

So fair thou madest, and so complete,  
The little daisies at our feet ;  
So sound, and so robust in heart,  
The patient beasts, that bear their part  
In this world's labor, never asking  
The reason of its ceaseless tasking ;  
Hast thou made man, though more in  
kind,

By reason of his soul and mind,  
Yet less in unison with life,  
By reason of an inward strife,  
Than these, thy simpler creatures, are,  
Submitted to his use and care ?

For these, indeed, appear to live  
To the full verge of their own power,  
Nor ever need that time should give  
To life one space beyond the hour.  
They do not pine for what is not ;  
Nor quarrel with the things which are ;  
Their yesterdays are all forgot ;  
Their morrows are not feared from far :  
They do not weep, and wail, and moan,  
For what is past, or what's to be,  
Or what's not yet, and may be never ;  
They do not their own lives disown,

Nor haggle with eternity  
For some unknown Forever.

Ah yet, — in this must I believe  
That man is nobler than the rest : —  
That, looking in on his own breast,  
He measures thus his strength and size  
With supernatural destinies,  
Whose shades o'er all his being  
fall ;

And, in that dread comparison  
'Twixt what is deemed and what is  
done,  
He can, at intervals, perceive  
How weak he is, and small.

Therefore, he knows himself a child,  
Set in this rudimental star,  
To learn the alphabet of Being ;  
By straws dismayed, by toys beguiled,  
Yet conscious of a home afar ;  
With all things here but ill agreeing,  
Because he trusts, in manhood's prime,  
To walk in some celestial clime ;  
Sit in his Father's house ; and be  
The inmate of Eternity.

## BOOK IV.—IN SWITZERLAND.

### THE HEART AND NATURE.

THE lake is calm ; and, calm, the skies  
In yonder silent sunset glow,  
Where, o'er the woodland, homeward flies  
The solitary crow ;

The woodman to his hut is gone ;  
The wood-dove in the elm is still ;  
The last sheep drinks, and wanders on  
To graze at will.

Nor aught the pensive prospect breaks,  
Save where my slow feet stir the grass,  
Or where the trout to diamonds breaks  
The lake's pale glass.

No moan the cushat makes, to heave  
A leaflet round her windless nest ;  
The air is silent in the eve ;  
The world's at rest.

All bright below ; all calm above ;  
No sense of pain, no sign of wrong ;

Save in thy heart of hopeless love,  
Poor child of Song !

Why must the soul through Nature rove,  
At variance with her general plan ?  
A stranger to the Power, whose love  
Soothes all save Man ?

Why lack the strength of meaner crea-  
tures ?  
The wandering sheep, the grazing kine,  
Are surer of their simple natures  
Than I of mine.

For all their wants the poorest land  
Affords supply ; they browse and breed ;  
I scarce divine, and ne'er have found,  
What most I need.

O God, that in this human heart  
Hath made Belief so hard to grow,  
And set the doubt, the pang, the smart  
In all we know —

Why hast thou, too, in solemn jest  
At this tormented thinking-power,  
Inscribed, in flame on yonder West,  
In hues on every flower,

Through all the vast unthinking sphere  
Of mere material Force without,  
Rebuke so vehement and severe  
To the least doubt ?

And robbed the world and hung the night,  
With silent, stern, and solemn forms ;  
And strown with sounds of awe and  
might,  
The seas and storms, —

All lacking power to impart  
To man the secret he assails,  
But armed to crush him, if his heart  
Once doubts or fails !

To make him feel the same forlorn  
Despair the Fiend hath felt ere now,  
In gazing at the stern sweet scorn  
On Michael's brow.

### A QUIET MOMENT.

STAY with me, Lady, while you may !  
For life's so sad, — this hour's so  
sweet ;

Ah, Lady, — life too long will stay ;  
Too soon this hour will fleet.

How fair this mountain's purple bust,  
Alone in high and glimmering air !  
And see, . . . those village spires, up-  
thrust  
From yon dark plain, — how fair !

How sweet yon lone and lovely scene,  
And yonder dropping fiery ball,  
And eve's sweet spirit, that steals, un-  
seen,  
With darkness over all !

This blessed hour is yours, and eve's ;  
And this is why it seems so sweet  
To lie, as hushed as fallen leaves  
In autumn, at your feet ;

And watch, awhile released from care,  
The twilight in yon quiet skies,  
The twilight in your quiet hair,  
The twilight in your eyes :

Till in my soul the twilight stays,  
— Eve's twilight, since the dawn's is  
o'er !  
And life's too well-known worthless  
days  
Become unknown once more.

Your face is no uncommon face ;  
Like it, I have seen many a one,  
And may again, before my race  
Of care be wholly run.

But not the less, those earnest brows,  
And that pure oval cheek can charm ; —  
Those eyes of tender deep repose ;  
That breast, the heart keeps warm.

Because a sense of goodness sleeps  
In every sober, soft, brown tress,  
That o'er those brows, uncared for, keeps  
Its shadowy quietness :

Because that lip's soft silence shows,  
Though passion it hath never known,  
That well, to kiss one kiss, it knows —  
— A woman's holiest one !

Yours is the charm of calm good sense,  
Of wholesome views of earth and  
heaven,  
Of pity, touched with reverence,  
To all things freely given.

Your face no sleepless midnight fills,  
For all its serious sweet endeavor ;  
It plants no pang, no rapture thrills,  
But ah ! — it pleases ever !

Not yours is Cleopatra's eye,  
And Juliet's tears you never knew :  
Never will amorous Antony  
Kiss kingdoms out for you !

Never for you will Romeo's love,  
From depths of moonlit musing, break  
To poetry about the glove  
Whose touch may press your cheek.

But ah, in one, — no Antony  
Nor Romeo now, nor like to these, —  
(Whom neither Cleopatra's eye,  
Nor Juliet's tears, could please)

How well they lull the lurking care  
Which else within the mind endures, —  
That soft white hand, that soft dark hair,  
And that soft voice of yours !



So, while you stand, a fragile form,  
With that close shawl around you  
drawn,  
And eve's last ardors fading warm  
Adown the mountain lawn,

'T is sweet, although we part to-morrow,  
And ne'er, the same, shall meet again,  
Awhile, from old habitual sorrow  
To cease ; to cease from pain ;

To feel that, ages past, the soul  
Hath lived — and ages hence will live ;  
And taste, in hours like this, the whole  
Of all the years can give.

Then, Lady, yet one moment stay,  
While your sweet face makes all things  
sweet,  
For ah, the charm will pass away  
Before again we meet !

## NENIE.

SOFT, soft be thy sleep in the land of  
the West,  
Fated maiden !  
Fair lie the flowers, love, and light, on  
thy breast  
Passion-laden,  
In the place where thou art, by the  
storm-beaten strand  
Of the moaning Atlantic,  
While, alone with my sorrow, I roam  
through thy land,  
The beloved, the romantic !  
And thy faults, child, sleep where in  
those dark eyes Death closes  
All their doings and undoings ;  
For who counts the thorns on last year's  
perisht roses ?  
Smile, dead rose, in thy ruins !  
With thy beauty, its frailty is over.  
No token  
Of all which thou wast !  
Not so much as the stem whence the  
blossom was broken  
Hath been spared by the frost.  
With thy lips, and thine eyes, and thy  
long golden tresses,  
Cold . . . and so young too !  
All lost, like the sweetness which died  
with our kisses,  
On the lips we once clung to.  
Be it so ! O too loved, and too lovely, to  
linger

Where Age in its bareness  
Creeps slowly, and Time with his terri-  
ble finger  
Effaces all fairness.  
Thy being was but beauty, thy life only  
rapture,  
And, ere both were over,  
Or yet one delight had escaped from thy  
capture,  
Death came, — thy last lover,  
And found thee, . . . no care on thy  
brow, in thy tresses  
No silver — all gold there !  
On thy lips, when he kissed them, their  
last human kisses  
Had scarcely grown cold there.  
Thine was only earth's joy, not its sor-  
row, its sinning,  
Its friends that are foes too.  
O, fair was thy life in its lovely beginning,  
And fair in its close too !  
But I ? . . . since we parted, both mourn-  
ful and many  
Life's changes have been to me :  
And of all the love-garlands Youth wove  
me, not any  
Remain that are green to me.  
O, where are the nights, with thy touch  
and thy breath in them,  
Faint with heart-beating ?  
The fragrance, the darkness, the life and  
the death in them,  
— Parting and meeting ?  
All the world ours in that hour ! . . .  
O, the silence,  
The moonlight, and, far in it,  
O, the one nightingale singing a mile  
hence !  
The oped window — one star in it !  
Sole witness of stolen sweet moments,  
unguest of  
By the world in its primness ; —  
Just one smile to adore by the starlight :  
the rest of  
Thy soul in the dimness !  
If I glide through the door of thy cham-  
ber, and sit there,  
The old, faint, uncertain  
Fragrance, that followed thee, surely will  
flit there, —  
O'er the chairs, — in the curtain : —  
But thou ? . . . O thou missed, and thou  
mourned one ! O never,  
Nevertheless, shall we rove  
Through chamber, or garden, or by the  
dark river  
Soft lamps burn above !

O dead, child, dead, dead — all the  
shrunk romance  
Of the dream life begun with !  
But thou, love, canst alter no more —  
smile or glance ;  
Thy last change is done with.  
As a moon that is sunken, a sunset  
that's o'er,  
So thy face keeps the semblance  
Of the last look of love, the last grace  
that it wore,  
In my mourning remembrance.  
As a strain from the last of thy songs,  
when we parted,  
Whose echoes thrill yet,  
Through the long dreamless nights of  
sad years, lonely-hearted,  
With their haunting regret, —  
Though nerveless the hand now, and  
shattered the lute too,  
Once vocal for me,  
There floats through life's ruins, when  
all's dark and mute too,  
The music of thee !  
Beauty, how brief ! Life, how long !  
. . . well, love's done now !  
Down the path fate arranged for me  
I tread faster, because I must tread it  
alone now.  
— This is all that is changed for me.  
My heart must have broken, ere I broke  
the fetter  
Thyself didst undo, love.  
— Ah, there's many a purer, and many a  
better,  
But more loved, . . . O, how few, love !

## BOOK V.—IN HOLLAND.

## AUTUMN.

So now, then, Summer's over—by degrees.  
Hark ! 't is the wind in yon red region  
grieves.  
Who says the world grows better,  
growing old ?  
See ! what poor trumpery on those pau-  
per trees,  
That cannot keep, for all their fine  
gold leaves,  
Their last bird from the cold.

This is Dame Nature, puckered, pinched,  
and sour,  
Of all the charms her poets praised,  
bereft,  
Scowling and scolding (only hear  
her, there !)  
Like that old spiteful Queen, in her last  
hour,  
Whom Spenser, Shakespeare, sung to  
. . . nothing left  
But wrinkles and red hair !

## LEAFLESS HOURS.

THE pale sun, through the spectral wood,  
Gleams sparsely, where I pass :  
My footstep, silent as my mood,  
Falls in the silent grass.

Only my shadow points before me,  
Where I am moving now :  
Only sad memories murmur o'er me  
From every leafless bough :  
And out of the nest of last year's Red-  
breast  
Is stolen the very snow.

## ON MY TWENTY-FOURTH YEAR.

THE night's in November : the winds  
are at strife :  
The snow's on the hill, and the ice on  
the mere :  
The world to its winter is turned : and  
my life  
To its twenty-fourth year.

The swallows are flown to the south long  
ago :  
The roses are fallen : the woodland is  
sere.  
Hope's flown with the swallows : Love's  
rose will not grow  
In my twenty-fourth year.

The snow on the threshold : the cold at  
the heart :  
But the fagot to warm, and the wine-  
cup to cheer :



God's help to look up to: and courage  
to start  
On my twenty-fourth year.

And 'tis well that the month of the  
roses is o'er!

The last, which I plucked for Neræa  
to wear,

She gave her new lover. A man should  
do more

With his twenty-fourth year

Than mourn for a woman, because she's  
unkind,

Or pine for a woman, because she is fair.  
Ah, I loved you, Neræa! But now . . .  
never mind,

'T is my twenty-fourth year!

What a thing! to have done with the  
follies of Youth,

Ere Age brings its follies! . . . though  
many a tear

It should cost, to see Love fly away, and  
find Truth

In one's twenty-fourth year.

The Past's golden valleys are drained.  
I must plant

On the Future's rough upland new  
harvests, I fear.

Ho, the plough and the team! . . . who  
would perish of want

In his twenty-fourth year?

Man's heart is a well, which forever re-  
news

The void at the bottom, no sounding  
comes near:

And Love does not die, though its object  
I lose

In my twenty-fourth year.

The great and the little are only in name.  
The smoke from my chimney casts

shadows as drear

On the heart, as the smoke from Vesu-  
vius in flame:

And my twenty-fourth year,

From the joys that have cheered it, the  
cares that have troubled,

What is wise to pursue, what is well  
to revere,

May judge all as fully as though life  
were doubled

To its forty-eighth year!

If the prospect grow dim, 't is because it  
grows wide.

Every loss hath its gain. So, from  
sphere on to sphere,

Man mounts up the ladder of Time: so  
I stride

Up my twenty-fourth year!

Exulting? . . . no . . . sorrowing? . . .  
no . . . with a mind

Whose regret chastens hope, whose  
faith triumphs o'er fear:

Not repining: not confident: no, but  
resigned

To my twenty-fourth year.

### JACQUELINE,

COUNTESS OF HOLLAND AND HAINAULT.\*

Is it the twilight, or my fading sight,  
Makes all so dim around me? No, the  
night

Is come already. See! through yonder  
pane,

Alone in the gray air, that star again —  
Which shines so wan, I used to call it  
mine

For its pale face: like Countess Jacque-  
line

Who reigned in Brabant once . . . that's  
years ago.

I called so much mine, then: so much  
seemed so!

And see, my own! — of all those things,  
my star

(Because God hung it there, in heaven,  
so far

Above the reach and want of those hard  
men)

Is all they have not taken from me.  
Then

I call it still My Star. Why not? The  
dust

Hath claimed the dust: no more. And  
moth and rust

May rot the throne, the kingly purple  
fray: —

What then? Yon star saw kingdoms  
rolled away

Ere mine was taken from me. It sur-  
vives.

But think, Beloved, — in that high life  
of lives,

When our souls see the suns themselves  
burn low

Before that Sun of Righteousness, — and  
know

What is, and was, before the suns were  
lit, —

How Love is all in all . . . Look, look at it,  
My star, — God's star, — for being God's

't is mine:

Had it been man's . . . no matter . . .  
see it shine —

The old wan beam, which I have watched  
ere now

So many a wretched night, when this  
poor brow

Ached 'neath the sorrows of its thorny  
crown.

Its crown! . . . ah, droop not, dear, those  
fond eyes down.

No gem in all that shattered coronet  
Was half so precious as the tear which  
wet

Just now this pale sick forehead. O my  
own,

My husband, need was, that I should  
have known

Much sorrow, — more than most Queens,  
— all know some, —

Ere, dying, I could bless thee for the  
home

Far dearer than the Palace, — call thy  
tear,

The costliest gem that ever sparkled here.

Infold me, my Belovéd. One more kiss.  
O, I must go! 'T was willed I should

not miss

Life's secret, ere I left it. And now  
see, —

My lips touch thine — thine arm encir-  
cles me —

The secret's found — God beckons — I  
must go.

Earth's best is given. — Heaven's turn  
is come to show

How much its best earth's best may yet  
exceed,

Lest earth's should seem the very best  
indeed.

So we must part a little; but not long.  
I seem to see it all. My lands belong

To Philip still; but thine will be my  
grave,

(The only strip of land which I could  
save!)

Not much, but wide enough for some  
few flowers,

Thou'lt plant there, by and by, in later  
hours:

Duke Humphry, when they tell him I  
am dead

(And so young too!) will sigh, and shake  
his head,

And if his wife should chide, "Poor  
Jacqueline,"

He'll add, "You know she never could  
be mine."

And men will say, when some one speaks  
of me,

"Alas, it was a piteous history.  
The life of that poor countess!" For  
the rest

Will never know, my love, how I was blest.  
Some few of my poor Zealanders, per-  
chance,

Will keep kind memories of me; and in  
France

Some minstrel sing my story. Piteous  
John

Will prosper still, no doubt, as he has  
done,

And still praise God with blood upon  
the Rood.

Philip will, doubtless, still be called  
"The Good."

And men will curse and kill: and the  
old game

Will weary out new hands: the love of  
fame

Will sow new sins: thou wilt not be  
renowned:

And I shall lie quite quiet under ground.  
My life is a torn book. But at the end

A little page, quite fair, is saved, my  
friend,

Where thou didst write thy name. No  
stain is there,

No blot, — from marge to marge, all  
pure — no tear; —

The last page, saved from all, and writ  
by thee,

Which I shall take safe up to Heaven  
with me.

All's not in vain, since this be so. Dost  
grieve?

Belovéd, I beseech thee to believe

\* Who was married to the impotent and worthless John of Brabant, affianced to "good Duke Humphry," of Gloucester, and finally wedded to Frank von Lorsele, a gentleman of Zealand, in consequence of which marriage she lost even the title of Countess. She died at the age of thirty-six, after a life of unparalleled adventure and misfortune. See any Biographical Dictionary, or any History of the Netherlands.



Although this be the last page of my life,  
It is my heart's first, only one. Thy  
wife,  
Poor though she be, O thou sole wealth  
of mine,  
Is happier than the Countess Jacqueline!

And since my heart owns thine, say, —  
am I not  
A Queen, my chosen, though by all  
forgot?  
Though all forsake, yet is not this thy  
hand?

I, a lone wanderer in a darkened land,  
I, a poor pilgrim with no staff of hope,  
I, a late traveller down the evening slope,  
Where any spark, the glow-worm's by  
the way,  
Had been a light to bless . . . have I,  
O say,

Not found, Belovéd, in thy tender eyes,  
A light more sweet than morning's? As  
there dies

Some day of storm all glorious in its  
even,

My life grows loveliest as it fades in  
heaven.

This earthly house breaks up. This  
flesh must fade.

So many shocks of grief slow breach  
have made

In the poor frame. Wrongs, insults,  
treacheries,

Hopes broken down, and memory which  
sighs

In, like a night-wind! Life was never  
meant

To bear so much in such frail tenement.  
Why should we seek to patch and  
plaster o'er

This shattered roof, crusht windows,  
broken door

The light already shines through? Let  
them break.

Yet would I gladly live for thy dear  
sake,

O my heart's first and last, if that could  
be!

In vain! . . . yet grieve not thou. I  
shall not see

England again, and those white cliffs;  
nor ever

Again those four gray towers beside the  
river,

And London's roaring bridges: never  
more

Those windows with the market-stalls  
before,

Where the red-kirtled market-girls went  
by

In the great square, beneath the great  
gray sky,

In Brussels: nor in Holland, night or day,  
Watch those long lines of siege, and  
fight at bay

Among my broken army, in default  
Of Gloucester's failing forces from Hai-  
nault:

Nor shall I pace again those gardens  
green,

With their clipt alleys, where they  
called me Queen,

In Brabant once. For all these things  
are gone.

But thee I shall behold, my chosen one,  
Though we should seem whole worlds on  
worlds apart,

Because thou wilt be ever in my heart.  
Nor shall I leave thee wholly. I shall be  
An evening thought, — a morning dream  
to thee, —

A silence in thy life when, through the  
night,

The bell strikes, or the sun, with sinking  
light,

Smites all the empty windows. As there  
sprout

Daisies, and dimpling tufts of violets, out  
Among the grass where some corpse lies  
asleep,

So round thy life, where I lie buried deep,  
A thousand little tender thoughts shall  
spring,

A thousand gentle memories wind and  
cling.

O, promise me, my own, before my soul  
Is houseless, — let the great world turn  
and roll

Upon its way unvext . . . Its pomps,  
its powers!

The dust says to the dust, . . . "the  
earth is ours."

I would not, if I could, be Queen again  
For all the walls of the wide world con-  
tain.

Be thou content with silence. Who  
would raise

A little dust and noise of human praise,  
If he could see, in yonder distance dim,  
The silent eye of God that watches him?  
Oh! couldst thou see all that I see to-  
night

Upon the brinks of the great Infinite!

"Come out of her, my people, lest ye be  
Partakers of her sins!" . . . My love,  
but we

Our treasure where no thieves break in  
and steal,

Have stored, I trust. Earth's weal is  
not our weal.

Let the world mind its business — peace  
or war,

Ours is elsewhere. Look, look, — my  
star, my star!

It grows, it glows, it spreads in light  
unfurled; —

Said I "my star"? No star — a world  
— God's world!

What hymns adown the jasper sea are  
rolled,

Even to these sick pillows! Who in fold  
White wings about me? Rest, rest,  
rest . . . I come!

O Love! I think that I am near my  
home.

Whence was that music? Was it Heav-  
en's I heard?

Write "Blesséd are the dead that die i'  
the Lord,

Because they rest," . . . because their toil  
is o'er.

The voice of weeping shall be heard no  
more

In the Eternal city. Neither dying  
Nor sickness, pain nor sorrow, neither  
crying,

For God shall wipe away all tears. Rest,  
rest,

Thy hand, my husband, — so — upon  
thy breast!

## MACROMICROS.

It is the star of solitude,  
Alight in yon lonely sky.

The sea is silent in its mood,  
Motherlike moaning a lullaby,

To hush the hungering mystery  
To sleep on its breast subdued.

The night is alone, and I.

It is not the scene I am seeing,  
The lonely sky and the sea,

It is the pathos of Being  
That is making so dark in me

This silent and solemn hour: —  
The bale of baffled power,

The wail of un baffled desire,

The fire that must ever devour  
The source by which it is fire.

My spirit expands, expands!  
I spread out my soul on the sea.

I feel for yet unfound lands,  
And I find but the land where She

Sits, with her sad white hands,  
At her golden broidery,

In sight of the sorrowful sands,  
In an antique gallery,

Where, ever beside her, stands  
(Moodily mimicking me)

The ghost of a something her heart de-  
mands

For a blessing which cannot be.

And broider, broider by night and day  
The brede of thy blazing broidery!

Till thy beauty be wholly woven away  
Into the desolate tapestry.

Let the thread be scarlet, the gold be  
gay,

For the damp to dim, and the moth to  
fray:

Weave in the azure, and crimson, and  
green!

Till the slow threads, needling out and in,  
To take a fashion and form begin:

Yet, for all the time and toil, I see  
The work is vain, and will not be

Like what it was meant to have been.

O woman, woman, with face so pale!  
Pale woman, weaving away

A frustrate life at a lifeless loom,  
Early or late, 't is of little avail

That thou lightest the lamp in the  
gloom.

Full well, I see, there is coming a day  
When the work shall forever rest in-  
complete.

Fling, fling the foolish blazon away,  
And weave me a winding-sheet!

It is not for thee, in this dreary hour,  
That I walk, companionless here by  
the shore.

I am caught in the eddy and whirl of a  
power

Which is not grief, and is not love,  
Though it loves, and grieves,

Within me, without me, wherever I  
move

In the going out of the ghostly eves,  
And is changing me more and more.

I am not mourning for thee, although



I love thee, and thou art lost :  
 Nor yet for myself, albeit I know  
 That my life is flawed and crost :  
 But for that sightless, sorrowing Soul  
 That is feeling, blind with immortal  
 pain,  
 All round, for what it can never attain ;  
 That prisoned, pining, and passionate  
 soul,  
 So vast, and yet so small ;  
 That seems, now nothing, now all,  
 That moves me to pity beyond control,  
 And repulses pity again.  
 I am mourning, since mourn I must,  
 With those patient Powers that bear,  
 'Neath the unattainable stars up there,  
 With the pomp and pall of funeral,  
 Subject and yet august,  
 The weight of this world's dust : —

The ruined giant under the rock :  
 The stricken spirit below the ocean :  
 And the winged things wounded of old  
 by the shock  
 That set the earth in motion.

Ah yet, . . . and yet, and yet,  
 If she were here with me,  
 If she were here by the sea,  
 With the face I cannot forget,  
 Then all things would not be  
 So fraught with my own regret,  
 But what I should feel and see,  
 And seize it at last, at last, —  
 The secret known and lost in the past,  
 To unseal the Genii that sleep  
 In vials long hid in the deep ;  
 By forgotten, fashionless spells held fast,  
 Where through streets of the cities of  
 coral, aghast,  
 The sea-nymphs wander and weep.

#### MYSTERY.

THE hour was one of mystery,  
 When we were sailing, I and she,  
 Down the dark, the silent stream.  
 The stars above were pale with love,  
 And a wizard wind did faintly move,  
 Like a whisper through a dream.

Her head was on my breast,  
 Her loving little head !  
 Her hand in mine was prest,  
 And not a word we said ;

But round and round the night we  
 wound,  
 Till we came at last to the Isle of  
 Fays ;  
 And, all the while, from the magic isle,  
 Came that music, that music of other  
 days !

The lamps in the garden gleamed.  
 The Palace was all alight.  
 The sound of the viols streamed  
 Through the windows over the night.  
 We saw the dancers pass  
 At the windows, two by two.  
 The dew was on the grass,  
 And the glow-worm in the dew.

We came through the grass to the  
 cypress-tree.  
 We stood in its shadow, I and she.  
 "Thy face is pale, thine eyes are wild.  
 What aileth thee, what aileth thee ?"

"Naught aileth me," she murmured mild,  
 "Only the moonlight makes me pale ;  
 The moonlight, shining through the veil  
 Of this black cypress-tree."

"By yonder moon, whose light so soon  
 Will fade upon the gloom,  
 And this black tree, whose mystery  
 Is mingled with the tomb, —  
 By Love's brief moon, and Death's dark  
 tree,  
 Lovest thou me ?"

Upon my breast she leaned her head ;  
 "By yonder moon and tree,  
 I swear that all my soul," she said,  
 "Is given to thee."

"I know not what thy soul may be,  
 Nor canst thou make it mine.  
 Yon stars may all be worlds : for me  
 Enough to know they shine.  
 Thou art mine evening star. I know  
 At dawn star-distant thou wilt be :  
 I shall not hear thee murmuring low ;  
 Thy face I shall not see.  
 I love thy beauty : 't will not stay :  
 Let it be all mine while it may.  
 I have no bliss save in the kiss  
 Thou givest me."

We came to the statue carved in stone,  
 Over the fountain. We stood there  
 alone.

"What aileth thee, that thou dost sigh ?  
 And why is thy hand so cold ?"  
 "T is the fountain that sighs," . . . she  
 said, "not I ;  
 And the statue, whose hand thou dost  
 hold."

"By yonder fount, that flows forever,  
 And this statue, that cannot move, —  
 By the fountain of Time, that ceases  
 never,  
 And the fixedness of Love, —  
 By motion and immutability  
 Lovest thou me ?"

"By the fountain of Time, with its  
 ceaseless flow,  
 And the image of Love that rests,"  
 sighed she,  
 "I love thee, I swear, come joy, come  
 woe,  
 For eternity !"

"Eternity is a word so long  
 That I cannot spell it now :  
 For the nightingale is singing her song  
 From yon pomegranate bough.  
 Let it mean what it may — Eternity,  
 If thou lovest me now as I love thee,  
 As I love thee !"

We came to the Palace. We mounted  
 the stair.  
 The great hall-doors wide open were.  
 And all the dancers that danced in the  
 hall  
 Greeted us to the festival.

There were ladies, as fair as fair might be,  
 But not one of them all was fair as she.  
 There were knights, that looked at them  
 lovingly,  
 But not one of them all was loving as I.

Only, each noble cavalier  
 Had his throat red-lined from ear to ear ;  
 'T was a collar of merit, I have heard,  
 Which a Queen upon each had once con-  
 ferred.

And each lovely lady that oped her lip  
 Let a little mouse's tail outslip ;  
 'T was the fashion there, I know not  
 why,  
 But fashions are changing constantly.  
 From the crescented naphtha lamps each  
 ray  
 Streamed into a still enchanted blaze ; —

And forth from the deep-toned orchestra  
 That music, that music of other days !

My arm enlaced her winsome waist,  
 And down the dance we flew :  
 We flew, we raced : our lips embraced :  
 And our breath was mingled too.  
 Round, and round, to a magic sound —  
 (A wizard waltz to a wizard air !)  
 Round and round, we whirled, we wound,  
 In a circle light and fine :  
 My cheek was fanned by her fragrant  
 hair,

And her bosom beat on mine :  
 And all the while, in the winding ways,  
 That music, that music of other days,  
 With its melodies divine !

The palace clock stands in the hall,  
 And talks, unheard, of the flight of  
 time :  
 With a face too pale for a festival  
 It telleth a tale too sad for rhyme.

The palace clock, with a silver note,  
 Is chanting the death of the hour  
 that dies.  
 "What aileth thee ? for I see float  
 A shade into thine eyes."

"Naught aileth me," . . . low murmured  
 she,  
 "I am faint with the dance, my love,  
 Give me thine arm : the air is warm :  
 Lead me unto the grove."

We wandered into the grove. We found  
 A bower by woodbine woven round.

Upon my breast she leaned her head :  
 I drew her into the bower apart.  
 "I swear to thee, my love," she said,  
 "Thou hast my heart !"

"Ah, leave thy little heart at rest !  
 For it is so light, I think, so light,  
 Some wind would blow it away to-night,  
 If it were not safe in thy breast.  
 But the wondrous brightness on thine  
 hair  
 Did never seem more bright :  
 And thy beauty never looked more fair  
 Than thy beauty looks to-night :  
 And this dim hour, and this wild bower,  
 Were made for our delight :  
 Here we will stay, until the day,  
 In yon dark east grows white."



"This may not be," . . . she answered  
me,  
"For I was lately wed  
With a diamond ring to an Ogre-king,  
And I am his wife," . . . she said.  
"My husband is old; but his crown is  
of gold:  
And he hath a cruel eye:  
And his arm is long, and his hand is  
strong,  
And his body is seven ells high:  
And alas! I fear, if he found us here,  
That we both should surely die.

"All day I take my harp, and play  
To him on a golden string:  
Thorough the weary livelong day  
I play to him, and sing:  
I sing to him till his white hair  
Begins to curl and creep:  
And his wrinkles old slowly unfold,  
And his brows grow smooth as sleep.  
But at night, when he calls for his  
golden cup,  
Into his wine I pour  
A juice which he drinks duly up,  
And sleeps till the night is o'er.  
For one moment I wait: I look at him  
straight,  
And tell him for once how much I de-  
test him:  
I have no fear lest he should hear,  
The drug he hath drained hath so  
opprest him.  
Then, finger on lip, away I slip,  
And down the hills, till I reach the  
stream:  
I call to thee clear, till the boat appear,  
And we sail together through dark and  
dream.  
And sweet it is, in this Isle of Fays,  
To wander at will through a garden  
of flowers,  
While the flowers that bloom, and the  
lamps that blaze,  
And the very nightingales seem ours!  
And sweeter it is, in the winding ways  
Of the waltz, while the music falls in  
showers,  
While the minstrel plays, and the mo-  
ment stays,  
And the sweet brief rapture of love is  
ours!

"But the night is far spent; and before  
the first rent  
In yon dark blue sky overhead,  
My husband will wake, and the spell  
will break,  
And peril is near," . . . she said.  
"For if he should wake, and not find  
me,  
By bower and brake, thorough bush and  
tree,  
He will come to seek me here;  
And the Palace of Fays, in one vast blaze,  
Will sink and disappear;  
And the nightingales will die in the  
vales,  
And all will be changed and drear!  
For the fays and elves can take care of  
themselves:  
They will slip on their slippers, and  
go:  
In their little green cloaks they will  
hide in the oaks,  
And the forests and brakes, for their  
sweet sakes,  
Will cover and keep them, I know.  
And the knights, with their spurs, and  
velvets and furs,  
Will take off their heads, each one,  
And to horse, and away, as fast as they  
may,  
Over brook, and bramble, and stone;  
And each dame of the house has a little  
dun mouse,  
That will whisper her when to be gone;  
But we, my love, in this desolate grove,  
We shall be left alone;  
And my husband will find us, take us  
and bind us:  
In his cave he will lock me up,  
And pledge me for spite in thy blood by  
night  
When he drains down his golden cup."

"Thy husband, dear, is a monster, 'tis  
clear,  
But just now I will not tarry  
Thy choice to dispute — how on earth  
such a brute  
Thou hadst ever the fancy to marry.  
For wherefore, meanwhile, are we two  
here,  
In a fairy island under a spell,  
By night, in a magical atmosphere,  
In a lone enchanted dell,  
If we are to say and do no more  
Than is said and done by the dull  
daylight,  
In that dry old world, where both must  
ignore,  
To-morrow, the dream of to-night."

Her head drooped on my breast,  
Fair foolish little head!  
Her lips to mine were prest.  
Never a word was said.

If it were but a dream of the night,  
A dream that I dreamed in sleep —  
Why, then, is my face so white,  
And this wound so red and deep?  
But whatever it was, it all took place  
In a land where never your steps will go,  
Though they wander, wherever they will,  
through space;  
In an hour you never will know,  
Though you should outlive the crow  
That is like to outlive your race.

And if it were but a dream, it broke  
Too soon, albeit too late I woke,  
Waked by the smart of a sounding stroke  
Which has so confused my wits,  
That I cannot remember, and never shall,  
What was the close of that festival,  
Nor how the Palace was shattered  
to bits:  
For all that, just now, I think I know,  
Is what is the force of an Ogre's blow,  
As my head, by starts and fits,  
Aches and throbs; and, when I look  
round,  
All that I hear is the sickening sound  
Of the nurse's watch, and the doctor's  
boots,  
Instead of the magical fairy flutes;  
And ah! that I see, in my love's lost  
place,  
Is that gin-drinking hag, with her nut-  
cracker face,  
By the hearth's half-burned out wood:  
And the only stream is this stream of  
blood

That flows from me, red and wide:  
Yet still I hear, — as sharp and clear,  
In the horrible, horrible silence outside,  
The clock that stands in the empty hall,  
And talks to my soul of the flight of  
time;  
With a face like a face at a funeral,  
Telling a tale too sad for rhyme:  
And still I hear, with as little cheer,  
In the yet more horrible silence inside,  
Chanted, perchance, by elves and fays,  
From some far island, out of my gaze,  
Where a house has fallen, and some  
one has died,  
That music, that music of other days,  
With its minstrelsy undescried!

For Time, which surviveth everything,  
And Memory which surviveth Time: —  
These two sit by my side, and sing,  
A song too sad for rhyme.

## THE CANTICLE OF LOVE.

IONCE heard an angel, by night, in the sky,  
Singing softly a song to a deep golden  
lute:  
The polestar, the seven little planets,  
and I,  
To the song that he sung listened mute.  
For the song that he sung was so strange  
and so sweet,  
And so tender the tones of his lute's  
golden strings,  
That the Seraphs of Heaven sat hushed  
at his feet,  
And folded their heads in their wings.

And the song that he sung by those  
Seraphs up there  
Is called . . . "Love." But the words, I  
had heard them elsewhere.

For, when I was last in the nethermost  
Hell,  
On a rock 'mid the sulphurous surges,  
I heard  
A pale spirit sing to a wild hollow shell,  
And his song was the same, every  
word.  
But so sad was his singing, all Hell to  
the sound  
Moaned, and, wailing, complained like  
a monster in pain,  
While the fiends hovered near o'er the  
dismal profound,  
With their black wings weighed down  
by the strain.

And the song that was sung by the Lost  
Ones down there  
Is called . . . "Love." But the spirit  
that sung was Despair.

When the moon sets to-night, I will go  
down to ocean,  
Bare my brow to the breeze, and my  
heart to its anguish;  
And sing till the Siren with pining emo-  
tion  
(Unroused in her sea-caves) shall lan-  
guish.



And the Sylphs of the water shall crouch  
at my feet,  
With their white wistful faces turned  
upward to hear,  
And the soft Salamanders shall float, in  
the heat  
Of the ocean volcanoes, more near.

For the song I have learned, all that  
listen shall move :  
But there's one will not listen, and that  
one I love.

## THE PEDLER.

THERE was a man, whom you might see,  
Toward nightfall, on the dusty track,  
Faring, footsore and wearily —  
A strong box on his back.

A speck against the flaring sky,  
You saw him pass the line of dates,  
The camel-drivers loitering by  
From Bagdad's dusking gates.

The merchants from Bassora stared,  
And of his wares would question him,  
But, without answer, on he fared  
Into the evening dim.

Nor only in the east : but oft  
In northern lands of ice and snow,  
You might have seen, past field and croft,  
That figure faring slow.

His cheek was worn ; his back bent double  
Beneath the iron box he bore ;  
And in his walk there seemed such  
trouble,  
You saw his feet were sore.

You wondered if he ever had  
A settled home, a wife, a child :  
You marvelled if a face so sad  
At any time had smiled.

The cheery housewife oft would fling  
A pitying alms, as on he strode,  
Where, round the hearth, a rosy ring,  
Her children's faces glowed :

In the dark doorway, oft the maid,  
Late-lingering on her lover's arm,  
Watched through the twilight, half  
afraid,  
That solitary form.

The traveller hailed him oft, . . . "Good  
night :  
The town is far: the road is lone :  
God speed !" . . . already out of sight,  
The wayfarer was gone.

But, when the night was late and still,  
And the last star of all had crept  
Into his place above the hill,  
He laid him down and slept.

His head on that strong box he laid :  
And there, beneath the star-cold skies,  
In slumber, I have heard it said,  
There rose before his eyes

A lovely dream, a vision fair,  
Of some far-off, forgotten land,  
And of a girl with golden hair,  
And violets in her hand.

He sprang to kiss her . . . "Ah ! once  
more  
Return, beloved, and bring with thee  
The glory and delight of yore, —  
Lost evermore to me !"

Then, ere she answered, o'er his back  
There fell a brisk and sudden stroke, —  
So sound and resolute a thwack  
That, with the blow, he woke . . .

There comes out of that iron box  
An ugly hag, an angry crone ;  
Her crutch about his ears she knocks :  
She leaves him not alone :

"Thou lazy vagabond ! come, budge,  
And carry me again," . . . she says :  
"Not half the journey's over . . .  
trudge !" . . . He groans, and he obeys.

Oft in the sea he sought to fling  
That iron box. But witches swim :  
And wave and wind were sure to bring  
The old hag back to him ;

Who all the more about his brains  
Belabored him with such hard blows,  
That the poor devil, for his pains,  
Wished himself dead, heaven knows !

*Love, is it thy hand in mine ? . . . Behold !  
I see the crutch uplifted high.  
The angry hag prepares to scold.  
O, yet we might . . . . . Good by !*

## A GHOST STORY.

I LAY awake past midnight :  
The moon set o'er the snow :  
The very cocks, for coldness,  
Could neither sleep nor crow.

There came to me, near morning,  
A woman pale and fair :  
She seemed a monarch's daughter,  
By the red gold round her hair.

The ring upon her finger  
Was one that well I know :  
I knew her fair face also,  
For I had loved it so !

But I felt I saw a spirit,  
And I was sore afraid ;  
For it is many and many a year  
Ago, since she was dead.

I would have spoken to her,  
But I could not speak, for fear :  
Because it was a homeless ghost  
That walked beyond its sphere ;

Till her head from her white shoulders  
She lifted up : and said . . .  
"Look in ! you'll find I'm hollow.  
Pray do not be afraid !"

## SMALL PEOPLE.

THE warm moon was up in the sky,  
And the warm summer out on the land.  
There trembled a tear from her eye :  
There trembled a tear on my hand.

Her sweet face I could not see clear,  
For the shade was so dark in the tree :  
I only felt touched by a tear,  
And I thought that the tear was for  
me.

In her small ear I whispered a word, —  
With her sweet lips she laughed in my  
face  
And, as light through the leaves as a  
bird,  
She flitted away from the place.

Then she told to her sister, the Snake,  
All I said ; and her cousin the Toad.  
The Snake slipped away to the brake,  
The Toad went to town by the road.

The Toad told the Devil's coach-horse,  
Who cocked up his tail at the news.  
The Snake hissed the secret, of course,  
To the Newt, who was changing her  
shoes.

The Newt drove away to the ball,  
And told it the Scorpion and Asp.  
The Spider, who lives in the wall,  
Overheard it, and told it the Wasp.

The Wasp told the Midge and the Gnat :  
And the Gnat told the Flea and the Nit.  
The Nit dropped an egg as she sat :  
The Flea shrugged his shoulders, and  
bit.

The Nit and the Flea are too small,  
And the Snake slips from under my  
foot :  
I wish I could find 'mid them all  
A man, — to insult and to shoot !

## METEMPSYCHOSIS.

SHE fanned my life out with her soft  
little sighs :  
She hushed me to death with her face  
so fair :  
I was drunk with the light of her wild  
blue eyes,  
And strangled dumb in her long gold  
hair.

So now I'm a blessed and wandering  
ghost,  
Though I cannot quite find out my  
way up to heaven :  
But I hover about o'er the long reedy  
coast,  
In the wistful light of a low red even.

I have borrowed the coat of a little gray  
gnat :  
There's a small sharp song I have  
learned how to sing :  
I know a green place she is sure to be at :  
I shall light on her neck there, and  
sting, and sting.

Tra-la-la, tra-la-la, life never pleased me !  
I fly where I list now, and sleep at my  
ease.  
Buzz, buzz, buzz ! the dead only are free.  
Yonder's my way now. Give place, if  
you please.