must not heed him. What! the world is full
 Of men, and some are good, and most, God knows,
 Better than he, — that I should say it! — far
 Better." And down her face the large tears ran,
 And Muriel's wild dilated eyes looked up,
 Taking a terrible meaning from her words;
 And Laurance stared about him, half in doubt
 If this were real, for all things were so blithe,
 And soft air tossed the little flowers about;
 The child was singing, and the blackbirds piped.

Glad in fair sunshine. And the women both
 Were quiet, gazing in each other's eyes.
 He found his voice, and spoke: "This is not well,
 Though whom you speak of should have done you
 wrong;
 A man that could desert and plan to wed
 Will not his purpose yield to God and right,
 Only to law. You, whom I pity so much,
 If you be come this day to urge a claim,
 You will not tell me that your claim will hold;
 'Tis only, if I read aright, the old,
 Sorrowful, hateful story!"

Muriel sighed,

With a dull patience that he marvelled at:
 "Be plain with me. I know not what to think,
 Unless you are his wife. Are you his wife?
 Be plain with me." And all too quietly,
 With running down of tears, the answer came,
 "Ay, madam, ay! the worse for him and me."
 Then Muriel heard her lover's foot anear,
 And cried upon him with a bitter cry,
 Sharp and despairing. And those two stood back,
 With such affright and violent anger stirred,
 He broke from out the thicket to her side,
 Not knowing. But, her hands before her face,
 She sat; and, stepping close, that woman came
 And faced him. Then said Muriel, "O my heart,
 Herbert!" — and he was dumb, and ground his teeth,
 And lifted up his hand and looked at it,
 And at the woman; but a man was there
 Who whirled her from her place, and thrust himself
 Between them; he was strong, — a stalwart man:
 And Herbert, thinking on it, knew his name. [strive
 "What good," quoth he, "though you and I should
 And wrestle all this April day? A word,
 And not a blow, is what these women want:

Master yourself, and say it." But he, weak
 With passion and great anguish, flung himself
 Upon the seat and cried, "O lost, my love!
 O Muriel, Muriel!" And the woman spoke,
 "Sir, 'twas an evil day you wed with me;
 And you were young; I know it, sir, right well.
 Sir, I have worked; I have not troubled you,
 Not for myself, not for your child. I know
 We are not equal." "Hold!" he cried; "have done;
 Your still, tame words are worse than hate or scorn.
 Get from me! Ay, my wife, my wife, indeed!
 All's done. You hear it, Muriel; if you can,
 O sweet, forgive me."

Then the woman moved
 Slowly away; her little singing child
 Went in her wake; and Muriel dropped her hands,
 And sat before these two that loved her so,
 Mute and unheeding. There were angry words,
 She knew, but yet she could not hear the words;
 And afterwards the man she loved stooped down
 And kissed her forehead once, and then withdrew
 To look at her, and with a gesture pray
 Her pardon. And she tried to speak, but failed,
 And presently, and soon, O, — he was gone.

She heard him go, and Laurance, still as stone,
 Remained beside her; and she put her hand
 Before her face again, and afterward
 She heard a voice, as if a long way off,
 Some one entreated, but she could not heed.
 Thereon he drew her hand away, and raised
 Her passive from her seat. So then she knew
 That he would have her go with him, go home, —
 It was not far to go, — a dreary home.
 A crippled aunt, of birth and lineage high,
 Had, in her love, and for a place and home,
 Married the stern old rector; and the girl

Dwelt with them: she was orphaned, — had no kin
 Nearer than they. And Laurance brought her in,
 And spared to her the telling of this woe.
 He sought her kindred where they sat apart,
 And laid before them all the cruel thing,
 As he had seen it. After, he retired;
 And restless, and not master of himself,
 The day and night haunted the rectory lanes;
 And all things, even to the spreading out
 Of leaves, their flickering shadows on the ground,
 Or sailing of the slow, white cloud, or peace
 And glory and great light on mountain heads, —
 All things were leagued against him, ministered
 By likeness or by contrast to his love.

But what was that to Muriel, though her peace
 He would have purchased for her with all prayers,
 And costly, passionate, despairing tears?
 O, what to her that he should find it worse
 To bear her life's undoing than his own?

She let him see her, and she made no moan,
 But talked full calmly of indifferent things,
 Which, when he heard, and marked the faded eyes
 And lovely wasted cheek, he started up
 With "This I cannot bear!" and shamed to feel
 His manhood giving way, and utterly
 Subdued by her sweet patience and his pain,
 Made haste and from the window sprang, and paced
 Battling and chiding with himself, the maze.

She suffered, and he could not make her well
 For all his loving; — he was naught to her.
 And now his passionate nature, set astir,
 Fought with the pain that could not be endured;
 And like a wild thing, suddenly aware
 That it is caged, which flings and bruises all
 Its body at the bars, he rose, and raged

Against the misery : then he made all worse
 With tears. But when he came to her again,
 Willing to talk as they had talked before,
 She sighed, and said, with that strange quietness,
 "I know you have been crying : " and she bent
 Her own fair head and wept.

She felt the cold —
 The freezing cold that deadened all her life —
 Give way a little ; for this passionate
 Sorrow, and all for her, relieved her heart,
 And brought some natural warmth, some natural
 tears.

III.

And after that, though oft he sought her door,
 He might not see her. First they said to him,
 "She is not well ; " and afterwards, "Her wish
 Is ever to be quiet." Then in haste
 They took her from the place, because so fast
 She faded. As for him, — though youth and strength
 Can bear the weight as of a world, at last
 The burden of it tells, — he heard it said,
 When autumn came, "The poor sweet thing will die :
 That shock was mortal." And he cared no more
 To hide, if yet he could have hidden, the blight
 That was laying waste his heart. He journeyed south
 To Devon, where she dwelt with other kin,
 Good, kindly women ; and he wrote to them,
 Praying that he might see her ere she died.

So in her patience she permitted him
 To be about her, for it eased his heart ;
 And as for her that was to die so soon,
 What did it signify ? She let him weep
 Some passionate tears beside her couch, she spoke
 Pitying words, and then they made him go.

It was enough, they said ; her time was short,
 And he had seen her. He HAD seen, and felt
 The bitterness of death ; but he went home,
 Being satisfied in that great longing now,
 And able to endure what might befall.

And Muriel lay, and faded with the year ;
 She lay at the door of death, that opened not
 To take her in ; for when the days once more
 Began a little to increase, she felt, —
 And it was sweet to her, she was so young, —
 She felt a longing for the time of flowers,
 And dreamed that she was walking in that wood
 With her two feet among the primroses.

Then when the violet opened, she rose up
 And walked. The tender leaf and tender light
 Did solace her ; but she was white and wan,
 The shadow of that Muriel in the wood
 Who listened to those deadly words.

And now

Empurpled seas began to blush and bloom,
 Doves made sweet moaning, and the guelder-rose
 In a great stillness dropped, and ever dropped,
 Her wealth about her feet, and there it lay,
 And drifted not at all. The lilac spread
 Odorous essence round her ; and full oft,
 When Muriel felt the warmth her pulses cheer,
 She, faded, sat among the May-tide bloom,
 And with a reverent quiet in her soul,
 Took back — it was His will — her time, and sat
 Learning again to live.

Thus as she sat
 Upon a day, she was aware of one
 Who at a distance marked her. This again
 Another day, and she was vexed, for yet

She longed for quiet; but she heard a foot
 Pass once again, and beckoned through the trees.
 "Laurance!" And all impatient of unrest
 And strife, ay, even of the sight of them,
 When he drew near, with tired, tired lips,
 As if her soul upbraided him, she said,
 "Why have you done this thing?" He answered
 her,
 "I am not always master in the fight:
 I could not help it."

"What!" she sighed, "not yet!
 O, I am sorry;" and she talked to him
 As one who looked to live, imploring him, —
 "Try to forget me. Let your fancy dwell
 Elsewhere, nor me enrich with it so long;
 It wearies me to think of this your love.
 Forget me!"

He made answer, "I will try:
 The task will take me all my life to learn,
 O, were it learned, I know not how to live;
 This pain is part of life and being now, —
 It is myself; but yet — but I will try."
 Then she spoke friendly to him, — of his home,
 His father, and the old, brave, loving folk;
 She bade him think of them. And not her words,
 But having seen her, satisfied his heart.
 He left her, and went home to live his life,
 And all the summer heard it said of her,
 "Yet, she grows stronger;" but when autumn came
 Again she drooped.

A bitter thing it is
 To lose at once the lover and the love;
 For who receiveth not may yet keep life
 In the spirit with bestowal. But for her,
 This Muriel, all was gone. The man she loved,

Not only from her present had withdrawn,
 But from her past, and there was no such man,
 There never had been.

He was not as one
 Who takes love in, like some sweet bird, and holds
 The winged fluttering stranger to his breast,
 Till, after transient stay, all unaware
 It leaves him: it has flown. No; this may live
 In memory, — loved till death. He was not vile;
 For who by choice would part with that pure bird,
 And lose the exaltation of its song?
 He had not strength of will to keep it fast,
 Nor warmth of heart to keep it warm, nor life
 Of thought to make the echo sound for him
 After the song was done. Pity that man:
 His music is all flown, and he forgets
 The sweetness of it, till at last he thinks
 'Twas no great matter. But he was not vile,
 Only a thing to pity most in man,
 Weak, — only poor, and, if he knew it, undone.
 But Herbert! When she mused on it, her soul
 Would fain have hidden him for evermore,
 Even from herself, — so pure of speech, so frank,
 So full of household kindness. Ah, so good
 And true! A little, she had sometimes thought,
 Despondent for himself, but strong of faith
 In God, and faith in her, this man had seemed.

Ay, he was gone! and she whom he had wed,
 As Muriel learned, was sick, was poor, was sad.
 And Muriel wrote to comfort her, and send,
 From her small store, money to help her need,
 With, "Pray you keep it secret." Then the whole
 Of the cruel tale was told.

What more? She died.
 Her kin, profuse of thanks, not bitterly,
 Wrote of the end. "Our sister fain had seen
 Her husband; prayed him sore to come. But no.
 And then she prayed him that he would forgive,
 Madam, her breaking of the truth to you.
 Dear Madam, he was angry, yet we think
 He might have let her see, before she died,
 The words she wanted, but he did not write
 Till she was gone, — "I neither can forgive,
 Nor would I if I could."

"Patience, my heart!
 And this, then, is the man I loved!"

But yet
 He sought a lower level, for he wrote,
 Telling the story with a different hue, —
 Telling of freedom. He desired to come,
 "For now," said he, "O love, may all be well."
 And she rose up against it in her soul,
 For she despised him. And with passionate tears
 Of shame, she wrote, and only wrote these words, —
 "Herbert, I will not see you."

Then she drooped
 Again; it is so bitter to despise;
 And all her strength, when autumn leaves down
 dropped,
 Fell from her. "Ah!" she thought, "I rose up
 once,
 I cannot rise up now; here is the end."
 And all her kinsfolk thought, "It is the end."
 But when that other heard, "It is the end,"
 His heart was sick, and he, as by a power
 Far stronger than himself, was driven to her.
 Reason rebelled against it, but his will

Required it of him with a craving strong
 As life, and passionate though hopeless pain
 She, when she saw his face, considered him
 Full quietly, let all excuses pass
 Not answered, and considered yet again.

"He had heard that she was sick; what could he do
 But come, and ask her pardon that he came?"
 What could he do, indeed? — a weak white girl
 Held all his heartstrings in her small white hand;
 His youth, and power, and majesty were hers,
 And not his own.

She looked, and pitied him,
 Then spoke: "He loves me with a love that lasts,
 Ah me! that I might get away from it,
 Or, better, hear it said that love is not,
 And then I could have rest. My time is short,
 I think, — so short." And roused against himself
 In stormy wrath, that it should be his doom
 Her to disquiet whom he loved, — ay, her
 For whom he would have given all his rest,
 If there were any left to give, — he took
 Her words up bravely, promising once more
 Absence, and praying pardon; but some tears
 Dropped quietly upon her cheek.

"Remain,"
 She said, "for there is something to be told,
 Some words that you must hear."

"And first, hear this:
 God has been good to me; you must not think
 That I despair. There is a quiet time
 Like evening in my soul. I have no heart,
 For cruel Herbert killed it long ago,
 And death strides on. Sit, then, and give your mind
 To listen, and your eyes to look at me."

Look at my face, Laurance, how white it is;
 Look at my hand, — my beauty is all gone."
 And Laurance lifted up his eyes; he looked,
 But answered, from their deeps that held no doubt,
 Far otherwise than she had willed: they said,
 "Lovelier than ever."

Yet her words went on,
 Cold, and so quiet, "I have suffered much,
 And I would fain that none who care for me
 Should suffer a like pang that I can spare.
 Therefore," said she, and not at all could blush,
 "I have brought my mind of late to think of this:
 That since your life is spoilt (not willingly,
 My God, not willingly by me), 'twere well
 To give you choice of griefs.

"Were it not best
 To weep for a dead love, and afterwards
 Be comforted the sooner, that she died
 Remote, and left not in your house and life
 Aught to remind you? That indeed were best.
 But were it best to weep for a dead wife,
 And let the sorrow spend and satisfy
 Itself with all expression, and so end?
 I think not so; but if for you 'tis best,
 Then, — do not answer with too sudden words:
 It matters much to you; not much, not much
 To me, — then truly I will die your wife;
 I will marry you."

What was he like to say,
 But, overcome with love and tears, to choose
 The keener sorrow, — take it to his heart,
 Cherish it, make it part of him, and watch
 Those eyes, that were his light, till they should close?
 He answered her with eager, faltering words,
 "I choose, — my heart is yours, — die in my arms."

But was it well? Truly, at first, for him
 It was not well: he saw her fade, and cried,
 "When may this be?" She answered, "When you
 will,"

And cared not much, for very faint she grew,
 Tired and cold. Oft in her soul she thought,
 "If I could slip away before the ring
 Is on my hand, it were a blessed lot
 For both, — a blessed thing for him, and me."

But it was not so; for the day had come, —
 Was over: days and months had come, and Death, —
 Within whose shadow she had lain, which made
 Earth and its loves, and even its bitterness,
 Indifferent, — Death withdrew himself, and life
 Woke up, and found that it was folded fast,
 Drawn to another life forevermore.

O, what a waking! After it there came
 Great silence. She got up once more, in spring,
 And walked, but not alone, among the flowers.
 She thought within herself, "What have I done?
 How shall I do the rest?" And he, who felt
 Her inmost thought, was silent even as she. [him,
 "What have we done?" she thought. But as for
 When she began to look him in the face,
 Considering, "Thus and thus his features are,"
 For she had never thought on them before,
 She read their grave repose aright. She knew
 That in the stronghold of his heart, held back,
 Hidden reserves of measureless content
 Kept house with happy thought, for her sake mute

Most patient Muriel! when he brought her home,
 She took the place they gave her, — strove to please
 His kin, and did not fail; but yet thought on.
 "What have I done? how shall I do the rest?
 Ah! so contented, Laurance, with this wife

That loves you not, for all the stateliness
 And grandeur of your manhood, and the deeps
 In your blue eyes." And after that awhile
 She rested from such thinking, put it by
 And waited. She had thought on death before:
 But no, this Muriel was not yet to die;
 And when she saw her little tender babe,
 She felt how much the happy days of life
 Outweigh the sorrowful. A tiny thing,
 Whom when it slept the lovely mother nursed
 With reverent love, whom when it woke, she fed
 And wondered at, and lost herself in long
 Rapture of watching, and contentment deep.
 Once while she sat, this babe upon her knee,
 Her husband and his father standing nigh,
 About to ride, the grandmother, all pride
 And consequence, so deep in learned talk
 Of infants, and their little ways and wiles,
 Broke off to say, "I never saw a babe
 So like its father." And the thought was new
 To Muriel; she looked up, and when she looked,
 Her husband smiled. And she, the lovely bloom
 Flushing her face, would fain he had not known,
 Nor noticed her surprise. But he did know;
 Yet there was pleasure in his smile, and love
 Tender and strong. He kissed her, kissed his babe,
 With "Goody, you are left in charge, take care."—
 "As if I needed telling," quoth the dame;
 And they were gone.

Then Muriel, lost in thought,
 Gazed; and the grandmother, with open pride,
 Tended the lovely pair; till Muriel said,
 "Is she so like? Dear granny, get me now
 The picture that his father has;" and soon
 The old woman put it in her hand.

The wife,
 Considering it with deep and strange delight,
 Forgot for once her babe, and looked and learned.

A mouth for mastery and manful work,
 A certain brooding sweetness in the eyes,
 A brow, the harbor of grave thought, and hair
 Saxon of hue. She coned; then blushed again,
 Remembering now, when she had looked on him,
 The sudden radiance of her husband's smile.

But Muriel did not send the picture back;
 She kept it; while her beauty and her babe
 Flourished together, and in health and peace
 She lived.

Her husband never said to her,
 "Love, are you happy?" never said to her,
 "Sweet, do you love me?" and at first, when'er
 They rode together in the lanes, and paused,
 Stopping their horses, when the day was hot,
 In the shadow of a tree, to watch the clouds,
 Ruffled in drifting on the jagged rocks
 That topped the mountains,—when she sat by him,
 Withdrawn at even while the summer stars
 Came starting out of nothing, as new made,
 She felt a little trouble, and a wish
 That he would yet keep silence, and he did.
 That one reserve he would not touch, but still
 Respected.

Muriel grew more brave in time,
 And talked at ease, and felt disquietude
 Fade. And another child was given to her.
 "Now we shall do," the old great grandsire cried,
 "For this is the right sort, a boy." "Fie, fie,"
 Quoth the good dame; "but never heed you, love,
 He thinks them both as right as right can be."

But Laurance went from home, ere yet the boy
Was three weeks old. It fretted him to go,
But yet he said, "I must:" and she was left
Much with the kindly dame, whose gentle care
Was like a mother's; and the two could talk
Sweetly, for all the difference in their years.

But unaware, the wife betrayed a wish
That she had known why Laurance left her thus.
"Ay, love," the dame made answer; "for he said,
'Goody,' before he left, 'if Muriel ask
No question, tell her naught; but if she let
Any disquietude appear to you,
Say what you know.'" "What?" Muriel said, and
laughed.
"I ask, then."

"Child, it is that your old love,
Some two months past, was here. Nay, never start:
He's gone. He came, our Laurance met him near;
He said that he was going over seas,
'And might I see your wife this only once,
And get her pardon?'"

"Mercy!" Muriel cried,
"But Laurance does not wish it?"

"Nay, now, nay,"
Quoth the good dame.

"I cannot," Muriel cried;
"He does not, surely, think I should."

"Not he,"
The kind old woman said, right soothingly.
"Does not he ever know, love, ever do
What you like best?"

And Muriel, trembling yet,
Agreed. "I heard him say," the dame went on,

"For I was with him when they met that day,
'It would not be agreeable to my wife.'"

Then Muriel, pondering,—"And he said no more?
You think he did not add, 'Nor to myself?'"
And with her soft, calm, inward voice, the dame
Unruffled answered, "No, sweetheart, not he:
What need he care?" "And why not?" Muriel cried,
Longing to hear the answer. "O, he knows,
He knows, love, very well:"—with that she smiled.
"Bless your fair face, you have not really thought
He did not know you loved him?"

Muriel said,
"He never told me, goody, that he knew."
"Well," quoth the dame, "but it may chance, my
dear,
That he thinks best to let old troubles sleep:
Why need to rouse them? You are happy, sure?
But if one asks, 'Art happy?' why it sets
The thoughts a-working. No, say I, let love,
Let peace and happy folk alone.

"He said,
'It would not be agreeable to my wife.'
And he went on to add, in course of time
That he would ask you, when it suited you,
To write a few kind words."

"Yes," Muriel said,
"I can do that."

"So Laurance went, you see,"
The soft voice added, "to take down that child.
Laurance had written oft about the child,
And now, at last, the father made it known
He could not take him. He has lost, they say,
His money, with much gambling; now he wants

To lead a good, true, working life. He wrote,
And let this so be seen, that Laurance went
And took the child, and took the money down
To pay."

And Muriel found her talking sweet,
And asked once more, the rather that she longed
To speak again of Laurance, "And you think
He knows I love him?"

"Ay, good sooth, he knows
No fear; but he is like his father, love.
His father never asked my pretty child
One prying question; took her as she was;
Trusted her; she has told me so: he knew
A woman's nature. Laurance is the same.
He knows you love him; but he will not speak;
No, never. Some men are such gentlemen!"

SONGS OF THE NIGHT WATCHES.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY SONG OF EVENING, AND A
CONCLUDING SONG OF THE EARLY DAY.

INTRODUCTORY.

(Old English Manner.)

APPRENTICED.

"Come out and hear the waters shoot, the owlet hoot,
the owlet hoot;
Yon crescent moon, a golden boat, hangs dim be-
hind the tree, O!
The dropping thorn makes white the grass, O sweetest
lass, and sweetest lass;
Come out and smell the ricks of hay adown the
croft with me, O!"

"My granny nods before her wheel, and drops her
reel, and drops her reel;
My father with his crony talks as gay as gay can
be, O!
But all the milk is yet to skim, ere light wax dim,
ere light wax dim;
How can I step adown the croft, my 'prentice lad,
with thee, O!"

"And must ye bide, yet waiting's long, and love is
strong, and love is strong;
And O! had I but served the time, that takes so
long to flee, O!
And thou, my lass, by morning's light wast all in
white, wast all in white,
And parson stood within the rails, a-marrying me
and thee, O!"

THE FIRST WATCH.

TIRED.

I.

O, I would tell you more, but I am tired;
For I have longed, and I have had my will;
I pleaded in my spirit, I desired:
"Ah! let me only see him, and be still
All my days after."

Rock, and rock, and rock,
Over the falling, rising watery world,
Sail, beautiful ship, along the leaping main;
The chirping land-birds follow flock on flock
To light on a warmer plain.
White as weaned lambs the little wavelets curled,

To lead a good, true, working life. He wrote,
And let this so be seen, that Laurance went
And took the child, and took the money down
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Over the falling, rising watery world,
Sail, beautiful ship, along the leaping main;
The chirping land-birds follow flock on flock
To light on a warmer plain.
White as weaned lambs the little wavelets curled,

Fall over in harmless play,
As these do far away;
Sail, bird of doom, along the shimmering sea,
All under thy broad wings that overshadow thee.

II.
I am so tired,

If I would comfort me, I know not how,
For I have seen thee, lad, as I desired,
And I have nothing left to long for now.

Nothing at all. And did I wait for thee,
Often and often, while the light grew dim,
And through the lilac branches I could see,
Under a saffron sky, the purple rim
O' the heaving moorland? Ay. And then would
float

Up from behind—as it were a golden boat,
Freighted with fancies, all o' the wonder of life,
Love—such a slender moon, going up and up,
Waxing so fast from night to night,
And swelling like an orange flower-bud, bright,
Fated, methought, to round as to a golden cup,
And hold to my two lips life's best of wine.

Most beautiful crescent moon,

Ship of the sky!

Across the unfurrowed reaches sailing high.
Methought that it would come my way full soon,
Laden with blessings that were all, all mine,—
A golden ship, with balm and spiceries rife,
That ere its day was done should hear thee call me
wife.

III.

All over! the celestial sign hath failed;
The orange flower-bud shuts; the ship hath sailed,

And sunk behind the long low-lying hills.
The love that fed on daily kisses dieth;
The love kept warm by nearness lieth,
Wounded and wan;
The love hope nourished bitter tears distils,
And faints with nought to feed upon.
Only there stirreth very deep below
The hidden beating slow,
And the blind yearning, and the long-drawn breath
Of the love that conquers death.

IV.

Had we not loved full long, and lost all fear,
My ever, my only dear?

Yes; and I saw thee start upon thy way.

So sure that we should meet

Upon our trysting-day.

And even absence then to me was sweet,

Because it brought me time to brood

Upon thy dearness in the solitude.

But ah! to stay, and stay,

And let that moon of April wane itself away,

And let the lovely May

Make ready all her buds for June;

And let the glossy finch forego her tune

That she brought with her in the spring,

And nevermore, I think, to me can sing;

And then to lead thee home another bride,

In the sultry summer-tide,

And all forget me save for shame full sore,

That made thee pray me, absent, "See my face no
more."

V.

O hard, most hard! But while my fretted heart,

Shut out, shut down, and full of pain,

Sobbed to itself apart,

Ached to itself in vain.

One came who loveth me
 As I love thee. . . .
 And let my God remember him for this,
 As I do hope He will forget thy kiss,
 Nor visit on thy stately head
 Aught that thy mouth hath sworn, or thy two eyes
 have said. . . .
 He came, and it was dark. He came, and sighed
 Because he knew the sorrow, — whispering low,
 And fast, and thick, as one that speaks by rote:
 "The vessel lieth in the river reach,
 A mile above the beach,
 And she will sail at the turning o' the tide."
 He said, "I have a boat,
 And were it good to go,
 And unbeholden in the vessel's wake,
 Look on the man thou lovedst, and forgive,
 As he embarks, a shameful fugitive.
 Come, then, with me."

VI.

O, how he sighed! The little stars did wink,
 And it was very dark. I gave my hand, —
 He led me out across the pasture land,
 And through the narrow croft,
 Down to the river's brink.
 When thou wast full in spring, thou little sleepy
 thing,
 The yellow flags that broidered thee would stand
 Up to their chins in water, and full oft
 We pulled them and the other shining flowers,
 That all are gone to-day:
 We two, that had so many things to say,
 So many hopes to render clear:
 And they are all gone after thee, my dear, —
 Gone after those sweet hours,

That tender light, that balmy rain;
 Gone "as a wind that passeth away,
 And cometh not again."

VII.

I only saw the stars, — I could not see
 The river, — and they seemed to lie
 And far below as the other stars were high.
 I trembled like a thing about to die:
 It was so awful 'neath the majesty
 Of that great crystal height, that overhung
 The blackness at our feet,
 Unseen to fleet and fleet,
 The flocking stars among,
 And only hear the dipping of the oar,
 And the small wave's caressing of the darksome shore

VIII.

Less real it was than any dream.
 Ah, me! to hear the bending willows shiver,
 As we shot quickly from the silent river,
 And felt the swaying and the flow
 That bore us down the deeper, wider stream,
 Whereto its nameless waters go:
 O! I shall always, when I shut mine eyes,
 See that weird sight again;
 The lights from anchored vessels hung;
 The phantom moon, that sprung
 Suddenly up in dim and angry wise
 From the rim o' the moaning main,
 And touched with elfin light
 The two long oars whereby we made our flight
 Along the reaches of the night;
 Then furrowed up a lowering cloud,
 Went in, and left us darker than before,
 To feel our way as the midnight watches wore,

And lie in HER lee, with mournful faces bowed,
That should receive and bear with her away
The brightest portion of my sunniest day, —
The laughter of the land, the sweetness of the shore

IX.

And I beheld thee: saw the lantern flash
Down on thy face when thou didst climb the side.
And thou wert pale, pale as the patient bride
That followed: both a little sad,
Leaving of home and kin. Thy courage glad,
That once did bear thee on,
That brow of thine had lost; the fervor rash
Of unforeboding youth thou hadst foregone.
O, what a little moment, what a crumb
Of comfort for a heart to feed upon!

And that was all its sum:
A glimpse, and not a meeting, —
A drawing near by night,
To sigh to thee an unacknowledged greeting.
And all between the flashing of a light
And its retreating.

X.

Then after, ere she spread her wafting wings,
The ship, — and weighed her anchor to depart,
We stole from her dark lee, like guilty things;
And there was silence in my heart,
And silence in the upper and the nether deep.

O sleep! O sleep!

Do not forget me. Sometimes come and sweep.
Now I have nothing left, thy healing hand
Over the lids that crave thy visits bland,
Thou kind, thou comforting one:
For I have seen his face, as I desired,
And all my story is done.
O, I am tired!

THE MIDDLE WATCH.

I.

I WOKE in the night, and the darkness was heavy
and deep;

I had known it was dark in my sleep,

And I rose and looked out,

And the fathomless vault was all sparkling, set thick
round about

With the ancient inhabitants silent, and wheeling too
far

For man's heart, like a voyaging frigate to sail,
where remote

In the sheen of their glory they float,

Or man's soul, like a bird, to fly near, of their beams
to partake,

And dazed in their wake,

Drink day that is born of a star.

I murmured, "Remoteness and greatness, how deep
you are set,

How afar in the rim of the whole;

You know nothing of me, nor of man, nor of earth,
O, nor yet

Of our light-bearer, — drawing the marvellous moons
as they roll,

Of our regent, the sun.

I look on you trembling, and think, in the dark with
my soul,

"How small is our place 'mid the kingdoms and
nations of God:

These are greater than we, every one."

And there falls a great fear and a dread cometh
over, that cries,

"O my hope! Is there any mistake?
 Did He speak? Did I hear? Did I listen aright, if
 He spake?
 Did I answer Him duly? for surely I now am awake,
 If never I woke until now."
 And a light, baffling wind, that leads nowhither,
 plays on my brow.
 As a sleep, I must think on my day, of my path as
 untrod;
 Or trodden in dreams, in a dreamland whose coasts
 are a doubt;
 Whose countries recede from my thoughts, as they
 grope round about,
 And vanish, and tell me not how.
 Be kind to our darkness, O Fashioner, dwelling in
 light,
 And feeding the lamps of the sky;
 Look down upon this one, and let it be sweet in Thy
 sight,
 I pray Thee, to-night.
 O watch whom Thou madest to dwell on its soil,
 Thou Most High!
 For this is a world full of sorrow (there may be but
 one);
 Keep watch o'er its dust, else Thy children for aye
 are undone,
 For this is a world where we die.

II.

With that, a still voice in my spirit that moved and
 that yearned
 (There fell a great calm while it spake),
 I had heard it erewhile, but the noises of life are so
 loud,
 That sometimes it dies in the cry of the street and
 the crowd:

To the simple it cometh,—the child, or asleep, or
 awake,
 And they know not from whence; of its nature the
 wise never learned
 By his wisdom; its secret the worker ne'er earned
 By his toil; and the rich among men never bought
 with his gold;
 Nor the times of its visiting monarchs controlled,
 Nor the jester put down with his jeers
 (For it moves where it will), nor its season the
 aged discerned
 By thought, in the ripeness of years.
 O elder than reason, and stronger than will!
 A voice, when the dark world is still:
 Whence cometh it? Father Immortal, Thou know-
 est! and we,—
 We are sure of that witness, that sense which is sent
 us of Thee;
 For it moves, and it yearns in its fellowship mighty
 and dread,
 And let down to our hearts it is touched by the tears
 that we shed;
 It is more than all meanings, and over all strife;
 On its tongue are the laws of our life,
 And it counts up the times of the dead.

III.

I will fear you, O stars, never more.
 I have felt it! Go on, while the world is asleep.
 Golden islands, fast moored in God's infinite deep.
 Hark, hark to the words of sweet fashion, the harp-
 ings of yore!
 How they sang to Him, seer and saint, in the far
 away lands:
 "The heavens are the work of Thy hands;

They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure;
 Yea, they all shall wax old, —
 But Thy throne is established, O God, and Thy years
 are made sure;
 They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure, —
 They shall pass like a tale that is told."

Doth He answer, the Ancient of Days?
 Will He speak in the tongue and the fashion of
 men?

Hist! hist! while the heaven-hung multitudes shine
 in His praise,
 (His language of old.) Nay, He spoke with them
 first; it was then

They lifted their eyes to His throne:
 "They shall call on Me, 'Thou art our Father, our
 God, Thou alone!'
 For I made them, I led them in deserts and desolate
 ways;

I have found them a Ransom Divine;
 I have loved them with love everlasting, the children
 of men;
 I swear by Myself, they are Mine."

THE MORNING WATCH.

THE COMING IN OF THE "MERMAIDEN."

The moon is bleached as white as wool,
 And just dropping under;
 Every star is gone but three,
 And they hang far asunder, —
 There's a sea-ghost all in gray,
 A tall shape of wonder!

I am not satisfied with sleep, —
 The night is not ended.
 But look how the sea-ghost comes,
 With wan skirts extended,
 Stealing up in this weird hour,
 When light and dark are blended.

A vessel! To the old pier-end
 Her happy course she's keeping;
 I heard them name her yesterday:
 Some were pale with weeping;
 Some with their heart-hunger sighed:
 She's in, — and they are sleeping.

O! now with fancied greetings blest,
 They comfort their long aching:
 The sea of sleep hath borne to them
 What would not come with waking,
 And the dreams shall most be true
 In their blissful breaking.

The stars are gone, the rose-bloom comes, —
 No blush of maid is sweeter;
 The red sun, half way out of bed,
 Shall be the first to greet her.
 None tell the news, yet sleepers wake,
 And rise, and run to meet her.

Their lost they have, they hold; from pain
 A keener bliss they borrow.
 How natural is joy, my heart!
 How easy after sorrow!
 For once, the best is come that hope
 Promised them "to-morrow."

CONCLUDING SONG OF DAWN.

(Old English Manner.)

A MORN OF MAY.

ALL the clouds about the sun lay up in golden
 creases
 (Merry rings the maiden's voice that sings at dawn
 of day);
 Lambkins woke and skipped around to dry their
 dewy fleeces,
 So sweetly as she carolled, all on a morn of May.
 Quoth the Sergeant, "Here I'll halt; here's wine of
 joy for drinking;
 To my heart she sets her hand, and in the strings
 doth play;
 All among the daffodils, and fairer to my thinking,
 And fresh as milk and roses, she sits this morn of
 May."

Quoth the Sergeant, "Work is work, but any ye
 might make me,
 If I worked for you, dear lass, I'd count my holiday.
 I'm your slave for good and all, an' if ye will but
 take me,
 So sweetly as ye carol upon this morn of May."

"Medals count for worth," quoth she, "and scars
 are won for honor;
 But a slave an' if ye be, kind wooer, go your way."
 All the nodding daffodils woke up and laughed upon
 her,
 O! sweetly did she carol, all on that morn of May.

Gladsome leaves upon the bough, they fluttered fast
 and faster.
 Fretting brook, till he would speak, did chide the
 dull delay:

"Beauty! when I said a slave, I think I meant a
 master;
 So sweetly as ye carol all on this morn of May.

"Lass, I love you! Love is strong, and some men's
 hearts are tender."
 Far she sought o'er wood and wold, but found not
 aught to say;
 Mounting lark nor mantling cloud would any coun-
 sel render,
 Though sweetly she had carolled upon that morn of
 May.

Shy, she sought the wooer's face, and deemed the
 wooing mended;
 Proper man he was, good sooth, and one would have
 his way:
 So the lass was made a wife, and so the song was
 ended.
 O! sweetly she did carol all on that morn of May.

A STORY OF DOOM.

BOOK I.

NILOIYA said to Noah, "What aileth thee,
 My master, unto whom is my desire,
 The father of my sons?" He answered her,
 "Mother of many children, I have heard
 The Voice again." "Ah, me!" she saith, "ah, me!
 What spake it?" and with that Niloiya sighed.

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This when the Master-builder heard, his heart
 Was sad in him, the while he sat at home
 And rested after toil. The steady rap
 O' the shipwright's hammer sounding up the vale
 Did seem to mock him; but her distaff down
 Niloiya laid, and to the doorplace went,
 Parted the purple covering seemly hung
 Before it, and let in the crimson light
 Of the descending sun. Then looked he forth, —
 Looked, and beheld the hollow where the ark
 Was a-preparing; where the dew distilled
 All night from leaves of old lign aloe-trees,
 Upon the gliding river; where the palm,
 The alnug, and the gophir shot their heads
 Into the crimson brede that dyed the world:
 And lo! he marked — unwieldy, dark, and huge —
 The ship, his glory and his grief, — too vast
 For that still river's floating, — building far
 From mightier streams, amid the pastoral dells
 Of shepherd kings.

Niloiya spake again:

"What said the Voice, thou well-belovèd man?"
 He, laboring with his thought that troubled him,
 Spoke on behalf of God: "Behold," said he,
 "A little handful of unlovely dust
 He fashioned to a lordly grace, and when
 He laughed upon its beauty, it waxed warm,
 And with His breath awoke a living soul.

"Shall not the Fashioner command His work?
 And who am I, that, if He whisper, 'Rise,
 Go forth upon Mine errand,' should reply,
 'Lord, God, I love the woman and her sons, —
 I love not scorning; I beseech Thee, God,
 Have me excused.'"

She answered him, "Tell on."

And he continuing, reasoned with his soul:
 "What though I, — like some goodly lama sunk
 In meadow grass, eating her way at ease,
 Unseen of them that pass, and asking not
 A wider prospect than of yellow flowers
 That nod above her head — should lay me down,
 And willingly forget this high behest,
 There should be yet no tarrying. Furthermore,
 Though I went forth to cry against the doom,
 Earth crieth louder, and she draws it down:
 It hangeth balanced over us; she crieth,
 And it shall fall. O! as for me, my life
 Is bitter, looking onward, for I know
 That in the fulness of the time shall dawn
 That day: my preaching shall not bring forth fruit.
 Though for its sake I leave thee. I shall float
 Upon the abhorred sea, that mankind hate,
 With thee and thine."

She answered: "God forbid!

For, sir, though men be evil, yet the deep
 They dread, and at the last will surely turn
 To Him, and He, long-suffering, will forgive,
 And chide the waters back to their abyss,
 To cover the pits where doleful creatures feed.
 Sir, I am much afraid; I would not hear
 Of riding on the waters: look you, sir,
 Better it were to die with you by hand
 Of them that hate us, than to live, ah me!
 Rolling among the furrows of the unquiet,
 Unconsecrate, unfriendly, dreadful sea."
 He saith again: "I pray thee, woman, peace,
 For thou wilt enter, when that day appears,
 The fateful ship."

"My lord," quoth she, "I will. But O, good sir, be sure of this, be sure The Master calleth; for the time is long That thou hast warned the world: thou art but here Three days; the song of welcoming but now Is ended. I behold thee, I am glad:

And wilt thou go again? Husband, I say, Be sure who 'tis that calleth; O, be sure, Be sure. My mother's ghost came up last night, Whilst I thy beard, held in my hands, did kiss, Leaning anear thee, wakeful through my love, And watchful of thee till the moon went down.

"She never loved me since I went with thee To sacrifice among the hills: she smelt The holy smoke, and could no more divine Till the new moon. I saw her ghost come up; It had a snake with a red comb of fire Twisted about its waist, — the doggish head Lolloped on its shoulder, and so leered at me. 'This woman might be wiser,' quoth the ghost; 'Shall there be husbands for her found below, When she comes down to us? O, fool! O, fool! She must not let her man go forth, to leave Her desolate, and reap the whole world's scorn, A harvest for himself.' With that they passed."

He said: "My crystal drop of perfectness, I pity thee; it was an evil ghost: Thou wilt not heed the counsel?" "I will not," Quoth she; "I am loyal to the Highest. Him I hold by even as thou, and deem Him best. Sir, am I fairer than when last we met?" "God add," said he, "unto thy much yet more, As I do think thou art." "And think you, sir," Niloiya saith, "that I have reached the prime?" He answering, "Nay, not yet." "I would 'twere so,"

She plaineth, "for the daughters mock at me: Her locks forbear to grow, they say, so sore She pineth for the Master. Look you, sir, They reach but to the knee. But thou art come, And all goes merrier. Eat, my lord, of all My supper that I set, and afterward Tell me, I pray thee, somewhat of thy way; Else shall I be despised as Adam was, Who compassed not the learning of his sons, But, grave and silent, oft would lower his head And ponder, following of great Isha's feet, When she would walk with her fair brow upraised, Scorning the children that she bare to him."

"Ay," quoth the Master; "but they did amiss When they despised their father: knowest thou that?"

"Sure he was foolisher," Niloiya saith, "Than any that came after. Furthermore, He had not heart nor courage for to rule: He let the mastery fall from his slack hand. Had not our glorious mother still borne up His weakness, chid with him, and sat apart, And listened, when the fit came over him To talk on his lost garden, he had sunk Into the slave of slaves."

"Nay, thou must think How he had dwelt long, God's loved husbandman, And looked in hope among the tribes for one To be his fellow, ere great Isha, once Waking, he found at his left side, and knew The deep delight of speech." So Noah, and thus Added, "And therefore was his loss the more; For though the creatures he had singled out His favorites, dared for him the fiery sword And followed after him, — shall bleat of lamb

Console one for the foregone talk of God?
Or in the afternoon, his faithful dog,
Fawning upon him, make his heart forget
At such a time, and such a time, to have heard
What he shall hear no more?

"O, as for him,
It was for this that he full oft would stop,
And, lost in thought, stand and revolve that deed,
Sad muttering, 'Woman! we reproach thee not;
Though thou didst eat mine immortality;
Earth, be not sorry; I was free to choose.'
Wonder not, therefore, if he walked forlorn.
Was not the helpmeet given to raise him up
From his contentment with the lower things?
Was she not somewhat that he could not rule
Beyond the action, that he could not have
By the mere holding, and that still aspired
And drew him after her? So, when deceived
She fell by great desire to rise, he fell
By loss of upward drawing, when she took
An evil tongue to be her counsellor:
'Death is not as the death of lower things,
Rather a glorious change, begrudged of Heaven,
A change to being as gods,' — he from her hand,
Upon reflection, took of death that hour,
And ate it (not the death that she had dared);
He ate it knowing. Then divisions came.
She, like a spirit strayed who lost the way,
Too venturesome, among the farther stars,
And hardly cares, because it hardly hopes
To find the path to heaven; in bitter wise
Did bear to him degenerate seed, and he,
Once having felt her upward drawing, longed,
And yet aspired, and yearned to be restored,
Albeit she drew no more."

"Sir, ye speak well,"
Niloiya saith, "but yet the mother sits
Higher than Adam. He did understand
Discourse of birds and all four-footed things,
But she had knowledge of the many tribes
Of angels and their tongues; their playful ways
And greetings when they met. Was she not wise?
They say she knew much that she never told,
And had a voice that called to her as thou."
"Nay," quoth the Master-shipwright, "who am I
That I should answer? As for me, poor man,
Here is my trouble: 'if there be a Voice,'
At first I cried, 'let me behold the mouth
That uttereth it.' Thereon it held its peace.
But afterward, I, journeying up the hills,
Did hear it hollower than an echo fallen
Across some clear abyss; and I did stop,
And ask of all my company, 'What cheer?
If there be spirits abroad that call to us,
Sirs, hold your peace and hear.' So they gave heed,
And one man said, 'It is the small ground-doves
That peck upon the stony hillocks;' one,
'It is the mammoth in yon cedar swamp
That cheweth in his dream;' and one, 'My lord,
It is the ghost of him that yesternight
We slew, because he grudged to yield his wife
To thy great father, when he peaceably
Did send to take her.' Then I answered, 'Pass,'
And they went on; and I did lay mine ear
Close to the earth; but there came up therefrom
No sound, nor any speech; I waited long,
And in the saying, 'I will mount my beast
And on,' I was as one that in a trance
Beholdeth what is coming, and I saw
Great waters and a ship; and somewhat spake,
'Lo, this shall be; let him that heareth it,

And seeth it, go forth to warn his kind,
For I will drown the world.'"

Niloiya saith,
"Sir, was that all that ye went forth upon?"
The Master, he replieth, "Ay, at first,
That same was all; but many days went by,
While I did reason with my heart and hope
For more, and struggle to remain, and think,
'Let me be certain;' and so think again,
'The counsel is but dark; would I had more!
When I have more to guide me, I will go.'
And afterward, when reasoned on too much,
It seemed remoter, then I only said,
'O, would I had the same again;' and still
I had it not.

"Then at the last I cried,
'If the unseen be silent, I will speak
And certify my meaning to myself.
Say that He spoke, then He will make that good
Which He hath spoken. Therefore it were best
To go, and do His bidding. All the earth
Shall hear the judgment so, and none may cry
When the doom falls, "Thou God art hard on us;
We knew not Thou wert angry. O! we are lost,
Only for lack of being warned."

"But say
That He spoke not, and merely it befell—
That I being weary had a dream. Why, so
He could not suffer damage; when the time
Was past, and that I threatened had not come,
Men would cry out on me, haply me kill,
For troubling their content. They would not swear,
"God, that did send this man, is proved untrue,"
But rather, "Let him die; he lied to us;
God never sent him." Only Thou, great King,

Knowest if Thou didst speak or no. I leave
The matter here. If Thou wilt speak again,
I go in gladness; if Thou wilt not speak,
Nay, if Thou never didst, I not the less
Shall go, because I have believed, what time
I seemed to hear Thee, and the going stands
With memory of believing.' Then I washed,
And did array me in the sacred gown,
And take a lamb."

"Ay, sir," Niloiya sighed,
"I following, and I knew not anything
Till, the young lamb asleep in thy two arms,
We, moving up among the silent hills,
Paused in a grove to rest; and many slaves
Came near to make obeisance, and to bring
Wood for the sacrifice, and turf and fire.
Then in their hearing thou didst say to me,
'Behold, I know thy good fidelity,
And theirs that are about us; they would guard
The mountain passes, if it were my will
Awhile to leave thee;' and the pygmies laughed
For joy, that thou wouldst trust inferior things;
And put their heads down, as their manner is,
To touch our feet. They laughed, but sore I wept.
Sir, I could weep now; ye did ill to go
If that was all your bidding; I had thought
God drave thee, and thou couldst not choose but go.'
Then said the son of Lamech, "Afterward,
When I had left thee, He whom I had served
Met with me in the visions of the night,
To comfort me for that I had withdrawn
From thy dear company. He sware to me
That no man should molest thee, no, nor touch
The bordering of mine outmost field. I say,
When I obeyed, He made His matters plain.

With whom could I have left thee, but with them,
Born in thy mother's house, and bound thy slaves?"

She said, "I love not pygmies; they are naught."
And he, "Who made them pygmies?" Then she
pushed

Her veiling hair back from her round, soft eyes,
And answered, wondering, "Sir, my mothers did;
Ye know it." And he drew her near to sit
Beside him on the settle, answering, "Ay."
And they went on to talk as writ below,
If any one shall read:

"Thy mother did,
And they that went before her. Thinkest thou
That they did well?"

"They had been overcome;
And when the angered conquerors drave them out,
Behoved them find some other way to rule,
They did but use their wits. Hath not man aye
Been cunning in dominion, among beasts
To breed for size or swiftness, or for sake
Of the white wool he loveth, at his choice?
What harm if coveting a race of men
That could but serve, they sought among their thralls,
Such as were low of stature, men and maids;
Ay, and of feeble will and quiet mind?
Did they not spend much gear to gather out
Such as I tell of, and for matching them
One with another for a thousand years?
What harm, then, if there came of it a race,
Inferior in their wits, and in their size,
And well content to serve?"

"What harm?" thou sayest.
My wife doth ask, 'What harm?'"

"Your pardon, sir.
I do remember that there came one day,
Two of the grave old angels that God made,
When first He invented life (right old they were
And plain, and venerable): and they said,
Rebuking of my mother as with hers
She sat, 'Ye do not well, you wives of men,
To match your wit against the Maker's will,
And for your benefit to lower the stamp
Of His fair image, which He set at first
Upon man's goodly frame; ye do not well
To treat His likeness even as ye treat
The bird and beast that perish.'"

"Said they aught
To appease the ancients, or to speak them fair?"

"How know I? 'Twas a slave that told it me.
My mother was full old when I was born,
And that was in her youth. What think you, sir?
Did not the giants likewise ill?"

"To that
I have no answer ready. If a man,
When each one is against his fellow, rule,
Or unmolested dwell, or unproved,
Because, for size and strength, he standeth first,
He will thereof be glad; and if he say,
'I will to wife choose me a stately maid,
And leave a goodly offspring;' sooth, I think,
He sinneth not; for good to him and his
He would be strong and great. Thy people's fault
Was, that for ill to others, they did plot
To make them weak and small."

"But yet they steal
Or take in war the strongest maids, and such
As are of highest stature; ay, and oft

They fight among themselves for that same cause.
And they are proud against the King of heaven:
They hope in course of ages they shall come
To be as strong as He."

The Master said,
"I will not hear thee talk thereof; my heart
Is sick for all this wicked world. Fair wife,
I am right weary. Call thy slaves to thee,
And bid that they prepare the sleeping place.
O would that I might rest! I fain would rest,
And, no more wandering, tell a thankless world
My never-heeded tale!"

With that she called.
The moon was up, and some few stars were out,
While heavy at the heart he walked abroad
To meditate before his sleep. And yet
Niloiya pondered, "Shall my master go?
And will my master go? What 'vailleth it,
That he doth spend himself, over the waste
A-wandering, till he reach outlandish folk,
That mock his warning? O, what 'vailleth it,
That he doth lavish wealth to build yon ark,
Whereat the daughters, when they eat with me,
Laugh? O my heart! I would the Voice were stilled
Is not he happy? Who, of all the earth,
Obeyeth like to me? Have not I learned
From his dear mouth to utter seemly words,
And lay the powers my mother gave me by?
Have I made offerings to the dragon? Nay,
And I am faithful, when he leaveth me
Lonely betwixt the peaked mountain tops
In this long valley, where no stranger foot
Can come without my will. He shall not go.
Not yet, not yet! But three days — only three —
Beside me, and a muttering on the third,

"I have heard the Voice again." Be dull, O dull,
Mind and remembrance! Mother, ye did il;
'Tis hard unlawful knowledge not to use.
Why, O dark mother! opened ye the way?"
Yet when he entered, and did lay aside
His costly robe of sacrifice, — the robe
Wherein he had been offering, ere the sun
Went down, — forgetful of her mother's craft,
She lovely and submiss did mourn to him:
"Thou wilt not go, — I pray thee, do not go,
Till thou hast seen thy children." And he said,
"I will not. I have cried, and have prevailed:
To-morrow it is given me by the Voice
Upon a four days' journey to proceed,
And follow down the river, till its waves
Are swallowed in the sand, where no flesh dwells.

"There," quoth the Unrevealed, "we shall meet,
And I will counsel thee; and thou shalt turn
And rest thee with the mother, and with them
She bare." Now, therefore, when the morn appears,
Thou fairest among women, call thy slaves,
And bid them yoke the steers, and spread thy car
With robes, the choicest work of cunning hands;
Array thee in thy rich apparel, deck
Thy locks with gold; and while the hollow vale
I thread beside yon river, go thou forth
Atween the mountains to my father's house,
And let thy slaves make all obeisance due,
And take and lay an offering at his feet.
Then light, and cry to him, 'Great king, the son
Of old Methuselah, thy son hath sent
To fetch the growing maids, his children, home.'

"Sir," quoth the woman, "I will do this thing,
So thou keep faith with me, and yet return.

But will the Voice, think you, forbear to chide,
Nor that Unseen, who calleth, buffet thee,
And drive thee on?"

He saith, "It will keep faith.
Fear not. I have prevailed, for I besought,
And lovingly it answered. I shall rest,
And dwell with thee till after my three sons
Come from the chase." She said, "I let them forth
In fear, for they are young. Their slaves are few.
The giant elephants be cunning folk;
They lie in ambush, and will draw men on
To follow, — then will turn and tread them down."

"Thy father's house unwisely planned," said he,
"To drive them down upon the growing corn
Of them that were their foes; for now, behold,
They suffer while the unwieldy beasts delay
Retirement to their lands, and meanwhile, pound
The damp, deep meadows, to a pulpy mash;
Or wallowing in the waters foul them; nay,
Tread down the banks, and let them forth to flood
Their cities; or, assailed and falling, shake
The walls, and taint the wind, ere thirty men,
Over the hairy terror piling stones
Or earth, prevail to cover it."

She said,
"Husband, I have been sorry, thinking oft
I would my sons were home; but now so well
Methinks it is with me, that I am fain
To wish they might delay, for thou wilt dwell
With me till after they return, and thou
Hast set thine eyes upon them. Then, ah me!
I must sit joyless in my place; bereft,
As trees that suddenly have dropped their leaves,
And dark as nights that have no moon."

She spake:
The hope o' the world did hearken, but reply
Made none. He left his hand on her fair locks
As she lay sobbing; and the quietness
Of night began to comfort her, the fall
Of far-off waters, and the winged wind
That went among the trees. The patient hand,
Moreover, that was steady, wrought with her,
Until she said, "What wilt thou? Nay, I know.
I therefore answer what thou utterest not.
*Thou lovest me well, and not for thine own will
Consentest to depart. . What more? Ay, this:
I do avow that He which calleth thee,
Hath right to call; and I do swear the Voice
Shall have no let of me to do Its will.*"

BOOK II.

Now ere the sunrise, while the morning star
Hung yet behind the pine-bough, woke and prayed
The world's great shipwright, and his soul was glad
Because the Voice was favorable. Now
Began the tap o' the hammer, now ran forth
The slaves preparing food. They therefore ate
In peace together; then Niloia forth
Behind the milk-white steers went on her way;
And the great Master-builder, down the course
Of the long river, on his errand sped,
And as he went, he thought:

[They do not well
Who, walking up a trodden path, all smooth
With footsteps of their fellows, and made straight
From town to town, will scorn at them that wonn
Under the covert of God's eldest trees
(Such as He planted with His hand, and fed
With dew before rain fell, till they stood close

And awful: drank the light up as it dropt,
 And kept the dusk of ages at their roots),—
 They do not well who mock at such and cry,
 "We peaceably, without or fault or fear,
 Proceed, and miss not of our end; but these
 Are slow and fearful: with uncertain pace,
 And ever reasoning of the way, they oft,
 After all reasoning, choose the worsè course,
 And plunged in swamp, or in the matted growth
 Nigh smothered struggle, all to reach a goal
 Not worth their pains." Nor do they well whose
 work

Is still to feed and shelter them and theirs,
 Get gain, and gathered store it, to think scorn
 Or those who work for a world (no wages paid
 By a Master hid in light), and sent alone
 To face a laughing multitude, whose eyes
 Are full of damaging pity, that forbears
 To tell the harmless laborer, "Thou art mad."]

And as he went, he thought: "They counsel me,
 Ay, with a kind of reason in their talk,
 'Consider; call thy soberer thought to aid;
 Why to but one man should a message come?
 And why, if but to one, to thee? Art thou
 Above us, greater, wiser? Had He sent, [knoweth
 He had willed that we should heed. Then since He
 That such as thou, a wise man cannot heed,
 He did not send.' My answer, 'Great and wise,
 If He had sent with thunder, and a voice
 Leaping from heaven, ye must have heard; but so
 Ye had been robbed of choice, and, like the beasts
 Yoked to obedience. God makes no men slaves.'
 They tell me, 'God is great above thy thought:
 He meddles not; and this small world is ours,
 These many hundred years we govern it;

Old Adam, after Eden, saw Him not.
 Then I, 'It may be He is gone to knead
 More clay. But look, my masters; one of you,
 Going to warfare, layeth up his gown,
 His sickle, or his gold, and thinks no more
 Upon it, till young trees have waxen great;
 At last, when he returneth, he will seek
 His own. And God, shall He not do the like?
 And, having set new worlds a-rolling, come
 And say, "I will betake Me to the earth
 That I did make;" and, having found it vile,
 Be sorry. Why should man be free, you wise,
 And not the Master?' Then they answer, 'Fool!
 A man shall cast a stone into the air
 For pastime, or for lack of heed,—but He!
 Will He come fingering of his ended work,
 Fright it with His approaching face, or snatch
 One day the rolling wonder from its ring,
 And hold it quivering, as a wanton child
 Might take a nestling from its downy bed,
 And having satisfied a careless wish,
 Go thrust it back into its place again?'
 To such I answer, and, that doubt once mine,
 I am assured that I do speak aright:
 'Sirs, the significance of this your doubt
 Lies in the reason of it: ye do grudge
 That these your lands should have another Lord;
 Ye are not loyal, therefore ye would fain
 Your King would bide afar. But if ye looked
 For countenance and favor when He came,
 Knowing yourselves right worthy, would ye care,
 With cautious reasoning, deep and hard, to prove
 That He would never come, and would your wrath
 Be hot against a prophet? Nay, I wot
 That as a flatterer you would look on him,—
 "Full of sweet words thy mouth is: if He come,—

We think not that He will, — but if He come,
Would it might be to-morrow, or to-night,
Because we look for praise.” ”

Now, as he went,
The noontide heats came on, and he grew faint;
But while he sat below an almug-tree,
A slave approached with greeting. “Master, hail!”
He answered, “Hail! what wilt thou?” Then she
said,

“The palace of thy fathers standeth nigh.”
“I know it,” quoth he; and she said again,
“The Elder, learning thou wouldst pass, hath sent
To fetch thee.” Then he rose and followed her.
So first they walked beneath a lofty roof
Of living bough and tendril, woven on high
To let no drop of sunshine through, and hung
With gold and purple fruitage, and the white
Thick cups of scented blossom. Underneath,
Soft grew the sward and delicate, and flocks
Of egrets, ay, and many cranes, stood up,
Fanning their wings, to agitate and cool
The noonday air, as men with heed and pains
Had taught them, marshalling and taming them
To bear the wind in, on their moving wings.

So long time as a nimble slave would spend
In milking of her cow, they walked at ease;
Then reached the palace, all of forest trunks,
Brought whole and set together, made. Therein
Had dwelt old Adam, when his mighty sons
Had finished it, and up to Eden gate
Had journeyed for to fetch him. “Here,” they said,
“Mother and father, ye may dwell, and here
Forget the garden wholly.”

So he came
Under the doorplace, and the women sat,
Each with her finger on her lips; but he,

Having been called, went on, until he reached
The jewelled settle, wrought with cunning work
Of gold and ivory, whereon they wont
To set the Elder. All with sleekest skins,
That striped and spotted creatures of the wood
Had worn, the seat was covered, but thereon
The Elder was not: by the steps thereof,
Upon the floor, whereto his silver beard
Did reach, he sat, and he was in his trance.
Upon the settle many doves were perched,
That set the air a-going with their wings:
These opposite, the world's great shipwright stood
To wait the burden; and the Elder spake:
“Will He forget me? Would He might forget!
Old, old! The hope of old Methuselah
Is all in His forgetfulness.” With that,
A slave-girl took a cup of wine, and crept
Anear him, saying, “Taste:” and when his lips
Had touched it, lo, he trembled, and he cried,
“Behold, I prophesy.”

Then straight they fled
That were about him, and did stand apart
And stop their ears. For he, from time to time,
Was plagued with that same fate to prophesy,
And spake against himself, against his day
And time, in words that all men did abhor.
Therefore he, warning them what time the fit
Came on him, saved them, that they heard it not
So while they fled, he cried: “I saw the God
Reach out of heaven His wonderful right hand.
Lo, lo! He dipped it in the unquiet sea,
And in its curvèd palm behold the ark,
As in a vast calm lake, came floating on.
Ay, then, His other hand — the cursing hand —
He took and spread between us and the sun,
And all was black; the day was blotted out,
And horrible staggering took the frightened earth.

I heard the water hiss, and then methinks
The crack as of her splitting. Did she take
Their palaces that are my brothers dear,
And huddle them with all their ancients
Under into her breast? If it was black,
How could this old man see? There was a noise
In the dark, and He drew back His hand again.
I looked — It was a dream, — let no man say
It was aught else. There, so — the fit goes by.
Sir, and my daughters, is it eventide? —
Sooner than that, saith old Methuselah,
Let the vulture lay his beak to my green limbs.
What! art Thou envious? — are the sons of men
Too wise to please Thee, and to do Thy will?
Methuselah, he sitteth on the ground,
Clad in his gown of age, the pale white gown,
And goeth not forth to war; his wrinkled hands
He claspeth round his knees: old, very old.
Would he could steal from Thee one secret more —
The secret of Thy youth! O, envious God!
We die. The words of old Methuselah
And his prophecy are ended."

Then the wives,
Beholding how he trembled, and the maids
And children, came anear, saying, "Who art thou
That standest gazing on the Elder? Lo,
Thou dost not well: withdraw; for it was thou
Whose stranger presence troubled him, and brought
The fit of prophecy." And he did turn
To look upon them, and their majesty
And glorious beauty took away his words;
And, being pure among the vile, he cast
In his thought a veil of snow-white purity
Over the beauteous throng. "Thou dost not well,"
They said. He answered: "Blossoms o' the world,
Fruitful as fair, never in watered glade,

Where in the youngest grass blue cups push forth,
And the white lily reareth up her head,
And purples cluster, and the saffron flower,
Clear as a flame of sacrifice, breaks out,
And every cedar bough, made delicate
With climbing roses, drops in white and red, —
Saw I (good angels keep you in their care)
So beautiful a crowd."

With that, they stamped,
Gnashed their white teeth, and, turning, fled and spat
Upon the floor. The Elder spake to him,
Yet shaking with the burden, "Who art thou?"
He answered: "I, the man whom thou didst send
To fetch through this thy woodland, do forbear
To tell my name; thou lovest it not, great sire, —
No, nor mine errand. To thy house I spake,
Touching their beauty." "Wherefore didst thou
spite,"

Quoth he, "the daughters?" and it seemed he lost
Count of that prophecy, for very age,
And from his thin lips dropt a trembling laugh.
"Wicked old man," quoth he, "this wise old man
I see as 'twere not I. Thou bad old man,
What shall be done to thee? for thou didst burn
Their babes, and strew the ashes all about,
To rid the world of His white soldiers. Ay,
Scenting of human sacrifice, they fled.
Cowards! I heard them winnow their great wings;
They went to tell Him; but they came no more.
The women hate to hear of them, so sore
They grudged their little ones; and yet no way
There was but that. I took it; I did well."

With that he fell to weeping. "Son," said he,
"Long have I hid mine eyes from stalwart men.
For it is hard to lose the majesty
And pride and power of manhood: but to-day,

Stand forth into the light, that I may look
Upon thy strength, and think, EVEN THUS DID I,
IN THE GLORY OF MY YOUTH, MORE LIKE TO GOD
THAN LIKE HIS SOLDIERS, FACE THE VASSAL WORLD."

Then Noah stood forward in his majesty,
Shouldering the golden billhook, wherewithal
He wont to cut his way, when tangled in
The matted hayes. And down the opened roof
Fell slanting beams upon his stately head,
And streamed along his gown, and made to shine
The jewelled sandals on his feet.

And, lo,

The Elder cried aloud: "I prophesy.
Behold, my son is as a fruitful field
When all the lands are waste. The archers drew,—
They drew the bow against him; they were fain
To slay: but he shall live,—my son shall live,
And I shall live by him in the other days.
Behold the prophet of the Most High God:
Hear him. Behold the hope o' the world, what time
She lieth under. Hear him; he shall save
A seed alive, and sow the earth with man.
O earth! earth! earth! a floating shell of wood
Shall hold the remnant of thy mighty lords.
Will this old man be in it? Sir, and you,
My daughters, hear him! Lo, this white old man
He sitteth on the ground. (Let be, let be:
Why dost Thou trouble us to make our tongue
Ring with abhorred words?) The prophecy
Of the Elder, and the vision that he saw,
They both are ended."

Then said Noah: "The life
Of this my lord is low for very age:
Why then, with bitter words upon thy tongue,
Father of Lamech, dost thou anger Him?"

Thou canst not strive against Him now." He said:
"Thy feet are toward the valley, where lie bones
Bleaching upon the desert. Did I love
The lithe strong lizards that I yoked and set
To draw my car? and were they not possessed?
Yea, all of them were liars. I loved them well.
What did the Enemy, but on a day
When I behind my talking team went forth,
They sweetly lying, so that all men praised
Their flattering tongues and mild persuasive eyes,—
What did the Enemy but send His slaves,
Angels, to cast down stones upon their heads
And break them? Nay, I could not stir abroad
But havoc came; they never crept or flew
Beyond the shelter that I builded here,
But straight the crowns I had set upon their heads
Were marks for myrmidons that in the clouds
Kept watch to crush them. Can a man forgive
That hath been warred on thus? I will not. Nay,
I swear it,—I, the man Methuselah."
The Master-shipwright, he replied, "'Tis true,
Great loss was that; but they that stood thy friends,
The wicked spirits, spoke upon their tongues,
And cursed the God of heaven. What marvel, sir,
If He was angered?" But the Elder cried:
"They all are dead,—the toward beasts I loved;
My goodly team, my joy, they all are dead;
Their bones lie bleaching in the wilderness:
And I will keep my wrath for evermore
Against the Enemy that slew them. Go,
Thou coward servant of a tyrant King,
Go down the desert of the bones, and ask,
'My King, what bones are these? Methuselah,
The white old man that sitteth on the ground,
Sendeth a message, "Bid them that they live,
And let my lizards run up every path.
They wont to take when out of silver pipes,

The pipes that Tubal wrought into my roof,
I blew a sweeter cry than song-bird's throat
Hath ever formed; and while they laid their heads
Submit upon my threshold, poured away
Music that welled by heartful out, and made
The throats of men that heard to swell, their breasts
To heave with the joy of grief; yea, caused the lips
To laugh of men asleep.

Return to me
The great wise lizards; ay, and them that flew
My pursuivants before me. Let me yoke
Again that multitude; and here I swear
That they shall draw my car and me thereon
Straight to the ship of doom. So men shall know
My loyalty, that I submit, and Thou
Shalt yet have honor, O mine Enemy,
By me. The speech of old Methuselah.””

Then Noah made answer, “By the living God,
That is no enemy to men, great sire,
I will not take thy message; hear thou Him.
Behold (He saith that suffereth thee), behold,
The earth that I made green cries out to Me,
Red with the costly blood of beauteous man.
I am robbed, I am robbed (He saith); they sacrifice
To evil demons of My blameless flocks,
That I did fashion with My hand. Behold,
How goodly was the world! I gave it thee
Fresh from its finishing. What hast thou done?
I will cry out to the waters, *Cover it,*
And hide it from its Father. Lo, Mine eyes
Turn from it shamed.”

With that the old man laughed
Full softly. “Ay,” quoth he, “a goodly world,
And we have done with it as we did list.
Why did He give it us? Nay, look you, son:

Five score they were that died in yonder waste;
And if He crieth, ‘Repent, be reconciled,’
I answer, ‘Nay, my lizards;’ and again,
If He will trouble me in this mine age,
‘Why hast Thou slain my lizards?’ Now my speech
Is cut away from all my other words,
Standing alone. The Elder sweareth it,
The man of many days, Methuselah.”

Then answered Noah, “My Master, hear it not;
But yet have patience;” and he turned himself,
And down betwixt the ordered trees went forth,
And in the light of evening made his way
Into the waste to meet the Voice of God.

BOOK III.

ABOVE the head of great Methuselah
There lay two demons in the opened roof
Invisible, and gathered up his words;
For when the Elder prophesied, it came
About, that hidden things were shown to them,
And burdens that he spake against his time.
(But never heard them, such as dwelt with him;
Their ears they stopped, and willed to live at ease
In all delight; and perfect in their youth,
And strong, disport them in the perfect world.)

Now these were fettered that they could not fly,
For a certain disobedience they had wrought
Against the ruler of their host; but not
The less they loved their cause; and when the feet
O’ the Master-builder were no longer heard,
They, slipping to the sword, right painfully
Did follow, for the one to the other said,
“Behoooves our master know of this; and us,
Should he be favorable, he may loose
From these our bonds.”

And thus it came to pass,
That while at dead of night the old dragon lay
Coiled in the cavern where he dwelt, the watch
Pacing before it saw in middle air
A boat, that gleamed like fire, and on it came,
And rocked as it drew near, and then it burst
And went to pieces, and there fell therefrom,
Close at the cavern's mouth, two glowing balls.
Now there was drawn a curtain nigh the mouth
Of that deep cave, to testify of wrath.
The dragon had been wroth with some that served,
And chased them from him; and his oracles,
That wont to drop from him, were stopped, and men
Might only pray to him through that fell web
That hung before him. Then did whisper low
Some of the little spirits that, bat-like, clung
And cluster'd round the opening. "Lo," they said,
While gazed the watch upon those glowing balls,
"These are like moons eclipsed; but let them lie
Red on the moss, and sear its dewy spires,
Until our lord give leave to draw the web,
And quicken reverence by his presence dread,
For he will know and call to them by name,
And they will change. At present he is sick,
And wills that none disturb him." So they lay,
And there was silence, for the forest tribes
Came never near that cave. Wiser than men,
They fled the serpent hiss that oft by night
Came forth of it, and feared the wan dusk forms
That stalked among the trees, and in the dark
Those whiffs of flame that wandered up the sky
And made the moonlight sickly.

Now, the cave
Was marvellous for beauty, wrought with tools
Into the living rock, for there had worked
All cunning men, to cut on it with signs

And shows, yea, all the manner of mankind.
The fateful apple-tree was there, a bough
Bent with the weight of him that us beguiled;
And lilies of the field did seem to blow
And bud in the storied stone. There Tubal sat,
Who from his harp delivered music, sweet
As any in the spheres. Yea, more;
Earth's latest wonder on the walls appeared,
Unfinished, workmen clustering on its ribs;
And farther back, within the rock hewn out,
Angelic figures stood, that impious hands
Had fashioned; many golden lamps they held
By golden chains depending, and their eyes
All tended in a reverent quietude
Toward the couch whereon the dragon lay.
The floor was beaten gold; the curly lengths
Of his last coils lay on it, hid from sight
With a coverlet made stiff with crusting gems,
Fire-opals shooting, rubies, fierce bright eyes
Of diamonds, or the pale green emerald,
That changed their lustre when he breathed.

His head
Feathered with crimson combs, and all his neck,
And half-shut fans of his admirèd wings,
That in their scaly splendor put to shame
Or gold or stone, lay on his ivory couch
And shivered; for the dragon suffered pain:
He suffered and he feared. It was his doom,
The tempter, that he never should depart
From the bright creature that in Paradise
He for his evil purpose erst possessed,
Until it died. Thus only, spirit of might
And chiefest spirit of ill, could he be free.

But with its nature wed, as souls of men
Are wedded to their clay, he took the dread
Of death and dying, and the coward heart

Of the beast, and craven terrors of the end
 Sank him that habited within it to dread
 Disunion. He, a dark dominion erst
 Rebellious, lay and trembled, for the flesh
 Daunted his immaterial. He was sick
 And sorry. Great ones of the earth had sent
 Their chief musicians for to comfort him,
 Chanting his praise, the friend of man, the god
 That gave them knowledge, at so great a price
 And costly. Yea, the riches of the mine,
 And glorious brodered work, and woven gold,
 And all things wisely made, they at his feet
 Laid daily; for they said, "This mighty one,
 All the world wonders after him. He lieth
 Sick in his dwelling; he hath long foregone
 (To do us good) dominion, and a throne,
 And his brave warfare with the Enemy,
 So much he pitieth us that were denied
 The gain and gladness of this knowledge. Now
 Shall he be certified of gratitude,
 And smell the sacrifice that most he loves."
 The night was dark, but every lamp gave forth
 A tender, lustrous beam. His beauteous wings
 The dragon fluttered, cursed awhile, then turned
 And moaned with lamentable voice, "I thirst,
 Give me to drink." Thereon stepped out in haste,
 From inner chambers, lovely ministrants,
 Young boys, with radiant locks and peaceful eyes,
 And poured out liquor from their cups to cool
 His parched tongue, and kneeling held it nigh
 In jewelled basins sparkling; and he lapped,
 And was appeased, and said, "I will not hide
 Longer, my much-desired face from men.
 Draw back the web of separation." Then
 With cries of gratulation ran they forth,
 And flung it wide, and all the watch fell low.

Each on his face, as drunk with sudden joy.
 Thus marked he, glowing on the branched moss,
 Those red rare moons, and let his serpent eyes
 Consider them full subtly, "What be these?"
 Inquiring: and the little spirits said,
 "As we for thy protection (having heard
 That wrathful sons of darkness walk to-night,
 Such as do oft ill-use us) clustered here,
 We marked a boat afire, that sailed the skies,
 And furrowed up like spray a billowy cloud,
 And lo, it went to pieces, scattering down
 A rain of sparks and these two angry moons."
 Then said the dragon, "Let my guard, and you,
 Attendant hosts, recede;" and they went back,
 And formed about the cave a widening ring,
 Then, halting, stood afar; and from the cave
 The snaky wonder spoke, with hissing tongue,
 "If ye were Tartis and Deleisonon,
 Be Tartis and Deleisonon once more."
 Then egg-like cracked the glowing balls, and forth
 Started black angels, trampling hard to free
 Their fettered feet from out the smoking shell.
 And he said, "Tartis and Deleisonon,
 Your lord I am: draw nigh." "Thou art our lord,"
 They answered, and with fettered limbs full low
 They bent, and made obeisance. Furthermore,
 "O fiery flying serpent, after whom
 The nations go, let thy dominion last,"
 They said, "forever." And the serpent said,
 "It shall: unfold your errand." They replied,
 One speaking for a space, and afterward
 His fellow taking up the word with fear,
 And panting, "We were set to watch the mouth
 Of great Methuselah. There came to him
 The son of Lamech two days since." "My lord,

They prophesied, the Elder prophesied,
Unwitting, of the floods of waters, — ay,
A vision was before him, and the lands
Lay under water drowned. He saw the ark, —
It floated in the Enemy's right hand."
"Lord of the lost, the son of Lamech fled
Into the wilderness to meet His voice
That reigneth; and we, diligent to hear
Aught that might serve thee, followed, but, forbid
To enter, lay upon its boundary cliff,
And wished for morning."

"When the dawn was red
We sought the man, we marked him; and he
prayed, —

Kneeling, he prayed in the valley, and said —"
"Nay," quoth the serpent, "spare me, what devout
He fawning grovelled to the All-powerful;
But if of what shall hap he aught let fall,
Speak that." They answered, "He did pray as one
That looketh to outlive mankind, — and more,
We are certified by all his scattered words,
That He will take from men their length of days,
And cut them off like grass in its first flower:
From henceforth this shall be."

That when he heard,
The dragon made to the night his moan.

"And more."
They said, "that He above would have men knew
That He doth love them, whoso will repent,
To that man He is favorable, yea,
Will be his loving Lord."

The dragon cried,
"The last is worse than all. O man, thy heart
Is stout against His wrath. But will He love?
I heard it rumored in the heavens of old

(And doth He love?). Thou wilt not, canst not, stand
Against the love of God. Dominion fails;
I see it float from me, that long have worn
Fetters of flesh to win it. Love of God!
I cry against thee; thou art worse than all."
They answered, "Be not moved, admired chief
And trusted of mankind;" and they went on,
And fed him with the prophecies that fell
From the Master-shipwright in his prayer.

But prone

He lay, for he was sick: at every word
Prophetic cowering. As a bruising blow,
It fell upon his head and daunted him,
Until they ended, saying, "Prince, behold,
Thy servants have revealed the whole."

Thereon

He out of snaky lips did kiss forth thanks.
Then said he, "Tartis and Deleisonon,
Receive your wages." So their fetters fell;
And they, retiring, lauded him, and cried,
"King, reign forever." Then he mourned, "Amen."

And he, — being left alone, — he said: "A light!
I see a light, — a star among the trees, —
An angel." And it drew toward the cave,
But with its sacred feet touched not the grass,
Nor lifted up the lids of its pure eyes,
But hung a span's length from that ground pollute,
At the opening of the cave.

And when he looked

The dragon cried, "Thou newly-fashioned thing,
Of name unknown, thy scorn becomes thee not.
Doth not thy Master suffer what thine eyes
Thou countest all too clean to open on?"
But still it hovered, and the quietness

Of holy heaven was on the drooping lids;
And not as one that answereth, it let fall
The music from its mouth, but like to one
That doth not hear, or, hearing, doth not heed.

"A message: 'I have heard thee, while remote
I went My rounds among the unfinished stars.'

A message: 'I have left thee to thy ways,
And mastered all thy vileness, for thy hate
I have made to serve the ends of My great love.
Hereafter will I chain thee down. To-day
One thing thou art forbidden; now thou knowest
The name thereof: I told it thee in heaven,
When thou wert sitting at My feet. Forbear
To let that hidden thing be whispered forth:
For man, ungrateful (and thy hope it was,
That so ungrateful he might prove), would scorn,
And not believe it, adding so fresh weight
Of condemnation to the doomed world.

Concerning that, thou art forbid to speak;
Know thou didst count it, falling from My tongue,
A lovely song, whose meaning was unknown,
Unknowable, unbearable to thought,
But sweeter in the hearing than all harps
Toned in My holy hollow. Now thine ears
Are opened, know it, and discern and fear,
Forbearing speech of it for evermore."

So said, it turned, and with a cry of joy,
As one released, went up; and it was dawn,
And all boughs dropped with dew, and out of mist
Came the red sun and looked into the cave.

But the dragon, left a-tremble, called to him,
From the nether kingdom, certain of his friends, —
Three whom he trusted, councillors accursed.
A thunder-cloud stooped low and swathed the place
In its black swirls, and out of it they rushed,

And hid them in recesses of the cave,
Because they could not look upon the sun,
Sith light is pure. And Satan called to them, —
All in the dark, in his great rage he spake:
"Up," quoth the dragon; "it is time to work,
Or we are all undone." And he did hiss,
And there came shudderings over land and trees,
A dimness after dawn. The earth threw out
A blinding fog, that crept toward the cave,
And rolled up blank before it like a veil, —
A curtain to conceal its habitors.
Then did those spirits move upon the floor,
Like pillars of darkness, and with eyes aglow.
One had a helm for covering of the scars
That seamed what rested of a goodly face;
He wore his vizor up, and all his words
Were hollower than an echo from the hills:
He was hight Make. And lo, his fellow-fiend
Came after, holding down his dastard head,
Like one ashamed: now this for craft was great;
The dragon honored him. A third sat down
Among them, covering with his wasted hand
Somewhat that pained his breast.

And when the fit
Of thunder, and the sobbings of the wind,
Were lulled, the dragon spoke with wrath and rage,
And told them of his matters: "Look to this,
If ye be loyal;" adding, "Give your thoughts,
And let me have your counsel in this need."

One spirit rose and spake, and all the cave
Was full of sighs, "The words of Make the Prince,
Of him once delegate in Betelgeux:
Whereas of late the manner is to change,
We know not where 'twill end; and now my words
Go thus: give way, be peaceable, lie still

And strive not, else the world that we have won
 He may, to drive us out, reduce to naught.
 "For while I stood in mine obedience yet,
 Steering of Betelgeux my sun, behold,
 A moon, that evil ones did fill, rolled up
 Astray, and suddenly the Master came,
 And while, a million strong, like rooks they rose,
 He took and broke it, flung it here and there,
 And called a blast to drive the powder forth;
 And it was fine as dust, and blurred the skies
 Farther than 'tis from hence to this young sun.
 Spirits that passed upon their work that day,
 Cried out, 'How dusty 'tis.' Behooves us, then,
 That we depart, as leaving unto Him
 This goodly world and goodly race of man.
 Not all are doomed: hereafter it may be
 That we find place on it again. But if,
 Too zealous to preserve it, and the men
 Our servants, we oppose Him, He may come,
 And, choosing rather to undo His work
 Than strive with it for aye, make so an end."
 He sighing paused. Lo, then the serpent hissed
 In impotent rage, "Depart! and how depart!
 Can flesh be carried down where spirits wonn?
 Or I, most miserable, hold my life
 Over the airless, bottomless gulf, and bide
 The buffetings of yonder shoreless sea?
 O death, thou terrible doom: O death, thou dread
 Of all that breathe."

A spirit rose and spake:
 "Whereas in Heaven is power, is much to fear;
 For this admired country we have marred.
 Whereas in Heaven is love (and there are days
 When yet I can recall what love was like),
 Is naught to fear. A threatening makes the whole,
 And clogged with strong conditions: 'O, repent,

Man, and I turn.' He, therefore, powerful now,
 And more so, master, that ye bide in clay,
 Threateneth that He may save. They shall not die."

The dragon said, "I tremble, I am sick."
 He said with pain of heart, "How am I fallen!
 For I keep silence; yea, I have withdrawn
 From haunting of His gates, and shouting up
 Defiance. Wherefore doth He hunt me out
 From this small world, this little one, that I
 Have been content to take unto myself,
 I here being loved and worshipped? He knoweth
 How much I have foregone; and must He stoop
 To whelm the world, and heave the floors o' the deep,
 Of purpose to pursue me from my place?
 And since I gave men knowledge, must He take
 Their length of days whereby they perfect it?
 So shall He scatter all that I have stored,
 And get them by degrading them. I know
 That in the end it is appointed me
 To fade. I will not fade before the time."

A spirit rose, the third, a spirit ashamed
 And subtle, and his face he turned aside:
 "Whereas," said he, "we strive against both power
 And love, behooves us that we strive aright.
 Now some of old my comrades yesterday,
 I met, as they did journey to appear
 In the Presence; and I said, 'My master lieth
 Sick yonder, otherwise (for no decree
 There stands against it) he would also come
 And make obeisance with the sons of God.'
 They answered, naught denying. Therefore, lord,
 'Tis certain that ye have admittance yet;
 And what doth hinder? Nothing but this breath.
 Were it not well to make an end, and die,
 And gain admittance to the King of kings?"

What if thy slaves by thy consent should take
And bear thee on their wings above the earth,
And suddenly let fall,—how soon 'twere o'er!
We should have fear and sinking at the heart;
But in a little moment we should see,
Rising majestic from a ruined heap,
The stately spirit that we served of yore."

The serpent turned his subtle deadly eyes
Upon the spirit, and hissed; and, sick with shame,
It bowed itself together, and went back
With hidden face. "This counsel is not good,"
The other twain made answer; "look, my lord,
Whereas 'tis evil in thine eyes, in ours
'Tis evil also; speak, for we perceive
That on thy tongue the words of counsel sit,
Ready to fly to our right greedy ears,
That long for them." And Satan, flattered thus
(Forever may the serpent kind be charmed
With soft, sweet words, and music deftly played),
Replied, "Whereas I surely rule the world,
Behooves that ye prepare for me a path,
And that I, putting of my pains aside,
Go stir rebellion in the mighty hearts
O' the giants; for He loveth them, and looks
Full oft complacent on their glorious strength.
He willeth that they yield, that He may spare;
But, by the blackness of my loathed den,
I say they shall not, no, they shall not yield;
Go, therefore, take to you some harmless guise,
And spread a rumor that I come. I, sick,
Sorry, and aged, hasten. I have heard
Whispers that out of heaven dropped unaware.
I caught them up, and sith they bode men harm
I am ready for to comfort them; yea, more,
To counsel, and I will that they drive forth
The women, the abhorred of my soul;

Let not a woman breathe where I shall pass,
Lest the curse falleth, and she bruise my head.
Friends, if it be their mind to send for me
An army, and triumphant draw me on
In the golden car you wot of, and with shouts,
I would not that ye hinder them. Ah, then
Will I make hard their hearts, and grieve Him sore
That loves them, O, by much too well to wet
Their stately heads, and soil those locks of strength
Under the fateful brine. Then afterward,
While He doth reason vainly with them, I
Will offer Him a pact: 'Great King, a pact,
And men shall worship Thee, I say they shall,
For I will bid them do it, yea, and leave
To sacrifice their kind, so Thou my name
Wilt suffer to be worshipped after Thine.'"

"Yea, my lord Satan," quoth they, "do this thing,
And let us hear thy words, for they are sweet."
Then he made answer, "By a messenger
Have I this day been warned. There is a deed
I may not tell of, lest the people add
Scorn of a Coming Greatness to their faults.
Why this? Who careth, when about to slay,
And slay indeed, how well they have deserved
Death whom he slayeth? Therefore yet is hid
A meaning of some mercy that will rob
The nether world. Now look to it,—'Twere vain,
Albeit this deluge He would send indeed,
That we expect the harvest; He would yet
Be the Master-reaper; for I heard it said,
Them that be young and know Him not, and them
That are bound and may not build, yea, more, their
wives,
Whom, suffering not to hear the doom, they keep
Joyous behind the curtains, every one
With maidens nourished in the house, and babes

And children at her knees — (then what remain!)
 He claimeth and will gather for His own.
 Now, therefore, it were good by guile to work,
 Princes, and suffer not the doom to fall.
 There is no evil like to love. I heard
 Him whisper it. Have I put on this flesh
 To ruin His two children beautiful,
 And shall my deed confound me in the end,
 Through awful imitation? Love of God,
 I cry against thee; thou art worst of all."

BOOK IV.

Now while these evil ones took counsel strange,
 The son of Lamech journeyed home; and, lo!
 A company came down, and struck the track
 As he did enter it. There rode in front
 Two horsemen, young and noble, and behind
 Were following slaves with tent gear; others led
 Strong horses, others bare the instruments
 O' the chase, and in the rear dull camels lagged,
 Sighing, for they were burdened, and they loved
 The desert sands above that grassy vale.

And as they met, those horsemen drew the rein,
 And fixed on him their grave untroubled eyes;
 He in his regal grandeur walked alone,
 And had nor steed nor follower, and his mien
 Was grave and like to theirs. He said to them,
 "Fair sirs, whose are ye?" They made answer cold,
 "The beautiful woman, sir, our mother dear,
 Niloiya, bare us to great Lamech's son."
 And he, replying, "I am he." They said,
 "We know it, sir. We have remembered you
 Through many seasons. Pray you let us not;
 We fain would greet our mother." And they made
 Obeisance and passed on; then all their train,

Which while they spoke had halted, moved apace,
 And, while the silent father stood, went by,
 He gazing after, as a man that dreams;
 For he was sick with their cold, quiet scorn,
 That seemed to say, "Father, we own you not,
 We love you not, for you have left us long, —
 So long, we care not that you come again."

And while the sullen camels moved, he spake
 To him that led the last, "There are but two
 Of these my sons; but where doth Japhet ride?
 For I would see him." And the leader said,
 "Sir, ye shall find him, if ye follow up
 Along the track. Afore the noonday meal
 The young men, even our masters, bathed; (there
 grows

A clump of cedars by the bend of you
 Clear river) — there did Japhet, after meat,
 Being right weary, lay him down and sleep.
 There, with a company of slaves and some
 Few camels, ye shall find him."

And the man,
 The father of these three, did let him pass,
 And struggle and give battle to his heart,
 Standing as motionless as pillar set
 To guide a wanderer in a pathless waste;
 But all his strength went from him, and he strove
 Vainly to trample out and trample down
 The misery of his love unsatisfied, —
 Unutterable love flung in his face.
 Then he broke out in passionate words, that cried
 Against his lot: "I have lost my own, and won
 None other; no, not one! Alas, my sons!
 That I have looked to for my solacing,
 In the bitterness to come. My children dear!"

And when from his own lips he heard those words.
With passionate stirring of the heart, he wept.

And none came near to comfort him. His face
Was on the ground; but having wept, he rose
Full hastily, and urged his way to find
The river; and in hollow of his hand
Raised up the water to his brow: "This son,
This other son of mine," he said, "shall see
No tears upon my face." And he looked on,
Beheld the camels, and a group of slaves
Sitting apart from some one fast asleep,
Where they had spread out webs of broidery work
Under a cedar-tree; and he came on,
And when they made obeisance, he declared
His name, and said, "I will beside my son
Sit till he wakeneth." So Japhet lay
A-dreaming, and his father drew to him.
He said, "This cannot scorn me yet;" and paused,
Right angry with himself, because the youth,
Albeit of stately growth, so languidly
Lay with a listless smile upon his mouth,
That was full sweet and pure; and as he looked
He half forgot his trouble in his pride.
"And is this mine?" said he, "my son! my own!
(God, thou art good!) O, if this turn away,
That pang shall be past bearing. I must think
That all the sweetness of his goodly face
Is copied from his soul. How beautiful
Are children to their fathers! Son, my heart
Is greatly glad because of thee; my life
Shall lack of no completeness in the days
To come. If I forget the joy of youth,
In thee shall I be comforted; ay, see
My youth, a dearer than my own again."

And when he ceased, the youth, with sleep content,
Murmured a little, turned himself, and woke.

He woke, and opened on his father's face
The darkness of his eyes; but not a word
The Master-shipwright said,—his lips were sealed;
He was not ready, for he feared to see
This mouth curled up with scorn. And Japhet
spoke,

Full of the calm that cometh after sleep:
"Sir, I have dreamed of you. I pray you, sir,
What is your name?" and even with his words
His countenance changed. The son of Lamech said,
"Why art thou sad? What have I done to thee?"
And Japhet answered, "O, methought I fled
In the wilderness before a maddened beast,
And you came up and slew it; and I thought
You were my father; but I fear me, sir,
My thoughts were vain." With that his father said,
"Whate'er of blessing Thou reserv'st for me,
God! if Thou wilt not give to both, give here:
Bless him with both Thy hands;" and laid his own
On Japhet's head.

Then Japhet looked on him,
Made quiet by content, and answered low,
With faltering laughter, glad and reverent: "Sir,
You are my father?" "Ay," quoth he, "I am!
Kiss me, my son; and let me hear my name,
My much desired name, from your dear lips."

Then after, rested, they betook them home:
And Japhet, walking by the Master, thought,
"I did not will to love this sire of mine;
But now I feel as if I had always known
And loved him well; truly, I see not why,
But I would rather serve him than go free
With my two brethren." And he said to him,
"Father!" — who answered, "I am here, my son."
And Japhet said, "I pray you, sir, attend

To this my answer: let me go with you,
 For, now I think on it, I do not love
 The chase, nor managing the steed, nor yet
 The arrows and the bow; but rather you,
 For all you do and say, and you yourself,
 Are goodly and delightsome in mine eyes.
 I pray you, sir, when you go forth again,
 That I may also go." And he replied,
 "I will tell thy speech unto the Highest; He
 Shall answer it. But I would speak to thee
 Now of the days to come. Know thou, most dear,
 To this thy father, that the drenched world,
 When risen clean washed from water, shall receive
 From thee her lordliest governors, from thee
 Daughters of noblest soul."

So Japhet said,

"Sir, I am young, but of my mother straight
 I will go ask a wife, that this may be.
 I pray you, therefore, as the manner is
 Of fathers, give me land that I may reap
 Corn for sustaining of my wife, and bruise
 The fruit of the vine to cheer her." But he said,
 "Dost thou forget? or dost thou not believe,
 My son?" He answered, "I did ne'er believe,
 My father, ere to-day; but now, methinks,
 Whatever thou believest I believe,
 For thy beloved sake. If this then be
 As thou (I hear) hast said, and earth doth bear
 The last of her wheat harvests, and make ripe
 The latest of her grapes; yet hear me, sir,
 None of the daughters shall be given to me
 If I be landless." Then his father said,
 "Lift up thine eyes towards the north, my son:"
 And so he did. "Behold thy heritage!"
 Quoth the world's prince and master, "far away

Upon the side o' the north, where green the field
 Lies every season through, and where the dews
 Of heaven are wholesome, shall thy children reign;
 I part it to them, for the earth is mine;
 The Highest gave it me: I make it theirs.
 Moreover for thy marriage gift, behold
 The cedars where thou sleepest! There are vines;
 And up the rise is growing wheat. I give
 (For all, alas! is mine), — I give thee both
 For dowry, and my blessing."

And he said,

"Sir, you are good, and therefore the Most High
 Shall bless me also. Sir, I love you well."

BOOK V.

AND when two days were over, Japhet said,
 "Mother, so please you, get a wife for me."
 The mother answered, "Dost thou mock me, son?
 'Tis not the manner of our kin to wed
 So young. Thou knowest it; art thou not ashamed?
 Thou carest not for a wife." And the youth blushed,
 And made for answer: "This, my father, saith
 The doom is nigh; now, therefore, find a maid,
 Or else shall I be wifeless all my days.
 And as for me, I care not; but the lands
 Are parted, and the goodliest share is mine.
 And lo! my brethren are betrothed; their maids
 Are with thee in the house. Then why not mine?
 Didst thou not diligently search for these
 Among the noblest born of all the earth,
 And bring them up? My sisters, dwell they not
 With women that bespeak them for their sons?
 Now, therefore, let a wife be found for me,
 Fair as the day, and gentle to my will
 As thou art to my father's." When she heard,

Niloiya sighed, and answered, "It is well."
And Japhet went out from her presence.

Then

Quoth the great Master: "Wherefore sought ye not,
Woman, these many days, nor tired at all,
Till ye had found, a maiden for thy son?
In this ye have done ill." Niloiya said:
"Let not my lord be angry. All my soul
Is sad: my lord hath walked afar so long,
That some despise thee; yea, our servants fail
Lately to bring their stint of corn and wood.
And, sir, thy household slaves do steal away
To thy great father, and our lands lie waste, —
None till them: therefore think the women scorn
To give me — whatsoever gems I send,
And goodly raiment (yea, I seek afar,
And sue with all desire and humbleness
Through every master's house, but no one gives) —
A daughter for my son." With that she ceased.

Then said the Master: "Some thou hast with thee,
Brought up among thy children, dutiful
And fair; thy father gave them for my slaves, —
Children of them whom he brought captive forth
From their own heritage." And she replied,

Right scornfully: "Shall Japhet wed a slave?"

Then said the Master: "He shall wed: look thou
To that. I say not he shall wed a slave;
But, by the might of One that made him mine,
I will not quit thee for my doomed way
Until thou wilt betroth him. Therefore, haste,
Beautiful woman, loved of me and mine,
To bring a maiden, and to say, 'Behold
A wife for Japhet.'" Then she answered, "Sir,
It shall be done."

And forth Niloiya sped.
She gathered all her jewels, — all she held

Of costly or of rich, — and went and spake
With some few slaves that yet abode with her,
For daily they were fewer; and went forth,
With fair and flattering words, among her feres,
And fain had wrought with them: and she had hope
That made her sick, it was so faint; and then
She had fear, and after she had certainty,
For all did scorn her. "Nay," they cried, "O fool!
If this be so, and on a watery world
Ye think to rock, what matters if a wife
Be free or bond? There shall be none to rule,
If she have freedom: if she have it not,
None shall there be to serve."

And she alit,

The time being done, desponding at her door.
And went behind a screen, where should have
wrought

The daughters of the captives; but there wrought
One only, and this rose from off the floor,
Where she the river rush full deftly wove,
And made obeisance. Then Niloiya said,
"Where are thy fellows?" And the maid replied,
"Let not Niloiya, this my lady loved,
Be angry; they are fled since yesternight."
Then said Niloiya, "Amarant, my slave,
When have I called thee by thy name before?"
She answered, "Lady, never;" and she took
And spread her broidered robe before her face.
Niloiya spoke thus: "I am come to woe,
And thou to honor." Saying this she wept
Passionate tears; and all the damsel's soul
Was full of yearning wonder, and her robe
Slipped from her hand, and her right innocent face
Was seen betwixt her locks of tawny hair
That dropped about her knees, and her two eyes,
Blue as the much-loved flower that rims the beck

Looked sweetly on Niloia; but she knew
 No meaning in her words; and she drew nigh,
 And kneeled and said, "Will this my lady speak?
 Her damsel is desirous of her words."
 Then said Niloia, "I, thy mistress, sought
 A wife for Japhet, and no wife is found."
 And yet again she wept with grief of heart,
 Saying, "Ah me, miserable! I must give
 A wife, — the Master willeth it, — a wife,
 Ah me! unto the high-born. He will scorn
 His mother and reproach me. I must give —
 None else have I to give — a slave — even thee."
 This further spake Niloia: "I was good, —
 Had rue on thee, a tender sucking child,
 When they did tear thee from thy mother's breast
 I fed thee, gave thee shelter, and I taught
 Thy hands all cunning arts that women prize.
 But out on me! my good is turned to ill.
 O Japhet, well beloved!" And she rose up,
 And did restrain herself, saying, "Dost thou know?
 Behold, this thing shall be." The damsel sighed,
 "Lady, I do." Then went Niloia forth.
 And Amarant murmured in her deep amaze,
 "Shall Japhet's little children kiss my mouth?
 And will he sometimes take them from my arms,
 And almost care for me for their sweet sake?
 I have not dared to think I loved him, — now
 I know it well: but O, the bitterness
 For him!" And ending thus, the damsel rose,
 For Japhet entered. And she bowed herself
 Meekly and made obeisance, but her blood
 Ran cold about her heart, for all his face
 Was colored with his passion.

Japhet spoke:

He said, "My father's slave;" and she replied,
 Low drooping her fair head, "My master's son."

And after that a silence fell on them,
 With trembling at her heart, and rage at his.
 And Japhet, mastered of his passion, sat
 And could not speak. O, cruel seemed his fate, —
 So cruel he that told it, so unkind.
 His breast was full of wounded love and wrath
 Wrestling together; and his eyes flashed out
 Indignant lights, as all amazed he took
 The insult home that she had offered him,
 Who should have held his honor dear.

And, lo,

The misery choked him, and he cried in pain,
 "Go, get thee forth;" but she, all white and still,
 Parted her lips to speak, and yet spake not,
 Nor moved. And Japhet rose up passionate,
 With lifted arm as one about to strike;
 But she cried out and met him, and she held
 With desperate might his hand, and prayed to him,
 "Strike not, or else shall men from henceforth say,
 'Japhet is like to us.'" And he shook off
 The damsel, and he said, "I thank thee, slave;
 For never have I stricken yet or child
 Or woman. Not for thy sake am I glad,
 Nay, but for mine. Get hence. Obey my words."
 Then Japhet lifted up his voice, and wept.

And no more he restrained himself, but cried,
 With heavings of the heart, "O hateful day!
 O day that shuts the door upon delight!
 A slave! to wed a slave! O loathed wife,
 Hated of Japhet's soul." And after, long,
 With face between his hands, he sat, his thoughts
 Sullen and sore; then scorned himself, and saying,
 "I will not take her, I will die unwed,
 It is but that;" lift up his eyes and saw
 The slave, and she was sitting at his feet.

And he, so greatly wondering that she dared
The disobedience, looked her in the face
Less angry than afraid, for pale she was
As lily yet unsmiled on by the sun;
And he, his passion being spent, sighed out,
"Low am I fallen indeed. Hast thou no fear,
That thou dost flout me?" but she gave to him
The sighing echo of his sigh, and mourned,
"No."

And he wondered, and he looked again,
For in her heart there was a new-born pang,
That cried; but she, as mothers with their young,
Suffered, yet loved it; and there shone a strange
Grave sweetness in her blue unsullied eyes.
And Japhet, leaning from the settle, thought,
"What is it? I will call her by her name,
To comfort her, for also she is naught
To blame; and since I will not her to wife,
She falls back from the freedom she had hoped."
Then he said "Amarant;" and the damsel drew
Her eyes down slowly from the shaded sky
Of even, and she said, "My master's son,
Japhet;" and Japhet said, "I am not wroth
With thee, but wretched for my mother's deed,
Because she shamed me."

And the maiden said,
"Doth not thy father love thee well, sweet sir?"
"Ay," quoth he, "well." She answered, "Let
the heart
Of Japhet, then, be merry. Go to him
And say, 'The damsel whom my mother chose
Sits by her in the house; but as for me,
Sire, ere I take her, let me go with you
To that same outland country. Also, sir,
My damsel hath not worked as yet the robe

Of her betrothal;' now, then, sith he loves,
He will not say thee nay. Herein for awhile
Is respite, and thy mother far and near
Will seek again: it may be she will find
A fair, free maiden."

Japhet said, "O maid,
Sweet are thy words; but what if I return,
And all again be as it is to-day?"
Then Amarant answered, "Some have died in youth;
But yet, I think not, sir, that I shall die.
Though ye shall find it even as I had died,—
Silent for any words I might have said;
Empty, for any space I might have filled.
Sir, I will steal away, and hide afar;
But if a wife be found, then will I bide
And serve." He answered, "O, thy speech is good;
Now, therefore (since my mother gave me thee),
I will reward it; I will find for thee
A goodly husband, and will make him free;
Thee also."

Then she started from his feet,
And, red with shame and anger, flashed on him
The passion of her eyes; and put her hands
With catching of the breath to her fair throat,
And stood in her defiance lost to fear,
Like some fair hind in desperate danger turned
And brought to bay, and wild in her despair.
But shortly, "I remember," quoth she, low,
With raining down of tears and broken sighs,
"That I am Japhet's slave; beseech you, sir,
As ye were ever gentle, ay, and sweet
Of language to me, be not harder now.
Sir, I was yours to take; I knew not, sir,
That also ye might give me. Pray you, sir,
Be pitiful,—be merciful to me,
A slave." He said, "I thought to do thee good,

For good hath been thy counsel;" but she cried,
 "Good master, be you therefore pitiful
 To me, a slave." And Japhet wondered much
 At her, and at her beauty, for he thought,
 "None of the daughters are so fair as this,
 Nor stand with such a grace majestic;
 She in her locks is like the travelling sun,
 Setting, all clad in coiling clouds of gold.
 And would she die unmatched?" He said to her,
 "What! wilt thou sail alone in yonder ship,
 And dwell alone hereafter?" "Ay," she said,
 "And serve my mistress."

"It is well," quoth he,
 And held his hand to her, as is the way
 Of masters. Then she kissed it, and she said,
 "Thanks for benevolence," and turned herself,
 Adding, "I rest, sir, on your gracious words;"
 Then stepped into the twilight and was gone.

And Japhet, having found his father, said,
 "Sir, let me also journey when ye go."
 Who answered, "Hath thy mother done her part?"
 He said, "Yea, truly, and my damsel sits
 Before her in the house: and also, sir,
 She said to me, 'I have not worked, as yet,
 The garment of betrothal.'" And he said,
 "'Tis not the manner of our kin to speak
 Concerning matters that a woman rules;
 But hath thy mother brought a damsel home,
 And let her see thy face, then all is one
 As ye were wed." He answered, "Even so,
 It matters nothing; therefore hear me, sir:
 The damsel being mine, I am content
 To let her do according to her will;
 And when we shall return, so surely, sir,
 As I shall find her by my mother's side,

Then will I take her:" and he left to speak;
 His father answering, "Son, thy words are good."

BOOK VI.

NIGHT. Now a tent was pitched, and Japhet sat
 In the door and watched, for on a litter lay
 The father of his love. And he was sick
 To death; but daily he would rouse him up,
 And stare upon the light, and ever say,
 "On, let us journey;" but it came to pass
 That night, across their path a river ran,
 And they who served the father and the son
 Had pitched the tents beside it, and had made
 A fire to scare away the savagery
 That roamed in that great forest, for their way
 Had led among the trees of God.

The moon

Shone on the river, like a silver road
 To lead them over; but when Japhet looked,
 He said, "We shall not cross it. I shall lay
 This well-belovèd head low in the leaves, —
 Not on the farther side." From time to time,
 The water-snakes would stir its glassy flow
 With curling undulations, and would lay
 Their heads along the banks, and, subtle-eyed,
 Consider those long spiriting flames, that danced,
 When some red log would break and crumble down,
 And show his dark despondent eyes, that watched,
 Wearily, even Japhet's. But he cared
 Little; and in the dark, that was not dark,
 But dimness of confused incertitude,
 Would move a-near all silently, and gaze
 And breathe, and shape itself, a manèd thing
 With eyes; and still he cared not, and the form
 Would falter, then recede, and melt again.

Into the farther shade. And Japhet said:
 "How long? The moon hath grown again in heaven,
 After her eaving twice, since we did leave
 The threshold of our home; and now what 'vails
 That far on tumbled mountain snow we toiled,
 Hungry, and weary, all the day; by night
 Waked with a dreadful trembling underneath,
 To look, while every cone smoked, and there ran
 Red brooks adown, that licked the forest up,
 While in the pale white ashes wading on
 We saw no stars?—what 'vails if afterward,
 Astonished with great silence, we did move
 Over the measureless, unknown desert mead;
 While all the day, in rents and crevices,
 Would lie the lizard and the serpent kind,
 Drowsy; and in the night take fearsome shapes,
 And oftentimes woman-faced and woman-haired
 Would trail their snaky length, and curse and mourn;
 Or there would wander up, when we were tired.
 Dark troops of evil ones, with eyes morose,
 Withstanding us, and staring;—O, what 'vails
 That in the dread deep forest we have fought
 With following packs of wolves? These men of might,
 Even the giants, shall not hear the doom
 My father came to tell them of. Ah me!
 If God indeed had sent him, would he lie
 (For he is stricken with a sore disease)
 Helpless outside their city?"

Then he rose,
 And put aside the curtains of the tent,
 To look upon his father's face; and lo!
 The tent being dark, he thought that somewhat sat
 Beside the litter; and he set his eyes
 To see it, and saw not; but only marked
 Where, fallen away from manhood and from power,
 His father lay. Then he came forth again,

Trembling, and crouched beside the dull red fire.
 And murmured, "Now it is the second time:
 An old man, as I think (but scarcely saw),
 Dreadful of might. Its hair was white as wool:
 I dared not look; perhaps I saw not aught,
 But only knew that it was there; the same
 Which walked beside us once when he did pray."
 And Japhet hid his face between his hands
 For fear, and grief of heart, and weariness
 Of watching; and he slumbered not, but mourned
 To himself, a little moment, as it seemed,
 For sake of his loved father; then he lift
 His eyes, and day had dawned. Right suddenly
 The moon withheld her silver, and she hung
 Frail as a cloud. The ruddy flame that played
 By night on dim, dusk trees, and on the flood,
 Crept red amongst the logs, and all the world
 And all the water blushed and bloomed. The stars
 Were gone, and golden shafts came up, and touched
 The feathered heads of palms, and green was born
 Under the rosy cloud, and purples flew
 Like veils across the mountains; and he saw,
 Winding athwart them, bathed in blissful peace,
 And the sacredness of morn, the battlements
 And outposts of the giants; and there ran
 On the other side the river, as it were,
 White mounds of marble, tabernacles fair,
 And towers below a line of inland cliff:
 These were their fastnesses, and here their homes.

In valleys and the forest, all that night,
 There had been woe; in every hollow place,
 And under walls, like drifted flowers, or snow,
 Women lay mourning; for the serpent lodged
 That night within the gates, and had decreed,
 "I will (or ever I come) that ye drive out
 The women, the abhorred of my soul."

Therefore, more beauteous than all climbing bloom,
 Purple and scarlet, cumbering of the boughs,
 Or flights of azure doves that lit to drink
 The water of the river; or, new born,
 The quivering butterflies in companies,
 That slowly crept adown the sandy marge,
 Like living crocus beds, and also drank,
 And rose an orange cloud; their hollowed hands
 They dipped between the lilies, or with robes
 Full of ripe fruitage, sat and peeled and ate,
 Weeping; or comforting their little ones,
 And lulling them with sorrowful long hymns
 Among the palms.

So went the earlier morn.
 Then came a messenger, while Japhet sat
 Mournfully, and he said, "The men of might
 Are willing; let thy master, youth, appear."
 And Japhet said, "So be it;" and he thought,
 "Now will I trust in God;" and he went in
 And stood before his father, and he said,
 "My father;" but the Master answered not,
 But gazed upon the curtains of his tent,
 Nor knew that one had called him. He was clad
 As ready for the journey, and his feet
 Were sandalled, and his staff was at his side;
 And Japhet took the gown of sacrifice
 And spread it on him, and he laid his crown
 Upon his knees, and he went forth, and lift
 His hand to heaven, and cried, "My father's God!"
 But neither whisper came nor echo fell
 When he did listen. Therefore he went on:
 "Behold, I have a thing to say to thee.
 My father charged thy servant, 'Let not ruth
 Prevail with thee to turn and bear me hence,
 For God appointed me my task, to preach
 Before the mighty.' I must do my part

(O, let it not displease thee), for he said
 But yesternight, 'When they shall send for me,
 Take me before them.' And I sware to him.
 I pray thee, therefore, count his life and mine
 Precious: for I that sware, I will perform."

Then cried he to his people, "Let us hence;
 Take up the litter." And they set their feet
 Toward the raft whereby men crossed that flood.

And while they journeyed, lo, the giants sat
 Within the fairest hall where all were fair,
 Each on his carven throne, o'er-canopied
 With work of women. And the dragon lay
 In a place of honor; and with subtlety
 He counselled them, for they did speak by turns;
 And they, being proud, might nothing master them
 But guile alone: and he did fawn on them;
 And when the younger one taunted him, submissive
 He testified great humbleness, and cried,
 "A cruel God, forsooth! but nay, O nay,
 I will not think it of Him, that He meant
 To threaten these. O, when I look on them,
 How doth my soul admire."

And one stood forth,
 The youngest; of his brethren named "the Rock,"
 "Speak out," quoth he, "thou toothless, slaying
 thing,
 What is it? thinkest thou that such as we
 Should be afraid? What is this goodly doom!
 And Satan laughed upon him. "Lo," said he,
 "Thou art not fully grown, and every one
 I look on standeth higher by the head,
 Yea, and the shoulders, than do other men;
 Forsooth, thy servant thought not thou wouldst
 fear,

Thou and thy fellows." Then with one accord,
 "Speak," cried they; and with mild, persuasive
 eyes,
 And flattering tongue, he spoke.

"Ye mighty ones,
 It hath been known to you these many days
 How that for piety I am much famed.
 I am exceeding pious; if I lie,
 As hath been whispered, it is but for sake
 Of God, and that ye should not think Him hard,
 For I am all for God. Now some have thought
 That He hath also (and it may be so
 Or yet may not be so) on me been hard;
 Be not ye therefore wroth for my poor sake;
 I am contented to have earned your weal,
 Though I must therefore suffer.

"Now to-day
 One cometh, yea, an harmless man, a fool,
 Who boasts he hath a message from our God,
 And lest that you, for bravery of heart
 And stoutness, being angered with his prate,
 Should lift a hand, and kill him, I am here."

Then spoke the Leader, "How now, snake? Thy
 words

Ring false. Why ever liest thou, snake, to us?
 Thou coward! none of us will see thee harmed.
 I say thou liest. The land is strewed with slain;
 Myself have hewn down companies, and blood
 Makes fertile all the field. Thou knowest it well:
 And hast thou, driveller, panting sore for age,
 Come with a force to bid us spare one fool?"

And Satan answered, "Nay you! be not wroth;
 Yet true it is, and yet not all the truth.
 Your servant would have told the rest, if now

(For fulness of your life being fretted sore
 At mine infirmities, which God in vain
 I supplicate to heal) ye had not caused
 My speech to stop." And he they called "the Oak"
 Made answer, "'Tis a good snake; let him be.
 Why would ye fright the poor old craven beast?
 Look how his lolling tongue doth foam for fear.
 Ye should have mercy, brethren, on the weak.
 Speak, dragon, thou hast leave; make stout thy
 heart.

What! hast thou lied to this great company?
 It was, we know it was, for humbleness;
 Thou wert not willing to offend with truth."
 "Yea, majesties," quoth Satan, "thus it was,"
 And lifted up appealing eyes, and groaned;
 "O, can it be, compassionate as brave,
 And housed in cunning works themselves have
 reared,
 And served in gold, and warmed with minivere,
 And ruling nobly, that He, not content
 Unless alone He reigneth, looks to bend
 Or break them in, like slaves to cry to Him,
 'What is Thy will with us, O Master dear?'
 Or else to eat of death?

"For my part, lords,
 I cannot think it: for my piety
 And reason, which I also share with you,
 Are my best lights, and ever counsel me,
 'Believe not aught against thy God: believe,
 Since thou canst never reach to do Him wrong,
 That He will never stoop to do thee wrong.
 Is He not just and equal, yea, and kind?'
 Therefore, O majesties, it is my mind,
 Concerning him ye wot of, thus to think
 The message is not like what I have learned.
 By reason and experience, of the God.

Therefore no message 'tis. The man is mad."
Thereat the Leader laughed for scorn. "Hold,
snake;

If God be just, there SHALL be reckoning days.
We rather would He were a partial God,
And, being strong, He sided with the strong.
Turn now thy reason to the other side,
And speak for that; for as to justice, snake,
We would have none of it."

And Satan fawned:
"My lord is pleased to mock at my poor wit;
Yet in my pious fashion I must talk:
For say that God was wroth with man, and came
And slew him, that should make an empty world,
But not a better nation."

This replied,
"Truth, dragon, yet He is not bound to mean
A better nation; maybe, He designs,
If none will turn again, a punishment
Upon an evil one."

And Satan cried,
"Alas! my heart being full of love for men,
I cannot choose but think of God as like
To me; and yet my piety concludes,
Since He will have your fear, that love alone
Sufficeth not, and I admire, and say,
'Give me, O friends, your love, and give to God
Your fear.'" But they cried out in wrath and rage
"We are not strong that any we will fear,
Nor specially a foe that means us ill."

BOOK VII.

AND while he spoke there was a noise without;
The curtains of the door were flung aside,

And some with heavy feet bare in, and set
A litter on the floor.

The Master lay
Upon it, but his eyes were dimmed and set;
And Japhet, in despairing weariness,
Leaned it beside. He marked the mighty ones,
Silent for pride of heart, and in his place
The jewelled dragon; and the dragon laughed,
And subtly peered at him, till Japhet shook
With rage and fear. The snaky wonder cried,
Hissing, "Thou brown-haired youth, come up to me,
I fain would have thee for my shrine afar,
To serve among an host as beautiful
As thou: draw near." It hissed, and Japhet felt
Horrible drawings, and cried out in fear,
"Father! O help, the serpent draweth me!"
And struggled and grew faint, as in the toils
A netted bird. But still his father lay
Unconscious, and the mighty did not speak,
But half in fear and half in wonderment
Beheld. And yet again the dragon laughed,
And leered at him and hissed; and Japhet strove
Vainly to take away his spell-set eyes,
And moved to go to him, till piercingly
Crying out, "God! forbid it, God in heaven!"
The dragon lowered his head, and shut his eyes
As feigning sleep; and, suddenly released,
He fell back staggering; and at noise of it,
And clash of Japhet's weapons on the floor,
And Japhet's voice crying out, "I loathe thee, snake!
I hate thee! O, I hate thee!" came again
The senses of the shipwright; and he, moved,
And looking, as one mazed, distressfully
Upon the mighty, said, "One called on God:
Where is my God? If God have need of me,
Let him come down and touch my lips with strength
Or dying I shall die."

It came to pass,
While he was speaking, that the curtains swayed:
A rushing wind did move throughout the place,
And all the pillars shook, and on the head
Of Noah the hair was lifted, and there played
A somewhat as it were a light, upon
His breast: then fell a darkness, and men heard
A whisper as of one that spake. With that,
The daunted mighty ones kept silent watch
Until the wind had ceased and darkness fled.
When it grew light, there curled a cloud of smoke
From many censers where the dragon lay.
It hid him. He had called his ministrants,
And bid them veil him thus, that none might look;
Also the folk who came with Noah had fled.

But Noah was seen, for he stood up erect,
And leaned on Japhet's hand. Then, after pause,
The Leader said, "My brethren, it were well
(For naught we fear) to let this sorcerer speak."
And they did reach toward the man their staves,
And cry with loud accord, "Hail, sorcerer, hail!"

And he made answer, "Hail! I am a man
That is a shipwright. I was born afar
To Lamech, him that reigns a king, to wit,
Over the land of Jalal. Majesties,
I bring a message, — lay you it to heart;
For there is wrath in heaven: my God is wroth.
'Prepare your houses, or I come,' saith He,
'A Judge.' Now, therefore, say not in your hearts,
'What have we done?' Your dogs may answer that,
To make whom fiercer for the chase ye feed
With captives whom ye slew not in the war,
But saved alive, and living throw to them
Daily. Your wives may answer that, whose babes
Their firstborn ye do take and offer up

To this abhorred snake, while yet the milk
Is in their innocent mouths, — your maiden babes
Tender. Your slaves may answer that, — the gangs
Whose eyes ye did put out to make them work
By night unwitting (yea, by multitudes
They work upon the wheel in chains). Your friends
May answer that, — (their bleached bones cry out), —
For ye did wickedly, to eat their lands,
Turn on their valleys, in a time of peace,
The rivers, and they, choking in the night,
Died unavenged. But rather (for I leave
To tell of more, the time would be so long
To do it, and your time, O mighty ones,
Is short), — but rather say, 'We sinners know
Why the Judge standeth at the door,' and turn
While yet there may be respite, and repent.

"Or else," saith He that formed you, 'I swear,
By all the silence of the time to come,
By the solemnities of death, — yea, more,
By Mine own power and love which ye have
scorned, —

That I will come. I will command the clouds,
And raining they shall rain; yea, I will stir
With all my storms the ocean for your sake,
And break for you the boundary of the deep.

"Then shall the mighty mourn.

"Should I forbear
That have been patient? I will not forbear!
For yet,' saith He, 'the weak cry out; for yet
The little ones do languish; and the slave
Lifts up to Me his chain. I, therefore, I
Will hear them. I by death will scatter you:
Yea, and by death will draw them to My breast,
And gather them to peace.

“ ‘ But yet,’ saith He,
‘ Repent, and turn you. Wherefore will ye die?’ ”

“ Turn then, O turn, while yet the enemy
Untamed of man fatefully moans afar;
For if ye will not turn, the doom is near.
Then shall the crested wave make sport, and beat
You mighty at your doors. Will ye be wroth?
Will ye forbid it? Monsters of the deep
Shall suckle in your palaces their young,
And swim atween your hangings, all of them
Costly with brodered work, and rare with gold
And white and scarlet (there did ye oppress, —
There did ye make you vile;) but ye shall lie
Meekly, and storm and wind shall rage above,
And urge the weltering wave.

“ ‘ Yet,’ saith thy God,
‘ Son, ay, to each of you He saith, ‘ O son,
Made in My image, beautiful and strong,
Why wilt thou die? Thy Father loves thee well.
Repent and turn thee from thine evil ways,
O son! and no more dare the wrath of love.
Live for thy Father’s sake that formed thee.
Why wilt thou die?’ Here will I make an end.”

Now ever on his daïs the dragon lay,
Feigning to sleep; and all the mighty ones
Were wroth, and chided, some against the woe,
And some at whom the sorcerer they had named, —
Some at their fellows, for the younger sort —
As men the less acquaint with deeds of blood,
And given to learning and the arts of peace
(Their fathers having crushed rebellion out
Before their time) — lent favorable ears.
They said, “ A man, or false or fanatic,
May claim good audience if he fill our ears
With what is strange: and we would hear again.”

The Leader said, “ An audience hath been given.
The man hath spoken, and his words are naught;
A feeble threatener, with a foolish threat,
And it is not our manner that we sit
Beyond the noonday; ” then they grandly rose,
A stalwart crowd, and with their Leader moved
To the tones of harping, and the beat of shawms,
And the noise of pipes, away. But some were left
About the Master; and the feigning snake
Couched on his daïs.

Then one to Japhet said, —
One called “ the Cedar Tree,” — “ Dost thou, too,
think

To reign upon our lands when we lie drowned? ”
And Japhet said, “ I think not, nor desire,
Nor in my heart consent, but that ye swear
Allegiance to the God, and live.” He cried,
To one surnamed “ the Pine,” — “ Brother, behooves
That deep we cut our names in yonder crag,
Else when this youth returns, his sons may ask
Our names, and he may answer, ‘ Matters not,
For my part I forget them.’ ”

Japhet said,
“ They might do worse than that, they might deny
That such as you have ever been.” With that
They answered, “ No, thou dost not think it, no! ”
And Japhet, being chafed, replied in heat,
“ And wherefore? if ye say of what is sworn,
‘ He will not do it,’ shall it be more hard
For future men, if any talk on it,
To say, ‘ He did not do it?’ ” They replied,
With laughter, “ Lo you! he is stout with us.
And yet he cowered before the poor old snake.
Sirrah, when you are saved, we pray you now
To bear our might in mind, — do, sirrah, do; ”

And likewise tell your sons, "The Cedar Tree"
Was a good giant, for he struck me not,
Though he was young and full of sport, and though
I taunted him."

With that they also passed.
But there remained who with the shipwright spoke,
"How wilt thou certify to us thy truth?"
And he related to them all his ways
From the beginning: of the Voice that called;
Moreover, how the ship of doom was built.

And one made answer, "Shall the mighty God
Talk with a man of wooden beams and bars?
No, thou mad preacher, no. If He, Eterne,
Be ordering of His far infinitudes,
And darkness cloud a world, it is but chance,
As if the shadow of His hand had fallen
On one that He forgot, and troubled it."

Then said the Master, "Yet, — who told thee so?"

And from his dais the feigning serpent hissed:
"Preacher, the light within, it was that shined,
And told him so. The pious will have dread
Him to declare such as ye rashly told.

The course of God is one. It likes not us
To think of Him as being acquaint with changes
It were beneath Him. Nay, the finished earth
Is left to her great masters. They must rule;
They do; and I have set myself between, —
A visible thing for worship, sith His face
(For He is hard) He showeth not to men.
Yea, I have set myself 'twixt God and man,
To be interpreter, and teach mankind
A pious lesson by my piety.
He loveth not, nor hateth, nor desires, —
It were beneath Him."

And the Master said,
"Thou liest. Thou wouldst lie away the world,
If He whom thou hast dared to speak against
Would suffer it." "I may not chide with thee,"
It answered, "now; but if there come such time
As thou hast prophesied, as I now reign
In all men's sight, shall my dominion then
Reach to be mighty in their souls. Thou too
Shalt feel it, prophet." And he lowered his head.

Then quoth the Leader of the young men: "Sir,
We scorn you not; speak further; yet our thought
First answer. Not but by a miracle
Can this thing be. The fashion of the world
We heretofore have never known to change;
And will God change it now?"

He then replied:
"What is thy thought? THERE IS NO MIRACLE?
There is a great one, which thou hast not read,
And never shalt escape. Thyself, O man,
Thou art the miracle. Lo, if thou sayest,
'I am one, and fashioned like the gracious world,
Red clay is all my make, myself, my whole,
And not my habitation,' then thy sleep
Shall give thee wings to play among the rays
O' the morning. If thy thought be, 'I am one, —
A spirit among spirits, — and the world
A dream my spirit dreameth of, my dream
Being all,' the dominating mountains strong
Shall not for that forbear to take thy breath,
And rage with all their winds, and beat thee back,
And beat thee down when thou wouldst set thy feet
Upon their awful crests. Ay, thou thyself,
Being in the world and of the world, thyself,
Hast breathed in breath from Him that made the
world."

Thou dost inherit, as thy Maker's son,
That which He is, and that which He hath made:
Thou art thy Father's copy of Himself,—
THOU art thy FATHER'S MIRACLE.

“Behold

He buildeth up the stars in companies;
He made for them a law. To man He said,
‘Freely I give thee freedom.’ What remains?
O, it remains, if thou, the image of God,
Wilt reason well, that thou shalt know His ways:
But first thou must be loyal,—love, O man,
Thy Father,—hearken when He pleads with thee,
For there is something left of Him e’en now,—
A witness for thy Father in thy soul,
Albeit thy better state thou hast foregone.

“Now, then, be still, and think not in thy soul,
‘The rivers in their course forever run,
And turn not from it. He is like to them
Who made them.’ Think the rather, ‘With my
foot

I have turned the rivers from their ancient way
To water grasses that were fading. What!
Is God my Father as the river wave,
That yet descendeth,—like the lesser thing
He made, and not like me, a living son,
That changed the watercourse to suit his will?”

“Man is the miracle in nature. God
Is the ONE MIRACLE to man. Behold,
‘There is a God,’ thou sayest. Thou sayest well:
In that thou sayest all. To Be is more
Of wonderful than, being, to have wrought,
Or reigned, or rested.

“Hold then there, content;
Learn that to love is the one way to know

Or God or man: it is not love received
That maketh man to know the inner life
Of them that love him; his own love bestowed
Shall do it. Love thy Father, and no more
His doings shall be strange. Thou shalt not fret
At any counsel, then, that He will send,—
No, nor rebel, albeit He have with thee
Great reservations. Know, to Be is more
Than to have acted; yea, or, after rest
And patience, to have risen and been wroth,
Broken the sequence of an ordered earth,
And troubled nations.”

Then the dragon sighed
“Poor fanatic,” quoth he, “thou speakest well.
Would I were like thee, for thy faith is strong,
Albeit thy senses wander. Yea, good sooth,
My masters, let us not despise, but learn
Fresh loyalty from this poor loyal soul.
Let us go forth—(myself will also go
To head you)—and do sacrifice; for that,
We know, is pleasing to the mighty God:
But as for building many arks of wood,
O majesties! when He shall counsel you
HIMSELF, then build. What say you, shall it be
An hundred oxen,—fat, well liking, white?
An hundred? why, a thousand were not much
To such as you.” Then Noah lift up his arms
To heaven, and cried, “Thou aged shape of sin,
The Lord rebuke thee.”

BOOK VIII.

THEN one ran, crying, while Niloia wrought,
“The Master cometh!” and she went within
To adorn herself for meeting him. And Shem
Went forth and talked with Japhet in the field,

And said, "Is it well, my brother?" He replied, "Well! and, I pray you, is it well at home?" But Shem made answer, "Can a house be well, If he that should command it bides afar? Yet well is thee, because a fair free maid Is found to wed thee; and they bring her in This day at sundown. Therefore is much haste To cover thick with costly webs the floor, And pluck and cover thick the same with leaves Of all sweet herbs, — I warrant, ye shall hear No footfall where she treadeth; and the seats Are ready, spread with robes; the tables set With golden baskets, red pomegranates shred To fill them; and the rubied censers smoke, Heaped up with ambergris and cinnamon, And frankincense and cedar."

Japhet said, "I will betroth her to me straight;" and went (Yet labored he with sore disquietude) To gather grapes, and reap and bind the sheaf For his betrothal. And his brother spake, "Where is our father? doth he preach to-day?" And Japhet answered, "Yea. He said to me, 'Go forward; I will follow when the folk By yonder mountain-hold I shall have warned.'"

And Shem replied, "How thinkest thou?—thine ears Have heard him oft." He answered, "I do think These be the last days of this old fair world."

Then he did tell him of the giant folk: How they, than he, were taller by the head; How one must stride that will ascend the steps That lead to their wide halls; and how they drave,

With manful shouts, the mammoth to the north; And how the talking dragon lied and fawned, They seated proudly on their ivory thrones, And scorned him: and of their peaked hoods, And garments wrought upon, each with the tale Of him that wore it, — all his manful deeds (Yea, and about their skirts were effigies Of kings that they had slain; and some, whose swords Many had pierced, wore vestures all of red, To signify much blood): and of their pride He told, but of the vision in the tent He told him not.

And when they reached the house, Niloiya met them, and to Japhet cried, "All hail, right fortunate! Lo, I have found A maid. And now thou hast done well to reap The late ripe corn." So he went in with her, And she did talk with him right motherly: "It hath been full told me how ye loathed To wed thy father's slave; yea, she herself, Did she not all declare to me?"

He said, "Yet is thy damsel fair, and wise of heart." "Yea," quoth his mother; "she made clear to me How ye did weep, my son, and ye did vow, 'I will not take her!' Now, it was not I That wrought to have it so." And he replied, "I know it." Quoth the mother, "It is well; For that same cause is laughter in my heart." "But she is sweet of language," Japhet said. "Ay," quoth Niloiya, "and thy wife no less Whom thou shalt wed anon, — forsooth, anon, — It is a lucky hour. Thou wilt?" He said, "I will." And Japhet laid the slender sheaf

From off his shoulder, and he said, "Behold, My father!" Then Niloiya turned herself, And lo! the shipwright stood. "All hail!" quoth she.

And bowed herself, and kissed him on the mouth; But while she spake with him, sorely he sighed; And she did hang about his neck the robe Of feasting, and she poured upon his hands Clear water, and anointed him, and set Before him bread.

And Japhet said to him, "My father, my beloved, wilt thou yet Be sad because of scorning? Eat, this day; For as an angel in their eyes thou art Who stand before thee." But he answered, "Peace! Thy words are wide."

And when Niloiya heard, She said, "Is this a time for mirth of heart And wine? Behold, I thought to wed my son, Even this Japhet; but is this a time, When sad is he to whom is my desire, And lying under sorrow as from God?"

He answered, "Yea, it is a time of times; Bring in the maid. Niloiya said, "The maid That first I spoke on, shall not Japhet wed; It likes not her, nor yet it likes not me. But I have found another; yea, good sooth, The damsel will not tarry, she will come With all her slaves by sundown."

And she said, "Comfort thy heart, and eat: moreover, know How that thy great work even to-day is done. Sir, thy great ship is finished, and the folk (For I, according to thy will, have paid

All that was left us to them for their wage) Have brought, as to a storehouse, flour of wheat, Honey and oil, — much victual; yea, and fruits, Curtains and household gear. And, sir, they say It is thy will to take it for thy hold, Our fastness and abode." He answered, "Yea, Else wherefore was it built?" She said, "Good sir, I pray you make us not the whole earth's scorn. And now, to-morrow in thy father's house Is a great feast, and weddings are toward; Let be the ship, till after, for thy words Have ever been, 'If God shall send a flood, There will I dwell;' I pray you therefore wait At least till He doth send it."

And he turned, And answered nothing. Now the sun was low While yet she spake; and Japhet came to them In goodly raiment, and upon his arm The garment of betrothal. And with that A noise, and then brake in a woman-slave And Amarant. This, with folding of her hands, Did say full meekly, "If I do offend, Yet have not I been willing to offend; For now this woman will not be denied Herself to tell her errand."

And they sat. Then spoke the woman, "If I do offend, Pray you forgive the bond-slave, for her tongue Is for her mistress. 'Lo,' my mistress saith, 'Put off thy bravery, bridegroom; fold away, Mother, thy webs of pride, thy costly robes Woven of many colors. We have heard Thy master. Lo, to-day right evil things He prophesied to us that were his friends; Therefore, my answer: — God do so to me; Yea, God do so to me, more also, more

Than he did threaten, if my damsel's foot
Ever draw nigh thy door.'"

And when she heard,
Niloiya sat amazed, in grief of soul.
But Japhet came unto the slave, where low
She bowed herself for fear. He said, "Depart;
Say to thy mistress, 'It is well.'" With that
She turned herself, and she made haste to flee,
Lest any, for those evil words she brought,
Would smite her. But the bondmaid of the house
Lift up her hand and said, "If I offend,
It was not of my heart: thy damsel-knew
Naught of this matter." And he held to her
His hand and touched her, and said, "Amarant!"
And when she looked upon him, she did take
And spread before her face her radiant locks,
Trembling. And Japhet said, "Lift up thy face,
O fairest of the daughters, thy fair face;
For, lo! the bridegroom standeth with the robe
Of thy betrothal!"—and he took her locks
In his two hands to part them from her brow,
And laid them on her shoulders; and he said,
"Sweet are the blushes of thy face," and put
The robe upon her, having said, "Behold,
I have repented me; and oft by night,
In the waste wilderness, while all things slept,
I thought upon thy words, for they were sweet.
"For this I make thee free. And now thyself
Art loveliest in mine eyes; I look, and lo!
Thou art of beauty more than any thought
I had concerning thee. Let, then, this robe,
Wrought on with imagery of fruitful bough,
And graceful leaf, and birds with tender eyes,
Cover the ripples of thy tawny hair."
So, when she held her peace, he brought her nigh
To hear the speech of wedlock; ay, he took

The golden cup of wine to drink with her,
And laid the sheaf upon her arms. He said,
"Like as my fathers in the older days
Led home the daughters whom they chose, do I;
Like as they said, 'Mine honor have I set
Upon thy head!' do I. Eat of my bread,
Rule in my house, be mistress of my slaves,
And mother of my children."

And he brought
The damsel to his father, saying, "Behold
My wife! I have betrothed her to myself;
I pray you, kiss her." And the Master did:
He said, "Be mother of a multitude,
And let them to their father even so
Be found as he is found to me."

With that
She answered, "Let this woman, sir, find grace
And favor in your sight."

And Japhet said,
"Sweet mother, I have wed the maid ye chose
And brought me first. I leave her in thy hand;
Have care on her, till I shall come again
And ask her of thee." So they went apart,
He and his father, to the marriage feast.

BOOK IX.

THE prayer of Noah. The man went forth by night
And listened; and the earth was dark and still,
And he was driven of his great distress
Into the forest; but the birds of night
Sang sweetly; and he fell upon his face,
And cried, "God, God! Thy billows and Thy waves
Have swallowed up my soul."

"Where is my God?

For I have somewhat yet to plead with Thee;
For I have walked the strands of Thy great deep,
Heard the dull thunder of its rage afar,
And its dread moaning. O, the field is sweet, —
Spare it. The delicate woods make white their trees
With blossom, — spare them. Life is sweet; behold
There is much cattle, and the wild and tame,
Father, do feed in quiet, — spare them.

"God!

Where is my God? The long wave doth not rear
Her ghostly crest to lick the forest up,
And like a chief in battle fall, — not yet.
The lightnings pour not down, from ragged holes
In heaven, the torment of their forked tongues,
And, like fell serpents, dart and sting, — not yet.
The winds awake not, with their awful wings
To winnow, even as chaff, from out their track,
All that withstandeth, and bring down the pride
Of all things strong and all things high, —

"Not yet.

O, let it not be yet. Where is my God?
How am I saved, if I and mine be saved
Alone? I am not saved, for I have loved
My country and my kin. Must I, Thy thrall,
Over their lands be lord when they are gone?
I would not: spare them, Mighty. Spare Thyself,
For Thou dost love them greatly, — and if not . . ."

Another praying unremote, a Voice
Calm as the solitude between wide stars.

"Where is my God, who loveth this lost world, —
Lost from its place and name, but won for thee?
Where is my multitude, my multitude,
That I shall gather?" And white smoke went up

From incense that was burning, but there gleamed
No light of fire, save dimly to reveal
The whiteness rising, as the prayer of him
That mourned. "My God, appear for me, appear:
Give me my multitude, for it is mine.
The bitterness of death I have not feared,
To-morrow shall Thy courts, O God, be full.
Then shall the captive from his bonds go free,
Then shall the thrall find rest, that knew not rest
From labor and from blows. The sorrowful —
That said of joy, 'What is it?' and of songs,
'We have not heard them' — shall be glad and sing;
Then shall the little ones that knew not Thee,
And such as heard not of Thee, see Thy face,
And, seeing, dwell content."

The prayer of Noah.

He cried out in the darkness, "Hear, O God,
Hear Him: hear this one; through the gates of death,
If life be all past praying for, O give
To thy great multitude a way to peace;
Give them to Him.

"But yet," said he, "O yet,

If there be respite for the terrible,
The proud, yea, such as scorn Thee, — and if not,
Let not mine eyes behold their fall."

He cried,

"Forgive. I have not done Thy work, Great Judge,
With a perfect heart; I have but half believed,
While in accustomed language I have warned;
And now there is no more to do, no place
For my repentance, yea, no hour remains
For doing of that work again. O lost,
Lost world!" And while he prayed, the daylight
dawned.

And Noah went up into the ship, and sat
Before the Lord. And all was still; and now
In that great quietness the sun came up,
And there were marks across it, as it were
The shadow of a Hand upon the sun, —
Three fingers dark and dread, and afterward
There rose a white thick mist, that peacefully
Folded the fair earth in her funeral shroud, —
The earth that gave no token, save that now
There fell a little trembling under foot.

And Noah went down, and took and hid his face
Behind his mantle, saying, "I have made
Great preparation, and it may be yet,
Beside my house, whom I did charge to come
This day to meet me, there may enter in
Many that yesternight thought scorn of all
My bidding." And because the fog was thick,
He said, "Forbid it, Heaven, if such there be,
That they should miss the way." And even then
There was a noise of weeping and lament;
The words of them that were affrighted, yea,
And cried for grief of heart. There came to him
The mother and her children, and they cried,
"Speak, father, what is this? What hast thou done?"

And when he lifted up his face, he saw
Japhet, his well-beloved, where he stood
Apart; and Amaranth leaned upon his breast,
And hid her face, for she was sore afraid;
And lo! the robes of her betrothal gleamed
White in the deadly gloom.

And at his feet
The wives of his two other sons did kneel,
And wring their hands.

One cried, "O, speak to us;
We are affrighted; we have dreamed a dream,

Each to herself. For me, I saw in mine
The grave old angels, like to shepherds, walk,
Much cattle following them. Thy daughter looked,
And they did enter here."

The other lay
And moaned. "Alas! O father, for my dream
Was evil: lo, I heard when it was dark,
I heard two wicked ones contend for me.
One said, 'And wherefore should this woman live,
When only for her children, and for her,
Is woe and degradation?' Then he laughed,
The other crying, 'Let alone, O Prince;
Hinder her not to live and bear much seed,
Because I hate her.'"

But he said, "Rise up,
Daughters of Noah, for I have learned no words
To comfort you." Then spake her lord to her,
"Peace! or I swear that for thy dream myself
Will hate thee also."

And Niloia said,
"My sons, if one of you will hear my words,
Go now, look out, and tell me of the day,
How fares it?"

And the fateful darkness grew,
But Shem went up to do his mother's will;
And all was one as though the frightened earth
Quivered and fell a-trembling; then they hid
Their faces every one, till he returned,
And spake not. "Nay," they cried, "what hast
thou seen?
O, is it come to this?" He answered them,
"The door is shut."

CONTRASTED SONGS.

SAILING BEYOND SEAS.

(Old Style.)

Methought the stars were blinking bright,
 And the old brig's sails unfurled;
 I said, "I will sail to my love this night
 At the other side of the world."
 I stepped aboard, — we sailed so fast, —
 The sun shot up from the bourn;
 But a dove that perched upon the mast
 Did mourn, and mourn, and mourn.
 O fair dove! O fond dove!
 And dove with the white breast,
 Let me alone, the dream is my own,
 And my heart is full of rest.

My true love fares on this great hill,
 Feeding his sheep for aye;
 I looked in his hut, but all was still,
 My love was gone away.
 I went to gaze in the forest creek,
 And the dove mourned on apace;
 No flame did flash, nor fair blue reek
 Rose up to show me his place.

O last love! O first love!

My love with the true heart,
 To think I have come to this your home,
 And yet — we are apart!

My love! He stood at my right hand,
 His eyes were grave and sweet.
 Methought he said, "In this far land,
 Oh, is it thus we meet?"

Ah, maid most dear, I am not here;
 I have no place, — no part, —
 No dwelling more by sea or shore,
 But only in thy heart."
 O fair dove! O fond dove!
 Till night rose over the bourn,
 The dove on the mast, as we sailed fast,
 Did mourn, and mourn, and mourn.

REMONSTRANCE.

DAUGHTERS of Eve! your mother did not well:
 She laid the apple in your father's hand,
 And we have read, O wonder! what befell, —
 The man was not deceived, nor yet could stand,
 He chose to lose, for love of her, his throne, —
 With her could die, but could not live alone.

Daughters of Eve! he did not fall so low,
 Nor fall so far, as that sweet woman fell:
 For something better, than as gods to know,
 That husband in that home left off to dwell:
 For this, till love be reckoned less than lore,
 Shall man be first and best for evermore.

Daughters of Eve! it was for your dear sake
 The world's first hero died an uncrowned king
 For God's great pity touched the grand mistake,
 And made his married love a sacred thing:
 For yet his nobler sons, if aught be true,
 Find the lost Eden in their love to you.

SONG FOR THE NIGHT OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION.

(An Humble Imitation.)

"And birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave."

It is the noon of night,
And the world's Great Light
Gone out, she widow-like doth carry her:
The moon hath veiled her face,
Nor looks on that dread place
Where He lieth dead in sealed sepulchre;
And heaven and hades, emptied, lend
Their flocking multitudes to watch and wait the end

Tier above tier they rise,
Their wings new line the skies,
And shed out comforting light among the stars;
But they of the other place
The heavenly signs deface,
The gloomy brand of hell their brightness mave;
Yet high they sit in thronèd state, —
It is the hour of darkness to them dedicate.

And first and highest set,
Where the black shades are met,
The lord of night and hades leans him down;
His gleaming eyeballs show
More awful than the glow
Which hangeth by the points of his dread crown;
And at his feet, where lightnings play,
The fatal sisters sit and weep, and curse their day.

Lo! one, with eyes all wide,
As she were sight denied,
Sits blindly feeling at her distaff old;
One, as distraught with woe,
Letting the spindle go,
Her starry-sprinkled gown doth shivering fold;
And one right mournful hangs her head,
Complaining, "Woe is me! I may not cut the thread.

"All men, of every birth,
Yea, great ones of the earth,
Kings and their councillors, have I drawn down;
But I am held of Thee, —
Why dost Thou trouble me,
To bring me up, dead King, that keep'st Thy
crown?

Yet for all courtiers hast but ten
Lowly, unlettered, Galilean fishermen.

"Olympian heights are bare
Of whom men worshipped there,
Immortal feet their snows may print no more;
Their stately powers below
Lie desolate, nor know
This thirty years Thessalian grove or shore;
But I am elder far than they; —
Where is the sentence writ that I must pass away?

"Art thou come up for this,
Dark regent, awful Dis?
And hast thou moved the deep to mark our ending?
And stirred the dens beneath
To see us eat of death,
With all the scoffing heavens toward us bending?
Help! powers of ill, see not us die!"
But neither demon dares, nor angel deigns, reply.

Her sisters, fallen on sleep,
 Fade in the upper deep,
 And their grim lord sits on, in doleful trance;
 Till her black veil she rends,
 And with her death-shriek bends
 Downward the terrors of her countenance;
 Then, whelmed in night and no more seen,
 They leave the world a doubt if ever such have been
 And the winged armies twain
 Their awful watch maintain;
 They mark the earth at rest with her Great Dead;
 Behold, from Antres wide,
 Green Atlas heave his side;
 His moving woods their scarlet clusters shed,
 The swathing coil his front that cools,
 And tawny lions lapping at his palm-edged pools.
 Then like a heap of snow,
 Lying where grasses grow,
 See glimmering, while the moony lustres creep,
 Mild-mannered Athens, dight
 In dewy marbles white,
 Among her goddesses and gods asleep;
 And, swaying on a purple sea,
 The many moored galleys clustering at her quay.

Also, 'neath palm-trees' shade,
 Amid their camels laid,
 The pastoral tribes with all their flocks at rest;
 Like to those old-world folk
 With whom two angels broke
 The bread of men at Abram's courteous quest,
 When, listening as they prophesied,
 His desert princess, being reproved, her laugh denied.

Or from the Morians' land
 See worshipped Nilus bland,

Taking the silver road he gave the world,
 To wet his ancient shrine
 With waters held divine,
 And touch his temple steps with wavelets curled,
 And list, ere darkness change to gray,
 Old minstrel-throated Memnon chanting in the day

Moreover, Indian glades,
 Where kneel the sun-swart maids,
 On Gunga's flood their votive flowers to throw,
 And launch i' the sultry night
 Their burning cressets bright,
 Most like a fleet of stars that southing go,
 Till on her bosom prosperously
 She floats them shining forth to sail the lullèd sea.

Nor bend they not their eyn
 Where the watch-fires shine,
 By shepherds fed, on hills of Bethlehem:
 They mark, in goodly wise,
 The city of David rise,
 The gates and towers of rare Jerusalem;
 And hear the 'scapèd Kedron fret,
 And night dews dropping from the leaves of Olivet

But now the setting moon
 To curtained lands must soon,
 In her obedient fashion, minister;
 She first, as loath to go,
 Lets her last silver flow
 Upon her Master's sealèd sepulchre;
 And trees that in the garden spread,
 She kisseth all for sake of His low-lying head,

Then 'neath the rim goes down;
 And night with darker frown
 Sinks on the fateful garden watchèd long;

When some despairing eyes,
Far in the murky skies,
The unwishèd waking by their gloom foretell;
And blackness up the welkin swings,
And drinks the mild effulgence from celestial wings.

Last, with amazed cry,
The hosts asunder fly,
Leaving an empty gulf of blackest hue;
Whence straightway shooteth down,
By the Great Father thrown,
A mighty angel, strong and dread to view;
And at his fall the rocks are rent,
The waiting world doth quake with mortal tremble-
ment;

The regions far and near
Quail with a pause of fear,
More terrible than aught since time began;
The winds, that dare not fleet,
Drop at his awful feet,
And in its bed wails the wide ocean;
The flower of dawn forbears to blow,
And the oldest running river cannot skill to flow.

At stand, by that dread place,
He lifts his radiant face,
And looks to heaven with reverent love and fear;
Then, while the welkin quakes,
And muttering thunder breaks,
And lightnings shoot and ominous meteors drear,
And all the daunted earth doth moan,
He from the doors of death rolls back the sealed
stone. —

— In regal quiet deep,
Lo, One new waked from sleep!

Behold, He standeth in the rock-hewn door!
Thy children shall not die, —
Peace, peace, thy Lord is by!
He liveth! — they shall live forevermore.
Peace! lo, He lifts a priestly hand,
And blesseth all the sons of men in every land.

Then with great dread and wail,
Fall down, like storms of hail,
The legions of the lost in fearful wise.
And they whose blissful race
Peoples the better place
Lift up their wings to cover their fair eyes,
And through the waxing saffron brede,
Till they are lost in light, recede, and yet recede.

So while the fields are dim,
And the red sun his rim
First heaves, in token of his reign benign,
All stars the most admired,
Into their blue retired,
Lie hid, — the faded moon forgets to shine, —
And, hurrying down the sphery way,
Night flies and sweeps her shadow from the paths of
day.

But look! the Saviour blest,
Calm after solemn rest,
Stands in the garden 'neath His olive-boughs;
The earliest smile of day
Doth on His vesture play,
And light the majesty of His still brows;
While angels hang with wings outspread,
Holding the new-won crown above His saintly head.

SONG OF MARGARET.

Ah, I saw her, we have met, —
 Married eyes, how sweet they be, —
 Are you happier, Margaret,
 Than you might have been with me?
 Silence! make no more ado!
 Did she think I should forget?
 Matters nothing, though I knew,
 Margaret, Margaret.
 Once those eyes, full sweet, full shy,
 Told a certain thing to mine;
 What they told me I put by,
 O, so careless of the sign.
 Such an easy thing to take,
 And I did not want it then;
 Fool! I wish my heart would break,
 Scorn is hard on hearts of men.
 Scorn of self is bitter work, —
 Each of us has felt it now:
 Bluest skies she counted mirk,
 Self-betrayed of eyes and brow;
 As for me, I went my way,
 And a better man drew nigh,
 Fain to earn, with long essay,
 What the winner's hand threw by.
 Matters not in deserts old,
 What was born, and waxed, and yearned,
 Year to year its meaning told,
 I am come, — its deeps are learned, —
 Come, but there is naught to say, —
 Married eyes with mine have met,
 Silence! O, I had my day,
 Margaret, Margaret.

SONG OF THE GOING AWAY.

"Old man, upon the green hillside,
 With yellow flowers besprinkled o'er,
 How long in silence wilt thou bide
 At this low stone door?
 "I stoop: within 'tis dark and still;
 But shadowy paths methinks there be,
 And lead they far into the hill?"
 "Traveller, come and see."
 "'Tis dark, 'tis cold, and hung with gloom;
 I care not now within to stay;
 For thee and me is scarcely room,
 I will hence away."
 "Not so, not so, thou youthful guest,
 Thy foot shall issue forth no more:
 Behold the chamber of thy rest,
 And the closing door!"
 "O, have I 'scaped the whistling ball,
 And striven on smoky fields of fight,
 And scaled the 'leaguered city's wall
 In the dangerous night;
 "And borne my life unharmed still
 Through foaming gulfs of yeasty spray,
 To yield it on a grassy hill
 At the noon of day?"
 "Peace! Say thy prayers, and go to sleep,
 Till some time, ONE my seal shall break,
 And deep shall answer unto deep,
 When He cryeth, 'AWAKE!'"

A LILY AND A LUTE.

(Song of the uncommunicated Ideal.)

I.

I OPENED the eyes of my soul.

And behold,

A white river-lily: a lily awake, and aware,—

For she set her face upward,—aware how in scarlet
and goldA long wrinkled cloud, left behind of the wandering
air,

Lay over with fold upon fold,

With fold upon fold.

And the blushing sweet shame of the cloud made
her also ashamed,The white river-lily, that suddenly knew she was
fair;And over the far-away mountains that no man hath
named,

And that no foot hath trod,

Flung down out of heavenly places, there fell, as it
were,A rose-bloom, a token of love, that should make
them endure,Withdrawn in snow-silence forever, who keep them-
selves pure,

And look up to God.

Then I said, "In rosy air,

Cradled on thy reaches fair,

While the blushing early ray

Whitens into perfect day,

River-lily, sweetest known,

Art thou set for me alone?

Nay, but I will bear thee far,
Where yon clustering steeples are,
And the bells ring out o'erhead,
And the stated prayers are said;
And the busy farmer's pace,
Trading in the market-place;
And the country lasses sit
By their butter, praising it;
And the latest news is told,
While the fruit and cream are sold;
And the friendly gossips greet,
Up and down the sunny street.
For," I said, "I have not met,
White one, any folk as yet
Who would send no blessing up,
Looking on a face like thine;
For thou art as Joseph's cup,
And by thee might they divine.

"Nay! but thou a spirit art;
Men shall take thee in the mart
For the ghost of their best thought,
Raised at noon, and near them brought;
Or the prayer they made last night,
Set before them all in white."

And I put out my rash hand,
For I thought to draw to land
The white lily. Was it fit
Such a blossom should expand,
Fair enough for a world's wonder,
And no mortal gather it?
No, I strove, and it went under,
And I drew, but it went down;
And the water-weeds' long tresses,
And the overlapping cresses,
Sullied its admired crown.

Then along the river strand,
 Trailing, wrecked, it came to land,
 Of its beauty half despoiled,
 And its snowy pureness soiled:
 O! I took it in my hand, —
 You will never see it now,
 White and golden as it grew:
 No, I cannot show it you,
 Nor the cheerful town endow
 With the freshness of its brow.
 If a royal painter, great
 With the colors dedicate
 To a dove's neck, a sea-bight
 And the flickerings over white
 Mountain summits far away, —
 One content to give his mind
 To the enrichment of mankind,
 And the laying up of light
 In men's houses, — on that day,
 Could have passed in kingly mood,
 Would he ever have endured
 Canyas with the peerless thing,
 In the grace that it did bring,
 And the light that o'er it flowed,
 With the pureness that it showed,
 And the pureness that it meant?
 Could he skill to make it seen
 As he saw? For this, I ween,
 He were likewise impotent.

II.

I opened the doors of my heart.

And behold,

There was music within and a song,
 And echoes did feed on the sweetness, repeating it
 long.

I opened the doors of my heart. And behold,
 There was music that played itself out in æolian
 notes;
 Then was heard, as a far-away bell at long intervals
 tolled,

That murmurs and floats,
 And presently dieth, forgotten of forest and wold,
 And comes in all passion again and a tremblement
 soft,

That maketh the listener full oft
 To whisper, "Ah! would I might hear it forever
 and aye,
 When I toil in the heat of the day,
 When I walk in the cold."

I opened the door of my heart. And behold,
 There was music within, and a song.
 But while I was hearkening, lo, blackness without,
 thick and strong,
 Came up and came over, and all that sweet fluting
 was drowned,

I could hear it no more;
 For the welkin was moaning, the waters were stirred
 on the shore,
 And trees in the dark all around

Were shaken. It thundered. "Hark, hark! there
 is thunder to-night!

The sullen long wave rears her head, and comes
 down with a will;

The awful white tongues are let loose, and the stars
 are all dead; —

There is thunder! it thunders! and ladders of light
 Run up. There is thunder!" I said,

"Loud thunder! it thunders! and up in the dark
 overhead,

A down-pouring cloud (there is thunder!), a down-
 pouring cloud

Hails out her fierce message, and quivers the deep
 in its bed,
 And cowers the earth held at bay; and they mutter
 aloud,
 And pause with an ominous tremble, till, great in
 their rage,
 The heavens and earth come together, and meet with
 a crash;
 And the fight is so fell as if Time had come down
 with a flash,
 And the story of life was all read,
 And the Giver had turned the last page.
 Nor their bar the pent water-floods lash,
 And the forest trees give out their language austere
 with great age;
 And there flieth o'er moor and o'er hill,
 And there heaveth at intervals wide, [subside,
 The long sob of nature's great passion, as loath to
 Until quiet drop down on the tide,
 And mad echo hath moaned herself still.

Lo! or ever I was 'ware,
 In the silence of the air,
 Through my heart's wide-open door,
 Music floated forth once more,
 Floated to the world's dark rim,
 And looked over with a hymn;
 Then came home with flutings fine,
 And discoursed in tones divine
 Of a certain grief of mine;
 And went downward and went in,
 Glimpses of my soul to win,
 And discovered such a deep
 That I could not choose but weep,
 For it lay, a land-locked sea,
 Fathomless and dim to me.

O the song! It came and went,
 Went and came.

I have not learned
 Half the lore whereto it yearned,
 Half the magic that it meant.
 Water booming in a cave;
 Or the swell of some long wave,
 Setting in from unrevealed
 Countries; or a foreign tongue,
 Sweetly talked and deftly sung,
 While the meaning is half sealed;
 May be like it. You have heard
 Also;—can you find a word
 For the naming of such song?
 No; a name would do it wrong.
 You have heard it in the night,
 In the dropping rain's despite,
 In the midnight darkness deep,
 When the children were asleep,
 And the wife—no, let that be;
 SHE asleep! She knows right well
 What the song to you and me,
 While we breathe, can never tell;
 She hath heard its faultless flow,
 Where the roots of music grow.

While I listened, like young birds,
 Hints were fluttering; almost words,—
 Leaned and leaned, and nearer came;—
 Everything had changed its name.

Sorrow was a ship, I found,
 Wrecked with them that in her are,
 On an island richer far
 Than the port where they were bound.
 Fear was but the awful boom
 Of the old great bell of doom,

Tolling, far from earthly air,
 For all worlds to go to prayer.
 Pain, that to us mortal clings,
 But the pushing of our wings,
 That we have no use for yet,
 And the uprooting of our feet
 From the soil where they are set,
 And the land we reckon sweet.
 Love in growth, the grand deceit
 Whereby men the perfect greet;
 Love in wane, the blessing sent
 To be (howsoe'er it went)
 Nevermore with earth content.
 O, full sweet, and O, full high,
 Ran that music up the sky;
 But I cannot sing it you,
 More than I can make you view,
 With my paintings labial,
 Sitting up in awful row,
 White old men majestic,
 Mountains, in their gowns of snow,
 Ghosts of kings; as my two eyes,
 Looking over speckled skies,
 See them now. About their knees,
 Half in haze, there stands at ease
 A great army of green hills,
 Some bareheaded; and, behold,
 Small green mosses creep on some.
 Those be mighty forests old;
 And white avalanches come
 Through yon rents, where now distils
 Sheeny silver, pouring down
 To a tune of old renown,
 Cutting narrow pathways through
 Gentian belts of airy blue,
 To a zone where starwort blows,
 And long reaches of the rose.

So, that haze all left behind,
 Down the chestnut forests wind,
 Pass yon jagged spires, where yet
 Foot of man was never set;
 Past a castle yawning wide,
 With a great breach in its side,
 To a nest-like valley, where,
 Like a sparrow's egg in hue,
 Lie two lakes, and teach the true
 Color of the sea-maid's hair.

What beside? The world beside!
 Drawing down and down to greet
 Cottage clusters at our feet,—
 Every scent of summer tide,—
 Flowery pastures all aglow
 (Men and women mowing go
 Up and down them); also soft,
 Floating of the film aloft,
 Fluttering of the leaves alow.
 Is this told? It is not told.
 Where's the danger? where's the cold
 Slippery danger up the steep?
 Where yon shadow fallen asleep?
 Chirping bird and tumbling spray,
 Light, work, laughter, scent of hay,
 Peace, and echo, where are they?
 Ah, they sleep, sleep all untold;
 Memory must their grace unfold
 Silently; and that high song
 Of the heart, it doth belong
 To the hearers. Not a whit,
 Though a chief musician heard,
 Could he make a tune for it.

Though a lute full deftly strung,
 And the sweetest bird e'er sung,

Could have tried it, — O, the lute
For that wondrous song were mute,
And the bird would do her part,
Falter, fail, and break her heart, —
Break her heart, and furl her wings,
On the unexpressive strings.

GLADYS AND HER ISLAND.

(On the Advantages of the Poetical Temperament.)

AN IMPERFECT FABLE WITH A DOUBTFUL MORAL.

O HAPPY Gladys! I rejoice with her,
For Gladys saw the island.

It was thus:

They gave a day for pleasure in the school
Where Gladys taught; and all the other girls
Were taken out to picnic in a wood.
But it was said, "We think it were not well
That little Gladys should acquire a taste
For pleasure, going about, and needless change.
It would not suit her station: discontent
Might come of it; and all her duties now
She does so pleasantly, that we were best
To keep her humble." So they said to her,
"Gladys, we shall not want you, all to-day.
Look, you are free; you need not sit at work:
No, you may take a long and pleasant walk
Over the sea-cliff, or upon the beach
Among the visitors."

Then Gladys blushed
For joy, and thanked them. What! a holiday,
A whole one, for herself! How good, how kind!
With that the marshalled carriages drove off;

And Gladys, sobered with her weight of joy,
Stole out beyond the groups upon the beach —
The children with their wooden spades, the band
That played for lovers, and the sunny stir
Of cheerful life and leisure — to the rocks,
For these she wanted most, and there was time
To mark them; how like ruined organs prone
They lay, or leaned their giant fluted pipes,
And let the great white-crested reckless wave
Beat out their booming melody.

The sea

Was filled with light; in clear blue caverns curled
The breakers, and they ran, and seemed to romp,
As playing at some rough and dangerous game,
While all the nearer waves rushed in to help,
And all the farther heaved their heads to peep,
And tossed the fishing-boats. Then Gladys laughed,
And said, "O happy tide, to be so lost
In sunshine, that one dare not look at it;
And lucky cliffs, to be so brown and warm;
And yet how lucky are the shadows, too,
That lurk beneath their ledges. It is strange,
That in remembrance though I lay them up,
They are forever, when I come to them,
Better than I had thought. O, something yet
I had forgotten. Oft I say, 'At least
This picture is imprinted; thus and thus,
The sharpened serried jags run up, run out,
Layer on layer.' And I look — up — up —
High, higher up again, till far aloft
They cut into their ether — brown, and clear,
And perfect. And I, saying, 'This is mine,
To keep,' retire; but shortly come again,
And they confound me with a glorious change.
The low sun out of rain-clouds stares at them;
They redden, and their edges drip with — what?

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I know not, but 'tis red. It leaves no stain,
For the next morning they stand up like ghosts
In a sea-shroud, and fifty thousand mews
Sit there, in long white files, and chatter on,
Like silly school-girls in their silliest mood.

"There is the boulder where we always turn.

O, I have longed to pass it; now I will.

What would they say? for one must slip and spring;
'Young ladies! Gladys! I am shocked. My dears,
Decorum, if you please: turn back at once.

Gladys, we blame you most; you should have looked
Before you.' Then they sigh, — how kind they are! —

'What will become of you, if all your life
You look a long way off? — look anywhere,
And everywhere, instead of at your feet,
And where they carry you!' Ah, well, I know
It is a pity," Gladys said; "but then

We cannot all be wise: happy for me
That other people are.

"And yet I wish, —

For sometimes very right and serious thoughts
Come to me, — I do wish that they would come
When they are wanted! — when I teach the sums
On rainy days, and when the practising

I count to, and the din goes on and on,
Still the same tune and still the same mistake,
Then I am wise enough: sometimes I feel
Quite old. I think that it will last, and say,

'Now my reflections do me credit! now
I am a woman!' and I wish they knew
How serious all my duties look to me,
And how my heart hushed down and shaded lies,
Just like the sea, when low, convenient clouds
Come over, and drink all its sparkles up.
But does it last? Perhaps, that very day,

The front door opens: out we walk in pairs;
And I am so delighted with this world,
That suddenly has grown, being new washed,
To such a smiling, clean, and thankful world,
And with a tender face shining through tears,
Looks up into the sometime lowering sky,
That has been angry, but is reconciled,
And just forgiving her, that I, — that I, —
O, I forget myself: what matters how!
And then I hear (but always kindly said)
Some words that pain me so, — but just, but true:
'For if your place in this establishment
Be but subordinate, and if your birth
Be lowly, it the more behooves — Well, well,
No more. We see that you are sorry.' Yes!
I am always sorry THEN; but now, — O, now,
Here is a bight more beautiful than all."

"And did they scold her, then, my pretty one?

And did she want to be as wise as they, —
To bear a bucklered heart and priggish mind?

Ay, you may crow; she did! but no, no, no,
The night-time will not let her; all the stars
Say nay to that; the old sea laughs at her.

Why, Gladys is a child; she has not skill
To shut herself within her own small cell,
And build the door up, and to say, 'Poor me!

I am a prisoner;' then to take hewn stones,
And, having built the windows up, to say,

'O, it is dark! there is no sunshine here;
There never has been.'

Strange! how very strange!

A woman passing Gladys with a babe,
To whom she spoke these words, and only looked
Upon the babe, who crowed and pulled her curls,
And never looked at Gladys, never once.

"A simple child," she added, and went by,
 "To want to change her greater for their less;
 But Gladys shall not do it, no, not she;
 We love her — don't we? — far too well for that."

Then Gladys, flushed with shame and keen surprise,
 "How could she be so near, and I not know?
 And have I spoken out my thought aloud?
 I must have done, forgetting. It is well
 She walks so fast, for I am hungry now,
 And here is water cantering down the cliff,
 And here a shell to catch it with, and here
 The round plump buns they gave me, and the fruit.
 Now she is gone behind the rock. O, rare
 To be alone!" So Gladys sat her down,
 Unpacked her little basket, ate and drank,
 Then pushed her hands into the warm dry sand,
 And thought the earth was happy, and she too
 Was going round with it in happiness,
 That holiday. "What was it that she said?"
 Quoth Gladys, cogitating; "they were kind,
 The words that woman spoke. She does not know!
 'Her greater for their less,' — it makes me laugh, —
 But yet," sighed Gladys, "though it must be good
 To look and to admire, one should not wish
 To steal *THEIR* virtues, and to put them on,
 Like feathers from another wing; beside,
 That calm, and that grave consciousness of worth,
 When all is said, would little suit with me,
 Who am not worthy. When our thoughts are born,
 Though they be good and humble, one should mind
 How they are reared, or some will go astray
 And shame their mother. Cain and Abel both
 Were only once removed from innocence.
 Why did I envy them? That was not good;
 Yet it began with my humility."

But as she spake, lo, Gladys raised her eyes,
 And right before her, on the horizon's edge,
 Behold, an island! First, she looked away
 Along the solid rocks and steadfast shore,
 For she was all amazed, believing not,
 And then she looked again, and there again
 Behold, an island! And the tide had turned,
 The milky sea had got a purple rim,
 And from the rim that mountain island rose,
 Purple, with two high peaks, the northern peak
 The higher, and with fell and precipice,
 It ran down steeply to the water's brink;
 But all the southern line was long and soft,
 Broken with tender curves, and, as she thought,
 Covered with forest or with sward. But, look!
 The sun was on the island; and he showed
 On either peak a dazzling cap of snow.
 Then Gladys held her breath; she said, "Indeed,
 Indeed it is an island: how is this,
 I never saw it till this fortunate
 Rare holiday?" And while she strained her eyes,
 She thought that it began to fade; but not
 To change as clouds do, only to withdraw
 And melt into its azure; and at last,
 Little by little, from her hungry heart,
 That longed to draw things marvellous to itself,
 And yearned towards the riches and the great
 Abundance of the beauty God hath made,
 It passed away. Tears started in her eyes,
 And when they dropt, the mountain isle was gone.
 The careless sea had quite forgotten it,
 And all was even as it had been before.
 And Gladys wept, but there was luxury
 In her self-pity, while she softly sobbed,
 "O, what a little while! I am afraid
 I shall forget that purple mountain isle,

The lovely hollows atween her snow-clad peaks,
 The grace of her upheaval where she lay
 Well up against the open. O, my heart,
 Now I remember how this holiday
 Will soon be done, and now my life goes on
 Not fed; and only in the noonday walk
 Let to look silently at what it wants,
 Without the power to wait or pause awhile,
 And understand and draw within itself
 The richness of the earth. A holiday!
 How few I have! I spend the silent time
 At work, while all their pupils are gone home,
 And feel myself remote. They shine apart;
 They are great planets, I a little orb;
 My little orbit far within their own
 Turns, and approaches not. But yet, the more
 I am alone when those I teach return;
 For they, as planets of some other sun,
 Not mine, have paths that can but meet my ring
 Once in a cycle. O, how poor I am!
 I have not got laid up in this blank heart
 Any indulgent kisses given me
 Because I had been good, or, yet more sweet,
 Because my childhood was itself a good
 Attractive thing for kisses, tender praise,
 And comforting. An orphan-school at best
 Is a cold mother in the winter time
 ('Twas mostly winter when new orphans came),
 An unregardful mother in the spring.

"Yet once a year (I did mine wrong) we went
 To gather cowslips. How we thought on it
 Beforehand, pacing, pacing the dull street,
 To that one tree, the only one we saw
 From April, — if the cowslips were in bloom
 So early; or, if not, from opening May
 Even to September. Then there came the feast

At Epping. If it rained that day, it rained
 For a whole year to us; we could not think
 Of fields and hawthorn hedges, and the leaves
 Fluttering, but still it rained, and ever rained.

"Ah, well, but I am here; but I have seen
 The gay gorse bushes in their flowering time;
 I know the scent of bean-fields; I have heard
 The satisfying murmur of the main."

The woman! she came round the rock again
 With her fair baby, and she sat her down
 By Gladys, murmuring, "Who forbade the grass
 To grow by visitations of the dew?
 Who said in ancient time to the desert pool,
 'Thou shalt not wait for angel visitors
 To trouble thy still water!' Must we bide
 At home? The lore, beloved, shall fly to us
 On a pair of sumptuous wings. Or may we breathe
 Without? O, we shall draw to us the air
 That times and mystery feed on. This shall lay
 Unhidden hands upon the heart o' the world,
 And feel it beating. Rivers shall run on,
 Full of sweet language as a lover's mouth,
 Delivering of a tune to make her youth
 More beautiful than wheat when it is green.

"What else? — (O, none shall envy her!) The rain
 And the wild weather will be most her own,
 And talk with her o' nights; and if the winds
 Have seen aught wondrous, they will tell it her
 In a mouthful of strange moans, — will bring from far,
 Her ears being keen, the lowing and the mad,
 Masterful tramping of the bison herds,
 Tearing down headlong with their bloodshot eyes,
 In savage rifts of hair; the crack and creak
 Of ice-floes in the frozen sea, the cry

Of the white bears, all in a dim blue world
 Mumbling their meals by twilight; or the rock
 And majesty of motion, when their heads
 Primeval trees toss in a sunny storm,
 And hail their nuts down on unweeded fields.
 No holidays," quoth she; "drop, drop, O, drop,
 Thou tired skylark, and go up no more;
 You lime-trees, cover not your head with bees,
 Nor give out your good smell. She will not look;
 No, Gladys cannot draw your sweetness in,
 For lack of holidays." So Gladys thought,
 "A most strange woman, and she talks of me."
 With that a girl ran up: "Mother," she said,
 "Come out of this brown light, I pray you now,
 It smells of fairies." Gladys thereon thought,
 "The mother will not speak to me, perhaps
 The daughter may," and asked her courteously,
 "What do the fairies smell of?" But the girl
 With peevish pout replied, "You know, you know."
 "Not I," said Gladys; then she answered her,
 "Something like buttercups. But, mother, come,
 And whisper up a porpoise from the foam,
 Because I want to ride."

Full slowly, then,

The mother rose, and ever kept her eyes
 Upon her little child. "You freakish maid,"
 Said she, "now mark me, if I call you one,
 You shall not scold nor make him take you far."

"I only want — you know I only want,"

The girl replied — "to go and play awhile
 Upon the sand by Lagos." Then she turned
 And muttered low, "Mother, is this the girl
 Who saw the island?" But the mother frowned.
 "When may she go to it?" the daughter asked.

And Gladys, following them, gave all her mind
 To hear the answer. "When she wills to go;
 For yonder comes to shore the ferry-boat."
 Then Gladys turned to look, and even so
 It was; a ferry-boat, and far away
 Reared in the offing, lo, the purple peaks
 Of her loved island.

Then she raised her arms,
 And ran toward the boat, crying out, "O rare,
 The island! fair befall the island; let
 Me reach the island." And she sprang on board
 And after her stepped in the freakish maid
 And the fair mother, brooding o'er her child;
 And this one took the helm, and that let go
 The sail, and off they flew, and furrowed up
 A flaky hill before, and left behind
 A sobbing, snake-like tail of creamy foam;
 And dancing hither, thither, sometimes shot
 Toward the island; then, when Gladys looked,
 Were leaving it to leeward. And the maid
 Whistled a wind to come and rock the craft,
 And would be leaning down her head to mew
 At cat-fish, then lift out into her lap
 And dandle baby-seals, which, having kissed,
 She flung to their sleek mothers, till her own
 Rebuked her in good English, after cried,
 "Luff, luff, we shall be swamped." "I will not luff,"
 Sobbed the fair mischief; "you are cross to me."
 "For shame!" the mother shrieked; "luff, luff
 my dear;

Kiss and be friends, and thou shalt have the fish
 With the curly tail to ride on." So she did,
 And presently, a dolphin bouncing up,
 She sprang upon his slippery back, — "Farewell,"
 She laughed, was off, and all the sea grew calm.

Then Gladys was much happier, and was 'ware
 In the smooth weather that this woman talked
 Like one in sleep, and murmured certain thoughts
 Which seemed to be like echoes of her own.
 She nodded, "Yes, the girl is going now
 To her own island. Gladys poor? Not she!
 Who thinks so? Once I met a man in white,
 Who said to me, 'The thing that might have been
 Is called, and questioned why it hath not been;
 And can it give good reason, it is set
 Beside the actual, and reckoned in
 To fill the empty gaps of life.' Ah, so
 The possible stands by us ever fresh,
 Fairer than aught which any life hath owned,
 And makes divine amends. Now this was set
 Apart from kin, and not ordained a home;
 An equal; — and not suffered to fence in
 A little plot of earthly good, and say,
 'Tis mine; but in bereavement of the part,
 O, yet to taste the whole, — to understand
 The grandeur of the story, not to feel
 Satiated with good possessed, but evermore
 A healthful hunger for the great idea,
 The beauty and the blessedness of life.
 "Lo, now, the shadow!" quoth she, breaking off,
 "We are in the shadow." Then did Gladys turn.
 And, O, the mountain with the purple peaks
 Was close at hand. It cast a shadow out,
 And they were in it: and she saw the snow,
 And under that the rocks, and under that
 The pines, and then the pasturage; and saw
 Numerous dips, and undulations rare,
 Running down seaward, all astir with lithe
 Long canes, and lofty feathers; for the palms
 And spice trees of the south, nay, every growth,
 Meets in that island.

So that woman ran
 The boat ashore, and Gladys set her foot
 Thereon. Then all at once much laughter rose;
 Invisible folk set up exultant shouts,
 "It all belongs to Gladys;" and she ran
 And hid herself among the nearest trees
 And panted, shedding tears.

So she looked round,
 And saw that she was in a banyan grove,
 Full of wild peacocks, — pecking on the grass,
 A flickering mass of eyes, blue, green, and gold,
 Or reaching out their jewelled necks, where high
 They sat in rows along the boughs. No tree
 Cumbered with creepers let the sunshine through,
 But it was caught in scarlet cups, and poured
 From these on amber tufts of bloom, and dropped
 Lower on azure stars. The air was still,
 As if awaiting somewhat, or asleep,
 And Gladys was the only thing that moved,
 Excepting, — no, they were not birds, — what then?
 Glorified rainbows with a living soul?
 While they passed through a sunbeam they were seen,
 Not elsewhere, but they were present yet
 In shade. They were at work, pomegranate fruit
 That lay about removing, — purple grapes,
 That clustered in the path, clearing aside.
 Through a small spot of light would pass and go,
 The glorious happy mouth and two fair eyes
 Of somewhat that made rustlings where it went;
 But when a beam would strike the ground sheer down,
 Behold them! they had wings, and they would pass
 One after other with the sheeny fans,
 Bearing them slowly, that their hues were seen,
 Tender as russet crimson dropt on snows,
 Or where they turned flashing with gold and dashed
 With purple glooms. And they had feet, but these

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,—strewn 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 smelt 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 wonned 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 hungering 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.

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What ails my wife?

I know not if aught ails her; though her step
Tell of a conscious quiet, lest I wake.
She moves atween the almond-boughs, and bends
One thick with bloom to look on it. "O love!
A little while thou hast withdrawn thyself,
At unaware to think thy thoughts alone:
How sweet, and yet pathetic to my heart
The reason. Ah! thou art no more thine own.
Mine, mine, O love! Tears gather 'neath my lids, —
Sorrowful tears for thy lost liberty,
Because it was so sweet. Thy liberty,
That yet, O love, thou wouldst not have again.
No; all is right. But who can give, or bless,
Or take a blessing, but there comes withal
Some pain?"

She walks beside the lily bed,
And holds apart her gown; she would not hurt
The leaf-enfolded buds, that have not looked
Yet on the daylight. O, thy locks are brown, —
Fairest of colors! — and a darker brown
The beautiful, dear, veiled, modest eyes.
A bloom as of blush roses covers her [with her,
Forehead, and throat, and cheek. Health breathes
And graceful vigor. Fair and wondrous soul!
To think that thou art mine!

My wife came in,
And moved into the chamber. As for me,
I heard, but lay as one that nothing hears,
And feigned to be asleep.

I.
The racing river leaped, and sang
Full blithely in the perfect weather,
All round the mountain echoes rang,
For blue and green were glad together.

II.

This rained out light from every part,
And that with songs of joy was thrilling;
But in the hollow of my heart,
There ached a place that wanted filling.

III.

Before the road and river meet,
And stepping-stones are wet and glisten,
I heard a sound of laughter sweet,
And paused to like it, and to listen.

IV.

I heard the chanting waters flow,
The cushat's note, the bee's low humming, —
Then turned the hedge, and did not know, —
How could I? — that my time was coming.

V.

A girl upon the nighest stone,
Half doubtful of the deed, was standing,
So far the shallow flood had flown
Beyond the 'customed leap of landing.

VI.

She knew not any need of me,
Yet me she waited all unweeting;
We thought not I had crossed the sea,
And half the sphere to give her meeting.

VII.

I waded out, her eyes I met.
I wished the moments had been hours;
I took her in my arms, and set
Her dainty feet among the flowers.

VIII.

Her fellow-maids in copse and lane,
 Ah! still, methinks, I hear them calling;
 The wind's soft whisper in the plain,
 The cushat's coo, the water's falling.

IX.

But now it is a year ago,
 But now possession crowns endeavor;
 I took her in my heart, to grow
 And fill the hollow place forever.

REGRET.

O THAT word REGRET!
 There have been nights and morns when we have
 sighed,
 "Let us alone, Regret! We are content
 To throw thee all our past, so thou wilt sleep
 For aye." But it is patient, and it wakes;
 It hath not learned to cry itself to sleep,
 But plaineth on the bed that it is hard.

We did amiss when we did wish it gone
 And over: sorrows humanize our race;
 Tears are the showers that fertilize this world,
 And memory of things precious keepeth warm
 The heart that once did hold them.

They are poor
 That have lost nothing; they are poorer far
 Who, losing, have forgotten; they most poor
 Of all, who lose and wish they MIGHT forget.
 For life is one, and in its warp and woof
 There runs a thread of gold that glitters fair.

And sometimes in the pattern shows most sweet
 Where there are sombre colors. It is true
 That we have wept. But O! this thread of gold,
 We would not have it tarnish; let us turn
 Oft and look back upon the wondrous web,
 And when it shineth sometimes we shall know
 That memory is possession.

I.

When I remember something which I had,
 But which is gone, and I must do without,
 I sometimes wonder how I can be glad,
 Even in cowslip time when hedges sprout;
 It makes me sigh to think on it, — but yet
 My days will not be better days, should I forget.

II.

When I remember something promised me,
 But which I never had, nor can have now,
 Because the promiser we no more see
 In countries that accord with mortal vow;
 When I remember this, I mourn, — but yet
 My happier days are not the days when I forget.

LAMENTATION.

I READ upon that book,
 Which down the golden gulf doth let us look
 On the sweet days of pastoral majesty;

I read upon that book
 How, when the Shepherd Prince did flee
 (Red Esau's twin), he desolate took
 The stone for a pillow: then he fell on sleep.
 And lo! there was a ladder. Lo! there hung

A ladder from the star-place, and it clung
To the earth: it tied her so to heaven; and O!

There fluttered wings;
Then were ascending and descending things

That stepped to him where he lay low;
Then up the ladder would a-drifting go
This feathered brood of heaven, and show
Small as white flakes in winter that are blown
Together, underneath the great white throne.

When I had shut the book, I said:
"Now, as for me, my dreams upon my bed

Are not like Jacob's dream;
Yet I have got it in my life; yes, I,
And many more: it doth not us beseech,
Therefore, to sigh.

Is there not hung a ladder in our sky?
Yea; and, moreover, all the way up on high
Is thickly peopled with the prayers of men.

We have no dream! What then?
Like winged wayfarers the height they scale
(By Him that offers them they shall prevail)—
The prayers of men.

But where is found a prayer for me;
How should I pray?

My heart is sick, and full of strife.
I heard one whisper with departing breath,
'Suffer us not, for any pains of death,
To fall from Thee.'

But O, the pains of life! the pains of life!
There is no comfort now, and naught to win.
But yet, — I will begin."

"Preserve to me my wealth," I do not say,
For that is wasted away;
And much of it was cankered ere it went.

"Preserve to me my health," I cannot say,
For that, upon a day,
Went after other delights to banishment.

II.

What can I pray? "Give me forgetfulness?"
No, I would still possess
Past away smiles, though present fronts be stern.
"Give me again my kindred?" Nay; not so,
Not idle prayers. We know
They that have crossed the river cannot return.

III.

I do not pray, "Comfort me! comfort me!"
For how should comfort be?
O — O that cooling mouth, — that little white head!
No; but I pray, "If it be not too late,
Open to me the gate,
That I may find my babe when I am dead.

IV.

"Show me the path. I had forgotten Thee
When I was happy and free,
Walking down here in the gladsome light o' the sun;
But now I come and mourn; O set my feet
In the road to Thy blest seat,
And for the rest, O God, Thy will be done."

DOMINION.

When found the rose delight in her fair hue?
Color is nothing to this world; 'tis I
That see it. Farther, I discover soul,
That trees are nothing to their fellow-trees;

It is but I that love their stateliness,
 And I that, comforting my heart, do sit,
 At noon beneath their shadow. I will step
 On the ledges of this world, for it is mine;
 But the other world ye wot of shall go too,
 I will carry it in my bosom. O my world,
 That was not built with clay!

Consider it
 (This outer world we tread on) as a harp, —
 A gracious instrument on whose fair strings
 We learn those airs we shall be set to play
 When mortal hours are ended. Let the wings,
 Man, of thy spirit move on it as wind,
 And draw forth melody. Why shouldst thou yet
 Lie grovelling? More is won than e'er was lost:
 Inherit. Let thy day be to thy night
 A teller of good tidings. Let thy praise
 Go up as birds go up that, when they wake,
 Shake off the dew and soar.

So take Joy home,
 And make a place in thy great heart for her,
 And give her time to grow, and cherish her;
 Then will she come, and oft will sing to thee,
 When thou art working in the furrows; ay,
 Or weeding in the sacred hour of dawn.
 It is a comely fashion to be glad, —
 Joy is the grace we say to God.

Art tired?
 There is a rest remaining. Hast thou sinned?
 There is a Sacrifice. Lift up thy head,
 The lovely world, and the over-world alike,
 Ring with a song eterne, a happy rede,
 "THY FATHER LOVES THEE."

I.

Yon moorèd mackerel fleet
 Hangs thick as a swarm of bees,
 Or a clustering village street
 Foundationless built on the seas.

II.

The mariners ply their craft,
 Each set in his castle frail;
 His care is all for the draught,
 And he dries the rain-beaten sail.

III.

For rain came down in the night
 And thunder muttered full oft,
 But now the azure is bright,
 And hawks are wheeling aloft.

IV.

I take the land to my breast,
 In her coat with daisies fine;
 For me are the hills in their best,
 And all that's made is mine.

V.

Sing high! "Though the red sun dip,
 There yet is a day for me;
 Nor youth I count for a ship
 That long ago foundered at sea.

VI.

"Did the lost love die and depart?
 Many times since we have met;
 For I hold the years in my heart,
 And all that was — is yet.

VII.

"I grant to the king his reign;
Let us yield him homage due;
But over the lands there are twain,
O king, I must rule as you.

VIII.

"I grant to the wise his meed,
But his yoke I will not brook,
For God taught me to read,—
He lent me the world for a book."

FRIENDSHIP.

ON A SUN-PORTRAIT OF HER HUSBAND, SENT BY HIS
WIFE TO THEIR FRIEND.

BEAUTIFUL eyes, — and shall I see no more
The living thought when it would leap from them,
And play in all its sweetness 'neath their lids?

Here was a man familiar with fair heights
That poets climb. Upon his peace the tears
And troubles of our race deep inroads made,
Yet life was sweet to him; he kept his heart
At home. Who saw his wife might well have
thought, —

"God loves this man. He chose a wife for him, —
The true one!" O sweet eyes, that seem to live,
I know so much of you, tell me the rest!
Eyes full of fatherhood and tender care
For small, young children. Is a message here
That you would fain have sent, but had not time?
If such there be, I promise, by long love
And perfect friendship, by all trust that comes
Of understanding, that I will not fail,
No, nor delay to find it.

O, my heart

Will often pain me as for some strange fault, —
Some grave defect in nature, — when I think
How I, delighted, 'neath those olive-trees,
Moved to the music of the tideless main,
While, with sore weeping, in an island home
They laid that much-loved head beneath the sod,
And I did not know.

I.

I stand on the bridge where last we stood
When young leaves played at their best.
The children called us from yonder wood,
And rock-doves crooned on the nest.

II.

Ah, yet you call, — in your gladness call, —
And I hear your pattering feet;
It does not matter, matter at all,
You fatherless children sweet, —

III.

It does not matter at all to you,
Young hearts that pleasure besets;
The father sleeps, but the world is new,
The child of his love forgets.

IV.

I too, it may be, before they drop,
The leaves that flicker to-day,
Ere bountiful gleams make ripe the crop,
Shall pass from my place away:

V.

Ere yon gray cygnet puts on her white,
Or snow lies soft on the wold,
Shall shut these eyes on the lovely light,
And leave the story untold.

VI.

Shall I tell it there? Ah, let that be,
For the warm pulse beats so high;
To love to-day, and to breathe and see, —
To-morrow perhaps to die, —

VII.

Leave it with God. But this I have known,
That sorrow is over soon;
Some in dark nights, sore weeping alone,
Forget by full of the moon.

VIII.

But if all loved, as the few can love,
This world would seldom be well;
And who need wish, if he dwells above,
For a deep, a long death-knell.

IX.

There are four or five, who, passing this place
While they live will name me yet;
And when I am gone will think on my face,
And feel a kind of regret.

WINSTANLEY.

THE APOLOGY.

Quoth the cedar to the reeds and rushes,
"Water-grass, you know not what I do;
Know not of my storms, nor of my hushes,
And — I know not you."

Quoth the reeds and rushes, "Wind! O waken!
Breathe, O wind, and set our answer free,
For we have no voice, of you forsaken,
For the cedar-tree."

Quoth the earth at midnight to the ocean,
"Wilderness of water, lost to view,
Naught you are to me but sounds of motion;
I am naught to you."

Quoth the ocean, "Dawn! O fairest, clearest,
Touch me with thy golden fingers bland;
For I have no smile till thou appearest
For the lovely land."

Quoth the hero, dying, whelmed in glory,
"Many blame me, few have understood;
Ah, my folk, to you I leave a story, —
Make its meaning good."

Quoth the folk, "Sing, poet! teach us, prove us,
Surely we shall learn the meaning then;
Wound us with a pain divine, O move us,
For this man of men."

WINSTANLEY's deed, you kindly folk,
With it I fill my lay,
And a nobler man ne'er walked the world,
Let his name be what it may.

The good ship "Snowdrop" tarried long,
Up at the vane looked he;
"Belike," he said, for the wind had dropped,
"Sh' lieth becalmed at sea."

The lovely ladies flocked within,
And still would each one say,
"Good mercer, be the ships come up?"
But still he answered "Nay."

Then stepped two mariners down the street,
 With looks of grief and fear;
 "Now, if Winstanley be your name,
 We bring you evil cheer!

"For the good ship 'Snowdrop' struck — she
 struck

On the rock, — the Eddystone,
 And down she went with threescore men,
 We two being left alone.

"Down in the deep, with freight and crew,
 Past any help she lies,
 And never a bale has come to shore
 Of all thy merchandise."

"For cloth o' gold and comely frieze,"
 Winstanley said, and sighed,
 "For velvet coif, or costly coat,
 They fathoms deep may bide.

"O thou brave skipper, blithe and kind,
 O mariners, bold and true,
 Sorry at heart, right sorry am I,
 A-thinking of yours and you.

"Many long days Winstanley's breast
 Shall feel a weight within,
 For a waft of wind he shall be 'feared
 And trading count but sin.

"To him no more it shall be joy
 To pace the cheerful town,
 And see the lovely ladies gay
 Step on in velvet gown."

The "Snowdrop" sank at Lammas tide,
 All under the yeasty spray;
 On Christmas Eve the brig "Content"
 Was also cast away.

He little thought o' New Year's night,
 So jolly as he sat then,
 While drank the toast and praised the roast
 The round-faced Aldermen, —

While serving-lads ran to and fro,
 Pouring the ruby wine,
 And jellies trembled on the board,
 And towering pasties fine, —

While loud huzzas ran up the roof
 Till the lamps did rock o'erhead,
 And holly boughs from rafters hung
 Dropped down their berries red, —

He little thought on Plymouth Hoe,
 With every rising tide,
 How the wave washed in his sailor lads,
 And laid them side by side.

There stepped a stranger to the board:
 "Now, stranger, who be ye?"
 He looked to right, he looked to left,
 And "Rest you merry," quoth he;

"For you did not see the brig go down,
 Or ever a storm had blown;
 For you did not see the white wave rear
 At the rock, — the Eddystone.

"She drave at the rock with sternsails set;
 Crash went the masts in twain;
 She staggered back with her mortal blow,
 Then leaped at it again.

"There rose a great cry, bitter and strong,
The misty moon looked out!
And the water swarmed with seamen's heads,
And the wreck was strewed about.

"I saw her mainsail lash the sea
As I clung to the rock alone;
Then she heeled over, and down she went,
And sank like any stone.

"She was a fair ship, but all's one!
For naught could bide the shock."

"I will take horse," Winstanley said,
"And see this deadly rock;

"For never again shall bark o' mine
Sail over the windy sea,
Unless, by the blessing of God, for this
Be found a remedy."

Winstanley rode to Plymouth town
All in the sleet and the snow,
And he looked around on shore and sound
As he stood on Plymouth Hoe,

Till a pillar of spray rose far away,
And shot up its stately head,
Reared and fell over, and reared again:

"'Tis the rock! the rock!" he said.

Straight to the Mayor he took his way,

"Good Master Mayor," quoth he,

"I am a mercer of London town,
And owner of vessels three,—

"But for your rock of dark renown,
I had five to track the main."

"You are one of many," the old Mayor said,
"That on the rock complain.

"An ill rock, mercer! your words ring right,
Well with my thoughts they chime,
For my two sons to the world to come
It sent before their time."

"Lend me a lighter, good Master Mayor,
And a score of shipwrights free,
For I think to raise a lantern tower
On this rock o' destiny."

The old Mayor laughed, but sighed also;

"Ah, youth," quoth he, "is rash;
Sooner, young man, thou'lt root it out
From the sea that doth it lash.

"Who sails too near its jagged teeth,
He shall have evil lot;
For the calmest seas that tumble there
Froth like a boiling pot.

"And the heavier seas few look on nigh,
But straight they lay him dead;
A seventy-gun-ship, sir!—they'll shoot
Higher than her mast-head.

"O, beacons sighted in the dark,
They are right welcome things,
And pitchpots flaming on the shore
Show fair as angel wings.

"Hast gold in hand? then light the land,
It 'longs to thee and me;
But let alone the deadly rock
In God Almighty's sea."

Yet said he, "Nay,—I must away,
On the rock to set my feet;
My debts are paid, my will I made,
Or ever I did thee greet.

"If I must die, then let me die
By the rock and not elsewhere;
If I may live, O let me live
To mount my lighthouse stair."

The old Mayor looked him in the face,
And answered: "Have thy way;
Thy heart is stout, as if round about
It was braced with an iron stay:

"Have thy will, mercer! choose thy men,
Put off from the storm-rid shore;
God with thee be, or I shall see
Thy face and theirs no more."

Heavily plunged the breaking wave,
And foam flew up the lea,
Morning and even the drifted snow
Fell into the dark gray sea.

Winstanley chose him men and gear;
He said, "My time I waste,"
For the seas ran seething up the shore,
And the wrack drave on in haste.

But twenty years he waited and more,
Pacing the strand alone,
Or ever he set his manly foot
On the rock, — the Eddystone.

Then he and the sea began their strife,
And worked with power and might:
Whatever the man reared up by day
The sea broke down by night.

He wrought at ebb with bar and beam,
He sailed to shore at flow;
And at his side, by that same tide,
Came bar and beam also.

"Give in, give in," the old Mayor cried,
"Or thou wilt rue the day."
"Yonder he goes," the townsfolk sighed,
"But the rock will have its way."

"For all his looks that are so stout,
And his speeches brave and fair,
He may wait on the wind, wait on the wave,
But he'll build no lighthouse there."

In fine weather and foul weather
The rock his arts did flout,
Through the long days and the short days,
Till all that year ran out.

With fine weather and foul weather
Another year came in;
"To take his wage," the workman said,
"We almost count a sin."

Now March was gone, came April in,
And a sea-fog settled down,
And forth sailed he on a glassy sea,
He sailed from Plymouth town.

With men and stores he put to sea,
As he was wont to do;
They showed in the fog like ghosts full faint, —
A ghostly craft and crew.

And the sea-fog lay and waxed away,
For a long eight days and more;
"God help our men," quoth the women then;
"For they bide long from shore."

They paced the Hoe in doubt and dread:
"Where may our mariners be?"
But the brooding fog lay soft as down
Over the quiet sea,

A Scottish schooner made the port,
 The thirteenth day at e'en :
 "As I am a man," the captain cried,
 "A strange sight I have seen :
 "And a strange sound heard, my masters all,
 At sea, in the fog and the rain,
 Like shipwrights' hammers tapping low,
 Then loud, then low again.
 "And a stately house one instant showed,
 Through a rift, on the vessel's lee ;
 What manner of creatures may be those
 That build upon the sea?"
 Then sighed the folk, "The Lord be praised !"
 And they flocked to the shore amain ;
 All over the Hoe, that livelong night,
 Many stood out in the rain.
 It ceased, and the red sun reared his head,
 And the rolling fog did flee ;
 And, lo ! in the offing faint and far
 Winstanley's house at sea !
 In fair weather with mirth and cheer
 The stately tower uprose ;
 In foul weather, with hunger and cold,
 They were content to close ;
 Till up the stair Winstanley went,
 To fire the wick afar ;
 And Plymouth in the silent night
 Looked out, and saw her star.
 Winstanley set his foot ashore :
 Said he, "My work is done ;
 I hold it strong to last as long
 As aught beneath the sun.

"But if it fail, as fail it may,
 Borne down with ruin and rout.
 Another than I shall rear it high,
 And brace the girders stout.
 "A better than I shall rear it high,
 For now the way is plain,
 And though I were dead," Winstanley said,
 "The light would shine again.
 "Yet were I fain still to remain,
 Watch in my tower to keep,
 And tend my light in the stormiest night
 That ever did move the deep ;
 "And if it stood, why, then, 'twere good,
 Amid their tremulous stirs,
 To count each stroke, when the mad waves broke
 For cheers of mariners.
 "But if it fell, then this were well,
 That I should with it fall ;
 Since, for my part, I have built my hearth
 In the courses of its wall.
 "Ay ! I were fain, long to remain,
 Watch in my tower to keep,
 And tend my light in the stormiest night
 That ever did move the deep."
 With that Winstanley went his way,
 And left the rock renowned,
 And summer and winter his pilot star
 Hung bright o'er Plymouth Sound.
 But it fell out, fell out at last,
 That he would put to sea,
 To scan once more his lighthouse tower
 On the rock o' destiny.

And the winds broke, and the storm broke,
 And wrecks came plunging in ;
 None in the town that night lay down
 Or sleep or rest to win.

The great mad waves were rolling graves,
 And each flung up its dead ;
 The seething flow was white below,
 And black the sky o'erhead.

And when the dawn, the dull, gray dawn,
 Broke on the trembling town,
 And men looked south to the harbor mouth,
 The lighthouse tower was down, —

Down in the deep where he doth sleep
 Who made it shine afar,
 And then in the night that drowned its light ;
 Set, with his pilot star.

*Many fair tombs in the glorious glooms
 At Westminster they show ;
 The brave and the great lie there in state :
 Winstanley lieth low.*

THE
 MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN.

UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE NUEVO LEÓN
 DIRECCIÓN GENERAL DE BIBLIOTECAS





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THE
MONITIONS OF THE UNSEEN.

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THERE are who give themselves to work for men,—
To raise the lost, to gather orphaned babes
And teach them, pitying of their mean estate,
To feel for misery, and to look on crime
With ruth, till they forget that they themselves
Are of the race, themselves among the crowd
Under the sentence and outside the gate,
And of the family and in the doom.
Cold is the world; they feel how cold it is,
And wish that they could warm it. Hard is life
For some. They would that they could soften it;
And, in the doing of their work, they sigh
As if it was their choice and not their lot;
And, in the raising of their prayer to God,
They crave His kindness for the world He made,
Till they, at last, forget that He, not they,
Is the true lover of man.

Now, in an ancient town, that had sunk low,—
Trade having drifted from it, while there stayed
Too many, that it erst had fed, behind,—
There walked a curate once, at early day.
It was the summer-time; but summer air
Came never, in its sweetness, down that dark
And crowded alley,— never reached the door
Whereat he stopped,— the sordid, shattered door.

He paused, and, looking right and left, beheld
 Dirt and decay, the lowering tenements
 That leaned toward each other; broken panes
 Bulging with rags, and grim with old neglect;
 And reeking hills of formless refuse, heaped
 To fade and fester in a stagnant air.
 But he thought nothing of it: he had learned
 To take all wretchedness for granted, — he,
 Reared in a stainless home, and radiant yet
 With the clear hues of healthful English youth,
 Had learned to kneel by beds forlorn, and stoop
 Under foul lintels. He could touch, with hand
 Unshrinking, fevered fingers; he could hear
 The language of the lost, in haunt and den, —
 So dismal, that the coldest passer-by
 Must needs be sorry for them, and, albeit
 They cursed, would dare to speak no harder words
 Than these, — “God help them!”

Ay! a learned man
 The curate in all woes that plague mankind, —
 Too learned, for he was but young. His heart
 Had yearned till it was overstrained, and now
 He — plunged into a narrow slough unblest,
 Had struggled with its deadly waters, till
 His own head had gone under, and he took
 Small joy in work he could not look to aid
 Its cleansing.

Yet, by one right tender tie,
 Hope held him yet. The fathers coarse and dull,
 Vile mothers hard, and boys and girls profane,
 His soul drew back from. He had worked for
 them, —
 Work without joy: but in his heart of hearts,
 He loved the little children; and, whene'er
 He heard their prattle innocent, and heard
 Their tender voices lisping sacred words

That he had taught them, — in the cleanly calm
 Of decent school, by decent matron held, —
 Then would he say, “I shall have pleasure yet,
 In these.”

But now, when he pushed back that door,
 And mounted up a flight of ruined stairs,
 He said not that. He said, “Oh! once I thought
 The little children would make bright for me
 The crown they wear who have won many souls
 For righteousness; but oh, this evil place!
 Hard lines it gives them, cold and dirt abhorred, —
 Hunger and nakedness, in lieu of love,
 And blows instead of care.

“And so they die,
 The little children that I love, — they die, —
 They turn their wistful faces to the wall,
 And slip away to God.”

With that, his hand
 He laid upon a latch and lifted it,
 Looked in full quietly, and entered straight.
 What saw he there? He saw a three-years child,
 That lay a-dying on a wisp of straw
 Swept up into a corner. O'er its brow
 The damps of death were gathering: all alone,
 Uncared for, save that by its side was set
 A cup, it waited. And the eyes had ceased
 To look on things at hand. He thought they gazed
 In wistful wonder, or some faint surmise
 Of coming change, — as though they saw the gate
 Of that fair land that seems to most of us
 Very far off.

When he beheld the look,
 He said, “I knew, I knew how this would be!
 Another! Ay, and but for drunken blows

And dull forgetfulness of infant need,
This little one had lived." And thereupon
The misery of it wrought upon him so,
That, unaware, he wept. O! then it was
That, in the bending of his manly head,
It came between the child and that whereon
He gazed, and, when the curate glanced again,
Those dying eyes, drawn back to earth once more,
Looked up into his own, and smiled.

He drew
More near, and knelt beside the small frail thing
Because the lips were moving; and it raised
Its baby hand, and stroked away its tears,
And whispered, "Master! master!" and so died.

Now, in that town there was an ancient church,
A minister of old days which these had turned
To parish uses: there the curate served.
It stood within a quiet swarded Close,
Sunny and still, and, though it was not far
From those dark courts where poor humanity
Struggled and swarmed, it seemed to wear its own
Still atmosphere about it, and to hold
That old-world calm within its precincts pure
And that grave rest which modern life foregoes.

When the sad curate, rising from his knees,
Looked from the dead to heaven, — as, unaware,
Men do when they would track departed life, —
He heard the deep tone of the minster-bell
Sounding for service, and he turned away
So heavy at heart, that, when he left behind
That dismal habitation, and came out
In the clear sunshine of the minster-yard,
He never marked it. Up the aisle he moved,
With his own gloom about him; then came forth,

And read before the folk grand words and calm, —
Words full of hope; but into his dull heart
Hope came not. As one talketh in a dream,
And doth not mark the sense of his own words,
He read; and, as one walketh in a dream,
He after walked toward the vestment-room,
And never marked the way he went by, — no,
Nor the gray verger that before him stood.
The great church-keys depending from his hand,
Ready to follow him out and lock the door.

At length, aroused to present things, but not
Content to break the sequence of his thought,
Nor ready for the working day that held
Its busy course without, he said, "Good friend,
Leave me the keys: I would remain awhile."
And, when the verger gave, he moved with him
Toward the door distraught, then shut him out,
And locked himself within the church alone.
The minster-church was like a great brown cave,
Fluted and fine with pillars, and all dim
With glorious gloom; but, as the curate turned,
Suddenly shone the sun, — and roof and walls,
Also the clustering shafts from end to end,
Were thickly sown all over, as it were,
With seedling rainbows. And it went and came
And went, that sunny beam, and drifted up
Ethereal bloom to flush the open wings
And carven cheeks of dimpled cherubim.
And dropped upon the curate as he passed,
And covered his white raiment and his hair.
Then did look down upon him from their place,
High in the upper lights, grave mitred priests,
And grand old monarchs in their flowered gowns
And capes of miniver; and therewithal
(A veiling cloud gone by) the naked sun

Smote with his burning splendor all the pile,
 And in there rushed, through half-translucent panes,
 A sombre glory as of rusted gold,
 Deep ruby stains, and tender blue and green,
 That made the floor a beauty and delight,
 Strewed as with phantom blossoms, sweet enough
 To have been wafted there the day they dropt
 On the flower-beds in heaven.

The curate passed
 Adown the long south aisle, and did not think
 Upon this beauty, nor that he himself —
 Excellent in the strength of youth, and fair
 With all the majesty that noble work
 And stainless manners give — did add his part
 To make it fairer.

In among the knights
 That lay with hands uplifted, by the lute
 And palm of many a saint, — 'neath capitals
 Whereon our fathers had been bold to carve
 With earthly tools their ancient childlike dream
 Concerning heavenly fruit and living bowers,
 And glad full-throated birds that sing up there
 Among the branches of the tree of life, —
 Through all the ordered forest of the shafts,
 Shooting on high to enter into light,
 That swam aloft, — he took his silent way,
 And in the southern transept sat him down,
 Covered his face, and thought.

He said, "No pain,
 No passion, and no aching, heart o' mine,
 Doth stir within thee. Oh! I would there did:
 Thou art so dull, so tired. I have lost
 I know not what. I see the heavens as lead:
 They tend not whither. Ah! the world is bared

Of her enchantment now: she is but earth
 And water. And, though much hath passed away,
 There may be more to go. I may forget
 The joy and fear that have been: there may live
 No more for me the fervency of hope
 Nor the arrest of wonder.

"Once I said,
 'Content will wait on work, though work appear
 Unfruitful.' Now I say, 'Where is the good?
 What is the good?' A lamp when it is lit
 Must needs give light; but I am like a man
 Holding his lamp in some deserted place
 Where no foot passeth. Must I trim my lamp,
 And ever painfully toil to keep it bright,
 When use for it is none? I must; I will.
 Though God withhold my wages, I must work,
 And watch the bringing of my work to naught, —
 Weed in the vineyard through the heat o' the day
 And, overtaken, behold the weedy place
 Grow ranker yet in spite of me.

"Oh! yet
 My meditated words are trodden down
 Like a little wayside grass. Castaway shells,
 Lifted and tossed aside by a plunging wave,
 Have no more force against it than have I
 Against the sweeping, weltering wave of life,
 That, lifting and dislodging me, drives on,
 And notes not mine endeavor."

Afterward,
 He added more words like to these; to wit,
 That it was hard to see the world so sad:
 He would that it were happier. It was hard
 To see the blameless overborne; and hard
 To know that God, who loves the world, should yet
 Let it lie down in sorrow, when a smile

From Him would make it laugh and sing, — a word
 From Him transform it to a heaven. He said,
 Moreover, "When will this be done? My life
 Hath not yet reached the noon, and I am tired;
 And oh! it may be that, uncomfited
 By foolish hope of doing good and vain
 Conceit of being useful, I may live,
 And it may be my duty to go on
 Working for years and years, for years and years."
 But, while the words were uttered, in his heart
 There dawned a vague alarm. He was aware
 That somewhat touched him, and he lifted up
 His face. "I am alone," the curate said, —
 "I think I am alone. What is it, then?
 I am ashamed! My raiment is not clean.
 My lips, — I am afraid they are not clean.
 My heart is darkened and unclean. Ah me,
 To be a man, and yet to tremble so!
 Strange, strange!"

And there was sitting at his feet —
 He could not see it plainly — at his feet
 A very little child. And, while the blood
 Drave to his heart, he set his eye on it,
 Gazing, and, lo! the loveliness from heaven
 Took clearer form and color. He beheld
 The strange, wise sweetness of a dimpled mouth,
 The deep serene of eyes at home with bliss,
 And perfect in possession. So it spoke,
 "My master!" but he answered not a word;
 And it went on: "I had a name, a name.
 He knew my name; but here they can forget."
 The curate answered: "Nay, I know thee well.
 I love thee. Wherefore art thou come?" it said,
 "They sent me;" and he faltered, "Fold thy hand,
 O most dear little one! for on it gleams
 A gem that is so bright I cannot look

Thereon." It said, "When I did leave this world,
 That was a tear. But that was long ago;
 For I have lived among the happy folk,
 You wot of, ages, ages." Then said he,
 "Do they forget us, while beneath the palms
 They take their infinite leisure?" And, with eyes
 That seemed to muse upon him, looking up
 In peace, the little child made answer, "Nay;"
 And murmured, in the language that he loved,
 "How is it that his hair is not yet white;
 For I and all the others have been long
 Waiting for him to come."

"And was it long?"
 The curate answered, pondering, "Time being done,
 Shall life indeed expand, and give the sense,
 In our to-come, of infinite extension?"
 Then saith the child, "In heaven we children talk
 Of the great matters, and our lips are wise;
 But here I can but talk with thee in words
 That here I knew." And therewithal, arisen,
 It said, "I pray you take me in your arms."
 Then, being afraid but willing, so he did;
 And partly drew about the radiant child,
 For better covering its dread purity,
 The foldings of his gown. And he beheld
 Its beauty, and the tremulous woven light
 That hung upon its hair; withal, the robe,
 "Whiter than fuller of this world can white,"
 That clothed its immortality. And so
 The trembling came again, and he was dumb,
 Repenting his uncleanness: and he lift
 His eyes, and all the holy place was full
 Of living things; and some were faint and dim,
 As if they bore an intermittent life,
 Waxing and waning; and they had no form,
 But drifted on like slowly trailed clouds,

Or moving spots of darkness, with an eye
 Apiece. And some, in guise of evil birds,
 Came by in troops, and stretched their naked necks,
 And some were men-like, but their heads hung down;
 And he said, "O my God! let me find grace
 Not to behold their faces, for I know
 They must be wicked and right terrible."

But while he prayed, lo! whispers; and there moved
 Two shadows on the wall. He could not see
 The forms of them that cast them; he could see
 Only the shadows as of two that sat
 Upon the floor, where, clad in women's weeds,
 They lisped together. And he shuddered much:
 There was a rustling near him, and he feared
 Lest they should touch him, and he feel their touch.

"It is not great," quoth one, "the work achieved
 We do, and we delight to do, our best:
 But that is little; for, my dear," quoth she,
 "This tower and town have been infested long
 With angels." — "Ay," the other made reply,
 "I had a little evil one, of late,
 That I picked up as it was crawling out
 O' the pit, and took and cherished in my breast.
 It would divine for me, and oft would moan,
 • Pray thee, no churches,' and it spake of this.

"But I was harried once, — thou know'st by whom, —
 And fled in here; and when he followed me,
 I crouching by this pillar, he let down
 His hand, — being all too proud to send his eyes
 In its wake, — and, plucking forth my tender imp,
 Flung it behind him. It went yelping forth;
 And, as for me, I never saw it more.
 Much is against us, — very much: the times
 Are hard." She paused: her fellow took the word,
 Plaining on such as preach and them that plead.

"Even such as haunt the yawning mouths of hell,"
 Quoth she, "and pluck them back that run thereto."
 Then, like a sudden blow, there fell on him
 The utterance of his name. "There is no soul
 That I loathe more, and oftener curse. Woe's me,
 That cursing should be vain! Ay, he will go
 Gather the sucking children, that are yet
 Too young for us, and watch and shelter them
 Till the strong Angels — pitiless and stern,
 But to them loving ever — sweep them in,
 By armsful, to the unapproachable fold.

"We strew his path with gold: it will not lie.
 'Deal softly with him,' was the master's word.
 We brought him all delights: his angel came
 And stood between them and his eyes. They spend
 Much pains upon him, — keep him poor and low
 And unbeloved; and thus he gives his mind
 To fill the fateful, the impregnable
 Child-fold, and sow on earth the seed of stars.

"Oh! hard is serving against love, — the love
 Of the unspeakable; for if we soil
 The souls, He openeth out a washing-place;
 And if we grudge, and snatch away the bread,
 Then will He save by poverty, and gain
 By early giving up of blameless life;
 And if we shed out gold, He even will save
 In spite of gold, — of twice refined gold."

With that the curate set his daunted eyes
 To look upon the shadows of the fiends.
 He was made sure they could not see the child
 That nestled in his arms; he also knew
 They were unconscious that his mortal ears
 Had new intelligence, which gave their speech
 Possible entrance through his garb of clay.

He was afraid, yet awful gladness reached
His soul: the testimony of the lost
Upbraided him; but while he trembled yet,
The heavenly child had lifted up its head
And left his arms, and on the marble floor
Stood beckoning.

And, its touch withdrawn, the place
Was silent, empty; all that swarming tribe
Of evil ones concealed behind the veil,
And shut into their separate world, were closed
From his observance. He arose, and paced
After the little child, — as half in fear
That it would leave him, — till they reached a door;
And then said he, — but much distraught he spoke,
Laying his hand across the lock, — “This door
Shuts in the stairs whereby men mount the tower.
Wouldst thou go up, and so withdraw to heaven?”
It answered, “I will mount them.” Then said he,
“And I will follow.” — “So thou shalt do well.”
The radiant thing replied, and it went up,
And he, amazed, went after; for the stairs,
Otherwise dark, were lightened by the rays
Shed out of raiment woven in high heaven,
And hair whereon had smiled the light of God.

With that, they, pacing on, came out at last
Into a dim, weird place, — a chamber formed
Betwixt the roofs: for you shall know that all
The vaulting of the nave, fretted and fine,
Was covered with the dust of ages, laid
Thick with those chips of stone which they had left
Who wrought it; but a high-pitched roof was reared
Above it, and the western gable pierced
With three long narrow lights. Great tie-beams
loomed
Across, and many daws frequented there,

The starling and the sparrow littered it
With straw, and peeped from many a shady nook;
And there was lifting up of wings, and there
Was hasty exit when the curate came.
But sitting on a beam and moving not
For him, he saw two fair gray turtle-doves
Bowing their heads, and cooing; and the child
Put forth a hand to touch his own, but straight
He, startled, drew it back, because, forsooth,
A stirring fancy smote him, and he thought
That language trembled on their innocent tongues,
And floated forth in speech that man could hear.
Then said the child, “Yet touch, my master dear.”
And he let down his hand, and touched again;
And so it was. “But if they had their way,”
One turtle cooed, “how should this world go on?”

Then he looked well upon them as he stood
Upright before them. They were feathered doves,
And sitting close together; and their eyes
Were rounded with the rim that marks their kind.
Their tender crimson feet did pat the beam, —
No phantoms they; and soon the fellow-dove
Made answer, “Nay, they count themselves so wise,
There is no task they shall be set to do
But they will ask God why. What mean they so?
The glory is not in the task, but in
The doing it for Him. What should he think,
Brother, this man that must, forsooth, be set
Such noble work, and suffered to behold
Its fruit, if he knew more of us and ours?”
With that the other leaned, as if attent:
“I am not perfect, brother, in his thought.”
The mystic bird replied, “Brother, he saith,
‘But it is naught: the work is over-hard.’
Whose fault is that? God sets not overwork.

He saith the world is sorrowful, and he
Is therefore sorrowful. He cannot set
The crooked straight; — but who demands of him,
O brother, that he should? What! thinks he, then,
His work is God's advantage, and his will
More bent to aid the world than its dread Lord's?
Nay, yet there live amongst us legions fair,
Millions on millions, who could do right well
What he must fail in; and 'twas whispered me,
That chiefly for himself the task is given, —
His little daily task." With that he paused.

Then said the other, preening its fair wing,
"Men have discovered all God's islands now,
And given them names; whereof they are as proud,
And deem themselves as great, as if their hands
Had made them. Strange is man, and strange his
pride.

Now, as for us, it matters not to learn
What and from whence we be: How should we tell?
Our world is undiscovered in these skies,
Our names not whispered. Yet, for us and ours,
What joy it is, — permission to come down,
Not souls, as he, to the bosom of their God,
To guide, but to their goal the winged fowls,
His lovely lower-fashioned lives to help
To take their forms by legions, fly, and draw
With us the sweet, obedient, flocking things
That ever hear our message reverently, [way,
And follow us far. How should they know their
Forsooth, alone? Men say they fly alone;
Yet some have set on record, and averred,
That they, among the flocks, had duly marked
A leader."

Then his fellow made reply:

"They might divine the Maker's heart. Come forth,

Fair dove, to find the flocks, and guide their wings,
For Him that loveth them."

With that, the child
Withdrew his hand, and all their speech was done.
He moved toward them, but they fluttered forth
And fled into the sunshine.

"I would fain,"
Said he, "have heard some more. And wilt thou
go?"
He added to the child, for this had turned.
"Ay," quoth he, gently, "to the beggar's place;
For I would see the beggar in the porch."

So they went down together to the door,
Which, when the curate opened, lo! without
The beggar sat; and he saluted him:
"Good morrow, master." "Wherefore art thou
here?"

The curate asked: "it is not service time,
And none will enter now to give thee alms."
Then said the beggar, "I have hope at heart
That I shall go to my poor house no more."
"Art thou so sick that thou dost think to die?"

The curate said. With that the beggar laughed,
And under his dim eyelids gathered tears,
And he was all a-tremble with a strange
And moving exaltation. "Ay," quoth he,
And set his face toward high heaven: "I think
The blessing that I wait on must be near."

Then said the curate, "God be good to thee."
And, straight, the little child put forth his hand,
And touched him. "Master, master, hush!
You should not, master, speak so carelessly
In this great presence."

But the touch so wrought,
That, lo! the dazzled curate staggered back,
For dread effulgence from the beggar's eyes
Smote him, and from the crippled limbs shot forth
Terrible lights, as pure long blades of fire.

"Withdraw thy touch! withdraw thy touch!" he
cried,

"Or else I shall be blinded." Then the child
Stood back from him; and he sat down apart,
Recovering of his manhood: and he heard
The beggar and the child discourse of things
Dreadful for glory, till his spirits came
Anew; and, when the beggar looked on him,
He said, "If I offend not, pray you tell
Who and what are you, — I behold a face
Marred with old age, sickness, and poverty, —
A cripple with a staff, who long hath sat
Begging, and oftentimes moaning, in the porch,
For pain and for the wind's inclemency.

What are you?" Then the beggar made reply,
"I was a delegate, a living power;
My work was bliss, for seeds were in my hand
To plant a new-made world. O happy work!
It grew and blossomed; but my dwelling-place
Was far remote from heaven. I have not seen;

I knew no wish to enter there. But, lo!
There went forth rumors, running out like rays,
How some, that were of power like even to mine,
Had made request to come and find a place
Within its walls. And these were satisfied

With promises, and sent to this far world
To take the weeds of your mortality,
And minister, and suffer grief and pain,
And die like men. Then they were gathered in
They saw a face, and were accounted kin
To Whom thou knowest, for He is kin to men.

"Then did I wait; and oft, at work, I sang,
'To minister! oh, joy, to minister!'
And, it being known, a message came to me:
'Whether is best, thou forest-planter wise,
To minister to others, or that they
Should minister to thee?' Then, on my face
Low lying, I made answer: 'It is best,
Most High, to minister;' and thus came back
The answer, — 'Choose not for thyself the best:
Go down, and, lo! my poor shall minister,
Out of their poverty, to thee; shall learn
Compassion by thy frailty; and shall oft
Turn back, when speeding home from work, to help
Thee, weak and crippled, home. My little ones,
Thou shalt importune for their slender mite,
And pray, and move them that they give it up
For love of Me.'"

The curate answered him,
"Art thou content, O great one from afar!
If I may ask, and not offend?" He said,
"I am. Behold! I stand not all alone,
That I should think to do a perfect work.
I may not wish to give; for I have heard
'Tis best for me that I receive. For me,
God is the only giver, and His gift
Is one." With that the little child sighed out,
"O master! master! I am out of heaven
Since noonday, and I hear them calling me,
If you be ready, great one, let us go: —
Hark! hark! they call."

Then did the beggar lift
His face to heaven and utter forth a cry
As of the pangs of death, and every tree
Moved as if shaken by a sudden wind.
He cried again, and there came forth a hand

From some invisible form, which, being laid
A little moment on the curate's eyes,
It dazzled him with light that brake from it,
So that he saw no more.

"What shall I do?"

The curate murmured, when he came again
To himself and looked about him. "This is strange!
My thoughts are all astray; and yet, methinks,
A weight is taken from my heart. Lo! lo!
There lieth at my feet, frail, white, and dead,
The sometime beggar. He is happy now.
There was a child; but he is gone, and he
Is also happy. I am glad to think
I am not bound to make the wrong go right;
But only to discover, and to do,
With cheerful heart, the work that God appoints."

With that, he did compose, with reverent care,
The dead; continuing, "I will trust in Him,
THAT HE CAN HOLD HIS OWN; and I will take
His will, above the work He sendeth me,
To be my chiefest good."

Then went he forth,

"I shall die early," thinking: "I am warned,
By this fair vision, that I have not long
To live." Yet he lived on to good old age;—
Ay, he lives yet, and he is working still.

It may be there are many in like case;
They give themselves, and are in misery
Because the gift is small, and doth not make
The world by so much better as they fain
Would have it. 'Tis a fault; but, as for us,
Let us not blame them. Maybe, 'tis a fault
More kindly looked on by The Majesty

Than our best virtues are. Why, what are we?
What have we given, and what have we desired
To give, the world?

There must be something wrong.

Look to it: let us mend our ways. Farewell.

A BIRTHDAY WALK.

(WRITTEN FOR A FRIEND'S BIRTHDAY.)

"The days of our life are threescore years and ten."

A BIRTHDAY:—and now a day that rose
With much of hope, with meaning rife—
A thoughtful day from dawn to close:
The middle day of human life.

In sloping fields on narrow plains,
The sheep were feeding on their knees,
As we went through the winding lanes,
Strewed with red buds of alder-trees.

So warm the day—its influence lent
To flagging thoughts a stronger wing;
So utterly was winter spent,
So sudden was the birth of spring.

Wild crocus flowers in copse and hedge—
In sunlight, clustering thick below,
Sighed for the firwood's shaded ledge,
Where sparkled yet a line of snow.

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And crowded snowdrops faintly hung
 Their fair heads lower for the heat,
 While in still air all branches flung
 Their shadowy doubles at our feet.

And through the hedge the sunbeams crept,
 Dropped through the maple and the birch;
 And lost in airy distance slept
 On the broad tower of Tamworth Church.

Then, lingering on the downward way,
 A little space we resting stood,
 To watch the golden haze that lay
 Adown that river by the wood.

A distance vague, the bloom of sleep
 The constant sun had lent the scene,
 A veiling charm on dingles deep
 Lay soft those pastoral hills between.

There are some days that die not out,
 Nor alter by reflection's power,
 Whose converse calm, whose words devout,
 Forever rest, the spirit's dower.

And they are days when drops a veil —
 A mist upon the distance past;
 And while we say to peace — "All hail!"
 We hope that always it shall last.

Times when the troubles of the heart
 Are hushed — as winds were hushed that day —
 And budding hopes begin to start,
 Like those green hedgerows on our way:

When all within and all around
 Like hues on that sweet landscape blend,
 And Nature's hand has made to sound
 The heartstrings that her touch attend:

When there are rays within, like those
 That streamed through maple and through
 birch,
 And rested in such calm repose
 On the broad tower of Tamworth Church.

NOT IN VAIN I WAITED.

SHE was but a child, a child,
 And I a man grown;
 Sweet she was, and fresh, and wild,
 And, I thought, my own.

What could I do? The long grass groweth,
 The long wave floweth with a murmur on:
 The why and the wherefore of it all who know-
 eth?
 Ere I thought to lose her she was grown —
 and gone.

This day or that day in warm spring weather,
 The lamb that was tame will yearn to break its
 tether.

"But if the world wound thee," I said, "come back
 to me,
 Down in the dell wishing, — wishing, wishing for
 thee."

The dews hang on the white may,
 Like a ghost it stands,
 All in the dusk before day
 That folds the dim lands:
 Dark fell the skies when once belated,
 Sad, and sorrow-fated, I missed the sun;
 But wake, heart, and sing, for not in vain I waited.
 O clear, O solemn dawning, lo, the maid is won!

Sweet dew, dry early on the grass and clover,
 Lest the bride wet her feet while she walks over;
 Shine to-day, sunbeams, and make all fair to see:
 Down the dell she's coming — coming, coming with
 me.

A GLEANING SONG.

"WHITHER away, thou little careless rover?
 (Kind Roger's true)

Whither away, across yon bents and clover,
 Wet, wet with dew?"

"Roger here, Roger there —

Roger — O, he sighed,

Yet let me glean among the wheat,

Nor sit kind Roger's bride."

"What wilt thou do when all the gleanings ended,

What wilt thou do?

The cold will come, and fog and frost-work blended
 (Kind Roger's true)."

"Sleet and rain, cloud and storm,

When they cease to frown,

I'll bind me primrose bunches sweet,

And cry them up the town."

"What if at last thy careless heart awaking
 This day thou rue?"

"I'll cry my flowers, and think for all its breaking.
 Kind Roger's true;

Roger here, Roger there.

O, my true love sighed,

Sigh once, once more, I'll stay my feet

And rest kind Roger's bride."

WITH A DIAMOND.

WHILE Time a grim old lion gnawing lay,
 And mumbled with its teeth yon regal tomb,
 Like some immortal tear undimmed for aye,
 This gem was dropped among the dust of doom.

Dropped, haply, by a sad forgotten queen,
 A tear to outlast name, and fame, and tongue:
 Her other tears, and ours, all tears terrene,
 For great new griefs to be hereafter sung.

Take it, — a goddess might have wept such tears,
 Or Dame Electra changed into a star,
 That waxed so dim because her children's years
 In leaguered Troy were bitter through long war.

Not till the end to end to grow dull or waste, —
 Ah, what a little while the light we share!
 Hand after hand shall yet with this be graced,
 Signing the Will that leaves it to an heir.

FANCY.

O FANCY, if thou flyest, come back anon,
 Thy fluttering wings are soft as love's first word,
 And fragrant as the feathers of that bird,
 Which feeds upon the budded cinnamon.
 I ask thee not to work, or sigh — play on,
 From naught that was not, was, or is, deterred;
 The flax that Old Fate spun thy flights have
 stirred,
 And waved memorial grass of Marathon;
 Play, but be gentle, not as on that day
 I saw thee running down the rims of doom

With stars thou hadst been stealing — while they lay
 Smothered in light and blue — clasped to thy breast;
 Bring rather to me in the firelit room
 A netted halcyon bird to sing of rest.

COMPENSATION.

ONE launched a ship, but she was wrecked at sea;
 He built a bridge, but floods have borne it down,
 He meant much good, none came: strange destiny,
 His corn lies sunk, his bridge bears none to town,
 Yet good he had not meant became his crown;
 For once at work, when even as nature free,
 From thought of good he was, or of renown,
 God took the work for good and let good be.
 So wakened with a trembling after sleep,
 Dread Mona Roa yields her fateful store;
 All gleaming hot the scarlet rivers creep,
 And fanned of great-leaved palms slip to the shore,
 Then stolen to unplumbed wastes of that far deep,
 Lay the foundations for one island more.

LOOKING DOWN.

MOUNTAINS of sorrow, I have heard your moans,
 And the moving of your pines; but we sit high
 On your green shoulders, nearer stoops the sky,
 And pure airs visit us from all the zones.
 Sweet world beneath, too happy far to sigh,
 Dost thou look thus beheld from heavenly thrones?
 No; not for all the love that counts thy stones,
 While sleepy with great light the valleys lie.
 Strange, rapturous peace! its sunshine doth enfold
 My heart; I have escaped to the days divine,

It seemeth as bygone ages back had rolled,
 And all the eldest past was now, was mine;
 Nay, even as if Melchizedec of old
 Might here come forth to us with bread and wine

MARRIED LOVERS.

COME away, the clouds are high,
 Put the flashing needles by.
 Many days are not to spare,
 Or to waste, my fairest fair!
 All is ready. Come to-day,
 For the nightingale her lay,
 When she findeth that the whole
 Of her love, and all her soul,
 Cannot forth of her sweet throat,
 Sobs the while she draws her breath,
 And the bravery of her note
 In a few days altereth.
 Come, ere she despond, and see
 In a silent ecstasy
 Chestnuts heave for hours and hours
 All the glory of their flowers
 To the melting blue above,
 That broods over them like love.
 Leave the garden walls, where blow
 Apple-blossoms pink, and low
 Ordered beds of tulips fine.
 Seek the blossoms made divine
 With a scent that is their soul.
 These are soulless. Bring the white
 Of thy gown to bathe in light
 Walls for narrow hearts. The whole
 Earth is found, and air and sea,
 Not too wide for thee and me.

Not too wide, and yet thy face
 Gives the meaning of all space;
 And thine eyes with starbeams fraught,
 Hold the measure of all thought;
 For of them my soul besought,
 And was shown a glimpse of thine —
 A veiled vestal, with divine
 Solace, in sweet love's despair,
 For that life is brief as fair.
 Who hath most, he yearneth most,
 Sure, as seldom heretofore,
 Somewhere of the gracious more.
 Deepest joy the least shall boast,
 Asking with new-opened eyes
 The remainder; that which lies
 O, so fair! but not all conned —
 O, so near! and yet beyond.

Come, and in the woodland sit,
 Seem a wonted part of it.
 Then, while moves the delicate air,
 And the glories of thy hair
 Little flickering sun-rays strike,
 Let me see what thou art like;
 For great love enthalls me so,
 That, in sooth, I scarcely know.
 Show me, in a house all green,
 Save for long gold wedges' sheen,
 Where the flies, white sparks of fire,
 Dart and hover and aspire,
 And the leaves, air-stirred on high,
 Feel such joy they needs must sigh,
 And the untracked grass makes sweet
 All fair flowers to touch thy feet,
 And the bees about them hum.
 All the world is waiting. Come!

A WINTER SONG.

CAME the dread Archer up yonder lawn —
 Night is the time for the old to die —
 But woe for an arrow that smote the fawn,
 When the hind that was sick unscathed went by.

Father lay moaning, "Her fault was sore
 (Night is the time when the old must die),
 Yet, ah to bless her, my child, once more,
 For heart is failing: the end is nigh."

"Daughter, my daughter, my girl," I cried
 (Night is the time for the old to die),
 "Woe for the wish if till morn ye bide" —
 Dark was the welkin and wild the sky.

Heavily plunged from the roof the snow —
 (Night is the time when the old will die),
 She answered, "My mother, 'tis well, I go."
 Sparkled the north star, the wrack flew high.

First at his head, and last at his feet
 (Night is the time when the old should die),
 Kneeling I watched till his soul did fleet,
 None else that loved him, none else were nigh.

I wept in the night as the desolate weep
 (Night is the time for the old to die),
 Cometh my daughter? the drifts are deep,
 Across the cold hollows how white they lie.

I sought her afar through the spectral trees
 (Night is the time when the old must die),
 The fells were all muffled, the floods did freeze,
 And a wrathful moon hung red in the sky.

By night I found her where pent waves steal
 (Night is the time when the old should die),
 But she lay stiff by the locked mill-wheel,
 And the old stars lived in their homes on high.

BINDING SHEAVES.

HARK! a lover binding sheaves,
 To his maiden sings,
 Flutter, flutter go the leaves,
 Larks drop their wings.
 Little brooks for all their mirth
 Are not blithe as he.
 "Give me what the love is worth
 That I give thee.

"Speech that cannot be forborne
 Tells the story through:
 I sowed my love in with the corn,
 And they both grew.
 Count the world full wide of girth,
 And hived honey sweet,
 But count the love of more worth
 Laid at thy feet.

"Money's worth is house and land,
 Velvet coat and vest.
 Work's worth is bread in hand,
 Ay, and sweet rest.
 Wilt thou learn what love is worth?
 Ah! she sits above,
 Sighing, 'Weigh me not with earth,
 Love's worth is love.'"

WORK.

LIKE coral insects multitudinous
 The minutes are whereof our life is made.
 They build it up, as in the deep's blue shade
 It grows, it comes to light, and then, and thus
 For both there is an end. The populous
 Sea-blossoms close, our minutes that have paid
 Life's debt of work are spent; the work is laid
 Before our feet that shall come after us.
 We may not stay to watch if it will speed,
 The bard if on some lute's string his song
 Live sweetly yet; the hero if his star
 Doth shine. Work is its own best earthly meed,
 Else have we none more than the sea-born throng
 Who wrought those marvellous isles that bloom afar.

WISHING.

WHEN I reflect how little I have done,
 And add to that how little I have seen,
 Then furthermore how little I have won
 Of joy, or good, how little known, or been:
 I long for other life more full, more keen,
 And yearn to change with such as well have run—
 Yet reason mocks me—nay, the soul, I ween,
 Granted her choice would dare to change with none,
 No, not to feel, as Blondel when his lay
 Pierced the strong tower, and Richard answered
 it—
 No, not to do, as Eustace on the day
 He left fair Calais to her weeping fit—
 No, not to be,—Columbus, waked from sleep
 When his new world rose from the charmed deep.

TO —.

STRANGE was the doom of Heracles, whose shade
 Had dwelling in dim Hades the unblest,
 While yet his form and presence sat a guest
 With the old immortals when the feast was made.
 Thine like, thus differs; form and presence laid
 In this dim chamber of enforced rest,
 It is the unseen "shade" which, risen, hath pressed
 Above all heights where feet Olympian strayed.
 My soul admires to hear thee speak; thy thought
 Falls from a high place like an August star,
 Or some great eagle from his air-hung rings—
 When swooping past a snow-cold mountain sear—
 Down the steep slope of a long sunbeam brought,
 He stirs the wheat with the steerage of his wings.

ON THE BORDERS OF CANNOCK CHASE.

A COTTAGER leaned whispering by her hives,
 Telling the bees some news, as they lit down,
 And entered one by one their waxen town.
 Larks passioning hung o'er their brooding wives,
 And all the sunny hills where heather thrives
 Lay satisfied with peace. A stately crown
 Of trees enringed the upper headland brown,
 And reedy pools, wherein the moor-hen dives,
 Glittered and gleamed.

A resting-place for light,
 They that were bred here love it; but they say,
 "We shall not have it long; in three years' time
 A hundred pits will cast out fires by night,
 Down yon still glen their smoke shall trail its way,
 And the white ash lie thick in lieu of rime."

THE MARINER'S CAVE.

ONCE on a time there walked a mariner,
 That had been shipwrecked, on a lonely shore,
 And the green water made a restless stir,
 And a great flock of mews sped on before.
 He had nor food nor shelter, for the tide
 Rose on the one, and cliffs on the other side.

Brown cliffs they were; they seemed to pierce the
 sky,

That was an awful deep of empty blue,
 Save that the wind was in it, and on high
 A wavering skein of wild-fowl tracked it through.
 He marked them not, but went with movement slow,
 Because his thoughts were sad, his courage low.

His heart was numb, he neither wept nor sighed,
 But wearifully lingered by the wave;
 Until at length it chanced that he espied
 Far up, an opening in the cliff, a cave,
 A shelter where to sleep in his distress,
 And lose his sorrow in forgetfulness.

With that he clambered up the rugged face
 Of that steep cliff that all in shadow lay,
 And, lo, there was a dry and homelike place,
 Comforting refuge for the castaway;
 And he laid down his weary, weary head,
 And took his fill of sleep till dawn waxed red.

When he awoke, warm stirring from the south
 Of delicate summer air did sigh and flow;
 He rose, and, wending to the cavern's mouth,
 He cast his eyes a little way below,
 Where on the narrow ledges, sharp and rude,
 Preening their wings, the blue rock-pigeons cooed

Then he looked lower and saw the lavender
 And sea-thrift blooming in long crevices,
 And the brown wallflower — April's messenger,
 The wallflower marshalled in her companies.
 Then lower yet he looked adown the steep,
 And sheer beneath him lapped the lovely deep.

The laughing deep; — and it was pacified
 As if had not raged that other day.
 And it went murmuring in the morningtide
 Innumerable flatteries on its way,
 Kissing the cliffs and whispering at their feet
 With exquisite advancement, and retreat.

This when the mariner beheld he sighed,
 And thought on his companions lying low.
 But while he gazed with eyes unsatisfied
 On the fair reaches of their overthrow,
 Thinking it strange he only lived of all,
 But not returning thanks, he heard a call!

A soft sweet call, a voice of tender ruth,
 He thought it came from out the cave. And, lo,
 It whispered, "Man, look up!" But he, forsooth,
 Answered, "I cannot, for the long waves flow
 Across my gallant ship where sunk she lies
 With all my riches and my merchandise.

"Moreover, I am heavy for the fate
 Of these my mariners drowned in the deep;
 I must lament me for their sad estate
 Now they are gathered in their last long sleep.
 O! the unpitying heavens upon me frown,
 Then how should I look up? — I must look down."

And he stood yet watching the fair green sea
 Till hunger reached him: then he made a fire,
 A driftwood fire, and wandered listlessly

And gathered many eggs at his desire,
 And dressed them for his meal, and then he lay
 And slept, and woke upon the second day.

When as he said, "The cave shall be my home;
 None will molest me, for the brown cliffs rise
 Like castles of defence behind, — the foam

Of the remorseless sea beneath me lies;
 'Tis easy from the cliff my food to win, —
 The nations of the rock-dove breed therein.

"For fuel, at the ebb yon fair expanse
 Is strewn with driftwood by the breaking wave,
 And in the sea is fish for sustenance.

I will build up the entrance of the cave,
 And leave therein a window and a door,
 And here will dwell and leave it nevermore."

Then even so he did; and when his task,
 Many long days being over, was complete;
 When he had eaten, as he sat to bask

In the red firelight glowing at his feet,
 He was right glad of shelter, and he said,
 "Now for my comrades am I comforted."

Then did the voice awake and speak again;
 It murmured, "Man, look up!" But he replied
 "I cannot. O, mine eyes, mine eyes are fain
 Down on the red wood-ashes to abide
 Because they warm me." Then the voice was still,
 And left the lonely mariner to his will.

And soon it came to pass that he got gain.

He had great flocks of pigeons which he fed,
 And drew great store of fish from out the main,
 And down from eider ducks; and then he said,
 "It is not good that I should lead my life
 In silence, I will take to me a wife."

He took a wife, and brought her home to him;
 And he was good to her and cherished her
 So that she loved him; then when light waxed dim
 Gloom came no more; and she would minister
 To all his wants; while he, being well content,
 Counted her company right excellent.

But once as on the lintel of the door
 She leaned to watch him while he put to sea,
 This happy wife, down-gazing at the shore,
 Said sweetly, "It is better now with me
 Than it was lately when I used to spin
 In my old father's house beside the lin."

And then the soft voice of the cave awoke —
 The soft voice which had haunted it erewhile —
 And gently to the wife it also spoke,
 "Woman, look up!" But she, with tender guile,
 Gave it denial, answering, "Nay, not so,
 For all that I should look on lieth below."

"The great sky overhead is not so good
 For my two eyes as yonder stainless sea,
 The source and yielder of our livelihood,
 Where rocks his little boat that loveth me."
 This when the wife had said she moved away,
 And looked no higher than the wave all day.

Now when the year ran out a child she bore,
 And there was such rejoicing in the cave
 As surely never had there been before
 Since God first made it. Then full, sweet, and
 grave,

The voice, "God's utmost blessing brims thy cup,
 O, father of this child, look up, look up!"

"Speak to my wife," the mariner replied.

"I have much work — right welcome work 'tis
 true —

Another mouth to feed." And then it sighed,
 "Woman, look up!" She said, "Make no ado,
 For I must needs look down, on anywise,
 My heaven is in the blue of these dear eyes."

The seasons of the year did swiftly whirl,
 They measured time by one small life alone;
 On such a day the pretty pushing pearl

That mouth they loved to kiss had sweetly shown,
 That smiling mouth, and it had made essay
 To give them names on such another day.

And afterward his infant history,
 Whether he played with baubles on the floor,
 Or crept to pat the rock-doves pecking nigh,
 And feeding on the threshold of the door,
 They loved to mark, and all his marvellings dim,
 The mysteries that beguiled and baffled him.

He was so sweet, that oft his mother said,
 "O child, how was it that I dwelt content
 Before thou camest! Blessings on thy head,
 Thy pretty talk it is so innocent,
 That oft for all my joy, though it be deep,
 When thou art prattling, I am like to weep."

Summer and winter spent themselves again,
 The rock-doves in their season bred, the cliff
 Grew sweet, for every cleft would entertain
 Its tuft of blossom, and the mariner's skiff,
 Early and late, would linger in the bay,
 Because the sea was calm and winds away.

The little child about that rocky height,
 Led by her loving hand who gave him birth,
 Might wander in the clear unclouded light,
 And take his pastime in the beauteous earth;
 Smell the fair flowers in stony cradles swung,
 And see God's happy creatures feed their young.

And once it came to pass, at eventide,
 His mother set him in the cavern door,
 And filled his lap with grain, and stood aside
 To watch the circling rock-doves soar, and soar,
 Then dip, alight, and run in circling bands,
 To take the barley from his open hands.
 And even while she stood and gazed at him,
 And his grave father's eyes upon him dwelt,
 They heard the tender voice, and it was dim,
 And seemed full softly in the air to melt;
 "Father," it murmured, "Mother," dying away,
 "Look up, while yet the hours are called to-day."
 "I will," the father answered, "but not now;"
 The mother said, "Sweet voice, O speak to me
 At a convenient season." And the brow
 Of the cliff began to quake right fearfully,
 There was a rending crash, and there did leap
 A riven rock and plunge into the deep.
 They said, "A storm is coming;" but they slept
 That night in peace, and thought the storm had
 passed,
 For there was not a cloud to intercept
 The sacred moonlight on the cradle cast;
 And to his rocking boat at dawn of day,
 With joy of heart the mariner took his way.
 But when he mounted up the path at night,
 Foreboding not of trouble or mischance,
 His wife came out into the fading light,
 And met him with a serious countenance;
 And she broke out in tears and sobbings thick,
 "The little child is sick, my little child is sick."
 They knelt beside him in the sultry dark,
 And when the moon looked in his face was pale.
 And when the red sun, like a burning bark,

Rose in a fog at sea, his tender wail
 Sank deep into their hearts, and piteously
 They fell to chiding of their destiny.
 The doves unheeded cooed that livelong day,
 Their pretty playmate cared for them no more;
 The sea-thrift nodded, wet with glistening spray,
 None gathered it; the long wave washed the shore;
 He did not know, nor lift his eyes to trace,
 The new fallen shadow in his dwelling-place.
 The sultry sun beat on the cliffs all day,
 And hot calm airs slept on the polished sea,
 The mournful mother wore her time away,
 Bemoaning of her helpless misery,
 Pleading and plaining, till the day was done,
 "O look on me, my love, my little one."
 "What aileth thee, that thou dost lie and moan?
 Ah! would that I might bear it in thy stead."
 The father made not his forebodings known,
 But gazed, and in his secret soul he said,
 "I may have sinned, on sin waits punishment,
 But as for him, sweet blameless innocent,
 "What has he done that he is stricken down?
 O it is hard to see him sink and fade,
 When I, that counted him my dear life's crown,
 So willingly have worked while he has played;
 That he might sleep, have risen, come storm, come
 heat,
 And thankfully would fast that he might eat."
 My God, how short our happy days appear!
 How long the sorrowful! They thought it long,
 The sultry morn that brought such evil cheer,
 And sat, and wished, and sighed for evensong;
 It came, and cooling wafts about him stirred,
 Yet when they spoke he answered not a word.

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 It came, and cooling wafts about him stirred,
 Yet when they spoke he answered not a word.

"Take heart," they cried, but their sad hearts sank
low

When he would moan and turn his restless head,
And wearily the lagging morns would go,

And nights, while they sat watching by his bed,
Until a storm came up with wind and rain,
And lightning ran along the troubled main.

Over their heads the mighty thunders brake,
Leaping and tumbling down from rock to rock,
Then burst anew and made the cliffs to quake

As they were living things and felt the shock;
The waiting sea to sob as if in pain,
And all the midnight vault to ring again.

A lamp was burning in the mariner's cave,
But the blue lightning flashes made it dim;
And when the mother heard those thunders rave,

She took her little child to cherish him;
She took him in her arms, and on her breast
Full wearily she courted him to rest,

And soothed him long until the storm was spent,
And the last thunder peal had died away,
And stars were out in all the firmament.

Then did he cease to moan, and slumbering lay,
While in the welcome silence, pure and deep,
The care-worn parents sweetly fell asleep.

And in a dream, enwrought with fancies thick,
The mother thought she heard the rock-doves coo
(She had forgotten that her child was sick),

And she went forth their morning meal to strew:
Then over all the cliff with earnest care
She sought her child, and lo, he was not there!

But she was not afraid, though long she sought
And climbed the cliff, and set her feet in grass,
Then reached a river, broad and full, she thought,

And at its brink he sat. Alas! alas!
For one stood near him, fair and undefiled,
An innocent, a marvellous man-child.

In garments white as wool, and O, most fair,
A rainbow covered him with mystic light;
Upon the warmèd grass his feet were bare,
And as he breathed, the rainbow in her sight
In passions of clear crimson trembling lay,
With gold and violet mist made fair the day.

Her little life! she thought, his little hands
Were full of flowers that he did play withal;
But when he saw the boy o' the golden lands,
And looked him in the face, he let them fall,
Held through a rapturous pause in wistful wise
To the sweet strangeness of those keen child-eyes.

"Ah, dear and awful God, who chastenest me,
How shall my soul to this be reconciled!
It is the Saviour of the world," quoth she,
"And to my child He cometh as a child."
Then on her knees she fell by that vast stream —
Oh, it was sorrowful, this woman's dream!

For lo, that Elder Child drew nearer now,
Fair as the light, and purer than the sun.
The calms of heaven were brooding on his brow,
And in his arms He took her little one,
Her child, that knew her, but with sweet demur
Drew back, nor held his hands to come to her.

With that in mother misery sore she wept —
"O Lamb of God, I love my child so much!
He stole away to Thee while we two slept,
But give him back, for thou hast many such;
And as for me I have but one. O deign,
Dear Pity of God, to give him me again."

His feet were on the river. Oh, his feet
 Had touched the river now, and it was great;
 And yet He hearkened when she did entreat,
 And turned in quietness as He would wait —
 Wait till she looked upon Him, and behold,
 There lay a long way off a city of gold.
 Like to a jasper and a sardine stone,
 Whelmed in the rainbow stood that fair man-child,
 Mighty and innocent, that held her own,
 And as might be his manner at home he smiled,
 Then while she looked and looked, the vision brake,
 And all amazed she started up awake.
 And lo, her little child was gone indeed!
 The sleep that knows no waking he had slept,
 Folded to heaven's own heart; in rainbow brede
 Clothed and made glad, while they two mourned
 and wept,
 But in the drinking of their bitter cup
 The sweet voice spoke once more, and sighed,
 "Look up!"
 They heard, and straightway answered, "Even so:
 For what abides that we should look on here?
 The heavens are better than this earth below,
 They are of more account and far more dear.
 We will look up, for all most sweet and fair,
 Most pure, most excellent, is garnered there."

A REVERIE.

WHEN I do sit apart
 And commune with my heart,
 She brings me forth the treasures once my own;
 Shows me a happy place
 Where leaf-buds swelled apace,
 And wasting rims of snow in sunlight shone.

Rock, in a mossy glade,
 The larch-trees lend thee shade,
 That just begin to feather with their leaves;
 From out thy crevice deep
 White tufts of snowdrops peep,
 And melted rime drips softly from thine eaves.

Ah, rock, I know, I know
 That yet thy snowdrops grow,
 And yet doth sunshine fleck them through the tree,
 Whose sheltering branches hide
 The cottage at its side,
 That nevermore will shade or shelter me.

I know the stockdoves' note
 Athwart the glen doth float;
 With sweet foreknowledge of her twins oppressed,
 And longing onward sent,
 She broods before the event,
 While leisurely she mends her shallow nest.

Once to that cottage door,
 In happy days of yore,
 My little love made footprints in the snow.
 She was so glad of spring,
 She helped the birds to sing,
 I know she dwells there yet — the rest I do not know.

They sang, and would not stop,
 While drop, and drop, and drop,
 I heard the melted rime in sunshine fall;
 And narrow wandering rills,
 Where leaned the daffodils,
 Murmured and murmured on, and that was all.

I think, but cannot tell,
 I think she loved me well,
 And some dear fancy with my future twined.

But I shall never know,
 Hope faints, and lets it go,
 That passionate want forbid to speak its mind.

DEFTON WOOD.

I HELD my way through Defton Wood,
 And on to Wandor Hall;

The dancing leaf let down the light,
 In hovering spots to fall.

"O young, young leaves, you match me well,
 My heart was merry, and sung —
 "Now wish me joy of my sweet youth;
 My love — she, too, is young!

O so many, many, many
 Little homes above my head!

O so many, many, many
 Dancing blossoms round me spread!

O so many, many, many
 Maidens sighing yet for none!

Speed, ye wooers, speed with any —
 Speed with all but one."

I took my leave of Wandor Hall,
 And trod the woodland ways.

"What shall I do so long to bear
 The burden of my days?"

I sighed my heart into the boughs
 Whereby the culvers cooed;

For only I between them went
 Unwooing and unwooed.

"O so many, many, many
 Lilies bending stately heads!

O so many, many, many
 Strawberries ripened on their beds!

O so many, many, many
 Maids, and yet my heart undone!
 What to me are all, are any —
 I have lost my — one."

THE SNOWDROP MONUMENT

(In Lichfield Cathedral.)

MARVELS of sleep, grown cold!

Who hath not longed to fold

With pitying ruth, forgetful of their bliss,

Those cherub forms that lie,

With none to watch them nigh,

Or touch the silent lips with one warm human kiss?

What! they are left alone

All night with graven stone,

Pillars and arches that above them meet;

While through those windows high

The journeying stars can spy,

And dim blue moonbeams drop on their uncovered
 feet?

O cold! yet look again,

There is a wandering vein

Traced in the hand where those white snowdrops lie.

Let her rapt dreamy smile

The wondering heart beguile,

That almost thinks to hear a calm contented sigh. ®

What silence dwells between

Those severed lips serene!

The rapture of sweet waiting breathes and grows.

What trance-like peace is shed

On her reclining head,

And e'en on listless feet what languor of repose!

Angels of joy and love
 Lean softly from above
 And whisper to her sweet and marvellous things;
 Tell of the golden gate
 That opened wide doth wait,
 And shadow her dim sleep with their celestial wings.

Hearing of that blest shore
 She thinks on earth no more,
 Contented to forego this wintry land.
 She has nor thought nor care
 But to rest calmly there,
 And hold the snowdrops pale that blossom in her
 hand.

But on the other face
 Broodeth a mournful grace,
 This had foreboding thoughts beyond her years,
 While sinking thus to sleep
 She saw her mother weep,
 And could not lift her hand to dry those heart-sick
 tears.

Could not — but failing lay,
 Sighed her young life away,
 And let her arm drop down in listless rest,
 Too weary on that bed
 To turn her dying head,
 Or fold the little sister nearer to her breast.

Yet this is faintly told
 On features fair and cold,
 A look of calm surprise, of mild regret,
 As if with life oppressed
 She turned her to her rest,
 But felt her mother's love and looked not to forget.

How wistfully they close,
 Sweet eyes, to their repose!
 How quietly declines the placid brow!
 The young lips seem to say,
 "I have wept much to-day,
 And felt some bitter pains, but they are over now."

Sleep! there are left below
 Many who pine to go,
 Many who lay it to their chastened souls,
 That gloomy days draw nigh,
 And they are blest who die,
 For this green world grows worse the longer that
 she rolls.

And as for me I know
 A little of her woe,
 Her yearning want doth in my soul abide,
 And sighs of them that weep,
 "O put us soon to sleep,
 For when we wake—with Thee—we shall be satisfied."

AN ANCIENT CHESS KING.

HAPLY some Rajah first in the ages gone
 Amid his languid ladies fingered thee,
 While a black nightingale, sun-swart as he,
 Sang his one wife, love's passionate oraison;
 Haply thou may'st have pleased Old Prester John
 Among his pastures, when full royally
 He sat in tent, grave shepherds at his knee,
 While lamps of balsam winked and glimmered on.
 What doest thou here? Thy masters are all dead;
 My heart is full of ruth and yearning pain

At sight of thee ; O king that hast a crown
 Outlasting theirs, and tell'st of greatness fled
 Through cloud-hung nights of unabated rain
 And murmurs of the dark majestic town.

COMFORT IN THE NIGHT.

SHE thought by heaven's high wall that she did stray
 Till she beheld the everlasting gate :
 And she climbed up to it to long, and wait,
 Feel with her hands (for it was night), and lay
 Her lips to it with kisses ; thus to pray
 That it might open to her desolate.
 And lo ! it trembled, lo ! her passionate
 Crying prevailed. A little, little way
 It opened : there fell out a thread of light,
 And she saw winged wonders move within ;
 Also she heard sweet talking as they meant
 To comfort her. They said, " Who comes to-night
 Shall one day certainly an entrance win ;"
 Then the gate closed and she awoke content.

THOUGH ALL GREAT DEEDS.

THOUGH all great deeds were proved but fables fine,
 Though earth's old story could be told anew,
 Though the sweet fashions loved of them that sue
 Were empty as the ruined Delphian shrine—
 Though God did never man, in words benign,
 With sense of His great Fatherhood endue,—
 Though life immortal were a dream untrue,
 And He that promised it were not divine—
 Though soul, though spirit were not and all hope
 Reaching beyond the bourn, melted away ;

Though virtue had no goal and good no scope,
 But both were doomed to end with this our clay—
 Though all these were not, — to the ungraced heir
 Would this remain, — to live, as though they were.

THE LONG WHITE SEAM.

AS I came round the harbor buoy,
 The lights began to gleam,
 No wave the land-locked water stirred,
 The crags were white as cream ;
 And I marked my love by candle-light
 Sewing her long white seam.
 It's aye sewing ashore, my dear,
 Watch and steer at sea,
 It's reef and furl, and haul the line,
 Set sail and think of thee.

I climbed to her cottage door ;
 O sweetly my love sings !
 Like a shaft of light her voice breaks forth,
 My soul to meet it springs
 As the shining water leaped of old,
 When stirred by angel wings.

Aye longing to list anew,
 Awake and in my dream,
 But never a song she sang like this,
 Sewing her long white seam.

Fair fall the lights, the harbor lights,
 That brought me in to thee,
 And peace drop down on that low roof
 For the sight that I did see,
 And the voice, my dear, that rang so clear
 All for the love of me.

For O, for O, with brows bent low
By the candle's flickering gleam,
Her wedding gown it was she wrought,
Sewing the long white seam.

AN OLD WIFE'S SONG.

AND what will ye hear, my daughters dear?—

Oh, what will ye hear this night?

Shall I sing you a song of the yuletide cheer,
Or of lovers and ladies bright?

"Thou shalt sing," they say (for we dwell far away
From the land where fain would we be),

"Thou shalt sing us again some old-world strain
That is sung in our own countrie.

"Thou shalt mind us so of the times long ago,
When we walked on the upland lea,
While the old harbor light waxed faint in the white,
Long rays shooting out from the sea;

"While lambs were yet asleep, and the dew lay deep
On the grass, and their fleeces clean and fair.
Never grass was seen so thick nor so green
As the grass that grew up there!

"In the town was no smoke, for none there awoke—
At our feet it lay still as still could be;
And we saw far below the long river flow,
And the schooners a-warping out to sea.

"Sing us now a strain shall make us feel again
As we felt in that sacred peace of morn,
When we had the first view of the wet sparkling dew,
In the shyness of a day just born."

So I sang an old song — it was plain and not long —
I had sung it very oft when they were small;
And long ere it was done they wept every one:
Yet this was all the song — this was all: —

The snow lies white, and the moon gives light,
I'll out to the freezing mere,

And ease my heart with one little song,

For none will be nigh to hear.

And it's O my love, my love!

And it's O my dear, my dear!

It's of her that I'll sing till the wild woods ring,
When nobody's nigh to hear.

My love is young, she is young, is young;
When she laughs the dimple dips.

We walked in the wind, and her long locks blew
Till sweetly they touched my lips.

And I'll out to the freezing mere,

Where the stiff reeds whistle so low,

And I'll tell my mind to the friendly wind,
Because I have loved her so.

Ay, and she's true, my lady is true!

And that's the best of it all;

And when she blushes my heart so yearns
That tears are ready to fall.

And it's O my love, my love!

And it's O my dear, my dear!

It's of her that I'll sing till the wild woods ring,
When nobody's nigh to hear.

COLD AND QUIET.

COLD, my dear, — cold and quiet.

In their cups on yonder lea,

Cowslips fold the brown bee's diet;

So the moss enfoldeth thee.

"Plant me, plant me, O love, a lily flower —
 Plant at my head, I pray you, a green tree;
 And when our children sleep," she sighed, "at the
 dusk hour,
 And when the lily blossoms, O come out to me!"
 Lost, my dear? Lost! nay, deepest
 Love is that which loseth least;
 Through the night-time while thou sleepest,
 Still I watch the shrouded east.
 Near thee, near thee, my wife that aye liveth,
 "Lost" is no word for such a love as mine;
 Love from her past to me a present giveth,
 And love itself doth comfort, making pain divine.
 Rest, my dear, rest. Fair showeth
 That which was, and not in vain
 Sacred have I kept, God knoweth,
 Love's last words atween us twain.
 "Hold by our past, my only love, my lover;
 Fall not, but rise, O love, by loss of me!"
 Boughs from our garden, white with bloom hang
 over.
 Love, now the children slumber, I come out to
 thee.

A SNOW MOUNTAIN.

CAN I make white enough my thought for thee,
 Or wash my words in light? Thou hast no mate
 To sit aloft in silence silently
 And twin those matchless heights undesecrate.
 Reverend as Lear, when, lorn of shelter, he
 Stood, with his old white head, surprised at fate;
 Alone as Galileo, when, set free,
 Before the stars he mused disconsolate.
 Ay, and remote, as the dead lords of song,

Great masters who have made us what we are,
 For thou and they have taught us how to long
 And feel a sacred want of the fair and far:
 Reign, and keep life in this our deep desire —
 Our only greatness is that we aspire.

SLEEP.

(A WOMAN SPEAKS.)

O SLEEP, we are beholden to thee, sleep,
 Thou bearest angels to us in the night,
 Saints out of heaven with palms. Seen by thy
 light
 Sorrow is some old tale that goeth not deep;
 Love is a pouting child. Once I did sweep
 Through space with thee, and, lo, a dazzling sight —
 Stars! They came on, I felt their drawing and
 might;
 And some had dark companions. Once (I weep
 When I remember that) we sailed the tide,
 And found fair isles, where no isles used to bide,
 And met there my lost love, who said to me,
That 'twas a long mistake: he had not died.
 Sleep, in the world to come how strange 'twill be
 Never to want, never to wish for thee!

PROMISING.

(A MAN SPEAKS.)

ONCE, a new world, the sun-swart marinere,
 Columbus, promised, and was sore withstood,
 Ungraced, unhelped, unheard for many a year;
 But let at last to make his promise good.

Promised and promising I go, most dear,
 To better my dull heart with love's sweet feud,
 My life with its most reverent hope and fear,
 And my religion, with fair gratitude.
 O we must part; the stars for me contend,
 And all the winds that blow on all the seas.
 Through wonderful waste places I must wend,
 And with a promise my sad soul appease.
 Promise then, promise much of far-off bliss;
 But—ah, for present joy, give me one kiss.

 LOVE.

Who veileth love should first have vanquished fate,
 She folded up the dream in her deep heart,
 Her fair full lips were silent on that smart,
 Thick fringed eyes did on the grasses wait.
 What good? one eloquent blush, but one, and straight
 The meaning of a life was known; for art
 Is often foiled in playing nature's part,
 And time holds nothing long inviolate.
 Earth's buried seed springs up—slowly, or fast:
 The ring came home, that one in ages past
 Flung to the keeping of unfathomed seas:
 And golden apples on the mystic trees
 Were sought and found, and borne away at last,
 Though watched of the divine Hesperides.

POEMS

*Written on the Deaths of Three Lovely Children who were
 taken from their Parents within a Month of one another.*

HENRY,

AGED EIGHT YEARS.

YELLOW leaves, how fast they flutter—woodland
 hollows thickly strewing,
 Where the wan October sunbeams scantily in the
 mid-day win,
 While the dim gray clouds are drifting, and in sad-
 dened hues imbuing
 All without and all within!

All within! but winds of autumn, little Henry, round
 their dwelling
 Did not load your father's spirit with those deep
 and burdened sighs;—
 Only echoed thoughts of sadness, in your mother's
 bosom swelling,
 Fast as tears that dim her eyes.

Life is fraught with many changes, checked with
 sorrow and mutation,
 But no grief it ever lightened such a truth before
 to know:—
 I behold them—father, mother—as they seem to
 contemplation,
 Only three short weeks ago!

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 To better my dull heart with love's sweet feud,
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 And my religion, with fair gratitude.
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 Flung to the keeping of unfathomed seas:
 And golden apples on the mystic trees
 Were sought and found, and borne away at last,
 Though watched of the divine Hesperides.

POEMS

*Written on the Deaths of Three Lovely Children who were
 taken from their Parents within a Month of one another.*

HENRY,

AGED EIGHT YEARS.

YELLOW leaves, how fast they flutter—woodland
 hollows thickly strewing,
 Where the wan October sunbeams scantily in the
 mid-day win,
 While the dim gray clouds are drifting, and in sad-
 dened hues imbuing
 All without and all within!

All within! but winds of autumn, little Henry, round
 their dwelling
 Did not load your father's spirit with those deep
 and burdened sighs;—
 Only echoed thoughts of sadness, in your mother's
 bosom swelling,
 Fast as tears that dim her eyes.

Life is fraught with many changes, checked with
 sorrow and mutation,
 But no grief it ever lightened such a truth before
 to know:—
 I behold them—father, mother—as they seem to
 contemplation,
 Only three short weeks ago!

Saddened for the morrow's parting — up the stairs
at midnight stealing —

As with cautious foot we glided past the children's
open door, —

"Come in here," they said, the lamplight dimpled
forms at last revealing,

"Kiss them in their sleep once more."

You were sleeping, little Henry, with your eyelids
scarcely closing,

Two sweet faces near together, with their rounded
arms entwined : —

And the rose-bud lips were moving, as if stirred in
their reposing

By the movements of the mind!

And your mother smoothed the pillow, and her sleep-
ing treasures numbered,

Whispering fondly — "He is dreaming" — as you
turned upon your bed —

And your father stooped to kiss you, happy dreamer,
as you slumbered,

With his hand upon your head!

Did he know the true deep meaning of his blessing?
No! he never

Heard afar the summons uttered — "Come up
hither" — Never knew

How the awful Angel faces kept his sleeping boy
forever,

And forever in their view.

Awful Faces, unimpassioned, silent Presences were
by us,

Shrouding wings — majestic beings — hidden by
this earthly veil —

Such as we have called on, saying, "Praise the Lord,
O Ananias,

Azarias and Misael!

But we saw not, and who knoweth, what the mis-
sioned Spirits taught him,

To that one small bed drawn nearer, when we left
him to their will?

While he slumbered, who can answer for what
dreams they may have brought him,

When at midnight all was still?

Father! Mother! must you leave him on his bed,
but not to slumber?

Are the small hands meekly folded on his breast,
but not to pray?

When you count your children over, must you tell a
different number,

Since that happier yesterday?

Father! Mother! weep if need be, since this is a
"time" for weeping,

Comfort comes not for the calling, grief is never
argued down —

Coldly sounds the admonition, "Why lament? in
better keeping

Rests the child than in your own."

"Truth indeed! but, oh! compassion! Have you
sought to scan my sorrow?"

(Mother, you shall meekly ponder, list'ning to that
common tale)

"Does your heart repeat its echo, or by fellow-
feeling borrow

Even a tone that might avail?

"Might avail to steal it from me, by its deep heart-
warm affection?

Might perceive by strength of loving how the fond
words to combine?

Surely no! I will be silent, in your soul is no reflection
Of the care that burdens mine!"

When the winter twilight gathers, Father, and your
thoughts shall wander,
Sitting lonely you shall blend him with your list-
less reveries,
Half forgetful what division holds the form whereon
you ponder

From its place upon your knees—

With a start of recollection, with a half-reproachful
wonder,

Of itself the heart shall question, "Art thou then
no longer here?"

Is it so, my little Henry? Are we set so far asunder
Who were wont to be so near?"

While the fire-light dimly flickers, and the lengthened
shades are meeting,

To itself the heart shall answer, "He shall come
to me no more:

I shall never hear his footsteps nor the child's sweet
voice entreating

For admission at my door."

But upon *your* fair, fair forehead, no regrets nor
griefs are dwelling,

Neither sorrow nor disquiet do the peaceful fea-
tures know;

Nor that look, whose wistful beauty seemed their
sad hearts to be telling,

"Daylight breaketh, let me go!"

Daylight breaketh, little Henry; in its beams your
soul awaketh—

What though night should close around us, dim
and dreary to the view—

Though *our* souls should walk in darkness, far away
that morning breaketh

Into endless day for you!

SAMUEL,

AGED NINE YEARS.

THEY have left you, little Henry, but they have not
left you lonely—

Brothers' hearts so knit together could not, might
not separate dwell,

Fain to seek you in the mansions far away—One
lingered only

To bid those behind farewell!

Gentle Boy!—His childlike nature in most guileless
form was moulded,

And it may be that his spirit woke in glory un-
aware,

Since so calmly he resigned it, with his hands still
meekly folded,

Having said his evening prayer.

Or—if conscious of that summons "Speak, O Lord,
Thy servant heareth"—

As one said, whose name they gave him, might
his willing answer be,

"Here am I"—like him replying—"At Thy gates
my soul appeareth,

For behold Thou calledst me!"

A deep silence—utter silence, on his earthly home
descendeth:—

Reading, playing, sleeping, waking—he is gone,
and few remain!

"O the loss!"—they utter, weeping—every voice
its echo lendeth—

"O the loss!"—But, O the gain!

On that tranquil shore his spirit was vouchsafed an
early landing,
Lest the toils of crime should stain it, or the thrall
of guilt control —

Lest that "wickedness should alter the yet simple
understanding,
Or deceit beguile his soul!"

"Lay not up on earth thy treasure" — they have
read that sentence duly,

Moth and rust shall fret thy riches — earthly good
hath swift decay —

"Even so," each heart replieth — "As for me, my
riches truly

Make them wings and flee away!"

"O my riches! — O my children! — dearest part of
life and being,

Treasures looked to for the solace of this life's
declining years, —

Were our voices cold to hearing — or our faces cold
to seeing,

That ye left us to our tears?"

"We inherit conscious silence, ceasing of some
merry laughter,

And the hush of two sweet voices — (healing
sounds for spirits bruised!)

Of the tread of joyous footsteps in the pathway fol-
lowing after,

Of two names no longer used!"

Question for them, little Sister, in your sweet and
childish fashion —

Search and seek them, Baby Brother, with your
calm and asking eyes —

Dimpled lips that fail to utter fond appeal or sad
compassion,

Mild regret or dim surprise!

There are two tall trees above you, by the high east
window growing,

Underneath them, slumber sweetly, lapt in silence
deep, serene;

Save, when pealing in the distance, organ notes to-
wards you flowing

Echo — with a pause between!

And that pause? — a voice shall fill it — tones that
blessed you daily, nightly,

Well beloved, but not sufficing, Sleepers, to awake
you now,

Though so near he stand, that shadows from your
trees may tremble lightly

On his book and on his brow!

Sleep then ever! Neither singing of sweet birds shall
break your slumber,

Neither fall of dew, nor sunshine, dance of leaves,
nor drift of snow,

Charm those dropt lids more to open, nor the tran-
quil bosoms cumber

With one care for things below!

It is something, the assurance, that *you* ne'er shall
feel like sorrow,

Weep no past and dread no future — know not
sighing, feel not pain —

Nor a day that looketh forward to a mournfuller to-
morrow —

"Clouds returning after rain!"

No, far off, the daylight breaketh, in its beams each
soul awaketh:

"What though clouds," they sigh, "be gathered
dark and stormy to the view,

Though the light our eyes forsaketh, fresh and sweet
behold it breaketh

Into endless day for you!"

KATIE, AGED FIVE YEARS.

(ASLEEP IN THE DAYTIME.)

ALL rough winds are hushed and silent, golden light
the meadow steepeth,

And the last October roses daily wax more pale
and fair;

They have laid a gathered blossom on the breast of
one who sleepeth

With a sunbeam on her hair.

Calm, and draped in snowy raiment she lies still, as
one that dreameth,

And a grave sweet smile hath parted dimpled lips
that may not speak;

Slanting down that narrow sunbeam like a ray of
glory gleameth

On the sainted brow and cheek.

There is silence! They who watch her, speak no
word of grief or wailing,

In a strange unwonted calmness they gaze on and
cannot cease,

Though the pulse of life beat faintly, thought shrink
back, and hope be failing,

They, like Aaron, "hold their peace."

While they gaze on her, the deep bell with its long
slow pauses soundeth;

Long they hearken—father—mother—love has
nothing more to say:

Beating time to feet of Angels leading her where
love aboundeth

Tolls the heavy bell this day.

Still in silence to its tolling they count over all her
meanness

To lie near their hearts and soothe them in all sor-
rows and all fears;

Her short life lies spread before them, but they
cannot tell her sweetness,

Easily as tell her years.

Only daughter—Ah! how fondly Thought around
that lost name lingers,

Oft when lone your mother sitteth, she shall weep
and droop her head,

She shall mourn her baby-sempstress, with those
imitative fingers,

Drawing out her aimless thread.

In your father's Future cometh many a sad uncheered
to-morrow,

But in sleep shall three fair faces heavenly-calm
towards him lean—

Like a threefold cord shall draw him through the
weariness of sorrow,

Nearer to the things unseen.

With the closing of your eyelids close the dreams of
expectation, [their way:

And so ends the fairest chapter in the records of
Therefore—O thou God most holy—God of rest
and consolation,

Be thou near to them this day!

Be Thou near, when they shall nightly, by the bed
of infant brothers,

Hear their soft and gentle breathing, and shall
bless them on their knees;

And shall think how coldly falleth the white moon
light on the others,

In their bed beneath the trees.

Be Thou near, when they, they *only*, bear those faces
in remembrance,

And the number of their children strangers ask
them with a smile;
And when other childlike faces touch them by the
strong resemblance

To those turned to them erewhile.

Be Thou near, each chastened Spirit for its course
and conflict nerving,

Let Thy voice say, "Father — mother — lo! thy
treasures live above!

Now be strong, be strong, no longer cumbered over
much with serving

At the shrine of human love."

Let them sleep! In course of ages e'en the Holy
House shall crumble, [its decline,

And the broad and stately steeple one day bend to
And high arches, ancient arches bowed and decked
in clothing humble,

Creeping moss shall round them twine.

Ancient arches, old and hoary, sunny beams shall
glimmer through them,

And invest them with a beauty we would fain they
should not share,

And the moonlight slanting down them, the white
moonlight shall imbue them

With a sadness dim and fair.

Then the soft green moss shall wrap you, and the
world shall all forget you,

Life, and stir, and toil, and tumult unawares shall
pass you by;

Generations come and vanish: but it shall not grieve
nor fret you,

That they sin, or that they sigh.

And the world, growing old in sinning, shall deny
her first beginning,

And think scorn of words which whisper how that
all must pass away;

Time's arrest and intermission shall account a vain
tradition,

And a dream, the reckoning day!

Till His blast, a blast of terror, shall awake in shame
and sadness

Faithless millions to a vision of the failing earth
and skies,

And more sweet than song of Angels, in their shout
of joy and gladness,

Call the dead in Christ to rise!

Then, by One Man's intercession, standing clear
from their transgression,

Father — mother — you shall meet them fairer than
they were before,

And have joy with the Redeemèd, joy ear hath not
heard — heart dreamèd,

Ay forever — evermore!

THE TWO MARGARETS.

I.

MARGARET BY THE MERE SIDE.

LYING imbedded in the green champaign

That gives no shadow to thy silvery face,
Open to all the heavens, and all their train,

The marshalled clouds that cross with stately pace,
No steadfast hills on thee reflected rest,
Nor waver with the dimpling of thy breast.

Be Thou near, when they, they *only*, bear those faces
in remembrance,

And the number of their children strangers ask
them with a smile;
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O, silent Mere! about whose margins spring
 Thick bulrushes to hide the reed-bird's nest;
 Where the shy ousel dips her glossy wing,
 And balanced in the water takes her rest:
 While under bending leaves, all gem-arrayed,
 Blue dragon-flies sit panting in the shade:

Warm, stilly place, the sundew loves thee well,
 And the greensward comes creeping to thy brink,
 And golden saxifrage and pimpernel
 Lean down to thee their perfumed heads to drink;
 And heavy with the weight of bees doth bend
 White clover, and beneath thy wave descend:

While the sweet scent of bean-fields, floated wide
 On a long eddy of the lightsome air
 Over the level mead to thy lone side,
 Doth lose itself among thy zephyrs rare,
 With wafts from hawthorn bowers and new-cut hay,
 And blooming orchards lying far away.

Thou hast thy Sabbaths, when a deeper calm
 Descends upon thee, quiet Mere, and then
 There is a sound of bells, a far-off psalm
 From gray church towers, that swims across the
 fen;
 And the light sigh where grass and waters meet,
 Is thy meek welcome to the visit sweet.

Thou hast thy lovers. Though the angler's rod
 Dimple thy surface seldom; though the oar
 Fill not with silvery globes thy fringing sod,
 Nor send long ripples to thy lonely shore;
 Though few, as in a glass, have cared to trace
 The smile of nature moving on thy face;

Thou hast thy lovers truly. 'Mid the cold
 Of northern tarns the wild-fowl dream of thee,
 And, keeping thee in mind, their wings unfold,
 And shape their course, high soaring, till they see
 Down in the world, like molten silver, rest
 Their goal, and screaming plunge them in thy breast.

Fair Margaret, who sittest all day long
 On the gray stone beneath the sycamore,
 The bowering tree with branches lithe and strong,
 The only one to grace the level shore,
 Why dost thou wait? for whom with patient cheer
 Gaze yet so wistfully adown the Mere?

Thou canst not tell, thou dost not know, alas!
 Long watchings leave behind them little trace;
 And yet how sweetly must the mornings pass,
 That bring that dreamy calmness to thy face!
 How quickly must the evenings come that find
 Thee still regret to leave the Mere behind!

Thy cheek is resting on thy hand; thine eyes
 Are like twin violets but half enclosed,
 And quiet as the deeps in yonder skies.
 Never more peacefully in love reposed
 A mother's gaze upon her offspring dear,
 Than thine upon the long far-stretching Mere.

Sweet innocent! Thy yellow hair floats low
 In rippling undulations on thy breast,
 Then stealing down the parted love-locks flow,
 Bathed in a sunbeam on thy knees to rest,
 And touch those idle hands that folded lie,
 Having from sport and toil a like humanity,

Through thy life's dream with what a touching grace
 Childhood attends thee, nearly woman grown;
 Her dimples linger yet upon thy face,

Like dews upon a lily this day blown;
Thy sighs are born of peace, unruffled, deep;
So the babe sighs on mother's breast asleep.

It sighs, and wakes, — but thou! thy dream is all,
And thou wert born for it, and it for thee;
Morn doth not take thy heart, nor even-fall

Charm out its sorrowful fidelity,
Nor noon beguile thee from the pastoral shore,
And thy long watch beneath the sycamore.

No, down the Mere, as far as eye can see,
Where its long reaches fade into the sky,
Thy constant gaze, fair child, rests lovingly;

But neither thou nor any can desery
Aught but the grassy banks, the rustling sedge,
And flocks of wild-fowl, splashing at their edge.

And yet 'tis not with expectation hushed
That thy mute rosy mouth doth pouting close;
No fluttering hope to thy young heart e'er rushed,

Nor disappointment troubled its repose;
All satisfied with gazing evermore
Along the sunny Mere and reedy shore.

The brooding wren flies pertly near thy seat,
Thou wilt not move to mark her glancing wing;
The timid sheep browse close before thy feet,
And heedless at thy side do thrushes sing,
So long amongst them thou hast spent thy days,
They know that harmless hand thou wilt not raise

Thou wilt not lift it up — not e'en to take
The foxglove bells that flourish in the shade,
And put them in thy bosom; not to make

A posy of wild hyacinth inlaid
Like bright mosaic in the mossy grass,
With freckled orchis and pale sassafras.

Gaze on; — take in the voices of the Mere,
The break of shallow water at thy feet,
Its splash among long reeds and grasses sere,
And its weird sobbing, — hollow music meet
For ears like thine; listen and talk thy fill,
And dream on it by night, when all is still.

Full sixteen years have slowly passed away,
Young Margaret, since thy fond mother here
Came down, a six months' wife, one April day,
To see her husband's boat go down the Mere,
And track its course, till, lost in distance blue,
In mellow light it faded from her view.

It faded, and she never saw it more; —
Nor any human eye; — oh, grief! oh, woe!
It faded, — and returned not to shore;
But far above it still the waters flow —
And none beheld it sink, and none could tell
Where coldly slept the form she loved so well!

But that sad day, unknowing of her fate,
She homeward turn'd her still reluctant feet;
And at her wheel she spun, till dark and late,
The evening fell; — the time when they should
meet; —

Till the stars paled that at deep midnight burned —
And morning dawned, and he was not returned.

And the bright sun came up, — she thought too soon, —
And shed his ruddy light along the Mere;
And day wore on too quickly, and at noon
She came and wept beside the waters clear.
"How could he be so late?" — and then hope fled;
And disappointment darkened into dread.

He NEVER came, and she with weepings sore
Peered in the water-flags unceasingly;

Through all the undulations of the shore,
 Looking for that which most she feared to see.
 And then she took home sorrow to her heart,
 And brooded over its cold, cruel smart.

And after, desolate she sat alone
 And mourned, refusing to be comforted,
 On the gray stone, the moss-embroidered stone
 With the great sycamore above her head;
 Till after many days a broken oar
 Hard by her seat was drifted to the shore.

It came, — a token of his fate, — the whole
 The sum of her misfortune to reveal;
 As if sent up in pity to her soul,
 The tidings of her widowhood to seal;
 And put away the pining hope forlorn,
 That made her grief more bitter to be borne.

And she was patient; through the weary day
 She toiled; though none was there her work to
 bless,

And did not wear the sullen months away,
 Nor call on death to end her wretchedness,
 But lest the grief should overflow her breast,
 She toiled as heretofore, and would not rest.

But, her work done, what time the evening star
 Rose over the cool water, then she came
 To the gray stone, and saw its light from far
 Drop down the misty Mere white lengths of flame,
 And wondered whether there might be the place
 Where the soft ripple wandered o'er his face.

Unfortunate! In solitude forlorn

She dwelt, and thought upon her husband's grave,
 Till when the days grew short a child was born

To the dead father underneath the wave;
 And it brought back a remnant of delight,
 A little sunshine to its mother's sight;

A little wonder to her heart grown numb,
 And a sweet yearning pitiful and keen:
 She took it as from that poor father come,
 Her and the misery to stand between;
 Her little maiden babe, who day by day
 Sucked at her breast and charmed her woes away.

But years flew on; the child was still the same,
 Nor human language she had learned to speak,
 Her lips were mute, and seasons went and came,
 And brought fresh beauty to her tender cheek;
 And all the day upon the sunny shore
 She sat and mused beneath the sycamore.

Strange sympathy! she watched and wearied not,
 Haply unconscious what it was she sought;
 Her mother's tale she easily forgot,
 And if she listened no warm tears it brought;
 Though surely in the yearnings of her heart
 The unknown voyager must have had his part.

Unknown to her; like all she saw unknown,
 All sights were fresh as when they first began,
 All sounds were new; each murmur and each tone
 And cause and consequence she could not scan,
 Forgot that night brought darkness in its train,
 Nor reasoned that the day would come again.

There is a happiness in past regret;
 And echoes of the harshest sound are sweet.
 The mother's soul was struck with grief, and yet.
 Repeated in her child, 'twas not unmeet
 That echo-like the grief a tone should take
 Painless, but ever pensive for her sake.

For her dear sake, whose patient soul was linked
 By ties so many to the babe unborn;
 Whose hope, by slow degrees become extinct,
 For evermore had left her child forlorn,
 Yet left no consciousness of want or woe,
 Nor wonder vague that these things should be so.

Truly her joys were limited and few,
 But they sufficed a life to satisfy,
 That neither fret nor dim foreboding knew,
 But breathed the air in a great harmony
 With its own place and part, and was at one
 With all it knew of earth and moon and sun.
 For all of them were worked into the dream,—
 The husky sighs of wheat-fields in it wrought;
 All the land-miles belonged to it; the stream
 That fed the Mere ran through it like a thought.
 It was a passion of peace, and loved to wait
 'Neath boughs with fair green light illuminate;
 To wait with her alone; always alone:
 For any that drew near she heeded not,
 Wanting them little as the lily grown
 Apart from others, in a shady plot,
 Wants fellow-lilies of like fair degree,
 In her still glen to bear her company.

Always alone: and yet, there was a child
 Who loved this child, and, from his turret towers
 Across the lea would roam to where, in-isled
 And fenced in rapturous silence, went her hours,
 And, with slow footsteps drawn anear the place
 Where mute she sat, would ponder on her face,

And wonder at her with a childish awe,
 And come again to look, and yet again,
 Till the sweet rippling of the Mere would draw
 His longing to itself; while in her train

The water-ben come forth, would bring her brood
 From slumbering in the rushy solitude;
 Or to their young would curlews call and clang
 Their homeless young that down the furrows
 creep;
 Or the wind-hover in the blue would hang,
 Still as a rock set in the watery deep.
 Then from her presence he would break away,
 Unmarked, ungreeted yet, from day to day.

But older grown, the Mere he haunted yet,
 And a strange joy from its wild sweetness caught;
 Whilst careless sat alone maid Margaret,
 And "shut the gates" of silence on her thought,
 All through spring mornings gemmed with melted
 rime,
 All through hay-harvest and through gleaning time.
 O pleasure for itself that boyhood makes,
 O happiness to roam the sighing shore,
 Plough up with elfin craft the water-flakes,
 And track the nested rail with cautious oar;
 Then floating lie and look with wonder new
 Straight up in the great dome of light and blue.

O pleasure! yet they took him from the wold,
 The reedy Mere, and all his pastime there,
 The place where he was born, and would grow old
 If God his life so many years should spare;
 From the loved haunts of childhood and the plain
 And pasture-lands of his own broad domain.

And he came down when wheat was in the sheaf,
 And with her fruit the apple-branch bent low,
 While yet in August glory hung the leaf,
 And flowerless aftermath began to grow;
 He came from his gray turrets to the shore,
 And sought the maid beneath the sycamore.

He sought her, not because her tender eyes
 Would brighten at his coming, for he knew
 Full seldom any thought of him would rise
 In her fair breast when he had passed from view ;
 But for his own love's sake, that unbeguiled
 Drew him in spirit to the silent child.

For boyhood in its better hour is prone
 To reverence what it hath not understood ;
 And he had thought some heavenly meaning shone
 From her clear eyes, that made their watchings
 good :

While a great peacefulness of shade was shed
 Like oil of consecration on her head.

A fishing wallet from his shoulder slung,
 With bounding foot he reached the mossy place,
 A little moment gently o'er her hung,

Put back her hair and looked upon her face,
 Then fain from that deep dream to wake her yet,
 He "Margaret!" low murmured, "Margaret!"

"Look at me once before I leave the land,
 For I am going, — going, Margaret."

And then she sighed, and, lifting up her hand,

Laid it along his young fresh cheek, and set
 Upon his face those blue twin-deeps, her eyes,
 And moved it back from her in troubled wise,
 Because he came between her and her fate,

The Mere. She sighed again as one oppressed ;
 The waters, shining clear, with delicate

Reflections wavered on her blameless breast ;
 And through the branches dropt, like flickerings fair,
 And played upon her hands and on her hair.

And he, withdrawn a little space to see,

Murmured in tender ruth that was not pain,
 "Farewell, I go; but sometimes think of me,

Maid Margaret;" and there came by again
 A whispering in the reed-beds and the sway
 Of waters: then he turned and went his way.

And wilt thou think on him now he is gone?

No; thou wilt gaze: though thy young eyes grow
 dim,

And thy soft cheek become all pale and wan,
 Still thou wilt gaze, and spend no thought on him;
 There is no sweetness in his laugh for thee —
 No beauty in his fresh heart's gayety.

But wherefore linger in deserted haunts?

Why of the past, as if yet present, sing?

The yellow iris on the margin flaunts,
 With hyacinth the banks are blue in spring,
 And under dappled clouds the lark afloat
 Pours all the April-tide from her sweet throat.

But Margaret — ah! thou art there no more,
 And thick dank moss creeps over thy gray stone.
 Thy path is lost that skirted the low shore,
 With willow-grass and speedwell overgrown;
 Thine eye has closed forever, and thine ear
 Drinks in no more the music of the Mere.

The boy shall come — shall come again in spring.

Well pleased that pastoral solitude to share,
 And some kind offering in his hand will bring

To cast into thy lap, O maid most fair —
 Some clasping gem about thy neck to rest,
 Or heave and glimmer on thy guileless breast.

And he shall wonder why thou art not here

The solitude with "smiles to entertain,"

And gaze along the reaches of the Mere;

But he shall never see thy face again —

Shall never see upon the reedy shore

Maid Margaret beneath her sycamore.

II.

MARGARET IN THE XEBEC.

[“Concerning this man (Robert Delacour), little further is known than that he served in the king’s army, and was wounded in the battle of Marston Moor, being then about twenty-seven years of age. After the battle of Naseby, finding himself a marked man, he quitted the country, taking with him the child whom he had adopted; and he made many voyages between the different ports of the Mediterranean and Levant.”]

RESTING within his tent at turn of day,

A wailing voice his scanty sleep beset:

He started up — it did not flee away —

’Twas no part of his dream, but still did fret

And pine into his heart, “Ah me! ah me!”

Broken with heaving sobs right mournfully.

Then he arose, and, troubled at this thing,

All wearily toward the voice he went

Over the down-trodden bracken and the ling,

Until it brought him to a soldier’s tent,

Where, with the tears upon her face, he found

A little maiden weeping on the ground;

And backward in the tent an aged crone

Upbraided her full harshly more and more,

But sunk her chiding to an undertone

When she beheld him standing at the door,

And calmed her voice, and dropped her lifted hand,

And answered him with accent soft and bland.

No, the young child was none of hers, she said,

But she had found her where the ash lay white

About a smouldering tent; her infant head

All shelterless, she through the dewy night

Had slumbered on the field, — ungentle fate

For a lone child so soft and delicate.

“And I,” quoth she, “have tended her with care,

And thought to be rewarded of her kin,

For by her rich attire and features fair

I know her birth is gentle: yet within

The tent unclaimed she doth but pine and weep,

A burden I would fain no longer keep.”

Still while she spoke the little creature wept,

Till painful pity touched him for the flow

Of all those tears, and to his heart there crept

A yearning as of fatherhood, and lo!

Reaching his arms to her, “My sweet,” quoth he,

“Dear little madam, wilt thou come with me?”

Then she left off her crying, and a look

Of wistful wonder stole into her eyes.

The sullen frown her dimpled face forsook,

She let him take her, and forgot her sighs,

Contented in his alien arms to rest,

And lay her baby head upon his breast.

Ah, sure a stranger trust was never sought

By any soldier on a battle-plain.

He brought her to his tent, and soothed his voice,

Rough with command; and asked, but all in vain

Her story, while her prattling tongue rang sweet,

She playing, as one at home, about his feet.

Of race, of country, or of parentage,

Her lisping accents nothing could unfold; —

No questioning could win to read the page

Of her short life; — she left her tale untold,

And home and kin thus early to forget,

She only knew, — her name was — Margaret.

Then in the dusk upon his arm it chanced

That night that suddenly she fell asleep;

And he looked down on her like one entranced,

And listened to her breathing still and deep,

As if a little child, when daylight closed,
With half-shut lids had ne'er before reposed.

Softly he laid her down from off his arm,
With earnest care and new-born tenderness:
Her infancy, a wonder-working charm,
Laid hold upon his love; he stayed to bless
The small sweet head, then went he forth that night
And sought a nurse to tend this new delight.

And day by day his heart she wrought upon,
And won her way into its inmost fold —
A heart which, but for lack of that whereon
To fix itself, would never have been cold;
And, opening wide, now let her come to dwell
Within its strong unguarded citadel.

She, like a dream, unlocked the hidden springs
Of his past thoughts, and set their current free
To talk with him of half-forgotten things —
The pureness and the peace of infancy,
"Thou also, thou," to sigh, "wert undefiled
(O God, the change!) once, as this little child."

The baby-mistress of a soldier's heart,
She had but friendlessness to stand her friend,
And her own orphanhood to plead her part,
When he, a wayfarer, did pause, and bend,
And bear with him the starry blossom sweet
Out of its jeopardy from trampling feet.

A gleam of light upon a rainy day,
A new-tied knot that must be severed soon,
At sunrise once before his tent at play,
And hurried from the battle-field at noon,
While face to face in hostile ranks they stood,
Who should have dwelt in peace and brotherhood.

But ere the fight, when higher rose the sun,
And yet were distant far the rebel bands,
She heard at intervals a booming gun,
And she was pleased, and laughing clapped her
hands;

Till he came in with troubled look and tone,
Who chose her desolate to be his own.

And he said, "Little madam, now farewell,
For there will be a battle fought ere night.
God be thy shield, for He alone can tell
Which way may fall the fortune of the fight.
To fitter hands the care of thee pertain,
My dear, if we two never meet again."

Then he gave money shortly to her nurse,
And charged her straitly to depart in haste,
And leave the plain, whereon the deadly curse
Of war should light with ruin, death, and waste,
And all the ills that must its presence blight,
E'en if proud victory should bless the right.

"But if the rebel cause should prosper, then
It were not good among the hills to wend;
But journey through to Boston in the fen,
And wait for peace, if peace our God shall send;
And if my life is spared, I will essay,"
Quoth he, "to join you there as best I may."

So then he kissed the child, and went his way;
But many troubles rolled above his head;
The sun arose on many an evil day,
And cruel deeds were done, and tears were shed;
And hope was lost, and loyal hearts were fain
In dust to hide, — ere they two met again.

So passed the little child from thought, from view —
(The snowdrop blossoms, and then is not there,

Forgotten till men welcome it anew),
 He found her in his heavy days of care,
 And with her dimples was again beguiled,
 As on her nurse's knee she sat and smiled.

And he became a voyager by sea,
 And took the child to share his wandering state;
 Since from his native land compelled to flee,
 And hopeless to avert her monarch's fate;
 For all was lost that might have made him pause,
 And, past a soldier's help, the royal cause.

And thus rolled on long days, long months and
 years,

And Margaret within the Xebec sailed;
 The lulling wind made music in her ears,
 And nothing to her life's completeness failed.
 Her pastime 'twas to see the dolphins spring,
 And wonderful live rainbows glimmering.

The gay sea-plants familiar were to her,
 As daisies to the children of the land;
 Red wavy dulse the sunburnt mariner
 Raised from its bed to glisten in her hand;
 The vessel and the sea were her life's stage —
 Her house, her garden, and her hermitage.

Also she had a cabin of her own,
 For beauty like an elfin palace bright,
 With Venice glass adorned, and crystal stone,
 That trembled with a many-colored light;
 And there with two caged ringdoves she did play,
 And feed them carefully from day to day.
 Her bed with silken curtains was enclosed,
 White as the snowy rose of Guelderland;
 On Turkish pillows her young head reposed,
 And love had gathered with a careful hand

Fair playthings to the little maiden's side,
 From distant ports, and cities parted wide.

She had two myrtle-plants that she did tend,
 And think all trees were like to them that grew;
 For things on land she did confuse and blend,
 And chiefly from the deck the land she knew,
 And in her heart she pitied more and more
 The steadfast dwellers on the changeless shore.

Green fields and inland meadows faded out
 Of mind, or with sea-images were linked;
 And yet she had her childish thoughts about
 The country she had left — though indistinct
 And faint as mist the mountain-head that shrouds,
 Or dim through distance as Magellan's clouds.

And when to frame a forest scene she tried,
 The ever-present sea would yet intrude,
 And all her towns were by the water's side,
 It murmured in all moorland solitude,
 Where rocks and the ribbed sand would intervene,
 And waves would edge her fancied village green;

Because her heart was like an ocean shell,
 That holds (men say) a message from the deep.
 And yet the land was strong, she knew its spell,
 And harbor lights could draw her in her sleep;
 And minster chimes from pierced towers that swim,
 Were the land-angels making God a hymn.

So she grew on, the idol of one heart,
 And the delight of many — and her face,
 Thus dwelling chiefly from her sex apart,
 Was touched with a most deep and tender grace —
 A look that never aught but nature gave,
 Artless, yet thoughtful; innocent, yet grave.

Strange her adornings were, and strangely blent:

A golden net confined her nut-brown hair;
Quaint were the robes that divers lands had lent,

And quaint her aged nurse's skill and care;

Yet did they well on the sea-maiden meet,
Circle her neck, and grace her dimpled feet.

The sailor folk were glad because of her,

And deemed good fortune followed in her wake;

She was their guardian saint, they did aver—

Prosperous winds were sent them for her sake;

And strange rough vows, strange prayers, they
nightly made,

While, storm or calm, she slept, in naught afraid.

Clear were her eyes, that daughter of the sea,

Sweet, when uplifted to her aged nurse,

She sat, and communed what the world could be;

And rambling stories caused her to rehearse

How Yule was kept, how maidens tossed the hay,

And how bells rang upon a wedding day.

But they grew brighter when the evening star

First trembled over the still glowing wave,

That bathed in ruddy light, mast, sail, and spar;

For then, reclined in rest that twilight gave,

With him who served for father, friend, and guide,

She sat upon the deck at eventide.

Then turned towards the west, that on her hair

And her young cheek shed down its tender glow.

He taught her many things with earnest care

That he thought fitting a young maid should know.

Told of the good deeds of the worthy dead,

And prayers devout, by faithful martyrs said.

And many psalms he caused her to repeat

And sing them, at his knees reclined the while,

And spoke with her in all things good and meet,

And told the story of her native isle,

Till at the end he made her tears to flow,

Rehearsing of his royal master's woe.

And of the stars he taught her, and their names,

And how the chartless mariner they guide;

Of quivering light that in the zenith flames,

Of monsters in the deep sea caves that hide;

Then changed the theme to fairy records wild,

Enchanted moor, elf dame, or changeling child.

To her the Eastern lands their strangeness spread,

The dark-faced Arab in his long blue gown,

The camel thrusting down a snake-like head

To browse on thorns outside a walled white town,

Where palmy clusters rank by rank upright

Float as in quivering lakes of ribbed light.

And when the ship sat like a broad-winged bird

Becalmed, lo, lions answered in the night

Their fellows, all the hollow dark was stirred

To echo on that tremulous thunder's flight,

Dying in weird faint moans;—till, look! the sun

And night, and all the things of night, were done.

And they, toward the waste as morning brake,

Turned, where, in-isled in his green watered land.

The Lybian Zeus lay couched of old, and spake,

Hemmed in with leagues of furrow-faced sand—

Then saw the moon (like Joseph's golden cup

Come back) behind some ruined roof swim up.

But blooming childhood will not always last,

And storms will rise e'en on the tideless sea;

His guardian love took fright, she grew so fast,

And he began to think how sad 'twould be

If he should die, and pirate hordes should get

By sword or shipwreck his fair Margaret.

It was a sudden thought; but he gave way,
 For it assailed him with unwonted force;
 And, with no more than one short week's delay,
 For English shores he shaped the vessel's course
 And ten years absent saw her landed now,
 With thirteen summers on her maiden brow.
 And so he journeyed with her, far inland,
 Down quiet lanes, by hedges gemmed with dew,
 Where wonders met her eye on every hand,
 And all was beautiful and strange and new —
 All, from the forest trees in stately ranks,
 To yellow cowslips trembling on the banks.
 All new — the long-drawn slope of evening shades,
 The sweet solemnities of waxing light,
 The white-haired boys, the blushing rustic maids,
 The ruddy gleam through cottage casements bright,
 The green of pastures, bloom of garden nooks,
 And endless bubbling of the water-brooks.
 So far he took them on through this green land,
 The maiden and her nurse, till journeying
 They saw at last a peaceful city stand
 On a steep mount, and heard its clear bells ring.
 High were the towers and rich with ancient state,
 In its old wall enclosed and massive gate.
 There dwelt a worthy matron whom he knew,
 To whom in time of war he gave good aid,
 Shielding her household from the plundering crew
 When neither law could bind nor worth persuade;
 And to her house he brought his care and pride,
 Aweary with the way and sleepy-eyed.
 And he, the man whom she was fain to serve,
 Delayed not shortly his request to make,
 Which was, if aught of her he did deserve,

To take the maid, and rear her for his sake,
 To guard her youth, and let her breeding be
 In womanly reserve and modesty.
 And that same night into the house he brought
 The costly fruits of all his voyages —
 Rich Indian gems of wandering craftsmen wrought
 Long ropes of pearls from Persian palaces,
 With ingots pure and coins of Venice mould,
 And silver bars and bags of Spanish gold;
 And costly merchandise of far-off lands,
 And golden stuffs and shawls of Eastern dye,
 He gave them over to the matron's hands,
 With jewelled gauds, and toys of ivory,
 To be her dower on whom his love was set, —
 His dearest child, fair Madam Margaret.
 Then he entreated, that if he should die,
 She would not cease her guardian mission mild.
 Awhile, as undecided, lingered nigh,
 Beside the pillow of the sleeping child,
 Severed one wandering lock of wavy hair,
 Took horse that night, and left her unaware.
 And it was long before he came again —
 So long that Margaret was woman grown;
 And oft she wished for his return in vain,
 Calling him softly in an undertone;
 Repeating words that he had said the while,
 And striving to recall his look and smile.
 If she had known — oh, if she could have known —
 The toils, the hardships of those absent years —
 How bitter thralldom forced the unwilling groan —
 How slavery wrung out subduing tears,
 Not calmly had she passed her hours away,
 Chiding half pettishly the long delay.

But she was spared. She knew no sense of harm,
 While the red flames ascended from the deck;
 Saw not the pirate band the crew disarm,
 Mourned not the floating spars, the smoking wreck.
 She did not dream, and there was none to tell
 That fetters bound the hands she loved so well.

Sweet Margaret — withdrawn from human view,
 She spent long hours beneath the cedar shade,
 The stately trees that in the garden grew,
 And, overtined, a towering shelter made;
 She mused among the flowers, and birds, and bees,
 In winding walks, and bowering canopies;

Or wandered slowly through the ancient rooms,
 Where oriel windows shed their rainbow gleams;
 And tapestried hangings, wrought in Flemish looms
 Displayed the story of King Pharaoh's dreams;
 And, come at noon because the well was deep,
 Beautiful Rachel leading down her sheep.

At last she reached the bloom of womanhood,
 After five summers spent in growing fair;
 Her face betokened all things dear and good,
 The light of somewhat yet to come was there
 Asleep, and waiting for the opening day,
 When childish thoughts, like flowers, would drift
 away.

O! we are far too happy while they last;
 We have our good things first, and they cost
 naught;

Then the new splendor comes unfathomed, vast,
 A costly trouble, ay, a sumptuous thought,
 And will not wait, and cannot be possessed,
 Though infinite yearnings fold it to the breast.

And time, that seemed so long, is fleeting by,
 And life is more than life; love more than love;

We have not found the whole — and we must die —
 And still the unclasped glory floats above.
 The inmost and the utmost faint from sight,
 Forever secret in their veil of light.

Be not too hasty in your flow, you rhymes,
 For Margaret is in her garden bower;
 Delay to ring, you soft cathedral chimes,
 And tell not out too soon the noontide hour;
 For one draws nearer to your ancient town,
 On the green mount down settled like a crown.

He journeyed on, and, as he neared the gate,
 He met with one to whom he named the maid,
 Inquiring of her welfare, and her state,
 And of the matron in whose house she stayed.
 "The maiden dwelt there yet," the townsman said;
 "But, for the ancient lady, — she was dead."

He further said, she was but little known,
 Although reputed to be very fair,
 And little seen (so much she dwelt alone)
 But with her nurse at stated morning prayer;
 So seldom passed her sheltering garden wall,
 Or left the gate at quiet evening fall.

Flow softly, rhymes — his hand is on the door;
 Ring out, ye noontide bells, his welcoming —
 "He went out rich, but he returneth poor;"
 And strong — now something bowed with suffering;
 And on his brow are traced long furrowed lines,
 Earned in the fight with pirate Algerines.

Her aged nurse comes hobbling at his call;
 Lifts up her withered hand in dull surprise,
 And, tottering, leads him through the pillared hall;
 "What! come at last to bless my lady's eyes!"

Dear heart, sweet heart, she's grown a likesome
maid —

Go, seek her where she sitteth in the shade."

The noonday chime had ceased — she did not know
Who watched her, while her ringloves fluttered
near:

While, under the green boughs, in accents low
She sang unto herself. She did not hear
His footsteps till she turned, then rose to meet
Her guest with guileless blush and wonder sweet.

But soon she knew him, came with quickened pace,
And put her gentle hands about his neck;
And leaned her fair cheek to his sunburned face,

As long ago upon the vessel's deck:
As long ago she did in twilight deep,
When heaving waters lulled her infant sleep.

So then he kissed her, as men kiss their own,
And, proudly parting her unbraided hair,
He said: "I did not think to see thee grown
So fair a woman," — but a touch of care
The deep-toned voice through its caressing kept,
And, hearing it, she turned away and wept.

Wept, — for an impress on the face she viewed —
The stamp of feelings she remembered not;
His voice was calmer now, but more subdued,
Not like the voice long loved and unforgot!
She felt strange sorrow and delightful pain —
Grief for the change, joy that he came again.

O pleasant days, that followed his return,
That made his captive years pass out of mind;
If life had yet new pains for him to learn,

Not in the maid's clear eyes he saw it shrined;
And three full weeks he stayed with her, content
To find her beautiful and innocent.

It was all one in his contented sight
As though she were a child, till suddenly,
Waked of the chimes in the dead time of the night
He fell to thinking how the urgency
Of Fate had dealt with him, and could but sigh
For those best things wherein she passed him by.

Down the long river of life how, cast adrift,
She urged him on, still on, to sink or swim;
And all at once, as if a veil did lift,

In the dead time of the night, and bare to him
The want in his deep soul, he looked, was dumb,
And knew himself, and knew his time was come.

In the dead time of the night his soul did sound
The dark sea of a trouble unforeseen,
For that one sweet that to his life was bound
Had turned into a want — a misery keen:
Was born, was grown, and wounded sorely cried
All 'twixt the midnight and the morning tide.

He was a brave man, and he took this thing
And cast it from him with a man's strong hand;
And that next morn, with no sweet altering
Of mien, beside the maid he took his stand,
And copied his past self till ebbing day
Paled its deep western blush, and died away.

And then he told her that he must depart
Upon the morrow, with the earliest light;
And it displeased and pained her at the heart,
And she went out to hide her from his sight
Aneath the cedar trees, where dusk was deep,
And be apart from him awhile to weep

And to lament, till, suddenly aware
Of steps, she started up as fain to flee,
And met him in the moonlight pacing there,

Who questioned with her why her tears might be,
Till she did answer him, all red for shame,
"Kind sir, I weep — the wanting of a name."

"A name!" quoth he, and sighed. "I never knew
Thy father's name; but many a stalwart youth
Would give thee his, dear child, and his love too,
And count himself a happy man forsooth.
Is there none here who thy kind thought hath won?"
But she did falter, and made answer, "None."

Then, as in father-like and kindly mood,
He said, "Dear daughter, it would please me well
To see thee wed; for know it is not good
That a fair woman thus alone should dwell."
She said, "I am content it should be so,
If when you journey I may with you go."

This when he heard, he thought, right sick at heart
Must I withstand myself, and also thee?
Thou, also thou! must nobly do thy part;
That honor leads thee on which holds back me.
No, thou sweet woman; by love's great increase,
I will reject thee for thy truer peace.

Then said he, "Lady! — look upon my face;
Consider well this scar upon my brow;
I have had all misfortune but disgrace;
I do not look for marriage blessings now.
Be not thy gratitude deceived. I know
Thou think'st it is thy duty — I will go!

"I read thy meaning, and I go from hence,
Skilled in the reason; though my heart be rude,
I will not wrong thy gentle innocence,
Nor take advantage of thy gratitude,
But think, while yet the light these eyes shall bless,
The more for thee — of woman's nobleness."

Faultless and fair, all in the moony light,
As one ashamed, she looked upon the ground,
And her white raiment glistened in his sight.
And hark! the vesper chimes began to sound,
Then lower yet she drooped her young, pure cheek,
And still was she ashamed, and could not speak.

A swarm of bells from that old tower o'erhead,
They sent their message sifting through the bough
Of cedars; when they ceased his lady said,
"Pray you forgive me," and her lovely brows
She lifted, standing in her moonlit place,
And one short moment looked him in the face.

Then straight he cried, "O sweetheart, think all one
As no word yet were said between us twain,
And know thou that in this I yield to none —
I love thee, sweetheart, love thee!" so full fain,
While she did leave to silence all her part,
He took the gleaming whiteness to his heart —

The white-robed maiden with the warm white throat,
The sweet white brow, and locks of umber flow,
Whose murmuring voice was soft as rock-dove's note,
Entreating him, and saying, "Do not go!"
"I will not, sweetheart; nay, not now," quoth he,
"By faith and troth, I think thou art for me!"

And so she won a name that eventide,
Which he gave gladly, but would ne'er bespeak,
And she became the rough sea-captain's bride,
Matching her dimples to his sunburnt cheek;
And chasing from his voice the touch of care,
That made her weep when first she heard it there.

One year there was, fulfilled of happiness,
But O! it went so fast, too fast away.
Then came that trouble which full oft doth bless —

It was the evening of a sultry day,
 There was no wind the thread-hung flowers to stir,
 Or float abroad the filmy gossamer.
 Toward the trees his steps the mariner bent,
 Pacing the grassy walks with restless feet:
 And he recalled, and pondered as he went,
 All her most duteous love and converse sweet,
 Till summer darkness settled deep and dim,
 And dew from bending leaves dropt down on him.
 The flowers sent forth their nightly odors faint —
 Thick leaves shut out the starlight overhead;
 While he told over, as by strong constraint
 Drawn on, her childish life on shipboard led,
 And beauteous youth, since first low kneeling there,
 With folded hands she lisped her evening prayer.
 Then he remembered how, beneath the shade,
 She wooed him to her with her lovely words,
 While flowers were closing, leaves in moonlight
 played,
 And in dark nooks withdrew the silent birds.
 So pondered he that night in twilight dim,
 While dew from bending leaves dropt down on him.
 The flowers sent forth their nightly odors faint —
 When, in the darkness waiting, he saw one
 To whom he said — "How fareth my sweet saint?"
 Who answered — "She hath borne to you a son;"
 Then, turning, left him, — and the father said,
 "God rain down blessings on his welcome head!"
 But, Margaret! — *she* never saw the child,
 Nor heard about her *bed* love's mournful wails;
 But to the last, with ocean dreams beguiled,
 Murmured of troubled seas and swelling sails —
 Of weary voyages, and rocks unseen,
 And distant hills in sight, all calm and green. . . .

Woe and alas! — the times of sorrow come,
 And make us doubt if we were ever glad!
 So utterly that inner voice is dumb,
 Whose music through our happy days we had!
 So, at the touch of grief, without our will,
 The sweet voice drops from us, and all is still.
 Woe and alas! for the sea-captain's wife —
 That Margaret who in the Xebec played —
 She spent upon his knee her baby life;
 Her slumbering head upon his breast she laid.
 How shall he learn alone his years to pass?
 How in the empty house? — woe and alas!
 She died, and in the aisle, the minster aisle,
 They made her grave; and there, with fond intent,
 Her husband raised, his sorrow to beguile,
 A very fair and stately monument:
 Her tomb (the careless vergers show it yet),
 The mariner's wife, his love, his Margaret.
 A woman's figure, with the eyelids closed,
 The quiet head declined in slumber sweet;
 Upon an anchor one fair hand reposed,
 And a long ensign folded at her feet,
 And carved upon the bordering of her vest
 The motto of her house — "*Be glibly Rest.*"
 There is an ancient window richly fraught
 And fretted with all hues most rich, most bright,
 And in its upper tracery enwrought
 An olive-branch and dove wide-winged and white,
 An emblem meet for her, the tender dove,
 Her heavenly peace, her duteous earthly love.
 Amid heraldic shields and banners set,
 In twisted knots and wildly-tangled bands,
 Crimson and green, and gold and violet,
 Fall softly on the snowy sculptured hands;
 And, when the sunshine comes, full sweetly rest
 The dove and olive-branch upon her breast.

POEMS FROM "MOPSA THE FAIRY."

THE SHEPHERD LADY.

I.

Who pipes upon the long green hill,
 Where meadow grass is deep?
 The white lamb bleats but followeth on—
 Follow the clean white sheep.
 The dear white lady in yon high tower,
 She hearkeneth in her sleep.
 All in long grass the piper stands,
 Goodly and grave is he;
 Outside the tower, at dawn of day,
 The notes of his pipe ring free.
 A thought from his heart doth reach to hers:
 "Come down, O lady! to me."

She lifts her head, she dons her gown:
 Ah! the lady is fair;
 She ties the girdle on her waist,
 And binds her flaxen hair,
 And down she stealeth, down and down,
 Down the turret stair.

Behold him! With the flock he won
 Along yon grassy lea.
 "My shepherd lord, my shepherd love,
 What wilt thou, then, with me?
 My heart is gone out of my breast,
 And followeth on to thee."

II.

"The white lambs feed in tender grass:
 With them and thee to bide,
 How good it were," she saith at noon;

"Albeit the meads are wide.
 Oh! well is me," she saith when day
 Draws on to eventide.

Hark! hark! the shepherd's voice. Oh, sweet!
 Her tears drop down like rain.
 "Take now this crook, my chosen, my fere,
 And tend the flock full fain;
 Feed them, O lady, and lose not one,
 Till I shall come again."

Right soft her speech: "My will is thine,
 And my reward thy grace!"
 Gone are his footsteps over the hill,
 Withdrawn his goodly face;
 The mournful dusk begins to gather,
 The daylight wanes apace.

III.

On sunny slopes, ah! long the lady
 Feedeth her flock at noon;
 She leads it down to drink at eve
 Where the small rivulets croon.
 All night her locks are wet with dew
 Her eyes outwatch the moon.

Beyond the hills her voice is heard,
 She sings when life doth wane:
 "My longing heart is full of love,
 Nor shall my watch be vain.
 My shepherd lord, I see him not,
 But he will come again."

AND can this be my own world?
 'Tis all gold and snow,
 Save where the scarlet waves are hurled

Down yon gulf below.
'Tis thy world, 'tis my world,
City, mead, and shore,
For he that hath his own world
Hath many worlds more.

LOVE'S THREAD OF GOLD.

In the night she told a story,
In the night and all night through,
While the moon was in her glory,
And the branches dropped with dew.
'Twas my life she told, and round it
Rose the years as from a deep;
In the world's great heart she found it,
Cradled like a child asleep.
In the night I saw her weaving
By the misty moonbeam cold,
All the weft her shuttle cleaving
With a sacred thread of gold.
Ah! she wept me tears of sorrow,
Lulling tears so mystic sweet;
Then she wove my last to-morrow,
And her web lay at my feet.
Of my life she made the story:
I must weep — so soon 'twas told!
But your name did lend it glory,
And your love its thread of gold!

FAILURE.

We are much bound to them that do succeed;
But, in a more pathetic sense, are bound
To such as fail. They all our loss expound;
They comfort us for work that will not speed,
And life — itself a failure.

Ay, his deed,
Sweetest in story, who the dusk profound
Of Hades flooded with entrancing sound,
Music's own tears, was failure. Doth it read
Therefore the worse? Ah, no! so much to dare,
He fronts the regnant Darkness on its throne. —
So much to do; impetuous even there,
He pours out love's disconsolate sweet moan —
He wins; but few for that his deed recall:
Its power is in the look which costs him all.

GIVE US LOVE AND GIVE US PEACE.

One morning, oh! so early, my beloved, my beloved,
All the birds were singing blithely, as if never they
would cease;
'Twas a thrush sang in my garden, "Hear the story,
hear the story!"
And the lark sang, "Give us glory!"
And the dove said, "Give us peace!"
Then I listened, oh! so early, my beloved, my be-
loved,
To that murmur from the woodland of the dove, my
dear, the dove;
When the nightingale came after, "Give us fame to
sweeten duty!"
When the wren sang, "Give us beauty!"
She made answer, "Give us love!"
Sweet is spring, and sweet the morning, my beloved,
my beloved; [the year's increase,
Now for us doth spring, doth morning, wait upon
And my prayer goes up, "Oh, give us, crowned in
youth with marriage glory,
Give for all our life's dear story,
Give us love, and give us peace!"

THE DAYS WITHOUT ALLOY.

WHEN I sit on market-days amid the comers and
the goers,

Oh! full oft I have a vision of the days without
alloy,

And a ship comes up the river with a jolly gang of
towers,

And a "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy! heave,
hoy!"

There is busy talk around me, all about mine ears it
hummeth,

But the wooden wharves I look on, and a dancing,
heaving buoy,

For 'tis tidetime in the river, and she cometh — oh,
she cometh!

With a "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy! heave,
hoy!"

Then I hear the water washing, never golden waves
were brighter,

And I hear the capstan creaking — 'tis a sound
that cannot cloy.

Bring her to, to ship her lading, brig or schooner,
sloop or lighter.

With a "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy! heave,
hoy!"

"Will ye step aboard, my dearest? for the high seas
lie before us."

So I sailed adown the river in those days with-
out alloy;

We are launched! But when, I wonder, shall a
sweeter sound float o'er us

Than yon "pull'e haul'e, pull'e haul'e, yoy!
heave, hoy!"

THE LEAVES OF LIGN ALOES.

Drop, drop from the leaves of lign aloes,

O honey-dew! drop from the tree.

Float up though your clear river shallows,

White lilies, beloved of the bee.

Let the people, O Queen! say, and bless thee,

Her bounty drops soft as the dew,

And spotless in honor confess thee,

As lilies are spotless in hue.

On the roof stands yon white stork awaking,

His feathers flush rosy the while,

For, lo! from the blushing east breaking,

The sun sheds the bloom of his smile.

Let them boast of thy word, "It is certain;

We doubt it no more," let them say,

"Than to-morrow that night's dusky curtain

Shall roll back its folds for the day."

ON THE ROCKS BY ABERDEEN.

On the rocks by Aberdeen,

Where the whislin' wave had been

As I wandered and at e'en

Was eerie;

There I saw thee sailing west,

And I ran with joy opprest —

Ay, and took out all my best,

My dearie.

Then I busked mysel' wi' speed,

And the neighbors cried "What need?

'Tis a lass in any weed

Aye bonny!

Now my heart, my heart is sair:
 What's the good, though I be fair,
 For thou'lt never see me mair,
 Man Johnnie!

FEATHERS AND MOSS.

THE marten flew to the finch's nest,
 Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay:
 "The arrow it sped to thy brown mate's breast:
 Low in the broom is thy mate to-day."
 "Liest thou low, love? low in the broom?
 Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay,
 Warm the white eggs till I learn his doom."
 She beateth her wings, and away, away.
 "Ah, my sweet singer, thy days are told
 (Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay)!
 Thine eyes are dim, and the eggs grow cold.
 O mournful morrow! O dark to-day!"
 The finch flew back to her cold, cold nest,
 Feathers and moss, and a wisp of hay,
 Mine is the trouble that rent her breast,
 And home is silent, and love is clay.

SWEET is childhood — childhood's over,
 Kiss and part.
 Sweet is youth; but youth's a rover —
 So's my heart.
 Sweet is rest; but by all showing
 Toil is nigh.
 We must go. Alas! the going,
 Say "good-bye."

THE GYPSY'S SELLING SONG.

My good man — he's an old, old man,
 And my good man got a fall,
 To buy me a bargain so fast he ran
 When he heard the gypsies call:
 "Buy, buy brushes,
 Baskets wrought o' rushes.
 Buy them, buy them, take them, try them,
 Buy, dames all."

My old man, he has money and land,
 And a young, young wife am I.
 Let him put the penny in my white hand
 When he hears the gypsies cry:
 "Buy, buy laces,
 Veils to screen your faces.
 Buy them, buy them, take and try them.
 Buy, maids, buy."

A WOOING SONG.

My fair lady's a dear, dear lady —
 I walked by her side to woo.
 In a garden alley, so sweet and shady,
 She answered, "I love not you,
 John, John Brady,"
 Quoth my dear lady,
 "Pray now, pray now, go your way now,
 Do, John, do."

Yet my fair lady's my own, own lady,
 For I passed another day;
 While making her moan, she sat all alone,
 And thus, and thus did she say:
 "John, John Brady,"
 Quoth my dear lady,
 "Do now, do now, once more woo now.
 Pray, John, pray!"

SLEEP AND TIME.

"WAKE, baillie, wake! the crafts are out;
Wake!" said the knight, "be quick!
For high street, bye street, over the town
They fight with poker and stick."
Said the squire, "A fight so fell was ne'er
In all thy bailliewick."

What said the old clock in the tower?

"Tick, tick, tick!"

"Wake, daughter, wake! the hour draws on;
Wake," quoth the dame, "be quick!

The meats are set, the guests are coming,
The fiddler waxing his stick."

She said, "The bridegroom waiting and waiting
To see thy face is sick."

What said the new clock in her bower?

"Tick, tick, tick!"

MASTER, QUOTH THE AULD HOUND.

"MASTER," quoth the auld hound,

"Where will ye go?"

"Over moss, over muir,

To court my new jo."

"Master, though the night be merk,

I'll follow through the snow.

"Court her, master, court her,

So shall ye do weel;

But and ben she'll guide the house,

I'll get milk and meal,

Ye'll get liltin' while she sits

With her rock and reel."

"For oh! she has a sweet tongue,
And een that look down,
A gold girdle for her waist,
And a purple gown.
She has a good word forbye
Fra a' folk in the town."

LIKE A LAVEROCK IN THE LIFT.

It's we two, it's we two, it's we two for aye,
All the world and we too, and Heaven be our stay.
Like a laverock in the lift, sing, O bonny bride!
All the world was Adam once, with Eve by his side.

What's the world, my lass, my love! — what can it do?
I am thine, and thou art mine; life is sweet and new.
If the world have missed the mark, let it stand by,
For we two have gotten leave, and once more we'll try

Like a laverock in the lift, sing, O bonny bride!
It's we two, it's we two, happy side by side.
Take a kiss from me thy man; now the song begins:
"All is made afresh for us, and the brave heart wins."

When the darker days come, and no sun will shine,
Thou shalt dry my tears, lass, and I'll dry thine.
It's we two, it's we two, while the world's away,
Sitting by the golden sheaves on our wedding day.

BEEES AND OTHER FELLOW-CREATURES.

The dove laid some little sticks,
Then began to coo;
The gnat took his trumpet up
To play the day through;

The pie chattered soft and long —
 But that she always does;
 The bee did all he had to do,
 And only said, "Buzz."

LITTLE BABE.

Little babe, while burns the west,
 Warm thee, warm thee in my breast;
 While the moon doth shine her best,
 And the dews distil not.

All the land so sad, so fair —
 Sweet its toils are, blest its care.
 Child, we may not enter there!
 Some there are that will not.

Fain would I thy margins know,
 Land of work, and land of snow;
 Land of life, whose rivers flow
 On, and on, and stay not.

Fain would I thy small limbs fold,
 While the weary hours are told,
 Little babe in cradle cold.
 Some there are that may not.

A LAND THAT LIVING WARMTH
DISOWNS.

A land that living warmth disowns,
 It meets my wondering ken;
 A land where all the men are stones,
 Or all the stones are men.

THE PRINCE SHALL TO THE CHASE
AGAIN.

The prince shall to the chase again,
 The dame has got her face again,
 The king shall have his place again
 Aneath the fairy dome.

And all the knights shall woo again,
 And all the doves shall coo again,
 And all the dreams come true again,
 And Jack shall go home.

AT ONE AGAIN.

I. NOONDAY.

Two angry men — in heat they sever,
And one goes home by a harvest field: —
"Hope's naught," quoth he, "and vain endeavor;
I said and say it, I will not yield!"

"As for this wrong, no art can mend it,
The bond is shiver'd that held us twain;
Old friends we be, but law must end it,
Whether for loss or whether for gain.

"Yon stream is small — full slow its wending;
But winning is sweet, but right is fine;
And shoal of trout, or willowy bending —
Though Law be costly — I'll prove them mine.

"His strawberry cow slipped loose her tether,
And trod the best of my barley down;
His little lasses at play together
Pluck'd the poppies my boys had grown.

"What then — Why naught! *She* lack'd of reason;
And *they* — my little ones match them well: —
But *this* — Nay all things have their season,
And 'tis my reason to curb and quell."

II. SUNSET.

So saith he, when noontide fervors flout him,
So thinks, when the West is amber and red,
When he smells the hop-vines sweet about him,
And the clouds are rosy overhead.

While slender and tall the hop-poles going
Straight to the West in their leafy lines,
Portion it out into chambers, glowing,
And bask in red day as the sun declines.

Between the leaves in his latticed arbor
He sees the sky, as they flutter and turn,
While moor'd like boats in a golden harbor
The fleets of feathery cloudlets burn.

Withdrawn in shadow, he thinketh over
Harsh thoughts, the fruit-laden trees among,
Till pheasants call their young to cover,
And cushats coo them a nursery song.

And flocks of ducks forsake their sedges,
Wending home to the wide barn-door,
And loaded wains between the hedges
Slowly creep to his threshing floor —

Slowly creep. And his tired senses
Float him over the magic stream,
To a world where Fancy recompenses
Vengeful thoughts, with a troubled dream!

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III. THE DREAM.

WHAT'S this? a wood? — What's that? one calleth,
 Calleth and cryeth in mortal dread —
 He hears men strive — then somewhat falleth! —
 "Help me, neighbor — I'm hard bestead."

The dream is strong — the voice he knoweth —
 But when he would run, his feet are fast,
 And death lies beyond, and no man goeth
 To help, and he says the time is past.

His feet are held, and he shakes all over, —
 Nay — they are free — he has found the place —
 Green boughs are gather'd — what is't they cover? —
 "I pray you, look on the dead man's face;

"You that stand by," he saith, and cowers —
 "Man, or Angel, to guard the dead
 With shadowy spear, and a brow that lowers,
 And wing-points reared in the gloom o'erhead. —

"I dare not look. He wronged me never.
 Men say we differ'd; they speak amiss:
 This man and I were neighbors ever —
 I would have ventured my life for his.

"But fast my feet were — fast with tangles —
 Aye! words — but they were not sharp, I trow,
 Though parish feuds and vestry wrangles —
 O pitiful sight — I see thee now! —

"If we fell out, 'twas but foul weather,
 After long shining! O bitter cup, —
 What — dead? — why, man, we play'd together —
 Art dead — ere a friend can make it up?"

IV. THE WAKING.

OVER his head the chafer hummeth,
 Under his feet shut daisies bend:
 Waken, man! the enemy cometh,
 Thy neighbor, counted so long a friend.

He cannot waken — and firm, and steady,
 The enemy comes with lowering brow;
 He looks for war, his heart is ready,
 His thoughts are bitter — he will not bow.

He fronts the seat, — the dream is flinging
 A spell that his footsteps may not break, —
 But one in the garden of hops is singing —
 The dreamer hears it, and starts awake.

V. A SONG.

WALKING apart, she thinks none listen;
 And now she carols, and now she stops;
 And the evening star begins to glisten
 Atween the lines of blossoming hops.

Sweetest Mercy, your mother taught you
 All uses and cares that to maids belong;
 Apt scholar to read and to sew she thought you —
 She did not teach you that tender song —

"The lady sang in her charmed bower,
Sheltered and safe under roses blown—

*'Storm cannot touch me, hail, nor shower,
Where all alone I sit, all alone.*

*"My bower! The fair Fay twined it round me;
Care nor trouble can pierce it through;
But once a sigh from the warm world found me
Between two leaves that were bent with dew.*

*"And day to night, and night to morrow,
Though soft as slumber the long hours wore,
I look for my dower of love, of sorrow—
Is there no more—no more—no more?"*

"Give her the sun-sweet light, and duly
To walk in shadow, nor chide her part;
Give her the rose, and truly, truly—
To wear its thorn with a patient heart—

"Misty as dreams the moonbeam lyeth
Chequered and faint on her charmed floor;
The lady singeth, the lady sigheth—
'Is there no more—no more—no more?'"

VI. LOVERS.

A CRASH of boughs!—one through them breaking!
Mercy is startled, and fain would fly,
But e'en as she turns, her steps o'ertaking,
He pleads with her—"Mercy, it is but I!"

"Mercy!" he touches her hand unbidden—
"The air is balmy, I pray you stay—

Mercy?" Her downcast eyes are hidden,
And never a word she has to say.

Till closer drawn, her prison'd fingers
He takes to his lips with a yearning strong;
And she murmurs low, that late she lingers,
Her mother will want her, and think her long.

"Good mother is she, then honor duly
The lightest wish in her heart that stirs,
But there is a bond yet dearer truly,
And there is a love that passeth hers.

"Mercy, Mercy!" Her heart attendeth,—
Love's birthday blush on her brow lies sweet;
She turns her face when his own he bendeth,
And the lips of the youth and the maiden meet.

VII. FATHERS.

Move through the bowering hops, O lovers,—
Wander down to the golden West,—
But two stand mute in the shade that covers
Your love and youth from their souls oppress.

A little shame on their spirits stealing,—
A little pride that is loth to sue,—
A little struggle with soften'd feeling,—
And a world of fatherly care for you.

One says: "To this same running water,
May be, Neighbor, your claim is best."
And one—"Your son has kissed my daughter,
Let the matters between us—rest."

ROSAMUND.

He blew with His winds, and they were scattered.

"ONE soweth and another reapeth." Ay,
Too true, too true. One soweth — unaware
Cometh a reaper stealthily while he dreams,
Bindeth the golden sheaf, and in his bosom
As 'twere between the dewfall and the dawn
Bears it away. Who other was to blame?
Is it I? Is it I? — No verily, not I,
'Twas a good action, and I smart therefore;
Oblivion of a righteous enmity
Wrought me this wrong. I pay with my self-
ruth

That I had ruth toward mine enemy;
It needed not to slay mine enemy,
Only to let him lie and succorless
Drift to the foot o' the Everlasting Throne;
Being mine enemy, he had not accused
One of my nation there of unkind deeds
Or aught the way of war forbids.

Let be!

I will not think upon it. Yet she was —
O, she was dear; my dutiful, dear child.
One soweth — Nay, but I will tell this out,
The first fytte was the best, I call it such
For now as some old song men think on it.

I dwell where England narrows running north;
And while our hay was cut came rumors up
Humming and swarming round our heads like
bees:

"Drake from the bay of Cadiz hath come home,
And they are forth, the Spaniards with a force
Invincible."

"The Prince of Parma, couched
At Dunkirk, e'en by torchlight makes to toil
His shipwright thousands — thousands in the ports
Of Flanders and Brabant. An hundred hendes
Transports to his great squadron adding, all
For our confusion."

"England's great ally
Henry of France, by insurrection fallen,
Of him the said Prince Parma mocking cries,
He shall not help the Queen of England now
Not even with his tears, more needing them
To weep his own misfortune."

Was that all
The truth? Not half, and yet it was enough
(Albeit not half that half was well believed),
For all the land stirred in the half belief
As dreamers stir about to wake; and now
Comes the Queen's message, all her lieges bid
To rise, "lieftnants, and the better sort
Of gentlemen" whereby the Queen's grace meant,
As it may seem the sort that willed to rise
And arm, and come to aid her.

Distance wrought
Safety for us, my neighbors and near friends,
The peril lay along our channel coast
And marked the city, undefended fair
Rich London. O to think of Spanish mail
Ringing — of riotous conquerors in her street,
Chasing and frightening (would there were no more
To think on) her fair wives and her fair maids
— But hope is fain to deem them forth of her.

Then Spain to the sacking; then they tear away
Arras and carved work. O then they break
And toss, and mar her quaint orfèverie
Priceless — then split the wine kegs, spill the
mead,

Trail out the pride of ages in the dust;
Turn over with pikes her silken merchandise,
Strip off the pictures of her kings, and spoil
Their palaces that nigh five hundred years
Have rued no alien footsteps on the floor,
And work — for the days of miracle are gone —
All unimaginable waste and woe.

Some cried, "But England hath the better cause;
We think not those good days indeed are done;
We look to Heaven for aid on England's side."
Then other, "Nay, the harvest is above,
God comforts there His own, and ill men leaves
To run long scores up in this present world,
And pay in another.

Look not here for aid.
Latimer, poor old saint, died in the street
With nigh, men say, three hundred of his kind,
All bid to look for worse death after death,
Succorless, comfortless, unfriended, curst.
Mary, and Gardiner, and the Pope's man Pole
Died upon down, lulled in a silken shade,
Soothed with assurance of a waiting heaven,
And Peter peering through the golden gate,
With his gold key in 's hand to let them in."

"Nay, leave," quoth I, "the martyrs to their
heaven,
And all who live the better that they died.

But look you now, a nation hath no heaven,
A nation's life and work and wickedness
And punishment — or otherwise, I say
A nation's life and goodness and reward
Are here. And in my nation's righteous cause
I look for aid, and cry, So HELP ME GOD
As I will help my righteous nation now
With all the best I have, and know, and am,
I trust Thou wilt not let her light be quenched;
I go to aid, and if I fall — I fall,
And, God of nations, leave my soul to Thee."

Many did say like words, and all would give
Of gold, of weapons, and of horses that
They had to hand or on the spur o' the time
Could gather. My fair dame did sell her rings,
So others. And they sent us well equipped
Who minded to be in the coming fray
Whether by land or sea; my hope the last,
For I of old therewith was conversant.

Then as we rode down southward all the land
Was at her harvesting. The oats were cut
Ere we were three days down, and then the wheat,
And the wide country spite of loathèd threat
Was busy. There was news to hearten us:
The Hollanders were coming roundly in
With sixty ships of war, all fierce, and full
Of spleen, for not alone our sake but theirs
Willing to brave encounter where they might.

So after five days we did sight the Sound,
And look on Plymouth harbor from the hill.
Then I full glad drew bridle, lighted straight,
Ran down and mingled with a waiting crowd.

Many stood gazing on the level deep
That scarce did tremble; 'twas in hue as sloes
That hang till winter on a leafless bough,
So black bulged down upon it a great cloud
And probed it through and through with forked stabs
Incessant, and rolled on it thunder bursts
Till the dark water lowered as one afraid.

That was afar. The land and nearer sea
Lay sweltering in hot sunshine. The brown beach
Scarce whispered, for a soft incoming tide
Was gentle with it. Green the water lapped
And sparkled at all edges. The night-heavens
Are not more thickly speckled o'er with stars
Than that fair harbor with its fishing craft.
And crowds of galleys shooting to and fro
Did feed the ships of war with their stout crews,
And bear aboard fresh water, furniture
Of war, much lesser victual, sallets, fruit,
All manner equipment for the squadron, sails,
Long spars.

Also was chaffering on the Hoe,
Buying and bargaining, taking of leave
With tears and kisses, while on all hands pushed
Tall lusty men with baskets on their heads
Piled of fresh bread, and biscuit newly drawn.

Then shouts, "The captains!"

Raleigh, Hawkins, Drake,
Old Martin Frobisher, and many more;
Howard, the Lord High Admiral, headed them —
They coming leisurely from the bowling green,
Elbowed their way. For in their stoutness loth
To hurry when ill news first brake on them,

They playing a match ashore — ill news I say,
"The Spaniards are toward" — while panic-struck
The people ran about them, Drake cries out,
Knowing their fear should make the danger worse,
"Spaniards, my masters! Let the Spaniards wait.
Fall not a-shouting for the boats; is time
To play the match out, ay to win, and then
To beat the Spaniards."

So the rest gave way
At his insistence, playing that afternoon
The bravest match (one saith) was ever scored.

'Twas no time lost; nay, not a moment lost;
For look you, when the winning cast was made,
The town was calm, the anchors were all up,
The boats were manned to row them each to his
ship,

The lowering cloud in the offing had gone south
Against the wind, and all was work, stir, heed,
Nothing forgot, nor grudged, nor slurred, and most
Men easy at heart as those brave sailors seemed.

And specially the women had put by
On a sudden their deep dread; yon Cornish coast
Neared of his insolency by the foe,
With his high seacastles numerous, seaforts
Many, his galleys out of number, manned
Each by three hundred slaves chained to the oar;
All his strong fleet of lesser ships, but great
As any of ours — why that same Cornish coast
Might have lain farther than the far west land,
So had a few stout-hearted looks and word
Wasted the meaning, chilled the menace of
That frightful danger, imminent, hard at hand.

"The captains come, the captains!" and I turned
 As they drew on. I marked the urgency
 Flashing in each man's eye: fain to be forth
 But willing to be held at leisure. Then
 Cried a fair woman of the better sort
 To Howard, passing by her pannier'd ass,
 "Apples, Lord Admiral, good captains all,
 Look you, red apples sharp and sweet are these."

Quoth he a little chafed, "Let be, let be,
 No time is this for bargaining, good dame.
 Let be;" and pushing past, "Beshrew thy heart
 (And mine that I should say it), bargain! nay.
 I meant not bargaining," she falters; crying,
 "I brought them my poor gift. Pray you now take,
 Pray you."

He stops, and with a childlike smile
 That makes the dame amend, stoops down to
 choose,

While I step up that love not many words,
 "What should he do," quoth I, "to help this need
 That hath a bag of money, and good will?"
 "Charter a ship," he saith, nor e'er looks up,
 "And put aboard her victual, tackle, shot,
 Aught he can lay his hand on — look he give
 Wide sea room to the Spanish hounds, make sail
 For ships of ours, to ease of wounded men,
 And succor with that freight he brings withal."

His foot, yet speaking, was aboard his boat,
 His comrades, each red apples in the hand,
 Come after, and with blessings manifold
 Cheering, and cries, "Good luck, good luck!" they
 speed.

'Twas three years three months past.

O yet methinks
 I hear that thunder crash i' the offing; hear
 Their words who when the crowd melted away
 Gathered together. Comrades we of old,
 About to adventure us at Howard's hest
 On the unsafe sea. For he, a Catholic,
 As is my wife, and therefore my one child,
 Detested and defied th' most Catholic King
 Philip. He, trusted of her grace — and cause
 She had, the nation following suit — he deemed,
 'Twas whisper'd, ay and Raleigh, and Francis
 Drake

No less, the event of battle doubtfuller
 Than English tongue might own; the peril dread
 As aught in this world ever can be deemed
 That is not yet past praying for.

So far
 So good. As birds awaked do stretch their wings
 The ships did stretch forth sail, full clad they
 towered
 And right into the sunset went, hull down
 E'en with the sun.

To us in twilight left,
 Glory being over, came despondent thought
 That mocked men's eager act. From many a hill,
 As if the land complained to Heaven, they sent
 A towering shaft of murky incense high,
 Livid with black despair in lieu of praise.
 The green wood hissed at every beacon's edge
 That widen'd fear. The smell of pitchpots fled
 Far over the field, and tongues of fire leaped up,
 Ay, till all England woke, and knew, and wailed.

But we i' the night through that detested reek
Rode eastward. Every mariner's voice was given
'Gainst any fear for the western shires. The cry
Was all, "They sail for Calais Roads, and thence,
The goal is London."

Naught slept, man nor beast.
Ravens and rooks flew forth, and with black wings,
Affrighted, swept our eyes. Pale eddying moths
Came by in crowds and whirled them on the flames.

We rode till pierced those beacon fires the shafts
O' the sun, and their red smouldering ashes dulled.
Beside them, scorched, smoke-blackened, weary,
leaned
Men that had fed them, dropped their tired arms
And dozed.

And also through that day we rode,
Till reapers at their nooning sat awhile
On the shady side of corn-shocks: all the talk
Of high, of low, or them that went or stayed
Determined but unhopeful; desperate
To strike a blow for England ere she fell.

And ever loomed the Spaniard to our thought,
Still waxed the fame of that great Armament —
New horsemen joining, swelled it more and more —
Their bulky ship galleons having five decks,
Zabraes, pataches, galleys of Portugal,
Caravels rowed with oars, their galliasses
Vast, and complete with chapels, chambers, towers.
And in the said ships of free mariners
Eight thousand, and of slaves two thousand more,
An army twenty thousand strong. O then

Of culverin, of double culverin,
Ordnance and arms, all furniture of war,
Victual, and last their fierceness and great spleen,
Willing to founder, burn, split, wreck themselves,
But they would land, fight, overcome, and reign.

Then would we count up England. Set by theirs,
Her fleet as walnut shells. And a few pikes
Stored in the belfries, and a few brave men
For wielding them. But as the morning wore,
And we went ever eastward, ever on,
Poured forth, poured down, a marching multitude
With stir about the towns; and wagons rolled
With offerings for the army and the fleet.
Then to our hearts valor crept home again,
The loathed name of Alva fanning it;
Alva who did convert from our old faith
With many a black deed done for a white cause
(So spake they erewhile to it dedicate)
Them whom not death could change, nor fire, nor
sword,
To thirst for his undoing.

Ay, as I am a Christian man, our thirst
Was comparable with Queen Mary's. All
The talk was of confounding heretics,
The heretics the Spaniards. Yet methought,
"O their great multitude! Not harbor room
On our long coast for that great multitude.
They land — for who can let them? — give us
battle,
And after give us burial. Who but they,
For he that liveth shall be flying north
To bear off wife and child. Our very graves

Shall Spaniards dig, and in the daisied grass
Trample them down."

Ay, whoso will be brave,
Let him be brave beforehand. After th' event
If by good pleasure of God it go as then
He shall be brave an liketh him. I say
Was no man but that deadly peril feared.

Nights riding two. Scant rest. Days riding three,
Then Foulkstone. Need is none to tell all forth
The gathering stores and men, the charter'd ship
That I, with two, my friends, got ready for sea.
Ready she was, so many another, small
But nimble; and we sailing hugged the shore,
Scaree venturing out, so Drake had willed, a league,
And running westward aye as best we might,
When suddenly — behold them!

On they rocked,
Majestical, slow, sailing with the wind.
O such a sight! O such a sight, mine eyes,
Never shall you see more!

In crescent form,
A vasty crescent night two leagues across
From horn to horn, the lesser ships within,
The great without, they did bestride as 'twere
And make a township on the narrow seas.

It was about the point of dawn: and light.
All gray the sea, and ghostly gray the ships;
And after in the offing rocked our fleet,
Having lain quiet in the summer dark.

O then methought, "Flash, blessed gold of dawn,
And touch the topsails of our Admiral,

That he may after guide an emulous flock,
Old England's innocent white bleating lambs.
Let Spain within a pike's length hear them bleat,
Delivering of their pretty talk in a tongue
Whose meaning cries not for interpreter."

And while I spoke, their topsails, friend and foe,
Glittered — and there was noise of guns; pale
smoke

Lagged after, curdling on the sun-fleck'd main.
And after that? What after that, my soul?
Who ever saw weakling white butterflies
Chasing of gallant swans, and charging them,
And spitting at them long red streaks of flame?
We saw the ships of England even so
As in my vaunting wish that mocked itself
With "Fool, O fool, to brag at the edge of loss."
We saw the ships of England even so
Run at the Spaniards on a wind, lay to,
Bespatter them with hail of battle, then
Take their prerogative of nimble steerage,
Fly off, and ere the enemy, heavy in hand,
Delivered his reply to the wasteful wave
That made its grave of foam, race out of range,
Then tack and crowd all sail, and after them
Again.

So harass'd they that mighty foe,
Moving in all its bravery to the east.
And some were fine with pictures of the saints,
Angels with flying hair and peaked wings,
And high red crosses wrought upon their sails;
From every mast brave flag or ensign flew,
And their long silken pennons serpented

Loose to the morning. And the galley slaves,
Albeit their chains did clink, sang at the oar.

The sea was striped e'en like a tiger skin
With wide ship wakes.

And many cried, amazed,
"What means their patience?"

"Lo you," others said,
"They pay with fear for their great costliness.
Some of their costliest needs must other guard;
Once guarded and in port look to yourselves,
They count one hundred and fifty. It behoves
Better they suffer this long running fight —
Better for them than that they give us battle,
And so delay the shelter of their roads.

"Two of their caravels we sank, and one
(Fouled with her consort in the rigging) took
Ere she could catch the wind when she rode free.
And we have riddled many a sail, and split
Of spars a score or two. What then? To-morrow
They look to straddle across the strait, and hold —
Having aye Calais for a shelter — hold
Our ships in fight. To-morrow shall give account
For our to-day. They will not we pass north
To meddle with Parma's flotilla; their hope
Being Parma, and a convoy they would be
For his flat boats that bode invasion to us;
And if he reach to London — ruin, defeat."

Three fleets the sun went down on, theirs of fame
Th' Armada. After space old England's few;
And after that our dancing cockle-shells,

The volunteers. They took some pride in us,
For we were nimble, and we brought them powder,
Shot, weapons. They were short of these. Ill
found,

Ill found. The bitter fruit of evil thrift.
But while obsequious, darting here and there,
We took their messages from ship to ship,
From ship to shore, the moving majesties
Made Calais Roads, cast anchor, all their less
In the middle ward; their greater ships outside
Impregnable castles fearing not assault.

So did we read their thought, and read it wrong,
While after the running fight we rode at ease,
For many (as is the way of Englishmen)
Having made light of our stout deeds, and light
O' the effects proceeding, saw these spread
To view. The Spanish Admiral's mighty host,
Albeit not broken, harass'd.

Some did tow
Others that we had plagued, disabled, rent;
Many full heavily damaged made their berths.

Then did the English anchor out of range.
To close was not their wisdom with such foe,
Rather to chase him, following in the rear.
Ay, truly they were giants in our eyes
And in our own. They took scant heed of us,
And we looked on, and knew not what to think,
Only that we were lost men, a lost Isle,
In every Spaniard's mind, both great and small.

But no such thought had place in Howard's soul,
And when 'twas dark, and all their sails were
furled,

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 wicked 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?

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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?

I thought so. Yes, every one else was eleven — eleven!

So Oliver went, but the cowslips were tall at my feet,

And all the white orchard with fast-falling blossom was litter'd;

And under and over the branches those little birds twitter'd,

While hanging head downwards they scolded because I was seven.

A pity. A very great pity. One should be eleven. But soon I was happy, the smell of the world was so sweet,

And I saw a round hole in an apple-tree rosy and old.

Then I knew! for I peeped, and I felt it was right they should scold!

Eggs small and eggs many. For gladness I broke into laughter;

And then some one else — oh, how softly! — came after, came after

With laughter — with laughter came after.

And no one was near us to utter that sweet mocking call,

That soon very tired sank low with a mystical fall.

But this was the country — perhaps it was close under heaven;

Oh, nothing so likely; the voice might have come from it even.

I knew about heaven. But this was the country, of this

Light, blossom, and piping, and flashing of wings not at all.

Not at all. No. But one little bird was an easy forgiver:

She peeped, she drew near as I moved from her domicile small,

Then flashed down her hole like a dart — like a dart from the quiver.

And I waded atween the long grasses and felt it was bliss.

— So this was the country; clear dazzle of azure and shiver

And whisper of leaves, and a humming all over the tall

White branches, a humming of bees. And I came to the wall —

A little low wall — and looked over, and there was the river,

The lane that led on to the village, and then the sweet river

Clear shining and slow, she had far far to go from her snow;

But each rush gleamed a sword in the sunlight to guard her long flow,

And she murmur'd, methought, with a speech very soft — very low.

"The ways will be long, but the days will be long," quoth the river,

"To me a long liver, long, long!" quoth the river — the river.

I dreamed of the country that night, of the orchard, the sky,

The voice that had mocked coming after and over
and under.
But at last — in a day or two namely — Eleven
and I
Were very fast friends, and to him I confided the
wonder.
He said that was Echo. "Was Echo a wise kind
of bee
That had learned how to laugh: could it laugh in
one's ear and then fly
And laugh again yonder?" "No; Echo" — he
whispered it low —
"Was a woman, they said, but a woman whom no
one could see
And no one could find; and he did not believe it,
not he,
But he could not get near for the river that held us
asunder.
Yet I that had money — a shilling, a whole silver
shilling —
We might cross if I thought I would spend it."
"Oh yes, I was willing" —
And we ran hand in hand, we ran down to the
ferry, the ferry,
And we heard how she mocked at the folk with a
voice clear and merry
When they called for the ferry; but oh! she was
very — was very
Swift-footed. She spoke and was gone; and when
Oliver cried,
"Hie over! hie over! you man of the ferry — the
ferry!"
By the still water's side she was heard far and
wide — she replied

And she mocked in her voice sweet and merry,
"You man of the ferry,
You man of — you man of the ferry!"
"Hie over!" he shouted. The ferryman came at
his calling,
Across the clear reed-border'd river he ferried us
fast; —
Such a chase! Hand in hand, foot to foot, we ran
on; it surpass'd
All measure her doubling — so close, then so far
away falling,
Then gone, and no more. Oh! to see her but once
unaware,
And the mouth that had mocked, but we might not
(yet sure she was there!),
Nor behold her wild eyes and her mystical counte-
nance fair.
We sought in the wood, and we found the wood-
wren in her stead;
In the field, and we found but the cuckoo that
talked overhead;
By the brook, and we found the reed-sparrow deep-
nested, in brown —
Not Echo, fair Echo! for Echo, sweet Echo! was
flown.
So we came to the place where the dead people
wait till God call.
The church was among them, gray moss over roof,
over wall.
Very silent, so low. And we stood on a green
grassy mound

And looked in at a window, for Echo, perhaps, in
her round
Might have come in to hide there. But no; every
oak-carven seat
Was empty. We saw the great Bible — old, old,
very old,
And the parson's great Prayer-book beside it; we
heard the slow beat
Of the pendulum swing in the tower; we saw the
clear gold
Of a sunbeam float down to the aisle and then
waver and play
On the low chancel step and the railing, and Oliver
said,
"Look, Katie! look, Katie! when Lettice came
here to be wed
She stood where that sunbeam drops down, and all
white was her gown;
And she stepped upon flowers they strew'd for
her." Then quoth small Seven:
"Shall I wear a white gown and have flowers to
walk upon ever?"
All doubtful: "It takes a long time to grow up,"
quoth Eleven;
"You're so little, you know, and the church is so
old, it can never
Last on till you're tall." And in whispers — be-
cause it was old
And holy, and fraught with strange meaning, half
felt, but not told,
Full of old parsons' prayers, who were dead, of old
days, of old folk,
Neither heard nor beheld, but about us, in whis-
pers we spoke.

Then we went from it softly and ran hand in hand
to the strand,
While bleating of flocks and birds' piping made
sweeter the land.
And Echo came back e'en as Oliver drew to the
ferry
"O Katie!" "O Katie!" "Come on, then!" "Come
on, then!" "For, see,
The round sun, all red, lying low by the tree" —
"by the tree."
"By the tree." Ay, she mocked him again, with
her voice sweet and merry:
"Hie over!" "Hie over!" "You man of the
ferry" — "the ferry."
"You man of the ferry —
You man of — you man of — the ferry."

Ay, here — it was here that we woke her, the Echo
of old;
All life of that day seems an echo, and many times
told.
Shall I cross by the ferry to-morrow, and come in
my white
To that little low church? and will Oliver meet
me anon?
Will it all seem an echo from childhood pass'd
over — pass'd on?
Will the grave parson bless us? Hark, hark! in
the dim failing light
I hear her! As then the child's voice clear and
high, sweet and merry
Now she mocks the man's tone with "Hie over!
Hie over the ferry!"

"And Katie." "And Katie." "Art out with the glow-worms to-night, My Katie?" "My Katie!" For gladness I break into laughter And tears. Then it all comes again as from far-away years Again, some one else — oh, how softly! — with laughter comes after, Comes after — with laughter comes after.

PRELUDES TO A PENNY READING.

A Schoolroom.

SCHOOLMASTER (*not certificated*), VICAR, and CHILD.

Vicar. Why did you send for me? I hope all's right?

Schoolmaster. Well, sir, we thought this end o' the room was dark.

V. Indeed! So 'tis. There's my new study lamp —

S. 'Twould stand, sir, well beside yon laurel wreath.

Shall I go fetch it?

V. Do, we must not fail.

Bring candles also.

[*Exit* SCHOOLMASTER. VICAR *arranges chairs.*

Now, small six years old,
And why may you be here?

Child. I'm helping father;
But, father, why d' you take such pains?

V. Sweet soul,
That's what I'm for!

C. What, and for nothing else?

V. Yes! I'm to bring thee up to be a man.

C. And what am I for?

V. There, I'm busy now.

C. Am I to bring you up to be a child?

V. Perhaps! Indeed, I have heard it said thou art.

C. Then when may I begin?

V. I'm busy, I say.
Begin to-morrow an thou canst, my son,
And mind to do it well.

[*Exit* VICAR and CHILD.]

Enter a group of women, and some children.

Mrs. Thorpe. Fine lot o' lights!

Mrs. Jillifer. Should be! Would folk put on their Sunday best

I' the week unless they looked to have it seen?
What, you here, neighbor!

Mrs. Smith. Ay, you may say that.
Old madam called; said she, "My son would feel
So sorry if you did not come," and slipped
The penny in my hand, she did; said I,
"Ma'am, that's not it. In short, some say your
last

Was worth the penny and more. I know a man,
A sober man, who said, and stuck to it,
Worth a good twopence. But I'm strange, I'm shy."
"We hope you'll come for once," said she. In short,

"And Katie." "And Katie." "Art out with the glow-worms to-night, My Katie?" "My Katie!" For gladness I break into laughter And tears. Then it all comes again as from far-away years Again, some one else — oh, how softly! — with laughter comes after, Comes after — with laughter comes after.

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"We hope you'll come for once," said she. In short,

I said I would to oblige 'em.

Mrs. Green. Ah, 'twas well.

Mrs. S. But I feel strange, and music gets i'
my throat,

It always did. And singers be so smart,
Ladies and folk from other parishes,
Candles and cheering, greens and flowers and all,
I was not used to such in my young day;
We kept ourselves at home.

Mrs. J. Never say "used,"
The most of us have many a thing to do
We were not used to. If you come to that,
Why none of us are used to growing old,
It takes us by surprise, as one may say,
That work, when we begin 't, and yet 'tis work
That all of us must do.

Mrs. G. Nay, nay, not all.

Mrs. J. I ask your pardon, neighbor; you be
right,
Not all.

Mrs. G. And my sweet maid scarce three
months dead.

Mrs. J. I ask your pardon truly.

Mrs. G. No, my dear,
Thou'lt never see old days. I cannot stint
To fret, the maiden was but twelve years old,
So toward, such a scholar.

Mrs. S. Ay, when God,
That knows, comes down to choose,
He'll take the best.

Mrs. T. But I'm right glad you came,
it pleases *them*.
My son, that loves his book, "Mother," said he,

"Go to the Reading when you have a chance,
For there you get a change, and you see life."
But Reading or no Reading, I am slow
To learn. When parson after comes his rounds,
"Did it," to ask with a persuading smile,
"Open your mind?" the woman doth not live
Feels more a fool.

Mrs. J. I always tell him "Yes,"
For he means well. Ay, and I like the songs.
Have you heard say what they shall read to-night?

Mrs. S. Neighbor, I hear 'tis something of the
East.

But what, I ask you, is the East to us,
And where d' ye think it lies?

Mrs. J. The children know,
At least they say they do; there's nothing deep
Nor nothing strange but they get hold on it.

Enter SCHOOLMASTER and a dozen children.

S. Now ladies, ladies, you must please to sit
More close; the room fills fast, and all these lads
And maidens either have to sing before
The Reading, or else after. By your leave
I'll have them in the front, I want them here.

[*The women make room.*]

Enter ploughmen, villagers, servants, and children.

And mark me, boys, if I hear cracking o' nuts,
Or see you flicking acorns and what not
While folks from other parishes observe,
You'll hear on it when you don't look to. Tom
And Jemmy and Roger, sing as loud 's ye can,
Sing a the maidens do, are they afraid?

And now I'm stationed handy facing you,
Friends all, I'll drop a word by your good leave.

Young ploughman. Do, master, do, we like your
words a vast.

Though there be naught to back 'em up, ye see,
As when we were smaller.

S. Mark me, then, my lads.
When Lady Laura sang, "I don't think much,"
Says her fine coachman, "of your manners here.
We drove eleven miles in the dark, it rained,
And ruts in your cross roads are deep. We're
here,

My lady sings, they sit all open-mouthed,
And when she's done they never give one cheer."

Old man. Be folks to clap if they don't like the
song?

S. Certain, for manners.

*Enter VICAR, wife, various friends with violins and a
flute. They come to a piano, and one begins softly
to tune his violin, while the VICAR speaks.*

V. Friends, since there is a place where you
must hear

When I stand up to speak, I would not now
If there were any other found to bid
You welcome. Welcome, then; these with me ask
No better than to please, and in good sooth
I ever find you willing to be pleased.

When I demand not more, but when we fain
Would lead you to some knowledge fresh, and ask
Your careful heed, I hear that some of you
Have said, "What good to know, what good to us?
He puts us all to school, and our school days

Should be at end. Nay, if they needs must teach,
Then let them teach us what shall mend our lot;
The laws are strict on us, the world is hard."
You friends and neighbors, may I dare to speak?
I know the laws are strict, and the world hard,
For ever will the world help that man up
That is already coming up, and still
And ever help him down that's going down.
Yet say, "I will take the words out of thy mouth,
O world, being yet more strict with mine own life.
Thou law, to gaze shall not be worth thy while
On whom beyond thy power doth rule himself."
Yet seek to know, for whoso seek to know
They seek to rise, and best they mend their lot.
Methinks, if Adam and Eve in their garden days
Had scorned the serpent, and obediently
Continued God's good children, He Himself
Had led them to the Tree of Knowledge soon
And bid them eat the fruit thereof, and yet
Not find it apples of death.

Vicar's wife (aside). Now, dearest John,
We're ready. Lucky too! you always go
Above the people's heads.

Young farmer stands forward, VICAR presenting him.

SONG.

I.

Sparkle of snow and of frost,
Blythe air and the joy of cold,
Their grace and good they have lost,
As print o' her foot by the fold.
Let me back to yon desert sand,

Rose-lipped love — from the fold,
 Flower-fair girl — from the fold,
 Let me back to the sultry land.
 The world is empty of cheer,
 Forlorn, forlorn, and forlorn,
 As the night-owl's sob of fear,
 As Memnon moaning at morn.
 For love of thee, my dear,
 I have lived a better man,
 O my Mary Anne,
 My Mary Anne.

II.

Away, away, away and away,
 To an old palm-land of tombs,
 Washed clear of our yesterday
 And where never a snowdrop blooms,
 Nor wild becks talk as they go
 Of tender hope we had known,
 Nor mosses of memory grow
 All over the wayside stone.

III.

Farewell, farewell, and farewell,
 As voice of a lover's sigh
 In the wind let yon willow wave
 "Farewell, farewell, and farewell."
 The sparkling frost-stars brave
 On thy shrouded bosom lie;
 Thou art gone apart to dwell,
 But I fain would have said good-bye.
 For love of thee in thy grave

I have lived a better man,
 Oh my Mary Anne,
 My Mary Anne.

Mrs. Thorpe (aside). O hearts! why, what a song!

To think on it, and he a married man!

Mrs. Jillifer (aside). Bless you, that makes for nothing, nothing at all,

They take no heed upon the words. His wife,
 Look you, as pleased as may be, smiles on him.

Mrs. T. (aside). Neighbors, there's one thing beats me. We've enough

O' trouble in the world; I've cried my fill
 Many and many a time by my own fire:
 Now why, I'll ask you, should it comfort me
 And ease my heart when, pitiful and sweet,
 One sings of other souls, and how they mourned?
 A body would have thought that did not know
 Songs must be merry, full of feast and mirth,
 Or else would all folk flee away from them.

Mrs. S. (aside). 'Tis strange, and I too love the sad ones best.

Mrs. T. (aside). Ay, how they clap him!

'Tis as who should say,
 Sing! we were pleased; sing us another song;
 As if they did not know he loves to sing.
 Well may he, not an organ pipe they blow
 On Sunday in the church is half so sweet;
 But he's a hard man.

Mrs. J. (aside). Mark me, neighbors all,
 Hard though he be — ay, and the mistress hard —
 If he do sing 'twill be a sorrowful

Sad tale of sweethearts, that shall make you wish
Your own time would come over again, although
Were partings in 't and tears. Hist! now he
sings.

Young farmer sings again.

"Come hither, come hither." The broom was in
blossom all over yon rise;
There went a wide murmur of brown bees about
it with songs from the wood.
"We shall never be younger! O love, let us forth,
for the world 'neath our eyes,
Ay, the world is made young e'en as we, and
right fair is her youth and right good."

Then there fell the great yearning upon me, that
never yet went into words;
While lovesome and moansome thereon spake
and falter'd the dove to the dove.
And I came at her calling, "Inherit, inherit, and
sing with the birds;"
I went up to the wood with the child of my
heart and the wife of my love.

O pure! O pathetic! Wild hyacinths drank it,
the dream light, apace
Not a leaf moved at all 'neath the blue, they
hung waiting for messages kind;
Tall cherry-trees dropped their white blossom that
drifted no whit from its place,
For the south very far out to sea had the lulling
low voice of the wind.
And the child's dancing foot gave us part in the
ravishment almost a pain,

An infinite tremor of life, a fond murmur that
cried out on time,
Ah short! must all end in the doing and spend
itself sweetly in vain,
And the promise be only fulfilment to lean from
the height of its prime?

"We shall never be younger;" nay, mock me not,
fancy, none call from yon tree;
They have thrown me the world they went over,
went up, and, alas! for my part
I am left to grow old, and to grieve, and to change;
but they change not with me;
They will never be older, the child of my love,
and the wife of my heart.

Mrs. J. I told you so!

Mrs. T. (aside). That did you, neighbor. Ay,
Partings, said you, and tears: I liked the song.

Mrs. G. Who be these coming to the front to
sing?

Mrs. J. (aside). Why, neighbor, these be sweet-
hearts, so 'tis said,

And there was much ado to make her sing;
She would, and would not; and he wanted her,
And, mayhap, wanted to be seen with her.
'Tis Tomlin's pretty maid, his only one.

Mrs. G. (aside). I did not know the maid, so
fair she looks.

Mrs. J. (aside). He's a right proper man she
has at last;

Walks over many a mile (and counts them naught)
To court her after work hours, that he doth,

Not like her other — why, he'd let his work
Go all to wrack, and lay it to his love,
While he would sit and look, and look and sigh.
Her father sent him to the right-about.
"If love," said he, "won't make a man of you,
Why, nothing will! 'Tis mainly that love's for.
The right sort makes," said he, "a lad a man;
The wrong sort makes," said he, "a man a fool."

VICAR presents a young man and a girl.

DUET.

She. While he dreams, mine old grand-sire,
And yon red logs glow,
Honey, whisper by the fire,
Whisper, honey, low.

He. Honey, high 's yon weary hill,
Stiff 's yon weary loam;
Lacks the work o' my good will,
Fain I'd take thee home.

O how much longer, and longer, and longer,
An' how much longer shall the waiting last?
Berries red are grown, April birds are flown,
Martinmas gone over, ay, and harvest past.

She. Honey, bide, the time's awry,
Bide awhile, let be.

He. Take my wage then, lay it by,
Till 't come back with thee.

The red money, the white money,
Both to thee I bring —

She. Bring ye aught beside, honey?

He. Honey, ay, the ring.

Duet. But how much longer, and longer, and
longer,
O how much longer shall the waiting
last?
Berries red are grown, April birds are
flown,
Martinmas gone over, and the harvest
past.

[*Applause.*]

Mrs. S. (aside). O she's a pretty maid, and
sings so small
And high, 'tis like a flute. And she must blush
Till all her face is roses newly blown.
How folks do clap! She knows not where to look.
There now she's off; he standing like a man
To face them.

Mrs. G. (aside). Makes his bow, and after her;
But what's the good of clapping when they're
gone?

Mrs. T. (aside). Why 'tis a London fashion as
I'm told,
And means they'd have 'em back to sing again.

Mrs. J. (aside). Neighbors, look where her
father, red as fire,
Sits pleased and 'shamed, smoothing his Sunday
hat;
And Parson bustles out. Clap on, clap on.
Coming? Not she! There comes her sweetheart
though.

VICAR presents the young man again.

SONG.

I.

Rain clouds flew beyond the fell,
No more did thunders lower,
Patter, patter, on the beck
Dropt a clearing shower.
Eddying floats of creamy foam
Flecked the waters brown,
As we rode up to cross the ford,
Rode up from yonder town.
Waiting on the weather,
She and I together,
Waiting on the weather,
Till the flood went down.

II.

The sun came out, the wet leaf shone,
Dripped the wildwood vine.
Betide me well, betide me woe,
That hour's forever mine.
With thee Mary, with thee Mary,
Full oft I pace again,
Asleep, awake, up yonder glen,
And hold thy bridle rein.
Waiting on the weather,
Thou and I together,
Waiting on the weather,
Till the flood shall wane.

III.

And who, though hope did come to naught,
Would memory give away?
I lighted down, she leaned full low,
Nor chid that hour's delay.
With thee Mary, with thee Mary,
Methought my life to crown,
But we ride up, but we ride up,
No more from yonder town.
Waiting on the weather,
Thou and I together,
Waiting on the weather,
Till the flood go down.

Mrs. J. (*aside*). Well, very well; but what of fiddler Sam?

I ask you, neighbors, if 't be not his turn.
An honest man, and ever pays his score;
Born in the parish, old, blind as a bat,
And strangers sing before him; 'tis a shame!

Mrs. S. (*aside*). Ay, but his daughter —

Mrs. J. (*aside*). Why, the maid's a maid
One would not set to guide the chant in church,
But when she sings to earn her father's bread,
The mildest mother's son may cry "Amen."

Mrs. S. (*aside*). They say he plays not always true.

Mrs. J. (*aside*). What then?

Mrs. T. (*aside*). Here comes my lady. She's
too fat by half
For love songs. O! the lace upon her gown,
I wish I had the getting of it up,
'Twould be a pretty penny in my pouch.

Mrs. J. (aside). Be quiet now for manners.

VICAR presents a lady, who sings.

I.

Dark flocks of wildfowl riding out the storm
Upon a pitching sea,
Beyond gray rollers vex'd that rear and form,
When piping winds urge on their destiny,
To fall back ruined in white continually.

And I at our trysting stone,
Whereto I came down alone,
Was fain o' the wind's wild moan.
O, welcome were wrack and were rain
And beat of the battling main,
For the sake of love's sweet pain,
For the smile in two brown eyes,
For the love in any wise,
To bide though the last day dies;
For a hand on my wet hair,
For a kiss e'en yet I wear,
For — bonny Jock was there.

II.

Pale precipices while the sun lay low
Tinct faintly of the rose,
And mountain islands mirror'd in a flow,
Forgotten of all winds (their manifold
Peaks reared into the glory and the glow),
Floated in purple and gold.
And I, o'er the rocks alone,
Of a shore all silent grown,

Came down to our trysting stone.
And sighed when the solemn ray
Paled in the wake o' the day.
"Wellaway, wellaway —
Comfort is not by the shore,
Going the gold that it wore,
Purple and rose are no more,
World and waters are wan,
And night will be here anon,
And — bonny Jock's gone."

[Moderate applause, and calls for fiddler Sam.]

Mrs. J. (aside). Now, neighbors, call again and
be not 'shamed;
Stand by the parish, and the parish folk,
Them that are poor. I told you! here he comes,
Parson looks glum, but brings him and his girl.

The fiddler Sam plays, and his daughter sings.

Touch the sweet string. Fly forth, my heart,
Upon the music like a bird;
The silvery notes shall add their part,
And haply yet thou shalt be heard.
Touch the sweet string.

The youngest wren of nine
Dimpled, dark, and merry,
Brown her locks, and her two eyne
Browner than a berry.

When I was not in love
Maidens met I many;

Under sun now walks but one,
Nor others mark I any.

Twin lambs, a mild-eyed ewe,
That would her follow bleating,
A heifer white as snow
I'll give to my sweet sweeting.

Touch the sweet string.
If yet too young,
O love of loves, for this my song,
I'll pray thee count it all unsung,
And wait thy leisure, wait it long.
Touch the sweet string.

[*Much applause.*]

Vicar. You hear them, Sam. You needs must
play again,
Your neighbors ask it.

Fiddler. Thank ye, neighbors all,
I have my feelings though I be but poor;
I've tanged the fiddle here this forty year,
And I should know the trick on 't.

The fiddler plays, and his daughter sings.

For Exmoor —
For Exmoor, where the red deer run, my weary
heart doth cry.

She that will a rover wed, far her foot shall hie.
Narrow, narrow, shows the street, dull the narrow
sky.

(*Buy my cherries, whiteheart cherries, good my mas-
ters, buy.*)

For Exmoor —
O he left me, left alone, aye to think and sigh,
"Lambs feed down yon sunny coombe, hind and
yearling shy,
Mid the shrouding vapors walk now like ghosts
on high."
(*Buy my cherries, blackheart cherries, lads and las-
sies, buy.*)

For Exmoor —
Dear my dear, why did ye so? Evil days have I,
Mark no more the antler'd stag, hear the curlew
cry.
Milking at my father's gate while he leans anigh.
(*Buy my cherries, whiteheart, blackheart, golden girls,
O buy.*)

Mrs. T. (*aside*). I've known him play that Ex-
moor song afore.
Ah me! and I'm from Exmoor. I could wish
To hear 't no more.

Mrs. S. (*aside*). Neighbors, 'tis mighty hot.
Ay, now they throw the window up, that's well,
A body could not breathe.

[*The fiddler and his daughter go away.*]

Mrs. J. (*aside*). They'll hear no parson's preach-
ing, no not they!
But innocenter songs, I do allow,
They could not well have sung than these to-
night.

That man knows just so well as if he saw
They were not welcome.

The VICAR stands up, on the point of beginning to read, when the tuning and twang of the fiddle is heard close outside the open window, and the daughter sings in a clear, cheerful voice. A little tittering is heard in the room, and the VICAR pauses discomfited.

I.

O my heart! what a coil is here!
Laurie, why will ye count me dear!
Laurie, Laurie, lad, make not wail,
With a wiser lass ye'll sure prevail,
For ye sing like a woodland nightingale.
And there's no sense in it under the sun;
For of three that woo I can take but one,
So what's to be done — what's to be done?

And

There's no sense in it under the sun.

II.

Hal, brave Hal, from your foreign parts
Come home you'll choose among kinder hearts.
Forget, forget, you're too good to hold
A fancy 'twere best should faint, grow cold,
And fade like an August marigold;
For of three that woo I can take but one,
And what's to be done — what's to be done?
There's no sense in it under the sun.

And

Of three that woo I can take but one.

III.

Geordie, Geordie, I count you true,
Though language sweet I have none for you.

Nay, but take me home to the churning mill
When cherry boughs white on yon mounting hill
Hang over the tufts o' the daffodil.

For what's to be done — what's to be done?

Of three that woo I must e'en take one,

Or there's no sense in it under the sun,

And

What's to be done — what's to be done?

V. (*aside*). What's to be done, indeed!

Wife (*aside*). Done! nothing, love.

Either the thing has done itself, or *they*

Must undo. Did they call for fiddler Sam?

Well, now they have him.

[*More tuning heard outside.*]

Mrs. J. (*aside*). Live and let live's my motto.

Mrs. T. So 'tis mine.

Who's Sam, that he must fly in Parson's face?

He's had his turn. He never gave these lights,

Cut his best flowers —

Mrs. S. (*aside*). He takes no pride in us.

Speak up, good neighbor, get the window shut.

Mrs. J. (*rising*). I ask your pardon truly, that I do —

La! but the window — there's a parlous draught;

The window punishes rheumatic folk —

We'd have it shut, sir.

Others. Truly, that we would.

V. Certainly, certainly, my friends, you shall.

[*The window is shut, and the Reading begins amid marked attention.*]

KISMET.

Into the rock the road is cut full deep,
At its low ledges village children play,
From its high rifts fountains of leafage weep,
And silvery birches sway.

The boldest climbers have its face forsworn,
Sheer as a wall it doth all daring flout;
But benchlike at its base, and weather-worn,
A narrow ledge leans out.

There do they set forth feasts in dishes rude
Wrought of the rush — wild strawberries on
the bed

Left into August, apples brown and crude,
Cress from the cold well-head.

Shy gamesome girls, small daring imps of boys,
But gentle, almost silent at their play —
Their fledgling daws, for food, make far more noise
Ranged on the ledge than they.

The children and the purple martins share
(Loveliest of birds) possession of the place;
They veer and dart cream-breasted round the fair
Faces with wild sweet grace.

Fresh haply from Palmyra desolate,
Palmyra pale in light and storyless —
From perching in old Tadmor mate by mate
In the waste wilderness.

These know the world; what do the children know?
They know the woods, their groaning noises
weird,
They climb in trees that overhang the slow
Deep mill-stream, loved and feared.

Where shaken water-wheels go creak and clack,
List while a lorn thrush calls and almost
speaks;
See willow-wrens with elderberries black
Staining their slender beaks.

They know full well how squirrels spend the day;
They peeped when field-mice stole and stored
the seeds,
And voles along their under-water way
Donned collars of bright beads.

Still from the deep-cut road they love to mark
Where set, as in a frame, the nearer shapes
Rise out of hill and wood; then long downs dark
As purple bloom on grapes.

But farms whereon the tall wheat musters gold,
High barley whitening, creases in bare hills,
Reed-feathered, castle-like brown churches old,
Nor churning water-mills,

Shall make aught seem so fair as that beyond —
Beyond the down, which draws their fealty;
Blow high, blow low, some hearts do aye respond,
The wind is from the sea.

Above the steep-cut steps as they did grow,
The children's cottage homes embowered are
seen;

Were this a world unfallen, they scarce could show
More beauteous red and green.

Milk-white and vestal-chaste the hollyhock
Grows tall, clove, sweetgale nightly shed forth
spice,

Long woodbines leaning over scent the rock
With airs of Paradise.

Here comforted of pilot stars they lie
In charmed dreams, but not of wold nor lea.
Behold a ship! her wide yards score the sky;
She sails a steel-blue sea.

As turns the great amassment of the tide,
Drawn of the silver despot to her throne,
So turn the destined souls, so far and wide
The strong deep claims its own.

Still the old tale, these dreaming islanders,
Each with hot Sunderbunds a somewhat owns
That calls, the grandsire's blood within them stirs,
Dutch Java guards his bones.

And these were orphan'd when a leak was sprung
Far out from land when all the air was balm;
The shipmen saw their faces as they hung,
And sank in the glassy calm.

These, in an orange-sloop their father plied,
Deck-laden deep she sailed from Cadiz town,

A black squall rose, she turned upon her side,
Drank water and went down.

They too shall sail. High names of alien lands
Are in the dream, great names their fathers
knew;
Madras, the white surf rearing on her sands,
E'en they shall breast it too.

See threads of scarlet down fell Roa creep,
When moaning winds rend back her vaporous
veil;
Wild Orinoco wedge-like split the deep,
Raging forth passion-pale;

Or a blue berg at sunrise glittering, tall,
Great as a town adrift come shining on
With sharp spires, gemlike as the mystical
Clear city of Saint John.

Still the old tale; but they are children yet;
O let their mothers have them while they may!
Soon it shall work, the strange mysterious fret
That mars both toil and play.

The sea will claim its own; and some shall mourn;
They also, they, but yet will surely go;
So surely as the planet to its bourne,
The chamois to his snow.

"Father, dear father, bid us now God-speed;
We cannot choose but sail, it thus befell."
"Mother, dear mother —"
"Nay, 'tis all decreed.
Dear hearts, farewell, farewell!"

DORA.

A WAXING moon that, crescent yet,
In all its silver beauty set,
And rose no more in the lonesome night
To shed full-orbed its longed-for light.

Then was it dark; on wold and lea,
In home, in heart, the hours were drear.
Father and mother could no light see,
And the hearts trembled and there was fear.
— So on the mount, Christ's chosen three,
Unware that glory it did shroud,
Feared when they entered into the cloud.

She was the best part of love's fair
Adornment, life's God-given care,
As if He bade them guard His own,
Who should be soon anear His throne.
Dutiful, happy, and who say
When childhood smiles itself away,
"More fair than morn shall prove the day."

Sweet souls so nigh to God that rest,
How shall be bettering of your best!
That promise heaven alone shall view,
That hope can ne'er with us come true,
That prophecy life hath not skill,
No, nor time leave that it fulfil.
There is but heaven, for childhood never
Can yield the all it meant, forever.
Or is there earth, must wane to less
What dawned so close by perfectness.

How guileless, sweet, by gift divine,
How beautiful, dear child, was thine —
Spared all their grief of thee bereaven,
Winner, who had not greatly striven,
Hurts of sin shall not thee soil,
Carking care thy beauty spoil,
So early blest, so young forgiven.

Among the meadows fresh to view,
And in the woodland ways she grew,
On either side a hand to hold,
Nor the world's worst of evil knew,
Nor rued its miseries manifold,
Nor made discovery of its cold.
What more, like one with morn content,
Or of the morrow diffident,
Unconscious, beautiful she stood,
Calm, in young stainless maidenhood.
Then, with the last steps childhood trod,
Took up her fifteen years to God.

Farewell, sweet hope, not long to last,
All life is better for thy past.
Farewell till love with sorrow meet,
To learn that tears are obsolete.

SPERANZA.

Her younger sister, that Speranza hight.

ENGLAND puts on her purple, and pale, pale
With too much light, the primrose doth but wait
To meet the hyacinth; then bower and dale

Shall lose her and each fairy woodland mate.
 April forgets them, for their utmost sum
 Of gift was silent, and the birds are come.

The world is stirring, many voices blend,
 The English are at work in field and way;
 All the good finches on their wives attend,
 And emmets their new towns lay out in clay;
 Only the cuckoo-bird only doth say
 Her beautiful name, and float at large all day.

Everywhere ring sweet clamors, chirruping,
 Chirping, that comes before the grasshopper;
 The wide woods, flurried with the pulse of spring,
 Shake out their wrinkled buds with tremor and
 stir;
 Small noises, little cries, the ear receives
 Light as a rustling foot on last year's leaves.

All in deep dew the satisfied deep grass
 Looking straight upward stars itself with white,
 Like ships in heaven full-sailed do long clouds pass
 Slowly o'er this great peace, and wide sweet
 light,
 While through moist meads draws down yon rushy
 mere
 Influent waters, sobbing, shining, clear.

Almost is rapture poignant; somewhat ails
 The heart and mocks the morning; somewhat
 sighs,
 And those sweet foreigners, the nightingales,
 Made restless with their love, pay down its
 price,

Even the pain; then all the story unfold
 Over and over again — yet 'tis not told.

The mystery of the world whose name is life
 (One of the names of God) all-conquering wends
 And works for aye with rest and cold at strife.
 Its pedigree goes up to Him and ends.
 For it the lucent heavens are clear o'erhead,
 And all the meads are made its natal bed.

Dear is the light, and eye-sight ever sweet,
 What see they all fair lower things that nurse,
 No wonder, and no doubt? Truly their meat,
 Their kind, their field, their foes; man's eyes
 are more;
 Sight is man's having of the universe,
 His pass to the majestic far shore.

But it is not enough, ah not enough
 To look upon it and be held away,
 And to be sure that, while we tread the rough,
 Remote dull paths of this dull world, no ray
 Shall pierce to us from the inner soul of things,
 Nor voice thrill out from its deep master-strings.

"To show the skies, and tether to the sod!
 A daunting gift!" we mourn in our long strife,
 And God is more than all our thought of God;
 E'en life itself more than our thought of life,
 And that is all we know — and it is noon,
 Our little day will soon be done — how soon!

O let us to ourselves be dutiful:
 We are not satisfied, we have wanted all,

Not alone beauty, but that Beautiful;
 A lifted veil, an answering mystical.
 Ever men plead, and plain, admire, implore,
 "Why gavest Thou so much — and yet — not more."

We are but let to look, and Hope is weighed."
 Yet, say the Indian words of sweet renown,
 "The doomed tree withholdeth not her shade
 From him that bears the axe to cut her down;"
 Is hope cut down, dead, doomed, all is vain:
 The third day dawns, she too has risen again

(For Faith is ours by gift, but Hope by right),
 And walks among us whispering as of yore:
 "Glory and grace are thrown thee with the light;
 Search, if not yet thou touch the mystic shore;
 Immanent beauty and good are nigh at hand,
 For infants laugh and snowdrops bloom in the land.

Thou shalt have more anon." What more? In
 sooth,

The mother of to-morrow is to-day,
 And brings forth after her kind. There is no ruth
 On the heart's sigh, that "more" is hidden away,
 And man's to-morrow yet shall pine and yearn;
 He shall surmise, and he shall not discern,

But list the lark, and want the rapturous cries
 And passioning of morning stars that sing
 Together; mark the meadow-orchis rise
 And think it freckled after an angel's wing;
 Absent desire his land, and feel this, one
 With the great drawing of the central sun.

But not to all such dower, for there be eyes
 Are color-blind, and souls are spirit-blind.
 Those never saw the blush in sunset skies,
 Nor the others caught a sense not made of words
 As if were spirits about, that sailed the wind
 And sank and settled on the boughs like birds.

Yet such for aye divided from us are
 As other galaxies that seem no more
 Than a little golden millet-seed afar.
 Divided; swarming down some flat lee shore,
 Then risen, while all the air that takes no word
 Tingles, and trembles as with cries not heard.

For they can come no nearer. There is found
 No meeting point. We have pierced the lodging-
 place
 Of stars that cluster'd with their peers lie bound,
 Embedded thick, sunk in the seas of space,
 Fortunate orbs that know not night, for all
 Are suns; — but we have never heard that call,

Nor learned it in our world, our citadel
 With outworks of a Power about it traced;
 Nor why we needs must sin who would do well,
 Nor why the want of love, nor why its waste,
 Nor how by dying of One should all be sped,
 Nor where, O Lord, Thou has laid up our dead.

But Hope is ours by right, and Faith by gift.
 Though Time be as a moon upon the wane
 Who walk with Faith far up the azure lift
 Oft hear her talk of lights to wax again.

"If man be lost," she cries, "in this vast sea
Of being,—lost—he would be lost with Thee

Who for his sake once, as he hears, lost all.

For Thou wilt find him at the end of the days:
Then shall the flocking souls that thicker fall
Than snowflakes on the everlasting ways
Be counted, gathered, claimed.—Will it be long?
Earth has begun already her swan-song.

Who, even that might, would dwell forever pent
In this fair frame that doth the spirit inhearse,
Nor at the last grow weary and content,
Die, and break forth into the universe,
And yet man would not all things—all—were
new."

Then saith the other, that one robed in blue:

What if with subtle change God touch their eyes
When He awakes them,—not far off, but here
In a new earth, this: not in any wise
Strange, but more homely sweet, more heavenly
dear,

Or if He roll away, as clouds disperse
Somewhat, and lo, that other universe.

O how 'twere sweet new waked in some good hour,
Long time to sit on a hillside green and high,
There like a honeybee domed in a flower
To feed unneath the azure bell o' the sky,
Feed in the midmost home and fount of light
Sown thick with stars at noonday as by night,

To watch the flying faultless ones wheel down,
Alight, and run along some ridged peak,

Their feet adust from orbs of old renown,
Procyon or Mazzaroth, haply;—when they
speak
Other-world errands wondrous, all discern
That would be strange, there would be much to
learn.

Ay, and it would be sweet to share unblamed
Love's shining truths that tell themselves in
tears,
Or to confess and be no more ashamed
The wrongs that none can right through earthly
years;
And seldom laugh, because the tenderness
Calm, perfect, would be more than joy—would
bless.

I tell you it were sweet to have enough,
And be enough. Among the souls forgiven
In presence of all worlds, without rebuff
To move, and feel the excellent safety leaven
With peace that awe must loss and the grave sur-
vive—

But palpitating moons that are alive
Nor shining fogs swept up together afar,
Vast as a thought of God, in the firmament;
No, and to dart as light from star to star
Would not long time man's yearning soul con-
tent:

Albeit were no more ships and no more sea,
He would desire his new earth presently.

Leisure to learn it. Peoples would be here;
 They would come on in troops, and take at will
 The forms, the faces they did use to wear
 With life's first splendors — raiment rich with
 skill

Of broidery, carved adornments, crowns of gold;
 Still would be sweet to them the life of old.

Then might be gatherings under golden shade,
 Where dust of water drifts from some sheer fall,
 Cooling day's ardor. There be utterance made
 Of comforted love, dear freedom after thrall,
 Large longings of the Seer, through earthly years
 An everlasting burden, but no tears.

Egypt's adopted child might tell of lore
 They taught him underground in shrines all dim,
 And of the live tame reptile gods that wore
 Gold anklets on their feet. And after him,
 With fairest eyes e'er met of mortal ken,
 Glorious, forgiven, might speak the mother of men,

Talk of her apples gather'd by the marge
 Of lapsing Gihon. "Thus one spoke, I stood,
 I ate." Or next the mariner-saint enlarge
 Right quaintly on his ark of gopher wood
 To wandering men through high grass meads that
 ran

Or sailed the sea Mediterranean.

It might be common — earth afforested
 Newly, to follow her great ones to the sun,
 When from transcendent aisles of gloom they sped

Some work august (there would be work) now
 done.
 And list, and their high matters strive to scan
 The seekers after God, and lovers of man,

Sitting together in amity on a hill,
 The Saint of Visions from Greek Patmos come —
 Aurelius, lordly, calm-eyed, as of will
 Austere, yet having rue on lost, lost Rome,
 And with them one who drank a fateful bowl,
 And to the unknown God trusted his soul.

The mitred Cranmer pitied even there
 (But could it be?) for that false hand which signed
 O, all pathetic — no. But it might bear
 To soothe him marks of fire — and gladsome kind
 The man, as all of joy him well beseemed
 Who "lighted on a certain place and dreamed."

And fair with the meaning of life their divine
 brows,
 The daughters of well-doing famed in song;
 But what! could old-world love for child, for
 spouse,

For land, content through lapsing eons long?
 Oh for a watchword strong to bridge the deep
 And satisfy of fulness after sleep.

What know we? Whispers fall, "*And the last first,*
And the first last." The child before the king?
 The slave before that man a master erst?
 The woman before her lord? Shall glory fling
 The rolls aside — time raze out triumphs past?
 They sigh, "*And the last first, and the first last.*"

Answers that other, "Lady, sister, friend,
It is enough, for I have worshipped Life;
With Him that is the Life man's life shall blend,
E'en now the sacred heavens do help his strife,
There do they knead his bread and mix his cup,
And all the stars have leave to bear him up.

Yet must he sink and fall away to a sleep,
As did his Lord, His Life his worshipped
Religion, Life. The silence may be deep,
Life listening, watching, waiting by His dead,
Till at the end of days they wake full fain
Because their King, the Life, doth love and reign.

I know the King shall come to that new earth,
And His feet stand again as once they stood,
In His Man's eyes will shine Time's end and worth
The chiefest beauty and the chiefest good,
And all shall have the all and in it bide,
And every soul of man be satisfied.

THE BEGINNING.

THEY tell strange things of the primeval earth,
But things that be are never strange to those
Among them. And we know what it was like,
Many are sure they walked in it; the proof
This, the all gracious, all admired gift
Called life, called world, called thought, was all as
one,
Nor yet divided more than that old earth

Among the tribes. Self was not fully come —
Self was asleep, embedded in the whole.

I too dwelt once in a primeval world,
Such as they tell of, all things wonderful;
Voices, ay visions, people grand and tall
Thronged in it, but their talk was overhead
And bore scant meaning, that one wanted not
Whose thought was sight as yet unbound of words,
This kingdom of heaven having entered through
Being a little child.

Such as can see,
Why should they doubt? The childhood of a race,
The childhood of a soul, hath neither doubt
Nor fear. Where all is super-natural
The guileless heart doth feed on it, no more
Afraid than angels are of heaven.

Who saith
Another life, the next one shall not have
Another childhood growing gently thus,
Able to bear the poignant sweetness, take
The rich long awful measure of its peace,
Endure the presences sublime?

"I saw
Once in the earth primeval, once — a face,
A little face that yet I dream upon."

"Of this world was it?"

"Not of this world — no,
In the beginning — for methinks it was
In the beginning, but an if you ask
How long ago, time was not then, nor date
For marking. It was always long ago,
E'en from the first recalling of it, long
And long ago.

And I could walk, and went,
Led by the hand through a long mead at morn,
Bathed in a ravishing excess of light.
It throbbed, and as it were fresh fallen from heaven,
Sank deep into the meadow grass. The sun
Gave every blade a bright and a dark side,
Glitter'd on buttercups that topped them, slipped
To soft red puffs, by some called holy-hay.

The wide oaks in their early green stood still
And took delight in it. Brown specks that made
Very sweet noises quivered in the blue;
Then they came down and ran along the brink
Of a long pool, and they were birds.

The pool

Pranked at the edges with pale peppermint,
A rare amassment of veined cuckoo flowers
And flags blue-green was lying below. This all
Was sight, it condescended not to words
Till memory kissed the charmed dream.

The mead

Hollowing and heaving, in the hollows fair
With dropping roses fell away to it,
A strange sweet place; upon its further side
Some people gently walking took their way
Up to a wood beyond; and also bells
Sang, floated in the air, hummed — what you will."

"Then it was Sunday?"

"Sunday was not yet;

It was a holiday, for all the days
Were holy. It was not our day of rest
(The earth for all her rolling asks not rest,
For she was never weary).

It was sweet,
Full of dear leisure and perennial peace,
As very old days when life went easily,
Before mankind had lost the wise, the good
Habit of being happy.

For the pool

A beauteous place it was as might be seen,
That led one down to other meads, and had
Clouds and another sky. I thought to go
Deep down in it, and walk that steep clear slope.

Then she who led me reached the brink, her foot
Staying to talk with one who met her there.
Here were fresh marvels, sailing things whose vans
Floated them on above the flowering flags.
We moved a little onward, paused again,
And here there was a break in these, and here
There came the vision; for I stooped to gaze
So far as my small height would let me — gaze
Into that pool to see the fishes dart,
And in a moment from her under hills
Came forth a little child who lived down there,
Looked up at me and smiled. We could not talk,
But looked and loved each other. I a hand
Held out to her, so she to me, but ah,
She would not come. Her home, her little bed,
Was doubtless under that soft shining thing
The water, and she wanted not to run
Among red sorrel spires, and fill her hand
In the dry warmed grass with cowslip buds.

Awhile our feeding hearts all satisfied,
Took in the blue of one another's eyes,

Two dimpled creatures, rose-lipped innocent.
But when we fain had kissed — O! the end came,
For snatched aloft, held in the nurse's arms,
She parting with her lover I was borne
Far from that little child.

And no one knew
She lived down there, but only I; and none
Sought for her, but I yearned for her and left
Part of myself behind, as the lambs leave
Their wool upon a thorn."

"And was she seen
Never again, nor known for what she was?"

"Never again, for we did leave anon
The pasture and the pool. I know not where
They lie, and sleep a heaven on earth, but know
From thenceforth yearnings for a lost delight;
On certain days I dream about her still."

IN THE NURSERY.

"Where do you go, Bob, when you're fast asleep?"

"Where? O well, once I went into a deep
Mine, father told of, and a cross man said
He'd make me help to dig, and eat black bread.
I saw the Queen once, in her room, quite near.
She said, 'You rude boy, Bob, how came you
here?'"

"Was it like mother's boudoir?"

"Grander far,
Gold chairs and things — all over diamonds — Ah!"

"You're sure it was the Queen?"

"Of course, a crown
Was on her, and a spangly purple gown."

"I went to heaven last night."

"O Lily, no,
How could you?"

"Yes I did, they told me so,
And my best doll, my favorite, with the blue
Frock, Jasmine, I took her to heaven too."

"What was it like?"

"A kind of — I can't tell —
A sort of orchard place in a long dell,
With trees all over flowers. And there were birds
Who could do talking, say soft pretty words;
They let me stroke them, and I showed it all
To Jasmine. And I heard a blue dove call,
'Child, this is heaven.' I was not frightened
when

It spoke, I said 'Where are the angels then?'"

"Well."

"So it said, 'Look up and you shall see.'
There were two angels sitting in the tree,
As tall as mother; they had long gold hair.
They let drop down the fruit they gather'd there
And little angels came for it — so sweet.
Here they were beggar children in the street,
And the dove said they had the prettiest things,
And wore their best frocks every day."

"And wings,
Had they no wings?"

Two dimpled creatures, rose-lipped innocent.
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"And wings,
Had they no wings?"

"O yes, and lined with white
Like swallow wings, so soft — so very light
Fluttering about."

"Well."

"Well, I did not stay,
So that was all."

"They made you go away?"
"I did not go — but — I was gone."

"I know."

"But it's a pity, Bob, we never go
Together."

"Yes, and have no dreams to tell,
But the next day both know it all quite well."

"And, Bob, if I could dream you came with me
You would be there perhaps."

"Perhaps — we'll see."

THE BELL-BIRD.

"TOLL —
Toll." "The bell-bird sounding far away,
Hid in a myall grove." He raised his head,
The bush glowed scarlet in descending day,
A masterless wild country — and he said,
My father ("Toll"), "Full oft by her to stray,
As if a spirit called, have I been led;
Oft seems she as an echo in my soul
("Toll") from my native towers by Avon. ("Toll.")

("Toll.") "Oft as in a dream I see full fain
The bell-tower beautiful that I love well,
A seemly cluster with her churches twain.
I hear adown the river faint and swell
And lift upon the air that sound again,
It is, it is — how sweet no tongue can tell,
For all the world-wide breadth of shining foam,
The bells of Evesham chiming 'Home, sweet home.'

"The mind hath mastery thus — it can defy
The sense, and make all one as it DID HEAR —
Nay, I mean more; the wraiths of sound gone by
Rise; they are present 'neath this dome all clear.
ONE, sounds the bird — a pause — then doth supply
Some ghosts of chimes the void expectant ear;
Do they ring bells in heaven? The learnedest soul
Shall not resolve me such a question. ("Toll.")

("Toll.") "Say I am a boy, and fishing stand
By Avon ("Toll") on line and rod intent,
How glitters deep in dew the meadow land —
What, dost thou flit, thy ministry all spent,
Not many days we hail such visits bland,
Why steal so soon the rare enravishment?
Ay gone! the soft deceptive echoes roll
Away, and faint into remoteness." ("Toll.")

While thus he spoke the doom'd sun touched his bed
In scarlet, all the palpitating air
Still loyal waited on. He dipped his head,
Then all was over, and the dark was there;
And northward, lo! a star, one likewise red
But lurid, starts from out her day-long lair,

Her fellows trail behind; she bears her part,
The balefullest star that shines, the Scorpion's heart,

Or thus of old men feigned, and then did fear,
Then straight crowd forth the great ones of the sky
In flashing flame at strife to reach more near.

The little children of Infinity,
They next look down as to report them "Here,"
From deeps all thoughts despair and heights
past high
Speeding, not sped, no rest, no goal, no shore,
Still to rush on till time shall be no more.

"Loved vale of Evesham, 'tis a long farewell,
Not laden orchards nor their April snow
These eyes shall light upon again; the swell
And whisper of thy storied river know,
Nor climb the hill where great old Montfort fell
In a good cause hundreds of years ago;
So fall'n, elect to live till life's ally,
The river of recorded deeds, runs dry.

"This land is very well, this air," saith he,

"Is very well, but we want echoes here.
Man's past to feed the air and move the sea;
Ages of toil make English furrows dear,
Enriched by blood shed for his liberty,

Sacred by love's first sigh and life's last fear,
We come of a good nest, for it shall yearn
Poor birds of passage, but may not return,

"Spread younger wings, and beat the winds afar.
There sing more poets in that one small isle

Than all isles else can show — of such you are;
Remote things come to you unsought erewhile,
Near things a long way round as by a star.

Wild dreams!" He laughed, "A sage right
infantile;
With sacred fear behold life's waste deplored,
Undaunted by the leisure of the Lord.

"Ay go, the island dream with eyes make good,
Where Freedom rose, a lodestar to your race;
And Hope that leaning on her anchor stood
Did smile it to her feet: a right small place.
Call her a mother, high such motherhood,
Home in her name and duty in her face;
Call her a ship, her wide arms rake the clouds,
And every wind of God pipes in her shrouds.

"Ay, all the more go you. But some have cried
'The ship is breaking up'; they watch amazed
While urged toward the rocks by some that guide;
Bad steering, reckless steering, she all dazed
Tempteth her doom; yet this have none denied
Ships men have wrecked and palaces have razed,
But never was it known beneath the sun,
They of such wreckage built a goodlier one.

"God help old England an't be thus, nor less
God help the world." Therewith my mother
spake,

"Perhaps He will! By time, by faithlessness,
By the world's want long in the dark awake,
I think He must be all most due: the stress
Of the great tide of life, sharp misery's ache,

In a recluseness of the soul we rue
Far off, but yet — He must be almost due.

“God manifest again, the coming King.”

Then said my father, “I beheld erewhile,
Sitting up dog-like to the sunrising,

The giant doll in ruins by the Nile,
With hints of red that yet to it doth cling,
Fell, battered, and bewigged its cheeks were vile,
A body of evil with its angel fled,
Whom and his fellow fiends men worshippèd.

“The gods die not, long shrouded on their biers,
Somewhere they live, and live in memory yet;
Were not the Israelites for forty years
Hid from them in the desert to forget —
Did they forget? no more than their lost feres
Sons of to-day with faces southward set,
Who dig for buried lore long ages fled,
And sift for it the sand and search the dead.

“Brown Egypt gave not one great poet birth,
But man was better than his gods, with lays
He soothed them restless, and they zoned the earth,
And crossed the sea; there drank immortal praise;
Then from his own best self with glory and worth
And beauty dowered he them for dateless days.
Ever ‘their sound goes forth’ from shore to shore,
When was there known an hour that they lived more?

“Because they are beloved and not believed,
Admired not feared, they draw men to their feet;
All once, rejected, nothing now, received

Where once found wanting, now the most complete;
Man knows to-day though manhood stand achieved,
His cradle-rockers made a rustling sweet;
That king reigns longest which did lose his crown,
Stars that by poets shine are stars gone down.

“Still drawn obedient to an unseen hand,
From purer heights comes down the yearning west,
Like to that eagle in the morning land,
That swooping on her predatory quest,
Did from the altar steal a smouldering brand,
The which she bearing home it burned her nest,
And her wide pinions of their plumes bereaven,
Spoiled for glad spiring up the steeps of heaven.

“I say the gods live, and that reign abhor,
And will the nations it should dawn? Will they
Who ride upon the perilous edge of war?
Will such as delve for gold in this our day?
Neither the world will, nor the age will, nor
The soul — and what, it cometh now? Nay, nay,
The weighty sphere, unready for release,
Rolls far in front of that o’ermastering peace.

“Wait and desire it; life waits not, free there
To good, to evil, thy right perilous —
All shall be fair, and yet it is not fair.

I thank my God He takes the advantage thus;
He doth not greatly hide, but still declare
Which side He is on and which He loves, to us,
While life impartial aid to both doth lend,
And heed not which the choice nor what the end.

"Among the few upright, O to be found,
 And ever search the nobler path, my son,
 Nor say 'tis sweet to find me common ground
 Too high, too good, shall leave the hours alone' —
 Nay, though but one stood on the height renowned,
 Deny not hope or will, to be that one.
 Is it the many fall'n shall lift the land,
 The race, the age! — Nay, 'tis the few that stand."

While in the lamplight hearkening I sat mute,
 Methought "how soon this fire must needs burn
 out."

Among the passion flowers and passion fruit
 That from the wide verandah hung, misdoubt
 Was mine. "And wherefore made I thus long suit
 To leave this old white head? His words devout,
 His blessings not to hear who loves me so —
 He that is old, right old — I will not go."

But ere the dawn their counsels wrought with me,
 And I went forth; alas that I so went
 Under the great gum-forest canopy,
 The light on every silken filament
 Of every flower, a quivering ecstasy
 Of perfect paleness made it; sunbeams sent
 Up to the leaves with sword-like flash endued
 Each turn of that gray drooping multitude.

I sought to look as in the light of one
 Returned. "Will this be strange to me that day?
 Flocks of green parrots clamorous in the sun
 Tearing out milky maize — stiff cacti gray
 As old men's beards — here stony ranges lone,

There dust of mighty flocks upon their way
 To water, cloudlike on the bush afar,
 Like smoke that hangs where old-world cities are.

"Is it not made man's last endowment here
 To find a beauty in the wilderness;
 Feel the lorn moor above his pastures dear,
 Mountains that may not house and will not bless
 To draw him even to death? He must insphere
 His spirit in the open, so doth less
 Desire his feres, and more that unvex'd wold
 And fine afforested hills, his dower of old.

"But shall we lose again that new-found sense
 Which sees the earth less for our tillage fair?
 Oh, let her speak with her best eloquence
 To me, but not her first and her right rare
 Can equal what I may not take from hence.
 The gems are left: it is not elsewhere
 The wild Nepèan cleaves her matchless way,
 Nor Sydney harbor shall outdo the day.

"Adding to day this — that she lighteth it."

But I beheld again, and as must be
 With a world-record by a spirit writ,
 It was more beautiful than memory,
 Than hope was more complete.

Tall brigs did sit
 Each in her berth the pure flood placidly,
 Their topsails drooping 'neath the vast blue dome
 Listless, as waiting to be sheeted home.

And the great ships with pulse-like throbbing clear,
 Majestical of mien did take their way

Like living creatures from some grander sphere,
 That having boarded ours thought good to stay,
 Albeit enslaved. They most divided here
 From God's great art and all his works in clay,
 In that their beauty lacks, though fair it shows
 That divine waste of beauty only He bestows.

The day was young, scarce out the harbor lights
 That morn I sailed: low sun-rays tremulous
 On golden loops sped outward. Yachts in flig'its
 Flutter'd the water air-like clear, while thus
 It crept for shade among brown rocky bights
 With cassia crowned and palms diaphanous,
 And boughs ripe fruitage dropping fitfully,
 That on the shining ebb went out to sea.

"Home," saith the man self-banish'd, "my son
 Shall now go home." Therewith he sendeth him
 Abroad, and knows it not, but thence is won,
 Rescued, the son's true home. His mind doth
 linn

Beautiful pictures of it, there is none

So dear, a new thought shines erewhile but dim-

"That was my home, a land past all compare,
 Life, and the poetry of life, are there."

But no such thought drew near to me that day;

All the new worlds flock forth to greet the old,
 All the young souls bow down to own its sway,

Enamoured of strange richness manifold;
 Not to be stored, albeit they seek for aye,

Besieging it for its own life to hold,
 E'en as Al Mamoun fain for treasures hid,
 Stormed with an host th' inviolate pyramid,

And went back foiled but wise to walled Bagdad.

So I, so all. The treasure sought not found,
 But some divine tears found to superadd

Themselves to a long story. The great round
 Of yesterdays, their pathos sweet as sad,

Found to be only as to-day, close bound
 With us, we hope some good thing yet to know,
 But God is not in haste, while the lambs grow

The Shepherd leadeth softly. It is great
 The journey, and the flock forgets at last
 (Earth ever working to obliterate

The landmarks) when it halted, where it passed;
 And words confuse, and time doth ruininate,

And memory fail to hold a theme so vast;
 There is request for light, but the flock feeds,
 And slowly ever on the Shepherd leads.

"Home," quoth my father, and a glassy sea

Made for the stars a mirror of its breast,
 While southing, pennon-like, in bravery

Of long-drawn gold they trembled to their rest
 Strange the first night and morn, when Destiny

Spread out to float on, all the mind oppressed;
 Strange on their outer roof to speed forth thus,

And know the uncouth sea-beasts stared up at us.

But yet more strange the nights of falling rain,

That splashed without — a sea-coal fire within;
 Life's old things gone astern, the mind's disdain,

For murmurous London makes soft rhythmic din.
 All courtier thoughts that wait on words would fain

Express that sound. The words are not to win

Till poet made, but mighty, yet so mild
Shall be as cooing of a cradle-child.

Sensation like a piercing arrow flies,
Daily out-going thought. This Adamhood,
This weltering river of mankind that hies
Adown the street; it cannot be withstood.
The richest mundane miles not otherwise
Than by a symbol keep possession good,
Mere symbol of division, and they hold
The clear pane sacred, the unminted gold
And wild outpouring of all wealth not less.
Why this? A million strong the multitude,
And safe, far safer than our wilderness
The walls; for them it daunts with right at feud,
Itself declares for law; yet sore the stress
On steepes of life: what power to ban and bless;
Saintly denial, waste inglorious,
Desperate want, and riches fabulous.

Of souls what beautiful embodiment
For some; for some what homely housing writ;
What keen-eyed men who beggared of content
Eat bread well earned as they had stolen it;
What flutterers after joy that forward went,
And left them in the rear unqueened, unfit
For joy, with light that faints in strugglings drear
Of all things good the most awanting here.

Some in the welter of this surging tide
Move like the mystic lamps, the Spirits Seven,
Their burning love runs kindling far and wide,
That fire they needed not to steal from heaven,

'Twas a free gift flung down with them to bide,
And be a comfort for the hearts bereaven,
A warmth, a glow, to make the failing store
And parsimony of emotion more.

What glorious dreams in that find harborage,
The phantom of a crime stalks this beside,
And those might well have writ on some past page,
In such an hour, of such a year, we — died,
Put out our souls, took the mean way, false wage,
Course cowardly; and if we be denied
The life once loved, we cannot alway rue
The loss; let be: what vails so sore ado?

And faces pass of such as give consent
To live because 'tis not worth while to die;
This never knew the awful trembling
When some great fear sprang forward suddenly,
Its other name being hope — and there forthwent
As both confronted him a rueful cry
From the heart's core, one urging him to dare,
"Now! now! Leap now." The other, "Stand,
forbear."

A nation reared in brick, how shall this be?
Nor by excess of life death overtake.
To die in brick of brick her destiny,
And as the hamadryad eats the snake
His wife, and then the snake his son, so she
Air not enough, "though every one doth take
A little," water scant, a plague of gold,
Light out of date — a multitude born old.

And then a three-day siege might be the end;
E'en now the rays get muddied struggling down

Through heaven's vasty lofts, and still extend
 The miles of brick and none forbid, and none
 Forbode; a great world-wonder that doth send
 High fame abroad, and fear no setting sun,
 But helpless she through wealth that flouts the day
 And through her little children, even as they.

But forth of London, and all visions dear
 To eastern poets of a watered land
 Are made the commonplace of nature here,
 Sweet rivers always full, and always bland.
 Beautiful, beautiful! What runlets clear
 Twinkle among the grass. On every hand
 Fall in the common talk from lips around
 The old names of old towns and famous ground.

It is not likeness only charms the sense,
 Not difference only sets the mind aglow,
 It is the likeness in the difference,
 Familiar language spoken on the snow,
 To have the Perfect in the Present tense,
 To hear the ploughboy whistling, and to know,
 It smacks of the wild bush, that tune — 'Tis ours,
 And look! the bank is pale with primrose flowers,

What veils of tender mist make soft the lea,
 What bloom of air the height; no veils confer
 On warring thought or softness or degree
 Or rest. Still falling, conquering, strife and stir,
 For this religion pays indemnity.
 She pays her enemies for conquering her,
 And then her friends; while ever, and in vain
 Lots for a seamless coat are cast again

Whose it shall be; unless it shall endow
 Thousands of thousands it can fall to none,
 But faith and hope are not so simple now,
 As in the year of our redemption — One.
 The pencil of pure light must disallow
 Its name and scattering, many hues put on,
 And faith and hope low in the valley fell,
 There it is well with them, 'tis very well.

The land is full of vision, voices call.
 Can spirits cast a shadow? Ay, I trow
 Past is not done, and over is not all,
 Opinion dies to live and wanes to grow,
 The gossamer of thought doth filmlike fall,
 On fallows after dawn make shimmering show,
 And with old arrow-heads, her earliest prize,
 Mix learning's latest guess and last surmise.

There heard I pipes of fame, saw wrens "about
 That time when kings go forth to battle" dart,
 Full valorous atoms pierced with song, and stout
 To dare, and downy clad; I shared the smart
 Of grievèd cushats, bloom of love, devout
 Beyond man's thought of it. Old song my heart
 Rejoiced, but O mine own fore-elders' ways
 To look on, and their fashions of past days.
 The ponderous craft of arms I craved to see,
 Knights, burghers, filtering through those gates
 ajar,
 Their age of serfdom with my spirit free;
 We cannot all have wisdom; some there are
 Believe a star doth rule their destiny,
 And yet they think to overreach the star,

For thought can weld together things apart,
And contraries find meeting in the heart.

In the deep dust at Suez without sound
I saw the Arab children walk at eve,
Their dark untroubled eyes upon the ground,
A part of Time's grave quiet. I receive
Since then a sense, as nature might have found
Love kin to man's that with the past doth grieve;
And lets on waste and dust of ages fall
Her tender silences that mean it all.

We have it of her, with her; it were ill
For men, if thought were widowed of the world,
Or the world beggared of her sons, for still
A crowned sphere with many gems impearled
She rolls because of them. We lend her will
And she yields love. The past shall not be hurled
In the abhorred limbo while the twain,
Mother and son, hold partnership and reign.

She hangs out omens, and doth burdens dree.
Is she in league with heaven? That knows but
One.

For man is not, and yet his work we see
Full of unconscious omen darkly done.
I saw the ring-stone wrought at Avebury
To frame the face of the midwinter sun,
Good luck that hour they thought from him forth
smiled,
At midwinter the Sun did rise — the Child.

Still would the world divine though man forbore,
And what is beauty but an omen? — what

But life's deep divination cast before,
Omen of coming love? Hard were man's lot,
With love and toil together at his door,
But all-convincing eyes hath beauty got;
His love is beautiful, and he shall sue.
Toil for her sake is sweet, the omen true.

Love, love, and come it must, then life is found
Beforehand that was whole and fronting care,
A torn and broken half in durance bound
That mourns and makes request for its right fair
Remainder, with forlorn eyes cast around
To search for what is lost, that unaware
With not an hour's forebodement makes the day
From henceforth less or more for ever and aye.

Her name — my love's — I knew it not; who says
Of vagrant doubt for such a cause that stirs
His fancy shall nor pay arrearages
To all sweet names that might perhaps be hers?
The doubts of love are powers. His heart obeys,
The world is in them, still to love defers,
Will play with him for love, but when't begins
The play is high, and the world always wins.

For 'tis the maiden's world, and his no more.
Now thus it was: with new-found kin flew by
The temperate summer; every wheatfield wore
Its gold, from house to house in ardency
Of heart for what they showed I westward bore —
My mother's land, her native hills drew nigh;
I was — how green, how good old earth can be —
Beholden to that land for teaching me.

And parted from my fellows, and went on
 To feel the spiritual sadness spread
 Adown long pastoral hollows. And anon
 Did words recur in far remoteness said:
 "See the deep vale ere dews are dried and gone,
 Where my so happy life in peace I led,
 And the great shadow of the Beacon lies —
 See little Ledbury trending up the rise,
 "With peaked houses and high market hall —
 An oak each pillar — reared in the old days."
 And here was little Ledbury, quaint withal,
 The forest felled, her lair and sheltering place
 She long time left in age pathological.
 "Great oaks," methought, as I drew near to gaze,
 "Were but of small account when these came down,
 Drawn rough-hewn in to serve the tree-girt town.
 "And thus and thus of it will question be
 The other side the world." I paused awhile
 To mark. The old hall standeth utterly
 Without or floor or side, a comely pile,
 A house on pillars, and by destiny
 Drawn under its deep roof I saw a file
 Of children slowly through their way make good,
 And lifted up mine eyes — and there — SHE STOOD.
 She was so stately that her youthful grace
 Drew out, it seemed, my soul unto the air,
 Astonished out of breathing by her face
 So fain to nest itself in nut-brown hair
 Lying loose about her throat. But that old place
 Proved sacred, she just fully grown too fair

For such a thought. The dimples that she had!
 She was so truly sweet that it was sad.
 I was all hers. That moment gave her power —
 And whom, nay what she was, I scarce might
 know,
 But felt I had been born for that good hour.
 The perfect creature did not move, but so
 As if ordained to claim all grace for dower,
 She leaned against the pillar, and below
 Three almost babes, her care, she watched the while
 With downcast lashes and a musing smile.
 I had been 'ware without a rustic treat,
 Wagons bedecked with greenery stood anigh,
 A swarm of children in the cheerful street
 With girls to marshal them; but all went by
 And none I noted save this only sweet:
 Too young her charge more venturous sport to try,
 With whirling baubles still they played content,
 And softly rose their lisping babblement.
 "O what a pause! to be so near, to mark
 The locket rise and sink upon her breast;
 The shadow of the lashes lieth dark
 Upon her cheek. O fleeting time, O rest!
 A slant ray finds the gold, and with a spark
 And flash it answers, now shall be the best.
 Her eyes she raises, sets their light on mine,
 They do not flash nor sparkle — no — but shine."
 As I for very hopelessness made bold
 Did off my hat ere time there was for thought,

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 yerested 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 beloved, bring my whole
Store, make in loving, make O make mine art
More. Yet I ask no, ask no wished 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

Seever 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 carved 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,

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

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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 needl,

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 pray'd 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, away
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 full
 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;

Wake, I have found within my breast
 Counsel." Ah, the weird was strong,
 But the time is told. Release
 Openeth on him when his eyes
 Lift them in dull desolate wise,
 And behold he is at peace.
 Ay, but silent. Of all done
 And all suffer'd in the night,
 Of all ills that do him spite
 She shall never know that one.
 Then he heareth accents bland,
 Seeth the queen's ring on his hand,
 And he riseth calmed withal.

XVII.

Rain and wind on the palace wall
 Beat and bluster, sob and moan,
 When at noon he musing lone,
 Comes the queen anigh his seat,
 And she kneeleth at his feet.

XVIII.

Quoth the queen, "My love, my lord,
 Take thy wife and take thy sword,
 We must forth in the stormy weather,
 Thou and I to the witch together.
 Thus I rede thee counsel deep,
 Thou didst ill to sell thy sleep,
 Turning so man's wholesome life
 From its meaning. Thine intent
 None shall hold for innocent.
 Thou dost take thy good things first,
 Then thou art cast into the worst;

First the glory, then the strife.
 Nay, but first thy trouble dree,
 So thy peace shall sweeter be.
 First to work and then to rest,
 Is the way for our humanity,
 Ay, she sayeth that loves thee best,
 We must forth and from this strife
 Buy the best part of man's life;
 Best and worst thou holdest still
 Subject to a witch's will.
 Thus I rede thee counsel deep,
 Thou didst ill to sell thy sleep;
 Take the crown from off thy head,
 Give it the white-witch instead,
 If in that she say thee nay,
 Get the night, — and give the day."

XIX.

Then the king (amazed, mild,
 As one reasoning with a child
 All his speech): "My wife! my fair!"
 And his hand on her brown hair
 Trembles; "Lady, dost indeed
 Weigh the meaning of thy rede?
 Would'st thou dare the dropping away
 Of allegiance, should our sway
 And sweet splendor and renown
 All be risked? (methinks a crown
 Doth become thee marvellous well).
 We ourself are, truth to tell,
 Kingly both of wont and kind,
 Suits not such the craven mind."
 "Yet this weird thou can'st not dree,"

Quoth the queen, "And live;" then he,
 "I must die and leave the fair
 Unborn, long-desired heir
 To his rightful heritage."

XX.

But this queen arisen doth high
 Her two hands uplifting, sigh
 "God forbid." And he to assuage
 Her keen sorrow, for his part
 Searcheth, nor can find in his heart
 Words. And weeping she will rest
 Her sweet cheek upon his breast,
 Whispering, "Dost thou verily
 Know thou art to blame? Ah me,
 Come," and yet beseecheth she,
 "Ah me, come."

For good for ill,
 Whom man loveth hath her will.
 Court and castle left behind,
 Stolen forth in the rain and wind,
 Soon they are deep in the forest, fain
 The white-witch to raise again;
 Down and deep where flat o'erhead
 Layer on layer do cedars spread,
 Down where lordly maples strain,
 Wrestling with the storm amain.

XXI.

Wide-wing'd eagles struck on high
 Headlong fall'n break through, and lie
 With their prey in piteous wise,
 And no film on their dead eyes.

Matted branches grind and crash,
 Into darkness dives the flash,
 Stabs, a dread gold dirk of fire,
 Loads the lift with splinters dire.
 Then a pause i' the deadly feud—
 And a sick cowed quietude.

XXII.

Soh! A pillar misty and gray,
 'Tis the white-witch in the way.
 Shall man deal with her and gain?
 I trow not. Albeit the twain
 Costly gear and gems and gold
 Freely offer, she will hold
 Sleep and token for the pay
 She did get for greatening day.

XXIII.

"Or the night shall rest my fee
 Or the day shall naught of me,"
 Quoth the witch. "An't thee beseem,
 Sell thy kingdom for a dream."

XXIV.

"Now what will be let it be!"
 Quoth the queen; "but choose the right."
 And the white-witch scorns at her,
 Stately standing in their sight.
 Then without or sound or stir
 She is not. For offering meet
 Lieth the token at their feet,
 Which they, weary and sore bestead
 In the storm, lift up, full fain

Ere the waning light hath fled
Those high towers they left to gain.

XXV.

Deep among tree roots astray
Here a torrent tears its way,
There a cedar split aloft
Lies head downward. Now the oft
Muttering thunder, now the wind
Wakens. How the path to find?
How the turning? Deep ay deep,
Far ay far. She needs must weep,
This fair woman, lost, astray
In the forest; naught to say.
Yet the sick thoughts come and go,
"I, 'twas I would have it so."

XXVI.

Shelter at the last, a roof
Wrought of ling (in their behoof,
Foresters, that drive the deer).
What, and must they couch them here?
Ay, and ere the twilight fall
Gather forest berries small
And nuts down beaten for a meal.

XXVII.

Now the shy wood-wonners steal
Nearer, bright-eyed furry things,
Winking owls on silent wings
Glance, and float away. The light
In the wake o' the storm takes flight,
Day departeth: night — 'tis night.

The crown'd king musing of morn by a clear sweet
river.

Palms on the slope o' the valley, and no winds
blow;
Birds blameless, dove-eyed, mystical talk deliver,
Oracles haply. The language he doth not know.

Bare, blue, are yon peaked hills for a rampart lying,
As dusty gold is the light in the palms o'erhead,
"What is the name o' the land? and this calm sweet
sighing,
If it be echo, where first was it caught and spread?"

I might — I might be at rest in some field Elysian,
If this be asphodel set in the herbage fair,
I know not how I should wonder, so sweet the vision,
So clear and silent the water, the field, the air.

Love, are you by me? Malva, what think you this
meaneth?

Love, do you see the fine folk as they move over
there?

Are they immortals? Look you a wingèd one lean-
eth

Down from yon pine to the river of us unaware.

All unaware; and the country is full of voices,
Mild strangers passing: they reckon not of me nor
of thee.

List! about and around us wondrous sweet noises,
Laughter of little children and maids that dream-
ing be.

Love, I can see their dreams." A dim smile flitteth
Over her lips, and they move as in peace supreme,

And a small thing, silky haired, beside her sitteth,
 "O this is thy dream atween us—this is thy
 dream."

Was it then truly his dream with her dream that
 blended?

"Speak, dear child dear," quoth the queen, "and
 mine own little son."

"Father," the small thing murmurs; then all is
 ended,

He starts from that passion of peace—ay, the
 dream is done.

XXVIII.

"I have been in a good land,"

Quoth the king: "O sweet sleep bland,

Blessed! I am grown to more,

Now the doing of right hath moved

Me to love of right, and proved

If one doth it, he shall be

Twice the man he was before.

Verily and verily,

Thou fair woman, thou didst well;

I look back and scarce may tell

Those false days of tinsel sheen,

Flattery, feasting, that have been.

Shows of life that were but shows,

How they held me; being I ween

Like sand-pictures thin, that rose

Quivering, when our thirsty bands

Marched i' the hot Egyptian lands;

Shade of palms on a thick green plot,

Pools of water that was not,

Mocking us and melting away.

XXIX.

I have been a witch's prey,
 Art mine enemy now by day,
 Thou fell Fear? There comes an end
 To the day; thou canst not wend
 After me where I shall fare,
 My foredoomed peace to share.
 And awake with a better heart,
 I shall meet thee and take my part
 O' the dull world's dull spite; with thine
 Hard will I strive for me and mine."

XXX.

A page and a palfrey pacing nigh,
 Malva the queen awakes. A sigh—
 One amazed moment—"Ay,
 We remember yesterday,
 Let us to the palace straight:
 What! do all my ladies wait—
 Is no zeal to find me? What!
 No knights forth to meet the king;
 Due observance, is it forgot?"

XXXI.

"Lady," quoth the page, "I bring
 Evil news. Sir king, I say,
 My good lord of yesterday,
 Evil news." This king saith low,
 "Yesterday, and yesterday,
 The queen's yesterday we know,
 Tell us thine." "Sir king," saith he,
 "Hear. Thy castle in the night
 Was surprised, and men thy flight

Learned but then; thine enemy
 Of old days, our new king, reigns;
 And sith thou wert not at pains
 To forbid it, hear alsò,
 Marvelling whereto this should grow
 How thy knights at break of morn
 Have a new allegiance sworn,
 And the men-at-arms rejoice,
 And the people give their voice
 For the conqueror. I, sir king,
 Rest thine only friend. I bring
 Means of flight; now therefore fly,
 A great price is on thy head.
 Cast her jewell'd mantle by,
 Mount thy queen i' the selle and hie
 (Sith disguise ye need, and bread)
 Down yon pleachèd track, down, down,
 Till a tower shall on thee frown;
 Him that holds it show this ring:
 So farewell, my lord the king."

XXXII.

Had one marked that palfrey led
 To the tower, he sooth had said,
 These are royal folk and rare —
 Jewels in her plaited hair
 Shine not clearer than her eyes,
 And her lord in goodly wise
 With his plumèd cap in's hand
 Moves in the measure of command.

XXXIII.

Had one marked where stole forth two
 From the friendly tower anew,

"Common folk," he sooth had said,
 Making for the mountain track.
 Common, common, man and maid.
 Clad in russet, and of kind
 Meet for russet. On his back
 A wallet bears the stalwart hind;
 She, all shy, in rustic grace
 Steps beside her man apace,
 And wild roses match her face.

XXXIV.

Whither speed they? Where are toss'd
 Like sea foam the dwarfèd pines
 At the jagged sharp inclines;
 To the country of the frost
 Up the mountains to be lost,
 Lost. No better now may be,
 Lost where mighty hollows thrust
 'Twixt the fierce teeth of the world,
 Fill themselves with crimson dust
 When the tumbling sun down hurl'd
 Stares among them drearily,
 As a' wondering at the lone
 Gulfs that weird gaunt company
 Fenceth in. Lost there unknown,
 Lineage, nation, name, and throne.

XXXV.

Lo, in a crevice choked with ling
 And fir, this man, not now the king,
 This Sigismund, hath made a fire,
 And by his wife in the dark night
 He leans at watch, her guard and squire

His wide eyes stare out for the light
 Weary. He needs must chide on fate,
 And she is asleep. "Poor brooding mate,
 What! wilt thou on the mountain crest
 Slippery and cold scoop thy first nest?
 Or must I clear some uncouth cave
 That laired the mother wolf, and save —
 Spearing her cubs — the gray pelt fine
 To be a bed for thee and thine?
 It is my doing. Ay," quoth he,
 "Mine; but who dares to pity thee
 Shall pity, not for loss of all,
 But that thou wert my wife perdie,
 E'en wife unto a witch's thrall, —
 A man beholden to the cold
 Cloud for a covering, he being sold
 And hunted for reward of gold."

XXXVI.

But who shall chronicle the ways
 Of common folk — the nights and days
 Spent with rough goatherds on their snows,
 Of travellers come whence no man knows,
 Then gone aloft on some sharp height
 In the dumb peace and the great light
 Amid brown eagles and wild roes?

XXXVII.

'Tis the whole world whereon they lie,
 The rocky pastures hung on high
 Shelve off upon an empty sky.
 But they creep near the edge, look down —

Great heaven! another world afloat,
 Moored as in seas of air; remote
 As their own childhood; swooning away
 Into a tenderer sweeter day,
 Innocent, sunny. "O for wings!
 There lie the lands of other kings —
 I, Sigismund, my sometime crown
 Forfeit; forgotten of renown
 My wars, my rule; I fain would go
 Down to yon peace obscure."

Even so;

Down to the country of the thyme,
 Where young kids dance, and a soft chime
 Of sheepbells tinkles; then at last
 Down to a country of hollows, cast
 Up at the mountains full of trees,
 Down to fruit orchards and wide leas,

XXXVIII.

With name unsaid and fame unsunned
 He walks that was King Sigismund.
 With palmers holy and pilgrims brown,
 New from the East, with friar and clown,
 He mingles in a walled town,
 And in the mart where men him scan
 He passes for a merchant man.
 For from his vest, where by good hap
 He thrust it, he his plumed cap
 Hath drawn and plucked the gems away,
 And up and down he makes essay
 To sell them; they are all his wares
 And wealth. He is a man of cares,
 A man of toil; no roof hath he

To shelter her full soon to be
The mother of his dispossessed
Desired heir.

XXXIX.

Few words are best.

He, once King Sigismund, saith few,
But makes good diligence and true.
Soon with the gold he gather'd so,
A little homestead lone and low
He buyeth: a field, a copse, with these
A melon patch and mulberry trees
And is the man content? Nay, morn
Is toilsome, oft is noon forlorn,
Though right be done and life be won,
Yet hot is weeding in the sun,
Yea scythe to wield and axe to swing,
Are hard on sinews of a king.

XL.

And Malva, must she toil? E'en so.
Full patiently she takes her part,
All, all so new. But her deep heart
Forebodes more change than shall be shown
Betwixt a settle and a throne.
And lost in musing she will go
About the winding of her silk,
About the skimming of her goat's milk,
About the kneading of her bread,
And water drawn from her well-head.

XLI.

Then come the long nights dark and still,
Then come the leaves and cover the sill,

Then come the swift flocks of the stare,
Then comes the snow — then comes the heir.

XLII.

If he be glad, if he be sad,
How should one question when the hand
Is full, the heart. That life he had,
While leisure was aside may stand,
Till he shall overtake the task
Of every day, then let him ask
(If he remember — if he will),
“When I could sit me down and muse,
And match my good against mine ill,
And weigh advantage dulled by use
At nothing, was it better with me?”
But Sigismund! It cannot be
But that he toil, nor pause, nor sigh,
A dreamer on a day gone by
The king is come.

XLIII.

His vassals two
Serve with all homage deep and due.
He is contented, he doth find
Belike the kingdom much to his mind.
And when the long months of his long
Reign are two years, and like a song
From some far sweeter world, a call
From the king's mouth for fealty,
Buds soon to blossom in language fall,
They listen and find not any plea
Left, for fine chiding at destiny.

XLIV.

Sigismund hath ricked the hay,
 He sitteth at close o' a sultry day
 Under his mulberry boughs at ease.
 "Hey for the world, and the world is wide,
 The world is mine, and the world is — these."
 Beautiful Malva leans at his side,
 And the small babbler talks at his knees.

XLV.

Riseth a waft as of summer air,
 Floating upon it what moveth there?
 Faint as the light of stars and wan
 As snow at night when the moon is gone,
 It is the white-witch risen once more.

XLVI.

The white-witch that tempted of yore
 So utterly doth substance lack,
 You may breathe her nearer and breathe her
 back.

Soft her eyes, her speech full clear:

"Hail, thou Sigismund my fere,

Bargain with me yea or nay.

NAY, I go to my true place,

And no more thou seest my face.

YEA, the good be all thine own,

For now will I advance thy day,

And yet will leave the night alone."

XLVII.

Sigismund makes answer, "NAY.

Though the Highest heaped on me

Trouble, yet the same should be

Welcomer than weal from thee.

Nay; — for ever and ever Nay."

O, the white-witch floats away.

Look you, look! A still pure smile

Blossoms on her mouth the while,

White wings peaked high behind,

Bear her; — no, the wafting wind,

For they move not, — floats her back,

Floats her up. They scarce may track

Her swift rising, shot on high

Like a ray from the western sky,

Or a lark from some gray wold

Utterly whelm'd in sunset gold.

XLVIII.

Then these two long silence hold,

And the lisping babe doth say,

"White, white bird, it flew away."

And they marvel at these things,

For her ghostly visitings

Turn to them another face.

Haply she was sent, a friend

Trying them, and to good end

For their better weal and grace;

One more wonder let to be

In the might and mystery

Of the world, where verily

And good sooth a man may wend

All his life, and no more view

Than the one right next to do.

XLIX.

So, the welcome dusk is here,

Sweet is even, rest is dear;

Mountain heads have lost the light,
 Soon they couch them.
 Night — 'tis night.

Sigismund dreaming delightfully after his haying.

("Sleep of the laboring man," quoth King David, "is sweet.")

"Sigismund, Sigismund" — "Who is this calling and saying

"Sigismund, Sigismund"? O blessed night do not fleet.

Is it not dark — ay, methinks it is dark, I would slumber,

O I would rest till the swallow shall chirp 'neath mine eaves."

"Sigismund, Sigismund," multitudes now without number

Calling, the noise is as dropping of rain upon leaves.

"Ay," quoth he dreaming, "say on, for I, Sigismund, hear ye."

"Sigismund, Sigismund, all the knights weary full sore.

Come back, King Sigismund, come, they shall love thee and fear thee,

The people cry out, O come back to us, reign evermore.

The new king is dead, and we will not his son, nor brother,

Come with thy queen, is she busy yet, kneading of cakes?

Sigismund, show us the boy, is he safe, and his mother,
 Sigismund?" — dreaming he falls into laughter and wakes.

L.

And men say this dream came true,
 For he walking in the dew
 Turned aside while yet was red
 On the highest mountain head,
 Looking how the wheat he set
 Flourished. And the knights him met
 And him prayèd "Come again,
 Sigismund our king, and reign."
 But at first — at first they tell
 How it liked not Malva well;
 She must leave her belted bees
 And the kids that she did rear.
 When she thought on it full dear
 Seemed her home. It did not please
 Sigismund that he must go
 From the wheat that he did sow;
 When he thought on it his mind
 Was not that should any bind
 Into sheaves that wheat but he,
 Only he; and yet they went,
 And it may be were content.
 And they won a nation's heart;
 Very well they played their part.
 They ruled with sceptre and diadem,
 And their children after them.

THE MAID-MARTYR.

ONLY you'd have me speak.

Whether to speak
Or whether to be silent is all one;
Whether to sleep and in my dreaming front
Her small scared face forlorn; whether to wake
And muse upon her small soft feet that paced
The hated, hard, inhospitable stone —
I say all's one. But you would have me speak,
And change one sorrow for the other. Ay,
Right reverend father, comfortable father,
Old, long in thrall, and wearied of the cell,
So will I here — here staring through the grate,
Whence, sheer beneath us lying the little town,
Her street appears a riband up the rise;
Where 'tis right steep for carts, behold two ruts
Worn in the flat, smooth stone.

That side I stood;
My head was down. At first I did but see
Her coming feet; they gleamed through my hot tears
As she walked barefoot up yon short steep hill.
Then I dared all, gazed on her face, the maid-
Martyr, and utterly, utterly broke my heart.

Her face, O! it was wonderful to me,
There was not in it what I look'd for — no,
I never saw a maid go to her death,
How should I dream that face and the dumb soul?

Her arms and head were bare, seemly she walked
All in her smock so modest as she might;

Upon her shoulders hung a painted cape
For horrible adornment, flames of fire
Portrayed upon it, and mocking demon heads.

Her eyes — she did not see me — opened wide,
Blue-black, gazed right before her, yet they marked
Nothing; and her two hands uplift as praying,
She yet prayed not, wept not, sighed not. O father,
She was past that, soft, tender, hunted thing;
But, as it seemed, confused from time to time,
She would half-turn her or to left or right
To follow other streets, doubting her way.

Then their base pikes they basely thrust at her,
And, like one dazed, obedient to her guides
She came; I knew not if 'twas present to her
That death was her near goal; she was so lost,
And set apart from any power to think.
But her mouth pouted as one brooding, father,
Over a lifetime of forlorn fear. No,
Scarce was it fear; so looks a timid child
(Not more affrighted; ah! but not so pale)
That has been scolded or has lost its way.

Mother and father — father and mother kind,
She was alone, where were you hidden? Alone,
And I that loved her more, or feared death less,
Rushed to her side, but quickly was flung back,
And cast behind o' the pikemen following her
Into a yelling and a cursing crowd,
That bristled thick with monks and hooded friars;
Moreover, women with their cheeks ablaze,
Who swarmed after up the narrowing street.

Pitiful heaven! I knew she did not hear
 In that last hour the cursing, nor the foul
 Words; she had never heard like words, sweet soul,
 In her life blameless; even at that pass,
 That dreadful pass, I felt it had been worse,
 Though naught I longed for as for death, to know
 She did. She saw not 'neath their hoods those eyes
 Soft, glittering, with a lust for cruelty;
 Secret delight, that so great cruelty,
 All in the sacred name of Holy Church,
 Their meed to look on it should be anon.
 Speak! O, I tell you this thing passeth words!

From roofs and oriels high, women looked down;
 Men, maidens, children, and a fierce white sun
 Smote blinding splinters from all spears aslant.

Lo! next a stand, so please you, certain priests
 (May God forgive men sinning at their ease),
 Whose duty 'twas to look upon this thing,
 Being mindful of thick pungent smoke to come,
 Had caused a stand to rise hard by the stake,
 Upon its windward side.

My life! my love!

She utter'd one sharp cry of mortal dread
 While they did chain her. This thing passeth
 words,

Albeit told out forever in my soul.

As the torch touched, thick volumes of black reek
 Rolled out and raised the wind, and instantly
 Long films of flaxen hair floated aloft,
 Settled alow, in drifts upon the crowd.
 The vile were merciful; heaped high, my dear,

Thou didst not suffer long. O! it was soon,
 Soon over, and I knew not any more,
 Till grovelling on the ground, beating my head,
 I heard myself, and scarcely knew 'twas I,
 At Holy Church railing with fierce mad words,
 Crying and craving for a stake, for me.
 While fast the folk, as ever, such a work
 Being over, fled, and shrieked "A heretic!
 More heretics; yon ashes smoking still."
 And up and almost over me came on
 A robed — ecclesiastic — with his train
 (I choose the words lest that they do some wrong),
 Call him a robed ecclesiastic proud.
 And I lying helpless, with my bruised face
 Beat on his garnished shoon. But he stepped back,
 Spurned me full roughly with them, called the pikes,
 Delivering orders, "Take the bruised wretch.
 He raves. Fool! thou'lt hear more of this anon.
 Bestow him there." He pointed to a door.
 With that some threw a cloth upon my face
 Because it bled. I knew they carried me
 Within his home, and I was satisfied;
 Willing my death. Was it an abbey door?
 Was 't entrance to a palace? or a house
 Of priests? I say not, nor if abbot he,
 Bishop or other dignity; enough
 That he so spake. "Take in the bruised wretch."
 And I was borne far up a turret stair
 Into a peaked chamber taking form
 O' the roof, and on a pallet bed they left
 Me miserable. Yet I knew forsooth,
 Left in my pain, that evil things were said
 Of that same tower; men thence had disappeared,

Suspect of heresy had disappeared,
 Deliver'd up, 'twas whisper'd, tried and burned.
 So be it methought, I would not live, not I.
 But none did question me. A beldame old,
 Kind, heedless of my sayings, tended me.
 I raved at Holy Church and she was deaf,
 And at whose tower detained me, she was dumb.
 So had I food and water, rest and calm.
 Then on the third day I rose up and sat
 On the side of my low bed right melancholy,
 All that high force of passion overpast,
 I sick with dolorous thought and weak through tears
 Spite of myself came to myself again
 (For I had slept), and since I could not die
 Looked through the window three parts overgrown
 With leafage on the loftiest ivy ropes,
 And saw at foot o' the rise another tower
 In roof whereof a grating, dreary bare.
 Lifetimes gone by, long, slow, dim, desolate,
 I knew even there had been my lost love's cell.

So musing on the man that with his foot
 Spurned me, the robed ecclesiastic stern,
 "Would he had haled me straight to prison," me-
 thought,

"So made an end at once."

My sufferings rose
 Like billows closing over, beating down;
 Made heavier far because of a stray, strange,
 Sweet hope that mocked me at the last.
 'Twas thus,
 I came from Oxford secretly, the news
 Terrible of her danger smiting me,—
 She was so young, and ever had been bred

With whom 'twas made a peril now to name.
 There had been worship in the night; some stole
 To a mean chapel deep in woods, and heard
 Preaching, and prayed. She, my betrothed, was
 there.

Father and mother, mother and father kind,
 So young, so innocent, had ye no ruth,
 No fear, that ye did bring her to her doom?
 I know the chiefest Evil One himself
 Sanded that floor. Their footsteps marking it
 Betrayed them. How all came to pass let be.
 Parted, in hiding some, other in thrall,
 Father and mother, mother and father kind,
 It may be yet ye know not this — not all.

I in the daytime lying perdue looked up
 At the castle keep impregnable,—no foot
 How rash so e'er might hope to scale it. Night
 Descending, come I near, perplexedness,
 Contempt of danger, to the door o' the keep
 Drawing me. There a short stone bench I found,
 And bitterly weeping sat and leaned my head
 Against the hopeless hated massiveness
 Of that detested hold. A lifting moon
 Had made encroachment on the dark, but deep
 Was shadow where I leaned. Within a while
 I was aware, but saw no shape, of one
 Who stood beside me, a dark shadow tall.
 I cared not, disavowal mattered naught
 Of grief to one so out of love with life.
 But after pause I felt a hand let down
 That rested kindly, firmly, a man's hand,
 Upon my shoulder; there was cheer in it.

And presently a voice clear, whispering, low,
 With pitifulness that faltered, spoke to me.
 Was I, it asked, true son of Mother Church?
 Coldly I answer'd "Ay;" then blessed words
 That danced into mine ears more excellent
 Music than wedding bells had been were said,
 With certitude that I might see my maid,
 My dear one. He would give a paper, he
 The man beside me. "Do thy best endeavor,
 Dear youth. Thy maiden being a right sweet child
 Surely will hearken to thee; an she do,
 And will recant, fair faultless heretic,
 Whose knowledge is but scant of matters high
 Which hard men spake on with her, hard men forced
 From her mouth innocent, then shall she come
 Before me; have good cheer, all may be well.
 But an she will not she must burn, no power—
 Not Solomon the Great on 's ivory throne
 With all his wisdom could find out a way,
 Nor I nor any to save her, she must burn.
 Now hast thou till day dawn. The Mother of God
 Speed thee." A twisted scroll he gave; himself
 Knocked at the door behind, and he was gone,
 A darker pillar of darkness in the dark.
 Straightway one opened and I gave the scroll.
 He read, then thrust it in his lanthorn flame
 Till it was ashes; "Follow" and no more
 Whisper'd, went up the giddy spiring way,
 I after, till we reached the topmost door.
 Then took a key, opened, and crying "Delia,
 Delia my sweetheart, I am come, I am come,"
 I darted forward and he locked us in.
 Two figures; one rose up and ran to me

Along the ladder of moonlight on the floor,
 Fell on my neck. Long time we kissed and wept.

But for that other, while she stood appeased
 For cruel parting past, locked in mine arms,
 I had been glad, expecting a good end.
 The cramped pale fellow prisoner "Courage" cried.
 Then Delia lifting her fair face, the moon
 Did show me its incomparable calms.
 Her effluent thought needed no word of mine,
 It whelmed my soul as in a sea of tears.
 The warm enchantment leaning on my breast
 Breathed as in air remote, and I was left
 To infinite detachment, even with hers
 To take cold kisses from the lips of doom,
 Look in those eyes and disinherit hope
 From that high place late won.

Then murmuring low
 That other spake of Him on the cross, and soft
 As broken-hearted mourning of the dove,
 She "One deep calleth to another" sighed.
 "The heart of Christ mourns to my heart, 'Endure.
 There was a day when to the wilderness
 My great forerunner from his thrall sent forth
 Sad messengers, demanding *Art thou He?*
 Think'st thou I knew no pang in that strange hour?
 How could I hold the power, and want the will
 Or want the love? That pang was his—and mine.
 He said not, Save me an thou be the Son,
 But only *Art thou He?* In my great way
 It was not writ,—legions of Angels mine,
 There was one Angel, one ordain'd to unlock
 At my behest the doomèd deadly doors.

I could not tell him, tell not thee, why.' Lord,
 We know not why, but would not have Thee grieve,
 Think not so deeply on 't; make us endure
 For Thy blest sake, hearing Thy sweet voice mourn
 'I will go forth, thy desolations meet,
 And with my desolations solace them.
 I will not break thy bonds, but I am bound,
 With thee.'?"

I feared. That speech deep furrows cut
 In my afflicted soul. I whisper'd low,
 "Thou wilt not heed her words, my golden girl."
 But Delia said not aught; only her hand
 Laid on my cheek and on the other leaned
 Her own. O there was comfort, father,
 In love and nearness, e'en at the crack of doom.

Then spake I, and that other said no more,
 For I appealed to God and to his Christ.
 Unto the strait-barred window led my dear;
 Not table, bed, nor plenishing; no place
 They had for rest: maugre two narrow chairs
 By day, by night they sat thereon upright.
 One drew I to the opening; on it set
 My Delia, kneeled; upon its arm laid mine,
 And prayed to God and prayed of her.

Father,
 If thou should ask e'en now, "And art thou glad
 Of what befell?" I could not say it, father,
 I should be glad; therefore God make me glad,
 Since we shall die to-morrow!

Think not sin,
 O holy, harmless reverend man, to fear.
 'Twill be soon over. Now I know thou fear'st

Also for me, lest I be lost; but aye
 Strong comfortable hope doth wrap me round,
 A token of acceptance. I am cast
 From Holy Church, and not received of thine;
 But the great Advocate who knoweth all,
 He whispers with me.

O my Delia wept
 When I did plead; "I have much feared to die,"
 Answering. (The moonlight on her blue-black eyes
 Fell; shining tears upon their lashes hung;
 Fair showed the dimple that I loved; so young,
 So very young.) "But they did question me
 Straitly, and make me many times to swear,
 To swear of all alas, that I believed.
 Truly, unless my soul I would have bound
 With false oaths — difficult, innumerable, strong,
 Way was not left me to get free.

"But now,"
 Said she, "I am happy; I have seen the place
 Where I am going.

"I will tell it you,
 Love, Hubert. Do not weep; they said to me
 That you would come, and it would not be long.
 Thus was it, being sad and full of fear,
 I was crying in the night; and prayed to God
 And said, 'I have not learned high things;' and said
 To the Saviour, 'Do not be displeased with me,
 I am not crying to get back and dwell
 With my good mother and my father fond,
 Nor even with my love, Hubert — my love,
 Hubert; but I am crying because I fear
 Mine answers were not rightly given — so hard
 Those questions. If I did not understand,

Wilt Thou forgive me?' And the moon went down
While I did pray, and looking on the floor,
Behold a little diamond there,
So small it might have dropped from out a ring.
I could but look! The diamond waxed — it grew —
It was a diamond yet, and shot out rays,
And in the midst of it a rose-red point;
It waxed till I might see the rose-red point
Was a little Angel mid those oval rays,
With a face sweet as the first kiss, O love,
You gave me, and it meant that self-same thing.

"Now was it tall as I, among the rays
Standing; I touched not. Through the window
drawn,
This barred and narrow window; — but I know
Nothing of how, we passed, and seemed to walk
Upon the air, till on the roof we sat.

"It spoke. The sweet mouth did not move, but all
The Angel spoke in strange words full and old,
It was my Angel sent to comfort me
With a message, and the message, 'I might come,
And myself see if He forgave me.' Then
Deliver'd he admonition, 'Afterwards
I must return and die.' But I being dazed,
Confused with love and joy that He so far
Did condescend, 'Ay, Eminence,' replied,
'Is the way great?' I knew not what I said.
The Angel then, 'I know not far nor near,
But all the stars of God this side it shine.'
And I forgetful wholly for this thing
My soul did pant in, a rapture and a pain,

So great as they would melt it quite away
To a vanishing like mist when sultry rays
Shot from the daystar reckon with it — I
Said in my simpleness, 'But is there time?
For in three days I am to burn, and O
I would fain see that He forgiveth first.
Pray you make haste.' 'I know not haste,' he said;
'I was not fashioned to be thrall of time.
What is it?' And I marvelled, saw outlying,
Shaped like a shield and of dimensions like
An oval in the sky beyond all stars,
And trembled with foreknowledge. We were bound
To that same golden holy hollow. I
Misdoubted how to go, but we were gone.
I set off wingless, walking empty air
Beside him. In a moment we were caught
Among thick swarms of lost ones, evil, fell,
Of might, only a little less than gods,
And strong enough to tear the earth to shreds,
Set shoulders to the sun and rend it out
O' its place. Their wings did brush across my face,
Yet felt I naught; the place was vaster far
Than all this wholesome pastoral windy world.
Through it we spinning, pierced to its far brink,
Saw menacing frowns and we were forth again.
Time has no instant for the reckoning aught
So sudden; 'twas as if a lightning flash
Threw us within it, and a swifter flash,
We riding harmless down its swordlike edge,
Shot us fast forth to empty nothingness.

"All my soul trembled, and my body it seemed
Pleaded than such a sight rather to faint

To the last silence, and the eery grave
Inhabit, and the slow solemnities
Of dying faced, content me with my shroud.

"And yet was lying athwart the morning star
That shone in front, that holy hollow; yet
It loomed, as hung atilt towards the world,
That in her time of sleep appeared to look
Up to it, into it.

"We, though I wept,
Fearing and longing, knowing not how to go,
My heart gone first, both mine eyes dedicate
To its all-hallowed sweet desired gold,
We on the empty limitless abyss
Walked slowly. It was far;

"And I feared much,
For lo! when I looked down deep under me
The little earth was such a little thing,
How in the vasty dark find her again?
The crescent moon a moored boat hard by,
Did wait on her and touch her ragged rims
With a small gift of silver.

"Love! my life!
Hubert, while I yet wept, O we were there.
A menai of Angels first, a swarm of stars
Took us among them (all alive with stars
Shining and shouting each to each that place);
The feathered multitude did lie so thick
We walked upon them, walked on outspread wings,
And the great gates were standing open.

"Love!
The country is not what you think; but oh!
When you have seen it nothing else contents.

The voice, the vision was not what you think —
But oh! it was all. It was the meaning of life,
Excellent consummation of desires
Forever, let into the heart with pain
Most sweet. That smile did take the feeding soul
Deeper and deeper into heaven. The sward
(For I had bowed my face on it) I found
Grew in my spirit's longed-for native land —
At last I was at home."

And here she paused:
I must needs weep. I have not been in heaven,
Therefore she could not tell me what she heard,
Therefore she might not tell me what she saw,
Only I understood that One drew near
Who said to her she should e'en come, "Because,"
Said He, "My Father loves Me. I will ask
He send, a guiding Angel for My sake,
Since the dark way is long, and rough, and hard,
So that I shall not lose whom I love — thee."

Other words wonderful of things not known,
When she had uttered, I gave hope away,
Cried out, and took her in despairing arms,
Asking no more. Then while the comfortless
Dawn till night fainter grew, alas! a key
That with abhorred jarring probed the door.
We kissed, we looked, unlocked our arms. She
sighed

"Remember." "Ay, I will remember. What?"
"To come to me." Then I, thrust roughly forth —
I, bereft, dumb, forlorn, unremedied
My hurt forever, stumbled blindly down,
And the great door was shut behind and chained.

The weird pathetic scarlet of day dawning,
 More kin to death of night than birth of morn,
 Peered o'er yon hill bristling with spires of pine.
 I heard the crying of the men condemned,
 Men racked, that should be martyr'd presently,
 And my great grief met theirs with might; I held
 All our poor earth's despairs in my poor breast,
 The choking reek, the faggots were all mine.
 Ay, and the partings they were all mine — mine.
 Father, it will be very good methinks
 To die so, to die soon. It doth appease
 The soul in misery for its fellows, when
 There is no help, to suffer even as they.

Father, when I had lost her, when I sat
 After my sickness on the pallet bed,
 My forehead dropp'd into my hand, behold
 Some one beside me. A man's hand let down
 With that same action kind, compassionate,
 Upon my shoulder. And I took the hand
 Between mine own, laying my face thereon.
 I knew this man for him who spoke with me,
 Letting me see my Delia. I looked up.
 Lo! lo! the robed ecclesiastic proud,
 He and this other one. Tell you his name?
 Am I a fiend? No, he was good to me,
 Almost he placed his life in my hand.

Father,

He with good pitying words long talked to me,
 "Did I not strive to save her?" "Ay," quoth I.
 "But sith it would not be, I also claim
 Death, burning; let me therefore die — let me.
 I am wicked, would be heretic, but, faith,

I know not how, and Holy Church I hate.
 She is no mother of mine, she slew my love."
 What answer? "Peace, peace, thou art hard on me.
 Favor I forfeit with the Mother of God,
 Lose rank among the saints, foresee my soul
 Drenched in the unmitigated flame, and take
 My payment in the lives snatched at all risk
 From battling in it here. O, an thou turn
 And tear from me, lost to that other world
 My heart's reward in this, I am twice lost;
 Now have I doubly failed."

Father, I know

The Church would rail, hound forth, disgrace, try,
 burn,
 Make his proud name, discover'd, infamy,
 Tread underfoot his ashes, curse his soul.
 But God is greater than the Church. I hope
 He shall not, for that he loved men, lose God.
 I hope to hear it said "Thy sins are all
 Forgiven; come in, thou hast done well."

For me

My chronicle comes down to its last page.
 "Is not life sweet?" quoth he, and comforted
 My sick heart with good words, "duty" and
 "home."
 Then took me at moonsetting down the stair
 To the dark deserted midway of the street,
 Gave me a purse of money, and his hand
 Laid on my shoulder, holding me with words
 A father might have said, bade me God speed,
 So pushed me from him, turned, and he was gone.
 There was a Pleiad lost; where is she now?
 None knoweth, — O she reigns, it is my creed,

Otherwhere dedicate to making day.
 The God of Gods, He doubtless looked to that
 Who wasteth never aught He fashioned.
 I have no vision, but where vision fails
 Faith cheers, and truly, truly there is need,
 The god of this world being so unkind.
 O love! My girl forever to the world
 Wanting. Lost, not that any one should find,
 But wasted for the sake of waste, and lost
 For love of man's undoing, of man's tears,
 By envy of the Evil One; I mourn
 For thee, my golden girl, I mourn, I mourn.

He set me free. And it befell anon
 That I must imitate him. Then 't befell
 That on the holy Book I read, and all,
 The mediating Mother and her Babe,
 God and the Church, and man and life and death,
 And the dark gulfs of bitter purging flame,
 Did take on alteration. Like a ship
 Cast from her moorings, drifting from her port,
 Not bound to any land, not sure of land,
 My dull'd soul lost her reckoning on that sea
 She sailed, and yet the voyage was nigh done.

This God was not the God I had known; this Christ
 Was other. O, a gentler God, a Christ —
 By a mother and a Father infinite —
 In distance each from each made kin to me.
 Blest Sufferer on the rood; but yet, I say
 Other. Far gentler, and I cannot tell,
 Father, if you, or she, my golden girl,
 Or I, or any aright those mysteries read.

I cannot fathom them. There is not time,
 So quickly men condemned me to this cell.
 I quarrell'd not so much with Holy Church
 For that she taught, as that my love she burned.
 I die because I hid her enemies,
 And read the Book.

But O, forgiving God,
 I do elect to trust Thee. I have thought,
 What! are there set between us and the sun
 Millions of miles, and did He like a tent
 Rear up yon vasty sky? Is heaven less wide?
 And dwells He there, but for His wingèd host,
 Almost alone? Truly I think not so;
 He has had trouble enough with this poor world
 To make Him as an earthly father would,
 Love it and value it more.

He did not give
 So much to have us with Him, and yet fail.
 And now He knows I would believe e'en so
 As pleaseth Him, an there was time to learn
 Or certitude of heart; but time fails, time.
 He knoweth also 'twere a piteous thing
 Not to be sure of my love's welfare — not
 To see her happy and good in that new home.
 Most piteous. I could all forego but this.
 O let me see her, Lord.

What, also I!
 White ashes and a waft of vapor — I
 To flutter on before the winds. No, no.
 And yet forever ay — my flesh shall hiss
 And I shall hear 't. Dreadful, unbearable!
 Is it to-morrow?

Ay, indeed, indeed,

To-morrow. But my moods are as great waves
That rise and break and thunder down on me,
And then fall'n back sink low.

I have waked long
And cannot hold my thoughts upon the event;
They slip, they wander forth.

How the dusk grows.
This is the last moonrising we shall see.
Methought till morn to pray, and cannot pray.
Where is mine Advocate? let Him say all
And more was in my mind to say this night,
Because to-morrow — Ah! no more of that.
The tale is told. Father, I fain would sleep,
Truly my soul is silent unto God.

A VINE-ARBOR IN THE FAR WEST.

I.

"LAURA, my Laura!" "Yes, mother!" "I want
you, Laura; come down."

"What is it, mother — what, dearest? O your
loved face how it pales!

You tremble, alas and alas — you heard bad news
from the town?"

"Only one short half hour to tell it. My poor
courage fails —

II.

Laura." "Where's Ronald? — O anything else but
Ronald!" "No, no,
Not Ronald, if all beside, my Laura, disaster and
tears;

But you, it is yours to send them away, for you
they will go,
One short half hour, and must it decide, it must for
the years.

III.

Laura, you think of your father sometimes?"

"Sometimes!" "Ah, but how?"

"I think — that we need not think, sweet mother —
the time is not yet,

He is as the wraith of a wraith, and a far-off
shadow now

— But if you have heard he is dead?" "Not that."

"Then let me forget."

IV.

"The sun is off the south window, draw back the
curtain, my child."

"But tell it, mother." "Answer you first what it
is that you see."

"The lambs on the mountain slope, and the crevice
with blue ice piled."

"Nearer." — "But, mother!" "Nearer!" "My
heifer she's lowing to me."

V.

"Nearer." "Nothing, sweet mother, O yes, for one
sits in the bower.

Black the clusters hang out from the vine about his
snow-white head,

And the scarlet leaves, where my Ronald leaned."

"Only one half hour —

Laura" — "O mother, my mother dear, all known
though nothing said.

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 east 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 sunset 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 climb 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 wall'd 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
scarcely 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 also.
 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 soothed 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 soothes 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 oftentimes 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.

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 oftentimes 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.

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shone
Long shafts of gold (made all for them) of power
To charm it away, those thieves had sucked the
flower.

Now must they go; a-murmuring they go,
 And little thrushes twitter in the nest;
 The world is made for them, and even so
 The clouds are; they have seen no stars, the breast
 Of their soft mother hid them all the night,
 Till her mate came to her in red dawn-light.

Eggs scribbled over with strange writing, signs,
 Prophecies, and their meaning (for you see
 The yolk within) is life, 'neath yonder bines
 Lie among sedges; on a hawthorn tree
 The slender lord and master perched hard by,
 Scolds at all comers if they step too nigh.

And our small river makes encompassment
 Of half the mead and holm: yon lime trees grow
 All heeling over to it, diligent
 To cast green doubles of themselves below,
 But shafts of sunshine reach its shallow floor
 And warm the yellow sand it ripples o'er.

Ripples and ripples to a pool it made
 Turning. The cows are there, one creamy white —
 She should be painted with no touch of shade
 If any list to limn her — she the light
 Above, about her, treads out circles wide
 And sparkling water flashes from her side.

The clouds have all retired to so great height
 As earth could have no dealing with them more,
 As they were lost, for all her drawing and might,
 And must be left behind; but down the shore
 Lie lovelier clouds in ranks of lace-work frail,
 Wild parsley with a myriad florets pale,

Another milky-way, more intricate
 And multitudinous, with every star
 Perfect. Long changeful sunbeams undulate
 Amid the stems where sparklike creatures are
 That hover and hum for gladness, then the last
 Tree rears her graceful head, the shade is passed.

And idle fish in warm wellbeing lie
 Each with his shadow under, while at ease
 As clouds that keep their shape the darting fry
 Turn and are gone in company; o'er these
 Strangers to them, strangers to us, from holes
 Scooped in the bank peer out shy water-voles.

Here, take for life and fly with innocent feet
 The brown-eyed fawns, from moving shadows
 clear;
 There, down the lane with multitudinous bleat
 Plaining on shepherd lads a flock draws near;
 A mild lamenting fills the morning air,
 "Why to yon upland fold must we needs fare?"

These might be fabulous creatures every one,
 And this their world might be some other sphere
 We had but heard of, for all said or done
 To know of them, — of what this many a year
 They may have thought of man, or of his sway,
 Or even if they have a God and pray.

The sweetest river bank can never more
 Home to its source tempt back the lapsed stream,
 Nor memory reach the ante-natal shore,
 Nor one awake behold a sleeper's dream,

Not easier 'twere that unbridged chasm to walk,
And share the strange lore of their wordless talk.

Like to a poet voice, remote from ken,
That unregarded sings and undesired,
Like to a star unnamed by lips of men,
That faints at dawn in saffron light retired,
Like to an echo in some desert deep
From age to age unwakened from its sleep,—

So falls unmarked that other world's great song,
And lapsing wastes without interpreter.
Slave world! not man's to raise, yet man's to
wrong,

He cannot to a loftier place prefer,
But he can,—all its earlier rights forgot,
Reign reckless if its nations rue their lot;

If they can sin or feel life's wear and fret,
An men had loved them better, it may be
We had discovered. But who e'er did yet,
After the sage saints in their clemency,
Ponder in hope they had a heaven to win,
Or make a prayer with a dove's name therein?

As grave Augustine pleading in his day,
"Have pity, Lord, upon the unfledged bird,
Lest such as pass do trample it in the way,
Not marking, or not minding; give the word,
O bid an angel in the nest again
To place it, lest the mother's love be vain.

And let it live, Lord God, till it can fly."
This man dwelt yearning, fain to guess, to spell

The parable; all work of God Most High
Took to his man's heart. Surely this was well;
To love is more than to be loved, by leave
Of Heaven, to give is more than to receive.

He made it so that said it. As for us
Strange is their case towards us, for they give
And we receive. Made martyrs ever thus
In deed but not in will, for us they live,
For us they die, we quench their little day,
Remaining blameless, and they pass away.

The world is better served than it is ruled,
And not alone of them, forever more
Ruleth the man, the woman serveth fooled
Full oft of love, not knowing his yoke is sore.
Life's greatest Son naught from life's measure
swerved,
He was among us "as a man that served."

Have they another life, and was it won
In the sore travail of another death,
Which loosed the manacles from our race undone
And plucked the pang from dying? If this
breath

Be not their all, reproach no more debarred,
"O unkind lords, you made our bondage hard,"

May be their plaint when we shall meet again
And make our peace with them; the sea of life
Find flowing, full, nor aught or lost or vain.
Shall the vague hint whereof all thought is rife,
The sweet pathetic guess indeed come true,
And things restored reach that great residue?

Shall we behold fair flights of phantom doves,
 Shall furred creatures couch in moly flowers,
 Swan souls the rivers oar with their world-loves,
 In difference welcome as these souls of ours?
 Yet soul of man from soul of man far more
 May differ, even as thought did heretofore

That ranged and varied on th' undying gleam:
 From a pure breath of God aspiring, high,
 Serving and reigning, to the tender dream,
 The wingèd Psyche and her butterfly —
 From thrones and powers, to — fresh from death
 alarms
 Child spirits entering in an angel's arms.

Why must we think, begun in paradise,
 That their long line, cut off with severance fell,
 Shall end in nothingness — the sacrifice
 Of their long service in a passing knell?
 Could man be wholly blest if not to say
 "Forgive" — nor make amends for ever and aye?

Waste, waste on earth, and waste of God afar.
 Celestial flotsam, blazing spars on high,
 Drifts in the meteor month from some wrecked star,
 Strew oft the unwrinkled ocean of the sky,
 And pass no more accounted of than be
 Long dulses limp that stripe a mundane sea.

The sun his kingdom fills with light, but all
 Save where it strikes some planet and her moons
 Across cold chartless gulfs ordained to fall,
 Void antres, reckoneth no man's nights or noons,

But feeling forth as for some outmost shore,
 Faints in the blank of doom, and is no more.

God scattereth His abundance as forgot,
 And what then doth He gather? If we know,
 'Tis that One told us it was life. "For not
 A sparrow," quoth He, uttering long ago
 The strangest words that e'er took earthly sound,
 "Without your Father falleth to the ground."

PERDITA.

"I go beyond the commandment." So be it. Then
 mine be the blame,
 The loss, the lack, the yearning, till life's last sand
 be run,—
 I go beyond the commandment, yet Honor stands
 fast with her claim,
 And what I have rued I shall rue; for what I have
 done — I have done.

Hush! hush! for what of the future; you cannot
 the base exalt,
 There is no bridging a chasm over, that yawns with
 so sheer incline;
 I will not any sweet daughter's cheek should pale
 for this mother's fault,
 Nor son take leave to lower his life a-thinking on
 mine.

"Will I tell you all?" So! this, e'en this, will I
do for your great love's sake;
Think what it costs. "*Then let there be silence —
silence you'll count consent.*"

No, and no, and forever no: rather to cross and to
break,
And to lower your passion I speak — that other it
was I meant.

That other I meant (but I know not how) to speak
of, nor April days,
Nor a man's sweet voice that pleaded — O (but I
promised this) —
He never talked of marriage, never; I grant him
that praise;
And he bent his stately head, and I lost, and he
won with a kiss.

He led me away — O, how poignant sweet the night-
ingale's note that noon —
I beheld, and each crisped spire of grass to him for
my sake was fair,
And warm winds flattered my soul, blowing straight
from the soul of June,
And a lovely lie was spread on the fields, but the
blue was bare.

When I looked up, he said: "Love, fair love! O
rather look in these eyes
With thine far sweeter than eyes of Eve when she
stepped the valley unshod" —
For ONE might be looking through it, he thought,
and he would not in any wise
I should mark it open, limitless, empty, bare 'neath
the gaze of God.

Ah me! I was happy — yes, I was; 'tis fit you
should know it all,
While love was warm and tender and yearning, the
rough winds troubled me not;
I heard them moan without in the forest; heard the
chill rains fall —
But I thought my place was sheltered with him —
I forgot, I forgot.

After came news of a wife; I think he was glad I
should know,
To stay my pleading, "take me to church and give
me my ring;"
"You should have spoken before," he had sighed,
when I prayed him so,
For his heart was sick for himself and me, and this
bitter thing.

But my dream was over me still, — I was half
beguiled,
And he in his kindness left me seldom, O seldom,
alone,
And yet love waxed cold, and I saw the face of my
little child,
And then at the last I knew what I was, and what
I had done.

"You will give me the name of wife. You will give
me a ring." — O peace!
You are not let to ruin your life because I ruined
mine;
You will go to your people at home. There will be
rest and release;
The bitter now will be sweet full soon — ay, and
denial divine.

But spare me the ending. I did not wait to be
quite cast away;
I left him asleep, and the bare sun rising shone red
on my gown.

There was dust in the lane, I remember; prints of
feet in it lay,
And honeysuckle trailed in the path that led on to
the down.

I was going nowhere — I wandered up, then turned
and dared to look back,
Where low in the valley he careless and quiet —
quiet and careless slept.
“*Did I love him yet?*” I loved him. Ay, my heart
on the upland track
Cried to him, sighed to him out by the wheat, as I
walked, and I wept.

I knew of another alas, one that had been in my
place,
Her little ones, she forsaken, were almost in need;
I went to her, and carried my babe, then all in my
satins and lace
I sank at the step of her desolate door, a mourner
indeed.

I cried, “’Tis the way of the world, would I had
never been born!”

“Ay, ’tis the way of the world, but have you no
sense to see

For all the way of the world,” she answers and
laughs me to scorn,

“The world is made the world that it is by fools
like you, like me?”

Right hard upon me, hard on herself, and cold as
the cold stone,
But she took me in; and while I lay sick I knew I
was lost,
Lost with the man I loved, or lost without him,
making my moan
Blighted and rent of the bitter frost, wrecked,
tempest tossed, lost, lost!

How am I fallen: — we that might make of the
world what we would,
Some of us sink in deep waters. Ah! “*you would
raise me again?*”
No, true heart, — you cannot, you cannot, and all
in my soul that is good
Cries out against such a wrong. Let be, your quest
is forever in vain.

For I feel with another heart, I think with another
mind,
I have worsened life, I have wronged the world, I
have lowered the light;
But as for him, his words and his ways were after
his kind,
He did but spoil where he could, and waste where
he might.

For he was let to do it; I let him and left his soul
To walk mid the ruins he made of home in remem-
brance of love’s despairs,
Despairs that harden the hearts of men and shadow
their heads with dole,
And woman’s fault, though never on earth, may be
healed, — but what of theirs?

'Twas fit you should hear it all — What, tears?
they comfort me; now you will go,
Nor wrong your life for the naught you call "a pair
of beautiful eyes,"

"*I will not say I love you.*" Truly I will not, no.
"*Will I pity you?*"

Ay, but the pang will be short, you shall wake and
be wise.

"*Shall we meet?*" We shall meet on the other side,
but not before.

I shall be pure and fair, I shall hear the sound of
THE NAME,

And see the form of His face. You too will walk
on that shore,

In the garden of the Lord God, where neither is
sorrow nor shame.

Farewell, I shall bide alone, for God took my one
white lamb,

I work for such as she was, and I will the while I
last,

But there's no beginning again, ever I am what I
am,

And nothing, nothing, nothing, can do away with
the past.

LETTERS ON LIFE AND THE MORNING.

(First of a series.)

A PARSON'S LETTER TO A YOUNG POET.

THEY said "Too late, too late, the work is done;
Great Homer sang of glory and strong men
And that fair Greek whose fault all these long years
Wins no forgetfulness nor ever can;
For yet cold eyes upon her frailty bend,
For yet the world waits in the victor's tent
Daily, and sees an old man honorable,
His white head bowed, surprise to passionate tears
Awestruck Achilles; sighing, 'I have endured
The like whereof no soul hath yet endured,
To kiss the hand of him that slew my son.'"
They said: "We, rich by him, are rich by more;
One Æschylus found watchfires on a hill
That lit Old Night's three daughters to their work;
When the forlorn Fate leaned to their red light
And sat a-spinning, to her feet he came
And marked her till she span off all her thread.

O, it is late, good sooth, to cry for more:
"The work once done, well done," they said, "for-
bear!

A Tuscan afterward discovered steps
Over the line of life in its mid-way;
He climbed the wall of Heaven, beheld his love
Safe at her singing, and he left his foes
In a vale of shadow weltering, unassailed
Immortal sufferers henceforth in both worlds.

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"Who may inherit next or who shall match
The Swan of Avon and go float with him
Down the long river of life aneath a sun
Not veiled, and high at noon? — the river of life
That as it ran reflected all its lapse
And rippling on the plumage of his breast?

"Thou hast them, heed them, for thy poets now,
Albeit of tongue full sweet and majesty
Like even to theirs, are fallen on evil days,
Are wronged by thee of life, wronged of the world.
Look back they must and show thee thy fair past,
Or, choosing thy to-day, they may but chant
As they behold.

The mother-glowworm broods
Upon her young, fast-folded in the egg
And long before they come to life they shine —
The mother-age broods on her shining thought
That liveth, but whose life is hid. He comes
Her poet son, and lo you, he can see
The shining, and he takes it to his breast
And fashions for it wings that it may fly
And show its sweet light in the dusky world.

"Mother, O Mother of our dusk to-day,
What hast thou lived for bards to sing of thee?
Lapsed water cannot flow above its source;
'The kid must browse,' they said, 'where she is tied.'"

Son of to-day, rise up, and answer them.
What! wilt thou let thy mother sit ashamed
And crownless? — Set the crown on her fair head:
She waited for thy birth, she cries to thee

"Thou art the man." He that hath ears to hear,
To him the mother cries "Thou art the man."

She murmurs, for thy mother's voice is low —
"Methought the men of war were even as gods,
The old men of the ages. Now mine eyes
Retrieve the truth from ruined city walls
That buried it; from carved and curious homes
Full of rich garments and all goodly spoil,
Where having burned, battered, and wasted them,
They flung it. Give us, give us better gods
Than these that drink with blood upon their hands,
For I repent me that I worshipped them.
O that there might be yet a going up!
O to forget — and to begin again!"

Is not thy mother's rede at one with theirs
Who cry "The work is done"? What though to
thee,

Thee only, should the utterance shape itself
"O to forget, and to begin again,"

Only of thee be heard as that keen cry
Rending its way from some distracted heart
That yields it and so breaks? Yet list the cry
Begin for her again, and learn to sing;
But first, in all thy learning learn to be.
Is life a field? then plough it up — re-sow
With worthier seed — Is life a ship? O heed
The southing of thy stars — Is life a breath?
Breathe deeper, draw life up from hour to hour,
Aye, from the deepest deep in thy deep soul.

It may be God's first work is but to breathe
And fill the abysm with drifts of shining air

That slowly, slowly curdle into worlds.
A little space is measured out to us
Of His long leisure; breathe and grow therein,
For life, alas! is short, and "*when we die*
It is not for a little while."

They said,
"The work is done," and is it therefore done?
Speak rather to thy mother thus: "All-fair,
Lady of ages, beautiful To-day
And sorrowful To-day, thy children set
The crown of sorrow on their heads, their loss
Is like to be the loss of all: we hear
Lamenting, as of some that mourn in vain
Loss of high leadership, but where is he
That shall be great enough to lead thee now?"

Where is thy Poet? thou hast wanted him.
Where? Thou hast wakened as a child in the night
And found thyself alone. The stars have set,
There is great darkness, and the dark is void
Of music. Who shall set thy life afresh
And sing thee thy new songs? Whom wilt thou
love

And lean on to break silence worthily —
Discern the beauty in thy goings — feel
The glory of thy yearning, — thy self-scorn
Flatter to dim oblivion with a smile —
Own thy great want, that knew not its great name?
O who shall make to thee mighty amends
For thy lost childhood, joining two in one,
Thyself and Him? Behold Him, He is near:
God is thy Poet now.

A King sang once

Long years ago 'My soul is athirst for God,
Yea for the living God' — thy thirst and his
Are one. It is thy Poet whom thy hands
Grove for, not knowing. Life is not enough,
Nor love, nor learning, — Death is not enough
Even to them, happy, who forecast new life;
But give us now and satisfy us now,
Give us now, now, to live in the life of God,
Give us now, now, to be at one with Him."

Would I had words — I have not words for her,
Only for thee; and thus I tell them out:
For every man the world is made afresh;
To God both it and he are young. There are
Who call upon Him night, and morn, and night,
"Where is the kingdom? Give it us to-day.
We would be here with God, not there with God.
Make Thine abode with us, great Wayfarer,
And let our souls sink deeper into Thee" —
There are who send but yearnings forth, in quest
They know not why, of good they know not what.

The unknown life, and strange its stirring is.
The babe knows naught of life, yet clothed in it
And yearning only for its mother's breast
Feeds thus the unheeded thing — and as for thee,
That life thou hast is hidden from thine eyes,
And when it yearns, thou, knowing not for what,
Wouldst fain appease it with one grand, deep joy,
One draught of passionate peace — but wilt thou
know

The other name of joy, the better name
Of peace? It is thy Father's name. Thy life

Yearns to its Source. The spirit thirsts for God,
Even the living God.

But "No," thou sayest,
"My heart is all in ruins with pain, my feet
Tread a dry desert where there is no way
Nor water. I look back, and deep through time
The old words come but faintly up the track
Trod by the sons of men. The man He sent,
The Prince of life, methinks I could have loved
If I had looked once in His deep man's eyes.
But long ago He died, and long ago
Is gone."

He is not dead, He cannot go.
Men's faith at first was like a mastering stream,
Like Jordan "the descender" leaping down
Pure from his snow; and warmed of tropic heat
Hiding himself in verdure: then at last
In a Dead Sea absorbed as faith of doubt.
But yet the snow lies thick on Hermon's breast
And daily at his source the stream is born.
Go up — go mark the whiteness of the snow —
Thy faith is not thy Saviour, not thy God,
Though faith waste fruitless down a desert old.
The living God is new, and He is near.

What need to look behind thee and to sigh?
When God left speaking He went on before
To draw men after, following up and on;
And thy heart fails because thy feet are slow;
Thou think'st of Him as one that will not wait.
A Father and not wait! — He waited long
For us, and yet perchance He thinks not long
And will not count the time. There are no dates
In His fine leisure.

Speak then as a son:

"Father, I come to satisfy Thy love
With mine, for I had held Thee as remote,
The background of the stars — Time's yesterday —
Illimitable Absence. Now my heart
Communes, methinks, with somewhat teaching me
Thou art the Great To-day. God, is it so?
Then for all love that was, I thank Thee, God,
It is and yet shall bide. And I have part
In all, for in Thine image I was made,
To Thee my spirit yearns, as Thou to mine.
If aught be stamped of Thy Divine on me,
And man be God-like, God is like to man.

"Dear and dread Lord, I have not found it hard
To fear Thee, though Thy love in visible form
Bled 'neath a thorny crown — but since indeed,
For kindred's sake and likeness, Thou dost thirst
To draw men nigh, and make them one with Thee,
My soul shall answer 'Thou art what I want:
I am athirst for God, the living God.'"

Then straightway flashes up athwart the words:

"And if I be a son I am very far
From my great Father's house; I am not clean.
I have not always willed it should be so,
And the gold of life is rusted with my tears."

It is enough. He never said to men,
"Seek ye My face in vain." And have they
sought —

Beautiful children, well-belovèd sons,
Opening wide eyes to ache among the moons

All night, and sighing because star multitudes
Fainted away as to a glittering haze,
And sparkled here and there like silver wings,
Confounding them with nameless, numberless
Unbearable, fine flocks? It is not well
For them, for thee. Hast thou gone forth so far
To the unimaginable steeps on high
Trembling and seeking God? Yet now come home,
Cry, cry to Him: "I cannot search Thee out,
But Thou and I must meet. O come, come down,
Come." And that cry shall have the mastery.
Ay, He shall come in truth to visit thee,
And thou shalt mourn to Him, "Unclean, unclean,"
But never more "I will to have it so."
From henceforth thou shalt learn that there is love
To long for, pureness to desire, a mount
Of consecration it were good to scale.

Look you, it is to-day as at the first.
When Adam first was 'ware his new-made eyes
And opened them, behold the light! And breath
Of God was misting yet about his mouth,
Whereof they had made his soul. Then he looked
forth

And was a part of light; also he saw
Beautiful life, and it could move. But Eve—
Eve was the child of midnight and of sleep.
Lo, in the dark God led her to his side;
It may be in the dark she heard him breathe
Before God woke him. And she knew not light,
Nor life but as a voice that left his lips,
A warmth that clasped her; but the stars were out,
And she with wide child-eyes gazed up at them.

Haply she thought that always it was night;
Haply he, whispering to her in that reach
Of beauteous darkness, gave her unworn heart
A rumor of the dawn, and wakened it
To a trembling, and a wonder, and want
Kin to his own; and as he longed to gaze
On his new fate, the gracious mystery
His wife, she may have longed, and felt not why,
After the light that never she had known.

So doth each age walk in the light beheld,
Nor think on light, if it be light or no;
Then comes the night to it, and in the night
Eve.

The God-given, the most beautiful
Eve.
And she is not seen for darkness' sake;
Yet, when she makes her gracious presence felt,
The age perceives how dark it is, and fain,
Fain would have daylight, fain would see her well,
A beauty half revealed, a helpmeet sent
To draw the soul away from valley clods;
Made from itself, yet now a better self—
Soul in the soulless, arrow tipped with fire
Let down into a careless breast; a pang
Sweeter than healing that cries out with it
For light all light, and is beheld at length—
The morning dawns.

Were not we born to light? ®

Ay, and we saw the men and women as saints
Walk in a garden. All our thoughts were fair;
Our simple hearts, as dovecotes full of doves,
Made home and nests for them. They fluttered
forth,

And flocks of them flew white about the world.
 And dreams were like to ships that floated us
 Far out on silent floods, apart from earth,
 From life — so far that we could see their lights
 In heaven — and hear the everlasting tide,
 All dappled with that fair reflected gold,
 Wash up against the city wall, and sob
 At the dark bows of vessels that drew on
 Heavily freighted with departed souls
 To whom did spirits sing; but on that song
 Might none, albeit the meaning was right plain,
 Impose the harsh captivity of words.

Afterward waking, sweet was early air,
 Full excellent was morning; whether deep
 The snow lay keenly white, and shrouds of hail
 Blurred the gray breaker on a long foreshore,
 And swarming plover ran, and wild white mews
 And sea-pies printed with a thousand feet
 The fallen whiteness, making shrill the storm;
 Or whether, soothed of sunshine, throbbed and
 hummed

The mill atween its bowering maple trees,
 And churned the leaping beck that reared, and
 urged
 A diamond-dripping wheel.

The happy find

Equality of beauty everywhere
 To feed on. All of shade and sheen is theirs,
 All the strange fashions and the fair wise ways
 Of lives beneath man's own. He breathes delight
 Whose soul is fresh, whose feet are wet with dew
 And the melted mist of morning, when at watch

Sunk deep in fern he marks the stealthy roe,
 Silent as sleep or shadow, cross the glade,
 Or dart athwart his view as August stars
 Shoot and are out — while gracefully pace on
 The wild-eyed harts to their traditional tree
 To clear the velvet from their budded horns.
 There is no want, both God and life are kind;
 It is enough to hear, it is enough
 To see; the pale wide barley-field they love,
 And its weird beauty, and the pale wide moon
 That lowering seems to lurk between the sheaves.
 So in the rustic hamlet at high noon
 The white owl sailing drowsed and deaf with sleep
 To hide her head in turrets browned of moss
 That is the rust of time. Ay so the pinks
 And mountain grass marked on a sharp sea-cliff
 While far below the northern diver feeds;
 She having ended settling while she sits,
 As vessels water-logged that sink at sea
 And quietly into the deep go down.

It is enough to wake, it is enough
 To sleep: — With God and time he leaves the rest.
 But on a day death on the doorstep sits
 Waiting, or like a veiled woman walks
 Dogging his footsteps, or athwart his path
 The splendid passion-flower love unfolds
 Buds full of sorrow, not ordained to know
 Appeasement through the answer of a sigh,
 The kiss of pity with denial given,
 The crown and blossom of accomplishment.
 Or haply comes the snake with subtlety,
 And tempts him with an apple to know all.

So,—Shut the gate; the story tells itself
 Over and over; Eden must be lost
 If after it be won. He stands at fault,
 Not knowing at all how this should be—he feels
 The great bare barrenness o' the outside world.
 He thinks on Time and what it has to say;
 He thinks on God, but God has changed His hand,
 Sitting afar. And as the moon draws on
 To cover the day-king in his eclipse,
 And thin the last fine sickle of light, till all
 Be gone, so fares it with his darkened soul.

The dark, but not Orion sparkling there
 With his best stars; the dark, but not yet Eve.
 And now the wellsprings of sweet natural joy
 Lie, as the Genie sealed of Solomon
 Fast prisoned in his heart; he hath not learned
 The spell whereby to loose and set them forth,
 And all the glad delights that boyhood loved
 Smell at Oblivion's poppy, and lie still.

Ah! they must sleep—"The mill can grind no
 more

With water that hath passed." Let it run on.
 For he hath caught a whisper in the night;
 This old inheritance in darkness given,
 The world, is widened, warmed, it is alive,
 Comes to his beating heart and bids it wake,
 Opens the door to youth, and bids it forth,
 Exultant for expansion and release,
 And bent to satisfy the mighty wish,
 Comfort and satisfy the mighty wish,
 Life of his life, the soul's immortal child
 That is to him as Eve.

He cannot win,
 Nor earn, nor see, nor hear, nor comprehend,
 With all the watch, tender, impetuous,
 That wastes him, this, whereof no less he feels
 Infinite things; but yet the night is full
 Of air-beats and of heart-beats for her sake.
 Eve the aspirer, give her what she wants,
 Or wherefore was he born?

O he was born
 To wish—then turn away:—to wish again
 And half forget his wish for earthlier joy;
 He draws the net to land that brings red gold;
 His dreams among the meshes tangled lie,
 And learning hath him at her feet;—and love,
 The sea-born creature fresh from her sea foam,
 Touches the ruddiest veins in his young heart,
 Makes it to sob in him and sigh in him,
 Restless, repelled, dying, alive and keen,
 Fainting away for the remorseless ALL
 Gone by, gone up, or sweetly gone before,
 But never in his arms. Then pity comes,
 Knocks at his breast, it may be, and comes in,
 Makes a wide wound that haply will not heal,
 But bleeds for poverty, and crime, and pain,
 Till for the dear kin's sake he grandly dares
 Or wastes him, with a wise improvidence;
 But who can stir the weighty world; or who
 Can drink a sea of tears?

O love, and life,
 O world, and can it be that this is all?
 Leave him to tread expectance underfoot;
 Let him alone to tame down his great hope
 Before it breaks his heart: "Give me my share .

That I foresaw, my place, my draught of life.
This that I bear, what is it? — me no less
It binds, I cannot disenslave my soul."

There is but halting for the wearied foot.
The better way is hidden; faith hath failed —
One stronger far than reason mastered her.
It is not reason makes faith hard, but life.
The husks of his dead creed, downtrod and dry,
Are powerless now as some dishonored spell,
Some aged Pythia in her priestly clothes,
Some widow'd witch divining by the dead.

Or if he keeps one shrine undesecrate
And go to it from time to time with tears,
What lies there? A dead Christ enswathed and
cold,

A Christ that did not rise. The linen cloth
Is wrapped about His head, He lies embalmed
With myrrh and spices in His sepulchre,
The love of God that daily dies; — to them
That trust it the One Life, the all that lives.

O mother Eve, who wert beguiled of old,
Thy blood is in thy children, thou art yet
Their fate and copy; with thy milk they drew
The immortal want of morning; but thy day
Dawned and was over, and thy children know
Contentment never, nor continuance long.
For even thus it is with them: the day
Waxeth, to wane anon, and a long night
Leaves the dark heart unsatisfied with stars.

A soul in want and restless and bereft
To whom all life hath lied, shall it too lie?

Saying, "I yield Thee thanks, most mighty God,
Thou hast been pleased to make me thus and thus
I do submit me to Thy sovereign will
That I full oft should hunger and not have,
And vainly yearn after the perfect good,
Gladness and peace"?

No, rather dare think thus

"Ere chaos first had being, earth, or time,
My Likeness was apparent in high heaven,
Divine and manlike, and his dwelling place
Was the bosom of the Father. By His hands
Were the worlds made and filled with diverse
growths

And ordered lives. Then afterward they said,
Taking strange counsel, as if he who worked
Hitherto should not henceforth work alone,
'Let us make man;' and God did look upon
That Divine Word which was the form of God,
And it became a thought before the event.
There they foresaw my face, foreheard my speech,
God-like, God-loved, God-loving, God-derived.

"And I was in a garden, and I fell
Through envy of God's evil son, but Love
Would not be robbed of me forever — Love
For my sake passed into humanity,
And there for my first Father won me home.
How should I rest then? I have not gone home;
I feed on husks, and they given grudgingly,
While my great Father — Father — O my God,
What shall I do?"

Ay, I will dare think thus:

"I cannot rest because He doth not rest

In whom I have my being. THIS IS GOD—
My soul is conscious of His wondrous wish,
And my heart's hunger doth but answer His
Whose thought has met with mine.

I have not all;
He moves me thus to take of Him what lacks.
My want is God's desire to give,— He yearns
To add Himself to life and so for aye
Make it enough."

A thought by night, a wish
After the morning, and behold it dawns
Pathetic in a still solemnity,
And mighty words are said for him once more,
"Let there be light." Great heaven and earth have
heard,
And God comes down to him, and Christ doth rise.

NOTES.

"THE DREAMS THAT CAME TRUE."

Page 199.

This story I first wrote in prose, and it was published some years ago.

"A STORY OF DOOM."

Page 271.

The name of the patriarch's wife is intended to be pronounced Nigh-loi-ya.

Of the three sons of Noah—Shem, Ham, and Japhet—I have called Japhet the youngest (because he is always named last), and have supposed that, in the genealogies where he is called "Japhet the elder," he may have received the epithet because by that time there were younger Japhets.

Page 324.

The quivering butterflies in companies,
That slowly crept adown the sandy marge,
Like living *crocus beds*.

This beautiful comparison is taken from "The Naturalist on the River Amazon." "Vast numbers of orange-colored butterflies congregated on the moist sands. They assembled in densely-packed masses, sometimes two or three yards in circumference, their wings all held in an upright position, so that the sands looked as though variegated with *beds of crocuses*."

"GLADYS AND HER ISLAND."

Page 386.

The woman is Imagination; she is brooding over what she brought forth.

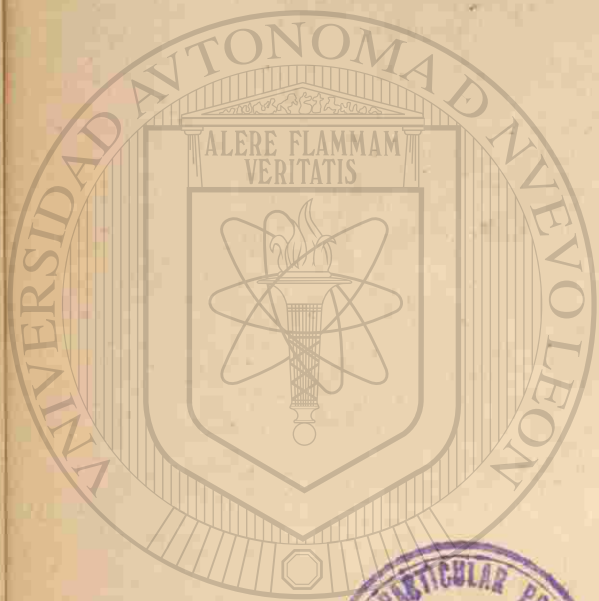
The two purple peaks represent the domains of Poetry and of History.

The girl is Fancy.

"WINSTANLEY."

Page 402.

This ballad was intended to be one of a set, and was read to the children in the National Schools at Sherborne, Dorsetshire, in order to discover whether, if the actions of a hero were simply and plainly narrated, English children would like to learn the verses, recording them by heart, as their forefathers did.



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129



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129