



POEMS
of
Two Friends.

165
1860



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E Pratt, John James

P O E M S

OF

TWO FRIENDS.

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PREFACE.

It may be that the Tenderness which cannot leave these poor Children of the Heart to generous Oblivion, is not wise. There is the Doubt.

Gracious Reader! (approached with the reverent Affection due to the Reader of a first Book), solve us the Doubt.

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JOHN J. PIATT.

P O E M S .

THE MORNING STREET.

I WALK alone the Morning Street,
Filled with the silence strange and sweet ;
All seems as lone, as still, as dead,
As if, unnumbered, years had fled,
Letting the noisy Babel be
Without a breath—a memory !
The light wind walks with me, alone,
Where the hot day like flame was blown,
Where the wheels roared and dust was beat ;
The dew is in the Morning Street.

Where are the restless throngs that pour
Along this mighty corridor
While the noon flames? the hurrying crowd
Whose footsteps make the city loud?
The myriad faces? hearts that beat
No more in the deserted street?—
Those footsteps, in their dream-land maze,
Cross thresholds of forgotten days ;

Those faces brighten from the years
In morning suns long set in tears ;
Those hearts — far in the Past they beat —
Are singing in *their* Morning Street.

A city 'gainst the world's gray Prime,
Lost in some desert, far from Time,
Where noiseless Ages, gliding through,
Have only sifted sands and dew —
Yet still a marble hand of man
Lying on all the haunted plan ;
The passions of the human heart
Beating the marble breast of Art —
Were not more lone to one who first
Upon its giant silence burst,
Than this strange quiet, where the tide
Of life, upheaved on either side,
Hangs trembling, ready soon to beat
With human waves the Morning Street.

Ay, soon the glowing morning flood
Pours through this charmed solitude ;
All silent now, this Memnon-stone
Will murmur to the rising sun ;
The busy life this vein shall beat —
The rush of wheels, the swarm of feet ;
The Arachne-threads of Purpose stream,
Unseen, within the morning gleam ;

The Life will move, the Death be plain;
The bridal throng, the funeral train
Together in the crowd will meet,
And pass within the Morning Street.

BELOW AND ABOVE.

“It might have been:” To the heart’s deeps are cast
Those slow, sad words. To funeral trains they move
Within the soul. The deserts we have passed
We cross again — from Eden-dreams of Love!

“It might have been,” we say, whene’er we give
Into the grave our coffin silently;
But the sad tears some unknown gleam receive —
We lift our eyes and say, “It still may be.”

THE GOLDEN HAND.

FROM out the city's heat and dust
A Golden Hand is ever thrust;
Uplifting from a spire on high,
A golden finger in the sky.

I see it when the morning brings
Fresh tides of life in living things,
And the great world awakes: behold
That quiet Hand in morning gold!

I see it when the noontide beats
Pulses of fire in busy streets;
The dust flies in the flaming air:
Above, that Golden Hand is there.

I see it when the twilight clings
Around the earth with rosy wings:
Flashing with the last fluttering ray
That Golden Hand remembers Day.

The midnight comes—the holy hour;
The city, like a giant flower
Sleeps full of dew: that Hand, in light
Of moon and stars, how strangely bright!

Below, in many a noisy street,
Are toiling hands and striving feet.
The weakest rise—the strongest fall ;
That Golden Hand is over all.

Below, men wage the war of Trade,
Fortunes are lost and fortunes made ;
The rich the poor, their slaves, enthrall ;
That Golden Hand is over all.

Below, in courts to guard the land,
Gold buys the tongue and binds the hand ;
Stealing in Justice, scales the gold—
That Golden Hand above, behold !

Below, the Sabbaths walk serene
With the great dust of Days between ;
Preachers within their pulpits stand,
And over all that Golden Hand !

The week-dust, in the crowded air
Below, arises never there ;
Like one whose language can not speak,
That Hand makes Sabbath all the week.

G H O S T S .

IN the olden mansion lying
That has known me — long ago —
Far I see the long white river
Flash the lightnings of the snow.

The moon so close by the window
Freezes in the trees with her light,
A glitter of motionless silence
All the ice-lit branches bright!

Working at the drowsy silence
There are footsteps on the stair,
Lifting up their ghostly echoes
From the chambers — everywhere!

Some arising, slow and heavy,
Toiling with the clogs of heart,
As the dreary and weary languor
Of their toil will ne'er depart.

Some seem borne on childhood laughter,
As if all life's roses were red!
Children's footsteps speak their language —
But all are the feet of the dead!

How near they startle the stairway!

I feel the opening door!

Now far and fainter dying

They echo in me no more.

In a moment the door will open!

How near they grow again!

They have left the ghost of their silence

Walking in my brain!

Growing up the haunted stairway

I have heard them oft before,

In this olden house forever,

Haunting me forevermore.

Strangers here have never heard them,

For I know they are all mine,

Rising ever, O heart! and dying

On that haunted stair of thine!

To me, forever returning,

My souls forever fled —

Startling the stair forever and ever,

I hear my footsteps dead!

O heart, make braver beating,

The funeral haunting the stair,

Is the long, long dead procession

That follows thee everywhere!

THE FORGOTTEN WELL.

BESIDE the highway old—
 (The weeds their story tell)—
With vanished curb, and filled with stones,
 Some old, forgotten Well!

The chimney, crumbling low,
 A mute historian stands,
Of human joy and human woe—
 Far, faded fireside bands!

Here still the apple blows
 Blossoms of rose-lit snow;
The rose-tree blessed some happy hands
 With roses, long ago.

I cannot choose but dream
 Of all the well has done:
Old gifts of beauty, fresh and free,
 Flash diamonds in the sun!

Travelers with weary limbs,
 Toiling through dust and heat;
And youths in dream-land sowing deeds,
 And maidens blushing sweet;

THE FORGOTTEN WELL.

The reaper, from his sheaves —
The mower, from his scythe:
The freshness flowed into their hearts
And voices, fresh and blithe!

Forgotten by the throng,
Uncared for and unknown,
None see it through the wood of weeds
Neglect has slowly sown.

Yet, under all, 'tis there!
The fountain ne'er grows old;
And, if the sunshine came to see,
As bright, as pure, as cold!

So many a Heart — a well,
Where all could draw, before,
Deserted lurks, and no one comes
To draw its beauty more.

Around, weeds gather slow,
Yet under all, unknown,
Springs the old fountain, fresh and free —
Oh, give it back the sun!

MOONRISE.

'Tis midnight, and the city lies
With dreaming heart and closed eyes:
The giant's folded hands at rest,
Like Prayer asleep, are on his breast.

From window, hushed, I see alone
The talk-worn streets so silent grown:
The dusty footprints of the day
Are blest with dew and steal away.

O scarce a pulse of sound! Afar
Flashes, upon a spire, a star,
And in the East a dusky light:
Veiled the ghost-moon steals through the night!

Unveiling slow her face of blood
Uplifting in the solitude!
The city sleeps: above, behold
The Moonrise kiss a cross of gold!

Golden in air that cross: at rest
Below, the city's sleeping breast;
And on the cross, moon-brightened, see,
Christ, dying, smiles down lowly!

DREAM-WORLD.

BRIGHT, beautiful, far land!
Where all these footsore, dusty travelers go,
Leaving the shadow and the weary woe—
Dead foot prints in life's sand!

Thither all travel—these,
Tired kings, by glad content uncrowned, go smiling;
The slave from all the tread-mill of his toiling,
Breaches some enchanted air.

Thither go home at even
All weary exiles, in this foreign mart,
Finding the old doors opening in each heart,
Beneath the Maying heaven!

The poet there no more
Carves the old songs that in his heart have died;
The Past—no marble—singing by his side,
On that enchanted shore.

There, fresh as in far years,
Stand shattered temples of the heart—old homes!
Through open doors each face familiar comes—
Smiles!—but we waken tears!

How far! how near it seems!
This weary world forgotten far, unseen—
Circling lost sunshine in a heart serene,
That strange bright world of dreams!

PARTING.

WE clasp our hands: we turn and go—
Our foot falls echoing years between;
We meet again; we hardly know
(Years whisper) to whom change has been.

We clasp our parting hands; we go,
Far travelers with strange Hours and Years;
The face, the form, the voice we know,
They come not back from time and tears.

We clasp our hands in loving trust;
We send our hearts back o'er the wave;
No hand can reach us from the dust—
No voice can find us—in the grave!

P O S T S C R I P T .

I shall not hear from her again :

 In all my blushing letters, long
I stole the secret from my pen,
 And hid it in unwritten song.

Her letters, sweet as roses pressed,
 Bloom from my dreaming heart to-day.
Flushing I wrote, in sweet unrest :
 My rose forgot to climb for May.

Long years : for her another's name—
 Another's lip—another's arm—
(Ah, crawl into the ashes, flame!)
 Another heart—though mine was warm.
My cricket, hush ! his mirth is stilled ;
 Dream-flames among dream-embers play ;
Another my Lost Heaven has filled :
 My rose forgot to climb for May.

Ah, well—the Postscript steals at last
 Beneath shy letters, buried—dead :
“I love”—in my regret are cast
 Low echoes, whispering words unsaid.

Sweet flowers, remember her, apart ;
 Write your sweet postscript here to-day
 Upon her headstone—in my heart ;
 My rose forgot to climb for May.

C A G E D B I R D S .

SPELL-BOUND within their cage, my heart,
 Are sweetest birds that ever sing
 On beams to heaven ; they dream apart
 Silent, with folded wing.

Spring lays her blessing hands on all
 The earth : it blossoms ! Everything
 Breathes—sings ! They pass the festival
 Silent, with folded wing.

You have the word, beloved one,
 The magic key of opening :
 O give these larks a morning sun—
 Earth, heaven of you shall sing !

IN THE ORCHARD.

O THE beautiful apples, so golden and mellow,
They will fall at the kiss of the breeze!
While it breathes through the foliage, frosty and yellow,
When the sunshine is filling the trees.
Though high in the light wind they gladly would linger
On the boughs where their blossoms were found,
Yet they drop at a breath—at the touch of a finger,
They shatter their cores on the ground!

Through the morns of October, while Autumn is trying
With all things to whisper of Spring,
How the leaves of the orchard around us are flying,
And the heavens seem ready to sing!
How the ladders in breezes of sunshine are swinging!
The farmer boys gladden and climb!
To gather the fruit they are swaying and singing—
Glad hearts to glad voices keep time!

Far down the bright air they are happy to listen
The noise of the mill and the flail,
And the waters that laugh, as they leap and they glisten,
From the dam that is lighting the vale;

The wild flutter of bells that so breezily rises
From glades where the yellow leaves blow—
And the laughter of faces in childish surprises,
If the wind fling an apple below!

Oh see! in the trees that are drinking the splendor,
How the gladness of boyhood is seen!
How they shake all the branches so windy and slender,
And a bright golden rain is between!
And higher they climb, till the grasses are covered
With the fruits that were sweet April flowers,
And the yellowing leaves that all over them hovered,
Flutter down with the apples in showers!

The harvests are garnered—the meadows are burning,
Every sunset in golden and brown;
The apples are gathered, the wains are returning,
And the winter may bluster and frown:
The blind drifting snows may make barren the even—
Golden twilights may shiver in rain—
But the Apples and Cider by Summer are given
To give Winter to Summer again!

TO A CHILD.

O WHILE from me, this lovely morn, depart
Dreams vague, and vain, and wild,
Sing, happy child—sing, dance into my heart,
Where I was once a child.

With eyes that send the butterflies before,
With lips that kiss the rose,
O happy child, joy opes your morning door—
Joy kisses your repose!

The fairy Echo-children love you, try
To steal your loving voice;
Flying you laugh—they, laughing while you fly,
Laughing your glee, rejoice!

O while from me, this lovely morn, depart
Dreams vague, and vain, and wild,
Play, happy child—sing, dance within my heart,
Where I—will be a child!

THE NIGHT-TRAIN.

A TRUMBLING hand—a lingering word—the burning
Of restless passion smouldering, and we part :
Ah ! slowly from the dark the world is turning
When midnight stars are in a heavy heart.

The streets are lighted, and the myriad faces
Steal through the gas-light, with their home-led feet.
Passing me, homeless : sweet and warm embraces
Charm many a threshold—smiles and kisses sweet.

From great hotels the stranger throng is streaming—
The restless wheels in many a street are loud ;
Within the depot, in the gas-light gleaming,
A glare of faces, stands the waiting crowd.

Soon will the web of streets be quiet, lying
In dew—the human hive no more a-swarm ;
And soon the charmed silence, Slumber, flying
Into the myriad heart, will nestle warm.

The whistle screams : the wheels are rumbling slowly :
The path before us glides into the light :
Behind, the city kisses Silence holy ;
The puffing engine leaps into the night.

I seem to see each street a mystery growing,
Bounded by dream-lands—Time-forgotten air :
Does no sweet soul, awaking, feel me going?
Loves no sweet heart in dreams to keep me there?

R O S E .

I CAME to find her blithe and bright,
Breathing the household full of bloom,—
Wreathing the fireside with delight :
I found her—in her tomb !

I came to find her gathering flowers—
Their fragrant souls so pure and clear
Haunting her face with lovelier love :
The flowers—*she gathers here !*

Sweet Rose ! the loving name that were
Her love, her beauty and her bloom :
One rose, her only epitaph,
"In Memory," on her tomb !

THE SPRING.

THE Spring! The Spring! She comes again! In the
sunny world once more!

The children sweet, they meet and greet, and pull her to
the door!

Like a maiden, dancing home her song: O, echoes sad,
depart!

Her smile's the key in every door of the prison of the
heart!

All things remember, seeing her—her traveling choir the
birds;

What singing in the sunshine, and what lowing of the
herds!

The lambs, that only Winter knew, have like a garland
bound her—

As if they knew her long ago, all gladdening, dance
around her!

The trees she only looks upon—green leaves begin to
grow;

The orchard blushes! Is it snow?—but oh! how fragrant
snow!

All things are in the sunny air, whatever can learn to fly;
The very worm has the brightest wings, in its heaven—
the butterfly!

The Spring! The Spring! She is here again—her train.
the brightest Hours!

And the last o' the snow, she is smiling so, forgets it was
not—flowers!

THE POET'S BIRD.

“MANY a little song there flutters
From my heart on sunlit wings:
In the world's blue sky it singeth—
From my heart its echo sings.”

Far away it flieth, singing
Through the Mays of many springs:
(*He* was laid in lost Decembers)—
From all hearts its echo sings!

THE LOST SONGS.

He lived and died: he sang sweet songs
Of flower that blooms—of bird that sings—
Of feelings sweet that through the dust
Of life lift their forgotten wings.
His earth was God's: he deemed he saw
In every path His image stand;
On every flower unseen by all,
He saw the Sabbath-resting Hand!

All things to him were dear—the voice
Of childhood-glee, of mother-love—
He clasped the dear world to his heart,
And lifted eyes to bless above.
The brother-world—*he* knew so well—
Their brother saw and *knew him not*:
He roamed an exile in their land;
He died without their doors—forgot.

Years passed: the sunshine seemed more bright—
The Mays more blithe—the earth more young.
Years passed: oh, sweetest lips grew sweet
When many an orphan song was sung.

Flowers human grew, to musing men,
By those song-children plucked and given ;
All mornings gladdening took the pulse
Of those strange skylarks in their heaven !

Now many a little orphan child
Of song looks up into the eyes
Of Pride, and Hate, and Wrong, and sings
Till tears of love and pity rise.
These are the songs the poet sang
Unnoticed o'er the earth long years—
And the world wonders where he lies :
They seek to *name* his grave with tears !

None knows : no rose was planted there,
Remembering him—no lettered stone :
Those little songs, that wandered lost,
Are all that knew the poet lone.
“Ah,” the world cries, “our brother died
Without—we heeded not his call.”
The proud world sighs : “These orphan songs
May live within the hearts of all.”

SONNET,

ON JONES'S BUST OF SALMON P. CHASE.

A NOBLE soul is breathing from the clay,
Created, Sculptor, to a soul by thee,
A noble soul a noble man's must be ;
One of the few who knelt not to To-day,
Nor petty stampings of the applausive Hour ;
But in the hush of Truth's uprising light,
Upheld in word, and dared in deed the right :—
Nor sued the many-headed god for power.
Oh, beautiful ! on the calm lips content,
Breathes the high presence of a life well spent :—
A brow the Centuries love. No marble needs
His soul that breathes itself in marble deeds.
O be it long, Ohio's truest son !
Before this marble, here, contains that soul alone.

A GLAD SEPTEMBER MORNING.

ALL things breathe full of life this Autumn morn ;
The hills seem growing under silver cloud ;
A fresher spirit in Nature's veins is born ;
The woodlands are blowing lustily and loud—
The crows fly cawing among the flying leaves—
On sunward lifted branches struts the jay—
The fluttering brooklet, dashing bright, receives
Bright frosty silverings, slow from ledges gray
Of rock among fresh sunlight glittering out—
Cold apples drop through orchards mellowing—
'Neath forest eaves quick squirrels laugh and shout—
Farms answer farms, as through bright morns of spring,
And joy, with dewiest pulses, full and strong,
Joy, everywhere, goes Maying with a song.

THE WEEK.

SWEET Days! God's daughters, shining o'er the world!
Bright are your feet on the far morning shore—
And going back to heaven evermore
Through twilight's dreamy golden gates unfurled
Your footprints 'mong the dews of even are bright!
A singing garland round the golden throne,
Guarded by angel wings—a heavenly zone—
Fair are ye all—sweet children of the Light!
Yet fairest she—the youngest of your name—
The Sabbath Day in her translucent white,
And wearing round her brow the halo light,
Shining till all things near her wear the same;
For though God love ye all—when ye are blessed—
His hand lies on the brow of the sweet Day of Rest.

A PARTING.

WE leave the olden house to-day
That in our hearts forever is
The dear, deserted chrysalis —
Wing'd hours of childhood flown away!

The trees we rooted in the Past
April shall flush — autumnal cold
Shall warm their apple-cheeks with gold —
Crushing the mellow cores at last.

The rose shall climb forever thus
Into the Junes — though we depart —
And take the bees into its heart,
And in the window look for us!

The grass shall wear around the door
Our hands' fresh flowers — the twilight breeze
Shall find our voices in the trees,
The vine shall whisper evermore —

“O they made sunshine for all hours,
And gave it to the darker ones!
They wear the years in other suns,
And yonder grows — a place of flowers!”

Young feet shall give the stairs delight,
 The chimney, clasping home around,
 Wed happy hearts to loving sound
 From faces rosy in rosy light.

The gate shall open to receive —
 Our dreams! — no more, oh! nevermore
 The rhyming hearts and feet of yore —
 Nor all together as we leave!

The years shall come — the flowers shall blow —
 Through all their glitter of leaves again
 The trees shall sing in sunset rain —
 But we are gone. The years will go.

But ye so loved — so sad to leave
 Pale orphans of sweet hours we knew;
 That died in heavens of sunniest blue —
 Children that parting stand and grieve.

Sweet memories! here forevermore,
 (That parting clasp our knees so dear),
 If we return ye will be here :
 Keep open house and open door.

Remain in old familiar places,
 Sing songs of sunshine — laugh as *they*,
 With souls of happiness at play,
 With sunshine o'er your loving faces!

Ye cannot move with us. We go :
 But oftentimes—in dreams perchance—
 Strangers may pass, like sunshine dance,
 To meet them at the gate and know !

I F .

BONES whitening and crouched lions in our track
 Are types of thee, O most provoking Unity ;
 Pitfalls that sleep—we shudder, crawling back
 Across the golden bridge of Opportunity.
 What mighty victories have for thee been scrolled :
 But for thee, long ago, Archimedes
 Had pried the green world from its orbit old,
 And Alexander been Diogenes !
 Wide armies ambuscaded by thee, reeling :
 Wide cities, earthquake-shaken, from thee flying :
 A black knight palsyng with enchanted lance :
 Dim ghost of Doubt the warm life-pulses feeling ;
 Cold sun whose system clasps all mortal trying :
 Dwarf-axle of the giant wheel of Chance !

THE OLD PIANO'S PLAYERS.

O LEAVE the keys unfingered for Spirits of the Breeze :
Æolian music played by Time kisses the silent keys.

The tones they give thy fingers seem harsh and old to-day :
The silence whispers lovingly, the music passed away.

Sweet ghosts of music rising ! Now low, now loud it swells ;
Now gladdening into bridal trains, now tolling funeral bells.

Unseen they throng around it — what dream-like players
these !

And fingers from the Past are reached, and touch the
enchanted keys !

Steal forms of grace around it, and eyes of tenderness :
O pulse's music-wakened ! O voices made to bless !

Hands dust, hearts ashes now that beat responsive long
ago ;

To shadowy fingers on the keys, old voices ebb and flow.

What happy sounds awaken : the words of Youth and
Love

Freight lovely lips again with song, old dreams to music
move.

O sweet enchanted music, at the threshold of our dreams —
Before the opening portals — how beautiful it seems !

Ah, if those unseen players, whose dreams the keys
remember,
Could steal within the twilight, how May would leave
December !

Faces would steal from locks of gray, and wrinkled fea-
tures wear
The purple dawn of Time, and eyes their vanished bright-
ness bear.

Lips kissing long, the long dead years — in coffins far
apart —
Would kiss the Future rosily, with roses in the heart !

Ah, embers glow from ashes — the Past's dream-fragrant
dust,
Long-crumbled rose-leaves of the heart, is Memory's lov-
ing trust !

O leave the keys unfingered ! — for harsh their tone to-day ;
But Silence whispers lovingly the music passed away.

THE FORGOTTEN STREET.

THROUGH Midnight's holy hush, with hushing feet,
 Seeming to hear the sleeping heart-beat plain,
 I wandered slow through the forgotten street,
 Toil's weary tread-mill—Traffic's noisy brain—
 Where flashed the wheels—the busy dust was blown—
 Where all went masked—Life lost his brother Death—
 Where sat the God Gold on his golden throne
 Last noon, last eve—and through the crowded breath,
 Mocking the Babel, crept the funerals through;
 Lo! all the dust lies down in heaven's dew!

The holy Crown of every weary Day—
 The Night—the Rest, the Sleep, the Dream—is here;
 The star-light glitters, the pure dew-winds play,
 Where swarmed the myriad feet—the smile, the tear—
 The bride's rose-wreath of joy-lit girls—the train
 Funereal, hushing through the singing hours—
 The waking-dream of Life and Death. Again
 The seeds of Sleep sow all the dark with flowers,
 Blooming in some returning Paradise:
 The World, a Child, pulls them with loving eyes!

Where are they vanished? Here an hour ago!

The hiving purposes that hum no more?

Napoleon-wills that made the Alps seem low?

To Dream-land!—what far sunrise finds that shore?

To that New World—who but Columbus knows?

Where are the homeless exiles? Gone to dreams!

To the green lands the love of Heaven blows;

Laugh in their eyes green England's village-gleams;

The German all-forgets he left the Rhine—

Sings in the Past—the golden hills of wine!

Hope, bee-like, cradled in the morrow-rose,

Dreams on the dead, cold bosom of To-day,

Despair, at Morning's threshold, finds repose—

Wearing the face of Hope and heart of May;

The young, the old—rich, poor—the evil, good—

Take God's rich alms alike in blinded eyes

To beggar-hearts—sweet sleep!—in gratitude;

The Eve with Adam still in Eden lies;

The fallen from the heaven of human love,

Rise from the scornful flame—singing above!

Where yonder vine-top, in the moonshine gleams,

To some bright breeze's fingering, sleeps a girl—

Clasping the white dove of her bosom, dreams;

The silver moonlight clasps the golden curl,

And the leaf's shadow plays o'er her pure eyes.

She sleeps—she dreams the morn to wake her joy!
 The dream is *there*. The gate of Paradise
 (Those angels have forgot their old employ),
 To-morrow opes. To-morrow clasps to-day;
 The lark sings up into her heaven of May!

There haunts a prison. White, pure, holy stars!
 Through all the dark, reach ye the darkness *there*?
 Rains your sweet influence through the ghastly bars—
 The grated soul? Sleep opes the prison-air!
 God's sweetest human angel, loving all,
 Kisses the lips and hovers happy wings;
 A child sings forth from some rose-clasping hall,
 Dancing his song into all loving things!
 And who is *she* that keeps his hand?—the gleam
 Losing his dark! That angel leaves his dream!

Pleasure lies in the rose's heart asleep,
 And sorrow falls asleep in Pleasure's arms;
 The mighty torrent, Life, seems slumbering deep
 Over the precipice. Time's hive no more swarms
 In the charmed palace of the Soul's distress;
 All dream their dream, and wait the morrow's kiss
 To sing the sunshine from their happiness,
 And give the trees, the flowers, the clouds their bliss!
 The Ixion-world wakes in To-morrow's ray,
 Turning the ever-turning wheel To-day!

COUSINS BELLE AND KITTIE.

I HAVE two cousins. One is sweetly shy ;
Her heart's sweet roses climb into her cheek
In lovely answers. If you hear her speak,
You love her voice—forgetting she is by.
O, she is beautiful! Her pure large eyes
Keep heaven's azure in their soul's far deeps,
Ay, *both* are beautiful! The other weeps
And smiles—to steal a rainbow in your skies!
Dark mischief-eyes, and raven ringlets, which
Are shaken o'er her darling scorn. The kisses
She'll toss to you (despair)! may never reach
Your lips, that, bee-like, wait the rosy blisses!
I love them both. Which most? I dare not know;
I weigh them in the dice-box: darlings, throw!

GENIUS LOCI.

AH, this is the place where my boyhood
Saw its beautiful moments depart :
The butterflies winged in the sunshine—
Their chrysalis—dust in my heart !

Still green are the hills in the distance,
And breathing of Summer the farms;
But the Years clasp the Present forever
To the Past with their shadowy arms !

I wander in pathways familiar,
But vanished are faces so kind ;
The footsteps of strangers have trodden
The footprints I dreamed I would find.

Come back to me, beautiful visions !
Steal over me, vanishing sky !
With the rose-like soul of my boyhood,
Blossom, sweet days gone by !

O beautiful soul that was dreaming
In this heart, so deserted, for years :
My Boyhood, the angel that lingers
In the Rainbow's sweet Heaven of Tears !

My Boyhood, come back! From the sunshine
A hoop is the world of his care—
He gazes at me for a moment,
And vanishes into the air!

Come back! From the school that is closing
Boy-faces burst joyous and bright:
One only among them remembers,
And vanishes into the light!

Come back! With a kite in his heaven,
Flash his heart's happy wings in the sun:
He gazes upon me a moment,
And flashes to air and is gone!

Come back, O my beautiful boyhood!
For weary the heart is that sings—
And the chrysalis here in my bosom
No longer remembers thy wings!

PILGRIMS.

WE may not be contented : 'tis our life
To drag slow footsteps after the far mind—
The long Endeavor toiling up behind
The bright-winged Aspiration—ceaseless strife
Clasping the cold hand Guerdon for warm heart
Of all desires. No man may feel the goal :
The want divine—the hunger of the soul
Moves like a star—the thirst will not depart,
Howe'er we drink. 'Tis that before us goes
Keeps us a-weary—will not leave us lay
Our heads in dream-land, though the enchanted palm
Rise from our desert—though the fountain grows
Up in our path, and slumber's flowery balm ;
The soul is o'er the horizon—far away.

THE BOUQUET.

“I LOVE her, Fairy Rose,” I said,

“But, darling, whisper not :”

The rose within her bosom laid,

Blushing, my blushing thought.

“I love her,” then I whispered deep

In Violet’s heavenly heart :

In her sweet eyes a child asleep

The secret dreamed apart.

“I love her, gentle Lily, bright

As her pure soul’s sweet springs :”

The Angel of the flowers, white,

Around it drew her wings.

“I love her,” to the other flowers

I whispered—every one :

“We must not tell this Queen of ours

The secret we have won.”

They came to her : they all forgot

Their fairy promise true.

Ah, flowers can have no secret thought :

Their Queen their secret knew !

My love the Rose had overflushed ;
Lisped Violet tenderest things ;
The Angel of the flowers blushed
Till Love stole from her wings.

THE LETTER WITH A ROSE-LEAF.

I GREET thee, loving letter—
Unopen, kiss thee, free,
And dream her soul within thee
Gives back the kiss to me.

The fragrant little rose-leaf
She sends by thee, is come :
Ah, in her heart was blooming
The rose she stole it from !

SABBATH EVENING AFTER A SHOWER.

FRESH, breezy trees are shaking into gold,
Against the sinking of the cool, broad sun ;
Far spires shown o'er them, tremulously fold
Their sunny mingling presence scarcely won
Through the bright distance in the gush of light ;
Long streets hang quiet down the golden air ;
Low eaves and windows fresh are hidden bright
In vines sweet-fluttering, sunlit, everywhere.
How slow and calm and solemn afar are tolled
The evening bells down through the city wide,
With melancholy echoes through the gold.
Hushed twilight breathes along the river's tide,
Like music in a soul whispering to Peace
Of Sabbath Hours and Days that never cease.

THE YELLOW LEAF IN THE POET'S BOOK.

“WHISPER, Yellow Leaf, to me
Thy forgotten history.”

“One far spring-time, green and young,
On a sunny bough I hung.
Happiest of happy leaves were we,
Fluttering green on the green tree!
Merrily fairy moonbeams played,
Dancing through our checkered shade.
Decked with Morn's lost jewelry,
Full of singing birds were we—
Through the May and through the June,
Dancing every breeze's tune.
Ask not whither they are gone :
I am old and here alone.
Their far Summer-time was brief :
I am here a Yellow Leaf.
Sunbeams grew cold, the winds grew wild :
Kiss the Summer's orphan child !”

“Yellow Leaf, O whisper me
Why the Poet treasures thee.”

“That far Spring, when we were young,
In our shade a maiden sung.

And the Poet's life, a tree,
Danced with leaves as glad as we.

But the happy leaves at last
Fluttered, yellowing, to the Past :

See his song along with me,
Yellow Leaf of Memory !

Book-marks of his life we lie,
Brother-leaves, the Song and I.

Song and Leaf, from that far Spring
Dreams of joy and woe we bring.

Let the Poet's song be sung—
I again am green and young,

And a maiden sings below—
Fern-leaves, shadows, wreath her brow !

Ah, that Summer-time was brief :
Love the Poet's Yellow Leaf !”

FROST-BLOOM.

It blossoms on the windows,
All the long December night,
While the Earth 'neath the moon lies dreaming,
Heart-hushed, with a face all bright.

It blossoms on the windows,
The Phantom-Summer of Frost,
The trees, the flowers and the foliage—
All that of lovely is lost.

The children will waken at dawning,
With childhood's hushed surprise:
Oh! a beautiful summer blossoms
From the frost, in their hearts and eyes!

The beautiful summer blossoms
To their hearts' enchanted charm;
They think not of vanished summers—
Hearth and heart are happy and warm.

It blossoms a phantom summer—
The phantom summer of frost;
For the old man's dreams it blossoms
With the lovely, the loving and lost.

He wakens in the dawning,
Alone in the world again.
The frost in his heart had blossomed,
While the Frost bloomed on the pane!

D E W .

WHILE the one star flutters in golden blue,
Over the sweet young moon, and everything
Clasps slumber to the heart—with folded wing
All vulture-cares—breathes down the loving Dew,
God's benediction o'er the cradled Day.

All things that breathe the sunshine everywhere,
Leaves, flowers that hold their prayerful faces fair,
Purest of all earth's children, as to pray—
All the sweet blessing feel, tree, flower and weed,
And man's wide soul: the restless Ocean billows
And the Soul's waves—a peace the stars to view!
O emblem sweet of God's sweet love! The need,
The prayer, the gift. Lo! on their quiet pillows
All things are lying in God's falling Dew!

FALLEN LEAVES.

I LOVE to steal my way
Through autumn's woods, when autumn's work is done,
And through the tree-tops all the dream-like day
Breathes the soft golden sun.

When all is hushed and still,
Only a few last leaves, fluttering slow
Down the warm air, with ne'er a breeze's will—
A ghost of sound—below.

When naught of song is heard,
Save the jay, laughing while all nature grieves,
Or the lone chirp of some forgotten bird
Among the fallen leaves.

Around me everywhere
Lie leaves that fluttered green the summer long,
Kissing the rainbow's tears in sunset air,—
And roofed the summer's song.

Why shun my steps to tread
These silent hosts that everywhere are strown,
As if my feet were walking 'mong the dead,
And I alive, alone?

Hast no bright trees, O Past!
Through whose bare boughs, once green, the sunshine
grieves?
No hopes that fluttered in the autumnal blast,
No memories—Fallen Leaves?

THE TRUNDLE-BED.

Do you remember? long—long—long ago!

Yet there thou liest—though all the Past lies dead
That nestled in thee! old, old Trundle-bed!

Nest of delicious fancies! dreams that grow

No more! Thou magic car to Fairy-land!

Ghosts walked the earth then (in the garret living:

For Polly knew—our hearing, our believing!)

In thee we saw them near—how near us stand!

Stars, then, looked out of heaven—to heaven, too,

Prayers clothed like angels from *our lips* arose—

Though from the *heart* of her who bent so close,
Hushing us like to flowers that feel the dew.

Alas! those dreamers (buried in us) dead,

Fresh morns “shall rouse no longer from *their lowly bed.*”

ANONYMOUS.

HE walked forgotten o'er the earth,
 But still his songs were singing there—
 Sweet ghosts that came with heavenlier air,
His dreams, his loves, his woes, his mirth!

None knew his grave but poet-eyes:
 Flowers wrote their memory lovingly
 About his mound: "He loved us; we
 Loved him and love him: *Here he lies.*"

Few friends were his. Ah, few his need
 Of friendship knew: they, confined dreams!
 But first they buried *him*, it seems:
 His epitaph, "*He sowed the seed.*"

And lo, the Harvest! Through the land
 Beauty has bloomed among the wheat!
 The reapers toil to music sweet;
 The gleaners, weary, singing stand.

Sweet flowers looked up! The maidens kissed
 Their lips his God-light human made;
 The violets lifted in the shade—
 Heaven's children lost—blue eyes a-mist!

He toiled not in the Harvest hours
 (Yet took his harvest home indeed);
 Whispers the grave, "*He sowed the seed.*"
Lo! Heaven filled all his wheat with flowers!

And, here and there—unknown before—
 Where fell the dreamer's random seed,
 Strange century flowers arose, indeed,
Forever blooming, evermore.

THE BURIED ORGAN.

FAR in a valley, green and lone,
Lying within some legend old,
Sometimes is heard an Organ's tone,
Trembling, into the silence rolled.
In vanished years (the legend stands),
To save it from the unhallowing prey
Of foemen's sacrilegious hands,
The monks their Organ stole away.

None knows the spot wherein they laid
That body of the heavenly soul
Of music. Deep in forest shade,
Forgotten, lies the grave they stole.
But oftentimes, in Morning gold,
Or through the Twilight's hushing air,
Within that valley, green and old,
The Organ's soul arises there.

O, low and sweet, and strange and wild,
It whispers to the holy air,
Gentle as lispings of a child—
Mild as an infant angel's prayer,

While silence trembles, sweet and low :
Then rapture bursts into the skies,
And chanting angels, winging slow
On wings of music, seem to rise !
The herdsman, sometimes, lost, alone,
Wanders into that holier air :
He hears the buried Organ's tone,
Crossing his hands—his breath is prayer !
And, while into his heart it steals,
With hushing footsteps, downcast eyes,
Some grand cathedral's hush he feels—
A church of air, and earth, and skies !
Sometimes when the sweet wand of spring
Has filled the woods with flowers unsown,
Or Autumn's dreamy breeze's wing
Flutters through falling leaves—alone
I wander forth, and leave behind
The city's dust—the week-day air :
A lonely dell far off I find—
I know the buried Organ there !
Within the city's noisy air
I leave the creeds their Sabbath bells ;
I cross my hands—my breath is prayer,
Hearing that Organ's mystic swells.
The sweet birds sing—the soft winds blow—
The flowers have whispers low, apart :
All wake within me, loud or low,
God's buried Organ—in my heart !

"TO ——."

BELoved one, whose lovelit, floating form
 Steals visits to my dreams in heart and eyes—
 Where art thou, Love? My heart is beating warm;
 From dreams alone I rise!

Long have I known thee: first I saw thee come,
 With laughter ringing from thy girlhood years,
 Kissing the Future with a face in bloom—
 The Past with sun-bowed tears!

Steal from my dreaming to my waking heart!
 Awake! within my soul there stands alone
 Thy marble soul: in lovely dreams apart
 Thy sweet heart fills the stone!

Oft have I trembled with a maiden near,
 In the dear dream that thou wast come at last,
 Vailed in her face; but I am dreaming here—
 Sweet dreams woke in the Past!

May be thou never yet hadst mortal birth,
 Or childhood wings to Heaven with thee have flown,
 My Eve in Paradise! O'er all the earth
 Must Adam walk alone?

O, that thou breathest earth or Heaven, I know ;
I call, like Orpheus, into shadowy air :
Where art thou, Love? My heart makes answer low—
Thy bridal chamber—“Where?”

O waken in my morning thy pure eyes—
Thy voice from angel-air of dreams remove !
Sweet Chance, blow those strange seeds of Paradise
Together, flowering love !

O come, while yet my dream is in warm bloom—
Come ere the rose-vail from the years depart :
Cottage to me with thee is palace : Come—
Thy Palace builds my Heart !

FROM THE CRADLE.

A LITTLE mound, and only seen
By eyes that dream of lovely death—
A tearful plot of sunny green
Last summer kissed with flowery breath.

A little mound, and only sought
For bird-like footprints in the Past,
While Autumn writ a holy thought
On leaf, and blade, and blossom last.

A little mound, and only known
By tears that here to Faith are wed:
To one, our morrow journey done,
We all are orphans of the dead.

A little mound, and only here,
That flowers may gather sweeter ground,
And, sunward lifted from a bier,
A life with holier Hope be crowned.

A little mound, and only made
To wear the earliest wreath of sun,
That morn through heavenly dews shall braid—
The last while heavenly dews are on.

For Faith a child's strong hand is given—
Smile through the world your tearful part!
The flower and fragrance bloom in heaven,
Whose root is sorrow in your heart.

SUNDOWN.

WHILE stealthy breezes kiss to frosty gold
The swells of foliage down the vale serene,
And all the sunset fills
The dream-land of the hills,
Now all the enchantment of October old
Feels a cold veil steal o'er its closing scene.

Low sounds of Autumn creep along the plains,
Through the wide stillness of the wood-lands brown.
Where the still waters glean
The melancholy scene :
The cattle, lingering slow through river lanes,
Brush yellowing vines that swing through elm-trees
down.

The foliage-distance of the northern air
Wears far an azure slumber through the light,
Showing, in pictures strange,
The stealthy wand of change ;
The corn shows languid breezes, here and there,
Faint-heard o'er all the bottoms wide and bright.

On many a silent circle slowly blowing,
The hawk, in sun-flushed calm suspended high,
 With careless trust of might
 Slides wing-wide through the light—
Now, through the dreamy dazzle, golden showing,
Now, drooping down, now swinging up the sky.

Wind-worn along their sunburnt gables old,
The barns are full of all the Indian sun,
 In golden quiet, wrought
 Like webs of dreamy thought,
And in their Winter clasp serenely fold
The green year's April promises harvest-won.

With evening bells that gather low or loud,
A village, through the distance, poplar-bound,
 O'er meadows silent grown
 And lanes with crisp leaves strown,
Lifts up one spire, a-flame, against a cloud,
That slumbers eastward, slow and silver-crowned.

THE HARVEST-SPRING.

SWEET birds sing out from branches green
Of fresh-leaved maples tall,
O'er rocky banks, whose mosses sheen
Show sunward trickles fall.

There, clothed in grasses, fed with flowers,
Half hid in sun and shade,
Joy-bosomed toward the summer hours,
The Harvest-Spring is laid.

From fronting slopes the breezy grain
Runs up the noontide warm,
Whilst rustling sickles glitter plain
On many a sunlit arm.

Till oft, when strength grows faint in stir,
Quick beating every vein,
Full oft each calm-browed harvester
Drinks, in the shade again.

Then hearts wear health like dreams of Prime
Glad lifting through their forms ;
Hark to the striking sickle's chime !
Large sheaves flash from their arms !

Thus at the heaven-fringed spring of Truth,
In fresher spots of Life,
Our souls drink bright a sense of Youth,
To wear our harvest strife.

And forward on the light we bend
A weight of grain and flowers,
And toward our evening sunlight wend,
Binding our sheaves of hours.

THE PIONEER CHIMNEY.

I.

EVERYWHERE a Land of Shadow,
Not a footstep echoes o'er;
Song of peace and cry of battle,
Dream-like, dying evermore.

War-fires in the vales are leaping,
And the glaring dance of war;
But the wildly-gleaming faces
Are a silent dream afar.

O'er the valley, clothed in shadow,
Sunlit stands the startled deer,
From the cliff against the morning,
Flashing away as we appear!

Lo! the golden veil of Morning
O'er that Land of Shadow cast—
Where the tomahawk lies buried
In the grave of all the Past!

Nothing of that Land remaining
Save these old historic trees,
Shaking through their glittering branches
Dews of olden memories.

Yes, the years are easy numbered,
But the Change has traveled fast,
And how far behind, forever,
Lies the dead forsaken Past !

There the Vanished Race forever,
Smoke their calumet of peace ;
Fainter-gleaming haunt their faces,
Dim old shadows of the trees !

I I.

Low among the greenery hiding,
Sent'nel of that Shadow Land,
Near the highway ever roaring,
See an old, dead Chimney stand !

Hiding from the highway golden,
'Mong the cherries, old and low,
While their blossoms fill the breezes
With their sunlit fall of snow.

Dead!—no more a flame is leaping
Through it toward the wintry cold ;
Dead!—no more the smoke is wreathing
Wood-lands green and dim and old.

Dead!—no more an azure welcome,
Far to eyes that distant roam :
Dead!—no more it seems uplifting
Incense from the heart of Home !

Gone the homely threshold olden—
Feet that joyed and sorrowed o'er;
Gone the happy waiting faces;
Gone the smiles that oped the door.

Gone the hands that shook the forest,
Burying in the April earth
Golden seed of tears, returning
Here their smile of harvest birth.

Gone the hearts that made pale faces,
When the wolves came through the cold,
And the fireside still was waiting,
Through the twilight snows of old.

Yet I see a light of sparkles
Reddening up old evenings, wild—
Like the fancies sent to wander
Up the chimney from a child.

Hearts among the years may wander
Echoing through the vanished doors—
Dreaming dreams, returning hither,
Gather footfalls from the floors!

Faith and Hope, the heaven-waiters,
Learning o'er their lessons bright,
Their young hearts may here be lifting
Wings of prayer in Heaven's light!

Children here that dewed life's roses
With the smile of early tears,
May be children dreaming hither—
While old gray men lose the years!

They may hear the red man's voices—
Through the nights the silence start—
Olden nights that here are haunting
Some old graveyard of the heart!

You may find them growing weary,
Fainting through the mighty lands;
Painted by the years their faces—
Weary, burying years, their hands!

O, the Fireside and the Threshold!
Where the joys of life we find;
By the beating heart forever,
Both together they are joined!

Nothing speaks their language olden
But the Chimney, crumbling low,
And a gleam of lighted faces,
From a fireside, long ago!

F A I T H .

BEAUTIFUL Faith! White angel with no wings!
Blind, lovely eyes, feeling their light in heaven!
While from all clouds to thy lone smile is given
A rainbow-bower, where Hope, thy sister, sings.
Strong men, who only smiled to conquer death,
Martyrs whose patience leaped to heaven a-flame,
Most holy faces painted not by fame,
Women that smiled long lives of loving breath,
Planting in childhood-hearts the rose of prayer
Wide dewless desert-noons may wither never—
Or with pure lips kissing their sleep forever,
On thy dear bosom, for heaven's morning air—
These are thy followers through wide, wandering years,
Blind child of God! half-lost, found in this vale of tears!

P R A I R I E - F I R E S .

How bright this dim Autumnal eve,
While the wild Twilight clings around,
Clothing the silence everywhere,
With scarce a dream of sound!

The high horizon's northern line,
With many a silent-leaping spire,
Seems a dark shore—a sea a-flame—
Quick, crawling waves of fire!

I stand in golden solitude,
October breathing low and chill,
And watch the far-off leaps of flame
Playing the wind's wild will!

I see the vanished autumns blown
Through years that leave no leaves lie dead,
To rustle through the Past and stir
Beneath historic tread;

These boundless fields of green, once more,
Old summers' rustling sunshine stir,
And wild, wide autumns blowing Fire,
A lone bright harvester!

Ere the wide highway of the sun
Was full of Emigration's dust ;
Ere the wide River, wearing heaven,
A sunny fountain thrust.

I see wide terror blown before—
Wild steeds, wild herds of bison here,
And, blown before the flying flame,
The flying-footed deer !

Lone wagons bivouack'd in the flames
That, long ago, flashed wildly past :
Faces, from that bright solitude,
A gleam of terror cast !

Lone trains with drowsy bells that rang
Along red twilights dying slow,
Whose wheels turned wearily their way
Through autumns, long ago.

A gleam of faces like a dream !
No history after nor before—
Inside the horizon with the Flames—
The Flames !—nobody more !

That Vision vanishes in me—
That Reaper swift, and wild and bright !
Another steals through me—through all
The solitude, to-night.

The horizon lightens everywhere;
Wide sunshine hangs in breezy maize:
And, everywhere, the voice of Man,
And Childhood's sunny lays.

Far city spires against the sun—
White villages of quiet sweet—
And, echoes for the heaven above,
Homes smiling through the wheat.

No longer, driven by winds, the Fire
Flashes yon flaming sickle fleet,
But, numberless as the stars of heaven,
Home's window-stars shine sweet!

THE CHURCH PATH.

WHILE my footsteps rustle slow
Fallen leaves of long ago,
In my heart they rise to-night,
Far-off mornings blest and bright!
When the weary week at rest
Slept upon the Sabbath's breast,
(As a mortal orphan weeping
To an angel's bosom creeping).
All their sunshine from the Past
Through these twilight leaves is cast:
From the June-green boughs above
Flutters out the startled dove,
Or in sweet contented mood
Fills the Sabbath neighborhood.
Looking at the sun, so bright,
Flutter and hide the leaves in light;
Everywhere the birds are singing!
Suddenly a bell is ringing,
While I wander here apart:
'Tis the Past rings in my heart!

Years have walked this pathway old
Under green and over gold—
In their graves these years are gone
With the leaves they trod upon—
Vanished years: and every one
Walked with me in shade and sun,
Under clouds, through rainbows bright,
Nights made day and days made night:
Joys that leafed my heart with May,
Rustle round my lonely way—
Fallen leaves my footsteps start:
Their bright trees grew in my heart!

Boys that kissed the Houris then,
Wandered—wandering, weary men!
Maidens blithe and bright and fair,
Guests of beauty to the air,
Dreams were cradled in their eyes:
Eves—we came from Paradise!
To the chapel clothed in white—
 Roses—white the bridal train:
To the chapel clothed in white—
 Lilies—black the funeral train!
Sad and glad and grave and gay
Years have walked with all away;
From the paths that blessed their feet,
Blessing dust and dewing heat;

From the folded dream of beauty,
 Open rose of Woman' duty;
 For the path with dew impearled,
 Dusty street of the wide world!

Through the Church-path often they
 Wander, girls in girlhood's May:
 Through their hearts and eyes a-dreaming,
 Eden-vistas strangely gleaming;
 Smiles that open brighter skies—
 Tears go back to Paradise!

Ah, the sunny time departs:
 Weary hands and weary hearts!
 Through the world they beat their way,
 Dreaming golden, growing gray;
 Lose the rose-wreath, lose the rhyme,
 Giving weary hands to Time—
 Weary tears to days of sorrow,
 Weary smiles to clouded morrow.
 Only when the flame crawls low
 In the embers—ashes slow—
 From the girl and from the boy,
 Memory gleans fresh sheaves of joy!

If to all whose prints are here
 All that Past could reappear—
 If the weary feet could turn
 From the valleys dark and dern—

If the desert eyes no more
On the Sphinx's face would pore—
If the lips that thirst in vain
Youth's enchanted draught could drain—
If once more old faces sweet
Here could blossom—here could beat
Hearts (a hearse and funeral train)
Blithe in this old Path again—
What a dusty company
Would go down—in Memory!
Hearts of girls and hearts of boys,
Emptying graves of Hopes and Joys!

In the silence—in the chill
Of the autumnal evening still—
Through the golden evenfall—
While the year is 'neath the pall
Of the fallen, falling leaves,
And the breeze, that, sighing, heaves,
Knows a spirit—here I tread,
Lone with Memory's risen dead,
While my footsteps startle slow
Ghost-like leaves of long ago:
Ghost-like memories seem to be
Shrouded, as they come to me.
From Life's busy graves they fill,
And from those green, low, and still
(Yonder gleaming where the breeze
Shivers with moonrise through the trees;

Graves that names remembered keep :
There—alas! but names—they sleep) :
Memories leave those days of gold,
Angels, in the Church path old!

A POET'S WREATHING.

THOUGH poor the blossom-words I breathe you,
Oh, magic be their power:
Loveliest of lovely wreaths shall wreath you—
If silent wishes flower!

THE LETTER CHEST.

YOU ask, if haply gems be there?

Gems from the heart's deep mine!

Glad friendships gathered long ago—

The grave of "Auld Lang Syne."

Familiar hands, clasped far, but warm,

Clasp there, o'er desert years apart;

Old words familiar faces wear—

Old autographs of heart!

No! fling them not into the flames!

Dim, old words, crumbling one by one,

Would start, like ghosts, into our eyes—

Some Memory's dying Sun!

Kindle within our hearts their flame!

Feeling their dreamy eloquence,

The Past—whose flowers in these were sown—

Will rise like frankincense!

The world, in them, turns ever new;

Dead summers live in flowers, and sing;

Old June-lands show their roses through—

Heaven breathes the older Spring!

Those dear old words! they kept glad time
In sunny days, and rainy weather,
And to the music of their feet
Still, all things sing together!

Old lips that speak no more, I hear;
Old vanished faces, brightening come;
Old footsteps travel strangely near
From happy doors of Home!
I feel the red blood of the Past
Pulse through Time's veins again, in light,
I see their warm hands, from their hearts,
Extended while they write!

IN MARCH.

WELCOME, sweet Wind; you bring
 A soul of Spring
From some far fragrant rose,
 That blows
In some far coming May, or half-forgotten Spring.

Welcome, sweet dream; you wear
 Your wings of air
From some far isle of love—
 A dove,
Flying with happy bough from some far, lovelier air.

What though my sweet wind knows
 A vanished rose,
My dream the Past, alone,
 Has known?
Bloom from my heart, sweet dream—climb from my
 heart, sweet rose!

THE WESTERN PIONEER.

[The Bees are said to have ever swarmed westward before the steps of the whites.]

INTO the prairies' boundless blossom,
Into the Wide West's sunburnt bosom,
The earliest emigrants came :
The flowers, like sunny miracles, grew
Before them, fragrant, from the dew,
Filling the grass like flame !

From some old land of song and life—
Of man, in manhood's glowing strife,
Departing all alone,
And journeying with the journeying sun,
They came—their busy empire won—
Before the white man known.

The Indian saw the moving Bees,
From flower to flower, in dream-like breeze
Blowing their pilgrim way ;
Or, deep in honey of the flower,
Hanging in sunshine hour by hour,
Dream through the dreaming day.

He saw the Future's garment gleam
O'er mounds of tribes and legend-stream—
O'er the sweet waste of flowers ;
He saw his hunting ground—the Past !
Lit with the domes of cities vast—
Glory of spires and towers !

Those other Bees ! He felt—he saw,
With sorrowing eye, in dreamy awe,
The blossom of the West
Thrill with the sunny-toiling Bees
Of busy Freedom, happy Peace—
Wide blessings and the blest.

They come ! They *came* ! Lo ! they are here !
The Indian heart-beat everywhere
Starts echoes wild no more ;
The leaves have fallen from his trees
Of life : dead leaves, in every breeze,
Rustle forevermore !



WM. D. HOWELLS.

P O E M S .

P R E L U D E .

IN March the earliest blue-bird came
And caroled from the orchard-tree,
His little, tremulous songs to me,
And called upon the summer's name.

And made old summers in my heart,
All sweet with flower and sun again ;
So that I said, " O not in vain
Shall be thy lay of little art,

" Though never summer sun may glow,
Nor summer flower for thee may bloom ;
Though Winter turn in sudden gloom,
And drowse the stirring Spring with snow."

And learned to trust, if I should call
Upon the sacred name of Song,
Though chill through March I languish long,
And never feel the May at all.

Yet may I touch, in some who hear,
The hearts, wherein old songs asleep,
Wait but the feeblest touch to leap
In music sweet as summer air!

I sing in March brief blue-bird lays
And hope a May, and do not know:
May be, the heaven is full of snow—
May be, there open Summer days.

THE MOVERS.

SKETCH.

PARTING was over at last, and all the good-byes had been spoken.

Up the long hill-side the white-tented wagon moved slowly,
Bearing the mother and children, while onward before them
the father

Trudged with his gun on his arm, and the faithful house-
dog beside him,

Grave and sedate, as if knowing the sorrowful thoughts of
his master.

April was in her prime, and the day in its dewy awaking :
Like a great flower, afar on the crest of the eastern wood-
land,

Goldenly bloomed the sun, and over the beautiful valley,
Dim with its dew and shadow, and bright with its dream
of a river,

Looked to the western hills, and shone on the humble pro-
cession,

Paining with splendor the children's eyes, and the heart
of the mother.

Beauty, and fragrance, and song filled the air like a palpable presence.

Sweet was the smell of the dewy leaves and the flowers in the wild-wood,

Fair the long reaches of sun and shade in the aisles of the forest.

Glad of the spring, and of love, and of morning, the wild birds were singing:

Jays to each other called harshly, then mellowly fluted together;

Sang the oriole songs as golden and gay as his plumage ;
Pensively piped the querulous quails their greetings unfrequent,

While, on the meadow elm, the meadow lark gushed forth in music,

Rapt, exultant and shaken, with the great joy of his singing;

Over the river, loud-chattering, aloft in the air, the kingfisher,

Hung, ere dropped, like a bolt in the water beneath him ;
Gossiping, out of the bank, flew myriad twittering swallows ;

And in the boughs of the sycamore quarreled and clamored the blackbirds.

Never for these things a moment halted the Movers, but onward,

Up the long hillside the white-tented wagon moved slowly.

Till, on the summit, that overlooked all the beautiful valley,
Trembling and spent, the horses came to a standstill unbidden ;
Then from the wagon the mother in silence got down with her children,
Came, and stood by the father, and rested her hand on his shoulder.

Long together they gazed on the beautiful valley before them ;
Looked on the well-known fields that stretched away to the woodlands,
Where, in the dark lines of green, showed the milk-white crest of the dogwood,
Snow of wild-plums in bloom, and crimson tints of the red-bud ;
Looked on the pasture-fields where the cattle were lazily grazing—
Softly, and sweet, and thin, came the faint, far notes of the cow-bells ;—
Looked on the oft-trodden lanes, with their elder and black-berry borders,
Looked on the orchard, a bloomy sea, with its billows of blossoms.
Fair was the scene, yet suddenly strange and all unfamiliar,
Like as the faces of friends, when the word of farewell has been spoken.

Long together they gazed; then at last on the little log-cabin,—

Home for so many years, now home no longer forever,—
Rested their tearless eyes in the silent rapture of anguish.
Up on the morning air, no column of smoke from the chimney

Wavering, silver and azure, rose, fading and brightening ever;

Shut was the door where yesterday morning the children were playing,—

Lit with a gleam of the sun the window stared up at them blindly.

Cold was the hearthstone now, and the place was forsaken and empty.

Empty? Ah no! but haunted by thronging and tenderest fancies,

Sad recollections of all that had ever been, of sorrow or gladness.

Once more they sat in the glow of the wide red fire in the winter,

Once more they sat by the door in the cool of the still summer evening,

Once more the mother seemed to be singing her babe there to slumber,

Once more the father beheld her weep o'er the child that was dying,

Once more the place was peopled by all the Past's sorrow and gladness!

Neither might speak for the thoughts that come crowding
their hearts so,
Till, in their ignorant sorrow aloud, the children lamented ;
Then was the spell of silence dissolved, and the father
and mother
Burst into tears and embraced, and turned their dim eyes
to the westward.

THE OLD BOUQUET.

SUCH odd things gather on one's hands !

I found an old bouquet
 (The buds all faded whity-brown)
 Among forgotten things to-day.

I recollect 'twas Clarence Young
 That gave it, long ago—
 O, years and years, my child—how long,
 Ah me ! I don't exactly know.

We quarreled—we were foolish both—
 He married Susan Gray,
 Who died last summer—and I heard
 That he was buried yesterday.

There's something blurs my glasses, dear ;
 I wish you'd read to me
 These scribbled lines I found among
 The faded flowers. Can you see ?

*Within this golden-hearted rose
 (Sad in their sweet eclipse)
 I send Regrets. Ah, smile them free
 To fly in kisses to your lips.*

A silly rhyme! I never knew
What there the boy had writ—
Alas! I smiled not!—I'm too old,
And you too young, to talk of it!

Ah me! we quarreled. We were fools.
He married Susan Gray,
Who died last summer—and I heard
That he was buried yesterday.

THROUGH THE MEADOW.

THE summer sun was soft and bland,
As they went through the meadow land.

The little wind that hardly shook
The silver of the sleeping brook,
Blew the gold hair about her eyes,—
A mystery of mysteries!
So he must often pause, and stoop,
And all the wanton ringlets loop,
Behind her dainty ear—emprise
Of slow event and many sighs.

Across the stream was scarce a step—
And yet she feared to try the leap;
And he, to still her sweet alarm,
Must lift her over on his arm.

She could not keep the narrow way,
For still the little feet would stray,
And ever must he bend t' undo
The tangled grasses from her shoe—
From dainty rose-bud lips in pout,
Must kiss the perfect flower out!

Ah! little coquette! Fair deceit!
Some things are bitter that were sweet.

G O N E .

Is it the shrewd October wind
Brings the tears into her eyes?
Does it blow so strong that she must fetch
Her breath in sudden sighs?

The sound of his horse's feet grows faint,
The Rider has passed from sight;
The day dies out of the crimson west,
And coldly falls the night.

She presses her tremulous fingers tight
Against her closed eyes,
And on the lonesome threshold there,
She cowers down and cries.

THE THROSTLE.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINE.

IN the wold I wander weeping ;
The throstle sits on high,
She springs and sings so gaily—
“Why art so sad? ah why?”

“Nay, ask thy sisters, the swallows,
They can tell thee, O throstle gay!
For their nests are built at the window
Of my darling, far away.”

THE AUTUMN-LAND.

At last, the sorrowing wind
Hath moaned itself to sleep—
Over all the autumn-land
Broods silence strange and deep.

Like bright but songless birds
Along the naked leas,
All day the crimson leaves have flown,
Vexed by the wayward breeze.

The while the stricken elms
Through all their boughs have sighed
For the summer birds that sang,
The summer flowers that died.

Night falls. I scarce can see
The cattle where they droop
Together about the barnyard bars,
A mute and steadfast group.

Ah! well that the sorrowing wind
Hath moaned itself asleep!
That over the autumn-land
Broods silence dull and deep!

For all too long hath been
 The brief November day,
Of barren field and somber wold,
 And sky of sullen gray.

Too long the leaves were vexed,
 Too long the sad elms sighed
For the summer birds that sang,
 The summer flowers that died.

Alas! that Autumn-land
 Where the sad wind never sleeps;
Where over the summer-mourning soul
 No silence ever creeps;

Where the thoughts are ever vexed,
 The heart is ever tried—
O! the summer birds that sang,
 The summer flowers that died!

ALL FOUR.

AN AFTERNOON PICTURE.

A LITTLE child before the shady door,
 A kitten lying on the cottage floor—
 Beneath a locust tree, from whose white bloom
 A passing breeze shook out a rich perfume,
 An old man sitting in his easy chair—
 A hale old man, with silver-flowing hair—
 The house-dog stretched beneath his master's feet,
 On bed of cool, green grasses, dark and sweet:
 And dog, and child, and cat on cottage floor,
 And hale old man, were wrapped in sleep—all four!

A partridge, piping in the dead'ning near,
 Called to "Bob White," in whistle soft and clear;
 From marshy pasture rose a lark in mirth,
 Spilled his brief song, and silent sunk to earth;
 In a new-furrowed field, a noisy crew
 Of blackbirds picked the worms the plow up-threw;
 The panting farmer, as he held the plow,
 With his straw-hat brim fanned his streaming brow:
 While dog, and child, and cat on cottage floor,
 And hale old man, slept sound and cool—all four!

Loud crows uprising from the neighboring field,
 With cawings hoarse, in lazy circles wheeled,

Then downward sank again in less'ning rings,
Flashing the sunlight from their sable wings ;
Higher up a hawk, too, circled—cunning spy,
Watching the barn-yard with a hungry eye,
Where Chanticleer with wings distended stood,
And clucking Partlet called her screaming brood :

While dog, and child, and cat on cottage floor,
And gray old man, slept sound and sweet—all four !

In dreams through memory land the old man strayed,
Re-trod his traveled path—and child-like played
Along each stream, upon each flowery plain—
Lived *all* his happy boy-life o'er again ;

In dreams the child, through hope's bright fairy-land,
Roamed glad and far with loving angel band,
Saw sights that childhood only dreaming, sees,
Marvelous flowers, and birds, and streams, and trees :

But dog and cat a dreamless slumber slept,
While round to four, the clock's slow finger crept !

Sudden a white cloud veiled the sun's bright face—
Another joined it in its resting-place—
The sky that, erewhile, bent an arch of blue,
Grew black with clouds—with tempest threatening grew ;
Quick-flashing lightnings rent the storm in twain,
And in its bosom sheathed themselves again ;
From its torn breast the sky its life-tide spills,
And its hoarse moans re-echo through the hills,
And dog, and child, and cat on cottage floor,
And hale old man, are roused from sleep—all four.

THISTLES.

I.

I PLUCKED them from the weedy lane,
And from the barren hillside-field,
Where years ago, for goodlier yield,
The sterile soil was sown in vain.

II.

In every desolate place they grow—
Neglected gardens, stony lands,
And acres tilled by drunken hands—
In baleful beauty, thrive and blow.

III.

Armed well, they keep the land alone,
Stinging all gentle flowers to death,
And filling the sweet zephyr's breath
With poison seeds for lands unknown.

IV.

I send them to you! You, whose scorn
So glad a soul made desolate,
And left unto the desert-fate
Of thistle-bloom and thistle-thorn!

V.

And so I send my thistle seeds,
And trust to find them bloomed again
In that rude heart where Love, in vain,
Toiled in the rocks and evil weeds.

VI.

Blow, thistles, blow! and ripe and fall
Upon the sterile soil below,
Where never fragrant flower shall grow—
Lo! yours the desert place is all!

THE MYSTERIES.

ONCE on my mother's breast, a child, I crept,
Holding my breath—
There safe and sad lay shuddering, and wept
At the dark mystery of Death.

Weary and weak, and worn with all unrest,
Spent with the strife—
O mother, let me weep upon thy breast
At the sad mystery of Life.

THE SHEPHERD.

FROM THE GERMAN OF UHLAND.

THE comely shepherd loitered by
The castle of the king ;
The princess from the turrets gazed
With love's sweet sorrowing.

She called to him a tender word—
“ O were I down by thee, my dear !
How whitely show the lambkins there,
How red the flow'rets here !”

The shepherd called to her again—
“ O camest thou but down to me ;
How blossom there thy cheeks so red—
How white thine armès be.”

And as he now in silent pain
His flock at every dawning drove,
He looked above, till on the tower
Appeared his tender love.

Then called he joyfully to her,
“ O welcome, princess, sweet and fair !”
And sweetly still she answered him,
“ O thanks ! thou shepherd dear.”

The winter passed, the spring appeared,
The flowers were blooming as before ;
The shepherd loitered by the tower,
But she appeared no more.

He called to her, all sorrowful,
“O, welcome, princess, sweet and fair!”—
A phantom voice replied to him,
“Adieu, thou shepherd dear.”

THE SARCASTIC FAIR.

HER mouth is a honey-blossom,
No doubt, as the poet sings ;
But within her lips, the petals,
Lurks a cruel bee, that stings.

EVENING VOICES.

BROKEN snatch of cow-boy's song,
Swelling high and sinking low,
Mingles, as he plods along,
With the lowing of his cow.

Wagon rattling o'er the road,
(White top gleaming like a sail),
Wakes the echoes harsh and loud,
Of the dusk and distant vale.

On the night-air faintly swell,
From the whitely-peopled meads,
Silver sounds of lambkin's bell,
Singly tinkling while it feeds.

On the listless winds that pass,
Insects fling their harmonies;
Crickets chirping in the grass,
Locusts trilling in the trees:

And like music of a Fay,
'Mong the maple's foliage hid,
Comes thy sad and changeless lay,
Melancholy Katy-did! —

Comes the dull and sullen roar
Of the distant waterfall,
Where the swift waves foam and pour,
Wrapped in vapors like a pall.

Sweetly mingled, yet distinct,
Countless witching voices are ;
Sweetly various, sweetly linked,
Trembling on the dewy air.

THE HEAVEN-WREATH.

THE blooming halos of the garden trees,
All sweetly murmurous with clustering bees,
Fling a rich odor on the air around;
And broad, cool shadows on the grassy ground;
And in their shade a little child at play,
Whileth the hours through all the sunny day.

A placid child, that never strayeth out
Into the sunshine with unruly shout,
But sitteth still, the fragrant boughs beneath,
Striving in vain to weave himself a wreath;
About his feet blue violets are strown,
And golden dandelions and willows thrown.

The children watch him as he sitteth there,
With earnest mien, and sweet, abstracted air;
And while they gaze, they cease their boisterous sport,
And speak of him in sober, childish sort;
And oft they call their mother to behold
His fruitless toil, and flowers of blue and gold.

But as the mother looketh on her child,
So young, so fair, and so unearthly mild,
Though she would haply have them seem more bright,
Her eyes grow dimmer for the simple sight;
And her pained heart feels with foreboding love,
Fond Death hath woven him a wreath above.

LIEBESWONNE.

IN my rhyme I fable anguish,
Feigning that my love is dead,
Playing at a game of sadness,
Singing hope forever fled,—

Trailing the slow robes of mourning,
Grieving, with the player's art,
With the languid palms of sorrow
Folded on a dancing heart.

I must mix my love with death-dust,
Lest the draught should make me mad,—
I must make believe at sorrow,
Lest I perish, over-glad.

THE VIOLETS.

FROM THE GERMAN OF LENAÜ.

I.

AFTER long cold, the wind blows soft and mild,
And fair young violets brings the beggar-child.

II.

Ah! sad to think the sweetest gift of spring
To me the child of Misery must bring.

III.

And yet this earnest of the day to me,
Is dearer from hand of Misery.

IV.

For to the Future our own grief doth bring
The gentle promises of coming spring.

SONNET.

ALONE I wander o'er the path we pressed
With lingering footsteps in the Long-ago,
And the soft summer moon hangs warm and low,
While languid stars are faint through all the West,
And though the form that then mine arm caressed,
Thrilling to feel the heart's quick ebb and flow,
Its zoning clasp no more shall ever know,
Still, still I wander with a sweet unrest:
For silver whispers haunt the dreamy air,
Like ghosts of words I never may forget;
The smiles, the welcome thou wert wont to wear,
Meet my fond seeking as of yore they met;
And at my side, grief-sanctified and rare,
The glory of thy presence lingers yet.

THE DEATH OF MAY.

“O, I am weary!” sighed the languid May,
And so lay down, and on the breast of June
Her fair head pillowing, breathed away her life.
None knew that she was dying, and the stars
Shone bright and tearless from their far-off sky,
And kindled other stars in lake and river;
The south wind whispered lovingly to her
That slept so long; and lifted her bright hair,
And kissed her playfully, yet never dreamed
That May was dead! Earth felt not her deep loss,
But glad in presence of the lusty June,
Nor grieved nor cared for one who was no more.
And the sad soul of May, that lingered nigh,
Was panged with bitterness, to be forgot
So soon.

’Twas night—but when the blushing Morn
Looked forth from out the portals of the East,
And saw not May, though lovelier than May,
Her sweet young sister, reigned—in somber clouds
She pensive veiled her radiant face, and wept.

Then May was glad, and rose on glowing plumes
And rippling robes, far into the bright realm
Appointed for the pure and early dead.

O, what if noisy Fame ignore thy fall,
And pass thee in forgetfulness or mirth?
Still in the memory of some dear friend
The fragrance of thy better self shall live,
And be an holier sorrow for thy loss!

COMPLIMENT.

CLEVERLY done, it is certain!
And nobody can complain.
There was something about old friendship,
And hopes to meet often again.

When one is to die, it is pleasant
To have the knife bright and keen;
This awkward hacking is horrid—
Work not fit to be seen.

Here comes your friend, my darling—
A compliment to your art!
Who would think, to see you together,
You had stabbed him to the heart!

DRIFTING AWAY.

As one whom seaward winds beat from the shore,
Sees all the land go from him out of sight,
And waits with doubtful heart the stooping night,
In some frail shallop without sail or oar,
Drifting away!

I ride forlorn upon the sea of life,
Far out and farther unto unknown deeps,
Down the dark gulfs and up the dizzy steeps,
Whirled in the tumult of the ocean strife,
Drifting away!

Like faint, faint lights, I see my old beliefs
Fade from me one by one, and shine no more;
Old loves, old hopes lie dead upon the shore,
Wept all about by ghosts of childhood griefs,
Drifting away!

O never more the happy land shall glow,
With the fair light of morning on mine eyes;
Upon its loftiest peak the sunset dies,
And night is in the peaceful vales below,
Drifting away!

I rise and stretch my longing arms in vain,
And fold in void embraces on my breast
The nothing claspt, and with dim fears opprest,
Cry to the shores I shall not see again,
Drifting away!

D E A D .

I.

SOMETHING lies in the room
Over against my own ;
The windows are lit with a ghastly bloom
Of candles, burning alone—
Untrimmed, and all aflame
In the ghastly silence there !

II.

People go by the door,
Tiptoe, holding their breath,
And hush the talk that they held before,
Lest they should waken Death,
That is awake all night
There in the candlelight !

III.

The cat upon the stairs
Watches with flamy eye
For the sleepy one who shall unawares
Let her go stealing by.
She softly, softly purrs,
And claws at the banisters.

IV.

The bird from out its dream
Breaks with a sudden song,
That stabs the sense like a sudden scream ;
The hound the whole night long
Howls to the moonless sky,
So far, and starry, and high.

SPRING.

I FEEL thy coming in the balmy air,

That woos the landscape from its winter-dream
Of leafless grove, bleak field, and frozen stream,
And in the warmth and freshness everywhere.

Oh, Earth is passing beautiful and fair!

Birds, trees, and flowers—the morning's golden beam,
Noon's glow, and sunset's mellow glory, seem
The bright belongings of some happier sphere!
And lured by these, and loathing the mean fame
That man doth yield to long, unworthy strife,
The heart turns heavenward with a holier aim,
Soars every thought, and every sense grows rife,
Till all the world and all its hopes look tame,
And the pent soul longs for a larger life.

THE CAGED ROBIN.

OH, like the laughter of a broken heart
That tells of sorrow in its hollow ring,
Yet strives to hide beneath a show of art
The joyless spirit's silent cankering—
Seems the sweet strain thou art caroling,
Poor patient Robin, in thy prison home—
Shut from the opening beauties of the spring
In the thick, somber silence of this room,
Where scarce through curtained glass a sickly light can
come.

Erst when the day in peaceful panoply,
With crimson banners decked the glowing east,
Thy matin gushed in joyous notes and free,
And only with the morning's freshness ceased.
So when the sunset reddened all the west,
Thy vesper rose, and with its beauty died,
And the sad whippowil beguiled the rest.
But *here* alike are morn and eventide,
The sunset's purple glory and Aurora's pride !

Erewhile I marked thee on thy bounding wing,
In aerial gambols whirling through the sky,
Stooping, anon, to taste the little spring,
That, pebbly-channeled, leapt translucently
Down a green hill-side—sparkling in its glee.
In crystal vase thy still warm drink now stands,
Its unrefreshing moisture mocking thee!
Dost loathe the bounty of thy captor's hands,
And long for that bright spring?—its silver shifting sands?

Can this carved roof and colonnaded hall
Vie with the blue sky and wild-wood grove,
Where now unanswered sounds the tender call
Of thy lone partner, plaining for her love?
What though thy cage be hung with fruits above?

Its wires be hid in freshly-gathered flowers—
Sweeter the fruits that thou mightst pluck, and rove
Through woods a-bloom, and fair, vine-clambered bowers,
The while shaking bright dew from clustering leaves in
showers.

O! sing no more, but fold thy useless wings,
And drop thy head upon thy bosom low—
Thou art too like the grief-worn soul that flings
A vail of gladsomeness upon its woe,
And mocks with gayety its bitterest throe!

O! hush the song now rising in thy throat!
Bid the sweet lay be still—or rough its flow,
Till sorrow speaks in every lilting note,
And sob-like strains along the carved arches float!

THE DOUBT.

SHE sits beside the low window,
In the pleasant evening-time,
With her face turned to the sunset,
Reading a book of rhyme.

And the wine-light of the sunset,
Stol'n into the dainty nook,
Where she sits in her sacred beauty,
Lies crimson on the book.

O beautiful eyes so tender,
Brown eyes so tender and dear,
Did you leave your reading a moment,
Just now, as I passed near?

Maybe, 'tis the sunset flushes
Her features, so lily-pale—
Maybe, 'tis the lover's passion,
She reads of in the tale.

O darling, and darling, and darling,
If I dared to trust my thought ;
If I dared to believe what I must not,
Believe what no one ought—

We would read together the poem
Of the Love that never died,
The passionate, world-old story
Come true, and glorified.

THE THORN.

“EVERY Rose, you sang, has its Thorn,
But this has none, I know.”
She clasped my rival's Rose
Over her breast of snow.

I bowed to hide my pain,
With a man's unskillful art,—
I moved my lips, and could not say
The Thorn was in my heart!

DROWNED.

LIKE a bird of evil presage,
To the lonely house on the shore,
Came the wind with a tale of shipwreck,
And shrieked at the closed door.

And flapped its wing in the gables,
And shouted the well-known names,
And buffeted the windows,
Afeard in their shuddering frames.

It was night, and it is morning—
The summer sun is bland,
The white-cap waves come rocking, rocking,
In to the summer land.

The white-cap waves come rocking, rocking,
In the sun so soft and bright,
And toss and play with the dead man,
Drowned in the storm last night.

UNDER THE LOCUSTS.

O LISTEN to the bees,
Weaving their honeyed harmonies,
In the white bloom of the locust-trees!

O faint, and soft, and slow,
Come the delicious winds that blow
Through the sweet drifts of Summer snow!

I sit with closed eyes:
Dimly the golden dreams arise,
All my soul in warm languor lies.

O swoon, enchanted brain!
Heart, why shouldst thou ever beat again?
Death is delight, and life is pain.

MIDNIGHT RAIN.

AT twilight Auster, like a gossip, came
And told the secret to the listening leaves :
And they did whisper it among themselves,
The while that dark clouds, purpling in the west,
Heaved up and blotted out the sunset's glory :
The while that lightnings darted from the folds
Of the thick mass, and sprang in fiery shapes
Like weird, fantastic trees and flowers, and withered :
The while the storm-sprite, mounting on damp plumes,
Brushed, as he passed, the cresset stars, and quenched :
The while that Luna hid behind the dusk ;
But, as night grew apace, the leaves grew still,
And hung in mute expectance of the rain.

And now the thunder, that had murmured long
Among the western clouds, rose as they rose,
And shook the fabric of the night. Slow rolled
Along the vault, and nearing earth, grew loud,
And burst with iron clangor on the hills.
Frequent and ghastr the lurid lightnings shone
With wide-pervading glow.

At last, some drops,
Shaken from out the sky, fell down to earth;
Then others came, and following fast and many,
The sweet-voiced, sibilant-show'ring gushes fell.
There had long time been drouth, and grateful fields
Drank the pure offering of the teeming clouds
With eager joy. The forest-trees, by heat
Untimely tinted with the hues of autumn,
Held out their stiff leaves, and their branches waved,
And crooned a dreamy measure to the wind.
The rills that arteried the valley-sides,
Swelled and ran down, and mingled in the stream
That flowed beneath. Flowers that had drooped,
Lifted themselves and gave their chalices
For the soft rain to brim. Brute-life partook
The common joy; and men did sweetly sleep.

As, when a fever long hath burned the frame,
Haply comes health, and bathes the aching brow
With dewy drops: relax the tensioned nerves,
The palms grow moist, the temples throb no more,
A pleasing languor spreads throughout the soul;—
So, welcome to the parched earth, came the rain!
And when the storm had passed, and far away
The thunder faintly murmured, slumber came
Upon her, and she slept the gentle sleep
That health doth ever bring.

THE BIRD.

HER bird in his cage sang songs
Of summer-time and love:
The snow was white on the winter fields,
The sky was dark above.

The tears came into the eyes
Of the lady so fair and wan —
“O bird,” she sobbed, “sing another song!
The summer-time is gone.

“The snow is white on my winter-heart,
And heaven is dark above:
My heart will break if you sing to me
Of summer-time and love.”

THE FISHER-MAIDEN.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINE.

BEAUTIFUL fisher-maiden,
Drive thy light boat to land—
Come to me, and sit down beside me;
We whisper, hand in hand.

Rest on my heart thy head, love,
Nor tremble for fear of me,—
Thou trustest thyself without trembling
Still to the stormy sea!

My heart is like the sea,—
Has storm, and ebb, and flow,
And many a beautiful pearl sleeps
In its calm depths below.

WORDS OF WARNING.

FRAGMENT.

LIFE'S made up of partings and meetings
At the best!
Sorrowful farewells and joyous greetings—
Hands are ever shaken, lips are pressed!
Wherefore, though the frown of heaven darken
Love's blue sky,
And thy soul in its forlornness hearken
To thy darling's tremulous good-bye,
Take thou heart, for all the world hath kindred
To thy woe;
Everywhere are longing spirits hindered
By the cruel fate that bids thee go!
Take thou heart—perchance the paths now parting
Shall be joined,
And the goal shall be the point of starting,
And the soul forgets that it hath pined.

Yet—yet, linger on those lips awhile ;
 Time may come
They shall wear for thee no loving smile,
 And to all thy tender words be dumb.

Look into those tearful eyes that mirror
 Love again ;
Clasp her fair form near and nearer,
 They may turn from thee in cold disdain.

THE STRAW HAT.

A PICTURE AT THE DOCTOR'S.

THE sweet shade falls athwart her face,
And leaves half shadow and half light—
Dimples and lips in open day,
And dreamy brows and eyes in night.

So low the languid eyelids fall,
They rest their silk upon her cheek,
And give delicious laziness
To glances arch and cunning meek.

It cannot frown, the placid brow!
Hidden in rare obscurity;
They cannot hate, the indolent eyes!
The sins they do not strive to see.

And in the sunshine of her cheeks,
The wanton dimples are at play,
So frolic-earnest in their sport,
They do not care to look away.

And oh, if Love, kiss-winged, should come,
And light on such a rose as this,
Could brow, or eye, or dimples blame
Such lips for giving back a kiss?

"SIR PHILIP SYDNEY."

A PET DOVE, WHICH FELL A PREY UNTO THE RAVENING CAT.

(For his Mistress.)

IN MEMORIAM.

ERST mirror of the stateliest chivalry,
 And not misnamed for that most gentle knight,
 In whom sweet love made shining deeds more bright,
 And gracious even the fault of vanity—
 Thee in the groves of heaven flying free,
 Flashing thy silver wings in that rare light,
 Whereof to think doth hurt our mortal sight—
 Thee, glorified through death; I weep not thee!
 But rather deem, thou stooping from on high,
 Hauntest my heart, the spirit of a dove,—
 Oh! guard it with a loving jealousy,
 That none but gentle thoughts therein may move,
 Ah! nestle there, and keep me ever nigh—
 Thou beauteous word of God for Peace and Love!





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