

How the lamp wanes! All grows dark—
Dark and strange. Yet now there
shined
Something past me . . . Husband, hark!
There are voices on the wind.

Are they come? and do they ask me
For the songs we used to sing?
Strange that memory thus should task
me!

Listen—

Birds are on the wing:

*And thy Birthday Morn is rising.
May it ever rise as bright!
Wake not yet! The day's devising
Fair new things for thy delight.*

*Wake not yet! Last night this flower
Near thy porch began to pout
From its warm sheath: in an hour
All the young leaves will be out.*

*Wake not yet! So dear thou art, love,
That I grudge these buds the bliss
Each will bring to thy young heart, love,
I would claim all for my kiss.*

Wake not yet!

— There now, it fails me!

Is my lord there? I am ill.
And I cannot tell what ails me.
Husband! Is he near me still?

O, this anguish seems to crush
All my life up, — body and mind!

THE EARL.

Gertrude! Gertrude! Gertrude!

GERTRUDE.

There are voices in the wind.

THE EARL.

Still she wanders! Ah, the plucking
At the sheet!

GERTRUDE.

Hist! do not take it
From my bosom. See, 'tis sucking!
If it sleep we must not wake it.

Such a little rosy mouth!
— Not to-night, O not to-night!
Did he tell me in the South
That those stars were twice as bright!

Off! away! unhand me—go!
I forgive thee my lost heaven,
And the wrong which thou didst do.
Would my sin, too, were forgiven!

Gone at last! . . . Ah, fancy feigns
These wild visions! I grow weak.
Fast, fast dying! Life's warmth wanes
From me. Is the fire out?

THE EARL.

Speak,

Gertrude, speak! My wife, my wife!
Nay she is not dead, — not dead!
See, the lips move. There is life.
She is choking. Lift her head.

GERTRUDE.

* * * * *
Death! . . . My eyes grow dim, and
dimmer.

I can scarcely see thy face.
But the twilight seems to glimmer,
Lighted from some distant place.

Husband!

THE EARL.

Gertrude!

GERTRUDE.

Art thou near me?
On thy breast — once more — thy
breast!
I have sinned — and — nay, yet hear me,
And repented — and —

THE EARL.

The rest

God hath heard, where now thou art,
Thou poor soul, — in Heaven.

The door —

Close it softly, and depart.

Leave us!

She is mine once more.

MINOR POEMS.

THE PARTING OF LAUNCELOT AND GUENEVERE.

A FRAGMENT.

Now, as the time wore by to Our Lady's
Day,
Spring lingered in the chambers of the
South.
The nightingales were far in fairy lands
Beyond the sunset: but the wet blue
woods
Were half aware of violets in the wake
Of morning rains. The swallow still
delayed
To build and be about in noisy roofs,
And March was moaning in the windy
elm.

But Arthur's royal purpose held to keep
A joust of arms to solemnize the time
In stately Camelot. So the King sent
forth
His heralds, and let cry through all the
land
That he himself would take the lists,
and tilt
Against all comers.

Hither came the chiefs
Of Christendom. The King of North-
galies;
Anguishe, the King of Ireland; the Haut
Prince,
Sir Galahault; the King o' the Hundred
Knights;
The Kings of Scotland and of Brittany;
And many more renowned knights
whereof

The names are glorious. Also all the
earls,
And all the dukes, and all the mighty
men

And famous heroes of the Table Round,
From far Northumberland to where the
wave
Rides rough on Devon from the outer
main.

So that there was not seen for seven
years,
Since when, at Whitsuntide, Sir Galahad
Departed out of Carlyel from the court,
So fair a fellowship of goodly knights.

Then would King Arthur that the Queen
should ride
With him from Carlyel to Camelot
To see the jousts. But she, because that
yet
The sickness was upon her, answered
nay.
Then said King Arthur, "This repenteth
me.

For never hath been seen for seven years,
No, not since Galahad, at Whitsuntide,
Departed from us out of Carlyel,
So fair a fellowship of goodly knights."
But the Queen would not, and the King
in wrath
Brake up the court, and rode to Astolat
On this side Camelot.

Now men said the Queen
Tarried behind because of Launcelot,
For Launcelot stayed to heal him of his
wound.
And there had been estrangement 'twixt
these two

I' the later time, because of bitter words.
So when the King with all his fellowship
Was ridden out of Carlyel, the Queen
Arose, and called to her Sir Launcelot.

Then to Sir Launcelot spoke Queen
Guenevere.

"Not for the memory of that love
whereof
No more than memory lives, but, Sir,
for that
Which even when love is ended yet en-
dures
Making immortal life with deathless
deeds,
Honor—true knighthood's golden spurs,
the crown

And priceless diadem of peerless Queens,—
I make appeal to you, that hear perchance
The last appeal which I shall ever make.
So weigh my words not lightly! for I feel
The fluttering fires of life grow faint and
cold

About my heart. And oft, indeed, to
me
Lying whole hours awake in the dead
nights

The end seems near, as though the dark-
ness knew

The angel waiting there to call my soul
Perchance before the house awakes; and
oft

When faint, and all at once, from far
away,

The mournful midnight bells begin to
sound

Across the river, all the days that were
(Brief, evil days!) return upon my heart,
And, where the sweetness seemed, I see
the sin.

For, waking lone, long hours before the
dawn,

Beyond the borders of the dark I seem
To see the twilight of another world,
That grows and grows and glimmers on
my gaze.

And oft, when late, before the languor-
ous moon

Through yonder windows to the West
goes down

Among the pines, deep peace upon me
falls,

Deep peace like death, so that I think I
know

The blessed Mary and the righteous
saints

Stand at the throne, and intercede for
me.

Wherefore these things are thus I can-
not tell.

But now I pray you of your fealty,
And by all knightly faith which may be
left,

Arise and get you hence, and join the
King.

For wherefore hold you thus behind the
court,

Seeing my liege the King is moved in
wrath?

For wete you well what say your foes and
mine.

'See how Sir Launcelot and Queen
Guenevere

Do hold them ever thus behind the King

That they may take their pleasure!
Knowing not
How that for me all these delights are
come
To be as withered violets."

Half in tears
She ceased abrupt. Given up to a proud
grief,

Vexed to be vexed. With love and anger
moved.

Love toucht with scorn, and anger
pierced with love.

About her, all unheeded, her long hair
Loosed its warm, yellow, waving loveli-
ness,

And o'er her bare and shining shoulder
cold

Fell floating free. Upon one full white
arm,

To which the amorous purple coverlet
Clung dimpling close, her drooping state
was propt.

There, half in shadow of her soft gold
curls,

She leaned, and like a rose enricht with
dew,

Whose heart is heavy with the clinging
bee,

Bowed down toward him all her glowing
face,

While in the light of her large angry
eyes

Uprose, and rose, a slow imperious sorrow,
And o'er the shine of still, unquivering
tears

Swam on to him.

But he, with brows averse
And orgolous looks, three times to speech
addressed,

Three times in vain. The silence of the
place

Fell like a hand upon his heart, and
hushed

His foolish anger with authority.
He would not see the wretched Queen:
he saw

Only the hunter on the arrassed wall
Prepare to wind amont his bugle horn,
And the long daylight dying down the
floors;

For half-way through the golden gates
of eve

The sun was rolled. The dropping tap-
estry glowed

With awful hues. Far off among his
reeds

The river, smitten with a waning light,
Shone; and, behind black lengths of
pine revealed,
The red West smouldered, and the day
declined.

Then year by year, as wave on wave a
sea,

The tided Past came softly o'er his heart,
And all the days which had been.

So he stood
Long in his mind divided: with himself

At strife: and, like a steed that hotly
chafes

His silver bit, which yet some silken
rein

Swayed by a skilled accustomed hand
restrains,

His heart against the knowledge of its
love

Made vain revolt, and fretful rose and
sunk.

But at the last, quelling a wayward grief,
That swelled against all utterance, and
sought

To force its salt and sorrowful overflow
Upon weak language, "Now indeed,"

he cried,

"I see the face of the old time is
changed,

And all things altered! Will the sun
still burn?

Still burn the eternal stars? For love
was deemed

Not less secure than these. Needs
should there be

Something remarkable to prove the world
I am no more that Launcelot, nor thou

That Guenevere, of whom, long since,
the fame,

Fruitful of noble deeds, with such a
light

Did fill this nook and cantle of the
earth,

That all great lands of Christendom be-
side

Showed darkened of their glory. But I
see

That there is nothing left for men to
swear by.

For then thy will did never urge me
hence,

But drew me through all dangers to thy
feet.

And none can say, least thou, I have
not been

The staff and burgonet of thy fair fame.

Nor mind you, Madam, how in Surluse
once,

When all the estates were met, and no-
ble judges,

Armed clean with shields, set round to
keep the right,

Before you sitting throned with Galahault
In great array, on fair green quilts of
samite,

Rich, ancient, fringed with gold, seven
summer days,

And all before the Earls of Northgalies,
Such service then with this old sword
was wrought,

To crown thy beauty in the courts of
Fame,

That in that time fell many noble
knights,

And all men marvelled greatly? So
when last

The loud horns blew to lodging, and we
supped

With Palamedes and with Lamorak,
All those great dukes and kings, and
famous queens,

Beholding us with a deep joy, avouched
Across the golden cups of costly wine

'There is no Queen of love but Guene-
vere,

And no true knight but Launcelot of the
Lake!'

Thus he, transported by the thought of
days

And deeds that, like the mournful mar-
tial sounds

Blown through sad towns where some
dead king goes by,

Made music in the chambers of his heart,
Swept by the mighty memory of the past.

Nor spake the sorrowful Queen, nor from
deep muse

Unbent the grieving beauty of her brows,
But held her heart's proud pain superbly
still.

But when he lifted up his looks, it seemed
Something of sadness in the ancient
place,

Like dying breath from lips beloved of
yore,

Or unforgotten touch of tender hands
After long years, upon his spirit fell.

For near the carven casement hung the
bird,

With hood and jess, that oft had led
them forth,

These lovers, through the heart of rippling woods
 At morning, in the old and pleasant time.
 And o'er the broidered canopies of state
 Blazed Uther's dragons, curious, wrought with gems.
 Then to his mind that dear and distant dawn
 Came back, when first, a boy at Arthur's court,
 He paused abasht before the youthful Queen.
 And, feeling now her long imploring gaze
 Holding him in its sorrow, when he marked
 How changed her state, and all unlike to her,
 The most renowned beauty of the time,
 And pearl of chivalry, for whom himself
 All on a summer's day broke, long of yore
 A hundred lances in the field, he sprang
 And caught her hand, and, falling to one knee,
 Arched all his haughty neck to a quick kiss.
 And there was silence. Silently the West
 Grew red and redder, and the day declined.
 As o'er the hungering heart of some deep sea,
 That swells against the planets and the moon
 With sad continual strife and vain unrest,
 In silence rise and roll the laboring clouds
 That bind the thunder, o'er the heaving heart
 Of Guenevere all sorrows fraught with love,
 All stormy sorrows, in that silence passed.
 And like a star in that tumultuous night
 Love waxed and waned, and came and went, changed hue,
 And was and was not: till the cloud came down,
 And all her soul dissolved in showers: and love
 Rose through the broken storm: and, with a cry
 Of passion sheathed in sharpest pain, she stretched
 Wide her warm arms: she rose, she reeled, and fell

(All her great heart unqueened) upon the breast
 Of Launcelot; and, lifting up her voice,
 She wept aloud, "Unhappy that I am,"
 She wept, "Unhappy! Would that I had died
 Long since, long ere I loved thee, Launcelot!
 Would I had died long since! ere I had known
 This pain, which hath become my punishment,
 To have thirsted for the sea: to have received
 A drop no bigger than a drop of dew!
 I have done ill," she wept, "I am forlorn,
 Forlorn! I falter where I stood secure:
 The tower I built is fall'n, is fall'n: the staff
 I leaned upon hath broken in my hand.
 And I, disrobed, dethroned, discrowned, and all undone,
 Survive my kingdom, widowed of all rule,
 And men shall mock me for a foolish Queen.
 For now I see thy love for me is dead,
 Dead that brief love which was the light of life,
 And all is dark: and I have lived too long.
 For how henceforth, unhappy, shall I bear
 To dwell among these halls where we have been?
 How keep these chambers emptied of thy voice?
 The walks where we have lingered long ago,
 The gardens and the places of our love,
 Which shall recall the days that come no more,
 And all the joy which has been?"
 Thus o'erthrown,
 And on the breast of Launcelot weeping wild —
 Weeping and murmuring — hung Queen Guenevere.
 But, while she wept, upon her brows and lips
 Warm kisses fell, warm kisses wet with tears.
 For all his mind was melted with remorse,
 And all his scorn was killed, and all his heart
 Gave way in that caress, and all the love

Of happier years rolled down upon his soul
 Redoubled; and he bowed his head, and cried,
 "Though thou be variable as the waves,
 More sharp than winds among the Hebrides
 That shut the frozen Spring in stormy clouds,
 As wayward as a child, and all unjust,
 Yet must I love thee in despite of pain,
 Thou peerless Queen of perfect love!
 Thou star
 That draw'st all tides! Thou goddess far above
 My heart's weak worship! so adored thou art,
 And I so irretrievably all thine!
 But now I will arise, as thou hast said,
 And join the King: and these thine enemies
 Shall know thee not defenceless any more.
 For, either, living, I yet hold my life
 To arm for thine, or, dying, by my death
 Will steep love's injured honor in such blood
 Shall wash out every stain! And so farewell,
 Beloved. Forget me not when I am far,
 But in thy prayers and in thine evening thoughts
 Remember me: as I, when sundown crowns
 The distant hills, and Ave-Mary rings,
 Shall pine for thee on ways where thou art not."

So these two lovers in one long embrace,
 An agony of reconciliation, hung
 Blinded in tears and kisses, lip to lip,
 And tranced from past and future, time and space.
 But by this time, the beam of the slope day,
 Edging blue mountain glooms with sullen gold,
 A dying fire, fell mournfully athwart
 The purple chambers. In the courts below
 The shadow of the keep from wall to wall
 Shook his dark skirt: great chimes began to sound,
 And swing, and rock in glimmering heights, and roll

A reeling music down: but ere it fell
 Faint bells in misty spires adown the vale
 Caught it, and bore it floating on to night.
 So from that long love-trance the envious time
 Reclaimed them. Then with a great pang he rose
 Like one that plucked his heart out from his breast,
 And, bitterly unwinding her white arms
 From the warm circle of their amorous fold,
 Left living on her lips the lingering heat
 Of one long kiss: and, gathering strongly back
 His poured-out anguish to his soul, he went.
 And the sun set.
 Long while she sat alone,
 Searching the silence with her fixed eyes,
 While far and farther off o'er distant floors
 The intervals of brazen echoes fell.
 A changeable light, from varying passions caught,
 Flushed all her stately cheek from white to red
 In doubtful alternation, as some star
 Changes his fiery beauty: for her blood
 Set headlong to all wayward moods of sense,
 Stirred with swift ebb and flow: till suddenly all
 The frozen heights of grief fell loosed, fast, fast,
 In cataract over cataract, on her soul.
 Then at the last she rose, a reeling shape
 That like a shadow swayed against the wall,
 Her slight hand held upon her bosom, and fell
 Before the Virgin Mother on her knees.
 There, in a halo of the silver shrine,
 That touched and turned to starlight her slow tears,
 Below the feet of the pale-pictured saint
 She lay, poured out in prayer.
 Meanwhile, without,
 A sighing rain from a low fringe of cloud
 Whispered among the melancholy hills.
 The night's dark limits widened: far above
 The crystal sky lay open: and the star

Of eve, his rosy circlet trembling clear,
Grew large and bright, and in the silver
moats,
Between the accumulated terraces,
Tangled a trail of fire: and all was still.

A SUNSET FANCY.

Just at sunset, I would be
In some isle-garden, where the sea
I look into shall seem more blue
Than those dear and deep eyes do.
And, if anywhere the breeze
Shall have stirred the cypress-trees,
Straight the yellow light falls through,
Catching me, for once, at ease;
Just so much as may impinge
Some tall lily with a tinge
Of orange; while, above the wall,
Tumbles downward into view
(With a sort of small surprise)
One star more among them all,
For me to watch with half-shut eyes.

Or else upon the breezy deck
Of some felucca; and one speck
'Twixt the crimson and the yellow,
Which may be a little fleck
Of cloud, or gull with outstretched neck,
To Spezia bound from Cape Circello;
With a sea-song in my ears
Of the bronzed buccaneers:
While the night is waxing mellow,
And the helmsman slackly steers,—
Leaning, talking to his fellow,
Who has oaths for all he hears,—
Each thief swarthier than Othello.
Or, in fault of better things,
Close in sound of one who sings
To casements, in a southern city;
Tinkling upon tender strings
Some melodious old love-ditty;
While a laughing lady flings
One rose to him, just for pity.
But I have not any want
Sweeter than to be with you,
When the long light falleth slant,
And heaven turns a darker blue;
And a deeper smile grows through
The glance asleep 'neath those soft lashes,
Which the heart it steals into
First inspires and then abashes.
Just to hold your hand,—one touch
So light you scarce should feel it such!
Just to watch you leaning o'er
Those window-roses, love, . . . no more.

ASSOCIATIONS.

You know the place is just the same!
The rooks build here: the sandy hill is
Ablaze with broom, as when she came
Across the sea with her new name
To dwell among the moated lilies.

The trifoly is on the walls:
The daisies in the bowling-alley:
The ox at eve lows from the stalls:
At eve the cuckoo, floating, calls,
When foxgloves tremble in the valley.

The iris blows from court to court:
The bald white spider flits, or stays in
The chinks behind the dragonwort:
That Triton still, at his old sport,
Blows bubbles in his broken basin.

The terrace where she used to walk
Still shines at noon between the roses:
The garden paths are blind with chalk:
The dragon-fly from stalk to stalk
Swims sparkling blue till evening
closes.

Then, just above that long dark copse,
One warm red star comes out, and passes
Westward, and mounts, and mounts, and
stops
(Or seems to) o'er the turret-tops,
And lights those lonely casement-
glasses.

Sir Ralph still wears that old grim smile.
The staircase creaks as up I clamber
To those still rooms, to muse awhile.
I see the little meadow-stile
As I lean from the great south-chamber.

And Lady Ruth is just as white.
(Ah, still, that face seems strangely
like her!)
The lady and the wicked knight—
All just the same—she swooned for
fright—
And he—his arm still raised to strike
her.

Her boudoir—no one enters there:
The very flowers which last she gath-
ered
Are in the vase; the lute—the chair—
And all things—just as then they were!
Except the jasmins,—those are with-
ered.

But when along the corridors
The last red pause of day is streaming,
I seem to hear her up the floors:
I seem to see her through the doors:
And then I know that I am dreaming.

MEETING AGAIN.

Yes; I remember the white rose. And
since then the young ivy has grown;
From your window we could not reach it,
and now it is over the stone.
We did not part as we meet, Dear. Well,
Time hath his own stern cures!
And Alice's eyes are deeper, and her hair
has grown like yours.

Is our greeting all so strange then? But
there's something here amiss,
When it is not well to speak kindly. And
the olives are ripe by this.
I had not thought you so altered. But
all is changed, God knows!
Good-night. It is night so soon now. Look
there! you have dropt your rose.

Nay, I have one that is withered and
dearer to me. I came
To say good night, little Alice. She does
not remember my name.
It is but the damp that is making my
head and my heart ache so.
I never was strong in the old time, as the
others were, you know.

And you'll sleep well, will you not, Dar-
ling? The old words sound so dear!
'Tis the last time I shall use them; you
need show neither anger nor fear.
It is well that you look so cheerful. And
is time so smooth with you?
How foolish I am! Good night, Dear.
And bid Alice good night too.

ARISTOCRACY.

To thee be all men heroes: every race
Noble: all women virgins: and each
place
A temple: know thou nothing that is
base.

THE MERMAIDEN.

HE was a Prince with golden hair
(In a palace beside the sea),
And I but a poor Mermaiden,—
And how should he care for me?

Last summer I came, in the long blue
nights,
To sit in the cool sea-caves:
Last summer he came to count the stars
From his terrace above the waves.

There's nothing so fair in the sea down
there
As the light on his golden tresses:
There's nothing so sweet as his voice:
ah, nothing
So warm as the warmth of his kisses!

I could not help but love him, love him,
Till my love grew pain to me.
And to-morrow he weds the Princess
In that palace beside the sea.

AT HER CASEMENT.

I AM knee-deep in grass, in this warm
June night,
In the shade here, shut off from the great
moonlight.
All alone, at her casement there,
She sits in the light, and she combs her
hair.

She shakes it over the carven seat,
And combs it down to her stately feet.
And I watch her, hid in the blue June
night,

Till my soul grows faint with the costly
sight.
There's no flaw on that fair fine brow of
hers,

As fair and as proud as Lucifer's.
She looks in the glass as she turns her
head:

She knows that the rose on her cheek is
red:

She knows how her dark eyes shine,—
their light

Would scarcely be dimmed though I
died to-night.

I would that there in her chamber I
stood,

Full-face to her terrible beauty: I would

I were laid on her queenly breast, at her
lips,
With her warm hair wound through my
finger-tips,
Draining her soul at one deep-drawn kiss.
And I would be humbly content for this
To die, as is due, before the morn,
Killed by her slowly returning scorn.

A FAREWELL.

BE happy, child. The last wild words
are spoken.
To-morrow, mine no more, the world will
claim thee.
I blame thee not. But all my life is
broken.
Of that brief Past I have no single token.
Never in years to come my lips shall
name thee,
Never, child, never!

I will not say "Forget me"; nor those
hours
Which were so sweet. Some scent dead
leaves retain.
Keep all the flowers I gave thee — all
the flowers
Dead, dead! Though years on years of
life were ours,
As we have met we shall not meet again;
Forever, child, forever!

AN EVENING IN TUSCANY.

LOOK! the sun sets. Now 's the rarest
Hour of all the blessed day.
(Just the hour, love, you look fairest!)
Even the snails are out to play.

Cool the breeze mounts, like this Chianti
Which I drain down to the sun.
—There! shut up that old green Dante,—
Turn the page, where we begun,

At the last news of Ulysses, —
A grand image, fit to close
Just such grand gold eyes as this is,
Full of splendor and repose!

So loop up those long bright tresses, —
Only, one or two must fall
Down your warm neck Evening kisses
Through the soft curls spite of all.

Ah, but rest in your still place there!
Stir not — turn not! the warm pleasure
Coming, going in your face there,
And the rose (no richer treasure)

In your bosom, like my love there,
Just half secret and half seen;
And the soft light from above there
Streaming o'er you where you lean,

With your fair head in the shadow
Of that grass-hat's glancing brim,
Like a daisy in a meadow
Which its own deep fringes dim.

O you laugh, — you cry "What folly!"
Yet you'd scarcely have me wise,
If I judge right, judging wholly
By the secret in your eyes.

But look down now, o'er the city
Sleeping soft among the hills, —
Our dear Florence! That great Pitti
With its steady shadow fills

Half the town up: its unwinking
Cold white windows, as they glare
Down the long streets, set one thinking
Of the old dukes who lived there;

And one pictures those strange men so! —
Subtle brains, and iron thews!
There, the gardens of Lorenzo, —
The long cypress avenues

Creep up slow the stately hillside
Where the merry loungers are.
But far more I love this still side, —
The blue plain you see so far!

Where the shore of bright white villas
Leaves off faint: the purple breadths
Of the olives and the willows:
And the gold-rimmed mountain-widths:

All transfused in slumbrous glory
To one burning point — the sun!
But up here, — slow, cold, and hoary
Reach the olives, one by one:

And the land looks fresh: the yellow
Arbuté-berries, here and there,
Growing slowly ripe and mellow
Through a flush of rosy hair.

For the Tramontana last week
Was about: 't is scarce three weeks

Since the snow lay, one white vast streak,
Upon those old purple peaks.

So to-day among the grasses
One may pick up tens and twelves
Of young olives, as one passes,
Blown about, and by themselves

Blackening sullen-ripe. The corn too
Grows each day from green to golden.
The large-eyed wind-flowers forlorn too
Blow among it, unbeholden:

Some white, some crimson, others
Purple blackening to the heart.
From the deep wheat-sea, which smothers
Their bright globes up, how they start!

And the small wild pinks from tender
Feather-grasses peep at us:
While above them burns, on slender
Stems, the red gladiolus:

And the grapes are green: this season
They'll be round and sound and true,
If no after-blight should seize on
Those young bunches turning blue.

O that night of purple weather!
(Just before the moon had set)
You remember how together
We walked home? — the grass was
wet —

The long grass in the Poderé —
With the balmy dew among it:
And that nightingale — the fairy
Song he sung — O how he sung it!

And the fig-trees had grown heavy
With the young figs white and woolly,
And the fire-flies, bevy on bevy
Of soft sparkles, pouring fully

Their warm life through trance on trances
Of thick citron-shades behind,
Rose, like swarms of loving fancies
Through some rich and pensive mind.

So we reached the loggia. Leaning
Faint, we sat there in the shade.
Neither spoke. The night's deep mean-
ing
Filled the silence up unsaid.

Hoarsely through the cypress alley
A civetta out of tune

Tried his voice by fits. The valley
Lay all dark below the moon.

Until into song you burst out, —
That old song I made for you
When we found our rose, — the first out
Last sweet Springtime in the dew.

Well! . . . if things had gone less wildly —
Had I settled down before
There, in England — labored mildly —
And been patient — and learned more

Of how men should live in London —
Been less happy — or more wise —
Left no great works tried, and undone —
Never looked in your soft eyes —

I . . . but what's the use of thinking?
There! our nightingale begins —
Now a rising note — now sinking
Back in little broken rings

Of warm song that spread and eddy —
Now he picks up heart — and draws
His great music, slow and steady,
To a silver-centred pause!

SONG.

THE purple iris hangs his head
On his lean stalk, and so declines:
The spider spills his silver thread
Between the bells of columbines:
An altered light in flickering eves
Draws dews through these dim eyes of
ours:
Death walks in yonder waning bowers,
And burns the blistering leaves.
Ah, well-a-day!
Blooms overblow:
Suns sink away:
Sweet things decay.

The drunken beetle, roused ere night,
Breaks blundering from the rotting
rose,
Flits through blue spidery aconite,
And hums, and comes, and goes:
His thick, bewildered song receives
A drowsy sense of grief like ours:
He hums and hums among the bowers,
And bangs about the leaves.
Ah, well-a-day!
Hearts overflow:
Joy flits away:
Sweet things decay.

Her yellow stars the jasmin drops
In mildewed mosses one by one :
The hollyhocks fall off their tops :
The lotus-blooms ail white i' the sun :
The freckled foxglove faints and grieves :
The smooth-paced slumbrous slug de-
vours

The gluey globes of gorgeous flowers,
And smears the glistening leaves !
Ah, well-a-day !
Life leaves us so.
Love dare not stay.
Sweet things decay.

From brazen sunflowers, orb and fringe,
The burning burnish dulls and dies :
Sad Autumn sets a sullen tinge
Upon the scornful peonies :
The dewy frog limps out, and heaves
A speckled lump in speckled bowers :
A reeking moisture, clings and lowers
The lips of lapping leaves.
Ah, well-a-day !
Ere the cock crow,
Life's charmed array
Reels all away.

SEASIDE SONGS.

I.

DROP down below the orbéd sea,
O lingering light in glowing skies,
And bring my own true-love to me —
My dear true-love across the sea —
With tender-lighted eyes.

For now the gates of Night are flung
Wide open her dark coasts among :
And the happy stars crowd up, and up,
Like bubbles that brighten, one by
one,
To the dark wet brim of some glowing
cup
Filled full to the parting sun.

And moment after moment grows
In grandeur up from deep to deep
Of darkness, till the night hath
clomb,
From star to star, heaven's highest
dome,
And, like a new thought born in sleep,
The slumbrous glory glows, and glows :
While, far below, a whisper goes

That heaves the happy sea :
For o'er faint tracts of fragrance wide,
A rapture pouring up the tide —
A freshness through the heat — a sweet,
Uncertain sound, like fairy feet —
The west-wind blows my love to me.

Love-laden from the lighted west
Thou comest, with thy soul opprest
For joy of him : all up the dim,
Delicious sea blow fearlessly,
Warm wind, that art the tenderest
Of all that breathe from south or west,
Blow whispers of him up the sea :
Upon my cheek, and on my breast,
And on the lips which he hath prest,
Blow all his kisses back to me !

Far off, the dark green rocks about,
All night shines, faint and fair, the far
light ;
Far off, the lone, late fishers shout
From boat to boat i' the listening star-
light :
Far off, and fair, the sea lies bare,
Leagues, leagues beyond the reach of
rowing :
Up creek and horn the smooth wave
swells
And falls asleep ; or, inland flowing,
Twinkles among the silver shells,
From sluice to sluice of shallow wells ;
Or, down dark pools of purple glow-
ing,
Sets some forlorn star trembling there
In his own dim, dreamlike brilliancy.
And I feel the dark sails growing
Nearer, clearer, up the sea :
And I catch the warm west blowing
All my own love's sighs to me :
On the deck I hear them singing
Songs they sing in my own land :
Lights are swinging : bells are ringing :
On the deck I see him stand !

II.

The day is down into his bower :
In languid lights his feet he steeps :
The flushed sky darkens, low and lower,
And closes on the glowing deeps.

In creeping curves of yellow foam
Up shallow sands the waters slide :
And warmly blow what whispers roam
From isle to isle the lulled tide :

The boats are drawn : the nets drip
bright :
Dark casements gleam : old songs are
sung :
And out upon the verge of night
Green lights from lonely rocks are hung.

O winds of eve that somewhere rove
Where darkest sleeps the distant sea,
Seek out where haply dreams my love,
And whisper all her dreams to me !

THE SUMMER-TIME THAT WAS.

THE swallow is not come yet ;
The river-banks are brown ;
The woodside walks are dumb yet,
And dreary is the town.
I miss a face from the window,
A footstep from the grass ;
I miss the boyhood of my heart,
And the summer-time that was.

How shall I read the books I read,
Or meet the men I met ?
I thought to find her rose-tree dead,
But it is growing yet.
And the river winds among the flags,
And the leaf lies on the grass.
But I walk alone. My hopes are gone,
And the summer-time that was.

ELAYNE LE BLANC.

O THAT sweet season on the April-verge
Of womanhood ! When smiles are toucht
with tears,
And all the unsolaced summer seems to
grieve
With some blind want : when Eden-
exiles feel
Their Paradisal parentage, and search
Even yet some fragrance through the
thorny years
From reachless gardens guarded by the
sword.

Then those that brood above the fallen
sun,
Or lean from lonely casements to the
moon,
Turn round and miss the touching of a
hand :
Then sad thoughts seem to be more sweet
than gay ones :

Then old songs have a sound as pitiful
As dead friends' voices, sometimes heard
in dreams :
And all a-tiptoe for some great event,
The Present waits, her finger at her lips,
The while the pensive Past with meek
pale palms,
Crosts (where a child should lie) on her
cold breast,
And wistful eyes forlorn, stands mutely
by,
Reproaching Life with some unuttered
loss ;
And the heart pines, a prisoned Danaë,
Till some God comes, and makes the air
all golden.

In such a mood as this, at such an hour
As makes sad thoughts fall saddest on
the soul,
She, in her topmost bower all alone,
High-up among the battlemented roofs,
Leaned from the lattice, where the road
runs by
To Camelot, and in the bulrush beds
The marsh river shrinks his stagnant
horn.
All round, along the spectral arras,
gleamed
(With faces pale against the dreary light,
Forms of great Queens — the women of
old times.
She felt their frowns upon her, and their
smiles,
And seemed to hear their garments rus-
tling near.
Her lute lay idle her love-books among :
And, at her feet, flung by, the brodered
scarf,
And velvet mantle. On the verge of
night
She saw a bird float by, and wished for
wings :
She heard the hoarse frogs quarrel in the
marsh :
And now and then, with drowsy song
and oar,
Some dim barge sliding slow from bridge
to bridge,
Down the white river past, and far
behind
Left a new silence. Then she fell to
muse
Unto what end she came into this earth
Whose reachless beauty made her heart
so sad,
As one that loves, but hopes not, inly ails

In gazing on some fair unloving face.
Anon, there dropt down a great gulf of
sky
A star she knew; and as she looked at
it,
Down-drawn through her intensity of
gaze,
One angry ray fell tangled in her tears,
And dashed its blinding brightness in
her eyes.
She turned, and caught her lute, and
pensively
Rippled a random music down the
strings,
And sang . . .

All night the moonbeams bathe the
the sword.
There's not an eye to-night in Joyous-
Gard
That is not dreaming something sweet.
I wake
Because it is more sweet to dream awake:
Dreaming I see thy face upon the lake.

I am come up from far, love, to behold
thee,
That hast waited for me so bravely and
well
Thy sweet life long (for the Fairies had
told thee
I am the Knight that shall loosen the
spell),
And to-morrow morn mine arms shall
infold thee:
And to-morrow night . . . ah, who can
tell?

As the spirit of some dark lake
Pines at nightfall, wild-awake,
For the approaching consummation
Of a great moon he divines
Coming to her coronation
Of the dazzling stars and signs,
So my heart, my heart,
Darkly (ah, and tremblingly!)
Waits in mystic expectation
(From its wild source far apart)
Until it be filled with thee, —
With the full-orbed light of thee, —
O beloved as thou art!
With the soft sad smile that flashes
Underneath thy long dark lashes;
And thy floating raven hair
From its wreathed pearls let slip;
And thy breath, like balmy air;
And thy warm wet rosy lip,

With my first kiss lingering there;
Its sweet secret unrevealed, —
Sealed by me, to me unsealed;
And . . . but, ah! she lies asleep
In yon gray stone castle-keep,
On her lids the happy tear;
And alone I linger here;
And to-morrow morn the fight;
And . . . ah, me! to-morrow night?

Here she brake, trembling, off; and on
the lute,
Yet vibrating through its melodious
nerves,
A great tear plashed and tinkled. For
a while
She sat and mused; and, heavily, drop
by drop,
Her tears fell down; then through them
a slow smile
Stole, full of April-sweetness; and she
sang —
— It was a sort of ballad of the sea:
A song of weather-beaten mariners,
Gray-headed men that had survived all
winds
And held a perilous sport among the
waves,
Who yet sang on with hearts as bold as
when
They cleared their native harbor with a
shout,
And lifted golden anchors in the sun.

Merrily, merrily drove our barks, —
Merrily up from the morning beach!
And the brine broke under the prows in
sparks;
For a spirit sat high at the helm of each.
We sailed all day; and, when day was
done,
Steered after the wake of the sunken
sun,
For we meant to follow him out of reach
Till the golden dawn was again begun.

With lifted oars, with shout and song,
Merry mariners all were we!
Every heart beat stout and strong.
Through all the world you would not
see,
Though you should journey wide and
long,
A comelier company.
And where, the echoing creeks among,
Merrily, steadily,
From bay to bay our barks did fall,

You might hear us singing, one and all,
A song of the mighty sea.
But, just at twilight, down the rocks
Dim forms trooped fast, and clearer
grew:
For out upon the sea-sand came
The island-people, whom we knew,
And called us: — girls with glowing
locks;
And sunburnt boys that tend the herd
Far up the vale; gray elders too
With silver beards: — their cries we
heard:
They called us, each one by his name.

"Could ye not wait a little while,"
We heard them sing, "for all our sakes?
A little while, in this old isle,"
They sung, "among the silver lakes?
For here," they sung, "from horn to
horn
Of flowery bays the land is fair:
The hillside glows with grapes: the
corn
Grows golden in the vale down there.
Our maids are sad for you," they sung:
"Against the field no sickle falls:
Upon the trees our harps are hung:
Our doors are void: and in the stalls
The little foxes nest; among
The herd-roved hills no shepherd calls:
Your brethren mourn for you," they
sung.
"Here weep your wives: here passed
your lives
Among the vines, when you were young:
Here dwell your sires: your household
fires
Grow cold. Return! return!" they
sung.

Then each one saw his kinsman stand
Upon the shore, and wave his hand:
And each grew sad. But still we sung
Our ocean-chorus bold and clear;
And still upon our oars we hung,
And held our course with steadfast cheer.
"For we are bound for distant shores,"
We cried, and faster swept our oars:
"We pine to see the faces there
Of men whose deeds we heard long since,
Who haunt our dreams: gray heroes:
kings
Whose fame the wandering minstrel
sings:
And maidens, too, more fair than ours,
With deeper eyes and softer hair,

Like hers that left her island bowers
To wed the sullen Cornish Prince
Who keeps his court upon the hill
By the gray coasts of Tyntagill,
And each, before he dies, must gain
Some fairy-land across the main."

But still "return, beloved, return!"
The simple island-people sung:
And still each mariner's heart did burn,
As each his kinsman could discern,
Those dim green rocks among.

"O'er you the rough sea-blasts will
blow,"
They sung, "while here the skies are
fair:
Our paths are through the fields we
know:
And yours you know not where."

But we waved our hands . . . "farewell!
farewell!"
We cried . . . "our white sails flap the
mast:
Our course is set: our oars are wet:
One day," we cried, "is nearly past:
One day at sea! Farewell! farewell!
No more with you we now may dwell!"

And the next day we were driving free
(With never a sail in sight)
Over the face of the mighty sea,
And we counted the stars next night
Rise over us by two and three
With melancholy light:
A grave-eyed, earnest company, —
And all round the salt foam white!

With this, she ceased, and sighed . . .
"though I were far,
I know yon moated iris would not shed
His purple crown: yon clover-field would
ripple
As merry in the waving wind as now:
As soft the Spring down this bare hill
would steal,
And in the vale below fling all her
flowers:
Each year the wet primroses star the
woods:
And violets muffle the sharp rivulets:
Round this lone casement's solitary panes
The wandering ivy move and mount each
year:
Each year the red wheat gleam near river-
banks: