

BOOK I.—IN ITALY.

THE MAGIC LAND.

By woodland belt, by ocean bar,
The full south breeze our foreheads
fanned,
And, under many a yellow star,
We dropped into the Magic Land.

There, every sound and every sight
Means more than sight or sound else-
where ;
Each twilight star a twofold light ;
Each rose a double redness, there.

By ocean bar, by woodland belt,
Our silent course a syren led,
Till dark in dawn began to melt,
Through the wild wizard-work o'er-
head.

A murmur from the violet vales !
A glory in the goblin dell !
There Beauty all her breast unveils,
And Music pours out all her shell.

We watched, toward the land of dreams,
The fair moon draw the murmuring
main ;
A single thread of silver beams
Was made the monster's rippling
chain.

We heard far off the syren's song ;
We caught the gleam of sea-maid's hair.
The glimmering isles and rocks among,
We moved through sparkling purple
air.

Then Morning rose, and smote from far,
Her elfin harps o'er land and sea ;
And woodland belt, and ocean bar,
To one sweet note, sighed " Italy ! "

DESIRE.

THE golden Planet of the Occident
Warm from his bath comes up, i' the
rosy air,
And you may tell which way the Day-
light went,
Only by his last footsteps shining
there :

For now he dwells
Sea-deep o' the other shore of the world,
And winds himself in the pink-mouthéd
shells ;
Or, with his dusky, sun-dyed Priest,
Walks in the gardens of the gorgeous East ;
Or hides in Indian hills ; or saileth
where
Floats, curiously curled,
Leagues out of sight and scent of spicy
trees,
The cream-white nautilus on sapphrine
seas.

But here the Night from the hill-top
yonder
Steals all alone, nor yet too soon ;
I have sighed for, and sought for, her ;
sadder and fonder
(All through the lonely and lingering
noon)
Than a maiden that sits by the lattice to
ponder
On vows made in vain, long since,
under the moon.
Her dusky hair she hath shaken free,
And her tender eyes are wild with love ;
And her balmy bosom lies bare to me.
She hath lighted the seven sweet Plei-
ads above,
She is breathing over the dreaming sea,
She is murmuring low in the cedar
grove ;
She hath put to sleep the moaning dove
In the silent cypress-tree.

And there is no voice nor whisper, —
No voice nor whisper,
In the hillside olives all at rest,
Underneath blue-lighted Hesper,
Sinking, slowly, in the liquid west :
For the night's heart knoweth best
Love by silence most exprest.
The nightingales keep mute
Each one his fairy flute,
Where the mute stars look down,
And the laurels close the green seaside :
Only one amorous lute
Twangs in the distant town,
From some lattice opened wide :
The climbing rose and vine are here, are
there.

On the terrace, around, above me :
The lone Ledaean* lights from you en-
chanted air
Look down upon my spirit, like a spir-
it's eyes that love me.

How beautiful, at night, to muse on the
mountain height,
Moated in purple air, and all alone !
How beautiful, at night, to look into the
light
Of loving eyes, when loving lips lean
down unto our own !
But there is no hand in mine, no hand
in mine,
Nor any tender cheek against me prest :
O stars that o'er me shine, I pine, I pine,
I pine,
With hopeless fancies hidden in an
ever-hungering breast !

O where, O where is she that should be
here,
The spirit my spirit dreameth ?
With the passionate eyes, so deep, so
dear,
Where a secret sweetness beameth ?
O sleepeth she, with her soft gold hair
Streaming over the fragrant pillow,
And a rich dream glowing in her ripe
cheek,
Far away, I know not where,
By lonely shores, where the tumbling
billow
Sounds all night in an emerald creek ?

Or doth she lean o'er the casement stone
When the day's dull noise is done with,
And the sceptred spirit remounts alone
Into her long-usurpéd throne,
By the stairs the stars are won with ?
Hearing the white owl call
Where the river draws through the
meadows below,
By the beeches brown, and the broken
wall,
His silvery, seaward waters, slow
To the ocean bounding all :
With, here a star on his glowing breast,
And, there a lamp down-streaming,
And a musical motion towards the west
Where the long white cliffs are gleam-
ing ;

* "How oft, unwearied, have we spent the
nights,
Till the Ledaean stars, so famed for love,
Wondered at us from above." — COWLEY.

While, far in the moonlight, lies at rest
A great ship, asleep and dreaming ?

Or doth she linger yet
Among her sisters and brothers,
In the chamber where happy faces are
met,
Distinct from all the others ?
As my star up there, be it never so bright,
No other star resembles.
Doth she steal to the window, and strain
her sight
(While the pearl in her warm hair trem-
bles)
Over the dark, the distant night,
Feeling something changed in her home
yet ;
That old songs have lost their old de-
light,
And the true soul is not come yet ?
Till the nearest star in sight
Is drowned in a tearful light.

I would that I were nigh her,
Wherever she rest or rove !
My spirit waves as a spiral fire
In a viewless wind doth move.
Go forth, alone, go forth, wild-winged
Desire,
Thou art the bird of Jove,
That broodest lone by the Olympian
throne ;
And strong to bear the thunders which
destroy,
Or fetch the ravisht, flute-playing Phry-
gian boy ;
Go forth, across the world, and find my
love !

FATALITY.

I HAVE seen her, with her golden hair,
And her exquisite primrose face,
And the violet in her eyes ;
And my heart received its own despair —
The thrall of a hopeless grace,
And the knowledge of how youth
dies.

Live hair afloat with snakes of gold,
And a throat as white as snow,
And a stately figure and foot ;
And that faint pink smile, so sweet, so
cold,
Like a wood anemone, closed below
The shade of an ilex root.

And her delicate milk-white hand in mine,
And her pensive voice in my ear,
And her eyes downcast as we speak.
I am filled with a rapture, vague and fine;
For there has fallen a sparkling tear
Over her soft, pale cheek.

And I know that all is hopeless now.
And that which might have been,
Had she only waited a year or two,
Is turned to a wild regret, I know,
Which will haunt us both, whatever
the scene,
And whatever the path we go.

Meanwhile, for one moment, hand in hand,
We gaze on each other's eyes;
And the red moon rises above us;
We linger with love in the lovely land, —
Italy with its yearning skies,
And its wild white stars that love us.

A VISION.

THE hour of Hesperus! the hour when
feeling
Grows likest memory, and the full
heart swells
With pensive pleasure to the mellow
pealing
Of mournful music upon distant bells:
The hour when it seems sweetest to be
loved,
And saddest to have loved in days no
more.
O love, O life, O lovely land of yore,
Through which, erewhile, these weary
footsteps roved,

Was it a vision? Or Irene, sitting,
Lone in her chamber, on her snowy
bed,
With listless fingers, lingeringly unknit-
ting
Her silken bodice; and, with bended
head,
Hiding in warm hair, half-way to her
knee,
Her pearl-pale shoulder, leaning on
one arm,
Athwart the darkness, odorous and
warm,
To watch the low, full moon set, pen-
sively?

A fragrant lamp burned dimly in the room,
With scarce a gleam in either looking-
glass.
The mellow moonlight, through the deep-
blue gloom,
Did all along the dreamy chamber pass,
As though it were a little toucht with awe
(Being new-come into that quiet place
In such a quiet way) at the strange
grace
Of that pale lady, and what else it saw; —

Rare flowers: narcissi; irises, each
crowned;
Red oleander blossoms; hyacinths
Flooding faint fragrance, richly curled
all round,
Corinthian, cool columnar flowers on
plinths;
Waxen camelias, white and crimson ones;
And amber lilies, and the regal rose,
Which for the breast of queens full-
scornful grows;
All pinnaled in urns of carven bronze:

Tables of inwrought stone, true Floren-
tine, —
Olympian circles thronged with Mer-
curies,
Minervas, little Junos dug i' the green
Of ruined Rome; and Juno sown rich eyes
Vivid on peacock plumes Sidonian:
A ribboned lute, young Music's cradle:
books,
Vellumed and claspt: and with be-
wildered looks,
Madonna's picture, — the old smile
grown wan.

From blooméd thickets, firefly-lamped,
beneath
The terrace, fluted cool the nightingale.
In at the open window came the breath
Of many a balmy, dim blue, dreaming
vale.
At intervals the howlet's note came clear,
Fluttering dark silence through the
cypress grove;
An infant breeze from the elf-land of
Love,
Lured by the dewy hour, crept, lisping,
near.

And now is all the night her own, to
make it
Or grave or gay with throngs of wak-
ing dreams.

Now grows her heart so ripe, a sigh
might shake it
To showers of fruit, all golden as be-
seems
Hesperian growth. Why not, on nights
like this,
Should Daphne out from yon green
laurel slip?
A Dryad from the ilex, with white hip
Quivered and thonged to hunt with Ar-
temis?

To-night, what wonder were it, while
such shadows
Are taking up such shapes on moonlit
mountains,
Such star-flies kindling o'er low emerald
meadows,
Such voices floating out of hillside
fountains,
If some full face should from the win-
dow greet her,
Whose eyes should be new planetary
lights,
Whose voice a well of liquid love-
delights,
And to the distance sighingly entreat
her?

EROS.

WHAT wonder that I loved her thus,
that night?
The Immortals know each other at first
sight,
And Love is of them.
In the fading light
Of that delicious eve, whose stars even yet
Gild the long dreamless nights, and can-
not set,
She passed me, through the silence: all
her hair,
Her waving, warm, bright hair neglect-
fully
Poured round her snowy throat as with-
out care
Of its own beauty.
And when she turned on me
The sorrowing light of desolate eyes di-
vine,
I knew in a moment what our lives must
be
Henceforth. It lightened on me then
and there,
How she was irretrievably all mine,
I hers, — through time, become eternity.

It could not ever have been otherwise,
Gazing into those eyes.

And if, before I gazed on them, my soul,
Oblivious of her destiny, had followed,
In days forever silent, the control
Of any beauty less divinely hallowed
Than that upon her beautiful white
brows,
(The serene summits of all earthly sweet-
ness!)
Straightway the records of all other vows
Of idol-worship faded silently
Out of the folding leaves of memory,
Forever and forever; and my heart be-
came
Pure white at once, to keep in its com-
pleteness,
And perfect purity,
Her mystic name.

INDIAN LOVE-SONG.

My body sleeps: my heart awakes.
My lips to breathe thy name are moved
In slumber's ear: then slumber breaks;
And I am drawn to thee, beloved.
Thou drawest me, thou drawest me,
Through sleep, through night. I hear
the rills,
And hear the leopard in the hills,
And down the dark I feel to thee.

The vineyards and the villages
Were silent in the vales, the rocks.
I followed past the myrrhy trees,
And by the footsteps of the flocks.
Wild honey, dropt from stone to stone,
Where bees have been, my path sug-
gests.
The winds are in the eagles' nests.
The moon is hid. I walk alone.

Thou drawest me, thou drawest me
Across the glimmering wildernesses,
And drawest me, my love, to thee,
With dove's eyes hidden in thy tresses
The world is many: my love is one.
I find no likeness for my love.
The cinnamons grow in the grove:
The Golden Tree grows all alone.

O who hath seen her wondrous hair!
Or seen my dove's eyes in the woods?
Or found her voice upon the air?
Her steps along the solitudes?

Or where is beauty like to hers ?
 She draweth me, she draweth me.
 I sought her by the incense-tree,
 And in the aloes, and in the firs.

Where art thou, O my heart's delight,
 With dove's eyes hidden in thy locks ?
 My hair is wet with dews of night.
 My feet are torn upon the rocks.
 The cedarn scents, the spices, fail
 About me. Strange and stranger seems
 The path. There comes a sound of
 streams
 Above the darkness on the vale.

No trees drop gums ; but poison flowers
 From rifts and clefts all round me fall ;
 The perfumes of thy midnight bowers,
 The fragrance of thy chambers, all
 Is drawing me, is drawing me.
 Thy baths prepare ; anoint thine hair :
 Open the window : meet me there :
 I come to thee, to thee, to thee !

Thy lattices are dark, my own.
 Thy doors are still. My love, look out.
 Arise, my dove with tender tone.
 The camphor-clusters all about
 Are whitening. Dawn breaks silently.
 And all my spirit with the dawn
 Expands ; and, slowly, slowly drawn,
 Through mist and darkness moves toward
 thee.

MORNING AND MEETING.

ONE yellow star, the largest and the last
 Of all the lovely night, was fading slow
 (As fades a happy moment in the past)
 Out of the changing east, when, yet
 aglow
 With dreams her looks made magical,
 from sleep
 I waked ; and oped the lattice. Like
 a rose
 All the red-opening morning 'gan
 disclose
 A ripened light upon the distant steep.
 A bell was chiming through the crystal
 air
 From the high convent-church upon
 the hill.
 The folk were loitering by to matin prayer.
 The church-bell called me out, and
 seemed to fill

The air with little hopes. I reached the
 door
 Before the chanted hymn began to rise,
 And float its liquid Latin melodies
 O'er pious groups about the marble floor.

Breathless, I slid among the kneeling folk.
 A little bell went tinkling through the
 pause
 Of inward prayer. Then forth the low
 chant broke
 Among the glooming aisles, that
 through a gauze
 Of sunlight glimmered.

Thickly throbbed my blood.
 I saw, dark-tressed in the rose-lit shade,
 Many a little dusk Italian maid,
 Kneeling with fervent face close where I
 stood.

The morning, all a misty splendor,
 shook
 Deep in the mighty window's flame-
 lit webs.

It touched the crowned Apostle with his
 hook,
 And brightened where the sea of jasper
 ebbs

About those Saints' white feet that stand
 serene
 Each with his legend, each in his own
 hue

Attired : some beryl-golden : sapphire
 blue
 Some : and some ruby-red : some emer-
 ald-green.

Wherefrom, in rainbow-wreaths, the rich
 light rolled

About the snowy altar, sparkling clean.
 The organ groaned and pined, then,
 growing bold,
 Revelled the cherubs' golden wings
 atween.

And in the light, beneath the music,
 kneeled
 (As pale as some stone Virgin bending
 solemn

Out of the red gleam of a granite col-
 umn)
 Irene with clasped hands and cold lips
 sealed.

As one who, pausing on some mountain-
 height,
 Above the breeze that breaks o'er vine-
 yard walls,

Leans to the impulse of a wild delight,
 Bows earthward, feels the hills bow
 too, and falls —
 I dropt beside her. Feeling seemed to
 expand
 And close : a mist of music filled the air :
 And, when it ceased in heaven, I was
 aware
 That, through a rapture, I had toucht
 her hand.

THE CLOUD.

WITH shape to shape, all day,
 And change to change, by foreland, firth,
 and bay,
 The cloud comes down from wander-
 ing with the wind,
 Through gloom and gleam across the
 green waste seas ;
 And, leaving the white cliff and lone
 tower bare
 To empty air,
 Slips down the windless west, and
 grows defined
 In splendor by degrees.

And, blown by every wind
 Of wonder through all regions of the mind,
 From hope to fear, from doubt to sweet
 despite
 Changing all shapes, and mingling
 snow with fire,
 The thought of her descends, sleeps o'er
 the bounds
 Of passion, grows, and rounds
 Its golden outlines in a gradual light
 Of still desire.

ROOT AND LEAF.

THE love that deep within me lies
 Unmoved abides in conscious power ;
 Yet in the heaven of thy sweet eyes
 It varies every hour.

A look from thee will flush the cheek :
 A word of thine awaken tears :
 And, ah, in all I do and speak
 How frail my love appears !

In yonder tree, Beloved, whose boughs
 Are household both to earth and heaven,
 Whose leaves have murmured of our vows
 To many a balmy even,

The branch that wears the liveliest green,
 Is shaken by the restless bird ;
 The leaves that nighest heaven are seen,
 By every breeze are stirred :

But storms may rise, and thunders roll,
 Nor move the giant roots below ;
 So, from the bases of the soul,
 My love for thee doth grow.

It seeks the heaven, and trembles there
 To every light and passing breath ;
 But from the heart no storm can tear
 Its rooted growth beneath.

WARNINGS.

BEWARE, beware of witchery !
 And fall not in the snare
 That lurks and lies in wanton eyes,
 Or hides in golden hair :
 For the Witch hath sworn to catch thee,
 And her spells are on the air.
 "Thou art fair, fair, fatal fair,
 O Irene !

What is it, what is it,
 In the whispers of the leaves ?
 In the night-wind, when its bosom,
 With the shower in it, grieves ?
 In the breaking of the breaker,
 As it breaks upon the beach
 Through the silence of the night ?
 Cordelia ! Cordelia !
 A warning in my ear —
 "Not here ! not here ! not here !
 But seek her yet, and seek her,
 Seek her ever out of reach,
 Out of reach, and out of sight !"
 Cordelia !

Eyes on mine, when none can view me !
 And a magic murmur through me !
 And a presence out of Fairyland,
 Invisible, yet near !
 Cordelia !

"In a time which hath not been :
 In a land thou hast not seen :
 Thou shalt find her, but not now :
 Thou shalt meet her, but not here" :
 Cordelia ! Cordelia !
 "In the falling of the snow :
 In the fading of the year :
 When the light of hope is low,
 And the last red leaf is sere."
 Cordelia !

And my senses lie asleep, fast asleep,
O Irene!
In the chambers of this Sorceress, the
South,
In a slumber dim and deep,
She is seeking yet to keep,
Brimful of poisoned perfumes,
The shut blossom of my youth.
O fatal, fatal fair Irene!

But the whispering of the leaves,
And the night-wind, when it grieves,
And the breaking of the breaker,
As it breaks upon the beach
Through the silence of the night,
Cordelia!
Whisper ever in my ear
"Not here! not here! not here!"
But awake, O wanderer! seek her,
Ever seek her out of reach,
Out of reach, and out of sight!"
Cordelia!

There is a star above me
Unlike all the millions round it.
There is a heart to love me,
Although not yet I have found it.
And awhile,

O Cordelia, Cordelia!
A light and careless singer,
In the subtle South I linger,
While the blue is on the mountain,
And the bloom is on the peach,
And the fire-fly on the night,
Cordelia!

But my course is ever norward,
And a whisper whispers "For-
ward!"

Arise, O wanderer, seek her,
Seek her ever out of reach,
Out of reach and out of sight!
Cordelia!

Out of sight,
Cordelia! Cordelia!
Out of reach, out of sight,
Cordelia!

A FANCY.

How sweet were life, — *this* life, if we
(My love and I) might dwell together
Here beyond the summer sea,
In the heart of summer weather!

With pomegranates on the bough,
And with lilies in the bower;

And a sight of distant snow,
Rosy in the sunset hour.

And a little house, — no more
In state than suits two quiet lovers;
And a woodbine round the door,
Where the swallow builds and hovers;

With a silver sickle-moon,
O'er hot gardens, red with roses:
And a window wide, in June,
For serenades when evening closes:

In a chamber cool and simple,
Trellised light from roof to basement;
And a summer wind to dimple
The white curtain at the casement:

Where, if we at midnight wake,
A green acacia-tree shall quiver
In the moonlight, o'er some lake
Where nightingales sing songs forever.

With a pine-wood dark in sight;
And a bean-field climbing to us,
To make odors faint at night
Where we roam with none to view us.

And a convent on the hill,
Through its light green olives peeping
In clear sunlight, and so still,
All the nuns, you'd say, were sleeping.

Seas at distance, seen beneath
Grated garden-wildernesses; —
Not so far but what their breath
At eve may fan my darling's tresses.

A piano, soft in sound,
To make music when speech wanders,
Poets reverently bound,
O'er whose pages rapture ponders.

Canvas, brushes, hues, to catch
Fleeting forms in vale or mountain:
And an evening star to watch
When all's still, save one sweet foun-
tain.

Ah! I idle time away
With impossible fond fancies!
For a lover lives all day
In a land of lone romances.

But the hot light o'er the city
Drops, — and see! on fire departs.

And the night comes down in pity
To the longing of our hearts.

Bind thy golden hair from falling,
O my love, my one, my own!
'T is for thee the cuckoo's calling
With a note of tenderer tone.

Up the hillside, near and nearer,
Through the vine, the corn, the flow-
ers,
Till the very air grows dearer,
Neighboring our pleasant bowers.

Now I pass the last Poderè:
There, the city lies behind me.
See her fluttering like a fairy
O'er the happy grass to find me!

ONCE.

A FALLING star that shot across
The intricate and twinkling dark
Vanisht, yet left no sense of loss
Throughout the wide ethereal arc

Of those serene and solemn skies
That round the dusky prospect rose,
And ever seemed to rise, and rise,
Through regions of unreachd repose.

Far, on the windless mountain-range,
One crimson sparklet died: the blue
Flushed with a brilliance, faint and
strange,
The ghost of daylight, dying too.

But half-revealed, each terrace urn
Glimmered, where now, in filmy flight,
We watched return, and still return,
The blind bats searching air for sight.

With sullen fits of fleeting sound,
Borne half asleep on slumbrous air,
The drowsy beetle hummed around,
And passed, and oft repassed us, there;

Where, hand in hand, our looks alight
With thoughts our pale lips left un-
told,
We sat, in that delicious night,
On that dim terrace, green and old.

Deep down, far off, the city lay,
When forth from all its spires was
swept

A music o'er our souls; and they
To music's midmost meanings leapt;

And, crushing some delirious cry
Against each other's lips, we clung
Together silent, while the sky
Throbbing with sound around us hung:

For, borne from bells on music soft,
That solemn hour went forth through
heaven,
To stir the starry airs aloft,
And thrill the purple pulse of even.

O happy hush of heart to heart!
O moment molten through with bliss!
O Love, delaying long to part
That first, fast, individual kiss!

Whereon two lives on glowing lips
Hung claspt, each feeling fold in fold,
Like daisies closed with crimson tips,
That sleep about a heart of gold.

Was it some drowsy rose that moved?
Some dreaming dove's pathetic moan?
Or was it my name from lips beloved?
And was it thy sweet breath, mine own.

That made me feel the tides of sense
O'er life's low levels rise with might,
And pour my being down the immense
Shore of some mystic Infinite?

"O, have I found thee, my soul's soul!
My chosen forth from time and space!
And did we then break earth's control?
And have I seen thee face to face?"

"Close, closer to thy home, my breast,
Closer thy darling arms enfold!
I need such warmth, for else the rest
Of life will freeze me dead with cold.

"Long was the search, the effort long,
Ere I compelled thee from thy sphere,
I know not with what mystic song,
I know not with what nightly tear:

"But thou art here, beneath whose eyes
My passion falters, even as some
Pale wizard's taper sinks, and dies,
When to his spell a spirit is come.

"My brow is pale with much of pain:
Though I am young, my youth is gone,
And, shouldst thou leave me lone again,
I think I could not live alone.

"As some idea, half divined,
With tumult works within the brain
Of desolate genius, and the mind
Is vassal to imperious pain,

"For toil by day, for tears by night,
Till, in the sphere of vision brought,
Rises the beautiful and bright
Predestined, but relentless Thought;

"So, gathering up the dreams of years,
Thy love doth to its destined seat
Rise sovran, through the light of tears —
Achieved, accomplisht, and complete!

"I fear not now lest any hour
Should chill the lips my own have
prest;
For I possess thee by the power
Whereby I am myself possest.

"These eyes must lose their guiding
light:
These lips from thine, I know, must
sever:
O looks and lips may disunite,
But ever love is love forever!"

SINCE.

WORDS like to these were said, or dreamed
(How long since!) on a night divine,
By lips from which such rapture streamed
I cannot deem those lips were mine.

The day comes up above the roofs,
All sallow from a night of rain;
The sound of feet, and wheels, and hoofs
In the blurred street begins again:

The same old toil — no end — no aim!
The same vile babble in my ears;
The same unmeaning smiles: the same
Most miserable dearth of tears.

The same dull sound: the same dull
lack
Of lustre in the level gray:
It seems like Yesterday come back
With his old things, and not To-day.

But now and then her name will fall
From careless lips with little praise,
On this dry shell, and shatter all
The smooth indifference of my days.

They chatter of her — deem her light —
The apes and liars! they who know
As well to sound the unfathomed Night
As her impenetrable woe!

And here, where Slander's scorn is spilt,
And gabbling Folly clucks above
Her addled eggs, it feels like guilt,
To know that far away, my love

Her heart on every heartless hour
Is bruising, breaking, for my sake:
While, coiled and numbed, and void of
power,
My life sleeps like a winter snake.

I know that at the mid of night,
(When sheflings by the glittering stress
Of Pride, that mocks the vulgar sight,
And fronts her chamber's loneliness,)

She breaks in tears, and, overthrown
With sorrowing, weeps the night away,
Till back to his unlovely throne
Returns the unrelenting day.

All treachery could devise hath wrought
Against us: — letters robbed and read:
Snares hid in smiles: betrayal bought:
And lies imputed to the dead.

I will arise, and go to her,
And save her in her own despite;
For in my breast begins to stir
A pulse of its old power and might.

They cannot so have slandered me
But what, I know, if I should call
And stretch my arms to her, that she
Would rush into them, spite of all.

In Life's great lazar-house, each breath
We breathe may bring or spread the
pest;
And, woman, each may catch his death
From those that lean upon his breast.

I know how tender friends of me
Have talked with broken hint, and
glance:
— The choicest flowers of calumny,
That seem, like weeds, to spring from
chance; —

That small, small, imperceptible
Small talk, which cuts like powdered
glass

Ground in Tophana — none can tell
Where lurks the power the poison has!

I may be worse than they would prove,
(Who knows the worst of any man?)
But, right or wrong, be sure my love
Is not what they conceive, or can.

Nor do I question what thou art,
Nor what thy life, in great or small,
Thou art, I know, what all my heart
Must beat or break for. That is all.

A LOVE-LETTER.

My love, — my chosen, — but not mine!
I send
My whole heart to thee in these words
I write;
So let the blotted lines, my soul's sole
friend,
Lie upon thine, and there be blest at
night.

This flower, whose bruised purple blood
will stain
The page now wet with the hot tears
that fall —
(Indeed, indeed, I struggle to restrain
This weakness, but the tears come,
spite of all!)

I plucked it from the branch you used to
praise,
The branch that hides the wall. I
tend your flowers.
I keep the paths we paced in happier
days.
How long ago they seem, those pleas-
ant hours.

The white laburnum's out. Your judas-
tree
Begins to shed those crimson buds of
his.
The nightingales sing — ah, too joyously!
Who says those birds are sad? I think
there is

That in the books we read, which deeper
wrings
My heart, so they lie dusty on the
shelf.
Ah me, I meant to speak of other things
Less sad. In vain! they bring me to
myself.

I know your patience. And I would not
cast
New shade on days so dark as yours
are grown
By weak and wild repining for the past,
Since it is past forever, O mine own!

For hard enough the daily cross you bear,
Without that deeper pain reflection
brings;
And all too sore the fretful household care,
Free of the contrast of remembered
things.

But ah! it little profits, that we thrust
From all that's said, what both must
feel, unnamed.
Better to face it boldly, as we must,
Than feel it in the silence, and be
shamed.

Irene, I have loved you, as men love
Light, music, odor, beauty, love it-
self; —
Whatever is apart from, and above
Those daily needs which deal with dust
and pelf.

And I had been content, without one
thought
Our guardian angels could have blusht
to know,
So to have lived and died, demanding
nought
Save, living dying, to have loved you
so.

My youth was orphaned, and my age
will be
Childless. I have no sister. None,
to steal
One stray thought from the many
thoughts of thee,
Which are the source of all I think
and feel.

My wildest wish was vassal to thy will:
My haughtiest hope, a pensioner on
thy smile,
Which did with light my barren being
fill,
As moonlight glorifies some desert isle.

I never thought to know what I have
known, —
The rapture, dear, of being loved by
you:

I never thought, within my heart, to
own
One wish so blest that you should
share it too:

Nor ever did I deem, contemplating
The many sorrows in this place of pain,
So strange a sorrow to my life could
cling,
As, being thus loved, to be beloved in
vain.

But now we know the best, the worst.
We have
Interred, and prematurely, and un-
known,
Our youth, our hearts, our hopes, in one
small grave,
Whence we must wander, widowed,
to our own.

And if we comfort not each other, what
Shall comfort us, in the dark days to
come?
Not the light laughter of the world, and
not
The faces and the firelight of fond
home.

And so I write to you; and write, and
write,
For the mere sake of writing to you,
dear.
What can I tell you, that you know
not? Night
Is deepening through the rosy atmos-
phere

About the lonely casement of this room,
Which you have left familiar with the
grace
That grows where you have been. And
on the gloom
I almost fancy I can see your face.

Not pale with pain, and tears restrained
for me,
As when I last beheld it; but as first,
A dream of rapture and of poesy,
Upon my youth, like dawn on dark, it
burst.

Perchance I shall not ever see again
That face. I know that I shall never
see
Its radiant beauty as I saw it then,
Save by this lonely lamp of memory,

With childhood's starry graces lingering
yet
I the rosy orient of young womanhood;
And eyes like woodland violets newly wet;
And lips that left their meaning in
my blood!

I will not say to you what I might say
To one less worthily loved, less worthy
love.
I will not say . . . "Forget the past.
Be gay.
And let the all ill-judging world ap-
prove

"Light in your eyes, and laughter on
your lip."
I will not say . . . "Dissolve in thought
forever
Our sorrowful, but sacred, fellowship."
For that would be, to bid you, dear,
dissever

Your nature from its nobler heritage
In consolations registered in heaven,
For griefs this world is barren to assuage,
And hopes to which, on earth, no
home is given.

But I would whisper, what forevermore
My own heart whispers through the
wakeful night, . . .
"This grief is but a shadow, flung be-
fore,
From some refulgent substance out of
sight."

Wherefore it happens, in this riddling
world,
That, where sin came not, sorrow yet
should be;
Why heaven's most hurtful thunders
should be hurled
At what seems noblest in humanity;

And we are punished for our purest
deeds,
And chastened for our holiest
thoughts; . . . alas!
There is no reason found in all the
creeds,
Why these things are, nor whence
they come to pass

But in the heart of man, a secret voice
There is, which speaks, and will not
be restrained,

Which cries to Grief . . . "Weep on,
while I rejoice,
Knowing that, somewhere, all will be
explained."

I will not cant that commonplace of
friends,
Which never yet hath dried one
mourner's tears,
Nor say that grief's slow wisdom makes
amends
For broken hearts and desolated years.

For who would barter all he hopes from
life,
To be a little wiser than his kind?
Who arm his nature for continued
strife,
Where all he seeks for hath been left
behind?

But I would say, O pure and perfect
pearl
Which I have dived so deep in life to
find,
Locked in my heart thou liest. The
wave may curl,
The wind may wail above us. Wave
and wind,

What are their storm and strife to me
and you?
No strife can mar the pure heart's in-
most calm.
This life of ours, what is it? A very
few
Soon-ended years, and then, — the
ceaseless psalm,

And the eternal sabbath of the soul!
Hush! . . . while I write, from the
dim Carminé
The midnight angelus begins to roll,
And float athwart the darkness up to
me.

My messenger (a man by danger tried)
Waits in the courts below; and ere
our star
Upon the forehead of the dawn hath
died,
Beloved one, this letter will be far

Athwart the mountain, and the mist, to
you.
I know each robber hamlet. I know
all

This mountain people. I have friends,
both true
And trusted, sworn to aid whate'er be-
fall.

I have a bark upon the gulf. And I,
If to my heart I yielded in this hour,
Might say . . . "Sweet fellow-sufferer,
let us fly!
I know a little isle which doth em-
bower

"A home where exiled angels might for-
bear
Awhile to mourn for paradise." . . .
But no!
Never, whate'er fate now may bring us,
dear,
Shalt thou reproach me for that only
woe

Which even love is powerless to console;
Which dwells where duty dies: and
haunts the tomb
Of life's abandoned purpose in the soul;
And leaves to hope, in heaven itself,
no room.

Man cannot make, but may ennoble, fate,
By nobly bearing it. So let us trust,
Not to ourselves, but God, and calmly
wait
Love's orient, out of darkness and of
dust.

Farewell, and yet again farewell, and yet
Never farewell, — if farewell mean to
fare
Alone and disunited. Love hath set
Our days, in music, to the self-same
air;

And I shall feel, wherever we may be,
Even though in absence and an alien
clime,
The shadow of the sunniness of thee,
Hovering, in patience, through a
clouded time.

Farewell! The dawn is rising, and the
light
Is making, in the east, a faint en-
deavor
To illuminate the mountain peaks.
Good night.
Thine own, and only thine, my love,
forever.