

While, ah, with each my memory from  
the hearts  
Of men would fade, and from their lips  
my name.

O which were best — the wide, the windy  
sea,  
With golden gleams of undiscovered  
lands,

Odors, and murmurs — or the placid Port,  
From wanton winds, from scornful waves  
secure,

Under the old, green, happy hills of  
home?"

She sat forlorn, and pondered. Night  
was near,

And, marshalling o'er the hills her dewy  
camps,

Came down the outposts of the sentinel  
stars.

All in the owlet light she sat forlorn.

Now hostel, hall, and grange, that eve  
were crammed:

The town being choked to bursting of  
the gates:

For there the King yet lay with all his  
Earls,

And the Round Table, numbering all  
save one.

On many a curving terrace which o'er-  
hung

The long gray river, swan-like, through  
the green

Of quaintest yews, moved, pacing state-  
ly by,

The lovely ladies of King Arthur's court.  
Sighing, she eyed them from that lonely  
keep.

The Dragon-banners o'er the turrets  
drooped,

The heavy twilight hanging in their folds.  
And now and then, from posterns in the  
wall

The Knights stole, lingering for some  
last Good-night,

Whispered or sighed through closing  
lattices;

Or paused with reverence of bending  
plumes,

And lips on jewelled fingers gayly prest.  
The silver cressets shone from pane to  
pane:

And tapers flitted by with flitting forms:

Clanged the dark streets with clash of  
iron heels:

Or fell a sound of coits in clattering  
courts,  
And drowsy horse-boys singing in the  
straw.

These noises floated upward. And  
within,

From the great Hall, forever and anon,  
Brake gusts of revel; snatches of wild  
song,

And laughter; where her sire among his  
men

Caroused between the twilight and the  
dark.

The silence round about her where she  
sat,

Vext in itself, grew sadder for the sound.  
She closed her eyes: before them seemed  
to float

A dream of lighted revels, — dance and  
song

In Guenver's palace: gorgeous tourna-  
ments;

And rows of glittering eyes about the  
Queen

(Like stars in galaxies around the moon),  
That sparkled recognition down below,

Where rode the Knights amont with lance  
and plume;

And each his lady's sleeve upon his helm:  
Murmuring... "none ride for me. Am  
I not fair,

Whom men call the White Flower of  
Astolat?"

Far, far without, the wild gray marish  
spread,

A heron startled from the pools, and  
flapped

The water from his wings, and skirred  
away.

The last long limit of the dying light  
Dropped, all on fire, behind an iron  
cloud:

And, here and there, through some wild  
chasm of blue,

Tumbled a star. The mist upon the  
fens

Thickened. A billowy opal grew i' the  
crofts,

Fed on the land, and sucked into itself  
Paling and park, close copse and bush-  
less down,

Changing the world for Fairies.

Then the moon

In the low east, unprisoned from black  
bars

Of stagnant fog (a white light, wrought  
to the full,

Summed in a perfect orb) rose suddenly  
up

Upon the silence with a great surprise,  
And took the inert landscape unawares.

White, white, the snaky river: dark the  
banks:

And dark the folding distance, where  
her eyes

Were wildly turned, as though the whole  
world lay

In that far blackness over Carlyel.  
There she espied Sir Launcelot, as he rode

His coal-black courser downward from  
afar,

For all his armor glittered as he went,  
And showed like silver: and his mighty  
shield,

By dint of knightly combat hackt and  
worn,

Looked like some cracked and frozen  
moon that hangs

By night o'er Baltic headlands all alone.

## TO —.

As, in lone fairy-lands, up some rich  
shelf

Of golden sand the wild wave moaning-  
ly

Heaps its unvalued sea-wealth, weed and  
gem,

Then creeps back slow into the salt sad  
sea:

So from my life's new searched deeps to  
thee,

Beloved, I cast these weed-flowers.  
Smile on them.

More than they mean I know not to ex-  
press.

So I shrink back into my old sad self,  
Far from all words where love lies fath-  
omless.

## QUEEN GUENEVERE.

THENCE, up the sea-green floor, among  
the stems

Of mighty columns whose unmeasured  
shades

From aisle to aisle, unheeded in the sun,  
Moved without sound, I, following all  
alone

A strange desire that drew me like a  
hand,

Came unawares upon the Queen.

She sat  
In a great silence, which her beauty  
filled

Full to the heart of it, on a black chair  
Mailed all about with sullen gems, and  
crusts

Of sultry blazonry. Her face was bowed,  
A pause of slumbrous beauty, o'er the  
light

Of some delicious thought new-risen  
above

The deeps of passion. Round her state-  
ly head

A single circlet of the red gold fine  
Burned free, from which, on either side  
streamed down

Twilights of her soft hair, from neck to  
foot.

Green was her kirtle as the emeralde is,  
And stiff from hem to hem with seams  
of stones

Beyond all value; which, from left to  
right

Disparting, half revealed the snowy gleam  
Of a white robe of spotless samite pure.

And from the soft repression of her zone,  
Which like a light hand on a lute string  
pressed

Harmony from its touch, flowed warmly  
back

The bounteous outlines of a glowing  
grace,

Nor yet outflowed sweet laws of loveli-  
ness.

Then did I feel as one who, much per-  
plexed,

Led by strange legends and the light of  
stars

Over long regions of the midnight sand  
Beyond the red tract of the Pyramids,

Is suddenly drawn to look upon the sky  
From sense of unfamiliar light, and sees,  
Revealed against the constellated cope  
The great cross of the South.

The chamber round

Was dropt with arras green; and I  
could hear,

In courts far off, a minstrel praising May,  
Who sang... *Si douce, si douce est la*

*Margarete!*

To a faint lute. Upon the window-sill,  
Hard by a latoun bowl that blazed i' the  
sun



Perched a strange fowl, a Falcon Peregrine;  
 With all his feathers puffed for pride, and  
 all  
 His courage glittering outward in his eye;  
 For he had flown from far, athwart  
 strange lands,  
 And o'er the light of many a setting sun,  
 Lured by his love (such sovereignty of  
 old  
 Had Beauty in all coasts of Christendom!)  
 To look into the great eyes of the Queen.

## THE NEGLECTED HEART.

THIS heart, you would not have,  
 I laid up in a grave  
 Of song: with love enwound it;  
 And set sweet fancies blowing round it.  
 Then I to others gave it;  
 Because you would not have it.  
 "See you keep it well," I said;  
 "This heart's sleeping — is not dead;  
 But will wake some future day:  
 See you keep it while you may."

All great Sorrows in the world, —  
 Some with crowns upon their heads,  
 And in regal purple furred;  
 Some with rosaries and beads;  
 Some with lips of scorning, curled  
 At false Fortune; some, in weeds  
 Of mourning and of widowhood,  
 Standing tearful and apart, —  
 Each one in his several mood,  
 Came to take my heart.

Then in holy ground they set it:  
 With melodious weepings wet it:  
 And revered it as they found it,  
 With wild fancies blowing round it.

And this heart (you would not have)  
 Being not dead, though in the grave,  
 Worked miracles and marvels strange,  
 And healed many maladies:  
 Giving sight to sealed-up eyes,  
 And legs to lame men sick for change.

The fame of it grew great and greater.  
 Then said you, "Ah, what's the matter?  
 How hath this heart I would not take,  
 This weak heart a child might break —  
 This poor, foolish heart of his —  
 Since won worship such as this?"

You bethought you then . . . "Ah me  
 What if this heart, I did not choose  
 To retain, hath found the key  
 Of the kingdom? and I lose  
 A great power? Me he gave it:  
 Mine the right, and I will have it."

Ah, too late! For crowds exclaimed,  
 "Ours it is: and hath been claimed.  
 Moreover, where it lies, the spot  
 Is holy ground: so enter not.  
 None but men of mournful mind, —  
 Men to darkened days resigned;  
 Equal scorn of Saint and Devil;  
 Poor and outcast; halt and blind;  
 Exiles from Life's golden revel;  
 Gnawing at the bitter rind  
 Of old griefs; or else, confined  
 In proud cares, to serve and grind, —  
 May enter: whom this heart shall cure.  
 But go thou by: thou art not poor:  
 Nor defrauded of thy lot:  
 Bless thyself: but enter not!"

## APPEARANCES.

WELL, you have learned to smile.  
 And no one looks for traces  
 Of tears about your eyes.  
 Your face is like most faces.  
 And who will ask, meanwhile,  
 If your face your heart belies?

Are you happy? You look so.  
 Well, I wish you what you seem.  
 Happy persons sleep so light!  
 In your sleep you never dream?  
 But who would care to know  
 What dreams you dreamed last night?

## HOW THE SONG WAS MADE.

I SAT low down, at midnight, in a vale  
 Mysterious with the silence of blue  
 pines:  
 White-cloven by a snaky river-tail,  
 Uncoiled from tangled wefts of silver  
 twines.

Out of a crumbling castle, on a spike  
 Of splintered rock, a mile of change-  
 less shade

Gorged half the landscape. Down a  
 dismal dike  
 Of black hills the sluiced moonbeams  
 streamed, and stayed.

The world lay like a poet in a swoon,  
 When God is on him, filled with  
 heaven, all through, —  
 A dim face full of dreams turned to the  
 moon,  
 With mild lips moist in melancholy  
 dew.

I plucked blue mugwort, livid mandrakes,  
 balls  
 Of blossomed nightshade, heads of  
 hemlock, long  
 White grasses, grown in oozy intervals  
 Of marsh, to make ingredients for a  
 song:

A song of mourning to embalm the  
 Past, —  
 The corpse-cold Past, — that it should  
 not decay;  
 But in dark vaults of memory, to the  
 last,  
 Endure unchanged: for in some future  
 day

I will bring my new love to look at it  
 (Laying aside her gay robes for a mo-  
 ment)  
 That, seeing what love came to, she may  
 sit  
 Silent awhile, and muse, but make no  
 comment.

## RETROSPECTIONS.

TO-NIGHT she will dance at the palace,  
 With the diamonds in her hair:  
 And the Prince will praise her beauty —  
 The loveliest lady there!

But tones, at times, in the music  
 Will bring back forgotten things:  
 And her heart will fail her sometimes,  
 When her beauty is praised at the  
 King's.

There sits in his silent chamber  
 A stern and sorrowful man:  
 But a strange sweet dream comes to him,  
 While the lamp is burning wan,

Of a sunset among the vineyards  
 In a lone and lovely land,  
 And a maiden standing near him,  
 With fresh wild-flowers in her hand.

THY VOICE ACROSS MY SPIRIT  
FALLS.

THY voice across my spirit falls  
 Like some spent sea-wind through dim  
 halls  
 Of ocean-kings, left bare and wide  
 (Green floors o'er which the sea-weed  
 crawls!)  
 Where once, long since, in festal pride  
 Some Chief, who roved and ruled the tide,  
 Among his brethren reigned and died.

I dare not meet thine eyes; for so,  
 In gazing there, I seem once more  
 To lapse away through days of yore  
 To homes where laugh and song is o'er,  
 Whose inmates each went long ago —

Like some lost soul, that keeps the sem-  
 blance  
 On its brow of ancient grace  
 Not all faded, wandering back  
 To silent chambers, in the track  
 Of the twilight, from the Place  
 Of retributive Remembrance.  
 Ah, turn aside those eyes again!  
 Their light has less of joy than pain.  
 We are not now what we were then.

## THE RUINED PALACE.

BROKEN are the Palace windows:  
 Rotting is the Palace floor.  
 The damp wind lifts the arras,  
 And swings the creaking door;  
 But it only startles the white owl  
 From his perch on a monarch's throne,  
 And the rat that was gnawing the harp-  
 strings  
 A Queen once played upon.

Dare you linger here at midnight  
 Alone, when the wind is about,  
 And the bat, and the newt, and the viper,  
 And the creeping things come out?  
 Beware of these ghostly chambers!  
 Search not what my heart hath been,  
 Lest you find a phantom sitting  
 Where once there sat a Queen.



## A VISION OF VIRGINS.

I HAD a vision of the night.

It seemed  
There was a long red tract of barren land,  
Blockt in by black hills, where a half-  
moon dreamed  
Of morn, and whitened.

Drifts of dry brown sand,  
This way and that, were heapt below:  
and flats

Of water:—glaring shallows, where  
strange bats  
Came and went, and moths flickered.

To the right,  
A dusty road that crept along the waste  
Like a white snake: and, farther up, I  
traced

The shadow of a great house, far in sight:  
A hundred casements all ablaze with  
light:

And forms that flit athwart them as in  
haste:

And a slow music, such as sometimes  
kings

Command at mighty revels, softly sent  
From viol, and flute, and tabor, and the  
strings

Of many a sweet and slumbrous instru-  
ment

That wound into the mute heart of the  
night

Out of that distance.

Then I could perceive  
A glory pouring through an open door,  
And in the light five women. I believe  
They wore white vestments, all of them.

They were  
Quite calm; and each still face unearth-  
ly fair,

Unearthly quiet. So like statues all,  
Waiting they stood without that lighted  
hall;

And in their hands, like a blue star,  
they held

Each one a silver lamp.

Then I beheld  
A shadow in the doorway. And One  
came

Crowned for a feast. I could not see the  
Face.

The Form was not all human. As the  
flame

Streamed over it, a presence took the  
place

With awe.

He, turning, took them by the hand,  
And led them each up the white stairway,  
and  
The door closed.

At that moment the moon dipped  
Behind a rag of purple vapor, ript  
Off a great cloud, some dead wind, ere it  
spent

Its last breath, had blown open, and so  
rent

You saw behind blue pools of light, and  
there

A wild star swimming in the lurid air.  
The dream was darkened. And a sense  
of loss

Fell like a nightmare on the land: be-  
cause

The moon yet lingered in her cloud-  
eclipse.

Then, in the dark, swelled sullenly across  
The waste a wail of women.

Her blue lips  
The moon drew up out of the cloud.

Again  
I had a vision on that midnight plain.

Five women: and the beauty of despair  
Upon their faces: locks of wild wet hair,  
Clammy with anguish, wandered low  
and loose

O'er their bare breasts, that seemed too  
filled with trouble

To feel the damp crawl of the midnight  
dews

That trickled down them. One was  
bent half double,

A dismayed heap, that hung o'er the last  
spark

Of a lamp slowly dying. As she blew  
The dull light redder, and the dry wick  
flew

In crumbling sparkles all about the dark,  
I saw a light of horror in her eyes;

A wild light on her flushed cheek; a wild  
white

On her dry lips; an agony of surprise  
Fearfully fair.

The lamp dropped. From my sight  
She fell into the dark.

Beside her, sat  
One without motion: and her stern face  
flat

Against the dark sky.

One, as still as death,  
Hollowed her hands about her lamp, for  
fear

Some motion of the midnight, or her  
breath,

Should fan out the last flicker. Rosy-  
clear

The light oozed, through her fingers, o'er  
her face.

There was a ruined beauty hovering there  
Over deep pain, and, dasht with lurid  
grace

A waning bloom.

The light grew dim and blear:  
And she, too, slowly darkened in her  
place.

Another, with her white hands hotly  
lockt

About her damp knees, muttering mad-  
ness, rocked

Forward and backward. But at last  
she stopped,

And her dark head upon her bosom  
dropped

Motionless.

Then one rose up with a cry  
To the great moon; and stretched a  
wrathful arm

Of wild expostulation to the sky,  
Murmuring, "These earth-lamps fail us!

and what harm?

Does not the moon shine? Let us rise  
and haste

To meet the Bridegroom yonder o'er the  
waste!

For now I seem to catch once more the  
tone

Of viols on the night. 'T were better  
done,

At worst, to perish near the golden gate,  
And fall in sight of glory one by one,

Than here all night upon the wild, to  
wait

Uncertain ills. Away! the hour is late!"

Again the moon dipped.

I could see no more.  
Not the least gleam of light did heaven  
afford.

At last, I heard a knocking on a door,  
And some one crying, "Open to us,  
Lord!"

There was an awful pause.

I heard my heart  
Beat.

Then a Voice—"I know you not.  
Depart."

I caught, within, a glimpse of glory.  
And

The door closed.

Still in darkness dreamed the land.  
I could not see those women. Not a  
breath!

Darkness, and awe: a darkness more  
than death.

The darkness took them. \* \* \* \* \*

## LEOLINE.

In the molten-golden moonlight,  
In the deep grass warm and dry,

We watched the fire-fly rise and swim  
In floating sparkles by.

All night the hearts of nightingales,  
Song-steeping, slumbrous leaves,

Flowed to us in the shadow there  
Below the cottage-eaves.

We sang our songs together  
Till the stars shook in the skies.

We spoke—we spoke of common things,  
Yet the tears were in our eyes.

And my hand,—I know it trembled  
To each light warm touch of thine.

But we were friends, and only friends,  
My sweet friend, Leoline!

How large the white moon looked, Dear!  
There has not ever been

Since those old nights the same great  
light

In the moons which I have seen.  
I often wonder, when I think,

If you have thought so too,  
And the moonlight has grown dimmer,

Dear,  
Than it used to be to you.

And sometimes, when the warm west-  
wind

Comes faint across the sea,  
It seems that you have breathed on it,

So sweet it comes to me:  
And sometimes, when the long light  
waned

In one deep crimson line,  
I muse, "and does she watch it too,

Far off, sweet Leoline?"

And often, leaning all day long  
My head upon my hands,

My heart aches for the vanished time  
In the far fair foreign lands:



Thinking sadly — "Is she happy?  
Has she tears for those old hours?  
And the cottage in the starlight?  
And the songs among the flowers?"

One night we sat below the porch,  
And out in that warm air,  
A fire-fly, like a dying star,  
Fell tangled in her hair;  
But I kissed him lightly off again,  
And he glittered up the vine,  
And died into the darkness  
For the love of Leoline!

Between two songs of Petrarch  
I've a purple rose-leaf prest,  
More sweet than common rose-leaves,  
For it once lay in her breast.  
When she gave me that her eyes were wet,  
The rose was full of dew.  
The rose is withered long ago:  
The page is blistered too.

There's a blue flower in my garden,  
The bee loves more than all:  
The bee and I, we love it both,  
Though it is frail and small.  
She loved it too, — long, long ago!  
Her love was less than mine.  
Still we are friends, but only friends,  
My lost love, Leoline!

## SPRING AND WINTER.

THE world buds every year:  
But the heart just once, and when  
The blossom falls off sere  
No new blossom comes again.  
Ah, the rose goes with the wind:  
But the thorns remain behind.

Was it well in him, if he  
Felt not love, to speak of love so?  
If he still unmoved must be,  
Was it nobly sought to move so?  
— Pluck the flower, and yet not wear it—  
Spurn, despise it, yet not spare it?

Need he say that I was fair,  
With such meaning in his tone,  
Just to speak of one whose hair  
Had the same tinge as my own?  
Pluck my life up, root and bloom,  
Just to plant it on her tomb?

And she'd scarce so fair a face  
(So he used to say) as mine:  
And her form had far less grace:  
And her brow was far less fine:  
But 't was just that he loved then  
More than he can love again.

Why, if Beauty could not bind him,  
Need he praise me, speaking low:  
Use my face just to remind him  
How no face could please him now?  
Why, if loving could not move him,  
Did he teach me still to love him?

And he said my eyes were bright,  
But his own, he said, were dim:  
And my hand, he said, was white,  
But what was that to him?  
"For," he said, "in gazing at you,  
I seem gazing at a statue."

"Yes!" he said, "he had grown wise  
now:  
He had suffered much of yore:  
But a fair face to his eyes now,  
Was a fair face, and no more.  
Yet the anguish and the bliss,  
And the dream too, had been his."

Then, why talk of "lost romances"  
Being "sick of sentiment!"  
And what meant those tones and glances  
If real love was never meant?  
Why, if his own youth were withered,  
Must mine also have been gathered?

Why those words a thought too tender  
For the commonplaces spoken?  
Looks whose meaning seemed to render  
Help to words when speech came broken?  
Why so late in July moonlight  
Just to say what's said by noonlight?

And why praise my youth for gladness,  
Keeping something in his smile  
Which turned all my youth to sadness,  
He still smiling all the while?  
Since, when so my youth was over  
He said — "Seek some younger lover!"

"For the world buds once a year,  
But the heart just once," he said.  
True! . . . so now that Spring is here  
All my flowers, like his, are dead.  
And the rose drops in the wind.  
But the thorns remain behind.

## KING HERMANDIAZ.

THEN, standing by the shore, I saw the  
moon  
Change hue, and dwindle in the west, as  
when  
Warm looks fade inward out of dying  
eyes,  
And the dim sea began to moan.

I knew  
My hour had come, and to the bark I  
went.  
Still were the stately decks, and hung  
with silk  
Of stoled crimson: at the mast-head  
burned  
A steadfast fire with influence like a  
star,  
And underneath a couch of gold. I  
loosed

The dripping chain. There was not any  
wind:  
But all at once the magic sails began  
To belly and heave, and like a bat that  
wakes  
And flits by night, beneath her swarthy  
wings  
The black ship rocked and moved. I  
heard anon  
A humming in the cordage and a sound  
Like bees in summer, and the bark went  
on,  
And on, and on, until at last the world  
Was rolled away and folded out of sight,  
And I was all alone on the great sea.  
There a deep awe fell on my spirit. My  
wound

Began to bite. I, gazing round, beheld  
A lady sitting silent at the helm,  
A woman white as death, and fair as  
dreams.  
I would have asked her "Whither do we  
sail?"  
And "how?" but that my fear clung at  
my heart,  
And held me still. She, answering my  
doubt,  
Said slowly, "To the Isle of Avalon."

And straightway we were nigh a strand  
all gold,  
That glittered in the moon between the  
dusk  
Of hanging bowers made rich with  
blooms and balm,  
From which faint gusts came to me;  
and I heard

A sound of lutes among the vales, and  
songs  
And voices faint like voices through a  
dream  
That said or seemed to say, "Hail, Her-  
mandiaz!"

## SONG.

In the warm, black mill-pool winking,  
The first doubtful star shines blue:  
And alone here I lie thinking  
O such happy thoughts of you!

Up the porch the roses clamber,  
And the flowers we sowed last June;  
And the casement of your chamber  
Shines between them to the moon.

Look out, Love! fling wide the lattice:  
Wind the red rose in your hair,  
And the little white clematis  
Which I plucked for you to wear:

Or come down, and let me hear you  
Singing in the scented grass,  
Through tall cowslips nodding near you,  
Just to touch you as you pass.

For, where you pass, the air  
With warm hints of love grows wise:  
You — the dew on your dim hair,  
And the smile in your soft eyes!

From the hayfield comes your brother;  
There your sisters stand together,  
Singing clear to one another  
Through the dark blue summer weather,

And the maid the latch is clinking,  
As she lets her lover through:  
But alone, Love, I lie thinking  
O such tender thoughts of you!

## THE SWALLOW.

O SWALLOW chirping in the sparkling  
eaves,  
Why hast thou left far south thy fairy  
homes,  
To build between these drenched April-  
leaves,  
And sing me songs of Spring before it  
comes?



Too soon thou singest! Yon black  
stubborn thorn  
Bursts not a bud: the sneaping wind  
drifts on.  
She that once flung thee crumbs, and in  
the morn  
Sang from the lattice where thou  
sing'st, is gone.  
Here is no Spring. Thy flight yet fur-  
ther follow.  
Fly off, vain swallow!

Thou com'st to mock me with remem-  
bered things.  
I love thee not, O bird for me too  
gay.  
That which I want thou hast, — the gift  
of wings:  
Grief — which I have — thou hast not.  
Fly away!  
What hath my roof for thee? My cold  
dark roof,  
Beneath whose weeping thatch thine  
eggs will freeze!  
Summer will halt not here, so keep  
aloof.  
Others are gone; go thou. In those  
wet trees  
I see no Spring, though thou still singest  
of it.  
Fare hence, false prophet!

## CONTRABAND.

A HEAP of low, dark, rocky coast,  
Where the blue-black sea sleeps smooth  
and even:  
And the sun, just over the reefs at  
most,  
In the amber part of a pale blue  
heaven:

A village asleep below the pines,  
Hid up the gray shore from the low  
slow sun:  
And a maiden that lingers among the  
vines,  
With her feet in the dews, and her  
locks undone:

The half-moon melting out of the  
sky;  
And, just to be seen still, a star here,  
a star there,

Faint, high up in the heart of the heaven;  
so high  
And so faint, you can scarcely be sure  
that they are there.

And one of that small, black, raking  
craft;  
Two swivel guns on a round deck  
handy;  
And a great sloop sail with the wind  
abaft;  
And four brown thieves round a cask  
of brandy.

That's my life, as I left it last.  
And what it may be henceforth I know  
not.  
But all that I keep of the merry Past  
Are trifles like these, which I care to  
show not: —

A leathern flask, and a necklace of  
pearl;  
These rusty pistols, this tattered chart,  
Friend,  
And the soft dark half of a raven curl;  
And, at evening, the thought of a  
true, true heart, Friend.

## EVENING.

ALREADY evening! In the duskiest  
nook  
Of yon dusk corner, under the Death's-  
head,  
Between the alembecs, thrust this  
legended,  
And iron-bound, and melancholy book,  
For I will read no longer. The loud brook  
Shelves his sharp light up shallow  
banks thin-spread;  
The slumbrous west grows slowly red,  
and red:  
Up from the ripened corn her silver hook  
The moon is lifting: and deliciously  
Along the warm blue hills the day de-  
clines:  
The first star brightens while she  
waits for me,  
And round her swelling heart the zone  
grows tight:  
Musing, half-sad, in her soft hair she  
twines  
The white rose, whispering "he will  
come to-night!"

## ADON.

I WILL not weep for Adon!  
I will not waste my breath to draw thick  
sighs  
For Spring's dead greenness. All the  
orient skies  
Are husht, and breathing out a bright  
surprise  
Round morning's marshalling star: Rise,  
Eos, rise!  
Day's dazzling spears are up: the  
faint stars fade on  
The white hills, — cold, like Adon!

O'er crag, and spar, and splinter  
Break down, and roll the amber mist,  
stern light.  
The black pines dream of dawn. The  
skirts of night  
Are ravell'd in the East. And planted  
bright  
In heaven, the roots of ice shine, sharp  
and white,  
In frozen ray, and spar, and spike, and  
splinter.  
Within me and without, all's Winter.

Why should I weep for Adon?  
Am I, because the sweet Past is no more,  
Dead, as the leaves upon the graves of  
yore?  
I will breathe boldly, though the air be  
frore  
With freezing fire. Life still beats at  
the core  
Of the world's heart, though Death  
his awe hath laid on  
This dumb white corpse of Adon.

## THE PROPHET.

WHEN the East lightens with strange  
hints of morn,  
The first tinge of the growing glory takes  
The cold crown of some husht high alp  
forlorn,  
While yet o'er vales below the dark is  
spread.  
Even so the dawning Age, in silence,  
breaks,  
O solitary soul, on thy still head:  
And we, that watch below with reverent  
fear,  
Seeing thee crowned, do know that day  
is near.

## WEALTH.

Was it not enough to dream the day to  
death  
Grandly? and finely feed on faint per-  
fumes?  
Between the heavy lilacs draw thick  
breath,  
While the noon hummed from glowing  
citron-glooms?

Or walk with Morning in these dewy  
bowers,  
'Mid sheaved lilies, and the moth-loved  
lips  
Of purple asters, bearded flat sunflowers,  
And milk-white crumpled pinks with  
blood i' the tips?

But I must also, gazing upon thee,  
Pine with delicious pain, and subtle  
smart,  
Till I felt heavy immortality,  
Laden with looks of thine, weigh on  
my heart!

## WANT.

You swore you loved me all last June:  
And now December's come and gone.  
The Summer went with you — too soon.  
The Winter goes — alone.

Next Spring the leaves will all be green:  
But love like ours, once turned to pain,  
Can be no more what it hath been,  
Though roses bloom again.

Return, return the unvalued wealth  
I gave! which scarcely profits you —  
The heart's lost youth — the soul's lost  
health —  
In vain! . . . false friend, adieu!

I keep one faded violet  
Of all once ours, — you left no more.  
What I have lost I may forget,  
But you cannot restore.

## A BIRD AT SUNSET.

WILD bird, that wingest wide the glim-  
mering moors,  
Whither, by belts of yellowing woods  
away?



With pausing sunset thy wild heart al-  
lures  
Deep into dying day?

Would that my heart, on wings like  
thine, could pass  
Where stars their light in rosy regions  
lose, —  
A happy shadow o'er the warm brown  
grass,  
Falling with falling dews!

Hast thou, like me, some true-love of  
thine own,  
In fairy lands beyond the utmost seas;  
Who there, unsolaced, yearns for thee  
alone,  
And sings to silent trees?

O tell that woodbird that the Summer  
grieves,  
And the suns darken and the days  
grow cold;  
And, tell her, love will fade with fading  
leaves,  
And cease in common mould.

Fly from the winter of the world to her!  
Fly, happy bird! I follow in thy  
flight,  
Till thou art lost o'er yonder fringe of fir  
In baths of crimson light.

My love is dying far away from me.  
She sits and saddens in the fading  
west.  
For her I mourn all day, and pine to be  
At night upon her breast.

## IN TRAVEL.

Now our white sail flutters down:  
Now it broadly takes the breeze:  
Now the wharves upon the town,  
Lessening, leave us by degrees.  
Blithely blows the morning, shaking  
On your cheek the loosened curls:  
Round our prow the cleft wave, breaking,  
Tumbles off in heaped pearls,  
Which in forks of foam unite,  
And run seething out to sea,  
Where o'er gleams of briny light,  
Dip the dancing gulls in glee.  
Now the mountain serpentine  
Slips out many a snaky line  
Down the dark blue ocean-spine.

From the boatside, while we pass,  
I can see, as in a glass,  
Pirates on the flat sea-sand,  
Carousing ere they put from land;  
And the purple-pointed crests  
Of hills whereon the morning rests  
Whose ethereal vivid peaks  
Glimmer in the lucid creeks.  
Now these wind away; and now  
Hamlets up the mountain-brow  
Peep and peer from roof to roof;  
And gray castle-walls aloof  
O'er wide vineyards just in grape,  
From whose serfs old Barons held  
Tax and toll in feudal eld,  
Creep out of the uncoiling cape.  
Now the long low layer of mist  
A slow trouble rolls and lifts,  
With a broken billowy motion,  
From the rocks and from the rifts,  
Laying bare, just here and there,  
Black stone-pines, at morn dew-kist  
By salt winds from bound to bound  
Of the great sea freshening round;  
Wattled folds on bleak brown downs  
Sloping high o'er sleepy towns;  
Lengths of shore and breadths of ocean.

Love, lean here upon my shoulder,  
And look yonder, love, with me:  
Now I think that I can see  
In the merry market-places  
Sudden warmth of sunny faces:  
Many a lovely laughing maiden  
Bearing on her loose dark locks  
Rich fruit-baskets heavy-laden,  
In and out among the rocks,  
Knowing not that we behold her.  
Now, love, tell me, can you hear,  
Growing nearer, and more near,  
Sound of song, and splash of oar,  
From wild bays, and inlets hoar,  
While above yon isles afar  
Ghostlike sinks last night's last star?

## CHANGES.

WHOM first we love, you know, we sel-  
dom wed.  
Time rules us all. And Life, indeed,  
is not  
The thing we planned it out ere hope  
was dead.  
And then, we women cannot choose  
our lot.

Much must be borne which it is hard to  
bear:  
Much given away which it were sweet  
to keep.  
God help us all! who need, indeed, His  
care.  
And yet, I know, the Shepherd loves  
His sheep.

My little boy begins to babble now  
Upon my knee his earliest infant  
prayer.  
He has his father's eager eyes, I know.  
And, they say too, his mother's sun-  
ny hair.

But when he sleeps and smiles upon my  
knee,  
And I can feel his light breath come  
and go,  
I think of one (Heaven help and pity  
me!)  
Who loved me, and whom I loved,  
long ago.

Who might have been . . . ah, what I  
dare not think!  
We all are changed. God judges for  
us best.  
God help us do our duty, and not shrink,  
And trust in heaven humbly for the  
rest.

But blame us women not, if some appear  
Too cold at times; and some too gay  
and light.  
Some griefs gnaw deep. Some woes are  
hard to bear.  
Who knows the Past? and who can  
judge us right?

Ah, were we judged by what we might  
have been,  
And not by what we are, too apt to  
fall!  
My little child—he sleeps and smiles  
between  
These thoughts and me. In heaven  
we shall know all!

## JUDICIUM PARIDIS.

I SAID, when young, "Beauty's the su-  
preme joy.  
Her I will choose, and in all forms  
will face her;

Eye to eye, lip to lip, and so embrace  
her  
With my whole heart." I said this  
being a boy.

"First, I will seek her, — naked, or clad  
only  
In her own godhead, as I know of  
yore  
Great bards beheld her." So by sea  
and shore  
I sought her, and among the mountains  
lonely.

"There be great sunsets in the wondrous  
West;  
And marvel in the orbings of the moon;  
And glory in the jubilees of June;  
And power in the deep ocean. For the  
rest,

"Green-glaring glaciers; purple clouds  
of pine  
White walls of ever-roaring cataracts;  
Blue thunder drifting over thirsty  
tracts;  
The homes of eagles; these, too, are di-  
vine,

"And terror shall not daunt me—so it be  
Beautiful—or in storm or in eclipse:  
Rocking pink shells, or wrecking  
freighted ships,  
I shall not shrink to find her in the sea.

"Next, I will seek her—in all shapes  
of wood,  
Or brass, or marble; or in colors clad;  
And sensuous lines, to make my spirit  
glad.  
And she shall change her dress with  
every mood.

"Rose-latticed casements, lone in summer  
lands—  
Some witch's bower: pale sailors on  
the marge  
Of magic seas, in an enchanted barge  
Stranded, at sunset, upon jewelled sands:

"White nymphs among the lilies: shep-  
herd kings:  
And pink-hooved Fawns: and mooned  
Endymions:  
From every channel through which  
Beauty runs  
To fertilize the world with lovely things.



"I will draw freely, and be satisfied.  
Also, all legends of her apparition  
To men, in earliest times, in each condition,  
I will inscribe on portraits of my bride.  
"Then, that no single sense of her be wanting,  
Music; and all voluptuous combinations  
Of sound, with their melodious palpitations  
To charm the ear, the cells of fancy haunting.  
"And in her courts my life shall be outrolled  
As one unfurls some gorgeous tapestry,  
Wrought o'er with old Olympian heraldry,  
All purple-woven stiff with blazing gold.  
"And I will choose no sight for tears to flow:  
I will not look at sorrow: I will see  
Nothing less fair and full of majesty  
Than young Apollo leaning on his bow.  
"And I will let things come and go:  
nor range  
For knowledge: but from moments pluck delight,  
The while the great days ope and shut in light,  
And wax and wane about me, rich with change.  
"Some cup of dim hills, where a white moon lies,  
Dropt out of weary skies without a breath,  
In a great pool: a slumbrous vale beneath:  
And blue damps prickling into white fire-flies:  
"Some sunset vision of an Oread, less  
Than half an hour ere moonrise caught asleep  
With a flusht cheek, among crusht violets deep,—  
A warm half-glimpse of milk-white nakedness,  
"On sumptuous summer eves: shall wake for me  
Rapture from all the various stops of life:

Making it like some charmed Arcadian life  
Filled by a wood-god with his ecstasy."  
These things I said while I was yet a boy,  
And the world showed as between dream and waking  
A man may see the face he loves. So, breaking  
Silence, I cried . . . "Thou art the supreme Joy!"  
My spirit, as a lark hid near the sun,  
Carolled at morning. But ere she had dropt  
Half down the rainbow-colored years that propped  
Her gold cloud up, and broadly, one by one  
The world's great harvest-lands broke on her eye,  
She changed her tone, . . . "What is it I may keep?  
For look here, how the merry reapers reap:  
Even children glean: and each puts something by.  
"The poms of morning pass: when evening comes,  
What is retained of these which I may show?  
If for the hills I leave the fields below  
I fear to die an exile from men's homes.  
"Though here I see the orient pageants pass,  
I am not richer than the merest hind  
That toils below, all day, among his kind,  
And clinks at eve glad horns in the dry grass."  
Then, pondering long, at length I made confession.  
"I have erred much, rejecting all that man did:  
For all my pains I shall go empty-handed:  
And Beauty, of its nature foils possession."  
Thereafter, I said . . . "Knowledge is most fair.  
Surely to know is better than to see.

To see is loss: to know is gain: and we  
Grow old. I will store thriftily, with care."  
In which mood I endured for many years,  
Valuing all things for their further uses:  
And seeking knowledge at all open sluices:  
Though oft the stream turned brackish with my tears.  
Yet not the less, for years in this same mood  
I rested: nor from any object turned  
That had its secret to be spelled and learned,  
Murmuring ever, "Knowledge is most good."  
Unto which end I shunned the revelling  
And ignorant crowd, that eat the fruits and die:  
And called out Plato from his century  
To be my helpmate: and made Homer sing.  
Until the awful Past in gathered heaps  
Weighed on my brain, and sunk into my soul,  
And saddened through my nature, till the whole  
Of life was darkened downward to the deeps.  
And, wave on wave, the melancholy ages  
Crept o'er my spirit: and the years displaced  
The landmarks of the days: life waned, effaced  
From action by the sorrows of the sages:  
And my identity became at last  
The record of those others: or, if more,  
A hollow shell the sea sung in: a shore  
Of footprints which the waves washed from it fast.  
And all was as a dream whence, holding breath,  
It seemed, at times, just possible to break  
By some wild nervous effort, with a shriek,  
Into the real world of life and death.

But that thought saved me. Through the dark I screamed  
Against the darkness, and the darkness broke,  
And broke that nightmare: back to life I woke,  
Though weary with the dream which I had dreamed.  
O life! life! life! With laughter and with tears  
I tried myself: I knew that I had need  
Of pain to prove that this was life indeed,  
With its warm privilege of hopes and fears.  
O Love of man made Life of man, that saves!  
O man, that standest looking on the light:  
That standest on the forces of the night:  
That standest up between the stars and graves!  
O man! by man's dread privilege of pain,  
Dare not to scorn thine own soul nor thy brother's:  
Though thou be more or less than all the others.  
Man's life is all too sad for man's disdain.  
The smiles of seraphs are less awful far  
Than are the tears of this humanity,  
That sound, in dropping, through Eternity,  
Heard in God's ear beyond the furthest star.  
If that be true,—the hereditary hate  
Of Love's lost Rebel, since the worlds began,—  
The very Fiend, in hating, honors Man:  
Flattering with Devil-homage Man's estate.  
If two Eternities, at strife for us,  
Around each human soul wage silent war,  
Dare we disdain ourselves, though fall'n we are,  
With Hell and Heaven looking on us thus!