

POEMS AND SONNETS,

BY

GEORGE BARLOW.

“The rapture of pursuing  
Is the prize the vanquished gain.”—LONGFELLOW.

PART I.

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## DEDICATION.

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### SAND AND THE BAYS.

#### I.

SHE *crowned my hair with sand*; I wonder will

She ever twine her hand amid the bays,

And ever render unto me the praise

Without which all men's praise, alas, is nil,

But which is potent by itself to fill

To the full the flowing current of my days :

Was it an omen for my future lays,

An evil omen, that she chose to spill,

And twine amid my locks a sandy wreath ?

Have I, in fact, as Keats in humble thought

Deemed that in water he his name had wrought,

To shifting sand of poetry made bequeath ;

And will the foamy, white, advancing teeth

Of Time bring both myself and mine to nought ?

## II.

WILL she be favourable ? she, who crowned with sand  
My head, too happy to be touched at all  
By what her hand had touched to care to call  
Out, "Stay, sweet, choose a less ill-omened band  
Wherewith to bind my brow." I seem to stand  
Before her, yea, before my Queen alone,  
And into nothingness the world is thrown  
For the time, and only two possess the land ;  
I offer her my book ; I think that she  
Will smile to recognize a flower or two •  
We plucked together, set in frame-work new,  
And many buds and blossoms she will see  
Unseen before, and leaflets not a few,  
And will she, think you, cast a glance on me ?

LOVE.

I—2



# LOVE.

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## *A SERIES OF SONNETS.*

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### FAIR EYES.

#### I.

FAIR eyes of women many had I seen,  
Eyes deep as darkness, bright as noontide ray,  
And others bluer than the depths of day,  
Bluer than turquoise-jewels of a queen,  
But none so sweet, so wonderful, I ween,  
With power to quicken, power to pierce and slay,  
A twin-born wonder, green and brown and gray,  
Three colours blended, mixed in loveliest sheen ;  
Gazing in awe I saw myself therein,  
My past and future mingled into one,  
A picture harmonized from taint of sin,  
A poem finished, or a race well run,  
The melody I long had gasped to win,  
A moon completed, a full-circled sun.

## II.

NOR have I ceased to wonder at those eyes,  
Nor have they lost their power to make me tremble,  
My sweet love-shivering I cannot dissemble,  
Nor can I meet them yet without surprise ;  
Most wonderful ! were all the thoughts that rise  
Within me to be told with facile fingers,  
Would still remain some loiterer that lingers,  
A fancy that eludes, a form that flies ;  
Had I the minds all blended into one  
Of all the poets who have touched the ages,  
That mind would not suffice to get it sung,  
To tell the beauty which my soul engages,  
To tell the torments which my heart have wrung,  
Though I should rustle through ten thousand pages.



III.

How can one ever hope to get it sung,  
A beauty which for ever is deceiving us,  
First wiling forth our worship, and then leaving us  
With minds embittered and with heart-strings wrung ;  
The vision, when it beamed upon us, stung  
Our being into songfulness, achieving  
A gladness of possession past believing,  
Next into emptiness our souls it flung ;  
The wonder still is borne upon the breeze,  
Moves on the hill-top, shines upon the sea,  
Still ripples in the river and the trees,  
Looms forth at twilight from the lonely lea,  
The sorrow of it is that no one sees,  
And dumb for ever are the souls that see.

## IV.

THE souls that *do* see, only see by snatches,  
Long intervals of blindness lie between,  
In vain they strive to get behind the screen  
With stealthy footsteps, gently lifted latches—  
With hand that trembles, and with pen that scratches  
To rid them of the wonder they have seen ;  
For Beauty, see you, reigns a sovereign queen,  
The purest on her errands she dispatches,  
The highest to her kingdom she attaches,  
Herself, be certain, she will not demean,  
By Purity alone is Beauty seen,  
And nature like to like for ever matches ;  
King Truth and Monarch Goodness you may sever  
Each from the other, both from what is pure,  
Queen Beauty in the ether rules for ever,  
The slightest sin-stain she will not endure,  
Breathe taint upon her fairness, she will never  
Return to grace your dwelling-place, be sure.

## V.

BACKWARD Queen Beauty darts her maiden glances—

With lips that quiver as she glances back,

The staring poet pants along her track,

With feet that flutter, and with heart that dances ;

The distance all her loveliness enhances—

He sinks exhausted, footsteps growing slack—

She waits him at some turning of the track,

Till once again his heart for pleasure prances ;

So goes it, but from time to time he catches

Some cadence of the melody she sings,

Gleam in upon his soul in fitful snatches

Dim-seeming glimpses of mysterious things,

The odour of her hair his soul attaches

More madly than aught else that being brings.

## VI.

How madly I love Beauty ! I would grasp her  
With greedy grasp of passion-shaking hands,  
' As proudly as a long-lost lover stands,  
So standing, to my bosom I would clasp her !  
What recks the soul of shipwreck or disaster,  
If haply in the end himself may win her,  
She daintiest of maidens, he a sinner,  
If hope abides of winning at the last her,  
If her sweet image in his soul resides—  
A heart enshrined-shrine at which to kneel,  
As year by year, life's river onward glides,  
Around it strains of music ever peal,  
Soft as the sheep-bells, strong as ocean-tides ?

## VII.

For those indeed who once have seen her splendour,  
And known it, no alternative remains,  
For ever doomed to suffer endless pains,  
Or else in emptiness their souls surrender,  
That Beauty in a vision may engender  
The new-born power of singing endless strains ;  
A gasping gush of melody she rains  
Upon them—they must force it forth, or never  
Win rest, or cushioned couch, or conscious ease—  
Their souls from Beauty they will not dis sever,  
The stern-eyed goddess they cannot appease,  
Save by a manful choice to sing for ever  
All that, and nothing save what, she shall please.

PSYCHE AND MERCURY, ONE OF  
RAPHAEL'S FRESCOES.

A FACE that, as it seems to me, combines  
 All beauties of *expression* into one !  
 As shines upon the sea the summer sun,  
 With rippling laughter it for ever shines ;  
 Gaze only with intensity, the lines  
 Will shift themselves before you ; I could swear  
 I've seen it move as I was standing there,  
 And look to me and speak to me by signs ;  
 And then the wonder of the black-brown hair,  
 And gleaming glory of the green-grey eyes !  
 I never see the picture, I declare,  
 Without a gasp of sorrow and surprise,  
 Surprise that I have found a face so fair,  
 Sorrow that 'tis not mine in anywise.

## THE SONG OF THE BLIND POET.

It sootheth me on love's delights to linger,  
They're true for some one else, if not for me,  
I cannot sing in any other key,  
At least, I'll point them out with passionate finger,  
A voice, an unseen sound, a sightless singer,  
I'll teach them what to take and what to flee,  
A Finger-Post, a Light-House in the sea,  
Of joy to all men but myself a bringer ;  
There *was* a world of wonder and of daytime,  
*I* found it, men that live will find it, fair,  
For them will gleam the greenery of Maytime,  
And laughter leave an echo in the air,  
For them the hours of work and pleasant playtime,  
For me the inactive deeps of dull despair.

## BLOWN BUBBLES.

I MAY not see you, love, but I will greet you  
With sweet blown bubbles, kisses of my rhymes ;  
Sleepless, my thoughts shall wander forth to meet you—  
At odorous hours of dusk, at evening-times,  
A vesper-song, a fairy peal of chimes,  
Borne in upon your hearing they shall reach you,  
Take form, and falling at your feet beseech you  
To breathe a prayer for a lover in lonely climes ;  
I would, my love, that fancy's troop of kisses  
Might fall upon you like a gentle dew,  
A shower of shaken rose-petals, or a crew  
Of elves to pelt you with bewildering blisses  
And cowslip-balls, beneath sweet warm abysses  
Of hay to smother you, as we used to do  
In the hot hazy afternoons in hay-fields,  
Hours of delight in childhood's pleasant play-fields,  
Happy, amidst the green, beneath the blue.



## THE ECSTASY OF THE HAIR.

I'd send a troop of kisses to entangle  
 And lose themselves in labyrinths of hair,  
 Thy deep dark night of hair with stars to spangle,  
 And, each a tiny fire-fly, to dangle  
 Amid the tresses of that forest fair ;  
 A perfume seems to blossom into air,  
 The ecstasy that hangs about the tresses,  
 Their blush, their overflow, their breath, their bloom,  
 A wind that gently lifts them, and caresses,  
 And wings itself, and floats about the room ;  
 My meaning this but partially expresses,  
 The thoughts that in me smoulder and consume,  
*I want to say* that to my mind the hair  
 So wonderfully, wildly, sweetly fair  
 Seems, that a fancy all my soul possesses  
 Its ecstasy *ought* to blossom into perfume.

## SPRING.

## I.

As some sweet rosebud opens and discloses  
    A widening wealth of beauty to the view,  
As every day in spring the wild-flower posies  
    Increase in number, scent, and warmth of hue,  
As pale pink rosebuds redden into roses,  
    And faint gray larkspur freshens into blue,  
As every morn the great sun-artist rises  
    And paints afresh high heaven's fiery floor  
With streaks, and lights, and tints, and new surprises,  
    And waves of colour all unknown before,  
Bewildering the air with shapes and sizes  
    Of clouds its shining surface sprinkled o'er,  
So day by day your beauty, my delight,  
comes clearer, fuller, fresher into sight.

## II.

As every wave a broken wave that follows  
    Flings a fresh flower of foam upon the shore,  
As year by year the home-returning swallows  
    Seem sweet to us as though ne'er seen before,  
As greenery of spring on hills, in hollows,  
    Seems each new spring-time greener than of yore,  
As every morn the ether seems to lighten  
    With one great blue broad smile from side to side,  
As snows are white, and holly-berries brighten  
    With ruddier redness at each Christmas-tide,  
And flowers are fair, and orange-blossoms heighten  
    Their loveliness for each new blushing bride,  
So love your beauty every morning light  
Blossoms into some new nosegay of delight.

## IN SPITE OF ME.

O LOVE, my love, I love you more than ever,  
I prithee tell me, what am I to do ?  
With some faint, feeble shadow of endeavour  
At times I try the bonds of love to sever,  
But stronger than before they close anew,  
I could not, if I would, become untrue,  
I feel as if before I'd loved you never  
For every day your beauty into view  
Comes clearer ; as the great gold sun-ship rises,  
A vessel fraught with ever-fresh surprises,  
So daily beams upon me some sweet vision  
Entangling in its train some new condition ;  
In fine, I find that still as life grows longer  
In spite of me my love becometh stronger !

## DREAMS.

## I.

At last have passed the blanks and dreary spaces  
 And hours of the cold white windy day,  
 My soul set free descends to happier places  
 Where golden-wingèd dreams, a bright array,  
 Wait for me, glimpses of sweet smiling faces,  
 And chords of light that round my pillow play ;  
 O welcome, welcome, gladsome hours of night time  
 When fancy loosed exerts her wondrous spell,  
 A joy to me, a marvel, a delight-time,  
 A rainbow-coloured realm I love right well,  
*My region of reality, my bright time—*  
 (For nights are sometimes heaven when days are hell)  
 The time in which, in dreams comes peeping in  
 The face of her I'd give the world to win.

## II.

THEREFORE I love the darkness, and right gladly  
I lay me down and close my eyes and wait,  
Wait, wondering half smilingly, half sadly,  
What dreams will issue through the Ivory Gate ;  
'Tis bliss to feel that I perchance may meet her,  
And talk to her, and walk with her till morn,  
And falling low before her feet entreat her  
Till dreams at daylight-advent fly forlorn,  
To think that ere I wake to face the morrow  
Closed eyes may feast in rapture on her face,  
And heart forget its pain, and soul its sorrow,  
And life its labour, for some little space,  
While I my lady through the halls of night  
Follow after, lips half parted for delight.

## III.

THE thought of such sweet company forsaking  
Is odious, would that I could stay the sun,  
Put back the clock, dream on without awaking,  
Nor rise to meet a sad new day begun ;  
But days will pass, they do not last for ever,  
And then there comes again the sweet warm night,  
A gentle lady, sent our souls to sever  
From all the wear and labour of the light ;  
Thrice welcome art thou, brood about my pillow,  
And cover me with darkness as a shield,  
And touch my eyes with sleep—into the billow  
Of soft unconsciousness my soul I yield,  
And sinking, dying into sleep I pray  
To dream of her who stole my heart away.

## IV.

AH me ! how would one struggle on I wonder  
From one day to another but for dreams,  
Sweet dreams, that part the halves of life asunder,  
The real, and the half that only seems ;  
“ Our life is not a dream *yet*,” says Novalis,  
“ A dream it ought to be and may become,”  
With yours, my friend, my own experience tallies,  
The Ideal and the Real in truth are one,  
Nay more, the Ideal is the only Real,  
The days are false, the golden nights are true,  
Only when straining towards the Pure Ideal  
Are we men living as we ought to do ;  
Believe *the dreams*, my brothers, make them facts,  
And carry out the nights in daylong acts.



## KING LOVE.

## I.

OUT of the depths of loneliness I cry,  
     A voice to awake the echoes of the past,  
     A voice that rises, borne upon the blast,<sup>1</sup>  
 And seeks the shadowy land for which I sigh,  
 • A land I long to visit ere I die,  
     Where, throned in isles of green and bowers of roses,  
     Himself a red rose, revels and reposes  
     King Love, all bathed about with seas of posies  
 And scent of honeysuckle hanging nigh ;  
     There skies are blue and breath of gentle breezes  
 Gladdens a land that smiles from side to side,  
     Smiling a smile the enraptured soul that seizes  
 And whirls adown its own soft-flowing tide,  
     A land of purple seas, of day that pleases  
 And night that soothes, a starry dark-eyed bride.

## II.

NOR only dwells the King in bowers of roses  
Amid the growth and greenery of the land,  
Across the seas and barren breadths of sand  
His voice is heard, the mountain-height discloses  
His form enshrined where ignorance supposes  
The cold white Snow-Queen lords it all alone,  
Shaking the snow-showers round her misty throne,  
And all her force to melting love opposes ;  
Warm Love that melts the very rocks in sunder,  
And crumbles mountains into sheets of sea,  
Brave Love that steals the bolts of Monarch Thunder,  
And, when the Monarch mutters, laughs in glee,  
True Love, the King of Wisdom and of Wonder,  
White, born of woman, fiery-footed, free.

III.

ALONG the hills and heights and purple highlands,  
Adown the valleys, lo ! Love sweeps his wand,  
The spring breathes blossoms born at his command.  
The streams, the lakes, the seas, the wreath of islands,  
The sunset-splendour of the western skylands,  
All borrow bloom and beauty from his touch,  
He holds the Round World crumpled in his clutch,  
The suns and moons, the starry far and nigh lands ;  
Love interpenetrates the silent spaces,  
Therein his wings awake a wave of sound,  
With Sound and Light King Love runs laughing races  
And beats them breathless, beats them at a bound,  
Above, beneath the earth, yea, in *all* places  
Some shimmer of his presence may be found.

## A KISS FOR EVER.

Two lovers were found, slain by lightning. And it seemed as if, when the lightning slew them, they were in the act of kissing one another.\*

## I.

THEY stood beneath the roses in the lane—  
 The honeysuckle breathed upon the pair,  
 The roses shed their petals in her hair  
 And blushed for joy—two lives without a stain,  
 With pleasure pale and passing into pain  
 Were hand in hand together, and the air  
 About them both a perfume seemed to bear,  
 A misty veil that closed around the twain  
 And hid them from the world : her gentle breath  
 Rises and falls and lightly fans his face,  
 The after-sunset silence of the place  
 Broods o'er them sleepily, as still as death,  
 Save only when from time to time he saith  
 Low words, her rosy lips soft whispers grace.

\* The accounts of this occurrence were given in the daily papers at the time.

II.

A LITTLE while, and then the first-born kiss,  
Long, lovingly and lingeringly taken,  
By one who feels the whole wide world of bliss  
For him that rosebud cup contains ; a shaken  
Wild rosebush sprinkles them with drops of dew,  
Pure, pearly, dripped from off the leafy fingers—  
They nestle in her hair and trickle through—  
All save one larger loitering pearl that lingers  
Crowning the fair white circle of her brow  
In sign that she too reigns henceforth a queen,  
A queen among the pure ; the branches bow,  
And eyes of love the sprays and flowers atween  
Seem softly to peep out upon a pair  
Together soon the life of death to share.

## III.

FOR, from on high, the Lord of Love looked down  
On man and maid, and saw that these were pure,  
And, pleased, prepared right royally to crown  
Their lips with a white kiss that should endure,  
The kiss for which fair lovers have been sighing  
Through all the ages that have passed away,  
A kiss to last for ever, never flying  
Through all the hours of Eternal Day ;  
And this they won ; Love sent his servant Lightning  
To seal for ever their one lovers' kiss,  
And bear them gently, softly, without frightening,  
To spend their honeymoon in brighter bliss,  
Among the lanes where faithful lovers walk  
In heaven, to renew that evening's broken talk.

## ANNE HATHAWAY.\*

"ANNE HATHAWAY, she hath a way," I wonder  
 What way it was that won the singer's soul,  
 Could lips that pout, and part, and smile asunder,  
 Heart of a Shakespeare conquer and control,  
 Or had some traitor tress "a way of waving"  
 In windy jubilation across her eyes—  
 A way it was, I doubt not, worth the saving  
 In some soft sonnet proud of such a prize,  
 Only, unluckily, the words were broken  
 Short off, you see, by some such "woman's way,"  
 For, soon as Shakespeare's lips the above had spoken,  
 So sound an illustration I should say  
 Of what he meant was given in a kiss  
 That he was well content the rest to miss.

\* Completion of the unfinished sonnet attributed to Shakespeare, beginning "Anne Hathaway, she hath a way."

## REMINISCENCE.

STANDING upon the cliff where I remember  
That autumn eve the maiden musing stood,  
Enwrapped around with twilight of September,  
Pondering soft things in some soft maiden mood,  
Fanning a fresh flame out of memory's ember  
Over the past and "is to be" I brood ;  
I joy to see that signs are all around me  
Of her sweet presence who before was there,  
An echo of her loveliness has found me  
Breathed forth from all the crowd of flowers fair  
That, smiling upwards, silently surround me,  
Filling the places that before were bare ;  
A perfume of her presence seems to hover  
In ecstasy about the holy place,



Entanglements of trefoil and of clover  
In soft solicitude my feet embrace,  
The special spots her feet have trodden over  
By blossom-clusters special sweet I trace,  
And, resting in the midst of flowers fair  
Feel in some sort as if their queen was there.

## A FLOWER.

A FAIR white flower, gathered all alone,  
Before me sighs, and bends a lowly head ;  
Instinct with life she seems, as if she shed  
Tears for the sake of soft companions flown,  
As if she musically made a moan  
(Just as a maiden though she smile or weep  
Her soul in beauty cannot fail to steep)  
After her loved ones into sorrow thrown ;  
'Tis wet to-night, and all the cliffs are raining,  
And heavy hang the beaded blades of grass,  
And I can fancy pale white faces straining,  
Pale flower faces, tearful with complaining,  
After my captive planted in a glass—  
Herself, it seems, a sorrow far from feigning.

## SACRA NOX.

O NIGHT divine, bringer of dreams to mortals,  
What should we do without thee ? when the day  
Like some slow snake has dragged its length away,  
With gentle hand thou closest eyelid portals,  
And, fact shut out, sweet fiction works within,  
And many a form to Beauty's Queen akin  
Sweeps through the sleeper's brain, the weary din  
Of daylight all forgotten, bliss that foretells  
Reality of waking bliss to be,  
Casting across the forehead of the sleeper  
Soft lights and shades, as over summer sea  
Flit clouds of colour, ever waxing deeper  
As laughs by night a soul in light a weeper  
Uprising strong the moon of ecstasy.

## TO A YELLOW ROSE.

O FLOWER of flowers, fit for Beauty's breast,  
To rise and fall upon a bosom fair,  
Or sink in silent ecstasy and rest  
Deep down amid the hollows of her hair,  
Sweet places winged with odours all divine,  
Soft nests wherein I long to twine my hands,  
Whence beauty, queen of roses, bright as thine  
Buds, blossoms, and at last in air expands ;  
For I have always felt the wealth of tresses,  
Of certain deep dark tresses I have seen,  
No wreath of rhymes, no written word expresses—  
I approach the nearest to the thing I mean,  
When I say that to my mind this wondrous hair  
Seemeth to blossom into scent as fair.

## O N C E !

## I.

WHEN we grow old shall we forget, I wonder,  
 The bloom and delicate odour of our youth ?  
 Will years that are to be divide in sunder  
 The achieved and the as yet unconquered truth ?  
 Will cheeks all pale with eld and worn and shrunken  
 Remember the sweet flush that once they wore,  
 And limbs that totter, as a man reels drunken,  
 Be mindful of the weight that once they wore  
 So lightly ? Sad to me the thought of growing  
 Towards the withering withered autumn time,  
 For autumn roses lose the art of blowing,  
 The only true rose is the rose of prime,  
 And what a rose is that, the rose of youth,  
 No words of poet compass all its truth !

## II.

IF this be so, my brothers, let us sing,  
Yea, let us raise our voices while we can,  
And join our numbers to the birds of spring ;  
Our life is short, for but a little span  
We see the sunshine, then we face the winter,  
And though we shiver, we in our sore need,  
Never, although we blow it till it splinter,  
Will music echo from a wintry reed ;  
But something is it but *once* to have spoken,  
And wrung from out our hearts a broken cry,  
A cry towards Beauty—to have given token  
Once how we love her, once before we die,  
And if we can but *die* upon her breast  
Breathing her loveliness we may find rest.

## III.

SOMETHING it is to have found in some slight measure

A voice, a gift of speech, before we die,

Yea, should we die *now* yet we've had the pleasure

Of breathing out our souls in one long sigh

Towards the lips of Beauty ; this, my brothers,

While life abides in veins of ours we do,

As timid children cry for absent mothers,

We cry for her, we know that she is true ;

Though all else fail us Beauty *has been* ; never

Can we forget the vision we have seen,

Weak as a babe is Death's arm bonds to sever,

He cannot change a kiss that once has been,

He cannot move its image from the lips

Though thrice in his cold stream a soul he dips.

## IV.

THEREFORE we triumph—even in our sorrow—

For if we vanish Beauty yet abides,

And if our song is blotted out to-morrow

Our Queen for ever through the planet rides,

Yea, if our name be not remembered

And no man mourn us, She it may be bears

In memory these singers who are dead,

Their vainly sought for crowns she wins and wears ;

And so it should be ; let us raise our voices

And beat upon our hearts till each one rings,

What matters agony if *she* rejoices,

Or loss of self, if only *some one* sings,

What matters *anything* if she our Queen

Lives on, and her sweet face our eyes have seen ?



## v.

WHAT we have seen no soul can take away,  
What we have known, is open to no hand  
To rob us of, we too have had our day  
And sailed the seas, and traversed lengths of land  
In search of satisfaction, and our sorrow  
Is when we fear the Beauty of the Whole  
Is not as we would have it—but we borrow  
In some sort consolation for our soul  
By falling back upon the fact that certain  
It is that eyes of ours *have Beauty seen*,  
If o'er her form has fallen again the curtain  
'Tis none the less true that she *once has been*,  
That we with our eyes, yea, these eyes of ours,  
Have seen her home and fairyland of flowers.

## VI.

WHAT has been may be yet again—for others

At all events, if for ourselves no more ;

We pass the wonder on towards our brothers

Who have wandered further forward on the shore  
Of Man's Development ; let these men find her,

And raise their voices loud, and sing her fame,  
*But let us know to whom we have resigned her,*

Our Goddess—if they are worthy of her name ;  
Let these, the poets of the future, finish

The work we have tried, and trying, left undone ;  
By not a jot their fame would we diminish,

By not a ray the splendour of their sun,  
Only let *some* one *say* the things we *see*,  
And these things *see* with clearer sight than we.

## D O N ' T.

DON'T—ah, but, sweet, I *will*—you must not mind it,

My turn at last it is to have my will,

If I should kiss my treasure till I blind it

Closed eyes of hers I'd go on kissing still ;

A poor wild singer am I, and a singer

In love is not, you know, like other men,

They kiss their mistress' hand, / I kiss each finger,

Then think I've miss'd one out and count again ;

Let these make odes, as is their bounden duty,

To love, and seal their songs with finger tips,

But as for me when / am praising Beauty

My signature is always with the lips

Just so, sweet—let me kiss the place again,

Believe me it will heal the sooner then.

## THE BAY-LEAF CROWN.

## I.

AND is it yet in front in spite of all ?  
That crown my eyes are hungry to embrace,  
And will my head be ever fitting place  
On which its circular shadow soft may fall ?  
If this be so, I am strong to burst the thrall  
Of every low desire that backward bears  
A soul that should be wingèd as the airs,  
That downward drags a heart that should be tall  
As a majestic oak, and as the sea  
In width, and as the diamond air above  
In depth, intensity, and warmth of love  
Towards all the living things that 'neath it be,  
And long as woman's memory, and as free  
And gentle as the flying of a dove.

## II.

FAR, far in front they glitter, those sweet leaves,  
But many a lonesome agony lies between,  
And many a desert all untouched by green,  
And many a day that mocks, and night that grieves,  
And many a harvest all bereft of sheaves,  
Bereft of fruit to gather—but the prize  
Is worthy—in the future far it lies,  
And distance of its sorrow hope bereaves ;  
But pain is pain, and bitter are the tears  
We shed, the wreaths of weeping we entwine,  
Sad cypress wreaths made bright with eglantine,  
Around the cherished hopes of vanished years,  
Around our earlier loves, their low-laid biers,  
Their ghosts proceeding in a pale long line.

## ISOLINA.

## I.

O ALL fair women of my boyish days  
With whom I fell in love in sweet rotation,  
I bow my head in humble obligation,  
And lift my voice, and loudly sing your praise ;  
There was an "Isoline" whose memory stays  
Yet with me, and "Die Vernon," I remember  
How heartily to her I did surrender  
My soul, my reverent open-eyed amaze  
At that most fascinating dame ; and others  
A countless host of many coloured eyes  
Whose glances now, alas ! forgetfulness smothers,  
But which once thrilled me thoroughly with surprise,  
And unto thoughts that tender youth supplies,  
All high romantic thoughts, were foster-mothers.

## II.

BUT, chiefest of them all, sweet Isolina  
The heroine of the ' War-Trail' doth remain  
In mind of mine, and even now the pain  
And mingled pleasure of her high demeanour  
In that most perilous time in which I'd seen her  
My memory is potent to retain,  
And her fierce beauty as of dark-eyed Spain  
Is present with me ; when a boy to screen her  
From those wild Indians what would I have done,  
To have been the happy man who brought her back,  
A kiss of Isolina's to have won,  
To have followed furiously the White Horse track ?  
Why, *I* was all the time upon the rack,  
I *felt* upon my lids the fervent sun

## III.

OF Mexico, and through the shadowy waste  
Of mezquite bushes and the flowery plains  
I followed hard the trail with-loosened reins  
And made pursuit of her in hottest haste,  
All tremulous lest half a tress displaced  
By rougher hands might bring to nought our pains ;  
An echo of the agony yet remains,  
A vision of the speed with which we raced  
Across these burning prairies, and a throb,  
Yea, even now a throb of that long kiss  
With which we welcomed back to arms of bliss,  
Inviolatè, her that fate had tried to rob  
Us of ; pure ecstasy indeed was this,  
The ecstasy that endeth in a sob,



## IV.

Too sweet to tarry dry-eyed ; good old tale,  
I thank thee for the pleasure thou hast given  
To hours of boyhood, in that I have striven  
Over thy pages, heart a-beat and pale,  
To one at least thou hast been of avail,  
And of reality his mind hast shriven  
For a time, asunder robe of daylight riven,  
And filled Imagination's swelling sail  
With breezes of romance ; farewell my Queen,  
My early dark-eyed face-flushed Queen of Hearts,  
Tanned with the passion of those Southern parts !  
Alas ! full many a year has rolled between  
Thee and thy boyish knight, and sting of darts  
Of Love far fiercer since his soul has seen.

## ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

I saw a couple courting—and her face  
Was beautiful, and she was half afraid,  
And he, the stronger, rather roughly played  
With fears of hers, and caught in his embrace  
Her form eluding him with lissom grace,  
And clasped again the waist that forward swayed ;  
And so they toyed together, man and maid,  
And filled with sunny love the quiet place  
Where they were seated ; and I looked and thought,  
“She is seated on love’s ladder—it is true,  
Her love, but much remaineth yet to do  
Before love’s hand the flower of love has wrought,  
And to the ladder’s summit she is brought,  
Proceeding rung by rung the stages through !”

## II.

BUT most I marked that strange consenting "Nay"  
Of womanhood, at once her choicest gift,  
The power by which God meant her high to lift  
Our manhood, the sweet power of giving way,  
And chiefest peril ; many a weary day  
Will pass before we learn to reverence  
Those lips of hers that bid a man "go hence"  
While all the time they whisper "Sweetheart stay"  
By something than mere words more potent far—  
Before we learn to reverence the yielding,  
And meet it on our side by courtly shielding  
Of woman from her own malignant star,  
Not caring that her very grace should mar  
Beauty that otherwise she should be wielding.

## III.

It is so beautiful, that readiness  
To yield herself unquestioning, so fair,  
That doubled twenty times should be the care  
With which we harder men ourselves address  
To the task of coaxing forth the coy caress  
That woos us as a blossom woos the air,  
Half fearful yet half eager—it is there,  
But grasp it rudely, *it is there the less.*  
Experiments in love for all the ages  
We have been making, and we see our way  
At last to somewhat of a clearer day,  
To the fresh unfolding of some final pages  
Of Love's portfolio ; its final sway  
In utmost Beauty God himself engages ;

IV.

IN utmost Beauty, Purity as well—

    Twin sisters these, they traverse hand in hand  
    The lengthy avenues of Love's long land,  
And great as is the fall from heaven to hell  
The loss is if a man would either quell  
    To worship one alone ; the latter wears  
    A white rose in her bosom, and *she* bears,  
Her sister, set upon her lips to tell  
    Her fragrance unto each she deigns to kiss,  
A red rose—in the future we shall know  
That Beauty hath a breast as white as snow,  
    That lips of Purity with passionate bliss  
    Are rosy as her sister's, and that this,  
This combination, hath the sunset glow,

## v.

THE fire of the scarlet evening air,  
All its intensity made more intense  
By dazzling clearness free from all offence,  
And not made colourless, but made more fair,  
More beautiful, more passionately rare  
By the white rose petals ; more to be desired  
Than kisses of a cheek by passion fired  
Is such a sweet unbinding of the hair  
Of Beauty ; in that kiss and here alone  
King Passion hath his rights and Beauty too,  
For otherwise she maketh much ado,  
Queen Beauty, roughly hurled from off her throne  
And crushed beneath his gauntlet ; but a few  
Have both the Monarch and his Lady known,

VI.

AND found them fair, she soft as eventide,  
    He burly with the blushes of the noon,  
    For ever humming forth some lusty tune,  
Ready to kiss her if she only sighed,  
She—one with whom it would be sweet to ride  
    Beneath an early rising of the moon,  
    Or listen to the ripple all in tune  
The March Triumphant of a flowing tide ;  
    But let us grasp the hands of King and Queen,  
And be with her on silent summer eves,  
And run a race with Passion 'mid the sheaves,  
    The golden sheaves of Autumn in between  
    At molten noonday, yea, and after, glean  
With her the ears that he the reckless leaves.

## CONFESSION OF MY FAITH.

## I.

LOVE, thou art sweet, but thou art not for me,  
Only to love thee more than other men  
Is mine, a fleeting vision now and then  
Of garments passing rapidly to see,  
But never in thine arms alas ! to be,  
Never to hold thee in a close embrace  
And only see the eyes and not the face,  
So near that all things else are forced to flee  
Save the expression of the life—to die  
Ten thousand deaths ecstatic in a kiss,  
Low at annihilation's feet to lie  
Unconscious in abandonment of bliss—  
The lovers who are capable of this  
By fate are left *for loss of it* to sigh.



## II.

LOVE crowns the careless men who seek her not  
    With hand capricious, but she leaveth those  
    Who loyally the first her service chose  
With tears the path of every day to blot,  
She leaveth them it seemeth quite forgot,  
    The current of her favour onward flows  
    And over heads of former victims goes  
In haste to fertilize some other spot ;  
    But, O my brothers, let us yet be true,  
And tho' she slays us, gives us no relief,  
Yet notwithstanding let us be the chief  
    Of those who on the earth are found to do  
    Her work, and prominently bring to view  
The lineaments that smite us low with grief.

## III.

BECAUSE I love Love I am forced to sing,  
Because Love careth not for me I cry,  
Because she, cruel, heedeth not I sigh,  
Because she spurneth me my hands I wring  
And this confession of my faith I bring  
To lay before the laughter of her eye ;  
In vain to other goddesses I try  
To turn, I cannot rid me of the sting  
Of rosy lips that kissed me long ago,  
I have not power now behind to fling  
Love's influence, and Love no more to know—  
Her arrows have a certainty to cling,  
And to the heart itself their way they wing  
Once she hath put a finger to her bow.

IV.

BECAUSE I love Love I am cast aside,  
Because I found her face exceeding fair,  
And straightway bowed my neck her yoke to wear,  
And in her train obedient to ride,  
Because for further ecstasy I sighed,  
And in the forefront of the fight to bear  
Her colours, she hath chosen down to tear  
The banner of the heart of him who cried  
For her, and for her only—it is left  
The praises of my Queen alone to sing  
In that I love her more than anything,  
Though of her own sweet self, it seems, bereft,  
And from the savour of her presence cleft  
Aside, because I foolish sought to bring

## v.

To her a larger nosegay than the rest  
    . As an offering—well, it cannot but seem hard  
        That having once received the post of bard  
To Beauty, and unfeathered one's own nest,  
And having caught a glimpse of being blest,  
        These obstacles one's further route retard,  
        And barriers insurmountable have marred  
The course which Fate once seemèd to suggest ;  
        It cannot but seem hard that when I craved  
The kiss of Beauty, full, from mouth to mouth,  
        A kiss upon the forehead she hath saved,  
And nothing else for me—the withering south  
Wind makes in sandy deserts no such drouth  
        As this wherewith my being she hath paved.

VI.

THE doom of loving Love more than the rest  
 Is never to attain the thing you seek,  
 At most to get a kiss upon the cheek  
 Never a home in Love's own inmost nest,  
 Never the certainty of "being blest,"  
 Possession of a cup without a leak  
 From which to drink, but one perpetual shriek  
 Of unsuccessful searching for the "Best ;"  
 The doom of men who have the poet's gift :  
 Is constant failure, misery, in that they  
 Must fail to get the thing for which they pray  
 And be content with but a mere make-shift :  
 It may be that for these the clouds will lift,  
 For *even these*, at some far future day,

## VII.

BUT nothing now is left us but to wail,  
In that we see, and seeing, cannot grasp,  
In that we strive perpetually to clasp,  
And in that as perpetually we fail ;  
Because we are not clothed with coat of mail  
As other men, and hides are not so tough,  
We suffer more from the embraces rough  
Of countless stormy breezes that assail ;  
In that we love the Beautiful the more,  
And harder to attain to it have tried,  
The further is it absent from our side,  
*The less we have it*—gone is what we saw  
But shortly since, and distant looms the shore  
That only yesterday we held in pride.

## MY OWN DART.

I LOVE Love, therefore am I far apart  
From Love—because she's everything to me  
The less am I allowed her face to see,  
The less am able to outpour my heart,  
Permitted less to ease its aching smart  
And low to fall and say, "I worship thee ;"  
If I loved less the fates would gracious be,  
But loving much transfixed by mine own dart  
Of over great anxiety I die ;  
I cannot get to clutch the thing I would,  
If it were possible—ah ! if I could  
Attain to it, extended in a sigh  
My being, all of it, would prostrate lie,  
Fainting for joy at such a gained good !

## THE DISCOVERY OF LOVE.

A YOUTH was walking in the early hours  
Of life along a garden alley fair,  
When on a sudden, lo ! a rose was there,  
Unseen by him before among the flowers  
That wove a many-coloured mist of bowers  
And redolent of sweetness made the air ;  
He came the next day, but would hardly dare  
To hope the night's attendant band of showers  
Had spared the rose, but lo ! the rose was red,  
And fragrant, far more fragrant than before,  
And fuller petals had unfolded more,  
And round about it brighter bloom was shed ;  
The rose the lover fondly feared was dead  
Was blushing beauty to the very core.



## IN THE FUTURE.

I FANCY somewhere waits for every one  
    A bride, a bridegroom, far in future years ;  
    The way thereunto sodden deep with tears  
It may be, or parched fiery dry with sun  
Of lonely misery—but when 'tis done  
    With gladness each shall garland memory's biers,  
    And make away with faces of old fears,  
And hail the advent of new life begun ;  
    And such a spot is waiting on the road  
Of each of us, a place where three paths meet,  
Two sad ones into this that shall be sweet  
    Converging, towards which our foreboding showed  
    That ever since we can remember flowed  
The expectant eager current of our feet.

## POETRY.

I LOVE it, but I cannot find a voice,  
I cannot bead my thoughts upon the strings  
Of that soft lyre wherewith the Goddess sings,  
I cannot sorrow rightly, nor rejoice  
Aright—her garment over me she flings ;

I love Love, but I cannot reach her hair,  
Though lips of mine are burning with desire  
With kisses to enkindle in a fire  
What I, caressing once, once found so fair—  
No striving of the spirit brings me nigher.

## MISS THACKERAY'S "REINE."

## I.

THANK Heaven ! that there still are left a few  
     Right noble women who know how to *feel*—  
     If there are none *in fact*, why let *them* steal  
 Possession of our hearts, the heroic crew  
 Who in *the fictions* which alone are *true*  
     Alone give unto mankind cause to kneel  
     In adoration—let the novelists heal  
 The age, providing us with Passion new ;  
     If women whom we daily see around  
     Are white and feeble, most unreal dames,  
 For God's sake let us bury knightly aims  
     Along with knightly stories underground,  
     And when they seek us, let us still be found  
 Insensible to any but the claims

## II.

Of storied damsels—such as noble Reine  
    Who set my heart a-scribbling in this fashion ;  
    I wonder whether such a wealth of passion,  
Save only in recesses of the brain  
Of genius, on earth doth yet remain,  
    Whether a woman fit to tie the shoe  
    Of Reine of Petitport *is ever true*,  
Or only fancied in the painted pane  
    Of High Imagination ; but since one,  
• One worthy woman, only think my brothers,  
Has struggled into life, we'll hope for others,  
    Yea, for a reign of Goddesshood begun,  
    That the Romances that have such a run  
May unto passionate romance be mothers !

## ABSTRACT TO CONCRETE.

## I.

MY Queen, I have not quite forgotten you—  
     Though abstract thoughts have occupied my pen  
     Of late, I turn towards you now and then,  
 And never fail to find refreshment new ;  
 As opens out a flower towards the blue  
     When early morning chases shades of night,  
     So when your beauty, sweet one, comes in sight  
 I put aside the work I had to do  
     And open out Imagination's arms  
 To grasp the graceful image that I see —  
 To grasp at all events *the thought* of thee.  
     That of itself a mind perturbèd calms,  
     And, exercising a magician's charms,  
 Bids pale Philosophy take wings and flee.

## II.

PHILOSOPHY *is* pale—she is a bride

To some who rosier lips have never seen,

Who never in the company have been,

Have never trodden, silent, at the side

Of Beauty ; had they, they *must* have defied

Another to assert herself as Queen ;

The Marble Goddess hath a countenance keen,

And she is gentle, and her hands are wide

In distribution, *but*—one day I saw,

I caught a glimpse, high seated in a wood,

Of Beauty, and I tell you she is good,

Fair as a rose, and free from any flaw,

And in a moment, lo ! I loved her more

Than the other in a century any could.

*SUGGESTED BY MR. MAC DONALD'S POEM.*

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LOVE'S ORDEAL.

HE felt the darkness—and he felt them fold  
    Around him, arms of her who loved him so  
    That she was certain Youth yet lay below  
The aged garment that she did behold  
Encircling him grown withered, wrinkled, old—  
    That she was strong extremity to know,  
    Yea, strong to cherish with her breast of snow  
His breast by this time earthy, clay-like, cold ;  
Another way the story may be told  
    For fades from arms of ours Queen Beauty's glow  
    As frequently, and sore excess of woe  
Is over eyelids sick with longing rolled,  
    Heavy with fainting for a sight of her

Who has withdrawn the sunset of her face,  
And left in heaven not a single trace,  
    No gold-tipped cloud to show that she was there,  
    That but a moment since the sky was fair  
And crimson colour flooded every place.



## THE CHASE OF BEAUTY.

## I.

WE follow her fast, we follow her through the gloom,  
We follow her through the gladsome glare of day,  
And through the evening shadows sad we stray,  
We are ready to follow her even to the tomb  
If only light of eyes of hers may loom  
From out the dark and dance across the way  
Paved with the bones of poet-heroes—they  
Whose hearts the passionate constant fires consume ;  
We follow her hard—she glances round at times,  
But once or twice in a thousand years or so,  
And sets some singer's being in a glow,  
And burns from out his soul a rage of rhymes  
That ring perhaps some twenty centuries' chimes  
And through the mouths of men for ages go.

## II.

SHE glanced at Homer, and his soul was glad,  
And straight the poet seized his pen and sang,  
And straight the aisles of all the centuries rang  
With echoes of the vision he had had ;  
Sonorous sound to sound he sought to add,  
His verse is martial with metallic clang,  
With shattering of spears, and with the pang  
Of heroes pierced, nor lacks a melody sad,  
Sweet, plaintive, as of evening, when he treats  
Of Hector and Andromache, a pair  
Gigantically shadowed in the air  
Of early Greece ; the passionate pulsing beats  
Of every human heart a heart that meets  
Awake a throb responsive everywhere.

## III.

IN those old days her giants had the earth,  
Men strong to love and strong to smite as well,  
And straight from heaven the fire of valour fell  
And unto man's divinity gave birth,  
And unto all large-hearted human mirth,  
The story of the world was sweet to tell ;  
Men had not learned that love was made to sell,  
They held it (strange to say) of greater worth  
Than gold—*our* gold that buys for each of us  
With short delay his inmost heart's desire ;  
Thrice happy are we, brothers, we are higher  
Than these, we fear not, let the fools discuss  
What heroism is and make a fuss,  
*Wealth* lifts *our* world to heaven's heights far nigher.

## THOSE FLOWERS

I HAVE them still, those flowers—ah ! those flowers,  
Thy blossom in my heart not withered yet  
Though more than twelve months 'tis since they  
were wet

With tender nourishing of northern showers,  
Since they were beautiful in northern bowers ;  
Sweet savours even now of soft regret  
Hang round them, and a fragrant misty net  
Of memory having most miraculous powers  
To wake the past and bring it near again ;  
Ah ! that sweet past of mine, that most sad past,  
Most sad, most sweet, set thick with thorns of pain,  
With many a cloudy canopy overcast,  
Yet bearing roses one or two to last,  
A smile or two predestined to remain.

## BLUE WEATHER.

A BEAUTIFUL blue day ! I would that I  
 Were pure as is to-day the cloudless sky,  
     Transparent as the spotless autumn air,  
 That unto Beauty I might be more nigh,  
     Myself more like her, nobler and more fair  
 And stronger ; low before her feet to lie,  
     Watching the downcast ripples of her hair  
 The endless fire of her face, I sigh,  
 Too happily placed to care to move or cry,  
 Too happy even to pray or wonder *why*  
     I am happy, only knowing that I share  
 The nectar of the glances of her eye !

## THE WORLD.

WE are moved, it seems, by never changing law  
Towards *the better*, with *the best* in view  
In the distance ; mist-enfolded mountains new,  
Strange valleys our forefathers never saw  
Gleam wonderfully before us—passing o'er  
Each ridge another magically blue,  
Folded in mystery, cuts the horizon through,  
And with discovery's passion even more  
Unquenchably inspires us ; so we wander  
Towards the future, careless of the past,  
Each age outflanking utterly the last,  
Working new miracles for us to ponder,  
While ever those sweet misty mountains yonder  
Entice the feet of Progress forward fast.

## A MEETING.

I PRAY you kiss me once, my queen, to show  
That all the past is merged in present bliss,  
And kiss me twice to make more certain this,  
And once again to signify the flow  
The happy future undivided glow  
Of Love ; make each kiss keener than the last  
To indicate the pallor of the past  
Compared with rosy days we two shall know ;  
A kiss for present, future, past, for each  
Was good ; the past was lit by expectation  
Striving across the waves of tribulation  
Unto the present arms of hope to reach,  
Sweet is the present, blessed beyond speech,  
Sweeter each future than the former station.

## THE GOVERNESS.

HAVE you been lonely, darling ? So have I,  
And weary, oh ! *so* sick and sad at times—  
I used to hum the old familiar rhymes  
That we, do you remember, used to try  
Upon the pianoforte on the sly—  
Delight ecstatic of those youthful crimes !  
Most marvellous melody of those drawing-room  
chimes  
Sometimes in the morning no one else being by !  
So sorrowfully they came back to me  
Laden with fragrance of the vanished past—  
I thought at the time it was too good to last,  
That such excessive happiness *must* flee,  
And *so it did*, but now hath followed fast  
A far more radiant reality.



## GLANCES.

## I.

SOME of those looks I never shall forget,  
Some of those looks you gave me long ago ;  
To you at all events, I own, I owe  
Remembrance sweeter even than regret ;  
When I recall your eyes my eyes are wet,  
You used to glance at me sometimes just *so*—  
Just *so* it was—ah ! *you* would hardly know,  
But *I* remember how the lightnings met—  
The sudden mutual flashing of the eyes  
When one struck strongly on a common chord  
That used the other's action to applaud ;  
Though unto height of threescore years I rise  
And every other pleasure life denies  
I have that recollection for reward,

## II.

REWARD of having lived and sorrowed much  
And sinned and suffered ; why it was worth while  
Creating one to get but one such smile,  
To feel the passionate fervour of a touch  
Of hands that used to send an electric shock  
That shivered into pieces the rent rock  
Of my poor heart in most emphatic style ;  
If now my life is desert, yet an isle,  
A green oasis, blossoms in the past,  
And worth the agony of all the rest  
It is with one such vision to be blessed,  
By one such memory to be followed fast,  
To have *one radiant recollection* cast  
Across the raging waters sore-distressed

## III.

OF present sad existence, to have known  
At least in dreams how wonderful is Love  
When Beauty, girded sweetly, sits above,  
The occupant of some soft grassy throne,  
How rapturous a thing it is to own  
Yourself defeated, over head and ears  
Immersed in Passion's sea of smiles and tears,  
When some one else's heart is there to moan  
The music of response ; at least I say  
That Love is Beautiful, that Love is Fair,  
And rosy is the circling of the air  
Around the heads of lovers in the way ;  
If now in loveless paths my footsteps stray  
Yet once *for me* the paths perfumèd were.

## THE PURPLE WINGS.

## I.

If on my shoulders never shall be seen  
The puissant purple fluttering of the wings  
Wherewith the poet beateth as he sings  
The high celestial atmospheric sheen,  
If I may never say the thing I mean,  
And only half an ear my audience brings,  
And misdirected are my ambitious slings,  
And no Goliath blazing eyes between  
My stone hits full—at least she lets me die,  
Queen Beauty, as my gentle brother died  
Who lies on the Italian mountain-side,  
In one long passion of an outpoured sigh  
That seemeth tremblingly to wonder why  
The kiss of satisfaction is denied

II.

To her lovers—why we cover sheets in vain  
    But seldom split the wand we have for mark,  
    And are but wanderers struggling in the dark  
Full of a language that we can't make plain  
To ordinary ears, although we rain  
    Down words in torrents, saying, ' Brother, hark !'  
    And why we cannot blow to a fire the spark  
That ever in our bosoms doth remain  
    Unchanged, unquenchable ; 'tis either light  
That gladdeneth us with ecstasy past speech,  
Or else a flame whose roots deep-founded reach  
    Abysses of our being out of sight,  
    Burning our fibres, ruthless, day and night  
Till we take up our parable and preach.

## DELL' INFERNO.

## I.

O SEA of all the sorrow of the earth,  
     Thou rollest wide gray-garmented sad waves  
     Across a mute metropolis of graves,  
 Thou takest from us, but dost not give birth  
 To other than a melancholy mirth—  
     Who hath been salted in thy cruel caves  
     To the end the scar of his remembrance saves  
 And holdeth but of little passing worth  
     The occasional gleams of a most sorry sun  
 That striveth through the mists to beat a way,  
 He knoweth that the evening will be gray,  
     He knoweth that the sand of time will run  
 No faster, *though he shake the glass* and pray  
     Existence to give over and have done.

## II.

No faster—though he plead with piteous tears—

For each shall struggle his allotted span,

Enjoy and suffer, each as best he can,

Performing a pale pilgrimage of years

That slowly build a greatening pile of biers

Above the hopes with which the youth began

His fervent course, when first his chariot ran

Triumphantly, not knowing aught of fears ;

The roses now have shed their summer leaves,

The bloom is faded, shorn the strength of limb,

The eye that flashed with brilliance oncè is dim,

    Droop heads of desolation sodden sheaves

Over which hangs a cloudy sky that grieves

The swallows who in low sad circuit swim.

## III.

ARE these things true ? Is Beauty not a fable  
Invented by the misty minds of men  
As seasoning for a supper now and then ?  
Hath Goodness, think you, a foundation stable,  
And is there other than a flimsy cable  
Connecting us with lands beyond the sky  
Of which men babble when they come to die  
Because they find themselves no longer able  
For pleasure upon earth ? Is God a dream,  
And harmony, the poet's crown of bays,  
And other crowns as well that all men praise  
That for a season satisfying seem ?  
And is it merely a nervous self-wrought gleam  
That fire of Love that flashed upon the ways,



## IV.

AND turned the very paving stones to gold ?

Then let us sink into our beds and sleep,

Or cast ourselves upon the grass and weep

Until another Deluge we behold

The hideous beauty-lacking fields enfold

Through which we cripples, shorn of deity, creep ;

What is there left for us but one long deep

Draught of annihilation icy cold ?

For what we used to worship is away,

And we ourselves are nowise worshipful,

And we have lost the art the strings to pull

That move aside the curtains of the day,

And we have lost the knowledge how to pray—

Of misery's bitter herbs our hands are full ;

## V.

THE apples of our love have turned sour,  
We see no longer what of old we saw,  
Nor is the vision present any more  
Of Beauty holding in her hand the flower,  
The scent of which her grace was wont to shower  
Our poet's rainbow-coloured garments o'er ;  
The voices of our souls are very sore  
For *lack* of singing, yea, for lack of power  
Lark-like to rise into the morning sky ;  
No longer overhead the air is blue,  
Cold shafts of raindrops pierce us through and through  
Until we raise an exceeding bitter cry,  
And crouching forehead downward, wait to die  
For want of any *living* thing to do.

## VI.

YET they were sweet, the old familiar days  
    In which we trod firmfooted on the earth,  
    When lips were resonant with frequent mirth,  
And mouths were moved with frequent lilt of lays,  
And hands were able thanksgiving to raise  
    To Heaven; when we were strong and all went well,  
    Our foot-soles ignorant as yet of hell,  
And eyes not shrivelled with the infernal blaze ;  
    The memory abideth ; even here,  
Amid the scorching gloomy aisles of heat  
Wherein we wander, cool old shades are sweet,  
    And in the pressing presence of a fear  
    That giveth us no rest we still hold dear  
Earth's grasses grateful to uncovered feet ;

## VII.

We still remember pleasant hours of noon  
In summer, and the happy river-sides  
Where ripple unceasing after ripple glides,  
The tender radiance of the August moon  
That breatheth down a sweet delirious swoon  
Of ecstasy, and eloquence provides  
For lovers sailing down the abundant tides  
That move the boat of Passion to a tune  
Of fairy-fingered music ; we are glad,  
With feet enshrined upon the fiery bars  
Of agony that every feature mars,  
To recollect that even we have had,  
We sorrowfullest sinners, we who are sad,  
A sight of some sweet clusters of the stars

## VIII.

OF Love's innumerable constellations ;

These lips once quivered at a maiden's kiss,

That now must tremble at the tyrant hiss,

The steam-engine approach, of hostile nations

Of gad-flies of remorse that take their stations

Upon the neck and shoulders of a man

Bare for the torment, where each stinger can,

Each to pursue his noisome occupations ;

Once we were free from these—free as a child

Who having wandered from his mother's arms

Plucks flower and flower, ignorant of harms

In any, till with voice and gesture mild

She calls him back, and soon his eyes have smiled

Themselves to sleep forgetful of alarms.

## THE WAKING OF BEAUTY.

## I.

TAKE courage, friends, for she hath but been sleeping  
    These eighteen centuries underneath the snow ;  
    She whom we loved and worshipped long ago  
In Hellas, for whose face we have been weeping,  
And long look-out the sons of men are keeping,  
    Shall burn upon us with her early glow  
    Of sweetest rosy gladness ; we shall know  
Her resurrection—we who have been reaping  
    The bitter harvest of her absent shame ;  
From end to end of our awakened earth  
Shall roll upon the wings of morning mirth  
    The great reverberation of her name,  
    And she shall rule the ages, she the same  
To whom the foam of Grecian waves gave birth ;

## II.

YEA, she shall rule the ages ; we can bear  
    No longer want of comeliness on high,  
    We turn to seek the more congenial eye,  
To breathe the kinder more familiar air  
Of Beauty ; *we will do it*—though we tear  
    The creeds asunder with a Titan's sigh,  
    Though to the edge of hell we hover nigh,  
And all the weak and puling populace scare,  
    As one who lifted in a high balloon  
Sees all the many-coloured robe of lands  
And seas and goodly forests, as he stands  
    Torn upwards in a swift aerial swoon,  
    While to and fro the admiring people moon  
Gaping amazement in concentrate bands.

## UNDIVIDED SERVICE.

WE have to give her eyes, and hearts, and hands,  
Sweet poet brothers, lovers of my soul ;  
We have to crown her with the living whole  
Of power that each in his degree commands ;  
Silent and smiling before each she stands  
Ready to lay cool palms upon his brow  
If only he will swear allegiance now  
Renouncing love of home, and life, and lands,  
Renouncing popularity and praise  
And great laudation of most petty minds  
And all the vulgar hubbub of the ways ;  
The man that doth this thing most surely finds  
The earth as fresh as when drawing up the blinds  
Upon a rain-washed summer morn we gaze.



KATE AT THE WINDOW, "GRIFFITH  
GAUNT."

A MOST sweet picture ! Kate—the fire—the moon—  
 The ivy-tree—with Griffith Gaunt below,  
 All softened by the tender light of snow,  
 And set by Love to a dim delicious tune  
 That swelled into a stronger symphony soon,  
 Into a fiercer more ecstatic glow—  
 Such painting we have not been let to know  
 Of late ; the age is waking from the swoon  
 Of artificiality that since  
 The great wide human grand Shakespearian time  
 Has given us jingles for melodious rhyme  
 And made poor nature's delicate features wince ;  
 Approach us, rouse us, keen-eyed Fairy Prince,  
*And kiss us out of centuries of crime.*

## WHAT THE SONNET NEEDS.

"To write a Sonnet is an easy thing,"  
 Says somebody, "there are but fourteen lines—  
 Once get the knack that word with word combines  
 And you will soon be qualified to sing,  
 And o'er your shoulders rightfully may fling  
 The mantle of a poet." I say, *No*;  
 To write a Sonnet first through fire and snow  
 Your heart must pass due melody to bring  
 From out the inert mass; some lady fair  
 You have to love with a half hopeless pain,  
 (This serves to give the "yearning" of the strain),  
 While now and then a glimmer of her hair  
 Waved in the distance, serveth back to bear  
 The power of soaring high in song again.

## A VISION.

I HAVE a vision of a lady bending  
     Over a wounded warrior clad in mail,  
     Blood-stained, sore smitten, weak and very pale—  
 A vision of sweet delicate fingers tending  
 His feebleness, a fair physician sending  
     Throughout his veins a draught that doth avail :  
     And ever and anon I see her fail  
 And faint half backward, woman's courage ending  
     For a season ; *then he smileth*—such a smile !  
 Great eyes of fire glowing back within  
 The head encased in panoply of tin,  
     A smile as of a child not knowing guile ;  
     For *she* hath pitied him who mocked him while  
 Unwounded, *which is worth a death to win.*

## CROWNS.

THERE are many crowns ; the poet's wreath of bays,  
     The warrior's laurel and the monarch's gold,  
     The twisted sweet rose garlands that enfold  
 The brow of Beauty—they were wont to praise  
 In Greece the parsley and the oaken sprays  
     And the grey sad wild olive we are told,<sup>1</sup>  
     But if I had my choice I'd choose to hold  
 As a reward for any tuneful lays  
     I may have had the grace to sing—a wreath—  
 A wreath of *woven ferns and meadows-sweet*—  
     And if you ask me why, I will not say—  
 But such a simple crown for me is meet,  
 And memories lurk therein with golden feet  
     Bringing back *one unforgotten summer day*.

## THE POET'S CROWN.

AH ! they may sneer, the men who do not know  
     The glory of the things the poet sees,  
     Who feel no magic in a western breeze,  
 Who see no marvel in a sheet of snow,  
 No mystery-mountains in the sunset glow,  
     Who hear no lisp of voices in the trees,  
     Who sit and sip their port and take their ease,  
 Not feeling either ecstasy or woe  
     Of any exalted attitude—but I  
 Would rather wear the crown the poet wins  
     Than any other underneath the sky—  
*Save only that*, the sweetest gift of all,  
 Which on a favoured lover letteth fall  
     His mistress by a sparkle of her eye.

## DEATH'S LIPS AND PALMS.

THERE are two crowns I covet most of all—

One that the fair white brows of poets wear,

That singers only have the right to share,

The other that a woman's grace lets fall

Upon the head of him she wills to call

Her knight, and whom she singleth out to bear

Her banner ; but as yet alas ! my hair

Is neither shadowed by a laurel pall,

Nor have my lips been crowned with Love's long  
kiss ;

I wait for both—I wait the most for this ;

I wait—and it may be that no warm grasp

May round my living brow the former clasp,

That I may never know the latter bliss,

Till lips and brow Death's lips and rough hands rasp.

## L O V E S.

LOVES vary ; one is like a summer night  
Just after rainfall, rich with fragrant dew,  
Another Love is like a shy recluse  
Who shuns the glaring openness of light  
And folds his happiness from public sight  
Wandering the woods at eventide to muse,  
Love is a flower of vari-coloured hues,  
Passion an eagle of uncertain might ;  
Some lips there are that tremble, others close  
Upon their rapture, faces that grow pale  
With longing, others shrouded in a veil  
Of reticence, or flushing as a rose ;  
This seeks to hide emotion, that one shows  
In every lineament Love's written tale.

## THE POET.

THE poet wore a wreath of many years  
Of labour and of agony of thought,  
And straightway he the fresh green bay leaf brought  
That *she* might crown him whom with outpoured tears  
And strong solicitude and anxious fears  
His forward footsteps had unceasing sought ;  
*He found her not*, and all the fame was nought,  
And as the sturdier steed the higher rears,  
He bounded, vehement in passion, back  
And tore the bay leaves—slowly—one by one—  
Dropping the crown his worthiness had won  
In crumpled pieces on the dusty track ;  
What *is* the world to him who finds it lack  
The warmth and radiance of Beauty's Sun ?



## WREATHS.

A WREATH of oak leaves for a runner's head,  
     Gold for the monarch, laurel for the brow  
     Of the successful warrior I trow,  
 Bay leaves upon the poet should be shed,  
 And o'er the tresses of a Genius dead\*  
     To place white roses his admirers bow—  
     Towards another coronet I vow  
 Allegiance, to a strange ambition wed,  
     A crown of woven ferns and meadow-sweet ;  
 I cannot tell you why I choose this thing,  
 But go ye into summer woods and bring  
     The flowers of my choice with speedy feet,  
     And I will sweep the lyre with finger fleet,  
 For very love of recollection sing.

\* Over the tomb of Charles Dickens they placed a chaplet of roses.

## A VISION OF THE PAST.

I HAVE a Vision, clad in green and gold,  
Of the Past that seemeth very sweet at times,  
And wakeneth an echo of old rhymes—  
*Green* for the leafage and the mossy mould  
And ferny foliage amid which we strolled,  
*Gold* for the sunlight falling branches through,  
Falling upon a face as bright—that's *you*—  
And mountain-chesnut berries that we hold ;  
Do *you* remember ? *I* shall not forget,  
Though now ('tis in November that I write)  
In that sweet woodland all the leaves are wet,  
Symbolical of that most sorry blight .  
Which has thought good my withered being to smite  
Leaving an antique savour of regret.

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOVE.

THEY sat together in an autumn wood,  
 These two—they were not very old you know—  
 She on a mossy pinnacle, he below,  
 Discussing (do you think they understood  
 The subject, wise ones, ye who wear the hood  
 Of Learning ?) the Philosophy of Love !  
 The lady lecturer from the rock above  
 Discoursing, he replying as best he could ;  
 Ah well ! one “learned love from a lady’s eyes”  
 Says Shakespeare—this man’s task was sweeter far,  
 More highly privileged are they that are  
 Permitted to become in love-lore wise  
 By teaching of the lips, albeit in sighs  
 The lesson endeth, having left a scar !

## THE PROMISED LAND.

## I.

LET some one else achieve it ! it was fair  
     The poetic purpose that I had in view,  
     Sweet as the early sprinkling of the dew,  
 Fresh as the savour of a mountain-air,  
 That distant hint of bay-leaves for the hair,  
     The remote announcement of a work to do ;  
     I stood bare-headed underneath the blue  
 Ready a stern allegiance to swear  
     To Beauty—but alas ! it has passed away,  
 And I am cold and shiver and am sad  
     To think that lips of hers have signed a “ Nay ;”  
 I give them up ! the joys I might have had,  
 But I would *see* them—from a present bad,  
     A cloudy foggy damp November day.

II.

I WOULD look to the summer that there might have been ;

I do not groan for loss alone, I mourn

The *realization* of my rapture torn

From out my mind, I weep for loves *unseen* ;

I might have wandered with my Forest Queen

Through dim arched aisles of mystery, sunlit glades,

And sat with her beneath the beechen shades,

And trodden in time the bending grasses green,

And pressed soft palms upon the mossy floors,

Seated, and gazing upward in her eyes

That put to shame the efforts of the skies

When the strong sun has kissed the cloudy doors

Of heaven into Beauty—being wise

I might have won such ecstasy I ween.

## III.

BUT I was foolish, therefore have I failed ;  
And yet I know not if the fault is mine  
Entirely, or how much to Fate's design  
Is due, for force of circumstance assailed  
With vehemence the fortress of my Will ;  
But I will cease from groaning and be still,  
If only this one thing for which I pine,  
This boon for which incessant I have wailed  
Be mine, to see as in a Panorama—  
As unto Moses it was given to see  
The Promised Land of Canaan that he  
Was ne'er to enter in a warrior's armour—  
If I may but behold my being's drama,  
My '*might have been*' expanded before me !

## SHAKESPEARIAN.

I SAID, "my love is sweet, and I will seek  
    Whereto to liken her—her eyes are grey  
As the grey water mingled in a creek  
    With green, and greener than the seas are they,  
And browner than the golden moor-fed stream,  
    Her hands are wonderful, her lips are red,  
And as the light of morning is the beam  
    That, as a coronet, crowns my lady's head ;  
She hath a way to walk with maiden grace,  
    She hath the flushing of a mountain rose,  
As some sweet lily in a shady place  
    My lady, lissome and most queenly, grows,  
Waiting for one to pluck the tender flower  
Whose beauty floods with white the garden bower."

## P O E S Y.

## I.

SWEET POESY, I love thee ; as a bride  
    Plays with a lover's locks and crowns his hair  
    With kisses, finding him exceeding fair,  
So do thou prattle, sweet one, by my side,  
And let me on thy gentle converse glide  
    As softly as a swallow on the air ;  
    Be kind to me, let me some secrets share,  
Thou knowest for how long my soul hath sighed  
    After thy Beauty, shall I not attain  
One day the inner vision of thy face ?  
    Are all a poet's passionate pleadings vain ?  
—I care for nothing else if but thy grace  
Be present, making summer of each place,  
    Wringing a melody out of every pain.



## II.

LET us be joinèd hand in hand and go  
    Along the secret dim mysterious shore  
    Where wave succeedeth wave for evermore,  
Each following each with an incessant flow  
Of music most bewitching, let us row  
    Beside strange banks with a half-sleepy oar  
    Under a moon of magic, and explore  
The world together, say, shall it be so?  
    The glamour of the mornings and the nights  
Of sacred summer we will make our own,  
    My Poesy, the laughter of the dawn,  
    The music thrilled from mouth of midday's horn,  
All lusty loves ecstatic and delights,  
    And, best of all for me, thy silvery tone !

## P R A I S E   B E A U T Y.

## I.

PRAISE Beauty ! so say I—although the seas  
Of loss of being choke the effort down,  
And universes armed against me frown,  
I stand upright and speak the thing I please,  
Not bending feeble supplication knees  
To any petty bully of the town,  
Be he philosopher or sage or clown,  
Whether his glances petrify or freeze ;  
Praise Beauty ! and if Beauty loves me not,  
And never on my brow may cool be laid  
Aught sweeter than the sorry cypress shade,  
Nor pointed tips of bay leaves touch the spot  
With inward brain-desires and panting hot,  
Yet unto Beauty be my tribute paid !

## II.

AH ! sweet one, why thus lure us on by day,  
And send us flying phantom dreams by night  
That lips may smart for unattained delight ?  
Why, treacherous, teach our vehement tongues to pray  
Just to annihilate us with a "Nay,"  
A cold still countenance after smiles so bright ?  
Sweet, thou wast rosy once, why now be white,  
Thou who did'st hasten towards us, why delay ?  
Why tarry thus the backward lingering wheels  
Of Beauty's chariot harnessed to the sun,  
And swift by rights as dawn's approach begun,  
Or echoes following hard triumphant peals  
When all the brain brimful of rapture reels  
With melodies that beat and burst and stun ?

## NORTH AND SOUTH.

THEY met beneath the darkening orange trees  
    Upon a perfect evening of the South ;  
    Just light enough was left for mouth to mouth  
To find a gentle way when one might please,  
And in accordance laughed a lover's breeze  
    Across the ripples of the broad blue bay  
    That, softening into night, before them lay,  
And washed toward their silent resting knees :  
    The one was fair with all the lusty bloom  
Blown upon faces by the Northern winds,  
But she showed that pale passion which the minds  
    Of sweet Italia's daughters doth consume,  
    When dark eyes serve to fill the features' room  
Covering the countenance with most fervent blinds.

## THE POET'S GRAVE.

## FIRST VERSION.

"He hath sung sweetly," so the Lady said,  
     Sweet Poesy, who stood above his grave  
     With tears and claspèd sorrowing hands that gave  
 A gentle tribute to her hero dead—  
 "He hath sung sweetly, let the bays be shed  
     About the brows of one more prophet brave,  
     He hath sung sweetly, let a rose-wreath wave  
 Around the eager brain that beauty fed ;  
     He hath sung sweetly," and she bent, the Queen,  
 To press upon his lips a farewell kiss,  
 But started back—for—what a thing is this !  
     The poet's eyes to open slow are seen,  
     For—*Beauty once attained is life* I ween,  
 And *death* it is the beautiful to miss.

## THE POET'S GRAVE.

## SECOND VERSION.

"He hath sung sweetly," so she said, and came,

The Lady of the bays, to where he lay

Quiet beneath the evening shadows gray,

While in the west the sun was as a flame—

"He hath sung sweetly," said the gentle dame,

And—half a tear fell sudden on the clay,

"He hath sung sweetly, Poetry must pay

This tribute to a soul of lofty aim ;"

But as she said the words, behold, a form

Most strong, most beautiful, before her stood,

The Poet, risen from his coffin-wood,

Alive, heart beating, head conceiving, warm—

For—Beauty wept for him, *for whom he died*,

And therefore was he present at her side.

## THE POET'S GRAVE.

## THIRD VERSION.

"He hath sung sweetly, he hath died for me,"  
     Said Beauty, bending o'er the poet dead,  
     "He hath sung sweetly, round my hero's head  
 A wreath of farewell bay-leaves let there be,  
 Lilies and roses likewise, in that he  
     Was white as well as unto passion wed,  
     And lastly, let a pearly tear be shed  
 In that I loved him—yea, *I do love thee*  
     Thou poor pale corpse." No sooner said than lo!  
 Across his cheek there runs a rosy flush  
     As of the life returning, as the snow  
 At advent of the morning 'gins to blush,  
 For—*where are Love and Beauty* sideways rush  
     Death's waters in a horror-stricken flow.

## A CONTEMPLATED VOYAGE.

Across the blue Atlantic to a land  
Where thought is free, and men may act and speak,  
And roses blossom in a woman's cheek  
Without the pruning of Convention's hand,  
I am going—so good-bye my native strand,  
Good-bye to you for many a month and week ;  
Before I see you let me scale the peak  
Of Chimborazo, by Niagara stand,  
Across the Rocky Mountains sit astride,  
Make havoc of the Himmalaya chain,  
And perhaps before I turn me home again  
At a canter through Australian deserts ride,  
Or tame into a steed some zebra pied  
Caught traversing an Oriental plain.



## SWEET!

I HAVE not written sonnets lately, sweet,  
     About you, have I? what am I to say,  
     What melody wring from out my brain to-day  
 Worthy your soft approving smile to meet,  
 What flower of novel song before your feet  
     Already deep in blossoms shall I lay,  
     A rose-bud, or a white acacia spray,  
 Or golden globèd lily incomplete?  
     Nay, sweet, on second thoughts it shall be none  
 Of these, cast glance of memory back my Queen,  
 Be quick to apprehend the thing I mean  
     When I recall *a sprig of heath* undone  
     By careless fingers underneath a sun  
 Of afternoon, and *what you asked for* glean.

“SHE KEPT ME AWAKE LIKE A TUNE OF  
MOZART.”—*Keats*.

AND *she* kept *me* awake, but not the same  
The vision, or the phantasy of sound  
That kept my sleepless senses still unbound  
And all my heart encircled by a flame,  
But rather as if some splendid flower came  
Waving a magic mist of perfume round,  
And occupied my being itself and wound  
About me with a most imperious claim,  
Coloured as is a choice kaleidoscope ;  
And ever and anon the clouds would rise  
And, as a moon, would beam before my eyes  
That far from closing ever wider ope,  
The form that to the craving clasp of hope  
Pursuing, she retreating still denies.

## THE SUPERNAL LOVELINESS.

OUTSIDE a wood upon a summer morn

Men were disputing—"Why, I saw her plain,"

Said one, "a violet robe—without a stain

Was hers, and in her hand a lily borne—"

"Nay, but she held a golden hunting horn,"

The second said ; the third—"She did retain

A rose ;" and yet another—"there remain

Red poppies in her hair and plaited corn ;"

The tale of each was different, and I thought

The wonder that the Fairy of the Wood

In honest truth-desiring minds has wrought

In every poet's fancy is made good,

For Beauty we have seen, yet never could

Agree as to the panoply she brought ;

## II.

NOR as to Love, nor as to Music ; these  
    Burn in upon our souls in varied guise,  
    As I have seen the shades of woman's eyes  
Shift delicately lookers on to please ;  
Love hath the savour of a southern breeze  
    To one, the tinting of the northern skies  
    To another, and the musically wise  
Before a changeful goddess on their knees  
    Bend rapturously ; not to two alike  
Is the Ideal Ecstasy afforded,  
Behold ! the fairy vision I have hoarded  
    On you with face as different may strike  
    As is the land one loves of marsh and dyke  
From mountains by another's longing lauded.

III.

THEY have seen her in the wood and they confess  
That she is beautiful and queen of hearts,  
But as to e'en the colour of her darts,  
Still more the fairy fashion of her dress,  
They are divided, for one lays the stress  
Upon the folding which her bosom parts,  
Another at her grace of girdle starts,  
A third it may be worships none the less  
The massing of her hair, so in the end  
Reports must differ—but they come to me,  
And as I am a poet I can see  
What each man sees, and satisfied can send  
These wayfarers to supplicate and bend  
Before *my including Beauty's* perfect knee.

## THE SPARROW AND THE THRUSH.

## FIRST VERSION.

## I.

HE thought he was a bard of equal power  
     With others who aforetime twanged the strings,  
     Around whose brows the unfading bay-wreath  
         clings,  
 Before whose feet the people incense shower ; '  
 Oh, he could sing ! as in some summer bower  
     The nightingale an admiring audience brings,  
     So feels our young flushed poet as he flings  
 Aside his sonnets, flower after flower ;  
     But winter came, reaction of his glow,  
 And took away the fervent pith and marrow  
     Of the heart that in the heat would overflow,  
 And he, the second singer trained at Harrow !—  
     In a looking-glass beheld himself, and lo,  
 The nightingale was nothing but a sparrow !

THE SPARROW AND THE THRUSH. 131

II.

BUT Beauty came, and smiled, and he was glad,  
And well content to sweep a humble harp,  
Bringing out at seasons some note strong and  
sharp,  
The echo of some vision he had had,  
The nightingale that had been mute and sad  
Now burst into a sudden flame of song,  
The bird that had been but a sparrow long  
Abandoning his garment brown and bad ;  
For Poesy had said, " my child, the lyre  
Gives out a gracious melody in your hands,  
Be stalwart, *be* a singer, do not tire ;  
I have my nightingales in many lands,  
But *be an English thrush.*" Who understands,  
May take this double sonnet for his hire.

## THE SPARROW AND THE THRUSH.

## SECOND VERSION.

## I.

HE thought he was a bard who knew the ways  
Of Poesy, and swept the subtle strings,  
As when upon a sudden somewhere sings  
A nightingale, and all the hearers praise  
The sweet bird hidden in the leafy sprays  
And hush towards the harmony she brings,  
When upward each a hand of waiting flings,  
And halting half advanced each foot delays ;  
He thought he was a poet, he was great  
In his own estimation, bone and marrow  
Of genius, trained by cunning eye of fate,  
The second mighty songster reared at Harrow,  
When—in a looking-glass upon a gate  
He saw himself perched, and behold, a sparrow !



II.

THEN he despaired—but gentle Beauty came  
And laid a cooling palm upon his brow,  
And said, ‘ my singing bird, be certain now  
I had not fanned thy passion to a flame  
To bring thee unto poverty and shame,  
Nor any who before my footstool bow ;  
He who would write heroic hymns I throw  
Must be *himself*, as his most lofty aim ;’  
And then she held a glass before his eyes,  
And in it, with a sudden choke and rush  
Of feeling as when hopes achievèd flush  
Some sufferer, with a shiver of surprise,  
Himself again he seemed to recognise,  
No nightingale, but a bright-breasted thrush.

## DANTE AND BEATRICE.

## FIRST VERSION.

## I.

HE circled round his Queen—as round a flower  
     A hawk moth dances on a summer eve,  
     And having sipped its sweets is loth to leave  
 And seek some other food-supplying bower,  
 So Dante, after fire or icy shower  
     Of agony endured, ceased to grieve  
     For a season, and each circle would achieve  
 A nearer stand-point, a more passionate power ;  
     And *she* stood in the centre of the maze,  
 The purgatory of his tortured heart,  
 And ever and anon the clouds would part  
     And Beatrice was clear before his gaze,  
     And eyes of adoration he might raise,  
 And clean forget that fires and frost-bites smart ;

## II.

EACH circle he was closer—then he turned  
    Aside another journey to pursue,  
    To brush with weary footstep distant dew ;  
But that he might be certain that not spurned  
In anywise was he, that pity yearned  
    Towards him, with some flower she would endue  
    His lean worm-fingers, with a hare-bell blue,  
Or rose, or hyacinth, whose beauty burned  
    Till the next meeting, nourishing his soul ;  
But when the circles slackened to a point,  
And gone was every barrier and joint  
    Of walls of separation, *with the whole*  
    *Of her sweet self* she waited at the goal,  
Not now with any blossom to anoint.

## DANTE AND BEATRICE.

## SECOND VERSION.

HE circled round his Queen, and nearer grew  
     Each fainting circle, at each meeting place  
     His hands with some sweet flower she would grace  
 Diverse in perfume, different in hue,  
 A gracious rose, or hyacinth-bud blue,  
     To summon up the vision of her face,  
     To burn before him till his steps retrace  
 The well-worn path his former footing knew ;  
     But at the last she stood, fair, flowerless, white  
 To meet him ; even *herself* he shall attain  
 This time, and having traversed icy plain  
     And fiery seas and penetrated night  
     Shall stride—worn weary Dante—into light  
 And share the sceptre of his lady's reign.

## ROSES FOR HER.

✓ ROSES for her ! the dark green bays for him,  
     To adorn the furrowed brows, the weary head,  
     Over which leaves of sorrow had been shed  
 As many as on the autumn breezes swim ;  
 Lilies for her ! for Dante wreath a dim  
     Grey crown as for one risen from the dead,  
     Through every cell of purgatory led,  
 For whom hell's horror mantled to the brim ;  
     For her the flowers of spring, for him the sere  
 And withered branches of the later days—  
 O Dante, great worn Dante, whom we praise,  
     By all the ages counted first and dear,  
     Be thine the flaming offerings of the year  
 Being ended, hers its softer opening sprays !

## P H A S E S.

## I.

FROM phase to phase I faint, from song to song,  
Even as the earth, through many changes cast,  
Once molten fire, shines out green at last,  
Nor tarries at a single epoch long ;  
My lyre now is plaintive, next is strong  
Swept by a more sonorous passion blast,  
Alone a moment, next my thoughts have passed  
To meet a golden-robed advancing throng ;  
And so I sit and sing ; I catch the gleams  
That flit across my mind like butterflies  
Across a flower-bed, and I string my dreams  
Upon a sonnet-necklace as they rise,  
Hoping my gift may meet approving eyes  
Of her who mistress of my fancy seems ;

## II.

FROM golden bridge of song to bridge of sighs  
    I leap, from rosy ecstasy to gloom,  
    From midday to a twilight darkened room,  
From summer to a winter that denies  
Me fire of words wherewith to sacrifice  
    To her who sways the sceptre of my doom,  
    From meads melodious to a silent tomb,  
From sweet blue waters to a sea of ice ;  
    But I continue singing—yea I can  
By no means bear me otherwise than this,  
    O voice from out the darkness, not a man,  
I seek to strain imagination's kiss  
Into a faint similitude of bliss  
    And by my yearning fires of passion fan ;

## III.

At times I hit the mark—then am I glad  
In that another jewel of the crown  
My lady carries I have blazoned down,  
To her attire another grace to add ;  
That she may be the gladder I am sad,  
Forgotten for the sake of her renown—  
Yea, let her brow be smoother though I frown  
For ever, she be white though I be bad !  
But will she hear my singing ? yes—I think  
That even as a stag may stoop its head,  
Or as a sweet pure swan may downward shed  
Her dignity at a muddy pool to drink,  
So may my lady step towards the brink,  
To taste my song may daintily be led.



## MUSIC.

## I.

WHEN I hear music I am left alone

With thee, as if the world were but a wood,

And king and queen together we two stood

And occupied in unison a throne,

Glad leaves against close faces blithely blown—

Ah, sweet, the vision—this at least is good !

That ecstasy of music—if it could

Incessant be by hearts enchainèd known !

For all one's soul is turned into a lyre

At such times, and a woman sweeps the strings,

And every nerve becomes a note of fire,

And every strained fibre pants and rings

In answer to the subtle touch that stings

Us into one wide flaming of desire ;

## II.

WE are stretched upon a cross of agony,  
Enduring death perpetual at her hands  
That shudders into life—who understands,  
And hath the power to penetrate and see  
My meaning, I am strong to say that he  
Hath traversed many acres of love's lands ;  
Our throats are bound in silken stifling bands,  
One foot is raised, and yet we dare not flee ;  
We are indeed *the harp itself* she slays  
From heaven to higher heaven of delight,  
She tortures, ever new creates in might,  
New fingered in a hundred lissome ways,  
The strings o'er which her touch seraphic strays,  
Now loosens one, now draws another tight !

## THE LEOPARD.

SWEET leopard, kill me, claw me, anything,  
The more you irritate me I the more  
Shall love the chiding of your velvet paw,  
The more you tease me louder I shall sing,  
The further cast away the closer cling,  
Fiercely repelled more fervently adore ;  
More gracious far than any peace the war  
Of feelings those green catlike glances bring ;  
Be merciful and slay me, let me know  
The utmost sweet abandonment of being,  
The extremity of a delicious woe,  
Love, I am here before thee, ceased from fleeing,  
Be tender if thou canst and strike me so  
That I may die thy face entrancèd seeing !

## TO HAVE BEHELD.

## I.

*To have beheld* is something—for I might  
 Alone with my Ideal have sought in vain  
     Through centuries of passionate absent pain  
 Along the sunbeam's path the casting light ;  
 But I have found it ; though the end be night,  
     At least the fact of finding doth remain  
     Eternal—that a lily without stain  
 Hath blossomed, that a woman hath been white ;  
     To have beheld and loved ! if nothing more,  
 Yet can there be a greater thing than this ?  
 If I behold and love, what do I miss ?  
     Am I within the shrine, or at the door ?  
     Though heart be fainting, every fibre sore,  
 If I behold and love, *I also kiss.*

## II.

THIS hath been given, that the thing I sought  
I have also found—a flower I might love,  
A bird to sing to, soft as any dove,  
And supple and as wayward as a thought ;  
Towards me such a worship hath been brought,  
And is it not enough ? I might have sighed  
For such a vision vainly till I died,  
And pale my marble statue and for nought,  
My mind's ideal—but it is not so,  
The stone is moved and flushes, and I see  
How far more passionately falls the glow  
Across the living features that I know  
Than flame the blossoms of my fancy's tree ;  
O sweet one, when you flash your face on me  
Grown cold is my ideal and of snow.

“AND KEEP OUR SOULS IN ONE ETERNAL  
PANT.”—*Keats*.

“IN one eternal pant to keep our souls,”  
     Said Keats ; a poet’s motto it might be,  
     To plunge for ever to a deeper sea  
 Of ecstasy, as each wave backward rolls,  
 Exacting pitiless incessant tolls  
     Of riper redder fruit from Love’s sweet tree ;  
     And, clearly, such the fittest life for me,  
 New wine each day from new provided bowls  
     Perpetually to sip, yet not to fill  
 My craving heart ; and so it is, for you  
     Keep all my being in a constant thrill—  
 Thou hast creative power to renew  
 With every morn the ambrosial passionate dew  
     My eager lips are ever prone to spill ;

II.

AND so from pant to stronger pant I flow,  
Even as my River Thames in downward course  
Boils, whirls, and bubbles with a fiercer force,  
In haste the unfettered open sea to know ;  
So in a great increasing volume go  
My pulses, waxing hotter as the days  
Make more apparent far my lady's praise,  
And as the winter waneth ; even so  
The summer of my love is drawing nigh,  
With sweet May-blossoms and the lilac bloom,  
And all the streets made heavy with perfume,  
And visions of a softer bluer sky ;  
So with the seasons, with the stream I sigh  
And change and eddy, sparkle and consume.

## THE PEARL NECKLACE.

WHAT can I give you, sweet ? I am but poor  
As men count riches, yet I have my pen  
That flings aside a ruby now and then,  
Or emerald not all unworthy your  
Acceptance ; seeing I will not endure  
With aught save choicest jewels to bedeck  
That pure unequalled *choicer* Parian neck  
What gift of passionate sense can I procure ?  
Well, I will take my heart and string the same  
Upon a necklace—lady, will that do ?  
Each pearl shall be a sonnet, and its hue  
The brighter, in that tinged with blood it came,  
The clearer, being cleansed in the flame  
That burns incessant sacrifice to you.



## THE LOVE-PHILTRE.

"But she will love you, *kiss you perhaps*, who knows?

Come take it, don't be foolish," so persuaded

A simple youth a witch with features faded,

And hump-back orthodox, and rusty clothes,

Pressing upon him hard a magic dose

By which his love-suit might be swiftly aided ;

But he recoiled, and, vehement, upbraided

Her foul intention, saying, "let my rose

Bloom on and let me wither if so be,

But let her pierce me with her own sweet eyes

Deluded by no draught prepared of thee

Even if heaven to me the truth denies ;

Thy gift I accept not in anywise,

Avaunt enchantress, vanish quickly, flee !"

## LOVE AND IMMORTALITY.

THOSE magic dreams of boyhood ! passing sweet  
They were, the glimpses swift as when we see  
From a railway window, field and tower and tree  
Torn by us on the wings of motion fleet,  
The flashes of a future joy to meet,  
A heaven all untrodden yet to be ;  
But present Love transcends foreboded glee,  
As April suns are pale in August heat,  
And youth's romance was but a star beside  
The moon of riper passion ; so I think  
It shall be when we float upon death's tide,  
To a new shore's, another ocean's brink ;  
The draught shall deeper, sweeter, be to drink  
Than dimly in the distance we descried.

## THE LAST SONNET.

YOUR presence is not always with me, sweet,  
As a conscious summer sky to dome me round  
With rapture, or a soft encircling sound,  
Or tenderest embrace of arms that meet,  
Or sense of cool refreshment after heat,  
Or wreath of flowers about my temples wound ;  
I seem to lose the treasure I have found,  
And in the distance fade departing feet :  
But, *back you come*, with the old threatening hair,  
And grace and melody of returning spring,  
More cruelly delightful, and more fair ;  
As each successive season seems to bring  
Grass greener, sweeter roses, birds that sing  
The stronger, beauty brighter yet you wear.

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# LATER SONNETS.



## ONCE MORE !

### I.

ONCE more ! and can I mix the past and present  
Close in a single cup of clasped hands,  
Into a single grasp compress the pleasant  
Old memories, the voices of lost lands,  
Into a single glance hurl all the passion  
That should have been, that is to be no more,  
Then say good-bye to you in common fashion,  
And move composedly towards the door ?  
Once more to see you—then—I must be dreaming—  
*My* Lady of the rosebands and the bays,  
*My* sweet hair still divinely downward streaming,  
*My* dimple, and *my* soft caressing ways—  
It is not true ? to-morrow I shall wake,  
And find it but a dim-remembered ache !

## II.

ONCE more to bring to mind the green old places,  
And songs and dreams and tenderness recall,  
As in one flash to see my sonnets' faces  
In *your* face, then a long farewell to all,  
Sweet eyes . . . sweet lips . . . no time for numeration  
Have I, I leave a dainty list behind,  
One gaze, one second in the singer's station  
With vision clear, the next a poet blind,  
Once more to feel the summer thrill flow through me,  
Then winter—winter—winter—and the dark,  
The last time at the sunrise to renew me,  
To the old sweet melody once more to hark,  
Once more—once more—then never, love, again,  
But one long Arctic episode of pain.



## THE SONNET-THRONE.

## I.

I WOULD have built a throne of sonnets high  
     And seated you thereon—an ivory throne—  
     A delicate golden sceptre all your own  
 My hand had been most cunning to supply,  
 And crimson curtains should have fluttered nigh,  
     And flower after flower have been sown,  
     That regal perfumes might be gently blown  
 About you, queenly colours greet your eye ;  
     But—you are gone ! and in disgust I hurl  
 My chisel down, I split my poet's pen,  
     The gorgeous hangings I am quick to furl,  
 The flowers to uproot that flourished when  
 Their petals might anticipate the ken  
     That raised me to a singer from a churl.

## II.

WHAT shall I do without you ? Can I write  
Worship and sigh towards the barren airs,  
And having laid so many careful stairs,  
Each step a sonnet, gold or rosy white  
Alternate, lady, lady, is it right  
To leave the queenly seat at top unfilled ?  
Over the silken cushion I have spilled  
My very soul in flowery phrases bright,  
And now you scorn my offering ! down—down—  
down  
With every step and stone and ornament !  
Just as an angry child with bitter frown  
Sweeps all the toys aside to which he lent  
His heart a moment since, so am I bent  
On utterly destroying this fair town !

•

## THE SERENADER.

## FIRST VERSION.

OUT at a window looked a lady fair,  
     Set, like a miniature, sweet within the frame,  
     And upward gazed a youth with heart a-flame,  
 Who laughing said, "To-night I will prepare  
 A serenade to soften all the air,  
     And shafts of singing at that casement aim ;"  
     The night wore on, the lover never came,  
 For pouting lips had answered, "If you dare !"  
     But O, sweet lady, he has done it still,  
 He could not help it, please his fault condone,  
 He could not find a lyre of silver tone  
     Enough to satisfy his searching will  
     That autumn, therefore has he sought to fill  
*Two volumes* with the serenader's moan !

## THE SERENADER.

## SECOND VERSION.

OUT at a window looked a lady sweet,  
And smiled towards an admiring youth below,  
Who answered, "Gracious Madam, I shall go  
And buy a harp whose strings by finger fleet  
Swept cunningly may move a melody meet  
Towards that casement and its hand of snow,"  
Came quickly wafted down a laughing "No,"  
Silent of serenading was the street.  
But—the forbidden song is here instead,  
Filling two volumes with a swell of sound,  
For what are all my poems choicely bound  
But a flowery Serenade whose petals shed  
Their perfume round about your sleeping head,  
Filling the window, covering the ground?

## TRY AGAIN.

"SWEET, try again ;" so Beauty said to me ;  
     As wipes a mother tenderly the face  
     Of her child who has stumbled, eager, in a race,  
 Till once again his features beam with glee,  
 So would God's pale humanity smile if He  
     Vouchsafed a similar maternal grace,  
     If *He* would bid our souls resume the chase  
 Undaunted, what a glory it would be !  
     So thought I, and a little bird came nigh  
 With gentle eyes and glistening plumes of blue  
     Just as my passion ended in a sigh  
 Of doubt, and joy was potent to renew,  
     Whispering, as if with message from the sky,  
 "The thought is no deceit, child, *it is true.*"

## BROWN AND RED.

## FIRST VERSION.

"WHAT can I do to please you ?" answer then  
     Was wanting, lady, I will tell you now ;  
     Let my poor poems round about your brow  
 Wave as a wreath of flowers, or as when  
 In a tiara jewels twice times ten  
     Flash like red fruits that 'tween the branches bow,  
     Accept my service, this my gift allow,  
 The first aspiring produce of my pen ;  
     I plucked, sweet, I remember once for you  
 A tiny plant with tender separate leaves  
     Of red, that olden gift I would renew,  
 My poem is successful if it weaves  
 Itself within your memory, and achieves  
     A proud position, peeping brown hair through.

## BROWN AND RED.

## SECOND VERSION.

"WHAT can I do to please you?" answer none  
     There *was*, but, lady, I will tell you how  
     If so disposed your heart may please me *now*,  
 But first let feet of memory backward run,  
 And tell me whether you remember one  
     Sweet plant I plucked for you in former days,  
     A tender delicate plant with ruby sprays,  
 Red separate leaflets kindled by the sun?  
     You *do* remember? good; then let my song  
 Be even such a sweet red flower, and bound  
 Within the black-brown hair I loved, and wound  
     The tresses I caressed in thought among,  
     That when a host of other jewels throng  
 Superior, *there that leaf may still be found.*

## BROWN AND GOLD.

SWEET colours as I think ! a golden band  
Mingled with black the Bride of Corinth wore,  
*That* flashed upon her lover when the door  
Gave sudden ingress to a snow-white hand,  
And, sweet, for you a circlet I have planned  
To mingle if it may be with the brown  
Soft tresses, and I lay it gently down,  
My "poems" namely, do you understand ?  
But I am too ambitious, such a gift  
Is not for me, but rather if I may  
Let me a second time my hand uplift  
(For once before I touched your hair in play)  
And, awkward as I am, I may make shift  
To twine therein *a gold thread* that shall stay ;



II.

It was a peacock's feather that old time  
    Before that, as a boy, tight in your hair  
    I twisted—nothing, lady, half as fair  
I bring now, only a stray wreath of rhyme,  
No peacock's feather spotted and sublime  
    With many eyes and Eastern colours rare,  
    Rather a brown pale plume a man might tear  
From some street-sparrow in our colder clime ;  
    But take it as it is, and it may be  
That touched by you a wonder shall be done,  
And as a black bird underneath the sun  
    Shining with many colours you may see,  
So suddenly across my rhyme may run  
    Paradise-plumage, tropic brilliancy !

### NOT GONE?

O SWEET you are not gone ? it *cannot* be,  
     You *must* be waiting underneath the light,  
     Amid the perfume of a Northern night,  
 And soon the moon will rise above the sea  
 And silver, as of old, the ruin, and we  
     Shall wander off together out of sight,  
     It *cannot* but be so—it is not *right*  
 That anything so exquisite should flee !  
     No, I am certain that you still are there  
 Under those dreamy pale blue Northern skies,  
     Not a day older, not an hour, as fair  
 As ever, with the same delicious eyes,  
 And panoply of sweetly pert replies,  
     And with that same divinely-coloured hair.

## THE SAME AS EVER.

UNDER the dim blue Northern skies she waits  
The same as ever, days are but a dream,  
At night again the green witch-glances gleam  
As fierce as ever through my fancy's gates,  
And shifted is the circle of the fates,  
Backward my strong imaginations stream,  
Present in living force past figures seem,  
And blotted out my memory's evil dates ;  
And she is waiting, and that strange pale crown  
Of turquoises and pearls is on her brow,  
White clouds—blue spaces— never shining now  
Across the sky, but in that long-lost town  
I am present, and again am kneeling down  
To that Witch-Lady my sole self to vow !

## HARMONIA AND THE HANDMAIDEN.

A SWEET handmaiden Poesy had sent  
     To lead her servant to the palace-gates,  
     But she herself within the entrance waits,  
 On a most gracious interviewing bent,  
 And he was half aware of her intent,  
     But on the thither road he fell in love  
     *With the handmaiden*, and preferred the dove  
 To the Paradise-bird for his approval meant ;  
     Here was a mess ! Harmonia held him fast,  
 He, like a child, to the handmaiden clung,  
 And jealous heart of Poesy he stung  
     By screaming, all his spirit backward cast,  
 " Not *you*, old woman, *her* I love," and flung  
     His form convulsed away from her at last !

## MY FIRST PROOF-SHEETS.

THE proof is in my hand ; this very day  
     Last year my earliest sonnet I achieved,  
     But when I wrote it who could have believed  
 That coiled behind it such a lengthy lay  
 Was waiting, that the words I had to say  
     Would fill the paper I have just received,  
     That thus my brain was thickly interleaved  
 With sheets to be redeemed without delay ?  
     Well, well, the first-fruits of my work are here,  
 But where are those "fair eyes" of which I wrote  
     That made my sonnet's melody so dear ?  
 And where alas ! the form that seemed to float  
 As graceful as a maiden in a boat  
     Along the lines I struggling bent to rear ?

## PYGMALION'S DOOM REVERSED.

HAPPY Pygmalion ! that the tender boon  
    Thou didst implore sweet Venus granted thee,  
    See how thy fate hath been reversed for me  
In that alive the Lady of my Tune  
*Was* at the first, but now a marble swoon  
    Hath caused her soft supremacy to flee,  
    A fairer flush each day 'twas thine to see,  
Not even a statue shall be present soon  
    For me to sing to, thou didst twine around  
That image passionate arms that met the stone,  
    And every hour more warm the marble found,  
My harder fate it is to sit and moan  
The desolate seat of a vacated throne,  
    Embraces swiftly by cold force unwound !

## THE LOVE-NOTES.

YESTERDAY afternoon I strove to sing  
     Against a thrush high-perched upon a bough,  
     And certain notes that only every now  
 And then he introduced, seemed soft to ring  
 As if "Do you love me, sweet," or some such thing  
     He kept repeating, and I failed to seize,  
     Accomplishing the stronger quavers, these  
 To which the thrush's soul most close did cling ;  
     Ah ! then I thought, the reason's very plain,  
 These are *the love-notes*—just as never man  
 Indite a sonnet for another can,  
     So these most luscious notes that downward rain  
     Are thoughts original of the thrush's brain,  
 And straight from out his love-sick fancy ran.

# HAVE I LEFT OUT A FLOWER?

HAVE I left out a flower, or a shade  
     Of colour on the wind-swept changing grass?  
     Has any tint of sunset seemed to pass  
 Into the silence of a thing unsaid?  
 Or have I failed to count each single braid  
     As you might, sweet, before your looking-glass?  
     Each sigh, each leaf, each fleeting cloud, alas!  
 Deep in abysses of my memory laid  
     Is present with me—have I told them all?  
 Good; then my work is over, and I may  
     Lean head upon the table, and let fall  
 The pen that had so many things to say,  
 Each second of a summer to portray,  
     All your forgotten glances to recall!



THE HANDMAIDEN WITH THE GREEN  
GREEN EYES.

## I.

“ Oh, that handmaiden with the green green eyes !”  
     So wept a youth within the palace-gate  
     Where Poesy herself in cumbrous state  
 Sat with a chin uplifted to the skies,  
 “ Oh, sweet handmaiden, where art thou ?” he cries,  
     “ My love is wasted on this dame sedate,  
     That I had held thee fast ! too late ! too late !”  
 Even so his tearful shrieks incessant rise ;  
     For Poesy had sent a maiden fair  
 Unto the portals of her lordly dome,  
 The golden pillars of her palace-home,  
     To lead the singer whom she would ensnare,  
     But *on the way* down came the maiden’s hair  
 Through sudden slip of untrustworthy comb,

## II.

AND he, poor poet, had to bind it fast  
    Again as she threw back her gentle head  
    Tossing the sweet brown tresses freely shed  
Over her shoulders his pale fingers past,  
And, as he did it, he forgot the vast  
    And solemn Goddess unto whom she led  
    The way, and loved her messenger instead,  
And all his heart into his hands he cast ;  
    And therefore in an agony he tries  
To break in twain the lyre that before  
His fervent touch, caressing, would adore,  
    And low upon the bitter marble lies,  
Sobbing towards the unsympathizing floor  
    “ That sweet hand-maiden with the green green  
    eyes ! ”

## WHAT SHALL I DO?

## I.

WHAT shall I do when music fades away,  
When silence occupies the world of things,  
And not a throat of any throstle sings,  
And not a single sunset but is gray,  
When blue forsakes the summer, and to day  
And night a sodden robe of fog-damp clings,  
And never a rosy dream the twilight brings,  
And not a sonnet has a word to say ?  
What shall I do when these things come to pass,  
When moons are mute, and all the stars are pale,  
And ever, as the winter rushes wail  
And shiver at the East wind stalks of grass,  
I tremble, fingers powerless alas !  
To make my loosened harp-strings of avail ?

## II.

WHAT shall I do when all these things are mine ?

A love that was in summer, and instead

The frozen pallor of a wintry head,

A wreath of meadow-sweet I used to twine,

But now of icicles a lengthy line,

And pale snow-berries for the golden-red

Fruit of the mountain chesnut, and a dead

White waste of foam, a scentless field of brine,

For sweet green waters, and for flowers tears,

And fervour barrenness, and fire cold,

And roses of the summer some sad old

And wrinkled dowager rose of later years,

For softest orange-blossoms square-cut biers,

And for forget-me-not a corpse to hold ?

# THOU COULDEST NOT WATCH WITH ME.

## I.

THOU couldst not watch with me one little hour —

One little hour, sweetheart, only one,

To wait the crimson outleap of the sun,

Was it too much for thee, that icy shower,

And were the roses angry on thy bower,

And did the braids of sweet hair come undone,

And were the waves irreverent to stun

Thy tender lack of man's enduring power ?

Thou couldst not watch with me—the flowers are  
thine

Red in the valleys, fragrant in the meads,

The purple foam-flecked scentless road that leads

Through solitude to sunrise, *that* is mine ;

Thou couldst not watch with me—too weak to  
twine

Thorn-crowns, lest any dainty finger bleeds ;

## II.

THOU couldst not watch with me—I would have torn  
    From out the raging waters of the years  
    That are to be, a crown of passionate tears  
For a pearl-circlet—splendour of the morn  
As yet beneath the ocean had been born  
    For thee, and round thy forehead as a star  
    Songs many and triumphant from afar,  
The shouts of victors in the times of dawn ;  
    Thou couldst not watch with me—the night behind  
Swallows thee up, in front the great strong sea  
Salt hands of welcome stretches out to me,  
    Alone upon a barren beach I find  
    Myself, eyes open that before were blind,  
*Thou* couldst not wait and shall *I* wait for thee ?

## III.

THOU couldst not watch with me—the violets smile  
To see the backward fluttering of thy feet,  
A peaceful sojourn in the valley, sweet,  
Be thine, a homestead in the green defile,  
Soft dreams and whispers of the roses, while  
I bare my lonely forehead, pale to meet  
The increasing future fiery circle's heat,  
That rises, red as a volcano-isle ;  
I laugh to hear the tumult of the breeze—  
I weep to see the splendour of the day—  
I weep to think that thou art far away  
Still treading soberly the moonlight leas,  
That toys and trifles have a charm to please  
And not the wholesome savour of the spray ; ,

## IV.

SWEET spray that splashes fast across my lips—  
What touches yours ? and was it good to choose  
The sheltered sunny hill-side, and refuse  
The broader rapture of a foot that dips  
Deep in the foam, a rosy mouth that sips  
The ocean sparkle ? round my brows be twined  
Fresh seaweed, flowers of green and pink combined,  
Do thou the rather with fair finger-tips  
Dabble amid the tufted foam of grass,  
Make cowslip-balls, and pondering divide  
Like Marguerite alone at eventide  
The tender daisy for divining glass,  
While through these misty barriers I pass  
Into the future thou didst deem too wide.



## V.

THOU hast chosen rather to turn backward eyes  
    Towards the sunset, and the old sweet tales,  
    Asking, with smile incredulous, what avails  
The fervour of a heart that towards sunrise  
The rapid footstep of its pulses plies,  
    And latest swathings of the dark assails—  
    I am in love with that white cheek that pales;  
I am in love with that fleet foot that flies,  
    I am in love with glances backward thrown,  
Backward or forward they are sweet to me,  
Beckons thee onward finger of the sea  
    In haste to win a daughter for his own,  
    Beckons thee backward thine untroubled throne,  
And quiet creeds to which to bow the knee ;

## VI.

BECKON thee backward gentle palms uplifted,  
And amber robes and raiment of the skies,  
Hasten thee onward faint awakening cries  
From far-off unborn isles and oceans drifted—  
Beckons thee backward some strong angel gifted  
With sword to sweep the people and devour,  
But forward draws thee scent of some sweet flower,  
Or delicate shade of sunrise sudden shifted ;  
Love lies in front ; behind, the golden gates,  
And sound perpetual of ascending hymns,  
And beatific bending of the limbs  
Are thine ; the wind-kissed crimson clover waits  
In front, and as the turbid heaven abates,  
From heavenly waves rise clear-cut, starry rims ;

## VII.

BEHIND, the moonlight and the shadows long  
    Across the furrows, and the dark-green trees,  
    In front, calm eyes of morning and the breeze  
That stirs the silent meadows into song,  
Behind, the lyres of a saintly throng  
    And stone indented deep by roughened knees  
    In front, stern faces and the forms of these  
Who bow towards the future, and are strong ;  
    Behind are many gardens and the fruits  
That redden lighting up the autumn walls,  
Green spaces where the mellow apple falls,  
    Brown circles shadowed by the rose-tree roots,  
    Paths planted either side with lilac shoots,  
Broad sweeps of gravel, dim-lit cloistered halls ;

## VIII.

BEHIND, the voices of a jewelled choir,  
    An ornamented, ring-bedizened band  
    Whose feet along the aisles of heaven stand,  
In front, the flashing of a far-off fire,  
Red embers breathed upon by hot desire,  
    The first announcement of an unfound land,  
    And here and there a grain of golden sand  
The pale adventurers' hard-won glimpse of hire ;  
    Cool seats behind, and shady arbours those,  
Chosen of butterflies, beloved by bees—  
My lady, what hast thou to do with these  
    Who art thyself the envy of the rose,  
    Thou that art delicate to do with snows,  
And with the salt-lipped bluster of the breeze ?

IX.

ABIDE in peace, yea, tarry, be at rest—  
The eventide and sunset unto thee  
I leave, but as for others, as for me,  
Let the blue waves upon their loftiest crest,  
Shot like a sunbeam from that flaming nest,  
Bear me triumphant to the further sea ;  
I will not tarry longer under lee  
Of those tall cliffs by cowardice possessed ;  
Forward I hasten ; and I send my song  
Across the breakers to the sandy shore  
Where thou art standing, and I join the roar,  
The melody of giants hurled along,  
The chant of many wayfarers that throng  
To some fair future, to the past no more.

## THE POET'S GARDEN.

## THE ROSE.

A POET loved a rose—and watched it grow ;  
And every day a sweeter blush was there,  
And pouting petals fuller and more fair,  
Each eventide “to-morrow it will blow,”  
The poet said, “to-morrow I shall know  
The perfect splendour of this flower rare,”  
Sometimes its beauty more than he could bear  
Brought tears for joy’s excess akin to woe ;  
And so he watched it ; and one night he said,  
“I see my rose upon the verge of bloom,  
To-morrow royal robes she shall assume,  
Uplift to heaven a pink most perfect head,”  
But when he came next day the rose was dead,  
And on that spot they placed—a poet’s tomb !

## THE LILY.

A poet loved a lily—and his eyes  
     Were set upon this flower from afar,  
     Just as a man may tremble towards a star,  
 Distance between them many miles of skies ;  
 So, similarly, swayed the singer's sighs  
     This silver glitter, this white moon of plants,  
     And little rest unto himself he grants  
 (A somewhat passionate soul, not otherwise)  
     Preparing a choice mossy bank whereon  
 His sonnets strown might make a velvet bed  
 For soft reclining of the lily's head,  
     He thought that there some time she should have  
         shone,  
     But—poets pity him !—he found her gone  
 One day, brown gaping garden-mould instead.

## THE VIOLET.

A POET loved a violet—and he thought  
    “ The purple is in bud : it is not blown ;  
    ’Twas only yesterday that it was sown,  
And but the day before the plot was bought ;”  
And so he turned his heart aside, and sought  
    To buy a vase wherein the flower grown  
    To perfect beauty for his very own  
He might have, and his hands a marvel wrought,  
    A many-coloured, cunning, carven glass,  
Choice, set with jewels, painted by his pen,  
Sides gilt with some sweet poem now and then,  
    And he had set it down upon the grass  
    Beside the violet—when a shower alas !  
A hail-storm, shattered it in seconds ten.



## THE PRIMROSE.

## I.

A POET loved a primrose in a wood—

“Transplant it some day,” said he, “that will I,  
Not under shadow of boughs but under sky—  
Blue sky—this tender flower should have stood ;  
Mistake of gardener ! I will make it good,  
Correct the early error by and bye ;”  
And then he left the primrose with a sigh,  
And ran to fetch the quickest tools he could ;  
He was not long ; I heard a linnet say,  
(You know I understand the speech of these)  
A linnet perched upon a hazel spray,  
“*In less than half a song,*” upon his knees  
The poet was—so tell me, primrose, please,  
Was there a breathless second of delay ?

## II.

HE fell upon his knees before he saw  
That nothing but a hollow brown was left,  
A clean triangle by a trowel cleft,  
That not a pretty primrose any more  
Was smiling, that a hand had been before  
His urgent speed, and consummated theft ;  
For ever of that flower-face bereft  
He turned aside, and closed the forest-door.  
But still, they say, a poet by the grave  
Of that sweet primrose may be seen to walk  
O' nights, and heard in incoherent talk,  
And ever to himself doth sob and rave  
“ Why did not passionate *fingers* dig the cave ?  
Thou fool, to run for trowel, line, and chalk !”

## THE POET'S AVIARY.

## THE NIGHTINGALE.

A POET loved a nightingale—and she  
     Would sing to him, and he was speechless yet,  
     But vowed solicitude to weave a net  
 Wherein the tender bird entrapped might be,  
 And when the moon was silver on the sea,  
     And all the leaves with silver splashes wet,  
     He came to that sweet cliff-top wood to set  
 The cunning of his hand beneath the tree ;  
     And as he passed along the dusty road  
 He met a boy who swung a wicker cage,  
 “Some linnet or a chaffinch, I’ll engage,”  
     He commented contemptuous, as he strode  
     Towards the trysting-tree with heart that glowed,  
 A war of mingled melody to wage ;

## II.

THE beauty of the night was on the leaves,  
They trembled to the tuning of a wind  
That wept among the stalks, and wailed, and pined,  
Not other than a human sufferer grieves,  
And on the left hand silver shone the sheaves ;  
“ To-night,” he thought, “ my lady will be kind,”  
“ To-night,” so smiled he, “ surely I shall find  
The guerdon that a songful soul achieves ;”  
So pondered he, and trembled, and advanced,  
When—feathers and a broken trap he saw,  
Dirt scattered here and there by frightened claw,  
As here and there the clinging feet had chanced  
To alight—*one groan* he uttered as he glanced,  
“ *That was my bird then !*”—spake aloud no more.

## THE HAWK.

A POET loved a hawk—sweet, wild-eyed, strong  
To flutter from the staying of a hand,  
And, subtle, soon a silken lure he planned,  
And wove in vari-coloured threads of song,  
Now gold, now crimson, and his work was long  
And wearisome, but still the thought sustained  
His soul, “When once my falcon I have gained,  
*How* we will soar above the vulgar throng !  
For she shall raise me ; *I* will teach my bird  
The art of singing, *she* shall show me how  
To beat the azure wave with windy brow,  
In soft ethereal heights as yet unstirred  
Save by her sweet brown flying, shall be heard  
The added pinion of her poet now.”

## II.

So mused he ; and his silken lure he brought,  
And trembled as his fingers sought the wrist  
His passion craved, imperious, to have kissed,  
But then his labour had been all for nought ;  
The falcon's crest was eager, and he thought  
"I have my beauty safe with one more twist,  
To carry on a closed triumphant fist,  
My green-eyed bird, my darling, fairly caught !  
*One more twist,*" as he stooped to tie the thread,  
(Gold beads of many sonnets strung thereon)  
A rustle and a shiver—overhead  
The laughing dark eye of the falcon shone,  
" You thought you had me safe, but I am gone,  
Good-bye my poet, love your lure instead."

## THE FIRST WOMAN.

God made a woman ; and he stood aghast  
For very wonder ; as a sculptor sees  
With terror and with trembling of the knees  
And tears of yearning his Ideal fast  
Emerging from the marble, so God cast  
His careless chisel downward, clasped his hands !  
And keen upon the Ivory Foot that stands  
Across the ages in expansion vast  
The edge fell—hardly did he feel the sting,  
But blood was drawn, and ever since the day  
When God's great poem "Woman" out of clay  
His cunning hand was powerful to bring,  
He bears in recollection, so they say,  
Across his foot that clean-cut ruby ring.

## WHAT CAN I GIVE YOU?

WHAT can I give you, lady? pearls will soon

Be many, as I doubt not, in your hand—

What silver memory from a former land,

What echo of a chat beneath the moon,

What vision, in a sonnet for a boon

Set daintily, shall I be bold to place

Among the many presents proud to grace

Your boudoir, what choice jewel of a tune?

I cannot give you half, I give you *all*,

My songs, my volumes, both of them, complete—

*You* are my books, and they are nothing, sweet,

But one long sounding of a throstle's call

Whose hope is high that next his own may fall

The patter of another throstle's feet;



II.

THE soft alighting on a neighbouring bough  
 Of the bright-breasted bird he doth adore ;  
 Such are my poems, lady, nothing more,  
 A diadem to circle that pure brow,  
*A peacock's feather* twined the tighter now  
 That through my negligence it fell before,  
 The scent of fancy's myrtle bruised and sore,  
 The voiceful repetition of my vow ;  
*This* then I give you ; even your sweet soul,  
 Your own sweet self, my lady, back again,  
 Your self made audible in subtle strain,  
 And visible on wings of words that roll  
 Sonorous—you, the prompter of the whole,  
 Its ecstasy, its agony, its pain !

## WELL?

## I.

WELL? have I stirred the ancient chord at all,  
     Brought any flower of dreamland back to view,  
     Moved any depth of feeling strange and new,  
 My lady, by my long-sustained call?  
 When, like a withered autumn leaf let fall,  
     My book is thrown upon your lap, can I  
     Discern a deeper colour in your eye,  
 Have I made memory's waning height more tall?  
     I have done my work if I have made you weep  
 In any place, in any made you sigh;  
     I *meant* at least one pearly tear to reap,  
 For very love I *meant* to make you cry,  
 You can be cruel, sweetheart, so can I,  
     Come, hands away from face, and let me peep;

## II.

I MEANT to make you laugh and weep as well,  
To let you know that every word you said  
Hath found immortal wings, by no means dead,  
For each upon a fertile fancy fell,  
That on my singing fingers I can tell  
Each smile as readily as when 'twas shed,  
That *you* are throned in my creative head,  
A queen within a fructifying shell ;  
And so you can't escape me ! down they go,  
Sweet looks and sour—which were most for me ?  
Hair loose and waving, as I loved to see  
The ripples of its unimpeded flow,  
Or, braided tight, as you *would* have, *you* know,  
A seemlier more becoming way must be ;

## III.

LIPS angry, pouting, just as they are *now*,  
I thought they would be when you came to this—  
No—not the fire, lady—you might miss  
The mark, and then the mantelpiece, I vow !  
—Sweet sober vision of a thoughtful brow,  
And delicate flush I chiefly loved to see,  
The rose of night that reddened soft when we  
Talked talk bewitching—you remember how ?  
Well, shall I stop, or is it there again,  
The flush I speak of ? never mind, my time  
Is short, and I am speechless save in rhyme,  
The voice emphatic of a poet's pain,  
That need be to you but the patter of rain  
Outside the glass it vainly longs to climb.

# GRAINS OF SAND.



**SWEET EYES.**

IN places many I have been  
Through hours of life's long day,  
Sweet eyes full many I have seen,  
But none so sweet as they,  
Eyes coloured like the moss-water  
Of green and brown and gray.

## FROM SUNSHINE.

ONCE a maiden shielded me from sunshine,  
Interposing wealth of silk between,  
Simple heart of hers it was that won mine,  
Ne'er shall I forget that silken screen,  
Till the parted rivers run in one line  
Not one single barrier between !

## II.

Once she shielded me from fervent light,  
Fervent beating of the midday sun,  
She—the shielder—hath forgotten quite,  
I—the shielded—though the ages run  
Into most chaotic endless night  
Hug the closer this that she hath done ;



Hug the closer memories one or two  
—I have not got many, friends, you see—  
Clasp the closer memories a few  
Clustered round my being's barren tree,  
Breathing gentle solace unto me,  
Gentle soothing, as of summer dew ;

I have triumphed once at least in life—  
If I fail for ever, and am hurled  
Out of Beauty's into Blackness' world,  
Into lands with desolation rife,  
This may calm the fury of the strife,  
Once *for me* a flag hath been unfurled !

## A DREAM OF A KISS.

LAST night I dreamed a dream of a kiss  
And awoke the better for fancied bliss ;  
I dreamed of a maiden dear to me  
Whom alas ! but seldom in fact I see,  
I had said " goodbye " to the rest I know,  
And, waiting alone in a room below,  
I found my darling, my love, my queen,  
She and I only, no soul between ;  
And we clasped hands as lovers should do,  
And thrills of lovers the palms passed through,  
*And she leaned forward*—I hardly dare  
To talk to the paper of gifts so rare—  
*She leaned forward*—again I repeat  
*She leaned forward*—the words are sweet—

And closed my lips with a maiden kiss,  
Maiden, the first one, first-fruit of bliss.  
O sweet firstling, first in a dream,  
Passing sweet to my lips you seem,  
I pray that the phantom-kiss may endure,  
And seal my lips and burn them pure !  
And then we parted ; a word I said,  
And " Love " was the word, and turned and fled,  
Yet as I went I breathed a prayer,  
" God be with you " my maiden fair,  
And that pure prayer I desire to repeat,  
" The God of the daylight be with you, sweet ! "

O Sender of Dreams, that the dream may be  
In some way or other true to me !

## YESTERDAY'S DEW.

PRIESTS are many, but men are few,  
See that you become  
As much *yourself* as yesterday's dew,  
Though strangely alike in some  
Respects, was nevertheless quite new,  
And never again will come.

## TO-MORROW.

WHAT shall I say of to-morrow?  
Judging by life of to-day,  
Wreathèd it will be with sorrow  
Pale, and with rosier play,  
Sweet-smelling hours that borrow  
Happiness, soon to decay,  
Leaving a burthen to follow,  
An arrow of sun-god Apollo,  
A gap and a resonant hollow,  
In hearts once merry as May.

A LOVER'S APOLOGY FOR KISSING HIS  
MISTRESS' HANDWRITING.

YOUR hand touched the pen and the pen touched the  
place,

And that's quite enough, love, for me,

If I can't kiss *yourself* why I needs must trace

In your writing an image of thee.

## A KISS.

A KISS can awake the dead,  
And snap the iron of Fate,  
And lift the Universe-weight,  
And change the colour of hate,  
And raise or shatter a state,  
And give to a lone bird a mate,  
To a world, to an era, a date ;  
The worth of a kiss men rate  
By lips off which it is shed.

## WHAT A SMILE CAN DO.

SWEET, do you know what a smile can do ?  
Listen, and I will tell ;  
Send upon souls that are dry, soft dew,  
Scatter the fires of hell,  
From grey clouds open a glimpse of blue,  
Oceans of happiness swell,  
Slay false dreams, bringing in the true,  
Change a funereal knell,  
Breezes that over the churchyard blew,  
Into the wind of a bell  
Wingèd with echoes of sounds that flew  
News of a marriage to tell.



## A QUESTION.

ONE look I have especial in my mind—

Ah ! Lady, cruel lady, was it fair

To rouse a hope predestined not to find

Fulfilment, thus to flood the rosy air

With radiance, that I might the sooner share

Despondent wintry darkness of the blind ?

**THE HOT CLEAR WEATHER.**

PLEASANT is the hot clear weather  
For two—twin swallows together  
    Soaring aloft in the sky,  
But sad for one all alone,  
Cast down from his bright blue throne,  
To sit upon the ground and moan,  
    And die !

**GONE IS THE BEAUTY.;**

**GONE** is the Beauty, clean gone,

And what do I care for the rest ?

Stripped is the sun that shone

Of its rays, of its feathers the nest,

And yet men mock me, and tell me

That these things are all for the best !

## THE ROSE.

WHERE is the Rose I gave you, sir ?

Is this the sorry way

You treat the gifts that I confer ?

Come—have you lost it, eh ?

Or—valued it as much as her

You used to *love—in play* ?

The Rose *is* gone, but, sweet, the fact

Is such a flower scatters

So easily its petals packed,

Your gift so highly flatters,

That—in one wild impulsive act

I *kissed it all to tatters* !

## VERILY THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD.

VERILY they have their reward !

The men who enamoured of Beauty  
With cold eyes looked upon Duty,  
And whether hell had for a booty  
Their bodies, cared not at all,  
So that upon them was poured  
Beauty, they have their reward.

Verily they have their reward !

The men who for Holiness' sake  
Cup of the Queen would not take,  
Thirst of their throats to slake  
At Beauty's river refused,  
For the sake, they thought, of the Lord,  
These too have their reward.

74 *VERILY THEY HAVE THEIR REWARD.*

Verily they have their reward !

Philosophers proud, who have spilled

Beauty's blood, and have killed

Duty besides, and filled

This world with the worship of Truth,

And facts of Science have roared

In our ears, they have their reward.

Verily they have their reward !

Souls that have faithful been

To Beauty, a Goddess, a Queen,

And Kingdom of Goodness have seen,

And Truth for a daughter have known

Of these twain, bearing a sword

Golden, *they* have their reward.

## SURELY TO DIE IS GOOD !

KEATS (*loquitur*).

SURELY to die is good ;

We are born it seems for this,

To win us a long cold kiss,

A second of infinite bliss,

Snatched from beneath Death's hood,

Surely to die is good !

GOETHE (*loquitur*).

Surely to live is better ;

We are born for this the rather,

To many a kiss to be father,

To many a rose-pink letter,

To many a luscious night

And new moon's maze of delight,

To many a flowery fetter,

Surely to live is better !

## SUNSET OVER THE MULGRAVE WOODS.

SUCH a sunset ! draping clouds in golden  
    Robes, and casting colour all abroad,  
Glad to show to nobody beholden  
    Is she for it, plenty more is stored,  
Plenty more to-morrow morning molten  
    Masses on the canvas will be poured ;

Blue and pink and crimson intershaded,  
    Interwoven, soft as beauty's hair,  
Tracery most intricately braided,  
    Delicate as lace-work here and there,  
One into another fashions faded,  
    Paler than the former, but as fair ;



Best of all the bloom upon the woodlands,  
    Golden, rosy, dying into white,  
Surely underneath them something good stands,  
    Sleeps a gracious fairy of the night,  
Glad to stretch towards us if she could hands  
    Bountiful, and sparkle into sight.

## A LETTER.

SWEET, I tell you that I love you still,

Have you, *have* you quite forgotten me ?

Every separate tinkle of the rill

That the fresh sweet water-cresses fill,

Winding on its way to turn the mill,

Every flower where we used to be,

Hath a power all of me to thrill ;

There was a forget-me-not I sent

In a letter—I have never heard

Whether you accepted what I meant,

Whether you the pouting eyebrows bent

In a rage, and my poor missive rent ?

Answer me, *this time*, a single word,

'*Tis the last time*,—I will be content.

## HER BEDROOM.

SHE had waited, silly, overlong,  
    She had dallied, now she lay in bed,  
Ended was her coy coquettish song,  
She had put him off, 'twas very wrong,  
By her bedside flourished blue and strong  
    *The forget-me-not*, but she was dead,  
    And he, coming, found a flower instead,  
And a gaping sad funereal throng.

## THE MAN OF GENIUS.

ONCE a man of genius there walked  
By the Galilean inland sea,  
Taught of heaven in parables he talked  
Wonderfully, "who can this man be?"  
Said the people—Pharisees he balked  
And the rulers—"tell us who is he?"

Eighteen Christian centuries have tried  
This responsive doubtful task to do,  
Needles philosophical have plied,  
Spades of metaphor and poetry too—  
"God he is," at last the Churches cried,  
"God Himself,"—but is the answer true?

## C O N T R A S T S.

PLEASURE is sweet and sweet the scent of roses—

But sad the vanished fragrance of the past,

If flowers are fair the flowers do not last,

Within the petals lo ! the worm reposes.

Love is of God, divine the face of Love—

Granted, but doth Love fill the visible earth,

Doth God to everything that is give birth,

And is not even God strong Fate above ?

Rosy is youth and sweet the early years—

But youth shall vanish, and for fervour frost

Shall sparkle, and the rose-hue shall be lost,

And smiles give sorry place to future tears.

## A D R E A M.

I DREAMED that I was lying  
    With my head upon her breast,  
Wings folded, ceased from flying,  
    As a bird's are in his nest ;

Very happy was I, lying,  
    And her breath like gentle dew  
Kept over me soft flying,  
    How I wish the dream was true !

## A M E L O D Y.

THE wings of the melody take me  
    Speeding back to the place  
Where last the light did forsake me,  
    The light of my true love's face,  
The waves of the melody wake me,  
    And her sweet image I trace ;

Trace as when last I saw it,  
    The face of a goddess, a queen,  
Teeth of the years shall not gnaw it,  
    For ever as it hath been  
In the past, without freckle or flaw, it  
    By eyes of my mind shall be seen ;

Well I remember the night when  
    Last met hands of us twain,  
Dark was it, gone was the light then,  
    Pleasure made way for pain,  
Morning will beam on my sight when  
    My Sun-queen shineth again !



## O V E R !

YEA, it is over, sweet, and now  
    Alone we face the seasons,  
Alone life's fickle fallows plough,  
    And find our trusts were treasons,  
Alone we trudge, we two, I trow,  
    For at last we've found our reasons !

## BAGPIPES.

I LOVE sweet roses, but instead  
I only gather night-shade,  
And round about my nightly head  
Instead of poppies bright, laid  
Sweet slumber thereupon to shed,  
Bagpipes are till the light played !

## SIGHS THE WIND.

SIGHS the wind to-night like a voice from far-away  
regions

Bringing in memories of foam flung wide on the  
waves of the past,

And echoes of long-lulled laughter, and shafts and  
lances in legions

From the homes of the dead hurled forth high  
horsed upon wings of the blast !

## THE IMAGE OF EACH.

SURELY the image of each  
Will one day burst the veil  
Of the body, and rend the mail  
In twain of the flesh, and the pale  
Sick shrouds to our feet that reach,  
Clouding the image of each !

One day the gleams that we see  
Now upon faces at times,  
The lame disjointed rhymes,  
The clustering vine that climbs,  
A sun, a poem, will be,  
And the last a great strong tree,  
Tall, planted in fervent climes !

## THE ENGLISH MAIDENS.

## I.

AH me ! the English maidens,  
 How beautiful they are,  
 You will not find their equals  
 Although you wander far  
 Through sunset-lighted Aidenns,  
 And search from star to star.

## II.

How beautiful they might be !  
 If one fair woman knew  
 The wonder of her womanhood,  
 And would but carry through  
 Right to the end her own ideal,  
 Unshaken, steadfast, true.

## III.

The very thought delights me,  
The fact I shall not see,  
It startles, it affrights me,  
Compared with what they be—  
And yet they hope from frightfulness  
The sons of men to free !

# SONGS.

6—2





**"EYES OF BEAUTY."**—*MacDonald*

EYES of beauty, eyes of fire,  
Rousing in me mad desire,  
Rousing love that cannot tire ;

Eyes of beauty, eyes of green,  
Sea-sweet colour, seldom seen,  
Rippling eyelashes between ;

Eyes of beauty, eyes of brown,  
Lovely, lowly, looking down,  
All unknowing how to frown ;

Eyes of beauty, eyes of gray,  
Soft as night-time, bright as day,  
Born to govern, born to sway ;

Eyes of green and brown and gray,  
Deep as darkness, bright as day,  
I love you more than words can say !

## BEAUTY WITH GREEN EYES.

BEAUTY with green eyes,  
Beauty with grey,  
Soft as the sunrise,  
Bright as the day,  
Be to me kind skies,  
Hearken, I pray ;

Beauty with grey eyes,  
Beauty with brown,  
Lo ! what a depth lies,  
Deep—deep down—  
You must be very wise !  
No—don't frown ;

Beauty with brown eyes,  
    Beauty with green,  
Just as each shade dies,  
    My sighs, Queen,  
Follow, and sorrow flies  
    Colours between !

## THE KITTEN.

It does not matter much, love,  
    You did not mean to slay,  
You did not think a touch, love,  
    Would throb throughout the day,  
You did not mean it much, love,  
    I know you were in play ;

A kitten's claws can scratch, love,  
    —You think it is not so ?—  
*I* think they can despatch love,  
    Although you answer, " No "—  
*I feel* that they can scratch, love,  
    And make the red blood flow ;

It does not matter, sweet love,  
That half triumphant tear  
'Tis something of a feat, love,  
For me to have brought near,  
Although to see it, sweet love,  
Has cost me very dear.

## THE ENCHANTRESS OF THE SHORE.

## I.

THIS is the song she sang to me,  
Upon the grass, beneath the tree,  
That summer cloudless diamond day  
We were together, when I lay  
Content her peerless face to see.

"Sleep, love, and let the ages run their weary  
Wild way as they have hastened heretofore,  
But do not thou be busy any more  
With social schemes, and systems dusty, dreary,  
But stay with me and I will be thine eerie  
Witch-Lady, thine Enchantress of the Shore ;

Yea, I will kiss thee—once—no more—contented  
     With this thou hast to be, if thou *wilt* go  
     To be a bubble on the ebb and flow  
 Of that strong tide of action man invented,  
 Because his soul was loveless and consented  
     Not pure passivity of life to know ;

But if thou wilt abide with me, soft laughter  
     From morning until even, and delight  
     That thou hast little dreamed about, my knight,  
 Is ours, and, careless what may come hereafter,  
 But as the wind a creaking loosened rafter  
     Shakes gently, shall the World our quiet smite."

Such was the song she sang to me  
 Beneath the listening silent tree,  
     The leaves left fluttering as she sang,  
     My heartstrings so responsive rang  
 Dead I had been content to be.



II.

THIS is the song she sang to me,  
Upon the sand, beside the sea,  
That dreamy burnished autumn noon  
When, like a sleeper in a swoon,  
I, languid, rested next her knee.

“Peace, love, and listen to a soothing ditty  
That I will sing to thee, and close thine eyes  
And ponder all things slumbrous—sunset skies,  
Long shores at nightfall, or some Arab city  
Wherein myself shall find thee and take pity  
And be thy good magician, come, be wise ;

For what is fame, and crowns of glory, golden  
     Or green or grey or coloured otherways,  
     The warrior's laurel—or the poet's bays?  
 Why shouldst thou be to any man beholden,  
 Once having known sweet lips that wax not olden,  
     Feet having trodden once Love's mystic maze?

I sing to thee, and hath my voice no power  
     To send the hot blood round thy forehead fair,  
     And art thou not enamoured of my hair?  
 See, I will give thee, sweet one, even this flower,  
 If thou wilt tarry with me in my bower,  
     This rose that *I* have been content to wear."

Such was the song she sang to me,  
 Beside the rippling of the sea,  
     Their voices mingled passing sweet  
     And bound a chain about my feet,  
 And glad was I in prison to be.

III.

THIS is the song she sang to me,  
Upon the cliff, above the sea,  
That blue delightful summer morn,  
Along its eddies I was borne  
Wrapped in a silent ecstasy.

"Rest thou, and I will shield thee and caress thee,  
Thou shalt not need to wander any more  
Along the barren sad sun-stricken shore,  
Nor unto weary labour to address thee,  
For I am thine, and here am I to bless thee,  
Thou hast Love, what hast thou to do with war ?

104 *THE ENCHANTRESS OF THE SHORE.*

Thou hast not heard me sing before, my simple  
Strong hero with the iron arms and heart,  
If thou wilt stay with me and not depart,  
I will let loose my hair, cast off my wimple,  
And singing, honey-sweet, shall surely dimple  
The airs, and I will use my mystic art

To soothe thee, and to lull thee, and to prove thee  
Whether thou art a lover true indeed,  
Thou hast been strong to struggle and to bleed  
Wearing my colours, listen, doth this move thee,  
Or must my lips make plainer that I love thee,  
I thought my eyes had left them little need."

Such was the song she sang to me,  
In that green nook above the sea,  
The sun was softened, for her face  
Stole all his fire and added grace,  
And as the sun she seemed to be.

## THE WHOLE NIGHT LONG.

*THAT* must have been the reason, that yesterday I  
heard

What made the hope of seeing you a hope for months  
deferred,

Why, though before I fancied I had conquered and  
was strong,

I went to bed—and dreamed of you the whole night  
long ;

I had wooed an abstract Goddess, I had bowed before  
the feet

Of art, the marble Lady, and had found her worship  
sweet,

106      *THE WHOLE NIGHT LONG.*

But night brought back reality, by day I did thee  
    wrong,  
Avenged thou art—I dreamed of thee the whole night  
    long ;

In the clash of arms, so hath it our Tennyson,  
    forgets  
A man love's early savours and the younger years'  
    regrets,  
I doubt it—when the lull came, and ceased the cannons'  
    song,  
I think that I should dream of you the whole night  
    long ;

What do I care for Progress, the triumphant “ march  
    of mind ?”  
My eyes keep backward looking into eyes long left  
    behind,  
By day I fail to reach them, when sleep-lit fancies  
    throng  
They shine upon me tenderly the whole night long ;

To merge oneself in action is well enough by day,  
It's not so very hard then to drive a thought away,  
How will it be when darkness puts a point to memory's  
prong ?

Why—I shall lie and dream of you the whole night  
long ;

“Come be a man,” they say to one, “assert the in-  
born strength

Of manhood, why should *any* love become a love of  
length ?”

I know not—but when silence slays the clatter of the  
gong

Of daytime, I shall dream of you the whole night  
long.

## IN THE PAST.

My love is waiting in the past,  
And I, I cannot go to her,  
My eyes are closed, my lips are fast,  
Between us comes a shadow vast  
And interposes arms of air ;

Ah, love, if I could get to you,  
If I could break the bands of life,  
And bring by death your face in view,  
And things that used to be renew,  
How I would kiss the keen-edged knife !



How I would run to meet King Death,  
And fall upon his icy breast,  
And hug each single word he saith,  
If only we might mingle breath,  
And in his arms together rest !

## A DREAM OF ROSES.

HE dreamed a dream of roses,  
And bowers of delight  
Where rosy love reposes  
Through soft sweet hours of night,  
Till eyes of his uncloses  
The coming of the light ;

He dreamed of faces never  
Seen save in depth of dreams,  
When hours of darkness sever  
What is from that which seems,  
And raptures gone for ever  
Return in rainbow gleams ;

He dreamed that he was walking  
By side of maiden fair,  
A happy twain were talking, '  
And breath of evening air  
Was sweet, and moths were hawking  
Around them everywhere ;

And sweet the scent of clover,  
And smiles of flowers around,  
And odours wafted over  
Their heads, and o'er the ground—';  
Queen Loveliness a lover  
At eventide has found ;

The summer seems to bear them  
Aloft in arms of love,  
As if from earth to tear them  
And carry them above,  
All pain henceforth to spare them,  
Brooding with wings of dove ;

Over sweet souls united  
In silken love-spun bond,  
Their separate beings plighted  
By oath of kisses fond,  
When lips that blush delighted,  
Cling eager, and beyond

The veil seems half uplifted  
And meaning of the world  
Made plain, the curtain shifted,  
The drop-scene upward furled,  
And cloud-wreaths sidelong drifted,  
And fog-banks backward hurled ;

For many a misty season  
Clears up with love beside,  
Truth is too much for treason  
When two together ride,  
And bright the reign of Reason  
Beneath the sway of bride ;

Four eyes can pierce a cloud-veil  
That baffles two alone,  
What seemed to be a shroud pale  
In rainbow colours shown  
Shines, as a suit of proud mail  
Behind a monarch's throne !

The loneliness that slays us  
Is over, and instead  
From brokenness to raise us  
A downward bending head  
Hangs over us, and sways us-  
With smiles from heaven shed ;

And, were it not a dream, love,  
My very soul would leap,  
In rosy lips that gleam, love,  
Like flowers from out a deep  
Dim summer-scented sea, love,  
Its utmost self to steep,

Pressing from out the roses  
All odours strong to save,  
The ecstasy that closes  
One's eyes as in a grave  
Dug deep in seas of posies  
Whose lips about one wave !

## WHEN WE ARE LEFT ALONE !

Love shall mount to his throne, my sweet,

Love shall mount to his throne,

Soon, when friends that abide

To say good-bye by our side

Have finally farewell cried,

When we are left alone, my sweet,

When we are left alone !

Now you are all my own, my sweet,

Now you are all my own,

But many a kiss must wait

Till we sit by ourselves in our state,

Gone, given up to our fate,

When we are left alone, my sweet,

When we are left alone !

116      *WHEN WE ARE LEFT ALONE.*

Sweet to me now is your tone, my sweet,  
    Sweet to me now is your tone,  
    But sweeter far will it be  
    When, spoken alone to me,  
    Its silvery notes are free,  
When we are left alone, my sweet,  
    When we are left alone !

When we have wings and are flown, my sweet,  
    When we have wings and are flown,  
    Joy we will have, you and I,  
    Soaring aloft in the sky  
    As twittering twin swallows fly,  
When we are left alone, my sweet,  
    When we are left alone !

Pleasant it is to have known, my sweet,  
    Pleasant it is to have known  
    Friendship and pressure of hands,  
    But brighter the bloom that expands  
    On the spot where Loveliness stands,  
When we are left alone, my sweet,  
    When we are left alone !



Pleasant it is to have sown, my sweet,

Pleasant it is to have sown

Seeds of friendship on earth,

Sweeter by far is the birth

Of Beauty's smile, and the mirth

Of lips that are left alone, my sweet,

Of lips that are left alone !

Many a nice old crone, my sweet,

Many a nice old crone

Has a sweet dim sort of a smile,

But the thought of old age is a vile

Thing, a sin, a blasphemy, while

Young lovers are left alone, my sweet,

Young lovers are left alone !

Half of it is not known, my sweet,

Half of it is not known,

Of the happiness that for us waits

When the bars are drawn, and the gates

Closed, and the hubbub abates,

When we are left alone, my sweet,

When we are left alone !

118      *WHEN WE ARE LEFT ALONE.*

Pleasant it is to have known, my sweet,  
    Pleasant it is to have known  
    Life and the light of the skies,  
    But sweeter the sight of the eyes  
    Of each other, and soft replies,  
When we are left alone, my sweet,  
    When we are left alone !

Pleasant it is to have grown, my sweet,  
    Pleasant it is to have grown  
    Into the strength of a man,  
    But sweeter than shouts in the van  
    Of the battle the lisp of your fan  
Waved when we are left alone, my sweet,  
    When we are left alone !

Pleasant it is to have thrown, my sweet,  
    Pleasant it is to have thrown  
    Pallor and pain to the winds,  
    Quick drawing up the blinds,  
    Letting in the sun that finds  
Us when we are left alone, my sweet,  
    When we are left alone !

Lone are the birds that moan, my sweet,  
Lone are the birds that moan,  
Twain are the birds that sing  
Making woods and the copses ring  
Back again with the notes that they fling  
When two are left alone, my sweet,  
When two are left alone !

Joyful enough to have shown, my sweet,  
Joyful enough to have shown  
To ourselves some savours of love  
Already, but gladness above  
What She dreams, the wings of my Dove  
Shall anoint once we are alone, my sweet,  
Once we are left alone !

Once was a time to groan, my sweet,  
Once was a time to groan  
When you and I were apart,  
Severed the halves of our heart,  
These, they shall cease to smart  
When we are left alone, my sweet,  
When we are left alone !

120 *WHEN WE ARE LEFT ALONE.*

Had I a heart of stone, my sweet,  
    Had I a heart of stone,  
    Surely my heart would melt  
    At the thought of the joys we felt,  
    The kisses that each soul dealt  
When we were left alone, my sweet,  
    When we were left alone !

Kisses before were blown, my sweet,  
    Kisses before were blown  
    From the end of a finger tip,  
    But out from the flower of a lip  
    Sweet kisses each shall sip  
When we are left alone, my sweet,  
    When we are left alone !

Know you the source of the Rhone, my sweet,  
    Know you the source of the Rhone,  
    Pure as the skies it goes  
    Till the Arve and its melted snows  
    Are joined, and muddy it flows  
Henceforth, no longer alone, my sweet,  
    Being left no longer alone !

## AS ROSES ARE TO JUNE.

As sweet you are to me, my love,  
As roses are to June,  
As clouds that march in tune  
To the fair face of the moon,  
As sweet you are to me, my love,  
As roses are to June !

As dear you are to me, my love,  
As green to eyes of spring,  
As boughs of woods that ring  
To birds therein that sing,  
As dear you are to me, my love,  
As green to eyes of spring !

As good you are to me, my love,  
As showers to thirsty ground  
When drops of healing sound  
In the summer all around,  
As good you are to me, my love,  
As showers to thirsty ground !

As fair you are to me, my love,  
As morning to the air  
And the ringlets of the hair  
Of Aurora here and there ;  
As fair you are to me, my love,  
As morning to the air !

As new you are to me, my love,  
As every dawn is new  
And the sparkle of the dew  
Fresh grass that glitters through ;  
As new you are to me, my love,  
As every dawn is new !

As old you are to me, my love,  
As Beauty to our eyes,  
To every child that cries  
For a face, a form, that flies ;  
As old you are to me, my love,  
As Beauty to our eyes !

As young you are to me, my love,  
As the flush upon the face  
Of a winner in a race,  
Or your own lips' grace ;  
As young you are to me, my love,  
As your own lips' grace !

As strong you are to me, my love,  
As waves are to the sea,  
And miles of mist that flee  
To the ether where they be ;  
As strong you are to me, my love,  
As waves are to the sea !

As kind you are to me, my love,  
    As the moon to waves at night,  
    As the radiance of the light  
    Of the sun to waking sight ;  
As kind you are to me, my love,  
    As the moon to waves at night !

As true you are to me, my love,  
    As the magnet to the pole,  
    As love to every soul,  
    As stars to seas that roll ;  
As true you are to me, my love,  
    As the magnet to the pole !

As white you are to me, my love,  
    As snows upon the heights,  
    And the dazzle of the lights  
    Of Aurora in the nights ;  
As white you are to me, my love,  
    As snows upon the heights !



As pure you are to me, my love,  
    As ether's softest breath,  
    Or the gentle hands of Death,  
    As every word Christ saith ;  
As pure you are to me, my love,  
    As every word Christ saith !

As fond you are of me, my love,  
    As I am fond of you,  
    Like swallows in the blue  
    We twitter, two and two ;  
As fond you are of me, my love,  
    As I am fond of you !

## WEEPING ALONE.

I saw a maiden weeping alone—  
And the wail of the wind swept by,  
And clouds clean covered the sky,  
And never a blade was dry  
Of the grass by her, weeping alone !

I saw a maiden weeping alone—  
Tear-stained face that was fair  
Once, wind-waved beautiful hair,  
Sad eyes, how came you there  
In the wet grass, weeping alone ?

I saw a maiden weeping alone—  
    Head upon hands and knees  
    Huddled up to the head one sees,  
    Look close, and wonderment flees,  
And pity is left alone !

I saw a maiden weeping alone—  
    Hair that a man might stroke  
    Strayed, trailed from under a cloak  
    That covers her head from the folk  
That laugh at a maiden alone !

I saw a maiden weeping alone—  
    Where is he, what is he like,  
    Has he lifted a sword to strike  
    In the wars, or a ploughboy's pike,  
And left his sweetheart alone ?

I saw a maiden weeping alone—

Where is he, perhaps he is dead,

Buried in blood for a bed,

With the sod for a pillow instead

Of her breast, and she is alone !

I saw a maiden weeping alone—

Where is he, yet it may be

He lives, and has left her, and she

Will never his false face see

Any more, so she weepeth alone !

## AUGUST—AN IDYLL.

YOUNG they were, and hand in hand  
    Across the fields they wandered,  
Swiftly passing through the land  
    A wealth of love they squandered  
That afternoon, when hand in hand  
    They loved, and laughed, and pondered !

The August sun across the sheaves  
    Shot slantwise bolts of light,  
Beneath the nodding golden eaves  
    They sat, till hint of night,  
With cool hand laid upon the leaves,  
    Brought back to them their sight ;

Sight gone astray a weary way,  
The world long left behind  
That afternoon of August day—  
We know that love is blind,  
And eyes of those who own his sway  
The best thing blindness find.

Now cooler lips the dews caress,  
And gentle shadows fall,  
And fold around the maiden's dress,  
And homeward lovers call,  
And back they go, two hearts a-glow,  
Beside the low grey wall ;

I do not think that either will  
In time to come forget  
One single whisper of the rill,  
One single leaflet wet  
That night with dew they wandered through,  
One waft of mignonette !

I think that many a kiss will stay  
    On brow, and eyes, and hand,  
That many a blithesome breeze will play,  
    And many a wintry strand  
Be white with snow before they go,  
    These, into Lethe's land !

For one such day is brighter far  
    Than years that slowly crawl,  
And single sight of one such star,  
    Such sight as did befall  
These two to see, will better be  
    Than constellations all.

## A SERENADE.

WAKE, sweet, look to the life of the air,  
And the scent of the winds below,  
The moonlit night is in love with the light  
Of a half-seen shimmer of snow !

Draw back the curtain—thy true love stands  
With eyes that climb and aspire,  
As the tendrils wind convolvulus-twined,  
To Beauty on high to be nigher ;

The scent of the flower-beds all night long  
Has leave, you know it, to play  
By your bedside, and why should you chide  
Feet low on the ground that stay ?



Let the light of the moon fall soft on an arm

By the window-sill sweet shining,

Like ivory white set in jet-black bright

Stray tresses of hair for a lining ;

I thought you were fair, I thought you a queen,

When I looked on you, love, by day,

But little I thought of the radiance brought

By night when the sun is away !

Your eyes were deep, and I sank therein,

But never I thought to swim

In a sea so deep, my soul to steep

In ecstasy up to the brim !

Sweet, blow me a kiss—O flowers on high

Stretch petals of hands and down

To my lips “with care” bring its fragrance fair,

In love of it life I drown !

## THRICE !

*Kiss me once* to wash away the past,  
All the dark and dreary time between  
Now and when I sadly saw you last  
Disappear behind the bushes green,  
Garment fluttering out of eyeshot fast,  
Kiss me for forgiveness sake, my queen !

*Kiss me twice*, to emphasize the new,  
This new, blessed, happier, holier time,  
Clouds have parted, shines again the blue,  
Rings again the old triumphant rhyme,  
Peals in either heart a merry chime,  
Kiss me twice to show *that it is true !*

*THRICE.*

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*Kiss me thrice*, yea, sweetheart, once again,  
Think of all I've suffered far away,  
Think of all the panting and the pain,  
Bleeding feet that 'mid the briars stray  
Seeking sight of you from day to day,  
Signify that I may here remain !

## SISTERS.

YOUNGER SISTER.

WHAT is he like, sweet sister mine ?

I prithee talk to me  
Of the face and form of that lover of thine,  
His image I long to see !

ELDER SISTER.

O sweet my love, he has bonny brown hair,  
And his eyes are of glistening grey,  
And his face is a rose, and his feet are fair,  
And his glance is as bright as day !

*SISTERS.*

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YOUNGER.

And how does he smile, this lover of thine,

I have seen you smile at the thought,

I have seen you smile, sweet sister mine,

*Somebody* that smile taught !

ELDER.

He smiles, little bird, as the great Sun smiles

In the morning drying the dew,

And the glance of his eye falls soft and beguiles

An answering eye glance too !

YOUNGER.

So his hair is brown, sweet sister mine,

Does it curl ? . . . and his eyes are grey . . .

Has he rose-red lips, that lover of thine,

Like mine, sweet sister, say ?

ELDER.

Oh sweet, he has lips that I love right well,

As rosy, and stronger than thine,

For his could be set to encounter hell,

Or . . . parted to meet . . . perhaps . . . mine !

YOUNGER.

And what does he say, sweet sister mine,  
Does he talk, does he prattle at all,  
Can he say soft things, this lover of thine,  
Can he thoughts of thine own forestall?

ELDER.

Ah ! sweet, you should hear him, 'tis not for me  
To show you, I can't, how he talks . . . .  
But his voice is as soft as the fall of the sea  
As close by my side he walks !

YOUNGER.

And oh ! can he kiss, sweet sister mine . . . .  
I remember at school we agreed  
That nobody should be a lover of thine  
If he couldn't . . . in this succeed !

ELDER.

Ah ! love, one day you will know for yourself  
What a kiss from a hero means . . . .  
Why, sister mine, you sly little elf,  
You are not yet in your teens !

YOUNGER.

Shall I have, do you think, sweet sister mine,  
When I grow as tall as you,  
And as pretty . . . perhaps . . . such a lover as thine,  
A lover shall I have too ?

ELDER.

Yes, little sister, keep you still  
And be content to abide,  
Eyes now full of fun one day shall fill  
With tears when he walks by your side.

YOUNGER.

What is it like, 'sweet sister mine,  
What they call *being in love* ?  
Was *he* in love, that lover of thine,  
When he kissed . . . I saw . . . your glove ?

ELDER.

Sweet, it is fair beyond all our dreams,  
And gentle as airs at night,  
And softer than wave of a symphony seems  
That lulls one asleep with delight.

*SISTERS.*

YOUNGER.

Can he laugh, can he smile, sweet sister mine,  
Or is he stern, does he frown,  
This bearded man, this lover of thine,  
As he bends his high head down?

ELDER.

Aye, he can laugh, little sister mine,  
He can laugh, and his laugh is sweet,  
Thrilling the veins as a draught of wine,  
As the wild wind thrills the wheat.

YOUNGER.

And aren't you sorry, sweet sister mine,  
From me, from us all to part,  
To leave us all for that lover of thine,  
To give to him your young heart?

ELDER.

Sorry, my sweet, as the flowers that give  
To the sun their scents in the morn,  
As the crimson clouds that for one thing live  
Their colour to give to the dawn.



SISTERS.

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YOUNGER.

But is he *worth* it, sister mine,  
Is he worthy . . . worthy of you . . .  
If he is *the sun*, that lover of thine,  
You are something better than *dew* !

ELDER.

Worthy . . . aye . . . we will not talk, sweet,  
Of worth, if you please, any more,  
Precious to me is the print of his feet,  
And the sound of his step at the door.

YOUNGER.

Has he ever told you, sister mine,  
That he loved you, loved you at all,  
Has he spoken out, that lover of thine,  
Did he ever at your feet fall ?

ELDER.

Never, love, but he said, " My own,"  
And I . . . I knew what he meant . . .  
I . . . why I know each turn of his tone . . .  
And . . . *home together we went* !

*SISTERS.*

YOUNGER.

Ah ! together . . . sweet sister mine,  
I remember now very well  
How you and he, that lover of thine,  
Came home as the night mists fell.

ELDER.

Ah ! *I* remember too, little love,  
And the dews and the darkening trees,  
And pale clear skies and a sparkle above  
Of the stars, and the balm of the breeze.

## THE SONG OF THE LONELY SOUL.

I LIVE my life in a lonely land

Without the sound of a smile,  
Pacing a desolate twilight strand,  
Gnawing my heart with a file  
Of memories iron, a heaped-up band,  
Like waves that the wild winds pile

All together, *en masse*, pell-mell,  
Writhing like crested snakes,  
Opening depths of a foam-flecked hell,  
Filling the air with flakes  
That ride, like witches, right out of the well  
Where each upon each wave breaks ;

144 *THE SONG OF THE LONELY SOUL.*

Such are the miseries strong to assail  
Heart and being of mine,  
Thrashing the wheat of one's mind with a flail  
That leaves no time to repine,  
For blows are rapid, and coats of mail  
Would be only as twisted twine

Before the force of it ; not to kill  
Outright are the blows of it bent,  
Only to torture, only to spill  
Warm blood from the veins of us rent  
As runs from a rock rod-stricken a rill,  
It seems as if it were sent !

If there is Purpose what care we ?  
What matter if there is none ?  
For then, as it seems, the sooner the sea  
Drowns out the light of the sun,  
And swamps in water all things that be  
The sooner will Death be done !

*THE SONG OF THE LONELY SOUL.* 145

If there is Love, though not for us,  
    Yet it is well to abide—  
If there is Beauty, we'll not discuss  
    Result of our own life's ride,  
But cease, like waves from foam, from the fuss  
    Of the ages and calm subside ;

If there is none there is nothing at all,  
    All things that are, are not,  
The Universe crumbles beneath a pall  
    Of rottenness, silences hot  
To blast with their breath us weak worms fall  
    On us, being from being to blot.

## IT'S ALL GONE AWAY.

It's all gone away,  
The light of the day,  
Now skies are gray,  
    And closed are the eyes  
    Of Love, hope flies,  
But miseries stay!

Never again  
Shall it be as when  
Strength as of ten  
    Was ours in the flower  
    Of life, and the power  
Of manifold men!

Weak as the grass  
Limbs of us pass  
Brittle as glass  
    To the grave that waits  
    With a grin on its gates—  
Life is a farce,

Only without  
Laughter, and shout  
Of delight, and the pout  
    Of lips that admire  
    The actors' fire,  
And sparkle about ;

Left of the fun  
Of the play there is none,  
Never a pun  
    In the drama of life  
    To lighten the strife  
With a ray of the sun ;

Slowly we go  
All of a row,  
Roses that blow,  
    And flowers that are faded,  
    To the churchyard shaded  
By tombs that grow ;

What does it matter ?  
Earth is the fatter,  
Beauty we scatter  
    All over the ground,  
    Soon to be found  
In the worms' wet platter ;

Lips are in bloom  
Ripe for the gloom  
Of a sunless tomb,  
    And flowers are fair—  
    We fix them there  
For decay to consume ;



The younger the better  
For death the setter  
Of plants, the abettor  
    Of grey grave-mists  
    And skeletons kissed  
By the clank of a fetter ;

Bloom upon cheeks  
For a time—till leaks  
Life's can, and he seeks  
    With slow sad strides  
    Like a ghost that glides  
Death's pitiless peaks ;

Upon these he sits,  
And Loveliness flits,  
And they are at quits,  
    Sad Life and Death—  
    Life gives us breath,  
Our throats Death slits !

## MY LOVE.

## MEDIÆVAL.

My Love is as the rose, her lips  
Are sweeter than the buds the bee  
In booming condescension sips,  
Each stray of hair that sideways slips,  
Is dearer than ten crowns to me.

My Love is as the lily, white  
And pure and passionate, lithe and tall,  
I dream of her the livelong night,  
And see her towering, golden bright,  
Beside the old grey garden wall.

My Love is as the violet,  
Most fair and modest, in the shade  
She sits, 'tis long since we have met,  
And therefore both my eyes are wet,  
And all my heart in motion made.

My Love is as the meadow-sweet,  
The odour of her hair is good,  
And round about her passing feet  
Enchanted flowers you may meet,  
The grass is green where she hath stood.

My Love is as the golden corn,  
Her hair it waveth in the wind,  
Before her face delight is born ;  
Attendant roses of the dawn  
Behind her footstep you may find.

## ACROSS THE SEA.

ACROSS the sea, across the strand,  
My Lady waved a snow-white hand,  
A farewell token to the land,  
A farewell gift to me,

Across the strand, across the sea,  
My Lady sent a sign to me,  
Twain lovers that should parted be,  
My lady sent a hand !

Across the waves, across the foam,  
She hurled a hasty hand-shake home,  
About to rove, about to roam,  
About to leave my side,

Across the foam, across the waves,  
White intermediate heaving graves,  
A look the wind and water braves,  
The last glance of my bride !

Across the sea, across the strand,  
My Lady waved a snow-white hand,  
By backward breezes forward fanned,  
By blithesome breezes home,

Across the strand, across the sea,  
She sent a joyous sign to me,  
A sign that shortly she would be  
Returned, no more to roam !

Across the waves, across the waste,  
My Lady came in gladsome haste,  
Blown kisses each the other chased,  
Blown kisses sent to me,

Across the waste, across the waves,  
Across the lapping sea that laves  
The ship's keel, comes my Queen and saves,  
Praise Heaven, my memory !

## THREE—ONLY THREE.

OH, love, give me a kiss,  
One—only one,  
To be the beginning of bliss,  
The first soft ray of the sun,  
The last wave wind being done,  
Last step a race being run,  
Grant me, sweetheart, this,  
One—only one !

Two—only two,  
To kiss each other, and be  
Twin kisses clinging to me  
Like seaweed washed in the sea,  
Or drops of delicate dew,  
Two—only two !

10—2

Three—only three,  
That I may remember, sweet,  
How your heart with my heart beat,  
And the rapid pulse of your feet  
When you came to give to me  
Three—only three !



## VICTOR HUGO INSIDE PARIS.

" I PITY you who are with the kings who kill ;"  
So said he, Victor Hugo, and prepared  
In the arms of that sweet city they had dared  
To threaten, aged blood of his to spill,  
As if her kisses, youthful, he had shared.

" I pity you who are with the kings who kill,  
But me to minister to a people dying  
It suits, and in the rear of Terror flying,  
And in the van of Hope that forward *will*  
Advance, to end a life of absent sighing ;

“Of lonely sighing far apart from her

My own sweet city, yea, my love, my queen,

I come to end the years that rolled between

Us, and my body to inter

Within the walls where long my soul hath been.

“At a most supreme moment I return

When Freedom re-established on the throne

A chant triumphant ending in a groan

Is singing, one hand pointing to an urn,

The other to a despotism flown !

“One hand is pointing to the sunset skies

Where sinks, but not this time in seas of blood,

Napoleon's sun that high in heaven stood

But yesterday, and held her for a prize—

And here my Lady hath the thing she would ;

“But with the other to the raging hordes !

Of mad barbarians marching to her gates

To wreak on lips inviolate their hates

She points, and summons garniture of swords,

And lovers' breasts to meet the fickle fates.

“And shall she make to any one in vain,  
To any one of us, her last appeal,  
Crowned with a kiss to each for woe or weal,  
A kiss that either lips of Death retain,  
Or else that rosy Victory's mouth may seal?”

## AT NIGHT.

COME to where the waters play  
Underneath the moon,  
See the honeysuckle spray  
Beckons softly, answer "yea,"  
You will be obedient, eh,  
You will join me soon ?

Come to where the sands are light  
And the breezes cool,  
O, my sweet one, shining white  
At the window, we will write  
Names upon the beach to-night,  
We will play at "school !" \*

\* I had, when I wrote this, the exquisite love-scene in poor Robertson's drama of "School" in my mind.

Come to where I wait for you,  
Where I wait and sing,  
Breathe upon me as the dew  
Gently fans the grasses through,  
Strength exhausted to renew,  
Health of heaven to bring.

## ANSWER.

No, Sir, you were cross to-day,  
Ah, *I* saw you frown,  
'Tis too cold to-night to play,  
Listen honeysuckle spray,  
Hear my answer, take my "Nay,"  
Winding woodwork down.  
*I* am cross to-night as well—  
Sir, what *did* you mean  
Praising so that faded belle,  
Really I can hardly tell—  
Here a pouting rosebud fell  
Lifted eyes between ;

Played the waters, played the pair

On the shining sands.

He was handsome, she was fair,

Love was rosy, he was there,

Well the three contented were,

Closely clasped their hands.

## BREAKERS THREE.

THE bells are chiming loud to-night,  
A sight they suggest to me  
Of a foam-flecked ocean surface white,  
A passionate heaving sea,  
And a boat with wings to flee  
The following waters' glee  
To the harbour beacon bright ;

Or, a wood with one beside,  
Dear, very dear to me,  
In a leafy, laughing, deep green tide  
The boughs and twigs of a tree  
Wave over us graciously  
As I upon bended knee  
Beseech her to be my bride ;

Or, a sandy desolate shore  
    With pale grey thistles to me  
Face turning evermore,  
    Low green cliffs on our lee,  
    And a heart that seems to be  
    As heavy as breakers three  
That follow and burst and roar.



## TWO TOGETHER !

EASY 'tis for two together  
Rainy skies to face,  
Roughest bursts of windy weather,  
All alone to pace  
Needs a heart as hard as leather,  
'Tis a sorry case !

I have seen the clouds unfolding  
When four eyes were there,  
Clouds that only now were holding  
Over one poor pair  
Pitiless thunder-symptoms, scolding  
Copper sheets of air.

I have seen the scent of flowers  
Freshen and expand,  
Glad to greet united powers,  
Glad to greet a hand  
Robbing blossom-laden bowers  
At a soft command.

I have seen a shower hurry,  
Haste to leave the skies,  
Cloudy masses in a flurry,  
Thunderstorm that flies,  
All for fear a crash might worry,  
Drown two lovers' sighs !

I have seen the ether brighten  
All from side to side,  
And the sunshine smile and lighten  
Like as if it tried  
All the universe to whiten  
For some bonny bride !

I have seen the roses blushing  
    Into deeper red,  
Beauty over lilies rushing,  
    Bloom intenser shed  
When two lovers' cheeks were flushing  
    Over every head,

Every gentle head of flower,  
    'Faith they seem to share  
With us some mysterious power,  
    Hand in hand to fare  
Along with us, glad gifts to shower  
    Upon a happy pair !

# ALONE!

ALONE ! alone !

What does it mean ?

Has any one seen

The last rose-queen

Of the Autumn blown ?

*She* is left alone.

Alone ! alone !

The last brave man

In the rear, in the van

The foremost, can

Tell, must have known,

What it is to be lone.

Alone ! alone !

A love-sick maid  
Who fingers a braid  
Of hair that he played  
With often, is shown  
The grief of the lone.

Alone ! alone !

A mother, whose sons  
In the war by the guns  
Are standing, stuns  
The trumpet's tone,  
For, she is alone.

Alone ! alone !

An old man grey  
Who has lived his day  
Who has played his play,  
Now feeble grown  
Sits sadly alone.

Alone ! alone !

A bird in its nest  
Who misses the breast  
That it loves the best,  
For a mate makes moan,  
Is indeed alone.

Alone ! alone !

A lover who sighs  
For the light of the eyes  
Of his mistress, cries  
With a vehement groan  
*I* am alone.

## WHEN SUNS ARE BRIGHT.

WHEN suns are bright,  
And life's before you,  
And breezes o'er you  
Are floating light,  
Nor miseries gnaw you,

Launch forth your bark,  
And sail the seas,  
Inhale the breeze,  
Till dawn of dark  
And nights that freeze ;

11—2

Sing in the blue,  
Like happy birds,  
And leap as herds  
Are wont to do  
When morning girds

Her belt of beauty—  
Soon to pass  
Like gathered grass  
Some hot hand's booty,  
Or broken glass ;

Love while you may,  
It is not long  
That lasts a song,  
An hour of play,  
A life of wrong,

A gaze in eyes,  
A broken heart,  
An æon's smart,  
And shattered lies  
Life's every part,



A sigh, a kiss,  
    And all is gone  
    And hope is borne  
On wings of bliss  
    To lands forlorn :  
  
Where desert sands  
    Stretch dreary plains,  
    And flower of pains  
Alone expands,  
    Alone remains !  
  
Was this thing meant  
    For us to see  
    And not to flee,  
When we were sent  
    Alive to be ?  
  
That we should sigh  
    The livelong day,  
    And weep for play,  
For gladness cry,  
    Nor wish to stay ;

That we should love  
The life of flowers,  
And rose-hung bowers,  
And clouds above,  
And summer showers,  
And softest airs  
Of twilight lands,  
And lonely sands  
Where Beauty fares,  
And Mystery stands,  
And inland scenes,  
And wealth of woods  
With waving hoods  
Of varied greens  
That reach for roods,  
And moors' expanse,  
Where bells of heather  
In windy weather  
And fern-leaves dance  
In joy together,

And sweeping hills,  
Where winds are free  
And kissed in glee  
The leaping rills  
The breezes flee—

I cannot tell  
Why these are glad,  
But we are sad—  
Why we a hell,  
These heaven had?

# AH, WELL-A-DAY !

AH, well-a-day !

Man is a worm,

Weak and infirm,

A blossomless germ

Woven of clay—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Woman is a dream,

A stray rose-beam

From the sunset stream,

One red ray—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Love is the light

Of an hour, in the night

It fails us quite,

Never does it stay—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

What is the bloom

Of youth worth ? gloom

And moss on a tomb

Is the end of the way—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Beauty of lips

The young man sips

Death's hand snips

With his scissors, *I* say—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Best to be gone,

Not to be born,

To be left forlorn

In the womb of the clay—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Beauty of a rose

No man knows

Till the best part goes,

Till the cankers slay—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Best for us all

Like leaves to fall,

And escape from the thrall

Of our garments gray—

Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Flowers are sweet,  
And lips that meet,  
But swift are the feet  
Of the flails that flay—  
Ah ! well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Come, let us turn,  
Strong souls that burn,  
To the face of the Urn,  
Strong souls that stray—  
Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !

Sweet was the hair,  
And the face was fair  
Of Beauty, but where  
Is she gone to, pray ?  
Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !  
The world is mad,  
We are all of us sad,  
We are most of us bad,  
We are weak to delay—  
Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !  
There is a child—  
See, *he has smiled !*  
Bricks he has piled  
In a heap at his play—  
Ah, well-a-day !

Ah, well-a-day !  
Few men know  
Where spring-buds blow,  
And the birth of the snow  
That blossoms in May—  
Ah, well-a-day !



Ah, well-a-day !

All men see

Agony, and flee—

Why should we be

At all, if we pay

Such a penalty, eh ?

## GOOD-NIGHT !

GOOD-NIGHT, my sweet one, sleep attend you,  
And bear you into dreamland on his wings,  
Into a mist of soft sights send you,  
Where not a single bird there is but sings,  
Happiness higher than the day's is lend you,  
And eyes that revel in the midst of things,  
From which, alas ! the light will rend you  
In spite of memory that backward clings.

## MY LOVE.

## MEDIÆVAL.

My Love is of the summer, she  
Is bound about her brow with hair  
As golden as the sun-lit air  
Upon a base of porphyry ;

A summer Queen she seems to be,  
Her feet caress the grasses fair,  
And they in turn obeisance bear,  
And blossoms bend before her knee ;

She hath a wondrous way with me,  
She glances at me, and I wear  
A silent mien, content to share  
Her sweet complaisant company.

My Love is of the autumn, she  
Hath black-brown hair and subtle eyes,  
Green as the green-grey Northern skies,  
Her face is good for man to see ;

I strove, alas ! I failed to flee,  
As effort flutters down and dies  
Like a shot swallow, and low lies,  
So I succumbèd quietly ;

With meadow-sweet and fern did we  
In Love's unending Folly wise  
Make garlands, weave together ties  
That left me shorn of liberty.

My Love is of the spring-time, she  
Is gentle as the opening flowers,  
And lays a sense of cooling showers  
Upon a forehead fever-free ;

Under an Elm's gigantic lee  
    We sat and laughed aside the hours  
    With pouting time-regardless powers,  
And tears of changing ecstasy ;

She hath blue eyes, she hath the key  
    To open green May-scented bowers,  
    She hath the songs of birds for dowers,  
And nosegays folded full of glee.

My Love is of the winter, she  
    Is queen of the dim blue-gray land  
    Where the auroral streamers stand,  
And, roseate, stride across the sea ;

The daughter of the winter, he  
    Her cheeks with bitter frosts hath fanned,  
    And made my Lady keen-eyed, and  
Next beautiful in turn to thee

My Goddess of the graces three

Who hast the autumn to command,

And hast the eyes so subtly planned,

Holding three separate shades in fee.

# MISCELLANEOUS PIECES.





## THE FIRST.

As dreams at morning fly  
And leave no trace behind,  
When we draw up the blind,  
To the limbo of mists consigned,  
So when to thee I sigh  
Cleared are the clouds of my mind—  
Cleared are the clouds of my mind,  
Breaks forth and shines the blue  
Wet dismal fog-damps through,  
Slays fancies false the true,  
And faces false I find  
Fly before thought of you.

O darling do not leave  
My side, or I shall die,  
To you my soul doth cry,  
To you my heart doth fly,  
For loss of you I grieve  
As the flowers at sunset sigh ;

Come back at least in dreams,  
And let me see your face,  
If but for some short space,  
And let my fancy trace  
Deep hair of thine that gleams,  
Ringlets that interlace ;

Come to me when you can—  
As sighs for the scent of the rose  
Air where a rosebud blows  
I sigh, my wings I close,  
They hang down weak and wan,  
My life-stream stagnant flows ;

O sweet, come, quicken the life  
    In my veins, make roses blow,  
    Melt sad white widths of snow,  
    Bid gladsome streamlets flow  
Till all the air is rife  
    With melody, freed from woe ;

As for me I am weary,  
    I lie and think of you  
    And paint a likeness true,  
    As songbirds love the blue  
Bright skies I love you dearie,  
    Each dawn my love is new ;

As songbirds hate the winter,  
    Short days and nights that freeze,  
    No flowers and leafless trees,  
    As songbirds cease the breeze  
With shafts of song to splinter,  
    So am I ill at ease,

Sick, silent, when we're parted,  
Unhappy till we meet,  
Till sound of some one's feet  
Is heard, and hands that greet  
Make whole the heart that smarted,  
Rebuild the broken street ;

Sweet love, I cannot say  
Though I try the things I would—  
Ah ! if I only *could*,  
If at your feet I stood  
The gift of a voice one day  
Made mine, sweet, *then* you should

Know what your Beauty means,  
And how my heart is riven,  
And how in vain I've striven  
To reach the heights of Heaven  
With pen that only gleams  
Stray ears, through Earth's fields driven ;

I find my life flow sadly,  
And many a stagnant pool  
Is there, and breezes cool  
Are absent, 'tis the rule  
It seems for daytime badly  
And night to use their tool ;

But if *your* life flows gladly  
Something that is to know,  
Then all things are not woe,  
And grass beneath the snow  
Is green yet, and less madly  
Our pulses come and go ;

If Beauty *is*, and you, sweet,  
Are Beautiful, 'tis well !  
The cold and fires of hell  
Have not sufficed to quell  
All things, and your white feet,  
Unsunged, the good news tell ;

Be perfect ; let your Beauty  
    Bud, blossom, like a rose,  
    Straight as a rose-tree grows  
    Rise, proud and pure as snows,  
The sons of men for booty  
    To you Fate, smiling, throws ;

And all I claim—I *do* claim  
    This much—is right of place ;  
    I was the first to trace  
    In dust before your face  
My form, the first that came,  
    The foremost in the race,

First lover of them all,  
    The first to speak your praise,  
    The first a psalm to raise  
    With heart and lips a-blaze  
Fast bound in Beauty's thrall,  
    The first your Beauty slays !

## ONE TRESS.

I SHOULD have liked *one tress—one—only one—*

One sea-soft ripple of the black-brown hair,  
 One ray from off the circle of the sun,  
 One leaf from out a flowering forest fair,  
 Surely, sweet lady mine, 'twere no harm done  
 Of wealth so wide a mite with me to share ;

\* \* \* \* \*

One drop from out the Great Wide World of Water,  
 One crystal blade from fields of ether torn,  
 One distant dimple of a smile, O daughter,  
 One blush from off the crimson face of morn,  
 One soft sweet echo of thy low love-laughter,  
 One pearl-pink petal pouted from a rose,  
 One wingèd word of answer, silence after,  
 One star from all the galaxies of snows,

One look of love, one pressure of a hand,  
    One sparkle flashed from out an answering eye,  
One grain from all the silted seas of sand,  
    One point of light from blue expanse of sky,  
One rosy foam-flower flung from out the Ocean  
    Fair as Queen Venus, when she rose, new-born,  
One gentle message of a hand in motion  
    All fraught with hopefulness for love forlorn,  
One whisper of the wind on summer mornings  
    Waking a glad re-echo in the leaves,  
One ripple of laughter rung from under awnings  
    Merry maidens shading on soft summer eves,  
One moonbeam shining silvery o'er the billows  
    Amid the bewildering witchery of the night,  
One delicate dream-tune played about our pillows,  
    One ray, one pure white shaft of morning light,  
One echo of a symphony suggesting  
    Delicious dreams in rainbow raiments dressed,  
One glimpse of hope of somewhere, sometime, resting  
    And sinking into sleep, and being blest,



One distant tiny tinkle of remembrance,  
    Preserved through all the sights and sounds of  
        morn,  
Of some fair vision, without form or semblance,  
    Amid the misty dim dream-valleys born,  
One flame plucked off the pyre of sunset fires,  
    One feather fallen from out an eagle's wing,  
One waft of melody seized from off the lyres  
    Of all the Universe of Birds that sing,  
One flake of foam blown off the ocean ridges,  
    One rattle in the rowlocks of an oar,  
One winglet waving in a mist of midges,  
    One shell from all the lone Atlantic shore,  
One silent memory of seasons golden  
    When life and love went hand in hand together,  
One glance a fearful follower to embolden,  
    One whistle of wind aloft in winter weather ;  
One rosy flush a fair face overflowing,  
    One honeysuckle-scented wave of air,  
One lightning flash the landscape sudden showing,  
    One look, its owner only half-aware,

Right to the heart of hearts of some one going,  
For him a life or death-doom to declare—

\* \* \* \* \*

All these seem small things, lady—*I ask less,*  
For I only ask of thee *one tiny tress.*

## MY LOVE.

My love is waiting by the sea—

By sloped long hillocks of dun sand

With grey-green grasses clothed, a land

Most lonely, there she chose to stand—

Most grievous, there she chose to be—

My love is waiting by the sea !

My love is waiting in the wood—

Beneath her feet the flowers are red

And yellow, over her sweet head

The falling fluttered leaves are shed,

She wears her hair, she wears no hood,

My love is waiting in the wood !

My love is waiting at the gate—

A rose she holds between her hands,  
And, silent, smiling down she stands,  
Her hair in braids of golden bands  
Hangs downward by its own glad weight,  
My love is waiting at the gate !

My love is waiting in the lane—

The honeysuckle stoops inclined  
To kiss her, of an equal mind  
With me, the roses blush to find  
Their rivalry of redness vain,  
My love is waiting in the lane !

My love is waiting on the shore—

The waves are plashing at her feet,  
Soft music this, but not so sweet  
As low desire of lips that meet,  
Once having met to meet the more,  
My love is waiting on the shore !

My love is waiting by the stream—

Ah, sweet one, fast the waters flow,

Our joy is fleeting even so,

A moment's mute delight we know,

A moment's wild ecstatic dream,

And—love's no longer by the stream !

My love is waiting nigh the lake—

Sweet pebbles, rounded water-stones

She stands upon, I would my bones

Were even as ye, I would my groans

A sacrifice her feet might take,

That love would slay me by the lake !

My love is waiting in the road—

And up and down she looks and weeps,

My coldness at a distance keeps,

For what she, cruel, sowed she reaps,

She mocked me when my own heart glowed,

I leave her weeping in the road !

My love is waiting by the trees—

Those fair four trees where first we met,  
I have them in my memory yet,  
She waits, she sigheth for regret,  
And I burn round her in the breeze,  
And breathe upon her through the trees !

My love is waiting in the street—

We are not rich, we envy not  
The wealthy, ours a lowly lot,  
But she, she loveth me, God wot !  
And therefore are my footsteps fleet  
To meet my lady in the street !

My love is waiting by the burn—

A Scottish maiden she, and I  
A Scotchman born as such to die  
Am steadfast, O the soft blue eye,  
The yellow hair, the lips I earn  
As greeting, coming nigh the burn !

My love is waiting by the brook—  
    The peppermint and forget-me-not  
    Make sweet and gracious all the spot,  
    But as for me my lips are hot,  
My eyes are eager, and I look  
For heaven and her beside the brook !

My lady waiteth on the hill—  
    And I, I weep, I cannot move,  
    I cannot go to meet my love,  
    I strive below, she sings above,  
Bound fast by fate's remorseless will  
I cannot cry, nor climb the hill !

My love is waiting in the glade—  
    And over her the branches bow  
    And make a green cathedral now  
    With waving aisles, across her brow  
A soothing shadow next have laid,  
And so she waits within the glade !

My love is waiting on the beach—  
    High green cliffs on the dexter hand  
    Enclose us from the inward land,  
    And on the left the billows band  
Together in a foamy reach,  
And laugh, as we do, on the beach !

My love is waiting by the elm—  
    In France, a lonely sun-struck spot  
    With poplars lined that waver not  
    In straightness, in the mid-day hot  
She chose with fire to overwhelm  
My parched pale soul beside the elm !

My love is waiting by the bridge—  
    A country bridge with mosses grown  
    Across a babbling streamlet thrown,  
    And she and I were there alone,  
Alone we walked the wooded ridge,  
And, after, rested on the bridge !



My love is waiting far away—

In Italy underneath the blue

A sculptor's work I have to do

But I can only image *you*,

For you possess me, night or day,

Although you *are* so far away !

My love is waiting in the town—

In London, and I try to write

“Dramatic Poems,” failing quite,

She lays her hands across my sight,

And what she wills I must put down,

My queen, and queen of London town !

My love is waiting on the heath—

Sweet upland, would that I were there,

That nostrils drank the scented air

Of furze, and feet the fingering fair

Of heather felt, a foxglove wreath

I'd weave for love upon the heath !

My love is waiting in the vale—

I have not seen her since I went  
On fame's achievement strongly bent  
To the wars, my soul in sunder rent,  
One half she holds, that maiden pale,  
Of a soldier's heart hid in the vale !

My love is waiting on the mount—

Beneath the rocks, above the vines  
That grow in green trim-trellised lines  
She sits, and slowly sadly pines,  
As I pine, and the hours count  
Until I stand on that Swiss mount !

My love is waiting in the night—

Dark-eyed, a sweet signora face,  
With the old unequalled southern grace  
Of figure, in the market place  
Against the carven pillar, white  
She leans and shineth through the night !

My love is waiting by the bay—

The Ganges rolls long brown-lipped waves,

And her bare feet their whisper laves,

Their broken whisper, just as saves

Each kiss a keener word to say,

A closer lip-caress next day !

My love is waiting in the North—

I see her, she hath green-grey eyes,

And something of the serpent lies

Within those deep bewildering skies,

Whence witchery lightens, ceaseless, forth

The Auroral lustre of the North !

My love is waiting—fond of me

She is, at least she was last year,

Who knows, I may not now be dear,

We are parted, shall I shed a tear ?

Come, sweet one, if I weep for thee

At least *a half tear* drop for me !

My love is waiting where I left  
Her last—and let her wait awhile,  
For when I wept she did but smile,  
Now let her sorrow and beguile  
As best she may, from love's lips reft,  
The time, for laughed-at love has left !

My love is waiting—is it so,  
And *doth* she wait and look for me ?  
As seeks an old sweet flower a bee,  
So will I flutter unto thee,  
The unforgotten lips to know  
Again I tasted long ago !

My love is waiting in a dream—  
Come, sleep, and close the daylight gates,  
And where my golden-haired one waits  
Robed in the delicate mystic states  
Of dreamland, let my presence seem,  
And let me join her in a dream !

My love is waiting in the morn—  
Her face is in the rosy flush,  
The beatific sunrise blush,  
And out the gay-eyed memories gush,  
The tinted clouds night left forlorn,  
To meet my mistress in the morn !

My love is waiting at the eve—  
The golden sunset gleams away  
Its glory into simple gray,  
The rose-hued raptures where are they,  
Is nought left but to sigh and grieve,  
And mourn our midday merged in eve ?

My love is waiting in the breeze—  
A fairy she, with wings outspread  
She hovers round about my head,  
And in each shower of leaves is shed  
Upon me, sighs from out the trees,  
And rustles gently in the breeze !

My love is waiting by the boat—

The ripples rise, advance, and flee,

My lady's foot is stayed for me,

And golden all across the sea

The sunset splendours fall and float,

My love is waiting by the boat !

My love is waiting at the mound—

Grey, desolate, in a lonely place,

With granite boulders leaving space

For fern and heaths that interlace,

A witch-like, strange, enchanted ground,

With Fairy Love upon the mound !

My love is waiting by the hedge—

Under her feet the laughing blue

Wild speedwell peep the grasses through,

And white stars glisten two and two

Along the ivy-tangled edge

Of that sweet spring-time trysting hedge !

My love is waiting in the sky—  
At sunrise towards her face I turn,  
At sunset towards her lips I yearn,  
And all the livelong day I burn  
To win me wings of death, and fly  
To her I long for in the sky !

My love is waiting far behind—  
One kiss, one whisper, only one,  
And with the setting slanting sun  
Her life—my life as well—was done,  
And henceforth here death's face I find,  
Love's warm embrace being left behind !

My love is waiting in a cloud—  
A cloud of memory, mute and wet  
With raindrops of grey gone regret,  
That shall be slashed with rainbow yet,  
As the sun turns a winter shroud  
Of mist into a red-lipped cloud !

My love is waiting where the moon  
Casts all across a dim grey waste  
Of waves and sand by waters chased  
A pale-gold shimmer, and I haste  
To wake her from that cold sad swoon  
Beneath the unsympathizing moon !

My love is waiting where the sun  
Burns vehement, and the distant hills  
With azure mist-enchancement fills,  
I wait to learn the thing she wills,  
She waits to see her work well done,  
She in the shade, I 'neath the sun !

My love is waiting, and I go  
To lay upon her lips a kiss  
Including all the passion this  
My song hath seized, no note I miss,  
No pang of the melody, tear or throe,  
When my own mistress' mouth I know !



## YET HOW FAIR !

God *saw* the world that he had made, and its beauty swept across his soul like a sudden scent of summer in the air, like the sound of distant music, like the melody of the wings of the wind, and he leaned his head upon his hands *and wept*.

Yet how fair !

For all the sweeping agony of rain  
That bars the windows of the day with pain  
At night, behold ! the moon peeps forth again  
    With golden hair,  
This world of ours is woeful, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

To-day her words are cruel, and her eyes  
Shake all the summer glory of the skies  
Into the sieve of sadness, and low lies  
    Her lover in despair,  
Wicked is she who wounds him, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

In all the reckless splendour of his youth  
He rides his horse-hoofs over trampled truth,  
And gives for gladness to a maiden ruth,  
And sorrow for her share,  
Ignoble is his presence, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The long melodious laughter of the storm  
Across a seething waste of billows borne  
When shipwrecked heart from heart asunder torn  
Shrieks everywhere,  
Wild is the winter weather, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The simple lines of softly smiling lips  
That hold a rosebud unto him that sips  
Their sweetness, that a sudden shudder nips  
And freezeth there,  
Thrice treacherous are they, brother, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The burning flow of vowels that deceive,  
That wrap a heart in flames they mean to leave,  
And such a marvellous web of witchery weave,  
    So soft a lair,  
Kindled at hell the words are, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

When on some sick St. Anthony peepeth in  
A face whose fire might tempt a saint to sin,  
Braided with sighs of souls she seeks to win,  
    She seeks to tear,  
Wicked is she who tempts him, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The world is heavy with the weight of snows,  
And only here and there we find a rose,  
And up and down the wheel of fortune goes,  
    And hard to bear  
Her folly, she is fickle, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The summer morning wet with woven dew  
On all the grass not one of us can choose  
But love, though unto him the day refuse  
A flower to wear,  
The summer day is selfish, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The gentle moonlight cast across the sheaves,  
Though in the midst there sits a soul that grieves,  
Whose heart is shaken like the autumn leaves,  
To blossom ne'er  
Again in this world, bitter, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The silvery night that takes a maid away  
For whom a mother somewhere strives to pray,  
The silvery night in arms of which they stray  
A passionate pair,  
The night it is that wiles them, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

An early morning in the woods of spring  
When like young leaves so easily they cling—  
Those kisses—and the afternoons that sting,  
That would repair  
With sadness over-gladness, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The bloom and pouting petals of a rose,  
Though not a man of us there is but knows  
That bloom is for a season, after goes,  
And goeth where ?  
Thrice bitter is its beauty, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

A little hand that waves a man to follow,  
A wafted sigh that, foolish, he must swallow,  
A glance that leads him over hill and hollow,  
Swift to ensnare,  
A simple thing is each one, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The white face of a hero lying dead,  
Over each cheek of his a pale rose shed,  
Death's bosom bent to pillow him instead  
Of heart of her  
Who would have died to save him, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The very rubbing off of early bloom,  
Yea, and the threatening terror of the tomb,  
Yea, and the steady coming on of gloom  
An end to declare  
Of all things, bitter is it, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The laughing eyes of maidenhood the while  
Their sole success is knowing how to smile,  
Although we feel that teeth of time will file,  
His fingers pare  
'The softest apple-blossom, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The weary years, the years that come and go  
And crown their sad departure, each, with snow,  
For each to some gay heart has given a glow,  
A kindled glare  
Of happiness, they hasten, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The softest sighs of air that steal between  
Downbending tracery of branches green  
Where lovers' feet are often standing seen,  
Though frosts should dare  
To nip the leaves in winter, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The foam flakes showered all across the blue,  
On mornings when the wind is wailing through  
The rigging, and a pair of lovers true  
Their fealty swear,  
The sea's an arch deceiver, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The very ecstasy that drags us down,  
The very wild delirium of the crown  
A smile can weave, and fling to earth a frown,  
A motion scare,  
Sweet is it, fleeting is it, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The dreams that wave their sleepy wings at night  
And scatter, scared at advent of the light,  
To leave us unfledged, after visions bright  
Fast held of care,  
Deceitful are they, dangerous, yet how fair !

Yet how fair !

The whole of things, the ecstasy that drains  
The panting soul till not a drop remains,  
Till pleasure's flower ripens into pains, ;  
Till eyelids stare,  
Till happiness is heavy, yet how fair !



Yet how fair !

In spite of all, the Universal Glow,  
In spite of all the streets on fire with woe  
And faces pale and haggard all-a-row,  
    Though to prepare  
Reaction runs the feeling, yet how fair !

## THE BRIGAND'S LETTER.\*

" I CHERISH the sweet hope she will not marry,  
     Marry again, my love, my dark-eyed queen,  
 It may be memory of a man will tarry  
     In heart of hers when I am bruised between  
 The sudden folding doors of violent death ;  
     I charge you, therefore, brother, safe to carry  
 Words wafted by her husband's dying breath ;  
     If aught there were that yet for me could parry  
 The silent stress of agony that awaits  
 My soul approaching close Death's darksome gates  
     It were to know that she, my love, were true,  
     The grave being found too feeble to undo  
     The silken love-knot twined around us two,  
 Made strong for both by fingers of the Fates ;

\* Founded, *literally*, on a letter purporting to have been written by one of the Greek Brigands to his wife on the eve of his execution. I do not know whether the reported letter was true or not, *but it was quite beautiful enough to be true.*

But if she should be all too weak to wait  
To meet me at Death's lonely garden-gate,  
    Let it be so— I lay no vows upon her ;  
Let all my gifts of happy olden time  
In such case still be hers, with this my rhyme,  
    My wreath of death-song, last of all I'd don her !  
But take away, sweet brother mine, and keep,  
    The ring I gave her with my name therein,  
If so be she, my queen, should count so cheap  
    The heart that once she thought it wealth to win  
Because it beats beneath the ground—I love her !  
And wings of mine may, who knows, wave above her,  
And, if she but be true, we may discover  
    Some gate by which to Heaven to enter in !"

## A LITANY ;

FOR THE USE OF THE MEN WHOM THE CHURCHES  
HAVE IN THIS AGE CAST OUT.

God, God, what does it all mean,  
All this agony of being ?  
Surely, Thou dost not rejoice  
Mankind's misery in seeing ?  
Send us some sound of a voice,  
Send us some avenue of fleeing.

If there is Purpose in the pain,  
Scourge, till we faint beneath the rod,  
Waken us, and scourge us again ;  
If Thou art our Mother O God,  
Not one of us will complain,  
Hell we will traverse unshod.

Beauty is the thing that we require—  
    Beautiful if Thou canst make  
Us men and women by fire,  
    Then over us fires rake,  
Such is thy children's desire,  
    They will not blench neither quake.

Heat we can bear and the pain of it,  
    Cold of the ice-cold lake,  
Are we assured of the gain of it,  
    Souls in our hands we will take,  
If we suspect but the bane of it,  
    Limbs of us quiver and shake.

One thing Thou lovest and mortals,  
    Beauty—and Goodness and Truth ;  
Towards these open Thou the portals,  
    Spare not, make away with ruth,  
So that to us in the end falls  
    Beauty of Holiness in sooth.

Purposeless pain we outcry at,  
    He were a Fiend not a God,  
He that should issue his fiat  
    For application of the rod  
Only for torture, we sigh at  
    But love not the might of his nod.

Nay if He be, we defy Him,  
    Turning to worship a man,  
Some one, the best we can find,  
    He that is least of us blind,  
Strongest, and purest of mind,  
With Godhead at once we supply him.

But, if Thou art, O our Lord,  
    And if Thou lovest us, well—  
Lead us through horrors of hell,  
    World-wide conflagrations to quell,  
As sheep follow a bell  
We will follow the flame of Thy sword.

## HYMN

AT SUNRISE OF THE THEISTIC 'PILGRIM FATHERS'  
 LANDING ON THE SHORE OF A NEW FAITH—  
 THEIR 'TE DEUM LAUDAMUS.'

*At Last*, thank God, the watchers on the mountains  
 Tell us that far off flush the streaks of dawn,  
 Again are flowing long-forgotten fountains,  
 From out the ether long-lost sounds are born,  
 On all sides round about us are appearing  
 Signs, and faint flowers of Thought not seen before,  
 And hope there is that we at last are steering  
 Our Planet Vessel to the looked-for shore,  
 That all these weary centuries of waiting  
 At last, it may be, quicken to an end,  
 And rolls the Race towards its final state in  
 That groove in which its way it has to wend  
 Through all the glorious future harvest years  
 When tree of life of ours its blossom bears ;

When sons of men who long have been enduring,  
Waiting the sunrise, bound in bitter thrall,  
Eyes bent upon the ground, their heads obscuring  
With poured-out ashes, faces to the wall,  
These, who endured the agony of anguish,  
And all the strain and struggle of the fight,  
Sweet pale girl faces, prisoners who languish  
Peeping between the prison bars of night,  
And all that mighty host in tribulation  
Now longing, well nigh hopeless, for the morn,  
Shall feel at last a thrill of jubilation  
As sounds from out the foremost watcher's horn  
Signal that in the east the morning sun  
To assail the realms of darkness has begun ;



Shall raise their heads, and looking each to other,  
Each holding out to each a happy hand,  
Say, " Dreams of ours are over, sister, brother,  
• At last upon the continent we stand,  
Awake, firm-footed, finding things we dreamed of  
In daylight wear an even happier hue,  
Finding the things our hearts the surer seemed of  
*Are* verily the truest of the true,  
Finding that better after all is daylight  
And pale blue skies and breezes of the morn  
Than dreams engendered by the broken stray light  
From clouded moon-rays o'er the ocean borne  
To us the humble watchers upon earth  
For the Great Planet of the Future's birth ;

“The higher were the thoughts of us aforetime  
The purer and the truer now they seem,  
The sorrows undergone in our sad sore time  
Like smoking torches far behind us gleam  
Just marking the old margin of the darkness  
And making clearer light in which we stand,  
Of agony if we had had one spark less  
Our lanterns had not lasted to the land  
And we had lingered on, for ever moaning  
Across the billows of an angry sea,  
Wind blowing off the foam of our strong groaning  
Without a haven into which to flee,  
But now, secure upon the Sacred Shore,  
We laugh at waves that mocked at us before ;

“ And ah God ! how we love our friends and brothers

Who, hand in hand together, sailed the seas,

Not resting on the land, content as others

By deputy to inhale the ocean breeze,

But strong to sail alone the ocean spaces

Ploughing the deep blue furrows flecked with foam

Not crying, like children lost in lonely places,

‘ We are lost—where are we—find us—take us  
home,’

But crying rather, ‘ helmsman, we will forward

Where most of all are dangers that devour,

We are not landsmen to be frightened shoreward

In terror at mere mention of a shower,

Where waves are deep, and flies the fiercest spray

There, helmsman, lies for us our lonely way ;’ ”

—Dark nights for these, and long lone hours of watching,  
Cold hands upon the tiller through the night,  
Like schoolboys counting hours, their knives notching  
Slow spaces of approach of morning light,  
And backward looking o'er the ocean-spaces  
To hearts of friends who stay at home on shore,  
And dreary midnight thoughts of lost embraces,  
And weary pulling at the weary oar,  
And doubts if after all the labour boots them  
And wiser after all are those at home,  
Doubts which arise though mouth of no man moots  
them,  
Mouths tightly set with stern resolve to roam  
Onward, aye ever onward to the end,  
Though arms wax feeble, and strong oar-blades bend ;

Bend wearily, as bend above the handles  
    Bowed breasts of the once eager-hearted band,  
Faint light upon them thrown from lantern candles  
    That here and there among the benches stand,  
Just making visible the outer ocean  
    Flinging on all sides angry spots of spray,  
And shadows, as it were, of hands in motion  
    To rend the boat in splinters as a prey,  
Great giant shadows, flung from out the blackness  
    Hanging around them, heavy, like a pall,  
And walls of water right across their track, less  
    Easy to climb than cliffs of granite tall,  
All these, and other horrors bar the way  
Of passengers from twilight unto day ;

But unto these few, in that they still trusted,  
And bore their heads up 'mid the seas of scorn,  
And kept their helmets bright, and swords not rusted,  
And shields untarnished, neither banners torn,  
To these is given to see the first faint flushing  
Of sunrise ushering in the future day,  
And bright cloud-clusters o'er the ether rushing—  
Eyes strained to catch the first faint rosy ray,  
And lips apart, and nostrils all expanded,  
Strung to inhale the savour of the breeze  
From off the hay-fields, sweet to men new-landed  
From over barren breadths of scentless seas,  
Odours of home that bring the hot salt tears  
To hardy eyes that have not wept for years ;

For all the old loves in the sweet new morning  
Seem stronger still, and better than before,  
Besides that many a new love has been born in  
The dreary long time since we left the shore,  
Loves now are wingèd that before were wingless,  
And lips are rosy that were pale of old,  
Dost think that any bird of song would sing less  
If broken down were bars of cage that hold,  
That cheek of maiden would not bloom the fairer  
For keen embraces of the rough salt sea,  
That rosy flowers of flesh would be the rarer  
If torn from out hot flower-pots, fresh and free,  
Full free themselves to wander, and explore  
Dim visions only seen as yet from shore ?

The birds are free, and all the fields and flowers,  
And flying clouds, and spaces of the air,  
And foam-bells flung from off the seas in showers,  
And seaweed floating, like long waving hair,  
The insects all are free, the world of creatures  
That underlies our own on every side  
Have faces fair, with no distorted features,  
On wings of nature, fetterless, they ride,  
And hard it is to see why man, the noblest,  
Should tie himself by senseless iron chains,  
Man, who, of all the creatures ought to know best  
That Liberty is, truly, She who reigns,  
While all the other queens are fitful shades  
Their worship only a fond dream that fades ;



Around us, yesterday, the skies were raining,  
And we were all enswathed in driving mist,  
And eyes were sore, and heavy hearts were straining,  
To-day by happiness our souls are kissed ;  
We stand upon the summit of the mountain,  
And see the fair green valleys far below,  
And many a silver stream, and many a fountain,  
And many a league of blossom white as snow,  
Bright spots are here and there, laburnum clusters,  
Whose slender fingers drip with yellow rain,  
And red and white horse-chestnuts, stalwart musters,  
And sheets of purple lilac strew the plain,  
For face of morning that upon us gleams  
Is wreathed with smiles of spring-time as it seems ;

The world then, after all, is not a medley,  
A chaos of twisted snakes that intertwine,  
A seething mass of human heads, a deadly  
Fermenting flask of every kind of wine  
Mixed at haphazard, but a fair great picture,  
Complete in every part from side to side,  
Open to keenest glance, severest stricture,  
Of men within it—many-coloured, wide  
Enough to satisfy the largest craving,  
With many a nook and corner for the small,  
Its floor with inlaid land and water paving,  
And roof of ether, stainless, over all,  
On all sides round about, beneath, above,  
Clasping the whole in soft strong arms of love.

## RELIGIONISTS.

LET us fix our eyes upon distant skies,  
And turn from a world that in wickedness lies,  
Let us flee, let us pray, let us hurry away,  
For the maw of the devil is big, say they ;

Let us crucify flesh, the devil's own mesh,  
And fly from his states and turn "Secesh,"  
'Tis a very bad thing for sinners to sing,  
Slow psalms are the tunes that happiness bring ;

Aside let us shove soft savours of love,  
Laid up for us all are treasures above,  
Rose-lips of delight are not for a knight  
Enamoured of flowers of Paradise bright ;

Bodies of clay were built for a day,  
Here upon earth for a minute we stay,  
Yet it is true that only a few  
Shall pierce to the height of the Heaven of blue ;

All the rest in the fiery nest  
Of Gehenna are laid by the devil's behest,  
We upon high look down from the sky  
Upon neighbours and friends that in agony lie ;

Theirs is the blame, they never came  
To our Church, and visited now by shame,  
Each shall repent that his ears he lent  
To temptation, and over the broad way went ;

Upon earth in pride these sinners deride—  
Poor puffed up people !—saints who have sighed,  
Now let them see that happy are we,  
From the pit not one of them forth can flee ;

Babes are there, the devil to spare  
Is seldom wont, and all who dare  
To impugn his will the fire shall kill,  
And breath of them power of his shall spill ;

Let us all rejoice, let us lift our voice,  
We that have made the righteous choice,  
We are inside, and these that defied  
Our warnings given to the depths have hied ;

Not to return, for ever to burn,  
Each that Religion on earth shall spurn,  
In the depths of the pit, by hammering hit  
Of the fiends, and fires of agony lit.

## THE AGONY OF THE AGE.

HORROR of darkness, agony of craving  
And straining after what we cannot see,  
Bound hand and foot, fast, powerless to flee,  
One moment dumb with stupor, wildly raving  
The next, a maddening memory still saving  
Deep down within some ancient recollection  
Of life and love and laughter and affection,  
Green fields and flowers and leaves and branches  
waving ;  
Pierces the walls of e'en this hideous prison  
A ray of light, a memory of the sea  
Dancing beneath a summer sun new-risen,  
Risen for all things else, not risen for me,  
A dream, a vain mirage, a vanishing vision,  
That leaves the dark a deeper dark to be ;

A consciousness of misery, and of gladness  
    A pale faint shadow that seemeth æons old,  
    A dream that's talked about, a tale that's told,  
A dim delusion, echo of all men's madness,  
Their refuge from the pelting storms of sadness,  
    A hut, a furze-bush on a lonely wold ;  
    Short time it shields them for the walls are rolled  
Asunder, and reality that had less  
    Pity than foe that waits to gather force,  
Beats hard upon them, and they fold their arms,  
    And take it as the merest matter of course,  
And close their eyes, and see the wondrous charms  
    Of Beauty fade and fall without remorse,  
And all the might of men, and war's alarms,  
    And warrior's ecstasy, and love that strengthens,  
    And strained hour of battle life that lengthens,  
And sink beneath a weight of windless calms ;

At times they rouse them, rise, and feebly wonder,  
    " What was it—where is it—can it be true—  
    The life we lived, the work we used to do,  
The open sea, the sky, the clouds, the thunder,  
The piled-up heaps by lightning torn asunder  
    With intermittent glimpses of the blue,  
    The force of freshness when we rose anew  
The purse of each new day's delights to plunder?"  
    Raising their heads and looking each to other,  
Resting a weary brain on weary hand,  
    Each says to each, " do *you* believe it, brother,  
Is it a dream, or *was* there such a land,  
    A land of love, of sister and of mother,  
Have we lain here for ever, *did* we stand  
    Once fair among the foremost doing battle,  
    Rejoicing in the roaring and the rattle,  
Or *is* it all a desolate waste of sand ?



“ Whose fault is it, why is it we are sleeping  
    With weary heads upon the yellow sand,  
    A circle of sleepers, an inactive band,  
Stiff as the stony circle that is keeping  
Mute watch at Stonehenge, while the world is weeping,  
    Laughing, enjoying, tasting tears and sorrow,  
    And mirthfulness to-day and death to-morrow,  
And times of birth, of sowing and of reaping ?  
    Were it not well at least to have a part  
In action, to immerse oneself in living,  
    Though action brought with it a keener smart  
Than Buddhist feels his conscious life upgiving  
    To the Infinite Soul, to mingle in the mart,  
And drink one's fill of struggling and of striving ?

“ But who will set us free ? the winds are free,  
The waters rise and fall for very gladness,  
The evening pang, the shadow of sunset sadness  
At morning advent fades in infinite glee,  
The leaves pass kisses on from tree to tree,  
The summer brings a sound of happy lovers,  
An everlasting tunefulness that hovers  
High on the hills, and shines upon the sea ;  
The Universe is Happiness—but we,  
Striving in vain to tear away the chains  
That circle us, the more acutely see  
Our own consuming atmosphere of pains,  
Long only the more maddeningly to flee,  
The more triumphantly the sunshine reigns  
Without us, the more ecstasy in the sky,  
The more would we weave wings for us and fly,  
But back we sink exhausted on the plains ;

“ Black plains of horror, destitute of greenness,  
    Brooding above them lowers a lurid sky,  
    We gasp, and, could we, willingly would die  
If but to escape the visions of uncleanness  
And tear aside the rags and robes of meanness,  
    The rags that flutter around us as we lie ;  
    The silence, piled upon us mountains high,  
Burns in upon our brainlessness, serenity  
    Of Infinite Atmosphere towers above our faces,  
We sink into ourselves and fall for ever  
And find no footing in the void, endeavour  
    A something sometimes seen in distant places,  
A creature of the fancy, or a star  
At times appearing dimly from afar,  
    While Hope, the Rainbow-Goddess, leaveth never  
Of passage of her train the tiniest traces.”

# A NINETEENTH-CENTURY "EPITHALAMION."

IN THREE PARTS.

"MY darling, do you care for me at all?"

"I only *love* you, sweet," the maiden said,

He answered not, but slowly sank his head  
Upon the breast his being held in thrall ;

\* \* \* \* \*

A time of sacred silence, and of rapture,

And giant thoughts that round the planet roll  
And dance from star to star, and chase and capture  
Echoes of the Universal Soul,

Of race-horse thoughts that pant from pole to pole,  
And skim the ages, and returning pour  
The wealth they've gathered on time's shelving shore

At feet of her their master bends before ;  
The cup of ecstasy can hold no more,  
It groans for very fulness, seething o'er  
It floods with flowers the encircling floor,  
Passion the chrysalis must find a door  
    To free herself, and now the kisses rain,  
    Till pleasure sinks into the lap of pain,  
    Thence to arise, strong to receive, again ;

\* \* \* \* \*

Rejoice ye stars and heights of windy ether,  
And pass the message on from hand to hand,  
The Queen of air has stooped to wed beneath her,  
Love leads the Goddess of the sea to land,  
With hair of hers she weaves a silken band  
To link the seas of sunrise and of sunset,  
By no one has such sovereignty been won yet  
Of sister nymphs that haunt the ocean strand !

Take up the message, wind, and waft it over  
The waste of waters, hearken waves of blue,  
Babble about the secret of a lover,  
And bear a name to coasts and countries new,  
The name of her to whom a reckless rover  
Resigns himself, henceforth strong, steadfast, true !

Resigns himself, resigning each to other  
    With loss of self the essence of the soul,  
    Commingling into one white wondrous whole  
Embracing love of father, love of mother,  
With all the ancient love of sister, brother,  
    The carpet of the future they unroll,  
    Before them love lies outlined in a scroll,  
And live delights the laughing days to smother ;  
    They see before them traced in wondrous fashion  
A shadowy record of what is to be,  
    Vales of endeavour, sunlight, heights of passion,  
Ecstatic glimpses, raging of the sea,  
    While all the further end beyond unrolled,  
    Melts mistlike into one wild wave of gold ;

And hand in hand together they *will* wander  
Through all the shady roadways of the land,  
Till hand in hand together they shall stand  
Upon the snowy summits that are yonder,  
Now pressing onward, pausing now to ponder,  
At times she stoops to pluck for him a flower,  
The fairest she can find, a gift, a dower,  
A dower that each of other leaveth fonder ;  
As mind, and love, and life of each expands,  
While individual passion groweth stronger,  
It widens, reaching out to other lands,  
And, not the less intense, becometh longer,  
With eyes of light that look beyond "the yonder,"  
High as the hills, a wealth too great to squander,  
Binding the earth together in broad bands.



Words fail me ; would that I could paint the wonder  
    Of young souls met together on the earth,  
    The growth of Giant passion, and the birth  
Of Love, that I could clothe my pen with thunder,  
That I could tear the sunset robes asunder,  
    And paint with every colour of the sky  
    The splendour of young love before I die  
And face the dark, and pass Death's gateway under ;  
    I faint, I fade, I cannot reach the meaning  
Of earth or air, of sea, or sky, or land,  
    Bewildered in the centre, drowsily dreaming,  
    While all the air with countless colours streaming  
Intoxicates with ecstasy, I stand,  
Afraid to move, afraid to raise a hand,  
    Lest I disturb the Incense cloud around me  
    slowly steaming !

The joy that trembles at itself, the rapture,  
The keen pursuit, the glimpses of the goal,  
The more than mad delirium of the soul  
Realizing possibility of capture,  
The dreams at night as gorgeous as stories  
Of old Arabia, visions, sunset glories,  
The thought that after all it *may* be true,  
That woman's love may yet be left for *you*,  
—And dim delights of dark and morning rapture—  
The Past and Present on for ever flowing  
Towards a Future time more glorious still,  
With speed of light the lightsome minutes going,  
With speed of sound the hours that work their will,  
A Righteous Willing, one with inclination,  
And Universe of Life, and world's rotation,  
And every sunlight shaft, and wandering rill !

The notion runs throughout of the whole Universe of Things  
partaking, with an almost conscious sympathy, in the happiness  
of the happy lovers.

## WHAT THE DEAD MAN SAW.

I AM lying dead, deep down beneath the ground,  
Choked out from hope of loving, or of living,  
Hope of achieving aught, receiving, giving,  
Cold, motionless, alone, in graveclothes bound,  
All voiceless in a realm without a sound,  
A flash of memory at times reminding  
My soul with bitterness, black, biting, blinding,  
Of joys that once alive on earth I found ;  
I sometimes seem to see the sky as clearly  
As ever, a happy child, I used to do,  
The birds and flies and flowers I loved so dearly,  
The broad green seas of grass, the arch of blue,  
The dream, departing, grazes me so nearly  
'Tis hard to believe it baseless, bald, untrue ;

I find that I can still rejoice a little,  
Can still delight me in the life of others,  
Warm souls upon the earth, my moving brothers,  
In love the bubble, beautiful but brittle,  
Can still take pleasure in the thought that ever  
Life streameth onward, hurrying, loitering never,  
Its surface bearing fair white lily kisses,  
And sound of sighs and songs, and woes and blisses,  
Fierce flame of battle, failure, strong endeavour,  
Meetings that madden, partings souls that sever,  
Glimpses of heaven, weeping, wild embraces,  
Horrors of hell beneath, pale praying faces,  
And gleams of light from distant dazzling places,  
Glories that beckon onward, rainbow traces,  
Free heights of ether, snowy mountainous spaces,  
And Hope with wings, and eyes that smile for ever;

The stream flows on though I have ceased to be,  
Flows over, under, through the conscious me,  
    Expanded, widened out upon the tide,  
    Free from encumbrance, fetterless, I ride,  
And float towards the universal sea,  
    I feel the life of leaves, the grasses growing,  
    One with the sower, *in* the seed he's sowing,  
    Fulfilled with joy of harvest and of mowing,  
Partaker of the May-fly's dance of glee,  
I sip the honey with the humble bee,  
    An antelope, I leap along the sands,  
    And, like a lion, pace the lonely strands,  
In death I've found at last to life the key,  
    One mighty blood pulse beats throughout the  
        whole,  
    One Central Heart, one Universal Soul,  
One Vital Force of all the lives that be ;

Along the polished graven groove of space  
In harmony the planets run their race,  
    And tides of suns and starry clusters roll,  
The power that runs the race we call Free Force,  
Limitless fields of ether form the course,  
Each sun and moon a bounding burning horse  
    Moving melodiously beneath control,  
    A music sounds across from pole to pole,  
Beating a burthen out of sultry sands,  
Ringing the changes on the frozen lands,  
Dissolving, forming, joining hands in hands,  
    Bringing the severed sons of men together,  
    The extreme southern shores of rainless weather,  
The regions where the glittering iceberg stands,  
    In one soft silken Universal Tether  
To link the scattered skeins of separate nations,  
Their planet homes, their lands, their several stations,  
    Convolving into one triumphant whole,  
    As seethes the rich red wine within the bowl,  
And foaming, flashing, slowly settles down ;  
The end is worthy, such an end shall crown

The writhing long-drawn serpent of the ages,  
The many-volumed roll of history's pages,  
Smoothing right out at last creation's frown !

## II.

I wonder whether I shall ever arise,  
And join the ranks of men that work and fight,  
And reach again the region of delight ?  
Far off from me the land of labour lies,  
Hope faints, and, fading into daylight, dies,  
Once rosy as the sunset, and as bright  
As the May moon that sails the seas of night,  
At morn before the great sun frigate flies ;  
Though I am dead life flows around, above me,  
I find some comfort in its ceaseless flow,  
I hear the voices of the men that love me,  
They reach me lying, silent, far below,  
The grasses wave above my funeral mound,  
And love bears blossoms even underground.

## A COOL WET RIPPLE.

I LOSE myself in all the life around me,  
A cool wet ripple adown the stream I go,  
I widen out to meet the hills that bound me,  
The horizon hills that bound my being's flow,  
Softly I melt me out into the ether  
All bathed about, without, within, with air,  
And sink into the earth, and dive beneath her  
Green surface-garden, blossoming, broad and fair,  
Along the branches brown I stretch my fingers,  
My finger tips pervade the points of leaves,  
Awake, aware of the warm life that lingers  
In the midst, the leafy soul that sings and grieves,  
Stirring the sap within the various veins  
With vegetable rapture, pangs and pains.



THE HOME OF LOVE.

WHERE is the home of Love? Upon the mountains  
Amid the icy peaks and slopes of snow,  
Or in the soft green valleys far below,  
Where willows' tresses trail in crystal fountains?  
Haunts he the homes that stud the sandy reaches,  
The white-washed walls where fisher-folk abide,  
Shaken at every rising of the tide,  
The dim expanse of shore, the gravelly beaches?  
Men seem uncertain ; one there is that teaches  
That " Love is of the valley," I think rather  
To every place and person he is father,  
Though diverse are his forms, and ways, and  
speeches ;

He dwells, methinks, in every bower of roses,  
And peeps from out each petal of a flower,  
Into the essence of the scent his power  
Impressed pervades the waves and widths of air,  
From point to point his balmy breath to bear,  
Laden with sweets of all the world of posies ;  
Along the winding paths of woods he walks,  
And with the strawberry gatherers he talks,  
And hides himself within the yellow stalks  
Of corn, in seas of grass his head reposes,  
In petals of pimpernel his eyes he closes,  
Atween the curtains red secure he dozes,  
And all his panting pale pursuers balks ;  
I've seen him seated all the livelong day  
Astride upon a scented seat of May  
Thrilling right out from thence his roundelay,  
And heard him in the night upon the seas  
Laugh in the blithesome laughter of the breeze,  
And shout a-sailing on the watery way,  
When he will shine upon us none can say,  
Nor where, 'tis " as his majesty doth please ;"

Sometimes, upon some merry summer morn  
From out a night of silvery silence born,  
The hills are startled with his hunting horn  
And all the crimson spaces of the dawn  
    With sounds of life and light are sudden filled,  
    While all the strings of melody are thrilled  
That right across creation's gulf are drawn,  
    Like gossamer spiders' threads across a plain,  
    Or air-dividing tiny threads of rain,  
    Or streaks the canvas of the sky that stain  
When sunset's scarlet flames have riven and torn  
    Its smooth white surface ; sometimes in the night  
    When all the waves are dancing, laughing light  
Melodious music underneath the moon,  
Ripple after ripple melting into tune,  
Love sends upon the soul a sudden swoon,  
    And, losing self, across the seas one goes,  
    While all the life of love about one flows,  
    Along the veins in giant throbs and throes

The hot blood pulsing, at one gasp of sight  
This Universe of mute mysterious might  
Flaming across one's vision, all the ages  
Read by the light of lightning, history's pages  
An open scroll, all wisdom of all sages,  
The sources whence pale Passion's river rages,  
The roots of that Great Tree whose leaf assuages  
Our mortal agonies, and for ever wages  
    With evil one continual winning war ;

In slow procession through our eyelid portals  
The story of the loves and hates of mortals  
    Streams endlessly, and all the loves that are  
And shall be, piercing through the silent spaces  
Our eyes behold at once the world's embraces,  
The hands that pray, the passion of all faces,  
The circle of caresses, tear-drop traces,  
Hope's chariot around the world that chases  
The steeds of dark Despair, the wars of races,  
We hear the sound of kisses in all places ;

And, hand in hand with Love, from star to star  
We dance along the railroad rays of light,  
Cleaving, as if with arrow's fiery flight,  
The abysmal sacred silences of Night,  
Finding in every moon the self-same story,  
With golden sheaf of similar human glory  
The glorious heads of solar systems crowned,  
We span the spaces star from star that sunder,  
And all the cloudy home of Monarch Thunder  
And bright-eyed Lady Lightning his fair spouse,  
[The Queen of those that kiss—*her kisses slay*,]  
Lies bare before us, in the air around  
Mighty orchestral choruses resound,  
From off the surfaces of spheres that bound  
Alive along the windy ways of space  
Flung loudly and triumphantly; they rouse  
The sleeping white-enfolded form of Day,  
Who casts aside with rosy fluttering fingers  
The star-bespangled robe of Night that lingers

Still here and there about the western sky,  
And, opening wide his single sunny eye,  
Across the fields of ether far and nigh  
Sends glances hot the dews of dark to dry,  
And gladden into scent the flowers that sigh  
    For his sweet coming, into song the birds,  
    And into motion musical the herds,  
Smiling upon them with his festive face.

## THE POET'S BRIDE.

PLEASANT it is beneath a tree to lie  
And, gazing upward, see the turquoise sky  
    Broken across by moving emeralds green,  
    Emeralds all blazing with the golden sheen  
The sunlight casts upon them, every leaf  
Of colour, green and gold, a shining sheaf,  
    Shining against the broad background of blue  
    That burns above and, parted, glistens through,  
As though ten thousand maidens' bright blue eyes  
Were peeping through the leaves in soft surprise,  
    Or eyes of fairies in a virtuous glow  
    Of anger at the mortal stretched below,  
Inquisitive to search the mysteries  
Deep hidden within the leafy hearts of trees ;

Pleasant again to stretch one's being wide,  
Unclothed, unfettered, out from side to side,  
And, lengthening long arms, oneself at rest  
In some soft, grassy, flower-scented nest,  
To embrace the whole wide earth in clasp of love,  
And feel her green arms slowly close above  
Your sinking head, feeling as if you were  
Slow-sinking in some scented sea of air,  
Or rosy summer-quiet sunset-sea,  
Clothed all about with mists of ecstasy ;

Yea, the Earth is indeed the poet's bride,  
A Queen for ever seated at his side.  
Upon the fair broad billow of her breast  
His head falls heavily and sinks to rest,  
And she bends over him, his hot brow bathing  
In her cool ether breath, his limbs enswathing  
In wreaths of long-leaved blossoming grass and  
flowers,  
Cooling her hero with the sound of showers



Down-shaken in the distance, breathing rest  
In every rising of her gentle breast  
    And happiness in the downfall, now she twines  
    About his brow a bower of eglantines,  
Or places underneath his sleeping head  
Soft cushions woven of roses white and red,  
Smoothing with gentle hands his grassy bed,  
    Now all her art for him the Earth combines  
That scents of all her choicest garden flowers  
By savour sweet may soothe his sleeping hours,  
Building about him misty perfume bowers  
    From off the universe of blossoms shed ;

O great Earth-Goddess, happy indeed is he  
That man to whom thy beauties wedded be,  
    Though all men scorn him, Thou, the Earth, art  
    wide,  
    And his alone art Thou from side to side,  
For him buds, blossoms, flowers and fruits are born,  
Wave goldenly for him long leagues of corn,

Forests and rivers, lakes and silent seas,  
All shower drops, every whisper of a breeze,  
The whole world's wealth of beauty, forms and flowers,  
Sweet sounds and scents and sights and woven bowers  
Of all fair colours interlaced together,  
With all white wild delights of winter weather,  
And bare-browed summer revelry, and spring's  
Soft ecstasy when all the greenwood rings  
With loud love songs of every bird that sings  
And happy voices of ten thousand things  
Bursting aside their ice-bound wintry tether ;  
All these are his, the Earth-Queen's bridal dower,  
Her secrets all are in the poet's power,  
Placed by her gently in his humble hands,  
Sweet secrets that he only understands  
Of all men, silent secrets of the sea,  
Sad secrets some of things that hidden be,  
And secrets soft hidden in the hearts of roses,  
Others the deep green forest soul discloses,

Others again that smile from out the sky  
When sunsets of November seem to dye  
The clouds in scarlet, fading with a sigh  
    Of low wind bitter-breathed across the wold,  
    Like some bright meteor-life whose tale is told,  
Into cold calm-eyed distances of grey,  
Hot blue-robed summer secrets of the day,  
    And secrets of the night his Queen unfolds  
    To the poet, over him her white hand holds  
The great unspeakable silence of the Dark,  
Sacred, as some sweet maiden you may mark  
    From sunlight strong to shield her lover's head  
    Low lying beside her ; from his happy bed  
At dawn the Queen awakes him, from her breast  
Raising him, right content therein to rest  
    For ever, and across the world she takes  
    His soul in great grand glimpses, lonely lakes  
He sees beset by snowy mountains tall,  
A blue sky burning constant over all,

And wide dim reaches of hot yellow sand,  
And flowery visions of a verdant land,  
Well watered, smiling, rich from side to side,  
Intense in colour, next the dreamers ride  
Along the edges of a creeping tide, .  
Out and away blue distances of sea  
Into the infinite ether seem to flee  
That sits upon the horizon like a throne  
And claims the land and seascape for its own  
Brooding above the whole, along the edge  
Towers a wave-clomb, black-browed, beetling ledge  
Of cliff, kissed here and there by lights of green  
And white, deep-carven clefts pierce in between  
As where some giant's chisel erst has been  
Shining with soothing sound and silver sheen  
Of rivulets drawn from out the rocky wedge ;  
At last he sinks into her arms and sleeps,  
And she bends over him, and smiles and weeps,  
Soft tears and smiles of Beauty born together  
Like rain and sunshine in uncertain weather

Making a beaming rainbow of her face,  
White arms she winds about him that embrace  
    His form as lovingly as arms of roses  
    Whose wealth of tenderness some wall encloses  
With wreaths of flowers and leaves and rich perfume,  
Or dark green ivy clusters that entomb  
    The trunk of some great weary prostrate tree,  
    She holds her servant safe from harm, and he,  
Half conscious of the embraces of his bride,  
Floats dimly down the sleepy fast-flowing tide  
That runs to meet the quiet dreamful wide  
    Illimitable haven of the sea.

## CHANGES.

It does not take very long  
    To change the colour of things,  
    A cloud that a storm-blast brings  
    Has blue behind, loud sings  
The bird who before was strong  
    To scatter the wet from his wings ;

A thunderous afternoon  
    Is oftentimes light as it grows  
    Towards eventide, Alpine snows  
    Gleam rosy on heights and blows  
Blue gentian, under the moon  
    The mad sea softly flows ;

Gleams from behind the clouds  
At even, suddenly red,  
The sun's great glorious head,  
And light of his presence is shed,  
Fast breaking the dun grey shrouds,  
Across the waves that were dead ;

Suddenly green and blue  
Flecked with breakers of white  
Gleams the ocean, a sight  
To madden a man with delight  
As the wail of the wind whistles through  
His brain, and wakes in him might ;

Falls upon sunburnt sails  
A smile of the sun, and they shine,  
Shine ruddy, the whole long line  
Of fishing boats, mists of the Rhine  
Gathered high when the sunlight fails  
Scatter, ruins and rocks are fine ;

Broad blue breadths of the sea  
Change to a sullen grey,  
For the light is taken away,  
The clear white light of the day,  
And the distances darken and flee  
Far further, and thickens the spray ;

But rises the sun in the morn,  
And the shoals and the porpoises play,  
And the grey mists quicken away,  
And the rose-streaks redden and stray  
In the east, and Beauty is born,  
And rises a glad new day.



## NORTH AND SOUTH.

PRAISE we the skies of the North,  
And the grey long seas and the foam,  
And the slope of the beach by our home,  
And the mariners hard to roam,  
Most lusty to issue forth !

Laud *we* the sands of the South,  
The green sweet shores and the blue,  
With a soft light shimmering through  
Still waves that float a canoe,  
That wash by the harbour mouth !

Praise we the arms of our men,  
Most sinewy, muscular, lean,  
Lithe bodies shapely and clean,  
Long limbs that have wrestled and seen  
A fierce hot race now and then !

Laud *we* our women and eyes  
Very lovely, that after the day  
Has burned its beauty away  
Expand, plead, sparkle, and pray,  
When the mists of the evening rise !

Praise we our fair-cheeked girls,  
Red lips, and roses, and hair  
For the most part golden, and rare  
Blue glances cast here and there  
Upon young unnoticing churls !

Laud *we* the pale clear brow  
Of a passionate queen of the land  
Where the olives and oranges stand,  
And the myrtles, and hand in hand  
The milk-white oxen plough !

Praise we a Northern flower,  
Upright, strong, lady of light,  
With modesty clothed for a might,  
And eyes as the stars that are bright  
When the long cold nights are in power !

Laud *we* a Southern maid,  
With the fire and the sweet firm walk,  
And the movements supple, and talk  
Of a meeting soon where the cork  
Trees furnish a suitable shade !

## POWERLESS!

SAD to see but not  
    To be able alas ! to do,  
    To see the thing that is new,  
And know that this is what  
    They want, that this is true ;

But not to be able to speak,  
    Though a man may struggle and sigh,  
    Though fire flash from the eye,  
And fire burn on the cheek,  
    To be passed, inaudible, by ;

To struggle as one in a dream  
    To burst the choking bands  
    Of unreality's lands,  
To be and not to seem,  
    To loose the powerless hands,

But back again to be thrown  
    Into the old dark place,  
    We who had known the grace  
Of Beauty, we thought, to moan  
    For a sight of her bright sweet face,

For a sight of her we adore  
    Piercing the gloom of the dark,  
    That we with wings of a lark.  
May rise the universe o'er  
    Grown small as a dim small spark,

And shower down from the skies  
Manifold gifts for men,  
Light, and fire now and then,  
Songs, and melodious cries,  
Rocket-like flash of a pen—

Bitter it is, when our work  
Is some such as this, to be bound  
On earth, and here to be found  
Feeble, seeming to shirk  
Our duty, giving no sound.

END OF PART II.

---

JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, 74 AND 75. PICCADILLY.

# POEMS AND SONNETS,

BY

GEORGE BARLOW, EX. COLL. OXON.

“The rapture of pursuing  
Is the prize the vanquished gain.”—LONGFELLOW.

PART III.

LONDON :  
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L O N D O N .



## OH DEAR !

OH dear, I'd give the world to win a voice !

A thousand things my soul desires to utter,

But finds that she can only stammer and stutter,

And what she does say hardly says by choice ;

But nevertheless I bid you all rejoice,

Mouths that are empty, brothers—men that mutter,

Poor crumpled women—sisters, hearts that flutter,

I cry you greeting, and I say, “ Rejoice ;”

At all events some voice will soon arise

To crystallize the thoughts of men I trust, ,

Soon, as it seems to me, arise it must

To set the age to Music ere it dies,

For underneath this so smooth-seeming crust

A fiery force of pent-up Passion lies

Enough to grind the Planet into dust !

MY CREED,  
AN OCTOBER SONNET.

## I.

I HAVE a faith in Beauty ; though I see  
The sunsets perish, and the flowers fall,  
And autumn creeping slowly over all  
The fields where countless colours used to be  
When Monarch Spring held radiant jubilee,  
Though swallows wingèd once are wont to crawl,  
And threatenings of the frozen wintry pall  
Warn all such summer visitors to flee,  
Yet Beauty *is* ; the buds are even now  
Appearing in between the falling leaves  
To clothe in greenery the coming bough,  
Over the past a maiden sits and grieves,  
But lo ! another counts the gathered sheaves  
Of golden love with calm complacent brow ;

II.

THOUGH one be dead, and wickedness lay low  
    Another, or the pain of vanished hope  
    Force cornered gaiety to sit and mope,  
And visions of romance beneath the snow  
Of cold reality lose their early glow,  
    Yet faith in Beauty gives us endless scope  
    For satisfaction, endless length of rope  
To reach recesses of the pit of woe  
    And raise us therefrom ; let us trust in her,  
And if to make the Harmony complete  
• We have to tread the waste with weary feet,  
    And beat with weary wings the desert air,  
    Let us be certain that the whole is fair,  
That some such discord as our own was meet,

## III.

Was needed in its season ; if the whole  
    Be beautiful, why, we are well content,  
    Happy to its perfection to have lent  
The fragments of our Comfort's broken bowl,  
The strange stray melodies that the Goddess stole  
    From off our heart-strings when our harp she rent  
    So cruelly in sunder, when she sent  
Sorrow aside our gladness' Sun to roll ;  
Our individual cries sound sweet if heard  
    At a fitting distance, on the agony  
    The groaning and tumultuous misery  
Of even London light would be conferred,  
Could we but borrow pinions of a bird  
    And from a height the heaving city see.

## UNDER THE GASLIGHT.

## I.

ALAS ! the flowers that are crushed beneath  
The muddy careless feet of passers-by  
In London, the unutterable cry  
Of agony that flashes from the sheath  
Of suffering, the woes that we bequeath  
For a spectacle to the pitiless daily sky  
That gazes down upon us, draining dry  
The cup of misery with tightened teeth ;  
Knowing that we are fair and yet are foul,  
Bearing within the imperishable seed  
Of Beauty, the inalienable creed  
That we were born for laughter, we who scowl,  
For happiness and summer, we who prowl,  
Deep frozen in the winter of Misdeed ;

## II.

THINGS are not as they should be, some are low,  
Deserving it but little, others reign  
On high, deserving little else than pain,  
Deserving lowest of the low to lie ;  
They say there is a God—I wonder why  
At such a distance then he doth remain,  
Can he not cleanse from out our midst the stain,  
This stain of wretchedness whereof we sigh ?  
Once we had visions of the early flowers  
Of Spring, and banks alive with grasses green,  
And she, my sister, once was crownèd Queen  
Of May, but now we see the fog-crowned towers  
By day, by night we worship evil powers  
Till that strange ruddy sun again is seen



III.

THAT ushers in the morning in the town,  
And then into our weary beds we creep,  
And seek the sickly solace of a sleep,  
And cast with curses our weak bodies down,  
In dreams to hunt in vain that long-lost crown  
Of Purity, the loss of which we weep,  
For love of which we count creation cheap,  
And all the crackling tinsel of renown ;  
Please set us down once more upon the grass,  
And let us go to work and try again,  
If haply we may labour out the pain,  
If haply this our agony may pass,  
If haply we may one day in the glass  
Look upon forms of women without stain ;

## IV.

As those we see who ride the streets by day  
    With pale proud faces, casting glances hard  
    At us who sometimes venture to retard  
Their horses' footsteps, sometimes cause delay  
To their mock business, the pursuit of play,  
    The frantic chase of pleasure ; never mind,  
    Around their brows the gold of life is twined,  
But crowns are waiting somewhere in the way  
    For us as well, sweet crowns of woven flowers,  
And ferns, and grasses, decked with pearls of dew,  
    Fragrant with memory of summer showers,  
Let these perfume the streets with odours new,  
Some nobler thing we waiting ones will do  
    When we attain at last our destined powers ;

v.

THE sun shall shine upon us and the moon,  
 And one with Nature we will be by day,  
 Not forced as now these weary miles to stray  
 Away from her in a most fruitless swoon  
 Of being, every fibre out of tune,  
 With feet that plead against the granite way ;  
 When *we* are well we will not be as they  
 Who scorn us, we will teach them, sister, soon  
 The dignity of womanhood, we see  
 Dim in the distance visions that are fair,  
 Most passing fair, of love that is to be,  
 And casting back the damp rain-powdered hair  
 From off our foreheads, even now prepare  
 For worship won from manhood's bended knee ;

## VI.

FAR in the future, very far, it seems,  
The radiant vision, and we have to die,  
Full many of us, first ; Death brings us nigh  
To the fulfilment of forgotten dreams,  
To the accomplishment of distant gleams  
Of glory ; here on sticks and straw we lie,  
Be patient, sisters all, for bye-and-bye  
In at the window *our* redemption beams ;  
No man shall sin for ever, neither one  
Of all these women suffer without end,  
Beauty is Queen of all, and she shall send  
Into the darkness her strong servant, Sun,  
To pierce the gloom, and bring the blackness won  
To light, for soothing kiss of hers to mend.

## UNDER THE SUNLIGHT.

## I.

ANOTHER beautiful blue day ! but I  
Am sad, and very weary, and afraid,  
Why is delivery so long delayed,  
Why does my misery mock the morning sky,  
Why must I when 'tis eventide still sigh,  
And still with frozen lips the fates upbraid,  
Cannot in anywise the stream be stayed,  
The late-prolongèd current of my cry ?  
If only I could cast the chains aside  
That now encompass me, and freely soar  
With wings exulting ever more and more  
Into the ether, and unfettered ride  
Upon the airy soft ethereal tide,  
Leaving behind the old existence sore

## II.

It mocketh me, this beautiful blue day,  
    It mocketh many a woman heavy of heart  
    Who hath by deputy taken sorry part  
In this wild war, this huge gigantic play  
Of thousands who opposing thousands slay,  
    Causing the throbbing of a world-wide smart,  
    It mocketh many a corpse upon a cart  
With clammy limbs slow-stiffening into clay ;  
    It mocketh many a pale heroic man,  
Grievously wounded, bandaged, bloody, faint,  
Who uttereth no semblance of complaint,  
    Who only yesterday was in the van  
    Of strength advancing for a little span,  
Who feels to-day decay's approaching taint ;

III.

THIS beautiful blue day ! it mocketh all  
    Less pure, less peerless, than its radiant self,  
    It putteth all our glory on the shelf,  
We thought that we were swift, we can but crawl,  
We thought that we were fair, our fancies fall  
    To the ground, we are but flabby pallid shades  
    This perfect day our feebleness upbraids,  
We are short, we giant creatures who were tall  
    In our own estimation ; cruel day,  
That by the contrast, as of whitest snow,  
Dost serve our dim sad dustiness to show,  
    Our lack of fervent colour to betray,  
We long to lose our being in thy glow,  
    We envy thee beyond what we can say ;

## IV.

THOU cruel day ! thou mockest many a soul,  
Peeping with pitiless eyes of sunshine in  
Through windows stained with steamy fumes  
of sin,  
Aside closed misery's curtains thou dost roll,  
Closer we draw them, but we *can't* control  
The rays of light that struggling entrance win ;  
Ah me ! thou mockest the discordant din  
Of cities through whose staring streets we stroll,  
And find no comfort ; still thou blazest down  
Upon the pavement, stern, strong, merciless,  
Until we close our eyes in sharp distress,  
Each filthy frowsy alley of the town  
Thou penetratest with a golden frown,  
Splashing the houses with a molten mess



v.

Of free-dispersèd splendour ; ah ! sweet day,  
 Sweet cruel brilliance, sweet coquettish blue  
 That laughest mocking glances through and  
 through  
 Our being, be more pitiful we pray,  
 Consider us a little, how that they,  
 These penitents, health and beauty never knew,  
 They never daily rose, as thou dost do,  
 In sportive heavenly fields of air to play ;  
 They have the stones to play on, and the street  
 To cherish, but *thou* hast, most sacred sun,  
 A world through which with fiery feet to run,  
 A world with smiling morning face to greet,  
 And all the harbingers of dawn to meet  
 Waiting to hail another day begun ;

## VI.

A HAPPY face, as of a bride, awaits

Thy kisses, rubbing sleep from drowsy eyes ;

See how she blushes with a sweet surprise

When thou dost open these, the eastern gates,

And warmth of thine embraces penetrates

The heart that night to dalliance denies ;

O sun, thou hast a reason to be wise,

He hath a reason whom Aurora mates !

But we, we are sad, we are cold, we are left alone,

No husband presses kisses on our lips,

Nor sweetness of returnèd kisses sips,

We occupy a solitary throne,

No flush of loveliness our cheeks have shown

Save only when the wintry finger nips

VII.

OUR nakedness, we are not much to blame,  
If health were ours, as health is thine, O sun,  
We should rejoice a similar race to run,  
But we are sick and simmer in our shame,  
Fed upon daily food of evil fame,  
With brains whose nerves the daily roar doth stun ;  
Accomplish thou the work thou hast begun  
Would we could only rise and do the same !  
But here we sit, embracing our weak knees,  
With faces shivering, shaken out of form,  
Battered by winds and hail of Passion's storm,  
We are not beautiful, we are not as these  
Upon whose sunny faces thou dost please  
To fall with radiation soft and warm ;

## VIII.

AH, beautiful blue day ! shine sweetly on,  
Thy beauty will be passed and over soon,  
Soon thou shalt cease to mock us, and the moon  
Make us forget that ever sunlight shone,  
For then we wander forth, weak, wanton, wan,  
To dance till morning to a ghastly tune,  
Until we reach the expedient state of swoon  
That brings us back a dirty couch to con ;  
And *then* thou risest ! and with stately splendour,  
Having again kissed life into thy bride,  
With strong arm folded round her yielding side,  
Another flood of daylight to engender  
Preparest—would to God we could surrender  
Our life, that we had not been born but died !

## IN THE STREETS.

A SUDDEN sound of music that recalled

The voice of vanished summers, and of years

Not yet hung round with necklaces of tears,

And she, as sudden spell-bound, stood enthralled,

And gaiety and all the present palled

Upon her, and the city and its smoke

And muddy pavement and the passing folk

Were nothing, and hot agony 'gan to scald

Her poor pale cheeks with drops of maiden sorrow—

A flower, do you know it, very sweet—

Sweeter for trampling of tyrannic feet

Not seldom ; for one night she sought to borrow

A quiet couch to lie on, on the morrow

Her face had smiled, her heart had ceased to beat !

## FAIR AND FOUL.

    AH me ! the world is fair, but I am foul,  
        The skies are blue and shines the sun to-day  
        Right merrily, what meaneth this I say,  
Had ye the wisdom, sun and sky, to scowl,  
The one to glimmer through a cloudy cowl,  
        The other to put on a garment gray,  
        We might consent your gloomy words to weigh,  
As it is with sulky half-closed eyes we prowl  
        Resenting your wild brilliance ; O blue sky,  
Come, be persuaded, cast these robes aside  
Till all the tears of all of us are dried,  
        Be brown or yellow till we cease to sigh,  
        But tower not in blue abysses high,  
Exult not thus from morn till eventide !

## THE FUTURE.

A FEW there are upon whose foreheads fall  
The rosy message of the rising sun,  
Whose ears are open to the speech begun  
In whispers of a voice that soon shall call,  
With power to ring through cottage and through hall,  
With clamour of a double-shotted gun,  
A voice that murmurs now but soon shall stun  
The planet like the bursting of a ball  
Filled to the brim with powder ; but to those  
Who have suffered, who have striven and obeyed,  
The sound is as the mandate of a maid  
When all her heart with tenderness o'erflows  
To a lover, who at her sweet bidding goes  
To prove himself a hero not afraid,

II.

To try himself in battle ; as the kiss  
That welcomes him returned, with many scars  
It may be, from accomplished worthy wars,  
The passionate lip-meeting, even as this !  
Or as the unutterable fervent bliss  
When lovers, seated in fond first-love's cars,  
Start for a double journey to the stars,  
Visiting each ere they their steeds dismiss,  
And Sun and Moon as well ; as these soft things  
The Future is to us who have waited long  
To catch the first faint whisper of the song  
Which round about the byeways gently rings  
Already, which a lonely poet sings,  
Soon to be chorussed by an applauding throng.



"THEIR WHITE SAILS FILL THE PURPLE  
AND THE SOMBRE SEAS!"—*Conway*.

L.

"THE purple seas !" and through the misty mountains  
Flutter the first advances of their feet,  
And through deep forests, and in openings sweet,  
By many flower-spotted glades and fountains,  
They press straight forward, stedfast, as is meet ;  
A youthful band with foreheads wrinkled, aged  
With fervent thoughts with which they have engaged,  
Yet having Youth's fair footsteps strong and fleet;  
I saw them, and my soul was very glad,  
And burst into a rosy shout of song,  
And scattered scented petals on the throng,  
Ready to kiss the lips that seemèd sad,  
Ready to weep for sorrows each had had,  
And smile for crowns that each should wear ere long !

## II.

THEY are leaving fast the ancient standing-places,  
The altars and the churches and the creeds,  
And for each drop from every heart that bleeds  
Blossom a hundred flowers, a hundred graces !  
I watched them, and a light was on their faces  
Even such that not a lantern any needs,  
A light that leads the way to burning deeds  
And sets a hero running stalwart races ;  
These are the founders of the Future ; they  
Have set against their losses a great gain,  
Nor cared any longer to remain  
Bowing beneath a dome of carven clay,  
And therefore must they emigrate to day  
Through penury and solitude and pain.

WRITTEN BEFORE A CONTEMPLATED  
VOYAGE TO AMERICA.

O MY sweet city, back again to thee,  
    After the blue Atlantic's twice-crossed plain,  
    And months of new laborious thought and pain,  
Let my returning footsteps bended be,  
And let me hail with tears and solemn glee  
    The fog-crowned towers and streets, and there  
    remain,  
    Striving to bring to birth some sweet refrain  
Wherein my auditors designed may see  
    The city with its heaving and its sin,  
And great tumultuous ecstasy of life,  
And vast progression through an awful strife  
    Towards a goal triumphant yet to win,  
    Hearing through all the rumble and the din  
The gentle tuning of a poet's fife.

## THE PASSIONATE CITY.

To feel the passionate city throb and flow  
    Throughout one, every street and every soul,  
    The power of the blood that sways the whole,  
Its agony of yearning and of woe,  
And great unutterable fervent glow  
    Of gladness leaping forward past control—  
    This is to sip the nectar of a bowl  
A giant might be jubilant to know !  
    Yet over and above I have a sense  
Of Beauty, of my Lady, over all  
    Supreme, and in a solitude intense  
Yet peopled with creation, I can call  
Most close upon her, leaping every wall  
    Of separation, each dividing fence.

## THE ART OF THE FUTURE.

## I.

RISE, sweet new art, and show the dreamers right,  
Resume the chisel cunning Greece laid down,  
And, though the adorers of past triumphs frown,  
Be faithful to the present and its might,  
So, soon upon the hill-tops shall be light,  
And morning flush the alleys of our town,  
Rise, art that hath humanity for crown,  
And push thy budding splendour into sight ;  
All women shall be fair, and every man  
Made perfect in his strength ; but while we bend  
Before past Christs, Apollos, Marys, mend  
Our present art's discomfiture who can ?  
But yet have courage, in a little span  
New art a green strong shoot shall upward send ;

## II.

THEN every Englishwoman shall be meet  
    To sit for a Madonna, we shall find  
    At every turn a model to our mind,  
A Mercury, or Atalanta fleet,  
And unto every lover shall be sweet  
    As Hebrew Mary genius-designed  
    His maiden—so it shall be, when the blind  
Win eyes, and swiftness our advancing feet ;  
    But now with every breathing we blaspheme  
God present in humanity, and tread,  
To offer homage to a hero dead,  
    The exalted Jesus of a Church's dream,  
    Beneath our careless stride the Christs that stream  
About us, having suffered, toiled, and bled.

## BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE.

As Wordsworth stood on Westminster and sang,  
    I stood upon Blackfriars, and I thought  
    That since his hand that perfect sonnet wrought  
Whose numbers forward most prophetic rang,  
By so much as Blackfriars arches hang  
    The nearer to the sea, we had been brought  
    The closer to the ideal city sought  
By dreamers in the centre of the clang,  
    The bustle, and the life ; some other bard  
Shall stand on London Bridge, and he shall be  
    The singer of the music we retard  
By our blindness, when the clouds of misery flee,  
    And London's smiling face no longer marred  
Flows out at last to the open sweet blue sea.

## THE SECRET OF THE CITY.

## I.

A SCOTTISH bard, Buchanan is his name,  
Invaded London, and he sought to wring  
The city's secret from the hands that cling  
About a singer with a clasp of flame.  
Our city's mighty soul he sought to tame,  
Her heart into captivity to bring ;  
But she, sweet lady, rather chose to fling  
Towards a poet born within the same  
The secret of her stately streets and towers,  
She tarried for a servant who should rise  
Into maturity beneath her eyes,  
Before *him* spread her apronful of flowers,  
And made him part partaker of her powers,  
Swelling at seasons to her giant size.



## II.

AN Englishman was needed—that he might  
Expand his wide imagination's stream,  
And traverse, as in some celestial dream,  
The city's toiling path from dark to light,  
And through the sunny hours till the night  
To cover all things with a cloak doth seem,  
That miracles wherewith the town doth teem  
He might make manifest to common sight ;  
Buchanan, friend, thou hast *the hand*, but I,  
I think I feel the throbbing of *her heart*,  
Thine are the thistles, exercise thine art  
Beneath the sweet familiar Scottish sky,  
But leave to me the roses, nor deny  
To London's chosen champion his part.

## THE NEW JERUSALEM.

## I.

IN common with humanity I sought  
    A New Jerusalem with golden floors,  
    And diamond-studded opal-handled doors,  
And held our grimy earth for less than nought,  
Some echo of the melody I thought  
    That through the pearly gates incessant pours,  
    A soft suggested hint of heavenly oars  
On crystal streams, attentive ears had caught ;  
    But now the vision fadeth, and instead  
I find my longed-for city very clear  
In spite of London fog before me here,  
    And here a crown, it may be, for my head  
    Of truer import than the splendours shed  
On saints by former creeds accounted dear ;

II.

No city sent from heaven as a bride  
Is mine, but poor, and needing the attire  
That I may weave for her in songs of fire  
Before she can be unto love allied,  
Meet for a hero's and a husband's side,  
Able towards her own sunset to aspire ;  
I found her draggled, slip-shod, in the mire,  
Her pure potential sovereignty denied,  
And vowed myself to raise her ; therefore I,  
Brought down from Isis unto where the Thames  
For many an arch her stately descent stems,  
Will celebrate my London till I die,  
If haply o'er her head without a sigh  
Some day may flame the sunset diadems ;

## III.

I MAY not be her champion unless

I prove my worth in heat of sorest fight,

Oh ! I would suffer with her through the night,

And share her agony and great distress,

And sober crape-embroidered mourning dress,

If so I might partake her bridal bright,

And when she riseth, clothed in power and white,

She might acknowledge me *with one caress !*

Sweet city take me, here am I, not strong

As some men count strength, yet I love thee well,

And hand in hand with thee will traverse hell,

And penetrate the utmost realms of wrong;

That so the road to heaven in my song

And purity I may be meet to tell.

## THE CHOICE.

## I.

Two women stood before me, and I heard  
 A voice that said, "Look well, consider, choose ;"  
 The one wore dainty feet in golden shoes,  
 And head made bright with plumes of tropic bird,  
 And written on her brow that who preferred  
 To dwell with her in heaven should straightway  
 lose  
 The sound of earth's distress ; in quiet hues  
 The other clad, my heart the sooner stirred,  
 For in her I was let to recognize  
 My pale sweet city, and she looked to me  
 With mute appealing in her stricken eyes,  
 And, brushing Paradise aside, "I see,"  
 Said I, "my Lady in this lowly guise,  
 My choice is made already, I love *thee* ;"

## II.

THEN Paradise was angry, and she turned  
    With a majestic tossing of her head ;  
    Not through those golden gates shall I be led,  
No home for me in that high city spurned,  
Nor choice amid the costly tapers burned  
    That round about sweet wealth of incense shed,  
    Nor any cunning cloak of white or red,  
Nor harp for which my former spirit yearned ;  
    But, hearken all, for here is my reward,  
In that I took the lowly for my bride,  
The humble present, by the pomp and pride  
    Of a past heaven in nowise overawed,  
    She hath made me master of her keen-eyed sword  
Of song, to wear in triumph at my side ;

## III.

IN that I let the lyres and lutestrings go,  
    Enamoured of no beatific strain,  
    And here elected, stedfast, to remain  
Where tides of silver Thames do ebb and flow,  
For recompence I have been given to know  
    The beauty of the bud within the pain  
    We suffer, that the weary London rain  
Shall bring to bloom at last as white as snow ;  
    I sacrificed the past, and I behold  
A present greater, let the future wait,  
And left my lyre at the city gate  
    For an obliging rose-winged saint to hold,  
    And lo ! *no organ now* but doth unfold  
Dreams far too golden-glorious to relate.

## THE AMBROSIAL LOCKS.

Nor Florence, nor the Baian bay, I sing,  
Nor sunny vine-clad slopes of southern France,  
Nor gardens where the Spanish maidens dance  
With laughter in a white-armed starry ring,  
Not unto Palestine, nor Greece, I cling,  
As many with a longing backward glance,  
But in the city's fog I plant my lance,  
From London seek a melody to wring ;  
Mine are the suns of morning, looming red  
Through misery and smoke, till gleams of blue,  
Occasional at midday, glisten through,  
Across our patient care-worn foreheads shed,  
Mine is the sorrow, mine the imperial head,  
The ambrosial locks, of London born anew.



## THE POOR MAN'S CHILD.

“ BEND low before him, frankincense and myrrh  
Let wise men from the East adoring bring,  
And round his sacred head a golden ring  
Place tenderly, and sovereignty confer,  
And as the Queen of Heaven reverence her  
Unto whose maiden breast the babe doth cling ;”  
So let the full-voiced Christian chorus sing,  
Ignore the present, worship things that were ;  
But I beheld a more significant sight,  
More holy than the Virgin Mary mild  
And babe of ancient fable undefiled  
With angels round about in robes of white,  
When on the river Thames in sober plight  
I saw one day *a poor man's wife and child.*

## THE CRUCIFIXION OF HUMANITY.

We have not done our duty by the race,  
Our Christ, Humanity, will not be fit  
Upon the cross as on a throne to sit,  
And "It is finished" with a quiet face  
To say, till every woman hath the grace  
Of Venus, and a brow Madonna-lit,  
Each man a form in sweet perfection knit,  
And power to stand for truth in Jesus' place,  
That as Apollo, Buddha, Odin, Thor,  
Christ, Jove, Athene, Ceres, being men  
And women once, became transfigured then,  
And here upon the earth abode no more,  
*For God mistaken*, so it may be when  
Each single soul *as God* is meet to soar.

# THE POETS.



## SHELLEY'S PRAYER.

## I.

O BEAUTY, Maiden Goddess, hear my cry ;  
I bow my being and before thee kneel,  
From men and women I to thee appeal,  
Give me the power to give the priests the lie,  
To set my teeth and front them and reply,  
Thy Virgin glory they from thee would steal,  
Enraptured worship such men cannot feel,  
They still preserve the utterance of the stye ;  
O Thou that dwellest in the ether, hear me,  
And cover me with sunset as a shield,  
Stand forth before me Beauty, *thou* shalt clear me,  
Grant me to utter what thou hast revealed,  
Pass Purity throughout me, aid me, cheer me,  
Then snatch me up into thine Azure Field.

## II.

O BEAUTY kiss me, kiss me on the lips ;  
As frightened children to their mother cry  
I cry to thee, O tell me why should I  
Be like the bee that sucks, the fly that sips,  
The swallow that her wings in water dips,  
Why cannot I possess thee ? I would die  
But once to hear thee, see thee, feel thee nigh,  
But ever from my mouth the goblet slips ;  
Take pity on me, O my gracious Queen,  
Immerse my soul in sweetness, let the waves  
Of rapture writhe around the mouth that craves  
And choke it in fruition, rend the screen  
That veils the vision from the eyes of slaves,  
Stand forth and let thy Majesty be seen,  
The Majesty that slays the souls it saves.

### THE SUNSET-SHIELD.

**FEAR** not my Poet-Brothers, Beauty guards  
 With shield of sunset and with waving wings  
 The self-forgetful soul of him that sings,  
**And** draws a charmèd circle round her Bards ;  
**Tradition** your development retards,  
 Burst bands of custom, wander forth alone,  
 Subdue the nations, make the earth a throne,  
**Shake** Falsehood as one shakes a house of cards ;  
 Some higher work the world's a right to ask  
**Than** floods of flowery diction, rivers of rhyme,  
 Expression after all is but a mask  
**Concealing** some reality sublime,  
 Assert your birth-right, bend ye to your task,  
**Inheritors** of History, Heirs of Time.

## FROM HILL TO HILL.

THE Poet, as it seems to me, combines  
All powers, all professions, into one ;  
For him the rivers of the ages run,  
His are the stars that stare, the sun that shines,  
Before him all things range themselves in lines,  
Discordant elements are soon combined  
In harmony in his creative mind,  
The victor with the vanquished soul that pines ;  
He sweeps the whole of things with eagle glances,  
He lingers at no single point of view,  
From hill to hill the poet's vision dances,  
From fruit of falsehood he extracts the true,  
He sees that Nature gradual growth advances  
From worn-out boulders building up the new.



## ALONG THE AGES.

DOTTED along the ages like a row  
Of Lights that mark the onward flowing tide  
Of progress, stand the poets, sent to show  
To eyes of every age some newer side  
Of Truth, to open out with gentle finger  
Fresh leaves of Beauty's book, to point the way  
Forward to regions where again may linger  
We travellers for a while, with sword to slay  
More monsters of the past, with spade and trowel  
To erect the Temple of the Future's walls,  
Old foes with stroke of pen to disembowel,  
Shaking the house of Falsehood till it falls,  
Opening afresh the windows of the World  
That rubbish of the past may forth be hurled.

## THEY SUFFER AND THEY SEE.

ACROSS the centuries they join their hands,  
The poets, and half sadly smile to see  
How small a portion mankind understands  
Of all their work, how far apart they be  
From the rest, a little company surrounding  
The inmost circle of Queen Beauty's throne,  
For future ages peace and comfort founding  
At the sacrifice too often of their own ;  
They suffer and they see ; they love each other,  
A mute freemasonry exists among  
These singers, each to each is closest brother,  
Reason enough it is that each has sung,  
That each alike, yet differently has seen  
The face, and kissed the Garment of his Queen.

## KEATS "ON BURNS."

## I.

"WE will not speak about it, it is over,  
All over now, the misery of Burns,"  
So spake poor Keats, and one instinctive turns  
To Keats himself, and next, a mental rover,  
Runs through the list of poets, and in clover,  
Alas ! no single one of them we find,  
The crown of bay-leaves thick with thorns entwined  
Seems, and behind blue skies the storm-clouds hover ;  
For he himself that valiant soul of Keats  
Fell into agony as great as Burns,  
His heart was heavy with as many beats,  
His feet were weary with as many turns  
Along the path of misery, and he yearns  
As wildly, and as little answer meets ;

## II.

WHY is it that they each must suffer so,  
Burns, Shelley, Byron, gentle Keats as well?  
Must souls that long for Heaven traverse Hell,  
And souls that sigh to revel in the glow  
Of Happiness be swathed first in snow,  
And choked with cold, I wonder, who shall tell?  
We only know to each it so befell,  
That not uninterrupted was the flow  
Of harmony of any one of these,  
They had to beat their lyre with aching fingers,  
No strains of an Æolian harp that lingers  
And idly toys with every passing breeze  
Were theirs, but thunders of the spheres to seize,  
And under stress of suffering to be singers.

## THE "PARADISE OF SENSATIONS."

## I.

O KEATS, my brother, thou didst pity Burns,  
    "His misery is over," thou didst say,  
    "And we will not speak more of it to-day,"  
My heart to thine own agony straightway turns  
Inquisitive, and calls to thee, and yearns  
    To know if thou indeed hast found it true,  
    And if the clouds have given place to blue  
Sweet skies, and if cold Death the spirit spurns  
    Indignant, as the foot a worn-out shoe  
Hurls itself free from ; is that Paradise thine,  
That Paradise of "sensations" thou didst pine  
    To taste the sweets of, dost thou wander through  
    A maze of thine own fancies ever new,  
Rich in thine own imagination's mine ?

II.

AND has thy love sunk, lark-like, low to peace,  
 And art thou brooding o'er a quiet nest  
 Of hopes by this time fluttered into rest?  
 Sure, brother, Heaven could not make to cease  
 A love so pure as thine, a longer lease  
 Of life, and more intensity I think  
 From heavenly wells our lowly loves must drink,  
 And doves of earth must don a golden fleece  
 Beneath the next world's sun-stroke ; if thou art,  
 I am sure of this, sweet brother singer Keats,  
 That still with stronger and more passionate beats  
 That love of thine keeps time across thine heart,  
 In Heaven *thou* wouldst play a sorry part  
 If Love were hurled from off celestial seats ;

III.

ARE fields of Heaven as sweet as those of earth,  
And hast thou written, brother, softer lines,  
And dug the deeper in Expression's mines,  
Since death to this new life of thine gave birth ?  
I fancy perhaps thou hast joinèd mirth  
To Shelley, and together in the skies  
That each his former trade of poet plies,  
And sure I am that there will be no dearth  
Of singing mid the soft ethereal airs,  
Of lute-strings fingerèd by master hands,  
If there be many such successful pairs  
In Heaven's concert ; stormy Death that strands  
Such waifs and strays of ours on heavenly sands,  
The hearers' gratitude most surely shares ;

IV.

**THYSELF** didst suffer, 'tis the same with all  
 Who inner meaning of the earth can see,  
 Whene'er the veil is lifted all is glee,  
 When down again the curtain hastes to fall  
 Across the mind is drawn a funeral pall,  
 And till the light comes glistening forth again  
 Nothing is left save one dull throb of pain,  
 And all the world is like a withered wall,  
 A dead brick wall without a moss thereon,  
 Or yellow wall-flower planted in the chinks  
 To show that even there the sun has shone,  
 And back into his shell the poet shrinks,  
 And into self Imagination sinks—  
 I hope the case is better, Keats, up yon !



## TENNYSON'S HEAD.\*

## I.

A NOBLE head ! as far above the rest  
As looms out, silent, far above the trees,  
Surpassing efforts of the rest with ease,  
The top of some tall oak, and bares its breast,  
Offering its choicest greenery for a nest  
To the flying feet of Heaven's fiercest breeze,  
Nor for the thunder or the lightning flees,  
Assailed by every storm from East to West ;  
From such a height methinks the view is wide,  
And yet a terror is it far to reach  
Arms of the intellect out of sight and speech  
Of fellow men, to woo the sun as bride,  
And all alone along the shore to ride  
Of solar systems' seas, an infinite Beach ;

\* Written on first seeing a new photograph of Mr. Tennyson.

## II.

BETTER in many ways to bow the head,  
A lowly beech, or gentle forest ash,  
Than upwards hard against the sky to dash,  
Green against blue, aspiring sprays instead ;  
Unknown to calmer calibre is the dread  
Of solitary sunsets, lonely morns,  
Though all unseen as well the dazzling dawns,  
The glories that at seasons overspread  
The Infinite Horizon ; choose your part,  
Either to soar and suffer in proportion,  
To face the chance of possible distortion,  
Of seizure by paralysis of the heart,  
Or else, preferring unto daring caution,  
Wings clipped, with the rest to mingle in the mart.

## TO THE POETS.

WE have to suffer, brothers, we who see,  
We have to suffer, and we have to sigh,  
That we may get to Beauty's knee more nigh,  
That in her bosom some of us may be,  
The very breast of Beauty, as was he  
Who had the honourable post to die  
For love of her, whose last expiring cry  
Breathed through a sonnet one long passionate plea ;  
"Awake for ever in a sweet unrest  
To live, or else to swoon to death," he said,  
"Pillowed upon his fair love's ripening breast,"  
Was such a poet's life as should be led ;  
Granted his wish the gods, and laid him dead,  
Knowing that this, the latter boon, was best.

## THE POETS' TABLE.

## • I.

**LIKE** flowers sprinkled through the barren ages,  
 Gathered within the delicate vase of song,  
 The poets band together, a sweet throng,  
 Turning with souls absorbed Creation's pages,  
 Moved rapidly throughout the world's slow stages,  
 Not lingering at a single epoch long ;  
 Learning the innermost laws of right and wrong  
 Each bard henceforth a valiant warfare wages  
 With all the current evils of his day,  
 Hurling a strong East wind of eloquence  
 To blast aside the things that give offence,  
 Allowing nought of respite or delay,  
 Not if he fall upon his knees and pray,  
 To Sin's sure father dull-eyed Ignorance dense ;

II.

THEY understand each other, and they smile  
    Across the centuries, holding out strong hands  
    Of welcome to the singers of strange lands,  
Not letting envy their white souls defile ;  
If any tongue hath power and lacketh guile  
    Attention undivided he commands,  
    Alone before them, as it were, he stands,  
That they may sit in judgment for awhile,  
    And then assign to him his proper seat  
At the poets' table ; burning talk is there,  
The eloquence of forms and faces fair,  
    Down-bending of a condescension sweet,  
    Around the board where seers sit at meat  
Hovers a fragrant soft unselfish air.

**"THANK GOD, IT HAS COME."**

**"Thank God, it has come," said Keats ; it makes one  
sad**

**To see a poet suffer, most of all,  
Who should be tossing to and fro the ball  
Of poesy with heart and fancy glad ;  
Poor Keats ! the agony half drove him mad  
When it was fated that his health should fall,  
And wrung from out his soul that piteous call  
Of gratitude that this existence bad  
Was hurrying to its utter end at last ;  
Unfortunate in love, as poets are,  
Because they love too passionately far,  
And follow beauty's footsteps far too fast,  
He thanked God that a tortured life was past,  
And, peaceful, saw the setting of his star.**

SUGGESTED BY WORDSWORTH'S SONNET  
"ON HIS MARRIAGE DAY."

"DARK and more dark the shades of evening fell ;"  
Quite so ! but was there nothing else to say,  
Friend Wordsworth, on that memorable day,  
No high-wrought feeling fitter far to tell,  
No ecstasy enfolding in its spell  
Sweet lovers standing sidewise in the way ?  
Good heavens, Sir ! to dawdle and delay,  
Chanting the praises of each hill and dell,  
And maundering over aspect of the skies,  
With a fair woman standing by your side—  
I count you undeserving of a bride,  
Unless you find a sunset in her eyes,  
And view with more unparalleled surprise  
Her phases, than the starry changing tide.

## WORDSWORTH'S SONNETS.

GREAT mastery in the Sonnet he attained,  
The poet Wordsworth ; something in the mind  
To writing Sonnets makes a man inclined,  
But Wordsworth had it not, and yet he gained  
A melody soft and limpid, self-restrained,  
And well knew how these wisps of words to bind  
Into a bundle that a man may find  
Easy to handle ; he had not been pained  
Enough to write a real Sonnet though ;  
Glance through them all and you will find it clear,  
Love's craving and the agony of fear  
And fierce reaction, as of melted snow  
Tearing a deep-cut channel by its flow,  
Are requisites unrepresented here.



## THE POET-QUEEN.

A COLD calm singer, Wordsworth ; yet he wrote  
     Good sonnets, some of them, but poetry needs  
     Not only a heart that breathes, but one that bleeds,  
 Pants, shivers, and aspires ; you may float  
 From morn till even in a cockle-boat  
     Upon a river 'mid the sluggish weeds,  
     But launch instead an ocean-keel that speeds  
 Through waters white with foam, and bare your throat  
     To revel in the tempest, and the muse  
 Is straightway silent of that gentle man  
 Who loved to inhale the softer winds that fan  
     Lake Windermere, a most ideal recluse ;  
     Some stronger minstrel, brothers, we must choose,  
 Find a more masculine harper if we can,

## II.

To soothe the passions of our present age  
    Into a flood of music, not apart  
    Indulging his own solitary heart,  
Turning for ever his own being's page,  
A singer barred within a mountain cage,  
    Shunning the distant echo of a cart,  
    The rumbling and the rustling of the mart,  
While sober thoughts his sober life engage,  
    But one who having pressed himself between  
The foremost strugglers in the very van  
Of nineteenth century energy, now can  
    Come back and tell us all what these things mean ;  
    We do not want a gentle Poet-Queen,  
We want a fiery passionate Poet-Man !

## BEAUTIFUL FACES.

L

BEAUTIFUL faces have the Poets ! they  
     Herd all together in the Happy Fields,  
     And one to another the lyre alternate yields,  
 And thus with snatches of sweet song they stray  
 Through golden hours of each cloudless day,  
     Not racked as here upon the points of care,  
     But finding things that they were sure *were* fair,  
 Far fairer, far more beautiful than *they*,  
     Than *even they*, imagined ; Keats I saw,  
 And he had written Sonnets more than those  
 He left with us, as leaves his cast-off clothes  
     A Prophet when his time on earth is o'er,  
     And sweeter, and he sang them on the shore  
 To listeners seated in attentive rows ;

## II.

AND Shelley sat beside him, driven wild  
    No longer by the insensate rage of priests,  
    Free from the fangs of prowling earthly beasts,  
His face had sunk into a childhood mild,  
And from the eyes of Byron manhood smiled,  
    And on the lips of Burns a gracious word  
    Hovered from time to time, like some sweet bird  
Of Paradise with plumage undefiled ;  
    And Chatterton, with many dreams behind  
His wondrous-gleaming eyes of any age,  
Sat turning hastily some ancient page,  
    A long forgotten chivalrous tale to find,  
    But Wordsworth sat apart, another kind  
Of poet he, and other thoughts engage

## III.

HIS lake-lit fancy ; they were talking too,  
The former ones, of poets on the earth,  
How to a melody had given birth  
In England of a delicacy new  
A certain strong sad singer, bathed in dew  
Of sorrow, knowing Sleep, not knowing Mirth ;  
They did not think that there was any dearth  
Of songfulness poetic work to do ;  
But Whitman most of all I found them praising,  
“The English poets,” so they said, “are dead  
To the future, for past seasons in their head  
A deafening jingle keep incessant raising,  
But here we have *one man* in ecstasy gazing  
Upon the glory of the Present shed

## IV.

UPON his country, not ashamed to sing  
Of the America before his eyes,  
In love with colours of the Western skies,  
Noting the changes that the seasons bring,  
Filling his soul with essence of the spring,  
Marking each leaf that in the autumn lies  
Red in the furrows, every bird that flies,  
Each note wherewith the summer woodlands ring ;  
The Poet of the Future forth he stands,  
The only Poet who has shaken off  
The fetters of the Past, and turned to quaff  
The draught that Nature with her own sweet hands  
Offers to each who lets the present flow  
Through his veins with unimpeded fiery glow."

## KEATS FOR A SONNET !

KEATS for a Sonnet ! Shakespeare for a Play !

For sheep and bells and quiet pastoral scenes  
Friend Wordsworth, he whose subtle insight gleans  
From common objects of a common day  
Poems and thoughts uncommon, for a lay  
Of clashingswords, and seated rose-crowned queens  
Of tournament, and knights, and tilting greens,  
The singer who at present holds the bay !  
For Passion furious as the raging steed  
That scents the smoke of battle from afar,  
Or, soft and tender as the evening star,  
Our most impetuous Swinburne we will read,  
And unto Morris give the Epic meed,  
Whose poems, verily, Homeric are !

## THE POET.

HE is fallen, the poet, from his high estate,  
How he hath fallen, God knows, and only God,  
The high ethereal stairs he would have trod  
Have vanished from beneath his feet of late,  
And he is vanquished by Uneasy Fate,  
And sinks upon a damp inferior sod,  
And, mournful, breaks his sweet divining rod,  
And sighs a broken-hearted sad "Too Late ;"  
Ah, God ! make poets not, or make them wise,  
Girded with power to accomplish their high ends,  
Thou givest them that fire in their eyes,  
That flush of songfulness, and why should any  
Find adverse circumstances far too many  
Whose force from first to last on thee depends ?



# MISCELLANEOUS SONNETS.



TO RALPH WALDO EMERSON,  
OUR LEADER.

GREAT Prophet of the West ! I hardly know  
How to express the reverence that I feel,  
The thousand thoughts that through my spirit  
steal—

Your words are living words, they flicker and flow,  
Dance phantom-dances, vanish, come and go,  
Sick with Conventionality I kneel  
And ready for me find an ample meal  
That never fails to put me in a glow ;  
This one thing I *will* say that to my mind  
Your rounded periods are always new,  
A something fresh invariably I find,  
Although by heart I thought the words I knew,  
The words themselves remain so deeply true  
One feels as if before one had been blind.

## THE SEVEN SLEEPERS.\*

SEVEN wisps of hair, seven heads of seven sleepers,  
    Studding the spikes that top the city's gate ;  
    I wonder did these brigands meet their fate  
Unpitied, all unwept of women weepers,  
Lived they their lives alone, with none for keepers,  
    Hard weary lives, perhaps best when soonest ended,  
    The sooner wrenched away the sooner mended,  
Mown clean away by pitiless vengeance-reapers ;  
    A wondrous softness seems to me to hover  
Over those seven faces of the dead,  
Life's mask has fallen from off them, and instead  
    We see sad eyes perhaps some lowly lover  
    Has gazed into, we cannot but discover  
Some silent Beauty stamped on each grim head ;

\* Photographs of the heads of the brigands were exposed in the shop-windows in England for sale at the time.

## II.

STRONG limbs and able bodies, I should say—  
    (I'marguing downwards,neckwards,from the heads,)  
Fitter for strenuous work and powerful play  
    Than lazy loitering in bloody beds  
On Grecian hill-sides, all the muscles sleeping,  
    Strong to subdue the world if used aright ;  
And all these men had mothers ! surely weeping  
    Somewhereforsome there must have been that night,  
Weeping of sister, deep-drawn breath of brother,  
    Rising to heaven in one indignant wail,  
Mixed with the protest death has failed to smother  
    Upon those faces grim, and foreheads pale,  
Against a world that leaves her sons untaught,  
Dumb, wild-eyed, ignorant, without power of thought,  
Then, for the ruin *She Herself* has wrought,  
    Thinks that before High Heaven it will avail ,  
To snatch away the lives she had in trust,  
And roll her children's tresses in the dust—  
    A sacrifice that cannot choose but fail !

WHAT THE MAN SAID WHEN HIS FRIENDS  
CONGRATULATED HIM "ON HAVING AT  
LAST GOT HIS HEAD ABOVE WATER."

HEAD above water ! yes, but, brothers all,  
    The water yet is singing in mine ears,  
    And beat about my head a host of fears  
With flapping wings, and horrors that appal ;  
Before I reach the sloping sandy wall  
    That runs along the margin of the tide,  
    Through many a mile of breakers I must ride,  
And over many a mile of mud-flat crawl ;  
    The memory of the past is beating yet  
Across my heart, and though my head is free  
    And eyes are open, all my limbs are wet,  
And beats about them still the strong salt sea,  
    And curling angry waves have to be met  
Dragging me backward, though I fain would flee.

IN MEMORY OF PATRICK BRANWELL'  
BRONTË, GENIUS.

I PAY a sorrowful tribute to the sun  
Of genius overcast, and downward hurled,  
Its flag no sooner hoisted than 'twas furled,  
Its flame no sooner kindled than 'twas done,  
Its race no sooner started than 'twas run,  
And love no sooner tasted than 'twas sour,  
And fruit of beauty faded with the flower,  
Great things attempted, yet how little won ;  
A poor pale finger-post he seems to stand,  
Saying to men that follow in his wake,  
“ In front of me there lies a lonely land,  
One of two courses, brothers, you must take,  
Either for Emptiness yourself forsake,  
Or hold your Whole self in tenacious hand.”

ON LOOKING AT A PORTRAIT OF CHAR-  
LOTTE BRONTË, BY RICHMOND.

WONDERFUL eyes ! a leaping fire behind  
Burns, and at seasons flames the face-veil through,  
As burst their cloudy curtain gleams of blue,  
When, on a sudden, lo ! the sun has shined ;  
Passion and strong repression-power combined  
I see before me, and a depth as well  
That but a hint of what it had to tell  
Has cast upon the surface of her mind ;  
They are not easy natures these to grasp  
Complete in comprehension, nor do they  
Hold their own power circled in a clasp,  
They only see the fruit from day to day  
That ripens, and abstruser find themselves  
Than any book they have upon their shelves.



## GOOD-NIGHT !

GOOD-NIGHT, my hero ! I shall dream of you—

Ah me, how I *do* love the eventide,

And shadows that across the surface ride

Of the lawn ! when you were absent, soldier true,

I heard your voice in every breeze that blew,

And used to shudder at a noise of nights,

And tremble, silly one, at simple sights,

But now you're here, sweet, everything is new ;

I love the lawn that dreary seemed before,

The very moths and bats are friendly things

And seem to wave a greeting in their wings,

And noises of the night alarm no more,

The sorrow and the loneliness is o'er,

A maiden wept once, now behold she sings !

## KESHUB CHUNDER SEN.

## I.

Too narrow is it, Keshub Chunder Sen,  
Our Christianity, for human hearts,  
Too narrow for the scope of Eastern parts,  
The craving minds of Oriental men  
Who seek religious background wide as when  
At dawn the sun from the horizon starts  
And over all the sky his kisses darts  
And leaves no spot unkindled by his ken ?  
I do not wonder that you found it weak,  
Bringing to bear an Oriental mind  
Where width and colour revel intertwined,  
And homeward turn your steps again to seek  
Where burning suns of India flush the cheek,  
A Revelation newer and more kind,

## II.

MORE strong, more beautiful, as lusty-limbed  
As manhood, and as supple, yea, as fair  
As maidens who by Ganges bind their hair,  
Who frolic on its banks with eyes undimmed ;  
Some psalm thou seekest by humanity hymned  
And not by echoes of the things that were,  
That steps of eighteen centuries' feet impair  
The freshness of, the cream of newness skimmed  
From off its surface ; thou shalt find it soon,  
If yet a God be living to inspire  
The souls that seek him, and to touch with fire  
Of sun of his the weary waiting moon  
Of mankind, thou shalt find a nobler tune  
And sweep the strings of a more lissom lyre ;

## III.

BENEATH the Palm-Tree of the future stand  
Already seen in vision of a few  
Whose eyes have deeply pierced the heaven of  
blue  
Religious deputies from every land,  
Blossoms of thought washed up on every strand,  
And budding creeds original and new,  
Credentials of a thing that it be true,  
Progressive, of a nature to expand ;  
And such a time may satisfy, I ween,  
Even an Indian Prophet : Chunder Sen  
Will find his pulpit ready for him when  
The symptoms of its advent shall be seen,  
How best to pass the seas that roll between  
At present occupies the minds of men.

## THE RELATION OF THE BROAD CHURCH SCHOOL TO THE ECCLESIASTICAL HELL.

THEY undervalue their own Hell, and why?

The reason is that *they were never there*,

They never tried to breathe its fetid air,

The lurid effervescence of its sky

They never saw, nor lifted voices high

In consummated ardour of despair ;

But some *have* seen and know that hell is fair

With all the beauty of a devil's lie,

With all the beauty of a crested snake,

Insatiable, devouring more and more,

As swallows an advancing sea the shore,

Incapable its fiery thirst to slake,

And in the hollows of its burning lake

Engulfing human victims by the score.

## THE MARRIAGE OF WHITE AND BLACK.

## I.

I WONDER, why do *women* cling to hell,  
     The Hell Ecclesiastical I mean,  
     And why with tender hands they try to screen  
 It from the fate that it deserveth well,  
 And hamper men who fain would ring the knell  
     Of this the ghastliest thing that e'er hath been,  
     The foulest form of faith the earth hath seen,  
 Most loathsome lie that priests have had to tell !  
     They would have been the first I should have  
         thought  
 Against such an infliction to have cried,  
 Pale unbelieving priests to have defied,  
     Who first the harbinger of ruin wrought,  
     And hell to make earth's burden heavier brought,  
 And placed an Unclean Monster at our side ;

II.

THEY would have been the first I should have thought,  
These tender ones, to wring their hands and cry,  
“ It *cannot* be, it surely is a lie,  
The glory of our God they bring to nought,  
A Fiend is He whom prayers of ours have sought,  
And reigns the Devil in the upper sky,  
If this be true,” *but no such thing*, I sigh  
To see that this infection they have caught,  
Our women, they who should be gentler far,  
Each one of them, and nobler, than the God  
They worship most mistakenly, but ah !  
In his own fiery footsteps they have trod,  
With flowers they should have bedecked the sod,  
Instead of this whate’er they touch they mar ;

III.

No wonder, seeing such a faith is theirs  
     How can they smiling womanhood enact,  
     And carry beauty out in face of fact,  
 Can women's minds already sown with tares  
 Bring forth sweet produce, think you, grapes and pears,  
     And every gracious flower of graceful act ?  
     Can any be a Queen whose faith is tacked  
 To such a pocket-handkerchief of snares,  
     Of priestly admonitions ? I implore  
 Sweet ladies all of you, in England's name,  
 For lovers' sakes, and for your own fair fame,  
     By ears of yours be listened to no more  
     The men who cover God and mankind o'er  
 With self-created panoply of shame !



## THE CREW OF THE CAPTAIN.

## I.

THEY are sacrificed, these men, with thousands more,  
Unconscious martyrs to the cause of Truth  
Advancing wafted on the wheels of Ruth,  
Ground small beneath the iron feet of Law  
That makes its progress known by heart-strings sore  
With necessary errors, with mistakes  
From out the hand of which its hint it takes  
Then hurls triumphantly its teachers o'er ;  
Like some glad boy contemptuously bursting  
The bladders that once taught him how to swim,  
Now he can do without them, they to him  
Are but reminders of the time when first in  
The water cold he placed a dainty limb ;  
For higher feats aquatic he is thirsting !

II.

BUT I can hardly think that Truth advances  
     Without the ultimate advance of those,  
     Of each, whose seeming ruination shows  
 The way, who like a " Prussian Uhlan " prances  
 In the van, and for the sake of sundry glances  
     Into the future under fire goes  
     And risks a very thunder-storm of blows,  
 Alone, without the aid of brother lances ;  
     The ultimate advance of each is sure,  
 As sure as that of Truth for which he died  
 If a philosopher, or of his bride,  
     Queen Beauty, if a poet ; to secure  
 The very choicest fruit for which he cried  
     'Twas needful Death *that moment* to endure.

## THE THREE STATUES.

## I.

I SAW the Goddess whom they all adore,  
The sons of Science, she was pale and cold,  
A snowy robe without a single fold,  
Without the semblance of a crease she wore,  
Without the faintest vestige of a flaw,  
From purest virgin-shoulders backward rolled ;  
Her face I thought was somewhat over-bold,  
And on her brow was writ the "Reign of Law,"  
And on her lips, thin, tightened, and severe,  
The Passion of "Discovery of the new,"  
Her eyes, not over-swift to shed a tear  
For human misery, from the lightning drew  
Their radiance, looking close a man might view  
On either cheek the symptom of a sneer ;

## II.

I TURNED away from such a Marble Queen,  
And, standing on the pedestal beside,  
The Ambassadors of Holiness I spied,  
With all the tribe of pietists between  
Her feet ; upon the shoulder she did lean  
Of stern asceticism, and denied  
With lips expressive of a saintly pride  
That Beauty of the flesh was ever seen ;  
In hand of hers she held a brazen rod  
With which from time to time she bent to scourge  
Her worshippers, their sins away to purge,  
The sterner emphasizing of her nod,  
And low she murmured o'er a mournful dirge,  
The incense that she offered up to God ;

III.

I was not satisfied, and yet again

I looked, and this time what I sought was there,

A Goddess of a face so wondrous fair

Her very visage soothed away my pain,

And seemed to fold a perfume o'er my brain,

And with a mother's hand to smooth my hair ;

Her cheeks, as rosy as the morning air,

The softness of the even did retain,

And lips, like flower-buds half apart for pleasure,

Proclaimed at once the maiden name of her,

Queen Beauty, whom I worshipped without  
measure,

To whom for ever poets will prefer,

As long as breath of hers their hearts shall stir,

To dedicate their labour and their leisure.

WRITTEN AFTER AN APPARENT FRENCH  
VICTORY.

A VICTORY AT LAST !

A VICTORY at last ! and over France  
    There runs a sound as of a sudden sigh,  
    A low tumultuous inarticulate cry,  
As when one wakeneth with a startled glance  
While yet the fiends of some dream-vision dance,  
    Retaining devilish might to terrify,  
    Across his brain, and meets the quiet eye  
Of watchful woman, sees her steps advance ;  
    And, as he sigheth low for sheer relief,  
And longeth for the cool clear lips of day,  
So with one victory vanisheth away  
    From France the nervous nightmare of her grief,  
    And, by the bedside, stands her chosen chief—  
The Young Republic—in the morning gray.

## DEATH OF A FLY.

A FLY has just achieved a piteous fate  
    Before me, slaughtered in a candle-flame ;  
    He has fulfilled, no doubt, his being's aim,  
And won possession by the fiery gate  
Of martyrdom of joys that may await  
    In Paradise the flies of noble name,  
    At all events he has not come to shame,  
That I am sure of, nor has cause to rate  
    The universal justice ; if he had,  
Arms of protesting we would run to take  
And go to war with Heaven for the sake  
    Of one poor fly—for then the whole were bad,  
    And Beauty clothed in sackcloth would be sad  
For the infliction of a single needless ache !

WHAT THE SCOFFER SAID TO THEODORE  
PARKER.

## I.

"A PERFECT world !\* why, how can it be so ?

The world is full of sighing and of tears

And sin and insincerity and sneers

And want of charity as cold as snow

And regions of infernal fiery woe

And strong men's agony and women's fears,

What, tell me that a Perfect Pilot steers

A ship with such a crew as this below

The hatches, that a Perfect God designed

This seething mass chaotic that I see,

And that the welfare of all things that be

Is warranted by His almighty mind,

You are somewhat credulous, good friend, I find,

*My* caution I can recommend to thee !

\* "The best of all possible worlds."—PARKER.



II.

“FOR some succeed, and some men fail the faster,  
Some lips are rosy, and some cheeks are white,  
Kisses attained others put to flight,  
And blessing bears a burthen of disaster,  
Not happiness but misery is the master,  
Not summer but the moonless winter night,  
Blackness to follow looms behind the light,  
A giant far more resolute and vaster ;  
A wail ascends for ever to Heaven on high,  
And here and there it may be lovers kiss,  
Their lips a temporary home of bliss,  
But lo ! the fervour endeth in a sigh  
As youth and rose-crowned years of youth go by,  
And yet—a Perfect World you say is this !”

## GOD'S NOVEL.

THE WORLD IS A GREAT NOVEL OF WHICH GOD IS  
THE AUTHOR," AND GOD'S NOVELS ALL END WELL.

God's novels all end well ! who does not know  
The trembling passionate turning of the pages  
Of some sweet story, as the varied stages  
Proceed through interchange of joy and woe ?  
This world of ours is fashioned even so,  
Save that, although all eyelashes are wet,  
'The wiping of the tears we see not yet,  
The lines that stand the last ones in the row ;  
But as the " Happy Marriage " in the play  
Makes each content, and every reader sigh  
With long-delayed relief, so some glad day,  
Some season of deliverance by and bye,  
The " Bridal of the World " shall flutter nigh,  
And sorrow's wings as surely flee away.

# MARIOLOGIA.



## THE STATUE.

FOUNDED ON AN OLD LEGEND.

## I.

A STATUE, so they say, an artist made,  
A Christian artist, of the Virgin Mary,  
Wherein with cunning hand and chisel wary  
Her virginal perfection he displayed,  
And outlined chastity in every braid  
Of hair, and indicated all the glory  
Of her who in the marvellous sweet old story  
As chosen Bride of Deity was portrayed ;  
And so successful was the Sculptor's hand  
That many a potent master-mind of Greece,  
Who many a wonder in that ancient land  
Had wrought whose fame was fated not to cease,  
Came worshipping the quiet Queen of Peace,  
The pure-eyed marble virgin he had planned ;

## II.

CAME Phidias and Praxiteles and saw,  
And were astonished, saying each to other,  
“We thought that we had quite succeeded, brother,  
And Venuses invented without flaw,  
But here we have, it seemeth, something more  
In her who of their Jove, they say, is mother,  
A Beauty that her meekness cannot smother,  
And raiment such as Venus never wore ;  
We cannot but do homage to the man  
Who has surpassed us in our chosen art,  
We cannot but do homage to his heart,  
We cannot but esteem him in the van  
Of men who mould the marble, for our part  
We kiss the hand that did the Goddess plan ;”

## III.

So said they, but she came herself, the Queen,  
The Queen of Heaven, leaving for awhile  
The fields on high she gladdens with her smile,  
The pastures kept by virgin glances green,  
And when her own sweet image she had seen,  
Well pleased for a time and satisfied she stood,  
And seemed to think that it was wholly good,  
Till on a sudden came a frown between  
Her eyebrows, and she turned aside and bent  
And gathered up a lily from the ground,  
And in the fingers of the statue wound  
It, making plain to all the thing she meant,  
That those who Deity to her had lent  
Had stolen a something that she sweeter found,

## IV.

EVEN the grace of Natural Womanhood,  
The grace that crowneth Hebrew maid and wife,  
That crowneth woman in her daily life,  
But crowneth not the Virgin Queen that stood  
On the heights of heaven ; *Joseph's Mary would*  
*In no wise cease to own him*, and in her  
Combined were found the beauties that there were  
In Venus, and the halo of the good,  
The glory of the pure ; and ever after  
In token that his Lady loved the Earth  
And garden-flowers and lowly cottage mirth  
In Galilee and children's happy laughter,  
In hand of her who brought a Christ to birth  
A lily, graspèd in its gentle girth,



## V.

HE placed, ashamed that he had thus forgot,  
While eyes were dazzled by the exceeding splendour  
Of Heaven, unto Earth its due to render,  
Its due to Mary's well-loved garden-plot,  
That, pure as he had made her, he had not  
Contrived besides the beauty to engender  
That clear-expressed Humanity would lend her,  
The clear expression of a woman's lot,  
To love and to be loved ; I do not wonder  
That she herself the first one intervened,  
Entirely refusing to be screened  
By blaze of Godhead, to be torn asunder  
In lightning-chariot dragged by steeds of thunder  
From blossoms here on Earth that she had gleaned !

## VI.

How would she feel in highest Heaven, although  
The Mother of the God vouchsafed to be,  
Would there not come a craving after glee  
Of human baby-lips, and for the glow  
Of Mutual Love, a husband's mouth to know,  
And passionate embrace of his to see?  
Poor woman up there, I must pity thee,  
High seated on a Mount as cold as snow!  
I think that all thy glory thou wouldst gladly  
Exchange, again with Joseph here below  
To wander in the eventide, and go  
Beneath the Eastern Moon with him; right sadly  
Thou longest down from Heaven I think, and madly,  
To meet the arms with love that overflow!

## VII.

WHAT is it worth, to sit in lonely State,  
And dream that thou art Mother of a God,  
A God-Man ? yea, far better to have trod  
The Earth in company with some sweet mate,  
And known Love's long kiss ere it was too late,  
And Love lay buried underneath the sod,  
And sudden sprang at Great Jehovah's nod  
From out the Virgin-womb the child of Fate ;  
Didst thou love Joseph ? was it nothing then  
To give him up, even for Deity's sake,  
Can God so easily the fealty shake  
Of woman unto man, by stroke of pen  
Annul and cancel oaths of ours, as when  
Careering winds aside are strong to rake

## VIII.

THE clouds ? I have more faith in woman's soul,  
    Though all the thunders of the skies implore,  
    And Heaven testify from shore to shore,  
And lightnings flash forth a miraculous scroll,  
And dead men all the graves of earth unroll  
    In sweeping corpse-clothes, and the oceans roar,  
    And like a leaning tower tottering o'er  
The Whole World quivers—Woman thou art whole  
    From faithlessness, and Love is left alive,  
And in the midst of ruin and of dark  
And fearful prodigies is left a spark  
    Of happiness in the seething human hive,  
*Joseph's and Mary's eyes have met*, and hark !  
    Their lips that closer meet a kiss connive.

## A SINGLE ROUNDED PEBBLE.

RIGHT sure am I that she would love the more,  
    Sweet Mary, fabled Mother of the God,  
    A single reminiscence of the sod,  
A single rounded pebble of the shore  
Where she and Joseph hand in hand of yore  
    Wandered, and foot to foot together trod,  
    Than all the bloom miraculous of the rod  
Wherewith the Queen of Heaven ruleth o'er  
    The nations ; yea, a single scent of thyme  
Recalling love's first kiss at eventide,  
Thought of the night when Joseph called her bride,  
    Far more than all the ecstasies sublime  
    That eighteen centuries in prose and rhyme  
Have thought it well to scatter at her side.

## JOSEPH'S VIRGIN.

AN ANSWER TO ROSSETTI'S SONNET ON THE VIRGIN  
MARY, "GOD'S VIRGIN."

## I.

VOICES were singing on one Christmas Eve  
     Rossetti's sonnet, and she heard the sound,  
     Sweet Mary, but she only tighter wound  
 Around the man they would have had her leave  
 Soft wifely arms, she could not choose but grieve  
     To think they should have been in thought un-  
     bound,

    And *Joseph's spotless Virgin* faithless found  
 The highest seat of Heaven to achieve  
     Possession of ; their singing made her sad,  
 And once she looked in Joseph's eyes and smiled,  
 And once she laid her hand upon her child,  
     Him they call Jesus, and her face was glad  
     When now she raised it, in that she had had  
 A sunny recollection back-beguiled

II.

OF early days of life when all was new,  
     And Joseph brought an era in his arms  
     Of love, and opened unto her the charms  
 Of Paradise, the sweeter in that true  
 It was, fresh-washed in Heaven's gentle dew,  
     And heavy with the breath of scented balms  
     Of eventide, and rich with noontide calms,  
 And happy loitering beneath the blue  
     Of Eastern Midnight ; not made hard and hollow  
 As now the Story is by wondrous tales  
 Of Birth Miraculous that fact assails,  
     And Giant Progress threatens fast to swallow,  
     With many other mysteries that follow—  
*Beauty of loved and lover never fails !*

## VIRGIN MOTHERHOOD.

## I.

SHE came, sweet Mary, from the happy skies  
Of Paradise, and looked upon the earth,  
And stories that her child had given birth  
To among us to understand she tries,  
And when she does, half sadly in surprise,  
Half smilingly in woman's gentle mirth  
At finding such a lamentable dearth  
Of insight here, she turns to him her eyes,  
Joseph her husband, and she tells him all  
In one long look, and then they look to God  
Who crowned their marriage with a Mother's nod  
Of blessing, next her lips are like to fall  
On his, to emphasise the wifely thrall  
Severed by stroke of Superstition's rod.



## II.

How could a man have ventured to embrace '  
The Mother of the Majesty of Him  
Before whose Glory all our eyes are dim,  
Who fills with Awe Ineffable every place,  
And lover's hands in hands to interlace,  
Kisses to disentangle from the rim  
Of lips that in a sea of mystery swim,  
And, having known the Lord, *must* backward chase  
Contemptuously humanity? she could  
In no wise after be a wife for man,  
She who upon a pedestal has stood  
That, thank God, woman never really can  
Be made to occupy, and known the ban  
Of foolish fancied Virgin Motherhood.

## GOD INCARNATE IN A WOMAN.

## I.

THEY found him cold, the Christ of Galilee,  
And too severe the lines of masculine lips,  
They longed to kiss the tender finger-tips  
Of Woman, a God Feminine to see,  
And so they took the golden crown that He,  
As God Incarnate in a man, till now  
Had worn, and placed it on his mother's brow,  
And worshipped her, the Queen of Purity,  
The Virgin Mary, finding in her face  
The gentle attributes of womanhood  
That in Christ's features they had failed to trace,  
Dividing thus in half the Eternal Good  
That, self-existent, in itself hath stood  
From the beginning and in every place.

II.

OTHERS again, who held that all in all  
The Christ must be, thought that in him they found  
Both womanhood and manhood interwound—  
“Nor male nor female is there,” saith St. Paul,  
“In him,” we have a God to whom to call  
In whose heart strength to tenderness is bound,  
In him we have the origin and ground  
Of woman's glory before which we fall  
Adoring, and of Manhood's might of will,  
What we have sought in woman, but in vain,  
Of Beauty, lo ! in the God-Man we gain  
Assurance of, and what is wanting still  
To man of craft and philosophic skill  
Is represented in his weightier brain.\*

\* See Robertson's sermon on the Glory of the Virgin Mother.

## A HUSBAND'S TONE.

UPON the heights of Heaven she sat alone,  
    Mary the Virgin, mother of the God ;  
    Pale snowy heights by other feet untrod,  
In solitary glory on a throne  
Of jasper, sapphire, and sardonyx stone,  
    Ruling the nations, seated as a Queen,  
    For ever clothèd in the snow-white sheen  
Of her virginity, all the world her own ;  
    And yet she seemed unhappy, and her eyes  
Were turned towards a lowly cottage home,  
From heaven I saw at times sad glances roam  
    To where, beneath the cloudless Eastern skies,  
    A buried ancient recollection lies,  
The gentle memory of a husband's tone.

## THE INSCRIPTION.

MARY THE VIRGIN after heavenly years,  
 Returning, paid a visit to the earth,  
 To Galilee, and Bethlehem where the birth  
 Of Jesus was, but with surprise she hears  
 Herself assailed by outpoured hopes and fears  
 Of womanhood, and as the Virgin Queen  
 Of Heaven, clothed for ever in the clean  
 White garb of maidenhood addressed appears ;  
 And underneath an image of her life  
 High in a temple on a gorgeous throne  
 Enshrined, she, with murmuring gentle tone,  
 Having erased the first with golden knife,  
 In a new inscription made her will be known  
 Not— “ Mary Virgin”—“ Mary Joseph's Wife.”



# CHRISTOLOGIA.





“CHRIST IS NOT RISEN.”—*Clough*.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE sought in this poem to show the way back from heaven to earth, noting some of the finger-posts, plucking a few of the flowers and grasses, relating a few of the strange sights that abound by the way ; and then, to do justice to the Christians, I have let them sing a long song, into which I have tried to hurl the Christian melody, and the glorious leaping wild-fire of Christian Enthusiasm—that sweet maiden who sits with her eyes so steadily fixed on the next world and its splendour, that she forgets the thought of lover and of kinsfolk, of songs and the dance, of sisters and

acquaintance, and grows pale with excess of longing, sacrificing the bloom of earth for the far-seen flushes that shall redden cheeks hot beneath the lamps of heaven.

And—*then—then*—like a draught of cold water to the thirsty, a shady seat to the dusty and weary of limb, a warm covering to the naked, bread to the hungry, like the rustle of the leaves on a summer evening responsive to a low soft wind from the west—like all sweet things we can think of which are the birthright of our own sweet earth, and not to be torn from us by any interposed and fiery fingers of a gold-robed messenger from the skies—like the first kiss of love, like the melody and the fragrance that hangs around glad lovers seated under a silver moon in August by some enchanted sea, like the ecstasy of the breeze upon an autumn morning when he wakes to chase the flying clouds across a pale blue sky, as the burning savour of sunset, like the glory of bending ears of corn, and crimson crowns of clover, and

tufted heads of grass—comes back to us like all these things I say, with the power of that solemn voice of some strong spirit hid in each—comes back to us after our vision of the skies that are beyond the sunset, the jewelled coronets, the princely palms—comes back to us the voice of sweet earth saying, "Lo ! here am I, thy first love, yea, thy first and last and only love ; all that is mine to give I give thee freely ; all my beauty for a bride-gift and a dower ; wilt thou not abide with me, and be faithful unto me even till the end ?"

And, as we look, behold ! her eyes are as the eyes of a lost love from beyond the clouded barriers, of the years—the very same—the same sweet shades, the same soft glance, if somewhat sadder—and the days, the years, the centuries between, are even as a mist that shuddereth away at the advent of the morning before the sunstroke of such a glance—and—fierce-eyed heaven, lady that clothest thyself in crimson dyes dipped in the blood of the fallen, and ridest in an amber chariot whose wheels drip with the tears

130      "*CHRIST IS NOT RISEN.*"

of the crushed ones, and goest on thy way to glory  
through the groaning heads of a seething human sea,  
where art thou now ?

“CHRIST IS NOT RISEN.”—*Clough*.

“CHRIST is not risen !” clouded were the eyes  
 Of those five hundred nameless ones who thought  
 They saw in fact what heated fancy wrought,  
*Who brought themselves to see* the Saviour rise ;  
 As fast from hill to hill the tidings flies  
 As flew of old the news that, strong to save,  
 The man they crucified had burst the grave,  
 That Christ is Victor, death the vanquished lies !  
 How will the planet bear it, is it good,  
 This news that Death is conqueror after all ?  
 We thought that one at least had burst his thrall,  
 That one at least alive again had stood  
 On the earth, and somewhat hard are they that  
       would  
 After long centuries have our hero fall ;

It may be so ; it may be that the grave  
Has never yielded sign to sons of men,  
It may be that he saw corruption then,  
Nor found his vaunted Father strong to save,  
As over all of us the grasses wave  
They wavèd over him, and wet with dew  
In vain were faithful faces that refuse  
To leave alone the clay within the cave ;  
If it be so, see how thy flag is torn  
Proud Christendom in sunder, in that He,  
The Holy One, for victory virgin-born,  
Himself was forced to turn at last and flee,  
In that the King the Churches look to see  
In the clouds, himself was left of life forlorn !

**"CHRIST is not risen !" strange if now the cry,  
The opposite of which was once the key  
To unlock the gates of golden victory, be  
A worthier banner for the age to fly,  
A nobler motto under which to die,  
A weightier watchword for our sons to wear  
Around their necks, a keener blade to bear,  
A lordlier hope to lift the world on high !  
Henceforth no longer eyes of men are turned  
To keep a New Jerusalem of gold  
In view, no longer battlements are spurned  
Of earth, and lovers of her beauty told,  
Eternal Beauty's wages best are earned  
By those who this world's birthright first have sold.**

IF Heaven is lost, and clouded are the towers,  
And misty pinnacles that once we saw,  
Yea, if the Heavenly City now no more  
We see, yet God be praised ! this earth is ours,  
And all the brighter blooms her robe of flowers  
In that no longer dazzled are our eyes  
By all that olden glory of the skies,  
By all the flaming beauty of the bowers  
That songs of saints have imaged ; let us turn  
With tenfold tenderness to the loves of earth,  
Here die we, brothers, here are brought to birth,  
And little it befits a son to spurn  
The earth that bare him, or the earth-built urn  
That shall receive him in its gentle girth.



**"CHRIST is not risen !" bolted are the bars  
Of the grave, no loving eyes on Easter night  
Saw forms of angels sitting robed in white,  
No herald, pale beneath the morning stars,  
In gallant guise from off heaven's fiery cars  
Stepped, to those waiting women-souls to tell  
The news that weak was found the power of hell,  
That Christ, a Knight, Death's recreant features mars ;  
Were they deluded ? love, they say, is blind,  
Were *all* the watchers blind that fateful night ?  
Can love's intensity so seal the sight  
That things long looked for eyes of lovers find,  
Yea, see so clearly with the high-strung mind  
That facts in front of them escape them quite ?**

AND, after, on the hills and by the Lake  
Of Galilee, I wonder *what* appeared ?  
Was it a spectre, think you, that they feared,  
Those fishermen ? have phantoms power to shake  
The soul ? can phantoms full possession take  
Of the minds of men the essence of whose trade  
Is to take note of every shifting shade  
Of light upon the sea, each floating flake  
Of cloud or sudden wind-fall, in that they  
In the hands of keen observance of the skies  
Are holding lives of theirs, were these men's eyes  
Full of the folly of a ghost, I pray ?  
Alas ! a gulf of eighteen centuries lies  
Unbridged between us, it is hard to say.

If He, the Lord of Life, has given to Death  
The pulses of his heart that people thought,  
That twelve disciples standing forward taught  
Were beating on unceasingly, his breath  
In Spirit poured upon them, so each saith,  
We stand, we sons of men, just where before  
Of old the nations stood upon the shore  
Of time, and crushed the Christians' "Shibboleth,"  
In the fingers of King Death the Victor lies ;  
This world is left us, left with us the skies  
Of morning, and the panoply of night,  
And many a miracle Love brings to light,  
And some there are that say with clearer sight  
They see, more highly this world's wonder prize ;

THEY hardly knew, those men, the saints of old,  
For whom a hope on high in Heaven was stored,  
On heads of whom miraculous oil was poured  
Perpetually, the ecstasies unrolled  
Before our eyes, the marvel all untold  
That shines before the open eyes of men,  
Open in part at last, not closed as when  
A man who praised Love was overbold;  
Make ye a speedy choice, ye sons of men,  
This world or Heaven, choose the better part,  
Turn to the earth your eyes with all your heart,  
When She is perfect, this sweet home of ours,  
Her every corner elbow-deep in flowers,  
Time it will be, and 'tis *not* time till then  
To Heaven's culture to devote our hours.

"CHRIST is not risen !" is our faith found vain,  
Our Faith in Beauty and the Eternal Laws,  
Why wreck the ship, friend Paul, without a cause,  
Though Christ be taken, much doth yet remain,  
Though Christ be taken from us, yet 'tis plain  
That Love is left, and Beauty's face is turned  
Towards those who for the love of her have  
spurned  
At Heaven, and held for nought Hell's hottest pain !  
Choose ye between a Creed whose blatant boast  
It is that "form nor comeliness" was found  
In its Author ; make your choice between a host  
Who pitch their tents in Heaven's camping ground,  
Or those whose hearts and hopes in earth are bound,  
Not caring to forsake their present post ;

"Sit loose to this world," so the Christians say,  
For many a year the system has been tried,  
And Nature now for many a year defied,  
And time it is to find a better way ;  
"Sit loose to Heaven ;" let the preachers pray  
For a high seat and happiness therein,  
Freedom of thought and action christen sin,  
And banish pleasure with a mighty "Nay !"   
But we will bend us low before the feet  
Of Beauty, and in reverence explore  
The fields of this world, finding more and more  
That some God made the earth and made it sweet,  
It is not time until we tread the shore  
Of Death the other side in thought to greet ;

KING SALADIN —I think it was—for fear  
    He might forget that Death would one day find  
    Him out, gave orders fast a skull to bind  
Upon his table, that amidst the cheer  
Of banqueting a conscience might be near,  
    A bone-embodied conscience, to remind  
    The king from time to time that death is twined,  
Twined close about the cup of all men here ;  
    The very opposite idea pervades  
The opening flower of the modern mind  
    That even now the past in some sort shades,  
    As Death and Heaven's fabled fancy fades  
With tenfold vigour are we all inclined  
    To ply upon our planet cleansing spades ;

YEA, in proportion as the earth grows clearer,  
And more apparent all her budding powers  
Become, and deepens odour of her flowers,  
As she, our Mother, daily groweth dearer,  
And to our heart of hearts is claspèd nearer,  
So fades, as fades a sunset into grey,  
The marvellous mirage in the sky that they,  
The saints, were blind with seeing ! as a steerer  
Who looks behind keeps missing all the might  
Of waves in front, and fails to bring to port  
His ship in safety, so the men who thought  
That constant striving still to keep in sight  
The vision of a once-vouchsafèd light  
Was duty, ruin on the earth have wrought.



It may be, after ages of eclipse,  
    A sentence passed upon it for the clouds  
    Of mist in which its splendour this world shrouds,  
The fervent sun of Christendom that dips  
Beneath the horizon, that the night wind clips  
    Of feathery rays, will rise again and shine,  
    And cast across the world a flaming line,  
As our strong sun the seas of noontide sips ;  
    But first we have beneath the quiet moon,  
Not worthy of the fervour of the sun,  
    To work a world discordant into tune,  
And set our house in order, which being done,  
    Faint flushing in the east may tell us soon  
Of reign of Christ on earth again begun ;

WHEN we have had the world for Heaven awhile,  
And loves of earth again begin to fade,  
And suns of earth to soften into shade,  
And puckered are the lines of Beauty's smile,  
And fields across the grave again beguile  
Our longing observation, when the years,  
Their harvest garnered, once more wet with tears  
Of autumn traces of decay defile,  
When, as again may come to pass, the earth  
Sits like a crying child tired out by play,  
And quiver into sadness mouths of mirth,  
And sunset folds around her robes of gray,  
And puny weaklings women bring to birth,  
Then, if indeed the dawn of such a day

BREAKS in upon us, we may look to see  
Rising from out the waters waste around,  
As a volcano-island has been found  
All on a sudden in a void to be,  
The longing from the fields of earth to flee,  
The craving to encamp on heavenly ground,  
The lust of ears to listen to the sound  
Of cymbal, psalm, and lute, and psaltery !  
Then, as I say, the people having tried  
The high Theistic table-land, and found  
Anthropomorphic yearning still defied  
Efforts of lungs on such exalted ground  
To breathe, may yield them up unto the tide  
That sweeps them back within the Christian bound ;

If aught there be that this great thing will do  
    It is methinks the ever-present yearning  
    After a Man-God, that most natural turning  
Of all, save perhaps some philosophic few  
Who breathe the very essence of the blue  
    And live on formless ether, after One  
    Whom hands may touch and over whom may run  
The keenest eyes of love and find him true ;  
    The incarnation of the formless whole  
Of beauty that we praise and vainly seek  
    To handle, yea, the Universal Soul,  
A God whom subtle eyes of sculptor Greek  
Could find no flaw in, before whom a meek  
    Maiden might fearless all her heart unroll ;

BUT many a year will roll its weary way,  
And fold its wings and sink into the past,  
Ere floats again from Christendom's high mast  
That Flag triumphant as in olden day,  
The Red-Cross Flag triumphant as they pray,  
Above the palace-towers of the world  
And every place its whitest folds unfurled,  
A weary time will first elapse I say ;  
It may be after ages we shall find  
That yearning hearts of men have still been true,  
The God of fact *may be* the Deity too  
So naturally evolved from out the mind  
Of ever-seeking-sympathy mankind,  
Or—attributes of His be wholly new ;

WE know not—but we know that all men yearn  
After a God that eyes of ours may see,  
And unto whom our weary limbs may flee,  
And unto whom the sorrowful may turn,  
Yea, of a surety hearts of all men burn  
With hope the thing they crave for fact may be,  
And Christ of Nazareth seems to hold the key  
To many who in Him a God discern ;  
If it be so the craving has come true,  
But if it be so see what men require,  
According to the tuning of the lyre  
Of mind of each, each seeketh something new,  
And shall we not at last the patience tire  
Of a God-man who walks beneath the blue ?

We have not used the gifts of earth aright,  
Men who can read their title clear to Heaven  
Care little for the weeding of the leaven  
That smears the face of this world else so bright ;  
"The world," say they, "is sunk in hopeless night,  
Why waste a wealth of sympathy over one  
Whose choice it is along the road to run  
That ends in fires of hell and piteous plight ?  
A little band, a chosen flock, we wait,  
Christ's Church on earth, the witness of the Light,  
On every side surrounded by the hate,  
On every side outnumbered by the might,  
Of men who careless dare to face the fate  
That theirs is at the ending of the fight ;

"WE fear not, nay we have a high reward  
Laid up for us, a seat upon the throne  
Of judgment, and a Heaven of our own  
In which God's bounty gracious gifts has stored,  
A Heaven all with pearly pavement floored  
And set with jasper, lit by countless gems,  
Brilliant with flash of diamond diadems  
And grass of emeralds in its fields outpoured ;  
Our eyes are hot with longing for the light  
That shineth on the table of the Lord,  
And ecstasies unspoken seal our sight,  
And strength miraculous tightens grip of sword,  
And arms of ours are heavy with the might  
Of soldiers trained who many a month have warred ;



"TAKE courage, brothers, life doth yet remain  
A little longer, yet a little while  
We suffer, riding through this world's defile,  
High horsed upon the iron edge of pain,  
Lasts yet a little sighing, and the strain  
Of faces pale with longing for the sight  
Of Him who unto us a crown of light  
Is, Him whom in the end we hope to gain  
And hold Him for our own ; He loves his bride  
And shields her safely from the bitter world,  
His own, whom blood of his has sanctified,  
And over whom his angels' wings are furled,  
And men that mock and mouths that do deride  
Shall into outer darkness down be hurled !

"ONCE we were young in faith, and love seemed fair,  
And bright the early dawning of the earth,  
And early opening sounds of childhood's mirth,  
And freest early breathing of the air,  
But, God be praised, we stand not as we were,  
Another sight unsealed eyes have seen,  
And all the beauty of the people's Queen  
Is withered, and the rust upon her hair  
Is ruddy, and her eyes of fire are dim,  
And paler now the odour of her lips  
And fainter than the foam, and love of Him  
The Crucified is as a frost that nips  
The bloom of earth, and higher than the brim  
Fills up the cup the true believer sips ;

**" ETERNITY before us, what is time ?**

**A grain of sand, a pebble on the shore,**

**A floating foam-flake, brothers, nothing more,**

**The jolting jingle of a poet's rhyme,**

**The effervescence of a heated clime**

**In which, thank God, we only have to stay**

**The passing hours of a fleeting day,**

**The lowly gate of ecstasies sublime ;**

**Gird up your loins and keep your lamps alight,**

**Pilgrims and strangers ready to depart**

**Swift travelling through the terrors of the night**

**With upward eyes and forward-fronting heart,**

**Beneath the feet of each one vanquished lies**

**The world, and Heaven will heal the Victor's smart ;**

“HE cometh, yea, from day to day the light,  
The wonder of his presence may be seen,  
And darkness rent asunder by the sheen  
Of limbs that crucify the reign of night,  
Weep all ye people, shudder ye that might  
Have been enfolded in the Shepherd's arms,  
And gently soothed, and shielded from alarms  
That terrify the sheep too weak to fight ;  
But now, emblazoned on the trembling skies,  
In letters painted by the hand of God  
Who loves and saves us, guides us with his rod,  
Before whose feet the world a footstool lies,  
In letters each with fiery sandals shod,  
“Too Late,” the words of condemnation, rise !

" BUT we who struggled hard amid the rain  
And all the storms and agony of earth,  
Torn by the travail of another birth,  
The throes of an extraordinary pain,  
Henceforth laid up for us on high remain  
Harps, and the willing praise of happy fingers,  
Yea, and the strained gaze of love that lingers  
The Beatific Vision to retain ;  
Ah God ! the fields of earth were not so sweet,  
Poor sorry faded petals of the flowers  
In midst of which once strayed our childhood's  
feet,  
Poor broken principalities and powers,  
Poor rusty withered wings of rose-bud bowers  
Folded in which those lowly lovers meet !

"**MORE** than we thought for, higher than we dreamed,  
The palaces, the many mansions shared  
Among us, yea, the gifts he has prepared  
**As** infinitely sweeter than they seemed  
**As** brighter were the sun's rays if they streamed  
On eyes within the circle of the light,  
Or eyes for fifty years embalmed in night  
**On** whom aforetime nought but blackness beamed ;  
How puny were the loves we thought so great !  
**More** is it, brothers, as the stars to stand,  
**With** Christ the Sun of all things hand in hand,  
Than all the beauty of the earth to mate,  
**Our** God to win, and places in the land,  
The heavenly Canaan, ere it be too late !

"YE who will 'follow on to know the Lord,'  
Ye who will 'follow fully,' stand apart,  
And close the opening flower of your heart  
And keep it safe for him, a subtle sword  
He gives you strong to smite in twain the cord  
That fast around you earth's affections binds,  
And forces low to grovel ardent minds  
Already all on fire to have soared  
To the gates of heaven ; Courage, be ye strong,  
The battle is a hot one and a long,  
'Tis *not* for ever, smileth from on high  
The face of him who every tear shall dry,  
And change a wail funereal to a song,  
And into gladness kiss the saddest sigh ;

"FOR every earthly hope of thine laid low,  
My child, and every flaring form of lust,  
And every goddess even with the dust,  
Thy heavenly robe is washed afresh in snow,  
They do not matter greatly—let them go !  
These fiery phantasms of young romance,  
And leaping steeds of youthfulness that prance,  
And fancies reinless that the greater grow  
The more they are indulged, pray God to curb  
And bridle these high spirits he has given,  
Tell him in prayer that you in vain have striven  
To overthrow the tyrants that disturb  
The revels of the soul asunder riven,  
Wine spoilt by earth's insinuated herb ;



“THOUGHTS will intrude and faces layer on layer  
Hover before a saint upon his knees,  
Inscrutable are Heaven's high decrees,  
And tempted most of all it seems in prayer  
Are holiest men by hints of faces fair,  
And fancies that in spite of us *will* turn  
To earth and meditation's footstool spurn,  
And devils drag us backward by the hair ;  
But let us seek in stiller calmer thought,  
Abstraction more ascetic than of yore,  
And feet more frequent on the temple's floor,  
To build anew the ruin he has wrought,  
That Evil One, of every soul that sought  
More earnestly has God been found the more.

"AND what if, while the gates of Heaven appear  
Closer, and sweeter portals day by day  
Seem to smile down upon us as we pray,  
And ever growing nearer and more near,  
And ever coming clearer and more clear,  
Sounds of the harps that saints for ever play  
In ears of ours in soft accordance stay,  
If this be so, why what have we to fear ?  
What if the world around us daily fades,  
And daily loosens mental grip of things  
Whose hand encroaching round our garment clings,  
And Heaven's sun across the silver shades  
Of this world's moon shakes dulness, and the strings  
That moved melodious discord now invades ?

"SEE how the Infinite mystery of sin  
See, brothers, how it hangeth as a pall  
Over this world of ours, and shroudeth all  
Yea, every new-born babe that entereth in ;  
Christ hath redeemed us, and we hope to win  
A righteousness far higher than before,  
From cliff-tops now we gaze upon the shore  
And all the former waves and waters' din ;  
A cross we carry on the brow of each  
In token that Christ's soldiers to the end  
We wage a weary warfare, yea, we wend  
A weary way to him we hope to reach,  
And by the road-side everywhere we preach,  
And over all the world apostles send.

"ONE day the nations and the isles afar  
Shall bow before him, all the seas shall send  
To Jesus presents, every knee shall bend  
Before the radiance of Jacob's star,  
And all the constellations that there are  
Shall pale in glory, when he comes again,  
(And come He will,) right royally to reign,  
The fire of his face his foes shall mar ;  
Over "all people that on earth do dwell"  
His arm and outstretched sceptre shall extend,  
Yea, over Death's abode, and darkest hell,  
He comes a bright Millennium to send  
Upon the earth, and happiness to lend  
Till every tongue shall answer, "It is well."

"WE trace the wily serpent over all,  
In every place his feet have left a mark,  
And slough of his has made the grasses dark,  
Like an equator round this earthly ball  
He winds, and low before his lustre fall  
Full many a prince and many a potent name,  
And bargain for the increase of their fame,  
And sell their souls for witchery like King Saul ;  
As leaves upon the wall a slimy trail,  
Which all amidst the mosses you may mark,  
Or lichens gray that clothe a gnarled bark,  
His presence to proclaim, a climbing snail,  
So never doth the Prince of this world fail  
To leave behind his path a poisonous spark ;

"He peeps from out the fields of early flowers,  
And treads behind the path a loving pair  
Are taking, yea, he hovers in the air,  
And all around distributes he his powers,  
Lurketh within the honeysuckle bowers  
A sting of his, and any child may find  
Who cares to turn his head and glance behind  
Face of a fiend that at his elbow lowers ;  
Between the kisses of a man and maid  
He slips, and into holy thoughts he pours  
The dust of refuse swept from off hell's floors,  
And when the sun is bright a sudden shade  
On happy faces often-times is laid,  
And often of delight he slams the doors ;

"ON marriage too he lays a filthy touch,  
And Holy Church we need to sanctify  
The thing his presence once has passed by,  
To claim it and redeem it from his clutch,  
To dust it clean and wipe away the smutch,  
The mark his fingers leave, by nature all  
Things bend their heads and low before him fall,  
Nature is lame and needs the Church's crutch ;  
On either side she stretches healing hands,  
And offers unto all her gifts of health,  
This church that, silent, in the centre stands,  
A green oasis in the midst of sands,  
The desert sands of this world, and her wealth  
Of verdure, willing, shares with all the lands.

" **AMIDST** the weary wilderness we walk,  
And in the darkness feet are found to stray,  
And few there are that keep the narrow way,  
And few there are that care for holy talk,  
And many a million sinners that would balk,  
If they knew how, our slow ascent to heaven,  
Aud interfuse the Church with carnal leaven,  
And on the backs of saints with laughter chalk  
Words wet with blasphemy ; but we persevere,  
And moisten lamps with oil, and hasten on,  
In front of us behold the skies are clear,  
Not yet extinguished is the sun that shone  
On Israel, putting out the moon of fear  
And making pale the stars of night and wan ;



**"THE** very ecstasy of self-control

Itself hath wings with which to speed our flight.

To urge us faster onward towards the light,

The joy of having hold upon the soul

And knowing that eternities may roll,

But folded close within the Saviour's hand

Through every age that is to be we stand

We that were lost, redeemèd, healèd, whole ;

We break the slow monotony of the way

By shafts of hymns shot forth into the air,

Shivering the summer silence everywhere,

And teaching heathen creatures how to pray,

The birds and butterflies that round us stray

The curse of sin upon them, yet how fair !

"HYMNING the name of Him who unto all  
Who with the heart believe has now been made  
A Robe of Righteousness, a soothing shade,  
A Mighty Rock to lean against, a wall  
To circle us, before whose knees we fall  
And worship, growing stronger day by day,  
And more akin to him to whom we pray,  
As loosens from our neck the devil's thrall,  
And loosens love of this world, and we shake  
The dust from off our feet and seek the skies,  
The borders of the Galilean Lake,  
In lowly meditation, and our eyes  
From things of earth tumultuous we take,  
A Heaven of calm appointed for our prize.

"THE dreary night of waiting fades away,  
And in the East behold the skies are red  
And over clouds the light of roses shed  
Proclaims the newborn advent of the day,  
Rises the Day Star unto which we pray  
And shines amid the pale clear skies of morning,  
Announcing to the sons of men a dawning  
Of better things, a change of garments grey  
Into the golden robes of saints that sing  
The march triumphant of a risen Lord,  
That hymn the Sacred Sweeping of his Sword,  
Whose fingers all about his garments cling,  
And arms of theirs about his knees they fling  
And twine caresses round him as a cord.

"LONG time we waited, hearing but the beating  
Of our own hearts that held a lonely post,  
Each one of us as silent as a ghost,  
Counting the sluggish seconds that were fleeting  
Not faster, not more fervent, for entreating,  
The seconds of the hours hid between  
Our faces and the face but dimly seen  
In Galilee, and prayers we kept repeating  
That He, the Lord, would hasten, might it be,  
The footsteps of His coming, and relieve  
His Church's sentinels, and send reprieve  
To eyes well nigh too weary more to see,  
To hearts well nigh too heavy not to flee,  
To souls too sorry triumph to achieve ;

"To arms already overborne and weighted  
With all the lead of wickedness of men,  
Accumulated since the era when  
The first who worshipped God was duly hated,  
And unto hand of Cain was murder mated,  
And first the devil saw with gleaming eyes  
How ready to his grip his power lies,  
How many for his fires have been fated !  
We cannot bear it longer, living Lord  
Arise, and show thyself the Lord of old,  
The shepherd of the sheep of Israel's fold,  
An arm of retribution, a strong sword,  
No more can saints upon the earth afford  
That God is dead and vanished to be told !

“RISE, God of all the earth, and bare thine arm  
And show this people how that we are thine,  
All we that love thee, yea, all we that pine  
For Canaan on high and breath of balm  
Of Gilead, for the coronet and palm,  
And most of all, our Father, for the stone,  
The name Thou givest unto each alone,  
He only knoweth it who has the charm ;  
Let each of us shine forth upon thy finger,  
A ring to flash a flame upon thy table,  
A flame or high or low as each is able,  
The rays of light that round the lowly linger,  
That crown the patient forehead of the stable,  
That stud the strings of every saintly singer !

"WE are not sorry—yea we are glad, we are strong,  
Right glad that unto us the first was given  
With wickedness of this world to have striven,  
And first to chant the Beatific Song,  
And first to join the circle of the throng  
Of angels round about the throne of God,  
These who from immemorial time have trod  
The floors and passed the golden courts among,  
All ignorant of sin, not knowing sorrow  
The fruit of sin, but having foreheads fair  
And high and white, and long luxuriant hair,  
And brilliant wings a butterfly might borrow,  
And eyes that fearless look towards to-morrow  
Without a thought of thunder in the air ;

"THEY are not vexed with storms—these heavenly  
bowers,  
They are not overcast with copper skies,  
And over glassy floors no foam-flake flies,  
And winter is as summer, and the flowers  
For ever exercise a gift of powers  
Of one perpetual spring-tide, and the air  
Is clear and soft as satin everywhere,  
As soft as on an August eve is ours ;  
The butterflies are wingèd all at once  
Without an agony of previous stages,  
And no one knows the terror of a dunce,  
The tortures of a learner, for the ages  
Are not as here with us loose separate pages,  
No past has any student to renounce ;



"FOR why? the serpent has not found his way  
    Into the folds of Heaven, they are clear  
    From coil of his, and free from any fear  
Of ravening wolves the lambs are let to play,  
And all unfettered, lo ! the heifers stray,  
    And lions are as gentle as a child,  
    And tigers as a maiden who has smiled,  
Whose lips seem all too soft to smile a "Nay ;"  
    Perfect in every point the world of God  
On high, the very faces are not lined  
Of men that dwell there, not like ours entwined  
    With care, who over cheeks of ours rough-shod  
    Hath lorded it, and many a furrow trod  
With flying feet, and carved in every mind  
    The deeply graven impress of his rod ;

"BUT earth is holy now that God as man  
Has stepped upon its pale inferior floors,  
Now hand of his the handle of its doors  
Hath turned, and breath of his hath bent to fan  
Its furnace of endeavour, and his plan  
Of rendering Redemption hath succeeded,  
And out of this world's fields the tares are weeded,  
And flowers left to flourish as they can ;  
Since he was here with holier wave of wings  
Love's angel bends above a passionate pair  
And shields them safe from noose of thick-set snare,  
And with a stronger note the throstle sings,  
And with a weaker hold defilement clings,  
The clay of this world, to the clothes we wear.

"OF gazing at our God we do not tire,  
Of wandering over Heaven hand in hand,  
And making ours at last a longed-for land,  
Of singing praises both with harp and lyre,  
And hymns to Christ who plucked us from the fire,  
Brands snatched from out the fire that now con-  
sumes

That ghastly world below, that world of tombs,  
From which, thank God ! we have been lifted higher,  
High as the stars we used of old to see  
When mouth to mouth spake holy words of nights  
And lovers of the Lord saw sacred sights,  
We men who for a season sought to flee  
The busy world, the flaring of the lights,  
And in communion with our God to be.

"THE body having fallen away, we find  
That clearer shines the spirit than of yore,  
And hands of prayer are freer than before,  
And mouths of ours to praise the more inclined,  
More fervent far the fire of the mind,  
Loosened at last the cordage of the tongue,  
And bows of benediction newly strung,  
Clothèd upon with quite another kind  
Of flesh we revel in the extirpation  
Of seeds of evil Adam introduced,  
His soul by shining of an apple noosed,  
And, after all our times of tribulation,  
For all eternity we take our station  
In heaven, from the bands of Satan loosed."

\* \* \* \* \*

A LONG breath—and the earth again is fair,  
    And for the gates of Heaven shines the blue,  
    And for the dreams of saints awakes the true,  
The many mansions that they would prepare  
On high have faded into common air,  
    And for the wings of angels here are seen  
    The willow leaves and waving grasses green,  
And all things are as sunny as they were  
    In olden days, before the dream of skies  
More golden than the sunset-skies of earth  
Came, marring beauty at its very birth,  
    And introducing harsh discordant cries  
    Into the bosom of a land that lies  
By nature in the very heart of mirth ;

WE are thankful that the dream has had its reign,  
And passed into the limbo of the things  
Around whose corpses a cold clay-wreath clings  
While now with tenfold glory shines again  
The earth, and tenfold is the joy we gain,  
We who unto this sweet world have yet been true,  
Who saw lying hid behind the clouds the blue,  
Who faithful here below did still remain ;  
With loving eyes we see our Queen emerge  
From that dim dreamy cloak around her wrapped  
By heavenly sight-seers who, while they napped,  
Saw visions rise from out a sleepy surge,  
Who sought by prophecy their souls to purge,  
And marvellous hills with mounts miraculous capped ;

OUR miracles are round us, and instead  
Of staring into skies we gaze around  
And find Gethsemane in every ground  
Where agony of fellow-man may tread,  
Wherever brothers tears of blood may shed,  
And find of God a visible Revelation,  
Of attributes of His an Incarnation,  
In every mortal man that eateth bread ;  
Why centre thoughts and hopes on One alone ?  
Can one combine the intellect of all,  
And bind within a single being's thrall,  
And seat upon a single body's throne,  
The individual beauty that doth fall  
To each, and only unto each is known ?

THE beauty of the many-coloured eyes  
Of all fair women who in time have walked,  
Of all the burning tongues too that have talked  
The fire, and the eloquence that flies  
Like flame across a company that tries  
The tether of their combination ? all  
The towering manhood of a youthful Saul,  
The bursting brain of Solomon the wise ?  
Can any, be he man, or be he God,  
Or both in one, can any close combine,  
Though help be rendered by a hand divine,  
All excellence that on the earth has trod,  
All beauty buried deep beneath the sod,  
All loveliness that on the earth shall shine ?



THE splendour of all nations, yea, the fire,  
The fire, and the forming hand of Greece,  
A hand whose cunning since has come to cease,  
A poet's eye and mastery of the lyre,  
And would not e'en a God bethink you tire  
If it were put to him in one to bind,  
In one clay-fashioned fleshly body, mind,  
The beauty of a son and of his sire,  
The beauty of a woman and a man,  
("In Him nor male nor female is"), and eyes  
At one time lit with light of southern skies  
Now gentle as the North, this miracle, can  
It happen on the earth and not surprise ?  
No greater wonder was since time began !

AND how shall one himself *not* holding all,  
All beauty folded down between his hands,  
And flowers and all the fruits of all the lands,  
How shall He be a God to whom to call?  
Before whom bodies beautiful may fall,  
But in him after all may vainly seek  
To find the bloom *they* wear upon the cheek,  
Turning aside with vinegar and gall  
In mouths of theirs, in that they sought to find  
A Perfect God in visible Perfect Form,  
The very efflorescence of the Mind,  
The Flower of our Beauty, and a warm,  
A human breast, on which to rest reclined,  
A Man to be a shelter from the storm.

## WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

"WHAT is God like?" the children used to ask,  
    "The God in whom you tell us to believe,"  
    "Like Christ" the ancient answer they receive,  
For us response is no such easy task,  
For we have torn aside Tradition's mask  
    Possession of the naked truth to achieve,  
    The moon of miracle behind us leave  
Beneath the sun of fact content to bask,  
    And wider is the answer that we give ;  
"God *was* like Christ, but he is something more,  
In every man and woman we adore  
    Incarnate Deity, and all that live,  
Shall live, or in the past the earth have trod,  
Together form one Giant Son of God."



# THE OLD AND THE NEW.

A DRAMATIC POEM.



## DEDICATION.

## TO BEAUTY.

My Beauty, little do they know who read  
    The hidden inmost meaning of my song ;  
    Not for a man who has not brooded long,  
And been content to agonize and bleed  
In thy behalf, is such a sight decreed  
    As to the poet when his fancies throng  
    In sweet succession—when his soul is strong,  
And fingers sweep the singer's harp with speed.  
    Take thou my poem—as it is—be kind,  
And overlook my haste, and count for zeal  
The impetuous words that leap forth when I feel .  
    Myself with eyes half opened midst the blind,  
    And *in that I do love thee* let me find  
Favour when with this gift of mine I kneel.

## TO THE READER.

To trace two flowing currents I have tried  
That traverse with unceasing restless speed  
The ages, one the Naturalistic Creed,  
The other, they assert, from Heaven supplied  
Directly, a revealed untarnished tide,  
For love of which have been content to bleed  
Full many heroes ; ye will see who read  
That I have set the rivers side by side,  
As holding both yet neither ; loving each,  
Perusing each, as doth befit a man  
Who hath the poet's sympathy, and can  
Through outward forms to the intention reach,  
And disregard the sorry husks of speech,  
Seeking the fount whence each Religion ran.



## P R O L O G U E.

CHRIST.

HERO of Galilee, most strong, most brave,  
Are thine the coming years, the coming light,  
Made part and parcel of thy pristine might,  
Or hast thou, with a shudder, crossed thy grave,  
And found thy Father powerless to save  
Thy name from inundation of the night?  
Hearken, while these sweet singers clothed in white  
Along the world's exalted echoing nave  
Chant of the things that are to be and are ;  
Recount thy birthplace and the mother-maid  
Who sat within the stable's sorry shade  
While through the window shot that fiery star  
Which led the wise men westward from afar  
To seek the lowly spot where Thou wast laid.

## CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.

“CHRIST being raised, dieth no more”—  
Henceforth Phoebus is dead,  
Broken in pieces his head,  
Foam-Queen Venus is wed  
To the dust of the sand on the shore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Once more garments are white—  
Broken the sceptre of night,  
Broken by masculine might,  
And hands of a Righteous law.

## CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.

“CHRIST being dead, liveth no more”—

Venus from out of her grave

Risen is, mighty to save ;

White limbs lazily wave

In waters, by seas without shore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Once more sunset is red—

Breath of our Goddess is shed

Over the bones that were dead,

Slain by a Pitiless Law.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Out of the ashes of Greece  
Rises a Lamb, with a fleece  
Golden, the Bringer of peace  
And of plenty, the Slayer of War.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Trample the flowers of the nations,  
Hustle old gods from their stations,  
That room may be had for oblations,  
And room for the Man we adore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Rulers and people blaspheme ;  
Little do these men dream  
Of glories that in on us gleam—  
On eyes that were weary and sore.

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

Out of the ashes of Christ

Rises a Red Flag, spliced

To the mast of the peoples, enticed

Into being by Mars, god of War.

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

Beauty again shall reign over us

Strong to shield, like a lover, us,

Wings of her mighty to cover us,

Wings of the Queen we adore.

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

Watchers that wait at the tomb

Of our Lady, from out of the gloom

See wings waver and loom,

Waking hearts that were sorry and sore.

196 *CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.*

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—

As a Lion from corner to corner

He shall rage—He shall raise up the mourner,

The wicked and every scorner

He shall smite with the strength of his paw.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—

Praise we, in hymn and in psalm

Jesus, His strong right arm,

Offering incense and balm,

Low bending our monarch before.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—

Blast of the breath of the Lord

Ice of the ages has thawed,

Holy His arm, and His sword

In front of us flames as of yore.

*CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.* 197

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

The Lion of Judah is down,  
Scattered the gold of his crown,  
Shattered the might of his frown,  
And broken the power of his paw.

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

From the rose-tipped vase of her hands  
A nosegay, a perfume expands,  
Bearing her breath to the lands  
Unfavoured of Venus before.

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

Gone is the Pallor of Passion—  
Returns in the sweet old fashion  
To eyes of our Goddess Compassion,  
And cheeks rose-red as of yore.

198 *CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.*

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
As a King, as a Hero He reigns  
Over the snow-white plains  
Of the future, cleansèd from stains  
By the blood He was willing to outpour.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
The Eagle of Holiness hovers  
Over the faces of lovers—  
Sand-splashed faces he covers  
With the outspread veil of his claw.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
What is the body but dust?  
Lips of Beauty with rust  
Are rotten—let no man trust  
In her, false is the oath that she swore.



“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—  
    Shineth upon us the grace  
    Of our Lady, her way we may trace  
    By the light of the bloom of her face,  
By the beauty she bends to outpour.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—  
    Cleaving the ether with wings  
    Snow-white, rises and sings  
    Our Song-Bird—happiness clings  
On the ground to the print of her claw.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—  
    He is not risen at all,  
    For who hath broken the thrall  
    Of the grave, or lifted its pall ?  
Made false is the oath that he swore.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

He, the Lamb that was slain  
Over the peoples shall reign ;  
As a giant's the girth of His brain,  
As a lion's the ring of His roar.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Lying, a babe in His bed,  
The bare white heights of His head  
To a glory, a halo were wed,  
To a light such as man never saw.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Breaks the dawn of a day  
Gladsome, under His sway  
The asp and the adder shall play  
With the new-born child at the door.

*CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.* 201

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Plays with the folds of the frown  
Of the lion, and carries his crown  
From her fingers dangling down  
Queen Beauty—and smiles at his roar.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Nobler Christs shall arise,  
Tenderer depths in their eyes,  
Soothing the sadness of sighs  
Such as soul of the first never saw.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
Blown by the wind of the Fates  
To our shore, she stands at the gates,  
The sound of her footstep waits,  
And rustle her robes at the door.

202 *CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.*

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Quills of the wings of Apollo  
The Sun-god, are sapless and hollow,  
Once he was swift as the swallow,  
Never again shall he soar.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Gone is the Goddess Minerva,  
Power there was none to preserve her,  
Priests and the people who serve her  
The fires of hell shall gnaw.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Heaven is ours, and its power,  
Crude is the fruit, and the flower  
Of Love in our mouths is sour  
As an April apple is raw.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—  
Sink in the sea shall His name  
As the sun sets, leaving a flame ;  
Sink to the ground whence He came,  
Whence never again shall He soar.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—  
Priests who our Goddess defy  
Beauty herself shall deny ;  
Mouths that against Her cry  
Flesh of their own shall gnaw.

“ Christ being dead, liveth no more ”—  
Round has the weathercock veered,  
Let grow again is the beard  
Of mankind, shortened and sheared—  
Covered are chins that were raw.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—  
     Shaven our faces, and crowns  
     Of our heads—wealth, worldly renowns  
     Are thistle-flakes blown across downs,  
 Or bubbles the wild waves o’er.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—  
     Earthly Leaven that sticks  
     To our fingers, fire shall unfix ;  
     Venus a goddess of bricks  
 Was, woven of bricks and of straw.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—  
     Brothers at last we may live,  
     Alms of our goods let us give,  
     Sifted as corn in a sieve  
 Let us be till we shine without flaw.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Nought will his vigour avail  
Now, for his forehead is pale,  
Though he were clad in the mail  
Of Goliath his sceptre is o'er.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

We bend not ; let them bend,  
Worship a baby, and send  
Presents ; their ways let them wend  
To the mouth of a manger of straw.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Sisters, again we may love,  
Garments of Venus above  
Gleam, as the wings of a dove,  
Rainbow-like, fair, without flaw.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—

Sunk is the statue of Beauty,  
Blind before blazing of Duty,  
Sunk in the sea for a booty  
To the uttermost depths of its floor.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—

Colour henceforth is forgotten,  
The roots of the roses were rotten,  
For us thorn-crowns are begotten  
Of garlands that goddesses wore.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more ”—

Death hath no more dominion,  
Broken the plume of his pinion,  
Death and the devil his minion  
Are hidden inside hell's jaw.



"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

Kissed by the ripple that rushes

Over her, Loveliness blushes

As the wild wood-anemone flushes

All over the wild-wood floor.

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

Think you there is but one

Sole Supereminent Sun ?

That the only crown to be won

The head of the Christ-King wore.

"Christ being dead, liveth no more"—

Risen again is King Death

Body and bones—so he saith,

But weak as a babe's is his breath,

For Beauty hath broken his jaw.

208 *CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.*

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Teeth on his foes he shall blunt  
In the heart of the fight, in the brunt  
Of the battle—and winters in front  
The flame of his breath shall thaw.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Out of the veins he hath sucked  
Of Venus the fires they conduct ;  
Plumes of her wings he hath plucked,  
And behold ! for a peacock a daw.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—  
Christ, and His Throne we raise ;  
Heaven, and its homes we praise ;  
Sour is earth, and its ways  
In our mouths are crude to the core.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Vanish from under Her feet

Snows, and instead you may meet

Flowers, and ice-fields the sweet

West wind of Her breath shall thaw.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Venus, alive, to us shows

Beauty as white as the snows ;

Seen by the side of her clothes

The Eagle's are clothes of a daw.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—

Praise we Beauty our Queen,

Praise we her feet, and the sheen

Of her shoulders, and lips that are seen

Full ripe as a peach to the core.

210 *CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.*

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

    Their vain goddess that sings  
    Has fallen to the ground ; to her wings  
    Low-fluttering wet clay clings,  
    And her song is changed to a caw.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

    Ours are the pearl-paved floors  
    Of Heaven, and the golden doors  
    Of the New Jerusalem, pours  
    On us God good gifts from His store.

“Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

    He is risen, and summer is seen,  
    And flowers, and grasses are green  
    Yet again where winter hath been,  
    And happiness comes to the fore.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
    Seen by the side of the snow  
    White wings of our song-bird, show  
    The Eagle’s as wings of a crow,  
And hoarse is the croak of his caw.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
    Sleeps, as in some soft nest  
    Happily young birds rest,  
    Beauty untold in the breast  
Of our Queen, in her deep-bosomed store.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
    She is risen, and out of her eyes  
    New-washed in the light of the skies  
    Of morning, loveliness flies  
To the front, as a flag to the fore.

212 *CHORUS OF CHRISTIAN ELDERS.*

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Eyes are blind with the blaze  
Of Summer in Heaven as we gaze,  
But alas ! our foot yet stays  
In earth's fields frosty and hoar.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Raise we the Red-Cross Flag,  
Nought was the robe but a rag  
Of Venus, and nought but a brag  
The boast of Earth's deities four.

“ Christ being raised, dieth no more”—

Priests and the people hiss ;  
Hands and the feet we kiss  
Of Him who to buy for us bliss  
The Cross and its agonies bore.

*CHORUS OF GREEK MAIDENS.*    213

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
    Beauty is born, and in sight  
    Is her coming ; again beam bright  
    Earth’s fields that before were white  
As woods in winter are hoar.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
    Aye—and the sun still shines,  
    And the blue waves wander in lines,  
    And the grass grows green, and the vines,  
And the air breathes—deities four.

“Christ being dead, liveth no more”—  
    Beauty we love, and none other,  
    Beauty, for she is our mother,  
    Father, and sister, and brother,  
She it was Being who bore.

## EPILOGUE.

## BEAUTY.

QUEEN of the future and the previous past,  
     Before the Galilean's breath was hot  
     To scorch the grasses green within the spot  
 Where Thou wast thronèd on a worship vast,  
 Is it true, indeed, that Thou art risen at last  
     To wash away the world's long weary blot,  
     With kisses to awaken us forgot  
 Of comeliness, and out of colour cast ?  
     Then let these maidens with the happy faces  
 And golden girdles and sweet lids of eyes,  
 Who chant the antiphonal strong replies  
     To Christ's pale chorus, blossom into graces,  
     And blush for joy till Beauty fills all places,  
 Ascends to Heaven in one wide sacrifice !



## APPENDIX.



## WHITE HANDS AND GREEN LEAVES.

"SWEET, let *me* crown you, let me be the first  
     To circle *my* white forehead with the bays ;"  
     And under the pure pressing of the sprays—  
 The leaves dark-green and bountiful that burst  
 Long since upon his eager soul, and nursed  
     The inextinguishable heart of lays,  
     The passion and supreme desire of praise,  
 The poet's unappeasable deep thirst,  
     The golden wings of yearning, and the eyes  
 That pierce with hot temerity the blue—  
 With victory and love besides in view  
     He bends his forehead lowly, as she tries  
     On tiptoe delicate compelled to rise  
 Her happy coronation-task to do.

## THE PALE FLOWER OF PHILOSOPHY.

You did not like the philosophic part ?

I thought you would not—for it gives a rose

The head-ache to put off her dainty clothes

Of Love, and exercise another art ;

It has no colour, no, nor any heart,

That flower that in the sage's garden grows,

Nor perfume, has it ? *Your* pink petals close

Even at the distant whistle of the dart

Of Thought, so delicate are they ; for “ it makes

One miserable to exercise the mind ;”

Ah well ! my happy rose, be pink and blind,

I love the beauty that a raindrop shakes,

I also love the flower that forsakes

Her colour, higher bloom of heart to find.

## YOU DID NOT UNDERSTAND?

You did not understand?—well, never mind—  
     Come, skip it all, my lady, be content  
     To read the dainty love-tales that were meant  
 Acceptance of your dainty brain to find—  
 Quick, pretty fingers, rattle down the blind,  
     Lest the strong sun of thought should find a rent  
     Wherethrough his winged arrows might be sent,  
 And round your brow an aching fillet bind ;  
     And *then*, calm-seated in a shady room,  
 The sonnets and the songs ! for these are free  
 From any taint of foul philosophy,  
     And free from any fires that consume,  
     And free from any tendency to gloom,  
 As sonnets writ to roses ought to be.

## ROSES FOR YOU !

ROSES for you ! pink flowers of high romance,  
     And passionate songs, and many-scented love ;  
     These have I written lest I soar above  
 The eager following of my lady's glance,  
 Lest wildfire feet of nimble pen should prance  
     Right out of sight, absorbèd in the blue,  
     These have I written, lady sweet, for you,  
 These sonnets won at singer's point of lance ;  
     Roses for you, and violets, and a crown  
 Of quiet colours, while I seek the skies ;  
*You* gave the poet wings, and when he tries  
     Obedient to be conqueror of renown,  
     You have a fear that he will totter down,  
 Well—many a man that falls for one that flies !

## BEFORE I TAKE MY BOOK.

BEFORE I take my book, I wonder will  
     She smile, or be offended, and a frown  
     Be bent upon me as I lay it down ;  
 I tremble as I break the glass and spill  
 The perfume of my thought, and see it fill  
     The room with incense—as I bruise the flower  
     Of fancy for her sake, and see it shower  
 Soft scented petals round her—as I kill  
     Rose after rose that each may yield its heart  
 To please the queen of roses—as I slay  
 Blue passing hours of a summer day  
     Painting the feathers of my poet's dart  
     (Mending my pen in prose), if but a part  
 I may achieve of what I had to say.

## MY BOOK.

COME, will you take it, lady? it is I,  
    Pressed down and folded tight between the leaves;  
    If there be in me any heart that grieves,  
Or any that aspires to the sky,  
A summer soul that laughs, a voice to sigh  
    When winter gives us stubble for the sheaves,  
    And branches of their greenery bereaves  
Whose banners once were jubilant on high—  
    If there is in me any memory long,  
Yea, any dream of voices that abides  
A steady light upon the changing tides  
    Of ebbing or of overflowing song,  
    A fancy musical, a passion strong,  
My book an index to the whole provides.



## I CANNOT SAY "FAREWELL."

I CANNOT say "farewell;" I am afraid  
     That as a man long looking at the sun  
     Sees suns for ever, I am doomed to run  
 A sunstruck lover vainly seeking shade ;  
 I have been dazzled, and I *can't* evade  
     My own remembrance written on the eyes—  
     The gleam once flashed upon them from the skies  
 Exhibits a reluctant heart to fade ;  
     Burn on then, beauty of the ancient day,  
 Better a burnt-up soul than one that fears  
 Delicious singeing of a sun that nears,  
     Sweet pitiless scorching of our wings of clay ;  
     Why, even the moths are wiser, in that they  
 Die passionately molten into tears !

# THAT SEA-BIRD'S BREAST.

## I.

THAT sea-bird's breast ! it has not found its way  
     Into a soft memorial sonnet yet,  
     The pure white northern diver's plume that met,  
 Alive, the waters of the northern bay,  
 And, after, as a flaming token lay  
     On dainty head-dress of brown velvet set ;  
     Lady, thou little knowest what a debt  
 Of early gratitude 'tis mine to pay  
     To those sweet feathers—for they flashed afar  
 Upon the lonely cliff at eventide  
 As on the solitary ships that ride  
     Through storms Atlantic some familiar star,  
     Or as the mellow August moons that are  
 The heaven-sent perfect dowry of a bride ;

II.

"TO-NIGHT," I used to say, "the plumes are there,"  
And all my heart was flattered into flame,  
As step by step the white magician came,  
Until beneath the hat the face was fair ;  
" *My* colours she has bent her brow to wear,  
To-night the gentle weather will be kind,  
The music bountiful, and we shall find  
Environment of roses in the air !"   
But, ay di mi, there came another eve,  
And dimmed the hat of feathers, and I knew,  
As erst the diver's heart the shot that slew,  
The message mute that told the stars to grieve  
Melodious, and the lovesick moon to leave  
For waters grey the seas of airy blue.

## THE BIRD LOVERS.

## I.

HE that hath loved deserveth not to die ;  
     So thought I ; and a sudden vision came  
     Of birds of splendour, crowned with crimson flame,  
 Wings touched with brilliance of the azure sky,  
 Breasts sapphire, throats of emerald, flying high  
     In the old forest-haunts without a name,  
     The sweet green palaces that shone the same  
 Millions of centuries ere a man was nigh ;  
     I saw them frolic through the leafy arches,  
 And a strange sense came over me that they,  
     *Those two*, that loved and laughed amid the larches,  
 And leaped with glittering feet from spray to spray,  
 Being in the secret, had *my* right to stay—  
     Yet stayed not—Death's indomitable marches.

## II.

I COULD have wept to think that these sweet things  
Had loved, not lived for ever ; that the fire  
That lit their eyes with the same soft desire  
That stirs a poet's pulses as he sings,  
And round the raiment of a sonnet clings,  
And sweeps the fingers firm across the lyre,  
That such a flame should faint, subside, and tire,  
When hand of final sleep the opiate brings ;  
It ought not so to be ; those birds should live  
For ever, had I in my power the voice  
To bid them blossom onward, and rejoice  
In endless spiral ascent—*I* would give  
To every soul Love's song-creating kiss,  
Eternity in which to utter this !

TRA BEATRICE E TE È QUESTO MURO.

FIRST VERSION.

"TWIXT Beatrice and thee there is this wall"—  
 So said Virgilius, leading Dante on  
 To face the extreme agony that shone  
 In front, and had a power to appal ;  
 And, as before the trumpet thunders fall  
 The towers of Jericho with a sudden spasm,  
 So fell the fires of that dismal chasm  
 Before the mellow sounding of his call ;  
 And he went on to say, "her eyes I see  
 Already"—gli occhi suoi già veder parmi—  
 Sweet eyes ! methinks if they would shine on me,  
 I would not even hesitate, as he  
 Was slow, but swift would hurl aside the army  
 Of flames between my lovesick lips *and thee*.

TRA BEATRICE E TE È QUESTO MURO.

SECOND VERSION.

"TWIXT Beatrice and thee there is this wall"—

Say, lovers sweet, and, poets, tell me true,

Can ye not *see* the triumphant smile that flew

To Dante's lips responsive to the call ?

Of a verity, no fairer fate can fall

To any than to pass a flaming tide,

And gather on the green cool further side

The flower our passion fancied first of all ;

*Would* we not join our hands in tuneful rows,

And plunge light-hearted, bare-soled, on the fires,

Or stiffen toiling limbs in Alpine snows,

If but for each a gentian blue that blows

'Mid these might open dainty arms, and those

Lead towards the lips that consecrate our lyres !

TRA BEATRICE E TE È QUESTO MURO.

THIRD VERSION.

"TWIXT Beatrice and thee there is this flame"—  
     And, as Virgilius said the soothing words  
     And Dante for his perilous descent girds  
 His loins, the furnace-heated air became  
 Not other than the cooling shafts that aim  
     To pierce the leaves in summer, as the birds  
     The forked loud hissing of the tongues of herds  
 Of leaping monsters reddening in the same ;  
     A simple reason—in that Love was there,  
 Effecting transformation of the scene,  
     That on the other side a face was fair—  
 And, wafted fires of agony in between,  
 Came visible the soft occasional sheen  
     Of raiment she was wont of old to wear.



## TRA BEATRICE E TE È QUESTO MURO.

## FOURTH VERSION.

"TWIXT Beatrice and thee there is this fire"—

And all the past came rushing back again,

And nought was with him save the untold pain

And pleasure of the birth of new desire,

And leaped the soul of Dante seven times higher

Beneath the fiery shudder of the rain,

Leaped with a giant grasping and a strain

Seven times to Beatrice—seven ages—nigher.

To this man it was given to hear a voice

Saying, "her eyes I seem to see already,"

And through the fires with a vision steady

A Woman in discerning to rejoice—

Swept body and spirit through the flaming eddy

To know the after import of his choice.

“HOW IS IT?”

“How is it that I see it all so clearly,

And memory hath potent backward feet?”

First reason, and by much the largest, sweet,  
Is simply that I love it all so dearly—

The second, that I do adore you really,

And not with any half-assumed heat—

Reason the third, that with my fancy fleet  
I could enumerate each flower nearly.

For through the past I drive the strong lime-light  
Of my imagination, and as when

The upturned faces of a host of men

By fireworks made visible at night

Shine plain in every feature, flame in sight  
Smiles olden for employment of my pen.

## YOUR FACE.

WHAT *can* you know about it, lady mine ?

    You see it in the glass, but I have set

    Your image, white upon a ground of jet,

Within my heart, that looking-glass is thine,

Before that mirror you may stand and twine

    The soft braids loosened from the clinging net,

    By a reflection of yourself be met

Complete in each minutest rosy line ;

    Take this glass, wash it clean with maiden tears,

Breathe thou upon it, wipe each film away,

    Dust and the cobwebs of forsaken years,

Pale stains that are upon it, streaks of grey,

That a sweet silver mirror may display

    A new face as the old one disappears.

NOT ITS SEMBLANCE BUT *ITSELF*. *Browning.*

## I.

God gives a new love—but is that the old ?  
Thy ways are all imperfect now we see,  
Who art thou then that we should worship thee,  
Believe the fable of thy glory told,  
Our mouths are strong to deny thee, yea we are bold  
To look thee in the face and not to flee,  
We are rebellious creatures, even we  
With hanging heads and lips unkissed and cold ;  
“Come, let me do it,” say you, “what I can,  
Bind up the wound, if I must leave the scar,”  
I tell you, God, you know not us that are  
Thine offspring, thou art ignorant of a man,  
And all the suns thou holdest in thy span  
Shall not console him for that sweet set star.

II.

God gives a new love—but is that the same ?  
A lily, not the splendour of a rose,  
Some better, princelier flower, perhaps, that blows  
With circled opening scent of crimson flame ;  
He thinks—does God you know—that he will tame  
The old desire, that he when no one knows  
Will, coming in the night-time, interpose  
Another plant, and turn aside our aim ;  
But is it so ? men who have loved I pray  
You speak your minds out, let your voices rise  
In one wild protestation to the skies,  
Call bleeding hearts to witness when you say  
That no new God-sent loves of latter day  
Have kissed to peace the God-caused former sighs.

## THE POET'S PRAYER.

God, give us love, no matter what comes after,  
And roses for the lips, and crimson dreams,  
One long exultant throb of scented laughter,  
Then pour upon us all thine icy streams,  
God, crown us with a kiss, we hate to-morrow,  
Eternity we crumple in a night,  
God, kill us, smother us, but let us borrow  
*First*, graveclothes of delirious delight,  
God, make us drunk with pleasure, after slay us,  
Heap coals upon us from thine hottest hell,  
Hurl brimstone on our faces, scourge us, flay us,  
Tongues tortured shall give answer, "It is well,"  
For we have kissed our shaking mouths to death,  
And mingled every rose in our last breath.

## THE RAINBOW CAUGHT AND HELD.

LOVE is not love that cannot stand and say  
    What I have suffered I would bear again  
    And ten times more, if so the slightest pain  
From finger tip of thine to soothe away  
I might be able, pleasure to convey  
    In tiniest crimson tingle of a vein,  
    Yea, sweetheart, stony-hearted would remain  
Unloved, unkissed, for ever and a day,  
    If so the Beauty might be nearer brought  
That I have seen between the palms of dreams ;  
Till we are one with our ideal gleams,  
    And bear upon our brows the rainbow sought  
    By snatching baffled hands of eager thought,  
Apart from us somehow our passion seems.

PIGMY POET TO THE LAUREATE OF THE  
UNIVERSE.

THE Great Poet Laureate of the Universe ; the Great Genius who has rolled the ages into song, and written his organ-choruses and flashes of intuition on the keys of the thunder and the wings of the lightning of the spheres ; who has inscribed his sonnets in showers of scented and colourful loveliness on the white spaces of the hearts of all sweet lovers, from the first humming-birds that kissed in Paradise to Beatrice weeping and Dante triumphant, since time began ; the Singer who has shouted his Odes and Marches and War-Chants through the clamorous breath of tens of thousands of trumpets and the sonorous lungs of all warriors whom the ages have massed together for battle in crimson splendour of array ; who has written Epics in the history of nations, and early ballads in their



growth through the previous stages of green and spring-like progress; the Great Author who exults in all this, and through whose giant veins tingle the throbs of eternity; who has laughed with the laughter of creation, and down whose cheeks the sobs of all sufferers have trickled; who sits, white brows of him darkened with the undying bay-wreath, and the harp of all origination in his hand.

God, make a poet of me, make a man,  
A hero of me, great in every part,  
In voice, intelligence, and width of heart,  
And let me bear thy banner in the van,  
Amidst the little company that can  
Discern the gentle Mother that thou art,  
The tender woman's glance of eyes that dart  
From Iceland even unto Ispahan ;  
Kiss me upon the forehead, let the bays  
Be warm upon me, O the sweet dark leaves !  
Thou hast the exalted Genius-Heart that grieves  
Exults and laughs in universal ways,  
Thou hast *the* perfect laurels, let some sprays  
Fall soft upon my brow's wind-battered eaves.

THOU hast the voice that sings in every age,  
    Thou writest sonnets for each loving pair,  
    And tenderly perfumest thou the air  
With breath of roses, or the sweet wild sage,  
Or honey, or of hyacinths ; to wage  
    War's fury bare-armed too thou dost prepare,  
    And turnest jubilant with flying hair  
Red battle's windy most melodious page ;  
    The harp is in thine hand ; the ages sweep  
Across the strings in one triumphant chord,  
*Thou* art the Singer, *thou* the Poet, Lord,  
    Who dost the eternal bays in beauty keep,  
    Whence ever and anon a sprig we reap,  
A withered leaf or so thou dost afford.

THE harp is in thine hand ; across the strings  
Sweep bitterness, and wars, and many tears,  
And throbs tumultuous, as of women's fears,  
And flashes sudden, as of fire that clings  
To broken wayward hearts of men, and stings  
New music into being, thou dost lean  
Over us all thy delicate ear to glean  
Each mellow tone, each subtle note that rings ;  
I see thy face, Lord God, and as I see  
It streams for ever with the sobs of men,  
And smileth with creation, and as when  
Uplifted in a wondrous ecstasy  
A poet's face is one hot flame of glee  
So are thy features fire now and then ;

For thrills of lovers pass across thy soul,  
And all the rapture of the bloom of flowers,  
And gentle happy drip of falling showers,  
And songs of golden stars, and seas that roll,  
And all the mingled madness of the whole,  
And all the mirthfulness of moving powers,  
And sparks from out thy giant heart in showers  
The flying flints of solar systems stole ;  
Thou smilest as in triumph ; yet I see  
That while thy stag-built nostrils expand  
With joy of savours mixed in every land  
Thou art too great to let a spider flee  
Into his unwept dark eternity  
Without a first caressing of thine hand.

Our flashes come from thee ; the things we long  
    To say, yet cannot say, with easy tongue  
    Thou dost achieve, and when thy voice has sung  
To listen all the planet-sisters throng,  
And dance attendant choruses among  
    Blue heavenly floors ; the melody of rage,  
    Of battle, as a peach or sweet greengage  
Thou rollest on thy crimson palate strong ;  
    The joy of every kiss at once is thine,  
A poet I am—weak—and I can share  
By sympathy perhaps of one poor pair  
    The ecstasy, and write one golden line,  
    But every rose-wreath, each of eglantine,  
Thou hast, Lord God, the intellect to wear.

Good God ! that all the ages in a flash  
Of intuition should be thine to know,  
To tingle to the finger-tips with woe  
Of each, and with the glory ; hard to dash  
A stone into creation's pool and splash  
Thyself from head to foot with fiery glow,  
To shake the Universal Oak-tree so  
As I may, feeble-handed, shake an ash !  
And thou dost give to each of us a share  
In thy delight, a little at a time,  
A flower to love and ponder, or a rhyme  
To chant and muse upon, as each can bear,  
And tenderly thou holdest straight the fair  
Long ladder that we slowly learn to climb.

THOU art so beautiful that we have prayed  
That thou wouldst kill us with thy splendid kiss,  
But thou art merciful, and keepest this  
A boon behind, and coverest with a shade  
The perfect vision of thy face delayed  
Till we are competent to fathom bliss ;  
We know we are but waiting, that we miss  
No sob, no note of all the melody made  
Along the crimson-coursing speedy veins  
Of Her, the Maid, whom we Creation call  
By kiss that her Eternal Lord lets fall  
On her most sweet uplifted mouth, for all  
The Universe's pleasures, pains, and pains,  
And trembles, through his body flame and crawl.



## WOMEN'S EYES.

WHAT have you there ? a set of women's eyes,  
     Alike, yet, God, how different ! so deep  
     Are some that you may stand and peer and peep  
 For ever, might as well attempt the skies  
 To sound, blue heaven itself to analyse,  
     Or ocean's harvest in a hand to reap ;  
     And others are there glassy, and as cheap  
 As beads, and little better as to size ;  
     Blue, green, and hazel, wicked, soft and sweet,  
 Eyes piercing, sad ones, modest, flaming gleams,  
 Eyes over-daring, brown ones dipped in dreams,  
     As strange a medley as a man may meet  
     Who follows in his sleep the flying feet  
 Of forms with which his fervent fancy teems.

## THE PARTED PEACH.

BEAUTIFUL eyes I have seen,  
Now they are torn from my heart,  
And a cleft is crimson, and clean  
Cut through its central part,  
As with delicate rose-coloured dart  
Of her fingers a maiden, a queen,  
Doth prepare for the lips that lean  
Very eagerly over it some  
Sweet peach, or apple, or plum,  
Thinking not that a throb can come  
From the core of a fruit, nor a smart.

## THE ROSES AND THE BAYS.

At last about my brows the bays are cool,  
I dreamed of bays and roses intertwined,  
Dreamed tenderly, but wake alas, to find  
Dreams laughing at the over-eager fool  
Who, hardly having broken out of school,  
Owns such a passionate impulsive mind,  
Who thought that whitest arms would surely wind  
Around a poet-heart as is the rule ;  
They glitter dark those bays, they glitter yet  
Most sweetly, won by struggle and by strain  
And many months of solitude and pain,  
And on the points behold ! the dews are wet,  
The very leaves being tinged with regret  
For roses that their wearer hoped to gain.

## FAREWELL.

I THOUGHT that I would win a leaf of bays,  
I thought that I would win the roses too,  
Fame to achieve was not enough to do,  
And brows encircled by the public praise  
Were cold, if absent were the softer sprays  
A maiden gives, her hand's caressing dew ;  
My dreams were all too daring to come true,  
And Fate hath baffled me in diverse ways ;  
But none the less I hold that I was right  
In lifting aspiration in mine hand  
To view the exalted cliff-tops of a land  
Where shines the sun with perpendicular light,  
In struggling upward to a tottering height  
Where, as it now turns out, I may not stand.

JUST as a man may lift his eager son  
—Some bird-catcher born in the Orkney Isles—  
To inspect a nest hung high in the defiles,  
The granite barriers explored by none,  
So have I in my strong desire done,  
For heart was over-covetous of smiles ;  
I have leaped boulders, frowning rocks in piles,  
And summit of a toilsome ascent won,  
That to my mind might peep into the nest,  
The eagle's nest I loved ; and it was well  
That, though I staggered overborne and fell,  
And fierce and angry was the eagle's crest,  
I yet have reached from this hot beach of hell  
A hand to that cool cliff-top heaven of rest.

ALTHOUGH I lie upon my back and groan,  
And feel my spine made hollow by the edge  
Of cutting pebbles, and the salt sea-sedge  
Wave round me, and my pillow be a stone,  
Yet something is it but once to have known  
Firm footing on the highest grassy ledge,  
A sole broad-based upon the granite wedge  
That widens upward to a skyey throne ;  
Once I was on the cliff, and flowers were sweet,  
And ferns were soft around me, and I saw  
Myself the centre of expanding law,  
A god with white integrity of feet,  
And stood bare-headed, hair thrown back to meet  
Existence, stamping hard upon the floor.

I KNEW myself enthronèd in the blue,  
Blue sky before, blue seas above, behind,  
A solitary sentinel reclined  
To pass a panorama into view,  
To let creation stream my eyelids through  
And traverse all the corridors of mind,  
The bandage I was potent to unbind  
That veils the Universe's features true ;  
Yea, She was sweet before me ; as a maid  
Who, laughing, bows her head towards the hand  
That shall unwind the handkerchief soft-planned  
To cast across a momentary shade,  
So stood the Maiden clear in every braid  
Of hair, the Universe at my command,

Most white before me ; in a dream I kissed  
Each vein and every blood-throb, and I laughed  
In giant exultation as I quaffed  
The honeysuckle-lips that I had missed  
For centuries, and held the dainty wrist  
That kings and prophets, seeking, have not seen,  
And saw the Universe's body clean  
From every stain, or taint, or turn, or twist ;  
I speak forth the unspeakable ; I fail  
To seize the windy flying hair of words,  
To grip the shaggy manes of goat-like herds  
Of leaping forms of speech that dance and sail  
Along imagination's eddies pale,  
To snare the plumes of fancy's azure birds.

\* \* \* \* \*



*THIS* was the pallid Vision that I strove  
To bring before the listener's sharp-eared mind—  
Myself upon the broken chalk, wet, blind,  
Yet clutching eagerly a scented glove,  
And lovers walking on the cliff above  
With hand in honeysuckle-hand entwined ;  
Myself upon the blazing beach reclined,  
Cool arbours there, and rose-abodes of Love,  
Sweet grasses, and soft loitering in lanes,  
And kisses, lips that blush, and low replies,  
Myself washed over by a sea of pains,  
And lashed by long brown tangle into sighs,  
But up above green archery of eyes  
Whose every arrow having pierced remains.

THE sun shone hard upon me ; I was glad  
To think that—let him shine ! I did not care,  
Why, who was I that I should shed a tear,  
A broken-hearted, fervent-headed lad,  
The passionate effigy of a poet sad  
Who had but touched his harp-strings for a year ?  
It did not matter, no, the case was clear,  
Whatever happened my look-out was bad.  
For I had loved, and given up my soul  
For her to hold between her pink sweet hands,  
And placed between her palms the crystal bowl  
Of my creative power, and the whole  
Domain of my imaginative lands,  
And all the fire of my heart she stole ;

AND then she spurned it ; did it matter much  
That I was ready more than to have died,  
To run myself to ruin in a tide  
Of passionate aspiration, that a touch  
Of hers upon my head had made me king  
Of earth, and air, and sea, and everything,  
And given me the Universe to clutch  
In hot strained fingers, that I learned to sing  
On purpose so to please her ? did it matter  
That I had agonized and sobbed and toiled  
In icy winter, or when August broiled  
The pastures, that I might be strong to scatter  
From perfumed casket of my pen's broad platter  
About her feet a host of flowers unsoiled ?

WHAT did it matter that already I  
    Had died a hundred times, and all for her,  
    And ready was to die again, and dare  
Extremity, if so I might but buy  
One soft approving sparkle of her eye,  
    Sight of a distant glimmer of her hair?  
    That I, to make my gentle rose more fair,  
Would crush my being into one broad sigh,  
    And toss myself upon a host of spears,  
And traverse hell bare-footed, and the North  
Pour scorn upon, and hurl defiance forth  
    At armies massed in crimson great array  
    Against me, count eternity a day,  
    And but a puddle oceans full of tears?

CAN any love her as I loved her now,  
    Though she be wedded, will he even then'  
    Be cognizant of every braid as when  
For very love I kissed her pure white brow  
Though miles of distance were between? I vow  
    That mine she is, for after all she blows  
    A rose within my heart not his, she knows  
Her gentlest breath can make my being bow,  
    For I am a barometer, and she  
Can raise or hurry down the silver thread  
Dividing heart of mine, by bend of head,  
    Or wave of hand, or sound of voice, can he  
    Be made to shift and change as readily,  
By silken cord as easily be led?

I DOUBT it ; and I know that I have died,  
Died many times to win her ; that for *her*  
My love was pure and crystal as the air,  
And bright as orange-blossoms of a bride,  
And white as her own God-created side,  
And as her own untarnished bosom fair,  
And tender as the lifting of her hair  
When through it a soft summer wind has sighed ;  
What does it matter ? for she does not know  
What I gave up for her, the fight I fought,  
The blood-encrusted victories I bought,  
The fingers that I plunged beneath the snow  
That a sweet gentian or two might blow  
Beside her suddenly it seemed unsought ;

**SHE** does not know, nor will know ; ah, Good God !

I would that once her maiden face might flame

With joy of knowing how a poet came

To seek her, all the churchyards that he trod

Beneath him, and the conquest of the sod

Of hell, and lions that he had to tame,

That so a peerless spirit without blame

Might bow and blossom underneath her rod ;

Ah, God, she is so beautiful ! and you,

You made her, you designed those wondrous eyes,

The plan original in thy studio lies,

And you can testify that I am true

In saying that I never dreamed or knew

That any rose so radiant could rise

I WOULD that she could know ! they do not see  
The abnegation of a poet's love  
Who, standing on the cliff-top high above,  
See on the beach below a broken tree,  
She never thinks that, had she touched it, he  
Had blossomed in response, and flashed, and  
beamed,  
Till beauty such as never woman dreamed  
Had bent a green obeisance at her knee ;  
I would that she could know ; that she could hear  
The strong sad sweeping of my spirit's harp  
With tender admiration of her ear,  
That she could see the rending of the bays,  
And hear them crackle in a crumpled blaze,  
The smoke ascending plentiful and sharp !



AND she will never know, and perhaps, indeed,  
There is not any God to listen either ;  
No God nor any woman ! what if neither  
Be true, save only in a doting creed ?  
If this is of a verity the meed  
Of having loved and highly honoured both,  
It looks as if the advocates of sloth  
Were in advance of warriors who bleed !  
To pray is to be baffled, so it seems,  
To love to be deluded, and to fight  
To hurl oneself the sooner into night,  
The sooner to be quit of rose-hued dreams,  
The firmer seated in a land that teems  
With scarecrows of delirious affright.

Oh love, my love, my love to you was pure  
As is the daybreak, as the scent of thyme—  
The wreath I wove for you of scented rhyme  
Had everlasting power to endure,  
My love was as the eagle's eyrie sure,  
And soft as twilight in a Southern clime,  
And as a Northern mountain-top sublime,  
Eternity too feeble to obscure,  
To brush the bloom off; as a perfect peach  
I held my rounded heart between my hands  
For biting of the sweet short lips to reach,  
I am not ready at anointed speech  
Nor curlèd adoration, but that each  
White tooth may sting the heart to death it stands

PERVERSE before you, asking to be slain  
And put upon the shelf and out of sight,  
That I may no more trouble you who write  
These Sonnets, and permit you to remain  
In peace and meadows golden, and retain  
The tablet of your heart's untarnished white ;  
Why should I bother you ? come, kill me quite,  
And torture out of me a dying strain.  
O leopard, cruel leopard, beauty mine,  
To whom I wrote not one but many songs,  
Before whose feet in manifold soft throngs  
Heap after heap of blossoms in a line  
Of fragrance I was cunning to entwine,  
To you my death if not my life belongs.

COME, take it, why be merciful and spare ?

I would not have been merciful to you,

I would have been the latchet of your shoe,

Or comb that crested the divine soft hair,

Or brooch that brooded only half-aware

Of the delicious breathing that it knew

With sleepy eyes, and yet I tell you too

I could uncover crimson claws to tear !

You are a leopard, a strong tiger I,

Is there a reason then that either should

Be over-tender of the other's good ?

Is there a single tiny reason why

You should not strike me dead, and see me die

With heart as callous as a bit of wood ?

COME, leopard, let a claw be bright from out  
The velvet furry covering that you close  
So tightly, that the lookers-on suppose  
You carry only velvet fur about,  
They have not seen, as I have seen, the pout  
Of sudden flaming angry lips that shows  
A woman with a shoulder as the snows  
Can also utter the indignant shout  
Of scorn and of defiance, and be red  
As any eagle-heart that sees its young  
Carried away by foolish whistling boys,  
And, just as if a crimson fire has stung  
Her heart into a furnace, strikes one dead,  
And flaps around the rest with hurtling noise !

I LIKE you for it ; had our fire been one  
    There was not any end to prizes we  
    Had certainly attained, the future sea  
Had watched the rising of a double sun,  
Or sun and moon together, we had done  
    Great deeds, my lady. great in verity !  
    The Universe had shaken as a tree  
That trembles at the booming of a gun !  
    But now I walk a solitary star,  
My crown is rounded, paler, stripped of rays,  
And less aspiring is the spirit's blaze,  
    And less magnificent the thoughts that are  
    The riders of the fervent-footed car  
I call my brain, less glittering the chaise ;

I THOUGHT thou hadst the glory to have found  
The first rose of the future, that thy feet  
Had made the snows of Alpine valleys sweet,  
And cleared the creeds and systems at a bound,  
And planted on a green unearthly mound  
The flag we all are passionate to greet ;  
I thought thou hadst a forehead fit to meet  
The future's sun, and ears to hear the sound  
Of cymbal, psalm, and lute, and psaltery,  
And many voices rung from many lands,  
The organ-intonation of the free,  
The timid treading of the foot that stands  
Already on the threshold, and disbands  
By prophecy the powers and things that be !

I THOUGHT thou hadst been able to discern  
Through all the noises of the current time  
The under-echo of another rhyme,  
And that thy foot was white enough to spurn,  
Indignant, that old empty-headed Urn  
That thou art hardly strong enough to climb  
As it turns out, I cherished a design  
That made my blood one boiling brawling burn,  
None other than that thou and I should stand  
As did the Brownings, Prince and Princess high  
Enthronéd in the ether, that thine eye  
Should win the acclamation of the land,  
And either brow by bays as sweet be fanned  
As ever fell on poets from the sky.



SUCH were my thoughts ; were these ignoble, sweet,  
Unworthy of you ? such a sunset-glow  
Of hope of soul of him who loved you so  
He had but kissed the slaying heels of feet !  
Was it a mean desire to long to meet  
A singer's lips, a poet's mouth to know,  
To see the dark caressing bay-leaves flow  
About your brow, and soothe your forehead's heat ?  
All this I wished for you, and hoped, and prayed,  
Seeing, as no one else has ever seen,  
The simple reason being that no one, queen,  
Has ever loved *you* as I love each braid .  
Of hair, the power of thought that you betrayed  
At times, not knowing what yourself might mean ;

BUT *I* knew ; for your image in my soul  
For two long years was never out of sight,  
And I had studied every feature bright  
Of mind and face, and learnt by heart the whole,  
Therefore I sorrowed much that you should roll  
Against your mental sepulchre the stone  
That I was daring to have overthrown,  
And quench your rosy laughter into night ;  
*Now* do you understand me ? that my fault  
Was love, and nothing else, and love again,  
And why my face was white at times with pain,  
And why I would have perished in assault  
Of marble cliffs, lest you might in default  
Of knowledge build a tower of life-long strain !

Now I have spoken you shall kill me ; come,  
    “ Be merciful and slay me,” as I said  
    In that old withered sonnet long since dead,  
Don't hesitate, consider me a plum  
To swallow, or a peach, or think that some  
    Green caterpillar hard upon your head  
    Has fallen from an oak-tree branch, and spread  
Its talons in your hair, and visage dumb !  
    Why I am but a poet, so you know  
You need not hesitate a moment, sweet,  
We were but made as cushions for the feet  
    Of ladies, pressure of your soles of snow,  
    I'm but a poet, and a young one, so  
You need not be afraid my back to beat !

You *have* been beating it for two long years,  
A year and a half more accurate to be,  
I still am candid, lady, as you see,  
My conscience has a tendency to fears,  
And is not callous quite, in spite of sneers,  
And hints that this impulsive poet, he  
Had not behaved himself, so strike thou me  
With stronger hand, away with woman's tears !  
For first they slay a soul, and then they weep  
And wish they had not done it, and again,  
They string our hearts in dancing beads of pain  
Upon their necklaces, then fear to keep  
The harvest of our agony they reap,  
Lest any throb of conscience should remain.

BUT they are very sweet ; I love their wild  
And cruel mockery, as I love the spots  
Upon a dainty leopard, and the dots  
Upon his shining sides, but shall a child  
Play with that gentle leopard smiling mild,  
And romp with her upon the grassy plots  
And gather hand in hand forget-me-nots,  
And not come home with weeping face defiled ?  
O, my sweet leopard, must I bid adieu ;  
When you have caused such joy and grief to me,  
Such happy hours beneath the summer blue,  
Such moonless winter nights of misery,  
Must I a final farewell take of thee,  
Not even *that* sweet agony renew ?

O SUMMER, and the woods, and happy flowers,  
And ferns and mosses, and the broad sweet sea,  
Where hand in hand I wandered, love, with thee,  
And laughed aside the insults of the hours  
That pressed upon us, honeysuckle-bowers,  
And chastened moonlight shining silvery  
Across the clover-carpeted cliff where we  
Talked careless young romantic talk in showers,  
I bid you all farewell ! I kiss you first,  
Gathering together in my greedy hand  
Each sunny memory of that fair lost land,  
To print *my* inextinguishable thirst  
Upon the lips of memories that nursed  
My present sorrow's fiery-footed band.

AND unto you I bid farewell, my queen,  
My two-years queen on earth that might have been,  
If otherwise the awful fates had seen  
    Good to allow, my soft eternity,  
Yea, even that unnamed white stone clean  
    That man receives, Lord, only straight from Thee,  
My emerald, perfect in green-golden sheen,  
    My diamond, radiant in her purity.  
O thou that shouldst have wound about me arms  
    Made beautiful with roses, and the scent  
    Of every flower on thy lips have lent,  
And shielded me from the enchantress charms  
    Of snakes and serpent-eyes about me bent,  
And made me as a crystal clean from harms ;

O THOU that shouldst have been my dainty bride,  
And worn with me the roses and the bays,  
And traversed with me the untrodden ways,  
And to my lonely pilgrimage supplied  
Cool bowers of soothing, and a gentle side  
For me to lean upon when agony's blaze  
Made glory's laurels seem but broken sprays,  
And flowers the wintry Crown of Thorns denied,  
I bid thee farewell ! and I kiss my hand  
For more I may not do, as thou dost sail  
To seas I know not, and I leave the pale  
Sweet cheeks for summers of another land  
To cherish and caress, and lips are fanned  
By balmy greeting of another gale ;



I LAY aside the crown thou shouldst have worn  
    (Do you remember them, those flowers?) and I  
    Turn resolutely to the hot bare sky,  
To face the uncovered splendour of the morn ;  
I fold thy bays and roses up ; forlorn  
    Are these of comfort, barren now, and dry,  
    For never shall another hand come nigh  
To these, by any be the paper torn ;  
    They wait for thee in heaven ; but, my sweet,  
Before I turn the corner and depart,  
And cease to tease the crystal of thine heart,  
    And fades the silent echo of my feet,  
    I pray devoutly that my rose may meet  
Full bloom, and play a proper queenly part !

THAT not a thought of hers may fall aside  
    Into the wasted tissue of a bud,  
    That she herself may trample in no mud  
The genius I coveted for bride,  
To be to any power of mine allied  
    For ever in a great increasing flame ;  
    That every flower of intellectual aim,  
And spirit, and heart, may redden glorified  
    I pray ; I pray that she herself may know  
Her own ability, her passionate mind,  
And let it feed itself as best inclined,  
    Not swamped in artificial heaps of snow  
    But flowing outward in the fiery glow  
Of radiant womanhood that God designed;

THAT she may blossom onward, upwards, straight  
As any standard rose, as lithe and tall,  
And that I may not quite forgotten fall  
Into the rank of dancing figures of fate  
Who occupied the dim horizon late,  
The old familiar voice that used to call ;  
So I send spinning towards her this last ball  
For her to catch with countenance sedate ;  
That she might understand I loved her well  
And would have placed, not life, for that is nought,  
But self, existence, being's heart unbought,  
In her hands without a shudder lest it fell  
And, brittle, cracked upon the ground, to tell  
My lady this I also would have sought,

AND then to leave her, for I know that if  
God ruleth, then the roses that are best  
Are hers and mine as well by his behest,  
And wrecked is delicate keel of neither's skiff;  
They have given me the bays—a little—though  
The pressure of the palms I longed for so  
Is absent, and my forehead uncaressed,  
Yet something is it even these to know,  
And *to have loved*; yes, that is something more,  
For had not you been tender at the gate,  
And cunning fingers busy at the door,  
And sweet pink hands appointed by my fate  
To Poesy herself my soul to mate,  
I never should have had the heart to soar ;

THEREFORE the bays *are* thy gift after all,  
They blossomed under touching of thine hand  
As rapidly as in a southern land  
Along the edges of a sun-struck wall  
Ripens the blush of peaches, fit to fall  
At the imperious noontide's hot command,  
And, if it gives you pleasure, understand  
That your soft voice it was that came to call  
A poet into being ; so farewell ;  
And by the strong sea and the silver moon,  
And by your being's own delicious tune,  
And by the straggling braids of hair that fell  
Across your forehead, that I used to tell  
Each in a Sonnet, don't forget me soon !

## THE ORGAN-GRINDER.

TO-NIGHT to me God's holy angel came  
    To cheer the dying embers of my heart,  
    And send by the insertion of his dart  
Across my soul a crimson spurt of flame,  
He hit me with his arrow's certain aim,  
    Transfixed imagination's central part,  
    And with consummate agony of art  
Transfused with novel fire of thought the same,  
    And brought my love before me, and the sea,  
And silver memories of an ancient moon,  
    Who was it, think you, did this thing for me,  
And sent me into a delicious swoon,  
    And seemed God's purple-wingèd priest to be ?  
A London organ-grinder with his tune !

## CREATION, GOD'S BRIDE AND A MAN'S.

Just as a lover brings a gentle maid  
To view the palace that he has prepared,  
Cold, comfortless of heart, till she has shared  
His happiness, and sympathy conveyed,  
Just as he standeth, eager, half-afraid,  
Waiting her soft approval of the place  
That he with genius and subtle grace  
No cunning touch of any trowel spared,  
Has built for her to dwell in, so God stands  
Before Creation his pure maiden bride,  
And blushes, I can fancy, at her side,  
Uncovering the splendour of the lands  
He holds a dower untarnished in his hands  
Till she has her rejoicing signified.

“ ARE they not beautiful, these flowers of mine ?”

He says, as eager as a happy boy

Who runs to show a trumpet or a toy,

A kite, or some new delicate design,

To comrades standing in a silent line,

Waiting to share the outburst of his joy ;

“ My bride Humanity without alloy

Shall drink with me creation’s luscious wine,

And toast our wedding-day ; I give to thee,

With all a husband’s happiness and heart

Of open effervescence, what you see

Before you, fair and sweet in every part,

This greenhouse built by my consummate art,

This universal great conservatory ;”



"ARE they not good, the red geranium leaves,  
And steaming savours of the hot-house plants,  
And ferns whose giant shadow over-slants  
And softens into green the nodding eaves  
Of golden-spotted crimson-hooded sheaves  
Dipped in the flaming sunsets of the West?  
Come, speak, my lady, is not this a nest  
Wherein to still that throbbing heart that grieves?"  
So says her husband, and she blushes sweet  
Before him, covers face with trembling hands,  
And beats upon the flooring with her feet,  
For now she sees her master understands  
The inmost heart of her, and all the lands  
Of intellect his glance has run to meet.

SUCH is my fancy, rather if you will  
    My faith, that God is vehement to show  
    The utmost azure mountain-tops of snow,  
The water-cresses green in every rill  
At its commencement—when the wavelets spill  
    On tender grass-blades with a silver show  
    Of playfulness their symmetry, and flow  
With soft abandonment adown the hill—  
    The meaning of the sunset, and the home  
Of rose-encircled golden-footed dreams,  
Is ready with a coronet of gleams  
    Of Intuition, if a man will roam  
    With wings that flutter till thy dust the dome  
That over-arched with endless azure seems ;

THAT he is waiting passionately strong  
    As any poet who has won a bride,  
    And longs to chant triumphant at her side  
Some new-found melody, some subtle song,  
And, having trained a heart of woman long  
    To be to choicest literature allied,  
    Now watches, happy with a teacher's pride,  
The flashes that from under eyelids throng ;  
    Who, having worked a poem into form,  
Reads it as not another voice can do,  
Whose whole soul sparkles as he brings to view  
    Its swan-like symmetry, and takes by storm  
    (He knows that very well) a bosom warm  
With love for him by intonation true ;

Who stands a mighty giant to declaim,  
And watches her grow eager, and her heart  
Bend forward as he stings with silver dart  
Her passionate power of sympathy to flame,  
And knows his words can kindle or can tame,  
Can make alive or slay ; whose eyes are keen  
To note each changing shade of colour seen  
Upon the face at which his arrows aim ;  
So God I fancy has a gift to show  
To each of us, and only waits till we  
Are ready for it, strong to brush the snow  
Aside that covers up the young green tree  
That presently shall blossom sweet when he  
Breathes soft upon it, as the west winds blow.

I FANCY he is passionate to say

“ *Is* it not beautiful ? Come, tell me true,

You did not think, now *did* you, I could do

Such wonders when you used to groan and pray

That I would turn the night-time into day,

The fogs of winter into summer blue ?

You did not think that I could e'er renew

That withered cast-aside May-blossom spray ?

Well, are you satisfied, my beautiful,

My dainty one, whom I have brought to see

This garden in which is not any tree

Whose fruit thou mayest not freely taste and pull,

And not a grazing horn of any bull

To hurt thee, nor the sting of any bee ?

"*Now* am I not a poet? Can I paint  
At all, my lady, build a tower at all,  
Carve frescoed steps of any ancient hall,  
Circle the haloed head of any saint,  
Or chisel out a statue pure of taint  
As any Greek's on whom the people call?  
No, sweet one, don't be frightened, do not fall—  
I must abstain to kiss her, lest she faint,"  
(For God's kiss kills) ; so I can fancy he  
Is saying, as his hand delights to tear  
The covering aside he had to wear  
Like Moses, lest with over-brilliancy  
He dazzle eyes that only yet can see  
A little, but a little beauty bear.

To change the figure ; God himself bestows  
Creation as a bonny bride on each,  
And, pale with coming pleasure beyond speech,  
Himself unrobes her shoulder as the snows,  
Himself unveils the countenance that glows  
As moonlight cast across an August beach,  
Or as the golden tremulous streams that reach  
Us when the sunset beaker overflows ;  
“ Is she not beautiful ? ” he says, and stands  
Watching the eager glances of the boy  
For whom this ivory sweet-shapen toy  
He fashioned into life between his hands,  
And wove her hair in silken subtlest strands,  
And chose a marble block without alloy ;

“ Is she not beautiful, this marble maid  
Creation, with her rivers and her stars,  
And fiery-footed azure-circled cars,  
And palms that canopy a perfect shade ?  
Come, touch her hair, be daring, not a braid  
But hath the perfume of the western seas,  
Sweet savours as of cinnamon in these  
I tenderly invented and conveyed ;  
O thou that hast her, see thou hold her fast,  
She is Infinite before thee ; not for time,  
For endless aspiration of a rhyme  
That trembles not at death's bleak-biting blast,  
For issue of a trumpet-volume vast  
Of Song, for valour of long steps to climb,



"I GIVE her to thee ; see thou hold her fair  
With most chaste pressure of most perfect hands,  
Lest lips should shrivel as they kiss the bands  
Of beautiful exuberance of hair,  
Believe me, brother, such a bride is rare,  
That marble-bodied Universe that stands  
Before thee, and green eloquence of lands,  
And flowers tropical she can prepare ;  
And she can crown thee ; not with any bays  
Of earth, poor pointed dark-hued sorry leaves,  
But with the pressure of immediate praise  
Of lips, and every arrow-hilt that grieves  
Thy soul she can extract, she sits and weaves  
The golden chains of everlasting lays.

“ Is she not beautiful ? her body fair  
    I chiselled far away before the earth  
    Came as an infant to primeval birth,  
And plumes of Paradise-birds to form her hair  
Were ready, and of tender lashes rare  
    Of soft-eyed stags there was not any dearth,  
    And many spirits moulded I in mirth  
One perfect after-spirit to prepare ;  
    My eye was on this meeting from afar,  
And, hidden in the green of forest leaves,  
Or under shadows of the golden sheaves  
    No hand of man had gathered, this sweet star  
    I chose *for you* of all the suns that are  
Strung upon heaven's bright blue nodding eaves

“ LIKE swallows’ nests beneath a roof ; *this* sight,  
    *This* Vision of the Universe for *you*,  
    This sweet dividing of the veil of blue,  
That so thou mightest adore a Goddess white,  
This soft uplifting of her lashes bright  
    To give thy vehemence a long first view,  
    This glory that for ever shall renew  
The God-sent magic of the nuptial night ;  
    This perfect pure enfolding of chaste arms,  
And breath of roses heavy on the air,  
And delicate unbinding of her hair,  
    And golden palace of perpetual charms,  
    And odours as of Araby, and balms  
For ever breaking into fruit more fair ;

" *This* Vision of the Universe is thine ;  
I smiled, my mother-heart was quick to greet  
The double pattering of eager feet,  
I sent across eternity a line  
Of ripples from my motive cheeks to twine  
About you both a charmed circle sweet  
Of scented sunset-waters, *now* you meet,  
But all the planning of the plot was mine,  
Mine from the first beginning ; for I knew  
While yet alone I sat in quiet state,  
A God upon a throne of self sedate,  
A picture in a solid frame of blue,  
The passions and the labour and ado  
To which I meant your toiling heart to mate,

"THE travail and the speed ; and first I passed  
Your spirit through the forms of birds and flowers,  
And let you frolic in the leafy bowers  
Of Paradise, and revel in the blast  
Of snowstorms, and be cognizant of vast  
Ecstatic thrilling of material powers,  
And made you one with consciousness of showers  
And seas, and over you the veil I cast  
Of the primeval universe, and hurled  
You through the early strata of the clay,  
Now as a nautilus or trilobite curled  
In sleepy peace on shore of some old bay,  
Now as the brilliant beetle of a day,  
Or butterfly with azure wings out-furled."

## MY CHILD.

A MAN died cursing God aloud, with foam  
    Upon the lips, and beads upon the brow  
    Of bloody sweat ; “ Ah me ! where is he now ? ”  
The praying priest said, “ in the fiery home  
Of hell for ever must his footsteps roam,  
    His back the share of endless agony plough,  
    No hope of any heart of ascent now  
Up the blue steps of heaven’s exalted dome ! ”  
    So groaned he, but I lifted high the lid  
That closed above him, as with face defiled  
    With oaths his meagre spirit downward slid,  
And caught a glimmer of a countenance mild  
    As any mother’s, soothing arms that hid  
The sinner, and a voice that said “ My child ! ”

## CHRIST'S EYES.

## I.

O EYES of Christ, thou prince among the pure,  
Where are ye now ? I fancy that the Lord  
Has found a woman spirit to afford  
By this time unto him that did endure  
The solitude of Calvary a sure  
Safe resting-place, the thorns have blossomed now  
And wound a wreath of roses round the brow  
That spitting of the soldiers did obscure ;  
I think that now, Lord Christ, the body stretched  
Upon a wooden cross of agony  
Has known the soothing presences that be  
From soft encircling arms of women fetched,  
And that a newer figure has been etched  
By kisses, not by nails, for us to see

## II.

UPON thine arms and bountiful fair sides ;  
    I think that thou hast known the kiss of love,  
    And found it softer, sweeter, up above  
Than is the tenderness of earthly brides,  
That thou hast known the overflow of tides  
    Of passion perfect-pure, the crystal stream  
    That swift by many a bank and strange new dream  
Through pastures ever white with wonder glides ;  
    And it *was* sweet, King Christ, come, was it not ?  
The foaming of the cup thou didst despise,  
Didst even bend a word to satyryze,  
    While crude as yet thine undeveloped lot,  
    Nor early struggle with the fiends forgot,  
Nor serpent-witchery of Eastern eyes ;



III.

**SWEETER** that anything you found on earth  
Save only thine own Father's loving kiss,  
The full assurance of eternal bliss,  
The passion of the struggle into birth  
A second time, a share in God's wide mirth,  
Sweeter I say than all things else save this ;  
Thou shalt not any note of beauty miss  
Henceforward, nor be bound in any dearth  
Of passion, God himself had failed to teach  
To thy strong soul the tenderer side of *Him*  
And half the lantern of thine heart been dim  
For ever, had the prattle of the speech  
Of woman never been an arrow to reach  
Thy soul, and round it as a bubble swim,

## IV.

A CLEAR gold bubble, teaching thee the ways  
Of that most feminine sweet side of God  
Whence, silver-sandalled, sprang to kiss the sod  
The feet of that high Womanhood we praise;  
And thou hadst, lonely, worn the thorns for bays,  
And never won a blossom on thy rod  
Of divination, as an eagle trod  
The ether, never resting on the sprays  
Of any oak, acacia, or ash ;  
I see thee crossed upon a granite cliff,  
Thy nostrils as the mighty bird's that sniff  
Afar salt savours where the fishes splash  
The waters into lusty foam, and dash  
The waves aside like a sharp-pointed skiff ;

## v.

I SEE thee crossed upon the granite wall  
    That gleams against thy white attire of pain,  
    Prometheus-like thou art fated to remain  
For ever Monarch of that windy hall  
It seems, that knees of centuries may fall  
    Before thee, and the savour of the strain  
    Of cymbal, lute, and psaltery attain  
Thine eminence, and on thy favour call ;  
    That hands of frozen worshippers may bring  
Their bodies and their passions crucified,  
    And underneath the cliff in chorus sing  
    Chants doleful, immolate the flowers of spring,  
    And drag to thee the God-anointed King  
A withered rose of Womanhood for bride !

“AND CHASTENED MOONLIGHT.”

“AND chastened moonlight”—as I thought the same  
     I upward looked, and lo ! the moon was there,  
     That old familiar moon of mine, as fair  
 As ever ; with a flood of silver flame,  
 The eye of God apparently, it came  
     And seemed to bid me hope, and *not* despair ;  
     O lady moon, if words are but as air,  
 Hopes futile, let God's shoulder bear the blame !  
     But strange it *was* that as the words unsought  
 Rang through the empty corridors of mind  
 My face was at the pane devoid of blind,  
     And lo ! the fair fruition of my thought  
     Reflected in the skies I sudden caught,  
 And seemed a silver hope confirmed to find.

## GOD'S BEST GIFTS.

## I.

God keeps his best gifts till the end they say,  
His choicest sunny raptures ; it may be  
That eyes not yet illuminate may see  
The advent of a far triumphant day  
When, for the darkened budding of the bay,  
Shall shoot exuberant a young rose-tree,  
And scented petals flutter over me  
From delicate down-bending of a spray ;  
Therefore I wait the rather, and am strong  
To cast my fingers o'er the harp at times,  
If there be left in me a leaf of rhymes,  
A gracious sprig of any subtle song,  
And vigorously thread the thoughts that throng  
Across my brain on strings of changing chimes ;

## II.

THEREFORE I wait the rather, and hope high,  
And, valorous, endure the winter's rage,  
If haply I may turn another page,  
And panorama of another sky  
May open, and I put my bay-wreath by,  
To blossom into roses when the white  
Fair fingers that I worship day and night  
Are mischievous to handle it, and try  
Its power of coherence ; ah ! sweet face,  
I would your breath were warm upon the bays,  
And on my garland crown of gentle grace  
Of yours, that so duality of praise  
Might fall upon the singer's head, and raise  
Him into giddy dignity of place !

## III.

GOD keeps his best gifts till the end ; to me  
His grace has given some access of fame,  
The plucking of the tendril of a name,  
A broken wreath about my brows to see,  
But not the roses of the love of thee  
In search of which my spirit chiefly came,  
My arrow hit the centre of its aim,  
But brake against the iron of the tree  
I struck, and now the bays are withered, and  
I lay them down within a dusty drawer,  
The effervescence of their bloom is o'er,  
And all for silly want of one white hand,  
The pressure of whose palm, so I had planned,  
Should make their blossom brighten evermore !

## YOU LOOK VERY SWEET.

## I.

SWEET, mother? Yes, no wonder, in that I  
Have just been cognizant of tender arms  
Around me, and the lullaby of balms  
Breathed gently, and a loving longed-for eye,  
And blue suggestion of a perfumed sky,  
And white environment of summer charms,  
And perfect ministry of outpoured palms,  
And long deliverance of a giant sigh ;  
No wonder I look sweet, and washed in tears,  
Yea, bathed in roses, in that I have seen  
At last the expected advent of my queen,  
And watched her crumple in her hand the years  
Of agony and yearning, and for fears  
Place round about my heart her necklace clean.



II.

SWEET? So I should look in that just I came  
From leafy frolic in a scented wood  
Where flowers I plucked and fruit, and found it  
good,  
And washed my mouth in luscious crimson flame,  
And dipped my lips in roses, till for shame  
In a quiescent attitude I stood,  
And wondered why God's hand removed the hood  
From Happiness, and let the gentle dame  
Be clear before me ; why he sent a band  
Of angels spade-entrusted to remove  
The snows from off my spirit, and to groove  
With powerful exuberance of hand  
The first long furrows of a rose-sown land,  
Himself an overseer to approve.

## III.

SWEET, mother, do I? I have known to-night  
The short uplifting of a load of pain,  
A rapture I shall never know again  
Till, like the stars, my eyes are golden-bright,  
And, like the risen souls, my robes are white,  
And polished pearly floors my feet attain,  
And on my lips songs exquisite remain,  
Or issue forth for perfect arc of flight ;  
To-night has been my scanty honey-moon,  
Into an hour Eternity compressed,  
My spirit by white arms an hour caressed,  
And by the shadow of an hour's swoon,  
And by the perfect passion of a tune  
That, leaving me for aye, yet leaves me blessed.

IV.

SWEET? So I ought to look ; my apex high  
 Of jubilant existence I have known,  
 And pressed the cushion of a crimson throne,  
 And flashed the sparkle of an eagle eye,  
 And laughed in union with the summer sky,  
 And by a breeze of sympathy been blown,  
 Held Love an hour for my very own,  
 And mingled breath for breath, and sigh for sigh ;  
 Was *this* not sweet? God's great omniscience knew  
 My heart's desire I never should attain,  
 And let me kiss the passion and the pain  
 Of one intense imaginative view  
 Not of *your* love for me, but *mine* for you,  
 Gave me *this* barren recompence to gain.

## v.

SWEET, do I? Little wonder, in that I  
Am washed in radiance of the yellow moon,  
Aud washed in tears, and swathèd in a swoon  
Delicious with the essence of the sky  
Of summer, and that roses have been nigh  
To lips of mine, a silver-stringèd tune,  
And love that shall be dead and over soon,  
Yet that has given me one perfect sigh  
Of endless satisfaction ; for she came,  
My lady, and white arms were soft around  
My feebleness, and sweet rose-tendrils wound  
In a caressing flood of crimson flame  
About me, and I recognized the same  
Pure black-brown hair in my behoof unbound.

VI.

I OUGHT to look sweet, in that I have seen  
    My lady face to face, and kissed her hands,  
    And tenderly unwoven soft the bands  
That brown upon her marble forehead grace  
Its whiteness, and are cunning to embrace  
    Her eyelids, and to revel in stray strands,  
    And round the purple-veinèd dainty lands  
Of chin and neck luxuriate, and chase  
Each other, and are perfect in each place,  
    Whether a wind of summer-time commands,  
    Or coaxing accent of a voice that stands  
And summons blushes into her sweet face,  
Or fingers that are free to interlace  
    Their fervency in rivulets of hair  
    That ripple downwards in procession fair  
A brown tumultuous never-ending race.

## VII.

I OUGHT to look sweet, for I knew to-night  
    What is not any more in life for me,  
    The vision of returnèd love, the glee,  
The perfect passion of caresses white,  
The perfect tenderness of glances bright,  
    The pure long heaving of a giant sea  
    Of crystal aspiration, and the plea  
Of Love for once responded to in might ;  
    And now I wait to die ; I wait to know  
Why God has let my dazzled eyes be 'ware  
Of towers of excellence exceeding fair,  
    And passion crimson as the sunset glow,  
    And pure as any Alpine path of snow,  
The power and the prize away to tear.

## THORNS AND A KISS.

## CHRIST'S CROWN.

A CROWN of thorns for him ! and never a kiss,  
And never the sweet embrace of any eyes,  
The blue asperity of Eastern skies,  
Foretokening of beatific bliss,  
And golden gates of heaven, but *not* this  
That in the grip perhaps of Judas lies,  
A solitary wilderness of sighs,  
And woman's white oasis-hand to miss !  
O strong Lord Christ, the thorns were hard upon  
Thy forehead, and the roses were away,  
And, " Father," not, " My Mother," thou didst say,  
When extreme beads of bloody agony shone  
Across thy features streaked with tears, and wan  
With last illuminated calm of clay.

## THE POET'S CROWN.

FIRST over him my Lady placed a hand  
    White as a lily in a moonlit lane,  
    And passed a perfume over him for pain,  
And bound about his brow a linen band,  
And folding of it with her breath she fanned  
    That tight and tenderly it might remain,  
    And with her hair she cleansèd every stain  
Of blood and weariness, and, after, spanned  
    His forehead with the bays, and, after this,  
When he could only weep, and, weeping, sigh  
    “O God, my Mother, thou hast sent me bliss  
Too great to bear alive, so I must die,”  
To his lips shuddering were her own brought nigh  
    In sweetest condescension of a kiss.



WHICH crown prefer you ? that the Father gave  
    With strong approval of majestic hand  
    To Christ, the sunburnt hero of the land  
Where olives and the purple vineyards wave,  
And palms are plentiful about his grave,  
    And on the barren rock the lizards band  
    Together, or the Mother's breath that fanned  
The poet, and the kiss that came to save ?  
    The kiss ? the thorns ? know then that both are  
        one,  
For woman's lips, as surely as to-morrow  
The assent of the sun is safe to borrow,  
    Shall over Christ's pure flesh be fleet to run,  
    And think you that the poet's crown was won  
Without sharp thorns and prickly points of sorrow ?

## THE GOLDEN WINGS OF YEARNING.

## I.

THE golden wings of yearning, what are they ?  
These are the pinions, brother, that implore  
A soul to circle endlessly, and soar  
Till feather-tips are fervent with the spray  
That swift from off the chariot of day  
Flints fierce and manifold are found to pour,  
To brush the bars of heaven's exalted door,  
And never take denial to mean Nay ;  
These are the plumes that flutter at the gate  
Of dawn, and carry shot across their quills  
The splendour of the sunset, and the thrills  
Of broad humanity, and throbs of fate,  
Then fold upon a table-top sedate  
While pen with eager ink the owner fills.

II.

THE golden wings of yearning ! they are strong,  
And crimson-hearted, and alive with blood,  
Sweep of their energy a passionate flood  
That tames the ripples of the air to song,  
And hurls electric choruses along  
The wheel-ways of the ether, and the stars  
Makes shiver on the cushions of their cars,  
And laughs to watch the white faint-hearted throng  
Of moons and pallid planets ; they are bold  
To enter haunts and stem the streams of wild  
Tempestuous agony, and face the piled  
Swart thunders, and hell's havens icy-cold,  
Nor has as yet a solitude been told  
Whereto their glitter has not soared and smiled.

## THE SCULPTOR'S VICTORY.

I PLAYED at swift creation with the Lord ;  
    He made a giraffe and I made a stag,  
    He perched an eagle on a mossy crag,  
I sent a sparrow sweet and tender-clawed  
To sit upon a roof-top ; next he poured  
    The energetic passion of his mind  
    Into a new direction, and combined  
Feet serpentine with sweeping wings that soared  
    In a monster Plesiosaurus ; but at last  
I made a man, and threw the chisel down,  
And upward looked with a triumphant frown,  
    And thought the conflict's heat was over-passed ;  
    It was not so ; for next God's cunning cast  
A woman, and I seemed a clumsy clown !

## DOES HE LOVE YOU?

## I.

AND does he love you, sweet, and are you fair  
And white to him as you have been to me,  
And has he eyes to reverence and see  
The tender out-pouring of black-brown hair,  
And purple brain-amazement to prepare  
For every braid an immortality,  
And is his heart on fire abundantly  
With songs and many sayings to declare?  
If you stood cold on one side and a rock  
Gigantically severed in between  
Ran, would he violate that chasm clean,  
And welcome on a crimson heart the shock  
Of downfall, and be vehement to mock  
Swift death, would he do this for you, my queen?

## II.

WOULD he be stretched upon a cross that each  
    Vein, every purple floodlet, might outpour  
    A stream, if any might uplift you more  
Triumphantly—and any apple reach,  
Or any apricot, or pear, or peach,  
    That tiresome teeth were teasing you to gnaw,  
    To win it for you would his effort soar,  
And fashion every cunning form of speech?  
    And has he heart enough to sit and sing  
With hardly intermission of a day,  
And is his voice as vehement to pray,  
    And are his hands as passionate to cling  
    To any rose, or flower, or dainty thing,  
That from your hair, my beautiful, may stray?

## YOU KNOW.

GOD, *you* know : I am weary, I appeal  
To Thee, be just, and show that Thou art true,  
And open forth to me another view  
Of Beauty, for I cry to Thee, I kneel,  
And let my withered fasting forehead feel  
The tender touch of circumambient blue,  
And be a God Almighty to renew  
The scent of roses red that used to steal  
About my lips, and cherish them, and press  
Soft kisses there, so that I thought that Thou  
Wast worthy, and awakenèd to bless  
At last the terror of my tortured brow,  
And smooth it into peacefulness, but now  
My temples beads of agony caress.

GOD TO THE AUTHOR OF THE HYMN OF  
MAN.

THOU hast done well, my son, to scatter down  
     With passionate trumpet-voice the tyrant's throne,  
     Thou wast a faithful servant to disown  
 The God they painted with a giant frown  
 Between his eyebrows, and to cast his crown  
     Along the winds of freedom to be blown !  
     I love thy sharp defiance of tone,  
 Thy bitter rending of the heavenly town  
     With white sad teeth to pieces, and I say  
 That having been the first to overthrow  
 The tyrant's stronghold, thou shalt foremost know  
     My name triumphant in a happier day,  
     And to the Mother's rose-strewn bower the way  
 Shalt be the first strong pioneer to show.



## WHERE ART THOU ?

WHERE art thou, love, and where is now my name,  
For thou wast all in all and more to me,  
What triumph of a trumpet shall I see,  
What frolic of the fervent hand of fame,  
What sweet caressing of the fitful flame  
Of first applause, or breath of brilliancy,  
For having missed the crimson heart of thee  
I miss my choicest arrowhead of aim ?  
O bitter bays, O sour untouched fruit  
Of public approbation, be discarded,  
And be my voice disjointed and retarded,  
And be my bow-string nerveless now to shoot,  
And be my passion paltry at the root,  
Since thou thy heart too gallantly hast guarded !

## THE POETS WORK.

WHAT is the poet's work ? to sit and sing,  
    To hear the beating heart of early flowers,  
    And see the fervent eye of playful showers,  
And note the purple passion of a king,  
And green advancement of the life of Spring,  
    And opening of red buds in shady bowers,  
    And golden revelry of sun-kissed towers,  
And giant daily growth of everything ;  
    To let the world flow through him, and to pour  
From eager brain the molten song he hears,  
The voices of the passion of the years,  
    The chatter of the pebbles on the shore,  
    *This* is the poet's work ; to be the door  
To universal terrors, hopes, and tears,

## A BIT OF BROKEN HAIR.

O CRUEL summer, what have *I* to do,  
What hand of sympathy to hold to thee ?  
O mocking brilliance of an apple tree,  
And overhanging bitterness of blue,  
And green buds trembling tenderly to view,  
And silver recollections of the sea,  
Why dart delirious sophistry at me,  
And seek past passionate spring-time to renew ?  
Be rather clothed with symmetry of black,  
And mute abandonment of ashen robes,  
Choose sackcloth pinafores for bridal globes  
Of orange-blossom, nor let any lack  
Of tears and bleeding pant upon the track,  
Each roof drip icicles in giant lobes ;

BE tender, be more pitiful, O sun,  
    And shudder soft thy glory out of sight,  
    And cut the dazzling throat of dainty light,  
And sever heels wherewith thy chariots run,  
And be a sickly crape-attire spun  
    To choke thy neck, annihilate the white  
    Exuberance of passion, and the bright  
Swift circling of the molten wheels that stun  
    Our feebleness ; be pitiful, I say,  
Come, tremble, be eclipsed, be brittle, fall,  
    Let there be no more dashing of the spray  
Of golden effervescence over all  
These sufferers, but rather let a pall  
    Descend, be clothed, as we are clothed, with clay.

AND thou, O moon, forsake the silver heights  
    Thou hast with laughter over-lately trod,  
    And be thy feet impoverished, unshod,  
Ungarnished with the splendour of clear nights,  
Unfitted now with strings of stars for lights,  
    Unkissèd of the shining mouth of God ;  
    And broken be the fire of thy rod,  
Divided be the mettle of thy mights,  
    And tarnished be thy crown, and hot thy hand,  
And feverish the foam upon thy brow ;  
O cruel moon of mine, be certain now  
    The seas shall leap upon thee and disband  
    Thy sovereignty, and thou shalt no more stand  
A light towards whom all lovers' hearts may bow.

AND roses be forgotten, and the flame  
    Enfeebled, and the passion of all flowers  
    Made desolate, and robbed the honey-bowers,  
And yellow bees devoid of any aim,  
And tigers' teeth devoid of any blame,  
    Devoid of any tenderness the showers,  
    And stripped of happiness the hearts of hours,  
And souls of years made absent of the same ;  
    No longer purple be the seas, but grey,  
No longer green the summer woods, but yellow,  
And apples of the autumn no more mellow,  
    But crude, and as the savour of a day  
    Core of whose sweet attire has danced away  
Like harlequin become a common fellow.

AND meadow-sweet be dusty, and the grass  
    Be bent and withered, and ye ferns be fled,  
    And let not any eye-bright raise a head,  
Nor any mountain-chestnut berry pass  
Unchallenged, nor be gathered in a glass  
    Blue violet-tendrils or verbenas red,  
    Nor any fervour of a song be shed  
Nor any breath of beauty born, alas !  
    Over the dim waste meadows ; let the morn  
Be destitute of crimson, and the eve  
Of gold be strong and bitter to bereave,  
    And violent to break the silver horn  
    Of midnight, and the scarlet flag be torn  
Of noontide, and the panting bosoms heave

OF sweet white-chested swallows, and the harp  
    Be hindered, and the organ spoilt of strings,  
    And round a poet's pen the mirth that clings  
Be even as the shriek of beldame sharp,  
And as the quarrelsome ungraceful carp  
    Of tattered women be the lute that rings  
    With passion of the summer, and that flings  
A melody round the untrodden moonlight ways,  
    And traverses the furrows, and is strong  
    To bind the sheaves of August into song,  
And into symphony the spring-tide sprays,  
And wears the dark-brown crescent of the bays,  
And hath the ordinary heart to raise  
    To fever-heat the tremor of a throng



OF full-pulsed low-voiced listeners ; let the sea  
    Be shaken, and the silver waves be mute,  
    And as the chatter of a pigmy's flute  
The chant sonorous of a huge oak tree,  
And let the ripple of the leafage be  
    No longer soft, but as the owlet's hoot,  
    And sinews masculine be weak to shoot  
As any arrow is annoyed to flee  
    The bowstring of a boy, and be the hills  
Made hollow, and burnt bare of any green,  
And every shore be washed in pebbles' sheen,  
    And stayed reluctant revelry of rills,  
    And choked reluctant chattering of bills  
Of blackbirds, yellow, mellow, moist and clean.

AND be the tongues of aspiration dumb,  
    And quenched the heavenward ascent of fires,  
    And littered be the shattered joints of lyres,  
And bloom impoverished on every plum,  
Nor let a ripple of improvement come  
    To cheer the universe till each one tires,  
    And tumbled over be the tops of spires,  
And every builder's heavy hand be numb ;  
    And every prospect frozen, and the lakes  
Sing one perpetual pæan of the frost,  
And all desire of old summer lost,  
    And every lover be a boy that shakes  
    With shadow of confusion, and forsakes  
His maiden in a tremble tempest-tost.

AND every kiss be bitter, and the arms  
Of woman lose delight to close and wind,  
Nor longer roses have a scent to bind  
Sweet hearts together, nor the sunset charms  
Made cunning to unite, nor perfect palms  
Be white upon the mirror of the mind,  
Nor any soul of acquiescence find  
A solitary seeker, nor the balms  
Of mutual repose ; be every man  
A lonely giant, built of granite, tall  
As any Scottish sad sequestered hall,  
And hard on every woman be the ban  
Of lips that never quiver quick, nor can  
Move bent assuagement to a baby call ;

LET every love be desolate of bliss,  
And every flower destitute of scent,  
And every flag victorious be rent  
In tatters, and the memory of a kiss  
Be even as the burning irons that hiss  
Across white smoking flesh in cinders sent,  
And as a broken battered bow be bent  
Each nerve-stem of invention, even as this.  
Be dancing no more dainty to the feet,  
But damp, dissatisfying, and a labour,  
Nor any knuckle-note upon a tabour,  
Nor breath of flute, nor harp, nor horn, be sweet,  
Nor unto any warrior to meet  
With burning palm the silvered hilt of sabre ;

NOR unto any steed to sniff the war,  
    To smell the battle-savour from afar,  
    Nor unto an astronomer the star  
That he alone, the first of all men, saw,  
Nor unto a magician any more  
    The trumpet and the rattle of his car,  
    And crimson ministry of gifts that are  
Accompaniment, result, and crown of lore ;  
    The middle of the melody of spears  
No longer have a glitter to enchant,  
Nor any foxglove on a hill to grant  
    Unto a poet "thoughts too deep for tears,"  
    Nor any poet's line a place for sneers  
To any middle-aged frowning aunt.

Be these things ended ; be the world a flame,  
A gas, a meteor, even as at first,  
Before the inextinguishable thirst  
Of man, the mover and explorer, came,  
And Beauty roused his subtlety of aim,  
And fire of his soul Love's labour nursed,  
And made him either blessed or accursed,  
And served a man to madden or to tame.  
Be green again ye waters over all,  
And let not any sail or foot be seen,  
Nor any wing of gull with silver sheen,  
Nor any crab or shrimp be swift to crawl  
Upon the sandy cover of the pall  
That shrouds the giant races that have been.

AND let them find a skeleton, and say

“Good heavens ! brother, who can this have  
been ?”

Some angel in a planet without sin,  
Some being happy in a golden day,  
Uncover an old fossil form of clay,  
As we uncover relics wrought of tin,  
Flesh hanging perhaps in fragments to the chin,  
Robes hanging perhaps in rags of green and grey,  
And let them find a locket linked in gold  
Around the lean worn fingers, the shrunk bones,  
And shudder all together, and in tones  
Of wonder be to one another told  
The miracle that Love was in the old  
Past planet, and the passion and the moans

THAT miss the perfect present ; let them see  
    That here a man, whatever was his name,  
    Had held his hand to wrinkle in the flame  
Of Love, and died unlovèd, and that he  
Had carried blossom of a barren tree  
    To bloom beneath the ground ; for let them find  
    About the muscle of a heart entwined  
A gift of swift significance that we  
    Interpret readily enough, a fair  
Gold locket, underneath the glass a face,  
Not yet discrowned of reverence and grace,  
    More grace perhaps than any living share  
Though angels' locks luxuriant they lace,  
    And, at the back, a bit of broken hair.



## TO THE CRITIC OF THE SPECTATOR.

HAVE I made troubled waters in the town,  
And dashed Conventionality's hot face  
With bubbles, and been vehement to place  
Across Society a giant frown ?  
I always had intended to bring down  
A shower of red splinters when I died,  
And not to leave a pillar at my side  
Unshaken, no undevastated crown ;  
I stood delighted, and I hurled a stone  
Into the artificial heart of these  
Brick walls that have a vanity to please,  
And gardens with brown mould and mildew sown,  
I blew a volume of astounding tone  
That made the patent mouths of mockers freeze.

## II.

THEY say I imitate Rossetti ; Sir,  
I have not read his book, but who can tell ?  
Perhaps in some sweet dream the leaflets fell  
Across my eyes, and made my pulses stir,  
And seized the auspicious moment to confer  
My own originality's last knell,  
And rang the executioner's swift bell—  
His Goddess came that I might copy her,  
The white-foot Muse Rossetti follows fast ;  
Well, critic, will you kindly tell me now  
With furrowed bending of a thoughtful brow  
Whose trumpet have I stolen or borrowed last,  
Am I the mouth-piece of a Swinburne-blast,  
Or knight to any Tennysonian vow ?

## III.

Is hand of Keats apparent in my lines,  
    To *him* I own I owe a mighty debt,  
    Or have I captured Morris in my net,  
Is it my pen that cleverly combines  
The lees of modern poetry, and for wines  
    Clear, sparkling, full of savour, gives a wet  
    Weak mixture, and—kind critic! even yet  
A wreath of melody at seasons twines;  
    To whom am I indebted most of all?  
Why, to *you*, Sir, for opening my eyes,  
That I might see that what I took for skies  
    Was only shadow of a tenten pall,  
    And that, at most, I had but kicked the ball  
That in the hands of better poets lies

## IV.

SWEET, golden, full of luscious life and song ;  
The skies were not interpreted by me, .  
Nor was there any ripple in a tree,  
Nor any casting of a shadow long  
Upon the grass, but straightway in a throng  
Rank plagiarisms you were swift to see !  
I dare not call the sunset scarlet—he,  
King Tennyson, had said so, and 'twas wrong  
To paint a sunset scarlet twice you know ;  
My good Sir, I am envious of your art,  
And long to see the fervency of glow  
That your description of the sun should show,  
Each word as novel as untrodden snow,  
And dainty as an undivided heart !

## WHERE IS MUSIC?

I WONDER where is Music? she has swept  
    Upon the golden subway of her wings  
    The broken dust of melody that clings  
In beads about the harp I hired and kept  
That flowers of song might round her as she slept  
    Be scattered, she has hurled the harp away,  
    For lissome fingers woven hands of clay,  
Made a beginner out of an adept ;  
    I tremble ; and the lyre is loud and pale,  
Not flushed, nor soft in subtlety of song,  
Nor are the strings exuberant and long  
    In fervour of a fleet unending wail  
    Of worship, furling the flutter of the sail  
Of fancy, flowing neither white nor strong.

## I HAVE NO VOICE, THE CRITIC SAYS.

I HAVE no voice ? then I must sink and die,  
For what is life to me who cannot sing,  
And must not love ? if neither white arms cling,  
Nor summer blue above me in the sky  
Be pitiful, and I am dumb to cry,  
What is existence, sleep, or anything ?  
'Tis only left to me to sit and wring  
Hands feeble, and soliloquise, and sigh !  
O critic, cruel critic, is it true ?  
Then let the truth be patent and declared,  
And not a spear of any anguish spared,  
Be competent untiring work to do,  
And point the folly into fuller view  
Of a poor heart that loved, and toiled, and dared.

## ALICE.

O ALICE, you have left me ! where am I  
    To find a lyre to handle sweet and sing,  
    What heart of reverence in anything  
Is left, what beauty of a summer sky ?  
Behold, the boughs are bare of twigs, and dry,  
    And never any more the trumpets ring  
    Of fervid eloquence, nor white hands cling  
Beseechingly, nor bosoms burn and sigh !  
    My dainty deer, white-footed, swift as any  
Fleet dance of forest-haunting sweet-eyed fawn,  
    For heaven's sake let us hope there are not many  
Left lonely, and as I am left forlorn,  
Nor voices left to stutter and to cry  
    With palpitating blast of feeble horn.

## II.

WHY have you left me? are the ways made sweet,  
Yea, sweeter than the paths we trod together,  
And are you tired of soft summer weather,  
And moonshine cool and silvery after heat,  
And has it ceased, that ancient tender beat  
Of heart I held in silken poet's tether,  
Shall I forget that flaming sea-bird's feather  
I used with bound of every pulse to meet?  
Shall I forget you? let the skies be dim,  
And all untrodden be the sun's red ways,  
And withered be the eyes of seraphim,  
And angels' glances no more gleam and blaze  
Resplendent, before I forget to raise  
Unto mine unforgotten love a hymn ;



## III.

A HYMN that gathers all the flowers and tints  
We saw together in the olden land,  
The pebbles that were washed upon the sand,  
The blue unveilings and horizon hints,  
The waves that curled the eager rounded flints  
In pattering wet heaps upon the strand,  
The white encouragement of wafted hand,  
The beauty that sweet summer never stints  
Us of, let these be bound together swift  
And made into a bridal crown for thee,  
But as for thine admirer, as for me,  
Let me be sober and not slow to lift  
The stone that hides the next world, and to shift  
The garments of existing vanity.

## NO MORE.

O SONGS of stars and beautiful waste places  
Be no more swift and tender to my soul,  
Nor any wheels of golden chariot roll  
Along the hills of heaven unharnessed races,  
And thistles strike their root and thorns in places  
Where soft before the flower-tendrils stole ;

And let thy power, silver moon, be broken,  
And tarnished be the shadow of thy might,  
And brittle be the tenure of thy light,  
And be thy name no more a dainty token  
To lovers, nor a whispered word be spoken,  
Nor kisses nor caresses in thy sight ;

And hills be overthrown and mountains levelled,  
And eagles' pinions clipped and pennons torn,  
And shattered be the silver hasp of horn,  
And hair of women unwound and dishevelled,  
And rotten be the rose-tree roots that revelled  
Of old from midnight until lusty morn ;

Let Beauty no more breathe upon the spaces,  
The spaces of the air, nor fill the seas,  
And laughter no more ride upon the breeze,  
And never any childrens' feet run races,  
Nor lovers' hands be hardy in embraces,  
And woman's tresses timorous to please ;

Be lips no more perfumed and sweetly scented,  
And kiss of God no longer soft and strong,  
And no more amorous the thrush's song,  
And no more upmost boughs of woods be rented  
By feet of eager birds, nor tunes invented,  
Nor any note of nightingale be long ;

Let snows for summer fill the paths, and winter  
Be swift to follow on the heels of spring,  
And stones be sudden on the ice to ring  
Where reeds before would rustle, let a splinter  
Of shell make short the poplar, at the hint her  
Sweet branches and abysses cease to sing.

## THREE VOLUMES.

THREE volumes have I written, and I feel  
That, now my mouth is silenced and my lay  
Forbidden, I have somehow failed to say  
*A single word*, a single thought to steal,  
A single sunny melody to peal  
From golden bells with striving hands of clay ;  
The Beauty that I wanted to portray  
Was more abundant than the threaded reel  
I call my fancy, and a braid of hair  
Of yours more wonderful than all the books  
That hang upon the critics' tenter-hooks  
And furnish sour sayings, and more fair  
Is any single shadow of your looks  
Than all my songs and sonnets I can swear !

IN part I have succeeded, *but* in part,  
Not wholly ; for I wanted to put down  
Smiles fierce and fickle, tender, and each frown,  
And every wild vagary of the heart,  
And every throb that made a lover start,  
And write a sonnet for each fibre brown  
Of beautiful pure hair, but set a clown  
Who ought to draw the harness of a cart  
To write adoring poems and he brings  
Poor clumsy fellow ! only volumes three,  
When every voice of every bird that sings,  
Were such a chorus resonant in me,  
Would fail to give the wonderment that clings,  
My sweet lost love, to every thought of thee !

To every thought of thee, each recollection,  
    Each flower, and tender summer waft of air,  
    Each odour of the ancient black-brown hair,  
And fancied haunt of mutual affection,  
And hand waved as a symbol of rejection  
    That made pursuit more passionate and fair,  
    And made my flower's petals far more rare  
Than any easily achieved collection  
    Of dried and scented leaves ; the wonder passes  
By no means, though it ought to pass away,  
And here am I upon a summer day  
    Wiping the stains from memory's dusty glasses  
    That cool amid the old familiar grasses  
My feet may for a season shine and stray ;

THE old familiar grasses with the glory  
    Of yellow moonlight streaming over all,  
    And shadow of a misty murmuring pall  
Like babble of some sweet romantic story  
Shrouding the seas that break in masses hoary  
    Along the glimmering soft sandy wall,  
And double feet in unison repeated  
Along the clover carpet ready sheeted  
    For white and crimson imprint pure to fall ;  
But let me leave it ; I have said already  
    More than enough, but hard to stay my hand  
I find it, and to force a vision steady  
    To inspect the platitudes of marshy land  
That lie before me, and to quit the eddy  
    Of foaming waters and that wind-swept strand !



I HAVE not said *a word*; though I have written  
Three volumes tuned to symphony of Love,  
Love's face unblushing towers as high above  
As ever, not an arrow point has smitten  
His cunning harness, nor a javelin bitten  
The folding of his gauntlet or his glove,  
Nor any spear been permanent to shove  
Aside the crumpled scarlet of his mitten,  
Nor any touched his hand, nor any sword  
Been furnished with a fire to destroy  
The peaceful pitilessness of this boy,  
This jaunty rose-encircled lounging lord,  
Nor any dagger destined to afford  
A blood-shot interruption of his joy;

He sits and laughs, and ever pass before him  
The people and their panoply and tears,  
And rotten rose-roots of the days and years,  
And showers of desolation darken o'er him,  
And weeps the bosom of the Maid that bore him,  
The more she weeps the more his round cheek  
sneers ;

He crumples in his hand the hopes and fears  
And manifold hot voices that implore him ;  
He sends his kisses through the windy places  
And gives them wings to cherish and devour,  
And sweetness for the savour of an hour,  
And delicacy for a month of graces,  
And after with a fire of storms he chases  
Weak mouth from mouth, and strips each naked  
bower ;

He sends us summer and he sends us treason,  
    He sends us moonlight and he sends us cold,  
    And fervent love of youth and makes us old,  
And flowers he snatches swift without a reason,  
And gives us for a woman's heart a season  
    Of sick desire and solitude untold,  
He rolls beneath his feet the wheels of beauty,  
And moist upon his lips lie for a booty  
    The petals that the rosebuds first unfold,  
And bloom is his, and bitterness of creatures,  
And marble sweet serenity of features,  
    And cheeks as firm as granite and as cold,  
And overthrow of passion and of duty,  
    And falling stars made plentiful and bold ;

HE gives the adoration of endurance,  
And aims heroical, and strength of steel,  
And after has a fashion to repeal,  
Consummate in his calm and his assurance,  
The swords he moulded ; with his iron heel  
He stamps upon the progress of the nations,  
And sends a ceaseless scourge of tribulations  
To lash the limbs humiliate that kneel ;  
And half shut are his heavy eyes ; behold him !  
See how the roses and the green leaves fold him,  
And dainties spread for his awaking meal,  
Has any yet had courage, any told him  
The Universe is risen in arms to scold him  
To death, swift-handed vengeance vowed to deal ?

\* \* \* \* \*

I HAVE not said a word ; if every cell  
Of brain could blossom plentiful, and from each  
An Eden Garden perfect beyond speech  
With flowers and fruits and Eastern fancies fell,  
My message it would fail alike to tell,  
Your beauty, sweet one, fail alike to teach,  
The wonder of a braid of hair to reach,  
The magic of a single smile to spell ;  
And so I sink to silence ; let *that* speak,  
And, more impressive than my garrulous river  
Of utterance, embalm each dainty quiver  
Of lip, each changing colour of your cheek,  
A fossil in some sweet rose-haunted creek,  
Where reeds are green, and willows weep and shiver.

I HAND my pen to Summer, and I say  
    To Summer, "strong-limbed, loud-voiced, lusty  
        friend,  
    Be gracious, and be pitiful, and send  
From throat of thine a meritorious lay,  
And I will hush, and hearken, and obey,  
    And learn, and listen eager, and attend ;  
    Be sweet around her, Summer, I commend  
My love to thee, a special tender spray  
    Of rose should hover over her I think,  
    Come, Summer, let it be so, let her drink  
Instead of mine a thrush's song by day,  
And nightingales be plentiful and play  
    At even on her lips' delicious brink.

I CEASE my song ; but let the moon be full  
Of melody, and let the stars be bright  
About her, and the gentle hand of night  
Be playful in her hair, and hide, and pull  
Those long sweet tresses, and her dreams be light,  
And morning full of wonder, and the sea  
As silver and as sacred as when we  
Watched the unalterable flow and flight  
Of waters ; be the roses sweeter still,  
And, since my flowers of song are absent now,  
The honeysuckle hasten swift to spill  
New perfume round her calm uncherished brow,  
And jessamine be jubilant to bow  
Obeisance, and ferns frolicsome to fill

HER hasty hands, and heather bells be fleet,  
And clematis, and woodbine, and the strays  
Of all aspiring twisted creeper sprays  
Be eager in her bosom, and be sweet—  
And let the heaving of her bosom meet  
White lilies, and the yellow hearts of pansies,  
Now I may send no sad wild flowers of fancies  
Her timorous attentive ear to greet,  
And hyacinths be gracious, and the mosses,  
And oak leaves, and the greenery of beech,  
And delicate ash be dutiful to teach  
The meaning of thy shafts and shining glosses,  
That so she be repaid for trifling losses  
Of harp-strings and a singer's subtle speech.



LET all the world be with her, nights and mornings,  
And dews and darks and stars and mists and  
moons,  
And mountains manifold, and towering tunes,  
Swift inspirations, genius, dazzling dawns,  
And summer, and cool dews beneath the awnings,  
And bountiful attire, and soft boons,  
And dreams delicious, and sequestered swoons,  
And every creature's worship, and free fawnings  
Of dogs and dainty deer, and plumes of flowers  
And butterflies and birds, and tropic shawls,  
And multiform appurtenance of halls  
Of England, and the grass of gathered hours  
Of sunshine, and the sanctity of showers,  
And every snow-star of each storm that falls !

SHE has lost a singer, let her find creation,  
And every thrush, each linnet, loud to sing,  
She has lost the solo of a single string,  
But let the harp of every crownèd nation  
Pay clamorous and incessant adoration,  
And every copse and street and city ring,  
And every pinnacle be proud to bring,  
Each tower inaugurate an acclamation ;  
She has lost a singer, let the woods be white  
With choristers, my songs were not as I  
Had wished them, let the larks be brown to fly  
Above them, and to flutter out of sight  
With beaks and resonant pinions passing bright,  
Throats tuneful, my last unmelodious sigh !

SHADOWS of summer fold her, heaven be ready  
With robes and raiment and uplifted palm,  
And amulet and emerald and charm,  
And be her feet upon the mountain steady,  
And not tempestuous in the turbid eddy,  
Nor any finger flutter into harm,  
And pure for ever be her face, and tender  
As when I testified my soul's surrender,  
And white the rounded circle of her arm,  
And breath for ever blessèd as the balm,  
And golden as the angels' her sweet wings,  
And as the volume of the voice that rings  
By moonlight when a nightingale slow sings  
In Italy, her chanting and as calm !

SKIES crown her, dreams encircle and caress her  
    With rosy beating of rose-garnished wings,  
    Extracted be the venom and the stings  
Of serpents, and the days be strong to bless her,  
Innumerable nights surround, address her,  
    With beauty soft that soothes and sighs and clings,  
And tears make cheeks more rosy, and each morrow  
More distant far the vanishing of sorrow  
    And nearer the delight each noontide brings,  
And suns shine rounded colour in all places,  
And moons be mellow, and the stars run races  
To frolic in her hair, and harness graces,  
And smiles be sweet and sudden on all faces,  
    And absent be each noisome gnat that sings !

AND absent wasps and snakes, and flowers surround her  
    Red, blue, and crimson, golden, luscious, strong,  
    A many-scented thousand-coloured throng,  
And trusty meadow-sweet with which I crowned her  
Be present, and be playful to astound her  
    With clear-voiced repetition of my song,  
    And tendrils of all creeping plants be long,  
Luxuriant, and beautiful to bound her,  
    To climb about her seated on the grass  
In summer, and though I be no more there,  
And through the leafy forest of her hair  
    Wind of my hand no longer wild to pass,  
    And heart of mine no more a looking-glass  
Reflecting back to her that vision fair,

STILL let her beauty brighten, and her eyes  
    Be lovelier, and the lashes longer yet,  
    And though no more their delicacy wet  
For me is sweet, and I no more surprise  
A teardrop glittering in the cloudy skies  
    Of ancient recollection and regret,  
    And never more my weary face be met  
By hers, and sighs responsive sound to sighs,  
    And hand thrill tenderly to hand, and feet  
Keep striding time together, and the years  
Cover in leaves the coffins and the tears  
    We shed, and through eternity we meet  
    No more, yet God be gracious to you, sweet,  
And keep you free from sorrow, frowns, and fears.

## THE CRY OF THE UNIVERSE.

THE blood of all the prophets is on God ;  
Dyed to the shoulders are his arms in blood,  
Dyed to the shoulders in that purple flood  
That drenches every furrów of the sod,  
All murderers moved to being at his nod,  
All harlots hang their misery on his hand,  
Not at their own but at the Lord's command  
Their feet the bitter streets of sorrow trod ;  
The universal agony and tears  
Are his responsibility and care,  
And doth he make his face exceeding fair  
With blood and fire and foam and flowers and  
fears,  
Crushed centuries and crumpled months and years,  
And doth our wind of wailing lift his hair ?

O GOD, till every creature is as clean  
    As a fair woman sweet before her lord,  
    Thou hast not wiped the handle of thy sword,  
And bloody is the blade that we have seen  
Across the harvests of our pleasure lean  
    About the bowers of our beauty poured,  
    And crimson is its tassel and its cord,  
And wet the white refulgence of its sheen !  
    It drips with terror ; with the agony shed  
In every human heart in every star,  
And all the sorrows of the brutes that are  
    Alive to meet a moment's misery, dead  
    The next, place as a crown upon thine head  
The circle of their groaning fetched from far.



THY hand is red with blood, and hot with fears  
Of all creation, not a murderer slew  
But thou wast in the sudden blade that flew  
To bring upon a widowed woman tears  
And sighs, and into mouths of scoffers sneers,  
And make our unbelief fresh-born and new,  
In every wicked kiss thy lips are too,  
Thou art the author of lascivious years,  
And treachery, and cruelty, and strife,  
And keen-edged clatter of the guillotine,  
And bare beneath it white neck of the queen  
Thou wast the executioner to place,  
And thou didst take delight to mar her face  
With down-swept heavy glitter of the knife !

HISTORY is seated in thy perfect palms,  
Pure, passionless ; but not a sigh can rise  
But swift an arrow right between the eyes  
It strikes thee, folded round us are thine arms,  
And births and deaths and dances, chills and charms,  
And littleness, and abject giant size,  
And truth and error, lusts and loves and lies,  
Hypocrisy and healing, hurts and harms,  
Blue summer, and the winter and the cold,  
Green grasses, and the flowers and the frost,  
And seas, and vessels wrecked and tempest-tost,  
Sweet youth of Greece, and Europe grey and old,  
And ages piled on ages thou dost hold,  
And not a throb of any heart is lost !

THOU art the wicked Universal King,  
The wicked and the good, for both from thee  
Take root together simultaneously,  
As in one field the tares and wheat-ears spring,  
And in one covert soft the throstles sing,  
Owls hoot their doleful utterance of glee,  
Or as the summer savour of the sea  
Is sweet, but horrid balls of brine that cling  
Unto the mouth of some drowned mariner ;  
All these are in thy hand ; the women hurled  
Upon the points of rocks, and seaweed curled  
Around lithe bodies white and fine and fair  
But yesterday, and limpets in their hair  
And wet crustaceans' limbs to-day are furled.

THE horror and the triumph and the hope,  
The yearning and the seething and despair,  
And tearing out by handfuls of the hair,  
And dealing out by morsels of the rope  
Of fancied fresh deliverance, and of scope  
For building up an earth more green and fair,  
All these thou dost engender and prepare,  
Thou art too powerful for us to cope  
With thee, we fold our arms and cast aside  
The world, its loves, its duties, and its bliss,  
And victories, and appurtenance, and pride,  
And many a groan, and many a straining kiss,  
And many a heart of man content with this,  
And many a discontented heart of bride,

AND many a crumpled limb, and tortured frame,  
And mangled patriot, many a woman lost,  
Her bosom bloodily bedewed and crossed  
With crucifix of ruinous scarlet shame,  
And fair white heart made pitiful with flame  
Of indignation, troubles that exhaust,  
And many a noble spirit tempest-tost,  
And many an overturned heroic aim,  
And many a cheek made feeble, and the light  
Of many eyes made dim, and hopes obscured,  
And many a dark Gethsemane endured,  
And vail of many a temple in the night  
Rent suddenly in pieces, and the sight  
Of degradation certain and assured—

WE cast it all aside, and unto thee ;  
     Thou art responsible, O Lord, for all,  
     Thou holdest in thine hand the golden ball  
 Of beauty, and the heaving of the sea  
 Of swift existence, nor can any flee  
     Beyond the echo of thy giant call,  
     Nor is there any spirit over-tall  
 To reach above the plateau of thy knee ;  
     Therefore thou art responsible we say  
 For poverty and passion and for crime,  
     And well we think it is thy hairs are grey  
 With listening to the horror of the chime  
 Of centuries, and never-ending time,  
     And never-ending accents of dismay !

THY hair may well be grey, thy features cold  
    With passionless fruition of despair,  
    And marble as a statue's, and as fair  
And pitiless and beautiful and bold  
And perfect and unending ; we have told  
    The story of the ages, does it matter ?  
    Or are our sorrows but as flowers to scatter,  
Our shrieks as stifling perfume fit to fold  
    About thy smooth unfurrowed kingly brow ?  
It is not grey I fancy after all  
    That hair of thine, I see its colour now,  
I see it gathered in a golden ball,  
Or, loosened, see the unfaded tresses fall  
    As sunlight flutters down I know not how.

BUT, if thou hast a mercy, and the men  
    Who worshipped thee were right and not deceived,  
    And other than a folly they believed,  
And other than a shadow cherished, when  
They spake of God and hope and heaven, then  
    Thou hast the Universe's sins to slay,  
    Each creature to make satisfied I say,  
Not leaving nine to jeer at thee nor ten  
    Nor twenty, nor a spider, nor a toad,  
Nor crumpled butterfly, nor maiden pale,  
Nor vessel with a shattered mast and sail,  
    Nor dried-up rivulet silver once that flowed,  
    Nor ox in torture from an iron goad,  
Nor silence of a man, nor woman's wail,



NOR withered flower, nor scorched wings of fly,  
Nor elephant astounded and cast down,  
Nor antelope's sweet forehead in a frown,  
Nor spider's soul embittered, nor a sigh  
Unanswered, nor an infant's stuttered cry,  
Nor giant groan of some great toiling town,  
Nor poor bee struggling feebly not to drown—  
All these thou hast, O Lord, to satisfy !  
And *canst* thou do it ? then, if not, I say  
That all the blood from Abel until now  
Is clotted in a line across thy brow,  
For every drop of sweat of every day  
Since time began, thou hast, O Lord, to pay,  
Before a single creature's head can bow !

BEFORE our love is golden, and our faith  
Triumphant, passion crimson, and the sea  
Of aspiration crystal, and the tree  
Of life shall blossom as the prophet saith ;  
Till every hand is clean thy hands are red,  
Till every heart is white thine own has bled,  
Till every head is crowned thy dusty head  
Discrowned and sunk in ashes has to be ;  
Till every murderer is mute and pure  
And gentle, and each wicked woman weak  
For sorrow and after strong, thine own high cheek  
I will not look upon, nor, seeing, endure,  
For stains of black bloodthirstiness obscure  
*Thine own face*, moist and lustful and not meek ;

TILL every man is fair and woman white  
    Be absent, God, and hide thy vanquished features,  
    For *thou* art conquered in thy conquered creatures,  
And *thou* art dark in robbery of light,  
And *thou* art blackened by the wings of night,  
    And *thou* art piercèd by the iron spear  
    That traverses burnt hearts of all men here,  
Thy daughter is defiled, and art *thou* bright  
    And beautiful and calm and crowned with peace,  
And grapes upon thy tongue, and olive leaves  
    And bays upon thy brow, a golden fleece  
Of victory on thy shoulders, when she heaves  
From neck to soles of sweet white feet, and grieves  
    Till pulses pale are pitiful and cease ?

THE Universe thy daughter is defiled  
           And dark and desolate, and her eyes are full  
           As throbbing clouds at evening, see her pull  
 Those plants to pieces passionate and wild  
 Upon the sad grey cliffs, with breakers piled  
           Before her in a misty rain-swept reach,  
           And foam that blown upon her from the beach  
 Makes her cheeks start like some forsaken child !  
           She is so beautiful, the Universe,  
 And thou hast left her, so she says at least,  
 And hearts of rough intrusion are increased,  
           And hands of a solicitude perverse,  
           And where is now her Mother, her false Nurse,  
 Whose care has come to nothing and has ceased ?

WHERE art thou, God ? for she is left alone,  
The Universe that thou didst bring to pass,  
And when she sees her features in the glass  
Behold, her glory spoilt and overthrown !  
And so she turneth with a bitter moan,  
And twines her hands more tight within the grass,  
And beats with pitiful fair feet, alas !  
The unresponding gravel, and each stone,  
And stem, and tiny flower ; and the pink  
Geraniums, more tender, God, than thee,  
Weep dew-drop tears of sorrow, sad to see  
Her body shudder, curl and cleave and shrink  
Together, pressing closer to the brink  
Of that swift precipice with struggling knee ;

AND writhing and recoiling and returning,  
    And wondering and wailing, and her face  
    More beautiful than ever with the grace  
Of passion and despair, and bitter burning,  
And desolation, and swift throbs of yearning,  
    And tears that hot parched channels carve, and  
    chase  
    Each other in a sickening sultry race,  
Her agitated feet the grasses spurning  
    And beating up a little cloud of dust ;  
For she the beautiful, the pride of roses,  
Whose head on pillows white and pure reposes  
    Has been the victim of a giant lust,  
    Her Mother found a faithless one to trust,  
And so her eyes for final sleep she closes !

O UNIVERSE most passionate and pure  
    With many dewfalls, and the throbs of springs,  
    And grasses, and dark haunts of ferns, and rings  
Of foliage green, and circles swift and sure  
    Of suns and stars are in thy hair, and many  
    Cool nights and mornings, tell me, sweet, has any  
Been found thy virgin bosom to obscure ?  
    Have any feet been fast to overtake thee,  
    And by the shoulder hands to turn and shake thee,  
    And from thy dreams inviolate to awake thee,  
    And lustful fingers found to bruise and break thee,  
    And passion black to rend and wrench and rake  
    thee—  
    And hath thy God been bitter to forsake thee ?  
Then *I* will not forsake thee but endure ;

ENDURE, and mingle tears, and kiss the battered  
Fair features, and the shuddering of hands,  
And bind together the unwoven bands  
Of golden hair, and robes divided, tattered,  
And dust-bestrewn, and lips astounded, scattered,  
And shaking like the tremulous thrill of sands,  
And cover all the dainty desolate lands  
Impoverished, and pale, and shocked, and shattered.  
My beauty, O my sweet one, on the morrow  
Having slept a century in my quiet arms  
Thou shalt awake, and I with pure quick palms  
Will put thy hair together, and will borrow  
A looking-glass, and thou shalt no more sorrow,  
Abundantly aware of thy chaste charms.



## BEAUTIFUL BROWN HAIR.

O BEAUTIFUL brown hair that kissed and wound  
About me, lashed to fury and to song,  
And combing of clear tresses chaste and long,  
And fingering of falling locks unbound,  
And ringlets rippling with a velvet sound  
White shoulders and uplifted arms among,  
What care I for the golden sister throng,  
The flaxen, or the black, that trickle round  
Invitingly ? I only love the hair  
That once I handled tenderly, and swore  
That I would die forgetting never more  
Its gracious bloom once gathered, once found  
fair ;  
Be absent golden locks, and ye beware  
Blue eyes, since green were those sweet eyes I saw.

## THE MOTHER'S EYE.

SHINES as a moon behind the distant clouds  
     Of centuries the Mother's eye, beholding  
     Afar white arms that one day shall be folding  
 In sweet encompassing of soothing shrouds ;  
     She moves twin spirits through the forms and  
         speeches  
 Of flowers and birds, they frolic on old beaches,  
 And backward into matter her hand reaches  
     The perfect after human heart pre-moulding ;  
  
 And, when they meet, I fancy he shall say  
     As he fingers the chaste colour of her hair,  
     By flash of memory suddenly aware  
 Of the haunts and actions of a former day,  
 " Millions of years ago perched on a spray  
     I kissed *that very feather* brown and fair."

## THE SUMMER NIGHT AND KISSES.

THE summer night and kisses—ah, Lord God,  
The summer night and kisses ! and the stirred  
Rose-tendrils at the window, and soft-heard  
Low breathings, and the mutual flow and throb  
Of pulses, lips that shudder, breasts that sob  
Like panting bosom of a bright-eyed bird,  
Calm crowns and clear and passionate conferred,  
Time's gardens traversed, and warm feet that rob  
Each other's ardour, and the hands that cling—  
O summer night and kisses, what am I  
To say of thee, save only that to die  
Is easy—and the roses weep and sing,  
Shake soft, and whisper, and the breezes bring  
The thousand savours of a Southern sky.

## THE WINTER NIGHT AND COLD.

THE winter night and cold—O time of tears  
And thorns and solitude and frozen feet,  
No stars to shine, no mellow moon to meet,  
But slow procession of unending biers,  
And fleet array of icicles and fears,  
Fashions funereal, and the bitter beat  
Of grave-drums for the triumph soft and sweet  
Of songs and trumpets that the bride's blush hears !  
What shall I say of *thee* ? to die is hard  
With grass to kiss the lips, and earthy arms  
To embrace, and plenitude of clayey palms  
To cherish and to cover and retard,  
And coffins crimson, and a crown of card,  
And beetles, and the dismal drone of psalms.

## THE SLAIN GOD.

## I.

AND this was God, they said, and trembling came  
And touched the hands, and held the long fair feet,  
And lingered over lips that once were sweet  
And terrible, and as a scarlet flame,  
For Moses knew them, and Christ kissed the same,  
And died, for death was in them moist to meet ;  
And are the arrows stayed that once were fleet,  
And hindered is his hand's unerring aim,  
Broken his bow, and arms as withered grass,  
And glory as the evening of a day  
Descending into mist, and limbs as clay,  
And sceptre brittle as a rod of glass,  
And body foreordained to part and pass  
Into divided patchwork of decay ?

## II.

AND this was God, the beautiful, the king,  
The poet, the achiever, the strong lord,  
With hand for ever on the hilt of sword  
Untarnished, and a lute-voice loud to sing,  
And knees to which the desolate might cling  
We thought, and comfort cunning to afford,  
And tyrants to have slain and over-awed,  
And widows into peace of heart to bring,  
And maidens towards the bower of rosy dreams ;  
We were deceivèd, let us say no more,  
For white as any whale upon the shore,  
And over space of sand as wide he streams,  
Poured out in a confusèd mass that steams  
And throbs and sickens, turning o'er and o'er ;

## III.

THE breakers hurl the limbs from side to side,  
And, as the people hasty flock to see  
An overthrown gigantic trunk of tree,  
Or vessel wrenched in pieces by the tide,  
They gather in amazement at the pride  
Of God brought low ; but, " Master, *is* it he ?"  
A woman with a baby on her knee,  
The first bold heart to utter question, cried !  
And then we closer looked, and in a flash  
Of inspiration came the truth across  
Our minds, that we had not to mourn the loss  
Of any God, but that *the Devil* lay  
Stone dead at last before us in our bay—  
So *let* the waves make sport of him and splash !

## THREE BLACK CROWS.

THREE priests I saw this morning, three black crows,  
Sleek, subtle, sliding down the sunny street,  
They were not spring-like messengers to meet,  
The flowers cried shame upon their gloomy clothes,  
The Hyde Park hyacinths in shining rows,  
“Come, look at us,” they said, “for *we* are sweet,”  
Their narrow and emasculated feet  
Were pointed, and their pitiful weak toes  
Out-turned, and ankles feeble, and their eyes  
In-drawn, and shoulders narrow, and short chests,  
No hint of muscle underneath their vests,  
No bulge betokening a sudden rise  
Of brawn and sinew, chicken’s legs and thighs—  
Anachronisms, nineteenth century jests !



## TO A CRITIC.

WEAK places are there—melody halt and lame—

Slips sudden and many ? had you come to me

I could have pointed out, swift friend, to thee

The gates and gaps, and arrows of thine aim

Have fitted with a far more fervent flame ;

My eyes, I doubt not, are as keen to note

Each beam, and every midge, and slur, and mote,

And lack of symmetry, and cause for blame,

My hands, I doubt not, are as quick to fling

Over the shapeless shoulders of my books

Robes of forgetfulness, and hide their looks

Unseemly, and their dissonances ring

In my ears horrid first, and cleave, and cling,

And bury in my flesh their barbèd hooks.

## THE MANY LOVES.

THE many loves are voiceless ; they are strong  
And pulse with passionate wings beneath the  
ground,  
But never any pinion hath a sound,  
And never any plume provides a song,  
And so they suffer and are silent long,  
By the infernal speechless river bound,  
And wind black feathers loves of theirs around,  
And pant and tremble in a quivering throng,  
Till with a rustle and a rapture rises  
Some one of them, and saith, " I have a voice ;  
Be ready, O my brothers, and rejoice ;"  
And out a gush of singing that surprises  
Their seated tongues of different hues and sizes,  
And ears that listen hard, by fate not choice.

His wings were dusk before, but as he shakes them,  
And throbs, and, timorous, extends the plumes,  
His Song is as a fire that consumes  
The darkness, and the weary night forsakes them,  
And splendour of the morning moves and takes them,  
And light is plentiful, and pallor looms  
As distinct as a ghost amid the tombs  
Of eventide, and beauty beams and breaks them  
Into a golden tremor quill by quill—  
And, as they look, by sympathy and power  
Extracted from his singing, as a flower  
Is each, and as a rosebud rich to thrill  
The dewdrops amorous, and soft to spill  
Their tenderness and pearlhood in a shower.

A ROSE is each, their wings are white, they rustle  
Each other eager, and they haste to say,  
“ *I* could have sung—*I* also—*I*—to-day ;  
His words are *my* words ;” and they press and hustle  
And burn and listen open-mouthed and bustle  
Like linnets in contention for a spray ;  
The passion he is potent to portray  
Was theirs as well, they cannot but be certain  
That had he tarried long to lift the curtain  
Their turn it would have been to plead and pray,  
Their turn it would have been to shake and shiver  
Wings golden, speech as any running river,  
And perfumed as the rosy lights that quiver  
At eventide across a southern bay ;

*THEY* had the power, had he waited longer—

O envious one, to take away their art,  
And make a swift division of their heart !

*They* had the power, had they been but stronger

*They* would have played a princely poet's part,  
And sung before the kings, and hushed the people,  
And sent an incense circling to the steeple,  
And mirrored the wild heaving of the mart,  
And tipped with honeysuckle-sweet their dart,  
And drawn in harness golden-clad the cart  
The sun sends through the clouds, and fathomed  
deep hell,  
And shown a swift solicitude to leap well  
And daringly, and not on any cheap bell  
Made manifest their rattle at the start !

THEY had the power ; now his wings are shining,  
His love's are rosy and his own are gold,  
Their loves' are dusty and their own are cold,  
And palms made clammy with desire are twining  
About them, pale with sweat of long designing  
Some roundelay, some ripple free and bold,  
And tremulous and bitter breasts they hold,  
And tears their cheeks with furrows fast are lining ;  
For they have loved and yet they cannot sing,  
And *he* can sing, why, how can this thing be ?  
That one can say when all the people see,  
When every heart is subtle as a string  
That only one becomes a harp to ring,  
And only one a handle full of glee ?

THE singing soul shall answer ; " My pale roses,  
And brothers with the downcast heavy wings,  
It is not any voice, 'tis Love that sings  
And murmurs and ascends and sighs and closes  
His beautiful bright plumes, laughs and reposes,  
And vehemently storms and calms and clings  
With pink and tender claws, and smiles, and brings  
The primrose seasons, and the riper posies  
Of summer, and the hours of silent fruit ;  
Once let your hands get hold upon his neck,  
Be competent his fiery course to check,  
And crumple those fair feathers to the root  
That round his throat a crimson circle shoot,  
And *your* palm shall be pure henceforth of fleck."

## WHITE.

## I.

WHITE when I saw you last with eyes as clear  
     As ocean in the summer over sand  
     Your face was, when I pressed your final hand—  
 I did not know it was the last time, dear,  
 And so another sonnet-pressure here  
     I send, the last wave washed upon the strand,  
     The very last time *really*, understand,  
 Last petal of the last rose of the year ;  
     The last long wailing of a harpsichord,  
 Last struggle, last spent chatter, of a flute,  
 Last broken iridescence of a lute,  
     Last gleam and snapping of a singer's sword,  
     Last arrow that my bowstring can afford,  
 Worn to the very centre-thread, to shoot ;



## II.

LAST memory of the summer and soft places,  
    Last whistle of the severed silver string,  
    Last clapping of abundant palms that cling,  
Last rustle of the last limb of the graces  
When some swift-footed god with clamour chases  
    The voices and the arms and hands that sing,  
    Last green leaf of the budding life of spring,  
Concluding spasm of our breathless races !  
    Last bubble of the tired breath of a boy,  
Last savour of a fruit remaining sweet  
Upon the tongue, and to the palate's heat  
    Cool, and a reminiscence, and a joy,  
    Last glitter of the fragment of a toy,  
Last recollection of some childish treat.

## END OF PART III.

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JOHN CAMDEN HOTTEN, 74 AND 75, PICCADILLY.



