

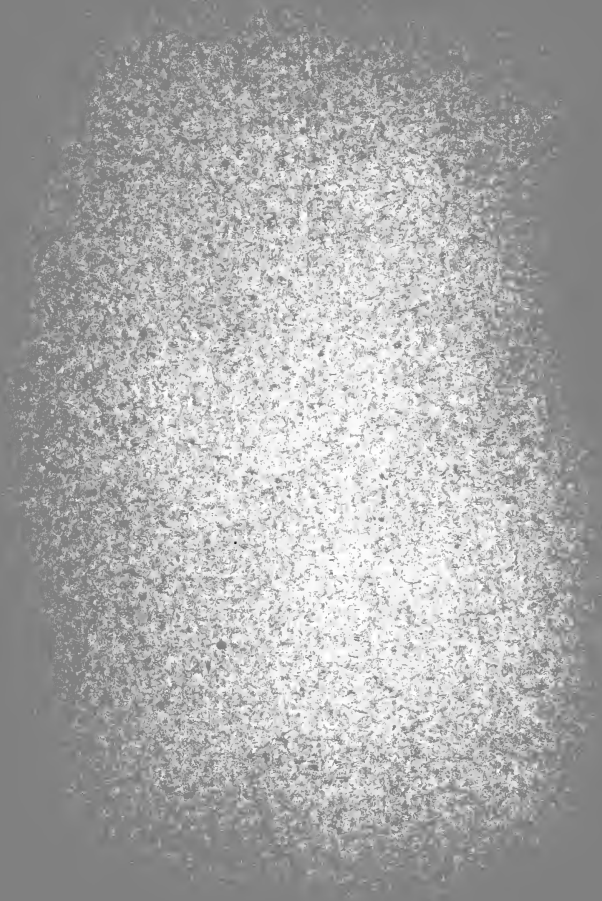
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LIFE AND FAITH

SONNETS

BY

GEORGE MCKNIGHT



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

1878

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PROLOGUE TO PART I.

Prologue to Part I.

SOME record I would leave of trustful hours,
When wider, livelier sympathy ended
The mind with freer scope for all its powers,
And made both felt and clearly understood
The casual evil and essential good
Of human motives; though full many a deed
Of sin seemed to require such plenitude
Of pity, reason would to love concede,
Divine compassion must respond to such great need.

Of holy hours, when Duty to incline
The will to yield a full obedience,
Spake with a tone of majesty divine;
And, pointing to no other recompense,

PROLOGUE TO PART I.

Gave by approving look immediate sense
Of great peculiar favor God bestows
Upon the just ; though lawful consequence
For both the evil and the good dispose
Events, now making glad, now darkening life with
woes.

Triumphant hours, when though the changeful look
Of Fortune darkly frowned, it terrified
Not even the delicate delights that brook
No hot pursuit, but only will abide
In souls where love and knowledge are allied
And, blended, issue forth through gazing eyes ;
Making a vision so serene and wide,
The narrowest horizon will comprise
The beauty of all lands, the glory of all skies.

And of more solemn hours, when Birth and Death
As Life's successive ministers were viewed ;—
One to inspire, one to withdraw the breath,
As Destiny ordains ; and though they stood

PROLOGUE TO PART I.

In mutual antithetic attitude
Among the powers obeying life's control,
A common end was seen to be pursued
By both, and, to the calmly reasoning soul,
Death evermore appeared the nearer to the goal.

Would that in those serener seasons, when
The sun of truth seemed with unclouded light
To beam upon me, farther reaching ken
Had to the eye belonged, or finer sight ;
Or I had stood upon some lofty height
Of learning, where great minds abide alone ;
That looking near or far, I haply might
Have then discovered, and to others shown,
Some precious verities still waiting to be known.

But though the truths I have recorded here
May be familiar as the flowers that grow
Along the wayside, yet they did appear
Into my soul immediately to flow

PROLOGUE TO PART I.

From their first source ; for I did surely know
Through my own new and clear experience
Their truthfulness, did feel the warming glow
Imparted to them in that fountain whence
Truths issue and disperse in radiant effluence.

And does not Nature own the wayside flowers ?
Perchance her rarest beauty is revealed
In dainty petals distant dewy bowers
Of unfrequented forests have concealed
From common vision, or the cultured field
Brought forth. Yet could we but discern the true
And perfect meaning Nature fain would yield
Unto our minds in flowers we daily view,
Their beauty might appear as precious and as new.

And though care-burdened men, day after day,
Go and return in haste, and give no heed
To blossoms seen so often by the way ;
Yet haply if a resting traveler, freed

PROLOGUE TO PART I.

A season from demands of want and need,
Should note a lowly modest comeliness

In blooming wayside herbage, then, indeed,
Pure, peaceful thoughts his spirit might possess,
And even some after hours, remembered peace might
 bless.

PART I.
L I F E.

Gifts.

“ Who maketh thee to differ ? ”

BROTHER, my arm is weaker far than thine;
And thou, my brother, in each common view
Of Nature canst discern some beauteous hue
Too delicate to thrill such brain as mine.
And yet, O brothers both, by many a sign
God shows for me as warm love as for you :
With equal care His light and rain and dew
Cherish the sturdy tree and clinging vine.
Be thou not proud of thy more massive brawn !
Nor thou, because within thy brain each thread,
Through which the thought pulsations pass and
spread
From cell to cell, has been more tensely drawn !
God's forces made you what you are, why then
Should you expect the reverence of men ?

Dues.

“Ye are not your own.”

AGAINST a soul the accusing angel brought
Complaint, and said, “The earth has not concealed

The sweat of one who tilled unpaid thy field —
’T is risen to Heaven!”

“He served but as he ought,”

The soul replied. “A suffering wretch besought
Help of the knowledge God to me revealed,
And in one hour all his disease was healed;
For this a hundred weeks he duly wrought.”

Then from the Throne the words of judgment came:

“The powers wherewith my servants are endowed
Are for my service; if, possession-proud,
One for his own behoof or glory claim
Their use and increase, he will rob his Lord —
Not his the faithful servant’s great reward.”

The Soul's Measure.

DOST thou of all attainments value those
Most that enlarge thy soul? and wouldst be
shown

A sign, whereby it clearly may be known
How much, from year to year, thy spirit grows?
By as much more as others' joys and woes,
Through wider sympathy, are made thine own,
By so much in soul stature hast thou grown.

The bounds of personality that close
Around uncultured spirits narrowly
Have been so far extended, and contain
So much the more of conscious life's domain;
And so much has thy knowledge grown to be
Like that of clearest souls, whose bounding walls
Will cast no shadow where the soul-light falls.

Time's Best Promise.

O HAPPY thou, whose daily work supplies
To others joys that else would never be!
For thine shall be the happiness and glee
Of many hearts, and thine the goodliest prize
The future showeth to fore-looking eyes :
For safely are reserved in store for thee
Occasions for yet nobler charity, —
It may be for sublime self-sacrifice.
The day may come when much of that delight
Shall in unmingled purity be thine,
Which fills the souls of messengers divine ;
Who, with invisible and silent flight,
O'er the abodes of mortals have bestrown
Dear blessings, and forever are unknown.

All Seek the Good.

*“And one far off, divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”*

DESPISE thou not thy neighbor, though the goal
Of his endeavors far remote has stood
From that which thine have worthily pursued.
The good he gains may be a scanty dole ;
Yet 't would dishonor Him whose high control
Directs the world, to think that aught but good
Has been from His omnipotence endued
With power of drawing any human soul.
Though oft within a heart thou shalt inquire,
Only sad heedlessness of right to find, —
Negations dark that shock the searching mind, —
Yet whatsoe'er incitement prompts desire
Is Nature's effort toward the Good to lead,
But lacking oft just guidance for the deed.

Les Misérables.

IF you have pity, O give not the whole
To those whose hopes are dead, though in their
dirge

The moans of present suffering sadly merge :
They too need pity who, as seasons roll,
Shall live beneath their base desires' control ;
Whom guilty hopes and secret fears shall urge
To ceaseless, toilsome efforts, with the scourge
Of discontentment, while the weary soul
No satisfying peace and rest shall find.

In devious ways they know not, some proceed ;
And see not far nor clearly whither lead
The branching paths they choose : and some, not
blind,
But driven forward by resistless power,
Approach with conscious steps the torturing hour.

The Inevitable Penance.

AGAINST thy penance thou wilt plead in vain
That laws their full control o'er wills exert:
The scourging of Remorse 't will not avert!
To this sad knowledge thou shalt soon attain, —
The spirit's sufferings, like the body's pain,
Cannot be measured by the ill-desert
The test of reason certifies. The hurt
Thy soul will feel, if some base impulse gain
Dominion o'er thy wavering will, and blot
With lasting stains, a page of Memory's book,
Whereon thy backward glance perforce must look,
Will be as keen, while reason doubteth not
That, in the struggle of each rueful hour,
Thy low incentives had resistless power.

The Ministry of Remorse.

DOES conscience with most bitter chiding speak?
The unremitting anguish thou must bear!

No work of merit, reasoning thought nor prayer
Can cleanse thy life of stains that foully reek.

Is there no remedy? One only seek, —

Let just and rigorous Remorse not dare
Thy self-abasing penance yet to spare,
Until endurance, lasting, willing, meek,
Imbue thy life with sweet humility.

O penitent, unwise were thy resort
To dull, benumbed forgetfulness, to thwart
The painful salutary ministry
Of one, divinely sent, who hath the power
To add so dear a grace to thy soul's dower.

Means of Rescue.

L AWS uncreated and omnipotent
Have shaped thy being, though to sin 't was
made

So prone. A hard lot was upon thee laid :
But think not 't was for thee malignly meant !
And though stern Chastisement will not relent
When aims of thine another's right invade,
Yet know, the Righteousness supreme, to aid
Thy woful weakness, hath His angel sent.
And if thou art forgiven by God or men,
Know that a willingness to suffer pain
And loss, for others' happiness and gain,
Touches thy soul. O, if thou feel it then,
From sinful aims, that have thy will enslaved,
Thou mayst by that love-kindling sense be saved.

A Vision of Forgiveness.

I.

IN a sweet dream I viewed, with vision clear,
A region where departed souls abode :
Bright rivers through the blooming valleys flowed,
And fragrant breezes murmuring soothed the ear ;
But all the souls with sin were stained and sere.

I marveled and bespake an angel there :

“Should souls like these abide in this sweet air ?
By these pure streams ?” The angel answered :

“Here

The air is God’s own breath of pitying love.

Forgiveness is diffused unseen therein,

And gives its balmy sweetness, until sin

Attracting from below, it from above

Descends as rain and dew ; whence are supplied

These streams, wherein stained souls are purified.”

A Vision of Forgiveness.

II.

“**B**UT must not souls like these, so seared and
scarred,

Insensible to love's warm breath remain ?

And though forgiveness wash away each stain,
Is not their comeliness forever marred ?”

I asked. The angel answered : “Naught so hard

The love of God is shed thereon in vain !

These souls, though calloused deep by sin and pain,
In this sweet air, made warm by His regard,
At length will feel a softening influence,

Melting the indurations sin has made.

Then knowledge of the good must needs pervade
Each soul, and rouse such holy penitence,

The pardon freely poured in these pure streams

Will cleanse its stains, and heal its scars and
seams.”

Rectitude.

WHEN hard and painful hindrance has withstood
Thy course, pursuing Duty's paths that lie
Distinctly traceable to every eye ;
When tempting thee in some sore troubled mood
Of spirit, whispered words have told of good,
That far outweighed all ills thou couldst descry
Borne in the consequence, to justify
One slight departure from thy rectitude ;
If still thy moral precepts held control,
And from the right thou didst not turn aside,
Thy human soul has proved itself allied
Most closely to the great majestic Soul
Of Nature, who will not, for any cause,
Depart the least from her eternal laws.

Clear Assurance.

“If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason, seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything to distract thee, —”

I.

THERE is too much on earth to mourn and rue,
Too much of body pain in every land,
And agony of soul, when thou hast scanned
Our human life, to take a mirthful view !
O, soberly and vigorously pursue
The task required by duty at thy hand :
Ne'er let a vagrant impulse make demand
Upon endeavors to thy life-work due.
And, trusting God's great purpose doth inclose
The purposes wherewith His creatures act
Accept with equal tolerance each fact,
Whether it aid thy efforts or oppose ;
As unperturbed, if they in failure end,
As if success their final zeal attend.

Clear Assurance.

“But keeping thy divine part pure, as if thou shouldst be bound to give it back immediately.”

II.

BE mindful always that thou art a child
Of Nature's hope. The God-like soul, on earth
Became once more incarnate at thy birth.
Watch well! keep thy divine part undefiled,
Unvexed by envy, calmly reconciled
To whatsoe'er for thee the years bring forth—
Disease, toil, penury, unhonored worth.
Keep thy heart's feelings sweet and kind and mild,
Though haughty glances of the unworthy proud
Cast on thy merit unprovoked disdain;
And let no selfish purpose with its train
Of troubling cares, even for a day, becloud
The clearness of thy spirit, making dull
Thy vision of the good and beautiful.

Clear Assurance.

“—*If thou holdest to this, expecting nothing and fearing nothing, —*”

III.

NOT as it looks, will be thy coming state.

It falsely looms to both thy hopes and fears.

Unwise is he, with prying eye, who peers

'Neath the unturned pages of the book of fate.

Yet whether good or evil hours await

Thy coming in the far successive years,

Thou mayst foreknow by that which now ap-
pears —

It well may daunt thee, or with joy elate.

For in thy heart's affections thou canst see

What thou becomest as the days go by :

Think not by skilled device to modify

The strict fulfillment of the high decree,

That more and more like the sublime or low

Ideals thou dost cherish, thou shalt grow.

Clear Assurance.

“ — But satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, — ”

IV.

SAY not all blessings of thy husbandry
Are insecure until the groaning wain
Bears to thy barn the shocks of golden grain!
One harvest was already ripe for thee
While yet unseeded lay thy fallow lea : —
A harvest that without the summer rain
May wave abundantly upon the plain,
For souls to reap with glad festivity.
O tiller, though thy fields yield no increase,
Because the fleeting clouds their rain refuse,
Its best reward thy labor need not lose ;
For thine may be the sweet contentful peace
The soul may draw from willing, worthy doing,
While yet the still eluding end pursuing.

Clear Assurance.

“— And with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou shalt live happy.”

THOUGHTS OF M. AURELIUS ANTONINUS.

V.

BUT little harm thy error works to thee,
Though it continue long, unless, indeed,
Through self-deception to it thou accede.
Of that beware! Thy lasting hurt 't will be!
For if in willfulness thou yield the key
That opes the soul for Truth to enter in,
Unto her enemy, how can she win
Thenceforth an entrance? O, watch jealously,
If veiled desire persuasively entreat
Thy reason for the form of an assent,
To give some fair or subtile argument
Admittance into Truth's peculiar seat!
Lest treason to the truth, within thy soul,
Deliver it to falsehood's hard control.

Defeat of Nemesis.

I.

A MORTAL, who had prospered well and long,
At length incurred the enmity of those
Immortal powers whose might none can oppose;
And Nemesis came down to quell the wrong
Of human joy from grief divorced. But strong
And brave before his unresisted foes
That mortal stood, while from his heart arose
Defiant accents of triumphant song :—
“ I charge you, O ye ministers of Fate,
That all of your appointed task ye do !
Behold me your co-worker ; for with you
I serve Eternal Destiny and wait
The sure unfolding of the great design
Wherein hath been ordained your work and mine.”

Defeat of Nemesis.

II.

DEFEATED, Nemesis sped to the skies,
And in the assembly of the gods complained:—

“Beneath my hand a human heart disdained
To plead for pity with entreating cries —
Upon Fate’s justice calmly it relies.

Have mortals our tranquillity attained?”

Then Jove himself to that strange question deigned
An answer. Thus his final word replies :

“If mortals in their hearts subordinate
Desire to duty, and from selfish prayer
That would pervert determined ends, forbear,
It was of old decreed by highest Fate,
That our exemption from all troubling cares
And vain solicitude, shall even be theirs!”

The Prayer of the Righteous.

I.

WHEN thy best efforts fail, when day by day
Thy heart grows sick of hope deferred, and
still

New obstacles arise, and omens ill
Threaten thy future, art thou moved to pray?
'T is well the good incentive to obey.

Pray for a confirmation of thy will
In fealty to duty — to fulfill
All her behests till she commands to stay
The strife, — from unavailing toil to rest.

But with all precious benefits of prayer —
Peace, strengthened purpose, fortitude to bear
Life's evils, thou shalt be most richly blest
If, all thy heart's desires comprised in one,
Thou art content to pray — "THY WILL BE DONE."

The Prayer of the Righteous.

II.

DOST thou desire the Father of us all
To watch with kindlier providence o'er thee
Than others? and with importunity
Of strong desires, dost thou upon Him call,
That special influence from heaven may fall
To bring some lingering joy more speedily?
Or heal thee of thy grievous malady
When thoughts of early death thy breast appall?
Not mine a wish to lessen aught thy trust
In power divine. Yet, haply, better aid
Had been received, if thus thy heart had prayed:
O Father, thou to all art good and just;
To help my hope to bloom, myself to live,
I ask no more than thou to all dost give.

Elihu's Argument.

“ If thou art righteous, what givest thou to Him? ”

I.

HEAR me, O Job, and heed my words. Al-
though

Upon the name of the Most High thou call,
And render truth and righteousness to all, —
Yea, on the worthy poor thy wealth bestow, —
The wind from out the wilderness will blow
As strongly, though it strike thy dwelling's wall ;
The fire of heaven as fatally will fall,
Although the flocks be thine that graze below.
For thinkest thou thy goodness will augment
His changeless love? Or, emulous of thine,
More active grow benevolence divine?
His goodness never sleeps! His powers are sent
To do their needful tasks, and in each work
Of seeming waste, conserving efforts lurk.

Elihu's Argument.

“If thou hast sinned, what dost thou against Him?”

II.

IF thou shouldst scorn Jehovah's high behest ;
Shouldst hear unmoved the orphan's cry of pain
And all the toil-won harvest shouldst retain,
Though famine sore upon thy plowmen pressed ;
The clouds of God above thy fields would rest,
And shed the early and the latter rain ;
Nor thorns nor weeds would lessen aught the gain
Of barley or of wheat thou gatherest.
Would thy weak wickedness repel the love
Of the Almighty, when with bounteous hand
He sows the seed of plenty on thy land ?
Behold the skies, how far they stretch above !
So high is He, howe'er thy sins increase,
Resentment will not mar His holy peace.

Elihu's Argument.

“For a man like thyself is thy wrong, and for a son of man thy righteousness.”

III.

BUT if to all thou render righteously,
And for all kindly deeds thy loins thou gird,
On men a benefit will be conferred,
That haply yet may reach far years to be.
And thou shalt treasure in thy memory
Full many a thankful look and grateful word, —
Perhaps of some whose hope fled ere they heard
Thy footfalls, bringing rescue sure with thee.
The blessings which the humble poor will breathe
Upon thee, through each pathway thou shalt trace,
Will follow thee to thy last resting place.
There, while thou sleepest peacefully beneath,
Like a low cloud, that outbreathed gratitude
On thy remembered grave will seem to brood.

The Retrospect.

“Consciousness comes after bliss.”

OUR lives are often happier than we know.
The waters of each stream of life discrete,
Through all their depth and width with joy are
sweet,
Whether they roughly rush or smoothly flow.
Pleasures are ripples bright that seaward go ;
But if the current adverse influence meet,
The waves upheaved and moved in forced retreat
Against the stream, are surges of life's woe.
And consciousness doth on the surface seem
To feel both waves and ripples, but it sinks
Seldom into the depths, nor often drinks
Of the profounder sweetness of the stream : —
But o'er the past if pensive Memory sweep,
She sees how bright the current and how deep.

Reaching Forth.

THOUGH fondly we review both hopes and fears,
The joys and even the griefs that once we
knew,

We never wish again to live them through.

'T is not because in that dead past appears
Too much of irksome toil, too many tears ;

Nor yet because of doubt if Memory's view
Of the delights they held be just and true,
That back to life we would not call those years.

We feel that should our vanished joys revive,
They would not satisfy to-day's desire.

Thought dwells on them as earnest of the higher
And more complete delights for which we strive —
Spurred ever onward by the hope of bliss,
More satisfying than has been, or is.

The Estrangement of Happiness.

I.

TO neither past nor future giving heed,
At first the soul enjoyed the present good ;
And Happiness bestowed beatitude
That well sufficed for all the present need.
But soon as Hope came, promising to lead
To bliss that in the distance dimly viewed,
With perfect sweetness seemed to be imbued,
And from the unsatisfying wholly freed,
The soul grew eager for the yet ungained ;
And, pressing forward with continual haste,
Would scarcely linger long enough to taste
The offered joys that present hours contained.
Thus Happiness was first estranged, aggrieved
Because her favors were so ill received.

The Estrangement of Happiness.

II.

THE soul, Hope-led, was prompted to pursue
Expected joys by Memory, who placed
In sight her tablets, whereupon were traced
Pictures that seemed of future bliss a view,
Though all their soft, harmonious tints were due
To the refracted radiance from the past.
But when the longed-for joys were reached at last,
Harsh Memory, with rude words and untrue,
Chided the present Happiness, complaining
That all the former sweetness had been changed.
Thus Happiness was finally estranged
From the pursuing soul, — thenceforth remaining
Most disappointing and averse forever,
To those who seek most eagerly her favor.

The Estrangement of Happiness.

III.

STILL Happiness remembers tenderly
Her old love for the soul, before the day
When Hope's eye wounded her with scornful ray,
Ere she had borne the blame of memory.
And sometimes, when with such authority
Duty commands, the whole will doth obey ;
Or when the visionary thoughts survey
Some lofty phase of Nature's harmony ;
And Hope in awe and silent reverence lets
Pursuit abate, while Memory holds in view
Only her records of the always true,
All her estrangement Happiness forgets,
And lavishes upon the soul once more
Her favor, still more precious than before.

Unhonored Worth.

*“All that Nature made thy own
Will like thy shadow follow thee.”*

ART slighted and neglected? Dost consume,
Unloved, the number of thy earthly days?
Who most deserves the tribute pity pays?
If beautiful, amiable light illumine
Thy inner soul, how sad the torpid gloom
Of any heart, that 'neath the warming rays
Outstreaming from thy spirit, yet delays
To beautify itself with love's sweet bloom!
Or other minds perhaps do not admire
Thy natural gifts—do not to thee assign
The rank among thy peers that should be thine;—
For shame! Insult not Nature! Why require
Of others confirmation and assent,
To make thee with her chosen gifts content?

“ Though Naught They may to Others be.”

IF in these thoughts of mine that now assuage
The tedium of the toilsome life I live,
The few who chance to notice should perceive
Nothing their lasting interest to engage,
And quickly cease to turn the farther page,
It were a shameful thing if I should grieve.
For if kind Destiny has chosen to give
To other minds, in many a clime and age,
Days brighter than my hours, should I repine?
And what if by an overhasty glance
Some import be not heeded, or, perchance,
Too dim a light upon the pages shine?
Would I be wronged, even though the wealth I own
And not the less enjoy, were all unknown?

Perpetual Youth.

*“And ever beautiful and young remains
Whom the divine ambrosia sustains.”*

THE days of youth! The days of glad life-gain!
How bright in retrospection they appear!
Yet standing in my manhood's stature here,
I ask not Time his fleet hours to refrain.
The joyance of those days may yet remain.
Fly on swift seasons! Not with grief or fear
I see your speed increase from year to year;—
The soul may still its buoyant youth retain!
May, if supplied with its celestial food,
Forever keep so young it will not cease
To grow in strength, in stature to increase
Through all its days, whate'er their multitude.
And lo, ambrosia plentifully grows
On many a field through which thought, culling,
goes.

Soul=Food.

“ Whence all our spiritual food is brought.”

NOT every truth can nourish. It behooves
A soul to choose its food with care aright,
If it would grow in the pure spirit's might.
Vainly, with science for its guide, it roves
In search of truth, and clearly parts and proves,
Unless the verities its guiding light
Discovers and illumines to its sight,
Add to the objects it admires and loves.
For only when the soul in love extends
Its sympathy to other life, — acquires
Similitude to that which it admires,
And thus itself with other being blends,
It finds its proper, growth-promoting food —
Experience of the beautiful and good.

Discernment of the Good and Beautiful.

*“ And you must love before to you
There will seem worthiness of love.”*

THAT all the seasons may bring forth for thee
Soul-food in thought's wide fields, however wise
And diligent thy tith, 't will not suffice
Unless from selfish care thy mind is free.
The light that to those tender plants shall be
Most genial is the light of searching eyes
Long gazing ; and the loving heart supplies
The warmth that makes them bloom most fragrantly.
If thou art heedful thus thy land to till,
Within thy mind's domain there is no field,
So cold and barren, but has power to yield
Ambrosia, and with joy thy soul to fill.
And others to thy garnered store will haste,
To share with thee the sweets that else would waste.

“The Soul is Dyed by the Thoughts.”

THE objects whereupon the affections rest
Tinge them, and with their good and evil hues
The source of love within the soul infuse ;
So they who love not many, love not best.
His love thou wilt receive with languid zest,
Who loveth only thee. Thou canst not choose
But feel its vapid sameness : — soon 't will lose
Its power to still the longings in thy breast.
But his, who loveth all things fair and good,
Comes to thee filled with fragrance taken up
From every overflowing flower cup
That tints the light of garden, field or wood,
Wherein his steps in blissful moods have wended,
When the plant-souls with his in love were blended.

Kinship.

“ So light yet sure the bond that binds the world.”

I FOUND beside a meadow brooklet bright,
Spring flowers, whose tranquil beauty seemed to
give

Glad answers as to whence and why we live.

With pleased delay I lingered while I might,
Because I thought when they were out of sight,
No more of joy from them I should receive.

But now I know absence cannot bereave
Their loveliness of power to give delight,
For still my soul with theirs sweet converse holds,
Through sense more intimate and blest than see-
ing; —

A bond of kindred, that includes all being,
Our lives in conscious union now infolds.

And O, to me it is enough of bliss
To know I am, and that such beauty is.

Scorn.

“Which wisdom holds unlawful ever.”

I F on a child of Nature thou bestow
A scornful thought, a grievous punishment
Is thine; for now no longer evident
Are loving looks Nature was wont to show.
Yet alters not her favor toward thee so; —
Not really does she thy scorn resent;
Her heart is too full of divine content
To feel the troubling passions mortals know.
'T is thou, by harboring unjust disdain
Within thy selfish bosom, who hast marred
The beaming tenderness of her regard.
Thy sympathy with her is less, in vain
Is now each kindly look of hers, each smile
Of favor thou didst oft enjoy erewhile.

Fortune and Wisdom.

BECAUSE with such capricious preference
Fortune on men gifts of the gods bestows,
Jove took from her the best of all, and chose
Wisdom, *divine contentment* to dispense.
And some have thought that Fortune still resents
The loss of her prerogative, and shows
Haughty aversion and disdain for those
Whose prayers to her, Wisdom's best gift prevents.
But Fortune in her secret heart admires
Her rival's favorites, and, would they choose
To seek her favor, she might not refuse
Some glittering bauble to their souls' desires.
And 't is not strange, when they as worthless deem
Her kindness, if unloved of her they seem.

Fame and Wisdom.

THEY only with whom Wisdom doth abide,
With Honor's wreaths are worthy to be
crowned,

By Fame proclaimed to reverent throngs around.
But often, far away from Wisdom's side,
Fame flies, with Self-assertion for her guide,
Whose trumpet through the land is heard to sound;
And praises of the unworthily renowned
Are shouted till far echoes have replied.

But Wisdom knoweth well to choose her own ;
Who, if the favorites of her secret choice
For that grieve not, but silently rejoice
That no loud cry of Fame shall make them known
Even as the elect of Wisdom, lest some word
Of hers should not so clearly then be heard.

Opportunity.

HAS thy pursuit of knowledge been confined
Within a narrow range by penury,
And by the hands' hard toil required of thee?
O, sorely tried! But if God had designed
A strong, divinely gifted human mind
Should in the world appear, and grow to be
A grand exemplar of humanity,
Perhaps his wisdom, provident and kind,
Seeking a time and place upon the earth,
Wherein such noble life might grow and bear
Its perfect fruitage, beautiful and rare,
Would choose and foreordain, tried soul, a birth
Like that assigned to thee! O, squander not,
The opportunity given in thy lot.

Forewarned.

I F finer powers within thy brain inhere,
Part of mankind's best heritage is placed
In thy safe keeping. Sad it were to waste
In hard work of the hands a gift so dear.
But shouldst thou ever from a loftier sphere
Review thy life — its history retraced
Through soul-impressions deep and uneffaced —
Within a world where men from year to year
Wrought painfully in body weariness ;
And, while thou sharedst in the pleasant use
Of what their labor struggled to produce,
Thy own strong arm ne'er felt the irksome stress
Of that hard toil, — forsooth I fear a trace
Of shame will overspread thy angel face.

Triumph.

THOUGH hard surroundings, like unsparing foes,
Against thee have prevailed, a victory
May yet be thine, and noble life may be
The trophy which thy triumph will disclose.
The world's great prizes thou must yield to those
Of better fortune! Yield them willingly :
By so much more thy virtue shall be free
From trammels selfish cares on it impose.
Famed, far-off landscapes thou shalt never view!
Submit: the bliss denied thee do not crave ;
And thy attentive soul a sight may have
Of the omnipresent Beautiful and True,
So clear, 't will bring thee nearer to thy God,
Than if thou soughtst His wonders far abroad.

“An Edler in the Land.”

THE Highest One, I trust, will not despise
Thy life's oblation, though it be but hours
Of gratitude and wonder; for in bowers
Of wildest woodland that remotely lies,
Known only to the bee that hath not eyes
For finer lines and hues, He bids his powers
Cherish most delicately tinted flowers;
Assuring thus our hearts that He doth prize
For its own sake the beauty, pure and lowly,
Of fruitless blossoms. Can He value less
The dearer, unobtrusive comeliness
Of a meek human soul, devout and holy;
Even if, in humbleness of life unknown,
Conspicuous virtues it has never shown?

Not in Vain.

ALTHOUGH with valiant arm thou hast not slain
One of the evils that our world infest ;
Nor with a clear, full utterance expressed
One thought that yields the mind a precious gain ;
Yet if thou hast, to soothe another's pain,
Toiled with a willing heart, or on thy breast
Hast lulled a little weary child to rest,
Rejoice and hope ! Thou hast not lived in vain.
Thy life, one of the drooping boughs that grow
Upon the tree of Destiny, has been ;
But even the fairest blossoms, widely seen,
Which the far upward reaching branches show,
With no diviner beauty have illumed
The world, than these wherein thy life has bloomed.

Consummation.

“ The grand results of Time.”

'T WAS needful that with life of low degree
But slowly rising, long the earth should teem
Ere man was born ; and still the guiding scheme
Seemed not to rest in full maturity.
For Nature since has so assiduously
Cherished his growth in spirit, it would seem
That lofty human souls, in her esteem,
Are the best trophies of her husbandry.
And now, as if she neared her final aim,
She sheds upon them with conspicuous care
Each fruitful influence, that they may bear
Great and pure thoughts and deeds of noble fame ;
As if her crowning joy were to transmute
The sum of Time's results into soul-fruit.

Soul-Symmetry.

NOT to win great successes in the fray
Of right with wrong, nor to create some
mould

Of beauty distant ages shall behold,
The purpose of thy life should choose its way : —
The evidence but not the substance they —

The blossoms that in due time will unfold :
But if thy rude haste has the bud unrolled,
Their beauty withers in a summer's day.

Then let the soul in its integrity
Be nourished well ; and if it come to bear
Such blooming splendor, far-renowned and rare,
That distant eyes flock thitherward to see ;
Or only leaves, its symmetry shall tell
Of healthful growth : — 't will please the Master
well.

In Unison.

MAY nevermore a selfish wish of mine
Grow to a deed, unless a greater care
For others' welfare in the incitement share.
O Nature, let my purposes combine,
Henceforth, in conscious unison with thine, —
To spread abroad God's gladness, and declare
In living form what is forever fair.
Meekly to labor in thy great design,
O, let my little life be given whole!
If so, by action or by suffering,
Joy to my fellow creatures I may bring;
Or, in the lowly likeness of my soul,
To beautiful creation's countless store
One form of beauty may be added more.

Disinthrallment.

DOST strive against thy selfishness in vain?
Though grieved and shamed that it so oft
should fill

Thy weary breast with wrangling clamor, still
Do low importunate desires remain
To vex thy peace of soul? Thou shalt attain
Thy freedom not alone by power of will
And lofty aspiration; not until
Thou make another's benefit and gain
The object of thy earnest, strong endeavor.
And think not even then to disinthrall
Thy soul from selfish longings once for all,
Thou must again strive on and on forever
Towards larger liberty. Yet it may be,
Death will have power at once to set thee free.

Live while You Live.

A VIEW of present life is all thou hast !
Oblivion's cloud, like a high-reaching wall,
Conceals thy former being, and a pall
Hangs o'er the gate through which thou 'lt soon have
passed.

Dost chafe, in these close bounds imprisoned fast ?

Perhaps thy spirit's memory needs, withal,
Such limits, lest vague dimness should befall

Its records of a life-duration vast.

And artfully thy sight may be confined

While thou art dwelling on this earthly isle,
That its exceeding beauty may, the while,

Infuse itself within thy growing mind,

And fit thee, in some future state sublime,

Haply, to grasp a wider range of time.

Memento Mori.

LOOK, soul, how swiftly all things onward tend!
Such universal haste betokens need
In Destiny's design of pressing speed.
Speed thou, stay not until thou reach the end!
Upon the haste of time there may depend
Some far-off good. Thou child of Time, give heed,
That with a willing heart and ready deed,
To Time's great haste thy dole of speed thou lend!
Though beauteous scenes thy onward steps would stay,
Press forward toward the Goal that beckons thee —
The unimagined possibility
Of all the mighty future to assay!
And when thou drawest near thy hour to die,
Rejoice that one accomplishment is nigh.

All to Hope.

LIFE'S real good remains—shows no decrease.
An inner sense of beauty still thou hast
Albeit impressing forms have wholly passed :
Thy love will never with its object cease.
The ill of life is transient, though release
Seem slow to thee. No discord will outlast
The conflict, though desires of thine are cast
In moulds too rigid for thy being's peace.
Death's change they dread not who have well re-
volved
This truth ; — still hoping all and fearing naught,
Though into elements ungrasped by thought
The form of their desires shall be dissolved : —
Hoping all conflict in that change may end,
Trusting Life's good shall all Death's power tran-
scend.

“Reason thus with Life.”

O LIFE of mine! I am not well assured,
That the isolation separating thee
From boundless being would forever be
Thy highest good. Still, to be thus immured
May well be deemed a precious boon, procured
For none but favorites of Destiny; —
Even though the walls of personality,
When for a little season they 've endured,
Into the Unlimited must surely melt.
For if thine isolation had not been,
Sweet life, the many joys of thoughts serene
That have been mine, had not as mine been felt:
Still, hadst thou been not wholly separate,
Joys might have been yet more serene and great.

Assured.

“When I heard the Earth song.”

WHEN I reflect on Nature's mighty past,
That far transcends the comprehending mind ;
And countless years through which it seems de-
signed
Her unexhausted lifetime yet shall last ;
And then with these durations, dim and vast,
Compare the little space before, behind,
Wherein my earthly being is confined,
What triviality on this poor life is cast ! —
Unless my soul clings to one truth sublime ;
Whereby its self-assurance still it keeps
While gazing into those abysmal deeps : —
I 'm part of that which was throughout a time
That reaches far back in eternity,
And part of that which yet so long shall be.

Fearless.

UPON Life's sea how high the billows surge!
O soul, each bark has need its prow to keep
Directed well against the wave-fronts steep,
Nor let from that one line its course diverge.
But fearest not when such strong waves shall urge
Thy fragile skiff, such furious tempests sweep
Thee, helpless, over the tumultuous deep,
They 'll speedily thy being quite submerge?
Nay, my eternal home is that great sea!
Then why should I, though all unskilled and frail,
Tremble at coming storms, and fear to sail
The arduous voyage of my destiny?
I can but sink again, when tempest-spent,
Into my home and native element.

Action and Rest.

AS if to reconcile us to our doom,
Nature in fitting symbols has expressed
The equal good of action and of rest.
The splendors which the eastern sky illumine
As busy day approaches, when the gloom
Of restful night draws near, glow in the west ;
The earth in Autumn's aged foliage dressed,
Is beautiful as in the Spring's fresh bloom ;
And, weighing the alternate joy and pain
Of changeful human life, the wisest sages,
Who gather knowledge from all climes and ages,
Have failed, and yet will fail, to ascertain
Which hour is more auspicious — when the breath
Is drawn at birth, or last expired in death.

Death the Renewer.

'T WAS in far ancient days it did befall :
The forms of Nature, filling all the space
Of their abode, had lost their youthful grace ; —
The years were sadly withering great and small.
And when the gods met in their council hall
To choose out one among their mighty race,
Who should renew the faded earth's wan face,
None could perform the task among them all, —
So strictly do the laws of Fate restrain
Each to his proper work — save one alone ;
Death felt the arduous duty was his own.
Therefore, the sacred synod did ordain,
And for all time was passed the high decree,
That Death thenceforth should the Renewer be.

Death and Love.

TOWARD Death, Love beareth enmity so great,
From bitter words he can refrain not long,
Though hushing fears within his breast are strong.
And once Death cried to Jove against such hate :
“I, serving Life most loyally, whom Fate
Decrees my master, bear a grievous wrong ;
For Love, Life’s pensioner, oft joins the throng
Of them that name me but to execrate !”
Then Jove replied : “Was it ne’er told to thee
How blind Love is ? He is Life’s careful friend ;—
Thy work in dissolution seems to end,
And so thou seemst to him Life’s enemy.
For Love, with his dim vision, the return
Thou renderest unto Life, cannot discern.”

The Guile of Nature.

THOU knowest somewhat of Nature's strategems.
Ofttimes, by strong desire, she moves thy will
To deeds that profit not thyself, but still
Are needed to promote her cherished schemes :
And such thy love of earthly being seems,
And fear of death's undemonstrated ill.
'T is needful that these human ranks we fill
A little longer here as Nature deems ;
So to our weary life vague hope she brings,
And stills with fear the discontented breast ;
Lest souls become enamored of their rest,
And earth too soon abandoned of her kings ;
Lest dire disorder and calamity
Befall the plans of highest Destiny.

Euthanasia.

SEEING our lives by Nature now are led
In an appointed way so tenderly ;
So often lured by Hope's expectancy ;
So seldom driven by scourging pain and dread ;
And though by destiny still limited
Insuperably, our pleasant paths seem free : —
May we not trust it ever thus shall be ?
That when we come the lonely vale to tread,
Leading away into the unknown night,
Our Mother then, kindly persuasive still,
Shall gently temper the reluctant will ?
So, haply, we shall feel a strange delight,
Even that dreary way to travel o'er,
And the mysterious realm beyond explore.

PROLOGUE TO PART II.

Prologue to Part II.

'T IS needful there should be some stable forms
Of faith, to give a resting place and stay
To wavering virtue, lest the furious storms
Of evil impulse bear the soul away.
'T is needful that on conscious truth we lay
Foundations for the forms of faith, so sure,
That come the sweeping tempests whence they
may,
Resting upon unmoving rock secure,
Those soul-sustaining forms unshaken shall endure.

And well I trust all earnest souls, if each
Delve in the soil whereon its life has grown,
A sure foundation for their faith may reach.
The seeming and uncertain are bestrown

PROLOGUE TO PART II.

O'er all experience, yet the surely known,
Whose truthfulness all minds may apprehend,
Lies underneath — firm as the floors of stone
Below earth's varied surface, that extend
The same where valleys sink and stately hills ascend

O brother, though I seem not well to found
My joy and confidence in love divine;
Though only few have chosen adjacent ground,
Whose surface seems to give as doubtful sign
Of solid rock beneath as this of mine,
Whereon to build belief; although thou trace
No common stay between my faith and thine,
Connecting while it severs them in space,
Yet deeply they may rest upon the same sure base.

And if the edifice of faith I rear
Upon foundations that have seemed to me
Both steadfast and secure, to thee appear
Of scant dimensions, blame not hastily

PROLOGUE TO PART II.

The ground whereon it rests. It well may be
If I had delved more widely, and laid bare
A broader underlying certainty,
A risen structure would have stood even there,
As high as thou hast built — as stately and as fair.

Yet, brother, scorn not the abode wherein
My soul with peace and comfort doth reside;
For it hath spacious, lightsome rooms within:
Hath one with outlook unobscured and wide,
Whereinto shine the stars on every side;
Where hope finds refuge when by fear sore pressed.
For signs of Highest Goodness, verified
By clear responses heard within the breast,
Have builded for my soul a bower of holy rest.

Hath one, that often to the externally
Beholding, shows a gloomy look within;
For evidence of sad necessity
Requiring conflict, suffering and sin,

PROLOGUE TO PART II.

And all the ills that are, or e'er have been
Hath reared its walls : yet if my spirit choose
 Therein to dwell awhile, its sight can win,
Of human life and ruling laws, such views
As with contentful peace the feeling thought infuse.

It hath another, whose transparent sides
 Consist of clear persuasions that all light
Has come from heaven. Within it Doubt abides,
 And for all outward radiance claims a right
 To enter — both the beautiful and bright
And that which clouds reflect of sombre hue.

Yet oft my soul there stays the livelong night :
For in the darksome hours 't is only through
Clear, crystal walls can pass gleams of the fair and
 true.

And one, whose consecrated space no sound
 But thanksgiving and adoration knows.
Confirmed beliefs in Mind that hath no bound,
 And in all being lives and rules, compose

PROLOGUE TO PART II.

The lasting structure of its walls that rose
As if by power of music ; when the sign
Of conscious purpose, Nature often shows,
Did with the reasoning consciousness combine
To form a silent chord — faith in a Thought Divine.

PART II.
F A I T H .

Light in Darkness.

*“ Though Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravin, shrieked against his creed.”*

HOW oft, when seamen on a wreck from whence
The foaming billows soon must sweep them,
plead

With Heaven for help in that dread hour of need,
The storm roars on, none of its rage relents!

Such harsh succession of the earth's events,

And early deaths whereof there seems no heed

In Nature's heart, might make us doubt, indeed,

If aught but selfish strife of the elements,

The ordinations of the world controls!

Yet in the Uncreated there must be

A source of predetermined tendency

Which shapes at least a few sweet human souls—

Of goodness and of beauty types serene—

Else one my heart has loved would ne'er have
been.

Fidei Fundamentum.

*“If I but remember only,
Such as these have lived and died.”*

MY soul's grief cannot rightfully atone
Even for one hour of an ungrateful mood.

Our blessings lay a debt of gratitude
Upon us, that remains when they have flown.
Sweet, disembodied soul! O, you have shown,
In the unselfish aims your life pursued,
So clear an evidence that God is good,
My trust in Him no faltering should have known;
Nor can I ever with just reason fear
As one who feels no firm ground for his faith;
Even though you were not saved from early death!
Even though I never more on earth shall hear
The soft tones of your words so true and wise,
Nor see the tender glow of your dear eyes.

“He that Formed the Eye shall He not See?”

I F love has been created, if it flows
Not forth immediately from the Divine ;
If to bring aught to pass along some line
Of His great scheme, it pleased God to compose
Love out of elements that ne'er disclose

The power and aim of love till they combine,
The inward thought that must be, ere design
To outward, realized existence grows,
Would still support our trust that God is good.

Though He who formed the eye see not with eyes,
Yet must the earliest purpose to devise
Sight for the yet unseeing, have pursued,
As final object, that which adumbrated
The vision then existing, uncreated.

No Secondary Cause of Love.

I.

NO chance from selfish motives could compose
The unselfish goodness we have known to be.

That which in human hearts we sometimes see,
In Nature's heart pure goodness doth disclose.

Search ye its forming cause? Your science throws
In vain its light upon that mystery.

Thou Cause beyond our knowledge! thanks to thee
For all unselfish love life ever shows : —

For every action of self-sacrifice,

Country or race or kindred to defend ;

For every kindly thought of friend for friend

That e'er was told by looks of meeting eyes,

Whereby our doubting minds may clearly prove

That in thy Being is a source of love.

No Secondary Cause of Love.

II.

SINCE oft a soul's self-seeking pathway lies
Through others' gain, 't is said that many driven
By self-love's impulse, purposely have striven
For others' good unto self-sacrifice.
Strangely-deceived Self-love! through the disguise
Of others' good thou sawst thy own — 't was
given
Oft to thy grasp ; — couldst thou forget it? even
Prefer that which is hateful to thine eyes?
I think the selfish bee, even if she knew
How many a sweetly blooming race yet lives
Through fertilizing aids her pillage gives,
Would ne'er forget to sip the honey-dew.
And but for it the drowsy summer hours
Not long would hear her hum among the flowers.

Ubique et Semper.

I.

LOVE that regards not self we daily feel!
Rejoice my soul, that thou such love dost
know;

And should the wise, defining clearly, show
The power of love, with its true warmth and zeal,
In many an instinct lower lives reveal,

Rejoice no less. But on no aim bestow
The name of love unless it outward go—
Abandon self to work another's weal.

O Spirit of Love, dost thou indeed pervade
All the degrees of Being? All the more
Will I thy omnipresent power adore!
Although thy function in each lower grade
Dim knowledge to our minds of thee imparts,
Till thou revealest thyself in human hearts.

Ubique et Semper.

II.

SHOW me that lower instincts have ascended
During vast time in slow gradation due,
Till to the height of human love they grew!
Yea, even that these arose from force expended
In orbits of primeval atoms blended
In the old chaos! Joyful were such view
Of the unselfish impulse, active through
The world's vast former lifetime, and extended
Beyond into eternity foregone.
If ancient atom-pulses have become
Through favoring concurrence, in their sum,
Motives that to all kindly deeds lead on
The human soul, doubt not they always strove
In the direction, with the aim of love.

Revealed.

O JUDGE not Nature by the mantle cold
That wraps the wintry earth and all its graves,
Nor by the summer landscape as it waves
Beneath the breeze. To thee was never told
The meaning those external views infold ;
In vain thy soul with theirs communion craves.
But if the power of life to thee yet saves
Dear human fellowship, and thou canst hold
Within thy heart the joys and griefs that swell
Another's heart, whene'er with blest surprise
Deeply-illumined, softly-glowing eyes
Meet with thy own, thou understandest well
What Nature then reveals to thee. O, rest
Thy thought of her on what thou knowest best.

No Waste of Life.

*“And early deaths whereof there seems no heed
In Nature’s heart,—”*

HEAR what self-vindicating Nature saith :—
“ In hymeneal songs I tell my mirth
And every new life from its hour of birth
The fullness of my love inheriteth.
My hardest strife is to prolong the breath
Of helpless young, in danger, cold, and dearth.
My tears in parents’ eyes bedew the earth
Beside the monuments of early death.
I, heedless that so many must forego
Life’s sweetness after one short moment’s taste ?
Each brief existence proves I will not waste
One drop of precious life, but will bestow
On each, with equal, unremitting care,
Its least and greatest law-appointed share.”

The Part and the Whole.

SOME tendencies within thy soul I learn,
O Nature, since of thy great life my own
Is part—the part to me best known,
Wherein thy aims directly I discern
Oft in my soul thy kind affections yearn ;
But often outward acts of thine have shown
Harshness that tender human hearts bemoan.
Can kindness dwell with will so hard and stern ?
Thus Nature answers: “Thou art part of me ;
Search in each part the qualities of the Whole :
But seek no measure in thy partial soul
To mete the bounds of my necessity,
Or mark the final object of my hope !
It far transcends thy powers’ utmost scope.”

The Earliest Need.

*“That self might be annulled—its bondage prove
The fetters of a dream opposed to love.”*

MOURN that man's soul is selfish, but defame
Not Nature. Thy regrets 't will soothe to
heed

His spirit's adolescence. Thou 'lt concede
One want may his first efforts justly claim.

To grow must needs be the young soul's first aim,

Yea, duty! and the motives which this need
Begets, and rears into accomplished deed,

Though selfish, do not all deserve thy blame.

When such maturity the soul attains,

That care of self may cease, then it extends

Its sympathy to other lives, and blends

Its joy with theirs, its sorrow with their pains ;

And finds through consciousness of brotherhood

Its own desire sufficed by others' good.

Complaints and Answers.

I.

WHEREFORE, O Nature, thy excessive zeal?
Thy aims are doubtless right, but oft the deed
Of time and place appears to take no heed,
And therefore not to reach the general weal.
'T is not that thou shouldst less profusely deal:—
We chide thee, not because the ripened seed
So oft surpasses all apparent need—
Such care thou seemest for thy types to feel.
But when thou seest Death invade our life,
'Gainst his approach thou dost protest through
pain,
Sometimes prevailing, and sometimes in vain:
O why, when hope remains not in the strife,
Dost thou prolong thy ineffectual plea
Of agony, for life that cannot be?

Complaints and Answers.

II.

THINK not, my children, that the spring's bare
plain

Alone incites my care of seeds,—know ye,
The very germs of life are dear to me,
Although their hope of growth they ne'er attain.
And call not fruitless pangs my protest vain
Against the near destroying power I see
Approach a life I love too tenderly.
Behold the struggling life itself is pain!
And can ye find it in your hearts to blame
My ceaseless love, and charge it with excess,
Because when life's low fire grows less and less,
And now burns only with a flickering flame,
I will not quench it, nor the faintest spark
That lingers yet awhile ere all is dark?

Complaints and Answers.

III.

THE best of human rulers oft forego
A wonted law-enforcement, if it lead
To grievous hardship. Laws by thee decreed,
O Sovereign Nature, are not tempered so
By mercy, but alike through joy and woe
Unanswering, unrelenting, still proceed!
Forsooth of fixed succession there is need,
That thinking beings may their future know.
Yet such slight swerving as would oft avert
Unmeasured anguish, scarce could make us lose
Faith in our prescience. Still thou dost refuse.
Does order so much more control exert
In thy heart than in ours — or so much less
The care of sentient creature's happiness?

Complaints and Answers.

IV.

YE well may grieve, O children, if it seem
My constancy to order e'er impedes
The granting of one boon for which love pleads!
Within my heart the longing is supreme
To give and cherish life, and none will deem
The love of mere unloving order leads
My just, undeviating course, who heeds
The vast repleteness of the world's life-scheme.
Of life, real and potential, know ye well,
The universe is full! My pulses waste
No intermediate efforts while they haste
From life to life its progress to impel.
Where'er my law-directed purpose tends,
The means through which it passes all are ends.

The Covenant.

THE properties of the elements, if scanned
When thought is clearest, seem the seal extant
Of an inviolate, solemn covenant,
Wherein has been with plain distinctness planned
A scheme of bounty that unchanged shall stand.
Omnipotence is firmly bound to grant
Each promised favor, which the feeblest want,
Assured of full performance, may demand.
Each particle of Being, though but dust
That flies and whirls according to the laws
Of outward and of inward forces, draws
Its proper share in the allotment just
Of help divine, toward the one perfect end
Whither all forms of Nature strive and tend.

No Promise Broken.

JUSTICE of God, O most impartially
Thou judgest! Though we scarce can bear the
light

Of heavenly emanations, pure and bright
As thy divine, transcendent equity.
The lowest worm will ne'er be wronged by thee;
Though the denial to so mean a wight
Of some small portion of its lawful right,
Would save a noble life from agony,
And grant a boon besought with urgent prayer.
Thy sentence is that promises divine,
Which Nature's laws promulgate and define,
Shall not to one be broken, though its share
Of favor be so small, 't would seem not hard
So low and mean a thing to disregard.

The Birth of Sorrow.

WHEN Sorrow first appeared in Heaven of yore,
The angels by the voice of Fame beguiled,
Believed he sprang from God's unreconciled
Resentment toward some wrong that vexed Him sore.
But strange it seemed — they marveled more and
more —

That one of mien so meek, and look so mild,
Should be of such stern parentage the child ;
Till heavenly Truth her tidings to them bore :
“ This beauteous stranger seraph whom ye see,
Is offspring of that Hierarch benign,
Who reconciles in unison divine,
The perfect peace of present Deity
And strifes through which Creation's work goes
on, —
Of God's great Patience ye behold the son.”

The Work of Evil.

I N the great Hierarchy of the skies
The seat of Harmony is next the Throne,
To the angels, times and places to make known
Wherein obedient zeal to act should rise.
Now Satan's fall of old was in this wise :
Once, when desire that just before had flown
Warm from the Eternal Heart, throbb'd in his
own,
With Harmony not waiting to advise,
He flew in haste the prompting pulse to obey.
Thus he estranged the highest Harmony ;
And then not knowing how to make agree
His works with Nature's wants, became the prey
Of unadapted impulse, — and he still,
Striving to do the good, does only ill.

The Mission of Sorrow.

I.

BETWEEN the world-directing Harmony
And Evil—who 't is said in Heaven once bore
A name remembered on the earth no more —
Estrangement grew to such high enmity,
The peace of Heaven was brought in jeopardy, —
Contentious thoughts that ne'er were known before
Vexing celestial bosoms o'er and o'er!
Still the Supreme chose not by stern decree
To exercise His high arbitrament;
But summoning a seraph from among
His waiting messengers, one fair and young,
Sorrow by name, him graciously He sent,
On Evil's restless ardor to impose
Restraining guidance of experienced woes.

The Mission of Sorrow.

II.

ALTHOUGH at first impetuous Evil spurns
Sorrow's restraints, they grow in strength until
The purpose of their being they fulfill,
And Harmony no more offense discerns.
But Evil with unlesened longing yearns
Toward the divine activity; and still,
When pulses of divine incitement thrill
His being, with intemperate zeal he burns.
Therefore must constant Sorrow yet restrain
His zealous ardor, that his deeds may be
Acceptable to highest Harmony.
And thus it seems it ever shall remain:—
As moderating guardian till the end,
Sorrow on Evil closely shall attend.

Fixed Fate.

A MONG the sons of God the Accuser came
And said: "Your willing virtue is not free:
That which ye are doth lay necessity
Upon your choice — ye must and will the same.
The Eternal Will cannot exemption claim
From laws the Eternal Being doth decree:
Effect and cause are linked unchangeably,
Constructing Destiny's unyielding frame."
Then answered he, the Clearly Seeing called:
"True, O Accuser, as thy words have shown,
The effect that is was possible alone!
But thinkest thou our hearts can be appalled
By that wherein we find assurance blest?
The Possible is one, since 't is the best."

The Mental Spectrum.

OF the reflected rays of soul-light, few
From nearest objects reach the intellect ;
And formed beliefs within the mind deflect
And part them variously while passing through, —
Making the images they cast not true
To outward things. Yet 't is by this defect
Of mind-transparency that we detect
Most beauteous beams, else hidden from our view.
'T is thus the falling rain drops, half opaque,
The clear, uncolored sunbeam decompose ;
Yet the refracted light which through them flows
Is that which God selects, when He would make
A sign to gladden every creature's eye,
And sets His rainbow in the evening sky.

The Permanence of Truth.

*“All the forms are fugitive,
But the substances survive.”*

OUR creeds of living essence of the mind
Consist, of conscious life-experience,
Which by the lights and shades of evidence
Has into formed ideas been defined.
And though full many a creed may have declined
Within our souls, they failed not wholly thence :
Their substance shares the spirit's permanence,
Though to decay their forms have been consigned.
And should the essence of the mind remain
Fixed in one form, with no progressive change?
Through higher, fairer ranks no longer range
The unfulfilled Ideal to attain ?
Nature not always will permit to hold
Her liveliest substance in one hardened mould.

Crumbled Forms.

WHEN we look backward to the early rise
Of human thought — to Faith's far distant
youth,

We see in old beliefs, strange and uncouth,
Much that all earnest souls forever prize,
Though many a present creed we quite despise ;
Because form-crumbling years have freed, forsooth,
Those ancient faiths from falsehood, while their
truth,

Substantial, still remains beneath our eyes.
But loving souls are strengthened by discerning
The truth in every faith on which they brood ;
Long ere its form, perhaps unfit and rude,
And hardened in the flames of zeal still burning,
The crumbling power of lapsing time has felt ;
For by their softening warmth all forms they melt.

Growths from the Soul.

'T IS pleasant wending peacefully and slow
Among the creeds, in thought's warm, still
retreat,

To note their outward contrasts, and to greet
The inward harmonies of soul they show.
The roots of all strike deeply, far below
In spirit-substance. Rising, they may meet
Misshaping influence, but life-sap sweet
They draw from out the soil whereon they grow.
And throughout all that wondrous wilderness,
From every bough a spirit fragrance drips,
And fruit hangs down even to the hungry lips
Of him who through the forest dares to press.
And underneath each lofty growth are found
Meek flowers of feeling, covering all the ground.

The Dimness of History.

FOR me, dense ignorance beclouds past time,
Except the little space that memory clears ;
Save when my ear, with eager listening, hears
Wise men, whom Destiny permits to climb
Earth's speculative heights, serene, sublime ;
As they narrate how to their sight appears
The far extending retrospect of years —
Even far away toward human story's prime.
But, ah me, they report so variously !
And no fit umpire, I, with measured line
From point to point those objects to define,
Which they upon the heights but darkly see !
I only feel in this one faith secure, —
Then were, as now, the just and good and pure.

The Test of Truth.

IF ye have precious truths that yet remain
Unknown to me, O teach me them! Each way
Into my soul I open wide, that they
May enter straightway and belief constrain.
But urge not fear of loss nor hope of gain
To rouse my will, and move it to essay
To shape my soul's belief or tinge one ray
Of Nature's light! All willful faith must pain
The Genius of true Faith, who asks assent,
Not even to dearest truths, until the hour
Arrives of their belief-compelling power ;
That so the energy they will have spent
In wrestling with our unbelief, at length
May be transformed into believing strength.

The Office of Unbelief

TRUTH has prevailing power 'gainst all reply,
The due effect whereof she cannot lose,
Except when arrogant beliefs refuse
To let the reason scan and testify.
But Unbelief will be thy firm ally,
O Truth, and will remain, if her thou choose,
Most faithful, though defaming tongues accuse
Her faithfulness, and say she will deny
Thy right to enter souls! She does but strive
To keep thy beautiful abodes unmarred
By lawless occupancy, and to guard
Against wrong ingress until thou arrive ;
And with a voice of unmistaken tone,
Demand and gain entrance into thine own.

Recompense of Doubt.

*“There is more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.”*

I.

AN angel whose delight is to dispense
God's truth, thus to a prophet gave command :
“Take now this truth, and going through the land
Teach it in form that fits the intelligence
Of them that hear ; — a blessed consequence
Succeeds true faith.” * * * But when the
prophet scanned
His finished work, and saw a blessing hand
Distribute faith's rewards, he took offense.
For some souls who appeared to have full well
Accepted all the message he declared
From Heaven, had in the heavenly blessing shared
Even less than others, who, most strange to tell,
In doubt, on farther scrutiny intent,
Still to a truth of God delayed assent.

Recompense of Doubt.

II.

THE prophet to the angel then addressed
Complaining words: "With credence unde-
laid

These willingly accepted all I said.

Why are not they conspicuously blessed?"

And thus the angel answered: "Though professed

So promptly, yet this faith does not pervade

Their being, — only on the surface laid

And lightly by thy power thereon impressed.

The doctrine thou hast offered them they take

With languid scrutiny, assent inert.

Not thus can truth its conquering force exert!

And only souls that full resistance make,

Are, when convinced, assimilated well

Unto the truth. Let it belief compel!"

Doubt and Hope.

WHAT time the Eternal Council did ordain
That men might hope, but not the future
know,

One asked: "If Doubt, Hope's ever-present foe,
Is made immortal, may not Hope be slain?"

And one replied: "Not evermore these twain

A look of mutual enmity will show;

For Hope will all her joyful freedom owe
To the wide liberty of Doubt's domain.

While Doubt asserts the unknown, she will deny

Naught of the future good Hope seems to see.

As well her words will show such good may be
More than it seems." Then Hope with kindling eye

Will answer: "Thou to me such strength dost
give,

My sister, I without thee cannot live."

Relative Truth.

SHOULD drooping eyelids from mine eyes conceal

The sky's expanse, still to my downward sight
A pool's smooth surface in a cloudless night,
Heaven's peaceful, starry aspect might reveal.
And though at times the stars might seem to reel
And tremble, if I then should note aright
The wavelets moving o'er that surface bright,
And the disturbing breeze distinctly feel,
My reason would with full assurance know
The tumult in that earth-reflected view
Of heaven, to earthly tumult must be due ;
And that the image the still waters show,
Must in its look so tranquil and serene
Be truer to realities unseen.

Certitude.

*“ The heart
Stood up and answered, I have felt.”*

“ O SOUL, thy knowledge only can include
The Seeming! How canst thou escape the
fear

That falsely all things may to thee appear,
Even these which thou hast called the Fair and
Good? ”

I asked. My soul replied with hardihood : —

“ Laws of my life have led me to revere
And to admire. Experience so clear
Gives me sure knowledge, perfect certitude.
And if, as I must deem, my being's laws
Have to all conscious being been assigned,
Surely throughout the universe of Mind
Such impulse as their equal sway would cause,
Is felt ; and these clear promptings which I feel
A truth of universal scope reveal.”

Clear Hours.

WHEN Nature's calm and greatness hush the
cry

Of every conscious want within thy breast,
Or others' joys have made thee wholly blest,

Ask of thy soul, and on each clear reply
Defining what is life's real good, rely.

Deeply in memory be its truth impressed,
Thereon securely high-built faith may rest,
Whence Hope's far land thou mayst almost espy.

For in such hours thy soul has oft averred
That some of its delights though they remain
Briefly as others, mixed no less with pain,

Are yet forevermore to be preferred.

No other evidence hast thou required

To prove them better — more to be desired.

Diffusive Beauty.

THE presence of the beautiful ye know
By one sure sign, in only one blest hour ;
'T is only when ye feel your souls' own dower
Of beauty larger, more contentful, grow.
And all its outward sway doth beauty owe
Unto its widely self-diffusing power,
That radiates from the petals of a flower,
From lines and angles of a flake of snow ;
That makes the stars shed peace serene and great
On troubled minds through upward looking eyes ;
One noble action of self-sacrifice
The daily lives of millions elevate ;
And clear, accordant songs of souls sublime
Echo from kindred souls through endless time.

Formative Beauty.

WHENE'ER the atoms into forms combine,
The grouping, shaping forces seem to owe
Allegiance to the beautiful, and show
Beauty has power to mould and to define.
Its blessed presence seems a potent sign
Which e'en obdurate elements well know ;
Toward it alone will Nature's favors flow,
Even with its measure metes the Grace Divine.
For when, attent, the beautiful we view,
And radiant beauty enters through the sight,
The soul is filled with hope and deep delight ;
As if its being were assured anew ; —
As if the right to be had been bestowed
Only where Beauty maketh its abode.

The Power of the Ideal.

THE forms that are do not alone decide
The course of plastic Nature : rights of these
Limit the power of onward tendencies ;
But forms to be, the shaping effort guide.
Mark what the mental vision verified
By reason, in rebounding bodies sees !
When equipoise of clashing energies
Is reached, the undriven atoms backward glide —
A form that was and is not, but shall be,
Determining the swift, exact recoil.
And likewise witnesseth the artist's toil,
That still unfashioned forms most potently
Arouse and rule efforts to make them real,
Through Beauty's power, efficient though ideal.

The Great Hope.

I N every soul are purposes whose names
May be unknown, yet are they loved full well.
We live for their sake, and beyond the knell,
For their fulfillment Hope a new life claims.
Wide influence have they : within our frames
All of the multitudinous lives that dwell
In forms distinct of fibre or of cell,
Join with consenting effort in their aims.
O daring Hope! when all the forms decay
Wherein reside the forces that now strive
To serve these purposes, will they survive?
Will other energies their rule obey?
They may forsooth, for Purpose ever guides
The powers of Nature, and naught else abides.

The Past and the Future.

BEFORE me rose the buried Past, and said:
“The Future is mine heir, whom from my grave
I rule, for she shall naught inherit save
That whereupon my strict constraint is laid.”
I heard, and to the Future turned dismayed:
“O radiant with all brightness that we crave,
Of the dead Past art thou to be the slave?”
The Future spake, in hues of dawn arrayed:
“Hope is forever mine, and in pursuit
Of Hope all past succession was ordained.
By no imposed necessity constrained
My deeds shall seem, for Hope can well transmute
Each impulse which unchanging laws require,
To yearning tendency and sweet desire.”

The Persistence of Hope.

THOU grievest that disappointment seems the
sure,

The one sure end man's efforts shall achieve!

Consoling comfort dost thou not receive,

Seeing what sore defeats Hope can endure?

Although our lives' achievements seem so poor

That through the past again we would not live,

With promise yet to conquer or retrieve,

The future doth as strongly still allure.

And well thou mayst believe that Hope derives

Her light from no past joys; for if thou add

To all that e'er have made thy own life glad

Remembered joys of far ancestral lives,

When focused in the lamp of Hope, their beams

Form not the roseate light that thence outstreams.

Into thy Hands.

NOT solely by the impulse from the Past
The World is moved. A World-hope, old and
great,
Has prompted Nature to perpetuate
Her races during all her æons vast.
And in our human hopes that yet outlast
The ills of life, we feel a future state
Attracting, though the gains that for us wait
Only the World-hope clearly can forecast.
Thou vast, minute Intelligence! that dost,
By all-inclusion of the near and far,
Link things that shall be unto things that are,
Whereby the Future, beautiful and just,
Doth guiding influence to the Present send,
Into thy hands my being I commend.

Whence this Light?

LOOK backward to the dawn of thought; thy
sight

Reaches at length black darkness through the gray.

Look forward; in the earth's assured decay

Darkness returns, reclaims its ancient right.

What deemst thou of this glorious mental light

That now o'erspreads the earth? Was its white
ray

Born of black darkness? Will it pass away

Again into the unilluminated night?

Must not the primal spark have been derived

From some great self-existent source sublime,

Where during unoriginated time

The unlesened kindling radiance has survived,

And where forevermore undimmed and pure

The intellectual light shall still endure?

Partial Readings.

THOUGH the great Scroll wherein have been
outlined

By Nature, thoughts of God, deep and immense,
We cannot read, yet gleams of meaning thence
At times shine on us, clear, distinct, defined.

Hence comes assurance that the human mind

Though weak in reason, and obtuse in sense,
Still owns a share of that intelligence

Whereby the great World-builder has designed
The wondrous plans which Nature's works disclose.

A child who scans the philosophic page
Of some profoundly meditative sage,

May see familiar phrases, — then he knows

That his own simple thoughts and childish lore
Are part of the great scholar's mental store.

Light Gleams.

GOD'S glory, lest it blind our human sight,
Hath been behind material forms concealed ;
Yet to our eyes brief glimpses are revealed
Of radiance we must deem divinely bright.
For hast thou not had moments when such light
Has gleamed upon thee, thou wast forced to yield
Thy will to worship? In a lonely field
Or mid a clamorous throng, by day or night,
When gazing on a landscape, star, or cloud,
Strong rapture seized thee, and before a view
Of the forever Beautiful and True,
In reverence profound thy spirit bowed
For a brief season ; then the vision passed.
O, that such gleams of the divine would last !

The Divine Immanence.

*“All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.”*

I.

GOD from the world distinguish,—from the great
But known Effect, the unknown greater Cause!
From aught our minds conceive, that which but
awes

Our souls with thoughts that past their bounds dilate.
But call these twain not wholly separate.

Confess that every natural process draws

Its moving power through channels, which as laws
Within the heart of God originate.

And may there not be nerves which from the seat
Of the Divine Intelligence arise

And reach the world's remotest boundaries?

Unfelt are these by us,—they do not beat

Like arteries of Law even to their ends

When the great Heart its life-pulsations sends.

The Divine Emmanence.

*“If we could see and hear,
This vision, were it not He?”*

II.

NO doubt a wise philosopher was he
Who called the Universe “Thought petrified;”
But does a whole truth in his words abide?
Perchance the Thought Divine not really
Is petrified: all this solidity
May be my sense of Being, that outside
My own continues, and so unallied,
It but resists, — yields me no sympathy.
But if the hills and valleys are to One,
O soul of mine, as now thy subtile essence
Is unto me, through a pervading presence,
And through the inner life’s experience known,
To Him their substance may appear as free
From stony hardness, even as thine to me!

“The Glory of the Lord shall Endure Forever.”

THE forces that prevail eternally,
And those that seem to quickly vanish hence,
Are emanations from Omnipotence
Of self-conserving, ceaseless energy.
And whatso in the changeless entity
Of God originates, partaketh thence
Of the divine, essential permanence : —
Whatever is because He is, shall be.
O, then to strengthen trust, thyself assure,
In every fearful, every doubting mood,
From God came forth the Beautiful and Good ;
And as the Eternal Glory shall endure,
They in His changelessness shall still abide
Unwasted, mid destruction far and wide.

The Receding Perfect.

“NO man may look upon my face and live!”
’T is well He veils perfection from our sight ;
And if because of visions clear and bright,
Which raptured souls in ecstasy achieve,
They deem assuredly that they perceive
A perfect type of the Eternal beauty —
Truth absolute, the final Goal of Duty —
That day they suffer death without reprieve!
Since one activity within the mind,
Through which its highest life is manifest —
One effort toward the unattained Best,
Must then its final check and limit find :
’T is satisfied, it makes no farther quest,
It can but sink to death’s unending rest !

Compensation.

GOD asks from creatures for His plenitude
Of goodness, no return. Without the hire
Of prayer or praise or love, till they expire
He feeds the teeming earth's unthankful brood.
That each demand shall with the general good
Of all consist, His justice must require ;
And to His yearning bounty, such desire
Ascends a grateful offering, like food
To weary, fainting men whom famine gnaws.
The creature need affords a counterpart
To the outflowing of the Mighty Heart.
Recurrent stream of love! supply it draws
From wants of all created life, and pours
Replenishment into Love's Primal Source.

“Perfect Love Casteth out Fear.”

FEAR thou a creature with self-guarding fear.
Too far from thee for sympathy, the ill
Thou offerest him he may return, until
The hard requital brings thee penance drear.
But fear not so the One to thee so near
His being doth include thy own — His will
Rewilling thy volitions, doth fulfill
Their aims through powers that not in thine inhere.
And O, beware lest thy distrusting doubt
Dishonor Love divine, and the attribute
Of narrow finitude to it impute
By deeming any soul can be without
Its blest embrace. At once each fear reprove
And hush by faith in all-including Love.

The Right Eternal.

*“ The wrong that pains my soul below,
I dare not throne above.”*

IF any, as an advocate who pleads
Religion's cause, shall to mankind proclaim
The rule and test of right is not the same
For motives whence a human act proceeds,
And purposes of God's great sovereign deeds, —
That right, forsooth, by God's command became,
Beware of the false prophet! In the name
Of Faith's defender, he avers what needs
Must the foundation of all faith remove.
For what supports even your most holy trust
That all is well, and will be with the just,
If your clear intuitions do not prove
The laws of right which pure souls apprehend,
Unchanged, throughout all time and space extend?

The Criterion of Rebelation.

I.

THUS spake Elisha to the Shunamite:
“The angel of the Lord, with voice to dread,
Has bidden that thy son, raised from the dead,
Be offered a burnt-offering on the height
Of Carmel! He who gave thy heart's delight,
Twice pitying thee, now bids that it be laid
Upon His altar.” But the woman said:
“O, man of God! ne'er would that cruel rite
Be claimed by Him who gave me back my boy.
Some evil spirit has thine ear deceived!
I know that He who pitied when I grieved
And turned the anguish of my heart to joy,
Would not desire such painful sacrifice—
No incense sweet to Him would thence arise.”

The Criterion of Revelation.

II.

“**H**AST thou the wisdom to determine when
Commands from Heaven are His, and when
not so ?

How can a heart He trieth, if it show
Bold disobedience, ever hope again ? ”
The prophet spake, but not less boldly then
The woman :— “ Well His goodness do I know.
My faith therein no words can overthrow,
Spoken by angels or by holy men.
He tries me by this test ? It cannot be
He so delighteth in obedience
That He would break a heart to draw it thence.
No proof thereof would make Him pleased to see
A mother’s agony, though hushed her cries,
When yielding up her child for sacrifice.”

The Criterion of Revelation.

III.

ELISHA sped away to Carmel's wild,
And to the Lord thus prayed with many a tear:

“Be merciful to her who will not hear

Thy word, though thou didst raise to life her child!”

And the Lord answered with reproof though mild:

“For her thou needst not my displeasure fear!

An evil spirit did deceive thine ear.

Now learn of her to be no more beguiled;

For, mindful of the favor to her given,

She in my goodness hath abiding faith;

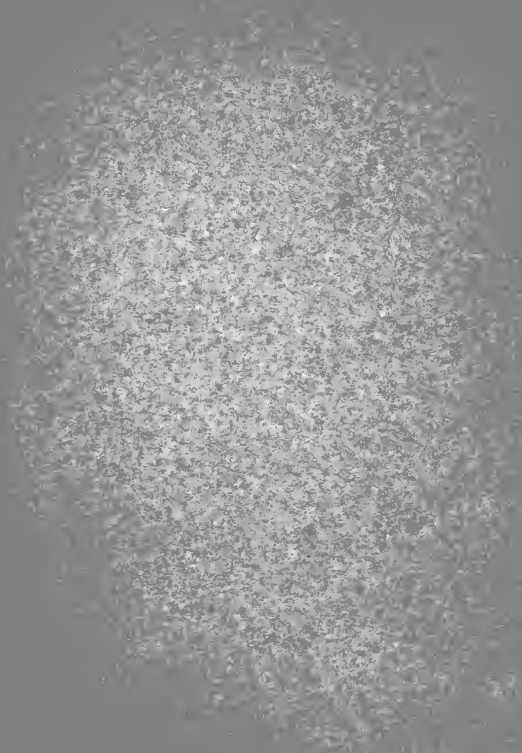
And whatsoever of me another saith,

Although the words may seem to come from Heaven,

She ponders well, and tries it by the test

Of that which in her heart she findeth best.”





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