

OUTSIDE THE GATES,

or

A Tale of a Departed Spirit.

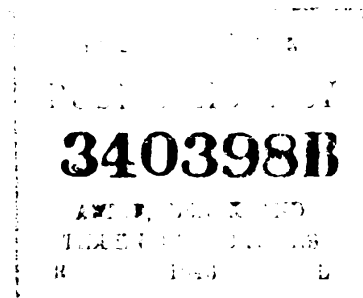
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INTRODUCTION.

The following poem has been in manuscript for about fifteen years. It was written during hours of meditation, but without any intention of publishing it. But having passed into other hands, it is given to the public for what it is worth, by the one having it in charge. The author is not unmindful of the pruning it will receive by the relentless knife of criticism.

It is but just to say, however, that thoughts suggested by a narrative claimed to have been written under psychic influence by one reputed to possess remarkable occult powers, will account, in part, for its production.

However little credence may be given this claim, the fact remains that the character of this strange and unusual narrative furnished the inspiration that modeled the theme. In it will be found much that meets the approval of a large, increasing sect that pins its faith to the imperishable nature of man—the immortality of the soul.

If in it is found one thought that shall serve as a guide to one enquirer and light the way to duty to himself and his fellowman, and awaken within a thought of the results of conduct in this life on his status in the life beyond, the tale will not have been told in vain.

THE AUTHOR.

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INVOCATION.

O, Mind! On Mystery's, magic, silent wing,
Make rapid flight thro' Nature's secret way;
And bring me fervid thought and aid to sing,
And swell the notes of one immortal lay!

Thou deep receptacle of searching thought—
The home in which its richest germs are nursed;
Till, springing forth with revelations fraught
On visions bright, its gilded pinions burst;
Enrich my mind and warm my yearning soul
With one hot spark from thy inspiring whole,
Which thou canst guide, and yet is thy control!

Departed Bard, around whom spirits throng,
To learn the chords of thy impassioned lyre;
And imitate its notes and matchless song—
And feel the thrill its melodies inspire—
Awake for me thy harp and bring it near,
And softly, deftly touch each golden string;
And fill and charm my dull receptive ear,
That I may hear the song the angels sing;
And drinking in the soft, inspiring strain,
Breathe back to man a thrilling, sweet refrain!
So I may tell the tale of grief and woe—
The deep remorse the guilty soul awakes—
The dark abode the erring only know,
Amid the helpless gloom outside the gates!
And paint the bliss and joy that ever come,
And welcome all who work their way beyond!

OUTSIDE THE GATES.

Or a Tale of a Departed Spirit.

A dreamy twilight broods the hills;
A deeper shade the valley shrouds;
A spicy fragrance floats, and fills
The tranquil air, and fading clouds
With mottled fleece the parted sun
Has draped with purple tint and gold;
And one bright veil of glory hung
Beneath the stars; and on a scroll
Of beauty, blent the skies in one.

A muffled tread! A sob suppressed!
A balmy quiet drinks my breath;
And watching friends by grief oppressed,
Around me whisper: "This is death!"
I cannot speak; my tongue is still;
The eyes are glazed and yet I see;
One pang; and one convulsive chill;
The cord is loosed and I am free.

I'm changed; and yet it can not be;
Familiar scenes in outlines clear,
Are still around me; and I see
Them all; and friends and kindred near.

And yet how strange! How wierd! I hear
The music of each vanished year
From those pure lips that death had stilled;
The magic notes that charmed the ear;

And my young heart with rapture thrilled.
It floats from yonder mellow haze
That like a silv'ry veil conceals
The misty forms its gauze reveals;
And fixes there my wondering gaze.
But see! They move! They nearer glide;
And one far brighter than them all;
And one erect in queenly pride
With crown as bright as morning sun;
With others dim but pure withal
As new born stars when day is done;
Their robes as white as polar snow,
In streams of dazzling luster flow
As if a crimped fleece of light,
Its wavey, flowing silv'ry fold,
That once had wrapped an airy sprite,
By magic hand had been unrolled;
And royal vestures, wove and made
In textures fine with changing shade
Of crimson tint with gold inlaid;
And ev'ry web the fabric traced
Were by some ornate gem enlaced;
And then put on to meet me here
By those dim forms now grown so clear.
There cannot be beneath the skies;
Nor in elysium's vale of bliss,

Where Beauty's smile with Beauty vies
A scene so bright, and pure as this!

A gleam of light breaks on me now;
A gentle touch of dreamy dawn,
Reveals the truth, but dimly how
To spirit life the man is born.
But where the forms I saw so bright?
A visage dark and saddened face—
A somber cloud like walls of night
Has shut them out and filled their place;
Has changed the scene and chilled the heart;
And settled down and all is dark.

And now, I hear a cheerless sigh;
'Tis she: My stricken mothers' moan!
She's sorting out and laying by
The precious things I called my own;
And giving to my sisters near
The jewel which to each was dear;
My auburn hair to each a tress,
Then for herself reserves the rest;
(I have not left my dear old home!)
Then gentle words to sooth her, broke
From Lillie's lips as thus she spoke:

"Fond mother: do not longer weep!
'Tis sin to grieve or wish her here!
Let mem'ry bright its treasures keep,
And smiles of joy displace the tear!
'Tis pain to spare her but we must!
What we forego is but her gain!

In all that's good she put her trust;
And lived a life without a stain!

“Her works of love—her richest prize,
In free self sacrifice were giv'n;
And light her path beyond the skies;
And bring her peace and bliss in heav'n!
Oh, so unselfish, noble, pure!
A full complete reward is hers
That will forever rich endure;
And which her life so rich deserves!”

But had a dagger blade been driven
Through heart and brain, and quivering nerves,
It could no greater shock have given
Than those kind spoken, burning words!
I, happy now and joy deserve!
I, so unselfish, noble, pure!
I, who lived a lie, nor right observed;
And seemed to be what I was not!

To me a blissful peace secure!
Would that all could be forgot!
Oh, I must from their presence fly!
I cannot linger round this spot,
To hear such praise, the soul would die
If not immortal. For unforgot
The mem'ry of all that I have done;
And unatoned, unceasing burn;
As in review, and one by one
My selfish acts accusers turn;

Oh, I would flee the voice of home!
To hide myself and be alone!

And now, I'm gone from thence; but where?
As quick as light I'm hither brought;
A vapor darkens all the air;
A shrubless waste and mist abound;
And were it not for haunting thought,
My courted solitude I've found.
But here about me, loud and clear,
As if some mortal lips had spoke,
Accusing voices fierce I hear,
And so the bitter past awoke!
But well I know each stinging word
Is but a thought I would conceal;
And solitude I so preferred
Doth but my darker thoughts reveal!
There is not to the erring known,
A place to which the soul has fled,
Where it can be from self alone,
Unless the soul itself be dead!

II.

The mist and haze have thinner grown.
And forms and objects rise anew;
The village scenes, its church and dome,
And old familiar sights renew;
I see again my earthly home.
But what is yonder gleaming zone,
Extending far as eye can see,

Like billowy scintillating foam,
Or rainbow tinting walls of light,
From which the spectral shadows flee?
What can it be so clear and bright?

A moment lost in reverie's dream;
Absorbed in thought the scene inspires;
A ray of dawn, a sudden gleam,
Like light from morning's smothered fires,
Breaks in upon me, and I know
That yonder bright and gleaming band—
And brighter far than sunsets glow—
Is that dividing wall that stands,
Through which the ransomed spirits go
From this the desert border land,

Where they a full redemption know.
Expelled from earth, unfit for heaven!
Enslaved by earthly loves and hates,
By black remorse and sorrows driven,
I'm wand'ring still outside the gates!

Outside the gates! Could I erase
The record of my wasted years,
With brighter lines its pages trace,
Now stained with unavailing tears,
I then were spared this grief and shame;
And might those fields of glory gain!
Ah, now I feel, and keenly see,
How center in a single hour
The pangs of an eternity,
With all their burning, crushing power!

And must I here in exile be!
Is there no way or method given
To set a weeping spirit free,
And open wide the gates of heaven,
And gain a pardon full for me?
Oh, can it be, that I may win
My ransom from a life of sin?

"Never!" in language firm and slow;
"No, never!" like a sigh of fate
From lips whose gentle tone I know—
But speaking now inside the Gate:
"Until your self respect you gain,
Immortal faces bright and pure
You can not see, but all the stain,
And hateful bonds you now endure,
In exile darker than the grave,
Will hold you still a trembling slave!

"Go and for your fellow beings toil!
For burdened spirits bowed with fright,
From every passing shade recoil
Your kindest thoughts and words invite!
Your sympathetic loving words
Will wake the better life within,
And be like welcome music heard,
And lead away from thoughts of sin,
Will courage give, and bear above
Rich trophies of your works of love!

"And go to earth! They need you there!
Reveal to friends your tale of woe

That they may in your knowledge share,
And shun the wayward paths you know!
Where trembling age is bowed with years,
Or hearts are strong in manhood's pride,
And youth alive to all but fears
In hopes embrace and joys abide!

"And go where tears and sorrow dwell,
And cold neglect its victims wrack!
To erring ones who thoughtless fell,
Whose hopes are dead, and skies are black!
And bind and heal the wounded hearts!
In kindness soothe the fevered brow
With balm that love alone imparts,
And love alone can tell you how!

"Had you on earth this duty done,
Your features now like sunlit snow
Would light the summer land beyond
Where your lorn spirit yearns to go!
There is a cherished plant that thrives
Beyond the Hindoo's sacred stream,
Where Brahman priest with Buddha strives,
And Nature paints her fairest scenes—

"When plucked to form a festal wreath,
For royal place or peasant maids,
Enlaced with garlands hung beneath
The pendant arch in blending shades,
Is ever green and never fades,
But ev'ry morning blooms anew,

With fragrance feeds the evening air,
Renewing buds the whole night through;

“And burst in brightest blossoms there;
And so unique and chaste and fair
They seem like smiles to mortals given,
From some sweet lips illumed by heaven;
And though a hand should bruise or sever,
It still blooms on and blooms forever—
In constant works of love remain,
Unselfish as this immortelle!
In keeping Beauty’s garlands bright,
With bud and bloom that none excel
To lift the soul to pleasure’s height,
And what seems lost you may regain!”

Then looking up to the shining wall,
I caught the glimpse of a radiant face,
From whence I heard the silvery call
To seek and gain that glorious place;
And it awoke the life in my soul anew,
As the flower revives in the falling dew.
Like a flash they’re gone! so brief the stay!
The voice and the visage die away!

Despondent now for the vision flown—,
My hope revived, is faint once more,
My somber robes have darker grown,
And blacker far than they were before!
For the face I saw in that light divine,
Above the gates of sunlight shown,

Disclosed the land, the radiant home,
The blissful sphere, I had hoped was mine!

And broader drew the shaded lines
Between the cheerless border land,
Which now my erring soul confines,
And those redeemed celestial bands
Who know no hope deferred like mine,
And thicker strewed and wider spread
The dreary waste the spirits tread;
Who groped their way to that pure light,
Just faded out on yonder height,
With forms and wrecks that bar and fret
And sting with thoughts I would forget!

But other forms are hovering near,
With saddened faces dark and worn;
And in each eye a starting tear
As for some hope forever flown,
As if some dark and faithless deed,
A love betrayed or broken vow,
And true hearts crushed, and left to bleed,
Had left dark stains on ev'ry brow;

And clothed in robes as black as night
The image they would screen from sight,
As those who think the harvest past,
And feel the sting of keen despair,
To see the reck'ning justly cast,
And rise in judgment on them there;
To stamp each face with every sin,
And each unholy thought within,

So ev'ry eye may clearly read
The motive for each thought and deed,
And ev'ry idle gazer show
The secrets they would blush to know,
Whose souls their own accusers turn,
And dire remorse and vain regret,
Which unavailing sting and burn,
Had their hot seal of judgment set,
Nor found a place for hope and peace.

Lost in grief or by gloom oppressed,
Left to reflect and regret the past,
My soul with vain remorse distressed,
Feels retributions fire at last!
Swift years with all the blight they bear,
Seem come and gone since in that light
I saw her face so sweet and fair,
Yet all in one brief moment's flight!

But whence that sound? It pains my ears!
'Tis woman's voice; and sobbing moan!
It comes from out the shadows near,
Where she has gone to hide alone,
That solitude might drink her tears!
I see her form! Her face! Her woe!
An infant nestles in her arms,
She mutters now in accents low
To that pure one with angel charms!
Oh, why should guilt and guiltless share
Alike these confines of despair!
Her face is sad but undefaced
The lines by her young beauty traced!

And yet is grave and deeply seamed,
As if a mad delerium dreamed
Within a mind by fate confined
Of some bright realm her soul had lost,
By rash and thoughtless act designed
And mid the ruins counts the cost.

“Unhappy one, as lone as I!
And can it be! Why art thou here
With that sweet babe? Oh, do not fly
From me! Be calm and have no fear!
I, like thee, am misfortune’s heir!
Deep pain to me is not unknown!
I would in all thy sorrows share!
Confide in me! We’re here alone!
Thus good may come, and some relief
Through this, and sooth thy grief.”

“Alone! The air with gaping ears
And glaring, flashing eyes of hate
Is filled! The tales of wasted years
They’ll catch, and gloat upon my fate!
But who are you? You seem so kind!”
Then turns her tear stained face to mine—
“Your proffered aid has come too late!
For I must suffer on alone!
So leave me please! All hope is gone!”

“I know I may not break the chain
That binds your weeping spirit here,
But may relieve and sooth your pain
By weeping with you tear for tear,”

I kindly said; and as I spoke
I saw the faith my words awoke,
While her wild look now calmer grown,
With steadier gaze returns my own,
And thus in language sad and low
Relates in brief her tale of woe:

“There is a deep and limped stream,
Whose swift, yet placid waters glide,
Whose abrupt banks of living green,
And silvan vales and hills beside,
And floral lawns and walks between
Present a bright enchanting scene,
That rivals all that art provides;
And there a nestling cottage hides.

“Young life first dawned upon me there,
And there a doting father died,
And left me to a mother's care,
A mother's only hope and pride;
And through those shady peaceful haunts
I romped and played, a happy child;
Her kindly hand supplied my wants,
And on my girlish frolics smiled.

“Oh, how indulgent, good and pure!
I never knew a care or pain!
For any toil she would endure
That I high social rank might gain
And hold, though she was poor and plain!
My features cast in beauties' mold,
With grace and form by all admired;

The station gained she saw me hold,
And so attained the end desired.
Then came a glimpse of purer bliss!
Nor was there aught in life amiss!
Oh, love's fond dream so quickly flown!

“A manly youth with classic face,
With noble mien and cultured mind,
Who then adorned an honored place,
In all his social ways refined,
Breathed in my ears his vows of love;
(Oh, how his words my memory thrill!
By that pure light of God above,
I worship, love, adore him still!)
He broke his vows; I felt betrayed,
And crushed by shame, I need not tell;
From that deserted home I strayed—
To me but then a haunted cell;
I siezed my babe, and hastened flight
To where those sparkling waters swell--
Concealed by mists and gloom of night,
And plunging in the waiting stream—
A moan, a splash, the silence broke,
The end had come, the closing scene:
A gurgling sigh upon the wave—
My nuptial couch and bridal grave—
A moment lost I here awoke.

“And thus I wronged her, crushed with shame
Myself and him—this infant life—
Could I get back to earth again
(Oh, was I not and am I not his wife?)

And hear from her pure pallid lips
And his, the feeling accents given,
And know by her I am forgiven,
With pardon full as I have him,
Then all the dregs an outcast sips
From putrid streams that flow from sin,
I'd wring and drink; and were I driv'n
On fiery waves, whose tongues of flame
Should deeper burn my blackened name,
I'd face it all and be content;
If then my child were thither sent,
Or could some brighter place be found
Than this abode, where darkness smears
And frowning face and ghastly shapes
And grinning specters dancing round,

“Forbode no good, and nurse our fears,
And each a restless effort makes
To hiss his tortures in my ears!
For my pure babe without a sin
On which was brought its only stain,
By one rash act provoked by him!
It cannot, must not bear the shame!
Will He who guides the eagle's flight,
And would reclaim and save the vile,
If I invoke His aid aright
Not find a heav'n for my child?
By her forgiven, and this bright boy
Where he can only taste of joy,
I can resign a world of bliss,
And suffer all the pangs of this!”

With tiny hands the cooing child,
As if it knew her cause of grief,
Caressed the mother's face and smiled,
To bring her aching heart relief;
Then nestled closer to the breast
Of her who wished it truly blest,
As if to say: "Enough to me is given!
Here, ma'ina, here alone is heaven!
I would enjoy no sweeter rest!"

"My punishment is just, though great,
And all deserved; and I would go
With naked feet and cramping limb
Through red hot coals or seething lake,
To warn him of the ills I know;
Do anything to shelter him.
Could I but leave this dismal place
And meet again my mother's face,
A full forgiveness then were won!"

"Do not repine," I said, "but come;"
I held her form in my embrace,
And strove to calm the troubled one.
"We can escape this cheerless place!
If we but will, it then were done!
There is a net of golden webs
Of subtle texture strangely clear,
That fills, and round creation spreads,
And interlaces every sphere;
And reaching outward round the globe
It draws together kindred hearts,

And joins and binds in love's abode
However wide they seem apart.

“Along these webs like magic wire,
Flash loving thoughts to friends beyond;
And fervent prayers and pure desires,
And back the glad responses come;
As if electric means were giv'n,
Unseen yet often used by man,
And lines connecting earth and heaven,
And love to love in every iand.
They form a way, I know it well,
It passes through this valley near;
And down across yon shadowed dell—
The guides along the way I hear,
And wandering spirits often find,
And go to earth their pleasures tell
Or there unfold a troubled mind.”

With wild and wondering gaze she turned
Her eyes to mine; and in them burned
The fires of doubt, as if she thought
The lessons she was early taught
Were all so true, none dare dispute:
“You cannot make of me a brute!”
Yet from her eager look I knew
She half believed my statement true.

“To you 'tis strange—and was to some
We left to tread the earth behind—
That from my lips such words should come.
With all the zeal that bigots find,

They censured me till life was done.
To such I say: The time will come
When this great truth shall come to all!
They do not heed the rising tide,
Their education leads astray,
And binds them down in fosile pride,
And upward progress holds at bay;
A light will dawn, e'en now 'tis here!
They see nor seek, but me assail!
But wait! and watch! the angel 's near
And soon will burst the clouding veil!

III.

"Here now we leave, you would not stay!
So follow me! I'll lead the way!
Think of your mother, and your home,
A moment's time will take us there!"
We outward float! Now in a room
Arranged with taste, but draped in gloom,
We see a weeping one alone.
Pale and bowed as if despair
Had done its work; yet I can trace
In that sad beauty's simple grace
The mother by the daughter's face.

Frail Ida, (my companion's spirit name)
Then darting from my side, she flew,
And swifter far than lightning fleet,
In wild surprise and cries of pain

Her quivering self in anguish threw
Prostrate at that drooping figure's feet,
And clasping, held in her embrace
To gain the pardon she came to seek
From lips that no deception knew.

Startled, she cries; a shudder shook
And run through all that mortal frame;
Then round she turned a wondering look
As if she sought from whence it came.
A sweet inflowing filled the room,
A something mortal seldom knows.
Is it a beam the mellow moon
So softly through the shutter throws?
She inly asks; but fails to see
The spirit weep on bended knee
In earnest prayer, still incomplete;
And clinging to her fettered feet—
But with continued vacant gaze—
A soft and glistening silv'ry haze
Which filled the room, which brighter grown,
Now in a blaze of glory shone.
She looks: A gleam of beauty plays
Upon her face and lips, as if the rays
From happy thoughts and sunny past
Their holy radiance round her cast,
Had all returned in smiles at last.

And there a stately mould, and perfect formed,
In richest robes of male attire,
She sees with manly grace adorned,
And gentle mien which love inspires,

With hands outstretched as if in prayer,
And calling down a blessing there.
The weeping spirit, prostrate still,
Is lifted up and to his side
Is drawn, as if his guiding will
The magic force and will supplied.
He gave me then a silent look;
Its import quickly read I knew;
The tender spirit babe I took
From Ida, when she wildly flew
From me, and clasped her mother's feet,
With soft caress I quickly placed
There in his arms, where love embraced
With blessings and communion sweet.

The erring daughter, father, child,
Now radiant in an arch of light,
And closely clasped in fond embrace,
Met that lone mother face to face.
She sees and knows; and with a wild
Delerium of joy's delight,
Now reaches forth for their embrace:
"Claud! Claud! Hast thou come back to bless
Thy stricken love in grief's distress?
One hour, one moment of such bliss,
One sip of joy as sweet as this
Can heal a heart to madness driven!
Ida! Ida! The past is all forgiven!
Oh, can it be I dream of heaven!"

She spoke no more; but wild and mute
She gazed upon that spirit scene;

With snowy hand he waved salute,
And on his lips a smile serene
Of depthless love, love only knows
When all this sacred passion flows.
She does not see, but pale and weak
She swoons; a glow upon her cheek
Like one who sinks to happy sleep.
The scene fades out, and its glory flown,
While she in the darkness seems alone.

“We ’ll tarry here, till the shadowed night
Has faded out in the morning light;
And sow her dreams with the thoughts of love,
Then backward wing to her home above,”
The elder spirit said. And then to me
In gratitude thus spoke: “There is to you
For the scene of to-night much credit due!
Your words in love to my daughter were spoken!
Unselfish your councils, unclouded your mien!
So to you, were the secrets that fettered her broken;
And the harvest before us to-night we have seen!
You, a sister in sorrow approaching her kindly,
Her confidence won, and lightened her fear;
And trusting your honor, she followed you blindly
To win from her mother forgiveness here!

“To her we found so faded with blight,
And bowing in grief, and a smothering gloom,
You have opened that bridge of ineffable light,
So long unseen that is spanning the tomb!
Tho’ foul were your deeds through the sin you inherit,
That darkened your life and hastened your fall,

And the punishment stern you deservedly merit,
This work of your love should atone for them all!"

And now upon the horizon's brim
I see the silvery touch of day;
While night is faster growing dim,
And bids me off to my work away.
The end which brought me here is won;
The work is closed, my mission done,
Till some sad soul shall bid me come.
So, taking leave of Ida and friend,
Who still keep watch and the mother attend,
And retracing the path in which I came,
I'm back in the border land again;
And find that a store of labor awaits
For me to attend outside the gates.

IV.

Unchanged the scene! But the wall of light
I yonder see as I saw before;
And the signals' flash on its shining height,
That then, such a wond'rous luster bore
Down through the misty shadows, gleam
With a beauteous glow and a richness new,
And all of their glory nearer seem;
While my robes that then were of blackened hue
Have strangely turned to a darkish blue.

The air seems lighter now! It burdens less!
With greater ease I move, and breathe!

Within there 's not that keen distress
That then I felt; yet I perceive
And feel the thoughts that still oppress!
For when I look at the shining Gate
I feel despair awaken anew,
That here outside I am forced to wait,
With the joys of heaven so plain in view,
By the burning chains of deriding fate,
Because my love is not purged of hate!
And so with my robes I cover my face,
That the quizzical look of the passer-by
Shall not a line of my features trace,
Thus hid from the gaze of a glaring eye.

By sad experience I have been taught
That constant work will better turn
Aside or hide the haunting thoughts
That in an erring bosom burn.
To work for good; and others' woes
Relieve and soothe; and calm their grief;
And him who no kind friendship knows
Befriend; in him awake belief
In better things; that love still glows
For him in others' hearts, and so
The soul will find its own relief
In gladdening joys it thus imparts
To stained and fallen aching hearts.
This, this, the only balm for pain
A sinning soul can ever know!
It bleaches white the foulest stain
If from unselfish love it flow!

And here are beings lost as I!
I must not, can not turn away!
Nor shun, nor spurn their hopeless cry,
Let word or look be what it may,
Or else the greater sin were mine!
"Greet with smiles the smileless one,"
Speaks out a voice I know divine,
"Though from the lowest depths he come,
And blessing sweet shall yet be thine!
Neglect no want you can relieve,
And all your wasted life retrieve,
And thus a full redemption win!
The Gates will ope, with joy receive
And let your ransomed spirit in!"

Thus hope revives with cheer anew!
The widest wasted fields I'll seek,
And search the blackest valleys through,
For banished souls too vile to weep;
To turn their thoughts to that bright heaven
From which they seem forever driven!
With gentle hand to lead, and point the way,
And courage give to strive and rise,
Till in their souls one cheering ray
Of light shall flash from yon bright skies;
And their cold eyes shall warm with tears
Of joy revived through vanished fears,
And all their sorrows pass away!

But whither first? To my earthly home
Where first the seeds of my sorrow were sown?

Where joy and grief were so near allied
And shame as current a coin as pride?
And selfish all as a pulseless stone?
They have no need of my labor there!
'Tis here I 'll work; and, if need, alone!
E'en now there comes a wail of despair;
A stifled cry like a woman's moan;
Or one adrift on the breaking wave
When storm and night have gathered around,
Who shrieks his last for a hand to save
When his craft is crushed and he goes down!

Crouched like a brute, or a serpent coiled,
As if within there is some pride
Still left, that seeks through shame to hide
A visage grim and garments soiled,
I see what seems a female form,
Which love and beauty once adorned.
Kind pity calls. Approaching near
The place where now she crouches low,
I backward shrink, appalled by fear;
Those restless eyes are flashing so!
But speak: "Is there ought that I can do
To soothe your life and comfort you?"
And then repelled away I go,
But cannot stay; I quick return
Where yet those eyes with terror burn,
And features rough with lines of sin
Show dark and foul the crimes within
That fret and tell their tales of woe;
Nor will I leave her till I know
The source from whence her sorrows flow!

"Poor woman! I am suff'ring, too,
From sins of life alike with you;
And would my sympathy bestow!
Confide in me, and I may show,
And point you up to that pure light
Where life is sweet, and all is bright;
And you may gain if you will seek!
You can, if once you will, arise,
And by your love in labors meet,
Exchange this place for Paradise!
Oh, tell me what you'd have me do!
I'd feel but bliss in helping you!"

And then, as if a gentle sound,
Or soothing notes from childhood's years
Where she unbroken pleasures found,
And mother's loving counsel hears—
That ever quelled and calmed her fears—
She mutely lists, as if the strain
Her eager ears would catch again,
And drink the balm she then had known
Of innocence and guiltless joy,
Ere youthful love so quickly flown
Had sipped the bitter dregs that cloy,
And hope and peace and love destroy.

Her features softer, milder grown;
Her heavy eyes are drooping now,
That had defiant glances thrown,
And with the flame of vengeance shone;
While calm has settled on her brow.
The quivering lips and bosom's swell,

Suppress the words they seek to tell;
And dryness chokes. Now at my feet,
And like a wounded beast, she falls,
And strives in vain, but cannot weep;
And tells this tale my heart appalls:

“Go with me to the land of the vine,
Where the grape is rich in its harvest of wine!
And the brimming cup and convivial song,
Indulged at the eve, through the night prolong!
Where the fields are fresh with the roses in bloom,
And the air is rich with their sweet perfume;
And stand unveiled in that somber June
By the new laid clods on my mother’s tomb;
And behold the tears then in sorrow I shed
Ere the world was cold, and my hope was dead!
Till then I was blest, and a beautiful child,
And petted and flattered, and giddy and wild;
But chaste as a tear, and bright as the dew!
No stain of dishonor, and no sinning I knew!
But the trail of the serpent alluring me on,
I fell in the snare as others had done!
My blood at the thought is still running cold!
My love I bartered for passion and gold!

“And many an innocent woman and girl,
Unused to the ways and wiles of the world,
I basely deceived, and led to their shame,
And scoffed at their tears when their misery came!
But wait—let me see, and ponder a while—
Oh, it’s too revolting and vile!
I can not tell it!” Now she breaks and sighs;

And a filmy mist in her moist'ning eyes
Is gathering fast in a quivering tear,
As if a sweet voice from over the mere
Had whispered a hope to her famishing soul;
And as if she saw in the whirl of the stream
The sunken wreck of her young life's dream
Rise up with its fluttering sails again.
And then she resumes and her story is told:

“I seem so bad to you I know!
I was not always sinning so!
I often struggled to be free,
And sought for honest work; to live
A blameless life; and through it be
Reclaimed—if after life could give
Atonment for a life of sin!
With vipers' stings and serpents' bite,
The gentler sex beset my path;
And with a fiendish, grim delight,
They emptied on me all their wrath!
And if I took an upward step,
They hurled me backward with a frown!
And with an eye that never slept,
They watched to scourge and keep me down;
As if they feared I would return
To virtue's ways, and goodness learn!
If erring woman ye would crush,
That she may never rise again,
Ald all her purer longings hush,
Or turn from that which may reclaim.
Place that destroyer, scourge and rack:
Relentless woman on her track!

"My father drove me from his door,
And my employers did the same;
And forced me thus to sinning more!
They have my pity, not my blame!
And so the loathsome life I led,
The only means to earn my bread!
Vile as I am, I 'm not all bad,
Nor stained as now I seem to you!
One faithful, trusting one I had,
And loved; the only love I knew!
And he returned my love; but when
Another one around me came,
And visit paid our hateful den,
In jealous rage and fury's flame,
He struck me down, and I was dead!
They took him off, I know not whence!

"Perhaps to some dark, chilling cell,
As punishment for his offense!
If you can find him for me, tell!
I love him still! Oh, he was mad!
Oh, no, lady, I'm not all bad!
Take me to him! I care not where!
Oh, if I could meet and see him now!
He must be sad and lonely there!
He needs me, too, for I know how
The best to soothe his fettered limb!
Lead me, lady! Guide to him!
For I must say once more, 'forgiven' !
And then I'll go where e'er you lead;
Do anything that may be given;

And toil wherever mercy needs!
Will you, please? He is so sad!
Kind lady, friend, I'm not all bad!"

"Sad one, not yet. It is not meet
That I should on the mission go
To earth again, until I seek
These victims of your life of woe,
And find; their love and light renew,
And give them hope as I have you!
And you should here your work begin,
To lighten all your load of sin!
And if in all this gloomy zone
They hide, we 'll find them, one by one;
And tell them of that better home,
That they may reach; when this is done
We then will seek the one you love!"

And then through darkness thick we move,
And find them crouching here and there
Skulking like brutes; in their despair
Cry out: "Stay your steps, come not near
Our den of vice, of shame and fear!
We can not have you see us here!
You kindly seek the lost, no doubt;
But none are here you care about!"

I smiling, speak: "Sisters, be calm!
There is for you a healing balm!
If you will use, 't will soon restore
Your love and purity once more!"
And then, I breathed a loving word,

Which, paying heed, they gladly heard!
We leave them then, and all elate
With hope to win their lost estate.
I swiftly glide to earth again,
And Kate is with me; with cheery song
Upon her lips she glides along—
She soon would find the best of men.
We trace him to the stately walls
Where sentries watch and warden calls,
And enter in; and there we find
The man she still believes is kind;
Who cries aloud for help: "Kate! Kate!
Oh, help me from this cursed place!
Oh, I was mad! But now too late
To mend the wrong, the loss replace!"
And now the slayer and the slain,
The lost and found, together meet--
Are in love's fond embrace again;
And while to him 't is but a dream—
The fading joy of some sweet sleep—
Yet the effects so real seem,
He would the bliss forever keep.
His heart is touched; awaking sense
Of purer thoughts and holy things
Now fills his soul with love intense;
While hope renewed, her promise brings,
And breaks the bitter, dark suspense.

He little knows his Kate is near,
Within the cell wherein he sits,
And, kissing, wipes away his tears
With sweet forgiveness on her lips.

Oh, 't is a scene of pure delight!
My sorrows, on this hallowed spot
Where hope once more renews her light,
A moment lost, are all forgot!

"I now must leave you, Kate," I said,
"And you would be with him alone!
There 's light that elsewhere must be shed;
And weeping ones are crying: 'Come'!"
"God bless and speed your work and you!
Your love has taught me faith in Him;
And charity to all mankind!
I will from hence His work pursue,
And show his love and here begin;
And soothe through this the troubled mind!"
And speaking thus, in my embrace
Her falling tears a moment hides;
And then she wipes her bright'ning face.
Then I am gone; my spirit glides
To other scenes; and on the way
These welcomes come, and kindly say:

"In prison, and ye came to him!
A hunger, and ye gave to eat!"
Like some bright cherub's soothing hymn
In gentle strains prolonged and sweet!
"And what ye have for one of these,
The least of my lost children, done,
Ye did for me, and He who sees
And cares for every erring one,
Insures rewards that daily come
For ev'ry act of love to these."

V.

The scillinating mist, to folds
Or belts of tiny nestling stars,
Is changed, and grander views unfolds.
Above the brighter golden bars;
And through the crystal lines between
The belts and bars, but further on,
In nameless beauty clearer seen,
Is summer land—the bright beyond.
And here and there, surpassing bright
With wondrous beauty's charms, a spray
Of flowers is seen along the way.
My robes I see are turning light
And bleaching to an ashen gray—
But yet I can not enter in;
A darkness still that broods within
My soul, not cleansed of secret sin,
Repels; but there is bliss for him who waits
And pleads in mercy's cause outside the gates.

Land of the earth's departed shades,
Where erring spirits, shut from heaven,
May see its shinning, rich facades
And would its inner temple hold,
From whose pure altars sin has driven,
Nor can be gained by force or gold,
How oft must I thy realm invade?
"Until your debt is fully paid,"
Speaks out a plaintive voice and low;
"Till all your robes are white as snow.
The starry crown ye cannot win

But must on Pity's errand go."
The beckoning smiles of those who wait
And watch for friends at the outer gate
Again I see, but they quickly dim
And blend with the glory hid within.

And so I enter the sorrowing lands
On a mission of love and peace once more;
To seek and find and unite the bands
Of wandering ones, and the lost restore.
And now in the mist and the twilight of earth,
And near to the base of the shining wall,
I hear the revels of riot and mirth,
And the ring of the harlots' and gamblers' brawl—
Defiant and callous, relentless and bold,
Who still their old ways of iniquity hold.
Around them is gleaming a glorious light—
To them 't is a darkness and shadow of night;
But the gloom and the darkness are all within.
I strive in my strength to work their reform,
And turn from their ways of sorrow and sin;
But proud and abandoned, polluted in soul,
With sneers of contempt, they leave me in scorn;
And yield to mad passion a wanton control.
I leave them to harvest the winds they have sown,
And turn to another who now is alone;
And is muttering low, and his locks of gray
He toys in his hands, while a stifled moan
Escaping his lips for a pleasure flown.
In his lamentations I hear him say:

"Yes, man will live and toil for gold,

Deserting friends, dissolving ties,
Till higher thoughts have lost their hold,
And all his better nature dies;
And follow onward to the brink
The shadow he has loved so well;
To see his golden castles sink
And hear the bursting bubbles tell
Of false ambition's iron tread;
Of schemes he formed and foully won;
And nameless wrongs as basely done,
And faithless acts to which they led.
And one by one are gathered in
By his then cold and dying ear,
The echoes from his life of sin.
Tho' weaker grown yet still can hear
'Ere all of life has passed away,
In crisp and husky whispers said,
The dark attending angels say:

'Ha! All your treasures cannot save!
By greed and pelf they 're foully stained!
You cannot carry to the grave
The only friend you sought or gained!
Behold the bride you won and wed!
Embrace the couch her love prepared!
'T is cold and plain, yet strong nor new,
And is the same the beggar shared.
Prepared and spread alike for you!

'Your all you trusted to her care;
You had no higher, purer aim;
And courting her alluring snare,

You won your triumphs in her name!
To you her altar was divine;
You worshipped only in her fanes;
And burning incense at her shrine,
You rose and perished in its flames!
Had you desired the purer light
And inspiration's holy stream,
Then other guides than spectral fright,
Delirium and maddening dreams
Had soothed to rest your parting soul!
But it has been as you have willed;
The charms of love you basely sold
For bitter dregs by hate distilled;
Faith, friends and heaven you rudely spurned;
For God you had no love nor fear,
And now Remorse, your only friend,
With haggard look and hiss returned,
Your shrunken sheaves has gathered here,
And this the harvest, this the end!'"

And now he sees and knows the cost;
That he and they alike are lost.
Yet gazes out with yearning look,
As if for some rich treasures gone,
That were so bright ere life forsook,
And death around its veil had drawn;
And reaches forth to grasp them still,
And hug delusion's fevered dream,
That yet his sordid bosom fills,
And with delirium drapes the scene.

With a step as soft and as fleet as light,

I move, and stand by the restless one.
With a cry of pain and a look of fright,
As if my presence would strike him dumb,
In the shadow's gloom he is lost to sight.
I follow him on and overtake
Him, trembling and shy and pale and mute,
And with words assuring, thus I spoke:
"A bubbling fount of cheering truth
Is springing free, where all may drink;
And if you seek, you will surely find
Aglow upon its crystal brink,
Far brighter gems, of rarer kind
Than all the treasures you now miss;
That wait for your selecting hand.
Go, freely take and drink of bliss.
'T will fill with love for fallen man.
Then this lone vale, where darkness lowers,
Will seem less sad; and at your feet
Will spring bright buds and opening flowers,
With faultless fragrance, fresh and sweet.
Go, deeply drink, and soothe regret
For wrongs and sin ye would forget.
And go ye forth, nor sleep nor rest
Till ye shall teach, and others know,
That Heaven is kind, and all are blest
Who will its loving mercies show.

"'Sell all thou hast, and give the poor,
And thus replete thy famished store!'
He said who spake as never man.
Ye heeded not, and must atone.
For you no other being can;

This is your work, and yours alone.
And would you taste of bliss once more,
The fallen raise, relieve, restore!
Then Mammon's shrine you so revere,
And which ye mourn as crushed and lost—
The cruel throne which tyrants rear
To burden, toil and bind with fear—
You'll see is but a gilded dross,
That never warms nor love imparts;
But chills and cankers human hearts;
And all are beggars, paupers, cast
Upon the waste when earth is past,
Who worship there, to weep at last!"

"Stranger," he said, "'t is passing strange
That you should here a wanderer be,
Since you with ease can so arrange
A certain way to bliss for me.
Relieve yourself! Escape from here!
This cavern vault so deep and dark!
And I will then your counsels hear,
And all your outward footprints mark.
It is not meet for one so young
And bright and fresh and seeming pure
To linger long where vice is sung
And breathed by vile and ribald tongue.
Why will you scenes like these endure,
If one can leave them when he will?
Your smiles so sweet my bosom fill
With hope; and coming peace insure,
And half my ills and sorrows cure.

Your robes are clean, of dove-like hue;
The rest you see are foul and black.
This place must be unknown to you!
Good angel hasten, hurry back,
Ere ye are lost, and vice destroy,
And turn to torture all your joy!"

"Sire: I came to find and succor you;
And often in the fledged years,
With aching heart I've hunted thro'
This vale of sighs, dismay and fears,
Amidst the deepest, blackest gloom,
Where vice and crime their riots run,
To tell the lost there yet is room,
A happy place that may be won
If they will seek; and now I come
To you to tell the only way
That spirits know that has been given
Where erring ones, who seeking, may
Thro' full redemption, enter Heav'n!
Accept my words! I know so well
The truth of all you hear me tell!
For cold with fear and burned with shame,
I once was trembling here like you;
A gentle one, in kindness came,
And told me I must all undo
My work of earth; begin anew;
Restore my wasted life; perform
In love what once I did in scorn,
And should I thus this work complete,
A wreath of happy smiles and bright
Would fill my eyes, illumine my cheek,

As if from Heav'n's own purest light,
And cheer my way and guide my feet.
I strove to do as I was told,
And so I am as ye behold!
Yet there is much for me to do
Before my labor here is through.
These suff'ring ones who turned in hate
From me, contented with their fate,
Take in your ceaseless, watchful care,
And teach and guide; and loving plead
At morn and eve, in constant prayer,
(Of this they have a pressing need)
Till their hard, stony hearts shall melt,
And sweet redeeming peace is felt.
Go, do, and teach and thus be given
The golden key to enter Heav'n!"

And now a sense of calm relief
Is settled on his pallid face;
His doubts have yielded to belief,
And glowing visions fill their place:
"Whoe'er thou art," he said. "whose fair,
Kind messenger, with tidings glad,
Or where thy home, my fervent prayer,
In all the love I ever had,
Shall rise for thee! I know and feel
Thy balm will all my sorrows heal;
What thou hast bid, I now will go
And do; and teach the best I know!
Oh! Seraph's chants for thee are sung
Throughout the pure and beaming skies,
For love's unselfish labor done."

And then in whiter robes I rise,
And, fading, vanish from his eyes.
He wondering looks: "A saint!" he cries;
"Translated hence to Paradise!"

VI.

In bright and fresh ambrosial field,
Where gushing fountains, bursting, rise
With cooling spray, which now unsealed
Are sparkling under warming skies;
And melting strains and mellow note
From unseen lips entrancing float;
Here still I knew the vale of sighs.
Swift thoughts awake, but few oppress;
The air is clear, and dusk has flown;
A real bliss and peaceful rest
That I before have never known
My bosom fill, and being bless;
Yet not outside the suffering belt,
But verging near the boundry, where
A sure benign relief is felt,
And eyes are bright and cheeks are fair.
I find a meet companion here,
Who lends me aid where e'er I go—
A teacher from a higher sphere,
So I my duty better know.
Her mind is rich in lessons deep;
Her silvery voice and cheering word
My grateful heart enchanted keep,
Like soft, celestial music heard.

Earth-life to her without a stain
Had ceased when she was pure and young;
She passed the vale of care and pain
To summerland, the bright "Beyond,"
Nor stayed nor ceased her upward flight
Till she had passed the "Gates of Light."
And now in love and smiles returned,
Imparts the wisdom she has learned.

Still clouds are here; but not to me;
And dark indeed their shadows cast;
The unrepentant only see;
And these their sinful pleasures past,
To which they cling, as if to hold
Their blighting mildew on the soul.

Foul imprecations, fierce with ire—
As if the wrath of all the cursed,
Intense with hate's consuming fire,
Had from its secret prison burst—
Now fall discordant on the ear
From crime's defiant, blackened lips
Of one enraged and standing near,
Who shame's polluted potion sips,
Nor knew a love, nor felt a tear.

Red with blood of hearts betrayed—
His hands are stained. The law has made
His life atone and brought him here,
And thus its claim in part was paid.
"Swung up" at some stern hangman's call,
He like a writhing serpent fell

Where first we heard his curses fall,
To doom so dark, his former cell
Were heaven compared to this, his hell.

Thus from a felon's scaffold hurled,
Besmeared with crime; and burning hate,
Too base and vile to mourn his fate,
He welcomed thus the spirit world.
His torment keen, severe his pain,
But spurning all that we can say,
And muttering curse on curse again
With glow'ring brow he turns away.

Then in a mist of golden light
Two manly, model forms appear,
With kindly features glowing bright
With sunny smiles, and drawing near,
These kind, approving words I hear:

The older said to me: "Well done!
Long hast thou toiled amid such scenes
In this abode of fallen ones;
And taught their souls how to redeem
And purify their sinful lives,
And gain the peaceful, tranquil skies.
In labor done for others weal,
Bestowed with an unselfish zeal,
The soul its own reward will find.

"But leave this seeming child of fate
To us to tranquillize his mind!
He is too strong, too fierce in hate

For you; we better know his state;
And how to treat and soothe his kind.
Well hast thou said and done; and taught
The lessons of a useful life;
And many out of darkness brought,
And guided in the way of light
Leading upward to Divine.
And brighter fields can now be thine.

“Between the hills that yonder rise,
And mountain range, and spurs beyond,
A charming valley nestling lies,
With shining lakes and fields and lawns,
In unique beauty clad and strown
With little homes in every part,
Adorned as earth has never known.
These all are homes and bright abodes,
Where teachers wise and kind preside;
And children with no irksome loads,
Unfolding germs of life reside;
Are fed with thoughts and lessons new;
And nature's secrets brought to view,
By men and women pure and wise,
At childhood's school in Paradise.

“One unique cot without a guide,
A needed teacher would procure;
Its former one, called to preside,
And teach and lead the more mature.
Three winsome children left behind,
Who watch and wait a guardian there;

A gentle, tender one and kind.
Wilt thou assume the charge and care?"

"Am I to this bright place assigned,
And worthy deemed to act as guide,
As teacher, gentle, pure and kind?
No work to me so sweet beside,
Nor so congenial to my mind."
With bounding heart and look intent,
At such an unexpected bliss,
I give a willing, glad assent,
Nor wish a brighter lot than this.

"Then thou canst start at once," he said,
"And thy companion knows the way;
She oft the worthy there has led,
But here at present we must stay,
And tend our charge who came to-day."
With gratitude no words describe,
But which my looks could not suppress,
We toward that charming valley glide,
And my kind benefactor bless.

But as we move we here and there
Hear sorrow's calls along the way;
On love and hope we feed despair,
And so our journey thus delay.
And now a louder, wilder call,
As if it rose on torture's flame;
Intense and deeper than them all,
And yet familiar speaks my name.

With startled nerve and timid look,
My eye turned toward a blackened nook—
“Father! Father!” resistless slips
From my impassioned, quivering lips.
“When didst thou die? Why art thou here?
My loved of earth, I love thee still.
Thou ever kissed away my tear.
These memories swift my bosom fill.
In all my grief wert ever near—
Always so noble, kind and true—
The type of every manly worth.
Thou hadst no sin I ever knew,
That stained thee in thy life of earth;
And what can now thy trouble be?
Tell all thy sorrow’s tale to me.”

“Oh! child; I’m lost! Why do I live?
I’d hoped all this might be forgot!
But death, I thought, would quiet give,
Now shows a deeper, blacker blot!
Oh, see! Those wounds! That bleeding heart!”
“What wounds, father? Why dost thou start?
There are no wounds here to be seen—
’Tis but delirium of thy dream.”

“Thy mother’s heart with wounds afresh,
Her scarred and pale and quivering flesh,
Bleeding, quivering, still I see!
She never faltered in her trust,
Nor spurned nor shunned nor doubted me,
E’en kissed the cruel hand that crushed!

"Often on unbattling fields
I've met the foe in stern array;
In valor's pride that never yields,
That torturing death can not dismay,
And fought to break oppression's chains,
That my loved country might be free,
And Freedom's sacred home remain.
I joined the nation's jubilee—
The welcome to the returning brave,
And heard the cannon peals prolong
The martial strains and feeling songs—
The cheers and praise of grateful throng—
The tributes of young liberty—
That knew no more a weeping slave.
And, yet, with soul enslaved by rum,
Unwept, I filled a drunkard's grave;
Unmourned, save by that faithful one,
Whose fondest hopes I had undone!
Dauntless as death, I faced
The shock of war nor met disgrace;
But from this force I could fly,
It numbed and led me on to die—
And now my curse is just begun!

"Those scars and wounds are all so plain!
They can not be delusion's dream!
They gape and bleed and fresh remain!
And every moment vivid seem!
Blind me so I may never see!
O, help me, child, in my despair!
I would from their dread presence flee!
I can not long such torture bear!"

“Parent, beloved: It gives me pain
To meet thee in this wretched state.
But pleas like thine are not in vain;
That earnest prayer is not too late.
Mother, to thee so kind and true,
Will so remain while she may live;
Go seek her now, relieve thy mind,
And she in gladness will forgive.
And go to Maud, and her control—
My youngest sister, frail and fair;
And open wide thy troubled soul,
And pour out all thy sorrows there.
And find thy peace; and feel its rest;
And hear her faultless lips revered
Declare: ‘I love thee still and bless.’
And lo! the wounds have disappeared!”

“Blood of my life, my stay and pride,
In loving charms and worth arrayed
Till, like a flower ye drooped and died,
Ye all my wayward spirit stayed!
'Twas then I seized the maddening bowl
To drown my grief and still the soul!
Oh, yes, with you, where'er you lead,
I'll travel every danger's brink,
On sulphur's flaming vapors feed;
And e'en its seething liquid drink;
If then these scars I can not see,
These bleeding ones that trouble me!

“And do you think she'll make the vow
And meet as was her wont of yore?

If you will go, I'm ready now.
Why that regret upon your brow?"
Thus helpless he implored the while,
As if I were parent, he the child.
I turn to my companion near:

"Alone the journey you must take!
My highest duty now is here.
And you my charge must undertake—
Are better fitted for the sphere;
And will the wiser teacher make.
And tell them there I can not come
Till this more pressing work is done.
Now, father, I will go with you!"

And, then, behold! A wondrous light
In purple, scarlet, mottled hue
With crimson tints and lines of gold
In blending shades surpassing bright
Form in a bud, and flower unfold.
Its leaves in beauty rich expand
Till gorgeous petals soft and deep,
With imbricated gauze of gold,
That fringes every petal's fold,
Display a royal blossom grand,
And molds perfection more complete.

I look, and gaze, and one by one
The petals fall till all are gone.
Then mid the light, and in their place
I see my Benefactor's face
With gladsome smiles and beaming eyes,
At my unselfish sacrifice.

For the present: Farewell to the haunts of the young,
To the bright, fragrant gardens where infancy stays;
Where never a heart by a sorrow is stung,
In the "Vale of the Pure," where innocence plays!
My spirit companion, perceiving my duty,
With kind words approving, concedes my request.
Then wreathing her smiles in a halo of beauty,
Thus chanted this lay, and my pilgrimage blest:

"O, light is the burden affection imposes,
And downy the pillow her hand ever made;
She crushes the thorns when unfolding the roses.
And the pain of her vot'ries has lovingly stayed.

"O, sire! thou canst freely confide in this spirit,
Whose labor of love will her past life redeem—
When she met thee in silence, was fast drawing near it,
She will safely conduct where thy wronged one is seen.
And then thro' the truth by her lessons imparted,
The darkness within thee will melt into light,
When thy tortures and weeping and wounds have departed,
And Heav'n smiles upon thee and crowns with delight.
A mysterious force love secretly finds us,
Irresistibly drawing in Heaven and earth;
Unveiling our hope, then caressingly binds us—
How noble our station or humble our birth.
'Tis the life of the spirit, the light of our being,
And bright were the world if it never depart;
When its light has gone out, or is fading or fleeing,
Then dark is the spirit and lifeless the heart.
True affection when plucked or robbed of her pinion,
Or from her loved object hath trembling flown;

Will gladly replume and reclaim her dominion,
Her anguish forgot in embracing her own,
If she can but hear the voice of contrition,
The sigh the repentant alone ever give;
Nor will she in coldness exact a condition,
If lips warm with love will but whisper 'Forgive!'
Thou sister unselfish, devoted thy mission,
The lost and the weeping to find and unite;
In my love I will strive to adorn thy position.
Till thy welcome return from thy labor of light."

Then turning away from that valley of youth,
To the now sleeping world I hasten my flight;
That father may profit by learning the truth,
And be able to read from its pages aright—
That our peace on the earth and our future in Heaven,
Depend on ourselves and the love we bestow;
And the motive with which our assistance is given—
That all our misdoings their traces will show
On the soul in deep scars, still vivid remaining,
To haunt and oppress us wherever we go;
Till we through our efforts, the spirit reclaiming,
Their stains and their presence no longer will know—
That happiness rests on our kept resolution,
To maintain self-respect and of purity learn;
And thus is prepared a healing ablution,
That cleanses all wounds and prevents their return.

"But what is that," my father cries
In seeming fear as on we glide—
'That dusky belt that yonder lies
Across our track, and spreading wide

Like clouds along the lower skies!
Its ev'ry outward passage hides!
It looks like hills with rugged lines;
And gloomy caves, where darkness dwells!
It all my rising hope confines!
Again with doubt my bosom swells!
Is it a wall my fate has cast
Athwart our way that can't be passed,
Or but a tempest's gathering blast!
It denser grows. And here and there
I catch a glimpse of hills and trees,
And feel a kiss—a chilling breeze—
A breath so like my native air.
Cities and towns and homes to view
Before me rise, that once I knew!
I hear the ribald lips of mirth—
The bustling jar and busy hum—
The wails of life and dying one—
Oh, yes! I see! I know! 'Tis Earth!

“And, Oh! What memories throng my mind!
My youthful joys, my scenes of woe!
One trusting heart to all resigned!
Oh, can I to her presence go?
It seems long years since last we met,
It's scarcely been a half month yet,
Since she alone wept at my side—
And I a drunken beggar died!
Could I but backward call the years,
And smooth that careworn, furrowed brow,
These unrequitted, blinding tears
She vainly shed, that burn me now—

Should never flow, nor life destroy,
Deserving only love and joy!"

"Father," I whispered, "Maud's asleep!
Dim twilight yet is in her room.
She's so fatigued it were not meet
To break her rest, or wake too soon.
Frail, tender child, her heavy eyes
Should open not until the skies
Their stars have hid, and morning's ray
With golden splendor gilds the day.
And mother's with her: come and see!
She never yet has seemed more fair
And lovely in repose to me,
Than now in sleep's embraces there!
Fair as the lily and as white,
Her slightly quivering lips—
As if communing with the light
And joy of some long fledged years;
And all its sweetest nectar sips—
Seem now to breathe a prayer; I hear!

"Come nearer, father; come and listen;
See! from each eye a starting tear!
They with a holy luster glisten!
'Tis for thee she lisps a prayer!
I hear her softly breathe thy name!
'He erred, and so did I, so all!
Place not on him alone the blame!
Invoking love, on Thee I call!
Oh in Thy mercy sooth and spare!
Forgive! as I have him forgiven!

Grant that we in peace may share
The joy and bliss of one bright Heaven!
But if he's from Thy presence driven,
Oh let me go and with him share
His pain, his exile, and despair!
For where he is, tho' lost he be
It matters not, were Heaven to me!"

He, the warrior brave and stern,
Yet kind of heart, who could not turn
From danger's path; whose martial ear
Had often drank the battle's blast;
Who ne'er had known or felt a fear;
Now pale and weeping yields at last.
His softening eyes are moist and dim
For tears that love has shed for him;
And prayer that he, and she may yet
Unite in some calm, blissful sphere;
And every wound and wrong forget.
Well may the tribute of a tear—
For hope's bright star he thought had set,
But sees ascend—now glisten here.

As bright Aurora's rosy beam
Now streaming from the eye of morn,
Awakes the land of busy scene—
The chills of night and shadows gone—
Refreshed, the sleeping pair awake.
"Repentant one, I'll leave thee here;
With ease thou canst perform the rest.
At once to Maud thy presence make
Clearly known, and her control.

She'll write or talk, as she can best.
And mother 'll see and read or hear.
To her thy aching, troubled soul
Reveal; she 'll know, and thee console.
Call, if thou hast further need
Of me in making thyself known;
I 'll come with joy and quickened speed,
On swifter wings than light has flown,
Or lightning's ever-waiting steed."

VII.

How deep the calm and sweet the rest,
The tortured body only knows
When aching limb and quivering flesh
In painless moments find repose!
But sweeter far to find and link
The loved and lost, who in despair
Have separated on the brink
That severed wide the weeping pair;
To see their youthful love revive;
And memory's sacred throb alive;
In love's devout caresses share.
Bright smiles will come, and hopes depart
To chill and blight each fond endeavor;
Till holy light has filled the heart
By love's embrace that warms forever.
The purest lesson love has taught,
The gem emitting clearest light,
That gilds the knowledge truth has wrought,

With all the bliss that Hope imparts,
Is thinking, loving, doing right,
In charity to erring hearts.
'T was my love for another that pleaded:
"Surrender the pleasures ye crave!
Your work and your wisdom are needed
To console, redeem him and save!"
That prompted the course I pursued.
If in this I have losses sustained,
The peace and blessings in others renewed
Are treasures my sacrifice gained,
And pleasures I would not elude.
That "vall'y of youth" I surrendered
With feelings of love and regret,
And the pleasures the prospect engendered,
I feel; and are charming me yet.
No tutors are needed there now
For all the positions are filled.
But who is he? Upon whose brow
Is light, and on his lips a smile?
(Heaven a brighter for me may have willed!)
His face aglow as if love's caress
Had left a holy radiant gleam
That all around with beauty filled,
So bright and pure and kind he seems.
He bows and greets his wandering child.

My old benefactor! I know his address!
He gratifies the first desire
My yearning spirit long had known.
The place to which I most aspire,

To know and fill and call my own,
Where childhood dwells and flowerets bring
Their tributes to eternal spring
He offers me; and bids me: "Haste
Along thy way, no moments waste!
Near to, but just outside the gate,
Within a modest cottage there,
Two infants on thy coming wait;
Thou art assigned their guardian care;
Unfold and guide the tender mind,
Till each has fitting progress made
To leave the nursing place behind;
And join the next ascending grade,
Where bright'ning, in the upward race,
The children learning thus will rise,
But cannot leave a vacant place,
For Death keeps watch and this supplies;
This is all thy force can do;
Yet light the work and blissful too;
Take charge! If asked at whose request,
Say: 'Benefice'; they 'll know the rest."

With thankful heart and fervent prayer
For guiding help and wisdom's way
I glide along, till finding where
The "Vale of Innocence" lay
Embowered with vines; and there alight
Beneath the shade of lofty trees;
And there my college stands so bright,
With all that can my fancy please.

"My Innocents", with dimpled cheeks,

And lips that welcome love's embrace,
Now look the joy they cannot speak,
As I assume the waiting place
To be their mother, nurse and guide,
And they my darlings, love and pride.
Could I the Lyre of Heaven control
I might unfold in fitting strain
This Heaven of the rising soul!
But all my efforts now were vain.
The taper could eclipse the sun,
And drink his all pervading flame
As well, as I a single one
Of all its beauties paint or name.

Here little homes, and trailing bowers,
And founts that gush their silvery spray,
And gardens broad, profuse with flowers,
Where children ramble, chat and play;
So sweet and radiant every one
Thro' songs and sports and pleasures shared
That diamonds glittering in the sun
In clustering groups were dim compared.

And in this valley's center, stands
A massive temple, grand and white,
As if the work of angel hands—
It gleams with such a wondrous light;
And thro' its corridors and halls,
Unique in all the taste of art,
When some exalted teacher calls,
The children go with cheery hearts
To learn the truth, and lessons new

Imparted by his master lips;
Or go their studies to review,
And 'pass examination through'
Before a teacher wise who sits
And marks the grade, to each his due.
Here all the little waifs that drop
On earthly shores are kindly brought
By spirit hands, and ne'er forgot,
Are in the ways of wisdom taught.

And many bright enchanting homes
Throughout these boundless valleys lie;
And every friendless waif that comes,
Some kindred ones its wants supply,
And so unfold each tender germ
Of good, that evil ones can never grow,
And virtue there alone they learn;
The pure and sinless only know.
And here thro' years, each tender one
I nurse and guide, and mould their minds,
Till they advance, and others come;
And thus my life its pleasure finds.

I thought that in a higher sphere
No charmed abode the ransomed find
Could be so pure and sweet as here;
Till, musing in the twilight of my mind,
At length I yearn to go and see
Those loving ones, to death resigned,
Who long ago had gone from me.
And one, who with a noble soul
To me his tale of love had told—

A manly noble heart and true,
Then vanished like the early dew—
My first ambition's hope and pride;
And nothing left but solitude
For me to love on earth beside.

When thro' the breathless silence came
The well remembered gentle tone
Of that sweet voice, that oft had sung
To me the tale of love alone;
And with that soft enchanting sound
A radiant splendor only seen
By pure young love in youth's bright dream,
Now fills with glory all around.
I look! I gaze! and lo! 'T is he!
And faint lest that bright vision fade;
The manly form of him I see,
I flutter toward him, hear him say:
(Nor could I check my gladsome cry)
"My little Blossom, 't is Clyde, 't is I!
Is my own ready for me now?"
With sunny smiles upon his face
He holds me in his pure embrace
And then renews his youthful vow:

"You ever thought me far from you;
But in temptation's darkest hour
A guiding force, (ye never knew
From whence the saving power,
But felt) I've watched your work and way,
And by thy side was ever near;
And when your trials brought dismay,

Or pain and doubt, I calmed your fear;
And when from o'er that shining wall
Came words of love and hope and cheer,
Ye knew it not, but 't was my call.
In yonder bright and spirit spheres
I have prepared a home for you;
Adorned and waiting; kept thro' fleeted years;
With beauty's charm ye never knew;
And held, till disenthralled and free,
We thence could come and ever dwell;
My true and loved companion ever be;
And bliss alone thy bosom swell.
And now I would transplant thee there;
Thou art so bright and pure and fair.
Art thou ready, Blossom, now to go?"

"Oh Clyde! a dream! celestial bliss!
Whence all these strains of music flow!
I ne'er expected joy like this.
But, love, I am so sinful yet
I need not go and sin again.
My erring life I can't forget;
I still remember all its pain.
I would no more its evil know.
This memory makes me tremble so
I dare not go, lest I may fall."

"No, Blossom, you will sin no more,
For ye are pure, I know it all;
Your work of love has well atoned
For your past life with error sown.
Take leave of these, your nestlings, dear,

And leave them with this spirit here,"
Referring to a winsome one
Who at this moment radiant come.

"Things of beauty now ye well may see,
But naught ye did not richly earn.
Come, little Blossom, go with me!
Thy home awaits thee, come and learn!"

My soul now beaming through my eyes
On that familiar, noble face,
Grand and massive, and more I prize
It now; in every line I trace
The wisdom long experience brings;
Not youthful, but no trace of time,
No weariness, no mark of stings
That sin or care hath left behind,
But round and full and calm with peace,
Aglow with love of priceless wealth;
Nor would I change or aught increase;
He 's just what I would have him—all himself
True love and worth will not betray;
They brook no sin and know no sin.
"Yes, Clyde, I 'll go and with thee stay!
Now, love, do with me as thou wilt!"

"Thou hast taken leave of thy treasures,"
He said, "and labors the innocent please,
To welcome the long waiting pleasures
In a blissful peace that never deceives!
But thy soul with excitement is weary;
Thy joy, with emotion is rocked;

T is better that hence I should bear thee,
When thy senses in slumber are locked."

I now give way to his perfect control;
With the soft gentle passes he soothingly made,
With magnetic hands now o'er me laid,
A sweet blissful feeling entrancing the soul
Like a breath of enchantment over me stole.
Till, like the dreamy haze of a calm Autumn day,
My consciousness fading soon melted away.

How long I thus rested in sleep's soft repose,
Or whence my love bore me I made not a note.
My guardian is gone; but in this lovely place
I find myself lying and here I awoke
On a bank of bright mosses that velvety seem,
And thick with the brightest of flowerets strown,
That add a royal splendor to the scene,
Whose perfumes floating like incense borne
On balmy breezes over me creep,
And bring the essence of delicious rest.

A rosy mist lends flowers a pleasing shade;
Some seem like crystal cups of creamy hue,
Of bright celestial mould by angels made,
As chalices from love's own light,
Whence ransomed spirits sip forever new
The nectar of immortal life.
A silence drinks the quiet air;
A hush, as if all life were bound,
And held in deep and voiceless prayer

Adoring; and field and floral crown
In all this deep devotion share.

So like a fairy dream of pure delight,
I hardly know if I 'm awake or yet asleep;
I seem sole legatee of Heaven's bequest.
Temple and cottage, with a dreamy light,
In the distance gleam through a silvery haze,
Aflame with morning's first born rays.
Fields upon waving fields of bending flowers,
And lawns of downy grass of fadless green
In vigor grown and fresh, from gentle bathing showers,
While streams and fountains play and flow between;
And formed to please, like those elysian bowers,
Where spirits disenthralled forever dwell,
Stretch out before my charmed and wondering eyes.

Oh Beauty's bright, enchanting scene I love so well!
This, this indeed, must be my Paradise!
"Here all is bliss," a voice replies;
But soon, in silvery, gentle tone,
As if my name and life were known,
Entrancing strains of music rise:
"It gives me joy and sweet delight
To meet thee thus in the "Valley of Light."
I strove so hard to come and be first
When the glory of Heaven should over thee burst,
Unfolding the charms of thy radiant home;
To hail thy arrival, and greet thee alone.
And oft I have asked the cause of thy stay;
And what could occasion thy spirit's delay.
Thy mansion awaits; its apartments so fair!
Thy loved one is ready to welcome thee there!"

"There 's much so bright in thy sweet face;
And lines familiar there I trace,
But can't recall thy features now.
If I have met thee, where and how?
It is so strange, if ever yet
I have so bright a being met,
That I such lovely charms forget!
Fair ones I 've seen from every star,
But thou art fairer, brighter, far!
Who art thou, friend? and what 's thy name?
And why so kindly here remain
To greet my advent when I came?
And with thy voice, so sweet and clear,
To be the first to welcome here?
Thy name and station I must know!
A mission grand thy life hath filled!
My love and gratitude o'erflow
To one who hath my pleasure willed!"

"Ye met me at first in the 'Valley of Woe;'
A young mother weeping in shadows of grief;
And in sorrow a perfect life never can know;
And through thy wise counsel came the dawn of relief;
And the smile of thy love then gilding the gloom
Was the first gleam of hope in that midnight of noon!
The notes of the lute then silent from fear,
And the lyre unstrung, and broken its chords,
Came back in my voice in a symphony clear,
By a breath and a touch of thy pity restored;
And the beauty I wear that is charming thy sight
Is the germ thou hast nursed into blossoms of light!

"To thee I'm in debt for perfection above;
'T is the fruit of thy kindness; thy harvest of love!
Unselfish thou wert, and so lovely thou art,
Thou hast been, and will be, the first in my heart!

"To dear little Bertie the tale I unfold,
And grateful he looks when the story is told.
He's gay as the fawn and bright as the dew,
And he joys when I mention a visit from you.
'And what,' he has asked, 'is the cause of her stay?
And what can occasion so long a delay?'
And oft in his gambols these questions renew;
So, sweetly and gladsome, he'll welcome thee, too.
With my mother I act in the work I prefer,
And bear the glad tidings from Heaven to her;
To the doubting of earth; and thus they are given
The light of the truth as it's written in Heaven.

"Thy pity once found me in fetters of hate;
And bore me away to the freedom in Truth.
Now gladsome, no longer shut out from the gate,
We meet in the home of perennial youth...
To pay for thy kindness, and thy blessings complete,
Eternity's round is too short and fleet!
Lena, thy ransomed, before thee I stand,
To act on thy bidding, what e'er thy command!
I have been hither, these many bright years!
Where hast thou lingered? 'Mid shadows and tears?
Thy labors of love were to others confined.
No evil has happened a spirit so kind?"

Elate with joy and a sweet surprise,

I started up with a glad acclaim
To welcome this child of Paradise—
Aglow with love and its warming flame;
Rejoicing to hear such a blessing come
From the stainless lips of the shining one;
In a land that brings so rich a feast
To my soul embowered in perfect peace.

“Lena, indeed; but the change how great!
Dark as the web and the woof of woe,
A child of grief and an exile of gloom
Now bright as the gleam on the fleecy snow
That flashes out from the eye of noon;
Thy labors wrought in humanity’s fields
Alone can bring or such changes make,
Or waken such bliss as thy spirit feels.
Thy stream of wealth in this love-kissed land
Flows from thy works that ennoble man;”
And then with a radiant smile,
And fond embrace, she bade me adieu,
And said: “I must withdraw a while,
For others wait to welcome you.”

With agile step and simple grace—
A form in robes of azure hue,
With smiles upon her radiant face,
And joy to welcome one she knew,
I see approach; with snowy hands
Like some bright favored child of air,
And while I see a misty trace
Of lines deep hidden, buried there
Beneath each glowing sunny smile,

I seem to know; yet when or where,
If e'er I met this joyous child,
Has faded out of thought and mind,
And left no lingering trace behind.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "you do not know
Poor fallen Kate who loved you so!"
Amazed, I started back to see
This type of perfect purity
In one I once had seen so base,
And so degraded, low and vile
That virtue seemed to have no place
Within her soul, then rent and wild
With fear, where hatred burning raged,
So black and foul in shame and sin
That all she touched, or thoughts engaged,
Were turned to damning stains within.

She read my thoughts, and smiling, said:
"Yes, I am Kate, that fallen one,
Ye found when joy and hope had fled;
And by your work in kindness done,
And through the light your love then shed,
Peace came to me and I was blest,
And through my works I gained the rest.
And so you see me pure, redeemed;
No more what then to you I seemed.
I welcome now your advent here,
Where you might long have been before,
Had it not been your secret fear,
And lack of trust in your own power,

Have kept you back and held you down
On lower planes, till in this hour
You have your full redemption found.
Thrice welcome now to blessings new!
None deserve them more than you!"

So joyed, surprised, at this strange tale,
I had not seen him calm and pale—
A stately form, a perfect man—
Whose face and smile in part I knew,
Who forward stepped and grasped my hand,
And welcomed me as Kate withdrew:
"I 'm he," he said, "whose god was gold,
Who crushed the poor beneath my tread,
And hushed the whispers of my soul
Till every manly instinct fled,
And hope and love alike were dead.
When by remorse and madness driven,
I sought escape to find repose,
I saw each avenue to Heaven
By my own deeds of darkness close,
And shut me out and fix my doom
With ghastly ghouls, that sneer and wink,
And hiss through all that 'Vale of Gloom',
And slime the pools, they made me drink!
Amid these specters dancing, gliding round,
With hollow laugh and fiendish glee,
Thy gentle spirit kindly found
And brought relief and rescued me.
And all the bliss that now is mine,
In this fair world so glad and free,

Is due to loving words of thine
And my own efforts roused by thee.

“From thee I learned that ev’ry soul
Within itself must work its own
Redemption from the iron hold
Of every sin its life has known.
The words of truth, I listening heard,
By thy pure lips so kindly said,
The germ of love within me stirred
And woke, I long had thought was dead;
And bore me up and higher led
To do the work in life deferred;
And thus new light around me shed.
And tho’ unnumbered ages pass,
And leave the soul engulfed in woe,
It can a ransom find at last,
And all of Heaven’s blessings know
If it but wills; and upward strives
To reach the glowing waiting skies;
Whence it may live, in glory rest,
Unless it loves perdition best.

“And so we all this duty owe,
To teach in love, and smooth the path;
And if a wayward brother go
Astray, to never chide in wrath,
And thus return the wandering feet
To wisdom’s fields where toil is sweet,
And harvests rich the sickle wait;
And golden sheaves of ripened seed

Bring their rewards and treasures great,
And every soul ahunger feed.

“From every soul this love is due,
E’en when it dwells in crumbling clay,
Or disenthralled it wander through
The ‘darkened vale’ with tangled way.
So if each soul to self is true,
And kindly work for others weal,
’T will see at length the rising day,
And loves’ benign redemption feel.
These living truths I learned of thee;
My shackles broke and set me free.”

Then from a group that stands near by,
And social converse holds awhile,
Come one by one, with sparkling eye,
And lighted by affection’s smile
On rosy lips I never knew;
And each in tender voice referred
To some kind act which I had done—
Some loving smile, or gentle word—
When fears all hope had overcome;
That had the fallen spirit won—
That taught the truth that lights the way;
And changed the shadows one by one
To white-winged messengers of day;
That gave new life, and hope, and strength—
The spirit will, to seek and find
A blissful rest, and peace at length;
And home in this soft, sunlit clime;
Where loving ones once bound together

By kindred ties and love divine—
The golden chain that naught can sever—
Drink joys renewed; and sipping ever,
Will still live on and drink forever.
But hence may go at mercy's call
To erring ones enslaved by sin,
And fill with truth the souls that fall;
And through the light their love has given,
May bring the spirits, ransomed, in;
Or guide them in their way to Heaven.

In dumb humility I gaze
In each bright face of that glad throng,
And listen to the words of praise
That run like choral peals of song,
Or like some gladsome jubilee,
When Justice triumphs o'er the strong;
And shackles fall and freedmen see
And taste the fruits of liberty;
And their deliverer's presence greet
And strew with palms the way he treads;
With downy sandals clothe his feet,
And with bright chaplets crown his head;
That joy has come and pain is dead.
This could but flatter human pride.

The gems which eastern princes bore
Across the wave and drifting tide—
The wealth of some enchanted shore—
To deck and clothe a queenly bride,
Ne'er flattered royal weakness more.
And joy was mine; my soul was stirred

At gratitude so warmly shown,
That healing balm on every word
I spoke, but now to me unknown—
Had borne such fruit, such tributes brought;
Thro' simple lessons kindly taught.

Oh, then, I saw in quick review,
This truth in shining garments new:
Deep gratitude for aid received,
The soul uprisen ever feels
To one who hath in love relieved,
And o'er the thankful spirits steals.
It can not fade and deeper grows,
And toward its benefactor flows.

Here comes a man of noble mien,
So proud in step and strong in limb,
As if some bright unusual scene
Had fixed his gaze enchanting him.
"My child," he cried; and "Father" I—
The glad acclaim and quick reply:
"My favorite one, and cherished child,
The time is long since we have met;
Ye found me torn with anguish wild,
Stung by remorse and vain regret;
And thro' your gentle words and mild—
I hear their soothing music yet;
Ye made me all that now I am,
Redeemed, a perfect, happy man!
I'm hardly living, staying here,
I watch and guide your mother still;
And at her call I hasten near,

With pure emotion's warming thrill,
Yet oft return to view the rare
And royal dwelling incomplete;
And which thy sister's constant care,
Adorns with every art replete.
Displays in full, in each design,
Materials of priceless worth,

“And culled by her artistic mind,
From deeds your mother does on earth
To make for her a joyous home,
Swept and garnished all complete;
Unique in beauty when she comes,
And all her parted children meet.
There, too, will be my dwelling place.
And ever thro' the blissful years
I'll see that sweet and gentle face,
And hear the voice that hushed my fears;
And feel I owe so much to you,
And thanks forever there renew.

“But here she is. She'll tell you all!
For I must go; your mother calls!”
So quick the change, I scarcely knew
When he upon his errand flew.
And I entranced, my lips were dumb,
To see so bright a being come.
Like a restless beam of that magic light,
That sparkles along the rippling tide;
Or the dancing wave when the moon is bright,
A very sylph in her youthful pride.
Her trailing robe like a snowy fleece,

Concealing her form of a delicate mould;
Girt, and looped with a slender band
Of gleaming cords of the finest gold,
As if the work of a fairy hand.
Her face aglow with the smiles of peace,
And gliding she floats like a thing of air.
Born of the breath and a kiss of the sky,
A gleam of love in her dark, soft eye;
And a rosy light in her flowing hair,
And gently she whispers: "Sister, it's I."
A wavy light in her auburn hair,
And a gleam of love in her radiant eye;
A feast of joy for my sister prepare,
As gently she whispers: "Sister, it's I."

Then twining her soft and delicate arms
Around me in love and drawing me near,
Unveiling more fully her exquisite charms,
As a soft, mellow light, like the mantle of morn
Envelopes us both, illuming her form.
And she in a voice so earnest and clear
Exclaims: "My sister, I welcome you here
To the sunrise land and the valley of bliss,
Where hearts are unselfish and loves never fade;
And aught uncongenial can never invade."
And then on my lips imprinting a kiss,
Imparting a joy and a thrill of delight
That only could come from a being so bright.

"But I came," she said, "to show you the way
To the beautiful home completed for you;
And also the one where mother will stay,

And father; when she has her mission performed,
And all of her labor as mortal is through.
Oh, they are so rich with beauty adorned—
Rare builders are here and designers in art,
And with skill unsurpassed completing each part.”

Then thro’ a smooth and shady way,
Embowered with vines and towering trees;
Where birds of gorgeous plumage stay,
And fragrance fills a balmy breeze,
That wafts the minstrel’s happy lay
In welcome strains and sweetest note,
Which, like enchantment, charming float;
And branch and bloom and bower rejoice,
As if attuned to Music’s voice,
She leads me on; yet oft delays,
To listen to the strains that seem
Like choral chants of joy and praise,
That wandering souls at last redeemed
Receive, with joyous welcomes given,
On their first entry into Heaven.

Through shining fields and tasty lawns
We pass abodes; with open sides;
Supporting columns, rich and strong,
And carved to please a princely pride,
Are all that form the outer wall.
At home the inmates here abide,
As in an open, spacious hall;
Pursue the course that pleases best—
Study or work or dreaming, rest.
We see them here their time employ,

As if from work came all their joy.
Works of love insuring bliss,
That light the worlds and brighten this;
Till near a grove that stands alone,
New beauties burst and temples rise—
The homes of those who dwell in skies.
And one within of circular form,
And open sides; its roof and dome,
Which rare designs of art adorn,
Long lines of pillars carved, support
Within a spacious, gorgeous court,
Where every glance wakes new surprise—
Rest on a new mosaic floor,
Inlaid with azure pearl and gold;
With that display and lavish store
Of art, that spirit minds unfold.

And ev'ry day some polished stone
Or thing, her loving work supplies,
To make complete this royal home
For her abode, each day arrives;
And when complete, there will be none
More sweet than this in Paradise.

Along the walks like jasper shining,
Feathery shrubs and flowers lining,
We move on, gliding slow;
At every step new flowers espying,
All our descriptive art defying,
Such as mother nursed, and loved them so.
She drinking in the fragrance flowing,
Would here grow young and brighter growing,

But could not ever sweeter grow.

“Oft have I gathered from year to year,
And hither brought on a train of light;
The things that have added such beauty here,
And now unfolding so pleasing the sight.
And each gem, which her own ready hand
Turned out, thro’ the skill which a love provides;
At charity’s call and mercy’s demand,
No stain nor a blemish its purity hides.
So the arts of her life that ennoble her kind,
Deep carved or engraved and tracing these walls;
Clear written and perfect a record will find,
In varied designs that embellish the halls.
So the thoughts that depressed and the joys that elate her,
The first of her labor is here; and await her.”

“But we must haste,” she said, and smiled.
I followed the beck of my guardian child
Out of the grove, through the winding way,
And into the charms of a circular park,
With groups of statues, perfection in art,
Around the border set; where the fountains play
Within and nearer the central park,
Is lading the air with a fragrant spray,
And waves of beauty enrapture the heart.
Beyond, a line of tall, imperial trees,
As watchman act or vet’ran sentries seem;
Whose parting plumes now bending to the breeze,
Unveil a castle grand, whose turrets gleam
With gems aglow in the morning beam,
Which thro’ the opening branches flowing,

Not half of the wonderous splendor showing
Of that bright home, which childhood's rosy dream,
In fondest, sweetest visions hath not seen.
When thro' an arch, embowered with blooming vines,
That spans a walk, whose branches outward wind
Around, and thro' a green and spacious lawn,
And with a white or silvery luster shines—
Except where drooping bowers afford retreat,
Where love's devoted, blissful subjects meet,
By love's resistless, silent forces drawn;
And drink their brimming cup, nor drink in vain,
I see my absent, waiting, loved one come.

His hands outstretched, and clasping both of mine,
His lips in tender notes of joy exclaim :
"Welcome, Allie, to thy heavenly home!
Oh, this with all its beauty now is thine!
Fruit of thy noble life, reward divine!
I deemed it meet that I away remain,
Till, they who had attained a life of bliss,
Thro' thy kind words and loving actions shown,
Could first their joy and gratitude make known,
And greet thee to a loving feast like this
Ye now partake, and that thy sister guide
Conduct thee hence, and leave thee thus alone,
To wake 'mid scenes where splendor's swelling tide
Had Beauty's richest gifts and tributes strown.
And now I come and claim thee as my own,
My long delayed but constant, faithful one!
As chaste and bright as Heaven has shone upon,
Or ransomed spirit yet hath truly known!

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“A haven of peace may it be to you!”
Up silvery steps he smiling, leads the way;
And thro’ the massive doors now opening wide
Into apartments grand, appearing new,
As if prepared to meet a royal bride,
And crown with regal pomp her nuptial day.
My sister softly gliding out, is gone;
And we ’mid all the grandeur seem alone.
And yet sweet music’s note and liquid voice,
That tell the tale how gladdened hearts rejoice
Float out in faultless cadence, soft and sweet,
As if in Splendor’s home were song’s retreat;
Where inspiration springs and minstrels stray,
And drinking deep, add rapture to their lay.

A spacious room we entered in—
Long and high and grander far
In art, than all I yet had seen.
Above, a canopy of stars,
And all illumined like shining worlds,
Whose light reflected by the pearls
That form the floor and shining walls,
In soft, effulgence mantles all.
I pause; in silent joy adore;
Rejoice in pleasures here in store
For me. And now he gently calls:
“Allie, this is set apart for thee,
Where thou canst with companions meet;
Or meditate alone, or sleep,
But never wake to sigh or weep.
And yet must see where sorrows traced
In furrowed lines and carvings deep;

And love's kind work amid the waste,
Their lasting records kept and keep."

And then designs on either side,
Where beauty's forms in beauty rise—
On unique tablets long and wide,
Attract and hold my wondering eyes.
And here and there along the walls,
Are smaller ones at intervals;
And' black or clouded o'er with lines
Of leaden hues and mottled shades,
And some profuse with rare designs.

And oft a sombre band that fades
To richest flowers, that seem as bright,
As if they shed an inborn light;
And some with indentations deep,
Of circular form and roughly torn;
As if the tears the fallen weep,
These cavities had sharper worn.
And these a clear, historic tale
Of life across the dark abyss
Unfold; and through "the weeping vale,"
Till reaching out they blend in this.

And on one tablet plainly spread,
The stains of sin and works of love;
With crossing lines of golden thread,
Are set apart and interwove.
And crowning all, a sparkling one—
A polished surface, snowy white;
On which no tracing yet is done,

Like frostwork glitters in the light.
And this is left, and here will be
The record of my life to come—
With each inscription carved by me.
The doubts, suspense, the grief, despair—
The good resolves, the triumphs won—
The fallen raised, imprinted there—
The lessons taught, reforms begun—
And gentle smile and loving word—
That woke a hope, or bosom stirred,
Are clearly seen, yet read by none,
And understood except by me;
And such affinities alone,
As warm with kindred sympathy.

“Rest, my beloved,” he tenderly said,
“On the rich, downy couch awaiting thee here!
Thy labor has triumphed, thy sorrow is dead,
And the joy that is thine never ends in a tear.
I will leave thee alone with thyself to commune,
Mid the beauty and grandure collected for thee;
Where the flowers exhaling a vernal perfume,
Are the tributes of love brought hither by me—
Here, here, thy dominion is exclusive and free.
And when I shall hither invited return,
We shall ramble together, these wonders review;
And the hidden secrets and mysteries learn,
Of God and creation; but still something new,
Will forever our searches and study attend.
And to whatever object our searches we turn,
We shall find a beginning, but never the end;

While our pleasure and joy and wisdom increase,
Mid the welcomes of love, and the blessings of peace."

A dreamy charm, a pleasing sense
Of balmy peace and bliss intense;
Like deep enchantment's soft embrace,
Entrance my soul and fill the place.
Alone, again my thoughts take wing,
And backward fly, thro' all the past;
While mellow voices, softly sing—
"Thy home and rest are found at last!"

VIII.

And now a hurried tread I hear,
Like that of vet'rans sweeping by;
To stay a foe whose arm is near—
And then a voice in pity cry.
A door on noiseless pinions swings—
The crystal bars are backward pressed—
A herald comes, this message brings,
And thus with anxious look addressed:
"The earth with all her teeming plains
Is dark with clouds that craft distills,
And flagrant wrong its grasp retains,
The priest his doubtful mission fills.
That senseless forms are saving needs,
And bread of life by him is taught,
With these alone the spirit feeds,
And seeks to bind the wings of thought.
Invents the rack, for all who will
Insist on Freedom's sacred right;

To think for self, enquiring still, .
Seeks out the way the truth and light."

And now I see in fierce array
A motley host with banners spread;
Of mitered priest and servile lay,
By hate and superstition led;
To crush the truth and claim as prize,
The fallen standard Freedom rears—
And then, rejoicing, hush her cries,
The only foe that error fears.
A spirit light now dimly seen,
They sternly dread and seek to hide;
To slay the infant Nazarine,
And safety for their creeds provide.

They would maintain their pomp and pride,
Tho' all the world should weep beside.
They can not rest; its sure effects
Are crumbled domes, and desk and pew
Deserted; or useless mouldering wrecks
Amid this Dispensation New,
If naught its forward movement checks.
And if a wave of human blood
Could save; or if once lost, restore
Their waning cause, a crimson flood
Would drench the earth as oft before;
When bigot rule made slaves of men,
And slew, and shouted long "Amen!"
To please an irate God whom they adore.

The love and peace they seek to win,
Are black and foul and stained with crime;

And sacrificing life for sin,
Proclaim that flesh and blood Divine
Alone are welcome at His shrine:
That blood of Him, the faultless one—
The guiltless for the guilty one—
Can for the sins of life atone.
Love waits and wishes all may see—
And all the willing seekers can;
The Fatherhood of Deity,
And perfect Brotherhood of Man.
And that within each sentient soul,
Are germs and force in constant strife;
That can a perfect flower unfold,
To ripen in immortal life.
And through this force in wisdom given,
Must work its own way up to Heaven;
And can not pass as precious coin,
The virtues from another shorn
Nor pardon gain; the ransomed join
Thro' vestures from the guiltless torn.

A messenger in knowledge versed,
And firm in will and strong in mind;
Who can these tyrant shackles burst,
Which struggling thought has long confined;
And Freedom's children chafe and bind
To teach the truth, dispel the clouds;
Unveiled the light which darkness shrouds
That ignorance may strive in vain
To fetter man and scourge again,
And help are needed, urgent now—
And none can better serve than thou.

Nor from experience better knows,
The dire suspense the soul endures;
Which through the shadowed valley goes,
The antidote that soothes and cures—
Its fears and pain and nameless woes,
And purges clean and renders pure.

Exalted ones from upper skies
To earth can wing an instant flight:
But those of earth can only rise,
Thro' works of love in that pure light,
Which shows the gem, the only prize
Without alloy, which virtue knows,
That gleam across the Vale of Sighs,
And from a blameless effort flows,
A crown awaits the one who tries.
But I'm too weak; nor can contend
Against the force which there defies,
But I will with thee thither tend.
To make of earth a brighter sphere,
To lead the erring to the skies.
And strip from Death a chilling fear,
Are worth the richest sacrifice.
Thou needst but tell what thou hast known,
In all thy lonely wanderings shown.
Exert thy force and use the lines;
"Through which a spirit work endures,
And then, as victor, thou shall win
The chaplet of the seraphim."

Am I another trial given,
So sweeping and severe a test?

And must I leave "my loved" and Heav'n?
That man may be as I am blessed.
Oh, yes; I'll go; the trial brave;
Humanity is calling now.
And love desires the light she gave,
Should shine immortal on each brow.

In glad and silvery accents come,
And vibrate thro' that spacious hall:
"Many the triumphs thou hast won,
But this the greatest of them all.
No greater love it hath been said,
Hath any man nor can transcend;
Than he who drinks the "poison dreg,
And gives his life to save his friend.
But she hath the love that is deepest,
Who renouncing her pleasures and her joys;
And her own love in Heav'n that is sweetest,
And her talent and her wisdom employs.
To snatch and preserve from error's control,
And cleanse of its stain one sin-blackened soul."
Then away from the bliss and the splendor of home,
I wing to the earth on the mission alone;
While joying companions in vestures of white,
Press after with praises and songs of delight.

"All ye who are dwelling in prisons of clay,
And drink of the tears your sorrows prolong;
And see the withering hand of decay,
On all that is loved, the tender and strong—
Who see in the grave the ultimate goal,
Of all of your hopes, and the death of the soul—

Who surrender your all to terror and gloom,
And the cheerless damp and the chill of the tomb—
And ye who invite to communion and feast,
The soul to be saved by the prayer of the priest—
Who barter for gold their dogmas and creeds,
As the only redemption the soul ever needs—
Who believe that the shedding of innocent blood,
Is the price to be paid for man's highest good—
And ye who are dwelling 'mid shadows and blight,
Where ignorance rules with its scepter of might;
Rejoice! for I come on a mission of love,
And the tidings of peace to the nations proclaim;
I am sent by the power and spirit above,
To dispel every cloud and break every chain;
Now binding a limb or dwarfing a mind,
And a message I bring as a light to the blind;
That ye disenthralled by the gospel set free,
May welcome and hail the deferred jubilee.
And join in the anthem prolonging the cry;
'The soul is immortal and love can not die!
And the labor of love to humanity given,
Is the charter of love and the passport to Heaven.'
Would ye never know the woes I have known—
Would ye taste of the bliss in which I rejoice—
Then practice the love in this narrative shown.
With you is the duty, and with you is the choice.
I yet may be called to a still broader field,
In a sphere where the harvest the cycle awaits;
I'll welcome the call, to the sacrifice yield,
And feel I am never 'Outside the Gates.'"