

The Attic of
the
Past

Louis Ginsberg

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY



BEQUEST
OF
STEWART HENRY BURNHAM
1943

Cornell University Library
PS 3513.I59A8

The attic of the past, and other lyrics/



3 1924 022 445 146

oim



Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

THE ATTIC OF THE PAST

THE
ATTIC OF THE PAST
AND OTHER LYRICS

BY
LOUIS GINSBERG



BOSTON
SMALL, MAYNARD & COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

Copyright, 1920,
By SMALL, MAYNARD & COMPANY
(INCORPORATED)

**TO
MY PARENTS**

For permission to reprint here a few of these poems, thanks are due the editors of the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, the *New York Times*, *Munsey's Magazine*, the *Forum*, *Rutgers' Alumni Quarterly*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Contemporary Verse*, the *Masses*, the *New York Evening Post*, *Argosy*, the *Newark Evening News*, and other periodicals.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE ATTIC OF THE PAST AND OTHER LYRICS .	1
II LYRICS OF THE CITY	49
III PORTRAITS AND SKETCHES	65
IV LOVE SONGS	79
V OTHER LYRICS	97

THE ATTIC OF THE PAST

THE ATTIC OF THE PAST

I STUMBLED on a hidden door
Up in the chambers of my heart;
I had not guessed of it before,
I flung it open with a start,—
I flung it open to a room,
And knew by shadows that were cast
Upon the litter in the gloom,
It was the Attic of my Past.
I saw the Chest of olden Days
Was emptied out upon the floor;
Letters with many a searching phrase;
And crumpled scraps that someone tore;
The silt of flowers of a June;
Old ribbons, faded joys, and books;
And broken bits of hopes were strewn
About the corners and the nooks;
Moth-eaten days were smears of grime;
The stagnant silence mouldered there,
Musty with dreams, while dust of Time
Was deeply drifted everywhere.

THE ATTIC OF THE PAST

Oh, in that chamber in my soul,
Among the shadows of that room
Old hungers all about me stole.
Then as I bent within the gloom,
What laughter was it that I heard?
What stir of footsteps entered in?
What was the murmur, what the word,
That made my heart a swirling din,
That made me lean to other eyes —
And made the sudden tears arise?

RELIGION

WITHIN the temple of my heart,
There is an altar set apart,
Where I am but a worshipper.
I bow me humbly in a mist
Of holy incense, sweet as myrrh —
The holy incense of my prayer,
That hushes all the temple whist.
What shreds of voices cry to me?
What light of dreams is drifting there?
What is the radiance I see?
And what the whirl of wings I hear?
Oh, like a swift and pouring flame —
A drenching fragrance sweeping near —
Oh, like a surge of glory is
The bursting splendor of a Name,
That floods my temple's passages!
And when I hear and when I see
The tempest of this harmony,
A sudden voice upon my sight
Breaks into swift and radiant light!

RELIGION

*This my prayer and this my plea —
This the word I cry to Thee:
Blind me so that I may see! —*

*Beauty, in what holy place,
Shall I meet Thee, face to face?*

IN THE NEWARK LIBRARY

TREAD softly in these magic halls,—
This Palace of Romance;
For mighty monarchs of the mind
Gaze at your every glance.

Prophet and poet, priest and sage
Arc living here anew;
From alcove and from crowded stack
They look again at you.

And all these voices of the past
Arc murmuring again
Their garnered wisdom of the world
Into the ears of men.

Here Keats is watching eagerly
Wherever Beauty gleams;
Shakspeare is gazing in your heart;
And Shelley, in your dreams.

IN THE NEWARK LIBRARY

So enter very softly here
This Palace of Romance;
For all the monarchs of the mind
Peer at your step and glance!

APRIL TWILIGHT

So beautiful it is, this April dusk,
This quiet twilight after wistful rain,
That everything is breathless, lest it stir
The mystery that haunts this meadow lane.

A hush is clinging to the hallowed air.
I hear the murmur of the looms of Spring.
I see the testament of leaf and grass;
And glory lurk in every simple thing!

Until I think, within this wistful dusk,
Within this miracle of bud and tree,
Heaven must be a land of haunted lanes,
Where April blossoms out eternally!

SPRING ON THE AVENUE

AGAIN a sudden rumor comes
Along the avenue;
The merry sparrows hear it there
And twitter it is true.

They twitter all the secret out
To every lad and lass —
To all the people swarming by,
That Spring has come to pass!

And yet, of all the teeming crowds,
Has anybody spied
Romance is tripping down the street
With April at its side?

AT A RAILROAD STATION

THROUGH the grimy station gates
Pass what destinies and fates?
Round about these rumbling stones,
Haunt what hollow, stifled groans
And upon the throbbing air,
Whose the laughter darting there?

Now and then, a looming train,
Breathing heavily, will drain
And will suck the seething rush
Of the crowds that pour and crush.
Like a pageant, whirling on,
Flashing now and paling wan,
Like a bright kaleidoscope,
Swarm how many a love and hope?

Laborers and laughing boys;
Lovers eager with their joys;
Actresses and Chinamen;
Aliens seeking home again;

AT A RAILROAD STATION

Smoking businessmen and dudes ;
Laughing courtesans and prudes,—
Where will end their journeys all? —
At a feast or funeral?
What will soon enfold them back,
Brilliant palace or a shack?
Will a brothel or a home
Lure and bid them cease to roam?

As they ever ebb and flow —
Youth and Age, the High and Low —
Through these grimy station gates,
Pass what destinies and fates?

IN A STREET-CAR

I WATCH on the jolting street-car
How rows of the people stare ;
Though huddled together, they journey alone,
Wrapped in a dreaming there.

I watch and I see before me
A shop-girl's eyes are bright ;
Perhaps she dreams of a dim-lit hall
And a dim sweet kiss last night.

I look at a pallid mother ;
Two weazened workers who doze ;
A jaunty sailor ; a prim-lipped nun ;
A girl like a flaming rose.

And there is a sodden drunkard ;
Two lovers who wink and nudge ;
A wan old man ; and a whistling boy ;
And a solemn and thoughtful judge.

Where will they end their journeys,—
These people that dream and stare?

IN A STREET CAR

At a bright-lit hearth; or a merry feast;
Or a lonely bed of despair?

Yet wheresoever they journey,
All of their travelling must
Bring them together again at last
Back to the dreamless dust.

SPRING NIGHT

THE sighing twilight slowly ebbs away
And now the fragrant darkness laps around
And flows about us two. I tell you, Dear,
All the day long your words were nightingales
That sang within the forests of my heart.
And all the day I saw your eyes and saw
My brimming pools of Years. Come lean to me;
Give me your hands. How softly from them flows
Tenderness on my heart! You scarcely breathe.
Tranquillity is dripping, drop by drop,
Down from the taper-pale, white, glimmering
stars.

This rustling drift of sere and shrivelled leaves,
That brush across the night like shaken sedge,
Will never hush. What are the hungry eyes
That dimly flicker in the wind-blown crying?
What pale, desiring hands are fluttering
And passing in the night with wistful sighing?
My Dear, the tales of Queens of olden times

SPRING NIGHT

Are hovering and trembling into song
Amid a light about your drooping head.
The night is strange. I feel that generations
Are melting and dissolving from about me.
My heart is smouldering with memories.
It must have been on such a night as this
That Naisi hurried Deidre through the gloaming;
Guenevere sighed and clung to Lancelot!
Oh, all that host of loved ones I can see:
Francesca, Helen, Ruth, and Juliet,
Isolde, Semiramis, and Beatrice —
Passionate faces, yearning through a mist,
With warm and curd-white breasts like sleeping
music —
Go surging past me on the waves of darkness,
That wash about us in the scented night
With ebbing blossoms of the paling foam.

Come, heap on me your burning flowers of kisses,
Covering me, while all the pouring night
Drenches us with its fires!

MASKS

THE people in the market,
The people in the Square,
They try to hide their hearts with masks,
But I can see them bare:

On every laughing shop-girl,
On every laughing youth,
I lift a corner of a mask
To peer upon the truth.

A lover in his anguish
Of memories that sere
Covers the ghosts within his heart
Behind a mask of cheer.

Or there a married woman
Who hungers to be free
Conceals her cheated heart behind
A mask of gaiety.

MASKS

Or here two mothers chatter,
But who is it can guess
What daughter's shame is cloaked behind
A mask of happiness?

Or there a broken father,
Gnawed by his son's disgrace,
Adjusts a mask of unconcern
To cover every trace.

Or now a debutante,
Hiding a stifled love,
Although she feels her soul to rust
Laughs, as she fits her glove.

And so they laugh and saunter,
The people in the Square,
Little they know behind their masks
That I can see them bare!

NOCTURNE

THE rustling trees are growing dimmer,
Like blowing vapor in the night;
And down the street, the arc-lights glimmer
In pale and silver pools of light.

Without a word, we two are walking;
Far off a lonely window gleams;
There is no further need for talking;
Dimly your hair is dripping dreams.

About you subtle fires quiver.
The silence settles on your brows.
The night is hushed. The winds shiver
And darkness rustles in the boughs.

Here in the peace from din and riot;
The stars are foaming down the sky.
But oh, as we are walking quiet,
What songs are hotly trembling by?

NOCTURNE

There is no need for your replying.
And suddenly you turn away.
The darkness rustles into sighing.
And I have nothing more to say.

ROADS

THERE are long white roads to the lane of Where-
you-will

And the orchards of cherries near the clover;
Where the sky smiles blue on the glinting of a rill
With the heart of a laughing, merry rover.

There are roads through the meadows where all the
crickets cry

Near the buzz of bees upon their sally,
When the mottled Moth of Day slowly flutters by
And the Dusk is a smoke within the valley.

There are roads that lead from the snug and
fragrant inns

To the hovels of wretchedness and pity,
Where the tenements spawn their miseries and sins
In the fret and the fever of the city.

ROADS

But there's just one road that's the only road I take,
For it beckons me onward clear as duty
Past the town's loud mart and the meadow and the
lake
On a quest for the holy Grail of Beauty.

APRIL-SONG

APRIL, April, laughing by,
April, can you tell me why
You are happy, you are gay? —
Have you seen my love to-day?

April, did you ever know
Tides of fragrant glory so
Swift to flood the avenue? —
Listen, eager April, you!

April, when I saw her last,
All her laughter as she passed,
Like a sudden flame in air,
Quenched the sunlight everywhere!

Tell me did you ever see
How it is that Love could be
Sweetness poured on me like this
Sweetness burning in a kiss!

APRIL-SONG

April, April, going by,
Underneath a flame of sky,—
April, have you seen my Sweet,
Laughing down the laughing street?

THE TAVERN OF MY YOUTH

EVERYTHING I scoffed at, now I know for truth,
Brooding in the tumble-down Tavern of my Youth;
Love it was that entered, but left it evermore,—
Love it was and Faith it was that scorned my door!

Is the weary dribble upon the windowpane
The slow drip-dripping of the blind dark rain?
It's nothing but a whimper, it's nothing but a sigh,
It's nothing but a rustle as the ghosts go by!

Ghosts of all my old desires press about and peer.
Ghosts of hooded memories creep and huddle near;
And what is it that flickers, what is it that gleams,
Through dim room dusty with the dust of
dreams?

Haunted every corner, haunted every room;
Only broken whispers hurry through the gloom.
Nothing but a door creaks, nothing but a sigh,
Only startled wraiths and the ghosts go by!

THE TAVERN OF MY YOUTH

Here where Love has feasted, everything is still ;
Through the broken door, the wind comes chill —
I brood upon the things, that now I know for truth,
Thinking in the tumble-down Tavern of my
 Youth.

SUMMER AFTERNOON

A GLORY pours into my room ;
And from my window, I can see
The many birds that skim and trail
Shimmering threads of melody.

Although it's only one o'clock,
The little moon is in the sky,—
A torn white petal of a rose,
Fluttering with the wind on high!

And where the sun is spilling gold
The girls are going down the street,
With laughter like a swaying flame,
With eager hearts and eager feet!

O happy, laughing days of gold,
O happy, laughing sky of blue,
A glory brims your hearts, and see!—
My eager heart is brimming, too!

IN A LUMBER YARD

BLURRY and grimy the warehouses bulk, dim near
the moonlit dock,

Where, in the hushed and gloomy yards, huddles the
lumber stock.

And the grim piles of the grim boards are bulging
everywhere:

Florida hickory, Georgia oak, are crowding and jut-
ting there;

And the hemlock and the white pine from Maine are
heaped upon

Cypress from Yazoo Delta and cedars from
Oregon!

Who is it knows if they dream of the forests, afar
thousands of miles?

Or what are the furtive secrets that cling to the
darkened piles?

Perhaps Romances are lurking and whispering
memories

IN A LUMBER YARD

From the old days and the dear past of the vanished
countless trees?

And what is the woodland gossip the timber carefully
hoards?

How many summers and how many winters hide in
the dreaming boards?

Perhaps they dream of the whispering woods with the
dappled aisles of shade,

Where, lingering by the glugging brook, drowsily
Time strayed.

When, sunlight was dripping and soaking down on
the grass

And the twitter and chirp of carolling birds beguiled
the day to pass! —

And the woodland would hold up torches and flam-
beaux high,

As Autumn-Queen with her pageantry gorgeously
went by!

Or maybe they dream how the drenching rain glugged
and pelted and dashed —

Armies of rain that massed their ranks of regiments
and dashed,

IN A LUMBER YARD

With onslaught of fierce battalions and booming of
 charioteers,

Flashing a myriad gleaming swords and slanting
 glittering spears! —

Then cohorts of the wild winds joined with the armies
 of rain

To plunge and to lash and to scatter the ranks of
 the trees again!

Or maybe they revelled in riotous dreams of forests
 wherein they grew,

When Summer was vividly blazoning out revelations
 of Beauty anew! —

Luxurious foliage tangled the plants, twining about
 each tree,

Until the forest was flooded full with an ocean of
 greenery,

That billow on billow, and wave on wave, deluging
 the mazy bowers,

Broke into bright and wavering foam of white and
 tossing flowers!

*But here in the grimy and blurry shacks, dim near
 the moonlit dock,*

*Hushed and massed in the sordid yard, now huddles
 the lumber stock.*

IN A LUMBER YARD

*The grim piles of the grim boards are bulging every-
where:*

*Florida hickory, Georgia oak are dozing and sprawl-
ing there;*

*While the hemlock and the white pine from Maine
are heaped upon*

Cypress from Yazoo Delta and cedars from Oregon!

ETCHING — AN OLD SIDE-STREET

ALONG the twisting cobbled way,
Where Time has never thought to stray,
Ramshackle houses, gambrelled queer,
From drooping hoods of garrets, peer.
Their joggly stairs are worn and weak
And querulously grunt and squeak.
And there the loosened, tattered boards
Of swaying fences, slat and creak,
While here and there are leaky drains
And cloggy pipes that often glug
And rattle many swishing rains.
The sidewalk overgrows with grass;
For in this snuggled quiet street,
There come no hurried trampling feet,
But maybe now and then may pass
A bent old woman with her shawl;
Or one who hobbles with his stick.
All else is very quiet, save
When here a rusty gate will click. . . .
.

ETCHING — AN OLD SIDE STREET

O little street, you do not know
The pouring traffic's ebb and flow;
And little street, Oh not for you,
Life of the seething avenue;
For down your quaint and cobbled way,
You know that Time will never stray! . . .

AS I CAME DOWN IN THE HARBOR

As I came down in the harbor, I saw ships
careening —

Tall ships with taut sails, bulging slowly away;
And I saw long ships with their smoke-stacks leaning
In the white scud and the white foam and the
swift flung spray!

As I came down in the harbor, like far swallows
flying,

Delicate were the sails I saw, poised faint and dim.
And who — Oh who will it be that will know how my
heart went crying

With the far ships and to far Spain to the sky's
frail rim?

OLD HOUSES

THE gray old houses are hooded women peering
From sloping trowsled bonnets of garrets hung
awry;

The gray old houses dream that they are hearing
Voices of their children in the years gone by.

With dim glazed eyes of windows they are staring,
Thinking of a father when broken was his pride;
And while they brood, they wonder where are faring
Lovers that kissed and the girls that cried.

What tales and Romances are dozing and are
dreaming

About the broken heath within the musty gloom?
What stories of loving and quarrelling and scheming
Huddle with their memories to crowd each room?

OLD HOUSES

So hushed they stand, like hooded women peering,—

These worn old houses that always dream and
sigh;

And like old mothers, they brood and stare at hearing

Voices of the vanished in the years gone by!

THE COAL YARD

THE night was hushed and the street was dark;
Dimly came the flicker of the lone pale arc.
And dreary from the corner, a chill wind stole,
Huddling past the desolate yards of coal.

But while I peered at the yards of gloom
And saw how the heaps lay dark as doom,
I heard a crackle and I heard a roar —
And the black piled coal was seen no more! —
Suddenly I felt the night to sag,—
And Time fell away, like a worn-out rag!

I saw before me how the forests towered,
How the fronds and the ferns and the creepers
 flowered;
I saw the jungles of gigantic grasses;
I saw the waving of the monstrous masses;
And the looping mosses and the crowding spores! —
I watched how the greenery leaps and pours
Down from the branches in a rich green blaze,

THE COAL YARD

Flooding on the tangle of the riotous maze!
But more than this, I could feel the heat
Soak on the forest and simmer and beat!
I spied dim swamps and I spied wide lakes,
Where hissed and threaded the huge red snakes;
I saw the lizard and Okapi lunge;
And the rearing Brontosaurus thrash and plunge!
But while they were battling in the bellowing din,
I heard a peal and a crash begin:
Earthquakes weltered and convulsions tore —
I heard Chaos dance — I heard Chaos roar —
The deafening jungles were hurled down deep —
Earth closed over. . . . Then in one swift sweep,
Burying forest and beast and tree,
Years came flooding like a wild white sea!

Again I stood in the hush of night
Underneath the flicker of the lone pale light;
And I gazed at jungles and their fronds and ferns —
Jungles of foliage in a heat that burns —
Jungles with sunlight and beasts,— the whole
Huddled and crowded into pieces of coal!

WISDOM

WHAT need have I of knowledge of men?
What need have I of crusted ancient lore?
Of lying books that peering Graybeards pen?
What need have I of treasures any more?

For all my treasure is in your caress;
My learning and my knowledge is but this:
My heart is wisest when your lips I press,—
Yea, all my wisdom shrinks into your kiss!

I do not seek the loud acclaim of men,
Their empty plaudits, or their tinsel prize;
For all my peace and happiness is when
Your smiling word unlocks my Paradise!

BLIND

THE blind old man with crooked staff
Saw everything with inner eye;
He tottered down the cobbled street,
And felt the sun and sky.

Ahead of me, the sunset flared
With livid and with lurid gleams,
As burning treasure-argosies
Sank in a sea of dreams!

Or then the West, a crimson Rose,
Within a crystal jar of air,
Was dropping all its petals down
And slowly wilting there.

But as I passed the blind old man,
Although the beauty flamed for me,
I hurried on with staring eyes,
And did not even see!

DUST

Dust upon my windowsill,—
Only dust it is, and still,
Drifting dust is where we know
Everything will ever go.

Every dream and every plan
Every thing of every man —
Every dome and pillar must
Moulder back into the dust.
Where are Babylon and Tyre?
Where the temple and the spire
Fabulous in Troy or Rome? —
All have drifted to the loam.
Lover and beloved, too:
Every kiss they ever knew,
Even every sweet caress,
Flaming once to loveliness,
Sleeps where every glory must
In a drift of passing dust.

DUST

Dust upon my sill,— who knows
If it was a crimson rose?
Did it blossom in the sun
For a wanton or a nun?
Dust, the wind is bringing in,
Who can tell what secret sin?
What the fever? what the pain?
What the fire in the brain?
What the vigil and prayer
Carelessly is sleeping there?

Dust upon my windowsill,—
Only dust it is, and still,
Drifting dust is where we know
Everything will ever go.

OLD SHIPS

BESIDE dim wharves, the battered ships are
dreaming,—

The worn ships, the torn ships, with many a
dragged mast.

The gray old ships are musing of those creaming
Waters that weltered in the days long past!

Maybe they dream of how the idle ocean,
A glittering Dragon, with rippling scales of gold,
Would writhe and twist with sleepy crafty motion.
Suddenly frothing where the hushed bark
rolled.

How still they sway and think upon the glories
Of shimmering lagoons that lit and tranquil morn!
How soft they sigh, remembering the stories
Of Africa, Bermuda, and the far Cape Horn!

By what fierce tempests were they hurled and
harried?

Or did they groan on any foamy shoal?

OLD SHIPS

And what strange freight or cargoes have they
carried?

Bulging green bananas or the bins of coal?

But now they creak and startle from their nap-
ping,—

These worn old ships, with many a draggled mast ;
And while they listen to the waves lip-lapping,
They fall to dreaming of the days long past !

ON READING POETRY

A CUP of sweet warm tea; a cake or two;
Sunlight upon a fresh white table-cloth;
And then with these a book of poetry,—
Such is my chief delight. Then will I pore
About the words and dream on many a line.

Some words are but the mouths of wondrous caves;
I heave away the stones and enter in.
Then the gates grate on their gold hinges —
And lo, what secret grottoes are revealed!
Around the gaping caverns, casks and chests
Bulge with a million scintillating gems,
That drip and quiver with their drops of light:
Ingots of dreams and jewels of desires;
Carbuncles, rubies, lapis lazuli;
Doubloons-of-wisdom, amethysts-of-fancies;
Topazes, moidores, opals shot with flames —
All these are heaped like piles of smouldering
moons!
And in the center of this glowing cavern,

ON READING POETRY

The Witch-of-the-Imagination brews
Her colored images and phantasies.
She mumbles over rows of burnished Urns —
The Urns and Jars of Words — and breaks their
seals

Whereupon curling smokes and lights of vapor,
Like exhalations of a drifting flame,
Spiral about and cloak the peering Genii.
These twist about and wink for you to follow
Further into the crypts of other vaults,
Where Lamps of bright Enchantment — Phrases —
glow!

Or else each word is but a gate or portal,
The entrance to some wonderland of wood,
Where Beauty and Romance have worn a path
Along the glinting brooks of happy songs,
That leap from mossy ledges and broad rocks,
Hurrying through the forests of my thought!

Or else I see the words of many a line
Are like a row of windows open wide,
Disclosing panoramas of the Past —
Windows and casements opening upon

ON READING POETRY

The gleaming vistas of the Centuries —
Casements through which a heavenly radiance
Streams like a rain of fine and golden fire,
Blinding the eager soul that gazes out!

ENTIRETY

EACH drop of the tossing waters
No matter how small it be,
Mirrors the mighty ocean,
And globes in itself the sea!

So every heart compresses,
Hides, like a drop of the sea,—
Holds in itself the thundering
Tides of humanity!

LYRICS OF THE CITY

RUINED HOUSES

I NEVER pass a ruined house,
 But always I can hear,
That, like an old deserted shell,
 It murmurs to my ear.

I hear the murmur echo low
 The washing tides of strife,
I hear the hollow thunder of
 The surging sea of Life.

For there, what storms of passion roared?
 What raging surfs of hate?
What swift and strong desires beat?
 What shifting winds of Fate?

So when I pass a ruined house,
 I think it is a shell:
I listen and I try to guess
 All that its murmurs tell.

HOT CITY NIGHT

THE dank and sulky tenements
Are wilting weary with the heat;
While from the doorways, children spill
And clot the humid, huddled street.
The pools of faces flood the stoops
And dribble into every space,
Until this packed humanity
Seethes like a vat in every place!
The sallow mothers with their babes;
The playing, sprawling children there;
The flaccid moldy aged men;
The boys with their disheveled hair —
This weltering humanity
Is saturated with the heat
That wedges into every crack,
Pressing and beating on the street!
But while a hurdy-gurdy trolls,
A sentimental tinsel tune;
And cars are droning down the tracks;
And weary pallid mothers croon,
In every eye, a flare or gleam
Reveals the sea-shore in a dream!

THE CITY-PARK

A HAVEN in a stormy sea,
A sweet oasis and a nook,
It nestles in the noisy streets,
A lyric in a prosy book.

And green and mossy like a stone,
That dozes by the river side,
It never heeds the pour of crowds,
Foaming along in endless tide!

CITY-DAWN

THE weary Slattern-Dawn is slinking on
Slowly along the sordid empty street;
She huddles close her misty shawl and wan,
And drags her listless feet.

Drab store and ghostly office peer and stare
With many a window like a vacant eye;
Buildings loom darkly furtive everywhere —
And Dawn creeps by.

Some hulky wagon lumbers, rumbling nigh;
Rent is the hush by sudden blatant gong —
Darkness is scattered — whispers stumble by —
A trolley screams along.

Darkness is scattered — lo, and tides asurge —
Tides of the faces wash the streets at length,
Bounteously pouring forth in sweeping urge
Their love and hope and strength!

THE SIDE-STREET

THE bye-street, the shy street,
The street where cobbles gleam,
Is quaint and narrow like a lane
That drowns in a dream.

The staid trees, the shade trees
Are prim old maids that sway;
They rustle laces and their gowns
And bustle all the day.

Yon garden wall that crumbles
Upon the garden grass,—
Who knows what lovers it has heard
Whispering there and pass?

The bye-street, the shy street
That dozes in the shade,
It never hears the Traffic roar,
Nor hears the tramp of Trade!

IN THE SUBWAY

THE car is screeching mad with speed;
It lurches in the roar and veers;
Staccato thunders volley down
And storms upon our ringing ears!

And as it whizzes through the dark,
It plunges through the flashing lights,
That blaze like crowds of meteors,
Rushing away on startled heights.

And who can tell, in years to come,
What speed will whirl us through the sky?
What lights of stars our car will graze?
What worlds will flash and flutter by?

SATURDAY NIGHT

Down through the passionate street, an infinite glory
is streaming,

Touching the restless pageant with glamor and
light;

And a mirth is stripping its sloth and prodding it
forth to a dreaming,

Tugging, tugging away at its heart in the night!
And oh, to what hot desires does this endless pageant
surrender? —

This mist of eddying faces — this hungering
throng!

For over it, over it all, an ineffable conquering
splendor

Wakes the heart, the heart of the night to song.

There's a bleary, carroty woman that shambles
along and grumbles;

There are white-faced, smiling mothers forgetting
their woe;

SATURDAY NIGHT

There's a groggy, besotted drunkard, who blankly
blinks and mumbles,

How can he know what it means,— this glamor
and glow?

But there past a riot of color, where flaunting win-
dows are flaring,

Come the adventuring youths, careless and free;
And faces of laughing girls challenge them forth
to a daring—

Faces of Helen . . . sea of triumphant sea.

IN AN OLD BOOKSHOP

THE bookshop in the roaring avenue
Was like an island in a foamy sea,
Was like a cloister waiting for a few,
Was like a chapel of Tranquillity.

And from the surging of the raucous street,
I entered in this hermitage of Peace;
And heard the tumult of the world retreat
And beating seas of iron clangor cease!

Hushed in this dim and sacred hermitage,
I paused before the volumes stuffed with dreams,
The tomes and missals with each musty page,
And chronicles of quaint and olden themes.

And once again, I saw Adventure ride;
And there before a thousand raptured eyes,
With pomp of chivalry and flashing pride,
Shock in the tourney for the golden prize!

IN AN OLD BOOKSHOP

I saw the Kingdoms passing on their biers ;
And hosts of high Romance from every clime ;
And lo ! I heard the steady tread of Years
Echo along the corridors of Time !

SUMMER AFTERNOON

THE sky pours gold, raining in a shower
Fluid sunlight down to flood each street,
Deluging all the world in the hot noon hour,
Till the teeming city simmers with the heat!

Sunlight spills along the allies and the byways;
All the air is crowded with scents upon the breeze;
Sunlight inundates the busy marts and highways;
While pale gold light is shaken from the trees!

Radiant with gold are passing girlish faces —
Radiant gold of sunlight which drenches and
clings!
Streets drink brightness and blaze to flaring places;
And round a hurdy-gurdy, children dance rings.

IMPRESSIONS — CITY-BEAUTY

I SEE a beauty in the sooty city
On many blurred and rainy nights, when gold
Washes and gurgles down the cloggy gutters;
And cloudy moons of globes are glimmering
And swimming in the pools on purple pavements.
Then streets lie twisted and tangled like
Bedraggled rainbows with the colors spilt
And splashed away!

Or yet again, often the city seems
A gorgeous golden Dragon, sinuous,
All coiled and shimmering in iridescence
Of countless, colored, scintillating scales!

Sometimes I see the city is a Spider,
Gigantic, million-eyed, spinning with threads,
With golden streaming filaments and strands,
A mazy mesh and tangle of the streets,—
A tremulous and undulating web,

IMPRESSIONS — CITY-BEAUTY

Spangled with clustered flecks of many lights
For lure of many souls!

And also, when that mighty passing torrent,
When all that frothy torrent of the faces
Swishes and roars away past flaring corners.
When Life, as in a cauldron, steams and stews,
Fretting incessantly with bubbling noise.
When traffic pours along in swollen sluices.
When crowding trolleys clang and gride along
With raucous grate of wheels, and autos flit
Like fleeing beetles with their beady eyes!

And in the splendor of the mighty city,
I can forget the squalor and the pain
Of huddled and dilapidated ghettos,
Where dark ramshackle homes of dreariness,
Where sordid and where sluttish tenements
Brood like a cancer, gnawing at the city.
Oh, there it is, where darkened Life ferments,
That I have often seen the many tossed
And bleary faces, wanly drifting on:
The mothers with their sagging, baggy breasts,
Wearily tugging dirty, squalling children;
There have I seen the frowsy painted women,

IMPRESSIONS — CITY-BEAUTY

Who barter love and scrape the lees of lust;
And rheumy faces, evil faces, faces
Of tragedy and sorrow and despair.

But this I know I often can forget;
All this I know is often blotted out
In the great beauty of the towering city;
In rainy beauty when the city streets
Are like enchantments from Aladdin's lamp;
In all the splendor of the surging city,
That boldly blazons on the shrinking skies
The glory of its beauty and its might —
That shouts and hurls its Titan hands above
To grasp and pull aside the crowding skies
And make a way for all its might and splendor!

PORTRAITS AND SKETCHES

PORTRAIT

HE made them flutter to the piano there.

He drew the gusts of laughter from the throng;
Flinging about his banter and his quips,
He blithely chirped a song.

Yet from his words, were but the sheathing torn,
Were but the kernel crushed, without a doubt,
Even the blindest easily might see
Bitterness trickle out.

But no one knew he hid a lonely grief;
Or that his heart was like a midnight street,
Where weeps a dripping, darkly-shuttered house,
Which blind rains beat!

AN OLD MAN

THE tide of his desires,
In ebbing by,
Had left the bed of his mind
Barren and dry.

Lost in forgotten bye-streets
His thoughts would go
Knocking at dusty Inns
Of Long Ago.

His heart, a broken garret,
Smudged with disease,
Mouldered with fading and old
Memories.

PORTRAIT OF A POET

WITH shouting tumult and with raucous din,
The city seethed about him in its strife,
Pouring about him, in a beating storm,
Turbulent torrents of its whirling life!

And yet the noises of this roaring life
Fell deaf upon his ears. He walked apart:
A moon-lit courtyard with his dreaming heart! —
Amid the turmoil of the swarming street,

A moon-lit courtyard with its moated towers,
Where glimmered massy Castles of Romance.
What drawbridge opened and what Knights of
Dreams
Filed to what quest with trumpet and with lance?

FOURTH FLOOR, BACK

THE candles gutter in the room;
The hungry candles lick the gloom;
And through the open parlor door,
The light is spilling on the floor.
A bent old couple nod and stare;
They do not see the candle flare;
They do not murmur any word;
Their eyes are dim, their eyes are blurred:
For each one feels and each one sees
The room is stuffed with memories.
But suddenly a footstep starts
Waking the dust within their hearts.
They dab their eyes and turn to stare
Into the plastered corner, where
Over the books upon the stack,
His photograph is draped in black.

MEMORIES

THE clock upon the tawdry mantel-piece,
Is ticking-tocking in the quiet room.
The weary woman on the rocking chair
Croons to her querulous baby in the gloom.

But at the tarnished picture on the wall,
She always gazes, swaying to and fro,—
The picture of her husband and herself
Before they married many years ago.

And quavering a tune, she feels a surge,—
A headlong rush of years come tumbling fast.
She gazes through the picture-frame and stares
Out through the Casement of her happy Past.

And once again, she sees the mossy well;
The sun-flecked cornfield near the Russian town;
The fragrant cherry-trees; the orchard-boughs;
The broken bridge; the brook that straggles
down.

MEMORIES

Again her lover stops before the wall.

Again the pond is hushed. The day is dim.
Again her singing blood is pouring wild.

Again she feels he crushes her to him!

But now — the kitchen-door is banging shut.

Her groggy husband shuffles in and peers.

But crooning to her restless, crying child,

She bends her head — and wipes away the
tears.

THEIR FIRST KISS

THE gas-jet sings and shrills. Upon the couch,
The serious student and the girl debate
Morality, Psychology, and Freud;
Ibsen and Keats; Plato and Socialism.
Adroitly to and fro they toss ideas;
But this discussion is a colored curtain
Torn to the floor at one touch of their hands,—
Rent to the floor to bare each other's hearts.
And as her eyelids droop, she turns away.
They do not hear the ceiling shake with stamping,
Nor hear the raucous shouting in the street.
But in the hush that packs into the room,
Her breathing is a melody. Her pulse
Is quickly beating little songs for him.
He sees the flames that haunt her oval face
And haunt the curving of her trembling lips.
His eyes implore. His arms are hungering
And as a fire flowers up in him,
He sways to her as if to drink her sweetness.

THEIR FIRST KISS

He gathers her . . . and then her loveliness
Beats on his being, surges on his heart,
Storms on him in a sudden scorching flood —
And Time is flaring up in their long kiss!

BITTERNESS

THERE in the brilliant parlor,
Merriment flashes about;
The company tosses the glittering jests
Over the joyous shout.

But here in her darkened bed-room,
She cries in spasms and fits;
While scattered and littered over the floor,—
His letter is torn to bits!

IN A JAPANESE TEA-SHOP

OUTSIDE the traffic roars,
But here in the hush, I see
How stealthy and furtive the swarthy Jap
Is bringing my tea.

I think, by the mist of dreams
Which floats in his glowing eyes,
That his heart is far away to Japan,
'Neath drifting skies.

He dreams of a broken bridge
And its yellow-lanterned nook,
Where peonies and wistaria-blooms
Have flecked the brook.

Do the willows hide the spot?
Do the fireflies still glow?
Do the nightingales still haunt that path
Of Long Ago?

IN A JAPANESE TEA-SHOP

And he wonders if once again
The night is as sweet and dim;
And, under the Lotus-moon, if yet
She waits for him? . . .

LOVE SONGS

For Naomi

IN THE HALLWAY

THE hall is windy with the wings of dreams ;
And as I hold you in this quiet place,
The darkness grows a benediction hushed
About the rapture of your lifted face.

From what sweet lyric did you blossom out?
From what old master's nocturne did you come?
How long did Leonardo trace your heart?
How many striving songs have faltered dumb?

A hush is brooding dimly at your lips.
You cling to me and let me hold you long.
You do not even murmur any word.
Your eyes are silence and your breath is song!

The hall is windy with the wings of dreams ;
They brush our hearts with fire till we start.
Your eyes are silence and your breath is song—
And thronging flames are crying through my
heart!

MIDNIGHT

WARMLY covered and snuggled in bed,
Deep in the night, I heard overhead
Battalions charge in an endless train,
Rank on rank, the battalions of rain,
Galloping horsemen on galloping hoofs,
Gallop like thunder over the roofs.

And while they swept with their gurgling laughter
And hounds of the wind ran whimpering after,
I turned to you there in the quiet room;
And the word you would say flowered to bloom
Bright in your eyes, as I held you, Love —
And again the horsemen clattered above.

Thus I shall always hold you quiet,
Warm in your love and deaf to the riot
Of massed battalions of charging Years,
That pass, like rain, with menacing spears;
That gallop like horsemen on galloping hoofs —
Gallop like thunder over the roofs!

THE LOVER THINKS OF THE BELOVED

You are the terraced-temple of my dreams,
Near cloisters where the glimmering twilight fails;
Or a pavilion dreaming to a pool,
Where fountains sigh to hear the nightingales.

The dim pagoda-bells are shaking out
Their dusky petal-notes upon the air;
And soon the Silence flowers up to song,
As Holiness is brooding everywhere.

A sudden whisper smoulders through the dusk.
A stir of wings . . . and lo, I meet your gaze,
O flame-white Goddess, leaning down to me
Over my ebbing tide of paling days!

SONG IN AUTUMN

THE soggy road is desolate;
The leaves have drifted down;
And every gaunt and withered tree,—
How barren and how brown!

And yet my heart is all ablaze,
For bursting blossoms throng,
Where Summer of your lasting love
Flames on my Trees of Song.

TO NAOMI

As we were pushing through the rain,
We saw a dripping corner arc
Flare like a torch that spluttered spray
To splash the velvet dark.

The black and rainy branches shook
Clusters of star-drops in the air;
The pavement shimmered in the rain;
As we were walking there.

And down the gutters fluid gold
Bubbled away in streaming rills;
Along the street, the puddles shone
Like rows of daffodils!

We struggled closer through the rain;
We saw how tides of glory rolled
About the avenues, where flared
Whirlpools of misty gold!

TO NAOMI

And yet, with all this beauty, Dear,
I cannot help but think you knew
The greater glory drenching me
Was nothing else but you!

MY DAYS

My days are like a heap of leaves
When every tree in Autumn thins;
But underneath the yellow mound,
A smouldering of love begins. . . .

And as an incense spirals up
In curling smoke to bless her name,
Her kisses are the sparks that set
My days to crackle into flame!

SONG

WHEN I was walking home with you,
The street was glowing everywhere;
You shed a radiance about;
A glory blew around me there.

A glory blew about my heart;
And carelessly we laughed, until
I made a little song for you,—
And you were walking very still.

I hadn't thought of it at all,
But always when I meet you, then
I wish that you could only know
My heart is singing it again!

LOVE-SONG

THE Epochs are a flight of birds,—
The sages mumble this ;
Although the Nations fall like leaves,
I ask another kiss.

The sages say that all our tears
Are but the passing rain ;
That all the rainbows of our hopes
Will come and go again.

They cry that all will fade like dew :
The shield of Fame will rust ;
The walls of Time will topple down
And moulder into dust.

Oh, let them mumble all they want,
Enough for me it is,
If I can have your closing arms
And have another kiss.

SONG

You are the Spirit
And I am the Flute;
So blow through my being,
That's idle and mute! —

Sweep through my being
Swiftly and bright,
Till music emblazons
Your beauty aright!

WINTER

A BARREN field in the Winter,
When the winds dart,
When chilly the driving snowflakes
Bite and smart,
Bleak with the frost of sorrow,
Lies my heart.

Yet in the dreary snowfall,
Lighting the view,
And whistling with vibrant music,
That shrills through,
Green are the glistening hemlocks,—
My thoughts of you!

REMEMBRANCE

I saw two lovers in the park —
And felt as if a spark was caught
Swift from a flash of memory
To kindle all my boughs of thought!

Till branch on branch, and bough on bough
Blazed with the fire leaping fast —
Flared to the roots of all my mind,
In conflagration of the Past!

And in the circle of the flames,
That ranged around like Knights of Fire,
Again I saw you lean to me,
O Sweetheart of my Heart's Desire!

THE ROOM

THE other night I entered in
My small and dingy room;
And though I cannot tell you how,
I felt it was abloom!

And then I heard a little sigh;
A rustle for a space;
And suddenly I turned — to see
My olden Sweetheart's face!

Her lips were tremulous and dim.
Her eyes were full of tears.
I cried to her, "At last you come
After these long years?"

I couldn't say another word;
But as I knelt to cling,
I found that it was all a trick —
There wasn't anything!

THE ROOM

And now, although I fear the room,
I linger night and day;
I know she never comes again
And never goes away.

THE KEY

I HEAR it in its troubled cry,
I know I hear it start —
The secret that is locked within
A chamber of your heart!

I know that it has harried you
And haunted you before ;
But now I hear it drag its feet
And hide behind the door.

What ghost of memory is it?
Or what desire sighs?
I wonder if it is a grief
With red and hollow eyes?

And so I wait for you to yield
The word that is the key :
And it will never trouble you,
And never trouble me.

OTHER LYRICS

MEMORIES

THE twilight thickens. As I sit and brood,
Returning waters of my memory,
Flooding the creeks and inlets of my Mind,
Wash like the swelling of a restless sea.

I feel them foam and billow up the line.—
But ebbing slowly back, they soon depart,
Casting my olden dreams, like colored shells,
Along the banks of all my sandy heart!

PASTEL

Misty against the dark,
 Against the rainy sky,
Lilac the arc-light spluttered,—
 And the wind went by.

Tip-toe in the pool
 Of violet and white,
A slender sapling trembled,
 Shivering in the night.

And vaguely from afar,
 Like a shadow there,
A skein of longing bird-notes
 Drifted through the air.

Lo, the two that passed
 Did not speak one word.
Wistful he bent to her. She bowed.
 Only the wind stirred.

• • • • • • • •

PASTEL

Misty against the dark,
 Against the rainy sky,
The lilac arc-light spluttered,—
 And the wind went by.

THE GALLEON-MOON

THE silver-shrouded Galleon-of-the-moon,
 Freighted with Song and Love,
Is dipping, dream-like, past the blue lagoon,
 In foam-lit seas above.

But soon she strikes the iceberg-cloud, and lo,
 'Mid cloud-spray in the skies,
Shuddering strangely there, she settles slow,—
 And then star-bubbles rise.

AT HEAVEN'S GATES

(For My Mother)

I CLAMBERED up the blazing cliffs;
I struggled through the storms of lights;
I heard the roar as space was poured
Down from the heavenly heights!

And through the gust of countless leaves —
Leaves of the Years that flurried past —
I stumbled up the golden stairs
And saw the Gates at last!

I beat upon the dazzling doors!
I called and cried amid a whir!
I battered at the Golden Gates,
But none of them would stir!

Yet as a burst of glory flamed,
Where angels fluttered in the din,

AT HEAVEN'S GATES

I heard a sudden whispering,
Absolving me from sin.

I heard a little simple word.
My mother murmured quietly —
And lo, I saw the Golden Gates
Opening up for me!

SPRING

My heart was like a frozen pond,
After the winter had begun;
But now the ice of all my sloth
Is breaking up beneath the sun.

And at the edges of the pond,
New violets of thought are seen;
While all around, I see how Spring
Is blowing up a flame of green.

And my desires are the birds
That circle in a happy rout,—
I see them skimming on the pond
And gaily twittering about!

THE GYPSY-AUTUMN

THE Gypsy-Autumn shuffles slowly back;
Weary and wan she seems,
Dragging her crimson-smudged and tattered pack,
Drab with the dust of dreams.

Her draggled, flapping cloak is wet and worn;
And rain drips from her hair;
Her tawdry petticoat shows frayed and torn,
Besplattered everywhere!

Weary and wan, she shuffles down the lane,
Heeding not anything;
But, haggard with some sorrow, sighs again,
Seeking the road to Spring!

WINTER, THAT OLD CRONE

WINTER, that old crone,
In raiment of sleet,
Wheezes and shuffles
Down the chilly street.

Blue-lipped and pallid,
And shivering there,
She muffles up her garments
About her snowy hair.

Then boisterous blasts,
Crowding in a throng,
Like mischievous urchins,
Come whistling along!

They tear at her garments ;
They tug her snowy hair ;
And drive the crone of Winter
Down the corner there !

ON A PICTURE OF MY PARENTS AS
SWEETHEARTS

PARENTS, gazing down at me
From your picture wistfully,
I can see you never knew
What the years could bring to you.

Mother, girlish yet so grave;
Delicate yet strong to brave
Blows and bludgeons of the years
Menacing with cruel jeers,—
Mother, I can see a smile
Lurk about your lips the while
You are wrapped in dreaming yet.
Tell me, can you not forget
How you paused within the lane
Near your Russian town again,
How within the haunted dusk,
That was filled with scent of musk,—
How you shyly bent your head
To the word your lover said?

MY PARENTS AS SWEETHEARTS

Father, you — I see you gaze,
Youthful in your student days.
Did you know the nights I know?
Was your heart of long ago
Like a sunlit field in Spring,
Full of daisies blossoming?
You are dreaming, too, I guess,
How you heard her whisper Yes.
Father and my Mother, too —
Lover and beloved, you,—
Do you see the dream you planned,
In my heart and in my hand?

TREASURES

DEEP beneath the darkling waters of my Self,
Dim near many a lurking and glimmering rocky shelf,
What are all the treasured galleons I may find
Buried in sand at the bottom of my Mind?

The waves upon the waters are glittering and bright;
They eddy in the wind and foam smokes white,—
The foam froths white and the blown spume sprays,
But deeper — fathoms deeper — the hashed tide
 sways!

Fathoms in the darkness, murky in the deeps,
Where everything is quiet and dim Time sleeps,
Galleons and argosies with chests in the hold,
Are freighted with nuggets and ingots of gold!

Galleons and argosies of powers and dreams;
Laden barques of longing, where pale light
 streams. . . .

TREASURES

Ships of desire, hidden in the soul,
Where no surf surges and no storms roll!

*Deep beneath the darkling waters of my Self,
Dim near many a lurking and glimmering rocky
shelf,*

*What are all the treasured galleons I may find
Sunken and buried at the bottom of my Mind?*

MY LYRICS

My lyrics are the leaning ships
That seek a haven and a goal;
And so they sail upon the deep
Tides of the soul.

Past sandy bars, past hidden reefs,
When seas thunder and lash their sails,
I pray that all my tossing ships
Ride the gales.

May winds of inspiration blow
And bear my ships across the foam —
Across the billows and the bars —
And bring them home!

AT A MASQUE BALL

THE hall was flashing with colored lights ;
The band was quavering out a tune ;
And mazing about, the motley masques
Whirled in a motley throng !

Figures of Folly and figures grotesque,
Love in white and Woe in a shawl,
Delight and Sorrow and green-eyed Greed,
Swayed in the festive ball !

And while they were dancing, each heart was a Hall,
With masques of Joy and with masques of Dole ;
For Life, like a motley masquerade,
Revelled in every soul !

COUNTRY-NIGHTFALL

(During War)

THE meadows drowse ; the fields are growing dimmer ;
And dim the fragrant ricks of gathered hay.
Beyond, the yellow lights begin to glimmer,
As quietly the twilight ebbs away.

And down the road, a flock of sheep are wending ;
They straggle at the turns and slowly wind
Dim like a file of dreamy thoughts unending
Along the tranquil highway of the Mind.

And all about I hear the swallows twitter ;
The plaint of eerie whippoorwills that cry
Locusts that rasp and shrill ; the birds that flitter ;
And buzzing grasshoppers that zig-zag by.

And more than this, a murmuring and thrumming —
The myriad burr of insects in the air —

COUNTRY-NIGHTFALL

The droning and innumerable humming
Nibbles to bits the silence everywhere!

The road is lone, save for a lad that rambles;
A villager who trudges to his home;
A bent old crone that slowly gathers brambles;
Or hand in hand, two lovers in the gloam.

And soon the silver of the moon is slipping,
Splashing through leaves of trees to ponds of
white;
Until in roadside hollows, dripping, dripping,
It trails a row of daisies in the night!

Softly, like moths, a flock of hours flutter
About this hushed and dreamy road to town.
And all that Beauty thought, the stars would utter,
In raining fine and silver silence down!

.

But then the quiet snaps — peace is scattered;
Beauty becomes a hollow empty name:
How many roads like this in France are shattered
By howling rains of shrapnel and of flame?

COUNTRY-NIGHTFALL

And oh, as all the darkness bursts, revealing
 Splinters of night, where storming Ruin stuns,
I hear the laugh of Death above the pealing
 Thunderous cannonade of roaring guns! . . .

CHAMBERS OF IMAGINATION

"The Imagination is the Poet's rack of anguish and also the chamber of his joy."—KEATS.

I

THE CHAMBER OF DELIGHT

My chambers of Imagination hold
One dream-embroidered chamber of Delight —
One room of all the many in my mind,
Whose casements peer upon a wondrous sight.

For there upon the hills and fields of Song,
Porphyry palaces and cloisters gleam;
Vistas of visions bloom; and cities rise —
Fabulous cities with their domes of Dream!

And it is in this chamber of Delight,
That rows of Hours always bring to me
Bright-colored baskets heaped with many joys,
Spreading them gaily out for me to see:

CHAMBERS OF IMAGINATION

The colors and the scents of growing flowers ;
The winds of dusky valleys ; sun-flecked woods ;
The moon that spills in silent lakes of silver :
The quiet stars on haunted solitudes.

A book of poetry ; a kindly deed ;
The happy voices in the lights of home ;
An April evening after twilight rain ;
The face of my Beloved in the gloam.

Not only these, but countless other joys
Are yielded me within this precious room ;
Goblets that brim with philosophic thought ;
Caskets-of-fancy, fragrant with perfume.

And often in the niches and the nooks,
I open up the Chests of Olden Days ;
And then unlock the Coffers of the Past,
Disclosing treasured trinkets to my gaze.

And from the shelves, I take the Jars of Art ;
I pour their golden liquid on the grime
And sordidness of common things, till, lo,
Their image-sparkling radiance dazzles Time !

CHAMBERS OF IMAGINATION

II

THE CHAMBER OF DESPAIR

Nor is this room the only room I know,
For many a time, my spirit passing there,
Entered to learn what anguish and what pain
Crouched in the doleful chamber of Despair

The room is dismal. Blackened tapestries
Flap to the moldering walls their shredded seams;
The shutters rattle. The floor is strewn
With clotted shards from broken jars of
Dreams. . . .

Here in this chamber, have the throngs of thoughts,
With sharply pointed lances, ringed me round;
Probed with their pikes each cranny of my mind;
Fallen on me, and lashed me tightly bound.

Hollow-eyed apparitions of defeat;
And ghosts of evil deeds in foolish hours
Have lacerated me with racking prongs;
And wreaked upon me their tormenting powers.

CHAMBERS OF IMAGINATION

And all my dastard words, that hemmed me in,
Have cried their accusations in my ears;
Have whipped my conscience with a scourging lash;
And tortured me with firebrands and spears!

THE END

